



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, June 29, 2017

New Specializations, Certificates Meet Emerging Workforce Needs

ABERDEEN, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Regents has approved new academic program requests to meet emerging employment trends across the state.

The regents this week authorized three highly-focused specializations within graduate-level biology programs at the University of South Dakota. Specializations in **bioinformatics** and **integrative biology** will apply to the Ph.D. program in biological sciences, while the specialization in **conservation and biodiversity** will be offered as part of USD's master of science degree in biology. Specializations within a degree program appear on a student's transcript.

Bioinformatics concentrates on analyzing large data sets originating from a variety of sources. Courses will focus on biology, as well as mathematics, statistics, and computer science, enabling doctoral students to collaborate on high-level research projects. Integrative biology emphasizes a multidisciplinary approach in the study of diverse biological systems.

The specialization in conservation and biodiversity concentrates on content knowledge and research in ecology, conservation, and biodiversity. Courses will focus on the conservation and variability of organisms and their environment, equipping degree holders with a more specific set of marketable skills and competencies compared to a master's degree in biology without specialization.

Regents also gave the go-ahead to deliver new undergraduate certificate programs at the University of South Dakota in **communication and leadership, healthcare and leadership, management, personnel supervision, and small business entrepreneurship**. A graduate certificate in **science, technology, and math pedagogy** will also be offered by USD. At Dakota State University, a graduate certificate will be available in **digital humanities**, while South Dakota State University will offer an undergraduate certificate in **workplace intercultural competence**.

Certificate programs usually require fewer credit hours to complete than a minor. They are developed by packaging a small set of courses that allows students to develop expertise within a focused area of study, addressing identified market and workforce development needs.