



News Release

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Tuition Buy-down for All Students Ranks High in Regent Budget Priorities

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Regents wants to buy down tuition and mandatory fees for all students next year to bring the ratio of funding from students and state government closer to a 50-50 split. An \$8.4 million budget request for next year will be forwarded to Gov. Dennis Daugaard to prevent more higher education cost shifting to students, regents said.

For the first time, the board’s budget request includes tuition cost relief for non-resident students and also for students who take courses off campus and through distance delivery.

“While resident tuition rates were frozen in two of the last three years, our non-resident and off-campus rates were not,” said Regents President Randy Schaefer. “We believe it is time to address that disparity. Attracting students to South Dakota is critical to sustaining and growing our state’s economy.”

In addition, the regents will request new state investments in student financial aid, security of campus data systems, and four capital construction projects. The \$3.3 million financial aid request, referred to as a shared responsibility student aid model, would have the state fill the funding gap for a student after every other available source—from the student, student’s family, institution, and federal government—has been exhausted.

The budget request overall seeks \$15 million in new and ongoing state resources linked to specific priorities of the six public universities and two special schools. The regents have asked Gov. Daugaard to make the tuition buy-down his highest priority in the recommended Fiscal Year 2018 budget.

Research and economic development are also priorities. Doubling the annual budget directed to Governor Research Centers, through the Governor’s Office of Economic Development, will create new centers and build research capacity across South Dakota. First established in 2004, Governor Research Centers grow the state’s economy by targeting investments in specialized research at the public universities. State resources support the centers in their first five years of operation, after which they are to become self-sufficient and sustained only through outside funding.

Other research initiatives ask for new investments in precision agriculture research at South Dakota State University. The request calls for a combination of new base money and one-time

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funds at the Dakota Lakes Research Farm near Pierre, which conducts research on precision agriculture methods applied to conservation farming. Additional funds would also go to SDSU Extension to improve its capacity to translate precision agriculture research into practical application by farmers and ranchers across the state.

Campus-based requests seek additional resources to support quality initiatives at the University of South Dakota law school and a new University College model to help high-risk students succeed and graduate at Black Hills State University. The board's budget request also includes proposals to raise student achievement and preparation for college mathematics at engineering programs offered by South Dakota School of Mines & Technology and SDSU.

The Board of Regents will seek salary increases for teachers at the South Dakota School for the Deaf and South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Those teachers were not part of the statewide K-12 teacher compensation package approved in the 2016 legislative session. Other budget requests pertain to support for students on the autism spectrum at Dakota State University and new student success programs for American Indian students at Northern State University.

The board also identified \$123.1 million in one-time budget requests. Among those priorities are four capital construction projects. The largest is \$68 million for major laboratory renovations and additional space at the Animal Disease Research & Diagnostic Lab, a state-authorized facility operated under the Board of Regents' supervision on the SDSU campus.

Other capital projects in the budget request include investments in research and economic development at School of Mines, expansion of the Graduate Education and Applied Research Center at the USD Discovery District in Sioux Falls, and new cybersecurity research and development labs at DSU.