



News Release

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Regents Issue ‘Opportunity for All’ Statement

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Regents today adopted a statement and action plan that strongly positions its public universities as places of opportunity for all students to benefit from higher education, preparing them to live and work in South Dakota or anywhere in the world.

The statement, reaffirms and doubles down on the board’s commitment to providing the resources and services necessary to ensure all students have an opportunity to succeed at its universities. “We treat each person as an individual, not as a member of a group, and offer services and supports for each person’s individual situation,” the board’s statement says.

The board’s statement frames its position around four central tenets: (1) offering opportunity for all students; (2) proudly supporting the United States of America; (3) safeguarding the rich tradition of American universities; and (4) offering curriculum based upon widely held and accepted knowledge and thought.

The statement recognizes the importance of teaching public university students in South Dakota about America’s history, the system of individual liberty in a democratic republic, and the free enterprise system. “Part of that instruction is to acknowledge and discuss America’s flaws and mistakes, so that we can learn from them and improve,” it says. “Critical Race Theory is not the basis for instruction in our state universities and it’s not going to be. But this is a label that means different things to different people,” said Regent Tony Venhuizen. “That’s why our board today is taking a step back and stating the American values that will continue to guide the university system.”

“We are committed to programs that enhance a wide ranging knowledge of American government and its traditions,” said Regent Jeff Partridge. “As part of that, we are prepared to offer new opportunities for students to increase their civic engagement and develop skills in communication, critical thinking, civility, and dispute resolution.”

Regents recognize that South Dakota’s public universities are part of the rich tradition of American universities, a tradition built upon free speech, scientific discovery, and academic freedom. “As our students expand their understanding in a field of study, we encourage that

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students be exposed to a variety of viewpoints, ideas, and theories, so that they can be debated and critiqued,” the statement says.

Progress toward goals outlined in the board’s statement will be discussed at the next regular Board of Regents’ meeting, scheduled for October 6-7 in Rapid City. The Board of Regent’s full statement on “**Opportunity for All**” can be accessed at this link https://www.sdbor.edu/the-board/agendaitems/2014AgendaItems/2021%20Agenda%20Items/August3_21/7_A_BOR0821.pdf