



News Release

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Regents Launch Higher Education Task Force Study

PIERRE, S.D. – The first meeting of a task force to study operations of the public university system in South Dakota is scheduled Oct. 7-8 in Rapid City.

The Senate Bill 55 Task Force takes its name from legislation passed by the 2020 South Dakota Legislature, which directed the South Dakota Board of Regents to create a task force to study the operations and functions of higher education institutions under the regents' control.

“South Dakotans invest significant resources in its public universities and the return on citizens' investment is in the billions of dollars,” said Brian L. Maher, the regents' executive director and CEO. “We intend to step up and examine the system's current operations to identify areas ripe for change.”

Maher will chair the task force, which must report its findings back to the Legislature and Gov. Kristi Noem no later than Nov. 15, 2021. A tentative agenda calls for five meetings at campus locations across the state between October 2020 and June 2021.

Named to the Senate Bill 55 Task Force are:

- **Brian L. Maher**, regents' executive director and CEO
- **Sen. Ryan Maher**, Isabel; **Sen. Reynold Nesiba**, Sioux Falls; **Rep. Hugh Bartels**, Watertown; and **Rep. Chris Karr**, Sioux Falls; representing the Legislature's Joint Committee on Appropriations
- **Regent Jim Thares**, Aberdeen; **Regent Joan Wink**, Howes; and **Regent Barb Stork**, Dakota Dunes
- **USD President Sheila Gestring**, **BHSU President Laurie Nichols**, and **SDSU President Barry Dunn**
- **Jim Neiman**, Hulett, Wyo., Neiman Enterprises CEO
- **Tyler Tordsen**, Sioux Falls, southeast regional director for U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds
- **Paulette Davidson**, Rapid City, Monument Health CEO
- **Elsie Meeks**, Pine Ridge, Lakota Funds board chair
- **Nadifa Mahamed**, Sioux Falls, South Dakota State University student
- **Hal Clemensen**, Aberdeen, Agtegra Cooperative Board of Directors
- **Jon Veenis**, Sioux Falls, ELM Resources CEO (retired)
- **Jim Lochner**, Dakota Dunes, Tyson Foods COO (retired)
- **Doug Morrison**, Sioux Falls, Sioux Falls School District director of research, innovation, and accountability