



News Release

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Universities Rise to Challenge of Looming Workforce Problem

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – The supply of new jobs in South Dakota is growing, an estimated 7 percent increase in the decade ending in 2024. Those new jobs will be increasingly knowledge based, which challenge public universities and other education providers to supply enough skilled workers to fill those positions in a state where the working-age population is not growing.

The latest Board of Regents' analysis confirms the significant extent to which graduates from South Dakota's six public universities remain in state—either hired into the workforce or enrolled in further studies.

Based on the 2015 graduation cohort, the public universities retain 70.5 percent of their home-grown graduates in state the year following college graduation, either to work or to pursue additional postsecondary education. More than 30 percent of out-of-state students completing degrees at the same institutions also are placed here a year after graduation. When comparing raw numbers in the latest analysis, 674 more graduates remained in South Dakota over a FY06 baseline.

This placement rate would likely be even higher, regents' officials noted, but the data do not account for degree completers who are self-employed, employed by the federal government (including members of the armed forces), or enrolled in out-of-state postsecondary institutions while living in South Dakota.

“These findings underscore the economic importance of intensifying efforts to boost graduate production in South Dakota,” said Mike Rush, the regents' executive director and CEO. “Public universities play a critical role in meeting the state's skilled workforce needs.”

Delivering education by distance is one way that public higher education meets this workforce challenge. A report released this week shows headcount in distance education coursework at the public universities increased by 30 percent over the past five years, to a total of 15,790 students. Compared to fall 2013, an additional 20,000 credit hours were delivered via distance this fall.

Graduate Placement – 2

Forty-five percent of students enrolled in South Dakota public universities took at least one distance course, a nine percent increase in the past five years. Four institutions—Black Hills State University, Dakota State University, Northern State University, and the University of South Dakota—had more than half of their students enrolled in a distance course this fall.

Interactive dashboards illustrate key Board of Regents’ data points. A dashboard on graduate placement (<https://www.sdbor.edu/dashboards/Pages/GraduatePlacement.aspx>) examines how many public university graduates remain in South Dakota one year after graduation. Another dashboard (<https://www.sdbor.edu/dashboards/Pages/Distance-Education.aspx>) looks at the growth in distance education.