



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Universities Tackle Workforce Shortage Problem

VERMILLION, S.D. – An estimated 33,000 new jobs are expected to be created in South Dakota between 2012 and 2022, based on state labor department projections. The state’s challenge is to supply an adequate pool of skilled workers to fill those positions. New data confirm a robust majority of students who graduate from South Dakota’s six public universities remain in state after completing a degree, but that efforts must intensify to boost graduate production going forward.

Looking at the 2014 graduation cohort, the public universities retain about 72 percent of their home-grown graduates in state the year following college graduation, either to work or to pursue additional postsecondary education. For out-of-state students completing degrees at the same institutions, the percentage that remained was just over 29 percent.

“The supply of new jobs is growing, and those new jobs will be increasingly knowledge based,” said Mike Rush, the regents’ executive director and CEO. “Public universities can and will play a critical role in meeting the state’s skilled workforce needs.” To address human capital demands across the state, Rush said the regents have adopted a statewide attainment goal of 65 percent of South Dakotans, ages 25 to 34, holding some type postsecondary credential by 2025.

Even as larger cohorts of students graduate from the public universities, Rush noted that the number of graduates placed in state has climbed steadily since 2006. Nearly 650 additional graduates were placed in 2013-14 in South Dakota, compared to the number placed eight years earlier.

The top-two industries where graduates found employment in South Dakota were health care (29.9 percent) and educational services (19.6 percent). Several of the highest-ranked employment sectors that South Dakota graduates entered also correspond to industries projected by the state labor department to be in high demand for employment through 2022.

The placement study examined data sets from the South Dakota Board of Regents, the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, and the National Student Clearinghouse to determine the extent to which public university degree completers were retained in state after graduation. The full study can be found online at: https://www.sdbor.edu/the-board/agendaitems/2014AgendaItems/2016-December/6_N_BOR1216.pdf.