



# News Release

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## **Interim BHSU Presidential Appointment Made Permanent**

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Regents will make permanent an interim appointment of Laurie Stenberg Nichols as Black Hills State University president. The decision was announced today, after a meeting of the presidential search committee Wednesday in Spearfish.

“President Nichols has been a strong and steady hand at Black Hills State since we asked her to take an interim appointment last July,” said Regent Joan Wink of Howes, who has chaired the search process. “It became apparent to search committee members that our best candidate was right here, living in Spearfish and working at Black Hills State University. Laurie Nichols is highly respected by her peers and brings with her many years of prior experience in the South Dakota public higher education system. She has been doing a tremendous job as the interim president.”

“I was delighted to return to my home state of South Dakota last July and have enjoyed these six months as interim president of Black Hills State University,” Nichols said. “During this time, I have come to appreciate the vital role that BHSU plays in western South Dakota in providing access to higher education and serving as an economic engine for the region.”

Paul B. Beran, executive director & CEO of the South Dakota Board of Regents, said Nichols’ unique skill set was a strong selling point for the regents and the search committee.

“From her South Dakota roots, she knows this state very well. She has established connections to higher education statewide,” Beran said. “We value her presidential experience, including a year as interim president at another South Dakota university. All of these qualities, and more, demonstrated that Laurie Nichols is the right person at the right time for Black Hills State University.”

Prior to her work at BHSU, Nichols served for three years as the University of Wyoming’s president, the first woman to hold that post. From 2009 to 2016 she was provost and vice president for academic affairs at South Dakota State University. From 1994 to 2009 she was dean of family and consumer sciences, also at SDSU. In 2008 she was tapped to be the interim president at Northern State University. She was an American Council on Education fellow in

## Laurie Nichols - 2

2006-07. Prior to that, she taught at secondary and post-secondary levels in South Dakota, Colorado, Nebraska, Ohio, Idaho, and Iowa.

“I am excited to take a longer and more permanent view of providing leadership to Black Hills State University,” Nichols said. “I appreciate the confidence that the Board of Regents and Executive Director Beran have in me, and I look forward to working with the campus and community to create a positive future for BHSU.”

A native of Colman, S.D., Nichols received her undergraduate degree in home economics education from SDSU. She holds a master’s degree in vocational and adult education from Colorado State University and a Ph.D. in family and consumer sciences education/family studies from The Ohio State University.

Nichols succeeds Tom Jackson Jr., who became president at California’s Humboldt State University in July.

Black Hills State University is the third largest institution in the South Dakota unified system of public higher education. Located in Spearfish, with an additional campus in nearby Rapid City, BHSU is home to 3,858 students, 131 full-time and 86 adjunct faculty, and 243 staff members. BHSU is a comprehensive institution offering 65 bachelors, nine masters, and seven associate degree programs through the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Business and Natural Sciences, and the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences.