

**South Dakota Board of Regents
2006 High School to College Transition Report**

Executive Summary

The South Dakota *High School to College Transition Report* is an annual report developed by the South Dakota Board of Regents with intent to further develop communication between South Dakota high schools and the Regental system. High school administrators are provided a range of valuable data (e.g., ACT scores, first-year GPA, retention, remedial enrollment, advanced placement, etc.) for their graduates after the first year of college to better ensure that these students are adequately prepared for success at the post-secondary level. During the 2006-07 academic year, a total of 2,786 of the South Dakota High School Graduating Class of 2006 entered Regental Institutions on a full-time basis in Fall 2006, representing 30% of the 9,244 graduates from South Dakota high schools in 2006. This percentage is up slightly from the 28.6% of those graduates enrolled in 2005. Four noticeable trends emerged in the data depicted in the narrative report:

- A total of 139 South Dakota high school graduates entered Regental Institutions on a part-time basis, representing approximately 5% of the 2006 high school graduates. This represents a 42% decline in the number of part-time students enrolling from the 2006 graduating class.
- The average ACT Composite score of those 2006 SD high school graduates who entered on a full-time basis was 22.7, up slightly from the 2002 and 2003 average of 22.2. For those who entered on a part-time basis, the average ACT Composite score was 20.4, down slightly from the 2005 composite score of 20.7.
- The third cohort of the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship recipients entering the public universities in Fall 2006 was 768 (28% of the South Dakota graduates who entered the public universities this past fall). This represents the second straight year with at least a 6% increase in the number of SDOS recipients. One hundred and forty-two (79%) high schools had at least one graduate receive the SDOS.
- The percentage of SD high school graduates who were awarded credit for College Board Advanced Placement Examinations increased for the sixth year in a row from 5.1% in 2001 to 10% in 2006.

South Dakota Graduate Remedial Coursework

Students are placed into remedial English and mathematics courses based on their ACT English and ACT Mathematics scores. Students with ACT English scores below 18 and/or ACT Mathematics scores below 20 are placed into remedial courses. Students may challenge their placement by sitting for the ACT COMPASS placement examinations. Since the analyses in this report is based on the ACT subscores of entering freshmen, the number of students reportedly placed in remedial courses is usually higher than the number of students who enroll in remedial courses because a set of students use the COMPASS exam to demonstrate that they are ready for college-level courses.

Of those SD high school graduates who entered Regental Institutions on a full-time basis in 2006 and completed at least one semester during the 2006-07 academic year, 70% enrolled in college-level English and mathematics courses and 30% enrolled in at least one remedial math or English course. This is a slight decrease in the percentage of these full-time graduates who enrolled in remedial courses (down from 34.2% in 2003 and 31.8% in 2004).

- SD high school graduates who entered on a full-time basis in 2006 and enrolled in general education courses had higher average ACT Composite scores (24.3 vs. 21.6) up slightly from 2005 (24.3 and 18.8) and had higher first-year university GPAs than graduates who enrolled in remedial courses (2.98 vs. 2.32). Both of these indicators are nearly the same as in 2005.
- Out of the 179 SD high schools with 2006 graduates enrolling in at least one semester at a Regental Institution during the 2006-07 academic year, 27 (15%) had no students enrolled in remedial coursework.

Recommended Actions for Parents and Students

An important implication for parents and students to consider regarding a successful transition into post-secondary education is the need to take the right courses in middle school and high school. Preparation for success in college requires completion of rigorous academic courses in high school. For example, Algebra continues to serve as a *gateway* course and school districts should provide and allow prepared students to take Algebra I in the 8th grade followed by at least four years of higher-level mathematics in high school that includes Algebra II, Geometry, Trigonometry and Pre-Calculus. For example, those South Dakota high school graduates this past year who completed a college preparatory curriculum earned an average ACT Composite score of 26.5 compared to 21.2 for those who took less than the college preparatory curriculum. This trend has held for the past twelve years.

Finally, there are three reasons why it is important that one considers making cost effective decisions while students are in high school. First, remedial courses cost 23% more, with the tuition and fees during the 2006-07 academic for a three-credit college general education course costing \$502. The cost of a three-credit remedial course is \$619. Second, remedial courses extend the amount of time it takes to earn a degree because they do not count towards a degree. Finally, high school Advanced Placement Courses save money. A high school advanced placement course can provide a student with college general education credit for a test fee of \$85, saving the student \$153 in tuition. Additionally, well prepared students who entered one of the six Regental Institutions in Fall 2006 were 40% more likely to successfully progress toward graduation during their first year (earning more than 31 credit hours during the fall and spring term).