

**South Dakota Board of Regents
College Application Campaign**

In February 2014, representatives from the American College Application Campaign inquired with Board of Regents staff regarding South Dakota’s interest in participating in the program with other states around the country. Starting as an initiative affiliated with the GEAR UP program in North Carolina high schools in 2005, the program was designed as a one-day event intended to provide students with assistance in submitting college admission applications. Following successful implementation in North Carolina and seven other states the American Council on Education (ACE), State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) and the Council on State School Officers (CCSSO) joined together in 2010 in an effort to establish a national presence for the initiative. The following year funds from the Lumina, Bill & Melinda Gates, and Kresge Foundations were used to leverage additional support resulting in ten states in 2011, twenty-four states in 2012, and thirty-five in 2013. Through a concerted push by SHEEO, all remaining states agreed to pilot programs in 2014.

Through the ACAC organizations, states are provided with technical assistance in planning campaign activities with local school districts. ACAC recommends that a state steering committee be assembled to coordinate efforts locally, and during the first year of the program the GEAR Up/College Access Challenge Grant Advisor Council was used to serve this role when making program decisions. One of the major issues identified during early discussions was the need to waive the application fee for low-income or underrepresented students at districts willing to partner in the pilot program. Representatives from SAC and BAC were consulted about issues associated with allowing a waiver for students at the targeted districts during the designated ACAC activity, and council representatives supported waivers for students enrolling in up to three Regental institutions. From the list of CACG partner school districts, nine schools were targeted to participate and, when comparing the percentage of graduates from the most recent set of graduation placements, the percentage of students not enrolling in postsecondary within 18 months of graduation ranged from 28% to 93% (see Table 1). One of the goals for the program will be to assess student matriculation to postsecondary institutions in South Dakota. The week of November 11-15, 2014 was selected for districts to participate in the program, and CACG staff worked with institutional volunteers to coordinate specific dates/times at each of the participating districts.

*Table 1
Enrollment Outlook for the 2012 Graduates for the Nine School Districts Participating in the American College Application Campaign*

| <i>High School</i> | <i>Enrolled SDBOR</i> | <i>Enrolled SD Any</i> | <i>Enrolled Any</i> | <i>Not Enrolled</i> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Cheyenne-Eagle Butte</i> | 28.2 % | 28.2 % | 38.5 % | 61.5 % |
| <i>Rapid City Academies</i> | 4.1 % | 14.9 % | 17.6 % | 82.4 % |
| <i>Pine Ridge</i> | 4.3 % | 4.3 % | 7.1 % | 92.9 % |
| <i>Red Cloud</i> | 42.6 % | 42.6 % | 57.4 % | 42.6 % |
| <i>Winner</i> | 28.6 % | 65.3 % | 69.4 % | 30.6 % |
| <i>White River</i> | 18.8 % | 31.3 % | 50 % | 50 % |
| <i>St. Francis*</i> | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| <i>Kadoka</i> | 40 % | 60 % | 65 % | 35 % |
| <i>Lyman</i> | 50 % | 66.7 % | 72.2 % | 27.8 % |

District teachers and staff employed a number of strategies during the target week to foster student interest in the initiative including: 1) developing pamphlets highlighting the degree programs and universities attended by district staff; 2) allowing staff to wear apparel from their degree granting institutions; and 3) decorating classrooms depicting university affiliations for staff. Prior to completing applications, students completed common materials emphasizing career interests and identifying institutions that provide degree programs that meet those respective goals. During the application week, 234 students completed up to three applications for their institution(s) of choice, resulting in 404 individual applications to Regental institutions.¹

Table 2
The Number of Participants by School District Compared with the Number of 2013 Graduates from that District Enrolling in the Regental System

| High School | Students Participating | 2013 High School Graduates | 2013 System Enrollments |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Cheyenne-Eagle Butte</i> | 41 | 39 | 11 |
| <i>Rapid City Academies</i> | 40 | 74 | 3 |
| <i>Pine Ridge</i> | 38 | 70 | 3 |
| <i>Red Cloud</i> | 38 | 47 | 20 |
| <i>Winner</i> | 29 | 49 | 14 |
| <i>White River</i> | 16 | 16 | 3 |
| <i>St. Francis*</i> | 15 | ** ² | ** |
| <i>Kadoka</i> | 9 | 20 | 8 |
| <i>Lyman</i> | 8 | 18 | 9 |

At the conclusion of the application week, representatives from the school districts, CACG staff, and the Board of Regents central office convened to discuss program expansion for the 2015-16 school year and identify areas to further improve support to districts that will be asked to participate during the second year of the program. Areas identified include: 1) increased training opportunities for high school counselors serving as site coordinators; 2) increased emphasis on ACT registration and completion; 3) increased emphasis on financial aid and FAFSA completion; and 4) improved data tracking methods for student participation.

¹ Black Hills State University (52), Dakota State University (29), Northern State University (46), South Dakota School of Mines & Technology (37), South Dakota State University (120), University of South Dakota (121).

² Data from St. Francis are not available through the Department of Education.