

**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS**

**Planning Session**

**REVISED  
AGENDA ITEM: 4 – G  
DATE: July 31 – August 2, 2023**

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**SUBJECT**

**Admission Policy Enhancements**

**CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY**

[BOR Policy 2:3](#) – Undergraduate Admissions  
[SDBOR Strategic Plan](#)

**BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION**

In March of 2022, the Board of Regents approved the Strategic Plan. The complete annual report for the 2022-2023 academic year is presented in Board item 4-B as Attachment I. The August 2023 Board items 4-G (Admission Policy Enhancements) and 4-H (Credit for Prior Learning Enhancements to Transfer Policy) impacts Goal 2, Access and Affordability, of the strategic plan.

Goal 2: Access and Affordability

The Regental system is the largest public postsecondary education system in South Dakota. This system offers both undergraduate and graduate education. *Access* to affordable education is the cornerstone to ensuring South Dakotans attend a public post-secondary institution.

The objectives found in the strategic plan identify three major topical strategies to increase enrollments across the system: FAFSA completion of high school students, traditional high school student matriculation, and transfer student policy. As the system continues to identify additional tasks to strive toward those objectives, a new board policy will be critical for admissions to help drive success. The ability to recruit and retain students begins with admittance into the university system.

Admission policies impact the following student types:

1. Traditional Student – Defined as applicants who are eighteen (18) years old.
2. Post-Traditional Students – Defined as applicants who are at least twenty-five (25) years of age.
3. Transfer Students – Defined in BOR Policy 2:5 as a degree-seeking student who transfers credit from a sending institution to a receiving institution.
4. Graduate Students – Defined as applicants whose primary area of study is at the master’s, specialist, or doctoral level.

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

5. High School Students (Dual Credit) – Defined as students that have not graduated from a secondary school and are taking college courses for credit while actively pursuing a high school degree.
6. International Students – Defined as applicants that are citizens or permanent residents of a country to which they intend to return other than the United States.
7. Non-Degree Seeking Students – Defined as applicants that desire to attend a postsecondary institution for a course, or courses, that will not count toward a degree.

**Population Demographics**

The 2021<sup>1</sup> census data provides a snapshot of the population in South Dakota by age and educational attainment. According to the 2021 census data, the South Dakota population in total was 895,376. The total population percentage of individuals under the age of eighteen (18) was approximately 24.6% or 162,542 of the total population. South Dakota’s total population of individuals over eighteen (18) was approximately 75.4%. Of South Dakota’s 75.4% of individuals over the age of eighteen (18), approximately 9.4% or 84,378 individuals make up South Dakota’s traditional age of eighteen (18) through twenty-four (24) years of age. Whereas the post-traditional age population of twenty-five (25) and over for South Dakota is approximately 65.9% or 590,377 individuals of the total population.

Chart 1: Census Data Traditional Age Population [18-24]

<b>Ages 18-24</b>	<b>US Educational Attainment<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>SD Educational Attainment<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>SD Total 18-24 Years</b>
Less than High School/GED	11.7%	14.9% or 12,554	75,646 of 84,378 individuals have an associate degree or less
High School Graduate	34.8%	32.6% or 27,512	
Some College or Associates	40.7%	42.2% or 35,580	
Bachelor’s degree	12.8	10.3% or 8,732	8,732 of 84,378 individuals have a bachelor’s degree

Chart 1 aims to provide a breakdown of educational attainment for those individuals between the ages of eighteen (18) through twenty-four (24). The total number of individuals that have an associate degree or less was reported as a total of 75,646 individuals. Enrollment trends for the traditional student type show a decline in the number of students that enroll in a postsecondary college or university. The census suggests that

<sup>1</sup> 2021 American Community Survey. Dataset: ACSST1Y2021 Table Id: S1501 <https://data.census.gov/table?q=south+dakota&t=Age+and+Sex&tid=ACSST1Y2021.S0101>

<sup>2</sup> 2021 American Community Survey. Dataset: ACSST1Y2021 Table Id: S1501 <https://data.census.gov/table?q=south+dakota&t=Educational+Attainment&g=010XX00US&tid=ACSST1Y2021.S1501>

<sup>3</sup> 2021 American Community Survey (ACS). Dataset: ACSST1Y2021 Table Id: S1501 <https://data.census.gov/table?q=south+dakota&t=Educational+Attainment&tid=ACSST1Y2021.S1501>

the largest population of students includes those students that have only a high school diploma or less. There appears to be a correlation of the actual count of students matriculating from high school directly to postsecondary education as displayed in Chart 2<sup>4</sup>.

Chart 2 displays the percentage of high school graduates that attend a postsecondary college or university and that number started to decline starting in 2017-18 cohort.

Chart 2: SD High School Graduates & Postsecondary Education Enrollment

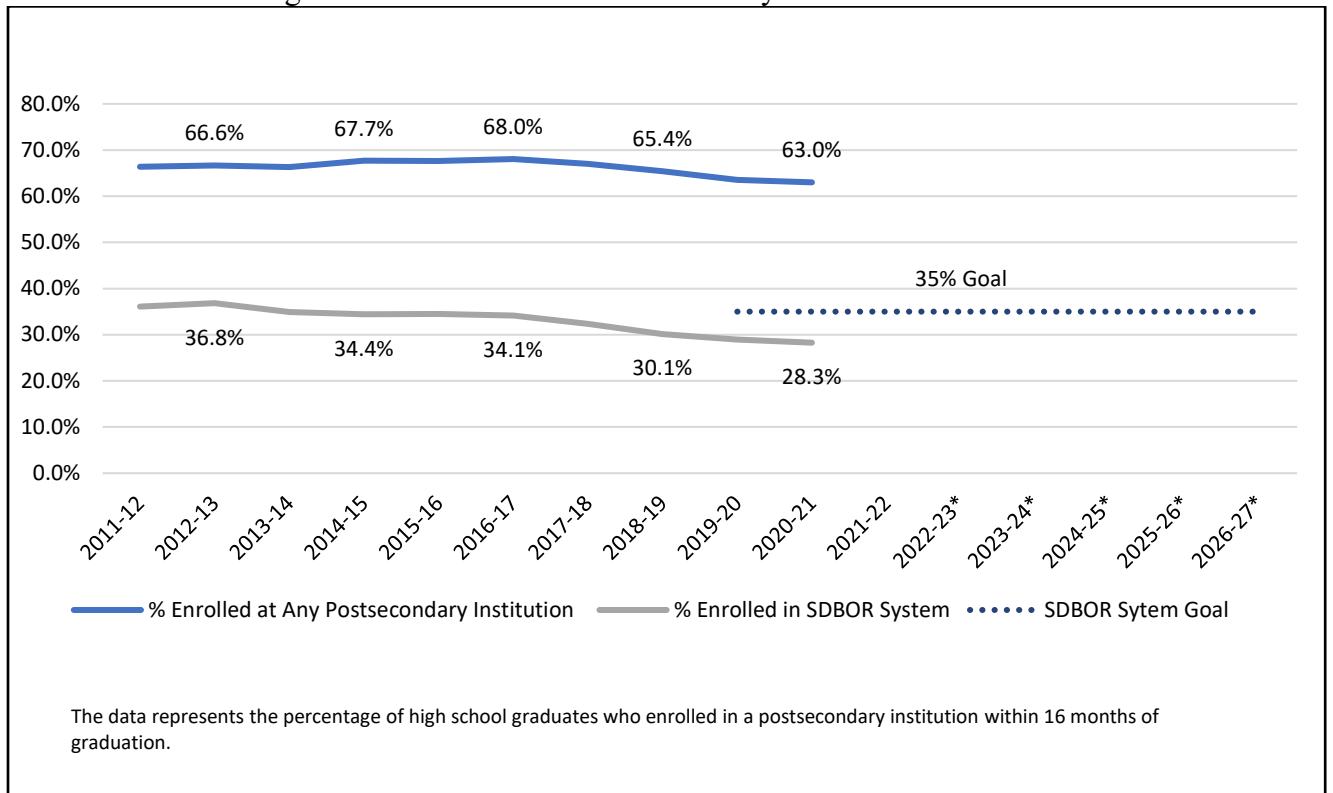


Chart 3, on the following page, aims to provide a breakdown of educational attainment for those individuals over the age of twenty-four (24). The data demonstrates that there are 403,431 individuals that have the potential for enrollment and educational attainment. This group of individuals would be considered the post-traditional student population. It is important to note that not all of the South Dakotan individuals will equate to a 100% yield in postsecondary education; however, the data shows the promise of potential for applicants. To better understand the post-traditional population, Attachment I provides additional demographic trends of post-traditional students as reported by the Postsecondary National Policy Institution.

<sup>4</sup> SD Department of Education and the National Student Clearinghouse data.

Chart 3: Census Data for Post-Traditional Population [25 or Older]

Ages 25 or Older	US Educational Attainment <sup>5</sup>	SD Educational Attainment <sup>6</sup>	SD Total 25 Plus Years
Less than High School/GED	10.7%	6.9% or 41,013	403,431 of 590,377 individuals have an Associate’s Degree or Less
High School Graduate	26.3%	29.3% or 172,971	
Some College/No Degree	19.3 %	20.1% or 118,503	
Associate’s degree	8.8%	12.0% or 70,944	
Bachelor’s degree	21.2%	21.6% or 127,258	186,946 of 590,377 individuals have a Bachelor's or Advanced Degree
Advanced Degree	13.8%	10.1% or 59,688	

**Policy Enhancements**

The current BOR Policy 2:3 was initiated in 1987 and has been modified since the original policy's adoption. This policy refers to undergraduate admissions and can be seen as a very technical policy. It encompasses primarily the traditional age population of applicants. Given the changes in South Dakota populations and demographics, Dr. Minder requested that a team of stakeholders from the Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Councils review the Board of Regents admissions policy as well as other university and system admissions policies and procedures across the United States for best practices.

The committee members are close to completing the research. Each committee member was asked to reach out to their respective campus stakeholders to understand the needs of the various institutional departments (admissions [undergraduate and graduate], academic records, financial aid, etc.). Next, the Academic Affairs Council (AAC) and the Student Affairs Council (SAC) will be meeting in October to discuss the recommendations from the workgroups with the plan to bring a new and enhanced policy to the December 2023 and March 2024 BOR meetings for approval.

Currently, there are three (3) themes to consider:

1. ‘What is required in order to be admitted to an institution of higher education,’
2. ‘What is required in order to be admitted to a program of study,’ and
3. ‘What are the placement requirements for general education.’

<sup>5</sup> 2021 American Community Survey (ACS). Dataset: ACSST1Y2021 Table Id: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2022/educational-attainment.html>.

<sup>6</sup> 2021 American Community Survey (ACS). Dataset: ACSST1Y2021 Table Id: <https://data.census.gov/table?q=south+dakota&t=Educational+Attainment&tid=ACSST1Y2021.S1501>

All stakeholders confirmed that the BOR policy addresses the minimum standards of being admitted into the university and for all potential populations of applicants. Second, the universities are best equipped and should address the enrollment requirements into a program of study based on program and accreditation requirements. For example, enrollment requirements in Nursing may look very different when compared to requirements in Fine Arts. The university needs to be able to clearly articulate the enrollment requirements based on specific programs to the applicants, whereas the overall admission to the university should be defined by the Board of Regents. Research does provide that these two policies do not have to be the same and *can look very different*.

### **IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION**

There are opportunities for enhancement of the admissions policy to include a more comprehensive approach (Undergraduate, Graduate, Traditional, Post-Traditional, Transfer, etc.). The need to connect with all South Dakotans for access to higher education is significantly important.

To further promote cohesiveness in the research to date by the committee, the Regents may want to consider the following topics as it relates to admission policies and procedures during the meeting.

1. Mission of the University – Comprehensive Regional, Special Focus, and Research
2. Demographic Changes in South Dakota
3. Admission to the University versus Admission to a Program of Study

Dr. Minder will provide an in-depth summary of the findings at the BOR Retreat.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment I – Postsecondary National Policy Institution Factsheet

# Postsecondary National Policy Institute

## Post-Traditional Students in Higher Education

### OVERVIEW

Post-traditional students are over the age of 24 when they enter higher education; the “traditional” age range of college-goers is typically defined as 18-24.<sup>1</sup> In general, post-traditional students have one or more of the following characteristics: they delayed enrollment in college after high school, they attend part-time for at least part of an academic year, they work full-time while also enrolled in school, they are financially independent, or they have dependents (spouse and/or children).

### ENROLLMENT

- In [fall 2019](#), post-traditional students made up 33.4% of all postsecondary enrollment.
  - Male post-traditional students made up 13.2% of all postsecondary enrollment and 31% of all male postsecondary enrollment.
  - Female post-traditional students made up 20.2% of all postsecondary enrollment and 35.2% of all female postsecondary enrollment.
- Since [fall 2009](#), overall post-traditional student enrollment has declined from 7.9 million to 6.6 million, a 17.8% decrease.
  - Full-time post-traditional enrollment declined from 3.4 million to 2.7 million, a 19.4% decrease.
  - Part-time post-traditional enrollment declined from 4.6 million to 3.8 million, a 16.6% decrease.
- Though post-traditional students are much more likely to attend [public institutions](#) of higher education versus private, they are overrepresented in the for-profit sector.
  - In fall 2019, 73% of post-traditional undergraduate students attended public institutions: 32% attended public four-year institutions and 40% attended public two-year institutions.<sup>2</sup>
  - In fall 2019, post-traditional students made up 68.2% of all for-profit enrollment and 81.1% of all for-profit part-time enrollment.
- Post-traditional students are much [more likely](#) to enroll in online courses than traditionally aged students.

### FINANCIAL AID AND STUDENT DEBT

- According to the National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey, [57%](#) of post-traditional students received some form of federal Title IV financial aid in the 2017–18 academic year, compared to 60% of traditionally aged students.
  - [47%](#) of post-traditional students received a Pell Grant, compared to 42% of traditionally aged students.
  - [38%](#) of post-traditional students received a federal student loan, similar to traditionally aged students.

<sup>1</sup> While the U.S. Department of Education uses the term “nontraditional,” many researchers prefer the term “post-traditional” since it recognizes these students for the value they bring to their colleges. In this brief, terms used reflect their data sources.

<sup>2</sup> Due to rounding in the Digest of Education Statistics, percent values may not completely add up.



- Among post-traditional students who received federal Title IV aid in 2017–18, the [average amount](#) received was \$8,343.
  - The average Pell Grant amount for post-traditional students was \$3,528.
  - The average federal loan amount for post-traditional students was \$7,774.
- According to the [Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study](#):
  - Post-traditional students who first entered postsecondary education in 2003–04 and had not paid their student loans off still owed an average of \$18,476, compared to \$24,952 for traditionally aged students 12 years after entering
  - However, post-traditional students owed on average 80% of their total amount borrowed, compared to 68% for traditionally aged students.

## COMPLETION/DEGREE ATTAINMENT<sup>3</sup>

- Among post-traditional students who entered postsecondary education in fall 2011, by June 2017, [6.5%](#) had attained a bachelor’s degree, 15.3% had attained an associate degree, 16.6% had attained a certificate, and 61.6% had not attained a degree or certificate.
  - Among traditionally aged students, 40.8% had attained a bachelor’s degree, 10.3% had attained an associate degree, 7.4% had attained a certificate, and 41.5% had not attained a degree or certificate.
- Post-traditional students represented [27.8%](#) of all bachelor’s degree completions in the 2017–18 academic year.

## EARNINGS AND WEALTH

- According to the Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study, ten years after receiving a bachelor’s degree, post-traditional graduates reported having an average gross income of [\\$71,823](#), compared to \$78,013 for traditionally aged graduates.
- Wealth accumulation can be [measured](#) differently from income. Ten years after graduating:
  - [67%](#) of post-traditional graduates reported owning a home, compared to 61% of traditionally aged graduates.
  - [84%](#) of post-traditional graduates had some form of a retirement account, compared to 88% of traditionally aged graduates.

## POPULATION-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

- [48.8%](#) of post-traditional students reported having dependent children, compared to just 3.9% of traditionally aged students.
- Post-traditional students are [more likely](#) to be low-income and require financial assistance.
- Post-traditional students are [more likely](#) to work and work longer hours while enrolled than traditionally aged students.
  - 37.4% of post-traditional students worked full-time while enrolled, compared to 10.7% of traditionally aged students.

## DATA SOURCES

[American Community Survey](#). & [Current Population Survey](#). U.S. Census Bureau, March 2023.

[Baccalaureate & Beyond Survey](#). National Center for Education Statistics, March 2023.

[Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study](#). National Center for Education Statistics, March 2023.

[Digest of Education Statistics](#). National Center for Education Statistics, March 2023.

[National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey](#). National Center for Education Statistics, March 2023.

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<sup>3</sup> Completion rates are based on entering cohorts at 150% time. Therefore, among those completing their program in 2020, four-year institutions represent the 2014 cohort and two-year institutions represent the 2017 cohort.