

Hackemer eager to chair history department

Spotlight On

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA

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Longtime history professor Kurt Hackemer, Ph.D., is poised to take over as chair of the University of South Dakota's history department, and he can't wait.

"This is my academic home, this is why I came to the university in the first place," Hackemer said. "I'm kind of sad to

be leaving the office I've been working in – I love it there – but this was a really good opportunity.

"There are some great people in this department. I think we can do some really interesting things, and I want to be a part of that," he said.

A member of the USD faculty since 1996, Hackemer is replacing Judith Sebesta, Ph.D., who will retire in May.

"Kurt's commitment to

education, his significant experience with history and the respect he has earned from colleagues and the community makes him a perfect fit to serve as chair of the Department of History," Chuck Staben, Ph.D., provost and vice president for academic affairs at USD, said via a press release.

As chair of the USD Department of History, Hackemer basically will serve as a supervising administrator.

"It's about managing curriculum, working with students, managing workload, making academic decisions – it's really just administrative oversight for the department," he said.

He's looking forward to getting started, he said.

"This department has a long history of serving the state and the region,



and we are very well-positioned right now to do that at a higher level," Hackemer said. "I've got a great group of colleagues, and ... we're excited to build that a little bit more.

"We're the state's public liberal arts institution. One of the things that we can do is serve the state a bit more, so we're excited to do that," he said.

Hackemer comes to his new role with extensive administrative experience, serving as interim director of diversity from 2010-12, interim registration from 2011-12, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences from 2001-10 and acting chair of the department of American Indian Studies from 2007-08.

Although his primary research interest is American military history, Hackemer said he is not what his colleagues would refer to as a "guns and drums guy."

"What I find fascinating about (military history) it is that wars stress political and social institutions like almost nothing else does," he said. "In those wartime environments, you see things and learn things about the United States and how our society functions, how our government functions. You learn how our culture functions. "War is an interesting

laboratory environment for seeing things that you would not otherwise see, and I've always found that interesting," he said.

Hackemer also is author of several articles and two books, "To Rescue My Native Land: The Civil War Letters of William T. Shepherd, First Illinois Light Artillery; and "The U.S. Navy and the Origins of the Military-Industrial Complex."

For more information, visit <http://www.usd.edu/arts-and-sciences/history/kurt-hackemer.cfm>.

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