

# Regent Questions Governor's Plan For Funding Universities

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE – The governor's budget proposal for South Dakota's public universities falls short of the money needed to stay competitive in paying faculty and administrators, one member of the state Board of Regents said Tuesday.

Regent Harvey Jewett of Aberdeen was the only board member who raised questions about the recommendations Gov. Dennis Daugaard made Dec. 8 to the Legislature.

The governor proposed freezing tuition for resident on-campus students, raising university employees' pay 2.7 percent and offering 0.5 percent for faculty salary enhancement.

Jewett said the regents had been giving 1 percent for faculty salary enhancement, but missed four years during times of budget difficulties, which he said set the salary pool back \$6 million.

The 0.5 percent in the governor's proposal would put the salary pool further behind by \$750,000 more, according to Jewett.

Regent Terry Baloun of Sioux Falls said the tuition freeze would help South Dakota compete for students.

"From that standpoint it's probably something that I guess we're going to support and move forth on," Baloun said.

Jewett said he would support it but he called it a bad deal.

"We need to do a better job saying we hire nationally... and we have to pay those salaries. It's just the real world. We have to do a better job of showing those people it's no joke," Jewett said.

"It's just a status quo, tread water deal when we have these freezes," Jewett continued.

The tuition freeze was the regents' top priority when they submitted their requests to the governor.

"At the end of the day it's a big number and we will appreciate the effort by our board staff and the governor's office in getting a number that will get us to the tuition freeze," said Randy Schaefer of Madison, the regents' president.

"It's a compromise deal. Things like this weigh heavily on students when we're talking tuition freeze," Schaefer said.

The governor wants lawmakers to appropriate \$35.5 million to pay off several series of bonds that were issued in 2008 to finance improvements to university science facilities.

In turn the \$2.9 million that has been annually earmarked for the next 15 years for repaying those two series of bonds would be used instead for two other purposes:

To help keep tuition from increasing for resident on-campus students; and

To increase the endowment for need-based scholarships to lower-income students.

The governor's funding package calls for the universities to redirect some funds from the employee insurance program to other purposes.

The insurance program is over-funded by about \$275 per employee.

Jewett said the insurance money should be retained for future use in the insurance program.

But because of regulations on federal funds, the insurance money can't be set aside in a savings pool, according to Monte Kramer, the regents vice president of finance and administration.

The needs-based scholarship endowment would get \$1.4 million from the insurance savings and \$2.1 million from other sources under the governor's plan.

Those would raise the endowment to \$5 million.

Those other sources would be \$700,000 from savings in the bonding program and \$1.4 million from university support fees that students pay to the campuses.

Kramer said officials in the state Bureau of Finance

and Management thought the 3.2 percent for university faculty was "generous" when inflation has been below 1 percent in the past year.

Jewett wants a \$35 million math and science building constructed at Northern State University in Aberdeen. The regents unanimously endorsed the legislation for the project Tuesday but there isn't any funding for it.

NSU officials and supporters will need to find the money.

Jewett, now in his nineteenth year on the board, is its longest-serving member. His final term expires March 31, 2017. He was the board's president for many years and since then has been a reliably public critic of the current and past governors and legislators on university budgets.

The regents also unanimously endorsed legislation for the \$12 million renovation and expansion of Hammond academic hall at South Dakota State University in Brookings.

The SDSU project will need \$5 million from student fees, \$3.3 million from maintenance and repair funds and \$3.7 million from donors.

The regents also support the governor's revised plan to provide \$250,000 annually for five years to swap new routers into the university system's Internet network;

Spend \$434,369 more on Opportunity scholarships for higher-performing students;

Provide \$390,054 for National Guard and state-employee tuition support; and

Give \$210,725 annually for a child maltreatment center at the University of South Dakota that was recommended by the governor-appointed Jolene's Law task force on child sexual abuse.

# COPS AND KIDS



COURTESY PHOTOS CLAY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## Annual Event Helps Spread Cheer

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE  
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More than 20 law enforcement officers from the Clay County Sheriff's Office, Vermillion Police Department, University of South Dakota Police Department, S.D. Highway Patrol, Jefferson Police Department and the Division of Criminal Investigations (DCI) participated in the annual Cops and Kids event last Saturday.

Annual event made possible every year by donations collected from local businesses, local residents, and a grant from Walmart was able to provide 37 children a \$75 gift card.

Clay County Deputy Sheriff Michael Smith said, 104.1 The Wolf radio station ran an advertisement and was on scene for the event this year, where they collected donations from

shoppers.

"Cops and Kids is an event where children get the opportunity to shop one on one with a law enforcement officer for Christmas presents for themselves and/or their families," Smith said. "At the end of the event, staff from Walmart as well as the officer that shopped with them helped the children wrap the presents before bringing the gifts home."

He said it wouldn't be possible without community involvement.

"This year, we were able to provide 37 children this opportunity," Smith said. "Each child received a \$75 gift card for the event. As well, thanks to the more than \$300 worth of donations collected before and after the event at Walmart, we were able to buy gifts for 7 children from the Angel Tree at the Vermillion Walmart."

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