

# USD has largest freshman class ever

## Enrollment down 2 percent overall

By Nathan Johnson

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While the University of South Dakota (USD) has the largest freshman class in its history this fall, the total number of students enrolled at the institution is down almost 2 percent.

The decline at USD is similar to the overall drop in headcount enrollment at South Dakota's six public universities, which shrunk by 337 students to 36,103 — a less than 1 percent slide. It ends a 13-year streak of setting overall enrollment records in the university system.

"We've had an uninterrupted string of continuous headcount enrollment growth," said Jack Warner, the South Dakota Board of Regent's executive director and CEO, during a teleconference Tuesday afternoon. "This (decline) was not entirely unexpected, given that last year's enrollment growth was a record for the system."

In 2010, the universities

experienced 8 percent growth in headcount enrollment.

Meanwhile, the number of full-time equivalent students for the fall 2011 term, a number that is based on total credit hours generated by all students within the system, increased by 94.5 students to a total of 26,719.5.

"The pattern we're seeing is very slightly fewer students in the head count, but they're taking more courses on average than the previous year," Warner said. "We think it may have something to do with an economy that is beginning to improve. In particular, part-time adult students are finding their way to the job market ... Whether that is in fact a trend related to the easing of the recession, I don't know. But that's one way to speculate about it."

"The other way to speculate about it is to say that we're comparing ourselves against a very high base last year," he continued. "So this maintaining a virtually level enrollment this year was expected because last year's rate of growth was probably not sustainable in

this kind of climate."

Headcount enrollment at USD fell 1.78 percent to 9,970 students, dipping below the 10,000-student benchmark that was first reached in 2010 with an enrollment of 10,151 students.

However, the college's total full-time equivalent student enrollment increased from 7,069 students from the fall of 2010 to 7,233 in 2011. USD joins Northern State University and Dakota State University as the three regental schools to grow their full-time equivalent enrollment from last year to this year.

James Abbott, president of the University of South Dakota, stressed the increase in freshman enrollment during Tuesday's conference call.

"The big news at USD this fall is a 9 percent increase in first-time, full-time freshman," he said. "We're particularly pleased about that. This is not only our largest freshman class ever, but ACTs are higher, high school GPAs are higher and class rank is higher, as well."

"Obviously," he added in a media release, "we are very pleased with our growth of traditional undergraduate students, but we are even more excited that we have been able to maintain a

quality incoming freshman class."

He also noted a 28 percent increase in students enrolled in the university's Honors Program and that residence halls at the college are about 99 percent full.

Meanwhile, Northern State University had an 8.6 percent enrollment increase — the highest of any school. The school enrolled 284 more students this year compared with last year.

Dakota State University and South Dakota State University each had a less than 1 percent decrease in student enrollment. South Dakota Mines & Technology decreased by 1.8 percent.

Blacks Hills State University saw the biggest decrease at 6.5 percent. The school enrolled 307 fewer students this year compared with last year.

Black Hills State President Kay Schallenkamp said the decline was directly attributed to losing graduate students who were part of a research grant.

The universities have so far been able to withstand a 10 percent budget cut by the state Legislature, Abbott said.

"The cuts, of course, are

unfortunate in many ways," he stated. "We've all done what we needed to do to be more efficient."

Warner noted that the universities face demographic challenges because the number of high school-age residents in South Dakota and the region is expected to continue to decline through 2018.

"We feel we are capturing our fair share of those high school graduates," he said. "We have also increased our out-of-state student percentage from 29 percent last year to 31 1/2 percent this year. We do that by keeping our out-of-state tuition affordable."

"There is also a public policy reason for attracting out-of-state students," Warner added. "If we look at projected South Dakota demographics, there really is only one age group increasing in South Dakota and that's the over-65 population. We need to bring in young people to South Dakota, educate them here and hope to retain a significant portion of them to participate in our workforce, or we're likely to have significant workforce shortages."

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

## Zalud named commended student in National Merit Scholarship Program

Over 1.5 million students took the 2011 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) last October and entered the National Merit Program, a nationwide competition for recognition and awards conducted by National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC).

Vermillion High School Principal Curt Cameron has announced that Kristina K. Zalud has been named Commended Student in the 2012 National Merit Scholarship Program. A letter of commendation from the school and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), which conducts the program, will be presented by the principal to this scholastically talented senior.

About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Although they will not continue in the 2012 competition for National Merit Scholarships, Commended Students placed among the top five percent of more than 1.5 million and are eligible for institutional, foundation and corporate scholarships.

As demonstrated by their outstanding performance in our highly competitive program, the young men and women named Commended Students represent some of the most academically talented students in our country.

## USD Theatre opens 2011-12 season with 'God of Carnage'

The University of South Dakota Department of Theatre presents Yasmina Reza's award winning comedy "God Of Carnage" Sept. 29-Oct. 3 in the Wayne S. Knutson Theatre of the Warren M. Lee Center for the Fine Arts. Translated by Christopher Hampton, "God Of Carnage" focuses on two sets of parents who meet for the first time to reconcile a schoolyard conflict which has occurred between their young sons. Their discussions run the gambit of emotions, from pleasantries to an all-out battle of wits.

The original 2009 Broadway production of "God Of Carnage" won three Tony Awards including Best Play, Best Actress in a Play (Marcia Gay Harden) and Best Director of a Play (Matthew Warchus). A film adaptation of the story, entitled "Carnage," is expected early winter and features Jodi Foster, Kate Winslet, John C. Reilly and Christoph Waltz under the direction of Roman Polanski. USD Theatre's production of "God Of Carnage" is an area premiere. Ms. Reza, a French playwright of international renown, is also the author of "Art," which won the 1998 Tony Award for best play and went on to be translated into more than 30 languages.

"God Of Carnage" is set in the Brooklyn home of Michael and Veronica Novak (Kendra Bolan, Lincoln, NE and Cody Strand, Brandon Valley), where Alan and Annette Raleigh (Patrick Beasley, Lincoln, NE and Emily Dorsett, Sioux City, IA) have been invited to discuss how best to resolve the conflict between their sons which has resulted in Henry, the Novak's boy, losing two teeth. While the couples feel that they are mature enough to find a solution,



Pictured are Emily Dorsett (as Annette Raleigh), Patrick Beasley (as Alan Raleigh), Kendra Bolan (as Veronica Novak), and Cody Strand (as Michael Novak).

initial pleasantries soon give way to conflict as disruptive phone calls, panic attacks and alcohol fueled emotional outbursts lead to a humorous four way prize fight.

Emotions run high, private matters become public, and we are left with the idea that even well-educated, well-

intentioned people, are capable of unusual and uncivilized behavior when minor irritations are handled badly.

"God Of Carnage," which contains strong language, performs Sept. 29, 30, Oct. 1 and 3 at 7:30 p.m. and Oct. 2 at 2 p.m. in the Wayne S. Knutson

Theatre on the USD campus. Tickets (\$15 Adults, \$9 K-12 & non-USD students with ID, and \$4 USD students with ID) can be reserved in the afternoons (12 - 5 p.m.) starting Sept. 22 by calling the USD Theatre Box Office at (605) 677-5400 or online at [www.usd.edu/theatre](http://www.usd.edu/theatre).

## South Dakota Public Broadcasting's 'The Stavig Letters' wins Emmy

South Dakota Public Broadcasting Television's production of "The Stavig Letters" earned an Emmy® Award.

The Regional Emmy® Award, announced at a gala Sept. 24 in Minneapolis, was awarded by the Upper Midwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences for Historical Documentary. The program earned the Emmy® in competition with television stations in South Dakota, Minnesota, North Dakota and parts of Nebraska and Wisconsin.

"The Stavig Letters" documentary is based on a little-known treasure collected by the descendants of a Norwegian immigrant to South Dakota. Over more than half a century, between 1881 and 1938, immigrant Lars Stavig, who settled near Sisseton, and his brother, Knut, a farmer/fisherman in Norway, and family members exchanged dozens of letters. Both families kept their letters and these treasures finally came together in the late 20th century to provide a first-hand look at the immigrant experience.

The SDPB Television production premiered in Sisseton in February and statewide on SDPB Television in March.

"This is a major honor for our network and a testament to the great work people at the network do every day," said Bob Bosse, SDPB director of television. "In the Upper-

Midwest Emmy Awards, we compete head to head with some large market, well-funded productions. The Upper Midwest chapter is considered one of the toughest chapters to compete in."

In "The Stavig Letters," SDPB Television uses the Stavig family's letters as a backdrop to the docu-drama that features footage from South Dakota and Norway, as well as hundreds of historic photos that depict the immigrant life as well as life in the old country. The one-hour production is based in part on the readers' theater play created from the letters by Dr. Wayne S. Knutson, Professor Emeritus of the University of South Dakota in Vermillion.

The letters, video footage, photographs and actors give voice and reality to the immigrant experience from different perspectives. Woven through the letters are the dreams, aspirations, joys and sorrows of the two brothers, one who came to the prairie and one who stayed by the sea. The music for the SDPB Television production

includes traditional Scandinavian tunes on the hardanger fiddle, the Norwegian national instrument. The artist, Ingvild Habbestad, has a masters degree in violin performance from the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo and an Orchestral Diploma from the Royal College of Music in Stockholm.

Narrator Sarah Rasmussen, great great granddaughter of Lars Stavig, is among several family members who worked on the production, most notably John and Jane (great granddaughter) Rasmussen of Sisseton, who assisted with videography and research. John and Jane Rasmussen accepted the Regional Emmy® Award on behalf of the network at the awards gala in Minneapolis.

"The Stavig Letters" is a unique glimpse of South Dakota's past. The program was produced with the support of a grant from the South Dakota Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and with the help

and support of the Stavig House Museum in Sisseton, as well as the members of the Friends of South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

The staff involved with the production includes:

- James P. Sprecher, Producer/Executive Producer
- Kyle Mork, Director/Editor
- Kevin Patten, Assistant Producer
- Joel Rische, Videographer
- Saturnino John, Videographer
- Rex Kinnear, Videographer
- Sarah Rasmussen, Narrator
- John Rasmussen, Videographer
- Jane Rasmussen, Researcher-Archivist

- Wayne S. Knutson, Writer
- Paul Ebsen, Production Assistant

The SDPB Television network previously has won Regional Emmy® Awards for "Lost Bird of Wounded Knee," another historical documentary; "Wild Horses: An American Romance," a

documentary produced in conjunction with Nebraska Educational Television; and "Dakota Pathways: a History," a 20-part history series used in fourth-grade classrooms in South Dakota. All the productions are available for purchase at [shop.SDPB.org](http://shop.SDPB.org) or by calling 800-456-0766.

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