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Joint Committee on Appropriations
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May 27, 2020

John Bastian, Board President   Dr. Laurie Nichols, President
Board of Regents   Black Hills State University
306 E. Capitol Ave., Suite 200   1200 University Street
Pierre, SD 57501-2545   Spearfish, SD 57799

Letter of Intent Regarding the Operation of the West River Health Science Center (WRHSC)

Dear President Bastian and Nichols,

This Letter of Intent sets forth a particular view held by the Joint Committee on Appropriations (JCA) in approving your appropriation in the 2020 Legislative session. As such, this Letter of Intent seeks to supplement that legislation with specific policy guidance as approved on May 27, 2020.

While the guidance does not have the direct force of statutory law, it rests solidly on a long-standing tradition of Legislative-Executive relationships in South Dakota and it will be used by the Joint Committee as one basis for the fiscal oversight of your agency and its continued funding.

The West River Health Science Center (WRHSC) is a newly created entity that will be located within the Rapid City University Center currently managed by Black Hills State University (BHSU). The role of the WRHSC is to provide a one-stop service for students who wish to purse a nursing or health-related degree. The Center's immediate focus will provide access for student to the pre-nursing curriculum via an Associate Degree in Applied Health Science offered through BHSU. With students' satisfactory progress, a seamless admission process will occur into the BSN programs offered by USD and SDSU in Rapid City. Coordination with Western Dakota Tech's AAS and AS Nursing program will also be offered for those who wish to pursue an associate degree or continue their education. In an expanded capacity, the WRHSC will also assist other health-related programs such as respiratory therapy, medical laboratory science, pharmacy and others.

BHSU will provide office space, classrooms, meeting space and oversight of the Healthcare Center. The genesis of this effort will consist of an expanded Admission Office and student support/advising function that will house 3 FTE's as follows:

- One FTE funded by BHSU to coordinate efforts, provide oversight, provide leadership and communication to stakeholders
- One FTE funded by Monument Health to provide recruiting resources, clinical placement and human resource services
- Once FTE funded by West River AHEC, a Fed Grant position currently housed in Western Dakota Tech College.

The immediate goal of this center will be to greatly expand the pipeline of students who wish to pursue a health-science career, particularly nursing. The goal is to double all programs in healthcare at all Regent programs as well as Technical College efforts. The Center will focus on recruitment, academic advising and admission into the program that is best for that student, no matter who offers the degree. The Healthcare Center is maximizing space available for a need of healthcare workers.

A goal for the center should include the ability for students to make a seamless transition from different South Dakota state universities and technical colleges as well as work towards the ability to utilize faculty from different South Dakota state universities and technical colleges for the courses offered through the center.

Therefore, the JCA requests BHSU provide a document during the 2021 legislative session presenting at a minimum the following:
- Number of new students into health-related degrees as a result of the center's operations;
- New applicants as a result of the center's operations;
- How WRHSC is collaborating with other healthcare entities; and
- A financial operating statement for the center.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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Representative Chris Karr   Senator John Wiik
Lead Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Appropriations   Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Appropriations

cc: Marty Guindon, Auditor General
        Liza Clark, Commissioner, Bureau of Finance and Management