



## BOARD OF REGENTS

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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

November 27, 2024

Governor Kristi Noem  
*Sent via email*

South Dakota Legislators  
*Sent via email*

RE: SD Board of Regents annual report on intellectual diversity and free exchange of ideas

Dear Governor Noem and Legislators,

This correspondence is in furtherance of the Board of Regent's compliance with SDCL § 13-53-53, which requires the Board of Regents, on or before December first of each year, to prepare and submit to the Governor and each member of the legislature a report that:

- (1) Sets forth all actions taken by each institution to promote and ensure intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas; and
- (2) Describes any events or occurrences that impeded intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas.

The attached report covers the period from November 1, 2023 – October 31, 2024, and includes individual campus summaries of the actions and occurrences described above. The report reflects increased engagement by our students and faculty to foster robust discussion and new ideas on each of our campuses. With the support of the Legislature, we created the South Dakota Center for Civic Engagement at Black Hills State University, which hosted its inaugural event in October — a lecture by Dr. Jeffrey Rosen, of the National Constitution Center, on “The History and Future of the American Idea.”

The Board of Regents remains committed to such collaboration, and to providing a vigorous educational environment that fosters intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas among its students, faculty, and communities.

Collegially,

Nathan Lukkes  
Executive Director and CEO  
South Dakota Board of Regents

Attachments:  
2024 Annual Report on Intellectual Diversity and Free Exchange of Ideas

**Black Hills State University**  
**Annual Report on Intellectual Diversity and Free Exchange of Ideas**  
**(November 1, 2023 – October 31, 2024)**

**Actions taken by the institution to promote and ensure intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas:**

- BHSU launched the SDBOR civics initiative, a key component of which is the South Dakota Center for Civic Engagement at BHSU. Key actions around establishment of the center include:
  - Hosting the inaugural lecture of the Center. Dr. Jeffrey Rosen, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center, spoke on “The History and Future of the American Idea” on October 15, 2024. Students, faculty, staff, and community members were in attendance, along with several local elected officials.
  - Formation of an advisory committee to establish a strategic mission for the center, aided by a consultant. The advisory committee consists of representatives from all BOR institutions. Focus groups with students, faculty, and staff were held in Fall 2024 to assist the committee in its work.
- The Chiesman Committee sponsored and hosted the statewide We the People showcase on January 16, 2024. BHSU political science faculty continue to engage with teachers at Spearfish High School to prepare students for state and national competitions within the We the People program.
- BHSU’s Center for Faculty Innovation hosted a three-day Summer Institute for 14 faculty members on experiential and community-engaged learning and high-impact teaching practices. These sessions aimed to increase students’ exposure to people with diverse experiences and backgrounds.
- BHSU Student Senate activities include:
  - Working with the civics advisory committee consultant referenced above to hold a student focus group on civics awareness in Fall 2024; and
  - Hosting a six-week voter registration drive in Fall 2024 with participation from campus groups like the College Democrats and College Republicans.
- A comprehensive [BHSU Policy and Procedure website](#) is active. Of relevance to intellectual diversity:
  - [Freedom Of Expression Statement](#) was revised and added to policy web site
  - [3:2 Campus-Wide Posting](#)
  - [4:3 Equal Opportunity, Non Discrimination and Affirmative Action](#)
  - [4:8 Human Rights Complaints](#)
  - [9:3 Freedom of Speech and Use of Institutional Facilities and Grounds for](#)

Expression & Demonstration

- 2:12 Syllabus Policy which describes the “Freedom in Learning” statement set forth in each course syllabus:

*“Under Board of Regents and University policy student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact the chair of the department in which the course is being taught to initiate a review of the evaluation.”*

- The university conducts the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) on a biannual basis. The survey was most recently conducted in 2024. Relevant survey results from the 2024 survey include:
  - When asked, “During the current school year, about how often have you included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments?” 43% of first-year students and 50% of senior-level students responded: “often” or “very often.”
  - When asked, “During the current school year, about how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups: people with religious beliefs other than your own?” 68% of first-year students and 55% of senior-level students responded “often” or “very often.”
  - In response to the same prompt about “People with political views other than your own?” 69% of first-year students and 59% of senior-level students responded “often” or “very often.”
  - Conclusions from this data: Course discussions and assignments appear somewhat less likely to include diverse perspectives than they were in the previous year. First-year students especially seem to be encountering fewer diverse perspectives in their course discussions and assignments than their counterparts did in the 2022 NSSE survey.

**Events or occurrences that impeded intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas:**

We are not aware of any events or occurrences that impeded intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas.

**Dakota State University**  
**Annual Report on Intellectual Diversity and Free Exchange of Ideas**  
**(November 1, 2023 – October 31, 2024)**

**Actions taken by the institution to promote and ensure intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas:**

- The Opportunity Center at Dakota State University continues to guide and encourage students as they work to attain their academic, personal, and career goals. This Center also supports clubs and organizations, so they can connect with others and create lifelong friendships through activities that are based on common interests and skills.

Examples of club and organization events that took place in 2023-2024 include Global Entrepreneur Week speaker Nick Cash, art exhibitions featuring Lakota artist Gene Swallow and former Vietnam combat artists Stephan Randall and James Pollock, and a campus visit from alumnus and NBA referee Tre Maddox.

- DSU and the Student Senate organized a Constitution Day Quiz competition to encourage awareness and understanding of the U.S. Constitution. Pocket Constitutions, Constitution-themed word search and crossword puzzles were available.
- DSU provided a shuttle for students, faculty, staff to attend a lecture by Dr. Jeffrey Rosen, President & CEO of the National Constitution Center, hosted at South Dakota State University by the South Dakota Center for Civic Engagement.
- The 2024 History and Ethics Forum, an event designed to bring prominent national thought leaders to campus, featured Dr. John Blaxland, Director of the Australian National University North American Liaison Office and Professor of International Security and Intelligence Studies in the Strategic and Defense Studies Centre. Dr. Blaxland's address focused on signals intelligence and the Advent of Cyber: The Australian Connection.
- DSU maintains a focus on increasing the number of women in STEM fields enrolled at DSU through the CybHER® Security Institute, which has been working since 2013 to empower, educate, and change the perception of girls and women in cybersecurity. It does so by providing resources for girls from middle school to collegiate programs and into professional careers. This initiative has reached well over 54,000 students through events, camps and classroom visits intended to empower, motivate, and educate girls and boys in cybersecurity.

Outreach programs included CybHER Conversations, the CybHER YouTube channel, the Cyber Community Club (CX3), after school programs, and the annual GenCyber camp. AT&T is continuing a partnership with CybHER and Boys & Girls Clubs to reach out to the state's tribal nations.

- DAKOTACON, an annual cyber security event on campus, brought in several speakers to discuss topics in cyber fields.
- The Educator Rising Learning Expo was organized by DSU in partnership with the South Dakota chapter of Educators Rising, a national organization aimed at encouraging future educators.
- The Beacom College of Computer and Cyber Sciences Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Director, Jen Esterly. Esterly spoke and took questions at DakotaCon/Residency Week. This series continues to create, inspire, and educate students and faculty by introducing them to people who can share about the impact and challenges of careers in cyber-related fields.
- DSU Center for Teaching and Learning sponsored the following events:
  - Speed Sharing Teaching Strategies and Tools – To encourage faculty to share and discuss a variety of pedagogical methods and classroom strategies, creating opportunities for differing positions on effective teaching practices.
  - Academic Advisor Series – To promote the exchange of diverse advising approaches, helping faculty consider multiple perspectives to improve student success.
  - Supporting Neurodiverse Learners: Case-based Learning – To facilitate group problem-solving and discussion on real-world scenarios, ensuring the inclusion of diverse perspectives in creating equitable learning environments.
  - Workshop: Advising Unlocked – Empowering Online Students: To encourage faculty to explore and debate innovative methods for supporting online learners, emphasizing differing approaches to advising.
- The Dakota State Career Development office organized multiple Career and Professional Development-sponsored career fairs, featuring 123 employers and attracting 746 students. In the lead-up to the fairs, they hosted Career Fest, a series of 22 career development events. These included workshops on topics like internship search, resume building, soft skill development, and Handshake, as well as Dress for Success events. Other highlights included Practice with the Pro mock interviews, Resume Rave, Coffee with Career Professionals, and LinkedIn Profile Building sessions.
- Motivational speaker Jake Kneeland spoke with employees and students about why your mindset matters.
- DSU employees and students participated in and successfully completed comprehensive online Title IX training through Vector Solutions in Fall 2024, enhancing their understanding of policies related to discrimination, harassment, and equal opportunity.

- The university hosted an International Welcome Picnic at the Madison Public Library Park. This annual event fosters connections and celebrates the diverse cultures that enrich both the campus and the greater Madison community, offering students an opportunity to engage with residents, make new friends, and feel welcomed.

**Events or occurrences that impeded intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas:**

We are not aware of any events or occurrences that impeded intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas.

**Northern State University**  
**Annual Report on Intellectual Diversity and Free Exchange of Ideas**  
**(November 1, 2023 – October 31, 2024)**

**Actions taken by the institution to promote and ensure intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas:**

- In August 2024, the office of the Dean of Students collaborated to launch *Wolves Vote* to encourage students to register and vote in the Fall 2024 election. Efforts included coordinated messages to students, informational posters, and other activities to encourage participation in the election, including several forums and activities detailed below.
- The Center for Public History and Civic Engagement, established in Fall 2021, continues to provide guest speakers to address topics in American Government, American History, Civic Engagement, and the US Constitution. The Center also provides programming for events such as Constitution Day (see below) and National History Day to engage students, faculty, staff, and community members, and recruits students for internships with the South Dakota State Legislature.

Constitution Day activities took place on September 17, 2024. Numerous events and media were developed and featured by faculty, local/state/national legislators, student and community organizations, and pocket Constitutions were purchased by the Center for Public History and Civic Engagement.

- On October 9, 2024, a forum entitled “The Ballot or the Ballot? Potential Consequences of Ballot Initiatives” was hosted by student Evelyn Carlson.
- The NSU Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning sponsored presentations in Fall 2024, including “Food for Thought: Teaching Rural Students” and “Understanding Gen Z/Gen Alpha.”
- Professor Jon Schaff and student Evelyn Carlson hosted a non-partisan forum entitled “Ballot Breakdown” on October 15, 2024, regarding measures appearing on Fall 2024 South Dakota ballots, in addition to an informational exhibit showcasing candidates running for state and federal offices.
- On October 16, 2024, in conjunction with the South Dakota Center for Civic Engagement’s hosting of Dr. Jeffrey Rosen (president and CEO of the National Constitution Center) at South Dakota State University, NSU provided a livestream of Dr. Rosen’s presentation “The History and Future of the American Idea.”
- On October 23, 2024, a forum entitled “Only a Week to Save Democracy” was hosted by Steve Usitalo, Ken Blanchard, and Jon Schaff, which discussed upcoming election data, theories, and expert opinions.

- NSU and its Student Government Association collaborated to recognize and celebrate the third annual “Free Speech Week” October 21-27, 2023. Free Speech Week encourages all students, faculty, staff and citizens of the City of Aberdeen and Brown County, South Dakota to participate in celebrating this fundamental freedom.
- Campus offices collaborated with students to assist students in the formation of seven new student organizations representing a variety of interests, missions, and viewpoints. New student organizations include Awaken, Baseline Tennis, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Para Me Genta, Pheasants Forever NSU Student Chapter, Wolves Low Brass Choir, and Wolves Pickleball Association.
- NSU emphasizes the fundamental principles of free speech, scientific discovery, and academic freedom for students and employees. As an example, a “Freedom in Learning” statement is included in all course syllabi. The statement reads:

*“Under Board of Regents and University policy, student academic performance must be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.”*

The NSU Student Handbook also includes a Freedom in Learning statement, reading:

*“To secure student freedom in learning, faculty members in the classroom and in seminar should encourage free and orderly discussion, inquiry and expression of the course subject matter. Student performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.”*

Students are further made aware of the academic grievance process. While students have appealed grades for other reasons and the academic deans and Provost have evidence of students following the “Student Academic Grievance Procedure” and the institution enforcing policies and procedures, the institution has encountered no instances in which student appeals alleged an “academic evaluation was tainted by prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions.”

- NSU operates in compliance with SDBOR Policy 3.8.1 (Section 1.2 paraphrased) to ensure *Recognized student organizations are to exist independent of, and outside of the direct control of the institution . . . are not agents of the institution and are not to be endorsed or directed by the institution . . . to ensure recognized student organizations enjoy the necessary autonomy to protect their right to engage in expressive activity to fullest extent permitted by law, while also maintaining the applicable accountability and responsibility associated with their status.*
- NSU campus policies of relevance to freedom of expression/expressive activity:
  - <https://northern.edu/sites/default/files/policies/nsu-policy-6-3-affiliated-use-of-institutional-facilities-and-grounds-for-expressive-activity.pdf>



- <https://northern.edu/sites/default/files/policies/nsu-policy-6-4-non-affiliated-use-of-institutional-facilities-and-grounds-for-expressive-activity.pdf>

**Events or occurrences that impeded intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas:**

We are not aware of any events or occurrences that impeded intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas.

**South Dakota School of Mines and Technology  
Annual Report on Intellectual Diversity and Free Exchange of Ideas  
(November 1, 2023 – October 31, 2024)**

**Actions taken by the institution to promote and ensure intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas:**

- A series called Black Hills Talks hosted a session on September 9, 2024, to discuss the topic of inflation. Students and community members were invited to attend.
- A special Voter Registration Drive was held on September 11, 2024.
- A local election forum was hosted on campus on September 12, 2024, with approximately 60 students and community members in attendance. Candidates for several local and state offices attended, as well as representatives from various initiated measure and constitutional amendment campaigns.
- South Dakota School of Mines and Technology celebrated U.S. Constitution Day on September 17, 2024. Specific events included:
  - Notification to students with links to the National Voter Education website;
  - Social media information regarding the weeks' events and Constitution Day;
  - Distribution of free pocket Constitutions;
  - Students could compete in a Constitution quiz to win a prize;
  - Publication of voter registration information in and around high-traffic areas;
  - A Roamin' Boards event was held where students could draft and pin an amendment that they would like to be added to the United States Constitution. There were six boards traveling between the Surbeck Center, Devereaux Library, and the O'Harra Building; and
  - South Dakota Mines hosted former Rapid City councilwomen Laura Armstrong and Darla Drew as guest speakers for the Constitution Day program.
- Voter Education Week was held October 2-6, 2024. A social media campaign was conducted to highlight campus events, and voter information literature was provided.
- On October 15, 2024, the Pearson Alumni Center hosted a Speed Friending event with the goal of allowing students to meet new people and learn about new perspectives and ideas.
- Common Ground Bingo, a new event which allows students to speak to their peers about current events and other issues, was hosted on October 30, 2024.
- In a continuation of an initiative started in August 2023, the campus Personal Development Promise Program, using a competency entitled Global Awareness and Inclusion, worked to further a learning outcome whereby students developed effective interactions with people of different backgrounds and to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of human

differences. Another competency enacted is Community Service and Citizenship. To date, 383 students have participated. Seminars held are:

- Education Abroad- 9/3/2024
  - Local Government- 10/7/2024
  - Exploring Worldview- 11/19/2024
  - Community Service and Service Learning- 9/6/2024
  - South Dakota History and Roots- 10/3/2024
  - The Legacy and Value of Veterans- 11/4/2024
- South Dakota Mines continues to include a “Freedom in Learning” statement on each course syllabus. The statement is:

*“Under Board of Regents and University policy, student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgement about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at [provost@sdsmt.edu](mailto:provost@sdsmt.edu) to initiate a review of the evaluation.”*

Mines created the [provost@sdsmt.edu](mailto:provost@sdsmt.edu) email address four years ago to efficiently route freedom in learning complaints directly to the Provost’s Office.

- Campus continued education and promotion of a platform where students, faculty, and staff can report complaints or file a grievance. The platform is called Advocate, which is also used to report and track student academic integrity and student conduct complaints.
- SDSM&T continued the NSF funded initiative to increase the enrollment of first-generation students. The grant provides scholarships to first-generation students. Campus also link those incoming students with mentors who are also first-generation.
- Discussions regarding Intellectual Diversity continue to be included in freshman orientation sessions. These discussions include the description of freedom of expression and the need to include and accept varying perspectives.
- Other events of interest:
  - **Young Americans for Liberty (YAL) Events**
    - 1/23/2024 Tabling in Surbeck Center
    - 2/15/2024 Tabling in Surbeck Center
    - 4/15/2024 Movie Watch Party
    - 10/24/2024 Tabling in Surbeck Center

- Weekly Tuesday meetings for membership
- **College Republicans Events:**
  - 4/24/2024: Speaker Dr. Rohan Loveland (Topic: The Woke Agenda)
  - 10/25/2024: Speaker Bradlee Dean (Topic: Constitutional Law)
- **Gideons International Organization Events**
  - 9/26/20204 Passing out Bibles

**Events or occurrences that impeded intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas:**

We are not aware of any events or occurrences that impeded intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas.

**South Dakota State University**  
**Annual Report on Intellectual Diversity and Free Exchange of Ideas**  
**(November 1, 2023 – October 31, 2024)**

**Actions taken by the institution to promote and ensure intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas:**

- Speakers and Events:
  - SDSU implemented a university events calendar during this past year and promotes speakers open to the public through this tool. In addition, SDSU promotes student organization speakers and events through [Jacks Club Hub](#), an online tool designed for student organizations to promote their organization and their programming. Finally, events are promoted through an intranet portal, InsideState, to all SDSU employees.
- Training Sessions for University Employees and Students
  - The SDSU Office of General Counsel has maintained a link to a pre-recorded training presentation regarding the First Amendment on SDSU's business portal, InsideState. This training presentation was last updated in April 2024 and is the basis for the training sessions conducted by the Office of General Counsel. OGC provided additional question and answer sessions and training to employees, including but not limited to new employee orientations and residence hall staff.
    - Completed:
      - August 19, 2024      New Faculty Orientation (60+ attendees)
      - August 26, 2024      Training for Admissions Ambassadors (55+ attendees)
      - September 3, 2024      Training for Office of Multicultural Affairs and Accessibility Staff (6 attendees)
      - September 16, 2024      Training for Student Health Clinic and Counseling Services Staff (16 attendees)
      - September 16, 2024      Students' Association Guest Speaker (50+ attendees)
  - Additionally, excluding dual credit students, SDSU made information available for new students entering the University via information sessions with Title IX/EO staff at Welcome Weekend. New students were required to complete online Title IX training through Vector LMS in Fall 2024. This training was also provided for all returning students. All SDSU employees were mandated to complete online Title IX training through Vector Solutions, in addition to optional "Active Shooter" training. In Fall 2023, the Title IX training had a completion rate of 99.8% for permanent employees. All new supervisors are required to complete online trainings, including Communication Styles and Skills, Discrimination

Awareness in the Workplace, General Ethics in the Workplace, Retaliation Liability, Sensitivity Awareness, Conflict Management, and Workplace Violence.

The Title IX/EO office also works to offer training on topics relevant to Title IX/EO, such as bystander intervention, workplace conflict, and the ADA, on a frequent basis to both students and employees.

- Academic and Other Activities:
  - Course syllabi are required by SDSU Course Syllabus Policy 2:3 to have the following statement included, and this was communicated during this period:
 

*“Freedom in Learning Statement: Under Board of Regents and Regental Institutions policy, student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Discussion and debate are critical to education and professional development. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact their home institution to initiate a review of the evaluation.”*
  - SDSU validated that it offers the System General Education Requirements (SGRs) courses in communication, mathematics, and sciences. There is an array of elective courses within the requirements for Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities, which provide an awareness of the histories and psycho-social, economic, and political structures, as well as an understanding of the contributions of diverse cultures. Course offerings to meet the Social Sciences elective include, but are not limited to, South Dakota American Indian Culture and Education, Cultural Anthropology, Introduction to Human Geography, United States History I/II, American Government, American Political Issues, Political Ideologies, State and Local Government, and The Sociology of Rural America. Course offerings to meet the Arts and Humanities elective include, but are not limited to, Introductory Lakota I/II, Intermediate Lakota I/II, World Civilizations I/II, Western Civilization I/II, and Native American Religions.
  - SDSU reviewed three courses based on complaints about course material/content. A complaint was made about the textbook used for SOC 100, Introduction to Sociology. The textbook in question is one of a few generally accepted textbooks in the field and was found to be within academic standards for a text used in the classroom. A complaint was made about the course material in HDFS 250, Development of Human Sexuality. The course is a component of the curriculum for the Human Development and Family Services program and the content was found to be appropriate to prepare students entering the human

services workforce for interactions with individuals/clientele from various backgrounds. The other complaint was in regard to content in the online textbook used for CMST 101, Foundations of Communication. Following review of the chapter in question, it was determined that the material aligned with academic standards for introductory communication textbooks.

- Review of Policies: New or Revised University Policies: SDSU's Office of General Counsel continues to review policies and procedures at SDSU to ensure alignment with all SDBOR Policies and applicable SD and federal laws. Policies are vetted through the shared governance structure and with the campus community prior to their adoption.
  - <https://www.sdsu.edu/policies-and-procedures>
  - Recently adopted:
    - New Policy 2:29 – Non-Student Minors (Feb. 2024)
    - Revised Policy 6:7 – Facilities and Grounds Use and Scheduling (Sept. 2024)
    - Revised Policy 6:8 – Use of University Facilities and Grounds for Expressive Activity (Sept. 2024)
  - Currently in Progress
    - Revised Policy 3:10 – Student Organizations
    - Student Organizations Fundraising
    - Other SDSU and departmental policies and procedures
- Campus Climate Assessment:
  - The University is committed to administering the Skyfactor Campus Climate, Safety, and Sexual Assault Assessment every two years to university employees and currently enrolled students. The assessment measures 15 dimensions of faculty, staff, and students' perceptions and satisfaction with the institution. SDSU administered the Campus Climate survey five times since 2017, including in 2024. While proprietary information cannot be made publicly available, annual summary reports are shared with the campus.
- SDSU has validated that it maintains reporting protocols for a variety of situations, depending on the concern raised. In addition, the process for investigation varies based upon employment relationship, conduct reported, and student status. Beginning in fall 2019, SDSU added "First Amendment/Intellectual Diversity" as a report/complaint category in its online reporting portal, Lighthouse, in which reports may be submitted anonymously.

*The Rabbit Report* is a weekly student publication sent to all students while classes are in session via the SDSU Students' Association. The Rabbit Report includes a reporting section with links to reporting procedures for a variety of concerns, including anonymous reporting options. In addition, the HR Newsletter sent electronically to all SDSU employees includes information on how to report concerns, including anonymous reporting options. Below, in

the *Existing Resources & Policies* section, a comprehensive list of reporting protocols is provided.

- Existing Resources and Policies:
  - [SDSU Student Handbook](#) (Policies, Procedures, & Forms)
  - [SDSU Housing & Residential Life Handbook](#) (Non-Discrimination; Reporting Concerns, pp. 40-42)
  - [Office of the Dean of Students](#) (Concerns and Complaints)
  - [Lighthouse Syntrio Reporting](#) (Report an Incident)
  - [Ombuds Office](#)
  - [SDSU Policy 2:3 – Course Syllabus](#) (Freedom in Learning Statement)
  - [SDSU Policy 2:29 – Non-Student Minors](#)
  - [SDSU Policy 4:3 – Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Affirmative Action](#)
  - [SDSU Policy 4:6 – Human Rights Complaints](#)
  - [SDSU Policy 6:7 – Facilities and Grounds Use and Scheduling](#)
  - [SDSU Policy 6:8 – Use of University Facilities and Grounds for Expressive Activity by Student Organizations, Students, Employees, and their Guests](#)
  - [SDSU Policy 6:9 – Campus-Wide Posting](#)
  - [OGC Freedom of Expression Webpage](#)

#### **Events or occurrences that impeded intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas:**

- A complaint was received regarding the Board's Communications and Branding Policy (SDBOR Policy 1.7.6) that was passed in December of 2023, alleging that free speech rights were violated. The policy does not impact the ability of individuals to express themselves as private citizens, but it did set certain standards for employee communication when using official institutional communications platforms. One such standard created parameters for what contact information could be utilized in signature blocks for official university communications. The policy permits only the listed items to be included and does not permit the inclusion of additional items, such as expressive quotations, preferred pronouns, political/ideological expressions, tribal affiliations, or links to external websites or organizations.
- An instructor mentioned the anniversary of when the US Constitution came into effect and asked students what their favorite amendment is. A student responded "not the 19th" which made the female students in the class uncomfortable. The instructor responded that the answer wasn't appropriate and that he was under mandatory reporting requirements.

All occurrences in this section were reviewed and responded to in accordance with applicable SDSU and BOR policies.



**University of South Dakota**  
**Annual Report on Intellectual Diversity and Free Exchange of Ideas**  
**(November 1, 2023 – October 31, 2024)**

**Actions taken by the institution to promote and ensure intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas:**

- USD continues its tradition of hosting a variety of speakers both in the classroom and for broad campus-wide lectures and events.
  - The South Dakota Supreme Court held its October term at the Knudson School of Law, providing an opportunity for students to see one of the three branches of government in action. Faculty encourage their students to attend the sessions when possible.
  - The Knudson School of Law, USD Opportunity Center, and Cheisman Center for Democracy collaborated to host several events celebrating Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day. The events included hosting a #YotesVote voter registration drive, bringing in national experts for a panel on electoral integrity and reform, and hosting a screening of “Undivide Us,” a film by the Mercatus Center at George Mason University,
  - The University of South Dakota hosted a public panel discussion featuring a selection of USD’s Truman Scholars, moderated by President Harry S. Truman’s grandson, Clifton Truman Daniel.
  - 72nd Annual Harrington Lecture “On Service, Leadership and Public Administration: Hopes, Warnings, Possibilities” by Matthew R. Fairholm, Ph.D., USD Department of Political Science
  - USD hosts periodic classroom visits with various elected officials and policy makers, including but not limited to: SD Congressional delegation, SD Department secretaries, SD Supreme Court judges, state legislators and local office holders.
- The Opportunity Center continues to improve and grow in every area of operation. In addition to serving more students than the previous year, the Opportunity Center was also able to create new and innovative programs, such as the peer success coach program, that support its mission of providing opportunities for all students to succeed at USD. The total number of students served by the Opportunity Center increased by 58.6%; those students who contacted the Opportunity Center were retained at the university at a rate of 87%.

The Opportunity Center continues actively implementing the South Dakota Board of Regents (SDBOR) Opportunity Statement by fostering a welcoming environment promoting intellectual diversity. This year, the center director attended the Heterodox Academy Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois, to explore new ways to strengthen the

University's commitment to open inquiry and freedom of expression. One key way the center achieves this is by providing funding to bring a wide range of speakers to campus, empowering student groups and academic departments to host events exploring various perspectives. These speaker engagements offer students exposure to varied viewpoints and encourage critical thinking, creating a campus culture that values respectful dialogue and the free exchange of ideas.

Over the last year, the Opportunity Center has provided funding and/or supported logistically the following organizations/events:

- “The History and Future of the American Idea” with Jeffrey Rosen at SDSU
  - The Opportunity Center provided a charter bus for 41 USD students to attend this statewide event in Brookings.
- Speaker Sara Lowrey- “Shining a Light on Mental Darkness”
- Kinesiology & Sport Management
  - Susan Kundrat, a renowned author and nutrition expert from eatmovegroove.com, presented insights on integrating balanced nutrition with active lifestyles. Her talk covered practical strategies for fostering healthy eating habits, optimizing performance through diet, and maintaining overall well-being, drawing from her extensive experience in sports nutrition and wellness coaching.
- USD Access Student Organization
  - USD Accessibility Day celebrated college access for students with disabilities.
- National Music Museum
  - Featured Darren Thompson, an Ojibwe flute player from the Lac du Flambeau Indian Reservation in northern Wisconsin. The event discussed American Indian history and culture, focusing on the music of Native American flutes.
- USD Sanford School of Medicine Students for Life
  - “Biological, Behavioral, and Psychological Consequences of Drug-Induced Chemical Abortion and Abortion Pill Reversal in an Animal Model” presented by Dr. Stephen Sammut from Franciscan University of Steubenville, OH.
- Native Student Services
  - Presented “Growing up with Heroes: The Navajo Code Talkers of WWII...A Grandson Looking up to His Relatives.”

- Psychology Department
  - 27th Annual Building Bridges Conference—an initiative designed to introduce Native American students to higher education with participation from 150-200 students, counselors, and community members.
- History Department
  - Eighth Annual Lecture in Ethics, Law, and Society: “Consent and the Offers We Cannot Refuse.”
- Multicultural Affairs
  - Unity Week celebrated community and togetherness with several events, panel discussions and programming.
- USD takes steps to inform students of the university’s position on Freedom in Learning. A statement is included in the [USD student handbook](#) and, per [USD Policy 1.018](#), on all course syllabi:

*“Under Board of Regents and University policy, student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact the dean of the college or school that offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.”*

- USD strives to make outdoor spaces conducive to free expression for members of the campus community and outside parties. This year was typical in the variety of speakers engaging in use of outdoor campus space for expressive activities. Because the university does not require pre-approval or registration for individuals or small groups engaging in expressive activity outdoors, these groups may not have made our report.

One individual not associated with the University was given a warning for using sound amplification without permission, and quickly complied with the request to cease use of sound amplification.

#### **Events or occurrences that impeded intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas:**

- USD was made aware of multiple questions/concerns regarding the Board’s Communications and Branding Policy (SDBOR Policy 1.7.6) that was passed in December of 2023, questioning whether employees’ free speech rights were violated. The University followed up with communication regarding faculty/staff’s right to engage in speech as a private citizen, as opposed to communication undertaken in the scope of University employment.