



The University of South Dakota

**MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS AND
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Director hired for The U's Master of Social Work program

VERMILLION, S.D. – Elizabeth Talbot, Ph.D., will serve as director for the Master of Social Work program at the School of Health Sciences of The University of South Dakota. The master's degree is expected to be offered to students for the first time in the fall of 2010.

Talbot served as the director of the Master of Social Work Program at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minn., for the past three years. Before that, she was an assistant professor with the Graduate School of Social Work at Dominican University in River Forest, Ill. She received her Ph.D. from Loyola University in Chicago.

“We're fortunate to have found someone with Dr. Talbot's experience,” said Charles Schwartz, Ph.D., Department of Social Work chair. “She helped create the Master Degree of Social Work at St. Cloud State. She is very knowledgeable about developing a program, including adopting a curriculum and achieving accreditation.”

Brian Kaatz, Ph.D., dean of the School of Health Sciences, said the program is already popular. “We're very excited to begin this master's degree program,” he explained. “We know the demand is there. We've already received more than 100 inquiries for information.”

Efforts began in the 1980s to begin a Master of Social Work in South Dakota – the only state that doesn't currently offer the degree. This spring, the South Dakota Legislature approved the program. Twenty-five organizations around the state wrote letters of support to legislators advocating for the degree, including Avera Behavioral Health Center, Regional Health, Sanford Health, AARP, and the Community Mental Health Centers.

“We are so pleased to finally have this much-needed program in the state,” said Joan McMillin, ACSW, Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers in South Dakota. She added that the degree program will bring dollars into the state because those with the degree who are licensed for private practice can bill Medicare and insurance companies for mental health services.

More information on the Master's of Social Work is available at www.usd.edu/socialwork. To download a photo of Elizabeth, please go to www.usd.edu/urelations/images/Elizabeth_Talbot.jpg.

About The University of South Dakota

Founded in 1862, The University of South Dakota is designated as the only public liberal arts university in the state and is home to a comprehensive College of Arts and Sciences, School of Education, the state's only School of Law, School of Medicine, School of Health Sciences, the accredited Beacom School of Business and the College of Fine Arts. It has an enrollment of approximately 9,200 students taught by 400 faculty members. More information is available at www.usd.edu/press/news.

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Extraordinary.