University of South Dakota

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

NOVEMBER 2026



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA



THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT

The South Dakota Board of Regents invites applications and nominations for the position of President of the University of South Dakota, one of six public universities governed by the Board. As South Dakota's flagship university, USD is a regionally acclaimed and nationally recognized public liberal arts university located in Vermillion, with a satellite campus in Sioux Falls. With a proud legacy of excellent teaching, innovative research, and impactful service, USD prepares graduates who strengthen South Dakota's workforce and economy.

Serving as the university's chief executive officer, the president is responsible for the leadership and management of all facets of the institution, advancing its mission and working under the oversight and governance of the South Dakota Board of Regents. The next president will build upon USD's strong foundation while providing visionary and collaborative leadership to strengthen academics, research, and enrollment. As USD looks toward an ambitious future, its next President will play a pivotal role in preparing graduates for career and life success while advancing the university's continued impact.

PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES

Visionary and Strategic

A forward-thinking leader who can articulate a vision for USD's future and turn it into clear priorities and measurable results. The president will set strategic direction, align resources with priorities, anticipate changes in higher education, and position USD for long-term success.

Champion for Academic Excellence

A leader who champions excellence across undergraduate, graduate, and professional education; supports outstanding teaching; strengthens and modernizes academic programs; and encourages interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation.

Student-Centered Leader

A president who places student success at the center of institutional decision-making and is committed to recruitment, retention, persistence, graduation, career readiness, and postgraduate outcomes.

Advocate for Research, Graduate and Professional Education

The president will support growth in research and graduate education, recognize the distinctive contributions of USD's professional schools, and foster partnerships that translate the university's expertise into benefits for South Dakota and beyond.

Engaged and Visible

An accessible, authentic, and energetic leader who builds strong relationships and actively engages with the USD and Vermillion communities and surrounding region. The president serves as the chief storyteller for USD, building understanding of and support for the university's value.

Accountable Financial Leader

An experienced executive who responsibly stewards public and private resources and aligns financial decisions with institutional priorities. The president will bring sound judgment, transparency, and accountability to university operations and pursue operational effectiveness and strategic investment.

South Dakota First

A leader who embraces USD's role in serving the state of South Dakota and strengthens the university's contribution to workforce development, healthcare, economic development, research, and community vitality through partnerships that respond to the needs of South Dakota.

Chief Fundraiser

A leader who builds meaningful relationships with alumni, donors, and university friends, partnering with the USD Foundation to advance fundraising and secure resources for students, faculty, programs, research, facilities, and strategic priorities.

Clear Communicator

A leader who communicates with clarity, transparency, and consistency. The president shares decisions and their rationale openly with the Board of Regents, campus community, policymakers, and the public, building trust and shared commitment to USD's priorities.

Education and Experience

The successful candidate will demonstrate significant and progressively responsible executive leadership experience in higher education or another complex organization of comparable scope and responsibility.

Candidates should possess:

- An earned doctorate, or advanced terminal degree, and/or significant executive leadership experience that would garner the respect of the campus community is required. A graduate degree combined with extensive relevant leadership experience may be accepted.
- Candidates for the position should demonstrate significant, successful executive leadership experience in a complex organizational setting.
- Experience working effectively with governing boards, faculty, employees, students, and external constituencies.





THE OPPORTUNITY

USD'S NEXT PRESIDENT WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD ON INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS, ADVANCE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, AND SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SOUTH DAKOTA'S FLAGSHIP UNIVERSITY.

USD IS IN A TIME OF MOMENTUM.

The university has reported a total enrollment above 10,000 students for the third consecutive year; it recently completed a successful strategic plan and is launching the next; it is benefiting from a strong financial position; and it continues to strengthen innovative academic programs and partnerships that benefit students, communities and the workforce in South Dakota and beyond. USD's next president will be well positioned to build upon a strong foundation and guide the university through its next chapter of excellence.

POINTS OF DISTINCTION

- South Dakota's flagship university and designated public liberal arts institution.
- Home to the state's only medical school and law school, among other premier programs addressing workforce needs.
- A "High Earning" public institution that is on the path to being an "Opportunity College and University," as determined by Carnegie Classifications, with student-centered and high-impact research initiatives that advance academic excellence, drive economic growth, and strengthen innovation.
- Strong partnerships and outreach initiatives across business, education, government, healthcare and other industries.
- State-of-the-art facilities spanning academics, student life and athletics, including the Center for Health Education, the Wellness Center & Natatorium, and the future Gassen Family Fieldhouse.
- Extensive experiential learning opportunities and career preparation services that prepare students to thrive after graduation.
- A "Best National University" according to U.S. News & World Report, receiving this distinction every year since 1992.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

FOUNDED IN 1862, THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA IS THE STATE'S FLAGSHIP PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY, SERVING SOUTH DAKOTA AND THE REGION THROUGH TEACHING, RESEARCH AND SERVICE.

USD offers more than 200 undergraduate and more than 90 graduate and professional programs. The university is also home to the state's only medical school and law school. With programs in business, healthcare, education, data sciences, the arts, and more, USD offers numerous academic paths.

The university's main campus, in Vermillion, offers residential living options, USD's largest selection of academic programs, NCAA Division I athletics, and a range of experiential learning opportunities that prepare students for their careers. USD boasts several new and renovated buildings, creating a modern learning environment that blends state-of-the-art facilities with the historic charm of a flagship university campus. USD embraces its mission as the state's liberal arts institution, graduating ethical decision-makers, critical thinkers, and adaptable leaders who contribute meaningfully to their careers and communities.

In addition to its Vermillion campus, USD also has a strong presence in Sioux Falls. The USD – Sioux Falls campus provides an enriching, flexible education for place-bound, traditional, and nontraditional students in the state's largest city while helping address regional workforce gaps. Near this campus is the USD Discovery District, which connects university research with private-sector resources and companies. The USD Sanford School of Medicine also has a campus in Sioux Falls and will soon house an additional portion of the Doctor of Medicine curriculum. The university has strong partnerships across the city's healthcare, education, and business industries, making the Sioux Falls community a key audience for USD that bolsters the university's potential for impact across the state.

USD proudly serves South Dakota as a central part of its mission. Beyond preparing and strengthening the workforce, USD serves communities statewide through impactful research, outreach that expands access to resources and knowledge, and initiatives that connect faculty expertise and student talent with community needs. The university embraces the role of higher education as a public good and nurtures partnerships to strengthen that impact.

VERMILLION, SIOUX FALLS AND THE REGION

Vermillion, South Dakota, is a small community in the southeast corner along the Missouri River bluffs.

USD and Vermillion have a close partnership. The university employs more than 1,500 Vermillion residents and 1,000 nearby neighbors, while more than 5,600 students live on campus or in the area. Residents enjoy a high quality of life, a close-knit community, and opportunities across the region.

An hour north, USD is integrated into South Dakota's largest city — strengthening educational pathways, research, and partnerships that help the workforce thrive and expand opportunities for students. This proximity, along with neighboring cities and towns, enables several recreational experiences and resources beyond Vermillion.





MISSION

The University of South Dakota offers undergraduate, graduate and professional programs within the South Dakota System of Higher Education. As South Dakota's oldest university, the University of South Dakota serves as the flagship and only public liberal arts university in the state.

VISION & VALUES

STUDENT EXPERIENCE FOCUSED

USD's students are engaged, thoughtful, and well-prepared for a global and complex world. The experience in and out of the classroom is robust, experiential, and practical. Lives are enhanced and changed by the breadth of experiences USD provides.

RESPONSIBLE STEWARDS

USD strives to make its education affordable to every qualified student by operating efficiently and effectively with high-quality standards to minimize financial barriers to a life-changing investment.

TRANSPARENT

USD communicates frequently with internal and external stakeholders through informative, agile, transparent processes. Its authentic, clear identity is widely understood: people know USD, what it does, and who it serves.

VALUE OUR COMMUNITY

USD embraces community partners and neighbors who value the strength of its community. USD invests in its people and strives to provide appropriate compensation and recognition. USD values its employees and invests in their professional development. All employees play an important role in creating the university experience.

WELCOMING

Community is one of USD's strengths. USD is proud of its caring culture and embraces the uniqueness of its students, faculty, and staff. The university provides opportunities so everyone feels welcome here.

RESOURCE CUSTODIANS

USD has a process for modernizing and upgrading its facilities so they can be fully utilized by students, faculty, staff and the community. The university leverages its technology resources to provide a flexible and adaptable learning and research experience.

HIGHEST INTEGRITY

USD is seen as a trusted partner by those with whom it collaborates and lives up to the high expectations of South Dakota, tribal nations and other stakeholders. The university is optimistic and excited about the future it will create.

ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

USD ORGANIZES ITS ACADEMIC PROGRAMS INTO SEVEN COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS, WITH SUPPORT FROM THE GRADUATE SCHOOL.

The **College of Arts & Sciences** is the heart of liberal arts education at USD and is the university's largest academic unit, offering programs in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences.

The **Beacom School of Business** is committed to the state's economic development through its programs and outreach centers, providing high-quality support for small- and large-scale businesses while developing a pipeline of talented business professionals.

The **School of Education** prepares teachers, educational leaders, school psychologists and counselors, researchers, and sport-related professionals to serve their communities.

The **College of Fine Arts** provides students with paths to pursue their passions in art, music, and theatre, including through new and innovative programs that set them up for success in the 21st-century economy.

The **School of Health Sciences** strengthens the state's healthcare workforce by preparing practice-ready professionals while also supporting communities through dental hygiene clinics and public service centers.

The **Knudson School of Law** is South Dakota's law school and plays an integral role in preparing leaders for the legal profession in the state.

The **Sanford School of Medicine,** South Dakota's only medical school, has an outstanding reputation in family and rural medicine while preparing medical students for practice in all fields of medicine.

USD AT A GLANCE

FOUNDED
1862

LOCATION
Vermillion, South Dakota (main campus)
Sioux Falls, South Dakota (USD – Sioux Falls)

TOTAL ENROLLMENT
10,000+ students

STUDENT-TO-FACULTY RATIO
16:1

ALUMNI
80,000+

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
200+ undergraduate programs
90+ graduate and professional programs

ACADEMIC UNITS
College of Arts & Sciences
Beacom School of Business
School of Education
College of Fine Arts
Graduate School
School of Health Sciences
Knudson School of Law
Sanford School of Medicine

ATHLETICS
Division I NCAA athletic programs



NOMINATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

Nominations and applications will be accepted until an appointment is made, within practical limits of the process as finalists are identified. Applications will remain confidential except for those invited for campus interviews. **For full consideration, materials should be submitted by January 24, 2027.**

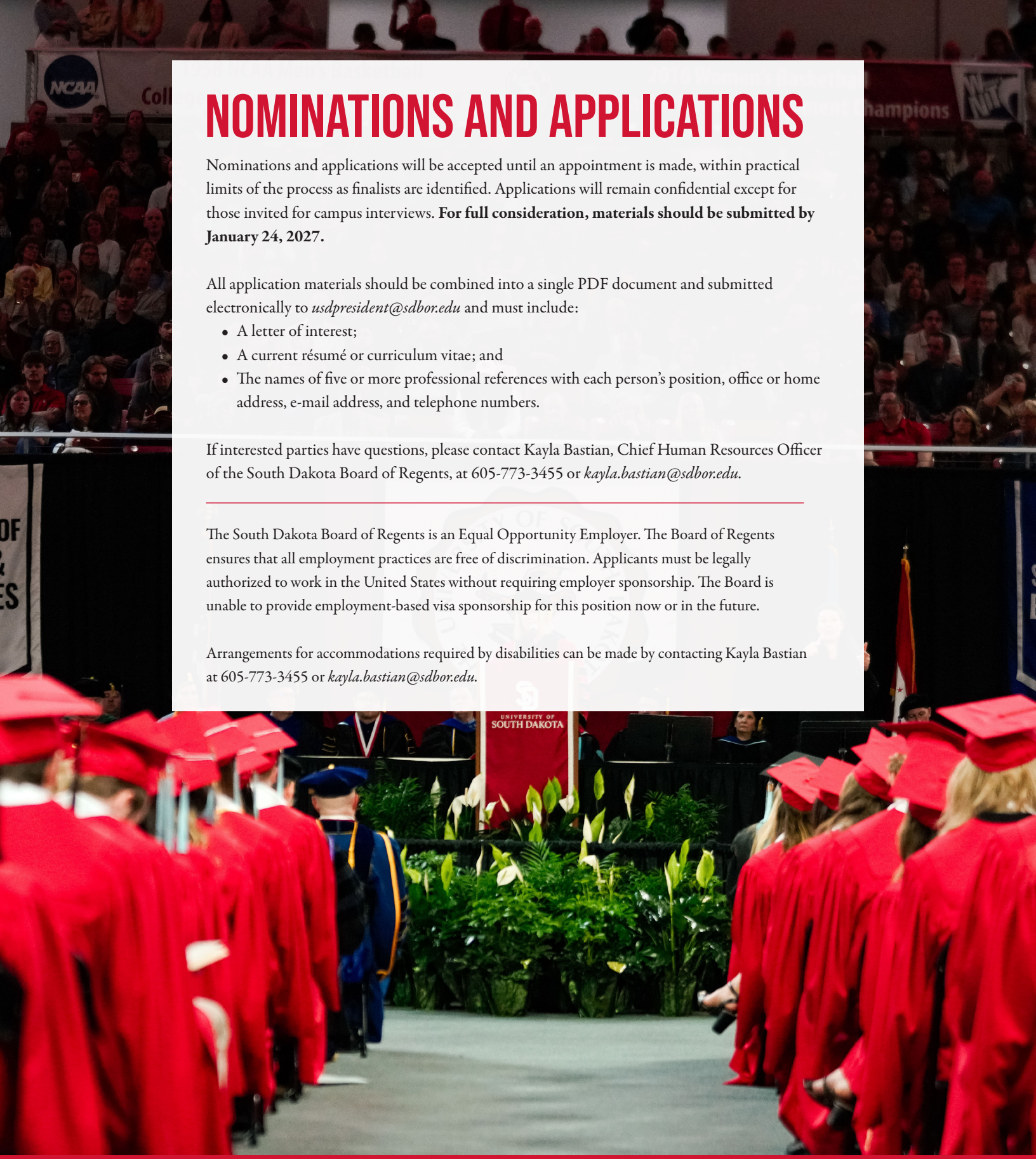
All application materials should be combined into a single PDF document and submitted electronically to *usdpresident@sdbor.edu* and must include:

- A letter of interest;
- A current résumé or curriculum vitae; and
- The names of five or more professional references with each person's position, office or home address, e-mail address, and telephone numbers.

If interested parties have questions, please contact Kayla Bastian, Chief Human Resources Officer of the South Dakota Board of Regents, at 605-773-3455 or *kayla.bastian@sdbor.edu.*

The South Dakota Board of Regents is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Board of Regents ensures that all employment practices are free of discrimination. Applicants must be legally authorized to work in the United States without requiring employer sponsorship. The Board is unable to provide employment-based visa sponsorship for this position now or in the future.

Arrangements for accommodations required by disabilities can be made by contacting Kayla Bastian at 605-773-3455 or *kayla.bastian@sdbor.edu.*



SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD of REGENTS

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA