



BOARD OF REGENTS

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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 30, 2019

RE: **June 26 Intellectual Diversity in Higher Education Hearing**

Dear Colleagues:

Earlier this month, Board of Regents' President Kevin Schieffer sent you a letter explaining that the Board is seeking comments and will be holding a public hearing at South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD on June 26, 2019, in an effort to develop the most effective and responsible means of fulfilling the new legislative requirements regarding intellectual diversity.

As you know, these new legislative requirements obligate the Board to "prepare ... a[n annual] report that: (1) Sets forth all the 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 purpose of this hearing is to solicit your assistance in gathering the best means of achieving the intent of the new legislative requirements. Therefore, please consider this an invitation to participate in the public intellectual diversity discussion in person or through written commentary.

The intellectual diversity public conversation will take place from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on June 26th in Woster Celebration Hall at the SDSU Alumni Center (815 Medary Avenue, corner of 8th Street and Medary Avenue). Participants who would like to speak will be given five minutes to share their thoughts on intellectual diversity especially in regard to the issues noted below. Additionally (or alternately) individuals are encouraged to provide written comments by June 12 so that they can be included in the Board's meeting materials.

When structuring your testimony, please keep the following in mind:

- a) One goal that must be reached is to develop some baseline assessment on the degree to which South Dakota public universities are or are not meeting the definition and objective of intellectual diversity today. (For quick reference, the state statute defines "Intellectual diversity" as "a learning environment that exposes students to and encourages exploration of a variety of ideological and political perspectives.")

- b) Effective ways to meet the definition and objective of intellectual diversity should be explored and discussed.
- c) Legitimate¹ and measurable metrics to help define progress in the future need to be developed, and in that regard, one purpose of the hearing will be to develop a defensible record of any areas requiring improvement.
- d) Testimony should focus primarily on creating measurable and specific assessments of intellectual diversity and how it can be expressed at South Dakota public universities.

If you are interested in testifying at the meeting on June 26, please let my executive assistant Molly Weisgram know as soon as possible. If you do not identify yourself beforehand, you may testify at the meeting as long as there are slots available. Written comments should be directed to Molly no later than June 12. Her email is molly.weisgram@sdbor.edu.

Thank you for your interest in this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul B. Beran", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Paul B. Beran
Executive Director & CEO
South Dakota Board of Regents

¹ Please note that SDCL 13-49-14 provides that “no person may be employed or dismissed by reason of any sectarian or political opinions held.”