

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Commencement is always a significant and joyous time for our graduates and their families. While the celebration looked very different last week, we celebrated our grads with a Virtual Commencement ceremony for the nearly 330 students who earned their degree from BHSU this semester.

At the same time last Friday we concluded spring semester, which also looked dramatically different from typical spring semesters. Our students experienced an abrupt change in course delivery on March 23 when we announced that we would convert all courses to an on-line format, and students could move out of the residence halls to complete their semester at home. While our students rose to the occasion and made the transition quite well, it wasn't without a loss of in-class support and personal contact with peers—something that most students said they really missed.

In times like these, we must do all we can to help our students. Last week, we announced the availability of \$757,487 of student emergency assistance for our students allocated to BHSU through the CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund. The pandemic has caused unexpected expenses and, in some cases, a loss of income for our students. We are moving quickly to get these funds to students who have financial need so they can continue their education. As I write this, we are working with more than 750 students who have requested support from this fund. It was wonderful to see the support of BHSU alumni and friends as we raised funds on Giving Tuesday for our Jackets in Need Fund. With your support, we exceeded our goal and raised more than \$10,000 that will go directly to students who are struggling. Together, these resources will help our students get through a tough time where budgets are stressed. Thank you for helping our students stay in school and complete their degree.

The summer term began this week at BHSU. All summer classes are online and we have stepped up course offerings to provide more options for students to continue their degree and complete even earlier than anticipated. We are optimistically looking forward to the fall semester and in doing so, identifying specific modifications to ensure a successful and safe educational experience for our students.

Our commitment to students remains in place, and we are excited to welcome them back to our beautiful campus.

Go Jackets!



President, Laurie S. Nichols



The BHSU Virtual Commencement was live streamed on the scoreboard on campus at Lyle Hare Stadium.

FIRST-EVER BHSU VIRTUAL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY HONORS 300 GRADS

Black Hills State University honored the Spring 2020 graduating class with a Virtual Commencement Ceremony Friday, May 8. More than 600 people tuned in to watch the livestream of Commencement on Facebook and YouTube, and the recording has since been viewed more than 6,000 times. The virtual ceremony included aspects of a normal commencement ceremony including a commencement procession, the National Anthem, and a commencement address, given this year by Rep. Dusty Johnson. [Watch](#) the ceremony.

GRADUATES PREPARE TO SERVE THEIR COMMUNITIES, NATION



Nielson

PANDEMIC CONFIRMS BHSU GRAD'S PATH TO MEDICAL SCHOOL

BHSU graduating senior Katie Nielson of Pierre has never been more sure of her calling to be a physician. The biology and chemistry major will attend the Sanford School of Medicine at the University of South Dakota this summer. [Read more](#)



Jackson

VIRTUAL SALUTE SIGNIFIES COMMITMENT TO SERVICE FOR BHSU GRAD

Even more than missing a traditional graduation ceremony because of the pandemic, BHSU graduating senior Tate Jackson, of Parmelee, will miss attending the ROTC Commissioning Ceremony at Mount Rushmore. Tate will become a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Infantry following his graduation from BHSU, traveling to Ft. Benning, Ga., for training in June. [Read more](#)



Ward

RODEO ATHLETE WILL RETURN TO FORMER STUDENT TEACHING CLASSROOM FOR JOB THIS FALL

When BHSU senior KeAnna Ward of Belle Fourche begins her first teaching job at Martin Elementary School this fall, it will be a homecoming. KeAnna will teach in the same fourth grade classroom where her student teaching experience was cut short this spring due to COVID-19. [Read more](#)

FOLLOWING NATIONAL SEARCHES, TWO NEW ADMINISTRATORS WILL BE JOINING BHSU THIS SUMMER.

Dr. Priscilla Romkema, a BHSU alum who previously served as a dean and professor at the University, has been named Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at BHSU.



Romkema

Romkema is currently President of the Monument Health Foundation in Rapid City, a position she has held for three years. Prior to that she served as a faculty member and in administrative positions at BHSU. She began working at BHSU in 1997 as an assistant professor. Her leadership and expertise propelled her to positions as a chair, director, and dean.

[Read more](#)

Dr. John Allred, Assistant Vice President for Academic Records and Student Services at Southern Utah University in Cedar City, Utah, has been named Vice President for Enrollment Management at Black Hills State University.



Allred

Allred has held a number of administrative positions at Southern Utah University since he began as registrar there in 2010. He is recognized for his expertise as a process engineer, using technology to address challenges and create solutions while providing exceptional leadership on campus. [Read more](#)



Rainboth

JOE RAINBOTH NAMED ADMISSIONS DIRECTOR AT BHSU

Joe Rainboth has been selected as the Director of Admissions at BHSU. Rainboth has more than 10 years of professional experience in university admissions, enrollment, and student services, working most recently for the South Dakota Department of Education. He previously served as Assistant Director of Admissions at BHSU and as Admissions Regional Director at the University of South Dakota (USD). [Read more](#)



CARES funding will be distributed to students with the highest financial need as identified by their FAFSA record. Money can be used for housing, food, course materials, technology, childcare and other educational related expenses.

BHSU STUDENTS TO RECEIVE FUNDS FROM FEDERAL CARES ACT

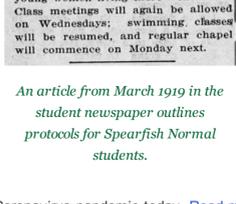
Students at BHSU can now apply for funding to help cover expenses caused by the pandemic. The CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund allocated \$757,487 to BHSU for student emergency assistance. The funds, allocated by the Department of Education as a result of the CARES Act, are designated to assist students with expenses incurred during this semester when classes were unexpectedly moved online. CARES funding will also be available for the Fall 2020 semester. [Read more](#)

BHSU IS MAKING PLANS FOR FALL CLASSES ON CAMPUS

Black Hills State University is preparing for on-campus classes for the Fall 2020 semester. The South Dakota Board of Regents announced earlier this month that plans are being made to resume face-to-face teaching at the six public universities and special schools' system. A group of faculty and staff from across campus are reviewing CDC recommendations and best practices offered by several professional associations to develop a sound fall plan for BHSU. [Read more](#)



Fall classes begin Aug. 24. Pandemic planning will continue in the weeks ahead and campus-specific details and protocols will be provided through news releases and on the BHSU website.



An article from March 1919 in the student newspaper outlines protocols for Spearfish Normal students.

SPANISH FLU ARTICLES FROM BHSU ARCHIVES MIRROR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COVID-19

Spearfish Normal School, the school that would become BHSU, closed temporarily on October 15, 1918 as a means to prevent the spread of the Spanish Flu which lasted from 1918-1920. Articles from the BHSU Archives about the Spanish Flu are providing some unity between alumni from 100 years ago and students affected by the

Coronavirus pandemic today. [Read more](#)

MORE THAN \$10K RAISED ON GIVING TUESDAY FOR STUDENTS IN NEED

Black Hills State University joined the global effort Giving Tuesday on May 5 to respond to the unprecedented need caused by COVID-19. More than \$10,000 was donated by BHSU administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters for the Jackets in Need fund. Dollars raised by BHSU through this effort will assist students who are struggling with basic needs like housing, food, or everyday living expenses. Gifts can still be made by texting BHcares to 41444 or online at www.BHSUFoundation.org



The Student Association and the BHSU Foundation spearheaded the Giving Tuesday effort.

