

SDSU

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on our Brookings campus, with the rest online or at one of our attendance centers,” he said.

SDSU also seeks to retain 80 percent of its students from one year to the next, Chicoine said. Besides raising the current retention level, university officials want to determine the reason for enrollment fluctuations between years.

SDSU looks to tap into the projected increase in South Dakota high school graduates along with a continued strong showing in neighboring states, he said.

University officials also want to continue their marketing emphasis that a college graduate will likely earn much more during his lifetime than someone without a degree, Chicoine said.

“We believe in the value of education, and we believe that post-secondary education serves (our students) well,” he said.

Activity isn’t limited to the Brookings campus, as SDSU has also worked with major reorganization of Extension, research and 4-H activities across South Dakota. SDSU officials said the restructuring was necessary because of budget cuts and demographic changes, particularly in rural areas.

Barry Dunn, dean of the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences, said Thursday that the Extension changes are on the right path.

“We are really confident that we are on the right model, even with the 8 percent budget cut from the federal government for Extension,” he said.

Dunn likened the public’s wide-ranging view of Extension to the story of the blind men who felt and described an elephant in different ways.

“That’s the way it is with Extension and 4-H — people see it different ways,” he said.

Dunn acknowledged that many South Dakotans, particularly county officials, disagreed at first with the restructuring effort. But SDSU officials are working with county officials to regain their trust, he said.

The reorganization has already produced positive results, particularly with 4-H, Dunn said. “In 2012, our 4-H numbers were up 16 percent, and our youth participation is up (in other areas),” he said.

He added that communities and counties — including Yankton County — have stepped forward with their own resources to support 4-H and youth activities.

Besides its regional centers, Extension has used online sites such as iGrow to inform the public in a more timely and convenient fashion, Dunn said.

“We have taken the learning out of the courthouse and onto the Internet through learning platforms such as iGrow,” he said.

Looking ahead, the “It Starts With STATE” success has provided valuable momentum for the future, said Steve Erpenbach, president and CEO of the SDSU Foundation.

The 23,000 donors included 7,000 first-time givers to SDSU. The oldest donor was a 1928 graduate, while about 50 donors came from the Class of 2012.

“We received 39 percent of the money from alumni, 37 percent from non-alumni and the remaining 24 percent from corporations and other businesses,” he said.

“It Starts With STATE” grew larger than organizers imagined at the start, Erpenbach said.

The SDSU Foundation’s trustees unanimously supported a \$190 million goal in April 2008, then increased it to \$200 million in October 2010.

“We got approval in April 2008. If we had waited until the following fall, in October 2008, you then had the housing crisis,” he said. “We may never have gone forward with this campaign, so we are lucky with the timing. We never had to extend or suspend the campaign, and we beat our goal by 25 percent.”

The campaign’s success energized SDSU and attracted new supporters, Erpenbach said.

“I think it shows people are very committed, and they want to invest in SDSU,” he said. “We have a great story to share. Now, we need to continue that momentum.”

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Administration: ‘Obamacare’ To Offer More Choices

WASHINGTON (AP) — Insurance companies are showing interest in providing coverage under the new health care law, a development likely to increase market competition and give uninsured people more choices than they now have, the White House said Thursday. Many of the 14 million people who currently buy their own insurance plans could also benefit.

Eager to counter Republican criticism of the law, the White House’s upbeat assessment of the effect of the law comes four months before consumers can begin shopping for subsidized private insurance in new state markets. Widespread enrollment in those plans is crucial to the successful implementation of President Barack Obama’s 2010 health care law.

On its website, the White House posted a memo that concluded that most of the consumers who seek insurance from federal- or state-run insurance markets will be able to choose

from five or more different insurance companies. The finding is based on data provided by 19 states where the federal government will run the markets and from other state-run markets. Those states account for about 80 percent of the 7 million people that the Congressional Budget Office estimates will obtain insurance through the new markets in 2014.

Currently the insurance market in most states is dominated by one or two insurance carriers; in 45 states and the District of Columbia two insurers cover more than half of all enrollees.

The administration’s findings about increased competition generally match up with private sector assessments of early indicators. The market research firm Avalere Health found strong insurer interest in participating in about a dozen states that have released details of their new insurance markets.

Whether the competition will result in lower premiums,

however, remains an open question.

Administration officials point to a report by the Democratic staff of the House Energy and Commerce Committee last week that determined that in Oregon and Washington the competition is lowering premium rates even before income-based tax credits are taken into account. But two other states whose filings were examined by the committee, Rhode Island and Maryland, signaled premium rate increases.

An earlier report by the committee’s Republican staff surveyed insurers who estimated that premiums would increase in most cases.

Indeed, concerns remain that people who already have insurance coverage, especially the young and healthy, could face an increase in premiums because of the new law’s demands. The plans that will be offered next year are more comprehensive than many bare-bones policies currently available to individuals.

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