MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING OF

SOUTH DAKOTA FREEDOM SCHOLARSHIP BOARD

First PREMIER Bank First Floor Conference Room, 500 S Minnesota Avenue, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

The meeting was called to order by Miles Beacom at 11:01 a.m. CDT, Thursday, October 22, 2026, at the First PREMIER Bank. First Floor Conference Room in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Members present were Miles Beacom, Chris Houwman, Jennifer Grennan and Phyllis Heineman. Dana Dykhouse was absent. Others present were Elli Haerter, Olivia DeBoer, John McGrath, and Dr. Ron Place.

Agenda

Beacom moved and Houwman seconded to approve the agenda. Motion carried with a voice vote.

Minutes

Houwman moved and Grennan seconded to approve the minutes from July 27, 2026. Motion carried with a voice vote.

Gratitude from Students

The Board received thank-you notes from eight students submitted through the new portal. The Board suggested sharing students' thanks on the website and consider how much to share publicly. They also suggested asking students which year they are in school so others know recipients are in all years of college.

Program discussion

Elli Haerter shared information on the SD Community Foundation’s current-year earnings and expenditures and reminded the Board about the 2026-27 second disbursement to universities this fall. Haerter also shared historical allocations and projections for future allocations. Haerter reviewed some statistics with the Board based on the data provided by the new database and answered questions about areas where the team’s future work on graduate employment tracking and texting capabilities.

2025-26 Year Report to SD Legislature

Board members reviewed the draft 2026 SD Legislature report and made suggestions for the final version, due Friday, October 30. Heineman moved and Houwman seconded to approve the report, allowing Haerter to make final edits before submission. Motion carried with a voice vote.

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The board paused for a lunch break from 11:57 AM – 12:12 PM

2027-2028 school year allocation to participating institutions

Board members considered the Fall 2026 census figures shared by universities, based upon the existing, agreed-upon formula, as well as the spendable amount from the endowments, to determine the overall allocation from the Freedom and PREMIER Scholarship Funds. Motion by Houwman second by Heineman, to approve the 2027 Freedom Scholarship allocation for $9,200,000 as follows:

2027-2028 Freedom Allocation to Universities

Augustana	$ 810,000
BHSU	$ 700,000
DSU	$ 734,000
NSU	$ 594,000
SDSM&T	$ 515,000
SDSU	$ 3,322,000
USD	$ 1,980,000
USF	$ 385,000
DWU	$ 90,000
Mount Marty	$ 70,000

Motion carried with a voice vote.

Employment Tracking and Documentation

The board discussed updates to the employment tracking and documentation required to administer the Freedom Scholarship. Regarding employment verification for those scholars who work for companies, staff should continue to confirm employment with available resources, including reliable, public sources. For self-employment, multiple employers and/or "PRN" status, the monthly income minimum should be based on 100% of the yearly federal poverty rate for their family size. Houwman moved to adopt the discussed changes to the working in South Dakota requirement. Heineman seconded. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Executive Session for student matters (SDCL 1-25-2(2)), contractual matters SDCL 1-25-2(3) and personnel matters (SDCL 1-25-2(1)

Grennan moved and Heineman seconded to enter into executive session at 1:01 pm for executive session for SDCL 1-25-2(1-3). Motion carried with a voice vote. Beacom declared executive session over at 1:08 pm. No votes were taken in executive session.

Student Exceptions

Grennan motioned and Houwman seconded to grant the 6 students (cases: 20261022001, 20261022002, 20261022003, 20261022005, 20261022007, 20261022010) exceptions to the Freedom Scholarship requirements. Motion passed with a voice vote. One case is held until the next meeting.

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2027 Meetings Ahead -All held at First PREMIER Bank Board Room, 500 S. Minnesota Ave, Sioux Falls, SD from 11 am to 1 pm:

January 21, 2027
April 20, 2027
July 26, 2027
October 26, 2027

Public Comment

There was no public comment received at the meeting.

Adjournment

Houwman moved, and Heineman seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 1:19 p.m. Motion carried with a voice vote.

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Phyllis Heineman, Secretary/Treasurer

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