

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA
SANFORD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

CHAIR
DEPARTMENT OF
NEUROSCIENCES

LEADERSHIP PROFILE



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA
SANFORD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Together in teaching, innovation and compassion



THE OPPORTUNITY

The University of South Dakota (USD) Sanford School of Medicine (SSOM) located in Sioux Falls announces a nationwide search for an accomplished academic board-certified neurologist to serve as the next **Chair, Department of Neurosciences**.

This position reports directly to the Dean of the Sanford School of Medicine and Vice President for Health Affairs at the University of South Dakota, Tim Ridgway, M.D., MACP, FASGE.



The Department of Neurosciences at the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine was created in 1991 and the founding chair, Dr. Jerome Freeman has led the department continuously for the past 35 years. Dr. Freeman has announced plans to retire in December of 2026.



THE DEPARTMENT OF NEUROSCIENCES

South Dakota's rural landscape and geographic spread pose unique challenges and opportunities in providing health care, with demand for neurology and physical medicine and rehabilitation physicians across the state. USD SSOM meets those challenges by offering a community-based clinical faculty model that utilizes clinician educators employed by the three major hospital systems across the expansive state. At present, there are 46 neurologists and 17 physical medicine and rehabilitation physicians with faculty appointments in the Department of Neurosciences providing clinical care across the state. An additional 30 faculty members hold adjunct faculty appointments in the department from a variety of disciplines including nursing, bioethics, pharmacy, psychology, chaplaincy, and other interprofessional backgrounds.

In addition to providing educational opportunities for medical students, residents, and other learners, the expansive faculty of the department serves as a common thread for the neurology and physical medicine and rehabilitation communities across the state to improve collaboration, share best practices, and enhance the quality of neurologic care across South Dakota. With a very high percentage of the total

neurology and physical medicine and rehabilitation physicians in the state serving as faculty in the department, the chair has a unique insight into the neuroscience workforce challenges and patient diagnosis trends across the state. This data can be used for training and workforce planning in addition to research.

In 2023, Sanford Health and the SSOM initiated an accredited four-year [neurology residency program](#) with its first class of three residents. Residents train at the Sanford USD Medical Center in Sioux Falls, a level-one trauma center on the campus of the SSOM, with additional opportunities for training at the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center. This is the only neurology residency program in the state of South Dakota. The SSOM also offers medical students a neurology clerkship and electives.

Neurology faculty span the spectrum of sub-specialties including behavioral neurology, headache medicine, epilepsy, clinical neurophysiology, neurocritical care, neuromuscular medicine, vascular neurology, endovascular neuroradiology, movement disorders, neuroimmunology, and sleep medicine in addition to general inpatient and outpatient neurology. Physical medicine and rehabilitation faculty include specialists in pain management, spinal cord injury, sports medicine, and general physiatry.



THE POSITION

The **Chair of the Department of Neurosciences** for the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine (SSOM) will be a respected board-certified academic neurologist with leadership experience in a medical school or similar environment. This individual will have demonstrated abilities as a leader, educator, clinician, and scholar. The position is based in Sioux Falls, but the chair is expected to work effectively and collegially with colleagues throughout the state, advancing the mission of the department in both rural and urban areas. SSOM is a community-based medical school with a tradition of excellence and is highly ranked in rural medicine.

Required Qualifications:

- Medical Doctor, Doctor of Osteopathy, or equivalent accredited medical degree
- Board certified and residency trained in neurology
- Minimum of eight years of clinical experience
- Regionally and/or nationally recognized achievement in clinical, educational, and/or scholarly pursuits that would warrant an academic appointment at an advanced rank at USD
- Able to work collaboratively with academic and clinical faculty, medical students, and residents
- Commitment to holistic care of patients from every background
- Commitment to rural and urban practice environments, and to inter-professional education
- Able to obtain a medical license and hospital privileges to practice in South Dakota

Preferred Qualifications:

- Ability to collaborate with the state of South Dakota, tribal nations, community providers, cities and other educational institutions
- Ability to promote health care education to community professionals and leaders
- Ability to be an effective spokesperson for the school and the university
- Actively engaged in or willingness to participate in development, alumni relations and philanthropic activities
- Ability to be a positive, supportive role model and mentor for students, residents, faculty and staff, modeling exemplary ethical and professional behavior
- Ability to foster interdisciplinary teamwork, delegate authority and ensure accountability
- Experience growing or building a residency or fellowship program
- Track record of obtaining external grant funding
- Skilled in recruiting faculty and residents

Personal Qualities:

- High degree of personal integrity and credibility
- Mission oriented with the ability to create a vision and culture for the department
- Intellectually curious problem solver
- A team player with skill in collaboration, interaction, and mentorship
- Ability to inspire and mentor students and faculty
- Excellent communication and listening skills
- Emotionally intelligent

Responsibilities

Academic/Teaching

- Develop an understanding of how the SSOM works to assist the department in advancing its strategic mission and vision
- Advocate for the SSOM and its mission and goals
- Regularly participate in SSOM leadership meetings
- Work with the Associate Dean of Rural Health to assist in promoting rural health care
- Advise the dean on policy development/implementation and methods/actions to achieve the mission and goals of SSOM and support workforce development efforts in South Dakota
- Document the degree of attainment of the department's academic goals
- Assure departmental curricular development in conjunction with SSOM's curriculum
- Recruit, mentor, and develop academic and clinical faculty from across the state to ensure the highest possible academic learning experiences for the students and residents
- Assure departmental continuing professional development activities in education, scholarly activities, service, and community engagement
- Communicate to academic and clinical faculty at all campuses and frontier and rural medicine sites to include regularly scheduled on-site visits to each campus and site
- Provide robust career planning support for medical students interested in neurology
- Assure the quality/effectiveness of medical student education on all campuses in neurology and physical medicine and rehabilitation
- Foster relationships with specialty experts to ensure student participation in the entire patient care process
- Oversee communication to medical students and faculty at all campuses and sites including:
 - The educational goals and objectives
 - The learner and program assessment methods
 - The process and methods for medical student evaluation of the program and their instructors
- Perform annual evaluations:
 - Conduct annual faculty and staff evaluations in a timely manner
 - Assure timely evaluation and reporting of student/resident achievement
 - Monitor and counsel students/residents in both their academic and career goals
 - Intervene as needed to remedy inadequate faculty or student performance
- Work with the director of the Neurology Residency Program and its sponsoring hospital to ensure the program is fully accredited and of high quality
- Work with the Neurology Clerkship Director and other faculty on increasing early exposure to the field of neurology in the medical student journey
- Maintain effective working relationships with neurosciences staff at all affiliated hospital systems



Research

- Advance the academic mission including enhancing externally funded research, publications, and presentations
- Encourage and facilitate student/resident involvement in research
- Assist faculty in obtaining funding and collaborators for research activities
- Identify opportunities to leverage existing research assets such as Center for Brain and Behavioral Research (CBBRe), Human Functional Neuroimaging Core, and the MD/PhD program to support scholarly research growth in the Department

Clinical

- The chair may have a clinical practice which will allow for visibility and an intimate understanding of the clinical environment
- The structure, specialty/sub-specialty focus, and location of the clinical practice is negotiable



**Toward the Future
Strategic Priorities for the Chair of Neurosciences**

- Define the future goals, objectives, and priorities of the Department of Neurosciences
- Identify opportunities to bring together the neurosciences community across the state to share best practices, collaborate, and maximize the quality of care delivered across the state including telehealth neurology access in rural areas
- Promote expanded educational rotations for medical students interested in exploring rural and urban neurology and psychiatry and mentor students interested in pursuing these specialties
- Work with health systems to explore feasibility of adding subspecialty fellowships
- Collaborate with other department chairs at the Sanford School of Medicine and leaders within the School of Health Sciences to create interprofessional and interdisciplinary educational opportunities
- Create pathways for residency graduates to identify practice opportunities across South Dakota
- Promote the department regionally and nationally
- Advocate for the important role of neurosciences in supporting the state's communities and health systems



Affiliated Hospitals

The Department of Neurosciences operates across the three major health systems in South Dakota. Together, these systems deliver a full spectrum of neurological and rehabilitation care including comprehensive stroke intervention with endovascular capability, inpatient epilepsy monitoring for adult and pediatric patients, multiple sclerosis care, deep brain stimulation, neurocritical care, clinical neurophysiology with EMG, EEG, VNG, and autonomic testing, sleep medicine, pain management, acute rehabilitation, and outpatient subspecialty neurology across epilepsy, movement disorders, neuromuscular medicine, behavioral neurology, headache medicine, neuroimmunology, and vascular neurology. All three flagship hospitals hold accreditation as Comprehensive Stroke Centers.

Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center (AMH)

Sioux Falls, is a 549-bed level-two trauma center serving over 35,000 emergency department visits annually. AMH is the flagship facility of Avera Health, a system that includes 36 hospitals and 200 clinics spanning a 72,000 square mile footprint across South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Iowa. AMH hosts training programs in family medicine, pathology, internal medicine, and psychiatry. The hospital is home to dedicated programs including a certified ALS clinic, deep brain stimulation, a dementia clinic, and clinical neurophysiology services encompassing autonomic testing and videonystagmography. Approximately fifteen of the SSOM neurosciences faculty practice medicine at AMH in Sioux Falls.



Sanford USD Medical Center, located on the SSOM campus in Sioux Falls, is a 545-bed level-one trauma center serving approximately 46,000 emergency department visits annually and is home to the only free-standing [children's hospital](#) in South Dakota. Sanford USD Medical Center hosts training programs in neurology, general surgery, internal medicine, pediatrics, cardiology, interventional cardiology, orthopedic surgery, and gastroenterology. The hospital features a multidisciplinary deep brain stimulation program and it is a Comprehensive MS Care Center and Partner in MS Care. The hospital has a dedicated inpatient epilepsy monitoring unit for both adult and pediatric patients. Sanford USD Medical Center is the clinical home to approximately 22 neuroscience faculty.



Monument Health Rapid City Hospital, in Rapid City, is a 385-bed level-two trauma center serving over 40,000 emergency department visits annually and is the flagship hospital of the Monument Health system, which includes five hospitals and more than 40 clinics serving 12 communities across the Black Hills region of western South Dakota. The hospital hosts training programs in family medicine, pharmacy, respiratory care, medical radiography, nursing, and certified nursing assistants. Approximately fifteen faculty members of the Department of Neurosciences provide clinical care at Monument Health, which is a member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network.

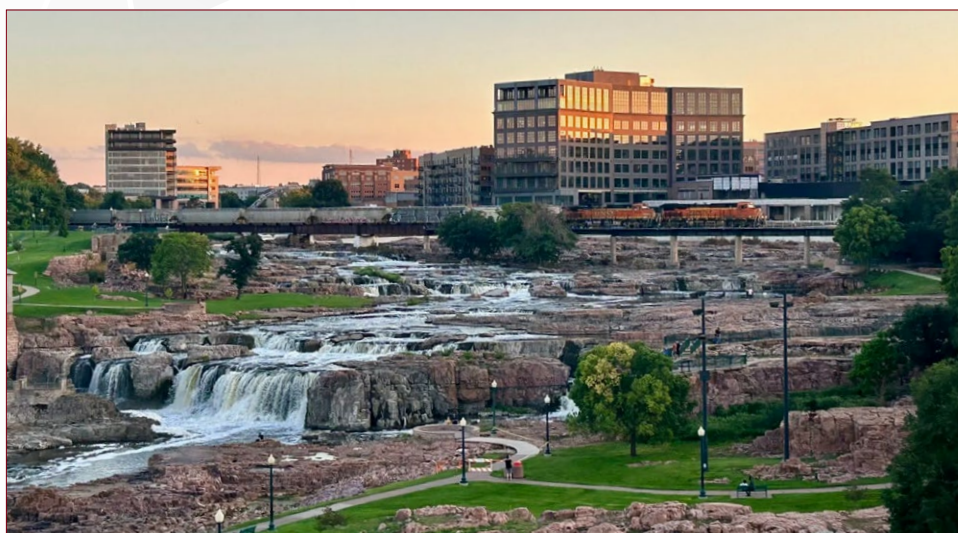


The Royal C. Johnson Veterans' Memorial Hospital in Sioux Falls serves as the primary hub for the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System. Situated on a historic 40-acre campus, the facility's core is a striking English Gothic building originally constructed in 1925 for Columbus College. The hospital is named after Royal C. Johnson, a highly decorated World War I veteran and South Dakota Congressman who was instrumental in establishing the Department of Veterans Affairs. Today, the medical center provides comprehensive primary and specialty care, mental health services, and advanced research, serving thousands of veterans across the quad-state region and serving as a training site for the SSOM-affiliated neurology residency program.



Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Sioux Falls is a vibrant city that offers Midwestern charm and metropolitan amenities. As the state's largest city, with a metro population of over 300,000, Sioux Falls is a hub for healthcare, business, education, and technology. The city enjoys a strong economy, consistently low unemployment, and a business-friendly environment that attracts both established companies and entrepreneurial ventures.



Quality of life is a signature of Sioux Falls. Residents enjoy a thriving downtown filled with local shops, restaurants, art galleries, and entertainment venues, along with the city's namesake Falls Park—an iconic destination featuring waterfalls and trails in the heart of the community. Sioux Falls offers extensive recreational opportunities, including more than 80 parks, a 30-mile greenway bike trail, and a variety of cultural institutions such as the Washington Pavilion of Arts & Science. The average summer high temperature is 84 degrees and the average high temperature in the winter is 29 degrees. When snow is on the ground, residents enjoy skiing at Great Bear Ski Valley on the edge of Sioux Falls.

Families are attracted to Sioux Falls for its highly rated public schools, safe neighborhoods, and affordable cost of living. With no state income tax and a lower-than-average cost of housing, the city offers excellent value alongside a dynamic, welcoming community. Sioux Falls' largest employers include Sanford Health, Avera Health, the Sioux Falls School District, Smithfield Foods, and Hy-Vee Food Stores.

The airport in Sioux Falls flies directly to Chicago, Denver, Minneapolis, Dallas/Fort Worth, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Fort Lauderdale, Nashville, Atlanta, Orlando, Tampa, Punta Gorda, and Miami.

USD SANFORD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

School History

More Than a Century of Service

[The Sanford School of Medicine](#) (SSOM) has provided high quality medical education and served as the only school of medicine in the state of South Dakota since 1907. The SSOM strives for excellence in education, research and service. The [2025 Data Reference card](#) highlights the current enrollment of the medical school as well as the economic impacts the school has on the state and region.

Humble Beginnings

Beginning as a two-year medical program with two students enrolled, the following year saw enrollment grow to four first-year and seven second-year students. The first dean, Christian Peter Lommen, began a long tradition of dedicated, public-spirited medical school deans. By 1925, the class size was stable at 20 students and the school was recognized as one of the finest two-year medical institutions in the nation. The school continued to grow and in 1955, the class size increased to 40 students.



Program Expansion

By the late 1960s, with a physician shortage in the state, South Dakotans began to question if a four-year medical program would better serve its citizens. Thus, medical school advocates proposed expanding the school to a four-year, degree-granting institution. A campaign to accomplish that was led by Medical School Dean Dr. Karl Wegner and State Senator Harvey Wollman and in 1974, the state legislature and Governor Richard Kneip endorsed the four-year program.

The new four-year institution used a “school without walls” approach, an innovative concept that utilized existing hospitals and clinics as classrooms for third and fourth-year students. Practicing physicians complemented full-time, academic faculty. The school’s first four-year graduates - 39 in all - received their M.D. degrees in May 1977.

Research Emphasis

Research at the medical school assumed new importance in the 1990s and funded research grew from \$5.3 million in 1996 to \$16 million by 2019. A focus on research for faculty and students continued to flourish, and, in 2006, the school launched an M.D./Ph.D. program to train future physician scientists. In addition to USD research, faculty at all institutional partners add to the scholarly environment. Students, residents and faculty have opportunities to participate in basic, translational, clinical and population health work, as well as quality improvement and advocacy.

Accreditation

The USD Sanford School of Medicine (SSOM) is accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), which accredits medical schools in the United States. Each school undergoes a complete accreditation survey at least every eight years. The most recent survey of SSOM occurred October 6-8, 2025, and the LCME determined at its February 10-12, 2026 meeting to grant full accreditation of the medical education program for an eight-year term. The next full survey visit will take place in 2033-2034. Our medical community can be proud that the excellence we live out each day was recognized.

Contemporary Medical Education

Today's medical school - renamed in 2006 as the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine - includes diverse training experiences across several campuses. In Pillar 1, students participate in foundational biomedical sciences in parallel with foundational clinical sciences over the course of the first 18 months. The clinical foundation courses are integrated with two medical foundations courses and eight organ system courses. Much of this foundational training currently occurs on the main USD campus in Vermillion, SD with additional early clinical exposure, active learning, case-based small groups, and high-fidelity simulation training at the state-of-the-art Parry Center for Skills & Simulation on the USD SSOM Sioux Falls campus. In August 2025, the announcement was made that all foundational courses will be taught at the Sioux Falls campus beginning in the summer of 2028.

In Pillar 2, students participate in seven core clerkships through longitudinal integrated ambulatory experiences interleaved with hospital-based education, formal didactics and a focused rural family medicine block experience. Most complete this training at one of three clinical campuses – Rapid City, Sioux Falls, or Yankton. Selected students voluntarily participate in the FARM (Frontier and Rural Medicine) program, in which they serve 11 months in a rural South Dakota community.

In Pillar 3, students complete selected required rotations including two surgery sub-specialty selectives, an emergency medicine rotation, and an acting internship (sub-internship). Students also participate in a capstone rural family medicine experience during this phase of the curriculum. The remainder of this time provides flexibility to pursue elective rotations, research, away rotations, and global health experiences. Students can also select from a variety of courses on medical ethics, medical humanities, and health policy. A transition to residency course and a professional development course serves as the final requirements in the M.D. program.

With its innovative focus on training holistic physicians that care for patients in all communities, the school has been acknowledged as the nation's top provider of rural physicians. Despite its community-based focus, USD SSOM also successfully trains academic physician scientists through a combined seven-year M.D./Ph.D. program. Alternatively, students can supplement their medical training with courses and experiences that focus on improving population health through an M.D./MPH or MBA Track. USD SSOM offers diverse and personalized training opportunities to support nearly every career path in medicine.

Throughout its history, the medical school has distinguished itself as a leader in medical education, rural medicine, research, and innovation. This tradition of excellence continues, creating a vibrant, modern institution.



SSOM's Commitment to the South Dakota Population

AHEC

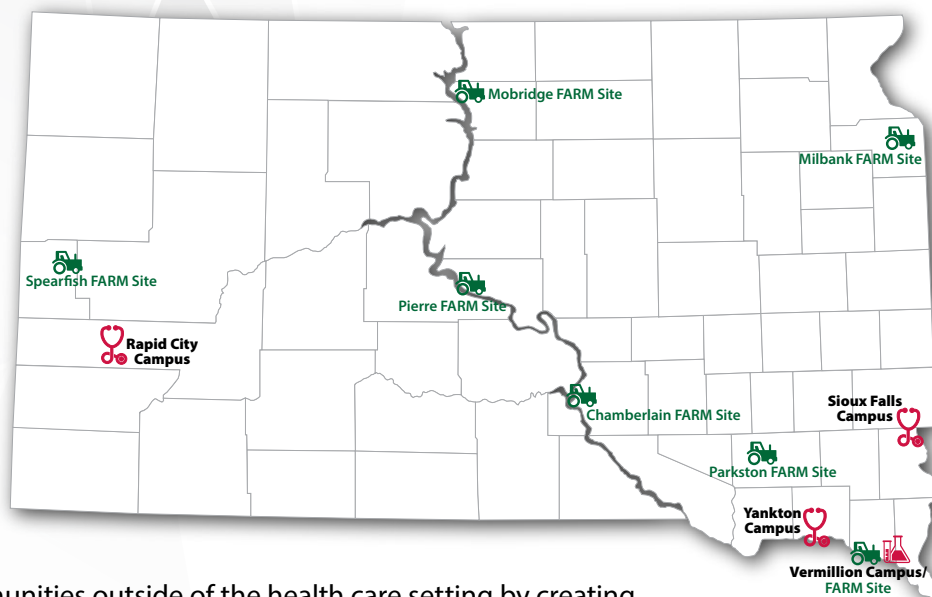
The [South Dakota Area Health Education Center \(AHEC\)](#) is a grant-funded program with centers in Yankton, Aberdeen, and Rapid City. The AHEC connects students to careers in health care, health care professionals to communities and communities to better health.

FARM

[Frontier And Rural Medicine \(FARM\)](#),

our rural track training program, is a unique opportunity for a select group of third year (Pillar 2) medical students to complete 11 months of their clinical training in a rural South Dakota community. While at their clinical sites, students experience the full spectrum of rural living and providing rural medicine. They work with the health care team to provide supervised care, following patients and their families over time in clinic, hospital and extended care settings.

Students engage with their communities outside of the health care setting by creating community projects aimed at benefiting the community at large and participating in volunteer activities within the community. The new emergency medicine program was created in part due to medical student demand for a South Dakota emergency medicine residency and it is expected that the residency slots will be highly sought after from SSOM students seeking an opportunity to train within the state to eventually serve in the rural and urban emergency departments of the state.



CRHI

The Center for Rural Health Improvement (CRHI) hosts a portfolio of community facing and internal projects based on social determinants of health. CRHI takes a social location perspective (e.g. race, class, gender, disability, and rurality) in addressing community needs to improve health and wellness outcomes. The team does this through supporting the development of new programs through grant writing/management, evaluation of programmatic efforts, providing technical assistance, project management, and performing academic and applied research that contributes to knowledge in this area. The CHRI has over \$3.1 million in grants to support efforts to improve health and wellness across the state.

HOSA

[HOSA: Future Health Professionals](#) is a student organization whose curriculum is aligned with Career Tech Education standards. SD HOSA's focus is to recruit students into the health care pathway. Through local and state chapters, South Dakota HOSA provides education activities and procedures encompassing health care careers and topics for students in a multiple number of courses. Currently, there are 250,000 members nationwide.

USD Sanford School of Medicine Vision Statement

The University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine will be a leader in educating students, who, with knowledge, skill and compassion, dedicate their lives to the well-being of their patients, their community and their profession.

Mission Statement

The Mission of the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine is to provide the opportunity for South Dakota residents to receive a quality, broad-based medical education with an emphasis on family medicine. The curriculum is to be established to encourage graduates to serve people living in the medically underserved areas of South Dakota, and is to require excellence in the biomedical sciences and in all clinical disciplines.

The University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine is to provide to its students and to the people of South Dakota excellence in education, research and service. To these ends, the school is to provide educational pathways leading to both the Doctor of Medicine and the Doctor of Philosophy degrees; and quality health care for the people of South Dakota is addressed by undergraduate, graduate and continuing educational programs as well as by biomedical and applied medical research.

The School of Medicine should serve as a technical resource in the development of health care policy in the state and provide extension and research initiatives to improve the health care of the citizens of the state.

Opportunity Statement

The University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine is committed to fostering a dynamic and welcoming learning environment for all. Therefore, the medical school is committed to both recruitment and retention of students, residents, faculty, and staff who through their intellectually and ideologically diverse perspectives enrich the learning environment. We provide equal opportunities for all. We value people with broad life experiences, with records of service to disadvantaged populations, and with other attributes that may enhance the learning community.

*Together
in teaching,
innovation and
compassion*

The Sanford School of Medicine's adopted inspirational statement exemplifies the sentiments that permeate the school and its people.

TOGETHER: Working together, we can accomplish tremendous things.

TEACHING: The school of medicine has produced outstanding physicians and scientists who have made significant contributions in local, national and international arenas. Teaching is the foundation of our school.

INNOVATION: Our faculty, staff, residents, and students are dedicated to discovery and innovation. This dedication leads to a greater understanding of illnesses that impact our communities and ultimately to new therapeutic approaches.

COMPASSION: Health care is in need of compassionate practitioners. Kindness is what we are known for, and I believe kindness is a vital component of compassion.

Dean of USD SSOM and Vice President of Health Affairs, Dr. Tim Ridgway

Dr. Tim Ridgway is the 15th dean of the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine and the vice president for Health Affairs. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Augustana University and Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of South Dakota School of Medicine. After doing a transitional residency at McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, he completed his internal medicine residency and gastroenterology fellowship at the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine in Rochester, Minnesota. Dr. Ridgway is a Fellow of the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, a Master of the American College of Physicians and has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the SDSMA Presidential Award, the USD Sanford School of Medicine Distinguished Alumnus Award, the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award, the Augustana Alumni Achievement Award and the Teacher of the Year Award by the American College of Physicians. His service highlights include serving as president of the South Dakota State Medical Association and councilor of the Alpha Omega Alpha-South Dakota chapter. In 2015 he was named the Dr. Charley F. and Elizabeth Gutch Chair in Medicine. He has been a faculty member of the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine since 1997.



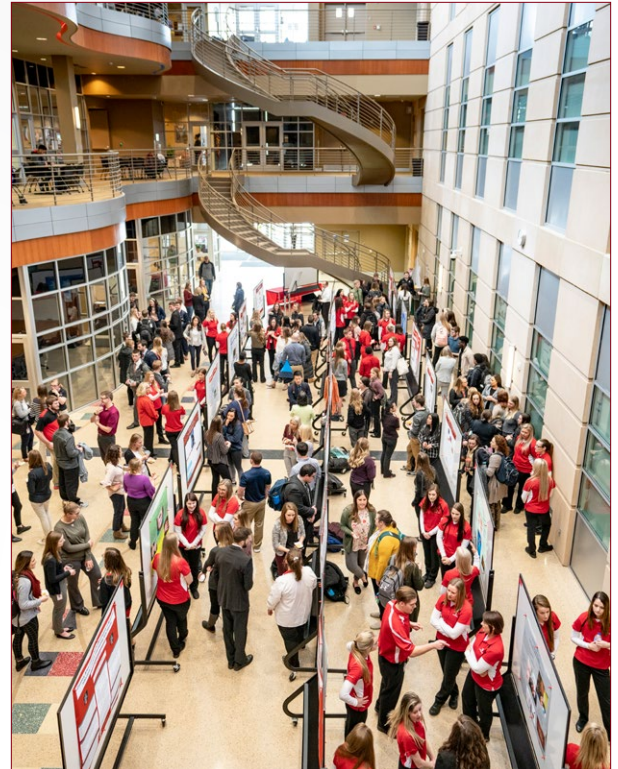
SSOM Links

[SANFORD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE ACCREDITATION \(LIAISON COMMITTEE ON MEDICAL EDUCATION—LCME\)](#)

[SANFORD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE News](#)

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES

The Sanford School of Medicine is a part of the **USD Division of Health Affairs**, which also oversees the [School of Health Sciences](#). The university's School of Health Sciences has a profound economic impact with over 2,000 students majoring in undergraduate and graduate health sciences programs in the following departments: Addiction Counseling & Prevention, Dental Hygiene, Medical Laboratory Science, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physician Assistant Studies, Physical Therapy, Public Health & Health Sciences, and Social Work. Last year, over 500 students graduated with degrees from the School of Health Sciences. Additionally, the school has two centers: the Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment (CPCM), and the Interprofessional Health Education Center (IHEC). Students at the USD School of Health Sciences interact with a wide array of multidisciplinary health care providers to ensure they learn modern, holistic approaches to care.



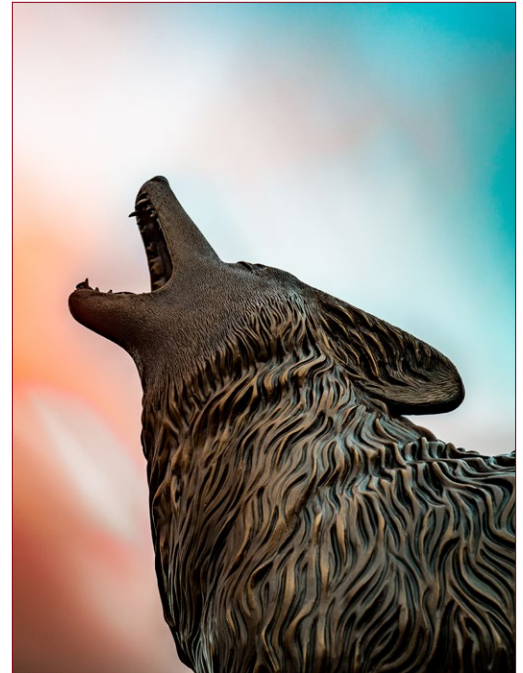
Committed to academic excellence, the University of South Dakota School of Health Sciences provides low student to-faculty ratios and real-world settings beyond the classroom that lead to student success. This is proven as students routinely exceed the national average on their board certification exams.



THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

The [University of South Dakota](#), the first public university established in the Dakota Territory and the flagship university within the South Dakota system of higher education, highly values excellence in teaching and learning, advancement of knowledge, public service, freedom of thought and expression, and personal responsibility and development. USD provides a strong liberal arts education and an array of regionally and nationally recognized professional and graduate programs. Undergraduate programs provide a solid foundation for entry-level careers and for graduate and professional degrees at USD or other institutions of higher education. Graduate and professional programs at USD prepare students to contribute to their disciplines and professions as well as to their communities through scholarship, leadership and service.

The university provides students with an intellectually stimulating educational experience, in and out of the classroom, within a supportive and diverse community of active learners. The students' academic and personal growth is assured through an innovative curriculum that integrates excellence in teaching with research and service. At USD, students are inspired to become lifelong learners who will make significant contributions through leadership and service as citizens of the state, the nation, and the world. USD relies on strategic planning, program review, and assessment activities to refine its vision and measure its success in achieving its goal to be the best small, public flagship university in the nation built upon a liberal arts foundation.



USD Facts

- Founded in 1862 in Vermillion, South Dakota
- Campus locations in Vermillion and Sioux Falls
- 16:1 student-faculty ratio
- [Sheila K. Gestring](#), president since 2018 ▶



USD Enrollment (Fall 2025)

- Total Enrollment: 10,405
- Undergraduate: 7,515
- Graduate: 2,352
- Medicine: 284
- Law: 254
- More than 70,000 alumni



Campus & Community

The USD main campus is located on an attractive 274-acre campus in Vermillion, a small community nestled along the bluffs above the Missouri River in the southeast corner of South Dakota. Vermillion serves as a safe, welcoming host for the university and recreational and cultural opportunities abound in town, the nearby countryside and in neighboring communities.

Faculty

- Total USD Faculty (not including SSOM): 392
- With Highest Degree in Field: 73%
- Student-Faculty Ratio: 16:1

Finances

- The university: \$147.7 million
- Medical School: \$54.6 million



Statistical Highlights: [Annual Fall Stat Highlights - Institutional Research](#)

History

When the first Legislature of the Dakota Territory met in 1862, it authorized the establishment of the University at Vermillion, making it the oldest postsecondary institution in the Dakotas. The authorization was unfunded, however, and classes did not begin until 20 years later under the auspices of the privately incorporated University of Dakota, created with great support from the citizens of Clay County. Ephraim Epstein served as the first president and primary faculty member in the institution that opened in loaned space in downtown Vermillion. Before 1883 ended, the university had moved into Old Main, and the first public board was appointed to govern the fledgling institution.

Enrollment increased to 69 students by the end of 1883, and, by the time South Dakota became the 40th state in 1889, USD boasted an enrollment of 500 students. USD's first academic unit, the College of Arts & Sciences, was established in 1883.

The School of Law began offering classes in 1901; the School of Medicine in 1907; Continuing Education in 1916; the graduate school in 1927; and the College of Fine Arts in 1931. Today, USD is one of six public institutions governed by the South Dakota Board of Regents, a nine-member board appointed by the governor.

Institutional Accreditation

USD has been continuously accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools since 1913.

Institutional accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) provides assurance to prospective students, parents, and others that an institution of higher education meets the agency's clearly stated requirements and criteria. Institutional accreditation is the standard against which colleges and universities are evaluated for the quality of their education activities. The HLC is an independent organization founded in 1895 as one of six regional institutional accreditors in the United States. The University of South Dakota has been accredited by the HLC since 1913.

Institutional accreditation is an ongoing process consisting of the Assurance Review, the Quality Initiative, and the Comprehensive Evaluation. Please visit the Higher Learning Commission website for more information on the institutional accreditation process.



[USD Links](#)

[USD STRATEGIC PLAN](#)

[USD NEWS](#)

APPLICATION AND NOMINATION PROCESS

The University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine seeks qualified candidates from all backgrounds to align with our goal to promote a rich learning environment.

The position is available with a negotiated start date as early as fall 2026, but not later than spring 2027. Befitting the importance of a search for an academic executive at this level, the University of South Dakota has retained [AGB Search](#) to assist in the recruitment of the Chair of Neurosciences.

Assisting the search committee will be AGB Search principal, Cody Futch, MBA, senior executive consultant Garry W. Owens, Ph.D., and search associate, Elizabeth Alvarado, Ed.D.

Interested candidates are encouraged to initiate a confidential conversation about this opportunity through an email contact with Dr. Alvarado at elizabeth.alvarado@agbsearch.com prior to submitting materials. To receive full consideration, nominations and application materials should be submitted no later than the target date of June 25, 2026.

Application materials must include

- 1) a letter of interest, which responds directly to items listed under *The Position*, along with addressing each of the listed *Strategic Priorities*, both of which are included within the **Leadership Profile**.
- 2) a curriculum vitae.
- 3) the names, telephone numbers, and email addresses of five references (indicate your professional relationship with each). **No references will be contacted without prior permission granted by the candidate.**

Please include your personal email and cell phone number. All candidate names will remain confidential, except for those individuals invited to finalist interviews. Application and nomination materials should be submitted electronically through the AGB Search portal accessible via this link: bit.ly/3PJ2oOh. Please direct all nominations and expressions of interest to USD_Neurology@agbsearch.com.

AGB
SEARCH

Advancing Higher Education Leadership