**New Academic Degree Program**
**Full Proposal Application**
**South Dakota Board of Regents**
**Academic Affairs Forms**

**Internal Ticket ID:** 39484
**Created:** 9/2/2026
**Modified:** 11/16/2026

Use this form to propose a new degree program. The Board of Regents, Executive Director, and/or their designees may request additional information about the proposal. After the university President approves the proposal, submit a signed copy to the Executive Director through the System Academic Officer (through the online submission process).

*Note: Within the proposal, all references to external sources should be documented with a footnote (including web addresses where applicable).*

**University** DSU - Dakota State University
**Degree** BAS : Bachelor of Applied Science
**Name of Major** X999 : New Major Requested **Business**
**Specialization Required?** No
*Note: If the new proposed program includes specific specializations within it, complete and submit a New Specialization Form for each proposed specialization and attach it to this form. Since specializations appear on transcripts, they require Board approval.*
**College/Department** 8I : DSU Business & Info Systems/DBUS : Business
**Planned CIP Code** 52.0201
**WICHE WRRGP Eligibility** Yes

## Program Description

**1. Provide the working program description that may appear in the university catalog.**

The Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) is a 90-credit degree program designed to provide students with a foundation in business principles, technology, and applied professional skills. The program integrates coursework in core business disciplines with practical applications of technology to prepare graduates for careers in a variety of business and organizational settings. Students develop fundamental knowledge and skills in management, marketing, accounting, finance, and business analytics, with an emphasis on critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and decision-making.

**2. Does the university request any exceptions to any Board policy for this program?**
*Explain any requests for exceptions to Board Policy. If not requesting any exceptions, indicate* ***"None."***

Yes. Dakota State University requests approval to offer the BAS at 90 semester credit hours as an exception to BOR Policy 2.6.1, which currently states that baccalaureate degree programs require 120 credit hours but permits exceptions for compelling reasons approved through the Board's established process.

The requested exception supports an intentionally designed reduced-credit bachelor's program. The 90-credit curriculum retains required general education and the core business coursework necessary to achieve established program learning outcomes. Students will not be required to select a specialization (e.g. Accounting, Finance, Management), which differentiates it from the 120-credit Bachelor of Business Administration degree currently offered by DSU. The reduced-credit model is intended to improve affordability, accelerate degree completion, increase access for transfer and adult learners, and position South Dakota to respond to emerging national movement toward three-year and reduced-credit bachelor's degrees.

**Strategic Impact**

**3. Describe how the program fits in with the institutional mission, strategic plan, existing institutional program array, and academic priorities.**

The proposed reduced-credit BAS aligns closely with Dakota State University's mission and academic priorities by combining innovation, technology, workforce preparation, and student success. DSU's current mission emphasizes preparing cyber-savvy graduates who are lifelong learners, problem solvers, innovators, and leaders. A streamlined BAS advances that mission by preparing business graduates to work effectively in technology-rich organizations while making the degree more accessible and efficient.

The proposal also supports DSU's ADVANCE strategic plan. The plan identifies increased enrollment, enhanced student success, regional and national relevance, responsible stewardship of resources, and efficient degree completion as institutional priorities. A 90-credit BAS directly supports these priorities by providing a differentiated pathway that can reduce both time to degree and student cost while retaining the learning outcomes necessary for workforce readiness.

The program is a natural extension of DSU's existing Business BBA, which is currently offered on campus and online and includes specializations in areas such as accounting, business technology, cybersecurity management, finance, management, and marketing. The reduced-credit BAS adds a broad, general-business option rather than duplicating a new disciplinary area. It also complements DSU's existing MBA and accelerated 4+1 opportunities, creating a potential pathway for students who want an efficient undergraduate business degree and later graduate study.

Because the curriculum relies entirely on existing general education and business courses, the program fits within the current academic program array and leverages established faculty expertise, assessment processes, advising structures, online delivery capacity, and business accreditation infrastructure.

**If the program does not align to the strategic plan, provide a compelling rationale for the institution to offer the program.**

NA

**4. How does the program connect to the Board of Regent's Strategic Plan?**

The proposed 90-credit Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) at Dakota State University supports the South Dakota Board of Regents' 2022–2027 Strategic Plan by expanding access to affordable, career-focused higher education, increasing educational attainment, and addressing South Dakota's evolving workforce needs.

Goal 2: Access and Affordability. The program advances access and affordability by providing a bachelor's degree pathway requiring 25% fewer credits than a traditional 120-credit degree. This streamlined structure has the potential to reduce tuition costs and time to degree completion while expanding educational opportunities for traditional students, working adults, transfer students, and other nontraditional learners.

Goal 3: Academic Excellence, Student Success and Educational Attainment. The program supports increased educational attainment by offering an alternative pathway to earning a bachelor's degree. The curriculum maintains academic rigor through clearly defined program learning outcomes and an emphasis on applied business knowledge, technology integration, critical thinking, and professional competencies. The reduced credit requirement is designed to eliminate unnecessary coursework rather than compromise educational quality.

Goal 4: Workforce and Economic Development. The program addresses South Dakota's need for a more highly educated and technologically proficient workforce. By integrating business fundamentals with applied technology and professional skills, the curriculum prepares graduates to contribute to organizations across multiple industries. The program also provides opportunities for individuals already in the workforce to enhance their qualifications and advance professionally.

Goal 5: Financial Health and Competitiveness. The 90-credit degree provides Dakota State University with a

differentiated academic offering that may attract new student populations and support enrollment growth. The program also responds to the Board of Regents' identified challenges of declining high school graduate populations and increasing competition for students by creating an accessible alternative to traditional bachelor's degree structures.

Overall Strategic Alignment.
The proposed program directly advances the Board of Regents' priorities of affordability, educational attainment, and workforce development. By offering a shorter bachelor's degree pathway while maintaining academic quality, Dakota State University can expand access to higher education, respond to changing student demographics, and contribute to South Dakota's economic competitiveness.

**Program Summary**

**5. If a new degree is proposed, what is the rationale?**
*This question refers to the type of degree, not the program. For example, if your university has authorization to offer the Bachelor of Science and the program requested is a Bachelor of Science, then the request is not for a new degree.*

The proposed 90-semester-credit Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) is designed to expand access to affordable, high-quality business education through a streamlined degree structure. By requiring 25% fewer credits than a traditional 120-credit bachelor's degree, the program provides an opportunity to reduce the time and total tuition required for degree completion while maintaining academic rigor and workforce relevance.

The program will provide a technology-infused business education that develops essential competencies in accounting, economics, finance, management, marketing, business analytics, communication, ethics, and technology-supported decision-making. The curriculum emphasizes applied learning, and the knowledge and skills needed for employment across a variety of business settings.

The BAS is intended to serve traditional students as well as transfer students, working adults, military-affiliated students, and other learners who may benefit from a more efficient pathway to a bachelor's degree. The reduced-credit structure is not intended to lower academic expectations but rather to focus the curriculum on essential business learning outcomes and workforce preparation. Students seeking specialized preparation for careers in accounting, finance, business analytics, etc. have the option of choosing the traditional BBA instead of the BAS.

The proposed degree responds to the growing need for accessible, affordable educational pathways that increase bachelor's degree attainment and prepare graduates for South Dakota's evolving workforce.

**6. What modality/modalities will be used to offer the new program?**

*Note: The accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) require Board approval for a university to offer programs off-campus and through distance delivery.*

| | Yes/No | Intended Start Date |
|---|---|---|
| **On Campus** | Yes | Fall 2027 |

| | Yes/No | Location(s) | Intended Start Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Off Campus Location** | No | | |

| | Yes/No | Delivery Method(s) | Intended Start Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Distance Delivery** | Yes | Asynchronous Online | Fall 2027 |

| | Yes/No | Identify Institutions |
|---|---|---|
| **Does another BOR institution already have authorization to offer the program online?** | No | No other BOR institution offers a 90-credit BAS - Business. Business administration and related bachelor's-level business programs are offered by other South Dakota public universities. Those programs establish statewide demand for undergraduate business education; however, the distinguishing feature of this proposal is the reduced-credit, 90-credit structure combined with Dakota State University's technology-infused business focus. |

**7. If the program will be offered through distance delivery, identify the planned instructional modality:**

Asynchronous : Students are not required to attend the course at a specific time or location.

**8. What are the student learning outcomes for this program?**

Upon completion of the program, graduates will be able to:

- Analyze business information to provide business strategies to provide viable business strategies. (Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving)
- Communicate business information and recommendations effectively. (Communication)
- Integrate the principles of ethics into corporate social responsibility business decision-making. (Ethical Decision-Making)
- Analyze the complexity of business operations in a global environment. (Intercultural Knowledge)
- Use business technologies and data analytics to transform raw operational data into actionable business insights. (Technology and Data Analytics)

**9. For associate's and bachelor's degree proposals, identify the 3-5 AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes that have been selected for this program.**

*Use the chart below to indicate the student learning outcomes that align to the selected ELOs (See BOR Policy 2.11 and Guideline 8.5).*

| Essential Learning Outcomes (AAC&U) | Student Learning Outcomes |
|---|---|
| Inquiry and Analysis | |
| Critical and Creative Thinking | Analyze business information to provide business strategies to provide viable business strategies. |
| Information Literacy | Use business technologies and data analytics to transform raw operational data into actionable business insights. |
| Teamwork | Communicate business information and recommendations effectively. |
| Problem Solving | Analyze business information to provide business strategies to provide viable business strategies. |
| Civic Knowledge and Engagement | |
| Intercultural Knowledge | Analyze the complexity of business operations in a global environment. |
| Ethical Reasoning | Integrate the principles of ethics into corporate social responsibility business decision-making. |
| Foundational Lifelong Learning Skills | |
| Integrative Learning | |

**10. Enter the number of credit hours required to graduate**

| Credit Hours | 90 |
|---|---|

**11.Complete the following tables to provide a degree program curriculum summary.**

A. Table 1 –Total Program Degree Credit Hours

| | Credit Hours In Program | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Hours Per Requirement** | **%Total Hours** |
| **System General Education Requirements** | 30 | |
| *Subtotal - Gen Ed Requirements* | 30 | % |
| **Program Requirements** | | |
| Required Support Courses | 6 | |
| Major Requirements | 54 | |
| Major Electives | 0 | |
| *Subtotal - Program Requirements* | 60 | % |
| **Free Electives** | 0 | |
| *Subtotal - Free Electives* | 0 | % |
| **Degree Total** | 90 | % |

**Board Policy 2:29 requires each baccalaureate level degree program to require 120 credit hours and each associate degree program to require 60 credit hours. Exceptions to this policy require documentation that programs must comply with specific standards established by external accreditation, licensure, or regulatory bodies or for other compelling reasons, and must receive approval by the Executive Director in consultation with the President of the Board of Regents.*

B. Table 2 – Insert Required Program Support Courses Impacting Other Programs (outside department). Do not include General Education courses.

*The individual curriculum tables should be included as a word document **attached** to the TDX ticket.*

C. Table 3 – Insert Major Requirements (within department)

*The individual curriculum tables should be included as a word document **attached** to the TDX ticket.*

D. Table 4 – Insert Major Electives

*The individual curriculum tables should be included as a word document **attached** to the TDX ticket.*

**12. New Course Approval**

*New courses required to implement the new degree program may receive approval in conjunction with program approval or receive approval separately. Please check the appropriate statement:*

No

**Academic Quality**

**13. What peer institutions and current national standards will be referenced to develop the curriculum for this program?**

*Peer Institution: Regional and Competitive institutions. Include links to at least 3 comparable programs at peer institutions and links to national or accreditation standards, if any.*

The following institutional comparisons and accreditation standards will guide the development of a rigorous, technology-infused business curriculum that maintains essential academic competencies while providing a more affordable and efficient pathway to bachelor's degree completion.

Institution and program  Relevance to DSU
Wayne State College (Nebraska) – Applied Business Administration
Strongest comparison. Regional public institution with a business curriculum incorporating project management, human resources, and predictive analytics. (Planned January 2027 start)
https://www.wsc.edu/applied-business-administration-degree?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Upper Iowa University – B.S. Business Administration
HLC-approved reduced-credit business degree emphasizing affordability, accessibility, and focused coursework. https://uiu.edu/news-events/upper-iowa-university-launches-new-90-credit-bachelors-degree-in-business-administration/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Saint Mary's University of Minnesota – B.S. Business Administration
HLC-approved model emphasizing essential major and core requirements with fewer electives.
https://www.smumn.edu/90-credit-online-bachelor-degree-programs/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

The curriculum will be guided by the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Evaluating Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree Programs guidelines, which address academic rigor, curriculum coherence, general education, measurable learning outcomes, and justification for reduced program length.
https://download.hlcommission.org/Reduced-CreditBachelorsGuidelines_OPB.pdf

The program will also reference the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) Unified Standards and Criteria, particularly Standard 4 (Student Learning Assessment) and Standard 6 (Curriculum). These standards emphasize measurable student learning outcomes, appropriate coverage of foundational business disciplines, and continuous improvement.
https://acbsp.org/resource/resmgr/docs/accreditation/Unified_Standards_and_Criter.pdf

**14. What program accreditation is available, if any?**

Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP)

**15. Will the proposed program pursue accreditation or certifications?**

Yes

**If no, why has the department elected not to pursue accreditation for the program?**

Yes, the curriculum has been developed with reference to ACBSP accreditation standards

**16. Did the university engage any developmental consultants to assist with the development of the curriculum? Did the university consult any professional or accrediting associations during the development of the curriculum? What were the contributions of the consultants and associations to the development of the curriculum?**

*Developmental consultants are experts in the discipline hired by the university to assist with the development of a new program, including content, courses, and experiences, etc. Universities are encouraged to discuss the selection of developmental consultants with Board staff.*

No

**17. Inclusion of High Impact Practices (HIP) across all undergraduate programs is a strategic priority of the Board of Regents to enhance academic quality and increase student engagement. For associate's and bachelor's degree proposals, which HIPs will faculty embed into the program?**

*Mark all that apply. To be considered as a HIP program, two or more should be selected and required in the program.*

| High Impact Practices | Included |
|---|---|
| Capstone courses and projects | Yes |
| Collaborative assignments and projects | Yes |
| Common intellectual experiences | No |
| Diversity/global learning | Yes |
| ePortfolios | No |
| First year experiences | No |
| Internships | No |
| Learning communities | No |
| Service learning, community-based learning | No |
| Writing intensive courses | No |
| Undergraduate research | No |

**18. For associate's and bachelor's degree proposals, discuss how HIPs will be embedded into the program**

*Your discussion should provide examples and include whether the HIP is required or an optional component. It should also indicate at what point the experience is offered or required. (eg "students will be required to participate in an internship during their third year of enrollment in order to develop skills in…").*

The proposed 90-credit Bachelor of Applied Science in Business will incorporate three High Impact Practices (HIPs) throughout the curriculum to promote applied learning, student engagement, and workforce preparation.

Capstone Courses and Projects (Required): Students will complete a culminating business capstone experience near the end of the program. The capstone will require students to integrate knowledge from multiple business disciplines, analyze business challenges, and develop practical, technology-supported recommendations.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects (Required): Students will participate in team-based projects within required business courses during the middle and later stages of the program. These activities will emphasize teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and decision-making through business cases and applied projects.

Diversity/Global Learning (Required): Students will examine global business environments, cultural differences, and international business practices through assignments and case studies embedded in required business coursework. These experiences will develop an understanding of how cultural, economic, and technological factors influence business decisions in a global marketplace.

**Student Success**

This section outlines the university's plan to assess student achievement of the program learning outcomes.

**19. Complete the table below to provide evidence of a preliminary assessment plan. Place an asterisk next to assessments that are national or state-level instruments.**

*Note: It is only necessary to indicate the summative assessment for each outcome, not the formative assessments used throughout the program.*

| Program Learning Outcome | Course | Summative Assessment |
|---|---|---|
| Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Analyze business information to provide business strategies to provide viable business strategies. | BADM 482 - Business Policy and Strategy | Students will meet or exceed the selected scores that are built into a business simulation. |
| Communication: Communicate business information and recommendations effectively. | BADM 344 - Managerial Communications | Students will be evaluated on their ability to communicate business information effectively. |
| Ethical Decision-Making: Integrate the principles of ethics into corporate social responsibility business decision-making. | BADM 457 - Business Ethics | Students will complete a summative assessment evaluating their ability to apply ethical principles and corporate social responsibility concepts to business decision-making. |
| Analyze the complexity of business operations in a global environment. | BADM 405- International Trade & Finance | Students will complete a summative assessment evaluating their ability to analyze the impact of the global environment on business operations. |
| Technology and Data Analytics: Use business technologies and data analytics to transform raw operational data into actionable business insights | BADM 321 - Business Statistics II | Students will complete a summative assessment evaluating their ability to apply business technologies and data analytics to organizational decision-making. |

**20. How will outcomes for graduates of the program be assessed?**

*Outcomes may include employment and placement rates, licensure examination pass rates, acceptance rates to graduate school, student or employer surveys, or other assessments of graduate outcomes.*

Graduate outcomes for the 90-credit Bachelor of Applied Science in Business will be assessed through employment and graduate school placement data, graduate surveys, and employer feedback when available. These measures will be used to evaluate graduates' career readiness, professional advancement, and preparation for further education. Results will be reviewed periodically to identify opportunities for program improvement.

**Duplication and Competition**

**21. Do any related programs exist at other public universities in South Dakota?**
*A list of existing programs is available through the university websites and the RIS Reporting: Academic Reports Database. If there are no related programs within the Regental system, indicate* ***none.***

No other BOR institution offers a 90-credit BAS - Business. Business administration and related bachelor's-level business programs are offered by other South Dakota public universities. Those programs establish statewide demand for undergraduate business education; however, the distinguishing feature of this proposal is the reduced-credit, 90-credit structure combined with Dakota State University's technology-infused business focus.

**A. If yes, defend the need for an additional program within the state, Include IPEDS enrollment data and additional data as needed.**

NA

**B. If yes, would this program be a candidate for Regental system collaboration?**

NA

**22. Do any related programs exist at any non-Regental college or university within 150 miles of the university?**
*List those programs here:*

No 90-credit BAS Business programs exist.

**A. If yes, use IPEDS to identify the enrollment in those programs.**

NA

**B. What evidence suggests there is unmet student demand for the proposed program, or that the proposed program would attract students away from the existing program?**

NA

**Market Demand**

This section establishes the market demand for the proposed program (eg Regental system need, institutional need, workforce need). Use the following sources for your data:

- South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation
- O-Net
- US Department of Labor Projections Central
- SDBOR Workforce and Degree Gap Analysis Report

**23. What is the expected growth of the industry or occupation in South Dakota and nationally?**
*Include the number of openings, as well as the percentage of growth when possible.*

Employment projections indicate continued demand for business professionals in South Dakota and nationally. According to the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, statewide employment is projected to grow 7.4% between 2024 and 2034, adding approximately 38,559 jobs. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects national employment growth of 3.5% between 2025 and 2035, adding 5.9 million jobs.

In South Dakota, occupations relevant to the proposed program include buyers and purchasing agents (10.7% growth; 152 annual openings) and business operations specialists, all other (2.9% growth; 145 annual openings), based on the state's 2024–2034 projections.

Nationally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2025–2035 projections indicate approximately 285,000 annual openings for general and operations managers, 94,100 for management analysts, and 82,000 for market research analysts and marketing specialists.

These projections demonstrate continued workforce demand for individuals with broad business knowledge, analytical skills, and technology competencies. The proposed 90-credit BAS in Business will prepare graduates for business operations, management support, marketing, purchasing, and related professional roles across multiple industries. Some positions may require additional experience or specialized preparation.

Sources:
- South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, Statewide Occupational Employment Projections, 2024–2034: https://dlr.sd.gov/lmic/menu_projections_occupation_statewide.aspx
- South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, Hot Careers Data: https://dlr.sd.gov/lmic/hot_careers_data.aspx
- South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, Occupational Employment Projections to 2034: https://dlr.sd.gov/lmic/lb/2026/lbart_sept2026_occupational_projections_2024_2034_growers.aspx
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections: https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/occupational-projections-and-characteristics.htm
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Management Analysts Occupational Outlook: https://www.bls.gov/ooh/business-and-financial/management-analysts.htm
- Projections Central, Long-Term Occupational Projections: https://projectionscentral.org/Projections/LongTerm

**24. What evidence, if any, suggests there are unfilled openings in South Dakota or nationally?**

South Dakota labor market data indicates continued employer demand for individuals with business and management skills. According to the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, employers advertised 4,827 openings in management occupations and 2,177 openings in business and financial operations occupations between April and September 2025. These postings provide evidence of active recruitment in fields relevant to the proposed BAS in Business.

The state's 2024–2034 occupational projections also identify substantial annual demand for management analysts (381 openings), buyers and purchasing agents (152 openings), and business operations specialists, all other (145 openings). These occupations are among South Dakota's designated high-demand, high-wage career fields.

The South Dakota Board of Regents' workforce analysis also identifies potential gaps between graduates produced and projected workforce needs in selected occupations. While advertised vacancies and projected openings do not necessarily establish persistent workforce shortages, they demonstrate continuing demand for business-related skills.

The proposed 90-credit BAS in Business will help address this demand by preparing graduates with foundational business knowledge, technology competencies, and applied decision-making skills relevant to a variety of industries.

Sources:
- South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, 2026 WIOA Combined State Plan, advertised job openings by occupational group: https://dlr.sd.gov/workforce_services/wdc/meetings/agenda-120925-itemF-wioa_sd_combined_state_plan_2026.pdf
- South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, Hot Careers Data, 2024–2034: https://dlr.sd.gov/lmic/hot_careers_data.aspx
- South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, Current Job Openings: https://dlr.sd.gov/lmic/menu_job_openings_data.aspx
- South Dakota Board of Regents, Workforce and Degree Gap Analysis, included in April 2025 Board materials: https://sdbor.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/2025.04-BOR-Minutes-FINAL.pdf

**25. What salaries can program graduates expect to earn in South Dakota and nationally?**

Graduates of the proposed 90-credit BAS in Business will be prepared for employment in business operations, marketing, purchasing, and related professional fields. According to O*NET Online and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2025 wage data, median annual salaries for buyers and purchasing agents are $73,990 in South Dakota and $77,710 nationally. Market research analysts and marketing specialists earn median annual salaries of $63,490 in South Dakota and $78,760 nationally.

South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation data also identifies business operations specialists as a high-demand, high-wage occupation, with an average annual salary of $91,300.

These occupational wages demonstrate earning potential across business-related careers. Actual starting salaries for program graduates will vary based on position, location, prior experience, and employer requirements. The reported wages represent workers at different career stages rather than guaranteed starting salaries.

Sources:
- South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, Occupational Wage Data: https://dlr.sd.gov/lmic/menu_occupational_wages.aspx
- South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, Hot Careers: https://dlr.sd.gov/lmic/hot_careers_data.aspx
- O*NET, Buyers and Purchasing Agents: https://www.onetonline.org/link/localwages/13-1021.00?st=SD
- O*NET, Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists: https://www.onetonline.org/link/localwages/13-1161.00?st=SD

**26. Optional: Provide any additional evidence of regional demand for the program.**
*e.g. prospective student interest survey data, letters of support from employers, community needs...*

Employer survey evidence points to sustained regional demand for work-ready business graduates. The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation's 2025 Employer Survey (nearly 600 employers responding, November–December 2025) found that 84% of employers named finding candidates with the required skills, or simply filling open positions, as their greatest workforce challenge. Work ethic, reliability, critical thinking, and communication were the skills employers most often reported lacking in new employees (49%), compared with 7% who cited job-specific technical skills. Managers, accounting/bookkeeping, and sales were among the job titles employers expect to need most over the next three years, and part-time positions, college internships, and job shadowing were the work-based learning options employers most often offer or would like to offer (46%). These findings align with the program's emphasis on critical thinking, communication, ethical decision-making, and applied business skills.

Enrollment trends at DSU and national adult-learner data point to student demand for flexible, efficient pathways. DSU enrolled 3,975 students in fall 2026, a 3.5% increase and the largest total in university history. Online-only enrollment grew 11.5% to 2,744 students, South Dakota resident enrollment rose 2.2% to 2,383 (nearly 60% of the total), and the university reported growth among transfer students. Nationally, the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reports 43.1 million people with some college and no credential and identifies re-engaging this population as a key objective for states. A 90-credit, asynchronous online BAS built from existing courses is well positioned to serve this group.

Demographic projections add urgency to reaching adult, transfer, and returning learners. WICHE's Knocking at the College Door (11th edition) projects that the number of high school graduates will peak in 2025 and decline about 13% nationally through 2041, with the Midwest already experiencing declines. A lower-cost, shorter degree pathway is one way to maintain enrollment as the traditional-age pool shrinks.

DSU's own employer and advisory board relationships provide additional regional evidence. The Business Advisory Board includes representatives from a variety of industries with a focus on Madison and Sioux Falls, and the 2025 ACBSP site-visit team noted that the board is actively engaged through internships, hiring, consultation, and guest lectures. Internship supervisors rated student performance 3.5 out of 4 in 2023, DSU reported a 98.78% undergraduate placement rate for the Class of 2023, and DSU career fairs have drawn roughly 144 employers and nearly 1,000 students. Together, these indicate established regional employer relationships and demand for DSU business graduates that the BAS can build on.

Sources:


- South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, 2025 Employer Survey Report: 2025 Employer Survey
- Dakota State University, DSU enrollment grows for fifth consecutive year, September 11, 2026: DSU enrollment news release
- National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Some College, No Credential: Student Outcomes 2025 Report for the Nation and the States: Some College, No Credential
- Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Knocking at the College Door, 11th Edition: Knocking at the College Door
- Dakota State University, Business Unit ACBSP Reaffirmation Self-Study (Standards 1 and 2) and ACBSP Executive Summary and Feedback Report, January 2025 (internal documents)

## Student Demand

**27. Provide evidence of student completers/graduates at that degree level at peer institutions that offer the same/similar program using data obtained from IPEDS.**

*Peer Institution: Regional and Competitive institutions. Choose programs not already listed in question 11. Use the most recent year available.*

| University Name | State | Program Name | Number of Degrees Conferred in Program | Total Number of Conferrals at Level (Undergrad or Grad) |
|---|---|---|---|---|

NONE

**28. What evidence suggests there is interest from prospective students for this program at the university?**

National survey findings and early enrollment experience at comparable institutions provide evidence of prospective student interest in 90-credit Bachelor of Applied Science in business such as the one Dakota State University is proposing. The program is positioned to serve four prospective student groups: career-focused high school students who have identified business as their intended field and want to enter the workforce sooner with less cost and student debt; working adults seeking a bachelor's degree for professional advancement; returning students who previously stopped out and need a more manageable path to completion; and transfer students whose prior coursework aligns with the curriculum. These groups could benefit from the program's reduced credit requirements, potential cost savings, and emphasis on applied business and technology skills.

A September 2025 Tyton Partners survey, described as involving almost 500 families, found that 73% of students and 69% of parents expressed strong interest in a three-year bachelor's degree after the concept was introduced, although only 20% were initially aware of the option. Furthermore, 72% of students and 73% of parents considered a 90-credit bachelor's degree equally valuable relative to a traditional 120-credit degree. These findings suggest substantial potential interest. Complementing these findings, an April 2026 Quinnipiac national adult poll found that 36% of Americans considered a three-year applied bachelor's degree a better choice for most students, 42% considered it about the same, and 13% considered it worse than a traditional four-year degree.

Johnson & Wales University provides a successful early example of attracting students to comparable programs. The university reported enrolling 95 students in its inaugural fall 2025 cohort of three-year career-focused bachelor's programs, including students studying on campus and online. Its 90–96-credit programs retain the major coursework and university core curriculum of their traditional counterparts while reducing electives, similar to what DSU is proposing. This initial enrollment demonstrates that students will select a reduced-credit pathway when it is offered, although longer-term completion and employment outcomes remain to be established.

Finally, RAND's August 2026 analysis of reduced-credit bachelor's degrees identifies business, information technology, cybersecurity, and related applied fields as offering particularly promising near-term opportunities for implementation. RAND also identifies adult and returning learners as promising student populations for more structured, efficient degree pathways. These findings reinforce the fit of DSU's proposed technology-infused business program with both suitable academic fields and prospective student needs. Collectively, the evidence supports a credible case for prospective student interest, while DSU-specific recruitment research would strengthen estimates of likely enrollment.

## Enrollment

**29. Are students enrolling in this program expected to be new to the university or redirected from existing programs at the university?**

The majority (90%) of the students in this program are expected to be new to the university with a few (10%) redirected from other university programs.

**30. Complete the enrollment worksheet to provide an enrollment projection for the next six academic years**

| | |
|---|---|
| Worksheet Completed | Yes |

**31. What is the minimum number of students required in this program to break even, with respect to the budget?**

The program is expected to meet productivity requirements with a minimum of approximately 7 graduates per year, consistent with South Dakota Board of Regents thresholds. The projected enrollment pattern.

**32. Discuss the assumptions informing your enrollment estimates.**
*(e.g. current enrollment and trends in similar programs, IPEDS data, recruitment strategies, partnerships)*

Initial enrollment in the BAS Business program is expected to begin modestly, with approximately 3 students in the first year as the program gains visibility and marketing efforts begin. Growth is projected to occur steadily as students learn about the program and career opportunities. There are currently 199 students in the current 120-credit BBA Business degree indicating students are interested in pursuing degrees in business.

**33. If projected program enrollment is not realized in year two, what actions is the university prepared to take?**

If program enrollment does not meet projections by Year 2, Dakota State University will implement targeted strategies to strengthen recruitment and support enrollment growth. These efforts will include expanding outreach to prospective students and pursuing formal articulation agreements to establish clear and attractive transfer pathways. The university will also evaluate course rotations and adjust as needed to optimize faculty workload while ensuring students can make timely progress toward degree completion.

Additionally, DSU will enhance marketing efforts to highlight this degree. The university will also strengthen partnerships with industry leaders to promote career pathways for graduates.
These strategies will allow DSU to respond proactively to enrollment challenges while maintaining academic quality, supporting student success, and ensuring the program's long-term financial sustainability.

Should the 90-credit option not be attractive to the market and enrollment is low, there is no risk to the University. All courses required in the 90-credit BAS are also required by the well-established 120-credit BBA. There should be no negative financial impact if the 90-credit option does not attract students.

**34. Discuss the marketing and recruitment plan for the program**
*Include information on partnerships and pipelines (e.g. articulation agreements with BOTE, collaboration with partner university, community partnerships).*

The recruitment strategy will emphasize DSU's distinctive position as the only South Dakota public university offering this degree. Marketing initiatives will highlight:

- DSU's reputation in business technology and its alignment with the institution's mission.
- The program's applied-learning structure, including a capstone.
- Career opportunities supported by national and regional labor data.
- Partnerships with employers seeking business technology skill sets.
- Outreach through regional high school presentations, DSU Discover Days, and digital campaigns targeting students interested in technology, business, and cyber innovation.

## Financial Health

**35. Complete the budget worksheet to provide a budget projection for the next six academic years.**

| Worksheet Completed | Yes |
|---|---|

| Financial Health Summary | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1st FYxx | 2nd FYxx | 3rd FYxx | 4th FYxx | 5th FYxx | 6th FYxx |
| Tuition & Fee Revenues | 32604 | 76075 | 97811 | 97811 | 108679 | 108679 |
| Program Expenses | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **NET** | 32604 | 76075 | 97811 | 97811 | 108679 | 108679 |
| Other Supporting Revenues | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **NET (Other)** | 32604 | 76075 | 97811 | 97811 | 108679 | 108679 |

**36.Explain the amount and source(s) of any one-time and continuing investments in personnel, professional development, release time, time redirected from other assignments, instructional technology and software, other operation and maintenance expenses, facilities, etc., needed to implement the proposed major.**

*Address off-campus or distance delivery separately.*

There are no new instructional costs anticipated for this program. All the courses in the major are currently offered and on course rotation. We are anticipating 5 new students per year at year 3 of the program and there is sufficient room in the courses that the current projected enrollment numbers will be sufficient. However, if enrollment grows more rapidly, then additional sections in certain courses may need to be offered. We would hire adjuncts to teach some of the lower-level courses to cover that increase need.

**37. If new faculty are not requested, describe how existing faculty will be utilized and indicate whether this action will impact other existing programs.**

No new faculty are being requested.

**38. Is the university requesting or intending to request permission for a new fee or to attach an existing fee to the program?.**

| Requesting Permission for Fee? | No |
|---|---|
| Explanation | |

**39. Use the table below to describe potential risks to the program's implementation over the next four years.**

*For each risk, identify the severity (low, medium, high), probability of occurrence (low, medium, high) and the institution's mitigation strategy for each risk.*

| Risk | Severity | Probability | Mitigation Strategy |
|---|---|---|---|
| **low enrollment** | Medium | Medium | Increase Marketing |

## External Review

**40. If this proposal is for a graduate program, provide information below for at least five potential consultants who may be considered to conduct the external review.**

| Reviewer Name | Title | Institution |
|---|---|---|
| / | | |
| / | | |
| / | | |
| / | | |
| / | | |

## Additional Information

**41. (Optional) Use this space to provide pertinent information not requested above that may assist the Board in understanding the proposal.**

## Approvals

### University Approval

**To the Board of Regents and the Executive Director:** *I certify that I have read this proposal, that I believe it to be accurate, and that it has been evaluated and approved as provided by university policy.*

| President of the University | Date |
|---|---|
| | 1/1/1970 |

| Academic Affairs, Provost | Date |
|---|---|
| | 1/1/1970 |

| Finance and Administration, Vice President | Date |
|---|---|
| | 11/16/2026 |

Stacy Krusemark

| Enrollment Management, Vice President | Date |
|---|---|
| | 11/16/2026 |

Amy S. Crissinger