Mines, BHSU serve most veteran students

Classes kick off at both universities on Monday

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Journal staff

The two public universities located in the Black Hills area lead the state in the percentage of students who are veterans.

Black Hills State University in Spearfish boasts the largest percentage of veterans in its student population with 5.2 percent.

South Dakota School of Mines & Technology in Rapid City has 4.1 percent of its students who are military veterans. Next is the University of South Dakota in Vermillion at 3.7 percent and Dakota State University in Madison with 1.8 percent. South Dakota State University in Brookings has 1.6 percent while Northern State University in Aberdeen lists 1.4 percent of its student population as veterans.

To better serve veteran students, BHSU opened its new Vets Center with a ribbon-cutting Monday morning, said Corinne Hansen with BHSU. The center is located on the lower level of the student union.

Hansen said the veterans center is something the university has wanted to do for some time.

“There are an increased number of veterans on our campus,” she said. “We really wanted to meet their needs and provide them with a place to be on our campus.”

Hansen said the center has a place for studying and relaxing, and serves as the location of the biweekly Vets Club. Students can also get information about student programs and support services provided by the university.

“It’s a place where they can meet people who have a lot of things in common with them,” Hansen said.

Mines also provides veterans with assistance with its Veterans Resource Center, in the lower level of the Surbeck Center. The center offers tutoring, scholarship information and workshops.

Classes at both BHSU and Mines began Monday afternoon after a morning of orientation and other activities. Mines provided lunches with faculty members, as well as free picnics and welcome dances. BHSU organized a block party with local Spearfish businesses Monday afternoon and will host an outdoor concert by Canaan Smith.

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