

A people person, a numbers person and a person with vision are all traits of a successful university president.

Dakota State University President Dr. Douglas Knowlton came to the office in 2004 as the school's 21st president.

Knowlton said a university president needs to be an outgoing person who likes to connect with friends and potential supporters of the university.

"It gives me a chance to interact with many people," he said of the position.

As president, Knowlton plays a role in numerous aspects of the university, such as new program development, recruiting, electronic communications, marketing and public relations.

"The president is the CEO of the university so you have overall responsibility essentially for all the functions," Knowlton said. "You're the voice of the university. You articulate a vision and talk about what the mission of the school is about."

The duties of a university president have changed in recent years, he said. Economic development and fundraising are two new functions that have become expected of all university presidents.

Knowlton, who serves on the Lake Area Improvement Corporation board of directors, said one of his top priorities is to raise money for a new information systems building. Information technology systems are currently housed in a beautiful but old building that isn't equipped to meet modern technology demands, he said. A new building would showcase information technology on campus and keep DSU competitive in the field.

The South Dakota Legislature designated DSU as the information technology university of the state, Knowlton said, and DSU's success in this area has given the university a unique role in working with the Governor's Office of Economic Development.

Since Knowlton has become president of DSU, a doctoral

degree of Science in Information Systems has been implemented and the Science Center building has been totally renovated. For the past five consecutive years, DSU has held the number one spot as best baccalaureate college in the Midwest in the U.S. News & World Report annual ranking.

The integration of information technology and the educational experience of students is important to Knowlton, who is a first generation college graduate. He sees a college campus as a dynamic place for conversation and broadening one's perspectives.

"I have an absolute passion for education," Knowlton said. "I can't imagine a better job."

Between him and his wife Sharon, the Madison High School principal, the couple has worked in all aspects and levels of education, he said.

"Education is so much a part of who we both are and it's an exciting place to be," Knowlton said.

The Knowltons have passed the importance of education onto their



Dakota State University President
Dr. Douglas Knowlton

two sons. One son teaches at a North Dakota school and the other is finishing his degree at DSU.

Both Knowltons grew up in Sioux Falls and returned to South Dakota after about a 30-year absence. During that time, Knowlton held tenured faculty positions at the University of North Dakota and the University of Minnesota, Crookston and served as Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UMC. Part of

his career was spent as a clinical psychologist in private practice with the Family Institute in Grand Forks, North Dakota. He also served as director of the Child Evaluation and Treatment Program at UND's Medical Center Rehabilitation Hospital.

Part of moving back to the area for the Knowltons was reconnecting with their roots.

"It was coming home to a significant extent," Knowlton said.

Knowlton participates in several community organizations, including Rotary International and the First Presbyterian Church in Madison. He is a member of the board of trustees for the Washington Pavilion in Sioux Falls, which he said is fun because he went to high school there.

"I naturally like knowing the people I live in a community with," Knowlton said.

Being involved with organizations is a good way to connect with people, Knowlton said, and learn of their own desires and vision for DSU.

