NEW LAW CLOUDS NICOTINE LEGALITY
Federal law increases tobacco purchasing age to 21
SEE STORIES ON A3-A8
Collegian photo by JULIA MITCHELL
Debates, resolutions highlight Feb. 3 SA meeting

J. MICHAEL BERTSCH
News & Lifestyles Editor

Multiple resolutions were up for debate and eventually postponed at the South Dakota State University Students’ Association Feb. 3 alongside an already full schedule.

To begin the meeting, the Senate heard from the Vice President for Division of Research and Economic Development, Daniel Scholl.

Scholl primarily focused on South Dakota House Bill 1100, which, if passed, will reserve $1 million to the Board of Regents for the development of a new bioprocessing facility.

“The one-time funds will be dedicated to architecture and engineering,” Scholl said. “The purpose of the plan is to provide a design development plan for a pre-pilot, bioprocessing and value added agriculture processing research and development laboratory.”

According to the bill, the facility will “be located in Brookings, SD with collaboration from South Dakota State University, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and industry partners.”

HB 1100 will soon be heard by the Joint Committee on Appropriations.

In addition to the bioprocessing lab, the Senate heard from David Reynolds, the director of the School of Performing Arts, about the school’s growth since the opening of the Performing Arts Center, their use of GAF money and the accreditation process.

“Even in a year of decline, participation increased by 6% last year,” Reynolds said. “We now have eight theatre majors on $2,500 scholarships.”

Reynolds also informed the Senate that the school is in the process of receiving reaccreditation.

“The visit and the report is the beginning of a conversation,” Reynolds said. “The last time it took about 18 months working through that process to get us fully accredited for the next ten years.”

After the public forum, the Senate addressed three resolutions: Resolution 19-06-R Pride Month, Resolution 19-07-R Location Tracking and Resolution 19-08-R Support for HB 108.

Resolution 19-06-R stated that SA would recognize June 2020 as LGBTQ+ Pride Month. This bill was heavily debated. Supporters of the resolution focused on the celebration of diversity on SDSU campus.

“The whole point is to celebrate LGBT inclusion on campus,” said the resolution’s prime sponsor, Sen. Dustin Manzey. “Right now people who are part of this community are currently being marginalized by this state.”

However, those against this resolution argued that it was not inclusive enough.

“We’d have to be writing resolutions every week to cover all of the months celebrating diversity,” Sen. Megan Kellen said.

Another argument against the resolution was the timeline. The current SA term is slated to end before the recognition of pride month is scheduled.

The resolution was moved to be postponed indefinitely as a way to stop the resolution without taking an official vote.

“The reason I have moved to postpone indefinitely to kill this motion is I do not feel confident that this resolution would pass,” Communications Chair Nick Lorang said. “As bolstering as it would be for transgender or queer people in South Dakota, it would be damaging for it to fail.”

Weekly Crime Log

01.26.2020
• 1:25 a.m. DUI, lane driving required, driving without headlights. 2000 6th Street.

01.29.2020
• 11:10 a.m. False pretense/swindle. 1405 Jackrabbit Avenue
• 10:23 p.m. Open container in public, underage purchase or possession of alcoholic beverages, possession controlled drug or substance. Abbott Hall.

01.30.2020
• 1:19 a.m. Underage purchase or possession of alcoholic beverages. Young Hall.

01.31.2020
• 3:42 a.m. Overdriving road conditions, possession or use of drug paraphernalia, possession of marijuana 2 oz or less.
• 6:23 p.m. Sexual assault. 1405 Jackrabbit Avenue.
Federal law and South Dakota state law are on a crash course for the legality of nicotine among those who are 18 and older.

On Dec. 20, 2019, President Donald J. Trump signed United States House Resolution 1158, the "Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020," into law. The resolution contains the 2020 national budget, military spending information and the increase of the age required to purchase tobacco from 18 to 21 years old.

Though this resolution has been signed by the president, and therefore signed into federal law, it does not align with current South Dakota law.

Currently, the South Dakota House of Representatives is aiming to match state law and federal with South Dakota House Bill 1063. However, the bill has yet to pass the South Dakota Senate and the governor's desk.

United States H.R. 1158 is one of two spending packages passed by the U.S. Senate and signed by the president. The resolution is 715 pages long and contains several sections unrelated to government spending or appropriations, a common practice in federal budget legislation.

Starting on page 562 of the resolution, Health and Human Services Extenders — such as amendments for the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act — are listed.

On page 590 of the 715 page resolution, the minimum age of sale for tobacco is raised from 18 to 21 years of age.

These amendments change the previous Food and Drug Administration guidelines set in 1996, which listed the federal minimum age of sale for tobacco products at 18 years of age. Prior to 1996, there were no federal regulations regarding the minimum age for smoking. Instead, the minimum age of 18 was set by the state of South Dakota.

According to the FDA website, "it is now illegal for a retailer to sell any tobacco product — including cigarettes, cigars and e-cigarettes — to anyone under 21."

SEE FEDERAL LAW ON A4

Many tobacco product retailers are affected by the new federal law. Though the FDA is pushing retailers to enforce the new policy immediately, the resolution allows a grace period until Sept. 15, 2020.
FEDERAL LAW

The FDA recommends that retailers immediately enact the law; however, the legislation allows for a period of 180 days (June 17, 2020) to be published into law and another 90 days (Sept. 15, 2020) to be in full effect for retailers.

This year, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, alongside senators from both sides of the aisle, have been pushing for a minimum age increase in response to reported vaping-related deaths in the U.S.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "As of Oct. 22, 2019, 34 deaths in patients with e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury have been reported."

The conflict between state and federal law is by no means an unprecedented issue.

Similar to cases of marijuana legalization in California, Colorado and Washington, the law is subject to what is known as the "Supremacy Clause" of the Constitution.

According to Article VI, Clause 2 of the Constitution, federal law takes priority over state law.

"This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof; and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding."

Despite a potential crash course, South Dakota lawmakers have made their intentions clear.

“The new generation is getting hooked on nicotine through the e-cigarettes,” the prime sponsor of South Dakota HB 1063, Rep. Carl Perry said. “The longer we can move that out to 21, I think the better we’re going to be.”
Domestic Abuse Shelter Staff Advocate Position

Hours: Part-time/Hourly (evenings, weekend and overnight shifts)
Compensation: Overnight shift is minimum wage of $9.30 per hour. Day/evening shift is $10 per hour.

Duties include:
• Be responsible for the crisis-line hotline.
• Provide education, information, supportive listening and referral information to individuals seeking assistance via telephone.
• Deliver services to Shelter residents/walk-ins including intake, maintaining records and crisis intervention services.
• Assist with maintenance of facility and grounds.
• Conduct Education and Public Awareness by participating in conferences, in-service activities, and educational opportunities, attending all relevant Shelter meetings and trainings, accurately representing the Shelter’s philosophy and educational objectives to the general public, and assisting with fundraising events
• And other Duties as Assigned

This is a grant funded position. As with all positions, continuation is contingent upon funding.

Serious inquiries only. Interested candidates are asked to email their resume and letter of interest to domestic@brookings.

Vaping comes with hefty cost

GRACIE TERRALL
Copy Editor

A recent national increase to the age required to purchase nicotine products has brought a new wave of interest in all things nicotine. In particular, the cost of nicotine products is a topic of discussion.

There is a higher financial investment that goes into vaping than one might initially think. To get started, a person must buy a kit outfitted with the vaporizer, mods which include coils and e-juice in bottles, pods or disposable vapes.

Jared Brown, an SDSU student who works at Roll N’ Smoke, says he spends around $50 to $60 a month on nicotine products, which includes a mixture of disposable vapes and pods.

In the past few months, Roll N’ Smoke has seen an increase in the purchase of disposable vapes rather than people buying new vape devices and pods. Brown says people are buying disposables out of convenience.

“It’s not like losing a $60 pod device,” Brown said. “Those big mods are out of fashion.”

At Roll N’ Smoke, disposable vapes run around $10 and, depending on the person, last about two days. While pod devices are usually more expensive up front, people are still showing more interest in the disposables.

“In the long run, a pod device is way cheaper,” Brown said. “But a lot of people don’t want to invest in that.”

A student at SDSU, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said they would spend around $30 to $35 a month on nicotine products. The student also owned a large mod that cost them around $50 to maintain. They have since quit vaping, which was largely due to the high expense and raised tobacco age.

“Especially since coming here, when money wasn’t very good, I would buy two packs of pods, which probably wasn’t the best decision,” the anonymous student said.

Some make the argument that vaping is more cost-effective than smoking — which it is — but that’s not why most people are making the switch.

Rather, it’s because vape products are less stigmatized than cigarettes.

“The whole world has shifted away from cigarettes,” Brown said.

Fewer people are entertaining the thought of smoking cigarettes. Therefore, the cost difference between vape products and cigarettes would be incomparable, making much of the argument that vape devices are better than cigarettes irrelevant.

Regardless of this notion, vape products still rack up an impressive expense when factoring in all the elements that go into a vaping device.

Things that you could buy in a month instead of nicotine products:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 $5 combo boxes from Taco Bell</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.37 gallons of gas</td>
<td>$213.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50 of flex add-on</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 SDSU 1/2 zip by J America at SDSU Bookstore</td>
<td>$49.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Things that you could buy in a month instead of nicotine products:

10 $5 combo boxes from Taco Bell
21.37 gallons of gas
$50 of flex add-on
1 SDSU 1/2 zip by J America at SDSU Bookstore $49.99

Vaping comes with hefty cost
ONE JUUL POD IS EQUIVALENT TO 20 CIGARETTES WORTH OF NICOTINE.

VAPOING NICOTINE CAN DAMAGE BLOOD VESSELS.

IF YOU VAPE, YOU ARE 4x MORE LIKELY TO START SMOKING CIGARETTES.

VAPING WEAKENS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM.
IF YOU VAPE, YOU ARE 4X MORE LIKELY TO START SMOKING CIGARETTES.

VAPING WEAKENS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM.

Information gathered from TheTruth.org, a national campaign focusing on eliminating teen smoking.
Inside the dangers of nicotine

JORDAN RUSCHE
Copy Editor

A recent law raising the minimum age to purchase tobacco from 18 to 21 has brought about much discussion regarding the use of nicotine. According to the World Health Organization, more than 1.1 billion people across the globe smoke cigarettes, even though smoking is the leading preventable cause of death. This begs the question: why is it so hard to quit smoking?

The addictive nature of nicotine is the first and most obvious explanation as to why quitting is so difficult. When inhaled, nicotine enters the bloodstream directly through the lungs and makes its way to the brain. This can happen in as little as seven seconds, as opposed to absorption through the skin or the mouth, which takes longer and is less concentrated.

Nicotinic receptors are filled with the drug and release dopamine, which creates the “buzz” associated with smoking. The longer a person smokes, the more receptors are created and the more they will crave nicotine. If the smoker leaves these receptors empty for too long, they will become uncomfortable and the craving will increase.

This “brain training,” as named by the National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens, is what makes nicotine nearly as addictive as drugs like heroin and cocaine.

“They say that smoking is the gateway to bigger drugs, unfortunately,” said Rita Parsley, a registered nurse at the South Dakota State University Student Health Clinic and one of two certified tobacco treatment specialists employed there.

Additionally, according to the Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center, the people or places a person interacts with influence their ability to quit. Smoking only in certain scenarios creates strong associations, which can result in heightened cravings while in said situations. Social smoking also creates a connection between certain people and smoking, making quitting especially hard if the smoker spends considerable time with those people.

According to the Mayo Clinic stress worsens cravings. When smokers use nicotine as a coping mechanism, the urge to smoke can intensify under daily stressors. Smokers can also have a harder time concentrating without nicotine, once again making quitting difficult.

Read full story online at sdsucollegian.com

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL

The Collegian
@sdsucollegian
@CollegianSports
@collegian_live
sdsucollegian

Domestic Abuse Shelter

Staff Advocate Position

Hours: Part-time/Hourly (evenings, weekend and overnight shifts)

Compensation: Overnight shift is minimum wage of $9.30 per hour. Day/evening shift is $10 per hour.

Duties include:

• Be responsible for the crisis-line hotline.
• Provide education, information, supportive listening and referral information to individuals seeking assistance via telephone.
• Deliver services to Shelter residents/walk-ins including intake, maintaining records and crisis intervention services.
• Assist with maintenance of facility and grounds.
• Conduct Education and Public Awareness by participating in conferences, in-service activities, and educational opportunities, attending all relevant Shelter meetings and trainings, accurately representing the Shelter’s philosophy and educational objectives to the general public, and assisting with fundraising events
• And other Duties as Assigned

This is a grant funded position. As with all positions, continuation is contingent upon funding.

Serious inquiries only. Interested candidates are asked to email their resume and letter of interest to domestic@brookings.

Collegian photo by JULIA MITCHELL

WHAT’S YOUR IDEA? WE WANT TO HEAR IT!

Stop by any Tuesday 8am-5pm
StartupBrookings.com/IdeaAdviser
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY®
IDEA Adviser
A PROGRAM OF BROOKINGS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

FREE INFORMATION | FREE LOCAL RESOURCES
Throughout the summer of 2019, the United States endured a sudden outbreak of what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now calls e-cigarette or vaping associated lung injury (EVALI). The mysterious illness puzzled health officials for months; meanwhile, the EVALI emergency room visits peaked in August. According to the CDC, 52% of EVALI patients were under 24 years old, meaning that this is an acute condition appearing in new users as well as old.

So, why were products that had been on the market for 20 years suddenly causing acute injury?

Toward the end of 2019, the CDC discovered that retail nicotine vaping products were likely not responsible for the outbreak. Patient data supports this assertion, with only 14% of EVALI cases reporting exclusive use of nicotine cartridges. Meanwhile, 82% of the afflicted reported using illegal THC cartomizers. The CDC identified Vitamin E Acetate, a thickening agent, as the prime suspect in EVALI cases. Although some medicinal dispensaries use the same agent in their products, the chemical composition of the Vitamin E Acetate coming off the street proved very different in nature, and basement chemists don’t exactly cooperate with the Food and Drug Administration.

Unlike retail nicotine products, these cartridges undergo no testing or quality control — not even in private laboratories. This means that, like any other illicit substance, the buyer knows nothing about the true ingredients in the product. Additionally, there is no brand presence behind the products, making holding the manufacturer accountable nearly impossible. Now that the White House has raised the age to legally purchase nicotine products to 21, already-addicted teens may now turn to new illicit markets, exposing nicotine users to even more dangerous products than before.

While states with legal adult marijuana-use markets will likely soon ban such additives as Vitamin E Acetate, the judicial system has no such control over illegal markets. This further criminalization will likely impede the CDC and FDA’s studies on teen use of the drug, as criminalization has greatly slowed the study of marijuana use. The new restrictions are counterproductive in this regard, as precise data and research on teen use of vaping products enable public and private health care organizations to better address its consequences.

Criminalization could also discourage teens from participating in nicotine cessation programs, therefore decreasing such programs’ effectiveness. Without amnesty amendments for nicotine similar to those made for alcohol, existing addicts are now criminals.

The White House’s decision to raise the minimum age seems uninformed and hasty given that it contradicts the previous approach to curtailing smoking throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Counter-marketing in advertising and schools is tried and true, as the CDCs “Tips from Former Smokers” advertisements reportedly drove 1.6 million smokers to attempt quitting in the first year of its campaign. We at The Collegian believe that the White House’s decision to raise the minimum age to purchase nicotine products was a hasty effort to appease an upset populace. Additionally, we expect that the new law will do more harm than good, as it denies teens access to more regulated products and, more importantly, cessation without fear of consequences. The Trump Administration turned its backs to historical precedent in favor of reactionist policy, creating more obstacles for public health administrations, care-providers and addicts to overcome.

The Collegian Editorial Board meets weekly and agrees on the issue of the editorial. The editorial represents the opinion of The Collegian.
Keep pedestrians safe: shovel your sidewalks

NATE DEJONG
Guest Columnist

Another holiday season has come and gone. As we pull ourselves through another winter, we are reminded yet again that we live in the northern Midwest, where this season tends to bring us cold, snow, more snow and more cold. I know many of us despise the snow-shoveling season and the responsibilities that it brings (especially after the last few winters), but I encourage you to give some thought to these responsibilities now, particularly the ones of snow removal. Besides driving on roadways, sidewalks are one of the main avenues of transportation for both bicyclists and pedestrians alike.

Being a community that is home to a sizable university, there is a large number of individuals—students and professors alike—that use the sidewalks around campus every day during the school year. With this in mind, I would like to encourage everyone to continue to be diligent in keeping these sidewalks clean after a snowfall in the areas surrounding campus.

There are several important reasons landowners or residents might be compelled to keep their sidewalks clean. First, it is common courtesy, and after realizing how many commuters use the sidewalks surrounding campus every day, a landowner would hopefully be compelled even more so. According to the South Dakota State University Department of Residential Life, there were 11,518 students that were enrolled for the fall of 2019. Of that 11,500, 8,115 students were enrolled full-time last fall through the Brookings campus, according to University Marketing and Communications. They also reported that the number of students who lived on campus during the fall semester is 4,143. Intuitively, almost 4,000 students (~34% of total enrollment) are left to commute to campus somehow, whether it be walking, bicycling, or taking a vehicle and using parking areas on or around campus.

New tobacco law limits freedom of adults

KENDAL SCHREIER
Reporter

Recently, the legal age to purchase tobacco increased from 18 to 21. I was not disheartened to hear this news at first, but the more I thought about my rights as an adult, I began to question the age increase.

Ever since we were little kids, we have looked forward to making our own choices. This was an unrealistic expectation, since we were bound by our immaturity and the foresight of our parents. As the years went by, however, we crept closer and closer to independence as our experiences strengthened our judgment and the influence of our guardians began to fade. We have only just turned 18 and we have made so many critical choices regarding our future.

We have chosen where to go to school for four years, put ourselves into debt and pursue a major that will determine our careers.

If I can go into debt and vote, then why can’t I buy a pack of cigarettes?

I don’t buy cigarettes, but I still believe in the rights of others. I know that smoking is not healthy and it’s a habit I can’t afford, but that doesn’t matter because it all comes down to personal choice. Choices are what separates us from person to person and have a major part of our freedom. If I ever feel the need to buy my own vape or cigarettes, I will have to wait, just as I do to drink.

In all reality, I do not feel like an adult. Staying up late past “bedtime” seems like a trivial reward to the hardships of 18, when I am still deprived of certain experiences and choices.

I am perfectly fine with abiding by the law, but I don’t want to be completely deprived of everything that is technically “bad for me.” If that were the case, I wouldn’t be able to drink as much soda as I do. I’m sure I would be healthier, but there is an alternative to banning choices which would be an education of the consequences. In middle school, the phrase “cigarettes are bad, cigarettes are bad” was constantly thrown at me and anti-tobacco posters reminded me to not smoke. Although it seems excessive now, I had a better understanding of why I should avoid smoking altogether and in general, I did not encounter many classmates that smoked.

It’s okay to make a choice even though others disagree. However, breaking laws or making a choice without an understanding of the risks should be heavily considered.
New-look SDSU softball set to open 2020 season

LANDON DIERKS
Sports Editor

After establishing itself as a Summit League title contender the past two seasons, the 2020 campaign marks a new chapter for South Dakota State softball.

Head coach Krista Wood, now in her sixth year at SDSU, has helped the program turn a corner. The Jackrabbits recorded back-to-back winning seasons in 2018 and 2019 — the program’s first time doing so since 1996 and 1997 — but after graduating nine players from last year’s roster, there’s plenty of room for growth with a young team featuring only five upperclassmen.

“We’re excited about the direction our program is heading, and have been pleased with the efforts we’ve seen from this group,” Wood said in a Jan. 30 release from GoJacks.com. “… We’re looking forward to the challenges ahead of us.”

The Jackrabbits were tabbed third in the Summit League Preseason Coaches Poll with 27 points, just behind the University of South Dakota (28) and two-time defending regular season champion North Dakota State (34).

On paper, SDSU’s biggest strength is its pitching. All six pitchers from a season ago return, and freshman Grace Glanzer, a Sioux Falls native and FloSoftball’s 23rd-ranked recruit from 2019, adds even more depth to the experienced staff.

“That’s been really good for our offense because we’ve been going live for the last three weeks seeing different pitchers, different looks,” Wood said in a Feb. 3 update with GoJacks.com.

Headlining the veteran pitching staff is junior Kendra Conard. The 2019 All-Summit League first-teamer compiled an 18-7 record with a 2.87 ERA across 29 appearances in the circle a season ago and was named a Summit League Player to Watch.

While the pitching was not impacted by graduations, the same cannot be said of the rest of the roster.

Headlining the veteran pitching staff is junior Kendra Conard. The 2019 All-Summit League first-teamer compiled an 18-7 record with a 2.87 ERA across 29 appearances in the circle a season ago and was named a Summit League Player to Watch.

While the pitching was not impacted by graduations, the same cannot be said of the rest of the roster.

With nearly 40% of the roster from a season ago gone, several holes in the defense needed to be filled. Since only two returning players have more than seven career starts in the field, Wood anticipates shuffling the lineup to better match up with each opponent.

“You’ll see a whole new defense out there,” Wood said. “Last year we graduated almost every single defender we had in our lineup, so we have a lot of kids learning two different positions and, depending what we’re needing offensively, our lineup could change game-to-game.”

Outfielders Allison Beaudry and Caelyn Christianty are the only two returning players with more than seven career starts in the field. Sophomore Peyton Daugherty, who joined Conard on the Summit League Player to Watch list, started 55 games at designated hitter a season ago and is the most experienced returning bat, having recorded a .264 average across 163 at-bats.

While the team may need some time to adjust to the many new faces, Wood is optimistic about the balance a near fresh start could bring to the lineup.

“In the past, maybe we’ve had too much power, not enough speed, and now we have a good mixture of both,” Wood said.

The Jackrabbits open the season Feb. 7-8 at the Doc Halverson UNI-Dome Tournament and will attend three more neutral site tournament-style events before Summit League play begins March 21.

SDSU’s home slate is scheduled to begin March 28 with a doubleheader against NDSU. An April 4-5 trip to the Cyclone Classic in Ames, Iowa, breaks up the conference regular season, which concludes May 2 against USD in Vermillion.
Jacks aim for strong finish to regular season

LANDON DIERKS  
Sports Editor

Now more than two weeks removed from a 35-point loss to the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, the worst Summit League loss in program history, the Jackrabbits seem to have recovered heading into the final three weeks of the regular season.

Five days after losing to USD, SDSU stumbled through three quarters against 6-15 North Dakota State before pulling ahead late in a 60-52 win.

It looked like the loss to the Coyotes had a lasting effect, a sentiment SDSU head coach Aaron Johnston acknowledged following the win against the Bison, but the Jacks had five days before their next game to recompose and get ready for the final month before the conference tournament.

For the moment, the break looks to have done wonders. Last week, SDSU went on the road and dominated third-place Western Illinois 89-48. Two nights later, they dispatched fifth-place Oral Roberts 76-61 after holding a 20-plus point lead for much of the second half.

“It really started at Western Illinois,” Johnston said in a Feb. 3 update with GoJacks.com. “I thought our team, in preparation for that week, had a really good week of execution, but also just kind of reset a little bit mentally after a couple of games that didn’t go, offensively, the way we wanted. ... Sometimes those resets mentally are just as important as anything you can do on the court in practice.”

Alongside the mental reset, Johnston pointed to freshman Tori Nelson’s return to the starting lineup for the first time since late December (she missed two games with an ankle injury before coming off the bench each game since Jan. 9) as another reason for the strong back-to-back showings.

“Tori moving into the starting lineup was really good for us at Western Illinois,” Johnston said. “Just having her length in there not only changes things at her position but moves Tylee (Irwin) to a different position and just gives us a different feel. And we still got good minutes from our bench.”

Nelson scored a game-high 17 points and grabbed five rebounds against WIU, adding six points and seven rebounds against ORU.

Another important piece to the Jacks’ success, senior Tagyn Larson, has scored at least 12 points in three straight games after reaching that threshold only twice in her previous seven games and continues to impact the game on the defensive end, recording a season-high 14 rebounds against ORU.

“We need Tagyn to be in that place every game,” Johnston said. “... We were able to run some things through her and I think we want her with that mindset. She’s not a complimentary player, she needs to go out there and assert the things she can do well.”

The biggest question yet to be answered: Can Jackrabbits close the gap between themselves and the Coyotes?

A definitive answer will likely come Feb. 22 when the Coyotes visit Brookings, but for now Johnston is focused on continuing to win one game at a time.

“I really like these single-game weeks in the middle of the season, not just because you get a little bit of rest, but because I think it gives you a chance to go back and add, improve and find some ways to create new angles,” Johnston said. “We’ll make the best of [the time off], but we have some good momentum from this past weekend and definitely want to keep it going.”