

Don C. Peterson (1985-1989)

Don C. Peterson wanted the campus to continue as a learning institution. He contacted about 50 individuals to get them interested in the school. Turning the campus into a United Sioux Tribe academy also fell through. The question of money scared off most potential buyers. Peterson eventually contacted U.S. Senator Larry Pressler initiating contact with the Justice Department about turning the campus into a federal prison. The Bureau of Prisons was interested, but they wanted community support for the prison. Turning the campus into a prison was divisive in the community. Some feared there would be safety issues with the surrounding residential areas and wanted the city to buy the campus. In an unofficial ballot, the community voted 3,025 to 986 against the city buying the campus.

Shortly after in 1988, the Board of Trustees voted in favor of selling the campus for \$3.1 million to the Bureau of Prisons. The Board officially selected Peterson as the school's thirteenth president for his tenacious efforts during the transitional phase. President Peterson - who never took a salary - gave credit to the many others who helped achieve the preservation of the campus. He was saddened that Yankton College ceased to be an educational facility but happy the campus would continue in a non-traditional way.