Strengths
- Clear contractual guidelines and policies exist to guide SMSU in its daily operations.
- University constituents are represented and involved in the development or revision of policies through the various Meet and Confer processes or other shared governance processes.
- The HLC survey results indicate that necessary information for students and the public is clear and easy to find on the web site.
- The University retains its autonomy in the MnSCU system while contributing to system-wide initiatives and complying with system-wide requirements.
- SMSU follows commonly accepted and ethical practices in financial and academic administration of the University.
- Students have strong grounding in ethical academic and research practices.

Recommendations
- While the SMSU web site has won awards in the past, the website and other online media need continuing support and resources in order to keep up with this main artery of communication. Some information about departments, program accreditations/certifications, and organizational structures could be more clearly displayed on the University web site.
- The University web site could be examined to ensure that links exist between policies or the Student Handbook descriptions and the departments/offices that are relevant to those policies. (Example: The Public Safety page and Residence Life page could link back to Student Handbook rules and regulations.)
- More information on the SMSU website regarding its relationship to the MnSCU Governing Board and MnSCU responsibilities might be useful in key locations.
- The University has a clear policy about freedom of expression, and the IFO contract and Student Handbook contain statements about academic freedom. However, a clear, direct statement regarding freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning could be prominently placed on the website and in appropriate print materials.

HLC Criterion 2: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Core Component 2.A: The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

Core Component 2.B: The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Core Component 2.C: The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

> 2C1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

> 2C2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

> 2C3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

> 2C4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Core Component 2.D: The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Core Component 2E: The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

> 2E1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

> 2E2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

> 2E3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.