

DRAFT OF CRITERION 3: STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengths:

- The redesigned Liberal Education Program provides a strong educational foundation to support every degree program on campus.
- SMSU was created to fill a need in this part of Minnesota. From the beginning the University has identified unfulfilled needs in the region and developed appropriate responses. College Now, new programs such as Culinary and the RN-to-BSN, our service learning and civic engagement efforts, and the Undergraduate Research Conference are recent examples of this approach to the mission.
- A number of processes work together to ensure currency and quality of programs regardless of location or delivery method.
- The Writing Center, the Speech Center, Academic Commons, formal library instruction in information literacy and Faculty Improvement Grants support overall educational excellence at SMSU, in addition to the services provided by Student Affairs' offices.
- Specialized segments of the SMSU student population receive extra support developed with their needs in mind.
- The review of advising has resulted in concrete actions and improved processes that support all students' advising needs.

Recommendations:

- Continue efforts to emphasize the new LEP goals across all campus units and involve all areas of campus in promoting them.
- While the student:faculty ratio supports the premise that faculty members know their students, and contractual office hour requirements indicate that students are likely to find their faculty members are accessible, the University could explore a revision of a survey instrument to determine student perception of faculty accessibility.
- Continue to give consideration to areas that provide direct student support and to explore new methods and technologies to assist with offering this support.
- Continue to carefully monitor and support staffing levels for faculty as well as staff support as the budget allows.
- Continue to explore ways to support the mission's focus on helping students to become engaged in local and global communities.



HLC Criterion 3 Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Core Component 3A: The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

3A1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

3A2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

3A3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Core Component 3B: The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

3B1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

3B2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

3B3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

3B4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

3B5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Core Component 3C: The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

3C1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

3C2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

3C3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

3C4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

3C5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

3C6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Core Component 3D: The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

3D1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

3D2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

3D3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

3D4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

3D5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Core Component 3E: The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

3E1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

3E2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.