

SMSU Mission

Southwest Minnesota State University prepares students to meet the complex challenges of this century as engaged citizens in their local and global communities. Our comprehensive degree programs, taught in the liberal arts tradition, are dedicated to connecting students' academic and practical professional development experiences in southwestern Minnesota to the wider world.

Vision

Southwest Minnesota State University is a university of choice.

MNSCU Strategic Directions

Direction 1: Increase access and opportunity

Direction 2: Promote and measure high-quality learning programs and services

Direction 3: Provide programs and services integral to state and regional economic needs

Direction 4: Innovate to meet current and future education needs efficiently



Summary of Strategic Planning Goals 2007-12

February 25, 2008

Goal One: Southwest Minnesota State University will continue to be the higher education institution of first choice in southwest Minnesota.

Southwest will offer high quality academic programs, market SMSU effectively, and focus on recruitment and retention.

Goal Two: Southwest Minnesota State University will create comprehensive learning for its students.

Southwest will develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated First Year Experience, along with developing and expanding collaborative learning opportunities and social inclusiveness.

Goal Three: Southwest Minnesota State University will develop students' talents to prepare them to be successful in life.

Southwest will incorporate the LAC outcomes into academic majors and degree programs, help students understand and relate concepts across disciplines and experiences, and develop systemic integration of student services, student life, activities, and academics.

Goal Four: Southwest Minnesota State University will establish a distinguished record as a student-centered higher education institution.

Southwest will continue to use outcome-based learning and student-centered criteria to improve performance.

Goal Five: Southwest Minnesota State University will contribute significantly to the quality of life in southwestern Minnesota.

Southwest will facilitate regional access to SMSU facilities, promote the events center as a regional resource, and serve as a center for economic and social research related to the region.

Goal Six: Southwest Minnesota State University will manage itself to ensure high quality standards and to optimize its fiscal, human, and physical resources.

Southwest will focus on its mission, vision statement, and core values to provide resources for achievement of long-term goals, including decreasing its environmental footprint.

Brown and Gold Task Force Strategic Priorities

May 2007

1. Define SMSU's signature program in terms of universal "excellence" within the liberal arts tradition. Continue to develop and expand collaborative learning opportunities, study abroad programs, and international exchange programs. Create a broad educational focus on an overarching theme.
2. Establish an aggressive marketing campaign for the university. Improve and expand both physical and electronic efforts to make SMSU more attractive to potential students. Make the campus exterior more beautiful and inviting with additional landscaping and a visible campus entrance. Create a visual symbol for the University.
3. Actively seek participation from a diverse population of students, faculty, staff, and community members. Promote participation by all members of the SMSU community through physical and social inclusiveness, particularly for physically disabled and international students.
4. Decrease SMSU's environmental footprint by reducing our energy use, reducing our waste stream, and obtaining energy from renewable sources.
5. Develop, maintain, and advance electronic communications between all members of the University community and stakeholders in the University. This includes but is not limited to email, social networking, podcasting, and video sites.
6. Develop and implement a comprehensive First Year Experience program. This includes full integration of the First Year Experience into the University curriculum. Included in the First Year Experience program are Orientation, Learning Communities, and a required University Experience classroom course. All aspects of student services and student life should be included in the planning and participation of the First Year Experience.
7. Develop systemic integration of Student Services, Student Life, Activities, Academics, and other aspects of University life. This includes joint planning and implementation of all University projects and events. Projects with joint development, cooperation, and implementation should be given priority at the University.

NEW SMSU Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of study at SMSU, students will:

1. Understand the techniques and habits of thought in a variety of academic disciplines, having attained an adequate foundation of knowledge in those disciplines.
2. Communicate effectively.
2. Be creative thinkers able to identify, formulate, and solve problems using interdisciplinary perspectives.
3. Be critical thinkers who evaluate information wisely and examine how assumptions and positions are shaped.
5. Understand both physical and social aspects of the world and their place in it.
6. Embrace the similarities among peoples and appreciate the diversity that enriches the human experience.
7. Analyze moral judgments and engage in moral discourse.
8. Practice responsible citizenship in their local and global communities.
9. Continue life-long learning.
10. Integrate mind, body, and spirit, the essential elements of a flourishing life.

Upon completion of the LAC at SMSU students will:

Outcome 1: *Understand the techniques and habits of thought in a variety of liberal arts disciplines, having attained an adequate foundation of knowledge in those disciplines.*

- 1) Summarize major themes and discoveries of these disciplines and understand how new work is created and evaluated.
- 2) Apply the methods by which practitioners of these disciplines process information and solve problems.
- 3) Articulate how these disciplines are interconnected and how they relate to the student's major areas of study.

Outcome 2: *Communicate effectively.*

- 1) Determine the nature and extent of information needed to formulate and develop a coherent and unified thesis.
- 2) Understand and select the best communication methods for achieving a given purpose.
- 3) Comprehend and synthesize messages conveyed in both oral and written contexts.
- 4) Recognize and employ various methods of verbal, nonverbal, cultural, and emotional communication.
- 5) Consider and account for the nature of audiences when presenting written and oral arguments.
- 6) Present ideas with comfort and confidence in written and oral formats.
- 7) Develop an appreciation for the significance and aesthetics of language.

Outcome 3: *Be creative thinkers able to identify, formulate, and solve problems using interdisciplinary perspectives.*

- 1) Break a complex issue or task into incremental steps.
- 2) Comprehend the differences and similarities among fields of study, and how these augment our understanding of important issues.
- 3) Employ multiple modes of inquiry and analysis to arrive at a range of possible solutions to a problem or task.
- 4) Apply a range of methods for producing creative results.

- 5) Exhibit increasing development of characteristics essential to being a creative thinker, including:
- Curiosity
 - Aesthetic appreciation
 - Desire to make things better
 - Enjoyment of challenge
 - Ability to suspend judgment
 - Acceptance of and willingness to learn from mistakes and failures.

Outcome 4: *Be critical thinkers who evaluate information wisely and examine how assumptions and positions are shaped.*

- 1) Demonstrate information literacy by accessing, utilizing, formatting, citing, and documenting relevant material accurately and correctly.
- 2) Interpret arguments by correctly identifying relevant premises, conclusions, and key assumptions.
- 3) Evaluate the extent to which evidence is reasonable, relevant, accurate, and sufficient to support intended claims.
- 4) Formulate clear, well-supported arguments.
- 5) Engage in civil discourse, self-reflection, and consideration of other points of view.

Outcome 5: *Understand both physical and social aspects of the world and their place in it.*

- 1) Demonstrate knowledge of concepts, methods, and theories designed to enhance understanding of the natural world and human society.
- 2) Demonstrate the ability to access, comprehend, compare, and evaluate contemporary scientific and social literature.
- 3) Demonstrate an awareness of multiple worldviews, and how each is shaped by the interaction of physical and social factors.
- 4) Critically consider the ethical and physical ramifications of scientific decisions on society and the environment.

Outcome 6: *Embrace the similarities among peoples and appreciate the diversity that enriches the human experience.*

- 1) Demonstrate awareness of personal identity as the result of a broad set of influences.
- 2) Engage in a variety of cross-cultural interactions.

- 3) View other cultures and social norms from multiple perspectives.
- 4) Explore one's biases while developing independent attitudes regarding the "difficult differences" in society.
- 5) Integrate and apply diverse perspectives to increasingly challenging questions and real-world problems.
- 6) Develop an informed concern for the greater good.

Outcome 7: *Analyze moral judgments and engage in moral discourse.*

- 1) Demonstrate understanding of the meaning, application, and justification of a number of core ethical values, including, but not restricted to:
 - Individual dignity
 - Human rights
 - Honesty
 - Integrity
 - Justice
 - Compassion
 - Personal and social responsibility
- 2) Demonstrate understanding of and respect for a variety of ethical viewpoints.
- 3) Recognize and critically reflect on one's own moral values and their determinants.
- 4) Recognize and address broad moral issues in a variety of contexts, including coursework, personal life, and global society.

Outcome 8: *Practice responsible citizenship in their local and global communities.*

- 1) Develop the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions necessary to make a difference in local and global communities.
- 2) Recognize themselves as part of a larger social fabric, with public lives and personal ownership of social problems.
- 3) Explore the nature and use of power and authority in various contexts.
- 4) Engage in democracy as a life-enhancing, everyday practice of skills such as:
 - Attentiveness to public affairs and current events
 - Regular volunteering
 - Creative use of conflict
 - Active group membership

- Collective problem solving
- 5) Express their voices through informed citizenship and participation in civic and political processes.
 - 6) Confidently engage in civic discourse, self-reflection, and consideration of other points of view.

Outcome 9: *Continue life-long learning.*

- 1) Continuously evaluate their ever-changing environment across multiple dimensions.
- 2) Engage in self-directed learning with an emphasis on “learning how to learn.”
- 3) Cultivate curiosity and openness to varied experiences.
- 4) Integrate prior knowledge with newly obtained information.
- 5) Pursue formal and informal educational opportunities throughout life.

Outcome 10: *Integrate mind, body, and spirit, the essential elements of a flourishing life.*

- 1) Explore how mind, body, and spirit function in interconnected ways.
- 2) Reflect on the intellectual, physical, and spiritual factors that shape personal and social identities.
- 3) Understand their individual wellness from various disciplinary perspectives.
- 4) Acquire knowledge to pursue their full human potential.