

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Agenda Item Summary Sheet**

**Committee:** Academic and Student Affairs

**Date of Meeting:** September 16, 2008

**Agenda Item:** Southwest Minnesota State University Mission Approval

Proposed  
Policy Change

Approvals  
Required by  
Policy

Other  
Approvals

Monitoring

Information

**Cite policy requirement, or explain why item is on the Board agenda:**

Board Policy 3.24 System and Institutional Missions, Part 2: Review and Approval of Institutional Missions requires institutions to have new missions approved by the Board. As required by procedure, the institution must indicate:

- a. How its mission and vision respond to the definitions in procedure 3.24.1.
- b. The extent to which the institution will meet expectations of law, how it relates to other institutions of higher education, and how its mission, vision and purposes support fulfillment of the system mission and vision.
- c. Its purposes and the array of awards it offers.
- d. How the new mission compares with the former mission.
- e. Ample consultation with faculty, students, employers and other essential stakeholders.

**Scheduled Presenter(s):**

David Danahar, President, Southwest Minnesota State University

Linda L. Baer, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

**Outline of Key Points/Policy Issues:**

The proposed vision, mission and purposes of Southwest Minnesota State University meet the criteria identified in MnSCU Board Policy 3.24 System and Institutional Missions, Part 2: Review and Approval of MnSCU Institutional Missions. The Higher Learning Commission requires accredited institutions to get approval from their governing boards for new missions.

**Background Information:**

The new mission for Southwest Minnesota State University has been reviewed and found to meet all Board requirements for institutional missions.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

***ACTION ITEM***

**SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MISSION APPROVAL**

1 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2  
3 The vision, proposed mission and purposes of Southwest Minnesota State University meet the  
4 criteria identified in System Board Policy 3.24 System and Institutional Missions, Part 2: Review  
5 and Approval of Institutional Missions.

6  
7 **Southwest Minnesota State University’s vision, mission, purposes and array of awards are:**

8  
9 **Vision:** Southwest Minnesota State University is a university of choice.

10  
11 **Mission:** Southwest Minnesota State University prepares students to meet the complex  
12 challenges of this century as engaged citizens in their local and global communities. Our  
13 comprehensive degree programs, taught in the liberal arts tradition, are dedicated to connecting  
14 students’ academic and practical professional development experiences in southwestern  
15 Minnesota to the wider world.

16  
17 **Purposes:** Southwest Minnesota State University’s purposes are:

- 18 1. To be the higher education institution of first choice in southwest Minnesota.  
19 2. To create comprehensive learning experiences for students.  
20 3. To develop students’ talents to prepare them to be successful in life.  
21 4. To establish a distinguished record as a student-centered higher education institution.  
22 5. To contribute significantly to the quality of life in southwestern Minnesota.  
23 6. To decrease the University’s environmental footprint by reducing energy use and the  
24 waste stream, and by seeking renewable energy sources.  
25 7. To optimize the University’s human, fiscal, and physical resources.

26  
27 **Array of Awards:** Southwest Minnesota State University offers the Associate in Science, the  
28 Bachelor of Science, the Bachelor of Applied Science, the Bachelor of Arts, the Master of  
29 Business Administration, and the Master of Science.

30  
31 **An institution’s mission, vision and purposes shall support achievement of the system**

32 **mission and vision:** Southwest Minnesota State University’s proposed mission is “Southwest  
33 Minnesota State University prepares students to meet the complex challenges of this century as  
34 engaged citizens in their local and global communities. Our comprehensive degree programs,  
35 taught in the liberal arts tradition, are dedicated to connecting students’ academic and practical

1 professional development experiences in southwestern Minnesota to the wider world.” The  
2 proposed Southwest Minnesota State University mission supports System mission by  
3 envisioning:

- 4 • Innovative and efficient education programs that meet students’ personal and career goals as  
5 well as the economic needs of the state and region.
- 6 • Access and opportunity for a wide range of students who will enroll at SMSU.
- 7 • High quality programs and services leading to academic and professional development  
8 experiences for students.
- 9 • Preparing students to be engaged citizens in local communities, the state, and the region, as  
10 well as in the wider world.

11  
12 The mission supports the following system strategic directions:

- 13 • **Strategic Direction One – Increase Access and Opportunity** by providing access and  
14 opportunity for a wide range of students who will enroll at SMSU.
- 15  
16 • **Strategic Direction Two – Expand High-Quality Learning Programs and Services** by  
17 offering high quality programs and services leading to academic and professional  
18 development experiences for students.
- 19  
20 • **Strategic Direction Three – Strengthen Community Development and Economic**  
21 **Vitality** by preparing students to be engaged citizens in local communities, the state, and the  
22 region, as well as in the wider world.
- 23  
24 • **Strategic Direction Four – Innovate to meet current and future needs** through innovative  
25 and efficient education programs that meet students’ personal and career goals as well as the  
26 economic needs of the state and region.
- 27  
28 1. **An institution’s mission, vision, and purposes shall provide a foundation for evaluation,**  
29 **accountability, and regional accreditation:** Southwest Minnesota State University’s  
30 proposed vision, mission, and purposes provide a basis for evaluation, accountability, and  
31 regional accreditation.
- 32  
33 2. **Compliance:** Southwest Minnesota State University’s vision, proposed mission, and  
34 purposes are consistent with statute, policy, and regional accreditation requirements.

## 35 36 **BACKGROUND**

37  
38 Southwest Minnesota State College was created by the Minnesota legislature in 1963. After the  
39 Minnesota State College Board recommended a curriculum for the college, the board named a  
40 director of planning who, in 1965, became the first president. The college’s first mission  
41 statement was approved by the board in March 1966, and the first North Central Association  
42 accreditation visit occurred in 1969. In April 1970, the college was granted candidacy for  
43 accreditation and received accreditation in March 1972.

1 The institution's name has changed three times. Although the word Minnesota was included in  
2 the college's name to begin with, the name was later changed to Southwest State College. When  
3 the State College Board became the State University Board in 1975, the title became Southwest  
4 State University, and then in July 2003 the university changed its name to Southwest Minnesota  
5 State University, with the approval of the system Board of Trustees.

6  
7 Southwest Minnesota State University's most recent evaluation visit by the Higher Learning  
8 Commission was in February 2004. The next visit is scheduled for 2013-14.

### 9 10 **Mission, Vision and Purposes Application Analysis**

11 The proposed vision, mission, and purposes of Southwest Minnesota State University meet the  
12 criteria identified in Board Policy 3.24 System and Institutional Missions, Part 2: Review and  
13 Approval of System Institutional Missions.

14  
15 As required by procedure, the institution must indicate:

- 16 a. How its mission and vision respond to the definitions in procedure 3.24.1.
- 17 b. The extent to which the institution will meet expectations of law, how it relates to other  
18 institutions of higher education, and how its mission, vision and purposes support fulfillment  
19 of the system mission and vision.
- 20 c. Its purposes and the array of awards it offers.
- 21 d. How the new mission compares with the former mission.
- 22 e. Ample consultation with faculty, students, employers and other essential stakeholders.

23  
24 Additionally, the institution's mission must be compliant with statute, policy, and regional  
25 accreditation requirements.

### 26 27 **Review of Southwest Minnesota State University's Mission, Vision and Purposes**

28 Southwest Minnesota State University's proposed vision, proposed mission and purposes meet  
29 these requirements.

- 30  
31 a. The mission and vision respond to the definitions in the procedure:

32  
33 Southwest Minnesota State University's proposed mission is "Southwest Minnesota State  
34 University prepares students to meet the complex challenges of this century as engaged citizens  
35 in their local and global communities. Our comprehensive degree programs, taught in the liberal  
36 arts tradition, are dedicated to connecting students' academic and practical professional  
37 development experiences in southwestern Minnesota to the wider world." Southwest Minnesota  
38 State University's proposed mission emphasizes that the institution will prepare students to  
39 become engaged citizens whose academic and professional lives in the state and region are  
40 connected to the wider world.

41  
42 The proposed mission for Southwest Minnesota State University is guided by a vision that reads  
43 "Southwest Minnesota State University is a university of choice."  
44 Southwest Minnesota State University envisions a future in which:

- 45 • The institution continues to serve first-generation students from the area as well as physically  
46 challenged students; continue to serve a high percentage of international students; and serve

1 an increasing percentage of minority students, through offering innovative, high-quality  
2 programs and services.

- 3 • The institution enhances its academic reputation and environment; maintain its long tradition  
4 of providing a broad-based liberal arts education; develop innovative programs such as the  
5 highly sought after concurrent enrollment program; continue to develop cooperative  
6 educational programs with 2-year campuses; offer degree programs desirable to both students  
7 and employers; and increase quality learning opportunities for students both academically  
8 and professionally.
- 9 • The institution provides diverse, high-quality education programs to a highly diverse  
10 population of students. SMSU was the first handicapped accessible state university and  
11 continues to address the needs of disabled students. First-generation college students will  
12 continue to be a target market. SMSU continues to demonstrate that it can provide quality  
13 programs and services despite insufficient budget support.

14  
15 b. The extent to which the institution will meet expectations of law, how it relates to other  
16 institutions of higher education, and how its mission, vision and purposes support fulfillment  
17 of the system mission and vision:

18  
19 The Southwest Minnesota State University proposed vision, mission, and purposes are consistent  
20 with statute, policy, and regional accreditation requirements. The proposed Southwest Minnesota  
21 State University mission and vision support the System mission and vision as it “prepares  
22 students to meet the complex challenges of this century as engaged citizens in their local and  
23 global communities.”

24  
25 c. Its purposes and the array of awards it offers:

26  
27 Southwest Minnesota State University’s purposes are:

- 28 1. To be the higher education institution of first choice in southwest Minnesota.
- 29 2. To create comprehensive learning experiences for students.
- 30 3. To develop students’ talents to prepare them to be successful in life.
- 31 4. To establish a distinguished record as a student-centered higher education institution.
- 32 5. To contribute significantly to the quality of life in southwestern Minnesota.
- 33 6. To decrease the University’s environmental footprint by reducing energy use and the  
34 waste stream, and by seeking renewable energy sources.
- 35 7. To optimize the University’s human, fiscal, and physical resources.

36  
37 SMSU’s purposes/goals:

- 38 • Affirm the commitment to offer education of highest quality and value;
- 39 • Confirm the commitment to student success and to access and opportunity for a diverse  
40 population;
- 41 • Address the individuality of students;
- 42 • Offer contributions to quality of life in the region and in the state;
- 43 • Address economic goals and considerations, particularly contributions to the economic  
44 development and well-being of southwest Minnesota and the state; and

- 1 • Continue SMSU’s commitment to innovative programs suited to the student population, the  
2 region, and the state.

3  
4 Southwest Minnesota State University offers the Associate in Science, the Bachelor of Science,  
5 the Bachelor of Applied Science, the Bachelor of Arts, the Master of Business Administration,  
6 and the Master of Science.

7  
8 SMSU is the only four-year institution in the southwest Minnesota area. Over 60% of students  
9 who enroll are first-generation college students. Our role is to prepare students to live and thrive  
10 in the wider world outside southwest Minnesota, to prepare students for the world of the 21<sup>st</sup>  
11 century, to prepare students to be engaged citizens who contribute to their communities, and to  
12 enhance the economic viability of the southwest Minnesota region by preparing highly qualified  
13 graduates.

14  
15 d. How the new mission compares with the former mission:

16  
17 The former mission states: “The mission of Southwest State University is to provide high  
18 quality liberal arts, professional, and technical programs at the undergraduate and graduate level.  
19 Southwest Minnesota State University is dedicated to excellence in teaching and to preparing  
20 students to be life-long learners in a changing global, social, and natural environment.” The  
21 University has a special commitment to the educational needs of people in its service region.  
22 This commitment is reflected in the curricula, cultural enrichment programs, cooperative  
23 relationships with other regional institutions, and in service and research contributions to both  
24 the public and private sectors of the region.

25 The new mission reads: “Southwest Minnesota State University prepares students to meet the  
26 complex challenges of this century as engaged citizens in their local and global communities.  
27 Our comprehensive degree programs, taught in the liberal arts tradition, are dedicated to  
28 connecting students’ academic and practical professional development experiences in  
29 southwestern Minnesota to the wider world.”

30 The revised mission statement is more succinct and is updated to reflect changes both within and  
31 outside of the university. Since SMSU no longer offers technical programs, reference to those  
32 programs has been deleted. While SMSU continues to serve the southwest Minnesota service  
33 region, the revised mission statement acknowledges the importance of a vital connection  
34 between the region and the wider world. The revised statement recognizes the complexity of the  
35 world students enter upon graduation, and the need for students to become involved as engaged  
36 citizens.

37  
38 e. Ample consultation with faculty, students, employers and other essential stakeholders:

39  
40 Revision of the mission, vision, and goals, undertaken in 2005-06, took place as part of SMSU’s  
41 strategic planning process. President Danahar and constituent groups appointed a task force to  
42 work on the mission, vision, and goals, leading to development of SMSU’s next strategic plan,  
43 keeping in mind the four system strategic directions.

1 SMSU's mission was due for approval by the system Board of Trustees before the 2004 HLC  
2 visit. However, because of the visit, SMSU requested a delay. After the visit, work on the  
3 mission was incorporated into strategic planning. The revised mission, vision, and goals are now  
4 ready for submission to the Board of Trustees.

5  
6 Below is a summary of the process.

- 7 • Fall 2006 Task force appointed; membership includes students, faculty, staff,  
8 administration
- 9 • Sept 2006 First meeting held; Task Force charged with establishing road map for next 5  
10 years; preparing for next HLC visit; holding meetings, forums, interviews; involving faculty,  
11 staff, students, alumni, and internal/external community; revising vision, mission, and goals;  
12 preparing 6-12 recommendations for future direction of the university
- 13 • Oct-April 2006-07 Task Force appoints subcommittees, holds meetings, forums,  
14 interviews, etc.
- 15 • Jan 2007 Strategic planning day held
- 16 • May 2007 Task Force makes recommendations and final report to President Danahar
- 17 • Fall 2007 Meet and Confer/Meet and Discuss sessions held w/faculty, staff, students
- 18 • Sept 2007 Strategic planning day held
- 19 • December 2007 Strategic planning committee convened; members include students,  
20 faculty, staff, administration, and community representatives
- 21 • Jan 2008 Strategic planning day held
- 22 • Spring 2008 Strategic planning committee continues to meet

## 23 24 **RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE MOTION**

25  
26 The Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve  
27 the Southwest Minnesota State University proposed vision, mission, purposes, and array of  
28 awards as listed in the executive summary.

## 29 30 **RECOMMENDED MOTION**

31  
32 The Board of Trustees approves the request by Southwest Minnesota State University to approve  
33 its proposed vision, mission, purposes, and array of awards as listed in the executive summary.