



**Public Disclosure Notice on  
New Mexico Highlands University**  
Las Vegas, New Mexico  
Effective: August 31, 2016

New Mexico Highlands University (“the University”) in Las Vegas, New Mexico, is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). It has been placed on Probation because the Board determined that the University was out of compliance with some of HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation. The Board took this action because of a number of concerns including those related to staffing and institutional support, assessment of student learning, student retention and completion rates, governance, and institutional planning. The specific areas of non-compliance are noted below.

### **Understanding Probation**

Probation is a public status signifying that an accredited institution is no longer in compliance with one or more of HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation. The period of Probation is not more than two years from the date that the Board placed the institution on Probation. During the Probation period, the institution remains accredited and has the opportunity to remedy the concerns noted below.

In most cases, because institutions on Probation remain accredited, other institutions of higher education will continue to accept the institution’s credits in transfer or for admission to a program at a higher degree level. However, students enrolled at an institution on Probation and interested in pursuing a higher degree or transferring should contact any institution they plan to attend in the future to confirm the institution’s admission and transfer policies.

### **Recent Board Action**

On August 31, 2016, the HLC Board of Trustees placed the University on probation. The Board concluded that the University is out of compliance with the following Criteria for Accreditation.

- Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support
  - Core Component 3.C. “the institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services”
  - Core Component 3.D. “the institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching”
  
- Criterion Four. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement
  - Core Component 4.B. “the institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning”
  - Core Component 4.C. “the institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates”

- Criterion Five. Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
  - Core Component 5.A. “the institution’s resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.”
  - Core Component 5.B. “the institution’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission”
  - Core Component 5.C. “the institution engages in systematic and integrated planning”

The Board concluded that the the University is at risk of being out of compliance with the following Criteria for Accreditation:

- Criterion One. Mission
  - Core Component 1.A. “the institution’s mission is broadly understood within the institution”
- Criterion Two. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
  - 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”

### **Next Steps**

The University is required to file an Assurance Filing no later than November 1, 2017 providing evidence that the University has resolved the concerns of the Board identified in the Probation action and evidence that it meets the Criteria for Accreditation.

The University will be required to host a comprehensive evaluation no later than December 2017 to determine whether the concerns of the Board identified in its action have been resolved and the Criteria for Accreditation have been met.

At its meeting in June 2018, the Board will review materials related to this evaluation and determine whether the University can be removed from Probation. If the University has not resolved the Board’s concerns that led to Probation, other action may be appropriate.

### **About the Higher Learning Commission**

The Higher Learning Commission accredits approximately 1,000 colleges and universities that have a home base in one of 19 states that stretch from West Virginia to Arizona. HLC is a private, nonprofit regional accrediting agency. HLC’s mission is to assure and advance the quality of higher learning. It is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. The institutions HLC accredits include public, private not-for-profit, and proprietary institutions at degree levels from the associate’s through the doctoral degree level and from small, specialized institutions through large research universities.

Students, parents, and others from the general public with questions regarding HLC’s work should contact the Higher Learning Commission by email at [info@hlcommission.org](mailto:info@hlcommission.org) or by phone at 312-263-0456.