



New Mexico Highlands University Vision 2020 Strategic Goal Accomplishments 2016-2017

Mission

New Mexico Highlands University is a public comprehensive university serving our local and global communities. Our mission is to provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to attain an exceptional education by fostering creativity, critical thinking and research in the liberal arts, sciences, and professions within a diverse community.

Vision

Our vision is to be a premier comprehensive university transforming lives and communities now and for generations to come.

Strategic Goal #1

Highlands University will achieve academic excellence, academic integration and student success.

We commit to establishing and strengthening systems, structures and programs to enhance students' holistic well-being and success at all levels of study (including life-long learning), through the delivery of High-Impact Practices such as research and creative opportunities, increased student engagement, and service learning.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the University focused on strengthening systems to support the academic, personal, and social integration our students to increase student success.

- **Expanded and refined First-Year Experience Learning Communities program.** In 2016, all first-time freshmen enrolled in a Learning Community of at least three linked classes, choosing from 19 Communities representative of all schools and colleges. The program provides engaging experiences focused on supporting student success through community building and experiential learning, as well as supporting personal and academic growth. This year, Highlands integrated more field experiences into learning communities, expanded the peer mentor program, and established First-Year Experience-Learning Community center and study lounge in Felix Martinez building that held 70 peer study group sessions per week. In 2015, 97.3 percent of first-time freshmen participated in FYE-LC. For fall 2016, this was increased to 99.3 percent. Students' grades are higher in their LC courses than in their non-LC courses, and more students qualified for the lottery as a result of LCs..
- **Institutionalized ARMAS.** Highlands University institutionalized the Achieving in Research, Math, and Science (ARMAS) Center, moving from being supported by grant money to being permanently supported by Highlands. ARMAS provides STEM students opportunities for participation in high-impact practices through grant-funded internship opportunities. Expanded support to athletes through evening study halls; students that take advantage of ARMAS activities (SIL, tutoring, internships) have higher success rates.
- **Increased funds to support implementation of high-impact practices.** The HU-HIPS endowment was funded with more than \$750,000 through a combination of donations and state-matching funds. Two task forces developed programs after approximately 30 people attended a mini retreat in May 2016. These are HU-WRITES (Writing across the Curriculum) and Systematic Service Learning, both beginning in 2017. In addition, a three-year \$250,000 NSF grant will fund five Highlands students per year for summer research on volcanoes in the Czech Republic, Germany, and Poland.
- **Increased funds through grants to make curricular and programmatic changes to accelerate student progress.** The STEMfast grant provides \$2.9 million to work on improving outcomes in math and English for STEM majors. The NMHU/APS PREP grant continues to prepare special education teachers, and has completed its third cohort.
- **Established partnership with Diné College to expand media arts opportunities for Navajo students,** utilizing a \$438,715 grant from the USDA Rural Development program.
- **Committed faculty resources to strengthen School of Social Work, Nursing, and Languages and Culture.** Continued efforts to increase the number of tenure-track faculty in social work, by converting contingent faculty lines to five tenure-track lines, which consisted of two tenure-track Native American faculty in fall 2015 and three additional tenure-track faculty in 2016. Hired two new tenure-track faculty in nursing in fall 2016. Committed resources to hiring new tenure-track lines in languages and culture in spring 2017 (1-2 positions), to begin fall 2017.



Strategic Goal #2

Highlands University will achieve strategic enrollment management.

We commit to establishing and implementing a strategic enrollment management plan that includes target enrollments, recruitment, and retention strategies for all academic degree programs and all locations.

Since its creation, the Strategic Enrollment Management department has worked on developing a comprehensive recruitment and retention program that engages the campus community and uses a data-driven approach to guide these efforts in accomplishing NMHU's second strategic goal.

- **Created the division of Strategic Enrollment Management.** Highlands University created the Strategic Enrollment Management department in January 2016. Five offices comprise the department: the Office of Recruitment and Undergraduate Admissions, Academic Support, Financial Aid, International Education Center, and the Native American Center
- **Restructured the Office of Recruitment to include admissions personnel and a campus tour welcome office.** Prospective students receive application and admissions assistance from one office until they are admitted. Restructuring also increased collaboration with recruitment at the university's centers. The Rio Rancho Center hired one full-time recruiter.
- **Restructured the Campus Tour Program and increased recruitment markets.** The Campus Tour Program is housed in the NMHU Welcome Office in the Student Center and is managed by a coordinator to better serve prospective students and their families visiting campus. Six hundred twenty potential students visited campus as of March 31, 2017. Increased recruitment markets will include transfer students with recruitment expansion in Colorado, Arizona, California, and New Mexico and new markets in Texas and Illinois.
- **Contracted with Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) to meet recruitment and retention goals.** Highlands and RNL conducted a targeted application generation (TAG) campaign, which reached out to approximately 58,000 prospective students via email and phone. Highlands also expanded prospective student/counselor events on campus and created a recruitment twitter account. RNL recommended the purchase of a customer relations management (CRM) system to more effectively and efficiently communicate with prospective students and their families. The CRM will be purchased in spring 2017. For student retention, Highlands is using data from various student surveys to better advise first-time freshmen. Historical student data were also used

by the campus community to identify six Highlands student subpopulations and develop realistic goals. Five strategies that will be implemented to achieve retention goals for these populations.

- **Collaborated with University Relations to develop new marketing materials.** This collaboration has produced one viewbook, three e-magazines, an admitted-student group Facebook page, one NMHU informational trifold, one coming your way poster, one NMHU "at a glance" poster, two different department and major fact sheets, and 17 different post cards that will be used to present NMHU to prospective students and their families.
- **Endorsed the student retention plan and formalized the Retention Advisory Council and the Matriculation Task Force.** General faculty, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, the Associated Students of New Mexico Highlands University, and the Board of Regents endorsed a retention plan. The Retention Advisory Council is responsible for the implementation of retention strategies, oversees the identification of new retention goals, and develops and implements new strategies to fulfill goals. The Matriculation Task Force is responsible for reviewing NMHU processes that affect prospective students from inquiry through the enrollment phases and develops more efficient and effective interdepartmental communication process to support students from inquiry to matriculation.

Strategic Goal #3

Highlands University will achieve a vibrant campus life.

We commit to enhancing campus life for students, staff, faculty, alumni and community through expanded intellectual and recreational programs and services at the main campus and Centers, with a commitment to safety and inclusion.

To accomplish these goals, the division of Student Affairs has worked collaboratively to develop and promote a vibrant campus life for our students, campus community, and the Las Vegas community. This includes the development of the three-pronged campus life initiative (Arts @ HU series, Outdoor Recreation Center, and On- and Near-Campus Activities). Coordination of activities from across the campus has occurred, and there are campus life offerings at the center campuses for the first time.

- **Developed Arts @ HU series that provides high-quality and cultural entertainment for students** - including center students - at no charge and for the campus and Las Vegas communities at minimal cost. A number of events were held with a hundreds of students and campus and community members participating.



- **Created Outdoor Recreation Center for NMHU students, including center students.** All students get access to rent equipment at no charge and can participate in coordinated outdoor excursions which include skiing, hiking and camping trips. When the first ski trip was advertised to students at the end of the fall 2016 semester, it was booked within thirty minutes.
- **Enhanced the on and near campus activities available for students.** A variety of activities are available for students at no charge. Center specific activities are now available for the first time. A number of activities were hosted, occurring on and off campus.
- **Continued residential hall specific programming for students residing in the residence halls.** The Housing Office hosted 61 activities, and a 823 residents participated. While there was programming specific in the residence halls previously, the Housing Office has maintained these offerings including the annual Rez Fest week of activities at the beginning of the fall semester and Rez Fest Carnival in April.
- **Coordinated all campus life activities across departments** to limit duplication and double-booking of activities with the intent to maximize offerings available for students, including athletic events. A campus activity calendar is developed monthly and provided to students and posted on campus. Activities are also posted on NMHU events calendar and are now synced to the Ellucian Go application for ease of access.
- **Strengthened the social integration of all first-time freshmen and freshman-level transfer students through enrollment in a learning community Hacienda.** All learning communities are placed into a Hacienda, which supports students' extra- and co-curricular activities. A total of 323 students participated in learning communities during fall 2016.

Strategic Goal #4

Highlands University will be a community partner.

We commit to developing, expanding, and enhancing collaborative community partnerships for mutual benefit in the areas of leadership, community and economic development, community service, academic enrichment, entertainment, and recreation.

NMHU strives to be a leading community citizen and partner to a variety of community constituencies. Our goal is to benefit the Las Vegas, San Miguel County, and Northern New Mexico communities by sharing the talents, resources, and ideas of our faculty, staff, alumni, and students. Of particular focus is our desire to model community citizenship and service for our students and prospective students in the region. To that end, NMHU has:

- **Created an alumni board**, which held its first meeting in October 2016, to engage Highlands alumni and friends both locally and worldwide in the life of the University. Representatives who are alumni of our Rio Rancho and Santa Fe centers sit on the alumni board, and the board is seeking representatives who are graduates of each of our other centers. The alumni board attends and welcomes new graduates at main campus and at all of our center graduation ceremonies or celebrations
- **Invited the community to campus to share in a series of cultural events**, including regular free films at Ilfeld Auditorium, use of the Natatorium and gym facilities while a local community fitness center underwent renovation, and bringing headline acts like comedian Gabriel Iglesias ("Fluffy") and the National Dance Troupe of Ireland to campus, with low-cost tickets available to the community. Highlands has also scheduled cultural events in Albuquerque (HU @ the Zoo, at the Albuquerque Zoo and Bio Park; the River of Lights holiday display), and Santa Fe (Highlands Museum Day, an opportunity to visit for free multiple museums in the area) in partnership with our centers.
- **Partnered with the local business community to enhance campus life** while growing business opportunity, and to introducing our students to Northern New Mexico. Thanks to Highlands University's campus life initiative, students can participate in special events such as free screenings of first-run movies at a local theater, free pizza and bowling on pre-arranged evenings at a local restaurant, and no-cost Sipapu ski resort days, which includes equipment rental, lessons, and lift tickets.
- **Served as a lead participant in Main Street Las Vegas**, an organization seeking to revitalize and support the Las Vegas business community and work to economically develop the area.



- **Hosted alumni and community members at a series of free events on campus and at our centers**, including Highlands Loves Alumni, an Alumni Tea, and Homecoming events at the main campus in Las Vegas. Events specifically designed to serve our centers in Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Farmington, and Roswell, included a free ice skating event in Rio Rancho, a welcome picnic for alumni, students, and community members in Albuquerque, and a student/community/alumni reception in Farmington. These events have been attended by more than 800 alumni and community members since January 2016. Our event calendar can be found at nmhufoundation.org/nmhu-alumni/events.
- **In partnership with the Society for Science and the Public, Highlands hosted the annual Northeast Regional Science Fair**, which brings winning elementary, middle, and high school students to compete on our campus

In all that we do, we are mindful of the example and role we serve in our communities. We strive to engage broadly within our communities, and bring to bear our unique resources and perspective.

Strategic Goal #5

Highlands University will achieve technological advancement and innovation.

We commit to using technology strategically to support quality, efficiency, and innovation in daily operations, student support services, and teaching and learning.

To accomplish this goal, many departments from the campus community worked together to implement new technologies, including core elements essential for a modern campus such as critical servers, robust infrastructure, and easy-to-use technologies.

- **Upgrade to NMHU main computer system.** Like any university in the U.S. and abroad, having a core data center is vital and, in many cases, critical. To meet this goal, the university invested one-time state resources and internal funding to upgrade the aging system to a modern data center. These new upgrades included a highly available virtual server farm and storage array. Because of demand to service our students and centers, the university also upgraded its power backup system to include uninterrupted power supplies (UPS) and two generators in critical areas. These upgrades provide the university a data center similar to a systems used in Fortune 100 companies or research-one universities. These upgrades are flexible and expandable and should take the university well into the next decade.
- **Migration from Blackboard's Collaborate to Zoom Video Communications for its main online classroom delivery system and video conferencing platform.** At the recommendation of the faculty, Highlands adopted Zoom as its primary video conferencing tool, integrating this into Highlands pre-existing learning management platform Desire 2 Learn. Zoom has provided greatly enhanced video conference capabilities for the institution while providing a very user-friendly interface, which has added to the campuswide adoption of this product. By migrating to this new system, NMHU has increased the number of uses and the length of time within the system. From the 2015 to 2016 academic year, the university increased the number of zoom sessions by 160, an increase of 21.1 percent. This platform interfaces with numerous platforms, including Windows, Mac OS, tablets, and mobile devices.
- **Acquired new tools to enable the University to create a more robust recruitment and retention strategy.** One of the area of concerns, like most institutions in New Mexico as well as across the country, has been our enrollment decline. The university created a division of Strategic Enrollment Management and procured service from Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL). These tools and best practices are being provided by RNL and have begun to assist the university in building its enrollment and retention.
- **Email migration from campus servers to Microsoft cloud-based service called Office 365 (O365).** The new O365 environment provides a robust suite of integrated collaboration tools that will improve communications between faculty and students on campus while providing access and learning platform that will prepare Highlands' students for e-communications after graduation. So far, 100 percent of student accounts have been migrated, 100 percent of full-time faculty accounts have been migrated, approximately 95 percent of staff have been migrated, and adjunct faculty migration efforts are underway. This project is scheduled to be completed by December 2017.
- **Implemented a new voice recording services for campus police.** Prior to implementing the new service, NMHU dispatchers would take handwritten notes. Although campus police staff were all certified at this procedure and continue to use this procedure is a backup, most law enforcement agencies use this or similar technology. This new technology will help our law enforcement department to get more accurate facts and details for each call. This technology also helps reduce NMHU liability.



Strategic Goal #6

Highlands University will achieve enhanced communication and efficiency.

We commit to engaging in proactive communication at all levels to provide efficient and effective services.

- **Expanded participation at executive meetings.** To foster better communication of administrative decisions and deliberations, President Minner expanded the number of positions included in the semimonthly executive team's meetings. Before Dr. Minner's presidency, the president, vice president of academic affairs/provost, vice president of finance and administration, vice president for advancement, the dean of students, and the athletic director comprised the executive team. During the first months of his presidency, Dr. Minner added the presidents of the Faculty Senate and Staff Senate and the director of university relations to the team. He frequently invites other campus administrators to the meetings when needed.
- **Provided weekly messages to the campus.** At the start of his presidency, Dr. Minner began a campaign of weekly email communications to promote administrative transparency to the university community. The communications outline state legislation impacting the university, administrative actions, Highlands' community outreach, student life, and other events affecting the university community.
- **Held monthly coffee with the president.** To promote dialogue between the university community and contribute to administrative transparency to staff who might not receive the president's weekly email updates, such as grounds staff, Dr. Minner hosts a monthly coffee session for the university community. This allows the campus community, including participants from the university's centers, to address questions and concerns directly with the president in a comfortable environment.
- **Created the NMHU Power of Excellence series.** To highlight the many achievements of Highlands' faculty and staff, Provost Carol Linder instituted a Power of Excellence program. The program recognizes accomplishments in the arts and letters, successful grant writing, degree completion, and foundation giving. Honorees are noted through emails to the university community and reports to the university's Board of Regents.
- **Improved HR through hiring a new director and implementing best practices, including annual reviews and contracts.** Highlands' new director of human resources, Denise Montoya, brought a new level of communication and functionality to the university's HR office. Dr.

Montoya restructured employee evaluations to encourage constructive feedback between managers and employees, developed broad training programs for all employee levels, and is implementing best practice models in the Office of Human Resources, such as a formalized contract policy.

- **Implemented a new strategic budgeting process.** Highlands University's budgeting process is the most transparent and mission driven compared with the past several decades. Each unit leader meets with his or her team to identify the unit's budgeting needs and prioritizes requests to align with the unit's and university's mission. The requests are then forwarded to the respective vice president and the university's executive team for evaluation within the context of the university's mission and goals and makes recommendations to the president. At that point, the president determines the top 20 requests for funding. The funding proposals and ranking are then discussed in an open campus forum and published on the university's website at www.nmhu.edu/accreditation-information/probation-areas/strategic-plans.