

NM Highlands University Strategic Planning AY 16/17

Executive Summary: Closing the Loop

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To: Executive Management Team

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Overview:

In the Fall of 2016, New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) established a Strategic Steering Planning Committee to provide recommendations and input to the NMHU executive leadership team (EMT) on the long and short term goals for budget and NMHU strategic plan as they relate to our mission, goals, and values. Specifically the Committee is charged with the following:

1. To recommend initial budget priorities to the President for the year as outlined in the Budget Process;
2. To review and recommend revised procedures to the Executive Management Team as necessary related to the implementation of the university's strategic plan;
3. To monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the strategic plan and to report regularly to the executive leadership team and Faculty Senate about the progress of the strategic plan.

Membership is comprised of the Provost/VPAA who serves as chair, three administrators, three faculty, three staff, and three students from different departments across the University.

Each department and VP office developed a strategic plan to address their priority goals in support of the university's strategic goals. Budget priorities are also included as part of the strategic plan. One-hundred-twelve plans were submitted to the VPAA office and reviewed; 100% submission.

During the summer of 2017 a new step was added to the initial process and introduced a revised template. The revised template included new sections that required departments to *close the loop*. All departments were tasked with completing an analysis of their status in meeting those goals as; achieved, ongoing, or stopped, providing date of completion, recommendations for further actions, challenges meeting those goals, and budget considerations.

In early Fall 2017, a call was sent out the university community with the new template with a request to complete and close the loop from the previous year's strategic plan. The VPAA reviewed 21 plans submitted to determine the overall success from the individual departments, ensuring the accomplishments met the University goals, and establish overarching themes of challenges departments faced in meeting their goals.

Accomplishments:

Overall, each department was able to achieve at least one of their stated goals. For example, academic support increased the use of NetTutor by 33%, the goal was to increase usage of the online platform. Center for Teaching Excellence saw an increase in attendance at the faculty professional development workshops, resulting in comments from faculty stating they are seeing an improvement in student success and their teaching skills. Student life has been able to move forward on many of their strategic goals due to the Student Life fee. In general, most academic programs are *ongoing* in terms of program revisions and establishing advisory groups for those programs with a professional focus. An area of achievement across the University is the increase of training for faculty, staff, and students in a variety of topics. Additionally, there has been an increase in the use of technology to support processes/procedures and streamline services across the operational departments. While there are many goals yet to be met, all departments identified recommendations for next steps, which were typically modifications of the goal or stopping the goal, and challenges they face meeting those goals.

Themes of Challenges:

The strategic planning process has proved to be a useful tool for University as a whole and as we move forward to meet our University and departmental goals, it is important to highlight the areas most commonly identified as challenges as the challenges do seem to cross all sectors.

- Training – although there has been an increase in training, there is a stated need University-wide for more training on technologies, teaching models, customer service, and ongoing professional development for staff.
- Web site – many departments University-wide consider our web site a major challenge in terms of recruitment, currency of information, and ability to function as our primary marketing tool.
- Technology – many departments are in favor of added technologies to streamline our operations, data collection, and learning technology advancements.
- Staffing – there are concerns about turnover rates, although I haven't seen any data on turnover, there is a need to collect this information. Low personnel to carry out the tasks required are a common theme – not enough people to do the job: we have several one person initiatives for the University. Additionally, there is a need to review the tenure-track lines compared to the credit hour enrollment production by program as well as reviewing release time for special projects and grants.
- Scarce Resources – fiscal and personnel limitations have resulted in some goals being stopped. Additionally, some goals have been scaled back or pushed out until resources are available. However, there will be limited resources and not all goals will be implemented, as a result, in a few of the strategic plans, recommendations were made to reevaluate the goal.
- Enrollment – although low enrollments were not specifically identified as a challenge, many of the resource challenges are directly related to credit hour production.

- Collaboration – many goals were tied to collaborative work within the University and in the community. The challenge appears to be commitment of time, resources, and establishing a standard of communication across the University.

Next Steps:

For those departments that did not submit their revised 2016/17 Strategic Plans with the analysis of their status in meeting goals, they will be sent a notice to have their documents submitted no later than September 22. Once in, the VPAA will review the plans for additional information and status of completion. The next Strategic Planning Committee meets on September 18, 2017, at this meeting we will establish the date for the 2017 strategic plan revisions. The Steering Committee has already submitted FY 19 priorities based on the current strategic plans.

Conclusion:

The NM Highlands University Strategic Planning for the AY 16/17 was successful and achieved the overall goal of establishing a process whereby budgetary priorities have been established, we now have a process in place that is established allowing the University to continue with the continual improvement.