



## Institutional Marketing Plan 2018-2019

### Strategic Goals

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.

Highlands University will achieve enhanced communication and efficiency. We commit to engaging in proactive communication at all levels to provide efficient and effective services.

The institutional marketing plan is designed to increase New Mexico Highlands University's visibility, strengthen the university's reputation, build interest of our academic programs among prospective students, assist with fundraising efforts, and align communication efforts across the institution's Las Vegas campus and centers in Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, and Farmington. To support a consistent, unified brand centered on the Highlands Family while supporting academic and non-academic units, this plan outlines tactics and strategies to achieve that end.

This plan is designed with the recognition of multiple, unique audiences:

- Prospective students,
- Parents/relatives of prospective students,
- Current students,
- Parents of current students,
- The institution's geographic communities,
- Media and influencers,
- Faculty and staff,
- Donors,
- Employers, &
- Alumni

### Situational Analysis

#### 1. Competitive Analysis:

- For more than a century, New Mexico Highlands served as the educational center for Northern New Mexico. As the nature of higher education has changed, the commitment to a personalized education, social mobility, and opportunity served as a constant foundation supporting a diverse

community of learners. The quality of Highlands' faculty has long been a strength for the university as evidenced by the consistent positive responses from alumni satisfaction surveys. Highlands has also earned Best Bang for the Buck recognition from Washington Monthly Magazine and the Brookings Institution noted Highlands is one of the top universities in its category for improving its students' social mobility. Students at Highlands' Las Vegas campus enjoy unparalleled scenery rich with the state's history as well as an engaging Arts@HU series that brings in national performing talent.

#### 2. Quality of Faculty:

- Highlands features a 15:1 student-faculty ratio, unique for a public university.
- At Highlands, 89 percent of faculty members hold the highest possible degrees in their fields, which means students are taught by experts. Faculty also serve as mentors and/or advisors to both undergraduate and graduate students.
- Highlands is committed to hiring a diverse faculty that reflects our student demographics. Currently there are 94 tenured/tenure-track faculty at Highlands. Of these, 59 percent are white, 21 percent are Hispanic, 1 percent are American Indian, 2 percent are African American, 4 percent are Asian, 7 percent are non-resident alien, and 5 percent self-identify as two or more or unknown (Source 2016-2017 NMHU Factbook). Compared to the other New Mexico four-year Institutions, Highlands has the second-highest percentage of Hispanic faculty in the state, trailing only to Northern New Mexico College.
- On average, 35 faculty and staff teach a learning community course every year.

#### 3. Academic Programs:

- Whether students are interested in pursuing graduate school, a professional career or conducting research, New Mexico Highlands University has strong professional programs in the schools of social work, education, and business administration and media arts, offering 39 bachelor's programs, 18 master's programs, seven associate programs, and 24 certificates. The College of Arts and Sciences fully prepares students for graduate school and careers in industry or nonprofit entities.
- To promote accessibility and to meet the economic and educational needs of our students, Highlands operates four



main centers in Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, and Farmington.

- o The Albuquerque Center is located in midtown Albuquerque and only offers bachelor of social work and master of social work degrees.
- o The Farmington Center is located in the Four Corners region of northwestern New Mexico. The center provides access to programs in business, education, criminal justice, counseling, psychology, university studies, and social work.
- o The Rio Rancho Center is located in Rio Rancho, a suburb 20 minutes north of Albuquerque, and focuses on education programs, helping to educate teachers, counselors, and administrators for the Albuquerque and Rio Rancho population center. The Rio Rancho Center also offers a number of classes in social work, criminal justice, and psychology.
- o The Santa Fe Center is located in Santa Fe, the state capital. The center provides access to programs in business, education, criminal justice, counseling, university studies, and social work.

#### 4. University Identity:

The Highlands Family: During the spring of 2016, a newly formed branding committee conducted surveys of current and prospective students, faculty and staff, and the alumni and community. One theme clearly rose to prominence among each of New Mexico Highlands' constituencies: family.

#### Brand Principles:

Our principles honor New Mexico Highlands' history, tradition and perspectives. The brand principles articulate our beliefs and community values and convey to each of our audiences why we do what we do:

- Passion
- Support
- Belonging
- Loyalty
- Acceptance

As a member of the New Mexico Highlands family, each student, faculty and staff member, and alumnus/a is here to celebrate each other's victories, support each other through difficulties, and respect each other's individual contributions to our community.

- Highlands has a long-standing reputation for providing educational opportunities for all students as an open admission university, serving Northern New Mexico's

and Southern Colorado's Hispanic and Native American populations since 1893.

- In 1987, NMHU was a founding member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and has been a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) since the inception of such institution designations by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Highlands has a wide range of academic offerings. Identified in our mission as a comprehensive university and classified by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions as such, Highlands follows the Carnegie definition that "These institutions awarded at least one master's degree or professional practice/other doctoral degrees in each of the humanities, social sciences, and STEM fields, as well as such graduate degrees in one or more professional fields."

#### Opportunities

**Student Markets:** Identifying out-of-state recruiting markets and developing goals to increase enrollment of out of state students. In addition, development of marketing materials, targeted advertising campaigns, and MOUs to attract and enroll more international students.

**Nationwide Demographic Shift:** There are several shifts occurring nationwide in terms of college-going populations. More nontraditional students are seeking to obtain degrees and or improve their credentials by attending university. This group is also shifting how education is being delivered therefore Highlands needs to adapt and be innovative in developing new and various modalities of offering courses to this population.

A second nationwide factor is the ethnic shift in K-12 school enrollment. About a quarter of the children in K-12 US schools are Hispanic, and it is estimated that by 2023 this minority group will be the majority. To address the shift in ethnicity of college aged students, NMHU has the advantage of already being a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). NMHU has experience with this ethnic group and many of the support systems already in place were developed to serve this population. However, NMHU must capitalize on the fact that it is an HSI and better market this fact to this emerging population.

**Student Retention:** Highlands has had varying success retaining first time freshmen with average fall to spring rates of 74 percent and fall to fall rates of 50 percent. Retention of transfer students has been higher with fall to spring rates of 80 percent and fall to fall average of 68 percent. Highlands' enrollment can be highly impacted by increasing not only retention rates for its undergraduate population but there is



also an opportunity to impact enrollment by recruiting more transfer students. These students have proven to be more successful overall as compared to first time freshmen.

## Challenges

New Mexico's changing demographic trends, particularly in New Mexico Highlands' traditional service areas underscore the need to continue to expand the university's marketing reach outside the state and region. However, the university's commitment to marketing funds, while improving, have been substantially less than similarly sized institutions and has not been adequate to maintain advertising campaigns consistently throughout each fiscal year.

**New Mexico Population:** Decreasing number of high school graduates in the state of NM due to a decreasing population, especially in the northern part of the state, which has been the primary service area of NMHU.

**Competition:** Other colleges and universities in the state of NM offer many of the same programs at a slightly higher cost but have better reputation or are located in urban centers more attractive to many students; we must successfully differentiate Highlands from top competitors in order to attract and retain students.

**Economic Climate of NM:** The state's funds are primarily generated from oil and natural gas reserves. When demand for these natural resources decreases the funds generated also decrease. NM's dependence on oil and natural gas highly affects state funding for higher education. Highlands' dependence on state funding makes the institution highly vulnerable therefore NMHU needs to develop other sources of revenue.

## Key Messages

- **Family.** At Highlands University, we believe in our students. Like a family, we're here to celebrate success and help through life's challenges. The friendships and memories from our student's tenure will last a lifetime.
- **Social Mobility.** Compared with other colleges around the country, New Mexico Highlands University is an extraordinary value. Our students graduate with less debt, meaning they live their dreams faster when they graduate. But don't take our word for it, The College Scorecard (a program sponsored by the United States Department of Education), issued its annual findings regarding college costs and earning of graduates, stating Highlands graduates earn more on average than graduates than graduates from the University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University, Western New Mexico University and Eastern New Mexico University.

- **Transformative Experience.** Our faculty care about your goals and want to help you achieve them.
- **Opportunity.** Highlands prides itself on its high-impact practices. These are experiences that enhance what is learned in the classroom: working on research with the professors, learning communities, first-year experiences, global learning. We provide our students with real life skills that will take them farther.
- **A place like no other.** Discover what generations of artists, explorers, filmmakers and students like you already know – there's no place in the world like northern New Mexico. We'll even give you the tools to help explore your new home; our Outdoor Recreation Department organizes free ski and hiking trips for students and has outdoor equipment you can borrow. For free.

## Marketing Objectives:

This is a yearly plan that will be modified based on data and newly developed strategies at the end of every year for the subsequent year

- Advance positive awareness of Highlands University in Northern New Mexico, across the region, nationally and globally,
- Develop internal communications to inspire the university community to understand and tell the Highlands Family story consistently,
- Promote the Highlands Family story in an engaging manner across traditional and new media platforms,
- Increase the number of qualified and promising applicants to all Highlands degree programs,
- Build and affinity for Highlands University and its mission among alumni, the communities we serve and donors to increase engagement, giving, volunteering, and event attendance, and
- Support strategic, data-driven marketing and communication activities around campus.

## Current Advertising Activities

- Online
- Radio
- Print
- Other

### Online

Google, Facebook and Instagram ads in New Mexico, Arizona and California (excluding Los Angeles ZIP codes, primarily reaching people from 18-34, non-parents and parents with a household income in the middle and lower middle class.



### Radio

KKSS-FM (Kiss 97.3 top 40) Albuquerque  
KKRG-FM (YO! 105.1 hip hop) Albuquerque  
KJFA-FM (La Jefe 101.3 Spanish) Albuquerque  
KVLO-FM (Radio Lobo 97.7 Spanish) Albuquerque/Santa Fe  
KBAC-FM (Radio Free 98.1 alternative) Santa Fe/Las Vegas  
KQBA-FM (Outlaw Country 107.5 country) Santa Fe  
KLBU-FM (Jamn 94.7 top 40) Santa Fe  
KTRC-AM (KTRC 1260 talk) Santa Fe  
KFUN-AM (KFUN 1230 variety) Las Vegas  
KNMX-AM (KNMX 540 variety) Las Vegas  
KEDP-FM (HU campus radio)

### Print

Cibola County Beacon (Grants) 2,470 Tues, Fri  
Clovis News – Journal 5,735 Daily  
El Defender Chieftain 2,305 Thursday  
Farmington Daily Times 11,103 Daily  
Guadalupe Co Communicator (Santa Rosa) 2,200 Thursday  
Herald 4,063 Wednesday  
Hidalgo Co Herald (Lordsburg) 1,800 Friday  
Hobbs News – Sun 6,726 Daily  
Independent (Edgewood) 3,400 Wednesday  
Las Cruces Bulletin 20,000 Friday  
Las Vegas Daily Optic 3,885 Monday –Wednesday -Friday  
Los Alamos Monitor 4,640 Tuesday – Friday – Sunday  
Lovington Leader 1,500 Tuesday – Thursday- Friday  
Mountain View Telegraph 4,200 Thursday  
Portales News Tribune 1,933 Daily  
Quay County Sun (Tucumcari) 1,451 Wednesday  
Rio Grande Sun (Española) 9,852 Thursday  
Roswell Daily Record 10,389 Tuesday – Sunday  
Santa Fe New Mexican 19,836 Daily  
Sierra County Sentinel / Hatch Sentinel 4,987 Friday  
Silver City Daily Press 5,106 Monday – Friday  
Taos News 9,466 Thursday  
Valencia County News Bulletin 15,500 Thursday

Total Circulation: 152,547

Total Readership: 380,000

### Press Release Distribution:

New Mexico AP (Associated Press wire)

### TV

KRQE News 13  
KOAT Action News 7  
KOB Eyewitness News 4

### Newspapers

Albuquerque Journal  
Santa Fe New Mexican  
Farmington Daily Times  
Roswell Daily Record  
Las Cruces Sun-News  
Alamogordo Daily News  
Albuquerque Business First  
Las Vegas Optic  
Santa Fe New Mexican  
THE magazine  
Rio Rancho Observer  
El Defensor Chieftain  
The Taos News  
Los Alamos Monitor  
Valencia County News-Bulletin  
The Chronicle-News (Trinidad, Colo.)  
Lovington Leader  
Truth or Consequence Herald  
Lordsburg  
Fort Sumner  
Clayton  
Santa Rosa Nat Bloomer  
Angel Fire  
Alamogordo  
Silver City

### Radio

KRTN  
KCRT  
KFUN  
KNMX

### Other Advertising:

Movie theater lobby advertising

- Albuquerque Downtown 14
- Albuquerque Rio 24
- Santa Fe Stadium 14



- Albuquerque Buses
- Newspaper special issues
- Trade publications

## Strategies

- Develop an overarching university marketing plan that outlines Highlands' unique brand across the institution's Las Vegas campus, its centers and distance education, and alumni and donors. (Spring- Fall 2019)
  - Establish a marketing plan committee with representatives from SEM, the Office of Advancement, the centers, faculty and staff.
  - Develop and execute an institutional visibility and awareness campaign.
- Align the university under an improved website and portal to better tell the Highlands Family story and direct information to relevant audiences. (Spring 2019)
  - Hire consultant to develop data-driven content audit and wireframes to improve information access.
  - Secure portal software for better communication to current students, faculty, and staff.
  - Hire web content manager to assist units in keeping web information current and relevant. (January 2019)
- Advance the university's recruitment, admissions, enrollment and communication tools.
  - See Office of Student Recruitment plan.
- Continue updating Highlands' library of digital and printed recruitment materials. (Ongoing)
- Establish a timeline of printed material updates. (Fall 2019)
  - Create a single budget for the production of printed materials.
  - Examine the possibility of a single university budget / office for "swag."
  - Hire graphic designer (April 2019).
  - Develop University Relations' video production capabilities and produce regular material to supplement e-brochure, website pages and social media campaigns.
  - Create an online asset library, style guides and templates for marketing materials.
- Develop a plan for consolidated, efficient internal communications.
  - Current students, faculty and staff portal application to segregate information to relevant offices (ITS).
  - Weekly combined administrative email newsletter "What you need to know."
  - Scheduled Facebook Live events.
  - Internal HU in the News campaign.
- Utilize digital and social media trends to highlight the HU Family story. (Spring/Fall 2019)
  - Revive Purple Posse under the direction of web content manager.
  - Begin series of Facebook Live interviews with campus newsmakers.
  - Create news video feed.
- Develop a media relations strategy to further the reach of the HU Family story. (Spring – Fall 2019)
  - Expand media list to include influencers and specialty publications.
  - Develop a faculty experts list and distribute to targeted media outlets.
  - Produce an editorial calendar for media placements and potential opportunities for op-eds from faculty and university administrators.
  - Leverage the president as the university's leader and face of the institution and identify opportunities for community visibility, outreach and speaking opportunities.
  - Statewide newsroom visits by University Relations staff.
  - Weekly Highlands news show on KEDP featuring campus newsmakers.
  - Hometown newspaper outreach for student stories
- Coordinate efforts between the Office of Advancement and University Relations to produce an editorial calendar for alumni and donor communications. (Fall 2019)
- Build formal advertising plans and goals based on current and expanded budget assumptions. (Spring – Fall 2019)
  - Build on current online advertising campaigns to increase geographic outreach .
  - Continue optimizing targeted audience to more effectively reach an appropriate demographic of prospective students.
  - Research firms specializing in university marketing.
  - Standardize radio and print advertising .



