



Focused Visit Report

After the team reaches a consensus, the team chair completes this form to summarize and document the team's view. Notes and evidence should be essential and concise. **Note:** If the visit involved more than five areas of focus, please contact the institution's HLC staff liaison for an expanded version of this form.

Submit the completed draft report to the institution's HLC staff liaison. When the report is final, submit it as a single PDF file at hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Final Reports" from the list of submission options to ensure the report is sent to the correct HLC staff member.

Institution: New Mexico Highlands University

City, State: Las Vegas, New Mexico

Visit Date: 10/05/2020-10/06/2020

Names of Peer Reviewers (List the names, titles and affiliations of each peer reviewer. The team chair should note that designation in parenthesis.)

Dr. Janet V. Smith (Team Chair)
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Part A: Context and Nature of Visit

1. **Purpose of the Visit** (Provide the visit description from the Evaluation Summary Sheet.)

The Board required that the institution host a Focused Visit regarding Core Components 4.C, 5.A, and 5.D.

2. Accreditation Status

- Accredited
- Accredited—On Notice
- Accredited—On Probation

3. Organizational Context

New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) is a public, not-for-profit institution with a current enrollment of approximately 2780 students. The University offers degrees at the Associates, Bachelors, and Masters levels, totaling 61 degree programs, as well as 24 certificate programs, across a wide variety of disciplines.

NMHU has been regionally accredited since 1926. The institution's recent accreditation history involves extensive monitoring, including three Monitoring/Progress Reports in 2007, a Monitoring Report in 2012, a Financial Indicators Report in 2013, and the institution was placed on probation in 2016. In 2018, NMHU was no longer deemed to be out of compliance with the criteria for accreditation and the probation status was removed. However, at that time, three core components were still found to be Met with Concerns, necessitating the current Focused Visit.

The next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for academic year 2021-2022.

4. Unique Aspects of Visit

The Focused Visit was originally scheduled for March 30th - March 31st, 2020, but was rescheduled due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the original dates and rescheduled dates were planned as an onsite visit. Because of the continuing impact of the pandemic in October 2020, it was not possible to conduct an onsite visit due to out-of-state travel restrictions to New Mexico. Therefore, the visit was conducted virtually with the addition of an in-state team member, who served as an onsite reviewer.

5. Interactions With Institutional Constituencies and Materials Reviewed. List the titles or positions, but not names, of individuals with whom the team interacted during the review and the principal documents, materials and web pages reviewed.

Interactions with Institutional Constituencies:

President and Cabinet

- President
- Provost/VPAA
- VP for Finance and Administration
- VP for Student and Donor Engagement
- Dean of Students
- Special Assistant to the President

- Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- Director of Marketing/University Relations
- Director of Athletics
- Librarian/Head of Public Services
- Senior Executive Administrative Assistant
- Dean of Business, Arts, and Technology

President

Vice President for Student and Donor Engagement

- Vice President for Student and Donor Engagement
- Director of Student Enrollment Management

Budget and Planning Committee

- VP for Finance and Administration
- Associate VP for Finance, Administration, and Government Relations
- Director of Purchasing
- Undergraduate Student Representative
- Graduate Student Representative
- Center Director
- Faculty Representative
- Staff Senate Representative
- Housing Representative
- HLC Liaisons (Internal) (2)

VP for Finance, Administration, and Government Relations

- VP for Finance and Administration
- Associate VP for Finance, Administration, and Government Relations
- Budget Director/Comptroller

Faculty Senate Executive

- Faculty Senate Chair
- Faculty Senate Vice-Chair
- Faculty Senate Secretary
- Faculty Senate Representatives (2)

Strategic Enrollment Management Committee

- 28 Attendees

Open Forum

- 49 Attendees

Financial Aid Office

- Director of Financial Aid
- Associate Director of Financial Aid

Foundation Office/Student Relations Coordinator

- Vice President for Student and Donor Engagement
- Student Relations Coordinator
- Dean of Students
- Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving
- HLC Liaison (Internal)

Strategic Planning Committee

- Provost/VPAA
- Associate VP for Academic Affairs, Grants, and Contracts
- Assistant Registrar
- Center Director
- Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- Director of Online and Extended Learning
- HLC Liaisons (Internal) (2)
- Special Assistant to the President
- Faculty Representatives (4)
- President's Leadership Fellow

Unit Planning Committee/Unit Leaders

- 32 Attendees

Retention Advisory Committee

- Vice President for Student and Donor Engagement
- Dean of Students
- Director of Strategic Enrollment Management
- Faculty Representative

- Executive Administrative Assistants (2)
- Assistant Director of Student Success Center
- HLC Liaison (Internal)

Drop-In Session

- 12 attendees (including two Board members)

Exit Session

- President and Cabinet

Materials Reviewed:

- Self-study and supporting evidence documents
- Institutional website
- New Mexico Highlands University Financial Audit FY2019
- Fall 2019 Census Day Enrollment
- Spring 2020 Census Day Enrollment
- NMHU Organizational Chart
- Membership and Charge for Selected Committees
- Fall 2020 Census Day Enrollment (Unofficial)
- Fall-to-Fall Retention Rates: Fall 2016 to Fall 2019 Cohorts
- Enrollment in New Programs Fall 2020
- Procedures for Ensuring Graduation Success
- New Mexico Highlands University Financial Audit for Fiscal Year 2018
- Financial Statements and Independent Auditors' Report, June 30, 2020
- Financial Audit for Fiscal Year 2017

6. **Areas of Focus.** Complete the following A and B sections for each area of focus identified in the visit description on the Evaluation Summary Sheet. Note that each area of focus should correspond with only one Core Component or other HLC requirement.

A1. Statement of Focus:

- Completion and implementation of a comprehensive Enrollment Management Plan. This plan should, at a minimum, identify target enrollments with supporting rationale for student population types (e.g., first-time, first-year students, transfer students, graduate students); mechanisms for recruiting students; and targets for retention, persistence, and completion rates for each student type.

- Documentation of improvement in the collection and analysis of data on student retention, persistence, and completion, with consistency in data reporting. These data should include a comprehensive review of the 2017 retention, persistence, and completion goals.
- Increased use of information to make improvements as warranted by the data on student retention, persistence, and completion. Evidence should be provided that demonstrates the use of the evaluation of the 2016 and 2017 retention, persistence, and completion goals for continuous improvement.

Relevant Core Component or other HLC requirement:

Core Component 4.C

B1. Statements of Evidence (check one below):

- Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.
- Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention, rather than monitoring, is required in the area of focus.
- Evidence demonstrates that monitoring is required.
- Evidence demonstrates that HLC sanction is warranted.

The team will also note its determination as to each applicable Core Component or HLC requirement in Part B.

Evidence:

Completion and implementation of comprehensive Enrollment Management Plan

- New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) has developed and implemented a comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEM) to guide the institution's enrollment operations and activities, and eventually earned the support and endorsement of a broad range of university stakeholders after needed refinements and revisions were identified and made. This plan will be completed in 2021 and work is currently underway to develop a new strategic enrollment plan which is expected to be launched during the spring semester, 2021.
- The University has made significant progress in gathering and effectively analyzing a variety of data and information sources relative to recruitment and enrollment by student type, i.e. new, first time freshmen, transfer students with and without Associates' degrees, graduate students. Using a set of Key Enrollment Indicators (KEI's) collected by the Office of Institutional Research, these data are regularly examined, evaluated and reports are shared with a variety of constituencies across campus who are engaged in the University's enrollment and retention efforts.
- Highly effective personnel changes have been made which have led to the recent reorganization of enrollment activities under the leadership of a Vice President for Student and Donor Engagement. While some organizational modifications and personnel changes are still needed and others are underway, this reassignment of responsibilities and staff has created an energized team of professionals who are unified in their purpose and committed to achieving their goals.

- Despite the improved planning and operations and effective organizational changes, NMHU, like all New Mexico institutions of higher education, is still struggling to increase enrollment because of a range of external environmental conditions largely beyond the institution's control. These conditions include a significant decline in college age students in the State of New Mexico, increased competition for students among the several state universities, and deteriorating economic conditions across the state, presently exacerbated by the pandemic.
- As a result, both undergraduate and graduate student enrollment figures show consistent declines. To address the problem, attention has been focused on developing new programs and different learning formats and platforms. Some efforts have been successful in attracting new enrollment such as the Alternative Teacher Licensure Program and the Business Administration Entrepreneurship Concentration and others proposals are still being developed, including a Doctor of Nursing Practice Program in collaboration with another institution. Other initiatives under serious consideration and viewed as promising are a collaborative venture with Wiley to offer the Social Work and other degrees online, a master's degree in Forestry, and a graduate program in Criminology.

Improvements in collecting and analyzing data to improve retention, persistence, and completion

- NMHU has also made significant progress in gathering and effectively analyzing data and information relative to retention, persistence and completion. To track retention, each semester, specific information is collected for first time, full-time enrollees, incoming transfer students, new graduate students, and academically at-risk students. These data are evaluated each semester and weekly during the registration period. Reports are then shared with constituencies across campus who are also engaged in the University's retention efforts.
- University staff focused on retention and completion have benefited from extensive professional development and external support, including consulting advice from Noel Levitz, participation in the Higher Learning Commission Persistence and Completion Academies, and attendance by six University administrators and faculty at the Georgia State University Program for improving retention and success for at-risk students. Several specific programs and activities have been redesigned to incorporate and institutionalize the knowledge gained from these efforts which include:
 - Transitioning from an Academic Advising to a Student Success model of student coaching and engagement, through tracking innumerable details of student performance, ranging from class attendance to campus involvement followed up with pro-active reaching out;
 - Adopting Tutor Track software to record and examine students' use of a variety of support services including the Writing Center, the ARMAS math and science support Center, the Learning Center computer services, accessibility services, online tutoring, placement testing, and peer advising;
 - Expanding the Highlands University Undergraduate Enrichment Program by extending the first-year experience learning communities to include sophomores as well as supporting student engagement through academic and student activities and peer connections.
- While there is still much work to be done to increase retention and degree completion rates, some progress has been made and the Strategic Enrollment Management staff are pleased

to see that numbers are now more closely matching the national averages of other open enrollment institutions, even during the disruption caused by the current pandemic.

- Access to reliable data has also enabled staff to develop a more fine-grained understanding of the impact of enrolling at-risk categories of students such as first year students who apply for acceptance late and with low high school GPA's and transfer students who have not completed an associate's degree (as compared to those who have). The institution has begun to formally track at-risk student target goals and is now positioned to quickly identify those who are not as likely to succeed and have developed the resources and strategies to support them.
- Perhaps one of the more important changes with respect to retention and completion is the rather significant cultural transformation that has enabled the wider campus community to understand that achieving retention and degree completion success is quite literally everyone's job. This wider understanding and commitment was articulated by numerous faculty and staff and was evidenced in a number of different ways across campus.

Increased use of data and information to make improvements as warranted

- Adroit analysis of data has enabled NMHU to assess its successes and pinpoint areas needing attention or requiring change. Some former practices have been discontinued and/or replaced by new systems, revised procedures and innovative methods of operation which together have strengthened outreach to prospective students, systematized follow up of admitted applicants and improved advising and orientation practices for students to support their retention and completion. Among these are:
 - making major improvements to the University's website, though more are still needed and anticipated and making significant adjustments in the Marketing Plan;
 - hiring a Transfer Evaluation Specialist in the Office of the Registrar, with plans for increased automation being discussed; and
 - creating the position of Student Relations Coordinator, now in the Dean of Students Office, to serve as an ombudsman, fielding all types of student academic and co-curricular questions or concerns and then following them through to resolution by the appropriate offices.
- University administrators know that their new, data-informed understanding of the institution and its students has enabled them to identify more realistic and promising opportunities for enrollment growth. Given state demographics, attention is now being focused not only on undergraduate recruitment but also on adult degree completion and graduate education, given that 27 percent of the institution's undergraduates go on to earn graduate degrees at NMHU. They can see their graduate population is now significantly shifting toward online education, and have recognized the importance of centrally coordinating graduate recruitment and admissions. They have organized customized recruitment programs at the Campus Centers, and may investigate designation as a Native American Serving, Non-Tribal Institution (NASNTI).
- Administrators also know what is not working, realizing that though athletics is an important undergraduate recruitment tool, changes in policy and personnel were essential to ensure that student athletes are retained and graduate and a new Director of Athletics has been hired. Administrators know that the recently hired Transfer Coordinator has been challenged by major enrollment declines in the state's community colleges and consequently the number of transfers will be necessarily limited. They recognize that career development is an

important factor motivating first generation college students particularly, and with the help of a recently awarded grant from the New Mexico State Legislature, they have secured the funds to transition their Career Services Office to a Center for Professional Development and Career Readiness which is expected to build students' self-knowledge and soft skills while also developing their career readiness.

A2. Statement of Focus:

- Evidence of a reduction in the reliance on state funding to balance the institution's budget.
- Stabilization or growth in student enrollment through the identification of a clear strategy linked to metric-driven recruitment and student persistence goals.
- Independent audits of the institution, the Foundation, and Isotopes that do not yield any findings or, at minimum, do not yield any repeat findings.
- Continued year-end actual change in net assets at break-even levels or that yield surplus.

Relevant Core Component or other HLC requirement:

Core Component 5.A

B2. Statements of Evidence (check one below):

- Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.
- Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention, rather than monitoring, is required in the area of focus.
- Evidence demonstrates that monitoring is required.
- Evidence demonstrates that HLC sanction is warranted.

The team will also note its determination as to each applicable Core Component or HLC requirement in Part B.

Evidence:

Evidence of a reduction in the reliance on state funding to balance the institution's budget

- New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) has made progress in reducing their reliance on state funding. Working with their Board, they have increased tuition 6% in FY16, 15% in FY17 and 7% in FY18. Tuition was held constant in FY19. Tuition policy indicates NMHU has always focused on access. Even with these recent large increases, NMHU still is the second most inexpensive institution amongst their regional peers.
- Advancement and foundation revenue have increased 66% from \$1.223M in FY16 to \$2.023M in FY19. Due to changes in tuition pricing in combination with the increase in advancement revenue, NMHU percentage share of their budget from State General Fund has decreased from the mid to upper 70% to around 60-65% for FY18 and FY19. Given the

uncertain nature of the New Mexico economy and its reliance on extraction and tourism, NMHU will probably always be subject to dramatic fluctuations in their state appropriation.

- NMHU has attempted to alleviate the budget pressures from the state economy by building up their reserves. The Board of Regents passed a policy in 2018 which requires the institution to have a reserve balance of \$12M. NMHU have altered their annual budgets to allow for a portion to be placed into that reserve every year. As of FY19, the reserve is up to \$9.8M, while their unrestricted net assets are at \$15M. Both indicators are moving in the right direction and reflect a changing attitude from the institution to build these up to soften any reductions in state appropriation or declines in enrollment.
- To better respond to enrollment and state appropriation declines, NMHU has built into their budget process, mechanisms to reduce expenditures quickly. Examples of this include reducing travel budgets, slowing down or halting hiring of new positions and sweeping budget balances back to the central University fund so they may help offset any budget deficits. In Fall of 2019, NMHU experienced an enrollment decline of 9%. Through implementation of some of the above processes, NMHU was able to balance their budget without any significant layoffs of personnel or dramatic budget reductions.

Stabilization or growth in student enrollment through the identification of a clear strategy linked to metric-driven recruitment and student persistence goals

- NMHU has faced, and will continue to face, enrollment challenges. The University has taken a multi-pronged approach to addressing its enrollment challenges. New program development is one method they are actively pursuing. NMHU has recently received approval to offer an MFA, a new Alternative Teacher Certification program and an entrepreneurship concentration at both the BBA and MBA level. Others currently under consideration include a Doctorate of Nursing Practice, a MS in Forestry and a fully online MBA program.
- NMHU has worked on numerous ideas to increase their freshman to sophomore retention rate. The rate has hovered typically around 50% and has increased to 55% for the 2019-2020 academic year. Strategies implemented include creation of a Retention Advisory Council, participation in the HLC sponsored Persistence and Completion Academy, creating a new position of Student Relations Coordinator and implementation of a success coaching model.
- NMHU has also worked extensively to leverage their available financial aid to provide students with the best information to make their higher education financing decision. Adoption of a new financial aid software package has helped with the timely communication to students. While more work remains, this is a step in the right direction.
- Admissions is also utilizing new software to allow students to be admitted and register much faster than previously. Currently, a student can be admitted and register in only four days, and this is reduced from weeks under the old system. This type of customer/student friendly initiative should help NMHU with its enrollment challenges.

Independent audits of the institution, the Foundation, and Isotopes that do not yield any findings, or at a minimum, do not yield repeat findings

- The institution has worked to resolve all outstanding audit findings and minimize any new findings. For the NMHU audit of 2016-17, all audit findings have been resolved. In the 2017-18 audit, there were five findings, none of them repeat from 2016-17 and they have all been

resolved. It should be noted that the severity of the findings themselves have also decreased over time.

- The Foundation audit findings for 2016-17 have all been resolved. For the 2017-18 audit, there were no audit findings.
- Highlands Stable Isotopes audit findings from 2016-17 have been resolved. The 2017-18 audit had no findings. The University will no longer be investing resources into the Stable Isotopes operation but will keep the venture active if there are future revenue opportunities.

Continued year-end actual change in net assets at break even levels or that yield surplus

- NMHU has taken many steps to ensure a balanced budget at the end of the fiscal year. In its auxiliary operations, it has made tough decisions such as stopping any new investment into the Stable Isotopes program. This technology transfer operation received substantial investment from NMHU with the hope of future returns that never materialized. Elimination of this annual subsidy to a venture that was not contributing significantly to their educational mission will help the overall budget. Another example is the decision by the Board of Regents and the University to close the University owned and operated golf course. The golf course had required significant investment to maintain it at a certain level and this was not helping the institution's budget situation. The University has also closed two residence halls to reduce the maintenance and utility costs. They were able to accommodate all interested students in their remaining residence halls. These are all examples of difficult decisions NMHU has had to make in the past couple of years that will help them balance their budget in the future.
- NMHU has also revamped their budgeting process to provide for more input, transparency, and ultimately improve shared governance at the institution. An annual budgeting process now involves University-wide planning groups that give their input at multiple points along the way. There is a Strategic Planning Group, a Unit Planning Group, as well as a Campus Budget and Planning Committee. These groups are comprised of faculty, staff, administrators and students. It is apparent from the Site Visit Team's interactions with campus constituents that all groups feel their input is valued, heard, and considered.
- NMHU has improved many financial metrics with the improved budgeting process and accompanying financial decisions they have made. Ending fund balance has increased 15.2 percent, current assets have increased by 11 percent to \$17.9M, endowment investments increased 9.5 percent to \$4.6M and no-current liabilities have decreased 4.3 percent to \$24.3 M. The Composite Financial Index (CFI) for FY18 was 2.27. The CFI has increased dramatically over time from 0.01 in FY12 to 1.83 in FY15 to the current 2.27.

A3. Statement of Focus:

- Evidence of the creation and implementation of policies related to new processes for the institutionalization of stakeholder agreements in all areas, including strategic planning and budgeting, student complaint management, the Office of Advancement, and Student Financial Aid administration.
- An executive Strategic Plan Indicators update that includes outcomes that provide evidence that the institution is improving its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, both as a whole and in its component parts.

- A unit and/or department strategic plan update that includes outcomes that provide evidence that the institution is improving its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, both as a whole and in its component parts.

Relevant Core Component or other HLC requirement:

Core Component 5.D

B3. Statements of Evidence (check one below):

- Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.
- Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention, rather than monitoring, is required in the area of focus.
- Evidence demonstrates that monitoring is required.
- Evidence demonstrates that HLC sanction is warranted.

The team will also note its determination as to each applicable Core Component or HLC requirement in Part B.

Evidence:

Creation and implementation of policies related to new processes for the institutionalization of stakeholder agreements

- New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) is currently in the process of developing a new Strategic Plan. This process has involved a high level of shared governance, with extensive input from a wide range of constituents. At the time of the Focused Visit, the new plan had been submitted to the President for consideration, with plans to then take to the Board for approval. As part of the development of the new plan, serious consideration was given to developing “SMART” objectives and this high level of specificity and focus on being measurable has the potential to provide effective guidance of University operations. This is in stark contrast to the expiring Strategic Plan which lacks sufficient specificity for implementation of high level goals.
- The University has a defined planning model with oversight of various aspects by the Budget and Planning Committee and the Unit Planning Committee. During the Focused Visit, members of these committees were able to clearly articulate the role of the committees and provide specific examples to highlight their work.
- NMHU has implemented a robust budget process which is posted on the University’s website, promoting a high level of transparency. Budget requests are prioritized in a coordinated manner, from the department to college (where appropriate) to division level. The Budget Process document outlines steps and timeline for resource requests and decision-making, and during Focused Visit campus meetings, attendees were able to articulate this budget process.
- Student complaint management has been addressed through more centralized notification and reporting of policies and complaints. All student policies are now provided in one location, available in the Student Handbook. The University has created a new position of Student Relations Coordinator to improve responsiveness in assisting students. While there is still opportunity for increased “buy-in” by academic departments

to make the process truly more centralized, this new position provides an easily identifiable point of contact for students and there is now a clear process for following up with complaints until a resolution has been reached. Student complaints are now housed in a centralized database, although this initiative is in its infancy and has potential to promote more effective use of data in the future.

- The Office of Advancement has undergone a major review and overhaul of all policies, resulting in creation of a Strategic Plan to inform the direction of Advancement activities and the creation of numerous policies to delineate stakeholder responsibilities. These new policies are standard operation at most institutions and include a Conflict of Interest Policy, Use of Funds Policy, Investment Policy, and Advancement Policy. A review of these policies shows guidelines for operation are clear and comprehensive. After multiple years of repeat audit findings, no audit findings for the past three years provide evidence of success of this major review and overhaul.
- The Financial Aid Office is under new leadership and has likewise, implemented a range of improvements in operations and structure after seeking the services of an external consultant. Specific improvements include revisions in the allocation of scholarships, Communication Plans for prospective and current students, and use of the financial aid module in Banner to streamline awarding of financial aid packages to students. These improvements have been designed to provide better service to students but have also created efficiencies in processes and improved integration with other campus offices.
- Creation and implementation of policies related to new processes for the institutionalization of stakeholder agreements in all areas, extends far beyond the required areas of strategic planning and budgeting, student complaint management, the Office of Advancement, and Student Financial Aid administration. NMHU has undertaken an extensive array of improvement initiatives in many other areas including the institution's website, library services, and Information Technology Services. Across these areas, improvements have been accomplished through increased use of data to inform decisions as well as improvement and/or creation of policies and processes.
- A key aspect of institutionalization of stakeholder agreements is an intentional effort to increase campus communication. These efforts include newsletters, campus forums, and other informational events, with recordings available on the website. Throughout the Focused Visit, the Site Visit Team heard comments about increased level of transparency in major institutional processes, most notably in the area of budget.

Executive Strategic Plan Indicators update

- NMHU has developed and adopted a set of Key Performance Indicators for its current Strategic Plan. These indicators relate well to the plan and provide comprehensive, measurable indicators of planning success. The indicators include enrollment and retention data, faculty productivity information, financial data, human resource data, website use, advancement revenue and activity, use of student support services, and athlete participation and academic success. Although the Key Performance Indicators are publicly available on the institution's website, effective use of some of the indicators is in its infancy and there is room for improvement in this area.
- Strategic Plan Indicators are not available for the new plan as the plan has not yet been approved by the Board or formally adopted by the University. However, in several campus meetings during the Focused Visit, attendees noted that development of Key Performance Indicators for the new plan was the next step after Board approval. The

current set of Key Performance Indicators demonstrate the institution understands what makes a good, measurable indicator and has the capability to revise/develop new indicators to match the upcoming plan. As NMHU develops this new set of indicators, they are encouraged to consider ways to maximize use of those indicators.

- The University provided numerous examples of using data to improve institutional effectiveness beyond formal Key Performance Indicators. One such example is use of the National Survey of Engagement (NSSE) data and other institutional surveys to verify success and identify areas for improvement. Although the University has developed procedures for survey data collection, it acknowledges need for improvement in systematically using survey data to its fullest extent. However, the institution does show some progress in this area. For example, according to the Focused Visit Report, as well as being examined at the institutional level, some of these survey data are disaggregated at the department level and used to support program review.

Unit and/or department strategic plan update

- In the Focused Visit Report, NMHU reported numerous examples of unit planning by a wide range of specific departments and offices. These examples detailed improvements resulting from unit planning efforts of both academic and support units, indicating commitment to improvement in component parts as well as at the institutional level. Specific examples of improvements noted include establishing or enhancing partnerships with the local community, creation of programs to enhance the student experience, and cost-savings measures or other efficiencies in procedures.
- The institution has also developed a co-curricular outcomes assessment model. This has assisted support units in clarifying their role within the institution and identifying measures of success. This model promotes the use of data to inform continuous improvement.
- Most importantly, beyond specific examples of successful unit planning, NMHU now has an established process for *systematic* unit planning. The institution has adopted a nested model of planning, where unit plans play a critical role in having potential initiatives prioritized for funding by college or division administrators. This process involves connecting new initiatives to the institutional-level Strategic Plan, thereby decreasing fragmentation in planning efforts and promoting alignment of unit and institutional-level planning. The Unit Planning Committee provides some oversight for this process. In the past, the committee evaluated all individual unit plans, but decided this was not the most efficient use of their time. A template is provided for unit planning, but as with most planning models in their early implementation, there appears to be variation in the quality of unit plans. The committee is in the process of revising the template for use with the new Strategic Plan and this would provide a timely opportunity for training to unit leaders in the development of unit plans.

A4. Statement of Focus:

Relevant Core Component or other HLC requirement:

B4. Statements of Evidence (check one below):

- Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.
- Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention, rather than monitoring, is required in the area of focus.
- Evidence demonstrates that monitoring is required.
- Evidence demonstrates that HLC sanction is warranted.

The team will also note its determination as to each applicable Core Component or HLC requirement in Part B.

Evidence:

A5. Statement of Focus:

Relevant Core Component or other HLC requirement:

B5. Statements of Evidence (check one below):

- Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.
- Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention, rather than monitoring, is required in the area of focus.
- Evidence demonstrates that monitoring is required.
- Evidence demonstrates that HLC sanction is warranted.

The team will also note its determination as to each applicable Core Component or HLC requirement in Part B.

Evidence:

7. **Other Accreditation Issues.** If applicable, list evidence of other accreditation issues, identify the related Core Components or other HLC requirements and note the team's determination as to each applicable Core Component or other HLC requirement in Part B.

Not applicable.

Part B: Recommendation and Rationale

Recommendation:

- Evidence demonstrates that no monitoring is required.
- Evidence demonstrates that monitoring is required.
- Evidence demonstrates that HLC sanction is warranted.

Rationale for the Team's Recommendation

During all aspects of the review process, the institution was extremely cooperative and candid about past and current challenges. Based on review of documentation submitted by NMHU for the Focused Visit, along with interactions with campus constituents, it is clear the institution has given very serious attention to all monitoring requirements for the Focused Visit. In addition to addressing each individual item of required monitoring, it is evident the institution has made significant systemic changes at the institutional level. These have included changes in organizational structure and personnel, along with development of an increased culture of increased transparency.

As a result of multiple changes in staffing, policies, and processes, NMHU has made significant progress in addressing the requirements outlined for the Focused Visit. Based on interactions with senior leadership during the Focused Visit, the institution appears committed to continued improvement. Indeed, the review team noted several ongoing improvements between submission of the original documentation for the Focused Visit and the time of the visit occurring. The institution is commended for the multiple improvements made in the areas of core components 4.B, 5.A., and 5.D. However, NMHU continues to face substantial challenges. Most notably, despite numerous efforts to address enrollment, including success in raising retention rates of current students, the institution faces serious ongoing enrollment decline which is consistent with the trend experienced by other state institutions in New Mexico. NMHU is aware of their challenges and has developed plans and strong leadership to continue to address these challenges.

Based on the extent of effort addressing all aspects of the Focused Visit, success in several key areas (including finances), and the proximity of the next scheduled Comprehensive Evaluation occurring in 2021-2022, the Focused Visit Team concludes the evidence demonstrates no additional monitoring is required. However, the team strongly urges NMHU to continue to closely attend to enrollment trends and success of strategies to improve enrollment, as any further decline in student enrollment may have serious implications for financial viability, despite recent successful efforts to balance the institution's budget.

Stipulations or Limitations on Future Accreditation Relationships

If recommending a change in the institution's stipulations, state both the old and new stipulation and provide a brief rationale for the recommended change. Check the Institutional Status and Requirement (ISR) Report for the current wording. (Note: After the focused visit, the institution's stipulations should be reviewed in consultation with the institution's HLC staff liaison.)

None recommended.

Monitoring

The team may call for a follow-up interim report. If the team concurs that a report is necessary, indicate the topic (including the relevant Core Components or other HLC requirements), timeline and expectations for that report. (Note: the team should consider embedding such a report as an emphasis in an upcoming comprehensive evaluation in consultation with the institution’s HLC staff liaison.)

The team may call for a follow-up focused visit. If the team concurs that a visit is necessary, indicate the topic (including the relevant Core Components or other HLC requirements), timeline and expectations for that visit. (Note: The team should consider embedding such a visit as an emphasis in an upcoming comprehensive evaluation in consultation with the institution’s staff liaison.)

None recommended.

Core Component Determinations

Indicate the team’s determination(s) (met, met with concerns, not met) for the applicable Core Components related to the areas of focus or other accreditation issues identified by the team in Part A. If a Core Component was not included in an area of focus, it should be marked as not evaluated.

Number	Title	Met	Met With Concerns	Not Met	Not Evaluated
1.A	Core Component 1.A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.B	Core Component 1.B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.C	Core Component 1.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.D	Core Component 1.D	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.A	Core Component 2.A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.B	Core Component 2.B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.C	Core Component 2.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.D	Core Component 2.D	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.E	Core Component 2.E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.A	Core Component 3.A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.B	Core Component 3.B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.C	Core Component 3.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Number	Title	Met	Met With Concerns	Not Met	Not Evaluated
3.D	Core Component 3.D	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.E	Core Component 3.E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.A	Core Component 4.A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.B	Core Component 4.B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.C	Core Component 4.C	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.A	Core Component 5.A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.B	Core Component 5.B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.C	Core Component 5.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.D	Core Component 5.D	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other HLC Requirement Determinations

Indicate the team's determination(s) (met or not met) for the HLC requirements related to the areas of focus or other accreditation issues identified by the team in Part A.



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

INSTITUTION and STATE:	New Mexico Highlands University, NM
TYPE OF REVIEW:	Monitoring Focused Visit
DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:	<p>The Board required that the institution host a Focused Visit regarding Core Components 4.C, 5.A, and 5.D no later than June 30, 2020.</p> <p>Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only the following will travel to campus: Mickey Best. The rest of the team will conduct the evaluation remotely.</p>
DATES OF REVIEW:	10/5/2020 - 10/6/2020
<input type="checkbox"/> No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements	

Accreditation Status

Nature of Institution

Control: Public

Recommended Change: no change

Degrees Awarded: Associates, Bachelors, Masters

Recommended Change: no change

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2017 - 2018

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2021 - 2022

Recommended Change: no change

Accreditation Stipulations

General:

The institution is approved at the following program level(s): Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's

The institution is not approved at the following program level(s): Specialist, Doctoral

Recommended Change: no change



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Additional Location:

Prior HLC approval required.

Recommended Change: no change

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

Approved for distance education courses and programs. The institution has not been approved for correspondence education.

Recommended Change:

Accreditation Events

Accreditation Pathway

Standard Pathway

Recommended Change: no change

Upcoming Events

Comprehensive Evaluation: 2027 - 2028

Recommended Change: no change

Comprehensive Evaluation: 02/28/2022

Recommended Change: no change

Monitoring

Upcoming Events

None

Recommended Change: no change

Institutional Data

Educational Programs

Undergraduate

Certificate 24

Associate Degrees 4

**Recommended
Change:**



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Baccalaureate Degrees	37	_____
Graduate		
Master's Degrees	20	_____
Specialist Degrees	0	_____
Doctoral Degrees	0	_____

Extended Operations

Branch Campuses

None

Recommended Change: no change

Additional Locations

Clovis Community College, 417 Schepps Rd., Clovis, NM, 88101 - Inactive
 Los Alamos High School, 1300 Diamond Dr., Los Alamos, NM, 87544 - Inactive
 New Mexico Junior College, 1 Thunderbird Circle, Hobbs, NM, 88240 - Inactive
 New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science, 1800 Mountain Rd. NW, Albuquerque, NM, 87104 - Inactive
 NMHU @ Rio Rancho, 1700 Grande Blvd, Rio Rancho, NM, 87124 - Active
 NMHU Albuquerque, 5041 Indian School Rd. NE, Albuquerque, NM, - Active
 NMHU at Roswell, 52 University Blvd, Roswell, NM, 88203 - Inactive
 NMHU at the Higher Education Center, 1950 Siringo Rd., Santa Fe, NM, 87508 - Active
 NMHU Espanola, 1227 Railroad Ave, Espanola, NM, 87532 - Inactive
 NMHU in partnership with San Juan C, 3539 E 30th St #203, Farmington, NM, 87102 - Active
 Santo Domingo Head Start Program, NM-22, Santo Domingo Pueblo, NM, 87502 - Inactive

Recommended Change:

Correspondence Education

None

Recommended Change: no change

Distance Delivery

11.0401 - Information Science/Studies, Bachelor, Bachelor in Software Development Apprenticeship
 13.0301 - Curriculum and Instruction, Master, MA in Curriculum & Instruction
 13.0401 - Educational Leadership and Administration, General, Master, MA in Educational

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Leadership

- 13.1001 - Special Education and Teaching, General, Bachelor, BA Special Education
 - 13.1001 - Special Education and Teaching, General, Master, MA in Special Education
 - 13.1101 - Counselor Education/School Counseling and Guidance Services, Master, MA Guidance and Counseling
 - 13.1202 - Elementary Education and Teaching, Bachelor, BA Elementary Education
 - 13.1314 - Physical Education Teaching and Coaching, Master, MA Human Performance and Sport
 - 43.0104 - Criminal Justice/Safety Studies, Bachelor, BA Criminal Justice Studies
 - 44.0701 - Social Work, Master, MSW
 - 51.3801 - Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse, Bachelor, BSN
 - 52.0201 - Business Administration and Management, General, Bachelor, BBA Business
 - 52.0201 - Business Administration and Management, General, Master, MBA
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Contractual Arrangements

None

Recommended Change: no change

Consortial Arrangements

None

Recommended Change: no change
