

June 26, 2023

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Sam Minner
President
New Mexico Highlands University
Box 9000
1005 Diamond Avenue
Las Vegas, NM 87701

Dear President Minner:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning New Mexico Highlands University (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, June 22, 2023. In taking this action, the Board considered materials from the most recent comprehensive evaluation, including, but not limited to: the Assurance Filing the institution submitted, the report from the comprehensive evaluation team, the report of the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) Hearing Committee, and the institutional responses to these reports.

Summary of the Action: The Board reaffirmed the accreditation of the Institution. The Institution meets Core Components 4.B and 5.B with concerns. The Institution is required to host a Focused Visit, as outlined below, no later than fall 2025.

Board Rationale

The Board based its action on the following findings made with regard to the Institution as well as the entire record before the Board:

New Mexico Highlands University (“the Institution”) meets, but with concerns, Criterion Four, Core Component 4.B, “the institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students,” the following reasons:

- The Institution has made limited progress in assuring faculty and staff are collecting and analyzing data to assess student learning, but has not demonstrated that student outcome data is being used for continuous quality improvement.
- The Institution needs to use assessment data to show that students demonstrate mastery of the curricular and co-curricular learning outcomes.

The Institution meets, but with concerns, Criterion Five, Core Component 5.B, “the institution’s resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has made some progress in staffing human resources and the payroll departments, including recruitment, retention and ongoing training of employees, but needs to continue to demonstrate ongoing progress.
- The Institution has engaged third-party vendors to assist with various tasks, but needs to continue to demonstrate that these third-party vendors have successfully transitioned payroll processing to eliminate inaccuracies in paychecks, third-party withholding and deductions and benefits associated with payroll management.
- The Institution has repeat findings identified in the FY22 audit that need to be corrected.

The Board of Trustees of the Higher Learning Commission has determined based on the preceding findings and evidence in the record the Institution has demonstrated that it is otherwise in compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, Assumed Practices, and Federal Compliance requirements.

Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

Focused Visit: The Board required that the Institution host a Focused Visit regarding Core Components 4.B and 5.B no later than fall 2025.

Comprehensive Evaluation: The Institution has been maintained on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation in 2027-28.

HLC Disclosure Obligations

The Board action resulted in changes that will be reflected in the Institution’s Statement of Accreditation Status as well as the Institutional Status and Requirements Report. The Statement of Accreditation Status, including the dates of the last and next comprehensive evaluation visits, will be posted to the HLC website.

HLC policy¹ requires that a summary of Board actions be sent to appropriate state and federal agencies and accrediting associations. It also will be published on HLC’s website. The summary will include this HLC action regarding the Institution.

¹ COMM.A.10.010, Notice of Accreditation Actions, HLC Public Notices and Public Statements

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact your HLC Staff Liaison, Dr. Stephanie Brzuzy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Gellman-Danley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

Cc: Keith Tucker, Director of HLC Accreditation, New Mexico Highlands University
Evaluation Team Chair
Stephanie Brzuzy, Vice President of Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning
Commission
IAC Hearing Committee Chair
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President of Legal and Regulatory Affairs, Higher Learning
Commission
Marla Morgen, General Counsel, Higher Learning Commission