



# **ONE HIGHLAND**

**ONE MISSION, ENDLESS IMPACT.**

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030**

DRAFT



# ONE HIGHLAND

## ONE MISSION, ENDLESS IMPACT.

### STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

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# HIGHLAND'S GUIDEPOSTS

A college's mission, vision and values form the foundation of its identity and must serve as the compass for every strategic decision. They articulate who we are, why we exist and what we aspire to become. When a strategic plan is grounded in these core statements, it ensures every goal and investment aligns with the institution's purpose and promises to its students and community. At Highland Community College, this shared foundation unites us as Scotties and makes us proud to be part of a community defined by purpose, possibility and progress. Rooted in that pride and guided by our mission, vision and values, the following Strategic Plan charts a bold path forward, transforming commitments into action and ensuring that One Highland: One Mission, Endless Impact is more than a theme, it is our way of working, learning and leading together.

## MISSION

Highland Community College, the first college in Kansas, provides lifelong learning opportunities and contributes to economic development to enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve.

## VISION

Highland Community College is recognized as the college of choice in Northeast Kansas.

## VALUES

Our core values represent the 'how' in achieving our mission and vision. We want to take pride in our dedication to achieving the goals of the College. The core values to us are the overarching themes in our communications and the reason behind our actions. They are the foundation of our brand and give us a clear direction for growth. The values are listed in no particular order.

### **Serving Communities:**

As the first college in Kansas, we take pride in serving the communities around us. Scottie Nation was built on a rich foundation of community, teamwork and family. Since 1858, we have encouraged our students to work together toward success as we provide aid and resources to our surrounding area.

### **Demonstrating Integrity:**

As an institution of higher learning, we honor integrity in all we do. We desire to instill the type of work ethic that fosters dependability in the classroom, on the field and in the workplace. Our midwestern heritage will continue to uphold honesty in every aspect of life at HCC.

### **Culture of Belonging:**

The Highland Community College culture is diverse, inclusive and understanding. You'll find welcoming people and a place to call home. Highland is a place where you belong. You'll find Scotties across the nation and world unifying us as Scottie Nation. The friendships and memories you make at HCC will last a lifetime.

### **Lifelong Learning:**

Scotties are lifelong learners at their core. We are passionate knowledge and skill seekers who value innovation to stay up-to-date with the latest technology in an ever-changing world. We continue to evolve to meet the needs of the students, staff and communities we serve.





## A LETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

As members of Scottie Nation, we are bound together by something larger than ourselves. We are part of One Highland, a community defined not only by our proud history but by our shared commitment to progress, opportunity and excellence.

One Highland represents more than a strategic plan. It is the product of months of listening, learning and working together; students, faculty, staff, alumni and community partners; all united by a single purpose: to chart a bold, new course for Highland Community College.

Through hundreds of conversations and surveys, one truth became clear: Highland is special. It has always been a place of promise and potential. As Kansas's first institution of higher learning and a destination of choice for those seeking knowledge, purpose and a better future, Highland Community College continues to change lives for the better. Yet to honor our tradition, we must not stand still. We must continue to innovate, adapt and meet the evolving needs of those we serve.

One Highland is built on six strategic imperatives; six pillars that reflect our mission and guide our work; Student Success, Access and Affordability, Workforce and Transfer Pathways, Innovation and Agility, Unifying Culture, and Stewardship and Sustainability.

These imperatives are more than goals on a page. They represent our shared belief that education has the power to transform lives and strengthen communities. Together, they form a clear and ambitious vision for the future — one that builds on Highland's proud legacy while preparing us to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Students from Kansas and beyond, from every background and every walk of life, should see Highland Community College as a place where they belong, where they can achieve their dreams and where their potential knows no limits.

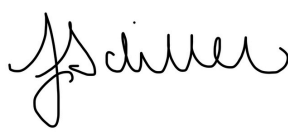
As you read through this plan, remember that we are, indeed, One Highland. Our future is bright. And if we continue to work together with purpose, with passion and with pride, there is no limit to what we can achieve.

Every day is a great day to be a Scottie.

Sincerely,



**Dr. Vincent Bowhay**  
President



**Dr. Jennifer A. Schiller**  
Executive Vice President  
Chair, HCC Strategic Planning Council



# INTRODUCTION

## **Highland Community College stands at a pivotal moment in its history.**

Founded in 1858 as Kansas's first institution of higher learning, Highland has always been a place of access, opportunity and purpose. From its earliest days serving the people of Northeast Kansas to its modern role as a regional hub for education, workforce training and community development, Highland has remained steadfast in its mission: to change lives through learning.

## **Today, the landscape of higher education is evolving at an unprecedented pace.**

Demographic changes, shifting workforce demands, affordability pressures and rapid technological advancement are redefining what it means to serve students and communities effectively. Rural colleges, in particular, face the dual challenge — and opportunity — of adapting to these realities while preserving the personal connections and community trust that define their strength.

In this environment, Highland Community College embraces both its heritage and its future. The One Highland: One Mission, Endless Impact Strategic Plan charts a bold and focused path forward for the next five years. Developed through months of listening, dialogue and analysis involving students, faculty, staff, trustees, alumni and community partners, the plan reflects the collective aspirations of Scottie Nation.

Grounded in evidence and guided by institutional values, this plan aligns directly with the priorities of the Kansas Board of Regents and the needs of the communities we serve. It is intentionally designed to be focused, measurable and achievable, advancing Highland's mission while preparing the College for long-term sustainability and growth.

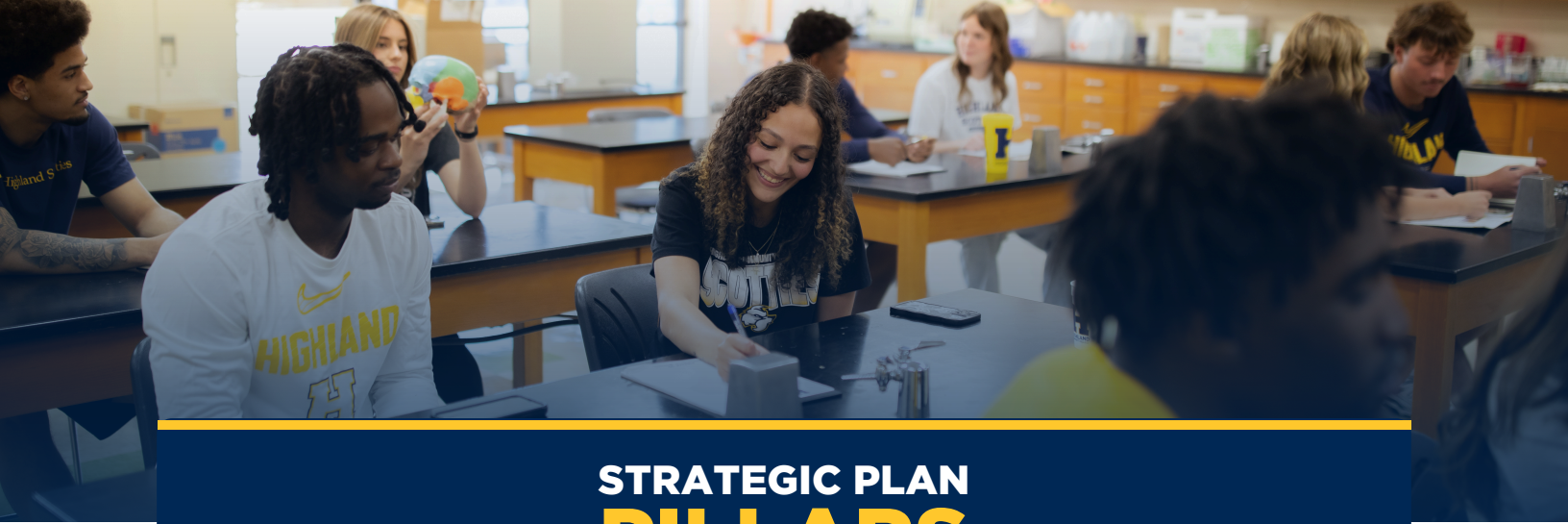
## **At the heart of this work are six strategic imperatives that define where Highland will focus its energy and resources through 2030:**

1. **Student Success:** Ensuring every Highland student has the support to persist, complete and thrive.
2. **Access and Affordability:** Expanding opportunity and reducing barriers to higher education across rural Kansas.
3. **Workforce and Transfer Pathways:** Building strong academic and career pipelines that meet regional workforce needs and prepare students for seamless transfer.
4. **Innovation and Agility:** Modernizing systems, services and practices to enhance institutional responsiveness and operational efficiency.
5. **Unifying Culture:** Strengthening the “One Highland” spirit by investing in people, communication and collaboration across all departments and campuses.
6. **Stewardship and Sustainability:** Securing Highland's future through sound fiscal management, philanthropy and responsible planning.

Together, these imperatives represent more than institutional priorities, they are a promise to Highland's students, employees and communities. They reaffirm the College's role as a rural leader, a trusted partner, and a place where every learner can find belonging and opportunity.

Through this five-year plan, Highland Community College will build on its historic foundation to create a stronger, more connected and future-ready institution, ensuring that the promise of One Highland continues to deliver Endless Impact for generations to come.





## STRATEGIC PLAN PILLARS

At Highland Community College, we stand united as One Highland, the first college in Kansas and a future-focused leader in rural higher education. Guided by our history and values, we are committed to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Our mission is to provide accessible, high-quality education that empowers learners, strengthens communities and fuels workforce development across Northeast Kansas and beyond. This mission shapes every decision we make, every program we offer and every partnership we build.

Through this plan, Highland commits to delivering lasting impact by transforming lives through student success, rural access, innovative programs and strong community partnerships. By aligning our resources with clear goals, using data to drive decisions and fostering collaboration, we will position Highland as a national model for rural-serving community colleges.

Our core values are Student Success, Rural Access, Collaboration, Innovation, Stewardship and Community Impact. These principles ensure we remain student-centered, committed to rural communities, purposeful in partnerships, innovative in our approach, accountable in stewardship and anchored in the communities we serve.

**This strategic plan is more than a roadmap; it is a collective call to action. Together, as One Highland, we will build a stronger future for our students, our communities and our state.**

### WHAT WILL WE DO

Highland Community College provides accessible, high-quality education that empowers learners, strengthens communities and fuels workforce development across Northeast Kansas and beyond.

Our mission reflects Highland's enduring promise to expand opportunity and deliver transformative learning experiences that prepare students for success in work, life and citizenship.

### WHY IT MATTERS

Highland Community College will be recognized as a student-centered, rural-serving and future-ready institution, a national model for how community colleges transform lives and strengthen communities through innovation, collaboration and opportunity.

Our vision calls us to lead boldly, serve inclusively and adapt intentionally as we prepare the next generation of learners and leaders.

## CULTIVATING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Our values define how we work, learn, and lead together as One Highland. They guide our decisions, shape our culture and reflect the character and care that distinguish our community.

**Integrity:**

We act with honesty, fairness and accountability in every action and decision.

**Collaboration:**

We work together across departments and campuses to achieve shared goals.

**Resilience:**

We meet challenges with optimism, adaptability and determination.

**Respect:**

We value every person and foster a culture of inclusion, kindness and understanding.

**Empowerment:**

We encourage growth, leadership and ownership of our collective success.

**Stewardship:**

We honor the trust placed in us by using our time, talent and resources responsibly for future generations.

Together, these values create the foundation for One Highland. They remind us that how we lead and serve matters as much as what we achieve, ensuring that our actions reflect the character and purpose of Kansas's first college.





# STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES AS DRIVERS OF CHANGE

Highland Community College's One Highland: One Mission, Endless Impact (2025–2030) Strategic Plan is organized around six Strategic Imperatives that define our collective priorities and actions for the next five years. Each imperative represents a core promise to our students, our employees and our communities and is grounded in Highland's mission to provide accessible, high-quality education that changes lives and strengthens rural Kansas.

These imperatives are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Together, they provide a roadmap for student success, workforce and transfer excellence, operational agility and long-term sustainability.

## Each imperative includes:

- Goals by 2030, which define what success will look like when each imperative is achieved and how Highland will measure progress over time.
- A Bold Idea, also known as a wildly important goal expresses the transformative vision driving the work. It's the "why" behind the initiative.
- Leading Success Metrics, allow us to monitor progress towards our imperatives month over month.
- Key Priorities, which outline the measurable actions, objectives and key results (OKRs) that move the bold idea from vision to reality.
- This five-year strategic plan includes three years of intervention work with a year of architecture and a year for reflection and future action planning.

This structure ensures that every part of the plan links purpose with performance, translating aspiration into measurable results that strengthen the student experience and institutional excellence. The imperatives are guided by six principles, the enduring commitments that ensure every action aligns with Highland's purpose and values:

### Champion Student Success and Belonging:

We design every policy and initiative to advance access, retention, completion and a strong sense of belonging. This focus ensures we are a people first organization.

### Invest in People and Culture:

We strengthen leadership, enhance human resources practices and foster engagement that promotes satisfaction, growth and well-being.

### Embrace Innovation and Adaptability:

We pursue creative solutions and adapt quickly to meet evolving student, workforce and community needs across our region.

### Practice Stewardship and Sustainability:

We manage financial, human, technological and physical resources responsibly to ensure long-term institutional and community vitality.

### Lead with Data-Informed Decisions:

We use analytics and evidence-based insights to guide planning, accountability and continuous improvement across all institutional areas.

### Expand Rural Access:

We grow educational and workforce opportunities across our nine-county service area, ensuring equitable access for all learners.

Together, the following imperatives and principles outlined above anchor the work of One Highland. They ensure that every strategy, investment and innovation reflects the College's enduring mission and shared belief in the power of education to transform lives.

## IMPERATIVE 1: NURTURE STUDENT SUCCESS AND ENGAGEMENT

We will ensure every Highland student has the support needed to persist, complete and thrive. By strengthening advising, expanding co-curricular engagement and creating clear academic and career pathways, we will improve retention and graduation rates across all student populations.

**By 2030, Highland will have more intentional strategies to support persistence and retention:**

- First-year retention will rise to 65%.
- Graduation rates will reach 45%.
- 95% of first-year students will complete a degree plan.

### Key Priorities

#### **2026–27 Projects: Strengthen advising and launch wellness supports**

- 70% of first-year students complete advising each semester.
- Pilot early-alert system in three departments.
- Launch telehealth system with 40% awareness rate.
- 40% of first-year students participate in at least one co-curricular or engagement activity.

#### **2027–28 Projects: Scale early intervention and wellness engagement**

- Early-alert system implemented across all divisions.
- 85% of first-year students complete advising.
- 25% of students use telehealth, with 85% satisfaction rate.
- 50% of first-year students engage in co-curricular activities tracked through campus systems.

#### **2028–29 Projects: Institutionalize proactive student engagement**

- Retention rate reaches 65%.
- Telehealth referrals embedded within early-alert workflows.
- 60% of students demonstrate sustained involvement in co-curricular or engagement programs.

By 2030, Highland will have nurtured a culture of connection and care, where every student is supported, every challenge is met with timely intervention and every learner finds belonging in the Highland community.



### **Bold Idea: Every Student Thrives**

Highland will create a proactive and holistic student-success model that ensures every learner receives personalized guidance, timely intervention and meaningful engagement opportunities. Advising, academic support and wellness services will be seamlessly integrated to empower persistence and completion.

Grounded in evidence and focused on results, these leading success indicators will enable HCC's Institutional Leadership Council to monitor progress, ensure alignment and keep Highland on track toward meaningful and measurable impact.

#### **Early-Alert Response Rate**

**Definition:**

Percentage of flagged students (attendance, grades, or behavior) who receive timely outreach from advisors or intervention staff.

**Target:**

100% of flagged students contacted within 72 hours.

**Why it matters:**

Immediate intervention prevents small issues from becoming barriers to completion.

#### **Tutoring and Academic Support Engagement**

**Definition:**

Percentage of first-year students attending at least one tutoring session, study-skills workshop or supplemental instruction session.

**Target:**

Increase engagement by 5% each term.

**Why it matters:**

Students who use tutoring are significantly more likely to persist and succeed.

#### **First-Year Co-Curricular Involvement**

**Definition:**

Percentage of first-year students enrolled in at least one club, activity or leadership program.

**Target:**

90% of first-year students engaged by end of first semester.

**Why it matters:**

Early involvement builds belonging and predicts long-term engagement and persistence.

## IMPERATIVE 2: EXPAND ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY

We will expand access to higher education across rural Kansas and remove barriers to affordability. Highland will grow enrollment, expand dual-credit and early-college programs and modernize admissions so that students can easily begin — and affordably continue — their educational journey.

### **By 2030, Highland will improve outreach and meaningful communication with recruits**

- Grow enrollment to 3,000 learners.
- Expand early opportunities by increasing dual-credit and early-college enrollment by 10%.
- Engage more Kansans by boosting postsecondary participation in Northeast Kansas 25%.
- Advance recruitment through a CRM-based Strategic Enrollment process.

### **Key Priorities**

#### **2026-27 Projects: Strengthen the enrollment pipeline**

- Increase completed applications by 10% over baseline.
- Achieve 70% FAFSA completion among applicants.
- Ensure 85% of admitted students attend orientation or advising.
- Grow new student enrollment to 2,500 learners.
- Join National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP) and design three key intervention areas with success metrics.

#### **2027-28 Projects: Improve conversion and yield rates**

- Raise application-to-enrollment conversion to 55%.
- Increase FAFSA completion to 75% of applicants.
- Achieve 90% orientation/advising participation.
- Grow total enrollment to 2,800 learners.
- Complete NCCBP intervention of all three plans.

#### **2028-29 Projects: Sustain enrollment through persistence**

- Maintain 55% conversion rate.
- Increase orientation/advising participation to 95%.
- Improve fall-to-spring persistence of first-year students to 80%.
- Reach total enrollment of 3,000 learners.
- Highlight lessons learned and five process improvements based on NCCBP interventions.

By 2030, Highland will be recognized as a statewide leader in rural access and affordability. A modernized enrollment process, expanded early-college pathways and strong student support systems will make Highland the first choice for students seeking opportunity close to home.



### **Bold Idea: Education Without Barriers**

Highland will ensure that geography, cost or circumstance never limit opportunity. The College will simplify processes, expand rural outreach and create equitable pathways that make higher education attainable for every learner.

Grounded in evidence and focused on results, these leading success indicators will enable HCC's Institutional Leadership Council to monitor progress, ensure alignment and keep Highland on track toward meaningful and measurable impact.

#### **Application-to-Enrollment Conversion Rate**

**Definition:**

Percentage of applicants who register for at least one course.

**Target:**

Increase conversion by 7% per term.

**Why it matters:**

Improves yield and reduces "summer melt."

#### **FAFSA Completion Rate**

**Definition:**

Percentage of aid-eligible applicants completing FAFSA or equivalent forms.

**Target:**

75% completion rate.

**Why it matters:**

Financial aid completion is one of the strongest predictors of enrollment.

#### **Orientation and Advising Participation**

**Definition:**

Percentage of admitted students completing orientation or an advising session.

**Target:**

95% completion before registration deadlines.

**Why it matters:**

Early advising and orientation increase persistence and engagement.



### IMPERATIVE 3: EXPAND LEARNER SUCCESS OPPORTUNITIES

We will prepare students for meaningful careers and seamless transfer to four-year institutions. By aligning programs with industry demand, expanding short-term credentials and strengthening articulation agreements, Highland will ensure every learner has a clear path from education to employment or advanced study.

**By 2030, Highland will curate programming that meets the need of today's communities and tomorrow's innovation**

- Establish 10 employer partnerships and six internship pipelines.
- Formalize five articulation agreements with four-year institutions.
- Launch three short-term training or certificate programs aligned with workforce needs.
- Integrate AI and emerging technologies to strengthen teaching and learning.
- Report annual program review progress and success on our website.

#### Key Priorities

**2026-27 Projects: Enhance current offerings and develop new and innovative academic pathways and programs**

- Enhance the academic program portfolio to attract learners and equip graduates for success.
- Secure three new employer partnerships.
- Develop three new internship opportunities and place at least 15 students.
- Negotiate or renew two articulation agreements with four-year institutions.
- Respond to the educational needs of adult learners in our service area.

**2027-28 Projects: Scale partnerships and promote student achievement in Northeast Kansas**

- Grow to a total of six new employer partnerships.
- Offer six internships per semester, with at least 30 student placements.
- Formalize three additional articulation agreements, ensuring transfer pathways in at least three high-demand programs.
- Meet the needs of adult learners in the communities we serve.
- Increase the postsecondary attending rates of Northeast Kansans at Highland Community College by 10%.

**2028-29 Projects: Institutionalize partnerships, learning opportunities and transfer pipelines**

- Reach 10 employer partnerships with active student pipelines.
- Sustain at least 50 internship placements annually with 85% student satisfaction.
- Establish five new articulation agreements, ensuring coverage across all major program areas.
- Explore Highland Community College's role in developing 90-credit hour bachelor programs.
- Accelerate the creation of academic programs that respond to pressing industry workforce needed.

By 2030, Highland will be recognized for connecting learning to opportunity and ensuring every program demonstrates clear, measurable outcomes. Through partnerships, pathways and intentional integration of AI and evidence-based teaching practices, students will graduate with adaptable, career-ready and transfer-prepared skills that reflect Highland's commitment to continuous improvement and accountability.



### **Bold Idea: Learning That Leads to Opportunity**

Highland will serve as a bridge between education and opportunity, creating pathways that connect learning with real-world impact. Through expanded partnerships, stackable credentials and intentional use of instructional technology, the College will position learners for success in today's evolving economy.

Grounded in evidence and focused on results, these leading success indicators will enable HCC's Institutional Leadership Council to monitor progress, ensure alignment and keep Highland on track toward meaningful and measurable impact.

#### **Employer and Industry Engagement**

**Definition:**

Number of new or renewed employer advisory councils, partnership MOUs and internship sites established each year.

**Target:**

Add three new partnerships annually to reach 10 active by 2029.

**Why it matters:**

Building partnerships predicts internship growth and career placement.

#### **Transfer Pathway Development**

**Definition:**

Number of articulation agreements or curriculum maps completed each year.

**Target:**

Two agreements signed per year to reach five by 2029.

**Why it matters:**

Each agreement creates a pipeline for future transfer success.

#### **Program Improvement Actions**

**Definition:**

Percent of academic programs that implement at least one action identified in annual outcomes review.

**Target:**

80% implementation rate by 2029.

**Why it matters:**

Shows faculty are using assessment evidence to improve learning.

#### **Instructional Innovation Adoption**

**Definition:**

Percent of courses adopting new teaching tools, simulations or learning technologies each year.

**Target:**

25% increase in adoption annually to reach full integration by 2029.

**Why it matters:**

Predicts future gains in student engagement and outcomes.

## IMPERATIVE 4: ENHANCE INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATION AND AGILITY

We will modernize operations, technology and processes to strengthen Highland's capacity for collaboration, responsiveness and data-informed decision-making. By improving systems, training and workflows, the College will enhance efficiency, service quality and institutional resilience across all campuses and departments.

**By 2030, Highland will embed technology into our day-to-day processes to maximize student outcomes, operational efficiencies and drive data informed decision making:**

- Achieve 95% adoption of new enterprise systems, including SIS and CRM platforms.
- Train 100% of faculty and staff in digital workflows and process improvements.
- Implement real-time dashboards for enrollment, retention and budget performance.
- Reduce operational processing times by 25% across student and administrative units.
- Establish a collegewide data-governance framework to ensure accuracy and integrity in decision-making.

### Key Priorities

#### **2026–27 Projects: Build the infrastructure for institutional agility**

- Complete Phase 1 of SIS and CRM implementation.
- Develop cross-functional process maps for student services, human resources and finance.
- Launch data-governance council and develop a data-quality policy framework.
- Train 50% of employees in workflow and process management tools.

#### **2027–28 Projects: Strengthen digital proficiency and data use**

- Achieve 80% system adoption across all employee groups.
- Develop and publish three institutional dashboards for enrollment, finance and student outcomes.
- Launch quarterly data-literacy workshops for faculty and staff.
- Conduct baseline assessment of administrative efficiency metrics.

#### **2028–29 Projects: Institutionalize innovation and continuous improvement**

- Achieve 95% adoption of SIS, CRM and data dashboards.
- Reduce administrative processing times by 25%.
- Complete three process-automation projects in high-volume areas (e.g., advising, purchasing, HR onboarding).
- Publish annual Institutional Effectiveness Report summarizing data use and process improvements.

By 2030, Highland will be a more agile, connected and data-informed institution. Employees will have the systems and training they need to collaborate efficiently, make evidence-based decisions and deliver exceptional service to students and stakeholders.

### **Bold Idea: Transform How Highland Works**

Highland will operate as a unified, adaptive institution where systems, data and people work seamlessly together. Through technology transformation, continuous improvement and cross-departmental collaboration, the College will enhance institutional effectiveness and student experience at every level.

Grounded in evidence and focused on results, these leading success indicators will enable HCC's Institutional Leadership Council to monitor progress, ensure alignment and keep Highland on track toward meaningful and measurable impact.

#### **System Adoption and Utilization**

**Definition:**

Percent of employees actively using SIS, CRM and analytics dashboards in their work.

**Target:**

95% by 2028.

**Why it matters:**

Widespread use predicts data accuracy and process efficiency.

#### **Process Mapping and Redesign Activity**

**Definition:**

Number of core workflows documented, mapped and improved each year.

**Target:**

100% of high-volume processes mapped and reviewed by 2027.

**Why it matters:**

Mapping processes is the key input for reducing cycle times.

#### **Data Integrity Checks and Training**

**Definition:**

Number of data-validation audits and employee training sessions completed annually.

**Target:**

Four data audits and two training cycles per year.

**Why it matters:**

Continuous data verification drives accurate decision-making.



## IMPERATIVE 5: FOSTER A CULTURE OF BELONGING AND COLLABORATION

We will unite every campus, department and role under a shared purpose and culture of belonging. By investing in people, communication and professional growth, Highland will foster an environment where employees and students feel valued, connected and supported in advancing the mission of One Highland.

**By 2030, Highland will cultivate a sense of belonging, trust and sustainability:**

- Increase engagement by 15% and reduce turnover by 25%.
- Earn Great Place to Work® certification.
- Standardize onboarding and professional development collegewide.
- Complete five projects from the Facilities Plan to improve safety and modernization.
- Improve our Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) in 4 out of 5 of our lowest categories.
- Improve student belonging by 10%, based on climate and success surveys.

### Key Priorities

#### **2026-27 Projects: Strengthen onboarding and department collaboration**

- Implement standardized onboarding and professional development in three departments.
- Conduct baseline employee engagement survey and publish findings.
- Launch the One Highland communication and engagement initiative to unify departments and campuses.
- Begin planning Phase 1 of the 25-Year Campus Facilities Plan with emphasis on safety and accessibility.
- Document at least five cross-department collaboration projects and track participation levels.
- Administer student belonging survey and establish a baseline benchmark for 2026-27.

#### **2027-28 Projects: Expand professional development and engagement programs**

- Expand onboarding and professional development to 50% of departments.
- Increase employee participation in engagement activities by 20%.
- Perform a compensation study for faculty and full-time professional staff roles.
- Track and report implementation of professional development learning outcomes for at least 60% of employees.
- Develop and pilot student leadership and engagement programs that improve belonging measures by 5%.

#### **2028-29 Projects: Institutionalize belonging and recognition**

- Achieve Great Place to Work® certification.
- Implement standardized onboarding and professional development across 100% of departments.
- Reduce overall turnover by 25% compared to 2024 baseline.
- Complete five projects related to the 25-Year Campus Facilities Plan and conduct post-project satisfaction survey.
- Launch a collegewide employee innovation challenge or recognition program to showcase employee-led initiatives.
- Achieve a 10% increase in student belonging and engagement compared to 2025 baseline.

By 2030, Highland will have built a thriving culture of belonging, collaboration and pride across all campuses. Employees and students alike will feel connected to the mission of One Highland, supported in their growth, and inspired to contribute to a shared future of excellence and inclusion.

### **Bold Idea: One Highland, One Community**

Highland will cultivate a culture of connection and shared purpose across every campus and division. Through professional growth, transparent communication and inclusive engagement, the College will strengthen morale, build unity and celebrate what it means to be part of the Highland community.

Grounded in evidence and focused on results, these leading success indicators will enable HCC's Institutional Leadership Council to monitor progress, ensure alignment and keep Highland on track toward meaningful and measurable impact.

#### **Cross-Department Collaboration Activity**

**Definition:**

Number of cross-department initiatives or task forces launched each semester.

**Target:**

Two or more per department each year by 2029.

**Why it matters:**

Collaboration predicts trust and organizational alignment.

#### **Professional Development Application Rate**

**Definition:**

Percent of employees documenting application of new skills within six months of training.

**Target:**

75% by 2029.

**Why it matters:**

Shows learning is being used to improve work practices.

#### **Leadership Coaching Completion**

**Definition:**

Percent of supervisors conducting two formal coaching sessions with each direct report per year.

**Target:**

100% by 2028.

**Why it matters:**

Regular coaching drives engagement and accountability.

#### **Employee-Led Initiatives**

**Definition:**

Number of employee-initiated projects or recognition programs launched annually.

**Target:**

Ten per year by 2029.

**Why it matters:**

Participation is a precursor to engagement and retention.

#### **Student Participation in Belonging Activities**

**Definition:**

Percent of students engaged in mentorship, leadership or student-life programs each year.

**Target:**

75% by 2029.

**Why it matters:**

Active participation predicts strong belonging and persistence.



## IMPERATIVE 6: ENSURE STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

We will secure Highland's future through strong financial management, philanthropy and responsible planning. By diversifying revenue streams, managing resources efficiently and investing in people and infrastructure, Highland will strengthen its long-term stability and ability to serve rural Kansas for generations to come.

### By 2030, Highland will deepen stewardship connections that drive sustainability efforts

- Grow the Foundation endowment to \$10 million.
- Secure \$5 million in major gifts for the Student Union campaign.
- Establish 25 new endowed scholarships or funds.
- Maintain annual reserves equal to 3% of operating revenue.
- Host alumni and donor events in Kansas City, Topeka and St. Joseph.
- Build new partnerships to support scholarships, facilities and student success.

### Key Priorities

#### 2026-27 Projects: Grow the endowment to \$10 million

- Involve board directors in the campaign to assist with identification, cultivation, solicitation and stewardship of campaign donors.
- Develop the comprehensive campaign's case statement, branding and a publicity plan to maximize visibility of the effort.
- Engage the president and the vice presidents proactively to understand their needs, to coordinate fundraising initiatives, donors and prospects and to leverage fundraising best practices across the various academic and co-curricular initiatives.
- Identify and implement at least three new stewardship practices based on funder feedback and best-in-class nonprofit benchmarks.
- Work with Architect One to develop plans for a Student Union on the Highland campus.

#### 2027-28 Projects: Strengthen our relationships with donors and gatekeepers

- Develop prospect research strategy and identify top 200 potential donors to the new comprehensive campaign.
- Secure at least five gifts of \$100,000.
- Achieve \$1 million in major gift commitments by the end of year two.
- Launch annual employee giving program.
- Establish a partnership between the College and the Foundation to hire a grant writer.
- Publicly launch the comprehensive campaign with 40% of goal already committed.

#### 2028-29 Projects: Pursue additional grant and outside funding strategies

- Establish 25 new endowments by the end of year three.
- Secure at least 10 gifts of \$100,000 by the end of year three.
- Launch donor recognition program by the end of year three.
- Achieve \$5 million in major gift commitments to the Student Union by the end of year three.
- Host regional alumni partner events in Kansas City, St. Joseph and Topeka.
- Launch semi-monthly alumni and foundation newsletter.

By 2030, Highland will stand on a foundation of fiscal strength, community trust and sustainable growth. Through disciplined financial planning, transparent resource management and philanthropic leadership, the College will ensure that One Highland continues to deliver endless impact for students and communities across Northeast Kansas.



### **Bold Idea: Building a Foundation for the Future**

Highland will strengthen its fiscal and operational foundation through disciplined planning, strategic fundraising and community partnerships. By aligning financial stewardship with student and community priorities, the College will ensure its continued impact and relevance as Kansas's first institution of higher learning.

Grounded in evidence and focused on results, these leading success indicators will enable HCC's Institutional Leadership Council to monitor progress, ensure alignment and keep Highland on track toward meaningful and measurable impact.

#### **Donor Cultivation and Outreach Activity**

**Definition:**

Number of donor visits, proposals or stewardship touches completed each quarter.

**Target:**

20% annual increase through 2029.

**Why it matters:**

Cultivation efforts predict future gifts and endowment growth.

#### **Alumni and Community Engagement Events**

**Definition:**

Number of regional alumni or community events hosted annually.

**Target:**

At least six per year by 2029.

**Why it matters:**

Engagement inputs drive fundraising and partnership outcomes.

#### **Efficiency and Improvement Projects**

**Definition:**

Number of process-improvement or cost-savings initiatives completed per year.

**Target:**

Three major projects completed annually through 2029.

**Why it matters:**

Operational efficiency is a leading predictor of budget stability.

#### **Facilities Milestone Completion**

**Definition:**

Percent of planned facility upgrade milestones completed on schedule each year.

**Target:**

100% of Phase 1 projects completed by 2029.

**Why it matters:**

On-time progress predicts successful plan execution and safety compliance.



## ENDLESS IMPACT OUR PATH FORWARD

The One Highland: One Mission, Endless Impact (2025–2030) Strategic Plan charts a clear, measurable and collaborative path for the next five years. It is both a commitment and a call to action to advance student success, strengthen access and opportunity and ensure that every resource, decision and partnership contributes to the vitality of Highland Community College and the communities we serve.

**Each Strategic Imperative defines where Highland will focus its collective energy:**

- Nurturing student success and belonging through proactive support.
- Expanding access and affordability for learners across Kansas and beyond.
- Creating workforce and transfer pathways that connect education to opportunity.
- Enhancing innovation and agility to modernize operations and empower data-informed action.
- Fostering a culture of collaboration that unites every campus and department as One Highland.
- Ensuring stewardship and sustainability to secure the College's long-term strength and impact.

Progress on these imperatives will be guided by clear indicators, tracked through dashboards and analyzed regularly by the President's Cabinet, HCC's Institutional Leadership Council and the Board of Trustees. This evidence-based approach ensures every milestone reflects measurable progress toward Highland's mission and continuous improvement.

The success of this plan depends on the people of Highland, the students who trust us with their goals, the faculty and staff who bring the mission to life and the community partners who invest in our shared future. Together, we will strengthen access, innovation and belonging while honoring Highland's proud legacy as Kansas's first college.

As we look to 2030 and beyond, our path is defined by one truth: when we work together as One Highland, our impact is endless.

### Implementation and Accountability

To ensure measurable progress, One Highland: One Mission, Endless Impact will be implemented through a structured accountability framework led by HCC's Institutional Leadership Council. Each Strategic Imperative is supported by annual Objectives and Key Results (OKRs), reviewed quarterly by the President's Cabinet and updated through data dashboards.

Annual progress reports will document achievements, challenges and lessons learned, aligning improvement activities with the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria for Accreditation and the College's planning cycles. Departmental goals, budget priorities and performance measures will cascade directly from the Strategic Imperatives to ensure every initiative advances student success and operational excellence.

This intentional structure keeps the plan a living document: transparent, measurable and adaptable, guiding Highland Community College toward a future of innovation, sustainability and endless impact.

**Approved by the Highland Community College Board of Trustees**

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**Vernie Coy**

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**Bill Noll**

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**Mark Rounds**

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**Tom Smith**  
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**Jason Taylor**  
Vice-Chairperson

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**Carl Tharman**  
Secretary/Treasurer

**Endorsed by the President's Cabinet**

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**Dr. Jennifer A. Schiller**  
Executive Vice President

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**Andrew Gutschenritter**  
Vice President of  
Finance and Operations

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**Lexy Clark**  
Dean of Students

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**Eric Ketchum**  
Vice President of  
Academic Affairs

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**Lucas Hunzinger**  
Vice President of  
Technical Education

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**Keith Jaloma**  
Executive Director of  
the HCC Foundation

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**Dr. Vincent Bowhay**  
President

**Approved: [Month] [Year]**

**ONE HIGHLAND: ONE MISSION, ENDLESS IMPACT.**

