



A COMMUNITY 2018 - 2023
OF MISSION
Strategic Plan for Harding University



HARDING
UNIVERSITY

YEAR THREE REPORT





The 2018-2023 strategic plan,

approved by the board of trustees in May 2018, was developed around five University-wide strategic priorities and consists of broader strategic initiatives and more specific action items under each strategic priority. This 2019-2021 report highlights the significant accomplishments related to the strategic initiatives and action items during years two and three of the strategic plan.



Strategic Priority 1: A Christ-Focused Community of Mission

Both biblical history and the history of Christian higher education bear witness that faith commitments often fade with time and eventually disappear. A once vibrant spiritual identity can easily degrade into nothing more than a curious detail of our past and no longer a living commitment in our present. During this strategic planning process, the Harding University Community of Mission was challenged to address, as if for the first time, the assignment of making Jesus Christ the center of the Harding classroom and the entire Harding campus. These strategic initiatives with action items are the result of this challenge:

- Formed a faculty committee to explore literature on assessment of spiritual development and began planning the spiritual development initiative
- Developed learning outcomes for chapel that are tied to the mission and aligned with the University co-curricular profiles, implementing a plan to gather, assess and analyze data in the coming year
- Created an Online Virtual Ministry Fair in which area congregations list their locations, times of service and opportunities for student involvement
- Implemented Eat & Greet for incoming freshmen to visit local congregations in a progressive dinner format with transportation provided and more than 450 attending the inaugural event
- Hired the first Andy T. Ritchie Jr. Endowed Chair for Discipleship and Church Planting to support the activities in the Center for World Missions within the College of Bible and Ministry
- The Ritchie Endowed Chair for Discipleship and Church Planting held three sessions on "You Can Be A Church-Planting Congregation," with 44 church leaders attending, and began providing opportunities for students to receive mentoring in evangelism and church planting.
- Established the Office of Community Connection to create and manage academic opportunities that connect with and impact the community; and created a Center for Community Engagement that is accessible to the community at the corner of Race Street and Blakely
- Faculty in the Center for Health Sciences participated in poverty simulation training and piloted an interprofessional education poverty simulation that will be added to the IPE offerings each semester.
- Created an endowed fund to provide additional scholarships for children of missionaries with a goal to raise \$1 million for the fund
- Increased the number of Women for Harding scholarship recipients from 83 students to 96, with 46 volunteers mentoring students in this program
- Engaged government leaders and regulatory bodies to preserve our faith-based mission by rejoining the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the most influential organization representing private, non-profit higher education on public policy issues with the federal government. The University continues its affiliation with the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, the leading national voice of Christian higher education.
- Established a steering committee and created a task force with representation from across campus to begin developing a plan with proposed events, activities and ideas for the Centennial Celebration year of 2023-2024



Strategic Priority 2: An Affordable Community of Mission

Cost is an area where Harding University is committed to moving from “good” to “great” in the next five years. While we are presently very economically priced for private higher education, we will not rest until every qualified student who wishes to come to Harding can afford to do so. That is why in this strategic plan, the full creative resources of the Harding community have been brought to bear on this challenge. During this strategic planning process, the Harding University Community of Mission was challenged to find bold new ways to combine stewardship and philanthropy to make a Harding education even more affordable for all students. These strategic initiatives with action items are the result of this challenge:

- Utilizing results of a feasibility study, the board of trustees approved the planning of a comprehensive Centennial Campaign.
- A case statement was finalized with the various fundraising projects to be used to finish out the quiet phase of the campaign. The public phase of this six-year campaign is planned for Fall 2022, culminating with the Centennial Celebration in 2024. Gonser Gerber advancement consultants continue to assist the campaign.
- Designated more than half (53%) of the funds raised toward the endowment as part of the comprehensive campaign to specifically support student scholarships
- Hired an estate planning consultant to provide expanded estate plan options and increase estate gifts to the University
- The Freedom Fund has been created, and fundraising has begun to serve students who meet the criteria of the Pell Grant.
- Investment of endowment assets was reviewed and a strategy formalized to produce optimal returns while assuming a moderate level of investment risk.
- Added high school GPA to the data-driven scholarship model for incoming freshmen that already included standardized test scores and financial need
- Added \$1000 scholarships for graduates of National Christian School Association member schools
- Added a test-optional pathway for prospective undergraduate students using high school GPA to determine financial awards to accommodate students who did not have access to ACT/SAT during COVID-19 pandemic
- Initiated the development of a process tied to the pro forma and market analysis to inform graduate and professional program pricing each fall prior to the budget process
- Formed a Textbook Affordability Committee with a mission of promoting affordability on campus and educating faculty on affordable alternatives to conventional textbooks; and curated a list of affordable options that had the greatest potential for high use, implementing a campaign to increase faculty awareness of the need for reducing student textbook costs
- Added an alternative to traditional textbooks via HU Direct Access in most Canvas classrooms that delivers digital course materials (ebooks or publisher-created software) to students at lower-than-market prices
- Adopted cost-reducing tools related to classroom support materials that decreased average cost of a textbook from \$80 in 2018 to \$53 in 2021. Overall cost of materials per course is now \$34.
- Eliminated many course fees for first year and common liberal arts classes by absorbing those charges in the tuition increase
- Approved plans to start a 5-year Master of Architecture program with an option for a Bachelor of Arts in Architectural Studies
- Approved the use of undergraduate scholarships for up to one additional year of graduate/professional programs (maximum of eight semesters of aid)
- Developed a new catalog policy to better support accelerated programs and students in accelerated programs

Approved accelerated programs:

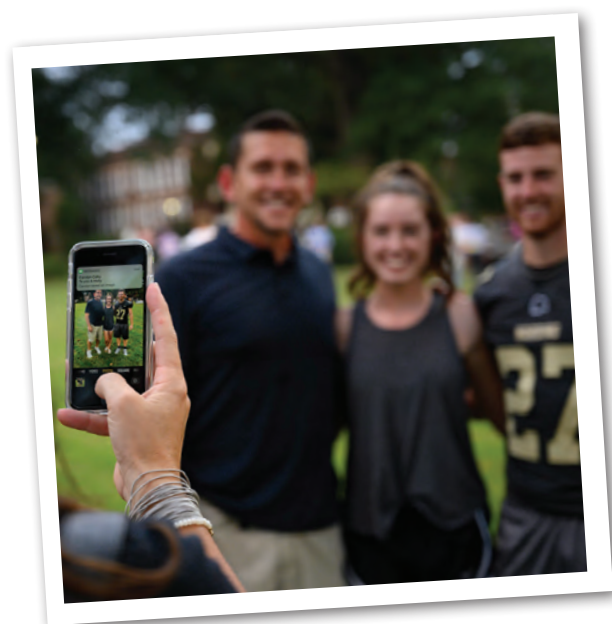
<p>Bachelor of Arts in Film and Master of Business Administration</p>
<p>Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Master of Science in Professional Counseling</p>
<p>Bachelor of Science in Communication Sciences & Disorders and Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology</p>
<p>Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Master of Science in Information Systems</p>
<p>Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science and Doctor of Physical Therapy</p>
<p>Bachelor of Science in Health Studies and Master of Science in Nursing</p>
<p>Bachelor of Science in Nutrition & Food Management and Master of Science in Nutrition & Dietetics</p>
<p>Bachelor of Science in Strength & Conditioning and Master of Science in Strength & Conditioning</p>

- A personnel attrition planning model was developed for reorganizing and creating efficiencies. Each vice president will prepare a plan for his or her area annually, outlining potential adjustments, reassignments and/or reductions in workforce, utilizing natural attrition where possible.
- Offered a second voluntary retirement incentive to qualifying employees
- Developed a resource allocation model for budgeting that focuses users' attention towards more consolidated data organized around Harding's 10 colleges rather than National Association of College and University Business Officers (instruction, student support, etc.) or natural (salaries, travel, office, etc.) classifications
- Improved operational efficiency by retiring obsolete products (Scantron, Student Response clicker) and adding emerging technologies (online testing, TurningPoint Anywhere, Echo360 Polling)
- Removed access to the locally hosted M:drives and assisted users in moving data to Google Drive File Stream and Google Team Drives cloud services
- Replaced computers in two labs (College of Bible and Ministry and Harding Academy) with Chrome stations and increased the capacity for loaning Chromebooks to employees for remote work on and off campus
- Implemented Wepa print kiosks in health sciences buildings, resulting in reduced printer wastage and a 20% decrease in the number of pages printed
- Quality and affordability language was systematically incorporated into recruiting email campaigns, viewbooks, financial aid brochures, online net price calculator, FAFSA reminder postcards and financial aid award packages.
- Significantly improved traditional and digital advertising in both undergraduate and graduate programs to generate awareness and increase the number of applicants

Strategic Priority 3: A Successful Community of Mission

The conviction of Harding University is that academic excellence is deeply rooted in our spiritual commitments. We clearly hear the call of Jesus to “love the Lord . . . with all (our) minds” (Mt 22:37). That is why Harding is committed to maintaining and enhancing high-quality academic and support programming that promotes educational and professional success. We want our students to retain, persist, graduate and excel in graduate school and job placement at even higher levels than before. These are areas where we can quantitatively “move the needle” in the next five years. During this strategic planning process, the Harding University Community of Mission was challenged to develop new strategies for helping our students succeed and excel. These strategic initiatives with action items are the result of this challenge:

- Began capturing interest areas for students at the inquiry stage and added communications and customized content in the application platform tailored to their interest areas
- Created customized viewbooks for students interested in specific majors to inform them of the strengths of their specific college and program and address their academic and vocational interests and the advantages Harding offers
- The physician assistant program initiated communication with their accreditors regarding steps to increasing class size
- GradCAS and BusinessCAS centralized application services were implemented to mature the application process and provide a broader audience of applicants for graduate and business offerings
- Developed a new weekly report and set of Tableau dashboard reports with more consistent year-to-date data for forecasting of both new and returning students
- Created a standardized graduate/professional application using a centralized application service for better access to application data
- Implemented Slate CRM (Customer Relationship Management) to manage and provide more decision-making information for undergraduate admissions
- Improved enrollment forecasting ability at all levels and within specific programs by creating an extensive, real-time registration table with comparative data from previous years
- Program reviews were completed by the departments of history and computer science, and the Honors College.
- Created reports summarizing class size and comparing course schedule over time to optimize use of full-time faculty and adjunct instructors while maintaining effective faculty-to-student ratios
- In addition to the existing survey of graduates, developed a comprehensive process for faculty to personally secure missing alumni outcomes data
- The Graduway networking platform was implemented to connect alumni and students for purposes of job assistance, internship opportunities, mentoring and connections.
- NetVUE grant participants participated in a regional conference and professional development activities for mentoring students in pursuit of calling and vocation.
- Successfully completed the initial one-year NetVUE grant activities and secured a new grant to support the development of an institutional approach to vocation and calling



- Developed and offered a new course for exploring students to help them determine a vocation and select an appropriate major
- Reorganized the career center and appointed two co-directors with one focused specifically on freshmen to provide better support for exploring students
- Used Graduway to provide a platform for students to find internships among the Harding alumni network
- Conceived a clearer vision and map forward for online academic programs at Harding
- Entered into a partnership with Strata Leadership to offer an online Master of Arts in Educational Leadership
- Entered into a partnership with Grand Canyon Education and Orbis Education to offer an Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Grand Canyon Education will also partner to market and enroll students in the MBA and MSIS programs.
- Partnered with CONNECTedu to develop and offer an online Master of Education in Christian Education Leadership
- A multimedia studio, including two video production rooms and one lightboard room, was completed for faculty to use in online course development.
- A task group was appointed to prepare a recommendation for the formation of a formal Harding Online organization with a leadership structure.
- Harding Online was created with leadership including vice president, dean, associate dean, Center for Learning with Technology, and Learning Management System Support.
- Joined Acadeum, Council for Christian Colleges and Universities' online consortium, so Harding can offer online classes to students at other universities and Harding students can take classes from other universities if not available at Harding
- Added Quality Matters English, history and biology online classes to expand the options for liberal arts classes available to students during the summer
- In response to COVID-19, moved all Summer 2020 classes online, resulting in greater student enrollment. Most Summer 2021 classes were offered online.
- Created Bison Ready, a new pre-transfer loyalty program targeted toward 2+2 transfer students at community colleges to encourage earlier application, connection and commitment to Harding
- As a part of Ruffalo Noel Levitz scholarship modeling, the monetary value of individual transfer scholarships was doubled, and a need-based component was added.
- Added position in the registrar's office to develop and maintain memorandums of understanding and articulation agreements with partner institutions to increase the number of partner schools with a defined pathway to matriculate to Harding. Added ASU-Beebe (Honors, Spanish, elementary and middle-level Education) and National Park College (Advertising, Bible and Ministry, Communication Studies, Film, Integrated Marketing Communication, Media Production, Multimedia Journalism, Public Relations, Theatre)
- The Cannon-Clary College of Education created the Educational Leadership Advisory Board, consisting of K-12 school leaders, leadership candidates and doctoral candidates, to provide feedback on the relativity of our coursework and projects, evaluate the validity of course assessments for Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation, address Specialized Professional Associations standard components when input is necessary, share the mission and core values of Harding, recruit for our programs, and provide insight and guidance when external input is necessary.

Consistently called community members toward markers of academic success, having the following recent measures:

	Goal	Yr 1 Results	Yr 2	Yr 3
Freshman Retention Rate	85.0%	84.8%	86.7	84.3
Four-Year Graduation Rate	50.0%	48.5%	52.6	55.3
Six-Year Graduation Rate	70.0%	68.5%	71.5	67.2
Six-Months-Out Placement Rate	85.0%	88.1%	73.9	76.6

- Added a new one-semester remedial math course, equivalent to College Algebra but with an associated lab, that replaces the two-semester sequence
- Added a new course in English that combined the remedial class with ENG 1110 to reduce the two-semester sequence to one semester
- Refined new academic program feasibility and approval processes, establishing two tracks based upon faculty and resource needs
- Approved new graduate programs: Master of Science in Student Affairs, Master of Science in Kinesiology & Sports Administration, Master of Science in Nursing with initial licensure, Master of Science in Nutrition & Dietetics, Master of Science in Strength & Conditioning, Master of Science in Cardiac Function & Interventional Technology
- Approved new graduate programs: Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership 2021-2022, Master of Architecture in 2022-2023, Doctor of Occupational Therapy in 2024-2025
- Signed University-wide memorandum of understanding with Arkansas State University-Beebe, formalizing and expanding the existing cooperation, increasing educational offerings for both schools, and streamlining the enrollment and course transfer processes for students between the two universities
- Created new MOUs with NorthWest Arkansas Community College, University of Arkansas-Pulaski Tech College, Arkansas State University-Beebe, University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville and Ohio Valley University and approved numerous articulation agreements
- OCLC WorldShare was implemented for the new library management system.
- Faculty Gallery software has been implemented, and more than half of the faculty have submitted their professional profiles and achievements.
- Expanded the Brackett Library online instruction and self-help resources by creating an online virtual tour of the library and creating new tutorials, along with updating the webpage design
- Implemented a new strategy for the President's Council to enhance their engagement in areas of recruiting students, internship and job placement, recruiting more President's Council members, and increased giving.
- Purchased and implemented Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT, a CRM system that will hold data previously held in Banner for alumni, parents, donors and other external constituents to Harding
- Discontinued implementation of the Nexus system to replace Banner due to the number of critical deficiencies being discovered
- Enhanced cybersecurity measures by implementing multi-factor authentication for access to more sensitive information and began developing plans to do so for the entire campus moving forward
- Renovated the Hammon Student Center, updating wall coverings, installing new built-in tables, resurfacing existing tables, reupholstering current seating and adding new soft seating
- Completed infrastructure and sold 17 lots in Legacy Park V
- Constructed a 12-unit condominium building and sold each unit
- Constructed the building for Warehouse 4 Coffee in Legacy Park
- Completed renovation of Cathcart Hall rooms, bathrooms, study lounges, lobby and manager apartment
- Constructed the Hatcher Indoor Soccer Center that includes turf practice space, weight room and viewing area overlooking the field
- Began construction on a Welcome Center located on the first floor of the David B. Burks American Heritage Building to provide a central location for the Offices of Admissions, Financial Aid and Alumni & Parent Relations



Strategic Priority 4: A Diverse Community of Mission

Harding is deeply committed to increasing the racial diversity of the University and to increasing opportunities for women. For us, diversity flows from our belief that “Christ is all, and is in all” (Col. 3:11). With this strategic plan, what has long been a desire must become a priority. We realize that this will require new perspectives and the allocation of significant new resources. During this strategic planning process, the Harding University Community of Mission was challenged to develop new strategies to accomplish these goals. These strategic initiatives with action items are the result of this challenge:

- Provided professional development during academic leaders meeting that focused on best practices for hiring with a focus on attracting a diverse workforce
- The admissions multicultural resource advisor held two training sessions for recruiters regarding cultural sensitivity to African American and Latinx prospective students and families.
- The Multicultural Consortium of administrators and faculty with racial and cultural diversity-related appointments was formed to assist in developing and implementing University initiatives specific to diversity.
- Juneteenth was celebrated on the front lawn in 2020 and became an annual campus event in 2021.
- The American Studies Institute Distinguished Lectures emphasized themes of diversity and inclusion with speakers that included Liz Murray, Benjamin Watson, Jerry Mitchell and Temple Grandin.
- The NCAA Student Athlete Advisory Committee hosted a night for all student-athletes with Bison legends Butch Gardner and Stan Eckwood on their experiences as African American student-athletes at Harding during the 1970s and 1980s. About 315 student-athletes attended, and video of the event is available on the Harding website.
- The Multicultural Consortium organized homecoming events for African American alumni with opportunities for networking and creating scholarships for African American students.
- Diversity Services and Church Outreach hosted the seminar, “All Men Are Created Equal: Conversations on Christianity, Race and Education.”
- The Office of Church Relations hired a Director of Church Outreach, focusing especially on minority-serving congregations.
- The College of Bible and Ministry facilitated a seminar on Conversations in Cultural Competency: Christian Resilience in a Racist World.
- Diversity Services hosted events such as the “Race Relations Panel: Let’s Revisit a Conversation About Race” and the viewing of “Trauma: The Effects of the Pandemic on African American Families.”



- The 2019 Ministers Visit Day was expanded with the invitation and participation of five Latinx ministers in an effort to establish and strengthen relationships among predominantly Latinx congregations.
- Harding University hosted the National Youth Conference for African-American teens and the For Christian Girls Conference in 2018 and 2019.
- Began purchasing data annually to compare salaries by position with other Division II colleges and universities located in the southeast region of the United States in the setting of pay rates and ensuring equity in pay
- A new sexual harassment training module was created that includes an awareness test which requires participation and a passing grade of 80% by all employees.
- Signed a cooperation agreement with Zhejiang Yuexiu University of Foreign Languages to begin accepting students from China into the Master of Science in Education program.
- ESL policy changes were made to better align the program with competitors to help with the recruitment and success of international students.
- Updated the faculty salary model to include all faculty, not just 9-month faculty, to improve accuracy and consistency



Strategic Priority 5: A Collaborative Community of Mission

This priority sprang from a year-long discussion among the faculty considering the question: “What is one idea, big or small, that would make Harding University better?” With one voice, the University faculty expressed their desire to work in a more interdisciplinary, collaborative environment. This reflects not only personal longings but also the demands of an increasingly inter-professional work world. Consequently, during this strategic planning process, the Harding University Community of Mission was challenged to envision collaborative processes not only among all academic disciplines but also among administrative units as a way to create a richer learning environment. These strategic initiatives with action items are the result of this challenge:

- The Liberal Arts Committee developed liberal arts learning outcomes that were vetted through faculty in spring 2021 that will enrich course offerings while reducing total required credit hours.
- Created a new position and appointed the director of interprofessional education for the Center for Health Sciences
- Approved new interdisciplinary majors of
 - Bachelor of Arts in Business and English Communication
 - Bachelor of Arts in Event Planning
 - Bachelor of Arts in Community Development
 - Bachelor of Arts in Cyber Security
 - Bachelor of Arts in Data Science
 - Bachelor of Science in Data Science
 - Bachelor of Arts in Construction Management
- Launched Association of College and University Educators professional development program for integration of technology in teaching and learning with 25 faculty members having completed an excellence-in-teaching credential
- A new faculty constitution was approved by faculty in fall 2019, and faculty leadership elections were held.
- Developed learning outcomes for chapel that are tied to the mission and aligned with University co-curricular profiles, implementing a plan to gather, assess and analyze data in the coming year (See Christ-Focused above)
- Developed profiles for co-curricular learning that will be used in co-curricular assessment in academic units as well as co-curricular programs and experiences to connect assessment of learning to the mission
- Human Resources developed two new training programs for employees: “Customer Service” and “FMLA for Supervisors.”
- Human Resources updated the training programs for “Employee Feedback and Corrective Action” and “Employment Procedures”.
- The budget director began hosting training sessions at the beginning of each semester and periodically during the semester to explain the University accounting system and budget processes.
- Established the Office of Community Connection, which is made up of three parts: the Wayne and Alice Ann Kellar Center for Community Engagement, the Community Collaboration Hub and the Center for Social Impact Leadership.
- The Honors College and Alpha Chi co-hosted an Undergraduate Research Day to encourage and showcase student and faculty research.
- Paul R. Carter College of Business Administration created a student-managed investment fund, under the guidance of faculty, managing \$1 million of University endowment.
- Harding History House management was transferred to the Ann Cowan Dixon Archives & Special Collections in the Brackett Library that collects, preserves and interprets cultural and related materials associated with the history of Harding.





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