Harding University
Strategic Plan 2013-18
May 2016 marks the third year of the 2013-18 Harding University Strategic Plan. Much has transpired since our yearlong process was completed, and I believe you will be impressed by how much has already been accomplished. The plan has been adjusted, expanded in many ways, and even put into a different format.

One of the observations made by our Higher Learning Commission site visit team was that we needed to be more specific in our Strategic Plan. In response, we are currently implementing new processes for formulating and executing the remainder of the 2013-18 Strategic Plan. This will provide our Strategic Plan with greater details such as timelines, budget and resource allocation, and the assignment of specific responsibilities. An added emphasis has been placed on diversity and debt reduction throughout the plan.

With the changes and adjustments that are reflected in this document, we reaffirm our belief in the important work of strategic planning and press forward to find even better ways to implement our plans and vision for the future.

Bruce D. McLarty, President
Mission of Harding University

Harding University is a private Christian institution of higher education committed to the tradition of the liberal arts and sciences. It is composed of the following academic units: the College of Arts and Humanities; College of Bible and Ministry; Paul R. Carter College of Business Administration; Cannon-Clary College of Education; College of Sciences; Honors College; and The Center for Health Sciences that includes the College of Allied Health, Carr College of Nursing and College of Pharmacy. Harding offers graduate and professional programs in business, counseling, education, family nurse practitioner, ministry, marriage and family therapy, physician assistant studies, pharmacy, physical therapy, speech language pathology, and a Center for Online and Adult Education. The University serves a diverse, co-educational student body of traditional and nontraditional students from across the United States and around the world although the primary constituency for students and financial support is the fellowship of the churches of Christ. The board of trustees, administration and faculty believe that the freedom to pursue truth and high academic achievement is compatible with the Christian principles to which the University is committed. The faculty is dedicated to excellence in teaching, scholarship, service, and their role as models of Christian living. The University community seeks to provide an environment that both supports students and challenges them to realize their full potential. Thus, Harding's mission is to provide a quality education that will lead to an understanding and philosophy of life consistent with Christian ideals. This involves the following goals:

- **Generally, the integration of faith, learning and living** (developing the whole person through a commitment to Christ and to the Bible as the Word of God, an emphasis on lifelong intellectual growth, and the encouragement of Christian service and world missions through a servant-leadership lifestyle)

- **Specifically, the development of Christian scholarship** (while acknowledging dependence on God, stressing Christian commitment to intellectual excellence through a strong liberal arts foundation and effective professional preparation)

- **The promotion of Christian ethics** (creating an atmosphere that emphasizes integrity and purity of thought and action)

- **The development of lasting relationships** (fostering personal and social relationships through interaction among faculty, staff and students and stressing a lifelong commitment to marriage and the Christian family)

- **The promotion of wellness** (emphasizing that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that lifelong health habits contribute to a better quality of life)

- **The promotion of citizenship within a global perspective** (developing a Christian understanding of and respect for other cultures through an emphasis on liberty and justice)

**Motto**

The motto of Harding University is “Developing Christian Servants.”

The Harding motto grows from the University mission statement with its emphasis on the integration of faith, learning and living. Students are encouraged to live lives of service to Christ and His church and, in so doing, to bless the lives of others. The development of a servant-leadership lifestyle is stressed.

The University provides sponsorship, support and encouragement for countless Christian service projects including evangelistic and medical missions, disaster relief, and aid to the disadvantaged. Thus, students become more like Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve.
Spiritual Vision

(The following statement of spiritual vision was adopted by the Harding University Board of Trustees in May 2008 and reaffirmed in May 2011.)

Harding University was founded in 1924 upon spiritual convictions. We are, at our core, a Christian university. The character, example and concerns of Jesus Christ are the standards that shape us and chart the course for our future. Because of this, an all-encompassing love for God and a corresponding love for people are at the heart of who we are.

We are committed to retaining the Christian identity of Harding University. Realizing that there is a powerful, almost overwhelming tendency for Christian institutions to drift toward secularism, we recommit ourselves at this time to the distinctive practices that have always been central to Harding’s Christian mission: required Bible classes; daily chapel; and a lofty code of behavior for the board, administration, faculty and students.

For many years it has been our goal that Harding University integrates and celebrates “faith, learning and living.” The Christian worldview is to be at the core of every academic discipline and every extracurricular activity on campus. Every professor who stands in front of a class, every coach who stands in front of a team, and every director who stands in front of a cast or a chorus is to speak and lead as a man or woman of God. They are to confess, both in words and actions, that God created the world, that He redeems us through the blood of His Son Jesus, that He fills his children with His Holy Spirit, and that He calls us to be holy as He is holy. Such core themes will be emphasized in chapel services, in faculty meetings and throughout the university.

The Gospel of John states that “the Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (1:14). Grace and truth were perfectly blended in Jesus. He spoke truth, but always in a gracious way. He extended his hand in grace, but never betrayed the truth in doing so. However, Christians constantly struggle to demonstrate that same sacred balance. Gracious people are easily tempted to compromise truth, and truth-seeking people often communicate ungraciousness. Recognizing this challenge, we are determined to be a people who are “full of grace and truth,” sacrificing neither in the pursuit of both. Cheap grace and harsh truth are two extremes we will seek to avoid. Our hope is that, when people think of Harding University, they will think of both grace and truth.

Another important aspect of our institutional identity is our belief in the Bible as the fully inspired and authoritative word of God. We hold it to be “God-breathed” and the basis of our teaching and life (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is central to our goal of spiritual formation in the life of everyone at Harding. Consequently, it is our goal that all graduating seniors leave our university with a greater level of confidence in Scripture than they had when they first arrived on campus.

Harding University has always been a leader in world missions. Nearly one-third of the missionaries who have gone out from churches of Christ have graduated from Harding. We believe that at this critical point in history it is important that we renew our commitment to participate fully in the mission of God, both at home and abroad. While the pluralism of our postmodern culture denies the need to preach the gospel, we continue to believe that salvation is found only in Jesus Christ and that Christians are to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).

Harding has always been deeply connected with churches of Christ, and we reaffirm this connection. Our goal will be to continue to hire only members of churches of Christ as faculty and administrators. Though we live in a time of significant confusion over our brotherhood’s identity, we are determined that Harding University will become captive to neither a rigid legalism on the right nor a formless liberalism on the left. “With gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:16) we affirm on this occasion such distinctive convictions of the mainstream churches of
Christ as baptism for the remission of sins, a cappella music in worship, and male spiritual leadership.

While we maintain our close ties with the churches of Christ, we make clear that Harding opens its arms to all. Those who do not share all of our convictions are always welcome, and we will work hard to see that they are always treated with kindness, fairness and respect.

This statement of spiritual vision is presented, and we offer it to God with the words of our Lord, Jesus: “Father … not [our] will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42).

Higher Learning Commission Criteria for Accreditation

Harding University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (www.hlcommission.org; 230 South La-Salle St., Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL 60604; 800-621-7440). The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) continued the accreditation of Harding in 2015 with the next reaffirmation of accreditation in 2024-25. HLC accreditation assures quality by verifying that an institution meets standards and is engaged in continuous improvement. The HLC Criteria for Accreditation reflect a set of guiding values and are the standards by which HLC determines whether an institution merits accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation. The University is committed to continuous improvement and aligning the Strategic Plan with the Criteria for Accreditation and their core components.

1. The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution operations.
2. The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.
3. The institution provides high-quality education wherever and however its offerings are delivered.
4. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.
5. The institution's resources, structures and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Institutional Priorities

Six Institutional Priorities are derived from the Mission, Motto and Spiritual Vision (collectively the Mission Documents) and guided by the HLC Criteria for Accreditation. Strategic Initiatives, which reflect these Institutional Priorities, have been developed within the major divisions of the University. Action Steps are specific tasks to be accomplished in order for the Strategic Initiatives — and thus the Institutional Priorities, HLC Criteria and Mission — to be realized.

1. Harding University is committed to providing a transformative Christ-centered university educational experience for all students.
2. Harding University is committed to being a vibrant and excellent academic community.
3. Harding University is committed to liberal arts education as the best preparation both for a lifetime of learning and for a lifetime of employment in a rapidly changing workplace.
4. Harding University is committed to becoming an increasingly more diverse community that inspires a Christ-like understanding and respect for all people and prepares students to live in a global community.
5. Harding University is committed to strong fiscal stewardship with an emphasis on affordability for students.
6. Harding University is committed to the ongoing process of developing policies, organization and governance structures that are needed for a university of increasing size and complexity.
Strategic Initiatives with Action Steps

Academics
- Engage alumni to strengthen the link between academic programs and realities of the workplace
  - Utilize alumni input to inform curricular change
  - Expand student/alumni networking opportunities
- Further develop infrastructure to support faculty in scholarship efforts
  - Establish Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP)
  - Develop and implement strategic plan for OSP
  - Develop new university policies and revise existing university policies to support research and scholarship
  - Apply for and receive federally approved indirect (facilities and administration) cost rate
  - Create committees that are identified as required or needed to support faculty research and scholarship
  - Develop grants handbook
- Formalize and assess student learning outcomes (SLOs) for all academic programs
  - Consolidate university-wide SLOs
  - Develop mission-aligned, university-level SLOs for undergraduate programs
  - Develop SLOs for each liberal arts category
  - Measure achievement of at least one SLO per academic program/department during the 2015-16 university assessment plan cycle
  - Measure achievement of at least two SLOs per academic program/department during the 2016-17 university assessment plan cycle
- Complete a systematic program review process for all academic programs
  - Develop academic planning and program review (APPR) process
  - Accelerate completion of APPR reviews
  - Revise APPR process based on assessment feedback from first complete cycle
- Contribute to becoming an increasingly more diverse community by recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty
  - Adapt faculty salary model to help attract and retain diverse faculty
  - Build a pipeline for identifying faculty candidates from underrepresented groups
  - Develop policy for mechanisms to seek diversity in faculty hiring processes

Student support and services
- Improve student success thereby increasing freshman retention rate to 85 percent and six-year graduation rate to 67 percent
  - Acquire services of a consultant to evaluate current status of student success and recommend steps for increasing retention, persistence and completion
  - Implement additional early intervention systems to assist faculty and staff with identifying at-risk students and initiating strategies to promote student success
  - Develop and initiate courses designed to equip academically at-risk students with essential skills for self-directed learning and college success
Design and implement yearlong first-year experience orientation programming through regular and timely scheduled learning enhancement seminars (known as Harding Hacks)

Reorganize and empower a multi-discipline retention committee to recommend and evaluate strategies for increasing student retention, persistence and completion

Develop and implement a holistic first-year experience (FYE) program to address academic, administrative and social orientation needs

Add a third summer orientation program (Stampede III) and begin requiring all new students to attend a summer Stampede session and fall Student Impact

Design and initiate annual events that build a class identity and provide opportunities for student engagement including FYE retreat, student organizational fair and year-end celebration banquet

Develop and implement a peer mentoring program (Peer Guides), linking FYE orientation and the required first-year Bible classes

Initiate a personal librarian program that will facilitate the integration of information literacy into the first-year experience

Develop an Office of Multicultural Student Services that provides specialized support to students from diverse backgrounds and promotes a Christ-like respect for all people and cultures

Appoint a director of Multicultural Student Services

Create a mission statement and develop a strategy for promoting awareness of the support services provided by this office

Create a Web and social media presence to communicate multicultural services, resources and events with various Harding constituents

Increase and enhance student social, recreational and study spaces on campus

Add Einstein Bros. Bagels and Panda Express food vendors in student center

Construct First Ladies Garden to also feature an outdoor classroom and secret garden

Expand and renovate Ganus Activities Complex and establish Suzanne and Rodney Waller Recreation Center

Expand Brackett Library to create more space for testing lab, student collaboration, individual study and student technology support

Renovate Charles M. White Cafeteria to provide increased food options, enhanced seating arrangements and more efficient serving stations

Enhance the safety and security of the community and campus

Expand response capabilities of public safety employees by increasing the number of armed officers and increasing employee certifications and credentials

Expand the use of technology in safety and security with emphasis on card-access control and surveillance cameras

Increase communication and use of social media tools to disseminate important security messages and helpful safety reminders
Information systems and technology

- Scrutinize and evaluate emerging technologies that lead to a change to operational efficiencies and advance teaching and learning
  - Archive Harding social media
  - Cooperate with Verizon to install a DAS cellular antenna system in campus buildings
  - Evaluate and implement degree audit and planning
  - Incorporate IPV6 technology into the campus network
  - Migrate to a new integrated library system, taking advantage of the cloud
  - Replace existing SAN data storage with newer technology that makes use of SSD storage
  - Retire Nortel phone systems, moving to VoIP solutions

- Monitor and enhance infrastructure and applications that underpin IS&T operations
  - Expand secure online testing options
  - Monitor and improve student printing satisfaction, cost and convenience
  - Provide wireless network access in campus housing
  - Redesign www.harding.edu
  - Transition from physical servers to virtual servers
  - Upgrade all of the Banner system from version 8 to Banner XE

- Maintain data security and integrity to protect Harding data and systems from destructive forces and unwanted actions
  - Choose and implement an intrusion prevention system
  - Encrypt laptop computers
  - Establish a secondary campus Internet connection with an alternate vendor for emergency purposes
  - Establish a “warm” disaster recovery data center at least 100 miles’ distance from Searcy
  - Evaluate preservation needs for current resources
  - Select and implement a campus-wide, automated patch/update service for all campus computers

- Promote digital access and scholarship and deeper integration of digital technologies in learning, teaching and scholarship.
  - Establish an archivist position to preserve Harding’s history and to initiate the start of a digital archive
  - Expand Brackett Library’s instructional online resources along with outreach to online classes and Harding’s professional development centers
  - Expand Brackett Library to create more space for testing lab, student collaboration, individual study and student technology support
  - Implement a digital institutional repository
  - Initiate a personal librarian program that will facilitate the integration of information literacy into the first-year experience
  - Promote increased understanding and usage of the library’s e-book and e-journal collections
  - Redesign Pipeline portal
• Promote improved digital and Web-based communication and public relations to help connect the Harding community
  o Build and launch a portal for searching/browsing campus historical markers
  o Develop and implement a vibrant and effective social media policy to be completed in collaboration with the Office of Public Relations
  o Develop more effective communication with liaison departments and librarians
  o Implement process for tagging and rating library resources
• Encourage and support teaching and learning with technology
  o Expand support for faculty and staff with self-help technology
  o Implement best practices for the delivery of courses offered using Canvas
  o Implement course reviews using the Quality Matters Rubric
  o Incorporate library databases and instruction into Canvas
  o In partnership with academics, expand faculty development in regard to learning with technology
  o Utilize lecture capture capabilities

Enrollment
• Grow new student enrollment by two percent each year
  o Develop lower-performing recruiting territories in the U.S.
  o Do “all but require” personal campus visits
  o Execute a series of college planning sessions across the U.S.
  o Grow the prospect pool with qualified prospective undergraduate students
  o Support the Sino-American recruiting efforts with their goal of 150 Chinese students enrolled
• Grow enrollment of new students from underrepresented populations by 10 percent each year
  o Appoint an admissions counselor dedicated solely to recruiting underrepresented populations in the undergraduate new student class
  o Assign an admissions counselor to discovering additional Hispanic prospective undergraduate students
  o Purchase the contact information for every African-American high school junior and senior in the U.S. who lists church of Christ as their church affiliation
  o Reach out to the largest minority church of Christ congregations in the U.S. for additional prospective students
• Harding’s emphasis on affordability will remain at the forefront of the institution’s pricing philosophy
  o Keep Harding accessible for its lowest-income students by keeping need-based grant spending in pace with increases in tuition and replace federal and state need-based programs
  o Keep academic scholarship spending in pace with increases in tuition thereby remaining competitive with Harding’s peer institutions
• The preparedness of Harding’s incoming new student class will be demonstrated by the mean ACT score among Harding’s freshmen remaining in the 24-25 range
  o Continue to offer 25 full-tuition Trustee Scholar Awards for a select group of new freshmen
  o Develop and implement further strategies for attracting more National Merit Scholars
  o Establish measures for encouraging all high school seniors in Arkansas to apply for the state-funded Arkansas Challenge Scholarship between Jan. 1 and June 1
- Establish measures for encouraging high-achieving high school seniors in Arkansas to apply for the generous state-funded Governor’s Distinguished Scholarship between Jan. 1 and Feb. 1
- Implement a recruiting weekend on campus targeting high-ability prospective freshmen
- Maintain attractive undergraduate scholarships for high-ability students
- Regularly analyze institutional undergraduate scholarships to ensure competitiveness with cohort institutions

Spiritual life
- Increase diversity of presenters in chapel and annual Bible Lectureship and request additional topics directly related to multicultural understanding and respect
  - Recruit a more diverse range of speakers to make presentations in our student chapels and in Bible classes
  - Schedule an increased number of minority and international presenters at our annual Bible Lectureship
- Increase the level of student participation in the annual Bible Lectureship
  - Partner with the College of Business Administration to provide learning experiences that lead students to become more aware of opportunities to pursue business in a way that reflects Christian values, especially our responsibility to the poor
  - Schedule speakers who more directly address the needs and interests of our students from within a Christian perspective
  - More effectively promote these enrichment opportunities through Bible class announcements and by creating special student Lectureship flyer
  - Schedule featured speakers in student chapels and use this exposure as a springboard to promote their subsequent presentations
Finance

- Develop and implement a sustainable financial plan for debt reduction
  - Establish a University debt policy which includes debt ratio targets
  - Expand communication of debt policy and debt ratios to involve all university employees
  - Prepare a new debt reduction plan maintaining favorable debt ratios and improving them
- Increase campus-wide awareness and involvement in annual budget process
  - Add and enhance communication to all employees throughout annual budget process
  - Offer budget basics training classes to employees taught by Harding financial system analyst

Physical resources

- Complete construction projects with high quality and in a timely and cost-effective manner
  - Add Einstein Bros. Bagels and Panda Express food vendors in student center
  - Build stadium and practice facility for women’s intercollegiate softball
  - Construct First Ladies Garden to also feature an outdoor classroom and secret garden
  - Construct Legacy Park III student apartments
  - Construct Pryor-England science building addition
  - Construct Swaid Center for Health Sciences for Carr College of Nursing and communication sciences and disorders department
  - Develop a comprehensive parking plan for campus
  - Establish and implement a plan for continued improvement to outdoor lighting on campus
  - Expand and renovate Ganus Activities Complex and establish Suzanne and Rodney Waller Recreation Center
  - Expand and renovate Rhodes-Reaves Field House to add practice gymnasium, locker rooms, meeting room and lobby
  - Expand Brackett Library to create more space for testing lab, student collaboration, individual study and student technology support
  - Renovate Charles M. White Cafeteria to provide increased food options, enhanced seating arrangements and more efficient serving stations
  - Renovate physical therapy building (phase II)
  - Renovate Searcy Hall and Cone Hall
  - Replace Ganus Academic Building
- Continue to maintain and upgrade beauty and functionality of campus facilities and grounds
  - Develop a rotating maintenance schedule for campus buildings
  - Establish a formal process for communication of maintenance needs by custodial staff to physical resources

Human resources

- Expand development opportunities for faculty, staff and administration
  - Create a mission leave policy for staff
  - Develop customer service training for staff and faculty
  - Develop online training for supervisors
• Provide an excellent working environment for employees
  o Contribute to becoming an increasingly more diverse community by recruiting and retaining a diverse staff
  o Ensure well-being of employees in the workplace through compliance with OSHA and expansion of safety initiatives

Advancement, alumni and parent relations, public relations
• Create a diverse group of visionary women who share a passion for inspiring leadership and financial support to Harding University
  o Establish 100 Women for Harding
  o Rebrand Associated Women for Harding and change name to Women for Harding
• Establish and implement a prospect pipeline process that develops a prospect pool that aligns with the goals and priorities of the university
  o Develop a plan to expand the existing donor base through engagement and networking
  o Hire a support person to assist in prospect research and identification
  o Purchase new donor search software to help identify potential donors for the University
• Increase awareness of financial needs of the university to existing and potential donors through marketing efforts and promotional materials
  o Develop and print new brochures for President’s Council, new giving societies and other programs
  o Office of University Advancement to collaborate with Office of Alumni and Parent Relations in electronic communications with alumni/donor base
  o Office of University Advancement to collaborate with Office of Public Relations with goal of increasing coverage in various printed materials of results and opportunities of donor involvement with the university
• Increase participation rates of the following constituencies: alumni to 20 percent, senior class to 20 percent, current parents to 25 percent, and faculty/staff to 70 percent by 2018
  o Expand the acquisition activities intended for first-time and small gift donors to the university
  o Expand the efforts of Generation HU for young alumni for giving percentages as well as graduating seniors for their senior scholarship gift
  o Expand the parents program for improved identification and qualification of donors
  o Hold a faculty/staff fundraising campaign
• Review the existing annual giving clubs and giving societies for improvement in areas of engagement, solicitation and stewardship
  o Create new giving societies based on lifetime giving, dividing James A. Harding Society for cumulative gifts of $100,000 into three more societies at $250,000; $500,000 and $1 million
  o Examine the possibility of creating a new donor recognition event for the newly created lifetime giving societies
  o Update the President’s Council to include active and inactive status based upon a prescribed set of criteria to increase active membership and better control the stewardship costs for this organization
Intercollegiate athletics

- Continue to integrate athletics, academics and campus life into a cohesive whole that reflects the Christian mission of Harding University
  - Recruit and retain qualified coaches who embrace the mission and principles of Harding University
  - Recruit athletes for all sports who embrace academic excellence, involvement on campus, and Christian principles of Harding University
- Strive to have modern athletic facilities that are among the best in the Great American Conference
  - Build stadium and practice facility for women’s intercollegiate softball
  - Conduct feasibility study, determine location and raise funds to build indoor tennis facility
  - Expand and renovate Rhodes-Reaves Field House to add practice gymnasium, locker rooms, meeting room and lobby
  - Raise funds to replace football scoreboard with new scoreboard/video board
Harding School of Theology

- Raise the goal of the annual fund for Harding School of Theology from $450,000 to $530,000 per year
  - Add new individual and congregational donors
  - Identify and revive lapsed donors
  - Raise the level of our intentional contact for the purpose of fundraising and recruiting
- Increase the number of new students from 40 to 45
  - Build our recruiting network adding one new recruiting pool per year
  - Improve the admissions section of the website by adding video, assisting prospective students in both application and scheduling a campus visit
  - Raise the visibility of HST among churches of Christ, young ministers and a diverse group of prospective students
- Raise completion rates for all degrees, specifically raising the completion rate for the Master of Divinity from 30 percent to 40 percent
  - Create a combined and accelerated Harding University B.A./M.Div. program that can be finished in five-and-a-half years
  - Create processes to assist the students in two categories that most commonly drop out of the M.Div.
  - Extend similar considerations to the M.A. in Christian ministry degree
  - Work on changes in the M.Div. degree making it possible for students to finish it in three years instead of four (current norm)

Harding Academy

- Build partnerships with Harding University to provide opportunities to increase student services and enhance instruction
  - Meet with deans and department chairs and establish specific collaborative endeavors
- Pursue renovations and additions to existing facilities
  - Design and build an addition with multiple classrooms
  - Install wire-reinforced glass at each public entrance of building
- Strengthen instruction and achievement through technology
  - Accumulate examples of completed student work at each grade level
  - Integrate technology into classroom instruction and student achievement
  - Utilize a specialist to assist faculty with integration of technology in the classroom