



A PUBLICATION BY
HIGHLANDS COLLEGE

FALL 2024

Eternal Impact



ROOTED IN PURPOSE
The Highlands College Story

LIFE ON CAMPUS
A Student's Perspective

A JOURNEY OF FAITH &
TRANSFORMATION

MISSION

Highlands College is a biblical higher education institution that exists to supply the Church with leaders of competence, character, and spiritual maturity, holistically trained to lead lives of eternal impact by fulfilling the Great Commission.



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Rooted in Purpose

THE STORY AND VALUES OF HIGHLANDS COLLEGE

Established by Church of the Highlands Senior Pastor Chris Hodges in 2011, Highlands College has become a beacon of biblical higher education in Birmingham, Alabama. Initially, classes were held in the extra space available at the Grants Mill campus of Church of the Highlands. Soon after, the College relocated to the Greystone campus, and in 2016, Church of the Highlands acquired the Grandview building to serve as the new campus, central offices,

and future home of Highlands College.

The College's mission is to supply The Church with leaders of competence, character, and spiritual maturity, holistically trained to lead lives of eternal impact by fulfilling the Great Commission. The College's unique approach to biblical higher education supports this mission, which focuses on developing the whole leader—spirit, mind, and body. Students receive this

comprehensive training experience through a unique four-pillar model of Academic Instruction, Ministry Training, Character Formation, and Spiritual Development.

The College's founding values are deeply rooted in its commitment to faith and education through a biblical worldview. The institution strives to create an environment where students can grow spiritually, academically, and

personally, preparing them to make a lasting impact in their communities and the world. The dedication to these values is evident in the College's continuous efforts to provide a holistic education that equips students to lead with excellence and purpose.

Significant milestones mark the history of Highlands College, including the renovation of the Grandview building, the construction of its first on-campus

student housing, the purchase of a commercial extended-stay hotel, to name a few. The College also received initial accreditation from the Association for Biblical Higher Education and authorization from the State of Alabama to award bachelor's degrees in various ministry-related fields.

Highlands College is a testament to the power of a faith-driven vision and

a commitment to developing leaders equipped to expand the local church and the Kingdom of God. Through its unwavering dedication to its mission, vision, and founding values, Highlands College continues to inspire and empower the next generation of leaders.

Letter from the President

Dear Highlands College Community,

I am pleased to extend a warm welcome as we embark on an exciting new chapter with the release of our inaugural college magazine. This publication marks a celebration of our community's achievements and a moment to reflect on our shared purpose and look ahead to an impactful future at **Highlands College, America's Ministry Leadership University**.

Our mission is clear. We are training and equipping the next generation of leaders with exceptional character, faith, and a commitment to leading a life of eternal impact.

Our vision is bold. We strive to be a transformative force in higher education, integrating rigorous academics with real-world experience, spiritual growth, and leadership development. By nurturing the mind and heart, we aim to cultivate graduates prepared to lead with integrity, resilience, and a servant's heart.

Our goals are ambitious and faith-driven. We commit to developing and expanding the Highlands College campus and scholarship programs to accommodate training 1,000 students annually. Through the ongoing funding of our scholarship endowment, more students will graduate barrier-free, fulfilling their God-given potential without financial burden.

This magazine is a testament to the passionate spirit of Highlands College. I invite you to explore these pages, celebrate our collective achievements, and join us as we move forward with purpose and Kingdom advancement.



Thank you for being an integral part of our Highlands College Family. Your support and involvement fuel our mission and propel us toward greater impact.

Together, we win,

Mark Pettus
President, Highlands College



America's Ministry Leadership University

Charting Our Path Forward

THE 2023-2024 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We are continuously overwhelmed by all God is accomplishing through the support of our Highlands College Donor Family. As our student body increases and our campus footprint expands, the realization of our mission to

send workers into the harvest field becomes increasingly more tangible. We are grateful to our students, HC Team, alumni, donors, and Community Partners for their contributions that made our 2023-2024 fiscal year remarkable.

Building Momentum

HIGHLIGHTS OF EXPANSION & ACHIEVEMENTS AT HIGHLANDS COLLEGE

ENROLLMENT

Awareness of Highlands College as America's Ministry Leadership University continues to grow, as evidenced by the increase in enrollment numbers and application starts. In the fall of 2023, Highlands College had its largest freshman class, more than 170 students eager to begin their HC journey.

**We welcomed 208 freshmen in the fall of 2024, evidence that Highlands College continues to grow and expand its reach.*



RESOLUTE CAFÉ AND BISTRO opened in July 2023 and provides an additional snack and beverage location to serve students and campus guests.





THE VILLAGE AT HIGHLANDS COLLEGE is the newest housing development underway for Highlands College. Because of donors' extraordinary generosity and through the leadership of our Board of Directors, we purchased the Extended Stay Hotel on Highway 280 adjacent to the campus property. Phase I renovations began in February 2024 and concluded at the beginning of August. The Village will accommodate 280 students in 140 rooms.

THE TECHNICAL ARTS LAB

is the dedicated ministry training space for students pursuing a degree in Visual or Technical Arts. The renovation and development of this space reached completion in January 2024 and now provides students with the most up-to-date technology for learning necessary Visual and Tech Arts skills.





THE VIEW renovation project is complete, and this fine-dining restaurant opened for students in February 2024. Designed with life skills training in mind, The View serves as the laboratory for training students in conversational and dining etiquette.





VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION

Highlands College students graciously served hundreds of United States Veterans and their families at Church of the Highlands' inaugural Veterans Day Celebration. The privilege to meet so many men and women who have bravely served and still serve this great country profoundly impacted everyone present.



Transforming Lives

THE IMPACT OF HIGHLANDS COLLEGE IN ACTION



ALUMNI DEPARTMENT

HC Alumni are leaders in the harvest field and forever “HC Family.” With graduates serving worldwide, we aim to intentionally celebrate, connect, and care for them as they make an eternal impact. To do this, we launched our first Alumni Department in the spring of 2024. The Alumni Department hosts regional meetups to connect with graduates

and facilitate network opportunities for them. Ten alumni also returned to Highlands College for the first Alumni Leadership Day, during which they spent time pouring back into the College by preaching and leading worship during chapel and teaching students in breakout sessions.

SERVE DAY 2024

Students in the Global Ministry major worked diligently to plan, coordinate, lead teams, and execute a Serve Day in local communities. A Serve Day is where teams dedicate a day to be the hands and feet of Jesus in local communities, meeting tangible needs and ministering to them through connection and prayer. Visual Arts students also participated by capturing photos and videos of the serve projects.

These HC Students returned from their outreach projects with story upon story of the lives eternally impacted by their obedience to serve.

One team went door to door, praying for people, when they met one particular couple who welcomed the students to pray for them. After praying, they had a deeper conversation that led them to give their lives to Christ. That’s so powerful, but that’s not the only testimony of lives changed that day.

During a grocery delivery, students prayed for a family and their kids, and before they left, the parents gave their lives to Christ in their living room. These students made an eternal impact on many lives through simple acts of kindness.



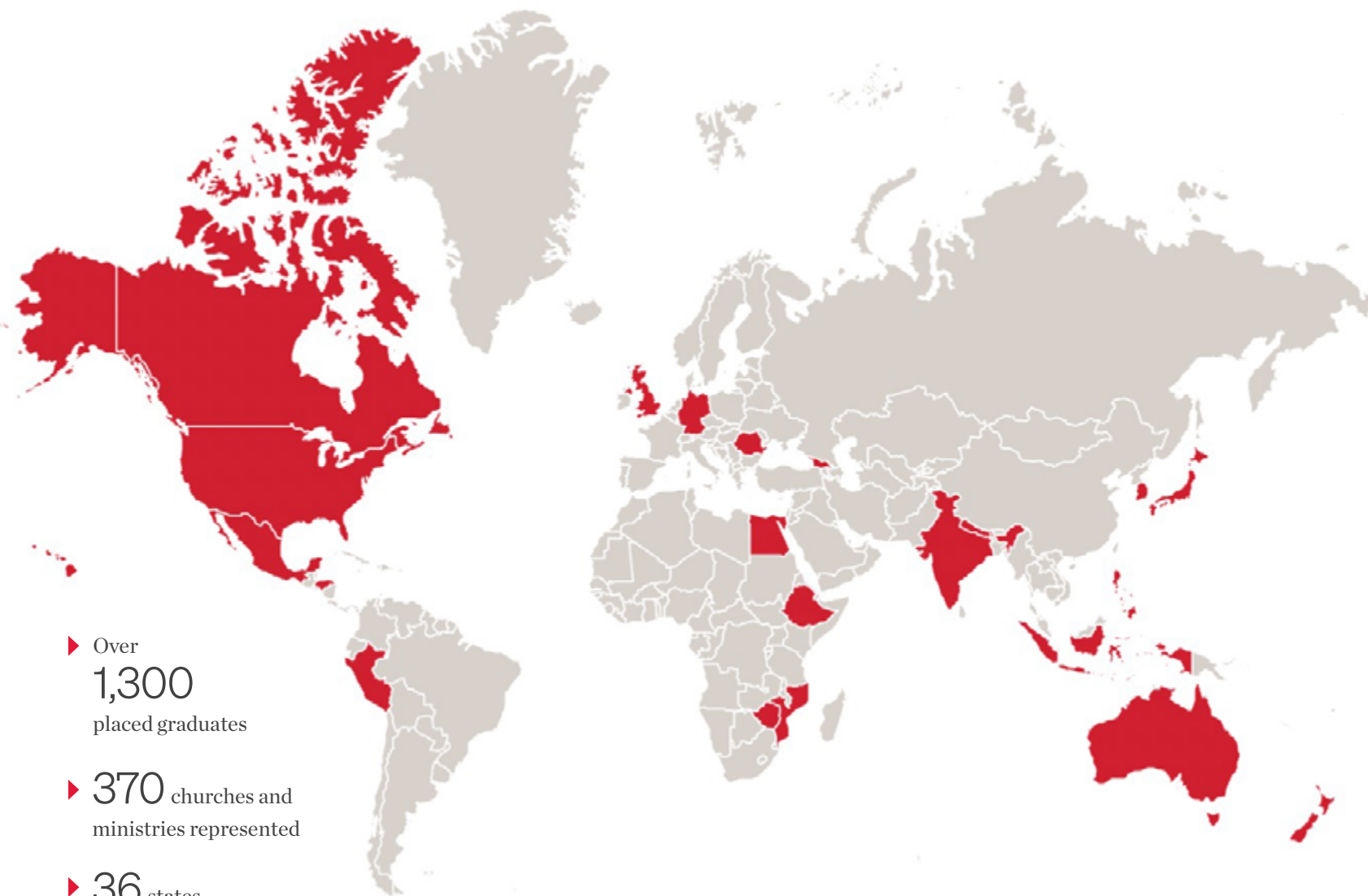
- ▶ 75 people served
- ▶ 370 people impacted
- ▶ 80 families received groceries
- ▶ 6 salvations
- ▶ 1 rededication



Placement

The Office of Ministry Placement has successfully assisted over 1,300 Highlands College graduates with their next step after graduation. One of our new favorite traditions when a graduate moves toward a ministry position is to host a “Seal Ceremony” in the Ministry Placement Office. During a Seal Ceremony, family and friends of the graduate share words of affirmation and encouragement; the graduate

shares more about their new role before stepping onto the inlaid bronze Highlands College seal while the Ministry Placement Team breaks confetti poppers overhead. The Seal Ceremony concludes with a commissioning prayer and photo opportunities to commemorate the impactful moment. Seal Ceremonies have become a highlight for everyone at HC.



- ▶ Over 1,300 placed graduates
- ▶ 370 churches and ministries represented
- ▶ 36 states
- ▶ 1 U.S. Territory
- ▶ 21 countries

Placement totals include students and graduates who received direct assistance through Ministry Placement and other strategic partners.



Roque Limon - Worship Leadership Major, Class of 2024; Placed at LakePointe Church in Rockwall, TX.

“

“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

— Luke 10:2



Katie Wallace - Student Ministry Major, Class of 2023; Placed at Church of the Highlands in Birmingham, AL.

Driving Change

2023-2024 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND THEIR OUTCOMES

THE VILLAGE AT HIGHLANDS COLLEGE

With enrollment growth rapidly increasing yearly, the College's most pressing concern has been additional student housing. The Lord provided the opportunity to purchase the Extended Stay Hotel adjoining its campus footprint. Again, through the transformational generosity of Hobby Lobby's Green family with their \$17.5 Million challenge gift, we completed Phase I renovations of The Village at Highlands College for fall 2024 upperclassmen to move in.

Phase II is already in progress, and once completed, The Village will house 280 students in 140 rooms and have a clubhouse area with a gym and community space to foster and strengthen relationships with classmates. This additional housing space will continue to allow us to expand our enrollment, providing accommodations for the ever-growing interest to attend Highlands College.



BUT TOGETHER, WE CAN
ACHIEVE SO MUCH MORE.

Beyond Today

A VISION FOR TOMORROW



Highlands College is committed to training 1,000 students each year to fulfill the Great Commission. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of thousands of dedicated supporters, we have already achieved more than we could have imagined. Yet, we believe God continues to call us forward, saying, **“There’s more.”** There are more students to equip and send, more projects to initiate and complete—all surpassing what we can accomplish alone. **But together, we can achieve so much more.**

To reach our goal of educating and preparing 1,000 students annually, we have established specific and strategic priorities that will guide us in fulfilling our mission. You can learn more about these priorities in the **“Eternal Impact – Future Vision”** section of this magazine.

At Highlands College, we recognize the transformative power of community and collaboration in creating lasting change. Your continued support has enabled us to reach remarkable milestones, but our journey is far from complete. As we look ahead, we invite you to join us in

this mission to send laborers into the harvest field, making an impact that echoes into eternity.

Whether through prayer, financial contributions, or sharing our mission with others, your involvement is essential to shaping the future of Highlands College.

Let’s continue to train leaders of competence, character, and spiritual maturity who will fulfill the Great Commission. Join us in making an eternal impact for generations to come.

VISION

To educate, equip, and empower leaders in a ministry academy model, applying leading-edge methods in world-class facilities where students launch into their calling to expand the Kingdom of God.

With Gratitude

HONORING OUR SUPPORTERS

The past fiscal year has been extraordinary, thanks to the incredible Highlands College Team, our dedicated students, and our proud alumni who have consistently contributed to the growth and success of Highlands College. Your unwavering commitment and hard work made the 2023-2024 fiscal year truly remarkable.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our generous donors, whose support has been essential in advancing our mission, as well as to our Board of Directors and Chancellor Chris Hodges, whose visionary leadership and dedication have been pivotal in guiding us through this transformative year.



Expecting the Extraordinary



The path ahead is rich with opportunities to make an even greater impact. Let us persevere in prayer and strive for the goals that keep the mission in the middle. Your ongoing engagement and support inspire us to press on, knowing that **“if we don’t quit, we win!”**

I have tremendous anticipation for the incredible plans God has in store for Highlands College, and there’s no one else I’d rather be on this journey with than you. Together, we will continue witnessing and being part of something extraordinary.

Mark Pettus
President, Highlands College

“
If we don’t
quit, we win!”

— Mark Pettus

Highlands College is an Alabama non-profit corporation licensed through the state of Alabama’s Private School Licensure Division and is accredited by the Association for Biblical Higher Education Commission on Accreditation (5850 T. G. Lee Blvd., Ste. 130, Orlando, FL 32822, 407-207-0808) to grant certificates and degrees at the Associate and Baccalaureate levels.



JESUS

DAR
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THE
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Academics that Inspire and Empower

Highlands College embodies academic excellence, offering a unique and transformative educational experience. The College's commitment to developing leaders of competence, character, and spiritual maturity is evident in its distinctive programs and innovative educational approach.

Inspired by the United States military academies, the College integrates a unique training model of rigorous academics with real-world experience, spiritual growth, and leadership development. This model ensures that students are well-versed in their academic disciplines and equipped with the practical skills and spiritual foundations necessary for effective ministry.

Central to Highlands College's educational approach are the Four Pillars: Academic Instruction, Ministry Training,

Character Formation, and Spiritual Development. These pillars provide a comprehensive framework for student growth and development. Academic Instruction focuses on developing students' intellect and increasing their knowledge of God, while Ministry Training offers hands-on experience in various aspects of church life. Character Formation challenges students to live a life of excellence, fostering leadership abilities and Christ-like character. Spiritual Development strengthens students' personal relationship with God through chapel services, small groups, fasting retreats, and mission trips.

The College's Schools of Ministry offer specialized training in various ministry fields, preparing students for diverse roles within the church and around the world. These schools provide

a robust curriculum that combines theological education with practical ministry skills, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to serve in their chosen vocations.

Highlands College also offers a range of ministry degrees and minors, including a minor in business, designed to equip students for leadership in the church and other ministry contexts. These degrees emphasize academic excellence and practical application, enabling students to integrate their faith with their professional pursuits.

A commitment to academic excellence, distinctive programs, and a holistic educational approach make Highlands College America's Ministry Leadership University—a premier institution for those seeking to lead lives of eternal impact.



4 Pillars

THE HIGHLANDS COLLEGE DISTINCTIVE CURRICULUM RESTS ON FOUR PILLARS:

ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION

At Highlands College, the Academic Instruction Pillar lays the groundwork for a lifetime of ministry leadership. By nurturing a love for learning, it equips students with a deep, holistic understanding of God's Word, supported by caring professors and engaging classes. Through a core of Foundational Studies, Biblical Studies, and Theological Studies, students gain the intellectual and practical tools they need to lead, serve, and inspire in their local communities and across the world.



Purpose of Academic Instruction

Academic Instruction is at the heart of Highlands College's mission to develop knowledgeable, capable, and spiritually mature leaders. The curriculum cultivates essential skills for lifelong learning alongside a robust understanding of Scripture and core Christian beliefs. Students engage with a broad range of subjects, learning to integrate their faith into every aspect of life, in preparation for fulfilling the Great Commission.

Emphasizing critical thinking, clear communication, and the pursuit of truth, this Pillar embodies Proverbs 1:5: "Let the wise listen and add to their learning," and echoes the command in Mark 12:29-30 to love God with all our minds. Highlands College's Academic Instruction Pillar ensures students graduate as well-educated, biblically literate, and theologically sound leaders, ready to make a lasting impact for the Kingdom of God.

MINISTRY TRAINING

Highlands College's Ministry Training Pillar equips students with the essential skills and understanding for effective ministry work. This pillar focuses on practical training, spiritual development, and leadership formation, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to serve in various ministry roles. Through classroom instruction, hands-on experience, and mentorship, students grow in their faith and make a meaningful impact in their communities.

Global Ministry

The Global Ministry Major students are equipped with a missional mindset, evangelism strategies, and administrative skillsets focused on growing The Church through local, national, and international efforts. They will demonstrate the proficiency to lead, pastor, and disciple within multiple cultural environments and show compassion to ministry populations to make an eternal impact in the world.

Student Ministry

The Student Ministry Major at Highlands College aims to equip students with the heart posture, practical knowledge, and skills needed to foster a daily relationship with God, effectively guide the next generation, and build vibrant, life-giving student ministries. Through thoughtfully structured classroom environments, personalized mentorship, and access to the exceptional staff of Church of the Highlands, Student Ministry Major students are prepared to make a meaningful, eternal impact.

Pastoral Ministry

The Pastoral Ministry Major at Highlands College equips students with the heart posture, practical knowledge, and skillset to cultivate a daily relationship with God, effectively shepherd congregations, and foster healthy, life-giving local churches. From carefully curated classroom settings to personalized mentorship and close proximity to the world-class Church of the Highlands staff, the Pastoral Ministry Major students are prepared to make a lasting, eternal impact in today's ministry landscape.

Family Ministry

The Family Ministry Major equips students with a comprehensive understanding of the family unit and essential elements of guarding and growing children's ministry. They will demonstrate proficiency in strategically aligning



curriculum, classroom design, and ministry practices with appropriate stages of a child and family's development to make an eternal impact that sets the foundation for a biblical worldview for children from multiple backgrounds.

Technical Arts

Students of the Technical Arts Major learn the technical expertise and professional skills required for excellence in worship and production environments. They will demonstrate proficiency in production technologies, live video, audio, and lighting, ready to lead professionally and excellently, making an eternal impact through live church environments.

Worship Ministry

The Worship Ministry Major equips students with a robust understanding of worship theology, musical theory, and technical skills in live music technologies and recording. They will demonstrate the leadership abilities necessary to create and lead transformative worship experiences in various contexts to make an eternal impact through live church environments.

Visual Arts

Just as Jesus illustrated his teachings through vivid storytelling, modern ministers must use the visual world and creative elements to reach the lost and encourage believers. Visual Arts students learn how to lead and build teams while mastering two elements of creative ministry—graphic design and video editing. Students use these media to design compelling graphics for church services, print materials, and digital media. They also learn to capture and edit photography and video footage with the latest tools and technologies for personal testimonies, church events, and more.



CHARACTER FORMATION

Highlands College's Character Formation Pillar is central to the institution's mission to develop leaders of Godly character who can persevere in ministry and life. The program shapes students in key virtues such as integrity, discipline, service, and excellence, which align with the College's vision of fostering Christian leaders who live out their faith in their personal and professional lives.



Purpose of Character Formation

Character Formation at Highlands College aims to create a holistic educational experience that integrates spiritual, physical, and emotional development. The goal is for students to internalize Christlike behaviors, enabling them to serve selflessly, pursue excellence in all endeavors, and exemplify ethical leadership. By cultivating these virtues, students become well-rounded individuals prepared to lead in ministry and contribute positively to society.

Connection to Highlands College's Mission

The focus on Character Formation directly supports Highlands College's mission to raise leaders with the integrity and strength to overcome life's challenges. The program embeds character-building activities into the student experience, ensuring growth academically, spiritually, and personally. Character Formation is a journey where co-curricular activities mold students, helping them navigate their calling with resilience and a deep sense of service.





YOUR IMPACT STARTS HERE.

"THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL,
BUT THE WORKERS ARE FEW."

LUKE 10:2

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

At Highlands College, a student's personal, intimate relationship with God directly influences their impact and longevity in ministry. Students are prepared to reach a complex and diverse world because of the rich, spiritual transformation that happens while they are at Highlands College.



Purpose of Spiritual Formation

Throughout their college experience, students build spiritual disciplines centered around prayer, worship, and God's Word. Chapel services, small groups, discipleship, and annual prayer and fasting retreats are integral components of strengthening students' faith and equipping them for a life of eternal impact.

Chapel

Highlands College students experience engaging weekly Chapel services with the entire student body alongside faculty and staff. With student-led prayer and worship and timely messages from global church leaders, these services are essential to the Spiritual Development Pillar at Highlands College.

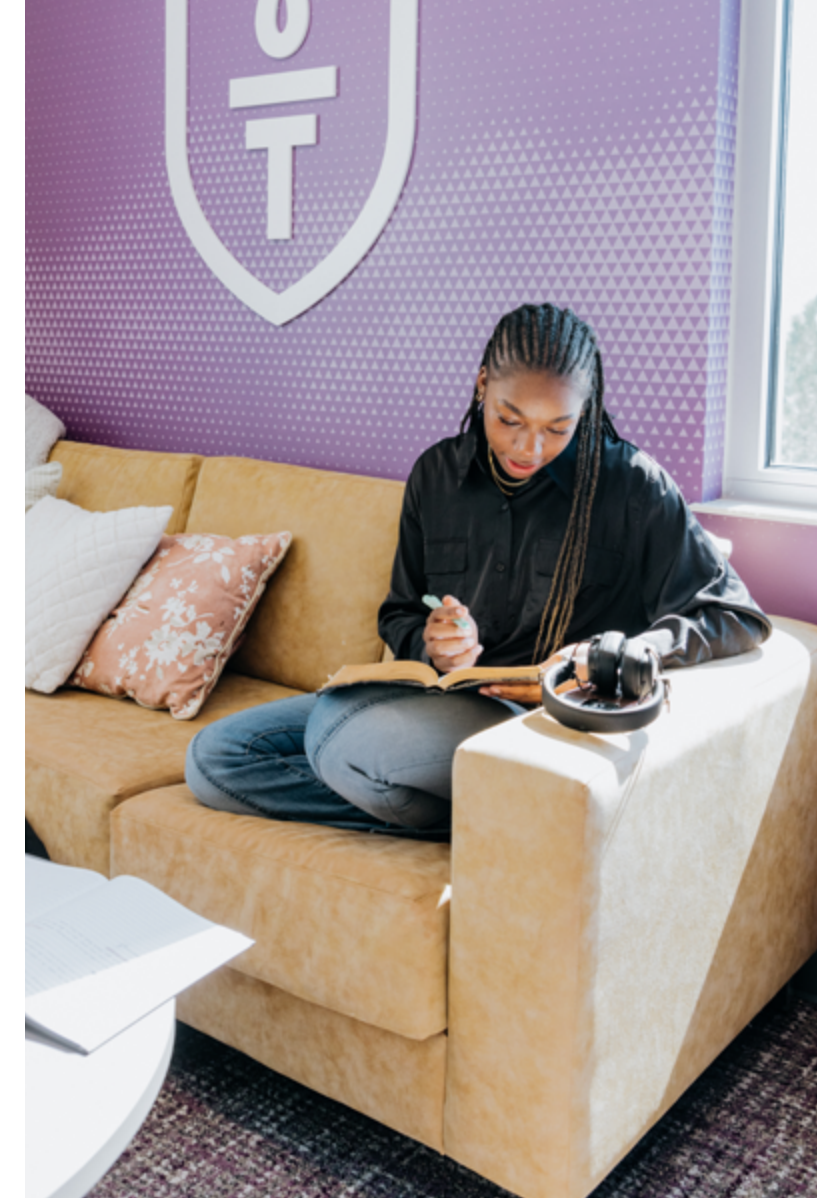
Highlands College Teammates, Church of the Highlands Staff, and a wide variety of world-class Christian leaders invest in students by sharing messages full of spiritual truth during Chapel services. Past speakers have included renowned ministry leaders, professional athletes, authors, movie producers, CEOs, and other business leaders with a heart for using their platform and influence to make an eternal impact.

Church Life

Life change happens in the context of relationships and can serve as a pivotal component of every individual's spiritual journey. Highlands College students spend a lot of their time pouring into others. Small groups are a great time of intentional fellowship and discipleship during the week, where they gather with other students to refresh and re-energize for the week.

Small groups encourage students to pursue a Christ-centered life by allowing them to invest in life-giving relationships, build character through healthy accountability, and build a solid spiritual foundation for the ministry ahead.

Sundays are opportunities for Highlands College students to put what they are learning into practice and build community throughout their Highlands College journey. During their first year, students receive a Church of the Highlands campus assignment. This intentional connection provides them the opportunity to serve the local church consistently, stay connected to a congregation throughout their time at



Highlands College, and learn directly from active ministry practitioners. Many church leaders they serve alongside also lead the classes they experience throughout the week.

Care

Given that we care about students holistically, the Spiritual Development Team dedicates their time to mentally, emotionally, and spiritually caring for students. They aim to build students' mental and emotional resilience and walk them through challenging situations. Through one-on-one pastoral counseling, this team helps strengthen spiritual disciplines and maturity in students.

Schools of Ministry

AND DEGREES AT HIGHLANDS COLLEGE

Highlands College's Schools of Ministry provide specialized training and education for students who aspire to serve in various ministry roles within the church and the world. Each School focuses on equipping students with theological knowledge and practical ministry skills, encouraging a well-rounded approach to leadership and service. With a strong emphasis on spiritual growth, real-world experience, and character development, the Schools of Ministry ensure that graduates step confidently into their vocations and make a meaningful impact in the world.

SCHOOL OF MEDIA

Students passionate about leading the local church as a full-time ministry practitioner through service production and creative skill sets pursue a four-year degree in one of two concentrated focuses.

Bachelor of Arts in Technical Arts

Technical Arts students are educated and equipped to build teams, create worship environments, and pastor people all within the local church. These students refine their audio and visual production skills for live church events through intentionally curated coursework.

Bachelor of Arts in Visual Arts

The Visual Arts coursework empowers individuals who are passionate about refining their creative process, storytelling, problem-solving, and leading and developing artists. The program educates and equips students to become creative ministry leaders who serve the church through skilled visual communication in graphic design, motion design, and video production.



SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

Students passionate about being effective ministry practitioners in a specific pastoral area of the church are intentionally educated and equipped to be leaders in their field of study. These students can earn a bachelor's degree designed for full-time ministry leadership to prepare them to serve the local church.

Bachelor of Science in Family Ministry

Students gain practical training in leading the local church by reaching children with truth and empowering parents. Family Ministry coursework focuses on effectively leading families on a journey that develops children spiritually through professional curriculum and pastoral practices.

Bachelor of Science in Global Ministry

The Global Ministry coursework equips students with community awareness, team building, administration, and pastoral care skills. Students passionate about reaching individuals and communities beyond the church walls through local, national, and international initiatives receive education and training to effectively build teams and minister to communities with Christ's love.

Bachelor of Science in Pastoral Ministry

Students cultivate the pastoral heart of a biblically educated ministry leader and gain the skills to guide others in taking their next steps through the local church. The Pastoral Ministry coursework prepares students to lead evangelistic gatherings, create environments that nurture authentic relationships and inspire life change, develop pathways for people to discover their God-given gifts and abilities, and coach others on using their passions to make a difference.

Bachelor of Science in Student Ministry

The Student Ministry degree program educates and equips individuals to become healthy, biblically sound, and influential student ministry leaders within the local church. Coursework and training help them build a Biblical worldview, develop strategic vision, and explore innovative ministry practices—such as student conferences, monthly services, and weekly group events—to prepare the next generation to build strong relationships and spiritual resilience.

SCHOOL OF WORSHIP

Highlands College's School of Worship develops skilled, spiritually grounded worship leaders prepared to inspire and lead others in meaningful, Christ-centered worship. These students learn to integrate their musical talents with a deep understanding of biblical principles, creating worship experiences that impact lives and facilitate genuine connection with God.

Bachelor of Arts in Worship Ministry

Worship Ministry students are biblically educated and intentionally equipped to build teams, develop musicians, create worship environments, and pastor people in the local church as full-time ministry practitioners. In addition to developing musical skills, coursework establishes the knowledge and wisdom required to apply biblical truths to personal disciplines and congregational environments.



Meet the Faculty

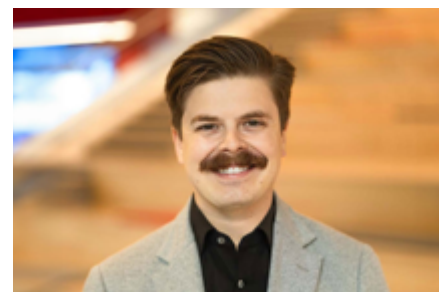
The Highlands College faculty are dedicated, experienced professionals who bring a wealth of knowledge, spiritual insight, and real-world experience to the classroom. Each member is committed to nurturing students academically, spiritually, and personally. They play a pivotal role in shaping future leaders prepared to make an eternal impact by combining their expertise with a passion for mentoring and discipleship.



Marguerite Armistead
Writing Center Director
M.A.



John Ball
Dean of Biblical Studies
Professor of Biblical Studies
M.Div., M.A.T.S.



Landon Benson
Adjunct Instructor
M.F.A.



Dr. Matthew Benson
Vice President of Academic Instruction
Professor of Communication
D.Min., M.Div., M.B.A., M.A.



Stacey Benson
Dean of Foundational Studies
Associate Professor of Social Sciences
M.A.



Bradley Blaylock
Instructor of Theological Studies
M.A.T.S., M.A.



Dr. Kevin Bussey
Professor of Biblical Studies
D.Min., M.Div., M.A.



Angelyn Cantrell
Instructor of Communication Studies
M.A.



Dr. John Cespedes
Associate Professor of New Testament
Ph.D., M.B.A., M.A.



Taylor Fagan
Assistant Professor of
Theological Studies
M.B.T.S



Dr. Chris Hanna
Dean of Theological Studies
Professor of Theological Studies
Ph.D., M.Div., Th.M



Dana Haynes
Adjunct Instructor
M.Ed.



Scott Hill
Librarian
M.A., M.L.I.S.



Michael Hodges
Vice President of Spiritual
Development
M.Div., M.B.A.



Trey Johnson
Professor of Biblical Interpretation
M.Div.



Ben Johnson
Practical Ministry Department
Chair



Dr. Sherrill Larson
Professor of Old Testament
D.Min., M.Div.



Dr. Kristen Lushington
Writing Center Coordinator
Ph.D., M.A.



Joshua Manley
Adjunct Instructor
M.A.



Michael Mardis
Adjunct Instructor
M.B.A.



Eric Parker
Associate Professor of Cultural Studies
M.Div.



Daniel Patti
Worship Ministry Department
Chair



Briley Ray
Assistant Professor of Church History
M.Div.



Dr. Naomi Reese
Associate Professor of
Theological Studies
Ph.D., M.Div., Th.M.



John David Robertson
Executive Director of Campus Life
Adjunct Instructor
M.A.



Josiah Roop
Instructor of Biblical Studies
M.Div.



Kathryn Skelton
Global Ministry Department
Chair



John Torres
Pastoral and Student Ministry
Development Chair
M.A.M.L.



Dr. Mike Williams
Executive Director of Institutional
Assessment, Registrar, Adjunct Instructor
Ed.D., D.Min., M.Div.



Shakima Wilson
Assistant Professor of
Communication Studies
M.A.



Katie Wilson
Instructional Designer
Associate Professor of Mathematics
M.A.M.



Lemuel Young
Visual Arts Department Chair



2025 Birmingham Marathon

EXPO

Highlands College

📅 APRIL 11, 12 – 5 PM

RACE OPTIONS

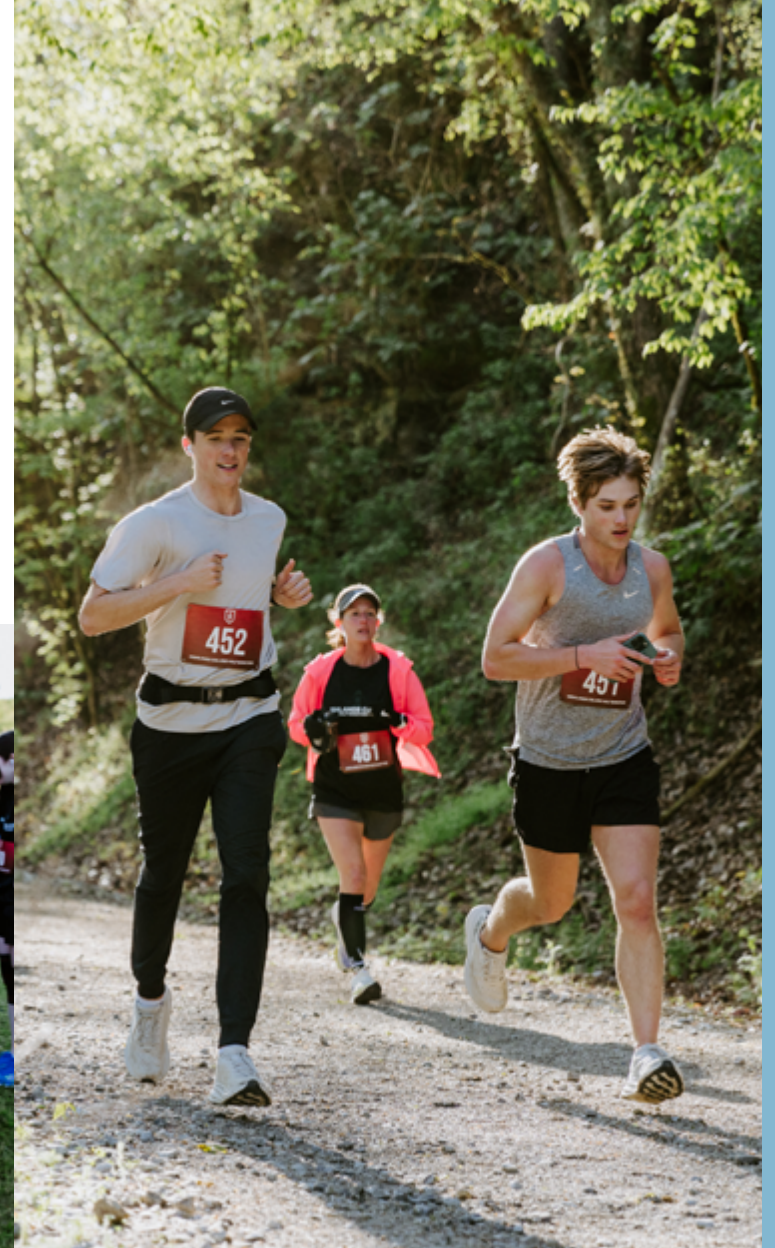
*Black Creek Park
Fultondale, AL*

📅 APRIL 12

Participate in our
Marathon, Half
Marathon, 10K, or
Family Fun Run.

**REGISTER TO JOIN
THE RACE HERE**

runsignup.com/birminghammarathon





DELANEY WICKSTRUM

Highlands College Student Body President, Class of 2026

Life on Campus

A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE AT HIGHLANDS COLLEGE

My name is Delaney Wickstrum, and I am a junior at Highlands College in the Student Ministry Major with a minor in Global Ministry. I also have the honor of serving as the inaugural Student Body President. It has been a joy to hear the students' thoughts and excitement about all that is happening around Highlands College. HC has been a blessing to all my peers and me through its intentional structure of Academic Instruction, Ministry Training, Character Formation, and Spiritual Development. These aspects of the College are in place because, as Luke 10:2 states, "the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few..." Therefore, **Highlands College is training us to be launched into ministry and fulfill the Great Commission.**

Our students are abundantly bearing the fruit of this vision and intentionality. As students, we have watched ourselves become night and day different from the freshmen we came in as. The student body frequently describes Highlands College

as a greenhouse. It is a place that supplies us with the resources we need to be well-rounded disciples of Christ and leaders of His Church. For example, HC's academy model and hands-on approach allow students to have hundreds of hours of hands-on training by the time they graduate. We grow here, blossom here, and do it with so much joy. **There is no place like Highlands College.**

Not only does our approach to learning and resourcing students set us apart, but the most significant characteristic that students say distinguishes HC from other colleges and universities is the HC Family. HC Family is the motto coined to celebrate the community God is building within Highlands College. As a student here, my professors also pastor me, and my pastors are also my friends. Additionally, student life at HC is vibrant. With weekly events, there is always something fun and valuable to participate in. Some of our students' favorite events of the year are the Expedition race, a 20-mile team-

building obstacle course race; the Luau, a welcome-week event to build community and welcome the freshmen into the HC Family; HC Madness, a student versus staff basketball game; and the Torch Awards, an elegant awards ceremony to celebrate together while honoring the students who have gone above and beyond.

While not at events or classes, our students can be found across our beautiful campus, studying, playing games together, throwing a frisbee, reading, or diving into the Word of God with one another. My personal favorite spots to be are diving into my coursework while enjoying some tea at the Resolute Cafe and Bistro, sharing a meal with some friends at the Harvest Food Hall's outdoor seating, or studying in our Library. The librarians are so kind and generous. Students frequently lean into them for academic support, resourcing, pastoral care, and guidance. Even in places like a library, **the Holy Spirit is shaping the student body.**

Our students consistently talk about how the Holy Spirit meets them daily at Highlands College. Our chapel services are a prevalent example of this. Chapel has shaped my peers' and my journey in understanding the will of God for our lives and how to best prepare for what God has called us to do. We get to hear the Word of God, enjoy a student-led time of worship, and connect with small groups multiple times a semester. You will find our students discussing the messages received days and weeks later as they allow their encounters with God during chapel to take them from glory to glory in their walk with Christ.

I am beyond grateful to be studying at Highlands College. It is an exciting time to be a part of this community as the campus expands and develops to soon house and train 1,000 students on campus. The development taking place has added significant value to my learning, friendships, and personal growth. It is an honor to be at Highlands College, and on behalf of the student body, thank you to every person who has generously prayed for or financially supported Highlands College. Because of each of you, generations are being sent out to fulfill the Great Commission, bearing the Gospel in the local church, the global Church, and to the ends of the Earth. **The best is yet to come.**





Empowered for Impact

MINISTRY PLACEMENT
AND ALUMNI SUCCESS

PREPARING LEADERS FOR LIFELONG IMPACT

Highlands College prepares students for placement in vocational ministry roles, positioning them to live out their God-given calling and make an eternal impact. The Ministry Placement team focuses on guiding students from their first semester at Highlands College through their transition into vocational ministry. Whether through local churches, faith-based nonprofits, or global missions organizations, the team ensures that each graduate finds the right environment to participate in God's global mission and impact the world.

Ministry Placement serves as the bridge between Highlands College and real-world ministry partners. The team's goal goes beyond job placement; they help graduates identify roles that align with their passions, gifts, and the needs of the Kingdom. Believing that students are Kingdom builders, the team collaborates with churches and ministries worldwide to help graduates step into their God-given purpose.

HOW MINISTRY PLACEMENT WORKS

The Placement Pathway

From Day 1, Highlands College works closely with students, providing professional development, life skills training, contextualized ministry training, and networking opportunities. Through the Placement Pathway, the team

offers personalized coaching and career assessments, helping students understand how their unique gifts can serve in ministry settings.

Relationships with Churches and Ministry Partners

Highlands College maintains an extensive relational network of over 20,000 local, national, and global ministry partners, providing students and graduates with access to diverse opportunities in world-class churches and ministries. The Placement team connects students with roles that align with their calling and strengths, whether in church leadership, missions, or outreach. Students engage with and learn from these global leaders each semester through classes and programs such as the In-Residence Program.

Long-Term Alumni Support

Ministry Placement focuses on more than just helping students secure their first job in ministry; it emphasizes longevity and sustained fruitfulness. Through the Alumni Network, graduates gain access to ongoing mentoring, professional development opportunities, and continuous support from the Highlands College community throughout their ministry journey. The picture described in Psalm 92:12-14 reflects the vision for alumni's future.



“

“The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green.”

— Psalm 92:12-14

Through Ministry Placement, Highlands College ensures that every student is equipped for the next step of their calling, connected to an impactful ministry community, and ready

to serve God wherever He leads them. With extraordinary partnerships worldwide, Highlands College is building the future of the Church—one placed ministry leader at a time.

The Vision for Highlands College Alumni

The Highlands College Alumni Department celebrates and supports graduates as they step into their ministry callings, providing resources and opportunities to keep them engaged with the Highlands community. We foster

meaningful connections, empowering alumni to make an eternal impact wherever they serve. Our team is committed to offering encouragement, guidance, and community as alumni participate in God's global mission.

*Celebrating,
Connecting,
Collaborating,
and Caring
for Our Alumni
as They Lead
Lives of
Eternal Impact*



Learn more about the Alumni Department by clicking below.

highlandscollege.edu/alumni/



A Decade of Dedication

JACOB LAVENDER'S MINISTRY JOURNEY

Jacob Lavender, a 2013 graduate of Highlands College, has devoted the past decade to ministry and now serves as the Associate Pastor at Action Church in Orlando, Florida. Reflecting on his journey, Jacob shared, "When I was young in ministry, my attitude was always, 'How can I use my gifts to serve the Church?' Now, I realize how much I need the Church, not the Church needing me." This shift in perspective

has strengthened his faith and resilience as he continues to guide others and witness transformative moments within the community.

In an interview, Jacob expressed his passion for helping others take their next steps: "It's amazing to hear how one step can lead to a family being restored and generations impacted." To recent graduates, his advice is clear: "Fight for

a heart of gratitude. Ministry is hard and will cost you, but remember you are called, and He who calls you is faithful."

Jacob has demonstrated perseverance and joy in ministry, from launching new church locations to leading outdoor services during unexpected power outages. His story exemplifies the profound and lasting impact made by Highlands College graduates.

Stepping Out in Faith

DANI CHAVEZ BLAKE'S JOURNEY FROM HIGHLANDS COLLEGE TO CATALYST CHURCH

Dani Chavez Blake, a 2023 Highlands College graduate, is a powerful example of recent alumni stepping into their calling with faith and determination. After completing her studies, Dani followed God's call to Washington, D.C., where she now serves as the Dream Team Lead and Executive Assistant at Catalyst Church. Dani's role enables her to help others take their next steps in faith and connect with the church community.

Her advice to recent graduates is to remember that "this season is about God shaping you into the person He wants you to become. Know that He'll place you in situations that make you

uncomfortable, but that's where growth happens."

Answered prayers have already marked Dani's placement journey. After a period of preparation, Catalyst Church recently hosted its first Momentum Night for students, an event Dani helped bring to life through prayer and dedication. Her story is one example of recent graduates making a meaningful impact in their new roles and communities.



You can read more impactful alumni stories on the Highlands College blog by clicking below.

highlandscollege.edu/news/

If you or someone you know would like to learn more about hiring a Highlands College graduate, click below.

highlandscollege.edu/job-placement/



Upcoming Alumni & Placement Events



MINISTRY PLACEMENT

ARC CONFERENCE

Dallas, Texas

📅 APRIL 29 – 30

The Ministry Placement Team will be at the annual ARC Conference to facilitate connecting church leaders with Highlands College graduates seeking their next step in vocational ministry.

ALUMNI MEETUPS

If you are a Highlands College graduate and interested in reconnecting and networking with other HC Alumni, plan to attend an Alumni Meetup in 2025. Email alumni@highlandscollege.edu to learn more.



Beyond Borders

THE POWER OF CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY TRIPS

Vision and Objectives

Cross-Cultural Ministry Trips with Highlands College give students a life-changing experience where they can build community, practice cross-cultural ministry, and learn about God's mission for the global Church in the context of the least evangelized people groups of the world.

“

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

— Matthew 28:18-20



Bridging Cultures

A TRANSFORMATIVE MINISTRY TRIP TO JAPAN

Highlands College students recently embarked on a life-changing Cross-Cultural Ministry Trip to Japan, partnering with Lifehouse International Church. Immersed in Tokyo, students engaged in outreach and relationship-building activities, sharing the Gospel with a population where only 2% identify as Christian. They witnessed impactful moments, including sharing testimonies that led to connections with Lifehouse Church and life-changing encounters. The experience deepened their faith, enhanced their ministry skills, and emphasized the power of relational ministry. Testimonies highlighted the profound impact of stepping beyond comfort zones to fulfill the Great Commission.

INSPIRING STUDENT TESTIMONIES

“We met a girl on her birthday who said it was her dream to be happy. Then she asked us what our dream was; I told her I wanted to share hope and love with people. I asked her if I could share my testimony with her. I told her how I was lost and hopeless until I found a group of people who wanted to be true friends, who brought me to Church, where I learned about God and how he loved me and created me. Tears formed in her eyes, and I believe, in that moment, God touched her heart. We connected her with the team at Lifehouse Church and showed her the Bible app. Not only was this the first time I have ever shared the Gospel with someone who has never heard it before, but this is the first time she had ever heard the Gospel, and I was in awe that God gave us that opportunity.”

— Abby Wicks

“This trip showed me the impact of leaving the ninety-nine for the one. During an outreach event outside a mall, I connected with someone who couldn't attend the upcoming church event we had invited them to due to work. Understanding there was a low likelihood she'd hear the Gospel, a teammate and I asked her if she knew God. She asked, ‘What's God?’ which was the first time I met someone who didn't know who God was. We explained that the Creator of the universe made us for a reason and that she could know Him personally. That with God, there is joy even amid the chaos! She wanted to learn more, so we connected her with Lifehouse Church, where they could equip her with the community and a Bible in her own language. I'm so thankful God sent this group to Japan!”

— Reece Meyers

Upcoming Ministry Trips

CROSS-CULTURAL
MINISTRY TRIPS
May - July 2025



DESTINATIONS:

- Ireland
- Hong Kong
- Zambia
- Japan
- Cambodia
- New York City
- Indonesia
- Serbia
- Moldova



DISCOVERY DAYS

- FEBRUARY 6
- MARCH 13
- APRIL 10

- Experience College Life
- Explore Our Campus
- Engage with Our HC Community
- Discover Your Future at Highlands College

ACCEPTED STUDENT DAYS

- FEBRUARY 18
- APRIL 17

- Accepted students get an insider experience of life at Highlands College
- Celebrate + Connect with current students, faculty, and future 2025 classmates

Upcoming Enrollment Events Spring 2025

Highlands College continues to experience high demand for enrollment, and spots for Fall 2025 are extremely limited. Request more information about applying to Highlands College by clicking below.

[APPLY NOW](#)



A Journey of Faith and Transformation

THE STORY OF VINCENT CARDOZA AND THE GENEROSITY OF BARBARA AND BEN NEVINS

When Vincent Cardoza first felt the calling to pursue vocational ministry, he could never have imagined the path that would unfold before him. His journey to Highlands College was a testament to his faith and a powerful reflection of the generosity and commitment of people like Barbara and Ben Nevins—donors who believe deeply in the power of transformation through God’s love.

Vincent’s “yes” to God came in July of 2022, a quiet but firm decision that stirred a range of emotions within his family. His parents, concerned for his future and uncertain about this new path, struggled to understand his decision and what it might mean for their son. “For nine months, I prayed,”

Vincent recalls. “I prayed for their hearts to soften, for them to see God’s purpose in my life.” But even as he held to faith, his parents remained steadfast, placing a final condition before him: “You can go if you can pay for it.”

Meanwhile, Barbara and Ben felt the same sense of calling—though theirs was to support students like Vincent. They had been part of the Highlands College Family from the beginning, moved by the College’s mission to equip young people for lives of ministry. “We believe that God works through people,” Ben shared. “When we invest in a student, we’re investing in the future of the Church, in communities that will be reached and lives transformed.”



Barbara and Ben Nevins

“I prayed for their hearts to soften, for them to see God’s purpose in my life.”

— Vincent Cardoza

Just a week after his parents set forth their condition, Vincent received news that would change his life: he had been awarded the Barbara and Ben Nevins Endowed Student Scholarship, funded by the Nevins’ generosity. For Vincent, this wasn’t merely a scholarship—it was a divine answer to prayer, a sign that validated his purpose and calling.

On freshman move-in day, Vincent stepped onto the Highlands College campus, his family by his side, still uncertain but open to see what might unfold. As they walked through campus, something shifted. The Highlands College Team’s warmth, hospitality, and embodiment of the fruits of the Spirit created an atmosphere that deeply touched Vincent’s family. Overwhelmed with emotion, Vincent’s mother turned to him and, with tears in her eyes, said words he would never forget: “God wants you here.”

Reflecting on moments like these, Barbara shared, “Knowing that our giving can help bring someone closer to God and impact an entire family’s faith journey—there’s no greater reward.” She and Ben had long believed that their role as donors was not just about financial support but about investing in an environment where students like Vincent could thrive spiritually, academically, and personally.

For Vincent, that environment became his foundation, and his story became a beacon of faith for his family. Today, both of his parents have been baptized, a testament to the transformation that began with his “yes” to God and sustained by the generosity of Ben, Barbara, and the entire Highlands College community. Now, as Vincent studies and prepares for a life in ministry, his family serves in their local church—a ripple effect that began with a call, was strengthened by faith, and made possible through an act of generosity.

Vincent’s story and the faith of Barbara and Ben beautifully illustrate the heart of Highlands College. Their journey together is a powerful reminder that generosity does more than open doors; it changes lives, strengthens families, and builds a legacy that will reach far beyond the walls of the College and into the world. Through their support, the Nevins have allowed Vincent and countless others to answer their calling, building a future filled with hope, faith, and endless possibilities.



Vincent and Family





The Path to Training 1,000 Students

Highlands College is on a faith-filled journey toward achieving its mission—equipping 1,000 students annually to fulfill the Great Commission. This ambitious goal reflects the College’s commitment to cultivating competent, character-driven, and spiritually mature leaders who will go into the world and advance God’s Kingdom by making an eternal impact.

The path to achieving this vision relies on a strategic plan and a steadfast focus to keep the mission in the middle. Highlands College has developed targeted priorities to support its expansion plan to accommodate the rapid increase in annual enrollment numbers.

Central to the College’s approach is its belief in the power of community and collaboration. Highlands College is leveraging the support of dedicated partners and generous donors to

propel this vision forward. The unwavering generosity of the Highlands College Donor Family plays an instrumental role in funding scholarships, programs, and capital projects, making it possible to educate and train more students every year.

To reach the milestone of educating 1,000 students each year, Highlands College focuses on strategic initiatives that include capital projects and funding a scholarship endowment.

This path forward is a testament to the College’s enduring mission. Every milestone achieved brings Highlands College closer to shaping the next generation of leaders capable of carrying out God’s work with passion and purpose. The future holds countless opportunities, and continued dedication will ensure Highlands College reaches 1,000 students annually, serving as a stepping stone for even greater impact.



IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

The Highlands College In-Residence Program is a group of esteemed practitioners who invest in Highlands College students to help prepare them for their calling. These leaders aren’t just theoreticians; they instead educate students from the full weight of their real-world expertise and experience. The In-Residence Program is key to inspiring and transforming students into leaders who make an eternal impact.

CHRIS TOMLIN

SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ

📅 MARCH 20

📅 APRIL 15



2025 In-Residence Days

Future Vision Priorities

RESIDENCE HALL III

Highlands College recognizes the growing need to expand its campus facilities to support the increasing number of students pursuing their calling. Adding a third residence hall is essential to accommodate this growth and ensure students have access to a supportive, community-centered living environment. By building a new residence hall, Highlands College can continue to provide a comprehensive, on-campus experience that facilitates personal development, spiritual growth, and strong connections among students as they prepare for their future in ministry.



RESIDENCE HALL III

As enrollment numbers continue to rise, a third residence hall is crucial to housing **1,000 students** on campus.

CAMPUS ENHANCEMENTS

Maintaining a safe and secure environment for its students, staff, and visitors is a high priority for Highlands College. The College prioritizes campus enhancements to support its commitment to safety and security. These improvements include upgraded surveillance systems, improved lighting, and reinforced access control measures to ensure a protected and welcoming space. By proactively addressing safety needs, Highlands College aims to create an atmosphere where everyone can thrive without concern, promoting a community focused on learning and growth.



ADDITIONAL DINING

As enrollment numbers continue to rise, Highlands College recognizes the need for additional student dining options. Expanding dining options will enhance the overall student experience by providing more space, improved service, and greater menu variety.

STUDENT CENTER

Highlands College identifies the need to expand the Student Center to support the health and well-being of its growing student population. An expanded student center will provide more space and equipment, accommodating a greater number of students and offering diverse fitness options. This expansion aligns with the Character Formation Pillar, promoting discipline, resilience, and holistic growth, supporting students' overall academic performance, personal development, and spiritual maturity.



Exterior View



Aerial View

Eternal Impact Campaign

Highlands College launched the Eternal Impact Campaign to support its mission, vision, and strategic goals. This comprehensive initiative aims to provide essential resources for the continued development of the Highlands College campus and to establish a scholarship endowment for 1,000 students.

The Eternal Impact Campaign focuses on strategic priorities that accelerate the progress and completion of capital projects to support future student growth. It also aims to build a scholarship endowment, easing the financial burden on students and their families.

Highlands College invites you to be part of this transformative journey. **Your involvement helps accelerate progress, expand opportunities, and shape the future of ministry leadership.** By contributing to this initiative, you play a vital role in supporting students as they grow academically, spiritually, and personally, creating an eternal impact that resonates far beyond the classroom. Join Highlands College in empowering the next generation of leaders who will carry the mission and make a life-changing impact around the world.

**YOUR INVOLVEMENT HELPS
ACCELERATE PROGRESS, EXPAND
OPPORTUNITIES, AND SHAPE THE
FUTURE OF MINISTRY LEADERSHIP.**



Ways to Partner

IMPACT TEAM AND IMPACT PARTNERS

The **Impact Team (individuals and businesses)** and **Impact Partners (pastors and churches)** commit to annually invest \$100,000, or more, to directly support the mission, vision, and goals of Highlands College. Impact Team members and Impact Partners receive invitations to select Highlands College events, the chance to attend events and trips with the Highlands College Leadership Team, including Chancellor Chris Hodges, and opportunities with Highlands College special guests.

WAYS TO PARTNER

Highlands College Community Partners is an annualized sponsorship program established to develop and continue relationships with business leaders and promote

neighborly partnerships between Highlands College and communities nationwide.

All Community Partner revenue is tax-deductible and will directly benefit the Eternal Impact Campaign, which exists to fund the mission, vision, and goals of Highlands College.

Learn more by clicking below.

highlandscollege.edu/community-partners

Join Us in Making an Eternal Impact

**CLICK TO
GIVE HERE**

highlandscollege.edu/giving/

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[CLICK HERE TO TAKE TOUR](#)



Explore Highlands College like never before with our immersive virtual tour app. Discover our state-of-the-art campus and vibrant student life. Whether you're a prospective student, parent, or supporter, this app lets you experience the heart of Highlands College anytime, anywhere. Start your journey today!





Eternal Impact,
a publication by Highlands College
Inaugural Edition