

A Values-Based Institution

An Interview with Dr. Nido R. Qubein, President, High Point University

EDITOR'S NOTE Dr. Nido Qubein became the seventh president of High Point University in January 2005. He has served as past president of the Big South Conference and teaches a class to all freshmen titled, "The President's Seminar on Life Skills." In this course, Dr. Qubein shares with students the habits, skills, values, and the practical intelligence that one must apply to succeed in an ever-changing world. The author of 11 books, Dr. Qubein received an associate degree in business from Mount Olive College, a bachelor's degree in human relations from High Point University, and a master of science in business education degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Bryan School of Business & Economics. In 2009, he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Letters in Humanity degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.



Nido R. Qubein

UNIVERSITY BRIEF Founded in 1924, High Point University (highpoint.edu) is a 94-year-old liberal arts institution located in the Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina. At High Point University, every student receives an education in an inspiring environment with caring people. "America's Best Colleges" 2020 Edition, published in the U.S. News & World Report, ranks HPU #1 among all regional colleges in the South (the eighth consecutive year at #1). It also ranks HPU for the fourth consecutive year as the #1 Most Innovative Regional College in the South for innovative improvements in terms of curriculum, faculty, students, campus life, technology or facilities. HPU was selected, for the eighth consecutive year, as a "Colleges of Distinction." HPU also earned Fields of Study distinctions for the Philips School of Business and the Stout School of Education. High Point University has been named one of the nation's top institutions for undergraduate education by The Princeton Review. HPU is recognized in "The Best 384 Colleges: 2020 Edition" for its academic programming, as well as positive survey responses and feedback from students, parents, and higher education leaders across the country. In addition to including HPU in "The Best 385 Colleges," the new Princeton Review rankings also names HPU as one of the top 20 universities in the nation for Best-Run Colleges (#19) and Best College Dorm Rooms (#5) and Most Beautiful Campuses (#18).

Will you provide an overview of the history and heritage of High Point University and how the University has evolved?

Founded in 1924, High Point University is a 95-year-old liberal arts institution located in the Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina. Since taking on the role as president of High Point University in 2005, the university has experienced extraordinary transformation, including major increases in enrollment from 1,450 to 5,400 students, a 272 percent increase, the number of faculty from 108 to 366, a 239 percent increase, and the addition of 112 new and acquired buildings on campus. We've added six academic schools, new programs in neuroscience, entrepreneurship, interactive gaming, commerce and many more along with new advanced degree initiatives in physician assistant, pharmacy, and physical therapy.

On a mission to provide every student with an extraordinary education in an inspiring

environment with caring people, High Point University's rankings have soared from #17 in 2005 to #1. The university was named the #1 Regional College in the South for the eighth consecutive year in "America's Best Colleges" by *U.S. News & World Report*. High Point University is also recognized in "America's Best Colleges" as the #1 Most Innovative Regional College in the South, in addition to #1 for undergraduate teaching. *The Princeton Review* named High Point University among "The Best 385 Colleges: 2020 Edition" for its academic programming, as well as positive survey responses and feedback from students, parents and higher education leaders across the country.

How do you define the High Point difference and what makes the University unique?

High Point University is the Premier Life Skills University. We don't focus on the "product" – the diploma. We focus on the product of the product – a life filled with meaningful success and framed with purposeful significance. At High Point University, we are focused on rendering value for our graduates. When students complete their education here, we want them to possess not only the technical skills needed to launch their career, but the life skills needed to navigate and continuously grow their career.

High Point University is a values-based institution, grounded in hard work, personal initiative, generosity, gratitude, faith and more. Parents spend their lives modeling values for their children. When they send their children to a university, they want it to uphold and further those values. When students choose a university, they want an institution that will serve as an extension of their home. Of course, values can't be taught. They can only be modeled. We've built a culture that celebrates those values. It's in the air at High Point University. It's the most consistent praise we hear from students and parents, that we've dared to build an environment and foster a culture where students choose to be extraordinary.

Will you discuss High Point's transformation under your leadership?

Our institutional growth has blossomed because students and parents value our approach to educating future leaders of our world. That approach is grounded in the understanding that parents spent a lifetime propelling their child forward. They want the college their student attends to continue their efforts.

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We aren't merely educating here. We are taking this transformational journey together. That's why 97 percent of the 2019 class of High Point University are employed or continuing education within six months of graduation, 11 points higher than the national average.

How do you define the meaning of Holistic Learning?

A college education should not only focus on the attainment of a diploma. An extraordinary, holistic education should be about professional development and personal transformation as well. Students need context in life if they are to thrive as they exit the hallowed halls of the academy and enter the vast global economy. Communication skills, relational capital and an attitude of adaptability will take them far in life. Couple that with a solid understanding of their core discipline and you have a person ready to think entrepreneurially and add value to any organization.

Additionally, our Access to Innovators program is one of the most unique components to our holistic learning model. Students have access to global leaders who serve in residence, including Netflix Co-Founder Marc Randolph, HPU's Entrepreneur in Residence; Apple

Co-Founder Steve Wozniak, HPU's Innovator in Residence; Dallas Mavericks CEO Cynt Marshall, HPU's Sports Executive in Residence; ABC News' Byron Pitts, HPU's Journalist in Residence; and Scott McKain, best-selling author, business consultant, trainer and HPU's Corporate Educator in Residence. We know that connecting students with people who have changed the world unlocks their ability to believe in themselves and accomplish goals they once didn't know were possible.

How is High Point preparing its students for future success in today's global economy?

We prepare students at High Point University for our ever-changing world with an innovative philosophy toward education that has drawn interest from college leaders, parents and students alike. Our approach to teaching and learning blends scientific strategy and creative artistry in a way that enables students to navigate the world as it is going to be, not merely the way it is today.

Has it been a focus to increase the number of international students attending High Point and will you discuss the makeup of High Point's student population?

Last fall, we announced our plan for the next 10 years, which includes \$700 million in endowed scholarships to support diversity, first generation students, academic excellence and veterans. High Point University has a total of 5,400 students representing 37 countries and all 50 states in the U.S. The student population is comprised of 57 percent females and 43 percent males, with 15 percent of undergraduates enrolling as first-generation college students.

Will you highlight the strength of High Point's faculty and your focus on attracting top talent to the university?

Providing an extraordinary education is at the heart of High Point University's mission, but the soul of the university lives and breathes with its people. At High Point University, students are supported by individuals who serve as heroes, models and mentors. We have stellar faculty conducting high-level scientific research on campus which is receiving national attention and providing students with incredible learning experiences that will benefit their future careers.

What do you see as High Point's responsibility to the community it serves and how is High Point engaged in the community?

Our city is a big part of our spirit and our heart. We will always be High Point's university, and High Point will always be our home. For this reason, we volunteer 110,000 hours every year with at least 40 local agencies, and students participate in dozens of service-learning courses that disperse them throughout the city to lend a helping hand. In addition to service, I have raised \$63 million from private donors to build projects to bring visitors downtown year-round, including the new downtown ballpark known as BB&T Point, an events center, a children's museum and a park.

How do you define the role of a university president and what are the keys to effective leadership?

Leaders strive to create capacity in others. For students, I teach a class to all freshmen titled, "The President's Seminar on Life Skills," sharing the principles, skills and values that one must apply to succeed in an ever-changing world. I remind faculty and staff on campus, "We live, students watch, and students learn," because students are paying attention to our actions. They need heroes, models and mentors to positively influence their lives and actions. You have to live the example for them to follow. ●



High Point University's campus includes dozens of sculptures as part of their inspiring environment