HMI teaches lessons that are often lacking in today’s world: our students learn to collaborate; they learn to communicate and problem solve with people from different backgrounds; and they build deep, meaningful relationships instead of superficial ones colored by social media. We are filled with hope when we think of the impact our 2,000 HMI alumni are having on the world, rooted firmly in a strong sense of self.

We have much to be proud of as an HMI community, and we are excited about what lies ahead for our school. Our team has developed five strategic goals that will strengthen our already robust program over the next five years. Throughout this newsletter, you will learn more about where our new strategic plan will take us, as well as some of the work that is already happening to reach our goals. We’re glad to have you with us on this journey.

THROUGH OUR LENS THIS WINTER & SPRING:

TO FOLLOW MORE OF HMI’S ADVENTURES, FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA
In 25 years, we have created a school where adolescents soar—where they can become their best selves as people, students, and leaders. We do this by asking students to engage with the natural world, to affirm others, to take risks themselves, and to embrace the concept of “simple in means, rich in ends.” These values informed HMI’s founding and remain relevant today.

Our community believes deeply in the ability of HMI to make a difference in students’ lives. They understand that remarkable learning happens when nature and minds meet. Against great odds, they have enabled HMI to thrive. Our job is to honor this passion by ensuring that HMI remains as impactful and relevant tomorrow as it is today.

I am proud to share with you HMI’s 2020-2025 strategic plan. The goals of this plan are challenging. We embrace these priorities, however, because we know HMI must evolve in order to remain a thriving, cutting-edge school that is defining what is integral to a twenty-first century education.

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OUR STRATEGIC GOALS FOCUS ON

FIVE AREAS

ADVANCE DIVERSITY, ACCESS, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION:
Building a diverse and inclusive community is central to our mission. In order to develop leaders, independent thinkers, and thoughtful citizens, all students need the opportunity to learn from and be challenged by those who have different life experiences. We must ensure that all students feel at home on our campus.

SUPPORT OUR PEOPLE:
We must honor the intensive commitment of our employees who engage with students in the classroom, in the backcountry, and on campus. The more that we can retain members of our team, the stronger our program will be.

ENHANCE & EXPAND OUR FACILITIES:
HMI must remain as vital tomorrow as it is today. Appropriate facilities are critical to the growth and development of our program. We must complete the 2017 campus master plan and ensure facilities are mission-aligned, equitable, adequate, and relevant.

SUSTAIN & COMMUNICATE OUR SUCCESS:
We have an incredible program that is creating strong leaders, independent thinkers, and thoughtful citizens. That’s why one goal of our strategic plan is to sustain this success while better communicating its impact to the world. Further, we must articulate how different parts of the school contribute to the larger whole.

EXPLORE PROGRAMMATIC EXPANSION:
We must continue to grow wisely by considering the ways our mission can address challenges facing the world, impact more students, and create opportunities for people to experience our transformative program at various price levels.

READ THE FULL STRATEGIC PLAN ONLINE:
www.hminet.org/high-mountain-institute-strategic-plan
Building a diverse and inclusive community is central to our mission. We cannot help our students grow into leaders, independent thinkers, and thoughtful citizens if our student body is made entirely of individuals from similar backgrounds and cultures, who embrace similar ways of thinking. HMI must also be a true home for all students—one where all students have access to the promise of our mission.

I take pride in my roots and community, having spent 25 years exploring and challenging my identity while growing up in the city of Los Angeles. I am fortunate to have been raised in a diverse environment. However, I made a momentous decision in moving to Leadville to become HMI’s admissions associate. Not only am I growing as a professional, but I am getting to know a completely different way of life and gaining outdoor skills along the way. It’s amazing that I can now say that I ski. This LA native is not afraid of the snow!

We cannot help our students grow into leaders, independent thinkers, and thoughtful citizens if our student body is made entirely of individuals from similar backgrounds and cultures, who embrace similar ways of thinking.
We aim to enhance our programs by constructing a Faculty and Student Center to meet the needs of our community. Unfortunately, our existing classrooms limit our ability to meet the needs of science courses; our teachers have inadequate work and meeting areas; and our students have to study, socialize, and have private conversations in the same spaces. This Faculty and Student Center will ensure our facilities match the ambitions of our program. This 4,000 square foot facility will join the East Building and the Barnes Building in creating a vibrant horseshoe opening up to the vistas of Mt. Elbert and Massive. The principle of “simple in means, rich in ends” that has always guided capital construction at HMI will extend to this project. The building will seamlessly match the veneer and feel of campus while enriching every aspect of this institution. We hope to begin construction in fall of 2020!

The Faculty and Student Center will add:

**Three classrooms, including a science lab to help us repurpose existing spaces in our current facilities.**

Once they come online, students will be able to use our library—currently serving as both a library and as a classroom—as a quiet study space. They will be able to more readily align their classes at HMI with sending schools as we utilize science equipment standard in high-school science programs; HMI is currently unable to offer such options, like a wet lab, for lack of storage space. We will also have a full-time rations room to better manage the risks inherent in the rise of food allergies among students.

**Dynamic work spaces for students that encourage all types of learning at HMI.**

No longer will students seeking areas for group work or quiet, individual study time need to compete with piano playing or rambunctious Jenga games in Who’s Hall. Students will have access to areas that both foster collaboration and enable focused, individual work. An increase in work space options will mean that students have the flexibility to choose environments that work best for their goals and learning style.

**Appealing work spaces for teachers that better meet their needs.**

Our community works best when adults are available to students for both academic and social-emotional mentoring. Currently, ten teachers share office space designed for fewer than half this amount; they avoid the area when possible citing distraction and overcrowding. Doubling teacher workspace will match the professionalism of our extraordinary faculty members.

**Gender-equitable facilities that meet our students where they are.**

Our new Faculty and Student Center will feature gender-neutral restroom facilities and other simple, yet meaningful, amenities that will help every student feel at home at HMI.

We are proud to say that our larger community has nearly committed the funds we will need to complete this project, the final part of a seven million dollar effort to transform HMI’s campus and align our mission with our facilities. We are grateful to the individuals and families who believe in the power of this school and who make this institution a top philanthropic priority. We invite you to join them and help us soar past our goal!
**SUSTAIN & COMMUNICATE OUR SUCCESS**

We have an incredible program that is creating strong leaders, independent thinkers, and thoughtful citizens. That’s why one goal of our strategic plan is to sustain this success while better communicating its impact to the world. We believe that our success can best be shown through the lives of our alumni and the impact that they have on the world.

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**ROBBIE HUGIN**
Semester 23 Alum

**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:**

**Q: WHERE HAS YOUR CAREER TAKEN YOU SINCE LEAVING HMI?**
**A:** Becoming a leader in the Marines had been a lifelong dream of mine. After college, I trained to go to Officer Candidate School in a bid to earn a commission as an officer in the United States Marine Corps. After attending 10 weeks of Officer Candidate School and earning my commission as a Second Lieutenant, I reported to The Basic School (TBS) for follow-up training.

I realized that I didn’t feel as fulfilled as I hoped, despite the fact that I had finally realized my dream of being an officer in the Marine Corps. I realized that my passions were better suited for the role of an Infantry Officer, where I could spend more of my time out in the field rather than behind a desk. Rifle platoon commanders interact closely with their platoon of 40 young enlisted Marines on a daily basis, providing guidance, mentorship, and often firm accountability for their failures.

After a year of rigorous and competitive training, I earned my spot as an Infantry Officer and reported to Camp Pendleton, California. I was assigned to Echo Company as first platoon commander. From that day, I have served as a rifle platoon commander, responsible for the successes and failures of myself, my 39 Marines, and my two navy corpsmen.

Following a year-long training, in the hills of southern California, the deserts of the Mojave, and the mountains of the Sierras Nevada, we deployed to serve as a crisis response force in the Pacific theater, visiting Japan, Australia, and Korea and conducting multilateral training with the host nations along the way.

**Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR HMI ALUMNI IN TERMS OF FINDING A CAREER THAT EXCITES THEM?**
**A:** It’s all about purpose. At the end of the day, if you feel that the work you are doing makes a difference in a way that is profound and important to you, it is worth any struggle. The early mornings and late nights, cold rains and emotional hardships, leadership difficulties and paralyzing stress become just another feature of the triumph.

In my case, those triumphs might seem small to anyone else, but they mean the world to me. It’s seeing one of my 19-year old Marines step up as team leader and take charge of his peers, despite the fact that he earned his GED only a year prior. It’s my platoon successfully executing a live-fire and maneuver range, employing principles that we labored to perfect for the last 15 months. It’s a Marine getting accepted into college after months of encouraging him to go for it. Most importantly, for leaders in the infantry, it’s about leaving the team, and therefore one small corner of the Marine Corps, better than we found it.
HMI must continue to grow wisely by considering the ways our mission can address challenges facing the world, and impact more students. This spring we have rolled out a new collaboration between HMI Gap and Where There Be Dragons that aims to better meet the needs of gap year students.

FRUIT OF COLLABORATION:
The Andes Leadership Semester

By: Chris Barlow, Director of HMI Gap

A quick perusal of the adventure education world reveals a plethora of incredible experiences. For example, at any given USA Gap Year Fair, there are more than 30 providers who offer the chance to venture to any corner of the globe and to explore just about any topic or activity. For a young person, it’s an embarrassment of riches: How could they choose just one?

While we have yet to create the “do-everything” program, we are excited to have launched the first Andes Leadership Semester (ALS) in February 2020. This course is a new collaboration between HMI and Where There Be Dragons, a Colorado-based organization that offers cultural immersion experiences around the world. Our goal in developing this course is to leverage each organization’s most compelling elements to offer a fresh experience and an exciting extension for students who have already completed an HMI or Dragons course.

Thematically, the ALS focuses on the land and people of the Andes Mountains, from gauchos and yerba mate of Patagonia to Quechua heritage and quinoa of Peru. In most of the modernized world, we see clearly defined boundaries between society and wilderness. By contrast, in much of the Andes, a far wider liminal zone exists between these spaces, and the ALS students explore this, learning how communities have established a way of life while also building their own skills to travel here respectfully.

Just as we teach our students, teamwork and collaboration aren’t always simple, but the sum is often greater than the individual parts. The process of collaboration with Dragons has never been in the spirit of “let’s just take the best things we each do.” It has been more nuanced, considering how to combine specific elements and ingredients to create something truly novel and valuable to our students. Now the stage is set, and we’re proud to welcome the inaugural cohort of students and see what they do with it.

Our goal in developing this course has been to leverage each organization’s most compelling elements to offer a fresh experience and an exciting extension for students who have already completed a Dragons or HMI course.
DO YOU KNOW AN EDUCATOR WHO HEARS ABOUT HMI AND THINKS, “HOW FUN WOULD THAT BE...?”

Then tell them to join us this summer on our Educators Expedition!

- Meet and backpack with HMI faculty and other educators in the Colorado mountains
- Discuss the impact of leadership and place-based education, and learn how to take it back to the classroom
- All educators welcome, regardless of position or grade level!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT WWW.HMINET.ORG/EDUCATORS-EXPEDITION