



HLC Accreditation Evidence

- Matters of Interest
President's Update
- URL:

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Contact(s):

- President

From: [Heilman, Carl Dr.](#)
To: [All Users](#)
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[203 BOCL 022522 2.pdf](#)

In looking back over the past 2+ COVID years; our lives have taken its customary twists and turns; joys and heartaches; and smiles and tears. Although we rightly question whether we will return to pre-COVID conditions, or whether personal losses will be overcome, we have been reminded time again, that we are not in control. However, we can and do take ownership for how we respond and our conduct in doing so. In nearly all instances, the College has adapted, modified, and responded according to COVID dominated circumstances involving a great many public and private enterprises potentially impacting the entire college community. Despite the dominating circumstances, "learning continued and the lights stayed on". That is the "bottom line". Of Course COVID remains harmful; however, national trends and findings are changing the COVID landscape and our practices in serving the human good. Being as it may, our duty remains and it is based on the Barton Mission, the bottom line, and our common skills in adapting, modifying and responding.

With my reference to duty and Barton Mission, it is appropriate to comment further on our newly "coined" and Board of Trustee approved Mission Statement:

- With the input of the College Community during the 2021 time period, The Barton Board of Trustees readily supported the recommended Mission statement that is located in the following blue circle.
- Identifying the Barton Mission and servicing the Mission are crucial elements for our Higher Learning Commission Accreditation (HLC) on-site visit - Fall 2022. At the point of the declared Mission, all functions of the College are held to account and for the public good.
- The Mission Seal can be accessed in the T:\Brand\MissionSeal. The Seal was designed by Connie Wagner.
- Please act on the promotion of the Mission statement by placing the Mission/Seal to your routine and not so routine, messages and correspondence. This includes placement on business cards, email signatures, College posters, College communications, etc. The Barton Mission Statement is clear and direct and speaks well for what we believe.
- The following Mission Seal is the minimum size that supports readability.



I brought to attention the upcoming HLC accreditation audit for this coming October. HLC Evaluators will be present and closely scrutinizing our self-report and points of proof that verify our adherence to the many standards of quality that are embedded in the five subject criterion. To date, thankfully, many employees from the faculty and staff memberships have stepped forward in supporting College preparations. Participating team members are guardedly positive concerning our up-to-date actions and progress. There will be many communications to follow in keeping you up-to-date and inviting you to personally support the momentum to achieve accreditation.

As we assess our external environment, there are a number of common concerns that are shared by the Kansas system of Community Colleges. Each year the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) provides an annual accounting of higher education services per each of the 32 four-year and two-year entities. This provides a review of student enrollment production. Overall, Kansas, and the nation, are being impacted by troubling enrollment trends. To no surprise, State leaders gauge success by whether enrollments are trending upwards or downwards. With the current downward trends of the past 3-4 years that was further ignited by COVID, and State statistics indicating a flattened high school student population through 2025, State policy leaders are discussing the necessity for immediate actions. Prominent considerations involve restructuring/redistribution of State funding and finance; relaxing and/or re-drawing service area boundaries that each of the 32 entities are assigned; and redefining USD high school student access to postsecondary services and postsecondary service access. The Kansas Association of Community College Trustees (KACCT), in conjunction with the KACCT Executive Director, KACCT lobbyists, and Community College administrators, are closely engaged with elected officials in order to safeguard the Mission, access, responsiveness, and affordability for each of the 19 Kansas Community Colleges.

Since 2016, Barton's enrollment has been trending downward. Barton's Army presence has long been a major factor in our enrollment trends. We have long supported the military communities and there has been mutual benefit from this service alignment. With the continued Ft. Riley soldier deployment schedule, we have been experiencing depressed enrollments. However, our presence (including online) does remain strong in supporting the Army - Ft. Riley, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas national guard, and government contractors. We will maintain our functions knowing changes are

continuous and there will be a date where the Army (family) presence will return. Until then, it is up to us to determine and seize advantages as they materialize.

Aside from the Army factor, Barton's overall enrollment decline is representative of most higher education entities. Factors such as - COVID, economy, migration, inadequate resources, industry competitors, changing workforce, etc., are recognized. Knowing who we are, we do not apply empty efforts and we relish being in pursuit of what is "right". Moving forward, Barton is tasked with identifying opportunities and smartly moving forward with data at our fingertips. Two such endeavors are underway and being supported by outside vendors. One approach is assessing our services, messaging, and recruitment of students who are seeking our online learning course options; and the second approach is to closely assess and advise on College-wide enrollment strategies and practices. As well, new programs are being developed and implemented. Doing nothing and just accepting circumstances as they are, will not improve our ability to enroll students and serve the best interests of the public. As our environment changes, so must we.

In referencing State-wide enrollment concerns, elected officials and State policy leaders are deliberating on a host of matters associated with the prediction that enrollments will continue to trend down through 2025. This is leading to discussions that may alter funding support; re-define higher education service areas; and other decisions that may be weighted to those institutions that have greater resources and/or service markets and/or population density and/or political influence. Barton has long been an anomaly among our fellow Kansas Community Colleges – serving rural populations, but traditionally generating the second greatest headcount. So yes, we do have a track record for assessing, developing, and implementing opportunities that meet the challenge and it will work again, if we let it.

Despite hardships and noted obstacles above, Barton is addressing a number of initiatives that will continue to allow Barton to stand out as a premier Kansas higher education entity. These initiatives (not all initiatives are listed) are in pursuit of quality and in support of our public:

- Nursing accreditation (great progress and achievement noted in the attachment – a round of cheers for nursing and healthcare team members)
- Higher Learning Commission accreditation
- Expanding the number of courses that reflect no cost/low cost text support
- Barton online workgroup
- Enrollment Management workgroup
- New program projects that include –
 - ADN nursing education at Pratt Community College
 - Dance Instruction and Management AA
 - Cybersecurity Certificate
 - Welding expansion leading to additional certificate and AAS learning options
 - Digital Communications and Content Strategy
 - CNH Technician Training certificate option
 - Subscription and Competency Based Learning
 - College Website Sub-Group
 - Institutional Effectiveness monitoring and reporting group

Financially, this College is sound with healthy reserves. Lower enrollment has been a limiting factor; however, with the multiple COVID financial streams becoming available this past year, our FY22 financial standing is secure. As it looks to FY23, we are looking to stronger enrollments and no decrease in State funding support.

It is apparent that Barton is a resilient education provider and regardless of gloomy forecasts , Barton refuses to be anything less than what it is - compassionate, accessible, affordable, and life changing.

It all begins with the Mission. If we believe in our Mission, all things good will prevail.

