

Section II: One-College¹ Framework

The purpose of this section is to explain the structural and procedural changes Barton has made to redress the HLC's concerns regarding Barton's institutional cohesion. Specifically, this section will address the organizational concerns the HLC noted in its April 4, 2003 report, when it wrote that Barton should "provide convincing evidence that:"

It (Barton) has developed a one-district framework for the entire institution in which the different components (the Great Bend Campus, the Ft. Riley center, distance education, etc.) can operate cohesively. (p. 14)

This section will address the HLC's concern over Barton's organizational framework by describing the organizational and structural changes Barton has made to facilitate cohesion within the College. This will entail describing Barton's revised administrative organizational structure and its supporting committee structure.

Administrative Organizational Structure

When the HLC Accreditation Team visited Barton in October 2002, the College was organized on a geographic basis. The College had two primary campuses, the main campus in Barton County and a satellite campus 130 miles northeast at Fort Riley. Although the Deans at the main campus were nominally in charge of the operational areas under their departments at Fort Riley, as the HLC Accreditation Team noted, the Executive Director at Fort Riley actually oversaw the operations at the Fort. As the HLC Accreditation Team also noted, in some cases this organizational structure led to a breakdown in cohesion between the two campuses.

¹ The HLC Report refers to a "one-district" framework. We prefer to consider Barton "one-college." While this may be considered by some to be a matter of semantics, we view a one-district policy as different from a one-college policy. In our view a district is a set of quasi-independent campuses with a coordinating entity such as a chancellor providing oversight and guidance to the various campuses. We view a college as a single cohesive organization in which although there may be geographical separation between the campuses, the campuses are a single cohesive entity. Therefore, we will use the term "one-college" instead of the term "one-district" throughout this report.

The discrepancy that the HLC Accreditation Team noted between the College's official (nominal) organization and its actual organization was not the result of any deliberate action on the part of any College employee, but the result of the College's failure to adapt to recent changes to the scope of its operations at Fort Riley. The College opened its Fort Riley operations in the 1980s. For the first fifteen or so years of its existence, the College's Fort Riley instructional operations were limited in scope. During that period, although the College provided limited off-duty education for the soldiers and their family members, the College focused its partnership with the Fort on providing military training for soldiers. In many respects, the Fort was in actuality little more than an outreach site during these initial years. This is evidenced by the fact that during this time period, the College offered only one degree to its Fort Riley students (an Associates in General Studies); all classes were taught by associate faculty; and only limited student services were provided.

In the late 1990s, the scope of Barton's operations at Fort Riley experienced significant growth. This growth was the result of a change in the leadership at Fort Riley and a more aggressive posture from the College's administration. The new leadership at the Fort was able to work with the Army to expand Barton's offerings on the Fort. As a result, by the late 1990s, the number of enrollments on the Fort grew to equal the number of enrollments on the main campus. Barton responded to this growth in several positive ways. The College increased its degree offerings, hired full-time faculty, and increased its student services, all in response to the growth of its operations at Fort Riley.

However, as the HLC Accreditation Team noted at the time of their visit in 2002, the College had not made the organizational and structural changes necessary to administer the new reality of two equal, but separate, campuses. During their visit, the HLC Accreditation Team observed that Fort Riley's organizational structure was being administered geographically, rather than functionally. This geographic orientation evolved in large part because of the significant environmental differences between the Fort Riley and Barton County campuses. As the Fort Riley campus evolved, it became

clear that the two campuses served significantly different student bodies in significantly different ways. This is evidenced by the fact that the majority of the students at the Barton County campus were (and still are) traditional-age students. For this reason, the Barton County campus operates on what may be considered a traditional college model. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of students at the Fort Riley campus were (and still are) non-traditional students. As a result, the Fort Riley campus has developed non-traditional scheduling, enrollment, advising, etc. processes. These differences in processes complicated the administration of the various functions and contributed in some degree to the lack of cohesion cited by the HLC Accreditation Team.

Since the HLC visit, Barton has recognized the problem the dual system created and has taken steps to address it. A key step Barton took in addressing this problem was to reorganize. Barton's new instructional organization is functionally, not geographically, based. (Appendix 3.22: Organization Chart) Specific changes made in the reorganization include:

- The Dean of Instruction has been promoted to Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services, a new administrative position. The Vice-President is now responsible for instruction and student services across the College. However, this change is more than a title change and position up-grade. As described in the historical portion of this narrative, the former position of Dean of Learning and Instruction was also nominally the chief administrator for learning and instruction College-wide, but never actually exercised control over the entire curriculum. Thus, in an effort to reinforce the scope of this new position, the following structural changes were also made.
 - The two primary academic administrators at Fort Riley (the Associate Dean for Fort Riley Academic Transfer Programs and the Associate Dean for Environmental Technology and Military Programs) were reassigned from under the operational control of the Executive Assistant to the President for Planning, Organizational Development, and Military Operations (the senior administrator at Fort Riley) to the operational

control of the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services. This reassignment severed the geographic ties between the two Associate Deans and aligned them functionally with instruction. Under this revised structure, the two Associate Deans at Fort Riley and the three Associate Deans at the Barton County campus, all report directly to the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services. This measure aligned all instructionally-related positions under the direct control of the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services.

- The College's student services functions were similarly realigned. At the time of the accreditation visit, the positions of Dean of Student Development and Dean of Enrollment Management were separate positions equal to the Dean of Learning and Instruction. Also, at that time, the Fort Riley Director of Student Services was under the operational control of the Executive Assistant to the President for Planning, Organizational Development, and Military Operations (the senior administrator at Fort Riley). Under the College's new organizational structure, two changes were made to ensure uniformity of purpose and practice in the area of student services. First, the two Dean positions are now combined in the position of Dean of Student Services, which reports to the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services. Second, the Fort Riley Director of Student Services was reassigned to the operational control of the Dean of Student Services. This move, as with the realignment of operational reporting of the Fort Riley Associate Deans, serves to reinforce the cohesion of the department of Student Services.

Supporting Committee Structure

In addition to revising the administrative organizational structure, Barton also realized the need to amend committee structure that supported the College's

administration. Prior to the HLC visit, Barton's committee structure was centered at and focused on the Barton County campus. Personnel from the Fort Riley campus were generally not involved in the College's committees. As with the lack of administrative oversight by the titular heads of functional areas, the absence of Fort Riley personnel on the committees was not as much a deliberate slight to the Fort Riley staff and faculty, as it was a failure of the College to adapt to the new reality brought about by the evolutionary changes at the Fort Riley campus. In the years prior to Fort Riley's growth, Fort Riley had a small administrative staff and no full-time faculty. In this environment, the administration viewed governance issues relating to Fort Riley as being peculiar to Fort Riley rather than to the entire College. As a result, these issues were handled through the Fort's administrative channels. Meanwhile, the College's committee structure also failed to adjust to the evolutionary changes at Fort Riley by continuing to focus on the Barton County campus, rather than College-wide issues. As a result, once Fort Riley had grown to a size and prominence that it merited inclusion in the committee structure, two cultures detrimental to its inclusion had been developed. The first culture was one in which Fort Riley issues were handled through administrative channels. The second culture was one in which only Barton County campus issues were addressed in committees. These two cultures produced a negatively reinforcing effect in which Fort Riley personnel viewed committee work as irrelevant because the issues discussed applied only to the Barton County campus, and Barton County personnel viewed the Fort Riley personnel as uncooperative because they either were unwilling to attend committee meetings or, when in attendance, participated in a very limited fashion.

Recognizing this disconnection between the two campuses, the College has adopted a new committee structure which is properly focused on College-wide governance issues. Barton has accomplished this by developing a cadre of standing committees to provide continuing governance and by insisting on balanced representation from its two campuses on those committees. Existing standing committees have been reorganized, where necessary, to accomplish the goal of balanced representation.

Appendix 3.23 (Barton County Community College Committee Structure) is a summary of the College's standing committees, their function, and their composition.

One-College Framework Summary

The purpose of this section is to explain the structural and procedural changes Barton has made to redress the HLC's concerns regarding Barton's institutional cohesion. A historical narrative explained the circumstances that led to the conditions the HLC Accreditation Team found during their visit. This narrative was not meant to excuse or in any way mitigate the HLC Accreditation Team's findings. Rather, it is intended to describe the situation as it existed at the time of the HLC Accreditation Team's visit and to provide a context for the corrective actions Barton has taken since that visit. To that end, Barton has addressed the HLC's concerns over the lack of cohesion in two primary ways.

First, Barton has reorganized its administration along functional, rather than geographic, lines. Major steps in this reorganization include:

- Promoting the position of Dean of Learning and Instruction to Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services;
- Re-assigning all Associate Deans (including those at Fort Riley) to the direct operational control of the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services;
- Combining most of the duties of the former positions of Dean of Student Development and Dean of Enrollment Management into a single position (Dean of Student Services) under the operational control of Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services; and
- Re-assigning the Fort Riley Director of Student Services to the operational control of the Dean of Student Services.

Second, Barton reconstituted and amended its committee structure. This new structure included the following major advancements:

- Standing Committees were established or reorganized to assist in the governance of the institution
- Committee membership was expanded to ensure both campuses were properly represented; and
- The committees were focused on College-wide, rather than campus-specific, issues.