

## **THE WHY OF ASSESSMENT MATTERS MORE THAN THE HOW OF ASSESSMENT**

Recently, I spoke at the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Annual Conference presenting Barton's Assessment Institute and how other colleges can adapt our model and scale it accordingly. In the room there were around 250 faculty and staff, and they had a hunger and desire to know the secret to engaging employees in assessment. Some inquired about our processes and procedures, others asked if an act from Human Resources was needed. But I shared with them a truth which supersedes all those concepts.

At Barton, the why of assessment matters vastly more than the how of assessment. Assessment is not solely about the uniform methods we use to document our processes; this is a part of it but not at its core. Rather, assessment is about the unity of purpose, commitment, and dedication faculty and staff have to ensure our students are learning what they came here to learn.

Faculty intuitively know the classroom is a sacred place to teach and inspire our students to learn and grow as individuals. Assessment can help them to refocus attention from using gut reactions and anecdotal comments, to using actual data about students learning to drive improvement.

By doing so, assessment can take an average faculty or staff member and make them exceptional. During the Assessment Institute, whenever we talk about students, it is clear the participants are all unified in purpose and focus. At Barton learning matters, end of statement. We are not perfect, but we aspire to be, and we are continually striving for excellence.

As shown by their completion of the program, distinguished guests, please allow me to present an exceptional group of faculty and staff, the graduating class of the Assessment Institute.

*Jo Harrington*  
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