



## INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE FORM

**Please complete, sign, and return this form to Stephanie Kramer ([skramer@hlcommission.org](mailto:skramer@hlcommission.org)). If you choose to include an additional written response, it must also be returned electronically with this form. Your response is due no later than two weeks from the date on this form.**

### Instructions for Submitting Response

1. This form, and an additional written response if you choose to include one, must be submitted electronically to Stephanie Kramer, [skramer@hlcommission.org](mailto:skramer@hlcommission.org).
2. If you choose to write an additional written response, it should be in the form of a letter to the Institutional Actions Council, should not exceed five pages, and must be sent electronically with this form within the two-week timeframe.

*If a response is not received within the two weeks, the Commission will conclude that the institution concurs with the accreditation recommendation.*

**Date:** October 23, 2013

**Name of Institution:** Barton County Community College

**Institutional ID:** 1267

**Evaluation Type:** Change panel - Request to offer the Associate of Applied Science in Technical Studies program.

**President Completing Form:** Dr. Carl Heilman

**E-mail and Phone for President Completing Form:** [heilmanc@bartonccc.edu](mailto:heilmanc@bartonccc.edu) 620-792-9301

**President's Signature:**

### Please Indicate ONE

- The institution concurs with the accreditation recommendations and chooses not to submit a further response.
- The institution concurs with the accreditation recommendations and has enclosed a written response (please return with this form).
- The institution does not concur with the accreditation recommendations and chooses not to submit a further response.
- The institution does not concur with the accreditation recommendations and has enclosed a written response (please return with this form).
- The institution does not concur with the accreditation recommendations and requests an in-person hearing in place of an Institutional Actions Council (IAC) meeting (see definitions below). In-person hearings are restricted to specific types of evaluation recommendations by Commission policy. *Pathways designations are not eligible for in-person hearings.* Contact your Commission staff liaison for more information. Fees for in-person hearings are found in the schedule of *Commission Dues and Fees* on the website, [www.ncahlc.org](http://www.ncahlc.org).

## Definitions

**Institutional Response.** The Commission expects a written response from the President or Chancellor of an institution (or chief executive by a different title) within two weeks of receipt of an accreditation report or reaffirmation recommendation and provides the attached response form for this purpose. The institution may choose to include an additional written response in the form of a letter from the President or Chancellor to the Institutional Actions Council. These additional written responses should not be longer than five pages and must be received electronically with this form within the two-week timeframe.

**Institutional Actions Council (IAC).** The IAC is composed of Board-appointed peer reviewers and public members. The First and Second Committees of IAC conduct electronically mediated meetings and in-person hearings to review and act on accreditation recommendations.

**IAC Meeting.** IAC meetings consist of five or more members of the First or Second Committee of IAC, who read the full materials of the evaluation, discuss the findings, and act on the accreditation recommendations. IAC committees may agree with the accreditation recommendations they review or offer differing recommendations or decisions. The meetings are electronically mediated and held eight or more times per year. The majority of accreditation recommendations are reviewed at an IAC Meeting. Exceptions include recommendations that are required by policy to be reviewed at an in-person hearing and recommendations that institutions request be reviewed at an in-person hearing instead of an IAC meeting (see IAC Hearing below).

**IAC Hearing.** In some circumstances, an institution may request or may be required to attend an IAC Hearing. IAC Hearings consist of five or more members of the First or Second Committee of IAC, who read the full materials of the evaluation, discuss the findings, and act on the accreditation recommendations. Conducted three times per year, IAC Hearings are held in-person and require the presence of institutional staff, Commission staff, and evaluation team representatives. There is a fee for requested hearings. An institution that is considering an IAC Hearing should consult with its Commission staff liaison for more information as not all accreditation decisions are eligible for review and action at a hearing.

**IAC First Committee.** Members of the IAC First Committee conduct IAC Meetings and Hearings to act on accreditation recommendations. The First Committee is the initial group to review an institution's case after an accreditation evaluation; the Committee may agree with the evaluation team's recommendation or it may offer a different recommendation or render a different decision.

**IAC Second Committee.** In some circumstances, institutions or Commission staff may request that the First Committee's decision be reviewed by the IAC Second Committee. Members of the Second Committee conduct Meetings and Hearings to act on accreditation recommendations forwarded on request or by policy after the action of the First Committee. The Second Committee may agree with the evaluation team's recommendation or First Committee's decision or it may offer a different recommendation or render a different decision. Institutions should consult with their staff liaison for more information.

November 4, 2013

Higher Learning Commission  
Attn: Institutional Actions Council  
230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500  
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Institutional Actions Council Members;

Please accept this letter as Barton County Community College's response to concerns regarding the approval of a new degree – AAS in Technical Studies. Barton has reviewed the identified concerns and has provided the following responses. If the Council should have any additional concerns, Barton will be glad to provide any additional information required.

### **Response to Capacity Concerns**

1. HLC Comment: "Board policy mandates that new programs be supported with current facilities, equipment, budget. It's unclear whether these are adequate."

Barton response: Barton has sufficient budget and infrastructure as these classes have been offered for more than 10 years. Students can earn three different certificates: 1) Hazardous Materials Management; 2) Military Leadership; and 3) Military Logistics. These three certificates assist military personnel, their family members, Department of Defense employees, and contractors to earn qualifications for advancement and/or employment. The change requested is simply allowing combinations of the existing courses with General Education requirements to complete an Associate's in Applied Science in Technical Studies. The AAS in Technical Studies has been approved and recommended to Barton by the Kansas Board of Regents.

2. HLC Comment: "Faculty qualifications are a concern: of the 8 FT faculty 2 have masters, 3 have an associates, 1 has no degree; of 10 PT faculty, 2 have masters, 3 have no degree."

Barton response: The non-degreed faculty members only teach courses in their field of expertise with an average of 15 years of work experience as well as technical certifications. These courses are specialized industrial or technical in nature and by nature require the skill acquired experientially (for example: Bus Driver Training). Degreed faculty members teach the general education courses within the curricula as per HLC requirements. (Attached is a list of the faculty and their credentials.)

### **Response to Strategies for Systematically Monitoring and Evaluating**

3. HLC Comment: "Employer surveys will generate graduate satisfaction data. Technical advisory committees will offer input on technical components. Only one assessment instrument (student

evaluations) would assess the program. It's unclear what direct measures will be used to measure student learning."

Barton response: Course outcomes are mandated by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party – the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). DOD sets the benchmarks for successful attainment of the student learning outcomes. Upon successful course completion, students are provided certification verification by the military. Additionally, national and local agencies provide input on industrial and technical skills as per industry standards.

#### **Response to Quality Standards**

4. HLC Comment: "Advisory committees evaluate student satisfaction, workplace success. National consortia inform about industry trends, hold instructor training. Some courses for all day for one week. It's unclear how students process/apply learning so quickly. Which courses are one week? Do they carry 1 or 3 hours of credit? Will pedagogies used produce learning equivalent to other courses?"

Barton response: Barton's delivery method aligns with current industry delivery methodology, including training for Emergency Medical Service, OSHA Education Centers, National Fire Academy, Emergency Management Institute (FEMA), and Solar Energy International.

The courses offered all day for one week are not traditional general education courses, but rather, technical and industrial courses that are better grasped when they are delivered in a continuous and complete method instead of sequenced and spread out across a longer timeframe. A course taught in this manner could include HZMT 1919 Hazardous Waste Operations & Emergency Response which is a three credit hour course. These practices meet the both student learning requirements of OSHA and EPA regulations as well as DOD training needs (to accommodate schedule changes due to deployment etc.). Students are certified by the DOD following completion of the course, this certification would not have been occurring over the past 10+ years, if Barton was not ensuring the learning outcomes were being met.

Most sincerely,

Dr. Carl Heilman  
President  
Barton County Community College  
245 NE 30 Rd  
Great Bend, KS 67530  
620-792-9301  
[heilmanc@bartonccc.edu](mailto:heilmanc@bartonccc.edu)

Enclosure