

Barton County Community College

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October of 2002, Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC-NCA) completed its accreditation visit at Barton County Community College. As a condition of continuing accreditation, the Commission required that Monitoring Reports be submitted in four areas of concern: Assessment of Student Learning, Developmental Education, Library Resources, and Operational Planning. Preliminarily, the Site Team recommended that all of the Monitoring Reports be due in December of 2006; however, the Team's final report stipulated that the Monitoring Report for the Assessment of Student Learning be submitted by December 2004. That report was submitted on time and received an excellent response. This document completes the other requirements requested by the Commission.

The Report is divided into four chapters. The first addresses the HLC-NCA concerns in Developmental Education, the second addresses Library resources, the third covers Operational Planning, and the final chapter details the College's recommendations for continuous improvement in the three areas addressed in chapters one through three. Each of the first three chapters is divided into sections which address the HLC-NCA Comments and Concerns. HLC-NCA comments relative to each topic have been pulled from the final Site Visit Report and answered, including a detailed description of Barton's progress made and any obstacles encountered since the HLC-NCA Site Team Visit. The Conclusion section of the first three chapters summarizes the achievements made in each area. Appendices referenced in the body of the report are included at the end of the document.

The process of writing the Monitoring Report has provided those responsible for its creation, the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services; the Associate Dean for Math, English, and Essential Skills; the Director of Learning Resources; and the Executive Assistant to the President for Planning, Organizational Development and Military Operations, with the opportunity to comprehensively evaluate Barton's progress since the site visit and to scrutinize its strengths and weaknesses. The authors believe this report will show that Barton has made significant progress in each of these areas.

Chapter I: Developmental Education

HLC-NCA Comments and Concerns and Institutional Response

Barton County Community College completed its accreditation visit in October 2002. Following the visit, visiting team members provided the College with a report dated April 4, 2003, that reflected the team's findings. The College, under the direction of the Vice President for Instruction and Student Services, has made diligent efforts to address the concerns expressed in that report. Responses to the Higher Learning Commission's Concerns and Expectations are set forth below:

NCA-HLC Concern

Meetings with developmental education faculty members, administrators, and assertions in the self-study affirm that the college lacks an effective organization and plans for its developmental education offerings, and that developmental education students do not perform as well as other students. The college's recent efforts to remedy these problems have proven unsuccessful, and the college should take immediate steps to solve its developmental education problems.

Response

- In summer of 2006, the Dean of Learning and Instruction's position was expanded to include Student Services. This new position, renamed the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services, oversees not only Barton's instructional domain, but also virtually all institutional services that directly touch on student life. (Appendix 1.1: Vice-President Position Description)
- The Dean of Student Services will report to the newly-created Vice President position. Currently, the Dean of Student Services is responsible for testing and placement, advisement, counseling, TRIO programs, tutoring, housing, discipline, and retention.
- Students who place into and successfully complete at least one developmental course have a higher graduation rate than students who do not place into a developmental course AND students who place into but do not pass a developmental education course. (Appendix 1.2a: Developmental Student Graduation Rates)

- Students who successfully complete developmental courses into which they are placed perform better in sequential courses than those who do not avail themselves of developmental education classes. (Appendix 1.2b: Sequential Developmental Course Success Rates)
- Detailed information is included in the progress section of this report.

NCA-HLC Concern

The developmental education division must progress from the transitional stage to a coherent, effective program that becomes an integral part of the overall progress toward improvement of student learning.

Response

The Math, English and Essential Skills Division has become a coherent academic unit at Barton. Faculty are responsive to students' needs on an individual and group basis.

- Working with the Associate Dean of MEES and Student Services personnel, MEES faculty have created individual educational plans for students, as needed. While not all students express a need for such intrusive strategies, such plans demonstrate the responsiveness of faculty and staff to serve students on an individual basis. Appendix 1.3 (Individual Student DE Plan Sample) provides an example of such a plan. This student had failed Intermediate Algebra three times. With this support network in place, the student passed Intermediate Algebra with a C.
- In general, developmental education students require more formal time-on-task and consistent practice than non-developmental students. To address this need, the MEES division is piloting a linked class schedule in spring 2007. This schedule features DE classes that meet five times a week for approximately eight weeks. This plan is detailed in the Progress section of this report.
- To enhance success in developmental education coursework, the MEES division created a new course, Essential Skills Seminar. This course will be piloted spring 2007. Similar to a lab supplement to science courses, EDUC Essential Skills Seminar will provide academic support for students enrolled

in DE classes while also teaching students basic computer literacy and library skills. The syllabus for this course is featured in Appendix 1.4 (EDUC 1110 Essential Skills Seminar Syllabus). A description of the course and how it will function to support DE students is included in the Progress section of this report.

NCA-HLC Expectation

Develop strategies and a timetable for implementing a developmental education program using appropriate recommendations from the Hunter-Boylan report or institutionally developed alternatives.

Response

- A plan for implementing the Boylan plan was created shortly after Dr. Boylan's visit. The plan and timeline are included in the progress section of this report. At the end of spring 2006, MEES faculty and the Developmental Education Task Force determined that the plan had been implemented to the extent that the College could commit physical and fiscal resources.
- Independent consultants hired to evaluate Barton's Developmental Education program determined that "response to the report has been extensive. With significant organizational change accomplished, institutional focus on instructional practice...." (Appendix 1.5: Independent Consultants' Report – fall 2005)
- In spring 2006, Barton instituted a new program review process. Developmental Education faculty and staff submitted an internal review of its program. (Appendix 1.6: Developmental Education Program Review – spring 2006) Further, they have incorporated Program Review findings into their 2006-07 goals. (Appendix 1.7: 2006-07 Goals, Philosophies, and Expectations)

NCA-HLC Expectation

Provide evidence of having implemented the above developmental program using the appropriate recommendations from the Hunter-Boylan report or institutionally developed alternatives.

Response

The following examples provide evidence that Barton has implemented the Hunter-Boylan report

- Barton's Developmental Education department (MEES) has developed goals, philosophies, and expectations which they review annually, and update as needed. (Appendix 1.7: 2006-07 Goals, Philosophies, and Expectations)
- The administrative leader of the Developmental Education department, the Math, English and Essential Skills Division, is an associate dean position which reports directly to the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services. The description for this position is featured as (Appendix 1.8: MEES Division Associate Dean Position Description).
- The Developmental Education Evaluation Plan provides a guide for the systematic collection of data and its use in determining curricular and programmatic improvements as well as in gauging the effectiveness of those improvements. (Appendix 1.9: 2006-07 Developmental Education Evaluation Plan)
- All Barton faculty administer Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) as part of Barton's institutional assessment plan. MEES faculty use CATs as a means of documenting student learning of short term learning objectives. Faculty share CAT results and ideas in department meetings. (Appendix 1.10: Classroom Assessment Techniques (CAT) Report – faculty samples)
- Faculty submit faculty development plans annually. At the end of the year, these plans are reviewed with the Associate Dean to determine their effectiveness and value. (Appendix 1.11: Professional Development Plans – faculty samples)
- MEES faculty have attended numerous conferences since Hunter Boylan's visit. These have included:
 - National Conference – College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA)
 - National Conference – National Association of Developmental Education (NADE)

- National Conference – American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges (AMATYC)
- National Conference – National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
- Regional Conference – Math Technology EXPO
- Regional Conference – College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA)
- Regional Conference – Midwest Regional Association for Developmental Education (MRADE)
- MEES faculty have aligned the competencies of sequenced courses to provide seamless transition from one class to the next. (Appendix 1.12: MATH 1809 Basic Applied Math/ MATH 1821 Basic Algebra syllabi)
- MEES faculty have completed Scope and Sequence reports for Developmental Education math, English and reading courses and the college-level courses into which they sequence. (Appendix 1.13: Scope and Sequence Reports)
- MEES faculty have commissioned numerous research projects from the Institutional Research (IR) Department. (Appendix 1.2 DE Research Reports)
The current revision of the Evaluation Plan details plans to use both IR research and internally-generated research to make data-driven decisions about Barton’s Developmental Education program. (Appendix 1.9: 2006-07 Developmental Education Evaluation Plan)
- The Boylan report recommended the use of a non-cognitive assessment instrument for students enrolled in developmental coursework. After extensive research by Student Services staff, the On-Course non-cognitive assessment was adopted. In addition, instructors of Barton’s Student Success course selected Skip Dowling’s textbook *On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life*, as the primary text for the course. (Appendix 1.14: EDUC 1103 Student Success syllabus)

- MEES faculty members have experimented with numerous innovations to enhance student success. These are described in the Progress section of this monitoring report.

Progress of Developmental Education since the HLC-NCA Visit

Since its accreditation visit in October 2002, Barton County Community College has made significant progress in its Developmental Education program. Using the Hunter-Boylan Report (spring 2001), the HLC-NCA Site Visit Report (fall 2002), and the independent consultants' evaluation report (fall 2005) to guide its efforts, Barton has systematically set about creating a program that meets the needs of the institution's developmental student population.

Structural Organization

Since the October 2002 Site Visit by HLC-NCA, Barton County Community College has effected significant changes to its structural organization. With the goal of unifying all instructional entities under one administrative area, two Associate Dean positions were created at Barton's Fort Riley campus. Prior to fall 2005, the two employees who were appointed to these newly-created positions dually reported to the Executive Assistant to the President for Planning, Organizational Development and Military Operations and to the Dean of Learning and Instruction. With the title change and focused instructional responsibilities, the administrators in these two positions now report only to Barton's instructional administrator. This change has allowed the College to begin the process of fully implementing a developmental education program at the Fort Riley campus.

Another stage of Barton's reorganization efforts involved a change in the scope of the Office of Learning and Instruction. Prior to summer 2006, Barton's Learning and Instruction area encompassed only the academic functions of the College, which included all functions related to Barton faculty (hiring, evaluating, training/development and supervising); curriculum (ensuring the quality, integrity, consistency and rigor of Barton's curriculum as well as new program/course development); and instruction (instructional technology, research, and innovation).

In summer of 2006, the Dean of Learning and Instruction’s position was expanded to include Student Services, Enrollment Services, Admissions, Financial Aid, Child-Development Center, and Student Life. Student Services encompasses placement, testing, student advisement, career services, and counseling as well as TRIO Programs such as Upward Bound and the Center for Educational Opportunity. In addition to supervising academic administrators and staff, this new position, now titled Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services, supervises the Dean of Student Services. With all instruction-related services under the umbrella of one administrator, Barton’s Developmental Education program now has the infrastructure needed for serving Barton students with seamless developmental education coursework and support services.

Scheduling of Developmental Education Classes

Another significant change involves the scheduling of developmental courses. Data collected at Barton’s Barton County campus show that students who enroll in and complete summer classes perform better than students who enroll in and complete classes during fall and spring semesters. In general, students enrolled in summer-school courses average a 3.175 grade point average (GPA), significantly higher than the 2.702 G.P.A. of fall/spring courses. Summer developmental courses achieve better student performances as well, averaging a G.P.A. of 2.840 compared to the 2.245 GPA of fall/spring students. Similarly, students enrolled in summer coursework are less likely to withdraw from their classes. Great Bend campus students withdraw at a rate of 8.61% in the fall/spring semesters, much higher than the 3.10% withdrawal rate of summer-school students. Developmental students have similar withdrawal rates, with fall/spring students dropping 10.82% of their enrolled courses compared with 3.57% of summer-school courses. (All differences are statistically significant at the alpha = 0.01 level.) Students enrolled in the six week cycles at the Fort Riley campus also show significantly higher success rates.

The grid below describes the reasons for the performance/retention gap between summer school and fall/spring students.

Table 1: Rationale for Linked-Class Schedule

Reason	Fall/Spring Semester	Summer Semester
Fewer extra-curricular distractions	Sports, music, scholarship commitments	No scheduled school-related activities

Reason	Fall/Spring Semester	Summer Semester
Different student population	Wide variety of skill levels. Over 60% place into one or more developmental courses. Many attend Barton because they lack the skills, test scores, high school coursework, or confidence to matriculate directly to the university.	Predominately local students, many of whom are returning from or planning to transfer to Kansas Regents' universities to pick up a couple of classes.
Higher motivation	Wide variety of reasons for attending Barton, many of which have nothing to do with academics (athletics, location, finances, personal relationships, etc.)	Desire to complete a particular course or courses for a specific reason – to fulfill a general education /degree requirement; to take coursework in a small-class setting (as opposed to a huge lecture hall); to retake a previously failed class
Lower course load	Average student load = 10.86 credit hours.	Average student load = 4.76 credit hours.
Intensive study (3-credit hour classes described →)	Daytime classes meet 2 to 3 times each week for a total of 2.5 hours/week; night classes meet once a week for three hours over the 18- week semester	Short-session (5 week) daytime summer classes typically meet five days a week, totaling over 9 hours/week; night classes meet twice a week for a total of 6 hours/week for 9 weeks

Implementation

Focusing on reasons over which the College has some control, MEES faculty determined that the intensive study characterized by summer-school classes could be replicated during the fall and spring semesters. Further, they determined that developmental students would benefit from a linked class schedule.

Student Services, specifically the Advisement Center, play an integral role in ensuring the pilot's success. During fall 2006, the Advisement Coordinator will work closely with MEES faculty to determine credit-hour limitations and enrollment priorities for eligible students. To optimize student success, priority for linked-class enrollment will be given to students needing two or more developmental courses. This priority will ensure the formation of cohort groups and will lay the ground work for building formal learning communities in the future.

Benefits to student learning

- Students who do not pass a first-session developmental class will be able to re-enroll in the same course at the same time during the second session.

- Students who enroll in linked classes will not be allowed to exceed pre-determined credit-hour limits (based on the number of linked-courses in which students are enrolled).
- Classes meet every day, providing opportunities for daily practice, time-on-task, and daily student/teacher interaction.
- Sequenced developmental courses transition seamlessly from one level to the next. Immediately after the first course in the sequence finishes, the next course begins. There is no interruption in learning because of a semester “break”; thus, learning from one developmental class will be retained for the next course in the sequence.
- Linked-course schedule allows developmental students to transition to college-level math, English, and reading-intensive courses more quickly.
- Priority advising enables the formation of cohort groups and eventual learning communities.

Setting up two eight-week sessions during the regular semester for the purpose of scheduling sequenced classes achieves an intensive-study schedule similar to the summer sessions. For the spring 2007 semester, one of each developmental course offered at the Great Bend campus will be delivered in the linked-class format similar to the schedule below.

Table 2: Linked-Class Schedule

Time	Session 1	Session 2	Session 2
8:00-8:50 am	Basic Applied Math	Basic Algebra	Basic Applied Math
	Basic Algebra	Intermediate Algebra	
	Intermediate Algebra	College Algebra	
9:00-9:50 am	Basic English	Intermediate English	Basic English
	Intermediate English	English Comp. I	
10:00-10:50 am	Basic Reading	Intermediate Reading	Basic Reading
	Intermediate Reading	English Comp. I	
11:00-11:50 am	Student Success		

Progress Made Toward Implementation of the Boylan Plan

Shortly following the receipt of Hunter Boylan’s Evaluation Report, Barton established the Developmental Education Task Force (DETF). Intended to be a short-term committee focused on the implementation of Hunter Boylan’s recommended plan for Developmental Education at Barton, DETF finished its work in spring 2006. The table below details how Barton has implemented the Boylan plan.

Table 3: Boylan Plan and Timeline with Accomplishments

Activity To be Completed by Fall 2005	Progress
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Convene a task force of developmental faculty and staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A written statement of general goals for developmental education at Barton; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A written statement of philosophy to guide developmental education activities; and <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A statement of expectations for developmental students and faculty. 	Completed 5/1/03 Brian Howe (math faculty member) is the facilitator of the team; the team meets every month during spring 2003.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appoint an interim coordinator for campus developmental education.	A permanent Associate Dean level position has been created and staffed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Design an evaluation plan for developmental courses and services.	06-07 Evaluation Plan approved fall 2006
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Form a study group of developmental faculty to use Classroom Assessment Techniques <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Include orientation and training for all faculty teaching developmental education courses. 	MEES Division structure allows faculty to share CAT results and experiences. All faculty have been trained and use CATs in their developmental classes. CATs have been discussed at brownbag lunches.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Establish a faculty development library for developmental educators.	Completed fall 02
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiate faculty development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty identify methods and techniques they would like to work on during the summer and fall to improve their developmental courses. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty set goals to improve developmental courses for the 2001 – 2002 academic year. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identify books, software, or materials needed. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Each faculty member designs and submits a personal professional development plan. 	Faculty development is ongoing Part of development plans Completed each academic year Completed each academic year Completed each academic year; reviewed with Associate Dean

<p style="text-align: center;">Activity To be Completed by Fall 2005</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director monitors plans.</p>	<p>Annual Review Process</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implement developmental education evaluation plan.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present first round of data relative to the developmental education evaluation plan to the developmental education task force for review.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Determine how data should be shared with faculty and staff in order for revisions in programs and courses to take place.</p>	<p>First set of data completed fall 2005</p> <p>MEES research reviewed by MEES faculty in spring 2006</p> <p>Data shared at semester meetings with Student Services staff and MEES faculty</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hire a full-time director/coordinator for developmental education.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiate a complete review of goals and objectives of developmental courses.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stipulate exactly what students are expected to learn in developmental courses;</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stipulate the sequence in which various objectives are to be learned to ensure that each set of skills in developmental courses builds upon previously learned skills;</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the exit criteria for each level of developmental courses are consistent with entry criteria for the next level of developmental courses; and</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the exit criteria for the highest level developmental courses are consistent with the entry criteria for regular courses in that subject area.</p>	<p>Associate Dean position created and staffed since fall 2002</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Complete – all DE courses have specific competencies that state expectations for student learning</p> <p>Complete – Competencies have been aligned</p> <p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Scope and Sequence Reports are complete ✓ Developmental English faculty have designed a writing assignment and rubric to pre- and post test students ✓ Nelson Denny and Stanford tests are used as pre- and post-tests in DE reading classes ✓ Faculty have reviewed math competencies ✓ Math faculty have designed and implemented check-off sheets to facilitate mastery learning ✓ All computer-mediated math classes have aligned course outlines
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Begin review of instruments to use for noncognitive assessment.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review assessment instruments measuring study strategies, learning styles, or personality characteristics that may be useful in improving placement of developmental students;</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identify an appropriate instrument to add to the college's existing assessment battery;</p>	<p>Completed fall 2004 with the adoption of OnCourse Non-Cognitive Assessment</p> <p>Completed fall 2004.</p> <p>Completed fall 2004.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Activity To be Completed by Fall 2005</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Determine the types of training that will be needed for advisors and faculty to use data from this assessment most effectively.</p>	<p>Ongoing – Initial Advisor Workshops planned prior to Advisement Day, fall 2005</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identify ways of improving student success in initial developmental courses.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How reading and study strategies can be implemented throughout the entire developmental education curriculum;</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How more diverse instructional strategies and techniques can be used in developmental courses;</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How monitoring and advising can be used to track the performance of developmental students; and</p>	<p>Ongoing – Continuous improvement is central to MEES mission, philosophy and goals</p> <p>Ongoing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Intermediate Reading now paired with Introduction to Sociology; will be paired with Intermediate Writing in fall 2006 ✓ Required note taking piloted in Basic Applied Math and Basic Algebra ✓ Word Problems reinforced in Basic Applied Math and Basic Algebra ✓ Math faculty use Documented Problem/Solution CATs <p>Ongoing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ MEES make-up testing policy ✓ Open computer labs ✓ Intermediate Algebra – lecture class pilot fall 2005 using same competencies and measures as computer-mediated class ✓ All reading classes now incorporate novels with "read and response" papers and written report/projects embedded into the curriculum ✓ Grammar instruction is embedded into developmental writing classes ✓ Student writing used as basis for text and tests in Intermediate Writing ✓ Writing assignments embedded in Intermediate Algebra classes ✓ Web-enhanced instruction incorporated into Basic Algebra ✓ Evening class offerings for lowest level math classes, Basic Applied Math and Basic Algebra, meet two nights a week ✓ Summer "Jumpstart" classes scheduled for incoming developmental students <p>Ongoing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Developmental Advisor positions established for advising developmental students ✓ Developmental advisees transition into major/discipline areas after completing developmental coursework ✓ All instructors complete the Early and Late Alert Reports to monitor and report student absences, difficulties, and performance

<p style="text-align: center;">Activity To be Completed by Fall 2005</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How academic support services and laboratories can best be integrated with developmental courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Student support personnel teach Student Success Seminar ✓ Peer and Professional Tutors undergo CRLA Training ✓ English faculty use Skills Bank software available in Student Services computer lab ✓ Early and Late Reports trigger Student Services', advisors', and athletic coaches' intervention ✓ MEES faculty use Tutor Referrals to facilitate communication between developmental students and Student Services ✓ Peer and Professional Tutors visit MEES classes to introduce themselves and their services ✓ Student Services professional staff and student tutors will assist with Essential Skills Seminar instruction in spring 2007 ✓ Dean of Learning & Instruction position reorganized to oversee Student Services area, with Dean of Student Services now reporting to the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services.
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Develop plans for a campus-wide developmental education center.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Plan should include the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty development activities; <input type="checkbox"/> Individualized instructional laboratories in reading/writing, and mathematics; <input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring; <input type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic testing; <input type="checkbox"/> Office space; and <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting space. <p><input type="checkbox"/> Address issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Where should center be housed? <input type="checkbox"/> How should it be coordinated? <p><input type="checkbox"/> How the center's services can best integrate instructional and academic support services.</p>	<p>This plan has been postponed indefinitely.</p> <p>Except for shared office and meeting space, all of the components are in place on the Great Bend campus. Due to budget constraints the focus is going to be on better cooperation between Student Services and the MEES division, rather than combining the two operations.</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seek CRLA certification of tutoring program</p>	<p>Completed March 2002 by Student Services</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Review hardware, software, and training needs for center as well as faculty and staff.</p>	<p>See above, Center no longer in plan.</p>

Education Goals and Objectives To be initiated in January 2004 and completed by fall 2005	Progress
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Re-train advisors and faculty to use results from non-cognitive assessment to place students in appropriate learning experiences.	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Implement plans for a developmental education center.	See above, center no longer in plan.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiate follow-up evaluation of developmental education at Barton County Community College.	Completed October 2005
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retain an external evaluator to assess progress made in developmental education between spring 2001 and spring 2002. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reviewer should determine: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What steps have been taken to improve developmental education; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How well they have been implemented; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Where further efforts need to be made; and <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Where plans need to be revised 	Completed October 2005
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implement recommendations on hardware, software, and training.	Ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Technology grants to build Smart classroom in C112B & C107 approved ✓ Reviewed Modumath for math instruction – faculty did not recommend implementation ✓ Purchased TI Viewscreens for projecting calculator screens ✓ Document cameras purchased for 3 C-building classrooms

Other Improvements

The following improvements, organized by category, represent other significant changes to Barton’s Developmental Education Program.

Evidence of Strengthened Relationship with Student Services

- Working together, the Testing, Advisement, and Career Services Coordinator and the Math, English, and Essential Skills Division revised Barton’s Placement Procedures and drafted Re-testing procedures. (Appendix 1.15: Academic Placement and Retesting Procedures – Barton County Campus)
- Instructors of the Student Success course, which include both Student Services staff and Math, English, and Essential Skills faculty, hold joint meetings, as needed. A

Student Services staff member teaches a Development Education math class and regularly attends monthly math department meetings.

- Math, English, and Essential Skills faculty use Student Services Referral Forms for referring students for counseling and tutoring services. (Appendix 1.16: Tutoring Services Referral Form)
- Student Services Staff, including peer tutors, will work with MEES faculty to staff the Essential Skills Seminar course.
- Peer and Professional Tutors visit all MEES classes at the beginning of every semester and attend departmental (math and English) meetings.
- Inter-departmental meetings between Student Services and Math, English, and Essential Skills faculty are scheduled at least once a semester.
- Student Services and Math, English, and Essential Skills faculty have shared responsibility in making major decisions that affect Developmental Education students. Examples of “major” decisions include the choice of the non-cognitive assessment instrument (*On-Course*), the design and implementation of the spring 2007 linked-class schedule, and the creation of a reading prerequisite for English Composition I.
- Jointly, Student Services and Math, English, and Essential Skills faculty complete a SWOT (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) Analysis (Appendix 1.17: SWOT Analysis) as part of the annual Evaluation Plan. (Appendix 1.9 2006-07 Developmental Education Evaluation Plan)

Advisement and Placement

- Prior to summer 2004, students enrolled through Barton’s Outreach program could request a waiver of their placement scores. At that time, Great Bend campus students who failed to achieve a desired score on a placement assessment could re-assess as often as they wanted. Revised Placement Procedures clarified the role of placement at the Great Bend campus while the newly created Re-testing Procedures specified the conditions under which students could retest. (Appendix 1.15: Academic Placement and Retesting Procedures – Barton County Campus)
- Since the adoption of the Mandatory Placement policy in 2000, placement has improved. (Appendix 1.2c: Placement Results Since Mandatory Placement) All

students associated with the Barton County campus, including Outreach and high school/concurrent students as well as students taking classes at service area correctional facilities, are expected to conform to the Mandatory Placement policy.

- In fall 2004, Math, English, and Essential Skills faculty, working with Student Services staff, established college-level reading skills as a prerequisite for entrance into English Composition I. Data shows that the reading prerequisite has benefited developmental reading students. (Appendix 1.2d: College Reading/English Composition I pre-req. data)
- Among the pool of forty-five Great Bend campus advisors, eight are classified as Developmental Education advisors. Of those eight, five teach classes in the College's Developmental Education program.
- Based on comparisons with other Kansas community colleges' placement scores (Appendix 1.18: Kansas Community Colleges' Placement Scores) and internal research (Appendix 1.2e: Math Placement Scores – Barton County Campus), math faculty, working with Student Services Testing Coordinator, revised the ASSET score between MATH 1824 Intermediate Algebra and MATH 1828 College Algebra in fall 2006.
- Barton's campus at Fort Riley has been working toward implementation of Barton's placement policy. The staff there has collected data which show a strong correlation between no/low placement scores and high attrition in math courses. (Appendix 1.2f : Fort Riley Placement Score data)
- In fall 2006, Barton's campus at Fort Riley held its first Advisement Day. Prior to this date, the Army Education Center had the responsibility to advise and enroll students into Barton's classes. This made enforcement of Barton's mandatory assessment and placement policy very challenging. Very few students had assessment scores. This is also an example of the improved communication and cooperation between the two campuses. The Advisement Coordinator, the Director of Enrollment Services and other staff from the Barton County campus travel to the Fort Riley campus to assist with advisement days.
- The new model implemented at the Fort has enabled significant improvements. Students who arrive to enroll with no assessment scores take the COMPASS test

prior to enrolling and the data show that this initiative has improved students' placement into Developmental Education courses. Prior to the initiative less than 10% of the students were on degree plans, now all those students who have attended advisement days have a degree plan.

- Subsequent data have shown that students who are correctly placed have better retention rates. (Appendix 1.2f: Fort Riley Placement Score data)
- Progress has also been made with students enrolling in Barton's two online learning systems, EduKan and BartOnline. The deans who work for the six EduKan colleges have recently agreed on common cutoff scores and students are placed according to these cutoff scores. This prevents students switching between colleges to get into courses that they are not prepared for.
- For the BartOnline system, the college is working with eCollege the courseware provider to develop a system that automatically enrolls students in a placement course shell, when they enroll in either a MATH or ENGL course. Once enrolled in the placement course shell, the student's math or English skills will be assessed to ensure that they are enrolled in the correct course. Students who are incorrectly placed will be moved to the correct developmental course.

Improvements to Curriculum & Instruction

- In spring 2004, Intermediate Reading and Introduction to Sociology were offered as paired courses for the first time. According to the MEES Evaluation Plan (Appendix 1.9: 2006-07 Developmental Education Evaluation Plan), the performance of the paired reading/sociology students will be evaluated at the end of spring 2007.
- Responding to requests from students and advisors, the math department now offers two MEES classes in lecture-based and computer-mediated formats. MATH 1824 Intermediate Algebra piloted a lecture-based class in fall 2005, and MATH 1821 Basic Algebra piloted a lecture-based class in fall 2006. (Although MATH 1824 Intermediate Algebra is not considered a Developmental Education course at Barton, many Kansas post-secondary institutions consider the course developmental.)

- Instructors of MATH 1809 Basic Applied Math and 1821 Basic Algebra instituted a note-taking requirement in fall 2005. Syllabi for these courses reflect this requirement. (Appendix 1.12: MATH 1809 Basic Applied Math/ MATH 1821 Basic Algebra syllabi)
- Instructors of READ 1108 Basic Reading and Intermediate Reading 1109 introduced high-interest novels into their course curriculum in fall 2003.
- All reading classes now incorporate writing assignments.
- All Developmental Education writing courses now expect error-free final drafts (of a multiple-draft assignment).
- Grammar instruction for ENGL 1194 Intermediate English is embedded into the writing process (rather than worksheet-based instruction).
- Instructors of MATH 1809 Basic Applied Math and 1821 Basic Algebra prohibited the use of calculators, instituted in fall 2005.
- A new course has been developed to supplement and enhance existing Developmental Education courses. Essential Skills Seminar, if approved in fall 2006, features four components: basic computer literacy, math success strategies, reading success strategies, and basic library literacy. (Appendix 1.4: EDUC 1110 Essential Skills Seminar syllabus) This course will allow reading faculty to integrate speed-reading into the developmental reading curriculum, a feature they have wanted to build into their courses but have not had the time or lab resources to do previously.

Technological Improvements

- With State technology grants, the MEES Division secured the installation of two new “smart” classrooms.
- State technology grants allowed for the purchase of two document cameras.
- Three Texas Instruments View Screens (for displaying math problems) were purchased with State technology grant funds.
- Interwrite pads allow math faculty to demonstrate math problems/solutions on an overhead screen without having to remain in a fixed location.

Planning and Evaluation Processes

- The Developmental Education Program has developed an Evaluation Plan for systematically collecting and using data. (Appendix 1.9: 2006-07 Developmental Education Evaluation Plan)
- Developmental Education Program staff have begun to use data to make decisions about curricular and programmatic improvements.
- Data are also collected for the purpose of gauging success of decisions.
- In spring 2005, the College created and staffed a position for Instructional Research; this position has been invaluable for requesting research projects that are beyond the scope of the Division's ability to compile. With more time, the DE program will have a wealth of data from which to draw conclusions.
- Barton's Developmental Education program faculty and staff are responsible for the creation of, and responsibility for, departmental/division-wide goals.
- Independent Consultants' report used to create goals.
- MEES faculty attend monthly Division meetings as well as monthly departmental meetings at which goals are reviewed, analyzed, and revised.
- Developmental math faculty hold monthly meetings, attended by both full-time and associate faculty, to discuss best practices. (Appendix 1.19: Best Practices - Samples) This group is facilitated by an associate faculty member.

Other Scheduling Improvements

- In the past, all Developmental Education math courses have been offered as evening courses, meeting one night each week. Based on student performance in evening classes and instructor recommendations, math faculty split the two lowest-level developmental math classes, MATH 1809 Basic Applied Math and MATH 1821 Basic Algebra. Since spring 2005, these classes have met two nights a week instead of one night per week.
- In an effort to reduce the number of students needing make-up tests and to control the environment under which the students were tested, MEES faculty developed a Division-wide make-up testing policy. (Appendix 1.20: MEES Make-up Testing Policy) In short, the policy sets specific times and dates on which make-up tests will

be administered. It also limits the number of make-up tests a student can take for a given MEES Division class.

- Two summer initiatives have been established to enable students to complete some or all of their required developmental coursework prior to the start of the fall semester.
 - In summer 2004, working with Student Services, the MEES Division offered incoming freshmen the “Jumpstart” opportunity to complete 9 credit hours (MATH 1809 Basic Applied Math or MATH 1821 Basic Algebra; ENGL 1194 Intermediate Reading; EDUC 1103 Student Success) in the second 4-week summer school session. (Appendix 1.21: Jumpstart Brochure) All 8 Jumpstart students in the 2004 pilot enrolled in the following fall semester. Preliminary data analysis reveals that in their Barton careers, these eight students accumulated a 2.64 GPA in subsequent English classes and a 2.0 GPA in subsequent math classes. According to the MEES Evaluation Plan (Appendix 1.9: 2006-07 Developmental Education Evaluation Plan), subsequent Jumpstart cohort groups will be evaluated. In addition, the original eight Jumpstart students will be analyzed more closely to compare their performance with other cohort groups.
 - In summer 2006, the MEES division marketed their Developmental Education Program to high school juniors and seniors who had failed to place into college-level math and English courses. (Appendix 1.22: Summer DE Flyer)

Conclusions

Strengths

- Developmental Education faculty value innovation. They constantly try new ways to present the material and to improve student attendance and retention.
- They are student-centered, holding students accountable for their learning and success. They speak with a powerful, positive voice on behalf of Developmental Students and their needs.
- Although difficult for faculty at first, the unified division of developmental instructors has proven invaluable in meeting the educational needs of the students it serves.
- Divisional structure encourages inclusion of associate faculty who teach Developmental Education classes. Although associate faculty teach a substantial number of Barton's Barton County campus Developmental Education classes, they are housed in the MEES office complex, attend division and department meetings, and play a respected role in the continuing success of Barton's Developmental Education program.
- Faculty control the curriculum and work together to make adjustments that will improve student learning.
- College administration values Developmental Education and has willingly supported initiatives to institutionalize the Developmental Education Program, including enforcing Mandatory Assessment and Placement Policies.
- Student Services personnel work closely with Developmental Education faculty. Staff in both areas understand their respective roles in creating an environment in which DE students can succeed.
- Increasingly, the MEES division uses data to make decisions regarding curricular and programmatic change.
- Barton faculty and staff now control advisement and enrollment processes at Fort Riley, making mandatory placement easier to implement. This improvement bodes well for future Developmental Education initiatives at the Fort.

Weaknesses

- The majority of developmental math courses (which include MATH 1824 Intermediate Algebra) are taught by associate faculty. During the 2006 calendar year, only 40% of developmental math classes offered at Barton's Barton County campus were taught by full-time faculty.
- In the areas of English and reading, full fall classes of 20 students cause burn-out for instructors.
- The lack of space for a fully-functional learning lab hinders both MEES faculty and Student Services staff in their abilities to address their students' needs.
- The Fort Riley campus is beginning to embrace the concept of Developmental Education. Efforts will now be made to build on this foundation.
- Making data-driven decisions requires asking the right questions and having the means in place to answer these questions. Barton's Developmental Education staff and faculty are still learning how to ask questions that will yield meaningful, usable results.

Chapter II: Library Resources

History

In the College's self-study¹ it was noted that some of the concerns about the library had been addressed since the last visit, namely the access issues for students who do not take classes on the Barton County campus. However, on page 22 the document noted that there were still concerns about the quality and balance of the collection. The self-study also recommended the hiring of a permanent Director of Library Services. (p.113). The consultant/evaluators clearly concurred with these assessments and directed the college to provide evidence of improvement. The evidence is contained below.

HLC-NCA Comments and Concerns and Institutional Response

In October 2002 Barton County completed its accreditation visit. The consultant/evaluators found two significant areas of concerns: library personnel and library resources. As demonstrated above, Barton included these concerns in its self-study and has now made significant progress in addressing them. Specifically, the report stated that Barton needed to:

“Provide evidence of the College’s commitment to procuring and maintaining adequate library resources to support its educational programs, such as hiring a full-time professional librarian with a Master of Library Science degree.”

In response to this, Barton hired a Director of Learning Resources in July of 2003. While Mary Hester did not have an MLS at that time, there was a clear understanding that she would earn her MLS as soon as possible. This was achieved by May of 2005. (Appendix 2.1: Resume Mary Hester)

The second area of concern has a broader scope:

“Since BCCC is in a rural area, the library should be an important element of instructional excellence. . . . The College will need

¹ Barton County Community College 2002 *Self-Study Report* prepared for the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

to provide evidence of its commitment to procuring and maintaining adequate library resources to support its educational programs.”

In December of 2003, the director presented a “Library Improvement Plan” to the administration of the College. This plan included goals for collection development, service, instruction, staffing, and marketing. Since these goals were far reaching, they have not been achieved; however, significant progress has been made. The complete plan is found in Appendix 2.2 (Library Improvement Plan).

Progress of Library Resources since the HLC-NCA Visit

Budget

During the 2001-2002 fiscal year only \$5,670.99 was spent on books, and nothing was spent on electronic materials. This amount continued a downward trend in acquisitions budget that had started years before.

In August of 2005, the Board of Trustees approved a budget increase of \$63,500 which enabled the purchase of electronic books and subscriptions to online databases for the use of the Barton community. These materials are being accessed by both distant students and those on campus. The budgets for these two years can be found in Appendices 2.3 and 2.4 (Library Budget).

In 2006, Barton was able to join a database consortium (Regents Library Database Consortium of Kansas) and will be able to achieve significant savings on database subscriptions; this money will then be available to provide much needed updating to the print collection.

Collection Improvement

The collection is being updated; however, this process is slow. Each book is being judged on its own merits as to content and condition of the book. In addition, decisions about replacement purchases are being made as the items are being evaluated. This book-by-book evaluation is almost complete, and replacements are being purchased as funds become available.

- In December 2002, the average publishing date of the book collection was 1972. Within the computer technology section, only three books were published after 1995, and in the medical section there were books on diagnosis that are over 40 years old. Similar situations exist throughout the collection.
- During professional days in January 2005, faculty members met in the library and each evaluated their subject area as to what books should leave the collection and what books should stay. They were given the opportunity to judge whether a book could remain, if a more recent edition of the same work should be purchased, if other material on the same subject should be purchased, or if the subject was one that did not need to be included in Barton's library collection.
- As of June 19, 2006, there were 24,582 print books and 1,339 audiovisual materials housed in the library at the Barton County campus. The average copyright date has improved only to 1981, so improvements still need to be made; however, the changes are happening. Within the technology and medical areas, there are no books older than 10 years except those considered by the faculty to be seminal works which should be retained, and similar gains are being made in all other areas as well. As there will be more money available for materials in the future, this will continue to improve.
- In addition, the Barton community has online access to 8,281 purchased eBooks (which are catalogued in Barton's online catalog for easy access) and 78 subscription-only databases provided by 14 interfaces. The library is in the process of cataloging the materials in those databases to provide easy access for the Barton Community.
- The College has recently received the donation of a special collection of Kansas history materials. (Appendix 2.5: Cohen Collection) Not only does this enhance the library's collection, it also provides a valuable resource to the area and to researchers in Kansas history all over the world. The library has been gifted with a book scanner so that this collection and other Kansas history resources may be digitized with the intention that access will not be limited to those who are on the Barton County campus. (Appendix 2.6: Invoice for Scanner)

Usage

As shown by the checkout statistics, usage of the library's resources has significantly improved over the past three years. The number of items checked out of the library in the most recent academic year is over 3.5 times the use in 2002-2003.

Table 1: Items Checked Out of Barton's Library

Academic Year	Usage
2002 - 2003	1,204 checkouts
2003 - 2004	3,384 checkouts
2004 - 2005	3,969 checkouts
2005 - 2006	4,229 checkouts

As the collection improves, this number is expected to steadily increase.

In addition to the checkouts of the materials housed in the library, students and staff are making use of the databases. The library subscribed to databases for the first time in the 2005-2006 school year; previously only databases supplied through the Kansas State Library were available. The following database usage statistics show the increasing importance of online databases to Barton users:

Table 2: Use of Electronic Data Bases

Academic Year	Database Usage
2002 - 2003	5,060 items retrieved
2003 - 2004	14,760 items retrieved
2004 - 2005	25,083 items retrieved
2005 - 2006	40,286 items retrieved

These numbers are expected to rise as the users become more accustomed to these resources being available and with the links to the online resources being placed in the online catalog.

Not only are checkouts and online resource usage rising, but it is obvious to the observer that the physical presence of students in the library has increased as well. No longer does one enter the library and see no students. In fact there are times when all the tables, easy chairs and study carrels are in use. To better serve students, the library has

increased the number of hours it is open. During the 2005-2006 school year, the library was open on Saturdays for the first time in its history. Weekday hours have been extended as well. (Appendix 2.7: Library Hours)² The current level of use by Barton students is demonstrated by the pictures in Appendix 2.8 (Photos of Students using the Library).

Instruction and Reference

The director works closely with the faculty in order to provide information literacy instruction. For example, all English Composition II students receive instruction in database search as well as effective use of the World Wide Web.

At this time, library staff is developing on-line tutorials³ which will have an evaluation and reporting component; these allow faculty to track which students are information literate and which students have information gaps. There will be the ability to target a student's particular needs instead of students receiving instruction in areas in which they are literate and perhaps not receiving instruction in areas where they have gaps. This will be an ongoing project, and the tutorials and assessment will evolve along with the changes in technology and information access.

The library has implemented virtual reference to complement the face-to-face and telephone reference services which were already in place. Library staff have instant message addresses which are given to the students; there are automated forms on the "Contact the Library" website, and library staff email addresses are available at several different places on the web site.⁴

Service

The library is committed to quality customer service, as is the whole college. It is not enough to have the information resources; the library must provide an atmosphere and a level of service that encourages use of those resources.

² http://www.bartonccc.edu/library/Library_Info/Library_Info.htm

³ <http://www.bartonccc.edu/library/Tutorials/Tutorials.htm>

⁴ http://www.bartonccc.edu/library/Ask_a_Librarian/Ask_a_Librarian.htm

The library web pages are an integral part of service. Barton Library staff have completely redesigned the web pages using web design usability criteria along with feedback from students and staff. In addition, information about every resource at or through the library is included in the web pages.

Service is not limited to the students and faculty of Barton, but is available to the community as well. Community members are encouraged to visit the library and make use of the materials and the research abilities of the staff. In addition, the library reaches out into the community to improve information access. For example, the director is currently working with the local historical museum on preservation issues and to help them provide better finding aids for their collection. She is also collaborating with staff at Central Kansas Medical Center to develop access to consumer health information for the community.

Facilities

The library facility remains dated and shabby in most areas. Most of the carpet, ceiling and furniture are original to the building, which was constructed in 1969. However, a special collection room has been added which contains new carpet and custom designed and built oak shelving. There is a fundraising campaign underway to remodel the rest of the library as well. At this time, \$300,448.90 has been raised. Not only will the library have new carpet, a new ceiling and furniture, but the lighting will increase drastically with new windows and a skylight. In addition, a classroom and a profession collection room will be available within the library building.

The library has updated the technology available to the users with up-to-date desktops as well as wireless laptops and wireless access available for personal laptops. Printing is available to the students free of charge. When the remodeling takes place, wireless access for library users will enable more flexibility for the users as to where they work.

Conclusion

Strengths

When the architects designed Barton, they placed the library at the physical center of the college. It is vital that the library also be the instructional center of the campus. In

fact, in this rural area, the library needs to be the informational center for the surrounding communities.

- The Board of Trustees and administration have shown a commitment by hiring a professional librarian who earned her MLS, and by the significant budget improvements.
- Barton's Foundation is also committed to providing the College with a modern library, as demonstrated by their fundraising efforts. BOT committed to reviewing the timeline and will plan for the renovation in Spring 2007.
- The Director of Learning Resources is committed to providing the college community and the surrounding area with up-to-date resources as well as a quality service atmosphere which encourages the use of the resources available.
- When the library improvement plan was written, only 845 of the approximately 33,000 monographs had been published in the last 5 years - less than 3% (02.56%). As of today 2,984 of 25,098 monographs have been published in the last 5 years - almost 12% (11.89%).
- Library hours have been extended to meet the needs of the students.
- The library will continue to evolve and improve both the resources and the services it provides.

Weaknesses

- The facilities on the Barton Campus need to be renovated.
- There are no physical facilities at the Fort Riley campus although students have access to interlibrary loans through the Barton County Campus.

Chapter III: Operational Planning

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide evidence that Barton County Community College has addressed the concerns expressed by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) concerning operational planning in its report dated April 4, 2003.

Background

During the October 2002 accreditation visit to Barton, the HLC accreditation team identified operational planning as an area needing redress. Specifically, the HLC expressed concerns about Barton's ability to fulfill Criterion Four: The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness. In that report the HLC directed Barton to submit a monitoring report in four years to provide evidence that Barton's operational planning system facilitated accomplishment of the following two goals:

1. Senior academic leadership and faculty **communicate** clearly across the district and **assume responsibility** for and **assure** both the **rigor** of programs and the **quality** of instruction.
2. The College has developed a **one-district framework** for the entire institution in which different components (the Great Bend Campus, Ft. Riley center, distance education, etc.) can operate cohesively.

The two goals above are taken verbatim from the HLC's report of April 4, 2003. From them, the College infers that the HLC is concerned with four areas related to Barton's educational effectiveness: Operational Planning; One-College Framework; Communication within the College; and Academic Rigor and Quality. As stated earlier, the purpose of this chapter is to meet the requirements of the HLC by describing the actions Barton has taken to redress the issues identified in the HLC report. This will be accomplished by addressing the four topics in the order presented above.

At this point, it is important to note that the four years since the 2002 accreditation visit have been turbulent ones for Barton County Community College. The effects of turbulence peaked in the spring and summer of 2005. In the spring of 2005 the College's Board of Trustees experienced a sixty-six percent turnover as the voters of Barton County elected four new members. In July 2005, in what was virtually the new Board's first action, the College's President was dismissed. An interim President was then hired for Academic Year 2005-6, while the new Board conducted a search for a new president. The new President was hired effective July 1, 2006.

This information is proffered not to excuse any action Barton has taken or failed to take. Indeed, this report will provide evidence that Barton has in fact redressed the concerns expressed in the April 2003 HLC report. Rather, this information is proffered as an explanation as to why in the ensuing narrative some of the processes being described are not yet completed. As a result of the change in the composition of the Board of Trustees and the subsequent hiring of a new President, Barton is now, and has been for almost eighteen months, in a state of flux. In that period, the Trustees have re-written the College's Mission, Vision, and Ends Statements. In the Policy Governance model, Ends Statements are key to the strategic direction of the College. They are simultaneously statements of the results expected by the Board of Trustees and the basis for action by the College's administration. The change in the Ends Statements has required the College to alter its strategic perspective and operational plans. To that end, the new President has focused the College administration on strategic planning as the basis to effect institutional improvement. However, as will be seen in the following narrative, the College is currently in the midst of its strategic planning cycle. As a result, some of the narrative will explain future, rather than current, actions.

Section I: Operational Planning

The purpose of this section of the chapter is to explain Barton's operational planning system. To provide a comprehensive view of Barton's operational planning system, it is necessary to first address Barton's strategic planning system, because the operational planning process flows from the strategic planning system. Therefore, this narrative will digress necessarily to first describe Barton's strategic planning system.

After describing Barton's strategic planning system, the narrative will then explain how the strategic planning system links to the operational planning system, and the operational planning system itself.

Barton County Community College Strategic Planning System

In describing Barton's strategic planning system, it is important to note that Barton's Board of Trustees adopted the Carver Policy Governance System on 10-16-97 (Appendix 3.1: Policy Type: Board Process). In accordance with the Carver Policy Governance System, Barton's Board of Trustees revised the College's Mission, Vision, and Ends Statements (Appendix 3.2: Mission, Vision, and Ends Statements) in the spring of 2006. The changes in the College's Mission, Vision, and Ends Statements prompted the initiation of a new strategic planning cycle, which Barton began in July of 2006.

The purpose of Barton's strategic planning system is to develop a plan to accomplish the College's Mission while simultaneously moving the College toward the College's Vision by accomplishing the Ends identified by the Board of Trustees. The strategic planning process Barton employs is deliberately inclusive (Appendix 3.3: Strategic Planning Process Five Year Cycle). This is an important concept, because the Barton administration deliberately opted to use an inclusive planning process even though it recognized that opening up the system would also slow it down. However, the administration believed input from all the College's stakeholders was critical to the creation of a quality strategic plan, so the administration opted for openness in the process over speed of completion. The major steps in the strategic planning process are:

1. Empanel the College Planning Coordination Committee (CPCC). The CPCC is the principle strategic planning entity at the College.
2. Conduct an Environmental Scan. This was completed in August 2006 (Appendix 3.4: 2006-7 Environmental Scan).⁵

Barton is also currently engaged in an effort to upgrade its ability to evaluate the service area environment. To that end, the College is negotiating a contract with CCBenefits, Inc. CCBenefits provides easy access to data. By making access to

⁵ http://bartonccc.edu/strategicplan/documents/environmental_scan_2006_%20for_merge.pdf.

such data easier, the College intends to improve its use of data in strategic planning and decision making.

3. Conduct a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis.⁶
The SWOT analysis is one of the primary tools the College used to initiate the planning process. SWOT analyses were collected from a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders, including, but not limited to the Board of Trustees, Barton employees, the Athletic Booster Club, the Barton Foundation Board, local citizens, school district superintendents, local high school students.
4. Develop Strategic Statements. Strategic Statements are sentences that provide a broad conceptual basis for developing goals and objectives in accordance with the policy governance Ends Statements. As with the SWOT Analysis, the development of Strategic Statements is a procedure used to promote participation in the planning process. The Strategic Statements created by the CPCC are subject to review and comment by the College's internal and external stakeholders. This is accomplished electronically by posting the Strategic Statements on the College's Strategic Planning webpage where the statements can be reviewed and critiqued. Since the CPCC is currently in the process of developing the Strategic Statements, the statements are in draft form only.⁷
5. Develop Strategic Goals and Objectives. Once the Strategic Statements have been ratified by the College's stakeholders, the CPCC will then develop Strategic Goals and Objectives. Strategic Goals and Objectives differ from Operational Goals and Objectives in purpose and scope. In general, Strategic Goals and Objectives focus on achieving a desired end state five years out through the attainment of five years' worth of annual Operational Goals and Objectives. At this point, Strategic Planning links to Operational Planning. The Strategic Planning System establishes the Strategic Goals and Objectives for the five-year period covered by the Strategic Plan. Then the College's Operational Planning System takes over by divining Operational Goals and Objectives for each of the five years covered by Strategic Plan. Again, since the College has not yet reached

⁶ <http://bartonccc.edu/strategicplan/swot.htm>

⁷ <http://bartonccc.edu/strategicplan/default.htm>

- this phase of its strategic planning cycle, neither the Strategic nor the Operational Goals and Objectives have been developed. They will be completed by May 2007 (Appendix 3.5: 2006-2007 Strategic Planning Development Timeline⁸).
6. Develop a Measurement Plan. Concurrent with the development of Strategic Goals and Objectives, the College will develop a plan for measuring its progress. The Measurement Plan will serve as a basis for assessing progress toward achieving the Strategic and Operational Goals and Objectives. From the data collected from the Measurement Plan, the College will make midcourse corrections to subsequent year Operational Plans to ensure accomplishment of its Strategic Goals and Objectives. Again the Measurement Plan is not complete as of this writing and its anticipated completion timeframe is also May 2007 (Appendix 3.5: 2006-2007 Strategic Planning Development Timeline⁸).

Barton County Community College Operational Planning System

In an effort to describe Barton's operational planning system it is necessary to explain both the process itself and the structures that support the system. In this context, the concept of process refers to the series of procedures that comprise the Operational Planning System, while the concept of structure refers to the assortment of committees, departments, etc. that participate in and/or support the Operational Planning System. A description of operational planning processes and structures follows.

The Operational Planning Process

Barton's Operational Planning Process is based on the College's Strategic Plan. The five-year Strategic Goals and Objectives established in the College's Strategic Plan are analyzed, assessed, resourced, and incorporated into the College's annual operations plan. The College's annual operations plan is developed through a multi-process system which is schematically represented in Appendix 3.6 (Yearly College Planning Diagram⁹).

The Operational Planning Process is comprised of three major processes: the Yearly Planning Process, the Implementation Process, and the Evaluation Process. These three processes are described below.

⁸ http://bartonccc.edu/strategicplan/documents/2006-07_strategic_planning_development_timeline2.pdf

⁹ http://bartonccc.edu/strategicplan/documents/spg_appendix_II.pdf

The Yearly Planning Process:

The long-range purpose of the Yearly Planning Process is to translate the Strategic Goals and Objectives into manageable increments that can be achieved on an annual basis. The immediate purpose of the annual Yearly Planning Process is to develop detailed action plans for the attainment of that year's operational goals and objectives. The Yearly Planning Process consists of three phases: the Operational Review Phase, the Operational Development Phase, and the Budget Planning Phase.

- Operational Review Phase: In this phase, the College reviews its progress towards achievement of its Strategic Goals and Objectives. This includes revalidation of the relevance and viability of the Strategic Goals and Objectives and evaluation of the progress towards those objectives. Primary sources for this phase include, but are not limited to:
 - Review of the Vision, Mission, and Ends Statements;
 - Review of the Environmental Scan; and
 - Review of data in previous year's Measurement Plan.
- Operational Development Phase: In this phase, based on the strategic plan and the results of the Operational Review Phase, the College prepares the operational goals and objectives for the next year. The major steps of this phase include:
 - Selection and prioritization of annual performance goals;
 - Development of annual objectives;
 - Development of College-wide action plans; and
 - Assignment of staff responsibility.
- Budget Planning Phase: In this phase, the College works with the administrators responsible for completing the goals to determine the resources, including human and financial, necessary for successful accomplishment of the annual goals and/or objectives assigned to them. The major steps in this phase include:
 - Identification of budget and logistical requirements;
 - Development of an annual budget;
 - Prioritization of resources; and
 - Allocation of resources.

The Implementation Process:

During the Implementation Process, the College's staff work towards accomplishment of the annual goals and objectives assigned to them during the Yearly Planning Process. The short-range purpose of the Implementation Process is to achieve the operational goals and objectives set forth in the annual plan. The long-range purpose of the Implementation Process is either to achieve or to make progress towards achieving the Strategic Goals and Objectives identified in the Strategic Plan.

The Evaluation Process:

The purpose of the annual Evaluation Process is to collect, correlate, and disseminate formative and summative data from a variety of sources in order to assess the College's progress towards achievement of its operational and strategic goals and objectives. This is a multi-tiered, multi-phased process, which includes:

- Stakeholder Feedback: As part of its Evaluation Process, the College collects feedback from both internal and external stakeholders in a variety of ways. The data collected from these various sources are then compiled into reports, which in turn are used by appropriate offices and committees in the pursuit of their assigned missions. Among the data collection methods are:
 - Community Meeting: Beginning in the February 2005, the College sponsored open community meetings at the four major population centers in the county. The data gleaned from those meetings was compiled into a series of reports, which are being used in the College's current strategic planning process. (Appendix 3.7: Analysis of Ellinwood Table Discussions; Appendix 3.8: Analysis of Claflin Table Discussions; Appendix 3.9: Analysis of Hoisington Table Discussions; Appendix 3.10, Analysis of Great Bend Table Discussions; Appendix 3.11: Combined Data from the Community Forum Critique Form; and Appendix 3.12: Analysis of four City Table Discussions)
 - Graduation Exit Survey: Although the College has long used a Graduate Exit Survey, the College has recently redesigned the instrument to enhance its relevance. (Appendix 3.13: Graduate Exit Form) In addition to

revising the Graduate Exit Survey itself, the College also revised its procedures for completing the form. Specifically, the College plans to post the form online. This innovation will not only allow students to apply for graduation online, but also facilitate collection of the data while ensuring the consistency of the questionnaire data regardless of which campus the student attended.

- Alumni Surveys: Annually, the College surveys its graduates (Appendix 3.14: Alumni Survey Form) in an effort to collect feedback on their experiences at Barton. Barton graduates who complete the alumni survey differ from those who complete the Graduate Exit Survey in two important ways. First, alumni have had more experiences, whether in the workplace or in academia, which give the students a broader base for evaluating their Barton experience. Second, the passing of time has given the students more time to reflect critically on their Barton experience.
- Learning Organization Survey: Faculty and staff feedback is collected through the biennial Learning Organization Survey. (Appendix 3.15: Learning Organization Survey Form) Beginning in 1998, the college set a goal of being a Learning Organization. The Learning Organization Survey provides feedback from employees (faculty and staff) on the College's progress towards that goal. In the process, the survey serves as the primary means by which the College's workforce may provide feedback into the institution's operational and strategic systems.
- Assorted Stakeholder Meetings: The College also holds regularly scheduled meetings throughout the year to gather feedback from its internal stakeholders. Although this topic will be expanded on later in the discussion of the College's structure, it is germane at this point to mention these meetings now. (Appendix 3.16: Advisory Groups) lists the committees, their purpose and their compositions. These committees represent a key component of the College's operational and strategic feedback systems. Among these committees, the monthly Management Council Meeting is particularly worth highlighting. In addition to

committee meetings, other activities allow stakeholders to have input into the college's operations. The President's monthly All-College Forum allows all Barton employees the opportunity to learn of and respond to new and ongoing initiatives and potential changes in policy and to voice concerns directly to the President. Both of these provide a consistent stream of feedback to the administration on the College's operations.

- **Assessment of Student Academic Achievement:** A second part of the College's Evaluation Process is the measurement of Student Academic Achievement. This is accomplished through the College's ongoing initiatives to assess student learning. Since the College's assessment system is explained in detail in the monitoring report the College sent to the Higher Learning Commission in December 2004, it would be redundant to repeat that information here. Response to that report can be found in Appendix 3.17 (HLC letter dated March 20, 2005). The annual Assessment of Student Learning planning documents can be found on the College website¹⁰. As part of its annual Evaluation Process, the College uses student learning assessment data to accomplish two purposes: either to effect immediate improvements to College operations or to make improvements in the next year's plan.
- **Academic Program and Service Program Review:** The third part of Barton's annual Evaluation Process is its Academic Program and Service Program Review. This review is primarily targeted at the College's overall fiscal status and its academic and vocational programming.
 - Barton conducts an annual fiscal review of its academic and vocational programs. The entity primarily responsible for the preparation of this report is the Fiscal Review Team (FRT). FRT is a neutral body independent of Instruction. FRT's mission is to provide information on the fiscal viability and efficiency of all academic and vocational programming at the College. (Appendix 3.18: Fiscal Review Team Reports) FRT reports are produced annually and used to:
 - Monitor the fiscal solvency of academic and vocational programs;

¹⁰ <http://www.bartonccc.edu/learningandinstruction/assessment.htm>

- Assess the fiscal efficiency of academic and vocational programs; and
 - Assist College decision makers in forecast of the effects of changes in College's fiscal situation brought about by such actions as tuition increases, alterations to the State funding formula, salary increases, etc.
- Barton also conducts reviews of the effectiveness of all of its academic and vocational programs using an annual program review process. The program review template is attached (Appendix 3.19a: Program Review Template). Faculty from all venues participate in the process, and each program reports to LICC on a five-year rotating basis. Examples of the program review forms are included in Appendix 3.19 (Program Review).
 - Each vocational program also participates in program level assessment. Students are pre-tested using WorkKeys and post-tested using both Work Keys and department assessments. Faculty members teaching in each program use the result to effect changes that improve program effectiveness.
 - Each vocational program also has an advisory board that consists of practitioners in the specific field. These advisory boards meet twice a year and provide valuable input that is used to improve each program.

Clearly, Barton uses multiple sources of data throughout the operational year to assess the College's progress towards its annual operational goals. The specific reports used in the explanation of the various parts of the Evaluation Process describe how data are collected and used in those parts. The specific reports described in this chapter are by no means the only reports Barton uses in its Evaluation Process. Appendix 3.20 (Barton Metrics System) provides an overview of the remainder of the reports and surveys used to collect data concerning the College's progress towards its achievement of annual operational and five-year strategic goals. Using multiple measures, either within the evaluation processes described in this chapter or through the overall Metrics System, Barton collects stakeholder feedback throughout the operational cycle to measure its

progress towards its operational and strategic goals. Depending on the collection cycle, data are then used either to make immediate improvements to the College's operations or to make improvements in the next year's plan.

Operational Planning Summary

- The College's operational plan is derived from its five-year Strategic Plan, which was built on the Board of Trustees' Vision, Mission, and Ends Statements.
- The strategic goals and objectives identified in the College's Strategic Plan were translated into annual operational goals and objectives through the College's annual Operational Planning Process.
- Barton's Operational Planning Process is comprised of three mutually supporting processes: the Yearly Planning Process, the Implementation Process, and the Evaluation Process.
 - The Yearly Planning Process is the process through which the College establishes annual operational objectives.
 - The Implementation Process is the process through which the College achieves the annual operational objectives.
 - The Evaluation Process is the process through which the College measures its progress towards annual operational objectives, which in turn provides input into the next iteration of the Yearly Planning Process.

Operational Planning Structure

The second component of Barton's Operational Planning System is its Operational Planning Structure. In this context, the concept of structure refers to the assortment of committees, departments, etc. that participate in and/or support the Operational Planning System. Appendix 3.21 (Barton's Operational Planning Structure) provides a schematic representation of the College's planning structure along with the supporting committees.

The primary planning entity for the College is the aforementioned College Planning Coordination Committee (CPCC). As such, the CPCC has primary responsibility for developing the College's Yearly Operational Plan which articulates

operational goals and objectives for the twelve-month period covered by the plan. Within the Yearly Plan, the goals and objectives are assigned either to individual departments within the College or, when appropriate, to a cross-departmental committee.

When goals and objects are inner-departmental, the planning structure is vertically (or functionally) organized. That is to say, individual departments develop plans for their functional areas to accomplish the operational goals and objectives established during the Yearly Planning Process. The best example of a vertical plan is the College's Capital Investment Plan, which is developed unilaterally by the College's Facilities Director based on the goals, objectives, and resources set by the CPCC.

When goals and objectives are cross-departmental, the planning structure is horizontal (or cross-functional). In such cases, responsibility for developing the plans to accomplish the operational goals and objectives is assigned either a standing committee (if one exists) or a new committee is empanelled to conduct the planning. An example of a standing cross-departmental committee is the Professional Development Committee (PDC). The PDC is comprised of representatives from all across the College. It is responsible for developing plans to achieve the professional development goals and objectives established in the Yearly Planning Process. An example of an especially empanelled cross-departmental committee is the Barton Fort Riley Marketing Committee. In response to a recent and significant change in the population at Fort Riley, the College empanelled this special committee comprised of marketing, instructional, and Fort Riley personnel to develop a plan to capitalize on the growth at the Fort.

Operational Planning Summary

To summarize, the College's Operational Planning System is rooted in its strategic planning system. Barton's Operational Planning System consists of two components: the Yearly Planning Process and the Operational Planning Structure. The Yearly Planning Process involves a series of steps and procedures that lead to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the College's Yearly Operational Plan. Finally, the College's Operational Planning Structure supports the Yearly Planning Process through the use of horizontally and vertically organized teams to convert strategic goals and objectives into annual operational goals and objectives.

Section II: One-College¹¹ 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.

¹¹ 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 chancellery 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.

Section III: Communications

The purpose of this section is to explain the structural and procedural changes Barton has made to redress the HLC's concerns regarding how Barton's "senior academic leadership and faculty communicate across the district...." This will be accomplished by explaining the initiatives the College has taken since the accreditation visit to improve its internal communications. This will involve describing three processes established since the HLC visit with the specific intent of improving the communications between the College's senior administration and the staff and faculty of the two campuses. Those three processes are the presence, the administrative structure, and the committee structure.

Presence

The College's senior academic leadership presence has always existed on the Barton County campus. However, as noted in the HLC accreditation report, it was lacking at the Fort Riley campus. When the College realigned its organization from a geographically-based to a functionally-based model, the College's academic leadership realized it would be necessary to establish and maintain its presence on the Fort Riley campus as well. To that end, the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services now makes routine visits to Fort Riley, frequently staying in Junction City overnight to extend the visits to two days. These visits are designed to make the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services available to and seen by the staff and faculty at Fort Riley. The nature and purpose of these visits change depending on the situation at Fort Riley. Some visits are scheduled to accommodate the Vice-President's attendance at specific Fort Riley functions. Other less-structured visits are simply designed to allow the Vice-President to meet with the Fort staff and faculty in their work environment. Ultimately, the College leadership has increased its presence at Fort Riley for the express purpose of providing the personnel at the Fort with the same level of access to them as the personnel at the Barton County campus have.

Administrative Structure

In this context, administrative structure refers to the hierarchical system through which the College's leadership operates and communicates. The administrative structure is the primary method the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services uses to conduct routine communications with the faculty. In routine matters, the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services communicates to the faculty through the Associate Deans.

At the time of the HLC accreditation visit, the College had only four Associate Deans, all of whom were at the Barton County Campus. The site consultant/evaluators found that a clear communication system was needed between senior academic leadership and faculty. The breakdown in communication was caused in part by the failure of the College to develop an infrastructure that would allow for clear communication between the Associate Deans on the Barton County campus and the faculty at Fort Riley. This led to the perception among many of the Fort Riley faculty members that their interests were under-represented within the Instruction Department because they had no representation at the policy-making level within that department.

Barton addressed this issue by adding two Associate Deans at the Fort Riley campus. This action allowed for a standardized administrative structure throughout the College. This standardization solved two problems simultaneously. First, it opened clear communications channels between the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services and the Fort Riley faculty. Second, the new channel of communication provided the Fort Riley faculty the assurances they needed that their interests were being fully represented.

Committee Structure

The primary process the College now uses for internal communications is its committee structure. For ease of explanation, these committees can be categorized into two groups. The first group consists of those committees specifically empanelled for communications purposes. The second group consists of those committees whose primary function is governance related, but who also bear the responsibility to communicate the results of their proceedings to the rest of the College.

Committees in the first group include the Management Council and the College Forum. The Management Council and the College Forum meet monthly and all College employees are encouraged to attend. The differences between the two are the scope of issues covered and the composition of the attendees. The two differ in scope because the agenda for the Management Council is driven more by the senior leadership, whereas the agenda for the College Forums is more free-wheeling. The two differ in attendance because Management Council has a defined membership, although any College employee is permitted to attend (Appendix 3.23: Barton County Community College Committee Structure), whereas the College Forum has no defined membership and all College employees are encouraged to attend. The typical Management Council meeting begins with the College leadership informing the attendees of the status of issues being discussed at the President's Staff level. During the course of the discussion of these issues, questions from and the opinions of the College's staff and faculty regarding the issues being discussed are solicited, noted, and kept for further consideration. The typical College Forum begins in a similar manner, but rather than following a set of predetermined issues, the agenda is open for any issue of concern to any employee.

To further facilitate the free flow of information, Management Council and the College Forums have been or will be held on a rotating basis on the Barton County and Fort Riley campuses. Additionally, when the meeting is held at one campus, members from the other campus are able to participate through the College's closed-circuit television system.

Committees in the second group include President's Staff, the Marketing Committee, the Coordination Planning Committee, the Learning and Instruction Committee, the Professional Development Committee, the Outcomes Assessment Committee, and the Institutional Technology Committee. Since the role, function, and membership of these committees are explained in Appendix 3.23 (Barton County Community College Committee Structure), it will not be detailed in this section. Although the primary responsibilities of these committees are governance-related, they have a secondary responsibility improving inter-College communications. They achieve this secondary responsibility through inclusive membership, constituency representation, and multiple means of communication.

- The first practice of Barton's committee structure is that Barton committees encourage open communication and inclusive participation. With the exception of Faculty Council-appointed Committees, any Barton employee can serve on any committee he or she desires. This is intended to open the committees to anyone interested in serving on them. Similarly, any College employee may attend any Committee meeting.
- The second practice of Barton's committee structure is that both campuses will be represented on all committees. This is facilitated by the use of the College's closed-circuit television system. It also ensures that the employees from both campuses have a voice in the committee process.
- The third practice of the College's committee structure is that committee members are the primary conduit of information between their work sections and the committee. Therefore, as part of every committee member's responsibilities is the duty to communicate the committee's proceeding to their co-workers.
- The fourth practice of the College's committee process is that the committees will publish written records of their proceedings. Most committees post records of their meeting through the traditional method of preparing meeting minutes, which are then posted to the committee's website. Barton's Institutional Technology Committee, however, has opted for a novel approach. It uses a blog to simultaneously conduct and record its proceedings.

Committees also perform a key communications role between senior academic leadership and faculty. The two principle committees that perform this role are the Learning and Instruction Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Council. Both these committees are described in Appendix 3.23 (Barton County Community College Committee Structure), but it is necessary to expand on that description here to demonstrate how they facilitate clear communication across and between the faculty and senior academic leadership.

Learning, Instruction, and Curriculum Committee (LICC): (Appendix 3.24: Learning, Instruction, & Curriculum Committee Charter) LICC's membership consists of five Associate Deans, the Director of Workforce Training and Community Education (these six members are *ex officio*), ten faculty members, the Advisement Coordinator, the Director of Enrollment Services, and the Director of Learning Resources. By structuring LICC in this manner, Barton has combined several elements that enhance communications. Having Associate Deans, faculty members, and support staff from both campuses on LICC provides multiple channels of communication from LICC back to the faculty members who are not on LICC. Similarly, including all the Associate Deans and faculty members from both campuses on LICC provides faculty members not on LICC multiple channels to have their concerns and ideas brought forward. Finally, it is important to reiterate that, like all Barton committees, any faculty member who wants to serve on LICC or to attend a LICC meeting is welcome to do so. In sum, the role, composition, and openness of LICC, make it an excellent and clear communications conduit between senior academic leadership and faculty. Furthermore, the Outcomes Assessment Committee (OAC) is a sub-team of LICC. The teams meet together at least once a year and a representative from OAC reports to LICC regularly. Members of LICC also serve on the EduKan curriculum and assessment teams.

Faculty Council facilitates communication between senior academic leadership and faculty. As described in Appendix 3.25 (Faculty Council Charter), Faculty Council is a faculty-governed, faculty-directed entity. Faculty Council membership consists of ten faculty members (five from each campus) who are elected by their peers. Faculty Council facilitates communication between the senior academic leadership and faculty by providing a forum for faculty members to discuss issues away from the influence of administrators. Although the Faculty Council is not a policy making body, it does provide the faculty a means to influence policy decisions. In this way, Faculty Council is also an excellent and clear communications conduit between senior academic leadership and faculty. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of faculty council to appoint faculty to the various teams and committees. This ensures that all faculty have the opportunity to serve.

Communications Summary

The purpose of this section is to explain the structural and procedural changes Barton has made to redress the HLC's concerns regarding how Barton's "senior academic leadership and faculty communicate across the district..." This was accomplished by explaining the initiatives the College has taken since the accreditation visit to improve its internal communications. Those initiatives included:

- Increasing the presence of senior academic leadership at the Fort Riley campus;
- Adding two Associate Dean positions at the Fort Riley campus to improve the routine communications and to ensure Fort Riley faculty concerns were fully represented;
- Establishing a system of committees that opened channels of communication to the highest levels of administration at the College; and
- Building a committee structure within the Instruction department that provided multiple channels for communication between senior academic leaders and the faculty.

Section IV: Academic Rigor and Quality

As with the systematic planning system Barton has adopted since the accreditation visit, the College has also taken a systems' approach to the issues associated with academic rigor and quality. Through this systematic approach, Barton has developed a multi-faceted system that ensures the rigor and quality of its courses and programs, faculty control of the curriculum, and consistency across the curriculum regardless of where or by what medium the classes are taught. This system is composed of three sub-systems: Instructional Policies, Faculty Standards, and Instructional Organization. The effects of these sub-systems are enhanced by Barton's use of technology to accelerate and promote College-wide collaboration.

Instructional Policies

Since the 2002 accreditation visit, the College has drafted and approved new policies that address academic quality and rigor¹².

The College's approach to academic quality and rigor begins with its Academic Placement Policy (Appendix 3.26: Academic Placement Policy). The Academic Placement Policy applies to all venues and locations in which Barton offers classes. Barton's Academic Placement Policy is designed to ensure that students are properly assessed and placed into courses based on their ability to perform college level work. By ensuring that Barton students are able to perform at the college level, Barton is facilitating academic quality and rigor. In turn, faculty members are better able to meet the competencies and objectives of the particular class.

The next policies in the College's system for assuring academic quality and rigor are its policies on Alternative Delivery Methods and Directed Independent Study (Appendix 3.27: Alternative Delivery Methods and Appendix 3.28: Directed Independent Study). These policies lay out the procedures the College uses to ensure the quality and rigor of courses offered by non-traditional methods or in non-traditional sequences, detailing specific guidelines for classes offered on an arranged basis, on-line, and over

¹² <http://www.bartonccc.edu/policiesandprocedures/learningandinstruction/default.htm>

instructional television. The policy includes a vetting procedure designed to ensure quality, rigor, and integrity.

The next policy in the College's system for assuring academic quality and rigor is the Course Attendance Policy (Appendix 3.29: Course Attendance Policy). Barton's Course Attendance Policy is designed to ensure that students attend class. This contributes to academic rigor and quality by requiring the students to attend class.

Complementing these four policies, all of which are directed at students, are the College's policies that address its expectations for faculty. The first of these is the Faculty Requirements Policy (Appendix 3.30: Faculty Requirements Policy). Through its Faculty Requirements Policy, Barton establishes the academic qualifications for faculty. These then serve as the basis for hiring new faculty. The second of these is the Integrity, Quality, and Academic Rigor Policy (Appendix 3.31: Academic Rigor Policy). Through its Academic Rigor Policy, Barton establishes the expectation that faculty members will maintain a high academic standard that challenges their students.

The final College policy addressing academic rigor and quality is Barton's Academic Integrity Policy (Appendix 3.32: Academic Integrity Policy). Through this policy, Barton emphasizes that academic quality and academic rigor are impossible without academic integrity. Barton's Academic Integrity Policy establishes the expectation of academic honesty and defines procedures for faculty to follow in the event of a lapse in integrity.

In summarizing this section on the College's instructional policies, Barton recognizes that policies by themselves do not ensure academic quality and rigor. However, this report opened with a discussion of Barton's academic policies for two reasons. First, while not ensuring quality and rigor, policies set the expectation for quality and rigor for both the students and the faculty. In so doing, the policies perform a valuable service in setting the standard. Second, it was necessary to open with a discussion of the College's academic policies because they are the basis for the following sections in which the actions, that the College has taken to ensure compliance with the policies, will be discussed.

Faculty Standards

The second sub-system Barton employs to guarantee the rigor and quality of its courses and programs is its faculty recruitment system. As discussed in the preceding section of this report, Barton has a Faculty Requirements Policy. This policy is based on the simple premise that in order to provide quality and rigorous academic programs, a college must have faculty capable of delivering quality and rigorous instruction. To that end, Barton has initiated three procedures.

The first two procedures address the procurement and development of full-time faculty. Barton has tightened its recruiting procedures for full-time faculty. A key to this procedure is that Barton gives priority to finding and hiring faculty members with the qualifications outlined in its Faculty Requirements Policy (Appendix 3.30: Faculty Requirements Policy). In the event that Barton is unable to find a fully-qualified faculty member (a challenge for rural community colleges in Kansas), as part of the policy, the best-qualified applicant is hired on a provisional basis. The applicant is then placed on a growth plan that requires him/her to attain the required qualifications within a certain time limit. If the applicant fails to attain the qualifications within the time limit, his/her contract is not renewed. Barton has also initiated a professional development program for staff and faculty. The faculty side of Barton's professional development program is overseen by the Faculty Council through the Professional Development Committee. This arrangement gives the faculty control of their faculty development activities.

As a result of Barton's commitment to procure and develop qualified faculty, the College has increased its overall compliance with HLC standards from 79% for full-time faculty at the time of the accreditation visit in 2002 to 98% of the full-time faculty who are either in compliance or on a growth plan at the time of this writing.

The third procedure addresses the qualifications of associate (part-time) faculty. Barton's self-study (p. 58) noted that only 50% of associate faculty personnel files were complete. Changes in hiring practices for associate faculty have resulted in over 80% of the associate faculty now having official transcripts in their personnel files. In addition to making every effort to hire faculty who have the appropriate credentials, Barton has conducted a comprehensive review of the credentials of its current associate faculty. Several faculty members have been asked to complete growth plans. Those who did not

agree to bring their credentials into compliance will no longer be offered teaching assignments. Barton has also initiated a proactive mentoring program to ensure its associate faculty members are enforcing the academic standards. This mentoring program involves assigning full-time faculty members as mentors for associate faculty members. Mentoring assignments are based on academic discipline. The mentoring process involves full-time faculty members conferring with and visiting associate faculty members on a regular basis. It also involves aligning course expectations, materials, and outcomes. This includes use of a common syllabus, common course competencies, and in some cases, a common final examination. Many associate faculty members are also participating in course level Assessment Projects.

Instructional Organization

The third sub-system Barton employs to guarantee the rigor and quality of its courses and programs is its organizational structure. This structure has two parts. The first part is comprised of the formal committee structure that is used to guide the Instructional Department. The second part is comprised of the procedures the Instructional Department uses to promote the one-college concept while ensuring faculty control of the curriculum.

Instructional Department Committee Structure: Instructional Staff is Barton’s primary regulatory entity for learning and instruction. Instructional Staff, in this context, refers to a committee comprised of Barton’s senior academic leaders. This includes the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services, the five Associate Deans, the Coordinator for Instructional Research, the Director of Workforce Training and Community Education, and the Director of Learning Resources. Instructional Staff provides strategic direction to and daily oversight of Barton’s academic programs and service. It is assisted in its oversight of learning and instruction by two key committees that report to it.

The previously-mentioned Learning, Instruction, and Curriculum Committee (LICC) is the first of the two committees that reports to and assists Instructional Staff. LICC is also one of the principle committees through which faculty exercise control over the College’s curriculum. LICC’s purpose is to “ensure instructional integrity and to

provide quality learning experiences for all Barton students regardless of venue or modality.” (Appendix 3.24: Learning, Instruction, & Curriculum Committee Charter) Having the expressed responsibility to uphold the quality, integrity, and rigor of the College’s curriculum regardless of location or mode of delivery, LICC reviews new and existing courses and programs to ensure they meet the proper standards. (Appendix 3.33: Course/Program Approval Flow Chart) LICC then makes recommendations to the Instructional Staff regarding:

- Maintenance of the academic integrity of the College by ensuring all programs, certificates and degrees are of uniformly high quality with current and valid course content;
- Additions, deletions or modifications to course content or Master Syllabi; and
- Changes to course, programs, or prerequisites that enhance transferability.

The second of the two committees that reports to and assists Instructional Staff is the Outcomes Assessment Committee (OAC), a sub-committee of LICC. (Appendix 3.34: OAC Charter¹³) The OAC provides leadership of the College’s Outcomes Assessment System (OAS). Barton’s OAS was reviewed in detail by and received compliments from the HLC in 2004. (See Appendix 3.17, HLC letter dated March 20, 2004) Through its OAS, Barton ensures that the assessment of student learning is providing consistent and useful data to faculty, the instructional divisions, and the institution for the improvement of the curriculum and student learning. Through its OAS, Barton also ensures faculty control of the curriculum as outlined in detail in Appendix 3.35 (Roles and Responsibilities of the Assessment of Student Learning¹⁴).

Barton has two Assessment Coordinators, one on each campus. They are both given a reduced load in order to ensure that Barton’s Assessment plan is implemented. At the course and class levels, Barton’s OAS is facilitated by Course Coordinators. Course Coordinators are faculty members assigned to that position on the basis of their academic discipline. Course Coordinators are responsible for coordinating their course’s Assessment Project by communicating with colleagues in their common academic

¹³ <http://www.bartonccc.edu/learningandinstruction/OAC/06-07%20Charter%20final.doc>

¹⁴ <http://www.bartonccc.edu/learningandinstruction/documents/Roles%20and%20Responsibilities1.pdf>

discipline. The goal of each Course Assessment Project is to develop and implement assessment activities at the course and class level. This arrangement promotes both communication between the faculty and the instructional leadership, and faculty control of the curriculum.

Instructional Department Procedures: After the 2002 HLC accreditation visit, Barton's Instructional Department set to work to address the HLC's concern that curriculum was being developed separately at the two campuses. The first step in this endeavor was to standardize the course outcomes for all courses regardless of where or by what means the course was delivered. This required Barton's faculty and Instructional Leadership to agree on a procedure for accomplishing common course outcomes and competencies. (Appendix 3.36: Memorandum on Common Curriculum (9/30/2004)) After much debate and several failed attempts, the faculty and Instructional Leadership finally agreed on using the Kansas Core Competencies Initiative as the basis for standardizing course outcomes. The Kansas Core Competencies Initiative is a project sponsored by the Kansas Board of Regents designed to align the curriculums of the State's seven public universities and nineteen community colleges. In a sense, Kansas Board of Regents was trying to do at the State level, what Barton was trying to do at the College level. Thus, it made perfect sense for Barton to attach its alignment efforts with those of the State because by doing so, Barton not only ensured the consistency of its courses, but also the transferability of its courses to the universities.

Once the Kansas Core Competencies were accepted as the basis for alignment, the next challenge was to establish procedures for reconciling Barton's curriculum with the one in the Kansas Core Competencies. This was accomplished through the use of Course Coordinators. Course Coordinators are faculty members responsible for ensuring that the competencies for a given Barton course are aligned to the Kansas Core Competencies and consistent throughout the College, regardless of location or mode of delivery. The Course Coordinators accomplished course alignment by working with every faculty member who taught a given course to develop common, or master, syllabi for each course. Each common syllabus then became the official syllabus for the College.

It is important here to emphasize that through these procedures, Barton was able to accomplish four important goals – three of which are directly related to the topics of this report. First, Barton aligned its curriculum to those of the State universities. Second, Barton aligned its curriculum internally. Third, Barton improved and increased the communication between its faculty members. Fourth, and perhaps most important, Barton established a workable process for aligning its curriculum that is accepted by faculty and Instructional Leadership, which will prevent a recurrence of the problems noted by the accreditation team in 2002.

Technology

In addition to developing the three sub-systems discussed above, Barton has applied technology as a means to accelerate and promote College-wide collaboration. Although the narrative above contains references to some of the technology employed to accelerate and promote College-wide collaboration, it is worth highlighting the role of technology in helping to build collaboration between the two campuses.

Without doubt, the College's inter-campus television network has played the most significant role in the development of a One-College mindset at Barton. Although this technology was available at the time of the 2002 accreditation visit, it was new, and the College had not yet realized its full potential. Since 2002, the College has come to rely heavily on its inter-campus television system. Through the system, the College was able to achieve levels of cooperation and collaboration in all sub-committees, councils, etc. referred to in this report that it had not had before. As of this writing, the inter-campus television system has become an integral part of the College's communications system. It is likely to continue to remain so for the foreseeable future.

Because of the constantly changing nature of technology, the College is also experimenting with other technological innovations to improve communication and collaboration. Among the new technologies the College is exploring are blogs and a commercial product from eCollege called eCompanion. Both of these technologies can be used for either synchronous or asynchronous collaboration. In the synchronous mode, both work as an on-line chat room. In the asynchronous mode, both act as an electronic bulletin board where team members - or interested parties - can leave their thoughts, ideas, etc. While the College's use of these is at only the experimentation stage, they

might someday become as important to the College's internal communications and cooperation as the inter-campus television system.

Academic Rigor and Quality Summary

The purpose of this section is to explain the structural and procedural changes Barton has made to redress the HLC's concerns regarding issues associated with academic rigor and quality. Primarily, Barton developed a multi-faceted system that ensures the rigor and quality of its courses and programs, faculty control of the curriculum, and consistency across the curriculum regardless of where or by what medium the classes are taught.

Those initiatives include:

- Developing Instructional Policies that articulate the expectation of academic quality, integrity, and rigor;
- Improving faculty recruitment and development procedures;
- Establishing a formal committee structure that promotes faculty control of the curriculum;
- Defining curriculum development procedures that ensures alignment of the College's curriculum under the supervision of the faculty; and
- Employing technology – especially the inter-campus television system – to promote inter-campus cooperation and collaboration.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to provide evidence that Barton County Community College has addressed the concerns expressed by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) concerning operational planning in its report dated April 4, 2003. In that report, the HLC required Barton to submit a monitoring report by December 15, 2006, explaining how Barton rectified the HLC-expressed concerns about Barton's ability to fulfill Criterion Four: The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness. HLC specifically directed Barton to provide evidence that its operational planning system facilitated accomplishment of the following two goals:

1. Senior academic leadership and faculty communicate clearly across the district and assume responsibility for and assure both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction.
2. The College has developed a one-district framework for the entire institution in which different components (the Great Bend Campus, Ft. Riley center, distance education, etc.) can operate cohesively.

In an effort to provide the evidence HLC requested, this report addresses four areas related to Barton's educational effectiveness: Operational Planning; One-College Framework; Communication within the College; and Academic Rigor and Quality.

- The report opens by describing the College's Operational Planning System. This is accomplished in three ways. First, this report describes how the College's Operational Planning System is linked to its Strategic Planning System. Second, the report describes the College's Operational Planning System, to include its processes and structure. Third, the report provides appendices and references to websites as evidence of the effectiveness of its Strategic and Operational Planning Systems.
- The report then addresses the issue of a One-College Framework. This is accomplished in three ways. First, the report describes how the College had reorganized along functional, rather than geographic, lines. Second, the report describes how the College amended its committee structure to ensure College-wide access and participation. Third, the report provides appendices and references to websites as evidence of its structural and procedural improvements.
- The report then addresses the issue of communications between "senior academic leadership and faculty communicate across the district...." This is accomplished in two ways. First, the report explains the structural and procedural initiatives the College has taken since the accreditation visit to improve its internal communications. Second, the report again provides appendices and references to websites as evidence of its communications-related structural and procedural improvements.
- Finally, the report addresses the issues regarding academic rigor and quality. This is accomplished using the same format described above. The report begins by

describing the structural and procedural changes Barton has made to redress the HLCs concerns regarding academic rigor and quality. Then the report provides appendices and references to websites as evidence of the College's improvements regarding its processes for ensuring rigor of its programs and the quality of its instruction across the curriculum.

In sum, Barton has taken decisive actions to redress the issues relating to the concerns the accreditation team expressed over Barton's ability to fulfill Criterion Four since the 2002 HLC accreditation. In so doing, Barton has become a more robust institution that is fully able to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

Conclusions

Strengths

- A systematic approach that links the College's Mission, Vision, and Ends to strategic and operational planning
- A one-college framework built on a functional basis in which different components (the Great Bend Campus, Ft. Riley center, distance education, etc.) can operate cohesively
- An inclusive committee system that ensures faculty control of the curriculum
- A functional operational and committee structure that assures both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction
- A robust and redundant communication system that facilitates clear communication between senior academic leadership and faculty
- A more empowered and engaged faculty
- Technological assets that promotes inter-campus collaboration

Weaknesses

- The newness of the new strategic and operational planning systems

Chapter IV: Recommendations

Clearly, the years since the HLC-NCA Accreditation visit have been productive ones for Barton County Community College. Much has been accomplished, and the College has a clear direction for future initiatives. To continue institutional improvement in the areas of Developmental Education, Library Resources, and Operational Planning, the College concludes this report with the following recommendations:

Developmental Education

- Create a Developmental Education Advisory Board made up of cross-disciplinary faculty, Student Services staff, faculty who teach developmental courses from both campuses, and representatives from the Center for Adult Education
- Encourage the creation of reading prerequisites for reading-intensive general education courses such as Principles of Biology, General Psychology, Physical Science, and Western Civilization
- Develop additional paired classes within the MEES division faculty and with faculty from other divisions/disciplines
- Continue to build on the improvements at the Fort Riley campus that include the new Advisement Day once a cycle
- Advance the proposal to unite Student Services personnel and services with the Math, English, and Essential Skills Division. Currently, a proposal is in draft form. (Appendix 1.23: AAC Project Proposal) Moving this proposal through the various administrative channels with the goal of approval by the Board of Trustees represents the most promising approach to a unified Developmental Education program at Barton County Community College.

Library

- Continue the financial support of the learning resources center
- Continue fundraising to renovate the building
- Ensure that all students have access to electronic resources, no matter their location
- Improve the use of interlibrary loans to serve Fort Riley faculty and students
- Develop partnerships with local civic libraries to better serve Fort Riley students

- Work with the Fort Riley's Army Education Center to improve the Base Library

Operational Planning

- Maintain and/or increase the momentum of the current structural reform efforts by continual emphasis from senior leadership
- Continue to use technology to aid in increasing inter-campus communication
- Maintain and/or improve the emphasis on academic rigor and quality of instruction
- Continue to use a one-college approach to address institutional issues
- Continue to use a systems approach to build a stronger institution