

Dr. Garstecki Monthly Board of Trustees Update

November 2025

- Barton hosted an FHSU at Barton Day including several faculty, staff, and administration to discuss potential partnership opportunities, transfer articulations, and to help advise Barton students who are planning to attend FHSU next year.
- I traveled along with VP Simmons and Dean Kottas to meet with Kevin Colle, the new Economic Development Director for Ellsworth County.
- I met Jason Kuilan, the new Great Bend Economic Development Director. We discussed the current relationship between Barton and GBED and additional opportunities for the future. Jason is fully invested in the role that colleges play in economic development and workforce development in their communities and is looking for a strong partnership.
- Dean Teal and I had the privilege of presenting a check for \$3,250 to the Soldier Recovery Unit at Fort Riley from the proceeds raised through the Wounded Warrior Golf Tournament sponsored by Barton in September.
- We held the much anticipated Barton-Golden Key Group Federal HR Program launch at Fort Riley. The event was a huge success, and we have already received several enrollments for the program which starts in January.
- We were notified by the Bellwether Consortium that Barton has been selected as a top 10 finalist in the Workforce Development category for their annual nationwide competition for our Barton-Pratt nursing partnership. There were 114 applications in the three competition categories. We will be sending a team to San Antonio in February for the final round of the competition.
- Chairman Johnson and I met with Representative Sherry Brantley to discuss current updates on the statewide budget and key legislation that will be up for debate this session.
- I traveled to the fall AACC Commission meetings in Washington, DC. I am serving on the Small and Rural Community Colleges Commission for the next three years. Some of the big topics discussed during the meetings included:
 - Updates on federal funding and grant opportunities.
 - The importance and relevance of community colleges with lobbying efforts at both the state and national level.
 - AI and innovation are going to continue to be important issues as higher education evolves.
 - The new AACC CEO, Dr. DeRionne Pollard spoke about the importance of community colleges being adaptive to the needs of workforce and different training options, such as short-term credentials.

- We opened the Cougar Den earlier this month in time for our first home basketball games.
- The Cougar Volleyball and Men's Soccer teams both qualified for their respective national tournaments. The Volleyball team won the Region Championship, and the Soccer team received an at-large invitation. I am extremely proud of the coaching staff and student athletes of both teams.