The Keystone Winner is The Barton Hall Team — Bill Babcock, Jim Haner and Mark Waterman, Building Care. Nominated by Steve Devlen.

We had somewhere in the range of 700 - 750 staff attending the celebration on June 11, 2013, this was a small set up in relation to some of the events that are set up at Barton and across campus.

There are so many different types of events held here in this building each year, has anyone ever been to a concert here? Bob Dylan was just here in April.

There are graduations, receptions, lunches, and celebrations just like this on a regular basis. And not just here in this building, but out on campus, under tents, in some buildings atriums, at the quads, and at Schoellkopf.

It’s somewhat easy to not pay much attention….after all, so many successful events happen throughout the year at Barton Hall and across campus; events that require the set-up/ break down of tens of thousands of chairs and tables each year.

And amazingly there is one team that organizes and leads all that. Their job is to lead the set up for these events, to make us comfortable, to give us a place to sit……a daunting challenge to say the least!

Commencement and reunion weekends deservedly grab the spotlight on this team’s success but consider too that they must still work smaller event set ups ranging from events like ours to larger events such as all the major concerts that still come to Barton, usually with sellout crowds.

Those who think about Commencement often think about Schoellkopf Field/Crescent packed with 40,000 people. They think about the dreams and aspirations of the students and how they endured the rigors of achieving academic success. What some may miss is the facilities crew that facilitates the set ups of this vast venue.

On Commencement weekend alone, they lead a specialized team to set up a total of 14,000 chairs; 8,000 of these are placed on the field.

Perfectly lined up, side by side, parallel to the seat in front and the seat beside them. ALL the way across the field!!

Tools such as string reels and masonry blocks are used to keep everything in line, with the first measurements being critical to the entire finished product, the key to a successful set up is that all the team members pay special attention to exact chair placements each time. The task is quite technical in nature but equally an art delivering a precision masterpiece such as what you see on the field at Schoellkopf for Commencement.

In addition to the field there is another:

2,750 chairs at Barton and 1,750 on the Arts Quad.

Even further, 500 tables are distributed at various venues at the same time and the deliveries alone account for 55 stops and set ups across campus. This requires some detailed planning. They work through, despite harsh weather conditions and tremendous fatigue.

Their customers write often. The Johnson School wrote about the high level of competency and quality this Barton Crew performed for their alumni lunch, which they referred to as the “best all alum lunch ever”.

Cornell catering wrote after a recent reunion event, “It doesn’t matter what it is, or how long they have been there working, the team at Barton are always happy to help out. There is never a question of whose job is it to do something, from moving water jugs ……. to loaning extension cords ……..They always have the success of the event in mind, even when they have been there for two days straight.”

Those that have interaction with these “behind the scenes employees know them to be both exceptionally professional and friendly. They also know they will go above and beyond for students, staff, faculty and guests to ensure their safety and comfort.

Congratulations and thank you Bill, Jim and Mark!