

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges
Strategic Engagement Planning Council (SEPC) Minutes

April 2, 2025 via TEAMS

2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Participants: Ryan Gower, Sheryl Childers, Tona Ambrose, Alex Cline, Jay Edgren, Matt Fowler, Ryan Hawkins, Amber Malone, Jessica McDonald, Andrea McDowell, Chris Simpson, Brandon Weger

Not Participating:

Guests: Cyndi Boyce, Alani Fredrick, Sharmilla Kakac, Amy Tarr, Robert Conn

Call to Order & Welcome:

Dr. Ryan Gower called the meeting to order and welcomed council members and guests. He recognized Alex Cline, Chief Information Officer, on his upcoming retirement and thanked him for his service. Dr. Gower reviewed the agenda and outlined the day's goals.

Reports:

- **OAR/Amber Malone** shared updates on midterm assessments and the Common Application project. A meeting with the CFO and IT is scheduled for April 11. Gradfest is planned for April 30 and May 1, with commencement on May 9. The Records training held at OCC on March 25 was successful. A total of 1,163 applications for Summer and Fall 2025 have been received.
- **IE/Brandon Weger** provided an enrollment overview for Summer and Fall, focusing on new student trends.
- **HR/Andrea McDowell** reported on participation in the Voluntary Separation Incentive Plan (VSIP). The first cohort has been processed, and the plan is progressing to a second eligible group.
- **Faculty/Jessica McDonald** brought forward faculty questions related to timing of the retroactive compensation as outlined in the Bargaining Unit contract. The contract will be presented to the BoT for consideration during the April meeting.

Consent Agenda: The following items were reviewed and approved:

1. Minutes from the March 2025 SEPC Meeting
2. Divisional Meeting Minutes: AALT, SALT, BOLT, and IOLT

3. Revised 2025 Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule. The May meeting will be rescheduled to May 27. This item will go to the Board of Trustees for approval in April.
4. Procedure 300.1.18 - Tuition Refunds (clarified 10-day/5-day drop period process)
5. Procedure 100.16.1 - Complaints for Students (clarified procedures based on nature of concern)
6. Procedure 500.5.4 - Credit for Prior Learning: State Seal of Biliteracy
7. Procedure 500.5.3 - Credit for Prior Learning: Tests & Examinations (addition of EPF1211 and EPF1212)
8. Procedure 500.5.2 - Credit for Prior Learning: Certifications and Licensures
9. Affiliation Agreement with Haven of Bridgeport was approved. The item will go to the Board of Trustees for approval in April.
10. Grant Update on grants currently operating or being pursued by the District

Items Removed from Consent Agenda:

None

Policies & Procedures: First Reading / Possible Approval:

1. Policy 500.42 - Children and Visitors in the Classroom (Edgren): Tabled for further review; feedback was provided, and each member and guest should share further feedback with Dr. Edgren before the next meeting. This item will be returned to SEPC in May.
2. **Policy 200.2 Appropriate Use of IT (Cline):** Revised to reinforce use of IECC email for professional correspondence; approved for Board presentation.

Staff Recommendations for Approval:

1. **LTC Technology Center:** Dr. Gower presented budget updates after bid-opening and cost recovery plan; approved for Board presentation.
2. **FCC Athletic Conditioning Facility:** Dr. Gower presented projected construction costs and fundraising efforts; approved for Board presentation.
3. **2025-2027 Model Partnership Agreements:** Tona Ambrose proposed extending MPA terms with dual credit high schools from one to two years; approved for Board presentation. Tona will work with the CFO and Assessment to explore course fees and assessment protocols.
4. **Non-Bargaining Unit Secondary Employment:** A draft memo outlining proposed changes in employment practices at IECC. Each President will review their campus/division to identify impact so a plan for phased implementation and

exemptions can be considered. The item is to return to SEPC over the summer months.

5. Academic Program Inactivation (approved):

- CUSM C3341 Customer Service Management
- ENT C182 Entrepreneurship
- ENRGY C122 Alternative Fuels
- ENRGY D121 Energy Technology
- EVENT C357 Special Event Management
- MSOFC C2444 MS Office Specialist
- PHLPY C343 Philanthropy
- PSER C352 Public Service Management
- RES 181 Real Estate *Note: Inactivation removes courses from the schedule but allows future reactivation if demand arises.*

6. Social Science Instructor at FCC: Dean Boyce requested approval to post a full-time position to address instructional needs; SEPC approval was given.

Informational & Discussion Items:

- **Litigation Settlement (Gower)** – an update on the timing of anticipated settlement was provided to SEPC.
- **Board Meeting Changes (Gower)** - Reminder of April and May Board of Trustees meeting date changes: April 22 and May 27
- **Updated Dual Credit Handbook (Ambrose)** – a discussion about ideas for improvement and standardization was presented.
- **Express Admissions (Ambrose)** – led a discussion about the benefits for students, staff, and enrollment data. Presidents will explore adopting universally or at minimum, a pilot with WVC and LTC participation will occur this year.
- **Emergency Flip Books & Door Signs (Ambrose)** - Reviewed materials being implemented at LTC; Dr. Gower encouraged introduction to each campus emergency preparedness committee and encouraged standardization across campuses.
- **Athletic Insurance (Hawkins)**- emphasized proper submission of secondary insurance claims for student-athletes and how insurance verification processes can be improved.

- **Initial FY2026-2028 Operating Budget (Hawkins)** -Highlighted early planning and areas for cost containment. The projected budget looks good, but some additional trimming will be required.
- **TRIO Talent Search Grant (Ambrose)** - shared information about the TRIO Talent Search and informed the group of her intent to reapply for the grant.
- **Mandatory Meal Plans for Affiliated Housing Residents (Fowler)** – shared the second phase related to college affiliated housing and invited input on implementation.

Capital Projects:

None

District Finance:

None

Approval of Personnel Items:

1. Records Student Services Software Specialist: Position update approved
2. Change in Status – FCC Business Office Assistant: Approved
3. FCC Gas & Utility Program Donation (Edgren): Acknowledged generous support

Other Items:

None

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. | TLB WRC