

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

February 5, 2025

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, Chris Simpson, Brandon Weger

Not Participating: Andrea McDowell

Guests: Alani Fredrick, Sharmilla Kakac, Chris Forde, Amy Tarr, Robert Conn

IECC Virtual Tours- Chris Forde gave a presentation on the newly developed virtual campus tours and encouraged everyone to assist in sharing information and to utilize the tool for welcoming new students and guests. He also presented the leadership team with information about IECC's social media campaigns discussing effectiveness and upcoming activities.

Call to Order & Welcome: Dr. Gower called the meeting to order and welcomed guests and the Council to the meeting. He provided an overview of the agenda and goals for the day.

Reports:

Chancellor's Office – Brandon Weger provided a first look at a new application tracker under development to help IECC better forecast enrollment at the program and college level.

Presidents & Divisions

SALT – Dr. Fowler gave an update from Student Affairs. He discussed the Look and Listen tours and the best practice for moving forward with them.

AALT – Dr. Edgren gave an update from the Academic Affairs division. The proposed Gas & Utility program is being closely reviewed by Dean Conn and Dr. Edgren, and a prospective budget is being established.

BOLT- Chris Simpson reported on the recent groundbreaking and construction progress for the Allied Health Technology Center. He reported that 160 students are at OCC today for the ACES Academic Challenges. He informed the council of the upcoming townhall meetings for BOLT.

IOLT – Tona Ambrose gave an update and reminded everyone of the upcoming production of Footloose at the LTC theater. She reported on upcoming trivia night events that will benefit the LTC Cares food pantry. Adult Education is working to backfill the director position following the retirement of Rodney Ranes with a position being brought to the February meeting. She gave an update on the first and second cohort of students enrolled in the Driver's Education program.

Faculty- Jessica McDonald reported on inquiries to host Saturday CPR classes to accommodate faculty teaching schedules. She relayed questions regarding course scheduling and guided pathways curriculum development. The Deans will work to provide communication on these efforts.

Consent

1. **December & January SEPC Meeting Minutes (Gower)-** Minutes from the December 2024 and the January 2025 meeting were reviewed and approved.
2. **Divisional Meeting Minutes (Vice Chancellors)-** Minutes from the most recent AALT, SALT, BOLT and IOLT were reviewed and approved as presented.
3. **Policy 100.31 Preventing Sexual Misconduct (Fowler)-** The policy has been reinstated per order of the U.S. Department of Education office for Civil Rights. The order invalidates the 2024 Title IX Rule and reinstates the 2020 Title IX Rule. Approval was given and the policy will now be presented to the Board on February 18, 2025.
4. **Grant Update (Gower)-** A copy of the grant agreement was provided for review. Approval was given.

The Consent Agenda was Approved.

Removed from Consent Agenda

None.

Policy & Procedure First Reading (and Possible Approval)

1. **Policy 500.21 Student Military (Fowler)-** Revisions were made to the policy that reflect IECC's commitment to not charge a student for unearned credits as a result of being called to active duty, as well as returning any Title IV funds that were received on the student's behalf to the appropriate federal agency. Approval was given and the policy will now be presented to the Board on February 18, 2025.
2. **Policy 500.15 Residency Policy (Fowler)-** Revisions were made to the policy that reflect IECC's compliance with the ICCB administrative rules and Illinois Public Community College Act in establishment of student residency for the purpose of enrollment reporting and tuition assessment. Approval was given and the policy will now be presented to the Board on February 18, 2025.
3. **Procedure 100.31 Preventing Sexual Misconduct (Fowler)-** Responsive to changes in federal Title IX mandates, IECC's former procedure was reinstated coinciding with the reinstatement of Policy 100.31. The appropriate contact information for

emergency response and off-campus health care options was updated within the procedure. Approval was given.

Staff Recommendations for Approval

- 1. Tuition Waivers (Ambrose)**- President Ambrose reported on the review of waivers for students. Her team has been working diligently to pull together the numbers of waivers being utilized across the District. The Council expressed its desire to continue to bring down IECC's discount rate and to use waivers strategically to support enrollment goals at the campus and program level. A decision regarding performing arts waivers will be reached and communicated to appropriate faculty within the next 14 days.
- 2. Program Closures (Gower/Edgren)**- Chancellor Gower announced IECC's intent to close five academic programs due to sustained patterns of declining enrollment and shifting student interests. This decision will result in a subsequent Reduction in Force (RIF) affecting associated faculty. The Chancellor emphasized IECC's obligation to remain responsive to enrollment trends and to strategically reallocate resources to programs that align with student demand and evolving workforce needs, ensuring the institution's continued relevance and sustainability.

Informational/Discussion Items

- 1. Revised Student Code of Conduct (Fowler)**- TABLED
- 2. October Division Meetings (McDowell)**- TABLED
- 3. Administrative Guidelines Update (McDowell/Edgren)**- TABLED
- 4. Academic Calendar (Malone)**- Amber Malone provided a copy of the academic calendar for AY25 and AY26 for review. She is asking the team to review and begin considering ways to enhance the calendar in AY27.
- 5. Campus Bookstores (Simpson)**- President Simpson provided the identified priorities for addressing new models for campus bookstores. He discussed potential partners the committee has reviewed, for providing textbook services. He provided a timeline for integrating the new process which includes staff training and testing the effectiveness of the new format. A recommendation to the Board of Trustees will be made at their February 18 meeting.
- 6. Paramedicine Program Update (Edgren)**- Sharmila Kakac provided an update on the program, the partnership with Wabash General Hospital, and provided an outline of the reactivation plan for review and feedback.
- 7. Emergency Response for Evening Faculty (Edgren)**- Dr. Edgren gave an update on the inquiry made by faculty teaching in the evenings. Jessica McDonald will liaise with the faculty to see if this solution is sufficient
- 8. IECC Climate Survey (Weger/Boyce)**- TABLED
- 9. Tuition Waivers- Applied Music Lessons (Edgren)**- TABLED
- 10. Other**- None.

Capital Projects-

None.

District Finance-

None.

Approval of Personnel Items-

1. **PT CPR Coordinator (Edgren)**- A coordinator is being sought following the departure of the previous full-time Director of Emergency Management. Dr. Edgren is seeking approval to hire a PT employee to backfill the position. Approval was given and the item will now be presented to the Board on February 18, 2025.
2. **AY26 Workforce Planning (Gower)**- TABLED

Other Items-

Adjournment- The meeting adjourned at 5:53 pm.

Date of Next SEPC Meeting-

Wednesday, March 5, 2025, at 2 pm @ TLB WRC