

**Illinois Eastern Community Colleges**  
**Strategic Engagement Planning Council (SEPC) Minutes**  
**July 2, 2025 | 2:00–4:30 p.m. | TLB West Richland Center**

**Attendees:** Ryan Gower, Sheryl Childers, Tona Ambrose, Matt Fowler, Ryan Hawkins, Sharmila Kakac, Amber Malone, Jessica McDonald, Andrea McDowell, Cathy Robb, Chris Simpson, Paul Tait, Brandon Weger

**Absent:**

**Guests:** Amy Tarr, Robert Conn

**Welcome & Opening Remarks**

Dr. Gower opened the meeting and welcomed President Kakac to her first official meeting as FCC President/VCBI and he gave an overview of the meeting agenda. He reviewed the addendum to the strategic plan. He commended the council for accomplishing 30 of 35 goals to date. He shared his excitement for progress in the year to come. He asked the group to review the addendum to the Strategic Plan and to focus AY26 efforts on system and process improvement. Review policy and procedure for ambiguity and bring it forward for necessary revision in the upcoming year. He encouraged the Deans to work with Rob Jackman and Mandy Grepaes regarding advisory groups, program review and assessment. He informed the VC's that feedback on their self-appraisals would be delivered in the upcoming weeks. The annual reappointment of staff will be presented to the Board in August.

**Reports**

- **Institutional effectiveness (Weger):** Mr. Weger discussed with the council his suggestions for improving processes in program review. Feedback from the Deans was received. He reported on institutional effectiveness and gave an overview of enrollment for Fall 25. Dr. Gower asked enrollment management to work with institutional effectiveness on how the data is being presented.
- **IT (Tait):** Paul Tait discussed options for copier and printer leasing following the closing of the local business that has historically provided these services.
- **FCC/B&I (Kakac):** President Kakac reported that paramedicine is up and running and enrollment for the program is in good standing.
- **Finance (Hawkins):** Budget appropriations from the State of Illinois have been received. IECC received less funding than anticipated due to a significant shift in the funding formula driven by adult education credit hours generated from the College of DuPage and City Colleges of Chicago. 33 out of 36 institutions in the State of IL have seen a decrease in base operating funds. The council will begin

looking at options in the upcoming days for how IECC can address the funding gap. The Budget will be approved by the Board of Trustees at the July Board meeting. Preconstruction meeting for the FCC athletic facility is happening and the bid opening will take place at the end of the month. E-billing will be launched for students on 7/7/25.

- **OCC/BOLT (Simpson):** President Simpson gave an update on food services, the job search for a PT position at WVC is ongoing. Dr. Gower provided BO with a phased plan for reviewing food services district wide and it will be an area of discussion at the August retreat. July 14<sup>th</sup> is the date for FA/bookstore. He is working with eCampus and negotiating pricing for lab kits. July 18<sup>th</sup> OCC will experience a power outage for the day. Campus will be closed and phones will be transferred to the District Office.
- **HR (McDowell):** Mrs. McDowell reported on the upcoming District workshop at OCC. She recognized and thanked all who assisted in planning the event.
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- **LTC/IOLT (Ambrose):** President Ambrose reported that on July 18<sup>th</sup> IECC will see 80 graduates participating in the Adult Education graduation ceremony to be held at the TLB West Richland Center.
- **Faculty (McDonald):** Mrs. McDonald shared requests for the clarification of procedures when utilizing eCampus. She encouraged communication before the launch of e-textbooks on July 19<sup>th</sup>. President Simpson indicated he would fill this gap.

### **Consent Agenda – Approved**

- June SEPC minutes
- Divisional minutes
- AY26 Early Dismissal Schedule (Gower)
- Procedure 300.9.2 Petty Cash Funds (Hawkins)
- Policy 400.12 Vacation Leave Policy (McDowell)
- Affiliation Agreements (Robb) – None.
- Grant Update (Hawkins)

*No items were removed from the Consent Agenda.*

### **Policies & Procedures**

- **Policy 400.36 – Remote Work (Gower):** Following feedback from the June SEPC meeting, the policy returned for approval. The policy outlines criteria for working from home.
- **Procedure 400.36 – Remote Work (Gower):** A partner procedure that operationalizes how remote work is reviewed, approved, and monitored.

### Informational & Discussion Items

- **Academic Catalog @ July BOT- Acceptance (Gower)-** The catalog will be presented to the Board for acceptance in July.
- **Financial Aid Impacts from “Skinny Budget” (Hawkins)-** Mr. Hawkins reported on the maximum Pell Grant award decrease that is scheduled to take effect in AY’27. Federal Student Worker programs will be impacted as well. FAFSA will no longer require some assets to be reported for farming and small business owning families.
- **Athletic Equity Plan Budgets (Fowler)-** President Fowler discussed the amount of funding that is available and inquired about allocation. The President’s group will meet and bring forward recommendations.
- **Advisor Replacement (Fowler)-** Dr. Fowler and Mrs. McDowell will schedule a meeting to discuss the job posting further. Concerns were expressed about the advertised range.
- **Ag Program Planning Consultant Update (Robb)-** Dr. Robb discussed engagement with a consultant (Kerry Travis) to assist in bringing forward a recommendation for Dual Credit pipelines that could be delivered across the District to create a loyalty pipeline for the District’s Agriculture program.
- **Canvas Attendance Update (Robb)-** Dr. Robb gave an update on the meetings she is engaging in for tracking student attendance through Canvas. She gave an overview of options for marking students present/absent. Feedback was given for ways to enhance reporting.
- **Graduate Survey Report (Weger)-** Mr. Weger reported on concerns with the functionality of the current survey. He gave an overview of the data collected from Spring ‘25. Dr. Gower asked Mr. Weger to share the results of the survey with the presidents following SEPC.
- **NSC Transfer Report (Weger)-** Mr. Weger provided a copy of the report for review. The report reflects the future plans for students following graduation from an IECC program.
- **Special Meeting of the BOT/Board Retreat (Gower)-** The Board will hold a special meeting on August 4, 2025, at the TLB WRC. The purpose will Board Training and a working meeting of the Board, with no formal action being taken.

### Capital Projects

### District Finance

### Approval of Personnel Items:

- Radiography Faculty Request (Robb/McDowell)- This item was tabled to allow careful review of faculty load and contribution margin to Allied Health.

#### **Other Business**

**Adjournment:** 4:52 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, August 6, 2025 | 2:00 p.m. | TLB WRC