Illinois Eastern Community Colleges
Strategic Engagement Planning Council (SEPC) Minutes
July 1, 2026 | 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. | TLB West Richland Center

Attendees: Cathy Robb, Sheryl Childers, Tona Ambrose, Matt Fowler, Cassandra Goldman, Ryan Hawkins, Sharmila Kakac, Amber Malone, Jessica McDonald, Chris Simpson, Brandon Weger

Absent: Andrea McDowell, Paul Tait

Guests: None

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Dr. Robb called the meeting to order and provided an overview of the agenda. She thanked Jessica McDonald for a well-organized Operational Planning retreat held at the TLB WRC on June 30, 2026. The retreat focused on Pillar I – Transforming Lives Through Exceptional Education and Services with four KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). The council discussed points of interest from the retreat and communicated suggestions for upcoming retreats.

Reports

Dr. Robb - Gave an update on Simple Syllabus. The project is expected to be completed by the end of July. Simple Syllabus will be embedded within Canvas for ease of use for all faculty to update and publish their syllabus using an IECC template that directly communicates with the Banner SIS system.

Intuitional Assessment – Brandon Weger gave an update on enrollment. Summer 2026 registration closed ahead of last year, finishing at 5,412 credit hours (+2.11%) and 1,145 students (+6.71%), though still below Summer 2024 levels (-8.53% credit hours, -10.76% headcount). Fall 2026 registration remains underway and is currently behind last year (-6.07% credit hours, -11.55% headcount) but well ahead of Fall 2024 at the same point (+7.30% credit hours, +6.72 % headcount).

Ryan Hawkins – Mr. Hawkins gave an update on the District budget. He provided an overview of the number of recently approved VSIP's and the relief they will provide in the overall deficit. He discussed the projected deficit in state funding for FY'28.

Consent Agenda

Approved items included:

- **June 2026 SEPC Minutes and Divisional Minutes**

- **Affiliation Agreements (Robb)-**
    i. Deaconess Illinois Crossroads, Inc.
    ii. Hamilton Memorial Hospital
    iii. Horizon Health
    iv. IECC standard clinical
    v. IECC standard non-clinical

- **Grant Update (Hawkins)**

The following procedures were removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion:

- **Procedure 300.1.16 Collection of Tuition & Fees (Hawkins) –** The revision will require students to have a payment plan in place for past due amounts prior to the first day of classes. The change will be reflected in 2027.

- **Procedure 300.1.19 Collection of Overdue Accounts (Hawkins) –** Revision to the amount allowed for past due payment plans with the District's third-party provider. Students with previous term balances of $50-$1000 will be provided the opportunity to engage in the plan.

All Consent Agenda items were approved.

Policies & Procedures

Reviewed for administrative action:

- **None.**

All policies and procedures were approved as presented.

Staff Recommendations for Approval

- **Early College / Homeschool Community (Ambrose) –** The proposal provides the opportunity for homeschool students to participate in IECC

Dual Enrollment and gives additional fee structure to the Model Partnership Agreement, increasing access to students not enrolled in public schools in the IECC District. Discussions took place and feedback was given. Revisions were suggested with the recommendation for this item to be returned to the August SEPC for additional review/discussion.

- **CourseStorm (Tait) –** Mr. Hawkins presented the item. CourseStorm will be a 3rd party platform used for registrations for community education, non-credit, and camps hosted at the IECC campuses. The annual cost will be $4,788 plus a $2.49 registration fee. Additionally, users will be required to pay a 3% credit card processing fee at checkout. The program will be piloted through B&I and closely monitored prior to the district-wide launch in Summer '27. Approval was given and the item will now be presented to the Board.

- **Business Card Procedure (Ambrose) –** The purpose of the procedure is to establish a clear and consistent process for requesting and producing employee business cards across the District. Business card requests will be coordinated through the Marketing Department. Approval was given.

Informational & Discussion Items

- **Turnitin Clarity (Weger) –** Brandon Weger discussed the changes being brought forth with the advancement of Artificial Intelligence available to students. Turnitin currently has protections in place for detecting the use of AI, however, false positives are possible which makes validating the integrity of the writing process challenging. Turnitin Clarity is an add-on to Turnitin that provides faculty with proof of the student's writing process. Clarity captures active writing time, revision history and logs when text is pasted from external sources, thus flagging excessive AI use. The upgraded version is being piloted on a one-year basis, and it will be reassessed prior to continuation.
- **Employee Satisfaction Survey Results (Weger) – TABLED.**
- **VSIP Update (McDowell) –** Cathy Robb gave an update on the number of employees who have been approved for the Voluntary Separation Incentive Plan. Ms. McDowell will be communicating with the supervisors of these employees upon her return next week.
- **IECC Controller Position Job Description & Timeline (Robb) –** The JD is being discussed and developed. The final version will be brought to the August SEPC for approval.

- **Moving Forward Operational Plan Review & Next Steps (Robb/McDonald) –** The council established the dates for upcoming retreats:
  - July 29, 2026, for Pillar 2 from 9am-3pm at TLB WRC.
  - August 24, 2026, for Pillar 3 from 9am-3pm at TLB WRC.
  - September 24, 2026, Pillar 4 from 9am-3pm at TLB WRC.
- **IECC Annual Athletics Year-End Report (Robb) –** Dr. Robb discussed the outline of expectations for the report that will be presented to the Board. All information for inclusion is due to Sheryl Childers via email by 4 p.m. July 20, 2026.
- **IECC District Workshop Update (Robb) –** Dr. Robb gave an update on the workshop and gave an overview of the topics to be discussed. She expressed excitement for this year's guest speaker.

Capital Projects: None.

District Finance: Discussed during reports.

Approval of Personnel Items:

- **Updated JD for Dean of Students (Fowler/McDowell) –** Updates have been made to the JD to more accurately reflect the responsibilities of the position. Approval was given and the position will be posted.

Other Business- None.

Adjournment: 12:13 p.m.

Next Meeting: August 5, 2026 @ 9 am