

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges
Strategic Engagement Planning Council (SEPC) Minutes
June 3, 2026 | 9:00 - 11:30 a.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: None

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Dr. Gower called the meeting to order and provided an overview of the agenda. He thanked the council for the hard work and dedication they have put into growing the organization over the past year, and encouraged them to take time to recharge.

Reports

Ryan Gower – Dr. Gower commented on the recently held Operational Plan Retreat held at LTC, and expressed his gratitude for the progress made during the meeting. He shared his vision for the progression of the Operational Plan and provided a tentative timeline for development. He informed the council of an upcoming Operational Plan Summer Retreat, to be facilitated by Jessica McDonald. The retreat will be held on June 30, 2026. He asked the council to evaluate and recommend staff members for engagement in specialized areas of interest within the plan. He is hopeful that the plan will be completed by November 2026 and launched in Spring '27. Brandon Weger, Ryan Hawkins, and Chris Simpson will review the Operational Drivers of KPI and Operational Planning Questions for Pillar 3 and recommend edits ASAP. He asked the council to remain mindful of how all divisions and decisions made within the plan will intertwine.

Dr. Gower also spoke about the anticipated 2026 Bond Issuance. This is IECC's normal cycle for the three-year PHS Bond, but also communicated that several initiative including the Process Technology Skid, OCC Athletic Building, OCC Men's & Women's Soccer program start-up costs, and FCC Men's & Women's Basketball program start up costs will also need to be considered. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of IECC investing deeply and strategically in select CTE programs to sustain excellence and advantage over the next decade.

Dr. Gower also provided SEPC with an update regarding the anticipated leadership transition. The Board has been engaged in the process for several months, and anticipates the new Chancellor being seated to serve for the Fall 2026 term forward. According to IECC's succession planning documents, Dr. Cathy Robb, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, will serve as the acting Chancellor until the new Chancellor is seated. Dr. Gower does not anticipate that extending beyond July. Dr. Gower's last day at the District Office will be June 18, and his last work-day will be June 30.

Consent Agenda

Approved items included:

- **May 2026 SEPC minute and Divisional Minutes**

 - **2026-2027 IECC Academic Catalog & Printing (Gower)-** The Academic Catalog alongside the most recent change log were reviewed. The catalog and a quote for printing the catalog were approved and will now be presented to the Board.

 - **MOU Richland Co. Health Office/OCC (Simpson)-** The MOU provides the Richland Co. TB & Public Health Office permission to utilize the OCC gymnasium and parking lot to dispense medications or vaccines in the event of an emergency/disaster event.

 - **Affiliation Agreements (Robb)-**
 - IECC standard clinical - *See Attachment for full list
 - IECC standard non-clinical – *See Attachment for full list

 - EmpowerMe Holdings, LLC d/b/a EmpowerMe Wellness – negotiated clinical
 - Healthcare Therapy Services, Inc. – negotiated clinical
 - Horizon Health – negotiated clinical
 - Lawrence County Memorial Hospital – removed negotiated clinical
 - ProgressiveHealth Rehabilitation, Inc. - (PTA only) – negotiated clinical
 - Wabash General Hospital – negotiated clinical
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- **Grant Update (Hawkins)**

Consent Agenda approved unanimously.

Policies & Procedures

Reviewed for administrative action:

- **Procedure 300.11 Inventory of Moveable Equipment (Hawkins)-** The procedure is being updated to adjust the IECC threshold for equipment capitalization from

\$5,000 to \$10,000. This revision aligns IECC with the current 2 CFR Uniform Guidance for equipment thresholds for grant purposes.

- **Procedure 300.14.2 Initiating and Processing Requisitions (Hawkins)**- The procedure is being updated to adjust the IECC threshold for equipment capitalization from \$5,000 to \$10,000. This revision aligns IECC with the current 2 CFR Uniform Guidance for equipment thresholds for grant purposes.
- **Procedure 300.21.1 Financial Standards for Federal Grant/Award Funds Procurement (Hawkins)**- The procedure is being updated to adjust the IECC threshold for equipment capitalization from \$5,000 to \$10,000. This revision aligns IECC with the current 2 CFR Uniform Guidance for equipment thresholds for grant purposes.
- **Procedure 300.14.4 Purchase Orders (Hawkins)**- The revised procedure clarifies the standardized process for initiating, approving, issuing, and managing purchase orders to ensure proper authorization, accurate financial tracking, and compliance with institutional and regulatory requirements. Additional guidelines were included for Open Purchase Orders.
- **Procedure 500.5.2 Certifications and Licensures (Robb/Gower)**- AALT approved updating the procedure to remove course numbers for courses that have been removed from the IST program, adjusting the prefix for Early Childhood Education courses, and adding courses to the credit for prior learning that provides academic credit for professional work experience within Law Enforcement.
- **Policy 100.45 Defense and Indemnification (Gower)**- The newly developed policy provides consistency with applicable Illinois law and IECC insurance coverage when providing defense and indemnification protections to authorized agents of the District. Approval was given and the policy will now be presented to the Board.
- **Deletion of Policy 100.19 Retaining Legal Counsel (Gower)**- In response to the newly developed Policy 100.45 the existing Policy 100.19 was deleted. Approval was given and deletion of the policy will now be presented to the Board.

All policies and procedures were approved as presented.

Staff Recommendations for Approval

- **Early College / Homeschool Community (Ambrose) - TABLED**
- **CourseStorm Non-Credit Registration & Payment Solution (Hawkins/Tait)**- CourseStorm has been selected as the preferred vendor for solutions for non-credit registration and payments. The council discussed options for the service and shared individual experience with the software. Mr.

Hawkins will facilitate further discussions to include Paul Tait, Sharmila Kakac, and Tona Ambrose (among possible others) and bring the item back to the July SEPC.

- **WVC Tennis Grant (Hawkins)**- Mr. Hawkins discussed the option to apply for a grant that will assist in renovating the tennis courts at WVC. The application for the grant is forthcoming.
- **RAMP FY '28 (Hawkins)**- The RAMP FY'28 submission was reviewed. The funding will be utilized to make ADA improvements to public restrooms and support other capital improvements. Approval was given and the RAMP for FY'28 will now be presented to the Board.
- **Bid Exception FCC Athletic Facility/Watchfire Video Board (Hawkins)**- Watchfire is being proposed as the single source video display vendor for the FCC Athletic Facility. The vendor will provide a digital faced scorer's table, shot clock systems, installation, and technical/programming support as part of the contract. The IT department will also be bringing a bid exception for the refresh of district computers. Approval was given and the contracts will now be presented to the Board.
- **Automotive Technology Fee (Robb)**- The fee will offset the expense of uniforms and required equipment for the program and be reflected in the academic catalog at actual cost. Approval was given and the fee will now be presented to the Board.
- **Campus Logos / Division Logos & Letterhead (Gower/Ambrose)**- Revised campus logos will reflect IECC's commitment to a unified institution. Newly developed division logos and letterhead will be utilized for all official divisional correspondence. Approval has been given and the items will now be presented to the Board for acceptance.
- **Division Meeting Minute Template (Ambrose)**- A standard template has been developed to provide a uniform approach for documenting division meeting minutes. Approval was given.
- **IECC Bookstore Restructuring (Simpson)**- President Simpson proposed a District Bookstore Manager position that would provide centralized leadership, coordination, and oversight for all IECC bookstore operations. Centralized management is expected to improve fiscal oversight by closely monitoring sales performance. The proposal was discussed and feedback was given. Approval was given for developing the job description and posting the position.

Informational & Discussion Items

- **VSIP (Gower/McDowell)**- Ms. McDowell reviewed the recently approved VSIP and gave an overview of the incentive plan and the process for informing supervisors when an applicant has been approved.
- **IECC FY '27 Budget (Hawkins)**- Mr. Hawkins gave an update on the budget and the recent decisions that have been passed through legislation. He gave an overview of how those decisions will affect the IECC budget and the procedure for addressing the changes.
- **Summer Operational Plan Retreats (Gower/McDonald)**- An Operational Plan Retreat will be held at the TLB WRC on June 30, 2026. More information is forthcoming.
- **September Change in Status Timeline (Gower)**- Dr. Gower reminded the council that all Change in Status requests should be made annually at the August SEPC. This process will ensure that the requests pass on for Board approval during the same timeline that annual salary increases are presented, and ensure that SURS reporting for salary increases are submitted in unison. The VSIP program may create an opportunity for job enlargement and promotions rather than backfilling.
- **Business Card Procedure & Campus and District-Wide Business Card Examples (Ambrose)**- President Ambrose proposed a consistent process for requesting and producing employee business cards. This process would apply to all supervisors requesting business cards for employees and would include a formal request form, Marcom review of requests, approved printing, and efficient delivery. SEPC believes strongly that business cards reflect identity, and that business cards should reflect IECC as a single entity and that all employees are IECC employees. Dr. Gower will pull together MarCom and select SEPC members for a discussion and revisions to be brought forward as a July approval item.

Capital Projects: Mr. Hawkins gave an overview of various projects happening throughout the District.

District Finance: Dr. Gower reminded division leadership to provide Mr. Hawkins with reduced division budgets to allow IECC to work to close the FY27 budget gap.

Approval of Personnel Items: President Kakac brought discussion regarding client relationships within Business and Industry. Dr. Gower had provided direction for the future of this position that would include connections with Institutional Outreach and Academic Affairs.

Other Business- None.

Adjournment: 12:07 p.m.

Next Meeting: July 1, 2026 @ 9 am

*Attachment – APPROVED IECC Standard Clinical & IECC Standard Non-Clinical
Affiliation Agreements

Standard Clinical

Christopher Rural Health
Clay County Hospital and Medical Clinics
County of Edwards EMS
Crawford County Health Department
Daviess Community Hospital
Embarras River Basin Senior Center
Fairfield Memorial Hospital
Gibson County Ambulance Service
Harsha Behavioral Center
Haven on the River, formerly Meadowbrook
Helia Healthcare of Olney, LLC
Helia Healthcare of Newton, LLC d/b/a Newton Care Center

Helia Richland Healthcare, LLC d/b/a Richland Nursing & Rehab
Ivy Rehab (new)
Jasper County Ambulance
Jasper County Health Department
Joyner Therapy Services
Lakeland Rehabilitation & Health Care Center
Lawrence County Ambulance Service
Lawrence Crawford Association for Exceptional Citizens
Marshall Rehab & Nursing (new)
Master's Hands Inc., NFP
Oakview Nursing and Rehab
Posey County EMS
ProRehab, Inc.
Providence Medical Group
R & T Physical Therapy
Richland County TB and Health Office
Robinson Rehab & Nursing
RuralMed, LLC
Salem Township Hospital
Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center
Sullivan County Community Hospital
United Life Care Ambulance Service
Wabash and Ohio Valley Special Education District
Wabash Senior Living & Rehabilitation
Wayne City Ambulance Service
Wayne County Ambulance Service
White County Ambulance Service

Standard Non-Clinical

Buckeroo Early Education Center
Christopher Rural Health
Crawford County Health Department
Edwards County Farm Bureau
Embarras River Basin Head Start
Fox River
Happy Day Express
Horizon Health
Kiddie Kollege
Lawrence Crawford Association for Exceptional Citizens
Sullivan County Community Hospital
Wayne County Health Department