

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges
Strategic Engagement Planning Council (SEPC) Minutes
May 7, 2025, TLB West Richland Center
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, Sharmilla Kakac, Amy Tarr, Robert Conn, Mike Conn

Welcome & Opening Remarks:

Dr. Gower welcomed members and guests, thanked the group for a successful academic year, and highlighted progress on the strategic plan and reorganization efforts. Adjustments continue to be made, progress is being realized, and he anticipates next year (and years thereafter) to be more stable ones for IECC. He also shared updates from Dean Frederick and the Academic Compliance Committee – Prof. McDonald also gave updates as she was a member of the committee.

Reports:

- **Enrollment (Weger)-** 1,000 students registered for Fall 2025, with 54.25% being returners—an increase over the prior year.
- **Finance (Hawkins):** Budget projections are based on current enrollment; slight adjustments expected in final version – we are still working to trim ~\$250,000 in spending.
- **HR (McDowell):** First round of retroactive faculty pay to be issued on May 9. Asked for questions and provided timeline for future retroactive payments.
- **OAR (Malone):** 210 graduation surveys received; 584 students expected to participate in ceremonies. Malone also serves as the undocumented student liaison.
- **Faculty (McDonald):** Questions were addressed in HR's overview of timing of retractive payments to faculty.

Presentations & Updates:

- **CETL Micro-Certifications (M. Conn):** Conn presented a proposal for micro-certifications for faculty development. Dr. Conn has built upon previous courses and is recommending credentials that will help new and experienced faculty strengthen the teaching and learning environment in the classroom.

- **Faculty Pathway Input (Boyce):** Shared faculty suggestions regarding the First-Year experience class.

Consent Agenda- Approved

- April SEPC minutes
- Divisional meeting minutes
- Policy 500.12 (Student Mental Health Needs): Updated following absence of Mental Health Specialist
- Procedure 500.12.1: Revised to reflect changes in Policy
- Affiliation Agreements: Approved for 3C Therapy & Wellness, Harrisburg Medical Center, Southern IL Hospital Services, and Southern IL Medical Services
- Grant Update (Hawkins)

Items Removed from Consent Agenda:

None

Policies & Procedures:

- **Policy 400.34 – Additional Compensation:** First reading. Aims to ensure workload integrity, operational consistency, and compliance with labor law. Council members were asked to identify non-bargaining unit employees currently holding secondary roles to allow for a case-by-case review process, which will inform whether each assignment should be approved as an exception, incorporated into a revised job description, or discontinued in the future.
- **Policy 800.12 – Minors & Visitors in the Classroom:** Approved with minor modifications to be distributed by Dr. Gower; policy addresses classroom disruptions and safety concerns.

Staff Recommendations- Approved

- **AFA/AES Degree Petition:** Approval given to seek authorization to offer the AFA and AES at IECC.
- **Paramedic Program Fees (Kakac):** \$15 for liability insurance and cost-recovery fee for uniforms approved.
- **WVC Food Services & Bookstore (Simpson):** Proposal for new full-time staff to oversee food services, bookstore, and pantry. A detailed business plan will be presented at a future meeting. Dr. Gower impressed upon the council that in tight budget years, new additions must be accompanied by new subtractions and asked leadership to be good partners in bringing recommendations for both.
- **Sports Classes Review (Edgren):** Ongoing curriculum review; Dr. Gower will form a sub-committee to guide the next steps.

Informational & Discussion Items:

- **IECC Agriculture Expansion (Gower/Ambrose):** President Ambrose identified a possibility to introduce a Dual Credit Agriculture program to LTC. A process was discussed that can be engaged in AY25 for possible implementation in AY26.
- **MPC Naming Rights Policy (Ambrose):** LTC is pursuing a Marathon Petroleum grant. The council discussed leveraging naming rights for the new buildings and how dollars raised could be used to expand the endowment of Foundations.

Capital Projects:

None

District Finance:

None

Approval of Personnel Items:

- **Temporary Full-Time Automotive Instructor (OCC)** as the current faculty accepted a VSIP and elected not to teach out in AY25.
- **Status Changes (Adult Education):** Two internal reassignments approved—one overseeing AEL instruction, another managing the Literacy Grant, eliminating the need for additional hires.
- **FLSA Update:** Reinstated FLSA rules require adjustments to exempt/non-exempt classifications; changes approved.

Other Business

- **HLC Update (Fowler)** Significant changes to the criterion used by HLC were introduced to SEPC.
- **Perkins Grant Position (Gower):** Role enhancement under consideration; updates to follow.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, June 4, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. | TLB WRC