Illinois Eastern Community Colleges
Strategic Engagement Planning Council (SEPC) Minutes
November 4, 2026 | 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. | TLB West Richland Center

Attendees: Tim Taylor, Sheryl Childers, Tona Ambrose, Andrea McDowell, Matt Fowler, Cassandra Goldman, Ryan Hawkins, Sharmila Kakac, Amber Malone, Cathy Robb, Chris Simpson, Brandon Weger.
Absent: Jessica McDonald, Paul Tait
Guests: None.

Call to Order & Welcome

Dr. Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and provided an overview of the agenda.

Recognition of Visitors and Guests

None

Reports

Chancellor- Dr. Taylor discussed the importance of reviewing the supporting documents for SEPC meetings prior to the meeting and being prepared to engage. He recognized the team for their dedication, and outlined six expectations for future meetings: advance preparation, meaningful participation and constructive disagreement, institution-wide perspective, appropriate consultation before a proposal reaches SEPC, clear distinctions between information, recommendations, approval and implementations authority, and accountable follow-through with identified responsibilities and return dates. He discussed the functions of SEPC and the role that SEPC plays in decision making and strategic engagement.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Approved items included:

- **October 2026 SEPC Meeting Minutes (Taylor)**
- **Divisional Meeting Minutes (Taylor)**
- **Grant Update (Hawkins)**
- **Biennial Review (Goldman)**

Disposition: The Consent Agenda was approved as presented.

Action on Items Removed from Consent Agenda

None.

Policy Review & Recommendation

None.

Procedure Review & Approval

- **Procedure 500.12.2 Student Mental Health Needs (Goldman) –** Revisions were made to reflect administrative responsibility with the reduction of a Mental Health Specialist following a decrease in grant funding. The responsibilities of the role have now shifted to the Dean of Students, minus clinical treatment responsibilities. Revisions also reflect compliance with statutes for mental health panels. The council discussed best practices for keeping faculty, staff, and students informed of available resources, and the January 6, 2027, workshop was identified as an opportunity for disseminating information.
  Disposition: Approved for implementation.

- **Procedure 100.16.1 Complaints from Students (Goldman) –** Revisions reflect updated titles and reporting relationships, clarification to informal and formal complaint steps, revised timing for annual administrative review, and language addressing attorney participation in institutional proceedings. Discussion was held and feedback was given regarding other areas of the procedure. Dean Goldman identified the need to clarify Step #1 – Waiver Contact.
  Disposition: Approval is conditional upon the Step 1 clarification and Dr. Taylor's subsequent review before implementation.
  Follow-up: Dean Goldman will make the revision and submit it for Chancellor review prior to implementation.

- **Procedure 500.5.3 Credit for Prior Learning: Tests/Examinations (Robb)-** Revisions were made to the Advanced Placement table to remove ENG 1101 Introduction to Compositions, as the course is being withdrawn with an effective date on 1/1/27 due to no enrollment. The class will be replaced with ENG 1100 Composition I Writing Lab. The procedure was approved by AALT prior to SEPC consideration.
  Disposition: Approved for implementation.

Staff Recommendations for Approval

None.

Informational Items

- **Grand Canyon University Concurrent Enrollment Agreement (Robb)-** Dr. Robb introduced an agreement that would create a concurrent enrollment pathway for ADN to BSN, between IECC and GCU. She expressed support for the opportunities that the agreement would present for IECC Health Professions students. SEPC conducted a first review and provided feedback.

  Disposition: First review, no approval at this time.

  Follow-up: Dr. Robb will take SEPC feedback to the Academic Affairs team for consideration before returning the agreement for final approval. She will work closely with the Financial Aid team when continuing correspondence with GCU to ensure that the financial impact for IECC students is being considered.

Discussion Items

- **Institutional Governance: Continuing the Conversation (Taylor)-** Dr. Taylor discussed meaningful opportunities for contributions made by SEPC team members when approaching organizational decisions. He asked the council members to share their thoughts and opinions for what justifies meaningful participation when those decisions are being made. A RACI-style framework was discussed as one possible option for distinguishing responsible, accountable, consulted and informed roles. Dr. Taylor emphasized SEPC as a forum for substantive institutional questions and recommendations and not a required clearinghouse for every operational action. He asked the council to share future thoughts and recommendations.

  Disposition: Discussion only, no framework adopted.

- **Governance in Practice: Safety Council and CEMT Charters (Taylor)-** Dr. Taylor shared examples of charters with the council that outline practices within Safety and Emergency Preparedness. He asked the council to share feedback following their review of the documents. He emphasized a reflection of governance within the charters, and how those structures might benefit other divisions and decision-making in the future. An ad hoc

effort to develop a broader shared-governance framework was considered, with May 2027 discussed as a possible target.

Disposition: Charters not adopted. Further development of governance process and a possible team charge remains open.

- **Governance Processes: Board of Trustees Submission & Review Timeline (Taylor)-** Dr. Taylor discussed the possibility of adjusting the timeline for submission and review of SEPC documents that will be moving forward for Board consideration, an earlier release of the board book, and a possible adjustment to the Board schedule.

  Disposition: No changes to the Board submission or review timeline were adopted.

  Follow-up: Dr. Taylor will discuss possible Board scheduling adjustments with Trustees.

- **SEPC Meeting Schedule: Supporting Effective Review and Deliberation (Taylor)-** Dr. Taylor discussed options for improving SEPC review and deliberation when considering the adjustment in the timeline for Board documents. SEPC discussed alternatives such as shorter and more frequent meetings, virtual or ad hoc sessions, and alignment with Board preparation. A possible January pilot was mentioned without agreement on meeting format.

  Disposition: No schedule change adopted.

  Follow-up: Dr. Taylor will initiate further discussion via Teams, and work with Paul Tait as appropriate.

- **December Board Retreat: Discussion Topics and Priorities (Taylor)-** Dr. Taylor shared proposed topics with SEPC for the Board of Trustees retreat to be held on December 8, 2026, at FCC. He asked for suggestions for inclusion/deletion. The retreat agenda will prioritize the work being performed within Pillar One of the Operational Plan.

  Disposition: Retreat agenda not finalized.

  Follow-up: Dr. Taylor will consult Trustees and refine topics and facilitation.

- **Digital Forms and Electronic Signature Technology (Goldman)-**

  Disposition: Deferred due to time constraints.

Capital Projects:
None.

District Finance:
None.

Personnel Items for Consideration

- **LTC Temporary Athletic Director Special Assignment (McDowell/Ambrose)-** President Ambrose and Mrs. McDowell presented a temporary assignment for the position in preparation of an upcoming retirement. Dr. Taylor recognized the detailed planning for continuity, development, evaluation and separation from the permanent hiring decision.

  Disposition: SEPC recommended advancing the proposed temporary assignment for Board consideration.

Other Business-
An adjustment was made to the SEPC schedule. The final meeting of the year will be held on November 25, 2026, at 9 a.m. via Teams. Meeting materials are due on November 18th by 4 p.m.

Follow-up: Sheryl Childers will distribute arrangements and update the SEPC meeting format.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

Next Meeting: November 25, 2026 @ 9:00 am via Teams