

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges
Strategic Engagement Planning Council (SEPC) Minutes
October 1, 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: None.

Guests: Amy Tarr, Casandra Goldman

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Dr. Gower opened the meeting, reviewed the agenda, and discussed the revised SEPC meeting schedule and structure. He noted upcoming campus visits by the University of Illinois (Oct. 6 at OCC) and Millikin University (Oct. 7 at OCC and LTC). He shared his upcoming travel dates and updated the group on new State guidelines for Freshman/Sophomore Dual Credit. A planning committee will be formed in Spring 2026 to address compliance and implementation.

Reports

- **Institutional Effectiveness (Weger):** Reported an external vendor bankruptcy and assured minimal impact. Shared pathway data and encouraged members to review the IECC Newsletter.
- **IT (Tait):** Discussed ongoing wireless issues and upcoming Cohesion/Banner training. ICCB will conduct an economic impact study with IECC participation. New phone systems will launch next year after separating from Frontier Communications.
- **FCC/B&I (Kakac):** Athletic Facility groundbreaking complete; construction underway. Campus cookout (Oct. 15) and faculty appreciation dinner planned. B&I staff attended CEO Summit; SBDC Business Plan Challenge launched. Grant-writing workshops scheduled at LTC (Nov.) and continuing in 2026.
- **Finance (Hawkins):** FAFSA for AY26–27 is open. Pell and student loans disbursed; MAP Grants suspending students earlier than usual. Electronic billing is going well. Walmart card process is changing positively. LTC pool nearing completion.
- **Human Resources (McDowell):** Mrs. McDowell reported that pay sheet operations are moving in the right direction and thanked all of those who participated in recent trainings.
- **Faculty (McDonald):** Attended IBHE meeting and raised Pell Grant questions; Dr. Gower asked Mr. Hawkins to meet with her to develop faculty communication.

- **Academic Affairs (Robb):** LTC/OCC Welding instructor interviews ongoing. WVC Ag instructors are visiting local high schools. The Canvas Instructor Insight Dashboard is aiding the Deans. Preparing for Oct. 10 workshop. Learning Commons questions were directed to Casandra Goldman.
- **OAR (Malone)-** 25-day reporting completed successfully. Financial Aid is operating more smoothly. Met with international students about transcripts. Requested feedback on continuing Grad Fest.
- **LTC/IOLT (Ambrose):** Business Summit held; Technology Center groundbreaking set for Oct. 21. Joint VCs town halls launched; next meeting at OCC (Oct. 29). Highlighted OCC STEM room as a staff accomplishment. PACE framework outreach to local schools is underway. USDA grant not received, but local donations to support the goal are progressing.
- **WVC/SALT (Fowler)-** Attended CEO breakfast with positive student feedback. Thanked SALT team for support. Upcoming SALT retreat theme: *Harvesting Student Success*. Positive feedback on athletic renovations.
- **OCC/BOLT (Simpson)-** Strong turnout for Blue Preview Day. Health Fest scheduled Oct. 4. Health Professions Center open house set for Nov. 14. Greenhouse reopened. Theater is celebrating 50th anniversary Oct. 11. Oct. 10 workshop includes faculty PD. Exploring food service models; online bookstore opens Nov. 3 with kiosks coming to all campuses

Approval of Personnel Items:

- **Change in Status B&I Specialist (McDowell/Kakac)-** Expanded duties to include Emergency Preparedness and B&I projects. Approved for October Board presentation.

Consent Agenda

Approved items included:

- September SEPC minutes and divisional minutes
- Student Complaint Log (FY23–25)
- Cosmetology & Nail Tech Kit Fees (catalog inclusion)
- Policy 100.41 BOT & Foundation Collaboration – second reading approved
- Affiliation Agreement with Greene-Sullivan Special Ed Cooperative
- Monthly Grant Update

ISU PTA Articulation Agreement – tabled.

Consent Agenda approved unanimously.

Policies & Procedures

Approved for Board or administrative action:

- Policy 300.18 – Assignment of Vehicles (requests through Business Offices; personal use reported to IRS)
- Procedure 700.1.3 – Use of College Vehicles (clarifies request/use process)
- Procedure 400.33 – Vehicle Use Guidelines (safety and reporting rules)
- Procedure 500.35 – Grades & Grading System (updated roles/timelines)
- Procedure 500.5.3 – Test Examinations (removed GED CPL language)
- Policy 100.43 – Intercollegiate Athletics (new; establishes governance)
- Procedure 100.43.1 – Intercollegiate Athletics (defines scholarships, limits, and accountability)

Policies approved will be taken to the Board of Trustees for the October meeting.

Staff Recommendations for Approval

- USDA Grant Portal Resolution (Hawkins): Designates IECC representatives for compliance; approved for October Board.
- ID Theft Policy 100.23 / Prevention Plan (Hawkins): Updated to align with FTC Red Flags Rule; clearer format and new annual reporting; approved for Board in October.

Informational & Discussion Items

- **Workshop Schedule (McDowell):** Proposal to move Fall Workshop later in semester for better participation.
- **SEPC Meeting Time (Gower):** Meetings to shift to mornings; November meeting at 9 a.m.
- **Policy 100.28 Weapons (Gower/Hawkins):** Reviewed feedback from insurance carrier.
- **Health Insurance Renewal 2026 (Hawkins):** Reviewed projected cost and network changes; focus on cost control and access.
- **Asset Sale & Disposal (Hawkins):** Tabled
- **International Student Tax / FISAP (Hawkins):** Tabled – email had been sent.
- **IECC Business Cards (Ambrose):** Proposed consistent district-wide design.
- **CRM Texting Guide (Fowler):** Draft shared will implement and adapt based on feedback.
- **Cybersecurity Training (Tait):** Brief progress update.

Capital Projects: None.

District Finance: None.

Other Business-

Adjournment: 4:48 p.m.

Next Meeting: November 5, 2025 at 9 a.m.