

Faculty Advisory Council Illinois Board of Higher Education

21 February 2025 Meeting Minutes

Zoom Only Meeting

FAC members/alternates attending and their institutions

In person: (This meeting was held over Zoom)

Angela Antonou University of St. Francis
Paul Bialek Oakton Community College
Tammy Bonhoff Olney Central College

Justin Bradley IBHE Assistant Director of Academic Affairs (IAI)

Kristine Burgess Rosalind Franklin University
Cynthia Boyce at-large (Lincoln Trail College)

Daniel J. Coles Aurora University
John Cooksey Truman College
Marie Donovan DePaul University

Allison Douglas Elgin Community College Karen Drage Eastern Illinois University

Jason Edgar Morton College

Greg Ferrence Illinois State University

Sarah Garber Rosalind Franklin University (MS)

Iill Gebke IBHE Assistant Director of Academic Affairs

Joao Goebel National Lewis University

Jack Haines Joliet Junior College

Tena Helton University of Illinois, Springfield Andy Howard Illinois Institute of Technology

Dan Hrozencik Chicago State University

Pratima Jindal Waubonsee Community College Brooke Johnson Northeastern Illinois University

Matt Landrus Lake Land College Mary Laundry Adler University

Shaalein Lopez Governors State University

James Marshall Rockford University

Laura Murdaugh Kishwaukee College

Mike Phillips at-large (Illinois Valley Community College)

Tiffany Puckett Northern Illinois University

Patricia Saleeby Bradley University

Nicole Scherger Elgin Community College
Mary Ellen Schiller Roosevelt University
Shawn Schumacher DeVry University

Melissa Stinnett Western Illinois University

Lichang Wang Southern Illinois University-Carbondale

J. Matthew Ward Quincy University

Sue Wiediger Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville

Absent:

Amy Carr Western Illinois University
Tyrone Forman University of Illinois at Chicago
Irene Jacobsen Eastern Illinois University
Jessica McDonald Olney Central College

Gay Miller University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Nkechi Onwaumeze IBHE Senior Associate Director of Academic Affairs

9:00 Call to order and Introductions

9:12 Business Meeting

- 1) Old Business
- a) Shawn sought a motion to approve the minutes from the January 24, 2025 meeting at Olney Central College. The motion was made by Marie and seconded by Dan H. 3 members abstained, and the motion passed.
- 2) New Business
- a) Shawn sought a motion to approve the Prior Learning Assessment Working Group's survey. The motion was made by Jack and seconded by Sarah S. One member abstained, and the motion passed.
- b) Approval of Resolution on DEI (Equity Working Group)

James noted that the Equity Working Group drafted the resolution before the new US Presidential administration came in, January 2025. The group encouraged the FAC to stick with existing polices despite what the new President's administration does.

Tiffany questioned whether we should be putting the resolution out, pointing out that institutions are having conversations about recent governmental edicts and how responses are going to come out. FAC members discussed the federal Department of Education's *Dear Colleague* letter, and its rationales to change any DEI language. At this meeting, Tiffany didn't want to call a vote on the document due to rapid changes.

Greg countered that the Resolution of DEI document was worked on prior to the new administration's changes, arguing that we can adjust language down the road, but not voting on it now could be seen as kowtowing to the new administration.

Mike, echoing Greg's position, said that as the FAC, we should support the resolution and move forward because it's not a state-level document; moreover, faculty think it's an important issue to take a stand on. He added that we are making a recommendation to IBHE, but it's not a mandate for other institutions. He stated that if the FAC is not going to support the resolution, it's not clear why we have an Equity Working Group.

Pratima asked whether we would be voting as individual faculty or on behalf of our institutions. Shawn said we always vote as representatives.

Shaalein suggested that we give voice to what we really mean. She stated that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are now triggering words, so we should be more descriptive to illustrate what we really mean.

Tiffany requested that we table discussion for later in the meeting.

Cyndi distinguished between at-large members voting (for themselves) and others who vote for their institutions.

Dan C. thanked the group for putting the document together, but said that he hasn't had time to check in with his institution for ratification.

After much discussion, James, on behalf of his working group, suggested that we table voting on the Resolution until after our Working Group meetings to decide how best to proceed.

10:15 Guest Presentation: Dr. Justin Bradley, IBHE, Assistant Director of Academic Affairs; "IAI Updates"

Dr. Bradley shared many informative slides about the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). He said that he works with 300 or so faculty involved with IAI, he manages course review process, and he keeps his various panels focused on what matters for individual courses.

He provided an overview of IAI's purpose, including giving students clarity on how to focus on academic endeavors. He stressed the IAI's three core principles: 2- and 4-year institutions are partners; faculty should take responsibility for IAI matters; and, institutions should work together to establish unity and rigor for courses.

Other important notes from his presentation include that the IAI's work is a faculty driven process. He reviewed the IAI's GECC Package, the IAI Major panels (18 of them), Public Act 099-0636 added elementary and secondary courses, and the IAI process of panel approval criteria and voting.

Turning to Fall Updates and Updates to Panels, Dr. Bradley reported that Social and Behavioral Sciences saw an increase to 87 total courses, so a second SBS panel will probably be created to handle the work load for faculty reviewers. He noted that Humanities is the second largest panel with 77 total courses submitted this year, and it has been split into two panels for workload reasons. He mentioned the creation of a possible Interdisciplinary Panel with ID descriptions of Humanities/Fine Arts, Social and Behavioral Science, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences. He reported that a lot of time is taken to go through how to approach content, but the time investment helps improve the review process for institutions and faculty.

After Dr. Bradley's presentation, a brief Q&A session followed.

Sue asked, having gone through the IAI process (regarding details of syllabi), the resulting syllabus didn't look to be the same as the one they give to students (not all of the detail). So, how similar are the two syllabi supposed to be?

Answer: IAI needs a representative syllabus that does not have to the same as what is given to students. There has been lots of discussions among panelists about the level of detail needed/described.

Paul asked how we go about volunteering for a panel?

Answer: Send an email to Justin or Patrick at IAI. They have a waiting list, and terms last three years. They try to balance participation between various types of institutions (privates, 2- and 4-years).

Andy asked whether panels that deal with communication address/discuss generative AI and the roles it should play?

Answer: Yes, there have been lots of discussions – especially regarding Writing courses. IAI doesn't have rules about it, but they encourage institutions to manage changes in classroom practice to ensure against the inappropriate use of AI.

Tena suggested that rubrics for course design would be nice.

Answer: IAI wants to give enough information about course design, but they don't want courses to be cookie cutter. Course descriptors and criteria exist, but there is variability.

Tena said that it is possible to create a clear rubric – without it being intrusive. Dr. Bradley agreed, saying that panels should be consistent in how they go about assessing courses. Also – in soliciting faculty, schools have a schedule to appoint faculty. He said that a lot of change has occurred with panel managers, and IAI works with Provosts to ensure rotation. IAI is trying to be more fluid with staffing and rotations, but scheduling a long way out doesn't work well, so they're working on their process.

Mike asked if there is a process for the GECC to add new categories and to make sure the categories are still appropriate?

Answer: Yes, but the general education courses are a little more complicated because ICCB looks at what is needed across the state, and panels can assess and make changes. He added that GECC courses go through ICCB to ensure specifics and accordance with rules and laws.

Greg Thanked Dr. Bradley for his work, and asked if he could point to examples where multiple faculty have been teaching for decades and doubts that they have seen the IAI syllabi? Further, how does IAI close the loop to make faculty aware that there is a larger governing syllabus?

Answer: That tracks. IAI will return master syllabi because they want a representative syllabus from faculty. Perhaps better communication is needed from IAI to individual institutions. Greg replied

that it's not necessarily a problem because of the consistency demanded (syllabi are general) in his discipline.

Sue noted the range of quality across the state among various institutions, and she asked how truly transferable that feels.

Answer: There is always that kind of difference, The IAI doesn't know outcomes at their level – just syllabus contents. They try to reinforce that the IAI is not to make all classes the same; it's about students' GECC completion and their ability to confidently move on to next educational stage with appropriate preparation to be successful. The goal is to ensure foundational knowledge for their next educational journey and foundations for life-long learning.

Nicole wondered whether IAI ever pulls Dual Credit course syllabi, and does IAI talk about it?

Answer: The ICCB handles that on their end. IAI wants syllabi the same, but it's really ICCB's issue to handle.

Dr. Bradley wrapped up his presentation, saying that it's the work that faculty do to make all of this possible. He acknowledged all of the unpaid time and work that gets done!

11:00 Guest Presentation: Ashley Musser Lewis, IBHE, Assistant Director of Policy Research; "ESHI and HOUSE Liaisons" (ESHI = End Student Housing Insecurity, and HOUSE = Housing and Opportunities that are Useful for Students' Excellence)

Ms. Lewis began her presentation by discussing college-aged youth homelessness. She reported that homelessness is a huge problem in IL; however, among college students, it is not easily seen or recognized by us. In fact, 4.2 million college-aged youth experienced homelessness in 2019. 43% of respondents at four-year students experienced housing insecurity while 14% experienced homelessness. Sadly, trends are continuing from 2021 to 2025, and not much headway is being made.

She made the distinction that housing insecurity and homelessness are not the same. Housing insecurity entails students not experiencing a safe, affordable, or consistent place to live. Issues include difficulties with paying rent and utilities, or even parents kicking students out of their homes. According to her preliminary 2023 – 2024 survey results, 14% of students experience homelessness, but it's likely closer to 20%.

She reported on Public Act 102-0083, (Summer 2021), The Illinois General Assembly Higher Education Housing and Opportunities Act. The law requires institutions of higher education to designate a HOUSE Liaison and provide housing and other opportunities/services.

She then provided a definition of homelessness that is not the same as HUD's – HOUSE liaison's duties were listed, and interested readers can see the IBHE HOUSE Liaison Website for contact information, QR codes, etc. The site is updated frequently for contact info, laws, resources, etc. For the rapidly changing and updated information related to HOUSE and ESHI activities, interested parties should visit: www.ibhe.org/HOUSE_Liaisons.html

After Ms. Lewis' presentation, a brief Q&A session followed.

Q/A

Tiffany asked that with respect to the undercounting of students – what definition of homelessness are institutions using? Are they using Mc Kinney-Vento definitions or different ones?

Answer: Ms. Lewis thinks that the definition in the law is different enough from HUD's and other Illinois law to make definitions slightly confusing, which makes counting/reporting/tracking difficult. She said that it takes time to build the process and get reporting/tracking right. Tiffany exclaimed that she loves that more funding is becoming available.

Mike asked whether the grant program is an ICCB and/or an IBHE process?

Answer: Ms. Lewis explained that the IBHE grants are only for 4-year institutions; ICCB has them for 2-year institutions.

Brooke asked whether Ms. Lewis could share her slide deck because she (Brooke) wants to share more information with her school.

Answer: Yes, Jill offered that she will send along the slide deck.

Shawn thanked Ms. Lewis and looks forward to the delivery of her slide deck!

11:26 Return to reports before lunch break

Reports:

Chair (Shawn Schumacher); Shawn thanked Jill and Nkechi for helping to prepare for this meeting. Shawn will be sharing the FAC's support statement for librarians at next IBHE meeting (March 12, 2025 at Prairie State College) and might share the DEI resolution. He reported that there is IBHE-related stuff to contend with, namely the board's June 25th meeting at 1:00 pm in Springfield, at which the FAC wants to meet with Board. Shawn and the FAC Executive Council still need to work on logistics for the meeting (at Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum), and they are looking for meeting spaces. Mike suggested that ICCB might have spaces. At that meeting, Shawn will present the FAC annual report, and more information will come available.

Brooke asked how we report our institutions' support for the FAC Library statement. Shawn said that we can send them to him.

Tiffany asked whether we should be working on hotels for the June meeting? Shawn said, Yes, we can start on that right away.

Tena said that she would be happy to help with arrangements. She believes there is a lot of space in June at all the places that Shawn mentioned.

Vice Chair (Dan Hrozencik);

Dan began his report by cautioning members that this meeting is being recorded, and it will be deleted once the minutes are done. Therefore, we ought not to be concerned as we remark on various topics in the meeting.

Next month's meeting is March 21 at DeVry's Lisle campus. Hotel information has been sent out, but please email Dan if you didn't get the information.

Future meetings include April at Joliet Junior College, and May and June will be in Springfield.

Dan attended the funding bill (3865 at that time) listening session at Chicago State University. It was a large meeting with over 100 people. Not much new was on offer, but most of the meeting was about the funding bill and how it works, as well as the bill's effect on Chicago State. Dan asked about FAC representation on committees/teams for implementation, and it seems that faculty will have representation for both unions and faculty.

Dan reported that there is lots of frantic backroom work on revising language for the revised HB 1581 and SB 0013. He said that John Miller thinks the funding bill might pass, but budgetary/revenue concerns may prevent implementation of the bill.

Dan noted similar meetings are happening at other universities, and that the Coalition for Transforming Higher Education Funding is a nonprofit group, which Dan has "somehow weaseled [his] way" into being invited to. Dan attended a 16 February meeting where they strategized and discussed initiatives for getting bills through the legislature. He reported that the coalition is looking for more MAP funding -- up to \$73 Million (as opposed to this year's \$50Million). Dan added that their goal was to have it increased by \$135 million over last year's amount. He mentioned the existence of a student Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act, and he will continue to attend and report out.

Shawn reminded members about the March meeting at Lisle. He clarified that hotels are close to the campus, but walking is tough in that area. We will want to catch rides from hotels to campus. The campus is in a building at 4225 Naperville Rd. on the fourth floor of a building adjacent to the campus -- 3333 Warrenville Ave. Dinner is at Granite City Food and Brewery.

Secretary (Jack Haines),

Jack mentioned that we might want to discuss smoothing out the process of confirming attendance to meetings. As a proposed solution, Dan hopes to get hotel information from hosts by the previous month's meeting to head off communication issues.

Assistant Director for Academic Affairs, (Jill Gebke)

Jill began her update by thanking the FAC members for the time provided for her colleagues.

She mentioned the Governor's proposed Higher Education budget and Illinois' challenging financial situation. She reported that higher education received some increases, such as an increase of 10 million dollars for MAP funding (\$721.6 million total funding), an increase of 3% for operational funding for public 4-year institutions and community colleges, and an increase of \$3 million for ECACE and one-click program. She stated that IBHE is still preparing for March board meeting.

Marie asked about early childhood consortium fund increases and the up to \$15 million that was asked for. Jill said that the Governor's figure was \$5 million.

FAC Legislative Liaison (Mike Phillips)

Mike stated that the legislature is early in its session, and he shared the most recent bill list via email. He encouraged FAC members to read the list and send him any bills that are missing from that list. He also said that language in bills does change, so we can express support, opposition, or questions to legislators.

He reported that the Dual Credit Quality Act amendment bill has language that appears to cap degrees and hours for instructors in certain subject areas, but that could be an error because capping it is strange. He asked for clarification, but had not heard back from anyone by the time of this meeting.

Further, Mike mentioned BA degrees at Community Colleges, a proposal driven by Community College presidents, addressing needs within their communities where partnerships don't exist or the need for certain degrees is high.

As to university funding bills, Mike said that the same bills were introduced in the House and the Senate, so we have to track them both. Mike also sent a link to the Governor's proposed budget bill book, which he encouraged us to look through. He said that a lot of people are talking about contacting Congress about everything that's going on, so he included a link in his email regarding contacting Congress about concerns.

Mike shared a PDF doc about how to craft messages/language when we reach out to Congress. He pointed out that congressional interns keep tallies on calls, so it's best to keep a call to single issues so that congressional people know the specific issues and the data mounts. In wrapping up his remarks, Mike mentioned that federal (Trumpian) caps on overhead of 15% on grants. He reminded members that funding affects our schools too, so it's important to reach out to legislators.

Greg noted that witness slips used to be a powerful way to communicate with legislators. He asked if there is a link to bills that Mike can send out so that we can coordinate our efforts? Mike said that witness slips are still something that we can do.

Tiffany asked about the time that Mike sent out the email. He said that it was last night and that if anyone didn't get it, contact Mike. Greg is sending the docs out as people contact him.

12:00 Lunch Break

12:30 Caucus Meetings

Shawn clarified issues about what is being threatened by the federal chaos and certain issues. In light of the situation, caucus chairs will lead discussions. Dan reminded members that 18 March is Higher Education Advocacy Day in Springfield; busses and training sessions are available, and members can contact Dan for more information.

Two Years:

Cindi asked about anything threatening at our institutions or programs. Pratima reported that she hadn't heard anything from Waubonsee Community College; however, a student on an NSF grant was hoping to transfer to NIU with a scholarship, but now things look doubtful. The college will support students through the semester. Mike said that their TRIO grant program seems like it's going to be in the crosshairs. Some presidents went to Washington DC and visited with Representative Underwood, who gave them lots of pointers on what to do. They also met with Representative LaHood about funds and their importance. Representative Underwood said it is important for us to contact Congress about the impacts that could occur before things get bad and it's too late. The Eastern Illinois Community Colleges sent out information about procedures and potential impacts. Nobody in the two-year caucus has received the Dear Colleague letter, and it's unclear which schools have received it. Science teachers are going to teach the facts; science will back them up.

Elgin Community College is doing the best they can. They are looking into things with their legal team, and they have held all-student meetings to keep the student body informed. Waubonsee Community College sent out information about ICE and what to do. The Eastern Illinois Community Colleges got a similar information, as did Lake Land, which is talking with their legal team. Oakland Community College has done a good job of communicating ICE what-to-dos, and some faculty are worried about federal budget cuts. The situation at Kishwaukee Community College is pretty much the same. Their union reported that Sociology faculty have received information about students who felt unsafe and couldn't share that they are in favor of legislation, fearing attacks by other students for their views. It was questioned whether equity plans are still in effect.? Elgin Community College seems like it's playing language games – changing words but being transparent and supportive of students. It was stated that DEI is about more than race, but the Dear Colleague letter doesn't reflect awareness of the many nuances. Illinois Valley Community College still has its DEI page up on the website; and Mike suggested not using "DEI" but instead the individual terms and challenge opponents on those terms. Nicole asked if anything is being done with the Digital Accessibility Act, noting the difficulty of posting accessible materials online. Elgin Community College has no plan despite having two staff members to help with making information accessible. Illinois Valley Community College has purchased short term access to a program that helps with determining accessibility. The sheer amount of work coupled with the intricacies of subject materials is overwhelming.

Private/Independents:

Andy reported that their group discussed issues similar to the 2-year caucus: changes at the federal level of government and in particular, the Dear Colleague letter. Members expressed concerns that they and their colleagues have. The group noted the importance of responding to verified statements as opposed to unverified rumors or impressions. Marie assured the group that the issues she was bringing forward were indeed verifiable. Andy put forth the notion that part of what is going on is a game, where the president expects ultimately that the courts will make final decisions, and that the president's asks are strategic: asking for more initially, knowing that he'll get less but still get what he wants. At the same time, the group acknowledges the chaos being created at the federal level.

It was pointed out the Dear Colleague letter was focused explicitly on admissions policies. However, the fear is that things could spread out beyond admissions policies to other kinds of interference of what faculty do in universities.

Four Years:

Brooke reported that their group had similar conversations, particularly about how campuses are responding to ICE and their threats. It seems that many campuses have protocols for dealing with ICE, and some institutions have websites or informational links informed by legal counsel.

The group also discussed federal transitions and the variety of ways that they are being addressed. Some campuses are forming ad hoc working committees to directly deal with the issues; at other institutions, guidelines are coming directly from Chancellors/Presidents.

They discussed how federally threatened funding cuts, DEI removal edicts, etc. are affecting their campuses. They also discussed a bill in Iowa regarding the development of a uniform general education program at their institutions, requiring courses on western civilization/American History, and caps the program at 40 hours. In addition, there is language concerning what can or should not be taught, such as avoiding the teaching of "distortions" of history, issues to related to sex and gender, or "institutional" issues (read: systemic -isms), and identity politics in the program. Discussion ensued on the nuances of forced speech versus free speech, but it's yet another interesting way of discussing equity issues in the classroom.

Finally, the group discussed how UIS and SIUC are undergoing prioritization policies, but it was unclear exactly what that may mean and how certain programs will be affected. The group will continue to monitor those issues.

1:15 Working Group Meetings

Prior Learning Assessment -- Marie reported that her group discussed revisions to the survey and procedures for sending it out. She stated that 30 March is the new due date for returning survey results, and an FAQ document will be prepared as concerns come in.

Technology -- Laura reported that Online Materials and ADA Compliance is being required soon, and it doesn't seem that many schools are prepared to hit targets. The group discussed an updated bill that calls out state institutions (particularly 4 years) for non-compliance. It was noted that funding, software, manpower, etc. are not present for us to attain compliance. The working group, with Andy at the helm, is drafting a short, direct appeal for a delay in the act's enforcement; some schools are aware and working on the issues, but many others are not. Greg mentioned that SIU is putting together a working group for compliance, and he will monitor ISU's successes in that endeavor. Andy added that Pratima has set up a page for entering data. Sue reminded members that institutional committee minutes and other documents not related to teaching, including the FAC website – as noted by Pratima--, will need to be changed so as to be ADA compliant.

Funding -- Dan will send the link for training regarding Higher Education Advocacy, noting that even if members don't go the event, the training will still be helpful. The group discussed the new funding bill and the possibilities (or not) of it being funded, passed, etc. He asked if slides from Abrahamson had been sent when he presented at the Harry S. Truman/June FAC meeting. Shawn thought yes, and Dan asked if Shawn could send them out to the FAC.

Early College Consideration – Allison reported on the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) standards for Dual Credit and how they have been applied in other states.

The group would like to recommend them to be adopted in Illinois, but they wonder how to move forward on such an initiative as an advisory council (FAC). At our next meeting, the group would like to fashion a singular message on how our institutions could/should implement the Dual Credit Quality Act or to legislators about how the NACEP standards would make Dual Credit better. She noted that faculty, rather than being seen as complaining, want to be seen as making Dual Credit better as opposed to fighting the act.

Faculty and Student Mental Health – Sue reported that the group talked through some of the various surveys that they are assembling and the process of IRB approval for sending out those surveys. They are scheduling another meeting before the FAC meeting to drill down on priorities and procedures for survey distribution.

Equity – Paul discussed the FAC's DEI Resolution and the need for the FAC to take it up. The group wants to move forward with the resolution and put it up for a vote. They simply want to urge the IBHE to continue what it is doing, and they wish to hear from FAC institutions about what they are doing relative to the DEI movements and the Dear Colleague letter from the new US president's administration.

2:32 -- Back To Our DEI Resolution Discussion – Dan asked about the process, suggesting that we could have a first reading followed by discussion and then a second reading and action at the following month's meeting. He was careful to stipulate that this process concerned rolling forward – not specifically about the DEI Resolution issue. Shaalein agreed with that idea, likening it to the Librarian Support Letter process we went through. At issue is members feeling that we have adequate to read, think, and vote on important issues. Marie stated that she doesn't disagree with the two-meeting rule, but she thoughtfully wondered if we are all in agreement that there will be times to have one meeting so as to act and think quickly. Tiffany mentioned that most of our institutions have a diversity statement, so more opportunity for discussion at institutions would be appreciated. Further, she noted the importance of waiting to see how various campuses react to the turmoil surrounding the Dear Colleague letter and other initiative underway. Nicole echoed Tiffany's comments, and expressed some discomfort with voting now due to Elgin Community College's efforts to rework hiring practices in light of DEI changes to language and policies. She has also had experiences with not feeling supported at her college when her and the college's views differed. Pratima felt similarly due to lack of time to discuss these matters with her faculty council or her administration. There is a general desire not to create discord within institutions until adequate time has been taken to sort out the issues. Dan expressed surprise at the unusual climate connected to this issue, and he made a motion to delay the vote on this issue due to the significant hesitation among group members. Greg seconded the motion. Paul, speaking for the Equity Working Group, said that if it is the will of the assembly, then following parliamentary procedure is appropriate, and tabling the vote would then be the respectful thing to do. On a voice note, the motion to table the discussion passed. Opposition to the motion to table was voiced by three members.

Upon Shawn's conclusion of the meeting, Mike interrupted with an important caucus note:

Sadly, the Four Nation Hockey Caucus was disappointed in the US's loss. (Thanks Mike!)

2:46 Shawn called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Marie and was seconded by John.

Minutes of the February FAC meeting respectfully submitted by Jack Haines.

Next FAC Meeting: March 21, 2025 at DeVry University, Lisle 3333 Warrenville Rd
Next IBHE Meeting: March 12, 2025 at Prairie State College