



## Faculty Advisory Council Illinois Board of Higher Education

### Minutes

Friday 16 May 2025 Meeting of the IBHE FAC

Springfield: Illinois Association of School Boards

### FAC members/alternates attending and their institutions

#### In person:

Angela Antonou	University of St. Francis
Paul Bialek	Oakton Community College
Cynthia Boyce	at-large (Lincoln Trail College)
Kristine Burgess	Rosalind Franklin University (MS)
Amy Carr	Western Illinois University
Daniel J. Coles	Aurora University
Marie Donovan	DePaul University
Alison Douglas	Elgin Community College
Jason Edgar	Morton College
Greg Ferrence	Illinois State University
Sarah Garber	Rosalind Franklin University (MS)
Jill Gebke	IBHE Assistant Director of Academic Affairs
Joao Goebel	National Lewis University
Sarah Hill	LakeLand College (alternate)
Andy Howard	Illinois Institute of Technology
Dan Hrozencik	Chicago State University
Jessica McDonald	Olney Central College
Gay Miller	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Nkechi Onwauamez	IBHE, Senior Associate Director of Academic Affairs
Mike Phillips	at-large (Illinois Valley Community College)
Nicole Scherger	Elgin Community College
Mary Ellen Schiller	Roosevelt University
Lichang Wang	Southern Illinois University-Carbondale
Sue Wiediger	Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville
Nicole Zeller	Eastern Illinois University

### **Attending Via Zoom**

John Cooksey	Truman College
Tyrone Forman	University of Illinois at Chicago
Brooke Johnson	Northeastern Illinois University
Mary Laundry	Adler University
James Marshall	Rockford University
Tiffany Puckett	Northern Illinois University
Shawn Schumacher	DeVry University

### **Absent:**

Jack Haines	Joliet Junior College
Tena Helton	University of Illinois, Springfield
Pratima Jindal	Waubensee Community College
Shaalein Lopez	Governors State University
Laura Murdaugh	Kishwaukee College
Patricia Saleeby	Bradley University
J. Matthew Ward	Quincy University

### **9:11 Call to order and Introductions**

Dan noted that Shawn would be joining us via Zoom. Dan called the meeting to order, and noted that we would hold our caucus meetings prior to Pranav's arrival at the meeting. FAC members provided brief self-introductions.

### **9:14 Reports**

*Chair* (Shawn Schumacher);

Shawn noted that the Wednesday 25 June meeting would be the final FAC meeting of the academic year. He reminded caucus and working group Chairs to get their annual summative documents to him or to Dan H. in order that Shawn can prepare his remarks to the IBHE at the afternoon session in June.

Shawn plans to work with Tena Helton of UIS to prepare for the morning portion of the 25 June meeting. We will need an accurate head-count for the lunch with the IBHE Board.

Shawn has met with Jill to plan both for this meeting and the June gathering. Jill is analyzing the reorganized categories of the Carnegie Foundation to see if the changes affect the invitation lists for the Independent Caucus.

The Governor's office has appointed a faculty member from a public four-year university to the IBHE Board, filling the slot that has been vacant for over a year. The member is Nora Lee Heist, an assistant professor in the School of Communication and Journalism at Eastern Illinois University. She will attend the June Board meeting.

Marie Donovan asked Shawn whether he has prepared a set of questions for the Board's consideration. Shawn said he has sent a question to Pranav regarding student issues, including deportations of non-US citizens, and asked Pranav for updates on the governor's proposal to allow community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees in specific fields.

*Vice Chair* (Dan Hrozencik);

Dan H. said he would send out the travel arrangements for the June meeting around 21 May. It's been reported that the Hilton Garden is clean but a bit run-down, so other hotels are being considered. Dinner on 24 June will be at Saputo's, 801 E Monroe; it's an old-style southern Italian restaurant.

*Secretary* (Jack Haines),

Jack was absent from the meeting. Andy Howard was recording minutes for the meeting. Amy had contributed some corrections to the April minutes. The April minutes were approved as amended.

*FAC Legislative Liaison* (Mike Phillips);

Mike said 13 FAC members participated in the information sessions at the State Capitol on Thursday 15 May. Mike split the 13 into two groups. Several of the legislators said they would like to have further discussions with the FAC. Among the participants were the chairs and ranking minority members of the Higher Education and Higher Education Appropriations Committees in both houses. Among the topics considered were the higher education funding formulae and the governor's proposal to enable community colleges to grant Baccalaureate Degrees. The legislators were impressed with how genuine our members were, and how successful we were in functioning as a collective. They recognized us as content experts and complimented us on our ability to communicate with one another. Some of the legislators we met with are in their first terms, and they seemed particularly eager to converse with us. In the past the IBHE staff, notably the Executive Director, has displayed some reluctance to support visits by FAC members to legislators.

Leadership at the four-year universities are opposed to baccalaureate degrees at Community Colleges. The Community College administrators are opposed as well but are reluctant to say so in public. It's often noted that four-year schools can set up baccalaureate programs on Community College campuses; it's disappointing that there aren't more of those in action. The potential for a loss of autonomy on both sides of such a program may be interfering with creation of such programs. FAC members wonder whether mandating such cooperative ventures would solve that problem. It was suggested that nearby 4-year schools would have a right of first refusal to create four-year programs at specific Community College campuses. The caucuses could consider these options today.

*Assistant Director for Academic Affairs* (Jill Gebke);

Jill provided an update on recent hires within the IBHE; notably, a full-time Budget Analyst has been hired. The staff hope to hire a Policy and Fiscal Analyst and an expert on Early Childhood programs.

The Carnegie Classifications, discussed at the April meeting, continue to get attention, including some historical background. Schools should consider opportunities for changing classifications.

She noted that the June Board meeting will be a busy one, with around 20 program votes expected.

*Senior Associate Director for Academic Affairs* (Nkechi Onwauamez);  
Nkechi said Jill had covered all of her concerns.

*Vice Chair's addendum* (Dan);

Dan acknowledged that the bill implementing the Higher Education Funding Formula will not be passed or even voted on during the current legislative session. The consensus in the legislature is that there isn't room in the budget to enable it. Dan has raised the question of approving the funding formula without a specific budgetary set-aside, but that idea hasn't gotten traction. He has seen a 180° turnaround, from optimism to pessimism, at the most recent meeting of the Funding Coalition. The estimate is that implementation of the formula would cost between \$100 – 150 million. In addition, there is a \$500 million arising from the absence of federal contributions. The actual Higher Education budget for the next fiscal year is likely to include a 2.9% increase for higher education, which is consistent with the Governor's draft.

#### **10:40 Business Meeting**

##### **1) Old Business**

##### **a) Election Committee discussion**

The Election Committee consists of Andy, Brooke, and Cyndi. Brooke is setting up a Google Doc tool to handle the votes. She will provide an explicit URL for the vote so that voters without Google accounts can use it. One candidate for chair, namely Dan, has emerged, along with one candidate for Vice-Chair, namely Jack. As of the beginning of the meeting, no one had volunteered to run for secretary, but during the discussion, Jason agreed to stand for that position, and he submitted a candidate's statement. Voting will begin once the committee distributes all three candidates' statements, and all votes must be submitted by 11 June.

##### **b) Website Administrator for 2025-2026**

Jessica has volunteered to serve as website administrator for the upcoming year and will discuss specifics with Pratima. She said she would bring some specifics to the June meeting.

##### **c) It is unclear whether the DFI fellowships have been renewed. Nketchi suggested that we ask Pranav about that.**

##### **2) New Business**

Sue suggested that it would be valuable to strengthen the FAC's ties with the IBHE's other Advisory Councils, particularly the Student Advisory Council and the Disabled Council. Nketchi said the staff will consider that.

#### **11:50 Caucus Group Meetings**

## 12:20 Working Group Meetings

### 1:00 Board Chair's visit: Pranav Koltari

Dan introduced Pranav Koltari, and the FAC members reintroduced themselves to him. He noted that he was appointed to the IBHE in 2019 and became chair in 2023. In his day job he runs a strategy consulting firm. He affirmed that a focus of the IBHE is approval of academic programs at Universities and Colleges in the state, and much of the Board's time at its quarterly meeting is devoted to those approvals. He noted that public universities and community colleges have activated a one-click college admissions system, with cooperation among IBHE, ICCB, ISBE, and ISAC. Admission decisions will be based on GPA. In the future, in-state first-year and transfer students won't even need to apply. He noted that the Board includes two student members—one traditional, one non-traditional. The Board's other foci include implementation of equity plans: the Board wants to close equity gaps for access and completion. The IBHE website includes Workforce Dashboards, showing employment trends and highlighting needs for new or revised academic programs. The Board is undertaking supply and demand analyses in specific regions: they recently completed one in the Quad Cities. Analyses of early childhood education programs have been upgraded; all three caucuses might want to take note of that. The Board is also considering student-based needs for housing, benefits, and food.

Among the controversial topics the Board is considering is the effort to diversify higher education faculty. All the funds allocated for this purpose are being spent, and the General Assembly will have an opportunity to evaluate these expenditures. Another topic relates to the long-term funding formula, for which the Board's staff can provide technical advice. Finally, the Board supports the Governor's plan to allow Community Colleges to award baccalaureate degrees in specific areas, and will provide guidance on how to achieve the desired outcomes of this innovation.

Pranav then opened the floor for questions from the FAC:

- (a) Amy asked how the Board sees its role in the rapid changes occurring in Washington; Pranav replied that the Board's primary role is to work through Deputy Governor Torres and others in the offices of the Governor and the Attorney General regarding legal matters.
- (b) Jason asked whether the FAC could play a role in the Governor's Baccalaureate at Community College plan; Pranav said it's already having an influence. Marie noted that the Governor is holding "Future Tables" meetings: should faculty have a place at those tables? Pranav said this is a project led by Assistant Deputy Governor Teresa Ramos; he said he's unclear about the status of these meetings, and will follow up.
- (c) Tyrone noted that two UIC students who had obtained DFI fellowships have had their funding cut. He asked if this contradicts Pranav's earlier statement that these DFI fellowships are still being funded. Pranav noted that IBHE didn't cancel the programs, but some campuses have chosen not to continue to participate. All the money for academic year 24-25 have been expended, but the status of out-year funding is unclear.
- (d) Mike noted that in some states, notably Texas and Florida, parents and students are concerned that they might see reductions in the kinds of topics that can be covered in academic programs. So he asked whether Illinois might want to promote itself as a site where students and faculty will not experience restrictions on the topics they can cover. The IBHE has few funds available for marketing, but the Legislature might find this notion attractive.

- (e) Tyrone asked a follow-up question about the equity plan within the Thriving Illinois effort. Pranav said the Board is sticking with the plan. Illinois and other progressive states are bearing the brunt of Federal attention about this, but this is work we need to be doing.
- (f) Amy asked what Illinois can do about the evident degradation of reading and writing literacy, particularly in the face of increasing reliance on Dual Credit and artificial intelligence. Pranav confirmed that writing well continues to be important. The FAC then discussed how best to respond to the challenges of AI. Tiffany noted that she requires a considerable amount of in-class work. Cindy said these changes call forth reevaluation of our approaches to teaching. Many faculty are reluctant to change approaches when they know their existing approaches worked well in the past. Having time and resources available to rethink our pedagogical approaches would improve our chances of responding. Kristine noted that these AI-related changes are affecting medical education. Mike suggested that students need to understand why they're enrolled in higher education. If they're excessively focused on credentials, they may lose sight of real learning. James suggested that teachers should ask whether the content they're delivering is leading to learning. Sue asked whether there are ways for the Board to develop a statewide plan to respond to these concerns. Pranav noted that the IBHE has little enforcement authority: it can set a macroscopic prioritization, and individual institutions will need to instantiate that.
- (g) Mike asked what the major challenges and opportunities are in front of the IBHE. Pranav said the challenges are dealing with changes at the Federal level, along with affordability, persistence, and the demographic cliff. The opportunities are stronger programs for admission and the "on track" system at UIC.

## 1:40 Caucus Reports

### *4-Year Public Universities*

Amy said the public universities continued to discuss the impact of changes in Washington on our institutions, both in terms of students' visa status, the loss of research grant and contract funds, and reductions in grant overhead.

### *Independent Institutions*

Andy said the focus of their meeting was on membership for 2025-26. Marie and Shawn were reelected as At-large representatives, and Andy will be the alternate At-Large member, which means he will attend and vote when one of the at-large members is absent. Jill will be sending out invitations to Augustana and McKendree; if either or both decline, then the next options are Millikan and Blackburn.

### *2 -Year Institutions*

Paul said the caucus focused on the question of baccalaureate degrees at community colleges. There are equity and location issues with these proposals. In general, the faculty at community colleges will not be taking positions on these plans, since the decisions will be made elsewhere. They might play a role in developing guardrails around the bachelor's programs, developing research capabilities, and providing a voice for the faculty in implementations.

## 1:55 Working Group Reports

### *Equity*

James said the group hopes to craft a document reaffirming the *utility* of DEI.

### *Early College*

NASEP accreditation of Dual Credit and Dual Enrollment is an ongoing concern.

### *Mental Health*

An introductory statement related to informed consent is being prepended to the survey.

### *Higher Education Funding*

Dan has already discussed the issues related to funding.

### *Prior Learning Assessment*

Marie noted that analysis of the survey is underway and is perhaps half-done. The legislators involved in the process are pleased with the survey.

### *Tech and Higher Ed*

Greg reported because Laura was unable to attend. The group continues to discuss ADA compliance. The group noted that a possible alternative to having community colleges issue bachelors' degrees would be wider implementation of online courses at the 3xx / 4xxx level, outside of the student's major.

**2:15** After working groups had furnished their reports, Dan thanked the Association of School Boards for hosting us.

**2:30** Dan sought a motion to adjourn the meeting. Paul made the motion, and Gay seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Andy Howard, volunteer recorder.

**Next IBHE Meeting:** June 25, 2025:

Morning: University of Illinois Springfield.

Noon onward: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum; Springfield, Illinois