

# Faculty Advisory Council Illinois Board of Higher Education



## MINUTES

FAC-IBHE Meeting  
March 20th, 2026  
Rockford University

### FAC members/alternates attending and their institutions

#### In person:

Mary Laundry	Adler University
Patrick Crawford	Augustana College
Daniel J. Coles	Aurora University
Patricia Saleeby	Bradley University
Dan Hrozencik	Chicago State University
Marie Donovan	DePaul University
Shawn Schumacher	DeVry University
Allison Douglas	Elgin Community College
Shaalein Lopez	Governors State University
Trish Aumann	IBHE Managing Director of Academic Strategy & Programs
Andy Howard	Illinois Institute of Technology
Greg Ferrence	Illinois State University
Mike Phillips	Illinois Valley Community College (at-large)
Jack Haines	Joliet Junior College
Cynthia Boyce	Lincoln Trail College (at-large)
Lara Hernandez Corkrey	Moraine Valley Community College
Jason Edgar	Morton College
Juan Martinez	Northeastern Illinois University
Tiffany Puckett	Northern Illinois University
Paul Bialek	Oakton Community College
James Marshall	Rockford University
Mary Ellen Schiller	Roosevelt University
Kristine Burgess	Rosalind Franklin University
Lichang Wang	Southern Illinois University-Carbondale
Sue Wiediger	Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville
Tyrone Forman	University of Illinois-Chicago
Kristi Barnwell	University of Illinois- Springfield
Gay Miller	University of Illinois- Urbana Champaign
Tosha Baker	Wabash Valley College

Amy Carr Western Illinois University

**Absent:**

Nicole Zeller Eastern Illinois University  
Matt Landrus Lake Land College  
Jessica McDonald Olney Central College

- 9:00 **Chair Dan Hrozencik, CSU**, Call to order and Introductions.
- 9:03 **James Marshall (Rockford)** delivered a speech of introduction for President Dr. Patricia Wynott. She opened by noting that Greg Ferrence from ISU has an exceptional voice, then transitioned into a reflection on the challenging landscape in education and academia. She emphasized the importance of serving as agents of change and encouraged all participants to approach their discussions with seriousness and purpose.
- 9:10 James then introduced Elizabeth Davies, Ph.D., Provost of Rockford University, who presented “Community Partners Become Community Internship Opportunities.” She discussed the legacy of Jane Addams and highlighted how the university has collaborated with local officials in Rockford to strengthen mutual initiatives. She also noted that Addams’ legacy included the development of a summer program for women.
- 9:18 James then introduced Kristen Clarke, MSW, LCSW, Director of the Lang Wellness Center and Social Work Program Director, along with Elizabeth Nardi, MBA, Chief Strategy and Research Officer, for a presentation titled “Rockford University’s Economic Impact and Growing Partnerships.” The presentation highlighted Jane Addams as the founder of social work and examined the university’s partnerships with various institutions to support funding for its social work programs. They also discussed a collaborative initiative with Denim Day and numerous community partners.
- 9:24 The presentation then transitioned to Elizabeth Nardi, who outlined the program’s economic impact. She noted that these data are shared with the community, local officials, and businesses, and that the program actively tracks student outcomes, including retention rates. She also presented concrete data on the program’s regional economic contributions and discussed a counterfactual scenario examining the potential impact on the community if Rockford University did not exist. She also discussed how many cohorts they have had as well as graduated students, as well as a program known as the Rockford Promise Partnership. She closed by reviewing her main points. **Paul Bialek (Oakton)** asked who is funding the Rockford Promise Partnership and she discussed multiple revenue streams including income from a nearby casino.
- 9:40 Deepshikha Shukla, Ph.D., MBA, Associate Vice President of Business Innovation and Dean of the College of Professional and Extended Learning (CPEL), presented “Bridging Opportunities, Empowering Individuals,” beginning with an overview of CPEL and its mission. She emphasized the college’s responsibility to respond rapidly to evolving workforce needs and highlighted its role in bridging the gap between higher education and employer demands. She also noted CPEL’s ability to serve adult learners and underserved populations, with the overarching goal of creating pathways for economic mobility. **Tyrone**

**Forman (UIC)** asked a question about sustainability. She discussed a number of concrete ways the university has stabilized sustainability, including building a better name recognition with the community. **Sue Wiediger (SIUE)** asked a question about more specific communication with the community in which she answered by giving examples including matching the fire department with chemists. **Andy Thomas (IIT)** asked if they have FTEs devoted to resources. She said it is dependent on work of a few passionate individuals, but its important for the success of the program, and what they have managed to do is create boards with local connections with funding, and their job is to prepare the workforce. The university has the people; the local has the funding.

10:02 Mary Weaks-Baxter, Ph.D, Department of English; and Director, Jane Addams Center for Civic Engagement discussed “Grounding Community Engagement in University Mission: A Case Study of the Jane Addams Center at Rockford University.” She discussed main areas of community-based service programs, Jane Addams day of service, RU Hearts in Action, and the Rockford Plunge, and their website shows their areas of focus. She talked about campus events that included nearly every member of campus including students and staff. She discussed civic engagement initiatives and community-based learning courses. She ended with highlights including hosting a global event on campus in 2027. **Tiffany Puckett (NIU)** asked about the date of the event, and she said Fall 2027. **Jack Haines (JJC)** asked how the the civic engagement days revolves around its academic calendar, and she said that all day classes are canceled. **Tyrone Forman (UIC)** asked how the university connects more to social justice similar to Jane Addams, and she discussed anti-racism initiatives that have been on campus. She discussed their websites land acknowledgement page and said they make sure the organizations they partner with are in line with their social views. **Patricia Saleeby (Bradley)** asked about monetary funding, and she said they need a community engagement impact statement to know for sure, as well as pairing with what a speaker had discussed earlier such as transportation support and day care.

10:26 The program then transitioned to The Honorable Thomas P. McNamara, Mayor of Rockford, who spoke on the importance of partnerships between communities and higher education. He emphasized that his role is to reduce barriers so that residents and students can succeed at all levels, from K–12 through higher education and adult learning. He highlighted the city’s partnerships with Rockford University and Northern Illinois University, including programs that allow Rockford residents with a 3.0 GPA to attend either institution tuition-free. He also noted the strength of their mentorship initiatives, with each student paired with a mentor. He concluded by underscoring the importance of engaging in difficult conversations within safe spaces and expressed appreciation for Rockford University’s role in the community. **Gay Miller (UIUC)** asked more about the mentor programs, and he spoke about the importance of them along with the next tier of the program: internships. He said a lot of these programs are meant to be sticky, meaning they have an impetus to stay around Rockford and call it home. **Marie Donovan (DePaul)** asked about funding, and he reiterated the program with the local casino.

10:45 BREAK

10:50 **IBHE Board Chair Pranav Kothari** immediately transitioned to the next portion of the meeting, organizing his remarks into two categories. He began with master planning and the needs of the state, explaining that the role of IBHE is to propose a budget to the Governor’s

office, typically recommending increases between 1% and 3%. He also outlined IBHE's responsibilities in program and institutional approval, noting, for example, the process for approving institutions such as GCU to offer programs (e.g., nursing) in Illinois. Additionally, he discussed IBHE's management of statewide data systems and grant administration. In response to questions about whether IBHE serves an advocacy role in higher education, he clarified that while their policies support the sector, advocacy is not their primary function, as other organizations are more directly responsible for that work. There was a question if they always do what the Governor says, and he said that it depends on who the Governor is.

- 11:02 **Mike Phillips (IVCC)** said that IBHE is appointed by him (Governor) so obviously the role is to support them, and although **Kothari** agreed, he said they can disagree on core principles. **Marie Donovan (DePaul)** opined that program approval has changed over the past 20 years and maybe its time to make program approval more 21<sup>st</sup> century in regards to academic needs. **Kothari** said program approval will emerge out of the strategic needs report, and that program approval is in one of the "six buckets". They both discussed obstacles with the GCU discussion. **Tena Helton (UIS)** asked a question about the board being proactive about proposals and needing more information. **Kothari** said he has this great data set with employment gaps, but universities don't ask for more data even if its published. He would like the data to be more "well promoted". He said as a state here are the areas of focus, and mentioned a similar program in Corpus Christi. He said that to do such a program at the state level would include "all the acronyms." **Sue Wiediger (SIUE)** added that in a previous FAC meeting we received the quad city report on the workforce, and that it was an awesome report, agreeing that the data is there. **Cynthia Boyce (Lincoln Trail)** asked if there are any programs to help two year compete with the four year, and he said they are focusing on removing obstacles, which may fall back to funding. **Dan Hrozencik (CSU)** asked a question about information regarding the three-year degree. **Trish Aumann (IBHE)** provided an answer that included HLC, teaching and learning outcomes. Dan also asked a question about funding advocacy and how IBHE sees it. **Kothari** said the funding is now a political process not a policy process, which is outside of his scope. **Mike Phillips (IVCC)** asked about guardrails to determine equity, and **Kothari** said that the bill has to be crafted well in order to not welcome lawsuits.
- 11:22 **IBHE Chair Kothari** answered a question about gathering data for credit hours. He said it wasn't the IBHE bill, and they are unclear on the data. **Marie Donovan (DePaul)** asked why the data bill was even created and he said he didn't know. He moved to a question about CCB and said it is being negotiated. He said there is a different funding formula that includes property taxes, and even if passed in the Fall, it will be fully initiated much later. He read a question regarding their role in other education such as K-12, and he reminded that there are a significant number of school districts in Illinois, as well as a significant number of community colleges and public colleges. He touched on the idea that health degrees were no longer considered professional and he said the state doesn't agree with that sentiment and that the federal approach, although arbitrary is more of an ISAC issue. **Patricia Saleeby (Bradley)** talked about how social workers and their loan payoff cycle, and that there needs to be great coordination with academics and professional associations. **Daniel Coles (Aurora)** said that previous budgets in the state came from other budget in the administration, which created agencies that could share funds. **Kothari** basically reiterated that it's important to discuss these funding formulas and how much the gaps are. **Mike**

**Phillips (IVCC)** said that once a formula is passed, it makes the politics of academics much easier since the politicians voted on it.

- 11:44 **IBHE Chair Kothari** raised a question regarding student needs and the use of a student needs survey. As part of the SUCCESS program, liaisons on each campus are being asked to identify the basic needs of their students, and he noted that last year's report is available online. **Trish Aumann (IBHE)** explained that the process between ICCB and IBHE is intended to be collaborative and serves as a national model for transferability. She clarified that IBHE does not require individual course submissions, but instead focuses on alignment with learning outcomes. She added that further clarification of the question may be needed to provide a more complete response and emphasized that alignment remains a central goal across Illinois higher education organizations. **Jack Haines (JJC)** raised concerns about workplace equity between high schools and colleges, particularly regarding class sizes and caps. Aumann responded by noting the importance of considering the full educational landscape. **Greg Ferrence (ISU)** added that class size caps at ISU differ significantly from those at community colleges and high schools. Cynthia Boyce (Lincoln Trail) emphasized that institutions must work diligently to ensure dual credit quality and build strong collaborative partnerships.
- 11:54 **Amy Carr (WIU)** posed two questions regarding how four-year institutions can maintain unique programs and how to reflect on GECC. Aumann responded that IBHE reviews policy, identifies areas needing additional context, gathers feedback, and then develops recommendations. **Mike Phillips (IVCC)** provided an example from his institution, highlighting the challenges and implications of requiring one lab versus two and the impact such decisions can have. Aumann believes that such an example would be approved if requested. **Tena Helton (UIS)** says that the program was meant maximize but actually minimized.
- 12:45 **Chair Dan Hrozencik (CSU)** reconvened after lunch to begin with reports. Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup> was an IBHE board meeting day. He also attended the coalition for transforming higher education funding meeting. He said that there is a growing frustration with the Governor and the Board to get behind the funding bill, and said he's going to send out a funding bill email which the FAC can send to representatives. The next meeting is June 17<sup>th</sup> in Springfield with meetings in the morning and lunch with the board afterwards. He said that the Capitol portion of the May meeting will be part of the official agenda for reimbursement purposes. He said that due to time we are going to cut caucus meetings today and the chairs agreed. He then transferred over to a discussion where he will be evacuating the Chair position in the Fall and that there will be elections in May.
- 12:50 **Vice Chair Jack Haines (Joliet Junior College)** started by saying thank you to the host James Marshall at Rockford University. He also said that the April meeting is in April and that individuals can decide whether to use the room block or not and that it's the last meeting before the Capitol.
- 12:55 **Secretary Jason Edgar, Morton College,** asked everyone to look at the membership list and make sure everything looks good including title, email, and term.

- 1:00 **Sue Wiediger (SIUE)** spoke about the most recent IBHE meeting including the creation of an ad hoc group to reevaluate the focus of the strategic plan, with seven specific “buckets” focus areas. She mentioned that the business meeting was interesting because of her connection to the business discussed.
- 1:05 **Legislative Liaison Mike Phillips (IVCC)** talked about the timing and stalling of the academic bills at the capitol. He talked about a house appropriations committee meeting and working through the bills. He also said that when filling out witness slips to fill it out as “self”. He said there is a teach-out at the capitol on April 16<sup>th</sup> among other protests at the capitol on that day. He said that the students really enjoy the trips to the capitol and tries to schedule as many appointments as possible, including with chairs and minority spokespeople. **Sue Wiediger (SIUE)** asked a question about delayed transfers and although he didn’t have an answer he was sure the information was available online. Dan Hrozencik (CSU) said that the FAC is down one public caucus member, and the community college caucus is entertaining at-large member, Angela Antoulou from College of Dupage.
- 1:15 **IBHE Liaison Trish Aumann** talked about academic awards and their due dates. She said the DFI board has new members that the IBHE voted to extend. She thanked everybody for the information about the IAI panels. She said the students did a great job sharing their voice in regards to the strategic plan. She discussed the house liaison summit on May 21<sup>st</sup> and that they will host a session on the house report. She also requested feedback on the workforce piece, along with other reporting, more widely useful. **Tena Helton (UIS)** expressed it was extremely reassuring that those reports were going to be available. **Patricia Saleeby (Bradley)** talked about bringing in the data showing the connections. **Gay Miller (UIUS)** asked if there are exceptions to degrees with low enrollment, Aumann said not every degree will meet every metric.
- 1:29 **Chair Dan Hrozencik (CSU)** asked for a motion to pass the February minutes. **Jack Haines (JJC)** made the motion, **Marie Donovan (DePaul)** with the second, with unanimous consent, with the exception of **Patricia Saleeby (Bradley)** who abstained.

1:30 Working Group

**Mental Health Group-** waiting on IRB approval.

**Technology working group-** deciding on what topics to focus on in Spring 2026 with a working document known as a rambler with the next meeting to align the ramble with the IBHE’s specific plan.

**Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) working group-** discussions of groups that are attempting to get funding to map out the PLA landscape, in hopes that both groups can join forces and start working on policies.

**Equity working group-** working on accommodations offices and various questions about what is working and what needs to change. The group has not been looking at cost for accommodations.

**Faculty and Student Mental Health working group-** continuing to work on the survey that they would like to pass out to all institutions.

**Early College working group-** the group looked at the dual credit quality act and reviewed where they could compare the NACEP requirements to it.

**Cynthia Boyce (Lincoln Trail)** asked how everyone was doing with their compliance and accessibility policies at their institution. A majority of the FAC said no and Cynthia wondered out loud how enforcement was going to work in the first place. ‘

**2:15 Chair Dan Hrozencik, CSU,** sought a motion to adjourn. **Jack Haines (JJC)** made the motion, **Marie Donovan (DePaul)** with the second, with unanimous consent. So moved.

Minutes respectfully submitted by *Secretary Jason Edgar, Morton College*

DRAFT