



MINUTES

IBHE FAC Meeting
April 17th, 2026

Morton College
Centennial Room
3801 South Central Avenue
Cicero, IL 60804

FAC members/alternates attending and their institutions

In person:

Mary Laundry	Adler University
Patrick Crawford	Augustana College
Daniel J. Coles	Aurora University
Stacy Kosier	Carl Sandburg College
Dan Hrozencik	Chicago State University
Shawn Schumacher	DeVry University
Nicole Zeller	Eastern Illinois University
Allison Douglas	Elgin Community College
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
Matt Landrus	Lake Land 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
Jessica McDonald	Olney Central College
Sarah Garber	Rosalind Franklin University
Kristine Burgess	Rosalind Franklin University (alternate)
Lichang Wang	Southern Illinois University-Carbondale
Sue Wiediger	Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville
Amy Carr	Western Illinois University

Absent:

Patricia Saleeby	Bradley University
Marie Donovan	DePaul University
Nora Heist	Eastern Illinois University, IBHE Board Member
Shaalein Lopez	Governors State University
James Marshall	Rockford University
Mary Ellen Schiller	Roosevelt University
John Cooksey	Truman College, City College of Chicago
Tena Helton	University of Illinois- Springfield
Gay Miller	University of Illinois- Urbana Champaign
Tosha Baker	Wabash Valley College

9:00 **Chair Dan Hrozencik, CSU**, Call to order and Introductions. **Jason Edgar (Morton College)** introduced **Dr. Sheldon Walcher, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Morton College**.

9:05 Dr. Sheldon Walcher, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Morton College, spoke about Career and Technical Education. He thanked **Jason Edgar** for his leadership at Morton College and got right into his discussion of a changing landscape. He discussed a structural gap between learning and the workforce. He says Career and Technical Education closes that gap. He affirmed that Applied Learning is important. He informed the FAC that Morton College is a Hispanic Serving Institution with around 83% Hispanic student population and with Cicero being one of the highest concentrations of Hispanics outside of Texas and California. He spoke about the difference between training and education. He said we should not just deliver content, but explain what it means, and have discernment, not just knowledge. He ended by saying faculty help students move from information to understanding to purpose/relevance.

9:28 **Tiffany Puckett (NIU)** said she loved field trips and asked about other types of career and technical education programs. He discussed nursing like most community colleges, as well as new EV programs.

The program was then moved to the CTE and HVAC labs for discussion and exhibits. Mike Jonas, HVAC Instructor at Morton College, said that no Prior Learning Assessment was needed to fill in gaps with CTE programs. One might have learned wrong in the field. He began with 101 in refrigeration when he returned for more learning as a non-traditional student. He gained a better, more complete picture than he would have had with prior learning credit alone.

10:00 BREAK

10:10 HLC Discussion (via Zoom). **Chair Dan Hrozencik (CSU)** introduced **Linnea A. Stenson from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC)**. She discussed the basics of accreditation and how HLC assists institutions in multiple areas to become accredited. She said that before the current administration has made accreditation bodies out to be the enemy even though we are just a sleepy little commission doing great work. She said that

accrediting bodies have become a target of modern day politics and that they are forcing certain ideologies but that they continue to do their jobs and believe that they are one of the top accredited states in the country, and when an institution is not meeting accreditation, they step in and work with the institution to do better. She said in jest that there are no perfect campuses, and that they enjoy working with all institutions. She said that each institution has an HLC liaison officer before moving on to prepared questions.

10: 22 **Chair Dan Hrozencik (CSU)** asked the FAC for additional questions, but none were raised, so Stenson continued with questions regarding institutional evaluation. She explained that the HLC relies heavily on peer review, as peer reviewers are the individuals best positioned to determine whether a campus is meeting accreditation standards and to provide recommendations for improvement. She noted that when peer reviewers fall behind on their assignments, HLC temporarily pauses their reviewing responsibilities until they are caught up. However, she also emphasized that new peer reviewers receive strong training and preparation. Stenson also addressed a question regarding how the HLC supports faculty. She explained that the commission establishes and defines what constitutes “faculty” and then evaluates campuses to determine whether institutions are meeting that definition and corresponding standards. She also said that HLC helps campuses with Curriculum.

10:31 **Shawn Shumacher (DeVry)** asked about HLC working with 19 different states. She said that work with numerous states and groups, and because of that they are one of the largest commissions. She said that Florida, North Carolina, and Texas are also joining, and discussed how Florida has a law that says they must change accreditors every 10 years. She said that the criteria doesn’t change regardless of the state or institution, including one institution that has less than a dozen students.

Mike Phillips (IVCC) asked a follow-up question regarding state and institutional restrictions placed on faculty members who are considered content experts, using the example of a geologist discussing evolution in the classroom. Stenson responded that it was an excellent question and reiterated that the HLC supports academic freedom. She explained that the commission generally assumes faculty are operating within state laws when discussing subjects that may intersect with issues of academic freedom. Stenson added that the HLC’s ability to intervene is somewhat limited in these situations, but that the commission can support faculty members when institutions themselves affirm and uphold principles of academic freedom. Mike followed up by giving an example of following the laws for accounting but also specific rules for accounting in a board. She followed up with another example involving aggregate data.

Greg Ferrence (ISU) provided a hypothetical example in which a state declared that pi equals three, arguing that such a decision would undermine the foundations of mathematics and science. He asked how the HLC would advocate for a return to academic and disciplinary standards grounded in established knowledge and “common sense.”

Stenson responded humorously that such an example would not give her much confidence when driving across a bridge in that state. She explained that situations like this ultimately come down to institutions maintaining academic standards and making decisions about transfer credit acceptance. She noted that colleges and universities, in consultation with their

faculty, would need to determine whether credits from institutions operating under such standards should be accepted.

She added that one of the more interesting developments in higher education is that regional accreditors have historically relied on a shared level of trust and familiarity among accredited institutions. However, she suggested that higher education may be moving into an era in which transfer credits are not automatically accepted across institutions, particularly if concerns emerge regarding academic standards or the practices of accrediting bodies.

- 10:44 **Dan Hrozencik (CSU)** asked about her thoughts on the 90 credit degrees. She said that there has always been some shrinking and expanding in the field, and at the 90 credit degrees are less debt and get students into the market quickly. **Amy Carr (WIU)** asked about how HLC thinks about who has the autonomy in dual credit courses.
- 10:58 **Andy Howard (IIT)** asked how the HLC interacts with specialized accrediting bodies, including ABET and the medical and professional accreditors. Stenson responded that HLC is fully aware of the concerns raised by specialized accreditors, and routinely works with those accreditors to see that students' needs are articulated at the proper levels.
- 11:00 **Chair Dan Hrozencik (CSU)** began the business meeting. Sue made some suggestions to the minutes and were accepted. **Mike Phillips (IVCC)** with the motion, **Greg Ferrence (ISU)** with the second, all in favor, abstaining were **Nicole Zeller (EIU)** and **Jessica McDonald (Olney)**.
- 11:05 **Amy Carr (WIU)** made forward a motion of an opening statement to be placed on the front of the website that was circulated via email. **Tyrone Forman (UIC)** asked for clarification about why this is essential. She said that we are acknowledging gaps in funding and policy. The FAC unanimously passed the statement with Tyrone's suggested edits: "Whereas the Illinois Board of Higher Education's (IBHE) proposed budget falls short of adequately meeting the needs of our higher education institutions, the Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE recommends that the IBHE in its annual budget proposals each year, include a model-based funding estimate of the state expenditure that would be adequate for meeting the needs of higher education including student financial aid, community colleges, and public universities. This is a vital contribution that the IBHE can make to higher ed funding conversations."
- 11:16 **Sue Wiediger (SIUE)** think folks should also know that there will be three committee meetings related to the strategic plan review, June 17 9-noon, August 19 11-12:30; and November 18, 11-12:30, with final recommendations made at the January 20, 2027 IBHE meeting. There will be time for public comment at those three meetings and other stakeholder engagement opportunities. There was an FAC wide discussion of having an ad hoc or working group committee created.
- 11:17 LUNCH

- 12:10 **Chair Dan Hrozencik (CSU)** discussed at the June meeting that we are going to have lunch with the IBHE Board with more details to follow. He also mentioned that the FAC will be voting on executive members in May. He also mentioned that working and caucus groups need a report to the Chair by June. He requested questions for the legislators to Mike Phillips (IVCC) by May 1st. Vice Chair report was also done by Dan Hrozencik (CSU) in which he discussed the day at the capitol (May 14th) and there will be a dinner that night. He also said that the meeting will make the capital day official with being on the agenda.
- 12:15 **Secretary Jason Edgar (Morton College)** said the membership list is updated and that he is running for Vice Chair, leaving the Secretary position open, explaining that taking care of the minutes is not difficult and the editing process is light.
- 12:20 **Legislative Liaison Mike Phillips (IVCC)** brought students and they delivered messages at the Teach Out (on 4/16). They submitted short bios to give to legislators. They asked for state back-up for TRIO programs as federal support goes away, but the money is not there. The students also asked for prompt responses for transfers students, since most students contract for housing in December. Mike added that every rural legislator is in favor of community colleges providing some baccalaureate degrees. The legislators were very open to the students' ideas, but noted the budget is super tight this year. Matt Landrus pointed out that starting in April, advisors need 8 hours of mental health counselor training. Mike added that SB 2202, on academic freedom, was amended to include faculty.
- 12:26 **Matt Landrus (Lake Land College)** asked a question about the budget and how some advisors at his school were switching to counselors to meet budget shortfalls. Mike said that the budget is extremely tight and to have more perspective on the SURS advisory board. He also brought up the funding formula and a lot of action on the Capitol floor on April 16th. The senate bill is still alive and the committee deadline is extended to April 24th.
- 12:34 **Trish Aumann (IBHE)** began by introducing herself again, her role at the IBHE, and Jill Gebke's new role. She said the IBHE now has four analysts to get program reviews to go through faster. She talked about attending the HLC conference and everything she and the group learned about AI and other academic topics. She ended with a discussion of deferred maintenance, in response to an FAC request for information about how the IBHE proposed budget proposed increasing funding for it.. **Tiffany Puckett (NIU)** asked who is doing the certified training for new IBHE liaisons and Trish said she did not have the specific information. Sue Wiediger (SIUE) asked if there was any news about the equity plans. Trish said full reviews of equity plans won't be requested now. They are requesting 5 year plans now, working with the ICCB.
- 12:48 Working Groups
- 1:20 Caucus Meetings
- 2:06 **Two-Year Caucus-** discussed the two at-large positions, with **Jessica McDonald (OCC)** earning an at-large position, and **Jack Haines (JJC)** earning an at-large position, with Jack also expressing interest in Chair of the FAC. **Cynthia Boyce (LTC)** and **Lara**

Hernandez-Corkey (MVCC) will serve as the chair and vice-chair of the Caucus. Shawnee, Richland, and College of DuPage will be receiving upcoming invitations

- 2:08 **Independent Caucus-** discussion of three un-filled positions but members were not here to be voted on, according to **Shawn Schumacher (DeVry)**. There was a motion made by **Amy Carr (WIU)** to move IIT up the invitation list, and **Matt Landrus (Lake Land College)** seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous.
- 2:10 **Public Caucus-** Discussion of upcoming elections including **Amy Carr (WIU)** running for Chair of the FAC. She also discussed the ADA compliance policy with an imminent deadline that doesn't seem enforced by a majority of Illinois institutions. Some public caucus faculty said that they are using no more PowerPoints or visuals, to avoid compliance worries. Sue had asked if we annually provide surveys to faculty evaluating the provost and president, and only some of our schools do so.
- 2:13 **Chair Dan Hrozencik (CSU)** said Lichang Wang, Lara Hernandez-Corkey, and elections chair Andy Howard, will serve as the election committee.
- 2:15 **Technology working group-** they are working on a draft for their year-long paper
- 2:17 **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) working group-** no report
- 2:18 **Equity working group-** discussion of neuro-diversity equity.
- 2:20 **Faculty and Student Mental Health working group-** discussed a survey they are working on.
- 2:23 **Early College working group-** discussion of compensation for dual credit liaisons, as well as NACEP- DCQA comparisons (and whether to include administrative rules).
- 2:25 **Student Needs-** discussion of coming with a description of Student Needs as well as a survey brought by **Jessica McDonald (Olney)**.
- 2:45 **Chair Dan Hrozencik, CSU,** sought a motion to adjourn. Unanimous consent.

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

Submitted Items: [HLC Trends, 2026](#)

[Board Meeting and Agenda](#)

[IBHE Calendar](#)