



Illinois Innovation Network

Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 17, 2022

1:00 – 2:30 PM

Martin Luther King Union at Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois and Zoom

Welcome and Introductions

Jerry Blazey, IIN Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM. Blazey welcomed Council members and reminded Council members that we follow the Open Meetings Act and for this to be an official meeting, a quorum in person needs to be present. Jerry also welcomed Kathleen Townsley-Samuel, who is new to the VPEDI Office. Kathleen will be providing administrative support to the IIN Council and working committees. Blazey thanked Ryan Hendrickson and Eastern Illinois University for hosting the IIN Council meeting.

Jay Walsh, Vice President for Economic Development & Innovation, University of Illinois System, also welcomed everyone. Walsh reminded the Council that the IIN is a trusted partner with companies. Further, the IIN is in a good position where we are pursued as a partner in a variety of different initiatives. This position will be particularly useful when applying for state, federal, and/or private funding.

Roll Call

Lori Pflugmacher conducted roll call. The following Council members answered present:

Jerry Blazey, Northern Illinois University
Denise Cobb, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Chris Merrett, Western Illinois University
Cynthia Faullin for TJ Augustine, University of Illinois Chicago
Jessica Mueller for Mike Bedell, Northeastern Illinois University
Ryan Hendrickson, Eastern Illinois University
Pradeep Khanna, Discovery Partners Institute
Kim Kidwell, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign
Lynn Andersen Lindberg, Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Craig McLauchlan, Illinois State University
Reggie Greenwood for Beverly Schneller, Governors State University
Bruce Sommer, University of Illinois Springfield
Theresa Johnston for Alex Stagnero-Green, UIC Health Sciences, Rockford

Janelle Gurnsey for Lt Governor Julianna Stratton, Ex-Officio
Shelly Nickols Richardson, University of Illinois Extension Ex-Officio

Host – Eastern Illinois University Welcome

Ryan Hendrickson welcomed attendees to EIU's campus and thanked staff for their help in getting the zoom meeting set up. EIU's mission is to provide superior education while being accessible to a wide range of students. In Fall 2022, EIU welcomed a freshmen class that had eleven percent higher enrollment than the 21-22 school year. They have the highest number of graduate students and international students in EIU's history. The international students come from 51 different countries. EIU offers an abundance of online programs, accelerated graduate programs, and second master's degree programs. Among the first-year student population, 50% are first generation students, 43% of undergraduates are first generation students, and 32% of undergraduates are students of color.

Hendrickson further stated that EIU is continuously making progress with their hub which is in collaboration with Lakeland College. The primary focus of their hub is sustainability. They received a \$1 million grant that is going to be used to build a new community welcoming classroom and meeting space for networking for Charleston, Mattoon and all of Coles County. This project remains in the design stage and will soon begin construction.

Electric Vehicle Initiative- Lisa Clemmons Stott from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), provided a brief overview of an Electric Vehicle initiative at the state level in which DCEO would like to utilize the IIN (See attached slides).

After the presentation, Blazey noted this would be a good profitable partnership. Jessica Mueller mentioned to Clemmons Stott regarding how to utilize universities in the EV effort; utilize in workforce training, business and workforce path. Cynthia Faullin asked Clemmons Stott how DCEO will get from 53,000 electric vehicles on the road at present to 1 million in 7 years. Clemmons Stott indicated this is why assistance through an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) is needed in prioritizing what tasks to accomplish. Clemmons Stott then touched on the first few tasks the DCEO is completing for the IGA. Reggie Greenwood asked about supply chain connections to help get into markets. Walsh proposed a question on the workforce development side, saying companies have particular needs and DCEO needs to be able to hear those needs. It would be good for the DCEO to go into meetings with companies knowing what the current needs are and how DCEO can meet them. Clemmons Stott concluded by stating some incentives available for electric vehicles.

ENGAGE Kyle Harfst provided an update, including that recent meetings took place with the National Center for Supercomputing Applications and University Capital Programs to discuss moving forward. ENGAGE has been a part of the IIN since day one. ENGAGE is a \$10 million initiative that is a part of the capital expenditure. This initiative is to provide deeper learning immersive classrooms for each of the university campuses. Since the pandemic, it would be useful to take another look at where we are

lacking or utilizing the assistance from these immersive classrooms. Question is, how are the facilities being utilized because of COVID, since the initiative started pre-pandemic. We need to come up with a new approach to provide hardware as well as interconnectivity for each of the hubs. Harfst indicated there is interest in scheduling a meeting with the Capital Development Board to move this initiative forward.

Review of NSF Engine Proposal Brian Rogers gave an update on Type I and Type II engine proposals in which IIN has involvement. A Type I engine proposal was submitted September 29th by Governors State University on behalf of the IIN. The topic of the proposal was 'Smart Logistics Engine'. Regarding Type II submissions, there are two important deadlines: A letter of intent is due December 15th and the proposal deadline is January 18th. There are a couple of current projects: Ag Tech Proposal run by UIUC; Workforce Development on behalf of IIN run by Courtney Breckenridge SIUE; Manufacturing engine run by DPI with a workforce development component lead by Jeannette Tamayo. There is a Quantum NSF Engine that is being run by UIC, led by Tamayo. They are currently looking for participants with a cutoff deadline by December 2, 2022.

Illinois Broadband Lab Update Kyle Harfst provided a summary of activities to date including Broadband READY planning grants, hiring of three broadband coordinators and soon to be hiring of two directors – a Digital Equity Director and a Broadband Access and Deployment Director. The IGA is between the state and our office of the Vice President of Economic Development and Innovation and provided a list of task orders.

Alex Stagnero-Green joined the meeting at 1:47 p.m.

Approval of September 22 Minutes (Jerry Blazey) – Action Item
Motion to approve by Craig McLaughlan
Second by Ryan Hendrickson

Aye: All
Nay: None
Abstain: Denise Cobb
Motion Carried

Public Comment Kyle Harfst reported that no comments have been submitted and none were brought forward from the audience.

New Business Walsh and Harfst discussed future collaborative activities with respect to next steps.

Hydrogen Initiative- Walsh updated the council on the details of the concept paper assembled in addition to due dates. The Department of Energy (DOE) received funding via a congressional legislation to develop 6-8 hydrogen hubs. A total of \$8 billion has been set aside for the hubs across the states. The concept paper was submitted

November 7, 2022. The Midwest region has pulled together a group to develop the proposal. The full proposal is due in early April 2023. Funds will be used to develop the capacities of hydrogen supply companies to store, use and transport hydrogen products. The aim is largely deployment. DOE has stated there will be no money for Research and Development; instead, universities will play a role in workforce development. MACH H2 is playing a role in entrepreneurial companies. There is a need for techno-economical analysis on which technologies to move forward with, for the long and short term. Two National labs, Argonne and Idaho National Labs, are heavily involved. Wind, solar and nuclear energy are the main sectors that do not produce carbon. There is also a significant educational play in hydrogen usage. The public needs to be educated, from K12 to adult learners. The university would be giving the education to those people. Discussions with the Illinois Board of Higher Education will be necessary for progress.

First Step Act- Harfst said this is a funded proposal. Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity was the lead applicant for the federal initiative. The funding is for returning citizens toward their first step back. Incarcerated citizens will have the resources to get retrained in employment and skills, prior to release. Funding includes \$10 million, including \$2 million for IIN partners administered through SIUE.

Frequency of IIN Meetings- There was a discussion on the possibility of going down to quarterly meetings. Eight members are required to be in person to meet Quorum. Question raised: Will we need to change bylaws?

Next meeting will be January 26, 2023, via zoom.

Ryan Hendrickson offered to meeting attendees a brief tour of campus.

Adjourn Chair Blazey adjourned at 2:17 p.m.