



**Illinois Innovation Network
Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 26, 2023
1:00 – 2:30 PM
Zoom Meeting**

Welcome and Introductions

Leslie Roundtree, IIN Council Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM. Roundtree welcomed Council members, IIN staff and guests. Roundtree mentioned Chair Blazey is in Washington DC and could not make this meeting. As Vice Chair, she presided over the meeting in his absence. Roundtree reminded people that this meeting is recorded, and they are following the guidelines of the Open Meetings Act.

Jay Walsh, Vice President for Economic Development & Innovation, University of Illinois System, also welcomed everyone. Walsh noted there is a lot happening in IIN across the state. Some of these activities are being initiated within the state and others are being initiated by the Federal Government. These activities will be discussed during the meeting today.

Roll Call

Kathleen Townsley-Samuel conducted roll call. The following Council members answered present:

Leslie Roundtree, Chicago State University
Denise Cobb, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Chris Merrett, Western Illinois University
TJ Augustine, University of Illinois Chicago
Mike Bedell, Northeastern Illinois University
Ryan Hendrickson, Eastern Illinois University
Kim Kidwell, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Lynn Andersen Lindberg, Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Craig McLauchlan, Illinois State University
Beverly Schneller, Governors State University
Chris Setti, Distillery Labs in Peoria
Bruce Sommer, University of Illinois Springfield
Alex Stagnaro-Green, UIC Health Sciences, Rockford

Janelle Gurnsey proxy for Lt Governor Julianna Stratton, Ex-Officio
Anne Silvis proxy for Shelly Nickols-Richardson, University of Illinois Extension Ex-Officio
Jennifer Foster, Illinois Community College Board, Ex-Officio

Sustaining Illinois Seed Grants

As Chair of the Research & Collaboration Committee, Craig McLauchlan reported the funded projects for this sixth cohort. McLauchlan noted they had another successful round of applications. From these applications, they awarded four more awards and there is more information on the news release. The lead hubs were Illinois State University, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Northern Illinois University; four other hubs were involved: University of Illinois Springfield, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, University of Illinois Chicago, Chicago State University. There were three new PIs in the program and all 15 hubs have now been a part of the Seed Grant process. There are now six different cohorts of this grant, they have funded 36 projects with just over \$1 million and 123 unique investigators. He ended by noting they have eight different funding follow up projects that have received a total over \$450k.

Ben Taylor provided a link to the Sustaining Illinois Seed Grant news release:
<https://news.uillinois.edu/view/7815/486889873>

Matt Schmit, Director of DCEO, Ex-Officio, joined the meeting at 1:10 PM

IIN Digital Dashboard Presentation

Brian Rogers provided a demonstration of the beginning elements of this digital dashboard. This was a follow-up discussion from a Council meeting earlier last Fall regarding the purchase of SMARTSHEET and collecting data for activities of the IIN. Rogers reiterates the digital dashboard is “A business intelligence tool that allows business leaders to track, analyze and report on key performance indicators and metrics.” The demonstration was over the Research & Collaboration Working Committee digital dashboard. A few things listed on the dashboard: Committee Members, Upcoming Meetings, Quick Links, Projects, Overview, etc.

Illinois Broadband Lab Update

Kyle Harfst started off saying Illinois Broadband Lab (IBL) is not a separate corporation or structure. Harfst noted the IBL is a collaborative or strategic partnership among Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), University of Illinois Extension, University of Illinois System, Illinois Innovation Network and the Benton Institute for Broadband. Harfst mentioned the announcement that will be coming up in the next few weeks on the Broadband Lab.

Jeannette Tamayo began by announcing the pursuit of a number of initiatives. The first one is a Digital Equity Act that requires states to submit their Digital Equity Plan in an application. IBL is launching a massive stakeholder engagement strategy between February and June throughout the 10, DCEO economic regions. This strategy is to gain knowledge from the communities about what their needs are to incorporate the insight into the plan. IBL is working with McKinsey on the infrastructure to figure out where Broadband is needed. The State of Illinois will receive up to \$1 billion for both plans. IBL will have branding that will be seen in the next few weeks along with information on what we are doing with IBL.

Walsh remarked that the IBL is an incredible effort between people across the state. This will affect every community that does not have Broadband. IBL will help many sectors (health, education, small/large businesses, individuals, etc.). The opportunity coming from the distribution of broadband is enormous.

Proposal Updates

Tamayo summarized the pending proposals that have been submitted in junction, or on behalf of the IIN, that included NSF Engines, Hydrogen and PROWD.

NSF Engines: There have been presentations from various groups to the IIN. The applications were submitted earlier this month. There were three applications that include university partners. The first application was Ag Tech CBE Engine, which was submitted in collaboration with the Illinois Community Colleges Board, a number of community colleges, Kansas State University, Nebraska Innovation Campus, SIUC, Manufacturing Times Design, St. Charles Community College and St. Louis Community College. The second application is a 'Design to Delivery: Reclaiming Global Leadership in Manufacturing Engine' that was proposed by DPI. NIU was a key part in the workforce development of this proposal. The third proposal was through UIC on the Quantum Crossroads Regional Innovation Engine. All three proposals were submitted and there will be a public dissemination and it will be pushed out to everyone when it is released.

Lisa Clemmons-Scott (DCEO) did a presentation for funding on NFS Engines (EV) at the last Council meeting. Lisa had noted DCEO needs assistance on getting tasks completed. Six tasks have been identified and have been put out to bid with the IIN, universities and consultants. These bids are under review and DCEO is the ultimate decision maker. For two of the tasks, IIN institutions have been selected to lead on workforce development and on battery storage analysis. NIU is leading workforce development and UIC is leading battery storage analysis.

Hydrogen: Tamayo recalled this is a 'slight' opportunity with \$1 billion attached. There are several universities that are participating. This proposal requires a non-disclosure agreement; therefore, little can be said to the public. Ultimately, the goal is to stand up a facility that would tap into new and existing technologies to create workforce development and economic growth opportunity. Many committees are working with this proposal.

PROWD: A grant was awarded to DCEO and the IIN as a subgrant partner. They are currently in the process of developing the work plan. There are two components: \$2 million is available for technical assistance; remaining \$7.5 million will be available for competitive direct service grants. There will be a press release for DCEO and IIN partnership coming soon. Jessica Mueller had a follow-up question: Will there be certain workforce development that is priority, i.e., training? Tamayo responded they do not want to limit themselves to one specific training or segment.

1871 Membership

Walsh had a recent meeting with Betsy Ziegler, Executive Director of 1871, to discuss a membership for IIN members. 1871 is a small business incubator in downtown Chicago consisting of tech founders and leaders. During the pandemic, much of 1871 services went virtual and there is an interest to include public universities throughout the state to 1871. Betsy has offered for the IIN to serve on the Education Leaders Advisory group that the 1871 CEO chairs; the group meets quarterly. 1871 will be rolling out a four-month innovation lab on many different topics. This lab will meet one week per month under a theme. Betsy would love to work with the IIN.

IIN Bylaw Changes

At the November IIN Council meeting there was discussion on the possibility of going down to quarterly Council meetings. Presently there are five meetings. Harfst reviewed the bylaws in advance of this meeting. We now have a Disaster Proclamation from the governor as of January 6th. Article IV 13.3.3 indicates Council meetings shall meet bi-monthly or as scheduled. Article VII, Section 1 indicates that General meetings of the Council shall be held at least quarterly. The language needs to be cleaned up and basically look at what the Council prefers. With bylaw changes, it is required that a two-week notice is provided before any action is taken. Harfst's recommendation moving forward would be to eliminate Article IV Section 13.3.3 and to amend Article VII, Section 1 General Meetings, to include General meetings of the Council shall be held at least twice per year.

Mike Bedell and TJ Augustine both agree to having in person and Zoom meetings. The possibility of extending the meetings would make the commute more worthwhile.

Working Committee Changes (Kyle Harfst) – Action Item

Merging High School Entrepreneurship to Youth Subcommittee: There have been overlaps to several subcommittees. The Youth Subcommittee is part of the Education and Workforce Development Committee.

Motion to approve by Bruce Sommer

Second by Mike Bedell

Aye: All

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

Approval of November 17, 2022 Minutes (Leslie Roundtree) – (Action Item)

Motion to approve by Craig McLauchlan

Second by Lynn Andersen-Lindberg

Aye: All

Nay: None

Abstain: Leslie Roundtree, Mike Bedell

Motion Carried

Public Comment

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

New Business

Roundtree and Walsh discussed upcoming activities and other possible projects IIN may be interested in.

March and May Meeting venues- Harfst discussed having March's meeting a Zoom meeting due to schedules and possible weather. He also noted that the IIN should have the meeting on May 25th in person, on the NIU campus in Dekalb, since it will be Chair Blazey's last meeting.

2023 STEAM Expo- Harfst touched on his discussion with Mary Reynolds of the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology about the STEAM Expo. Mary does want to do something again this year, either at the State Fair or perhaps hold it in April or early May. The target would be young adults, youth groups and students. Mary had ideas of a drone competition at the State Fair, a one-to-two-day STEAM Expo in collaboration with other organizations (May or September), or help organize a three-hour innovation event during Innovation and Technology month (April) to name a few. Harfst opened the floor to comments on having the STEAM Expo during the State Fair. Some members agreed it is difficult to commit that amount of time over several days, along with not being able to commit their staff's time.

Cannabis Research- Harfst sent out an email to ask if anyone has involvement or interest in cannabis research. Walsh noted the prevalence of cannabis use is growing in the US. There are many kinds of cannabis that need to be understood better. There has been a push to have a Cannabis Research Institute that is funded; DPI is taking a lead on this initiative. The University of Illinois System has been pushing for a while to try and understand how to move forward with this initiative. There are risks involved in cannabis research. Since cannabis is still illegal at the federal level, organizations could put their federal funding at risk. The cannabis institute would have a set of components: social equity impacts, medicinal and health impacts, agricultural crop management, research, education, regulatory advice, among others.

Next meeting will be March 23, 2023, via Zoom.

Adjourn Vice Chair Roundtree adjourned at 2:20 pm.