



GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY

Illinois Professional Development System

PDAC Higher Education Committee

September 15, 2022

Minutes

Anne Pradzinski	Kate Connor	Patricia Steinhaus
Christie Easley	Marie Donovan	Rebecca Pruitt
Emily Dorsey	Marsha Hawley	Ruth Kimble
Julia Auch	Mikki Sherwood	Tom Pavkov
Julie Lindstrom	Natalie Vesga	

Kate Connor and Rebecca Pruitt welcomed Marsha Hawley as the new tri-chair of the Higher Education Committee.

Approval of Minutes

- March 23, 2022
 - Marie Donovan moved to approve the minutes.
 - Patricia Steinhaus seconded the motion, minutes approved.

Committee members were asked to check-in regarding experiences with the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE)

- Continue to look for students that have a degree, many learners who are inquiring about classes only have a few hours or credit, but not the Associate's degree.
- Navigators need to know the rules around credit hours, junior status, degrees when discussing scholarship eligibility with potential students.
- Navigators are making good connections with higher education faculty and mentors.
- It is important for higher education institutions to have solid on-boarding systems in place as semesters begin in order for students to better navigate entering college.
- Some institutions are seeing increases in enrollment while others have not seen as big an impact on the number of students coming into their programs. Navigators are using their connections at SDAs to help inform the workforce of this opportunity.
- The COVID pandemic is still impacting overall recruitment and enrollment at higher education institutions.
- There is concern from center employers that they could potentially lose employees if they increase their education. Such as leaving to take positions at Chicago Public Schools.
- Students are preferring to participate part-time rather than become full-time students. Many are working full time and have families which limits their ability to attend school.

PDAC Higher Education Strategic Plan

- The PDAC Higher Education Strategic Goal 2 focuses on the Illinois Board of Higher Education's Strategic Plan and how it connects to the goals of the PDAC Higher Education plan. There is a focus on closing equity gaps, with the Consortium work connecting to this goal.
 - Higher Education Objective 2: *Explore the role apprenticeships play and create a guide for Illinois higher education institutions and workforce partners looking to implement.*
 - Questions surfaced include:
 - How to attract new students into the ECE field using apprenticeship modules? These modules could include high school students as a pipeline into the field.
 - What role does dual credit play in attracting students as well? There are many federal laws, regulations, and rules regarding apprenticeships.
 - Karen Yarbrough with the Illinois Department of Human Services is currently working on apprenticeship modules. We will outreach to Karen to invite her to our meeting in December to review module opportunities.
 - Any initiatives that are put forward must also take into consideration the limits on faculty capacity for projects.
 - Marie Donovan announced that this spring the next phase of the study she conducted before COVID on the shrinking early childhood faculty will resume with surveys going to faculty. The results of the survey and other findings will be released in fall 2023.
 - Rebecca Pruitt also would like to look at NAEYC accreditation and how it could connect to the work in Illinois including Gateways Credentials.

