

**THE ILLINOIS ARTICULATION INITIATIVE:
ANNUAL REPORT 2002-2003**

Submitted for: Information.

Summary: Although the planning for the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) began a decade ago in January 1993, the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) was not implemented until Summer of 1998. The IAI was designed to ease transfer for students among Illinois colleges and universities. May 2003 marked the end of the fifth year of implementation. In addition to the adoption of the GECC, 27 major panels also have been convened. This item reviews the current status of the IAI, highlights the past year's activities, and considerations for the future.

Action Requested: None.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**THE ILLINOIS ARTICULATION INITIATIVE:
ANNUAL REPORT 2002-2003**

Executive Summary

This item reviews the current status of the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). May 2003 marked the end of the fifth year of implementing the transferable IAI General Education Core Curriculum (GECC). The GECC was designed to ease transfer for students among Illinois colleges and universities. In addition to developing the GECC, faculty panels also have developed recommendations of courses to be taken by lower division students in preparation for transferring into the 27 most popular baccalaureate majors.

The Annual Report begins with a history of the development and implementation of the IAI. It then turns to discussing the current status of the IAI project; observations about the impacts of IAI and the effectiveness of several broad goals and objectives; issues that have been raised in the past year and progress made toward resolution of those concerns; current efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of the various components of IAI using multiple measures; and a brief discussion about marketing the IAI.

The report concludes with a summary of highlights of this past year's activities and several considerations for future study.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**THE ILLINOIS ARTICULATION INITIATIVE:
ANNUAL REPORT 2002-2003**

Introduction

This item reviews the current status of the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). May 2003 marked the end of the fifth year of implementing the transferable IAI General Education Core Curriculum (GECC). The GECC was designed to ease transfer for students among Illinois colleges and universities. In addition to developing the GECC, faculty panels also have developed recommendations of courses to be taken by lower division students in preparation for transferring into the 27 most popular baccalaureate majors.

History of the Illinois Articulation Initiative

In January 1993, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and Transfer Coordinators of Illinois Colleges and Universities jointly launched the Illinois Articulation Initiative to ease the transfer of more than 30,000 students annually among Illinois public and independent, associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. The IAI grew out of the Board's 1990 undergraduate education policies on transfer and articulation. Three key concepts in these policies provided the underlying foundation for IAI: (1) that "associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions are equal partners" in educating college freshmen and sophomores, (2) that "faculties should take primary responsibility for developing and maintaining program and course articulation," and (3) that "institutions are expected to work together to assure that lower-division baccalaureate programs are comparable in scope, quality, and academic rigor."

The IAI is one of the most ambitious transfer projects in the country. To date, over 19,000 courses have been reviewed and approved through the combined efforts of over 900 faculty members serving on five general education panels and 27 major panels. (The 27th major panel—physics—had its initial meeting in 2002.) Illinois has one of the nation's most consistent, comprehensive course approval and quality assurance processes, assuring that all approved courses are comparable and meet the high standards established by the faculty panels.

The IAI developed in three phases. The primary purpose of Phase I was to develop a GECC that "would be acceptable in transfer at all IAI participating institutions in lieu of each college or university's own campus-wide lower division general education curriculum of comparable size."

- The GECC is a limited array of lower division general education courses that serves as a statewide generic substitute for a participating institution's general education curriculum. The IAI is particularly beneficial for those students who are uncertain about what their major will be or to which baccalaureate institution they will transfer.

- The IAI statement of purpose indicates that the GECC does not replace the college or university's own general education curriculum, but rather provides students with a guaranteed pathway among institutions. "It is assumed that while each degree-granting institution has developed its own general education program as part of its undergraduate degree requirements, most general education program objectives are similar from one institution to another." The good news is that IAI provides one clear, steady pathway for a large number of Illinois transfer students, while still protecting the distinctive qualities and missions of Illinois colleges and universities. But, IAI is not the *only* transfer pathway. Other options are compact agreements between two and four-year institutions (which allow for transfer of completed associate degrees), specially designed and named associates degrees, 2+2 agreements between specific institutions, course by course transfer, or student completion of general education requirements according to specific institutions requirements.
- The IAI assumes that participating institutions will offer at least some of the courses in each of the categories identified by the panels. In practice, most participating institutions offer courses to complete the GECC, although some institutions have designated themselves as "receiving" institutions only—that is, they will accept a completed GECC package, but have not submitted their own courses for review by the panels.
- The GECC, as part of an associate degree, is meant to transfer as a package. Individual courses may transfer at the discretion of the receiving institution.

Phase II expanded the project to create models for easing transfers into major programs. To date, 27 major panels have been established to articulate courses that prepare students for work in specific majors.

Phase III instituted the process of regular five-year reviews designed to ensure that the panels' recommendations would continue to be relevant, i.e., that they would continue to reflect common practice in the first two years of coursework in a baccalaureate degree. In addition, panel members developed a plan and criteria for reviewing previously approved, institutionally matched courses, to ensure that they would continue to be comparable. In 1999-2000, the five general education panels (Communication, Mathematics, Humanities/Fine Arts, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Physical and Life Science) undertook fifth-year reviews. Four have been completed, and the Communication panel is continuing its review of courses over a five-year period. In 2002-2003, fifth-year reviews by the following major panels were initiated or in the process of being completed: Biological Sciences and Manufacturing Technology. The Engineering panel continues its review courses over a five-year period, and the Nursing panel has decided to put its fifth-year review on hold until the competencies are revised and updated. The four education panels (Early Childhood, Elementary, Secondary and Special Education) have been examining state and professional standards that will be used to draft new standards-based recommendations, and the review will take place after the new recommendations have been adopted for the Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) degree.

Illinois Articulation Initiative in the National Context

Transferability among institutions continues to be an important focus of state and national policy. States are rightfully concerned about easing transferability to help students save time and money toward degree completion. Most state-level transfer agreements incorporate traditional general education objectives similar to the IAI model, although some states add highly unique

objectives: awareness of environmental issues, knowledge of state history, or development of computer technology skills. Illinois' statewide transfer program is unique in several aspects: its focus on quality assurance, its website design and usefulness, and the voluntary nature of participation.

- Over the past three years, Board staff has participated in a national conversation on statewide general education programs. Led by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), the national study was sponsored by the Pew Trust, the Carnegie Foundation and the Fund for Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE). States were invited to share insights, experiences and reflections to better understand policy and practice surrounding statewide general education models. Today's college student often attends multiple institutions, and statewide models take on greater importance in helping define and shape a general education curriculum. Illinois is recognized as a model for quality assurance in statewide general education programs, and the IAI will be highlighted in a forthcoming report.
- The IAI model has most recently been used in the development of a new statewide transfer program for the state of Colorado.
- The IAI website team members have made numerous presentations at state and national meetings on the iTransfer.org website, further raising national awareness about Illinois' program, and the design and use of the website in advising. Programs were presented at the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) conference, the Illinois Academic Advising Association conference, the Illinois transfer coordinators group, and the IAI technical Task Force.
- Papers written by University of Illinois at Chicago researchers Celina M. Sima, Jill P. Stein, and Patricia S. Inman, analyzing the effectiveness of IAI were presented in several venues: the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (Sacramento, CA), the Association for Institutional Research (Tampa, FL), the American Education Research Council (Chicago, IL) and the annual symposium of the Illinois Education Research Council.

Accountability for student learning outcomes is a key to academic program quality in Illinois, and the oversight provided by IAI is an important element in that accountability process. This past year, for example, the accrediting body for engineering programs, ABET, re-accredited four of the six engineering programs in the state of Illinois. ABET is one of the most rigorous and demanding accrediting bodies, and an important focus of their review was accountability for quality in transfer student coursework. The accrediting team selected individual transfer student transcripts, and asked each program how they determined the quality of learning in specific courses. In every case, IAI was credited as an important tool for effectively and efficiently reviewing engineering coursework statewide for quality and comparability.

Recent discussions surrounding the reauthorization of the Higher Education Authorization Act have highlighted transferability, as well as a renewed interest in general education as a core value of a baccalaureate degree. Given this focus, it appears that Illinois will be well-positioned to conform to new requirements as they are developed.

Current Status

The Illinois Articulation Initiative has achieved the following implementation outcomes to date:

- It maintains one of the most extensive inventories of individually approved courses in the country. As of June 18, 2003, 8,092 general education courses and 11,064 major courses have been approved for a total of 19,156 courses in the database. Since last year, 740 new courses have been added to the inventory.
- Participation in IAI is entirely voluntary, and there is broad “buy-in” by the state’s institutions. It includes participants from all sectors: private and public, two-year and four-year institutions. One hundred eleven institutions and over 900 faculty members, transfer coordinators, and administrators have actively participated in IAI. This past year, Eureka College decided to move from the “receiving institution only” status to become a full participant in IAI. Several additional universities have requested information about participating.
- The IAI brings faculty together across institutions to discuss general education and lower-division coursework in various majors and come to agreement on acceptable statewide comparability and transferability.
- Through their activities on the various panels, faculty members have extended meaningful communication about curriculum with their colleagues statewide. As a result, many institutions have conducted extensive review of their curricula, resulting in a variety of changes, including raised standards and more clarity in communicating course requirements to students.
- The most obvious outcome of the extensive network of faculty panel reviews of course syllabi has been statewide quality assurance. Every IAI course has been reviewed and approved by panels made up of faculty members from public and private, two- and four-year institutions. Faculty panels review and compare standards for IAI courses, to assure that standards in the courses listed are comparable across all participating institutions.

Curriculum-related Concerns

As one might imagine in a program that seeks to balance among three key principles—respect for curriculum richness and diversity in 111 separate institutions, the vagaries of individual student course-taking patterns, and an effort to meet transfer expectations for multiple majors—sometimes these efforts don’t always align. Some concerns persist, but there is a commitment on the part of participating institutions to find the best way to resolve these concerns whenever feasible. Most of the remaining concerns are about transfer concerns not central to IAI. Many are curriculum-related. In general, the process of dialog and discussion among the participating institutions in the state has resulted in consensus, though not always unanimity. Several issues have been resolved, others are close to resolution, and discussions continue on some topics. All major issues are brought to the Steering Panel, where they are discussed at length, and either recommendations are made, or the Steering Panel deferred to the discipline panel’s decision. During the past year, two issues continued to dominate discussions—whether students preparing for degrees in the sciences should have the option of a different, or abbreviated general education package, and how to handle the transferability of non-IAI approved courses.

Science Major General Education Requirements. The first issue centers on whether or not the current GECC meets the needs of students seeking an associate transfer degree in certain science areas. Historically, the Steering Panel has rejected requests to design a second set of general education requirements to parallel the GECC, and current transfer policy requires completion of the GECC. Over the past year, this issue has been discussed at length, but there has been no resolution. A research project is planned to determine if community college associate in science graduates (who have completed a general education package), are disadvantaged in transfer because they lack the necessary prerequisite courses in the major.

Transferring Non-IAI Approved Courses. The second issue carried forward from last year and centered on how institutions should handle the transfer of courses that have not been approved by the panels, such as credits from out-of-state or non-IAI participating institutions. The Steering Panel passed a recommendation that allowed for the transfer of non-IAI approved courses through a slightly amended process of articulation. Their recommendation required changes to IBHE transfer policy, so the proposed policy change was circulated in Fall 2002 to IAI participating institutions for their review and comment. Further analyses of the recommended policy changes and the potential effects of those changes, as well as a thorough review of existing policy and the rationale for it, led IBHE and ICCB staff to conclude that it is best to retain the existing policy. Nevertheless, the issues and concerns raised during the course of reviewing the policy will continue to be explored in order to improve the transfer experience for Illinois students.

Relationship of IAI to a Proposed Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT). Discussions are continuing to identify the elements of a model Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT), to enhance transferability into teacher preparation programs. The IAI education major panels have played an important role in the development of the AAT. They identified the Illinois State Board of Education standards that could be met in the freshman and sophomore years, and shared this work with the newly established AAT committees. When the AAT model has been completed, the findings and recommendations will have a significant impact on the four IAI education panels. When the final model has been adopted, IAI education panels will likely play an important role in reviewing and approving comparability of courses among participating institutions.

Evaluating IAI and Student Transfer: Multiple Measures of Effectiveness

The IAI was formally implemented in summer of 1998. Students served by the IAI recommendations are now beginning to transfer to universities in large numbers. As more data become available, the findings can be integrated with more general transfer data.

In general, the table below offers a profile of potential transfer students (both students currently enrolled in transfer programs and students who have actually transferred) who are likely to benefit in some way from the comparability and transferability of IAI courses (2000-2001 data):

Type of Institution	Enrollees in undergraduate/ transfer programs	Actual Transfers*
Public Community Colleges	144,841	19,808
Public Universities	145,846	5,656
Independent NFP** Institutions	144,335	4,148
Independent FP** Institutions		463
Other (unknown)		13,443

*Without or without degree completion

**Not for Profit/For Profit

The traditional transfer pattern taken by the largest number of students is from two to four-year institutions. In recent years, however, student transfer patterns have been marked by a new fluidity—students move between and among four-year institutions and from four-year institutions to community colleges, sometimes taking coursework from multiple institutions. Unfortunately, because we cannot track individual student migration across institutions, it is difficult to evaluate the nature of student enrollments—whether they are seeking a course or two, a certificate, or a degree. This “churn” in the market is reflected in Table V-1 of the *IBHE Data Book* (Fall 2001 data):

Transfer Patterns Among Illinois Institutions

From/To	Public Universities	Independent NFP Institutions	Community Colleges	Independent FP Institutions
Community Colleges	10, 216	5,802	3,522	268
Public Universities	1,243	3,311	1,034	68
Independent NFP Institutions	1,057	986	2,036	69
Independent FP Institutions	34	202	210	17
Other Institutions*	3,546	4,622	4,357	918

*out-of-state, foreign, unknown

It is impossible to gather precise information on student transfers without a statewide student unit record system. While a student data system exists, it does not include the data necessary for individual student identification across public and private, and two- and four-year systems, which would allow for in-depth analysis of academic decisions and transfer effectiveness. In addition, until recently, private universities have not participated in the shared record system.

IAI Panel Five-Year Reviews, Surveys, and Recommendations. Several studies undertaken by IAI panels as part of their five-year review processes have explored the “state of the field,” as well as the effectiveness of the IAI panel activities. One of the unanticipated, but significant, outcomes of bringing faculty across the state together to look at curriculum has been a greater interest on the part of the panels in understanding how curricula are changing and continually responding to new ideas, standards, and directions in the academic arena. These surveys are an effort on the part of panels to participate in a statewide continual improvement process to keep the state’s transfer curriculum current and responsive to changes. They also reflect more broadly the dynamics of continual quality improvement in the curriculum. While this process of curriculum renewal is not obvious to the individual student, it insures quality and comparability across the state “behind the scenes.”

Higher education curriculum is constantly under review and revision to ensure that education and training is current and state-of-the-art. These continuous quality improvement processes also impact the IAI. From time to time, panels will develop new course descriptions and new emphases in curriculum. This year saw several curriculum changes and improvements:

- The development of a new interdisciplinary general education course description, incorporating course content from multiple areas in both the Social and Behavioral Sciences and the Humanities and Fine Arts.
- The Mass Communication major Panel added a new specialty in Multimedia to their recommendation to reflect a growing trend in which digital computer-based technology is integrated and used to write and edit text, design graphics, create animations, and incorporate sound with still and moving images.
- The Steering Panel reviewed the transferability of AP credits, and determined that because there was a variation in scores acceptable for transfer, references to specific scores would be removed from each panel’s general recommendations. The transferability of AP courses is still an option for students.
- The General Education Physical and Life Science Panel began a discussion of laboratory experiences, especially those that are part of on-line courses. The question is, “can computer simulations replace hands-on laboratory experiences?” The panel continues to debate this issue and will consider evaluating courses on the outcomes rather than the amount of time spent in laboratory situations. Evaluating courses according to their objectives and the learning that takes place is becoming even more necessary because there is no way to determine how long a student spends in courses offered via distance learning.

Institutional Studies/Observations. Large numbers of students who have completed the GECC are just now beginning to enter baccalaureate institutions. In an effort to get a preliminary look at the impact of IAI, public community colleges and universities were contacted to determine whether they had conducted any studies to assess their experiences with IAI, or transfer in general. Several institutions have shared the results of their studies, which are summarized below. Since most of these studies involved only one institution or very small numbers of students, care should be taken to not generalize these findings to the whole state.

- Northern Illinois University’s Center for Governmental Studies completed a collaborative study (authored by Michael T. Peddle and Charles E. Trott) of the transfer practices of 805 students transferring to NIU from Illinois community colleges. The majority of students in the study were from five community colleges. The students completed an extensive survey, and several of the questions focused specifically on IAI. A significant

majority had completed an associate degree or the GECC. Twenty-two percent reported that they had heard about IAI—usually from the community college. The report noted that “most of the respondents were not explicitly familiar with the Illinois Articulation Initiative and even fewer were familiar with the excellent resources of the *itransfer.org* website, most transfer students who responded to the survey indicated relatively few and relatively minor problems with the transfer process.” Students’ lack of knowledge about the Initiative may imply that IAI is transparent to them. Far more important is the improvement or success of transfer as a result of IAI. Most students who accessed the website found it useful.

- The Universities of Illinois at Chicago, Urbana-Champaign, and Springfield prepare an annual *Transfer Characteristics Study*, which provides some insight into transfer behavior in the state. In fall 2002, a total of 3,664 students transferred to the University of Illinois System. Thirty-seven percent of students at UIUC and 62 percent of students at UIC had earned transfer credit. Forty-six percent of all students transferring to UIC (1,973) earned more than one semester of credit (12 hours). By institutional policy, the majority of students transferring to UIUC (1,081) transferred as juniors. At UIS, more than 2/3 of all transfer students (610) attended an Illinois community college, most transferred 60 hours or more, and more than a quarter had completed an associates degree.
- Lake Land College completed a Transfer Follow-up Report (November 2002) on students transferring to public universities. In the November 2002 report, eight public universities reported on the performance of 1,204 students who had transferred from Lake Land. Overall, 569 of these students had completed an associate’s degree (AA, AS, or AAS) prior to transferring. The Lake Land group had earned an average GPA of 2.91, and had the highest GPA’s at Eastern, Northern, SIU-Carbondale, U of I at Springfield, and Western.
- As part of a wider effort to re-affirm faculty commitment to IAI, a brief survey was sent to panel members asking for feedback on three questions: What is working about IAI? How can IAI do a better job? What do you like best about your involvement in IAI and your work with the panel? Comments included: “great way to talk about what standards really matter in transferring credit;” “statewide communication;” “improving curriculum;” “interact with colleagues in the same discipline at other institutions, all types of institutions;” “feel our efforts have improved teaching on many campuses;” “learn from one another,” “help maintain academic excellence in Illinois,” “increase my knowledge in my field;” “regular questioning of standards;” “share concerns for student learning;” plus many other observations.

Evaluation of IAI Effectiveness. The University of Illinois at Chicago, in cooperation with eight two-year and four-year institutions, continued work on a longitudinal study of the effectiveness of IAI. The research effort had previously been supported by a Higher Education Cooperation Agreement (HECA) grant, but the line was eliminated last year. The research has continued, and three papers were presented in the past year:

- “Student and Transfer Coordinator Views of A Statewide Articulation Policy: A Qualitative Analysis” (Celina M. Sima, Jill P. Stein and Patricia S. Inman). Major findings of this study included the following: “Leadership must remain strong at the state level to ensure continued progress in the development of statewide agreements; “the

importance of the transparency of the process;” “communication and trust are important to implementation;” “flexibility in the implementation of the articulation agreement;” and “the importance of staff development.”

- “The Influence of Multiple Institution Transfer Patterns on Undergraduate Degree Attainment and Time-to-Degree” (Celina M. Sima, Patricia S. Inman, and Jill P. Stein). Analysis of the time-to-degree graduation rates of the 1998 cohort included the following findings: “Single transfer students graduate 5.96 years from initial postsecondary attendance, in comparison to 4.76 years by the native students. This difference of 1.2 years is not statistically significant. . . . Multiple transfer students took an average of 6.73 years to graduate, a difference which *was* significant.” It was hypothesized that time-to-degree would be shorter with the implementation of IAI. However, sufficient numbers of students have not yet graduated in the 2001 cohort to make this comparison and assess the impact of IAI on those completion rates. The study also noted that 30 percent of the 1998 cohort of *native* students (not transfer students) reported some kind of transfer credit on their transcripts such as summer enrollment or concurrent enrollment at a community college.
- “State Student Transfer and Articulation Policy Evaluation: An Approach that Informs Policy and Scholarly Communities” (Celina M. Sima, Patricia S. Inman, and Jill P. Stein). Student interviews conducted as part of this study produced several interesting findings: “As a general rule, students are their own advocates in the transfer process;” students who are more clear about their degree goals generally develop an increasing relationship with the destination institution; vertical transfers—2- to 4-year institutions—proceeded more smoothly than lateral transfers—between 4-year institutions. “In certain regions of the state compacts between community colleges and a regional four-year university seemed to result in the smoothest transition of all.

Evaluation of the iTransfer Website. The website staff developed and implemented a web based client survey for advisors and administrators who use the site. A series of nine questions regarding site function and usability were asked. Additional feedback was provided at the Spring Transfer Coordinator meeting. The survey findings and additional feedback aided the redesign of the faculty section of the website and identified the need of additional training for end users. Responses also indicated the need for additional marketing to the public to let them know about this resource. Additional website changes per panel request were made to the Computer Science and Nursing major recommendation sections. The Computer Science panel adopted changes to make it easier for students to compare school courses. The Nursing major section was changed into a new unique format to address the specific needs of the competency-based discipline. These changes can be viewed at www.itransfer.org A prototype for a new search to show course articulation between multiple schools was developed and is currently being tested.

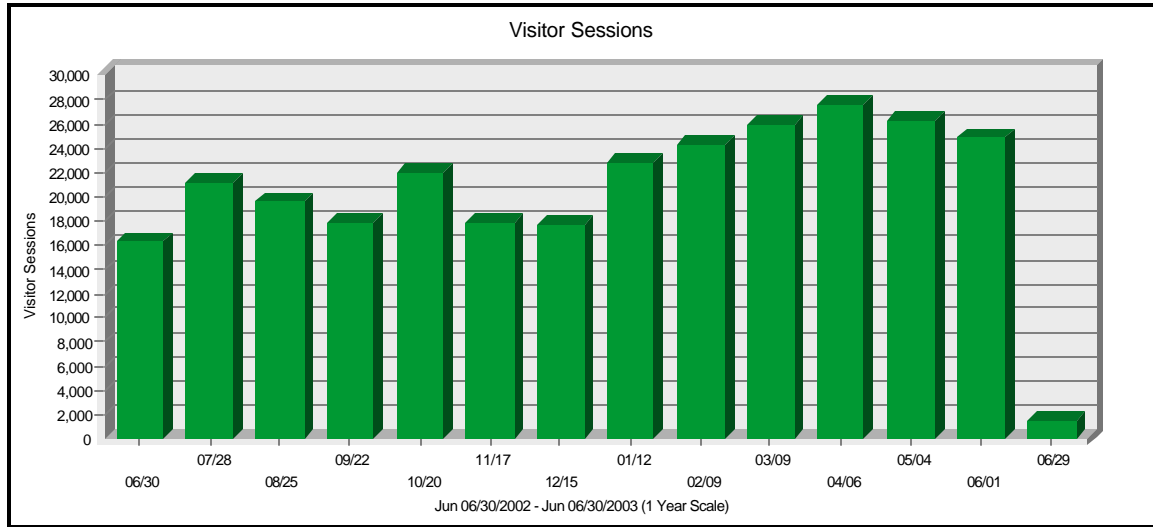
Participation in IAI is highest among public institutions, and highest in the General Education Core Curriculum. A total of 8,092 GECC courses and 11,064 major courses were included in the IAI website database on June 18, 2003, for a total of 19,156. Forty-eight public two-year institutions participate in the IAI GECC. Together, they field a total of 4,967 courses for an average of 103 courses per institution. Eleven public baccalaureate institutions field a total of 1,229 courses, or an average of 118 courses per institution. (Governors State University currently does not have a general education program). Thirty-seven participating independent institutions in the IAI GECC field a total of 1,896 courses, or an average of 51 courses per institution.

The 48 two-year public institutions field a total of 7,618 courses for transfer to a major, for an average of 158 courses per institution. In general, community colleges offer foundational courses to prepare students for a variety of majors. The twelve four-year public universities field a total of 1,746 courses in majors, for an average of 145 courses per institution. Seven of the public universities offer coursework in 20 to 26 of the majors; the other five range from 6 to 19. The difference in the number of majors "covered" reflects the differing program arrays at the various institutions. Not all universities offer degrees in agriculture, clinical laboratory science, social work, or engineering, for example. Twenty-seven independent institutions field 1,869 major courses, for an average of 69 courses per institution.

Participation in the major panels can vary significantly based on the array of majors offered by an institution—not all institutions offer a full complement of majors. Forty-eight public community colleges offer courses to help students prepare for transfer to baccalaureate institutions. Participation by both public and private four-year colleges and universities is also very important in helping students transfer easily among institutions. Twelve public universities are actively involved in many of the major panels, and the public institutions tend to offer the broadest array of program majors (due, in part, to both their broad missions and their size). The majority of community college students transfer to public universities. Twenty-seven two- and four-year independent institutions participate in various major panels as well.

Usage of the IAI website continues to be strong and steady. Records for the past year are included below.

General Statistics—IAI Website



Statistics - Report Range: 06/30/2002 19:00:51 - 06/30/2003 18:59:54		
Hits	Entire Site (Successful)	2,915,695
	Average Per Day	7,988
	Home Page	87,522
Page Views	Page Views (Impressions)	807,679
	Average Per Day	2,212
	Document Views	469,267
Visitor Sessions	Visitor Sessions	286,116
	Average Per Day	783
	Average Visitor Session Length	00:09:12
	International Visitor Sessions	1.95%
	Visitor Sessions of Unknown Origin	64.81%
	Visitor Sessions from United States	33.22%
Visitors	Unique Visitors	71,959
	Visitors Who Visited Once	59,047
	Visitors Who Visited More Than Once	12,912

Increasing Student Awareness of Transfer and IAI

Good programs often languish for lack of visibility and “advertising.” Making transfer and IAI an important part of student information and decision-making has always been a primary goal of the Initiative. Activities this past year in two areas have focused on how to better serve student needs for current information about transfer issues.

Visibility of IAI and Transfer Generally. Transfer coordinators continued their discussions this year about the visibility of IAI, and the general awareness on the part of students of transfer issues. At the spring transfer coordinators meeting, for example, they shared ideas and best practices on how to increase awareness of transfer.

Pilot Project: A Model for an Illinois Course Applicability System (CAS). Building on the successful rollout of the CAS project by Northern Illinois University and the College of Du Page last year, two additional CAS related projects were undertaken to further enhance the transfer process. This year, Northern Illinois University and the University of Illinois were awarded a HECA grant to develop a statewide plan for adopting CAS. Through the CAS project, students are able to answer their most burning transfer questions: How will my credits transfer? What will count? What courses should I take at my current institution that will transfer? This project will not replace IAI, but will incorporate it and be more inclusive, providing information on ALL courses and degree requirements at institutions, not just lower division course requirements.

In addition, the University of Illinois at Chicago and the City Colleges of Chicago were awarded a HECA grant to implement CAS on their campuses. Any student in the state transferring to these two institutions will now be able to compare courses they have taken at ANY college or university in Illinois with degree and graduation requirements at these two universities. Implementation is underway with the software and hardware purchased, installed, and running, the programs of study at UIC are entered and the articulations have been formatted to accept CAS data.

It is expected that CAS will promote better inter-institutional cooperation and better articulation. This will increase the ability of transfer students to select the most appropriate courses for transfer and degree completion, which will increase the number of students who transfer, will increase the number of students who complete the IAI package and an Associate's degree from the community colleges, and will decrease the amount of time it takes transfer students to complete their terminal degree at university. Strengthened by the use of technology, opportunities for success will extend to all transfer students in Illinois, but particularly to students from underrepresented groups.

2002-2003 Summary of Activities

In general, the year 2002-2003 can be characterized as a year during which several major issues related to broad transfer issues generally and IAI specifically were addressed, new initiatives were undertaken by the members, and recommendations were brought forward.

- After extended review and discussion it was determined that the current IBHE Transfer Policy will remain as originally stated.
- Discussions about general education requirements for students interested in majors in the sciences continued.
- Continued the fifth-year review process for selected discipline panels
- Initiated a discussion of a standards-based approach to the work of the education panels;
- The physics panel continues the process of developing a recommendation;
- Designed a new "paperless" process for reviewing syllabi on-line (www.ibhe.org/iai);

Considerations for the Future

There are three areas affecting the overall operation of IAI that would likely improve the effectiveness of IAI in the long term. After discussions of these matters in the coming year with the IAI panels and Steering Committee, recommendations may be developed and brought to the Board. These three areas are evaluation and data needs, refining IAI learning outcomes, and improving administrative processes.

Measuring IAI Effectiveness—Evaluation and Data Needs. There is a growing interest in undertaking a more systematic evaluation of IAI's overall effectiveness. This interest is partly in response to the first wave of community college students who have completed the IAI package and are transferring to 4-year institutions. Given that students take between 5 and 6 years to complete a baccalaureate degree, and that the IAI was not fully implemented until 1998, it may be several years before enough meaningful data can be gathered to assess the IAI impact on time-to-degree. A recent national study of time to degree completion noted, for example, that baccalaureate graduates who started in a two-year institution can take up to 10 years or more to complete a baccalaureate degree (National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, August 2003).

There are important gaps in our data that will directly impact the effective evaluation of IAI goals and objectives. The Illinois Board of Higher Education currently has no systematic way of knowing definitively how effectively IAI is serving individual student needs.

- The lack of a centralized, integrated student unit record system means that we cannot track students across institutions, systems, or sectors.
- While the current Shared Enrollment and Degree files allow for tracking students transferring from community colleges to public universities, the process is very complicated and the files do not include complete data from private institutions.

To better understand the impact of the IAI on student course-taking behavior and on timely baccalaureate degree completion, an expanded and improved student unit record system is needed that would allow for systematic analysis of student enrollment patterns across multiple systems. Given these data shortcomings, however, it will be difficult, without a substantial investment in infrastructure, to gather and interpret this data in order to assess the overall effectiveness of IAI. In the meantime, the program will continue to rely either on independent studies undertaken by institutions of their own transfer students, or on small statewide studies with limited dollars.

Measuring IAI Effectiveness—Refining IAI Learning Outcomes. *The Illinois Commitment* requires that all institutions have program assessment in place by 2004. Because IAI is a central piece of the coursework at over 100 institutions in the state, it is important that the IAI participants continue to review and clarify, where necessary, the goals of the IAI curriculum and clearly identify the anticipated student learning outcomes in course descriptions. By further clarifying student learning outcomes and the goals and objectives of the GECC, institutions will be better able to evaluate the effectiveness of the IAI general education program.

Measuring IAI Effectiveness—Improving Administrative Processes. The Illinois Articulation Initiative has achieved an important level of stability, and is respected across the state and the nation. When compared to similar statewide transfer programs in other states, the Illinois transfer network is one of the strongest and most inclusive, and the most focused on quality assurance. The active involvement of 111 institutions reflects a shared commitment to helping students transfer easily and smoothly by maintaining quality and comparability across the state. IAI’s strength is further reflected in the collaboration among individual faculty members from many disciplines, between public and private institutions, between two- and four-year institutions, and between ICCB and IBHE.

As part of an ongoing effort to reduce administrative costs related to the administration of the IAI project, Board staff expanded and refined a “paperless” on-line syllabus review process. Faculty can view all syllabi on line, indicate their initial evaluation, and make detailed comments about the syllabi, which can then be viewed in the context of all other panel members’ comments. After panels have met and made their recommendations and decisions, a highly sophisticated database allows for instantaneous generation of letters and reports to inform the field of panel decisions.

Board staff continues to study ways of improving the delivery of information and other transfer services to students, thus making transferability between all institutions in the state easier and smoother. As the awareness of the IAI grows, students will come to depend upon having access to even more information to assist them in making decisions about academic programs and institutions.

Staff will continue to explore other best practice options for enhancing student access to information about transfer of credits among institutions.

**IAI STEERING PANEL MEMBERSHIP
2002-2003**

General Education Field Panel Representatives (10)

Ken Beno, Lake Land College
Esther DiMarzio, Kishwaukee College
Margaret Dust, Chicago State University
James Harris, John A. Logan College
Thomas Joswick, Western Illinois University
Kenneth Nordin, Benedictine University
James O'Leary, South Suburban College
Linda Sons, Northern Illinois University
Gary Trammell, University of Illinois at Springfield
Denis Wright, Joliet Junior College **CO-CHAIR**

University [At-large] Representatives (7)

Mary Herrington-Perry, Eastern Illinois University
Emanuel Pollack, University of Illinois at Chicago
Charles Miller, Northern Illinois University
Gerald Pogatshnik, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, **CO-CHAIR**
Lois Backas, Roosevelt University
Richard Wilders, North Central College
VACANT, Independent

Community College [At-large] Representatives (7)

Carl Lorenz, Parkland College
Julie Fleenor, William Rainey Harper College
John Bennett, Lake Land College
Yvonne Harris, Harry S Truman College
Kevin Westin, Rend Lake College
Linda Uzureau, Prairie State College
Debra LaCour, Southeastern College

Illinois Transfer Coordinators' Representatives (3)

Marilyn Murphy, University of Illinois
Sheryl Paul, University of St. Francis
Fred Peterson, Heartland Community College