

**ILLINOIS TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION INITIATIVES
ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004**

Submitted for: Information.

Summary: The Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) continues to be the primary vehicle for encouraging transferability among postsecondary institutions in the state of Illinois. A more recent statewide transfer and articulation project, the Course Applicability System (CAS), is in the process of being implemented. CAS will significantly enhance the availability and accuracy of transfer information to allow even more effective and efficient degree completion. This item reviews the current status of the IAI and CAS projects, highlights the past year's activities, and outlines considerations for the future.

Action Requested: None.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Executive Summary

The Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) continues to be the primary vehicle for encouraging transferability among postsecondary institutions in the state of Illinois. A more recent statewide transfer and articulation project, the Course Applicability System (CAS), is in the process of being implemented. CAS complements IAI and further enhances the availability and accuracy of transfer information to allow even more effective and efficient degree completion.

Planning for the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) began in January 1993 and the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) was implemented in the summer of 1998. The IAI was designed to ease transfer for students among Illinois colleges and universities. May 2004 marked the end of the sixth year of implementation. In addition to the adoption of the GECC, 27 baccalaureate major panels have also been convened to recommend preparatory coursework at the lower division level.

Three years ago, the CAS project was initiated to offer Illinois students even more specific and detailed information on how their coursework will transfer among institutions and how it may or may not count towards a baccalaureate degree. This web-based program allows students to enter the courses they have completed and compare them to degree requirements at participating schools. A planning guide, which matches courses to degree requirements, is generated and outlines what additional coursework needs to be undertaken to complete the degree.

This report begins with a brief history of the development and implementation of the IAI. It then turns to discussing the current status of the IAI, CAS, and other transfer projects; observations about the impacts and effectiveness of several broad goals and objectives; transfer issues that have been raised in the past year; and other related transfer concerns.

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

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Introduction

Recent History of Transfer Initiatives in Illinois

The Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). In January 1993, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and transfer coordinators from Illinois colleges and universities jointly launched the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) to ease the transfer of students 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."

Illinois has one of the most comprehensive course approval and quality assurance processes in the nation, assuring that all approved courses are comparable and meet the high standards established by faculty panels. To date, thousands of courses have been reviewed and approved for statewide articulation through the combined efforts of over 900 faculty members and transfer coordinators serving on five general education panels and 27 baccalaureate major panels.

The IAI was developed in three phases. Phase I focused on developing a general education package, the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC), that, as part of a completed associate degree, "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." Individual courses may be accepted in transfer at the discretion of the receiving institution.

The IAI GECC does not replace the college or university's own general education curriculum, but rather provides students with a guaranteed pathway among institutions. IAI provides one clear pathway for a large number of Illinois transfer students, while still protecting the distinctive qualities and missions of Illinois colleges and universities.

Phase II expanded the project to create models for easing transfer into baccalaureate major programs. To date, 27 panels have been established to identify lower division coursework that best prepares students for advanced studies in specific baccalaureate majors. These recommendations include specific lower division courses in the major, required prerequisite

courses, or supporting courses that provide the necessary background for success in the major. This component of IAI is currently undergoing a review and will be described later in this report.

Phase III instituted the process of regular five-year reviews designed to ensure that the panels' recommendations continue.

Course Applicability System (CAS). Three years ago, the statewide Course Applicability System (CAS) project was initiated to offer Illinois students even more accurate and detailed information on how their coursework will transfer between institutions. Where IAI concentrates on articulation of general education and foundational coursework at the lower division level, CAS makes information on all courses as well as other degree completion requirements available to students. Northern Illinois University and the College of DuPage were the first institutions in the state to go online in 2002; the University of Illinois at Chicago and the City Colleges of Chicago followed in 2003; and in FY 2004, the remaining public universities were licensed and are currently at varying stages of implementation. Extensive statewide planning was undertaken in 2003, resulting in a plan to expand the participation in CAS to all interested institutions in the state on a phased-in timeline.

Other Transfer Pathways. The IAI and CAS initiatives are not the only transfer pathways available to students. Other options include individual agreements between 2- and 4-year institutions, that allow for transfer of completed associate degrees; specially designed and named associates degrees such as the new Associate of Art in Teaching (A.A.T.) degree; 2+2 agreements between specific institutions; course-by-course transfer; or completion of the general education requirements of the receiving institution.

Statewide Transfer: Outcomes and Accomplishments

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 baccalaureate degree completion. Most state-level transfer agreements incorporate traditional general education objectives similar to the IAI model, although some states add highly unique objectives such as awareness of environmental issues, knowledge of state history, and development of computer technology skills. However, Illinois' statewide transfer program is unique in its focus on quality assurance, its website design and usefulness, and the voluntary nature of participation.

- For the past four years, Board staff participated in a national conversation on statewide general education programs. Led by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), a national study was sponsored by the Pew Trust, the Carnegie Foundation and the Fund for Improvement of Post Secondary Education. States were invited to share insights and experiences to better understand policy and practice surrounding statewide general education models. In April 2004, Illinois was recognized at AAC&U's conference on General Education Assessment as a model for quality assurance in statewide general education programs.
- In the Spring 2004 issue of *Update Newsletter*, published by the Office of Community College Research and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, IAI and CAS were prominently featured in an article written by Dan Cullen, entitled "Transfer in Illinois: Meeting the Needs of Different Racial/Ethnic Groups."

- IAI was featured in an article about students transferring in the *Chicago Tribune* on April 11, 2004. The topic of the article was “When 1st College Stop Isn’t the Last,” and highlighted students transferring to private institutions.
- At the April 2004 Community College and University English Articulation Conference a panel discussed IAI—“Taking a Look at IAI—Has It Lived Up to Its Promise?” Panel members include IBHE and ICCB staff and representatives from Kishwaukee College, Lake Land College, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- 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 web in advising. Programs were presented at conferences sponsored by the National Academic Advising Association, the Illinois Academic Advising Association, the Illinois Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the University and Community College Systems of New Hampshire, among others.
- IAI continued to coordinate transfer activities across the state. Participation in IAI is entirely voluntary and currently there are 110 participating institutions from all sectors. In addition, over 900 faculty members, transfer coordinators, and institutional administrators have actively participated in IAI. Through their activities on the various panels, faculty members have undertaken meaningful communication about curriculum with their colleagues statewide. As of June 28, 2004, 6,998 general education courses and 9,868 major courses have been approved for a total of 16,866 courses in the database.

Evaluating Student Transfer in Illinois: Multiple Measures

During fiscal year 2003, 28,209 undergraduate students transferred among postsecondary institutions in Illinois, representing five percent of the total undergraduate student population in Illinois. Of these students, 19,563 transferred from a community college while 481 transferred from a public university, 3,794 from an independent not-for-profit institution, and 369 from an independent for-profit.

Sector Students Transferred From	Number of Students	Percent of Total Transfer Students
Community Colleges	19,563	68%
Public Universities	4,878	17%
Independent NFP Institutions	3,794	13%
Independent FP Institutions	481	2%
Total All Sectors	28,716	100%

A majority of these students, 41 percent, transferred to a public university. An additional 28 percent transferred to a community college, 27 percent to an independent not-for-profit institution, and 4 percent to an independent for-profit institution.

Sector Students Transferred To	Number of Students	Percent of Total Transfer Students
Public Universities	11,684	41%
Community Colleges	8,038	28%
Independent NFP Institutions	7,817	27%
Independent FP Institutions	1,177	4%

Curriculum Revitalization and IAI. Higher education curricula are 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. Occasionally, for example, panels will develop new course descriptions and new emphases in curriculum. This year saw several curriculum changes and improvements:

- The IAI General Education Humanities and Fine Arts panel developed three new course descriptions in the area of film studies: Film History, Film and Literature, and Film Appreciation.
- The English panel added a new course description for Women’s Literature.
- Physics became the 28th major panel endorsed by ICCB and IBHE. The panel’s recommendations and course descriptions have been added to the iTransfer website.
- In April 2004, the Elementary, Secondary, and Special Educations panels merged to form the IAI "Education" Panel. Members adopted five standards-based courses for the professional core of their new recommendation, which will become effective in January 2005. Their recommendation of lower division coursework in the major is aligned with the newly developed A.A.T. models.

Review of Transfer Initiatives. In a program that seeks balance among three key principles—respect for curriculum richness and diversity in 110 separate institutions, the vagaries of individual student course-taking patterns, and an effort to meet transfer expectations for multiple majors—alignment of goals and outcomes requires much coordination. There is a commitment on the part of participating institutions to find the best way to resolve concerns and align transfer efforts whenever feasible. Most of the remaining concerns are not necessarily related to IAI. Many issues are specific to baccalaureate major programs. The process of dialog and discussion among the participating institutions in the state has generally resulted in consensus, though not always unanimity.

On-going review of transfer initiatives in the state continued this past year, focusing in particular on Phase II of the IAI—the baccalaureate major panel recommendations. The effectiveness of the baccalaureate major panel recommendations has become a concern and a discussion of their status was initiated this past year at the request of the Technical Task Force (TTF). Initially, the primary purpose of the IAI baccalaureate major panel recommendations was to strengthen transfer among Illinois institutions for students who were uncertain of the institution

to which they will transfer. The panels were charged with developing recommendations “for students who have decided upon their major, but who have not yet decided upon the institution to which they may transfer.” These recommendations were specifically designed to be broad, but if students know the institution to which they will transfer, they need specific, not, general information. The concerns of the TTF were taken to a statewide meeting of transfer coordinators and the outcome of the discussions showed the following:

- Majors are often structured differently throughout the state. This is because institutions set curriculum to best meet the needs of students at that institution—whether it be by the geographical area the institution serves, the goals of the campus’ students, the place of that faculty in the discipline, or the types of students the institution typically enrolls. Availability of resources at the programmatic level also shape curriculum—number of faculty translates directly into breadth of course options, for example. As a result of the institutional variation across the state the curriculum at one institution may be structured differently from that at another or may emphasize different aspects of a discipline. In short, a major at one institution is not, and should not be, an exact copy of a curriculum at another institution. For this reason, a program that attempts to encompass all Illinois students and all Illinois institutions leads to vague, minimal, or broad recommendations that do not give individual students the shortest route to the degree.
- Many transfer coordinators are not using the major panels’ recommendations because most students know the institution to which they will transfer. A recent study by NIU showed that 60 percent of their transfer students had narrowed their choice of institutions to three or fewer. Therefore, following an institution-to-institution agreement or the catalog of the receiving institution provides more accurate information than the general recommendations of the IAI baccalaureate major panels.
- Major coursework transfers on a course-by-course basis while the GECC transfers as a package within an associate degree. This difference can cause confusion for students.
- A related issue is the display of information about majors on the iTransfer website. If an institution does not offer, does not submit, or is denied approval of a course, it appears to the student that the major and/or the major course are not available at the institution.
- Now that CAS is being implemented statewide, it will fulfill the need for information that is not only up-to-date and accurate, but will provide students with beneficial advice and relevant choices regarding the efficient route to transfer.

These findings were shared with the IAI Steering Panel, which recommended that a task force be set up to explore these concerns. This review is taking place during the 2004-2005 Academic Year.

Institutional Transfer Studies/Observations. Transfer students are very important to institutions, in particular, 4-year colleges and universities. At some 4-year institutions, transfer students are over 50 percent of all new admissions and students with associate degrees are in high demand. These students who have completed associate degrees are a “proven” success and are, therefore, likely to succeed at the 4-year institution as well. Institutions regularly undertake studies of transferability. The results of some studies are summarized below. Since most of these studies involved only one institution or very small numbers of students, these findings should not be generalized and interpreted as being representative of all institutions.

- Dominican University’s Office of Institutional Research and Assessment completed a small study of retention and GPA of transfer students. The transfer student GPA average consistently measured about 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- Bradley University studied 188 students admitted from fall 2000 through spring 2004 who had completed IAI transfer requirements. In fall 2003, the number of enrolled students who completed the IAI requirements represented approximately 17 percent of Bradley University’s total transfer enrollment. To date, of the 188 students, 42 have received their bachelor’s degree, 23 applied for graduation in spring 2004, 108 are continuing at Bradley, and only 15 have withdrawn or never enrolled. These data seem to indicate that the IAI is adequately preparing students for achieving success at Bradley and that students continue to make satisfactory progress toward completing the baccalaureate degree.
- A survey of Southwestern Illinois College students who transferred to other institutions revealed that, of 10,397 who originally enrolled in the FY 1998 transfer cohort, 2,804 eventually re-enrolled at another institution. Of these 2,804 students, 30.9 percent enrolled at another 2-year institution and 69.0 percent enrolled at a 4-year institution.
- The Universities of Illinois at Chicago, Urbana-Champaign, and Springfield prepare an annual *Transfer Characteristics Study*. In fall 2003, a total of 2,936 students transferred to the University of Illinois System. Thirty-seven percent of transfer students at UIUC and 61 percent at UIC had earned transfer credit. More than two out of every three transfers who entered UIC last attended a 2-year institution (812). Forty-four percent of all students transferring to UIC (1,973) earned more than one semester of credit (12 hours). The majority of students transferring to UIUC (1,085) transferred as juniors or seniors. At UIS, more than half of all transfer students (383) attended an Illinois community college, most transferred 60 hours or more, and nearly 20 percent had completed an associate degree.

Increasing Student Transfer Options—Implementation of CAS

Making transferability an important part of student information and decision-making has always been a primary goal of the transfer initiatives in Illinois. Activities this past year in continuing the implementation of the Illinois Course Applicability System (CAS) have focused on better serving student needs for current and accurate information about transfer issues.

Planning for the CAS project was initiated in 2001. Northern Illinois University and the College of DuPage were the first institutions in the state to go online in 2002; the University of Illinois at Chicago and the City Colleges of Chicago followed in 2003; and in FY 2004, the

remaining public universities were licensed and are currently at varying stages of implementation. Extensive statewide planning was undertaken in 2003, resulting in a plan to expand the participation in CAS to all interested institutions in the state on a phased-in timeline. All public universities were identified as a priority in the first round because they are the destination of the majority of transfer students in the state. Once these institutions have uploaded their baccalaureate degree requirements and course articulation guides, any student in the state transferring to these institutions will be able to compare courses they have taken at any college or university in Illinois with degree and graduation requirements at any 4-year public institution. A brief description of CAS implementation activities is included in the chart below.

Northern Illinois University	Fully implemented Piloting a project on electronic transfer of transcripts
University of Illinois at Chicago	Fully implemented
University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign	Partial implementation Course equivalencies available
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale	Partial implementation Course equivalencies available Explored interface programming
Western Illinois University	Partial implementation Course equivalencies available Proposed implementation December 2004
Chicago State University	Proposed implementation Fall, 2004 Interface programming in progress
Illinois State University	Developing interface programming
Eastern Illinois University	Exploring interface programming
Northeastern Illinois University	Preparing course equivalency data

The remaining public universities are in various stages of planning and/or partial implementation, and all are committed to participation in the CAS project.

Sheri Kallembach from Northern Illinois University and Marilyn Murphy Marshall from the University of Illinois have coordinated planning and implementation of the CAS project for the past two years. CAS activities completed in FY 2004 include the following:

- The statewide advisory council completed a statewide plan for implementing CAS in September 2003.
- Licensing of all public universities for CAS.
- Data collection on the number of CAS accounts created and surveys completed at NIU and UIC. In a relatively short period of time, over 2,000 student accounts and 315 college and university advisor and administrator accounts have been created.
- CAS user satisfaction surveys have been implemented at NIU and UIC. Early responses indicate that satisfaction is very high, and most students indicated they would use the system again.

- NIU's survey found that 87 percent of students indicated they would use the system again.
 - When asked to indicate their educational goal, 89 percent responded they wanted to complete a 4-year degree, and the remaining 11 percent wanted to complete the IAI GECC.
 - When asked their reason for using the system, 38 percent indicated they wanted to see the Course Equivalency Guides, 33 percent wanted to see how their courses apply to a specific university degree program, and 29 percent wanted to see if their course will fulfill general education requirements at the university level.
- NIU partnered with College of DuPage through Credentials, Inc. to develop an electronic transcript request in CAS to provide a more efficient means of transferring transcript information from one institution to another and allow automatic entry of accurate transcript information into the CAS system. As a result, accuracy will be increased in the CAS system and institutions will have a mechanism in place for greater cost savings in other applications.
 - A variety of activities to increase awareness and public education about the benefits of CAS are underway. A website was developed and is available at www.ibhe.org/CAS, to collect CAS-related documents for use and adaptation by all institutions. The CAS website features brochures designed to inform students about CAS and presentations for use in CAS training and promotion. The many features of CAS can be accessed directly at the CAS entry site: www.transfer.org.
 - Extensive training has been undertaken by NIU, UIC and UIUC. Training of academic advisors and technical staff was completed for 36 community colleges. NIU's Transfer Center alone trained approximately 130 advisors and counselors at 16 community colleges.
 - An article highlighting CAS, written by Dan Cullen from the University of Illinois, was published in the spring 2004 newsletter of the Office of Community College Research and Leadership.

The next phase of CAS will focus on expanding the number of institutions licensed to include community colleges and non-public institutions with degree audit systems in place and who serve large numbers of transfer students. Implementation of CAS by the public universities will continue. Discussion is under way to expand CAS training in other venues and to encourage greater statewide coordination of CAS-related activities. A HECA grant has been submitted to cover the cost of continued implementation in FY 2005.

In summary, CAS will promote greater inter-institutional cooperation and better articulation among Illinois institutions. This, in turn, will increase the ability of transfer students to select the most appropriate courses for transfer and degree completion. Several outcomes could result: an increase in the number of students who transfer; an increase in the number of students who complete the IAI package; and a decrease in the amount of time it takes transfer students to complete their baccalaureate degrees. Strengthened by the use of technology, opportunities for success will extend to all transfer students in Illinois, but particularly to students from

underrepresented groups who are more likely to begin their postsecondary education at a community college.

2003-2004 Summary of Transfer Initiatives

In general, the year 2003-2004 can be characterized as a year during which issues related to transferability were addressed, new statewide initiatives were undertaken, and recommendations were brought forward.

- A study of the role of the major panels was initiated.
- Several of the IAI education panels have been combined.
- The IAI physics panel completed its recommendations and is in the process of reviewing course syllabi.
- The implementation of CAS by public universities is well underway and a request for additional funding has been submitted.
- Information about the Illinois CAS project is available on the Board's website: www.ibhe.org/CAS.

Considerations for the Future

As part of the Board's ongoing commitment to enhancing transferability in the state, a variety of activities will continue into the near future.

To understand transfer student course-taking behavior, staff will continue to monitor the findings of independent studies undertaken by institutions of their own transfer students or on small, statewide studies. In addition, as more institutions are available to students on CAS, a variety of user survey data will provide a picture of student use and satisfaction with CAS.

Illinois students are benefiting from an array of transfer options and services designed to assist them in their degree planning. The IAI has achieved an important level of stability and is respected across the state and the nation. When compared to similar statewide transfer projects in other states, the Illinois transfer network is one of the strongest, most inclusive, and the most focused on quality assurance. The active and voluntary involvement of 110 institutions in the Illinois Articulation Initiative reflects a shared commitment to helping students prepare at the lower division to transfer easily and smoothly into baccalaureate degree programs. CAS will build upon these strengths and provides students with even more accurate and timely information about how completed courses transfer to specific institutions and fulfill specific degree requirements. As the awareness of the IAI and CAS grow, students will come to depend upon having access to even more information to assist them in making decisions about academic programs and institutions.

**IAI STEERING PANEL MEMBERSHIP
2003-2004**

General Education Field Panel Representatives

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
Gary Trammell, University of Illinois at Springfield
Denis Wright, Joliet Junior College **CO-CHAIR**
Mary Wright, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

University [At-large] Representatives

Mary Herrington-Perry, Eastern Illinois University
Mary Hinchcliff-Pelias, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
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

Community College [At-large] Representatives

Carl Lorenz, Parkland College
Polly Hoover, William Rainey Harper College
John Bennett, Lake Land College
Yvonne Harris, Harry S Truman College
Kevin Westin, Rend Lake College
Holly Hubert, College of DuPage
Debra LaCour, Southeastern College

Illinois Transfer Coordinators' Representatives

Marilyn Murphy Marshall, University of Illinois
Julie Stock, Roosevelt University
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Staff Support

Neala Schleuning, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Statewide Co-Coordinator
Barbara Risse, Illinois Community College Board, Statewide Co-Coordinator