

**ILLINOIS TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION INITIATIVES
ANNUAL REPORT 2008-2009**

Submitted for: Information.

Summary: A primary goal of the Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success is to “Increase the number of high-quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of the economy and an increasingly global society.” One of the recommendations identified under that Goal is to “Strengthen articulation through stable funding and expansion of transfer tools such as u.select and the Illinois Articulation Initiative and through development of an objective measure of transfer and acceptance of credits.” The Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) continues to be the primary statewide vehicle for encouraging transferability among postsecondary institutions in the state of Illinois. The u.select project (formerly the Illinois Course Applicability System), is in the process of being implemented. The u.select project complements the IAI and significantly enhances the availability and accuracy of transfer information to allow even more effective and efficient degree completion. Due to cuts in the state’s budget, both projects are under serious threat. This item reviews the current status of the IAI and u.select projects, highlights the past year’s activities, and outlines the challenges facing the projects in the near future.

Action Requested: None.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Executive Summary

A primary goal of the Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success is to “Increase the number of high-quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of the economy and an increasingly global society.” One of the recommendations identified under that Goal is to “Strengthen articulation through stable funding and expansion of transfer tools such as u.select and the Illinois Articulation Initiative and through development of an objective measure of transfer and acceptance of credits.” The Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) continues to be a primary statewide vehicle for encouraging transferability among postsecondary institutions in the state of Illinois. A more recent statewide transfer and articulation project, u.select (formerly the Illinois Course Applicability System or CAS), is in its third phase of implementation. IAI and u.select are complementary, with both enhancing the availability and accuracy of transfer information and fostering 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 GECC was designed to ease transfer for students among Illinois colleges and universities. May 2009 marked the end of the eleventh year of implementation. In addition to the adoption of the GECC, several major/discipline advisory committees have also been convened to recommend preparatory coursework at the lower division level.

Eight years ago, the u.select project was initiated to offer Illinois students 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. The u.select initiative had been funded through a series of Higher Education Cooperation Act (HECA) Grant appropriations. Funding for the program has been limited due to state budget constraints.

This report begins with a brief history of the development and implementation of the IAI. It then discusses the current status of statewide transfer policy including the IAI, u.select, and other transfer projects; observations about the impact 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, concerns relative to funding, and considerations for future study.

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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 IBHE'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 was developed in three phases. Phase I focused on developing a general education package, the General Education Core Curriculum (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." 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.

Through the IAI, Illinois has developed 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. As of September 2009, the IAI database tracked over 9,631 courses in the GECC with 6,714 currently remaining active. The site receives over 2,000,000 hits per academic year.

Phase II expanded the project to create models for easing transfer into baccalaureate major programs. Twenty-five Major/Discipline Advisory Panels have been a part of identifying lower division coursework that best prepares students for advanced studies in specific baccalaureate majors. Eighteen Major Panels remain active. These recommendations include specific lower division courses in the major and required prerequisite courses or supporting courses that provide the necessary background for success in the major.

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

u.select. Eight years ago, the statewide *u.select* project (formerly known as the Course Applicability System or CAS) was initiated to offer Illinois students more accurate and detailed information on how their coursework would transfer between institutions. Where IAI concentrates on general education and foundational coursework at the lower division, *u.select* makes information on all courses as well as other degree completion requirements available to students. In FY 2002, Northern Illinois University and the College of DuPage were the first institutions in the state to go online with *u.select*; the University of Illinois at Chicago and the City Colleges of Chicago followed in FY 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 FY 2003, resulting in a plan to expand the participation in *u.select* to all interested institutions in the state on a phased-in timeline. Six additional receiving institutions were licensed in 2006-2007 (Bradley University, College of DuPage, DePaul University, Loyola University, National-Louis University, and West Suburban College of Nursing). Efforts continue to advance the implementation levels of the previously-licensed institutions.

Statewide Transfer Policy

Goal Three of the Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success is to “Increase the number of high-quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of the economy and an increasingly global society.” One of the recommendations identified under that Goal is to “Strengthen articulation through stable funding and expansion of transfer tools such as *u.select* and the Illinois Articulation Initiative and through development of an objective measure of transfer and acceptance of credits”. The increasingly diverse population of students has increased the growing need to facilitate transfer on behalf of Illinois students and institutions of higher education.

Improving successful transfer in Illinois involves a comprehensive approach, not just reliance on IAI and *u.select*. Different tools need to be employed in a coordinated fashion to improve transfer. Other state level policies are advancing that will help to smooth the transfer process. For example, the American Diploma Project should help to eliminate remediation through the coordination of high school graduation standards and college readiness as well as increase communication of expectations by higher education institutions. The Dual Credit Quality Act aims at standardizing and facilitating the expansion of dual credit opportunities in Illinois. This will enable the accumulation of transferable credit more easily, but relies on the well developed Illinois Articulation Agreement structure to help to increase course transfer legitimacy. Not every student transfer problem can be solved through state policy, but these policies should be implemented in a coordinated fashion to open the widest pathways possible to help students achieve successful transfer.

There are four broad categories of students for whom transfer policies are designed: students who know the institution to which they intend to transfer and know the major they wish to pursue; students who have a preferred transfer institution but are undecided about a major; students who know their major, but not their preferred transfer institution; and students who know neither their intended transfer institution nor their major. For students who begin their higher education experience without knowing their major or the institution to which they wish to transfer, the IAI provides an invaluable tool. The student can complete the IAI General Education Core Curriculum and it will satisfy the same general education requirements at any of the 113 participating Illinois institutions regardless of the program or institution later decided upon by the

student. For those who do not know their institution but know the intended major, the baccalaureate major panel recommendations can serve as a guide to help students until they decide on a transfer institution.

For Illinois students who already know the institutions to which they intend to transfer, in addition to u.select, other tools for facilitating transfer are available. Individual articulation agreements between the sending and receiving institutions are the primary conduit and are able to provide specific detail to students about courses to take for successful transfer. For those who know their major as well, specially designed and named associates degrees have been developed in conjunction with the Community College Board such as the Associate of Arts in Teaching (A.A.T.) degree. The Community College Compact Agreement is still used by many Illinois institutions. The Compact originated December 1, 1970 with the Illinois Board of Higher Education adoption of “A Resolution on Transfer Equivalency of the Junior-Community College Associate Degree in Baccalaureate Sequences.” The Board directed public senior institutions to declare that a transfer student in good standing, who has completed an associate degree based on baccalaureate-oriented sequences be transferred from an Illinois Community College to an Illinois Public University at junior standing and having met lower division general education requirements of the senior institution. And of course, all transfer students benefit from effective advising. Effective advisors provide the information to students about all of these pathways for navigating through the transfer system.

Both IAI and u.select have continued as vehicles for advancing transfer and articulation across the state. In addition to regular meetings of panels and committees dealing with IAI and u.select, these initiatives have continued the following ongoing activities:

- IBHE and ICCB staff and the iTransfer.org website team members have made a number of presentations at state and national meetings on IAI and the iTransfer.org website, further raising awareness about Illinois’ program, as well as the design and use of the web in advising. Programs have been presented at conferences sponsored by the National Academic Advising Association, the Illinois Academic Advising Association, the Illinois Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, among others. Numerous additional training and informational presentations were provided by u.select and iTransfer staff at schools and conferences and other IAI and u.select related activities during the year.
- IAI continued to coordinate transfer activities across the state. Participation in IAI is entirely voluntary and currently there are 113 participating institutions from all sectors, 95 as full participants and 18 as receiving only institutions. Over 700 faculty members, transfer coordinators, and institutional administrators have actively participated in IAI. Through their activities on the various panels and committees, faculty members have undertaken meaningful communication about curriculum with their colleagues statewide.
- The iTransfer.org website continues to be an essential tool for current and potential students. In addition to students, this site serves parents, faculty, advisors, administrators, planners, registrars, admissions staff, and the public at large. Over the past year, the redesign and update of the iTransfer.org site to serve as a portal for transfer information has continued to move forward.

Evaluating Student Transfer in Illinois

According to data from the Fall Enrollment Survey, student transfers within Illinois totaled 72,664 for the fall semester of 2008, some 12.1 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment of 599,147 in the state. Of these, 24,209 transferred from a community college, 5,769 transferred from a public university, 4,358 from an independent not-for-profit institution, 703 from an independent for-profit, and 37,625 from other institutions, including out-of-state, foreign and unreported/unknown institutions.

Sector Students Transferred From	Number of Students	Percent of Total Transfer Students	Percent of Total Undergraduate Students
Community Colleges	24,209	33.3%	4.0%
Public Universities	5,769	7.9%	1.0%
Independent Not-for-Profit	4,358	6.0%	0.7%
Independent For-Profit	703	1.0%	0.1%
Other Institutions	37,625	51.8%	6.3%
Total All Sectors	72,664	100%	12.1%

The sector to which the largest number of students transferred was the community colleges (24,204). Approximately the same numbers of students transferred to a public university (15,602) as to independent not-for-profit institutions (15,473) or independent for-profit institutions (16,446). Some 939 Illinois students transferred to out-of-state institutions operating in Illinois.

Review of Transfer Initiatives. In a program that seeks balance among three key principles — respect for curriculum richness and diversity in 113 separate institutions, the vagaries of individual student course-taking patterns, and an effort to meet transfer expectations for multiple majors — the alignment of goals and outcomes requires a great deal of 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 concerns that have avoided resolution are not necessarily related to IAI. These 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.

Ongoing review of transfer initiatives in the state continued this past year, focusing in particular on Phase II of the IAI — the baccalaureate major/discipline advisory committee recommendations. The effectiveness of the baccalaureate major/discipline advisory committee recommendations has become a concern and a discussion of their status was initiated during the 2003-2004 year at the request of the IAI Implementation Advisory Council (IAC) and continued through the 2004-2005 and 2006-2007 academic years. In April of 2006, the IBHE endorsed the “Evaluation of the Illinois Articulation Initiative: Report and Recommendations January 2006” and charged the Board staff with implementing the report’s recommendations as they saw fit. In May of that year, the ICCB also endorsed the report and provided their staff with a similar charge. The two staffs have cooperated to formulate a series of revisions that were initially implemented during 2006-2007, with continued efforts ongoing. Among the notable revisions are several efforts to streamline and clarify the GECC course approval process and a refining of the charge to the Major/Discipline Advisory Committees.

Each of the GECC panels has been charged with developing a list of objective criteria to be used in evaluating courses for inclusion in the GECC. These criteria will clarify the evaluation process and aid institutions in curricular development. The Major/Discipline Advisory Committees have been asked to identify no more than four courses that serve as the common core in that major or discipline and are generally required by baccalaureate programs at the lower division. Committees will restrict their course approval activities to this core. Additional discussion is underway to make the recommendations of the major panels more viable as a plan for helping students to achieve junior standing as they transfer to a baccalaureate granting institution.

Development of a Transfer Portal – iTransfer.org

During the past year, the iTransfer.org website was redesigned and further developed to serve as a portal for transfer information. The new design places a single umbrella over the Illinois Articulation Initiative and u.select. The redesigned site also provides a single entry point for students, parents, faculty, and administrators seeking information on the types of transfer, resources for financial aid, and programs offered at Illinois institutions.

The website has a new look, the result of input from student focus groups. Additional functionalities and categories of information were also added as a result of suggestions from students and campus administrators. Staff have worked actively to improve the functionality and look of the website.

Expansion of u.select

Making transferability an important part of student information and decision-making has always been a primary goal of transfer initiatives in Illinois. Activities this past year in continuing the implementation of u.select have focused on better serving student needs for current users and supplying accurate information to support transfer.

Planning for the u.select project was initiated in 2001. In 2002, Northern Illinois University and the College of DuPage were the first institutions in the state to go online; the University of Illinois at Chicago and the City Colleges of Chicago followed in 2003; in FY 2004, the remaining public universities were licensed and are currently at varying stages of implementation; and in FY 2005, state funds were used to license six additional institutions: Bradley University, College of DuPage, DePaul University, Loyola University, National-Louis University, and West Suburban College of Nursing. Extensive statewide planning was undertaken in 2003, resulting in a plan to expand the participation in u.select 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. Because of a variety of factors, including the current status of the institutions' student information systems, rates of u.select implementation vary across the public universities. While this process continues, the system has been expanded to include other institutions that serve large numbers of transfer students and are willing to make the necessary investments to implement u.select. Currently, all 12 public universities, the 48 community colleges, and seven independent institutions participate in u.select at some level.

Once u.select-licensed 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 the target institution.

A brief description of u.select implementation activities is included in the chart below.

Receiving Institutions:		
Planning Guide, Course Equivalency Guide and Course Listing Implemented		
DePaul University		U of Illinois at Springfield
Eastern Illinois University		U of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Illinois State University		West Suburban College of Nursing
Southern Illinois U at Edwardsville (Winter 09)		Western Illinois University
U of Illinois at Chicago		
Course Equivalency Guide and Course Listing Implemented		
Bradley University		Northern Illinois University
College of DuPage		Southern Illinois U at Carbondale
National-Louis University		
Course Equivalency Guide or Course Listing Implemented		
Chicago State University		Northeastern Illinois U
Governors State University		
Sending Institutions:		
Course Listing Implemented		
Black Hawk C	IECC-Olney Central C	Parkland C
Bradley University	IECC-Wabash Valley C	Prairie State C
Carl Sandburg C	Illinois Central C	Rend Lake C
CCC-Harold Washington	Illinois State University	Richland CC
CCC-Harry S. Truman	Illinois Valley CC	Rock Valley C
CCC-Kennedy-King	John A. Logan CC	Sauk Valley CC
CCC-Malcolm X	John Wood CC	Shawnee CC
CCC-Olive Harvey	Joliet Junior C	South Suburban C
CCC-Richard J. Daley	Kankakee CC	Southeastern Illinois C
CCC-Wilbur Wright	Kaskaskia C	Southern Illinois U, Carbondale
Chicago State University	Kishwaukee C	Southern Illinois U, Edwardsville
College of DuPage	Lake Land C	Southwestern Illinois C
College of Lake County	Lewis & Clark CC	Spoon River C
Danville Area CC	Lincoln Land CC	St. Augustine C
DePaul University	MacCormac C	Triton C
Eastern Illinois University	McHenry County C	University of Illinois, Chicago
Elgin CC	Moraine Valley CC	University of Illinois, Springfield
Heartland CC	Morton C	University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Highland CC	National-Louis University	Waubonsee CC
IECC-Frontier CC	Northern Illinois University	West Suburban College of Nursing
IECC-Lincoln Trail C	Oakton CC	Western Illinois University
		William Rainey Harper C

One measure of u.select usage is the accounts that have been created. Presumably due to decreases in promotion and training activities over the last year, which are due to the decline in funds for travel, meetings, and conference attendance, the number of advisor and student accounts appears to have also decreased. However, staff are investigating whether students and advisors have moved from creating accounts, which requires a login process and password, to logging in as guests without creating an account. Guest usage currently cannot be tracked. Illinois u.select continues to receive approximately 10,000-13,000 web visitors per month with Champaign-Urbana reportedly experiencing the highest u.select usage in the country. Interestingly, in the hours Western Illinois University had opened their site to make last checks of the system for the first WIU training later that day several students found the system on the web and used the WIU data before their advisors had seen the new system.

A major u.select initiative has been to bring the Request Import function to more students. The u.select Request Import function allows students to automatically download their course history into their personal u.select accounts with information from their school's records system. This simple process allows students to update their accounts with complete and correct information instantaneously. Illinois u.select had made this project a priority in part to respond to student feedback received through Illinois u.select Statewide Meetings. The table below indicates the institutions at which the Request Import feature is now available.

Request Import Implemented:
Blackhawk College
Carl Sandburg College
College of DuPage
City Colleges of Chicago
Richard Daley
Kennedy King
Malcolm X
Olive Harvey
Truman College
Harold Washington
Wilbur Wright
Elgin Community College
Heartland Community College
Illinois Eastern Community Colleges
Lewis and Clark Community College
Lincoln Land Community College (Fall 2009)
Moraine Valley Community College
Sauk Valley Community College
U of Illinois Chicago (Fall 2009)
U of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (Fall 2009)

This past year, project staff took the opportunity of the statewide meeting to disseminate transfer related data. Currently there is no source of available data on the transfer of students to and from institutions in Illinois except by subscription – and then high-level analysis – with the National Clearinghouse. The Project Director took data collected by IBHE for many years to create statewide summaries and detailed institutional-specific data for a single year, fall 2007. Though the data as reported currently show differences in institution to institution definitions and in data gathering, nonetheless dissemination of these data is a real service to all staff working in transfer, whether involved in u.select or not.

One of the issues that has arisen this past year has been adjusting to changes being implemented by the owners of u.select, redLantern, LLC. Miami University renamed its academic services organization redLantern (replacing DARS, the degree audit reporting system) in the summer of 2008. In March 2009, the assets of Miami University's redLantern operations were purchased by the same owner as CollegeSource, Inc. In June, redLantern announced a change in the delivery of the service to a hosted model. This could involve substantial modifications to the use of u.select for Illinois. Discussions about the impact of these changes are underway involving redLantern leadership and Illinois u.select staff in conjunction with representatives of several other states that use u.select.

This collaboration with other states is an extension of attempts begun last year to work with states that use u.select. Discussions with representatives of the Indiana Commission for

Higher Education have been particularly beneficial and have even led to joint presentations. Among other benefits, there are hopes that such collaboration will result in better ways to develop the interfaces necessary to bridge u.select with the different student data systems, degree audit systems, and course articulation systems of the primary vendors. The efficiency of grouping schools with like needs can be realized if state boundaries are put aside in favor of functional groupings such as the schools using SCT/Banner, PeopleSoft, or Datatel, for example. Initial discussions are promising in these early stages.

Because work with the student information system companies will require long term collaboration before a product will be delivered, the u.select Technical Coordinator has begun development of a component of a degree audit interface and a prototype course equivalency guide interface. These interfaces are available to institutions on an “open source” basis to give institutions a head start on implementation with actual useable code. Staff will disseminate information about the interface, will work with institutions interested in implementing it, and will refine the interfaces as necessary. Other states have expressed interest in working together to use and support these interfaces until the vendors might supply them in the baseline product. Construction of the interfaces has not only given Illinois institutions an alternative for implementation, but also provided the u.select staff a base understanding of the infrastructure.

As Illinois u.select matures, it will promote greater inter-institutional cooperation and information-sharing among Illinois institutions. This, in turn, will increase the likelihood that transfer students will select the most appropriate courses for transfer and degree completion. Several outcomes could result: an increase in the number of students who transfer, efficient use of the resources of Illinois higher education, 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 and first-generation students who are more likely to begin their postsecondary education at a community college.

The greatest challenge to the continued success of u.select in Illinois is the concern over funding. The budget shortfall this year aggravated an already problematic situation with delayed payments from last year. The minimum budget for effective continuation of the program was not able to be met and the shortfalls have had to be absorbed by relying on the University of Illinois and the Illinois Articulation Initiatives for cooperative ventures and making timely payments which are not being made by the state. This problem must be addressed for the continued viability of the program.

Increasing Program Coordination: IAI and u.select Working Together

As noted above, the revision of the iTransfer.org website brings IAI and u.select together as a part of a comprehensive Internet transfer resource for all Illinois students, parents, and others. In addition, IAI and u.select staff members are working to take advantage of the information-access functionality of u.select to best inform students, advisors, and admissions representatives of individual students' progress toward completion of the IAI General Education Core Curriculum.

The Illinois Board of Higher Education provided additional funding to u.select for the purchase of the u.select license to cover the Illinois Articulation Initiative's General Education Core Curriculum. With this license expansion and completion of the design of the iGet u.select Planning Guide - an unofficial degree audit - students, advisors, parents, institutional

administrators, and others are able to instantly evaluate the courses entered into users' accounts against IAI GECC requirements.

IAI and u.select have a history of working toward similar state goals from different perspectives. IAI has been instrumental in the development of the GECC package by bringing together faculty from across sectors to develop course-transferability agreements considered a national model. Illinois u.select staff have worked to make information about agreements—those that are part of IAI as well as other institution-to-institution agreements—and their implications clear to students, thus allowing the best college planning possible to take place. The two programs have increasingly worked together to maximize the realization of shared goals and make the best use of the state funding that supports both projects. One recent collaborative effort has been the sharing of presentation opportunities in which staff of one of the projects delivers information on the other project so that travel and time expenses are reduced overall. For example, u.select staff include several minutes of information on iTransfer.org and IAI during training of advisors in u.select.

iTransfer staff have also provided funding for an important marketing piece for u.select, a bookmark. This simple product gives the url address for the two efforts, now easily tied together in promotion because the web home for u.select Illinois is located within iTransfer.org. The use of a single website for the two projects has produced efficiencies in effort and provides greater visibility for both projects. Begun in the past few months, u.select is in the process of a complete makeover of its portion of the website. The goal is to provide students and staff information on the use of u.select but also to minimize the use of text-heavy pages.

2008-2009 Summary of Transfer Initiatives

In general, the year 2008-2009 can be characterized as a year during which issues related to transferability were addressed, new statewide initiatives were undertaken, and recommendations were brought forward.

- ICCB and IBHE staff continued several revisions to the IAI based on directives from the boards.
- Revisions to the iTransfer.org website to create a general transfer information portal are ongoing with efforts to keep the website current and useful to students.
- The Board staff is continuing discussions with institutional representatives to finalize revisions to the IAI process that take into account the recommendations endorsed by the IBHE and ICCB in early 2006 and the needs of the institutions and their students.
- The implementation of u.select by public universities is well underway and continues to increase. Plans were in place to expand the number of institutions participating in u.select but these plans will be slowed due to funding issues. The system is growing and improving, but increased marketing and expansion of participation have been decidedly curtailed with the budget shortfalls.

Considerations for the Future

As part of the achieving the goals of the Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success and the Board's ongoing commitment to enhancing transferability in the state, a number of new initiatives have begun and a variety of ongoing activities will continue into the near future.

Staff will continue to monitor the findings of independent studies undertaken by institutions of their own transfer students as well as national trends in transfer initiatives. Additionally, as more institutions are available to students on u.select, a variety of user survey data will provide a picture of student use and satisfaction with u.select.

Illinois students are benefiting from an assortment of transfer options and services designed to assist them in their degree planning. The IAI has achieved an important level of success that is recognized across the state and the nation. The involvement of 113 institutions in the Illinois Articulation Initiative reflects a shared commitment to helping students prepare at the lower division to transfer easily into baccalaureate degree programs. The IAI continues to be an excellent tool particularly for those who are undecided about their academic futures. The baccalaureate major panel recommendations offer additional guidance to students who are undecided about their transfer destinations. Expansion of u.select builds 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 student need for effective transfer tools grows, students will come to depend even more heavily upon having access to programs such as the IAI and u.select, as well as even more information to assist them in making decisions about academic programs and institutions. The iTransfer.org transfer web portal will continue to be a valuable asset in bringing this important information to students, parents, faculty, and higher education administrators. As emphasized in the Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success, stability of funding for these initiatives is becoming ever more important.

Although considerable efforts have been expended in the area of student transfer, a number of challenges remain. No clear measure currently exists of the impact of IAI, u.select, and other transfer initiatives on post-secondary success. As recognized in the Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success, the establishment of a P-20 longitudinal data system to improve accountability is an essential step in researching such education issues. An important tool for measuring of transfer success requires the implementation of a standard student identifying number (student unit record) that will allow comprehensive tracking of students across sectors and levels from preschool through post-graduate education. The establishment of such a system is underway with the passage of Public Act 096-0107, the P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act. This system should open the door to a wide variety of research projects that could shed light on the transfer and articulation process, including reaching a clearer understanding of the impact of Illinois initiatives.

Additional interest is being shown in baccalaureate completion agreements across the state. Although currently unfunded, Public Act 96-0535 was recently passed which amends the Board of Higher Education Act to provide that the Board implement and administer a grant program to be referred to as the Collaborative Baccalaureate Degree Development Grant Program. Additionally, Board staff are currently conducting a survey regarding the availability of baccalaureate completion programs in Illinois with results to be used to help to identify the unmet needs that could be addressed through the addition of more such agreements.

The course descriptors for General Education courses in the Illinois Articulation Initiative were developed by faculty panels and identify an agreed-upon content and level of rigor for lower-division courses. These descriptors are being used as a part of the foundation upon which college-readiness standards are being created and to inform high school curricula as part of Illinois' participation in the America Diploma Project.