

**ILLINOIS TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION INITIATIVES  
ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011**

**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 Goal 3 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. In an effort to improve the pathways for students entering community colleges undecided about their intended transfer destination, significant changes have been made over the last year to expand the scope of IAI to include acceptance of the major recommendations by public universities. 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 Goal 3 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 an important 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), continues its expansion. IAI and u.select are complementary, 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 2011 marked the end of the thirteenth year of implementation. In addition to the adoption of the GECC, several major/discipline panels have been convened to recommend preparatory coursework at the lower division level. Over the last several years, concerns have arisen that as increasing numbers of students have begun their postsecondary careers starting at community colleges, there is a growing need to provide assistance in successfully transferring major coursework. Although substantial effort has gone into creating specific transfer agreements between community colleges and their partner transfer institutions, there are many students who enter community colleges undecided about their intended transfer destinations. For these students, significant changes have been made over the last year to expand the scope of IAI to include acceptance of the major recommendations by public universities. Until last year, the major panel recommendations have been advisory only, but this agreement to accept the panel recommendations will offer students undecided about their intended transfer destination additional guidance in the process.

Ten 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 compare the courses they have completed to degree requirements at participating schools. A planning guide, which matches courses to degree requirements, outlines what additional coursework is needed 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; transfer issues that have been raised and attempts to address these issues; 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 the future.

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**Brief History**

*The Illinois Articulation Initiative.* 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. The IAI was originally developed in three phases. Phase I focused on developing a general education package, the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC). Phase II expanded the project to create models for easing transfer into baccalaureate major programs. Twenty-five Major/Discipline Advisory Panels have participated in identifying lower division coursework that prepares students for studies in baccalaureate majors. Phase III instituted the process of regular five-year reviews designed to ensure that the panels' recommendations continue to be relevant and accurate.

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 2011, there are 195 GECC course descriptions, and the IAI database includes 9,983 courses in the GECC with 6,853 currently remaining active. There are 265 major course descriptions, and the IAI database has tracked 13,042 courses in the majors with 2,354 currently remaining active.

*u.select.* Nine 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 toward a baccalaureate degree. This web-based program allows students to compare the courses they have completed to degree requirements at participating schools. A planning guide, which matches courses to degree requirements, outlines what additional coursework is needed to complete the degree. The u.select initiative had been funded through a series of Higher Education Cooperation Act (HECA) Grant appropriations. Recently, funding for the program has been limited due to state budget constraints.

## Statewide Transfer Policy

Goal 3 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 recommendation of Goal 3 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 progressively more diverse population of students has increased the need to facilitate transfer on behalf of Illinois students and institutions of higher education.

According to data from the Fall Enrollment Survey, student transfers within Illinois totaled 62,527 for the Fall semester of 2010, some 8.7 percent of the total Fall 2010 undergraduate enrollment of 761,046 in the state. Of these, 27,240 transferred from a community college, up from 24,717 last year; 5,377 transferred from a public university, down from 5,504 in 2009; 4,039 from an independent not-for-profit institution, down from 4,215 in 2009; 686 from an independent for-profit institution, down from 738 last year; and 25,185 from other institutions, down from 31,117 in 2009, including out-of-state, foreign, and unreported/unknown institutions.

<b>Sector Students Transferred From</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percent of Total Transfer Students</b>	<b>Percent of Total Undergraduate Students</b>
Community Colleges	27,240	43.6%	3.6%
Public Universities	5,377	8.6%	0.7%
Independent Not-for-Profit	4,039	6.5%	0.5%
Independent For-Profit	686	1.1%	0.1%
Other Institutions*	25,185	40.2%	3.3%
<b>Total All Sectors</b>	<b>62,527</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>

\* Out of state, foreign, and unknown/unreported origin

The sector to which the largest number of students transferred was the community colleges, with 17,697 students, followed closely by the public universities with 16,912. A significant number of students transferred to independent not-for-profit institutions (13,578) and independent for-profit institutions (12,703). The number of students transferring to for-profit institutions dropped substantially from last year’s first ever position as the highest ranking sector attracting transfers with 17,825 in 2009. Some 1,637 Illinois students transferred to out-of-state institutions operating in Illinois.

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Number of Undergrad Students Transferred To Fall 2010</b>	<b>Total Fall 2010 Undergraduate Enrollments</b>	<b>Percent of Transfers to the Sector of the Total Undergraduate Students</b>
Community Colleges	17,697	379,736	4.7%
Public Universities	16,912	152,795	11.1%
Independent Not-for-Profit	13,578	138,241	9.8%
Independent For-Profit	12,703	79,317	16.0%

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 to satisfy general education requirements at any of the 110 participating Illinois institutions regardless of the program or institution later decided upon by the student.

For those who do not know their transfer 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. The current IAI and institutional transfer and articulation agreements work well for most students, particularly for program to program articulation agreements. However, the system could do more, especially for those students who enter community colleges with an intended major, but without an intended transfer destination. There had been several attempts over the years to gain full acceptance of the major panel recommendations by receiving institutions, but these attempts had not borne fruit. Increasing scrutiny of this issue over the last few years has led to renewed efforts. Over the past year, ICCB and IBHE staffs have worked intensively to successfully formalize the acceptance of the course recommendations of the IAI Major Panels.

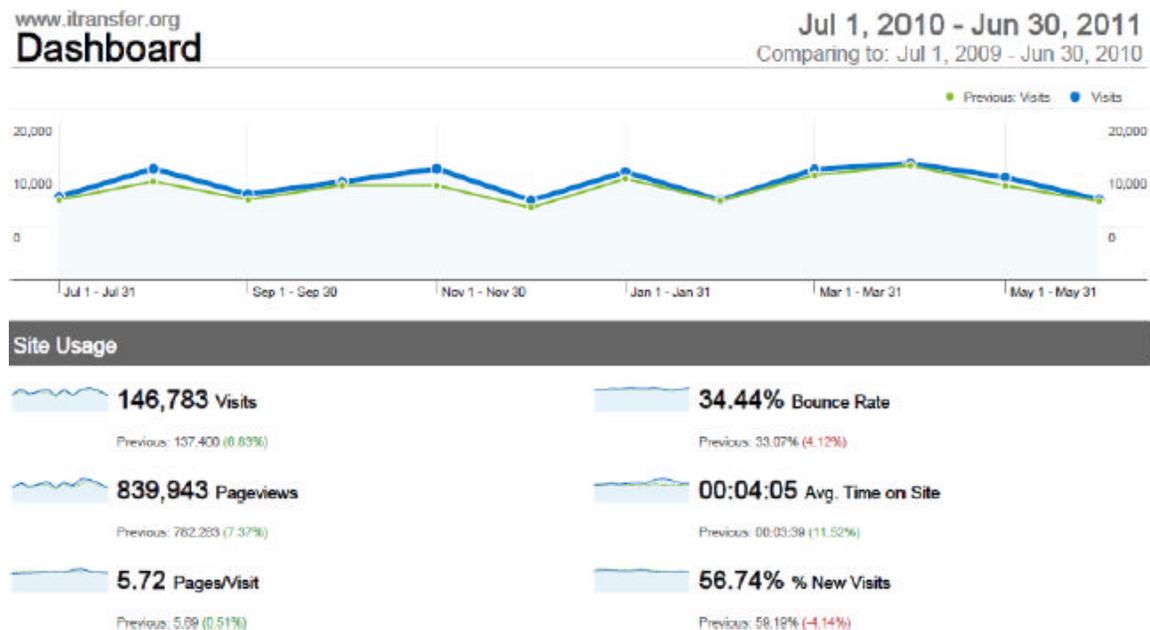
Past attempts at gaining acceptance of the recommendations have failed to produce agreement due to many curricular concerns. The chief problems stem from the differences between institutions about what constitutes the appropriate courses to be offered at the freshman/sophomore level for many majors. There have been concerns that variation in mission across four-year institutions, heavy course requirements in many majors, and the requirements of specialized accreditation in some fields will be compromised as a result of the acceptance of these course recommendations. However, working through the IAI panel structure and with a group of public institution academic officers, acceptance of the Major Panel recommendations is underway. The first two thirds of the majors have been through the acceptance process, and the remaining five majors are up for consideration this Fall.

Under the plan, the public universities are asked to accept the Major Panel course recommendations and be added to a list of receiving institutions that have agreed to the recommendations. If there is a curricular issue that does not allow them to do so, they are to provide feedback to IBHE or ICCB IAI staff to suggest revisions of the courses or their approval criteria that will allow the institution to accept the major recommendations. Staffs will then combine feedback received and provide the information to the panels to facilitate modifications. After this is submitted to the public institutions, it will then be presented to independent institutions offering them the opportunity to accept the recommendations under the same terms and be added to the web page lists. Each Major Panel iTransfer webpage will indicate the current major course recommendations and a list of all institutions that agree to those recommendations. The supporting memos and acceptance lists are available on the IAI website at <http://www.itransfer.org/iai/container.aspx?section=faculty&subsection=other&topic=iaidoc>.

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 their ongoing activities. There are 110 participating institutions from all sectors, 98 as full participants and 12 as receiving only institutions. Over 700 faculty members, transfer coordinators, and institutional administrators have actively participated in IAI. One of the valuable by-products of the IAI panel structure is that it provides faculty members from different sectors a conduit to have meaningful communication about curriculum. This helps to overcome misperceptions that sometimes develop between faculties in different sectors.

This year, IBHE and ICCB staff and the [iTransfer.org](http://www.itransfer.org) website team members have made a number of presentations at state and national meetings on IAI and the [iTransfer.org](http://www.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.

The [iTransfer.org](http://www.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. User statistics were tracked for the IAI website for July 2010 through June 2011. The IAI website, [iTransfer.org](http://www.itransfer.org), received 146,783 visits, up from 137,400 last year; 86,042 unique visitors, up from 83,969 last year; and 839,943 page views, up from 782,283 last year. An online version of the IAI bulletin was developed and implemented. It is available at <http://www.itransfer.org/iai/bulletin.aspx>.



The IAI iTransfer website underwent significant redesign in FY2010-2011. The iTransfer staff engaged in a number of activities designed to improve the functionality of the website and its supporting systems. This process involved a substantial effort by staff to rethink and program a revised supporting system. The revised supporting system was renamed iManage by the Implementation Advisory Committee. The iManage system is now the home to all administrative tasks for IAI and institutional staff and faculty who work with IAI. Expanded functionality includes: calendaring (scheduling lists, RSVP system, and meeting maintenance); meeting agenda and minutes creation and direct upload to the site capability; WebReview for panel voting on courses submitted to IAI; new and five year course submission; course database maintenance; transfer coordinator channel (which includes a forum for discussions and questions); school management system; user and panel management systems; questions and complaints regarding IAI and transfer in the State of Illinois; WebReview management for refining decisions and voting; and database history inquiries. To meet needs for facilitating meetings, staff conducted a review of software options and AnyMeeting was selected as iTransfer's new webinar program. In addition, the iTransfer team made changes to the iTransfer site based on usability studies and Google Analytics. "Channels" were added to the site to facilitate use including separate channels for students, faculty, and advisors. Quality control reviews were implemented to regularly review the site for content accuracy and broken links.

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 continue to advance that will help to smooth the transfer process. For example, the Common Core Standards, which were adopted in June 2010, and the American Diploma Project efforts are intended to 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 to standardize and facilitate 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 Initiative 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.

Many other tools are available to facilitate student transfer in Illinois. Students who already know their transfer institution destination are advised to make use of existing individual articulation agreements between institutions. Such articulation agreements between the sending and receiving institutions are the primary conduit for transfer and are able to provide specific detail to students about courses to take at partner institutions for successful transfer. For those who know their major as well, specially designed and named associates degrees have been developed in conjunction with the Illinois Community College Board, such as the Associate of Arts in Teaching (A.A.T.) degree. The Community College Compact Agreement (the Compact) 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 status 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.

## Expansion of u.select

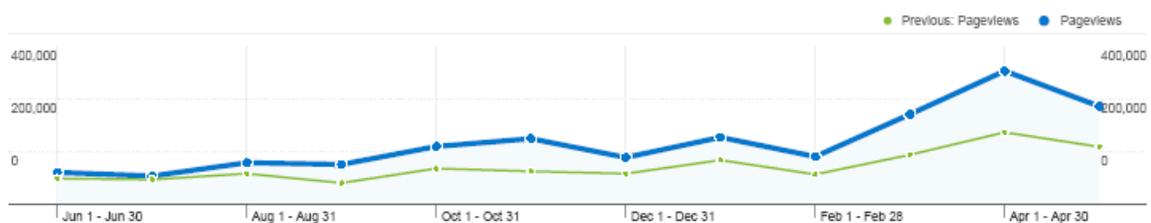
Making transferability an important part of student information and decision-making has always been a primary goal of transfer initiatives in Illinois. Activities this past year in continuing the implementation of u.select have focused on better serving student needs for current users and supplying accurate 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 FY2004, the remaining public universities were licensed and are currently at varying stages of implementation; and in FY2005, 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.

The u.select website is accessible to students via the Internet by using a free online program. Students can gather information about schools, search for courses, view course catalogs, find course equivalencies among various institutions, learn about the majors offered by different institutions, see graduation requirements for those majors, create a course history, and run personalized degree planning guides. In addition to students, this site serves parents, faculty, advisors, administrators, planners, registrars, admissions staff, and the public at large. User statistics were tracked for the u.select website for June 2010 through May 2011 with 1,883,812 page views, up from 1,141,949 last year.

### Illinois u.select pageviews year over year

Jun 1, 2010 - May 31, 2011  
Comparing to: Jun 1, 2009 - May 31, 2010



The greatest challenge to the continued expansion and success of u.select in Illinois is the concern over funding. The budget shortfall of the past few years has aggravated an already problematic situation with delayed payments. 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. There exists great potential for expansion but it depends not only on restoration of full funding, but on growth in funding for the program. This problem must be addressed for the continued viability of u.select.

A table of u.select implementation is included below.

<b>Receiving Institutions:</b>	
<b>Planning Guide, Course Equivalency Guide and Course Listing Implemented</b>	
DePaul University	University of Illinois at Chicago
Eastern Illinois University	University of Illinois at Springfield
Illinois State University	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville	Western Illinois University
<b>Course Equivalency Guide and Course Listing Implemented</b>	
College of DuPage	St. Xavier University
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale	
<b>Course Equivalency Guide or Course Listing Implemented</b>	
Bradley University	National-Louis University
Chicago State University	Northern Illinois University
Governors State University	Northeastern Illinois University
Loyola University Chicago	West Suburban College of Nursing

<b>Sending Institutions:</b>		
<b>Request Import and Course Listing Implemented:</b>		
Black Hawk College	IECC - Lincoln Trail College	
Carl Sandburg College	IECC - Olney Central College	
City College of Chicago - Harold Washington College	IECC - Wabash Valley College	
City College of Chicago - Kennedy King College	Heartland Community College	
City College of Chicago - Malcolm X College	Lewis & Clark Community College	
City College of Chicago - Olive Harvey College	Moraine Valley Community College	
City College of Chicago - Richard Daley College	Sauk Valley Community College	
City College of Chicago - Harry S. Truman College	University of Illinois at Chicago	
City College of Chicago - Wilbur Wright College	University of Illinois at Springfield	
Elgin Community College	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	
IECC - Frontier Community College		
<b>Course Listing Implemented:</b>		
Black Hawk College	C. of Lake County	Saint Augustine College
Bradley University	Lake Land College	Carl Sandburg College
Chicago State U.	Lewis And Clark Community College	Sauk Valley Community College
City Colleges of Chicago	Lincoln Land College	Shawnee Community College
Danville Area Community College	Loyola University Chicago	South Suburban College
DePaul University	John A. Logan College	Southeastern Illinois College

Eastern Illinois University	MacCormac College	Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
Elgin Community College	McHenry Community College	Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville
W.R. Harper College	Moraine Valley Community College	Southwestern Illinois College
Highland Community College	Morton College	Spoon River College
Illinois Central Community College	National-Louis University	St. Xavier University
Illinois Eastern Community College	Northern Illinois University	Triton College
Illinois State University	Oakton Community College	U. of Illinois at Chicago
Illinois Valley Community College	Parkland College	U. of Illinois at Springfield
Joliet Junior College	Prairie State College	U. of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
Kankakee Community College	Rend Lake College	Waubensee Community College
Kaskaskia College	Richland Community College	West Suburban College of Nursing
Kishwaukee College	Rock Valley College	Western Illinois University

### Considerations for the Future

Smooth transfer pathways play an important part in achieving the goals of the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success*. Improving degree attainment, enhancing affordability, and increasing the number of credential holders in Illinois are all facilitated through an effective transfer system. As part of the Board's ongoing commitment to enhancing transferability in the state, IAI and u.select continue to be vital tools. Plans for the near future for IAI and u.select reflect this commitment.

The process of formalizing the acceptance of the course recommendations of the IAI Major Panels has been an essential part in the continued success of IAI. This plan has attempted to address concerns that have been ongoing with the Major Panel recommendations. IBHE and ICCB staffs have worked with IAI and are dedicated to making sure that there continues to be progress on this issue, and as with last year, this will be the central focus for this year's IAI plans.

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. 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.

Growing interest is being shown in baccalaureate completion agreements across the state. An annual survey of community colleges is conducted by ICCB regarding the availability of baccalaureate completion programs in Illinois with results to be used to identify unmet needs that could be addressed through the addition of more agreements. A process is being considered to formalize the communication of these community college baccalaureate completion needs to the universities. Although currently unfunded, Public Act 96-0535, which was passed two years ago, 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. The provision of funding for this grant program could greatly enhance the availability of such baccalaureate completion programs and help to address the disparities in baccalaureate degree completion options in many regions of the state.

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 Common Core Standards project and the American Diploma Project. In addition to other content experts, faculty on the IAI panels will be asked to continue to participate in the implementation of the Common Core Standards and help to build the bridge between high school graduation standards and college readiness expectations.

