

Associate of Arts in Teaching Degrees Overview

In September 2002, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), in cooperation with the University of Illinois, formed a steering committee to develop Associate of Arts in Teaching (A.A.T.) degree models. Representatives of public universities, community colleges, and the three state education agencies (IBHE, ICCB, and ISBE) came together to undertake this task. The primary focus of the steering committee's work was to: Develop Associate of Arts in Teaching degree models that will attract students into high need teaching disciplines and facilitate the transfer of students desiring to become teachers in those disciplines into upper-division teacher education programs. Students obtaining an A.A.T. degree in the identified shortage areas should have equal status with university native students at the beginning of the junior year.

The steering committee identified three high need areas on which to focus its initial efforts—secondary math, secondary science, and special education. Three subcommittees were formed to address recommended curricula for these three discipline areas. A fourth committee addressed general education and the selection of appropriate lower-division professional education courses.

On June 26, 2003, workgroups comprised of approximately 100 community college and university faculty met at the University of Illinois in Springfield to link professional teaching standards to the mathematics and science teaching models, to identify appropriate artifacts demonstrating mastery of the standards, and to develop sample course syllabi for the selected education courses. Detailed matrices that identify standards, indicators and artifacts for general education and the professional education courses in the A.A.T. degree models, as well as sample syllabi, were produced by the workgroups. . These materials, along with a draft report of the steering committee, were widely disseminated to faculty and administrators at all the public community colleges and universities for review and comment.

On June 21, 2004, House Resolution 845 was adopted which directed the Illinois P-16 Initiative to also develop a model A.A.T. degree in Early Childhood Education. The Associate of Arts in Teaching Steering Committee convened working groups that included community college and university faculty, as well as representatives from Early Childhood and Special Education constituencies, in June 2004, to develop degree models.

The Illinois Community College Board granted approval for a model Associate of Arts in Teaching (A.A.T.) degree in Early Childhood on September 16, 2005. The Illinois Board of Higher Education endorsed the model on August 23, 2005.