ILLINOIS TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION INITIATIVES
ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

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 MyCreditsTransfer 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. 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 years to expand the scope of IAI to include acceptance of the major recommendations by public universities. The MyCreditsTransfer project (formerly named u.select Illinois and the Illinois Course Applicability System), has been implemented and continues to complement the IAI while significantly enhancing the availability and accuracy of transfer information to allow even more effective and efficient degree completion. Due to budgetary cuts combined with the lack of an approved state budget, both the IAI and MyCreditsTransfer projects are under serious threat; discontinuing either of these projects would negatively impact the more than 60,000 students who transfer to Illinois institutions each fall. This item reviews the current status of the IAI and MyCreditsTransfer 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 MyCreditsTransfer 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, MyCreditsTransfer (formerly named u.select Illinois and the Illinois Course Applicability System or CAS), continues its expansion. IAI and MyCreditsTransfer 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 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 2015 marked the end of the seventeenth year of implementation. In addition to the adoption of the GECC, several major 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 years to expand the scope of IAI to include acceptance of the major recommendations by public universities. Until the fall of 2010, 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.

MyCreditsTransfer is a statewide initiative, implemented fourteen years ago, which was designed to facilitate transfer within Illinois using the nationally available tool, Transferology. Within Transferology, students can find out how courses transfer between institutions and the different majors institutions offer. This web-based program also allows students to determine how courses they have completed may or may not count towards a baccalaureate degree at participating schools. A planning guide, which serves as a valuable tool to both advisors and students, matches courses to degree requirements and outlines what additional coursework is needed to complete the degree.

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, MyCreditsTransfer, and other transfer projects; transfer issues that have been raised and attempts to address these issues; and other related transfer concerns. This report also includes a summary of highlights from this past year's activities, concerns relative to funding, listings of participating schools, and considerations for the future.

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 ongoing reviews of courses. This process was designed to ensure that the panels' recommendations continue to be relevant and accurate, and that courses previously approved by the panel still align with the panel's criteria and course descriptions.

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 2015, there are 197 GECC course descriptions, and the IAI database includes 10,925 courses in the GECC with 7,035 currently remaining active. There are 78 major course descriptions, and the IAI database has tracked 13,495 courses in the majors with 2,360 currently remaining active.

MyCreditsTransfer. Fourteen years ago, the MyCreditsTransfer 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 MyCreditsTransfer initiative was originally funded through a series of Higher Education Cooperation Act (HECA) Grant appropriations. Beginning in 2010, HECA grant funding ended and IBHE began supporting this initiative through the agency's general grant budget, thus 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 "Improve transitions all along the education pipeline." The strategy provided to meet this recommendation is to "Strengthen articulation through stable funding and expansion of transfer tools such as u.select [now called MyCreditsTransfer] 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 58,226 for the Fall semester of 2014, some 9.2 percent of the total Fall 2014 enrollment of 631,118 (down from 666,369 in 2012) in the state. Of these in Fall 2014: 24,837 transferred from a community college (down from 25,004 in 2012); 4,993 transferred from a public university (down from 5,259 in 2012); 3,571 from an independent not-for-profit institution (down from 3,707 in 2012); 562 from an independent for-profit institution (down from 624 in 2012); and 24,263from other institutions (up from 21,458 in 2012).

Sector Students Transferred FROM:	Number Undergrad Students Fall 2014	Percent of Total Transfer Students
Community Colleges	24,837	42.7%
Public Universities	4,993	8.6%
Independent Not-for-Profit	3,571	6.1%
Independent For-Profit	562	0.9%
Other Institutions*	24,263	41.7%
Total All Sectors	**58,226**	**100%**

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

The sector to which the largest number of students transferred to was the community colleges, with 17,555 students, followed closely by the public universities with 15,251. A significant number of students transferred to independent not-for-profit institutions (10,611) and independent for-profit institutions (14,034). Less than 1,000 Illinois students transferred to out-of-state institutions operating within Illinois.

Sector Students Transferred TO:	Number of Undergrad Students Fall 2014	Total Fall 2014 Undergraduate Enrollments
Community Colleges	17,555	304,819
Public Universities	15,251	144,381
Independent Not-for-Profit	10,611	124,740
Independent For-Profit	14,034	51,649
Out-of-State, Operating in IL	775	5,529
Total All Sectors	**58,226**	**631,118**

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 do not know 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, also known as the GECC package, to satisfy 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 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. Significant changes have been made over the years to expand the scope of IAI to include acceptance of the major recommendations by public universities. Until the fall of 2010, 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.
The current IAI and institutional transfer and articulation agreements work well for most students, particularly for program to program articulation agreements.

Past attempts at gaining acceptance of the recommendations had failed to produce agreement due to many curricular concerns. The chief problems stemmed from the differences between institutions about what constitutes the appropriate courses to be offered at the freshman/sophomore level for many majors. There have also 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 would 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 has been completed with nearly all majors having been through the acceptance process.

Under the plan, the public universities were 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 was a curricular issue that did not allow them to do so, they were to provide feedback to IBHE or ICCB IAI staff to suggest revisions of the courses or their approval criteria that would allow the institution to accept the major recommendations. Staff worked to combine the feedback received and provided the information to the panels to facilitate modifications. In the future, independent institutions will be given the opportunity to accept the recommendations under the same terms and be added to the web page lists. Each Major Panel iTransfer webpage indicates the current major course recommendations and a list of all institutions that agreed 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 MyCreditsTransfer 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 MyCreditsTransfer, these initiatives have continued their ongoing activities. There are 113 participating institutions from all sectors, 95 as full participants and 18 as receiving only institutions. More than 525 faculty members, transfer coordinators, and academic officers from participating two-year and four-year public and private institutions serve on IAI general education and major panels. 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.

Over the last three years, the iTransfer team has continued to improve service and usability of the site to its constituents. The focus has been to develop and deploy various web resources to help users find, locate, and navigate the iTransfer.org site and the necessary IAI-

related information more easily. Through the last year, the iTransfer Coordinator continued to assist with panel related activities as well as serve as the primary contact and information resource for iTransfer and IAI.

In order to better serve the variety of constituents that use the site, the iTransfer staff has utilized a variety of sources to obtain user data and feedback. They continue to refine and improve the iManage system, which allows for all administrative functions for institutional course submitters and IAI related personnel to access information regarding IAI courses, and they have also developed mobile functionality for faculty members to use during the course review process.

The iTransfer web site serves current and potential students in Illinois higher education, parents, faculty/advisors, administrators, planners, registrars, admissions staff, and the public at large. In its 17th year, the site continues to be an essential tool for these constituencies. Between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015, the site processed 141,144 visits to the site with 92,318 being unique visitors. These figures represent a slight downward change over last year's totals but continue to demonstrate high volume user traffic through the desktop and mobile sites. On average, the site provided six pages of information viewed per visit (average duration of about four minutes) and handled a total of 841,296 page views.

Improving successful transfer in Illinois involves a comprehensive approach, not just reliance on IAI and MyCreditsTransfer. 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 State Standards, which were adopted in June 2010, and the Complete College America initiatives are intended to help 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 Fine Arts (A.F.A.) degree and the Associate in Engineering Science (A.E.S.) 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.

In Fiscal Year 2015, the following IAI goals were accomplished through a number of projects and activities:

- Monitor and maintained iTransfer business continuation activities to include existing systems and function. *This is an ongoing process.*
    - Edited and "fine-tuned" systems, including marketing activities to effectively meet client needs.
- Install and implement new software and hardware to facilitate database and web application design. *This is an ongoing process.*
    - Reviewed current software on the market to ensure iTransfer is utilizing technologies appropriate for the best functionality.
    - Explored how to expand and enhance the mobile site functionality. Our IT and Web Administrator attended professional conferences and collaborated with other web specialists to create a plan for enhancing our mobile site functions.
- Continue to upload courses into the course review system for panel review at spring and fall session meetings. *This is an ongoing process.*
    - This included monitoring the electronic processes involved in submission and via iManage.
    - Staff worked to improve performance and user satisfaction.
- Attend various IAI GECC and Major Panel meetings in spring and fall sessions. *This is an ongoing process.*
    - The iTransfer team continues use of the free web conferencing program called AnyMeeting for remoting participants whenever possible. We had experienced some functional difficulties with the use of the program in Fiscal Year 2014 and 2015. Our IT and Web Administrator as well as our Program Facilitator worked together and researched options to solve the issue. In initial use during the summer of 2015 through web training on site related items, the devised fix appeared to have resolved much of the previous difficulties. We are continuing work on devising and testing solutions to try to use this functionality at our other main venue of Heartland Community College. In the past, firewall issues on the wireless service at Heartland have prevented our ability to use it.
- Create meeting summaries for meetings iTransfer staff attended. *This is an ongoing process.*
    - Meeting summaries were completed by the iTransfer team for all GECC and iTransfer managed panels.
- Assist participating institutions with staff training and technical directions/implementation. *This is an ongoing process.*
    - After the IAI team discussed and reviewed plans on training, the following items were determined to be the appropriate course of action regarding training for Fiscal Year 2015 and Fiscal Year 2016 (*This is expected to be an ongoing project for Fiscal Year 2016)*:
        - ➢ Began work on the creation of a comprehensive booklet regarding informational items on IAI. The IAI Program Facilitator has begun the work of creating and pulling together items that will be housed in the manual/booklet.
        - ➢ The IAI Coordinator has begun work creating training documents which will also be available within the manual as well as on the iTransfer site. These documents are step-by-step walk-through pdf's that will provide direction:
            - ▪ for new panel members in voting and navigating in iManage,
            - ▪ for institutional submitters working on submitting courses and maintaining

- institutional database information, and
- for advisors using the main iTransfer site in working with students.
  - ➢ The IAI Coordinator conducted more than 35 web-based and one-on-one phone training opportunities for advisors, faculty members, and submitters in Fiscal Year 2015. The web-based training was handled as webinars through the AnyMeeting program. Training was available to any staff or faculty who contacted the IAI team and requested assistance. In addition, webinars were organized in a way which allowed interested people to sign up and participate without making any special request. These practices were determined to be effective and will be continued.
  - ➢ While the team did not rule out the possibility of Camtasia-based productions to be posted on the iTransfer YouTube channel, it was determined that the current course of action was a more efficient use of time. This will continue to be discussed as an option moving forward.
- Respond to IAI Steering panel directions regarding program evaluation processes. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - o As requests and needs were identified by the Steering Panel, staff worked to implement recommendations for IAI and iTransfer.
- Research web site and server technologies to ensure that iTransfer.org reflects current web practices and make changes accordingly. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - o Continued to adjust site based on user feedback and the overall iTransfer marketing plan to make the site more user friendly.
  - o The IT and Web Administrator, who joined the IAI team in July of 2014, identified possible improvements that could be made to business continuation practices as well as site functionality and design by working to move much of the iTransfer server structure to virtual servers. This server structure will also be a cost saving measure. This task has been determined to be monumental and will be taken in incremental steps. The IT and Web Administrator acquired the servers in Fiscal Year 2015. Work on configuring and structuring the servers for optimal function and security has begun. Plans continue to be developed to move portions of the site to the virtual server structure. *This is expected to be an ongoing project for Fiscal Year 2016 and into Fiscal Year 2017.*
  - o The IAI team continued to review and discuss the structure and design of the main site. It has been determined that improvements could be made as the volume of information currently on the site is vast and could be streamlined to assist with usability.
- Continue to develop and implement the IAI/iTransfer marketing plan. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - o With the iTransfer "portal," the marketing plan continued its focus to encompass "all things transfer" in Illinois.
- Continue technology research, development and implementation plan. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - o iTransfer staff and the IAI team met frequently to discuss projects, marketing opportunities, and look at refining site aspects to increase satisfaction with site functionality. This included a few all-day meetings in Fiscal Year 2015.
- Prepare annual report and identified specific goals for coming year. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - o The annual report was completed, shared with appropriate Board representatives, and deployed on the iTransfer site before mid-September 2014.
- Continue to provide support to our Board constituents. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - o Staff continued to provide assistance and support to the IBHE and ICCB staff as necessary. This included phone meetings and travel to programmatic meetings. Training was also offered as requested.

- Continue to review and refine the iTransfer operations manual and Business Continuation Plan. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - Reviewed recently updated Business Continuation Plan and made appropriate changes.
  - The new IT and Web Administrator began in July 2014 and based on his recommendation the Business Continuation Plan was updated to include the virtual server project.
  - The IAI team determined the need for an administrator manual for iManage functionality. The manual will include step-by-step instructions for processes and a timeline of expected administrator and IAI activities.
- Continue updates to the iTransfer website to refine the site as the state of Illinois comprehensive "portal" for transfer student information. *This is an ongoing process..*
  - Staff continued to review Google analytics, site navigation, and user feedback to improve functionality and design of the site.
  - Strengthening the military student section will be a focus of IAI team with assistance from MyCreditsTransfer staff and other experts within the IAI system in Fiscal Year 2016. MyCreditsTransfer and Transferology currently house some military student information and iTransfer.org should strive not to duplicate that information, but enhance it.
- Add content based on recommendations from the IAI Advisory Committee, IAI Steering Committee, IBHE, and ICCB. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - As changes in information were announced, the site was updated to reflect any changes and recommendations provided by constituents.
- Complete activities related to server structure reconstruction for enhanced business continuation purposes. These included, but were not limited to (*These activities will continue in Fiscal Year 2016*):
  - Pricing and purchasing of new server technology
  - Set up of appropriate software and server technologies
  - Bolstering server security from external attacks
  - This initiative is how the virtual server project began and will continue for Fiscal Year 2016 and possibly into Fiscal Year 2017.
- Develop and complete projects as they arise. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - As functionality issues in iManage and other site issues arose, a variety of programming and report projects were completed in a timely manner.

IAI: Illinois Participating Colleges and Universities

All IBHE-approved Illinois associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions which hold regional accreditation from an accrediting authority recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or the Council on Higher Education are eligible to participate in the Illinois Articulation Initiative. Institutions may participate in the Illinois transferable General Education Core Curriculum agreement and/or in one or more of the several Baccalaureate Majors' agreements, with the level of participation in Baccalaureate Majors' agreements depending upon whether or not the institution offers a program in the specific major. Currently there are 113 schools participating in IAI (the General Education Core Curriculum and/or the Illinois Baccalaureate Majors' Curricula).

Full-Participating Schools: There are 95 schools recognized by IAI currently as full-participation schools. These institutions must at all times maintain a complete GECC package which entails offering an adequate number of IAI GECC approved courses in the six core

disciplines (Communications, Mathematics, Life Science, Physical Science, Humanities and Fine Arts, and Social and Behavioral Sciences).

Two-Year Public Institutions (48 schools)

Black Hawk College	Lincoln Trail College (IECC)
Carl Sandburg College	Malcolm X College (CCC)
College of DuPage	McHenry County College
College of Lake County	Moraine Valley Community College
Daley College (Richard J.) (CCC)	Morton College
Danville Area Community College	Oakton Community College
Elgin Community College	Olive-Harvey College (CCC)
Frontier Community College (IECC)	Olney Central College (IECC)
Harold Washington College (CCC)	Parkland College
Harper College	Prairie State College
Heartland Community College	Rend Lake College
Highland Community College	Richland Community College
Illinois Central College	Rock Valley College
Illinois Valley Community College	Sauk Valley Community College
John A. Logan College	Shawnee Community College
John Wood Community College	South Suburban College
Joliet Junior College	Southeastern Illinois College
Kankakee Community College	Southwestern Illinois College
Kaskaskia College	Spoon River College
Kennedy-King College (CCC)	Triton College
Kishwaukee College	Truman College (Harry S) (CCC)
Lake Land College	Wabash Valley College (IECC)
Lewis & Clark Community College	Waubonsee Community College
Lincoln Land Community College	Wilbur Wright College (CCC)

Two-Year Independent Institutions (2 schools)

MacCormac College
Northwestern College

Four-Year Public Institutions (12 schools)

Chicago State University
Eastern Illinois University

Four-Year Public Institutions (continued)

Governors State University
Illinois State University
Northeastern Illinois University
Northern Illinois University
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
University of Illinois at Chicago
University of Illinois at Springfield
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Western Illinois University

Four-Year Independent Institutions (33 schools)

Aurora University	MacMurray College
Benedictine University	McKendree University
Blackburn College	Midstate College
Bradley University	Millikin University
Concordia University Chicago	National-Louis University
DePaul University	North Central College
DeVry University - Illinois	North Park University
Dominican University	Olivet Nazarene University
Elmhurst College	Quincy University
Illinois College	Robert Morris University
Illinois Institute of Art	Rockford University
Judson University	Roosevelt University
Kendall College	Saint Xavier University
Lewis University	St. Augustine College
Lincoln Christian University	Trinity Christian College
Lincoln College	Trinity International University
	University of St. Francis

Receiving-Only Schools [R]: There are 18 schools recognized by IAI currently as receiving-only schools. Institutions choosing to participate on a receiving only basis agree to accept as meeting all lower-division general education requirements of the institution a completed GECC package from any other fully-participating institution.

Two-Year Public Institutions (0 schools)

Two-Year Independent Institutions (2 schools)
> Solex College [R]
> The College of Office Technology [R]

Four-Year Public Institutions (0 schools)

Four-Year Independent Institutions (16 schools)
> American InterContinental University [R]
> Argosy University - Chicago [R]
> Argosy University - Schaumburg [R]
> Columbia College Chicago [R]
> East-West University [R]
> Ellis College of New York Institute of Technology [R]

Four-Year Independent Institutions (continued)
> Eureka College [R]
> Illinois Institute of Technology [R]
> ITT Technical Institute [R]
> Knox College [R]
> Lake Forest College [R]
> Lakeview College of Nursing [R]
> Loyola University Chicago [R]
> Northwestern Business College [R]
> Resurrection University [R]
> Saint Francis Medical Center, Nursing [R]

MyCreditsTransfer (formerly u.select Illinois)
Fiscal Year2016 Project Goals and Objectives – a Description of Work Activities

The goals of the MyCreditsTransfer Project for 2016 are five-fold: implementation, promotion, collaboration and coordination, maintenance, and evaluation. These goals continue the direction articulated in 2015.

The category of implementation refers to ongoing efforts to expand participation on three fronts: 1) bring fully licensed institutions up to full participation through the development and/or installation of interfaces with institutions' student information systems, course equivalency guides (CEG) and degree audit systems; 2) increase the license level of sending institutions – those participating through the submission of course banks only – to that of receiving institutions with CEG or degree audit capability; and 3) to identify and target new institutions for participation – particularly Illinois private institutions and out-of-state feeder institutions.

In many ways increased participation and higher implementation are primary goals, yet they are the least attainable given sustained reductions to the grant allocation. Most expansion efforts require additional funding for licensing and implementation. Without additional funding, potential for expansion in 2016 is limited. For this reason we include a goal to develop new collaborations that may yield supplemental funding sources. Staff will also continue ongoing efforts to identify/target institutions that are able to pay independently for their licenses – particularly Illinois private institutions, some community colleges and out-of-state feeder institutions.

IMPLEMENTATION
Objective: Implement Transferology across more of the state (and nation)

Increase the number of users: The MyCreditsTransfer staff will work closely with institutions and will increase student-directed outreach in order to help participating institutions and potential users with the transition. The support of MyCreditsTransfer staff will be critical to ensure continued growth throughout this process.

Increase the number of participating institutions: Wider implementation is key to enhancing the value of Transferology for students and participating institutions.

Increase the level of licensing and/or implementation of currently participating institutions: Project staff maintain close contact with institutions on the path to implementation in order to provide technical assistance and to help keep the focus on the value of achieving full implementation, especially in terms of its benefit to students.

MyCreditsTransfer Project staff are actively engaged in a pilot initiative called, "Military Training Counts" (MTC). Through this pilot the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) are working together with MyCreditsTransfer and several Illinois colleges and universities to ensure that veteran and military students are granted appropriate academic credit (amount and type) for the education, skills and experience they have earned in the military services. This effort aligns national, state and institutional goals to increase the rate of college completion among military and veteran students, as well as help veterans maximize their veteran education benefits. The MyCreditsTransfer staff are also working with IBHE, ICCB and IDVA on a larger, regional military initiative dubbed, "Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit"

(MCMC). This collaborative has related goals but approaches the project from a broader, regional perspective and includes participants from several states across the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) region.

As a result of MTC, MCMC and their commitment to military and veteran students, CollegeSource has begun providing **free** use of two software services - TES® (Transfer Evaluation System) and Transferology™ - to all institutions of higher education for the purpose of developing and publishing articulations for military learning experiences. This is a major breakthrough for Illinois. Many of our community colleges offer academic and vocational/technical programs closely aligned with military learning experiences, but could not afford to purchase the license needed to participate in Transferology at the receiving-institution level. In 2016, the MyCreditsTransfer team will promote the free use of TES and Transferology to Illinois higher education institutions to develop and publish military credit articulations.

Explore other vendors' products: As part of the annual renewal process for the MyCreditsTransfer subscription agreement (a sole source procurement), project staff are required to evaluate competitor products and assess their capability to provide the functions available in Transferology. This evaluation is also good standard practice to stay abreast of developments in the field of transfer advising tools.

Install "Course Import" interface at more Illinois institutions: "Course Import" is an interface between an institution's student information system (SIS) and Transferology. This student-centered feature allows students to download their course history in just a few clicks of the mouse, rather than adding course-by course from memory. The interface is secure, residing behind the institution's firewall. Course Import is not only a convenience. It helps institutions by greatly improving the integrity and accuracy of the course histories provided over that of student self-reported data. Installing Course Import requires a significant amount of work by the MyCreditsTransfer Technical Coordinator and by institution staff.

PROMOTION
Objective: Promote the use of Transferology by relevant audiences

Develop and distribute promotional materials: Due to the continued budget restrictions in 2016, one primary goal is to expand promotional efforts that rely on technology so as to reduce costs such as for printing, travel, and transportation. Staff plan greater reliance on carefully placed links on institution and organization sites throughout the state.

Project staff will continue collaborative marketing ventures with iTransfer/IAI including the recently produced Transferology postcards and pens that will be widely used at events and training sessions, as well as bag clips to be used on a more limited basis, such as meetings/presentations for specific groups.

Publish and distribute quarterly newsletter: MyCreditsTransfer News, a quarterly newsletter is distributed electronically to the MCT listserv and is available on the iTransfer.org/MCT website. It is an excellent communication tool for providing institutions with updates, information on functional enhancements, training opportunities, usage reports, and answering frequently asked questions. It also contains recurring segments for "Tech Tips" and a "Feedback Forum." In 2016, staff will seek to expand the newsletter audience.

Produce institution-specific advisor training materials: With the increased efforts toward advisor training, Project staff created the Transferology Reference Guide for advisors. This enhanced

training tool was distributed at all advisor training sessions and via email upon request. These efforts will continue in Fiscal Year2016.

Conduct training and presentations to promote use of Transferology: The MyCreditsTransfer Project staff provide training and presentation sessions to a variety of audiences, including advisor training sessions; presentations at local, regional, state and national association meetings/conferences; institutional meetings; and directly to students at transfer events. These presentations promote the use of Transferology and encourage users to participate in continuing promotion and evaluation. The goal for 2016 is to maintain advisor training levels that were strongly established in 2014 and continued in 2015 by utilizing online training resources, including regularly scheduled interactive webinars that will be recorded and stored for on-demand access and creating YouTube video tutorials for institutions. This will allow the Project staff to reduce travel costs.

Staff will continue efforts to promote the use of Transferology planning guides over the static transfer guides, specifically with advisors as they help students plan for transfer. Planning guides are an excellent tool for advising students toward degree completion, rather than just admission, and are a valuable resource to help students understand how specific coursework may be used to fulfill degree requirements. This should help reduce the number of extraneous classes taken by students.

Conduct annual statewide meeting: One of the most important events undertaken by MyCreditsTransfer is the annual statewide meeting, which gives participating institutions a voice in the use, promotion, and evaluation of Transferology. In the past, these gatherings have been important forums for guiding the initial construction of the Project, have allowed staff to showcase student support of Transferology, and given an opportunity to relate the different features of the tool and the approaches used by advisors.

Project staff promote attendance of the statewide meetings by seeking new venues and innovative solutions to the travel restrictions and budget cuts faced by many participating institutions. In 2015 the statewide meeting was offered twice in different regions of the state including the Chicago-area. The effectiveness of multiple meetings continues to receive positive evaluations. Project staff plan to offer two sessions again in 2015.

Provide transfer data: Project staff compile data collected by IBHE, and have for many years, to create statewide summaries and detailed institutional-specific data for a single year. The Statewide meeting continues to be an excellent opportunity to disseminate this transfer data.

Because the 2013 transfer enrollment data was not available through IBHE, project staff utilized the IPEDS Data Center to collect as much relevant information as possible and created a modified version of the Illinois transfer enrollment report. The 2014 transfer enrollment data is being made available by IBHE during summer 2015. Project staff hope that this data will continue to be collected by IBHE until the Illinois Longitudinal Data System is viable as a resource for these data.

Improve online presence: The iTransfer.org website is the object of continued collaboration between IAI staff and the MyCreditsTransfer project. The intent is to give students the full spectrum of Illinois transfer information on one site. Several revisions and updates are planned for 2016 to improve the MyCreditsTransfer pages on the iTransfer.org site once the IAI staffing is complete.

The MyCreditsTransfer staff will collaborate with participating colleges and universities to increase the number of Illinois institutions hosting a link to Transferology on their websites. Increasing direct access to Transferology will benefit the students and will allow institutions to customize the host link to make that school a "favorite" or to filter search results to give Illinois institutions an advantage in the search process. Project staff also plan to collaborate with several Illinois agencies (i.e., IBHE, ICCB, ISAC, IDVA, etc.) to host links to the MyCreditsTransfer pages on iTransfer.

Given the name changes that took place in 2014 for both the Project (i.e., u.select Illinois to MyCreditsTransfer) and the online tool (u.select to Transferology) a concerted effort is planned in 2016 to clean-up all old or incorrect references to u.select and u.select Illinois. Updating links and deleting outdated language will mitigate confusion and help promote recognition of the Project name (MyCreditsTransfer) and the tool name (Transferology).

COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION
Objective: Coordinate MyCreditsTransfer activities with other organizations involved in transfer; collaborate to realize efficiencies

Coordinate and collaborate with iTransfer: IAI/iTransfer.org and MyCreditsTransfer continue to work together to promote their mutual interests. Currently iTransfer and MyCreditsTransfer collaborate on the production of several promotional items, the most popular of which is a postcard, distributed to students through participating Illinois institutions. The card informs students of the presence and utility of Transferology in a cost effective method to direct students to the iTransfer.org/IAI website where much more extensive and complete transfer information is provided. The two staffs also collaborate on disseminating information statewide; the MyCreditsTransfer staff publish updates in the IAI newsletter. The semiannual Transfer Coordinator Meeting includes a MyCreditsTransfer update presentation. Further, the MyCreditsTransfer staff promote use of the IAI course articulation information displayed in Transferology and work with institutions to maintain the integrity of that information. In 2016 staff in both projects will continue to be vigilant and mindful of the impact the information in one system has on the other and of the benefits to seeking collaborative projects.

Promote sharing of information and collaboration across states: Many of the issues facing Transferology in Illinois also are issues for other states using Transferology. During the current grant period Project staff worked collaboratively with colleagues in Indiana, Ohio, Oregon, Wisconsin and other states to address these issues. Chief among them is the need for interfaces between Transferology and the many student information systems in use. This collaboration has resulted in a continuing dialog with CollegeSource and others on the development of interfaces with Ellucian (Banner DegreeWorks and Colleague) and PeopleSoft. The primary goal of these collaborations is the development of effective, affordable solutions for all concerned. These efforts will be continued in 2016.

MAINTENANCE
Objective: Maintain the MyCreditsTransfer project infrastructure

Maintenance of current implementation: Maintenance of complete functions in the Transferology system often require support or corrective action as institutions upgrade existing systems and/or change hardware, personnel, and information systems.

A few examples of this include maintenance of institution links, logos, program files, and the restoration of interface functionality between Transferology and institutions' student information systems (SIS) when disrupted by external factors, such as expiration of security certificates, URL changes, and SIS upgrades.

Annual maintenance of Transferology requires the MCT Technical Coordinator to collect and process course equivalency data files from non-DARwin/non-u.achieve institutions. This process occurs twice per year and includes a rigorous data normalization process to verify the validity of the information and to prepare the file for import by CollegeSource.

Renewal of annual subscription service agreement with CollegeSource: In the previous grant years, MyCreditsTransfer negotiated equitable terms for the subscription service renewal contract with CollegeSource. In 2014 CollegeSource implemented annual increases for renewal of the state subscription service agreement. Though small (ranging from 3-5%), these increases are difficult to sustain when the grant award amount is reduced each year. Staff continue to explore alternate funding sources, as well as institutional and regional alliances to overcome financial obstacles.

Attend users' conference: Attendance and participation at the annual users' conference hosted by CollegeSource benefits the Project in many ways, including training workshops and presentations, networking with staff from other states and with CollegeSource staff, receiving status reports on the progress of implementation in other states, and giving and receiving updates from CollegeSource in a face-to-face format. At current funding levels, no funds are available to staff to attend this important event. Several years the MyCreditsTransfer Project Coordinator has served as a presenter at this conference. Since 2011, funding to attend the annual users conference has been provided by the University of Illinois. It is unknown whether this support from the University can continue in 2016.

EVALUATION
Objective: Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the MyCreditsTransfer Project

Prepare proposal and evaluation materials: Project staff prepare annual evaluation plan activities based on feedback obtained from users, the statewide meeting, members of the Advisory Committee, feedback provided in training and presentation evaluations. The different functionality of Transferology doesn't allow users to append an exit survey. In 2016 MCT staff will explore other methods for obtaining direct user feedback.

Solicit feedback at annual statewide meeting: The statewide meeting affords an opportunity to receive firsthand evaluation and feedback on Transferology and the Project staff. A written survey is conducted to gauge the satisfaction of the content, format, presentations, accommodations, and delivery of the materials as well as the system satisfaction and support needs of participating institutions.

Solicit feedback and direction from MyCreditsTransfer Advisory Committee: The Project is directed by an Advisory Committee that meets monthly. Currently both ICCB and IBHE provide a committee representative. Other participants include representatives from DePaul University, Kaskaskia College, Northern Illinois University, Oakton Community College and the University of Illinois Springfield. Through its monthly meetings, this committee provides invaluable feedback and direction for the Project.

Evaluate information from user statistic reports: Project staff will continue working with participating institutions to utilize the enhanced reporting capabilities available through Transferology Lab in developing more valuable, informative reports on specific usage patterns, articulation data, and most frequently utilized features.

Foster open communication with partner institutions: Project staff foster open communication with partner institutions through the use and maintenance of a listserv; publication of a quarterly newsletter, including a "Feedback Forum" section that encourages reader input; and by participating in CollegeSource Client Forums. Staff will maintain and strive to expand these avenues of communication in 2016.

Produce self-study: In order to improve the Project services, the Transferology system itself, and the products offered to promote Transferology, a self-study will be undertaken at the end of the grant year. Each of the objectives articulated in the grant will be evaluated to determine:
1) Have the specified goals and objectives been achieved?
2) What may have hampered achievement of the goals and objectives?
3) What factors contributed to successful achievement of the goals and objectives?
4) Do the goals and objectives sufficiently address Project improvement?
5) What population was served in achievement of the goals and objectives? Was a portion of the intended population not served? If so, why and what will be done to remedy this problem?
6) What new factors were introduced or what changes occurred that were not foreseen? How did these circumstances affect the project? What will be done in the future to respond?

MyCreditsTransfer: Illinois Participating Colleges and Universities

Fully-Licensed "Receiving" Institutions:	"Sending-Only" Institutions:
Bradley University	Black Hawk College
Chicago State University	Carl Sandburg College
City Colleges of Chicago:	Danville Area Community College
Harold Washington College	Elgin Community College
Kennedy-King College	Heartland Community College
Malcolm X College	Highland Community College
Olive Harvey College	Illinois Central College
Richard Daley College	Illinois Eastern Comm. Colleges:
Harry S. Truman College	Frontier College
Wilbur Wright College	Lincoln Trail College
College of DuPage	Olney Central College
College of Lake County	Wabash Valley College
Columbia College Chicago	Illinois Valley Community College
DePaul University	John A Logan College
Eastern Illinois University	John Wood Community College
Elmhurst College	Joliet Junior College
Governors State University	Kankakee Community College
Illinois Articulation Initiative	Kaskaskia College
Illinois College	Kishwaukee College
Illinois Institute of Technology	Lake Land College
Illinois State University	Lewis & Clark Community College
Loyola University Chicago	Lincoln College
Moraine Valley Community College	Lincoln Land Community College
National-Louis University	MacCormac College
Northeastern Illinois University	McHenry County College
Northern Illinois University	Morton College
Saint Xavier University	Oakton Community College
Southern Illinois University Carbondale	Parkland College
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville	Prairie State College
Southwestern Illinois College	Rend Lake College
University of Illinois at Chicago	Richland Community College
University of Illinois at Springfield	Rock Valley College
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Saint Augustine College
Western Illinois University	Sauk Valley Community College
William Rainey Harper College	Shawnee Community College
	South Suburban College
	Southeastern Illinois College
	Spoon River College
	Triton College
	Waubonsee Community College

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*, particularly Goal 3 which is to "Increase the number of high-quality post-secondary credentials to meet the demands of the economy and an increasingly global society". 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 MyCreditsTransfer continue to be vital tools. Goals and plans for the near future for IAI and MyCreditsTransfer reflect this commitment.

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

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.

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, such as reverse transfer and dual credit programs. Additionally, as more institutions become available to students on MyCreditsTransfer, a variety of user survey data will continue to provide a picture of student use and satisfaction with MyCreditsTransfer.

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 education issues. An important tool for measuring of transfer success requires the implementation of a standard student identification number (student unit record) that will allow comprehensive tracking of students across sectors and levels from preschool through post-graduate education to employment. 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. As a major component of the ILDS, IBHE is in the process of moving its Higher Education Information System (HEIS) from development to full production. We plan to begin collecting enrollment and degree completion information via the HEIS from the public universities later this fall and from the private colleges and universities within the year. The development of a reporting system with integrated analytical tools is the final phase of the HEIS and should be completed sometime this spring.

In the coming months, IBHE will be using the HEIS to collect information as part of a major ILDS supported project. In collaboration with the Illinois Community College Board, IBHE will develop the template for a Community College Feedback report and pilot the report

using two public universities (NIU and UIUC) and their respective feeder community colleges. Once the community college feedback report is fully implemented statewide, it will allow us to identify community colleges and four-year institutions that are best supporting transfer students; pinpoint where improvements/enhancements in the transfer process are needed; and fulfill our mandated responsibilities under Public Act 099-0316, the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act.

Growing interest is being shown in baccalaureate completion agreements across the state. Although currently unfunded, Public Act 96-0535, which was passed several 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 agency's newly established Commission on the Future of the Illinois Workforce could also benefit from the programs and data that could emerge from this work.

Finally, due to budgetary cuts combined with the lack of an approved state budget, both the IAI and MyCreditsTransfer projects are under serious threat. Discontinuing the MyCreditsTransfer and/or IAI projects would negatively impact the more than 60,000 students who transfer to Illinois institutions each fall.

Ending the MyCreditsTransfer project would remove the primary source of consistent, up-to-date and centralized transfer information that allows these students to plan for and achieve successful transfer across our 12 public universities, 48 community colleges and 9 private institutions currently participating in the Illinois Transferology network. There were over 320,000 Illinois visitors to the site in 2014, with over 180,000 of those being unique visitors, and representing a continued climb in use for the sixth consecutive year in Illinois. The statewide license allows Illinois to provide this valuable resource to its students for approximately 60 cents per user. Several other Midwestern states provide this service so discontinuing this project would only disadvantage efforts to 1) encourage students from other states to enroll in Illinois institutions, and 2) to keep the state's students here in Illinois.

Furthermore, the MyCreditsTransfer project serves to provide detailed transfer information for the Illinois Articulation Initiative. There were over 141,100 visitors to the IAI site in Fiscal Year15, with over 92,300 of those being unique visitors. There are nearly 9,400 general education and major-specific courses currently approved for 113 participating institutions by IAI panels. These numbers clearly indicate that the state relies heavily on IAI as the leading state-wide transfer agreement among Illinois institutions.

With more students each year coming to higher education through the community college system – especially students from underrepresented and minority groups – providing both of these transfer tools for students, parents, advisors and administrators is more important than ever.