ILLINOIS TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION INITIATIVES
ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

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 approximately 60,000 students who transfer to Illinois institutions each fall. This item reviews the current status of the IAI and MyCreditsTransfer projects particularly as it relates to the impact of recent budget cuts, 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), has been unable to continue its expansion efforts due to a lack of funding. IAI and MyCreditsTransfer are complementary, both enhancing the availability and accuracy of transfer information and fostering more effective and efficient degree completion. Providing both of these successful transfer tools likely contributed to Illinois ranking third in the nation for full-time community college students completing bachelor's degrees at four-year universities, as reported by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

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 2016 marked the end of the eighteenth 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 had been advisory only, but this agreement to accept the panel recommendations offers students undecided about their intended transfer destination additional guidance in the process.

MyCreditsTransfer is a statewide initiative, implemented fifteen 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 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. 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 current 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 August 2016, there are 197 GECC course descriptions, and the IAI database includes 11,103 courses in the GECC with 7,045 currently remaining active. There are 81 major course descriptions, and the IAI database has tracked 13,615 courses in the majors with 2,320 currently remaining active.

MyCreditsTransfer. Fifteen 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 Project has been severely limited due to the state budget constraints and impasse.

Statewide Transfer Policy & the Illinois Articulation Initiative

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, undergraduate student transfers within Illinois totaled 57,760 for the fall semester of 2015, about 9.3 percent of the total undergraduate fall 2015

enrollment of 621,646 (down from 631,118 in 2014) in the state. Of these in fall 2015: 24,374 transferred from a community college (down from 24,837 in 2014); 4,471 transferred from a public university (down from 4,993 in 2014); 3,541 from an independent not-for-profit institution (down from 3,571 in 20142); 656 from an independent for-profit institution (up from 562 in 2014); and 24,718 from other institutions (up from 24,263 in 2014).

Sector Students Transferred FROM:	Number of Undergrad Students Fall 2015	Percent of Total Transfer Students
Community Colleges	24,374	42.2%
Public Universities	4,471	7.8%
Independent Not-for-Profit	3,541	6.1%
Independent For-Profit	656	1.1%
Other Institutions*	24,718	42.8%
Total All Sectors	**57,760**	**100%**

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

The sector to which the largest number of students transferred <u>to</u> was the community colleges, with 16,317 students, followed closely by the public universities with 14,970. A significant number of students transferred to independent not-for-profit institutions (10,850) and independent for-profit institutions (14,469). Slightly more than 1,100 Illinois students transferred to out-of-state institutions operating within Illinois.

Sector Students Transferred TO:	Number of Undergrad Students Fall 2015	Total Fall 2015 Undergraduate Enrollments
Community Colleges	16,317	285,294
Public Universities	14,970	143,616
Independent Not-for-Profit	10,850	131,492
Independent For-Profit	14,469	52,861
Out-of-State, Operating in IL	1,154	8,383
Total All Sectors	**57,760**	**621,646**

It is worth noting that the 2015 transfer rate of 9.29 percent represents the highest rate the state has experienced since 2007 in proportion to the total number of undergraduate student enrollments each year.

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 111 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 had been advisory only, but this agreement to accept the panel recommendations offers 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 through three rounds 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 through all three rounds 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, as well as specific GECC courses relevant to the major, 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 to the extent possible given the funding issues. There are 111 IAI-participating institutions from all sectors, 96 as full participants and 15 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 four 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 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 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 eighteenth year, the site continues to be an essential tool for these constituencies. Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016, the site processed 138,002 visits to the site with 85,756 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 815,004 page views.

Improving successful transfer in Illinois involves a comprehensive approach, not just reliance on IAI and MyCreditsTransfer. Different tools and strategies need to be employed in a coordinated fashion to further improve transfer. Other state level policies continue to advance that will help to smooth the transfer process. For example, the Illinois Learning 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 and college readiness standards 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 (AFA) degree and the Associate in Engineering Science (AES) degree.

Although the Associate of Science (AS) degree is not considered a specialized degree, in the fall of 2015 the Illinois community College Board approved modifications to the degree intended to smooth transfer for STEM students into four-year institutions. Under the new A.S. degree model, students will be required to take one additional math course and one additional science course, which will displace two general education core curriculum (GECC) courses in the Humanities & Fine Arts and Social & Behavioral Sciences. The GECC remains intact, however the timing of when the package is completed will now differ between A.A. and A.S. students. Under this new degree model, students are now able to take the necessary prerequisites and complete course sequences required for STEM pathways. This means that students will no longer have to choose between completing the associate's degree and meeting STEM transfer prerequisites. The new changes to the A.S. degree model will provide benefits to both institutions and students. Illinois should see more A.S. completions at community colleges and universities will receive better prepared students. Most importantly, STEM students starting at a community college will now be on equal footing with native students at the receiving institutions when they are allowed to shift two general education courses to post-transfer study to make room in the A.S. program to complete the lower-division STEM courses needed to successfully transfer.

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 when advisors provide the information to students about all of these pathways for navigating through the transfer system.

While IAI did not experience as severe of budget cuts as the MyCreditsTransfer Project this past year, the budget impact was reduced by delaying equipment purchases and finding new technology options such as server virtualization which resulted in less need of hardware purchases. The most noteworthy reduction was in the number of in-person faculty meetings for the Major panels, forcing panel managers to hold meetings via conference calls. Given the complex nature of discussing courses submitted to the panel for approval review, this meeting mode proved to be challenging, ineffective, and not nearly as productive as in-person meetings. Upon further review, it appears that the course approval rates by Major panels have actually decreased since changing to meeting calls. Another byproduct of the budget impasse came directly from the participating public universities and community colleges being unable to send their faculty members to meetings held in-person due to restricted travel. Without stable funding, IAI will be forced to de-prioritize important projects and continue to operate at a suboptimal level.

IAI: In Fiscal Year 2016, the following 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.
- Review, install and implement new software and hardware to facilitate database and web application design.
  - Staff is working with OU Campus for a site redesign. This project was begun in earnest in Fiscal Year 2016 and will continue moving through Fiscal Year 2017. This redesign is expected to improve our mobile functionality and layout as well.
  - Re-evaluated the current webinar program being used and have switched to a paid-for product called join.me. This product provides very reliable, easy to use web conferencing for remote attendees to the panel meetings.
  - In a related item to the webinar program, staff explored 800 number phone conferencing for iTransfer and IAI use in panel meetings, in addition to those by our Board constituents. Obtained an 800 number conference line to enhance remote participation offerings for panel members unable to attend the meetings in person.
  - Due to a database and site failure that occurred in late April of this year, the server project that was undertaken to convert all physical servers to a virtual server structure was completed on the main site and database. Work continues to convert a quality assurance and test environment of the site to virtual servers.
  - *Many of these items are processes that will continue to be reviewed and improved.*
- 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.*
- 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 Major-managed panels.
- Assist participating institutions with staff training and technical directions/implementation. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - This continues to be a concern and project for the iTransfer staff. Opportunities to enhance and create better training options continue to be refined, explored, and developed.
- Respond to IAI Steering panel directions regarding program evaluation processes. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - 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.*
  - Continued to adjust site based on user feedback and the overall iTransfer marketing plan to make the site more user friendly.
- Continue to develop and implement the IAI/iTransfer marketing plan. *This is an ongoing process.*
- Prepare annual report and identified specific goals for coming year. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - The annual report was completed, shared with appropriate Board representatives, and deployed on the iTransfer site before mid-September 2015.
- Continue to provide support to our Board constituents. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - Staff continued to provide assistance and support to the IBHE and ICCB staff as necessary. This included phone meetings and travel to programmatic meetings.
- Continue to review and refine the iTransfer operations manual and Business Continuation Plan. *This is an ongoing process.*
- 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.*
  - Add content based on recommendations from the IAI Advisory Committee, IAI Steering Committee, IBHE, and ICCB. *This is an ongoing process.*
- Staff continued to review Google analytics, site navigation, and user feedback to improve functionality and design of the site.
- 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 111 schools participating in IAI (the General Education Core Curriculum and/or the Illinois Baccalaureate Majors' Curricula).

Full-Participating Schools: There are 96 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
Carl Sandburg College
College of DuPage
College of Lake County
Daley College (Richard J.) (CCC)
Danville Area Community College
Elgin Community College
Frontier Community College (IECC)
Harold Washington College (CCC)
Harper College
Heartland Community College
Highland Community College
Illinois Central College
Illinois Valley Community College
John A. Logan College
John Wood Community College
Joliet Junior College
Kankakee Community College
Kaskaskia College
Kennedy-King College (CCC)
Kishwaukee College
Lake Land College
Lewis & Clark Community College
Lincoln Land Community College

Lincoln Trail College (IECC)
Malcolm X College (CCC)
McHenry County College
Moraine Valley Community College
Morton College
Oakton Community College
Olive-Harvey College (CCC)
Olney Central College (IECC)
Parkland College
Prairie State College
Rend Lake College
Richland Community College
Rock Valley College
Sauk Valley Community College
Shawnee Community College
South Suburban College
Southeastern Illinois College
Southwestern Illinois College
Spoon River College
Triton College
Truman College (Harry S) (CCC)
Wabash Valley College (IECC)
Waubonsee 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
Governors State University

Illinois State University
Northeastern Illinois University
Northern Illinois University

Four-Year Public Institutions (continued)

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 (34 schools)

Aurora University
Benedictine University
Blackburn College
Bradley University
Columbia College Chicago
Concordia University Chicago

MacMurray College
McKendree University
Midstate College
Millikin University
National-Louis University
North Central College

DePaul University	North Park University
DeVry University - Illinois	Olivet Nazarene University
Dominican University	Quincy University
Elmhurst College	Robert Morris University
Illinois College	Rockford University
Illinois Institute of Art	Roosevelt University
Judson University	Saint Xavier University
Kendall College	St. Augustine College
Lewis University	Trinity Christian College
Lincoln Christian University	Trinity International University
Lincoln College	University of St. Francis

Receiving-Only Schools [R]: There are 15 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 (1 school)
> Solex College [R]

Four-Year Public Institutions (0 schools)

Four-Year Independent Institutions (14 schools)

American InterContinental University [R]	Knox College [R]
Argosy University - Chicago [R]	Lake Forest College [R]
Argosy University - Schaumburg [R]	Lakeview College of Nursing [R]
East-West University [R] Aurora University	Loyola University Chicago [R]
Eureka College [R]	Northwestern Business College [R]
Illinois Institute of Technology [R]	Resurrection University [R]
ITT Technical Institute [R]	Saint Francis Medical Center, Nursing [R]

MyCreditsTransfer

The MyCreditsTransfer program supports Illinois' participation in the nationwide Transferology network – a web-based transfer information system for students, faculty, and staff – used by 12 public universities, 48 community colleges, and ten private institutions in Illinois. In Fiscal Year 2016 there were over 354,000 Illinois visitors to the site, with more than 195,000 of those being unique visitors. This represents a continued climb in Illinois' use of the system for the seventh consecutive year. Clearly, the state and its citizens value MyCreditsTransfer and the Transferology tool.

When regularly funded, the MyCreditsTransfer Project is driven by five goals: implementation, promotion, collaboration and coordination, maintenance, and evaluation. Past examples of important work guided by these goals include the following:

IMPLEMENTATION: Implement Transferology across more of the state
- 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.

- Increase the number of users: The MyCreditsTransfer staff works closely with institutions and increases student-directed outreach. The support of MyCreditsTransfer staff is 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.
- 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. Installing Course Import requires a significant amount of work by the MyCreditsTransfer Technical Coordinator and by institution staff.

PROMOTION: Promote the use of Transferology by relevant audiences
- 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.
- Produce institution-specific advisor training materials such as the Transferology Reference Guide for advisors.
- 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.
  o Staff continue to promote the use of Transferology planning 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.
- 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.
  o The MyCreditsTransfer staff 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.

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

- 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.
- Promote sharing of information and collaboration across states: 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.

MAINTENANCE: Maintain the MyCreditsTransfer project infrastructure

- 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.
  - 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.

EVALUATION: Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the MyCreditsTransfer Project

- Evaluate information from user statistic reports: Project staff work 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.

Due to the state's budget impasse, the project was not funded this past fiscal year. Lack of funding in the past and in the future creates a critical situation which could lead to the permanent loss of the Project's staff and/or statewide Transferology license. While recent efforts have been made by IBHE to provide enough funds to cover the upcoming cost to renew the license, retention of staff is also a crucial element required to sustain the Project as demonstrated in the work examples above. In other words, the license is essentially rendered useless without the Project staff to carry out and maintain functionality of this important transfer tool.

A primary cost to the MyCreditsTransfer Project is the renewal of the Illinois Transferology license. Given the dire circumstances, the University of Illinois provided funding to renew the statewide license in January 2016 with the anticipation of recompense. The license cycle runs January 1st through December 31st with renewal of the license being a procurement process that requires a few months lead time. The license must be renewed, or at the very least in the process of renewal, as of January 1, 2017 or the entire state system will be shut down. Without some form of funding, there is no way to sustain the MyCreditsTransfer Project.

This advance of "life-support" funding by the University is not sustainable for any significant period of time. By the end of Fiscal Year 2016, the University of Illinois had made $146,500 in cash outlay payments for critical funding. This included approximately $54,000 in personnel and $92,000 of the statewide Transferology license. The University has also supported the Project by not currently assessing to the grant costs for travel, equipment, technology, supplies, and office overhead. Furthermore, for various reasons, the University has moved full time employees off the grant. Not included in this cash outlay figure is the support by the participating institutions to supply data, marketing, and on-campus articulation and degree-audit systems. The $146,500 amount that the University of Illinois has paid to offset expenditures for MyCreditsTransfer, though significant, represents only a fraction of the commitment the University and the participating institutions of higher education have made to support MyCreditsTransfer.

Discontinuing the MyCreditsTransfer Project would negatively impact approximately 60,000 students who transfer to Illinois institutions each fall. It would remove the single existing source of consistent, up-to-date and centralized transfer information that allows these students to plan for and achieve successful transfer across the 12 public universities, 48 community colleges and ten private institutions currently participating in the Illinois Transferology network. The statewide license allows Illinois to provide this resource to its students for less than 60 cents per user. Furthermore, the MyCreditsTransfer project serves to provide detailed transfer information for the Illinois Articulation Initiative. With more students each year coming to higher education through the community college system – especially students from underrepresented and minority groups – providing this transfer tool for students and advisors is now more important than ever. Several other Midwestern states provide this service so discontinuing the Project would only further 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.

Should funding be restored to sustain MyCreditsTransfer, the Project staff will pursue active engagement in several initiatives to maximize the value of Transferology for all Illinois students. This includes veteran students' ability to determine how their military training will be accepted in transfer, high school students with dual credit coursework, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate test credit, and students who bring coursework and/or prior learning assessment to bridge programs and degree completion programs. More importantly, staff will be able to again focus on the Project's primary goals of increasing participation and elevating implementation throughout the state. Likewise, flat funding levels will limit these expansion plans as additional funding would be required to offset higher licensing and implementation fees. Without continued, as well as additional funding, potential for continuation and/or expansion of the project is questionable.

MyCreditsTransfer: Illinois Participating Colleges and Universities

Fully-Licensed "Receiving" Institutions (36 schools*)

Benedictine University	Governors State University
Bradley University	Illinois College
Chicago State University	Illinois State University
City Colleges of Chicago	Loyola University Chicago
Harold Washington College	National Louis University
Kennedy-King College	Northeastern Illinois University
Malcolm X College	Northern Illinois University
Olive Harvey College	Oakton Community College
Richard Daley College	Parkland College
Harry S. Truman College	Roosevelt University
Wilbur Wright College	Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
College of DuPage	Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville

College of Lake County	Southwestern Illinois College
Columbia College Chicago	St. Xavier University
DePaul University	University of Illinois at Chicago
Eastern Illinois University	University of Illinois at Springfield
Elgin Community College	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Elmhurst College	Western Illinois University
Illinois Articulation Initiative*	William Rainey Harper College

*The Illinois Articulation Initiative is a participating institution in the Illinois Transferology network so that users can see if or how their classes fulfill IAI requirements. The system also lets users search for IAI courses across all participating institutions.

Other Institutions* (35 schools)
Formerly called "sending only" institutions, these Illinois community colleges participate under the Illinois Articulation Initiative license.

Black Hawk College	Lake Land College
Carl Sandburg College	Lewis & Clark Community College
Danville Area Community College	Lincoln Land Community College
Heartland Community College	McHenry County College
Highland Community College	Moraine Valley Community College
Illinois Central College	Morton College
Illinois Eastern Community Colleges	Parkland College
Frontier Community College	Prairie State College
Lincoln Trail College	Rend Lake Community College
Olney Central College	Richland Community College
Wabash Valley Community 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	Spoon River College
Kaskaskia College	Triton College
Kishwaukee 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 have been 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 staff 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. IBHE's component of the ILDS, the Higher Education Information System (HEIS), was moved into full production this past year and IBHE staff are in the process of finishing the collection of three years of enrollment and completion data from all MAP-eligible institutions, as well as institutions that confer graduate or professional degrees. The development of a reporting system with integrated analytical tools is the final phase of the development of HEIS and with adequate funding should be completed sometime this fiscal year.

In the coming months, IBHE will be using the HEIS to analyze information as part of a major ILDS supported project. In collaboration with the Illinois Community College Board, IBHE has developed a template for a Community College Feedback report and will 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 staff 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. Its potential relevance is also increased by the current discussions of baccalaureates at community colleges as an alternative strategy.

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 nearly 60,000 students who transfer to and from Illinois institutions each fall. Both systems not only complement each other, they work together to provide a complete package of tools to ensure successful transfer.

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 12 public universities, 48 community colleges and ten private institutions currently participating in the Illinois Transferology network. In Fiscal Year 2016 there were over 354,000 Illinois visitors to the site, with more than 195,000 of those being unique visitors, representing a continued climb in use for the seventh consecutive year. If renewed, 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 138,000 visitors to the IAI site in FY16, with over 85,000 of those being unique visitors. There are nearly 9,400 general education and major-specific courses currently approved for 111 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 continues to be extremely valuable and important. As another example of how the two systems complement each other, IAI is a fully-licensed "institution" in MyCreditsTransfer and is the reason that all Illinois community colleges – even the 35 who are not licensed independently – have access to the transfer advising functions of the Transferology Lab tool. This is key because a majority share of transfer advising happens at the two-year schools before students are admitted to a four-year institution. Illinois community college advisors, therefore, use the Transferology Lab tool a great deal.

Illinois ranks second in the nation behind New Jersey in being a leading exporter of students. Efforts should be made to maximize and advertise the advantages to students of staying and enrolling in Illinois colleges and universities. Primary selling points include our robust transfer system, IAI, which is a nationally renowned model, and the Transferology tool, both of which likely contributed to Illinois ranking third in the nation for full-time community college students completing bachelor's degrees at four-year universities, as reported by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. A new state law was also recently passed which guarantees college credit to students earning a score of 3 or above on Advanced Placement exams and for scores of 4 or above on International Baccalaureate exams. Strong commitments to increasing the number of dual credit offerings as well as the number of 2 + 2 agreements between colleges and universities also continue to provide early college opportunities and more successful transfer pathways to students in Illinois.

In conclusion, one of the recommendations identified under Goal 3 of the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success* 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." Efforts should be made by the Board now to recommit to this goal by ensuring stable funding going forward for Illinois' distinguished transfer tools, IAI and MyCreditsTransfer, so that both may continue to exist and expand.