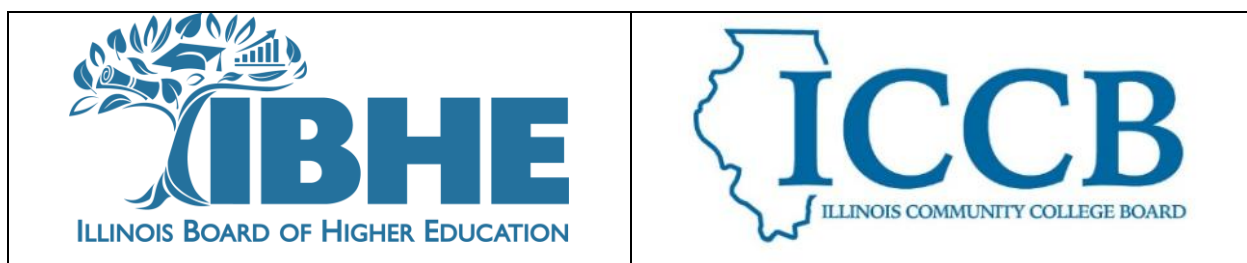


Annual Report on the Illinois Articulation Initiative

Fiscal Year 2024

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Executive Summary

As part of the annual review of transfer under the Illinois Articulation Initiative Act, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) as an entity jointly prepared this report on the state of seamless transfer among and between Illinois' public community colleges, universities, participating private institutions.

In Fiscal Year 2024 (Academic Year 2023-2024) institutions submitted and IAI panels reviewed 1,182 courses across six General Education and 15 Major panels. Of those submitted, over 700 courses received IAI approval for transfer.

Among the 42,345 students (a 10.8 percent increase from FY23) who transferred in Fiscal Year 2024, more than 9,441 students completed an IAI-approved General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) credential, indicating that those students completed their lower-division general education coursework and would be automatically granted "junior" status at the IAI-participating four-year institution that receives them as a transfer student.

Faculty and institution participation remained high in Fiscal Year 2024: 168 faculty from public four-year institutions, 158 faculty from public two-year institutions, and 26 faculty from private institutions participated in the 6 General Education and 15 Major panels. Meanwhile, 48 public community colleges, 12 public universities, and 9 private institutions submit courses to IAI for approval as transfer courses and received IAI-approved courses while, 38 private institutions receive IAI-approved courses for transfer.

As a matter of evaluation, the Boards look at the number of courses submitted and reviewed by panels, faculty and institutional participation, and overall administration of the IAI. IBHE and ICCB staff serve as GECC and Major panel managers, provide policy guidance, and serve as external communication services. The Boards and IAI meet annually to discuss and evaluate the work of the previous year, collaborate on developing and implementing IAI policies and procedures, and recruit faculty.

This report serves as the required IAI annual report to the General Assembly under the Illinois Articulation Act.¹

¹ P.A. 103-469, eff. 1-1-24

GECC Package at Public Institutions

The IAI GECC package (IAI GECC Credential) consists of 37–41 semester credit hours in communications, humanities and fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, life and physical sciences, and mathematics. It is in place for all 12 public universities and 48 community colleges. All colleges and universities participating in IAI agree to accept a completed IAI GECC package in lieu of their own comparable lower-division general education requirements. The IAI GECC package is credentialed on students' community college transcripts when transferring the completed package to another Illinois institution.

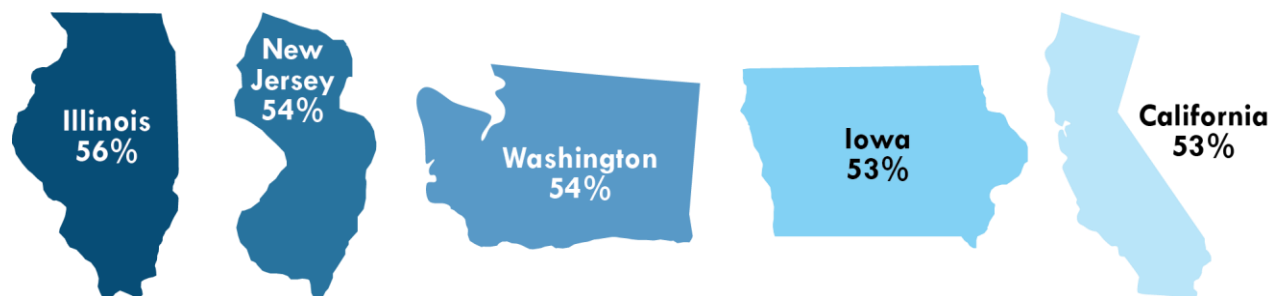
Students who complete the IAI GECC package at a community college can transfer the package as a credential, which is guaranteed to be accepted by all IAI-participating institutions and, with some exceptions, fulfills the accepting institution's general education requirements (Section 20(b) of the 110 ILCS 152 or Illinois Articulation Initiative Act). Students pursuing an Associate of Science degree do not complete the IAI GECC package until they transfer to a four-year university due to the additional math and/or science courses necessary to be on track for junior standing status in a STEM major. However, once the additional Humanities & Fine Arts and Social & Behavioral Sciences courses are completed at the receiving four-year institution, students can reverse-transfer (See original report on superscript) their completed lower-division coursework to the sending community college if the student wishes to get the GECC Package credential transcript.

In Fiscal Year 2024, more than 9,441² students completed a GECC credential from a community college, which enables those students to enter a baccalaureate institution as a junior. Further, granting GECC-credentialed students junior status unlocks upper-division coursework to transfer students, saving them time and money to degree completion.

Success with Transfer

IAI is a model for transfer initiatives in other states, including Indiana, Missouri, and California. In February 2024, the Community College Research Center of Columbia University's Teaching College, the Aspen Institute, and The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center released two reports detailing community college and four-year institutional effectiveness in broadening bachelor's degree attainment³, providing an update to the first-ever state-by-state transfer outcomes disaggregated by student race/ethnicity, neighborhood income, and age. Illinois, once again, emerged as a leader in successful degree completions among transfer students:

The five states with the highest bachelor's completion rates among students who started at a community college (transfer-out⁴) are:

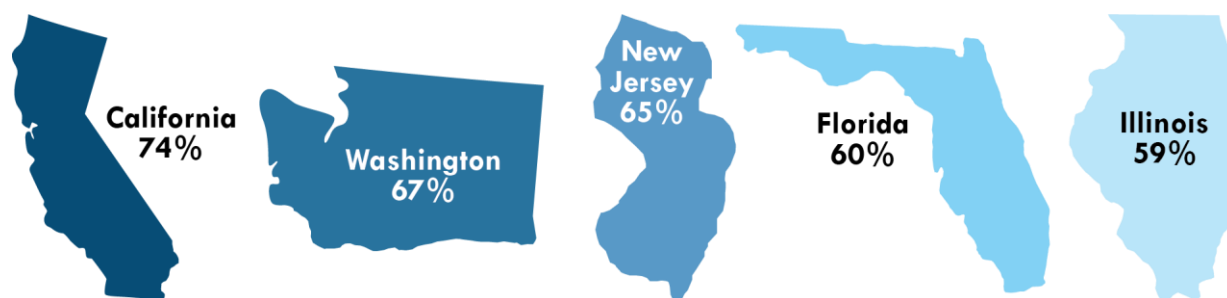


² Considered a preliminary number until the final ICCB Annual Report is published

³ Full report available at Tracking Transfer (<https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/tracking-transfer-four-year-institutional-effectiveness.pdf>)

⁴ The Transfer-out bachelor's completion rate is the rate at which transfer students earn a bachelor's degree from any four-year institution within six years of their community college entry.

The five states with the highest bachelor's completion rate among students who transferred-in⁵ to a baccalaureate institution are:



Legislative Updates

Public Acts 103-0469 and 103-1022 (Effective January 1, 2024) were passed to provide clarification to institutions regarding participation (110 ILCS 152/15), transferability (110 ILCS 152/20), and major panels (110 ILCS 152/25). Language was clarified requiring *'all public institutions submit and maintain up to 4 core courses in each of the Illinois Articulation Initiative majors, provided the public institution has equivalent majors and courses.'* Course transferability was updated to require that public institutions *'IAI major courses be transferable as direct course equivalents toward the requirements of the major.'*

Public Act 103-0469 also created the Elementary and Secondary Education major panel. The Elementary and Secondary Education major panel scheduled their first meeting for November 13, 2024. Submission of courses for review is planned to begin with the Spring 2025 panel season.

Institutional Participation

The IAI Act mandates all public two-year and four-year institutions to participate in IAI as Full Participants by submitting and reviewing courses for approval; maintain a complete IAI General Education Core Curriculum package (GECC package; and, if applicable to the institution, maintain up to four major courses approved for transfer (Section reference here). IAI staff conduct an annual audit to ensure public institution compliance with the Act.

As of July 24, 2024, IAI staff completed an extensive audit of course submissions and databases, including newly submitted courses and those due for review under the ongoing five-year course review process. The 2024 audit identified that certain institutions were not fully in compliance with the 110 ILCS 152/15 requirements for participation. Institutional representatives were informed of the statutory requirements and the specific courses necessary to achieve compliance on August 12, 2024.

⁵ The Transfer-in bachelor's completion rate is the percentage of transfer students who complete a bachelor's degree at the receiving four-year institution within four years of transferring-in

IAI Fiscal Year 2024 Quick Facts

Table 1. Quick Facts

Total Number of Institutions	107
Full Participating Institutions⁶	69
Public	60
Private	9
Receiving-Only Institutions⁷	38
Private	38

Academic Year 2023 Total Transfer Population: 42,345⁸

The charts below, generated from IBHE's Transfer d', show the total Transfer Population (42,345) as a portion of Total Undergraduate Enrollment (501,045) by gender and race/ethnic. Not included in the chart is ICCB's preliminary number of transfer students earning a GECC package credential, equaling approximately 9,441.

Figure 1. Gender

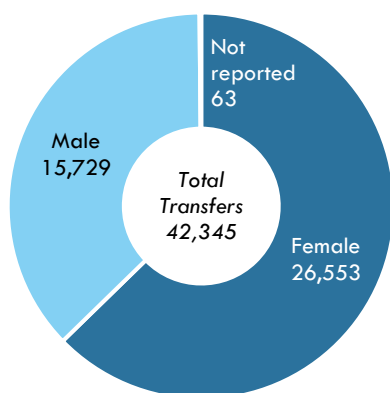


Figure 2. Under Enrollment

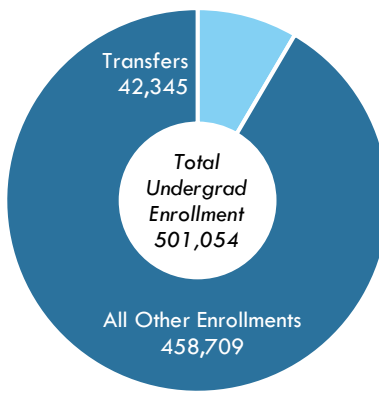
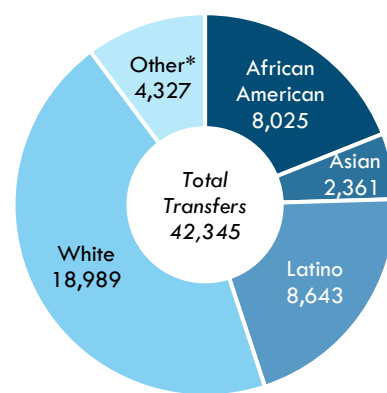


Figure 3. Race and Ethnicity



*The Other category includes: Native American and Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Multiracial, International, and No Report

The Transfer Student Distribution chart⁹ below, generated from IBHE's Transfer Dashboard, shows the flow of transfer students from the sending institutions to the receiving institutions demonstrating that the majority of the transfer students flow from public community colleges to public universities.

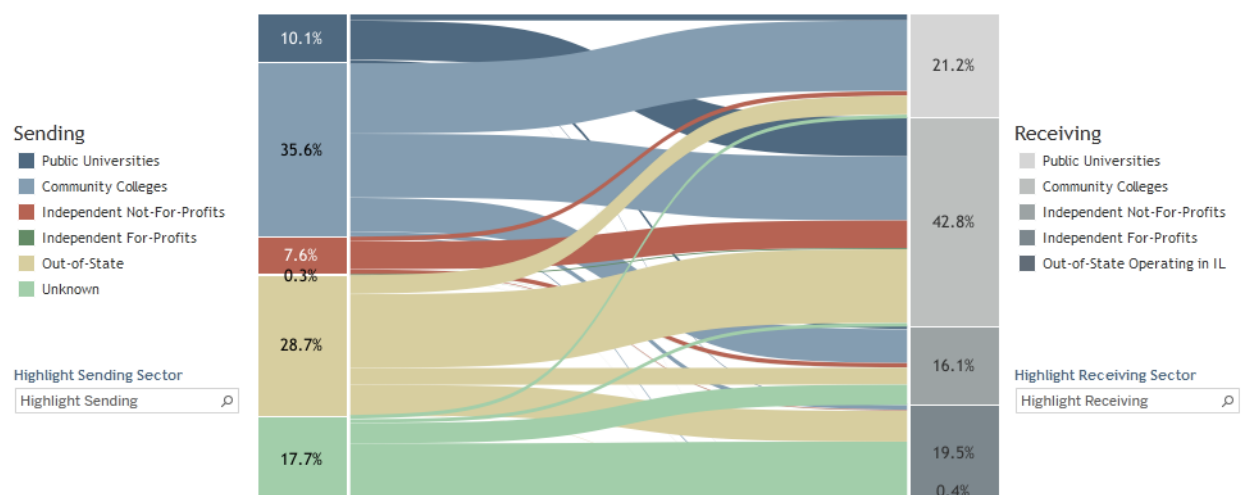
⁶ Full Participation Institutions are required to be accredited by the Higher Learning Commission or other regional accreditor; seek approval for and maintain a full GECC package; agree to accept as meeting all lower-division general education requirements of the institution of a completed GECC package from any other participating institution. Source: Policies and Procedures Manual for the Illinois Articulation Initiative. Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board: 2020.

⁷ Receiving -Only institutions agree to accept as meeting all lower-division general education requirements of the institution a completed GECC Package from any other participating institution. Institutional reference to IAI must include a receiving-only disclaimer. Receiving institutions will allow transfer-in students with a partially completed GECC package the option of completing the GECC after transfer under certain conditions. Source: Policies and Procedures Manual for the Illinois Articulation Initiative. Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board: 2020.

⁸ IBHE Information Management and Research: IHEIS Fall Enrollment Collection and Fall Enrollment Survey II; ICCB Centralized Data System – Fall Enrollment

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Figure 4. Distribution of Sending Sector by Receiving Sector



Panel Information

The IAI GECC and Major faculty panels serve as the foundation for IAI course review. Each fully participating institution must provide appropriate and qualified full-time faculty to serve three-year terms on relevant panels. In addition, seats on each panel are reserved for one executive or staff-level institutional representative to provide institutional perspective. There are currently 6 general education (GECC) panels and 15 active major panels in which faculty meet to review new and ongoing courses every spring and fall; only full-participating institutions or institutions working toward becoming full participants submit courses for review.

Faculty Participation in the IAI GECC and Major Panels

Table 2. Faculty Participation

Total Faculty	352
Public Four-Year Faculty	168
Public Two-Year Faculty	158
Private Institution Faculty	26

Panel Process

For a course to receive IAI approval, a participating institution must submit a representative course syllabus and other applicable course materials (e.g., sample labs) to the appropriate GECC or Major panel for review. All panels meet in the spring and fall semesters to determine each course's alignment to a panel's course descriptors and approval criteria. The iManage system and the iTransfer database are the IAI's formal database and information repository, respectively, for all course submissions, panel decisions, and faculty and institutional participant access to course submission materials. If a course is approved by a panel, it receives an IAI Code assignment communicating to students and institutions' registrars that the course has been approved for transfer by the IAI. Students and institutions may access the iTransfer website to determine whether a course at a particular institution has received IAI approval and an associated course code, indicating approval for transfer.

IAI Panel Activity Quick Facts:

Table 3. IAI Panel Quick Facts

GECC Panels	
Number of GECC Panels	6
GECC Course Descriptors	199
Active GECC Courses	6,333
Major Panels	
Number of Major Panels	16
Major Course Descriptors	199
Active Major Courses	2,420
Course Submission	
Total Number of Courses Submitted for Fiscal Year 2023 Review	1,182
Number Approved	774
Number Sent Back for More Information	301
Number Returned to Institution Unapproved	107

Along with the IAI, the IBHE and ICCB assist in ensuring institutional participation and adequate course submissions in IAI General Education and Major panels, faculty and institutional representation in the process, and compliance with the Act.

IAI History and Transfer in Illinois

The Illinois Articulation Initiative, created in 1993 as a joint effort between the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and transfer coordinators from Illinois colleges and universities, is a mature, coordinated, well-functioning statewide system that serves an average of 44,400¹⁰ transfer students annually over the past five years and includes nearly 110 participating public and private institutions. The IAI was designed to support students who have not necessarily determined the specific major(s) they want to pursue or the particular institution(s) to which they would like to transfer. The need for and importance of “seamless transfer” among and between Illinois’ degree-granting institutions was codified in 2017 by the Illinois General Assembly in the Illinois Articulation Initiative Act (the Act) (110 ILCS 152/1). The Act mandates the IBHE and ICCB to:

(a) . . . co-manage the implementation, oversight, and evaluation of the Illinois Articulation Initiative. . . and (b) The Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board shall provide a joint report on an annual basis to the General Assembly, the Governor, and the Illinois P-20 Council on the status of the Illinois Articulation Initiative and the implementation of this Act” (Source: P.A. 103-469, eff. 1-1-24)

... and requires all Illinois public community colleges and universities:

to participate in the Illinois Articulation Initiative; maintain a complete GECC package; accept all courses approved for IAI GECC codes for transfer as fulfilling parts of the GECC package; and to

¹⁰ Annually 2019-2023 for undergraduate degree-seeking students only; non-degree-seeking students are not included in transfer data since 2016.

prohibit additional lower-division general education course requirements for students with a complete GECC package (Source: P.A. 103-469, eff. 1-1-24; 103-1022, eff.8-9-24).

The IAI has been administratively housed and supported via State funds at Illinois State University (ISU) since 1997, a pivotal move by the Boards that, because ISU initiated the iTransfer website that year, created a comprehensive transfer system in Illinois and enabled the launch of a fully functioning IAI and GECC Package in 1998. The IAI staff consists of a full-time director, coordinator, and system programmer as well as a part-time technology/programming consultant. IBHE and ICCB staff serve as GECC and Major panel managers and provide policy and other guidance and external communications services.

Faculty from public community colleges and universities and participating private institutions from across the state take responsibility for ensuring that GECC and lower-division major courses meet expected standards of quality and rigor, ensuring that receiving IAI-approved courses meet accepted standards for general education and prepare transfer students for upper-division and major coursework; faculty participation in IAI panels is key to seamless transfer in Illinois and student success. In Fiscal Year 2023, 21 IAI panels comprised of 303 faculty¹¹ reviewed 1,060 courses. IAI maintains more than 8,500 active general education and major courses across 281 course categories. Once approved, courses are reviewed by faculty panels regularly, ensuring that IAI-approved courses remain relevant, adhere to IAI policies, and provide students and institutions with confidence in the integrity of transferred coursework.

Today, Illinois is recognized nationally as a model for transfer student success and now leads the nation in bachelor's degree completion rates among community college students who transfer to four-year colleges, significantly exceeding the national average. This success comes from a 25-year history of coordinating the transfer needs of an average 42,300 students annually over the past five years through the Illinois Articulation Initiative, which serves students and their families by guaranteeing transferability of approved courses. The IAI serves Illinois' institutions by ensuring approved courses retain integrity, remain relevant and applicable, and provide the appropriate rigor and preparation expected of college-level courses. These dual features of IAI are intentional and vital to seamless transfer and to ensuring student success.

¹¹ Number of faculty varies year to year. ICCB, IBHE, and IAI regularly audit participation to ensure adequate panel staffing.