Item #G-2
March 5, 2019

ILLINOIS TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION INITIATIVES ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

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 (MCT) project 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. Providing both of these successful transfer tools likely contributed to Illinois rising from third to first 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. Illinois' focus on and support of transfer initiatives and policies provides a framework of best practices that is highly regarded and often imitated by many states throughout the country. Consistent and increased funding for IAI and MCT are necessary to continue operating and to avoid negatively impacting nearly 50,000 students who transfer to and from Illinois institutions each fall. This item reviews the current status of the IAI and MyCreditsTransfer projects particularly as it relates to the impact of budget cuts, highlights the past year's activities, and outlines the goals and challenges facing the projects in the near future.

Action Requested: None.

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March 5, 2019

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

ILLINOIS TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION INITIATIVES ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

Executive Summary

For nearly fifty years, the state has been very deliberate about facilitating the seamless transfer of students between colleges and universities beginning with the 1970 Resolution on Transfer Equivalency, otherwise known as "The Compact Agreement". The state's focus on transfer initiatives has always been done in a collaborative approach between public and private two- and four-year institutions throughout the decades. The Illinois Articulation Initiative and the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) Package have officially been in place for twenty years now and continues to support one of the primary goals of the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success*, 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), which was formalized by the passage of the IAI Act in January 2017 (PA 099-0636), continues to be an important statewide system for encouraging transferability among postsecondary institutions in the State of Illinois. Another statewide transfer and articulation project known as MyCreditsTransfer has been unable to continue its expansion efforts due to inconsistent and reduced 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 rising from third to first 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.

Illinois has been a progressive leader in transfer for many years and for many reasons. Beyond IAI and MCT, the state fosters and supports direct course and program articulation agreements between two- and four-year institutions, as well as many other innovative approaches. The state has also worked collectively to establish a variety of professional organizations (e.g., Transfer Coordinators, Illinois Association for College Admissions Counseling, and the Illinois Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Counselors) which meet on a regular basis and where policy issues and new trends can be discussed among colleagues from both public and private colleges and universities. Universities also offer community college advisor days each year, as well as organize transfer visit days for students. Other transfer best practices in the state include student completion of the IAI GECC Package, dual admission programs, and increasing the number of articulation agreements between two- and four-year institutions including AAS degree program articulations.

Planning for the Illinois Articulation Initiative began in January 1993, and the General Education Core Curriculum was implemented in the summer of 1998. The IAI GECC was

designed to ease transfer for students among Illinois colleges and universities. May 2018 marked the end of the twentieth 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 four-year 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 (MCT) is a statewide initiative, implemented sixteen 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 free 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 (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 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 July 2018, there are 191 GECC course descriptions, and the IAI database includes 11,581 courses in the GECC with 6,897 currently remaining active. There are 79 major course descriptions, and the IAI database has

tracked 13,792 courses in the majors with 2,344 currently remaining active. With over 9,200 active courses already approved in IAI, the GECC and Major Panels typically receive over 800 submitted courses for approval review from over 110 participating public and private institutions each fiscal year which provides clear indicators of how robust and valued IAI is by institutions and students.

MyCreditsTransfer. In 2002, about sixteen 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 free 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 last year.

Statewide Transfer Policy and 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 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 47,909 for the Fall semester of 2017, about 8.42 percent of the total undergraduate Fall 2017 enrollment of 569,157 (down from 600,610 in 2016) in the state. Of these in Fall 2017: 20,417 transferred from a community college (down from 23,136 in 2016 yet is a slight increase in the transfer percentage over last year's rate of 41.8 percent); 3,760 transferred from a public university (down from 4,329 in 2016); 3,046 from an independent not-for-profit institution (down from 3,377 in 2016); 272 from an independent for-profit institution (down from 463 in 2016); and 20,414 from other institutions (down from 24,065 in 2016).

Sector Students <u>Transferred FROM:</u>	**Number of Undergrad Transfer Students Fall 2017**	**Percent of Total Transfer Students**
Community Colleges	20,417	42.6%
Public Universities	3,760	7.8%
Independent Not-for-Profit	3,046	6.4%
Independent For-Profit	272	0.6%
Other Institutions*	20,414	42.6%
Total All Sectors	**47,909**	**100%**

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

The sector to which the largest number of students transferred to was the public universities, with 13,985 students, followed closely by the community colleges with 13,742 students. This data reveals a shift from community colleges back to public universities receiving the most transfer students for the first time in over three years. A significant number of students also transferred to independent not-for-profit institutions (10,841) and independent for-profit institutions (8,760, although this is significant decrease compared to 2016's 13,491 students transferring to this sector). Less than 600 Illinois students transferred to out-of-state institutions operating within Illinois.

Sector Students Transferred TO:	**Number of Undergrad Transfer Students Fall 2017**	**Total Fall 2017 Undergraduate Enrollments**
Public Universities	13,985	130,955
Community Colleges	13,742	265,960
Independent Not-for-Profit	10,841	123,600
Independent For-Profit	8,760	43,035
Out-of-State, Operating in IL	581	5,607
Total All Sectors	**47,909**	**569,157**

Although transfer to Illinois institutions remains strong, the 2017 transfer rate of 8.42 percent reflects a decrease in the number of transfer students compared to the 2016 transfer rate of 9.22 percent. It is worth noting that the 2015 transfer rate of 9.29 percent represented the highest rate the state had experienced since 2007 in proportion to the total number of undergraduate student enrollments each year. As demonstrated in the following chart, decreases in the total number of transfer students correlates with the fall enrollment decreases the state has experienced over the last five years.

Note: Fall 2013 data not available

Transfer students can be classified into four broad categories 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 GECC package to satisfy general education requirements at any of the 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.

There are 114 IAI-participating institutions from all sectors, 93 as full participants and 21 as receiving only institutions. More than 640 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 and trends in various disciplines. This helps to overcome misperceptions that sometimes develop between faculties in different sectors.

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. 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.

Over the last six years, the iTransfer team has continued to improve service and usability of the site and course review system 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 twentieth year, the site continues to be an essential tool for these constituencies. Between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018, the site processed 113,238 visits to the site with 69,639 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 about six pages of information viewed per visit and handled a total of 603,159 page views.

Although usage of the site remains high overall, there has been a consistent decrease in the number of visitors over the last several years. Staff have been dedicated to maintaining and continuously improving the site resulting in a complete redesign of the website this past year in order to meet current needs and standards. New features of the redesigned site include: being mobile friendly; incorporating student-focused navigation and landing pages utilizing non-layman terminology that is easily understood by students and parents; and, limiting content to be more relevant, streamlined, and useful for transfer students, faculty members, and advisors.

While IAI did not experience as severe of budget cuts as the MyCreditsTransfer Project this past year, the budget reduction was navigated by continuing to reduce the number of in-person faculty meetings for the Major panels, therefore requiring 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 continues 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. Without stable funding, IAI will be forced to de-prioritize important projects and continue to operate at a suboptimal level.

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 AS degree model, students are required to take one additional math course and one additional science course, which will displace two GECC courses in the Humanities and Fine Arts and Social and Behavioral Sciences to post-transfer enrollment. The GECC remains intact, however the timing of when the package is completed will now differ between AA and AS students. Under this new degree model, community college students are now able to take the necessary prerequisites and complete course sequences required for baccalaureate 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 AS degree model will provide benefits to both institutions and students. Illinois should see more AS 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 AS 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. 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.

Improving successful transfer in Illinois involves a comprehensive approach, not just reliance on IAI and MyCreditsTransfer, therefore different tools and strategies need to be employed in a coordinated fashion to further improve transfer. In recent years, several new laws have been passed that directly and indirectly support transfer and degree completion in the state. Direct measures include the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) Act, the Career and Workforce Transitions Act, and the Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act. The IAI Act codifies the initiative and requires all public community colleges and universities to participate in IAI and maintain a complete GECC package. An amendment to the Act is planned to address degree program advising in order to improve articulation and reduce excess academic credit hours. The Career and Workforce Transition Act requires community colleges to accept up to 30 credit hours transferred from a nationally accredited vocational training-based institution that has been approved by ICCB if a student has completed one of 36 specific programs in fields such as HVAC, medical coding, and construction at that institution. The STAR Act guarantees that a community college student who earns an AA or AS degree is deemed eligible for transfer into the baccalaureate program of an Illinois public university if the student meets the requirements of the transfer degree, major-specific requirements, and has a minimum GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. The Act also guarantees junior status in a program and students will not be required to take more than 60 additional semester hours for majors requiring 120 semester credits.

While the following indirect measures as mandated by recent laws do not specifically pertain to transfer students and credits, they do impact student degree completion and are often included as transferable credit. Under the College and Career Success for All Students Act, all Illinois public colleges and universities are required to grant elective, general education, or major credits for Advanced Placement exam scores of 3 or higher (e.g., 3, 4, 5) and International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme subject scores of 4 or higher (e.g., 4, 5, 6, 7). The Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act also seeks to increase the number of dual credit

courses and begin offering transitional math courses for students in an effort to ensure students are more prepared to enter college without the need for remediation.

Illinois' implementation of Complete College America's Game Changer strategies are also addressing preparedness and completion issues by piloting corequisite math and English courses, as well as promoting 15 to Finish campaigns which encourages students to take at least 15 credit hours every semester in order to graduate on time. 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.

Illinois Articulation Initiative

In Fiscal Year 2018, the following goals were accomplished through a number of projects and activities:

Note: Many of these projects and activities will continue to be reviewed and improved into future fiscal years as ongoing processes.

- Monitored and maintained iTransfer business continuation activities to include existing systems and function, and revised as necessary. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - Edited and "fine-tuned" systems, including marketing activities to effectively meet client needs.

- Installed and implemented new software and applications 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.
  - Researched website and server technologies to ensure that iTransfer.org reflects current web practices and made changes accordingly.
  - Completed the process of restructuring the internal server technology resources for the iTransfer.org which ensures the security and sustainability of the database and site structure.

- Worked with internal resources at the host institution to complete a full reworking and redesign of the iTransfer.org website. This new site was deployed in December 2017. This redesign project included the addition of new applications, a full mobile device viewing structure, and a variety of new resources for all website users. In addition, the site redesign and upgrade allowed staff to move the iTransfer.org site revision process to a user-friendly OU Campus product which has resulted in the site becoming more dynamic. Illinois State University staff and resources supported this project for the duration.
  - Continued to focus on iTransfer.org as an information portal for transfer within the state. Staff strove to keep this focus in the new site redesign.
  - Completed activities related to site and server structure redesign for enhanced business continuation purposes, including set up of appropriate software and server technologies, and bolstering server security from external attacks.
  - Reviewed Google analytics, site navigation, and user feedback to improve functionality and design of the website, as well as enhance site content. This will continue to be an important driving process in site revisions.
  - Added content based on recommendations from the IAI Steering Committee, IBHE, and ICCB.

- Uploaded courses into the course review system for panel review during spring and fall session meetings. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - This included monitoring the electronic processes involved in submission and via iManage.
  - Staff provided training and technical directions to submitters and faculty reviewers, and worked to improve performance and user satisfaction.

- Provided assistance and support to the IBHE and ICCB staff as necessary in order to facilitate IAI panel meetings. *This is an ongoing process.*
  - Attended all IAI GECC and Major Panel meetings in spring and fall sessions, posted course decisions, and created meeting summaries for all panels.

- Staff also assisted the Boards as requested with securing meeting locations, handling all meeting planning-related activities, and posting agendas and summaries of other transfer-related meetings.
- Continued the use of the join.me web conference programming for remote participants in both general education and major panel meetings, and continued to review available resources for enhanced webinar and web conferencing performance. Going forward, IAI will begin using an internal product purchased in association with the host institution in order to reduce meeting costs and increase meeting efficiency.

¢ Continued to assist participating institutions with staff training and technical directions/implementation. *This is an ongoing process.*
- Conducted over 50 training sessions via group webinars and individual phone calls.
- Reviewed and enhanced training materials, including development of a section within the new site that provides training to the specific functions of the institutional users. Video training clips were also created and placed on the site.
- Implemented recommendations from the Boards and Steering Panel.

¢ Continued to develop and implement the IAI/iTransfer marketing plan. *This is an ongoing process.*
- Met frequently to discuss projects and collaborative marketing opportunities.
- Focused on iTransfer.org as a portal for transfer students and institutions within the state, with the site redesign supporting this goal.

¢ Completed a variety of programming and report projects regarding functionality issues in iManage in a timely manner in order to fulfill the needs of the Boards as well as IAI constituents. *This is an ongoing process.*
- Prepared the annual report and identified specific goals with the Boards for the coming year.
- Reviewed and revised, as needed, the recently updated iTransfer operations manual and Business Continuation Plan.
- Responded to IAI Steering panel directions regarding program evaluation processes.

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 114 schools participating in IAI (the General Education Core Curriculum and/or the Illinois Baccalaureate Majors' Curricula).

Full-Participating Schools: There are 93 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
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
University of Illinois at Chicago
Illinois State University
Northeastern Illinois University
Northern Illinois University
University of Illinois at Springfield
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Western Illinois University

Four-Year Independent Institutions (31schools)

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

Lincoln College
Loyola University Chicago
MacMurray College
St. Augustine College
Trinity Christian College
Trinity International University
University of St. Francis

Receiving-Only Schools [R]: There are 21 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)
Taylor Business Institute [R]

Four-Year Public Institutions (0 schools)

Four-Year Independent Institutions (20 schools)
Adler University [R]
American InterContinental University [R]
Argosy University – Chicago [R]
Argosy University – Schaumburg [R]
Columbia College Chicago [R]
DeVry University – Illinois [R]
Dominican University [R]
East-West University [R]
Eureka College [R]
Illinois College [R]
Illinois Institute of Technology [R]
Knox College [R]
Lake Forest College [R]
Lakeview College of Nursing [R]
Methodist College [R]
Monmouth College R]
Northwestern Business College [R]
Resurrection University [R]
Saint Francis Medical Center, Nursing [R]
University of Phoenix – Chicago [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 16 private institutions in Illinois. One of the intended outcomes of the MCT project is to provide underrepresented students access to information about how they can most efficiently transfer to baccalaureate-granting institutions; MCT serves as the single existing source of consistent, up-to-date and centralized transfer information that allows these students, at no cost, to plan for and achieve successful transfer across all public and private institutions currently participating in the Illinois Transferology network. 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. In Fiscal Year 2018 there were over 413,000 Illinois visitors to the site (up from over 390,000 visitors in Fiscal Year 2017), with more than 217,000 of those being unique visitors (up from over 215,000 unique visitors in Fiscal Year 2017). This represents a continued climb in Illinois' use of the system for the eighth consecutive year. Clearly, the state and its citizens value MyCreditsTransfer and the Transferology tool.

When consistently and fully funded, the MyCreditsTransfer Project is driven by five goals: increase participation, implementation, and usage of Transferology; promote use of

Transferology to relevant audiences; collaborate and coordinate with other organizations involved in transfer; maintain the infrastructure; and, evaluate progress of the MCT Project. The following completed tasks demonstrate that each Project goal was satisfactorily met over the last fiscal year:

Participation, Implementation, and Usage:

There are 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.

- MCT achieved an increase in the number of fully-licensed institutions participating in the Illinois Transferology network, from 38 to 45, and increased the implementation level of three institutions that were already participating.

MCT staff work closely with institutions in order to increase awareness and usage of the tool. Subsequently, the number of Transferology users in Illinois, which includes both students and staff, has continued to climb among returning and new (i.e., unique) visitors as demonstrated in the following chart:

Promotion:

Staff undertook numerous activities to promote the MCT Project, the use of Transferology in Illinois, and various other transfer resources and information:

- Published and distributed a biannual newsletter: MyCreditsTransfer News 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.
- Conducted training and made 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.

- Distributed institution-specific advisor training materials such as the Transferology Reference Guide for advisors.
  - 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.
- Improved online presence through continued access to Transferology via a link on the iTranfer.org website, as well as the MCT staff-developed TransferREADY website.
  - The MyCreditsTransfer staff continue to 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:

Nearly all activities undertaken by Project staff are completed in collaboration with various stakeholder groups for the overall value, productivity, and sustainability of Illinois MyCreditsTransfer and to promote effective transfer within the state. MCT staff supported this goal by:

- Working with iTransfer staff on semi-annual updates of the Illinois General Education Core Curriculum's IAI approved course file (upon conclusion of IAI fall and spring panel meetings), to format and verify for publication in Transferology, then work with CollegeSource to load updated files. This allows users of Transferology to determine which courses are IAI approved and which category of the GECC package the courses fulfill.
- Responding to requests by Illinois Association for College Admissions Counseling membership, Transfer Coordinators and other key stakeholders to provide reports and transfer tools as needed.
- Attending various articulation conferences in order to monitor changes to transfer policies, articulation, and degree programs throughout the state.

Maintenance:

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.

Staff maintained the MCT infrastructure through the following activities:

- Worked with 25 institutions in the Illinois Transferology network (including IAI/iTransfer) to update their existing articulation files, verify transfer data and work with CollegeSource to upload the completed files into Transferology, helping to ensure users have access to current transfer information.
- Completed the procurement process to renew Illinois' annual service agreement with CollegeSource for the state Transferology license subscription. NOTE: MCT staff

continually make adjustments to the Project budget given the extreme reductions in the grant award amount, coupled with annual increases for renewal of the state subscription service agreement.

- Conducted ongoing site testing of updated product features and problem solutions released by CollegeSource. Also advocated on behalf of Illinois participating institutions for proposed new enhancements deemed instrumental to ensure CollegeSource products are responsive to the needs of the state's institutions and students.

Evaluation:

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. This information, along with collected Google Analytics data, provide insight regarding web trends and progress of the MCT Project. Furthermore, staff engaged in the following practices as additional evaluation means:

- Fostered open communication and solicited feedback from stakeholders through the listserv, newsletter, and at the annual statewide meetings regarding use, promotion, and evaluation of Transferology, and direction / effectiveness of MCT initiatives.
- Solicited feedback and direction from the MCT Advisory Committee on scope and direction of Project initiatives, opportunities for collaboration, legislation impacting transfer, budgetary matters, expansion efforts, institution implementation challenges, enhancements and changes to Transferology, military articulation initiatives, and vendor communications.

The IBHE grant funding for the MyCreditsTransfer project has been cut by more than 20 percent over the last seven years, yet over the same period the program's actual costs have risen by 20 percent. In fall 2012 the IBHE awarded MCT $230,000, with the expectation of further financial support from the University of Illinois System and iTransfer/IAI. Since then, funding and support have been cut significantly to the current amount of $183,000 this fiscal year; subsequently, all Project expenses have been cut to zero except the cost of the statewide license and partial salary/benefits for the Project Coordinator (50 percent FTE) and Technical Coordinator (30 percent FTE). Continuing the work of MCT under these extreme circumstances has only been possible due to generous support by the University of Illinois System.

Additionally the MCT project faces a significant challenge in the coming year, in that the sole source agreement for licensure of Transferology will expire and there are no further extensions remaining on the current contract. Subsequently, the Project will have to undertake the competitive Request for Proposal bid process to purchase a transfer advising tool license. Staff are uncertain what fiscal challenges the bid process may create, as the current agreement has been grandfathered in through a ten year-old cost structure with a company that may not be the only qualified bidder.

A fully-funded grant is essential in order to adequately staff and sustain MyCreditsTransfer. Increasing the Project funding would allow staff to also 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. Likewise, flat and/or reduced funding levels will not only prevent these expansion plans but will also prohibit operating the Project at an optimum level given the rising costs associated with higher licensing and implementation fees.

Several other Midwestern states also provide Transferology so discontinuing the MCT 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.

Despite the financial challenges, MCT has continued to achieve increased participation and usage among Illinois institutions and students. It is imperative that the project be fully-funded in order to continue serving the needs of Illinois regarding the important transfer student population. Simply put, without consistent and increased funding, there is no way to sustain and expand the MyCreditsTransfer Project; at a minimum, returning to the 2012 grant level ($230,000) would provide sustainable resources.

MyCreditsTransfer: Illinois Participating Colleges and Universities

Fully-Licensed "Receiving" Institutions (45 schools*)

- Benedictine University
- Bradley University
- Chicago State University
- City Colleges of Chicago
  - Harold Washington College
  - Kennedy-King College
  - Malcolm X College
  - Olive Harvey College
  - Richard Daley College
  - Harry S. Truman College
  - Wilbur Wright College
- College of DuPage
- Columbia College of Chicago
- DePaul University
- Dominican University
- Eastern Illinois University
- Elgin Community College
- Elmhurst College
- Governors State University
- Harper College
- Illinois Articulation Initiative*
- Illinois College
- Illinois Institute of Technology
- Illinois State University
- Joliet Junior College
- Lincoln College
- Loyola University Chicago
- McHenry County College
- National-Louis University
- North Central College
- North Park University
- Northeastern Illinois University
- Northern Illinois University
- Oakton Community College
- Parkland College
- Resurrection University
- Roosevelt University
- Saint Xavier University
- Southern Illinois University, Carbondale
- Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville
- Southwestern Illinois College
- University of Illinois at Chicago
- University of Illinois at Springfield
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- University of St. Francis
- Western Illinois University

**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* (33 schools)

**Formerly called "sending only" institutions, these Illinois community colleges participate under the Illinois Articulation Initiative license.*

- Black Hawk College
- Carl Sandburg College
- Danville Area Community College
- Heartland Community College
- Highland Community College
- Illinois Central College
- Illinois Eastern Community Colleges
  - Frontier Community College
  - Lincoln Trail College
  - Olney Central College
  - Wabash Valley Community College
- Illinois Valley Community College
- John A. Logan College
- John Wood Community College
- Kankakee Community College
- Kaskaskia College
- Kishwaukee College
- Lake Land College
- Lewis & Clark Community College
- Lincoln Land Community College
- Moraine Valley Community College
- Morton College
- Parkland College
- Prairie State College
- Rend Lake Community College
- Richland Community College
- Rock Valley College
- Sauk Valley Community College
- Shawnee Community College
- South Suburban College
- Southeastern Illinois College
- Spoon River College
- Triton College
- Waubonsee Community College

IBHE's Role in Statewide Transfer

IBHE has a dedicated staff person, Malinda Aiello, Associate Director for Academic Affairs, who serves as a primary manager that oversees the continuous improvement of the Illinois Articulation Initiative including the IAI GECC and Major faculty panels, iTransfer website, and iManage course submission and approval system. She also serves on the MyCreditsTransfer Advisory Committee, gives presentations each year to key stakeholders and constituent groups, monitors transfer trends, and implements policies throughout the state.

IBHE staff goals for the upcoming year includes increasing awareness of the Illinois Articulation Initiative and MyCreditsTransfer tools, and promoting the state's success with student transfer and degree completion. IBHE staff will also foster the review and/or development of policies that, at a minimum, address the following topics: reverse transfer between public universities and community colleges; transferability of AP, IB, and dual credit course credits; articulation of military credit; acceptance of IAI GECC and major courses; transferability of vocational credits earned through AAS degrees, and; issues surrounding sustainability of state systems, including Transferology.

The IBHE Academic Affairs staff, in concert with ICCB, are proposing that a 2018/2019 Transfer Compact Project be initiated to enhance the already-strong transfer initiatives in Illinois. It has been 15 years since stakeholders have convened a statewide planning conversation about transfer in Illinois, and much has happened in that time (i.e., increased AP / IB participation, growing enrollment in dual credit courses, changes in professional expectations for individuals who hold the AAS degree, etc.). This effort would be undertaken by a working group comprised of representatives from public and private higher education institutions including, university provosts, community college chief academic officers, college and university registrars, and other administrators as appropriate. This working group will craft a new transfer compact that complies with all current laws and incorporates the use of highly functional systems such as the IAI.

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. Measuring the success of transfer students requires careful coordination of informational resources across the various sectors: Illinois public universities; Illinois private colleges and universities; and Illinois community colleges. The establishment of such a coordinated information system has been underway with the passage of Public Act 096-0107, the P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act. This system will open the door to a wide variety of research projects that will shed light on the transfer and articulation process, including reaching a clearer understanding of the impact of Illinois initiatives. IBHE's component of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS), the Higher Education Information System (HEIS), was moved into full production in fall of 2016 and IBHE staff are in the process of finishing the collection of its fourth year of enrollment and completion data from all MAP-eligible institutions, as well as institutions that confer graduate or professional degrees. Enrollment information has been fully integrated into IBHE's various reporting systems and completions information has been used for a few cross agency ILDS projects (e.g., the Career Outcomes Tool).

Over the past year, IBHE has used the enrollment information collected with the IHEIS to analyze transfer information as part of a major ILDS-supported project. In collaboration with the ICCB, IBHE has developed the framework for reporting the flow of new transfer students from sending institutions to their receiving institutions. These reports will serve as the foundation

for future reports that will include additional information on the post-transfer academic success of such students. Once the community college transfer student success reports are fully implemented statewide in the coming year, it will allow staff to identify community colleges and four-year institutions that are best supporting transfer students; pinpoint where improvements and/or enhancements in the transfer process are needed; and fulfill IBHE's mandated reporting responsibilities under Public Act 099-0316, the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act.

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 by Board staff for IAI, MCT, and other transfer initiatives 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 and Illinois Learning Standards state project. In addition to other content experts, faculty on the IAI panels will be asked to continue to participate in the implementation of this project and to help build the bridge between high school graduation standards and college readiness expectations. GECC courses have also been a primary target of increasing dual credit course offerings. Specific GECC-approved math courses are also being used to develop transitional math courses which will be offered to high school seniors in an effort to increase placement into credit-bearing gateway math courses and decrease enrollment in remedial education.

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 the MCT Project.

Due to budgetary cuts and inconsistent funding, both the IAI and MyCreditsTransfer projects are under serious threat. Discontinuing either projects would negatively impact nearly 50,000 students, including minority and underrepresented 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 by students within the state. 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 public and private institutions currently participating in the Illinois Transferology

network. In Fiscal Year 2018 there were over 413,000 Illinois visitors to the MCT site, with more than 217,000 of those being unique visitors, representing a continued climb in use for the ninth consecutive year. 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 113,000 visitors to the IAI site in Fiscal Year 2018, with nearly 70,000 of those being unique visitors. There are nearly 9,300 general education and major-specific courses currently approved for 114 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 33 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 the state's robust transfer system, IAI, which is a nationally renowned model, and the state-licensed Transferology tool, both of which likely contributed to Illinois rising from third to first 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. The amended College and Career Success for All Students Act, PA 099-0624, guarantees college credit to students earning a score of three or above on Advanced Placement exams and for scores of four 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.

<u>Opportunities:</u>

Growing interest is also 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 would 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.

For nearly fifty years, the state has been very deliberate about facilitating the seamless transfer of students between colleges and universities beginning with the 1970 Resolution on Transfer Equivalency, otherwise known as "The Compact Agreement". The Illinois Articulation Initiative and the General Education Core Curriculum Package have officially been in place for