ILLINOIS TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION INITIATIVES
ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

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. 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 cuts in the state's budget, both projects are under serious threat. 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 last three years to expand the scope of IAI to include acceptance of the major recommendations by public universities. This item reviews the current status of the IAI and MyCreditsTransfer projects, highlights the past year's activities, and outlines the challenges facing the projects in the near future.

Action Requested: None.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**ILLINOIS TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION INITIATIVES
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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 (MCT) and the Illinois Articulation Initiative and through development of an objective measure of transfer and acceptance of credits." The Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) continues to be an important statewide vehicle for encouraging transferability among postsecondary institutions in the State of Illinois. A more recent statewide transfer and articulation project, MyCreditsTransfer (formerly named u.select Illinois and the Illinois Course Applicability System, or CAS continues its expansion. IAI and MyCreditsTransfer are complementary, both enhancing the availability and accuracy of transfer information and fostering more effective and efficient degree completion.

Planning for the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) 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 2014 marked the end of the sixteenth year of implementation. In addition to the adoption of the GECC, several major/discipline 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 last four years to expand the scope of IAI to include acceptance of the major recommendations by public universities. Until the fall of 2010, the major panel recommendations have been advisory only but this agreement to accept the panel recommendations will offer students undecided about their intended transfer destination additional guidance in the process.

MyCreditsTransfer is a statewide initiative, implemented thirteen 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 to both advisors and students, matches courses to degree requirements and outlines what additional coursework is needed to complete the degree. The MyCreditsTransfer initiative had been funded through a series of Higher Education

Cooperation Act (HECA) Grant appropriations. Funding for the program has been limited due to state budget constraints.

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. The report then includes a summary of highlights from this past year's activities, concerns relative to funding, a listing of participating schools, and considerations for the future.

Brief History

The Illinois Articulation Initiative. In January 1993, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and transfer coordinators from Illinois colleges and universities jointly launched the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) to ease the transfer of students among Illinois public and independent, associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. The IAI grew out of the IBHE's 1990 undergraduate education policies on transfer and articulation. The IAI was originally developed in three phases. Phase I focused on developing a general education package, the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC). Phase II expanded the project to create models for easing transfer into baccalaureate major programs. Twenty-five Major/Discipline Advisory Panels have participated in identifying lower division coursework that prepares students for studies in baccalaureate majors. Phase III instituted the process of regular five-year reviews designed to ensure that the panels' recommendations continue to be relevant and accurate.

Through the IAI, Illinois has developed one of the most comprehensive course approval and quality assurance processes in the nation, assuring that all approved courses are comparable and meet the high standards established by faculty panels. As of September 2014, there are 198 GECC course descriptions and the IAI database includes 10,741 courses in the GECC with 7,009 currently remaining active. There are 267 major course descriptions and the IAI database has tracked 13,375 courses in the majors with 2,335 currently remaining active.

MyCreditsTransfer. Thirteen 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 had been funded through a series of Higher Education Cooperation Act (HECA) Grant appropriations. Recently, funding for the program has been limited due to state budget constraints.

Statewide Transfer Policy

Goal 3 of the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success* is to "increase the number of high-quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of the economy and an increasingly global society." One recommendation of Goal 3 is to "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, student transfers within Illinois totaled 56,052 for the fall semester of 2012, some 8.4 percent of the total fall 2012 enrollment of 666,369 in the state. Of these in fall 2012: 25,004 transferred from a community college down from 25,255; 5,259 transferred from a public university up from 5,123; 3,707 from an independent not-for-profit institution down from 3,788; 624 from an independent for-profit institution up from 596; and 21,457 from other institutions down from 23,270.

Sector Students Transferred From	Number of Students	Percent of Total Transfer Students	Percent of Total Undergraduate Students
Community Colleges	25,004	44.6	3.8
Public Universities	5,259	9.4	0.8
Independent Not-for-Profit	3,707	6.6	0.6
Independent For-Profit	624	1.1	0.1
Other Institutions*	21,457	38.3	3.2
Total All Sectors	**56,052**	**100%**	**666,369**

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

The sector to which the largest number of students transferred to was the community colleges, with 17,821 students, followed closely by the public universities with 15,450. A significant number of students transferred to independent not-for-profit institutions (11,733) and independent for-profit institutions (9,412). Some 1,636 Illinois students transferred to out-of-state institutions operating in Illinois.

Sector Students Transferred To	Number of Undergrad Students Transferred To Fall 2012	Total Fall 2012 Undergraduate Enrollments	Percent of Transfers to the Sector of the Total Undergraduate Students
Community Colleges	17,821	323,252	5.5
Public Universities	15,450	148,467	10.4
Independent Not-for-Profit	11,733	129,303	9.1
Independent For-Profit	9,412	54,372	17.3
Out-of-State, Operating in IL	1,636	10,975	14.9
Total All Sectors	**56,052**	**666,369**	**8.4**

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 not 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 to satisfy general education requirements at any of the 110 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. The current IAI and institutional transfer and articulation agreements work well for most students, particularly for program to program articulation agreements. However, the system could do more, especially for those students who enter community colleges with an intended major but without an intended transfer destination. There had been several attempts over the years to gain full acceptance of the major panel recommendations by receiving institutions but these attempts had not borne fruit. Increasing scrutiny of this issue over the last few years has led to renewed efforts.

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

Under the plan, the public universities were asked to accept the Major Panel course recommendations and be added to a list of receiving institutions that have agreed to the recommendations. If a curricular issue did not allow them to do so, they were to provide feedback to IBHE or ICCB IAI staff to suggest revisions of the courses or their approval criteria that would allow the institution to accept the major recommendations. Staff worked to combine the feedback received and provided the information to the panels to facilitate modifications. In the future, independent institutions will be given the opportunity to accept the recommendations under the same terms and be added to the web page lists. Each Major Panel iTransfer webpage indicates the current major course recommendations and a list of all institutions that agreed to those recommendations. The supporting memos and acceptance lists are available on the IAI website at http://www.itransfer.org/iai/.

Both IAI and MyCreditsTransfer have continued as vehicles for advancing transfer and articulation across the state. In addition to regular meetings of panels and committees dealing with IAI and MyCreditsTransfer, these initiatives have continued their ongoing activities. There are 110 participating institutions from all sectors, 96 as full participants, and 14 as receiving only institutions. Nearly 600 faculty members, transfer coordinators, and institutional administrators have actively participated in IAI. 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 two years, the iTransfer team has continued to improve service and usability of the site to its constituents. The focus has been to develop and deploy various web resources to help users find, locate, and navigate the iTransfer.org site and the necessary IAI-related information more easily. Through the last year, the iTransfer Coordinator continued to assist with panel related activities as well as serve as contact and information resource for iTransfer and IAI.

In order to better serve the variety of constituents that use the site, the iTransfer staff has utilized a variety of sources to obtain user data and feedback. They continue to refine and improve the iManage system, which allows for all administrative functions for institutional

course submitters and IAI related personnel to access information regarding IAI courses, and 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 16th year, the site it continues to be an essential tool for these constituencies. Between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014, the site processed 146,063 visits to the site with 94,984 being unique visitors. These figures demonstrate a small upward change over last year's totals and remain an example of high volume user traffic through the site. On average, the site provided 5.9 pages of information per visit and handled a total of 861,176 page views. The average visit duration was 3 minutes and 52 seconds. Usage increases for the site are due in part to general increases in overall usage but are primarily reflected in the use of the mobile application. From usage data, traffic through the desktop platforms has decreased by just under four percent. At the same time, the usage of the mobile site has seen increases across the platforms of four percent total.

Improving successful transfer in Illinois involves a comprehensive approach, not just reliance on IAI and MyCreditsTransfer. Different tools need to be employed in a coordinated fashion to improve transfer. Other state level policies continue to advance that will help to smooth the transfer process. For example, the Common Core State Standards, which were adopted in June 2010, and the American Diploma Project efforts are intended to help to eliminate remediation through the coordination of high school graduation standards and college readiness as well as increase communication of expectations by higher education institutions. The Dual Credit Quality Act aims to standardize and facilitate the expansion of dual credit opportunities in Illinois. This will enable the accumulation of transferable credit more easily, but relies on the well developed Illinois Articulation Initiative structure to help to increase course transfer legitimacy. Not every student transfer problem can be solved through state policy, but these policies should be implemented in a coordinated fashion to open the widest pathways possible to help students achieve successful transfer.

Many other tools are available to facilitate student transfer in Illinois. Students who already know their transfer institution destination are advised to make use of existing individual articulation agreements between institutions. Such articulation agreements between the sending and receiving institutions are the primary conduit for transfer and are able to provide specific detail to students about courses to take at partner institutions for successful transfer. For those who know their major as well, specially designed and named associates degrees have been developed in conjunction with the Illinois Community College Board, such as the Associate of Fine Arts (AFA) degree. The Community College Compact Agreement (the Compact) is still used by many Illinois institutions. The Compact originated December 1, 1970, with IBHE's 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. Effective advisors provide the information to students about all of these pathways for navigating through the transfer system.

In FY 2014, the following projects and activities were completed.

Staff:
1. Monitored and maintained iTransfer business continuation activities to include existing systems and function – revised as necessary.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - iTransfer staff continued to edit, refine, and "fine tune" systems, including marketing activities to effectively meet client needs.
   - Technologies were updated and new servers were purchased.
2. Installed and implemented new software and hardware to facilitate database and web application design.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - Reviewed current software on the market to ensure iTransfer is utilizing technologies appropriate for best functionality.
   - Programs necessary for keeping the servers secure and running at peak performance were updated and installed as necessary.
3. Continued to upload courses into the course review system for panel review at spring and fall session meetings.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - This included monitoring the electronic processes involved in submission and via iManage and working to improve performance and use satisfaction.
4. Attended various IAI GECC and Major Panel meetings in fall and spring sessions.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - This included the use of the web conferencing program called AnyMeeting and conference calling was also made available for remote participants.
5. Created meeting summaries for meetings iTransfer staff attended.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - All meeting summaries for iTransfer managed panels were posted to the appropriate place on the iTransfer site, utilizing the iManage Meeting Management system.
6. Assisted participating institutions with staff training and technical directions/implementation.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - The reprogrammed iManage system now includes a training channel which was implemented in December 2013.
   - Continued to offer training online, one-on-one, and in person, when possible, for participating institution staff and faculty. Online webinar and training was offered through the free provider AnyMeeting.
   - Began work on refining training opportunities for new faculty serving on panels. Further work will be undertaken in Fiscal Year 2015 with significant assistance and input from IBHE and ICCB IAI staff.
7. Responded to IAI Steering Panel directions in response to program evaluation process.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - As requests and needs were identified by the Steering Panel, staff worked to implement recommendations for IAI and iTransfer.
8. Researched web site and server technologies to ensure that iTransfer.org reflects current web practices and changed accordingly.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - Continued to adjust site based on usability studies and marketing plan to make the site more user friendly.

o Continued to refine and develop the Faculty and Transfer Coordinator channels for easier navigation within the site by stakeholders. As a result of this process, it was determined that having two sections for each indentified immediately on the site was not necessarily assisting users in obtaining the information for which they were visiting iTransfer. Staff have begun the work of exploring and defining a walk through basis, similar to the student section, to allow administrative visitors to find information more intuitively.

o Continued to refine and further develop the iManage system. A reprogrammed iManage was released in December 2013. This redesign is intended to enhance functionality and design of the administrative processes of IAI.

9. Continued to develop and implement the IAI/iTransfer marketing plan.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - With the iTransfer "portal", the marketing plan continued within Fiscal Year 2013 with its focus to encompass "all things transfer" in Illinois. As a result of review material on the site to this end, it was determined that the information included on the site for military and veteran students was lacking. Staff created a subcommittee to assist in the redesign and expansion of this section. The current plan is to deploy this redesign with the release of the reprogrammed iManage.

10. Continued technology research, development, and implementation plan.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - iTransfer staff met frequently to discuss projects, marketing opportunities, and look at refining site aspects to increase satisfaction with site functionality. This included a few all-day meetings in Fiscal Year 2013.

11. Prepared annual report and identified specific goals for the coming year.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - The annual report was completed, shared with appropriate Board representatives, and deployed on the iTransfer site before mid-September 2013.

12. Continued to provide support to Board constituents.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - Staff continued to provide assistance and support to the IBHE and ICCB staff as necessary. This included phone meetings and trips out of town to programmatic meetings in Springfield and other locations. Training was also offered whenever Board representatives requested it.
   - Provided assistance to Board staff as appropriate when a vacancy occurred with staff assigned to work with IAI.

13. Continued to review and refine the iTransfer operations manual and Business Continuation Plan.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - Reviewed recently updated plan and made appropriate changes.

14. Continued updates to the iTransfer website to refine the site as the state of Illinois comprehensive "portal" for transfer student information.
   2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
   - Staff continued to review Google analytics, site navigation, and user feedback to improve functionality and design of the site.
   - As a result of initiatives within the state involving support and assistance for current and former military personnel attending college, staff began work on enhancing and improving military information housed on the site. With the help of a small committee of 15 members formed to assist in the endeavor, work has

> begun on revising site information. The revision work was suspended due to staffing issues, but will be further pursued in Fiscal Year 2015.

15. Added content based on recommendations from the IAI Advisory Committee, IAI Steering Panel, IBHE, and ICCB.

    2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
    - As changes in information were announced, the site was updated to reflect any changes and recommendations provided by constituents.

16. Developed and completed projects as they arose.

    2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
    - The iTransfer programmer found an issue that required reprogramming the iManage system for enhanced functionality. This project was completed in a timely manner and ahead of schedule.

17. When the iTransfer Programmer position was vacated in mid-Fiscal Year 2014, the remaining iTransfer staff worked to hire a replacement.

    2013-2014 Activities Undertaken:
    - Plans were made to cover work and manage expectations in the absence of an IAI programmer.
    - The job position was reviewed by staff and Human Resources to ensure the skills and expectations were appropriate for the position.
    - The position was advertised in a variety of web and in-print venues.

Illinois Participating Schools and Colleges

All Illinois associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions 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 109 schools participating in IAI (the General Education Core Curriculum and/or the Illinois Baccalaureate Majors' Curricula).

IAI Participating Schools

Full Participating Schools **There are 96 schools recognized by IAI currently as full-participation schools.**

Two-Year Public Institutions (48 schools)

Black Hawk College	Lincoln Trail College (IECC)
Carl Sandburg College	Malcolm X College (CCC)
College of DuPage	McHenry County College
College of Lake County	Moraine Valley Community College
Daley College (Richard J.) (CCC)	Morton College
Danville Area Community College	Oakton Community College
Elgin Community College	Olive-Harvey College (CCC)
Frontier Community College (IECC)	Olney Central College (IECC)
Harold Washington College (CCC)	Parkland College
Harper College	Prairie State College
Heartland Community College	Rend Lake College
Highland Community College	Richland Community College
Illinois Central College	Rock Valley College

Illinois Valley Community College
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

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
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
Concordia University Chicago
DePaul University
DeVry University - Illinois
Dominican University
Elmhurst College
Illinois College
Illinois Institute of Art
Judson University
Kendall College
Lewis University
Lexington College
Lincoln Christian University
Lincoln College

MacMurray College
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
St. Augustine College
Trinity Christian College
Trinity International University
University of St. Francis

Receiving-Only Schools [R]

There are 14 schools recognized by IAI currently as receiving-only schools.

If an institution is listed as a "Receiving only" institution, you should be aware that the college or university will take a completed GECC package from any of the full participating institutions listed above. However, should students decide to transfer from a "Receiving only" institution to another institution without a completed GECC package, they will not be considered as having completed their general education requirements. It is strongly recommended that students work with academic advisors at both their current and future institutions in the event that they decide to transfer from a "Receiving only" institution.

Two-Year Public Institutions (0 schools)

Two-Year Independent Institutions (2 schools)

Solex College [R]
The College of Office Technology [R]

Four-Year Public Institutions (0 schools)

Four-Year Independent Institutions (12 schools)

American InterContinental University [R]
Argosy University - Chicago [R]
Columbia College Chicago [R]
East-West University [R]
Eureka College [R]
Illinois Institute of Technology [R]
ITT Technical Institute [R]
Knox College [R]
Lake Forest College [R]
Loyola University Chicago [R]
Northwestern Business College [R]
Resurrection University [R]

MyCreditsTransfer, formerly known as u.select Illinois
Fiscal Year 2015 Project Goals and Objectives – a Description of Work Activities

The goals of the MyCreditsTransfer Project (formerly u.select Illinois) for 2015 are five-fold: implementation; promotion; collaboration and coordination; maintenance; and evaluation. These goals continue the direction articulated in 2014.

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

In many ways increased participation and higher implementation are primary goals, yet they are the least attainable given sustained reductions to the grant allocation. Most expansion efforts require additional funding for licensing and implementation. Without additional funding, potential for expansion in 2015 is limited. For this reason in Fiscal Year 2013, project staff added a goal to develop new collaborations that may yield supplemental funding sources. Staff will also continue ongoing efforts to bring licensed institutions into full participation and to identify/target institutions that are able to pay independently for their licenses – particularly Illinois private institutions, some community colleges and out-of-state feeder institutions.

IMPLEMENTATION

<u>Objective: Implement Transferology across more of the state (and nation).</u>

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

<u>Increase the number of participating institutions:</u> Wider implementation is key to enhancing the value of Transferology. In every training, at every institution, staff hears the same plea: we need more receiving institutions to make the system more attractive to students and advisors. Steadily, that objective is being achieved. In 2014, the MyCreditsTransfer project expanded to include another institution, the Illinois Institute of Technology.

<u>Increase the level of licensing and/or implementation of currently participating institutions:</u> During 2014, several Illinois institutions increased their participation level from sending-only status to fully-licensed, sending and receiving institutions: the College of Lake County, Moraine Valley Community College, Southwestern Illinois College, William Rainey Harper College, and the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC). The addition of the City Colleges of Chicago is important as it is the nation's third largest community college district and the largest in Illinois. The CCC community currently includes almost 6,000 faculty and staff and 120,000 students that are as diverse as the city itself, with student diversity an important objective in the founding of the original project.

Project staff maintains close contact with institutions on the path to implementation in order to provide technical assistance and to help keep the focus on the value of achieving full implementation, especially in terms of its benefit to students.

MyCreditsTransfer Project staff is actively engaged in a pilot initiative called, "Military Training Counts" (MTC). Through this pilot the IBHE, the ICCB, and the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) are working together with MyCreditsTransfer and several Illinois colleges and universities to ensure that veteran and military students are granted appropriate academic credit (amount and type) for the education, skills, and experience they have earned in the military services. This effort aligns national, state, and institutional goals to increase the rate of college completion among military and veteran students, as well as help veterans maximize their veteran education benefits. A primary focus of this initiative is to evaluate military training against certificate and licensing requirements for vocational/technical programs selected by the participating colleges. Several of the participating institutions have now mapped their coursework to military training programs, and the staff of MCT will work with those institutions to promote that alignment.

The MyCreditsTransfer staff is also working with IBHE, ICCB, and IDVA on a larger, regional military initiative dubbed "Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit" (MCMC). This collaborative has related goals but approaches the project from a broader, regional perspective and includes participants from several states across the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) region. The MCMC collaborative is working directly with Department of Defense (DoD) military education staff and with Lumina, a major philanthropic proponent of programs serving military and veteran students, in order to synergize state activities with other national efforts concerning articulation of military credit and support of military students.

As a result of MTC, MCMC and their commitment to military and veteran students, CollegeSource announced it will begin offering free use of two software services – Tranfser Evaluation System (TES) and Transferology – in the fall of 2014 to institutions of higher education for the purpose of developing and publishing articulations for military learning experiences. This is a major breakthrough for Illinois as many of our community colleges offer academic and vocational/technical programs closely aligned with military learning experiences, but could not afford to purchase the license needed to participate in Transferology at the receiving-institution level. In 2015, the MyCreditsTransfer team will promote the free use of TES and Transferology to Illinois higher education institutions to develop and publish military credit articulations.

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

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

PROMOTION

Objective: Promote the use of Transferology by relevant audiences.

Develop and distribute promotional materials: Due to the continued budget restrictions in 2015, one primary goal is to expand promotional efforts that rely on technology so as to reduce costs such as for printing, travel, and transportation. Staff plans greater reliance on carefully placed links on institution and organization sites throughout the state.

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

With the release of Transferology in 2014, CollegeSource has committed to continue marketing the product directly to students and to assisting states with rebranding efforts. A

trademark logo and coded link provided by CollegeSource should help ensure direct access is maintained throughout the transition.

Publish and distribute quarterly newsletter: MyCreditsTransfer News, a quarterly newsletter is distributed electronically to the MCT listserv and is available on the iTransfer.org/MCT website. It is an excellent communication tool for providing institutions with updates, information on functional enhancements, training opportunities, usage reports, and answering frequently asked questions. It also contains recurring segments for "Tech Tips" and a "Feedback Forum." In 2015, staff will seek to expand the newsletter audience.

Institution-specific advisor training reference guides: With the increased efforts toward advisor training, project staff created the Transferology Reference Guide for advisors. This enhanced training tool was distributed at all advisor training sessions and via email upon request. These efforts will continue in FY2015.

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

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

Conduct annual statewide meeting: One of the most important events undertaken by MyCreditsTransfer is the annual statewide meeting, which gives participating institutions a voice in the use, promotion, and evaluation of Transferology. In the past, these gatherings have been important forums for guiding the initial construction of the project, have allowed staff to showcase student support of Transferology, and given an opportunity to relate the different approaches used by advisors. In 2015, the statewide meeting will be an essential forum to support participating institutions in efforts to learn about and maximize the potential of Transferology's many new features and functions.

Project staff promotes attendance of the statewide meetings by seeking new venues and innovative solutions to the travel restrictions and budget cuts faced by many participating institutions. Beginning in 2012 the statewide meeting has been offered three times, in different regions of the state including the Chicago area. The effectiveness of multiple meetings continues to receive positive evaluations and will be offered again in 2014-2015.

Provide transfer data: Project staff compile data collected by IBHE to create statewide summaries and detailed institutional-specific data for a single year. The Statewide meeting continues to be an excellent opportunity to disseminate this transfer data. This report is the only

source of available data on the transfer of students to and from institutions in Illinois except by subscription – and then high-level analysis – through the National Clearinghouse. IBHE data has been unavailable for recent academic years. The last report project staff were able to create was based on the 2012 academic year. Project staff hopes that more current data will be available later in 2014 and in 2015 to update this extremely valuable and very popular transfer report for Illinois institutions.

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. Maintenance of the site was a challenge throughout much of 2014 due to the iTransfer/IAI Technical Coordinator position vacancy. In fact, the Technical Coordinator of MyCreditsTransfer was given access to the iTransfer website by IAI staff in order to make the most critical changes needed in the conversion from u.select to Transferology/MCT. Several revisions and updates are planned for 2015 to improve the MyCreditsTransfer pages on the iTransfer.org site once the IAI staffing is complete.

In 2015, efforts will be strengthened to promote the project's new name, MyCreditsTransfer, and the new tool name, Transferology. The MyCreditsTransfer staff will collaborate with participating colleges and universities to increase the number of Illinois institutions hosting a link to Transferology on their websites. Increasing direct access to Transferology will benefit the students and will allow institutions to customize the host link to make that school a "favorite" or to filter search results in order to give Illinois institutions an advantage in the search process. Project staff also plans to collaborate with several Illinois agencies (i.e., IBHE, ICCB, Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), IDVA, etc.) to host links to the MyCreditsTransfer pages on iTransfer.

Given the name changes that took place in 2014 for both the project (i.e., u.select Illinois to MyCreditsTransfer) and the online tool (u.select to Transferology) a concerted effort is planned in 2015 to remove old references to u.select and u.select Illinois. Updating links and deleting the outdated language will mitigate confusion and help promote recognition of the new names.

COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

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

Coordinate and collaborate with iTransfer: IAI/iTransfer.org and MyCreditsTransfer continue to work together to promote their mutual interests. Currently iTransfer and MyCreditsTransfer collaborate on the production of several promotional items, the most popular of which is a postcard, distributed to students through participating Illinois institutions. The card informs students of the presence and utility of Transferology in a cost effective method to direct students to the iTransfer.org/IAI website where much more extensive and complete transfer information is provided.

The iTransfer/IAI and MyCreditsTransfer project staff collaborates on more than the aforementioned website and promotional projects. In 2014, the teams partnered, together with leadership of the Illinois Academic Advisors Association (ILACADA) to provide advisor training throughout the state on transfer resources. The two staffs also collaborate on disseminating information statewide; the MyCreditsTransfer staff publishes updates in the IAI newsletter. The semiannual Transfer Coordinator Meeting includes a MyCreditsTransfer update presentation. Further, the MyCreditsTransfer staff promotes use of the IAI course articulation information

displayed in Transferology and work with institutions to maintain the integrity of that information. In Fiscal Year 2015, staff in both projects will continue to be vigilant and mindful of the impact the information in one system has on the other and of the benefits to seeking collaborative projects.

Promote sharing of information and collaboration across states: Many of the issues facing Transferology in Illinois also are issues for other states using Transferology. During the current grant period Project staff worked collaboratively with colleagues in Indiana, Oregon, Minnesota, and other states to address these issues. Chief among them is the need for interfaces between Transferology and the many student information systems in use. This collaboration has resulted in a continuing dialog with CollegeSource and others on the development of interfaces with Ellucian (Banner DegreeWorks and Colleague) and PeopleSoft. The primary goal of these collaborations is the development of effective, affordable solutions for all concerned. These efforts will be continued in 2015.

MAINTENANCE

Objective: Maintain the MyCreditsTransfer project infrastructure.

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

A few examples of this include maintenance of institution links, logos, program files, and the restoration of interface functionality between Transferology and institutions' student information systems 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.

Subscription service agreement with CollegeSource: In the previous grant years, MyCreditsTransfer negotiated equitable terms for the subscription service renewal contract with CollegeSource. CollegeSource implemented a small price increase in 2014 for license renewal due to the upgrades and improvements made in the release of Transferology. Staff continues to explore alternate funding sources, as well as institutional and regional alliances to overcome financial obstacles.

Attend users' conference: Attendance and participation at the annual users' conference hosted by CollegeSource benefits the project in many ways, including training workshops and presentations, networking with staff from other states and with CollegeSource staff, receiving status reports on the progress of implementation in other states, and giving and receiving updates from CollegeSource in a face-to-face format. At current funding levels, no funds are available for staff to attend this important event. In the past several years, the MyCreditsTransfer Project Coordinator has served as a presenter at this conference. Since 2011, funding to attend the annual users conference has been provided by the University of Illinois. It is unknown whether this support from the University can continue in 2015.

EVALUATION

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

        Prepare proposal and evaluation materials: Project staff prepare annual evaluation plan activities based on feedback obtained from users, the statewide meeting, members of the Advisory Committee, feedback provided in training and presentation evaluations. The different functionality of Transferology doesn't allow users to append an exit survey as was previously done, so in 2015, MCT staff will explore new methods of receiving feedback directly from users.

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

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

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

        Foster open communication with partner institutions: Project staff foster open communication with partner institutions through the use and maintenance of a listserv; publication of a quarterly newsletter, including a "Feedback Forum" section that encourages reader input; and by participating in CollegeSource Client Forums. Staff will maintain and strive to expand these avenues of communication in 2015.

        Produce self-study: In order to improve the project services, the Transferology system itself, and the products offered to promote Transferology, a self-study will be undertaken at the end of the grant year. Each of the objectives articulated in the grant will be evaluated to determine:

1) Have the specified goals and objectives been achieved?
2) What may have hampered achievement of the goals and objectives?
3) What factors contributed to successful achievement of the goals and objectives?
4) Do the goals and objectives sufficiently address project improvement?
5) What population was served in achievement of the goals and objectives? Was a portion of the intended population not served? If so, why and what will be done to remedy this problem?
6) What new factors were introduced or what changes occurred that were not foreseen? How did these circumstances affect the project? What will be done in the future to respond?

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.* 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. Plans for the near future for IAI and MyCreditsTransfer reflect this commitment.

The process of formalizing the acceptance of the course recommendations of the IAI Major Panels has been an essential part in the continued success of IAI. This plan has attempted to address concerns that have been ongoing with the Major Panel recommendations. IBHE and ICCB staffs have worked with IAI and are dedicated to making sure that there continues to be progress on this issue.

Staff will continue to monitor the findings of independent studies undertaken by institutions of their own transfer students as well as national trends in transfer initiatives. Additionally, as more institutions are available to students on MyCreditsTransfer, a variety of user survey data will 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 such education issues. An important tool for measuring of transfer success requires the implementation of a standard student identifying number (student unit record) that will allow comprehensive tracking of students across sectors and levels from preschool through post-graduate education. 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.

Growing interest is being shown in baccalaureate completion agreements across the state. Although currently unfunded, Public Act 96-0535, which was passed five 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 course descriptors for General Education courses in the Illinois Articulation Initiative were developed by faculty panels and identify an agreed-upon content and level of rigor for lower-division courses. These descriptors are being used as a part of the foundation upon which college-readiness standards are being created and to inform high school curricula as part of Illinois' participation in the Common Core State Standards project and the American Diploma 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.