

If you have questions or comments to add to this document, please forward them to Ellen Furlong at [efurlong@iwu.edu](mailto:efurlong@iwu.edu).

Dear Colleagues,

The Transfer Experience strategic planning work group has been exploring ways that we can make transferring easier for students. Approximately 1/3 of all 4-year public and private college students now transfer at some point during their education and we only have a very small corner of that market: only about 7% of IWU students have transferred here. In general our transfer students do quite well. Transfer students retain at very high levels, generally greater than our traditional first-time, first-year cohorts. Further, there is not much of a gap in satisfaction between transfer and traditional first-year students. Therefore, the Transfer Experience Work Group has determined that the best starting point for our work is to seek ways to make IWU more attractive to transfer students. If we can find a way to do this, it could lead to some significant gains in our revenue without compromising the standards that we have for admitting students<sup>1</sup>.

One thing we could do is to join the Illinois Articulation Initiative (<http://itransfer.org/>). This initiative helps students plan their transfer process by making it easier for them to identify how their existing courses may or may not transfer to a new institution. Over 100 institutions in Illinois are a part of the IAI including many of our peer institutions such as Bradley, DePaul, Elmhurst, Millikin, Knox, and Loyola. Our admissions office reports that the easiest way to recruit transfer students is through developing such articulation agreements that students and their advisors can explore on their own because often by the time it's clear that a student is planning to transfer they have already decided where they will go. Data supports this: private institutions in Illinois that have joined the IAI recruit significantly more transfer students (median: 29% of the student body) than those who have not (median: 12% of the student body).

To join the IAI we need to enter into an articulation agreement with other institutions in the state of Illinois and agree to accept a “package” of IAI general education courses. This package requires 2 writing and 1 speech course; 3 courses in the humanities and fine arts (1 must be from humanities, 1 must be from fine arts, the 3rd may be from either); 1 course in mathematics; 2 courses in the physical and life sciences (1 course from each area, 1 must have a lab); and 3 courses in the social and behavioral sciences (from at least 2 different disciplines). [Further details about the specific descriptions of each of these requirements can be seen here](#). This “packet” of courses is similar to our own general education in some important ways: The Arts and two Natural Science requirements (PSI/L and LSI/L) are explicitly

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<sup>1</sup> In admissions application review for transfer students, we look at high school courses, test scores, and the college transcript. We review transfer students in the same way that we review high school seniors.

represented and we essentially give credit for GW if students have taken two writing composition courses at another institution.

The distribution requirements do pose some potential problems for us as there is not a clear analog between them and our own general education requirements. However, as far as we can tell<sup>2</sup> (1) we have control of which courses can and cannot count for transfer (for example, we could stipulate that courses below Finite Math do not “count” as meeting the FR requirement); and (2) we can have additional requirements (for example, we could still require students meet a diversity flag or take an AV course) that are not reflected here.

One important thing to note here is that the general education package would transfer in as a unit; if students were to transfer before completing their general education requirements outlined here they would not necessarily be able to transfer everything. Joining the IAI would allow students to know what courses would certainly transfer when they come to IWU (though chairs / directors could always do course substitutions to expand this later), and would end up being less work than our current system, in which we evaluate on a case-by-case basis.

We can decide whether to be a full member (such that students who complete these requirements can transfer out of IWU to another participating institution) or whether to just be a receiving member. The benefit of full participation is that students can transfer to us not having completed, say, an associates degree, and can then transfer some units back to their previous institution to allow them to finish that degree. However, most of the students that transfer to us come from 4 year institutions and we imagine the incidence of this will be small enough to be handled on a case by case basis. Thus we believe that at the moment we should join as just a receiving member and not as a full participating member. If we find growing numbers we can decide to join in full at a later date.

We would greatly appreciate your feedback before we move forward in making any formal proposals to the faculty. Below you will find additional questions we have about the IAI, and if you have any other questions we would be happy for you to add them. We will share this document with IAI representatives and discuss these questions at our upcoming meeting.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Ellen Furlong, Michael Thompson, Leslie Betz, Greg King, & Becky Roesner  
The Transfer Experience Work Group

Questions:

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<sup>2</sup> The documentation isn't clear. We are meeting with IAI representatives on 9/24 to confirm.

1. How much does it cost to enter the IAI?
  - a. There is no fee. The only expense would be the labor costs of getting set up / maintaining our affiliation. We expect there to be a great deal of labor initially while we are setting up our affiliation but those labor costs should decrease when we reach maintenance levels.
  - b. For the labor cost - who will perform this labor?
2. Can we decide which classes 'count' and don't count?
  - a. Yes.
3. There is a speech requirement yet we don't have such a course. How would we deal with that in giving general education credit?
  - a. We can count their speech course as an elective.
4. How would Second Language work under the IAI?
  - a. We could maintain our requirements. Some students may come in with credits through the Humanities courses that they have taken at their previous institution. However, they would still need to meet our proficiency at the third semester level requirement.
  - b. How do we determine where transfer students are placed in second language courses? Do they test for placement the way incoming freshmen do or are they placed into a level based on having taken X semesters of language off campus? Are they able to test for proficiency?
  - c. What if (or even is) proficiency at the third semester part of the IAI package?
5. "A student who completes 30 semester credit hours of college level coursework and transfers to an IAI participating institution will be given the option of completing the IAI Gen Ed or the receiving institution's lower-division general education core requirements." – how will this work given that all of our gen ed is not done at the lower division level?
  - a. How is our requirement for 11 300-level courses impacted here? This is not part of the gen ed, but an additional graduation requirement they must meet. Are courses transferred in meeting requirements for 100, 200, 300 level?
  - b. Can we cap the number of upper-level courses that transfer in? Do we want to?
  - c. Just a note - our current gen ed is intentionally structured to ensure that students engage a broad curriculum at all levels (or rather because of the 11 courses required at 300-level in practice this is generally how students engage with our gen ed)
6. What is the process for setting up the IAI and monitoring it? How is the system updated as courses are revised, deleted, or added?
7. If students only complete part of the IAI general education package/requirement, how are their completed courses evaluated? Is it possible that they have completed 6 courses identified as part of the package but only get credit here for a fraction of those?