

ILLINOIS TECH UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

12:45pm

Online via Zoom and In-person in PS-152

(pdf version available here)

Attending Voting Members: Fred Weening (AMAT), Braja Mandal (CHEM), Ishaan Goel (SGA), Patrick Ireland (SSCI), Matthew Bauer (CS), Yuting Lin (BIO), Victor Perez-Luna (CHBE), John Twombly (SSB), Erdal Oruklu (ECE), Erin Hazard (HUM), Eva Kultermann (ARCH), Nicole Legate (PSYC), Emily Leiner (PHYS), Ray Trygstad (ITM), Stephen Kleps (CAEE), Murat Vural (MMAE), Keigo Kawaji (BME),

Chairing Meeting: Kathir Krishnamurthy (FDSN)

Also Attending: Shamiah Okhai (LCSL), Abby McGrath (Enrollment Services), Kathy Nagle (ARCH), Jennifer deWinter (LCSL), Nichole Novak (Libraries), Katie Spink (Pre-Med), Jamshid Mohammadi (VP Faculty Affairs), Jeff Wereszczynski (UFC), Melanie Jones (Armour Academy), Nick Menhart (CCAC), Joy Chong (CHEM), Gabriel Martinez (Armour Academy), Diane Fifles (Univ Accred), Joe Gorzkowski (UGAA), Kyle Hawkins (AMP), Taylor Rojas (UGAA), Kevin Cassel (VP Acad Affairs), Melisa Lopez (Student Success & Retention), Ayesha Qamer (Registrar), Mary Haynes (UGAA), Mary Jorgenson Sullivan (ELS), Gabrielle Smith (UGAA), Katherine Leight (CHEM), Zipporah Robinson (Academic Success), Norma I Scagnoli (VP Learning Initiatives), Georgia Papavasiliou (Armour), Kindon Mills (ARCH), Yuanbing Mao (CHEM), M Kirshna Erramilli (SSB)

Quorum was reached and the meeting was started at 12:47pm

1. Approval of the Meeting agenda. Kathir Krishnamurthy displayed the proposed agenda, he noted that one item had been removed from the previously distributed agenda — the Honors Program proposal (which will be presented at a later meeting), and two items had been added: the Behavioral Health and Wellness program and a minor in Psychology. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Braja Mandal and seconded by Ray Trygstad. The motion passed without objection.
2. Approval of the October 22, 2024 minutes. Joy Chong made a suggestion to change the wording of the sentence in item 5: “Joy, who chaired the curriculum revision committee for chemistry, went into the details of the proposals.” to “A group of four Chemistry faculty members worked on the proposed curriculum revisions. Joy, who led the effort, went into the details of the proposal.” Additionally, Katie Spink noted that she should be listed as representing Pre-med instead of Biology in the list of meeting attendees. Ray Trygstad moved to approve the minutes with these changes. The motion was seconded and approved without objection.
3. IAI Update. Shamiah Okhai gave a [powerpoint presentation](#) of the update. She indicated that not much has changed since the last update. Illinois Tech is still a fully participating member of the Illinois Articulation Initiative which allows students to transfer their associate degrees into 4 year institutions and allows us to be more competitive and provides more access for students to attend Illinois Tech. We are now in ‘maintenance mode’ . We currently have two Illinois Tech members

(Shamiah and Solomon Kang) on IAI panels and there is opportunity for more. If anyone is interested in serving on a panel they should reach out to Shamiah. She indicated that we have some courses coming up for IAI review in Fall of 2025. In particular Shamiah will be working with Hannah Ringler, the director of Communicating Across the Curriculum, to ensure that certain Com courses align more with what is being taught at other institutions. Shamiah also indicated that she is in communication with Illinois Tech's Core Curriculum Revision Committee to make sure that any revisions are in alignment with IAI curriculum.

One big change with Illinois Tech's efforts to maintain IAI full participation is that this effort will be moving from Lewis College Dean's Office to the Office of Academic Affairs. This is intended to allow for better adherence to IAI policies and to provide a more centralized location especially in light of the core curriculum revision proposals that are being worked on. Shamiah will still be involved during the transition period.

Katie Spink had a question regarding whether, in order to be a full participating member, we have to offer the courses in the GECC. Specifically she is wondering about Com 428, a Speech course, which hasn't been offered in a long time. Shamiah responded that she will be working with Hannah Ringler to get this course in alignment with IAI.

Nick Menhart asked for a more direct answer to Katie's question. Do we need to offer Com 428 to be a fully participating member of IAI?

Jennifer deWinter offered an answer: With the course being in the bulletin we are within the letter of the IAI rule, moving toward offering the course will put us within the spirit of the rule. We need to hire appropriately to ensure that we are able to offer every course needed for IAI on a regular basis. In Lewis College, we have asked that every department come up with a 5-year course rotation plan with consideration to IAI requirements.

Nick also wanted to mention that IAI rules can also influence our course learning objectives in the Core Curriculum. Currently we are revising the third learning objective for (N) courses and, in part, this revision is being driven by meeting one of IAI's requirements relating to the relevance of courses.

4. The next agenda item concerned the title of ex-officio members of the UGSC. The item was presented by UFC chair, Jeff Wereszczynski, Jeff indicated that GSC is in the process of restructuring some of the ways that it functions and is looking at the language in the faculty handbook regarding its charge. One of the items in the handbook lists specifically who are the ex-officio members of GSC. GSC has decided that they would like to make this much less prescriptive and leave what offices are ex-officio to GSC to be decided in an ad-hoc fashion reviewed on a period basis. He suggested that UGSC might want to consider doing the same thing, since currently there is a long list of offices some of which no longer exist.

Kevin Cassel pointed out that it is a good idea to get some of this prescriptive language out of the handbook, since getting changes made to the handbook involves a long process.

Nick Menhart asked for a clarification of what exactly it means for someone to be listed as ex-officio. Jeff responded that it confers a degree of responsibility for that person to show up to the meetings and give input to the discussions when appropriate.

5. The next agenda item was from the Chemistry department. The chair of the department, Yaunbing Mao, presented the item. He indicated that his department voted in the Fall of 2023 to change three specializations into concentrations. The specializations were:
- Environmental Chemistry,
 - Forensic Chemistry, and
 - Medicinal Chemistry

He also wanted to revise the curriculum proposal change that UGSC approved for Chemistry at the last UGSC meeting. He indicated that the Chemistry department is still working on those changes.

Joy Chong, who made the presentation at the last UGSC meeting, disputed this account and said that there had been two special meetings of the Chemistry department concerning that proposal and that at the second meeting there was a vote: a majority of the Chemistry faculty approved putting forth the proposal. Joy described the previously presented proposal in detail and the motivations for the items in the proposal. She said that the concentration item that Yuanbing is now proposing is still under discussion.

Yuanbing said that he wanted to keep the discussion here simple and indicated that at the beginning of the Spring 2024 semester the Chemistry department had a full discussion and the majority of the department voted to turn the three specializations into concentrations.

Joy again disputed this account and went into details of what she said had occurred.

Kathir Krishnamurthy halted the debate between Joy and Yuanbing and said that this is taking too much time in today's UGSC meeting. He asked that the Chemistry department work on coming to a consensus internally and, hopefully, make a presentation at the next UGSC meeting.

6. The next agenda item concerned a change to the BS in Biochemistry Program and was presented by Nick Menhart. Nick reviewed the history of how the program has evolved a bit: Biology and Chemistry were at one time in a single department, but are now separate departments. In the separation process, Biology took control of the Biochemistry program because the faculty who taught the major courses in the program were pretty much all Biology faculty. Later, the Chemistry department wanted to get involved in the program and Biology thought this was a good idea. Last year the program was transferred into an interdisciplinary status by vote of UGSC, UFC, and the two departments.

Now an interdisciplinary committee from these two departments is proposing some curriculum changes to get the program down to 120 credits. Also, it is being proposed that two other low enrollment interdisciplinary programs:

- Computational Biochemistry, and
- Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry

be turned into specializations of the Biochemistry program. Nick provided [a link for the proposal in CIM](#) and summarized the main changes:

- The Biology requirements have been reduced by one class. Microbiology was removed from being a required course and is now eligible to be a technical elective. There are now 24 required credits in Biology
- The Chemistry requirements also have been reduced by one class. Analytical Chemistry has been removed. There are 24 required credits in Chemistry remaining.

- Some of the courses in the list of allowed elective Biology or Chemistry choices have been changed. As well as the list of lab courses that students are allowed to take to meet the program's lab requirements.
- There are now 5 specializations in the program including Computational Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry which were previously their own programs.

Nick asked for questions:

Katie Spink pointed out a discrepancy in the list of Biology courses that will factor into the GPA for the major and the list of required Biology courses. Nick thanked Katie for noticing that and indicated that he will fix that discrepancy.

Joe Gorzkowski asked Nick if he wanted all Biology and Chemistry courses to factor into the GPA for the major, or just the ones on the list. Nick asked Joe what is considered best practices by Academic Affairs and Joe responded that most departments list all 100 - 499 courses as counting toward GPA in the major. By doing it this way, if new courses are created they will automatically be entered into GPA for the major while if only specific courses are listed then the program needs to be revised if you want the new course to be part of the major GPA. Joe also explained how you can enter this into CIM and that it is much less work than specifying courses individually.

As this was the first reading of this proposal, it won't be considered for a vote until the next UGSC meeting.

7. The next agenda item was presented by Nikki Legate. There were two proposals:
 - A change in CIP code for the BS in Behavioral Health and Wellness program. The change will make it a STEM code which will have the benefit of giving international students an additional year of eligibility for internships. This also brings this program into alignment with other degrees in Psychology which have STEM CIP codes. This was viewed as an informational item; no vote was taken.
 - A change to the Minor in Psychology in which the requirement of one of the specific classes PSYC 203/320 is removed and replaced by any 300+ PSYC course. This will give students more flexibility and should enable more students to get the PSYC minor.

Katie Spink pointed out that she advises many students in Biology that get this minor. Currently they can double count PSYC 203 both for the minor and also to meet a statistics requirement of the Biology major. So taking PSYC 203 out of the minor will actually make it harder for these students to get the PSYC minor. She recommended that the change be worded as "PSYC 203 or any PSYC 300+ class". Nikki said that this was a good point, and that they will change the proposal to still allow PSYC 203. Ray Trygstad commented that this is the most popular minor for ITM students and they also recommend that students take PSYC 203 to double count for the minor and as a statistics requirement.

Gabe Smith wondered if there was any data on what course (BUS 221, PSYC 203, or MATH 225) non-stem major students are taking to meet a statistics requirement for their majors. Are there any lopsided enrollments in any of these courses? Should we be advising students more toward one of these courses? Does the demand for these courses possibly make it difficult for students within the major to get into the class? Nikki indicated that she didn't have enrollment data with her regarding PSYC 203, but that it is

routine that the course has a waitlist and that the max enrollment cap is frequently increased. She thought that this proposal should reduce the enrollment demand of PSYC 203 a bit since now students who don't need to meet a statistics requirement have other courses they can take to satisfy the minor.

The meeting had to be brought to an end as the time was 12:47 and a class was coming into the room. Voting on the proposed change to the PSYC minor was postponed to a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:48