

ILLINOIS TECH UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 24, 2024
12:45pm

Online via Zoom and In-person in PS-152

Attending Voting Members: Ishaan Goel (SGA), Keigo Kawaji (BME), Matthew Bauer (CS), Eva Kultermann (ARCH), Nicole Legate (PSYC), Mary Jorgenson Sullivan (ELS), Erin Hazard (HUM), James Mann (INTM), David Gidalevitz (PHYS), Erdal Oruklu (ECE), Melanie Jones (Armour Academy), Yuting Lin (Bio), John Twombly (SSB), Stephen Kleps (CAEE), Ben Zion (CHEM), Victor Perez-Luna (CHBE), Murat Vural (MMAE), Ray Trygstad (ITM), Patrick Ireland (SSCI)

Chairing Meeting: Fred Weening (AMAT)

Also Attending: Pam Houser (INTM), Abby McGrath (Enrollment Services), Kyle Hawkins (AMP), Jamshid Mohammadi (VP Faculty Affairs), Joe Gorzkowski (UGAA), Diane Fifies (Univ Accred), Gabrielle Smith (UGAA), Gabriel Martinez (Armour Academy), Nichole Novak (Libraries), Kindon Mills (ARCH), Melisa Lopez (Student Success & Retention), Jesse Mosqueda (UGAA), Georgia Papavasiliou (Armour), Zipporah Robinson (Academic Success), Jennifer DeWinter (LCSL), Fareine Suarez (Undergraduate Admissions), Taylor Rojas (UGAA), Carly Kocurek (LCSL), Katie Spink (BIOL), Jacob Thomas (student), Kathy Nagle (ARCH), Rama Sashank Madhurapantula (BIOL), Ayesha Qamer (Registrar)

Quorum was reached and the meeting was started at 12:49pm

1. Approval of [September 10, 2024 minutes](#). There was one correction to the minutes: The title/affiliation of Jamshir Mohammadi had been listed as (GSC), but he is now VP for Faculty Affairs. With this correction a motion to accept the minutes was made by Ben Zion and seconded by Ishaan Goel. The motion passed unanimously (14-0).
2. The next item on the agenda was informational. Fred Weening indicated that last semester the (S) subcommittee reviewed and recommended the following courses for the (S) designation:
 - SSCI 342 (Criminal Justice Policy), and
 - SSCI 357 (Race and Public Policy)

This designation has now been approved by UGSC in CIM.

3. Nominations for chair of (N) subcommittee. This item is a follow-up from our meeting in which Nick Menhart explained the urgency of having an (N) subcommittee chair. Fred Weening called for volunteers from the UGSC reps from departments teaching (N) courses. No volunteers were forthcoming. Fred followed up with a description of the duties of the (N) chair and indicated that the chair of the subcommittee need not be a UGSC member. Mary Jorgenson Sullivan further underlined the importance of having a chair as there is business stemming from the revised learning objective in (N) that cannot move forward until there is an (N) subcommittee chair. Fred encouraged faculty to talk to their (N) colleagues to try to find someone appropriate and willing to serve as chair. He indicated that if there are no volunteers, then we may need to assign a chair.
4. Nominations for Vice Chair (or secretary) of UGSC. This also is a follow-up item from our last meeting. Fred Weening asked for nominations, but none were forthcoming. He mentioned that he had conversations with Steve Klepps who might be willing but is concerned about scheduling conflicts he has making it hard for him to be present at the start and end of our meetings. He also mentioned that in recent years the leadership of UGSC has come from departments in Lewis College and the College of Computing, and so it would be appropriate for someone not in those colleges to step forward. There were still no volunteers; we will address this again at the next UGSC meeting.

5. Melisa Lopez gave a presentation on a new advising tool called [EAB Navigate 360](#). She discussed several features of the program and indicated that they are trying to get all advisors to use this tool in time for student registration for next semester's courses. Matt Bauer indicated that he has been using it and although it takes some time and effort to learn, there are lots of nice features including giving students automatic reminders about appointments, a convenient place to write notes, keeping statistics on student attendance to appointments, and running "campaigns" where you can set various criteria (such as on probation) and find all you advisees meeting that criteria. There were many questions regarding this tool and how to access the tool and what other capabilities the tool would provide. One additional feature that Abby McGrath pointed out was that the system can send text messages to students (provided the student authorizes this in the system). Melisa said that she would be happy to meet with anyone individually or to come to department meetings to answer questions. She also indicated that there is an online training video available; here is a link to the training video: <waiting to hear back from Melisa with a link>

All UGSC reps should inform their department members of this tool as it will become the standard tool for advising at Illinois Tech. It is imperative that faculty advisors have their calendars synchronized with this system by the time of Fall advising. If advisors don't currently have access to this tool they should contact Melisa (lopez@iit.edu) so that she can get them access.

6. David Gidalevitz presented the next item on the agenda which were proposals to reduce the number of required credit hours for both the BS in Physics program and the BS in AstroPhysics program to 120 credits. In the BS in AstroPhysics program the [proposal](#) is to remove one required course (Classical Mechanics II) and one technical elective; while in the Physics program the [proposal](#) is to remove one math elective and one technical elective. There was a motion to approve the proposals by Ben Zion which was seconded by Ray Trygstad. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 18-0.
7. The next item, [a proposal for an Illinois Tech Honors Program](#), was presented by Carly Kocurek. She summarized the 18-page proposal with a [slide presentation](#). The program complements current activities on campus. Successful completion of the program will be recognized by students receiving a special cord at graduation and a certificate stating that they graduated with honors (note that this is different from the summa cum laude and magna cum laude honors which are based solely on GPA). The structure of the program entails assigning point values for student involvement in various activities. Students must amass a minimum number of points each semester, produce a high quality honors project under supervision (not necessarily by faculty), and have a minimum final GPA of 3.0. Students must also be accepted into the honors program and the proposal details how this can occur for in-coming students, current students, and transfer students.

Eva Kultermann asked Carly if she had a sense of what percent of students would take part in the honors program and what this would mean in terms of faculty responsibilities. Carly responded that the committee putting together the proposal did look quite a bit into the faculty workload to support this program. She mentioned that the percentage 25% of the student population comes to mind, but that this may not be the correct number. As far as faculty responsibilities she noted that many of the activities are already things that faculty are doing, and also that supervision of projects needs to be initiated by the student; students would not be randomly assigned to faculty.

Kindon Mills asked whether projects that students complete as part of their degree program could be used to fulfill the honors project requirement. Carly responded that the honors project would need to be a separate project and that honors projects are not projects done for academic credit. She also pointed out that, in general, the honors project need not be tied to the student's major and can be community based so not all the work has to be absorbed by the departments or majors.

Eva Kultermann indicated that she had read through the proposal carefully and was impressed with the thoroughness of the document. She did want to point out that some programs, such as architecture, are

5-year programs and so the sample student timelines provided don't actually match up. Carly indicated that in this situation the honors project could be done in either the 4th or 5th year.

Fred Weening asked what is needed from UGSC with regard to the proposal. Jennifer deWinter (also on the development committee of the proposal) responded that to move forward UGSC needs to recommend that UFC consider the proposal. After a bit of discussion, it was agreed that UGSC reps should take the proposal back to their departments for input and that UGSC would vote on recommending the proposal at our next meeting.

There were a few other questions and answers including:

- Was the proposal designed with student input? (yes, throughout the process)
- What besides the certificate do students get from completing the program? (it can be used as part of a students portfolio of achievements, something that many employers and graduate schools look for is whether students can initiate and finish things that aren't requirements for graduation).

8. Other business: There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:39pm