ILLINOIS TECH UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday November 25, 2025
12:45pm
Online via Zoom
(pdf version available [here](#))

Attending Voting Members: Braja Mandal (CHEM), Erdal Oruklu (ECE), Victor Perez-Luna (CHBE), Promila Dhar (BME), Erin Hazard (HUM), John Twombly (SSB), Patrick Ireland (SSCI), Jeremy Hajek (ITM), Kindon Mills (ARCH), Emily Leiner (PHYS), Nicole Legate (PSYC), Fred Weening (AMAT), Matthew Bauer (CS), Andy Howard (BIOL), Stephen Kleps (CAEE)

Chairing Meeting: Kathir Krishnamurthy

Also Attending: Taylor Rojas (UGAA), Todd Diel (FDSN), Katherine Quiroa (UGAA), Mary Haynes (UGAA), Kelly Roark (CLI), Zipporah Robinson (Academic Success), Daniel Bliss (HASS), Yasmin Rodriguez-Escutia (Armour Acad Advisor), Kathy Nagle (ARCH), Ishaan Goel (Student), Nick Menhart (VP Assessment and Accreditation), Joe Gorzkowski (UGAA), Tracey McGee (ELS), Kevin Cassel (VP Acad Affairs), Melanie Jones (Armour Acad Advisor), Keigo Kawaji (Armour), Norma Scagnoli (CLI), Nicole Novak (Libraries), Mary Jorgenson Sullivan (ELS), Ayesha Qamer (Registrar), Katie Spink (Pre-Med), Diane Fifles (Univ Accred), Carly Kocurek (LCS), Rich Klein (SSB), Kyle Hawkins (AMP), Brian Casario (ELS), Gabrielle Smith (UGAA)

Quorum was reached and the meeting was started at 12:46pm

1. Approval of the proposed meeting agenda. Kathir Krishnamurthy shared the [proposed agenda](#). Kindon Mills moved to accept the agenda and this was seconded by Matt Bauer. Kathir asked if there were any additional items or other changes to be made; there were none. The motion passed without objection or abstention.

2. Approval of Meeting minutes. The minutes for the UGSC meeting on [November 11, 2025](#) were displayed. These had previously been made available on the UGSC website. Jeremy Hajek moved to approve the minutes and this was seconded by Matt Bauer. The motion passed without objection or abstention.

3. Kathir indicated that the next item concerned voting on two items which were discussed at the last UGSC meeting.
   a. The [C-designation core curriculum assessment report](#)

      Mary Jorgenson Sullivan gave a brief re-cap of the findings and recommendations in the report and asked if there were any questions; there

were none. Matt Bauer moved to accept the report and this was seconded by Kindon Mills. The motion passed without objection or abstention.

b. The [Core pilot framework](#)

Nick Menhart indicated that the document had been updated based on some of the feedback from the last meeting. There had been some confusion last time with the names of the courses proposed to be piloted since these names and the course designations had changed over time. To clear this up, he added some tables to the document which list
   ○ the specific course offerings in Spring 2026 that would be in the pilot,
   ○ the potential eventual designation of the course if it is eventually made part of the core curriculum, and
   ○ the core accommodation that would be given to students (i.e., the area that students taking the course in Spring 2026 would be deemed to have satisfied).
There was also one typo corrected in which Fall 27 was corrected to Fall 26. Kathir asked if there were any questions for Nick.

Andy Howard asked if it is the case that neither of the two communications courses had an oral communication component. Nick responded that these classes were primarily focused on written communication.

Erin Hazard indicated that she wasn't able to attend the November 11 UGSC meeting, and so instead supplied some feedback from Humanities, Arts, and Social Science (HASS) department to Nick directly and wanted to make sure that this feedback, along with some additional feedback she's providing today, makes it into the minutes. She noted that as the representative from HASS she represents the faculty for which this proposal has the greatest impact. She has received a lot of feedback from the faculty in the HASS department.

Erin made several points:
   ○ The HASS faculty recognizes the work done on this proposal and is in agreement with the overall spirit of revising the core. The proposal to allow classes in the core to also count to satisfy a student's major requirements is supported by the HASS faculty.
   ○ There are concerns and questions about the specific communications courses to be piloted:
      ➢ Where are these classes coming from?
      ➢ Who designed these classes?
      ➢ Before the merger of the Humanities department into HASS, the Humanities department had proposed to transform

Humanities 200 into three separate areas. One looking at communicating data, one looking at communicating ethics, and one looking at communicating design and visual communication. We don't know what happened to that plan. It seems it has been replaced by a course about AI.

➢ Having one fundamental writing class that's required of students that deals with AI likely will become dated. It would be like if the original designers of the core curriculum had designed a class about the information superhighway.

➢ The AI communications course also restricts student interest to that of communicating about data and technology.

➢ The AI communications course does not reflect the expertise of the HASS department's faculty.

➢ Are the learning objectives supplied in the pilot, course-specific to the AI communications course, or are they meant to replace the C, H, and S learning objectives?

➢ We have not seen syllabi for these courses. We don't understand how assessment will be used to assess the success of the classes.

○ The faculty in HASS support revision of the core curriculum, but this pilot proposal seems rushed.

○ As the plan currently stands, and as the representative of the department which it really impacts, and given what I've heard from my colleagues, I can't support the plan.

Kathir asked Nick if he wanted to respond to any of these points. Nick indicated that Kevin Cassel, as co-chair of the revisions committee, might know more about the origins of these courses. Nick offered to talk about the assessment plan after Kevin had talked about the courses.

Kevin commented that it is important to keep in mind that this is a pilot proposal, this is not proposing to make any changes to the core curriculum. The fact that the proposal would give students in the pilot credit for the H/S swing course is just to give an accommodation to students in the pilot, not to indicate that this would be how we envision the core to be revised. He also indicated that he views the purpose of a pilot proposal is to push the boundaries a little bit so that we can better learn what works and what doesn't. Any permanent changes to the core would be discussed over a longer time period and certainly more with those that are impacted the most from a teaching perspective.

Kindon Mills commented that she echoes everything that Erin said. This feels very rushed. The very notion that we are voting on the pilot program after the program

has been implemented and students can register for the courses, feels problematic. She also expressed concern that HASS did not design these courses, and that there are not adequate control groups to measure how these courses would affect students from different departments. She indicated that as the representative from the College of Architecture she also could not support the current proposal.

Kevin added one more response to Erin's points. He indicated that the COM courses, as well as the design course, did come from their respective units. The course descriptions and names of the COM courses did come from Lewis College.

Erin responded by drawing the distinction between the College (Lewis) and the academic unit (HASS). She also mentioned that the former communications director, Hannah Ringler (who left the university this past summer), had been working on a pilot course for the past two years and HASS doesn't know what happened to that course.

Carly Kocurek indicated that her understanding is that the syllabus for the AI communications course is from Hannah's pilot course. Kevin agreed that the current AI communications course was an outgrowth from the course that Hannah had been working on.

Daniel Bliss suggested that a better title for the course would be along the lines of media, data, and information. This would be more open-ended in terms of a pitch.

Nick discussed some of the points Erin raised regarding assessment by going through specific items written in the piloting framework document. In particular he showed the impact analysis portion of the document, in which there is to be a follow up with students in the pilot program to gauge what the loss of HUM 200 is to the students achievement of (H) learning objectives in future (H) classes that the students take. He agreed with Kevin's earlier remark that the best course of action is to pilot the courses and see what happens. He also pointed out what is at stake if the proposal is voted down: students registered for these two COM classes would not get to meet any of the requirements of the core by passing these classes. Getting core credit could be petitioned on a case-by-case basis with academic affairs, but this is not an optimal process.

Daniel Bliss asked for clarification as to what the approval of this proposal would accomplish. Is it just so that students taking these classes would get some credits counting towards the core?

Nick responded that yes, that is exactly what the proposal would do. He also noted that it would create a framework by which other courses could be piloted in the core in the future.

Kevin followed-up this point to clarify further: The pilot itself doesn't need UGSC approval, what needs UGSC approval is that students participating in the pilot will get credit in core areas for these courses in the pilot. He asked that members of UGSC base their vote on the proposal not on whether they believe this is the perfect pilot, but on whether they believe that useful information will come out of this pilot to help us revise the core in the future.

Nick added that he fully understands the concerns that have been raised about this happening in a rushed manner. He indicated that he doesn't like that it is being rushed and neither does Kevin, but that these classes are going to happen in the spring. They were going to happen in a non-consultive process with UGSC; the pilot framework proposal is an effort to bring some sort of transparency and collaboration with UGSC and the faculty in general.

Kindon said she understood Nick's point, but indicated that the College Architecture won't be able to assess how these courses affect their students in the spring because there won't be any Architecture students in these classes in the spring.

Nick indicated that for the class offered in Fall 2026, there should be a way to reserve seats so that all colleges have some minimum number of students in these courses. But the pilot is going to get underway starting in Spring 2026.

Kindon responded by indicating that the scenario in which this is going to happen no matter what, so why don't you just vote for it is not the right way to involve UGSC in the conversation.

Matt Bauer asked how these courses were advertised to students. Were they told that they would get credit for core requirements if they took these courses? If the proposal is voted down, do we need to contact the students to let them know that they will only count as free electives? He also expressed his shock that Humanities wasn't involved in the creation of these classes.

Kevin responded that students weren't told of any substitutions since this is still just a proposal at UGSC. And to Matt's second point, the AI communications course started with Hannah Ringler's pilot course and was constructed by people from within Lewis College, so it's not quite fair to say that there was no involvement from Humanities.

Kathir pointed out that there are other items on the agenda he would like to get to and asked if perhaps we could vote on this at the next meeting.

As a point of order, Kevin indicated that a vote would need to take place to postpone the scheduled vote to a later date.

Nick asked if there was another UGSC meeting scheduled this semester. Kathir said no, but he would be willing to schedule a special meeting.

Kathir asked if there was a motion. There were two competing motions, one to table the discussion and have a vote at the next meeting and one to vote on the proposal now. Kathir first took up the motion to table the discussion which had been moved by John Twombly and seconded by Nicole Legate.

Andy Howard said he supported tabling the discussion and voting at a later date even if it means calling a special meeting. He expressed that it is important to get further discussion within departments.

A show of hands vote was taken on the motion. The motion passed 10-3 with no abstentions.

4. The next item concerned proposals to eliminate three co-terminal pairing degrees:

    a. [Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering/Master of Food Process Engineering](#)
    b. [Bachelor of Science in Biology/Master of Food Safety and Technology](#)
    c. [Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry/Master of Food Safety and Technology](#)

Todd Diehl explained that the Food Science and Nutrition department made some major changes to their graduate program earlier this year. They took their Professional Master's programs and rolled them into their Master's of Science program. So these three co-terminal programs each involve Professional Master's programs that no longer exist. Once these programs are eliminated, the plan is to make new co-terminal programs in their place.

Kathir noted that since these are elimination proposals, they will be voted on at the next UGSC meeting.

5. The next three items concerned proposals from Carly Kocurek.

    ○ [Illinois Tech Accelerated bachelor's degree proposal](#)

- ○ [Undergraduate enrollment in graduate courses - policy update](#)
- ○ [Accelerated master's program - policy update](#)

Carly indicated that although these three documents are written as proposals, for now she would like to treat these as discussion items. As the meeting time was running short, she briefly introduced these documents and asked that we get input from our academic units and have some discussions at future meetings which may lead to refining the proposals and an eventual vote.

Regarding the accelerated bachelor's degree document, she explained that our accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), and most other accrediting bodies in the United States have begun recognizing and approving 3-year Bachelor's programs that are 90 credits. She asked if we should consider creating such a program. The document linked above describes the HLC criteria and also gives an example comparing the existing Bachelor's in Game Design and Experiential Media program and what an accelerated version of that program might look like.

Nick mentioned that he has a document entitled something like: "Regulatory and Accreditation Concerns with regard to Sub-120 Degree Bachelor's Degrees" that he will share with the committee. He indicated that he thinks we should be thinking about doing this for certain degree programs, but he wants to make sure that it is done in an effective fashion.

Concerning the undergraduate enrollment in graduate courses document, she indicated that currently the policy is for undergraduate courses to count in a graduate program; she wants to consider the reverse: graduate courses counting toward an undergraduate program. She also noted that our policies seem a little dated and out of step with peer institutions. The document provided gives some benchmarks of other institutions' policies in this regard.

In the document on our policy regarding approvals required for undergraduates to take graduate level courses, she pointed out that we require undergraduates to get approval from both the course instructor and the student's academic advisor unless the student is in a co-terminal program. She indicated that this is requiring more approvals than some of our peer institutions, and may be putting undue burden on our students.

6. The next agenda item was a [proposal to place a time limit on how late grade appeals can be requested](#). Joe Gorzkowski indicated that this proposal was constructed because there had been a case this semester in which someone was requesting a grade change from a course taken 22 years ago. The proposal is to make the time limit the same as the time limit that a student is required to make up a grade of incomplete. For courses this Fall, that would mean that grade appeals need to be requested by February 23, 2026. Students can appeal the deadline, and if there are extenuating circumstances such appeals would likely be granted.

Kathir asked if there were any questions for Joe; there were none. Kathir indicated that since we are running short on time, a vote on this proposal would be taken at the first meeting of next semester.

7. The next item [concerned a standardized university-wide course numbering system policy](#).

   Daniel Bliss displayed the document and gave some of the rationale for having such a policy:
   - Making it easier for students to transfer into the university
   - Making it lower risk for first year students to apply here
   - Improving the time to graduation

   He explained that currently there are situations where a 100 level course in one department might be equivalent to a 200 (or even 300) level course in another department. This is a problem for compliance with regulations, accreditation, and for membership in the Illinois Articulation Initiative. Today, this document is given purely for discussion purposes. He encouraged everyone to take this to the academic units for feedback.

8. Other Business. There was no other business.

   Kindon Mills moved that the meeting be adjourned and this was seconded by Jeremy Hajek. There was no objection.

   The meeting adjourned at 1:53 pm.