

ILLINOIS TECH UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday April 14, 2026
12:45pm
Online via Zoom
(pdf version available [here](#))

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

Chairing Meeting: Kathir Krishnamurthy

Also Attending: Taylor Rojas (UGAA), Nicole Beebe (Dean COC), Katherine Quiroa (UGAA), Zipporah Robinson (Academic Success), Melisa Lopez (Student Success & Retention), Kiah Ong (AMAT), Nicole Novak (Libraries), Nick Menhart (VP Assessment and Accreditation), Joe Gorzkowski (UGAA), Gabrielle Smith (UGAA), Michael Arnaudo (Armour Acad Advisor), Kevin Cassel (VP Acad Transformation), Melanie Jones (Armour Acad Advisor), Jennifer deWinter (Dean LCS), Norma Scagnoli (CLI), Mary Jorgenson Sullivan (ELS), Keith Alexander (UGAA), Ayesha Qamer (Registrar), Katie Spink (Pre-Med), Pam Houser (INTM), Carrie Hall (Armour), Brian Casario (ELS), Kathy Nagle (ARCH), Kyle Hawkins (AMP), Diane Fifles (Univ Accred)

A quorum was reached and the meeting started at 12:48 pm.

1. Approval of the proposed meeting agenda. Kathir Krishnamurthy shared the [proposed agenda](#) which had been previously distributed. Andy Howard moved to accept the agenda and Matt Bauer seconded the motion. The motion to accept the agenda as presented passed without objection or abstention.
2. Approval of Meeting minutes. The minutes for the UGSC meeting on [March 24, 2026](#) had previously been made available on the UGSC website. Victor Perez-Luna moved to accept the minutes and this was seconded by Andy Howard. The motion passed without objection or abstention.
3. The next item was a call for nominations for officers for UGSC for the 26-27 academic year. Kathir indicated that he would like to receive nominations for the positions of chair, vice-chair, and secretary. Members can self-nominate or nominate someone else for these positions.

Kathir described the roles and responsibilities of each of these positions. He indicated that the position of chair is actually not an elected position, but rather the chair is appointed by UFC. In practice UGSC votes on a recommendation for its chair, and

forwards this recommendation to UFC. In the past, UFC has always appointed the chair that UGSC recommends and it is expected that this precedent will continue this year.

The responsibilities of the chair position include setting the meeting agendas, providing members with necessary documents prior to meetings, running the meetings, making reports of UGSC activities to UFC, and presenting these reports at UFC meetings. The chair also makes approvals of proposals in the UGSC CIM queue as they are approved at UGSC meetings. There is a second, separate CIM queue for approval of course letter designations that is also the chair's responsibility: the chair makes these approvals at the determination of the letter designation committees. The chair is not a voting member of UGSC, the chair is meant to be impartial. The academic department that the chair belongs to may elect another representative who attends UGSC meetings and has voting rights.

The vice-chair is the least time consuming office of UGSC. During most weeks there is no time commitment at all. The responsibility of the vice-chair is to serve as a substitute for the chair if the chair is unable to perform their duties at any given time.

The secretary writes the meeting minutes and maintains the UGSC's website. Maintenance of the website includes posting new documents, linking these documents into meeting agendas and meeting minutes. Minutes need to be written in a timely fashion so that the chair can make their report to the UFC. Usually this means that minutes should be written within a time period of one week after a meeting has occurred. The secretary can also chair a meeting if neither the chair nor the vice-chair are able to do so.

Traditionally, all three of these positions have been held by members of UGSC. Although there is no stipulation within the faculty handbook nor the UGSC SOP requiring that these positions be filled by UGSC members.

Kathir indicated that we would vote on nominations for these positions at the April 28 UGSC meeting.

Katie Spink commented that she thinks it is important for the chair and vice-chair to have some previous UGSC experience. Also, since UGSC is part of Illinois Tech's faculty governance committees she expressed her belief that these positions should be held by faculty members. She also asked if the current vice-chair, Steve Kleps, was planning on nominating himself for chair (as has been the tradition at UGSC).

Fred Weening mentioned that when Steve accepted the role of vice-chair he specifically indicated that he was not going to nominate for chair at the end of his term.

Andy Howard asked if there were any rules concerning whether someone could succeed themselves in any of these offices. Fred Weening replied that there weren't any restrictions in this regard. Nick Menard confirmed this in the meeting chat.

Fred Weening also mentioned that he was not planning on being at IIT in the Fall, and so won't be self-nominating for any of these positions. Kathir expressed that we really need volunteers and indicated that he would be happy to have individual discussions about these positions individually with anyone. Fred also mentioned that he would be happy to help anyone acclimate to these positions while he is still at IIT.

4. The next agenda item concerned multiple information items. Kathir described each of these.
 - a. At our last UGSC meeting (March 24, 2026), we had voted in approval of a proposal, classified as a major change, to combine multiple tracks of the BS in BioMedical Engineering program into a single track. Within this proposal, there was language that eliminated the currently existing three tracks. Kathir wanted to include the elimination of these three tracks explicitly into minutes. The three tracks that are being eliminated (by virtue of being combined into a single track) are
 - [BS-BME-CTE : Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering: Cell and Tissue Engineering Track](#)
 - [BS-BME-MEDI : Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering: Medical Imaging Track](#)
 - [BS-BME/MAS-BMI : Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering/Master of Biomedical Imaging and Signals](#)

There is no need for a further vote on these eliminations, it was part of the proposal that was passed at the last meeting.
 - b. When the recent course renumbering was implemented, the core letter designations (H, C, and S) for HASS and Psychology courses were accidentally removed. As there were no changes to the programs and courses, UGSC and UFC leadership agreed to have these designations added back to the courses administratively (i.e., without going through the official CIM workflow). There are no changes to the courses, this is just to fix the previous error of removing the letter designations.
 - c. Updating course numbers on sample curriculum: Change in the core course numbering resulted in updating course numbers on sample curriculum. As there were no changes to the programs and courses, UGSC and UFC leadership agreed to have these corrected at the backend and provide this update for record keeping purposes.

Fred Weening commented that his understanding with regard to item c. above is that individual departments are going to have to go into CIM to make the updates within the sample curriculum. This will not be occurring automatically or just administratively.

Note: after consulting with the registrar's office after this UGSC meeting, here is the procedure: Departments will have to make the changes they need (to update references to courses that now have new numbers), save these changes in CIM as a draft,

but do not click on the save and submit button within CIM.

They should send an email to Ayesha Qamer (aqamer@illinoistech.edu) with a list of the programs for which they have made these "save as draft" types of changes. Ayesha will then be able to implement these changes without having the changes go through all the CIM workflow steps.

5. The next item was on a [proposal to eliminate the Bachelor of Science in Information Communication & Data Visualization program](#). Erin Hazard stepped in to present in place of Saran Ghatak who wasn't able to be at the meeting.

Erin explained that a new Communications program major was approved a few meetings ago, and this proposal was to now end the old program. Fred Weening asked Erin if she knew if there were any students in the program up for elimination. Erin said she didn't know for sure, but if there are any students in the program it would be a very small number. Nick Menhart commented that he has seen the proposal in CIM and everything in the proposal is well in order.

Kathir indicated that, since program elimination is considered a major change, we will vote on this proposal at the next meeting.

6. The next agenda item was a [proposal](#) to consolidate the "biotechnology" and the "biomedical engineering" specialization into a single "bioengineering" specialization within the Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering program. Victor Perez-Luna made the presentation.

Victor explained the current listing of two specializations dates back many years ago before there was a Biomedical Engineering department. It does not seem right to offer a specialization in a subject area of a separate department.

In the proposal, the two 9-credit sub-specializations listed in the program (biotechnology and biomedical engineering within the Bioengineering specialization) are removed and now it is just called a 9-credit Bioengineering specialization (with no sub-specializations). There is a minor change to core (i.e., main) course requirements of the program. The core program requires students to take either CHEM 344 (Physical Chemistry 2) or BIOL 403 (Biochemistry). If a student intends to take the Bioengineering specialization,

then they are going to be required to take the BIOL 403 course (and not the physical chemistry 2 course). Other than that there is no change to the core.

The choices students have for the 9 credits for the Bioengineering specialization are an updated list of choices from what students had to choose from previously. The choices no longer include courses that would be desired for a biomedical engineering perspective, but include some other options instead. For instance, there are now two subject specific statistics courses, although students are only allowed to count one of these two courses to the specialization.

Katie Spink had a couple of questions / comments:

1. She wanted to confirm that students who intended to get the new Bioengineering specialization would be required to take the biochemistry course in their core (and not the physical chemistry 2 course). Victor agreed with Katie's description; Katie then pointed out that the CIM document doesn't make this requirement clear.
2. She asked if there is a reason why the new specialization is giving only the option of BIOL 414 (Genetics for Engineering students) instead of BIOL 214 (Genetics) or BIOL 414 as is listed in the current specializations. This is pertinent because the Biology department is considering eliminating the BIOL 414 course due to low enrollments.

Victor thanked Katie for her comments and asked if he should revise and resubmit the proposal to address these concerns. Fred Weening suggested that it might make more sense to vote on the proposal as presented and then submit a new proposal at a later date to make changes that would address Katie's concerns. Otherwise none of the other changes in the proposal would be implemented until probably sometime next semester. The Biology 214 / 414 concern is just one course in a list of options that students can choose from.

Kindon Mills moved to accept the proposal and Fred Weening seconded the motion. The motion passed with no objection nor abstention.

7. The next item concerned Reduced Credit Hours Bachelor's degree proposals. There was [a proposal of a general policy](#), and [a specific proposal for a reduced credit hour Bachelor's degree in the area of Health Sciences](#). Jennifer de Winter made the general presentation and Katie Spink spoke on the specific proposal in Health Science

Jennifer reviewed the history a bit: About a year ago Carly Kocurek introduced a proposal as an item for discussion regarding 90-credit hour Bachelor's degrees at Illinois Tech. This has been on the back-burner since the university has been so busy with other items recently, but now it is returning as a revised proposal that we will consider voting on at the next UGSC meeting.

The general proposal defines a reduced credit bachelor's degree as a 90-credit (minimum) program that is intended to be completed in 3 academic years. The program will satisfy all of the core requirements of a traditional Bachelor's program and will be targeted to disciplines for which there is market demand for 3-year programs. More details can be found in the proposal. These details include how such degree programs are in alignment with the university mission, the approval process for such degree programs, the naming rules for such programs (to distinguish them from traditional 4-year Bachelor's degrees), and some of the considerations regarding HLC approval of these degree programs.

Jennifer indicated that the university has identified 5 possible subject areas where creating a reduced-credit Bachelor's program may be feasible. The university is starting with one of these: in the area of Health Sciences. Jennifer indicated that Katie contacted Medical schools and some health care providers to see if there is an interest in having students obtain a 90-credit Bachelors in the Health Sciences and there were positive responses. Jennifer asked Katie to discuss the specific Health Sciences program proposal

Katie indicated that this proposal is essentially a re-working of the existing minor in Pre-Medical Studies so that the required courses now meet all of the core curriculum requirements and to also include some free electives to bring the total number of credits to 90. She mentioned that the title listed in the document has been in flux and needs to be updated to be called a Reduced Credit Bachelor's program rather than an Accelerated Bachelor's program.

She indicated that there is some flexibility in the requirements, for instance if a student was going to apply to a pharmacy school and needed a course in microbiology there is room for that within the 90-credits. Also if a student decided part way through this program that they wanted to switch into a traditional 4-year program, the curricula in this program could easily be adapted to say a Biology or Biochemistry major.

Andy Howard commented that he thinks it would be a mistake to peddle this as a regular Bachelor's program obtained in 3 years, but it looks like the university is making efforts to clearly distinguish these reduced credits Bachelor's from regular BS or BA programs.

Nick Menhart gave some information about such programs on a national level. He said that currently there are 78 institutions which are offering 3-year Bachelor's programs. It seems to be an area which virtually all Bachelor's degree granting institutions across the country are investigating. Right now there is an HLC requirement that only allows a given institution to propose two such 3-year Bachelors. We have one in front of us now, and should be thinking hard about what other areas in which we might want to make a second proposal. Nicole Beebe asked for more detail on this 2-program limit. Nick explained that this is the initial limit imposed by HLC. Once a university gets approved, it

can offer more than two 3-year programs. The whole process will take some time as such programs need to go through faculty governance and then Board of Trustees approval. Kindon Mills asked if there are documents from HLC that offer guidance in the construction of these programs. Jennifer indicated that there are links in the general proposal document with information from HLC.

Since this is a new policy proposal, and a new degree proposal they will not be voted on at this meeting. Representatives should share with their academic units and be ready to vote at the next UGSC meeting.

8. The next item was a [proposal](#) to update UGSC's Standard Operating Procedures document. Fred Weening made the presentation. As Kathir scrolled through the proposed update document, Fred discussed the changes that were made to the existing document and the rationale for making these changes. The changes included policy and procedures concerning
 - meetings that run long and scheduling of "special meetings.
 - the roles and responsibilities of the chair, vice-chair, and secretary
 - the incubator proposal policy
 - electronic voting
 - what should be submitted when a person requests a course be given a core letter designation
 - when policy changes presented at UGSC require a vote and when they are just informational

Kathir mentioned that he felt that there might need to be less of a demand on the faculty requesting that a course be given a core letter designation. He felt that asking for the faculty to supply specific artifacts when requesting the letter designation may be asking for too much.

Fred responded that the requirement proposed in the SOP is not to have faculty submit specific artifacts, but rather to describe a plan for what sorts of artifacts could be collected when the course ultimately is being assessed to see whether student learning outcomes meet the course learning objectives.

Mary Jorgenson Sullivan said that she thought including this requirement in the SOP was crucially important. She said that sometimes what her committee sees when they do an assessment of a course with a core letter designation is that the learning objectives are in the syllabus, and there are assessment activities (test, projects, etc..) that are specified in the syllabus for grading purposes. But that there is a misalignment between using these assessment activities as artifacts for the purpose of assessing whether the learning outcomes of the students are meeting the learning objectives of the core letter designation. It is critical to have clear and intentional construction of assessments that will measure the learning objectives, rather than trying to get this information from existing assessments that were not necessarily designed with this purpose in mind.

9. The next item concerned courses designated with the (N) letter. Joe Gorzkowski made [the presentation explaining his concern](#) that there is ambiguity in the general description of (N) in the bulletin and the labelling of courses with the (N) designation also in the bulletin.

He explained that every semester his office gets emails from students and advisors that are confused as to what courses count for meeting the (N) attribute. His reading of the listed policy is that all courses in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics along with some courses in other departments should count toward meeting the (N) requirement of the core. There is inconsistency though in that only four courses in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics courses have the letter designation attached to them in the course catalog, while there are many more courses in Architecture, Food Science and Nutrition, and Psychology that have the (N) designation listed in their catalog descriptions. He'd like to have all courses in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics have the (N) designation explicitly in the course catalog

Nick Menhart asked Joe to clarify, does he want all courses in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics to have the (N) designation attached to them? Joe responded that it doesn't have to be all courses in those departments, but it would certainly seem that it should be more than one Biology course and 3 Physics courses (which is the current state of affairs). Nick said that his recollection was that a year or two ago, a request was made to the (N) letter designation committee to go through the catalog and make a judgement as to which courses in those 3 departments should be given the (N) designation. Somehow though, this hasn't either been done or hasn't made its way into the catalog. He suggested that we go back into the UGSC minutes and see what was done and rectify the situation starting at that point.

10. The next agenda item was "other business". Nobody had any other business.

Andy Howard moved to adjourn the meeting and this was seconded by Kindon Mills. There was no objection nor abstention to this motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:52pm.