

A Recommendation to Redefine STGEC Requirements at Indiana University Bloomington

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Eight years ago, in response to a legislative mandate, the BFC established the requirements for earning the Statewide Transfer General Education Core (STGEC) at IU Bloomington. As the landscape of undergraduate education in the state continues to change, OVPUE suggests that redefining the IUB STGEC requirements could be beneficial to undergraduate students—particularly those from Indiana—and to the campus as a whole.

The Origin of the Statewide Transfer General Education Core

In Fall 2011, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE) began to advocate for the establishment of a single statewide general education program for undergraduate students at all public institutions in the state, to be composed of 10 of the most frequently transferred 3-credit hour courses selected from the Indiana Core Transfer Library (CTL).¹ All of the institutions in question—2-year and 4-year alike—objected to this plan. The members of the Indiana Statewide Articulation and Transfer Committee (STAC) each argued that his or her institution had established a set of general education requirements, crafted and approved by campus faculty, specifically to meet the needs of its own students.² The public institutions of higher education in Indiana vary greatly in terms of mission and student profile (and, as some pointed out, faculty profile). Their own general education programs, they insisted, were an integral part of their degree programs and should not be determined, in whole or in part, by some administrative body or by the faculty of other institutions.

In Spring 2012, the state legislature passed SB 182 (2012), which mandated the creation of the Statewide Transfer General Education Core (STGEC), to be created by the ICHE, the members of STAC, and the faculty of the public institutions.³ Unlike what was originally proposed by the ICHE, the STGEC was to be not a set of courses but a framework of competencies and learning outcomes, constructed and agreed upon by the members of STAC and the faculty of the institutions they represent. In essence, the STGEC competencies reflect the commonalities among the various sets of institutional general education requirements—basically a lowest common denominator of general education requirements. The intent of the legislation was to maximize the transferability of a general education “package” from one campus or state institution to another while allowing each institution to determine and maintain its

¹ The Core Transfer Library (CTL) was mandated by the Indiana State Legislature in 2006 to ensure transferability of a number of basic college courses among all public institutions of higher education in the state.

² The Statewide Transfer and Articulation Committee (STAC) is composed of academic administrative representatives from each of the Indiana public institutions of higher education. Under the leadership of the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the committee is responsible for implementing legislative mandates relating to higher education (the Indiana Core Transfer Library, the Statewide Transfer General Education Core, Transfer Single Articulation Pathways, etc.).

³ For the text of SEA 182 (2012), see Appendix 1.

own distinctive general education curriculum for its students.⁴ STGEC requirements and course lists, therefore, vary by institution and campus, but each public institution must provide students with a way to earn the STGEC milestone and must document completion of that milestone on the student transcript. Students who earn the STGEC milestone from any campus of any Indiana public institution of higher education and subsequently transfer to another campus or institution will not be subject to the STGEC requirements of the receiving institution.

The STGEC competencies were articulated as follows:

Foundational Skills

- Quantitative Reasoning
- Speaking and Listening
- Written Communication

Ways of Knowing

- Humanistic and Artistic
- Scientific
- Social and Behavioral

To earn the STGEC milestone, a student must successfully complete a minimum of 30 credit hours, including at least 3 cr. in each of the six competency areas, with a GPA of 2.000 or higher.

The STGEC at IU Bloomington

Following creation of the STGEC framework, each campus of each public institution was required to detail how students at their institution could earn the STGEC milestone. This was a fairly straightforward task for IU Bloomington, since the STGEC framework closely resembles the Common Ground portion of the IUB General Education Program. By completing the IUB Breadth of Inquiry requirements, students will have met the STGEC Ways of Knowing competencies (and at least 17 cr. of the required 30.). By fulfilling the IUB English Composition and Mathematical Modeling requirements, students will have met two of the three STGEC Foundational Skills competencies. That leaves only Speaking and Listening, the 30-credit hour requirement, and the minimum GPA of 2.0.

The BFC, in April 2013, established the IUB STGEC requirements as follows (see Appendix 2):

⁴ The creation of the STGEC represents a second step in the commodification of public education in Indiana. First, creation of the CTL established a set of over eighty courses available to students from the various public institutions and interchangeable with the “equivalent” courses at all of the other public institutions. Similarly, the STGEC package represents a group of courses (30 cr.) that is intended to be interchangeable among all public institutions. Subsequently, the legislature mandated the creation of Transfer Single Articulation Pathways (TSAPs), an even bigger package (60 cr.) that includes STGEC courses plus courses in specific majors, establishing several 2+2 transfer programs between the 2-year institutions and the 4-year institutions.

To earn the Statewide Transfer General Education Core (STGEC) milestone at IU Bloomington, a student must:

1. Successfully complete the IU Bloomington General Education Common Ground requirements
2. Successfully complete an approved IUB Speaking and Listening course
3. Take additional coursework from the IUB Common Ground course lists, if necessary, to reach the STGEC 30–credit hour minimum
4. Complete the above STGEC coursework with a GPA of 2.000 or higher.

Since the IUB General Education Curriculum does not include a Speaking and Listening requirement, the campus had to create one for completion of the STGEC. In two areas, however, the IUB General Education Common Ground curriculum surpasses the minimum requirements of the STGEC: World Languages and Cultures and Mathematical Modeling (which requires a significantly higher level of mathematics than Quantitative Reasoning, as defined by the STGEC competencies). Consequently, students who earn the STGEC milestone at IU Bloomington are held to a higher standard than those who earn the STGEC from any other institution.

The Two-Tier System of General Education

The STGEC milestone earned by students at IU Bloomington, as required by Indiana Code, is interchangeable with an STGEC milestone earned at any other Indiana public institution, yet the IUB requirements go above and beyond the established STGEC competencies. Since STGEC milestones must be treated as equivalent, and since the IUB Common Ground requirements are part of IUB STGEC requirements, students who start elsewhere, earn the STGEC milestone, and then transfer to IUB are not subject to IUB Common Ground requirements. These students need not meet the Mathematical Modeling or World Languages and Cultures requirements (unless those requirements are also school-level requirements). In effect, students who transfer to IUB after earning the STGEC elsewhere are held to a lower standard than “native” students, who begin here and graduate here and are therefore subject to the IU Bloomington Common Ground requirements. This fact alone may motivate some students to begin their college career elsewhere. It also creates something of a two-tier system at IUB with respect to math requirements and exposure to non-U.S. cultures.

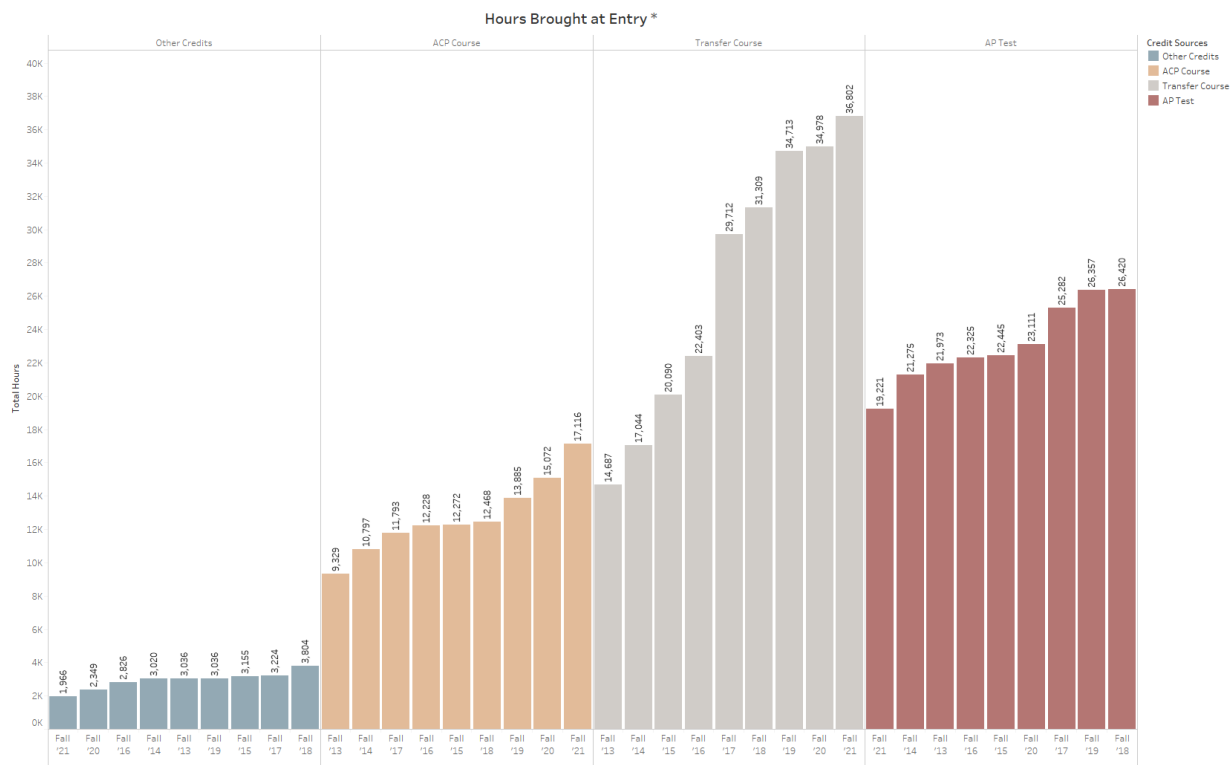
For the first several years after the creation of the STGEC, the number of external transfer students who had previously earned the milestone (and were therefore exempt from IU Common Ground requirements) has been relatively low, though increasing.

Students (Fall Cohorts) Who Earned the STGEC Milestone before Transferring to IUB									
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	0	16	34	37	54	73	88	128	99

In all likelihood, however, this trend will soon change.

The STGEC Becomes the Indiana College Core

In fall 2020, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education announced its plan to rebrand the Statewide Transfer General Education Core as the Indiana College Core (ICC), in an effort to dramatically increase the number of Indiana students who earn the ICC milestone *before graduating from high school*. Over the past decade, IU Bloomington has seen a steady increase in the number of college credit hours brought in by in-state beginners (i.e., students coming to IUB directly from high school, as opposed to transfer students, who begin elsewhere and then transfer here after one or more semesters of college).



The current effort by the ICHE, however, will almost certainly increase not only the amount of credit brought in by beginners but also the number of IU Bloomington students who are *not* subject to IU Bloomington Common Ground requirements.

Reconceiving the STGEC/ICC at Indiana University Bloomington

While the STGEC was created to ease transfer from one Indiana public institution to another, the ICC now threatens to divide the IUB student body further into two broad categories: in-state students who earn the ICC in high school and are therefore exempt from IUB Common Ground requirements and out-of-state students, who continue to be subject to IUB Common Ground requirements, as established by the BFC. If this outcome is considered undesirable, a partial solution may lie in redefining the IUB requirements for the Indiana College Core (formerly, the STGEC).

In accordance with SEA 182 (2012), students who earn the STGEC/ICC milestone elsewhere and subsequently matriculate at IU Bloomington are not subject to IUB ICC requirements. Since completion of IUB Common Ground requirements is among the IUB STGEC/ICC requirements, students who arrive here with the ICC milestone already on their transcripts are exempt from IUB General Education requirements. If, however, the IUB STGEC/ICC requirements were to be redefined, the exemption could apply to only a portion of IUB General Education requirements. For example, the IUB STGEC/ICC requirements could be rearticulated as follows:

To earn the Indiana College Core (ICC) milestone at IU Bloomington, a student must:

1. Successfully complete the IU Bloomington **Breadth of Inquiry** requirements
2. Successfully complete an approved IUB **Speaking and Listening** course
3. Successfully complete an approved IUB **English Composition** course
4. Successfully complete an approved IUB **Quantitative Reasoning** course⁵
5. Take additional coursework from the IUB **GenEd** course lists to reach the ICC 30-credit hour minimum
6. Complete the above ICC coursework with a GPA of 2.000 or higher

Reconceiving the IU Bloomington STGEC/ICC requirements in this way would do little to alter how IUB students earn the STGEC/ICC milestone. The only change would be a lower math requirement (for the STGEC/ICC but *not* for the IUB Common Ground), which would better align the IUB STGEC/ICC math requirement with that of all other Indiana public institutions.⁶ On the other hand, students who earn the STGEC/ICC milestone elsewhere prior to attending IU Bloomington would no longer be held to a lower standard with regard to math and world languages and cultures. Incoming students with the STGEC/ICC milestone on their transcript would still be subject IUB Common Ground requirements. While the STGEC milestone *would* satisfy the IUB English Composition and Breadth of Inquiry requirements, *all* students would be subject to the IUB Mathematical Modeling and World Languages and Cultures requirements.⁷

⁵ An IUB Quantitative Reasoning course list could be established by a GenEd subcommittee composed of appropriate IUB faculty. It would presumably include all courses on the Mathematical Modeling course list, with the addition precalculus courses such as MATH-M 125 and MATH-M 127. An introductory statistics course might be deemed appropriate as well.

⁶ Replacing the Mathematical Modeling requirement with a Quantitative Reasoning requirement for the IUB ICC would effectively make the ICC something of an “off-ramp” for IUB students who have not been able to satisfy the MM requirement. These students would be able to earn the ICC and transfer elsewhere without having to fulfill ICC requirements at the other campus or institution.

⁷ A few exceptions may have to be made due to approved Transfer Single Articulation Pathways (TSAPs) in majors that do not specifically require calculus or finite math, but such agreements are legislatively mandated and

All students—beginners or transfer students, in-state or out-of-state, domestic or international—would be treated equally with respect to campus-wide requirements.

currently limited to Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Secondary Education: Biology, Nursing, and Social Work. The number of students in these TSAP programs is very low (21 at present).

Appendix 1

SEA 182 (2012)

Second Regular Session 117th General Assembly (2012)

PRINTING CODE. Amendments: Whenever an existing statute (or a section of the Indiana Constitution) is being amended, the text of the existing provision will appear in this style type, additions will appear in **this style type**, and deletions will appear in ~~this style type~~.

Additions: Whenever a new statutory provision is being enacted (or a new constitutional provision adopted), the text of the new provision will appear in **this style type**. Also, the word **NEW** will appear in that style type in the introductory clause of each SECTION that adds a new provision to the Indiana Code or the Indiana Constitution.

Conflict reconciliation: Text in a statute in *this style type* or ~~this style type~~ reconciles conflicts between statutes enacted by the 2011 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

SENATE ENROLLED ACT No. 182

AN ACT to amend the Indiana Code concerning higher education.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana:

SOURCE: IC 21-18-9-7; (12)SE0182.1.1. ->

SECTION 1. IC 21-18-9-7 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE AS A NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2012]: Sec. 7. **In collaboration with the state educational institutions, the commission shall develop, implement, and maintain a common course numbering system to be used by the state educational institutions for all courses in the core transfer library (as defined in IC 21-42-1-3). The commission shall create a state course numbering system into which each state educational institution shall map the state educational institution's unique course numbers.**

SOURCE: IC 21-42-3-2; (12)SE0182.1.2. -> SECTION 2. IC 21-42-3-2, AS ADDED BY P.L.2-2007, SECTION 283, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2012]: Sec. 2. ~~The Each state educational institutions jointly institution, in collaboration with the commission for higher education, shall: identify~~

(1) **not later than December 1, 2012, create and report to the commission for higher education a statewide transfer general education core, to be implemented not later than May 15, 2013. The core must be based upon a set of core competencies, translated into at least thirty (30) semester credit hours of comparable general education courses; that in areas agreed upon by the state educational institutions, which apply for credit**

toward undergraduate degrees, including associate degrees and baccalaureate degrees at all campuses of state educational institutions; and are eligible to be earned by a student to fulfill graduation requirements at each state educational institution:

(2) **jointly establish statewide standards for use by all state educational institutions to document an individual's completion of the statewide transfer general education core on the individual's transcripts.**

SOURCE: IC 21-42-3-5; (12)SE0182.1.3. -> SECTION 3. IC 21-42-3-5 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE AS A NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2012]: Sec. 5. (a) **After May 15, 2013, an individual who has satisfactorily completed the statewide transfer general education core at a state educational institution, as indicated on the individual's official transcript, may not be required to complete additional courses in the statewide transfer general education core at the state educational institution to which the individual transfers, regardless of whether the individual has received an associate degree or the delivery method of the statewide transfer general education core the individual completed.**

Appendix 2

BFC Circular B25-2013

**Resolution to Establish an Indiana University Bloomington
Statewide Transfer General Education Core
Certification**

Be it Resolved that:

In order to comply with State Enrolled Act 182 and the Indiana Statewide Transfer General Education Core developed by the state educational institutions under the auspices of the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the Bloomington Faculty Council

- (1) requests the Provost to arrange for the certification of a student as having completed the requirements of the Statewide Transfer General Education Core when the student has completed, with a GPA of at least 2.000,
 - (A) the Common Ground requirements of the Bloomington General Education program,
 - (B) a course that satisfies the learning outcomes of the Speaking and Listening competency of the Indiana Statewide Transfer General Education Core,
 - (C) and, if necessary in order to attain 30 credit hours of General Education course work, additional courses approved for the Common Ground;

and

- (2) charges the General Education Committee, by May 1, 2013, to coordinate with the Schools the development a list of courses that satisfy the learning outcomes of the Speaking and Listening competency of the Indiana Statewide Transfer General Education Core and the assessment metrics for these courses.

This resolution is intended to be an interim measure that does not reflect on the recommendations of any committee with respect to changes in the Indiana University Bloomington General Education Program. More specifically, the details of how the STGEC requirements of a 2.000 GPA, a 30 credit hour minimum, and a Speaking and Listening competency will be reflected in the IUB General Education Program are still to be finalized. These details must be completed by the BFC by December 15, 2013.