

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Illinois Central College assures by established procedures and processes that each program of study results in collegiate level learning outcomes that are appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded. All undergraduate degrees must include general education requirements. In addition, the programs must be coherent and complete as they duplicate the structure of the College's current transfer Liberal Arts and Sciences degree and/or certificate requirements. Although the online Associate of Arts and Science degree is not yet complete in its offerings, plans are in place to address the "gaps" in key areas where Internet courses need development.

For example, science courses that need an on-site lab component are advertised as such in the class schedule. If an online course that is needed is not available at Illinois Central College, the ILCCO course-sharing mechanism (ICE) may be used. Students are able to search for online courses at other colleges in Illinois by using the Illinois Virtual Campus website that is linked on the student page of the Illinois Central College website. The Illinois Virtual Campus is an online catalog of distance learning courses available at universities and colleges within Illinois. The data is not comprehensive, but is the best resource for online courses in Illinois. ICE then allows for course sharing throughout Illinois community colleges.

Development Rationale and Process

All of the programs that are adding an online degree option have been and currently are offered in traditional format at the College. As indicated earlier, student, faculty, businesses, and the community have given the impetus to the offering of courses and programs online.

To date, the process has been one of supplementing the programs by importing courses from other colleges through, ILCCO. An online degree program will reduce the need for the College to import courses from other institutions, thereby increasing the College's efficiency and enhancing its abilities to verify quality. The number of online courses the College imports has been reduced, since those have been replaced by online ones designed and developed in-house.

New courses are proposed by faculty, the most qualified persons responsible for individual course development, as part of the College's strategic plan. These classes are supported by the College's Foundation, the College's strategic plan, and process improvement events. Associate Deans and the Vice President for Academic Affairs remain the most qualified to help shape the direction for courses in high demand and not yet proposed by faculty. Faculty are offered "unit credit" or monetary incentives to design and develop online courses. These applications are initiated by faculty, endorsed by Associate Deans, considered by a grant selection committee of an administrator, the instructional technology specialist, and other faculty and then funded through the College's Educational Foundation. All new syllabi or revised

ones must be submitted to the College Curriculum Committee and the Illinois Community College Board. In the new course development process, the procedure and expectations are identical regardless of the method of class delivery.

As with all classes at the College, online student success is measured by instructional grades, student evaluations, and periodic administrative reviews. In addition, a process management team has established “quality criteria” for online courses. This team of faculty and administrators co-wrote both benchmark and advanced competencies for online delivery of course material. Specific strategies from an online business course are as follows: “Exams are structured to be mini-research projects. Exam questions require identification of the pertinent legal concept; application of the concept to the exam situation; analysis of how the concept applies to the situation; and selection of an appropriate course of action. Students are instructed to use not only their texts, but other resource materials to assist them with this process.”

Faculty are aware as classes are being developed that there may be materials used in traditional classrooms that are not easily transmitted by the Internet due to bandwidth considerations. These materials can currently be placed on stored media such as VHS or DVD and distributed directly to students, broadcast on cable television, or placed in local libraries. The College has used the library and cable television mode for years to distribute telecourse materials.

In the development of an Online Associate of Arts and Science degree, the process has produced almost all general education classes online. The chart on the following pages shows the general education classes available online. Currently a biology general education class is hybrid and a Speech 110 course is not available.

Online Courses

DRAFT August 2003

Associate in Arts & Science Degree ONLINE COURSES

ENGLISH (6 Semester Hours)

- ENGL 110 – Composition I
- ENGL 111 – Composition II

SPEECH (3 semester hours)

- SPCH 110 (SPCH 112 – Public Speaking only available – use a Course Waiver)

SOCIAL SCIENCE (A total of 9 semester hours – three courses are required---taken in 2 of the following disciplines.

1. Economics: ECON 110, 111 (by Fall 2003)
2. Geography: GEOG 112, 113, 200
3. History: HIST 117, HIST 118-Modern Western Civilization, 201, HIST 202-American History Since 1865
4. International Studies: INTST 130, 131, 134
5. Political Science POLSC 115-American National Government, 119, 120, 122
6. Psychology: PSY 110-Intro to Psychology, 202, 210, 220
7. Social Sciences: SSC 110, 111, 112
8. Sociology: SOC 110-Intro to Sociology, 114, 120, 212, 213, 218, 219

MATHEMATICS (A total of 6 semester hours – two courses are required. At least one of these courses must be taken from Group 1, and the other may be taken from either Group 1 or Group II.)

1. Group 1

MATH 110-Concepts of Mathematics, MATH 111-General Education Statistics, 122, 134, MATH 135-Business Calculus, 201, 211, 222, 223, 224

2. Group II

MATH 115-College Algebra, 120, 124, 165, 200, 230, 240, 250

LABORATORY SCIENCES (A total of 8 semester hours – two courses- are required. One of these courses must be a Life Science and one must be a Physical Science.)

1. Life Sciences (4 Credit Hours)

BIOL 110, BIOL 111 The Biology of Man (hybrid), 115, 120, 130, 140, 145, 160, 250

2. Physical Sciences (4 credit hours)

CHEM 115, 118, 120, CHEM 130-General Chemistry-hybrid, CHEM 132-General Chemistry-hybrid

EASC 111, 116, 118, 250

PHYSC 110, 114

PHYS 115, 120, 220

HUMANITIES/FINE ARTS (A total of 9 semester hours – three courses – are required. At least one of these General Education courses must be a Humanities course and a least one must be a Fine Arts course. The third course may be taken from either group.)

1. Humanities (3-6 Credit Hours)

Foreign Language: FR 211, GER 211, SPAN 211

History: HIST 111, 112

Humanities: **HUMAN 125-Contemporary Humanities, 126, 129**

International Studies: INTST 132, 133

Literature: **LIT 110-Intro to Literature, LIT 111-The Short Story and Novel, 115, 117, 119, 120, 122, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 230, 250**

Philosophy: **PHIL 110-Intro to Philosophy, 111, 112, 115, 116, 211**

2. Fine Arts (3-6 Credit Hours)

Art: **ART 110-Intro to Art, 150, 151**

Film: **FILM 110-Survey of Film**

Humanities: HUMAN 128

Music: MUS 148, **MUS 150-What to Listen for in Music**

Theatre: **THTRE 110-Nature of Theatre, 111**

X = Online Course developed to complete this category – Specific course is listed in **BOLD**

Qualifications

The presentation, management, and assessment of online programs are done by the same individuals qualified to present traditional academic programs. Full-time faculty teaching online may have a combined load of traditional and online courses. Adjunct faculty teaching only one or more online courses are expected to have the same academic qualifications as adjunct instructors teaching traditional courses. Adjunct faculty are offered the same training and development opportunities as full-time faculty. The syllabi for courses delivered online have been reviewed and approved by the Illinois Central College Curriculum Committee. Each online course is designed and developed by an instructor in an academic department. Traditionally, the decision to move a course or program to the online environment is initiated by the faculty and approved by the Associate Dean. The Office of Instructional Innovation and Faculty Development may be involved in the design and development of the online course. The Assessment Coordinator may be involved in faculty development regarding online assessment strategies.

Since online courses and programs are integrated into the academic departments, the academic qualifications of those presenting and managing the courses and program are the same as those responsible for curricular decisions, assessment, and program oversight. A large-scale online degree also requires involvement from a wide design team with staff who have particular areas of expertise: pictorial materials, animation sequences, interface design, video production, and instructional pedagogy.

Faculty/Student Interaction

Instructor/student and student/student interaction may occur via email communication, discussion board postings, file exchange, peer review, virtual chat, face-to-face meetings, and telephone conversations. The use of specific strategies is determined by the instructor. Strategies may be detailed in the methods of instruction section of the course syllabus.

Instructor response to students is determined by individual instructors. Instructors are encouraged to provide students with explicit time frames to set expectations for communicating responses via email, posting replies to discussion board postings, and evaluating assignments. Instructors of online courses are not expected to “be online 24/7,” yet they are expected to understand the needs of online learners and set realistic expectations for communicating with students and providing feedback. Online faculty are allowed to hold virtual office hours for online courses. Most likely, due to the scheduling needs of online learners, this will require instructors to communicate with students outside of a “regular” day such as during evenings and weekends. An online instructor notes: “It is vital for students to receive a response from the instructor in a timely manner. Sometimes the response does not finalize the communication. For example, an acknowledgement of receipt of a student assignment may be sent within 24 hours of instructor receipt of the assignment; however, the evaluation may come later. But, the student is assured that the assignment has been received by the instructor and is undergoing evaluation.”

The technologies used for program interaction include the Internet, a course management system, mail, telephone, in-person and virtual office hours, voicemail, fax, chat rooms, Web-based discussions and computer conferences. In addition, Illinois Central College’s support services include student “roaming profiles”; Internet library access to books, articles, and newspapers; virtual librarian access; computer help desk; online applications to complete and class registration; planned online advisement; and online course management software support.

Interactivity success and needs have been measured by individual instructors through feedback surveys. According to student and instructor comments, courses with some sort of interactive component are favored over courses with no interactivity. One of the most common interactive components in the College’s online courses is Web-based discussions. The least effective component is virtual chat simply due to the constraints of synchronous communication. Students’ comments concerning

communication in an online MATH 111 when asked what they liked about the class were:

- “Being able to ask questions on discussion board.”
- “I liked the fact we were able to post all of our questions on the discussion board.”
- “I really liked the virtual classroom and bulletin boards.”