

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASSOCIATE OF ARTS IN TEACHING (AAT)

1. The AAT Degree Program grew out of the efforts of the Illinois P-16 Education initiative, a broad based group of Illinois educators, including representatives of community colleges, public and private universities, ISBE, IBHE and ICCB, under the leadership of Charlie Evans from the University of Illinois.
2. In September, 2002, in cooperation with ISBE, IBHE and ICCB, the University of Illinois formed a Steering Committee to develop AAT Degree models. The membership was made up of representatives of ISBE, IBHE, ICCB, the community colleges and the universities.
3. The primary focus of the Steering Committee's work was to develop AAT Degree models that would attract students into high need teaching disciplines and facilitate the transfer of lower- division students desiring to become teachers in those areas into upper-division teacher education programs. A key feature of the AAT Degree is that graduates with an AAT Degree have equal status with university native students at the beginning of the junior year.
4. The Steering Committee initially identified three high need areas on which to focus its efforts- secondary math, secondary science, and special education. A fourth area, early childhood education, was added later as a result of increased need in that area, due in part to legislative initiatives.
5. In June, 2003, workgroups comprised of approximately 100 community college and university faculty met at UIS to: link professional teaching standards to the models, identify appropriate artifacts and assessments demonstrating mastery of the standards, and develop sample course syllabi for selected education courses.
6. In September, 2003, guidelines for developing AAT Degree applications for secondary Math and Science were sent to all community colleges together with a cover letter encouraging them to apply. Also included were samples of model syllabi and matrices relating professional teaching standards to specific courses.
7. Statewide workshops were also held to publicize the Initiative and familiarize community college and university staff with the application process. A steady stream of applications soon began, primarily for the AAT in secondary math.
8. In March, 2005, guidelines for developing AAT Degree applications special education and early childhood education were released. The guidelines for these two degrees were somewhat more detailed than earlier guidelines, resulting in a slower, but still steady response.
9. To assist community college staff, a series of materials were developed and workshops were held, primarily in cooperation with professional organizations. Also, in 2006, ICCB hired a consultant to focus on AAT Reviews and provide assistance to community college staff in developing AAT applications.
10. During this entire process, the AAT Steering Committee has continued to meet and recommend improvements to both the guidelines and the approval process. One example is the introduction of GPA standards compatible with standards for acceptance into upper division teacher education programs.
11. During 2007 and 2008, three AAT Regional Conferences were held to familiarize educators with the AAT Degree Initiative and to provide a forum at which community colleges and senior institutions could meet and discuss articulation issues in the area of Teacher Education. The meetings, which were held in

Chicago (Northeastern), Southern Illinois (Kaskaskia) and Central Illinois (Heartland), were well attended and generally well received. Over 250 persons attended the three conferences.

12. Over the past two years, the application process has been simplified, including the use of application templates. In addition, several workshops and meetings, combined with an on-line interactive approach to application review, have resulted in a significant increase in successful applications. As of February 15, 2009, a total of 47 AAT Degree applications had been approved. They are broken out by category below:

- AAT Secondary Math Education—22
- AAT Secondary Science Education—3
- AAT Early childhood Education—10
- AAT Special Education--12

13. AAT Implementation Surveys in 2006, 2007 and 2008 have shown a steady increase in the number of public and private senior institutions fully or conditionally accepting the AAT Degrees. (Attached please find overviews of public and private senior institutions in Illinois accepting the AAT.)

14. Impediments to full acceptance still exist at some institutions. In these cases, follow-up efforts by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board are ongoing.

15. The collection of data on AAT Students and graduates has been initiated as part of a routine statewide effort.

16. In December, 2008, the Illinois Articulation Initiative reviewed and revised the IAI approved majors. Because the core courses identified in the Education majors were part of the AAT degree, the Education majors were removed and the panels' functions were changed to those of an advisory status.

17. Since the AAT Degree Initiative has been in place for approximately five years, the AAT Steering Committee will be requested to initiate a program review process at the April 23, 2009 Steering committee meeting. It is anticipated that the AAT SEC SCI will be the first program reviewed.