

## Proposal to the Senate Educational Policy Committee and the Council on Student Conduct Expectations and Accountability

**Proposal Title:** Revise the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Residency Requirement and Update the Language in the *Student Code* Section 3-801 a.1. to Reflect This Revision

**Sponsor:** Transfer Student Experience Task Force, Brenda Lindsey, Teaching Professor, School of Social Work, Chair

**Contact:** Brianna Gregg, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Academic Policies Subgroup Chair, [bjgray2@illinois.edu](mailto:bjgray2@illinois.edu)

**Brief Description:** This is a proposal to revise the current residency requirement for bachelor's degrees from 60 hours of UIUC credit to 45 hours of UIUC credit. An approved revision would necessitate then updating Section 3-801 a.1. of the *Student Code*.

**Justification:** Lowering the number of required hours of UIUC credit increases access for undergraduate students. Forty-five hours is better aligned with Big 10 peers. Further justification is expounded upon in the "Background" and "Recommendation" sections that follow this cover letter.

**Desired Effective Term:** The requirement would go into effect for bachelor's degree students matriculating to the university starting in Fall, 2024.

### Contents

Proposal – Pg 3

Higher Learning Commission – Pg 5

History – Pg 5

Recommended Code Change – Pg 6-7

Benchmarking with Peers – Pg 8

Supporting Data – Pg 9-10

Letters of Support – Pg 11-31

Dr. Kevin Jackson, *Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education*

Dr. Danita M. Brown Young, *Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs*

Dr. Venetria Patton, *Dean of College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*

Dr. German Bollero, *Dean of College of ACES*

Dr. Benjamin Lough, *Dean of School of Social Work*

Dr. Carla Santos, *Associate Dean of Undergrad and Graduate Affairs, College of AHS*

Dr. Sarah McCarthey, *Associate Dean of Undergrad Programs, College of Education*

Dr. Nehemiah Scott, *Associate Dean of Undergrad Programs, Gies College of Business*

Dr. Isabel Molina, *Associate Dean of Student Academic Affairs, College of LAS*

Robert Steltman, *Executive Assistant Dean, College of LAS*

Gretchen Pein, *Assistant Dean, College of LAS*  
Jonathan Elugbadebo, *Associate Dir of Recruitment and Admission, College of LAS*  
Kristy Valentin, *Senior Director, AAP, College of LAS*  
Darrell Hunter II, *Director of First Year Experience, College of LAS*  
Kathryn Clark, *Associate Dean of Student Services, College of Media*  
Zelda Gardner, *Associate Dean of Undergraduate Affairs, College of FAA*  
Mitch Ryba, *transfer student, Community Health, College of AHS*  
Stephanie Wayda, *transfer student, Journalism, College of Media*  
Ryan Waldinger, *transfer student, Agricultural Consumer Economics, College of ACES*

#### Letter of Concern – Pg 32

Dr. Jonathan Makela, *Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs, Grainger College of Engineering*

#### Transfer Student Experience Task Force Committee

Dr. Brenda Lindsey, *Chair, Teaching Associate Professor*  
Dr. Caitlin Clarke, *Associate Prof, Applied Health Sciences*  
James Fry, *Assistant Director of New Student Programs*  
Katie Clark, *Associate Dean of Student Services, College of Media*  
Stephon Fuqua, *Associate Athletic Director, Academic Services DIA*  
Dustin Tarter, *Assistant Dean, College of Applied Health Sciences*  
Bob Steltman, *Executive Assistant Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*  
Keri Niehans, *Senior Associate Director of Admissions Operations*  
Todd Kato, *Assistant Director of Course Articulation*  
Ross Wantland, *Director of Curriculum Development & Education*  
Ann Marie Morgan, *Associate Dean of Students, Office of the Dean of Students*  
Kimberly Alexander-Brown, *Executive Director of Office of Minority Student Affairs*  
Destini Coleman, *Student Representative – spring 2023 graduate*  
Brianna Ford, *Student Representative – spring 2024 graduate*  
Jacki Rand, *Associate Professor, American Indian Studies Program*  
April Carter, *Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, College of Education*  
Melissa Kisubika, *Program Manager for Student Success Initiatives, Office of Provost*  
Kathy Martensen, *Associate Provost for Educational Programs, Office of Provost*  
Brianna Gregg, *Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, College of ACES*

## **University of Illinois Undergraduate Residency Requirement**

### **Background:**

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign currently has a residency requirement of 60 hours of UIUC credit, of which 21 hours must be at the 300- or 400-level. When consulting the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) policies, it is recommended the institution maintains structures or practices that ensure the coherence and quality of the programs for which it awards a degree. HLC's Assumed Practices state that typically institutions will require a minimum of 30 of the 120 credits in residence earned for the bachelor's degree.

Peer institutions such as University of Minnesota and many others across the BIG10 (see appendix 1) follow the practice set by the HLC, only requiring 30 hours of residency within their respective college system to earn the bachelor's level degree. University of Wisconsin specifically has followed this practice for decades based on the recommendation of the HLC.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended by the provost-appointed Transfer Student Experience Task Force to reduce the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign residency requirement from 60 hours of UIUC coursework to 45 hours of UIUC coursework.

When evaluating transfer programs with the most applicants within each college or school at UIUC, the specified degree requirements hover around 100 hours of specified course work, falling short of the 120 minimum hours required to earn a bachelor's degree from UIUC. The flexibility with the last 20 to 30 hours to reach the 120-130 total hours required by the bachelor's degree is purposeful. The degree programs are designed so the student has room in the curriculum to add in a minor, certificate, or special interest courses, emphasizing the fact that no two degrees from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, just like no two students, are the exact same. This adds to the diversity of experiences and classes for UIUC alumni to pull from as they work and interact with the world around them.

If evaluating the averaged 100 hours of degree course work that could not be completed at a community college prior to attending UIUC, the average is around 60 hours of UIUC course work if specifically looking at the two transfer programs with the most applicants for each school or college. These hours range from 31-75. Psychology and Agricultural and Consumer Economics are two UIUC programs with the highest numbers of transfer students. Both programs' non-transferrable hours are in the 30s making these majors transfer friendly and accessible to the Illinois resident.

Major-required credit hours for most UIUC degrees often exceed the HLC recommended 30-hour mark, but typically are fewer than the 60-hour current residency requirement. Lowering the residency requirement to 45 hours provides an opportunity to transfer students who come in with more than 60 hours applicable towards their intended major to complete their UIUC degree without having to take elective hours for the sole purpose of meeting the current residency requirement. Ideally students would maximize their time at UIUC and take classes above and beyond the courses specifically required for their degree; however, this is not always

possible nor a goal of some students. In addition, lowering the residency hours to 45 would open the opportunity for prospective transfer athletes to consider Illinois when looking for institutions to complete their academic journey. Under the current 60-hour rule, the likelihood of even considering Illinois is significantly diminished due to strict NCAA eligibility requirements.

If a situation were to arise in that a student would transfer with the core requirements for their major being met, the requirement of 45 hours being in residence ensures the Illinois experience and authenticity of the Illinois degree. Additionally, current transfer practices across the different colleges and schools prevent admitting students to campus who are coming in with more than 90 credit hours when it would not benefit the student to continue their academic journey on the UIUC campus. This is often due to the time to degree completion if the transfer course work is completed at a bachelor's degree granting institution. Extending semesters at a bachelor's degree granting institution could impact financial aid award for the student, among other undesirable outcomes. Encouraging transfer prior to the 90-hour mark is demonstrated and supported in appendix 2, by showing the average number of credit hours brought in for the transfer majors with the highest numbers of applicants across the colleges and programs is 61, far below the 90-credit mark.

The recommendation of not lowering the requirement to 30 hours, as outlined in HLC's Assumed Practices, and used by many peers, is to ensure the authenticity of the degree at UIUC. Also, by landing at 45 hours instead of 30, the caveats that are often lost in the fine print of degree requirements of final hours needing to be in residency are left behind. Clarity for our students across the campus is met with the blanket requirement of 45 hours, like the current 60-hour rule. This negates and dismisses the need for footnotes and fine print that are often missed when reviewing degree requirements.

After evaluation of the data collected and by the recommendation of the HLC, it is the recommendation from the Transfer Student Experience Task Force to adjust the residency requirement to be 45 hours of University of Illinois Urbana- Champaign credit. This shift would benefit the Illinois transfer student as well as put University of Illinois Urbana Champaign closer in line with peers.

## HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

### B. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

1. Programs, Courses, and Credits
  - a. The institution conforms to commonly accepted minimum program length: 60 semester credits for associate's degrees, 120 semester credits for bachelor's degrees, and 30 semester credits beyond the bachelor's for master's degrees. Any variation from these minima must be explained and justified.
  - b. The institution maintains structures or practices that ensure the coherence and quality of the programs for which it awards a degree. Typically institutions will require that at minimum 30 of the 120 credits earned for the bachelor's degree and 15 of the 60 credits for the associate's degree be credits earned at the institution itself, through arrangements with other accredited institutions, or through contractual relationships approved by HLC. Any variation from the typical minima must be explained and justified.

### History of Last Revision

Most recently updated in 2006 by the Faculty Senate (see [minutes](#) and [proposal](#))

Former Rule: ‘...must spend either the first three years, not earning less than ninety hours, or the last year...not earning less than thirty hours, in residences on the Urbana-Champaign campus, uninterrupted by any work in another institution.’

Proposal to the Education Policy Committee (EP.04.04) indicates reasons for change included:

- Former rule penalized students who wanted to take summer courses in their last 30 hours
- Concerns that 30-hour requirement is “too thin”
- Small number of students who completing fewer than 60 hours on campus (>2%)

Previous versions of the residency rule according to ACES student handbooks included qualifications such as:

1974

- Students who have transferred to the University of Illinois must complete at least half of the required hours for technical courses in residence.
- A transfer student from a community college must complete at least 60 hours as a senior college and the last 30 hours at the University of Illinois.

1952

- No language of residency mentioned in Handbook (most likely due to the dramatic growth in Illinois community college founding's in 1960s)

## PROPOSED CODE CHANGES

### § 3-801 CREDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR DEGREES

#### a. First Bachelor's Degree

1. In addition to specific course and scholastic average requirements, each candidate for a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign must earn at least ~~45~~<sup>60</sup> semester hours of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign credit, of which at least 21 hours must be 300 or 400 level courses of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign credit.
2. A student on drop status may not graduate until the student has been reinstated by the dean of the student's college. A student who meets the conditions of subsection (a)(1) above must notify the dean of the student's college of the student's intent to apply credit earned elsewhere toward the degree requirements and arrange to have a final official transcript from the other collegiate institution(s) attended sent to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.
3. Only those courses that are applicable toward the degree sought may be counted in satisfying the above minimum requirements. (See the Academic Catalog at <http://catalog.illinois.edu/>)
4. Students transferring from the University of Illinois at Chicago or at Springfield to Urbana-Champaign as candidates for degrees must satisfy the degree requirements in subsection (a)(1) and academic requirements for graduation established for the curriculum entered on the Urbana-Champaign campus.
5. A student who requests that the credit requirement for graduation be waived should complete and submit a petition to the dean of the student's college, who will take action on the petition.

#### b. Additional Bachelor's Degree

1. A student who has received one bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign may be permitted to receive an additional bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, provided all specified requirements for each degree are fully met and provided also that the curriculum offered for the additional degree includes at least 30 semester

hours of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign credit that is not counted for the other degree.

2. The additional bachelor's degree may be earned either concurrently with or subsequent to the first degree.
3. Only those courses that are acceptable toward the degree sought may be counted in satisfying the above minimum requirements. This includes the 30 additional hours required for the additional degree.

c. Graduate Students

1. At least half of the hours required for a master's degree must be earned in courses meeting on the Urbana-Champaign or Chicago or Springfield campus, or in courses meeting in other locations that have been approved by the Graduate College.
2. At least two-thirds of the total hours required for a doctoral degree must be earned in courses meeting on the Urbana-Champaign or Chicago campus, or in courses meeting in other locations that have been approved by the Graduate College.
3. BTAA Traveling Scholars Program work may fulfill the "on-campus" requirement in subsections (c)(1) and (c)(2) for as much as 20 semester hours of course work at BTAA institutions each semester, for a maximum of two semesters.

## BIG10 and Peer University Residency Requirements Summary

University	In-Residence	Minimum Hours	Summary of Policy
<a href="#">Indiana University</a>	30%	36	Each school has slightly different variation on rule
<a href="#">Michigan State University</a>	25%	30	At least 30 credits or no more than twenty-five percent of the degree requirements
<a href="#">Northwestern University</a>	50%	Unit system	First-year student must earn credit for courses worth at least 32 units; A transfer student must earn credit for courses
<a href="#">Ohio State University</a>	25%	30	A minimum of <b>30 credit hours</b> earned through regular course enrollment
<a href="#">Pennsylvania State University</a>	30%	36	For a baccalaureate degree, the minimum is 36 credits of a student's last 60 credits
<a href="#">Purdue University</a>	27%	32	32 Residency Credits (30000 and above) at a Purdue University campus
<a href="#">Rutgers University-New Brunswick</a>	25%	30	30 of their last 42 credits
<a href="#">UNC Chapel Hill</a>	37.5%	45	45 hrs in residence and at least 24 of the last 30 hrs
<a href="#">University of Illinois at Chicago</a>	25%	30	either the first 90 semester hours or the last 30 semester hours
<a href="#">University of Illinois Springfield</a>	25%	30	Earn a minimum of <b>30 semester hours</b> of credit in residence at UIS
<a href="#">University of Iowa</a>	25%	30	Final 30 in residence, or 45 of final 60 overall total 90 residence
<a href="#">University of Maryland</a>	25%	30	30 hours in residence
<a href="#">University of Michigan</a>	50%	60	60/120 with 30 of the last 60 in residence
<a href="#">University of Minnesota</a>	25%	30	At least 30 semester credits. 15 of the last 30 need to be MN credits.
<a href="#">University of Nebraska-Lincoln</a>	25%	30	Must complete at least 30 of the 120 total hours
<a href="#">University of Washington</a>	25%	45/180	45/180 of credits must be completed in residence at UW
<a href="#">University of Wisconsin-Madison</a>	25%	30	Each school varies, but in all cases it is some version of the last 30 credits (or 30 of the last 34 etc)
<a href="#">UT Austin</a>	50%	60	60 hours in residence, 6 hours in residence in major

## Transfers Average Hours at Graduation

College	Grad Term	Total Students	Average	Min	Max	Average	Min	Max	Average TR Hours	Min TR Hours	Max TR Hours
			Overall Hours Earned*	Overall Hours Earned*	Overall Hours Earned*	IL Hours Earned	IL Hours Earned	IL Hours Earned			
ACES	Spring 2022	124	138.23	123	210	76.22	54	132	60.23	13	128
	Spring 2021	143	140.44	122	210	75.48	60	131	62.53	16	146
	Spring 2020	114	136.52	125.99	171	77.96	59	133	56.34	0	101
GIES	Spring 2022	53	140.17	124	196	73.35	54	105	58.17	24	93
	Spring 2021	44	139.43	124	163	74.93	57	100	55.61	0	82
	Spring 2020	47	133.75	124	162	67.27	57	114	61.45	0	84
EDU	Spring 2022	35	146.59	126	199	92.22	67	144	49.98	12	79
	Spring 2021	23	138.66	121.33	167	82.91	60	107	55.36	30	95
	Spring 2020	20	146.85	120	188	88.75	60	112	53.5	23	101
GRAINGER	Spring 2022	186	149.93	128	275	69.79	60	113	27.7	0	223
	Spring 2021	184	147.06	131	209	69.91	60	119	27.34	0	127
	Spring 2020	122	154.92	131.5	266	76.77	57	172	50.76	0	167
FAA	Spring 2022	61	147.15	124	204	88.98	60	144	55.12	0	110
	Spring 2021	50	150.61	120	227	87.69	60	162	59.29	0	140
	Spring 2020	53	146.98	121	235	84.5	57	123	57.25	0	159
MEDIA	Spring 2022	36	134.24	124	181	76.3	61	110	53.99	15	75
	Spring 2021	25	133.44	124	173	85.24	60	113	40.9	0	81
	Spring 2020	34	133.44	124	162	83.94	60	121	48.2	0	94
LAS	Spring 2022	413	135.74	120	198	77	35	128	47.69	0	99
	Spring 2021	448	135.94	120	229	76.47	48	144	48.73	0	108
	Spring 2020	471	134.91	120	216	77.11	48	144	47.78	0	141
AHS	Spring 2022	90	138.94	124	194	83.98	55	133	51.81	0	118
	Spring 2021	78	138.91	124	173	81.14	60	117	55.92	21	92
	Spring 2020	91	136.37	128	174	81.72	60	118	52.57	8	116
SOCIAL WORK	Spring 2022	24	129.55	120	176	76.45	55	154	52.93	12	88
	Spring 2021	21	127.55	120	150	69.28	60	107	58.41	13	81
	Spring 2020	21	130.21	120	154	74.23	60	99	55.73	25	101
iSCHOOL	Spring 2022	12	132.67	123	151.99	68.25	60	87	60.37	32	82.65
	Spring 2021								Data set too small to report		

\*does not include proficiency or test credit

## Top 2 transfer degree programs from each academic unit at Illinois Urbana Champaign

College	Major	Applications			Admits			Accepts			Average GPA FA23	Average # of transfer credits of Admits FA23	Minimum Core Degree Hours	Non  A  Core Degree Hours	Total Hours for Degree
		2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023					
ACES	ACE	89	100	116	68	80	117	53	55	43	3.47	58	87	33	126
ACES	ANSC	61	66	53	33	44	34	27	33	28	3.5	60	97	40	126
AHS	KIN	107	128	114	66	81	74	50	56	56	3.49	55	96	86	128
AHS	iHealth	80	70	84	51	54	52	29	36	32	3.51	48	102	63	128
BUS	Marketing	97	86	104	17	17	10	15	14	8	3.8	71	106	63	124
BUS	Finance	173	152	161	31	32	37	25	28	31	3.81	65	100	63	124
COM	Advertising	43	32	53	28	27	36	18	18	25	3.6	55	100	57	124
COM	Media & Cinema	25	29	30	11	21	21	2	13	11	3.53	53	100	67	124
EDU	Ele Ed	47	46	46	29	27	26	18	14	17	3.61	60	114	73	120
EDU	Early Child	24	35	23	10	9	9	6	7	8	3.38	71	114	73	120
ENG	Computer Sci	325	312	295	43	40	41	32	36	36	3.86	97	108	50	128
ENG	Mechanical Eng	115	108	125	33	29	44	27	28	34	3.81	67	121	54	128
FAA	Arch	45	69	65	17	35	27	12	19	14	3.34	58	100	70	120
FAA	Graphic Design	30	39	36	21	21	14	16	11	12	3.5	61	106	75	122
LAS	ECON	242	213	270	108	94	114	40	43	55	3.48	62	95	55	120
LAS	PSYC	244	291	234	123	149	117	84	85	71	3.59	58	76	32	120
SIS	IS	64	74	123	43	54	96	23	27	39	3.53	59	91	52	123
SW	Social Work	62	62	46	35	41	35	30	36	25	3.31	48	98	53	120
Total Averages											3.56	61	101	59	

October 19, 2023

Senate Committee on Educational Policy  
Office of the Senate  
228 English Bld, MC-461  
608 S. Wright St.  
Urbana, IL 61801

Dear Educational Policy Committee,

Please accept this letter as my endorsement of the proposal to reduce the current residency requirement from 60 hours to 45 hours. As Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, I have responsibility for the experience of our undergraduate students. I am mindful that I do not have “authority” over the undergraduate experience, but I am empowered and obligated to add my voice to matters that impact our undergraduate community.

In the case of the proposed change to the residency requirement, I view the proposal through the lens of the campus’ priority to expand access. The proposal itself describes the scenarios that can (and do) affect our current students’ ability to graduate; sometimes requiring students who have met all the degree requirements to enroll for another semester just to complete the residency requirement. I am aware that some students will face additional coursework to meet a proposed 45-hour residency requirement, but the new requirement would less likely impact students who transfer from community colleges, a primary point of access to the university for our state’s students from under resourced backgrounds.

Moreover, our campus leadership is prioritizing access and representation from diverse life experiences, acknowledging our institutional obligation to serve citizens of our state whose profiles differ from those we’ve historically defined as “traditional” undergraduate students. More students will have mixes of work experiences, coursework from multiple institutions, financial hardship, career change aspirations and less predictable circumstances. The proposed shift to a 45-hour residency requirement will provide needed flexibility to strategically respond to these changing contexts in ways that support our articulated access priority.

Finally, the proposal presents our residency requirement relative to our peers. I’m empathetic to concerns that we cannot (or perhaps, should not) be accessible to every student who wishes to be part of our University of Illinois undergraduate community. However, it is important that we not be less accessible than our peers. Our words may present what values we wish to reflect, but our choices reveal the values we truly hold. For

me, the proposed 45-hour residency requirement reflects our value for access and it has my full endorsement.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin E. Jackson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kevin E. Jackson

Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education





October 27, 2023

To: Brianna Gregg, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Subcommittee Chair

Brenda Lindsey, Teaching Professor, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Chair

From: Danita M. Brown Young, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

RE: Residency Requirement Proposal

Dear Brianna and Brenda,

I am writing to express my fervent support for the proposal from the Transfer Student Experience Task Group to revise the university's residency requirement for bachelor's degrees from 60 to 45 hours of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign credit. This proposal supports Student Affairs' long-standing commitment to ensuring access, equity, affordability, and success for University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign students.

As a public, land-grant University, which serves over 56,000 students annually, we are dedicated to teaching students and pioneering the science and art of learning, while tackling societal challenges and expanding the human experience in our local communities and beyond. The Transfer Student Experience Task Group's proposal is directly aligned with this mission and endeavors to ensure students are able to realize the full value of their educational experience by removing a residential barrier that may preclude them from realizing that promise.

It is without reservation that I support this revision. A residency requirement of 45 hours of UIUC credit represents an expectation of graduates that is better aligned both with numbers of major-required hours in the majority of our programs and with our Big 10 peers. Moreover, the University of Illinois has been a global leader in advancing access to higher education for students for over 150 years. We must continue to lead.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at [dbyoung@illinois.edu](mailto:dbyoung@illinois.edu) or (217) 333-1300 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Danita M. Brown Young, Ph.D.  
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

October 23, 2023

Dear Members of the Transfer Student Experience Task Force,

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences strongly supports the Transfer Student Experience Task Force's proposal to change the Campus Residency Requirement to 45 hours.

In 2006, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign changed our residency requirements from the first 90/last 30 with 45 of the last 60 at a 4-year institution to any 60 hours here. As stated in the formal Proposal to the Senate Committee on Educational Policy, said change was designed to address the degree to which the current policy's emphasis on uninterrupted UIUC study limited student choice, complicating degree progress and completion options by systematically eliminating the viability of summer and post-UIUC completion coursework at two-year institutions. Additionally, the change broadened our definition of institutional credit to include test-based credit and online and Guided Individual Study coursework, the former of which representing a relatively new instructional mode. It also sought to promote a longer stay on campus, to "mitigate against the possibility that a student could graduate from UIUC without ever setting foot on campus."

As the 2006 Proposal sought to recognize changing student educational and life needs, so, too, does the current 45-hour proposal. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is currently creating an entirely online degree program for students who have earned varying numbers of transfer credit hours but not a four-year degree, students who will never set foot on campus, many with family and work obligations. We are reportedly on the front edge of an enrollment cliff, a nationwide demographic change that will result in fewer traditional college-age young adults, a reality that obligates us to increase access and opportunity by recontextualizing our historical goals and traditions in terms of modern expectations and challenges: as such, our non-traditional and part-time populations are likely to grow even beyond that of our new degree program, and our best hope for serving them well is to revise existing rules to fit their needs and limitations, to broaden their range of choices and possibilities while continuing to safeguard our educational values.

At roughly the same time as the above change, campus announced plans to address overall undergraduate enrollment concerns by purposefully increasing the number of transfer students accepted, resulting in a greater number of such students admitted at opposite ends of the credit spectrum: those with less than 60 hours and those with more. An additional primary purpose of the 45-hour Residency proposal is to address difficulties faced by the latter cohort. Transfer students entering UIUC with more than 60 hours are technically closer to the total hour requirement, but may have to extend their stay regardless to satisfy the 60 hour residency rule, often taking electives they otherwise do not need in order to do so, a practice that can cause multiple problems, including financial hardship at a time when many students seek to finish in less than four years given skyrocketing educational and living expenses. Additionally, such

students may have to delay graduate school and employment opportunities in order to address otherwise unnecessary course requirements, effectively delaying opportunities for meaningful personal growth.

The College of LAS is increasingly aware of the ways our rules, regulations, and policies can unintentionally and disproportionately affect under-represented minorities negatively. Such students begin their college-level experiences at other institutions for a variety of reasons, such as more affordable costs, continued closeness to home and family, and increased employment options. These are talented, deserving students for whom additional time and expense may ultimately render their UIUC dreams unattainable. Our commitment to these students is founded on the belief that diversity, equity, and inclusion are always more than buzzwords or ostentatious displays of desirable mindsets. We are also cognizant of our responsibility as a land grant university to be truly accessible. This requires constant vigilance, honest institutional self-assessment, and evaluation to make sure all of our students have access to the opportunities we provide.

Sincerely,



Venetria K. Patton  
Harry E. Preble Dean

October 25, 2023

Dear Dr. Brenda Lindsey,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposal to reduce the University of Illinois residency requirements from 60 to 45 credit hours. I believe this change is crucial for the success of our transfer students and will enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of our institution.

As an alumnus of the University of Illinois and an advocate for higher education, I have witnessed the challenges faced by transfer students who wish to complete their degrees. The current residency requirement of 60 credit hours can be a barrier, potentially extending the time it takes for transfer students to graduate and potentially adding to their financial burdens. By reducing this requirement to 45 credit hours, the University of Illinois can provide a more flexible and accommodating environment for students seeking to achieve their academic goals.

I believe that the University of Illinois has always strived to provide an excellent education while fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students. By reducing the residency requirement, the university can further its commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, demonstrating that it values the diverse pathways that students take to achieve their academic goals.

I strongly encourage the faculty senate to approve this proposal to reduce the residency requirements from 60 to 45 credit hours. By doing so, the university will make a significant and positive impact on the lives of transfer students, creating a more inclusive and supportive academic environment.

Sincerely,



Germán Bollero, Professor and Dean

Brianna Gregg  
Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs  
College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences  
Transfer Student Experience Task Force Subcommittee Chair

Brenda Lindsey  
Teaching Professor  
Transfer Student Experience Task Force Chair

September 29, 2023

Subject: Support for Residency Requirement Revision Proposal

Dear Brianna and Brenda,

I am writing on behalf of the School of Social Work to endorse the proposal put forth by the Transfer Student Experience Task Group to amend the university's residency requirement for bachelor's degrees. This recommendation suggests reducing the current 60-hour requirement to 45 hours of UIUC credit, aligning with our institution's values of equity, access, and affordability. This adjustment not only harmonizes with most our program's major-required hours but also brings us in line with our esteemed peers in the Big 10.

The proposal highlights several challenges related to the existing residency requirement that we have encountered, which necessitate this change. These challenges affect our students' time to degree completion and financial burden in several ways:

First, our BSW and iBSW programs require 53 major credit hours. If a student transfers in having completed their general education requirements, they could meet all major degree requirements and yet fall short of the mandatory 60 residency hours. This discrepancy not only extends their time to degree completion but also significantly increases the cost to students by at least 7 credit hours. Students transferring from other accredited BSW programs face even greater challenges. If they have fulfilled most or all their general education requirements and completed some BSW courses before transferring, they may also need to take 7 or more credit hours to meet the 60 required residency hours.

Second, some students find it advantageous to complete non-major degree required courses, such as language courses, at a community college like Parkland College. However, the current residency requirement acts as a barrier for students who wish to do this. For instance, UIUC mandates the completion of 3 levels of language (or 3 semesters) as a degree requirement. Many transfer students, particularly those returning after a break from school, excel at community colleges for these language courses. Yet, the residency requirement restricts them

from pursuing this option. Those who choose community college for language studies are forced to spend additional time and money on additional courses to meet the residency requirement.

In addition, the proposed reduction from 60 to 45 hours of UIUC coursework aligns with best practices advocated by the Higher Learning Commission and mirrors the policies of peer institutions within the Big 10. It recognizes that each student's journey is unique and allows for flexibility in program completion. This adjustment not only benefits transfer students who come in with more than 60 applicable hours but also opens doors for prospective transfer athletes, making Illinois a more attractive option. Moreover, it ensures the authenticity of an Illinois degree for those students who meet their major requirements upon transfer.

In summary, we support the recommendation to adjust the residency requirement to 45 hours. It would alleviate the challenges faced by transfer students coming into our program and will bring UIUC in line with its peers. We believe this change will enhance the educational experience for all students and uphold our commitment to equity, access, and affordability.

Sincerely,



**BENJAMIN J. LOUGH, PHD, LCSW**

*Professor and Dean* | School of Social Work

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
1010 W. Nevada | M/C 082  
Urbana, IL 61801  
217.244.5242 | [bjlough@illinois.edu](mailto:bjlough@illinois.edu)





**COLLEGE OF APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES**

Office of the Dean  
110 Huff Hall, MC-586  
1206 S. Fourth St.  
Champaign, IL 61820

October 26, 2023

To: Brianna Gregg, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Subcommittee Chair

Brenda Lindsey, Teaching Professor, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Chair

From: Carla Santos, College of Applied Health Sciences

RE: Residency Requirement Proposal

Dear Brianna and Brenda,

On behalf of the College of Applied Health Sciences, I write to express support for the proposal from the Transfer Student Experience Task Group to revise the university's residency requirement for bachelor's degrees from 60 to 45 hours of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign credit. The proposal supports College of Applied Health Sciences values of equity, access, and affordability. A residency requirement of 45 hours of UIUC credit represents an expectation of graduates that is better aligned both with numbers of major-required hours in many of our programs and with our Big 10 peers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Carla Santos'.

Carla Santos  
Interim Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Graduate Affairs  
Professor, Department of Recreation, Sport, and Tourism  
College of Applied Health Sciences



UNIVERSITY OF  
**ILLINOIS**  
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**College of Education**

Undergraduate Student Academic Affairs Office  
110 Education Building, MC-708  
1310 S. Sixth St.  
Champaign, IL 61820

Date: October 31, 2023

To: Brianna Gregg, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Subcommittee Chair

Brenda Lindsey, Teaching Professor, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Chair

From: Sarah McCarthy, Interim Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs  
RE: Residency Requirement Proposal

Dear Brianna and Brenda,

On behalf of the College of Education, I write to express enthusiastic support for the proposal from the Transfer Student Experience Task Group to revise the university's residency requirement for bachelor's degrees from 60 to 45 hours of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign credit. The proposal supports the College's values of equity, access, and affordability. A residency requirement of 45 hours of UIUC credit represents an expectation of graduates that is aligned with the majority of our programs and with our Big 10 peers.

Sincerely,

Sarah J. McCarthy  
Sheila M. Miller Professor of Education  
Interim Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs  
College of Education  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
1310 S Sixth Street  
Champaign, IL 61820  
(217) 244 1149  
[mccarthe@illinois.edu](mailto:mccarthe@illinois.edu)



October 31, 2023

To: Brianna Gregg, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Subcommittee Chair

Brenda Lindsey, Teaching Professor, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Chair

From: Nehemiah Scott, Gies College of Business

RE: Residency Requirement Proposal

Dear Brianna and Brenda,

I am writing on behalf of the Gies College of Business to support the proposal from the Transfer Student Experience Task Group to revise the university's residency requirement for bachelor's degrees from 60 to 45 hours of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign credit. The proposal is aligned with our institution's values of equity, access, and affordability. It is also better aligned with the residency requirements of our Big 10 peers.

Broadly speaking, we recognize that a reduction in the residency requirement from 60 to 45 hours can expand access across campus as potentially measured by number of learners, educational opportunity, academic pathways to success, educational support, quality demand, and diversity. If access can be expanded, there can also be an increased opportunity to ensure student educational experiences result in successful student outcomes for transfer students. As our institution continues its success as a preeminent research university, we must acknowledge and tend to the things serving as barriers to learning, discovery, economic development, and engagement. Within the context of this proposal, a residency requirement barrier to access could increase the time to graduation and increase the financial burden for any transfer student, while also having a disproportionate impact on transfer students from underrepresented minority groups, less privileged socioeconomic backgrounds, and under-resourced high schools.

At Gies, we aim to shape our students into purposeful leaders through life-changing access to education, research, and innovation. In kind, we are proponents of removing barriers that may negatively impact students' ability to navigate through academic pursuits. In happily supporting this proposal to reduce the residency requirements from 60 to 45 hours, we remain in line with the purpose, commitments, and beliefs of the Gies College of Business, while also remaining aligned with the land-grant mission of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and its continued focus on making the university education accessible to all students.

Sincerely,

Nehemiah Scott  
Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs  
Teaching Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration  
Gies College of Business

October 19, 2023

To: Brianna Gregg, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Subcommittee Chair  
Brenda Lindsey, Teaching Professor, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Chair

From: Student Academic Affairs, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Re: Residency Requirement Proposal

Dear Brianna and Brenda,

**The Student Academic Affairs Office of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences strongly supports the Transfer Student Experience Task Force’s proposal to change the Campus Residency Requirement to 45 hours.**

In 2006, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign changed our residency requirements from the first 90/last 30 with 45 of the last 60 at a 4-year institution to any 60 hours here. As stated in the formal Proposal to the Senate Committee on Educational Policy, said change was designed to address the degree to which the current policy’s emphasis on uninterrupted UIUC study limited student choice, complicating degree progress and completion options by systematically eliminating the viability of summer and post-UIUC completion coursework at two-year institutions. It also sought to promote a longer stay on campus, to “mitigate against the possibility that a student could graduate from UIUC without ever setting foot on campus.”

As the 2006 Proposal sought to recognize changing student educational and life needs, so, too, does the current 45-hour proposal.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is currently creating an entirely online degree program for students who have earned varying numbers of transfer credit hours but not a four-year degree, students who will never set foot on campus, many with family and work obligations. We are on the front edge of an enrollment cliff, a nationwide demographic change that will result in fewer traditional college-age young adults, a reality that obligates us to increase access and opportunity by recontextualizing our historical goals and traditions in terms of modern expectations and challenges: as such, our non-traditional and part-time populations are likely to grow even beyond that of our new degree program, and our best hope for serving them well is to retailor existing rules to fit their needs and limitations, to broaden their range of choices and possibilities while continuing to safeguard our educational values.

At roughly the same time as the above change, campus announced plans to address overall undergraduate enrollment concerns by purposefully increasing the number of transfer students accepted, resulting in a greater number of such students admitted at opposite ends of the credit spectrum: those with less than 60 hours and those with more. Additionally, the University of Illinois Transfer Guarantee for AY 2022-23 now ensures admission to transfers enrolled at an Illinois community college after graduating from an Illinois high school if they earn at least 36 graded transferable semester hours with a minimum GPA of 3.0 in all transferable coursework completed and satisfy the university's English language proficiency requirement.

In response to the resultant rise in transfer numbers, especially for students entering with more than 60 hours completed, an additional primary purpose of the 45-hour Residency Proposal is to address difficulties faced by the latter cohort.

- Such students are technically closer to the total hour requirement but may have to extend their stay regardless to satisfy the 60-hour residency rule, often taking otherwise unnecessary electives.
- The latter practice can cause multiple problems: financial hardship at a time when many students seek to finish in less than four years given skyrocketing educational and living expenses
- Additionally, such students may have to delay graduate school and employment opportunities in order to address otherwise unnecessary course requirements, effectively delaying opportunities for meaningful personal growth.

Our office is increasingly aware of the ways our rules, regulations, and policies can unintentionally and disproportionately affect minority and international transfer students negatively. These are talented, deserving students for whom additional time and expenses may ultimately render their UIUC dreams unattainable. Our commitment to these students is founded on the belief that diversity, equity, and inclusion are always more than buzzwords or ostentatious displays of desirable mindsets: they are recognition of our global interdependence, of the life-altering power of difference, collaboration, varying perspectives and experiences, the true meaning of the universal. Equally fundamental to the broader goals of our ongoing land grant mission, such beliefs require constant vigilance, honest institutional self-assessment and evaluation to make sure all of our students have access to the opportunities we provide.

Sincerely,



Dr. Isabel Molina-Guzmán (Associate Dean)  
Robert Steltman (Executive Assistant Dean), Gretchen Pein (Assistant Dean), Jonathan Elugbadebo (Associate Director of Recruitment & Admissions), Kristy Valentin (Senior Director, LAS Access and Achievement Program), Darrell Hunter II (Director, First-Year Experience)



UNIVERSITY OF  
**ILLINOIS**  
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**College of Media**

Student Services Center  
18 Gregory Hall, MC-477  
810 S. Wright St.  
Urbana, IL 61801

October 24, 2023

To: Brianna Gregg, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Subcommittee Chair

Brenda Lindsey, Teaching Professor, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Chair

From: Katie Clark, College of Media

RE: Residency Requirement Proposal

Dear Brianna and Brenda,

On behalf of the College of Media, I write to express enthusiastic support for the proposal from the Transfer Student Experience Task Group to revise the university's residency requirement for bachelor's degrees from 60 to 45 hours of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign credit. The proposal supports the College of Media values of equity, access, and affordability. A residency requirement of 45 hours of UIUC credit represents an expectation of graduates that is better aligned both with numbers of major-required hours in the majority of our programs and with our Big 10 peers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn E. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Clark  
Associate Dean for Student Services  
College of Media



**COLLEGE OF FINE & APPLIED ARTS**

Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
110 Architecture Building, MC-622  
608 East Lorado Taft Drive  
Champaign, IL 61820

October 31, 2023

To: Brianna Gregg, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Subcommittee Chair

Brenda Lindsey, Teaching Professor, Transfer Student Experience Task Force Chair

From: Zelda Gardner, FAA Academic Affairs

RE: Residency Requirement Proposal

Dear Brianna and Brenda,

On behalf of the College of Fine & Applied Arts Office of Undergraduate Affairs, I write to express support for the proposal from the Transfer Student Experience Task Group to revise the university's residency requirement for bachelor's degrees from 60 to 45 hours of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign credit. The proposal supports our values of equity, access, and affordability. A residency requirement of 45 hours of UIUC credit represents an expectation of graduates that is better aligned both with numbers of major-required hours in the majority of our programs and with our Big 10 peers.

In conferring with our FAA Advisory Council, we could not identify a reason not to support this proposal. This change would benefit transfer students who may come with more than 60 hours and allows them to focus their time on required courses versus electives. We understand that this policy does not impact the student's core requirements for their program of study and believe that the 45-hour credit requirement still upholds the authenticity of a degree from UIUC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zelda', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Zelda Gardner  
Associate Dean of Undergraduate Affairs  
College of Fine & Applied Arts

Mitch Ryba  
Mryba4@illinois.edu  
10/30/2023

Dr. Brenda Lindsey, Chair  
Transfer Student Experience Task Force  
University of Illinois Urbana Champaign  
Urbana, IL 61801

Subject: Letter of Support for Adjusting Illinois Residency Requirement

Dear Dr. Lindsey and the Transfer Student Experience Task Force,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposal to decrease the residency requirement for Illinois transfer students from 60 to 45 credit hours. As an Illinois transfer student currently enrolled in the Community Health program with a focus on Health Education in the BS-MPH program at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, I have firsthand experience of the challenges and limitations the current residency requirement imposes.

Being a first-generation student, the first in my family to graduate high school, my journey in higher education has been both a source of pride and a pathway to my aspirations in student affairs and higher education. My story underscores the myriad reasons why students choose to transfer, which includes seeking specialized programs, exploring new opportunities, facing financial constraints, or fulfilling personal commitments. The current 60 credit hour residency requirement often acts as an additional hurdle in our pursuit of educational advancement.

Advocating for a reduction in the residency requirement to 45 credit hours offers more course flexibility for transfer students like me, aligning better with our academic and career aspirations. The current requirement often leads to unnecessary time, energy, and financial drain. Easing this allows for focused attention on key courses, promoting on-time graduation and smoother transitions into work or further education.

Moreover, a lowered residency requirement enhances both academic and co-curricular experiences. It provides extra freedom to explore electives and partake in campus activities, enriching our education and fostering a lively campus atmosphere.

Additionally, this alleviation can positively impact our mental and emotional well-being. Transitioning to a new educational setting is overwhelming, worsened by the pressure to meet the hefty residency requirement. A reduction would offer more time for acclimating, building

social networks, and accessing support services, fostering a smoother transition, a stronger sense of community, and contributing to our mental health and academic success.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the university to seriously consider reducing the residency requirement for Illinois transfer students from 60 to 45 credit hours. This change would greatly benefit transfer students like myself, providing us with increased flexibility, academic opportunities, and a more supportive and inclusive university environment. I genuinely believe that this improvement would contribute to the overall success and satisfaction of transfer students, leading to a stronger university community as a whole.

Thank you for considering my perspective and taking the time to review this letter.

With Illini Pride,

*Mitch Ryba*

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

College of Applied Health Sciences | Community Health BS-MPH

Counseling Center Paraprofessional | Communication and Collaborations Manager

Gender & Sexuality Resource Center | Community Advocate Intern

Student Success Undergraduate Advisory Board | Board Member

NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program (NUFP)

Stephanie Wayda  
swayda2@illinois.edu  
31 October 2023

Dr. Brenda Lindsey, Chair  
Transfer Student Experience Task Force  
University of Illinois Urbana Champaign  
Urbana, IL 61801

Subject: Letter of Support for Adjusting Illinois Residency Requirement

Dear Dr. Lindsey and the Transfer Student Experience Task Force,

I am writing to express my strong support for decreasing the residency requirement for Illinois transfer students from 60 to 45 credit hours. As an Illinois transfer student currently enrolled in journalism, I have personally experienced the challenges and limitations that the current residency requirement presents through my fellow transfer students. I've seen how my friends have to take extra semesters to fulfill their credits because no consistent summer journalism courses are offered. I've seen my friends struggle to balance work to pay for rent, school, and other necessities while balancing their schoolwork. I'm fortunate to have had a community college that made transferring a priority and set us up for success. I'm also fortunate to have worked during my time at community college and have saved up for these two years to focus on my studies. The transfer community in journalism is small, but we are supportive of each other in this niche experience we share. The people I've gotten to know have contributed greatly to this university and the journalism program, bringing new perspectives and people from across the country, if not the world. Without their ability to transfer to this institution, these necessary and diverse perspectives would be lost. Easing their ability and future students' ability to transfer, especially to the journalism program, would continue this university's ability to uphold the values of enhancing the lives of citizens in Illinois, creating leaders, and more.

I have personally been able to make a strong impact on the broader community through reporting on underserved communities such as Garden Hills and exploring the local impacts of national issues. Through this school, I have been on the Homecoming Court, attained the Roger Ebert Fellowship, performed social outreach for the Illinois Film and Video Club, was invited to the Sierra Leone documentary film class, and more. I've also struggled with many things while transferring to the university, such as figuring out the social aspect of college and the many academic opportunities in such a short time. In my reflection, I'm proud to be a transfer student and be an example to other transfer students that they can succeed here at this university and their experience is valued and welcomed. Therefore, I strongly believe that reducing this requirement would greatly benefit the overall transfer student community.

Transferring from one educational institution to another is a crucial step in our academic journey. Many students, including myself, decide to transfer for various reasons, such as seeking specialized programs, exploring new opportunities, facing financial constraints, or fulfilling personal commitments. Nevertheless, the current 60 credit hours of residency requirement makes it an extra hoop for transfer students to complete when we are already focused on the specific degree curriculum.

Additionally, decreasing the residency requirement can have a positive impact on the mental and emotional well-being of transfer students. Transitioning to a new university can be overwhelming and challenging, particularly when coupled with the pressure of fulfilling the extensive residency requirement. By reducing this requirement, transfer students would be able to dedicate more time to acclimating to their new environment, establishing social connections, and accessing support services. This would undoubtedly contribute to a smoother transition and a greater sense of belonging, ultimately improving the overall mental health and academic success of transfer students.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the university to seriously consider reducing the residency requirement for Illinois transfer students from 60 to 45 credit hours. This change would greatly benefit transfer students like myself, providing us with increased flexibility, academic opportunities, and a more supportive and inclusive university environment. I genuinely believe that this improvement would contribute to the overall success and satisfaction of transfer students, leading to a stronger university community as a whole.

Thank you for considering my perspective and taking the time to review this letter.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Wayda

Ryan Waldinger  
rw22@illinois.edu  
10/30/2023

Dr. Brenda Lindsey, Chair  
Transfer Student Experience Task Force  
University of Illinois Urbana Champaign  
Urbana, IL 61801

Subject: Letter of Support for Adjusting Illinois Residency Requirement

Dear Dr. Lindsey and the Transfer Student Experience Task Force,

I am writing to express my strong support for decreasing the residency requirement for Illinois transfer students from 60 to 45 credit hours. As an Illinois transfer student currently enrolled in Agricultural and Consumer Economics in the College of ACES, I have personally experienced the challenges and limitations that the current residency requirement presents. The residency requirement has been a continual barrier not only to my path at a timely graduation but also in my pursuit for engaging activities on and off campus, career planning, and my pursuit of academic opportunities within my degree curriculum and interests. These challenges are not unique to me, as I have learned repeatedly in conversation with peers and even my own roommates. Therefore, I strongly support this adjustment and believe that reducing this requirement would greatly benefit the overall transfer student community.

When I started my academic journey at the University of Missouri, I was enamored with campus life, collaboration with peers, and the unique opportunity of having a diverse pool of subjects and classes to learn from. However, once the pandemic interrupted my freshman year, I was unable to find stability in those experiences again and felt the need for a fresh start. Getting into the College of ACES and being able to start fresh was a great accomplishment and huge relief for me. After settling into my workload and residency requirement, it became clear my excitement and relief had to be tempered with the expectation that I would need to make sacrifices in my schedule to stay on track for graduation. While my experiences at the university in the years since that big life change have been rewarding, the residency requirement hindered my ability to make lasting connections in extracurricular activities and expand my experience in my field outside of the classroom.

When it comes to graduation, the residency requirement also proved to be a persistent hurdle in my pursuit for a speedy undergraduate timeline. Even with 72 hours completed towards my degree and sophomore standing going into my first semester at UIUC, I had another 60 hours to go, putting me on track for 132 total hours, or a full semester course load more than the degree requirement (120 hours). As I watched my classmates and friends I had met through the university walk the stage at Krannert and post their 2023 graduation pictures, I could not help but feel a bit left behind in all the fun and excitement for the future. Without the residency

requirement, I would have been able to graduate along with my peers and use my knowledge and skills I gained at the university in a meaningful career.

For developing my professional experiences, the residency requirement proved to be challenging as I had to spend more time on coursework. One of the most difficult experiences from my time in college came recently when planning my last semester at UIUC. While I had all my degree courses completed, I had to fill my schedule with two more courses to fulfill the residency requirement. As a student who depends on part time work to pay for my food and housing, I did not have time to do more classes along with my current schedule and an independent work study I and a professor had agreed upon the previous semester. My advisor told me I'd have to either give up my off-campus job or my research to take a class that fulfilled the requirement, and suggested I try a yoga or cycling course. While I was luckily able to resolve this issue and maintain my prior commitments thanks to help from the Assistant Dean of Student Services Brianna Gregg, I was incredibly frustrated. Under the current system, the residency requirement could have prevented me from gaining valuable applied experience with a professor outside of the classroom and cost me my ability to sustain a living attending UIUC.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the university to seriously consider reducing the residency requirement for Illinois transfer students from 60 to 45 credit hours. This change would greatly benefit transfer students like me, providing us with increased flexibility, academic opportunities, and building lasting connections and experiences outside of the classroom. I genuinely believe that this improvement would contribute to the overall success and satisfaction of transfer students, leading to a stronger university community as a whole.

Thank you for considering my perspective and taking the time to review this letter.

Sincerely,

Ryan Waldinger

October 31, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

We appreciate the effort and work undertaken by the Transfer Student Experience Task Group and support the overarching goal of increasing access for transfer students seeking to earn a degree from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

While making this change, we hope the opportunity is taken to increase the transparency of our policies by articulating the difference between the minimum credit hours to satisfy the residency requirement, being modified here, and that needed to complete individual program degree requirements.

For bachelor's degrees offered in The Grainger College of Engineering, it is unlikely that transfer students would be able to transfer enough coursework to complete degree requirements within the 45-hour residency minimum. Additionally, pre-requisite sequences and course availability make it unlikely that degree requirements could be completed with only 45 hours of credit after transfer. The revised policy should be written in a way to minimize the potential for confusion and dissatisfaction among transfer students, who may be unaware that they still may need to complete more than 45 hours after transfer to earn their degree.

Sincerely,



Jonathan J. Makela  
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs, The Grainger College of Engineering  
Abel Bliss Professor of Engineering, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering