COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
January 15, 2026

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS ITEM A: <u>**Academic Programs for Expedited Action**</u>

Staff Recommendation That the Commission for Higher Education approve the following certificate and degree programs, in accordance with the background information provided in this agenda item:

Indiana State University
- Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education (On Campus Only)

Ivy Tech Community College
IT Program Realignment
- <u>Information Infrastructure & Operations</u>
    - Certificate (CT) in Information Technology Infrastructure & Operations (On Campus and Online)
    - Technical Certificate (TC) in Information Technology & Operations (On Campus and Online)

- <u>Information Systems & Analytics</u>
    - Certificate (CT) in Information Systems & Analytics (On Campus and Online)

New Applied Artificial Intelligence Pathway
- <u>Applied Artificial Intelligence</u>
    - Professional Certificate (CT) in Applied Artificial Intelligence (On Campus and Online)
    - Technical Certificate (TC) in Applied Artificial Intelligence (On Campus and Online)
    - Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) in Artificial Intelligence by Ivy Tech Community College (On Campus and Online)

Background The Academic Affairs and Quality Committee discussed these degree programs and certain certificate programs at its December 15, 2025 meeting and concluded that the proposed programs could be placed on the January 15, 2026 agenda for action by the Commission as an expedited action item.

Supporting Document Academic Degree Programs on Which Staff Propose Expedited Action

CHE 25-25   **Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education to be offered by Indiana State University**

Proposal received on November 19, 2025

CIP Code: 13.1210 – Early Childhood Education and Teaching

Fifth Year Projected Enrollment: Headcount – 80, FTE – 85
Fifth Year Projected Degrees Conferred: 18

The proposed Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education (ECE) would be offered on campus by the Bayh College of Education (Bayh College) at Indiana State University. It requires the customary 120 credit hours to complete.

The degree would fill a specialty gap in the Bayh College's portfolio of teacher preparation programs. However, no new full-time faculty or facilities are necessary given preexisting ECE coursework. The university's Minor in Early Childhood Education is the most popular minor in the Bayh College and the second most popular minor across the entire university. Faculty believe a critical mass of current and prospective elementary education students wish to focus their teacher licensure preparation on the early grades, preschool through third grade (P-3), whereas the remainder, approximately two-thirds of current enrollment, are more focused on fourth grade through middle school. The Bayh College currently has graduate offerings in this area including an Early Childhood Education Transition to Teaching Certificate, an Early Childhood Education Leadership Graduate Certificate, and an ECE concentration in its M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning. All other state four-year institution main campuses, including some regional campuses, offer an ECE baccalaureate program. If approved by the Commission, the degree program would require Indiana State Board of Education approval as a teacher preparation program subject to state teacher licensure standards for P-3. Program design also aligns with standards from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC).

Licensed educators are a high-demand and societally vital occupation statewide. In many regions of the state, particularly rural, there are acute shortages of ECE professionals for both school and childcare settings. Preexisting partnerships with regional school corporations and childcare providers, in addition to area employer and community stakeholder input, indicate a professional ECE workforce shortage is severely constraining capacity in the university's general service area.

This program would prepare teachers for licensure in P-3; it would also prepare educators and administrators for childcare centers. The Indiana Department of Workforce Development's 'Indiana Top Jobs' rates Kindergarten Teachers (3-Star), Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten (3-Star), Special Education Teachers, Preschool (3-Star), Preschool Teachers (2-Star), Education Administrators, Preschool and Childcare Center/Program (3-Star), Special Education Teachers, Elementary School (3-Star), and, Elementary School Teachers (3-Star), which is also a U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics O*Net 'Bright Outlook' occupation. Overall, the faculty anticipates strong job placement and in-state graduate retention.

The curriculum requires 59 credit hours in sequential, cohort-based coursework and structured field experience (at least 12 credit hours). The faculty posits a distinguishing, innovative feature of the program is a two-course, 6-credit hour sequence in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics (STEAM) pedagogy to holistically foster creativity, critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving for developing young children. These courses are new. The age and developmentally appropriate deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based learning tools, educational games, and curricula will be introduced and analyzed. Another notable feature is a four-course, 12-credit hour sequence in Science of Reading-based early literacy coursework complemented by the reading components in early field experiences (2 credit hours) and student teaching (10 credit hours). Students must also produce a Teacher Work Sample for a capstone course, integrating their upper-division coursework and student teaching experience. Opened in Fall 2025, the on-campus Jan McCarthy Early Childhood Education Center, which serves the surrounding community, provides state-of-the-art facilities for experiential training and course practicum.

While there is no work-based learning requirement, students must complete at least 12 credit hours in structured field experiences, including supervised student teaching in employer-based settings. Coursework includes career pathway exposure and exploration; the faculty and university career services will facilitate employer interaction. Complementary options involving experiential learning include career-relevant minors, such as Special Education. Growing partnerships will provide structured field and service-based learning opportunities with area partners and employers, such as the Vigo County School Corporation, various private schools, Head Start, childcare centers, public libraries, and the Terre Haute Children's Museum.

Instruction will be on campus upon launch, but the faculty are exploring evening classes to better serve adult learners as well as hybrid modalities. Accelerated delivery is an option; undergraduate students can complete the degree in three years with heavy course loads. An embedded, stackable ECE certificate is also being explored to facilitate access for incumbent ECE workers. In addition to current institutional policies on credit for prior learning, faculty are interested in exploring industry-recognized credential crosswalks, such as credit for the Child Development Associate (CDA) certification and portfolio assessment credit for professional experience in childcare center settings. Transfer students have a 2+2 TSAP option through the A.S. in Early Childhood Education at Ivy Tech Community College and Vincennes University.

CHE 25-26   **Certificate in Information Technology Infrastructure & Operations to be offered by Ivy Tech Community College**

Proposal received on November 21, 2025

CIP Code: 11.1001 – Network and System Administration/Administrator

Fifth Year Projected Enrollment: Headcount – 1,002
Fifth Year Projected Degrees Conferred: 521

The proposed Certificate (CT) in Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure & Operations would be offered by the School of Information Technology (School of IT) at Ivy Tech Community College (ITCC) both on campus and online statewide. It requires 18 credit hours to complete.

This CT program and its corresponding Technical Certificate (TC) in Information Technology Infrastructure & Operations (see 'Expedited Item CHE 25-27') are the results of a strategic program realignment by the School of IT to streamline offerings through consolidation. They are sequenced, embedded stackable credentials. The creation of this consolidated pathway accompanies the suspension of five certificate programs (2 CTs and 3 TCs) in October 2025 as well as forthcoming suspensions.

The new CT-TC sequence provides students with foundational skills to pursue entry-level IT careers and more specialized IT study. It will provide a unified entry point to four preexisting associate degree programs: 1) IT Support, 2) Cybersecurity/Information Assurance, 3) Cloud Technologies, and 4) Network Infrastructure. Preexisting pathways were functionally siloed, resulting in students often changing their majors, slowing their studies, and accumulating undistributed credits. Instead, this new unified pathway provides foundational knowledge and skills while providing career exposure and exploration across the four corresponding IT specializations. After completing the CT-TC sequence, a student may then easily pursue any one of the four fully articulated associate degrees whereas before these transitions were less smooth. The new CT-TC sequence harnesses planned operational efficiencies and synergies. IT program marketing is expected to be simpler and more straightforward in addition to academic and career advising. Since most coursework was shared across the consolidated CTs and TCs, this should also optimize the utilization of faculty, classrooms, and labs.

Learning objectives, skills, competencies and the embedded industry certification, according to faculty, correspond with multiple occupations rated highly by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development's Indiana Top Jobs: Computer Network Support Specialists (4-Star); Computer User Support Specialists (3-Star); Computer Network Architects (4-Star); Network & Computer Systems Administrators (4-Star); and, Information Security Analysts (4-Star). ITCC anticipates strong job placement and in-state graduate retention.

The curriculum includes a first-year student success course common to all ITCC programs but specific to IT. Students must complete multiple fundamentals courses, introductory courses for informatics, networking, and cybersecurity, and a culminating workforce preparation course for the

CompTIA A+ certification exam. This starting point industry-recognized certification enables entry into the IT support workforce, which will be assisted by faculty advising and Ivy+ Career Link coaching. A work-based learning requirement would add time and cost for adult learners but these experiences are recommended and facilitated. Required coursework includes mandatory experiential learning through problem-solving labs and simulations. Opportunities for credit for prior learning toward required coursework include cross-walking industry-recognized certifications and Indiana's Next Level Programs of Study Career & Technical Education courses in IT and computing.

CHE 25-27   Technical Certificate in Information Technology Infrastructure & Operations to be offered by Ivy Tech Community College

Proposal received on November 21, 2025

CIP Code: 11.1001 – Network and System Administration/Administrator

Fifth Year Projected Enrollment: Headcount – 1,002
Fifth Year Projected Degrees Conferred: 521

The proposed Technical Certificate (TC) in Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure & Operations would be offered by the School of Information Technology (School of IT) at Ivy Tech Community College (ITCC) both on campus and online statewide. It requires 32 credit hours to complete.

This TC program and its corresponding feeder credential, the CT in Information Technology Infrastructure & Operations (see 'Expedited Item CHE 25-26'), are the results of a strategic program realignment by the School of IT to streamline offerings through consolidation. They are sequenced, embedded stackable credentials. The creation of this consolidated pathway accompanies the suspension of five certificate programs (2 CTs and 3 TCs) in October 2025 as well as forthcoming suspensions.

The TC builds on the pathway's foundational skills to pursue entry-level IT careers with more advanced coursework. The new CT-TC sequence provides a unified entry point to four preexisting associate degree programs: 1) IT Support, 2) Cybersecurity/Information Assurance, 3) Cloud Technologies, and 4) Network Infrastructure. Preexisting pathways were functionally siloed, resulting in students often changing their majors and slowing their studies. Instead, this new unified pathway provides foundational knowledge and skills while providing career exposure and exploration across the four corresponding IT specializations. After completing the CT-TC sequence, a student may then easily pursue any one of the four fully articulated associate degrees whereas before these transitions were less smooth. The new CT-TC sequence harnesses planned operational efficiencies and synergies. IT program marketing is expected to be simpler and more straightforward as well as academic and career advising. Since most coursework was shared across the consolidated CTs and TCs, this should optimize the utilization of faculty, classrooms, and labs.

Learning objectives, skills, competencies and the industry certifications, according to faculty, correspond with multiple occupations rated highly by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development's Indiana Top Jobs: Computer Network Support Specialists (4-Star); Computer User Support Specialists (3-Star); Computer Network Architects (4-Star); Network & Computer Systems Administrators (4-Star); Information Security Analysts (4-Star); and, Information Security Engineers (5-Star). ITCC anticipates strong job placement and in-state graduate retention.

The curriculum builds off the CT's coursework in the fundamentals of informatics, networking, and cybersecurity and the CompTIA A+ certification, advancing into other certifications, Linux, enterprise computing, and professional communication (coursework toward the articulated associate degrees). Mandatory certification courses include CompTIA Network+ and CompTIA

Security+. A work-based learning requirement would add time and cost for adult learners but these experiences are recommended and facilitated; coursework includes mandatory experiential learning through problem-solving labs and simulations. Opportunities for credit for prior learning toward required coursework include cross-walking industry-recognized certifications and Indiana's Next Level Programs of Study Career & Technical Education courses in IT and computing.

CHE 25-28   Certificate in Information Systems & Analytics to be offered by Ivy Tech Community College

Proposal received on November 21, 2025

CIP Code: 11.0199 – Computer and Information Sciences, Other

Fifth Year Projected Enrollment: Headcount – 367
Fifth Year Projected Degrees Conferred: 191

The proposed Certificate (CT) in Information Systems & Analytics would be offered by the School of Information Technology (School of IT) at Ivy Tech Community College (ITCC) both on campus and online statewide. It requires 20 credit hours to complete.

This CT program is the result of a strategic program realignment by the School of IT to streamline offerings through consolidation. It articulates to sequenced, embedded stackable credentials. The creation of this consolidated pathway accompanies the October 2025 suspension of five certificate programs—2 CTs and 3 Technical Certificates (TC)—and forthcoming suspensions. It was also designed to complement two proposed credentials (see below).

The new CT provides students foundational technical knowledge and skills in data analytics, cloud technologies, artificial intelligence, and software development. It also serves as a unified entry point to three preexisting TCs and corresponding associate degree programs: 1) Software Development, 2) Data Analytics, and 3) Informatics. The TC and A.A.S. in Informatics are under curricular revision. The proposed CT also articulates with the proposed TC and A.A.S. in Applied Artificial Intelligence (see Expedited Items CH 25-30 and CH 25-31, respectively). Preexisting pathways were functionally siloed, resulting in students often changing their majors and slowing their studies. Instead, this new unified pathway provides foundational knowledge and skills while providing career exposure and exploration across the four above corresponding IT specializations. The new CT harnesses planned operational efficiencies and synergies. Given the versatility of this certificate, marketing is expected to be simpler and more straightforward as well as academic and career advising. Since most coursework was shared across the consolidated CTs and TCs, this should optimize the utilization of faculty, classrooms, and labs.

Learning objectives, skills, competencies and the embedded industry certifications, according to faculty, correspond with multiple occupations rated highly by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development's Indiana Top Jobs: Web Developers (4-Star); Software Developers (5-Star); Computer Programmers (3-Star); Web Administrators (5-Star); Data Warehousing Specialists (4-Star); Database Administrators (4-Star); and, Business Intelligence Analysts (5-Star). ITCC anticipates strong job placement and in-state graduate retention.

The curriculum includes a first-year student success course common to all ITCC programs but specific to IT. Students must complete multiple fundamentals courses, including options across introductory courses for artificial intelligence, informatics, software development, cloud technologies, and data analytics. Mandatory workforce preparation courses include certification

exams in CompTIA Cloud+, AWS Cloud Practitioner, and AWS AI Practitioner. A work-based learning requirement would add time and cost for adult learners but these experiences are recommended and facilitated; coursework includes mandatory experiential learning through problem-solving labs and simulations. Opportunities for credit for prior learning toward required coursework include cross-walking industry-recognized certifications and Indiana's Next Level Programs of Study Career & Technical Education courses in IT and computing.

CHE 25-29   Professional Certificate in Applied Artificial Intelligence to be offered by Ivy Tech Community College

Proposal received on November 21, 2025

CIP Code: 11.0102 – Artificial Intelligence

Fifth Year Projected Enrollment: Headcount – 334
Fifth Year Projected Degrees Conferred: 297

The proposed Professional Certificate (CT) in Applied Artificial Intelligence (AI) would be offered by the School of Information Technology (School of IT) at Ivy Tech Community College (ITCC) both on campus and online statewide. It requires 21 credit hours to complete.

This "Professional" CT program is intended for students with IT work experience looking to reskill, upskill, and/or pursue a credit-bearing credential pathway. It articulates to the like-named stackable pathway: the Technical Certificate (TC) and A.A.S. in Applied Artificial Intelligence (see Expedited Items CHE 25-30 and CH25-31). Students new to the IT field can enter this pathway through the proposed CT in Information Systems & Analytics (See Expedited Item CHE 25-28). The creation of this pathway accompanies School of IT's consolidation efforts, including the suspension of five certificate programs (2 CTs and 3 TCs) in October 2025 and forthcoming suspensions. The new pathway is intended to align with and complement ITCC's post-reorganization programming, enabling both the creation of a distinct applied AI course of study and better integrating AI instruction across all IT offerings.

Learning objectives, skills, competencies, according to faculty, correspond with multiple occupations rated highly by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development's Indiana Top Jobs: Software Developers (5-Star); Database Architects (4-Star); Computer Systems Analysts (5-Star); Business Intelligence Analysts (5-Star); and, and Data Scientists (5-Star). ITCC anticipates strong job placement and in-state graduate retention. Indiana employers have informed the faculty they are seeking individuals with applied AI skills that can be used in a wider industry context.

Designed to serve the market segment of working professionals in the IT field, the curriculum provides fundamentals in a variety of specialties, including in AI, machine learning, and computer vision. An AI Essentials course includes professional ethics components. Students choose between three possible tracks: a Software Development Track (e.g., logic and Python programming), a Data Analytics Track (e.g., SQL and data-driven visualization), or an Informatics Track (e.g., business intelligence and human-computer interaction). A work-based learning requirement would add time and cost for adult learners but these experiences are recommended and facilitated. Students must complete a capstone project (Applied AI Projects), providing hands-on experiential learning.

Opportunities for credit for prior learning toward required coursework include cross-walking industry-recognized certifications and Indiana's Next Level Programs of Study Career & Technical Education courses in IT and computing.

CHE 25-30   Technical Certificate in Applied Artificial Intelligence to be offered by Ivy Tech Community College

Proposal received on November 21, 2025

CIP Code: 11.0102 – Artificial Intelligence

Fifth Year Projected Enrollment: Headcount – 668
Fifth Year Projected Degrees Conferred: 347

The proposed Technical Certificate (TC) in Applied Artificial Intelligence (AI) would be offered by the School of Information Technology (School of IT) at Ivy Tech Community College (ITCC) both on campus and online statewide. It requires 32 credit hours to complete.

The TC sits within the middle of a stackable pathway that culminates in the like-named A.A.S. in Applied Artificial Intelligence (see Expedited Item CH 25-31). Students may enter the pathway through the proposed unified entry point, the CT in Information Systems & Analytics, or the Professional CT in Applied Artificial Intelligence (see Expedited Items CHE 25-28 and CHE 25-29, respectively). The creation of this pathway accompanies the School of IT's consolidation efforts, including the suspension of five certificate programs (2 CTs and 3 TCs) in October 2025 and forthcoming suspensions. The new pathway is intended to align with and complement ITCC's post-reorganization programming, enabling both the creation of a distinct applied AI course of study and better integrating AI instruction across all IT offerings.

Learning objectives, skills, competencies and the industry certifications, according to faculty, correspond with multiple occupations rated highly by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development's 'Indiana Top Jobs': Software Developers (5-Star); Business Intelligence Analysts (5-Star); Database Architects (4-Star); Computer Systems Analysts (5-Star); and, and Data Scientists (5-Star). ITCC anticipates strong job placement and in-state graduate retention. Indiana employers have informed the faculty they seek individuals with applied AI skills that can be used in a wider industry context.

The curriculum builds off both feeder CTs (see above), providing stronger foundations in AI, machine learning, and intelligent systems as well as hands-on, applied usage of career relevant AI tools, such as Large Language Models (LLMs) and Computer Vision, and job-ready programming languages. An AI Essentials course includes professional ethics components. Career preparation courses include certification exams in CompTIA Cloud+, AWS Cloud Practitioner, Microsoft Azure Fundamentals, and AWS AI Practitioner. The curriculum will maintain its currency and responsiveness through faculty professional development, usage of regional IT Advisory Boards, and regularly updated industry-recognized exams and certifications.

A work-based learning requirement would add time and cost for adult learners but these experiences are recommended and facilitated. Students must complete a capstone project (Applied AI Projects) during the pathway, providing hands-on experiential learning. Opportunities for credit for prior learning toward required coursework include cross-walking industry-recognized

certifications and Indiana's Next Level Programs of Study Career & Technical Education courses in IT and computing.

CHE 25-31   Associate of Applied Science in Applied Artificial Intelligence to be offered by Ivy Tech Community College

Proposal received on November 21, 2025

CIP Code: 11.0102 – Artificial Intelligence

Fifth Year Projected Enrollment: Headcount – 1,144, FTE – 1,001
Fifth Year Projected Degrees Conferred: 521

The proposed Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) in Applied Artificial Intelligence (AI) would be offered by the School of Information Technology (School of IT) at Ivy Tech Community College (ITCC). It requires the customary 60 credit hours to complete.

This program would be the first associate degree in AI at an Indiana state educational institution. (Three state four-year institutions have AI baccalaureate programs.) At least 12 community colleges across the country have similar programs. ITCC studied these offerings with technical assistance from the National Applied AI Consortium (NAAIC). Moreover, an industry advisory group, regional IT advisory boards, and major stakeholders, such as the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership and state government agencies, e.g., the Indiana Office of Technology, provided guidance and input on programmatic design.

The new AI pathway is intended to align with and complement ITCC's post-reorganization programming, enabling both the creation of a distinct applied AI course of study and better integrating AI instruction across all IT offerings. This responsive offering is accompanied by School of IT consolidation efforts, including the suspension of five certificate programs (2 CTs and 3 TCs) in October 2025 and forthcoming suspensions.

Learning objectives, skills, competencies and the industry certifications, according to faculty, correspond with multiple occupations rated highly by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development's 'Indiana Top Jobs': Software Developers (5-Star); Business Intelligence Analysts (5-Star); Database Architects (4-Star); Computer Systems Analysts (5-Star); and, and Data Scientists (5-Star). ITCC anticipates strong job placement and in-state graduate retention.

The curriculum builds off the new feeder CTs (see Expedited Items CHE 25-29 and CHE 25-29) and TC (see CHE 25-30), providing general education courses as well as stronger foundations in AI, machine learning, and intelligent systems. The program includes the applied usage of career-relevant AI tools, such as Large Language Models (LLMs) and Computer Vision, and job-ready programming languages. Associate degree students must choose a track that complements their AI studies: data analytics, cloud technologies, cybersecurity, networking, or software development. Indiana employers have informed the faculty they seek individuals with applied AI skills that can be used in a wider industry context, hence incorporation of the customizable concentration tracks. Students can pursue industry-relevant, career-ready certifications in CompTIA Cloud+, AWS Cloud Practitioner, AWS AI Practitioner, and Microsoft Azure Fundamentals. An AI Essentials course includes professional ethics components. Moreover, students must complete coursework to round

out the associate-level degree, such as English Composition, Public Speaking, a humanities/social science elective, and a life/physical science elective. The curriculum will maintain its currency and responsiveness through faculty professional development, usage of regional IT Advisory Boards, and regularly updated industry-recognized exams and certifications.

ITCC anticipates working with state four-year institutions to collaboratively identify ideal baccalaureate programs for 2+2 articulation agreements. These may span various applied areas, including AI. A work-based learning requirement would add time and cost for adult learners, but these experiences are recommended and facilitated. Students must complete a capstone project (Applied AI Projects) during the pathway, providing hands-on experiential learning. Opportunities for credit for prior learning toward required coursework include cross-walking industry-recognized certifications and Indiana's Next Level Programs of Study Career & Technical Education courses in IT and computing.