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Members of the Brown Outing Club Bike Coop. From Left to Right: Bao Nguyen '12, Roukintou Aboubacar '09, Michael Teshima '11, Carly Sieff '09.

Bike-sharing program gears up for spring

By: Shannon O'Brien

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Students dreaming of riding a bike around campus need wait no longer, thanks to a new bike-sharing service slated to begin soon.

The Brown Outing Club plans to launch Bikes@Brown, a bike sharing service with seven bicycles, in early March.

The service, funded using leftover money from the club's budget from last semester, will be based in the old Undergraduate Finance Board room in lower Faunce House, said Carly Sieff '09, who is in charge of the program along with Michael Teshima '11.

Brown students will be able to borrow a bike, along with a lock and key, for up to two days after providing a \$20 deposit and their student ID number. When they return the bike, they'll get the deposit back. Students must pay a \$5 fee, which will be used for bike maintenance, to participate in the program.

The office in lower Faunce will be open for one hour each day, Monday through Friday.

"Freshman year, I was sort of shocked that it wasn't here, because I feel like it really complements everything Brown is about," Sieff said.

The outing club tried to create a bike-sharing program last year, but it failed because the club wasn't as committed to the idea as it is now, Sieff said, adding that it couldn't find a space for the bikes.

The club made proposals to both the Student Activities Office and the Undergraduate Finance Board last year, but neither was approved, The Herald reported in October.

Sieff said she has received a lot of positive reaction about the program from students and faculty alike.

With seven bicycles, the program will "start out small," but Teshima hopes it "will grow and we can expand (its) hours and accessibility." The organization plans to eventually have bikes available at the Sciences and Rockefeller libraries so students can check one out with a librarian at any hour of the day.

"If they're flamboyant, like, sick bikes, people will notice them and be like, 'Hey, I want one too,'" said Ariel Shecter '10, a member of the Outing Club. The bikes will be teal and pink, following the custom of most bike-sharing programs, which use signature colors both to publicize their programs and prevent theft, according to club members.

Bikes@Brown will try to become independent of the outing club sometime next year, Teshima said, adding that the club also plans to petition UFB for additional funding for Bikes@Brown next week.

In March or April, Bikes@Brown plans to launch a student-run maintenance shop where anyone with a Brown ID can get a bike fixed. Also in the works are training sessions on bike maintenance that would be open to both potential maintenance shop volunteers and students who just want to know how to fix their bikes.

Some students said they were excited about the program.

"That's a service I would definitely use, and more so because it's organized by Brown students," said Ian Gray '12.

Others, like Frankie Nuzzo '09, thought the program would be successful even though he wouldn't take advantage of it.

"I'm not really a bike rider," he said. "But if I was a freshman or a sophomore, I might have used it."

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