



BROWN

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November 11, 2009

Dear colleagues,

The two-week period at the beginning of each semester (what students call the “shopping” period) has long served as a time for students to visit classes and decide among those they find of greatest interest. While this period plays an important role in Brown’s open curriculum, it also creates some problems. I am writing to let you know about a new service that should partially alleviate these problems, and to request your help.

The Instructional Technology Group of CIS has recently created the Academic Services Gateway, <<http://www.brown.edu/cis/services/gateway/>>, offering centralized access to a suite of tools aimed at supporting teaching. Among these tools is an easy way for you to upload your course syllabus so that students can access it at the beginning of the semester when choosing their courses. Next semester, I would like all faculty members to use The Gateway for this purpose. **I am asking you, then, to upload a copy of your syllabus for your Spring 2010 courses no later than January 27 (the first day of classes).**

The process is simple: Use the URL above (which you can also find on the website of the Dean of the College <<http://www.brown.edu/college/>>) to enter the Gateway. Then click on “upload your syllabus.” You will be asked to identify yourself, then taken to a page listing your courses. Select a course, choose the file, then send. Your syllabus is automatically deposited to a “Preview page” for your course <<http://www.courses.brown.edu> <<http://www.courses.brown.edu/>> >.

Having syllabi on line is a resource that our students have long requested and which I think will be of considerable benefit to them and to the faculty. Not only should it help students make their decisions more quickly; it should help reduce the chaos often associated with the first week of class. The Course Preview pages should also be a boon to advisors who are seeking more information about courses when advising their students. I thank you in advance for using it.

I realize that faculty members often make changes to their syllabus once the semester is underway, and for good reason as they adjust the course to the interests and background of their students, or as student presentations may be scheduled, or as new material becomes available. Provisional syllabi uploaded for the first day of classes can be replaced at any time through the semester. The process of uploading or replacing a syllabus using the Gateway literally takes no more than a minute or two.

With thanks for your help in this effort.

Sincerely,

David Kertzer
Provost