Director’s Overview

The Curricular Resource Center student staffers—campus leaders not only for their work at the CRC but also for their contributions to other organizations and centers—represent much of the diversity of our undergraduate community, given their multiple identities, academic and co-curricular interests. It is for this reason that I took their call to rebrand the CRC seriously; indeed, what exactly does a curricular resource center at Brown do?

Thanks to conversations facilitated by Matched Advising Program for Sophomores (MAPS) co-coordinator Neel Yalamarthy ’15, who had interned at a New York City branding company, and to the design forte of Anna Stacy ’17, our digital archives and social media coordinator, we came up with the tag line and logo you see on this report’s cover. CRC staffers coordinate programs and advise their peers—they orient them to resources here and elsewhere on campus, hear their concerns through, and ask thoughtful questions. As one of the staffers wrote in their end-of-year evaluation, “I hope to see the CRC marketed more often as a peer-advising center.”

The staffers also identified a need to forge more connections with faculty, something we achieved through our conversations with some them about their role as advisors of independent studies and concentrations, and as evidenced by our MAPS events with the Randall Sophomore Faculty Advisors.

Finally, we realized that the CRC has a n important role to play in facilitating the exchange of ideas and illuminating pathways to learning—thus, we rebranded our conference for seniors as the Theories in Action Exchange, and we encountered the standing-room-only crowds for our end-of-semester (G)ISP Talks!

Mission

The Curricular Resource Center for Peer Advising (CRC) is a place where students help each other engage with Brown’s open curriculum and utilize its academic resources.

Founded in 1976 to support the fullest use of the New Curriculum, today the CRC’s Director, student coordinators and volunteers coordinate information sessions, community-building events, and individual meetings with students for advising about independent studies and concentrations, applying for funding opportunities, issues related to the sophomore year, and more. The CRC staff works with other departments and peer advising programs to best provide a broad spectrum of advice about the wealth of curricular resources at Brown. The CRC is a part of the Office of the Dean of the College.
Independent Studies—group/independent study projects (G)ISPs

In addition to independent studies sponsored within academic departments and Global Independent Studies coordinated by the Office of International Programs, the CRC assists with the selection process for student-designed courses proposed to the College Curriculum Council’s (CCC’s) sub-committee for independent studies. Wayne Byun ’16 and Ria Mirchandani ’15 met with students for individual appointments about the proposal process and hosted information sessions, a syllabus writing workshop in collaboration with Jessica Brodsky ’14 from the Sheridan Center, and “(G)ISP Cafés,” where students could get feedback on rough drafts of their proposal before the deadline. They also required check-in conversations between them and the student GISP coordinators at the start of each semester, and hosted mid-semester study breaks for students who were currently enrolled in an independent study.

The student coordinators strengthened connections to faculty by sending a specific mailing to 100 professors in October, hosting a lunch meeting per semester for (G)ISP sponsors, instituting a “(G)ISP faculty sponsor award,” and suggesting the creation of a video featuring some (G)ISP faculty sponsors. We coordinated the twice-annual presentations of CCC-approved independent studies at the end of each semester, affectionately named (G)ISP Talks.

“My group and I (space electronics) thank you … for all your hard work this semester. We all agreed that by holding these events you made the GISP more important for the students. We felt more a part of a larger effort to bring innovation to the Brown curriculum by studying this big range of interesting niches.” (Rick Fleeter [Engineering], sponsor for Aerospace Electronics GISP)

(G)ISP Sponsor Award winners: Rick Benjamin [Environmental Studies] and Eric Shed [Education]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Study</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Faculty Sponsor</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumption of Popular Culture in Contemporary South Korea</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Samuel Perry</td>
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<td>Topology</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Rich Schwartz</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Language of Hip Hop</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Johanna Hanink</td>
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<td>The American Executive in Modern Television</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Matt Guterl</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecological Place-Based Education &amp; Management</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Rick Benjamin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wine: A Full-Bodied Course</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Cristina Abbona-Sneider</td>
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<td>Philosophy of History</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>Michael Steinberg</td>
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<td>Race and Gender in the Scientific Community</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Cornelia Dean</td>
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<td>Educational Technology</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Eric Shed</td>
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<td>Politics of North Korea</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>James McClain</td>
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<td>Storytelling in Television</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>Hisham Bizri</td>
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<td>Lived Space</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>John Logan</td>
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<td>Studio Applied Math</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Bjorn Sandstede</td>
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<td>Model Theory</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Joshua Schechter</td>
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<td>Spirituality of Food</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Adam Teller</td>
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<td>Magick, Mysticism &amp; Esoterica</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Stephen Bush</td>
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<td>Sustainable Freight &amp; Supply Chain</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Kurt Teichert</td>
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<td>Weather for Sailors</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Meredith Hastings</td>
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<td>Music Journalism</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Adam Golaski</td>
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<td>Cognitive Musicology</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Adeline Mueller</td>
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<td>Avatar the Last Airbender</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Naoko Shibusawa</td>
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<td>Unreal Engine 4</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Steve Reiss</td>
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<td>Advanced Studio Composition</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Jim Moses</td>
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<td>Translation of the Portuguese Novel</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>Leonor Simas-Almeida</td>
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<td>Feminist Legal Theories &amp; International Law</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>Nathaniel Berman</td>
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<td>Igbo Identity and Culture</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Patricia Agupusi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerospace Electronics</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Rick Fleeter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridging the Gap (for Brown-RISD DD students)</td>
<td>Winter session</td>
<td>GISP</td>
<td>Dawn King</td>
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Total approved: 28  
8 denied/withdrawn
Independent Concentrations (ICs)

The student coordinators Lauren Galvan ’16, Amelia Grant-Alfieri ’15 and Alexandra Urban ’15 met with scores of students interested in learning more about independent concentrations or to review drafted proposals—via email or during scheduled or drop-in appointments, at their information sessions or at campus-wide events such as the Fall Concentration Fair and A Day on College Hill (ADOCH). They served on the independent concentrations selection committee, a sub-committee of the College Curriculum Council. The selection committee reviewed 46 proposals, 23 of which were approved for the year.

They coordinated community-building events and advising sessions for the IC Departmental Undergraduate Group (DUG), and worked with CRC Videographer Will Berry ’16 to create six IC student videos. The IC DUG hosted a Brown Degree Day event (funded by CareerLAB) at the Faculty Club in April with guests Bill Peña ’00, Rob Ranney ’08, and Kevin Liou ’10 MD’15.

The May 2015 graduates presented a poster of their capstone project or thesis at an event in early May:

Allison Rosen, Statistics
Alexandra Urban, Educational Neuroscience
Ana Gonzalez, Jazz Studies
Amelia Grant-Alfieri, Visual Art and Perception
Brett Anders, Social Innovation
Bartosz Zerebecki, Post-Colonial Studies
Chloe Zimmerman, Contemplative Psychosomatic Medicine
Daniel Sobor, Cognitive Aesthetics
Edle Tschudi, Politics, Philosophy & Economics
Ivy Sokol, Social Innovation
Jakob Schneider, Philosophy, Politics & Economics

Jay Xu, Statistics
Juan Santoyo, Contemplative Science
Mina Shakarshy, Art, Design and Visual Perception
Rebecca Carrol, Evolutionary Anthropology
Ria Mirchandani, Migration Studies
Samuel Kase, Medical Humanities
Shayna Zema, Geography
Timothy Lycurgus, Statistics
Thaya Uthayophas, Philosophy, Politics & Economics
William Allen-DuPraw, Visual Storytelling
Zein Khleif, Political Psychology
Leavetaking & Gap Years

Coordinators Lianne Blinn ’15, Ben Chesler ’15, and Ricardo Mullings ’15 worked with volunteer Zoe McWatters ’15 to develop a new mentoring program for returned leavetakers, the Brown Alliance for Leavetaking Mentors (BALM). 18 mentees and 12 mentors participated in BALM in this pilot year. The mentors were required to attend an information session with Jackie Twitchell and Linda Welch from Counseling and Psychological Services.

In addition to hosting information sessions and welcome back dinners for students returning from a leave, the coordinators collected stories from students returning from personal or medical leave for handouts and our office storyboard, and they updated information for potential leavetakers about financial aid concerns, federal loan grace periods and about the housing upon returning.

Liz Ruben ’15 again served as our volunteer gap year community organizer; she hosted a welcome dinner during Orientation, updated the Guide to Gap Years, and answered questions and requests from students over the summer.

Matched Advising Program for Sophomores (MAPS)

Two coordinators, Chinezi Ihenatu ’15 and Neel Yalamarthya ’15, paired nearly 140 mentees with 92 junior and senior mentors. They decided to accept applications first from mentees and then determine who the mentors should be; in addition, they conducted a focus group in September to determine what sophomore issues to address through MAPS. They facilitated various events, such as luncheons with academic advising deans and the Randall faculty sophomore advisors, panel discussions about fellowships, internships and research opportunities, and drop-in hours for mid-year sophomore transfer students.

Departmental Undergraduate Groups (DUGs)

CRC co-coordinators Manuel Contreras ’16 and Sophia Dalce ’15 helped the DUGs launch in the fall with a DUG leader meet and greet early in the semester and with another information session in October. They coordinated the first-ever DUG Week in November, with four clusters of DUGs—arts/humanities, life sciences, physical sciences, and social sciences—meeting together on four different nights to advise first-year and sophomore students interested in their concentrations.

DUGs must organize themselves by appointing at least one student coordinator and one faculty/staff advisor, and together prepare a projected budget in order to receive $500 from Office of the Dean of the College, $500 from the academic department, and additional $500 from CareerLAB for a Brown Degree Day
event with alumni. Examples of uses of funding include field trips, t-shirts, movie screenings, meals with faculty, study breaks, and advising events for new concentrators.


Theories in Action Exchange (TiA)

Manuel Contreras ’16, Sophia Dalce ’15 and Marguerite Joutz ’15 organized fifty-seven seniors into roundtable presentations or a poster session on a Sunday at the end of April. Dean of the College Maud Mandel gave the keynote address, and the inaugural Public Art Night for the Class of 2015, co-sponsored by the Senior Class Board, took place in Leung Gallery in the Campus Center. The TiA website had nearly 1,000 visitors. For pictures from the Public Art Night, videos of the roundtables, and files of the posters, please visit our website: http://browntia.org.

Fellowships, Internships & Research experiences (FIRe)

Camisia Glasgow ’15 supported the work of Deans Linda Dunleavy, Besenia Rodriguez, and Oludurotimi Adetunji by helping publicize some nationally sponsored and Brown-specific fellowships/research
opportunities, attending the November FIRE Fair sponsored by the Office of the Dean of the College and some of the Mellon Mays Fellowship information sessions.

In addition to meeting with students for individual appointments at the CRC, Camisia attended meetings or facilitated information sessions for members of the Black Student Union, Latin@ American Students Organization, Native Americans at Brown, Political Science DUG, and African Students Association. She facilitated an “UTRA Clinic” for humanities DUG leaders about specific UTRAs available to humanities undergraduates, and a created a new Trailblazer lunch discussion format in partnership with WiSE seniors, who shared their personal stories about finding funding and research opportunities in the sciences.

**Careers in the Common Good (CCG)**

*Careers in the Common Good* is a collaborative effort of CareerLAB, Swearer Center, and CRC. Amelia Grant-Alfieri ’15 worked closely with Jim Amspacher, CCG Advisor from CareerLAB, to publicize and attend discussions with alumni from various career pathways, the February 2015 nonprofit job fair co-sponsored with Rhode Island School of Design, and meetings about the CCG nonprofit summer internship program in New York City (for 23 students who received a $4,000 stipend).

The alumni discussions focused on careers in government, public and outdoor education, public health, international development, and public interest law. Amelia documented the advice from alumni into “Take-Away” summaries for the [CCG website](#).

**Events & Outreach**

The staffers hosted a discussion about navigating the open curriculum for Family Weekend, fall and spring semester open houses, an event in collaboration with BWell Week in November, and a social event in April on the Main Green. We attended various Orientation Week, ADOCH, and group training events.
Archives & Communications

Successful independent study and independent concentration proposals are archived electronically on the CRC website; students may request copies of past proposals. This year, 1200+ students subscribed to our bi-weekly electronic newsletter.

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Jim Amspacher, Center for Careers and Life After Brown
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Mary Greineder, Office of Student Life
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Professors Jonathan Ready, Sharon Swartz, Leslie Bostrom & Sandra Russo-Rodriguez, Randall Sophomore Faculty Advisors
Michele Armstrong & Annie Maselli, Office of Residential Life
President Christina Paxson & Kimberly Roskiewicz
Fireworks Catering
Betsy Valle, Ivy Hall, Jason Masi & Sara Walsh, Financial & Administrative Networked Services
2014-2015 Staffers

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Lianne Blinn ’15, Leavetaking Co-Coordinator
Wayne Woo-Hyun Byun ’16, Independent Studies Co-Coordinator
Peggy Chang ’93 AM’13, Director
Benjamin Chesler ’15, Leavetaking Co-Coordinator
Manuel Contreras ’16, DUGs and TiA Co-Coordinator
Sophia Dalce ’15, DUGs and TiA Co-Coordinator
Lauren Galvan ’16, Independent Concentrations Co-Coordinator
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Marguerite Joutz ’15, Brown Conversation Liaison & Special Projects Coordinator
Zoe McWatters ’16, Brown Alliance of Leavetaking Mentors (BALM) Volunteer
Ria Mirchandani ’15, Independent Studies Co-Coordinator
Ricardo Mullings ’15, Leavetaking Co-Coordinator
Elizabeth Ruben ’15, Gap Year volunteer Community Organizer
Anna Stacy ’17, Social Media and Digital Archives Coordinator
Ivy Sokol ’15, Independent Concentrations volunteer Peer Advisor
Alexandra D. Urban ’15, Independent Concentrations Co-Coordinator
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