

Curricular Resource Center

2014-2015



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 of 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 an 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]

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

The 53 DUGs this year: American Studies | Anthropology | Applied Math-Biology | Archaeology and the Ancient World | Biology | BEO | Center for Language Studies/Brown Language Society | Chemical Physics | Chemistry | Classics | Cognitive (Neuro)Science | Cognitive Science | Comparative Literature | Computational Biology | Computer Science | Contemplative studies | Development Studies | East Asian Studies | Economics | Education Studies | Egyptology and Ancient Western Asian Studies | Engineering | English | Environmental Studies/Science | Ethnic Studies | Geology | German Studies | Health and Human Biology | History | History of Art and Architecture | Independent Concentrations | International Relations | Italian Studies | Judaic Studies | Latin American & Caribbean Studies | Linguistics | Math | Medieval Cultures | Middle East Studies | Modern Culture and Media | Music | Neuroscience | Philosophy | Physics | Political Science | Psychology | Public Health | Public Policy and American Institutions | Religious Studies | Science and Society | Sociology | Theater Arts and Performance Studies | Urban Studies

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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 Betsy Valle, Ivy Hall, Jason Masi & Sara Walsh, *Financial & Administrative Networked Services*

2014-2015 Staffers

Will Berry '16, *Videographer*

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*

Camisia Glasgow '15, *Fellowship, Internship & Research Experiences (FIRE) Advisor*

Amelia Grant-Alfieri '15, *Careers in the Common Good (CCG) Coordinator & Independent Concentrations Co-Coordinator*

Chinezi Ihenatu '15, *Matched Advising Program for Sophomores Co-Coordinator*

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*

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