

Online Course Registration

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Background

Online course registration has long been a source of conflict for Brown. While some, perhaps those more technology-savvy, have pushed for a more streamlined, automated approach to the bi-annual event of course registration, others, especially the Registrar, have been reluctant. That is, until recently. Now Brown has made a multi-million dollar deal for an online course registration system, Banner. Problem solved, right? Wrong. Not only will minor Brown traditions have to change in order to accommodate this new system, such as changing the name "concentration" to "major", but there will have to be other, more fundamental changes made, for example adding an extra digit to every course title (CS190 will become CS1900) and enforcing course prerequisites. The biggest problem has been their recent announcement that instead of having the first version of Banner be available this semester, it will not be out for another year, and they will need another ten million dollars! With our version of online course registration we will implement fewer features than Banner, but we will do them better and faster, finishing by the end of this semester. We will also pay closer attention to the desires of the student body, those users who will use the program the most.

Features

Basic

- Allow students to enroll in courses at Brown through an online interface.
- Requirements important to the administration:
 - Have registration data for each student be formatted for easy integration into the Registrar's existing database. (5)
 - Prevent students from enrolling in a course that is already full. (5)
 - Ensure a secure way for advisors to sign off on their first-years' schedules through a pin number students can enter on the site that has been provided by their advisors. (5)

- Have it be on a first-come, first-served basis in order of numbers of semesters at Brown(i.e. Seniors will have first priority, then Juniors, and so on). (4)
- Provide an online way to add and drop courses throughout shopping period. (4)
- Requirements important to the student body:
 - Allow users to search for courses based on title, department, professor, and time of day and allow those results to be sorted based on those features. (4)
 - Warn students about enrollment caps and current enrollment numbers. (3)

Optional

- Allow users to add courses to a "shopping cart" schedule that shows them their tentative schedule visually. (2)
- Provide information about concentration requirements and which courses could fulfill them. (1)
- Link to the Critical Review's review of each course. (1)

Non-Feature Requirements

- Allow the entire student body (about 3000 users) register for courses during a one-day period. (5)
- Ensure that if a student gets to a confirmation page saying that they have successfully registered for their courses, their registration information has, in fact, been recorded. (5)
- Be fast enough that a student could register for four courses (that they had decided upon in advance) in about five minutes. (4)
- Have an interface that is intuitive to navigate, simple and uncluttered. (3)

Priorities

All requirements specified by the administration are crucial to a functional, usable, and stable online course registration system at Brown. Those requirements important to the student body are also of high priority but are not fundamental to the basic bare-bones functioning. Non-feature requirements are also very important but not vital and are listed in order of importance. Finally, those features listed as optional are least important and are too listed in order of importance. The exact priorities are specified in parentheses at the end of each bullet.