

LEARNING GOALS AND CORE COMPETENCIES

Despite the freedom students have to focus their studies narrowly, our enrollment data reveal that the majority of Brown undergraduates distribute their courses across the curriculum; year after year, they actively choose to pursue Brown’s [Learning Goals](#).

Brown’s Learning Goals

As students study areas broadly across the disciplines and deeply within a selected concentration, they become competent in a group of academic skills that enable them to examine knowledge critically, produce scholarship of their own and use these transferable skills as they set out on a career pathway and connect learning to life outside the classroom. These core competencies — reading, public speaking, critical reading, data analysis, problem solving and research — are skills students practice and hone as part of coursework, research and other co-curricular opportunities. The College provides students with an array of programs and opportunities to develop and practice these skills.

Exploratory Advising at Brown

Our Vision

We help students see their time at Brown as an intellectual exploration — both inside the classroom and beyond.

Our Mission

Exploratory advisors help students to think broadly about the curricular and co-curricular opportunities available to them at Brown in their first four semesters prior to declaring a concentration.

Description

Exploratory advisors meet regularly with students to initiate and co-create individualized academic plans that help students make meaning out of Brown’s Open Curriculum.

This work, however, is not always intuitive. It requires careful planning, consideration and support to ensure that advisors feel prepared to carry out the mentorship that is central to the exploratory advising that we provide at Brown, and to ensure that students are connected with timely and individualized support options to strengthen their curricular and co-curricular experiences at the University.

In order to do this work, the College advising team has developed a set of outcomes that will help to guide the first-year and sophomore advising process.

Advising Learning Outcomes

By actively engaging in an advising partnership and our learning community, Brown undergraduates will develop in the following ways:



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Why Meiklejohn?

Brown's academic peer advisors are named for Alexander Meiklejohn, who was professor of philosophy and dean of the College at Brown before becoming the first non-clergyman to be named president of Amherst College in 1912. His radical changes to Amherst's curriculum led to his forced resignation in 1923. He then moved to the University of Wisconsin, where he created an experimental college at which students studied only two subjects during their first two years: fifth-century Athens and modern America. Once again, conflicts with faculty led to his dismissal. He went on to become a founder of the American Civil Liberties Union, president of the American Philosophical Association and an inspiration for some of the student reform movements of the 1960s.

Meiklejohn's championing of free speech and self-government applies directly to the practice of peer advising at Brown. Meiklejohn peer advisors embody Brown's commitment to student-centered and student-directed learning. As students who work to strengthen the University's collective knowledge of Brown's Open Curriculum, Meiklejohn peer advisors fulfill the primary intellectual and civic duty of Brown students.

THE ADVISEES

Role: Explorers, Becoming the Architects of Their Own Education

First-Year Advisees

As the primary architects of their education, students at Brown are expected to assume responsibility for their educational choices, but they also are expected to keep an open mind and listen to many points of view. They receive a wealth of information from the College about academic life at Brown, both before and after they arrive on campus. [Your Bruno Beginnings](#), an online welcome booklet, is shared with students upon their acceptance of admission, and communications continue over the summer to help guide students on how to plan their course of study. They also learn about Brown's philosophy of advising, as well as the importance of sharing their academic plans with you and articulating reasons for their choices.

Another resource for students is the online workshop 1stYear@Brown. This online Canvas course serves multiple purposes:

- It introduces students to the Open Curriculum, the values and norms of a liberal arts education and the importance of accessing the available advising opportunities and resources at Brown.
- It gives incoming students a chance to think critically about Brown's philosophy of education while introducing them to strategies for building an advising network.
- It provides a space for reflection as incoming students prepare to begin college and join the Brown community.



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SOPHOMORE DEANS

All academic deans are happy to work with sophomores, but several people in the College have special responsibilities in this area. They are available during open hours and by appointment (virtual or in-person). They can also serve as a useful resource to you if you have concerns about your sophomore students.

Amari Boyd

x3-2315

Assistant Dean of the College for
First-Year and Sophomore Studies

Shaunté Montgomery

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Associate Dean of the College
for Class-Year Advising

Timothy Shiner

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Senior Associate Dean of the
College for Advising

Peggy Chang

x3-2324

Associate Dean of the College and
Director of the Curricular Resource Center

MATCHED ADVISING PROGRAM FOR SOPHOMORES (MAPS)

Second-year students participating in this program are paired with junior and senior mentors for advising support and assistance in navigating concentration declarations, research opportunities and other sophomore concerns. The MAPS program also organizes group events, panel presentations and focus groups that are open to all sophomores.

MAPS helps sophomores become more confident in making decisions, navigating academics and extracurriculars, and planning for their junior and senior years. Mentors help ensure that sophomores feel a sense of agency, inclusion and belonging at Brown as they navigate its Open Curriculum, social life, and future academic, career and life planning.

DEANS OF THE COLLEGE AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Academic deans are available for virtual drop-in consultations with students and advisors every weekday. Students also may make appointments with individual deans according to their interests and needs. Information regarding this can be found on the [College website](#).

If you have a question about first-year or sophomore advising, we encourage you to contact advising@brown.edu.



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Advising Fundamentals

ADVISOR ORIENTATION SESSIONS

We will be offering both online and in-person support sessions to help orient and prepare you for your first advising meetings, including some that will be particularly designed for new advisors. In these sessions, you will be introduced to relevant staff in the College and review the main goals for advising and the resources available to you and your advisees. You will be able to ask questions, share advising tips with other advisors and consider situations that you may encounter. Remember that all of the academic deans are available for consultation as needed.

ADVISING TOOLS

Advisors are provided with a number of advising tools to help in conversations with advisees. Some of these tools will be important in every advising meeting; others are designed to enhance your ability to access other kinds of information. We encourage you to browse through these sources of information and contact any of the academic deans with questions.

ASK: Brown's Electronic Advising Tool

ASK (short for "Advising Sidekick") is a platform that allows you to access a wealth of student information. As an advisor, you can view your advisees' admission essays, high school transcripts, standardized test scores and course preferences as well as the introduction they wrote to you over the summer. As your advisees progress, you will be able to see their internal academic record. Sophomores also declare their concentrations through ASK.

Advising Sidekick | ask.brown.edu

Alternate PIN (alt-PIN)

First-year and sophomore students will need a unique alt-PIN, which is only visible to the advisor, to register for courses in their first four semesters in ASK. This exists to ensure that advisees meet with their advisors prior to course registration periods.

Concentrations

Students and advisors can use the Undergraduate Programs interactive website to explore the many intellectual paths undergraduates can take at Brown. The site helps students investigate specific concentrations and explore how their varied interests might take academic shape.

Undergraduate Programs | brown.edu/go/concentrations



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First-Year Advising

PREPARING FOR YOUR ADVISING MEETINGS

Advising meetings will take place during Orientation. To prepare, review advisee information in ASK. Look at the self-introduction each of them prepared for you and skim their admission essays to get a sense of who they are and why they wanted to come to Brown.

You may want to note the following about your individual students in preparation for meetings:

- Academic interests, strengths and possible areas of challenge
- Significant life experiences, background and circumstances
- Extracurricular interests and involvements

Your advisees have also been asked to reflect on these elements and how they might inform their Brown experience, so any of these topics should be good starting points for discussion.

MEETING WITH YOUR MEIKLEJOHN AND FIRST-YEAR ADVISEES

Meeting with Meiklejohn Peer Advisor

WHEN: Advising Day — Friday, Sept. 4, 2026

TIME: 15-20 mins.

GOAL:

- Discuss your plans and approach for working together to support your first-year advisees.

SUGGESTED AGENDA:

1. Terms of engagement (5-10 mins.)

Advising partners may choose to discuss their agenda for the day, roles and responsibilities during advising meetings, and modes of desired communication throughout the academic year.

2. Student schedules (5 mins.)

Advising partners may use this time to pre-schedule individual advisee meeting times for Advising Day.

Group Meeting with Advisees and Meiklejohn

WHEN: Advising Day — Friday, Sept. 4, 2026

TIME: 25-30 mins.



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7. Registration

Review registration deadlines and policies related to late adds/drops. For all advising-related deadlines, consult the academic calendar on the Registrar’s website.

Academic Calendar | go.brown.edu/academic-calendar

Students may add courses online in weeks three and four of the semester for a fee of \$15 for each change. Grade option changes may be made online through the fourth week of classes. No fee is charged for grade option changes.

Individual Follow-Up Meetings with Advisees Course Registration for Semester 2

WHEN: Late October to early November

TIME: Varies

OBJECTIVES:

- **Connection:** Co-create shared strategies for communication and mentorship while providing holistic support for students during their first weeks at the University.
- **Decision making:** Identify coursework that aids in the advisee’s exploration of the Open Curriculum
- **Perspective building:** Review and compare pre-term interests with those that are emerging.

Advising tip: Schedule a few extra office hours during the Semester 1 “advising period” so you can meet with each of your advisees. Remember that your Meiklejohn partner can help schedule meetings by calling or emailing your advisees and arranging times for them to see you. Keep notes on your students so you can follow up on topics that were raised in earlier meetings and review your notes before students come in to discuss their Semester 2 course selection.



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