

UAF Faculty Senate, February 2013

Results from survey of UAF faculty:

Creating a central online repository of course information

CONTENTS

1) Introduction	p. 1
2) Summary results of survey questions 1-5	p. 2
3) Summary table of "main concerns" in question 6	p. 3
4) Summary demographics of survey respondents	p. 4
5) Remarks	p. 5
6) Breakdown of results by faculty subgroups	p. 7
7) Comments submitted for questions 1-6	p. 10

1) INTRODUCTION

The following introduction was shown at the beginning of the survey:

The UAF Faculty Senate is considering whether to establish a central online repository of course syllabi or expanded course descriptions. The **purpose** is to provide more and better information to students and advisors to help them with course selection. Expanding the formal catalog is not practical, for both legal and logistical reasons. An online repository of course information would be a user-friendly solution. Please provide input to the Faculty Senate by answering the questions below. Space is provided for comments.

Current practice:

Syllabi for all UAF courses are filed with the academic departments (this is an accreditation requirement). Students may request to see the syllabi. Most syllabi are not available online and there is no central collection. Faculty advisors say that they typically request syllabi directly from instructors on an individual basis.

What would be posted online, and by whom:

(1) Syllabus: An obvious possibility is to post the most recent syllabus from each course. These are already collected by the department offices, and would be uploaded and updated by staff (no additional work for the faculty). They could be posted as pdfs with a watermark showing the semester for which the syllabus was written.

(2) Expanded course description: An alternative would be to create expanded course descriptions based on a template. If the template just involves extracting sections from a standard UAF syllabus, i.e., course description, course goals, student learning outcomes, and instructional methods, then it could be created with minimal effort by either the course instructor(s) or department staff. This approach has been proposed as a way to deter students from engaging in course-shopping and instructor-shopping based on assignments in the course, grading policies, etc. It is also a (partial) response to questions about syllabi as faculty intellectual property.

Location and access:

A repository could be public or access could be restricted to the university community.

(1) A likely possibility for a restricted site is a shell in Blackboard, available just inside the login. Anyone with a UA login would have access.

(2) Alternatively, a collection could be set up in the UAF computer system. There are several possibilities, e.g., a collection managed by the Libraries and ARSC as part of a UAF institutional repository. We have emphasized that we do not want to create an archive of syllabi. This site

would contain only the most recent versions. The site could be set up for public access or for restricted access requiring a UA login.

The Faculty Senate sent email notices asking all UAF faculty to fill out the survey, and received 180 responses. For comparison, in October 2012 there were 571 tenure-track, research, clinical and term faculty represented on the Faculty Senate,¹ a handful of affiliate faculty, and an unknown number of adjunct faculty.

2) SUMMARY RESULTS OF SURVEY QUESTIONS 1-5

1. Do you favor creating a central online repository of course information? Note that the purpose is to improve student advising.

Yes	127	71%
No opinion	11	6%
No	40	22%

2. Should this repository be publicly accessible or restricted to the UA community, i.e., people with a UA login?

Public access	65	37%
No opinion	14	8%
UA access only	98	55%

3. Would you be willing to have your syllabi posted on a restricted-access site?

Yes	132	74%
No	46	26%

4. Would you be willing to have expanded descriptions of your courses (drawn from syllabi as described above) posted on a restricted-access site?

Yes	149	83%
No	30	17%

5. If UAF decides to create a central repository, what should it contain?

Syllabi for all courses	49	29%
Expanded course descriptions for all courses	39	23%
Either one, instructor's choice	83	49%

¹ Data from the Provost's Office, prepared for Faculty Senate reapportionment in Fall 2012.

3) SUMMARY TABLE OF "MAIN CONCERNS" IN QUESTION 6

6. What is your main concern, if any, about the proposed repository?

Answer to #1, Do you favor a central online repository:			
MAIN CONCERN	"Yes"	"No Opinion"	"No"
intellectual property	9	1	4
legal issues (unspecified)			1
release of information not intended to be public, privacy issues, potential for harassment	4		2
additional administrative work for faculty	6	1	5
want ease of posting, verifying and editing content	5		1
syllabi change rapidly, lots of work to keep updating	2		1
syllabi change rapidly, repository will be out of date	6	3	4
not useful without near-total participation	1		
need flexible format to accomodate diversity of courses	1		
need uniformity, consistency		1	
cost of database maintenance	1		
how to handle courses taught by several faculty	1		
course shopping	4	4	4
leading to restrictions in academic freedom, homogenizing courses (related to course shopping)		1	1
students might expect that past syllabi apply to future	6	1	3
students might use past syllabi to argue about requirements	2		
catering to consumerist approach to higher ed	1		
syllabus content might used against us politically	1		
might be used against us (unspecified)	1		
would information be available in time for advising	1		
facilitates self-advising, advising by people outside a department			2
students should talk to instructors for information and advice			3
people will ignore it	2		
not needed, little benefit to students			11

4) DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

FACULTY POSITION

Assistant Professor	36	20%
Associate Professor	34	19%
Professor	31	17%
Emeritus	5	3%
Affiliate Faculty	2	1%
Research Faculty	4	2%
Term Faculty	18	10%
Instructor	9	5%
Adjunct Faculty	41	23%
Total	180	

UNIT

CEM	19	11%
CLA	37	21%
CNSM	32	18%
CRCO	48	27%
Libraries	2	1%
SFOS	14	8%
SNRAS	5	3%
SOE	14	8%
SOM	4	2%
Total	175	

LOCATION

Bethel	7	4%
CTC	21	12%
Dillingham	5	3%
Fairbanks main campus	128	73%
Interior Aleutians	2	1%
Nome	3	2%
Other	9	5%

Juneau, Anchorage, Palmer, Seward, Kodiak, Fort Wainwright

Total	175
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OTHER

taught a course in past 3 yrs	170	94%
advises undergraduates	63	55%
advises grad students	61	50%
advises both	63	35%
advises neither	54	30%

5) REMARKS

Overall, 71% of those responding to the survey favored establishing a central online repository and 22% opposed it. What about subgroups?

By faculty status, the highest approval rate was among term faculty (74%) and adjunct faculty (80%). The lowest approval rate was among tenured associate professors (62%).

By location, there was little difference in the approval rate at the Fairbanks main campus (70%) versus other sites (73%). However, faculty were more likely to indicate disapproval at the Fairbanks main campus (25% no, 6% no opinion) than at other locations (15% no, 12% no opinion).

Faculty who advise undergraduate students were *less* likely to favor a central online repository (65% yes, 31% no) than faculty who do not advise undergraduates (79% yes, 12% no). It's not clear why or whether this is important. The number of faculty in these two groups were similar (97 and 81, respectively).

Posting expanded course descriptions instead of syllabi might decrease opposition to a central online repository.

Consider the 40 (22%) who said NO, I do not favor creating a central online repository.

17 nevertheless said they would be willing to have their expanded course descriptions posted. This is 10% of the responses. If these "willing" faculty are added to those who "favored" a repository, the total is 81% who would be at least willing to see such a system established.

7 said they would be willing to have their syllabi posted. Of those, 5 said yes to both and 2 said yes only to syllabi. One of those commented that it would be easier to post syllabi because they already exist, and that syllabi have more complete course information.

21 said NO to posting both expanded course descriptions and syllabi.

These 21 faculty "NO to everything" are 11% of the survey responses. This appears to indicate the level of firm opposition.

Six of these faculty left comments that indicate their reasons: syllabi would become outdated and misleading (1); no justification for how this would improve advising (1); willingness to post expanded course description would depend on what it contained (1); objection to additional administrative burden on faculty (2); potential legal issues (3); not needed, the course description says it all (1); not needed, my department or I already provide syllabi on restricted-access web site or upon request (3).

There was a clear preference for restricting access to UA only.

Preference for limiting access to UA was strongest outside of Fairbanks (66%) and among associate professors (69%).

Preference for public access was highest at the Fairbanks main campus (40%), among faculty who advise graduate students (48%), and among term faculty (42%) and adjunct faculty (41%). However, the only subgroup that actually preferred public access was the faculty who advised graduate students (48% for public access versus 40% for restricted access).

The reasons stated for preferring a restricted-access site were intellectual property rights and greater faculty comfort level (and therefore cooperation).

Regarding whether a repository should contain syllabi only, expanded course descriptions only, or the choice left up to individual instructors:

Survey results show a plurality (49%) in favor of leaving the choice up to the instructor, with the rest split between syllabi only (29%) and expanded course descriptions only (23%). However, comments on this topic raise some good points that should be considered in addition to the numbers.

The main advantage to posting syllabi is the workload argument, i.e., syllabi already exist and no one would need to create a new document. However, posting only expanded course descriptions would pose fewer problems with course descriptions/syllabi becoming outdated, how often the posts would need to be updated, handling courses taught by several faculty, course shopping, faculty intellectual property rights and privacy issues.

The "privacy issue" has to do with personal contact information for the instructor, which some faculty include in syllabi so that students can easily contact them during the semester.

Many faculty feel that their syllabi are written for students enrolled in their courses, not for a wider audience, and they would remove content from their syllabi if these were to become public.

6) Breakdown of results by faculty position, by location, and by experience advising students

	# FACULTY			total	% FACULTY RESPONDENTS		
Q1 yes/no	Yes	No opinion	No		Yes	No opinion	No
all	127	11	40	178	71%	6%	22%
asst prof	24	2	9	35	69%	6%	26%
assoc prof	21	1	12	34	62%	3%	35%
prof+emeritus	23	1	11	35	66%	3%	31%
term	20	3	4	27	74%	11%	15%
adjuncts	33	4	4	41	80%	10%	10%
Q2 access	Public	No opinion	UA only		Public	No opinion	UA only
all	65	14	98	177	37%	8%	55%
asst prof	13	3	20	36	36%	8%	56%
assoc prof	7	3	22	32	22%	9%	69%
prof+emeritus	13	4	19	36	36%	11%	53%
term	11	1	14	26	42%	4%	54%
adjuncts	17	2	22	41	41%	5%	54%
Q3 your syllabi	Yes	No			Yes	No	
all	132	46		178	74%	26%	
asst prof	25	11		36	69%	31%	
assoc prof	22	12		34	65%	35%	
prof+emeritus	22	13		35	63%	37%	
term	23	3		26	88%	12%	
adjuncts	34	7		41	83%	17%	
Q4 your expanded course description	Yes	No			Yes	No	
all	149	30		179	83%	17%	
asst prof	31	4		35	89%	11%	
assoc prof	25	9		34	74%	26%	
prof+emeritus	25	11		36	69%	31%	
term	25	2		27	93%	7%	
adjuncts	37	4		41	90%	10%	
Q5 format	Syllabi	ECD	Instr choice		Syllabi	ECD	Instr choice
all	49	39	83	171	29%	23%	49%
asst prof	9	8	18	35	26%	23%	51%
assoc prof	10	5	14	29	34%	17%	48%
prof+emeritus	11	8	15	34	32%	24%	44%
term	7	8	12	27	26%	30%	44%
adjuncts	10	9	21	40	25%	23%	53%

	# FACULTY			total	% FACULTY RESPONDENTS		
Q1 yes/no	Yes	No opinion	No		Yes	No opinion	No
Fbks main campus	88	7	31	126	70%	6%	25%
all others (incl CTC)	19	3	4	26	73%	12%	15%
all outside Fbks	34	4	9	47	72%	9%	19%
CTC	15	1	5	21	71%	5%	24%
Bethel	4	1	2	7	57%	14%	29%
Dillingham	5	0	0	5	100%	0%	0%
Nome	2	0	1	3	67%	0%	33%
Interior Aleutians	1	1	0	2	50%	50%	0%
Other	7	1	1	9	78%	11%	11%
Q2 access	Public	No opinion	UA only		Public	No opinion	UA only
Fbks main campus	50	11	64	125	40%	9%	51%
all others (incl CTC)	13	3	31	47	28%	6%	66%
all outside Fbks	7	1	18	26	27%	4%	69%
CTC	6	2	13	21	29%	10%	62%
Bethel	1	0	6	7	14%	0%	86%
Dillingham	2	0	3	5	40%	0%	60%
Nome	1	0	2	3	33%	0%	67%
Interior Aleutians	0	0	2	2	0%	0%	100%
Other	3	1	5	9	33%	11%	56%
Q3 your syllabi	Yes	No			Yes	No	
Fbks main campus	89	37		126	71%	29%	
all others (incl CTC)	38	9		47	81%	19%	
all outside Fbks	22	4		26	85%	15%	
CTC	16	5		21	76%	24%	
Bethel	7	0		7	100%	0%	
Dillingham	3	2		5	60%	40%	
Nome	2	1		3	67%	33%	
Interior Aleutians	2	0		2	100%	0%	
Other	8	1		9	89%	11%	
Q4 your expanded course description	Yes	No			Yes	No	
Fbks main campus	104	24		128	81%	19%	
all others (incl CTC)	40	6		46	87%	13%	
all outside Fbks	23	2		25	92%	8%	
CTC	17	4		21	81%	19%	
Bethel	6	0		6	100%	0%	
Dillingham	4	1		5	80%	20%	
Nome	3	0		3	100%	0%	
Interior Aleutians	2	0		2	100%	0%	
Other	8	1		9	89%	11%	
Q5 format	Syllabi	ECD	Instr choice		Syllabi	ECD	Instr choice
Fbks main campus	38	25	57	120	32%	21%	48%
all others (incl CTC)	9	13	25	47	19%	28%	53%
all outside Fbks	7	6	13	26	27%	23%	50%
CTC	2	7	12	21	10%	33%	57%
Bethel	1	0	6	7	14%	0%	86%
Dillingham	2	2	1	5	40%	40%	20%
Nome	1	1	1	3	33%	33%	33%
Interior Aleutians	1	1	0	2	50%	50%	0%
Other	2	2	5	9	22%	22%	56%

	# FACULTY			total	% FACULTY RESPONDENTS		
Q1 yes/no	Yes	No opinion	No		Yes	No opinion	No
advises undergrads	63	4	30	97	65%	4%	31%
does not advise undergrads	64	7	10	81	79%	9%	12%
advises grad students	61	5	23	89	69%	6%	26%
does not advise grad students	66	6	17	89	74%	7%	19%
Q2 access	Public	No opinion	UA only		Public	No opinion	UA only
advises undergrads	32	10	54	96	33%	10%	56%
does not advise undergrads	33	4	44	81	41%	5%	54%
advises grad students	42	11	35	88	48%	13%	40%
does not advise grad students	30	3	56	89	34%	3%	63%
Q3 your syllabi	Yes	No			Yes	No	
advises undergrads	69	11		80	86%	14%	
does not advise undergrads	63	35		98	64%	36%	
advises grad students	61	28		89	69%	31%	
does not advise grad students	71	18		89	80%	20%	
Q4 your expanded course description	Yes	No			Yes	No	
advises undergrads	76	23		99	77%	23%	
does not advise undergrads	73	7		80	91%	9%	
advises grad students	66	24		90	73%	27%	
does not advise grad students	83	6		89	93%	7%	
Q5 format	Syllabi	Expanded course description	Instr choice		Syllabi	Expanded course description	Instr choice
advises undergrads	28	27	36	91	31%	30%	40%
does not advise undergrads	21	12	47	80	26%	15%	59%
advises grad students	31	13	38	82	38%	16%	46%
does not advise grad students	18	26	45	89	20%	29%	51%
Demographics	Yes	No			Yes	No	
advises undergrads	99	81		180	55%	45%	
advises grad students	90	90		180	50%	50%	
undergrads only	36				20%		
grad students only	27				15%		
both	63				35%		
neither	54				30%		

7) COMMENTS SUBMITTED FOR QUESTIONS 1-6

1. Do you favor creating a central online repository of course information? Note that the purpose is to improve student advising.

Yes	127	71%
No opinion	11	6%
No	40	22%

Answered YES, comments:

It helps students know if the instructor covers all necessary elements of the course and to evaluate the instructor fairly.

Asst Prof, CEM

Right now I have almost zero information with which to advise students about which classes to take. At least being able to see the syllabus would prevent students from potentially signing up for something in which they are unlikely to succeed.

Asst Prof, CLA

...if the template is approved by both advisers and the faculty senate.

Asst Prof, CLA

This is a great idea! The catalog descriptions for courses in my department are fairly broad, and individual interpretations vary. It would be fantastic to have a central venue for posting advance information on what is going on each upcoming semester. However, the site should be constructed in a way that does not present past versions of the course as future versions: in my department, instructors and their approaches rotate. Students should be clearly directed to information for upcoming semesters; perhaps past versions could be posted in an archive.

Assoc Prof, CLA

I feel this could be useful, as long as its clearly labelled as "examples" so faculty do not feel locked in if they change syllabi between the time the site is updated and the course offered.

Prof, CLA

I do not favor putting individual instructor names on the syllabi.

Emeritus, CLA

Sounds great! If I were choosing classes, I'd love to know more than the names of the classes. The current one paragraph descriptions in the catalog are totally uninformative - the one for my class included.

Assoc Prof, CNSM

I am in favor of making as much information about the courses as possible available, but this should be left to the discretion of individual instructors.

Prof, CNSM

Contributions to the directory should come from the Dean's office, or the Department office. Dont ask the faculty to repeat this kind of work.

Prof, CNSM

This should have been done a long time ago and I applaud the effort now.

Adjunct, CNSM

Allow access to advisors, professors, and current students only.

Instructor, CNSM

Tying the repository in banner would give direct access for students looking for more information about a specific class.

Adjunct, CRCD

having access to other syllabi within my department will help with course assessment, learning outcomes and program certification reporting

Adjunct, CRCD

Some advisors are signing students' course selections without considering the depth of the subject matter being taught or the level of expertise to take any course.

Emeritus, CRCD

a good idea; very useful!

Assistant Prof, CRCD

MIT makes all their course information available online and has for a number of years!

Adjunct, CRCD

This is a great resource. It will be very usefully for faculty at distant sites as well.

Research Faculty, SFOS

This should be required for all UAF classes!

Prof, SNRAS

Whatever improves communication!

Prof, SNRAS

Answered NO OPINION, comments:

I am open to discussion of the idea. Without more specific information here, however, I am not prepared to to "vote" yes or no.

Adjunct, CEM

Not sure but I do not think Blackboard is a good place.

Term Faculty, CRCD

My response here is "maybe" - it depends on what would be in the repository and who would have access to it. I would agree to a central online repository if it contained expanded descriptions of courses (NOT full syllabi) and if it were restricted to just the UA community.

Asst Prof, SFOS

Answered NO, comments:

Although the general catalog description may not change year to year, it is possible that details in the syllabus would change depending on the instructor. Using a previous, perhaps not updated in how many years, syllabus for advising can be misleading.

Assoc Professor, CEM

For the purposes described in the goal, it seems extending that extending the current course descriptions would be a better option.

Adjunct, CEM

One more bureaucratic weapon against faculty. No need for it just more busy work for already busy people

Assoc Professor, CLA

Many students do not read for the courses in which they are enrolled. No one proposing this idea has explained how a central repository of course information would improve student advising.

Prof, CLA

As noted "Expanding the formal catalog is not practical, for both legal and logistical reasons." In the same way, the proposed collection would have legal repercussions. As a result, it will actually hinder student advising, whether it is done by faculty or by "professionals".

Assoc Prof, CNSM

it is better for students to talk to the instructor if there are issues with prerequisites, or general advising for their career. i am thinking of upper level courses. i dont think a person outside of the department can give good advice based on reading a syllabus

Assoc Prof, CNSM

I already post my syllabi on a private web-page, provide it to students, and post the url to uaonline so students may access it.

Adjunct, CNSM

If its not broke, why fix it? A problem has not been established. What is currently not working with the current system?

Asst Prof, CRCO

2. Should this repository be publicly accessible or restricted to the UA community, i.e., people with a UA login?

Public access	65	37%
No opinion	14	8%
UA access only	98	55%

Answered PUBLIC ACCESS, comments:

It will force us to boost our teaching quality and if we do well it will help us by attracting more students from other states. helpful in long run.

Asst Prof, CEM

We compete with increasingly innovative universities who routinely share syllabi information with students. Students are customers and we should help them decide that we offer value and are thus one of the best choices for where they spend their tuition dollars.

Asst Prof, CLA

Helpful to incoming 1st years? Highschool advisors?

Asst Prof, CLA

Public posting would help to advertise UAF's offerings to prospective students by allowing them to look at more detailed information than is available in the catalog. Faculty job candidates might also find this information illuminating.

Assoc Prof, CLA

I don't have a strong opinion, but see no reason to keep them private. People without a UA logon may be considering taking classes, for instance community members or high school kids.

Assoc Prof, CNSM

Having syllabi available is hugely useful for transfer credit and knowledge of course coverage, both internally and externally.

Prof, CNSM

If it is public it may encourage people from the outside to sign up for a class, since course titles alone do not provide too much information about content.

Prof, CNSM

I say, Public, because you will begin getting SO many requests for the info that it just makes sense to plan for and provide it from the onset.

Adjunct, CNSM

Good way to promote our courses. This is a trend with other Universities, going so far as placing some courses on-line for free.

Asst Prof, CRCD

public - so that you aren't excluding current non-UA students

Adjunct, CRCD

I'm all for complete openness to everybody. That way, prospective students who are not yet part of UAF can have a look too.

Asst Prof, CRCD

Yes the public the product they are paying for!

Prof, SNRAS

Answered NO OPINION, comments:

Don't believe there should be a repository.

Assoc Prof, CEM

no, there should not be a public repository. This question is flawed and assumes that I agree with the creation of a repository.

Assoc Prof, CLA

i can see how it would be useful for when students want to transfer credit to another school.

Asst Prof, CNSM

Again, make it accessible as possible to everyone, but again with the permission of individual instructors.

Prof, CNSM

Answered UA ACCESS ONLY, comments:

If you are creating a repository, usually the person who needs access to the document has a pre-existing relationship with the University and either does or can possess a UA login. If you are modifying the current records for courses to add the additional fields, existing software like the UAF Course finder (<http://www.uaf.edu/coursefinder/>) should be enhanced.

Adjunct, CEM

My syllabi are intended for instructional use, not for general public consumption. Also, my syllabi are my own intellectual property, as far as I know.

Adjunct, CLA

I think professors are more likely to accept it this way. The syllabus is, in many ways, a creative work. Making it public makes it easy for people to copy work that a professor has spent a great deal of time creating and perfecting.

Asst Prof, CLA

I can see making more course information (expanded course description) available to the public as well, but most should be reserved for UA purposes.

Asst Prof, CLA

Should this mistaken idea be carried forward, the only possible protection against eventual legal action would be to have it restricted. However, the courts will still find that providing it electronically constitutes publication, and that it is therefore binding.

Assoc Prof, CNSM

Definitely not public.

Adjunct, CNSM

If we must have a repository, and someone outside the system wants a syllabus, they can contact the department directly. It doesn't seem like this would be a common issue.

Asst Prof, CRCD

We should take care of our own...other professors in our system have assisted others with writing their first syllabi and course material. If the resources were made available to the public, anyone would be able to use them.

Emeritus, CRCD

Faculty will be more likely to post useful information if the audience is university rather than the public internet.

Assoc Prof, SFOS

Students pay for it, they should get it.

Prof, SNRAS

3. Would you be willing to have your syllabi posted on a restricted-access site?

Yes	132	74%
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No	46	26%
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Answered YES, comments:

Prefer public access.

Term Faculty, CEM

To me it is a public record of how the University has conducted business.

Adjunct, CEM

Yes, but since many faculty finish syllabi close to the beginning of class, this would be less useful than having a course description posted in advance during enrollment. Participation would be a problem if syllabi rather than descriptions were to be posted.

Assoc Prof, CLA

I feel this could be useful, as long as its clearly labelled as "examples" so faculty do not feel locked in if they change syllabi between the time the site is updated and the course offered.

Prof, CLA

Also willing on an open site.

Emeritus, CLA

Possibly

Asst Prof, CLA

Yes, but I would prefer an open-access site.
Prof, CNSM

This would also simplify our Honors Program getting - or having access to - syllabi in a timely way.
Adjunct, CNSM

i'm even fine with no restrictions
Asst Prof, CNSM

even on a public site would be ok
Asst Prof, CRCD

Many advisors should know the length and breadth of various courses so that their advisees would not fail from the get-go.
Emeritus, CRCD

Only if restricted.
Adjunct, CRCD

Answered NO, comments:

See answer to question 1: Although the general catalog description may not change year to year, it is possible that details in the syllabus would change depending on the instructor. Using a previous, perhaps not updated in how many years, syllabus for advising can be misleading.
Assoc Prof, CEM

I am a firm believer in open access. I routinely post my syllabus on my website for all to view. I would not participate in a closed, secretive system. I already feel bad enough about publishing papers in non open access journals.
Prof, CLA

However, already I readily distribute my course syllabi to anyone who is interested in seeing them.
Prof, CLA

I have high standards for all of my courses, and my syllabi are usually rather long and detailed. I think students could indeed shop around for "easy" sections of courses, and that would be unfortunate. Therefore I oppose requiring that all syllabi be posted.
Adjunct, CLA

My syllabuses change during the semester and from semester to semester. I don't want something posted online to be used as a binding document for future students. Also, I don't want other instructors taking some of my ideas without permission. With online courses competing for students, this could be a real issue.
Asst Prof, CLA

NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO
Assoc Prof, CLA

It IS already posted on a restricted-access site which I control.
Adjunct, CNSM

Not in courses where there are many sections and instructors. Students can use to shop within same course. Also syllabi content change so much between years because faculty need to update them to maintain current topics
Asst Prof, CRCD

It doesn't seem necessary. Core course syllabus don't have much variation. The expanded course description seems reasonable.

Asst Prof, CRCDD

I'd be afraid that if the syllabus changed, the site wouldn't be updated.

Adjunct, CRCDD

Students and advisors can currently access this info simply by contacting our department.

Asst Prof, CRCDD

I prefer the expanded description

Prof, SFOS

Public access for a public university!

Prof, SNRAS

4. Would you be willing to have expanded descriptions of your courses (drawn from syllabi as described above) posted on a restricted-access site?

Yes	149	83%
No	30	17%

Answered YES, comments:

Only if I were to create the expanded description myself and provide it for this purpose.

Asst Prof, SFOS

I suppose this is less objectionable, but I still don't see why we need to restrict access. What are we afraid of? That someone will critique our syllabus? Isn't criticism a good thing, as it helps us to improve? Or are we afraid someone will "steal" our ideas? Isn't that also a good idea, as it would help to improve teaching overall? I just don't see what good comes of closed access.

Prof, CLA

The information extracted would have to be considerably limited.

Asst Prof, CLA

Among other things, expanded descriptions won't go out of date as quickly as syllabi would. Also, there is too much "sensitive" information in syllabi. The expanded course description is cleaner and safer.

Assoc Prof, SFOS

i'm even fine with no restrictions

Asst Prof, CNSM

I like this option best since it displays the important information about a course that students can use to make a decision. The semester by semester syllabi are too detailed and are more the property of faculty.

Prof, CRCDD

Yes, but I would want the option of exercising control over what would appear in a course description. (I would not want my description edited down by someone else as they might inadvertently make changes that aren't in keeping with my plans for the course and that mislead students.)

Assoc Prof, CLA

I would prefer the fully syllabus because it is more useful and less work than to create some other object.

Prof, CNSM

Yes, as long as I have the ability to edit the content.

Asst Prof, SFOS

This just helps students understand what's coming at them during the semester.
Adjunct

From my point of view, I have expanded my course to include every learning style that students might have to include constant online support...the course I teach is difficult for most students and they need my input.
Emeritus, CRCD

Answered NO, comments:

Course description says it all.
Assoc Prof, CEM

NO
Assoc Prof, CLA

I do not have staff available to keep up with the updates that would be required
Asst Prof, CRCD

It depends on what "expanded" means. Much additional information is of little importance to students. What is important is, for example, whether instructors dock students for late work, poor attendance, etc. This information is not always on syllabi.
Prof, CLA

This is little better. The "expected learning outcomes" statements, as required for accreditation, are meant to be judged over the entire group of learners ("class"). A grievance filed by an individual will twist that purpose to unexpected ends.
Assoc Prof, CNSM

it is the easiest to post syllabus, why adding/generating another document. also syllabus is more complete regarding course requirements
Assoc Prof, CNSM

But just course objectives as many detailed of a course change with each offering as faculty update to keep course content current
Asst Prof, CRCD

Public access for a public university!
Prof, SNRAS

My syllabus is already long enough. Nobody but me should be allowed to change it.
Prof, SFOS

5. If UAF decides to create a central repository, what should it contain?

Syllabi for all courses	49	29%
Expanded course descriptions for all courses	39	23%
Either one, instructor's choice	83	49%

Answered SYLLABI, comments:

Both syllabi and course description
Prof, SNRAS

It should summarize all the topics that should be covered with x% room for the instructor to deviate from it. X should be determined by a committee.

Asst Prof, CEM

Why add to the work? Syllabus exists already, so it would be simpler to just post that.

Prof, CLA

requests for expanded course info would be directed to the instructor

Assoc Prof, SFOS

I think there should be a basic skeleton available for all courses...Individual instructors might choose to emphasize or add items central to the course however, the core elements should remain until best practice indicates otherwise.

Term Faculty, CRCD

I think syllabi for all would be consistent, with instructor option for extended description

Assoc Prof, CEM

Answered EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTIONS, comments:

Publically posting all syllabi is a professional discourtesy to faculty.

Adjunct, CNSM

it should be consistent University wide-- either syllabi for all courses OR expanded course descriptions for all courses. Not either one at instructor's discretion.

Asst Prof, CRCD

I really don't think we want to encourage course shopping by students based on criteria that have nothing to do with the quality or opportunities provided by a course. If there are any syllabi included it is likely that advisors and students would pay more attention to those - again not because the course is actually better.

Assoc Prof, CLA

I think all instructors should post the expanded description. There should also be the option to add a syllabus.

Asst Prof, CLA

For courses that are taught in multiple sections, a generic expanded description would be best--perhaps with some notes as to types of potential variation between sections (readings, activities, etc.)

Prof, CRCD

Better if the entries are consistent.

Assoc Prof, SFOS

We are in the education business. We should want to prepare the students and advisers. Everyone would benefit from being informed. Our classes should not be a secret. Making this data available sets the student, and us, up for success.

Research Faculty, SFOS

A full syllabus seems like a good idea, but the "course shopping" concern sounds worrisome too. A full understanding of the course content and goals seems most important.

Instructor, CRCD

The expanded course description can help avoid a class morphing over time from what was originally approved by faculty senate.

Prof, CRCD

I lean toward course descriptions only so that students can screen possibilities based on intellectual content rather than on which appears to have easier requirements. The GERC discussion seems to indicate faculty desire to promote writing across the curriculum, but allowing students to screen out classes that ask them to write papers would undercut this goal.

Assoc Prof, CLA

+ syllabi.

Adjunct Faculty

It should be standard, either course syllabi or expanded course descriptions, but not both or instructors choice

Assoc Prof, SNRAS

Because Instructors can change assignments and schedules, I feel the Expanded course descriptions containing course description, course goals, student learning outcomes, and instructional methods, which do not change would be the best to include.

Term Faculty, CRCD

If a repository is created, the kind of information for each course should be the same (either all syllabi or all descriptions), not the choice of the instructor.

Prof, CLA

Answered EITHER ONE, INSTRUCTOR'S CHOICE, comments:

Not mandatory. Faculty should have the right to refuse to have their syllabi posted.

Assoc Prof, CLA

Is there a reason that the majority of these items for the courses taught, should not be almost identical between different people instructing? It seems like the best service out of this repository is for first time instruction for specific courses, and the standardization of what goes into a syllabus.

Adjunct, CEM

It should be up to the instructor regarding to post these on a university site.

Prof, CNSM

I value instructor choice (particularly if something innovative is being presented that may not yet have been published).

Asst Prof, CLA

Both

Asst Prof, SFOS

Since the instructors are spending hours writing the material, the content of their course descriptions and expansions should be their choice.

Emeritus, CRCD

For courses, such as the core COMM 141/131 course that my department manages, it would make sense to have expanded descriptions maybe, but individual syllabi might not make sense since the instructors change every two years. For other courses, where the same faculty member is usually the one that teaches it, it might make more sense to have actual syllabi.

Asst Prof, CLA

6. What is your main concern, if any, about this proposed repository?

Answered YES, I favor creating this repository. Main concern:

Could on-line institutions outside Alaska use these materials to develop competitive offerings?
Asst Prof, CRCD

If it is public, another university in the country could duplicate UA's work, is this ok? Maybe, not sure?
Seems like UA would be giving resources away for free. Versus someone signing up for a course and accessing materials that way...at least a small amt of revenue is generated that way.
Term Faculty, CRCD

It needs to be a quick and simple process for the professors, even for those with limited computer skills.
Adjunct Faculty, CLA

It sure sounds like a positive, but I'm not familiar with the potential pitfalls--how that information might have negative unintended consequences (like easy-course shopping)
Instructor, CRCD

My private contact information being made public-ie to individuals other than my current students.
Adjunct Faculty, CRCD

That students would make assumptions based on past syllabi about future courses. I for one change my policies and course requirements a little bit each year, and I wouldn't want to be in a situation where a student gets upset because s/he finds my current course has 2 exams when the past syllabi in the repository were for classes with no exams.
Adjunct Faculty, CRCD

Syllabi change each semester especially in the schedule outline section. Creating a more general version that would not need to be re-uploaded each semester would be one solution.
Adjunct Faculty

Syllabi change every year - thus the database will always be out of date.
Asst Prof, CRCD

I think maintaining a repository of the most recent syllabi is going to be too much work. I think there is no big need to enter, say, a Spring 2013 syllabus if nothing really changed since Spring 2012. I would suggest that a syllabus is entered into the repository every time a new course is created and also every time a course is changed. So, basically every time a Format 1 or Format 2 go through the curriculum review, once approved, the syllabus will be entered into the repository. Just an idea.
Term Faculty, CRCD

That as the syllabus changes, the repository won't be updated in a timely manner.
Adjunct Faculty, CRCD

Property rights.
Adjunct Faculty, CRCD

That the "updated by staff (no additional work for the faculty)" promise might evaporate, leaving yet another faculty paperwork burden.
Assoc Prof, CEM

It will not be useful without near total faculty participation, and that will be difficult
Assoc Prof, CEM

database maintenance would be important if it is to be useful, and that could involve costs
Assoc Prof, CEM

The main concern would be that people who dislike what is in a course syllabus might use it for political purposes directed at the instructor or university

Research Faculty, CEM

Protecting faculty intellectual property while standardizing syllabi. Enforcing and building syllabi rulesets, like so: UA -> UAF -> College -> Department -> Course. Passive enforcement through a syllabi building interface might make a faculty member's job easier because this precludes the member from actively searching out UA -> UAF -> College -> Department policies.

Term Faculty, CEM

It needs to use the most current syllabus so as not to create additional work and it must be kept current.

Term Faculty, CEM

That people will ignore it and/or it won't be updated regularly. How will that be managed?

Asst Prof, CLA

I tweak my classes regularly, and would not want students to get the idea that the course book or assignments will be exactly as stated in an earlier syllabus.

Asst Prof, CLA

Students using past syllabi as justification for their current course being too hard or unfair; students mistakenly using the wrong syllabus; students not signing up for classes that have assignments they don't like (public speaking, writing papers, group projects)

Asst Prof, CLA

Course shopping, info as binding contract in student eyes, unapproved borrowing of course ideas by other instructors (which could lead to unwanted duplication of course content/assignments)

Asst Prof, CLA

My main concern is about the timing relative to advising. Currently, our syllabi are due to our admins. the first week of classes. Presumably, students would be advised before then. So, I'm a little unclear as to what problem this actually solves.

Asst Prof, CLA

I think the repository is a fantastic idea but would want materials clearly separated by semester, with students directed toward the upcoming semester during enrollment. The statement should also make VERY clear that future syllabi or course descriptions might not reflect the same requirements as in the past: faculty often learn from teaching experience and change the structure of assignments for new courses with the goal of improving student learning, so I would not want a system that would interfere with faculty academic freedom to do so. This disclaimer should be very prominent and the cache of past materials should make very clear that information on past semesters is NOT A GUARANTEE that future courses will remain the same and that the fact that an instructor has altered a past practice is not grounds for a complaint. My concern here is that a student might see, for instance, a fall 2011 syllabus for a course and then attempt to bully the instructor of, say, a spring 2014 course because the 2014 course has added or changed an assignment compared to the earlier version. I've been at UAF for a number of years now but have recently experienced an increase of contrapower harassment from students over issues such as textbooks; this seems to be the result of administrative initiatives that have focused students on concerns other than what is best for their learning. I would want a repository to inform students in helpful ways without enabling them to harass instructors in a narrow-minded fashion over changes from past practices. Conversations like this can really sidetrack from the main purpose of a course, which is to learn the material. But overall I think that this initiative is a great idea.

Assoc Prof, CLA

It could cause intellectual property issues. Students would not utilize it.

Prof, CLA

I feel this could be useful, as long as its clearly labelled as "examples" so faculty do not feel locked in if they change syllabi between the time the site is updated and the course offered.

Prof, CLA

As already noted my main concern is the proposal to make this repository closed. The best universities are already making syllabus and even course content available for free. Why would UAF want to move in the other direction?

Prof, CLA

I have multiple concerns, but the main issue for me is our growing support of a consumerist approach to higher education and its potential adverse consequences.

Prof, CLA

Keeping it updated. Also many courses are taught by several faculty. Would each faculty post their own syllabi for the same course?

Emeritus, CLA

easy access for instructors to verify or alter content

Assoc Prof, CNSM

I think this is a great idea. The challenge would be to keep it updated. If too many faculty have outdated syllabi posted that will be a problem and may also reflect poorly.

Prof, CNSM

I have no concerns. I actually don't understand the concerns of others. The syllabus expands upon the course description, and lists a book. When I evaluate transfer credit, I often need to see the book that the other course is using to know the course's level. Thus, a catalog description is often inadequate to really understand what that course was. I would like our students who may transfer to have the most information on our courses. The students already have a printed copy, so this information is theirs.

Prof, CNSM

Adding additional headaches and expectations to individual instructors' workloads.

Prof, CNSM

it needs to be easy for faculty to upload, i.e. an automatic self-explanatory upload system.

Prof, CNSM

The additional administrative load on faculty. More and more administrators are asking faculty to take on the work of compiling administrative information. That's no why we're here.

Prof, CNSM

That faculty retain copy rights to their intellectual property. I think, one requirement could be a watermark that states "Copy Right of Instructor"

Prof, CNSM

I think it's a great idea. I put my syllabi on the web already, as do many instructors. Information can always be misused, but more information for students can't be a bad thing.

Instructor, CNSM

demands on instructor's time to keep syllabi updated

Asst Prof, SFOS

Public release of information not intended to be public. This could cause privacy issues, intellectual property issues, and possibly harassment from students.

Assoc Prof, SFOS

I would be concerned about students shopping around for the version of a course with the least amount of reading or assignments, etc.

Assoc Prof, SNRAS

Intellectual property rights. Sometimes people borrow very heavily from other people's syllabi without giving credit.

Assoc Prof, SOE

Perhaps a wee bit more work o my part, but something I'm very willing to do if it helps others reconcile course selections.

Adjunct Faculty

Providing the flexibility of formatting and content that different instructors need when distributing their course content and syllabus.

Adjunct Faculty, SOE

It might be used against us??

Term Faculty, CRCD

None-people usually never "teach" themselves, libraries have been available for years and it does not lead to more doctors. I guess we could steal good ideas????

Adjunct Faculty, CRCD

Answered NO OPINION on creating this repository. Main concern:

No concerns

Adjunct Faculty, CRCD

Students and faculty comparing syllabi between instructors for standards in assignments, grading, and testing.

Adjunct Faculty, CRCD

I hope you will be sure to collect feedback about this "proposed repository" from all faculty and that you will listen to faculty concerns and suggestions.

Adjunct Faculty, CLA

It sounds like it would be one more administrative task that faculty would be asked to deal with.

Assoc Prof, CNSM

Students shopping for "easy" courses - This could eventually lead to an infringement on academic freedom.

Asst Prof, Libraries

I think it could promote to course shopping, and I fear it will not be updated regularly such that the syllabi will be out of date after the first year.

Prof, SFOS

Keeping the syllabi or other items up to date

Adjunct Faculty, SOE

uniformity, consistencey, accuracey, maintained and not outdated material

Term Faculty, CRCD

My concerns are the same as those listed above: 1) if syllabi are provided, this could result in students course-shopping and instructor-shopping based on assignments in the course, grading policies, etc. 2) intellectual property could be compromised if full syllabi are provided 3) posting full syllabi may inhibit instructor's flexibility to change aspects of the course if the students come in with a certain set of expectations based on a past year's syllabus

Asst Prof, SFOS

Answered NO, I do not favor creating this repository. Main concern:

That it might be construed in some way to restrict academic freedom. That it might drive a trend towards homogenizing courses.

Asst Prof, CRCD

The syllabi should be subject to removal or re-editing at instructors' choice

Term Faculty, CRCD

Course shopping

Asst Prof, CRCD

Legal issues.

Prof, CEM

In some ways, I think the addition of another repository is silly from a business perspective. Why introduce another place/location for data about the courses out side of the system of authority.

Adjunct Faculty, CEM

Could create problems - syllabi are updated/changed constantly (unlike brief course descriptions in catalogue) - it would be hard to keep up to date - students might take issue (well when I signed up it said there were 2 papers and now there are three...) - also it seems like it would just create more work for advisers - students should bear responsibility for investigating course and talking to instructors

Asst Prof, CLA

I change my syllabi (i.e., course materials, assignments, readings, etc) just about every term so they aren't static documents. I would not like a repository that is out of date and I think this could easily become out of date since oversight would be time-consuming and unfeasible if we were to regularly update it every term.

Asst Prof, CLA

I have several concerns: 1. Ownership of my own intellectual work. I don't mind sharing my syllabi with colleagues but I don't want them to be available for anyone to just copy, put their own name on and include in their tenure and/or promotion file or distribute any further. 2. Students shopping for courses based on factors other than their academic quality or fit with the student's interest. An unintended consequence could be pressure to make courses easier and more "convenient" to students as opposed to high quality. 3. Making information about when and where faculty are available (required to be included on syllabi) in public might put faculty at risk for stalkers, especially women faculty. I am not opposed to sharing my syllabi with colleagues, nor am I opposed to talking to students and advisors about my courses. But I don't want that information to be public where it is likely to be used in ways it was not intended. In other words, syllabi should not be advertising for a course.

Assoc Prof, CLA

intellectual property; encourages students to shop for "easy" courses; restricts faculty ability to make changes from semester to semester, especially with the propaganda that syllabi are a "contract" between faculty and student.

Assoc Prof, CLA

intellectual property, course shopping and a race to the bottom as we compete for increasingly lazy students, more fricking hassles and expectations, more big brother expecting more work without extra pay. Leave us alone so we can focus on our core work.

Assoc Prof, CLA

It will quickly become out-of-date, unless annually refreshed. If it is continually refreshed, it will take more of my time and not just the time of staff. All of this for little likely benefit for students.

Prof, CLA

Busy work and absolutely no need for it

Prof, CLA

It might be good for basic/core courses. However, instructors updates intermediate/advanced courses syllabus often. It would be confusing or misleading if students have access to older syllabi from past semesters.

Prof, CLA

Students will shop for classes that appear easier than others. Faculty may then be effected by lower registration based strictly on more challenging approaches.

Term Faculty, CLA

This seems like a solution in search of a problem. We have a catalog with reasonable course descriptions. What more is required for student advising that maintaining this repository would address?

Assoc Prof, CNSM

OK, let's check with the Department of Redundancy Department: "the proposed collection would have legal repercussions" as "the courts will still find that providing it electronically constitutes publication, and that it is therefore binding." "A grievance filed by an individual will twist that purpose to unexpected ends."

Assoc Prof, CNSM

Nobody needs this service. Advisors don't need it, and neither do the students.

Assoc Prof, CNSM

i am concerned that people outside a department would give advice to students about courses (except if it is the general core requirements) without having good experience. lots of students need advising outside the box.

Assoc Prof, CNSM

Redundant, since most departments post the syllabi on their web pages already.

Assoc Prof, CNSM

It creates additional work, with no real benefit. Old syllabi may not be relevant to the next offering of a course.

Prof, CNSM

more paperwork; emails from deans and dept chairs.

Prof, CNSM

I would remove ALL relevant contact info from my syllabus. There is no reason for students not in my class to call me because they had a question about a policy they found on an old course syllabus. Non-local summer sessions faculty (SCABS!) not writing their own syllabi is also a concern.

Adjunct Faculty, CNSM

I have several including the waste of time and energy that will be spent on creating and the constant updates that will be needed, and especially the loss of personal contact that will result if students/advisors actually used it. The contact that occurs between students and our staff and faculty when they ask about syllabi and programs is very important and cannot be replaced by more computer mazes.

Asst Prof, CRCD

There is not a clear problem with the current system. It feels like change for the sake of change.

Asst Prof, CRCD

first syllabi are changing from semester to semester - I just see no benefit for students, staff, faculty and the public coming from this additional administrative exercise.

Prof, SFOS

I am concerned about the issue of intellectual property.

Prof, SOM

Extra work and potentially minimal value. Syllabi get stale and students should contact the instructor for the current version reflecting changes.

Prof, SFOS