



Dear Colleagues,

It is that time of the term again when students are well into attending class, reading, and completing assignments. It is also the time when instructors are facing a deluge of grading, and perhaps answering questions that already have answers in the syllabus. In this week's installment of the CITAL newsletter, we will do a deep dive into Simple Syllabus. You will hear from your colleagues, get a better understanding of why this platform is important to the university, and be provided with many helpful resources to make the continued transition easier. We hope you find the information valuable.

Sincerely,

The CITAL Team (Ed, Gina, and Cindy)

 VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

The Center for Innovation in Teaching,
Assessment, and Learning

CITAL



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 SIMPLE
SYLLABUS

Answering the Why Question

Greetings,

In our discussions with faculty and staff over the last few months, we have been asked why the move to Simple Syllabus was so important for Valpo. In this issue of the CITAL newsletter, we are trying to address the “why” question. Until joining Valpo, I had never encountered a system quite like Simple Syllabus. Syllabi always “lived in Word.” However,

the more exploration I did with the system, the more it really made sense. This was not just a tool for administrators to collect syllabi for accreditation (although that is a benefit), but it was a powerful tool for faculty and students. Here are just a few of those benefits:

- **Automatically Updated Policies** – There is no more searching for updates to university policies, websites, or other required information in the system. This saves faculty valuable time.
- **Hyperlinked Sections** – Students can easily jump to sections that are most important to them. Faculty can also reorder sections to best fit the way they teach, or highlight the information they feel is most important.
- **The Syllabus Library** – This searchable archive (only for current Valpo faculty, students, and staff) allows students to see all of their syllabi in one place, and faculty to share previous copies of syllabi with new colleagues with a touch of a button. Additionally, seeing past syllabi can help students get a better understanding of the course and provide new faculty valuable information during onboarding.

There are many other benefits that Cindy will highlight in her blog. However, it is important to note that with any implementation of a new technology, there will be challenges. With over a 300 percent increase in published syllabi (221-Spring, 654-Fall), there are bound to be issues and concerns that come to light. Gina will highlight some of those issues and how we are working with Simple Syllabus to correct and address functions that may not be working as well as they should.

We hope that the most important takeaway from this issue is that we are listening. Through over 69 group workshops since summer 2022, small group meetings, and one-on-one sessions, we have listened and encourage you to share your continued feedback. Thank you for helping us to improve the experience for you and Valpo students.

Sincerely,

Ed

Ed Finn, Executive Director

Valpo Faculty Perspectives on Simple Syllabus

This fall Simple Syllabus debuted university-wide. For our students this means consistent syllabus navigation across all their courses and the ability to easily access their syllabi via Blackboard or SS directly using their device of choice. A print option is also available for students who prefer a paper copy.



For faculty, however, the transition from the syllabi they have used for years to a brand-new format has meant some bumps in the road. In this article your colleagues describe their transition to Simple Syllabus: the good, the bad, and the ugly. Bob Wichlinski thinks that Simple Syllabus is a flexible tool, whereas Danielle Lavin-Loucks finds that it gives

her less room for creativity. Lisa Jennings likes how Simple Syllabus provides consistency across Core sections but worries about intellectual property, while Tayler Dove and Ryan Bye find it easier for their GS-100 freshmen to navigate.

Click here to read more: [Valpo Faculty Perspectives on Simple Syllabus](#)

Cynthia Rutz, Director of Faculty Development



Q&A What's up with the formatting?

Popular on most faculty wishlists these days is to have better formatting on the Simple Syllabus template. Fonts can be inconsistent, it is sometimes difficult to resize tables, and the printed copy does not insert page numbers. The Simple Syllabus corporate team is working with CITAL to address these issues. Meanwhile, here are a few helpful tips:

Friendly Fonts

The default text font in Simple Syllabus is Arial 11 pts for components that are editable. If you want your fonts to be consistent with the template, change them to match the template in your MS Word document before you copy & paste text in. Copying from a PDF does not work so well.

Terrific Tables

Adjusting your columns to fit in Simple Syllabus can be challenging and frustrating. Reducing your font size and narrowing your columns before copying and pasting works best, rather than trying to adjust the columns within the template. To have your column headings repeat on new pages, use the table header tool.

For questions or assistance with Simple Syllabus, submit a [CITAL Help Desk Ticket](#).

Gina Rue, Instructional Designer



**Get the most out of your Simple Syllabus
and build your syllabus management expertise.**

Click on the bar below to create a free Guide account with your VALPO email address.



Simple Guide

Learn how Simple Syllabus works with access to documentation, best practice recommendations, and tutorials to help your team get the most out of the tool.



Simple Watch

Build your Simple Syllabus knowledge with these bite-sized videos that will help you and your team be successful with the Simple Syllabus platform.



Simple Community

The Community lets Simple Syllabus users and experts connect, share ideas, and help each other thrive. Learn more about Simple Syllabus from your peers.

Upcoming webinars



Guided Tour: Simple Syllabus and the benefits of syllabus management

In this one-hour demonstration learn how Simple Syllabus can help faculty save time, improve the learning experience, and streamline accreditation activities at your institution through digital class syllabi. **For registration, click on the links below:**

[Wed. Oct. 4, 2023 10:00 AM CST](#)

[Wed. Oct. 18, 2023 1:00 PM CST](#)

New View is Coming

Simple Syllabus will update Spring 2024

Valpo is currently using the "Original View" version and will update to the "New View" prior to next year. Here are some of "New View" features that you will like:

- Ability to filter documents by multiple terms, departments, and colleges
- Use photo tiles or lists to organize your dashboard
- Navigate with fewer clicks
- The floating submit button will be available on every screen (no more scrolling to the bottom to save changes) and includes a real-time accessibility checker.

WATCH IT: "Meet the New View" video! (23 min, password: simple)

TRY IT: See the article here on how you can try out the NewView now.

Visit the CITAL Website, Your One-Stop-Shop for Faculty Resources

[Submit a CITAL Helpdesk Ticket](#)



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