Health Policy Newsletter

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Health Policy Course New and Improved Website
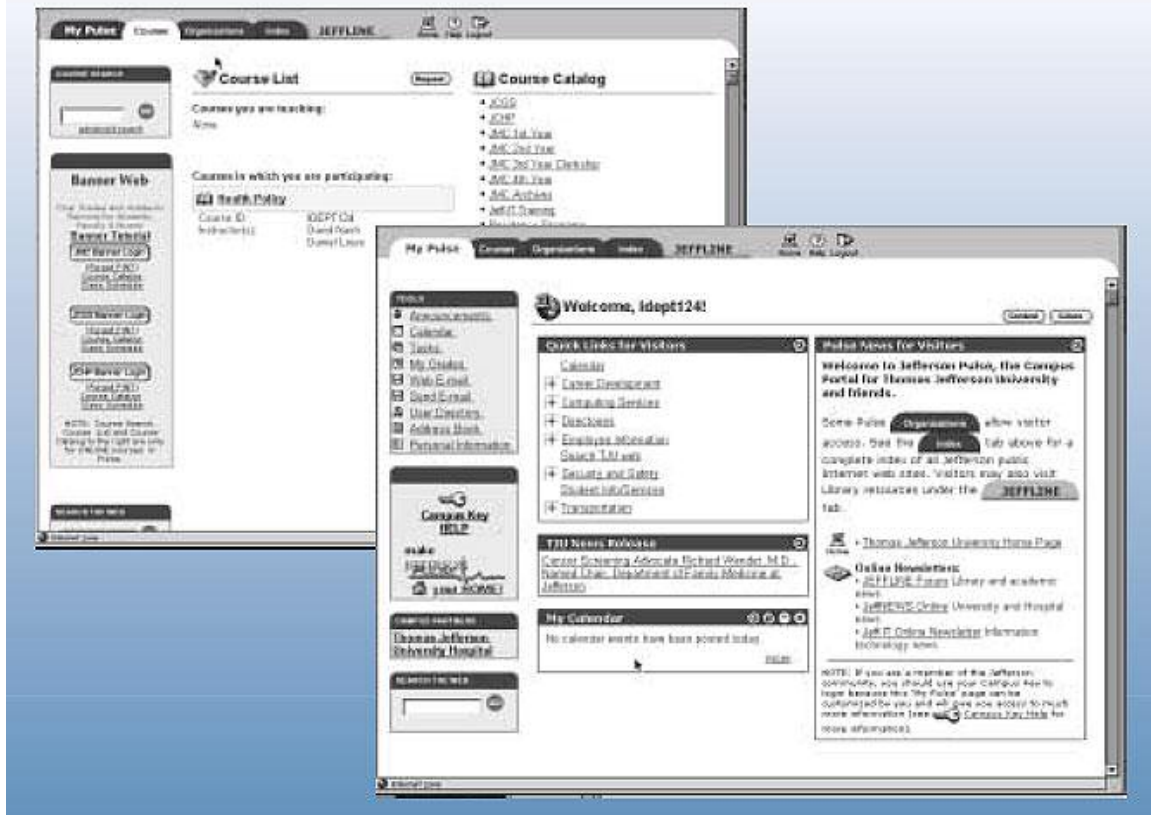
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In January, first-year medical students at Jefferson Medical College have an intense three-week curriculum, fittingly called Jan Plan, during which they are immersed in subjects ranging from genetics to ethics to health policy. For the past two months, I have been working with the Health Policy course instructors and the IT department at Jefferson to make the Health Policy course website more user-friendly and comprehensive, so that students can find information about health policy, or at least learn where to look for it. This task included strengthening the reference material available on the website by transferring printed class handouts to the website.

The Health Policy course, according to instructors Daniel Louis, MS, and David Nash, MD, MBA, is designed to provide first-year medical students with an overview of the health care system in the United States, major issues in health policy, and a perspective on proposals for health reform. The class includes discussions of cost and financing of health care including the current health insurance system, physician and hospital payment approaches, quality and outcomes of health care, an introduction to managed care, and a discussion of the future of the health care system in the U.S.

In order to create an easily navigable site that includes all these topics, we concentrated on both content and layout. With regard to content, the site includes class slide presentations, journal articles, and links to external sites that further explain class concepts or provide examples of class concepts. With regard to layout, the site is set up so that it is easy to navigate. For example, a student interested in finding out more about under-insured Americans would be directed to go to the lecture entitled "Health Insurance System" and click on any of the articles listed under the heading "Under-insured Americans."

Ultimately, we wanted to create a site that was more user-friendly and comprehensive so that students could more easily find information they needed about Health Policy. The recreated site should make the process of learning Health Policy not only easier, but also more fun.

About the Author

Kevin L. Bowman is a member of Jefferson Medical College's Class of 2005.