Building Easy-to-Use Websites

Paul David Terry, MNA
Digital Marketing & Communications Specialist
Grad Studies
Vice-Chair
Vice Chancellor and Deans LGBTQ+ Advisory Council
Introductions

• Program
• Role
• What’s a website you enjoy visiting on a regular basis?
• What makes a website easy-to-use?

Objectives

• Review user experiences
• The role of websites in digital marketing
• Examine types of site migrations
  • Content
  • Structure
  • Design
• Challenges to recruiting grad students
- Increased traffic for undergraduate majors
- Centralized applicant information

- October 1, 2018
- 80% of programs on Cascade
- Template design - June 2018
- Pilot group workshops

- Personalize user experience
- Segmentation and targeting of diverse applicants
- Partners with UCB, UCLA, USF
User Experience
Digital Diversity

How can we empower all users to engage and belong, utilize services that provide equal opportunities for support, and include us with their lifelong journeys?
Student Recruitment

• Positive impact on students sense of belonging
• Greater success in retention of employees & students
• Increases student commitment & retention
• Maximizes productivity
• Positive impact on job satisfaction

• Impacts brand reputation
• Makes recruitment easier
• Attracts new talent
• Drives Innovation
• Increases creativity
• Representative of community enhances relationship, e.g., trustworthiness, wider audience reach, and alumni participation
“Tools for transforming individuals into groups and groups into communities … think more sociologically to create strategies to make this happen – for the sake of better health…”

Meredith Gould
Prospective Graduate Student Questions

• Is this degree worth the cost?
• Will I have a faculty mentor? One that understands my challenges?
• What are the TOEFL scores and what if my English is poor?
• Will I find a job as a DACA student? Will I finish my degree?
• Am I good enough for this program?
• How can I benefit from this program?
• Can I live a balanced life? Relationship? Family?
• Will I be able to eat? What about housing? Mental health resources?
• Will I fit in or continue to be the ‘other’?
• Will my voice be heard?
# Models of Public Relations

Jim Grünig and Todd Hunt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models</th>
<th>One-way Communication</th>
<th>Two-way Communication (imbalanced)</th>
<th>Two-way Communication (balanced)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Press Agency Model</td>
<td>Persuasion, manipulation and influence of audience to act as the organization desires</td>
<td>Use of press releases and other one-way communication resources to distribute information. Organization or department acts as in-house journalist.</td>
<td>Communication to promote mutual understanding and respect or to negotiate with public or target audience. Greater research of target audience to increase relationship with organization</td>
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<td>The Public Information Model</td>
<td>Dissemination of information</td>
<td>Scientific persuasion</td>
<td>Mutual understanding</td>
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<td>The 2-way Asymmetrical Model</td>
<td>monologic</td>
<td>unbalanced monologic</td>
<td>dialogic</td>
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<tr>
<td>The 2-way Symmetrical Model</td>
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Social Support

• Emotional support
  • Reduces imposter syndrome
  • Emanates belonging and purpose
  • Validates behaviors and feelings
  • Reduces anxiety and depression
  • Provides a roadmap of life
  • Combats disparities

• Informational support
  • Reference and a resource
  • Content based upon user needs
  • Pathway to resources
  • Readily accessible information
  • Simple and easy choices

Love & Survival, Dean Ornish, M.D.
Max

First generation and identifies as LGBTQ+

Award-winning writer

Applied for a program with little diverse representation from faculty and social media.

Diversity statement includes diversity group with no activity since 2016

UC Davis offers modest funding while Stanford, Berkley, and MIT include financing and a climate of diversity.

**Concerns:** Social integration, mentorship from faculty that understands backgrounds and how to achieve a faculty position

**Resources:** Engagement with diverse graduate students, success stories of diverse students under mentors
Baseline conclusions

- Greater opportunities for engagement with potential faculty.
  - Emails, names, and photos
  - Labels like “First Generation”
  - Outcomes of research
- Impact international student confidence as they migrate across the world
- Current and accurate class list is a beacon of uncertainty and anxiety
- Social integration and authentic diversity
- Diverse narratives that demonstrate success among diverse populations influence acceptance to programs
Role of Websites
Types of Migrations
Types of Site Migrations

Platform
- Moving to a new platform
- Introducing new platform features
- Integrative different platforms
- Upgrading platform version

Content
- Adding or removing pages
- Consolidating pages and content
- Adding, removing, and hiding content
- Introducing new languages

Structure
- Site hierarchy changes
- Navigation changes
- Internal linking change
- User journey modifications

Design
- Look and feel changes
- Media changes
- Site performance modifications
- User-driven changes across devices

Site Location
- Domain and rebranding changes
- Moving or merging sites
- Branching off new sites
- Changing mobile set-up
Content

• Information that employs a path
  • Description of the program, people, and discipline through content, stories, and visuals
  • What is the value for entering into this program?
  • Why is this program and this culture beneficial?
  • Where do people go after they participate with this program?

• Narratives
  • Student and faculty interaction
  • Student activates and accomplishments
  • Alumni success
  • Faculty research endeavors
Content

• What do prospective students want?
  • Climate, costs, classes, culture, connection

• How do you deliver?
  • CTA (Call to action)
    • Define your audience
    • Identify priorities

• Set a path for success
  • Instead of ‘Apply’ or ‘Application’ give an action ‘Apply here!”
Content

• Keep content up-to-date
  • People are always checking out your site; leads and prospects
• Update application deadlines for the following year right away.
• Give them a timeline or check list with approximate dates.
• Reduce anxiety from uncertainty.
• Go beyond the application and demonstrate how prospects and leads can connect to culture and climate now.
Content

• Reduce acronyms
• Overuse and misuse terms
• Eliminate language geared towards internal audiences and conflicts with website users
  • E.g. agchem.ucdavis.edu
    • Do applicants search agchem?
    • AGC faculty
    • What’s a graduate group?
    • What’s the difference between a faculty coordinator and graduate coordinator
  • CTA
    • "If you have questions contact the grad coordinators"
Content

• SEO
  • Keywords and subheads
  • Duplicate content
  • Synonyms
  • Top 3 paragraphs
  • Headlines
  • Spell things out
Content

• SEO
  • Descriptor tags, transcripts, alt text
  • 600 – 900 words, not less than 300 words
  • No ‘click here’ unless it’s part of a paragraph
  • Ordered list is better than bullets
  • Use bold and italics for key words instead of all the words
  • Contextual searches
    • X subject – Y action – Z outcome
    • e.g. best beaches (x) in (y) Davis (z)
Structure

• Kill the home buttons
• Add information about the program in *About Us*
• Reduce options to essential to the user and business needs.
• Eliminate duplication
• Prioritize content
  • Undergraduate and graduate information
  • Look at the data
  • Channels for engagement
• Marketing mechanics
  • content marketing scheme
    • people, website, email, social media
• SEO
  • Domain and subdomain
Design

- Know target audiences to drive design and priorities
- Treat every page as if it’s a landing page
- Understand entry points and user needs
- Program pages are critical turning points in the prospective students journey
- Responsive design
Design

- Internal links and linking to your page
- Broken links
- Collapsible, accordion, and anchors
  - Negative marks if Google can’t figure out what’s going on
- Tabs should not lead to external links
- PDF content
  - GGG Handbook
  - PDFs are not searchable and do not improve searchable
  - Move content over
Challenges in graduate student recruitment

- Inconsistencies in communication and web content
- Greater focus on applicants over inquiries
- Data collection
- Relationship building towards applying and enrolling
- Communication flow that provides students with information most relevant to each state
- Overwhelming students with anything and everything

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<tr>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<td>Issue 1: There is little influence from “the top”</td>
<td>Graduate recruitment is often seen as the territory of individual academic programs and their faculty members. Without the active involvement and strong support of executive leaders in graduate recruitment, it is difficult to secure the level of resources needed to build a strong graduate recruitment program.</td>
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<td>Issue 2: Graduate recruitment is decentralized</td>
<td>Graduate program directors tend to have no training or experience in the fundamentals of recruitment. As a result, follow-up and faculty commitments are inconsistent, communication and web content are uneven, and database management virtually non-existent.</td>
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<td>Issue 3: A desire to shape the class, not grow it—creating a disconnect between the two</td>
<td>Shaping is sometimes seen as a separate or more desirable goal than growing enrollment. The two do not have to be mutually exclusive. Growth can bring significant benefits to graduate programs such as more qualified and diverse students and increased revenue.</td>
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<td>Issue 4: Ignoring the top end of the funnel</td>
<td>Most graduate recruitment efforts do not focus as much as they should on prospects and inquiries. Instead, the process begins with the applicant stage. Graduate and professional programs need to take a lesson from undergraduate admissions and proactively build their inquiry pools through travel, solicitation, referral, and self-initiated prospection.</td>
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<td>Issue 5: An inadequate database to track all funnel activities</td>
<td>Having a robust, organized data process is crucial. This includes four points:</td>
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<td>- A centralized database that is accessible to all relevant parties</td>
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<td>- Training for staff on proper data entry and tracking</td>
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<td>- The ability to account for different program start dates, data fields, and other items that may vary from program to program; and</td>
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<td>- Creation of management reports that allow the program directors to compare and project new student enrollment.</td>
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<td>Issue 6: Lack of a strong annual plan</td>
<td>A graduate recruitment plan needs to have these elements:</td>
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<td>- A situation analysis</td>
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<td>- Goal setting</td>
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<td>- Strategies for goal achievement</td>
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<td>- Action plans</td>
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<td>Issue 7: Little personal relationship building with prospective students</td>
<td>To get the graduate and professional students you want, you have to let them know they are wanted. Building relationships early is the best way to engage prospective students and move them toward applying and enrolling.</td>
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<td>Issue 8: Communication management</td>
<td>Build a communication flow that provides students with information that is most relevant to each stage—resist the temptation to overwhelm students with everything all at once.</td>
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<td>Issue 9: Scholarships and financial aid</td>
<td>As employer benefits decline, institutions will need to discuss providing more merit and need-based assistance. Graduate and professional students have different needs and expectations than undergraduates, requiring a different level of expertise and sensitivity by the financial aid office.</td>
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<td>Issue 10: Not enough coordination among faculty/graduate directors</td>
<td>Graduate directors and faculty need to come together to:</td>
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<td>- Develop individual and a master graduate recruitment plan</td>
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<td>- Identify the admissions office and department responsibilities</td>
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<td>- Create print and online communication flows and establish standards</td>
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<td>- Commit to using data so that efforts can be tracked and evaluated</td>
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<td>- Support and coordinate campus visit efforts</td>
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Source: Non-Unit2

27th.