

Purpose

University of North Dakota has engaged mStoner as its partner in a comprehensive web redesign and rollout initiative. As part of the project's discovery phase, mStoner came to Grand Forks for two days in February 2017.

We facilitated meetings with eight groups of key stakeholders and conducted two student focus groups.

This document provides a comprehensive recap of the information that was obtained in the sessions.

Day One / February 27, 2017

Core Project Team

Participants

1. Sol Jensen, Project Lead
2. Tera Buckley, Project Manager
3. Tanner Rosendahl, Content Advisor
4. Carrie Huwe, Brand Advisor
5. Nathan Clough, Technical Advisor
6. Kelicia Christianson, Technical Advisor
7. Sarah Nissen, Executive Director, Office of Marketing & Creative Services

Challenges outlined by the core project team include:

- **Gaining buy-in** from the university community that the website redesign is a worthwhile investment in an environment where budgets are being cut.
- **Reining in units** that have websites outside of the OU Campus content management system (CMS).
- **Establishing a successful governance model** in what is currently a highly decentralized environment.
- **Producing high-quality and marketing-focused content** for all levels of the web presence, including content that originates in the colleges.

College Group 1

(Medicine, Law, Aerospace)

Participants

1. Jessica Sobolik, Director of Alumni & Community Relations, School of Medicine & Health Sciences
2. Denis MacLeod, Assistant Director of Alumni & Community Relations, School of Medicine & Health Sciences
3. Kathryn Rand, Dean, Law School
4. Rob Carolin, Director of Alumni & Public Relations, Law School
5. Henry Borysewicz, Director of ASN & Science Computer Center, Aerospace

What We Heard and Learned

- **Each college operates with independence and autonomy. Aerospace is not in the CMS and has its own web team.**
- All three colleges identify **prospective students as the primary audience** for the website. Prospective faculty and current students were cited as secondary audiences. Medicine also communicates with clinical faculty throughout the state.
- **Navigation is confusing within the college templates.** People expect the college navigation at the top of the template and frequently click something that routes them to the university site.
- The bulk of the **content creation happens at the department level for Medicine and Aerospace, and at the college level for Law.**
- **Law enjoys the spotlight feature** image / story at the top of the template, and finds the spotlight archive helpful for accreditation purposes.
- **Each college sees value in an event calendar that showcases content specific to their college,** and would be fine with that content rolling up to a university-wide calendar.
- All have **concerns that centralization will create bottlenecks** in posting timely information.

Wishes for the Website

- Searchability
- Easy and clear navigation
- Improved calendar
- Cleaner look
- Easy to manage content
- More use of graphics
- Better user reporting
- Increased administrative access

College Group 2

(Business, Arts & Sciences, Nursing)

Participants

1. Margaret Williams, Dean, College of Business & Public Administration
2. Averil Haugesag, External Relations, College of Business & Public Administration
3. Michelle Garske, Graduate Programs, College of Business & Public Administration
4. Jennifer Stoner, Marketing Professor, College of Business & Public Administration
5. Debbie Storrs, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
6. Tanya Butler, Coordinator of College Relations, College of Arts & Sciences
7. Timothy Pasch, Communication Chair, College of Arts & Sciences
8. Lawrence Peterson, Math Professor, College of Arts & Sciences
9. Gayle Roux, Dean, College of Nursing & Professional Disciplines
10. Jacob Chaput, Director of Technology, College of Nursing & Professional Disciplines
11. Tracy Backstrom, Office Manager, College of Nursing & Professional Disciplines

What We Heard and Learned

- **These colleges are less autonomous in terms of managing their sites.**
- Participants cited **a lack of flexible space in the current template**. Thus, the spotlight / feature is popular because it can be used for many different types of content. Updating spotlight images is a pain.
- **“Search pulls too much old content.”**
- **People like the myUND page and the social feed on the UND homepage.** Colleges should be able to display their own social content within their sites.
- **“There is too much inconsistency across UND sites.”**
- People feel strongly that they need to be able to react quickly and nimbly to publish content on their sites.
- Mathematics faculty use the CMS to publish course sites and pages for students.
- **It is difficult to give to a specific college or department** because the Give link takes you to a generic landing page with all university giving options. Micro-donations to departments would be nice.
- **The online application process is very complex and confusing to students.**

Wishes for the Website

- Easy to find faculty information
- Easy to update news, brags, and announcements
- Intuitive navigation
- Increased administrative access
- Ability to spell check and format check
- Less complex templates
- All faculty, staff, and instructors can find what's available
- A faculty / research finder like Stanford GSB
- Stories geared toward recruitment and retention
- Content that shows donors and alums and how they make an impact
- Zappos-like (quirky, non-corporate)
- Consistent
- Social media integration
- Ability to easily create robust forms
- More variety in the layout options
- Consistent academic program information
- Good photography
- Fewer pages and no redundant pages
- Integration of an event calendar throughout the site
- An interactive course / program finder similar to UC Berkeley's
- A robust calendar that supports iCal export
- One primary program page per academic program

College Group 3

(Education, Engineering, ES, Graduate Studies)

Participants

1. Cindy Juntunen, Dean, College of Education & Human Development
2. Leslie Risky, Administrative Assistant, College of Education & Human Development
3. Matt Cavalli, Associate Dean, College of Engineering & Mines
4. Jeremy Malheim, Director of Technology, College of Engineering & Mines
5. Deb Austreng, Director of Alumni, Corporate & Public Relations, College of Engineering & Mines
6. Sarah Edwards, Director, MA Counseling, Graduate Studies
7. Cindy Juntunen, Dean, College of Education & Human Development
8. Ryan Zerr, Director, Essential Studies
9. Jennifer Swangler, Associate Director, Office of Marketing & Creative Services

What We Heard and Learned

- **These colleges are less autonomous in terms of managing their sites.**
- Participants cited **a lack of flexible space in the current template.**
- **Creating content is challenging due to resource constraints.**
- **Spotlights / features were not as popular with this group.** Education is displaying old spotlights.
- **People do not want barriers to posting content on the website.**
- **Search does not work well.** Too many old pages are lingering throughout the web presence.
- People rely on the A-Z index and like it, but that is an indication that the site is not easy to navigate.
- Most commented that **the website is difficult to navigate and fraught with “navigation rabbit holes.”** Information is hard to find.
- **People feel guilty contacting the central web team because they are busy and understaffed.**
- People are mis-using UND’s survey tool (Qualtrics) to create their own online forms.

Wishes for the Website

- A wow factor
- Well-organized content
- A way to access data in a database (list of courses with course attributes)
- More flexible templates
- A calendar that integrates information from across campus
- Fewer clicks for major destinations, information that is easier to find
- Student, alumni, and researcher testimonials
- An easier to use CMS
- Better semi-permanent content layout (more tools in the toolbox to display things)
- A clear way to delineate departments and their content
- A news feed with college specific articles
- A better news feed with RSS options and robust tagging
- Governance
- Visual continuity between department pages and college pages
- Display recruitment information
- More focus on science, research and academics. Make this cool and fun
- Tell UND's story in a more dynamic, interactive way
- A dynamic and interactive program finder
- A more interesting way to display course attributes

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Research

Participants

1. Kari Suedel, Designer, EERC
2. Nikki Massman, Communications Director, EERC
3. Travis Fretheim, Incubator Manager, Center for Innovation
4. Terry Aubol, Assistant to VP of Research
5. Naomi Hansen, Communications Coordinator, Research
6. Stephanie Walker, Dean of Libraries & Information Resources
7. Kristine Sande, Associate Director, Center for Rural Health

What We Heard and Learned

- **UND is a research-driven institution** and a leading researcher in important fields including energy, biomedical, and unmanned autonomous systems.
- **Research centers we interviewed operate somewhat independently from UND** and currently manage their own brands and websites. EERC is a self-supported, break-even organization.
- Key audiences include legislators, industry partners, prospective faculty, and current students.
- EERC wants a new website and is on-board with moving into the CMS as part of the redesign project. The future of the websites for the Center for Rural Health and the Center for Innovation is to be determined.
- The library site is focused on information needs, not marketing. The library has a dedicated web developer.
- The top-level research landing page is in the process of being redesigned, with an emphasis on feature stories and news, and a magazine-style layout.
- **Research recently published a magazine called UNDDiscovery**, using freelancer writers.
- **There is an opportunity to showcase research stories throughout the website**, which will strengthen UND's brand and appeal to prospective students.

Wishes for the Website

- Easier and more intuitive navigation pathways
- Fewer clicks to get to the information you are seeking
- A better search tool
- Fewer pages

Day Two / February 28, 2017

OU [—]Users

Participants

1. Curt Hanson, Head of Special Collections, Chester Fritz Library
2. Elizabeth Becker, Senior Instructional Designer, Center for Instructional & Learning Technologies
3. Jennifer Proulx, Student Academic Advisor, Student Success Center
4. Sean Cleary, Office of Institutional Effectiveness
5. Dennis Stangl, Technology Specialist, TRIO Program
6. Joneen Iverson, UND Tech Support
7. Rhapsody Eyring, Marketing and Outreach Coordinator, Physician Assistant Studies
8. Kim Myrum, Administrative Assistant, Chemistry
9. Sandy Monette, Administrative Assistant, Physical Therapy
10. Crystal Alberts, Professor, English
11. Jackie Jensen, Administrative Assistant, Social Work

What We Heard and Learned

- **UND lacks a proper web form tool** and people use UND's survey tool (Qualtrics) to create forms.
- Many stated the CMS has to be able to work well with a number of other systems.
- **Search needs to be improved**, and duplicate and/or dated content needs to be removed. **One participant noted that UND has never fully completed a redesign rollout.**
- It is difficult to edit or resize images either within or outside of the CMS.
- **CMS user training and support is lacking.** There are less than five people on campus who are experts in OU Campus, and users do not have a forum for collaborating with one another on a regular basis.
- People are concerned about the time it will take to learn how to use new templates .
- **User roles / permissions and content moderation / approval workflows are inconsistently applied across groups.**
- Faculty are programming their own sites (outside the CMS) that pull in data from multiple servers.
- Will from the library is an experienced web developer who knows OU Campus well and is helpful to others.

Wishes for the Website

- A centralized event calendar
- Simplicity
- Better highlighting of academics
- Ability to easily post and edit images
- More freedom to be creative within the templates
- A more engaging experience for students
- Less text-heavy
- Better use of images, video, accordions, and tables
- An improved search
- Easy to navigate and update

Marketing & Communications

Participants

1. Barry Brode, Director, TV Center
2. Peter Johnson, Interim VP, University & Public Affairs
3. Milo Smith, Senior Director of Publications & Media Relations, UND Alumni Association & Foundation
4. Derick Stoullil, Assistant AD, Marketing, Athletics
5. Susan Caraher, University & Public Affairs
6. Jessica Kinneberg, Graphic Designer, Office of Marketing & Creative Services
7. Nicki Voight, Marketing Coordinator, Office of Marketing & Creative Services
8. David Dodds, Senior Editorial Director, UND Today
9. Heather Bushaw, Social Media Coordinator, Office of Marketing & Creative Services
10. Alyssa Konickson, Director of Marketing & Communications, UND Alumni Foundation & Association
11. Breanna Linert, Licensing Coordinator, Athletics

What We Heard and Learned

- **UND Today is a digital news publication that was launched in October by President Kennedy.**
- UND Today publishes eight stories per week, some accompanied by video. **The stories are curated and produced by a small staff with support from a group of “campus communicators”.** Academic and administrative units are frequently repurposing UND Today stories for their publications.
- **UND Today is running on the blogs.und.edu domain, which is powered by WordPress.** Sites on this subdomain are newer, and have a more modern look and feel that was designed by the central web team. UND uses the MailPoet plugin for email management.
- Alumni manages emails, events, and publishes a magazine three times per year, using staff writers and occasionally freelancers. Athletics has a staff of sports information directors typical of NCAA Division I universities. **Both the alumni and athletics websites / CMS are outside of the project scope.**
- **The TV Center provides UND with strong video production capabilities.** Their staff of five plus students produces videos for campus clients and manages the university’s YouTube and Vimeo channels.
- **The social feed on the homepage provides a much needed student voice.** Note that in an earlier session we heard that faculty do not feel the social feed is appropriate for the homepage.

Wishes for the Website

- A better search
- Less frilly, a simple template that will “play nice” across a wide variety of sites
- Inviting
- A site that gets me to where I’m going
- Easier to navigate
- More consistency across colleges and departments
- A site that provides solid navigation for secondary audiences without losing focus on primary audiences
- Easier to give to departments
- Great content
- A better URL for UNDToday

**“It’s not enough to have images,
we need great content to go with the images!”**

Graduate Students

Participants

1. Dylan Berg
2. Setareh Champion
3. Kristina Syverson
4. Lewis Archer
5. Stephanie Lee
6. Katie Fullmer

What We Heard and Learned

- **Many graduate students have family who attended UND** or they grew up near the university and were familiar with it before applying.
- **Decision-making factors include price, the absence of a GRE requirement, great higher education job opportunities, and good graduate benefits.**
- **Participants like the myUND page.**
- All agree it is difficult to find the costs associated with the programs on the website.
- As a prospective student, they wanted to find courses, requirements, financial aid and registration information.
- Information about transferring credits and course plans need to be available online.

Interactive Exercise

We asked current **Graduate students** to imagine a better user experience for prospective students.

Prospective students look for:

- Cost
- Courses
- Program details
- Resources, including professional development, research opportunities, and faculty information
- Community information
- Success stories

Visuals should include:

- Fighting Hawks logo
- Campus buildings
- Videos
- Emotion
- Indoor spaces, such as labs and classrooms

Functionality should include:

- One place for students to find everything they need
- A good search tool
- UND Calendar
- Easier navigation

— Undergraduate Students

Participants

1. Julianna Fennacy
2. Brian Nelson
3. Taylor
4. Peter Monsrud
5. Matt Adamson
6. Hannah Carlson
7. Cole Backmeier
8. Jordan Balvitsch
9. Breanna Shore

What We Heard and Learned

- Most students had **family ties to UND and / or parental pressure to attend due to affordability.**
- Other schools students considered included North Dakota State, University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, Iowa State, Kansas, Marquette, Creighton, South Dakota School of Mines, and College of Saint John's.
- **Affordability was overwhelming cited as the primary decision-making factor.** Other factors the students identified include: Grand Forks as a great college town, UND's strong aviation program (frequently cited as one of only two of its kind in the US), the size of the university, the hockey program, Greek life, and a great experience while touring campus.
- Most students commented on being surprised by the **close connections they have made with their professors and the high-quality of the academic programs.**
- **Students like the myUND page** and also use the website to access Blackboard, email, campus events, and the academic calendar.

Interactive Exercise

We asked current **Undergraduate students** to imagine a better user experience for prospective students.

Prospective students look for:

- Application
- Cost
- Events (on and off campus)
- Housing
- Accolades

Visuals should include:

- Photos of all the seasons
- UND life
- Video
- Simulation room, labs, research
- Bright colors/school colors

Functionality should include:

- Simplicity
- Easier navigation
- Quick links

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Admissions /
Enrollment Management

Participants

1. Sol Jensen, Assistant Vice President, Enrollment Services
2. Jason Trainer, Director, Undergraduate Admissions
3. Heidi Flaten, Assistant Director, Office of Extended Learning
4. Scott Correll, Registrar, Office of the Registrar
5. Christina Fargo, Assistant Registrar, Office of the Registrar
6. Janelle Kilgore, Director, Financial Aid
7. Laura Look, Director of Graduate Admissions, School of Graduate Studies
8. Michael Hirschberger, Recruitment and Enrollment Manager, School of Graduate Studies
9. Jennifer Swangler, Associate Director, Office of Marketing & Creative Services
10. Troy Noeldner, Housing & Dining
11. Matt Lukach, Relations Manager, One-Stop Student Services

What We Heard and Learned

- **Recruiting messaging focuses on affordability, student life, outcomes, and academics.**
- **UND is recruiting higher quality students** and marketing the honors program, living and learning communities, scholarships, programs of distinction, and internship/research opportunities.
- **North Dakota State has surpassed UND in recent years in terms of market perception.** NDSU extension centers penetrate all North Dakota markets. Fargo and football help them as well. **UND has a healthy distaste for NDSU.** However, positioning UND as elite relative to NDSU will not fly in ND.
- Prospective students from North Dakota are less likely to visit and more likely to apply. The opposite is true of prospective students from Minnesota.
- **The current site is too much like the UND organization chart,** and has a lot of redundant content.
- **Admissions would like to improve their ability to interpret analytics** in a way that ties all of the data they look at together and provides insight into key steps in the funnel.
- **Enrollment manages one page for each active online course,** these pages are important to marketing the online programs and are key to search engine optimization.

Wishes for the Website

- Focus on prospective students
- Simple language that our prospective students will understand
- Easy to access financial aid information
- Clarity around key steps in the enrollment process including deposit payment, housing, financial aid and orientation
- Clear calls to action: request info, visit, and apply
- A robust and interactive program finder
- More organized
- Personalized
- Fewer pages
- Improved search
- Simple navigation
- Clear way to self identify
- Show more personality, more student testimonials
- More visual
- More friendly and inviting
- Market all the things you will get as a UND student
- Consider showing visitors recent search terms
- Capability to have short URL's and/or more friendly URL's
- A single point of entry per program, one main program page per academic program
- Get rid of the separate way the online programs are presented

Leadership

Participants

1. Mark Kennedy, President
2. Madhavi Marasinghe, CIO, UND
3. Laurie Betting, Interim VP for Student Affairs
4. Alice Brekke, VP for Finance & Operations
5. Brian Faison, Athletics Director
6. Bob Knutson, UND Alumni Association & Foundation
7. Deb Glennen, Director of Disability Services
8. Lisa Burger, Assistant Vice President for Student Academic Services

What We Heard and Learned

- **UND’s brand promise, once defined, should be prominently displayed within landing page templates.**
- **Colleges and research centers own their content.** Some have more to present than others and the templates should be flexible to support that variation, but not vary in terms of brand and design.
- **All sites within the web presence will have “common bones.”** Functionality will be added to the toolkit as people identify real needs. But, “we will not argue over which way to roll the toilet paper.”
- **UNDToday is not intended to be the central news hub.** Colleges should manage their own news and compete to have their stories included in UND Today.
- **There should be a common sense of purpose, a level of energy and excitement, and good collaboration and teamwork across the university as this project rolls out.**
- **The website will be a success if people can find what they need quickly and the site captures the attention of prospective students.** It proved difficult to capture feedback on the internal aspects of a successful project in terms of governance structures, expectations, policies, and staff engagement.

Leadership wants to be able to describe the new website as:

- Hypnotic
- “Looks like me”
- Streamlined
- Vibrant
- Enticing
- Progressive
- Intuitive
- Unique
- Visual
- Creative
- Easy to navigate
- User-friendly
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Consistent
- Compelling
- Edited
- Magnetic
- Clear
- Concise
- Accessible
- Fast
- Future-focused
- Moving
- A place that showcases “Why UND?”