



Department Web Framework Users Meeting

May 24, 2016 – CMU 202

Topic: Alumni & Careers web content

Notes:

- We started off with a brief review of why it's important to have content about careers and alumni on your website. Most departments want to increase the number of majors, increase enrollment in courses, increase alumni engagement, and increase donor and community support. Showing students that your program is a path to successful careers will help achieve those goals. Prospective students and parents deliberately seek this information.
- The Nielsen Norman Group, a leading web usability and UX design firm, released an article on top 10 design guidelines for university websites. Providing information about job placement was #6 on their list. See the explanation and the other guidelines at <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/university-sites/>
- We did an empathy map exercise to get ourselves into the mindset of students. Being aware of their environment, their anxieties, what they're thinking, feeling, seeing and hearing, can help us develop content and write in ways that speak directly to this audience. A blank empathy map is attached if you want to try this on your own.
- Question from audience: How can I gather information about my alumni?
 - Talk to your divisional advancement staff. They may be able to give you some useful data or examples.
 - Start a LinkedIn group for your alumni. You'll be able to gather interesting statistics and examples of specific positions they hold. You can request a list of alumni emails from advancement and invite alumni to the LinkedIn group. (Recommended by Geography, who had great success with this method.)
- Question from audience: How can I find out how many people are looking at these pages and what paths visitors use on our website?
 - Every site supported by the A&S web team has Google Analytics installed. Contact asweb@uw.edu with your NetID and we can give you access to the reports for your department.
- We looked at several examples of department career pages in small groups and reconvened to share suggestions for improving them. It's hard to capture everything, but here are some of the main ideas:

- Add pictures to create a welcoming atmosphere and increase engagement. Suggestions were photos of advisers or photos of recent alumni.
- Avoid text heavy pages – they are dull and uninviting. Use headings, bulleted lists, and short paragraphs.
- Think about the priority of information. Put the info that students are most anxious/curious about at the top. Link out to subpages for details on specific topics or resources.
- Answer the question “What can I do with a degree in X” and provide example job titles and statistics right away. Workshop attendees particularly liked Geography’s Alumni Careers page. They found the concrete data comforting (we had discussed the high level of anxiety among students and parents): <https://geography.washington.edu/alumni-careers>
- Mention and link to specific examples of alumni – profiles or news are great if you have them.
- Address students in the second person. Speak directly to students in that major with your examples and information.
- Include a list of career-related skills and strengths that students can copy-and-paste to their resumes.
- Give a bit of context to lists of links – a short summary intro or very brief descriptions of the resources.
- Pay attention to grammar and formatting. Details like grammatical parallelism in bullet points and consistent heading styles make pages easier to read and understand.
- How else can I incorporate alumni and career content into my department website?
 - We didn’t have time to delve into this discussion. You can be thinking about how other sections like the About page or the Major overview page talk about careers and reference alumni and job information. Those pages can provide summary details and link to relevant pages so that you don’t have to repeat the same information in multiple places. Some departments have been developing Alumni Profiles and some have Alumni News stories. A lot more could be said on this topic. Future workshop topic? Or continue the conversation with your colleagues and the college’s web and marketing teams.
 - There was a suggestion to have a “widget” to make it easy to show 2 or 3 alumni profiles or news stories on the careers page. Web Team can add a block to specific pages for this purpose. Contact us if you are interested.

