

**Guided Pathway Work Group
Executive Summary- Website Re-Design**

Website Re-Design's Charge

- A. Inquiry regarding the SRJC website's ease of access to information and other colleges' websites to identify possible models
- B. Recommend specific improvements to the SRJC website in support of teaching and learning.
- C. Serve as a repository for website-related needs and ideas identified by other work groups in the course of their research.

Charge A: Inquiry

Problems Identified:

1) Aspects of the "JC website." It is actually a compilation of 180 websites using Drupal 7/ 8 plus the portal. The portal is outside of Drupal, has multiple templates and includes password protected pages as well as public pages. Although the portal is outside the scope of this inquiry, people might experience it as part of the overall website. The websites are generated and maintained by a wide range of unit/ department staff throughout the district, resulting in uneven access, usability, and currency.

- A "present-state" overview/ visual representation of this sprawling SRJC web presence does not exist. Content site maps for each website aren't currently available but can be configured.
- Navigation and information presentation/ linkages are not consistent across these websites.
- A combination of past practice and diminishing staff/ programming resources over the past decade or so have resulted in an inability to apply essential features of contemporary website standards; for example:
 - Enterprise functionality—for a college, for example, teaching and learning resources viewed from the perspective of student and faculty core-users so they can complete their tasks/goals
 - User Experience or UX—for example, targeted information for different types of student needs (New, Re-entry, Veteran, 1st generation, etc.) and ease of finding resources and support
 - Information Architecture or IA—this is the skeleton or behind the scenes structure of the information that assures it will remain current and accurate by residing close to the experts/sources while still enabling it to interrelate with other content necessary to the tasks and goals of the core-users.
- There are only two web staff in the district's IT organization.
 - Both have additional duties and an expanded workload due to retirements/reorg/COVID-19

- 2) Other colleges’ websites. No single other college’s website reviewed presents a perfect model; however, we identified some approaches and important features we could adapt and integrate to rapidly begin redesigning our homepage to better serve students and other core users

Sources & Data:

- SRJC web presence. Structural assessment (“audit jigsaw”) conducted: **1)** the primary domain (www.santarosa.edu); **2)** subdomains of the primary domain—e.g., *academic affairs.santarosa.edu*, *admissions.santarosa.edu*, *dream.santarosa.edu*—each of which has content pages; **3)** subdomains of the subdomains —e.g., *admissions.santarosa.edu/apply-your-certificate*, *dream.santarosa.edu/calendar-events*—each with content pages. Overwhelming amounts of info, some redundant/ confusing/dated.
 - SRJC Homepage Redesign Focus Group Data (Oct 2018); user metrics data from district IT.
- Other colleges. Inquiry and initial “user experience” conducted on wide range of sites. Pasadena City, De Anza, Mt. San Antonio, Sierra, Santa Monica, Bakersfield, Los Rios District, and Maricopa District (AZ) were identified as having various ‘best practices’ and/or tools worth assessing for SRJC.
- User Experience Principles.
 - A Comprehensive Guide to User Experience Design, <https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2018/02/comprehensive-guide-user-experience-design/>
 - User Experience Basics, <https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/user-experience.html>
 - Content Strategy Basics, <https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/content-strategy.html>
 - Visual Design Basics, <https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/visual-design.html>

Recommendations:

#1 Provide the best possible user-focused experience by leading the institution, in partnership with Student Services, in reframing our approach to, and support of, the college’s web presence. For today’s world the SRJC website is no longer a convenience or simple tool. *It is an essential utility, like electricity. It is also our district’s newest campus.*

#2 Break down silos that disperse information across various unit/department sites. Collaborate with ISSC and others to organize and integrate content and resources, beginning with the college’s main point of student access and support, the main domain. These COVID-impacted times are an opportunity respond with a much-needed *big reset: Extraordinary circumstances require extraordinary efforts.*

Charge B: Specific Improvements

Problems Identified:

- Information is organized according to the district’s internal structure (i.e., content experts/generators) and not on student educational pathways and related learning success supports.
- Large chunks of text, lists, or ‘data dumps’ predominate and are presented in ‘academic jargon.’
- ‘Calls to action’—prompts providing users with a clear access point to complete the tasks/ goals they desire, such as apply, pay, register, explore, choose—are either missing or buried/unclear.

- The Homepage (on *www.santarosa.edu*, the primary domain) does not guide students directly to the intuitively organized and efficient pathway that is right for them and is designed to support them throughout their journey and lead them toward successful completion of their educational goal.
 - Academics and Students sections are so siloed that they do not links to each other’s information in any way—much less integrate essential, basic information all students need.

Sources & Data:

- Stepping into Guided Pathways with the Student Journey in Mind, San Diego Mesa College, https://ccconlineed.instructure.com/courses/2634/files/299073?module_item_id=199541
- Using Journey Mapping to Optimize the Student Experience, <https://www.terminalfour.com/blog/posts/using-journey-mapping-to-optimize-the-student-experience.html>
- Experience Design Tool: Improving the Student Journey from Applicant to Alum, <https://www.brightspotstrategy.com/tool/student-experience-journey-map-tool/>
- ASCCC Online Handbook for Guided Pathways, <https://ccconlineed.instructure.com/courses/2634>

Recommendations:

#1 Focus Phase One of Redesign on student users: As the core-user group most negatively impacted by the deficits/gaps identified by inquiry into the usability of the JC website, this is the area of most need at present.

#2 Begin Phase One activity as soon as possible: Support the Web Re-Design Workgroup to continue work in collaboration with the SRJC web team and the district’s Shared Governance ad hoc Website Workgroup to perform pre-planning tasks (e.g., developing site maps and content migration plan for critical content; creating mock-ups of possible approaches to a common integrated Academics + Student Services ‘student journey’ area of the JC’s homepage, etc.) to effect rapid remedies.

#3 Ensure sustainable, cross-functional web team support, at both district and departmental levels. Identify and allocate resources to the web team from appropriate stakeholders –e.g. Guided Pathways, Career Education, Student Equity and Success, the general fund, other categorical funds as appropriate– to do the work of integrating Guided Pathway elements into a student-oriented website framework and to support departments as they align with the this effort.

Charge C: Repository for other GP Workgroups

Problems Identified:

- Identifying the right tool for the purpose. In 2018-19, the GP group used *MS Teams*, which was “clunky.” This Spring we used *Canvas*. We found it to be very problematic for non-course use:
 - non-faculty workgroup users had to be manually entered by DE staff; some were very delayed getting access and some never were successfully added in the system

- only one staff member could perform the manual entry, which means a backlog if that person is sick, has other workload priorities, etc. The district has no backup system/ contingency plan
 - FERPA concerns arose because all members were given “teacher role” in order to enable full collaboration by all members. Appropriately addressing FERPA needs caused further delays
 - when all participants have “teacher” status, groups can not be created– which means that one workgroup’s discussions go to everyone, not just their group
- Because of the inability to effectively use Canvas for GP activities, most groups resorted to creating shareable collaborative materials in *Google docs*. While effective, having to do so added another step to the recording/archiving process a repository requires—that is, creating a mechanism to collect and disseminate/ provide access to resources identified or created through that process. At present, most materials created in Google docs do not appear in Canvas.
- Inadequate time for the task. Due to circumstances this semester, workgroup leads have not yet had the opportunity to share out information/ideas about their area’s website-related needs. Nor has there been any discussion to date where a broadly usable repository should be located and how it could best be organized from a faculty/staff core-user perspective.

Sources & Data:

- ASCCC Online Handbook for Guided Pathways, <https://ccconlineed.instructure.com/courses/2634>
- SRJC Academic Senate, <https://academicssenate.santarosa.edu/guided-pathways>
- SRJC Guided Pathways Workgroups in Canvas, <https://canvas.santarosa.edu/courses/44900> (click on Pages for the beginnings of an in-house repository)
- Education Insights Center (EdInsights), Final Report from Spring 2019 College Visits

Recommendations:

#1 Continue to gather and organize website-related needs and ideas from a variety of sources.

#2 Dedicate time to assess viability and usability of other platforms with collaborative content creation features and good accessibility for JC’s core users (i.e., faculty, staff, advisory an other committees, etc.) who will be engaging with and contributing to Guided Pathways over time.

Website Re-Design Workgroup Members
(currently active)

Terri Frongia : Lead	<i>(WL/PHR/Art-PET)</i>
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Andrew Gratto -Bachman	<i>(Class—CE Student Success Outreach- PET)</i>
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Alex Hays	<i>(Student)</i>
Sami Lange	<i>(Libr- PET/ DC-WL)</i>
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Leila Rand	<i>(Class—Web Devel/ IT)</i>
Nancy Ruud	<i>(Couns)</i>
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Sofia Tecpoyotl Ramon	<i>(Student)</i>
Sarah Whyllv	<i>(PHR/Comp Studies)</i>

Guided Pathways Workgroups:

<https://canvas.santarosa.edu/courses/44900/modules>

- **To access WR-D activities and results**, click on “Web Re-Design (WR-D) Workgroup Commons, Spring 2020” module
- **Want to experience an “ah-hah!” moment?** Click on “Homework #2, New Student Guided User Experience” and put yourself into a student persona. Give yourself max. 10 minutes for the activity outlined—and no using Search! Where did your website journey take you? What were you thinking and feeling as you moved around in JC web space?