**IT 337 Project Two**

**IT-337 User-Centered Sys Design/Eval**

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**August 4, 2024**

**Identifying Issues and Recommending Solutions:**

**Executive Summary:**

This proposal addresses critical usability and design limitations within the existing A&D University class registration system. While the fundamental registration process may be perceived as straightforward, its overall execution suffers from a lack of user-centered design principles, leading to a clunky and suboptimal user experience. This document outlines specific areas for improvement, focusing on enhancing the login interface and the post-login navigation and information presentation. By implementing user-centered design methodologies, we aim to create a more intuitive, efficient, and visually appealing system that empowers students to manage their academic schedules effectively.

**1. Introduction:**

The current A&D University class registration system, while functional, presents several usability challenges that detract from the overall user experience. These issues, ranging from the initial login process to the navigation and information display within the system, can lead to student frustration and inefficiency. This proposal identifies key areas requiring immediate attention and proposes user-centered design enhancements to create a more seamless and intuitive registration experience.

**2. Analysis of Existing System Usability Deficiencies:**

Our initial assessment of the existing class registration system reveals several critical usability issues that warrant immediate remediation:

**2.1 Login Interface Deficiencies:**

* **Lack of Professional Design and Visual Appeal:** The minimalistic login page lacks visual engagement and does not effectively represent the university brand. This can create a less welcoming and professional first impression.
* **Insufficient User Guidance:** The absence of readily accessible help center information directly on the login page creates a barrier for students encountering common login issues (e.g., forgotten credentials), leading to potential delays and frustration.
* **Ambiguous Input Fields:** The lack of clear labels or icons for the username and password input fields can lead to user confusion and input errors.
* **Suboptimal Font Size:** A potentially small font size may hinder readability, particularly for users with visual impairments or those accessing the system on various devices.

**2.2 Post-Login Navigation and Information Presentation Issues:**

* **Inefficient Navigation Structure:** The requirement to navigate back to the homepage to access different sections of the system introduces unnecessary steps and hinders efficient task completion. A persistent global navigation menu is essential for seamless inter-page movement.
* **Lack of Clear Information Identifiers:** The use of ambiguous single-character identifiers ('X', 'R') beside course listings without clear accompanying labels or a legend necessitates users to infer their meaning, leading to potential misinterpretations.
* **Suboptimal Schedule Visualization:** The current schedule display does not adhere to the commonly recognized seven-day week layout, making it difficult for users to quickly and intuitively understand their class schedules.

**3. Proposed User-Centered Design Enhancements:**

To address the identified usability deficiencies, we propose the following user-centered design enhancements:

**3.1 Login Interface Redesign:**

* **Enhanced Visual Design:** Integrate university branding elements such as official emblems, high-quality photographs of campus life or graduating students, and a consistent color scheme to create a more professional, welcoming, and visually appealing interface. This fosters a stronger sense of institutional identity and user trust.
* **Integrated Help Center Access:** Implement a prominent and easily accessible link (e.g., "Need Help Logging In?") directly on the login page, directing users to a comprehensive FAQ or support resources addressing common login issues such as password recovery and username retrieval.
* **Clear Input Field Labeling and Iconography:** Explicitly label the input fields with "Username" and "Password" using clear and legible text. Consider incorporating standard lock and user icons to further visually reinforce the purpose of each field. Ensure an appropriate and accessible font size for all text elements.

**3.2 Post-Login Navigation and Information Presentation Improvements:**

* **Implementation of a Persistent Global Navigation Menu:** Introduce a consistent navigation menu (e.g., a sidebar or a top navigation bar) that remains visible across all pages within the system. This will allow users to seamlessly navigate between different sections (e.g., course catalog, registration, academic records, schedule) without returning to the homepage.
* **Clear Identification of Course Action Indicators:** Replace ambiguous single-character identifiers ('X', 'R') with clear and concise labels (e.g., "Drop," "Register") or universally understood icons accompanied by descriptive tooltips that appear on hover. Alternatively, provide a clear legend explaining the meaning of each indicator prominently displayed on the relevant page.
* Enhanced Schedule Visualization: Redesign the schedule display to adopt a standard seven-day week layout with clear columns for each day and rows representing time slots. This familiar format will significantly improve readability and allow users to quickly grasp their weekly schedule. Consider incorporating visual cues such as color-coding for different courses or highlighting specific time blocks.

**4. Benefits of Implementing User-Centered Design:**

Adopting a user-centered design approach and implementing the proposed enhancements will yield significant benefits:

* **Improved User Experience:** A more intuitive and visually appealing system will reduce user frustration, increase satisfaction, and foster a more positive interaction with the university's online services.
* **Increased Efficiency:** Streamlined navigation and clearer information presentation will enable students to complete registration tasks more quickly and efficiently.
* **Reduced Support Requests:** Providing readily accessible help resources and clear interface elements will likely decrease the volume of support inquiries related to login and basic system navigation.
* **Enhanced Accessibility:** Implementing clear labeling, appropriate font sizes, and adhering to accessibility guidelines will make the system more usable for a wider range of students, including those with disabilities.
* **Professional Representation:** A well-designed and user-friendly registration system enhances the university's online presence and reinforces its commitment to providing a high-quality student experience.

**5. Conclusion:**

The current A&D University class registration system, while fundamentally functional, can be significantly improved by adopting a user-centered design philosophy. Addressing the identified deficiencies in the login interface, navigation structure, and information presentation will lead to a more intuitive, efficient, and satisfying experience for students. By implementing the proposed enhancements, A&D University can demonstrate its commitment to user-centricity and provide a modern and effective platform for managing academic endeavors.

Persona 1:



Name: Sarah

Age: 21

Student status: An on-campus student who is majoring in Humanities

Current Profession: Legal Receptionist

Future Profession: Legal Professional

Technological Proficiency: Good to Expert

Used technologies: MacBook, PC, iPhone, and iPad

Most portal usage: Spread out throughout the day

Specifics: Technologically literate and adept, requiring little assistance.

Persona 2:



Name: John

Age: 40

Student status: Online student majoring in art history

Current Profession: Works at a museum

Future Profession: Journalist

Technological Proficiency: Average

Used technologies: PC and tablet

Most portal usage: After work and weekends

Specifics: Improving technological skills through study and practice.

Persona 3:



Name: Rita

Age: 55

Student status: Part-time, online student who is majoring in history

Current Profession: Journalist

Future Profession: Author

Technological Proficiency: Poor to Moderate

Used technologies: Laptop and phone

Most portal usage: In the evening or early morning

Specifics: Struggles with technology, frequently requiring assistance.

A screen shot of a login form

Description automatically generatedA screen shot of a computer

Description automatically generatedA white rectangular object with text

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceA schedule of a university

Description automatically generated

Participant number: 1

Observer: Tatiana Epps

Date: August 4, 2024

Name of project: MY University Student Portal Test

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Task Number/**  **Description** | **Start Time** | **Issues** | **Help Used/Given** | **Completed?** | **Stop Time** |
| Log-In | 2:11 PM | None | None | Yes | 2:12 PM |
| Verify Profile | 2:13 PM | None | None | Yes | 2:14 PM |
| Find Classes Required for Program | 2:15 PM | Looked for My Program | Redirected to My Courses | Yes | 2:17 PM |
| Look Up Schedule | 2:17 PM | None | None | Yes | 2:18 PM |
| Register for Classes | 2:19 PM | Questioned which was the appropriate class | Informed her to choose the Information Tech class | Yes | 2:22 PM |