*Meeting Notes from Christine’s Consultation w/ Diana Lowry,*

*Prospective Student Communications & Marketing Team*

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**Feedback on Current Website (Prospective student pages and beyond)**

* If you search “admissions lfs” our page is the first link…but it’s a terrible site. We loose students by not having something they want to spend time exploring.
* Make use of a copy-writer
  + Upon review of our site, Diana noticed that each of the pieces/sections have been written by a different author, so there is no unified voice
* Use “you” when speaking to the audience rather than “students”
* Is our page mobile compatible?
* Highlight our STUDENTS!!!
  + What are the things prospective students want to know from the current students?
    - What are the stories that resonate?
    - Struggles, challenges, opportunities for growth?
    - Not all stories should be success stories form point A to B.
* Names of programs and Faculty are challenging to understand; hard to circumvent this, so we need to be clear about how we talk about them.
* The easier we can make it for students, the better.
* Need to find out what differentiates us from other programs at UBC (not just other programs at other institutions)
  + How are we innovative, why this program here at UBC?
* Professions – what are students from the program actually doing? What is the job title, the tasks, etc. What credentials do they need and can your program help them get certified (eligible to be certified)?
* What are the outcomes from coming to your program? Career and otherwise.
* Keep it simple!!
* We are well poised as a Faculty to speak to the millennial mindset; the issues our programs addresses are current, relevant and important to this generation – we need to capitalize on this.
* Don’t assume that current events in the Faculty won’t appeal to the prospective student audience. We need a way to show them what the environment is like for current students to help them see themselves here and get excited about being here. So, we should be promoting current student and faculty experiences on the prospective student site to draw them in; example, promote and talk about the LFS Research Cafés, Wednesday Night Dinners, Career Week, etc.

**Two Prospective Student Audiences to Consider**

* You have two audiences within the prospective pool who will visit your site:
  + Those who already know what they want in terms of a career path (program), and are visiting your sight to reaffirm their choice, justify their decision. You want these students to choose to be educated here to get in to that career.
  + Those who have no idea what they’re looking for and you need to persuade them to consider (and pick) you; can you cover all the bases and provide them with the information they are looking for to make this decision?
* What kind of inquiries are we getting from prospective students through other channels (phone, email, etc.) – are they asking about information that isn’t already on our website? If so, think about adding it.
* Are there distinct factors or bits of information required for specific groups, like international and/or Aboriginal students? There may not be as many distinct factors as we may think.

**Research Shows - Prospective Student Behaviour**

* Videos are HUGE for students
  + Polished videos on Youtube
  + Students are savvy – they know what is low production versus high production and expect well-produced multi-media…unless it’s student-generated, then there is some leeway given.
* Students creep on Faculty pages, websites, social media. They like creeping on current student channels to see what’s happening in that Faculty/on that campus/in research.

**Navigation and Architecture Suggestions**

* Tab creation/navigation suggestions:
  + Students search for key terms rather than identify themselves as a specific student (so, they will search “apply to ubc” rather than “prospective student ubc” – be sure to work on Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to ensure we capture all the right key words and that our pages appear first in Google searches.
  + What is our ideal bucketing system? How do we want to categorize information?
  + Topic- versus audience-based content?
  + Check out [students.ubc.ca](http://students.ubc.ca/) navigation ideas: big buckets of information as they know what students are looking for + they have the audience information underneath
  + Instead of a linear structure, conceptualize the multiple access points to your site and information
  + Very rarely do people navigate a website to get information: they use Google to search specific terms and expect the link they click on to have that information showing.
  + So, research how students are searching to get to our site - what are people typing in to Google?
    - This will help tell us what students are actually looking for.

**Organization of Content on Pages Advice**

* Prioritize content at the landing page-level; you need to draw students in with key messages
* Avoid side bars (creates clutter): example, our Advisor contact info and recent news from the blog is distracting and un-necessary
* We need a clear hierarchy between our headings; what is most important?
* Use terminology that students recognize; headings = what students want to know…don’t try to be fancy or wordy…short and sweet is the way to go
* Is the content on the page the stuff students are actually searching for?
* What are students searching for – make sure that information organically appears on our pages
* Avoid labels, jargon, etc. (speak their language)
* Avoid accordions and boxes; too clunky and forces students to click multiple times to get at the information they want/need
* Explore the idea of using wide photo structure, white space for layout (more popular convention across campus pages); examples - [youbc](http://you.ubc.ca/), [Arts](http://www.arts.ubc.ca/), etc.
* CTA = Call to Action – use CTA buttons to encourage further exploration
* Check out UBC Okanagan program pages for examples on how to better organize program-specific information (Example – Biology: <http://biol.ok.ubc.ca/undergrad/biology.html>)
  + Mini navigation built-in to the one single page (a great deal of content in one space because of the mini navigation menus)
  + Testimonials are important: do students fit in to this program/Faculty? Can they see themselves here?
* What is the value of your information so you can target it to a specific audience?

**Google Analytics and Site Traffic Tracking**

* Google analytics: run it on our site
  + Can help us make change in the future as well
* What tags/words are associated with our programs?
* Track behaviours on the page:
  + How many repeat visitors? Helps you to learn if this page is a resource for students?
    - Students will revisit a page over and over either to make them feel confident in their decision or check and re-check if they’ve got all the info/steps.
  + Is there a decent time spent on page?
  + Is the content engaging?
  + How high is your bounce rate? (Low = good)
  + Do you have material to engage students?
  + Does this material change often enough to keep people interested and want to return?