

Da Vinci User Research Report

December, 2016 | Abigail Lacey
Information Architecture I

Contents

I.	Overview	3
II.	Research Findings	
	<i>Group Research</i>	10
	<i>Individual Research (User 1)</i>	11
	<i>Individual Research (User 2)</i>	15
III.	My Strategy for Fixing the Problem	22

I. OVERVIEW

What is Da Vinci?

Da Vinci is a website designed for MassArt students, advisors and faculty. Depending on the user, the site offers a range of features.

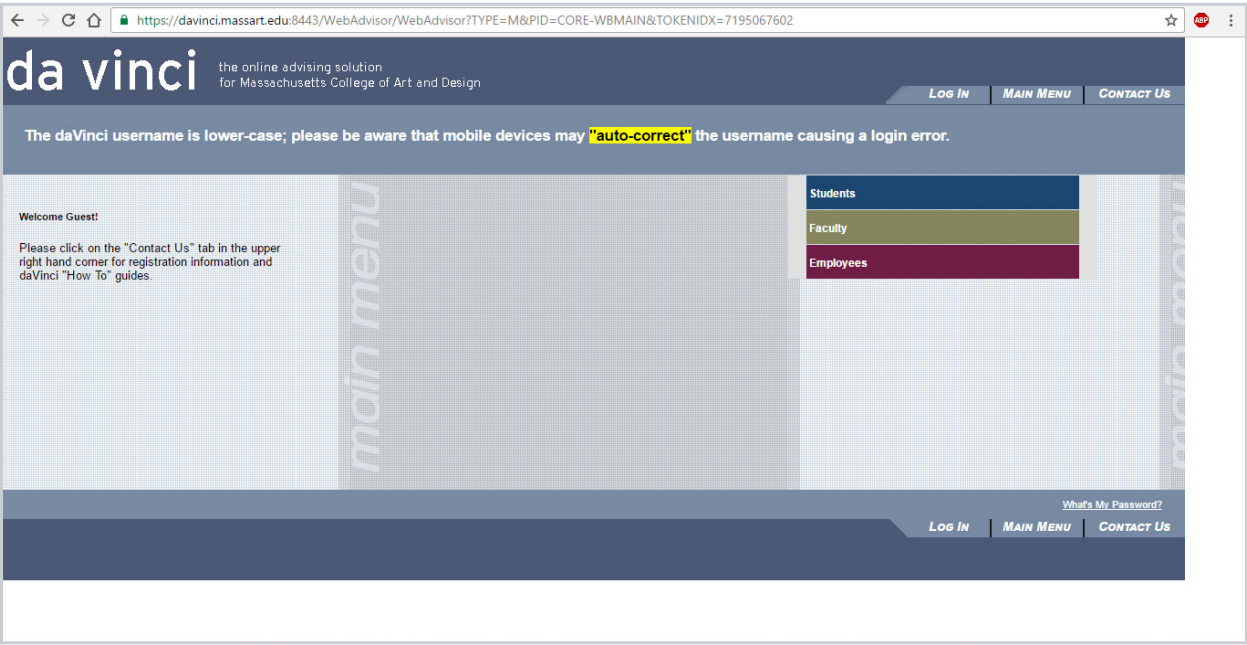
For students, the website serves as a place to search, plan, and register for courses while also being able to view their current class schedules, classes they have previously taken, as well as those they are required to take in the future. In addition to academic information, it also includes personal information such as contact, advisor, and financial information.

For faculty, the site allows viewing of class rosters, tracking of attendance, and editing of specific student information such as mid-semester warnings and final grades.

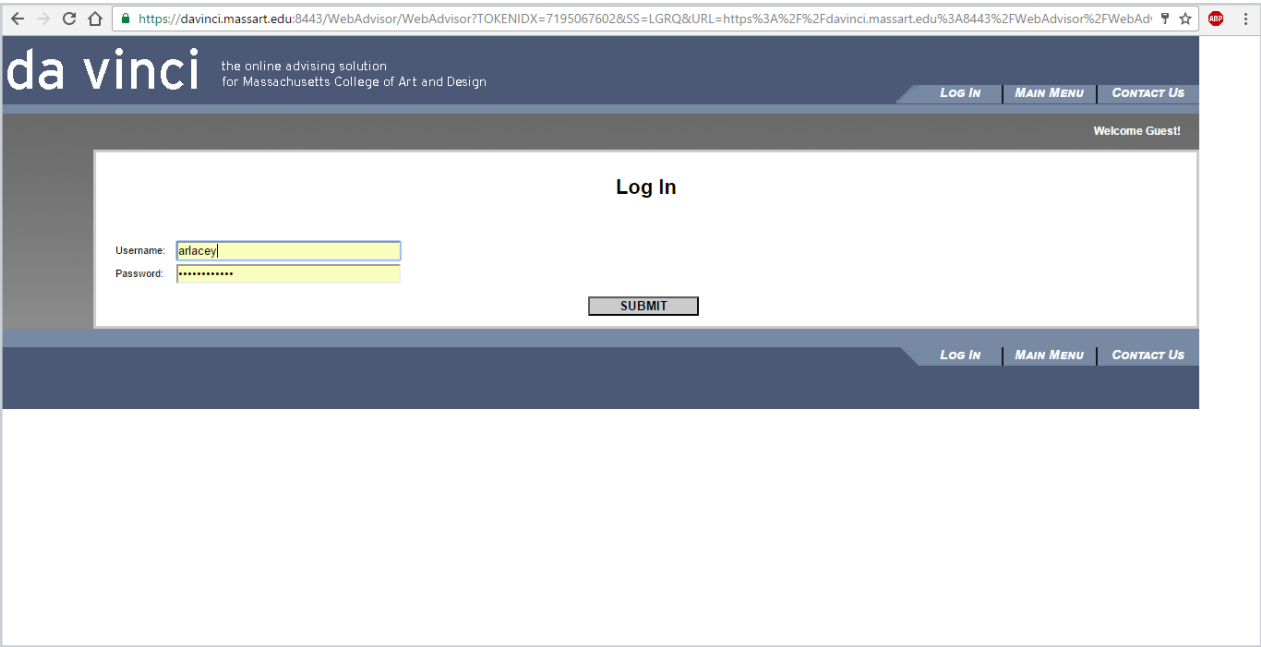
For advisors, Da Vinci allows access to student program evaluations during advising sessions as well as the ability to remove advisor holds so that students may register for classes.

Accessing Program Evaluation on a Desktop Computer

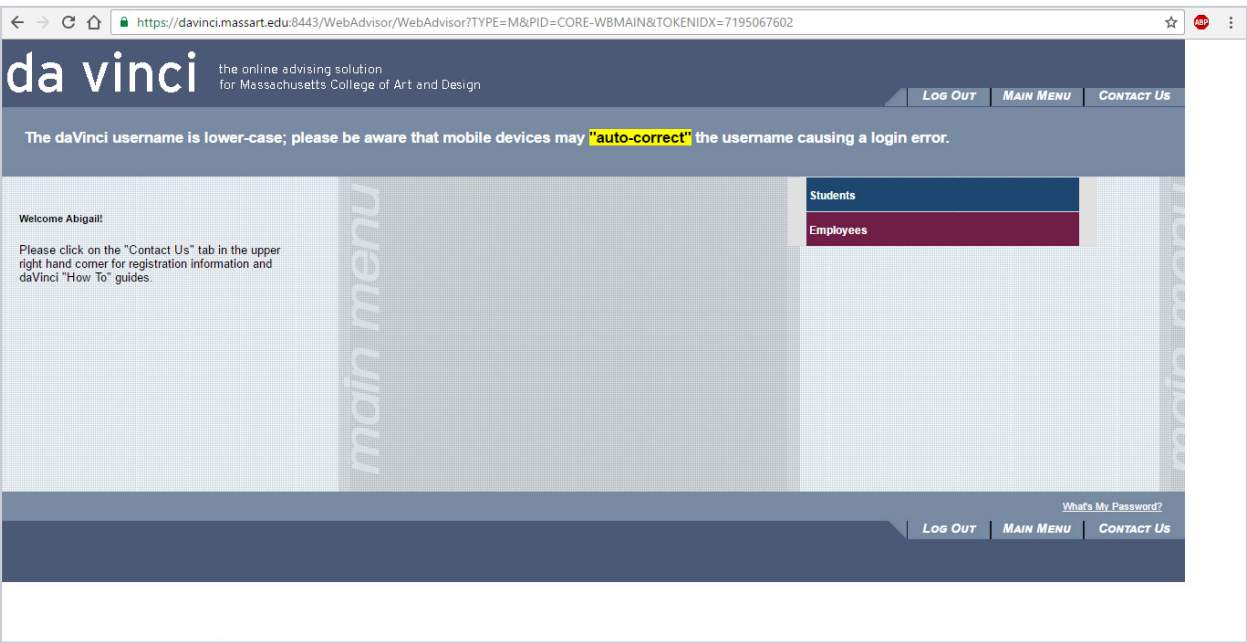
Main Page



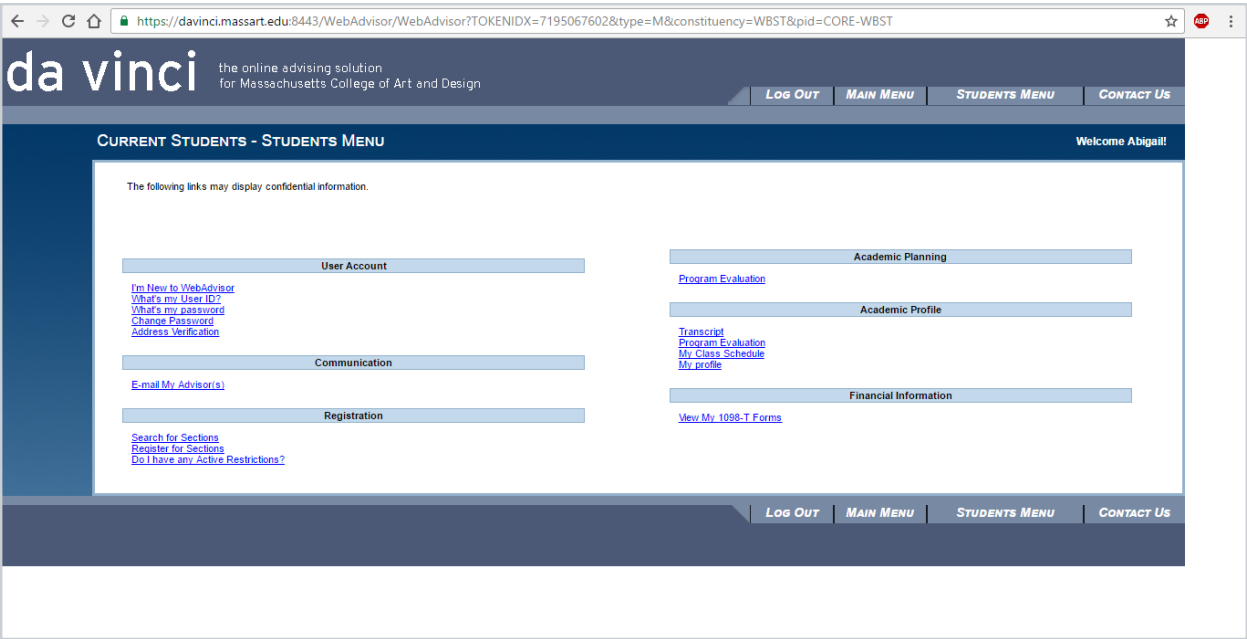
Log In Page



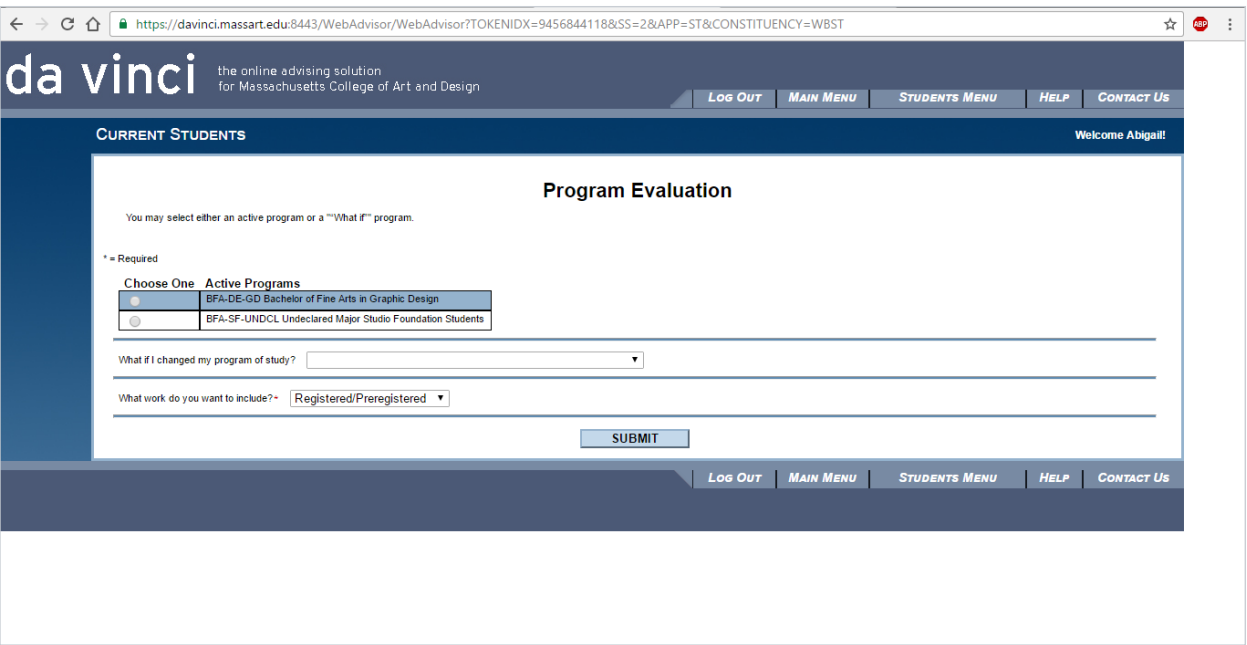
Main Page (After Logging)



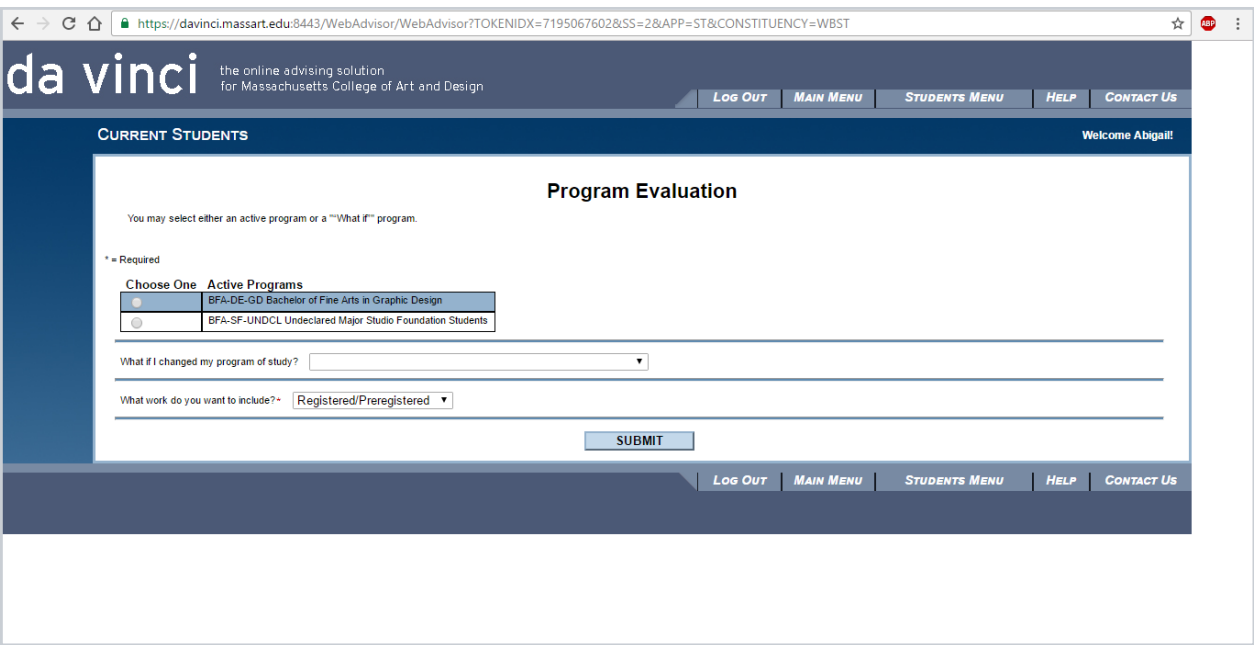
Student Menu



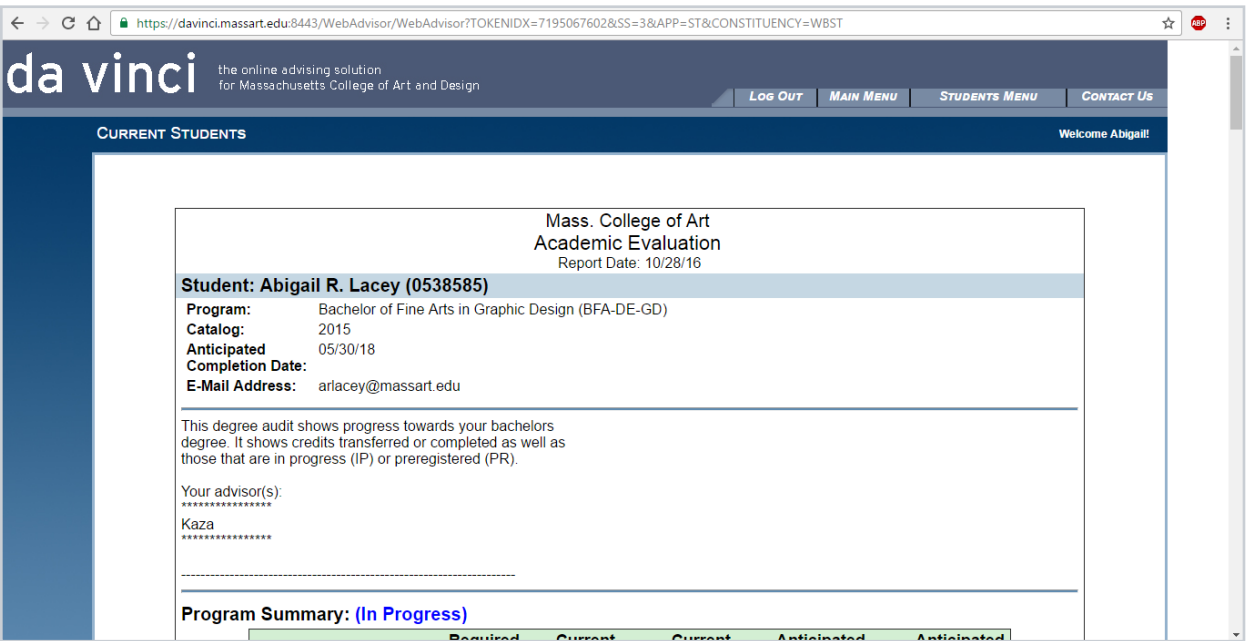
Program Evaluation Page (Loading)



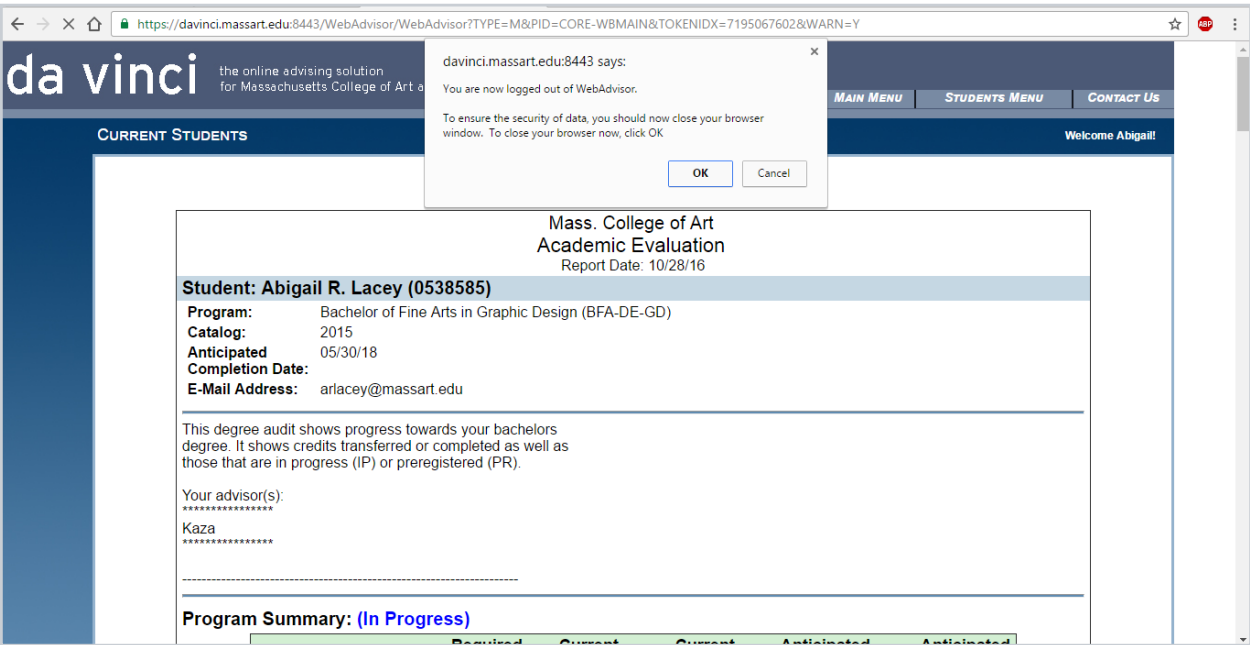
"Filter" Program Evaluation Page



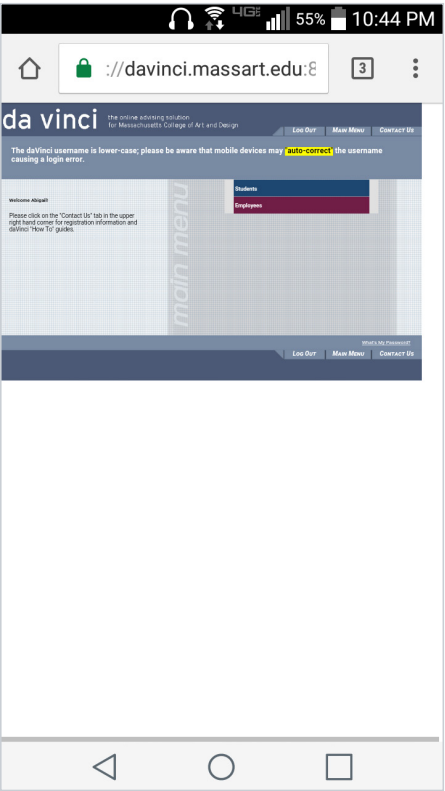
Program Evaluation Page



Logging Out



Main Page (After Log In)



Student Menu

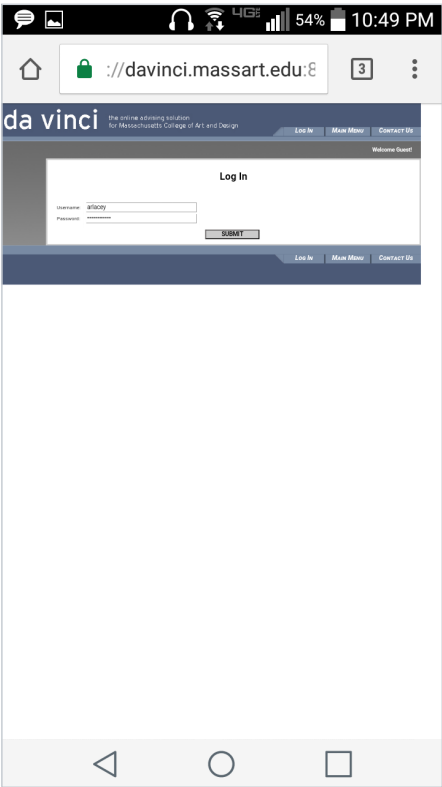


Accessing Program Evaluation on Mobile Device

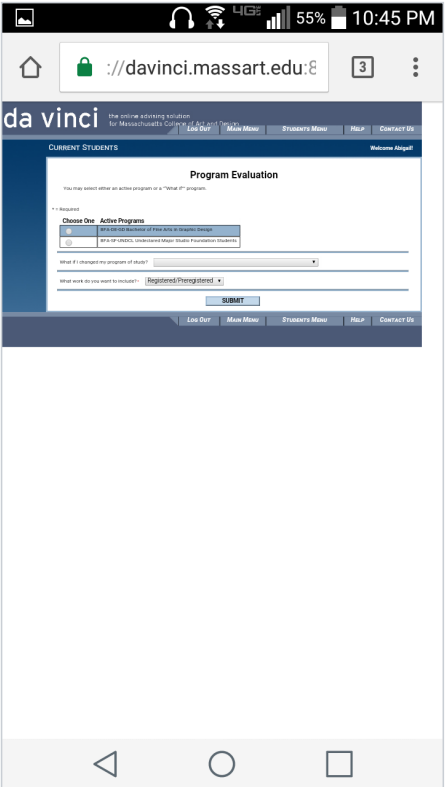
Main Page



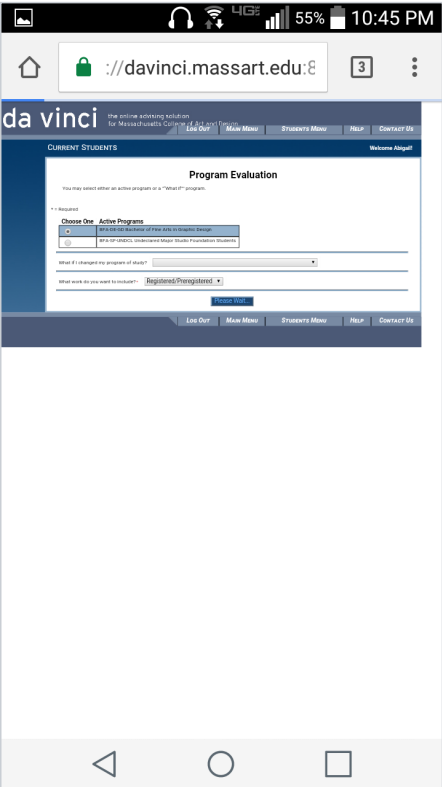
Log In Page



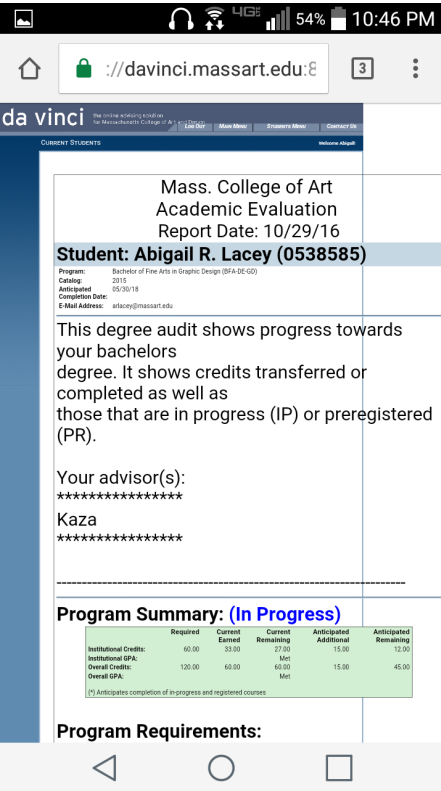
Filter Program Evaluation



Program Evaluation Page (Loading)



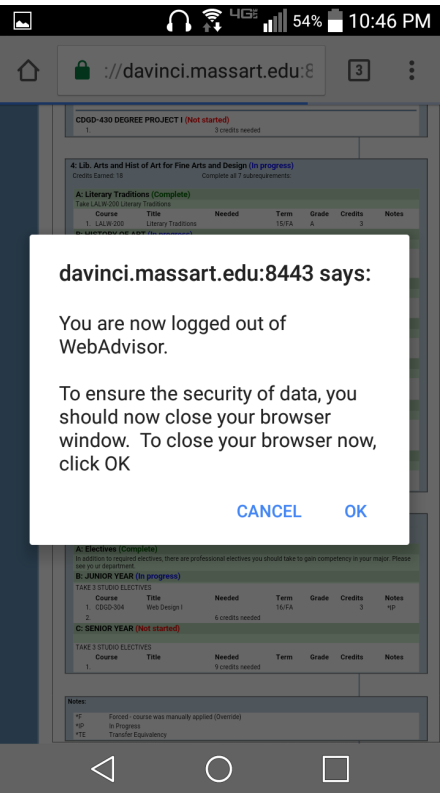
Program Evaluation Page



Logging Out



Logging Out Continued



General Problems

Some general problems people experienced with this process were readability, screen loading time, unnecessary repeated information, visual/information hierarchy, terminology used while navigating from screen to screen, and poor color schemes.

II. RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Group Research

Within my group, we first selected 8 methods from the four categories (Learn, Look, Ask, Try) described in the 51 IDEO Method cards. Using those methods, we observed how each of us goes through the process of accessing the Program Evaluation page on Da Vinci. After that, we conducted the same research on both MassArt students familiar with Da Vinci and those who have never used Da Vinci before.

Group Research Methods Used

- *Learn:* Activity Analysis, Error Analysis
- *Ask:* Five Whys, Extreme User Interviews
- *Look:* Fly on the Wall, Behavioral Mapping
- *Try:* Try it Yourself, Scenarios

Users Familiar with DaVinci

- *Graphic Design Majors:* Brie, Marlene, myself
- *Non-Graphic Design Majors:* Aubrey, Kellie

Non-DaVinci Users

- Christopher, Sherri

Based on our findings, my group gained insight on the differences between the experiences of non-Da Vinci users and those who are familiar with it.

For MassArt Students who are familiar with Da Vinci, we observed that they had developed their own personal systems for accessing the Program Evaluation page. These users generally claimed that creating such systems for themselves was necessary in order cope with elements that hindered their ability to read and complete certain tasks on Da Vinci. From this we learned that continual use of a website overtime sometimes enables even the most poorly designed sites to achieve its initial goal (Da Vinci's being servicing student academic needs).

For those who were not familiar with DaVinci, we observed that they didn't find the flow of the information itself nearly as difficult as it was to interpret the terminology used throughout the process (specifically: "preregistered" and "registered" options that appear in the screen before the actual program evaluation page). Also, repeated information such as the option to select

"Program Evaluation" in two different places and the repeated navigation bars at the top and bottom of the pages caused additional confusion to users trying to complete the task at hand. From this we realized that both users familiar and not familiar with Da Vinci essentially report on the site having an unclear navigation elements.

In the end, we concluded that rather than the information itself and overall path of accessing Program Evaluation being the issue, what really needs most adjustment is the layout of information and how that information is labeled throughout the interface. Such an adjustment would improve the overall readability, navigation, and feelings towards the site as a whole.

2. Individual Research (User 1)

Apart from my group, I conducted my own research by interviewing two people separately using my own selection of methods from the 51 IDEO Method cards. The first user I tested was a MassArt student in Illustration who had used Da Vinci multiple times prior to my interview. I asked this person to access the program evaluation using a desktop.

Methods I Used

- *Look*: Behavioral Mapping, Personal Inventory
- *Ask*: Questionnaire
- *Try*: Informance
- *Learn*: Flow Analysis, Affinity Diagram

Behavioral Mapping

- attentive and relaxed in the beginning
- continual commentary expressing hatred for the site
- relaxed, multi-tasking/eating chocolate while waiting for the loading screen
- remains calm during the waiting time but continues to point out specific problems with the site, without being asked, throughout the remainder of the process

Personal Inventory

Things that this user finds most important when navigating a site like Da Vinci are loading time between screens, readability of text and navigational elements, and visual aesthetics to some extent (should be simple, but not too simple so that it's boring).

Questionnaire

- 1.) *What was the easiest part?*
Logging in

- 2.) *What was the most confusing?*

Finding program evaluation because the type is so "condensed" and squished together

- 3.) *Did anything frustrate you? If so what?*

Yes. Waiting for the program evaluation page to load

- 4.) *How do you feel about the overall layout of information?*

- "Boring AF"

- Doesn't like how the navigation appears twice – it's just "really crappy"

- 5.) *How do you feel about the visuals (text, colors)?*

- Boring and basic

- There should be more space between things

Informance

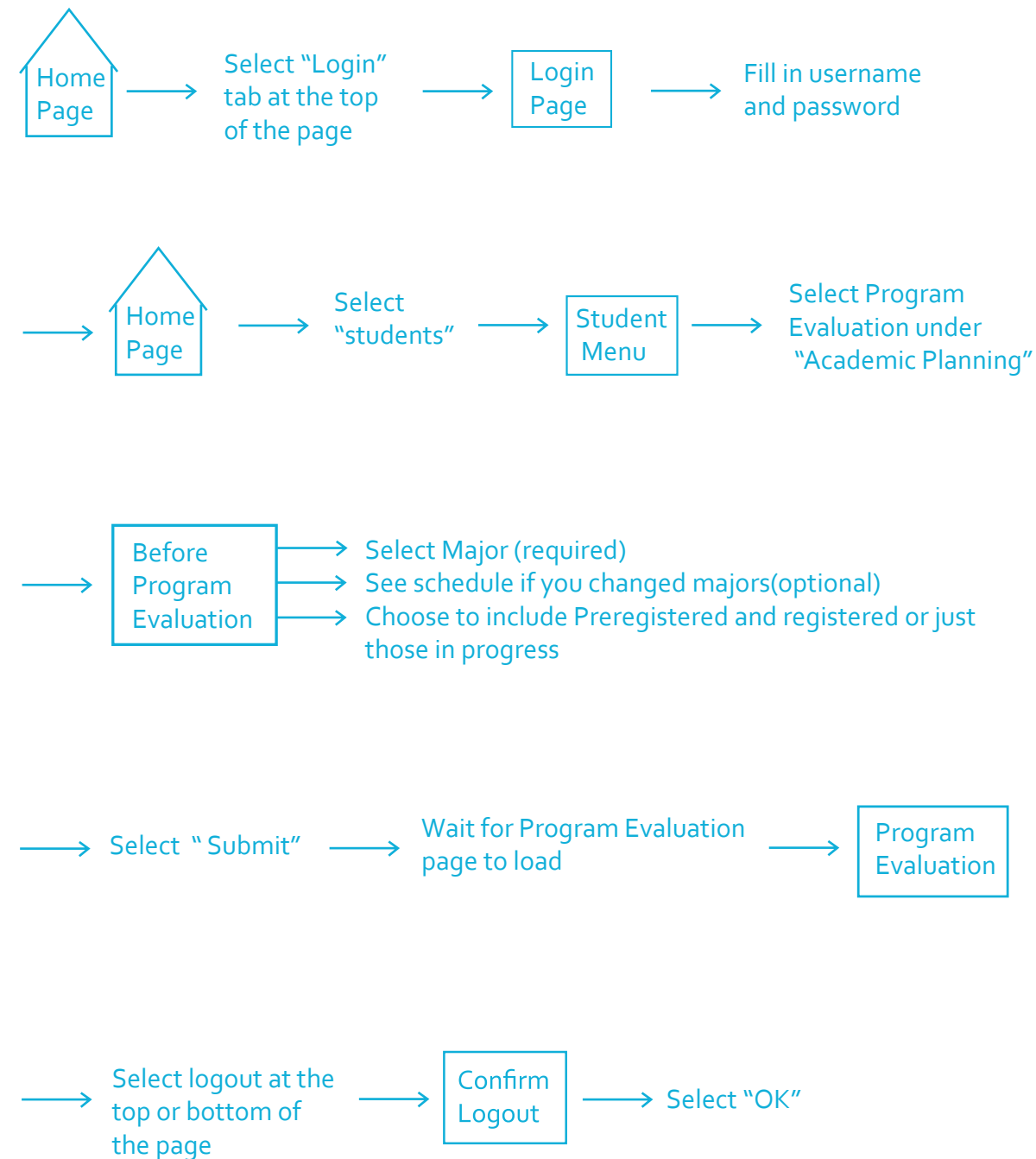
After observing the ways this user reacted and behaved while accessing the program evaluation through Da Vinci as well as after asking specific questions regarding the experience, it seemed that the most problematic part of accessing the program evaluation was deciding which place, out of two, to select the option "program evaluation." Seeing this as the most problematic, I decided to go through the process myself while focusing on that specific area.

During my experience of this problem, I tried to find the difference between selecting the program evaluation option under the "Academic Planning" section and the one under the "Academic Profile" section. After trying both options, I realized that there was really no difference between them at all. Their functions were exactly the same.

What I took from this was that putting the same information in two different sections is excessive and only creates confusion out of something that should otherwise be simple.

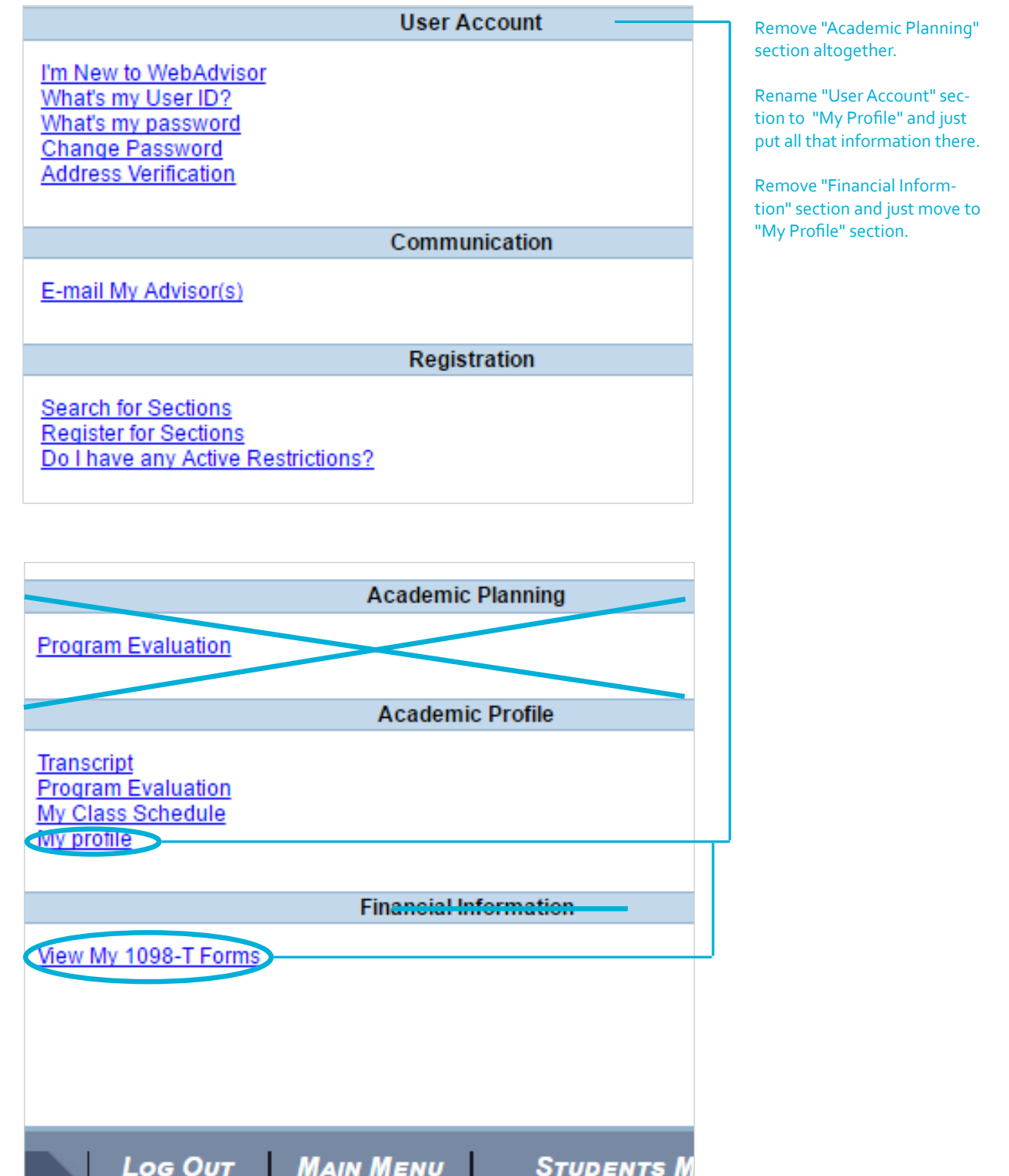
Flow Analysis

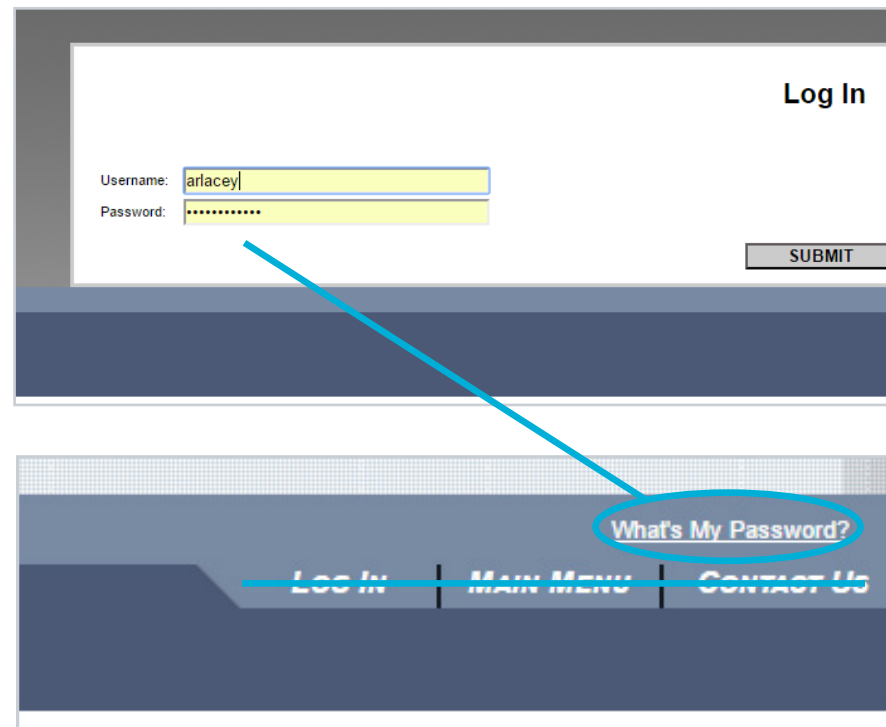
(mapping out the general path through to "Program Evaluation" in Da Vinci)



Affinity Diagram

After specifically observing and taking note of this user's personal inventory, I attempted to group and eliminate certain information on the pages in a way that would address this user's specific issues:





Move "What's my password?" from the home page to the Log In Page.

Get rid of bottom navigation bar on each screen.

3. Individual Research (User 2)

The second user I tested is a high school student who has never used Da Vinci prior to my interview. I asked this person to access the website using a mobile phone. The research methods I used were the same as the previous user.

Behavioral Mapping

- started out comfortable and relaxed
- squinting eyes at screen before program evaluation page
- when he saw the heading "program evaluation" on the page to select the major, he thought he was already at the program evaluation page and seemed open and ready for the next step
- after realizing it wasn't, he proceeded to select further choices to continue on to the actual program evaluation page
- while waiting for the program evaluation to load, he paused for about 30 seconds before sighing and shuffling around in seat.
- then decided to go back, became frustrated he couldn't do that
- tried to refresh then became more impatient
- when screen finally loaded, sense of relief
- tension stopped and easily logged out with no problems

Personal Inventory

Things that this user finds most important while navigating a site like Da Vinci from a mobile phone are loading time between screens, clear navigation and terminology, and a layout suited for the device being used.

Questionnaire

- 1.) *What was the easiest part?*
Logging in and logging out
- 2.) *What was the most confusing?*
Terminology: registered, pre-registered
- 3.) *Did anything frustrate you? If so what?*
Yes. Waiting for the program evaluation page to load
- 4.) *How do you feel about the overall layout of information?*
Not good. The layout is "not meant for mobile devices." Too much white space on the home page. On the page displaying the courses you have to take, there is an "awkward boarder going through the text."
- 5.) *How do you feel about the visuals (text, colors)?*
 - Colors are dated and dull.
 - "Doesn't look professional for college," specifically the grey bars on either side of the "Student" and "Faculty" buttons on the home page.
 - Thought it was made by a student.
 - Font is very "90s"
 - Overall "not the most aesthetically pleasing"

Informance

Just like the previous user, I took what this user found most problematic about the site and tried to understand them myself by following the same path as my user using the same device. For this user, I particularly focused on the visual layout of the site.

I discovered that just as my user described, the fact that the layout didn't seem suited for mobile devices made navigation extremely difficult in comparison to desktop navigation which on its own is rather confusing and difficult to navigate.

Flow Analysis

The path that my second user took to get to the Program Evaluation was almost identical to that of my first user. The only difference was that this user selected Program Evaluation from the "Academic Profile" section as opposed to the "Academic Planning" section. The fact that both ways lead the user to the same place in the same amount of time confirmed and emphasized the discoveries in my group research and personal belief in there really being no point in having two different places to select Program Evaluation.

Affinity Chart

Like with the first user, I attempted to group information on the pages in a way that would address this user’s specific issues based on behavior mapping and record of this user's personal inventory:

You may select either an active program or a "What if" program.

* = Required

Choose One	Active Programs
<input type="radio"/>	BFA-DE-GD Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design
<input type="radio"/>	BFA-SF-UNDCL Undeclared Major Studio Foundation Students

What if I changed my program of study?

What work do you want to include? *

Group the option to select which classes to include with the active programs. No horizontal line should be separating them.

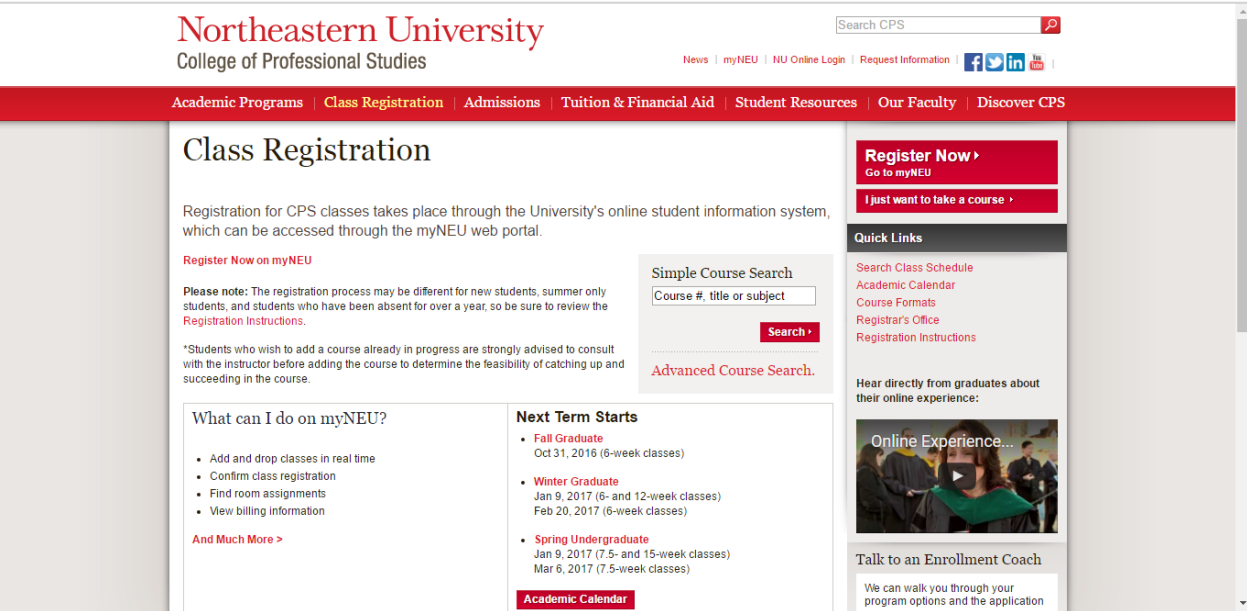
Have the drop down menu for "What work do you want to include?" a multiple choice setup since there are only two options to choose from anyway. It will also make the visual link to "Active Programs" stronger.

Further Research

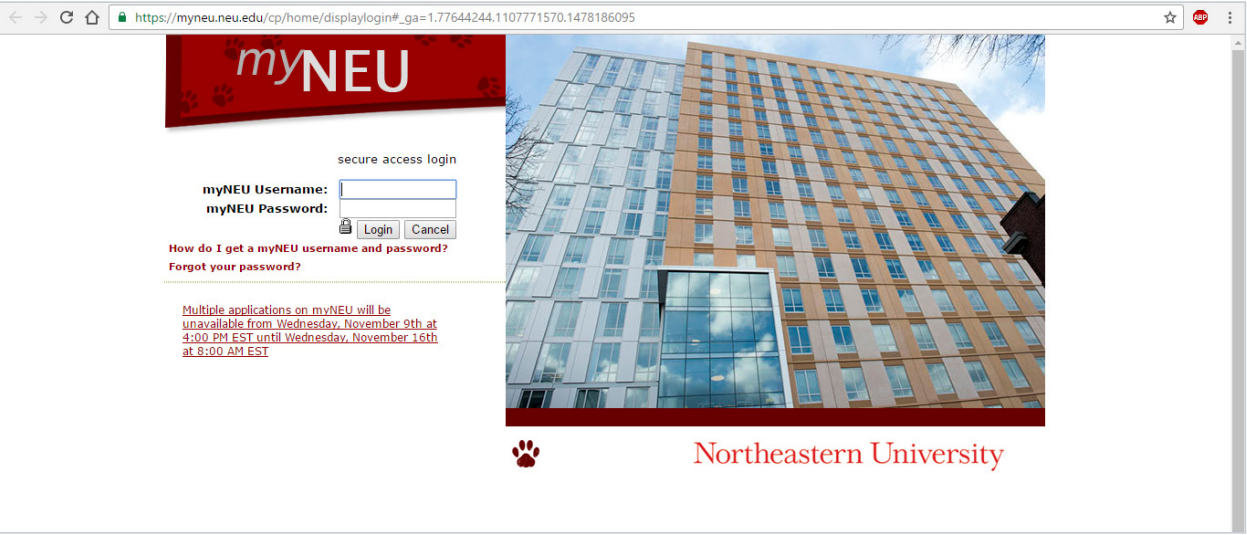
After going through and analyzing all of my research, I went on to find a few other college sites and how the students using those sites register for classes and access their specific academic information. I specifically looked at their home pages and log in screens to see what kinds of features they provide for their users right from the beginning.

Northeastern University

Home Page

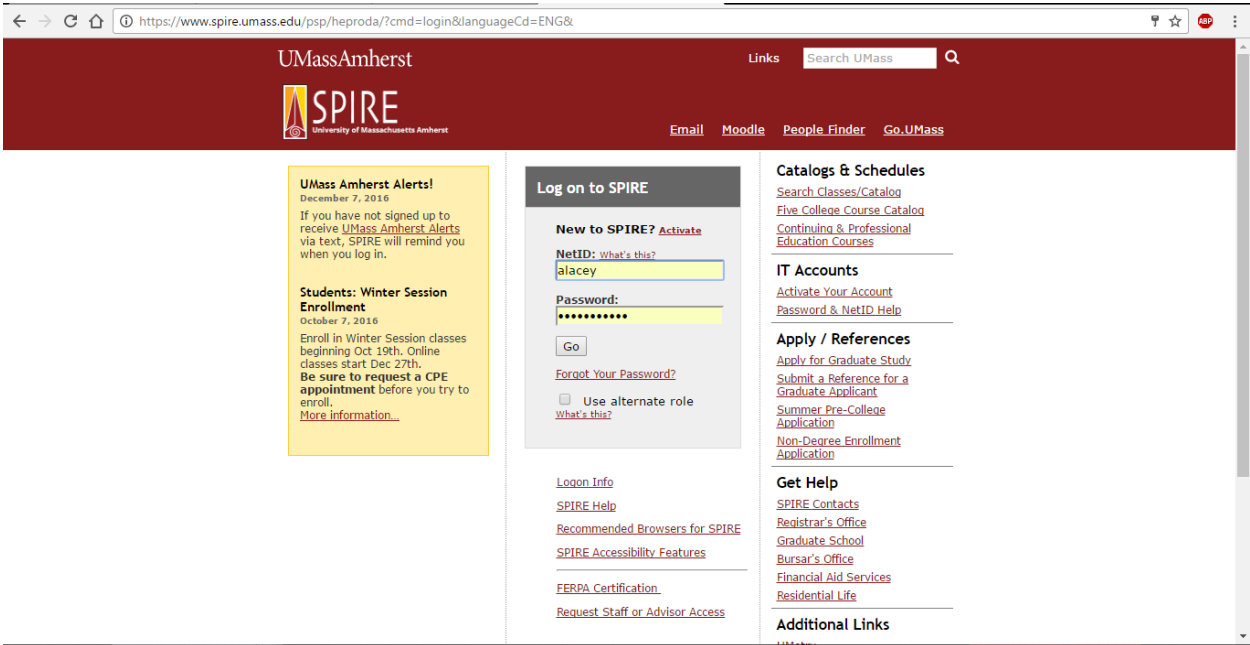


Login Page

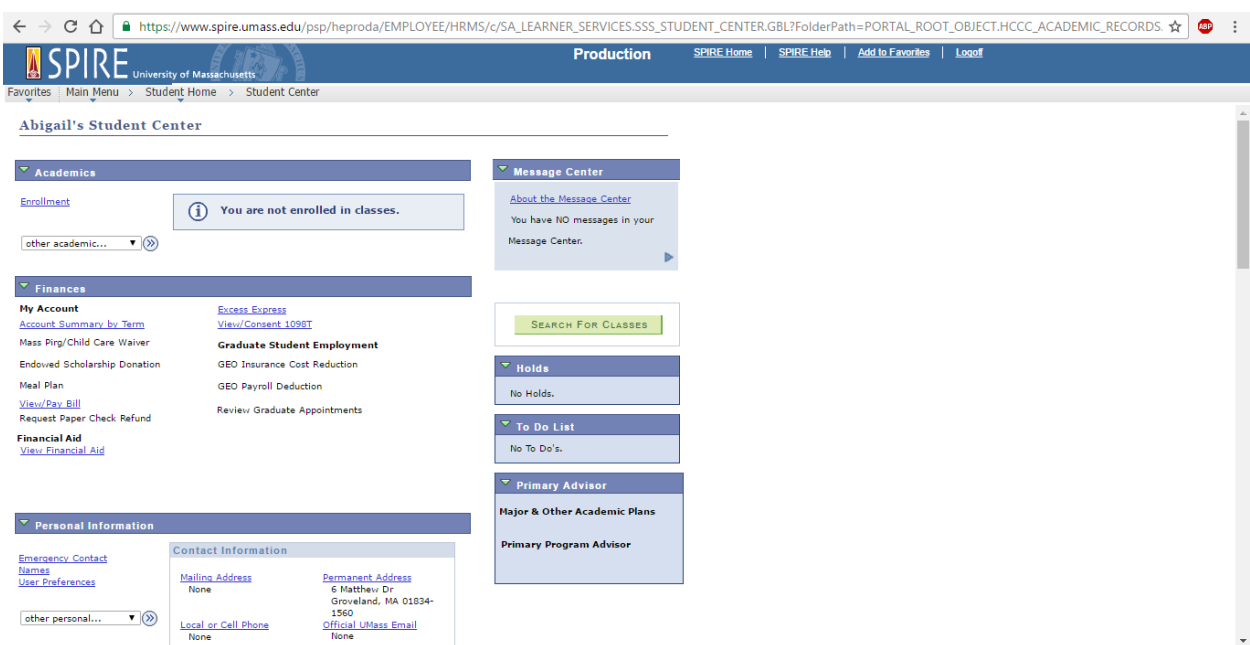


University of Massachusetts Amherst

Student Login Page

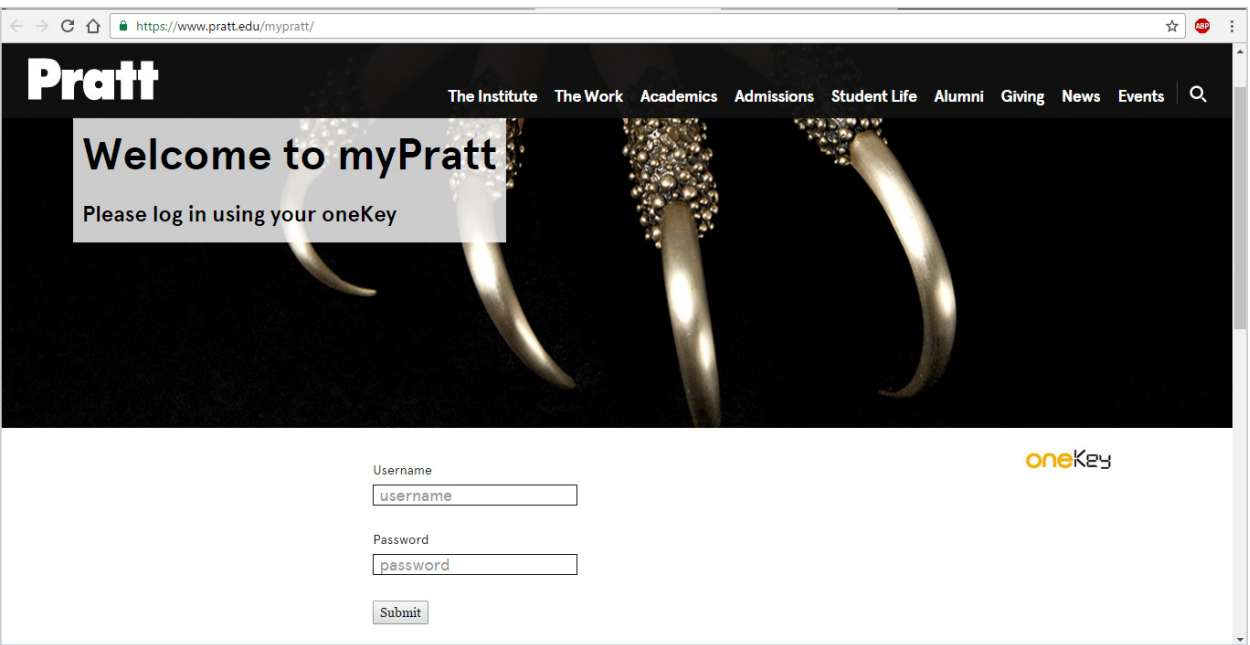


Student Home Page

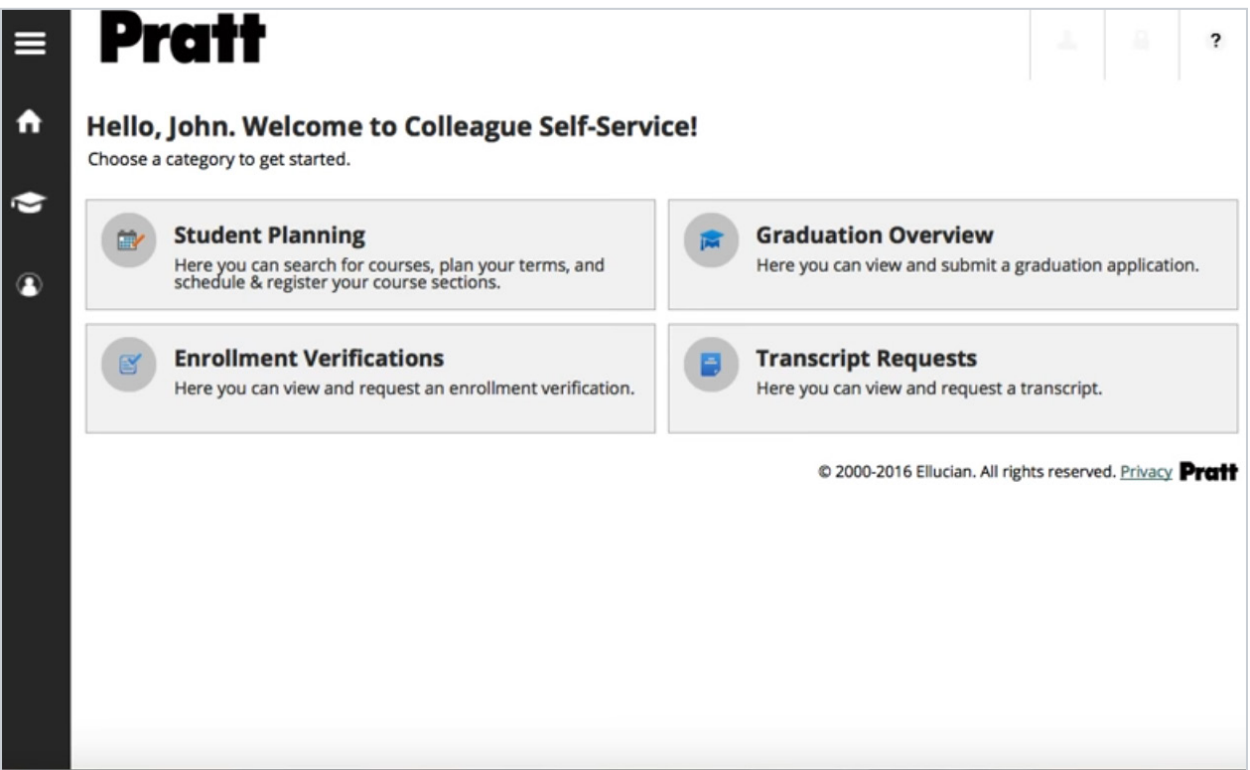


Pratt Institute

Login Screen



Student Home Page



III. MY STRATEGY FOR FIXING THE PROBLEM

Platform

To help fix the problem, I plan to focus on redesigning the process of accessing Da Vinci's Program Evaluation on the web (desktop computer).

Key features

- Navigation
- Filtering
- Dashboards

Type of Experience

A user would most likely use my system a few weeks before he/she has to register for classes in order to find out what required classes he/she has left to take before graduating. The user would simply access Da Vinci on a computer and follow the steps that I have designed for the website. The main advantage of my system is its clear and simple navigation which makes the process of navigating fairly quick and intuitive.

General Flow of Users' Steps Through Revised System

