

Memorandum

To: Dr. Rhonda Stanton
From: Hallee Hinds
Subject: Target Audience Report for the Professional Writing Student Recruitment and Advising Guide
Date: September 21, 2017

I am writing to introduce and describe the target audience for my Professional Writing Student Recruitment and Advising Guide. After briefly discussing details about the intended audiences for this project, this memo will outline the research and interviews that were completed to discover what students would find most helpful in such a guide.

Introduction

This target audience report serves to explain who is included in this report's audience, as well as describe exactly what students would like to see when they pick up a recruitment guide. I have researched to discover what audiences prefer to read about when they look to the guide for more information about the Professional Writing Program. This memo will outline the primary and secondary audiences, their preferences, and their requests and suggestions of what should be included in this guide.

Primary Audience

The primary audience for this document includes students. Whether it's prospective Missouri State students, current Professional Writing students, or students who just want to learn about the program, this recruitment guide is geared toward introducing and explaining Missouri State's Professional Writing Program and answering any questions students may have about it.

Secondary Audience

The secondary audience for this document includes faculty. Even though this guide is focused on serving the students of Missouri State University, it is also for faculty to use for reference. This recruitment guide will help the faculty of the Professional Writing Program recruit students into the program, as well as help them prepare students during advisement sessions. The secondary audience also has extensive knowledge of the primary audience, which greatly links the general interests of the two groups.

Sources Consulted

To gain a complete background of what my primary and secondary audiences prefer, I conducted student interviews, talked to faculty, found articles, and used my own experience in the program to determine what aspects and pieces are best for this project. This research will make sure that my document is made up of what my audience will enjoy and comprehend best.

Primary Audience Recruitment Bases

Before we can think about recruiting students to join the Professional Writing Program, we have to analyze why they chose Missouri State over other universities. Is it because of the programs we offer, the extracurricular activities, or the size of the campus. In a study completed by a university in Australia, it's discovered that students choose universities based on a variety of reasons. The top two factors in their findings are "career preparation" and "specific academic program" (Martin). This shows that if people know what they want, they will find a university that has it. Below these, ranked number four, comes "distance from home," (Martin) and many of these students may not know what they want to pursue as an academic path.

When this recruitment and advising guide is created, students will be able to see what the program has to offer. If students do not know what the program is when they arrive at Missouri State, they absolutely will when they leave, even if they do not choose to pursue it. Even spreading the word about the Professional Writing Program will help to recruit new students to join the program, and this guide will help do just that. It is in this guide that we will include statistics similar to those in Martin's research to show students that they don't have to know what they want to do right away. Missouri State is known for having many students with "Undeclared" majors, which means that they have not decided either. This guide will detail the benefits of the program, and hopefully encourage students that they can find a wonderful career by the time they graduate with a degree or background in Professional Writing.

On-screen v. Print

One aspect that can be controversial is what way the document should be displayed. Should I create the document as an on-screen document, or should I create it as a print document? One thing I found through my research and interviews is that many college students prefer looking at academic program information and advisement material in a print source. Having the document in front of them gives them the opportunity to tailor it to their own education, make notes and highlight key information, and consistently update it with new information about their program (Strickland). Although some students, such as Bean and Collier prefer on-screen documents, they also understand the benefits of using a print document for the purpose of this recruitment guide, since it does enable students to change items according to their own curriculum. Sources online even reiterate that print sources are much more permanent, accurate, accessible, and in-depth; online sources have many shortcomings that make print sources necessary for certain types of documents, like this guide (Dilevko).

Advisement of the Primary Audience

Many students do not understand the importance of advising when they first begin attending college. Missouri State makes it a requirement that all students meet with an academic advisor each semester until they have 75 credit hours. This ensures that students are completing all they need to, in order to be successful. One source says that, "The most critical period or stage

of vulnerability for student attrition continues to be the first year of college,” (Cuseo) which is just one source that says students need help when they begin. Because students are going through several changes as they transition from their previous school, whether it be high school or another college, to a new school, it’s sometimes easy to get caught up in everything that changes. This is one of the many reasons Missouri State requires advisement. This guide can help students lessen the challenges they may face when beginning to attend this university. It will provide an outline of what the Professional Writing Program consists of, and it will include most of the information the student may need to prepare for advisement meetings. The better prepared students are for these meetings, the easier the transition can be.

Another main factor of advising is the relationship a student has with their advisor. The two have to be able to trust each other and work together for the good of the student’s education and for their future career. Some believe that by working closely with an advisor, students are more likely to help invest in the success of not only themselves, but also their academic programs, and, in turn, the university as a whole (Yarbrough). It is through Yarbrough’s engagement model approach that students and advisors are able to establish a relationship with responsibilities for each party. This recruitment and advising guide will greatly help outline the individual roles of the student and the advisor as they work toward the success of the student and the program. In the end, this guide will serve as a manual for the team to follow as they complete their tasks in the academic program of Professional Writing.

MyMissouriState Described by the Primary Audience

Several of my student interviewees described the many modules in MyMissouriState that they thought would be key pieces to include in this recruitment document. Being a student at Missouri State, learning how to navigate this website can be confusing, but it’s also crucial. The Trial Schedule Builder is one major piece that all students must learn to use (Bean), especially when they are deciding what major or minor they want to pursue. The Degree Audit is also extremely important (Collier) because it serves to show how much progress a student has made in his/her major. Collier also believes that looking at the Transcripts sections can be very helpful. For those students that are not only new to learning about professional writing, but also new to the University, all of these are pieces of information that people within the target audience want to see in the Professional Writing Student Recruitment and Advising Guide.

Requests from the Primary Audience

There are several items I found through my interviews that students would want to see in this guide. They want to see information about admission requirements, program requirements, and GPA requirements (Collier). They also want information about the faculty and staff of the program, as well as their contact information (Bean). Students want as much information as they can get in one place. This keeps them from having to look through several sources or calling multiple offices. Making this guide will make the recruitment and advisement processes more accessible and more compact. The primary audience also said that I should include

details about the program application process, how to change or declare a major, and what the required classes are (Bean). Interest was also shown by the primary audience in statistics related to the major, including, but not limited to, how many people enter the program that follow through with it until they graduate (Strickland). Overall, asking the primary audience what kind of topics would help when determining their area of academic study really helped to establish criteria for what will be included in my document.

Requests from the Secondary Audience

In my interview with you, Dr. Stanton, I gained the view of my secondary audience, the faculty of the Professional Writing Program. In this interview, I learned what pieces of information many faculty members feel would be helpful to include in this guide. Information about each branch of the program, including the major, the minor, and the graduate program should be included because it will make advisement easier when everything is in one place (Stanton). Another major piece of information that will be included is what types of jobs students can get when they earn a degree in Professional Writing, as well as the salaries that go with certain jobs (Stanton). I have also discovered that certain aspects of the program can be confusing for students and, sometimes, faculty. As courses change and instructors move around, some parts of the program have to be shifted to accommodate the changes, which can sometimes lead to holes in information. One goal of this guide is to eliminate those holes as much as possible.

As new ideas and information surface, I will contact both the primary and secondary audiences to find out their preferences on including the newfound information. This will help keep the document on track of just how much the audiences will find it helpful. These are not the only topics that will be included; there are many other sections of information that will not only benefit the student, but will also help the instructors and the advisors of the Professional Writing Program while working with those students.

Conclusion

This Professional Writing Student Recruitment and Advising Guide will serve the primary and secondary audiences, which consist of the students at Missouri State and of the faculty of the Professional Writing Program. The two are very intertwined, as they should be, because the instructors also provide assistance in advisement. This document will help program faculty to better serve the students, and it will help students to better understand the program. This guide will give them the opportunity to learn about the program even when an advisor is not around to ask. The goal of this document will be to include all aspects that the target audiences have requested the inclusion of, and to make sure that this guide serves as a tool to facilitate the team-approach relationship that should be encouraged in all student-advisor teams.

I will continue to communicate with my target audience, including both students and faculty to make sure I include everything they have requested to see in this Professional Writing Student Recruitment and Advising Guide. If you have any questions about this information, or any

further suggestions about this document, please feel free to connect with me via email at hmh522@live.missouristate.edu.

Works Cited

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