

Website Visual Design Critique

(<https://www.charlotte.edu/landing/admissions-financial-aid>)

Group Members:

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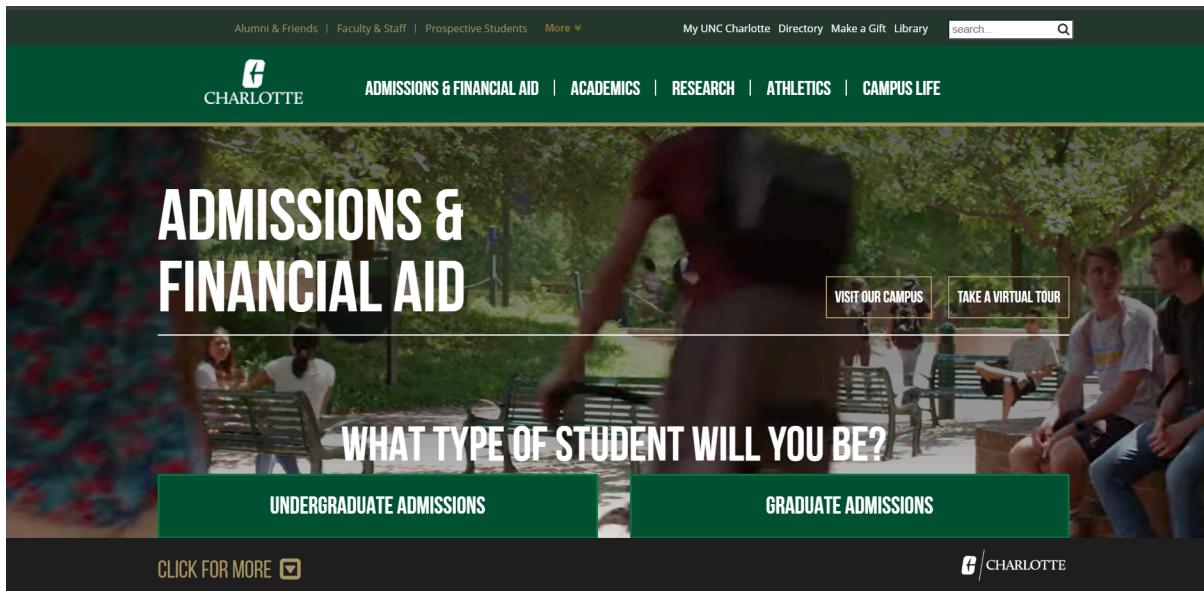
Rakesh Reddy

Breakout Room: 7

Color Choices

Observations:

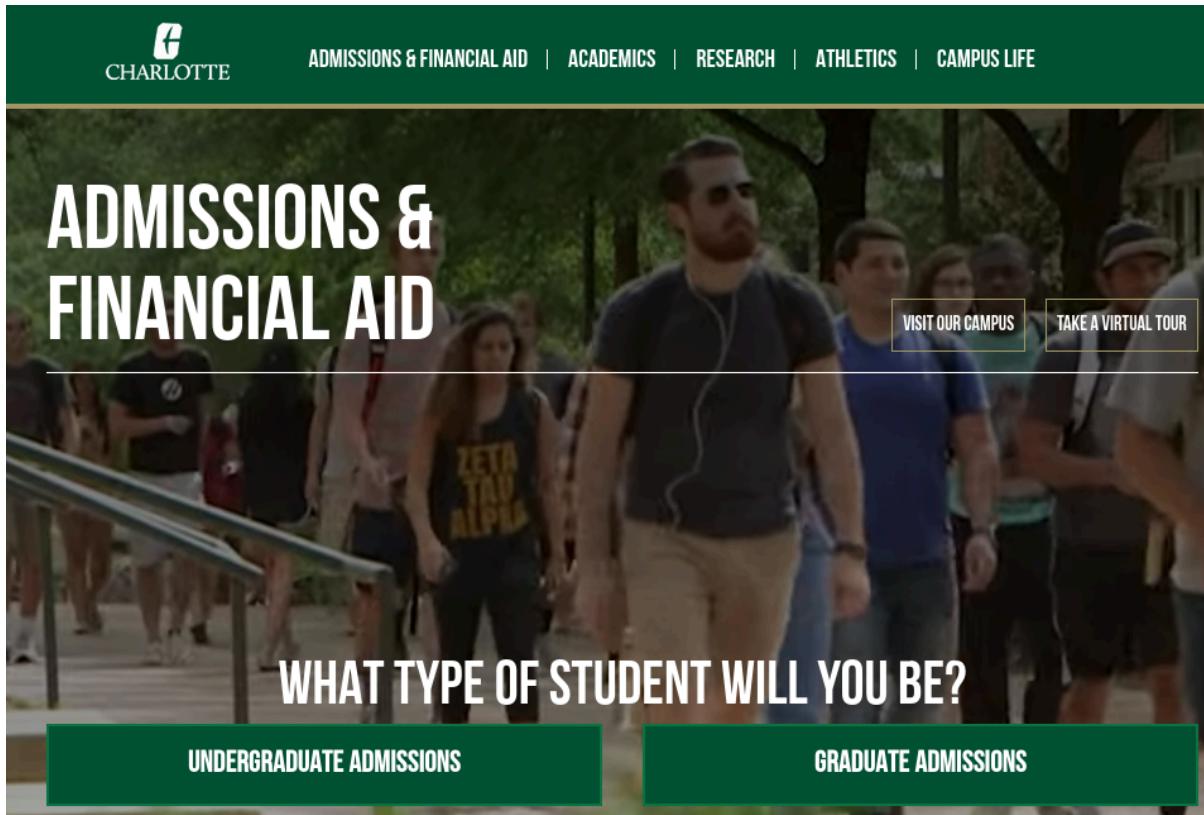
1. Most of the page is made utilizing the university's primary colors, with minor variations used to highlight certain areas or elements in those areas.
2. A main body color, green, is used for most of the site. Additional elements are highlighted, either in gold or white, which are the secondary colors for the school.



The screenshot shows the UNC Charlotte Admissions & Financial Aid landing page. At the top, there's a dark green header bar with links for Alumni & Friends, Faculty & Staff, Prospective Students, More, My UNC Charlotte, Directory, Make a Gift, Library, a search bar, and a magnifying glass icon. Below the header is a green navigation bar with the "CHARLOTTE" logo and links for ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID, ACADEMICS, RESEARCH, ATHLETICS, and CAMPUS LIFE. The main visual is a photograph of students sitting on a bench outdoors. Overlaid on the image is the text "ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID" in large white letters, followed by "WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT WILL YOU BE?" in a slightly smaller white box. Below this are two green buttons: "UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS" and "GRADUATE ADMISSIONS". In the bottom left corner of the image area, there's a link "CLICK FOR MORE" with a dropdown arrow. The bottom right corner features the "CHARLOTTE" logo again.

Critique:

1. The consistency of the visual style doesn't draw your eye to specific things; much of the page and text, towards the top, is very similar in style, size, and color. Many of the buttons look very similar.



This screenshot shows a variation of the UNC Charlotte Admissions & Financial Aid landing page. The layout is identical to the first one, featuring the same header, navigation bar, and main image. However, the text "ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID" is placed directly above the "WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT WILL YOU BE?" text, creating a more vertical flow. The "UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS" and "GRADUATE ADMISSIONS" buttons are also positioned closer together relative to the text above them compared to the first version.

2. The color of the bottom section doesn't fit the visual style; the dark gray/black is not part of the color scheme. A dark green could easily be used here.



3. The button under the financial aid section utilizes a great text background (as do some other buttons). This combination of font and color makes it a little hard to read, especially on smaller screens.



Grid or Layout Structure

Observations:

1. The page is clearly broken into vertical sections, which each have clear delineation, either by color or image, separating the sections.
2. The financial aid subsection breaks down three figures into separate components, which render next to each other in a clean and effective way.



ONCE A 49ER, ALWAYS A 49ER.

Want to take care of some unfinished business?
We'd love to have you back!

Coming back to UNC Charlotte after
taking time off?

[START HERE](#)

ENDLESS REASONS TO ENROLL.

Opportunities to learn and grow aren't only
limited to those seeking a degree.

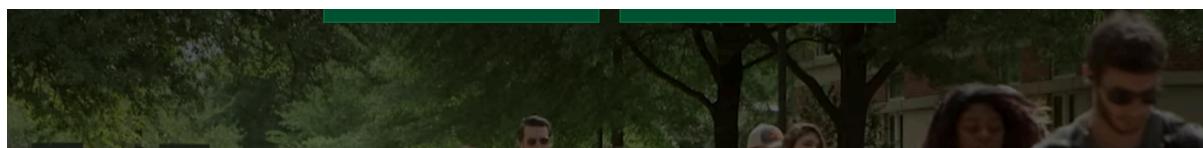
SCHOOL OF
PROFESSIONAL
STUDIES

POST-
BACCALAUREATE

GRADUATE
CERTIFICATES

Critique:

1. Sectioning the page vertically, while allowing effective and clear organization, can lead to jarring situations where multiple sections are rendering at a single time, such as this screenshot.



2. Having something visually captivating to look at could be achieved by

providing more spacing to some sections to avoid that cluttered appearance on small devices.

3. For the mobile interface, the statistics in the financial aid section feature a carousel you must click through manually. This should scroll on its own to show the figures available.



4. The inclusion of many buttons at the bottom of the navigation menu is a little crowded; maybe these buttons could be spaced out or larger. The lack of fill color is also visually unappealing.

ACADEMICS

RESEARCH

ATHLETICS

CAMPUS LIFE

Alumni & Friends

Faculty & Staff

Prospective Students

Community



Current Students

Parents & Family

My UNC Charlotte

Directory

Make a Gift

Library

ABOUT US

APPLY NOW

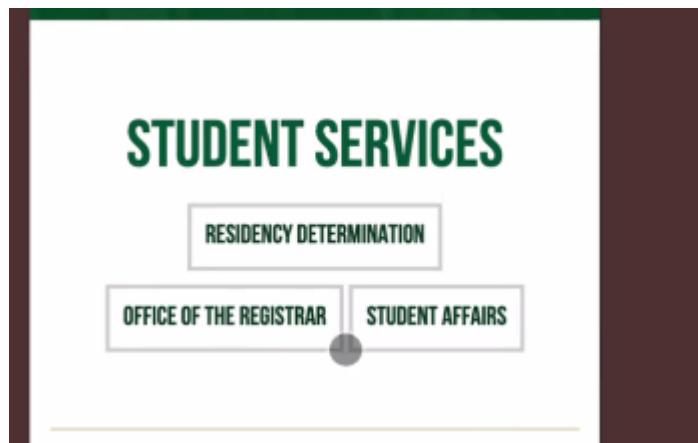
VISIT OUR CAMPUS

GIVE TO UNC CHARLOTTE

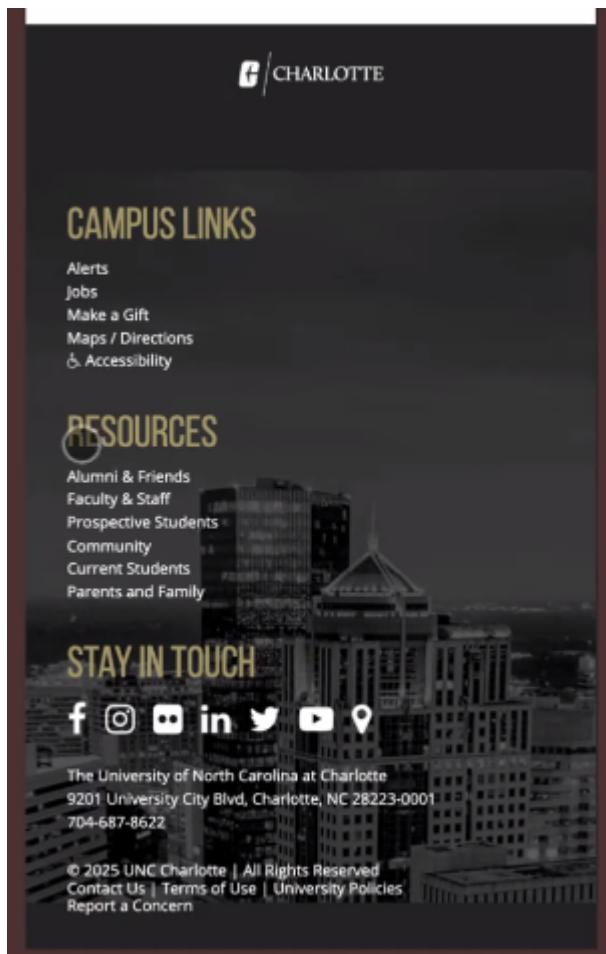
TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR

CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT

5. The buttons for student services are not aligned on the centered on mobile, leading to this awkward line that isn't centered.



6. The links at the bottom on mobile are too long, leading to a stacked column. The Campus Links and Resources sections could be put in a two-column format.



Typeface and Typography

Observations:

1. Sans serif fonts are employed on the website for readability across all devices.
2. Headings are bold to distinguish them from body texts, so there is a clear hierarchy. The body text is highlighted for clarity.



3. Interactive or important text, mostly buttons, headings, and sections, is always rendered in all caps, clearly drawing attention to the main points of the page. The buttons are not highlighted in this screenshot but are included in this point.

WELCOME READMITS!
ONCE A 49ER, ALWAYS A 49ER.

Want to take care of some unfinished business?
We'd love to have you back!

Coming back to UNC Charlotte after taking time off?

START HERE

NON-DEGREE SEEKERS DISCOVER ENDLESS REASONS TO ENROLL.

Opportunities to learn and grow aren't only limited to those seeking a degree.

SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

POST-BACCALAUREATE

GRADUATE CERTIFICATES

Critique:

1. Choosing a sans serif font adds to the web's readability, which is of prime importance for any information to be conveyed clearly.
2. Varying font sizes and weights are aptly exercised to create a visual hierarchy for easy navigation through the content.
3. Utilizing bold or italic styles sparingly could help highlight critical information, such as application deadlines or contact details.

Screenshot:

The screenshot shows the homepage of the UNC Charlotte Office of Emergency Management. At the top, there is a welcome message and a brief description of the office's role in emergency management. Below this, there is a section titled "EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS" featuring three cards: "NinerAlerts" (warning icon), "NinerNotices" (alert icon), and "NinerReady" (first aid kit icon). Each card has a brief description and a call to action. At the bottom, there is a footer with links to the university's policies and a "CHARLOTTE" logo.

WELCOME

The UNC Charlotte Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is an office within the [Department of Safety and Security](#). The office is responsible for coordinating efforts related to the four phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. OEM assists the UNC Charlotte community in preparing for, responding to and recovering from any type of emergency that could negatively impact the Institution.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

NinerAlerts

[NinerAlerts](#) will help keep you informed and safe during an emergency. Make sure you are [signed up](#) to receive notifications.

NinerNotices

[NinerNotices](#) will help keep you informed and safe during an emergency. Make sure you are signed up to receive notifications.

NinerReady

Being [NinerReady](#) begins with you. Make sure you know what to do if you receive an emergency alert.

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Use of Whitespace

Observations:

1. Whitespace separates images and text blocks sufficiently so that clutter does not overwhelm the pages. This is done through margins at the top and bottom of each section, pictured here.



Critique:

1. In creating organization with white spacing between the elements, text readability and focus can individually be achieved.
2. The application of white spaces in the non-web spaces would surely also contribute positively toward enhancing the user experience through diminished visual clutter.
3. Increasing whitespace around major headings or introducing divider lines could further delineate sections, improving content segmentation. This screenshot again shows this.

The screenshot shows a dark green header with a background image of people. Below the header are two rectangular call-to-action cards. The left card features a photo of two students and the text: "WELCOME READMITS! ONCE A 49ER, ALWAYS A 49ER." It includes a subtext about unfinished business and a "START HERE" button. The right card features a photo of a man and the text: "NON-DEGREE SEEKERS DISCOVER ENDLESS REASONS TO ENROLL." It includes a subtext about opportunities for growth and three categories: "SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES", "POST-BACCALAUREATE", and "GRADUATE CERTIFICATES".



Visuals & Smart Design

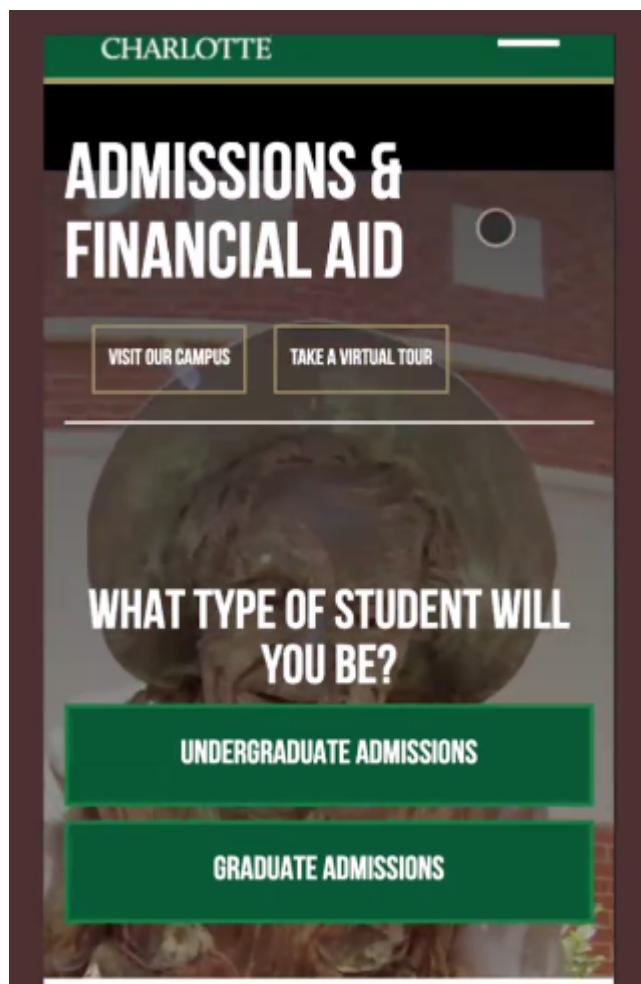
Observations:

1. The inclusion of images depicting students and campus life adds a personal touch, making the content more relatable.
2. Service and statistics icons were created to look good at the same time.



Critique:

1. Real photographs play a part in giving life to the prospective student feeling of community.
2. Helping the balancing of many functions on the web, upgrading usability in general, and decreasing time for their loading.
3. Ensuring all images are of high resolution and strategically placed can enhance visual appeal. Alt text should be provided for accessibility.
4. On mobile, the video at the top doesn't take up the full background, leaving a black line at the top.



Screenshot:

The image consists of two side-by-side screenshots. The left screenshot shows four students (three girls and one boy) sitting around a table in a study area, looking at books and papers together. Below this image is a green box containing the word "UNDERGRADUATE" and a brief description: "Have questions? Hitting a roadblock? Need help? We're here to make your path to graduation as smooth as possible." At the bottom are two buttons: "Explore Undergraduate Admissions" and "START HERE". The right screenshot shows three men in an office setting. One man is seated at a desk with a computer monitor displaying a molecular model, while two others stand behind him, engaged in conversation. Below this image is a green box containing the word "GRADUATE" and a description: "Just for you...special events, assistance and resources designed especially for graduate students." At the bottom are two buttons: "Explore Graduate Admissions" and "START HERE".

Graphic Components

Observations:

1. The navigation bar is distinctive across the top and helps correctly orient the visitor to the major sections.
2. The way buttons for actions are styled induces a uniformity that stirs users into further action.

Critique:

1. User interaction is enhanced with consistent styling of buttons and links to guide the user more productively to the right actions.
2. Accessibility of the website is enhanced with good contrast of all interactive elements.

Screenshot:



WELCOME READMITS! ONCE A 49ER, ALWAYS A 49ER.

Want to take care of some unfinished business?
We'd love to have you back!

Coming back to UNC Charlotte after
taking time off?

START HERE

Navigation and Accessibility

Observations:

1. The top navigation bar provides quick access to essential sections, and the inclusion of links like “Visit Our Campus” and “Take a Virtual Tour” caters to prospective students’ needs.
2. The footer contains valuable links to campus resources, social media, and contact information, facilitating easy access to additional information.

Critique:

1. Ensuring that all hyperlinks are clearly distinguishable from regular text, perhaps through consistent underlining or color differentiation, would enhance the user experience.
2. The footer uses a gray and black background image with white text, which reduces readability, especially for users with visual impairments or lower contrast perception. The lack of strong contrast can make it difficult to distinguish text clearly, particularly in low-light conditions or on screens with poor brightness settings.



Evaluation and Critique

The Strengths are:

1. The design of the site is according to UNC Charlotte branding; thus, it meets the requirements for a distinctive look and feel.
2. The information is clear, organized, and easily accessible.

The Weaknesses are:

1. It would be much more interesting for a user if the visuals were more dynamic or interactive.
2. The site should have good mobile responsiveness to give users consistency in device experiences.

User Experience Enhancement:

1. The current design makes sure the selected information is presented effectively to the future students.
2. With the proposed improvement, the website can be even more interactive and user-friendly to those it serves.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the UNC Charlotte Admissions & Financial Aid web page effectively uses the principles of visual design. With some improvements, it can be further improved in its appeal and effectiveness for the prospective students.