

Comparative Analysis

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FIRST LEVEL

Home Page Top Navigational Elements

- We first looked through the main top navigation options of our sites. This list includes those options.
- Please note, all **BOLDED** elements in the tally section represent categories we were interested in.

Main Top Navigation Elements

MIT	Stanford	University of Chicago	John Hopkins University	Northwestern University	Georgia State University
About	About Stanford	About	About JHU	Admissions	About
Admissions	Admission	Admissions & Aid	Admissions	Academics	Academics
Education	Academics	Academics	Schools & Academics	Research	Admission
Research	Research	Research	Research	Campus Life	Research
Community	Campus Life	Medicine	Campus Life	Administration	Athletics
Life@MIT		Civic Engagement	Athletics	About	Alumni
Initiatives		Campus Life	Giving		Giving
Impact			Alumni		Global Engagement

Navigational Element Tally:

Element	Tally
Admissions & Aid	5
About	5
Academics	4
Research	5
Campus Life	4

Community	1
Initiatives	1
Impact	1
Medicine	1
Civic Engagement	1
Athletics	1
Giving	1
Alumni	1
Administration	1
Life@xxx	1

Our Top Navigation Selection

About GSU
Academics
Admissions
Research
Athletics

Overall, the top navigation serves as the key source of the site's navigation. When choosing our main navigation options we picked the most commonly chosen options from several sites and options that would best meet GSU's users' needs. In our final Top navigation Selection we focused on the most popular and established categories used by the sites we chose to include in our competitive analysis. For instance, almost all sites used Academics. About was another option included by these sites; however, we chose to make Georgia State's site more personal by renaming it About GSU. Likewise, Admissions and Academics seemed crucial as top navigation options not only because they are standard as top navigation options, but also because they are high traffic links for student users.

The one navigation option that we felt would best serve GSU, and that was not offered as a primary navigation option by these sites, was Athletics. Since GSU is Division 1 school, we felt it was necessary to provide users, like students, alumni, or even local fans, a chance to easily find GSU's sports information. Campus Life, though popular among our chosen sites, seemed less crucial as a top

navigation option. To keep this information easily accessible for users, we opted to include it in an Explore section on the Home page. Additionally, since GSU is a prestigious research institution and could attract a variety of users, like scientists or even donors, we thought it best to make research one of the major, top navigation options.

“User Portals”

Other main navigational elements on the Home Page which serve specific users visiting the site, such as student or Faculty, are often included separately from the top navigation listed above. We decided to create a separate category for these and label these user links as “User Portals.”

Several of our sites decide to place these User Portals at the top of the page near the search bar and above the top navigation bar. While some, like MIT and Johns Hopkins, chose not to even use a separate navigation for User Portals. Still, Northwestern University chose to put these user relevant links in an “Information for” section lower on the page.

Here is a list of the “User Portal” options our sites chose to include for their diverse visitors.

MIT	Stanford	University of Chicago	Johns Hopkins University	Northwestern University	Georgia State University
-	Students	Students	-	Students	Students
-	Faculty/Staff	Faculty	-	Prospective Students	Faculty & Staff
-	Parents	Alumni	-	Faculty & Staff	
-	Alumni	Parents	-	Alumni	
-		Visitors	-	Parents	

Here is the final tally of these “User Portals”

Element	Tally
Students	3
Faculty & Staff	3
Alumni	3
Parents	3
Visitors	1
Prospective Students	1

Our “User Portal” Navigation

Students
Faculty & Staff
Alumni
Parents

We chose to cover a wide spectrum of common users, while limiting these portals so as to keep from cluttering the top of the page. In this, we felt that Visitor and Prospective Students were options that were too specific and fall under other navigation Categories already provided. For instance, Admissions could easily be a home for prospective students, while the About page could be useful for Visitors. In all, these portals serve to direct specific users to relevant links quickly.

SECOND LEVEL Navigation

About

MIT	Stanford	University of Chicago	John Hopkins University	Northwestern University	Georgia State University
Visiting	Stanford Facts & History	History	History & Mission	Facts and History	Contact Georgia State
Maps	Visitor Information	Accolades	Administration	News	Employment
Offices	Virtual Tours	Campus Slideshow	News	Civic and Global Engagement	Points of Distinction
History	Offices & Administration	University Reports	Community		Office of the President
	News & Events	Accessibility	Facts & Statistics		Administration
		Boards, Committees, and Councils	Social Media		

			Visitor Information		
			Campus Directories		
			Our Campuses		

We combined all the About navigational elements that we found most applicable to the GSU site and users. Here is a list of these About elements.

Possible About Navigation Elements Tally

Possible Element	Tally
History	5
News	3
Offices & Administration	4
Visitor Information	3
Contact	1
Facts & Statistics	1
Our Campuses	1
Community	1
Social Media	1
Accolades	1
Campus Directory	1
Boards, Committees, and Councils	1

Our About Selection

GSU History & Facts
News & Events
Administration

Visitor Information
Contact

We expect that most users encountering the GSU's main site may have less knowledge about the university. Most About pages, as we saw from our site analyses, focused on informing users of not only the History of the school, but also important campus chancellors and Presidents, and recent news about the campus. With these in mind, we decided to keep and rename a few options, like GSU History, News & Events, Administration, and Visitor Information. Finally, we felt providing a Contact link in About would be helpful and easily accessible for all user classes, but especially new visitors like parents of current and prospective students.

Admissions

MIT	Stanford	University of Chicago	Johns Hopkins University	Northwestern University	Georgia State University
Undergrad	Undergraduate	Undergraduate	Office of Undergraduate Admissions	Undergraduate	Undergraduate
Graduate	Graduate	Graduate	Additional Undergraduate Programs	Graduate	Student Affairs
Financial Aid	Financial Aid	Non-degree	Graduate	Financial Aid	Graduate
	Professional, Continuing, K-12	Summer	Part Time, Non-Degree, Summer	Visiting Campus	Student Financial Services
	Summer Session	Online Learning	Visiting John Hopkins		
			International Students		
			Financial Aid		

			Course Catalogs		
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The Admissions options varied greatly among our chosen sites. Rather than list out all their nuanced titles, we chose to list out the general semantic relationship between these titles. We did, however, also include several specific labels that were unique to sites that were not brought up in others.

Admissions Navigational Element Tally

Undergraduate	6
Graduate	6
Financial Aid	4
Summer	3
non-degree	2
visiting campus	2
Professional, continuing, K-12	1
online learning	1
international students	1
student affairs	1
additional undergraduate programs	1

Our Admissions Selection

Undergraduate Admissions
Graduate Admissions
Deadlines
Apply

Financial Aid

Visiting Campus

Overall, we kept several options similar since they catered to high value users, such as prospective students. Yet, we did decide to take out some superfluous and misplaced categories like Student Affairs, which was more relevant to Campus Life issues like Housing & Dining. Additionally, we felt making Visitor Information to GSU more visible would be extremely useful to prospective students and thus included Visiting Campus as a new categories. Lastly, Financial Aid seemed necessary for low-income potential and current students.

Research

MIT	Stanford	University of Chicago	Johns Hopkins University	Northwestern University	Georgia State University
Labs+centers	Doing Research at Stanford	Breakthroughs	Applied Physics Laboratory	Offices & Centers	About
Lincoln Lab	Dedicated Research Centers	Institutes and Centers	Research Projects Administration	Sponsored Research	Centers and Institutes
Libraries	Integrated Research & Teaching	Faculty and Research	Funding Opportunities	Libraries	Facilities and Services
	Libraries	Student Research	Undergraduate Research	Undergrad Research	Resources
	Undergraduate Research	Affiliated Laboratories	Resources for Researchers		Economic Development
		Research News	Health and Medicine		
		Events	Social Sciences, Humanities, and the Arts		
		Academic Departments	Natural Sciences, Engineering, Technology		

			Global Research		
			John Hopkins Technology Transfer		
			Expertise at John Hopkins		
			Institutes and Centers		

Research Navigational Element Tally

Research centers	6
Undergraduate/ Student research	4
Libraries	3
Resources	2
Financial matters	3
Breakthroughs	1
Faculty and Research	1
Affiliated Laboratories	1
Health & Medicine	1
Research Projects Administration	1
Facilities and Services	1
Integrated Research & Teaching	1

Our Research Selection

Centers & Labs*
Doing Research @ GSU
Funding
Research Libraries
Faculty & Research
Resources and Support

In general, the users who might frequently look over the Research tab may range from GSU faculty, scientists from other schools, potential graduate students, possible donors, and even interested undergraduates. With these users in mind, we decided to make use of both general options like Doing Research @ GSU (similar to Stanford), and more specific options like Funding for donors, and Centers & Labs for GSU and associated researchers. We also chose to include users, like interested researchers and professors, with an easy way to access specific researchers and their projects through "Faculty & Research," as well as links to specific research libraries.

Furthermore, we felt a few of the current GSU names were vague; for instance, Economic Development is ambiguous. Thus, we chose instead to copy the language incorporated by our chosen sites, namely their attraction to names like Funding.

Academics

MIT	Stanford	University of Chicago	Johns Hopkins University	Northwestern University	Georgia State University
schools + courses	Schools	Institutes & Centers	Schools	Undergraduate	University Library
OpenCourseWare	Departments & Programs	Laboratory Schools	Departments and Disciplines	Schools & Colleges	Degrees and Majors
MITx	Academic Calendar & Courses	Summer Session	Undergraduate Studies	Undergraduate A-Z	College of Law Library
edX	Undergraduate Life	Library	Graduate Studies	Graduate A-Z	Office of the Provost
	Graduate Academic Life	The University of Chicago	Part-time and Non-degree	Continuing A-Z	Colleges

		Press			
	Online Learning		Summer Programs	More Academics	Student Advising
	Professional, Continuing, K-12		Distance Education		Academic Calendar
			Academic Calendars		

Possible Academic Navigation Elements Tally

Schools & Colleges	6
Departments	2
Undergraduate Studies	1
Graduate Studies	1
Academic Calendar & Courses	2
Library	2
Undergraduate Life	1
Undergraduate Studies	1
Graduate Life	1
OpenCourseWare	1
Summer Session/ Summer Programs	2
Part time and non-degree	1
Online Learning	1

Our Academic Navigation

Undergraduate Programs
Graduate Programs
Schools & Colleges
Departments
Academic Calendar
Libraries

GSU users are typically vary greatly from prospective, undergraduate, and graduate students, and thus require different links and tools for their specific needs. We decided to combine and rename several current GSU options under Academics with more relatable menu labels for these users,, Libraries, and Undergraduate and Graduate Degrees, in place of Degrees & Majors and the numerous library options. For example, we decided to make a departments & programs section similar to that of Stanford's, because it allowed prospective students a chance to browse departments individually and see faculty or research of that department, while Undergraduate Program could be more specific to degrees within departments. Likewise, we gave current students tools that they might need throughout the year, like the Academic Calendar.

Athletics

MIT	Stanford	University of Chicago	Johns Hopkins University	Northwestern University	Georgia State University
Athletics	Cardinal Athletics	Varsity Sports	Sports	Varsity Athletics	Sports
Physical Education	Recreation & Fitness	Fitness & Facilities	Inside Athletics	Club Sports & Intramural	inside Athletics
Recreation	BeWell @ Stanford	Intramurals & Clubs	Traditions	Fitness & Recreation	Tickets

Club Sports	Summer Sports Camp	About Athletics	Store		Donate
Intramurals		Community	Tickets		Students
		Visitors & Fans	Support Athletes		Fanzone Shop
			Johns Hopkins		Recruits
					RUN SBC Pass

Possible Athletics Navigation Selection Tally

Intramural	3
Fitness & Recreation	4
Club Sports	3
Tickets	2
Inside Athletics	2
Store	3
Athlete Support/ Donate	2
Sports	2
Visitor & Fans	1

Our Athletics Navigation

Recreation
Intramural Sports
Club Sports
Tickets
Athletics Store

Official Athletics
Site

The GSU site includes a broad number of navigation categories and options on a separate Athletics site, so we chose to create a link for this larger site that might be attractive for users who want to watch games and support the school teams. However, we chose to also provide athletics options for students who are seeking basic recreation, intramural, or club sports. These links may be highly used by current students and even local residents with access to recreational facilities. Additionally, the Tickets and Athletics Store were provided separate of the official Athletics Site to allow quick access for users hoping only to buy tickets or merchandise, as we saw on the JHU athletics page.

Our Entire Site Navigation/ Site Map

About GSU	Admissions	Academics	Research	Athletics
History & Facts	Undergraduate Admissions	Undergraduate Programs	Labs & Centers	Recreation
News & Events	Graduate Admissions	Graduate Program	Doing Research @ GSU	Intramural Sports
Administration	Deadlines	Schools & Colleges	Funding	Club Sports
Visitor Information	Apply	Departments Library	Research Libraries	Tickets
Contact	Financial Aid	Academic Calendar	Faculty & Research	Athletics Store
	Visiting Campus	Library	Resources & Support	Official Athletics Site