**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 cover a wide spectrum of common users, while limiting these portals so as to keep avoid 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 |  |  |

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 Reseach** | 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 | UniversityLibrary |
| 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 Press | Part-time and Non-degree | Continuing A-Z | Colleges |
|  | 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 |
| Student Advising | 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 |