**MEMO**

To: Dr. Chris Lam

From: Rebecca Pope and Kathryn Beasley

Date: 11/25/15

Subject: Project 3 Information Architecture and Design Choices

We decided to construct our knowledge base on questions new graduate students at UNT would have prior to the first day of classes. At first we wanted to include information on how to apply to UNT, but we realized that we could write a whole knowledge base just on the questions applicants might ask. Because of this, we limited our knowledge base to include questions accepted students would ask. To get an idea about the types of questions new graduate students ask, we interviewed six students who are in their first semester at UNT.

After conducting the interviews and starting on writing articles, we realized that we could phrase article titles as questions. New graduate students would use the knowledge base to answer specific questions about how to enroll in classes, how to pay tuition, and how to access their online accounts and therefore would respond best if the titles were worded into specific questions. Once we completed our articles, we created a card sort with the article titles and had Rebecca’s fiancée do the card sort. From the card sort, we learned that some of our article titles were too vague or needed clarification and that we did not have categories that are specific enough for the articles. We rewrote some article titles and performed a card sort ourselves to define three or four overarching categories. We decided that we had four main categories: finding funding, registering for class, paying a bill, and accessing accounts. We got rid of a few articles that answered questions students might ask before their first day of class but did not fit within any of the categories. However, we did include links to further information and specific FAQ pages to answer questions outside of the scope of our knowledge base.

Once we had four categories, we created a site map based on both card sorts. We also thought about how a student user would interact with the knowledge base and in which order he or she would complete tasks and ask questions. Some of our articles overlapped categories (i.e., students would need to contact their department for some enrollment problems as well as for information about assistantships), so we showed this with our site map. Our site map has a mostly horizontal architecture because many of the articles are equal in hierarchy.

Once we wrote our articles and structured the site map, we created a wire frame. Between the deadline for the project and other obligations, we decided to build our knowledge base using WordPress. Because WordPress uses templates, we chose a free one that we could customize to fit our purpose. The template set up a banner, side navigation pane, and a footer on all pages. We customized the navigation bar to include a search bar and links to the four main categories of articles so that users could go from one page to another with ease. The footer has a search bar so that users do not have to scroll to the top of the page to navigate the knowledge base.

We created similar wire frames for our three types of articles: task, concept, and reference. They all have a banner, navigation pane, and footer as mentioned before. They all also have short introductions for the users to decide whether the rest of the article will answer their questions and links to further information outside of the knowledge base at the ends of all the articles. The task articles have numbered steps that guide users through a process, concept articles have a body explaining a topic in detail, and reference articles have tables for displaying information.

Our knowledge base’s URL is https://wolvesproject3.wordpress.com/

/RP, KB