

MAIZE AND BLUE CUPBOARD

BSI UX CAPSTONE SI 407/487
FINAL REPORT

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01

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

MEET THE TEAM



Lynn

Majors: UX Design & Art and Design



Natalie

Major: UX Design



Lauren

Major: UX Design
Minor: English



Chloe

Major: UX Design
Minor: Entrepreneurship

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We spent the 2024–2025 academic year redesigning the Maize & Blue Cupboard (MBC) website as part of the SI 407/487 User Experience Capstone course. The goal was to improve the website's usability, accessibility, and overall functionality to better serve University of Michigan students experiencing food insecurity.

- Our **Research Phase** involved surveys, interviews, usability testing, and heuristic evaluations to understand user needs, identify pain points, and assess accessibility gaps.
- In the **Design Phase**, we translated insights into low-fidelity sketches, developed mid-fidelity wireframes, and created a high-fidelity prototype focused on improving navigation, appointment booking, and overall clarity.
- The **Evaluation Phase** involved usability testing comparing the original site with our prototype, which showed increased task success rates, reduced completion times, and higher user satisfaction.
- Our **Final Recommendations** emphasize implementing the redesigned site, prioritizing accessibility and discoverability, and conducting future user testing to ensure continued alignment with user needs.

OUR CLIENT

The Maize & Blue Cupboard is a food pantry that provides food, resources, educational opportunities, and compassionate support for students experiencing food insecurity. Our main clients are **Keith Soster**, the Director of Sustainability, Student & Community Engagement, **Kate Glahn**, the Creative Director of Student Life Communications, Marketing & Design, and **Kelly O'Mara**, the Maize and Blue Cupboard Program Manager.

PROBLEM

The Maize & Blue Cupboard website aims to ensure all University of Michigan students, regardless of circumstances, are able to have a filling and nutritious diet. However, the website is currently a static page that no longer has the capability of supporting its growing resources and information. It lacks the necessary functionality, content, and organization to connect students with vital information, leading to a loss of access for individuals who rely on these resources, exacerbating the challenges of food insecurity on campus.

PROJECT GOALS

Enhance the website's usability, functionality, and accessibility, ensuring users can easily access the resources and information they need.

- 1.** Connect students with relevant information by developing a redesigned website interface that passes usability testing criteria.
- 2.** Improve the website's overall clarity in information presentation and navigation by understanding primary pain points and objectives.
- 3.** Assess accessibility gaps using WCAG 2.2 guidelines to ensure the website is usable for all users.

02

RESEARCH PHASE

RESEARCH GOALS

- **Understand what features are most used/valued by users on the website.**

When talking to current users or potential users, we aim to understand what features and information they utilize the most. By understanding this, we will be able to better prioritize the overall structure of the website. We will aim to highlight the aspects users value the most while reducing or eliminating elements that are less desired. This helps conserve resources and time, so we know what can be improved and expanded upon and what would be unnecessary.

- **Understand what frustrates users or what could be improved on the website.**

When users come to a website, they often have a pre-defined purpose. One of the most crucial aspects of improving the user experience of a website is allowing quick access to the desired information. If certain elements or information organization styles are making those goals more difficult, people are less likely to find what they need and may miss out on some of the many valuable resources the MBC provides.

- **Identify gaps in accessibility on the website.**

Accessibility is one of the most important features of any website, but it is even more crucial for the MBC website because of its message of inclusivity. Since the MBC serves all students and aims to accommodate a variety of types of users, it is imperative the website reflects that goal. Additionally, most users will face challenges that may impact their ability to fully understand a website at one point in their lives, so it is important to plan ahead to accommodate them. Mobile viewing, color blindness, a broken body part, arthritis, and many other temporary or permanent factors may not be the first thought for many when it comes to accessibility, but make a huge impact on a user's experience.

- **Understand what features users would like to see implemented.**

Finally, there is no reason to spend time, money, and effort on creating new features if they will be lost on the website and unused. Additionally, it would take up more space and make other resources that are more valued more difficult to find.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do users currently navigate the website?

2. Which current features and resources are most valuable to users?

- a. Which resources are underutilized?
- b. Which resources are difficult to find?
- c. What makes a resource valuable for the users?

3. What specific challenges and pain points do users face when navigating the website?

- a. How are users impacted by these?
- b. Do certain errors prevent users from achieving tasks they went to complete?

4. What additional content or features would users find helpful for their experience on the website?

- a. Is there any content currently on the website that is unhelpful to users?
- b. Is there any content on the website that could be expanded upon?

5. How accessible is the website for users with diverse needs, including those with disabilities?

RESEARCH METHOD 1

SURVEY

Purpose:

The survey aimed to gather insights into user experiences, pain points, and preferences related to the Maize & Blue Cupboard website's navigation, food availability information, and pickup scheduling process.

Methodology:

The survey was distributed online to U-M students and MBC staff, donors, and volunteers using targeted recruitment and included multiple-choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions on usability, clarity, and satisfaction.

Findings:

Student Survey (33 participants)

- Main Uses: 91% use the site to schedule appointments; 48% check operating hours.
- Navigation: 82% found it easy or very easy to navigate, but the appointment link is hard to spot on mobile.
- Key Insights:
 - Appointment scheduling is the most used and appreciated feature.
 - Other site features like recipes and FAQs are underused.
 - Users seek clearer operating hours, more recipes, and appointment reminders.

Staff/Volunteer/Donor Survey (16 participants)

- Main Uses: Volunteer sign-ups, location/hours, and donation info.
- Frequency: 44% of participants indicated that they use the website monthly as part of their role, 25% use it weekly, 19% rarely use it, and 13% stated that they never use it for their role.
- Challenges:
 - Navigation is difficult; important info is buried in dense text.
 - Volunteer spots fill up quickly due to a lack of communication.

RESEARCH METHOD 2

INTERVIEW

Purpose:

The interviews aimed to gain in-depth insights into users' experiences with both the physical Maize & Blue Cupboard and its website, focusing on tasks like booking appointments, finding information, and comparing in-person and online interactions.

Methodology:

4 students were recruited through flyers, outreach, and a Calendly sign-up to complete 30-minute interviews that included warm-up questions, open-ended website feedback, and reflections on their overall MBC experience.

Findings:

- Users only visit the website to make appointments, but the scheduling feature is hard to find or not intuitive.
- Users struggle with finding key information on the website, especially the appointment button and hours of operation. The website feels cluttered, inconsistent, and not optimized for mobile use.
- Many users are unaware of the recipes, events, and additional resources available on the website.
- First-time users struggle to find the MBC entrance because the website doesn't provide clear directions. The image of the door in the footer is not the door to the MBC.
- Users want updates on what food is available to help plan their grocery trips and what events are happening at the MBC.
- The physical MBC experience is described as easy, efficient, and friendly, while the website does not reflect the same level of accessibility and simplicity.
- Many users rely on the MBC for groceries, especially after moving into apartments. The free food is a major motivator.
- Many users find out about MBC through word of mouth rather than online promotion, and they feel it is not advertised enough.

RESEARCH METHOD 3

USABILITY TESTING

Purpose:

The usability tests aimed to evaluate the ease of use and identify pain points on the Maize & Blue Cupboard website.

Methodology:

6 non-users with varying tech literacy completed ten structured tasks and follow-up questions to assess navigation, accessibility, and overall usability, with observations capturing key challenges and feedback.

Findings:

- **Users find appointment booking to be difficult and restrictive.**
 - **Cause:** Appointment booking is difficult to find, and users can't schedule farther than a week in advance.
 - **Effect:** Users are frustrated by limited scheduling options and may not schedule appointments due to unclear instructions.
- **Users struggle to locate information quickly.**
 - **Cause:** Poor organization and lack of search functionality make it difficult to locate specific content.
 - **Effect:** Users experience frustration and may abandon their search.
- **Users feel confused by unclear navigation and labeling.**
 - **Cause:** The 'donate' button and 'how to help' tab lead to the same page, and users assume 'contact' would include appointment booking.
 - **Effect:** Users struggle to find relevant information, reducing engagement and participation.
- **Users lack awareness of additional features and content on the website.**
 - **Cause:** Features are not prominently displayed or intuitively organized, making them difficult to discover.
 - **Effect:** Users miss out on valuable resources that could support their food planning and nutrition.

RESEARCH METHOD 4

HEURISTIC EVALUATION

Purpose:

The heuristic evaluations aimed to identify accessibility issues and uncover usability insights not revealed in usability tests.

Methodology:

The team conducted heuristic evaluations using Nielsen Norman's 10 usability heuristics and performed accessibility audits with WAVE and AxE tools to identify issues like contrast errors, poor alt text, and empty links.

Findings:

- **Accessibility Issues:**
 - Color contrast errors, weak/repetitive alt text, empty links, and misused ARIA attributes affect screen reader usability.
- **Navigation Challenges:**
 - No back/undo buttons, no search bar, and an overloaded footer make the site hard to navigate.
- **Information Architecture:**
 - Appointment booking is unclear, terminology is confusing, content is dense, and filtering is limited.
- **UX Improvements:**
 - Inconsistent branding, poor mobile experience, no feedback (hover/loading indicators), and missing personalization features like user accounts.
- **Visual Error:**
 - Footer image incorrectly shows a dorm entrance instead of the MBC location.

OVERALL ANALYSIS

We conducted thematic analysis on user interviews and usability tests, coding data with “I” statements and identifying 12 insights that we grouped into 5 common themes reflecting users’ pain points, needs, and expectations for the MBC website.

Theme 1: Users struggle with locating information quickly and navigating the website due to unclear navigation elements and labeling.

- Users find the site disorganized and unclear, making it difficult to quickly locate essential information like donation guidelines, eligibility, or links.
- Supporting Code: P1: “I had a hard time finding the appointment button when I first used the website.”

Theme 2: Users mainly visit the website to schedule appointments, however, appointment booking is difficult to find and not intuitive.

- The appointment scheduling feature is hard to locate despite being the main reason users visit the site, often leading to frustration or abandonment.
- Supporting Code: P2: “I gave up the first time I visited the website because I couldn’t find the make appointment button.”

Theme 3: Users lack awareness of additional features and content on the website.

- Many users are unaware of helpful features like recipes or donation info.
- Supporting Code: P1: “I didn’t know there were recipes on the website.”

Theme 4: Users desire real-time updates on food availability and MBC events.

- Users want updates about food stock and events so they can plan their visits and stay informed without relying on chance.
- Supporting Code: P1: “I would like to know what food is available at the MBC so I can plan out my grocery trips beforehand.”

Theme 5: Users seek the same positive, straightforward experience from the website that they have in person at the MBC.

- The website feels cluttered and less welcoming than the physical location, creating a frustrating contrast in user experience.
- Supporting Code: P1: “I find the physical MBC to be so direct and easy, while the website has a lot of things that are competing for my attention.”

PERSONA 1: JULIA



JULIA

STUDENT

AGE : 20

GENDER : WOMAN

"Without access to the dining halls I've run out of food, and I need to make an appointment at the Maize & Blue Cupboard"



BIOGRAPHY

Julia is a sophomore at Michigan who just recently moved out of the dorms and no longer has access to the dining hall. She is finding it difficult to access and afford food on her own and wants to visit the Maize and Blue Cupboard.

PAIN POINTS

- Eligibility requirement confusion
- Difficulty scheduling appointments
- Uncertain food availability
- Time constraints

MOTIVATIONS

Julia is motivated by the need for food in her apartment and the opportunity to access free resources, which drives her to visit the Maize & Blue Cupboard.

NEEDS

- Quick and easy access to food
- An appointment at the MBC

GOALS

- Determine if she is eligible to use the MBC
- Create an appointment
- Locate the Maize and Blue Cupboard
- Discover what food is currently available in the cupboard
- Getting quality food for free

USER JOURNEY MAP / JULIA



SCENARIO

Julia is a sophomore at Michigan who just recently moved out of the dorms and no longer has access to the dining hall. She is finding it difficult to access and afford food on her own and wants to visit the Maize and Blue Cupboard.

EXPECTATIONS

- Determine if she is eligible to use the MBC.
- Create an appointment.
- Locate the Maize and Blue Cupboard.
- Discover what food is currently available in the cupboard and get quality food for free!

ACTIONS

Julia hears about the MBC through her friend that has been there before and decides to check it out.

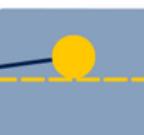
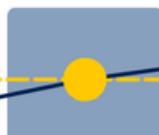
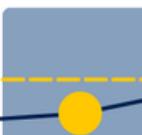
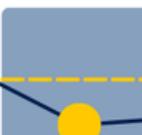
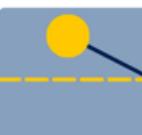
On the website, she struggles to find any information regarding eligibility.

She struggles to locate the appointment scheduling button, eventually finding it and booking a time.

On her way to the MBC, Julia looks for directions on the website but finds unclear signage and no map and has to use Google Maps for help.

Julia arrives at MBC and enjoys the welcoming staff and easy layout! She has a great experience but wishes she knew in advance what food was available to better plan meals.

POSITIVE NEGATIVE



FEELINGS & NEEDS

Julia is excited to visit the MBC and get food for free.

Julia is frustrated and gets nervous that she may not qualify to use the MBC.

Julia is annoyed at how small the button is and wishes it was larger. However, she feels excited to finally book an appointment.

The website's lack of relevant information stresses Julia out and makes her anxious.

Once at the MBC, Julia's stress goes away and she feels excited knowing she can use this resource in the future, even if the process is complicated!

PERSONA 2: KRISTIE



KRISTIE

VOLUNTEER/STAFF/
DONOR

AGE : 36

GENDER : WOMAN

"I am eager to donate my time to the Maize & Blue Cupboard as well as host a donation drive of kitchen supplies"



BIOGRAPHY

Kristie is an in-person volunteer at the Maize and Blue Cupboard, motivated to give back after experiencing food insecurity herself. Though not highly tech-savvy, she has basic skills and is involved in another organization, where she plans to organize a donation drive to support the cupboard.

MOTIVATIONS

Kristie faced food insecurity in her past, so now she enjoys devoting her time to helping others through the Maize & Blue Cupboard.

NEEDS

- Schedule a time to volunteer at MBC
- Resources to set up a donation drive

PAIN POINTS

- Difficulty finding information about donation drives
- Finding volunteering opportunities online
- Food shortages

GOALS

- Volunteer at the Maize and Blue Cupboard
- Find out how to host a donation drive
- Allow as many people as possible to access the MBC resources easily
- Find new recipes

USER JOURNEY MAP / KRISTIE



SCENARIO

Kristie is an in-person volunteer at the MBC, motivated to give back after experiencing food insecurity herself. Though not highly tech-savvy, she has basic skills and is involved in another organization, where she plans to organize a donation drive to support the cupboard.

EXPECTATIONS

- Volunteer at the Maize and Blue Cupboard
- Find out how to host a donation drive
- Promote the MBC
- Allow as many people as possible to access the MBC resources easily

ACTIONS

Kristie visits the MBC website every once in a while to book a volunteering appointment at the MBC.

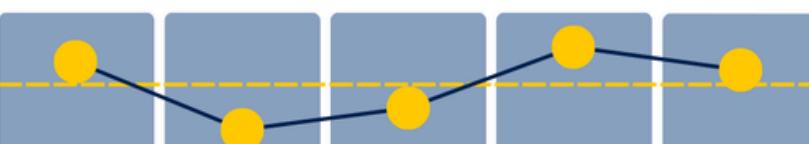
She decides she wants to host a donation drive and clicks on the 'How to Help' button and is faced with a lot of information.

After spending a few minutes scrolling through the site, Kristie finds important information regarding donation drives.

Kristie contacts the MBC and plans a donation drive!

Kristie wants to spread the word about her donation drive, but can't seem to quickly find promotional materials to help advertise the drive.

POSITIVE NEGATIVE



FEELINGS & NEEDS

Kristie enjoys helping the community but is often discouraged due to the website's organization.

Kristie gets overwhelmed with all the information thrown at her.

Kristie is excited to find necessary and useful information but is annoyed with the time she wasted searching for it.

Kristie is excited to support the cupboard and feels welcomed by the staff!

Kristie struggles to find flyers to share with others because she is forced to click through many pages to access the materials.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

- **Make Appointment Booking More Visible & Flexible**

Users need an easy, accessible, and clearly visible way to book appointments, as most visit the Maize and Blue Cupboard website for this purpose. Many users reported difficulty locating the appointment scheduling feature, making it a high-priority improvement.

- **Improve Information Architecture/Website Navigation**

Users need to quickly find essential information without excessive scrolling or overwhelming amounts of text. Many struggled to locate key details and underutilized available resources (recipes, news, etc.), indicating a need for better organization and content presentation, especially on mobile. This is backed by interviews, surveys, and usability testing, as many users struggled to find information quickly and were overwhelmed by the amount of text on pages.

- **Improve Wording/Labeling to Decrease Users' Confusion**

Users need clearer language across the website, particularly in FAQ titles and donation-related terminology. Usability testing showed that unclear labels made it difficult for users to complete tasks efficiently.

- **Incorporate Real-Time Updates**

Users seek real-time updates on things such as special events, and when the volunteering schedules are released. This requirement is backed by our interview and survey findings as users wanted transparency on available food items, when/where events are occurring, and when they can sign up to volunteer.

- **Improve Accessibility**

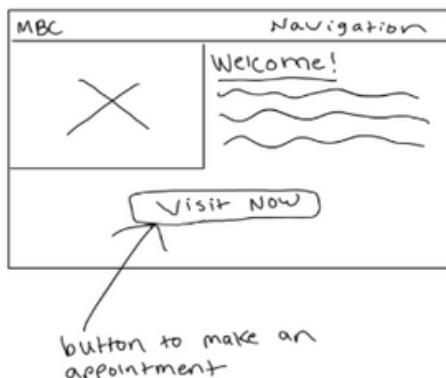
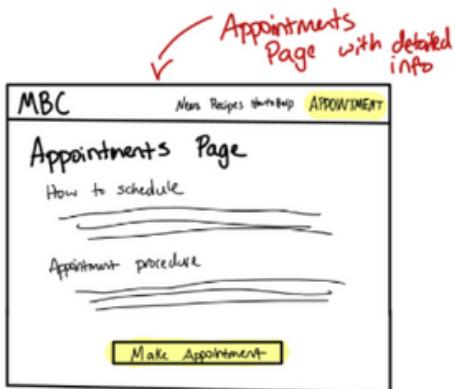
We want to improve the website's accessibility overall to ensure that all users can interact with the website. This requirement is backed by our heuristic evaluation findings, as we found several gaps when we analyzed the website using Nielsen Norman's UX heuristics.

03

DESIGN PHASE

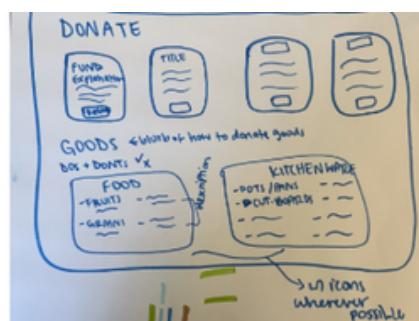
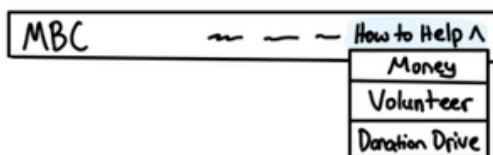
LO-FI STAGE

Our initial sketches helped shape key structural decisions regarding information architecture, core functionality, and user flows. These were based on our design requirements. With our sketches, we aimed to restructure information to make it easily scannable and better organized, straying away from overly large text and images and utilizing carousels and grid layouts for multiple pages. Additionally, we wanted to emphasize the appointment booking functionality of the site. We sketched various ways to make the process clearer as well as the information surrounding appointment creation. Another key decision was the breaking down of the How to Help page into sections to reduce terminology confusion. Once all of our sketches were completed, we combined and synthesized them to create our mid-fidelity wireframes.



Make Appointment

Booking Visible: Having a button in the navigation bar and in a specific appointment page.



Improve Wording to Decrease User Confusion: Separate the “How to Help” page into three different pages/tab in the navigation bar due to the large amount of information.

ITERATIVE REVISIONS AND REFINEMENTS

After viewing all the sketches, we discussed what pages and features to prioritize in our redesign and how to reorganize the information on the site to better address our UX requirements. After coming to a consensus, we began establishing our mid-fidelity wireframes of each page of the website, as well as potential new pages (e.g. Appointments, Donate).

Insights:

From peer and client feedback, here were some key insights about our wireframes that informed our hi-fidelity designs:

News Page & Navigation:

- Include filtering checkboxes for news topics since the original design never explicitly stated what options were filtered, confusing users.
- Include a “view all” button to see all news so users do not automatically have to scroll through everything.
- Format the news in cards for better readability and distinction between different stories.

Appointments & Eligibility:

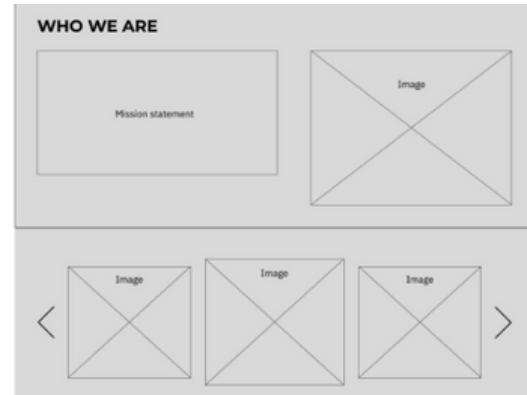
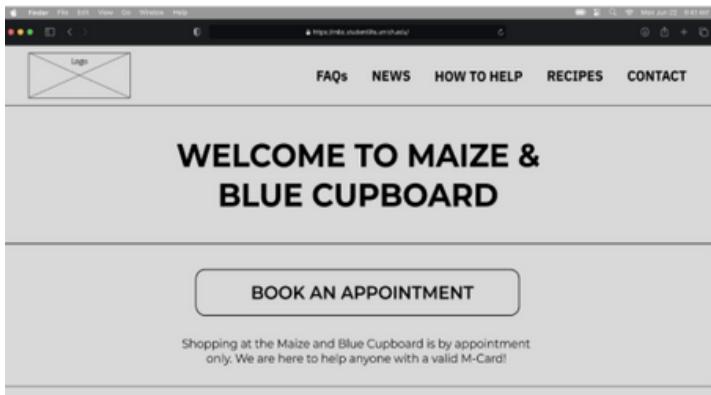
- Clearly define "Book an Appointment" because every user indicated that finding the appointment link was the most frustrating and difficult task on the website
- Place eligibility details before the appointment booking to set expectations, since some users were confused about eligibility and requirements needed to visit (i.e. valid MCard)

Content & Clarity:

- Revise the welcome message to be more concise, meaningful, and informative, since we received feedback from users that the headings/welcome message was too large and a bit irrelevant/confusing
- Improve information hierarchy to reduce reliance on an FAQ page—make key details clear upfront—as we got feedback in standup that our users should not be relying on the FAQs to get their questions answered (they should be able to find relevant information clearly on corresponding pages)

MID-FI STAGE

Home Page



Visit Page

A wireframe of a web browser showing the 'MBC Shopping Appointments' page. The header is identical to the home page. The main content features a title 'MBC Shopping Appointments' and a note '15 Minutes'. Below is a calendar for March 2025 with specific dates highlighted. A note at the bottom states: "Please Note: Bring your M Card to your appointment! Only schedule your appointment for a time slot you're able to show up on-time for. Due to capacity limits, we may not be able to invite you into the cupboard if you are late or early. If you've scheduled an appointment you're no longer able to make on-time, please cancel and reschedule so that another person can take that time slot." A note at the bottom also says: "Please contact maize.blue.cupboard@umich.edu with any questions."

FAQS

A wireframe of a web browser showing the 'FAQs' page. The header is identical to the other pages. The main content features a title 'FAQs' and a tabbed menu with 'Appointments', 'Eligibility', and 'Other'. Below are several collapsed FAQ sections: 'How often can I schedule an appointment?', 'How far in advance can I schedule an appointment?', 'What do I need to bring to my appointment?', 'Can I bring my friend to my appointment?', and 'Appointments are 15 minutes long - can I shop longer?'

FINAL DESIGN

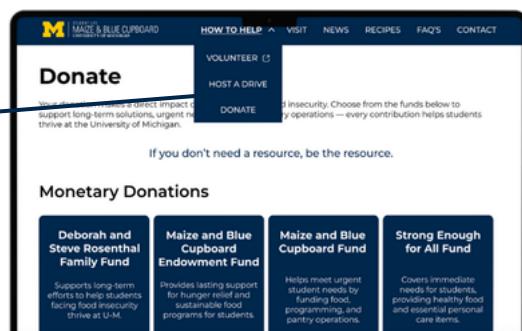
Our prototype focuses on improving clarity, navigation, and user experience across each page. Our redesigned pages guide users through clear, purposeful interaction flows that address key user needs identified in our research:

- **Homepage** - This is where the interaction flow begins. Users can easily make an appointment or navigate to high-priority sections through our navigation bar.
- **How to Help** - While hovering over the drop-down menu on this text in the navigation bar, users can either sign up for a volunteering time (external link), host a donation drive, or donate money/goods.
- **Visit** - This page provides simple instructions on how to make an appointment, with a clear call-to-action button.
- **FAQ** - This page includes a searchable and categorized FAQ section with expandable questions to reduce cognitive overload and help users quickly find answers.
- **Donate** - This page offers options for financial donations with simplified fund descriptions and clear CTAs, alongside a restructured goods donation section using “Do’s and Don’ts” for clarity.
- **Volunteer** - The volunteer link is now separated to clearly direct users to the external volunteering portal, which reduces navigation confusion.
- **Host a Donation Drive** - This page outlines clear steps and expectations for hosting a donation drive, with an easy-to-follow checklist and downloadable resources.
- **Recipes** - This page features simple, healthy recipes using common pantry items, and allows users to browse or filter by category.
- **Contact Page** - This page presents contact information with clear organization and an embedded form for easy inquiries.

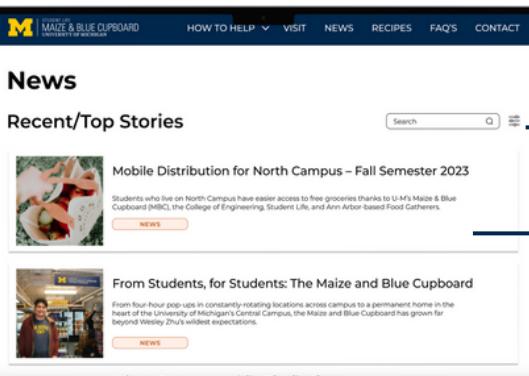
HIGH-FI STAGE

“How to Help” Dropdown
for three pages

How to Help Dropdown:



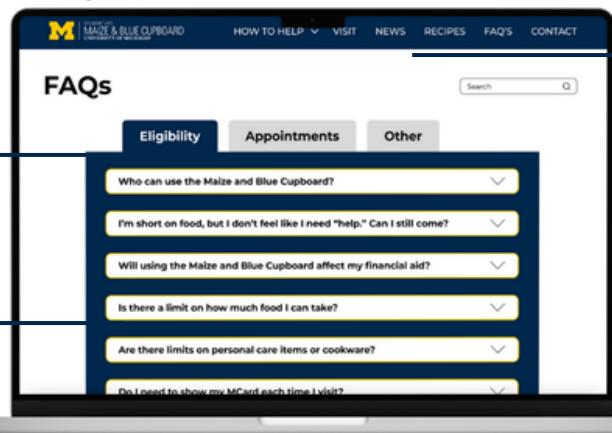
News Page:



Search & Filter functions

Consolidated news articles

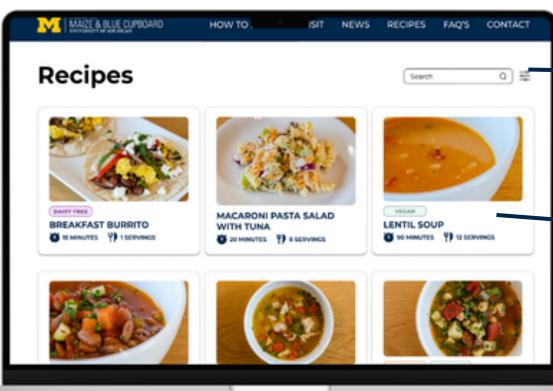
FAQs:



FAQ's
categorized

Dropdowns to
reduce scrolling

Recipes:



Search & Filter functions

Smaller, more
informational recipe cards

FINAL DESIGN - HOME PAGE

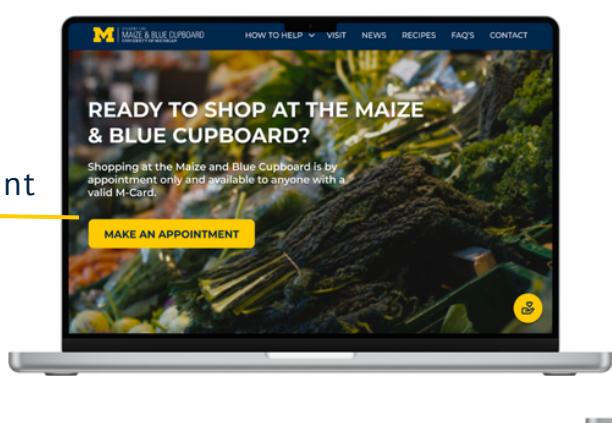
1. Improve Information Architecture/Website Navigation

- a. **Decision** – The homepage of the Maize and Blue Cupboard was redesigned to reduce excessive scrolling and improve information accessibility. Key content, such as details on what the cupboard provides and images from inside the cupboard, was made easily accessible on the homepage. Previous iterations included all of the content from the MBC website, but were later made more concise for better readability. An image carousel was implemented instead of a grid for better usability and to reduce cognitive overload.
- b. **Reasoning** – User feedback indicated that excessive scrolling made it difficult for users to quickly find the information they needed. By simplifying the layout and making essential content more visible, we aim to create a smoother and more intuitive navigation experience, allowing users to easily scan and access relevant information.

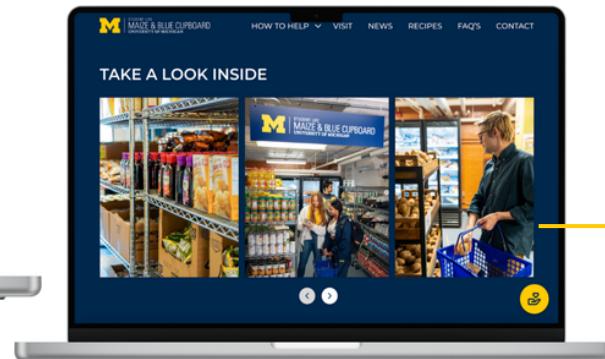
2. Improve Accessibility

- a. **Decision** – To improve user access to important functions, the appointment booking button was made the primary call to action on the homepage. The button was made larger, more noticeable, and easier to find.
- b. **Reasoning** – Usability tests revealed that many users had difficulty locating the appointment booking link on the homepage, causing frustration. Given that appointment booking is a key function for many users, emphasizing this action on the homepage ensures that users can quickly and easily access this important feature.

Make an
Appointment
Button



Reduced
scrolling
with image
carousel



FINAL DESIGN - VISIT PAGE

1. Calendar View

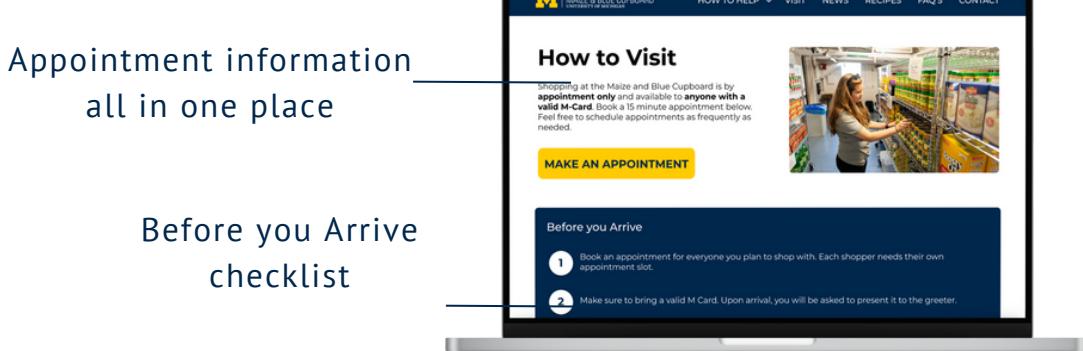
- a. In our first iteration of the appointment creation page, we decided it would be best to display the calendar as the main view. However, after receiving feedback from both our classmates and our client, we realized that once a user knew they needed to create an appointment, it was not essential for them to immediately view the calendar. Therefore, we shifted away from instantly displaying the appointment calendar, having it visible after clicking the "Make an Appointment" button.

2. Appointment Information

- a. We decided instead of framing this page as an appointment creation page, we would frame it as a "how to visit" page. This allows for easy understanding for all users, whether they have visited the MBC before or not.
- b. Instead of including limited information, we decided to break up everything a user needed to know into categories. This helps with both the visual appeal and scannability of the page. Additionally, it assures users feel fully prepared before their appointment.

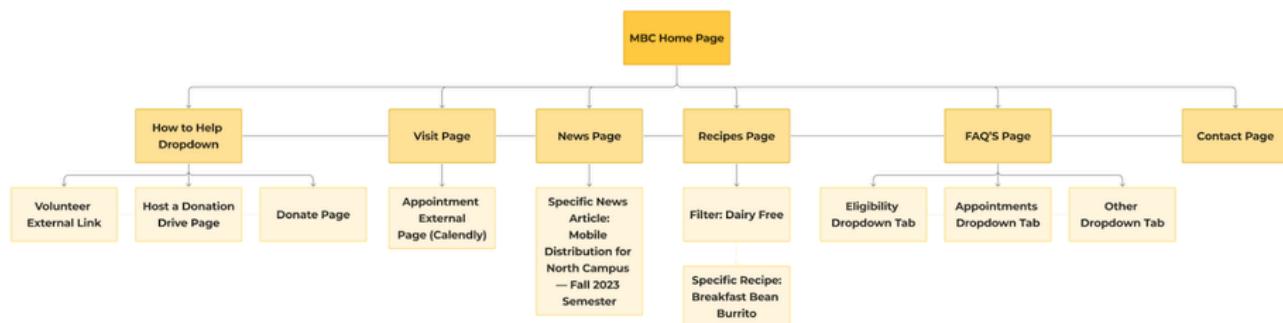
3. Privacy Policy

- a. The privacy policy was previously included in the FAQs. However, the privacy policy is most important to users who are attempting to visit the MBC. Including this section in the appointment creation provides the reassurance and trust many may need before feeling comfortable visiting the MBC.



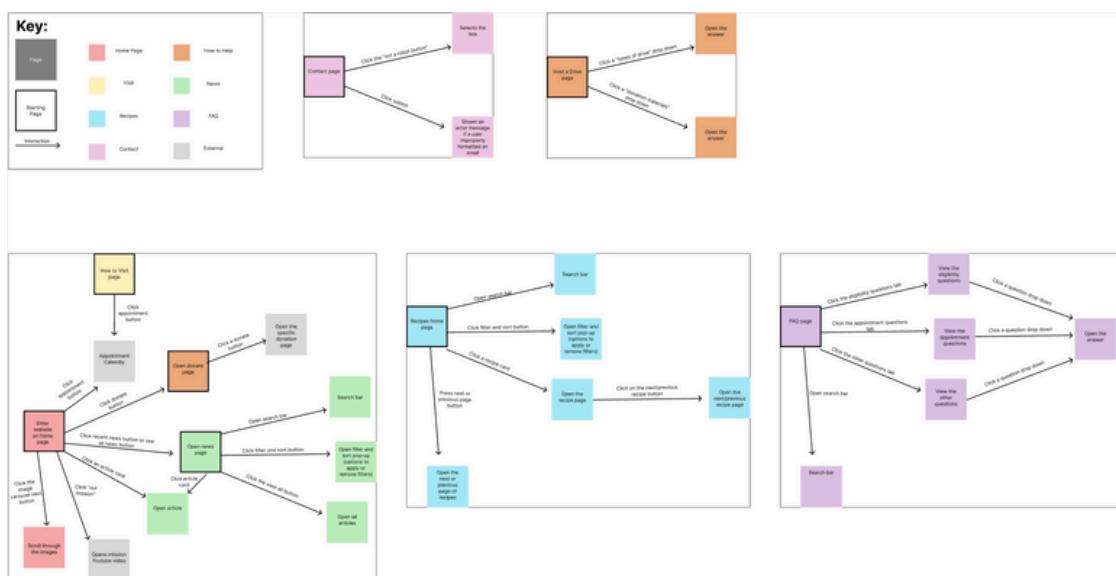
INTERACTION MAP

The Maize and Blue Cupboard website begins with the home page, which is the main page that users see when they first open the website. From the home page, users can navigate through the pages by using the navigation bar with 6 different page interactions.



USER FLOW

The user flow above showcases how different pages interact with one another and different ways to accomplish the same task. Each square is color-coded based on what main page it is a subpage of. You can gain a holistic view of how each page interacts with one another and better understand the different methods a user can take to arrive at the same location.



PAGE SPECIFICATIONS

We outlined the key UX specifications for the project, detailing the user interface, interactions, and design elements that are crucial for creating an intuitive and engaging user experience. These specifications focus on usability, accessibility, and consistency across the platform, providing a clear guide for building a seamless product.



STUDENT LIFE
MAIZE & BLUE CUPBOARD
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Navigation Bar

1
2
3
4
5
6
7

HOW TO HELP ▾
VISIT
NEWS
RECIPES
FAQ'S
CONTACT

8
9
10

VOLUNTEER ↗
HOST A DRIVE
DONATE

1	Home Page Logo
	When clicked, the user is navigated to the home page.
2	How to Help Button
	When hovered over, the user is shown a dropdown with 3 options.
3	Visit Button
	When clicked, the user is navigated to the visit page.
4	News Button
	When clicked, the user is navigated to the news page.
5	Recipes Button
	When clicked, the user is navigated to the recipes page.
6	FAQ'S Button
	When clicked, the user is navigated to the FAQ'S page.
7	Contact Button
	When clicked, the user is navigated to the contact page.
8	Volunteer Dropdown Button
	When clicked, the user is taken to an external page of the volunteer sessions: https://sessions.studentlife.umich.edu/track/3152
9	Host a Drive Dropdown Button
	When clicked, the user is navigated to the host a donation drive page.
10	Donate Dropdown Button
	When clicked, the user is navigated to the donate page.

*Example of a detailed specifications page.

03

EVALUATION PHASE

EVALUATION METHODS

STUDY DESIGN DESCRIPTION

Our evaluation study uses a usability testing approach to compare the new design with the current website. Participants will complete the same series of tasks that reflect common user interactions on both websites. Testing will include both task completion assessments and follow-up questions to gather qualitative feedback. Each test will follow this structure:

1. **Introduction & Consent:** Brief overview of the study and obtaining consent from participants.
2. **Pre-Test Questions:** Collect demographic information and familiarity with the system.
3. **Task-Based Usability Test:** Participants complete a number of key tasks in the old and new design while their interactions are observed and recorded, talking out loud as much as possible.
4. **Post-Test Questions:** Collect qualitative feedback on user experience.

RECRUITMENT & PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

We recruited participants who had never used or seen the website to ensure unbiased, first-time user feedback. Recruitment was done through outreach to classmates, friends, and family, with a focus on finding individuals unfamiliar with the Maize and Blue Cupboard website. To account for potential biases—such as participants being more tech-savvy or willing to help peers—we interpreted results with caution, focusing on trends rather than generalizations. Our sample included a diverse group of university students varying in major, year, and digital proficiency.

EVALUATION RESULTS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1. Does the new design improve usability and accessibility compared to the current website?**
 - a. Does the prototype offer better language support or more inclusive content than the current site?
- 2. Do users find the redesigned interface easier to navigate and more intuitive?**
 - a. Are there fewer instances of users getting lost or confused in the prototype?
 - b. Does the prototype reduce the number of clicks needed to complete key tasks?
 - c. Do users prefer the way information is presented in the prototype versus the current website?
- 3. How does the new design impact user efficiency in completing key tasks?**
- 4. Are there any remaining pain points or areas for improvement before full implementation?**
 - a. Are there any features from the current website that users miss in the prototype?
 - b. What aspects of the prototype are significant improvements over the current site, and what still needs refinement?
- 5. Which version of the website do users find more visually appealing?**

EVALUATION RESULTS

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Our testing showed an overall improvement in the usability of the website. The metrics measured were success rate per task, average completion time, and count of incorrect actions.

Introducing participants to the redesigned site led to an increase in average success rate by 12%, the redesigned site showing a success rate of 100% (Figure 1).

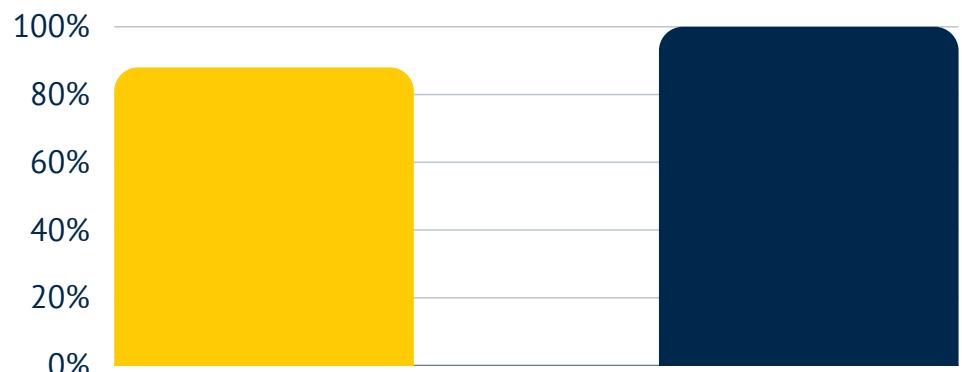


Figure 1. Average Success Rate.

Additionally, we observed an overall decrease in the time it took a participant to complete each task. The average time per task for the current website was 23.1s, while the average time per task for the redesigned website was 9.8s – 58% faster than the current site (Figure 2).

EVALUATION RESULTS

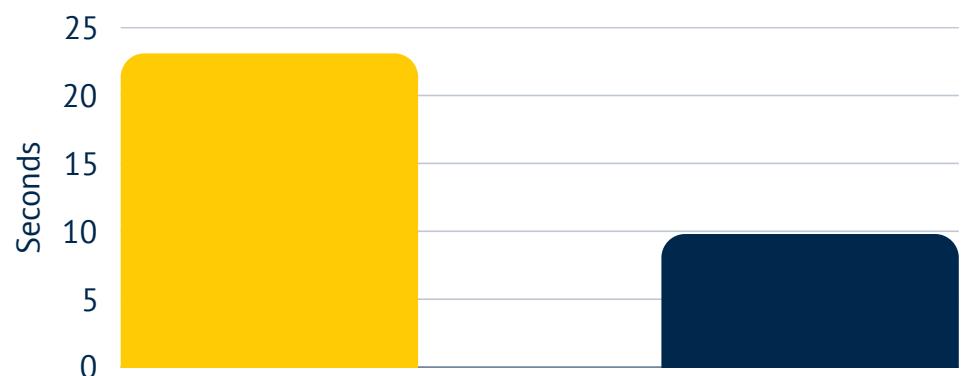


Figure 2. Average Time per Task.

Finally, we saw an overall decrease in incorrect actions taken by the user, comparing from the current website to the redesigned site. The average incorrect tasks went from 4.5 to 1.3—a 71% decrease from the current site to the redesigned site (Figure 3).

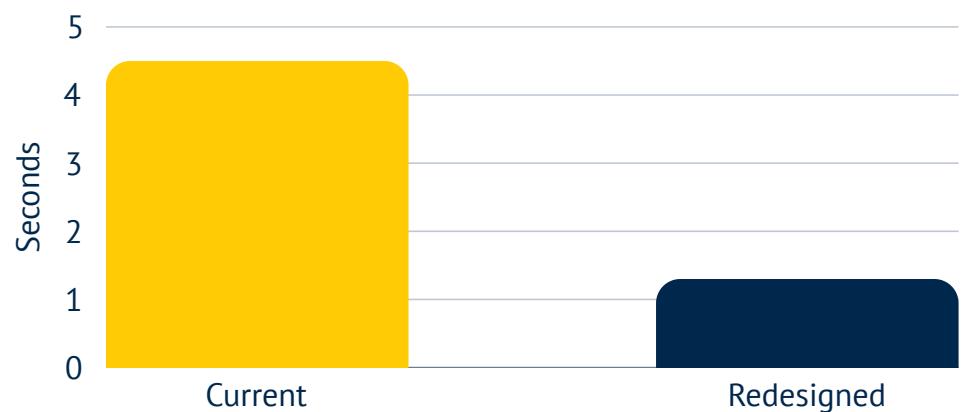


Figure 3. Average Incorrect Actions.

EVALUATION RESULTS

DISCOVERIES

Users Struggle with the Original Navigation & Information Structure

- Confusing headers and cluttered FAQ section.
- High task failure rate (12%) and longer task time (23.1s).
- Website structure hinders efficiency and clarity.

Visual Design Has a Large Impact on Perception & Engagement

- Original site described as “outdated” and hard to read.
- 100% of users found the redesigned site more visually appealing.
- Aesthetic improvements enhance usability and emotional engagement.

CONFIRMATIONS

Streamlined Navigation & Improved Wording

- Users praised the clear navigation and “How to Help” dropdown.
- Success rate increased to 100%, task time dropped to 9.8s (58% faster).
- New structure improves usability and clarity.

Michigan Branding Resonates with Users

- Users felt the new site better reflected UM’s identity and was more inviting.

CHALLENGES

Text-heavy & Unclear Pages

- Location/hours info hard to find, “Visit” page too dense.
- Reformat the footer visibility and redesign the “Visit” page for clarity by adding better headers, more images, and smaller text.

Accessibility & Alignment Issues

- Dropdown glitches and hard-to-find donate button.
- Contrast issues and misaligned elements.
- Fix dropdown, create a fixed donate button, and resolve contrast/alignment issues for accessibility.

DESIGN REFINEMENTS

Following usability testing, our team identified several areas for refinement in the final iteration of the website to ensure a cleaner, more accessible interface:

Redesigned “How to Visit” Page for Clarity: The original page was text-heavy and lacked visual hierarchy. The “Before You Arrive” section was particularly dense and easily overlooked. We added a relevant image to break up the text and a blue background to highlight the ‘Before You Arrive’ section, improving visual structure and making key information easier to find.

Fixed Navigation Bar Dropdown Glitches: Users encountered occasional glitches in the nav dropdowns, where the menu would trigger when hovering over the wrong area. We resolved these issues to ensure proper functionality across all pages. This improved navigation reliability, allowing users to navigate the site more smoothly.

Adjusted FAQ Spacing and Search Alignment: The FAQ section had misaligned drop downs and inconsistent spacing. We corrected these layout issues by adjusting the alignment of dropdown elements and repositioning the search bar to match the layout of other pages. This enhanced readability and made the section more user-friendly.

Updated Donate Button Design and Footer Alignment: Testing showed the Donate button lacked visibility and visual appeal. We redesigned it with a new icon, made it fixed to stay visible while scrolling, and adjusted the footer to prevent content overlap. These changes enhanced its prominence and improved overall interaction.

Improved Contrast on Homepage Background Images: Text over background images on the homepage had low contrast, making it hard to read. We adjusted the contrast to meet accessibility guidelines, enhancing readability and ensuring the site remains accessible to users with visual impairments.

Added Client Quote to Donate Page: The Donate page lacked emotional appeal and connection to MBC’s mission. We included a client-provided quote to humanize the page and highlight the importance of donations, enhancing emotional engagement and encouraging user contributions.

04

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Navigation and Information Access:** Users consistently struggled to find essential information quickly and efficiently. Improving information architecture and adding clearer navigation pathways is critical.
- **Appointment Booking:** The current process for scheduling appointments is unintuitive and inaccessible for new and returning users. A more streamlined, mobile-friendly system is needed.
- **Feature Awareness:** Many users were unaware of the full scope of services MBC offers (e.g., pop-ups, events, kitchen demos), indicating the need for more prominent and engaging content discovery features.
- **Desire for Real-Time Updates:** Users expressed a strong interest in knowing real-time food availability, which could improve planning and reduce uncertainty.
- **Consistent Experience:** There's a strong disconnect between the warm, helpful in-person MBC experience and the website. Users want the same ease and friendliness online.

FURTHER VALIDATION SUGGESTIONS

Due to the circumstances under which we conducted our research, we were unable to reach a large sample size of students. While we believe the feedback we gathered provides valuable insights and accurately reflects key usability concerns, we recommend that once the redesigned website is implemented, the Maize and Blue Cupboard conduct additional usability testing and student interviews. This follow-up research will help ensure that the new design is meeting student needs effectively and being received as intended.

DESIGN & FUNCTIONALITY

At this stage, we believe our final prototype includes all the essential screens and user flows needed for the Maize and Blue Cupboard website to function as intended. It effectively captures how students will navigate the site and access key resources.

IMPLEMENTATION/INTEGRATION

While our redesigned prototype is ready for implementation from a design perspective, the actual development will depend on the timeline and capacity of the university's central web development team, which supports all UofM resource websites.

We recommend that the client share our final design files and documentation with the university's development team to initiate the process. As development progresses, collaboration between the Maize and Blue Cupboard team and the developers will be crucial to ensure that key features—such as the new home page, appointment button and page, and FAQs—are prioritized. Given potential technical or policy limitations within the university's web system, flexibility may be needed in adapting certain design elements to fit within existing infrastructure.

05

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Our reports for each phase have in-depth appendices.

01 Project Introduction

[Final Project Scope and Plan](#)

02 Research Phase

[Research & Requirements Report](#)

03 Design Phase

[Design Report](#)

[Final Prototype](#)

[Figma Link](#)

04 Evaluation Phase

[Evaluation & UX Specifications Report](#)