**Section I. Overview/Proposed Report**

Guiding questions:

*What will students be able to do that they can't do now?*

Students will be able to view, in one place, online, their progress through the academic system. This will supplement and re-enforce the face-to-face personal experience of meeting orientation staff, by carrying over the process and continuing it online. The fact that they will be able to view the …..online overnight, “personalize” their experience, by tracking their progress through ……...

*What will students be able to do more easily?*

Students will be able to track their progress the critical components of their academic careers much more easily, as the information will be consolidated and presented visually in the form of progress bars. At a glance, students will be able to tell whether they are on track to complete registration, orientation, advising, and more.

Note: Care will be taken to ensure that those with visual disabilities have access to equivalent information.

**Section II. Assumptions & Functional Requirements**

**A. Assumptions**

1. The site should assist students in all aspects of their online learning experience. This includes registration, orientation, advising, research and study. Online components will supplement, reinforce, and support the face-to-face services currently offered by the university, such as Orientation.

2. This experience provides a possible top-level navigational structure for the site. The intention is to align the technology to extant offices and personnel, simultaneously dovetailing the organization of the links to SACS requirements:

**About Online Learning at USFSP**

Information

Services

Applicable departments/contacts on campus

<http://lib.usfsp.edu/online-learning/>

Audiences

Student-centered, notably divided into undergraduate and graduate.

**Orientation**

Information

Services

**Registration (Financial Aid)(shouldn’t Financial Aid be a subset?, or additional menu item?)**

Information

Services

**Advising**

Information

Services

**Research & Study (&Technology Support Services)**

Information

Services

Consider breaking the above into research & study, support being the librarians and the modules, for example, and another subdivision for the technology support. Different skill set as well as different departments.

**Taking classes and Exams**

Information

Services

3. The purpose of the site is neither to recreate the functionality of existing systems nor simply link to them but rather somewhere in the middle. In this regard, it will be both a portal and an endpoint. We will both provide information and help students accomplish certain tasks. **A key goal is to work with other content providers/maintainers to maximize the effectiveness of their resources.**

4. We will survey what resources we have now and then evaluate their effectiveness for online students. However, we will assume that we will work within the strengths and limitations of all existing systems.

5. Audiences will include current students (1) involved in fully online program, (2) taking one or more online courses, (2) taking one or more hybrid courses, (3) enrolled on campus not yet taking online classes but considering doing so, (4) potential students. (Undergrad vs. grad distinction)

6. The site experience will likely vary from one of the above groups to the next.

7. Faculty and staff will not be considered audiences for this site, though they may inform its design.

8. The spring deadline is firm, and therefore the site scope needs to be commiserate.

9. The presence needs to be fully mobile-capable.

**B. Functional Requirements:**

The platform for the site should be a library-hosted WordPress site. The platform will be enhanced with customization to take advantage of extant technologies.

Rationale: Departmental and institutional knowledge of WordPress is already in place, and documentation is readily available for the open-source WordPress platform.

Background: Other platforms considered:

1. Open-Source CMS systems such as Drupal and Joolma, both great, but would require additional time and training for staff and personnel.

2. Proprietary systems were expensive, and do not allow for ready customization.

3. “Flat” HTML sites did not provide a database substructure; a platform that supported databases was needed.

4. Cloud-based database technologies provided significant challenges in providing security for personal student information.

**What Others Have Done**

**There was a wide variety of approaches, but a common thread was to separate the portals by audience. Common audience groups were undergraduate, graduate, freshmen, transfer students, veterans, and international students. Although in the early stages of investigation we considered portals for professional development courses, we found that typically, such portals were not bundled together with the others.**

**We were surprised at how many third party applications were involved. Outsourcing made sense, due to sophistication of any application required to safeguard the sensitive, personal information of the students, and the requirement to handle the information securely. However, it also raised issues of one technology being able to shake hands with another, preserving the critical personal information all the while.**

**A few universities employed ombudsmen, which we thought was a great idea.**

*Present findings from this report. (500 words?)*

**What We Have**

## [Online Learning and Instructional Technology Services](http://lib.usfsp.edu/online-learning)

<http://lib.usfsp.edu/online-learning/>

**Orientation (Listed as Undergraduate)**

<http://www.usfsp.edu/undergrad/orientation/>

**Registration**

<http://www.usfsp.edu/records/>

Search for classes:

<http://www.registrar.usf.edu/ssearch/search.php>

NOTE CONFUSION ABOUT USF CLASSES VERSUS USFSP CLASSES

Register for classes:

Requires NetID

Registration Tutorials found in the “Advising” Section

<http://www.usfsp.edu/advising/student-resources/registration-tutorials/>

**Advising**

USFSP Students: <http://eschedule.forest.usf.edu/login.aspx>

Prospective Students: <http://eschedule.forest.usf.edu/nonstudentlogin.aspx>

Academic Advising Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/usfspAdvising>

(I didn’t see a link for deadlines, such as drop-add dates etc. except for on Facebook)

**Research & Study**

**Recommend breaking into two sections: Research Assistance, Technology**

**Research Assistance:**

**LIBGuides** [**http://guides.nelson.usf.edu/ResearchHome**](http://guides.nelson.usf.edu/ResearchHome)

**Modules** [**http://decade.it.usf.edu/stpete/lib\_modules/**](http://decade.it.usf.edu/stpete/lib_modules/)

**e.g.** [**http://decade.it.usf.edu/stpete/lib\_modules/AvoidPlagiarismAPA/index.html**](http://decade.it.usf.edu/stpete/lib_modules/AvoidPlagiarismAPA/index.html)

**Technology:**

**Instructional Technology Services** [**http://lib.usfsp.edu/service/instructional-technology-services/**](http://lib.usfsp.edu/service/instructional-technology-services/)

**Taking classes and Exams**

**Also remember to include Practicums**

[**http://www.usfsp.edu/fsc/ifmh/student-responsibilities/**](http://www.usfsp.edu/fsc/ifmh/student-responsibilities/)

**Additional Communications/Information Tools Possibilities**

Create a Q&A feature, and how we might design and manage this.

(There is a FB group that accomplishes some of this now.)

3rd party chat possibilities

Oohlala

Google Chat

Rationale: Human interaction should be supplemented by technical features that allow students and/or parents to continue to research information online, after hours, to supplement and strengthen the knowledge gained from face-to-face interactions in orientation. This will serve multiple purposes: Convenience, (location, time) re-enforcement, ….

Supplement to forms for accessibility purposes

<https://stptusf.askadmissions.net/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=undergraduate>

Provide a means for graduate questions

A dashboard that shows an online student her or his info at a glance

**Proposed Login Levels to Work Toward for Customization...**

Informational only (nothing login-specific)

Choose Role (To filter what information is shown, prioritized)

Custom Login (WP-based, dedicated account)

Scrapped Single-Sign On (Prototype in progress; probably connects to WordPress site)

Single-Sign On Login (To be explored)

**What We Need To Know and How We Plan to Find Out**

Survey(s)

Conduct surveys through specific classes

Demographics

Experience with online learning

best/worst part of the experience is?

Are there tool that would help the regular experience that could occur online? (Online supplements to classroom-based experience.)

**Ongoing Support Needs, Possibilities**

In general, what kind of ongoing support is needed for the site is an important ongoing issue. We can design the platform in such a way that minimal support is needed, but that may mean curtailing certain features.

Two kinds of support that we can look at are content and technical.

Who we are going to contact next:

Orientation: orientation@usfsp.edu or 727-873-4754.