Worksheet for W5 - Activity 2: Conduct a Heuristic Evaluation (Individual Assignment)		

Name:		Wyatt Whiting
Website/Product/device/system reviewed		Oregon State MyDegrees online interface
URL if applicable		mydegrees.oregonstate.edu

Nielens 10 Heuristics (concise)		
#1: Visibility of system status		#6: Recognition rather than recall
#2: Match between system and the real world		#7: Flexibility and efficiency of use
#3: User control and freedom		#8: Aesthetic and minimalist design
#4: Consistency and standards		#9: Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors
#5: Error prevention		#10: Help and documentation
Nielens 10 Heuristics (explained)		**https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/**

Find here Nielsens Severity Rating		**https://www.nngroup.com/articles/how-to-rate-the-severity-of-usability-problems/**
Severty		**Meaning**
0		I don't agree that this is a usability problem at all
1		Cosmetic problem only: need not be fixed unless extra time is available on project
2		Minor usability problem: fixing this should be given low priority
3		Major usability problem: important to fix, so should be given high priority
4		Usability catastrophe: imperative to fix this before product can be released

Running Number of UX Problems found	**Heuristic reviewed**	**Comments**	**Severty Rating**
1	#5 Error Prevention	When the user is running a 'What-if' evaluation, they are presented with a screen that shows a series of drop-down menus. With these menus, the user is supposed to fill out the various criteria realting to the audit they want to perform. However, there is a high possibilty of entering degree options which are not possible. In this case, the user may select a mathematica degrees with the inter-degree option in Animal sciences, which obviously is not possible. Letting these sets of options be selected with each other allows the user to run 'what-if' criteria for things that would never, ever be combined in practice. It should not be possible to do so, and the application clearly fails in the 'Error Prevention' usability category in this regard. It would be much better from a usability standpoint if only valid major/option combinations can be selected. However, it is unlikely that a student would try to combine these things, so this does not rise to the level of a major usability problem.	2
2	#8 Aesthetic and Minimal Design	At the top of MyDegrees, the page displays a chunk of information about the student's account. Some of the displayed information is redundant. For example, it lists the student's degree, but again just underneath, which is unnecessary. The student's college is also listed in more than once place. It also includes information that most students will never need to reference, or are obvious to the student already. A student using the system would know if they are an undergraduate or graduate student. This can be visually distracting, but do not severely impede the workflow, so I don't belive this rises to a major usability issue.	2
3	#8 Aesthetic and Minimal Design	Part of this category is to present the user with information that is most relevant to their goals. In the majority of cases, the user (student) is on this tool to gauge their progress towards completing their degree. However, the interface fails in this regard. There is a lot of vertical space between the top of the page and the checklist of requirements for the user's degree. This is a problem, as the users must go through many unnecessary movements. It would be much preferable if this information was more prominent and immediate upon entering the tool. I believe this is a fairly profound failure of the interface, so I would consider it a major usability issue.	3
4	#7 Flexibility and ease of use	The MyDegrees interface has very little customization options, and even few shortcuts available to the user. There is virtually no way to change what information is visible on the main screen, apart from collapsing the largest menus, such as the entire Major menu or the entire Bacc core menu. It would be prefereable if sub-checklists were collapsible. For example, the user may want to just collapse the the 'Fitness' requirements under the 'Bacc Core' list, but they are unable to do so and must have either the entire 'Bacc Core' list visible or none at all. Even more jarring is the bright color scheme, which strongly opposes the dark color scheme available on my.oregonstate.edu, which can lead into MyDegrees. However, this does not seriously detract from the ultimate ability of the user to assess the progress of the degree, so I would consider it a minor usability issue.	2
5	#1 Visability of System Status	On the degree checklist, it is made quite obvious to the user the status of each requirement for their degree. Finished requirements have a green check mark, in-progress requirements have a blue half-circle, and unfinished requirements have a red open circle. These all match quite well what one might expect them to mean without the need for a key, although one is available at the bottom of the page. This fits into a usability metaphor of a checklist that one might write with a pencil and paper, and for that reason is an appropriate way of indicating to the user the status of their degree. Therefore I will give this a grade of a non-problem, as this aspect of the system is designed quite well.	0
6	#5 Error Prevention	When the user goes to create a new plan, they are prompted to select the term for which the plan will become active. The list of terms is presented to the user as a drop-down menu, with each term corresponding to an entry. However, it presents options for terms that are potentially years before the current date. This should not be possible because there are no situations in which a user would be planning for classes in past terms. The options should have been cut off and restricted to the current term, as a student at the very beginning of the term might have a legitimate reason to change the classes they are taking that same term. It really should not be possible to create plans starting at past terms. However, most students will likely know not to select those options, so this constitutes a cosmetic problem in my opinion.	1

		Artimetic Average of the HE	**1.666666667**