

Communicating Our Identity: Part II Building Your Web Site's Content

Be sure to complete Part I: Conducting Identity and Communications Audits before moving on to Part II. Many of the tips in Part II reference information and exercises in Part I.

Your department's Web site is an essential marketing tool that can be used to highlight and promote your department's qualities to the outside world and to the University community. Therefore, it is important to present content in your site in a way that can help your department achieve its main goals and enhance its image.

Use the information gathered from the Benefits Offered section in Part I to determine some of the most important content to present in your department's Web site. To attract prospective students, include information from the section titled "What successful students want from the major" in Part I as one of the main links on your home page.

The following section is designed to ensure that that the findings of the Departmental Distinctiveness Exercise are a significant part of your site's content.

Evaluation Checklist

- Themes or broad selling points written in a persuasive tone (should be evident throughout site)
- Unique features (including all the Points of Pride your department forwards to University Communication)
- Areas of strength
- Benefits offered to students/quality indicators
- Special events (include impact on students)
- External funding sources (include benefit to students, department)
- Student focus group data
- Collected folder of existing press releases, campus media articles (i.e., write-up in the Scholar magazine), and any other relevant coverage your department may have received (see the later section on repurposing existing content for the Web)

The following outlines the main sections your department should strongly consider including in your departmental Web site.

Faculty

Develop an inventory of faculty profiles: courses they teach, office hours, contact information, course Web sites, research interests, institutional and disciplinary service, honors/awards, etc.—this should not be a CV; it should be written for a nonacademic audience.

It would be helpful to send out a letter or e-mail message to the faculty members in your department in order to gather the needed information. For example:

We are sending out this e-mail message in order to gather important faculty information for the department's Web site. Please supply the following information (one paragraph for each section) and send it to *****@ilstu.edu:

Biographical statement –
Your Courses and Teaching Philosophy –
Research Interests–
Honors/Awards –

Outcomes (Alumni Section)

Include an Outcomes section that describes successful graduates from your program(s) and the success they have had in the working world or graduate school (include three to five personal narratives). These sections should only be one screen in length and should include authentic voice quotes from recent graduates (three to five years out). Some of this information can be gathered from program review surveys or an e-mail message can be sent out to graduates to gather information.

For example:

We are sending out this e-mail message to gather important alumni information for the department's Web site. Please supply the following information (one paragraph for each section) and send it to *****@ilstu.edu:

Describe your current professional position (or your status in graduate school) - Describe how Illinois State and the department you were in influenced your life and professional development –
Describe any professional or academic honors/awards you have received –

Student Profiles and Testimonials

You may wish to include student profiles and testimonials throughout your site to help your Web visitors connect with your group. An e-mail message can be sent out to students to gather information.

For example:

We are sending out this e-mail message in order to gather important student information for the department's Web site. Please supply the following information (one paragraph for each section) and send

it to *****@ilstu.edu: The same kind of information could also be gathered from the student's professors.

Name/Major/Academic Year –

Describe what your academic life is like in your program –

Describe how Illinois State and your department influences your life and academic/professional development –

Describe any honors/awards you have received –

Describe any research interests or extracurricular activities related to your major/minor –

Employment/Internship Opportunities

Use an Employment/Internship section to sell all the opportunities you have for students to get involved in working in their chosen field during their time at Illinois State: internships, professional practice, undergraduate teaching assistantships, graduate assistantships, etc. Include three to five testimonials from current students describing their experience. These sections should only be one screen in length and should include authentic voice quotes from students. You could also use this section to show the employment growth areas in your field (each concentration), the average salaries offered to graduates, typical career paths, etc. Some of this information can be gathered from employers or an e-mail message can be sent out to students to gather information. For example:

We are sending out this e-mail message in order to gather important student information for the department's Web site. Please supply the following information (one paragraph for each section) and send it to *****@ilstu.edu:

Describe your current position as a student involved in an internship, professional practice, undergraduate teaching assistantship, or graduate assistantship (include how you got the position) –

Describe how this experience has influenced your academic and professional development and what it has taught you so far –

For an employer:

Describe how the Illinois State student working for you has gained an important academic/professional experience in his/her field of choice –

Read the [Web Writing Tips \(PDF\)](#) to learn how to repurpose content for the Web.