Content Website Audit for Units

We've found that over the years, websites suffer from content creep. We ask that you periodically take an inventory of your website content and keep the following in mind. Note: Many of these things go into greater detail in our Web Guide content checklist. *Note: Some of these items may pertain only to academic units.*

○ **Site menu.** We have a required menu for academic units. When prospective students "shop" for majors, they should be able to navigate between department sites and see the same offerings, articulated in a similar way. Review our academic department and college navigation guidelines.

○ **Homepage banner story—remember the work it should be doing and update accordingly.** Academic units should have at least one banner story specific to their unit that supports the internal positioning statement "Elevating Humankind." Content may be something created by the unit or by University Communications. Previously in homepage banners, there has been an emphasis on constantly changing department news -- no matter how big or small. We've shifted this thinking and now the BEST stories that offer the BEST messages for every unit should be elevated to the banner; even if that means they change a little less regularly. Even if there's just one and it stays awhile.

○ **Make sure your homepage hasn't become a holding page for everything.** This is a strategic page; make sure it contains content that gets people excited about what you're teaching, what professors are doing around research, what new alumni are doing to impact the world, what research or creative work students are involved in, then send them deeper into your site.

○ **Check-in with your majors pages.** One of the most popular search topics in higher ed, and one of the most popular pages on UVM's website is UVM Majors. From here, we link directly to your department's major pages. The audience for these pages is prospective students. The pages should be short, clear, and full of interesting information that would make a student excited to major in this area of interest. Not a list of all course requirements, etc. While you're thinking of majors, please make sure that the most up-to-date programs for your unit are reflected on the UVM Majors list and that they are going to the appropriate pages on your website. Send edits to webteam@uvm.edu

○ **Check-in with your student opportunities pages.** Make sure somewhat current student graduates are featured in outcomes, update internship opportunities with current student profiles and opportunities. The goal of these pages isn't to offer every option – that should be housed elsewhere whether it be on the web or with your student services office. But we do hope that this page is an opportunity to feature the kinds of experiences students can have, and next steps to seek these experiences out.

○ **Be sure that each of your pages is part of a larger user journey.** What work is this page supposed to do in the grand scheme of your user's journey? Is it to get them interested in the program and dig deeper to go to the major page? Is it to get excited about what our campus community is like and link them to the appropriate page on the admissions site to learn more? Provide a "call-to-action" on your key pages.

○ **Use site analytics to see what other pages are visible on your site.** Re-read this content. Think like a prospective student. Adjust accordingly. This is the first step toward making data-drive pages about content that you don't need.

Other quick hits:

○ **Get rid of content that duplicates catalogue information.** Just link to the catalogue.

○ **Pages with too much content should be edited down.** Use headings for scanning. Don't overdo accordions.

○ **Review your site administrators.** Get rid of admins who are no longer with you. Make sure there are no more than a few with access.

○ **Remind site admins that accessibility on the web is their responsibility.** Refer them to our online course to brush up on best practice.

○ **You have access to UVM's Photo Services professional photography collection.** Use great photos. It matters!