



PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- To synthesize findings and insights
- To level set to ensure we're in alignment on what we're solving
- To frame the evolution of Southwestern's public website from current state to aspirational state within context of digital ecosystem
- To provide creative kindling for iFactory team

THE BIG PICTURE

The 30,000 View of What SWC is Facing

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS

KEY CHALLENGES DRIVING THE DESIGN

- **SWC is uniquely positioned to shape your perception in the local area**
- **Website is most public representation of institution** and highly influential in a student's decision to attend. Recent survey of college-bound high school students shows institutions' websites are most heavily-accessed online resources (**82% of Fall Seniors** ranked college sites as top resource for researching colleges - *2016 Noel Levitz E-Expectations Report*).
- Current website **does not tell Southwestern's story** [welcoming, caring, + supportive + quality education (range of academic offerings + transferability) social + diverse + value]
- Given its economic value and exceptional education provided, **Southwestern should be first choice** for people who want to continue their education or enhance their career in the area
- Internal stakeholders **require user-friendly editorial workflow and content management system (CMS)** so staff can easily contribute content (lower barrier to adoption)
- **Website is not responsively designed and needs to be accessible**

“Despite high familiarity and a high level of past visit experience, the college’s overall rating is lukewarm and the depth of knowledge about the school is lacking. Many cannot name strengths or weaknesses and the aided perception ratings indicate that Southwestern lacks distinction on many attributes. ”

- STAMATS Report 2015

WHAT A SITE REDESIGN CAN DO

ONLINE VS. OFFLINE BEHAVIORS

- Create clear funnels and calls-to-action (CTAs)
- Improve content dissemination (sharing)
- Distill brand story into moment(s)
- Optimize destination for promotions/campaigns
- Collect data about behaviors (not causality); inform decisions

WHAT A SITE REDESIGN CAN'T DO

- Make sure people come to the site
- Undo “red tape” (complex forms/business operations/data flows/unknowledgable or unfriendly first line responders) that influence the customer experience
- Keep content up-to-date if staff aren't assigned to its ongoing maintenance as a priority or if governance isn't clear after the site launches

DISCOVERY

Our Approach and What We Learned

DISCOVERY INPUTS

- **Strategy + Brand Questionnaire** filled out by Southwestern Core Team
- **4 Stakeholder Interviews** (Student Affairs, Faculty, Students, Centers)
- **Campus & Center Tours**
- **Documentation and Analytics Review** (past 12 months)
- ***Faculty/Staff & Current Student Surveys***

KEY EXTERNAL AUDIENCES

Traditional Students (+ a nod to their influencers)

- High School/**Unsure/More likely to explore**/Social Life + Clubs/Focused on transferability

Non-Traditional Students

- Older/**Focused**/Flexibility/Not the only non-traditional student attending SWC

Community Members (non-credit/employer/friend)

- Take a class/Hire/Go to an event/Support the college/SWC network

NOTE: The above are not the only audiences; rather, they are the key audiences for purpose of the public site. We can create landing pages for other audiences as well (current students, faculty, etc.)

OUR FINDINGS

WHAT WE LEARNED

ABOUT SWC

- **“Vulnerable” students** (first generation; low income; language barrier; basic needs unmet...) who need help navigating the college process
- SWC culture is much more **personable** than the tone presented on the website
- **Caring, dedicated faculty committed to student success** in and out of the classroom
- Lots of **supportive resources** for students (financial, [library](#), [SWC Cares](#))
- **Perception is an issue**: around diversity, 13th grade, school for low income students (no in-depth knowledge of SWC locally)
- Increasingly **diverse community**, not exclusively Hispanic
- **The Centers are less known** compared to Chula Vista campus
- **Bandwidth might be an issue** for students accessing the website

“We are doing amazing things here. I can’t imagine there is anything someone might want to do that we couldn’t help that person get started.”

- Faculty

WEBSITE'S CURRENT STATE

- **Looks cluttered, outdated, and cramped** (undermines reputation)
- **Difficult to navigate** and not intuitive (overwhelming)
- Content is often **too dense** and **not always accurate** (frustrating)
- **Not personable**, not enough photos; **looks like a billboard** (not engaging)
- **Disjointed experience** due to inconsistency in presentation (navigation + outside tools to present information)
- Not **mobile responsive** (not accessible, inconvenient)

*****Overall the website is making it hard for people to engage*****

WEBSITE'S CURRENT STATE

- **No personality** or sense of what it's like @ SWC
- No indication of the **breadth of offerings/campus locations** aren't highlighted
- Heavy use of **acronyms and internal terms** (ex: [Outreach](#) to help with Enrollment)
- [SWC Cares](#) has **good thematic tone and helpful resources that you might want to bubble up** ("We are here for you" vs. "We are the only public higher ed institution in Southern San Diego....")
- [Your Guides to SWC](#) **good start** but some of info on the pages need work
- May want to **cultivate news that appears on the homepage** ([lockdowns](#) vs. [Mona](#))
- Found **some info about financial aid** on [Class Schedule page](#) (good info, just buried deeper than necessary)
- [Student Services](#) is daunting

WHAT WE HEARD

FROM FACULTY AND STAFF

- A lot of information is out-of-date or inaccurate
- Information changes on a regular basis
- Updating the website is burdensome
- Concerns about training, governance and maintenance moving forward
- Some confusion between information for internal vs. external audiences and the purpose of the external site
- Also confusion between iFactory and OmniUpdate

WHAT STUDENTS WANT

FROM FOCUS GROUPS

- **More faces on the website and photos of people here** (visuals!!!)
- **More testimonials and success stories** from people “like me”
- **More info about social activities and what to do beyond campus** (clubs & events)
- **Promote resources available to students** (especially financial)
- We should **focus on SWC’s accomplishments more** (academic excellence with music program, dental program, etc.)
- **Translation is necessary** (Google Translate & key pages in Spanish)
- **It feels like a family here**
- **Step by step explanations** preferred to videos

“Southwestern is a community, not just a campus.”
- Student

WHAT WE RECOMMEND

A FEW BEST PRACTICES

FROM NIELSEN'S 2016 TOP UNIVERSITY WEB GUIDELINES

- Clearly **identify your university** on every page
- **Use images** that reflect your **university's values and priorities**
- Make your **About Us** page count
- **Highlight your strengths and achievements**
- Make it **easy to view a list of majors and programs**
- **Provide information about job placement**, and link to it from the alumni section of the website
- Clearly show the **application deadlines and offer a step-by-step description of the application process**
- **Follow the user journey**: check the main tasks for each of your audiences
- Be prepared for **students to search for information about your university on external sites**

(THE NEW) SWCCD.EDU SHOULD

- **Introduce SWC through great storytelling** and “get a second date”
- **Talk to users about their hopes/dreams** (forget your current circumstances; what do you want to do?; let us help you figure out how to get there)
- **Make SWC relevant in that context via use of proofpoint stories**
- Provide **simple, straightforward, intuitive navigation** for external users
- Express **eagerness to engage and help prospectives** (student service)
 - “Please connect with us! Introduce yourself.”
 - “We have successful students just like you” (vets, transfers, first gen, high school students, etc.)
 - “College can feel challenging. You can do it and we’ll help you.”
- **Encourage users to act**
- **Begin moving internal audience content into a task-oriented user experience**

(THE NEW) SWCCD.EDU SHOULD NOT

“We need our site to be informational, not institutional.”

- Staff Member

- **Be a Billboard** of news, events, announcements, and press releases
- Be a **compendium of everything students need to know** until they graduate
- Be the place to **educate external audiences about how SWC operates**
- **Create departmental competition** for space on the homepage
- **Become primarily a storage shed** for internal audiences to store stuff
- **Be an academic publication**
- Be written at anything other than a **5th-grade reading level**

USE YOUR HOMEPAGE

to Introduce SWC to First Time Visitors

The screenshot displays the UC San Diego homepage. At the top right, there are links for "A-Z Site Index" and "Blink". The UC San Diego logo is on the left. A navigation bar contains links for "ABOUT", "ACADEMICS", "ADMISSIONS AND AID", "RESEARCH AND INNOVATION", "CAMPUS LIFE", and "SUPPORT UC SAN DIEGO". A search icon is on the right. The main banner features a woman running on a beach with a large red octopus emerging from the cliffs in the background. The text "BREAK FROM THE ORDINARY" is overlaid on the banner. Below the text are two yellow buttons: "SCHEDULE A CAMPUS TOUR" and "EXPERIENCE UC SAN DIEGO". The footer is yellow and contains a blue box with "AUG 1", the text "UC APPLICATION OPENS", a description of the application process, and a "MORE INFO" link.

A-Z Site Index Blink

UC San Diego

ABOUT ACADEMICS ADMISSIONS AND AID RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CAMPUS LIFE SUPPORT UC SAN DIEGO

BREAK FROM THE ORDINARY

SCHEDULE A CAMPUS TOUR

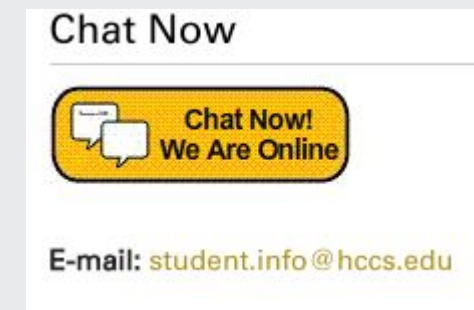
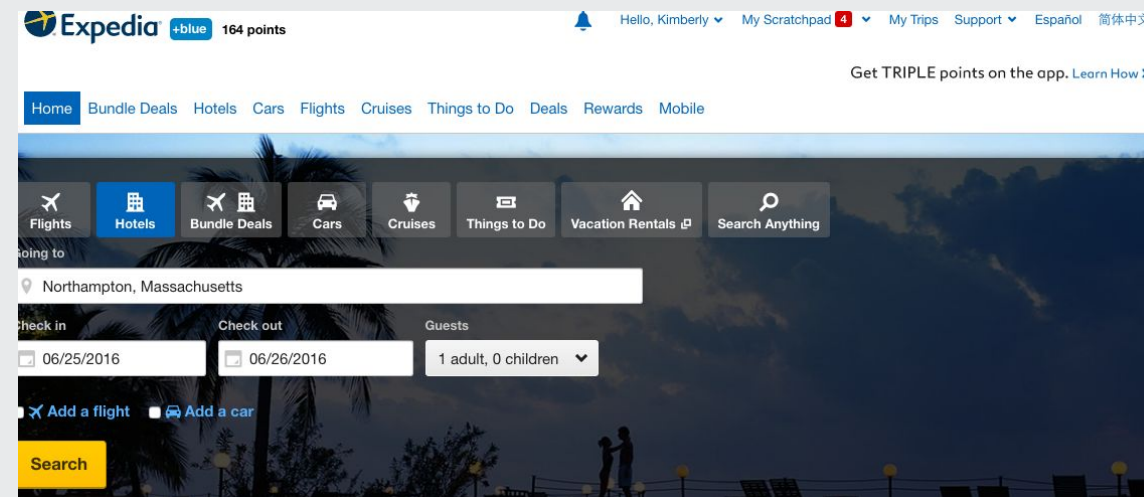
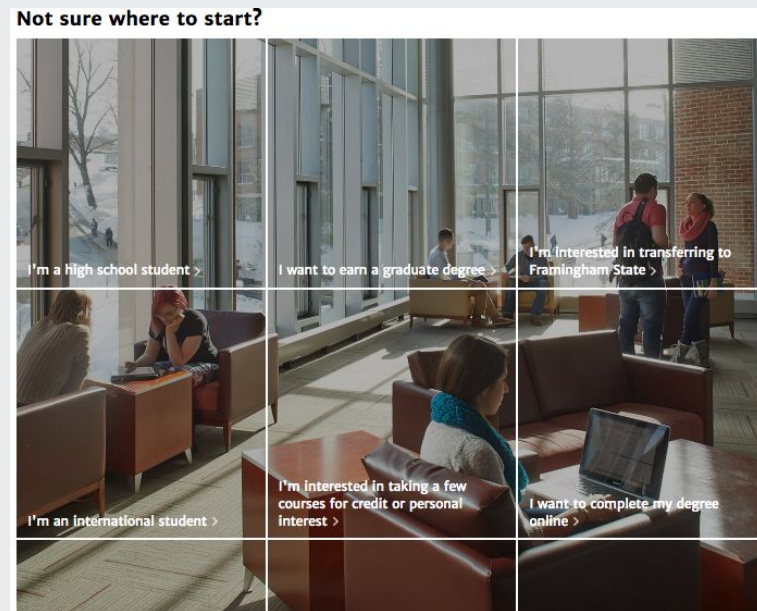
EXPERIENCE UC SAN DIEGO

AUG 1 **UC APPLICATION OPENS**

The University of California Application opens in August. Get an early start on your application before the filing period in November. [MORE INFO](#)

IMPROVE ONLINE CUSTOMER SERVICE

Use Tools and Navigation to Help People Find What They Need



Provide easy access

- Start with who you are
- **Start with what you want to do**
- Use step-by-step guides to make complicated content easier to understand
- Consider Chat Feature (student)




LET STORYTELLING DRIVE THE FUNNEL

set the tone | show diversity | show optimism, possibility + success

Melissa Jaffe

Eugene, Oregon
Environmental studies and biochemistry major, Junior


Jaffe is spending her summer in Sitka, Alaska, as a wild salmon conservation and restoration intern for the Sitka Conservation Society.



Describe your internship.

Sitka Conservation Society (SCS) was founded in 1967 and is dedicated to protecting the resources and way of life in Sitka and the Tongass National Forest. I work directly with Scott Harris of SCS assisting with field research consisting of long-term wilderness monitoring projects. For example, I recently went

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Michelle Aguinis
CLASS OF 2017
ECONOMIC CONSULTING, FINANCE

"I applied to all of the top business schools across the nation and Kelley's program really distinguished itself. Being number one for recruitment spoke so much to me."

"COLLEGE IS THE WAY TO GO."



meet **JOSE**
PROGRAM *Criminal Justice*

Jose is working toward his bachelor's degree in criminal justice, planning to go into law enforcement and continue the work he's doing with troubled youth at a Boston community center.

Or he might follow in the footsteps of his mom, a judge, who encouraged him and his siblings to graduate from college, no matter what. Jose values higher education because it teaches people to challenge different perspectives and speak up.

Learn More About the Criminal Justice Program

what drives jose?



Letter	Percentage	Category
A	20%	HELPING OTHERS
B	25%	FINANCIAL SECURITY
C	25%	INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY
D	15%	SENSE OF DUTY
E	15%	CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Student Stories

- Magazine-style profile
- Profile nugget
- Nugget with stats, multimedia

WHAT MATTERS TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

- Academic Programs
- Cost
- Enrollment
- Life or “Vibe”
- Wayfinding
- Outcomes

Figure 10: Top content students look for on a college website

