

Key Findings Executive Summary

Methodology

When conducting staff and faculty groups and high school focus groups, Desautel Hege Communications' goal was to gather perspectives from both audiences on current perceptions of the website, best practices, and areas of improvement. A total of ten focus groups were conducted; input from EWU Trustees (received via email) was also included in the report.

Staff and Faculty Key Findings

Internal research revealed the following key themes:

- Staff and faculty are frustrated with the number of outdated pages and broken links
- The CMS is ineffective and difficult to manage
- Overall navigation needs to be improved
- The main priority audience to gear the website for is prospective students
- Faculty and staff would like a university-wide events calendar
- The faculty/staff directory needs to be updated and needs to include job titles
- Key pages should be translated to cater to international audiences

High School Key Findings

High school focus groups produced the following key themes:

- High school students want content that is eye-catching, engaging, and easy to read
- When choosing a school, high school students value their own opinions the most (over parents, teachers, friends, etc.)
- Students are looking for information on campus life, "fast fact" information, and details on programs majors, etc.
- Students want to see what campus life is *really* like. Information should come from current students and shouldn't be glossy or staged. High school students want to see real pictures and videos of campus life and buildings.
- Students enjoy virtual tours and panoramic pictures of campus, as long as they are authentic.
- Recommendations for the EWU site include: Reduce clutter, eliminate white space, include more photos and videos, and catch people's attention.

Key Findings

High School Student Focus Groups

Research Goal

The goal of the focus groups with high school students was to gather perspectives regarding college searches, college websites, and web features. Discussion topics included gathering insight into how students choose colleges, how they interact with college websites and the features they look for on the websites they visit. In the majority of the groups, EWU's website was shown and students were asked for comments and feedback.

Methodology

Desautel Hege Communications conducted five in-person focus groups with approximately 84 total high school students. The majority of the students were high school juniors and seniors. One group was conducted at Lewis and Clark High School in Spokane, two groups at Ferris High School in Spokane, and two groups were conducted at Mt. Tahoma High School in Tacoma.

Breakdown of participants:

Lewis and Clark High School: 4
Ferris High School First Group: 29
Ferris High School Second Group: 15
Mt. Tahoma First Group: 11
Mt. Tahoma Second Group: 25

Key Findings

Throughout the five focus groups, key themes emerged. The following summary encapsulates the major content areas covered in the discussion of each of the questions. Verbatim quotes are included where appropriate, either to highlight a key finding or call out a unique comment.

How Students Research Universities and Colleges

Approximately half of all students had already done some research on colleges (39 participants).

Most students talked about researching colleges on the **college's website, general search engines, and college resource sites**. Students mentioned resource sites such as:

- Collegeboard.com
- Zinch.com

A few students also mentioned that they get information from:

- College fairs
- College mailers/View books
- Friends who attend the college they are considering
- College counselors/career centers at their high school

Students have looked at the following colleges when conducting research:

Top Mentions:

- **University of Washington (3)**
- **Washington State University (2)**
- **Pacific Lutheran University (2)**

Washington Schools:

- Eastern Washington University
- Western Washington University
- Gonzaga University
- Whitworth University
- Bates Technical College
- Tacoma Community College
- Pierce College

Regional Schools:

- University of Oregon
- Oregon State University
- University of Idaho
- Idaho State University
- University of Montana
- Montana State University
- Boise State University

Schools outside the region:

- Santa Clara University
- Stanford University
- University of Missouri
- Simon Fraser University
- Robert E Cook (Honors College at Indiana University of Pennsylvania)
- University of Texas
- Michigan State University
- Spellman College
- Clark Atlanta University
- Technical colleges

Best Practices

Students liked college sites that are **eye catching** as well as **easy to read**. **Simple navigation** is important on these kinds of sites, as students are looking for basic **information that is easily accessible**. Students also liked college pages that utilized **color** and pages that “stand out” or catch the eye.

One student mentioned that a pain point with many college sites is that it’s hard to find incoming freshman requirements.

Specific mentions of quality college sites that stood out to participants included:

- Gonzaga University
- Pacific Lutheran University
- Stanford
- University of Montana
- University of Washington

Verbatim Quotes:

“Gonzaga – all the pictures of people had bright, happy faces that were happy to be there, gave it a bright, cheery look to it.”

“University of Montana – everything was bright colored, throws itself at you, shows the best qualities of the school, and stands out.”

Influencers

The top audience that students mentioned as an outside influencer in the college decision making process was **people who currently go to the college in consideration**. Secondary influencers included parents, friends and teachers. Overall, students said that **their own opinions matter most** when choosing a college.

Favorite Websites

Students listed the following websites as their favorite sites and sites that they visit frequently:

- Google
- Myspace
- Facebook
- Yahoo
- YouTube
- Wikipedia
- Sports sites (ESPN, Cougfan)

When asked what makes these sites interesting or unique, the students had a variety of answers. Many students commented they are **easy to use, easy to navigate**, and are **not confusing**.

Students also commented that these sites incorporate **color** and have a **good ratio of pictures to text**. Finally, students discussed how the sites are **constantly changed or updated**. Many referenced Google's competitions for logo design and how Google often changes the look of their homepage.

Students also liked games, music and a variety of information on websites. A few students talked about their annoyance with pop ups, advertisements, or commercials on websites. Students also find it a necessity to have a good search function on a website.

Verbatim Quote:

"Something about Google that is really great, all that there is is a search bar and Google's name, it's really simple. There is no way to get confused. It's just a search bar and you hit enter."

Key Qualities in a College Website

Overall, students look for information on **student/campus life, "fast fact" information, and information on specific majors and classes**.

Student Life

Students mentioned that the top things they look for on a college website are student life, campus life and activities information. Students want to know what it's really like to attend the school. Therefore, the information they look for includes:

- Housing information (students mention that they want lots of photos and/or videos here, want to see what the dorms are really like)
- Student life information
- Information about the surrounding area (the city, off-campus activities)
- Activities and clubs
- Upcoming events

- Greek life
- Study abroad programs
- Campus size
- Sports (Club, Intramural, etc.)
- Actual students/professors in the pictures (to see if they might fit in)

Verbatim Quotes:

“I would click on campus pictures, I want to see what the campus is like.”

“I look at the people, I would look at the kind of people who are in the pictures, the environment, the people who populate the school to see if I would mesh with them.”

Fast Facts

Many students also mentioned that they look for basic “fast fact” information such as:

- Tuition and fees
- Financial aid opportunities
- Requirements for entry
- Basic contact information
- Scholarship information

Verbatim Quote:

“With kids today, they want it quick, how much it costs, what it is and how long it’s going to be. Get down to the basic nitty gritty. Give me a button with details.”

Programs, Majors and Classes

Many students also look for information on programs, majors and classes. Some students mentioned they look for information on *specific* classes or professors. Another student mentioned knowing how long a certain program lasts (i.e.: a 12 month program vs. a 16 month program) is important.

What Students Click

When asked which parts of college sites they visit first, responses were mixed. Most responses fall under “Incoming Freshman” or “Admissions.” Responses included:

- Incoming freshman
- Housing
- Classes
- Requirements
- Athletics
- Majors/Programs
- Cost/Tuition
- Scholarship programs
- Campus pictures

Verbatim Quote:

“I think that if on the websites, they wrote it so people who have no idea about college could understand. Really basic. If they assume we don’t know what we are getting into, that would help a lot.”

Why do Students go back to College Websites?

Students said they would go back to a university website to check **deadline information** or **get more information**.

They would also go back if something was always **changing or updated**. If the site served as a resource or provided interesting and relevant news, students would also be more inclined to be repeat visitors.

Virtual Tour Feedback

When asked what they thought of virtual tours, most students didn't have specific responses. A few students in each group had used virtual tours, some on college sites and some on other websites. For the most part, students had positive feedback and thought they were helpful to visitors. Those students who hadn't used virtual tours thought they would be helpful.

Some students discussed the challenges of virtual tours if you have a slow internet connection or a small monitor.

In a virtual tour, students mentioned that they would like to see:

- Videos or pictures of classrooms
- Inclusion of music
- High resolution/high quality photos
- Realistic photos of students (photos that realistically portray what students do on campus)
 - This point was stressed continuously. Students want to see more than the famous building on campus and posed students playing sports.
- Map with distances between buildings
- Estimated travel times between buildings

Overall, students want to see live experiences on campus and what it would be like to live on campus and attend classes at the university.

Verbatim Quotes:

"I know every school has their one building that's their pride and joy, but I like to see the not so well known aspects. They show kids playing sports and they are all so posed. I went and visited them and it's so different than what you see on the computer. I want to see more photos and a bigger variety."

Visiting a University Campus in Person

Most students said that they would visit a school if they were very interested in attending and/or planning on going there. Students think visiting a university campus in person is a necessary and valuable way to get a first-hand experience of what the school would be like to attend.

Some students said an incentive would entice them to visit (free lunch, free t-shirt). A few students suggested a full day of activities to help them get acquainted with the campus, such as visiting an actual class, going to a sporting event, etc.

Other University Website Features

Four out of the five groups were shown features on different college websites and asked questions about them. Students were shown Furman University's "Engage Furman" website, which included a campus tour and a guided video tour about Greek life. Next, students were shown the Colby College website "Inside Colby," and were directed to the student blogs. Facilitators then walked students through the Fresno Pacific University virtual tour, showing them some of the tour guides and guiding them through a few places on campus. Finally, facilitators showed students the Northeastern University

message boards and explained what they could be used for. Responses for each feature are captured below.

Furman University Campus Tour and Guided Video Tour (Greek life tour by Neca Parker)

(www.engagefurman.com)

Overall response to the campus tour and guided tour was positive. Students commented that it was nice to see pictures and videos and helpful to see what people are doing on campus. Students liked the tour and videos since they gave an idea of different aspects of campus life.

Naturally, the guided video tours are only going to captivate a group of people who are interested in the subject matter (Greek life, volunteerism, etc). While some students enjoyed the video, others commented that it didn't grab their attention and they weren't generally interested in the subject matter.

Students had specific feedback on certain aspects of the tours that they didn't enjoy. Many students commented that the woman narrating the introduction video had too much of a high pitched voice which students perceived as "annoying." Many commented that the videos and pictures seemed too staged and they would be more interested in seeing an accurate "day in the life" of a student.

There were mixed opinions on the opening video with the "wavers." While some thought it was clever and funny, others thought it made Furman seem like they were bragging about the campus. Similar mixed reviews were voiced about the guided tour about Greek life. Some thought it seemed genuine, while others thought it was too staged and cheesy.

A few students would have liked to see a more realistic video of Furman students. These participants thought the videos were forced and unnatural. However, some students thought the videos seemed realistic and portrayed a realistic representation of what life might be like at Furman.

A few participants thought the Engage Furman site was too busy. Students were distracted by the different pop-ups that come up when you hover the mouse over different parts of the pages.

Verbatim Quotes:

"The pictures with the dorms seemed like too much. The pictures were deceiving, they didn't show the room, just showed people sitting in a chair."

"I felt like they pointed out unique things, but it was too many unique things versus information."

"I liked how it wasn't really staged in the video. Some videos are in a controlled environment, but when its more every day you feel a part of it."

Fresno Pacific University Campus Tour

(<http://tours.fresno.edu>)

Most students liked the panoramic pictures in this tour as well as the map. Students thought it was helpful to see what buildings were next to each other so they could get a realistic view of what campus would be like. Overall, students thought the Fresno tour gave people a realistic sense of what campus would be like. While many students had

issues with the tour guides, they liked the fact that you could gain information through multiple mediums (photos, videos and text).

Many students thought the tour guides were annoying and talked about irrelevant information. Students suggested the University keep in mind the audience who will be using the tour. They thought having an older person talking about the history was probably irrelevant for high school students. Some students liked the idea of being able to pick your own guide and liked that the tour guides spoke in different languages. A few students thought picking your own guide was helpful so you can pick someone you can relate to (i.e.: area of study, interests). Some students also commented that there were too many guides to choose from and one or two would be sufficient.

Recommendations around the guides included making them more “human,” having the guides express their opinions, and having them talk to you from a more informal setting, such as a dorm room, etc.

Verbatim Quotes:

“I like the bottom part where it shows most of the campus where you can click where you want to go. You get the sense of how big it is.”

“I think it would be interesting if you can add the person’s opinion on something so you can relate to them, humanize them. Then you can relate to people and understand them.”

“The tour guides might be helpful, but they are all dressed nicely. If they were more laid back, sitting in a college dorm, not up front...be more nature.”

Colby College Blogs

(www.insidecolby.com/blogs/index.php)

Most students weren’t intrigued by these blogs and agreed that they wouldn’t read them during their initial college search. Most students don’t read blogs in general, although some students commented they read their friends’ Myspace blogs. Students mentioned blogs tend to be a lot of reading and often not interesting.

Some students commented that they *might* read them if they were in the final decision stage for a college and/or if they knew for sure they would attend that school. Some students liked the idea of having a more interactive type blog and got onto the topic of a live chat, which they liked. In another group, students talked about how they might read a blog if it were organized by topic instead of a few students blogging about everyday life.

Some students discussed the idea that blogs only offer one person’s opinion, which can sometimes be narrow.

Verbatim Quotes:

“People have so many different perspectives; it probably wouldn’t help me decide.”

“Once I had decided to go for sure to that college, I might look at blogs...but if it wasn’t funny or interesting I wouldn’t go back.”

Northeastern University Parent Message Boards

(<http://messageboard.chatuniversity.com/neuparent/default.asp?action=10&fid=861>)

Most students thought message boards would be useful and would use this feature if they had a specific question. Students liked the fact that you can ask detailed questions and liked the fact that there were multiple perspectives. Some students expressed

questions or concerns about who would manage the boards and answer questions. Students would want to ensure the answers were credible and legitimate.

EWU Website Critique

Four out of the five groups were shown the EWU site and asked questions. Prior to being shown the site in the focus group, the two Mt. Tahoma classes were asked to view and explore Eastern's website. Out of the two Ferris groups that were shown Eastern's site, eleven students had been to the EWU website prior to the focus group.

First Impressions

First impressions of the EWU site were mostly regarding the white space on the right hand of the screen. Many students asked what it was, as if it was a mistake or error on the page.

Students also wanted to know how often the "One day I'll..." picture was changed. Mixed reviews were voiced about this section, but many thought it was irrelevant to prospective students.

Most students commented that the homepage was too cluttered and busy, that there were too many options, too many links, and that it is somewhat distracting. Some students commented that nothing immediately catches your eye.

Verbatim Quotes:

"I've noticed every time you click home there is a new 'One day I'll...' picture. It would be cool to have a slideshow of it to see more pictures."

"Have a 'One day I'll...Attend this school' and then this could be a link to admissions."

After showing students the homepage, they were then directed to look at the Incoming Students page.

"Incoming Students" Feedback

Overall, students commented that there was too much to look at and too many links without photos. Students mentioned the page is too basic and generic. Students suggested adding more photos and eliminating links would improve the page. Students thought a useful way to eliminate links would be to incorporate a drop down menu.

Students were then shown a program page, which varied for each class.

Program Pages Feedback

Students discussed the excess of text blocks on these pages as well as the excess of white space on the pages. They were interested in learning basic information about the program or major, such as classes, professors, requirements, what it's like to study in this program, buildings that classes would be in, etc.

One class was shown the clubs/organizations page. Students immediately noticed that the page was outdated (photos were from 2005). Students would like to see pictures of campus, a slideshow of various photos, and updated pages. Some people would like music to be added to the page.

Finally, students were shown the athletics page.

Athletics Page Feedback

Most students liked this page the best, commenting that there is “a lot going on” on the site, it is more interesting, inviting, and it shows a lot of school spirit. They talked about how the page is immediately attention-grabbing and utilizes a good variety of colors and fonts. Students noticed this page was updated with current news and events.

One student group had many negative things to say about the athletics page. The students didn’t like how the first thing you saw was the men’s tennis team and the story about their championships. Students commented that more basic information should be on the athletics homepage, and there should be something about womens’ sports as well. This group also discussed how a lot of the site looks like spam or advertisements with blinking words and small icons on the sides of the page. When the facilitators clicked on Men’s Basketball, the students commented that it would be nice to have a photo of the team instead of recent news as the first item you see.

Although it didn’t come up as a key finding or theme, a few students commented on the fact that the page is a reflection of where the money is being spent at the school.

Verbatim Quote:

“I like how this one is organized a little better, but it looks like spam. When you put a bunch of little things on the sides, something that flashes on the top, it looks like spam. When you see spam it kind of discredits the website, you think a bunch of companies have their fingers in the site. It would be better to break things into clearly divided sections.”

Main Improvements

When asked what the number one improvement for the EWU site could be, the following feedback came up consistently:

- Less white space, use the entire screen
- More color (some students commented on using different shades of red)
- Catch people’s attention and make it memorable
- Homepage needs movement
- Add a slideshow of photos on the homepage
- Eliminate/consolidate links
- Simplify homepage
- Include videos where appropriate
- Consolidate text into photos or videos
- Consider putting the search bar in the top right corner

Key Findings EWU Staff and Faculty Focus Groups

Research Goal

The goal of the EWU staff and faculty groups was to gather perspective on perceptions of the website, including areas for improvement, audience prioritization and future enhancements. Discussion topics included how the website can utilize new media and technology, what is currently missing from the website, and how the EWU website can differentiate itself from peer universities.

Methodology

Desautel Hege Communications conducted five in-person focus groups with a variety of internal stakeholders at EWU. One focus group was conducted with each of the following: EWU President's Executive Council, Cheney staff and faculty (forum-style), EWU directors, EWU deans, and Riverpoint staff and faculty. Four groups were conducted at the EWU Cheney campus and one was conducted at the Riverpoint campus. Input from EWU Trustees was received via email and has also been incorporated into this report.

Key Findings

Throughout the five focus groups, key themes emerged. The following summary encapsulates the major content areas covered in the discussion of each of the questions. Verbatim quotes are included where appropriate, either to highlight a key finding or call out a unique comment.

EWU Website Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

When internal audiences were asked to name Eastern's website's strengths, participants identified many attributes:

- Effective use of school colors/Good color palate
 - One participant also commented that the site has a good use of graphics.
- Strong sense of EWU on the site
- People are used to using it
 - Participants commented that internally, the website works well.
- The website is uncluttered
 - Also came up as a weakness - other participants think the site is too cluttered.
- Eaglenet is visible
- Good continuity from page to page
 - This concept also came up as a weakness. When people mentioned it as a strength, they liked the fact that the pages were consistent and had a similar look and feel.
- Good intranet
- Current homepage
- The website does a good job of sharing stories of faculty and staff

Weaknesses

EWU staff brought up many weaknesses about the website. Key themes for this question included the mention that it is **hard to find information** on the website (see below for more details). Another key theme was the overall **navigation**. Finally, the **lack of**

updates/outdated content on the website and **broken links** came up consistently as a pain point. Below are additional weaknesses mentioned in staff groups:

- Hard to find information you are looking for
 - Participants added to this comment by mentioning that you often have to use the search function to find what you are looking for.
 - Participants also added that the website is difficult for *students* to navigate and find information.
 - Many responses centered around the idea that important content is buried too deep in the website.
- Too much text/Cluttered
 - Other comments around the look of the site included that it doesn't "draw people in" and lacks movement.
 - Participants added that there are too many links on the homepage.
- Continuity of pages
 - This also came up as a strength. When discussed as a weakness, people mentioned that each page is too structured. Faculty and staff would like some flexibility with designing and structuring website pages.
- Lacking new media
- Lacking usability functions (not capable with wide screen monitors, etc.)
- Branding isn't conveyed through the site

Verbatim Quotes:

"I think it's static so it doesn't have something that is going to draw people into EWU. The biggest thing you see is the menu and the 'Start Something Big'. We need to draw people in a bit more and get them a feel for campus right away."

"From our division's standpoint, we are buried. Every department will make a case for why they can be on the homepage, but its probably not possible."

Content Management System (CMS)

The staff forums held in Cheney and Riverpoint garnered many responses regarding the content management system. It's important to note that many staff and faculty refer to the content management system as the "intranet." Many comments and much of the passion of these forums, particularly the Cheney forum, was aimed at the Content Management System (CMS). The CMS system is clunky, inefficient and disliked by the staff. It is difficult to use with or without training and has many downfalls.

As such, the four primary conclusions of the forum are:

- The CMS is not effective – it is difficult to manage, use efficiently and navigate.
- There is no ownership – the site is outdated but no one knows how to fix things or who to report it to.
- Creating web pages is a long and unpredictable process, often resulting in "abandoned" pages and "broken" links.
- Using the staff/faculty directory is difficult and users (both students and staff) often contact the wrong person, or are unsure of how to contact the person they need.

These inefficiencies are best summed up by the following sentiment:

"These problems with the CMS mean pages aren't updated, there is old content out there that isn't accurate."

Ownership

One of the primary reasons the CMS is not effective is there is no ownership of different department pages, so content is difficult to manage.

- The directory is difficult to use and often out-dated – each department needs to manage their content and take responsibility for keeping it up to date.
- Ownership of different parts of the website would result in updated content and open the potential for greater usability.
 - Participants also suggested adding a “Last Updated” stamp on each page.

Priority Audiences

When asked to prioritize audiences for the external site, participants resoundingly listed **prospective students** as the number one audience. One group stressed the idea that there are many categories of prospective students (high school seniors, transfer students, non-traditional, graduate, international, etc.). The information needs for these audiences differ greatly and the website needs to reflect this. Other audiences mentioned consistently include:

- Alumni/potential donors/donors
- Job seekers
- International audiences (prospective students, their families, scholars, prospective faculty)
- Prospective students’ parents
- Community

In addition, following audiences were mentioned by a few participants:

- Current students
- High school counselors
- Other universities (advisors for transfer students and graduate students in particular)

Verbatim Quote:

“International audiences, not just students, but all kinds. An international community, whether you are a scholar coming here overseas or whatever, it would be nice to have an international community online with all the related information and events.”

Organizing Content around Audiences

When participants were asked whether organizing content around audiences is a good idea, most agreed that this was a good approach under a few conditions. As long as the website is able to capture audiences who don’t fit into one of the main audiences listed on the homepage, this approach would work. Some participants also mentioned that it would be helpful to organize content around both audiences and information.

Some participants discussed the fact that it may be easier to track web traffic on the site if people need to self select by audience.

Those who were opposed to organizing content in this way voiced concerns over confusion for visitors who may not fit into the audiences listed on the homepage.

Verbatim quotes:

“There is often times information that I need that has nothing to do with who I am. When you define things in terms of your role, I find it hard to maneuver.”

What’s Missing?

When asked what was missing from the current site, key findings included a **university-wide calendar with events**, a **virtual tour**, an **improved directory** with contact information and titles, and a **link to employment on the homepage**. Below are other responses:

- Fast facts
- Photo Gallery
- President's page, President's welcome
- Annual Report
- A way for visitors to interact with EWU representatives
- Link to Bellevue Community College
- An overall better sense of community, linking people together
- Faculty awards/grants
- Templates for department pages
- More information/photos/videos on the Riverpoint campus
- An "apply now" button

Verbatim Quotes:

"Include a calendar of events for students with activities and things that tend to attract students more. People can see photos from recent events and upcoming events they might attend. It would be nice to have more photos and less text."

"We pride ourselves on our one-on-one experience. I want pictures of staff, students, etc. I've been on sites where you can instant message advisors."

Additions and Changes

When asked what participants' top priorities for additions or changes to the site would be, most said they want **pages to be updated and reliable**. Another related key finding was that people want there to be a process or **guidelines for managing content**. Participants mentioned that currently, there are a lot of "broken" links and outdated content. There needs to be a process so people know who is in charge of managing a certain part of the site so that edits, changes and deletions are timely and effective. Participants would also like a space on each page so people can email a person and know who to contact if there is an error. Finally, **improving navigation** is important to internal audiences.

Other additions or changes that consistently came up included:

- Translation on key pages
- The homepage needs to "grab" students and be exciting for them
 - Clean up the homepage, eliminate clutter, keep it simple
- Improve admissions pages
 - Allow prospective students to interact with EWU representatives
- Make web updates easy and turnkey
- Improve department pages
 - Participants went on to discuss how the department page should show what its like to major in that area of study. Show what kinds of work students are doing, what types of internships and jobs students are getting, etc.
- Website navigation should be obvious and intuitive
- Have easier URLs. Instead of a long link, URLs can be simplified (i.e.: www.ewu.edu/employment instead of xml links)
- Web content needs to appeal to a variety of audiences
- Website needs to look more sophisticated
- Improve search function
- Increase multimedia on website
 - One participant mentioned the EWU site already has many videos that no one knows about. Moving these multimedia tools to a more visible place will be an easy change.

- Improve the website for non-traditional students
 - These participants specifically referred to having easy-to-access information on partnership opportunities, finishing your degree, master's degrees, internships, etc.

Verbatim Quotes:

"If a student looks at the site in the fall and then looks in January, it should have been updated."

New Media/New Technology

When asked how the site can better use new media and new technology, participants didn't have many responses. Many mentioned the content should be the main focus before integrating new features. Of those mentioned, participants talked about the concept of linking events from the EWU site to social networking sites such as Facebook. Participants also talked about integrating the new site with the "Start Something Big" site, which utilizes new media. Finally, participants talked about utilizing videos, wikis, iTunes, XML feeds, live chat, virtual tours and interactive photo galleries to paint a picture of life on campus.

Verbatim quotes:

"The virtual tour that is on there is outdated. We need to be able to see classrooms and campus. We have so many resources at our fingertips and we need to do this. Blogging or Eagle ambassadors doing live chats. It might be hard to get resources but maybe it could be a student project."

"We should be in front of technology instead of behind because students will be in front of it and its changing all the time. It's our customer who will be expecting to interact with us the way they are interacting with each other."

Measuring Success

When faculty and staff were asked how they will know when the web redesign initiative has been successful, the most common response was **people will be able to easily find things on the website and the website will be a resource**, not a barrier. A successful website will be **less cluttered** and the **homepage will improve**. Qualitative indicators such as positive feedback and having a positive experience on the website will also show that it has been successful.

Success can also be measured by an increase in enrollment, increases in job applications and funding. Some participants said it will be successful when the website content lines up with the strategic goals of the university. Finally, measuring web traffic to account for time spent on the site before and after the redesign will help measure success.

Wish List

Participants were asked what their ideal website would look like in five years if money were no object. While no key themes emerged, staff created the following "big wish list."

- The ability to do nearly everything on the site. From ordering tickets for games, paying tuition, or ordering books and merchandise from the bookstore, everything would be available and simplified.
- Having 24-hour live chat/customer service if visitors had questions or concerns
- Connecting alumni on the website
- Utilizing blogs and videos about campus life

- A consistently changing and updated website
- Translation on every page
- Video production for each program
- Building a sense of community

Differentiating the Site

Some groups were asked what EWU can do to differentiate itself from peer universities. Some participants talked about connecting the site with the “Start Something Big” website and continuing to promote the “Start Something Big” brand.

One participant said that the website should communicate that Eastern is a place that can educate people and prepare them for the workforce. One group stressed the idea of showcasing the sense of community at EWU. This group also suggested conveying the idea that EWU is the “people’s university” – the university is affordable, accessible, and provides sense of community. Emphasizing the connection between faculty and students will also reinforce this concept.

Best Practices

Some groups were asked to list other university websites they consider to be best practices.

- Furman University
- Seattle Pacific University
- Seattle University
- South Carolina
- Spokane Community College (homepage)
- University of Portland
- University of the Pacific in California (admissions and homepage navigation)
- University of Vermont (alumni)
- Washington State University
- Weber State

If time was available, participants were asked to list their favorite websites in general to visit.

- Amazon
- Boeing Employees Credit Union
- Craigslist
- EBay
- Google
- MSN