


MEMORANDUM

TO: Patricia Harrington
Brian Conniff
Michael Mensah
Deborah Pellegrino

FROM: Gerry Zabolski 

DATE: Friday, March 21, 2014

RE: Project to Update Web Content for Academic Programs and Departments

Over the course of the spring, summer and fall of 2013, Marketing/Communications, Admissions and Information Technology undertook a project to overhaul the University's website. The project included new content, revised designs and the implementation of a responsive site architecture that presents content in ways that best suits the device upon which it is viewed. During the course of this project, we identified a desire to improve the content of pages that serve academic programs and departments. These pages are important for many audiences, including prospective students.

Simultaneously and independently, a group of faculty serving on the Technology Advisory Group (TAG) identified challenges with department and program pages and also noted limitations and frustrations faced by faculty and departments in maintaining fresh and engaging Web content on department and program pages. Specific concerns were raised by TAG about the ease of use of the content management system and the need to identify ongoing support to help departments maintain their pages in the CMS.

Following conversations with TAG, Hal and I agreed to undertake a project to engage external writing and design support to address a large number of program and department pages quickly. Doing so would not address all of our pages or the long-term needs for maintenance support, but it would make an immediate impact on many important pages.

Accordingly, we have contracted with Converge Consulting (Cedar Rapids, IA) to assist in the first part of this project, which involves preparing new and improved content for a combination of roughly 50 academic program and department Web pages. TAG representatives participated in a presentation from the firm and have been sharing information about this project with faculty through their regular meetings and minutes. Originally discussed in the fall, the project was delayed a bit due to Hal's departure.

We are now hoping to move forward on a fast track and to schedule a campus visit by Converge staff on Wednesday and Thursday, April 23-24. During this visit, Converge will meet directly with designated representatives of academic departments/programs for a 45-minute discussion that is guided by responses to questions (below) that would be shared with departments beforehand.

In anticipation of this visit, I asked the members of the Committee on University Image and Promotion and representatives from the Technology Advisory Group (TAG) to guide the selection of the initial 50 departments/programs.

Our current working list is as follows:

Departments and Programs

	College	Department	# of Programs
1	CAS	Psychology	1
2	CAS	Physics/EE	6
3	CAS	Biology	1
4	CAS	Sociology/Criminal Justice	2
5	CAS	History	2
6	CAS	Communication	1
7	CAS	Communication	1
8	KSOM	Accounting	1
9	KSOM	Economics/Finance	2
10	KSOM	Management/Marketing	3
11	KSOM	Operations & Information Management	2
11	PCPS	Occupational Therapy	1
12	PCPS	Nursing	1
13	PCPS	Exercise Science	2
14	PCPS	Education	3
15	PCPS	Physical Therapy	1

Interdisciplinary and Other Programs or Pages

	College	Department	# of Programs
1	CAS	Biochemistry, Cell & Molecular Biology	1
2	CAS	Neuroscience	1
3	CAS	Common Curriculum	1
4	KSOM	International Business	1
5	KSOM	Common Curriculum	1
6	KSOM	5-Year MBA	1
7	KSOM	Entrepreneurship	1
8	PSPS	Common Curriculum	1

Phase One Summary

	College	Departments	Programs	Total
1	CAS	6	16	22
2	KSOM	4	12	16
3	PCPS	5	9	14
	Total	15	37	52

At this time, we would ask you to do the following:

1. Share information about this initial phase of work with your academic departments — both those in the first phase and those that will be addressed in the future.
2. Share the questions (below) to be considered and discussed by the selected departments before Converge’s April 23-24 visits.
3. Ask selected departments to identify a representative(s) who we will then contact to schedule an interview during the site visit. Interview sessions will be audio recorded to ensure that as much information as possible is captured. **All meetings will take place in the Casey Conference Room of Brennan Hall.** If we are not be able to schedule a time with a particular department during the site visit, then we will arrange for a follow-up phone conference call.

4. Identify a college/school representative who can meet with Converge to discuss your common curriculum.
5. Selected representatives should be shared with Lori Nidoh, Director of Marketing/Communication. Her office will be coordinating scheduling for the visit. Lori can be reached at lori.nidoh@scranton.edu.

Once the interviews are completed, Converge will prepare draft text for review that will be shared with departments and deans for review. After all changes are made to the drafts, Marketing/Communications will need to arrange for development support to convert the text into Web pages on our content management system.

I am hoping for your support as we move forward with this important project. You can also be helpful in reassuring departments or program directors not included in this first phase that we plan to move ahead with other departments as soon as we have completed writing and Web development work on this initial round.

We understand that there is no good time during the semester to undertake a project such as this. At the same time, the consensus in our discussions has been that we should move forward now.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this project.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM WEB PAGE UPDATE PROJECT

The following questions will assist us in developing program and department pages for The University of Scranton website. **Please discuss the following questions with your colleagues and provide feedback to your department/program designee prior to your interview session with Converge.**

Thank you!

1. Why do you think a prospective student SHOULD pursue their education at The University of Scranton?
2. For each major, please share 3-5 distinguishing factors that set this program apart from competitor institutions. Please be specific. For example, you might talk about a specific professor and the type of research or real-world experience he/she brings to the classroom. Or share innovative approaches to learning, internship opportunities, etc.
3. For each major, what words do your students/faculty/graduates use to describe it?
4. Are there other things that are great that we should include about each of these programs?
5. We know all of your faculty members are outstanding. However, please pick three people (and include their email addresses) who you think would be ideal to highlight/profile and willing to share information with us. What makes them distinctive? You might talk about the research they're doing, their experience in the real world, their teaching style, awards they've won, etc....
6. Please share hands-on learning opportunities, such as internships, practicums, etc., your students engage in—and the ways The University of Scranton connects them with these opportunities.
7. Please share up to three student success stories? What makes the experience these students had while at The University of Scranton distinctive?
8. Please share up to three alumni who best represent a successful graduate of your department/majors?

9. What kinds of careers do alums have? Be specific. We'd like to know industries, job titles and even some example of employers.*
10. Where have alumni gone on to graduate/professional school? Be specific. We'd like to know what they are studying and at which institutions.*
11. How do you want prospective students to feel after engaging with your new program content on the website?
12. Anything else you would like to share that you think is important/sets The University of Scranton apart?
13. How does your tradition as a Jesuit institution impact the classroom experience/education for students at The University of Scranton?

** Note that we will gather comprehensive information from Career Services and other sources. The intent of this question is to gather the examples that you most often reference.*