

UIS Office of Web Services

Official Guidelines for The UIS Website Project

Web Site Content for Academic Web Sites

See the pages that follow for detailed examples of each of the items listed below. As we continue to remodel all academic program websites, we will be using this content to redo the sites. At the point in time when we are ready for your site, the Office of Web Services will construct your Web site, install special software on your computer, and teach you how to easily maintain the site.

List of Items to Prepare:

- Photos and Graphics unique to the program
- Color Preference for the Menu Bars and other elements
- Meta Tag Content:
 - 25-word description of the program
 - 8 single words that are unique to the department

- Points of Pride
- What You Can Do With This Degree
- Ideas for Advertisements and Special Features areas on the Home Page

- Welcome to the Department (40 words or less)
- About the department – general information
- Curriculum – pages of content related to curriculum
- Faculty – pages of content related to program faculty
- Students – pages for and about students in the program
- Contact info – name, address, location, phone, fax, email

- Department and UIS Links – page of links unique to the department or UIS
- Resources – list of *external* links (outside UIS site) that are useful to students
- What's New – page of timely info

- Department Use Only information – any pages that need to be seen by staff and faculty, but not students or the general public.

Example of the Site Map for an Academic Web Site

<p>PSYCHOLOGY SITE MAP Directories and contents:</p> <p>about index.html – (general description) contact.html degree.html links.html pride.html resources.html whatsNew.html</p> <p>curriculum index.html – (overview) courseList.html entrance.html goals.html majorPsych.html minorPsych.html minorTeachEd.html research.html</p> <p>faculty index.html – (list of faculty + contact info) focus (DIR) index.html</p>	<p>students index.html – (outstanding students) advising.html advisingFAQ.html facilities.html forms (DIR) index.html form1.html, etc.</p> <p>deptUseOnly – (restricted access) index.html</p> <p>images (DIR) used for most images on the pages</p> <p>documents (DIR) used for most PDF, Word, and other documents that can be downloaded from the site</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Color Preference: Indigo Color: #4B0082 Rust Color: #CC6600</p>
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Guidelines for Preparing Content for Academic Web Sites

General Information.

- **Save your content in a Plain Text or Text-Only format.** When you prepare the content for your Web site, it should ultimately be saved in a Plain Text or Text-Only format:
 1. If you use Microsoft Word or another word processing program, when you are finished with the content, save a copy of the document and choose Plain Text or Text-Only as the format for the copy.
 2. You might also choose to originally create the document with a Text-Only document program like Notepad or WordPad (Windows/Programs/Accessories), or TextEdit (Mac), instead of using a word processor.
 3. The file should be named *.txt .
- **Use your Web Site content to extol the unique features and personality of your department.** Give users a chance to see why your program is a better choice than another school. Include photos and descriptions of department events, testimonials from previous students, interesting information about faculty, etc.
- All current research shows that **Web users SCAN the contents** of Web pages rather than read large blocks of text. Bulleted Lists are much better than long passages of text on the Web. Whenever possible, create lists, and then make words and phrases *hot*, so users can click to go to another page to get the details.
- **Don't underline words and phrases** on a Web page. When things are underlined on the Web, users think it is a clickable link. Use color, boldface, and spacing to make words and phrases stand out.
- **Email links should also be written out.** Providing embedded email links (i.e. MailTo tags) is good – but we should always include the text of the actual email address in addition to just making a name or word "hot." That way, if users do not have an email application like Outlook configured on their computer, they can write down the email address and use it later with their email client (like yahoo.com, msn.com, and other Web-based email programs).
- **Plan for the TITLE for each of your Web pages.** The *Title* appears at the very top of a browser window. If you do not put anything there, the *Title* will default to something generic. The *Title* is extremely important because it is one of the places that Search Engines (like Google) look first when compiling results. Use something descriptive that includes a keyword that your audience might be using

as a search term. The approved format for titles of UIS Web pages is as follows:

NameOfPage – NameOfAcademicProgram – University of Illinois at Springfield - UIS

- **Do not reproduce the material from official Course Descriptions.** You can use lists of courses, and one-line descriptions for each, on your Web site. A link to the official Course Description site where users can find current, complete, and official information is built-in to the new academic program Web template.
- **Official Program Requirements are listed on the UIS Catalog and Admissions/ApplyGrad Web sites.** If you include program requirements on your program Web site, you must be sure that the same information appears in both your location and the official locations. Links to the official UIS Catalog and Course Schedule are built-in to the new academic program Web template.
- According to official university guidelines, **units are not allowed to create and use their own logos.** Contact the Campus Relations department (www.uis.edu/campusrelations/) for more information.
- **Structure your content.** Long passages of text that cannot be put into List Format should be broken up with Sub-Headings. This is not only good writing style, but it is important to making our website accessible to differently-abled users. For more Writing Style Guidelines, see the campus Style Guides website. (www.uis.edu/newsroom/guides/style.html)
- We encourage every official unit to create (and link to on their website) a **Calendar of Events**, using the university's Web Toolbox. See the UIS Office of Web Services for more info (uis.edu/webservices/)

When we are ready to work on your website, we will contact you. In the meantime, follow your existing procedures for accessing your website. But, you may begin to incorporate the ideas in this document into your current website.

This is an extensive project. We thank you for your cooperation.

UIS Office of Web Services

<http://www.uis.edu/webservices>

The Standardized Navigation Set for All Academic Web Sites.

There are seven primary links that are standard for every academic program Web site:

- **About:** This area contains general information about the program, and contains these links: general info about the program; contact info; points of pride; what you can do with this degree; links to other program pages and resources, and links to other UIS websites; links to external websites that have info of interest to our students; a What's New page for employment announcements, student deadlines, department events, etc.

The **Contact Us** page should contain the name and mailing address of the program, the office location, phone numbers and email addresses of persons to contact. Program staff should be listed in this section.

- **Curriculum:** This contains links related to the requirements of the program and the specific areas of study. The Curriculum button itself links to a page with Overview information and a list of relevant links. (For programs offering both a Bachelor's Degree and a Master's Degree, the links should be separated by category.) Examples of links for this area include: Areas of Emphasis; Entrance Requirements; Major; Minor; Course List; Transfer Students, Online, etc.
- **Faculty:** This contains a list of all faculty in the program. Examples of links for this area include: Contact Info for each Faculty member; Research; Publications, etc.
- **Students:** This contains information for and about students, including links like these: Outstanding Students; Student Advising; Honors Programs, Alumni, Testimonials, etc.
- **Our College:** On each program home page, this link will take the user to the program's college home page.
- **Home:** On each inside page, this link will take the user to the program's home page.

The Program Home Page.

- **The top of every academic department Web page** must contain the UIS Bar. The Bar may be redesigned from time to time; if so, it will automatically be changed on program Web pages.
- **Meta Tags:** There are two important Meta Tags - for Description and Keywords - that should be included in your Web pages. These tags reside in the hidden code of the page. Users do not see them, but they are very important to search engines like Google. They help search engines find your Web pages in a Web search.
 - The **Description Meta Tag** is a 25-word description of your program or department.
 - The **Keywords Meta Tag** is a list, separated by commas, of words that describe your program, department, or services, as well as UIS in general.
- **Color will be used to give program Web sites a unique look.** The navigation bar and the box outline around the content of the program home page and inside pages will use a unique color for each program within a college.

Top Third of Home Page:

- **Left Side:** The name of the department appears on the left side.
- **Middle Column:** This column contains two standard links that are used for all academic program Web sites:
 - **Points of Pride:** This links to a bulleted list of unique features and interesting elements of the program.
 - **What You Can Do With This Degree:** This links to a page which features the types of jobs obtained by graduates of the program.
- **Right Side:** A photograph or graphic – unique to the program - is used here.

Bottom Two Thirds of Home Page:

- **Welcome to the _____ Department:** This area contains 40 words or less that make a powerful statement about the program. It links to the *About* page which contains general information about the program.
- **Site Search:** This allows a user to search the contents of the program Web site.

- **Special Feature:** This area can be changed frequently and is used to focus on a particular individual in the program. Use a small photo or graphic for visual interest. This links to more information about the topic.
- **The “Advertisement”:** This is a small graphic that contains a photo or graphic and a headline. It should be used to feature some aspect of the program. The Ad can change frequently or stay the same.
- **Text-Only Link:** This is automatically built into the Web page. It allows users to click to see a page containing all of the content without any graphics or advanced Web coding. This helps us to meet Web Page Accessibility Guidelines set by the Board of Higher Education.
- **Department Use Only Link:** This links to an area that will require a faculty/staff NetID Login, thus denying access to students and the general public. It can be used for important department notices and documents.
- **Copyright:** This is automatically built into the Web page.
- **Three Standardized Link Categories:** Each program Web site contains three standardized categories where links that are unique to the program can be created. Each of these links also appears in the *About* menu:
 - **Department and UIS Links:** Program links that are not part of the standardized navigation set can be placed here. For example: a program calendar, newsletter, FAQ, tip sheet, downloads, scrapbook, site map, etc.
 - **What’s New:** This category is used for job openings, special announcements, upcoming deadlines, and other material that is timely and that will be out of date in the near future.
 - **More Resources:** This category is used for links that are external to the program or the UIS Web site. Each link should open a new browser window.

The Inside Pages for Academic Web Sites.

- **The UIS Bar** must be used at the top of each inside page.
- The top of the page includes the **name of the department, 3 to 4 small photos or graphics** unique to the program, and the **navigation bar**. The **unique color** used on the program home page is carried throughout the inside pages.
- The body of the page contains a left-side column that is used for the **sub-menu**. The sub-menu is constructed as a Web **list** item and is easy to add to and subtract from. The left-side column may also contain a graphic, a quote, or another similar item.
- The right-side column in the body of the page contains the information relevant to that page. The information should be written with **scanning** in mind – i.e., **short paragraphs, indented text, and list items**.
- The **Footer** of the page includes copyright information, a Text-Only link, and a Department Use Only link.
- In rare cases, a one-column format may be used for the body of an inside page. This is highly dependant on content, and **the Office of Web Services will work closely with program Web Managers to determine when this type of variance from the general guidelines is necessary**.