



## WEBSITE REDESIGN STRATEGIC PLAN

CLACKAMAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE | 11/2009

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### **I. General**

#### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines, best practices and recommendations that can inform a major website redesign process for Clackamas Community College. This document is intended to be used as a framework for the overall process. A major goal of this report is to help refocus the understanding of what the website is for the college as a whole and how it should be viewed as part of the overall communication strategy of the institution.

The website site should be considered the cornerstone for the online communication efforts of the college as a whole, not the sum of the 30+ departments that make up the institution. The website should convey the logistical information, brand and overall personality of the institution as it serves to create and reinforce relationships with visitors. A shift in thinking about the website as the online representation for the community college for the entire county as opposed to the home grown effort of each department separately is not only recommend, it is critical to the long-term success of institution's communication needs.

#### **II. Critical Recommendations**

The following recommendations are considered critical to the success of a website redesign project. If these recommendations are not able to be met the overall undertaking of a major website

redesign project should be seriously reconsidered as any end result will maintain many of the characteristics that keep your current website from being an effective tool for the college as whole.

1. It is recommended that creating standardization in branding be a primary goal of a website redesign process.
2. It is recommended that the college move to a one-website system.
3. It is recommended that the Website Committee's role be more clearly defined according to the website governance recommendations.
4. It is recommended that the staffing resources allocated to support the website be reevaluated and adjusted to meet the revised needs of the website.
5. It is recommended that the college develop an overall strategic communication plan to include and overall online communications plan.
6. It is recommended that the college establish a set of policies and standards to guide the management of the website.
7. It is recommended that an RFP process be used to select a design firm.

### III. Website Governance

One of the major questions that many institutions face is that of website governance. Typically, as institutions grow their policies and procedures for managing their website are not updated, if they formally existed in the first place. This generally leads to websites that outgrow their structure, become a major point of frustration from a management perspective and neglected from a user perspective.

In 2008, the United Nations Joint Inspection Body produced a report identifying essential guidelines for website governance for the 40 agencies within the United Nations. These recommendations hold true and are scalable to most institutions. The following are a list of governance recommendations based on this report, general best practices and some additional recommends given your institution's unique needs.

A full copy of the 31-page report from the United Nations Joint Inspection Body can be found at the following link (<http://bit.ly/1up1pl>). This has a wealth of information and analysis that is useful as a general resource.

1. The executive leadership of the college should ensure that clear policies and corresponding mechanisms are adopted for the good governance and management of the institution's website.
2. The executive leadership of the college should establish an ad hoc website committee with representation from across the institution for the purposes of providing feedback on and supporting reporting mechanisms for policies, procedures and general governance of the website.
3. The executive leadership of the college should ensure that the website strategy be regularly updated, linked with and takes into account the other business strategies of the organization.
4. The executive leadership of the college should ensure that policies and guidelines are in places that, among other things, specify requirements and standards relating to (a) web layout and design; (b) editorial control and review of web content and (c) web accessibility.

5. The executive leadership of the college should request that the ad hoc website committee report on the implementation and adherence to the existing policies in place, in particular those aimed at reforming website governance, updating website strategy and policy, and branding efforts.
6. For relevant, timely and high quality website content, the executive leadership of the college should ensure the implementation of a CMS. When selecting an appropriate CMS, they should consider adopting common information exchange standards and strongly consider the benefits of using one common CMS across the college system. Selecting the appropriate CMS may be considered a project separate and done prior to an RFP process during a redesign process.
7. The executive leadership of the college should ensure that sufficient and sustained funding for staffing and training are allocated to website management. If such funding cannot be provided through redeployment or other means, it should be reported to the Ad Hoc Website Committee for its consideration in order to develop recommendations to address these needs. It is vital to recognize that insufficient support for staffing will have impacts on support of the CMS, staffing skill sets, training, user support, adoption of common information exchange standards, etc.
8. To ensure posting of timely and relevant information each department within the college should be charged with updating and maintaining content on their respective areas of the overall website. The executive leadership should ensure appropriate training and support is provided to this end.

These recommendations clearly identify the importance of having the overall process and procedures secure buy-in and support from the highest level of the institution. They also demonstrate the value of having an ad hoc committee with representation from across the various departments of the college. However, the role of this committee should be to support, implement policy, and review overall progress of the website to support the larger goals of the college. The role of this committee should not be to make day-to-day decisions. Use of the ad hoc committee for these purposes will greatly reduce the ability of the website to serve as a timely and effective communication tool for the college for primarily two reasons:

1. Technical decisions related to design, information architecture and content standards should be based on technical skill in the related areas.
2. Mechanisms need to be in place to guide day-to-day decisions so timely changes can be made in a manner that is far more responsive than is possible from a committee that may only meet on a monthly/quarterly/ bi-annual cycle.

#### **IV. Cross-Department Collaboration**

Another important topic identified in the staff interview process is the need for addressing cross-departmental collaboration in redesigning/management of the website. The history of ownership/management of the website at Clackamas Community College is a common one. It originally started as a project and responsibility of the communications department but as the technical needs and support for the website grew, it was transferred to the IT department.

A primary concern is that the website is viewed as a “job” simply to be housed by one department or another. It is vital that the website be seen as a strategic communication tool that needs both the technical support of the IT department and strategic guidance of the communications department in order to meet the overall communication goals of the college as a whole. If efforts of these two departments are not seen as interdependent the website will be of little value to the college as an effective communication tool and ultimately ineffective at meeting the needs of visitors.

## V. Organizational Culture

The organizational culture is an important factor to consider when establishing a strategic plan for a major website redesign. The long-term success and sustainability of a website is dependent on three factors:

- A technically sound platform that can meet the needs of the visitors as well as the college staff.
- A communications plan to guide and incorporate the effective use of the website as a communication/marketing tool for the college.
- An organizational culture that supports the successful implementation and use of that strategic communications plan.

Without appropriate buy-in and support from staff who manage content, functionality and use the tool on a daily basis, the website as a whole will fail over time. This is one of the primary reasons that websites often need to be redone every couple of years as opposed to simply being updated and remaining current. Neglecting a website to rebuild it every couple of years is neither cost effective nor effective in meeting the needs of your visitors in a timely manner.

How to incorporate the extremely organic and decentralized organizational culture of Clackamas Community College into the overall redesign process will be critical to the long-term success of this project. As the recommendations for governance indicate, the key to success lies in clearly defined roles, guidelines and standards driven by the executive leadership. It is clear that the current processes and methods for managing the website as a communication tool for the entire college, not just each department, is not sustainable and is in fact damaging the college’s ability to connect with visitors.

## II. RFP

### I. Cost Analysis

At this stage, it is not realistic to define what the actual cost of the project will be. In fact, that is one of the primary goals and reasons for using an RFP process, which is described below. However, at this point in the planning process, it is important to consider a few factors when looking at what will influence the cost of a website redesign project.

#### **Scale**

It is important to highlight the fact that the scale of a website project is not simply the number of pages to be included. Scale also includes elements such as types of functionality, level of work needed to redesign information architecture, amount of user testing, review and recreation of content, etc.

There are 30+ independent departmental websites that will need to be incorporated through this process. Scale should be carefully defined in the RFP process in order to manage the cost and scope of work for the overall project.

### **Integration**

The primary goal of your website should be meeting the needs of the visitor. However, a secondary goal should be that the website helps the college to connect and communicate with all key audiences. If the website is not effective as a tool for the staff, they will cease to use it and find other tools to meet their needs. Integration of technologies is crucial for efficiency and successful user adoption.

Integration is one of the primary areas comprising a significant portion of the development cost for any major website redesign. Incorporating a new website with existing technologies/platforms, policies and workflows is crucial to the long-term success of the website.

If integration is not incorporated in the redesign process to reduce cost, it will have drastic implications later. These implications can be as simple as cost overruns of 20 to 30 percent or as complex as a complete rebuild of the site to meet the technical needs of the institution.

### **Recurring Costs**

The cost of a website is not only the amount spent for the initial project. Funds must also be allocated for maintenance, ongoing training and support. This amount should be included as a recurring expense associated with the annual budget of the website and considered part of the “total cost of ownership”.

Given the various factors to be considered, it is reasonable to expect that a major website redesign project at the level being considered could cost between \$45,000 - \$70,000. This is a very rough estimate that should only be used as an initial target for planning purposes. The RFP process and submitted proposal will provide more specific detail and realistic estimates of what the overall project will cost.

## **II. Guidelines for RFP Process**

Using an RFP process solicits a wide range of applicants and increases odds of finding a qualified firm. The RFP process will require a significant amount of time and effort from staff and applicants alike. For this reason, it is recommended the RFP process be used only if each of the applicants truly has an equal opportunity to be selected. If this is not the case or not the message groups receive, you will find a diminished return in quality and response of applicants.

Each step of the process also includes a brief description of who should be involved in each step of the process. Groups to be included in this are defined as follows:

- Project Management Team: Individuals from both IT and Communications ideally (PMT)
- Ad Hoc Website Committee (AHWC)
- Executive Leadership (EL)

### **Clarification/Planning**

Involvement: PMT=Primary development; AHWC=Feedback & support for overall process; EL=Approval

Overall process, timelines, begin the development of governance policies, selection criteria for interviews, etc

### **Prepare Formal RFP**

Involvement: PMT=Primary development

The following section discusses in detail information that should be included in this step of the process. This stage is as much a gathering and clarifying process for you and your policies as it is preparing the RFP for applicants. This stage is where many of the larger process questions should be defined and resolved.

### **Invite Bids**

Involvement: PMT=Manage

Submit your RFP to at least 10 design firms. It is important to not restrict your invitations for submission to only local companies. Many of the design firms' familiar with working on larger projects are experienced working long distance. However, if you have a strong preference for working with a local company you may want to be more confined in distributing the RFP.

It is helpful to remember that not everyone you send an RFP to will respond. However, paying attention to how quickly firms respond, who contacts you for clarifications and additional detail, etc, may indicate the level of respondents' interest.

### **Review Submissions**

Involvement: PMT= Review and select based on criteria/process previously established and agreed upon

After reviewing, you should narrow your applicants down to 3-4 design firms you wish to interview. Remember that cost is only one of many factors to consider when selecting applicants for the interview process. Other factors such as project management methodology and communication methods are equally important when choosing a firm.

### **Interviews/Presentations**

Involvement: PMT=Primary role

This meeting should be face-to-face. For a project of this scale, the interview should include an opportunity for each design firm to present their proposed layouts and design. At the very least, the interview should allow for Internet access so firms can show examples of their work.

A certain level of flexibility in designs should be allowed at this step as information architecture will influence the redesign process and may affect design decisions.

\*Reminder: While it might be assumed as understood, it is always worth mentioning that you should never share one firm's proposal with another firm. It is illegal.

### **Check References**

Involvement: PMT=Run this process

Take the time to talk with former clients and ask them directly about your priority areas. Specifics of communication styles, ability to deliver on deadlines and delivery methods are examples of “working relationship” questions that should be explored. References that are sector specific to your project (other higher education clients) will provide the most relevant feedback.

### **Negotiate**

Involvement: PMT=Run this process; EL=Final approval and support for project moving ahead

This is the final step before the project begins. Remember that negotiation is not only important from a cost perspective, but also final approval and backing from the executive leadership will help set the tone for the overall project as a campus wide/institutional effort.

## **III. Guidelines for What To include in an RFP**

The following is a recommendation of sections that your RFP should contain.

### **Executive Summary**

Brief description of the projects overall objectives, target audiences, etc

### **RFP Schedule**

Clearly identifies the process and timelines for the RFP process. It is recommended that the RFP be as detailed as possible in this section to increase the quality of submissions.

### **Institutional Information**

This is a brief description about your institution, history of website and broad idea of the college’s personality as a client. This can be helpful as the website project will rely on communication and professional relationships as much as technical skill.

### **Qualifications & References**

Identify and specify qualifications you are looking for (Years of experience, experience with higher education institutions, etc. Ask for contact details and relevant urls of projects completed in seeking references. Ask the hard questions about communication styles and ability to meet deadlines when checking references.

### **Process Outline**

This section is a great opportunity to identify what and when you expect points of communication and accountability. This is your opportunity to propose methodology, development techniques, and use of preferred collaboration techniques.

In larger projects, it is recommended you request that interview applicants prepare rough designs, layouts and information architecture proposals based on the RFP guidelines. If you are interested in getting quality submissions at this stage, it is fair to assume those selected for interviews should be compensated for the time required to develop and present proposals. The amount of compensation offered will have a significant impact on the quality of applicants and proposals. For example, 10 hours of time to develop proposals would equal compensation of \$1000-\$1500.

### **Goals & Needs**

Clearly identify the project's goals and the needs. The more detailed you are in this section, the more likely you will be to minimize time needed for project management and clarification later. This can help reduce the overall cost and increase likelihood of staying on the targeted timeline of the project.

### **Groundwork & Examples**

Here you can provide a current or tentative navigation map (if you have done this work and are not looking for this as part of the project), sample graphics that will be required part of the project such as logos, or the understanding that each department will be able to customize their sections to some degree.

When it comes to the look and style layout of the website, every group will have different preferences. Provide examples of at least three websites you like with information about what you like about each. This information will be vital for the design firms as they work on developing design proposals during the interview stage of the RFP process. The more detail you include, the better the proposal submissions will be.

### **Special Features & Functionality**

This section is dedicated to clearly stating your needs in feature and functionality. The following is a list of examples.

- Forms
- Rotating ads or banners
- Flash
- Image requirement(stock photos, client supplied, etc)
- Site registration
- Site search engine
- Quiz, surveys, voting
- Music/sound effects
- Message/discussion board
- Chat room
- Animation, movies

This section is a good place to highlight the preference/desire/requirement to have any of the identified functionality integrate with existing technologies. For example, forms that dump information into Microsoft Dynamic CRM that is part of an overall SharePoint platform.

This is also the section where you define the various needs you have for the front end as well as the back-end. For example, from the front-end you need to be able to display images in a rotating slideshow. From the back-end, you should restrict access to loading images from the slideshows to select admin users.

### **Delivery methods of deliverables**

This is often assumed or informally implied to be understood in a website redesign process. However, being explicit about how deliverables are provided can eliminate problems from arising near the end of the project. For example, do you expect to be provided with the image files that are



part of the project or do you wish to be provided with raw Photoshop files? Should documents be email in Word format or will a collaboration tool be used throughout the project?

### **Project Stages & Milestones**

This stage is helpful to make your expectations on timelines and deliverables clear to the potential applicants. This may also be a way to break the project into smaller segments for the purposes of payment, renegotiation, etc.

### **Quality control**

This section can cover a wide spectrum of topics and may be covered during the process and testing sections. However, if it is an area of concern it might be worth the time to break it out into its own section and be specific on items such as workflow for content generation, backups during development process, etc. This section may also be where you can indicate if there are points throughout the process for reviewing and renegotiation.

### **Testing**

This section should primarily address two areas of testing.

The first is the technical aspect of the project that would include, but should not be limited to, cross browser compatibility (which browsers and which versions), ecommerce functionality, integration with existing technologies and other systems used by the college and accessibility.

The second area is usability. Usability testing of a development website can range dramatically and have a significant impact on the management of expectations. On the lower end of the spectrum, user testing may include having a small group of internal and external users go through the development site and provide informal feedback. On the higher end, user testing may include utilizing enterprise testing services and intensive observation and reviewing. These may have associated costs that should be identified up front. Clearly defining expectations will not only help inform applicants, but may help you differentiate if experience in this area is a primary qualification consideration.

### **Proposed Team**

This section can clearly identify who will be involved in the project from the institution's side as well as what you are looking for from your external applicants. It is important to note that members of the internal project team should be selected based on relevant skills sets, roles and responsibilities related to the website. The internal team should not consist of people who simply volunteer out of "interest" in the project. Are you expecting the design firm to provide a dedicated project manager, graphic designer or assistance in integrating with your existing technologies? What skill sets or individuals from the institution will be acting in what capacities throughout the project?

### **Proposed schedule**

Clearly identifying schedules and deadlines will establish your expectations on deliverables early in the process. It may be necessary to have some flexibility in this area as timelines may need to be defined by the design firm.

### **Indicators of Success**

An opportunity to summarize the current challenges in a positive action oriented format and provide applicants a way to get straight to the point.

### **Costs and payment details**

This section allows you define conditions around payment. This may include identifying a 25/75 payment option of 25% up front with 75% upon completion of the project. Another example might be payment upon delivery of products at the end of each project stage.

### **Terms and conditions**

This section should be used to identify and specific requirements that do not fit with in other categories. Examples include specific conditions of being an independent contractor of the college, who retains ownership of any custom applications built as part of the project or fees associated with extending deadlines.

## **III. Website Redesign Process**

### **I. Best Practices for Redesign Process**

The following is a breakdown of stages that should be included in the overall website redesign process with examples of steps within each stage. This is a framework to help you make overall solid decisions. However, be aware that the individual steps and process will vary depending on the design firm that you are using and systems that they have found to be successful for them.

#### **Process Framework**

##### Project Definition

- ✓ Discovery worksheet/client survey: the design firm should provide this to help them “dive deeper” into the project.
- ✓ Existing website analytics reports: Establishes baselines, benchmarks and areas in need of focus in redesign
- ✓ Development Plan: Where will the development site be hosted, how will backups happen, what is the process for updating content from current site to new site during development
- ✓ Maintenance Plan: Upgrading of CMS, backups, etc
- ✓ Project Plan: Timelines, stages, deliverables defined clearly, communications tools and methods defined

##### Site Structure

- ✓ Navigation map
- ✓ Site map/outline
- ✓ Wireframes (explanation of wireframes <http://bit.ly/PkOE1> )
- ✓ Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Planning

##### Visual Design

- ✓ Draft Design proposals (generally 2-3 options to review)
- ✓ Sign off on design choice

##### Site Development

- ✓ Implement CMS platform
- ✓ Implement and configure functionality

- ✓ Integrate with existing technologies
- ✓ Training (more on this topic in Staffing recommendations)

#### Testing & Modifying

- ✓ Testing functionality
- ✓ Testing integration
- ✓ User testing (this can mean a wide range of time and detail which should be defined in project plan)
- ✓ Prioritize issues in to pre-launch or post-launch categories
- ✓ Address pre-launch issues

#### Launch

- ✓ Implement style/content format guides for users
- ✓ Setup page redirects, domain mapping
- ✓ Launch Site
- ✓ Implement maintenance plan

#### SEO Review

- ✓ (Re)submit to major search engines
- ✓ Commence link building campaigns or whatever elements are part of your SEO efforts

#### Analysis, Review, Recommend

- ✓ Implement plan for analysis and reporting on metrics and how these are used to inform management of the site

## II. Website Committee

The role of the website committee throughout the process should be clearly defined for the overall process. The participation of the website committee in the overall redesign process is important given its historical role and value as overall input from general staff representatives. However, it is key that that same historical role does not carry over throughout the redesign process and into the future. As the governance issues and role of the committee is reviewed as part of the process it is recommended that the website committee be involved in the overall process in four ways. This should help to ensure there is no lose of valuable decisions that have been made up to this point but also allow appropriate changes to be made to ensure the success of a redesign project.

1. The Website Committee should provide feedback and approval for the overall process to be taken throughout the redesign process based on recommendations from the Primary Management Team and executive leadership .
2. The Website committee should be included as one of the stakeholders to be interviewed by the design firm during the redesign process. It is important to note however that they are only one of many stakeholders groups to be interviewed.
3. The Website Committee should participate in redefining its roles and processes based on good governance guidelines approved by the executive leadership.
4. The Website Committee, in its newly defined role, should be incorporated as part of the rolling out process of the newly established standards and guidelines of the new website.

### III. User Feedback Survey

Various methods exist to test usability, etc. In particular, a user survey conducted by CCC staff roughly 1 ½ years ago, solicited feedback about the website from visitors. This information should be incorporated into the early stages of this project to help in identifying needs and specifying goals.

In order of priority as defined by the participants in the survey, the following are top areas of concern with the current website:

1. Navigation
2. Search Engine
3. Department Websites
4. Calendar/Dates
5. Staff Directory/Phone Book
6. Cougartrax
7. Blue Bar Links

### IV. Website Management

#### I. Staffing Recommendations

Staffing support for your website can be handled in a number of ways. However, using an inappropriate approach to identifying and supporting staffing needs can create a number of issues. The first and most obvious is that the website does not get the support it requires and fails to achieve the communications goals of the college. A second issue is that of expectations. If an inappropriate approach is taken to determining staffing needs the expectations can be that appropriate support exists and that the tool is what is failing the college. This can greatly decrease the staff's ability and willingness to use the website as part of their communication efforts and encourage them to seek out alternatives. A great example of the implications of this is the current situation where every department has its own website essentially with no adherence to overall standards for usability, branding or communication goals.

The follow are brief explanations of two commonly used approaches with some discussion of the implications of using each approach.

#### **Time-Based Approach**

Time focused approach is often the “default” approach taken to establish website staffing because it seems the easiest way to determine need and justify allocation of resources. This approach is also the way most websites begin being staffed within institutions and organizations. Often the website started as a side project someone took on because of an interest and available time. This approach essentially focuses on using an overly simplified formula to calculating hours needed to support a website. The formula usually looks something like

$$\#pages + \#users + \#support\ requests = \#FTE$$

The major concern with this approach is that it assumes the primary qualification for supporting a website is available time. This often leads to staff being assigned responsibilities and roles that they have no relevant skill sets to fulfill, just some available time. As a website grows with this staffing approach, the website will struggle to get past a “homegrown” feel and functionality and lack credibility. Ultimately, this will lead to a website that is unable to meet the needs of the visitor or college.

### **Skill-Based Approach**

By contrast, the skill-based approach focuses on identifying the major areas of support, the associated skill sets, demand, and the amount of time required to support those needs. This approach also allows for consideration of which needs might be best addressed through internal staffing or the use of external support services.

The following is a simplified example but helps to illustrate the point and process.

<b>Need</b>	<b>Skill Sets Needed</b>	<b>Demand</b>	<b>Hours/week</b>	<b>Internal/External</b>
Technical Support of CMS	Database & CMS Mngt	1 instance of CMS	TBD	Internal
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)	SEO, Pay-Per-Click marketing, Metrics Analysis	Ongoing	TBD	Internal/External
Design, Usability, Graphics	Photoshop, CSS, Usability	Varies	As Needed	External
General Administration	Web Communications	Main website, 30+ dept sites, portal, etc	TBD	Internal
User Training	Curriculum development, facilitation	Initial and ongoing with Power Users	As Needed	Internal/External
Support Staff Users	CMS Mngt	# of staff	TBD	Internal
Support Student Users	CMS Mngt	# of students	TBD	Internal

If all department websites are rolled into the larger website (and it is a critical recommendation of this report that they are) then the minimum number of staff dedicated to supporting the website will need to be significantly increased from the current levels. It is important to recognize that taking an “absolute minimum” approach to staffing will only offer an “absolute minimum” result from the website. If the college is expecting more than “minimal” results from a redesigned website as a communication tool it should be understood that the level of support provided should likewise be more than “minimal”.

Staff assigned roles and given responsibilities must have the relevant skill sets or be provided appropriate training to build those capacities. Assigning staff based on available time and not available skill sets is not considered “appropriate support”.

## **II. Content Management System (CMS) Management**

During the planning stage of a website redesign process there are two primary areas that should be considered in regards to the Content Management System (CMS)

### **Selection of CMS**

It is important to note that the selection of a CMS is vital to the long-term success of a website. It might even be appropriate to go through this process as a project separate and prior to the general

website redesign RFP process. Otherwise, what can happen is that the CMS chosen simply gets rolled in with selecting a design firm which may not necessarily provide the best CMS for your needs.

In whatever manner the selection of a CMS is incorporated in the overall process, the following guidelines can be used to help inform the CMS selection process.

### **Solution Driven**

CMS selection should be driven by the desire to solve a particular set of issues the current site is facing. These issues must be articulated and considered when selecting the appropriate tool. For example, proper workflow mechanisms are currently missing that allow for the proper review of content before publishing.

### **Bigger is Not Always Better**

A general rule of thumb is that increased functionality equals increased management. The more features and functionality a CMS provides, the more time, effort and skill it will take to manage it appropriately. It is best to find a CMS that meets your current and near future needs but is not overloaded with unnecessary features and capabilities. This factor can also have a significant impact on user adoption. If the staff using the CMS are overwhelmed and uncomfortable using the technology they are likely to pass requests on to support or avoid updating the website all together.

### **Requirements vs. Selection Criteria**

It is important to distinguish between what is a “requirement” vs. “selection criteria”. For example, stating that the CMS “must include a WYSIWYG editor” may be a requirement but will offer little help in selecting a tool as most CMS has one. Rather use selection criteria such as “WYSIWYG must allow for pasting of content from a word document”. This is a feature not all CMS will be able to provide and can help reduce the number of options.

### **CMS selection vs. Overall Website Project**

It may be helpful to make the selection of CMS a separate project from the overall website project. If they are not separated, the design firm, which is selected for a variety of reasons, chooses the CMS they work with, which may or may not meet your needs. Selecting the preferred CMS(s) to consider and include as part of your RFP process will help ensure the end result will address your needs and improve the efficiency/cost of the RFP process.

### **Cross-Department Selection Team**

IT is an important part of the CMS selection team since they will be responsible for implementing, supporting and integrating it with other existing technologies across campus. However, it is vital that IT not be the only department making the selection. IT is rarely the end user of the CMS selected, and it’s important to have representation from other departments on the CMS selection team. For example, The Communications Department should be involved to ensure the tool can address specific marketing and communication needs such as Search Engine Optimization, RSS distribution, e-mail marketing integration and content management. In addition, some general representation from other end users across departments should provide input on workflow and general user adoption.

### **Management of Tool**

With an institution as large as Clackamas Community College, it is vital that a number of processes and procedures be put in place to get maximum benefit from a CMS.

### **Security & Maintenance**

Every CMS is built upon a coding language that provides connections to a database and thus increases the possibility of the website being compromised by hackers. There are a number of steps that can be taken to protect the database and servers. As security and maintenance relate to the use of a CMS, there are a few best practices to highlight.

- The version of the CMS should be kept current to address security and functionality issues.
- A system for backing up the entire website and associated files should be in place.

### **Training**

One of the most powerful aspects of a CMS is that it allows users of varying technical skills the ability to add and manage content. For a large institution, it can be helpful to define the various levels and responsibilities of users. The following are recommended roles:

Contributors (Beginner): These users generate content but may or may not be responsible for posting it within the CMS.

Power Users (Intermediate): These are users that receive enough training and support to know do the majority of the common tasks accomplished within the CMS, perhaps one per department. They should be able to answer basic questions for the casual user. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring that guidelines related to workflow and content as defined by policy are implemented.

Administrators (Experts): These core staff members have primary job responsibilities related directly to the support and management of the CMS and its use. They should be considered experts in the administration and application of the CMS and able to provide the basic training needed to support the Power users. This should include at a minimum two-three staff members from more than a single department.

### **Workflow Procedures**

The selection process for choosing a CMS should consider the capabilities to manage workflow in a variety of ways. This allows for the bulk of the daily workload for managing a website to be shared across various positions and allows for increased ownership in the website across the institution.

However, if clearly defined policies and procedures related to workflow are not established the available functionality is rarely used and one of the greatest potential benefits of using a CMS is lost.

## **III. Metrics and Analysis**

If a website is going to be used as an effective tool for communication and marketing, it is vital that a specific plan is in place for monitoring and reporting on the available metrics.

The frequency with which this is done will vary based on the amount of importance placed on analysis and the support provided for staffing. However, best practice indicates analysis and reporting take place no less than quarterly. Otherwise, a website is unable to be responsive to the changing needs of the visitors and college staff.

When it comes to metrics analysis, the 10/90 rule is applied. The tool itself will only provide about 10% of the information and value. The other 90% comes from the individual who does the analysis and reporting and how they interpret the data. This is important to keep in mind as a staffing plan is developed. If appropriate support is not given for internal staff to address this then use of external support should be considered.

## **V. Integration of Overall Communication Strategy**

### **I. Branding**

It is vital to highlight that “branding” a website consists of more than picking a logo and color scheme. Proper branding certainly includes these aspects but must also include elements such as layout, messaging, images, expectations of visitors, standardization across mediums and appropriate formatting for given mediums. Given the current challenges of the website and college in general, three elements should be considered priorities in the website redesign process as part of a larger effort to integrate the overall communication efforts of the college.

#### **Standardization**

Currently, a lack of standardization throughout the website (and associated 30+ department websites) is a major roadblock to branding success. From a best practices perspective, standardization of all online communications (this includes websites, e-mail marketing, etc) is considered the cornerstone of effective branding. From a user perspective, the top three areas of concern in the user survey are directly related to a lack of standardization in layout, style and design.

A priority of your website redesign project should be to create standardization of branding across all online communication efforts and may extend to create standardization with offline communication materials as well.

In addition to recommendations around best practices it is important to highlight that recently the current website committee formally recognized the need for standardization across the website for the college. Clearly indicating that even from an internal perspective the repercussions of a lack of standardization is being felt at a significant level for the colleg. The key now if that the process for setting and supporting standardization be driven by the executive leadership of the college.

The following screenshots demonstrate how inconsistent the current branding is in four official areas of the CCC website. Aside from the obvious confusion in branding (main logo is even missing from two of the examples) and messaging, many of the departmental sites are missing critical links to key services such as registration, staff directory, contact information that should be on every page of your website.

Not only do these examples not adhere to best practices for branding, these inconsistencies have major implications on the user experience and the college’s ability to meet the needs of site visitors. In general, they negate overall branding and messaging efforts.


Keep in mind that the following are simply 4 of the first 5 links I clicked on and represent a sort of “random” selection. These are not the outlying examples I had to search for to find.



Current Students Landing Page

Work Skills Center


## Water & Environmental Technologies



**Water & Environmental Technology**  
CLACKAMAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Clackamas **ADVANTAGE** makes the difference if you are seeking a career in the water or environmental industry.

- W&ET Program
- High Purity Water
- Instructors
- Student Testimonials
- Backflow Training
- Waterworks School
- Erosion Control
- Water envin.school




With expanding environmental regulations and the increasing sophistication of treatment processes, the career opportunities in the water industry have never been better!

Men and women with training in water treatment and pollution control technology can pursue many exciting and challenging job opportunities. The **Water & Environmental Technology** program at Clackamas has helped hundreds of our graduates find employment in the water/wastewater industry and environmental careers.

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## Health & Science Department

CLACKAMAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE Links:  Go



### Health Sciences Department

#### Nursing

##### Nursing Assistant Options

Clackamas Community College offers a Nursing Assistant course that will prepare students to perform routine nursing assistant tasks in the sub-acute settings as well as the community. Students who complete this course are eligible to take the state certification exam for nursing assistants. In addition, the college offers a Certified Nursing Assistant II-Acute course that will prepare students to perform routine nursing assistant tasks in the acute care settings. While these courses are not required for entry into the nursing program at Clackamas Community College, it is recommended for those who are interested in pursuing a career in nursing. Both courses are approved by the Oregon State Board of Nursing.

##### Nursing Program

The Nursing program at Clackamas Community College is a full partner in the Oregon Consortium for Nursing Education (OCNE). The curriculum in OCNE nursing program is a competency-based curriculum developed in collaboration with Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) and other community colleges around the state. This curriculum, which has been approved by the Oregon State Board of Education as well as the Oregon State Board of Nursing, can ultimately culminate in a Baccalaureate of Science Degree with a focus in Nursing offered by OHSU.

Admission into the nursing program is by special application only. The application is a two-step process. Students must submit application to the Registrar's Office by the deadline. Qualified applicants will progress to interview/essay portion of application process. Acceptance to the nursing program allows for co-enrollment to Clackamas Community College and Oregon Health & Science University, School of Nursing.

##### Nursing Program Outcomes

The OCNE curriculum addresses the need for nurses to be skilled in clinical judgment and critical thinking; evidenced-based practice; relationship-centered care; interdisciplinary collaboration; and assisting individuals and families across the life span regarding self-care practices in areas of health promotion, acute and chronic illness, as well as end-of-life issues.

The OCNE curriculum is designed as a four-year course of study, the first year devoted to pre-admission requirements. The second and third year of designated study will be taken at Clackamas Community College. Upon completion of the CCC nursing program, students are eligible to receive their Associate of Applied Science in Nursing and take the national examination (NCLEX-RN) for registered nurse licensure. Graduates of the nursing program at Clackamas Community College will be prepared for entry-level employment as a registered nurse. The student may elect to continue for the fourth year of study, leading to a Baccalaureate of Science Degree with a focus in Nursing offered by OHSU.

##### More Information:

- [Pre-Nursing Advising Website](#) (prerequisites, advising sessions, etc.)
- [Nursing Application](#)
- [Nursing Course Descriptions](#)

### **Style and Messaging**

Style and messaging will be a major part of the design process. Particular emphasis on experience in the higher education sector should be one of the considerations during the RFP process. However, creating style guides and standardization protocol for overall online communication will be a critical step. This should include aspects such as images, icons, colors, taglines and slogans.

### **Content Review/Generation**

With a website as large and comprehensive as that of the college it important to consider the amount of time and effort that should be dedicated to reviewing/rewriting the content for the redesigned website. Currently, there is a significant amount of information n the site that is out of date and will need to be removed. The vast majority of the content on the current site is not properly formatted for a website and will need to be rewritten.

While reviewing/rewriting content could be considered a separate project it is recommend it be considered a parallel project. To undertake this step out-of context from the larger redesign work being done would lead to a disconnect between the content on the site, the information architecture and overall messaging. For these reasons, it is recommended that consultation and /or services in this particular area are provided by the design firm selected for the website redesign project. Even if it is necessary for them to subcontract for these particular services it is preferred for consistency purposes that it be seen and handled as part of the overall poroject.

## **II. Strategic Planning**

The value of overall strategic planning cannot be stressed enough as a foundation for an effective communication strategy. This vital step will allow the institution to not only identify clearly defined goals but ways to operationalize those goals, metrics analysis for reviewing progress towards those goals and mechanisms for incorporating what is learned back into the process.

A simplified illustration of the levels of hierarchy that should be in place for an effective communication strategy follows. This illustrates the relationship of the various communication efforts and the impact that can come from not having one of the elements in place.

# Communications Strategic Plan

Online Communications

Print  
Communications

Website

Social  
Media

Email

Press  
Release

Student  
Handbooks

Staff interviews indicated that at this time there does not appear to be a clearly defined hierarchy of communication strategies with clearly defined goals, actions and metrics for success. What is in place is informal and inconsistent.

*We thank you for this opportunity to work with your institution.  
Please contact me if you have any questions or if I can be of service in the future.*

**Ash Shepherd**

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