ACCREDITATION EVIDENCE

Title: Western Internal Website Guidelines

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WEBSITE GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The guidelines were created to support **Policy #2110A** - Web Governance. The College's digital presence is vital to educating and engaging with all prospective students and community to establish appropriate guidelines to ensure these assets:

• Support the vision, mission, and academic values of the College.
• Reflect the College's brand and strategic goals.
• Portray accurate and relevant information.
• Comply with all applicable laws and statutes.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ARE AS FOLLOWS

Content Owner: The academic or administrative unit with primary responsibility for maintaining designated content.

Content Contributor**:** A College representative with authorized access to a website or application who can create, edit, and submit their own content to a workflow but cannot edit other's content or publish/approve content to become publicly accessible.

Content Editor**:** A College representative with authorized access to a website or application who can create and edit their own content, as well as others within a content workflow, but cannot publish/approve content to become publicly accessible.

Content Publisher**:** A College representative with authorized access to website or application who can create and edit their own content, as well as publish/approve workflow content to become publicly accessible.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL ROLES

Any violations of the guidelines below must be corrected within one month of identification.

Outline:
• Style
• Accessibility
• SEO (search engine optimization)
• Web Content
• CMS (content management system)
• Website Audit (by departments)

ON STYLE

We provide for you:
• **Publication Standards Manual** - Latest manual can be found at MyWestern on the Marketing & Communications page.
• **Website Style Guide** – available on the IT page in the MyWestern portal.

What you agree to do:
- Follow assumed best practices for college student information found in **Policy #5110D**.
- Follow assumed best practices for Data Privacy found in Policy #2500.
- Follow assumed best practices for Accessibility of Electronic Information, Communication and Technology found in **Policy #2120A**.

ON ACCESSIBILITY (federal law for higher ed)

We provide for you:
- Accessibility standards and guidelines: Western Accessibility Council has published a 5-year plan to address implementation of Section 508 WCAG A and AA standards, the federal law that as an institution higher ed must follow. You can find this on their MyWestern page called Accessibility/Disability Services.

What you agree to do:
- Adhere to the Accessibility Standards and Guidelines of the WCAG 2 AA standards available on the **W3C website**.

ON SEO

What we provide for you:
- Google analytics to inform your decision making in the Audit process. This will be sent a month before each audit. It is also available upon request through a help desk ticket.
- How to incorporate SEO into your website sections guideline.

What you agree to do:
- Identify your audience - Identify your target audience, what they need, and how they can address those needs through – or act based upon – the information you are providing. This is really the most important part of the process as it helps you develop appropriate keywords, keep content concise and to the point (eyes get tired looking at a screen!), but it can also help you determine if certain documents or bits of info need to live on your website versus say your department/unit's Box system.
- **Master your metadata** - Keywords are ideas and topics that define what your content is about. In terms of SEO, they're the words and phrases that searchers enter search engines, also called "search queries." If you boil everything on your page — all the images, video, copy, etc. — down to simple words and phrases, those are your primary keywords. Keywords are as much about your audience as they are about your content because you might describe what you offer in a slightly different way than some people ask for it. As a website owner and content creator, you want the keywords on your page to be relevant to what people are searching for, so they have a better chance of finding your content among the results. When multiple pages target the same keyword, the page highest in the site architecture will typically have more value.
- Heading tags matter - You may think that headings listed in the drop-down menu are simply there to make formatting your text easier, but the fact is that they are also very important to SEO. In fact, not only to they help search engines find your content, but if the search engine likes to spit things out as lists, your content will make sense. It's kind of like writing an outline for English class (but hopefully more fun). Also, using headers makes your content much more accessible to those who need to use screen readers, due to visual impairment.

ON WEB CONTENT

What we provide you:
- For Academic best practices view the **Business Management section**. For Student Services best practice, visit **Wellbeing & Accessibility**.
- Style and content templates, assets, snippets, pixels, and components.
- Training on writing for web users

What you agree to do:
• Carefully consider what the prospective student is hoping to "get" from, and "do" with, your website. See best practices for example.
• For structure and format, remember that readers of web pages are more reliant on the physical appearance of the page. Remember that viewers primarily use mobile devices but should be designed for both.
• The website is the College's primary source of public information to use and share. Please ensure your material is up to date. We recommend reviewing weekly.

ON CMS

What we provide for you:
• **Website How-To guidelines** - available on the IT page in MyWestern.
• Examples of best practices are available on the IT portal page on MyWestern.
• Basic website and CMS training. In-person training sessions are available in the Fall and Zoom training sessions are available in the Spring.
• Intermediate CMS training is available on MyWestern.
• Calendar and blog trainings are available on MyWestern.
• **Publisher training** is available on MyWestern.
• Digital content report sent monthly from Marketing.

What you agree to do:
• Take the training that is applicable to you.
• Keep your website pages updated, fix broken links, and do not use the CMS as document storage.
• Submit a blog article once a month for each 'School of' or Department. This can be done via student or employee.

ON AUDIT

What we provide for you:
• A full audit report of your site which contains information about the accessibility, SEO, web content, and content management system.
• Steps and suggestions for fixing any items identified as errors in the website audit.
• A meeting one month after the delivery of the audit to check on the identified issues in the site to see if they have been resolved.

What you agree to do:
• Review the audit and address any outstanding issues within one month of receiving the audit.
• Meet with the Web Governance team to review your website pages one month after the audit report.

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