# FRANKLIN COLLEGE

## User Research

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# RESEARCH GOALS

- Improve User Experience (UX)
- Optimize Navigation
- Enhance Content Presentation
- Increase Engagement & Retention

# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Ensure content is well-organized, easy to find, and does not overwhelm users.
- Develop a clear, intuitive, and structured navigation system that helps users find information quickly.
- Create a visually compelling, well-balanced layout that effectively conveys key messages and resources.
- Ensure that students, faculty, and prospective applicants can easily access important content and remain engaged with the website.

# RESEARCH METHODS

**Analytics Review:**
- Identify high-traffic pages, bounce rates, and drop-off points.
- Track user flows.
- Assess device breakdown.

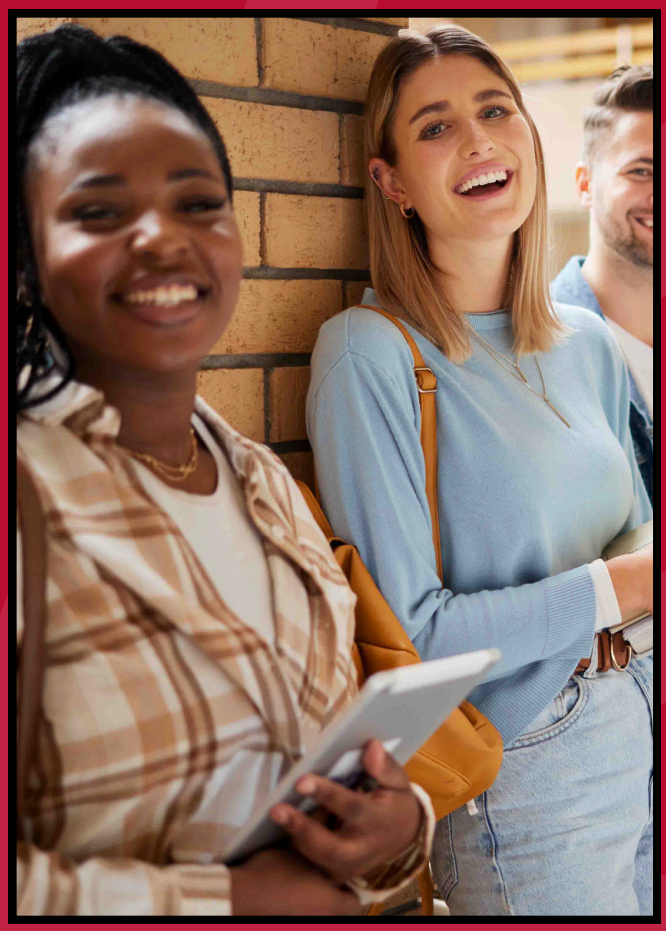
**User Surveys:**
- Distribute survey to students, faculty and staff.
- Focus on usability pain points, ease of navigation, and content clarity.

**Usability Testing:**
- Moderate Testing: Sit with users, give them tasks, and observe where they struggle.
- Record key performance metrics.

**Interviews and Focus Groups:**
- Speak with different user groups.
- Ask about their experiences, frustrations, and wishlists for the site.

**Competitor Benchmarking:**
- Compare Franklin College's website to similar institutions.
- Identify best practices in UX, navigation, and content layout.

# TARGET AUDIENCE



**Primary:** Prospective students and parents, alumni, current students, staff and faculty of Franklin College of Arts and Sciences.



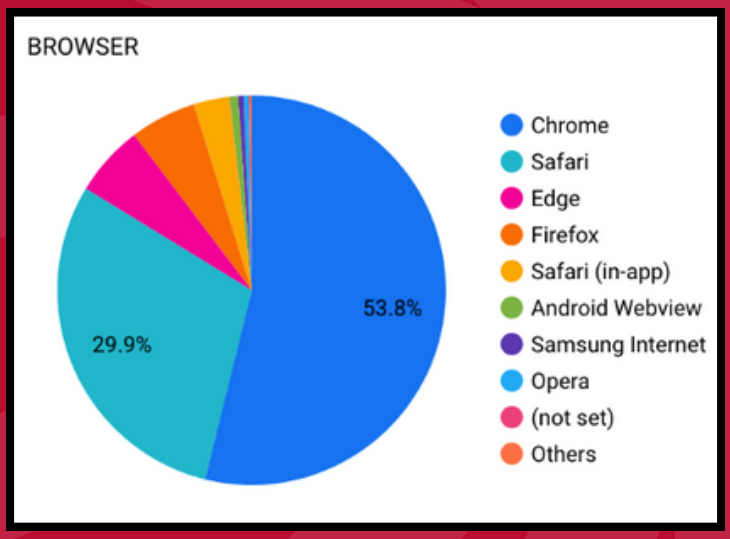
**Secondary:** Potential donors, research funders, media, ranking agencies, AAU and strategic partners.



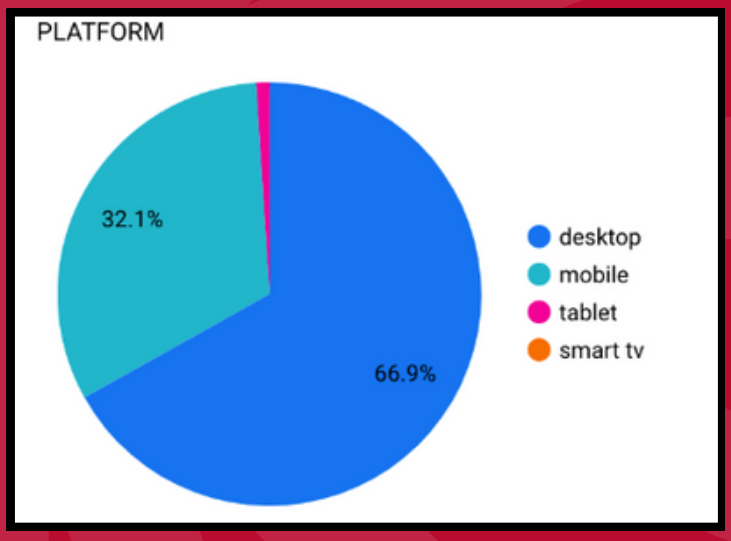
# ANALYTICS REVIEW

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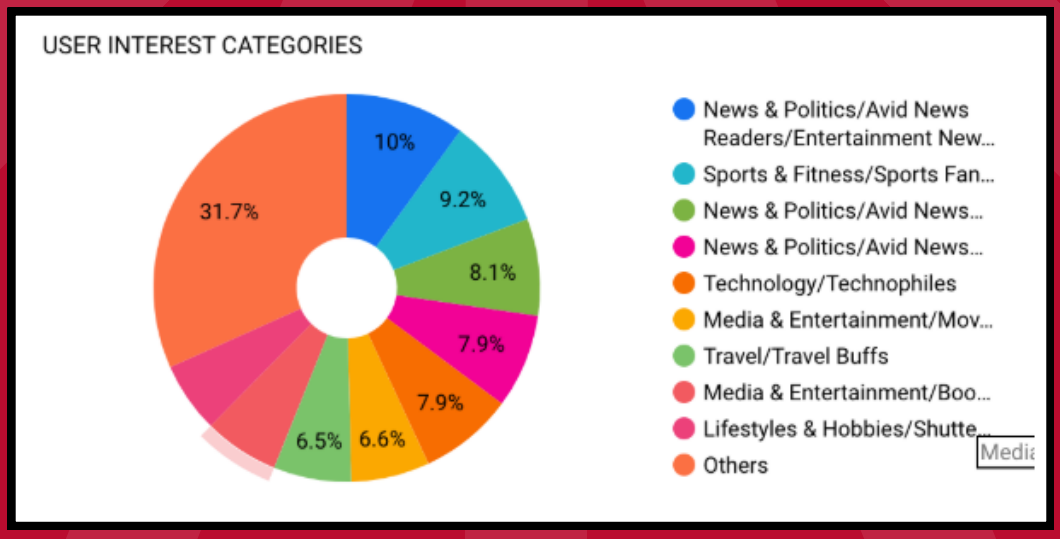
To further enhance the Franklin College website, we reviewed the Google Analytics report over the last 30 days to gain further insight into user engagement and demographics. By analyzing metrics such as user technology platforms and browsers, user demographics, geographical data, and other traffic data, this review further helps us to reach our goals and gain context into the user experience within the website and address specific issues.




Graph 1: User Technology: Browser




Graph 2: User Technology: Platform




Graph 3: User Interest Categories

# ANALYTICS REVIEW

TOP CITIES

| | City | Region | # of clicks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Athens | Georgia | 65,538 |
| 2. | Atlanta | Georgia | 25,369 |
| 3. | Ashburn | Virginia | 6,413 |
| 4. | Miami | Florida | 5,551 |
| 5. | Frankfurt | Hessen | 3,672 |
| 6. | New York | New York | 3,538 |
| 7. | (not set) | Georgia | 2,153 |
| 8. | Chicago | Illinois | 1,956 |
| 9. | (not set) | (not set) | 1,946 |

Table 1: Geographical Data

WHAT WERE USERS SEARCHING FOR IN THE SITE

| | Search term | Total Searches |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | | 208,331 |
| 2. | award | 7 |
| 3. | research | 7 |
| 4. | scholarship | 5 |
| 5. | Miss UGA contest | 4 |
| 6. | Virtual | 4 |
| 7. | Wendy brown | 4 |
| 8. | astronomy | 4 |
| 9. | faculty news | 4 |

Table 2: Terms users searched for

| Page referrer | |
|---|---|
| https://www.google.com/ | 208,151 |
| | 128,267 |
| https://franklin.uga.edu/ | 31,634 |
| https://www.franklin.uga.edu/ | 16,760 |

Table 3: Page Referrer

LANDING PAGE

| | First Page Visited | Total landing on page | New users | New User Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | / | 55,788 | 1,591 | 18.08% |
| 2. | /our-degrees | 8,746 | 289 | 3.28% |
| 3. | /news/stories/2025/uga-student-win... | 6,510 | 1,256 | 14.27% |
| 4. | (not set) | 5,753 | 0 | 0% |
| 5. | /welcome-prospective-students | 5,632 | 172 | 1.95% |

Table 4: User Events: Landing Pages

# ANALYTICS REVIEW

## USER TECHNOLOGY

**Browser:** Users primarily access the website through Windows, Macintosh, and IOS. These systems should be prioritized for functionality for users (refer to Graph 1).

**Platform:** Users primarily access the Franklin website through their desktop device (refer to Graph 2).

## DEMOGRAPHICS

**User Interest Categories:** Users have a focus on a multitude of functions for the website rather than one singular purpose, however, some popular categories include News, Sports & Fitness, and Technology (refer to Graph 3).

## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**Top Cities/Regions:** User traffic is predominantly concentrated in the state of Georgia, as expected, but other major cities also show significant web traffic. For example, several major East Coast cities and even Frankfurt, Germany, are among the top sources of clicks. A deeper analysis could reveal which specific pages these users are visiting, offering valuable insights into the appeal of content beyond the university itself, such as International Programs, News, and Research (refer to Table 1).

## TRAFFIC SOURCE

**Page Referrer:** Page Referrer references the URL of that the users originate from before they land on the site, which helps us further understand the traffic. The majority of clicks originate from Google and other major search engines, as well as from the Franklin website to other pages (refer to Table 3).

# ANALYTICS REVIEW

## USER EVENTS

**Landing Pages:** The landing page serves as the first point of contact for users, and based on this data, we can infer that many users are likely exploring Franklin's degree offerings. This suggests that they are either prospective or current students seeking more information about academic programs. Additionally, there is notable traffic to the News pages, with a particular emphasis on a story featuring a Franklin student, indicating a strong interest in the latest updates and achievements related to the university community (refer to Table 4).

**Search:** Gaining insight into users' search queries helps us better understand their intentions on the site. The terms outlined in Table 2 align with the provided analytics, highlighting a clear focus on specific News, Research, and topics relevant to students and prospective students.

## CONCLUSION

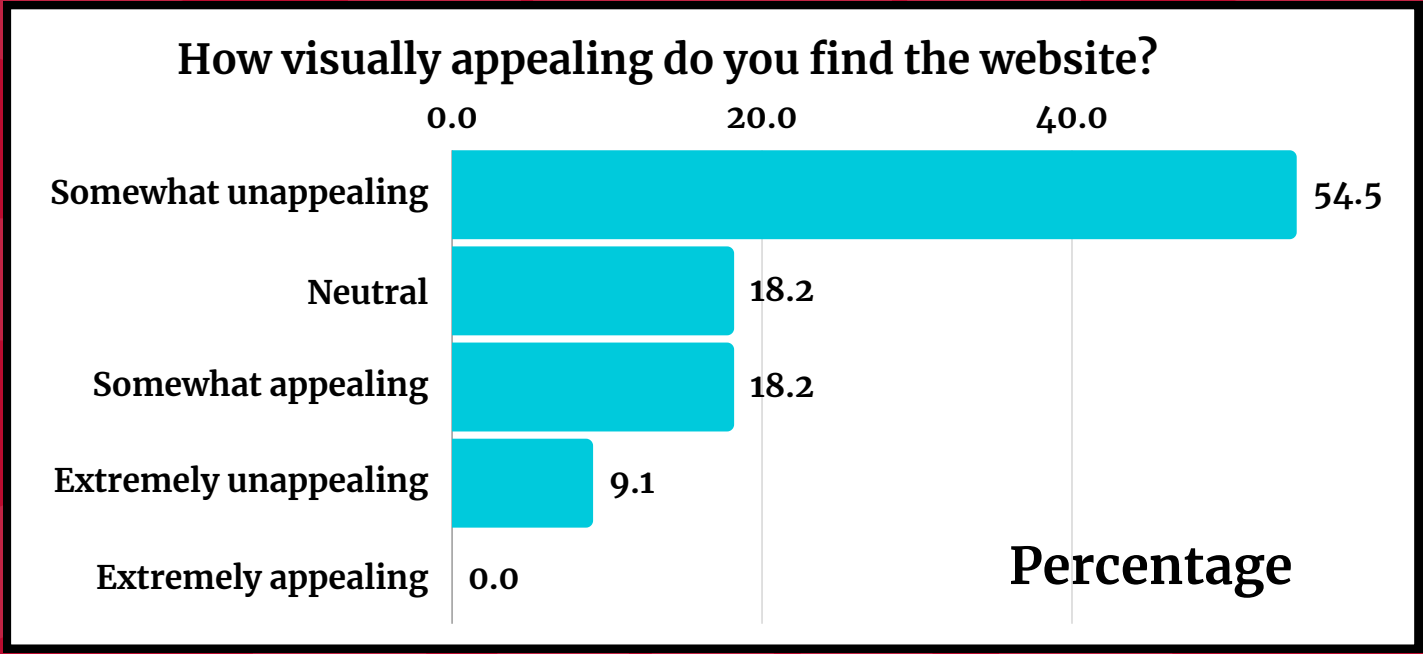
The Google Analytics review provides valuable insights into user behavior on the Franklin College website, reinforcing key areas for optimization. These insights provide a roadmap for improving content organization, enhancing the visibility of critical resources, and ensuring the website effectively serves both internal and external audiences. Moving forward, these findings will guide data-driven improvements to refine the site's usability and overall digital experience.



# USER SURVEYS

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To gather valuable insights on the usability of our website, we distributed a comprehensive survey across the University of Georgia to students, faculty, and staff. The survey was designed to assess key aspects such as ease of navigation, content clarity, and design, ensuring that the website meets the needs of its diverse users.



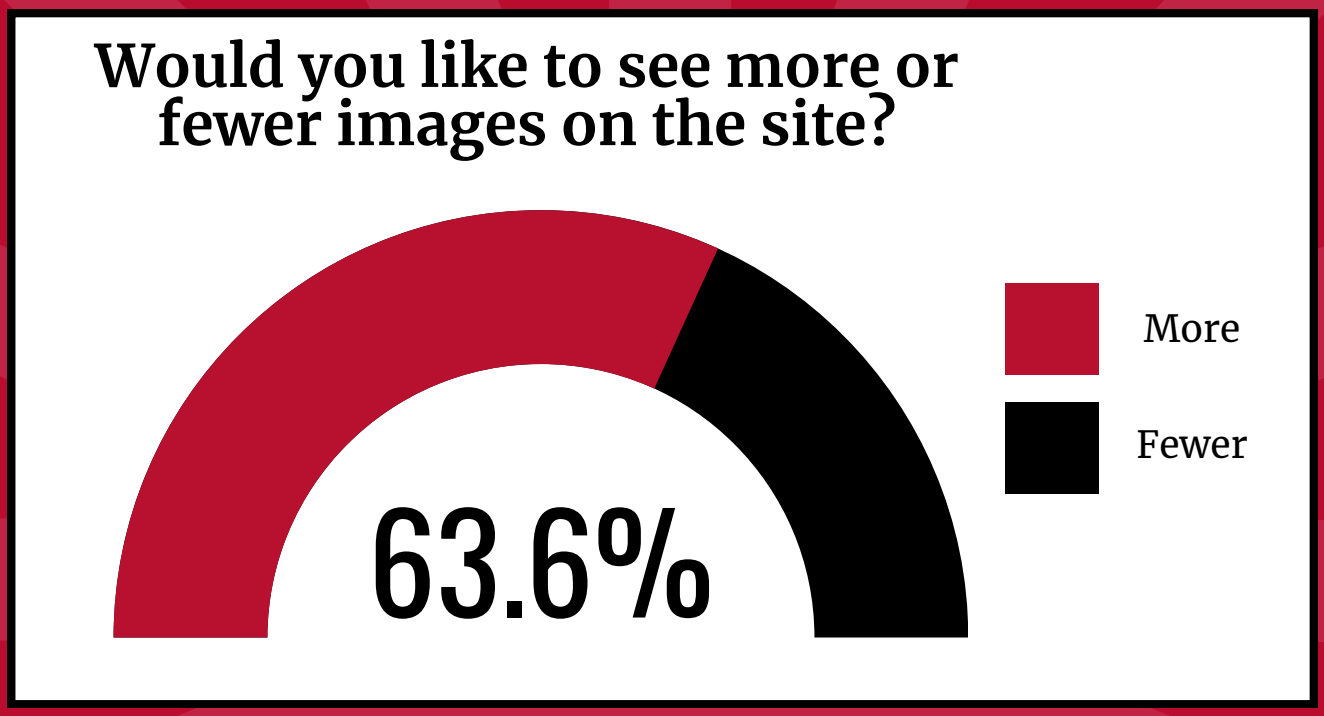

**54.5%** of survey respondents indicated that they find the website somewhat unappealing.

**44.4%** of survey participants reported that the website's layout or design is confusing.

Another **44.5%** mentioned they had trouble finding information on the site.

The remaining **11.1%** felt that the website offers a poor mobile experience.

# USER SURVEYS




**63.6%** of survey respondents expressed a preference for a website with more images to improve visualization.

Based on feedback from survey participants, we will redesign the website layout to make it more intuitive and visually appealing, incorporating a greater number of images for improved engagement. Additionally, we will optimize the mobile experience and reorganize the content to ensure information is easier to find, creating a more user-friendly and accessible website.

# USABILITY TESTING

# USABILITY TESTING

We conducted moderated testing by sitting with users, either in-person or via Zoom, and giving them tasks such as “Find information about research fundings.” We observed where they encountered difficulties, recording key metrics like task success rate, time to completion, and any struggles they faced. Based on these observations, we proposed solutions to improve the user experience.

## ELISE - 4TH YEAR, PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

**Process:** Elise began by clicking “Student Academic Services” to find an appointment scheduler, but it only led to advising policies. She then went to “Advising,” but the scheduling instructions were buried in paragraphs. The actual scheduling link was small and hard to find.

**Task Success Rate:** Elise found the scheduling link, but it was hard to locate and buried under text. She was able to complete the task but with difficulty.

**Time to Completion:** She spent too much time searching through paragraphs before finding the scheduling link.

**Solution:** Add a large, visible “Schedule an Advising Appointment” button on the Advising page.

- Simplify instructions with step-by-step visuals to guide students through the scheduling process.

# USABILITY TESTING

## EMMA – 4TH YEAR, GRAPHIC DESIGN MAJOR

**Process:** Emma began by clicking on "Career Resources," expecting to find internship opportunities, but only found general career advice. She then tried "Opportunities," but the listings were too broad and not specific to her major. After using the search bar, she saw outdated or irrelevant results. Eventually, she checked the Art and Design department page, but there was no internship information.

**Task Success Rate:** Emma struggled to find internship opportunities and did not complete the task efficiently. She had to visit multiple pages and still did not find relevant results.

**Time to Completion:** The process took longer than expected due to navigation difficulties, especially the ineffective search function.

**Solution:** Create a dedicated "Internships" page under Career Resources that categorizes opportunities by major.

- Improve search to prioritize recent, relevant results and allow filtering by major.

# USABILITY TESTING

## COLLIN - 4TH YEAR, BIOLOGY MAJOR

**Process:** Collin started by clicking "Academics," expecting to find funding details, but he could not find any. He tried "Student Resources," and while he found a funding section, it was buried in dense text. After more navigation, he discovered some funding under "Opportunities," but it linked to external pages with minimal guidance.

**Task Success Rate:** Collin eventually found funding opportunities but struggled with unclear organization and external links. He completed the task but with difficulty.

**Time to Completion:** He spent more time searching through dense text and external sites than expected.

**Solution:** Develop a "Research Funding" page within Academics that lists all available funding opportunities in bullet points.

- Break down text-heavy sections with categorized lists for easy navigation.

# USABILITY TESTING

## MYLES - 4TH YEAR, COGNITIVE SCIENCE MAJOR

**Process:** Myles first clicked on "Academics," looking for his major's course requirements, but the page was too general. He then went to the Cognitive Science department page, which linked to an outdated UGA Bulletin. The course listings were unclear, lacking a clear distinction between required and elective courses.

**Task Success Rate:** Myles did not readily find the course requirements and struggled to navigate to updated, relevant information.

**Time to Completion:** The time to completion had to be extended due to unclear department pages and outdated links.

**Solution:** Add a "Major Requirements" tab on the Cognitive Science department page with an updated visual flowchart showing required vs. elective courses.

- Ensure that the links to course info and UGA Bulletin are updated and relevant.

# INTERVIEWS

# CAPPIE MAY
# 4TH YEAR, ART MAJOR

**Q:** How well does the website provide the information that you need (e.g., academic resources, events, etc.)?

**A:** "I think one of the things that I've really struggled with finding on the website and has caused challenges for me is that someone who is an environmental major does not necessarily need all of the same resources that someone who is an art major would need. It was hard to find career resources that served everyone. Also, I think that they really highlight the dramatic arts on their website in terms of events and things when the reality is that makes up a small portion of the students at the University of Georgia, who are at Franklin."

**Q:** Can you describe a time you struggled to find information on the site?

**A:** "I think that's kind of hard because it really is just like a fire hose of information that I think it's hard to sort through what I need to find. I don't think that they've done a good job of categorizing the different resources, like I don't need the same resources that a science major needs."

**Q:** What do you think about the website's design? Is it visually appealing to you?

**A:** "I think that it serves its purpose. It's in the school colors and that is really helpful. I think that for someone like me who is a very visual learner, it would be helpful to specify based on the color of things what is considered more of a stem major resource and what is considered a liberal arts major resource."

# ELLA MCREYNOLDS
# 4TH YEAR, SCIENCE MAJOR

**Q:** What is the most frustrating part of using the website, and how do you think it could be improved?

A: "The most frustrating part about the website is that when things are embedded, it will take you to another website, where you have to click another link... it would be helpful to cut out the middle man."

**Q:** How would you rate the website's navigation and organization? Do you feel it's intuitive or are there areas for improvement?

**A:** " No specific areas I would say need improvement, its pretty intuitive. However, when you click on the menu at the very top that are black and have white letterings, it pops up it stays rather than being interactive and going away, so it blocks other elements on the website."

**Q:** Is there any information you wish the website provided that it currently does not?

A: "Sometimes professors for higher level classes are hard to contact, so if they could provide a clearer directory, we can reach them by email. That would be helpful."



# COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

# COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

We researched public arts and sciences colleges of similar size and scope with identifiable strong, connected communities. The colleges we completed a competitor benchmarking for were University of Washington College of Arts and Sciences, University of Michigan LSA, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and University of Virginia. We analyzed the user experience, navigation, design, and the content layout of the websites and combined them with industry standards to conclude the best practices.

## USER EXPERIENCE BEST PRACTICES

**Consistent Design:** University of Michigan integrates all departments into a unified website, avoiding disjointed experiences. Franklin College should ensure uniform branding, styling, and navigation across all department pages to create a seamless user experience.

**Clear Information Hierarchy & Content Prioritization:** Websites like National Geographic and the University of Washington use strong visuals and interactive elements to guide users. Franklin College should prioritize key content on the homepage while avoiding clutter.

**Engaging Visual Storytelling:** UNC Chapel Hill's "Meet a Tar Heel" feature personalizes the student experience. Franklin could implement a "Meet a Bulldog" section featuring student and faculty stories to strengthen community engagement.

**Use of Multimedia for Engagement:** The University of Georgia incorporates video headers, making the homepage dynamic. Franklin College could use video content for research highlights, faculty interviews, or campus life features.

# COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

## NAVIGATION BEST PRACTICES

**Intuitive Navigation with Clear Labels:** The University of Washington uses a straightforward top navigation bar, while UNC-Chapel Hill's navigation is cluttered. Franklin College should implement a clear and structured navigation bar with dropdowns for easy access to key pages.

**Avoid Overloading Sidebars & Pop-Ups:** University of Washington's sidebar navigation interferes with content. Franklin College should minimize sidebar clutter and limit the use of pop-ups to enhance readability.

**Dedicated & Accessible Course Guide:** The University of Michigan has a well-structured course guide. Franklin should ensure that academic programs and course offerings are easy to browse, ideally with filters by major, department, and interest.

**Organized Menu Structure:** Goizueta Business School lacks a clear navigation bar, making it hard to find resources. Franklin College should maintain a logical menu that is accessible from every page.

# COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

## CONTENT LAYOUT BEST PRACTICES

**Balanced Text & Visuals:** Goizueta Business School relies too much on text and charts, making it feel impersonal. Franklin College should use a mix of imagery, concise text, and infographics for an engaging content layout.

**Use of Statistics & Research Highlights:** UGA effectively incorporates statistics into its homepage design. Franklin College should highlight key data about faculty research, student success, and rankings in a visually appealing way.

**Storytelling Through Interactive Elements:** National Geographic excels in interactive maps and infographics. Franklin could adopt similar elements to showcase research impact, global partnerships, and student achievements.

**Consistent Branding Across Pages:** Michigan's departmental pages are inconsistent in layout. Franklin College should enforce a style guide to ensure uniformity in typography, color scheme, and formatting across all pages.

**Streamlined Homepage with Clear Calls to Action:** University of Washington's homepage contains excessive information. Franklin should focus on key actions (apply, visit, contact) and remove unnecessary text to improve clarity.

# COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

## SUMMARY OF TRENDS

### UX Trends

**Streamlined Homepages:** Cluttered homepages overwhelm users; essential information should be prioritized.
**Personalized Content & Storytelling:** Featuring student and faculty stories improves engagement.
**Fast Load Times & Mobile Optimization:** Users expect quick, mobile-friendly experiences without excessive animations or pop-ups.

### Navigation Trends

**Simple, Well-Structured Menus:** Overloaded or unclear navigation makes it difficult to find information.
**Minimizing Sidebar Menus:** Excessive sidebars or pop-ups can be distracting and reduce usability.
**Searchable & Filterable Course Information:** Users prefer structured, easy-to-navigate course catalogs.

### Content Layout Trends

**Balanced Text & Visuals:** A mix of concise text, high-quality images, and interactive elements keeps users engaged.
**Strategic Use of Statistics:** Highlighting key data improves credibility and user interest.
**Clear Calls to Action (CTAs):** Websites should focus on guiding users toward key actions like applying, visiting, or contacting.



# FUTURE RESEARCH

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enhancing User Experience (UX) and Navigation
- Content & Design Improvements
- Accessibility & Usability Enhancements

# FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

- **A/B Testing on Design Changes:** Compare different layout and content structures to determine the most user-friendly formats.
- **Heatmap & Eye-Tracking Analysis:** Identify areas where users focus their attention most and adjust content placement accordingly.
- **Surveys & Student Feedback:** Regularly collect insights from students and faculty on site usability and needed improvements.
- **Competitive Analysis Expansion:** Study more top-performing university websites and corporate websites for additional best practices.