

Discovery Summary v2

Indiana State University

Website Redesign

Thursday, March 3, 2022



Introduction

- + Indiana State University has partnered with mStoner (now Carnegie) on a redesign of the indstate.edu website.
- + The goal of the redesign project is to convey the value of an Indiana State University education through a highly visual, engaging, and seamless user experience.
- + From December 13, 2021, through February 14, 2022, our team held 13 remote stakeholder sessions with groups across campus in order to learn as much as possible about its current landscape, forward trajectory, challenges, and unique opportunities.
- + The following presentation outlines the key themes that emerged from those conversations.

Stakeholder Groups:

- + President Curtis
- + Provost Olsen
- + Cabinet Leadership
- + College Leadership
- + Admissions and Recruitment-Facing Offices
- + Ancillary Services
- + University Communications
- + Foundation & University Engagement
- + Information Technology
- + Power Users
- + Student Affairs
- + Current Students (two groups)

Indiana State has a long history of excellence, innovation, and serving the state of Indiana.

By showcasing the quality of the academics, access to faculty and cutting-edge learning opportunities, and successful alumni, this website redesign project will further reinforce Indiana State as a top destination for students and employers alike – even if Terre Haute exists in a media bubble.

“How does our website serve predominantly those audiences who come to take a look at Indiana State, but also keep in mind others looking at our website like policymakers and legislators?”

“We can get better, and this is what this project is designed to do. It's our outward facing front door of Indiana State that really needs and deserves.”

“Indiana State is not as visible as it should be in the state. We are combating a media bubble here in Terre Haute.”

The array of students that Indiana State attracts is broad and diverse in background and need.

Captivating the imaginations of prospective students, regardless of background, regional perspective, or career interests, will require a commitment to high-quality multimedia assets and content well written for the web and consistent in voice and tone throughout the site.

“We, overwhelming, have two broad streams of students. Two-thirds of our students come from rural, often small high schools and the other third comes from large, urban high schools that are often underfunded.”

“Students in the honors college frequently come from smaller higher schools. They could easily go anywhere but they are knowledgeable enough to know that a large liberal arts college won’t have what they need.”

“We are at about 41 to 50% first-generation undergraduate students.”

Site visitors are looking for a consistent, streamlined experience.

The new site must be digital-native, easy-to-use, optimized for search, and highly accessible. Creating well-structured and well-tested front-end code will help to ensure the new site employs best practices in accessibility and improves the overall experience for site visitors. This project will help to address search issues through the archival and deindexing of inaccurate, out-of-date, or orphaned content.

“The usability of the website is key. If we can't figure out how to make that easy for someone, it doesn't matter what the other messages are.”

“Some students and families are very website-savvy, and some are not at all. We need a user-friendly interface so that nothing is difficult to find.”

“You're getting a lot of different messages, links to different documents that that may or may not be current, and a lot of maintenance issues with broken links and things like that.”

Indiana State offers a high-quality, affordable education.

The new site needs to convey that attending Indiana State is an intelligent financial decision made by savvy students and highlight the opportunities afforded by the new *Indiana State Advantage* program. Site visitors should easily access the numerous types of aid available and information on how to apply for that aid.

“The *Indiana State Advantage* includes a guaranteed tuition-free program for Pell eligible students, an experience grant of up to \$3,000 for an internship or a study abroad program, and a four-year graduation guarantee.”

“You're not only getting what you came for out of this, but you're doing it in a much more affordable way than about any other of the choices in Indiana.”

“We're more affordable because we're high quality in that return on your investment.”

Indiana State offers innovative and in-demand programming ... that should be easier to find on the site.

Whether interested in cyber-criminology, pro-flight aviation management, nursing, or any of the other 80 majors (or graduate degrees), visitors to the site should be greeted with inspiring and engaging content demonstrating the transformative student experience. Academic program pages need to explain better the “why” and “what” each program offers, including access to faculty, research and experiential learning opportunities, sample courses, and career outcomes.

“I struggle with forcing our audience to make choices before they've really had much information in front of them or before they really know what program they're choosing.”

“Are we making it easier for them to find us? And once they find us, are we offering the right things that they want, the programs they want to take? Are we making that process super easy?”

“How are they finding us and how are they deciding to come here? A lot of our transfer students find us because they are at a two-year institution that knows us.”

Indiana State is student-focused and offers a highly supportive environment.

The new site should bring the school's supportive culture and diverse and dynamic community to life through stories highlighting the student experience and hands-on learning opportunities. Prospective students need to visualize themselves on campus and build excitement around becoming a Sycamore.

"I really, really value the smaller class sizes. When I toured different universities, they talked about having large classrooms and lecture halls, and I didn't like that. I want to have a personal relationship with each one of my professors."

"The support was really big for me. The issue is that a lot of students don't know that they have a good support system on campus and it's up to them to ask for that support system in a way."

"All incoming freshmen have an opportunity to be involved in so many bridge programs to help them connect and transition from high school to college."

Indiana State is invested in the career success of students and the workforce development of the state.

Developing a strong and capable workforce pipeline aligns with the University's mission to prepare productive citizens for Indiana and the world. The new site should showcase strong career outcomes, including placement statistics, starting salaries and successful alumni working in exciting fields of employment.

"We want to make sure that our students are prepared for what employers are looking for, best practices of student development. So, we really try to really be mindful and modernize our approach to how we work with and prepare students."

"Our essential careers and programs are transferable all over the country and certainly many times internationally as well."

"There's plenty of organizations based on what you want to do with your career, if you want to get your resume."

Managing content needs to be much easier and more flexible.

Across Indiana State content contributors and publishers have varying levels of skill and familiarity. Taking a ground up approach, we will provide a modular toolkit for editors that simplifies their experience while providing options for presenting content. Of specific concern will be ease of use, posting multimedia, layout adaptability, and improved tools for finding content within the Drupal dashboard. Moving the new site into one Drupal instance will create a sustainable environment for developers and admins by eliminating duplication of features and themes within the CMS back-end, and establishing a single, reliable foundation for the future evolution of the site.

“There are at least two themes running on the marketing site. And then the colleges have either variations of one of those two, or in some cases a third one. So, just in the Drupal instance, there are at least three themes that could come up at any point, at least.”

“I spend a lot of time searching for my folder in the pulldown menu because it’s not alphabetical. Sounds like a really petty issue. But believe me, it takes twice as much time to update.” [Faculty]

“Even when we first started, images weren’t considered as part of the database. So everyone is constantly uploading the same image even though we’re all supposed to be using one system.”

It's time to revisit and refine your web governance policies.

Governance, simply described, is deciding who gets to decide. Good governance policies span roles and responsibilities, standards and best practices, content review rhythms, and norms for collaboration and information-sharing.

"I've never been trained on any of this stuff but know probably enough to be dangerous. If I had some documentation to go by, I would probably do a better job."

"I think because it's so decentralized and we all have our own responsibilities for updating the pages or not, that cohesiveness just is not there."

"I would say every unit has a different process for approval of what that information will even be."

From Project to Process

This project offers Indiana State the opportunity to shift from a project mentality to an ongoing process framework.

If approached in the right way, this website redesign will be the very beginning of a process of continuous improvement through testing, analytics, experimentation, refinement, and the addition of functionality over time.

What's Next

- + **SITE SCAN**
- + **EXPERIENCE MAP INTERVIEWS & WORKSHOPS**
- + **CREATIVE & CONTENT STRATEGY**

Thank You!

