University Website

Purpose

This policy ensures the university's website is considered an official source of university information to all audiences, and that it is maintained by Web Services on behalf of the rest of the institution in a manner that is accessible, secure, stable, timely, accurate, thorough and clear.

Persons Affected

All faculty, staff, students, alumni and the public who share or consume information through the website.

Definitions

None

Policy

The Stephen F. Austin State University website is an important communication tool for the university and the source of vital information for prospective and current students, as well as faculty and staff, among other audiences. The quality of the university is evaluated in part by its online content.

University Marketing Communications provides best-practice guidelines, which are updated from time to time. Current guidelines may be found on the university website.

Procedures

A. Responsibility

1. Management of the website, led by University Marketing Communications, strives to ensure that information is accurate and easily accessible, while recognizing the contributions of university colleges, schools, departments and programs.

2. The administrative head of each campus organizational unit maintaining a website is responsible for seeing that the site adheres to this and other university policies .

3. Every organizational unit head shall designate an individual(s) to serve the following functions: website editor, and, if applicable, server administrator. (The same person may serve in both of these capacities.) To ensure continuity of service, these individuals must be regular (non-student) university employees. However, the organizational unit head is responsible for the unit's website and its adherence to university Web policy and practices provided by University Marketing Communications. Careful thought must be given to the collection of site content and the ongoing responsibility of site maintenance.

4. Each organizational unit head will keep University Marketing Communications apprised of the current designees and will assist University Marketing Communications in ensuring that all of the designees' responsibilities have been fulfilled.

B. Technical Requirements

1. Duplication: To facilitate revisions and prevent contradictory information from appearing on the university website, unit website editors should not duplicate information already on the university website, but rather should link to information on the site of the office primarily responsible for the function or activity. Information should be entered into the university's content management system and used from the system when available.

2. Identification: Each website associated with SFA must be clearly identified. The name of the organizational unit should be on every page it creates.

3. Required Page Links: Documents should be designed to minimize users' reliance on navigational aids in browsers. Links must be provided on each page back to the homepage for that document or collection, and for the homepage, back to the sponsoring department or unit. Each department or unit homepage must include a link back to the university homepage. Other links may be required for different websites as directed by University Marketing Communications.

C. Style and Format

1. University websites should maintain a uniform and consistent appearance; therefore all university websites shall use the university's Identity Standards that are posted on University Marketing Communications' website. Individual faculty members designing personal websites, as well as websites designed, hosted, and published pursuant to a properly executed written agreement with a third-party vendor that has been signed by the president, are excluded from this provision.

2. The university seal is reserved for use by the Office of the President and may only be used by other departments with the permission of the Office of the President. The university logo is to be used on university websites as per the university's Identity Standards manual.

3. The Identity Standards manual shall be developed by University Marketing Communications and approved by the president. It may be modified upon approval of the president.

D. Outsourcing

An organizational unit that is considering contracting outside the university for web development, paid or volunteer, should contact University Marketing Communications first. University Marketing Communications will work with units and their consultants to help ensure that the final product of outsourcing efforts complies with university policy and that the final site supports the mission and goals of the unit and the university effectively.

E. Content

Responsibility for accuracy of website content is the responsibility of everyone in the university, especially the deans, directors, managers and their designees:

1. Faculty Web pages must be approved by the relevant dean or designee.

2. Unit Web pages must be approved by the relevant director/manager or designee.

3. The university home page and top-level pages must be approved by University Marketing Communications.

4. Administrative material, e.g. policies and minutes of meetings, are to be approved through appropriate administrative channels prior to posting.

5. Obsolete or out-of-date material must be removed as soon as practical.

6. Links on the university homepage and index pages to material that is considered obsolete will be removed by University Marketing Communications.

F. E-Commerce Activity

The university offers a secure method to support e-commerce activities. Contact marketplace@sfasu.edu for more information about establishing e-commerce service on a university website.

G. Copyright and Privacy

Copyright laws and university copyright policy must be followed. Information created by a government agency is largely considered to be in the public domain. "Found" graphics or outside information must not be used on websites without proper attribution or permission.

H. Commercial Activity

Commercial activity for personal gain is not permitted on any site operated with university resources, nor may readers be automatically re-directed from a university website to an external website that may result in personal financial income for any university employee.

I. ADA Compliance

Websites must be in compliance with accessibility requirements. See the state of Texas website Rules and Regulations for additional information on meeting requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

J. Exceptions

All requests for exemptions from these standards must be submitted in writing to University Marketing Communications prior to a website launch.

Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards

1 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 206.1-.2, .70-.75

SFA Identity Standards Manual

Responsible Executive

Chief Marketing Communications Officer

Forms

None

Revision History

September 1, 2023 (original)