Real change has been made and more is in process since our WebCred meeting of Monday, August 22. See if you can identify the revisions on the college home page!

Communications

I got six of our top seven issues (See WebCred Report of 8/27/11) on the agenda of the Communications Committee by working closely with that committee’s chair. Here’s what happened with those six:

A. Employee Directory Changes: Communications agreed with our recommendations, and live on the site right now the D has finally been capitalized and “Classified” has been added in the filter list. I am very glad that Attila was at the meeting to champion the “Classified” word addition.

B. Landing Page Agreement: Communications discussed but I am unclear as to whether a definitive answer was reached regarding whether every department must have a CMS landing page and “non-CMS” pages must link back to the CMS page. I believe that Francine was going to take this to the CAC on 9/1.

C. Home Page Text: They agreed that it needed changing, and they took what I presented and shortened it to: “City College of San Francisco is an urban community college serving about 100,000 students annually at nine campuses and many other sites throughout San Francisco. We offer an affordable opportunity to earn associate degrees, prepare for transfer, and pursue career and technical education. City College also offers distance learning and free noncredit courses in many fields.” This rewording is a dramatic improvement. It includes more of what we offer, it is easier to read and follow, and it is more sale-y. I believe that Francine was going to take this to the CAC on 9/1 prior to final implementation.

D. Athletics Placement: Communications considered our repositioning suggestion. International Students generates a large amount of funds, so our suggestion was modified slightly. The Athletics button has been repositioned to just above the button for International Students.

E. Campus Police Location: Communications had a long discussion about messaging and positioning of the Campus Police site. They decided to put a link to the Campus Police site in the Public Information section of the home page. I was told to build the site wherever, but “Police” would not be added to any of the home page drop-down menus. I e-mailed Chief Barnes about the new link.

F. Lastly, Communications discussed the various mapping options to replace the currently-live blurry Ocean Campus map. Mono Simeone was present and provided a lot of information. Communications intends to discuss this issue further at their next meeting.
During the Communications Committee meeting, Francine presented my personal suggestion (to her via e-mail) of adding the Facebook “Like” button to the home page. The idea was greeted with widespread approval, and a “Like Us On Facebook” link is now on the home page under City College News. Communications intends on discussing the link’s positioning at their next meeting. The current location is a prototype.

Communications also reviewed the Student Services page which has been on my list for some time to resolve. I never got a response from my e-mails concerning the necessary changes. Communications will be taking many modification requests directly to Interim Vice Chancellor of Student Development Lindy McKnight.

Website Administration

I was invited to the September 2nd meeting of the Web Admin workgroup. In attendance were Joe Jah, Doug Re, Delicia Kamins and Wendy Fong. I was informed once I arrived that I was invited in order to give me a chance to voice concerns directly. I presented two ideas in development, and their feedback was really helpful. Here are my notes:

1. The Google Spell Check feature did not make it onto the agenda of the Communications Committee for August. I discussed adding this feature to our search with Web Admin. I learned that we bought the current search, called a “Mini Search” more than two years ago. It is no longer supported by Google. I do not know if this means that newer pages are not being indexed. The currently available version, 6.8, includes the Spell Check feature, but it does not include the “Do You Mean” feature of the current full version of Google Search. I believe we can make a case for purchasing the newest version of the Mini Search. I asked for a report of the number of searches made over a time period that produced no return. I intend to bring this to the next Communications Committee meeting.

2. Joe Jah said authors are still trying to use the CMS with unsupported, newer versions of Firefox. He will be reiterating to people that they must use Firefox version 3.6. He is, however, working on 5.4 so that it will work with the CMS in the future. Jah also expressed an interest in reminding CMS authors not to deactivate pages that do not belong to them. I offered to write an article for City Currents regarding Firefox and deactivations, but, in the experience of Web Admin, such a tech-specific article may cause further issues than it would resolve.

3. A password-protected forms/documents page is in the initial stages of development. They will be using Web4 log-ins to access it. This forms page requires “major infrastructural changes.” I told them that WebCred is working on a redesigned one-stop site for all forms on our website. I will coordinate with Web Admin as WebCred develops the forms site to maximize cooperation with their password-protected site.

4. I introduced my “Ask an Admissions Counselor” idea. We have not had time to discuss my longer-term issues in WebCred. Doug Re explained how the Library developed their site separately from the rest of the college. We discussed how the Library has a librarian available
during library business hours to respond to questions posed by a website visitor to their Meebo “Ask CCSF” box. Doug Re will be looking into the licensing agreement to see what it would take for us to add that component to the Admissions and Records page. I will try to communicate with Admissions/Records to explore the idea. Admissions would need someone dedicated to responding to questions posed because it is an interactive tool. Overall, this seems like an ideal solution to increase student success. We should sell the idea to Admissions as well as to whatever that group is that works on advancing student success. I have added re-titling the Library’s Meebo box to my list of issues to address. It should be “Ask a Librarian”; “Ask CCSF” is misleading and should be reserved for Admissions.

5. During the meeting, it occurred to me that I would write a City Currents article about the newest changes to the website. I will coordinate this with Francine Podenski in order to make sure all the people involved get their credit due.

At the close of the meeting, I was invited to come every week the Web Admin meeting, and I said I would bring a list of issues to address at the next one. This enhanced level of communication will further the goals of improving the website. During the meeting, Delicia made the remark that I am becoming the college’s public information officer. I have taken a vital role in crafting the public message of the college, and I appreciate Web Admin’s acknowledgement of my contribution to the college.

END OF REPORT