



JDT University Website Report



Prepared for: JDT University
Prepared by : Hunt's Consulting Firm
December 1, 2022



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11/7/2022

Ronny Campbell
President
JDT University
123 Adversary St.
Richmond, VA

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Subject: Proposal for website design

The premise of JDT University had our attention from the very moment it was announced and we would love to be a part of its development. We propose designing and curating JDT University's website to welcome in JDT's first students and help them get to know the university. A university's website is one of the main places college students go to access information about their university from student portals to office locations. This means that you'll need a top of the line website that caters towards your students' needs.

We are requesting that you revive our current website. We want our website to encompass all that JDT University stands for. We want the website to be user friendly and focus on the current students, future students and professors alike who will use the website for a variety of reasons.

It is our plan to launch this revived website by December 1, 2022, one month before the grand opening of the new academic buildings and basketball arena. In order to ensure this success in a timely manner, and implement our recommendations from the report, We would like to receive your report by November 30, 2022. We are looking forward to receiving your analysis. Should you have any questions, please contact our marketing director Bob Stevens. Bob.stevens@Hconsulting.com.

Yours Sincerely,
Tyler Marshall

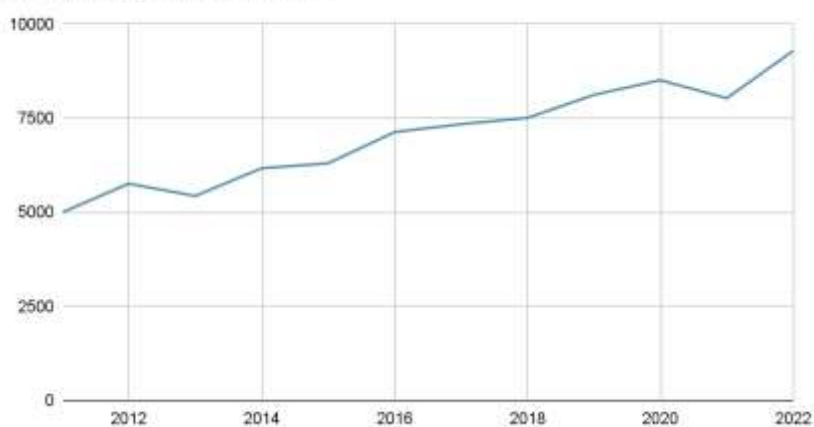
Table of Contents

Letter of Authorization.....	2
Introduction.....	4
Analysis of Websites	
Notre Dame University.....	6
George Mason University.....	8
Longwood University.....	10
Conclusion.....	12

Introduction

Over the past few decades, United States Colleges and Universities have seen increased traffic to their websites. One of the two largest universities is JDT University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, with a 78 percent enrollment increase over the last eleven years.

JDT Enrollment 2011-2022



The majority of university websites are designed to help current and prospective students, along with faculty and staff navigate and find important information.

This includes information about the university itself, financial aid, campus life, the library, and all the different majors and minors that are offered.

Over the last few years, the increase in website traffic to the university's website enhances the opportunity for JDT to upgrade their website to better accommodate all who seek information on the university.

Hunt's Consulting Firm was asked to analyze three neighboring university websites to help JDT University redesign their website. The resulting report will recommend the most crucial features for an attractive, informative and user-friendly website.

Hunt's Consulting Firm specialty is graphic design and marketing. Based in Richmond, Virginia, we have been in business for over 21 years. Our firm has commissioned reports and

helped build websites for well known business and Universities such as Polo and Harvard University.

For this report, we chose to analyze Longwood University, George Mason University, and Notre Dame University. Each website was analyzed based on its visual appeal, ease of navigation, and content.

Analysis of the Notre Dame University Website

Visual Appeal



The Notre Dame University website is easy to navigate and is efficient. The website is designed to help current and prospective students the necessary school resources and information to help them be successful . Students use the website on a regular basis and it is important to have a website that is efficient and easy to use on a day to day basis. The Website also has a calendar at the bottom of the page to allow for quick references to upcoming events at the university. This can be effective for not just students but also individuals who use the university for a variety of different reasons. The website also had tabs for academics, admissions, campus life and other tabs. I think that this is a good way to show prospective students what it is like living on campus and what academic programs are offered.

Content and ease of Navigation

At the very top of the website they have tabs that are for information about the university itself , how students and other interested individuals could visit the campus. In addition, alumni and athletics have their own tabs as well. I think something that we can look at when we are making our pitch for recommendations to our website is to have the quick links tab which is at the very bottom of the page be redirected to the right hand corner with a drop down menu. Overall, I believe the website is clear, concise and concrete. The website does a good job of ensuring that visitors to the website are able to find the necessary information that they would need when trying to figure out if they will apply to the university or use it for

other resources. The university also had a message on the front page from their president welcoming visitors to the website.

Analysis Of the George Mason University Website

Website URL: <https://www.gmu.edu/>

George Mason University is a four-year university located in Northern Virginia.

Visual Appeal

The George Mason University website is very focused on its visual style, relying heavily on modern designs in its areas of text and different shapes of buttons and text boxes. It sticks to the college's unique



and iconic color scheme of green, gold, and white, constantly reminding users of what university they are looking at. The top menu bar is very well designed, with two separate menus placed on top of each other that are used for different things. The top menu is used to learn more about GMU and to get started with the university while the larger, bottom menu is meant for GMU students who need help navigating their educational career and the campus itself. This is a very smart design philosophy as it allows for easier navigation for two separate audiences.

Content

The content present in the site is extremely useful. It offers easy access to application and student profile portals, different pages for all of GMU's majors and fields. These pages also include office locations to help current students navigate the sprawling campus. There are a variety of useful links on the main homepage that direct users to different parts of the site. The links can send users to pages that are for first-generation college students, students who want virtual tours, and even more links that directly link to the university's application portal.

Case of Navigation

Although the concept of two different menu bars for two different types of users is a great idea, I feel that it overcrowds the homepage and can be confusing for new users. The “student” menu is far too minimal in its options for it to make sense for there to be a separate menu bar. A few options could have been removed from the top bar allowing for the two to be combined, resulting in a much more coherent and logical menu.

Analysis of the Longwood University Website

Website URL: www.longwood.edu

Longwood University is a public, four-year university located in Farmville, Virginia.

Visual Appeal

The Longwood University website is well-designed, with large headings and a welcoming slideshow of life on campus.

The color scheme, matching

Longwood's colors of blue and white, is

easy to read. However, there is a surprising amount of teal text and design elements. In this image there is the teal Covid-19 info banner, but there's more teal text if the site visitor scrolls down. Teal isn't one of the school colors, which is fine, but it's visually confusing when there are four different shades of blue just at the top of the page. There's the banner all the way at the top, the striped background behind the name of the school, and then the Covid banner.

Looking farther down, there's text of yet another shade of blue overlaid on the slideshow.

This isn't a huge issue, but it would be better to just pick one shade of dark blue and one light blue. Regardless, the slideshow is pleasing and each design element is spaced out well.



Content

Visiting the tabs for each heading, there is plenty of information about programs of study, life on campus, expenses, and academics. Any site visitor should be able to find what they are looking for with relative ease. One thing that many students consider to be missing from the website is an inclusivity statement; the Longwood Student Government Association and top school officials have recently heard complaints from minority groups on campus for not including the statement anywhere on the site, despite claiming to have written one several years ago in response to similar complaints. An inclusivity statement helps to affirm diversity

and create a more-welcoming atmosphere on campus, especially in light of recent racially-motivated incidents at other schools and landmarks.

Navigation

Although the design elements are well-spaced and uncrowded, there is still a lot of information on the main page. At the top, there are four banners with the most pertinent information to visitors that aren't familiar with the site. Just above that is the Lancer dashboard for students, who are familiar with the site, thus allowing for a smaller tab.

Scrolling down, there's a massive search bar for undergraduate and graduate programs of study. Even further down, there is an upcoming events section and even more tabs for news, alumni, and athletics.

Conclusion

Based on the need for a more efficient website, JDT University has decided to redesign their online homepage based on design cues from other university webpages. This new website, currently being designed, is set to be unveiled in the first quarter of 2023. JDT University, recognizing the urgent need for a new site, asked Hunt's Consulting Firm to recommend features and design elements for the new page.

For our report, we analyzed the websites of Longwood University, George Mason University, and Notre Dame University. All three of these university websites have their strengths and weaknesses. By drawing from all three, JDT University can have all of the best elements combined.

Each of these websites were analyzed based on their visual appeal, content, and ease of navigation.

Our analysis concluded that the redesigned JDT website should have the useful content of the George Mason and Notre Dame websites, with the easy navigation of the Longwood website. Each site is relatively well-designed, with only a few weak points.

We found that all three universities use similar techniques to create a professional and useful website. The color schemes of each site match the theme of the school and add a welcoming flair for enrolled students. Additionally, all three sites use effective dropdown menus and search bars to help navigate an abundance of information. However, the George Mason site seems a little cluttered and would benefit from a reduction in information on the main page.

Overall, JDT University's website should combine visual-appeal elements from all three universities, including the ease of navigation from Longwood's website, the clean design of the Notre Dame site, but follow George Mason in the information category, albeit without as much on the main page.