Project Charter

PROJECT DEFINITION

Purpose
What purpose will your website serve?

Example: To support communication needs and business processes associated with the Department of department science at the University.

Goals
What outcomes does the website need to achieve?

Examples:

- Build general knowledge about the department
- Demonstrate the University's leadership in department science
- Demonstrate the impact of studying department science
- Build community within the Department of department science
- Streamline department processes for better efficiency and responsiveness

Target Audiences
Categorize and prioritize the groups of people that will be served by the website.

Examples:

External
- Prospective department science graduate students
- Prospective department science undergraduates
- Department professors/lecturers/researchers at large
- Prospective department science faculty
- Alumni
- Reporters, media
- Greater university community
- General public

Internal
- Current department science graduate students
- Current department majors
- Department science staff
- Department science faculty
- University staff

Indicators of Success

How will you know that you have achieved the goals for your site? What are some results that can be measured, whether online or offline?

Examples:

Recruitment

- Increase in the number of department graduate student applicants
- Increase in the number of undergraduate applicants who want to major in department science
- Increase in the number of students enrolling in department science courses

Engagement

- Increased traffic to the Department Science website
- More users clicking "apply" link
- Higher rankings in search engines for Department Science website content
- Increase in third-party engagement with Department Science website content (e.g., tweets, likes, shares)
- Increase in links to the Department Science website

General outcomes

- Fewer phone and email requests for information that is available through the website
- Phone and email requests targeted to the correct person or group
- Increased participation in Department Science-sponsored events and activities
- More media mentions of Department Science-related activities and people

Caretaking

- Current, accurate, and timely information on the Department Science website
- Regular updates to the Department Science website by department content providers

The University and the Department of Department Science are fictitious
This sample project charter document is intended for illustrative purposes only

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STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

A strategy is an approach that will help you reach your goals. A tactic is a specific activity you will undertake to support the strategy. These can be tangible ideas for how you would like to implement content on your website.

Examples:

Strategy: Describe what's happening now in the department

An organization with an active commitment to the advancement of knowledge is best described by timely and dynamic examples of that work, rather than a static "brochure" website. The website will highlight current work and activities to convey the excitement and innovative nature of the department.

Tactics:

- Provide a news feature highlighting the current work and accomplishments of department members
- Provide a news feature highlighting new programs and initiatives
- Provide a robust events listing
- Consider posting recordings of department events

Strategy: Illustrate the distinctiveness and impact of the program

Many academic websites contain similar information about programs and offerings. Highlighting what's *distinctive* about The University's Department Science department will help make the program stand out from competitors.

Tactics:

- Focus content development efforts on highlighting what is different about the program
- Highlight innovative faculty endeavors
- Highlight the work graduate students have done out in the world

Strategy: Provide comprehensive information about faculty

People, and department faculty in particular, make the department. Consistent, comprehensive, and well-crafted information about faculty is key to distinguishing The University's Department of Department Science.

Tactics:

- Integrate content from faculty websites into the Department Science website
- Highlight new publications
- Include profiles for all department members

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Strategy: Develop content that can be reused by other sites

Spreading messages and content is one of the more powerful aspects of the web. Videos, images, and RSS news stories can be easily embedded into other sites, which makes it easy to increase visibility of department activities.

Tactics:

- Post videos to the Cosmic University YouTube channel
- Create a News & Events page with an RSS feed

Strategy: Create a conversation with site visitors

Find ways to engage visitors with the website content.

Tactics:

- Consider how to use social media
- Include share functionality with site content (e.g., like, tweet, email)

Create an effective information architecture

Easy-to-use and consistent information architecture (site organization) leads to successful and satisfying user experiences.

Tactics:

- Adopt the University's standard for information architecture as much as possible
- Provide clear navigation and support for commonly sought information (e.g. the application process, program requirements, getting started in the department, etc.)

Support best practices and university standards

Quality of content and design says a great deal about any organization. Designing a site that meets high quality standards and identity standards of the institution will reinforce the quality of the program.

Tactics:

- Use the University's branding and best practice guidelines
- Monitor the quality of the site over time

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GOVERNANCE

The building, launch, and maintenance of an organizational website requires several key roles to be filled. The governance portion of the charter will help you determine who needs to be involved in the building and launch of your website. Each category below should have at least one person assigned. Depending on the size of your organization, some categories may have multiple people listed, or one person may be responsible for multiple roles.

Role	Description	Name(s)
Project Sponsor	Responsible for initiating the website development process, approving the overall direction, and determining whether project goals are met. The sponsor also allocates resources (human and otherwise) to support the project.	
Stakeholder Group	Responsible for setting strategic direction. It represents the different individuals and organizations that will be impacted by the website—whose work and responsibilities at the University are affected by how the website performs. The stakeholder group helps set direction for the website during the development phase and can be called upon to review the progress of the project at determined checkpoints if desired.	
Project Lead	Responsible for representing the stakeholders, coordinating efforts of the working group, and will assume responsibility for the website after launch. The project lead is accountable to the sponsor and the stakeholder group.	
Working Group	Responsible for implementation. It includes the individuals within the organization who have the knowledge and resources to build the site.	
Content Group	Responsible for generating the content for the site. In some cases, content creation may be the responsibility of one individual within the organization. Or, several individuals within an organization may be responsible for different areas of the site, with each person creating the content that is most related to his or her organizational affiliation. Content includes not just text, but also any images and multimedia.	
Website Editor	Responsible for updating site content on an ongoing basis after launch.	

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