

Bridging Communication and Connection: A Strategic Website Rebuild for LSU CSE

*Submitted to*

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Of

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by

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## SECTION ONE: CAPSTONE OVERVIEW

My capstone project took place within the LSU Division of Computer Science and Engineering, where I work in higher education administration with responsibilities that include communication, project management, coordination, and student engagement. When I joined the division, we also welcomed a new chair, and together we explored opportunities to strengthen the department's internal systems and external presence. As I became familiar with our programs and daily operations, it became clear that the existing website no longer reflected the division's growth, mission, or identity. Prospective students shared that the site felt outdated, difficult to navigate, and uninviting. Faculty also found it challenging to locate or update their information, which led to inconsistencies and confusion. Industry partners had similar concerns and often struggled to find basic information about research, faculty, and opportunities for collaboration. The outdated design created a poor first impression for anyone visiting the site, especially prospective students, faculty recruits, and external partners who expected a strong digital presence from a division focused on computing and engineering. For a program built around technology and innovation, an old and disorganized website created a clear misalignment with our purpose and reputation. This disconnect revealed an immediate leadership and organizational development opportunity, which I identified early in my transition into the role and chose to address through my capstone project.

The purpose of this project was to lead a complete rebuild of the LSU CSE website to strengthen communication, improve access to information, and create a more accurate and supportive digital experience for students, faculty, and all visitors. Because the website serves as both a central communication tool and a public-facing representation of the division, this work required thoughtful planning, consistent collaboration, and strong project management. Coordinating timelines, organizing content, engaging with faculty, and ensuring accuracy across

multiple sections demanded a clear and structured approach. This experience aligns directly with my long-term career goals in higher education administration, where communication systems, student support, and organizational leadership are central to the work.

A blended leadership approach was essential throughout the project. The skills approach was especially relevant because the work involved problem solving, social judgment, and conceptual planning. Northouse explains that effective leadership depends on competencies such as problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge (Northouse, 2019, pp. 56–57). Rebuilding the website required evaluating complex information structures, coordinating across multiple stakeholders, and making decisions about how content should be organized. These tasks align closely with the skills-based leadership model and the project management responsibilities within my role at LSU CSE.

Authentic leadership also guided my approach, especially in communication with faculty and staff. Authentic leadership centers on self-awareness, value-guided behavior, and maintain honest and transparent relationships with others (Northouse, 2019, p. 199). These principles shaped how I gathered feedback, maintained transparency about the project’s goals, and made decisions that aligned with my values around clarity, accuracy, and service. Being new to the division meant that building trust was essential, and authentic communication helped create a shared understanding of the project’s purpose.

Servant leadership supported the direction and intention behind the rebuild. Servant leadership focuses on listening, empathy, stewardship, and placing the needs of others first (Northouse, 2019, pp. 254–256). This approach reflects the core purpose of the project, which was to create a resource that genuinely serves students, faculty, and prospective members of our

community. Designing a site that is easier to navigate and more reflective of our strengths demonstrates a commitment to service and community support.

Finally, transformational leadership guided the broader vision for change. Transformational leadership encourages motivation toward a shared vision and inspires positive organizational development (Northouse, 2019, pp. 165–167). This was especially relevant because the project required shifting away from an outdated system and encouraging stakeholders to imagine a modern, organized, and cohesive digital presence. Transformational leadership helped build momentum and support for a long-term vision that aligns with the division’s identity.

This project matters because it directly improves how the division communicates and represents itself to the people who matter most. A clear, modern, user-friendly website enhances the experience of current students and faculty and strengthens the first impression for prospective students, external partners, and industry collaborators. For a department in a field centered on technology and innovation, an effective and professional digital presence plays an important role in how we are perceived. The rebuild also improves organizational efficiency by reducing confusion, removing outdated content, and creating a structured and accurate resource for everyone who interacts with the division.

In many ways, this project is the culmination of my academic focus on communications, leadership development, and sociology. It reflects how individuals interact with systems, how leadership shapes organizational change, and how thoughtful communication influences culture. This experience strengthened my project management skills, deepened my understanding of how leadership theories apply to real work within higher education, and reinforced my commitment to a career in higher education administration and improving systems that support clarity, connection, and student success.

## **SECTION TWO: JOURNAL ENTRIES**

### **JOURNAL 1**

Reflecting on my journey through my major, I can see how much I have developed academically, professionally, and personally. When I began this program, I had a general interest in leadership and communication, but I did not fully understand how deeply those subjects would influence my approach to work and life. The courses I have taken have helped me connect theory to practice and see how leadership can shape organizations and people for the better. I have learned that true leadership is not about position or authority, but about influence, service, and creating spaces where others can thrive.

One of the most meaningful lessons I have learned is the power of communication within organizations. Every message, meeting, or decision reflects leadership in action. Clear communication builds trust, strengthens relationships, and drives collaboration. Through this program, I have come to value transparency, empathy, and active listening as essential leadership tools. These lessons have carried over directly into my role at LSU, where effective communication plays a major part in supporting faculty, students, and the overall success of the division.

Another important realization for me has been the role of self-awareness in leadership. Understanding my own values, motivations, and areas for growth has allowed me to be more intentional about how I lead and how I support others. I have learned that growth requires reflection and a willingness to adjust when things are not working.

This program has also helped me recognize how leadership development is connected to organizational improvement. Courses in sociology and leadership development have shown me how culture, structure, and motivation all contribute to how people experience their workplace.

Applying these lessons has already made me more effective in my current position. I now approach challenges with a stronger sense of purpose and strategy, focusing on solutions that support both people and progress. As I move into my capstone project, I feel more confident in my ability to use what I have learned to create a positive, lasting impact within my organization.

## **JOURNAL 2**

Throughout my academic and professional journey, I have spent a lot of time reflecting on the kind of leader I want to be. My leadership philosophy is rooted in service, communication, and growth. I believe that leadership is not about authority, but about creating an environment where people feel supported, valued, and equipped to succeed. I aspire to be the kind of leader who listens first, acts with integrity, and makes decisions that reflect both purpose and empathy.

I want to lead in a way that encourages collaboration and clarity. I believe in being transparent, dependable, and thoughtful in my approach to both people and problems. I have learned that leadership is not a solitary role, but a collective process where everyone contributes to a shared mission. Whether I am managing a project, connecting with students, or working with faculty, my goal is to bring people together in a way that feels meaningful and empowering.

My personal brand reflects these values. I am known for being organized, creative, and intentional in everything I do. I take pride in being reliable and adaptable, especially when handling complex or unexpected situations. I want my brand to communicate that I care deeply about people, progress, and purpose. As I continue building my career in higher education administration, I want my leadership to strengthen communication, support learning, and create opportunities that benefit both individuals and the organization as a whole.

My long-term professional goals align with this philosophy. I want to help build systems that make information more accessible, collaboration more effective, and learning more engaging.

I see leadership as the chance to make a lasting impact, not by standing in front, but by working alongside others toward a shared vision.

### **JOURNAL 3**

My capstone project aligns directly with both my career goals and my field of study because it combines communication, leadership, and organizational development in a practical way. For my project, I led a full website rebuild for LSU's Division of Computer Science and Engineering. The goal was to improve how information is shared, how students and faculty access resources, and how our division presents itself to the community. This project reflects my long-term goal of continuing to grow in higher education administration and supporting systems that make education more accessible, engaging, and connected.

My major in Interdisciplinary Studies, with a focus on communications, sociology, and leadership development, has given me the foundation to understand how people and organizations interact. I used what I have learned about communication strategies, motivation, and collaboration to guide this project from planning to implementation. The rebuild required teamwork, problem solving, and creative thinking, which allowed me to apply leadership concepts in a real, results-driven way. It also reinforced the importance of clarity and inclusion in organizational communication, especially in an academic environment that serves so many different audiences.

Through this project, I hope to make a lasting impact on my department by improving access to information and creating a more engaging online presence for students, faculty, and visitors. The finished site reflects not only our academic excellence but also the innovation and collaboration that define our division. This experience has strengthened my confidence as a leader and reminded me why I am passionate about working in higher education. It has shown me how

much can be accomplished when creativity, structure, and purpose come together toward a shared goal.

## SECTION THREE: CAREER VISION WORKSHEET



Student Name: Caitlynn Coco

### **Self-Assessment**

One of my greatest strengths is my ability to lead through organization and follow-through. I take pride in managing complex projects from start to finish and ensuring that every detail aligns with a larger vision. Another strength is my interpersonal communication. I naturally build relationships across different teams and levels, which helps me connect with people, encourage collaboration, and create a sense of shared purpose. A third strength is creativity. I enjoy bringing fresh ideas to administrative work, whether that means rethinking event design, improving processes, or finding new ways to engage students and partners.

Areas where I want to grow include delegating more effectively, balancing my workload, and strengthening my strategic decision-making. I tend to take on too much because I want things done well, but I am learning that empowering others is an important part of leadership. I am also working on maintaining a healthy balance between the creative side of my work and the administrative side. What motivates me professionally is seeing my efforts directly contribute to student success, faculty growth, and the advancement of the college as a whole. Knowing that my work helps others achieve their goals gives me a strong sense of purpose.

### **Core Values**

The five most important values to me in my career are integrity, service, creativity, collaboration, and growth. Integrity guides me to lead with honesty and consistency, even when it is difficult. Service keeps me focused on helping others and creating meaningful impact. Creativity pushes me to find new ways to solve problems and make ideas come to life. Collaboration reminds me that leadership is not about control but about bringing people together to achieve something greater. Growth reflects my desire to keep learning and improving both personally and professionally.

These values influence how I make decisions and how I lead. I try to create an environment where transparency and respect come first. I also value feedback and see it as part of growth, not criticism. My leadership style reflects my values through empathy, accountability, and innovation. I believe good leadership means setting a clear direction, supporting others, and encouraging creativity and autonomy within the team.

### **Career Goals**

In the short term, over the next one to two years, I want to continue developing as a leader within higher education administration at LSU. My goal is to strengthen my ability to manage large-scale initiatives and support institutional goals that enhance student and faculty engagement. I also want to build more professional connections across the university and state, especially through partnerships that promote innovation in computer science and engineering education.

In the long term, my goal is to advance into a senior leadership role in higher education administration, potentially as a director or assistant dean. I want to contribute to shaping university initiatives that support academic excellence, research, and community impact. The industries I am most drawn to are higher education, nonprofit leadership, and technology outreach. Each of these areas allows me to combine my passion for service, innovation, and education.

## **Ideal Work Environment**

I thrive in a collaborative and forward-thinking environment where creativity and structure coexist. I work best in teams that value open communication, mutual respect, and clear goals. I enjoy organizations that are mission-driven and allow room for initiative and innovation. The type of culture that helps me succeed is one that celebrates both excellence and inclusivity, where everyone feels their contributions matter.

I work well under transformational and participative leadership styles. I appreciate leaders who empower their teams, communicate openly, and invest in personal and professional growth. A healthy work-life balance is also important to me. I value having time to rest, reflect, and recharge so that I can bring my best energy to my work.

## **Action Steps**

In the next six months, I plan to strengthen my leadership foundation by seeking mentorship from senior administrators at LSU and exploring professional development opportunities in higher education management. I also plan to refine my long-term career plan by identifying specific skills I need to advance, such as budgeting, policy development, and strategic planning. Another step will be expanding my professional network through conferences, alumni events, and university partnerships.

The main resources I need to succeed include mentorship, leadership training, and opportunities to take on challenging projects that stretch my abilities. I am fortunate to work closely with experienced leaders who model effective administration and provide guidance. I will continue to reach out to mentors within LSU's College of Engineering and beyond for feedback and advice on my professional growth.

## **Reflection**

My career vision is to continue growing as a higher education leader who strengthens the connection between academic excellence, innovation, and community engagement. I want to be known for creating meaningful experiences that empower students and highlight the impact of our faculty and programs. I see myself leading initiatives that inspire collaboration, advance diversity, and promote lifelong learning.

This vision aligns with my personal and professional values because it centers on integrity, creativity, and service. It allows me to continue helping others while challenging myself to grow in new ways. I see leadership not as a position, but as an opportunity to make a lasting difference within higher education and beyond.

## **SECTION FOUR: MAJOR PROJECT REPORT**

### **I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT**

When I began working within the LSU Division of Computer Science and Engineering, it became apparent that our digital presence did not match the quality, innovation, or growth happening within the department. As someone who supports communication and project management for the division, I quickly saw how the website influenced the experiences of the people who rely on it. The site was not only outdated in its appearance, but it also made it difficult for students, faculty, and external partners to locate critical information. These issues created unnecessary barriers for users and prevented the division from presenting itself accurately to the public.

At the same time, the division was transitioning under new leadership, and our team was actively evaluating opportunities to strengthen how we function and how we present ourselves to the community. The website emerged as a clear priority. Prospective students often used it as their first point of contact with the division, yet many struggled to navigate the pages or found that the content did not reflect our current programs, research, or accomplishments. Faculty and staff voiced similar concerns, noting inconsistencies in information, outdated content, and a lack of structure across pages. Industry partners shared difficulty finding information about research areas, faculty expertise, and opportunities for collaboration. Altogether, the website did not reflect who we are or what we offer.

This realization shaped the foundation of the project. A modern academic unit depends heavily on accessible digital communication, and the website plays a central role in how students connect with resources, how faculty share their work, and how external audiences understand the department. Improving the organization, accuracy, and visual presentation of the site became a strategic initiative that aligned with the division's priorities and with my own professional goals.

The website rebuild provided an opportunity to create a more cohesive digital environment that supports student success, strengthens community engagement, and reflects the identity and values of the division.

## **II. PROJECT GOALS**

The website rebuild project for the LSU Division of Computer Science and Engineering was guided by goals that addressed both the functional needs of the division and broader strategic priorities. One of the main objectives was to improve the usability of the site by creating a clearer and more intuitive navigation structure. The previous layout made it difficult for visitors to locate important information, so reorganizing menus, streamlining pathways, and creating predictable page structures became essential steps in making the site easier to use.

Another key goal was updating outdated or incomplete content. Many of the existing pages no longer reflected the division's programs, research, or accomplishments. Faculty profiles were inconsistent, student resources were scattered, and program descriptions lacked clarity. The rebuild focused on ensuring that every page presented accurate, current, and comprehensive information that supported both students and faculty.

Strengthening digital communication across the division also shaped the direction of the project. The website serves a wide range of audiences, including students, faculty, prospective students, alumni, and industry partners. To support these groups, the project aimed to create a site that communicated clearly, showcased the strengths of the division, and provided reliable access to essential resources. This included adding new sections on accreditation, enrollment, research labs, industry partnerships, career paths, and opportunities for alumni engagement.

A major visual goal of the project was to modernize the appearance of the site and present a unified digital identity. As a division rooted in computing and engineering, it was important that our online presence reflected innovation and professionalism. Updating faculty and staff photos,

refreshing page layouts, integrating new visuals, and ensuring consistency across pages helped create a stronger, more cohesive brand. Making the website functional and visually appealing on mobile devices was also a priority given the number of users who access the site on phones.

Another goal is centered on improving the overall accuracy and consistency of information. Updating office locations, contact details, faculty expertise, research areas, and course assignments helped eliminate confusion and strengthened the reliability of the website as an informational tool. These updates also made it easier for visitors to understand the structure and strengths of the division.

Finally, a long-term goal of the project was to create a digital foundation that the department could maintain more easily in the future. By establishing clear standards for layout, copy, and content organization, the rebuild positioned the division for sustainable growth and regular updates over time.

Together, these goals shaped the decisions made throughout the project and supported the broader purpose of presenting the division clearly, accurately, and professionally.

### **III. PROJECT DESIGN AND STRUCTURE**

The design of the website rebuild was shaped by the division's need for a clear, modern, and user-centered digital presence. From the beginning, the project focused on creating a site that accurately reflected the identity of the LSU Division of Computer Science and Engineering while improving access to information for all audiences. The design process involved evaluating the limitations of the previous website, identifying the most important areas for improvement, and building a structure that prioritized clarity, consistency, and ease of use.

A major component of the design work was the transition from OU Campus to the Modern Campus CMS, the new content management system adopted across LSU. Rebuilding the site in Modern Campus required developing every layout from scratch. Working with our Lab Manager,

Ali Ghosn, I used the updated snippet options, layout tools, and design features within the system to develop templates for the homepage, landing pages, menus, faculty index, news, events, and program pages. The new CMS offered greater flexibility, which allowed us to redesign the site in a way that aligned with both user needs and the division's branding.

Content accuracy was one of the most significant design priorities. Much of the previous website contained outdated or incomplete information, especially in program descriptions, faculty pages, and student resources. I rewrote or reorganized nearly all textual content to ensure that information was current, clear, and consistent. Faculty profiles were redesigned to include new professional photos, updated contact details, research interests, awards, grants, course assignments, personal websites, and Google Scholar profiles. Program pages for the undergraduate and graduate degrees were rewritten to provide clearer pathways for prospective students and to make requirements and opportunities easier to understand.

Visual consistency was another focus of the design. The previous website contained mismatched fonts, inconsistent photos, and scattered formatting choices. To improve this, I photographed faculty, staff, research labs, and student spaces to create a library of updated images that better represent our department. These new visuals helped create a more cohesive and professional identity while highlighting the diversity of our community.

A major design improvement centered on the faculty directory. The old directory required extensive scrolling and lacked an efficient way to locate faculty based on name or research area. To address this, our team developed custom snippets that allowed for a searchable, filterable index. This improvement supported students, prospective students, and industry partners who rely on the directory for information about faculty expertise and research areas.

Navigation restructuring played an important role in the design process. The previous menu was difficult to follow, and important pages were often buried or organized in ways that did not

reflect user expectations. The redesigned navigation created logical groupings, reduced unnecessary clicks, and organized content so that users could find key information quickly. This made the website easier to use and more intuitive for new visitors.

Accessibility was also a significant component of the design. Every page was evaluated for ADA compliance, and we made adjustments to improve readability and accessibility for all users. Modern Campus CMS includes an automated accessibility checker that scans each page and provides a list of issues that must be corrected. This tool identified problems such as missing alternative text, color contrast issues, heading structure inconsistencies, and link formatting concerns. We used these reports to correct accessibility barriers throughout the site and ensure that our content met accessibility standards.

The design process also incorporated structured feedback. After an initial draft of the site was completed, the LSU College of Engineering Communications team assisted in organizing focus groups for faculty, staff, and graduate students. Participants reviewed the site's layout, functionality, wording, and navigation. Their feedback informed additional improvements, particularly around page labeling, menu clarity, visual balance, and enhancements to student-facing sections. This feedback process allowed us to refine the design and ensure that the final version reflected the needs of its users.

Finally, the overall structure of the website was built to support the long-term goals of the division. New sections on accreditation, enrollment, industry engagement, alumni involvement, research labs, and student outcomes provided a more complete view of the department's work and impact. The design elevated the division's external presence while creating a stronger internal resource for students and faculty.

## **IV. IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

The implementation of the website rebuild followed a structured and collaborative process grounded in leadership, communication, and project management practices. Because this project involved completely reconstructing a large academic website with many interconnected components, the implementation required organization, teamwork, attention to detail, and the ability to guide others through change. Each stage involved coordinating stakeholders, managing tasks, and applying leadership behaviors that supported clear communication and continuous progress.

### **1. INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING**

The first phase involved a full audit of the previous website. I reviewed every page to identify outdated content, inconsistencies, broken links, and structural issues that affected usability. Conversations with faculty, staff, and students revealed additional challenges, including difficulty navigating program pages, outdated faculty profiles, and unclear advising information. These early discussions required active listening and relationship-building, qualities associated with servant leadership, which emphasizes understanding the needs of others and responding to them with care and attentiveness (Northouse, 2019, pp. 254–256).

During this stage, I worked closely with our Lab Manager, Ali Ghosn, to understand the capabilities of the new Modern Campus CMS. This required substantial problem-solving and technical skills, which align with the skills approach to leadership. This model highlights the importance of problem-solving skills, technical proficiency, and social judgment when addressing complex challenges (Northouse, 2019, pp. 56–57). We reviewed available snippets and layout tools, discussed customizations we would need, and began building a detailed project plan.

To manage the scope of the work, we created a Gantt chart in Excel outlining each page of the website, its status, and deadlines. This chart helped us break down the project into actionable

steps, stay organized, and maintain accountability. Weekly planning meetings allowed us to adjust timelines as needed and keep the project moving forward.

## **2. CONTENT COLLECTION AND VERIFICATION**

The next stage centered on gathering accurate and updated content for the new website. I contacted faculty individually to collect updated information on their research, publications, awards, grants, courses, contact information, and professional websites. This required strong interpersonal communication and balanced processing, which are essential elements of authentic leadership. Authentic leadership encourages thoughtful consideration of information and transparent communication when collaborating with others (Northouse, 2019, p. 199).

I also worked closely with our Undergraduate Program Manager, Juan Rodriguez-Cepero, and our Graduate Coordinator, Brandon Trouard, to organize updated advising information, degree requirements, forms, and deadlines. Their insight helped ensure that the student-facing content was accurate and easy to understand. Additional information on facilities, research labs, student organizations, accreditation, and enrollment was collected through collaboration with staff and campus partners.

Managing this volume of information demanded clear organization, strong communication, and the ability to maintain consistency across pages. These efforts helped ensure that the revised website would serve as a reliable and comprehensive resource for students, faculty, industry partners, and community members.

## **3. TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT AND PAGE BUILDING**

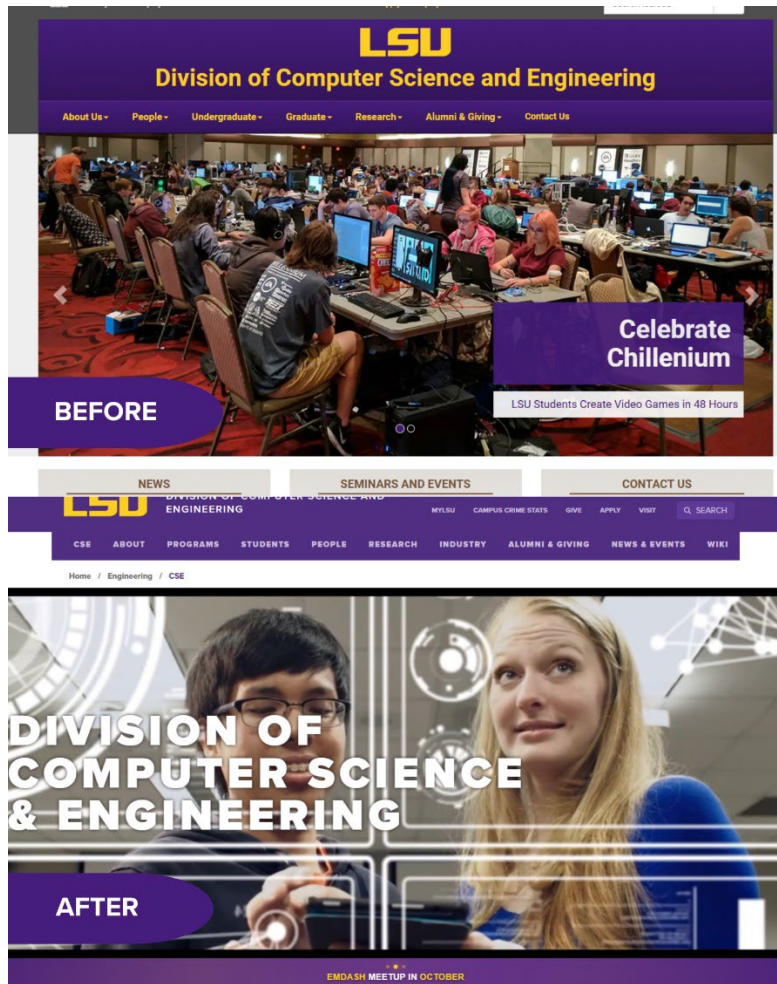
After content was collected, the technical development of the new website began. Using the Modern Campus CMS, Ali Ghosn and I rebuilt each page from scratch, applying consistent layout patterns, updated visuals, and rewritten copy. Every page required selecting appropriate snippets, structuring information logically, and ensuring that new content was clear and accurate.

**TABLE 1. Website Content Improvements**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Old Site Issues</b>	<b>New Site Improvements</b>
<b>Faculty Profiles</b>	Outdated info; mismatched formatting; old or low-quality photos	Updated headshots; consistent layout; research, awards, and external links added
<b>Student Resources</b>	Scattered, outdated, difficult to find	Clear structure; consolidated links; updated advising and resource information
<b>Navigation</b>	Confusing menus; too many clicks; poor flow	Simplified pathways; intuitive menus; logically grouped content
<b>Program Pages</b>	Vague descriptions; missing detail	Clear explanations; organized sections; updated degree requirements
<b>Research Labs</b>	Limited visibility; outdated lab descriptions	New images; updated lab content; improved structure and emphasis
<b>Branding</b>	Inconsistent colors, fonts, and visuals	Modern design; unified branding; polished and professional appearance

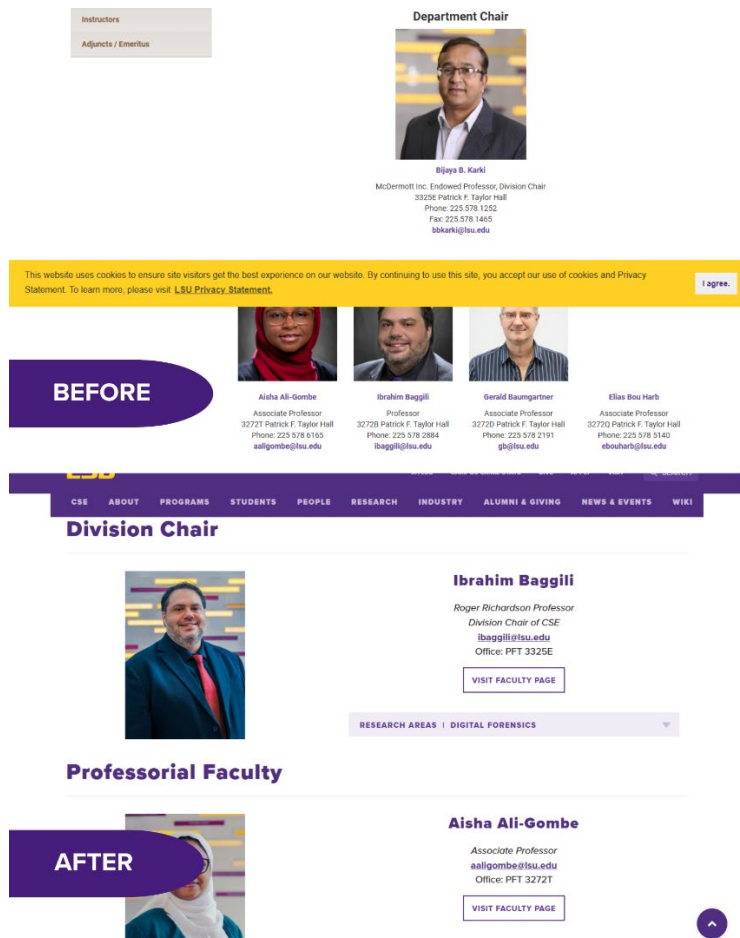
Because Modern Campus CMS does not provide a mobile preview tool, we tested every page manually on multiple devices, making adjustments for readability and usability. This process required adaptability and perseverance, qualities associated with transformational leadership. Transformational leaders motivate themselves and others to work toward a shared vision, even when tasks are challenging or time-consuming (Northouse, 2019, pp. 165–167).

**FIGURE 1. & FIGURE 2. Homepage Before & After**



One of the most significant technical improvements involved creating custom snippets for the faculty directory. The previous directory required extensive scrolling and lacked effective navigation. The new directory allows users to search for faculty members by name or research area, making the site more efficient and user-friendly.

**FIGURE 3. & FIGURE 4. Faculty Directory Before & After**



Throughout development, we used the Modern Campus automated accessibility checker to scan for ADA compliance issues. This tool identified potential problems with alternative text, heading structures, color contrast, and link formatting. Addressing these issues early helped us ensure every page met accessibility standards and served users effectively.

**TABLE 2. Accessibility Improvements Identified by the Modern Campus CMS Checker**

Accessibility Area	Issues Identified	Corrections Made
Alternative Text	Many images had no alt text	Added descriptive alt text to all relevant images
Heading Structure	Inconsistent or incorrect heading order	Standardized heading hierarchy across all pages

<b>Color Contrast</b>	Low contrast on buttons, headings, and some text	Adjusted colors to meet WCAG contrast standards
<b>Link Text</b>	Vague or unclear link labels (e.g., “click here”)	Rewrote links to be specific and descriptive
<b>Tables</b>	Missing header rows or structure for screen readers	Reformatted tables with proper headers and structure for accessibility

**4. VISUAL AND BRANDING ENHANCEMENTS**

A major part of the implementation process involved strengthening the visual identity of the website. I photographed faculty, staff, students, lab spaces, and classrooms to create an updated library of images. These visuals helped improve consistency, strengthened the division’s branding, and better represented the diversity within our community.

We also embedded videos throughout key sections of the site to highlight programs, research activities, and student experiences. Branding choices related to layout, color palettes, typography, and page structure were aligned with LSU’s standards and the direction of the division under new leadership. This contributed to a more polished and cohesive digital presence.

**5. COLLABORATION WITH LEADERSHIP AND STAKEHOLDERS**

Throughout the rebuild, I collaborated closely with our Department Chair, Dr. Ibrahim Baggili. We met regularly to review the structure of pages, clarify messaging, and ensure the site aligned with the division’s mission and vision. These conversations required transparency, open communication, and consistency, all of which reflect authentic leadership principles (Northouse, 2019, p. 199).

I also worked with the LSU College of Engineering Communications team, including Eddie Manes and Casey Muller. They provided guidance on branding standards, answered technical questions, and supported the preparation of focus groups. This collaboration helped

ensure that the final product aligned with college-wide expectations and met the needs of our community.

## 6. USER TESTING AND FOCUS GROUP EVALUATIONS

Once a complete draft of the website was built, the College of Engineering Communications team organized focus groups for staff, graduate students, and faculty to evaluate the site’s design, clarity, and usability. Their feedback played an important role in strengthening the final version.

The staff focus group praised the modern layout, improved mobile experience, clearer faculty directory, and overall usability. They suggested refinements related to labeling, image sizes, and color balances, which guided our final adjustments (LSU College of Engineering, n.d.).

The graduate student focus group responded positively to the organization of student resources and program pages. They recommended more visible pathways to research opportunities, funding information, and forms. Their suggestions led to restructuring several sections to improve clarity (LSU College of Engineering, n.d.).

The faculty focus group valued the updated profiles, easier navigation, and consistent formatting. They offered feedback on page titles, research lab visibility, and specific layout refinements that helped improve the accuracy and structure of academic content (LSU College of Engineering, n.d.).

Incorporating this feedback strengthened the overall user experience and allowed us to refine the site before launching.

**TABLE 3. Stakeholder Feedback Summary from Focus Groups**

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Positive Feedback</b>	<b>Suggested Improvements</b>	<b>Changes Implemented</b>
<b>Staff</b>	Modern design; improved mobile	Adjust photo sizes; refine color balance;	Resized images; improved color contrast;

	view; clearer navigation; stronger faculty listing	clarify labels and buttons	updated labels and button text
<b>Graduate Students</b>	Clearer program information; easier access to forms and requirements; better layout	Make research and funding information more visible	Added research links; expanded funding details; reorganized resource and forms sections
<b>Faculty</b>	Updated profiles; consistent formatting; easier navigation; better research visibility	Increase lab visibility; refine page titles; adjust category groupings	Enhanced research lab section; standardized titles; reorganized categories for clarity

**7. FINAL REVIEW, LAUNCH, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

The final review involved a detailed walkthrough of the website with department leadership and the College of Engineering communications team. Once approved, the site was launched publicly and aligned with the introduction of the division’s new social media accounts to create a cohesive rebranding moment.

After launching, we continued to update content and refine page layouts based on feedback from users. Students, faculty, staff, and external partners shared positive responses to the new site. Dean Colvin praised the rebuild and recommended that other engineering departments use our site as a model for their own Modern Campus transitions. The decrease in navigation-related questions from students and faculty demonstrated that the rebuild addressed long-standing issues and improved the division’s overall digital communication.

The implementation process resulted in a modern, accurate, and accessible website that supports communication, student success, faculty visibility, and the long-term goals of the division.

## **V. TOOLS, FRAMEWORKS, AND HRD/LEADERSHIP MODELS**

The website rebuild for the LSU Division of Computer Science and Engineering required a combination of practical tools, structured communication methods, and leadership and HRD frameworks that helped guide the decision making and collaboration involved at each stage of the project. These elements supported the technical and organizational aspects of the rebuild while strengthening the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the final product.

### **1. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL TOOLS**

A range of tools supported the planning, organization, and implementation of the website. The Modern Campus CMS served as the main platform for rebuilding each page, creating layouts, inserting content, and structuring navigation. The CMS also included an automated accessibility checker, which helped identify issues related to ADA compliance, including alt text, heading structure, and color contrast. Using this tool throughout the process allowed us to catch and correct accessibility concerns early and maintain consistency across the site.

To manage the timeline and tasks associated with the rebuild, I created a detailed Gantt chart in Excel. This chart outlined every page on the website, the work required for each section, deadlines, and notes about revisions. It helped break the project into manageable steps and provided a clear picture of progress at all times. Microsoft Teams and Outlook were used to maintain communication across stakeholders, schedule meetings, share documents, and track revisions. These tools ensured that everyone involved remained informed and engaged throughout the project.

Shared spreadsheets and folders helped organize faculty information, updated photos, research summaries, and program content. Frequent collaboration through text messages and in-person working sessions allowed our team to make decisions quickly, solve problems efficiently, and maintain momentum. Together, these tools created a reliable structure for organizing the large volume of information and tasks involved in the rebuild.

## **2. COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORKS**

Clear communication was essential throughout the project, especially given the number of individuals involved and the amount of information that needed to be verified. I relied on communication practices grounded in transparency, consistency, and responsiveness, which helped maintain trust with faculty, staff, and leadership during the more demanding stages of implementation.

A key communication strategy used throughout the project was stakeholder-centered messaging. This approach required adapting communication based on the audience, whether I was reaching out to faculty for research information, coordinating with staff about student resources, or meeting with leadership about structural decisions. This helped ensure clarity and avoided misunderstandings while working through changes.

Active listening played a central role, especially when gathering feedback during the content verification stage and when reviewing input from the focus groups. Listening first, reflecting on patterns in feedback, and then incorporating changes aligned with good communication practices and supported a more user-centered design.

## **3. LEADERSHIP MODELS APPLIED IN THE PROJECT**

The rebuild involved complex tasks, cross-functional collaboration, and ongoing decision making. Several leadership models from Northouse's *Leadership: Theory and Practice* were

especially relevant during this process. These models helped guide how I approached challenges, communicated with stakeholders, and managed the direction of the project.

### **SKILLS APPROACH**

The skills approach emphasizes problem-solving abilities, technical competence, and social judgment skills, which are essential for leaders working in complex environments (Northouse, 2019, pp. 56–57). This model directly aligns with the day-to-day demands of the rebuild, which required organizing large amounts of information, coordinating across teams, and navigating the technical requirements of the Modern Campus CMS. Applying the skills approach helped me manage the project systematically, troubleshoot issues, and work effectively with diverse stakeholders.

### **AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP**

Authentic leadership focuses on self-awareness, transparency, balanced processing, and acting in alignment with internal values (Northouse, 2019, p. 199). These principles shaped how I communicated with faculty and staff, especially when verifying sensitive or detailed information. Maintaining honesty, clarity, and consistency created a strong foundation of trust and helped ensure that the rebuild reflected the needs and expectations of our community. Transparent communication also supported decision making, especially when addressing competing priorities or determining the best structure for key content areas.

### **SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

Servant leadership emphasizes listening, empathy, stewardship, and a commitment to meeting the needs of others (Northouse, 2019, pp. 254–256). This model aligned closely with the purpose of the project, which centered on improving the experiences of students, faculty, and prospective users. Prioritizing user experience influenced decisions related to navigation, accessibility, layout, and clarity. The process of gathering information from advisors, coordinators,

faculty, and students reflected a service-oriented mindset that sought to understand and address the needs of the people the website was meant to support.

## **TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Transformational leadership involves inspiring others toward a shared vision, fostering innovation, and encouraging positive change (Northouse, 2019, pp. 165–167). This model was essential in guiding the division through the transition to a new digital identity. The rebuild required stakeholders to imagine and support a more modern, cohesive, and accurate representation of the department. Encouraging this shift, securing buy-in, and maintaining enthusiasm throughout the process reflected transformational leadership in practice.

## **4. HRD PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE PROJECT**

Human Resource Development emphasizes learning, organizational improvement, and the creation of systems that support individual and collective growth. Several HRD principles were central to the rebuild:

- Enhancing access to resources by making information clearer and easier to find
- Supporting faculty development through accurate profiles and visibility of research
- Strengthening organizational communication through consistent layouts and updated content
- Building a sustainable infrastructure that future staff can maintain with ease
- Encouraging stakeholder participation through focus groups and content verification

These principles ensured that the project did not simply fix immediate issues but created long-term value for the division.

## **VI. EVALUATION: FEEDBACK AND RESULTS**

Evaluating the impact of the website rebuild was an important part of understanding how well the project met the needs of the division and how effectively it supported communication,

usability, and the overall digital presence of the LSU Division of Computer Science and Engineering. To ensure that the site was tested thoroughly, we used a combination of qualitative feedback, focus groups, user observations, and ongoing communication with stakeholders. These evaluation methods offered a clear picture of what worked well, what needed improvement, and how the final site supported the goals of the division.

## **1. FOCUS GROUP EVALUATIONS**

After completing the initial draft of the website, the LSU College of Engineering Communications team facilitated focus groups consisting of staff, graduate students, and faculty. Each group reviewed the site independently and discussed clarity, functionality, organization, and overall user experience. Their feedback helped refine the site before launching and provided valuable insight into how different audiences interacted with the design.

### **STAFF FEEDBACK**

Staff participants responded positively to the updated visual design, mobile responsiveness, and the improved structure of faculty profiles. They appreciated the clearer layout of student resources and the consistent formatting across pages. They also offered suggestions regarding image sizes, menu clarity, and color balance. These recommendations helped shape final adjustments to the layout and the visual presentation of several key sections (LSU College of Engineering, n.d.).

### **GRADUATE STUDENT FEEDBACK**

Graduate students valued the simpler structure of program information and found it easier to locate details about degree requirements, forms, and deadlines. They emphasized the importance of having more visible information about research opportunities, funding, and departmental contacts. Their feedback led to updates in program pages, additional links to research resources, and clearer pathways to forms and graduate student support (LSU College of Engineering, n.d.).

## **FACULTY FEEDBACK**

Faculty participants appreciated the updated profiles and the improvements in navigation and consistency across the site. They offered suggestions for strengthening the visibility of research labs, standardizing the naming of certain pages, and improving how academic activities were presented. Their feedback informed additional refinements to page titles, faculty research categories, and the layout of the research section (LSU College of Engineering, n.d.).

The combined feedback from staff, graduate students, and faculty ensured that the website reflected the needs of those who use it most. Incorporating their perspectives supported a user-centered design and aligned with HRD principles focused on continuous improvement and organizational learning.

## **2. LEADERSHIP REFLECTIONS ON EVALUATION**

The evaluation stage provided several opportunities to apply leadership practices. Incorporating feedback required balanced processing, which is an important part of authentic leadership. This approach encouraged thoughtful consideration of diverse perspectives and supported transparent decision making. Listening carefully to each group's experience also reflected servant leadership principles, particularly the focus on meeting the needs of others and improving systems that support the community (Northouse, 2019, pp. 254–256).

Adjustments made following evaluation also aligned with the skills approach, which emphasizes problem solving and social judgment when evaluating complex situations and making improvements (Northouse, 2019, pp. 56–57). These leadership models helped guide the revision process in a way that respected user experiences and strengthened the final outcome.

## **3. POST-LAUNCH RESULTS AND OBSERVATIONS**

Once the website launched, the division experienced noticeable improvements in communication flow, user engagement, and departmental visibility. Students began reporting that

information was easier to find, and the number of emails requesting clarification on basic resources decreased. Faculty members shared that their updated pages helped them present their work more accurately, and several expressed appreciation for how the new design highlighted their accomplishments, publications, and research areas.

The division also received positive feedback from other departments, external partners, and industry representatives. The updated structure, modern appearance, and clearer layout were frequently noted as improvements that better reflected the work happening within the division. These early results demonstrated that the rebuild addressed both practical challenges and broader concerns about how the department presents itself.

#### **4. ADMINISTRATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL FEEDBACK**

The strongest validation came from leadership. The Department Chair, Dr. Ibrahim Baggili, publicly praised the work in emails to faculty, staff, students, and the dean. His feedback emphasized the quality of the rebuild, the collaborative effort involved, and the positive impact the new site had on the division's visibility. Dean Colvin also expressed strong support and informed other departments within the College of Engineering that they would use the CSE website as a model for future Modern Campus transitions. This recognition demonstrated that the project not only improved internal communication but also influenced the direction of digital communication across the college.

#### **5. ALIGNMENT WITH HRD GOALS AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The evaluation and resulting feedback showed that the project met several HRD goals: improved access to information, strengthened organizational communication, and increased effectiveness in supporting students, faculty, and external partners. The rebuild created a foundation for long-term development that aligns with HRD principles focused on learning, performance improvement, and organizational growth.

The division now has a website that is accurate, accessible, and representative of its strengths. The evaluation revealed that the project successfully addressed previously unmet needs, reduced confusion, strengthened community engagement, and positioned the division to continue evolving its digital communication strategies.

## **VII. RESULTS AND OUTCOMES**

The results of the website rebuild demonstrate how a well-planned, collaborative, and strategically guided project can create long-term value for an academic division. The new website significantly improved the clarity, accessibility, and overall effectiveness of the LSU Division of Computer Science and Engineering's digital presence. The outcomes extended beyond the design itself and influenced organizational communication, student engagement, faculty visibility, and the division's reputation within the College of Engineering.

### **1. IMPROVED USER EXPERIENCE AND NAVIGATION**

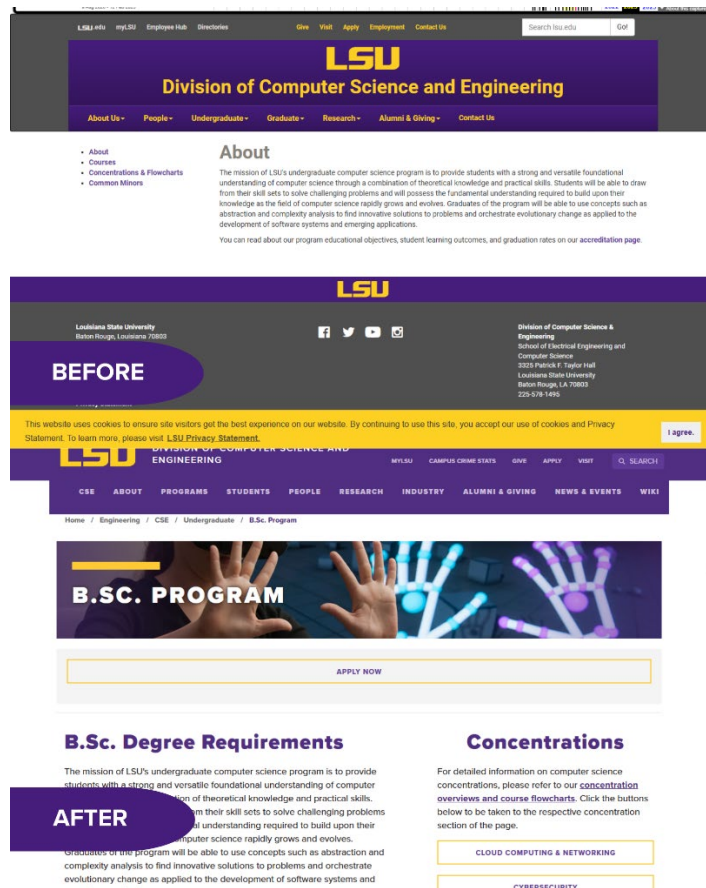
One of the strongest outcomes was the improvement in user experience. The redesigned navigation structure made it easier for all audiences to locate information quickly. Students were able to find advising materials, degree requirements, forms, and resources without confusion. Faculty pages became more informative and visually consistent, helping students, prospective faculty, and industry partners understand their research interests, accomplishments, and academic involvement. These improvements reflect HRD goals related to increasing access to information and supporting organizational learning.

The reduced number of emails requesting clarification on basic information demonstrated that the new structure was working. Students no longer need to search through outdated links or guess where information might be located. This shift supported both efficiency and student success.

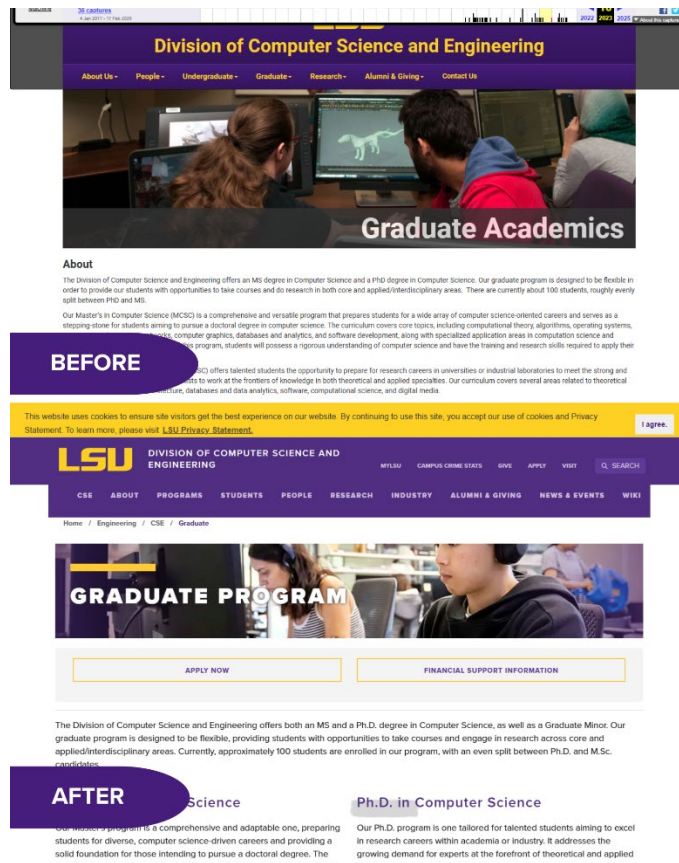
The rebuild also supported internal communication by standardizing information across the site and reducing inconsistencies that previously caused confusion. Consistent formatting, updated language, and accurate pages helped faculty and staff share information with students more effectively. Clearer descriptions of programs and resources improved communication within the division and made it easier to direct students and partners to relevant content.

These results aligned with the principles of authentic leadership, which emphasize transparency and clarity (Northouse, 2019, p. 199). By creating an accurate and accessible space for information, the website became a tool that supports open communication across all levels of the division.

**FIGURE 5. & FIGURE 6. Undergraduate Program Before & After**



**FIGURE 7. & FIGURE 8. Graduate Program Before & After**



## **2. STRENGTHENED COMMUNICATION ACROSS THE DIVISION**

The rebuild also supported internal communication by standardizing information across the site and reducing inconsistencies that previously caused confusion. Consistent formatting, updated language, and accurate pages helped faculty and staff share information with students more effectively. Clearer descriptions of programs and resources improved communication within the division and made it easier to direct students and partners to relevant content.

These results aligned with the principles of authentic leadership, which emphasize transparency and clarity (Northouse, 2019, p. 199). By creating an accurate and accessible space for information, the website became a tool that supports open communication across all levels of the division.

## **3. ENHANCED EXTERNAL PERCEPTION AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

A major outcome of the project was the improvement in how the division is perceived by external audiences. Before the rebuild, the outdated design created a negative impression for prospective students, potential faculty hires, and industry partners. The new website presents the division as modern, organized, and aligned with the standards expected of a computing and engineering unit.

This outcome reflects elements of transformational leadership, which focuses on building a vision that inspires change and improves the culture of an organization (Northouse, 2019, pp. 165–167). The updated site supports recruitment, strengthens industry relationships, and offers a more accurate representation of the division’s strengths and goals.

#### **4. INCREASED FACULTY AND RESEARCH VISIBILITY**

Another clear outcome was the improved visibility of faculty and research. Updated photos, accurate research descriptions, and direct links to publications and professional websites made it easier for external audiences to understand the expertise within the division. This supports the division’s goals related to outreach, collaboration, and research impact. It also benefits faculty by creating a professional and consistent representation of their work online.

Improving faculty visibility aligns with HRD principles related to supporting individual development and creating systems that highlight expertise and accomplishments.

#### **5. POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL FEEDBACK AND RECOGNITION**

The project received strong positive feedback from leadership. The Department Chair, Dr. Ibrahim Baggili, publicly praised the work through emails to faculty, staff, students, and the dean. His recognition highlighted the quality of the rebuild and its value to the division. Dean Colvin also commended the work and encouraged other engineering departments to model their own Modern Campus transitions after the CSE website. This recognition signaled that the project met high standards and contributed to the broader goals of the College of Engineering.

These outcomes reflect how leadership support and collaboration strengthen the results of complex projects. They also demonstrate how the rebuild contributed to organizational development by creating a model for future digital communication projects across the college.

**TABLE 4. Qualitative Summary of Website Outcomes**

<b>Outcome area</b>	<b>Qualitative Result</b>
<b>User Experience</b>	Information was easier to locate, pages were clearer, and navigation felt more intuitive.
<b>Navigation Clarity</b>	Pathways to key pages were simplified, reducing confusion for users.
<b>Design Consistency</b>	The site presented a modern, cohesive appearance with updated visuals and unified branding.
<b>Accessibility Compliance</b>	ADA-related issues were corrected, resulting in a more accessible experience.
<b>Stakeholder Satisfaction</b>	Students, faculty, staff, and leadership reported positive experiences with the redesign.

## **6. LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT**

One of the most meaningful outcomes is the long-term sustainability of the new website. Because of its clear structure, updated content, and accessible design, the site can be maintained more easily by future staff. The rebuild established a strong foundation for continued growth by creating a layout that can adapt as the division expands its programs, partnerships, and initiatives.

The project also created a cultural shift toward valuing clear communication, accessibility, and user experience. These values will continue to influence how the division approaches future projects, which aligns with core HRD goals related to organizational improvement and long-term development.

## SECTION FIVE: REFLECTION

Completing this capstone has been one of the most meaningful academic experiences I have had, because it brought together everything I have learned throughout my studies in communications, sociology, and leadership development. The website rebuild project for the LSU Division of Computer Science and Engineering challenged me to think differently about how organizations communicate and how leadership shows up in everyday work. It required me to recognize gaps, take initiative, collaborate across different groups, and manage a complex project in a way that felt true to my values. This experience confirmed that leadership is not limited to formal authority. It often begins with noticing what is not working and being willing to step up to fix it. In many ways, this project became a real test of the skills and ideas I have been developing in the LHRD program.

One of the biggest lessons I learned was how central communication is to strong leadership. Throughout the website rebuild, I had to understand the needs of students, faculty, staff, and industry partners. Their expectations shaped the way the website needed to function, and listening to them allowed me to create a solution that served everyone more effectively. This reinforced what I have learned about the skills approach to leadership, where technical, human, and conceptual skills matter in different moments (Northouse, 2019, p. 44). I used technical skills when working within the new CMS, human skills when coordinating with faculty and staff, and conceptual skills when understanding the broader impact that digital communication has on the division. Seeing these pieces come together helped me recognize how leadership development is not a single skill set, but a combination of abilities that grow with experience.

The project also revealed some of my strengths. I learned that I am most effective when I am working collaboratively and when I have the space to design and plan systems that improve clarity and organization. I was able to stay focused on long-term goals while managing day-to-day

tasks, which reminded me of how transformational leadership encourages a larger vision that motivates people to work toward meaningful change (Northouse, 2019, pp. 165–167). Even though I was still relatively new to the division when the project began, I felt confident identifying problems and proposing solutions that would make the department stronger. That reinforced the confidence I have been building throughout this program.

At the same time, this project highlighted areas where I want to continue growing. One of the biggest challenges was managing the volume of information and the number of stakeholders involved. There were moments when it felt overwhelming, especially while balancing this project with daily responsibilities in the division. It reminded me that delegation, boundary setting, and clearer prioritization are skills I still want to strengthen. I also want to continue developing my confidence in presenting large-scale projects to leadership. While I am comfortable with written communication and planning, ongoing development in verbal communication and presentation skills will support my long-term career goals in higher education administration.

Another important insight from this project is how much leadership depends on authenticity. Throughout the rebuild, I found myself returning to ideas from authentic leadership that emphasize self-awareness, clarity, and honesty in interactions with others (Northouse, 2019, p. 199). Being transparent about progress, challenges, and decisions helped build trust with faculty and staff. It also helped the project move forward smoothly, because everyone felt informed and included. This reinforced the value of leadership that is grounded in integrity and consistency, especially in roles that influence communication across an organization.

Reflecting on my journal entries throughout the semester, I can see how the project strengthened my identity as a leader. I often wrote about wanting to create systems that support people, improve access to information, and make organizations easier to navigate. This project allowed me to do exactly that. It helped me understand the type of leader I want to be. I want to be

someone who brings clarity, supports others, and builds tools that help people succeed. The rebuild gave me a chance to practice this in a very real way, and it helped me grow into that vision of myself.

Peer feedback throughout the program also influenced how I approached this project. Many of my classmates discussed the importance of empathy, understanding team dynamics, and staying grounded in personal values. Their perspectives reminded me that leadership is relational. It depends on how we treat people and how we communicate through change. This mindset shaped how I interacted with faculty, staff, and students during the rebuild. I stayed mindful of their needs and their experiences with the old website. That focus helped me create something that felt welcoming, accessible, and accurate for everyone.

This project has also influenced my career goals in meaningful ways. Before starting this program, I knew I enjoyed event planning, communication, and coordination. Through this work, I discovered how much I enjoy building systems, improving organizational communication, and shaping the public-facing identity of a department. I want to continue working in higher education administration, supporting projects that improve student experiences and strengthen connections between academic units and their communities. The capstone reinforced that I thrive in roles where I can combine creativity, strategy, and leadership. It also showed me how impactful it can be to take initiative and help shape the direction of an organization.

Looking ahead, I want to continue developing as a leader by taking on more projects that involve communication strategy, organizational design, and student engagement. I want to expand my skills in project management, especially in areas like process mapping, workflow design, and long-term planning. I am also committed to strengthening my ability to mentor and support others, especially students who may benefit from someone helping them navigate academic and professional environments. My next steps include seeking out leadership development workshops,

continuing my education, and staying involved in opportunities that allow me to contribute to positive change within the LSU community.

Overall, this capstone experience helped me better understand who I am as a leader and where I want to grow. It showed me that leadership can be practical and strategic, but also personal and relational. It allowed me to see how my strengths can support an organization, and it helped me identify the skills I want to continue building. Most importantly, it reinforced my commitment to working in higher education and contributing to projects that support clarity, connection, and student success. This project has shaped my confidence, my perspective, and my goals, and it will continue to influence the leader I am becoming.

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Northouse, P. G. (2019). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (8th ed.). Sage Publications.

# LSU Computer Science Website - Staff Focus Group Feedback Summary

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## Summary of Key Feedback from the Staff Focus Group:

### Compliments and Positive Feedback:

1. **Attractive Design:**
  - The overall aesthetic of the **LSU CSE site** was appreciated, particularly the use of clean, modern visuals. It was noted that the website's design appeals to a younger demographic.
2. **Faculty Directory:**
  - The **faculty directory** was praised for its clear structure, allowing users to easily navigate to individual profiles. It was also suggested that updating faculty content regularly would enhance the site's relevance.
3. **Content Accessibility:**
  - **Quick loading times** and **mobile-friendly design** were positively noted, with particular praise for the mobile version being easy to use and less cluttered compared to the desktop version.
4. **Functionality of the OU Comparison:**
  - The **OU site** was found to have more clear and direct links for **student organizations, career outcomes, and financial aid**, providing useful insight for areas that could be improved on the LSU CSE site.

### Areas of Concern

- **Visual Design:**
  - Participants noted that large images on the homepage can be distracting and affect the accessibility and ease of navigation.
  - Some feedback on the color scheme, particularly the use of blue for the CSE Wiki page, was seen as aesthetically displeasing.
  - Some participants suggested smaller images/videos to improve the user experience, and some participants emphasized the need for cleaner design, especially in mobile views. Cropped hero images for landing pages was suggested.
- **Navigation:**
  - Confusion arose around the two separate "Home" buttons at the top navigation bar and the site's footer, which could be made more distinct.
  - Users wanted the scholarship section to be department-specific instead of leading to a general College of Engineering page.
  - Several participants got confused on pages with images at the top that have a title, but directly under it having multiple "apply now" buttons on the page. \*\*
- **Content Issues:**

- Several participants expressed a need for clearer labeling and better navigation to critical information such as **application deadlines**, **financial aid**, and **student organizations**.
- The **Faculty directory** was highlighted as a positive feature, but there was a suggestion to improve the content update process for faculty and staff details.
- A suggestion to include **links to schedule campus tours** directly from the department home page, which would improve the site's accessibility for prospective students and families.

### **Task-Specific Feedback:**

- **Alumni and Career Information:**
  - The need for clear links to **career outcomes** and **alumni success stories** was desired. Participants noted that current information regarding alumni achievements and job placements was either outdated or not easily found. Also the companies listed had no descriptions of types of jobs, and were in an order that seemed too random.
- **Mobile Experience:**
  - The mobile version of the site was praised for being clean and accessible, but some noted that certain dropdowns and links did not work as expected without zooming out on the mobile view. (*UNIVERSITY LEVEL FEEDBACK*)

### **Faculty and Content Updates:**

- The group highlighted the importance of keeping **faculty information up-to-date**, including profiles, awards, publications, and research interests.

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# **LSU Computer Science Website – Graduate Students Focus Group Feedback Summary**

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## **Positive Feedback & Strengths**

1. **User-Friendly for Graduate Students**
  - The new website design received positive feedback, especially for its intuitive navigation for students, with participants finding the faculty profiles and student organization information easily accessible.
2. **Mobile Accessibility**
  - Both the College of Engineering and Computer Science websites were considered mobile-friendly, with users finding it easy to navigate on

smartphones, although some issues with video frames and images were mentioned.

3. **Clear News and Advising Sections**

- The department's news section was highlighted for being well-organized and easy to find. Similarly, the advising section was appreciated for being easy to locate, though some improvements to the flow of information were suggested.

4. **Research Areas and Faculty Information**

- Participants appreciated the ability to access faculty profiles, with LSU's site standing out due to its additional links to personal websites and Google Scholar pages for faculty.

5. **Fluid Design and Modern Aesthetic**

- The design of the new website was considered more modern and fluid than the old one. It was praised for its better visual appeal and smoother information access.

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## Areas of Concern

1. **Lack of a Clear "Contact Us" Section \*\***

- While contact information for faculty and staff was available, the "Contact Us" section was difficult to find and not including general contact details for prospective students.
- **Suggestion:** Add a centralized "Contact Us" button or section at the top of the page. The page should include general inquiries, admissions, and faculty contact details.

1. **Inconsistent Navigation and Information Placement**

- **Admissions Information:** Participants noted confusion around where department-specific admission requirements were located. The LSU site had issues with admissions under other categories (e.g., "Graduate School" instead of directly in the Computer Science section). This could be streamlined for ease of access.
- **Suggestion:** Ensure department-specific admissions, program requirements, and deadlines are clearly visible and accessible on the department page.

2. **Search Functionality Issues – UNIVERSITY LEVEL FEEDBACK**

- The search function was found to be ineffective, especially when looking for specific program-related information like scholarships. Relevant links were often buried under irrelevant results.
- **Suggestion:** Improve the search algorithm to prioritize relevant department-specific pages, such as direct links to scholarship details, requirements, and deadlines.

3. **Research Areas Presentation**

- Participants found the presentation of research areas to be unclear, particularly the use of a carousel-style format that made browsing more cumbersome. There was also a lack of clear links to research areas in this

- carousel
  - **Suggestion:** Replace the carousel with a more structured format, like a list view, and ensure research areas are easily accessible on faculty pages with links to relevant faculty research topics.
- 4. **Advising Information and Wiki Issues**
  - The advising section was well-structured but some students found the CSE Wiki link as a detour from directly accessible, critical information. Also, the Wiki side nav is blue and was a visual disconnect.
  - **Suggestion:** Provide a concise summary of advising information on the advising page, followed by direct links to the Wiki, rather than redirecting students immediately to the Wiki. Make Wiki side nav purple.
- 5. **Event Calendar and Deadlines**
  - **Suggestion:** Implement an event calendar to list important deadlines (e.g., application deadlines, registration dates) to keep users informed and organized.

# LSU Computer Science Website - Faculty Focus Group Feedback Summary

## Positive Feedback & Strengths

1. **Modern and Visually Appealing Design** – Faculty appreciated the updated look and feel of the site, noting that it is an improvement over the previous version.
2. **Faculty Profile Images** – The larger images on faculty profiles were preferred over OU's smaller images, providing a better visual experience.
3. **Research Areas & Publications** – Faculty found research areas and recent publications easy to locate and well-linked to faculty profiles.
4. **Advising Information Placement** – Compared to OU's website, LSU's advising information was easier to find.
5. **Improved Navigation Compared to Old Site** – Some faculty noted that the beta version was a significant improvement over the older LSU site.
6. **Potential for Further Enhancements** – Faculty recognized that the site is a work in progress and acknowledged the efforts being made to refine it.

## Areas of Concern

### Navigation & Organization

1. Excessive scrolling is required to access key information; content should be more compact and efficiently structured.
2. The **About** section is overloaded; consider separating **Academics** as its own menu item.
3. **Faculty pages** contain too much negative space; a two-column format may improve readability. *\*\* (this was mentioned by 3-4 participants, however I seem to remember you saying that it was causing mobile issues)*
4. The **People** section terminology was unclear to one user; reconsider naming

- conventions. (mentioned that “students are people, too”)
5. **Breadcrumb navigation** is inconsistent, making it difficult for users to track their location. *(a couple participants wished for more extensive breadcrumbs instead of a single level. This is also UNIVERSITY LEVEL FEEDBACK, as the “Home” button goes back to LSU main page)*
  6. The **search bar** is not effective in retrieving relevant content quickly. *(This is UNIVERSITY LEVEL FEEDBACK)*

## Content & Accessibility

1. **Mission and vision** statements should be clearly visible and not hidden under collapsible sections. - <https://lsu.edu/fierce-draft/eng/cse/about/missionandvision.php>
2. Course syllabi should be available and organized intuitively (e.g., by course number and semester).
3. Faculty benefits and professional development opportunities are not easily found.
4. Department initiatives, rankings, and research groups are difficult to locate.
5. Research areas should include faculty names and associated labs to provide better context.

## Design & User Experience

1. Large images and excessive empty space negatively impact usability. (shorter hero images)
2. The use of **accordions, tabs and dropdowns** should be minimized for short content to avoid unnecessary clicks. (this was specifically mentioned on the Undergraduate Advisor and Graduate Advisor pages that the amount of information didn’t require tabs) \*\*
3. Font sizes on certain pages (e.g., undergraduate advising) are too large. (On pages where there is a hero image with a title, that counts as a Heading 1. You do not need an additional Heading 1, you can go straight to Heading 2)
4. Some did not like the amount of whitespace. *(Mainly a University Level design decision)*
5. Some felt the ratio of large images to amount of information was too large on the home page.

## Functionality Issues

1. The **MYLSU menu is only partially active**, requiring users to hover over specific letters. *(University level problem)*
2. Faculty profile images should be clickable and linked to additional information. (instead of just a “VISIT FACULTY PAGE” button.)
3. Events are buried under **News & Media**, making them harder to find.
4. The terminology “Professorial faculty” was confusing to multiple users.
5. Website content update submission processes are unclear.