

Build a Better Research Website

Communicating the Value of University Research: Part 4

April 26, 2018

University Research Forum

Managing Your Audio

Audio

Audio Mode:

☒ Use Telephone
☐ Use Mic & Speakers

Dial: +1 800 555 1212

Access Code: 141-607-114

(and [additional numbers](#) ..)

You are connected to audio

If you select the “use telephone” option, please dial in with the phone number and access code provided

Audio

Audio Mode:

☐ Use Telephone
☒ Use Mic & Speakers



MUTED



000000000

[Audio Setup](#)

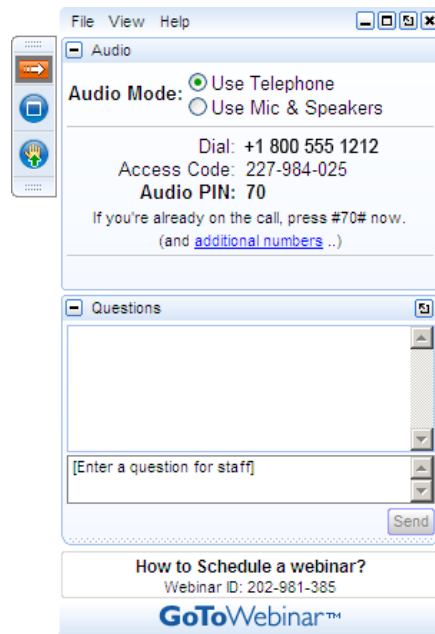
If you select the “mic & speakers” option, please be sure that your speakers/headphones are connected

Managing Your Screen



Use the **orange and white arrow** to minimize and maximize the GoTo panel

Use the **blue and white square** to maximize the presentation area



Managing Your Questions



To ask the presenter a question, please type into the question panel and press send



The screenshot shows a software window titled 'File View Help' with standard window controls. It contains two main panels:

- Audio Panel:** Features a 'Send' button at the top. Below it, 'Audio Mode' has two radio buttons: 'Use Telephone' (selected) and 'Use Mic & Speakers'. It also displays 'Dial: +1 800 555 1212', 'Access Code: 227-984-025', and 'Audio PIN: 70'. A note at the bottom says 'If you're already on the call, press #70# now. (and [additional numbers](#) ..)'.
- Questions Panel:** Contains a large text input area with a vertical scrollbar. Below the input area is a placeholder text '[Enter a question for staff]'. At the bottom right of this panel is a 'Send' button.

Below the Questions panel, there is a footer section with the text 'How to Schedule a webinar?' and 'Webinar ID: 202-981-385', followed by the 'GoToWebinar™' logo.

Build a Better Research Website

Communicating the Value of University Research: Part 4

April 26, 2018

University Research Forum

Today's Presenter



Brooke Thayer
Analyst
University Research Forum
bthayer@eab.com
202-568-7386

Our Full Webconference Series

Communicating the Value of University Research

Four Ways to Invest in Research Communications Staff

Learn ways to more effectively organize communications staff, foster collaboration across campus, and develop templates and protocols to improve staff competencies.

Archived Online

How to Prepare Faculty to Talk About Their Research With External Stakeholders

Hear strategies to encourage faculty to engage in research communications, train them to speak to nonacademic audiences, and leverage strong communicators.

Archived Online

Five Strategies for Elevating Research Communications Efforts

Learn strategies for developing and assessing communication campaigns, improving your social media presence, and creating more compelling communications materials and events.

Archived Online

Build a Better Research Website

Learn strategies for organizing and designing your research website to better engage stakeholders, highlight strengths, and demonstrate impact.



TODAY
Thursday, April 26
1:00 – 2:00pm ET

1 How Effective Are University Research Websites?

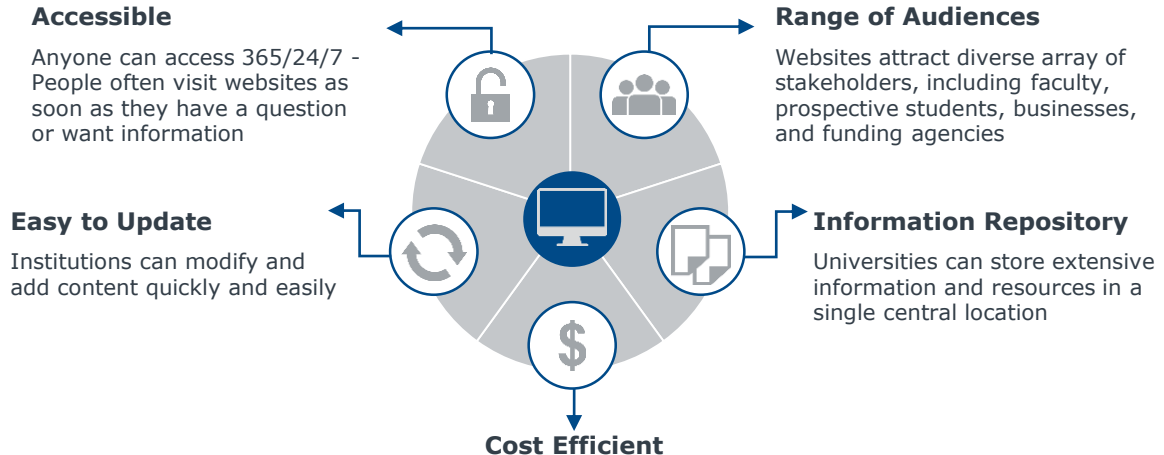
2 Four Key Areas for Improvement

3 Questions?

Missing a Golden Opportunity

Websites as Gateways to the Research Enterprise

The Potential Benefits of Your Website



Updating and maintaining a website can save universities money on print materials

“The website is really the centerpiece of the communications strategy and platform...getting it right is crucial in establishing the profile and impression that you need to convey.”

*AJ Cheline, Director of Marketing and Communications
Office of Research, University of California Davis*



Sizing Up the Current Landscape

How Well Are We Actually Doing?

URF Website Audit-in-Brief

- Audited 50 randomly-selected research universities
 - 25 with research expenditures exceeding \$100M
 - 25 with research expenditures between \$10 and \$99M
- Developed a list of 14 most valuable research website features based on website usability principles and an examination of best-in-class research websites
- In most cases, features had to exist within three clicks from research homepage to count



How Does Your Institution Stack Up?

Download the Research Website Self-Audit Today
www.eab.com/urf/researchcommunications

Best-in-Class Features



Checklist for the University Research Forum 2017 Research Website Audit

14 Most Valuable Research Website Features

1. First Result in Google Search

Start at www.google.com. Search "[Institution's full name] research." Is your main research website the first result?

8. Highlights Large-Scale Initiatives and/or Expertise

Does your website highlight large-scale university research initiatives and priorities? Grand challenges? Areas of specialization and/or expertise?

2. Visible Link on Institutional Home Page

Navigate to your institutional homepage. Is there a visible "Research" link on the main menu? Make sure viewers can get from the institutional homepage to your research site in one click.

9. Compelling and Jargon-Free Research Stories

Does your website profile interesting research stories in compelling, plain language terms?

3. Matching Google and Homepage Links

Does the link on your institutional homepage lead to the same research site that the first Google result did?

10. Communicates Broader Impact of Research

Does your website articulate the broader impact of research in terms of economic engagement and similar meaningful metrics (e.g. lives saved, jobs created, patents filed)?

4. Visually Engaging

Is your main research website visually engaging? Does it include several videos, photos, and/or infographics?

11. Contact Information and/or Instructions for Media

Does your website provide contact information and instructions for media?

5. Research-Specific Social Media Links

Does your main research page have the links to research-specific social media accounts?

12. Information for Multiple Stakeholders

Does your website provide clearly distinguished information for multiple audiences (e.g., undergraduates, researchers, corporate partners)? Is this part of the navigation menu?

6. Embedded Social Media Feed

Does your research website have the feed from a research-specific social media account(s) embedded on the page(s)?

13. Research-Specific News Center

Does your website have a research-specific news center or page separate from the institution's news center?

7. Research Enterprise Metrics

Does your website have visible metrics on the research enterprise (e.g., funding, awards, centers)?

14. Faculty and Scholarship Search Engine

Does your research website have a search engine viewers can use to find faculty and research in certain disciplines or topical areas?

Underwhelming Results

Audit Reveals Opportunities for Improvement Across All Institutions

Key Website Audit Findings

0

Not a single institution had a research website with all 14 features

<50%

Less than half of institutions incorporated 6 or more of the 14 features



~5 of 14

Average number of most valuable research website features for an institution was 5.48



Institutions with higher research expenditures had stronger research websites¹

1) T-test ($p < 0.05$) showed statistically significant difference in the number of website features between institutions with higher ($> \$100M$) and lower ($\$10-99M$) research expenditures.

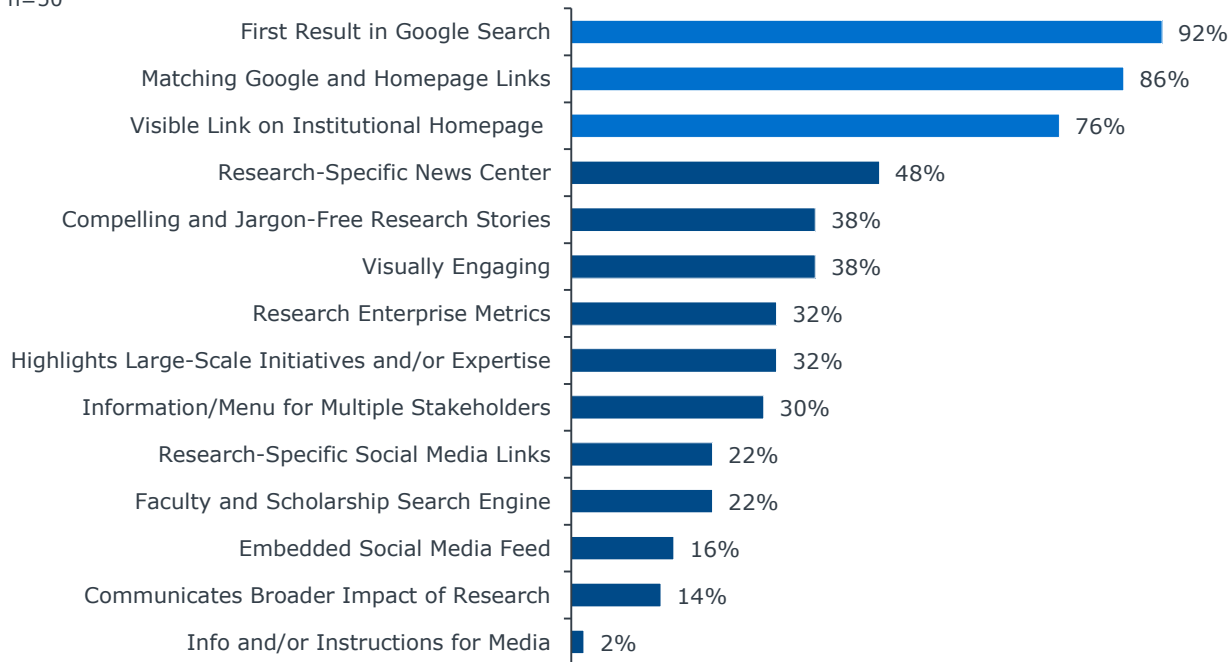
Failure to Move Beyond the Basics

Research Websites Rarely Include More Intermediate or Advanced Features

Prevalence of Most Valuable Research Website Features

Percent of sample institutions that had each research website feature

n=50



Source: University Research Forum 2017 Research Website Audit.

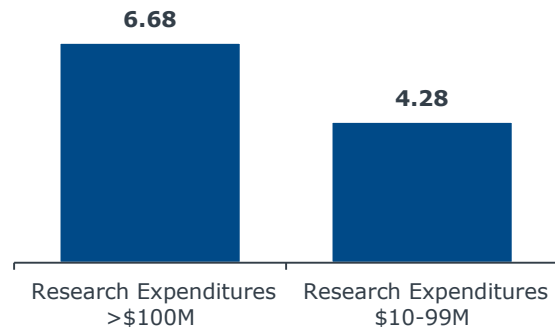
Higher Expenditures, Stronger Websites

Notable Differences in Number of Features and Visibility of Research Sites

Overall Quality of Research Websites

Average number of most valuable research website features

n=50

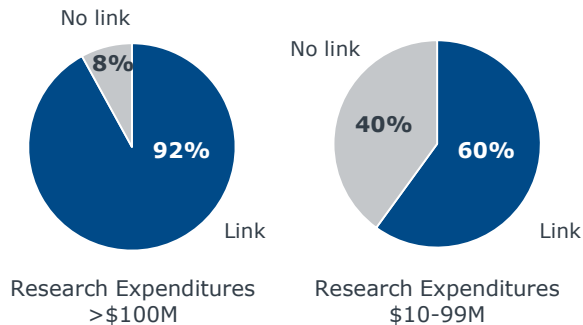


Visibility on Institutional Homepage

Percentage of institutions with visible "Research" link on their institutional homepage

n=25

n=25



High Risk, High Reward

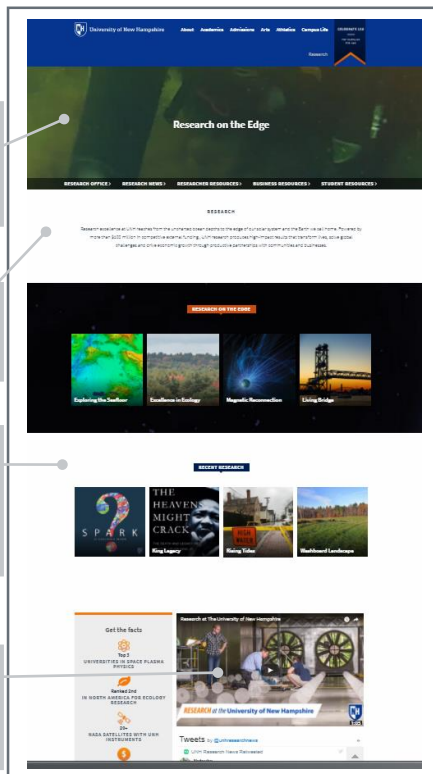
Creating Separate Internally- and Externally-Facing Sites

Externally-facing research site

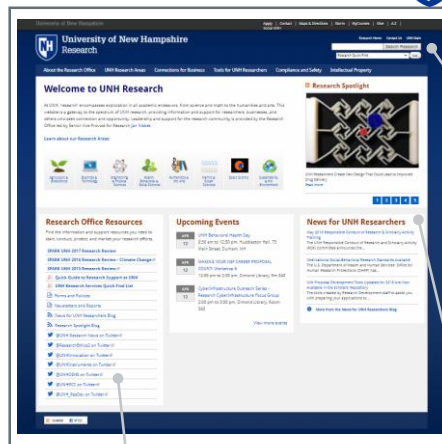
More visually engaging

Highlights stories relevant to external audiences

Video overview of UNH research



Internally-facing research site



Resource-centric

Focused primarily on UNH researchers

1

How Effective Are University Research Websites?

2

Four Key Areas for Improvement

3

Questions?

Pinpointing the Critical Deficits



Four Key Areas Where Websites Are Often Lacking



Engaging With Visuals

- Most viewers leave web pages in under 20 seconds
- Viewers are more likely to remain on sites if they are not solely text-based

Targeting Specific Stakeholders



- Viewers are eager to get to information that relates to them
- Institutions can keep viewers engaged longer if they provide navigational links and tailored information for different stakeholders



Highlighting Unique Strengths

- Research websites blur together so institutions need to make their sites distinctive
- If institutions stand out in key areas, they should publicize that information

Including Meaningful Metrics



- Non-academic audiences don't value publications and citations as much as academic audiences
- Potential funders, lawmakers, and the public at-large are more compelled by concrete examples of how research relates to their lives and communities

Creating a Multidimensional Website

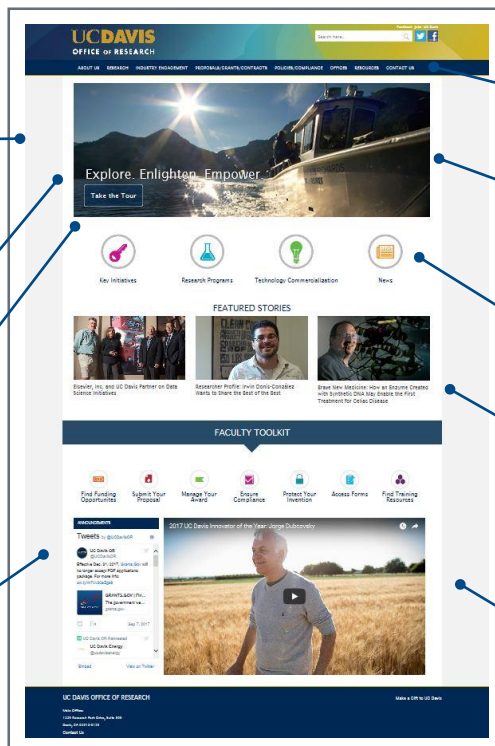
Overarching Strategy:

1. **Engage** – capture viewers' attention
2. **Direct** – get viewers to the info they want and need

Pithy catchphrase

Links to an “elevator pitch” page that provides viewers who don’t want to explore the site with a condensed overview of research at UC Davis

Embedded social media feed



Clear navigation menu with drop-down resources

Fast-moving video loop immediately draws viewers' attention

Icon-style menus enhance organization, add visual appeal

All text is accompanied by visuals

The main page requires limited scrolling

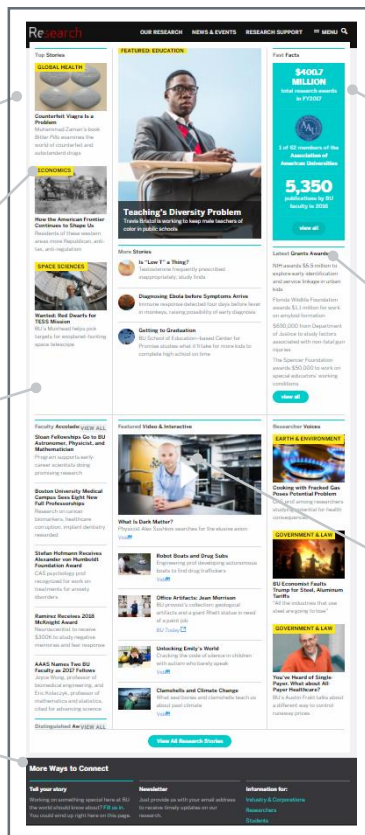
Embracing an Editorial Style

Very story-focused

Stories are visibly labeled by content area

Arranging content in columns allows for more info on the page and reduces the need to scroll

Creates easy mechanism for stakeholders to submit stories



Key metrics are front-and-center, link to separate page with more detail

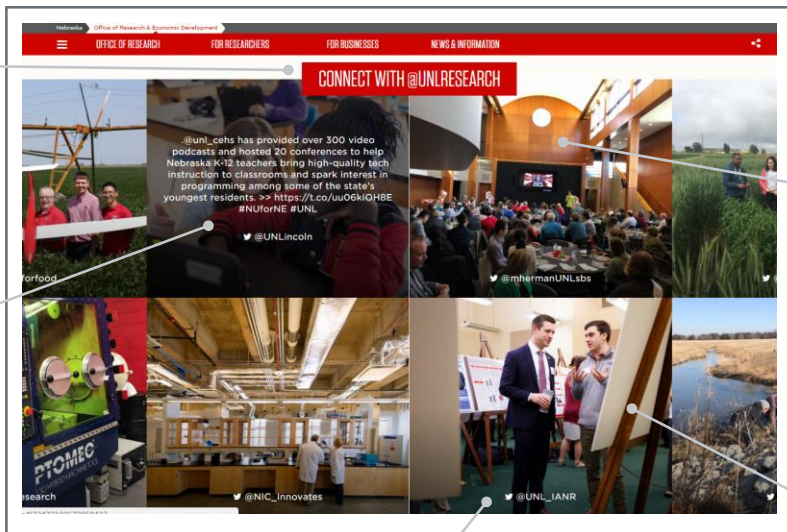
Clear headings for each section of the page

Numerous photos, as well as more interactive videos

Leveraging Social Media to Boost Visual Appeal

Leverages social media posts to increase visual appeal of site

Roll over each tile to see the actual post



Each tile pulls from a Tweet

Clicking on each tile redirects viewers to Twitter account

Draws on Tweets from various UNL Twitter accounts, as well as Tweets in which UNL was mentioned

First Impressions Matter

Designing a Visually Appealing Website to Increase Viewer Engagement

Key Takeaways



Make it multidimensional:

Combine different visual elements (videos, photos, social media links or posts, *and* infographics) to keep viewers engaged longer



Invest in graphics:

Viewers do not read website text word-by-word, so utilize high-quality graphics to communicate



Remove clutter:

Create a clear navigation menu with drop-down links and resources so that the rest of the page can be concise and visually engaging

Engaging with Visuals

38%

Percent of institutions with visually engaging websites that included video clips, photos, and/or infographics



Ensuring Key Stakeholders Get What They Want

University of Idaho



The screenshot shows the University of Idaho Research website. The header includes the University of Idaho logo, navigation links for Prospective Students, Current Students, Parents, Alumni, and Faculty & Staff, and buttons for APPLY, GIVE, and VISIT. A secondary navigation bar lists Academics, Admissions, Student Life, Research, Outreach, About, and Arts, along with DIVERSITY, ATHLETICS, EVENTS, NEWS, DIRECTORY, and A-Z. The main content area features a 'Research' section with a large image of a head filled with icons. A dropdown menu is open on the left, listing various research-related topics. A callout box points to the 'I WANT TO' button, and another points to the 'VIEW STORIES' button.

Clear menu options for stakeholders

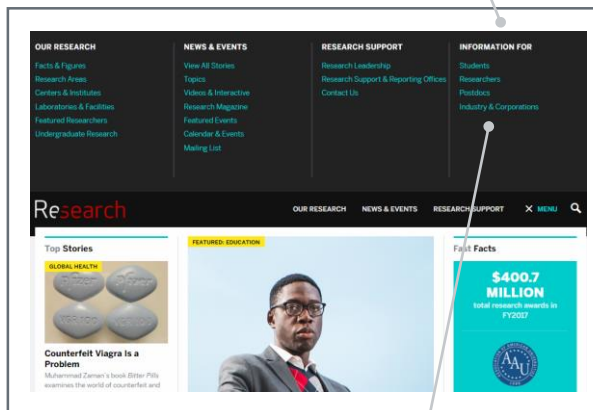
Each menu option has dropdowns with targeted resources for that particular stakeholder

Menu options link to landing pages for each stakeholder group

Dropdown with options:
"Get Help with a Grant Proposal"
"Get Involved in Student Research"
"Fund a Research Project"

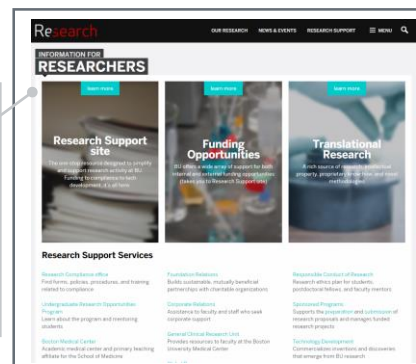
Structuring Your Website to Meet Viewer Needs

Main navigational menu includes an "Information For" bar with options for key stakeholders

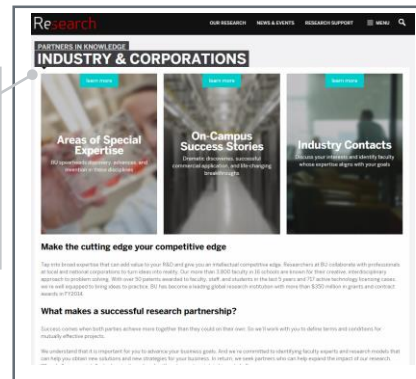


Menu bar links to individual pages with curated information targeted to the relevant stakeholder

Separate stakeholder pages allows BU to keep more logistical, internally-facing info off main page



Provides external stakeholders only with the info relevant to them and their needs



It's Not Just About Faculty Anymore

Making Your Website Stakeholder-Friendly

Key Takeaways



Tailor information:

You can keep viewers engaged longer if you provide information tailored specifically to different audiences



Include stakeholders in menu:

Creating a navigation menu with options "For students," "For researchers," "For businesses," and "For media" reduces clutter and improves organization



Provide clear starting point:

Including an explicit "I want to..." menu with the most common stakeholder requests provides viewers with quick-and-easy directions for navigating the site

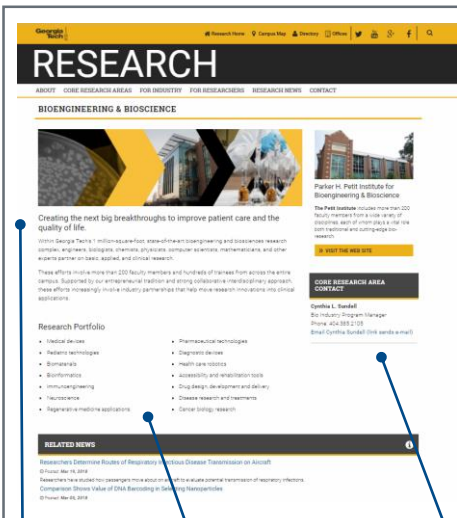
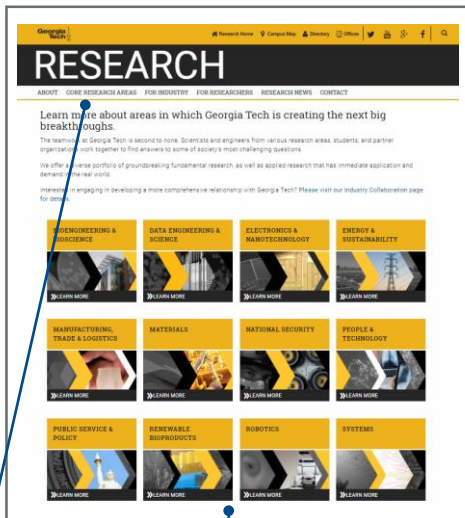
Targeting Specific Stakeholders

30%

Percent of institutions that provided clearly distinguished information for multiple audiences



Elevating the Profile of Your Core Research Areas



Includes "Core Research Areas" link on main navigation menu

Each core research area links to an individual page with more details

Highlights why Georgia Tech is uniquely positioned to conduct research in this area

Provides clear overview of areas of expertise and related news stories

Includes key contact info for the research area

Drawing Attention to Your Distinctive Research



University of Colorado
Boulder

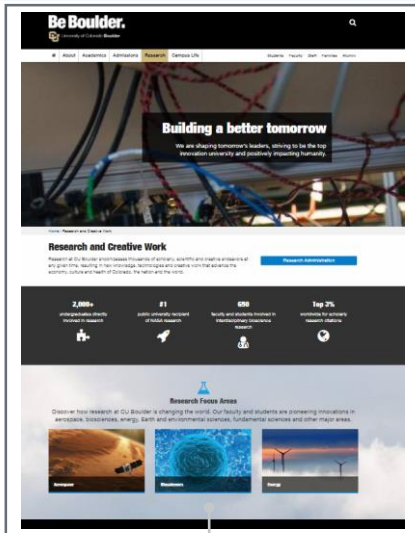
Research focus area pages
use same structure and style
as main research page

Highlights news stories
related to the research focus
area

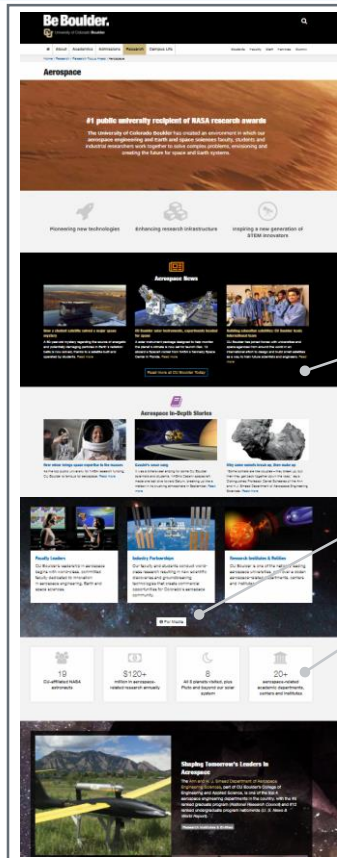
Includes link “For Media”

Key metrics showing
accomplishments

Bottom of page includes
more stories, facilities and
resources, and key
departments, institutes, and
centers

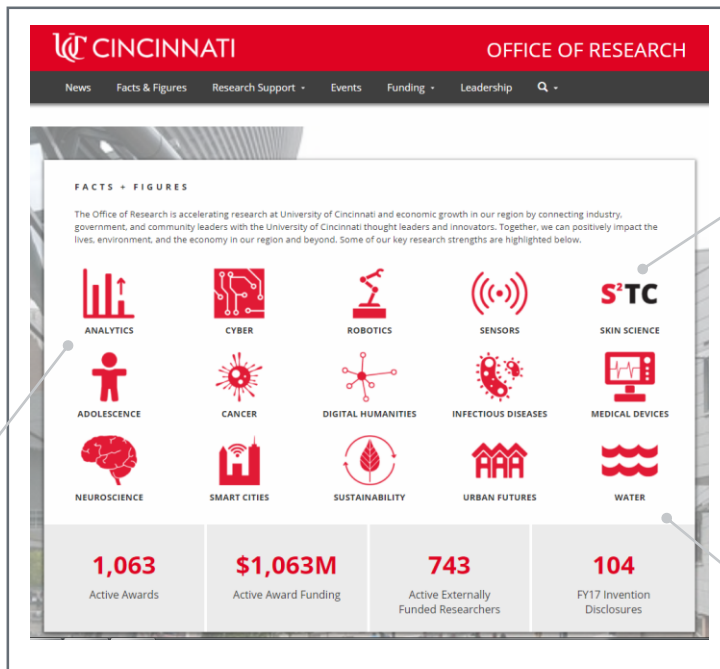


Profiles three key research
focus areas on main research
homepage, each of which link to
separate page with more info



Source: University of Colorado Boulder, available at
<https://www.colorado.edu/research> and
<https://www.colorado.edu/research/focus/aerospace>.

Using Simple Icons to Highlight Strength Areas



FACTS + FIGURES

The Office of Research is accelerating research at University of Cincinnati and economic growth in our region by connecting industry, government, and community leaders with the University of Cincinnati thought leaders and innovators. Together, we can positively impact the lives, environment, and the economy in our region and beyond. Some of our key research strengths are highlighted below.

 ANALYTICS	 CYBER	 ROBOTICS	 SENSORS	 SKIN SCIENCE
 ADOLESCENCE	 CANCER	 DIGITAL HUMANITIES	 INFECTIOUS DISEASES	 MEDICAL DEVICES
 NEUROSCIENCE	 SMART CITIES	 SUSTAINABILITY	 URBAN FUTURES	 WATER

1,063 Active Awards	\$1,063M Active Award Funding	743 Active Externally Funded Researchers	104 FY17 Invention Disclosures
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This style and organization allows for highlighting a lot of different areas in a small space and without overwhelming viewers

Icon-style approach helps boost visual appeal of main research page

This is a fairly simple upgrade – all you need are the appropriate icons

Taking Advantage of Your Research Advantages

Emphasizing Institutional Initiatives and Expertise

Key Takeaways



Make sure you stand out:

Research websites often sound similar so your site should emphasize what your institution is uniquely positioned to study, not using language that any other institution could use



Capitalize on investments:

If your institution is investing in strategic research areas, publicize this information to online audiences – it can build additional support and enhance reputation



Keep it simple:

It can be as easy as identifying your institution's key research areas and including a brief explanation about the importance of each

Highlighting Unique Research Strengths

30%

Percent of institutions that highlighted large-scale university research initiatives, priorities, and/or expertise on their research websites

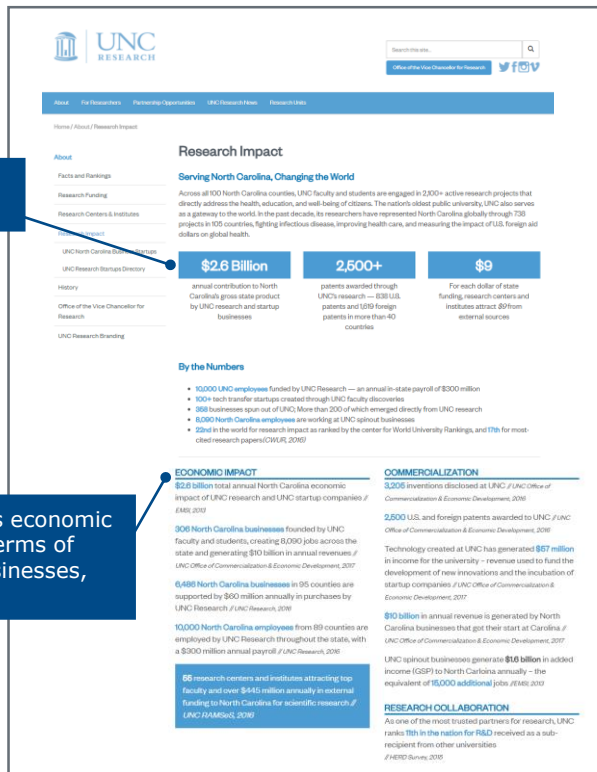


Connecting Research to Community Impact



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Key facts and figures



Emphasizes economic impact in terms of dollars, businesses, and jobs

Projects By County

UNC centers and institutes are conducting over 575 research and service projects in counties across all of North Carolina that help our state's communities thrive.

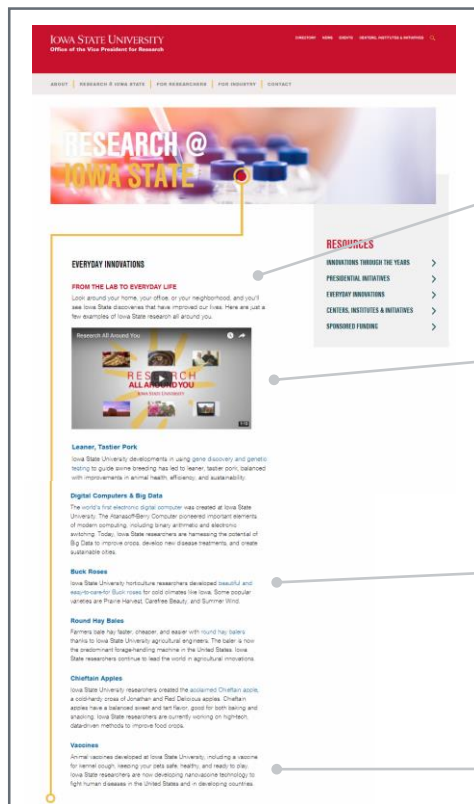
- Creating jobs for North Carolinians left unemployed after the loss of furniture, manufacturing, and textile jobs.
- Making North Carolina's roads and highways safer.
- Preventing disease in our state.
- Providing quality education to North Carolina's children and adults.
- Helping communities and local government prepare for natural disasters.



Focuses specifically on the impact in North Carolina

Relating Research to Everyday Life

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY



Frames impact of research as improving everyday lives

Video showing how Iowa State's research is "all around you"

Highlights six concrete examples of how Iowa State research has had an everyday impact

Descriptions are clear, concise, and easy to understand

Source: Iowa State University, available at <https://www.vpresearch.iastate.edu/research-iowa-state/everyday-innovations/>.

LEHIGH
UNIVERSITY


LEHIGH
 UNIVERSITY

STUDENTS, FACULTY & STAFF | PARENTS | VISITORS | ALUMNI

Q

ABOUT

ACADEMICS

RESEARCH

ADMISSIONS

STUDENT LIFE

ATHLETICS

GIVING

RESEARCH/INQUIRY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH & INQUIRY STUDIES

GRADUATE EDUCATION

LIFE

CONTACT US

PUBLICATIONS

LEHIGH RESEARCH

REVIEW

ENGINEERING RESOLVE

ARTS AND SCIENCES/

POLICY &

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

TO PRACTICE

RESEARCH AND LEARNING

RESOURCES

Research That Matters

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

The research says that Lehigh University is taking on the world's most complex problems and solving challenging questions. Driven by the impact of their work, our faculty are expanding research that affects both globally and locally. From obesity to algal bloom and big data to health care, Lehigh's enduring commitment to pioneering understanding and transforming perspectives has a profound effect on how we see ourselves and how we address humanity's most pressing problems. Learn more >

2017
 VOLUME NO. 2

**LEHIGH
 RESEARCH
 REVIEW**

DOES FRACKING BUILD OR BREAK THE WELL-BEING OF COMMUNITIES?

[Go to the review >](#)

DAVID CASAGRANDE IS DIGGING DEEP TO FIND OUT

Competition can motivate people to do more. In fact, it's one of the most powerful motivators in the workplace. But what if the competition is not a person, but a machine? In the case of David Casagrande, the competition is a machine that is designed to find out how people think. Casagrande is a professor of psychology and director of the Center for the Study of the Mind and Brain. He is also the author of the book "The Mind and the Machine: How the Brain Works and How It Can Be Hacked." Casagrande is currently working on a project that involves using a machine to find out how people think. The machine is designed to be able to read people's minds. Casagrande is currently working on a project that involves using a machine to find out how people think. The machine is designed to be able to read people's minds.

For more information on Casagrande's work, [click here >](#)

Clicking "Get the answer" prompts dropdown story about research addressing that specific question

Linking Research to Audience Interests

Using Meaningful Metrics to Communicate Research Impact

Key Takeaways



Use impact terminology:

Make sure your site minimizes scientific jargon and instead speaks in economic, community, and impact terms



Relate research to local community:

Emphasize the impact of research on your institution's city and/or state



Provide concrete examples:

Explain how research has had a real world impact (e.g., led to cures or new drugs, changed the way people do everyday tasks, helped children stay safe)

Including Meaningful Metrics

14%

Percent of institutions that effectively communicated broader impact of research in terms of economic engagement and other meaningful metrics (jobs created, businesses founded, patents filed)



▶ How Does Your Institution Stack Up?
Download the Research Website Self-Audit Today
www.eab.com/urf/researchcommunications

We review the research websites of your peer institutions so you can gauge how your website stacks up

1

How Effective Are University Research Websites?

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Four Key Areas for Improvement

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Questions?

Questions?



To ask the presenter a question, please type into the question panel and press send



The screenshot shows the GoToWebinar application window. It has a menu bar with 'File', 'View', and 'Help'. Below the menu bar is a toolbar with icons for chat, audio, and help. The main window is divided into two panels. The top panel is titled 'Audio' and contains the following text: 'Audio Mode: ☒ Use Telephone ☐ Use Mic & Speakers', 'Dial: +1 800 555 1212', 'Access Code: 227-984-025', 'Audio PIN: 70', and 'If you're already on the call, press #70# now. (and [additional numbers](#) ..)'. The bottom panel is titled 'Questions' and contains a large text area for typing a question, a smaller text area with the placeholder '[Enter a question for staff]', and a 'Send' button. At the bottom of the window, there is a footer with the text 'How to Schedule a webinar? Webinar ID: 202-981-385' and the 'GoToWebinar™' logo.

**Or send us feedback
and questions
directly:**

Brooke Thayer

bthayer@eab.com

Telling the Story of Research

Tactics for Communicating the Value of University Research

1.

Building Staff Capabilities and Coordination

- 1) Campaign-Based Templates
- 2) Purpose-Driven Collaborations Forums
- 3) Beat Reporting
- 4) Faculty Feedback Protocols

2.

Cultivating Faculty Engagement

- 5) Faculty Media Spotlight
- 6) Immersive Training
- 7) Faculty Leader Fellowship

3.

Optimizing Communications Channels

- 8) Targeted Campaigns
- 9) Website Enhancement Audit
- 10) Social Media Improvement Guide
- 11) Compelling Content Library
- 12) Community-Connected Events
- 13) Strategic Scorecard

Making the Most of Your Membership

Research Communications Services and Resources

Services



Facilitated Onsite Presentations

Our experts visit campuses to lead sessions highlighting key insights for senior leaders and helping internal teams select the most relevant practices and next steps



Research Strategic Plan Review

Receive a personalized evaluation of your strategic plan along with feedback and recommendations



Schedule an Expert Phone Consultation

Let us be your thought partner in strategizing about your research communications approach



Ask EAB

Send us your institution-specific questions. Our team will provide you with relevant practices, resources, and next steps

Resources



Communications Self-Assessment

Use this self-test to assess the current status of research communications on your campus



Effective Media Conversations Planning Worksheet

This tool will help communications staff guide conversations with faculty who are preparing to speak with the media



Research Website Self-Audit

Complete this checklist to evaluate how your research website measures up in terms of the 14 most valuable website features



Research Fact Sheet Template

Use this template to develop your own fact sheets that articulate the value of research in a compelling way to key stakeholders



Social Media for Research Communications

A guide for increasing public engagement through social media communications

Next Meeting Series Around the Corner

Our 2018 Agenda

Research Enterprise Strategy in the Trump Era

- Federal policy trends and their implications for research growth strategy
- Assessing and competing for best-bet federal funding opportunities

Confronting the Future of Facilities and Administration (F&A) Funding

- Articulating the value of F&A internally and externally
- Effective policies and procedures to maximize F&A recovery

Helping Faculty Achieve Their Full Research Potential

- Supporting faculty to increase extramural funding
- Best-in-class grant writing boot camps, internal review panels, and mentorship programs
- Holistic career development to retain faculty and keep them engaged in the research enterprise

Small-group breakout workshops

An opportunity to get more customized support to help you:

- Build and maintain partnerships with corporations
- Communicate the value of university research
- Tackle the mounting burden of research administration

Register Now!

National Meetings:

Executive Sessions:

*June 20, 2018
Washington, DC*

*August 10, 2018
Chicago, IL*

*October 16, 2018
Dana Point, CA*

Team Session:

*September 13, 2018
Washington, DC*

Questions?



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**Or send us feedback
and questions
directly:**

Brooke Thayer

bthayer@eab.com

Please Fill Out the Survey



Please take a minute to provide your thoughts on today's presentation at the end of the webinar when you log out.

Thank You!

Please note that the survey does not apply to webconferences viewed on demand.