Website Content Guide
Delta College web strategies and governance

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Delta College's informational online spaces are separated into three sites, each catering to a specific audience. It is important for all three sites to be accessible and represent Delta's high standards. Our goal is to satisfy our online visitors' reasons for coming to one of Delta's websites and have them leave with easily accessible, reliable information.

The recruiting website (www.delta.edu) provides relevant and compelling information about programs, people, unique-selling features and services in an accessible and engaging manner to the future student audience, as well as other audiences such as parents and the community.

Inside Delta (formerly Portal) is designed for current students and employees of Delta College and is also now publicly available. The goal of Inside Delta is to connect users with all of the information they need to be successful during their time at Delta.

Page content

So, what goes on the page?

The content of the site is what's most important. It needs to be relevant, current, sustainable, compelling and succinct.

It should be created with the target audience in mind and support the website goals and objectives. It should also be written with a consistent tone and voice with the expectation that the viewer will be "scanning" for pertinent or interesting information, but not "reading" the information in the traditional sense. Make sentences short, clear and focused on one idea. Using subheads and short, bulleted lists also helps to chunk content for easy scanning.

Page content should be reviewed regularly for a consistently optimal viewer experience. Best practices suggest refreshing content every six months keeps the page from dropping in search engine listings.

What shouldn't go on the page?

Please don't duplicate content on multiple sites. Determine best location for your information based on audience. If that information is also helpful for another audience, link to it.

The college is not allowing staff directory information and bios as page content. Faculty may include bio information on their eLearning site. Specific academic course offerings or syllabi, curricula guides, study guides or other course specific aids should also be located within eLearning (D2L).

Archival content and historical timelines should be removed, except for a few exceptions to comply with legal and transparency guidelines.

When possible, PDFs should be converted to actual web content.

Content strategy best practices

- Keep in mind Delta's goals and objectives.
- Give the viewer what they want to know.
- Make it easy to understand, and useful.
- Update regularly so it never gets old.
- Make sure it's accessible.
- Avoid the use of internal jargon, such as 'Articulation Agreements.' Instead, use something more visitor-friendly, such as 'Transfer Agreements.'

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) best practices

- Create content based on your audience's needs and interests. Use keywords (the ones your audience are using to search with) in your headings, sub-headings and throughout your copy. Include an introductory paragraph that explains what the page is about and include these keywords.
- Make your content relevant to the topic with good, comprehensive information.
- Use meaningful, descriptive links when it makes sense and will be helpful.
- Headings and subheadings are important. Make sure they're unique, and accurately describe the content on the page.
- Top-ranking pages load in one second. Marketing will make sure your images meet, but don't exceed, quality standards prior to loading them into the content management system.
- Use numbered lists, bolds and italics when appropriate, and headers and sub-heads to break up the page. Make it easy to scan for the information that's relevant to them.
- Convert PDFs to web content.

Use these great resources to help you write fabulous copy for the web:

- www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/writing-for-the-web.html
- www.enchantingmarketing.com/writing-for-the-web-vs-print/

Governance

The primary goal of Delta's website governance procedure is to empower college entities and stakeholders to develop engaging, accurate and relevant web content while maintaining a consistent, high-quality brand image and voice. Standardization is necessary to create a uniform user experience for our visitors.

Roles & responsibilities

Web Marketing Team
- Site administrator for all web content and the website user experience.
- Ensure logical, effective navigation throughout the websites.
- Review content changes made by content leads.
- Work with CMS vendor on IT issues.
- Manage CMS workflow permissions.
- Ensure standards and procedures are being followed.
- Resolve non-compliance issues.
- Provide analytics support.
- Create and maintain marketing content for homepage and other top-level pages.
- Communicate with content leads and content advisors via listserv and schedule meetings to share web content resources such as new developments and standards, strategy, writing and CMS training.

Content Advisors
- Subject area experts accountable for supplying information on their specific topic.
- Routinely monitor content within their jurisdiction to ensure it is accurate and relevant.
- Work with web marketing team to develop content and work with content leads to maintain content.
- Proofread all content published on their area of expertise, approve for posting.

Content Leads
- Understand and adhere to web standards guide, web procedure and relevant laws.
- Routinely review and update content.
- Develop and implement short- and long-term content plans that include a review process within the respective unit to ensure all posted content has the appropriate management approval and contains no errors.
- Bring any web management or technical issues to the attention of the web marketing team in a timely manner.
- Read and comply with listserv communications.
- Attend regularly scheduled trainings and informational meetings provided by the web marketing team in order to stay current with new developments and standards as they are implemented.

Web Committee
- Ensures that future decisions affecting the websites are strategically considered and consistent with the college's strategic goals and branding guidelines.
- Set priorities for future implementations and changes.
- Ensures the website meets all legal and regulatory requirements.
- Appeals body for non-compliance issues web marketing team is unable to resolve.

Accessibility

Information on the websites needs to be available to all visitors, including those with visual, hearing, mobility and cognitive disabilities. The college is dedicated to serving all students, however there are also legal obligations not to discriminate against people with disabilities. The college standards for web accessibility are from the guidelines found in section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Worldwide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 AA.

While Delta's content management system helps us adhere to accessibility standards, here are some key practices we should keep in mind:

- Be sure all images and links have an alternative text description.
- Avoid using images to display text or text layered on top of images. Important information must still be usable when images are turned off.
- Use tables only for tabular data, not to assist with design, and be sure to use table headings.
- Use descriptive text for link text. It should be understood when read out of context.
    - Example: Complete the Application form.
    - Not: Click here for application form.
- Don't use software specific document types. Convert files to PDF format and label links with the format in parentheses after the text for identification by screen readers. It is a best practice to convert information to web content, when possible.
    - Example: Application form (PDF)
- Provide a transcript or captions for audio and video with speech.
- Don't require users to perceive font, color or other styling changes in order to understand meaning.
    - Example: Refer to the highlighted word or the items marked in red.

External links

Per Delta's accessibility guidelines, links to outside web pages must open in a new window. Links to documents, such as PDFs, should also open in a new window.

Please keep in mind that the links hosted on your Inside Delta pages must connect students with safe, secure and up-to-date webpages and documents. Only host links to accredited professional resources, .edu, or .gov sites. Monitor these links frequently to ensure your link isn't broken.

Images and video

Photos

All photography should feature real-life situations at Delta College. Photos should be candid, shot with a shallow depth of field, with great emphasis on composition. They should look collegiate and represent the great work that is done at Delta. Stock photography is strongly discouraged.

Delta has approved photos that are resized for the website. If you are looking for a more specific photo or need one taken for your purposes, contact Marketing. If you chose to take your own photo, everyone photographed must sign a photo release form. Never copy images found on the Internet or use someone else's photo without permission.

Photos should look natural and not have any effects applied to them such as artistic filters or overlaid text or graphics.

Videos

Having video on your website is a great way to share information with your audience in a way that lets them experience and understand much more than through text alone. Due to copyright and captioning regulations, all videos must be produced by Delta College.

Before beginning the process of producing a video for the Delta website, contact Marketing to make sure that the project does not replicate other planned work, is consistent with the mission of Delta and will support Delta's web and video standards. Marketing can help you determine the right messaging for your audience and assist with video direction and production.

See Delta's [video standards (PDF)](#) for more information.

QR codes

QR codes should not be displayed on a webpage. If you choose to use a QR code in a print publication, be sure to link it to extended information.

External websites

Due to security risks, accessibility compliance and brand standards, Delta College highly discourages the creation of microsites for any of our existing audience types. All content for future students, current students, employees and community members should be housed on college-sanctioned platforms.

Social media sites

Delta College highly discourages the creation of departmental or group social media sites. All content for future students, current students and community members should be posted using Delta College's main social media channels managed by the Marketing department. By doing so, your content will reach a larger audience.

If you choose to create a social media account as a way to interact with your specific audience, remember they do carry extra responsibility. Before implementing, consider the following:

- There must be two or more administrators, one being the Marketing department.
- Do you have the time to properly manage this account and post timely, quality content?
- Who is responsible for maintaining the content?
- What is your objective and who is your audience?
- Remember, you are not just representing your area within Delta College. To someone that sees your page, you ARE Delta College.

Recruiting website – delta.edu

The Delta College recruiting website is, in most cases, our audiences' first look at the college, and as such, our most important tool to provide reliable and informative content that positions Delta as their top choice for higher education in the Great Lakes Bay Region.

The goal of the website is to provide relevant and compelling information about programs, people, unique selling features and services in an accessible and engaging manner to the future student audience, as well as other audiences such as parents and the community. As Delta's 'front door,' their impression of and experience with the website may determine whether Delta College will be a part of their future. Our goal is to satisfy their reason for visiting and stimulate future interaction.

Audiences

Target audience
Prospective students, ages 15-45 years old.

Secondary audiences
Parents and community members.

Page content and organization

Delta's recruiting website is organized in a logical, visitor-centered site structure and a navigation system that's intuitive and clear. Because our target audience is prospective students, many site visitors are not familiar with academic and/or Delta's specific labeling – such as department and division names.

Our information architecture places content into one of three sets:

- Topic-based navigation
    - Page titles are translated into topic-based headings so prospective students can easily find the information they are searching for.
    - Departmental pages do not exist on the recruiting website.
- Audience-based navigation
    - This provides a secondary route to serve the needs of internal audiences and secondary external audiences.
- Task-based navigation
    - This allows direct connections to the most important actions we want our visitors to take (i.e. Apply Now, Discover Delta, Explore Programs).

As with all webpages, our recruiting site is a living space. As changes occur, your pages should be regularly updated to reflect that new information. The recruiting website is not intended to archive data, but instead to represent the most up-to-date information that users want. It is a best practice to republish your page every six months, at the minimum. This will keep the information ranking high in search engines and more visible to those seeking information about Delta.

Infographics

Infographics are a great way to highlight a fact or statistic related to the topic of your webpage. Infographic topics are approved through the Marketing department for design. If you have an idea for a graphic that is not already available, please contact Marketing. The messaging of these are your responsibility, so please make sure to review them regularly.

Inside Delta – Current Students and Employees

Inside Delta is the name of two different Intranet sites, one for current students, one for current employees. The URLs are delta.edu/students and delta.edu/employees. The goal of Inside Delta is to connect users with all of the information they need to be successful during their time at Delta.

Inside Delta is organized according to how site visitors think, not necessarily how Delta College is structured as an organization. This will help users find the information they are looking for quickly while providing a logical path to explore and discover helpful resources.

Page content and organization

When building content for Inside Delta pages, keep our different audiences in mind. Don't assume a current student is familiar with Delta College. Always provide a description of your content area and outline any services offered so students can better understand the content on your page.

Walk your audience through everything they'll need to know about your resources and services. Be detailed, but remember users will likely not read your page in its entirety. Anticipate that users will instead scan your page for the information they need. Because of this focus on information, there will be fewer photos on Inside Delta pages than on the recruiting website. "How to" videos are allowed, but remember that they need to be carefully created to meet brand and accessibility standards, and reviewed for accuracy at least every six months.

Inside Delta is a living space. As changes occur, your Inside Delta pages should be regularly updated to reflect that new information. Inside Delta is not intended to archive data, but instead to represent the most up-to-date information that users want.

Choose which digital space works best based on audience and need.

- Inside Delta – Informational content publicly available.

- Microsoft Teams/OneDrive – Workgroup content, shared files between staff members or documents containing sensitive information.

- Forms – Forms may be included within Inside Delta pages. These must either be accessible (preferably fillable) PDFs or with Delta's current forms tool. See OIT for assistance.

- eLearning – Course content, instructor biographies, syllabi.

- Experience – Accessible by individual login credentials. Dashboard that pulls information specific to that individual such as: class schedule, student bill, timesheet or tax data.