

ROBERT E. KENNEDY LIBRARY HANDOUT

The Cal Poly ENGL 319 class is working to improve the information design and architectural structure of the Robert E. Kennedy Library website content in order to achieve the goal of providing valuable library resources in an accessible way. ENGL 319 students divided into the following teams: UX Research (analyzing user experience), DEI and Style (determining how to apply the library's DEI goals to the website), Library Renovation (improving the renovation information content), Looking Outward (surveying the Library's opportunities in Canvas and the Portal), and Policies (auditing the Academic Services policies). The group gained key findings through conducting research methods that provided the basis for recommendations to improve the library's website.



RESEARCH METHODS



UX Research

The UX Research team participated in card sorting sessions to gain insight on how participants group certain library terminology. This data is crucial in determining how to label and reorganize the website's content in the most user-friendly way.



DEI and Style

The DEI and style guide team researched and explored Cal Poly's library website, other library websites, and synthesized the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion goals with consistent formatting to create a style guide for content auditing.



Library Renovation

To find more information regarding the upcoming renovation, the Library Renovation team turned to the Internet, specifically the Cal Poly website. The team also found information from the Facilities Management and Development page.



Looking Outward

Three different research methods were administered to assess student use of the Canvas, Portal, and Library Home Page. The Looking Outward Team first reached out to Library ITS services in an attempt to access data logistics of student use of these websites. Then they sent out a survey to a diverse set of Cal Poly students to gain student feedback on the functionality of these services. Lastly, they conducted an analysis of other university websites to understand how their online services functioned in comparison to Cal Poly.



Policies

The policy team audited policy pages, focusing on clarity of language, ease of accessibility to essential information, discerning outdated information, and consolidation of equivalent or similar content. The policy team was advised by Professor Sarraf and library officials to assist in discerning outdated information, recognizing where consolidation of content was appropriate, and having policies that reflect Kennedy Library's mission statement.

FINDINGS

DEI & STYLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through the creation of the style guide, the DEI/style team discovered holes in accessibility, DEI values, consistent tone and formatting, and language usage.
RENOVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through internet research, the team found a lack of information on the library's website.• Being directed to the Facilities Management and development page we were able to come across information for the upcoming project.
LOOKING OUTWARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The barriers presented in accessing ITS information as a student proved to be difficult in adequately assessing student use of these services.• Thus, the attention was directed towards collecting a wide array of survey responses, as well as noting trends from other websites that would help in forming recommendations for this project.
POLICIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repetition of information across a variety of pages, when said information is applicable to one overall concept.• Broken links.• Vague information and unclear terms that the intended audience may not be able to understand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

UX RESEARCH

Utilize user interviews from the current UX Research team and work on developing user personas that represent a more diverse set of research participants. Some specific examples of opportunities to increase user accessibility include: using a simple color palette, grouping links, making clearer labels, removing sidebar navigation, and introducing more interactive components.

DEI/STYLE

DEI and style related recommendations include a “terms defined” section, a reorganization of the “Visions and Values” page, more visibility for library research guides centered around historically underrepresented groups, and an emphasis on accessibility for content concerning the library’s physical spaces.

RENOVATION

The Renovation Team found that a web page embedded in the libraries main website pertaining specifically to the renovation would be incredibly beneficial for students. Within the webpage content could include: where services are held, physical study spaces, a timeline of project, and specific contacts. Creating a social media presence for the library will add to the transparency that people seek out. Having constant content and updates of the days work and events would allow students to be in the know.

LOOKING OUTWARD

A list of feedback was compiled based on findings from student surveys and library research. The most notable recommendations that students and the Looking Outward team can offer are to add campus news tabs, increase accessibility of the “24/7 live chat” feature, and reduce the sections in the dropdown menu on the Library website. In addition, most students suggested that we also provide access to these options within the Canvas and Portal pages, as many prefer to use these sources over the Library website.

POLICIES

The policy team recommends the following: omission/collapsing of repetitive information across individual pages, fixing broken links on policy pages, specifying vague information to be more accessible to Kennedy Library’s intended audience(s), and definition or simplification of terms to be more accessible to Kennedy Library’s intended audience(s).