



Digital Presence

Executive Summary

Total Number of Sessions: 10 sessions; 3 with Faculty, 5 with Staff, 1 with Joint Council, 1 with Students

| Date | Modality and Location | Audience | # of Participants | Total # per audience |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| February 13 th , 2023 | In-Person, Loop | Faculty | 10 faculty | 48 Faculty |
| February 15 th , 2023 | In-Person, LPC | Faculty | 7 faculty | |
| March 13 th , 2023 | Virtual | Faculty | 31 faculty | |
| March 3 rd , 2023 | In-Person, LPC | Staff | 29 staff | 148 Staff |
| March 6 th , 2023 | Virtual | Staff | 39 staff | |
| March 8 th , 2023 | In-Person, Loop | Staff | 18 staff | |
| March 20 th , 2023 | Virtual | Staff | 49 staff | |
| March 29 th , 2023 | In-Person, LPC | Staff | 13 staff | |
| March 8 th , 2023 | In-Person, Loop | Joint Council | 24 members | 24 Joint Council |
| April 20 th , 2023 | In-Person | Students | 44 students | 44 students |
| Digital Presence Total Participants: | | | 264 community members | |

Discussion Questions:

1. What important pieces are missing or misrepresented in your department’s or the university’s story today?
2. How would you show versus describe your department’s or the university’s story to the community beyond DePaul?
3. What role would you like to play in the curation and showcasing of your department’s or the university’s story today?

Narrative of the efforts:

The President or Chief of Staff began each session by welcoming the group, introducing the initiative, and explaining the value of focusing our immediate efforts on improving our digital presence. After the introduction, we split into smaller groups of about 10 community members, either in person or through Zoom break-out rooms, to respond to the topic’s discussion questions. Each small group discussion was facilitated and documented by a member from the offices of the President or Continuous Improvement.

Faculty brought examples of ways in which they would like their activities shared, including what their departments are doing and the skills students learn in their courses that go beyond a course’s content. Staff talked extensively about opportunities to infuse mission into our digital presence, to find strategy for how we communicate externally and internally, and how to improve the systems and the way we use them. All participant groups discussed the challenges in finding information with our current website structure and how the separation of related content contributes to the siloed nature of the institution.

Recommended Initiatives to design a new digital presence:

We documented over 1,000 pieces of feedback in response to the Digital Presence discussion questions. From this feedback, 38 overarching themes represent most of our community's thoughts on the current state and desired future state of DePaul's digital presence. We converted the themes into 12 recommended initiatives that address changes to our internal policies and procedures as well as contribute to the RFP in pursuit of a new website platform.

Initiatives addressing a change in *university process*:

Initiative 1: Define content strategy, public relations strategy, communication strategy, as well as tools and resources we will use to support those strategies.

Discussion themes supporting this initiative:

- Unified social media strategy that helps manage and connect all DePaul accounts.
- Digital Presence should include more than the website: social media, signage, and podcasts.
- Clearly communicated strategies in public relations, content (web + social), and communication (web + content), including the why behind strategies, as well as the way in which faculty and staff can and should play a role in those strategies.
- Need for communication strategy is critical—social media use, purpose of website, audience-specific user experience, content strategy for attention span, tools (apps, TikTok, etc.).
- Review public relations strategy and vehicles with which we are communicating.

Initiative 2: Expand our digital content team to include student employees/interns to support the university's digital presence and provide authenticity to the student voice and experience.

Discussion themes supporting this initiative:

- Create, support, and compensate for content creation and build work-study or internship programs to include students in the development.
- Rely on current students and alumni to deliver messages about the student experience and impact of a distinct DePaul degree.
- Units need resources, particularly from student employees and experts in content creation, to support their digital presence.
- Highlight student stories and experiences, hear from students' perspectives, and see their experiences.
- Dedicated, accessible, fully resourced staff to support university community in telling and showing our stories effectively.

Initiative 3: Develop a university-wide digital content management system that is open to faculty/staff/students.

Discussion themes supporting this initiative:

- Shared resources and open access will allow for real-time and authentic participation.
- Need for an updated content management system.
- Create a unified and manageable content development process.
- Long lead time to making web changes and the challenges of developing content in silos.

Initiative 4: Identify courses and degree programs to build DePaul digital content creation into the curriculum.

Discussion theme supporting this initiative:

- Infusing digital content creation for the university into specific courses and degree programs.

Initiative 5: Reevaluate the waiver process that students can sign to grant permission to showcase their work.

Discussion theme supporting this initiative:

- Evaluate and streamline the various permissions students must grant for us to showcase their work digitally.

Initiatives addressing a change in *website/digital systems*:

Initiative 6: Implement a digital platform that supports all media types (videos and live feeds from certain campus classrooms or meeting spaces) that is easy to update with real-time content.

Discussion themes supporting this initiative:

- Current website limitations prevent individual units from uploading video content and requires content to fit within branding constraints.
- A website system that is easy to update with real-time content where all employees could request edit access, but not necessarily be responsible for managing content.
- We need an easier way to make real-time updates to the website including videos.
- Our content needs to provide a good mobile experience.
- Use TVs and other media sources around campus to bolster our digital presence and connection with touring, prospective students, and current students.

- More robust app –including updated information, short media.

Initiative 7: Build connections to approved sources (like social media accounts, Digication) to pull in external data and content into our website.

Discussion theme supporting this initiative:

- Creating opportunities to connect our website with social media posts that involve DePaul and our alums.

Initiative 8: Build a website analytics dashboard to provide website statistics, including monthly visits and clicks, to each area.

Discussion theme supporting this initiative:

- We need a better way to use the data (cookies, slate, social media interactions) to prioritize our efforts and improve our communications.

Initiative 9: Evaluate search engine optimization.

Discussion themes supporting this initiative:

- Search engine is a challenge, both internal and Google; improve search and status; audience understanding of search criteria.
- Searchability should be a main focus, but it is not a good substitute for intuitive design.

Initiative 10: Develop tagging standards and interactivity to surface the appropriate content based on user activity on the website.

- Develop a “choose your own adventure” component of the website where you can choose a program OR a career path, OR an interest, and walk through the different ways DePaul can support your adventure including support services.
- Incorporate Degree Progress Report data for visitors to design an academic course schedule that presents potential next courses and outcomes for site visitors.

Discussion themes supporting this initiative:

- Develop interactive elements to our website so students can discover content based on choices their making on the website – float only relevant information to the user.
- Surface cross-college connections, student and faculty work, and the elements unique to DePaul, like our library archives.

- Delivering content based on who the visitor is: prospective student, parent, current student, etc.
- Integrate current events on campus/Newsline announcements into a stronger web presence on depaul.edu.

Initiative 11: Remodel our website structure and how content is presented.

- Identify similar degree programs to develop digital content based on the topic rather than the individual degree program.
- Lead with the outcomes of programs, or type of impact this work will have on the community/workforce.
- Showcase research efforts in a unified approach with a focus on impact and community engagement.
- Highlight interdisciplinary opportunities, collaborative experiences, and the university's mission and values.

Discussion themes supporting this initiative:

- Highlight the ways in which our work—in and out of the classroom—is interdisciplinary.
- Better show connection between attending DePaul and things like career options and active alumni/opportunities in those fields.
- Showcase our sustainability efforts across our campus and through our research.
- Reimage the ways we show the connections between our programs, the impact of our research, and work in social justice on the community.
- Reversing the way users find our programs; leading with the topic before splitting into the various degrees housed in different colleges students could pursue.
- Elevating DePaul's R2 status and featuring more research impact stories that involve faculty and student effort.
- Remove the current web structure and serve up content based on topic and current events.
- Showcase: Chicago connections, updated facilities, pride in DePaul and being part of the community, university successes (faculty, staff, student, alum, etc.)—Newsline is not enough; need to build awareness about all that we do.

Initiative 12: Develop a university-wide intranet system to move internal-facing content off the depaul.edu website.

Discussion themes supporting this initiative:

- Simplify the current web structure so it's more focused on the user, with content that is interest-based and current. Move employee-specific information to an internal-facing site.
- Current website is restrictive, and users find out web structure hard to navigate and inconsistent across colleges based on resources.

Next Steps

The Office of the President will review this comprehensive list of initiatives and determine which ones to pursue.