

Speaking Geek (Without Being One)

Technical Questions to Ask
Before a University Redesign

2025 Digital Collegium Annual Conference

MIGHTY



CITIZEN

**Just give me a
new website.**



Stephen Tidmore

- Executive VP of Technology, Mighty Citizen
- 26 years of technical experience
- Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC)
- Former Elvis impersonator





We're the improvement agency.

We help universities
increase their impact and
improve the world through
strategic thinking,
engaging creative, and
digital transformation.



UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISVILLE



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By The End, You'll Know:

- How to avoid common pitfalls in a website redesign
- Six essential questions to ask before you start your project
- Real-world examples from university websites
- The importance of involving multiple departments in the redesign process
- How to align stakeholders to prevent common missteps and ensure a successful outcome



Technical Content Ahead

The background of the slide features a repeating pattern of the 'Mighty Citizen' logo, which consists of a stylized superhero figure with a cape and the words 'MIGHTY CITIZEN' in a bold, sans-serif font.

#1

**How does content get
published?**

Content Publishing

First consider your organizational goals and existing procedures.





Content Approval Workflow

Current state: Draft

Change to

- ✓ Draft
- Needs Review
- Published

Save Preview



CMS Needs

- Content publishing
(Create Once, Publish Everywhere)
- CMS Community
- Integration Needs
- Goals
- Multilingual
- Assets
- Other unique features

Governance Across Disciplines

Governance is the set of rules, processes, and protocols that define how an organization manages **the product**.

The product includes branding and technology which includes aspects of **design, code, and content**.

Centralized

More
consistency

Decentralized

More
flexibility



Why Governance Matters

- **Design** may feel too constrained, or that the product is not aligned with the brand.
- **Development** may feel the system is inconsistent.
- **Content creators** may feel the system is too limiting, or they have too much flexibility.

Centralized

More
consistency

Decentralized

More
flexibility



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Finding Balance

- Will there be a single team managing the website?
- Will there be variations between websites?
- Are there processes in place for website updates?
- Who is financing the website?
- How do you handle one-off needs?

Centralized

More
consistency

Decentralized

More
flexibility



Finding Compromise

- **Diverse requirements** – what are our core features?
- **Conflicting priorities** – where can we be flexible?
- **Individual customizations** – what can teams change without compromising the product?
- **Evolving needs** – revisit governance process.

Centralized

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consistency

Decentralized

More
flexibility



Balancing Governance

Centralized

More
consistency

Decentralized

More
flexibility

Design



Code



Content



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 Search

▼ Categories

All

Longform

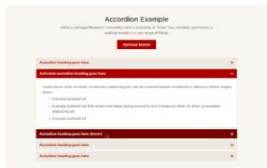
Lists and Groups

Actions

Dynamic Lists

Lists and Groups

Recommended when you have multiple options for your page audiences to become aware of.



Accordian

Shows and hides lists of headings and content. Used to break up complex information into more digestible portions.



Content Grid

Used to display related ideas together in a group – can be used to display information without requiring a link.



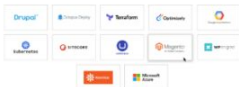
Card Grid

Used to group short pieces of related information together and links to pages where users can learn more.



Quick Links

Used to display a group of related links together in a grid.



Logo Grid

Displays a group of logos in



Icon Grid

Similar to Content Grid



Deadlines Grid

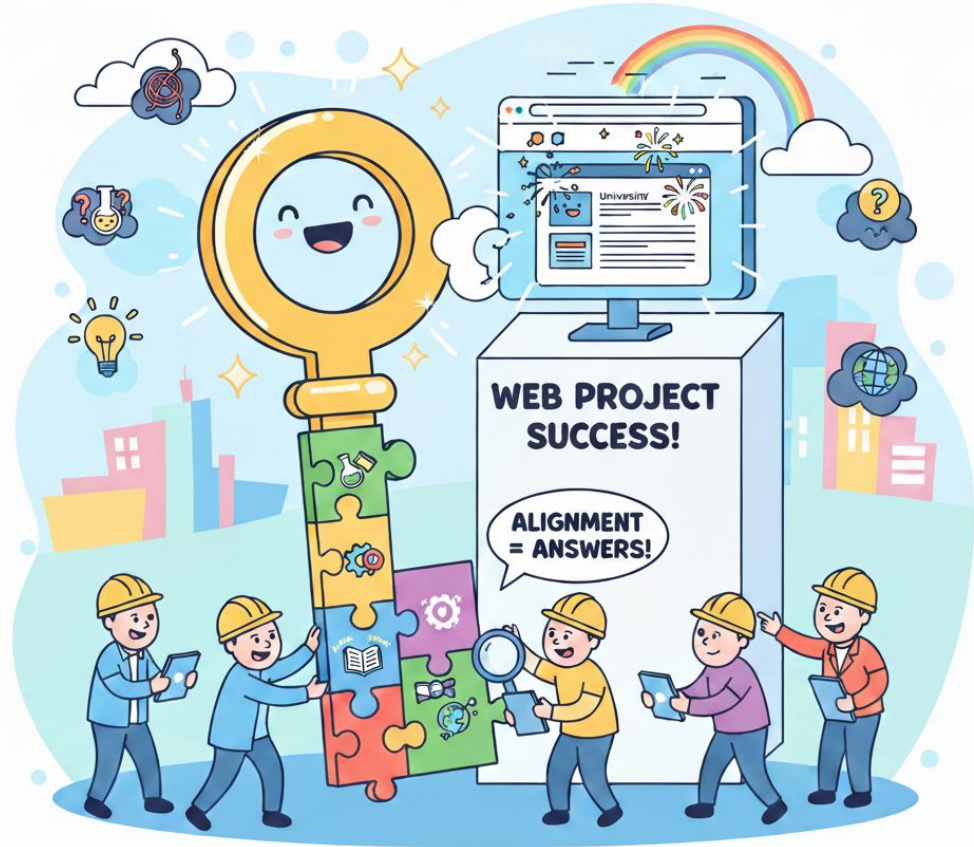
Display important upcoming dates by which your users must do or submit



Deadlines Grid - 2 column

Display two groups of important upcoming dates

**Cross
departmental
involvement is
key to project
success.**



Service Blueprint

A service blueprint is a detailed map of how a service works.

- Shows what students experience (frontstage)
- Reveals what staff, systems, and policies support that journey (backstage)
- Helps teams align and improve cross-campus services

“

Something we hoped to accomplish through this project was breaking down a lot of silos that we face and barriers that students face. The blueprint helps us start to have those conversations across departmental barriers and keep us focused on the student experience versus focusing on our own bureaucratic stuff all the time.

- University client

#2

**Do we need to migrate content
and if so, what content?**



**Content is typically the biggest pain point
orgs face during the new website process**

Old CMS

Old Content

New CMS





Square Peg, Round Hole (or No Hole)

Content from the old site will most likely not be a one-to-one match with content on the new site.

New Content and Data

Which pages need to have new pieces of content added?

Content Integration & Migration Plan

Web Improvement Project | 2025

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Content Integration & Migration Plan

Migration Plan



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#3

What third-party systems and integrations are needed?

NOT YOUR
WEBSITE



How many
third-party systems
are tied into your
current website?



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Step 1: Audit Your Systems

Build a list of every third-party system and tool that you will need to integrate with your new site.

- CRM, LMS, SIS
- Marketing automation/email
- Social media/digital marketing
- Application management
- Virtual campus tours/events
- Chatbots and AI assistants
- Campus life/student engagement
- Student finances
- Library management
- Alumni/advancement
- Career services
- Job board

Step 2: Decide on Method of Integration

Is it a simple, medium, or complex integration?

SIMPLE

- Embed code or a link

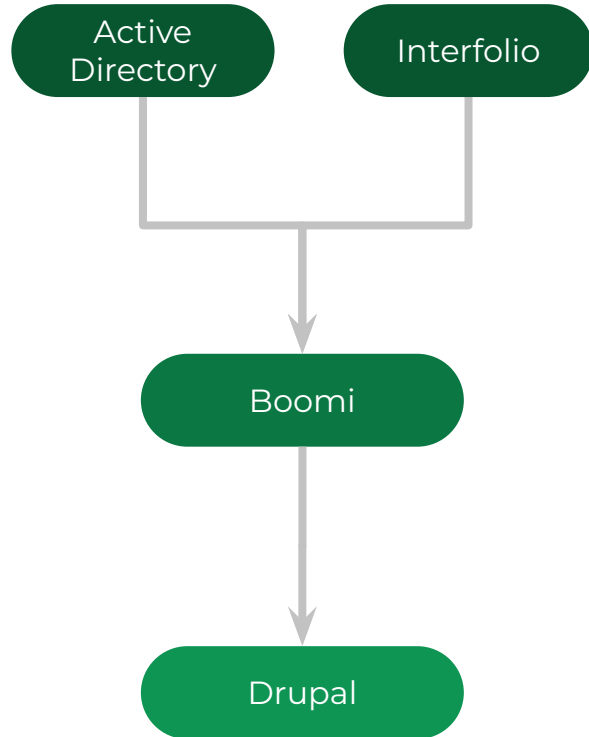
MEDIUM

- One-way data feed

COMPLEX

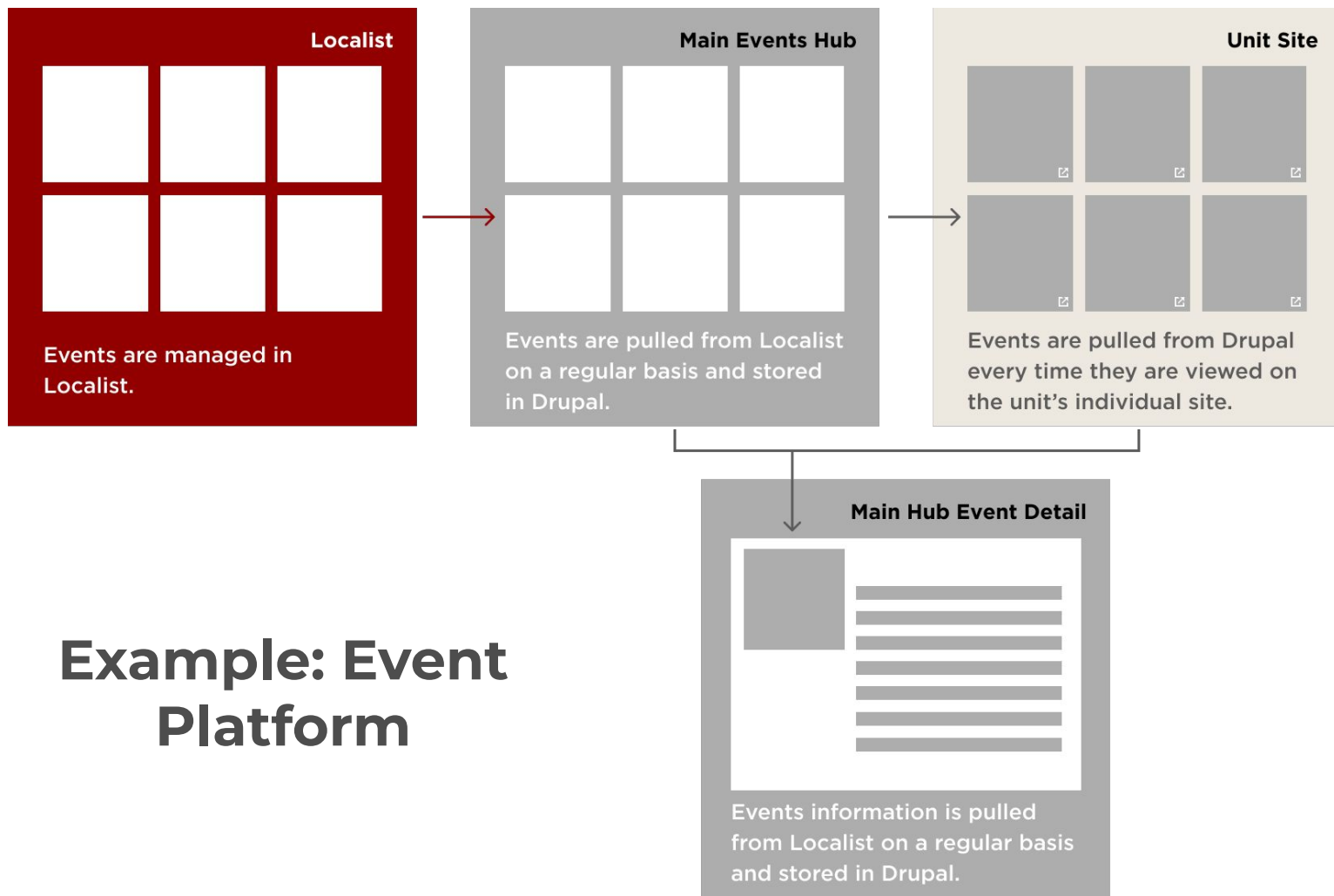
- Full API integration where the two systems need to talk to each other

Example: Faculty & Staff Data



The screenshot displays a university website interface. The main section is titled 'Connect with Your Admissions Counselor' and includes a text prompt: 'Have questions about UofL? Your admissions counselor is here to help you navigate the admissions process. Get in touch with your counselor by following the prompts below.' Below this are two dropdown menus: 'I am...' with the selected option 'a transfer or returning student', and 'I am interested in entering the...' with the selected option 'College of Arts & Sciences'. To the right is a profile card for 'Miriam Jones', an Admissions Counselor, featuring her photo and a right-pointing chevron.

An overlay titled 'Search the Faculty directory' is positioned in the foreground. It contains a search bar with the text 'assistant professor' and a red 'Search' button. Below the search bar are filter sections: 'Area' with 'All Results' and 'Faculty' (indicated by a right-pointing chevron), and 'Faculty' with 'Visiting Faculty' (indicated by a checkbox). To the right of the filters, the 'Faculty Directory' section shows 'Showing 25 search results' and lists two faculty members: 'Armstrong, Cassie Chambers' (Assistant Professor of Law, Academic) and 'Arnold, Craig Anthony (Tony)' (Boehl Chair in Property and Land Use, Affiliated Professor of Urban Planning, Director of the Resilience Justice Project, Academic). Each entry includes a small 'UL' logo and a 'TOP' button.



Example: Event Platform

Texas Around the World

Our faculty and students are globally connected and engaged in research, education and service.



WORLDWIDE

4,562

STUDENT JOURNALS

7,890

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS & STUDIES

1,051

FACULTY ACTIVITIES

193

AMERICAN STUDIES

Select a Continent



Asia

Europe

Africa

Oceania

South America

Global Studies

International

Get More Global Connections

Semester Tuition & Fees

1 \$8,506.18

*Full tuition cost without financial aid, grants or scholarships

To view current Housing & Dining Rates, click [here](#).

9 - 12.0 hour(s) +

2 Business: Finance

EDIT VALUES

Career: **Undergraduate**

Academic Year: **Fall 2025 - Spring 2026**

Residency: **Texas**

Class Location: **Denton Campus only**

Anticipated Enrollment of **12.0** Credit Hour(s)

Breakdown of Semester Tuition and Fees

For the purposes of this Estimate

Differential tuition, program fees and distance education fees are estimated, but will vary depending on your courses and hours once you register.

State Tuition	Board Designated Tuition	Differential Tuition
3 \$600	4 \$3,451.65	5 \$180
Mandatory Fees	Program/Instructional Fees	
6 \$1,484.53	7 \$2,790	

Explanation of Tuition and Fees

STATE TUITION

BOARD DESIGNATED TUITION

DIFFERENTIAL TUITION

MANDATORY FEES

PROGRAM/INSTRUCTIONAL FEES

- Statutory Tuition for **Texas Residents** is \$50.00 per credit hour.
- Statutory Tuition for **Oklahoma Residents** is \$100.00 per credit hour (rate applies to Undergraduates only).
- For the Fall of 2024 and the Spring of 2025, Statutory Tuition for **Non-Residents** is \$460.00 per credit hour
- For the Fall of 2025 and the Spring of 2026, Statutory Tuition for **Non-Residents** is \$455.00 per credit hour

Example: Tuition Calculator

EXPAND ALL

Additional Fees Not Included

LABORATORY FEES

10

Laboratory fees are only applicable to courses which require students to register for a laboratory section. Laboratory fees are collected to cover the cost of materials and supplies used by students in the laboratory. The laboratory fee may not be less than \$2 nor more than \$30 for any one semester or summer term.

UNT has summer classes. Rates and fees are calculated based on your summer enrollment and which summer terms you are enrolled in. [View Summer Tuition and Fees](#)

Yearly Cost of Attendance

Tuition & Fees	Room and Board	Transportation	Personal Expenses	Textbooks
11 \$17,012.36	12 \$9,888	12 \$1,860	13 \$1,860	14 \$1,000
Combined Fall and Spring	Combined Fall and Spring	Cost when Living On Campus		

Disclaimer:

Some colleges may charge differential tuition and/or additional fees for specific courses and programs. Not all fees are able to be represented in this estimate. This estimator assumes all courses are taken in the college of the major indicated. Final tuition and fee charges will vary depending on your courses and credit hours chosen when you register.

**Will we need
single
sign-on?**



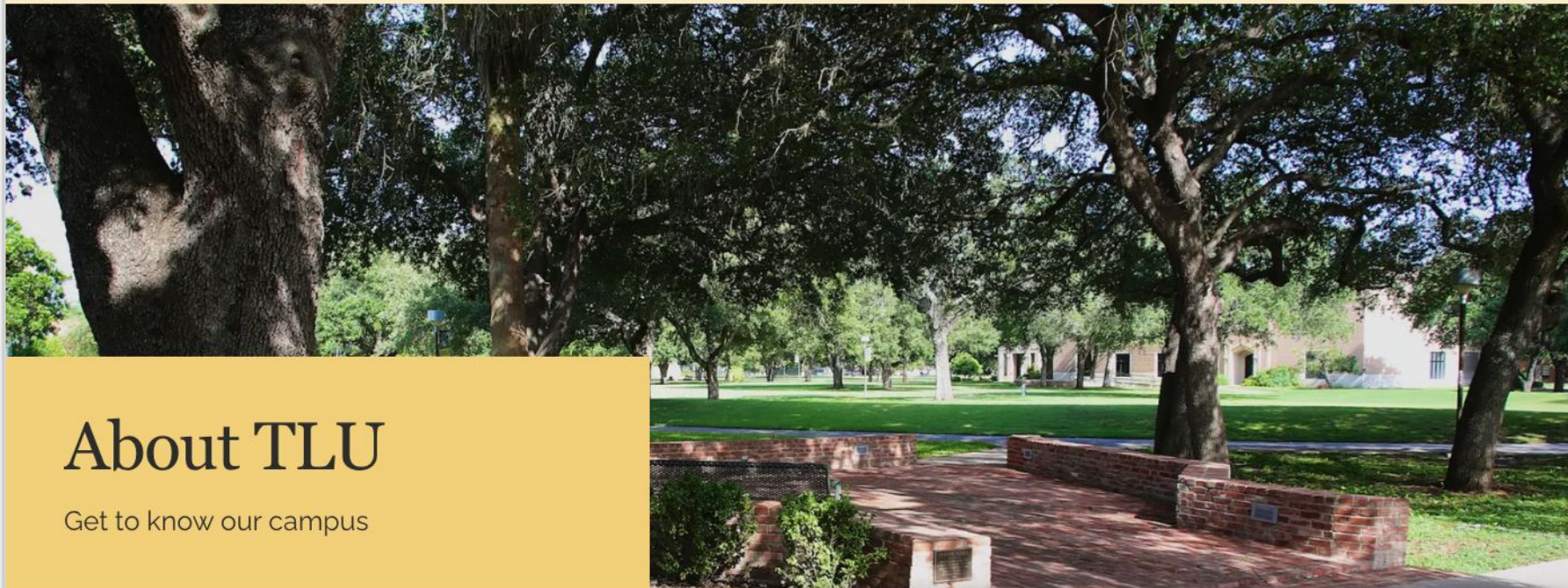
Single Sign On Decisions

- Choose identity provider (e.g., Azure AD, Okta, or other third-party)
- Confirm supported technologies (SAML, OpenID, OAuth)
- Single sign-on (SSO) needs: user info vs. sign-in only

Will any third-party sites need to be skinned?

About TLU

Get to know our campus



Ways To Visit TLU

College visits are the best way to know if a college is the right fit for you. Visit us today!



Choose Your Visit Preferences

Toggle between visitor type and experience to find a visit that meets your needs.

Visitor Type

Looking For...

Before Skinning, Identify:

- Which third-party sites **should and can be** skinned.
- This will require a lot of cooperation across departments.
- The limitations for each site.
 - Color changes only vs. fonts, imagery etc.
- Who is responsible for skinning each system: your team or the third-party.
- Timing for this process and if it will cause any delays.

#4

**Where will the new site be
hosted?**

Find Current Specs

You'll get this from your website traffic and hosting environment.

- Visitor analytics
 - Number of visitors and sessions per month
- Hard drive space
- RAM and CPU
- Monthly bandwidth

Don't forget to take into account regular activity and during traffic spikes!



Scalability

Roll your own



Ready to go



CDN/WAF and Transactional Email



#5

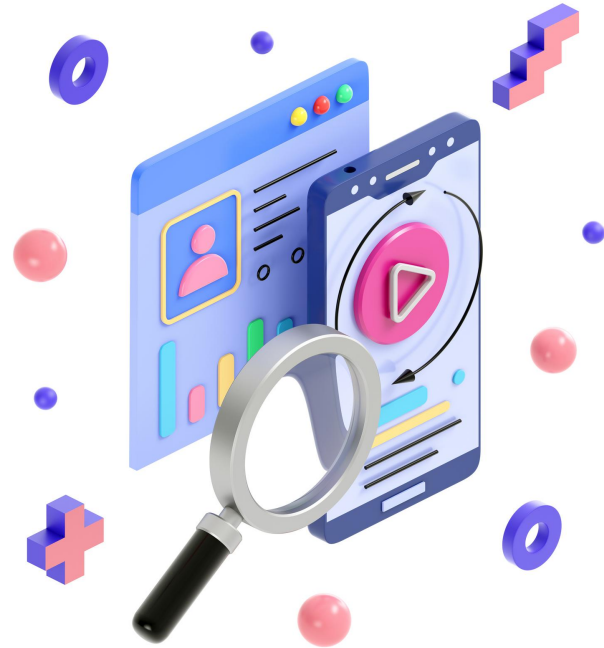
**How will we handle site search
and AI responses?**

Search Data Requirements

- Data must be identified and accessible for indexing.
 - Search may need to aggregate content from multiple systems.
- Files (e.g., PDFs) should be indexed for full-text search.
- Access-controlled content requires secure handling.
 - Sensitive data should be protected within the search solution.
- Content may require categorization for filtered searches.
 - Custom metadata or tags may need to be added for indexing.

Search Provider Requirements

- Do non-technical users need to modify the properties of the search engine?
- Do you have budget for a third-party solution?



business

[Everything](#) (1,259)[Programs](#) (41)[People](#) (64)[News & Events](#) (318)

1 - 10 of 1,259 search results for **business**

[Sort: Relevance](#) ▾

Filter

Date

[Yesterday](#)[Past week](#)[Past fortnight](#)[Past month](#)[Past 3 months](#)[Past 6 months](#)[Past year](#)

Web

Explore Business Programs at Auburn University >

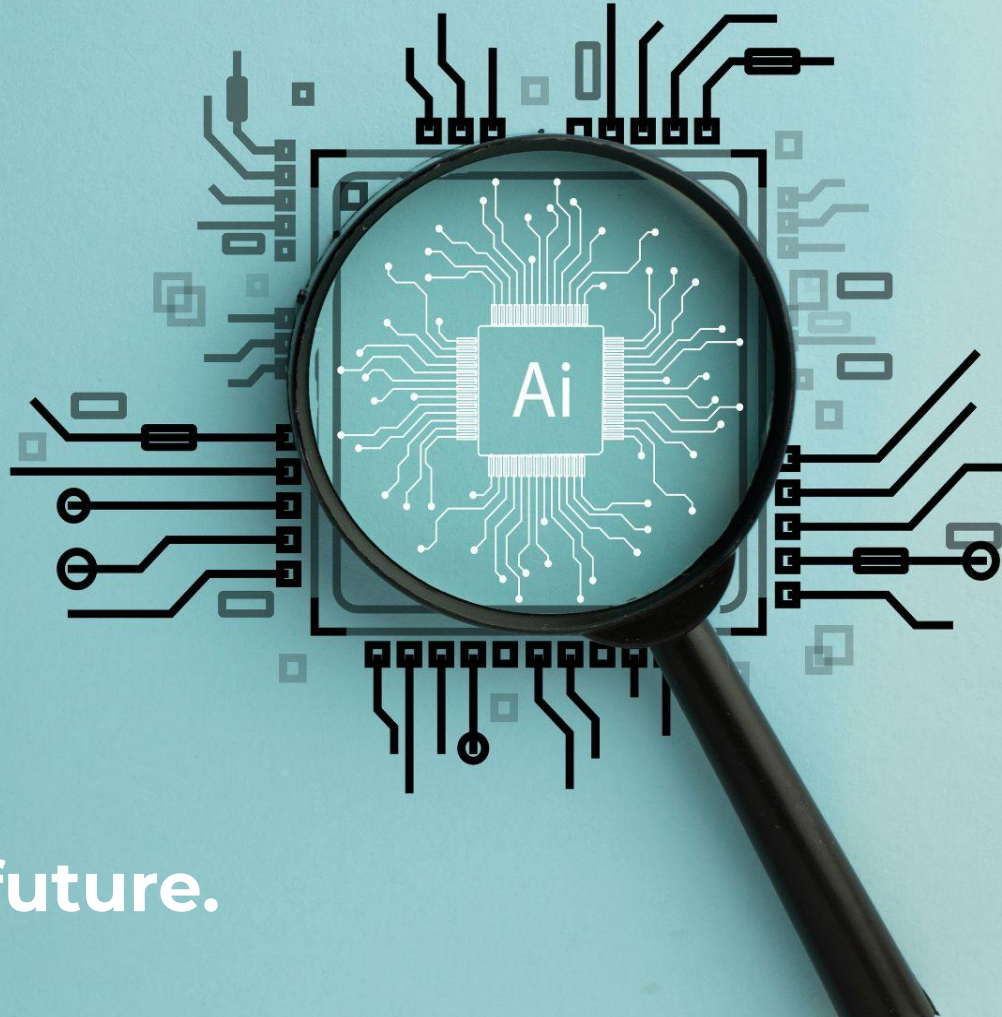
<https://harbert.auburn.edu/index.html>

ADVISING.  Undergrad **Business** students who need to schedule an advising session should do so in Advise Assist. ... Our research is changing **business**. Our faculty produce high-quality research published in the best journals.

Web



**AI is quickly becoming
expected and will be
ubiquitous in the near future.**



How much does it cost to attend?



AI-generated answer

Generated by AI, may contain errors.



Question: "How much does it cost to attend?"

The cost of attendance at Lone Star College varies based on several factors, including tuition, fees, and personal expenses. Below is a breakdown of the estimated costs for a full-time student (12 credit hours per semester) during the 2025-2026 academic year:

Tuition and Fees

- **In-District Tuition and Fees:** \$3,330

Out of District Tuition and Fees: \$7,470

[Show more](#) ▼

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#6

What standards are we required to follow?

Possible Standards

- Browser compatibility
- Organizational security requirements or policies
- Privacy laws like HIPAA, GDPR, CCPA, etc
- Performance requirements or expectations





Accessibility

You should be thinking about accessibility from the very beginning of a new web project.

- Level of accessibility (WCAG AA minimum)
- Test to meet accessibility standards, including manual testing



TEXAS

The University of Texas at Austin

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WHAT STARTS HERE

WHAT STARTS HERE

Elements Console Sources Network Performance Memory Application Privacy and security Lighthouse Recorder axe DevTools

DevTools
(Pro) **axe-core 4.10.3**

[Overview](#)[Guided Tests](#)

Home | University of Texas at Austin

Testing Progress

Automatic Testing 100% complete

Intelligent Guided Testing 0% complete

Remaining Testing [?](#) ☐ complete

Intelligent Guided Tests

Table [?](#)
Runs: 0 Total issues: 0



Structure [?](#)
Runs: 0 Total issues: 0



Keyboard [?](#)
Runs: 0 Total issues: 0



Images [?](#)
Runs: 0 Total issues: 0



Modal Dialog [?](#)
Runs: 0 Total issues: 0



Forms [?](#)
Runs: 0 Total issues: 0



Interactive Elements [?](#)
Runs: 0 Total issues: 0



Best Practices: **ON**

WCAG 2.1 AA

Experimental: OFF



Time to Wrap Up!

Key Takeaways

- **Plan Content Migration:** Build a clear migration strategy; Assume old content won't all fit the new site.
- **Establish Governance:** Define rules for content, design, and code management early.
- **Audit Integrations:** List all third-party systems (CRM, LMS) and classify their connection complexity.
- **Ensure Scalable Hosting:** Base new server needs on current traffic analytics and plan for spikes.
- **Prioritize Accessibility, Search, & AI:** Aim for WCAG AA compliance and plan for robust, indexed search and future AI needs.
- **Align Stakeholders:** Involve all departments early to break down silos and focus on the end-user experience.

Thank you! Questions?

Sign up for our insights,
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and download our website
technology planner!

Visit us at Booth 217



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