

**Content Audit**  
and  
**Recommendation**  
**Report**

for

**MNSU Finance**  
**department**

and

**MNSU Computer Science**  
**department**

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## Executive Summary

The Finance and Computer Science departments at Minnesota State University, Mankato are both popular majors with attractive websites. As with most things connected to or on the internet, every so often an update is beneficial. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to impact our way of life, and that the pandemic is nearing the two-year mark, most universities likely need to refresh some webpages. After reaching out to those in charge of the Finance and Computer Science webpages, I discovered the pandemic had made it difficult to take recent photos to update the webpages. Although assessing the content on two department webpages was an assignment for the Content Strategy class, having a real client for a content audit is a great way to internalize the process and help MNSU make sure they are reaching their intended audiences and conveying needed information that is also in a visually appealing format.

With the university color scheme of purple and yellow, and an obvious template used on most department webpages, a pattern is easily identified on pages. This pattern has both pros and cons. In an era where users expect quick page load time and access to information, the visual appeal, content, and layout of a webpage is very important.

- Both the [Finance](#) and [Computer Science](#) department webpages would benefit from more recent photos and small additions and edits to copy and layout.
- The font used to describe the majors should be thicker to make it easier to read.
- Put the copy on the webpages in narrower columns for better readability and visual accessibility (Section 508).
- Add more details about extracurriculars and career opportunities as well as any recent changes such as a new certificate or program.
- Feature a variety of smaller photos instead of a very large size photo at the top of a department page. Alternatively, consider a slightly smaller scale series of photos a user can click through.
- Consider different display options for the four buttons to allow more information to be seen in the first half of the page as well as reduce the load time for the pages.
- Add features highlighting professors, events, and students.

By including information of interest such as a Q&A with a professor in the major, a blurb about a recent event, a FAQ, and/or testimonials from successful students in the major on the department page, there is an opportunity to make a big impact. More students may consider the major or minor for Finance or Computer Science with the added information and updated photos in a visually appealing format. Small changes may make an oversize impact on prospective students considering MNSU.

# Findings

## Finance Department

Looking at the Finance department's site for MNSU, I am impressed with the large photo at the top of the page. The photo has a Finance professor and a good mix of students in it, with one student giving a presentation and a big screen with stocks and prices in the background and a small view of a scrolling stock ticker in the upper left. It is clear that the goal of the Finance page is both to inform and to some extent, persuade students, whether prospective or current, to consider a Finance major or minor and make them aware of opportunities in the field. The secondary audiences for this webpage are parents of prospective or current students and employees of MNSU.

While the description on the Finance department page is good, it could be fleshed out more to better explain what Finance is and what its practitioners do, as well as include updated information for the department. When going to the Finance department page, this is the description they see:

"Providing students with the financial skills and understanding necessary to secure entry-level positions in private industry and the public sector. The Department of Finance offers a major which requires the student to select an area of emphasis and specialize in one or more of the following areas: Financial Planning or General Finance. The department also offers a minor in Financial Planning." (MNSU Finance department)

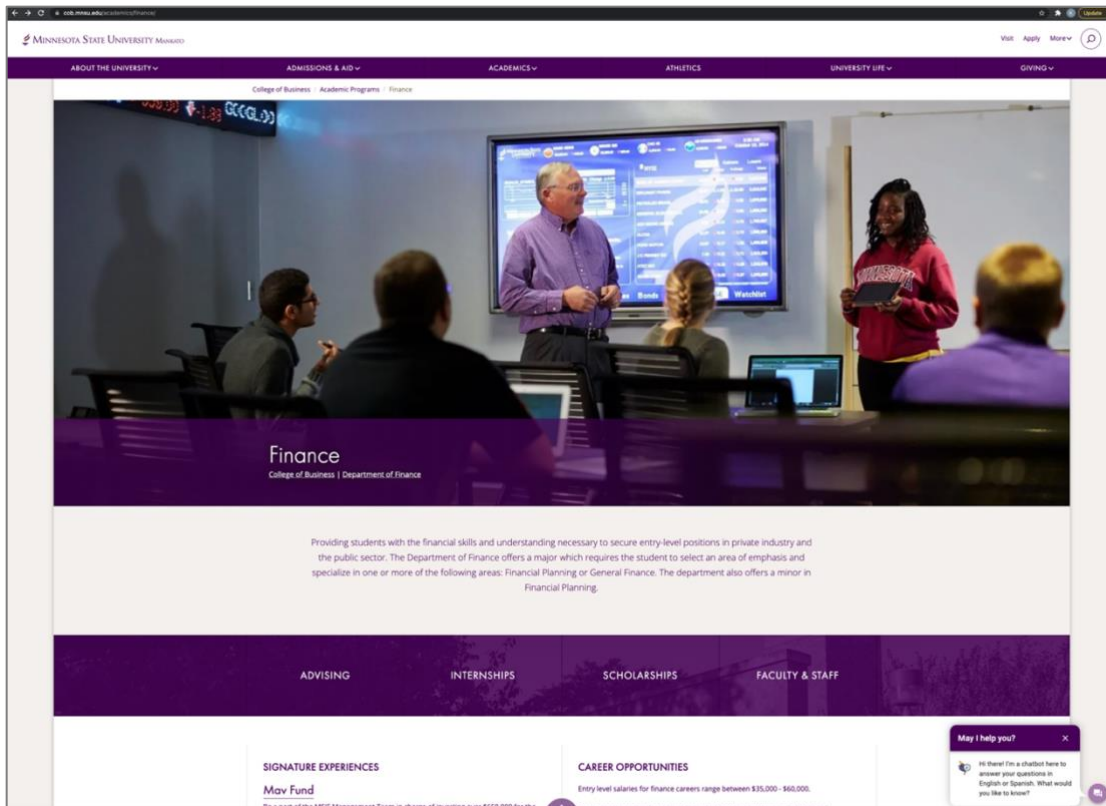


Figure 1: Finance Site Page – Computer Browser

## Findings (Continued)

The color scheme on the page is pleasing to the eye, and the contrast colors used with purple make it easy to read. Ideally, the font on the page for the description of the major would be thicker and easier to read under the photo instead of the thin font it is now. It would also be easier to read the Finance description if the copy were in a narrower column of copy. Having a variety of department photos would better engage the reader.

Even though the bottom of the page has a light gray color for the background, the link colors and the hover link colors work well with the background color, keeping it readable. Links are underlined, which is a good accessibility practice.

The page uses color to separate the Signature Experiences and Career Opportunities, highlighted in a white box, from the bottom portion of the page with the major, minor, and certification information, which are in a light gray background. Potential employers are highlighted in a bulleted list under Career Opportunities. The second half of the page has no photos but does have useful information and ample white space. There are ample links inviting interactivity as well as the chatbot on the lower right part of the webpage.

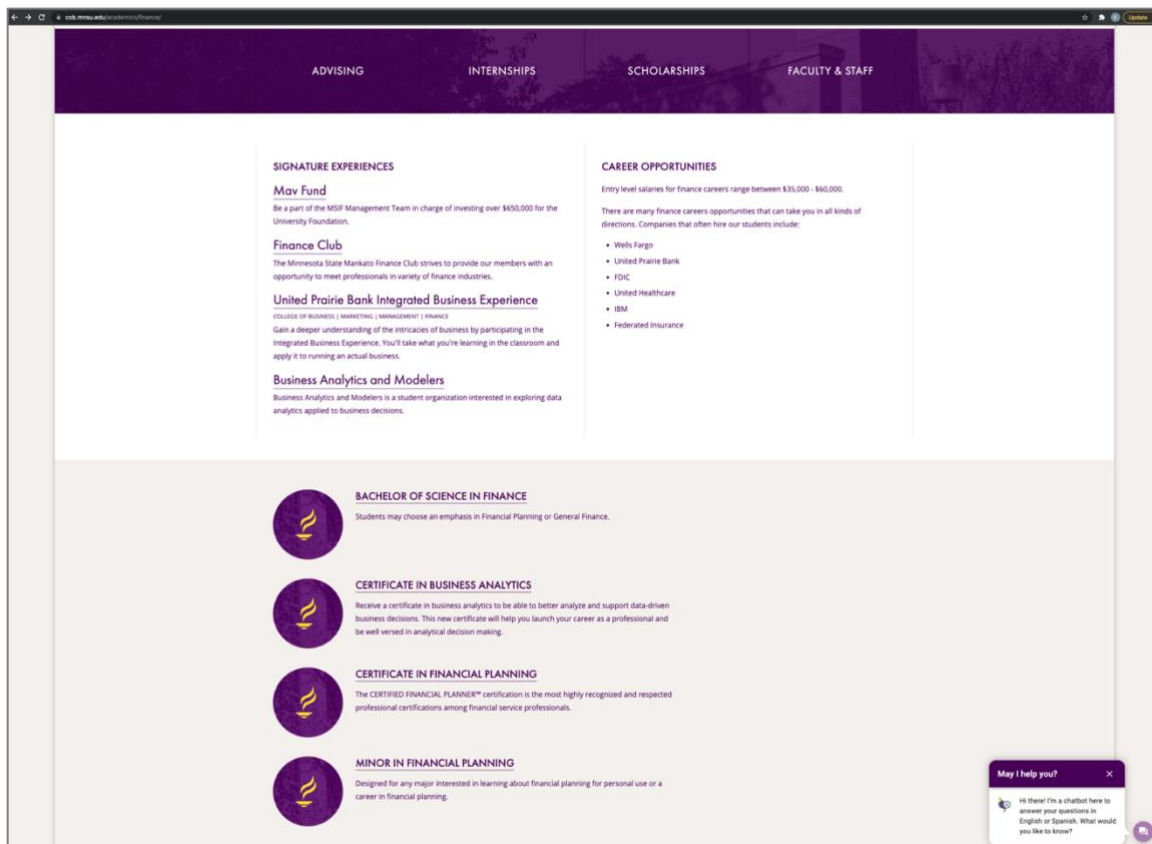


Figure 2: Bottom of Finance Site Page – Computer Browser

While the four buttons arranged in a thick purple line across the screen are pleasing to the eye, they occupy a larger portion of the page than necessary (Advising, Internships, Scholarships, Faculty & Staff).

## Findings (Continued)

### Computer Science

The Computer Science department's webpage features a young woman at a laptop with a chalkboard in the background with math on it. The importance of higher math for the computer science major is conveyed to the viewer. The primary audiences for this page are prospective and current students, with secondary audiences being parents of students and MNSU staff. This page comes across as an informational and light recruiting tool for those interested in the computer science field. The description of the computer science major talks about a project-based approach, which sounds intriguing.

Either changing the font on the page for the description of the major to a thicker one or making it bolder would result in it being easier to read and make it visually accessible. In addition, a narrower column for the description of the major would make it more readable especially when scanning the page.

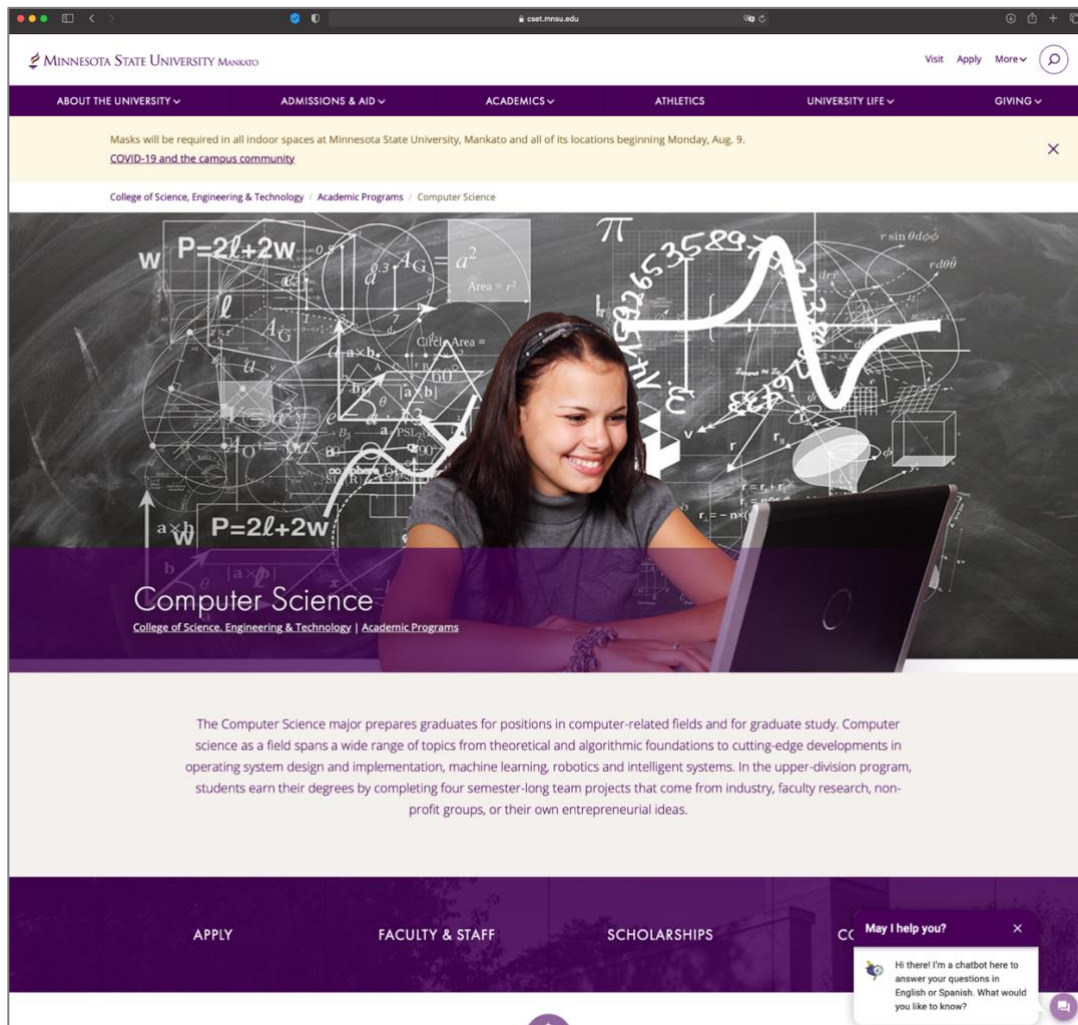


Figure 3: Computer Science Page – Computer Browser

## Findings (Continued)

The copy on the Computer Science department page is informative and clear and serves both prospective and current students with information on the major and minor. It stands out by being featured with a white background instead of the light gray on the rest of the webpage. However, the information provided for “Your Future Opportunities” seems a bit light.

How does the project-based approach work and are there any examples of success stories or photos of groups doing project-based work? Is there tutoring available for the first couple Programming classes? Knowing answers to these common questions may help women and minorities who typically are underrepresented in this STEM major feel confident enough to ask further questions of their advisor about how to make Computer Science their major or minor.

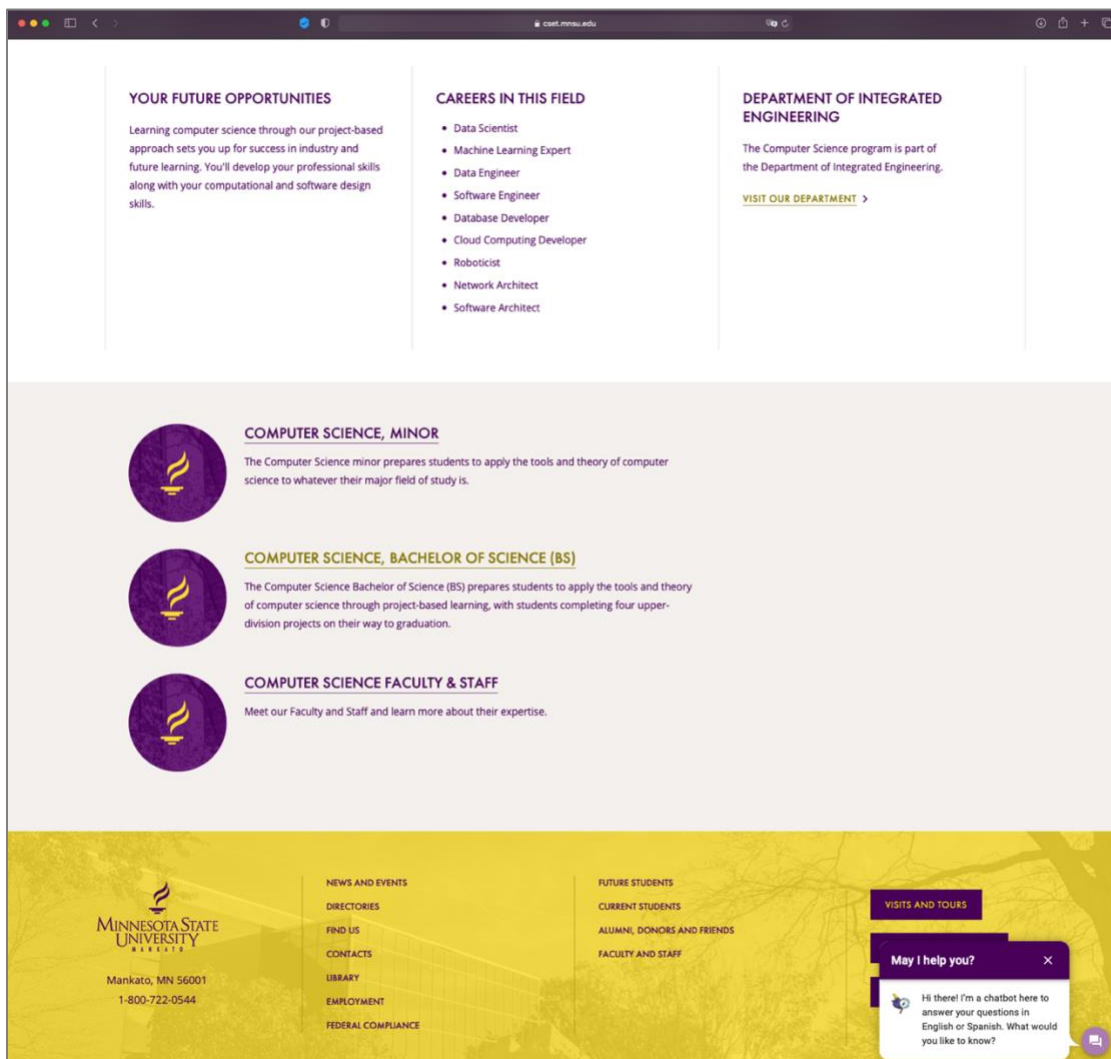


Figure 4: Bottom of Computer Science Page – Computer Browser

## Takeaway

Updating the font used on both the Finance and Computer Science department pages is recommended. A thicker font that is still modern would help with readability of major descriptions. In addition, switching to small caps instead of using all caps is recommended for better readability (Riley and Mackiewicz 10).

### Finance Department

While the description on the MNSU Finance department page is good, there is a need to add copy to make students aware of the new Certificate in Business Analytics. The description of the Finance major could be made stronger. For instance, what is Finance as far as what those in this career do? The current [description of the Finance major](#) (Figure 5) on the MNSU Finance department page could be fleshed out in order to help prospective and current students understand what a Finance professional does.

- **Copy:** Add copy about what the Finance curriculum covers and some of the topics included. Such details would help answer some questions of potential students and their parents and could ignite more interest in the major.
- **Photos:** Display a wider variety of photos available at the top of the Finance department page that are smaller than the current one would free up room for other information on the top half of the webpage.

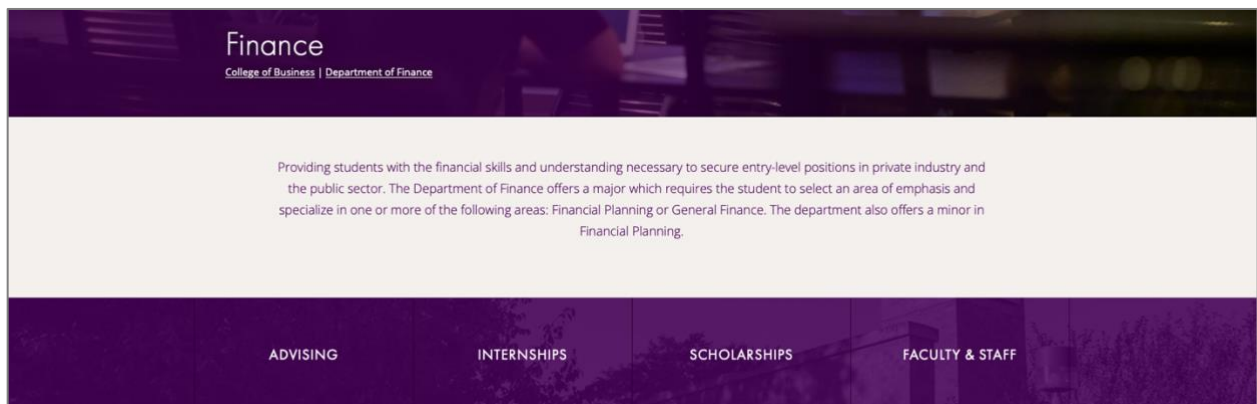


Figure 5: Finance Page – Description of Major



## Takeaway (Continued)

### Finance Department

- **Buttons:** Reducing the depth of the purple ribbon of four buttons is recommended, or simply having these four items as links on the right side of the page, as it would also help free up some room for other details on the webpage.
- **Success in the major:** Updating the page with what successful Finance majors are doing or what on or off-site gatherings are going on concerning Finance will be of interest to prospective or current students.
- **Salaries:** While entry level salaries can be good to post on a webpage, perhaps leaving off the entry level salaries could be considered, as some jobs in the Finance field are commission based and an entry level salary of \$35,000 for Finance majors does not seem beneficial to feature.
- **Testimonial video:** A short 2-minute video of one or two successful current Finance majors or those in the workforce would not only be great public relations for the Finance department, but very helpful for MNSU.

## Takeaway (Continued)

### Computer Science Department

- **Better visuals:** If one takes away the Computer Science title on the photo at the top of the department page for Computer Science, it would not be easy to guess what department the photo is for in Figure 3, and so finding better photos that reflect the Computer Science department would be prudent. Also, while the Computer Science photo does a good job of reminding the viewer that Computer Science involves higher math, more photos for this department page that reflect a variety of different cultures and more than one gender would be a good idea.
- **Content:** Adding content to the MNSU Computer Science department page such as a Q&A with a Computer Science professor, a recent event involving students in the major, extracurricular links, and/or a FAQ link to the department page would make the webpage more engaging. Additional details about the computer science major could be added to “Your Future Opportunities.”

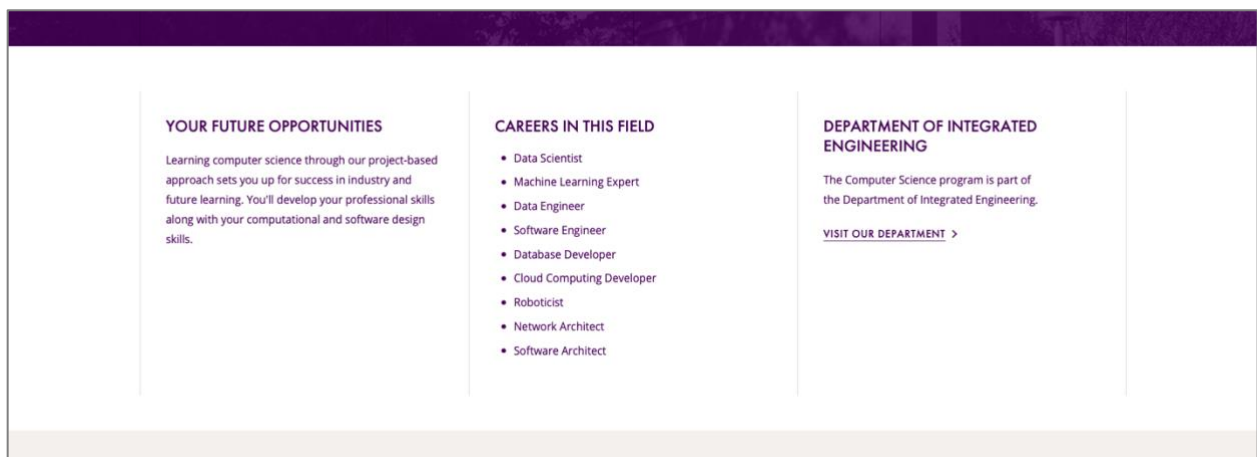


Figure 6: Computer Science Page Content

- **Services:** A few universities make it clear that tutoring is available for the first couple programming classes in Computer Science, making the decision to try programming an easier one, particularly for women, who are known to be underrepresented in this field. If tutoring for programming is offered, featuring it on the Computer Science department page would serve both prospective and current students well. The University of North Florida has a Tutoring link on their [School of Computing](#) page (see Figure 7).

UNF School of Computing College of Computing, Engineering & Construction

OUR COLLEGE - ACADEMICS - OUTREACH - CAREER SERVICES - DISTANCE LEARNING - GIVING BACK

## RF-Smart Lab Schedule

\*The University Holiday Schedule closures supersede the schedules listed here unless explicitly written otherwise.

ADA compliant Tutor Schedule available below

**Tutor Schedule**

Time:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
11:00 a.m.							
11:30							
12:00						Donald	Claire
12:30						12 - 5	12 - 5
1:00							
1:30							
2:00							
2:30							
3:00							
3:30							
4:00							
4:30							
5:00							
5:30							
6:00	Claire	Donald	Claire	Donald	Donald		
6:30	6 - 11	6 - 11	6 - 11	6 - 11	6 - 11		
7:00							
7:30							
8:00							
8:30							
9:00							
9:30							
10:00							
10:30							
11:00							

Please note that the lab schedule may be affected by classes or exams scheduled to use the room.

ADA compliant schedule:

- Computer Lab - Tutor Schedule (ADA Compliant)

**Tutor Detail**

Tutor	Subject/Topic
Donald	Programming 1, Programming 2, Comp Structures, Data Structures
Claire	Programming 1, Programming 2, Comp Structures, Data Structures

**Access to software**

NOTE: Students must be currently enrolled in a School of Computing Course. Have your instructor request access on your

Figure 7: School of Computing Page – University of North Florida

# Comparator Sites

While some university department pages are doing a few things better than MNSU, no webpage is perfect. Figures 8 and 9 are screenshots from university departments in Computer Science and Finance and serve as examples of what could be done in a similar fashion for the same departments at MNSU to better capture the attention of the viewer.

**Design:** Changing the design and moving the four buttons for the Finance department page can better focus the viewer's attention, like the University of Georgia Finance page. Note the smaller initial photo and the two-column setup below the major.

**Content:** The video on the page is between 2 to 3 minutes and is a testimonial from a successful student. The short video serves as a form of potential interaction, in addition to the highlighted button on the right; Apply Online. The headline font used on this webpage is modern but attractive, thick, and narrower than some other fonts. The content on the page satisfies most questions about the Finance major and the links on it serve as a vehicle for answering other questions.

Terry College of Business  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

DEGREES RESEARCH • EXPERTISE RESOURCES RECRUITING DIRECTORY

## BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN FINANCE

A degree in Finance prepares students for management careers in non-financial firms as well as careers in financial services firms such as banking, brokerage firms, and insurance companies.

Majoring in Finance

**APPLY ONLINE**

**BBA SELECTION CRITERIA**

**Contacts**

Finance Advisor  
Marjorie Herr

Finance Advisor  
Jill Hopkins

Finance Advisor  
Laura Nelson

**Department and Program Offices**

- Department of Finance
- Undergraduate Programs Office
- Advising

**Resources**

- Financial Aid
- UGA Bulletin

**Scholarships Available**

- Jim Mann Family Scholarship Fund

**Curriculum Overview**

The program combines coursework in financial management, investment analysis, financial institutions and markets, and international finance to prepare students for positions with major corporations, small business firms, brokerage firms, commercial banks, investment banks, insurance companies, other financial institutions, accounting and consulting firms, and government agencies.

**Topics covered include:**

Figure 8: Department of Finance Page – University of Georgia

## Comparator Sites (Continued)

The MNSU Computer Science department can view competitors and see what layouts and content are being used elsewhere to entice viewers. The University of Arizona uses a photo carousel to showcase successful students and professors for their department. Each photo in the carousel has a clickable link to “Read more” — inviting user interaction. This type of visual design puts content at the top.

In Figure 9, see how the webpage for the University of Arizona’s Computer Science department highlights its information by centering everything among white space to the left and right. Various features, buttons, and photos result in a design in which the reader is invited to linger.

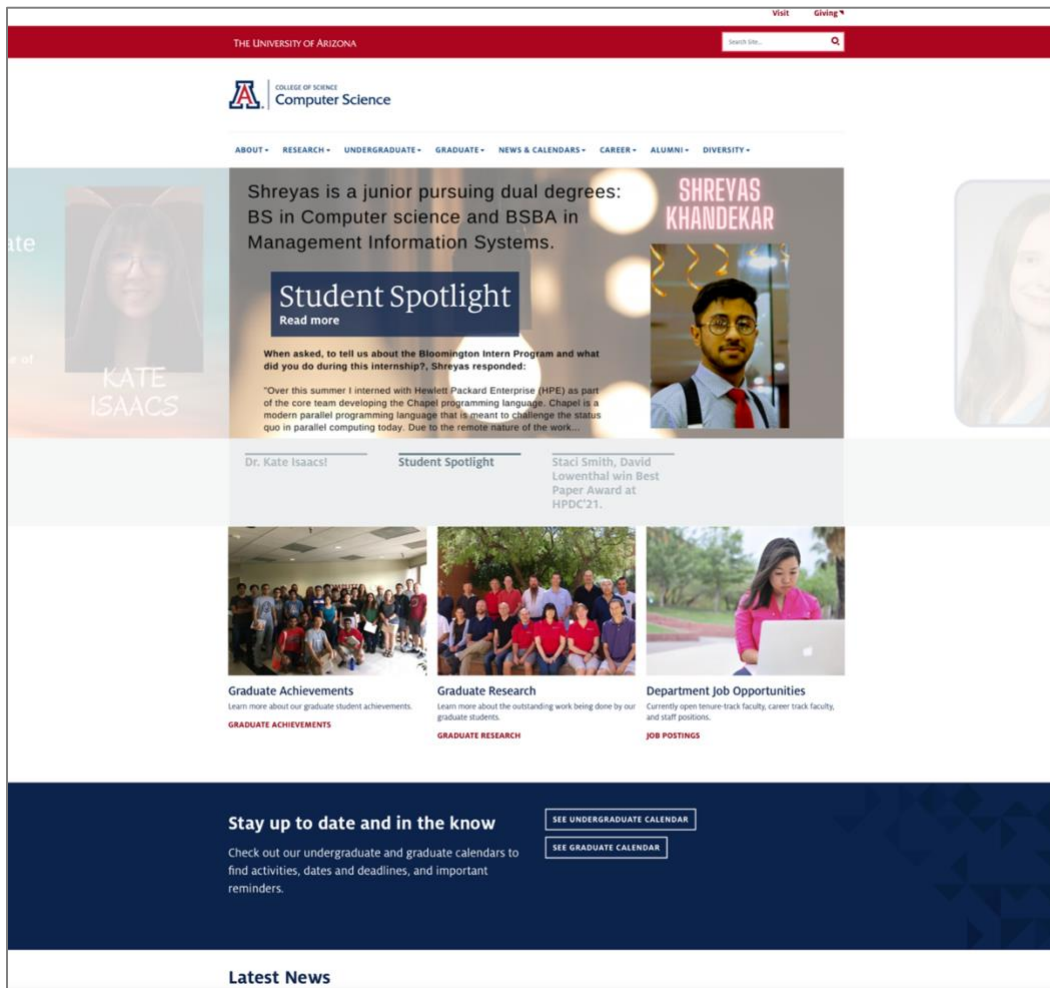


Figure 9: Computer Science Page – The University of Arizona

## Works Cited

*Minnesota State University, Mankato.* [www.mnsu.edu](http://www.mnsu.edu).

Riley, Kathryn, and Jo Mackiewicz. *Visual Composing: Document Design for Print and Digital Media*. Prentice Hall, 2011.

*Section 508.* [www.section508.gov](http://www.section508.gov).

*University of Arizona.* [www.cs.arizona.edu](http://www.cs.arizona.edu).

*University of Georgia.* [www.terry.uga.edu/finance/prospective-bba](http://www.terry.uga.edu/finance/prospective-bba).

*University of North Florida.*  
[www.unf.edu/ccec/computing/Facilities/SOC\\_Computer\\_Lab\\_\\_\\_Tutor\\_Schedule.aspx](http://www.unf.edu/ccec/computing/Facilities/SOC_Computer_Lab___Tutor_Schedule.aspx).