



March 15, 2021

Dear Don:

Thank you very much for your research on audience needs and perspectives for the Utah State University Department of English website. Your work is essential to informing the redesign of our department website this spring and summer.

Your team's report demonstrates research experience in a wide range of methods: interviews, surveys, usability studies, and secondary research. Each of these methods is valuable because each produces different kinds of findings to inform our work. For example, your summary of existing research (i.e., secondary research) identifies several best practices already established for websites like ours. Your survey revealed some surprising perspectives that I wasn't aware of before reading your report, such as widespread requests for more information about student accomplishments, and the interviews provided more depth and context to understand and interpret the survey results. The usability study identified some strengths in our current website that we'll need to be careful to retain in the redesign. Each of these methods produced findings that will directly inform the redesign.

In addition, I appreciated how your team conveyed your findings in the report. For departmental decision makers who need the bottom line, your executive summary provides everything they need to know, with an emphasis on specific, actionable recommendations. For those of us on the website redesign committee, the full report conveys enough detail to understand not only your findings and how they led to your recommendations but also exactly what you did to identify those findings. This detail is important for understanding where those recommendations come from, how you designed and conducted the research, and how confident we should be in the results.

Before your team produced the research report, our website redesign committee was a bit daunted by the task before us. We knew that the current website had problems but weren't quite sure where to begin, what to prioritize, or even what kinds of content or functionality our users needed. Your report helps to answer those questions: informing a clear path forward to producing a more useful, engaging website that can meet the needs of multiple user groups. Thank you very much for using your professional expertise to benefit our department.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Walton, Associate Professor
Technical Communication & Rhetoric