

Improving the MyUW Student Experience: Research Findings and Recommendations

UW Information Technology

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Introduction

Under the 2Y2D Initiative, University of Washington Information Technology (UW-IT) launched a number of projects to improve the student experience. As part of these efforts, the Academic and Collaborative Applications unit in UW-IT conducted a research project to understand students' experience of MyUW and identify opportunities for improvement.

MyUW is a vital resource for University of Washington (UW) students. On average, more than 20,000 students visit the portal daily. During Winter Quarter 2012, approximately 70,000 students accessed MyUW. MyUW is their primary conduit for much of the information they regularly use to navigate the UW—from tuition balances, to course registration details, to email, to course Web sites. Given the widespread use of MyUW by students, it is essential that the UW think strategically about the future direction of this service and how to maximize its utility for students going forward. Towards this end, UW-IT has been gathering data about students' current experiences with MyUW and the improvements they would like to see. We conducted six student focus groups in Autumn Quarter 2011 with 31 students. The results of the focus groups demonstrate that students want more personalization of the information they access in MyUW, a friendlier interface, and mobile access to some types of information. A complete report of focus group findings is included in the appendix (see Appendix 3: Focus Group Report). We developed the MyUW Student Survey based on the focus group findings, with the goal of gathering data to verify the trends from the focus groups across a larger student population and prioritize potential improvements to MyUW. This report details findings from the survey, as well as recommendations for the future of this service.

Though UW-IT focused this user research project on students, it is clear that the findings are relevant to the broader audience for MyUW, including faculty, staff, alumni, and applicants. The findings from this user research, which point toward an increasingly personalized and contextualized presentation of content, can be leveraged to improve the service MyUW provides to all members of the UW community.

Methods

Recruitment

Student survey participants were recruited online through a link on the MyUW entry page. The link text read, "Students: Help improve MyUW! Take our survey." Students who clicked on the link were directed to a Catalyst

WebQ survey, which gave more information about the study and eligibility requirements (respondents had to be current UW students). No incentive was offered for participation. Of the 606 respondents who started the survey, 588 were eligible current UW students and completed the survey.

Participants

Survey participants included undergraduate students (364), graduate students (199), and non-matriculated students or other (19). Survey respondents represent a wide range of disciplines on campus including Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, Engineering, Business, and Medicine (see Appendix 1: Data Tables).

Survey Items

The survey consisted of five sections: (1) Experience with MyUW and Priorities, (2) Desired Resources, (3) Customization, (4) Mobile, and (5) Demographics. A complete copy of the survey is included in the appendix (see Appendix 2: Survey).

Student questions for the survey were developed to validate the trends and priorities that emerged from the MyUW focus groups. Specifically, the survey sought to gain more data about students' desire for MyUW to be more user-friendly, personalized, integrated, easy to customize, and mobile-compatible.

Experience with MyUW and Priorities

This section asked questions about current student perceptions of MyUW. Students were asked to rate MyUW in terms of friendliness, navigation, cleanliness, and visual appeal. Another question asked how big a role MyUW played in fulfilling their information needs. Respondents also ranked priorities for broad improvements, including navigation, design, and mobile questions.

Desired Resources

This section asked students to rank the importance of completing specific tasks in MyUW. The tasks were grouped under sub-headings of Financial Information, Class Schedule, Class Resources, Department and Campus-level Resources, Campus Calendar, and Email.

Customization

This section focused on customizations that students had made to their MyUW home page. Those who had made changes were asked to indicate what those changes were. Students who had not made changes were asked to specify why they had not.

Mobile

This section asked questions about how students might use a MyUW mobile service. First, students indicated whether or not they use a mobile device. Then they were asked to select their likelihood of completing specific MyUW tasks on a mobile device. The tasks that respondents could select from were nearly identical to the tasks and categories of the Desired Resources section, with small changes made to make the tasks mobile-appropriate.

Demographics

Students were asked to identify their class standing and their primary college, school, or division.

Analysis

Survey responses were analyzed using SPSS, looking specifically at frequencies and distributions of responses, as well as mean values of ordinal responses. We also used the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test to compare graduate and undergraduate ordinal responses. Write-in responses were analyzed using ATLAS.ti, identifying additional themes and supporting evidences for quantitative data.

Findings

The key findings from the survey are organized into two sections: (1) Students' Current Experience of MyUW and (2) Suggested Improvements for MyUW.

Currently, MyUW presents a default set of tabs and content boxes based on a user's affiliation, such as faculty, staff, graduate or undergraduate student, alumni, or applicant. Each individual can then **customize** the content by changing the theme and colors, moving content boxes around on the page, hiding or showing tabs, adding additional content boxes, or removing content boxes from their display. In addition to content generally relevant to students, some **personal** content is displayed for each individual, such as their class schedule, tuition balance, and Husky Card balance. Keeping the distinction between **customization** (the end user adding, moving, or removing content) and **personalization** (an individually relevant display of content by default) in mind will be helpful for understanding the findings and recommendations.

Students' Current Experience of MyUW

Key Point: Students used MyUW as a primary source for UW information.

Students were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with several statements regarding their experiences with MyUW (Table 1). Responses to these questions show that MyUW is a primary resource for UW students' information needs. When students were asked to express their level of agreement with the statement "It is important to me that all of the UW-related information I need is available in one place," a vast majority of students agreed or strongly agreed (92%), with significant agreement between responses from graduates and undergraduates. Many students reported that MyUW is "the first place they go when looking for UW resources" (66% of students agreed or strongly agreed). This response also showed significant agreement between graduate and undergraduate students. MyUW is also one of their most frequently visited Web sites, particularly for undergraduate students (66% of all students agreed or strongly agreed).

Table 1. Current state of MyUW

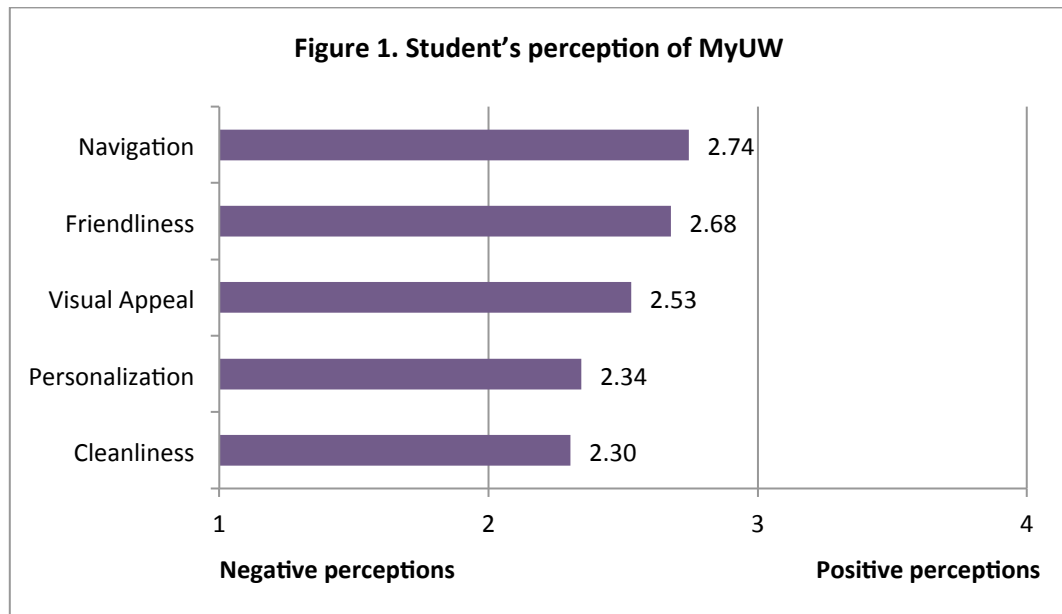
Current State of MyUW	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
MyUW is the first place I go to when looking for resources I need as a student at the UW	588	7.1%	26.7%	43.4%	22.8%
MyUW is one of my most frequently visited Web sites	585	11.6%	22.1%	42.1%	24.3%
I am able to find most resources I need on MyUW	580	3.6%	24.0%	54.8%	17.6%
It is important to me that all of the UW-related information I need is available in one place	580	0.7%	7.4%	31.4%	60.5%
It is important to me that MyUW is improved	583	1.9%	17.5%	39.1%	41.5%

Key Point: MyUW should be improved.

Although students clearly identified MyUW as a vital resource, many are ambivalent about MyUW's current navigation, user-friendliness, visual appeal, personalization, and cleanliness (Figure 1). In fact, 80% of student respondents felt it was important that MyUW be improved (Table 1). One area of improvement identified was finding information: only 18% strongly agreed that they are able to find the resources they need. Students emphasized the need to improve MyUW in their write-in comments, as the examples below indicate:

"... if it simply had a nicer look (like the UW home page), better (and faster) ease-of-use, and more customizable UW content, I would be more inclined to visit more often."

"Thank you for taking on a re-design of MyUW at all -- anything you do is bound to improve this incredibly confusing and cluttered interface!"



Key Point: MyUW customization features were easily overlooked and superficially used.

The survey data suggests that the many customization features of MyUW, such as changing themes and colors, and moving content boxes, were frequently overlooked. When customization was used, the changes made were largely superficial (Figure 2.). Most students were able to customize their MyUW site in some way (68%). Of the students who had not customized their MyUW site, 59% reported that they did not do so because they did not know it was possible. Although a number of options to customize the MyUW site exist, only a few of these were frequently utilized. The most common customizations were changing color and/or theme and adding and/or removing content boxes (Figure 2). Most students used only one of the customization options. The need to make customization features more effective was reflected in students' write-in responses:

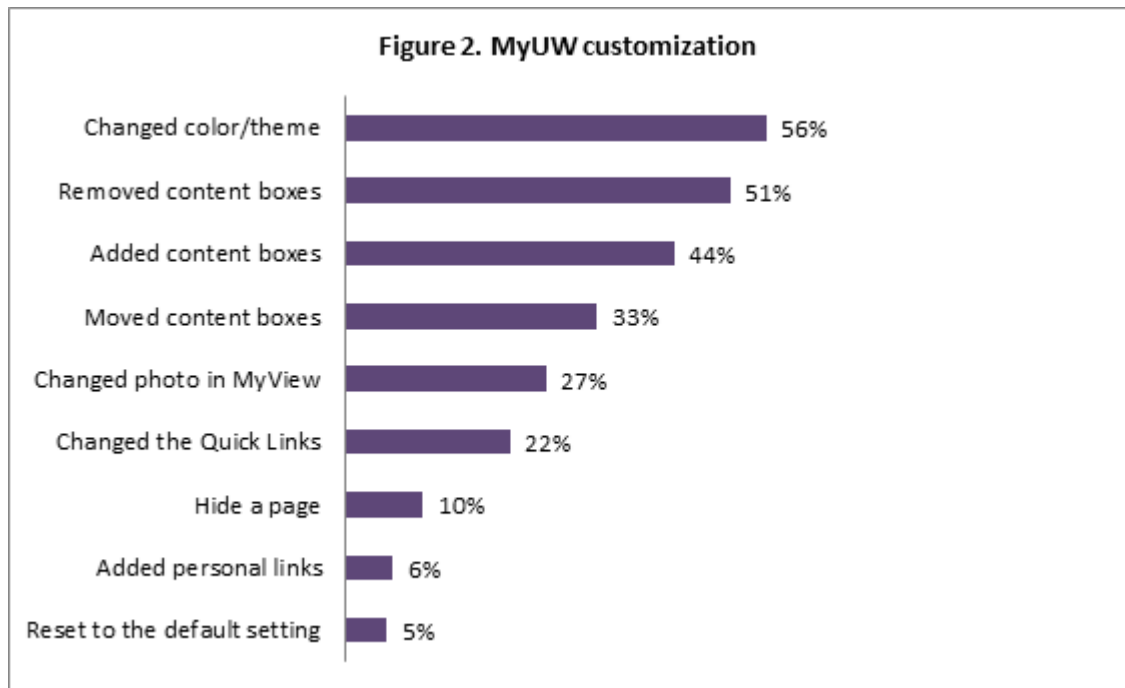
"I was unaware that I could personalize MyUW to the extent implied by the previous question about the extent to which I have customized. As soon as I finish this survey, I plan to declutter MYUW and remove all of the info that is not relevant to an online graduate student. So--Make the customization options easier to find and perform."

"I didn't even know there were ways to customize the page other than changing the photo! It's not at all obvious that one can do this. Why not take a clue from iGoogle, which is terrific?"

"I want my UW to be a one stop shop with easy customization. I did not know I could add and remove content boxes. I will have to try that."

"I am now familiar enough with layout, changing would be time-intensive and not worth it."

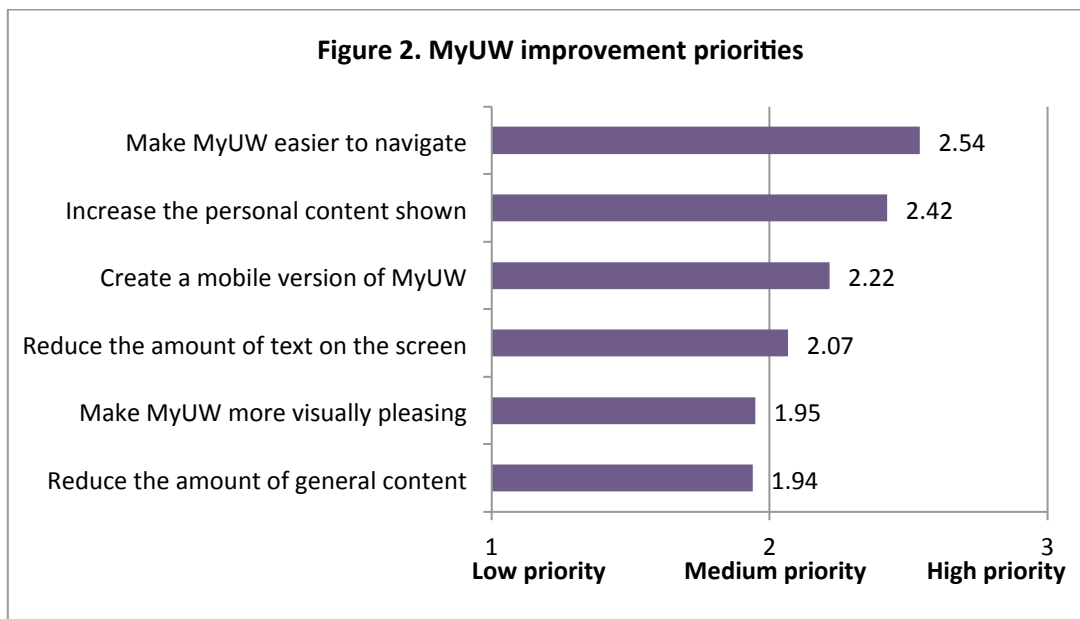
"I think that the best way to improve MyUW is to allow for more customization in moving around the content boxes. For example, I want to put stuff from the financial aid tab onto my front page tab. If that is an option, I currently don't know how to do it. Make it more obvious, perhaps?"



Suggested Improvements for MyUW

Key Point: Navigation and personalization are the top priorities for MyUW improvement.

We asked students to assign priority levels to general improvements for MyUW. Navigation and personalization of the content were rated as the highest priorities for improvement. The display of content was rated as a significantly lower priority for improvement (Figure 2).



Most students indicated that making MyUW easier to navigate is a high priority (61% rated high priority and 32% rated medium priority), while very few students rated this as a low priority (7%). The need to improve navigation was reflected in write-in responses. For example:

“The site should have a more clear home page that is simpler to navigate. I can generally find everything I need, but it would be nice if I could get my information more quickly.”

“Make it way simpler to navigate. The current MyUW is way too cluttered. Also, it would be better to have a specific default for each campus and then allow students to add content that is relevant to them (default: UW Bothell page with all relevant links to that specific campus, allowed to add UW Seattle content).”

Many students also indicated that they would like the content on MyUW to be more personalized, as 91% of participants rated “Increase the personal content shown (information specific to you and your status at the UW)” medium or high priority, with only 9% rating this as a low priority. The need to make the content on MyUW more personalized was reflected in write-in responses. For example:

“cluster of suggestions for events, classes, based on personal user information”

“Link directly to the course catalog and time schedule for my program.”

“The UW School of Nursing HEAVILY uses Moodle as a teaching tool. To have a link to Moodle on MyUW would be a Huge convenience and a wonderful way to personalize MyUW for nursing students! “

To make MyUW content more personalized, students would like resources and links on MyUW to be displayed based on their: major or program (87%); department, college, or school (75%); and class standing (67%) (Table 3). In write-in responses, students suggested their class enrollment, employment status, campus affiliation, and student organization or club membership could also be the basis for providing more personalized content on MyUW.

Table 3: Personalized Content

Student Affiliation	% Selected
Major or program	87%
Department, College, or School	75%
Class standing (what year I'm in)	67%
Financial aid status	45%
Residential vs. commuter status	27%
Matriculated vs. non-matriculated status	14%
International student status	10%
Transfer status	9%
Other	3%

Key Point: Academic, class-related tasks are the most important tasks for students to accomplish on MyUW.

Students were asked to rate how important it would be to accomplish specific tasks on MyUW. Responses were grouped by their mean values, with tasks receiving a mean value of 2.50 or higher designated as the highest importance, tasks with means between 2.00 and 2.49 designated as medium importance, and items with less than a mean value of 2.00 as least important. Students' responses indicate a strong desire and need for maintenance and improvements to the core functions of MyUW, with less importance placed on peripheral functions and calendar functions (Figure 3).

Students reported that the tasks that they most want to be able to complete on MyUW are related to academic life and classes. We grouped these tasks into four core functions:

- *Registration* – register for classes, browse class information in preparation for registration, and get notified of space available in high-demand courses
- *Class participation* – view your class schedule, check your final grades, access a link to your class Web site, and view your textbook list for the quarter
- *Tuition* – check your tuition balance, pay tuition, and get notified of tuition due dates
- *Notifications* – get notified when campus is closed (e.g., snow day), get notified of class cancellations from instructor or TA, get notified of tuition due dates, and get notified of space available in high-demand courses

All of these tasks, except one, were rated important by at least 90% of survey participants, with a large portion of students rating them as “very important.”

The importance of these tasks and core functions were emphasized in students' write-in responses when asked to “list other tasks that were not listed above, but you feel important to be able to do on MyUW”:

“I find it hard to always go to another website just to access Chemistry 142 and Math 124 materials! Somehow, this should be integrated so I don't have to go to various places with each different instructor! Thanks!”

“Creating a ‘wishlist’ of classes that you want to take sometime in the future, and set up reminder to sign up for those classes.”

“Easily go between Catalyst and MyUW.”

“See what classes should be offered tentatively for upcoming quarters not just the current quarter. I have to plan summer and fall all at the last minute which is not useful or conducive to my happiness.”

“It is very important that students get notification about add and drop due dates and refund due dates.”

Fig 3. To help us improve MyUW, please rate how important it would be to do each of the following on MyUW

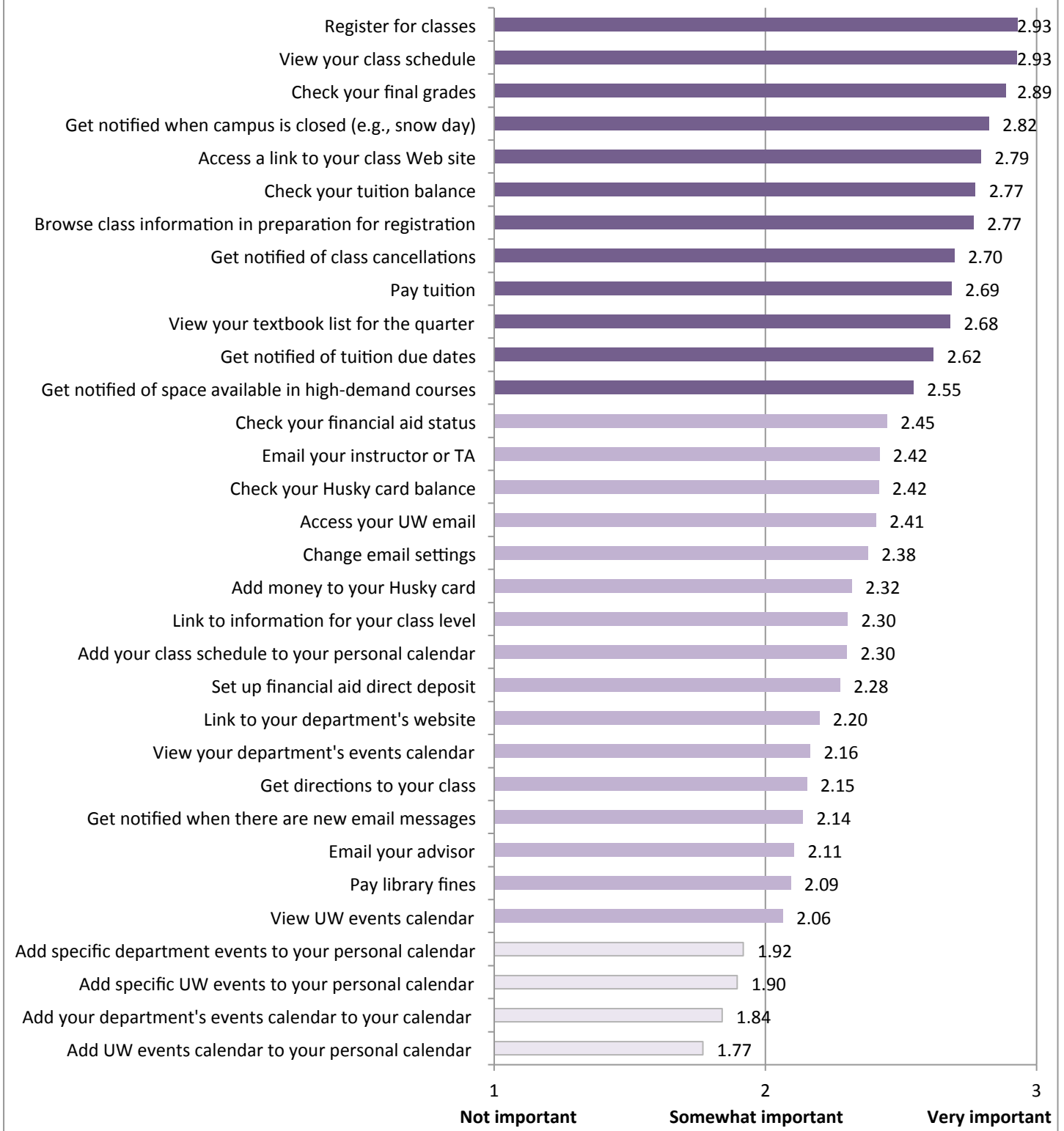


Table 4. Important tasks for students to complete on MyUW

Tasks	N	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Register for classes	578	0.5%	5.9%	93.6%
View your class schedule	576	1.0%	5.2%	93.8%
Check your final grades	575	0.7%	9.9%	89.4%
Get notified when campus is closed (e.g., snow day)	580	3.6%	10.3%	86.0%
Access a link to your class website	580	3.3%	14.0%	82.8%
Browse class information in preparation for registration	575	3.1%	17.0%	79.8%
Check your tuition balance	584	1.7%	19.2%	79.1%
Get notified of class cancellations (from instructor or TA)	577	6.6%	17.2%	76.3%
Pay tuition	583	6.7%	18.0%	75.3%
View your textbook list for the quarter	580	4.5%	22.9%	72.6%
Get notified of tuition due dates	581	4.8%	28.4%	66.8%
Get notified of space available in high-demand courses	574	11.5%	22.5%	66.0%

Students ranked the next group of tasks as being of moderate importance. These tasks are primarily administrative and complementary to the core academic functions of MyUW. Although these tasks may not be essential, many students rated them higher than “somewhat important.” We grouped these tasks into complementary functions:

- Financial functionality – Check your financial aid status, Check your Husky card balance, Add money to your Husky card, Set up financial aid direct deposit, Pay library fines
- Email – Email your instructor or TA, Access your UW email, Change email settings, Get notified when there are new email messages, Email your advisor

- Departmental and campus resources – Link to information for your class level, Link to your department's website, View your department's events calendar, View UW events calendar
- Class resources – Add your class schedule to your personal calendar, Get directions to your class

The least important types of tasks for students involved adding events to a personal calendar. At least 35% of participants rated these individual tasks “not important” while less than 30% of participants rated these tasks as “very important” (Table 5).

Table 5. Least important tasks for students to complete on MyUW

Tasks	N	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Add specific department events to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	576	35.9%	36.3%	27.8%
Add specific UW events to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	577	37.3%	35.9%	26.9%
Add your department's events calendar to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	571	39.6%	36.8%	23.6%
Add UW events calendar to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	577	44.2%	34.7%	21.1%

Similarly, students’ write-in responses illustrate that many other calendar functions would be nice to have, even though adding events to a personal calendar was not rated as necessary.

“While I said ‘not important’ to all of the export-to-your-personal-calendar options, it would be nice if the various date-based information (Important Dates and Deadlines, class schedule, university/department events calendars) could appear in an integrated calendar display on the site itself.”

“It would be great if I could see important social events throughout campus or like a list.”

“It might be nice to see when other departments are holding events, so that students could explore other majors and minors.”

“It would be nice to have a visual monthly school calendar that listed UW events/closures, and add personal dates as well.”

Students’ write-in responses point to other information that they want to access through MyUW, including employment information (eight responses) and library services (seven responses).

Key Point: Students would like to access MyUW on their mobile device.

A majority of UW students own and use a mobile device, and many express a desire for mobile access to MyUW. Of all participants, 73% reported that they use a mobile device that can access the internet such as a smartphone, tablet computer, or other device. Additionally, most students indicated “Create a mobile version of MyUW” as a priority improvement (50% high priority and 22% medium priority). The need for a mobile version of MyUW was also mentioned throughout students’ write-in responses:

“To me mobile access is most important. Also, I do not think it is very important to work hard to pack MyUW with information. UW’s search function is very good, so I am much more inclined to search for the info rather than spend several minutes clicking around MyUW looking for what I need.”

“I’m very excited for mobile MyUW. I constantly access MyUW from my phone.”

“We need a MyUW mobile app!!!”

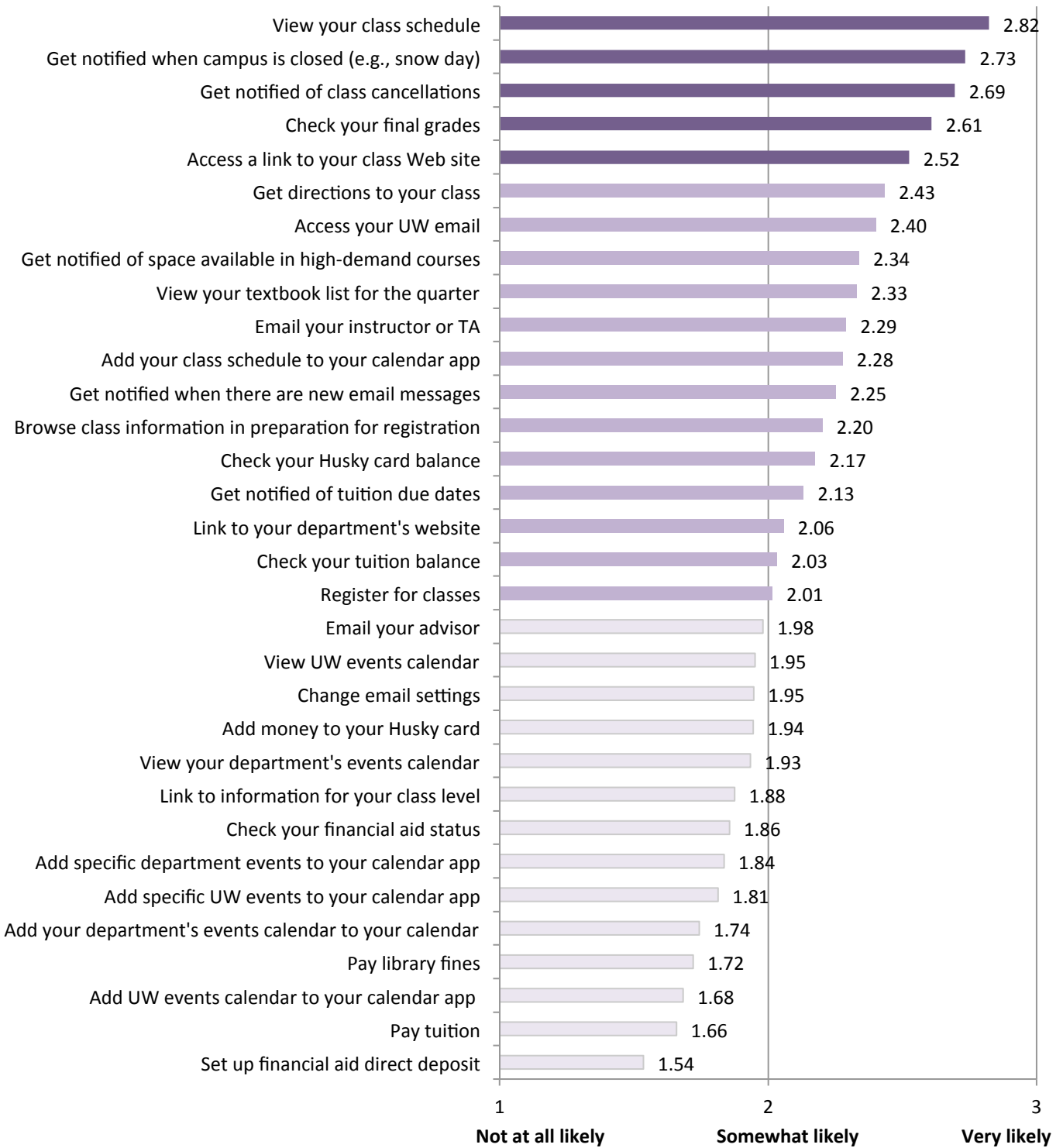
“MyUW mobile is really, really important.. We want it.”

“Would be super great to have mobile access to MyUW”

Mobile functions that students would likely embrace are a small set of urgent, time-dependent checks and notifications. Students would be unlikely to use a mobile interface for tasks that involve financial transactions or making changes to settings and transaction related tasks in a mobile application (Figure 4). Responses were grouped by their mean values, with tasks receiving a mean value of 2.50 or higher designated as the highest likelihood of use, tasks with means between 2.00 and 2.49 designated as moderately likely to be used, and items with less than a mean value of 2.00 as least likely.

- Students express strong support for a few high priority mobile tasks, all of which are related to immediate and urgent notifications: Viewing class schedules, notifications of campus and class cancellations, links to class websites, and final grade checks.
- Students show medium likelihood of use for a wide range of tasks on a mobile device. However, most of these tasks are not associated with making permanent changes. Instead, they include tasks such as semi-urgent notifications (space available in courses) and practical information like directions to class, and viewing textbook lists.
- Students would be least likely to use a mobile device for making permanent changes or completing transactions: Paying tuition, financial aid, or library fines.

Fig 4. If a mobile version of MyUW were available, rate how likely you would be to use your mobile device to do the following tasks



Recommendations and Approach

This section enumerates nine recommendations, and then outlines a suggested approach to address the highest priority findings. The following recommendations for changes and enhancements to MyUW are based on the findings from the student survey outlined in this report, as well as findings from the MyUW focus groups (see Appendix 3: Focus Group report). It has also been noted when the recommendation would provide collateral improvements for faculty and staff, in addition to students.

In suggesting an approach to carrying out these improvements, the MyUW team has taken into account technical issues and resource constraints in order to identify the most important changes to MyUW that could be accomplished in the near term—changes that we recommend undertaking now—and which recommendations require longer term efforts that will move MyUW towards the desired goal-state over time.

The recommendations are as follows:

1. Improve navigation, information architecture, and design

The information architecture and usability of MyUW should be improved so that students can more easily navigate the content and find the information or links they need. Content should be reduced, revised, and reorganized as necessary to make it easier to read and skim, in order to better support the information needs of students. The amount of text content, especially static and generic text, should be reduced. Customization features should be redesigned, in order to improve clarity and usability. Overall, content should be directly relevant to students, and easy for them to scan and identify desired content.

2. Increase personalization of content for students

MyUW should emphasize increased personalization and relevance of default content, and reduce reliance on customization of content by individual users. MyUW content for students should be personalized by campus, department, major, and class standing. This would allow, for instance, a sophomore Engineering major to see different information than a senior English major, with each student seeing information directly relevant to his or her individual experience at the UW. This increased personalization of content can proceed iteratively, and some improvements can likely be made in the short term. In the longer-term, it will require both infrastructure improvements to the affiliation and other data available about students, and a broad collaborative effort with campus partners to identify and present relevant content. Infrastructure enhancements to provide improved affiliation data would also benefit faculty and staff users of MyUW and other applications.

3. Provide notifications

MyUW should display personalized notifications for students to support registration and class participation and assist in the conduct of their business with the university. Notifications should also be available in other modes according to student preferences, such as on mobile devices. Examples of personalized notifications include changes to class information, assignments, or due dates; registration dates, alerts, and deadlines; tuition due dates and alerts; campus closures. MyUW should be one location at which students receive such notifications. UW-IT needs to develop an enterprise notification service that would provide notifications to MyUW from other systems. This service would have broad benefit for faculty and staff, as well as students.

4. Redesign class schedule

MyUW class resources should be redesigned to improve navigation, increase personalization, and increase effectiveness of the most important MyUW content for students. This effort should address the information design and usability of the course resources, and is an opportunity to develop a more useful integration with LMS and Library resources. Common student tasks needing improved support include: viewing a visual class schedule, locating classes, better integration with class Web sites, textbooks, library resources, and instructor contact information.

5. Develop MyUW mobile app to support student workflows

UW-IT should develop a mobile version of MyUW that support student's class participation, as well as urgent, time-dependent checks and notifications. Mobile content should be personalized and relevant to tasks typically completed on a mobile device. Relevant content includes: viewing class schedule, accessing class Web site, obtaining directions to class, sending email to instructors, checking grades, checking Husky card balance, receiving notifications of campus closures and class cancellations. A mobile version of MyUW was highly prioritized by students, and would also improve navigation for students to important class resources. A MyUW mobile app could be iteratively enhanced to provide support for faculty and staff as well.

6. Improve support for registration

MyUW should provide better support for registration, and play a role in streamlining the registration process for students. While registration functionality was rated as the most important academic task to complete on MyUW by students, improvements to registration and academic planning will be addressed by the My Plan project and Quali Student under the leadership of the Student Program. MyUW should integrate with MyPlan to help support planning and registration for students.

7. Simplify display of financial information

MyUW should display student financial account balances in one location, so students can easily find their current account information. This information includes tuition balance and Professional & Continuing Education tuition balance, housing and food services fees, Husky card balance, and other fees. As much as possible, financial information should be co-located and readability should be improved.

8. Provide more relevant UW email content

With the migration away from deskmail to other email services for students, the MyUW email content could be improved to provide more relevant and useful information for students. Generic information about available email services and disk quota usage should be replaced with relevant information about the UW email service the individual has selected. This work would also benefit faculty and staff.

9. Real-time information

MyUW should provide, as much as possible, accurate and real-time information. The latency of affiliation data and status information should be reduced. Nightly data feeds should be replaced with timely data from available Web services, when such services are available. Personal content and notifications need to be based on current

affiliation data and status. Registration, financial, and other relevant information should be as current as possible.

Many recommendations could be addressed with two near-term efforts: 1) MyUW mobile application and 2) enhancement of personal content for students.

Students prioritized **a mobile version of MyUW**, and identified specific tasks they would complete on a mobile device. In addition, a MyUW mobile application for students would, immediately upon release, improve student access to key information that supports their class participation (for those students with a smart phone or tablet). Design of the class schedule and class resources for viewing on the mobile application will directly translate to improvements in navigation, information architecture, and design on the MyUW Web portal. This value will be realized in the second recommended project to enhance MyUW personal content, which would include a redesign of the class resources. This mobile app would be designed specifically to meet students' needs, and not be a complete representation of MyUW content.

Recommendations addressed by a MyUW mobile application include the following:

1. Improve navigation, information architecture, and design
2. Increase personalization of content for students
3. Provide notifications
4. Redesign class schedule
5. Develop MyUW Mobile application to support student workflows

Possible UW-IT contributors to this effort include ACA, IAM, and the Student Program.

Initial effort **to enhance personal content for students** should focus on improvements to the MyFrontPage tab. This recommended project would include a redesign of the current class schedule for students, improvements to email content, a reconsideration of financial information, and a redesign of the customization functionality. In addition, the project would explore possible near-term enhancements to personal content based on students' major, department, and class standing. Visual enhancements to improve overall readability of MyUW would also be in scope.

Recommendations addressed by enhancing the personal content for students include the following:

1. Improve navigation, information architecture, and design
2. Increase personalization of content for students
4. Redesign class schedule
5. Develop MyUW Mobile application to support student workflows
7. Simplify display of financial information
9. Provide more relevant UW email content

Possible UW-IT contributors include ACA and the Student Program.

Future Efforts

Efforts that should be undertaken that would deliver value to students in the future include the following:

Infrastructure to support personalization: Other enhancements to student personal content based on department, major, class standing, etc., would require additional data and infrastructure, and considerable time to collaborate with campus partners, such as advisors and program subject matter experts, to prepare relevant and useful content for students. Additional infrastructure, such as an enhanced person service, would provide robust affiliation data to MyUW and other applications would improve personalization, and maintain performance of the service.

Registration improvements: The MyUW team will work with the Student Program as it develops MyPlan and works toward replacement of the student information systems to integrate usefully with MyPlan and make improvements to better support registration. This work will likely require both near-term actions and longer term efforts, as MyPlan features continue to be developed and released, and the student information systems transition to new platforms.

Content curation: The MyUW team will also begin to work with content providers to reduce the amount of static text content displayed on MyUW. This effort will rely on usage data and user research about the key tasks MyUW needs to support for students in order to identify content that can be revised to be more useful or removed from the portal.

Enterprise infrastructure additions and enhancements: Longer term efforts that the UW-IT could undertake to move MyUW toward the desired goal-state of a highly personalized and contextualized presentation of content for students include: building out an enterprise notifications service to provide timely and relevant reminders and alerts to students, and undertaking enhancements to organization and personal data services to provide enhanced and real-time information about an individual's affiliation and relationship to the UW.

Appendix 1: Data Tables

Experience with MyUW

Table 1. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Current State of MyUW	N	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
MyUW is the first place I go to when looking for resources I need as a student at the UW	588	7.1%	26.7%	43.4%	22.8%
MyUW is one of my most frequently visited websites	585	11.6%	22.1%	42.1%	24.3%
I am able to find most resources I need on MyUW	580	3.6%	24.0%	54.8%	17.6%
It is important to me that all of the UW-related information I need is available in one place	580	0.7%	7.4%	31.4%	60.5%
It is important to me that MyUW is improved	583	1.9%	17.5%	39.1%	41.5%

Priorities

Table 2. Here are some general changes we are considering making to MyUW; which would be a priority for you?

Priorities	N	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority
Make MyUW easier to navigate	585	6.8%	32.3%	60.9%
Make MyUW more visually pleasing	585	29.1%	47.0%	23.9%
Reduce the amount of text on the screen	584	24.1%	45.0%	30.8%
Increase the personal content shown (information specific to you and your status at the UW)	581	9.3%	39.1%	51.6%
Reduce the amount of general content about the UW shown	585	28.7%	48.7%	22.6%
Create a mobile version of MyUW	585	28.2%	22.1%	49.7%

Appendix 1: Data Tables

Desired Resources

To help us improve MyUW, please rate how important it would be to do each of the following on MyUW.

Scale: Not important (1), Somewhat important (2), Very important (3)

Table 3. Financial Information on MyUW

Tasks	N	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
Check your Husky card balance	584	15.4%	27.4%	57.2%
Add money to your Husky card	584	19.9%	28.4%	51.7%
Check your tuition balance	584	1.7%	19.2%	79.1%
Pay tuition	583	6.7%	18.0%	75.3%
Check your financial aid status	578	17.5%	20.2%	62.3%
Set up financial aid direct deposit	581	24.3%	23.9%	51.8%
Pay library fines	581	29.4%	31.8%	38.7%

Table 4. Class Schedule on MyUW

Tasks	N	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
View your class schedule	576	1.0%	5.2%	93.8%
Add your class schedule to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	579	23.3%	23.3%	53.4%
Get directions to your class	578	24.7%	35.3%	40.0%

Appendix 1: Data Tables

Table 5. Class Resources on MyUW

Tasks	N	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
Access a link to your class website	580	3.3%	14.0%	82.8%
View your textbook list for the quarter	580	4.5%	22.9%	72.6%
Check your final grades	575	0.7%	9.9%	89.4%
Get notified of class cancellations (from instructor or TA)	577	6.6%	17.2%	76.3%
Email your instructor or TA	576	12.7%	32.6%	54.7%
Access and read library e-reserves for your classes	579	14.3%	30.7%	54.9%

Table 6. Department and Campus-level Resources on MyUW

Tasks	N	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
Email your advisor	579	25.0%	39.4%	35.6%
Link to your department's website	579	20.2%	39.7%	40.1%
Get notified when campus is closed (e.g., snow day)	580	3.6%	10.3%	86.0%
Register for classes	578	0.5%	5.9%	93.6%
Browse class information in preparation for registration	575	3.1%	17.0%	79.8%
Get notified of space available in high-demand courses	574	11.5%	22.5%	66.0%
Link to information for your class level	577	14.9%	39.9%	45.2%

Appendix 1: Data Tables

Table 7. Campus Calendar on MyUW

Tasks	N	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
Get notified of tuition due dates	581	4.8%	28.4%	66.8%
View UW events calendar	576	22.0%	49.5%	28.5%
Add UW events calendar to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	577	44.2%	34.7%	21.1%
Add specific UW events to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	577	37.3%	35.9%	26.9%
View your department's events calendar	571	18.4%	46.8%	34.9%
Add your department's events calendar to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	571	39.6%	36.8%	23.6%
Add specific department events to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	576	35.9%	36.3%	27.8%

Table 8. Email

Tasks	N	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
Access your UW email	581	19.4%	20.3%	60.2%
Get notified when there are new email messages	574	31.0%	24.2%	44.8%
Change email settings (e.g., email forwarding, spam filter, vacation message)	575	16.0%	30.3%	53.7%

Appendix 1: Data Tables

Mobile

Do you use a mobile device that can access the internet, such as a smartphone (iPhone, Android phone, BlackBerry, Windows Mobile, etc.), tablet computer, or other device (iPad, iPod Touch, Kindle)?

If a mobile version of MyUW were available, rate how likely you would be to use your mobile device (phone, tablet, etc.) to do the following tasks:

Table 9. Financial Information

Mobile Tasks	N	Not at all likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Check your Husky card balance	413	28.3%	25.9%	45.8%
Add money to your Husky card	412	40.3%	25.0%	34.7%
Check your tuition balance	414	33.1%	30.7%	36.2%
Pay tuition	413	54.2%	25.7%	20.1%
Check your financial aid status	411	45.1%	24.1%	30.7%
Set up financial aid direct deposit	581	62.3%	21.9%	15.8%
Pay library fines	581	50.2%	27.5%	22.3%

Table 10. Class Schedule

Mobile Tasks	N	Not at all likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
View your class schedule	409	4.4%	9.0%	86.6%
Add your class schedule to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	409	25.7%	21.0%	53.3%
Get directions to your class	407	17.9%	20.9%	61.2%

Appendix 1: Data Tables

Table 11. Class Resources

Mobile Tasks	N	Not at all likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Access a link to your class website	412	10.9%	25.7%	63.3%
View your textbook list for the quarter	413	16.2%	34.6%	49.2%
Check your final grades	411	9.5%	20.2%	70.3%
Get notified of class cancellations (from instructor or TA)	412	7.5%	15.5%	76.9%
Email your instructor or TA	411	19.7%	31.6%	48.7%
Access and read library e-reserves for your classes	412	40.5%	29.9%	29.6%

Table 12. Department and Campus-Level Resources

Mobile Tasks	N	Not at all likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Email your advisor	407	32.4%	37.1%	30.5%
Link to your department's website	406	27.6%	39.2%	33.3%
Get notified when campus is closed (e.g., snow day)	410	6.3%	13.9%	79.8%
Register for classes	407	33.7%	31.2%	35.1%
Browse class information in preparation for registration	408	22.8%	34.3%	42.9%
Get notified of space available in high-demand courses	406	24.9%	54.4%	20.7%
Link to information for your class level	408	39.0%	34.6%	26.5%

Appendix 1: Data Tables

Table 13. Campus Calendar

Mobile Tasks	N	Not at all likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Get notified of tuition due dates	404	26.2%	34.4%	39.4%
View UW events calendar	409	34.0%	36.9%	29.1%
Add UW events calendar to your calendar app	407	49.9%	31.9%	18.2%
Add specific UW events to your calendar app	407	42.8%	33.2%	24.1%
View your department's events calendar	408	34.8%	37.0%	28.2%
Add your department's events calendar to your calendar app	409	44.5%	36.7%	18.8%
Add specific department events to your calendar app	408	40.4%	35.5%	24.0%

Table 14. Email

Mobile Tasks	N	Not at all likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Access your UW email	412	21.1%	17.7%	61.2%
Get notified when there are new email messages	411	28.0%	19.0%	53.0%
Change email settings (e.g., email forwarding, spam filter, vacation message)	409	37.9%	29.6%	32.5%

Appendix 1: Data Tables

Customization/Personalization

Table 15. Customization / Personalization Responses

	N	%
Have you ever made changes?		
Yes	588	68%
No	588	32%
What changes have you made to MyUW?		
Changed color/theme	398	82%
Removed content boxes	398	75%
Added content boxes	398	64%
Moved content boxes around	398	49%
Changed photo in MyView	398	39%
Changed the Quick Links	398	32%
Hide a page	398	15%
Added personal links	398	9%
Reset your content changes to the default setting	398	8%
Why didn't you make changes?		
Didn't know it was possible	188	59%
No need to make changes	188	34%
It was too time consuming	188	26%
It was not clear if changes could be undone	188	13%

Demographics

Table 16. Which of the following best describes your class standing?

Class standing	Frequency	%
Freshman	49	8.4%
Sophomore	63	10.8%
Junior	117	20.0%
Senior	138	23.6%
Masters student	123	21.0%
Doctoral student	76	13.0%
Other	19	3.2%

Appendix 1: Data Tables

Table 17. What is your primary college, school, or division

College, School, Division	Frequency	%
Arts and sciences - arts	17	2.9%
Arts and sciences - Humanities	45	7.7%
Arts and sciences - Natural Sciences	86	14.7%
Arts and sciences - Social sciences	99	16.9%
Built Environments	10	1.7%
Business	32	5.5%
Dentistry	3	0.5%
Education	14	2.4%
Engineering	99	16.9%
Environment	22	3.8%
Information	29	4.9%
Law	8	1.4%
Medicine	19	3.2%
Nursing	18	3.1%
Pharmacy	7	1.2%
Public Affairs	16	2.7%
Public Health	13	2.2%
Social Work	11	1.9%
Undecided	14	2.4%
Other	24	4.1%

Appendix 1: Data Tables

Differences between Graduates and Undergraduates

Table 18. Priority differences between graduate and undergraduates

Priorities	Undergraduate	Graduate	Difference	p-value
Make MyUW easier to navigate	2.48	2.65	-0.17	0.00
Make MyUW more visually pleasing	1.99	1.82	0.17	0.01
Reduce the amount of text on the screen	2.03	2.13	-0.1	0.13
Increase the personal content shown (information specific to you and your status at the UW)	2.48	2.33	0.15	0.01
Reduce the amount of general content about the UW shown	1.92	1.96	-0.04	0.46
Create a mobile version of MyUW	2.35	1.97	0.38	0.00

Table 19. Differences in perceptions of MyUW between graduate and undergraduates

Current State of MyUW	Undergraduate	Graduate	Difference	p-value
MyUW is the first place I go to when looking for resources I need as a student at the UW	2.84	2.77	0.07	0.37
MyUW is one of my most frequently visited websites	2.95	2.54	0.41	0.00
I am able to find most resources I need on MyUW	2.92	2.78	0.14	0.03
It is important to me that all of the UW-related information I need is available in one place	3.54	3.46	0.08	0.14
It is important to me that MyUW is improved	3.25	3.12	0.13	0.06

Appendix 1: Data Tables

Table 20. Difference in desired resources between graduate and undergraduates

Desired Resources	Undergraduate	Grad	Difference	p-value
Check your Husky card balance	2.53	2.23	0.30	0.00
Add money to your Husky card	2.40	2.20	0.20	0.00
Check your tuition balance	2.77	2.81	-0.04	0.28
Pay tuition	2.68	2.74	-0.06	0.22
Check your financial aid status	2.50	2.37	0.14	0.05
Set up financial aid direct deposit	2.31	2.24	0.07	0.33
Pay library fines	2.09	2.11	-0.02	0.75
View your class schedule	2.96	2.90	0.06	0.02
Add your class schedule to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	2.30	2.33	-0.04	0.62
Get directions to your class	2.21	2.08	0.13	0.06
Access a link to your class website	2.83	2.75	0.08	0.05
View your textbook list for the quarter	2.77	2.52	0.25	0.00
Check your final grades	2.91	2.87	0.04	0.20
Get notified of class cancellations (from instructor or TA)	2.78	2.58	0.20	0.00
Email your instructor or TA	2.53	2.24	0.29	0.00
Access and read library e-reserves for your classes	2.41	2.41	0.00	0.95
Email your advisor	2.26	1.84	0.43	0.00
Link to your department's website	2.31	2.02	0.29	0.00
Get notified when campus is closed (e.g., snow day)	2.88	2.75	0.13	0.00
Register for classes	2.94	2.93	0.02	0.48
Browse class information in preparation for registration	2.82	2.70	0.12	0.01
Get notified of space available in high-demand courses	2.73	2.26	0.48	0.00
Link to information for your class level (such as orientation info for freshmen or transfer students; graduation info for seniors)	2.41	2.14	0.27	0.00
Get notified of tuition due dates	2.65	2.56	0.09	0.07
View UW events calendar	2.07	2.07	0.00	0.97
Add UW events calendar to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	1.80	1.73	0.06	0.36
Add specific UW events to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	1.87	1.94	-0.07	0.35
View your department's events calendar	2.15	2.20	-0.05	0.48
Add your department's events calendar to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	1.85	1.83	0.02	0.80
Add specific department events to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)	1.89	1.97	-0.08	0.26
Access your UW email	2.45	2.32	0.13	0.06
Get notified when there are new email messages	2.26	1.93	0.33	0.00
Change email settings (e.g., email forwarding, spam filter, vacation message)	2.41	2.31	0.10	0.13

Appendix 2: Survey Instrument

MyUW Survey

UW students, please take a few moments to tell us about your experience using MyUW and provide some feedback to help us improve the service in the future. This survey should take approximately 10 minutes of your time.

Are you a current UW student?

Experience with MyUW

In general, how do you perceive the current state of MyUW on the following scales?

Scale: 4-point Likert

- easy to navigate vs difficult to navigate
- clean vs cluttered
- personal vs generic
- friendly vs unfriendly
- visually pleasing vs visually displeasing

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Scale: Strongly disagree (1); Disagree (2); Agree (3); Strongly agree (4)

- MyUW is the first place I go to when looking for resources I need as a student at UW.
- MyUW is one of my most frequently visited Web sites.
- I am able to find most resources I need on MyUW.
- It is important to me that all of the UW-related information I need is available in one place.
- It is important to me that MyUW is improved

Priorities

Here are some general changes we are considering making to MyUW; which would be a priority for you?

Scale: Low priority (1); Medium Priority (2); High Priority (3)

Changes we are thinking about making:

- Make MyUW easier to navigate
- Make MyUW more visually pleasing
- Reduce the amount of text on the screen

Appendix 2: Survey Instrument

- Increase the personal content shown (information specific to you and your status at the UW)
 - Reduce the amount of general content about the UW shown
 - Create a mobile version of MyUW
-

Desired Resources

To help us improve MyUW, please rate how important it would be to do each of the following on MyUW.

Scale: Not important (1), Somewhat important (2), Very important (3)

Financial Information on MyUW

- Check your Husky card balance
- Add money to your Husky card
- Check your tuition balance
- Pay tuition
- Check your financial aid status
- Set up financial aid direct deposit
- Pay library fines

Class Schedule on MyUW

- View your class schedule
- Add your class schedule to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)
- Get directions to your class

Class Resources on MyUW

- Access a link to your class website
- View your textbook list for the quarter
- Check your final grades
- Get notified of class cancellations (from instructor or TA)
- Email the instructor or TA of your class
- Access and read library e-reserves for your classes

Department- and Campus-level Resources on MyUW

- Email your advisor
- Link to your department's website
- Get notified when campus is closed (e.g., snow day)
- Register for classes
- Browse class information in preparation for registration
- Get notified of space available in high-demand courses (Bill's edit: Check for available spaces in...)
- Link to information for your class level (such as orientation info for freshmen or transfer students; graduation info for seniors)

Campus Calendar on MyUW

- Get notified of tuition due dates

Appendix 2: Survey Instrument

- View UW events calendar
- Add UW events calendar to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)
- Add specific UW events to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)
- View your department's events calendar
- Add your department events calendar to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)
- Add specific department events to your personal calendar (e.g., Google, Outlook)

Email

- Access UW email
- Get notified when there are new email messages.
- Change email settings (e.g., email forwarding, spam filter, vacation message)

Please list other tasks that are not listed above, but you feel important to be able to do on MyUW. (Write-in response)

Customization/Personalization

Have you ever made any changes to customize your MyUW page?

- Yes
- No

(If Yes to previous question)

Please select which of the following changes you have made: (select all that apply)

- Changed color/theme
- Removed content boxes
- Added content boxes
- Changed the Quick Links
- Changed photo in MyView
- Moved content boxes around
- Added personal links
- Hid a page
- Reset your content changes to the default setting
- Other (write-in)

(If No to previous question)

Why haven't you made changes to your MyUW page?

- No need to make changes
- It was too time-consuming
- Didn't know it was possible
- It was not clear if changes could be undone
- Other (write-in)

Appendix 2: Survey Instrument

I would like resources and links displayed to me on MyUW to change based on my current:

- Class standing (what year I'm in)
 - Major or program
 - Department, College, or School
 - Financial aid status
 - Residential vs commuter status
 - Matriculated vs non-matriculated status
 - Transfer status
 - International student status
 - Other: _____
-

Mobile

Do you use a mobile device that can access the internet, such as a smartphone (iPhone, Android phone, BlackBerry, Windows Mobile, etc.), tablet computer, or other device (iPad, iPod Touch, Kindle)?

If a mobile version of MyUW were available, rate how likely you would be to use your mobile device (phone, tablet, etc.) to do the following tasks:

Financial Information

- Check your Husky card balance
- Add money to your Husky card
- Check your tuition balance
- check your financial aid status
- set up financial aid direct deposit
- Pay tuition
- Pay library fines

Class Schedule

- View your class schedule
- Add your class schedule to your personal calendar
- Get directions to your class

Class Resources

- Access a link to your class website
- View your textbook list for the quarter
- Check your final grades
- Get notified of class cancellations (from instructor or TA)
- Email the instructor or TA of your class
- Access and read library e-reserves for your class

Department- and Campus-level Resources

- Email your advisor
- Link to your department's website
- Get notified when campus is closed (e.g., snow day)
- Register for classes

Appendix 2: Survey Instrument

- Browse class information in preparation for registration
- Get notified of space available in high-demand courses
- Link to information for your class level (such as orientation info for freshmen or transfer students; graduation info for seniors)

Campus Calendar

- Get notified of tuition due dates
- View UW events calendar
- Add UW events calendar to your calendar app
- Add specific UW events to your calendar app
- View your department events calendar
- Add your department events calendar to your calendar app
- Add specific department events to your calendar app

Email

- Access your UW email
- Get notified when there are new email messages.
- Change email settings (e.g., email forwarding, spam filter, vacation message)

Please list other tasks that are not listed above, but you feel important to be able to do on a mobile device. (Write-in response)

Final Thoughts

Is there anything else we should know about your experiences using MyUW as we think about ways to redesign and improve it? (Write-in response)

Demographics

Which of the following best describes your class standing?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Masters Student
- Doctoral Student
- Other: _____

What is your primary college, school, or division (broad category)?

- Arts & Sciences – Arts
- Arts & Sciences – Humanities
- Arts & Sciences – Natural Sciences
- Arts & Sciences – Social Sciences
- Built Environments
- Business

Appendix 2: Survey Instrument

- Dentistry
- Education
- Engineering
- Environment
- Information
- Law
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Pharmacy
- Public Affairs
- Public Health
- Social Work
- Undecided
- Other: _____

Understanding Students' Information Needs: Findings from the 2011 MyUW Student Focus Groups

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Introduction

The University of Washington (UW) and UW Information Technology (UW-IT) have made improving students' experience and learning outcomes a high priority. Therefore, UW-IT is investing in tools and services that support students' educational goals. One of the ways that UW-IT's Academic & Collaborative Applications unit is supporting these efforts is to plan improvements to the MyUW portal. MyUW receives a good deal of user feedback from students (who are the largest user group of the portal) requesting improvements and changes. In order to understand and prioritize improvements, we need to better understand the pattern of students' use, identify any obstacles or impediments to completing tasks, and make use of the extensive feedback that students provide about useful enhancements to the MyUW portal. To begin to gather this information, we conducted a series of focus groups with students in Autumn Quarter 2011. This report details findings from those focus groups and outlines the next steps for this project.

Methods

Recruitment

To solicit feedback around students' experiences with MyUW, we conducted a series of six focus groups with students over the course of three weeks. We recruited student participants by posting a link to a WebQ survey on the login page of MyUW. The survey asked students about their class standing, availability to meet during the allotted times, and how frequently they use MyUW. As an incentive for participation, students selected to participate in one of the groups were awarded \$10 credits to their Husky accounts. In the four days the WebQ link was available we received 420 responses, 372 of which were from students that said they would be available during one or more of the allotted time slots. We grouped survey respondents according to their preferred time slot and chose ten participants for each focus group session. Participants were chosen to represent a variety of different class standings and departments on campus. Three of the sessions were designed as a mix of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduate students, with two students from each class standing chosen for each group. In order to examine different experiences with MyUW among particular students, the other

Appendix 3: Focus Group Report

three groups were comprised of students of particular class standings: one group of freshmen, one group of juniors and seniors, and one group of graduate students.

Participants

Of the 60 students assigned to a focus group, 31 students attended and participated in one of the six groups. In terms of class standing, five freshmen, three sophomores, four juniors, seven seniors, eleven graduate students, and one international student participated in the sessions. Among students who had already chosen their majors, 20 different departments were represented; the other 11 students were not yet associated with a department. In each group session, a moderator informed students about the purpose of the research and how the data would be used, explained the process, and gave opportunities for students to ask questions. The moderator began by asking a series of questions regarding students' general use of the MyUW site, then asked more specific questions about specific services offered via MyUW as time allowed in each session. Students' responses were captured by assigned note takers as well as through audio recording.

Questions

The focus group questions asked students to provide general feedback on their goals for using MyUW, how well MyUW helped them accomplish those goals, and their general impressions of the service. We then asked respondents to look at a screenshot of the portal home screen and indicate the elements they considered most important and why, as well any elements that seemed less important or unnecessary. As they reviewed the screenshot, we also discussed the general layout of the page and their current use of customization features, and suggestions for structural or content changes that would improve their experience using MyUW. Encouraging students to think about future possibilities for the service, we asked a series of questions about mobile options, including what types of content they would like to access on a mobile device and why, as well as what content would be less useful on a mobile device. This section of questions also included questions about the types of notifications students would like to receive on the go or when visiting the portal at a computer. As time allowed, we ended the session with a series of questions about specific services accessed through MyUW, or expanded on the discussion about these services that had come up in response to other questions.

Analysis

We analyzed the focus group data by summarizing the main themes that had emerged across all sessions and that were common concerns among the majority of respondents. We then filled out the summary with some details that were raised by smaller numbers of students. The main trends from the focus groups are summarized in the findings section below, along with some of the service-specific feedback that participants provided.

Findings

Main Themes

While participants had various different opinions and feedback around specific services available on MyUW, several general themes emerged. Overall, student responses focused on the general usability of the site, a desire for greater personalization, a desire for more integration with other UW-related sites and content, and feedback around customization options. Additionally, when asked about MyUW and mobile devices, students generally expressed support for a simplified, mobile-friendly form of the site with information that would help them in their day-to-day experiences as students on campus. Each of these themes is described in more detail below.

General Usability

- Students felt that the MyUW site displays more information than they regularly need to access and that the overall format of the site could be more user-friendly.

Overall, there was a consensus among many students that the MyUW site is too text-heavy. While they appreciated knowing that so much information was available if they needed it, they did not want to have to sort through it all to get to what they need. Students articulated a desire for more visual ways to cluster information, like icons, color-coding, or some way of “starring” particular items, as opposed to the amount of text currently on the site. Connected to this was a feeling that there is a lot of information presented on MyUW, sometimes too much to take in all at once, which seems to lead to a perception that the site has a “high learning curve.” Students did not expect or want to have to put in much time learn to use the site or make it work for them, and would prefer that it be more intuitive to users from the beginning. If students were not sure that they would or could find information on MyUW, they generally used other non-UW tools (Google in particular). Some students expressed interest in having tips or pop-ups on the site to educate users about site features and changes, but no students in the groups reported having used the “help” section of the MyUW. In a given session of using the site, students were typically trying to accomplish one or two tasks, or to find a link that students knew was on MyUW and did not know how to find elsewhere.

Personalization

- Students want MyUW to provide them more information that is more pertinent to their individual student experience.

Connected to feeling that there is too much information on the site, students expressed a desire for a more personalization: having less general information, and more information specific to their own needs and experience. For example, several students mentioned that it would be helpful for MyUW to provide department-specific information depending on their major or discipline, or different information

Appendix 3: Focus Group Report

depending on their class standing, etc. Students wished that required university notices, like the FERPA and Peer-to-Peer File Sharing notices, could be acknowledged once and then not be displayed constantly. Personal financial information was frequently identified among the most important information available via MyUW, so having personalized information about tuition balances and due dates as well as Husky card balances was appreciated. Some students expressed a desire for personalization not only around academics but also around the social aspect of being a student; students mentioned wanting the site to be more about fun and helping them connect to the campus community as well (tools like Facebook and Google + were mentioned specifically in this regard).

Integration

- Students want MyUW to house all the University-related information that they need to access most frequently, integrating multiple UW sites.

There was a high level of interest in having MyUW serve as the main entry point for the most frequently needed UW-related information. Students expressed frustration with having to navigate multiple sites and tools to find information related to the school. Students specifically mentioned departmental information, Catalyst tools and course Web sites, lists of majors, advising, financial aid, Professional and Continuing Education, and Housing and Food services all being found on different sites as a frustration.

Customization

- Students want simple, obvious, and interactive ways to customize their MyUW page and rarely use the customization options currently available.

Overall, few students took advantage of the customization options currently available on MyUW. Many students were unaware of the possibility to add and delete content, and those that were aware rarely did so, either because they did not want to take the time to do so or because they were afraid they would not be able to retrieve removed content if they later needed to access it. In several groups, students expressed a desire to add, remove, or change something, and were surprised to find out those options already existed. There was a general desire for simple, obvious customization options, much like a “dashboard” or personalized Google site. In particular, students desired more “fun” with customization options as well as a more streamlined look to the site, with more white space, icons, and interactive possibilities. Along these lines, several students liked the MyView box and the theme/color change options currently on the site.

Appendix 3: Focus Group Report

Mobile MyUW Access

- Students would like to access a simplified version of MyUW on mobile devices that would help them in their day-to-day lives as students, especially in terms of navigating campus and coordinating their schedules.

Interest in a simple, mobile-friendly form of MyUW was high among participants. Specifically, students would like to access their own personal UW-related information via mobile devices, like class schedules and financial information, more than general school information. Many students want a way to link their class schedule with the campus map on their mobile device, so that their device could use its GPS to give them specific directions for getting around campus. Several also noted that being able to add to their Husky card balance via a mobile device would be very convenient. When asked about accessing their class schedule on a mobile device, students seemed to prefer the visual schedule option to the table layout. Some students expressed interest in receiving mobile notifications from MyUW, in particular notifications of changes to class location or schedule, as well as upcoming tuition or other financial due dates. Students indicated a desire to customize such notifications, choosing which ones they would receive and having the option to opt out of receiving them altogether.

Feedback on Specific Services

Class Schedule

- For many students, the class schedule is one of the most important features on MyUW. Several students reported that they check it frequently, especially early on in the quarter.
- Generally, students prefer the visual schedule to the table layout. Several students suggested having the information from the table version available via a link on the visual schedule (or in some other way) but having the visual schedule be the default view. The timeline alignment in the visual schedule needs to be more precise.
- The table version of the schedule could be simplified; students generally do not use the “Researching? Start here” link and rarely need the link to the course description in the catalog. They identified the following information as the most important items for the class schedule to contain: class title, meeting time, and location (linked to the campus map).
- Students want their course Web sites linked via their class schedule. They are frustrated when class Web sites are spread across various different systems and not linked in one central location (ideally on the class schedule).
- Students want to acknowledge notices like FERPA and Peer-to-Peer File Sharing and then dismiss them from the class schedule view.

Appendix 3: Focus Group Report

Email

- While some students still use MyUW to access Deskmall or other email programs, most students use Google to check their UW email or forward their UW email to gmail, yahoo, etc.
- The Deskmall storage box is not relevant or accurate for most students.
- Students who do use MyUW to access email generally only use the email link, and do not need the other links available in the email box very often (i.e. change forwarding, set up spam filter or vacation message, etc.).
- A few students mentioned wishing they could see right away on their MyUW front page whether they had any new email.

Registration

- Registration was identified by many students as one of the most important items available through MyUW.
- Most students use MyUW to register for courses; graduate students in Professional and Continuing Education programs and Law students mentioned having to register on a different site or sometimes both on MyUW and within their particular department.
- Many students appreciated the “schedule finder” option within registration, but wished there was a way to save a working schedule and then go back and look for other classes to see how they could fit everything they needed into their schedule.
- Students’ main frustration with the registration process had to do with needing to check it regularly to try and find a space in the more high-demand courses. They also mentioned receiving vague error messages when they tried to register for particular classes that did not explain *why* they were not allowed to register for that particular course.
- It would be helpful for students to have their registration schedule displayed right alongside the registration link, so they knew before trying to register whether they were within their assigned registration period.

Student Finances

- Many students pointed to tuition information as one of the most important pieces of information available on MyUW.
- While students varied in the frequency with which they check their tuition balances, generally all students agreed that it was nice to see their balance on their front page, even after it was paid for the quarter.
- Along with checking their tuition, students would like to be able to see other bills (i.e. housing balance, etc.) displayed centrally within MyUW, rather than having to check multiple sites to make sure they do not owe a balance.

Appendix 3: Focus Group Report

- Students receiving financial aid check MyUW frequently to make sure that their aid was correctly awarded and applied.
- Many students start in MyUW to add money to their Husky Card balances.
- Many student employees use MyUW to access Employee Self-Service.
- Students did not feel that their U-Pass activation status needed to be displayed consistently on their front page, now that the U-Pass is universal.
- A couple of students mentioned frustration about having a hold placed on their account and not being aware of it; maybe receiving notification about holds via MyUW would be helpful.

Next Steps

We plan to validate these trends and prioritize student needs for MyUW by surveying a larger population of MyUW users in early Winter Quarter 2012. Together, the survey and focus group data will deepen our understanding of student usage of MyUW, obstacles to completing tasks, and needs for enhanced functionality. Analyzing these data will help us make recommendations for how to make MyUW more useful for students. We will use findings from this user research to begin conversations with campus partners about the future direction of the MyUW portal.