

Siena College

Website Redesign 2017

This **Content Strategy document will outline how to best use your new design system by outlining the best use cases and practices of each **Component**.**

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Created by **Fastspot**

Components

WYSIWYG

WYSIWYG is an acronym, short for "What you see is what you get". It indicates that this is a visual designer for the web, allowing the content creator to get a sense of what the content will look like upon publishing, and visually see the structure and layout of the content. WYSIWYGs are the core of content entry on most web applications—think of it like the editor you use in gmail to compose an email.

The WYSIWYG will hold the majority of the content in the site. WYSIWYGs are highly flexible components that can take wide ranges of styled text, as well as certain block like elements, like quotes, images, or tables.

Each page comes with a built in WYSIWYG which is entered in as "Content" before the Callout fields. So why would we have a separate WYSIWYG component that can be entered into these callouts?

These WYSIWYGs allow you to build up more varied expositional content, by interspersing standard text and image content with other components. When using these content style WYSIWYGs, use the the built in page element first, and be sure to check the layout before publishing to ensure that the components flow together as seamlessly as possible.

Image Header

When selecting visuals for an Media Top, remember that this is the first impression a user gets when landing on an interior page. Provide extra context to these pages, and select visuals that are not just inspirational, but relevant. When in doubt, it's better to not use an image than to use one that will be confusing or frivolous. {{Image Header/Media Top}} should be avoided on task specific pages—they're much better at setting the tone on an expositional or story centric page

When selecting imagery, ensure that the important elements of the photo are in the vertical center, as the top and bottom may become cropped off at various browser widths. Ensure that

file types are kept small so the page still loads quickly. Check text legibility over light or highly varied media using tools like the [Contrast Analyzer Chrome extension](#).

Topic Row

Topic rows are a tremendously flexible component that helps move users between pages. When creating content for topic rows, always consider why the user is on this current page and what actions they would need next. The two links should be contextually related, so each topic row should be constrained to a single topic.

The biggest benefit of topic rows over other types of links is their ability to add extra context and to provide a supporting image. If you have a lot of resources to link to or if the context would be superfluous, consider one of the simpler options. If you need a callout to be more visually apparent, use a flex callout.

Link List

Link sets are used to group together contextually related links and actions in a simple way. These are especially useful for pages that are at the beginning of a process or pages that users will return to frequently. Use them in place of more visual callouts when there will be more than 2 or 3 links, especially if the links are useful without extra context.

Contact Information

Contact information callouts give the user a specific person or place to contact relevant to the current page. Wherever possible, make it clear to the user who they should be contacting to get the best information. Ensure that the person on the receiving end of each phone number or email inbox is aware of where it is being published and why so they can effectively field requests sent to them.

Flex Callout

Attention! Very noisy callout ahead!

Flex callouts are a visually arresting way to direct the user to a specific place. Due to their visually loud nature, flex callouts should be used sparingly and for important or visually beautiful things. Select a high-quality image, and prioritize imagery that fits the layout well.

Media Gallery

This component creates a set of media along with captions that the user can browse through. It accepts images and urls to link to videos.

When creating a media gallery, first consider the types and grouping of media that will be added. If they're all from a single event or range in time, they should be in chronological or reverse-chronological order. If they're grouped by concept, order them by importance, as media higher in the set is more likely to be interacted with. Ensure that videos are logical points in the set.

When captioning media, write descriptions that don't repeat the surrounding text.

Program Finder

The content for the program finder isn't going to be written directly to this page, but instead will be written as part of entering programs in the program module. When writing these descriptions, use an optimistic and excited tone that conveys the value of what this program is, and what students will be able to accomplish with it after graduation.

Be sure that programs that have similar siblings have differentiation in their descriptions. It's important that when comparing something like multiple accounting degrees, that the user is able to differentiate what it *means* to attend these different programs. This is especially important when you consider that a search term that will return one of these programs will also return programs that are very similar.

Featured News

Choosing news to feature is a delicate balance of the college's needs, and the user's needs. The college has specific things that it would like to talk about, but it needs to marry those desires with what students—and especially prospective students—want to see. Rely heavily on

stories of success. Show outcomes, especially those that result in Siena alums success in the wider world.

Siena's close knit community means that you can focus on people in these features, especially when you are engaging your current student body. Be comfortable referring to individuals as themselves instead of relying on categorical information (i.e. Talk about them as a person, not as a student or as a Biology major).

New Listing with Filters

The content on the news listing is an aggregation of the news system, showing the snippets of individual articles and the featured articles. Consequentially, this page's content is populated from the individual articles that form the news module.

This page doesn't have a specific content strategy on its own, but it does have one in aggregate. Regularly scan this page to ensure consistent tone, and good variance of content. Ensure that there is a nice rhythm of the types of stories, in their content, focus, and seriousness. Ensure that this rhythm shows Siena's community, and emphasizes people.

News Detail Metadata

The news detail metadata component is a simple modification of the page top, bringing in relevant metadata from the news article. It doesn't have a specific content strategy, but should be checked to ensure that the system is being utilized well.

Related News

The goal of related news is to give the user a place to go after reading through an article, allowing lateral movement between articles that cover similar topics. Related news is brought in by selecting a category, so it works best when categories are assigned thoughtfully. While there isn't a specific strategy applied to this component, it is worth checking to ensure that the articles that populate on any given story (Especially featured stories) are relevant and topical.

Announcement

Announcements are a sitewide feature that is active on every page of the site simultaneously. It's important to use announcements incredibly sparingly—only in situations that truly demand it. Over use of an announcement will decrease its importance, causing users to skip it and miss important information. It's important to consider that this type of component is used for nefarious or irrelevant purposes all over the internet, so it should be a surprise when it appears on Siena's site.

Resource Listing with Filters

Each individual resource has a small description that can be written for it. These descriptions should be fairly dry and straightforward—try to convey what this resource is as quickly and efficiently as possible. Consider not writing descriptions for relatively self evident items, and saving them for resources that users will be less familiar with, or those with names that don't convey the products use themselves.

Featured Event

This component will be pulling content directly from the MasterCalendar iCal feed, which requires careful use in order to be successful. MasterCalendar's feed is a little idiosyncratic, so it may take some time and internal processes to ensure that the data comes through correctly. The most important part of this is to check this component on the front end, to ensure that the data is coming through well and is accurately conveying its information to the end user.

Authenticated Page

Authenticated pages do not necessarily have a different content need from a standard page. The most important part of using an authenticated page correctly is ensuring that the user understand when they are accessing authenticated information vs. public information, and that it feels logical and reasonable when pages are protected.

Faculty Listing

The faculty listing outputs a list of directory members based off of an applied category in the directory. The chief purpose for this is to output the members of a department or office on that

organizational body's page. Because this is essentially a query of an internal system, the main function of the content strategy for this page will be checking to ensure that it is returning people accurately.

Directory Listing with Filters

As this page is another viewing of a module, there isn't a specific content strategy for this page outside of ensuring valid data. While there isn't an undue focus on photography in this directory, they still are attention catching, and should be checked for appropriate sizing and subject matter.

Scholarship Listing

This scholarship listing has a large amount of content in a relatively dense setup, so it is important to emphasize brevity and scannability. The first few sentences of the scholarship description should focus on eligibility requirements so that students reading through it can understand what is applicable to them.

Student Directory Listing

The student directory is even simpler than the standard directory—so its only need is an occasional scan to ensure accuracy of information and that the system is working.

Related Programs

Related programs are meant to show programs that are similar to each other, whether it is in subject matter or in structure. The [URL Structure Mindmeister](#) shows some examples of these programs by connecting them together with green lines, to show examples that fit these super-sets.

These programs are manually selected, so choose ones that make sense and feel similar to the current program—don't use this component to just highlight random programs. It's better to omit this component than to put irrelevant information in it.

Callout Cards

These cards are supplemental information that can be at home on almost any page. There are three types of cards available: Statistic, Story, and Testimonial. Any of these can be relevant to a page, but it's important that the connection is understandable by the student. This is most true for the Story and for the Testimonial. While generic stories and testimonials are easy to include, their impact is greatest when there is a common thread with their parent page.

Statistics can be used more generally, especially when talking about the success of the college or its students.

Homepage Elements

Feature

The feature section is a paired, headline, subline, link, and video. The goal of this section is in setting the tone of the homepage. It should have strong, terse messaging and a clear call to action that is understandable. While the primary audience is prospective students, it can accommodate more broadly appealing messaging as long as there is still a path to getting information or registering.

Program Finder

This section brings in the program finder, and should be relatively evergreen. When editing the lead in copy for this section, ensure that it still leads to the results driven, value oriented elements of Siena's messaging.

Callout Cards

Callout cards use different types of information to underscore the same thesis. There are two ways to structure this—top down or bottom up. Don't be overly focused on including one of each of the cards, it is far better that you include the best content (And the right amount of it) then getting precisely one of each. For the top down method, decide on a messaging theme and then find relevant information to bolster that theme. Bottom up is when you see a particular story, testimonial, or statistic that you want to highlight, and then build messaging and ancillary stories around it.

These sections have the broadest level of message flexibility of anywhere else on the homepage, and can serve a wide variety of purposes. One method that can be particularly successful here is to decide on a theme for a set period of time, and then swap out cards inside of that theme regularly to keep it fresh. Also consider how this section can be relevant based off of the time of year (e.g. focusing more on scholarships and admissions in the summer and fall, more on alum success near graduation, etc.)

From a layout perspective, we would recommend only having one or two sections of callout cards, each of which has between two and four content cards in it.

What's Happening

This section should be populating regularly with upcoming events. Similarly to other data views throughout the system, the chief interaction with this section from a content strategy perspective is for QA, to ensure that the data is coming through well and is representative of the school.

Quote

The quote from St. Francis should be relatively evergreen, and only particularly needs to change if there is a messaging difference that needs to be emphasized from a school level (e.g. responding to a recent piece of news, or a public change in messaging for the college).

Voice and Tone words

Communal

When speaking about being at Siena, talking about the community is more than just a noun. The community is an action and an intention of Siena's, a manifestation of what comes from the people they have brought together. This isn't an abstraction, it's a tangible and identifiable element of Siena that is crucial, and it needs to come through when Siena speaks about itself.

Compassionate

Siena's people bring their warmth and humanity to each other as part of the Siena experience. Engaging with Siena is engaging with caring people who do what they can to serve you, both as an envoy of Siena and as an embody of Siena's Franciscan values.

Person-centered

Siena isn't run by bureaucracy or greed, but by a deep focus on people and on serving them. Compassionate reflects how Siena's people engage with the outside world, but person-centered is focused on Siena's structure and heart.

Holistic

There is more to creating a whole person than just academic education—and there is a richness that comes from that. Being holistic is about focusing on the whole picture, not leaving your garden to decay while you build your house. Siena looks for that richness, focuses its energy in multiple places, and emphasizes the wholesomeness of a broad perspective.

Joyful

Siena's spirit shines brightly through its alumni, staff, and students. When Siena talks about its successes, joy subsumes pride. It's a minor, but noticeable difference. Siena rejoices in the good for its people and the broader community, it doesn't brag about its accomplishments.

Supportive

This voice and tone keyword comes across as an amalgamation of others—person-centered, communal, and compassionate. Siena looks for what is best for its students and staff, and creates structures and relationships that underpin that success. It looks to help students as individuals, however that help is needed.

Honest

Siena doesn't need to hide the truth about itself. This is most important when Siena talks about its own value—that it is clear that Siena speaks truthfully about what it provides, and that what it provides is purposeful. The people of Siena carry this value to each other, speaking directly but gently, and providing truth instead of spin.

Grounded

Siena's work is deeply practical in preparing its graduates for their entire lives. Being a liberal arts school comes with a stigma of frivolity. Moving past that is a combination of being honest and realist about what students need, and what the school can provide for them. Siena has the statistics about the success of its students, and it can make a solid case that what it provides isn't just valuable, it's useful and necessary.

Publication Calendar

As you are well familiar, even the most advanced website isn't a "set it and forget it" venture. This publication calendar isn't meant to plan out *how* you structure your content, but rather to give a general framework to check in on the content regularly—ensuring that sections are updated regularly and that there's a fresh stream of content flowing into the site. Some of these items may change in frequency as you become more familiar with the site, and find a comfortable rhythm for establishing that it is working well.

Weekly

- Check the events feed for accurate data.
- High level QA checks for directories, resources, and other data listings. (This will trail off over time)
- Create new stories for the site.
- Change featured stories on the News page.
- Change events featured on the homepage.

Monthly

- Assess callout cards on the homepage. Revise or create new ones as necessary. Change sections as necessary.
- Change featured stories on the homepage.

Quarterly

- Change the feature text/link/image.
- Assess high level content strategy by simulating user journeys through the site. Click through articles and features as if a new student, and ensure that there aren't dead ends.
- Audit course descriptions from the program finder.
- Audit crucial pages for user journeys (Admissions, Financial Aid, Scholarships).

Yearly

- Audit course pages (All content, not just from the listing page).
- Audit departmental pages. Ensure that they link correctly to other areas of the site.
- Plan out broad messaging strategy for the year, especially in regards to the homepage feature.