Scholarship Universe Website Redesign

OBJECTIVE: Make Scholarship Universe more UA Branded, more mobile friendly, more user friendly, with the possibility of guest access to assist in student recruitment.

PROGRAM: Since Scholarship Universe first launched in November 2010, the site has become highly visible and widely used by UA Students, with roughly 75% of graduate and undergraduate students having logged in at least once in the past year. The site has also expanded services to over a dozen UA colleges in the last year with more coming on board in 2014. The site’s distinctive design and innovative service has helped make it one of a kind and it is time to implement changes that will bring out SU’s fullest potential as a point of differentiation for the UA. With the university set to launch a significant rebranding effort and with students increasingly using mobile devices on a regular basis, now is the opportune time for SU to be redesigned.

BUDGET*: $180,000 ($80k salary + $40k ERE per year). For one temporary FTE to perform the necessary coding and programming work over 18 months. Given the lack of availability of local talent, the temporary nature of the position, and the complex requirements of the work, a competitive salary will be essential to attracting a qualified individual.

*4/21/14 ADDENDUM:
Since we initially created this proposal, the Scholarship Universe team has made significant progress toward the redesign of our site. We have clarified the goals and requirements as well as limitations for moving forward with the redesign. Student Affairs Marketing (SAEM) and Student Affairs Systems Group (SASG) have been key partners and, at no cost, will be assisting with the redesign.

SAEM and the SU team have already worked together to create wireframes for the redesigned site – many of which are close to being complete. SAEM has also begun work on the draft mock ups for the redesigned site that will be in line with the new UA brand. SASG will help us develop the appearance, style sheets, and Drupal portions of the redesigned site when mockups are complete, and in the meantime are consulting with us on the feasibility of SAEM’s proposed designs in relation to our existing technology. However, neither, SAEM or SASG has an experienced programmer capable of overhauling the underlying structure of the data, revamping site functionality, or marrying all the individual site components together in seamless web application.
Most of the research for the redesign process has already been completed through a recent survey of our students and user feedback over the last year. The primary need going forward is for a full-time programmer to help the SU team to develop, build, and successfully execute the proposed redesigned site. Funding additional research at this time would not be pertinent because we would still need a programmer to carry out all of the current redesign plans in addition to acting on any insights that additional research may reveal. Given the competitive local market for this type of programming position, that similar postings have taken up to 8 months to fill at SASG, and that our timeline expects to see some major results in 6 months, a competitive salary for the proposed position is essential. We estimate the total cost of this position to be $180,000 over 18 months. The first twelve months would break down to $80k salary + $40k ERE. The remaining $60K would go towards salary and ERE for the remaining six months which would make the position more attractive to candidates due to a longer time commitment, and it allows us the necessary time to meet our goals and deal with any unforeseen complications that may arise.

LAUNCH TIMELINE:
Phased Approach: SU is a complex web application utilizing many systems and technologies that involve much more interaction with users than standard websites. As a result, and to achieve all of the above goals, underlying functionality must be altered. This will require significant and complex programming work. We expect this to take 12-18 months of work from a full time programmer/software architect working in collaboration with SAEM Marketing, SASG staff, and our student programmers. Below are the three phases of the project, and what will be achieved in each phase.
Phase 1 Apr. – Nov. 2014: Redesign landing page, incorporate donor profiles, and re-skin student app to represent UA Brand.
Phase 2 Nov. 2014 – Nov. 2015: Redesign student app, incorporate guest login, and implement structural changes to SU to accommodate majority of devices (including mobile).
Phase 3 Nov. 2015 – Apr. 2016 (optional, dependent upon available resources): Redesign departmental and administrative apps to match UA Brand and implement structural changes to accommodate majority of devices.

PROJECT MEMBERS:
Theresa Whetzel - Financial Analyst, Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs
Redesign Programmer – Office of Student Affairs
Student Affairs Marketing (SAEM)
Student Affairs Systems Group (SASG)
Barry Brummund - Deputy Chief Information Officer, Office of the CIO
ITSAB Executive Board Members – IT Student Advisory Board, UITS