

Introduction

Seton Hill University utilizes an online platform entitled MySHU. This portal is a landing page for students and faculty to access information based on a variety of goals. The research being proposed allow for the university to identify and clarify these goals. As the main information repository, MySHU users must be able to locate the necessary data quickly and consistently. This research study will discover what information is accessed, how frequently, and if users are experiencing frustration in locating information or completing specific tasks.

Research Question:

- How can MySHU better serve student and faculty users ?

Data Analysis – Process

One-on-One interviews were conducted in Office 205 of the Seton Hill Arts Center over a period of three days. Seven sessions were held with the student utilizing their own technology, both Apple MacBook Airs and Apple iPads. Students were asked a series of fifteen questions and directed to navigate through the MySHU site as necessary. The sessions were audio recorded and the facilitator took notes as needed. At the conclusion of each day's sessions, the audio recordings and notes were compiled onto master interview sheets by the facilitator. These notes were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Keywords were bolded or italicized to indicate importance and for ease of use when scanning through the document. Key phrases were written onto notecards and organized to identify trends and patterns. The following sections were used to sort the cards:

- Likes
- Dislikes
- Most Used Features
- Work-flow
- Suggestions
- Daily/Frequently/Semester Tasks

Once organized into these major groups, like cards were collected and given a summary term.

A similar technique was used for the online survey respondents, however, the master interview sheets and Excel spreadsheet were not needed. The online survey was created and administered by SurveyMonkey. The results were returned via PDF and Excel spreadsheet documents. The survey contained a mixture of multiple-choice questions and questions which required the respondent to type in their own thoughts. SurveyMonkey analyzed the multiple-choice questions. The unique answers given by the users were scanned for keywords, thoughts, and phrases. These were copied to notecards and again sorted into the above categories.

All the notecards were then combined into one major sort. Topics with more than three similar responses are included in the results.

Data Analysis – Results

The following observations were discovered by studying patterns in user responses from online and in-person surveys, as well as usability testing:

Positive Results

Centralized location for a Wide Variety of Information:

Faculty and students alike are pleased with information being collected in one place under the MySHU portal, as illustrated in the following comments:

- One stop shop for so much!
- It has a lot of helpful information
- All of my necessary links (Aside from canvas) are on the main screen without any subdirectories or "middleman" links.

Because MySHU gathers information from many sources, users feel they are able to find anything they may need from this single page. Several users applauded the quick access MySHU provides.

Navigation Options

The standard navigation conventions employed on MySHU are very popular, specifically the left-hand vertical navigation and the top right drop down navigation. The left-hand navigation is familiar, and users are able to intuit its functionality. The top right navigation, what users refer to as the "Waffle Icon" is in a familiar location, especially for those who frequently use mobile or tablet devices.

Aesthetics

Users expressed a preference for the clean, simplified interface utilized by MySHU. Survey respondents discussed the application of clear headings, subheadings, links, and dates as well as the clean, grid-like structure used to organize the page. It was considered an upgrade from the "old-fashioned" GriffinGate interface previously utilized.

Photos/Moments

Many users enjoy the Moments area, where students, faculty, and staff are able to upload images of projects, in-class moments, trips, or sporting events.

Events

Having the events on MySHU is very helpful for students who live off campus or spend most of their class time in the Downtown Campus areas. The events area allows the user to know what is going on and to plan ahead to see if the events will conflict with their class schedules.

Negative Results

Organization

The most common complaint about MySHU is its organization or lack thereof. Users stated they feel overwhelmed with the amount of information, which makes the space feel cluttered. Several users stated it was confusing and difficult to navigate since the information did not feel prioritized. Users struggled with finding things, as 45.45% stated it was only somewhat easy to locate information, while 36.36% said it was not so easy. 45.45% of respondents also stated it took them a little more time than they expected to find information they were seeking. Similarly, 45.45% feel the site is only somewhat organized, 22.73% feel it is not organized, and 9.09% felt MySHU is not organized at all.

Bottom Navigation

While users are comfortable using the left side navigation for links, several respondents complained the bottom navigational area is a catchall area. There are many links assembled at the bottom in seemingly random order. Several of these links are items students and faculty find useful, such as the University Policy Manual, work study, and library links. Users are frustrated they need to scroll through several other areas to look for the information needed, which is often found in small fonts.

Photos/Moments

While many users find the photo area enjoyable, a nearly equal number of users found it waste of space, which could be used for information relevant to students or faculty members.

Search Functionality

There is a lot of confusion with users over the search function on MySHU. Some respondents mistook the Directory search with a global site search function. Others listed the following problems with the search feature:

- Cannot go back to results once you've searched and some search terms don't bring up the results as they should
- Search bar is not always accurate
- A stronger, more accurate search area is requested

Tutorial

The tutorial popup is a problem for students, which surfaces with inconsistency. Some students have never seen the tutorial, others have completed the tutorial and never seen it again, and others are plagued with the tutorial popping up on every use. Aside from the recurrence of the tutorial, students state it does not teach them anything new: the tutorial shows them how to locate the Moments/Photos area, which is prominent on the page once the user logs in.

Inconsistency

Because MySHU is a landing page tying together several other areas including GriffinGate, Griffin's Lair, work-study, the Library, and other individual websites, the jump into these different interfaces can be jarring. There is a lot of inconsistency in colors, layout, logo usage, fonts, and information provided. These inconsistencies confuse the user. Color usage on the site is very confusing, and respondents stated they do not feel it feels like the university's identity.

User Suggestions

Several survey respondents and interviewees stated they desire easier access to the following areas of the site: library, work-study, and directory. One major request was for personalization and customization. Users would like the ability to move menus around so the things that are important to the user can be placed where they would like them to be. One respondent stated, "The ability to customize which "sections" are displayed on the main portal screen, personalized academic information (such as schedule and class status), and prioritization of links above others. Some, such as the Work Study System, are all the way down at the bottom while a non-functional notification bell remains at the top."

Finally, users stated it is very difficult to navigate the site if you are on a mobile device. It does not appear to be optimized properly for mobile or tablet usage, causing the user to scroll, pinch, and zoom in and out in order to navigate the site. This becomes problematic when the user is browsing the already small, information-packed bottom navigation.

Recommendations

Information Reduction and Customization

While many of the users enjoy the “one-stop-shop” experience, more users expressed confusion when being presented with so much information in one place. Reducing the amount of information is recommended. Allowing the users to customize their MySHU experience could solve this issue. Drag and drop customization would allow students and faculty to personalize MySHU to their work-flow and needs individually, reducing the need to make difficult decisions on what content to include. The user could add a module or remove it as their situation dictated within each semester or year. An in-depth survey of faculty and student needs is recommended. 50% of respondents stated they feel Seton Hill only somewhat understands their needs.

Navigation

Since many users feel very comfortable with the left side navigation and the “Waffle Icon,” it is recommended these stay in place, but the information contained therein be reassessed. The most commonly used links need to be split between these two navigational areas. Since students and faculty use Canvas and Gmail, these links should stay within the Waffle Icon. Other links to be considered for both the left navigation area and the Waffle Icon include: library, work study, GriffinGate, maintenance, writing center, and registration. The split between each navigation area should be made based on frequency of use:

Waffle Icon – Daily/Weekly Usage

- Canvas
- Gmail
- OrgSync
- Library
- Directory

Left Navigation

- Work Study Program
- GriffinGate
- Maintenance
- Writing Center
- Parking Ticket Appeal
- Meal Plan Balance
- Print Balance
- Course Schedules
- Registration

Several of these links would be moved from the frustrating bottom navigational area and moved into a more prominent position on the portal.

Addition of Important Information

While MySHU houses a plethora of links to many important pages, it misses the mark when it comes to student and faculty life. Once logged in, students expressed a desire to see information pressing to their day: meal plan balance, menus for food service around campus, class announcements, class schedules, and parking ticket appeals.

Moments

Many users responded positively to seeing the photos of other students and faculty members on campus. However, more users stated they do not even look at the photos. Even those who enjoy the photos admitted they take up far too much space on the MySHU portal. The recommendation is to reduce the Moments area to a single column of images along the right

side of the page. This will allow more important information to become the focal point of the page. This is also a great example of content, which could be customized: if a user wishes to see the Moments area larger, they can rearrange their page with it in a more prominent location.

Search Functionality

Since the directory and search function are often confused, it is recommended the search function be restructured to provide consistent results and placed prominently on the MySHU portal. Placement near the top of the page, perhaps to the left of the Waffle Icon, will provide a consistent, familiar location for the user. The directory should be moved lower on the page and redesigned to be more user-friendly. This includes clearly labeled headers and fields, along with a prominent “Search” button, which is completely missing in the current integration.

The search feature must also be reconfigured to provide consistent, reliable results. This will also help with the site's credibility. Currently, nearly 30% of respondents seem to doubt the validity of the information presented. Returning reliable results that match the user's query will increase the credibility of MySHU.

Tutorial

The tutorial function should be disabled completely. Since it is not functioning with consistency and is not imparting useful information, other tutorial methods need to be considered. These include PDF walkthroughs, YouTube how-to's, or training session on campus coordinated with new feature rollouts.

Create Consistency

Due to the patchwork nature of the current website, it is important to create consistency across all digital interfaces. The creation of a brand standards manual for all content creators to utilize will help to ensure consistency. This manual should specify color palettes, fonts, available layouts, logo usage, and content creation guidelines. A web brand manager can also help to oversee the production of content to ensure it meets the manual's standards. This consistency helps the user navigate from one site to the next seamlessly, without being confused about where they are or what they are looking for. Since Seton Hill is in the process of combining several old systems into a more coherent interface, ensuring each page looks the same can alleviate some of the confusion. One respondent stated, “The bouncing to the previous site [GriffinGate and Griffin's Lair] and the way some important material is shelved at the bottom of the page...where I get lost looking around for it. The most important doc in faculty life -- the policy manual -- is next to the stock privacy statement, and it goes to an older version? The directory requires extra clicks to get to phone numbers? It all assumes a user familiar with hunting around on Griff Lair -- if I were a new faculty member, I'd be lost. Woe be to our students, too.”

Mobile Optimization or Application Development

Since faculty members are now required to use a smartphone due to DUO authorization and most students own a smartphone, it is highly recommended the site become fully mobile and tablet responsive. Currently, users must scroll and zoom in to view the information on the page, and not all areas function properly. Another suggestion is to create a proprietary mobile application for students and faculty to access important information. This could be a duplicate of the MySHU offerings, or a stripped down version.

Positive Feedback



Centralized Location for a Variety of Information

“All of **my necessary links** (aside from canvas) are on the main screen without any subdirectories or **"middle man"** links.”

Navigation Options

“I like the **left side list** that allows you to **easily choose** where you need to go.”



Aesthetics

“The webpage has a **clean interface**. The fonts are **easy to read**. It is clear which parts are headings, subheadings, links, and dates.”

Photos & Moments

“I like seeing the **photos** that are uploaded by students, faculty and staff.”



Events

“I also use it to see what **events are happening** and if they conflict with my class times.”

Negative Feedback



Lack of Organization

“ There is an **overwhelming** amount of information that makes the site seem **cluttered**. ”

Bottom Navigation

“ The collection of items at the bottom of the page is **not very intuitive**, especially the Policy Manual at the very bottom. ”



Photos & Moments

“ I **don't like** that the moments pictures take up the majority of the page. I think it could take up a **much smaller portion**. ”

Search Function

“ **Cannot go back** to results once you've searched and some search terms **don't bring up the results** as they should. ”



Tutorial

“ All the **annoying tutorial** popups do is show you where the "Moments" photos are and **it's pretty obvious** where the photos are without a tutorial box to tell me that. ”

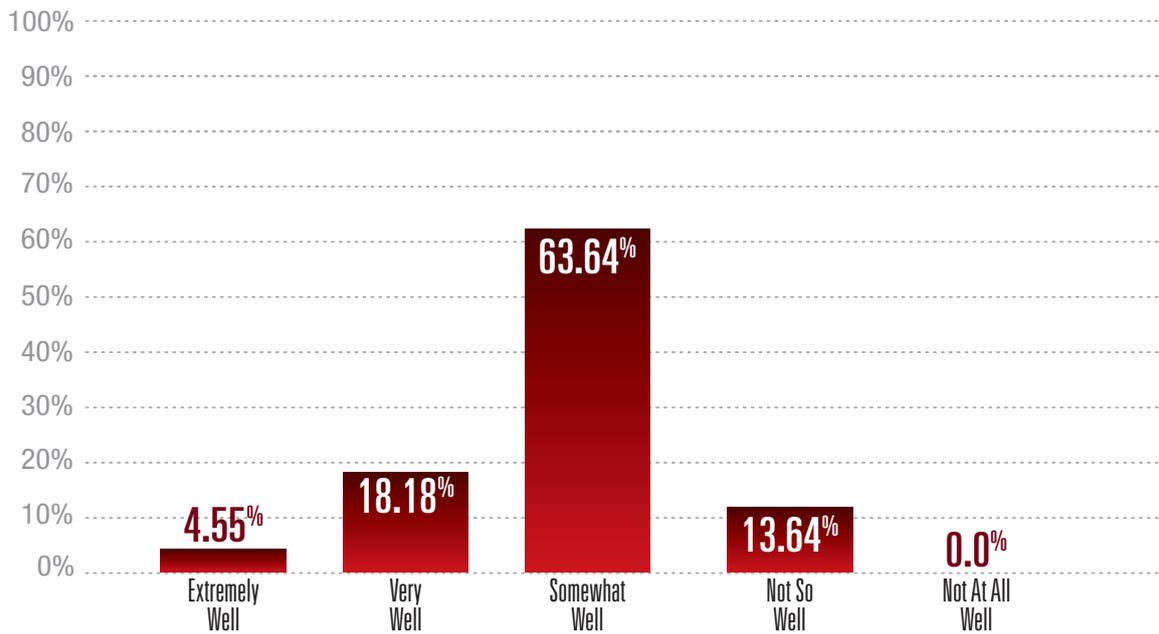
Inconsistency

“ The bouncing to the previous site (GriffLair) and the way some important material is shelved at the bottom of the page...**where I get lost** looking around for it. ”



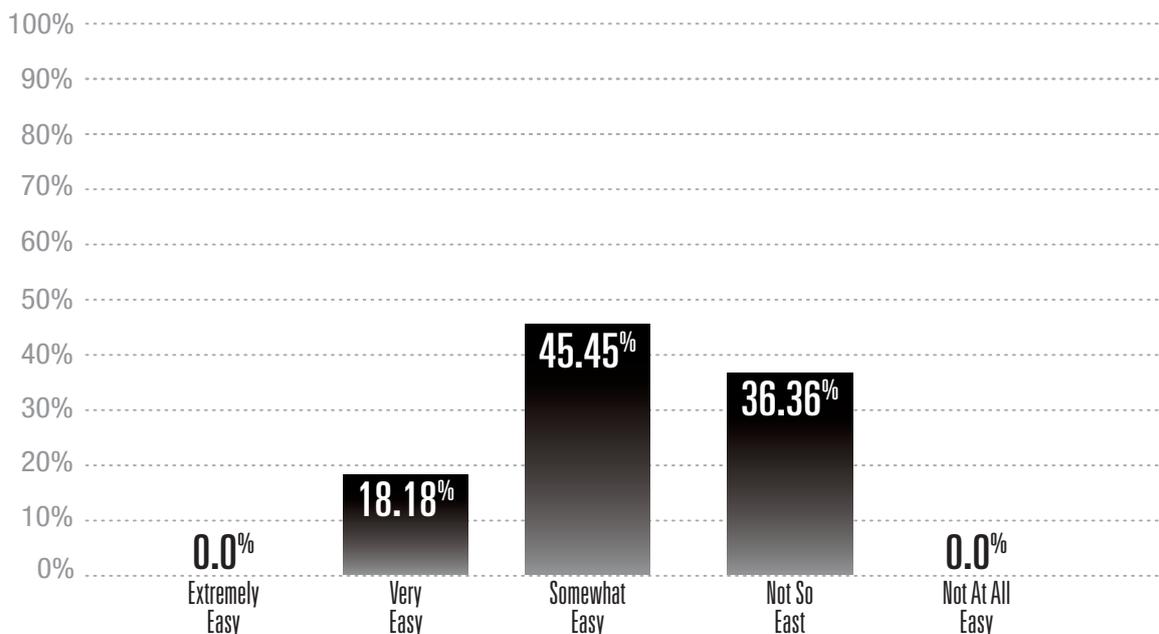
Overall, how well does MySHU meet your needs?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



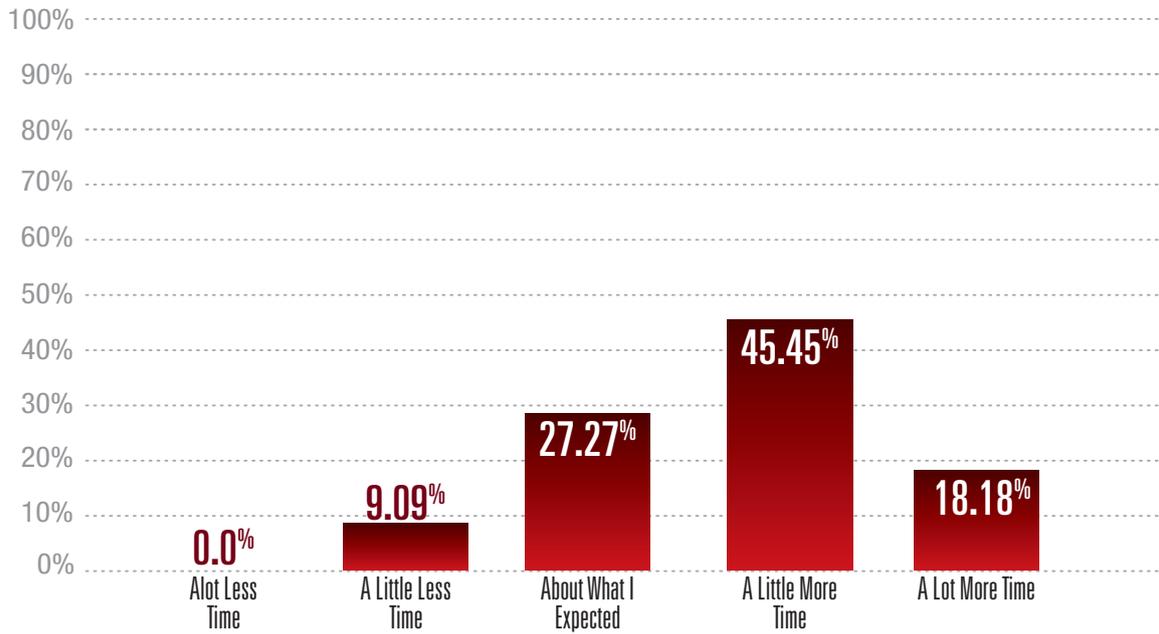
How easy was it to find what you were looking for on MySHU?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



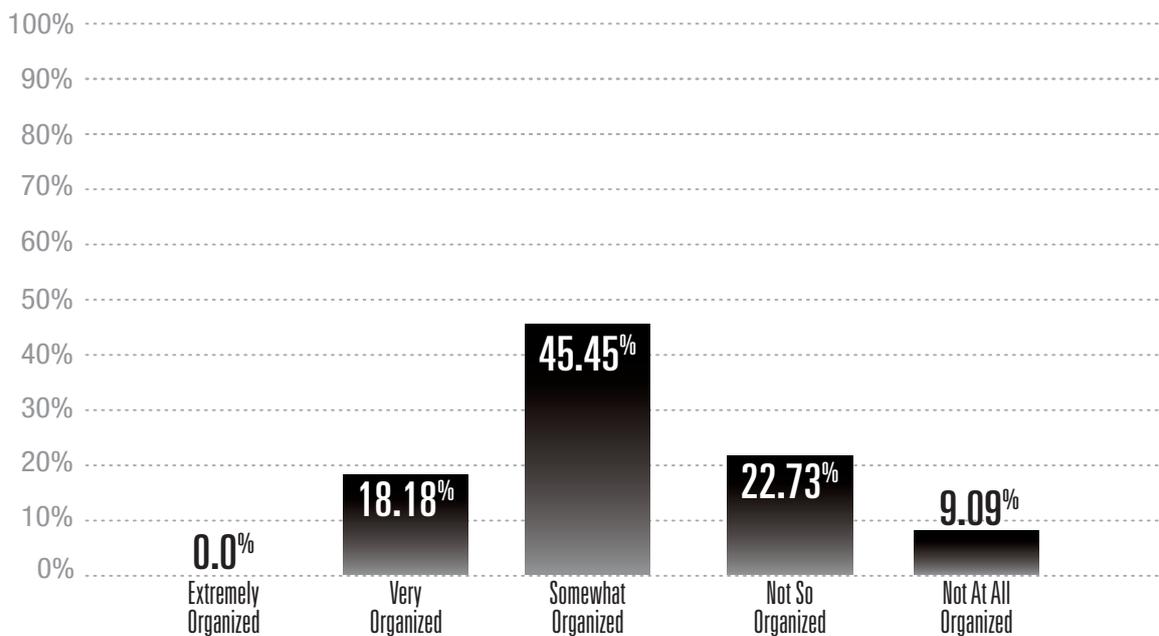
Did it take you more or less time than you expected to find what you were looking for on MySHU?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



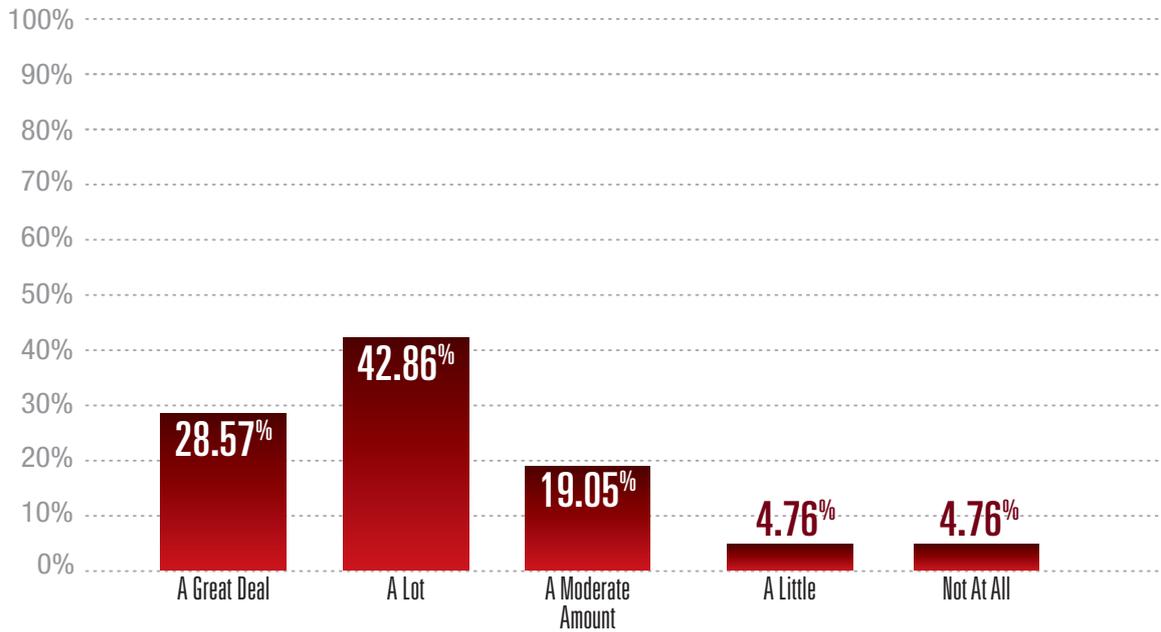
How organized is the information located on MySHU?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



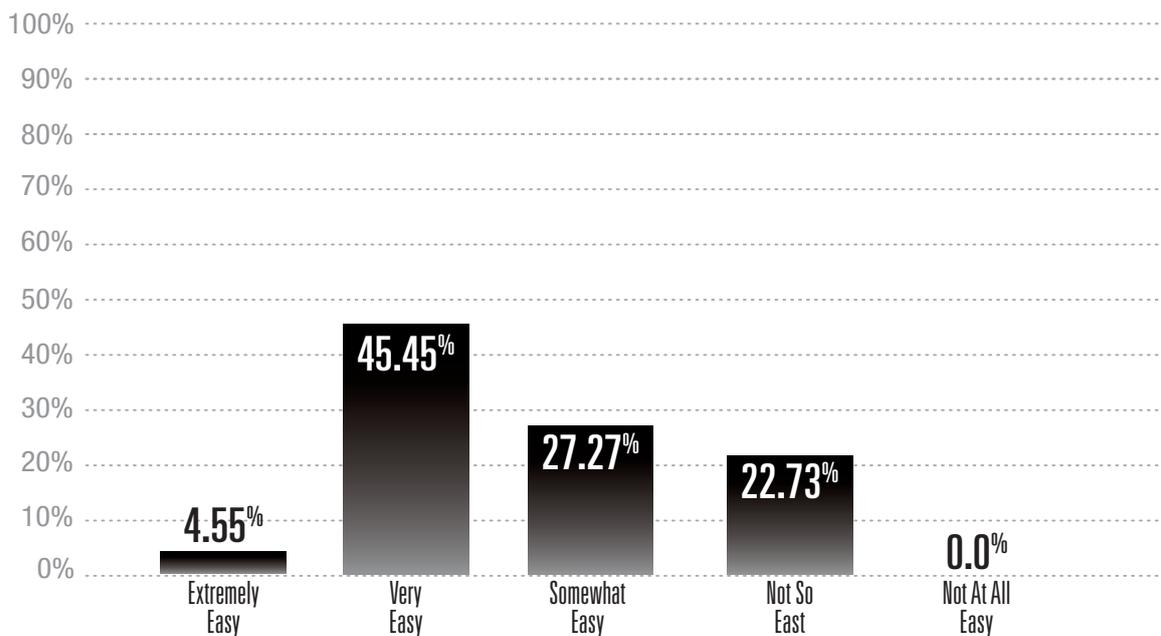
How much do you trust the information on MySHU?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



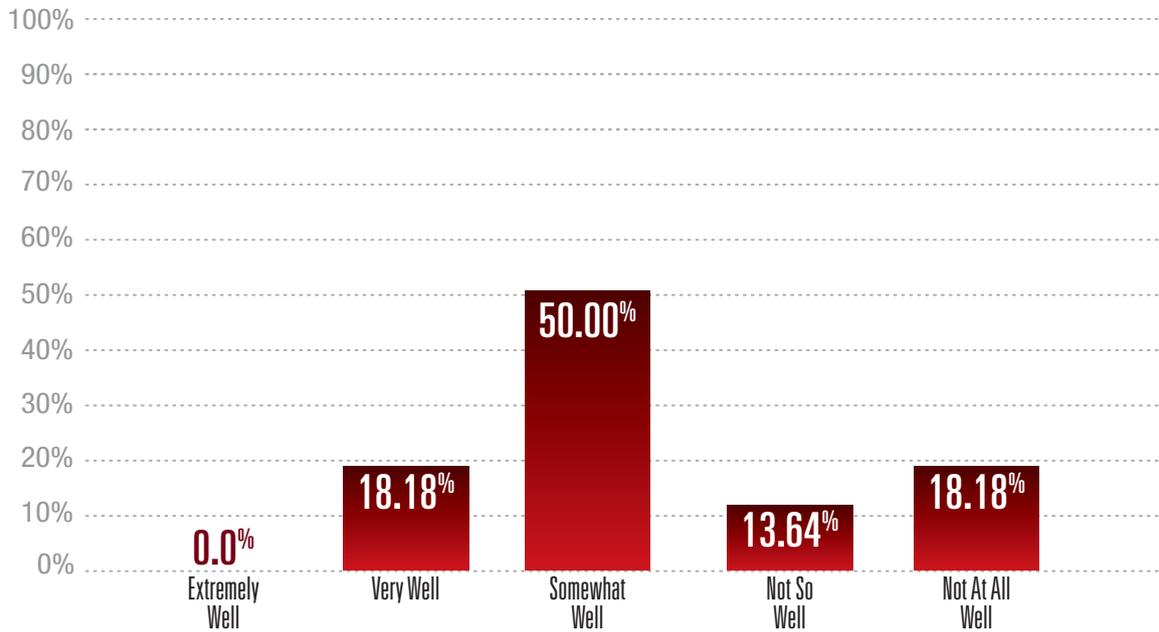
How easy is it to understand the information on MySHU?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



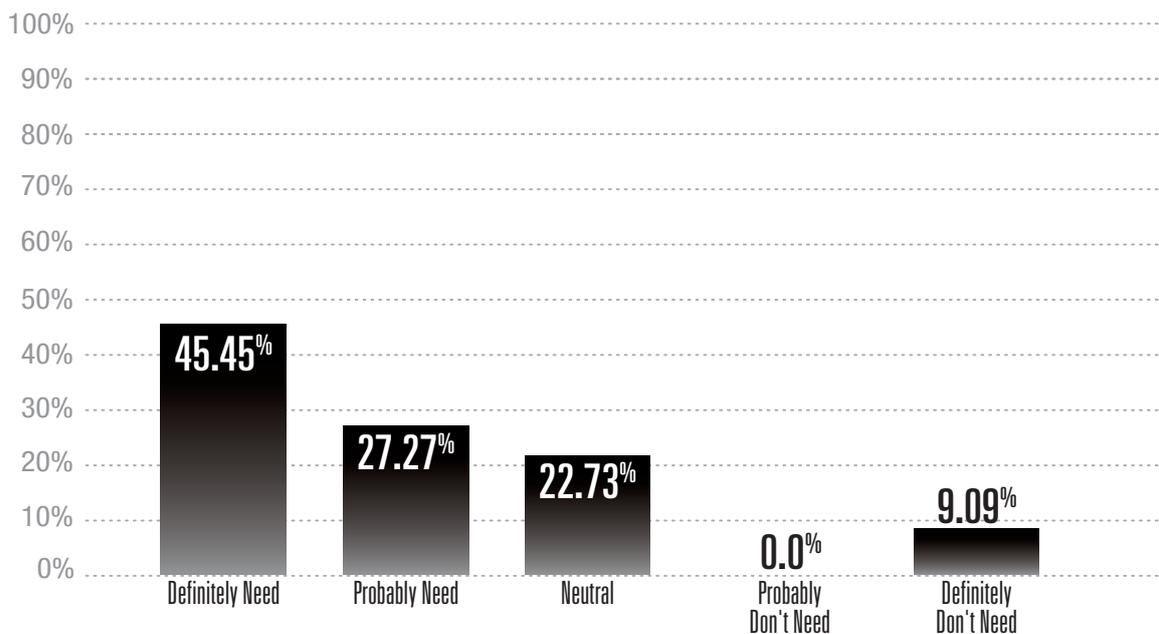
How well do you feel that Seton Hill understands your user needs?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



When you think about MySHU, do you think of it as something you need or don't need?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



Overall, how would you rate MySHU?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 1

