

Executive Summary

Seton Hill University has always embraced technology as a means to further its mission statement: “to educate students to think and act critically, creatively, and ethically as productive members of society committed to transforming the world.” The MySHU portal was created to aid students and faculty in connecting to vital information. However, in creating this all-inclusive portal, usability has gotten lost and user frustration has increased since its launch.

MySHU functions as the primary connection portal for Seton Hill University. It must function efficiently and effectively for multiple audiences with varying needs. This report provides research and user feedback about MySHU’s usage and functionality for students and faculty members. Utilizing this feedback, recommendations for improvements to MySHU conclude this report.

Currently, the MySHU site acts as a one-size-fits-all solution. There is very little difference in information provided to the faculty interface versus the student interface. As the main information hub, users must be able to locate the necessary data quickly and consistently. The completed research and analysis will help the university review and revise the organization of MySHU. By reducing the frustration and increasing the ease of use of MySHU, Seton Hill will be able to aid the faculty and students in their primary goal: educating creative, critical thinkers who will actively transform our future.

MySHU’s function as a launch pad for students and faculty must be reevaluated. Instead of acting as a one-size-fits all solution, customization for students and faculty is highly recommended. The user is inundated with information, which leaves them lost, confused, and wasting time neither student nor faculty member has to spare. Instead of helping the user, MySHU is hindering the user’s progress. Information reduction, streamlining of navigation, and the creation of a consistent interface are all recommended to reduce problems within the user interface. Seton Hill University has had the honor of being an Apple Distinguished school since 2010. Since students and faculty are given Apple iPads as part of this collaboration with Apple, it is highly recommended the school exploit the technology and develop MySHU into a mobile and tablet friendly application and website. As Seton Hill continues to develop its online and eLearning initiatives, this mobile integration will be increasingly important. By revising the MySHU interface now, the University will be able to better focus on developing curriculum, not correcting information retrieval problems from the user-base.

As part of the recommendations of this report, further research is highly suggested. While the researched detailed herein illustrates user trends and frustrations, it represents only a small portion of the University’s population, and is therefore limited. A larger research project focusing on the varying needs of departments, students across their career with the university, and the time of year will be able to uncover more specific needs. While the information within this report is compelling, it focuses primarily upon students and faculty from the Visual and Performing Arts Schools. These schools are housed off-campus and the needs of the students differ from those on campus.

Included in this report are the following:

- Research overview: This section covers the scope of research conducting regarding MySHU.
- Research methods: A comprehensive review of the methods employed to research MySHU usage.
- Recruitment: An in-depth analysis of the determination of eligibility of research study participants.
- Complete data analysis
- Recommendations for MySHU improvement strategies