



Bridgewater State University Website Policy

The initial development and ongoing maintenance and updating of the Bridgewater State University Website represent an extensive undertaking and major investment designed to enhance the university's image, brand and placement within the highly competitive world of higher education. Given the extraordinary role the web has assumed in student enrollment at all levels, it is extremely important that the campus community maintain the university's official Website – www.bridgew.edu – according to best practices and at the highest possible standards.

To that end, this document outlines the management and governance of the Bridgewater State University Web environment. Web governance refers to people, policies, procedures, standards and guidelines that govern the creation and maintenance of Bridgewater's official Website. Given the changing nature of technology and communication needs, consider this a working document that is subject to change to meet the evolving Web needs of the university.

bridgew.edu Website and Intranet

The website is BSU's main portal for sharing information with *external* stakeholders – including prospective students and their families, alumni and donors, prospective staff and faculty members, partners and friends in the wider business, civic and higher educational communities and the general public.

The intranet is designed to facilitate information sharing within the *internal* university community – including employees, students and other stakeholders with valid user credentials. While the website and intranet domains are platforms for sharing information, they serve very different purposes and accordingly are governed by different rules.

Intranet

The Division of Information Technology (IT) oversees the Intranet (my.bridgew.edu) as a platform for collaboration and information sharing *within* the university community. The site is viewable to all users with valid user credentials. The intranet is highly decentralized and autonomous with more than 200 Information Providers (IPs) authorized to create and edit content. Any authorized BSU employee may become an IP provided they have undergone the appropriate training. As an internal-facing platform, there is no need, and accordingly no formal mechanism, for ensuring consistency of and quality control over messaging, content and branding.

bridgew.edu Website

The Website, www.bridgew.edu is the primary external communications platform of Bridgewater State University. A platform to showcase the university's best qualities and project a positive image to the entire world, the university's Website is a strategic asset that carries enormous influence. It is the foremost platform for conveying the Bridgewater State University brand and providing information about the institution to a number of external audiences. As such, it is vital that the university ensure consistency of and quality control over messaging, content and branding across the website.

The Division of Marketing and Communications (MarComm) is entrusted by the University with oversight of and content creation for the website. Only designated employees within MarComm have authorization to approve the development of other external sites representing Bridgewater State University. Only designated employees within MarComm and its agents have authority to add and delete or otherwise modify content (text, photographs, video, etc.) on the website.

Designated personnel within MarComm ensure quality control, edit content as needed for clarity, grammar, spelling, usage and style as well as conform to the university's naming conventions and brand. All requests for changes to content on the website must be directed to MarComm through its web content editor at webeditor@bridgew.edu, although a limited number of approved personnel outside of MarComm have authority to modify content on specific pages. MarComm encourages all departments and units of BSU to send updates and information changes when they occur to keep the website as current as possible. The web content editor will respond to requests within five business days.

Guidelines/Compliance

MarComm has editorial authority over the content of the Bridgewater State University website. In addition, MarComm, which establishes the institution's external voice, reserves the right to revise or delete content housed on the university's Website that does not meet acceptable use guidelines or the standards outlined in this policy, although no changes to content will be made without consulting with impacted departments. IT reserves the right to ensure a secure and compliant web presence in line with approved policies. All reports of non-compliance or content errors should be reported to the web content editor at webeditor@bridgew.edu.

Official University Web Platforms

Consistency is essential to protecting the university's online image. Creation of stand-alone websites that operate outside of existing university approved platforms must not be developed without express approval of MarComm and will not be supported by IT. Approved platforms include the website www.bridgew.edu, faculty webhost, bsubears.com (athletics), bsulife.com (a for-student-by-student-operated Website), Virtual Commons, University Catalog, Student Handbook, Student Portal and the Master Calendar. All approved platforms are indexed and included in the Google search results.

Anonymous Intranet Sites

Anonymous intranet sites allow an intranet site to be viewable without requiring a log-in. The approval of anonymous intranet sites was intended as a temporary measure to expedite the development of externally-facing content. Moving forward, the university is forgoing the use of anonymous intranet sites. The web editor will collaborate with departments to determine and develop content which will be shared externally through the university website.

Website Content Review

The web content editor regularly reviews the website and reaches out to university departments to review and update content. In addition, Marketing and Communications regularly reviews content on the most visited web pages as determined by Google Analytics. Departments should contact the web content editor at webeditor@bridgew.edu as soon as possible with changes and updates to their information. The web content editor will respond to requests within five business days.

SiteImprove is a website quality-reporting tool that notifies users of misspellings, broken links and accessibility reports. The web content editor will work with departments to correct identified problems with their content in a timely manner.

Participants and Roles

MarComm is responsible for overseeing the strategic direction and content development of the website in alignment with the strategic goals of the university. The web content editor in the Division of Marketing & Communications manages, develops and maintains content on the website within the parameters of this policy and serves as liaison to university departments for web content changes and updates. MarComm also initiates and manages major website projects to develop new web pages and reorganize information on the website.

IT ensures the bridgew.edu website is secure and reliable. IT provides guidance to and supports MarComm in the areas of user experience, mobile responsiveness, accessibility, web site development, analytics and search optimization.

Departments are responsible for communicating to the web content editor any changes to content needed on the bridgew.edu website.

IPs are responsible for updating their own intranet content and for working with the web content editor to correct any problems identified through site quality reports.

Written Content/Messaging/Branding

The university's Website embraces a writing style that engages visitors such as prospective students looking for academic programs or community members seeking general information about the university. The Website must speak directly to them, answering their questions and giving them information as concisely and clearly as possible. Web visitors are task oriented – they skim and scan, getting just enough information to get to their next destination.

To help convey a clear and consistent message, it is critical for all parts of the site to use the university's official visual identifiers (logos) and the university naming conventions and style outlined in the *Bridgewater State University Style Guide & Graphic Standards Manual*. The Division of Marketing & Communication also follows style as outlined by *The Gregg Reference Manual* and *The Associated Press Stylebook*.

Visual Content

Photography that meets high professional standards plays a critical role in creating a positive image of Bridgewater State University. Photographic images used on the Website should inspire all visitors. Photographs should make a connection with the people and activities depicted and make visitors feel proud of their connection or potential connection with Bridgewater. To achieve these goals, the site primarily uses documentary-style photography that captures the authentic and vibrant interactions among students and among students and faculty, showing a range of genders, ethnic backgrounds, races, ages, etc.

Designated personnel within MarComm and its agents, working with individual units of the university, will select all university, divisional, college, departmental, office and center branding photos. These will be rotated based on need and the changing environment.

Videos

Videos are an important component of telling the Bridgewater story, and like other materials that tell our stories – brochures, handbooks, web pages, etc. – videos must adhere to university brand standards and be consistent in style, tone and message.

Measurement

Google Analytics has been embedded in all site pages. Departments that wish to use this data should request an account from the IT Web Development Team for their own access and reporting needs. IT produces monthly statistics to be included in reports that will be posted on the university's Intranet, my.bridgew.edu.

Duplication of Information

Information that already resides on the Website should be linked to rather than duplicated. For example, the University Catalog and the Student Handbook – which reflect the most current and accurate information – should, in general, be linked to rather than replicating information from those documents.

Academic Governance and Catalog

Academic governance is the official process for updating academic program information. The Bridgewater State University Catalog is the official repository for academic program

information. Academic program information will be updated on the website in accordance with updates to the University Catalog.

Approved by President and Cabinet November 16, 2016