

## Web site optimization

Your website is extremely important for getting information out and available to prospective students. However, while it is a good information tool, it is not a good recruitment tool. Good recruitment involves multiplatform, mixed media follow-up with appropriate timing and frequency.

Optimization of your website comes at two different levels. A. “First page traction” is absolutely essential. Ideally you want your website to be on the first page of a search results, and one of the first 5. Only about 20% of searches will access the second page, and far fewer will view pages 3, 4...etc. B. Quality of your website. This includes quality of text, images, ease to navigate, and so forth.

Check on optimization status of your site – collecting some information.

1. Using your search engine (e.g., Google, Yahoo) do a general search for: “graduate programs in [your department name]”. Examine each link on each page, keeping track of what these take you to, until you find your program’s web site.

- What page and rank does the link to your department/program appear?
- With this link did you land on your department/program home page? Your graduate program recruitment page? Does other department/program related content appear before your website?
- As you evaluate each page, take note of where your competition is positioned.

A maximally optimized website will appear on page one in rank positions 1 to 5 of a search. That is where you want to be!

2. Site quality. Write from the “you” perspective as much as possible. The following are matters of great interest to the prospective students, they should be address on your graduate recruitment page:

- Academic offerings
- Reputation (program image or position)
- Funding & cost (#1 thing they are interested in – how they can finance their program)
- Opportunities after graduation – tell them how they will benefit. Highlight successes of current grads, recent graduates, and alumni.
- Location – critical for “rural” locations. Recreational opportunities; cultural opportunities; entertainment opportunities. Why is UW & Laramie a great place to come & study.
- Size of the program and what is it like to be a graduate student in the program.
- Facilities & technology – especially important for sciences, engineering, & fine arts.
- Environment – climate & culture