A6: Navigation Hierarchy & Wireframe Sketches

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Organization

Using the dendrograms provided in the card sorting tool's analysis section, we observed participants' item categorization agreement rate through the best merge method. After analyzing participant patterns, we were able to estimate what kinds of information should be on each page during the redesigning process, as well as how they should be organized.

Based on the results, we came up with 6 categories following a **user-based organizational scheme**, as listed below:

Categories

1. **About HPP (Homepage)**

   General information about the HPP and a list of possible medical degrees students can pursue through the program's curriculum. This item may be cross-linked with the Medical School Application Process tab to concretely showcase how the HPP aids pre-med students. This grouping is **first** to orient users to the purpose and scope of the HPP, particularly new users. As this will be the overview of the HPP, this page will likely be frequently accessed by first-time visitors or those in the early stages of planning for medical school.

2. **Medical School Application Process**

   Information on how to apply to medical school and what sort of help the HPP can provide throughout the application process. This also includes required documents, exams, referral letters, and experiences to be considered for acceptance. This grouping is **second** because it contains important information for most primary users (current members of the HPP) as well as for new users who wish to see how the HPP will benefit them. This page will likely be accessed frequently, especially by students approaching the medical school application stage.

   a. **Timeline**

      Deadline information for different stages of the medical school application process, such as the exam, interview, referral letters, etc.

   b. **Review Process**

      General information about the application review process, timeline, and possible individuals/resources to reach out to for additional information.

   c. **Application Help**

Resources the HPP provides to aid applicants in applying for medical school.

d. **What to Do After Acceptance**

Things to consider and do after acceptance into medical school. Additional information specifically catered to each school, and hyperlinks to their websites.

This category is broken down into four subcategories so users can navigate and digest the large volume of information. By breaking down the medical school application process into distinct subcategories, users will be able to access the information and/or specific details for their immediate needs.

3. **Career Development**

Resources that HPP students can access to further their experience and education in the healthcare field. This grouping is **third** because it is slightly less major than information regarding medical school applications, but is still relevant to a majority of users. These sections are important for students throughout their undergraduate years and will likely be often accessed, especially by HPP students in their second and third years.

a. **Research Opportunities**
Information about the types of research opportunities available to students (link to their websites).

b. **Service/Internships**
Information about types of internships/service opportunities available to students (link to their websites).

c. **Clinical Experiences**
Information about clinical and apprenticeship opportunities available to students (link to their websites).

This category is organized into three sections on a *single* page (Career Development), rather than split into separate subpages. This design allows students searching for career opportunities to easily view all three types of experiences in one place, without needing to click between subcategories.

4. **Alumni Resources**

Information about Alumni resources, such as the CMU Alumni Network, direct contact with student ambassadors, and social media group handles for external communications. Additional information includes resources on career opportunities and employers known for hiring CMU graduates. This grouping is **fourth** because it is relevant to a smaller

portion of users and may only be accessed semi-frequently by alumni looking to connect or for students who may want a mentor.

5. Faculty Resources

Information for faculty members, such as financial compensation and referral letter requirements. Also includes research opportunities and publications by other faculty members. This grouping is **fifth** because it serves secondary users who require this information less frequently but need it in order to easily write letters of recommendation when asked.

    a. Letter of Recommendation FAQ

        How to write and submit a letter of recommendation for medical school applicants, deadlines, and recommended letter components and structure for medical school applications

This category is broken down into only one category. Although this creates a shallow structure, the choice is justified by the fact that faculty members visiting the website are most likely seeking information about letters of recommendation after being approached by an HPP student. Therefore, we can make it easier for faculty to find this information by isolating the relevant content from the rest of the resources page.

6. Contact Us

Contact information of the main HPP directors is provided to users for inquiries. This includes direct contact with advisors and faculty representatives. Also includes a hyperlink to the networking opportunities page (same as the alumni resources networking page). This grouping is **sixth** because, while important, we hope to also include contact information on the home page so users may need to access this section infrequently.

The six categories proposed cater to our four main personas. Current CMU and prospective students can learn more about the HPP program, how it will help them in the medical school application process, and career development opportunities through the first three categories. CMU Alumni will find all relevant information in the fourth category, while the fifth category is for faculty members (advisors and/or professors) who are supporting HPP students during the medical school application process. Finally, the sixth category serves as a resource for all groups to connect with program directors and learn more about the HPP.

Comparison to Card Study

We maintained a majority of the organization indicated by the card sort study data, with only minor adjustments based on content scope and considerations of user goals.

For example, the dendrogram showed that more than half of the study's participants grouped topics like the application packet review process, required lab courses, and steps after acceptance to medical school under categories such as "Academic" or "Application Process". We followed this grouping and created a "Medical School Application Process" category, combining all content related to applying to medical school. Similarly, the "Contact Us" and "Career Development" categories are supported by the card sort results.

However, we made slight departures where necessary. While participants grouped examples of medical degrees under separate categories like "types of degrees to apply for" or "medical-related", this content represented a minor portion of the site. Instead, we grouped this information in the "About HPP" category. This decision supports the validity of user tasks — logically, users would want to know what degrees the program supports while learning about the HPP as a whole instead of having to click on a separate page to find it.

We identified only one outlier: the "Life/Work Balance" topic. The card sort showed no clear agreement on its placement. After discussion, we decided to place it under "Career Development". Our justification is that users exploring career development are likely planning or preparing to enter some professional environment where balancing personal and work life becomes relevant. Therefore, placing life/work balance information here anticipates and supports this user need.

Comparison to the HPP Website

The categories suggested differ from the HPP website's current information organization and structure across two aspects:

1. **The HPP uses fewer categories than it should**

   The HPP website organizes its information into five main categories. However, the card sort study shows that users feel the information should be divided into more categories. Participants created a median of eight categories to group all the essential information.

2. **Unclear distinctions between components of the HPP application process and the application process for medical schools**

   The HPP website provides information not only about applying to its program but also about the medical school application process. However, participants in the card sort study struggled to consistently separate and categorize this information. For example:

- One participant grouped both HPP application information and medical school information into a single category titled "Academic."
- Another included "Incoming Students Application" for the HPP program under their "Med School Application Info" category.
- Two participants created separate categories for recommendation letters instead of grouping them with other medical school application details.

These errors suggest that information about the HPP application process and the medical school application process may need better distinction and clarifying labels to avoid confusion.

Wireframe Sketches

To determine our design direction, each group member began by creating individual sketches. We then held a group meeting to discuss and evaluate these designs before combining our strongest ideas into one final sketch. To see individual sketches, refer to the appendix.

Final Design Direction

Our final design direction encompasses several key features:

- **Clear Navigation Menus:** A well-defined, hierarchical navigation system with clear labels. This includes a global and local navigation menu (envisioned as a sidebar on the page).

- **Minimalist Design & White Space:** A cleaner layout with more spacing between sections and larger subheadings to signal the beginning of a new section.

- **Interactive & Visual Content:** Interactive elements like collapsible sections, embedded videos, and images to improve engagement and accessibility.

- **Call-to-action Buttons:** Important links are made more prominent so users can easily navigate.

  - The Google Forms application link is now available through the "Apply Now" button, making it clearer as to where the application for the HPP is.

- **Other Visual Aids:** A timeline graphic to help applicants visualize the application process in the "Timeline" subcategory.

- **More Personality:** Sidebar sections for student testimonials and other stories to

A rough sketch envisioning the layout of the homepage redesign. This basic format (an image header, sections with titles, and sidebar menus) will also be applied to other pages not sketched here (i.e. "Alumni Resources").

A rough sketch of the "Timeline" subcategory. This page is a bit different from the rest as it attempts to clearly visualize the important dates of the medical school application process.

make the HPP more engaging and appealing.

While not visualized here, the redesign will still adhere to CMU's website guidelines (including its color and the CMU logo on top).

By implementing this design direction, the new HPP website will be more user-friendly, accessible, and effective in guiding students, alumni, and faculty through their information-seeking goals.
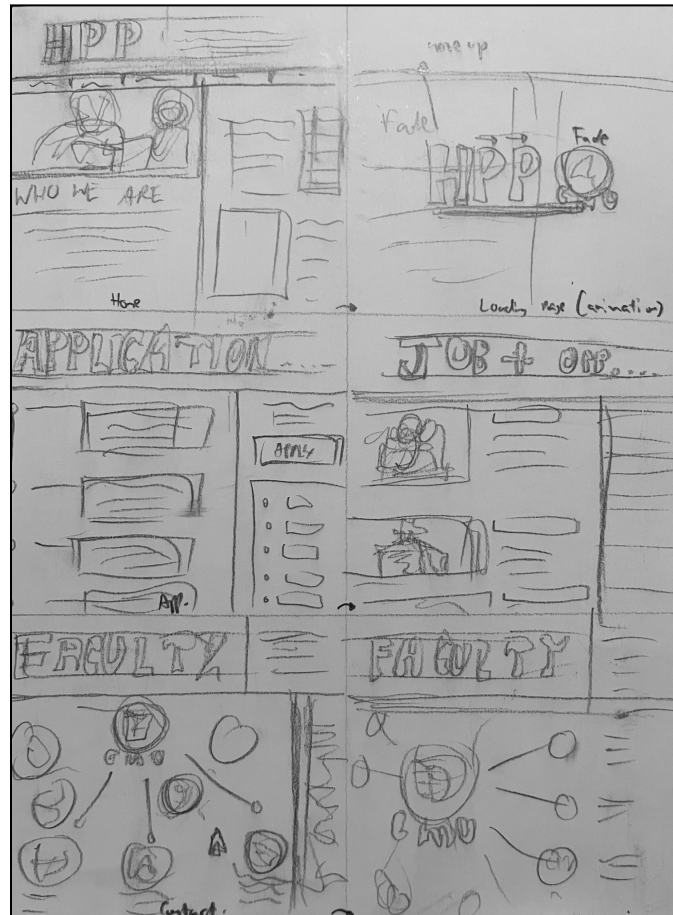

A rough sketch of the "Career Development" page, featuring collapsible sections and a sidebar menu for student stories.

Appendix

Sketch 1: Thon Prom.

Overview:

The redesigned website introduces a more interactive and user-friendly experience, helping guide visitors through its navigation. The landing page now features an engaging animation that visually represents the core aspects of the HPP program, further capturing the audience's attention and encouraging exploration. Each subpage has been restructured with a stronger visual presence (increased pictures and visual elements). By incorporating illustrations, icons, and infographics that enhance comprehension and engagement, the website establishes a clear and distinctive information hierarchy, allowing users to easily locate key content and understand the program's offerings at a glance. Overall, the redesign elevates the site's visual appeal while improving functionality and accessibility across devices.

Key Features:

- Increased interactivity
- More visual elements (pictures, infographics, colors)
- Better information hierarchy (font size, font, color, and font style changes)
- Two columns format, bringing in CMU's web design guidelines
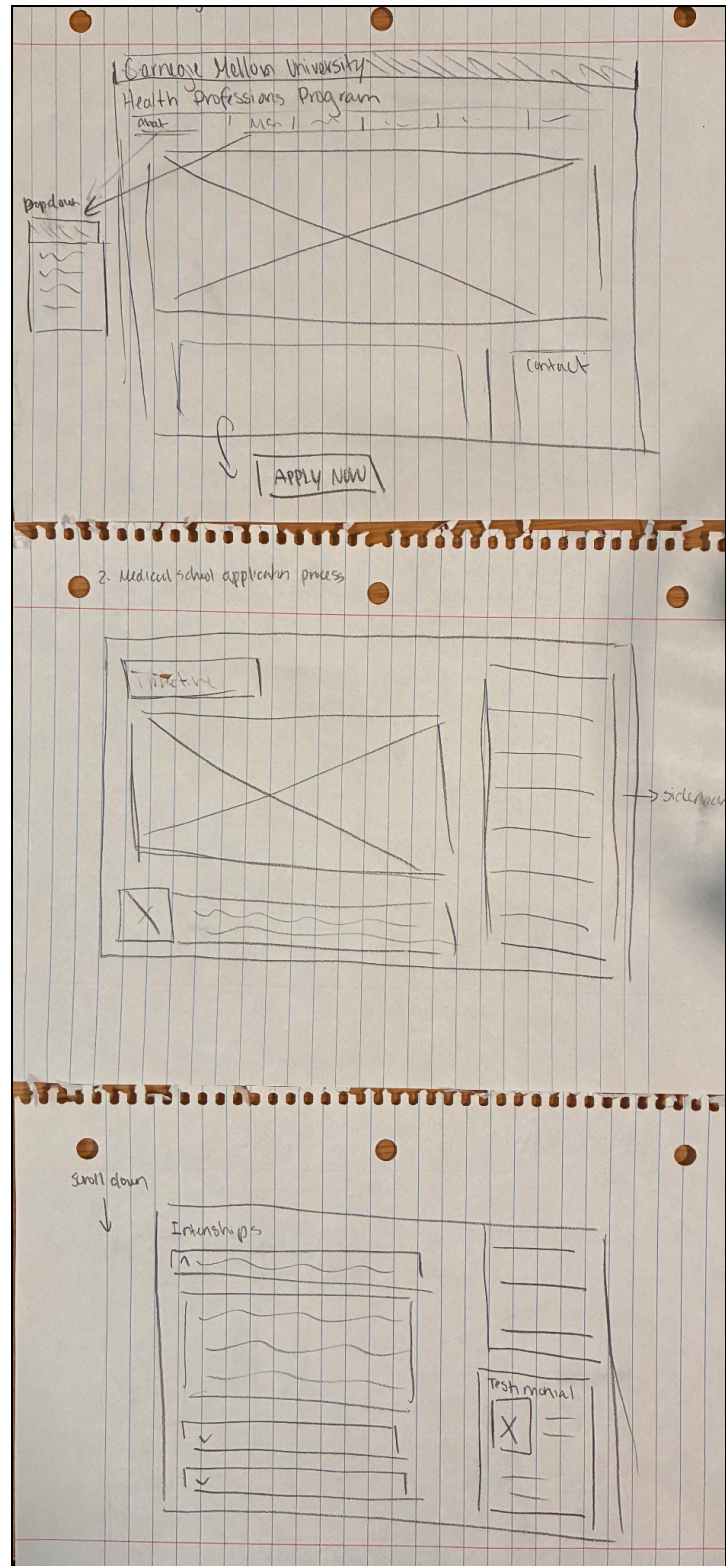- More subpages representing the six main categories of information

Sketch 2: Shannon Horning

Overview:
This redesign aims to maintain the appearance and structure of a typical CMU website while introducing more visual and interactive elements to improve accessibility and add personality.

Key Features:
- Call-to-action buttons
- A sidebar menu for better local navigation or other content (i.e testimonials)
- Dropdown menus for subcategories
- Collapsible columns
- More images and visuals

Sketch 3: Sina Lin

Overview:

This redesigned version of the original website seeks to maintain its original feel while introducing features that improve accessibility and create a welcoming experience for users visiting CMU's Health Professions Program. Each page follows a similar format as the homepage, utilizing clear information hierarchy to guide users effectively.

Key Features:

- Call-to-action buttons
- Navigation menu with six categories
- Search bar
- CMU logo
- Images and visuals
- Footer with contact information