



**CENTRAL**  
**MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**

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# WRITING FOR THE WEB 101

» Welcome! We are glad  
you are with us today!





# INTRODUCTIONS

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# CMU MISSION

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At Central Michigan University, we are a community committed to the pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, discovery, and creativity. We provide student-centered education, and foster personal and intellectual growth to prepare students for productive careers, meaningful lives, and responsible citizenship in a global society.



# TRAINING AGENDA

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- » Who Is Your Audience?
- » Selecting & Writing Content
- » Opportunity To Practice
- » Break
- » Branding Overview

# UPCOMING SESSIONS

» July 21, 2020

## Information Architecture Planning and Gather Content and Statuses

**9-11 a.m. or 2-4 p.m.**

Deeper dive to the Information Architecture and a discussion of the page creation process. Focus on Gather Content, our platform for collaborating on new website content, including the built-in writing and review processes.

» August 4, 2020

## First Draft Check-In

**10-11 a.m.  
or 3-4 p.m.**

This session is a milestone check-in with Q&A and a Ten Tips for Success.

» August 11, 2020

## Sitefinity Publishing

**9 a.m.-12 p.m.  
or 1-4 p.m.**

This session is an introduction to the new Content Management System (CMS) and offers content creation guidance.

» October 2020 to April 2021

## Webinars

### Morning and Afternoon Sessions

There will be ongoing live webinars to improve overall campus understanding of digital strategy to advance our brand and in turn improve overall admission and retention.

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# WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

3 steps to connect with your readers



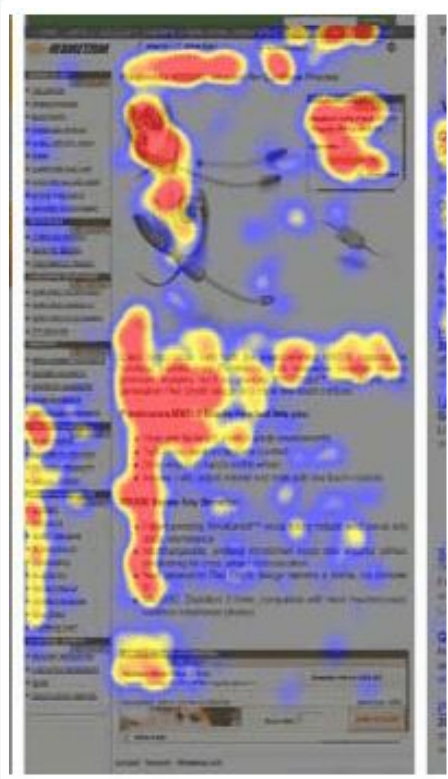
# STEP 1: IDENTIFY WHO READS YOUR WEBPAGE



- » Prospective Students
- » Current Students
- » Parents
- » Alumni
- » Community (Campus, Regional, State, National)



# STEP 2: UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE



- » Understand How Your Audience Reads Your Webpage
- » Typical Reading Pattern

# STEP 3: WHAT QUESTION(S) MUST BE ANSWERED?

Determine what is the burning question(s) that your webpage must answer for your intended audience.

## » OTHER QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

What is good to know but not an immediate need?

Is this answered somewhere else on our website?



Where am I: Home

## CITY COUNCIL

The Detroit City Council is the legislative body of Detroit, Michigan, United States. The full-time council is required to meet every business day for at least 10 months of the year, with at least eight of these meetings occurring at a location besides city hall. The council may convene for special meetings at the call of the mayor or at least four members of council.

Governor Gretchen Whitmer's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Executive Order (EO 2020-42) went into effect on Thursday, April 9, 2020. Therefore, Detroit City Council will be meeting virtually using videoconferencing until further notice. This action is being taken in accordance with Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 2020-48, which allows electronic meetings for legislative bodies.

City Council Sessions may be viewed in the following manner

**Please use the link below to watch the meeting on Channel 10:**

**Channel 10**

**Watch online by using**  
<https://detroitmi.gov/government/city-council> and clicking on Channel 10.

**To attend by phone only, call one of these numbers:**

+1 929 436 2866

+1 312 626 6799

+1 669 900 6833

+1 253 215 8782

+1 301 715 8592

+1 346 248 7799

Use meeting id: 738 256 485

**To attend online:** <https://cityofdetroit.zoom.us/j/330332554>

### Public Comment:

To participate at the time of Public Comment, please raise your hand within the zoom application.

1. **Telephone participants:** Raise your hand by pressing \*9
2. **Web participants:** Raise your hand by clicking raise hand in the application or pressing
  - a. Windows computer = [ALT] + [Y]
  - b. Apple computers = [OPTION] + [Y]

To be consistent with how Public Comment has been handled for in-person meetings:

- You will be called on in the order in which your hand is raised
- All time limits set by the meeting Chair will still be enforced
- Any hands raised after the Chair ends submission of public comments, will not be able to speak at the meeting

All interested persons are invited to be present and be heard as to their views. Persons making oral presentations are encouraged to submit written copies to the City Clerk's Office [CityClerkHelpDesk@detroitmi.gov](mailto:CityClerkHelpDesk@detroitmi.gov) via e-mail, for the record.

### CONTACTS

City Council  
Office 2  
Woodward Ave.  
Suite 1340  
Detroit, MI  
48226  
(313)224-3443

### GOVERNMENT MENU

Annual Budget  
City Council  
Standing  
Committees  
Information  
Council Awards  
and Resolutions  
Legislative Policy  
Division  
News & Events  
Documents  
Forms

# LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

<https://detroitmi.gov/government/city-council/city-council-meetings-and-agendas>



# LET'S TALK

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WHO?

WHY?

WHAT'S THE  
CONVERSATION?

“To have successful conversations with your site visitors, you must understand them and what they need and want.”—Janice Redish, author of *Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content that Works*.

Shift your focus from *what* you have to say to *how* to say it in a conversation with your audience.

# WHAT'S THE CONVERSATION?

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» How will you engage your reader in a conversation?

» One way is filling in the blanks of this sentence each time you begin to write content:

I'm writing this so that (who?) can do (what?).



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# SELECTING AND WRITING CONTENT

What Where Gather Write



# SELECTING AND WRITING CONTENT

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- » What content/information do you need to answer the top question for your page?
- » Where can you get the content/information you need to answer the top question for your page?
- » Gather the content/information and put it in a logical order.
- » Write your first draft. Go back to the content you set aside, keep only what helps with your page's purpose.



# WRITING CONTENT

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- » Write content in simple, straightforward sentences.
- » Use short sentences and only one or two ideas per sentence.
- » Write with obvious and clear language, don't use jargon or acronyms.
- » Write at a 8th grade literacy level to match the visitor's reading pace.





# WRITING FOR THE ESSENTIAL MESSAGE

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- » Less is more. Write content that your audience wants to know and needs to know.
- » Chop! Chop! Chop! Cut out words that don't answer your readers' grab and go questions.
- » Focus on the "bite, snack, meal".
- » Begin with your key message, don't bury it.
- » Tear down walls of words. Walls are barriers.



# KEYWORDS

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- » Keywords answer the question: What is this page about? Or what does this page do?
- » Always remember: Your readers will type their keywords into the search engine. You must use their keywords in your content or you could risk losing their visit to your page.
- » Use keywords sparingly throughout your content in the headline, headings, copy, and hyperlinks.
- » Think about your target audience searching for your page. Which words would get a successful result?



# KEYWORDS PRACTICE

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Pick one of the scenarios and type in the chat good (specific) keywords that are better than the poor (vague) keywords shown.

You are searching the web for:

» Tires (Michigan winters have your car sliding)

» Recipe (Bring a dish to pass for the party)

# KEYWORDS PRACTICE

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Pick one of the scenarios and type in the chat strong program specific keywords.

Your audience is searching the web for:

» How to become a news anchor

» How to become an actor



# WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR AUDIENCE TO DO?

## » Call to Action

- Request more information
- Apply to the program
- Register for an event

## » What step do you want your reader to take on your page?

## » Start with a verb (action phrase)

- *Register* for the event vs. event registration



**BREAK**



# TUNE UP

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- » The heart of your content writing should be a conversation with your site visitors.
- » Use their words.
- » Respect your busy readers' time.
- » Use short, simple and informal words.
- » Talk to your readers - use “you” “you’ll” and “we”.
- » Write in an active voice.



# NOW YOU TRY

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From the list, select a long, less common word and replace it with a short, simple word.

Instead of this, \_\_\_\_\_ try this:

purchase  
inquire  
obtain





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# Q&A



# HEADLINES

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- » Announce your topic with a clear, concise headline.
- » No matter what device your reader is using to find your page, your headline should indicate “that’s where the information I need will be”.
- » Use keywords in your headline that matches your site visitors’ search.
- » Use a statement, question or call to action.
- » Medium length is good (~5-8 words).



# EXAMPLES

» **Statement headlines – bring questions to readers' minds.**

**Robots may dominate soccer by 2030**

» **Question headlines – lets the reader start the conversation with something they'd ask.**

**Is there free parking on campus?**

» **Call to action headlines – encourage readers to act.**

**Fly off to Mexico with our study abroad program**

# TIPS TO MAKE MEANINGFUL LINKS

» When embedding links in the content, we are inviting the reader to leave in the middle of our important message. It's a distraction.

» Avoid using [Click here](#), [Here](#), [More](#), [Read More](#), etc. which say nothing about where the link is directing the reader. PLUS, this is not accessible for visually impaired visitors using screen reading software.

» Use keywords and action verbs in the links (i.e. Go to Student Accounts). Links need to be descriptive and convey what the user should expect when the link is clicked


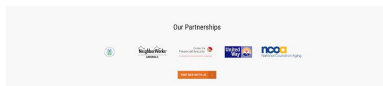
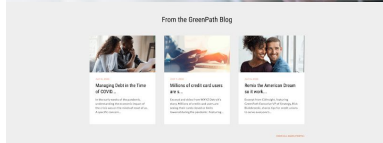
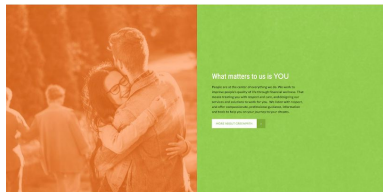
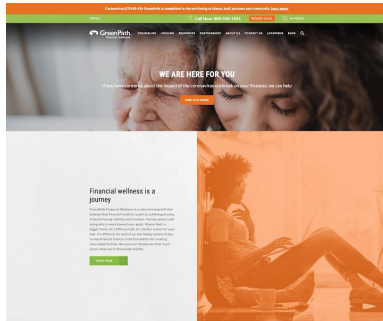
# ACCESSIBILITY

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- » Use alt text descriptions for images.
- » Provide sufficient color contrast and follow brand guidelines for colors.
- » Use consistent fonts and font sizes.
- » Write with obvious and clear language, don't use jargon or acronyms.
- » Avoid “click here”, “read more”, and bunching hyperlinks.
- » Logical flow of content.



# ACCESSIBILITY EXAMPLE



### Get Out of Debt

Most people have debt. We have support and tools so you can manage it.

[LEARN HOW >](#)



### Make Housing Decisions

Purchasing a home, considering a reverse mortgage or delinquency and foreclosure support.

[GET HELP >](#)



### Manage Your Money

Articles, tools, webinars and classes, so you can make informed decisions.

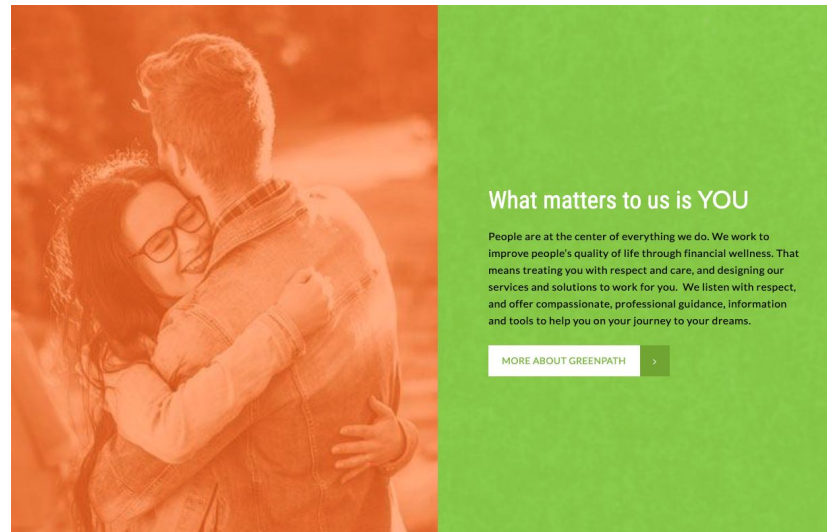
[START LEARNING >](#)



### Partner With Us

Let's build a financial system that works for everyone. Partner with us to deliver programs, learn, innovate and influence.

[JOIN US >](#)



## What matters to us is YOU

People are at the center of everything we do. We work to improve people's quality of life through financial wellness. That means treating you with respect and care, and designing our services and solutions to work for you. We listen with respect, and offer compassionate, professional guidance, information and tools to help you on your journey to your dreams.

[MORE ABOUT GREENPATH >](#)



# METADATA

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## **Metadata is data about data.**

If we think about a book, its metadata includes the title, author, copyright information, table of contents and index.

For a website, the metadata is the page title, page author, keywords, meta description and tags.

## **Metadata Description is a precise summary.**

If we think about a book, its metadata description is similar to a synopsis. It is 160 characters or less that tell the reader what the page is about.

# METADATA DESCRIPTION EXAMPLES

Search terms: Pembroke Welsh Corgi

www.purina.com › Dogs › Dog Breeds ▼

## A [Corgi Dog Breed Profile | Purina®](#)

There are two distinct breeds of **Corgis**: The Cardigan Welsh **Corgi** and the Pembroke Welsh **Corgi**. Temperament. The **Corgi** is affectionate, loyal, smart and alert.

www.ppwcc.org › corgi-puppy-information › corgi-right ▼

## B [Would the Pembroke Welsh Corgi Be a Good Family Pet ...](#)

Size: An adult Pembroke Welsh **Corgi** can weigh anywhere between 20 and 35 pounds. The responsible Pembroke breeder tries to breed for a dog that is ...

www.akc.org › Dog Breeds ▼

## C [Pembroke Welsh Corgi Dog Breed Information](#)

**Pembroke Welsh Corgi**. Among the most agreeable of all small housedogs, the **Pembroke Welsh Corgi** is a strong, athletic, and lively little herder who is affectionate and companionable without being needy. They are one of the world's most popular herding breeds.





# SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

## SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

A method of optimizing web content to bring organic traffic to your website through online searches. SEO helps potential visitors find our pages when they search online.

## Search engines

Use crawlers to draw conclusions about page content.

# ALT TEXT AND TITLE TAGS

## Alt Text

Text used to describe an image to website viewers. This text is not outwardly visible, but necessary for accessibility. Use unique text for each image and consider decorative images, too.

## Title Tag

An element of HTML that specifies the name of the page. It should be an accurate and concise description of the page. Ideal length is 50-60 characters so it will display properly across devices.

### Example

Photojournalism Major | Central Michigan University

# CHOOSING MEDIA: BEST PRACTICES

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- » Avoid Clipart
- » Use images relevant to the content
- » Use images sparingly
- » Use photos you own or have permission to use
- » Avoid misleading photos or images



**NOW IT'S YOUR  
TURN TO PRACTICE**



# PRACTICE WITH A PAGE

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With all the hot weather we've been having lately, Bob is looking for a place to get ice cream near his residence hall. Take a few minutes to brainstorm the following elements. Write your ideas down on paper or type them in a Word doc. You don't have to share what you write, but if you would like to you can put your answers in the chat.

- **What Bob might search online**
- **Headline with keywords**
- **Introduction using keywords**
- **Meta description**
- **Image alt text (for image to the right --->)**



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# Q&A



# WRAP IT UP

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- » Find resources at:  
<https://blogs.cmich.edu/webproject/category/training/>
- » Post session survey - your feedback will help us develop and improve resources and training.
- » Ask me anything - Lisa Wendland, Director of Digital Strategy,  
[wendl1l@cmich.edu](mailto:wendl1l@cmich.edu)



**BREAK**





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# The We Do Brand

» Brand Narrative, Tone  
and Voice Overview



# Brand Strategy

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- » Our modern approach to academics
- » Value of our emphasis on Leadership
- » Balance of our supportive community with accountability
- » Convert pride to engagement



# Brand Pillars

## » Pillar 1

### We Exemplify a Fired-Up Spirit

Students look to us to teach them how to do what they love - how to do it better. And how to make a living doing it for life. We will demonstrate a spirit of continuous self-improvement, empowerment and action in every endeavor. Because we are always looking at novel ways to better ourselves for the betterment of society.

## » Pillar 2

### We Lift Each Other Up

We will be known for our student-first approach. We are a student's family during their time here, and every new day is an opportunity to positively impact the life of a student, to inspire them - and our campus - to greatness. Because students everywhere are CMU Chippewas forever.

## » Pillar 3

### We Set the Leadership Standard

The world needs leadership of every discipline. We will provide them. But we will do much more than simply prepare students for successful careers; we will also educate them to be informed and active citizens. Because you don't get to where you want to go by following in the footsteps of others.

## » Pillar 4

### We Focus on Real-World Results

Career preparation and placement are paramount to students and parents. It's literally why we do what we do. Successful student outcomes matter just as much to us. Because we take a student's professional goals personally.

# Brand Platform

Brand Promise

## You Will Learn to Lead in Life

### » Pillar 1

We Exemplify a  
Fired-Up Spirit

### » Pillar 2

We Lift Each Other  
Up

### » Pillar 3

We Set the  
Leadership Standard

### » Pillar 4

We Focus on  
Real-World Results

### » Personality

Authentic  
Involved

Accountable  
Innovative

Impassioned

### » Foundation

Flexible Delivery Modes  
Large University/Small college feel

Strong Alumni Network  
A Valuable Education





# Messaging



# Concept Statement

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- » **At CMU, we pride ourselves on our tireless dedication to our students,** and our propensity for action. Our faculty, staff, and students start every task with a Fired Up attitude, and when we're not living, learning, collaborating, debating, developing and experience together – we're thinking of how we can do all of these things even better. Then we get to work.



# What does a Fired Up attitude feel like?

» It's the moment before the curtain rises.

Cutting a path wide enough for others to follow, and giving them the road map.

A cheering section 235,000-plus strong.

It's that voice. You know the one. That confident whisper "You've got this."

Finishing a full day's work, and checking on your research one. More. Time.

That last feeling of doubt disappearing.

It's knowing that leadership is not always a title, or the loudest voice.

Looking fear in the eyes, and knowing you've got the edge.

Finding your voice and knowing how to use it. For yourself. For others. For what's right.

It's the sudden spark of knowing, THIS is what it's all about.

Some call it being in the zone. Others call it flow.

We call it being Fired Up and Focused, and it's what

**We Do**

**#WeDo@CMU**



# Brand Element - We Do

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- » We Do statements are declarative first-person, plural statements from the perspective of the university community
- » Speak to the impact we have as a campus community on our students' lives, in Michigan, in the Midwest and beyond.
- » Describe the action we take for our community and our dedication to our students.





# We Do

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- » We do cutting-edge research
- » We do community
- » We do inspiration
- » We do learning in action
- » We do culture



# Brand Element - I Can

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- » Declarative first-person singular statements from the point of view of our students
- » Evoke wonder, excitement and interest
- » Exhibit the confidence of doing
- » Gets to the essence of a student's learning. If you can't answer, "So, what?" dig deeper.



# I Can

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» I Can Help Save the Last Wild Places on Our Planet

» I Can Share the Stage with the World's Best

» I Can take on 10,000 competition from around the world and win

» I Can Protect the Great Lakes from an Oil Spill

» I Can Inspire the Next Fashion Trend

» I Can Work Toward a Greener Future for Us All

# I Can - Don'ts

## » Don't use it for transactional purposes

**I Can Apply**

**I Can Transfer Credit**

**I Can Study Abroad**

If the statement isn't a powerful message about our academic prowess, choose another phrase.

## » Don't leave power on the table

**I Can Study Abroad**

**I Can Do Real-World Research**

**I Can Perform on Stage**

The statement shouldn't leave any doubt of the impact of the work, or the confidence of the student or faculty. If there's doubt, keep digging

## » Don't frame an "I Can" statement from a different perspective

**I Can Help You Apply**

**I Can Review Your Credits**

**I Can Answer Your Questions**

While each seem like kind offers to prospective students (and they most certainly are), we know there's more power in "I Can."

# I Can/We Do Relationship

- » We do culture  
I can perform on stage with the world's best.
- » We do innovation  
I can develop renewable fuel sources.
- » We do ground breaking research  
I can improve recovery time from spinal cord injuries.



# Voice and Tone

## » Be Clear and Concise

The most effective messages are uncomplicated.

## » Make it all about “you”

This is a conversation. It should sound like it.

## » Say One Thing Well

Everything we write should have one distinct message

## » Focus on Doing

Express our Fired-Up spirit by speaking in an active voice

## » Back It Up

Our storytelling should feature relevant points of pride, statistics, testimonials and emotion.

## » Be Confident, Not Cocky

We have a lot to be proud of – and it’s okay to tout our successes

## » Provide a Benefit

What’s in it for the reader? If you can’t answer this question, pause and reconsider.

## » Be Human

Highlight our students, faculty and alumni stories, their wins, and their challenges.



# Let's Practice



# Digging Deeper

- » I can study abroad.
- » I can swim with sea turtles.
- » I can help save the last wild places on our planet.





# Digging Deeper

- » We do research
- » We do important research
- » We do cutting-edge research



# Digging Deeper

- » You'll gain confidence as you participate in engaged learning opportunities through curricular and co-curricular activities starting your very first semester on campus.
- » Start doing what you love from your very first moment on campus. Build confidence in your skills as you participate in hands-on learning in the classroom and beyond.
- » Don't wait for your first job to start doing what you love. That starts day one. Dig in. Explore. Get to work.



# Biology Research on Alzheimer's

## » Situation

Student Lateer Shafau teamed up with his professor, Dr. Ute Hochgeschwender, to look at certain proteins as a way to stimulate neurons in spinal cords to promote recovery in lower limbs after an injury.

## » We Do

## » I Can

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## » Situation

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## » We Do

**Cutting Edge Research**

## » I Can

**Improve recovery time from spinal cord injuries.**

# Fashion Merchandising and Design

## » Situation

Fashion Merchandising and Design students Deana Lalonde, Joshua Golden and Emily Doyle upholstered chairs with fabrics they designed and printed for a regional textile print competition, winning first, second and third places.

## » We Do

## » I Can

# Fashion Merchandising and Design

## » Situation

Fashion Merchandising and Design students Deana Lalonde, Joshua Golden and Emily Doyle upholstered chairs with fabrics they designed and printed for a regional textile print competition, winning first, second and third places.

## » We Do

**Award-Winning Style**

## » I Can

**I can see MY fabrics  
sweep awards**

# Your turn - Who has an example?

» Situation

» We Do

» I Can

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# Q&A

