Project Kick Off
March 9, 2016

Blackboard
Project Kick-Off Agenda

3:00pm  Welcome
3:10pm  Vision for 2019
3:20pm  Introduction to “Design Thinking”
4:00pm  Work Streams & Timeline
4:45pm  Next Steps
The Blackboard Team

Christina Fleming  
Program Director

Chad Kainz  
Technology Lead

Justin Petro  
Design Thinking Lead

Tim Aaron  
Project Manager
Vision for 2019

Goal: …by 2019 we will modernize the student experience in order to better enable student success. Success will be defined as generating a long-lasting sense of belonging and pride among our students as well as improving core enrollment metrics such as retention and four/six-year graduation rates.

Year One
Define the ideal student experience; analyze the current environment; identify gaps and issues; develop an action plan; set goals for year two; and launch work.

Year Two
Define cross-functional teams; move forward with the first phase of implementation; assess student satisfaction; adjust; and create goals for year three.

Year Three
Move forward with the second phase of implementation; assess student satisfaction; adjust; and create goals for the following year.
Project Overview & Timeline

April - May

2.1 Defining the Ideal Student Experience

2.2 Student Profile & Current State Lifecycle Mapping

May - June

2.3 Gap Analysis

July - August

2.4 Recommended Implementation Plan

We’re here
Introduction to “Design Thinking”
Design Thinking is a combination of methods and tools built to solve complex, multi-factor problems alongside the people who benefit from the outcomes.

It utilizes interactive and contextual techniques designed to uncover and highlight opportunities for innovation.
Goals of Design Thinking

- Empathy with what People Need
- Shared Understanding of Constraints
- UNIQUE DIFFERENTIATOR

What Could Be?  
What Should Be?
Concepts of Design Thinking

- Deep stakeholder engagement
- Interactive and participatory exercises
- Balanced, interdisciplinary viewpoints
- Tangible (often visualized) recommendations
- Iterative refinement toward an outcome
How do we use Design Thinking to uncover innovation?

Hint: It begins with you.
Balancing the goals of many to solve the needs of one.
People are the center of our universe.

We’re starting with this room!

George Mason University Student Experience Redesign
Blackboard is excited to work with you to define the next generation experience for George Mason’s students. As a participant in this process you’ll actively mold and shape the insights and roadmap for future students.
To begin, help us get to know you and guide our future research initiatives by engaging with the following questions.
Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions during the presentation.

1. What's your First and Last name?

2. What function best represents your day-to-day focus? Check all that apply.
   - [ ] Enrollment Services
   - [ ] Student Services
   - [ ] Advising
   - [ ] Technology / IT
   - [ ] University Life
   - [ ] Other, please write in: ________________________________

3. CHECK THE TOP 3 phrases that you feel best reflect the ideal George Mason University student. Check all that apply.
   - [ ] Career Oriented
   - [ ] Local (from DC/Northern Virginia)
   - [ ] Entrepreneurial
   - [ ] Creative
   - [ ] Diverse
   - [ ] Driven
   - [ ] Globally Conscious
   - [ ] Innovative
   - [ ] Academically Well-rounded
   - [ ] Socially Conscious
   - [ ] George Mason
Tools & Techniques

**Macro Insights**

- **Define Inputs & Focus:** Research baselines, hypotheses, competition opportunities.

- **Get In The Field:** Contextual inquiry & interviews, competitive analysis, competitive interviews.

**Stakeholder Definition & Workshops**

- **Refine & Iterate:** Persona design, preferences, attributes and leading indicators.

- **Analyze & Spotlight:** Affinity mapping, and Feature, function, and goal analysis, trade-offs.

**Synthesis**

- **Participatory Activities**

**Prioritize:**
Prioritized Recommendations (Feature + Function + Story), effort, and roadmap.
Refinement Funnel

2 Weeks
- Large brush strokes to understand the various facets of the space.

1 Week
- Adding detail. Still allowing for divergent thinking.

2 Weeks
- vetting direction and areas of emphasis with Intel. Affirmation to continue on course.

1 Week
- Build out detailed design & validate concepts through contextual inquiry.

2 Weeks
- Finalize hero stories and hone detailed UI designs.

Present preliminary ‘Final Deliverable’ to Intel.

Finalize Experience Blueprint.
Macro Insights & Baselines

**Noteworthy Comparables: Product Packaging Depth**

Stratfor most closely resembles CB Insights in its packaging architecture.

Ad hoc reports represent potential revenue driver (if valuable enough).

McKinsey is the IHS-equivalent comparable in terms of breadth and depth.

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   - [ ] Creative

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**COMPETITIVE/COMPARABLE LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS**

Product Packaging Depth by Comparable

- [ ] Paid Subscription for Articles
- [ ] Intelligence Subscription
- [ ] Training Programs
- [ ] Other Services
Contextual Observation
Stakeholder Definition

PHLUR's persona assumptions are correct— but exist on a spectrum

II interviewees agree on:

- I want to stay apearing neat to a quality, well-made product and not going to spend an arm and a leg for products I am not sure that are worth paying for
- I display a high sense of self-confidence and am a bit of a personal style icon. I seek out products that help protect the environment and that I can live with
- I often look for functionally inspired products to wear and feel more comfortable in my own skin
- I consider myself a style icon. I tend to know a bit about the latest and greatest fashion and beauty trends before anyone else
- I have a lot of loyalty to a handful of fashion & beauty brands
- I use few perfumes, but when I do, I use them to enhance my existing style
- I use my products on myself and at home and am drawn to products that are classic styles like jeans and shirts

thinktv.
Participatory Workshops
Synthesis

**Example Visual Summary—Home Page**

**Home page should allow clear and relevant content navigation.**

**Epic Highlights:**
- Clear page navigation and simplified structure
- Preview sub-navigation for optimized browsing
- Site search
- Hero content
- Weekly, Analysis, and SitReps (top 3 content types)
- Trending / persona relevant content (and upsells)
- Secondary content driving additional engagement

**Building off of last week's recommendations...**

1. Improve clarity of messaging
2. Opt for consistency in utilising value propositions
3. Show subscription tiers and offerings clearly
4. Integrate subscription promotions site-wide
5. Explore other trial offering avenues to identify the approach with highest conversion
6. Consistent practice in email outreach
7. Create a consistent and recognizable brand style guide
8. Create strong and persuasive visual brand language
9. Update site, messaging, and marketing asset templates and designs
10. Simplify content offerings
11. Step offerings to personas
12. Use distinctive, recognizable voice/tone for content
13. Personalise brand content presentation/packaging
14. Label navigation home clearly
15. Improve discovery of other related content
16. Adopt web publishing best practices across devices
17. Clearly delineate user types and grid of sections
Synthesis

My Circle

My Circle is about getting together and doing things. Quickly orchestrate group activities on the fly. See where your friends are and meet up. Create content-rich snapshots of the times you hang out. Share photos with everyone that was at the BBQ instantly. Even get some interesting stats about your relationships.

Concierge Model:
Real time group sharing & orchestration. My Circle disseminates the concierge responsibility across your network. What's going on right now? Tonight! Who's in? Who's out? Where are you? Where are we going?

My Circle: Staying connected

Java apps like Hungry Jack and Hungry House manage all the heavy lifting. With a quarter of a second per transaction, the system is lightning fast. An order engine logs all transactions into a database.

My Circle: Campfire Sharing

Let's share an update and update our friends. When we connect our phone and tablet, we can see other people's devices and receive notifications. We can also add accounts to the database.
Representative Asks and Commitments for Participants

» **Students**
  - 1-2 30-60 min Workshops defined weeks ahead of time (early-mid April)
  - 2-3 Short Questionnaires
  - Background Homework

» **Staff**
  - 1-2 60 min Workshops defined weeks ahead of time (mid April - early May)
  - 1 60-120 min group Workshop
  - 2-3 Short Questionnaires
  - Data Requests

» **Other**
  - Parents, Counselors, Employers
  - 2-3 Short Questionnaires
  - Potential Phone or Video Interviews
**Steering Surveys**
*Goal*: Influence research questions and insights as well as refine perspectives before and after on-the-ground sessions
- Students
- Stakeholders / Staff
- Parents
- Counselors
- Employers

**Contextual Inquiries**
*Goal*: Provide deep understanding of key stakeholders in order to infer insights from behaviors, practices, and observed traits.
- In context interviews with Students / Staff (dorms / classroom / office)
- Day-in-the life student shadowing
- Class observation
- Tour group participation
- Phone and Video interviews

**Participatory Events**
*Goal*: Design alongside stakeholders and involve them in the process of creating and owning an outcome.
- Mad Libs
  - I Love Mason…
  - Mason means to me...
  - My ideal Mason hire is...
- On campus “Design Your Mason” activities
- Affinity mapping and evaluation workshops
- Evaluation and ranking feedback reviews
Work Streams & Timeline
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>MONTH 1</th>
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<td>Student Profile &amp; Current State Lifecycle Mapping</td>
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<td>Gap Analysis</td>
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<td>Recommended Implementation Plan</td>
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Defining the Ideal Student Experience

The goal of this work stream is define an ideal and truly transformative Mason student experience using a “design thinking” approach. This effort is intended to be blue sky and aspirational, which would map to an experiential ideal. Completion of this work involves an interactive and iterative process that couples specialists with key stakeholders from Mason including student representatives, faculty, and staff.

From the “George Mason University Student Experience Redesign” Scope of Work, February 2016

Work Products

- Summary findings and data synthesis from the interviews and additional research, presented to George Mason steering committee, including a 2X2 grid of prioritized insights based on the value contribution to the Mason student experience and timeline required to deliver this insight
- Validated high-level definition of and prioritized criteria for the ideal Mason student experience
Example 2x2 recommendation prioritization

**Building off of last week’s recommendations...**

1. Improve clarity of messaging hierarchy
2. Opt for conciseness in outlining value propositions
3. Show subscription tiers and offerings clearly
4. Integrate subscription prompts site wide
5. Explore other trial reading avenues to identify the approach with highest conversion
6. Use best practices in email outreach
7. Create a consistent and recognizable brand style guide
8. Create strong and pervasive visual brand language
9. Update site, newsletter, and marketing asset templates and designs
10. Simplify content offerings
11. Map offerings to personas
12. Use distinctive, recognizable titles/labels for content
13. Persona-based content presentation/packaging
14. Label navigation items clearly
15. Improve discovery of other related content
16. Adopt web publishing best practices across device types
17. Clearly delineate user types and grid of services
Overlapping with the Defining the Ideal Student Experience work stream, the “Student Profile & Lifecycle Mapping” work stream will concentrate on gaining a deeper understanding of three (3) identified student groups [Freshman Students, Undergraduate Transfer Students, Masters Students] and mapping the current state of the student lifecycle experience for each.

From the “George Mason University Student Experience Redesign” Scope of Work, February 2016

**Work Products**

- Three (3) student persona profiles.
- Student population analysis and related geographic heat map(s)
- Secret shop findings on Mason and two (2) chosen competitors
- Summary of findings from three (3) collaborative workshops with key Mason leaders and staff to map the current lifecycle experience for each segment and identify improvement opportunities
- Schematic design of the current and ideal Mason student lifecycle experience by persona
# Student Persona Snapshot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>About Me</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Getting a solid education that leads to a successful career is important to meet my family’s, and my own, high expectations.”</td>
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<tr>
<th>Background</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Skews Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity: White, Hispanic</td>
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<td>HH Income: $75k</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Type: Small Town/Suburban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Members: Parents may be divorced. One or two siblings who are close in age. Head of household may not have earned college degree.</td>
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<th>Beliefs &amp; Attitudes</th>
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<td>First-Generation College Student: Going to college very important to his/her family. Sees college as important stepping stone to a successful career. May be under more pressure and stress from family to succeed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong Work Ethic: Sees working hard and earning good grades as crucial to success. May plan to work part-time while going to school.</td>
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<th>Behaviors &amp; Lifestyle</th>
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<td>Financial: Parents are newer homeowners or plan to buy first home soon. Up and coming financially. Expect to be better off financially in next 12M.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Influencers: Family are most important influencers, along with friends and community members. Not heavily influenced by brands or advertising.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopping/Research: Primarily researches purchasing decisions online.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hobbies/Activities: Sports (soccer, basketball, track &amp; field) watching and participating; volunteer/community groups</td>
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<th>Media Consumption</th>
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<tr>
<td>Internet: Goes to the internet first for research and to communicate. Internet and mobile phone are primary source of entertainment. Recent website visits include: Netflix, Hulu, About.com, Wikipedia, Yahoo, Pandora.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media: Less active than some peers on social media, but likes to follow news and TV shows on social channels like Facebook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (Radio/TV/Print/Outdoor): Frequently listens to radio online, prefers country music. Favorite TV shows: American Idol, Nashville, Amazing Race.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Examining the Student Lifecycle
Gap Analysis

Using the profiles and plan developed within the Student Profile & Lifecycle Mapping work stream, Blackboard will examine key aspects of the Mason student experience to determine what will be required to move Mason from its current student experience approach to the ideal. This work will use key findings and directions identified as part of the design thinking process to focus analysis effort toward substantive analysis. Specifically, Blackboard will examine Mason’s: Enrollment Services, Student Life, Student Services, Advising Services and Technology Ecosystem.

From the “George Mason University Student Experience Redesign” Scope of Work, February 2016

Work Products

• Gap analysis summary of the five (5) key areas: Enrollment Services, Student Services, Student Life, Advising Services, and Technology Ecosystem
Technology Ecosystem Analysis
Using the information gathered throughout all aspects of the engagement, Blackboard will work with Mason to develop an implementation plan and roadmap to guide the transformation of its student experience. This work will include recommendations for KPIs and/or other metrics as appropriate, and conclude with an onsite session where the ideal student experience, findings and recommended implementation plan will be presented and shared with Mason.

From the “George Mason University Student Experience Redesign” Scope of Work, February 2016

Work Products

- Recommended implementation plan to inform the Mason Strategic Planning process
- Roadmap with recommended KPIs and metrics (as appropriate)
- Onsite presentation of engagement findings and recommendations
Implementation Framework Design

Change Framework & Cascading Dependency

- **Alignment**: Align the learning ecosystem with student expectations and skills, faculty needs and desires, college objectives, and broader academic goals.

- **Access**: Access to resources and services by students, faculty and staff should be streamlined to drive informed selection, consistent adoption, and effective use.

- **Awareness**: Awareness efforts regarding technology in learning and teaching should be designed to promote and improve faculty adoption and student use.
Roadmap of Cascaded Work Streams

We recommend that Monument University adopt a roadmap of eight (8) interrelated work streams with associated strategies that span and cascade across the three elements of the change framework.

Alignment
1. Governance
2. Responsibility
3. Ownership
4. Stakeholders

Access
5. Optimization
6. Standards

Awareness
7. Support
8. Planning
9. Faculty Development
10. Readiness
11. Communication

Blackboard
Governance of the educational technology ecosystem and its interrelated services and resources should translate university strategic goals and objectives into actionable initiatives that are aligned with curricular goals and operational capabilities. The university should engage stakeholders and balance prioritization and decision-making with advisory and continuous improvement efforts.

**Recommended Action (Summarized)**

1a) **Establish** a formal tiered governance structure that takes into account at least two major components of the educational technology ecosystem: steering and operations.
Next Steps
Immediate Next Steps

Activate project management process
Request access to materials and data
Schedule April onsite activities
Launch surveys
Conduct April onsite working sessions