

Submitter

Anthony Horn

UX Designer

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UC Location

UC Davis

Award Type

Team Recognition – Design Award

Team(s)

IET Web Development

- Shawn DeArmond (Project Lead - Web Architect)
- Anthony Horn
- Carson Black
- Mark Miller
- Jessica Hayes
- Armando Arbizo
- Jeroen Post
- John Jones

Strategic Communications

- Tristan Peery (Project Lead - Director of Web Communications)
- Tom Watts
- Max Boyd
- Rebecca Huval

Project

The Challenge



In 2021 UC Davis went through a rebrand and was provided a style guide and design elements from a 3rd party vendor. Sadly, the style guide included little to no digital/web assets or guidance. It was primarily targeted toward print and print assets.

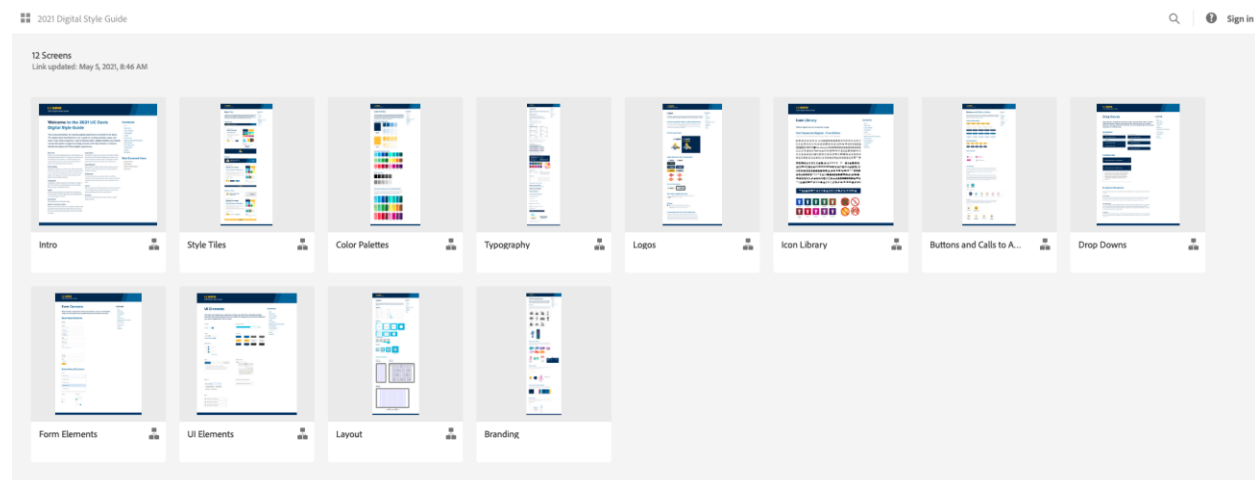
View Design Elements for the 2021 rebrand:

<https://communicationsguide.ucdavis.edu/brand-guide/design-elements>

UCDavis.edu always leads the charge in any rebranding or design change at UC Davis. So the challenge started with how do we apply the design elements and materials that we have to the flagship web property, knowing that it will set the tone for a rebrand of hundreds of UC Davis websites.

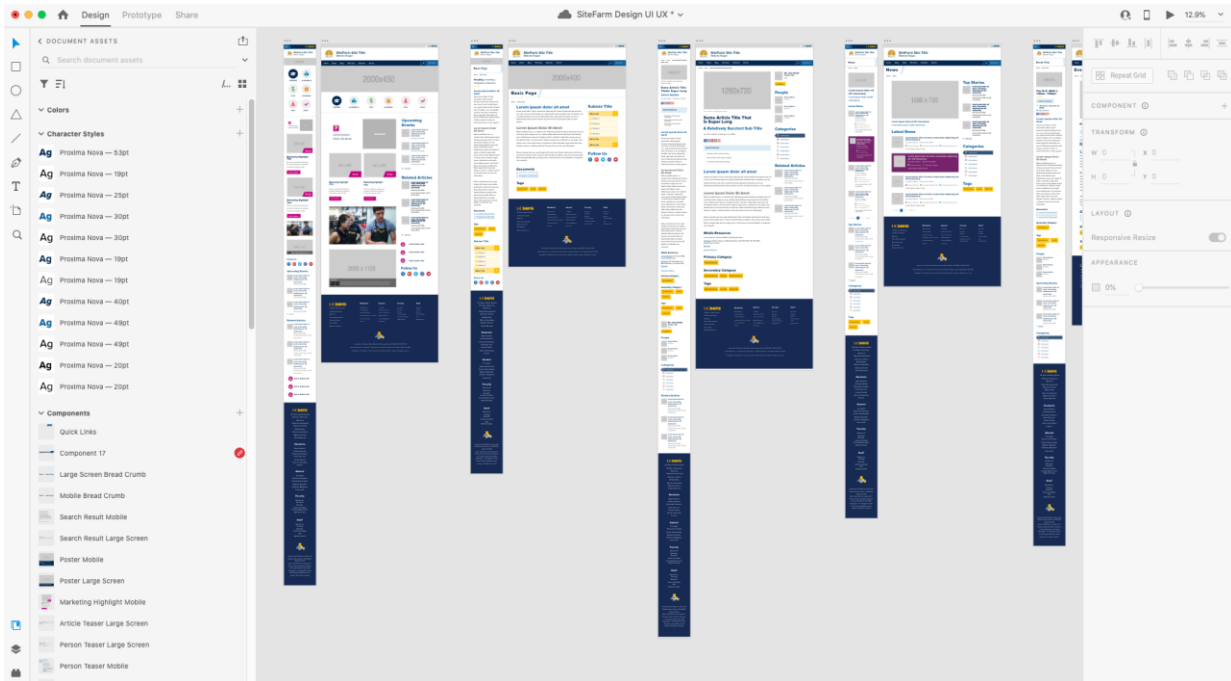
Design Systems to the Rescue

We knew that in the process interpreting the design elements for the digital space we would need a source of truth. A digital style guide that could be used as the blue print for UCDavis.edu, our campus CMS, and any and all digital properties and applications wishing to adhere to the latest university branding. Together the Strategic Communications and Web Development teams created a digital style guide that represented the design work and stylistic vision provided by our vendor while setting the stage for accessible and modern digital design.



View the 2021 Digital Style Guide: <https://xd.adobe.com/view/45eec55b-8d01-4f34-b3f6-66a4a0b0ef07-10bd/grid>

One of our major goals of this project was to move the campus home site onto the campus CMS, [Sitefarm](#). With this goal the first application of this style guide would have to be the campus CMS. Our campus CMS uses a pattern library called [Pattern Lab](#) as the primary interface for housing our web design components, so our first step was to apply the Digital Style guide to this system.



A design phase was conducted to apply the style guide to existing design elements using Adobe XD.

View SiteFarm page design: <https://xd.adobe.com/view/ef606701-b73d-46c9-8e13-eb6f522bfb4c-ba33/grid>

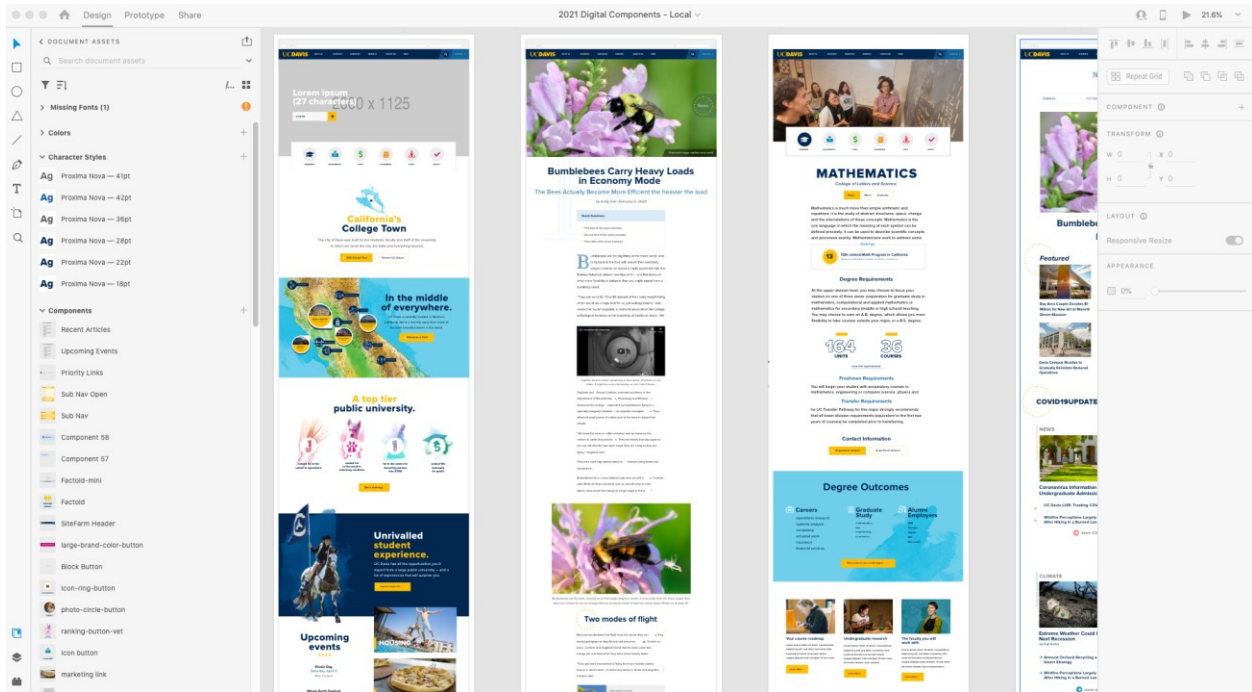
With the static designs in hand we then applied the design to our front end design system/pattern library. At this point we were getting into development.



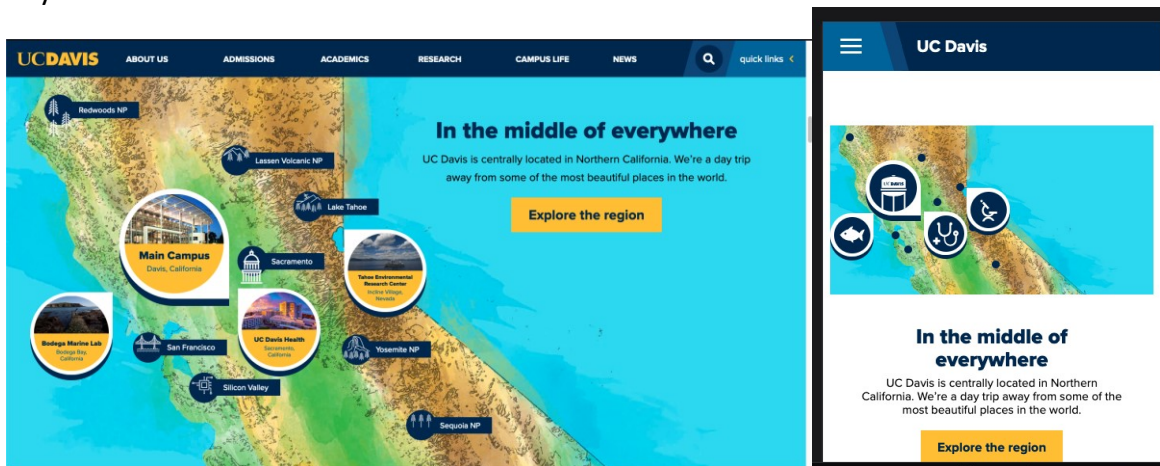
View the 2021 rebranded pattern library: <http://dev.webstyleguide.ucdavis.edu/redesign/?p=all>

After the front end development was complete in our pattern library, development began to apply this work to our CMS' primary theme. Once we had a stable version of our CMS with the new theme we began work on the campus home site. At this point the strategy was to build and launch the campus home site and then follow up with the roll out of new theme to the 800+ campus websites.

A separate design phase was held to create unique page design specific to the marketing needs of the home site.



This design was then implemented with special attention and care to accessibility and modern design techniques. A good example is the map/info graphic of CA found on the home page using HTML/CSS. This graphic includes all applicable accessibility and scales to accommodate any screen size.



See UC Davis.edu: <https://www.ucdavis.edu/>

After the successful design, theming, content migration, and launch of the campus home site the design was rolled out to the campus CMS. Special efforts had to be made to assist departments and programs with custom subthemes.

See examples of SiteFarm Sites:

- <https://vgl.sf.ucdavis.edu/>
- <https://gormanmuseum.ucdavis.edu/>
- <https://horticulture.ucdavis.edu/>
- <https://cpe.ucdavis.edu/>
- <https://gradstudies.sf.ucdavis.edu/>
- <https://law.ucdavis.edu/>
- <https://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/>
- See more: <https://sitefarm.ucdavis.edu/live-client-sites>

Impact

The design work done during this project has shaped the process for future rebrands and created a repeatable path for success. It has fostered interdepartmental cooperation and investment in shared success. To my knowledge the monetary savings of being able to update the branding of 800+ university sites in around 6 months with the efforts of only 2 small teams has not been calculated, but I know from experience that these sort of efforts in the past have taken years and required departments to employ their own resources and people to apply. We have been sharing the success of this design system with other universities, hoping to grow the number of campuses with centrally managed design systems. We are hoping to add this design award to our shelf, as this design just won a Peoples Voice Webby Award for School/University.

View award: <https://winners.webbyawards.com/2022/websites-and-mobile-sites/general-websites-and-mobile-sites/schooluniversity/212571/university-of-california-davis-homesite>

Team Contributions

The strategic communications team always leads with the vision for where the university brand is going. They provided initial design work to apply the new brand elements to a digital medium. The IET Web development team came in to provide guidance on the creation of a style guide that could be the single source of truth for all of UC Davis' digital UX. The digital style guide was a collaboration between UX Designers Tom Watts and Anthony Horn. The unique page designs for UCDavis.edu came out of design work from Tom Watts, and the design comps for SiteFarm were created by Anthony Horn and validated by Tom Watts. Development for UCDavis.edu was a collaborative effort of both teams. SiteFarm development was primarily conducted by IET Web Dev with backward contributions from UCDavis.edu since they are now sharing a codebase. Meaning they can create new design elements, program them, and contribute them to the greater web community. To this day the design is a living document that is growing all the time limited only by the creativity and vision of these two teams.

