

Web Style Guide

January 2009

This is one of two guides for the Web. This is the Style Guide, which explains the standards for all official College Web sites. The Technical Guide explains the use of Cascade content management system (CMS) for updating official College Web sites. Personal Web sites (<http://faculty.smcm.edu/yourusername> and <http://staff.smcm.edu/yourusername>) are NOT covered by either of these guides as they are not official College sites.

Introduction/Purpose:

This is one of two guides for the Web. This is the Style Guide, which explains the standards for all official College Web sites. The Technical Guide explains the use of Cascade content management system (CMS) for updating official College Web sites. Personal Web sites (<http://faculty.smcm.edu/yourusername> and <http://staff.smcm.edu/yourusername>) are NOT covered by either of these guides as they are not official College sites.

Style Guide Review:

Changes to Web policies are vetted through the Web Advisory Committee, a cross-functional mix of faculty, staff, and students. Questions about this Style Guide can be directed to the chair of the Web Advisory Committee.

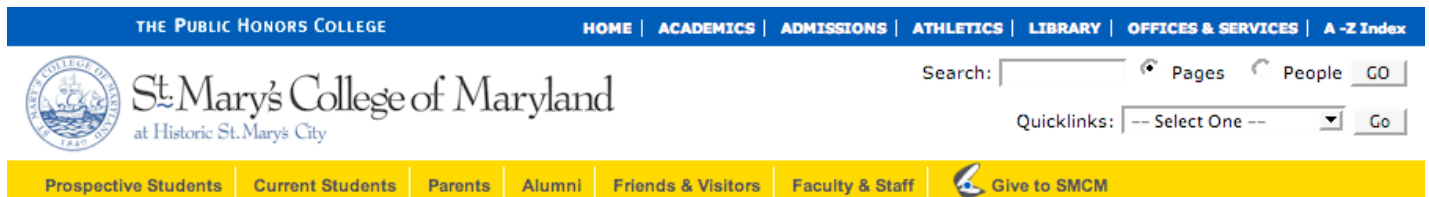
Official College Pages:

All official St. Mary's College of Maryland Web pages (that is, those which are intended as official public information about academic and administrative departments, offices, and other functions of the College will adhere to the following standards because those standards are built into the Cascade CMS as part of the provided templates. By using the Cascade CMS and provided templates, your site will automatically meet all requirements.

College Header and Footer:

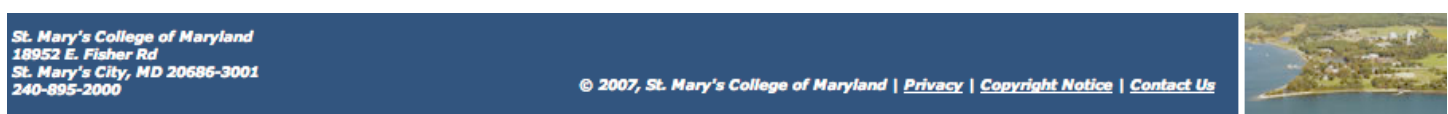
All official pages of the SMCM Web site include the standard header and footer shown here:

Header



The header features a blue navigation bar with the text "THE PUBLIC HONORS COLLEGE" on the left and a menu of links: "HOME | ACADEMICS | ADMISSIONS | ATHLETICS | LIBRARY | OFFICES & SERVICES | A-Z Index". Below this is a white search bar with a magnifying glass icon, "Pages" and "People" dropdowns, and a "GO" button. To the left of the search bar is the St. Mary's College of Maryland logo and name, including "at Historic St. Mary's City". Below the search bar is a yellow quicklinks bar with buttons for "Prospective Students", "Current Students", "Parents", "Alumni", "Friends & Visitors", "Faculty & Staff", and a "Give to SMCM" button with a dollar sign icon.

Footer



The footer consists of a dark blue bar. On the left, it contains the college's name and address: "St. Mary's College of Maryland", "18952 E. Fisher Rd", "St. Mary's City, MD 20686-3001", and "240-895-2000". In the center, it displays the copyright notice: "© 2007, St. Mary's College of Maryland | [Privacy](#) | [Copyright Notice](#) | [Contact Us](#)". On the right, there is a small image of the college's campus.

Branding:

The College logo (with tag and seal) appears on every official College page as part of the header. If the College logo is used elsewhere on an official page, it must be taken from the Cascade image library and used without modification to color or configuration (layout).

Site Navigation:

Within the College header there are two universal navigation menus (an organizational menu and an audience menu). The anatomy of a College Web page is shown here:

Main Page

Header

The screenshot shows the main page of St. Mary's College of Maryland. At the top is a blue header with the college name and a navigation menu: HOME | ACADEMICS | ADMISSIONS | ATHLETICS | LIBRARY | OFFICES & SERVICES | A-Z Index. Below the header is a yellow navigation bar with links for Prospective Students, Current Students, Parents, Alumni, Friends & Visitors, Faculty & Staff, and Give to SMCM. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column features a large image of a building with the text 'About ST. MARY'S COLLEGE' and a list of links: Our Philosophy, Core Curriculum, The First Year Experience, College Facts, Our History, and Maryland Heritage Project. Below this is a section for 'Upcoming EVENTS' with details for Monday, December 8 and December 9-12. The middle column has a 'FEATURES' section with two articles: 'Democracy Film Series Continues December 8' and 'Eric Bogosian's subUrbis opens Wednesday, December 10'. The right column has a 'NEWS' section with two articles: 'Countywide Survey Results Show Positive Community Response to SMCM: Nine Out of Ten People Say College Is Good Neighbor' and 'Emergency Assistance Fund'. At the bottom of the page is a footer with contact information and a copyright notice: © 2007, St. Mary's College of Maryland | Privacy | Copyright Notice | Contact Us.

Universal Navigation (Audience)

Universal Navigation (Organizational)

Footer

Secondary Page

Breadcrumbs

The screenshot shows the 'Museum Studies PROGRAM' page. The header is identical to the main page. Below the header is a yellow breadcrumb bar with the text 'Museum Studies'. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column has a 'Program Overview' section with links for Faculty & Staff, Declaring the Minor, Internships, St. Mary's Projects, Student Resources, Employment Opportunities, and Useful Links. Below this is a 'Study Abroad' callout box with an image of a city. The middle column has a 'Welcome' section with a large image of a classical building and a text block describing the program. The right column has a 'Program HIGHLIGHT' section with an image of a curator and a text block about George Ciscle. Below this is an 'SMP SPOTLIGHT' section with an image of a person and a text block about archaeological collections. At the bottom of the page is a footer with contact information and a copyright notice: © 2007, St. Mary's College of Maryland | Privacy | Copyright Notice | Contact Us.

Universal Navigation

Header

Site Navigation

Callout

Callout

Callout

Footer

Standard Information:

Every first (index/home) page in an official College Web site should contain the following standard information:

A phone number and a contact person (as an e-mail address)

Images:

Images used on all official College Web pages should specify height and width (in pixels) to facilitate efficient page loads.

Any image files uploaded for Web display should be no larger than 100 kilobytes.

Most images on the Web are compressed for fast delivery, usually as a GIF or JPEG. The following guide should be used when trying to determine the proper format for image files:

GIF - This format should be used when dealing with images that contain line art and large areas of solid color.

JPEG - This format should generally be used for photos, paintings, and images that include color gradients (places where one color gradually changes to another).

Other formats - If you feel that the image could be better stored or displayed in a format other than GIF or JPEG, contact the Web Services Team.

Source images must reside on the Web server.

No images that are copyrighted may be used without prior consent of owner.

A descriptive ALT tag should be provided for each image. Other incidental images should use an empty ALT tag (ALT="").

Other:

Links and content should be kept up-to-date. The Cascade CMS has a built-in link check that will alert you to broken links on your site when you edit it.

As an academic institution, SMCM requires that College Web pages be free of spelling errors. For questions about our College style, review "College Style Guide" and "Writing for the Web" on the Office of Publications' Web site (www.smcm.edu/publications). Copyediting assistance is also available through the Office of Publications.

Technical Rules:

The following are some technical guidelines to follow that will help ensure that the College Web site runs as efficiently as possible.

Functional Elements: Any additional software other than a Web browser needed to display or run functional elements should be conspicuously noted on the same page as the element. When possible, denote the file type it is (for example, .PDF). It should never be assumed that the user already has the appropriate software. Functional elements which are supported on the College server include the following: PDF, Flash, QuickTime, Windows Media Player, and other plug-ins as long as a link is provided as stated above

Coding: Most of the time, you'll be able to do what you need to do for your Web site in the CMS' WYSI-

WYG editor; occasionally, an unexplained error will occur that required a code check in HTML. Call the Web Services Team for help if this happens.

Privacy Statement:

A link to the following shall be included on the front page of the SMCM Web site:

“Maryland law mandates that State agencies shall not create personal records unless the need for the information is clearly established that personal records are relevant to the purposes for which they are collected, be accurate and current, and will not be obtained by fraudulent means.

State officials who request personal data from citizens must notify the citizens regarding the purposes for which the information is collected, the consequences to the citizen for refusing to provide the personal information, the citizen’s right to inspect and correct personal records, whether the information is generally available for public inspection, and whether the information is made available to other entities.

Please refer to the eMaryland technology Web site (<http://techmd.state.md.us/>) for additional information on information technology policies in Maryland. The State of Maryland is committed to providing you with Web sites over which you may securely and confidently transact business with the State.”

Copyright Information:

The following copyright notice is built into the footer used on each official page of the SMCM Web site, along with a link to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act Notice:

© 2008 St. Mary’s College of Maryland, 18952 E. Fisher Rd., St. Mary’s City, MD 20686-3001; 240-895-2000 USA

Compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Initiative:

St. Mary’s, along with many other institutions and government agencies, endorses the use of the guidelines set by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) as the standard for Web accessibility and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The W3C’s guidelines for Web accessibility can be found at <http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/>.

- The St. Mary’s Web site will comply with the W3C’s AA-level of Conformance for Web content accessibility. This includes the fulfillment of all Priority 1 and Priority 2 checkpoints. In addition, the Web site will include the Priority 3 checkpoints 13.5 and 14.3, the inclusion of navigation bars, and creation of a consistent style of presentation throughout the site, respectively. A checklist of the guidelines to follow can be found <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/full-checklist.html>. As some of the terms may be difficult for the non-technical user to understand, a “plain English” version of the guidelines will be included in the St. Mary’s Web FAQ.
- All claims of conformance appearing on a given Web page must meet the standards laid out in Section 5 (“Conformance”) of the W3C’s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0. The claims should be either in the form of a statement that includes the version, URL of the WAI document, and conformance level (such as “This page conforms to W3C’s “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0”, available at <http://www.w3.org/TR/1999/WAI-WEBCONTENT-19990505>, level Double-A.”), or as an official WAI icon that is linked according to the guidelines found at <http://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG1-Conformance.html>.
- Official pages should be viewable and usable by the broadest range of platforms, browsers, and

equipment. Official pages should be viewable with at least the following browsers: Firefox 2 and higher; Internet Explorer 6 and higher; Safari (Mac only). It is recommended that you use both Internet Explorer and Firefox on PC and Firefox and Safari on Mac to ensure that your pages may be viewed consistently by the greatest