

Chris Elliott

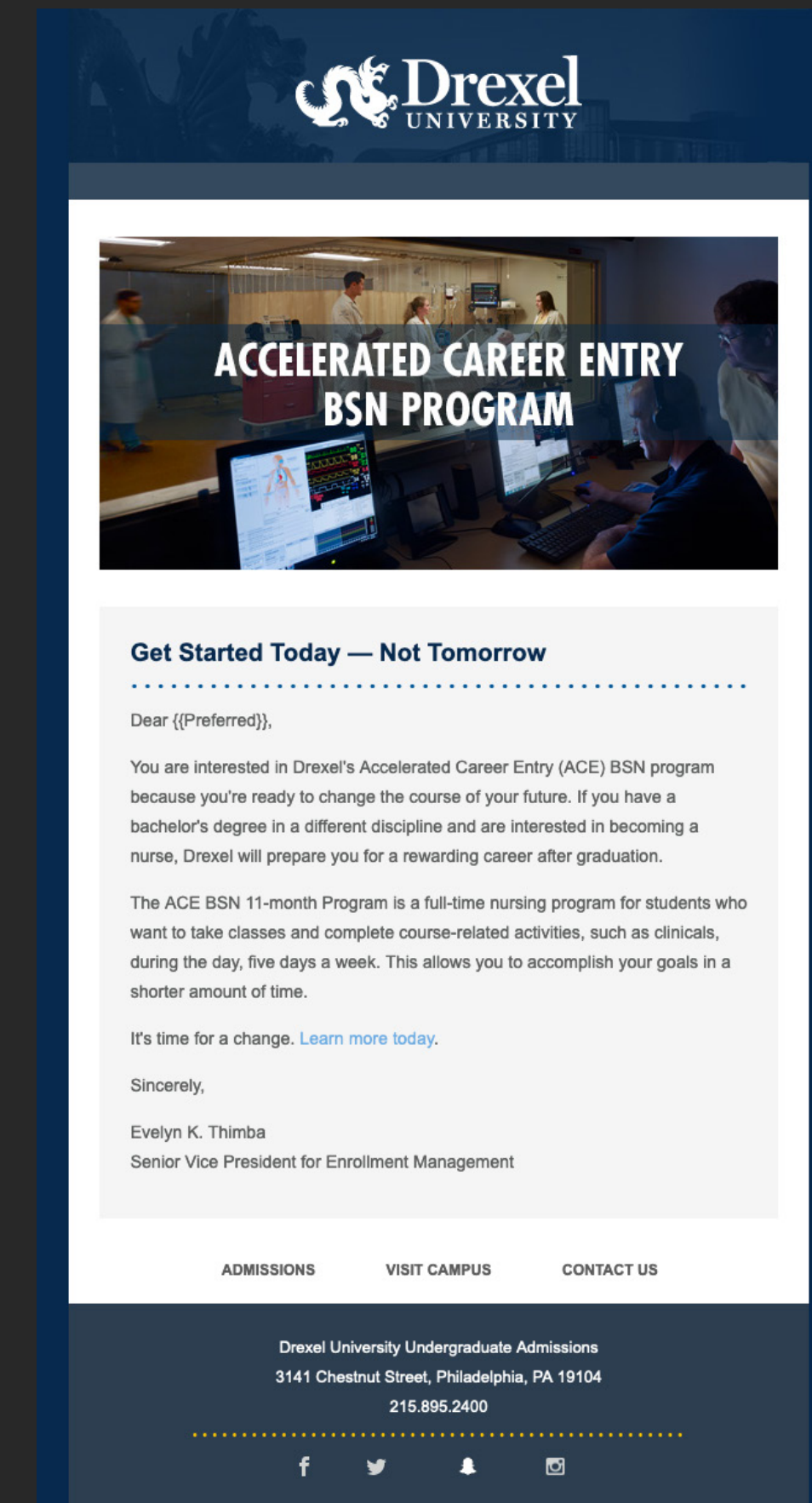
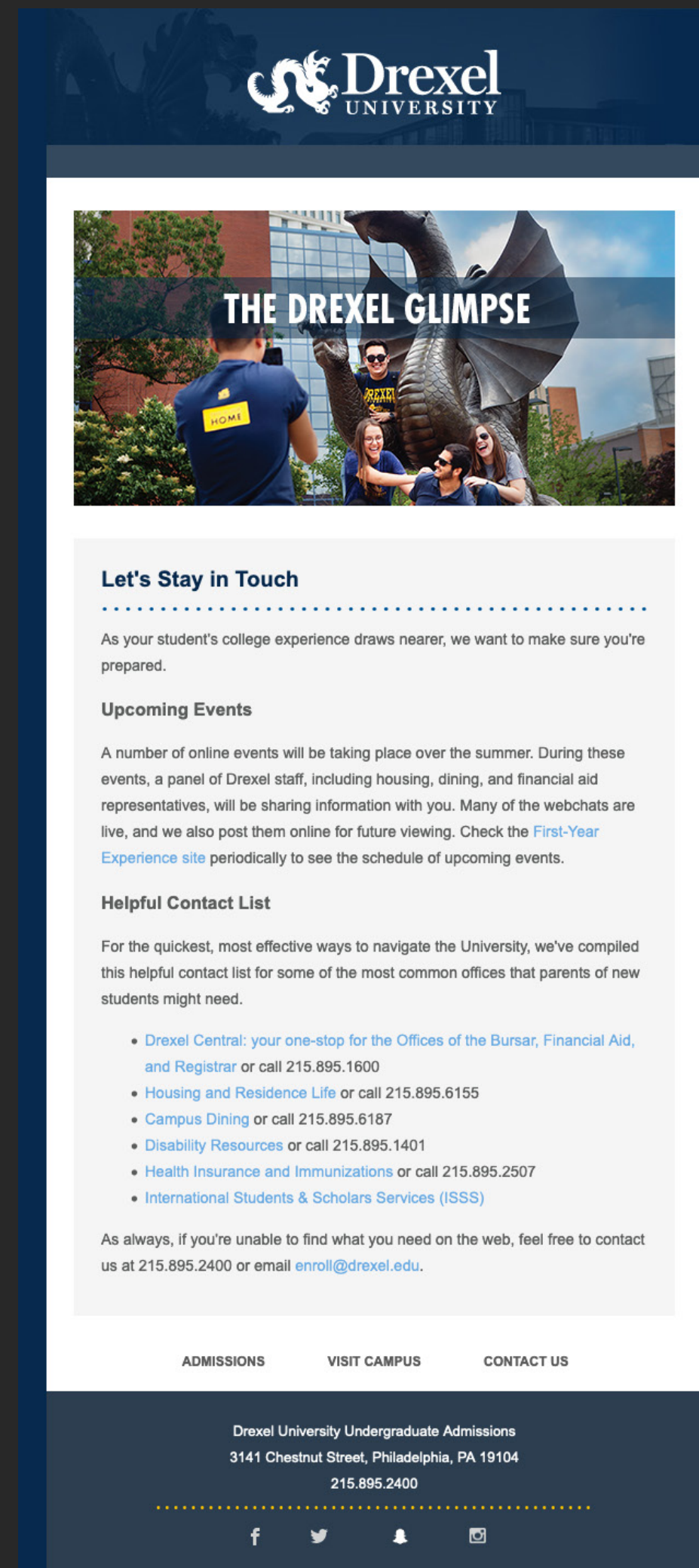
UI / UX Design Portfolio

Case Study: Drexel University Marketing and Student Life Email Template Redesign



Overview

- A full re-concepting and redesign of a core University email template.
- The existing email template (at right) was about 8 years old and in need of an update.
- I was the only person on the team with the skillset to tackle this redesign in-house.
- Stakeholders included:
 - dozens of departments across the university for whom C&M produces emails,
 - the strategists within C&M who coordinate with those clients, and
 - the University as a whole, given the importance of reaching and recruiting potential students, and retaining them after enrollment.
- The audience for these emails is primarily prospective and current college students, many of whom are used to short-form content, not long, letter-form emails.



Discovery

Accessibility concerns about the old email template included:

- excessive “framing,” creating extremely narrow content area on mobile devices,
- reliance on background colors and images which may not render in some clients,
- H-level text within images, and
- CTA buttons and other assets which didn't meet WCAG 2.0 AA standards.

The screenshot shows an email template for Drexel University. At the top is the Drexel University logo. Below it is a large blue banner with the text "The Next Generation of Leadership Begins Here" and "EVERY COLLEGE • EVERY INTEREST". The main content area is white and contains the following text:

You're Invited to Drexel's Graduate Open House

Drexel University invites you to join us for our University-wide [Graduate Open House](#) on Saturday, March 14. This special event is a great way to learn more about our 120+ graduate programs, speak with faculty within your field of interest, and connect with admissions and financial aid representatives. You'll also have the opportunity to take optional campus tours.

Drexel's Graduate Open House will run from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., with an optional Information Fair beginning at 10:30 a.m. and taking place throughout check-in.

Date:
Saturday, March 14, 2020

Time:
11 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Check-in occurs between 10:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Location:
Drexel Recreation Center
3301 Market Street

We have a program to meet every interest. To register for this special event, use the link below.

[Register Today](#)

At the bottom of the email, there are three links: [ADMISSIONS](#), [VISIT CAMPUS](#), and [CONTACT US](#). Below these links is the Drexel University Graduate Admissions contact information: 3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, 215.895.2400. At the very bottom are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram.

The screenshot shows an email template for Drexel University. At the top is the Drexel University logo. Below it is a large blue banner with the text "The Next Generation of Leadership Begins Here" and "EVERY COLLEGE • EVERY INTEREST". The main content area is white and contains the following text:

vibrant hub of history, industry, culture, and cuisine, it provides our students with unique opportunities to learn, play, and explore. Check out some of our student perspectives below to learn what they think makes Drexel and Philadelphia such an amazing place to live and learn.

Drexel and Philadelphia: A Winning Combination

[Read Story](#)

Summer Days in Philadelphia

[Read Story](#)

A Dragon's Perspective

[Watch Video](#)

The email features three sections, each with a title, a short paragraph, and a call-to-action button. The first section is "Drexel and Philadelphia: A Winning Combination" with a "Read Story" button. The second section is "Summer Days in Philadelphia" with a "Read Story" button. The third section is "A Dragon's Perspective" with a "Watch Video" button. Each section includes a small image related to the topic.

The screenshot shows an email template for Drexel University Enrollment Management & Student Success. At the top is the Drexel University logo and the text "Division of Enrollment Management & Student Success". Below it is a large blue banner with the text "Because the Season Can't Wait" and "From all of us to all of you, we wish you a wonderful holiday break and a prosperous new year!". The main content area is white and contains the following text:

From all of us to all of you, we wish you a wonderful holiday break and a prosperous new year!

Please enjoy a [special message](#) featuring the Drexel University Chorus directed by Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities Steven Powell, PhD.

[EMSS](#) [CONTACT US](#)

Enrollment Management & Student Success
3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

This message to Drexel Official Mail was approved under the authority of Evelyn K. Thibodeau, Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management and Subir Sahu, Senior Vice President for Student Success.

The email features a large blue banner with a play button icon, indicating a video. Below the banner is a white content area with a short paragraph and a link to a "special message". At the bottom of the email, there are two links: [EMSS](#) and [CONTACT US](#). Below these links is the Enrollment Management & Student Success contact information: 3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104. At the very bottom is a small disclaimer.

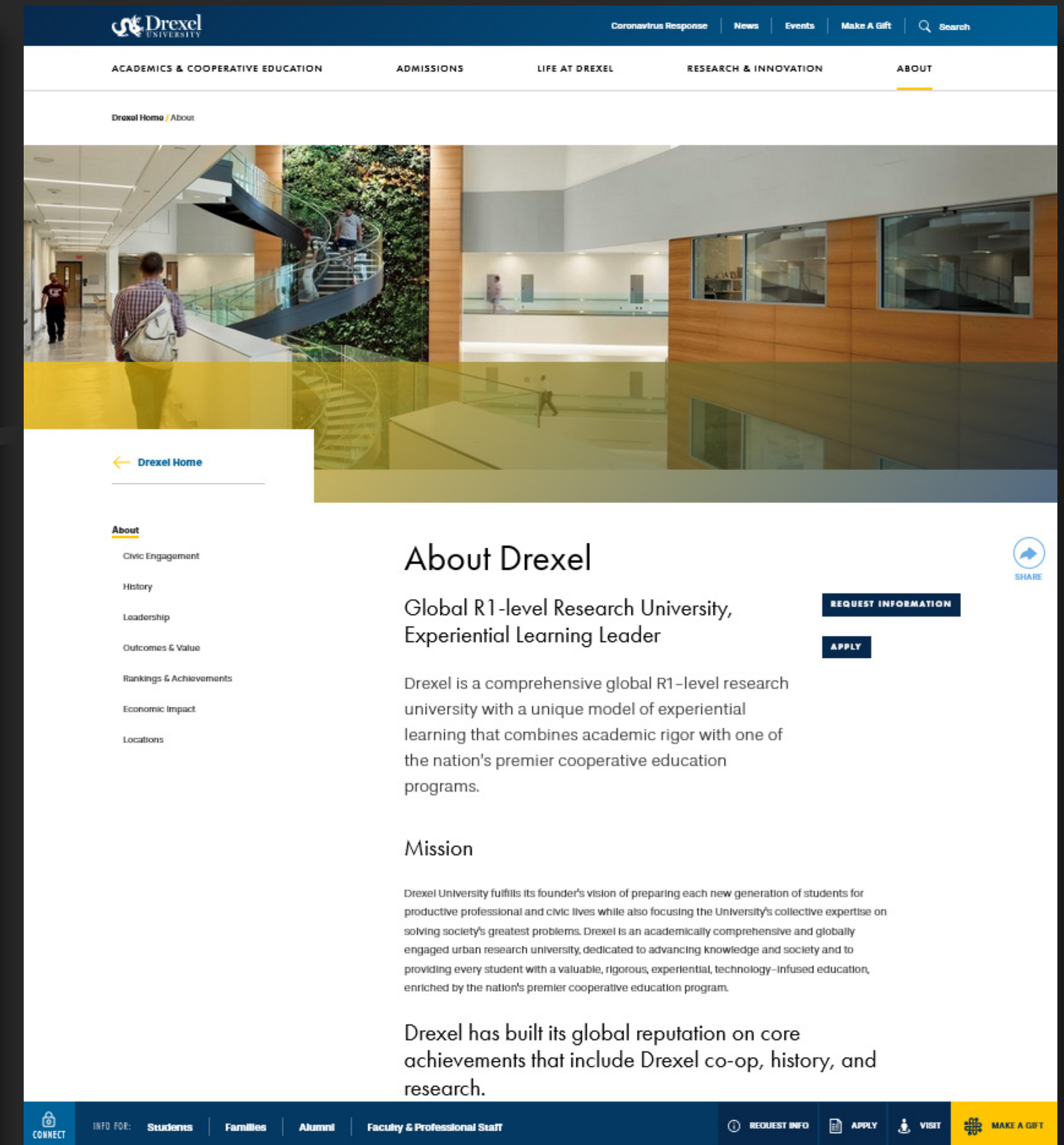
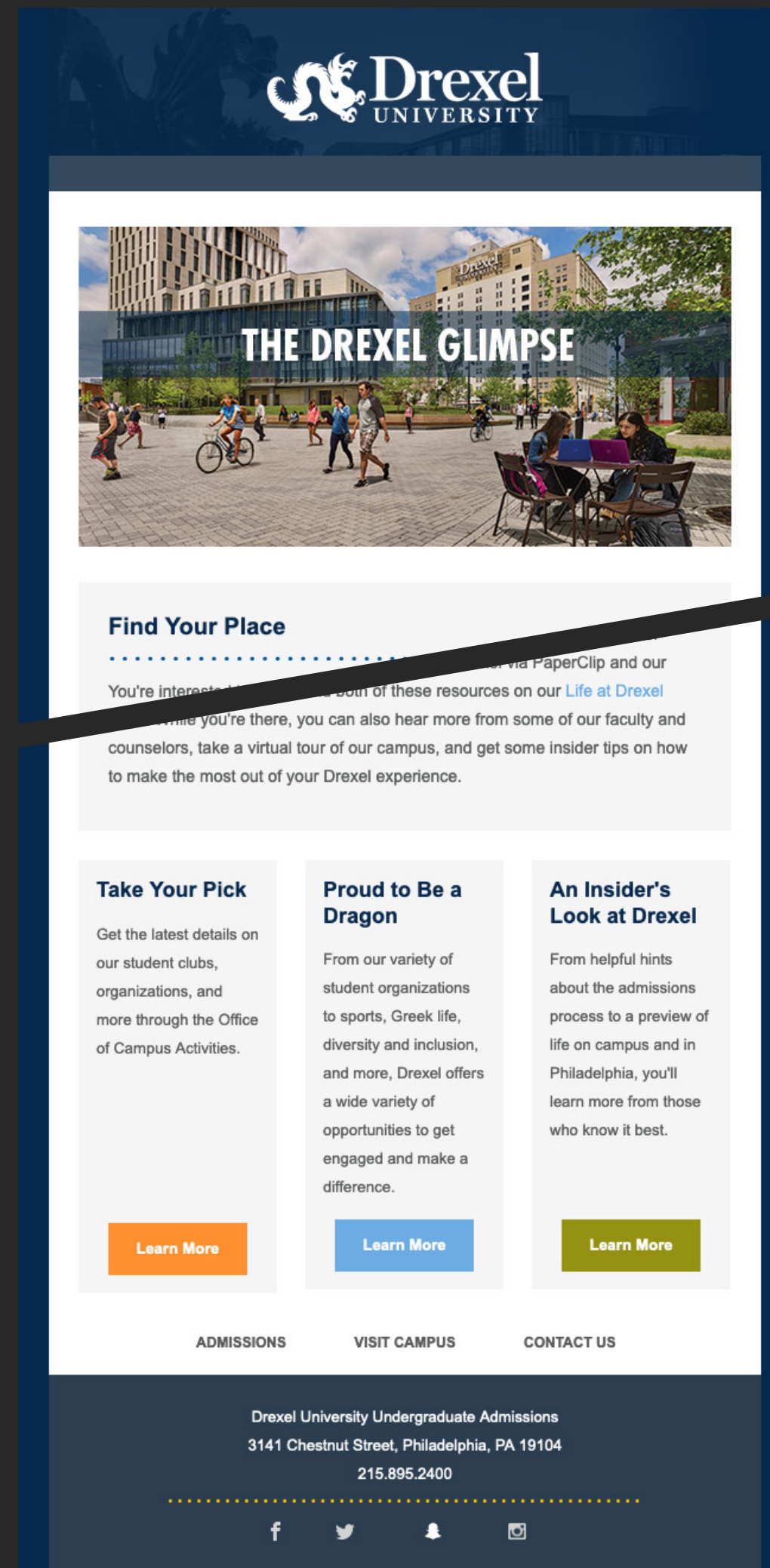


Discovery

Branding concerns regarding the old email template included:

- mismatch with new website's visual identity (farthest right), creating disconnect on click-through,
- difficulty supporting short content due to being primarily geared towards letter-format emails, and
- an overall feeling of being out-of-date, thus failing to present the university as a modern, tech-forward institution.

The goal of the new email template was to remedy all of these concerns, and to create a flexible layout where sections could be reorganized to suit the content.



Design

- 1) I worked with strategists to gather a representative sample of different emails from different jobs and clients to understand the widest array of content the template had to support.
- 2) I examined primary characteristics of the new website—colors, fonts, styles, etc.—and determined what was applicable and useful.
- 3) I fleshed out components based on existing and future content, focusing on the design system, accessibility, maximization of utility, and consistency.
- 4) I iterated the design through several rounds of review, addressing concerns such as where the department name appears, the size of the logo, and use cases for the footer links.

A Place Where Dragons Soar

EXPERIENCE STUDENT LIFE

Recognizing the strength of an equity-driven culture united under the guiding principles of diversity, inclusion, and mutual respect, Drexel Dragons develop lifelong friendships and build strong bonds with their surrounding community as they explore everything the University, and the great city of Philadelphia, has to offer.



Make Connections With Arts and Culture

Philly is a cultural hub teeming with museums, galleries, and more, all just waiting to be explored.



Activities and Student Organizations

With over 300 student clubs and organizations, you're bound to find something that matches your interests.



Cheer On Our Dragons — Or Play Alongside Them

Each year, over 7,000 students, faculty, and staff compete on Division I, club, and intramural levels.



THIS IS YOUR MOMENT



Life at Drexel

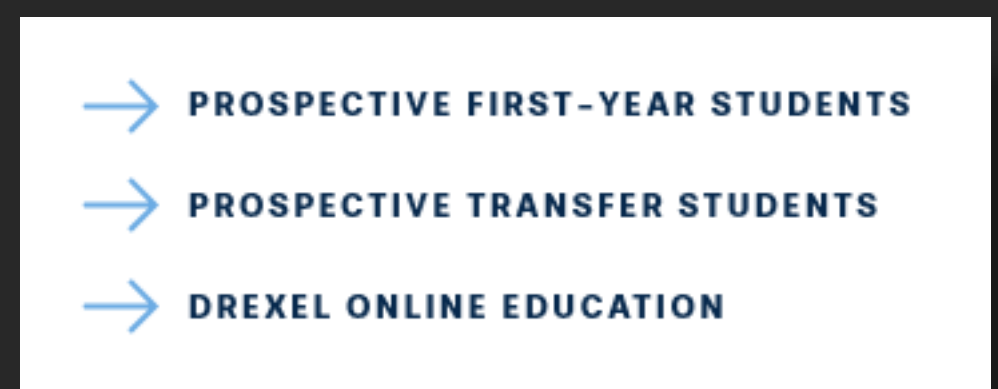
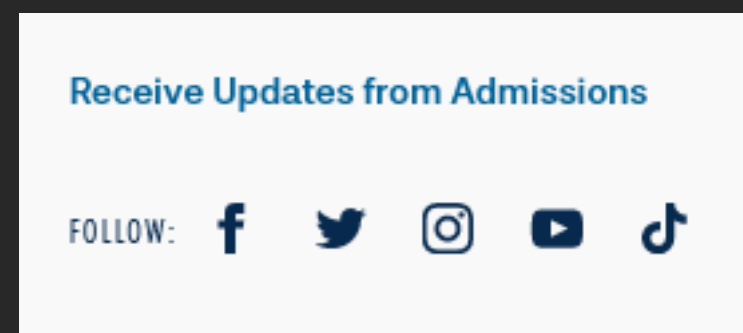
Get a sense of what it's like to be a Drexel Dragon and explore all the ways to get involved at Drexel.

Undergraduate Publications

Check out a sampling of some of our admission publications, each developed to provide helpful insights and answer questions you may have.

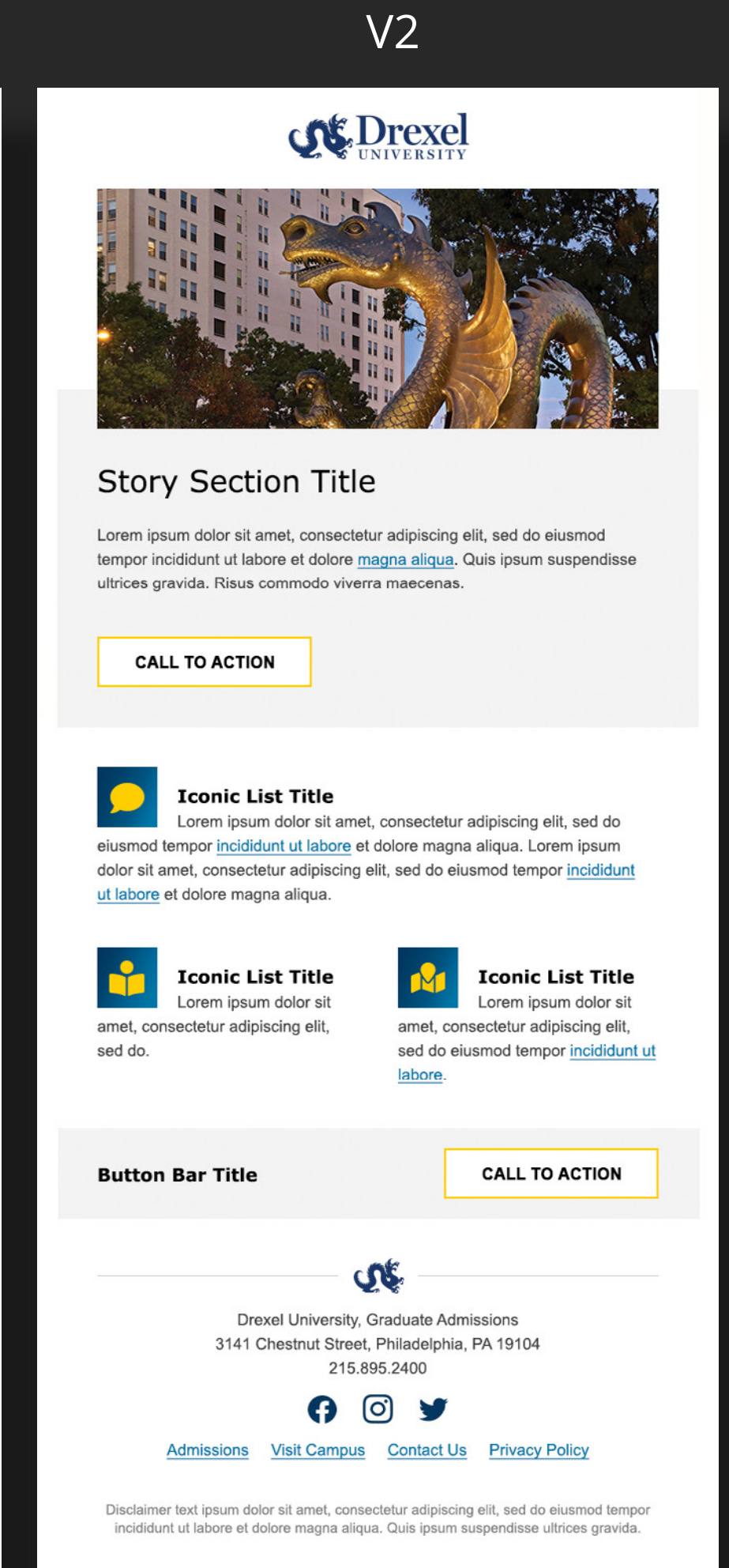
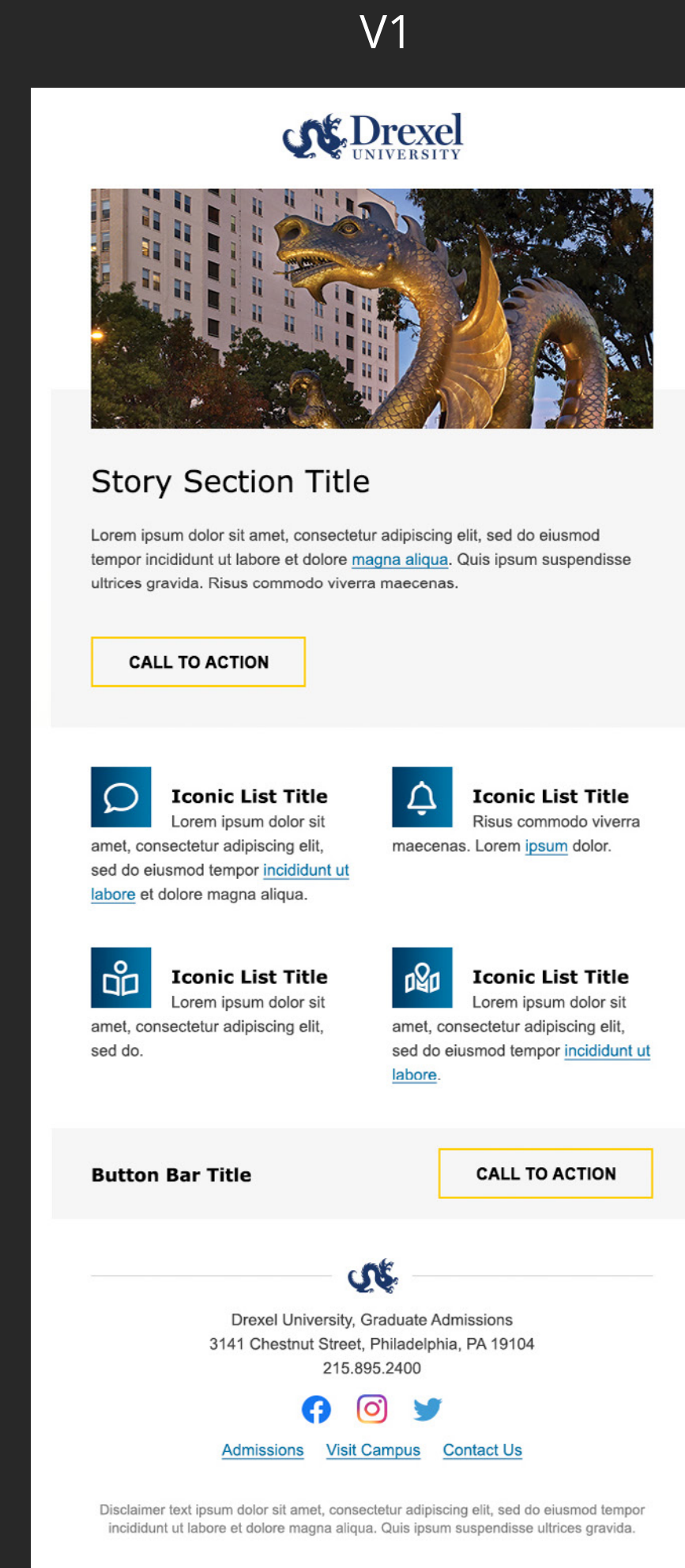
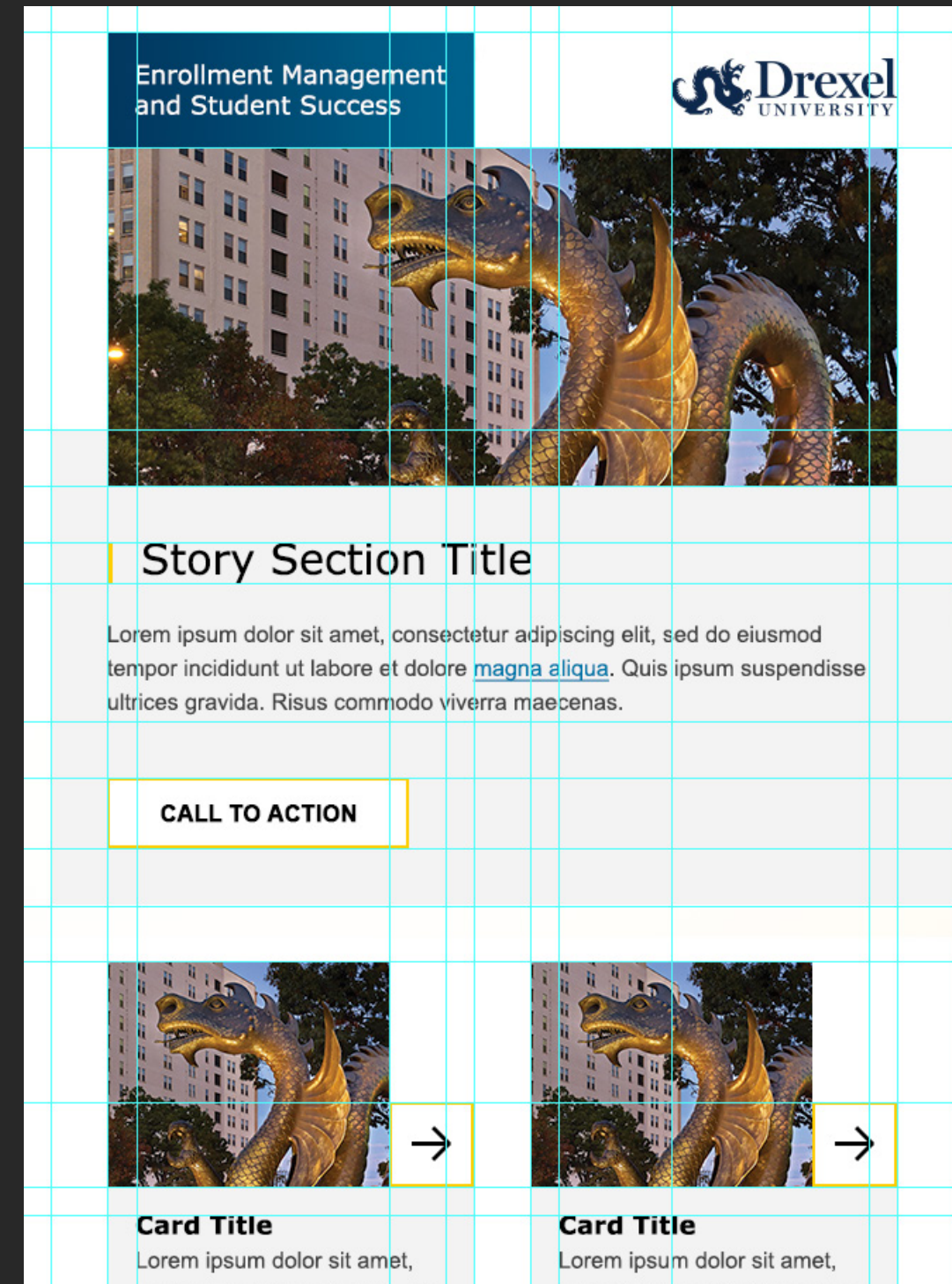
College Search Tips

We asked a few Drexel Dragons to share their experiences about searching for colleges. Watch their video responses.



Design



- Adherence to the revamped Drexel design language was important to ensuring that the new template felt cut from the same cloth as the newly redesigned drexel.edu website.
- Accessibility was put first from the start of the redesign, and all elements were designed to meet or exceed WCAG 2.0 AA standards.
- Special attention was paid to maintaining consistent spacing for both visual coherence and ease of development, and component layouts were optimized for the archaic tables-based structure of email.



Final Product

The finalized design remedied concerns about the old template while delivering the flexible layout identified as a primary goal during the discovery process. Few changes were made between the first draft and the final approved design thanks to in-depth research about content, audience, and format, and the close attention paid to design system and structure.


Enrollment Management and Student Success




Story Section Title

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CALL TO ACTION




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Card Title
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CALL TO ACTION



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Button Bar Title **CALL TO ACTION**



[Drexel University Graduate Admissions](#)
3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
215.895.2400


  


[Privacy Policy](#)

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Final Product

Student Life 



LET'S RUN THE CITY

UNIVERSITY CITY 5K

Benefitting the Nicholas P. Pipino Memorial Scholarship


The 29th Annual University City 5K is on its way!


Join us for the University City 5K virtually from Sunday, November 1 to Sunday, November 8, 2020. Gather your friends, family, and neighbors and run or walk your own route, wherever you can practice social distancing. Participants of all levels are welcome.

Online registration is available now at the [University City 5K page](#) and closes on November 8 at 11:59 a.m. ET. Registration costs \$20.


This special event benefits the Nicholas P. Pipino Memorial Scholarship. The foundation by the same name established this scholarship in memory of Nick, a student at Drexel University. The Nicholas P. Pipino Memorial Scholarship provides financial assistance to students so that they may focus on their education without the demands of part-time employment.


Register today at University City 5K to support a great cause. We hope to see you there! [REGISTER](#)


[Drexel University Student Life](#)
3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
215.895.2400


[Privacy Policy](#)

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Steinbright Career Development Center 




Cooperative Education: The Students' Perspective


On behalf of our students, we are so grateful to you for helping us provide a unique educational experience. Through partnership with organizations like your own, our students have gained invaluable, real-world experience that has set them up for a successful future.


For 100 years, cooperative education has continued to connect the next generation of workers with their future careers, and there is no better way to illustrate its impact than by hearing directly from its participants. Our [Drexel Co-op: This is Experiential Education video](#) highlights the positive effects of the program on our students, and what co-op has done for them. It's clear to see your influence has made a difference in their lives.

[STEINBRIGHT: THE CO-OP EMPLOYER VIEW](#)


 **Attend the Engineering and Technology Career Fair**


The Engineering and Technology Career Fair will be a multi-day event spanning two days and is available to all Drexel students interested in engineering and technology fields. This event is an opportunity to share details about your organization and fill vacant positions with prospective candidates at Drexel, as well as engage with the next generation of talent. Visit our [Engineering and Technology Career Fair page](#) to register and learn more.


[Steinbright Career Development Center — Cooperative Education](#)
3201 Arch Street, Annex Suite 110, Philadelphia, PA 19104
215.895.2185


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Undergraduate Admissions 





Preparing You for a Successful Future

At Drexel, your education will not only prepare you for the real world, but give you opportunities to test drive potential careers. In addition to time in the classroom learning from world-class faculty in their fields, you can make your mark through our cooperative education program in Fortune 500 companies, research institutions, nonprofits, and startups before you even graduate.

 **Need a Guide?**
From searching for openings to preparing for interviews, the Steinbright Career Development Center helps you land the perfect co-op position.

 **Steinbright Pathway**
Find out how the Steinbright Career Development Center provides the tools, resources, and opportunities to help Drexel students accomplish their career goals.


[Drexel University Undergraduate Admissions](#)
3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
215.895.2400


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Chris Elliott

Seasoned UI / UX designer with extensive web development experience

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