Heuristic Evaluation of the Campus Student Portal -- Fall 2007
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Background

      The campus student portal, located at my.uwindsor.ca and accessed with an LDAP user name and password, was developed as more than just a replacement for the current SIS. This system is destined to be much more to students, with hopeful intentions to become the one stop place for all students at the university, undergrad, grad and prospective. It will incorporate many of the actions on SIS but also useful and helpful information for the students. With so much bound to impact this application this is the first in a small number of usability evaluations. This report evaluates the site based on heuristic information and best practices.

Results and Recommendations

1. Login Page – *the initial page before logging into the system.*
   - The cursor should be auto focused on the "User Name" textbox as the page loads.
   - "Contact us" should either be "Email us" or contain a link to more methods of contacting the portal.
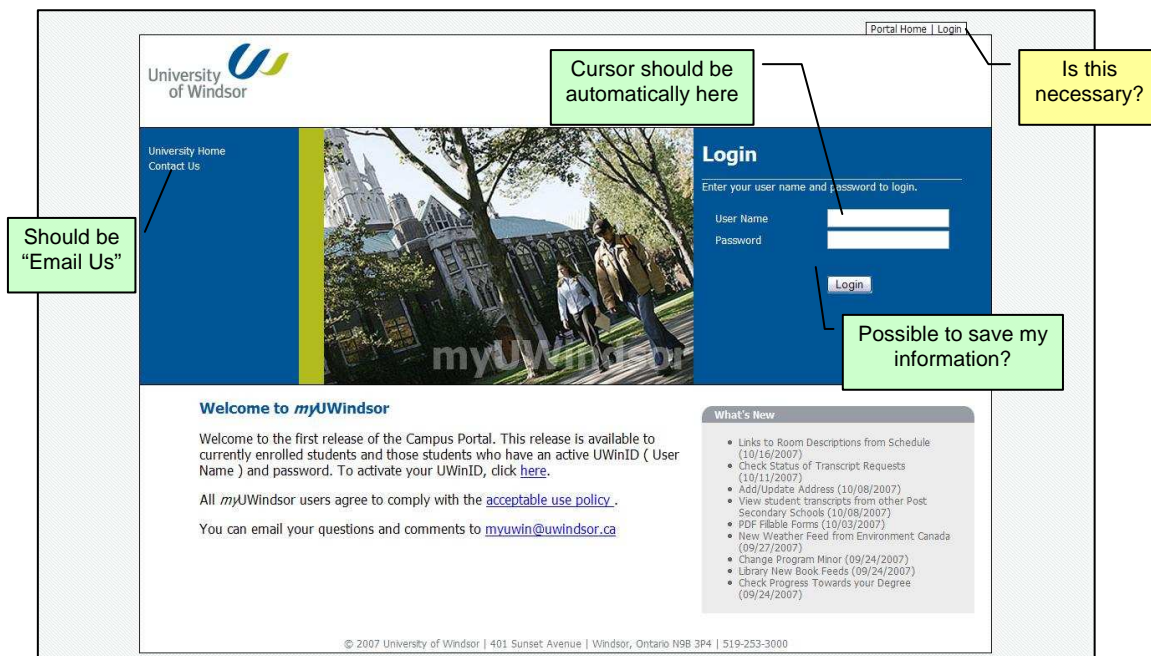   - Additional ability to save my name and/or password on specific computers.

Fig.1: Main Login page, before the myUwindsor banner.

2. myUWindsor – *the initial tab that is open when the user logs in.*
   - "Contact us" should either be "Email us" or contain a link to more methods of contacting the portal.
   - The Tabs currently look like they are floating and they are inconsistent from page to page. Visual treatments, such as color or adding a line will help this.
   - When switching between the news tabs is it very jarring, is there a way to do this without having to reload the whole page?
   - The "New at the Leddy" should indicate that these titles are relevant to my major. It's a very important factor that is often overlooked.
   - SIS Links Menu
     - Rename this menu "My Links", to avoid confusion with the SIS system we should stop using it as a descriptor in the portal.
     - New Set and Order
       Registrar Services
       Apply for Residence
       Class Notes
       OSAP
       Student Governments
     - Remove the SIS Web Hours link as it doesn't seem necessary. Also remove the STEPS Program link because it there are many programs to help students with their success.
     - *Additional ability* to edit these links from a set of standard links.
     - Possibilities to Add to the Menu
       Bookstore
       Food Services
       Health Services
       Campus Parking
       STEPS Program
   - Important Links Menu
     - Consider renaming this menu as "QuickLinks" to closer reflect the QuickLinks on the rest of the university pages and the mental model that the students have already built around them.
     - Suggested New set and order
       Academic Programs
       Campus Map
       Course Calendar
       Important Dates
       Find a Person
       Library
       Lancers Athletics & Recreation
       Student Services
     - Consider adding "Alumni Information" – A new page that should be built. It would serve as a gateway to all the tools that alumni services offers. It could point to an existing page for now, but a more targeted page would be useful.

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myUWindsor | Academics | Financial Matters

The tabs look like they are floating, decreasing their effectiveness

Should say "Email Us"

Go To
CLEW
WebMail
SIS

SIS Links
Registrar Services
Apply for Residence
OSAP
SIS WEB Hours
STEPS Program

Consider changing to "My Links"

Important Links
Academic Programs
Campus Maps
Campus Parking
Class Notes
Course Calendars
Find a Person
Library
Student Government
Student Services

Consider changing to "QuickLinks"

Welcome to *my*UWindsor

The Student Portal is in line with our goal to provide a One-Stop Virtual Service Centre. The first release of the portal includes: access to CLEW (the University's own implementation of the Learning Management System, Sakai), access to the Student Email system, some SIS other links. Click here for a list of services in this release. You can access your UWinID and password. This portal is evolving. On an ongoing from our current SIS system added to this portal.

to comply with the acceptable use policy.

uwin@uwindsor.ca.

Switching between tabs is too jarring

Should communicate that this is in MY field

News | Events | Lancers | Other

New at the Leddy | Personalize
Web data mining : exploring hyperlinks, contents, and usage data by Bing Liu.

Daily News | Personalize
* Community and academic leaders to receive honorary degrees
* Workshops key to AIESEC regional conference
* United Way dress-down day tomorrow
* Register now for workshop on logo usage
* Math and stats subject of colloquium

ITS HOT NEWS | Personalize
* Call Pilot Maintenance Shutdown
* CLEW Issue Resolved
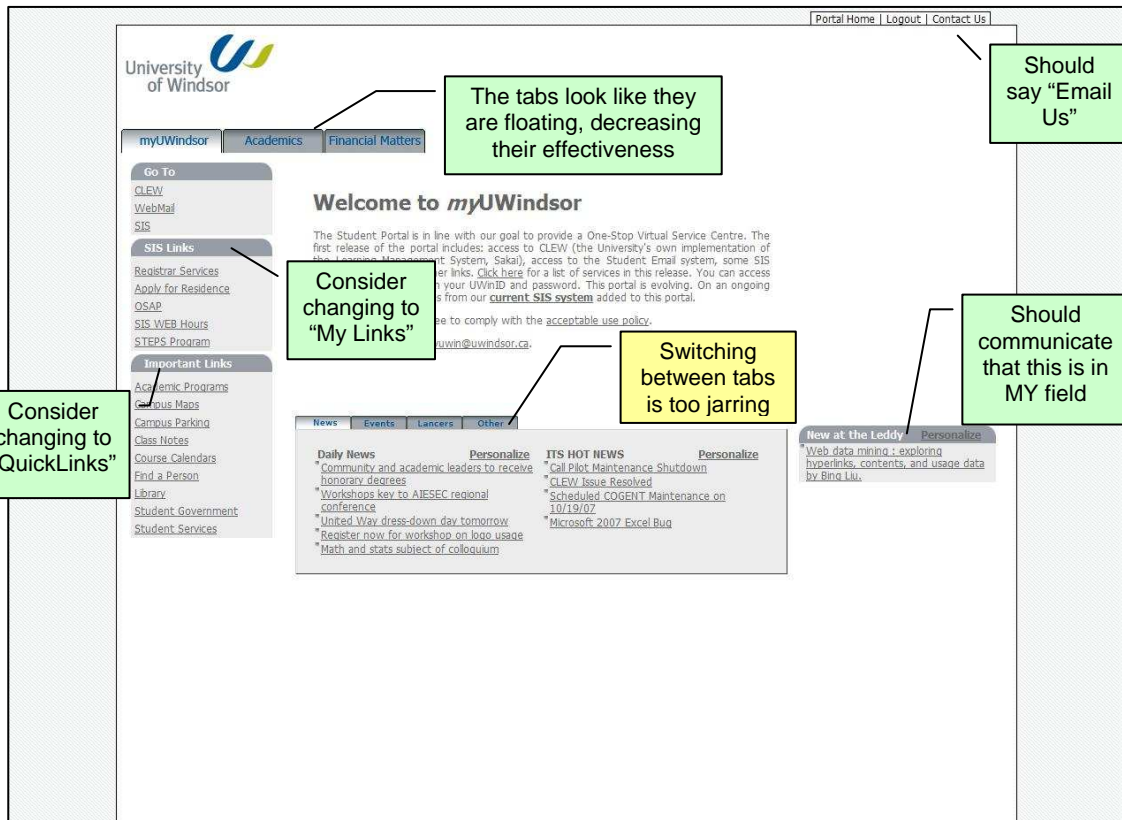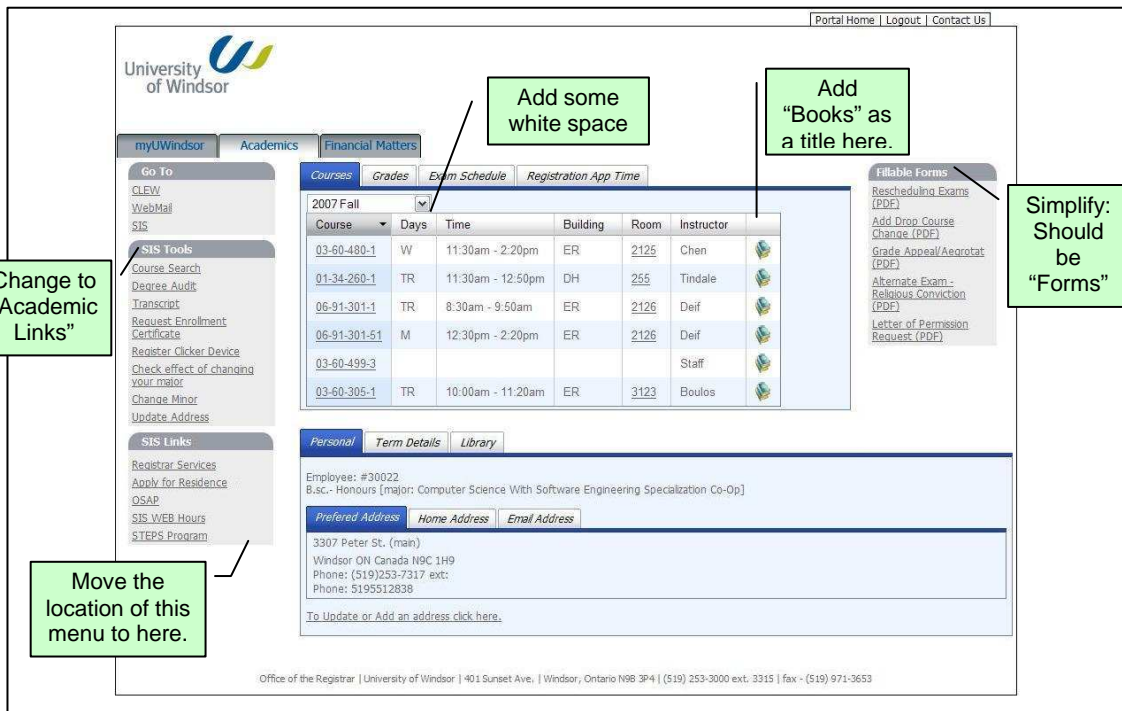* Scheduled COGENT Maintenance on 10/19/07
* Microsoft 2007 Excel Bug

Fig 2, 3: (above) MyUWindsor tab, with the some previously mentioned recommendations.
(below) Academics tab with some recommendations yet to be explained.

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myUWindsor | Academics | Financial Matters

Add some white space

Add "Books" as a title here.

Go To
CLEW
WebMail
SIS

SIS Tools
Course Search
Degree Audit
Transcript
Request Enrollment Certificate
Register Clicker Device
Check effect of changing your major
Change Minor
Update Address

Change to "Academic Links"

SIS Links
Registrar Services
Apply for Residence
OSAP
SIS WEB Hours
STEPS Program

Move the location of this menu to here.

Courses | Grades | Exam Schedule | Registration App Time

2007 Fall

Course	Days	Time	Building	Room	Instructor
03-60-480-1	W	11:30am - 2:20pm	ER	2125	Chen
01-34-260-1	TR	11:30am - 12:50pm	DH	255	Tindale
06-91-301-1	TR	8:30am - 9:50am	ER	2126	Deif
06-91-301-51	M	12:30pm - 2:20pm	ER	2126	Deif
03-60-499-3					Staff
03-60-305-1	TR	10:00am - 11:20am	ER	3123	Boulos

Fillable Forms
Rescheduling Exams (PDF)
Add Drop Course Change (PDF)
Grade Appeal/Aegrotat (PDF)
Alternate Exam - Religious Conviction (PDF)
Letter of Permission Request (PDF)

Simplify: Should be "Forms"

Personal | Term Details | Library

Employee: #30022
B.sc.- Honours [major: Computer Science With Software Engineering Specialization Co-Op]

Prefered Address | Home Address | Email Address

3307 Peter St. (main)
Windsor ON Canada N9C 1H9
Phone: (519)253-7317 ext:
Phone: 5195512838

To Update or Add an address click here.

Office of the Registrar | University of Windsor | 401 Sunset Ave. | Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4 | (519) 253-3000 ext. 3315 | fax - (519) 971-3653

3. Academic
   - The placement of the menus is slightly confusing and not intuitive. Move "SIS Links" under the "SIS Tools"
   - "Books" should be added to the last column on the table in the courses tab.
   - Consider *additional ability* to search for textbooks in all my registered courses.
   - Add an extra line (<br>) between the drop down menus and the table below. Doing this allows a little more space to notice the drop down menu and may make the tool more intuitive.
   - Simplify – "Fillable Forms" should be "Forms" possibly "Downloadable Forms"
   - SIS Tools Menu
     - Rename this menu to "Academic Tools" since we are under the academic tab and moving away from the SIS frame of mind.
     - "Request Enrollment Certificate" can be shortened to "Request Enrollment Cert." to hopefully keep it on one line
     - "Check the effect of changing your major" should be changed to "Check the effect of changing my major" to keep thing personal on this page. Also if it has to go onto a second line is it possible to indent the second line to make the distinction clear to the users.
     - When the users are within an academic tool, it may be useful to have an "Academic Home" link listed in the Tools menu. To ensure that the users have a clear path back to the main page.
   - Within the Academic Tools
     - Create a section title for the Course Search pages.
     - In Degree Audit, under related links, "DARS Explained" should be "Degree Audit help" for consistency.
     - Create a section title for the Transcript pages.
     - Within update address, the "start date" "end date" fields shouldn't be there if I can't edit them in some way.
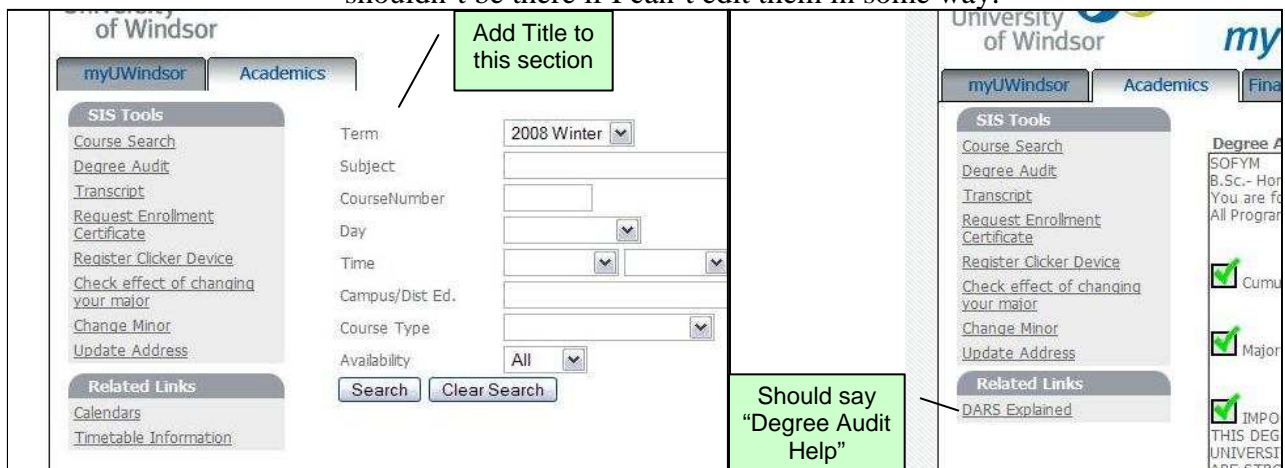

Fig 4, 5: (left) The course search tool, within the academic tools should have a section title.
(right) Within the Degree Audit tool, DARS Explained is unclear.

4. Financial Matters
   - Simplify – "Financial Matters" should be "Financial" or "Finances". The title is too long to properly fit in the tab without resizing the tab. As a two word title it doesn't have the same dramatic response to the user.
   - "Finance Links" should be "Financial Links" for consistency
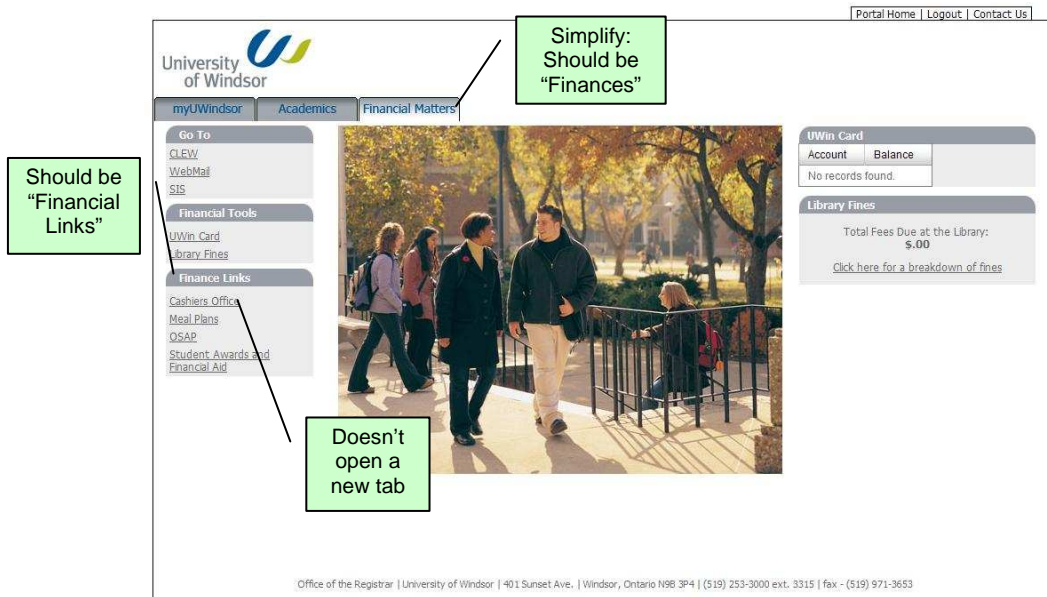   - "Cashiers Office" link doesn't go to a new window or tab.

Fig 6: The Financial Matters tab and recommendations

Topics to Research More in the Usability Study
1. Login Page
   - Does the top tabs, Portal Home and Login, confuse or frustrate anyone?
2. myUWindsor
   - When I click on two different links to pages outside the portal it will only launch one window or tab. Is this something that people notice? Has this been a problem?
   - Is the banner distracting on the inner pages of the portal? Is it necessary?
3. Academic Tools
   - Do the options in the Transcript pages stand out enough to students? Do they know what they are for?
   - What tools are missing?
4. Finances
   - What is the expectation here? What should be in place of the picture?
5. Overall
   - What do the students want to see? (Feature requests)
   - What can be done to make the students find the page useful and necessary?
   - Is any of the vocabulary confusing to the students?