CLICKING INTO QUALITY: A CONSTRUCTIVE EVALUATION OF THE SAN PABLO COLLEGES WEBSITE AS A DIGITAL GATEWAY FOR IDENTITY, INNOVATION AND NEXUSTAINABILITY

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Institutional websites have evolved from static information repositories into strategic platforms through which higher education institutions communicate identity, academic quality, student opportunities, research productivity, social engagement, and institutional credibility. This paper presents a constructive evaluative review of the official website of San Pablo Colleges (SPC), examining its effectiveness as the institution's principal digital gateway. The review employed a qualitative website audit and heuristic evaluation focusing on six dimensions: institutional identity and branding, information architecture and navigation, academic and admissions information, research and sustainability visibility, content quality and governance, and accessibility and stakeholder engagement. The evaluation shows that the SPC website possesses important strengths, including visible academic offerings, accessible admissions information, student-oriented resources, scholarship information, contact mechanisms, and a distinctive NEXUStainability section articulating the institution's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. However, the analysis also identifies opportunities for improvement, particularly in content consistency and proofreading, research and extension visibility, program-level information accuracy, user-centered navigation, evidence-based presentation of institutional accomplishments, accessibility, and stronger calls to action for prospective students. The paper proposes a shift from an information-centered website toward an integrated SPC Digital Institutional Ecosystem organized around the stakeholder journey of discovering SPC, choosing a program, applying, experiencing student life, engaging in research and community initiatives, and maintaining lifelong affiliation with the institution. Such transformation can position the website not merely as an online presence but as a strategic instrument for recruitment, quality assurance, sustainability communication, institutional reputation, and stakeholder engagement.

Keywords: higher education website, digital institutional identity, user experience, quality assurance, NEXUStainability, San Pablo Colleges

Introduction

A higher education website is no longer simply a homepage. It is often the first place where prospective students test an institution's promises, current students locate services, researchers seek evidence of scholarly activity, alumni reconnect, and accreditors or partners examine institutional credibility. Every program description, research record, licensure result, sustainability initiative, and application link therefore becomes part of the institution's public quality narrative, and a website may attract attention through design but earns trust through accurate information, visible evidence, coherent identity, and an experience that helps stakeholders make informed decisions. Research on university website usability shows that prospective students arrive with practical questions about programs, admission, cost, student experience, outcomes, and institutional fit, so effective sites require intuitive navigation, transparent requirements, meaningful differentiation, and clear pathways from exploration to action (Sherwin, 2016).

These considerations are particularly relevant to San Pablo Colleges (SPC). A recent institutional study found that freshmen and transferees were influenced most strongly by career prospects and employability, academic programs and quality, and institutional reputation, while location, facilities, marketing, and enrollment experience also contributed to confirmed enrollment and intention to remain (Lunar, Barradas, Eala, Lunar, & Gonzales, 2026). The official website is one of the few institutional platforms capable of bringing all these decision factors together in a single, verifiable experience. As SPC approaches eight decades of educational service, its website presents admissions, academics, student resources, Canvas LMS, library services, research, extension, alumni, sports, and NEXUStainability, and its homepage communicates excellence, innovation, spirituality, stewardship, community engagement, and partnership. These elements provide a substantial foundation for digital institutional identity, but the strength of that identity depends on whether the website connects institutional claims with evidence. SPC studies have already documented innovation in educational delivery and academic practice (Lunar & Eala, 2023), the use of a hybrid learning platform to sustain and evaluate learning continuity (Ortega, Velecina, & Lunar, 2021), and the importance of coherent quality-assurance processes for institutional sustainability (Lunar, Perez, & Eala, 2024). The website should make this institutional record visible and intelligible.

Of particular significance is the website's NEXUStainability section. The framework connects Virtus, Patria, and Scientia with the SPCian Intended Graduate Attributes (SIGA), the QUESTS research agenda, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Lunar, 2025a, 2025b). It therefore offers more than a sustainability label: it provides an institutional architecture for explaining how values guide graduate formation, how research priorities address social needs, and how SPC contributes to global goals. Local evidence further indicates that SPC's sustainability initiatives are strongly associated with perceived institutional effectiveness, particularly in governance and social sustainability (Lunar, Eala, & Perez, 2025a). NEXUStainability can thus become the website's most distinctive organizing narrative if its conceptual promise is consistently supported by programs, indicators, outcomes, and impact stories.

The value of an institutional website, however, depends not on the volume of content alone but on its accuracy, currency, findability, accessibility, and strategic organization. These are quality-assurance concerns because prospective students, regulators, accreditors, partners, and the public may treat official webpages as authoritative institutional evidence. Lunar et al. (2024) emphasized that quality assurance becomes sustainable when practices, processes, and stakeholder perspectives operate coherently; applied digitally, this means that published content must be correct, owned, periodically reviewed, and connected with the institutional systems it represents. The literature consulted for this study thus addresses website usability, student choice, and institutional innovation, quality, and sustainability at SPC; it does not evaluate how the institution's official website presents and connects these elements. Addressing this gap requires an evaluative approach that moves beyond identifying page-level weaknesses toward an integrated account of the website's role as a digital gateway.

The study is delimited to the publicly observable content and experience of the official SPC website and does not draw on website analytics or user-testing data. Specifically, it sought to determine whether the website enables stakeholders to (a) discover SPC; (b) evaluate its programs; (c) act on admissions information; (d) access services; (e) recognize its accomplishments; and (f) understand NEXUStainability as a lived institutional framework. Because the study was a qualitative evaluation, no hypotheses were tested. The purpose of the study was to critically but constructively evaluate the official SPC website as a digital

gateway for identity, student choice, quality assurance, research visibility, innovation, and sustainable development, and to propose an integrated digital ecosystem that connects institutional values with evidence and transforms online presence into stakeholder engagement.

Method

Using a qualitative evaluative case-study approach, this study conducted a heuristic review and content analysis of the publicly accessible sections of the official San Pablo Colleges website (2026), including its homepage, admissions, academic programs, Graduate School, research, outreach, sustainability, and student resources. Guided by higher-education usability principles and the four core principles of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2—perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust—the review examined the site across six dimensions: institutional identity, information architecture, academic and stakeholder information, research and sustainability visibility, content governance, and usability and accessibility. Because the evaluation relied solely on publicly observable content without statistical treatment, user testing, or access to back-end analytics and server architecture, its findings represent an interpretive assessment of the user experience and identify areas for future systematic testing rather than serving as a formal audit of technical or WCAG compliance.

Results and Discussion

The review found that the SPC website already possessed the architecture and many of the elements expected of a contemporary higher education platform, and that its principal challenge was integration and not absence. The strengths included visible academic offerings, accessible admissions information, student-oriented resources, scholarship information, contact mechanisms, and a distinctive NEXUStainability section articulating the institution's commitment to the SDGs. The opportunities for improvement concerned content consistency and proofreading, research and extension visibility, program-level information accuracy, user-centered navigation, evidence-based presentation of institutional accomplishments, accessibility, and stronger calls to action for

prospective students. These findings are discussed below by analytical dimension, followed by the proposed framework.

Institutional Identity, Architecture, and NEXUStainability

The San Pablo Colleges (SPC) website establishes a solid foundational architecture that serves diverse stakeholders—from prospective and current students to alumni and researchers—by clearly organizing its comprehensive academic offerings alongside dedicated spaces for library access, research, outreach, and its standout NEXUStainability initiative. Rather than rebuilding from scratch, SPC's primary challenge is to integrate these isolated sections into a cohesive, evidence-driven digital ecosystem that substantiates its institutional values and presidential message with tangible proof. Specifically, the site should evolve from conceptual framing to operationalized reporting by transforming the NEXUStainability page into an interactive dashboard tracking measurable outcomes across SDGs and institutional themes, while adding a verified "SPC by the Numbers" section to the homepage to highlight key indicators—such as board performance, accreditations, and career outcomes—that directly influence student enrollment and retention.

Admissions, Academic Programs, and Scholarships

While the San Pablo Colleges website successfully serves as an active recruitment channel with comprehensive admissions details, announcements for Academic Year 2026–2027, and extensive scholarship and program descriptions, it remains largely information-heavy rather than user-journey-oriented. To better guide prospective students from initial interest to enrollment, the admissions experience should be redesigned into a clear, step-by-step pathway featuring persistent, level-specific "Apply Now" buttons and decision-making factors like costs and career outcomes. Additionally, while pages like the College of Nursing and Graduate School offer strong content, implementing a standardized template across all academic programs—covering curriculum, facilities, licensure outcomes, and FAQs—would ensure consistency while preserving disciplinary identity. Finally, to reduce the cognitive load of the text-dense Scholarship page, the institution should convert it into an interactive or tabular

Scholarship Finder that lets applicants filter opportunities by eligibility and circumstances, turning passive information into an actionable decision-support tool.

Research, Extension, and Sustainability Visibility

Despite prominent placement in the main navigation, the San Pablo Colleges Website's Research and Extension/Outreach sections suffer from a visibility gap, offering limited substantive evidence compared to other areas of the site. To bridge the disconnect between actual institutional output and its public presentation, the Research section should be transformed into a searchable Research, Innovation and Creative Works Portal featuring faculty identifiers (such as ORCID and Scopus), institutional journals, policies, and publications indexed by discipline, QUESTS theme, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Similarly, the Extension/Outreach section should move beyond general statements to demonstrate measurable social impact by answering what problems were addressed, who benefited, what actions were taken, and what changed—ideally through an interactive SPC Impact Map that categorizes community partnerships and project outcomes by department, location, beneficiaries, and SDG alignment to support accreditation and stakeholder accountability.

Content Accuracy and Governance

The San Pablo Colleges website exhibits significant content-governance issues, including misaligned academic details on the Graduate School page—where business objectives and MBA courses appear under Education and Nursing sections—and awkward phrasing or grammatical errors on the homepage. Rather than being minor editorial flaws, these inaccuracies undermine institutional quality assurance and stakeholder trust. To address this systematically, SPC should move beyond one-off proofreading and implement a formal Web Content Governance Protocol integrated into its regular semester or annual quality assurance cycles. Under this framework, every webpage would track publication and review dates alongside assigned owners and approvers, requiring academic heads to certify program details,

specialized offices (such as Admissions, REPO, and administrative units) to verify their respective domains, and a dedicated communications team to enforce editorial and branding standards.

Accessibility, Usability, and Search Visibility

To align its digital presence with its broader commitments to inclusive education and sustainability, San Pablo Colleges (SPC) should prioritize both web accessibility and search-engine optimization (SEO). Specifically, SPC should adopt Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 Level AA—built on perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust design—as a core development standard supported by periodic automated and manual testing to ensure equitable access for all users. Alongside accessibility, the institution must strengthen its search visibility and technical professionalism by replacing unpolished, developer-style URLs (such as those containing "researchmaint" or "copy") with clean, stakeholder-oriented pathways (like /research/ or /programs/bs-nursing/), while equipping every page with unique descriptive titles, metadata, logical heading hierarchies, image alt text, and structured data.

Proposed Framework: The SPC Digital Institutional Ecosystem

Grounded in local institutional scholarship on innovation, quality assurance, and sustainability, the proposed SPC Digital Institutional Ecosystem transforms the San Pablo Colleges website from a collection of isolated departmental pages into an integrated platform organized around seven stakeholder journeys: Discover, Choose, Join, Experience, Create, Impact, and Belong. Rather than functioning as a standalone page, NEXUStainability acts as a transversal thread uniting these stages—connecting institutional identity, student formation, research innovation, SDG-aligned outreach, and lifelong alumni engagement. Ultimately, while the current site provides a solid informational foundation, its uneven content governance, limited public evidence of accomplishments, and lack of journey-oriented design restrict stakeholders from fully acting on admissions details or experiencing sustainability as a lived institutional practice—conclusions framed within the study's interpretive, publicly observable scope rather than a formal technical audit or analytics-based evaluation.

Conclusion

The official SPC website already contained many elements expected of a contemporary higher education platform: it communicated academic breadth, provided admissions and scholarship information, linked student resources, presented institutional identity, and, most distinctively, articulated NEXUStainability as SPC's response to sustainable development. Its principal challenge was integration and not absence, because the site must connect information with evidence, claims with outcomes, and institutional philosophy with the experiences and decisions of its stakeholders. Its institutional value can be strengthened through accuracy, ownership, consistency, accessibility, and interconnection, and the local SPC studies cited here already provide an evidence base on educational innovation, hybrid learning, quality assurance, student choice, research engagement, and sustainability (Lunar & Eala, 2023; Ortega et al., 2021; Lunar et al., 2024, 2025a, 2025b, 2026) that the website can translate into clearer program information, stronger admissions pathways, visible research accomplishments, measurable sustainability outcomes, and evidence-informed stakeholder engagement. As SPC approaches its eighth decade, its website has the potential to become a living digital expression of the institution—its history, people, scholarship, innovation, quality culture, community impact, and sustainable future—so improving it is not simply a technological or marketing project but an exercise in institutional quality assurance, knowledge management, stakeholder engagement, reputation building, and sustainable educational transformation. These conclusions rest on a qualitative review of publicly observable content and are not a measure of user behavior or technical compliance.

Recommendation

San Pablo Colleges is encouraged to treat its website as an integrated digital institutional ecosystem organized around the stakeholder journeys of discovering SPC, choosing a program, applying, experiencing student life, engaging in research and community initiatives, and maintaining lifelong affiliation. To strengthen content quality, the institution should adopt a Web Content Governance Protocol with named content owners, reviewers, approving authorities, and review dates; require Dean or Program Chair certification of every program page against a standard template; and conduct an annual or semester-based website audit as part of its quality

assurance cycle. To support student choice, it should develop a journey-oriented admissions pathway with a visible APPLY NOW option and separate entry points by level, a Scholarship Finder, and a verified "SPC by the Numbers" section. To increase the visibility of scholarship and community work, it should build a Research, Innovation and Creative Works Portal with searchable publications and faculty profiles, an extension impact presentation such as an SPC Impact Map, and an evidence-based NEXUStainability dashboard organized by Precept, SIGA attribute, QUESTS theme, and SDG. To strengthen accessibility and discoverability, it should adopt WCAG 2.2 Level AA as a development target, conduct periodic accessibility testing, and use clean URL conventions with descriptive page titles, metadata, and logical heading structures.

Future research should complement this interpretive review with evidence the present study could not access, including website analytics, search-console data, heat maps, bounce and conversion data, and user testing with prospective students, current students, alumni, and other stakeholders. Systematic automated and manual accessibility testing is needed to determine whether individual pages conform to WCAG 2.2, and evaluations conducted after any redesign should assess whether the proposed ecosystem improves stakeholder engagement, recruitment, and the visibility of research, extension, and sustainability outcomes.

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