



NEW MEXICO
SIMON SCHOLARS

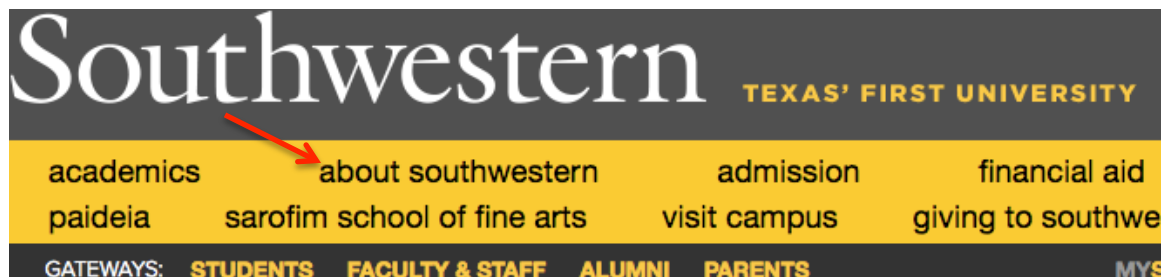
Tips for Exploring a College Website

Perhaps the quickest and easiest way to begin your college research is by visiting the websites of schools that interest you. Unfortunately, navigating a college website can be daunting. Although you're likely to find most of the key information about a school by exploring their website, no two websites are alike. Some college websites are so complicated to navigate that the only way to efficiently find the information you are looking for is by using the "search" feature. Furthermore, while college websites are theoretically designed to be attractive and "sell" the school to you with beautiful pictures and easy-to-read blurbs, in reality there is often a lot of text to sift through, some of it not all that helpful and occasionally downright boring. To help you more efficiently get a feel for a college/university through their website, here are some suggestions. If you have your own method for exploring a college website that is working for you, by all means keep doing what you're doing!

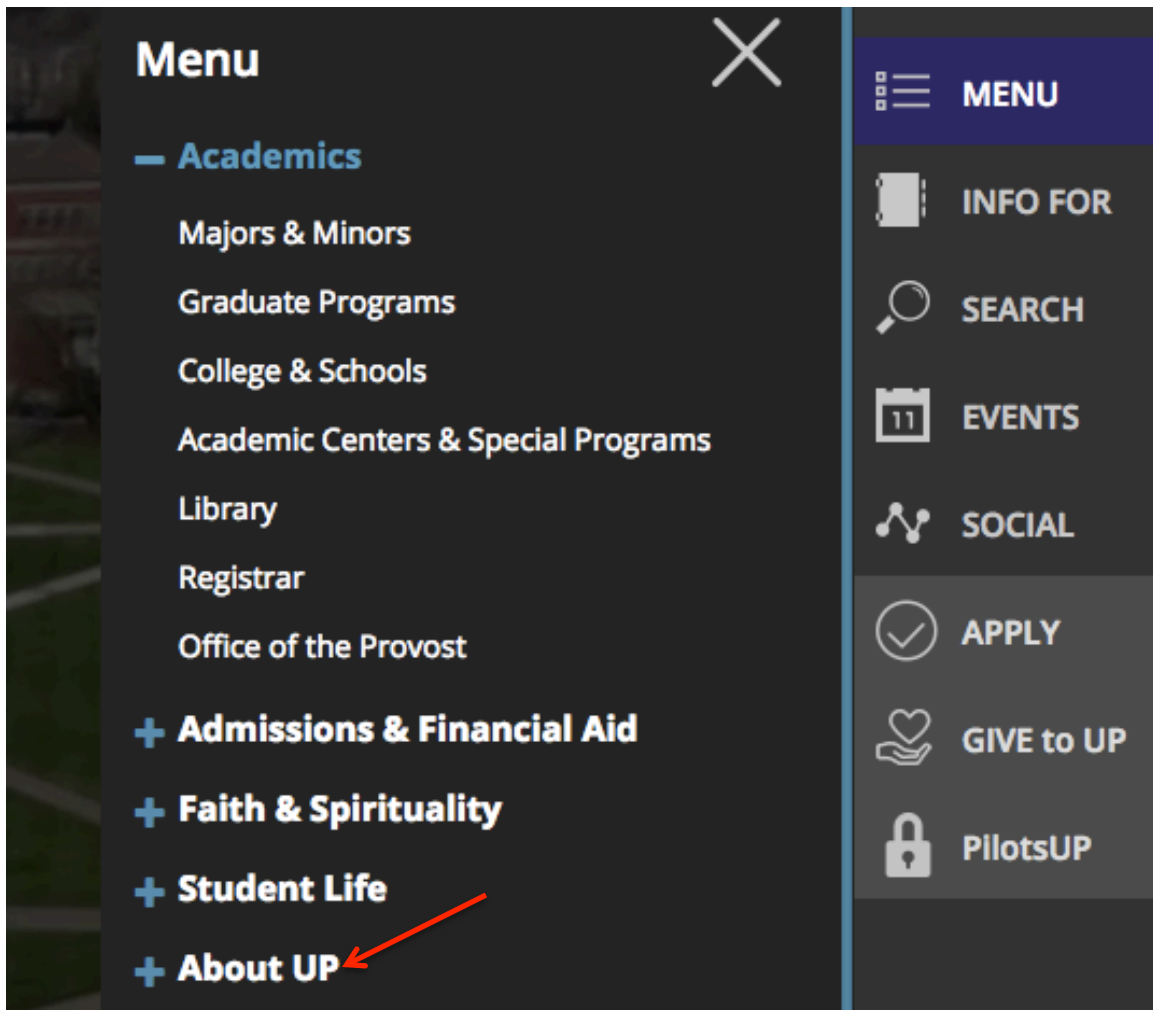
1) Take a look at the "About" section

Although this is often one of the most text-heavy sections of a college website, it can be helpful to explore to get a general feel for the school. Here, you may find statistics about the school (numbers of faculty and students, demographics, majors, minors, etc.), its history, as well as its mission and a statement of core values. Although these may not be the most interesting aspects of a school, they can provide an important "snapshot."

On some college websites (like Southwestern University's, below), finding the "About" section is quite easy:



On others (like University of Portland's), you have to click around a bit. Here, you would have to click "Menu" to access the dropdown list where you find UP's "About" section:



2) Take a virtual tour of campus

Ideally you will want to visit colleges of outstanding interest to you in person (thru “fly-out” programs or special “admit days” for admitted students). As a start, though, you can often get a good feel for the campus by taking an online “virtual tour.” Some college’s virtual tours are much more in-depth than others but in general, you can get a feel for the size of campus, what its buildings look like (inside and out), what important student resources are available, and where they are located.

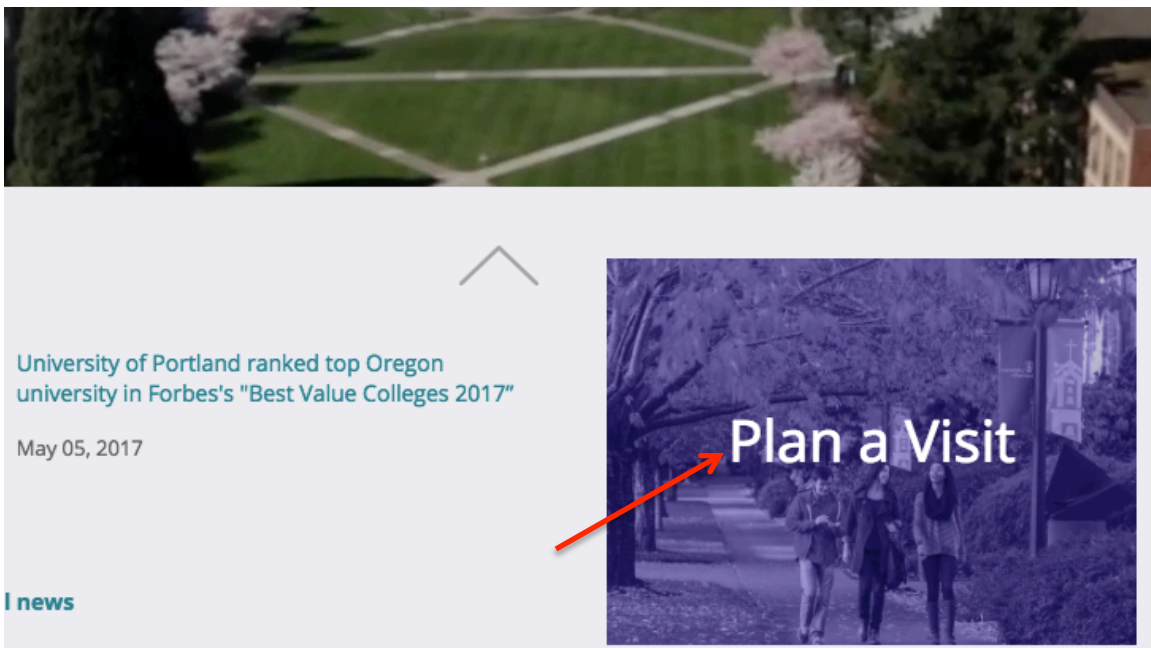
On the Southwestern website, you can access their virtual tour by first clicking “Visit Campus” on the main menu bar. From there, the virtual tour is clearly indicated:

VISIT CAMPUS



- Tours, Overnights, Class Visits
- Getting Here
- Where to Stay
- Where to Eat
- Campus Map
- Virtual Tour

On the UP website, first click on “Plan a Visit,” which is on the main homepage:



3) Check out social media

Nearly all colleges/universities now use multiple social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter. Taking a look at a school’s Facebook page or Twitter feed can be a great way to quickly get a feel for the “spirit” of a school, its events, and opportunities. You can almost always access social media pages by **scrolling to the bottom of the school’s main homepage**.

4) Browse a recent course catalog

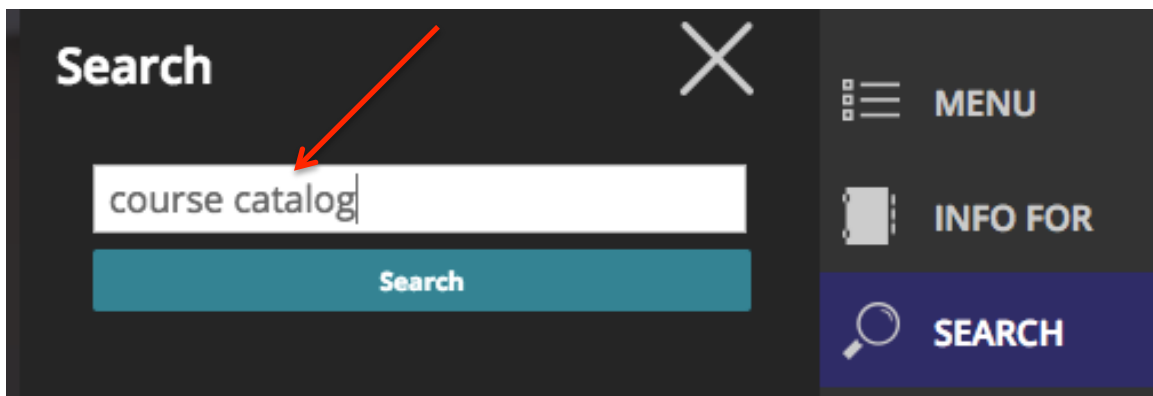
You can learn about a school’s different majors and minors, read short descriptions of frequently offered courses, and understand a school’s graduation requirements by looking thru a current (or recent) course catalog. These are often a little more “hidden”

on a website, so the easiest way to quickly find a catalog is by using the “search” feature.

On Southwestern’s homepage:



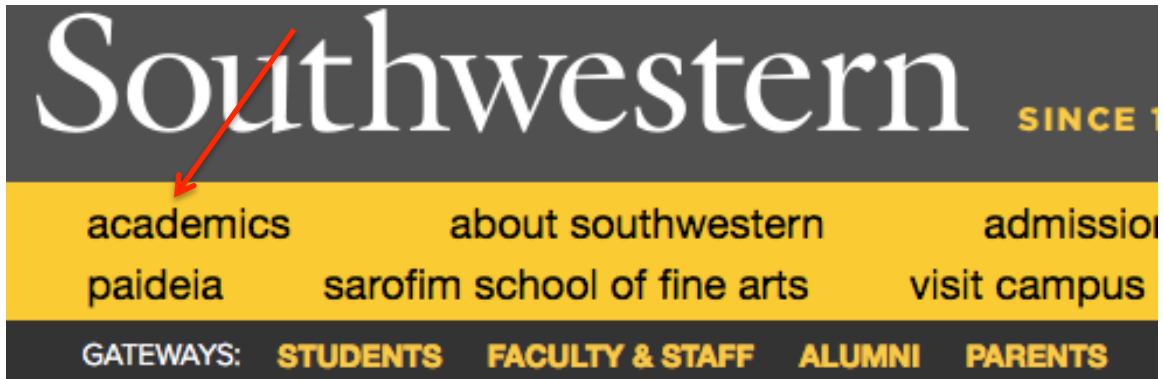
And for UP:



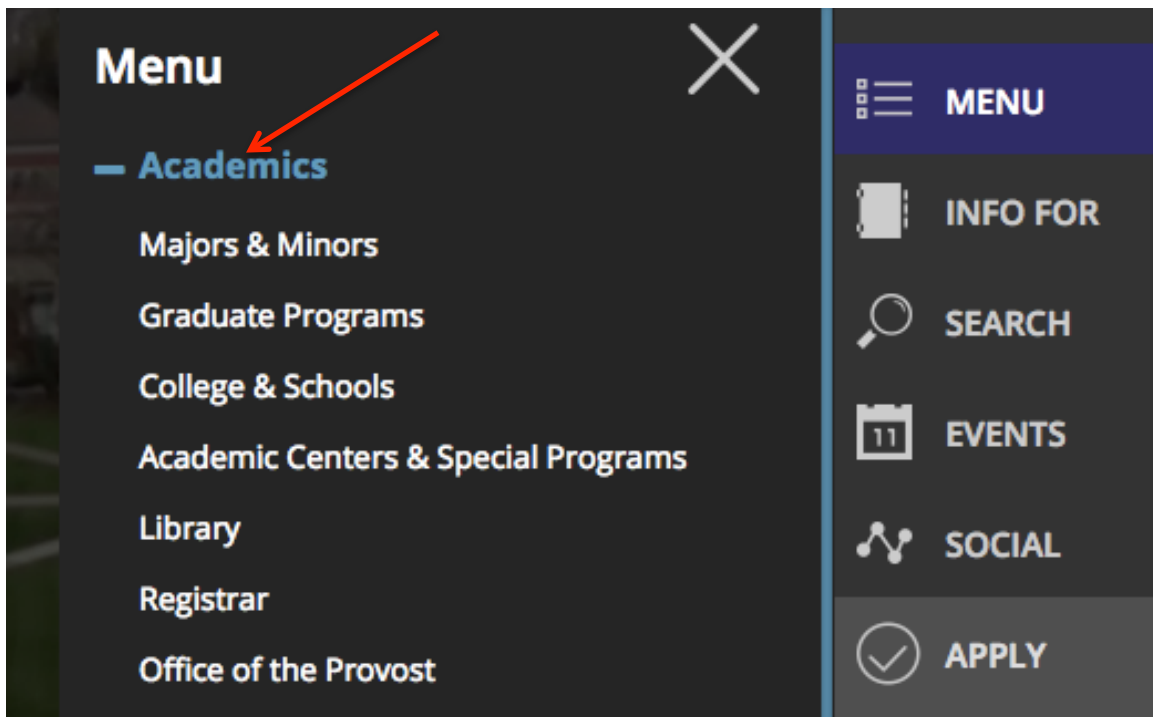
5) Visit an academic department

By visiting the homepage of a specific department or two, you can learn all about majors and minors that might be of interest to you, check out faculty profiles to see what professors’ backgrounds and interests are, and read about departmental resources. You can usually access specific academic departments by clicking on “Academics” on a school’s homepage.

For Southwestern:



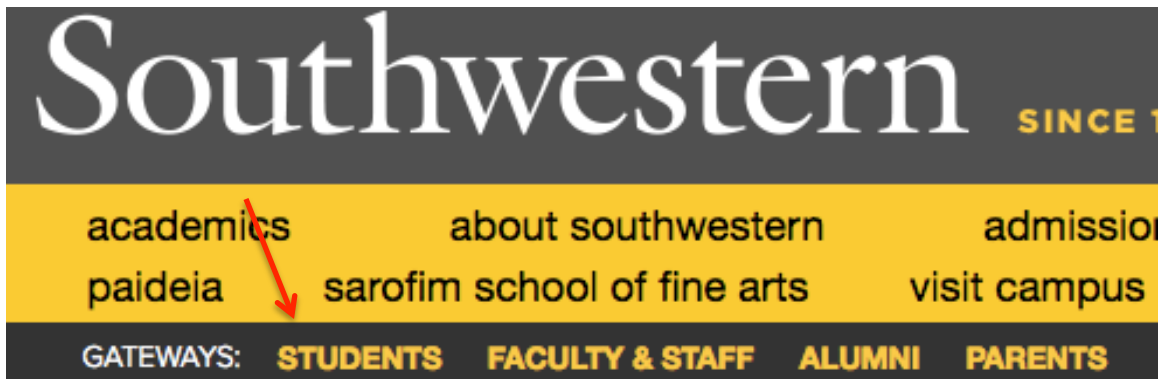
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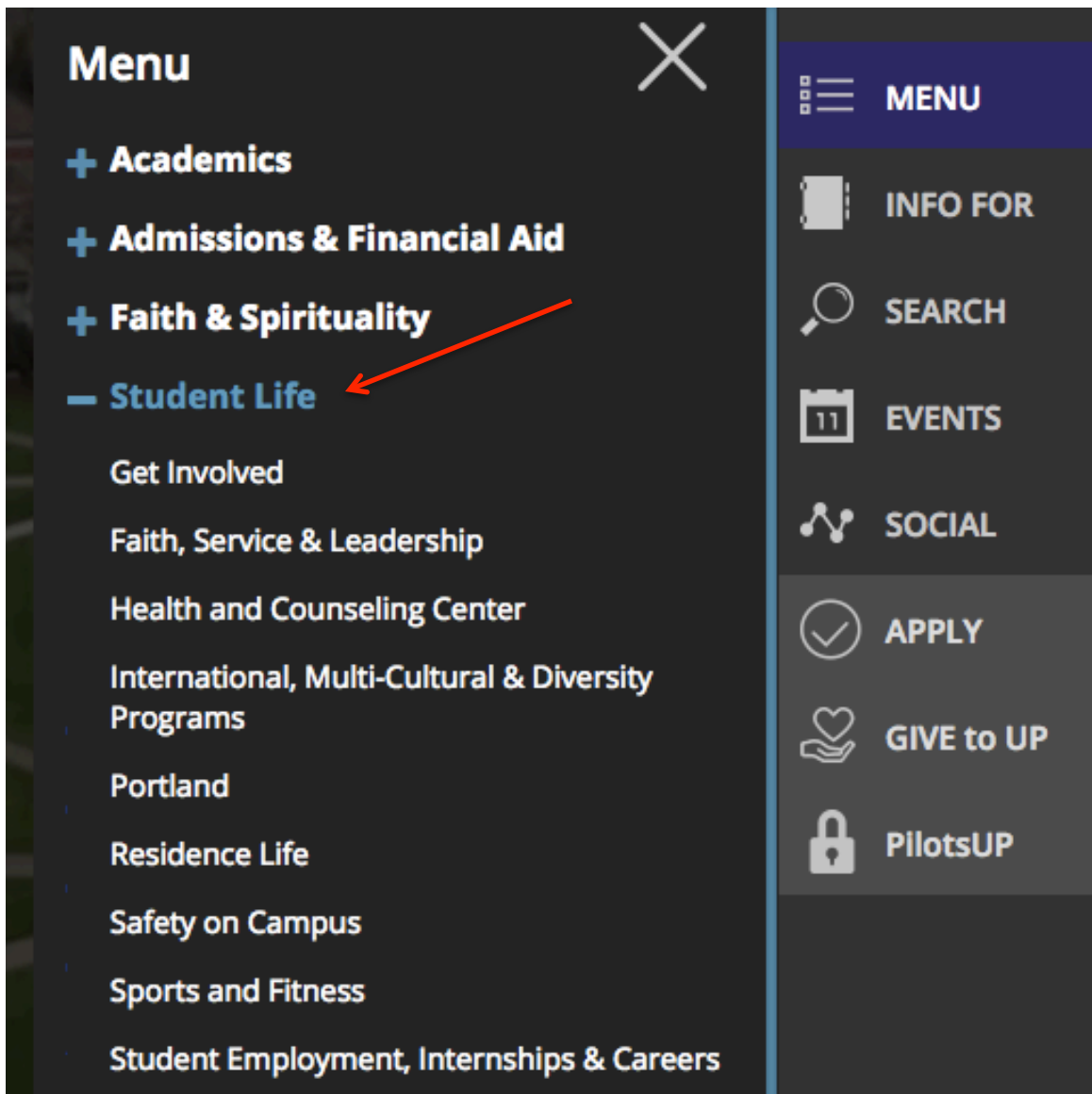
6) Investigate student support services

Take a look at the ways a school helps its students succeed. Common support services include academic support like tutoring and writing assistance, as well as financial support, counseling, and career guidance.

On the Southwestern site, support services can be accessed via the student "gateway:"



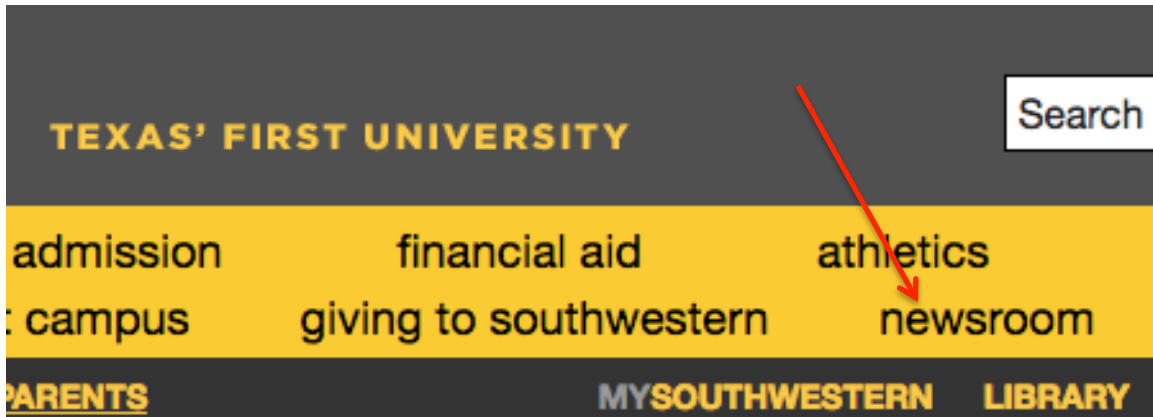
On the UP site, they can be accessed via "Student Life" under the main menu:



7) Read up on the latest news

All college websites have a dedicated page for “news,” where you can find information about the latest developments on campus, read about student and faculty achievements, find articles published by students and alums, etc. You will also often find links here to the school newspaper or newsletter. Exploring this material is another great way to get a feel for the character of a school.

Southwestern’s “newsroom” is again easily accessible from its homepage:



For UP, again, you will find “news” by clicking on the menu dropdown:

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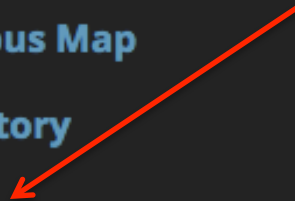
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