Project Milestone: Compilation of UNC Charlotte Admission & Financial Aid Website Critiques
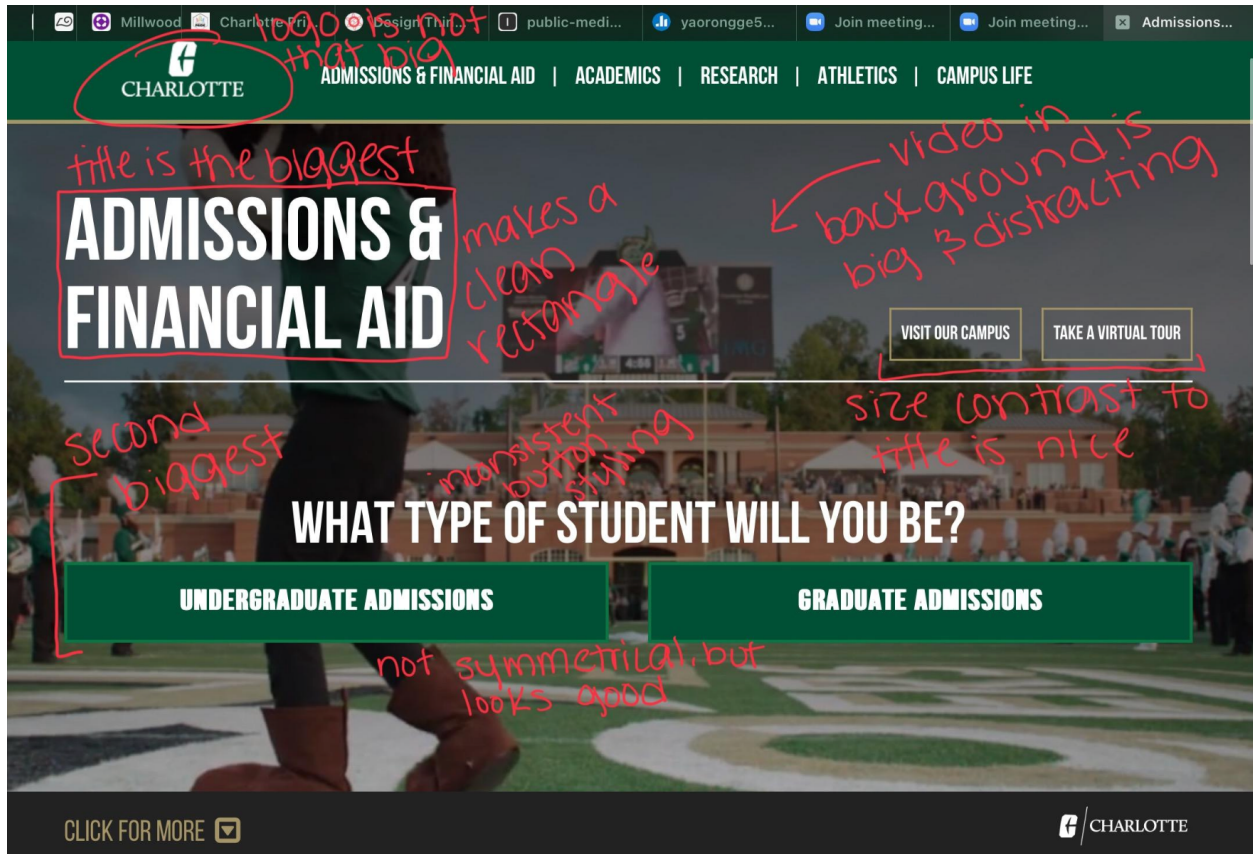
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Summarization of Critiques

Layout and Design

 The homepage has well balanced layout and draws attention of users to sections like Undergraduate and Graduate admissions. The use of white space between elements like the ones between the "Admissions & Financial Aid" title and the buttons, helps improve readability. The typography for prominent text, like titles, works well with proper contrast, ensuring important information stands out.

The large video background on the homepage can be overwhelming for users, especially because of its scale. It draws attention away from the important content, making it harder to focus on the buttons or sections that users need to interact with. In addition, the design appears to favor smaller screens, leaving excessive white space on larger displays, which reduces visual appeal. Some elements like card titles are oversized relative to the available space, creating a crowded or unbalanced look.

The screenshot shows the UNC Charlotte Admissions & Financial Aid webpage with handwritten red annotations:
- "logo is not that big" (pointing to the CHARLOTTE logo, circled)
- "title is the biggest" (pointing to "ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID" title, boxed)
- "makes a clean rectangle"
- "video in background is big & distracting" (arrow pointing to background)
- "size contrast to title is nice"
- "second biggest"
- "inconsistent button styling"
- "not symmetrical but looks good"

Consistency

The use of a consistent font and color scheme (green and gold) across the website enhances visual unity and readability. Consistent typography, whether for titles, buttons, or body text, ensures that the site feels professional.

Despite the overall consistency, some parts of the website exhibit inconsistency. For example, in the undergraduate section, the "Apply Now" button is prominently displayed, but in the graduate section, users need to scroll to find it. This inconsistency disrupts the user experience, as it creates confusion and requires more effort from users to perform similar tasks. Additionally, the inconsistent styling of buttons in terms of color and transparency across the site makes it unclear which elements are clickable.
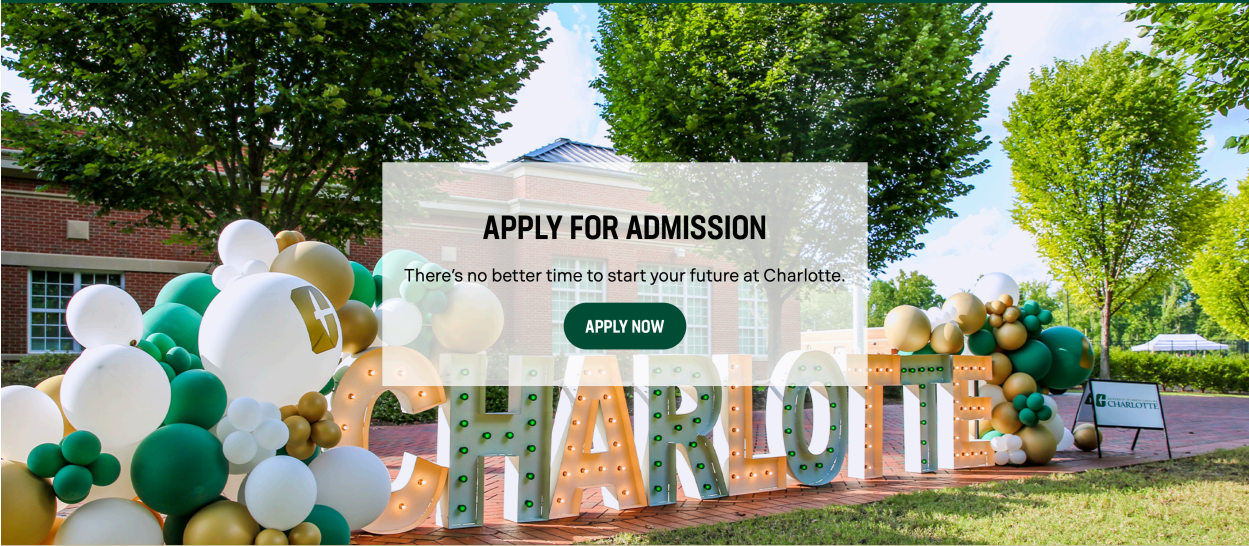
UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS

HOME | EXPLORE | VISIT | APPLY | AFFORD | ENROLL | CONNECT

APPLY FOR ADMISSION

There's no better time to start your future at Charlotte.

APPLY NOW

VISIT GRADUATE ADMISSIONS
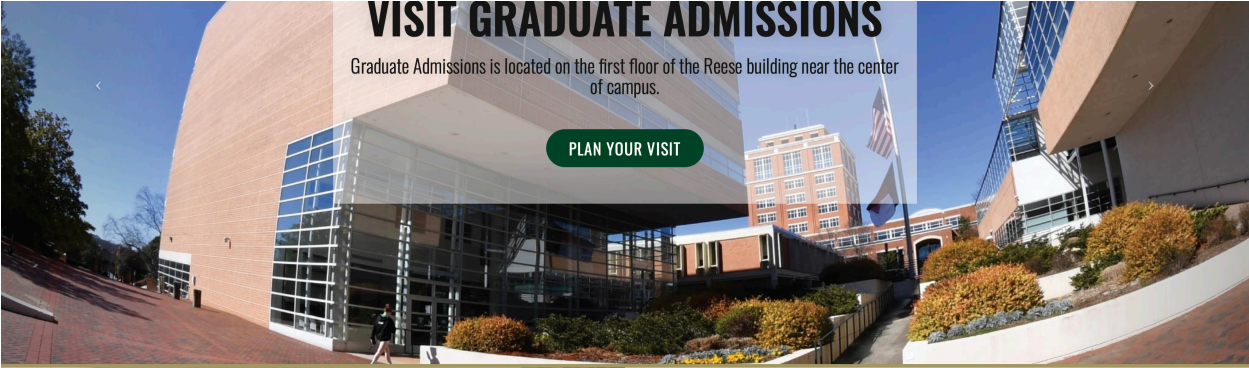
Graduate Admissions is located on the first floor of the Reese building near the center of campus.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

ADMISSIONS AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

Academic background, professional experience, standardized test scores, recommendations, research experience — these elements and more combine to give UNC Charlotte a glimpse of who you are as a prospective student. That's why Graduate Program Directors approach the application process holistically, considering information that may indicate an applicant's potential for success in a given program. Please refer to the application requirements for additional information.

APPLY NOW

Visual Hierarchy

The website effectively uses a large banner video showcasing student life to capture the user's attention. The prominent display of key buttons like 'Undergraduate Admissions' and 'Graduate Admissions' on top of this video ensures that users focus on the most critical actions first. The large, bold title "Admissions & Financial Aid" draws attention immediately, guiding users to understand the purpose of the page upon arrival.

While the large banner video is visually engaging, it sometimes overwhelms the page and makes it difficult to focus on the buttons. Additionally, on larger screens, the excess white space around card elements dilutes the visual impact of the content, making the website feel less engaging.

Discoverability

The website is well-organized, with clear distinctions between undergraduate and graduate admissions sections. This allows users to easily navigate and find relevant content depending on their status. Grouping related content, such as financial aid resources and admissions steps, makes it easier for users to discover what they need.

Some content is buried too deeply within the site, making it difficult to find. For example, sections like "Loan Resources" are nested several layers deep, requiring users to navigate through multiple pages. This increases the cognitive load on users and can frustrate those who are trying to quickly find specific information.

Minimalism and Aesthetic

The website generally sticks to a minimalist design with precise, necessary information presented upfront. This makes it easy for users to comprehend the content without feeling overwhelmed by unnecessary details. Icons and images are used in some places to effectively break up the text, adding visual interest without distracting from the key content. However, in some areas, the website strays from minimalism, incorporating unnecessary videos and large images that detract from the overall simplicity. These elements can make the page feel cluttered and distract users from completing key actions. The presence of a large video on the homepage, while visually interesting, complicates navigation for users seeking quick access to specific sections like financial aid or admissions information.

Error Prevention and Recovery

The use of clearly marked mandatory fields in forms helps users avoid submission errors by ensuring all required information is filled in. This is particularly useful for long forms like admissions applications.
The website does not prompt users when they attempt to leave a form with incomplete information. If a user accidentally navigates away from the page or closes the tab, their progress could be lost, causing frustration. A simple confirmation prompt asking users if they want to leave without submitting the form could help prevent data loss.

Learnability

The consistent design across the site makes it easy for users to learn how to navigate. Descriptive call-to-action buttons give users clear guidance on what actions to take next, improving the overall learnability of the website.

Some of the video content and overly large images hinder the simplicity of the user experience, making it slightly harder for first-time visitors to quickly learn where they need to go. Reducing the reliance on these elements could improve the learnability further.