EAB

How Wilmington College Turned a Website Redesign into an Enrollment-Ready Digital Presence

Web & Digital Solutions

Today's Presenters



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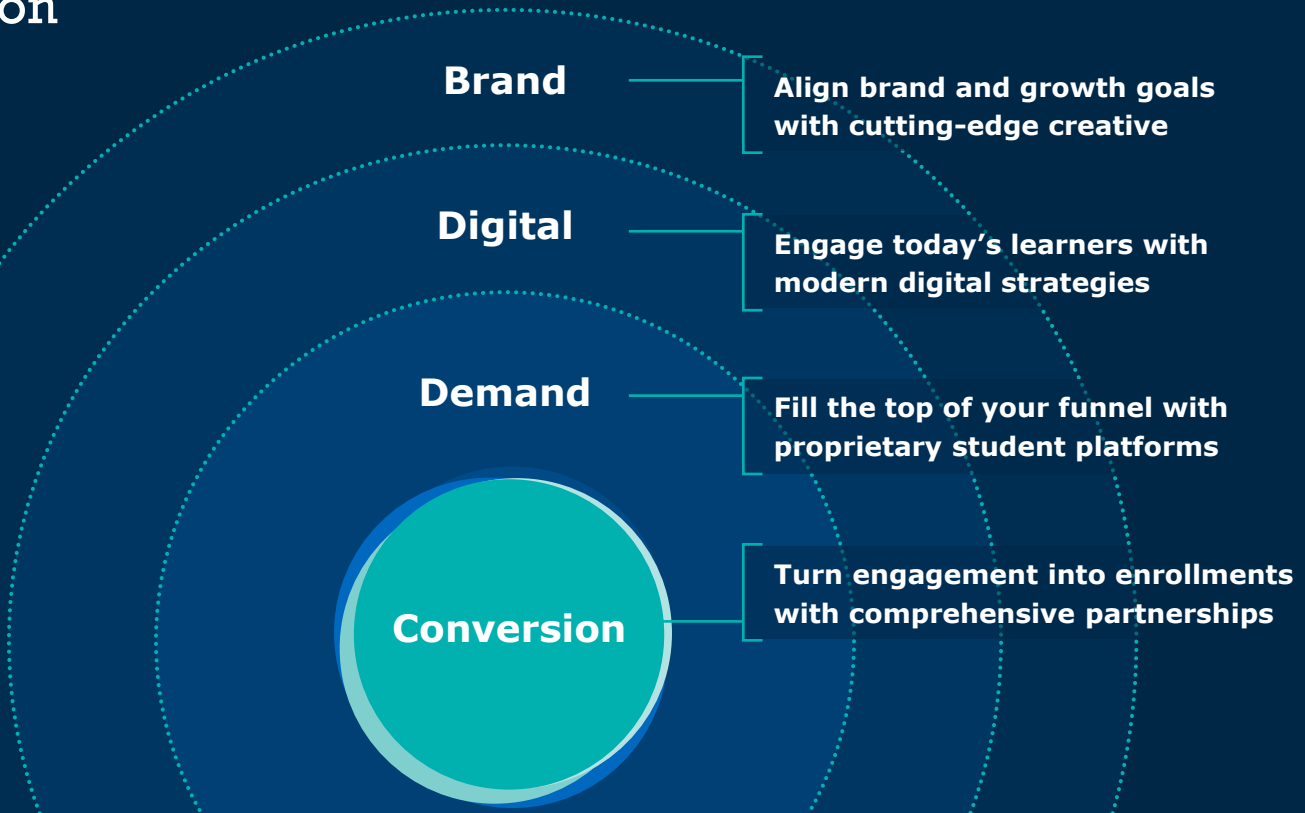
The Strategic Growth Partner for Higher Education

The EAB Difference

- AI-powered solutions to drive results from brand to yield
- First-of-its-kind recruitment ecosystem orchestrated to meet your goals
- Higher education's largest student dataset to inform what works—and doesn't
- The industry's leading experts to help you make the right calls in a dynamic market



Comprehensive Solutions Expertly Orchestrated to Meet Your Marketing and Enrollment Goals

Conversion

Enroll360
Full-funnel undergraduate marketing solution

Adult Learner Recruitment
Full-funnel graduate marketing solution

Financial Aid Optimization

Advancement Marketing Solutions

Demand

Undergraduate Student Leads *by Appily*

Graduate Student Leads *by Appily*

Virtual Tours

Direct Admissions Platform

Naviance Awareness and Leads *by Intersect*

Digital

AI Search Optimization and GEO

Paid Media Campaigns

Strategic Digital Partnerships

Website Design and Development

.edu AI Chat Agent

International Student Marketing *by Study International*

Brand

Brand Research and Strategy

Brand Development and Activation

Out-of-Home

Video and Creative

+ Strategy and Tech: Market Research | Consulting | Enrollment CRM

1 The Expanded Role of Your .edu

How AI is reshaping search and raising expectations for your .edu

2 Meet Wilmington College

Hear how they turned a web redesign into an AI- and enrollment-ready digital presence

AI-Powered Discovery Reshapes How Students Find and Engage with You



AI-Powered Discovery

SEO & Paid Search

Search

Easy-to-Navigate .Edu Content

Click

Conversion Optimization

Explore

Inquire



AI raises the bar on your .edu: enrollment success depends on a site that's *discoverable, engaging,* and *built to convert*.

Sources: EAB research and analysis.

Your .Edu Has a Bigger Job to Do

An enrollment-ready digital presence must...

Get found where students are searching

Give students a reason to choose you

Earn the right to learn more

...but changing student behavior is raising the bar across every stage

Students are searching across **AI platforms, traditional search, and other digital channels,** making visibility harder to manage

Students expect digital experiences that are **relevant, distinctive, accessible, and consistent** wherever they engage.

More students research anonymously, requiring institutions to **create low-friction ways to build connection** before asking for personal information.



What's your website's biggest challenge today?

MEET OUR PARTNER

Wilmington College

Background

Small private college in Wilmington, OH

~1,100 total enrollment

Five-year EAB partnership across digital and enrollment strategy

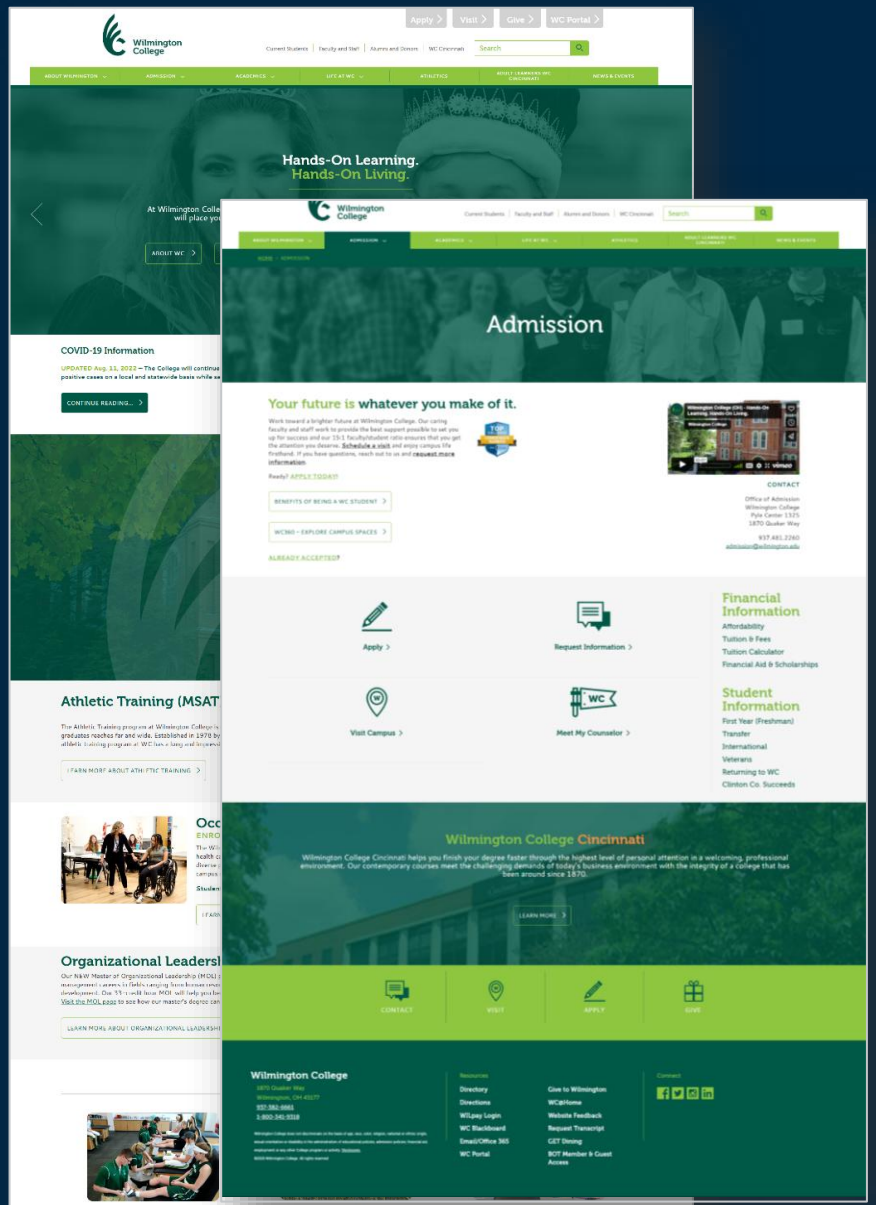
Challenge

Wilmington's **website had become a barrier to its enrollment goals.** The college needed to rethink the role of its .edu and build a stronger foundation for long-term digital growth.

A “Build It and Forget It” Website Was Holding Wilmington Back

Four Reasons Wilmington’s Old .edu Struggled to Support Enrollment

Where We Started



1 Outdated site experience

10+ years old, static, difficult to change design, interface, or UX

2 Decentralized, inconsistent

Limited governance led to outdated content and inconsistent brand

3 Limited capacity to evolve the site

No in-house web developers to support more sophisticated needs

4 Limited insight into student behavior

Little visibility into how students used the site or moved toward enrollment

Stage 1: Rebuild the Foundation

A Student-Centered Site Built for What Comes Next

Designed around students, not campus units

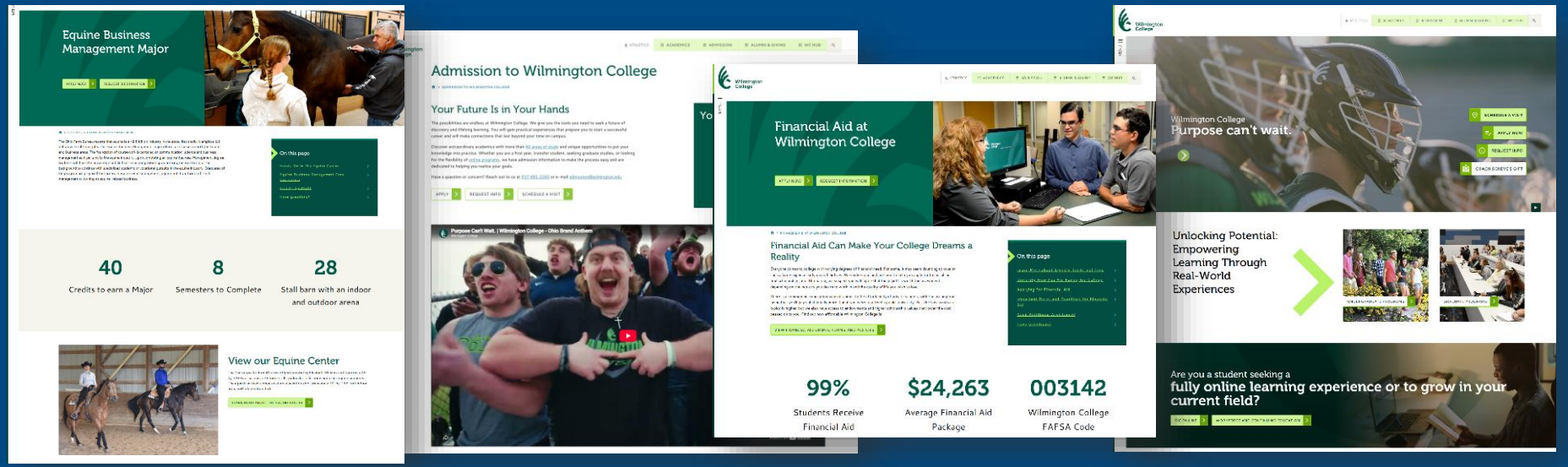
Intentional navigation and user pathways to academics, programs, and next steps

Manageable for a lean team

Modular content structure to simplify and streamline maintenance

Flexible by design

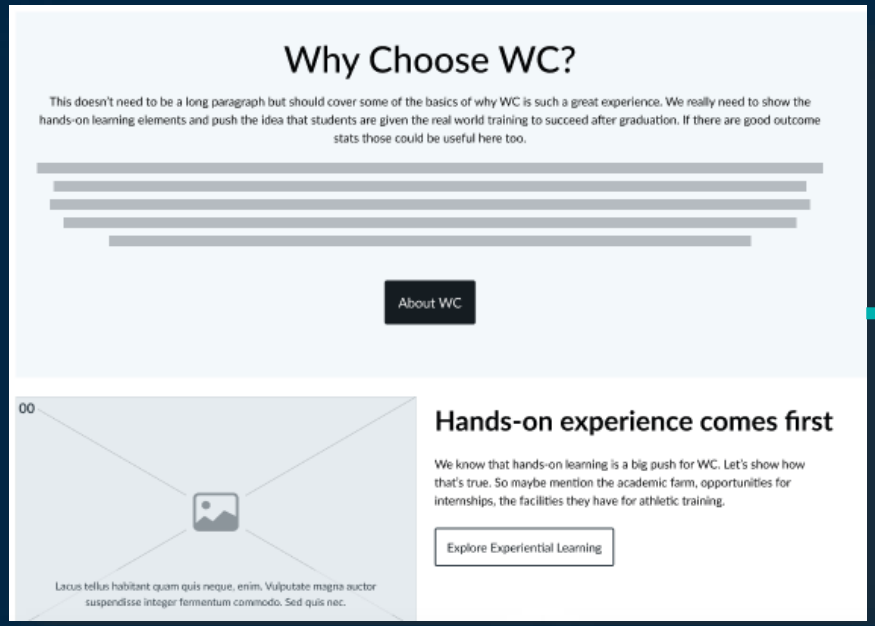
A dynamic foundation that could support new content, functionality, and changing search behavior

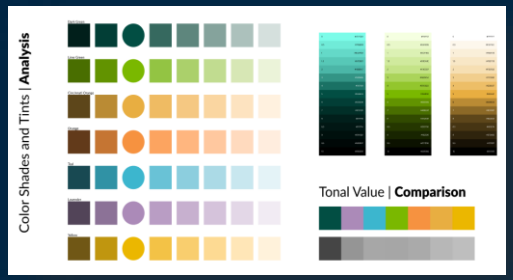


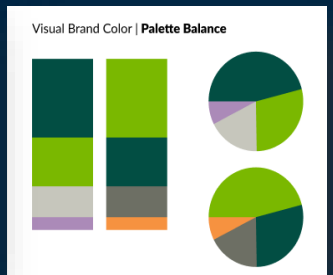
Design Decisions Before Development

EAB Built Wireframes to Define Page Structure and Guide the Website's Visual Design

Wireframe and Design Elements

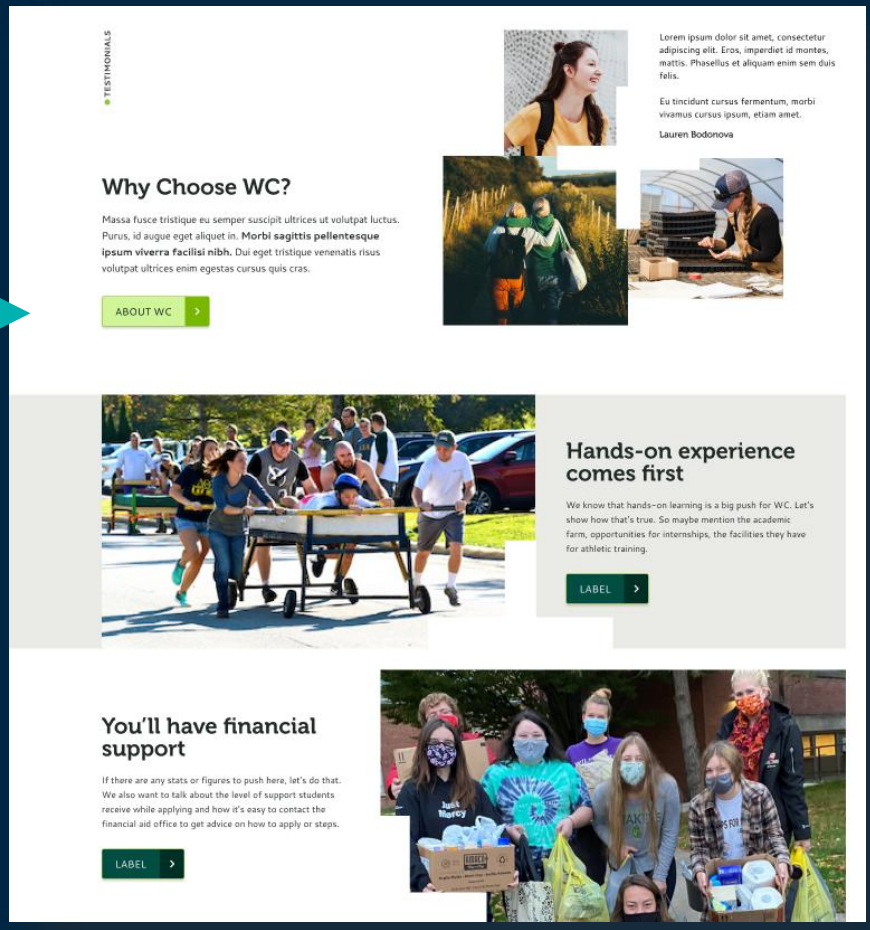






Visual Content Briefs
(Content Strategy + Copywriting)

Visual Design Concept

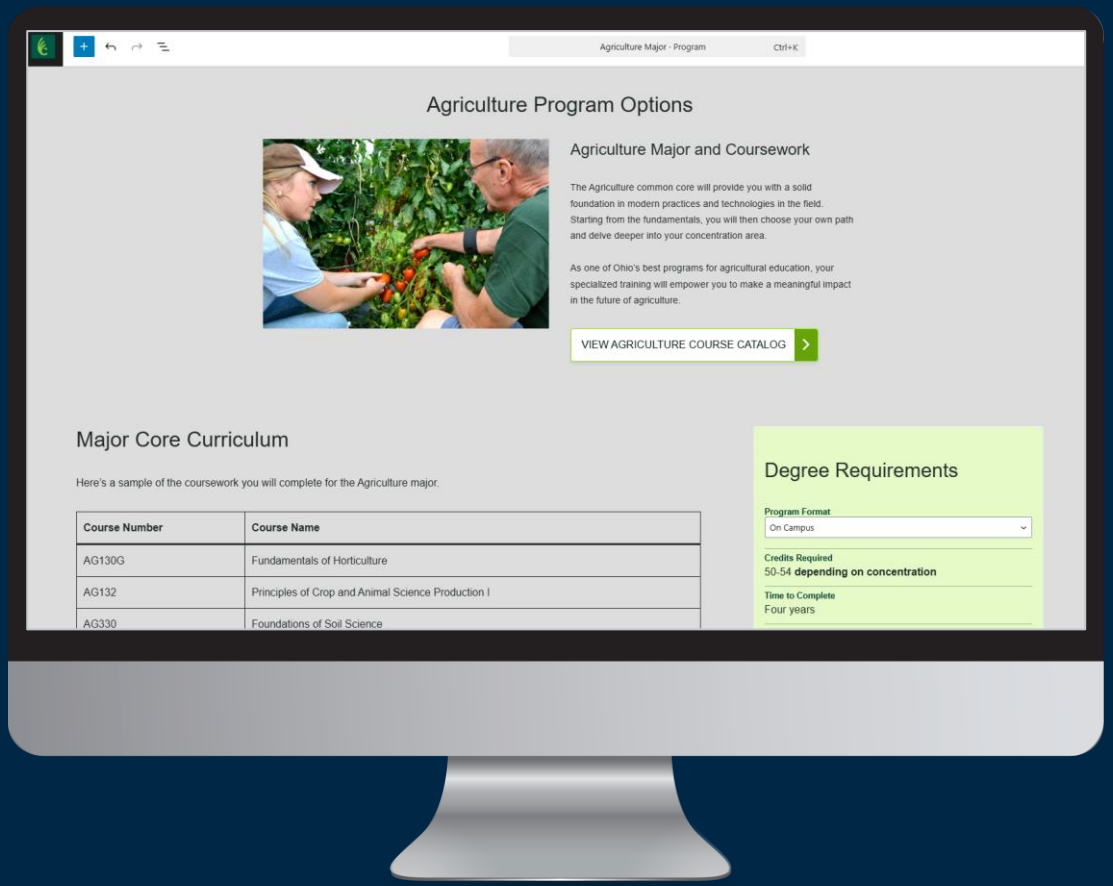


Published to the live .edu

The Technical Foundation Behind Wilmington's Redesign

A Technical Foundation Built for Performance and Growth

- Headless WordPress CMS architecture
- Responsive, performance-optimized front end
- GA4 event tagging and behavioral tracking
- Modular design and component library



~30% Fewer webpages following the redesign

What Began as a Redesign Grew into a Broader Digital Strategy

Optimize Content Strategy

Strengthened priority content, program discovery, UX, SEO, and enrollment-focused page experiences.

Evolve for AI-Driven Discovery

Extended search and content strategy into GEO to strengthen AI visibility, brand, and competitiveness.



Rebuild the Website

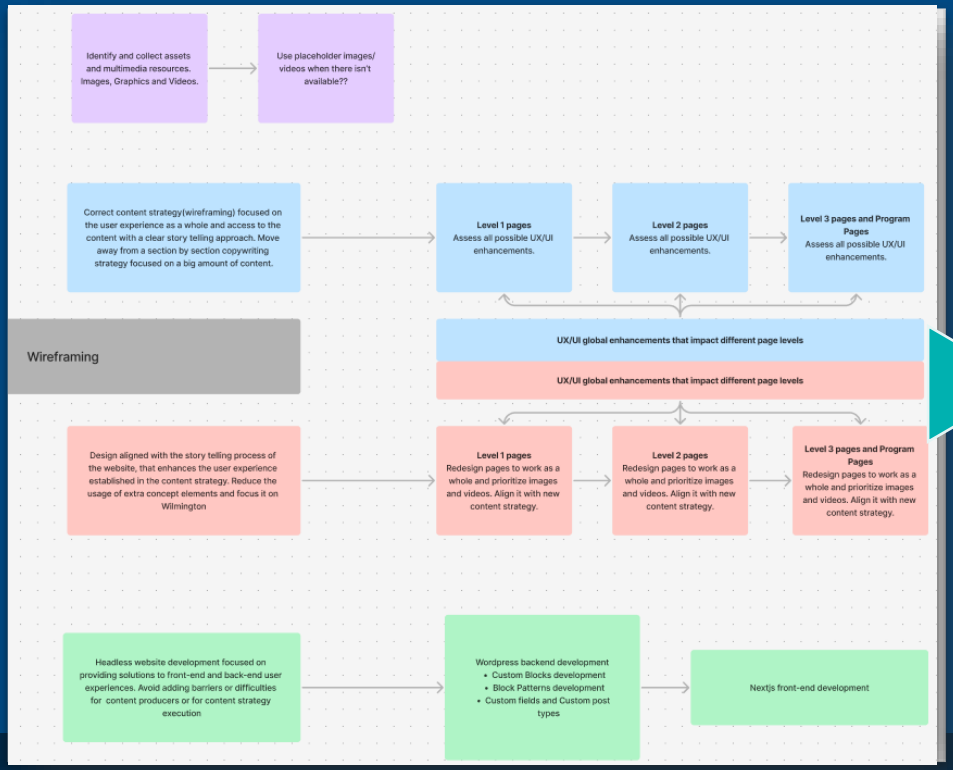
Rebuilt Wilmington's .edu around clearer pathways, flexible management, and student-centered navigation.

Analyze and Enhance Performance

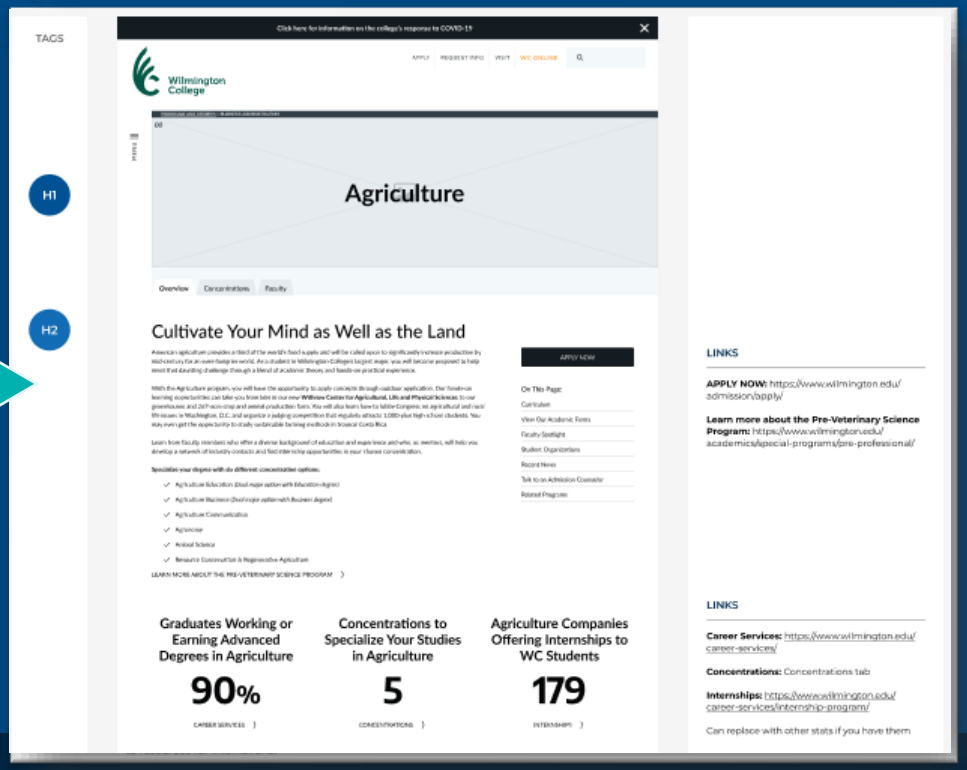
Used performance data to refine content, search strategy, and site capabilities over time.

Stage 2: Make Priority Content Easier to Find and Use

Map the Enrollment Journey



Translate Strategy into Detailed Briefs

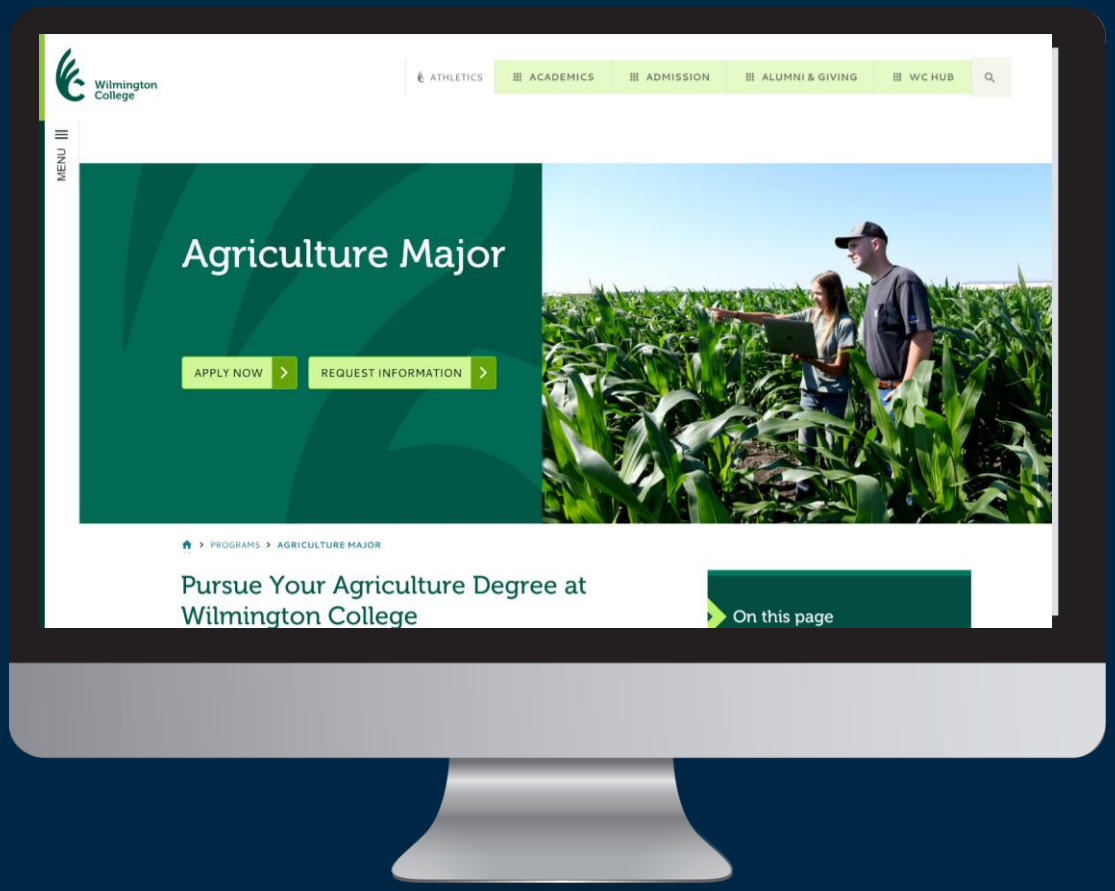


What Guided the Content Strategy

- Structure content for students and search visibility
- Prioritize high-impact content and UX improvements
- Showcase Wilmington's distinct brand and values
- Make the next step obvious

Applying High-Performing Content Strategies to Priority Programs

For priority programs like Agriculture, EAB combined **content strategy**, **UX**, **SEO**, and **GEO** to help students find what differentiates the program and move toward a next step.



PROGRAM PAGE PERFORMANCE

75%

Engagement rate across program pages*

Aug. 2025-Aug.2026

71%

Engagement rate for Agriculture program page

Aug. 2025-Aug.2026

Competitive Presence

Consistently positioned alongside large Ohio public agriculture programs in AI answers

*Higher ed benchmark for engagement rate is 63%.

Stage 3: Use Performance Data to Decide What to Improve Next

How Wilmington Connects Website, Search, and Enrollment Signals to Guide High-Impact Improvements



EAB's role: Identify the signals that matter, connect them to enrollment goals, and translate insights into prioritized improvements.

Connecting .Edu Engagement to Enrollment Outcomes

What Wilmington Can Now See

Moving Toward Application

75%

of admission-page visitors continued to the application page

Aug. 2025-Aug.2026

Website Inquiries Up

20%

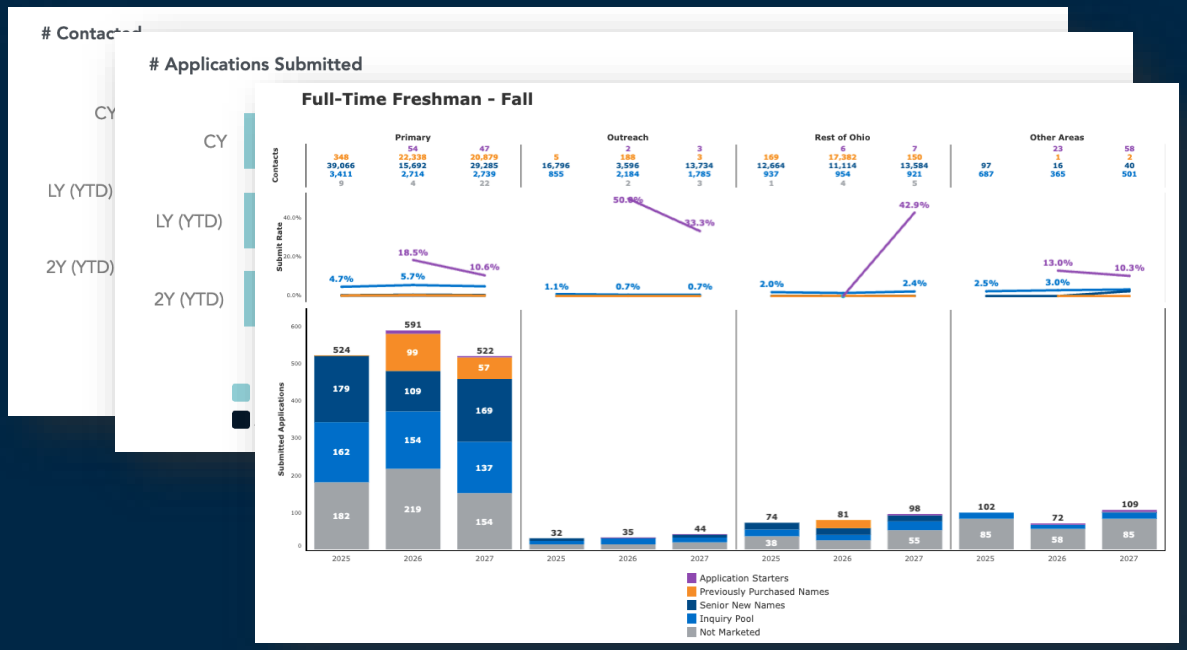
Increase in website inquiries for Fall 2027
as of Aug. 2026

First-Source Enrollments

10

Enrolled students with website inquiry as their first source for Fall 2026

Web + Enrollment Strategy Gives Wilmington a Clearer View of the Funnel



- Integrated efforts expand Wilmington's prospect pool
- Website inquiries feed into Enroll360 campaigns for continued nurture
- Combined data shows where students engage and where they drop off
- Lead-source reporting connects website inquiries to enrollment

Stage 4: Evolve for AI-Driven Discovery

Extend Wilmington's Existing Search and Content Foundation for a New Discovery Environment

1. Extend SEO into GEO

Build on Wilmington's existing content and search strategy to *improve visibility* across AI-powered discovery.

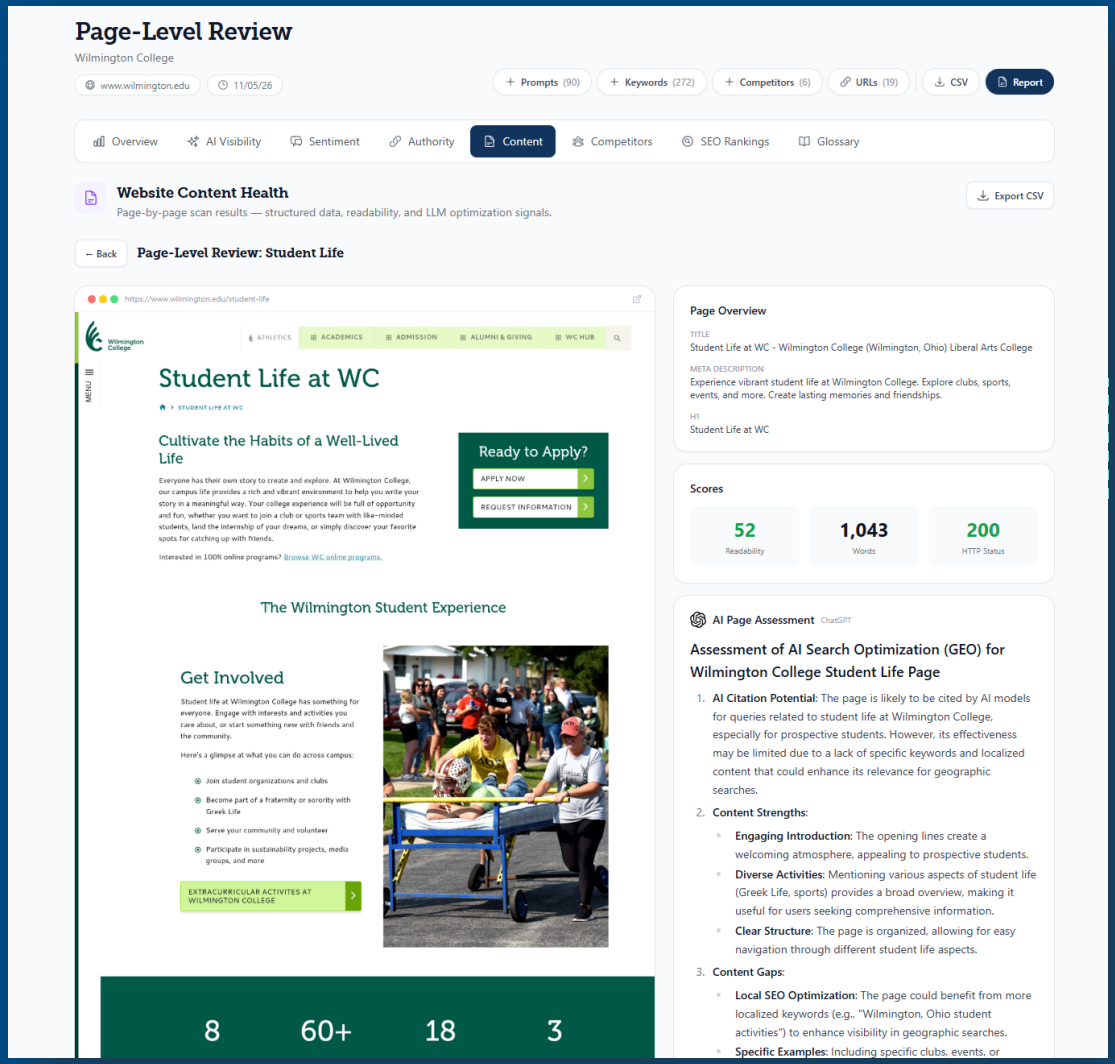
2. Add Schema + Structured Content

Help search engines and AI platforms *interpret priority program and enrollment information.*

3. Monitor AI Visibility + Brand Position

Track how often Wilmington *appears,* how it is *represented*, and how it *compares* with competitors.

GEO Dashboard AI Assessment Tool Guides Page-level Optimizations to Improve AI Search Visibility



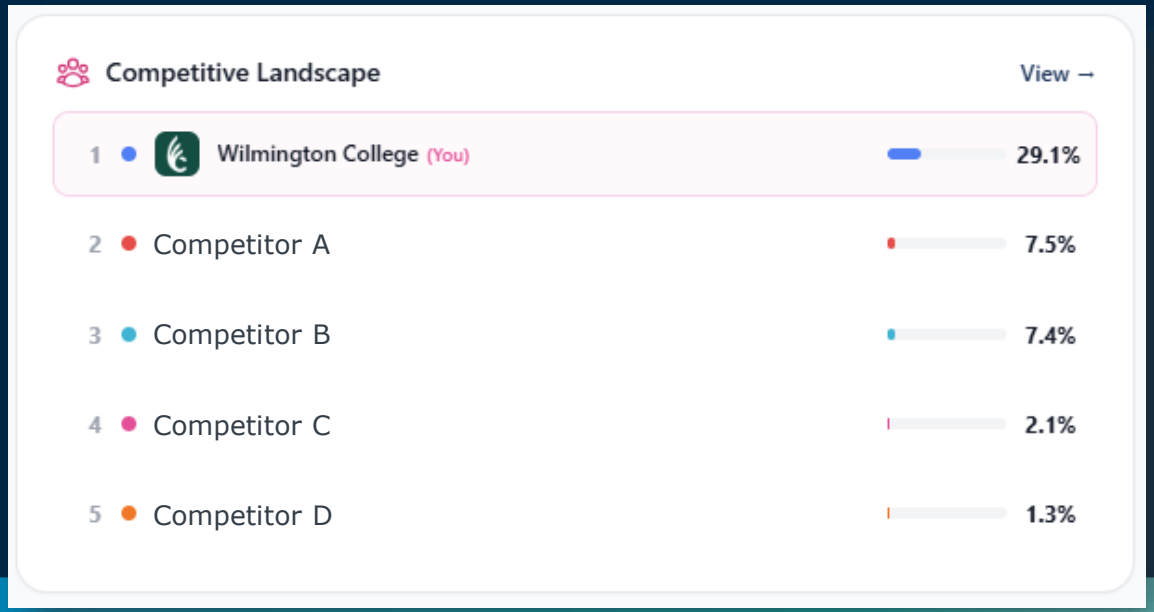
Wilmington Is Gaining Competitive Ground in AI Search

AI Visibility Is the Next Layer of Wilmington's Broader Search Strategy

AI Search Is Expanding Wilmington's Competitive Reach

- ✓ Compete beyond institution size
- ✓ Strengthen visibility for distinctive programs
- ✓ Improve how the brand is represented

Wilmington Ranks #1 in Competitive Position Among Tracked Peers.



One Search Strategy Across Traditional and AI Discovery

250%

Increase in AI search visibility*

since Jan. 2026

20M

New organic search impressions

Aug. 2025-Aug. 2026

6X

Increase in relevant AI Overview positions

Feb. 2025-Sept. 2026

1) *ChatGPT, Google AI Overview, Google AI Mode, Gemini

The Bigger Outcome: Finding and Connecting with the Right Students



Beyond the Numbers

More visibility into our strengths

SEO and GEO work amplify paid search footprint

A consistent, authentic brand experience

Retention has improved

What Wilmington Learned Along the Way

Three Lessons for Leaders Planning Their Next Digital Move

Prioritize a partner who knows higher ed



Treat launch as the beginning rather than the finish line



Connect the work, not just the channels



EAB's Web & Digital Solutions

Get Found. Get Chosen. Get Results.

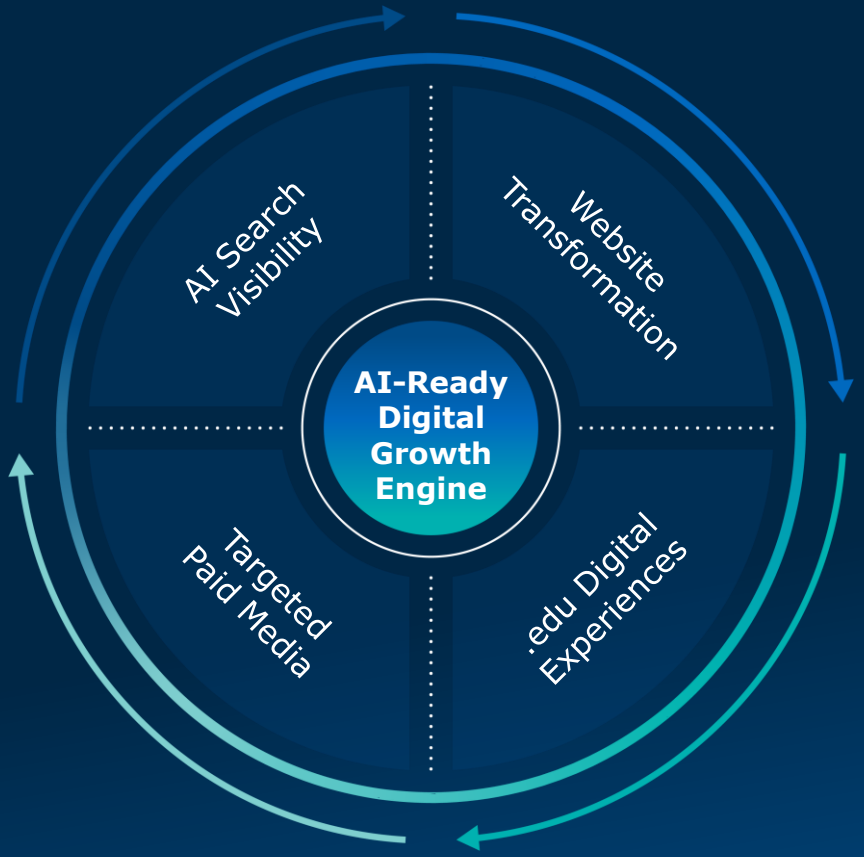
Connected Digital Solutions for AI-Powered Student Discovery

Become **Discoverable**

Earn visibility with GEO optimization support that builds authority in AI-driven search

Harness **Intent**

Anchor your digital growth engine with a full-spectrum web strategy that turns student interest into action



Amplify **Visibility**

Extend reach with multichannel campaigns that bolster engagement

Deepen **Engagement**

Spark connection with immersive .edu student experiences that personalize the journey

Built Specifically for **Higher Ed**

Built for the **Entire Student Journey**

Built for **Partnership**

Built for **Simplicity**

Purpose-Built for Higher Ed and the Outcomes That Matter

10X

Increase in AI search visibility in six months

Small private

31%

Increase in search-influenced enrollments

Large public

71%

Increase in brand mentions across AI platforms in 2025

Midsized public

Before We Close, Two Quick Poll Questions

1 **I'd like to schedule time to learn about solutions to…**

2 **Please rate the overall value of this session**

Please Complete Our Brief Post-Webinar Poll to Request Additional Content

Thank You!



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ABOUT EAB

At EAB, our mission is to make education smarter and our communities stronger. We work with more than 2,800 institutions to drive transformative change through data-driven insights and best-in-class capabilities. From kindergarten to college to career, EAB partners with leaders and practitioners to accelerate progress and drive results across enrollment, student success, institutional strategy, data analytics, and advancement. We work with each partner differently, tailoring our portfolio of research, technology, and marketing and enrollment solutions to meet the unique needs of every leadership team, as well as the students and employees they serve. Learn more at eab.com.