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CS 422

Requirements

### **Introduction**

### **Campus Connect** aims to tackle the difficulties that students attend University encounter when attempting to coordinate meetups and study sessions; more specifically the campuses with commuter populations. The project proposes integrating personal schedules, campus events, and peer availability into one platform. Effectively helping students find time to connect with peers more easily. Campus Connect will streamline the process of arranging meetups, academic or social, while maintaining the respect of users' privacy preferences. Ultimately, the project will strive to increase social and academic engagement on campus.

### **Methods for data gathering:**

To gather data on scheduling conflicts faced by university students at UIC, I sent out a Google Forms Survey. It was meant to identify the issues associated with the coordination of meet ups (academic and social); it took into account the participants' major, details about their commute, their involvement, etc. This was sent out to students through a discord platform to vary in age, as well as sent out personally to peers I know in different majors that differ from engineering to create variance.

It represents a mix of quantitative and qualitative data through the utilization of multiple-choice questions and open-ended responses which were automatically recorded in the Google Form. Descriptive statistics, which could be represented in plots, and thematic analysis were used to identify key trends and challenges faced by students in scheduling social meetups.

### **Participants:**

We distributed the Google Forms survey to a diverse group of **15 participants** to capture a wide range of experiences regarding scheduling challenges on campus. The participant demographics were as follows**:**

| **Year in School** | **Majors** | **Commute** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * 66.7% were seniors, * 20% were juniors, * 13.3% were sophomores | * 30.8% in Computer Science * 23.1% in Computer Engineering * Others in Mechanical Engineering, * Psychology * Marketing * Civil Engineering | * 60% commuted by car, * 20% used public transportation, * 20% lived on or near campus within walking distance. |
| **Commute Duration** | **Extracurricular Involvement** | **Challenges and Preferences** |
| * 33.3% reported a commute of 40-60 minutes, * 26.7% over an hour * the rest had shorter commutes of 15-40 minutes. | * 73.3% were involved in clubs or extracurricular activities * 26.7% were not. | * 53.3% stated that their commute or club involvement makes it harder to schedule meetups. * scheduling conflicts prevented 33.3% from often meeting up with friends. |

### **Questions asked to participants:**

* **Year in School** (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior)
* **Major** (Open-ended list of majors)
* **How do you get to campus?** (I live on/near campus, Commute by car, Public transportation)
* **How long does it take you to get to campus (one way)?** (Less than 15 minutes, 15-40 minutes, 40-60 minutes, 60+ minutes)
* **Are you involved in any clubs or extracurricular activities on campus?** (Yes, No)
* **Does your commute or club involvement make it harder to schedule meetups with friends?** (Yes, No, Sometimes)
* **How do you currently coordinate meetups or study sessions with friends on campus?** (Open-ended)
* **How often do scheduling conflicts prevent you from meeting up with friends?** (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)
* **What is a challenge you face when trying to coordinate meetups with friends (social or academic)?** (Open-ended)
* **Which of the following tools do you use to manage your schedule?** (Select all that apply: Google Calendar, Apple Calendar, Outlook, Paper planner, Group chats, Notes app, Structured app)

### **Data Findings:**

After analyzing the survey responses, three key themes were highlighted that reflect the challenges UIC students face when coordinating meetups and study sessions on campus.

#### **Theme 1: Reliance on Text-Based and Social Media Communication**

Most participants used texting, group chats, and social media platforms to coordinate meetups with friends.

* *60% of participants coordinated meetups through group chats, such as text messages, Snapchat, or Discord.*
* Participants mentioned seeing friends’ social media activity as a way to determine if they were free.
  + Quote 1: "Through text usually. I see my friends might be free through socials and that clues me in that I may be able to schedule something."
  + Quote 2: "I usually text them or tell them in person."
  + Quote 3: "Discord, I ask if they’re free and then meet up spontaneously."

*While convenient, these methods were more than often, informal, which led to slower coordination, missed opportunities, and last-minute planning.*

#### **Theme 2: Challenges with Scheduling Due to Conflicting Commitments**

Many participants reported that conflicting schedules—due to classes, work, extracurriculars, and commuting—were the primary barriers to successfully coordinating meetups.

* **53.3%** indicated that scheduling conflicts often or sometimes prevented them from meeting up with friends.
  + Quote 1: "It’s hard to find a time to meet up that works with everyone’s schedule."
  + Quote 2: "Not everyone is available, and it’s hard to know everyone’s schedule."
  + Quote 3: "I have to schedule around my classes, work, and clubs."

*Even when they used tools like Doodle polls or When2meet, it was still difficult to find convenient times amongst their peers.*

#### **Theme 3: Long Commutes Impact Meetup Coordination**

For students with longer commutes, meeting up after classes was particularly challenging.

* **60%** of participants commuted to campus, and **33.3%** had a commute of **40-60 minutes or more**.
  + Quote 1: "The commute sometimes makes it difficult—Metra does not have many trains going out in the afternoon."
  + Quote 2: "Usually people need to leave school before it gets too late in the afternoon because their commute is so long."
  + Quote 3: "Traffic is usually heavy too, so it makes it harder because I know I have a long commute."

*These students frequently needed to leave campus early to avoid traffic or ensure they could catch transportation home, further limiting their availability for social activities.*

### **Requirements**

As a student, I want to be able to see my friends’ availability in real-time so that I can coordinate meetups more easily and avoid long text conversations.

As a commuter, I want to be able to view my friends’ and classmates’ schedules so that I can find mutually convenient times to meet before needing to leave campus early.

As a student involved in multiple activities, I want the app to suggest meeting times based on my friends’ schedules and my own so that I can schedule meetups without manually comparing availability.

### **Personas**

Persona 1: Wendy - The Commuter Student

* **Senior** studying **Computer Science** that has a **60+ minute commute.** She is **not involved in extracurricular activities** but has a **part-time job.** Her schedule is very tight and needs to **leave campus early** to avoid traffic.

Goals:

* To meet friends on campus without staying too late and to have quick meetups between classes.
* To reduce the back-and-forth of scheduling meetups via texting on social platforms

Frustrations:

* Long commutes make it difficult to stay on campus after classes, limiting opportunities for socializing.
* Texting back and forth to coordinate meetups is inefficient, especially when friends don’t respond quickly.
* She doesn't always know when her friends are free, making it hard to schedule meetups spontaneously.

How can we help?

* Show her friends’ availability in real time, allowing her to plan social interactions quickly.
* Help her stay connected with friends despite her busy schedule.

Persona 2: Marty - The Super Involved Student

* **Junior** studying **Mechanical Engineering** and **lives on campus.** **On the board of two clubs**, attends weekly meetings, and participates in study groups.

Goals:

* To quickly schedule meetups with friends without conflicts between his classes, club meetings, and study sessions.
* To better manage his time so he can balance social activities with academic commitments.

Frustrations:

* It’s difficult to find time to hang out with friends due to conflicting club and class schedules.
* He often gets too occupied with too many commitments, and his friends leave campus early, so coordinating meetups is challenging.

How can we help?

* Provide him a comprehensive view of his friends’ availability and his own commitments, so he can see where free time overlaps.
* Can help him use his time efficiently, so he can focus on both academics/social life without stress

### **Scenario**

It’s the middle of the week, and Marty has a group project due soon. His study group is trying to find a time to meet but are struggling to find a time that works for everyone; it feels hard to find any time between class and his club meetings. Before, he would text the group chat multiple messages and had to wait a long time for everyone to respond—a process that takes an indefinite amount of time.

Marty opens Campus Connect and quickly inputs the names of his group members that he has already connected with on the app. The app scans everyone’s schedules and suggests a time slot when they are all free, right before Marty’s evening club meeting.

A meetup suggestion is sent out by Marty with just a few taps. The members of the group receive notifications and confirm their availability in no time. Because of Campus Connect, Marty was able to schedule his study session without the usual back-and-forth messaging, saving him time and energy to focus on his club meeting for later.