Brought to you by, The A-Team:

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[Link to Task Flow Diagrams on Miro](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVNfBI4vk=/?share_link_id=238361550752) (password: 12345678)

**App Name: “Intersectional Insights”**

**Problem Statement**

University students can fall behind in their studies and classes due to many different reasons such as family situations, sickness, mental health issues, and more. Sometimes, when students get overwhelmed they don’t reach out for help and their grades slip. This has proven to be a hard cycle for struggling students to get out of and can become a difficult feedback loop. In some cases, struggling students feel as though there is no choice left but to change majors due to this perceived difficulty.

Prior solutions to this previously stated problem can be seen through tutoring programs, CS help labs, and a variety of media outlets like discord and even instagram and facebook. Although these solutions can be useful to a certain extent, there are indeed gaps to them. A gap for these situations is that the students themselves have to take the initiative, and that students aren’t always in control of many of the factors which influence their day-to-day lives, or their ability to effect change. Prior solutions solely require students to help students, there is no higher involvement from the department, the professors, etc. Given the limited resources and time constraints of both students and professors, how can we implement a proactive, collaborative system that effectively identifies the difference between students genuinely struggling and those not putting in effort, ensuring timely interventions to support and guide students with declining academic performance?

# **Prior Solutions**

## **Solution 1:** Student-Run Discord

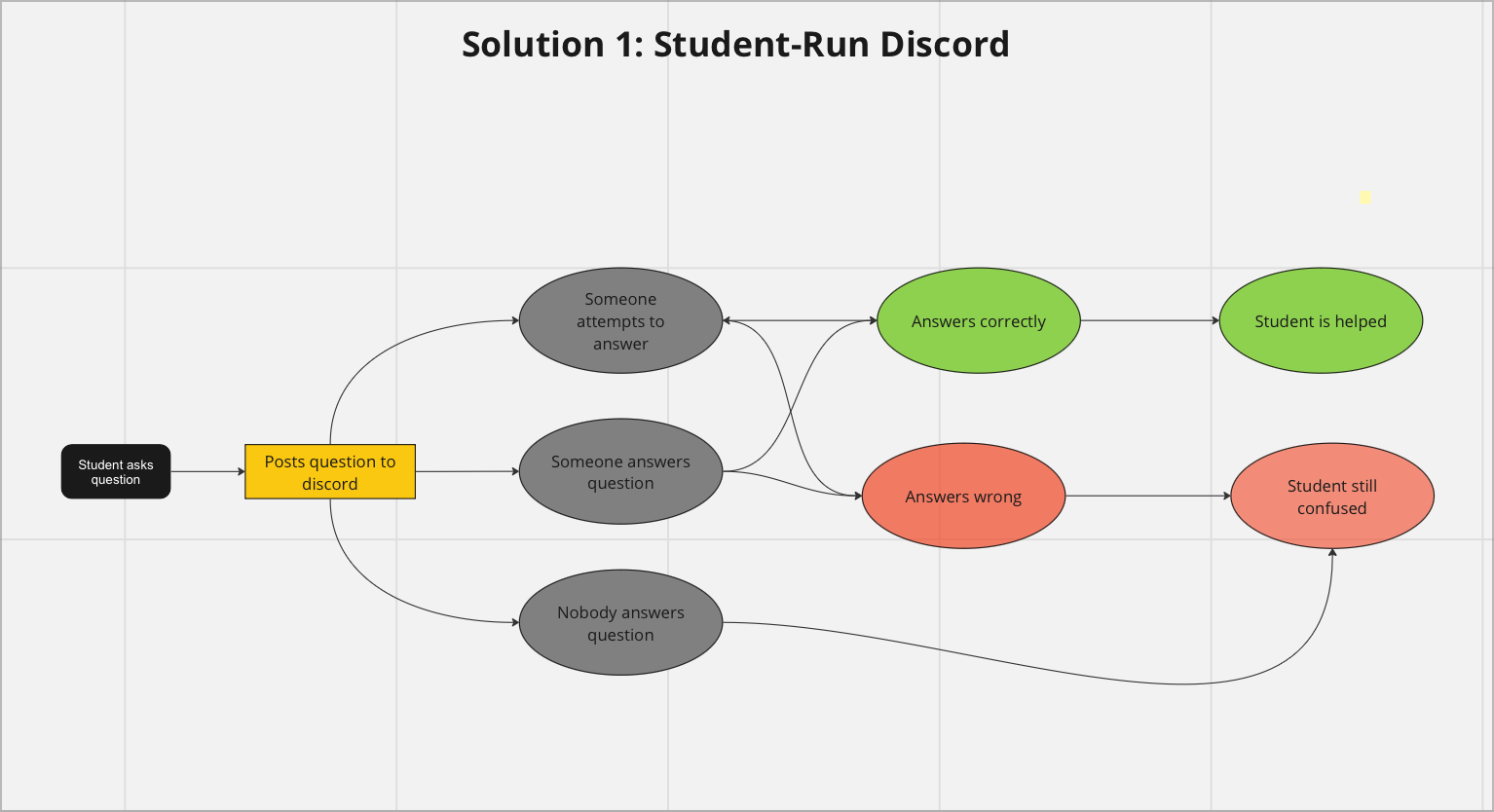
Our solution will be anonymous for students, as opposed to the current discord set-up, which requires students to put their names and classes.

The combination of anonymity, with the ability to understand that others have similar concerns, will help students understand that they are not alone, and that others are experiencing very similar problems, and provide a sense of community through shared hardship.

Further implementations of the system will allow for students with similar problems and concerns to communicate anonymously with each other in messages/threads, with an option to message a particular decision maker (instructor/professor, department head, etc.) separately to initiate communication about a specific concern.

To aid in the classification of domains of concern, users could join a specific group based on the classes they are taking while also being provided the ability to communicate with students from other sections of a class, as well as students who have successfully taken and completed a class; all in an effort to provide students who are struggling with support, mentorship, and most importantly, empathy.

Issues with the UMaine CS Discord have become evident. Firstly, its organization is messy; for instance, if you're in a 400-level class, you must scroll through all the preceding class channels, making navigation cumbersome. Additionally, the platform is notably inactive. This lack of activity could stem from students experiencing imposter syndrome, making them hesitant to discuss their problems openly. Moreover, there's a noticeable absence of engagement from professors and faculty, as they don't seem to interact with students or respond to messages within Discord.



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## **Solution 2:** Social Media (Yik-Yak, Facebook, etc.)

Students rely on social media for basic communication between themselves and others. Oftentimes, students will reach out to fellow classmates through the many different social media platforms available. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat provide a space for classmates to ask others questions about assignments, go over different materials, talk about professors, etc. but don’t allow for anonymity.

Yik-Yak is another form of social media that provides a space for students to connect but does allow them to remain anonymous. Yik-Yak is based on a general area, however and not made specifically for class and talking about a specific class/major will prove to be difficult.

Our App will aim to combine the best features of these platforms, the anonymity of Yik-Yak with the wide-spread accessibility and community of other social media platforms. Providing such a safe area for students to ask questions and provide feedback to professors while also remaining anonymous will help ease the anxieties of imposter syndrome by connecting with others.

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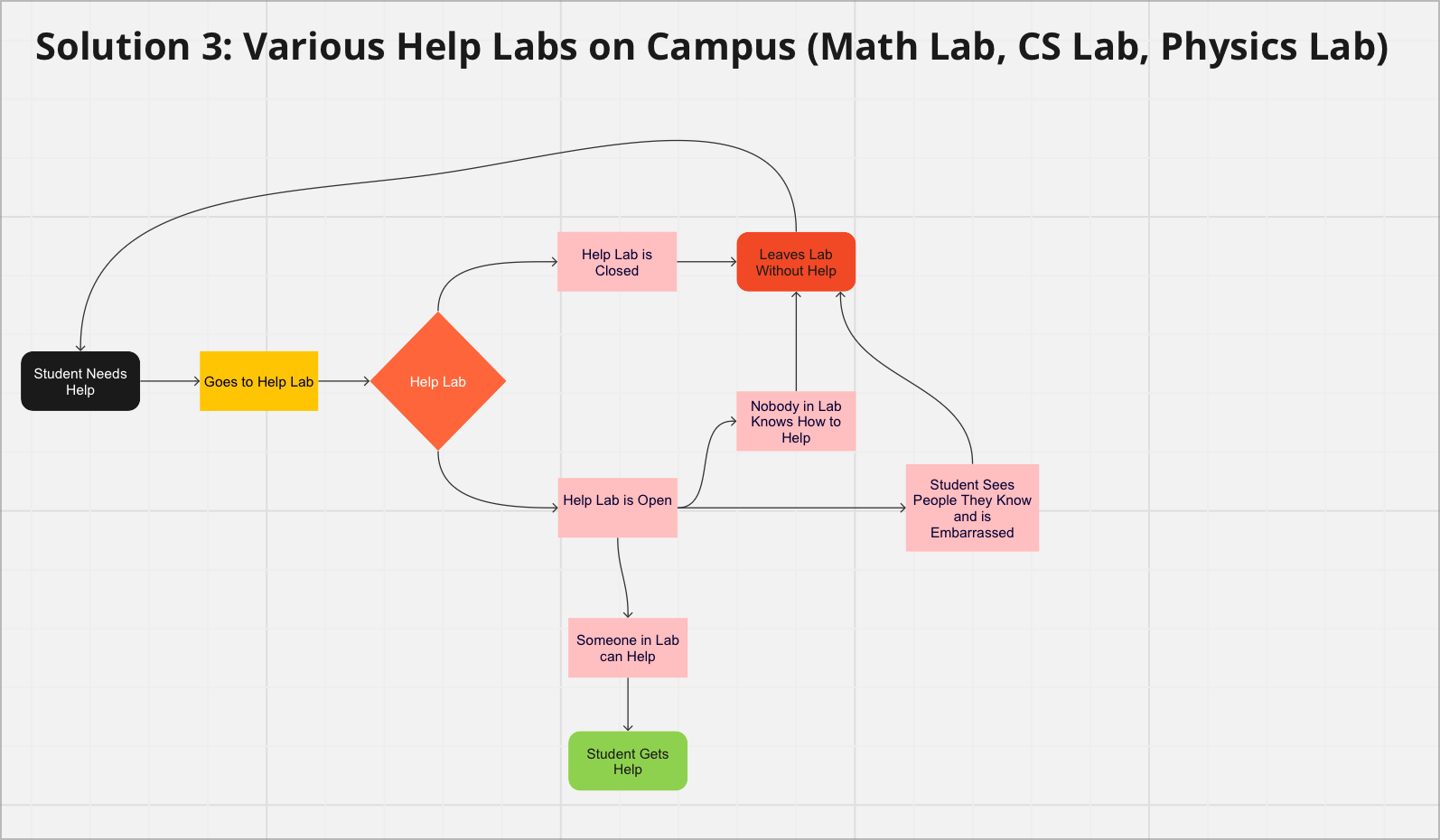
## **Solution 3:** Various Help Labs on Campus (Math Lab, CS Lab, Physics Lab)

The help labs on campus provide a valuable service for those students who are comfortable enough asking for help, and actively seeking it. This precludes any student who is unable to come forward, in person, and ask for such help.

Additionally, there is currently no possibility to asynchronously interact with the various help labs, as they are open only during specific hours, and with limited capacity (1-2 TA’s/Profs/MLAs per hour), specifically when students are not in class, when the question may arise. Basically, there are numerous roadblocks to actually getting a question answered.

Finally, if the lab does not have anyone present, or the person available does not know how to answer the provided questions, then the asker is left without an answer, and may very well be discouraged from doing so again.

OurApp will allow the concerns of students seeking help to voice their concerns, understand whether or not others have similar concerns, and provide information in turn to those reporting problems on how they may be able to address their situation in the meantime.



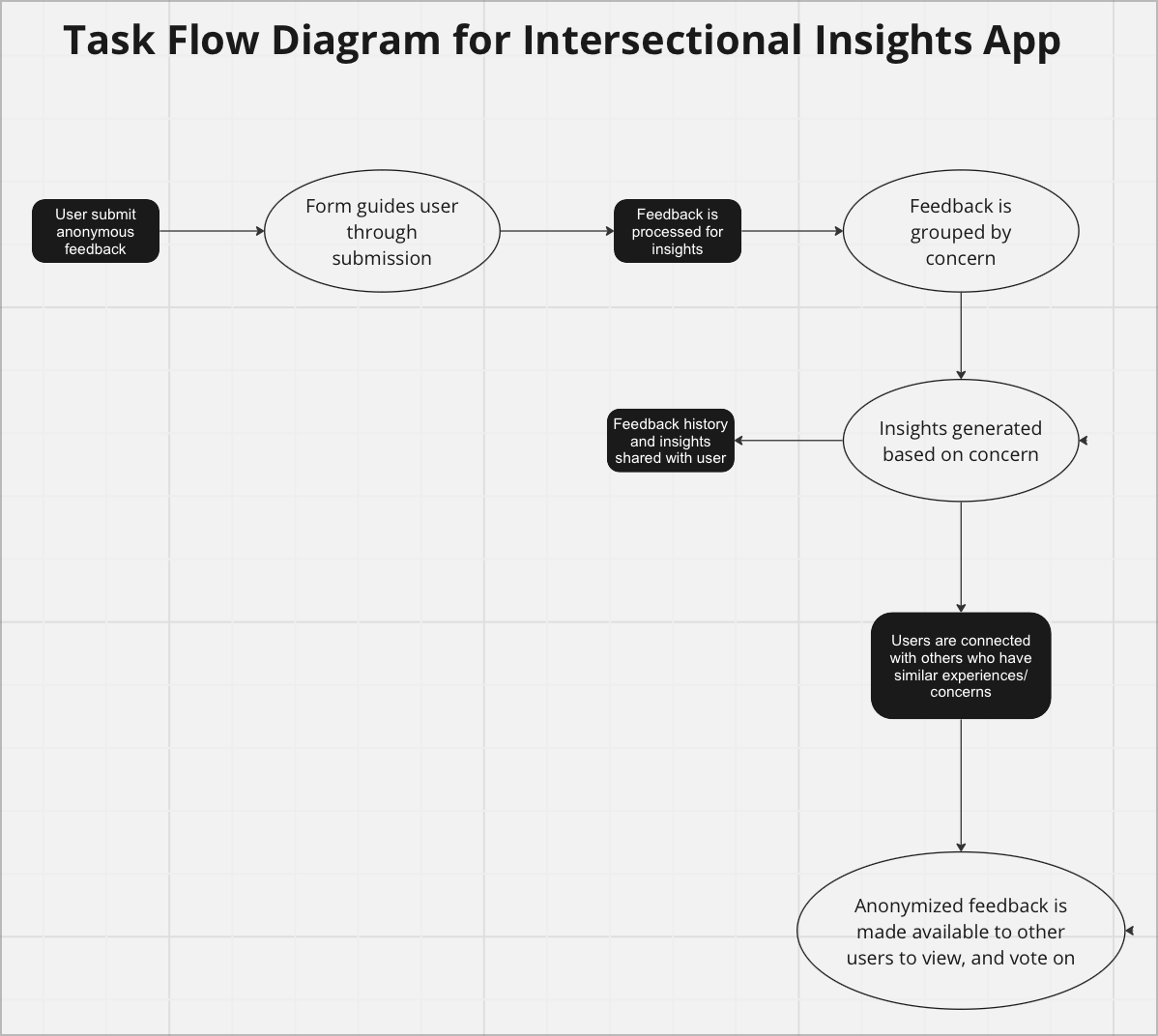
# **Comparison**

|  | Prior Solution 1 | Prior Solution 2 | Prior Solution 3 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Explain the similarities of the applications |  |  |  |
| Outline the differences / unique features of their team’s app |  |  |  |
| Explain why your app is different in that way |  |  |  |
| Comparison for each prior solution at least one paragraph |  |  |  |
| Task flow diagram present and not incorrect |  |  |  |

**Intersectional Insights**

Intersectional Insights allows users to circumvent feelings of imposter syndrome, by providing a service for students to anonymously submit feedback in environments where they do not currently feel comfortable doing so.

Students will not only be provided with an opportunity to provide feedback of their own and join a community of students with similar concerns, but feedback and information will flow back to the student to provide insight and resources to better address their concern.



# **Overview**:

The Intersectional Insights hub is a web-based application that empowers users (student, professor, administrator, etc.) to submit feedback in an anonymous and structured manner. Designed to foster a culture of openness and continuous improvement, the app not only collects feedback but also processes it to offer insights in response. This two-way interaction ensures that the users not only voice their concerns but also gain valuable insights about their submissions. The feedback portion will have a “history”, allowing the user to track their feedback’s progress throughout the process of being addressed, while also being able to connect and communicate with others who have similar concerns and experiences.

Whether it’s about the problem’s nature, its emotional impact, its cause, or potential solutions, Intersectional Insights captures it all. Once submitted, data is analyzed, categorized, and shared, revealing the collective concerns of a community. By presenting aggregated insights, Intersectional Insights empowers decision-makers with the clarity needed to understand and address large-scale issues effectively.

**Submission**

Feedback submission is “guided”, allowing a user to provide unique context for their unique perspective on what is occurring:

* what is happening
* how the problem makes them feel
* why they believe the problem is occurring, and
* how they believe the problem could be addressed

**Collection**

Feedback is collected, analyzed, and placed into categories of similar concerns. This information is shared back with the user who submitted the original feedback themselves, to allow the originator to see how many other people/percentage of people have a similar concern or experience.

**Sharing**

Feedback can then be shared with the appropriate parties. Singular or limited feedback is difficult for leadership teams to understand. By collecting and categorizing feedback of a larger population group, concerns can be viewed on a larger scale, and will have a measurable magnitude of how many people are reporting similar concerns. This in turn will provide decision makers with the information they need to address the concerns of those under their charge.

**Features and Web Development Techniques**:

1. **Anonymous Submission**: To encourage candid feedback, the application provides users with the ability to submit their thoughts anonymously. Through the use of standard web forms for input and server-side scripting, the application can ensure that feedback is stored without any personally identifiable data attached.
2. **Feedback Insights**: After a user submits their feedback, the tool processes this data and offers relevant insights. Feedback will be analyzed by appropriate methods (mainly human analysis) to determine what insight may be provided, prior to the problem being addressed.
3. **Feedback History**: One of the unique features of this tool is the ability for users to track the journey of their feedback, viewing its status as it moves through various stages such as if the comment was read yet, if the person providing the feedback has started writing anything up yet, etc.. By using a well-structured database system to manage the feedback records and statuses, users can see live updates about their feedback's progress. Techniques like asynchronous web requests can ensure the status updates in real-time without user intervention.
4. **Community Connection**: A community feature allows users to engage in discussions with peers who have similar experiences or concerns. Through the creation of discussion boards or chat modules using real-time web communication techniques, users can connect, share, and collaborate on shared topics. The ability to upvote and emote on helpful comments and show support without providing feedback will also allow users to participate even if they don’t feel comfortable submitting their own feedback request. Creating this environment for a helpful community will ease the effects of imposter syndrome by eliminating the feeling of isolation.

To wrap up, Intersectional Insights bridges the gap between feedback providers and receivers, offering a platform for meaningful interactions and insights. The application, while harnessing a blend of web technologies and techniques, remains focused on simplicity and user experience.