**User Story: Direct Communication with Decision Makers**

*"As a student, if I have a pressing issue, I want an option to message a specific authority, like a professor or department head, to directly address my concern.”*

**Story Tasks**

1. **Research and Requirement Gathering**

* Conduct interviews or surveys with students to understand their needs and preferences for direct communication.
* Collaborate with decision makers to understand their comfort level and boundaries regarding direct communication.

1. **Design**

* Design a messaging interface that allows students to select and message a specific authority.
* Integrate a directory or list of decision makers available for direct messaging.
* Incorporate features for message notifications and histories.

1. **Backend Development**

* Structure a database to store messaging histories, user preferences, and authority details.
* Create API endpoints for messaging, fetching authority lists, and notifications.

1. **Frontend Development**

* Implement the messaging interface based on the design.
* Ensure students can search, select, and message authorities seamlessly.

1. **Testing**

* Conduct unit tests for backend functions.
* Perform integration tests to ensure frontend and backend alignment.
* Engage students and decision makers in user acceptance testing.

1. **Documentation**

* Develop guides detailing the direct communication features and usage.

1. **Deployment**

* Outline and execute a deployment strategy.
* Monitor post-deployment for potential issues and gather user feedback.

**Functional Requirements**

1. **Messaging Interface**

* The system should offer a user interface where students can compose and send messages to specific authorities.
* Messages should be stored securely and be accessible for later reference.

1. **Directory of Authorities**

* A directory or list of available decision makers should be provided, complete with relevant details.
* Students should be able to search, filter, and select from this directory.

1. **Notifications**

* Upon message receipt, the respective authority should be notified.
* Students should also receive notifications for replies or other related communications.

1. **Privacy Controls**

* There should be settings for students and authorities to control the visibility and accessibility of their communication.

**Non-functional Requirements**

1. **Usability**

* The messaging interface and authority directory should be intuitive, ensuring students can communicate without hindrance.

1. **Performance**

* Message delivery and notification mechanisms should be swift, avoiding significant delays.

1. **Security**

* All communications should be encrypted and stored securely.
* Proper authentication methods should protect access to messaging functionalities.

1. **Scalability**

* As the academic community expands, the system should be capable of supporting increased communication volumes without degrading performance.

1. **Reliability**

* Consistent system uptime is critical, ensuring students can reach out whenever a pressing issue arises.

1. **Maintainability**

* Any future changes or updates to the communication feature should be possible without causing system-wide disruptions.

1. **Accessibility**

* The communication interface should adhere to accessibility norms, enabling all students to effectively use it.