

INFO 5440 - Appsole

<https://pages.github.coecis.cornell.edu/info4340-2023sp/appsole-project/>

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User Research

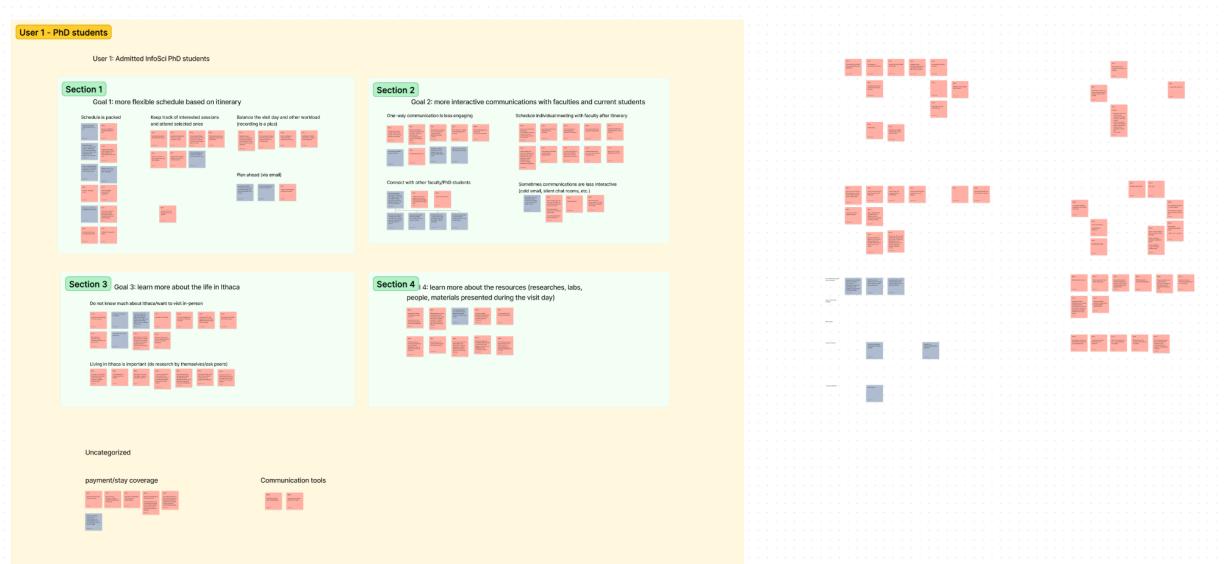
Summary of findings

- PhD

- Summary

Upon an analysis of each interview with the PhD students, we found that their familiarity with Ithaca and Cornell varied as some of them had attended school in New York while others were international and came from South Korea, or Taiwan. Due to the pandemic, all but one PhD student attended the visit day online, which truly influenced their experience. Despite having a very packed schedule everyday, most of them shared the sentiment that the visit day sessions are not very engaging and interactive and some events are also not relevant to their field of interests. Many international students had to attend the virtual zoom meetings with time differences, which made it even more challenging for them to engage. They wished for more opportunities to interact with the faculty and other PhD students (informally). Given the online experience, they were left with very limited knowledge about the Cornell campus and life in Ithaca, which they also wished to know more about.

- Analysis (see Appendix for detail)

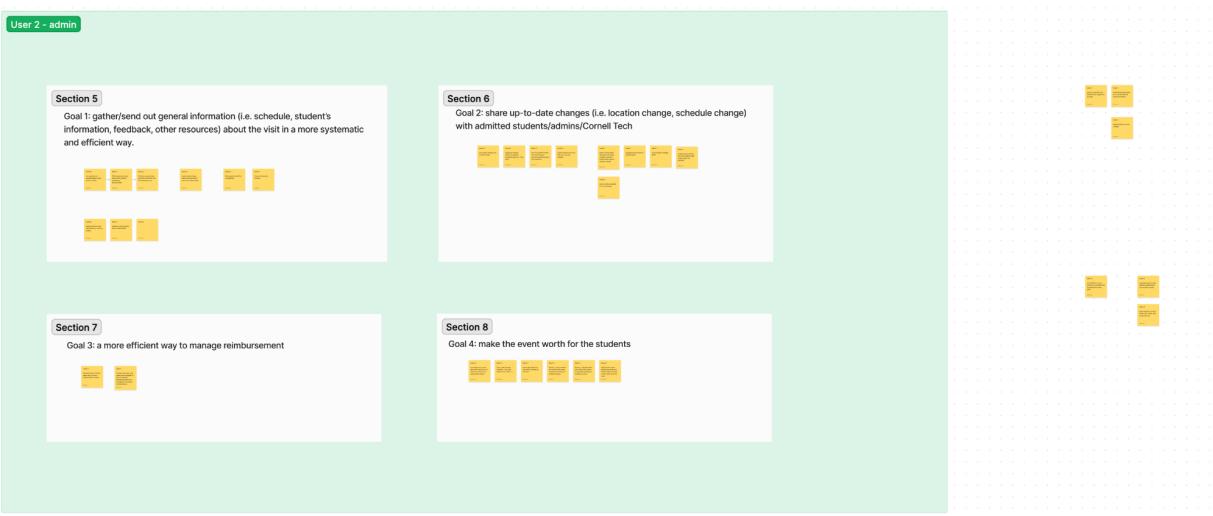


- Administrator

- Summary

According to our analysis of each interview with the administrators, we found that they would need help with sending out announcements, communicating with visiting students in emergency situations, and streamline the reimbursement process.

- Analysis (see Appendix for detail)



- Notes

Since we don't have the opportunity to observe the InfoSci PhD visit days, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 7 PhD students who attended either in-person or virtual PhD visit days and 1 administrator. We [took notes](#) and used an [affinity diagram](#) to identify the themes and understand users' motivations and needs.

Summary of each user

- PhD #1: In his final semester of his PhD. His PhD visit day was in person, and he was one of the only people who were able to make it because there was a huge snow storm. He drove here from Rochester, but flights and buses were largely canceled. He also attended visit day at UCSD and was deciding between the two. In the end, he chose Cornell because there seemed to be more resources available for affordability. Due to the fact that he had completed his undergraduate degree in Upstate NY, he was already familiar with the area and had gotten many recommendations for interesting professors to speak with at Cornell.
- PhD #2: A first-year Information Science PhD from South Korea. Attended undergrad in Korea and majored in Advertising. Her current area of research is within communication systems. She expected her PhD visit day to be physical, but it ended up being switched to remote due to Covid. She was accepted to several PhD programs, but knew she wanted to accept the Cornell offer even before she completed the visit day. She wanted the informal interpersonal connections from visit day but felt that it was rather hard to foster online.
- PhD #3 is a first year information science Phd from South Korea, as well. She attended PhD visiting day in 2022 virtually in Seoul. She worked as a data scientist for three years before deciding to pursue Phd and her research interest is about data science in education. She suffered a lot due to the time difference when attending the event. Visiting day didn't

make a large impact on her decision because she has already decided to go to Cornell before the visiting day. She feels more informal connections with admitted students and current students would be helpful.

- PhD #4: A first-year Information Science PhD student originally from New York City. She attended Princeton for undergrad and studied Sociology. Before coming to Cornell, she did her Master's at Trinity College Dublin. She chose Cornell because of great discussions with professors. Her PhD visit day was also virtual, and she attended as many sessions as possible. She actually organized her own trip to visit campus physically after the visit day. She visited two other campuses for prospective PhD: University of Michigan and UCLA.
- PhD #5 is a 1st-year infosci PhD who attended the virtual visit days in 2022 when she was in Taiwan. She described the itinerary as packed but well-organized. She attended the sessions she was interested in. She was too busy during the visit days to schedule individual meetings with professors after the event. She was impressed by different research directions and what others were doing. She wanted more opportunities to talk with faculty and other students as what she did in Yale's in-person visit days.
- PhD #6: is a 2nd year info sci PhD who attended the visit days online three years ago when she was in South Korea. She virtually visited three other phd programs at other schools prior to the Cornell visit day and she expressed that she already decided to study at Cornell before participating in the Cornell visit day. Regarding her experience with the visit days, she found that lots of information was covered very quickly and she believed it is due to the size of Cornell and its PhD program. All events are not very interactive, and it was generally hard to communicate and engage through zoom, especially with the time difference. Since it was online, it was also impossible for her to experience the weather and know more about the campus. She also wishes to have more individual/intimate time with actual PhD students and not just the faculty so she can expose herself to more genuine experience about Cornell and the PhD program.
- PhD #7 is a first year Information Science PhD student from California. She got her BS and Master degree form CMU and her research interest is in wearable technology. The visiting event occurred after all admission decisions came out, so she already knew she would go to Cornell at that point. She found people won't attend every zoom session because the schedule is packed.
- Admin #1 (Interviewee #8) is an events coordinator and administrator in Cornell CIS department for 25 years. She organized the itinerary (the school tour, lab and research presentations, bus to Cornell Tech, etc.) and managed the financial support (covered hotels, reimbursement of meals and transportations) for students. For the itinerary, she wants to remind students for the following sessions and encourage them to schedule individual meetings with faculty. Weather is a big consideration for her since it might significantly impact the schedule. She wants to quickly make changes to the whole schedule when encountering unexpected situations as well as inform students

immediately. She also wants to support students with additional materials (i.e. documents) if needed.

- Admin #2 (Interviewee #9) is the program coordinator in CIS for 7 years and has been working for the university for 34 years. She is mainly responsible for the “back side” of the event planning. She sent surveys before the event and gathered students' information such as living accommodation, food restrictions, traveling plans and ideas for activities. After the administration made all the schedule and planning, she would send the information back to students and answer any questions they might have via email. During the visit day, she would stay with other administrators and provide help and information in person. However, when an emergency happened, they would gather all the students in a room and announce the changes. Students had a very packed itinerary, but they were expected to schedule individual meetings if they had time. Based on the feedback she got from students who accepted the offer, most of the students said the visit day was great, but it's not that helpful since they had made their decision before going to the visit day. It makes her think whether the visit day is really worth it.
- Admin #3 (Interviewee #10) is the student service assistant for CIS graduate students. She is the main person who was in charge of the visiting day event. Currently, she uses Microsoft Excel to manage everything. She would like to have an app to help them communicate with visiting students efficiently. Besides, the reimbursement process now requires several manual inputs, which is time consuming.

Users

The app will have two groups of users who will primarily use the app and who will primarily administer the app.

User group 1 are admitted PhD students in Information Science. They have various concentrations in research fields and they are excited to learn the research directions and labs at Cornell. They are eager to talk more about their research interests and build connections with faculty and other PhD students. They come from all parts of the world and know little about living in Cornell University and Ithaca. In order to make the best decision of choosing school, they tend to attend multiple visit day events in different institutes.

User group 2 are administrators/event coordinators in the Information Science department. Since any emergency situation may occur during the visiting days, they want to create a concise schedule for students to be notified as soon as possible. To ensure the students can all have a positive experience, they want to provide as much information/resources as the students need during their visit days. They are looking for a more interactive way to communicate with admitted PhD students and answer their questions/address their concerns as much as possible, in

an efficient manner. They would like to find an app to facilitate the entire process by helping them manage the event logistics, such as scheduling sessions and tracking attendance.

User Goals

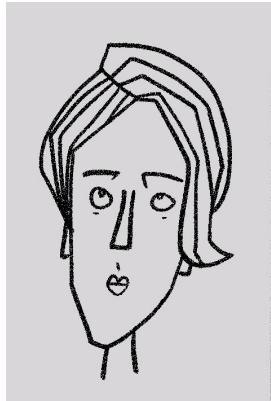
For user group 1 who are admitted PhD students in Information Science, the goals are:

- Users want a relevant schedule based on itinerary and individual needs
- Users want to have more interactive communication with faculty and foster informal connections with other PhD students
- Users want to have access to information and people within their area of research interests
- Users want to easily submit information to get reimbursed for expenses related to the PhD visiting day

For user group 2 who are administrators in Information Science, the goals are:

- They want to gather/send out general information (i.e. schedule, student's information, reimbursement, feedback, other resources) about the visit in a more systematic and efficient way
- They want to share the up-to-date changes (i.e. location change, schedule change) with admitted students/admins/Cornell Tech

Personas



Persona 1

Sunny is 24 years old and she is an admitted InfoSci PhD student from the West Coast. She is not aware of the weather and living conditions in Ithaca since she has spent her life in San Francisco. She heard about the great Cornell PhD program from one of her best friends who goes to Cornell for undergraduate. She is enthusiastic about research in Human-Computer Interaction. She is

attending PhD visit day and hopes to know as much about Cornell (and the program) as possible during this visit.



Persona 2

Kate is an administrator in the Info Sci department. She has worked at Cornell for 20 years and organized at least 10 visiting day events. She wants to create a concise schedule for students and quickly respond to any emergency situation as soon as possible. She wants to provide as much information/resources as the students need during their visit days as she wishes they can all have a positive experience. She is looking for a more interactive way to communicate with admitted PhD students and answer their questions/address their concerns as much as possible, in an efficient manner.

Task Scenarios

Task Scenario #1 [addressed in the schedule page]: Tomorrow is the last day of the visit day. Sunny wants to know what time the bus will leave for the Tech campus, so she can take some time before exploring the Cornell campus.

Task Scenario #2 [addressed in resources page – people and research tab]: After attending a whole day of scheduled information sessions, Sunny remembers thinking that the session about Machine Learning at Cornell stood out. She wants to refresh her memory and find more in-depth information about the lab's research goals.

Task Scenario #3 [addressed in announcement/resources page] : Sunny is very interested in the HCI research session that she just attended. She wants to learn more about the topic by sending an email asking to arrange an individual meeting to talk with Susan Fussell who hosted the session.

Task Scenario #4 [addressed in reimbursement page]: Sunny, who just finished her Master's degree in California, is currently visiting campus for prospective PhD day. Sunny booked a flight

from LAX to JFK and then took a private OurBus to campus. She wants to submit receipts to be reimbursed for her travel expenses.

Task added as most of our participants used resources page to address Task Scenario #3.

Task Scenario #5 [addressed in announcement page]: Sunny just finished her first day of events. She heard at the end of her last session that there will be an informal coffee chat that will be held tomorrow for the students and professors who are interested in chatting more about the different research areas. The event is not on the original itinerary and she wants to look up if the time and place for the coffee chat is released.

Task Scenario: ~~Kate received an email from the office of admission regarding the change of reimbursement policy. She would like to use a convenient communication method to inform visiting students about this change as soon as possible.~~

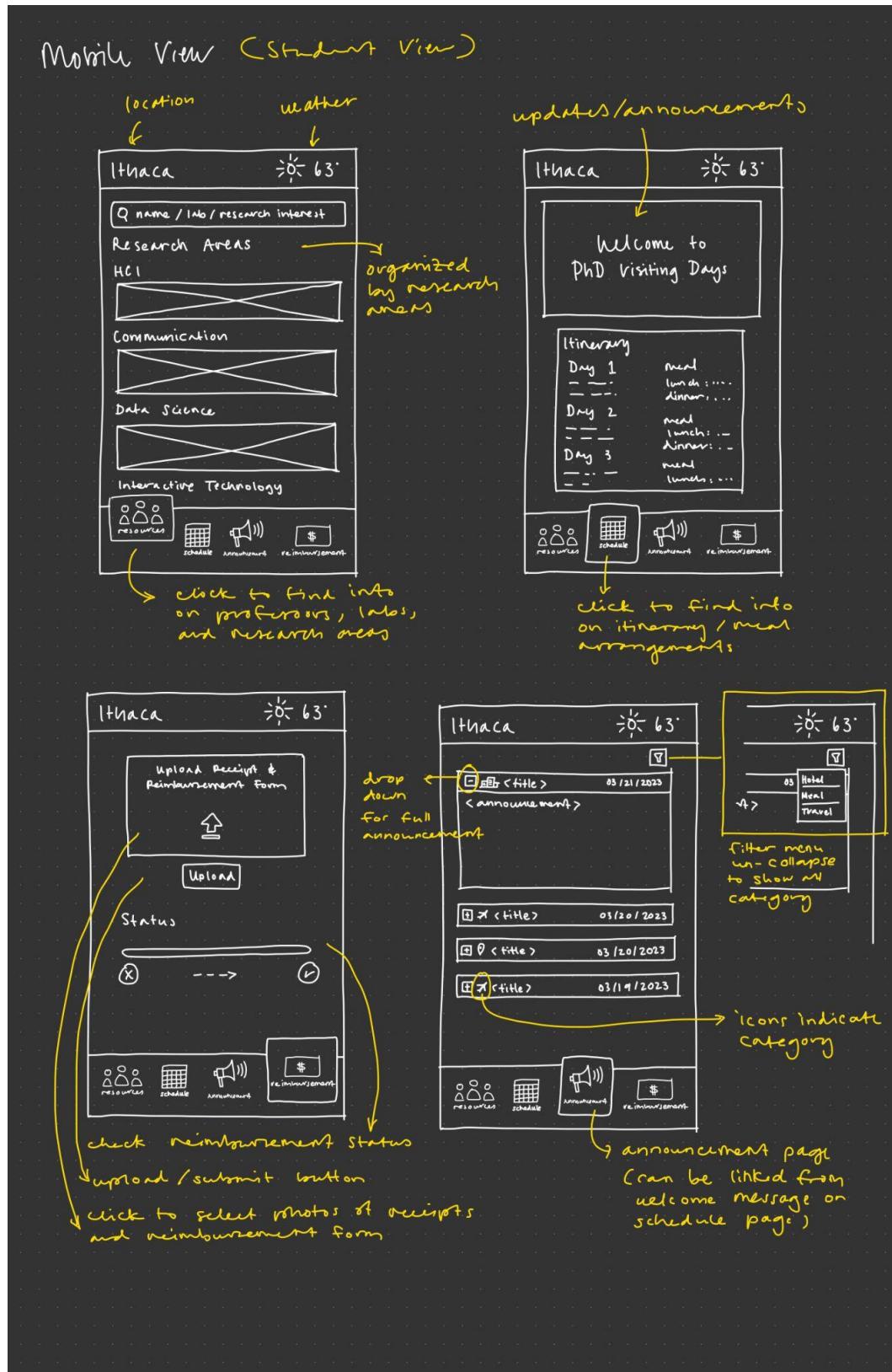
Task deleted as our group decides to design for the Fully Responsive Option.

Task Scenario: ~~Kate is currently planning the college's spring visiting day event, which will take place in two months. She has already secured representatives to speak for the labs and professors for the event and has created a schedule of sessions and tours. She wants to upload the itinerary to the app.~~

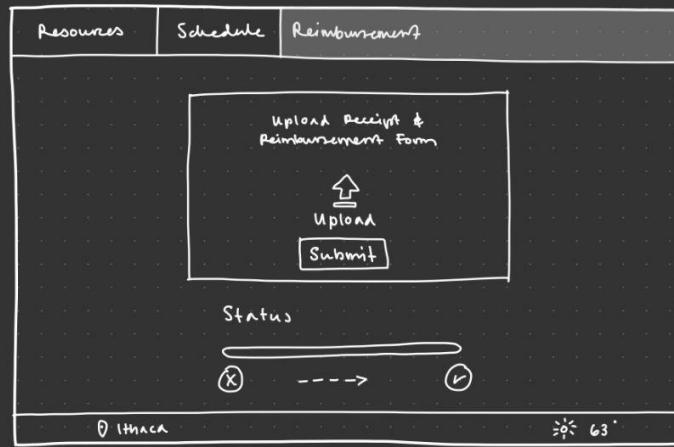
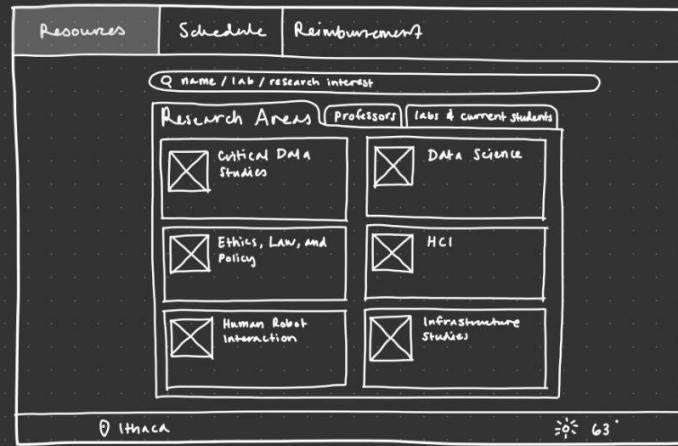
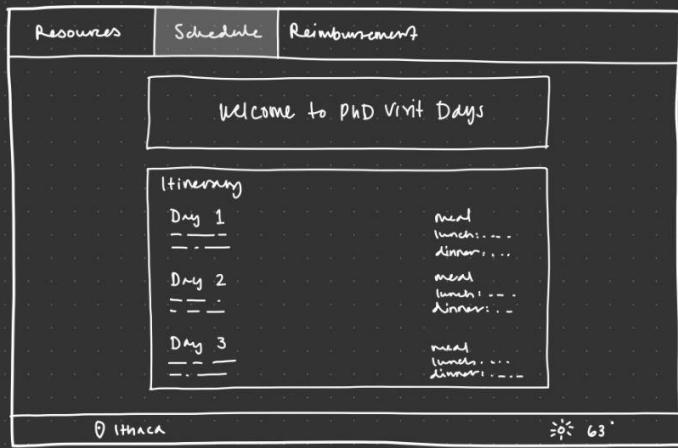
Task deleted as our group decides to design for the Fully Responsive Option.

Design

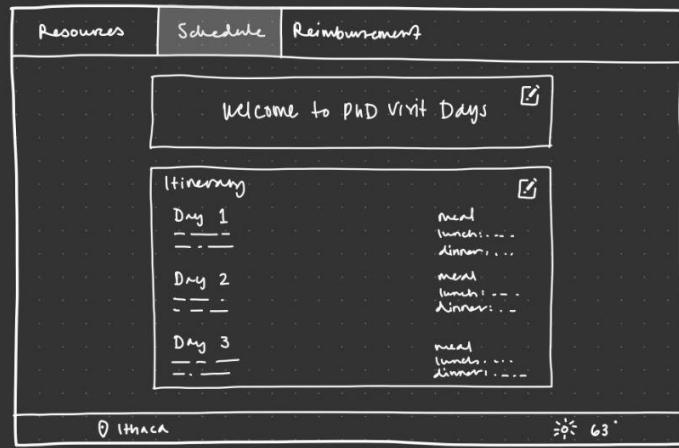
Final Design



Another iteration/design for Doctor View (Student View)



Aaron



Resources Schedule Reimbursement

form.pdf

receipt.jpg

DOWNLOAD ALL

Upload Approved Form



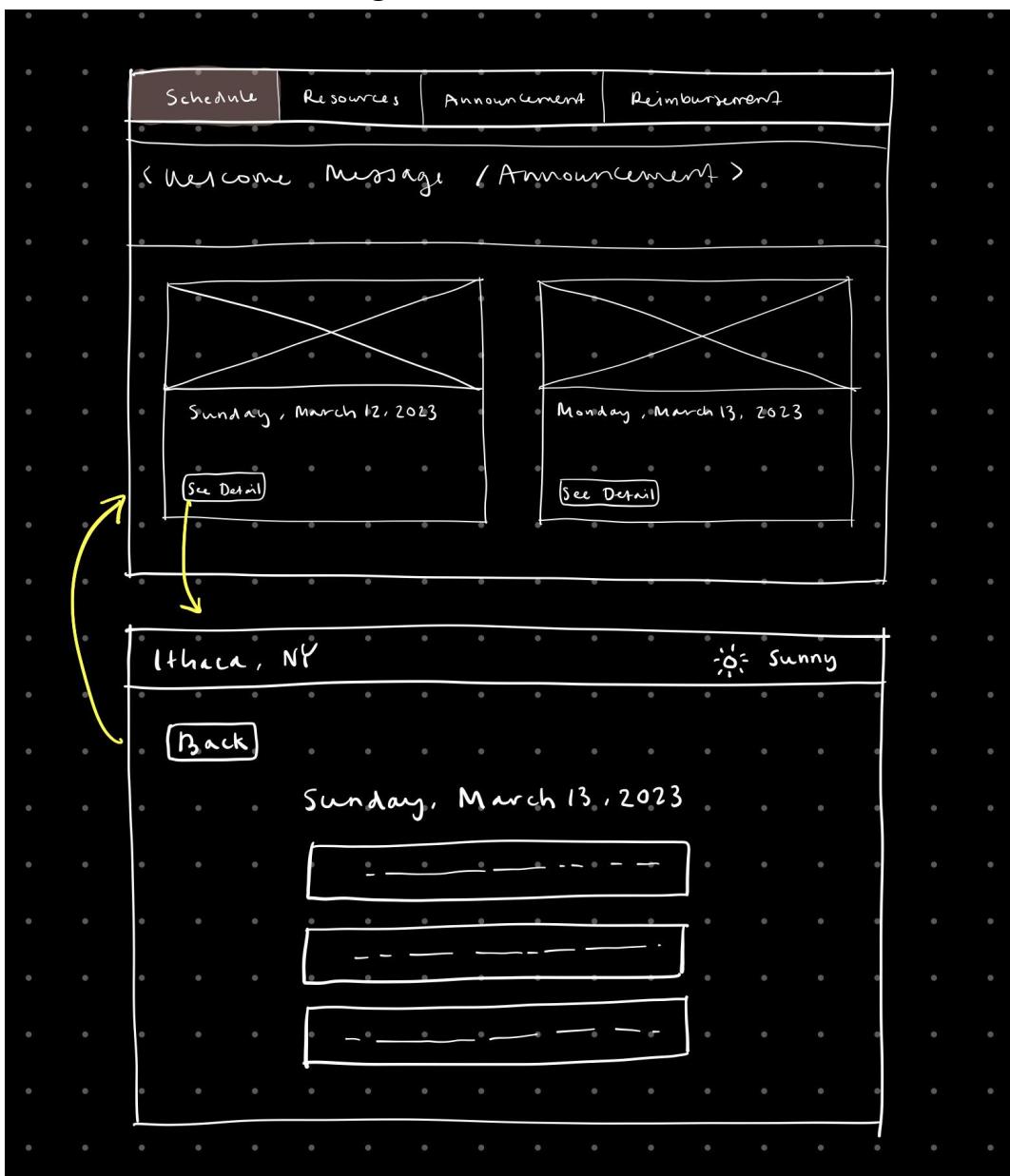
UPLOAD

Update Status

Ithaca

63°

Updated Sketch of the Schedule Page



Rationale

(Design conversation with the user)

Schedule

- We will have two main functions in the schedule page: Itinerary and Meal.
 - For admitted students, itinerary is one of the most important tools to help them learn the school and program. Based on our interview data, most of the students mentioned that the itinerary was sent via email a month ahead of the visit. The schedule was packed and they wanted to keep track of the sessions they were

interested in and attend selected ones. For example, PhD student 1 shared that he “looked at the schedule, keeping in mind labs he was interested in”. One of the design goals is to make “a relevant schedule based on itinerary and individual needs”. By providing the itinerary directly in the app, students can easily get access to the information, check their schedule and plan the visit at any time. If they have any food restrictions, they can learn the meal ahead of time and make accommodations on their own.

- For administrators, they need to handle an enormous amount of information such as distributing itinerary and gathering students information (i.e. food restrictions, living accommodations). One administrator shared that the most difficult part in managing was “dealing with too much information” since the team only had 36 people. Although it is hard to increase the human resources, one of our design goals for administrators is “sending out information in a more systematic and efficient way”. It can save more time and effort for the administrators by uploading and modifying the itinerary in the app directly. Providing food information via the app can also help students alleviate their concerns.

Resources

- One of the user needs from our research is that PhD students would like to have more information about current research topics that are available in information science labs at Cornell.
- [tab1] Research Areas
When users click resources, they would be able to see several research topics. A search box would be available for users to input any keywords, such as AI/ML. Research topics are displayed as blocks with corresponding titles on top. Users would be able to easily navigate to any specific topic on this page.
- [tab2] Professors
Besides the research areas, a tab called professors is implemented. It contains a list of professors and their research interests. Users can use the contact information to reach out to the professors.
- [tab3] Labs/Current Students
In the resources page, we designed another tab to list contact information of all current students in each lab.

Announcements (**note this was added after the initial implementation, as detailed below**)

- After receiving feedback on one of our earlier milestones, we were encouraged to slightly increase the scope of the project
- Based on user interviews, we decided that it would be beneficial to also include an announcements page as students should easily be able to access information about “quick changes” or other miscellaneous information which may not fit nicely in with the schedule page

- Furthermore, we already had one large announcement on the home page (schedule) and we believed that it was thus natural for this announcement to be clickable and lead the user to an actual announcements page.

Reimbursement

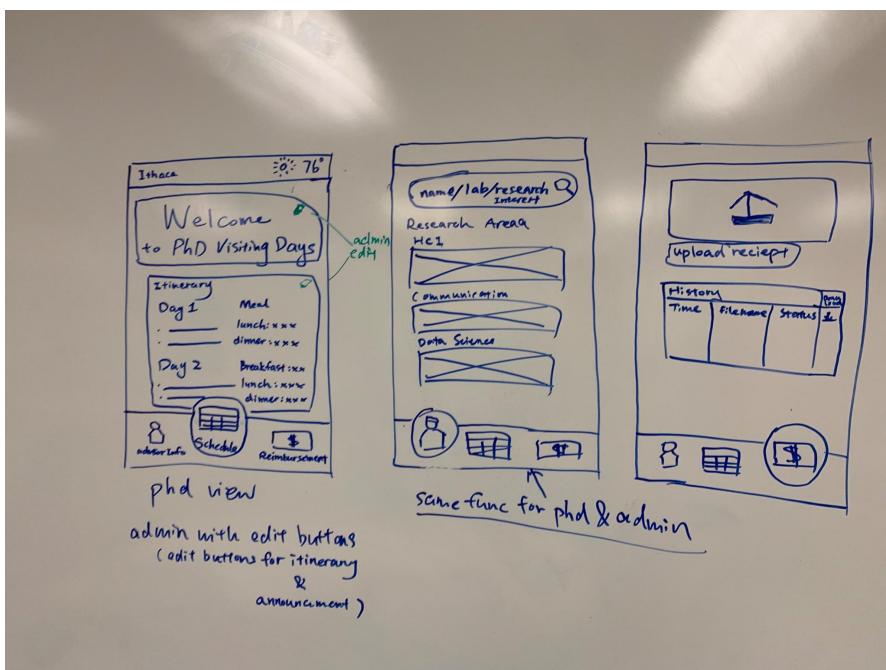
- [user view] Upload/download receipts and reimbursements forms & notes
Users would be able to use this page to upload their receipts and reimbursements forms. A large file dropbox is placed in the middle of the page to keep the page simple and easily navigated. Also, a progress bar is placed under the dropbox to visualize the uploading progress.
- [admin view] Download
For the admin view, a file dropbox is also available for administrators to upload any approved form or required documents, such as the reimbursement form, for users to fill out. On the left side of the dropbox, all uploaded documents from users are listed. Administrators can download all documents with one click. There would also be a check box at the bottom for administrators to check if they have downloaded the new uploaded files from users.

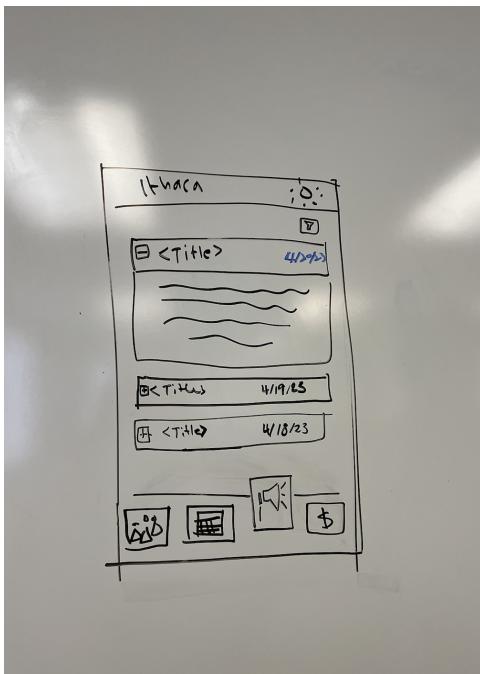
Styling

- Theme color: red, gray, and white. We got our theme color from Cornell branding website to keep it consistent with other Cornell websites.
- Font: we use the default font family in html to make our website easy to read.

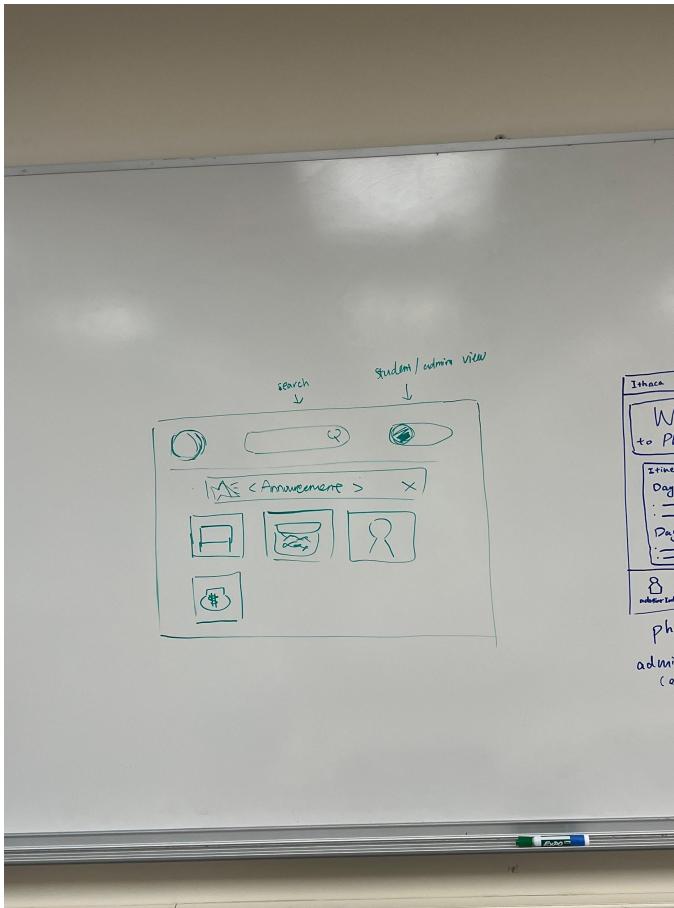
Brainstorming Sessions (first draft/iterations)

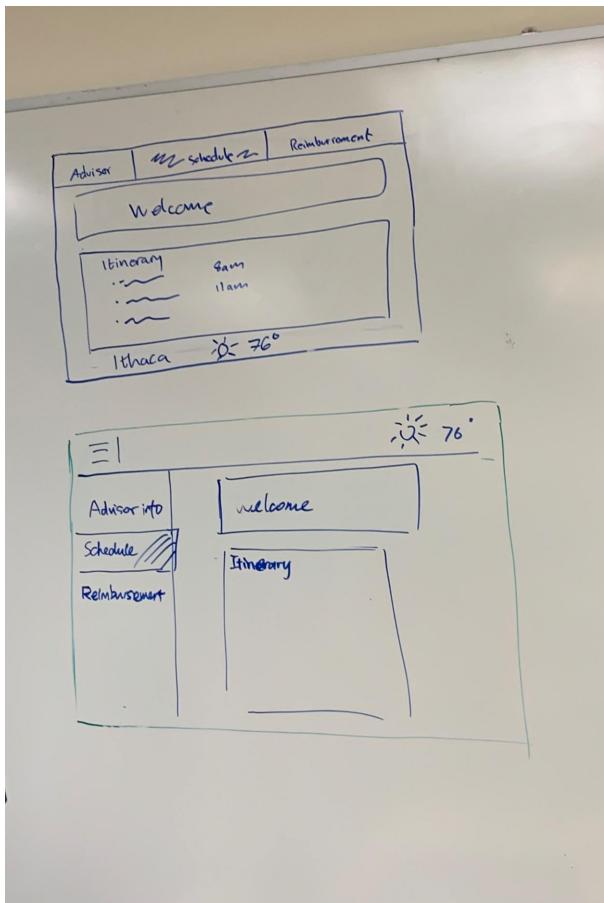
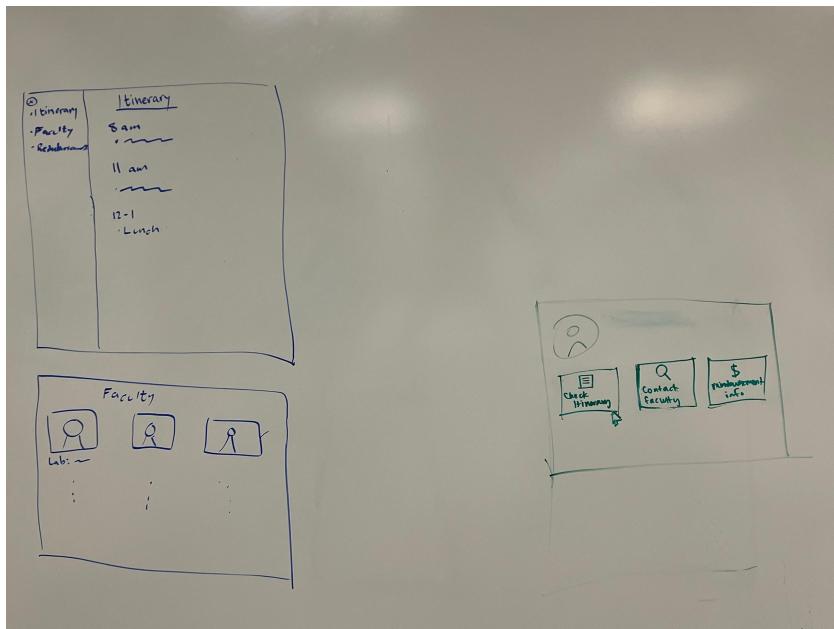
Mobile version

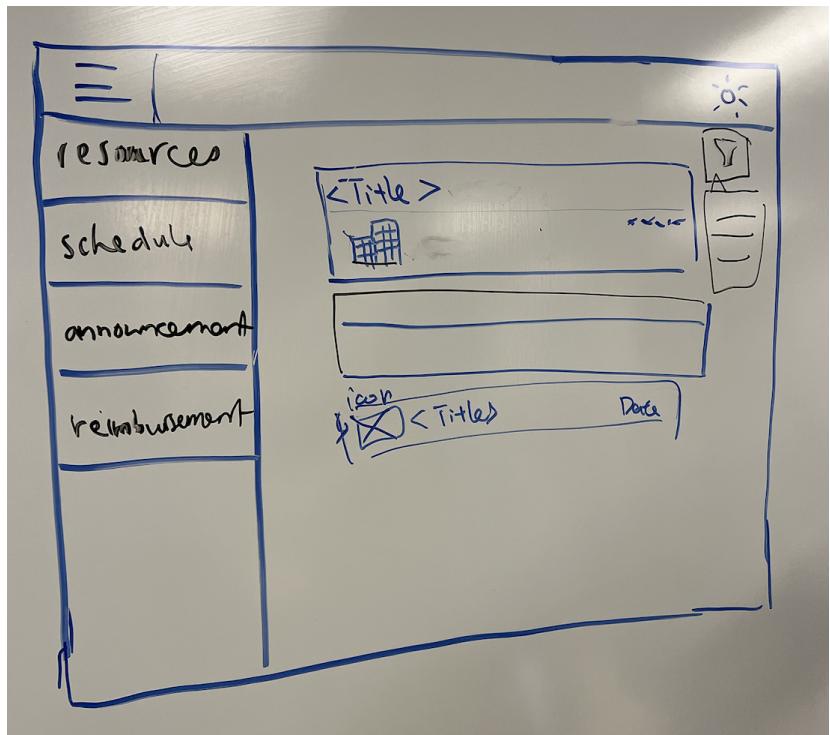




Desktop version







Second iteration (for desktop version)

Desktop View (Student View)

Prototype 1: Main Dashboard

The dashboard features a sidebar with 'Resources', 'Schedule', 'Announcement', and 'Reimbursement' buttons. A weather widget shows a sun icon and 63°. The main area displays a 'Welcome to PhD Visit Days' message, followed by an 'Itinerary' section with three days:

- Day 1**: meal, lunch, dinner
- Day 2**: meal, lunch, dinner
- Day 3**: meal, lunch, dinner

Prototype 2: Research Areas

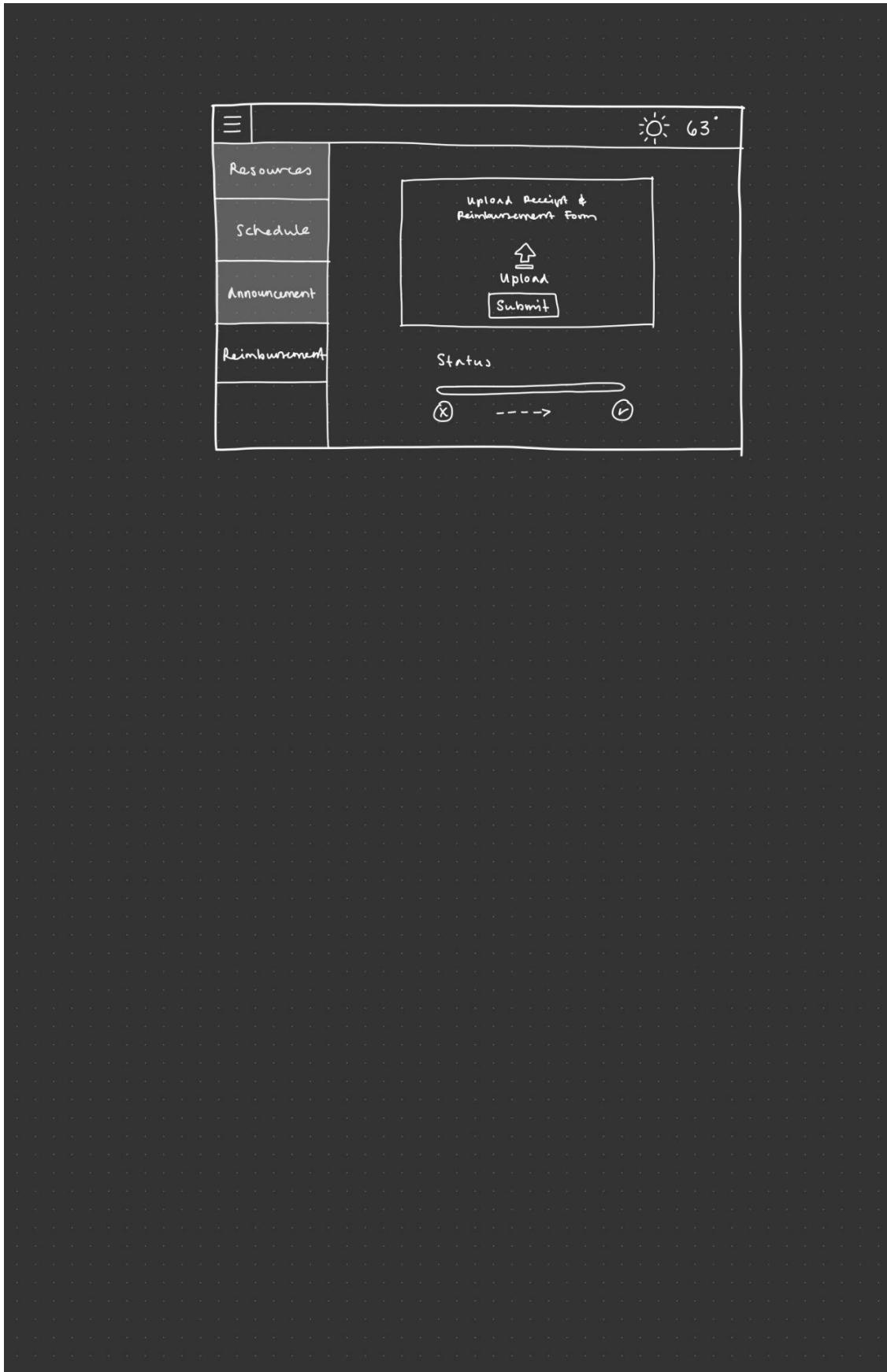
The sidebar remains the same. The main area includes a search bar ('Q Name / lab / research interest') and a grid of research areas:

Research Areas	Professors	labs & current students
Critical Data Studies		X DATA SCIENCE
Ethics, Law, and Policy		X HCI
Human Robot Interaction		X Infrastructure Studies

Prototype 3: Announcement List

The sidebar remains the same. The main area lists four announcements:

- 03/21/2023**: **<title>** **<announcement>**
- 03/20/2023**: **<title>**
- 03/20/2023**: **<title>**
- 03/19/2023**: **<title>**



Implementation

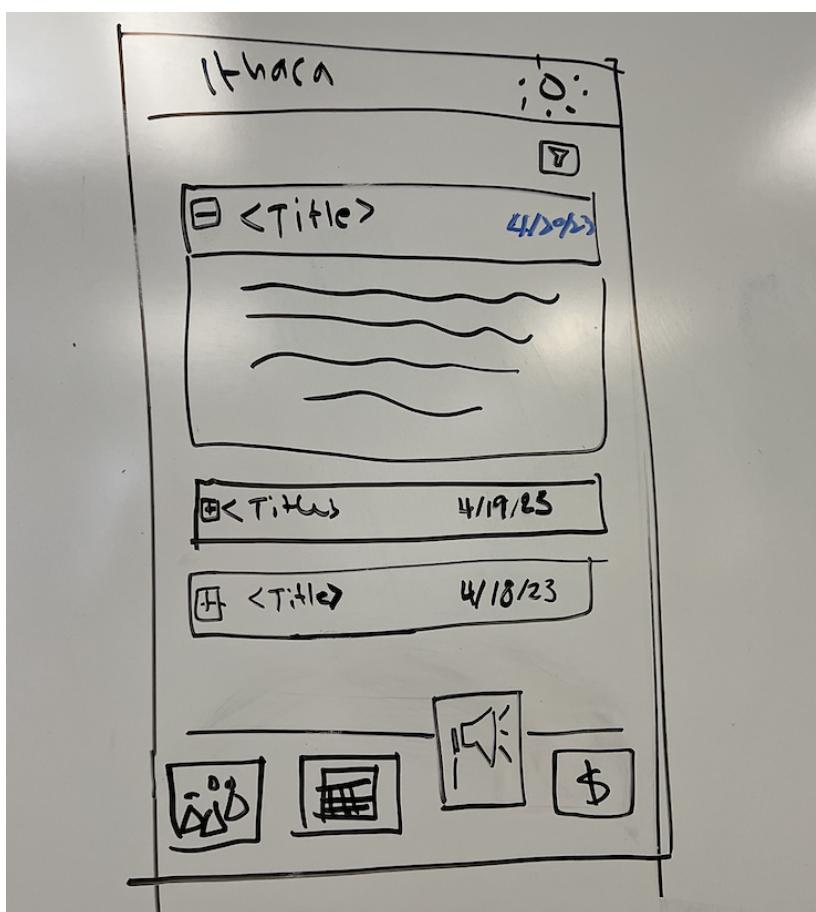
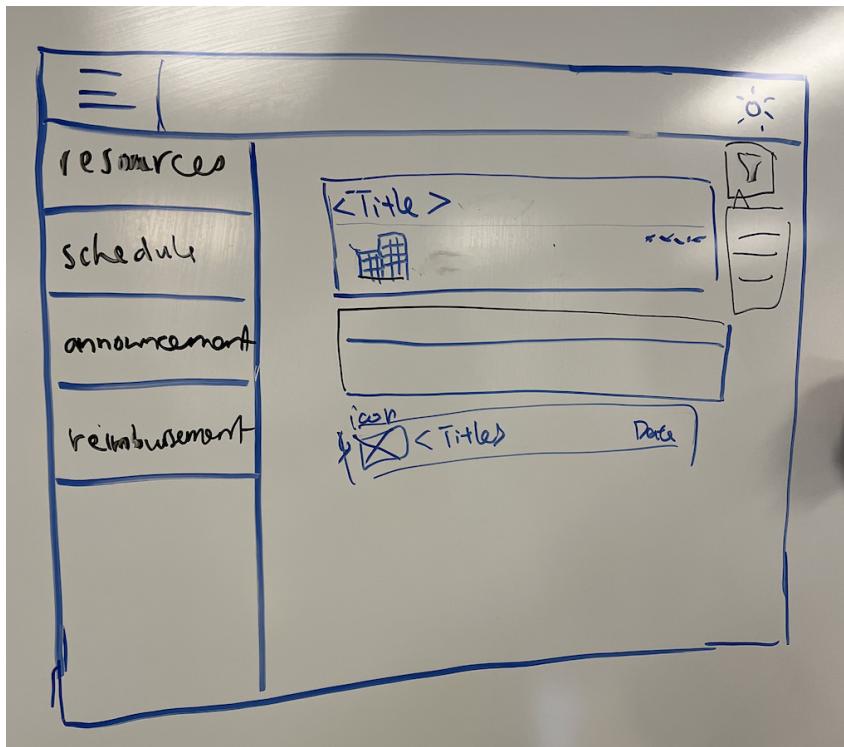
Changes from previous milestone artifact

We decided to implement a responsive prototype for PhD students. Therefore, we removed the task scenarios #5 and #6 for administrators. To make the description more accurate, we revised task scenario #3 to “*Sunny is very interested in the HCI research session that she just attended. She wants to learn more about the topic by arranging an individual meeting to talk with Susan Fussell who hosted the session*”, which can be achieved with the current design of our app. Based on the feedback from the previous milestone, we added a new view for the announcement, which is aligned with students’ needs for getting up-to-date information during the visit day.

Implementation planning artifacts

We designed new desktop and mobile views for the announcement page. For the rest of the page, we implemented them following the design from the previous design session. We decided on 3 components for the navigation bar (desktop, app and weather bar). We had 7 fixtures (json files) for storing and fetching different data dynamically.

The following are our initial sketches for the announcement page:



Accomplishments

We implemented 4 responsive views: Schedule, Resources, Announcement and Reimbursement. We created uniform components for the navigation bars across all the pages. There are two different designs of navigation bars for different screen sizes (desktop and mobile).

The schedule page provides Sunny (our persona) with information regarding her daily itinerary (and mandatory events), meal options, and more information about Cornell; this page is designed to address the tasks from Task Scenario #1 and #3.

The resource page aims to help Sunny find information including research fields, labs and people, achieving the task from Task Scenario #2. Each listing is a reusable card component, displaying an image, a title and a short description. The card title is set to be Cornell blue (obtained through the official Cornell branding website) and an arrow icon is added to the item title to indicate that each card is clickable and can direct users to an external link.

The announcement page is designed for Sunny to check up-to-date information and it fulfills Task Scenario #5. The announcements are listed in descending order of time. Sunny can use the small icons before the title of the announcement to quickly identify the category of the announcement and the underline of the titles indicating it is clickable. Once Sunny clicks the red button, she is able to view the full announcement.

The reimbursement page is very intuitive and it accomplishes Task Scenario #4. Sunny can upload her receipts and reimbursement forms. The reimbursement page has a status section that will reflect uploading progress on a progress bar once the user clicks the submit button.

Evaluation

Summary of findings

We found our app is easy to use. All of our participants successfully completed all the task scenarios, stating that the tasks are easy and straightforward. More specifically, users were able to upload the files to the reimbursement page (task 4) with ease and locate the information, the goal of the Machine Learning Lab at Cornell (task 2), on the resources page. However, two participants who tested with the mobile version had a hard time recognizing the resource icon on the bottom navigation bar. For the schedule page, all users were able to find the bus departure time (task 1) in the correct place, but all of them believed that the text was hard to read and that it was difficult to locate the needed information efficiently. All users were also able to find the contact information of Susan Fussell and schedule a meeting with her (task 3). Nevertheless, only one participant utilized the announcement page for the follow-up info session with Professor Fussell. The rest of the participants used the people tab under the resource page to find her profile and get her contact information.

In addition, participants provided other valuable suggestions such as the design of the itinerary (use images and fewer words) and announcement (arrow icon to show the collapse). We learned from professors and our clients that they liked the design of the weather icon. They suggested a different icon that can better indicate each resource item would direct to an external page. The announcement title should be more consistent.

Testing Methods

Since most of our ideal users were not around Ithaca at this time, we conducted three user testing remotely and only one in-person. All actions were observed by the interviewer when conducting the tests in person. For the remote sessions, interviewers sent the URL of our app to the participants and asked them to share their screens before testing. Interviewers would be able to observe all actions of the participants while they were trying to complete the tasks.

We interviewed four participants in total. Two of them were tested in the mobile version and another two were tested in the desktop version. We took a screenshot of the tested app view and asked the participants to think aloud.

During the demo day, we showcased our app through a 2-minute pitch, emphasizing our design objectives and demonstrating specific task scenarios to both peers and faculty members. Then we received additional feedback on the app's usability and visual design.

Description of Participants

Two of the participants are prospective phd students while the other two are current senior CS students and upcoming master students in MPS InfoSci. Prospective phd students are our main

target users, as they are looking forward to learning more about different programs and resources to help them decide on the next steps. Those who are not prospective phd students have some knowledge of InfoSci areas and they are interested in learning more about the academic resources for their future study, which makes them fit the requirements for testing. The information for each participant is listed below.

- Participant 1
 - Iris is an admitted master student in InfoSci, she will attend Cornell in fall. She is currently located in Rochester, NY. She has visited Cornell once.
 - Why do they fit requirements for testing?
Although she is not a prospective phd student, she applied to Cornell recently and she accepted the offer of MPS infosci. She is eager to learn more about the campus and academic resources for her future study.
- Participant 2
 - A senior Computer Science student at Cornell.
 - Why do they fit requirements for testing?
Even though this individual is not exactly a prospective Info Sci PhD, they do have enough knowledge to understand the context of CIS and the task scenarios. They are also late in their college career and understand what needs to be considered when wanting to understand more about a program, such as a PhD.
- Participant 3
 - He studied computer science at UBC. He is now working as a software engineer. He has visited Cornell.
 - Why do they fit requirements for testing?
He is a prospective PhD student who's currently thinking about going back to school. He's looking forward to learning more about different programs and resources to help him decide his next steps.
- Participant 4
 - Christine is a senior studying Biochemistry at UW. She is applying for a PhD this year and has been invited to visit Cornell.
 - Why do they fit requirements for testing?
She is a prospective PhD student who has been invited to visit Cornell for an interview. She's looking forward to learning more about different research topics and academic resources.

Design Iterations After Testing

Based on our primary findings, we propose the following changes we should make:

- Redesign the schedule page

To increase the readability, we changed the itinerary page to cards with images and brief summaries. The users can learn more detail about each day's schedule by clicking the "See Detail" button. See the final design sketch in the Design section.

- Remove the search field from the Resources page
During the testing, we found that the search field on the resource page is less useful, as the external resource page already had a working search bar. Therefore, we removed the redundant search function from the resources page.
- Indicate the current page by highlighting the navbar button on the desktop view
Instead of using black and gray text on the navigation bar, we changed to white and gray to highlight the status, which is more recognizable.
- Change the resource icon, or add a description under each icon on the mobile view
We added text under each icon on the mobile view to make the navigation more recognizable.
- Design a better task scenario with more concrete contextual information to make use of the announcement page
- A different icon that indicates the external link
We changed the old arrow icon to a more intuitive one, which can better communicate that the website would direct the user to an external page by clicking each resource information.
- Announcement title layout
We removed the button background of the announcement title to improve the readability and alignment consistency. We changed the title to a button without border and background. We didn't choose the link button since it looks like it directs users somewhere else. One challenge we had is to add a status icon for each announcement, indicating whether a thread is shown or hidden. In the current version, the arrow icon would not change when the user opens or closes a thread. But we would like to keep the design since it is a suggestion from our users, which helps communicate that the announcement object is collapsible. And we anticipate that this issue could be fixed for future work.

To sum up, most of the changes have been implemented except for the new task scenario and announcement styling. For future work, it would be great to test the revised prototype with our target users and keep resolving the usability and styling issues.

Contributions

Philip Ericsson

- Interviewed PhD #2
 - Took notes
 - Added notes to affinity diagram

- Interviewed PhD #4
 - Took notes
 - Added notes to affinity diagram
- Participated in design
- Implemented “Announcement” features
- Completed one iteration of user testing
- Conducted user testing #2
- Contributed to test evaluation and report

Iris Zheng

- Interviewed PhD #3
 - Took notes
 - Added notes to affinity diagram
- Interviewed PhD #7
 - Took notes
 - Added notes to affinity diagram
- Interviewed Admin #3
 - Took notes
 - Added notes to affinity diagram
- Participated in design
- Implemented “Reimbursement” features
- Published PWA
- Completed one iteration of user testing
- Contributed to the test evaluation and report
- Conducted user testing #4

Qianya Lin

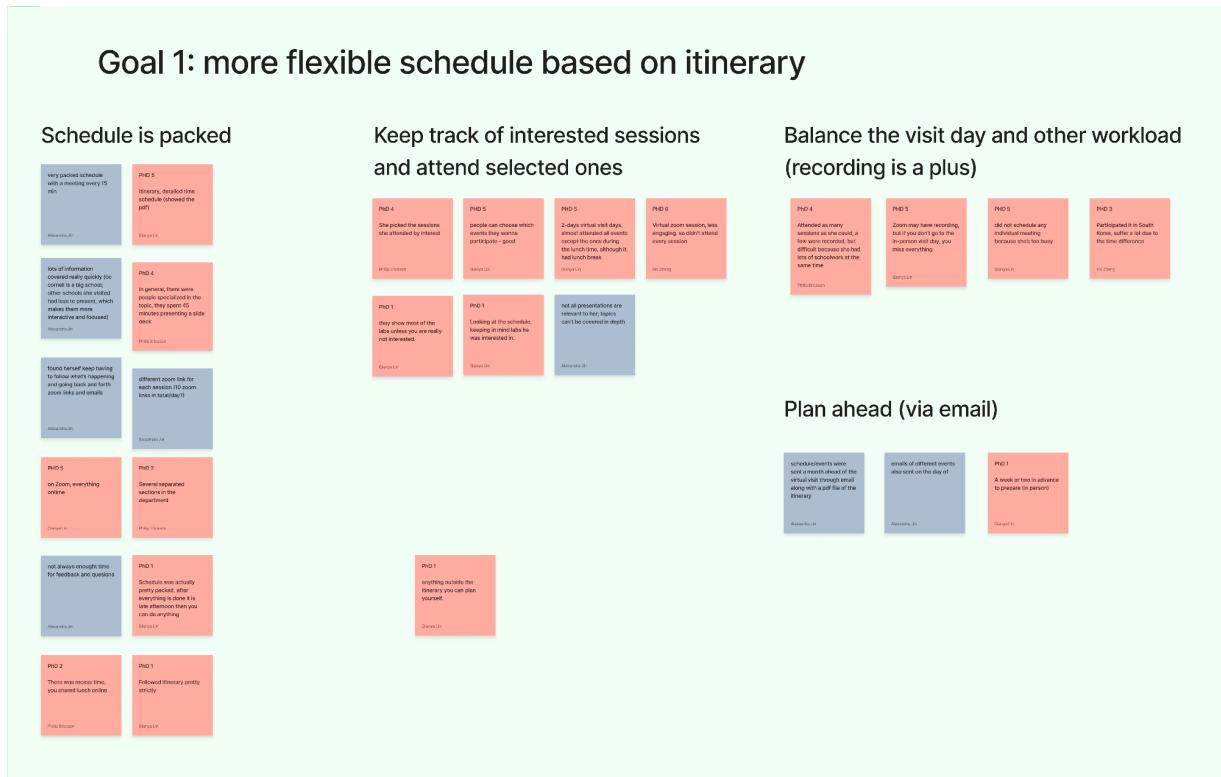
- Interviewed PhD #5
 - Took notes
 - Added notes to affinity diagram
- Interviewed Admin #2
 - Took notes
 - Added notes to affinity diagram
- Analyzed the affinity diagram
- Participated in design
- Implemented “Resources” feature
- Completed one iteration of user testing
- Conducted user testing #1
- Contributed to the test evaluation and report
- Implemented design iterations after evaluations

Alexandra Jin

- Interviewed PhD #6
 - Took notes
 - Added notes to affinity diagram
- Participated in design
- Drew the second draft of the sketches
- Implemented “Schedule” features and the navigation bar
- Completed one iteration of user testing
- Conducted user testing #3

Appendix

Affinity diagram (PhD students)

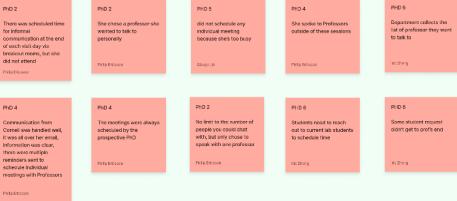


Goal 2: more interactive communications with faculties and current students

One-way communication is less engaging



Schedule individual meeting with faculty after itinerary



Connect with other faculty/PhD students



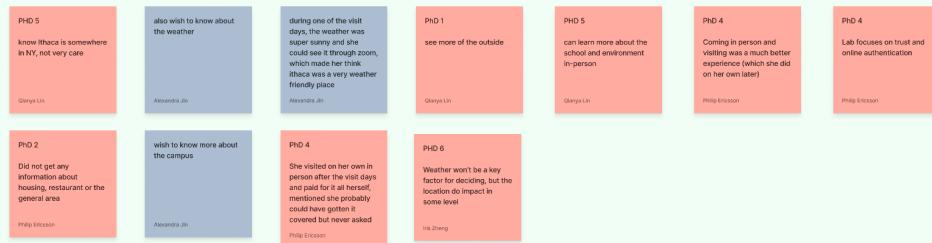
Sometimes communications are less interactive (cold email, silent chat rooms, etc.)



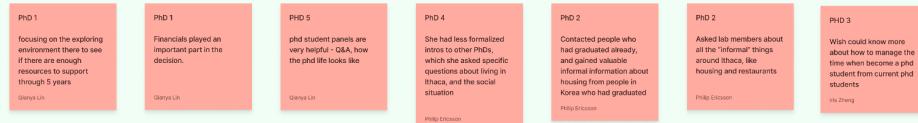
Section 3

Goal 3: learn more about the life in Ithaca

Do not know much about Ithaca/want to visit in-person

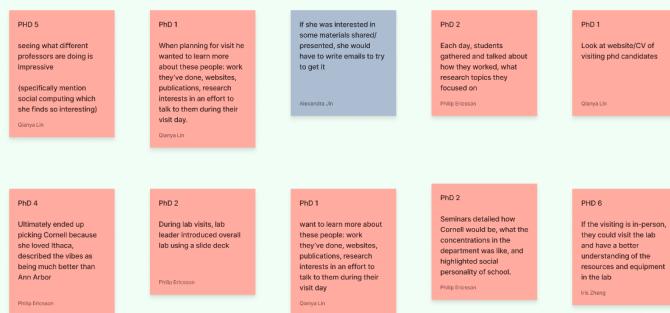


Living in Ithaca is important (do research by themselves/ask peers)



Section 4

Goal 4: learn more about the resources (researches, labs, people, materials presented during the visit day)



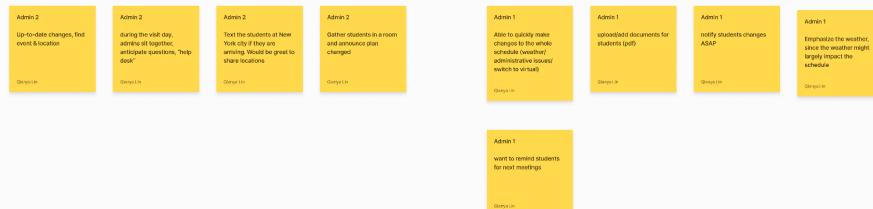
Affinity diagram (Administrators)

Goal 1: gather/send out general information (i.e. schedule, student's information, feedback, other resources) about the visit in a more systematic and efficient way.



Section 6

Goal 2: share up-to-date changes (i.e. location change, schedule change) with admitted students/admins/Cornell Tech



Section 7

Goal 3: a more efficient way to manage reimbursement



Goal 4: make the event worth for the students

Admin 2 encourage one-on-one discussion (big dinner for chat (sun+mon), 1 hour break before dinner) Qianya Lin	Admin 2 Tues - loose itinerary schedule → tour, talk, whatever from 8:30 - 11 Qianya Lin	Admin 1 encourage students to schedule the faculty by their own Qianya Lin	Admin 2 Itinerary - Lab discussion with faculty (Not require to attend all, but hope all students can join) Qianya Lin	Admin 2 Itinerary - Lab discussion with faculty (Not require to attend all, but hope all students can join) Qianya Lin	Admin 2 It doesn't matter since people have made their decision before coming → How much worth the event. Qianya Lin
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Interview Transcripts

PhD Interview #1

Introductions

Consent received from user

Can you introduce yourself?

- I'm Ru Zhao,
- 5th year PhD,
- area of research: HCI,
- doing this kind of work for 8 years starting in undergrad

Experience preparing for PhD visit day?

- In a personal statement, he listed three people he wanted to work with.
- When planning for a visit he wanted to learn more about these people: work they've done, websites, publications, research interests in an effort to talk to them during their visit day.

How far in advance?

- A week or two in advance

When you applied to PhD, did you look at faculty beforehand? Or only before visit day?

- In a personal statement, he talked about his research and how it aligns with the people here. He already knew who he wanted to talk to if he was admitted.
- When applying (months before) he went online and researched and talked to his previous advisor.

Before the visit, how did you get in contact with professors?

- When you apply, you try to have previous people you work with introduce you. If not, you cold email.

Were you successful in your cold emails?

- No. I just talked to them during the day of interviews.
- His previous advisor would receive hundreds of these emails.
- Try to have your previous advisor connect you, that is key.

Did you go to other visit days?

- The only other one was UCSD. Wasn't difficult to know the area around Cornell, but UCSD he didn't know.
- Questioned what it would be like in SD and if he would enjoy being there for that long.

Recall your expenses for Cornell PhD visit day?

- Doesn't remember it too well. He drove here, and they probably reimbursed him for gas even.
- Food was accommodated, and housing was accommodated.

Where did you stay?

- In a hotel

How did the reimbursement process for gas work?

- You gave them receipts for all expenses, they asked you to fill out something.

Did you remember to do that?

- Does not remember how or when but he did it.

How did they pay?

- Right to bank account

What was your impression of campuses?

- Heavy snow storm in Ithaca. Didn't go outside a lot but thought the campus was beautiful.
- Tech campus was still in rebuilding during his visit. So they talked to people in a building but did not get to go to Roosevelt Island.

With the snowstorm, how did the itinerary change?

- He had already lived in the area so already knew what to expect in terms of the weather. But for SD, the difference was that he had a chat where someone mentioned that funding for housing was limited.
- Financials played an important part in the decision.

How did the snow impact?

- A lot of people probably couldn't make it, so does not know how they decided, but he knew what to expect.
- Saw a few students at UCSD visit day that did not make it to Cornell visit day.

Recall planning for UCSD visit day?

- Does not recall how the ticket was booked.
- They planned housing for him.
- Schedule preplanned.
- Students would lead the group around.

How did they communicate the itinerary?

- Email, but does not remember exactly.

Deciding factor for choosing Cornell?

- Funding
- Cheaper places to live
- He knew people that would work here
- High profile people in the industry

Did you meet this person during the visit day?

- Yes, he thinks so

Walk us through some activities?

- Schedule to visit every lab, they would introduce themselves and speak about their research.
- Then you could talk openly to the students.
- One on one talks with advisors you are interested in talking with
- Tour campus

Do you also visit other labs?

- Yes, they show most of the labs unless you are really not interested.
- They have a schedule where you go and visit every lab.

How much did you reference the itinerary?

- Followed it pretty strictly.
- Remember to use just the schedule.

Were you in a group the entire time?

- Yes

How much unscheduled time did you have?

- Schedule was actually pretty packed, after everything is done it is late afternoon then you can do anything.
- Some of the students may show you around and there was an after hour thing.
- In SD he remembers going to a bar.
- Students can provide with allotted money.

Did you meet friends during visit day?

- Yes, went to San Diego first and met three students that also came to visit Cornell.
- PhD students generally already kind of meet each other.
- They were planning to reconnect at the Cornell day.

How did you plan together to meet up?

- Coordinated where they were planning to visit.
- Connected on Facebook.

Where did you live prior to Ithaca?

- Rochester.
- Lived there for undergrad. Kind of knew the area.

Who was the advisor you were talking about?

- Undergrad advisor from Rochester.

How else were they involved in visit day planning?

- Mainly advice for applying, not really a lot for actual visits.
- May recommend you speak with a particular person.

How did you keep track of all the people you needed to talk to?

- Looking at the schedule, keeping in mind labs he was interested in.

How many labs did you attend?

- No, does not remember.

Did you have input into your itinerary?

- Not really, but anything outside the itinerary you can plan yourself.

What tech did you use?

- Mainly phone, perhaps laptop.

Anything you would have done differently?

- Would have liked to see more of the outside while here if there wasn't a storm.
- Talking to more faculty, sometimes you want to find more than just talking to faculty that you already know.

Concluding remarks.

- We learned that the main goal was to find a research advisor.

Phd Student Rue - Iris

- Look at website/CV of visiting phd candidates
- Prepare A week or two before they come in or the visit day
- As candidate: know who would like to talk to before coming to the visit day, recommend working with
- Reach out method: cold emails
- Other visit day
 - UC San Diego, fly to, don't know the area, focusing on the exploring environment there to see if there are enough resources to support through 5 years
 - Live close to Ithaca, familiar with Ithaca area
- Reimbursement
 - Transfer to bank
- Tech campus v.s. Ithaca main campus
 - Still building at that time
 - Need to get access to enter google building.
- San Diego offers lower funding, the living cost is high there so there might be some financial difficulty/issue if went
- How did the snow impact the visiting day?
 - Some student met at San diego got into Cornell as well, wish to visit here but due to snow day they were not able to
- Communication method
 - Someone uses email to communicate the itinerary.
- Key factors that led to choosing Cornell

- Funding
 - Live close to this area
- Visit day activity
 - Given Schedule, when and where to visit every lab
 - Schedule meeting with lab leading professor
 - Visit every lab and try to talk to as many lab as possible
 - Walk around to navigate
 - The schedule was pretty tight
 - Some phd students would show you around
- Went to san diego first
- Meet phd student and use facebook to connect with other phd students
- Live in Rochester and attend University of Rochester for undergrad
- Not require to talk to student advisor, it's up to you
- Just go and talk to them, don't remember how many lab talk to
- Anything done differently
 - Talk to more faculty and people

PhD Interview #2

For reference: <https://infosci.cornell.edu/phd/admissions/phd-visit-day>

Greetings: Hello! How are you doing today?

Summarizing the interview goal and process: We are designing an app prototype to improve the experience of admitted PhD students and administration on InfoSci PhD Visit Day for our group project in App Design and Prototyping class. The interview will be audio-recorded and will last approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

Questions:

“To get to know you better, I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself.”

Demographics

- Could you briefly tell me about yourself?
 - What is your name/background?
 - Eun-Jeong Kang
 - First year PhD
 - From South Korea
 - Undergrad major in Advertising
 - Research in communication systems

Visit Day Planning

- Could you briefly describe your InfoSci PhD Visit Day?
 - Occurred last year in Feb

- Expected that it would be conducted physically, but they mentioned because of Covid they had to change settings to online
 - Online for three or four days
 - Detailed how Cornell would be, concentration of department, social personality
 - Several separated sections in the department
 - Each day, students gathered and talked about how they worked, research topics
 - Remembers it took more than three of four hours each day
 - Recess time, sharing lunch online
 - After sessions, you talk more freely among PhD students
 - Several chances to speak with professors
 - Chose a professor she wanted to talk to personally
 - No limit to the people you can chat with
 - Only chose to speak with one professor
 - Did not visit other universities (declined their offers), had already decided on Cornell
 - Visit day aims to persuade student to come to university
 - Wanted to explore what field to do research in, who are the faculty?
 - Wanted to get a face, not just read a list of faculty
 - Talked more to faculty rather than PhD students
 - To be honest, she felt like she could not proactively participate, only listened
 - Could not proactively participate because it is first day to visit all the professors, overwhelmed a little bit, did not want to present herself too much
 - Physical visit days you can build informal relationships with professors and students
 - Time difference made attending tough
 - There was scheduled time for informal communication at the end of each visit day
 - Breakout rooms
 - Didn't participate in informal communication
 - Formal introductions only
- Visiting labs
 - Was not physical, obviously
 - Lab leader introduced the overall labs using a slide deck
 - Introduced research
 - Seminar style
 - Did not know which lab she was going to work for at the time
 - Awkward situation
 - Host tried to break the awkward silence, but was embarrassing because it was silent
- External information

- Housing, restaurants, did not get any information about the area
- Asked lab members about all of this stuff
 - Contacted people who graduated
 - Gained informal information about housing from people in Korea who had graduated

Link to recording:

<https://cornell.box.com/s/q0ipnunx28200hgjizbg085g4op99hjv>

PhD Interview #3

For reference: <https://infosci.cornell.edu/phd/admissions/phd-visit-day>

Greetings: Hello! How are you doing today?

Summarizing the interview goal and process: We are designing an app prototype to improve the experience of admitted PhD students and administration on InfoSci PhD Visit Day for our group project in App Design and Prototyping class. The interview will be audio-recorded and will last approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

Questions:

“To get to know you better, I’d like to ask you a few questions about yourself.”

Demographics

- Could you briefly tell me about yourself?
 - What is your name/background?
 - Jinsook Lee
 - First year PhD
 - From Seoul, South Korea
 - Work as Data Scientist for three years before come to Cornell
 - Research in data science in Education

Visit Day Planning

- Could you briefly describe your InfoSci PhD Visit Day?
 - Occurred last year in Feb
 - Online for one or two days, from 12am to 6am local time (10am - 4pm Cornell)
 - Time difference was a big reason for this
 - Information Science department here is unique compare to other IS departments, IS here have wide research areas that are ranging from design-oriented to tech heavy project
 - Each day, students gathered and talked about how they worked, research topics
 - Meet a lot of current students and professors in the visiting days
 - Choose a professor she wanted to talk to personally, only talked to her advisor and the professor she will work with

- Did not visit other universities (UC Berkeley, Minnesota, Georgia State), had already decided to go to Cornell before visiting day
 - Talked more to current PhD students
 - Would flight to here if the visit day is in-person
 - Didn't participate in informal communication
 - Formal introductions only
- Visiting labs
 - Lab leader introduced the overall labs using a slide deck
 - Introduced research
- External information
 - Met other admitted Korean students in the visiting day and some of them around an area meet in-person
 - Feel comfortable with research funding, once admitted, the funding for the following five years are guaranteed
 - Wish could know more about how to manage the time when become a phd student from current phd students
 - Can't know image what the life will be like as a phd student at Cornell after attending the visiting day

PhD Interview #4

For reference: <https://infosci.cornell.edu/phd/admissions/phd-visit-day>

Greetings: Hello! How are you doing today?

Summarizing the interview goal and process: We are designing an app prototype to improve the experience of admitted PhD students and administration on InfoSci PhD Visit Day for our group project in App Design and Prototyping class. The interview will be audio-recorded and will be approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

Questions:

“To get to know you better, I’d like to ask you a few questions about yourself.”

Demographics

- Could you briefly tell me about yourself?
 - What is your name/background?
 - Princeton, sociology
 - Tech and science
 - Masters at Trinity College Dublin
 - Chose Cornell because of great discussions with Professors
 - Thesis advisor and undergrad advisors recommended
 - What is your title(s)/How long have you been in this position?
 - Gilly Leshed, running the Fake lab
 - She is the advisor

- Lab focuses on trust and online authentication
- Trust sources of information
- Previous work in art realms
- Knew she was going to be in the lab ahead of visit day

Visit Day Planning

- Could you briefly describe your InfoSci PhD Visit Day?
 - During covid
 - Virtual
 - Schedule that you could tune into
 - Time difference
 - Went to as many as she could
 - Had schoolwork so not a lot of time to go
 - Few were recorded
 - Coming in person and visiting was a lot better of an experience
 - Sent out a schedule of things you could tune into
 - Would like to say that she did it by interest
 - A few people specialized in the topic, a slide deck, 45 mins to an hour
 - Spoke to professors outside of these sessions
 - Less formalized intros to other PhDs
 - Asked specific questions to students about living in Ithaca
 - Social situation, find a place to live
 - UMich
 - Similar deal, itinerary, show up to the ones you didn't get to go to
 - UCLA
 - Did not have a formalized visit day
 - Picked Cornell
 - Loved Ithaca
 - Vibes are better than Ann Arbor
- How did you plan your way to get there and how did you plan your stay at Cornell?
 - Paid herself, did not get reimbursed
- What was the schedule like for the events?
 - Sent out email with itinerary beforehand
- How was the communication primarily handled from Cornell's end?
 - All over email
 - Pretty clear
 - Multiple reminders
 - About setting up meetings with professors one on one
- How were your meetings scheduled?
 - By the prospective PhD
- Apart from meetings and lectures, what else was organized for you?

- She went later, organized the entire thing herself
- Did you have any expenses that were paid for? How was that handled?
 - She probably could have, but never asked

Link to recording:

<https://cornell.box.com/s/032cl0horrvf5946pchz2a8suzv3hfp2>

PhD Interview #5

Demographics

- Could you briefly tell me about yourself?
 - I-Ting Tsai
 - 1st year infosci PHD
 - Architecture before, interested in multi-disciplinary research

Visit Day Planning

- How did you plan your way to get there and how did you plan your stay at Cornell?
 - Virtual (Laptop & Internet)
- What was the schedule like for the events?
- How did you know what was going to happen each day?
 - Detailed time schedule
 - Everything on time
- How was the communication primarily handled from Cornell's end?
 - Information send by email
- How were your meetings scheduled?
 - Busy
 - Schedule after the visiting
 - Almost attend all except for lunch
 - Do not chat after cuz she's busy
 - May have recording - helpful
 - People can choose - good
- Did you have any expenses that were paid for? How was that handled?
 - Yale
 - In Person, payment covered - not remember
 - Chance to chat, visit different studios and talk
- Recall the most memorable events from the weekend. Why were they memorable?
 - What professor Doing -> social computing, different

Visit Day Experience

- Did you attend the InfoSci PhD Visit Day before? In-person or online?
 - Could you walk me through your schedule for the most recent visit?

- In Taiwan, time difference, but get used to it
- 2days
 - 1 - school, research, labs, phd students, Staff, Phd panel
 - 2 - Presenting-directions, join different rooms, can choose, want to know others, lunch break, 2pm; Cornell tech panel
- What activities do you think are helpful to entice the admitted PhD students?
 - Research
 - Student panel - student life, QA
 - Only a little bit about Ithaca
 - Not very care about
 - Hard to travel internationally
 - If you don't go in person, you miss everything
- What activities do you think are less helpful to entice the admitted PhD students?
 - Virtual, missing chatting
- What are some information you wish that were provided to you before coming to the Visit Day?
 - All info are helpful

PhD Interview #6

For reference: <https://infosci.cornell.edu/phd/admissions/phd-visit-day>

Greetings: Hello! How are you doing today?

Summarizing the interview goal and process: We are designing an app prototype to improve the experience of admitted PhD students and administration on InfoSci PhD Visit Day for our group project in App Design and Prototyping class. The interview will be audio-recorded and will last approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

Questions:

“To get to know you better, I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself.”

Demographics

- Could you briefly tell me about yourself?
 - What is your name/background?
 - Tianhong Yu
 - First year IS PhD
 - From California
 - Got Bachelor and master degree in CS from CMU
 - Research in fabrics lab

Visit Day Planning

- Could you briefly describe your InfoSci PhD Visit Day?
 - Occurred last year in March
 - Already know will come to Cornell before visiting day bc only got this offer

- Online for two days, from 9am - 4pm
 - Virtual zoom session, didn't attend every session
 - Advisor's interest exactly match the research interest
 - Lab were introduced in panel format
 - Students need to reach out to current lab students to schedule time
 - Department collects the list of professor they want to talk to
 - Some student request didn't get to prof by the end
 - Would still attend the visiting day if the visit day is in-person
 - Most communication are by email, no communication platform
- Visiting labs
 - Lab leader introduced the overall labs using a slide deck
 - Introduced research
- External information
 - Weather won't be a key factor for deciding, but the location do impact in some level
 - If the visiting is in-person, they could visit the lab and have a better understanding of the resources and equipment in the lab

Admin Interview #1

Demographics (get from [admin page](#))

- events coordinator and administrative support for faculty, PhD students, and other staff members in the Department of Information Science
- Janeen has spent over 25 years at Cornell in various administrative support positions.

Login - no netID yet

Ithaca campus and tech campus (> 100 people)

- Sunday-tuesday
 - Sunday night - Group dinner (might cancel in the future)
 - Mon - 3 meals per day
 - Tue - breakfast, lunch box, dinner
- Tuesday-weds (by bus)
 - Weds - Dinner depend on travel schedule

Local hotels/restaurants

- some covered by Cornell
- Reimbursement (\$600? \$300?), receipts other than meal need to be submitted, fill form on website; Reimbursement form is managed by University, not department
 - To-and-from transportation (Airfare & ground transportation)

- Meals

Transportation (uber/public transportation/subway etc.) - redirect to other apps

Individual schedule

- not department specific
- Create a schedule for users
 - Itinerary - pdf
 - Reminder for next meetings
 - individual/group meetings - do not put staff on the spot
 - Able to edit schedule individual meeting, schedule the faculty by their own (could be external)
 - For emergency purpose might be good to locate the users
 - Data sources are mainly from qualtrics survey

Weather

- March (storms)
- Emphasize the weather, since the weather might largely impact the schedule

Able to quickly make changes to the whole schedule (weather/administrative issues/switch to virtual)

- Notification in app
- upload/add documents for students (pdf)
- Multiple admins to make changes

Cornell & CIS branding

- Infosci & cs logos

Admin Interview #2

For reference: <https://infosci.cornell.edu/phd/admissions/phd-visit-day>

Desired interviewees:

- Barbara Woske (bae2@cornell.edu) Rhodes 522

Greetings: Hello! How are you doing today?

Summarizing the interview goal and process: We are designing an app prototype to improve the experience of admitted PhD students and administration on InfoSci PhD Visit Day for our group project in App Design and Prototyping class. We would like to learn about your role as an administrator when organizing and managing the events. The interview will be audio-recorded and will cost approximately 30 minutes.

Questions:

“To get to know you better, I’d like to ask you a few questions about yourself.”

Demographics

- Could you briefly tell me about yourself?
 - What is your name/background?
 - What is your title(s)/How long have you been in this position?
 - Info sci - gfa
 - For phd and mps 7 years
 - In university - 34 years
 -

Visit Day

- What is the procedure of event planning? Since 2017
- What is your role when InfoSci PhD Visit Day? What did you do for the most recent visit day?
 - More back-side of planning
 - Start september - student heavy
 - Both phd and mps orientation
 - ask questions for accommodation, food, idea for activity
 - Tell the phd share room, learn identity, dietary restrictions, transportation
 - Get from surveys, share info with cornell tech (not all of them go to ny)
 - Itinerary - Lab discussion with faculty
 - Not require to attend all, but hope all students can join (some faculty want the students to be there)
 - One-on-one discussion, big dinner for chat (sun+mon), 1 hour break before dinner
 - Tues - loose itinerary schedule -> tour, talk, whatever from 9:30 - 11
 - Sitting together, anticipate questions, “help desk”
 - Reimbursement: 500, the week after, fill forms + submit receipt to Olivia
- What are the stakeholders you are working with? How do you communicate with various stakeholders involved in the event?
 - meeting/shared drive for updates
 - 3 people communicate closely
- Which part of the events do you think is the easiest to manage?
 - sending the survey, remote makes things easier, but people don't know much about ithaca
- Which part of the events do you think is the most challenging to manage?
 - A week before, answer lots of emails
 - Dealing with too much information
- Are there any other events or activities you organize that have similar needs or challenges?
- Can you tell me about any particular incident or challenges you’ve faced in the past event and how you addressed them?

- Storm (the third weather-related event changes 2017, 2019, 2023), 4 hrs early on Mon, rent bus, weather is a big factor -> might change to February
 - Gather them in room, announce plan changed
 - Text the students at New York city if they are arriving. Would be great to share locations
- How do you collect feedback from attendees and stakeholders after the event?
 - April, send different survey questions to students who accept/decline offers, why?
 - Feedback for virtual phd visit days - want to see in-person
 - It didn't matter since people have made their decision before coming
 - How much worth the event
- What tools or systems do you currently use to manage the event?
- What activities do you think are helpful to entice the admitted PhD students?
- What activities do you think are less helpful to entice the admitted PhD students?
- What kind of support or resources do you wish you had to help you organize the event?
 - More people needed for management
 - Admission decisions sooner/earlier
 - Time conflict with cs phd visit day
 - Blaster info, not just emails -> student have different email addresses
 - Up-to-date changes, find event & location (reference - whova)

Link to audio recording:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mesavYjPgOCC6-Ykwewc58Oh0woKsIkz/view?usp=share_link

Admin Interview #3

For reference: <https://infosci.cornell.edu/phd/admissions/phd-visit-day>

Desired interviewees:

- Olivia Howarth (oah23@cornell.edu) Rhodes 525

Greetings: Hello! How are you doing today?

Summarizing the interview goal and process: We are designing an app prototype to improve the experience of admitted PhD students and administration on InfoSci PhD Visit Day for our group project in App Design and Prototyping class. We would like to learn about your role as an administrator when organizing and managing the events. The interview will be audio-recorded and will cost approximately 30 minutes.

Questions:

“To get to know you better, I’d like to ask you a few questions about yourself.”

Demographics

- Could you briefly tell me about yourself?
 - What is your name/background?

- What is your title(s)/How long have you been in this position?
 - Student service assistant for PhD and MPS graduate students
 - In university - 1 year

Visit Day

- What is the procedure of event planning? First time planning this event
- What is your role when InfoSci PhD Visit Day? What did you do for the most recent visit day?
 - The main person who is in charge of the whole event
 - Process
 - Start from sending out offers to admitted students
 - Send out google form for admitted students to sign up for visiting day, the form includes
 - Student's name
 - Will they attend the event
 - Will they attend visiting day at Cornell
 - Will they need accommodation/ hotel at Ithaca
 - Will they need accommodation/ hotel at NYC
 - Food allergies
 - Travel plan: departure and arrival flight/bus info
 - Collect the form and import the result from google form to excel
 - Arrange transportation, hotel, and foods
 - Deal with special request and concern, would be good if can tell students dietary restrictions right away
 - Go through the whole event with students
 - Students sent receipts to Olivia via email
 - file out reimbursement forms for every student and send these forms to the accounting department at Cornell.
 - Get from surveys, share info with cornell tech (not all of them go to ny)
 - Itinerary - Lab discussion with faculty
 - Students need to reach out to faculty and schedule meetings with them by themselves.
- What are the stakeholders you are working with? How do you communicate with various stakeholders involved in the event?
 - meeting/shared drive for updates
 - 3 people communicate closely
- Which part of the events do you think is the easiest to manage?
 - Sending out the final service
- Which part of the events do you think is the most challenging to manage?
 - Keep track of every student's activities
 - Manage accommodation and allergies

- Can you tell me about any particular incident or challenges you've faced in the past event and how you addressed them?
 - This year, the snowstorm hit and the campus was closed on Tue. So they have to transport everyone to NYC at 3pm, which is earlier than planned.
 - Cannot connect to some students effectively, call several visiting students, but they didn't pick up the phone and have to sit on the floor in the gate and
- How do you collect feedback from attendees and stakeholders after the event?
 - April, send different survey questions to students who accept/decline offers, why?
 - Feedback for virtual phd visit days - want to see in-person
 - It didn't matter since people have made their decision before coming
 - How much worth the event
- What tools or systems do you currently use to manage the event?
- What activities do you think are helpful to entice the admitted PhD students?
- What activities do you think are less helpful to entice the admitted PhD students?
- What kind of support or resources do you wish you had to help you organize the event?
 - More people needed for management, admin decisions sooner/earlier, time conflict
 - Blaster info, not just emails -> student have different email addresses
 - Up-to-date changes, find event & location

User Testing Notes

Interview Protocol

- Greetings: Hello! How are you doing today?
- Summarizing the interview goal and process: We are designing an app prototype to improve the experience of admitted PhD students and administration on InfoSci PhD Visit Day for our group project in App Design and Prototyping class.
- Questions: “To get to know you better, I’d like to ask you a few questions about yourself.”
 - Demographics
 - Could you briefly tell me about yourself?
 - What is your name/background?

Participant 1

Short description: Iris is an admitted master student in InfoSci, she will attend Cornell in fall. She is currently located in Rochester, NY. She has visited Cornell once.

Why do they fit requirements for testing?: Although she is not a prospective phd student, she applied to Cornell recently and she accepted the offer of MPS infosci. She is eager to learn more about the campus and academic resources for her future study.

Tested app view



Cornell University

To all students admitted to the Cornell Information Science PhD Program,

On behalf of Cornell and the IS graduate student community, congratulations! Cornell is an excellent school, home to many enthusiastic researchers with diverse interests. We are excited to host you as you consider Cornell for your graduate studies.

ITINERARY	MEALS
Sunday, March 12, 2023	Sunday, March 12, 2023
Applicants arrive in Ithaca throughout the day	lunch [allergy-friendly with inclusive options]
Group dinner at 6 p.m. Location TBA	dinner [allergy-friendly with inclusive options]
Monday, March 13, 2023	Monday, March 13, 2023
Breakfast Welcome and Introduction and Program Overview with David Williamson (Chair) and Sue Fussell (Director of Graduate Studies)	breakfast [allergy-friendly with inclusive options]

Notes:

Tasks are easy:

- Task Scenario #4: One click to the reimbursement page.
- Task Scenario #2: resources -> search (not working) -> scroll down and find the lab.
 - Labs and researches are interesting
- Task Scenario #3: resources -> people (doesn't know if Sue is faculty or research staff so she opened both) -> search -> find -> contact via email
- Task Scenario #1: schedule -> takes some time to find the leaving time
 - Hard to read

Announcement:

- don't know what announcement page is doing, not used for any of the task
 - For task #3, not knowing there is an announcement about HCI followup session
 - might lack context. She will go to the announcement for contact if the professor mentioned that in the intro session
- Button is wired, thought it will direct to another page
 - Drop down?

Schedule:

- Hard to read/too wordy

Would be better if it has images

Why the itinerary and meals are in two separated columns

More -> footer

Menu bar:

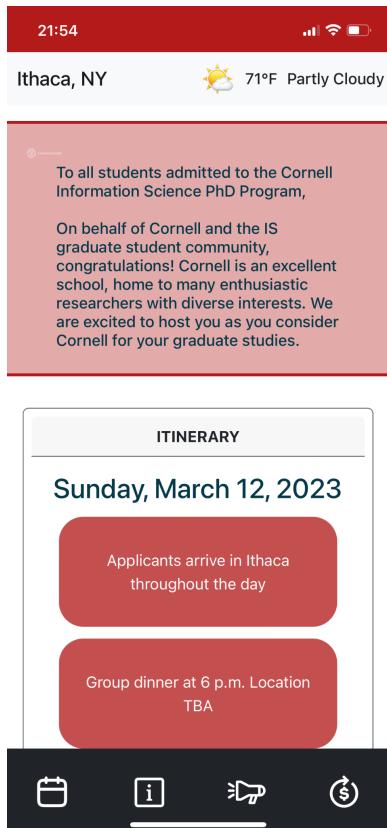
Hard to indicate the current page, gray and black are not distinctive

Participant 2

Short description: A senior Computer Science student at Cornell.

Why do they fit requirements for testing? Even though this individual is not exactly a prospective Info Sci PhD, they do have enough knowledge to understand the context of CIS and the task scenarios. They are also late in their college career and understand what needs to be considered when wanting to understand more about a program, such as a PhD.

Tested app view



Notes:

Attempting to find Machine Learning at Cornell information (Task Scenario 2):

- Scrolled the schedule page for a while,
- Read the info in the header thoroughly
- Scrolled through the entire schedule

- Asked about tech campus, “is that not in New York City?” Was confused at first why the app was telling him info about this but then said, “ohh, arrive in New York City” indicating that he understood it was about travel
- Presses “getting around” (one of the links in the schedule) which took him to a Cornell page, was confused at first, but exited and went back to the app.
- Almost gave up on the task and says “would probably do a Google Search”
- Asks to repeat instructions, I do
- Participant was stuck on the first schedule page for a while, and had a hard time finding the bar at the bottom which let him navigate to the other pages of the app. Eventually he did find it.
- Once he found how to navigate to other pages, he went to the right section (resources page), went to labs, found info on ML at Cornell successfully.

Submitting reimbursement for a flight from LAX to JFK and OurBus trip to Ithaca (Task Scenario 4):

- Found it right away, by pressing the rightmost icon (took him to reimbursement page)
- Tried to submit a photo from my phone (clicked upload button)

Finding the time the bus leaves from Ithaca to Tech Campus (Task Scenario 1):

- Correctly found it on the schedule page (had already extensively read this page when attempting to find info about Cornell Machine Learning).
- Answered “11:30 am”

Arranging a meeting about HCI with Susan Fussell (Task Scenario 3):

- Correctly navigated to announcements
- Said “It’s not scrolling right away”
- It was not immediately clear that the accordions were clickable but participant figured this out quickly
- Opened the link put in the announcement and found the right page (external Cornell page)
- Then went to Susan Fussell’s page by clicking on her name in the list
- Went to her personal page
- Explored her projects, and found the right email address

Follow-up questions I asked:

“Why did you not immediately press the buttons at the bottom?”

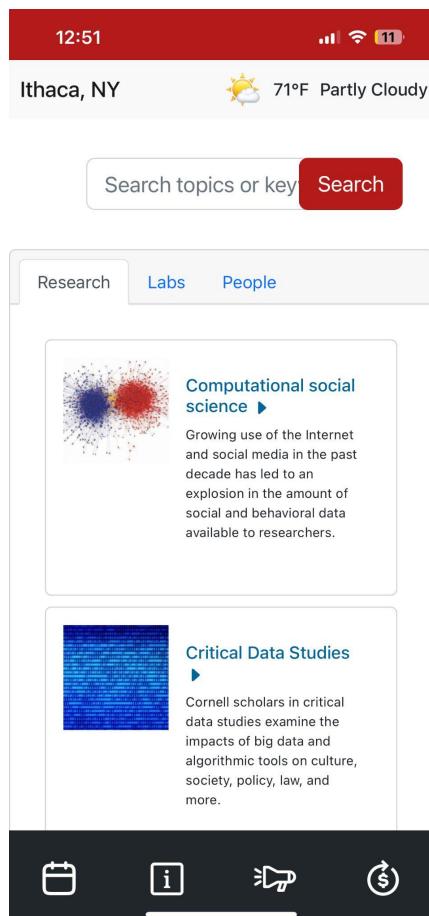
- The participant expected it to be at the top of the page. Reasoned that navigation menus for academic apps tend to be at the top, but social apps tend to have them at the bottom
- “One thing they usually have to let you know that it is a navigation bar is to include a ‘search icon.’ This is a key indicator.”

Participant 3

Short description: studied computer science at UBC. He is now working as a software engineer. He has visited Cornell.

Why do they fit requirements for testing? He is a prospective PhD student who's currently thinking about going back to school. He's looking forward to learning more about different programs and resources to help him decide his next steps.

Tested phone view



Notes:

- User found tasks quite straightforward and easy to do
- Icons were initially confusing but after remembering what each page does, it was alright
- User thought the events on the schedule page was a bit empty (referring to padding i think)
- Maybe add menu for meals

Notes from myself

- Can't delete the photo for receipt after uploading
- Can't add/select multiple photos

- Menu bar blocks content

Task Scenario #1: Tomorrow is the last day of the visit day. Sunny wants to know what time the bus will leave for the Tech campus, so she can take some time before exploring the Cornell campus.

- Scrolled through the schedule page
- Missed the event at first; eventually located the event

Task Scenario #2: After attending a whole day of scheduled information sessions, Sunny remembers thinking that the session about Machine Learning at Cornell stood out. She wants to refresh her memory and find more in-depth information about the lab's research goals.

- Can't recognise the icon for resources page
- Tapped on all icons in the menu bar
- Found the resources page and scanned through the research tab (trying to find info here)
- Clicked into human computer interaction which took him to the external cornell link
- Looked for the machine learning lab on this page; a bit frustrated
- Came back to the app and typed into the search bar but it's not responsive
- Finally noticed the labs tab
- Scroll through the labs
- Clicked on machine learning at cornell

Task Scenario #3: Sunny is very interested in the HCI research session that she just attended. She wants to learn more about the topic by arranging an individual meeting to talk with Susan Fussell who hosted the session.

- Stayed on the resources page because user remembered the people tab
- Clicked on the people tab
- Looked around faculty, research staff, and department staff
- Clicked into faculty
- Command f and found susan

Task Scenario #4: Sunny, who just finished her Master's degree in California, is currently visiting campus for prospective PhD day. Sunny booked a flight from LAX to JFK and then took a private OurBus to campus. She wants to submit receipts to be reimbursed for her travel expenses.

- Clicked to the last icon because of his familiarity with this page when exploring the menu bar in previous tasks
- Clicked on choose file
- Clicked on upload
- Right when he was asking about if the status is for him to check whether or not his receipt has been processed, he saw the status bar was responding for upload
- Made a comment saying that if he didn't explore the menu earlier, he might think that the icon for resources would be the page for all miscellaneous

Participant 4

Short description: Christine is a senior studying Biochemistry at UW. She is applying for a PhD this year and has been invited to visit Cornell.

Why do they fit requirements for testing? She is a prospective PhD student who has been invited to visit Cornell for an interview. She's looking forward to learning more about different research topics and academic resources.

Tested phone view

Appbsolute

71°F Partly Cloudy

Menu Schedule Resources Announcements Reimbursement

Search topics or keywords

Search

Research Labs People

Computational social science ▶
Growing use of the Internet and social media in the past decade has led to an explosion in the amount of social and behavioral data available to researchers.

Critical Data Studies ▶
Cornell scholars in critical data studies examine the impacts of big data and algorithmic tools on culture, society, policy, law, and more.

Data Science ▶
While their specific areas of research and inquiry vary, data scientists at Cornell share in a similar aim: to leverage computational methods to inform and improve society.

Economics and Information ▶
Information Science-affiliated researchers within Economics and Information exhibit interdisciplinary knowledge of algorithms, networks, mathematics and more.

Education Technology ▶
Info Sci faculty within the Education Technology research area specialize in the design, development and evaluation of information technologies for education.

Ethics, Law and Policy ▶
Critical questions concerning law, policy and privacy are more relevant and timely as ever, as technology becomes more common, ubiquitous and potentially intrusive.

Notes:

- User found tasks was straightforward and easy to do
- User thought the events in the schedule page were hard to navigate and the page was a little long
- Maybe add menu for meals

Notes from myself

- Needs to explain the way to arranging an individual meeting is by sending email to the professor

Task Scenario #1: Tomorrow is the last day of the visit day. Sunny wants to know what time the bus will leave for the Tech campus, so she can take some time before exploring the Cornell campus.

- Stayed in the schedule page because it is the main page
- Carefully scrolled down to find the event
- Was able to find the time without any click attempt

Task Scenario #2: After attending a whole day of scheduled information sessions, Sunny remembers thinking that the session about Machine Learning at Cornell stood out. She wants to refresh her memory and find more in-depth information about the lab's research goals.

- Skimmed through the navigation bar
- Clicked resources in the nav bar
- Found labs tab
- Clicked labs tab
- Found machine learning lab
- Clicked the title of machine learning lab

Task Scenario #3: Sunny is very interested in the HCI research session that she just attended. She wants to learn more about the topic by arranging an individual meeting to talk with Susan Fussell who hosted the session.

- Stayed on the resources page because user remembered the people tab
- Clicked on the people tab
- Looked around faculty, research staff, and department staff
- Clicked into faculty
- Scrolled down the list to find Susan

Task Scenario #4: Sunny, who just finished her Master's degree in California, is currently visiting campus for prospective PhD day. Sunny booked a flight from LAX to JFK and then took a private OurBus to campus. She wants to submit receipts to be reimbursed for her travel expenses.

- Clicked reimbursement in the navigation because she spotted the keyword reimbursement
- Clicked on choose file
- Clicked on upload
- Saw the status bar was loading and knew the file was uploaded successfully