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UniMates

Product Requirements Document :

Problem :

University students often struggle to build meaningful connections beyond their immediate friend groups. While orientation week offers a brief window for socializing, most students quickly find themselves isolated or unable to find the right peers for specific activities such as studying, sports, or social outings. Existing digital spaces like WhatsApp or Facebook groups are too generic, messy, and unstructured, making it difficult for students to connect with the right people at the right time.

Opportunity

Interviews conducted with AUI students revealed a strong demand for a platform that helps them connect purposefully and instantly with like-minded peers. The feedback highlighted that even students who already have social circles seek new connections for specific goals, for example, finding a study partner during exams or someone available to go out when their friends are busy. This unmet need presents an opportunity for a student-centered, wellness-driven digital product designed to strengthen community and combat social isolation.

Objectives

The main objective of UniMates is to enhance student well-being through structured and meaningful connections. Specifically, the app aims to:

1. Enable students to easily find peers based on shared goals or activities (study, hobbies, social events).

2. Support mental health by reducing feelings of loneliness and promoting positive social engagement.

3. Provide a safe, structured environment verified through university authentication.

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4. Foster inclusivity by helping every student feel connected, regardless of their background or friend group size.

Scope

UniMates is a mobile application currently built exclusively for Al akhawayn university students. It integrates a purpose-based matching system and real-time availability feature that allow users to connect instantly for shared goals.. Within the scope of AUI's community (50 to 100 concurrent users), UniMates will serve as a scalable, secure, and intuitive solution designed to make campus life more connected, healthy, and engaging.

Goals & Success Metrics

Business / Strategic Goals

- Get **at least 50 students** to install and register on UniMates.

- Build **basic brand awareness** around campus through word of mouth or posters.

- Gather **feedback from 20+ users** to validate demand and future potential.

Product / User Goals
- Ensure the **matching feature works smoothly** for initial users.

- Achieve **at least 30 successful matches** between students.

- Maintain a **safe and positive environment** (zero major complaints or misuse).

Key Success Metrics

- Adoption rate: **50+** registered users by end of semester.

- Active usage: **50%** of users log in at least once a week.

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- Matches created: **30+** matches made and accepted.

- User satisfaction: **80%** of surveyed users rate experience as "good" or "very good."

- Feedback collected: At least 20 detailed responses for product improvement.

The target users and their core needs :
- Al Akhawayn University (AUI) students, ages 18–25.

- Students from different majors and backgrounds who want to connect for specific purposes — studying, sports, hobbies, or social activities.
- Includes both students who feel socially isolated and those who already have friends but need new peers for particular goals.
  Core needs :
-

- **Belonging:** The need to feel part of the AUI community beyond classes or dorms.

- **Meaningful social connection:** Desire to connect with peers who share similar goals, mindsets, or interests.

- **Emotional support:** Reducing feelings of isolation or loneliness, especially when away from family.

- **Safety and comfort:** Confidence that interactions happen within a verified and respectful environment.

- **Personal growth:** Expanding networks, learning from diverse peers, and developing social confidence.

Stakeholders :
1. AUI Students

2. University Administration

3. Dr. Hoda Khalafalla

4. AUI IT Department

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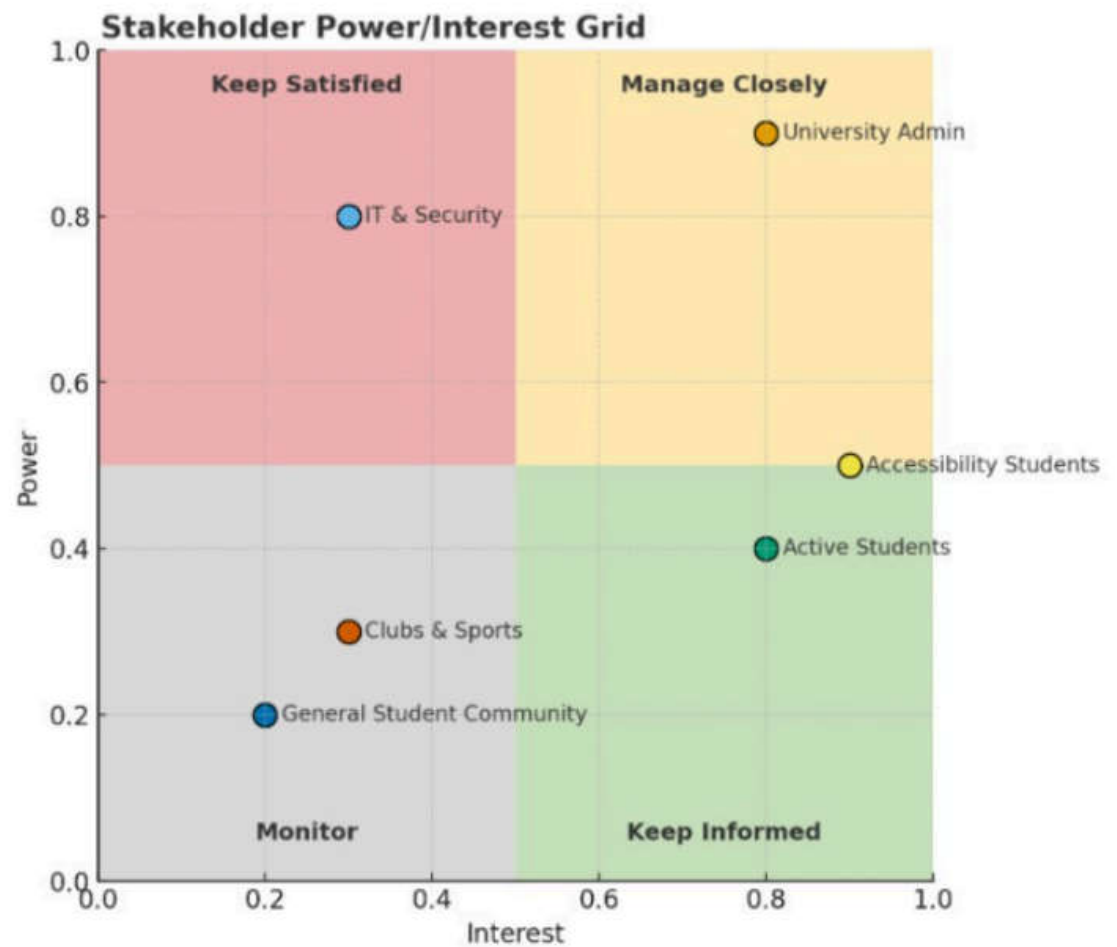Rim Bousta 149871
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5. AUI Security Department

6. Student Activities Office

7. Inclusion Program CLE

8. App Development Team

Stakeholder Power/Interest Grid

List of Features for MVP :

1. User Registration & Profile Setup

- Users can register using their university email for verification.

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- Each user can create a profile with name, major, year of study, and main purpose (e.g., study partner, gym buddy, social hangout).
- Users can optionally add interests and availability.
- Profile information can be edited or updated at any time.

2. Basic Matching System

- The system matches users based on shared purposes and common interests.
- Displays the top 3–5 most relevant matches for each user.
- Users can send, accept, or decline match requests.

3. In-App Messaging

- Matched users can communicate through a basic text-only chat.
- The system sends real-time notifications for new messages.

4. Notifications

- The app provides instant notifications for:
- New match suggestions
- Accepted or declined requests
- Incoming messages

5. Safety & Verification

- All users must verify their identity through a university email address.
- Users can report or block others in case of harassment or inappropriate behavior.

6. Accessibility (Text-to-Speech)

- The MVP includes a basic text-to-speech feature to support visually impaired users.
- Text-to-speech will be available on core app screens such as profile view, match list, and chat messages.
- Users can enable or disable this feature in the settings menu.

The guiding design principles :

- Simplicity and Ease of Use
  The interface should be intuitive and quick to navigate, allowing students to find and connect with others in just a few taps.

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- Purpose-Driven Interaction
  Every feature should support meaningful and goal-oriented connections — not random chatting or endless scrolling.

- Safety and Trust
  Prioritize verified users, privacy, and respectful interactions to create a secure and comfortable environment.

- Inclusivity and Belonging
  The design should reflect AUI's diverse student community, making all users feel welcome and represented.

- Visual Clarity and Consistency
  Use a clean, calming color palette and consistent icons to create a friendly, student-centered feeling

Risks

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation Strategy
1. Data Breach or Security Vulnerability	High	Medium	Use HTTPS, AES encryption, and regular penetration testing. Partner with IT security for audits.
2. Low Student Adoption	High	Medium	Launch awareness campaigns via Student Activities Office and integrate feedback loops.
3. Matching Algorithm Bias or Inaccuracy	Medium	Medium	Conduct pilot testing with diverse student samples and iterative refinement.
4. Accessibility Features Delayed	Medium	High	Prioritize accessibility in Phase 1 and involve Inclusion Program CLE in testing.
5. Integration Issues with AUI SSO or Servers	High	Low	Early coordination with IT; allocate 2-week buffer for SSO testing.

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6. Negative Behavior or Misuse by Users	Medium	Medium	Enable reporting, moderation tools, and automatic suspension for flagged accounts.
7. Delayed Development Timeline	High	Medium	Agile sprint-based project management and regular progress reviews with PM.

Open Questions / To Resolve

Integration and Data Access:
 What level of integration or data access will the university allow (e.g., access to the official student directory or authentication systems)?

Privacy and Real-Time Data:
 Are there university policies or restrictions regarding sharing students' real-time location or availability?

Institutional Support:
 Will AUI support or promote UniMates during student orientation or through official communication channels?

Safety Thresholds:
 What are the acceptable thresholds and procedures for handling reports or flagged accounts to ensure safety and privacy?

Development Resources:
 What timeline, budget, or infrastructure resources will be allocated for UniMates' development and maintenance?

Anonymity and Identity:
 Should the app allow **anonymity or pseudonyms** during the initial version, or require **verified real identities** from the start?

Dependencies

Dependency	Owner/Department	Description	Impact if Delayed

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AUI Single Sign-On (SSO) Integration	AUI IT Dept.	Required for secure login and verification.	App launch delay.
Database Infrastructure & Hosting	AUI IT Dept.	Needed for user data and matching system.	Core functionality blocked.
Accessibility Review	Inclusion Program CLE	Validation of text-to-speech and UI accessibility.	Compliance risk and delayed approval.
Security & Data Policy Approval	AUI Security Dept.	Mandatory compliance before deployment.	Legal and reputational risk.
Promotion & Awareness Campaigns	Student Activities Office	Increase initial adoption among students.	Low engagement and low user base.