

Project 1: Final Design Document

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Executive Summary

The problem to be addressed was challenges faced by international students when they first arrive at the University of Florida. I carried out various user tests as background material to examine the problems students faced. These user studies helped obtain insights into the difficulties students were facing. Upon obtaining this information, I segregated the information into several high-level themes through Affinity Diagramming. After this phase, I picked the ‘Socializing and Networking’ theme to implement a solution, to address the socializing needs of international students, while they adapt to the new environment. For further analysis, I considered primary and secondary users to build personas and define the user needs statements for building the application. In the next iteration of analysis and building the solution, I created scenarios for the personas and corresponding storyboards. These iterations enabled me in comprehending the needs of the users elaborately. The next phase involved building wireflows iteratively, to add significant features, while keeping the design minimal and practical. Through the wireflows I was able to decide on the correct application flow, which I tried to keep aligned with the user’s natural logical order. The design mockup was the final application design obtained that met the user’s needs and bridged the socializing gap for them in the new environment.

Introduction

This project aims at designing a solution to facilitate a smoother transition for international students at University of Florida upon their arrival here. Through user testing, we identified a set of problem areas for international students. The theme taken into consideration for building this solution is ‘Socializing and Networking’. Post brainstorming, and running through multiple design iterations, this solution proposes a design that is user friendly and practical for international students to utilize to socialize and network at the university.

Usability/UX Analysis

Usability/ UX factors that were occurring with the users:

Both in my user testing and in the real world, users reported having trouble socializing in a new environment. To expand their network and connections, they were looking for more details about graduate and undergraduate organizations they could join. They also desired easy access to information about events hosted by the University of Florida so they could attend more of them and network with others who shared their interests. Additionally, their user experiences were time-consuming and difficult, and their needs were also not being met.

Factors considered in my user interface:

Since our primary users are international students, I considered providing them with ample information about UF events through the application. Also, I have considered the point that they face difficulty in reaching out to the right people to get detailed information. Another factor considered was to make navigating to these events and reaching out to organizations easier for international students, who were finding it difficult to navigate on campus. An additional important consideration was to provide a one-stop solution for them to track their enrolled events and make the end-to-end process simple and quick.

Focus Statement

This project's objective is designing an application that enables international students at the University of Florida to build connections and provide easily accessible information to them about upcoming events and social organizations on campus. This application was designed since socializing and networking was identified as an issue during user testing that international students were struggling with, and we want to reduce the difficulties they encounter upon their arrival to the university.

Focus Setting, Interview goals, and Interview guide

Focus Setting:

The user interviews intended to identify the pain points encountered by international students upon their first arrival at the University of Florida. This study aimed to improve the experience of international students, aiding them in areas that they are facing problems and offering a more comfortable and supportive environment for learning. The researcher also seeks to address the challenges faced by international students and make the process simpler for the future incoming students through the solution being built.

Interview Goals:

The goal of the interview is to learn about the struggles of international students when they first arrived at the University of Florida. With the help of user testing, we are identifying the problem areas for international students to be able to address the identified issues and hopefully ease the experience for the incoming students in the future.

Interview guide:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key demographic questions	<p>First, I would like to ask you a few questions to know a little more about you, so would you be comfortable with that?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How old were you when you first arrived at UF?2. What degree are you currently pursuing at UF?3. Have you lived abroad previously?4. What is your home country?5. What is your ethnicity?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warm-up questions (factual answers)	<p>Now I would like to know a little more about your arrival at UF:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How much time did you have before classes began?2. How was your experience finding classes and events/committees you would want to be a part of at campus?3. How did you commute to campus when you first arrived?4. How did you manage your meals when you first came to UF?5. Did you receive any help or resources from UF for figuring out your accommodation?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main questions (open-ended discussions)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What was your main concern before arriving at UF?2. Were there any unanticipated situations you encountered when you started at UF?3. What are the top 3 things that UF could have done to make your transition to the university easier?4. How has the process of being able to meet like-minded people/ finding your own community been upon your first arrival at UF?5. What were the major hindrances you faced academically that impeded your learning curve at UF upon arrival?

	<p>6. Could you describe UF's role in helping you with the essential informational resources you needed?</p> <p>7. What did you think about the orientation conducted by UF?</p> <p>8. What were your expectations from UF in terms of networking events and socializing opportunities?</p> <p>9. Can you tell me about your experience navigating on campus?</p> <p>10. Did you face any medical emergencies when you got here? How did manage?</p> <p>11. Have you had any safety concerns living in the new environment?</p> <p>12. How was your experience of setting up your utilities and essential services (for example-bank account) here?</p>
• Design Probe(s)	<p>If the user cannot think of an answer to the question you asked, try to ask them to recall a moment or instance when that situation happened,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you recall any moment or instance when the situation occurred? <p>If the user is unable respond for 10s, ask them to think out loud,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you please think out loud? <p>If the user is finding the question complicated, stack the questions instead of asking a long-complicated question.</p> <p>If the user is unable to come up with an answer for 30s, Thanks for giving this question a try, let's move on to the next question.</p>

Consent Form

CEN 4722 / CEN 5728 User Experience Design Participant Acknowledgment Form

Submitted by:
Simran Sunil Kukreja

Participants: By signing this form, you acknowledge that you have participated in a focus group or user test for the above group related to the above course on the date indicated below. In addition, you acknowledge that you are aware that you are bound by UF's honor policy in signing this form to indicate that you have actually participated in a focus group or user test for the class as required.

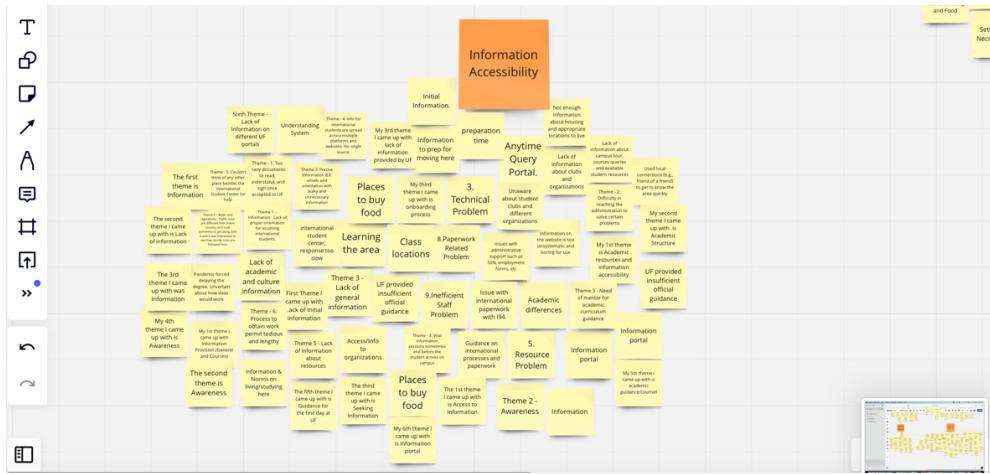
Printed Name of Participant	Signature of Participant	Date of Participation
Rachana Gugale		15th September' 2022
Bhavesh Dhirwani		15th September' 2022
Urmi Jethani		15th September' 2022

Group Members: please initial below to indicate that your group members acknowledge that you are aware that you are bound by UF's honor policy in students signing this form only if they have actually participated in a focus group or user test for the class as required.

(group members' initials)			
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Affinity Diagram





Data analysis plan and User Needs

Data Analysis plan:

For the analysis phase, I will start with creating a working board on Miro. I will then be creating concise sticky notes of the data gathered through the user tests. Post that, I will review all the sticky notes prior to grouping the ideas together. Based on the review, I'll start grouping the sticky notes together under high-level themes by dragging the notes that have similar content next to each other and giving a label for the common theme being reflected.

While creating groups from ideas or trying to derive themes, I would try to identify the accurate ideas and not just create a theme if a certain idea has been presented multiple times. Also, I would try to prioritize the essential ideas, instead of trying to fit all of them under themes. In prioritizing the ideas, it would help to explore the top pain points and to evaluate them against the task requirements, to validate if they are the point of focus within the task. The obtained themes would be useful and crucial in facilitating the design decisions during the prototyping phase to serve as guidelines for the features we want to emulate or skip during designing.

User Needs Statement 1:

Anmol, passionate about the cross-section of IT and business, is an international master's student at the University of Florida, who needs to make connections in the new country to feel more comfortable, at ease, and settle in quicker in the new environment.

User Needs Statement 2:

Rahul, a tech-savvy researcher, currently an international computer science graduate student at the University of Florida, needs to find organizations that align with his academic interests to utilize time doing activities and contributing to projects he is passionate about.

User Needs Statement 3:

Yu Chen, a multitasking, not-so-tech-savvy international undergraduate student at the University of Florida needs to interact with students from diverse backgrounds and grow her network to improve her communications skills and learn more about different cultures.

User Personas

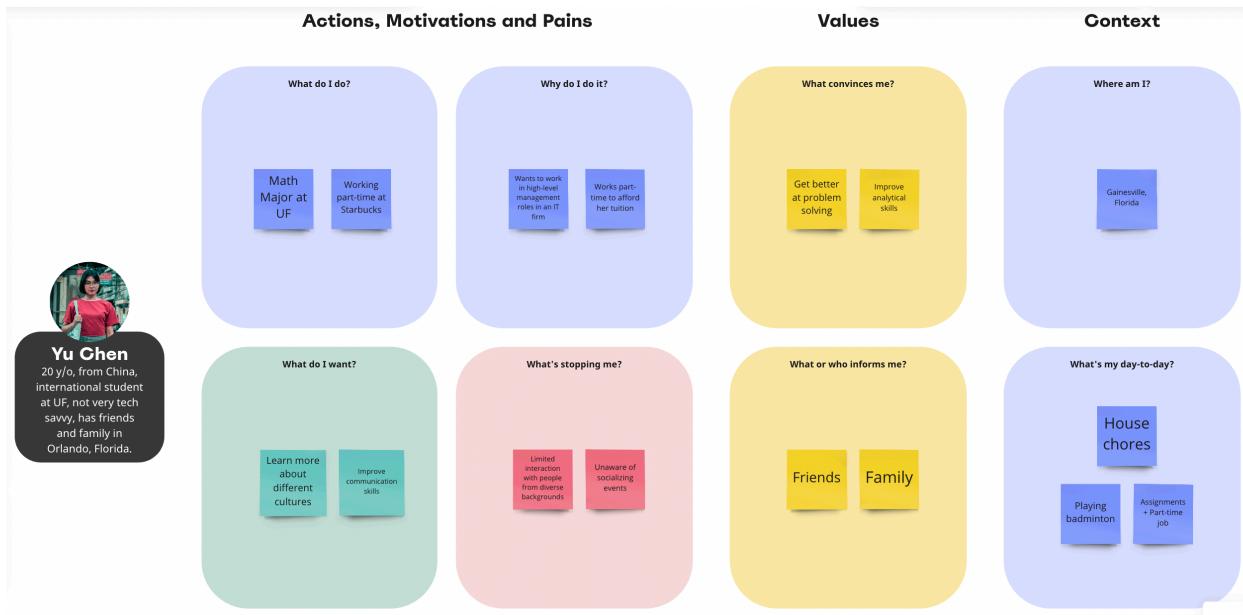
Persona 1



Persona 2



Persona 3



Design Scenarios and Storyboards

Scenario 1:

Anmol is an international graduate student from India who has recently moved to Gainesville to pursue her Master's in Information Systems at the University of Florida. She has never lived abroad previously and is having a hard time acclimatizing to the new surroundings. She doesn't have any relatives or friends here who could guide her or help her settle in. She has reached out to a few seniors and students through social media for academic and utility-based information. However, she is looking for ways to make friends and connections at UF that would aid in her smooth transition to an unfamiliar environment. During class, a classmate introduces her to the UF Connect application, where she can enroll for events and meet new people from different organizations. Anmol finds the application useful and is excited to sign up for new events and build connections.

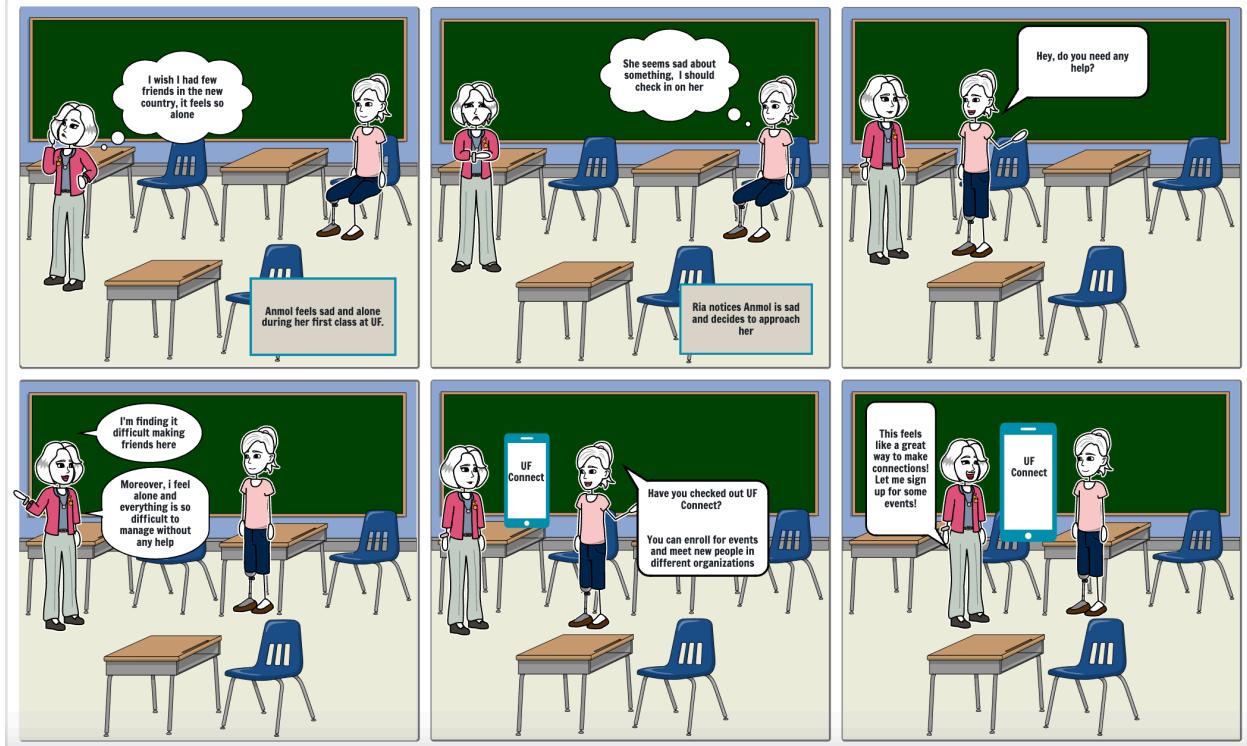
Scenario 2:

Rahul is pursuing a Ph.D. in Computer Science. He is an international graduate student, with research-oriented academic interests. With his current academic schedule, he barely finds the time to engage with new people that share the same interests as him. By joining certain student organizations and enrolling in relevant events, he aims to utilize his time in the right extracurriculars that align with his interest area. This would also help him find and interact with like-minded people, which would be a difficult task otherwise. Upon browsing online, he finds out about UF Connect and starts exploring the social organizations on the application. Using the contact details from the application, he meets a social organization representative, who guides him through the process of signing up, to meet like-minded people and contribute to ongoing projects. Rahul realizes this is exactly what he was looking for and registers for that organization's event.

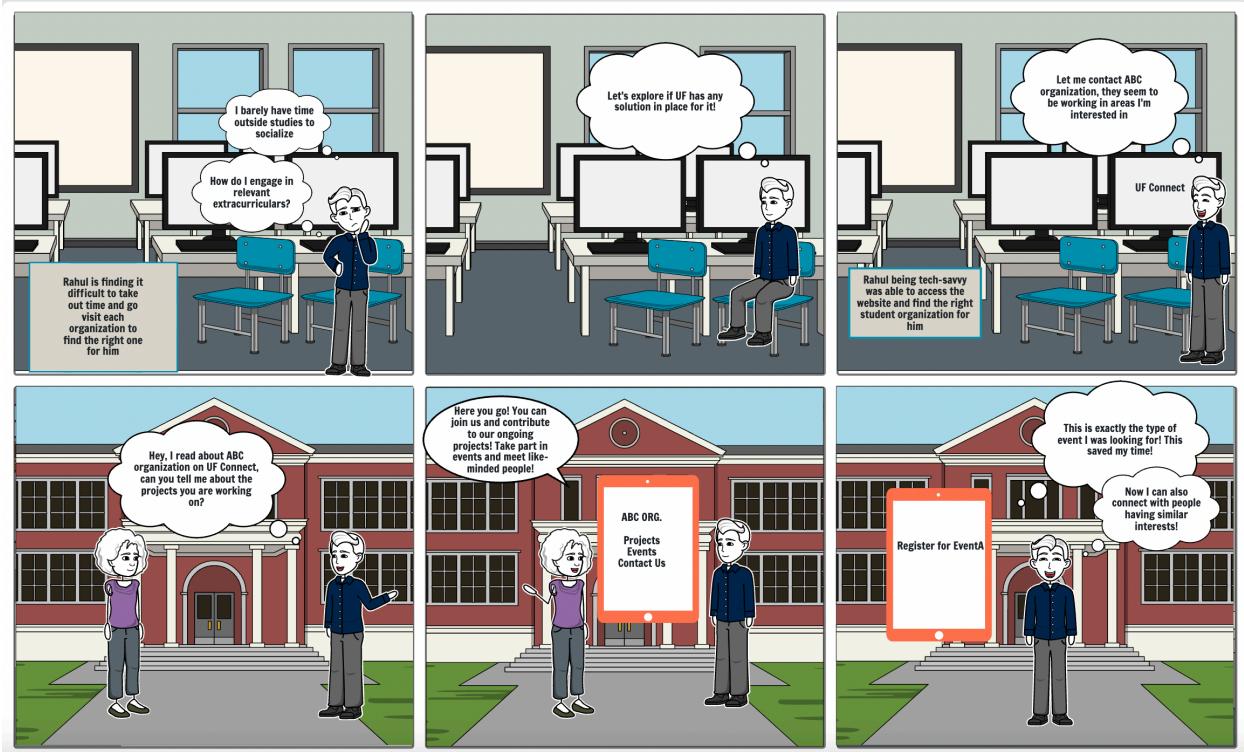
Scenario 3:

Yu Chen is an undergraduate student from China. She has friends and relatives in Florida to support her. However, she finds it difficult to communicate with people from outside her community and is weak at English communication beyond her academia. She wants to be more approachable and get better at interacting with people from diverse backgrounds. She is not very tech-savvy and currently lacks information about the different socializing events ongoing at the university. She wants to learn about the different cultural norms, go beyond her comfort zone, interacts with different people, and improve her communication ability through this. Yu Chen is not very tech-savvy, and she decides to approach her university counsellor to get more information about ways to interact with people from outside her community and to improve her English and communication skills. The counsellor suggests her to use the UF Connect application, since it is multilingual and has social media links. Yu finds the information useful as she is familiar with using social media and she can now track social media pages obtained through UF Connect for more information. Additionally, the application being multilingual makes it easier to comprehend for her.

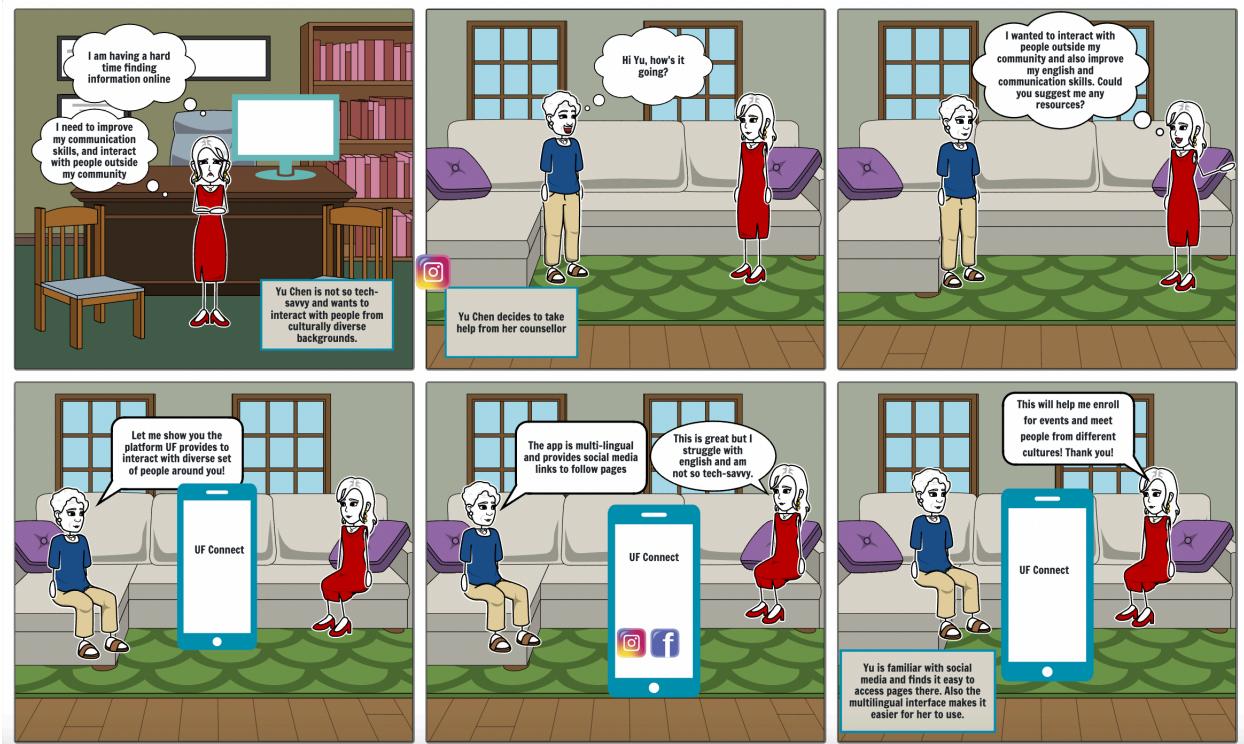
Storyboard 1:



Storyboard 2:



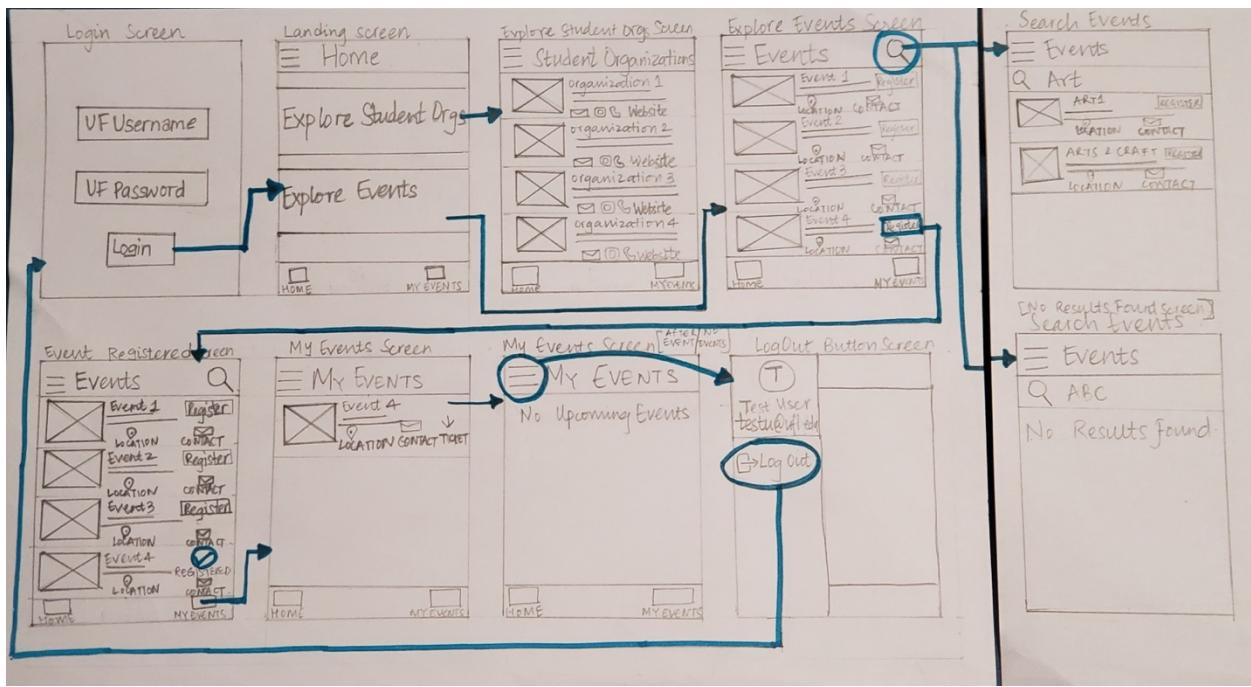
Storyboard 3:



Brainstorming of design solutions:

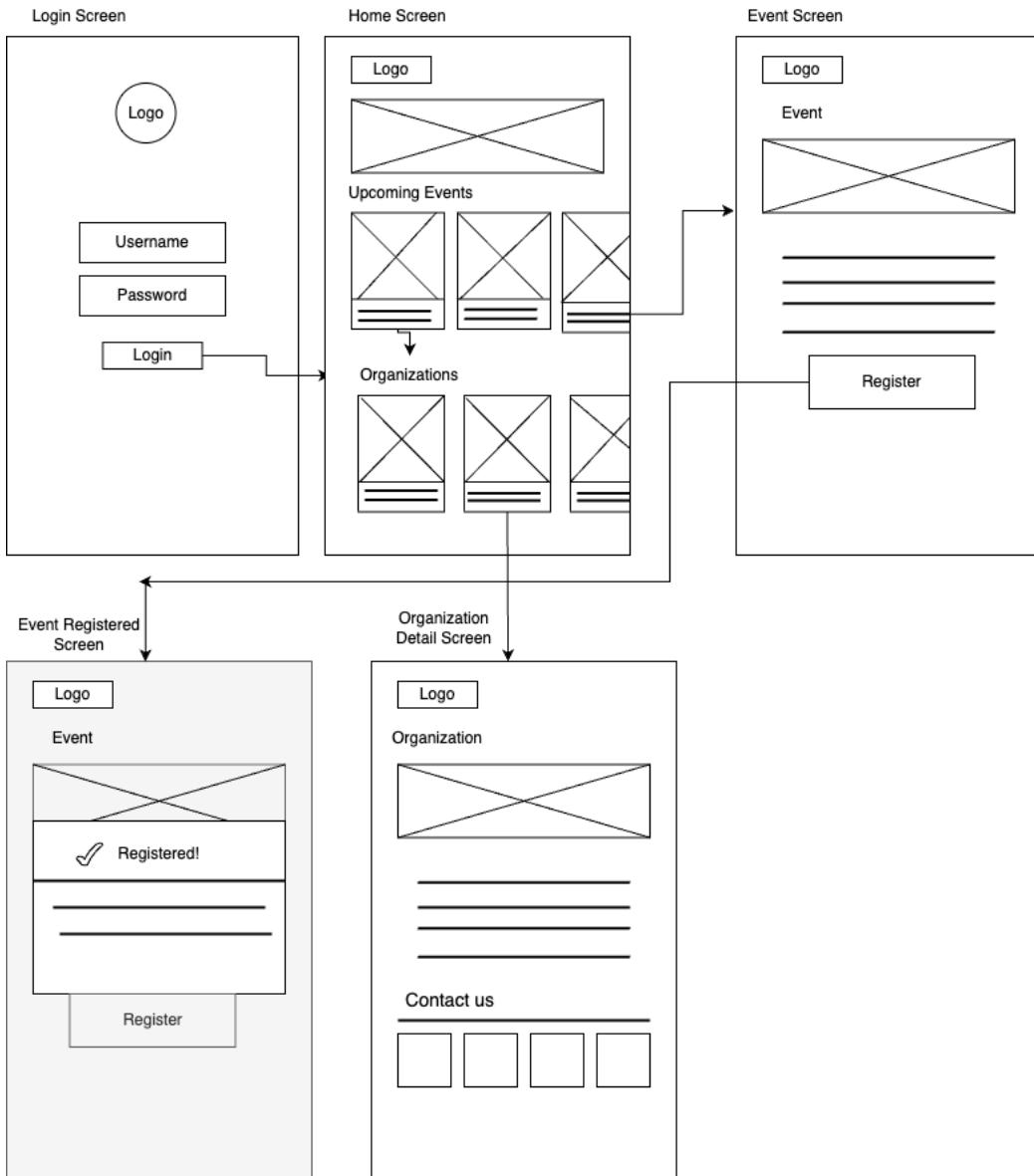
Iteration 0:

The following wireflow was created as a part of Iteration 0 of designing an application to meet the ‘Socializing and Networking’ needs identified as per the user needs statements and user scenarios.



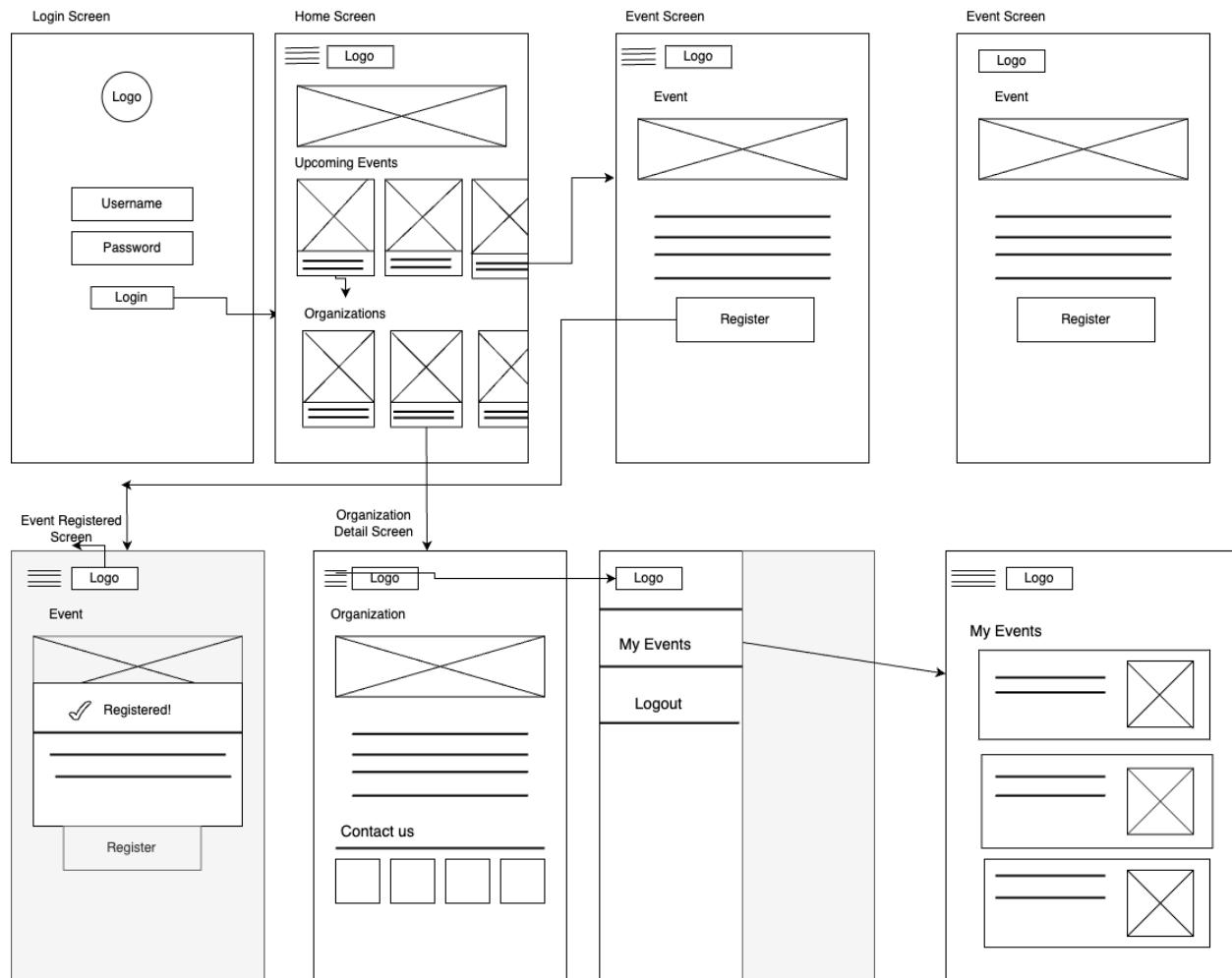
Iteration 1: (Revision of design in Iteration 0)

This wireflow is a revised version of the wireflow made in Iteration 0. It covers features including user login, browsing through upcoming events and social organizations, and the facility to register for the events.



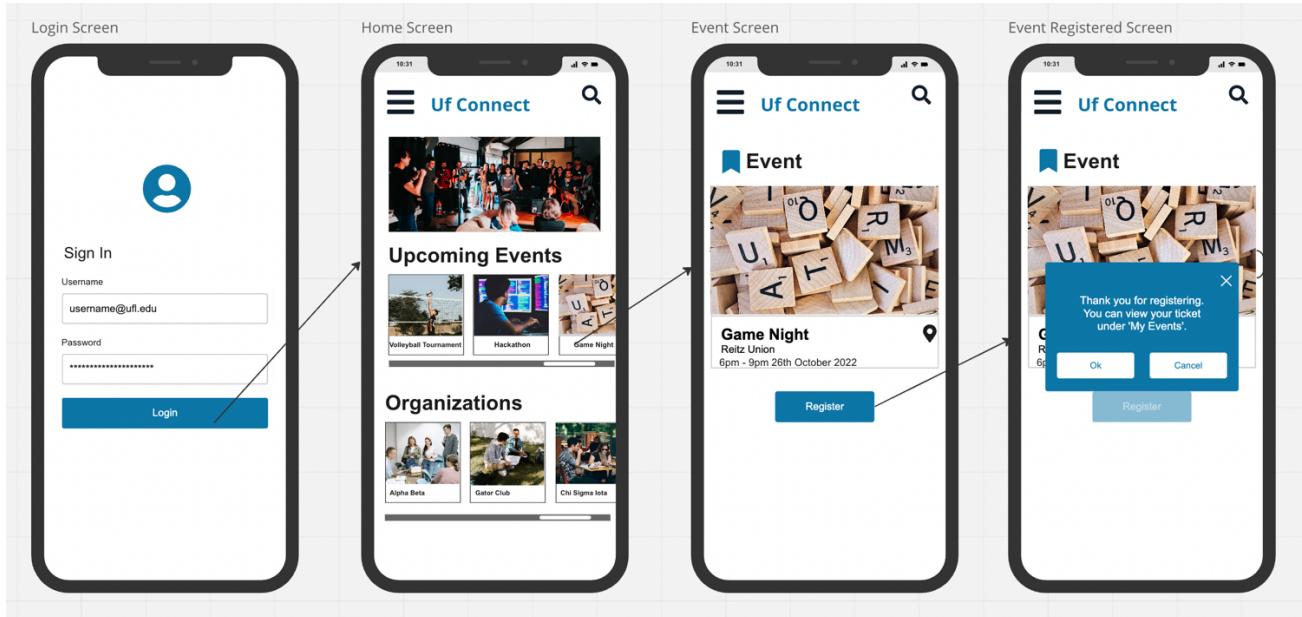
Iteration 2: (Enhancement of design in Iteration 1)

This wireflow is an enhanced version of the wireflow in Iteration 1, displaying screens different from wireflow1 (Home and Organization Detail screens are common to help understand the flow). It improves the user experience by adding a navigation panel, to navigate to ‘My Events’ and ‘Bookmarks’. Through ‘My Events’, the user can see the events they have registered for, and the Bookmarks screen displays the bookmarked events and organizations. Further, I have added features to search and sort the events and contact social organizations regarding queries or to obtain additional information.

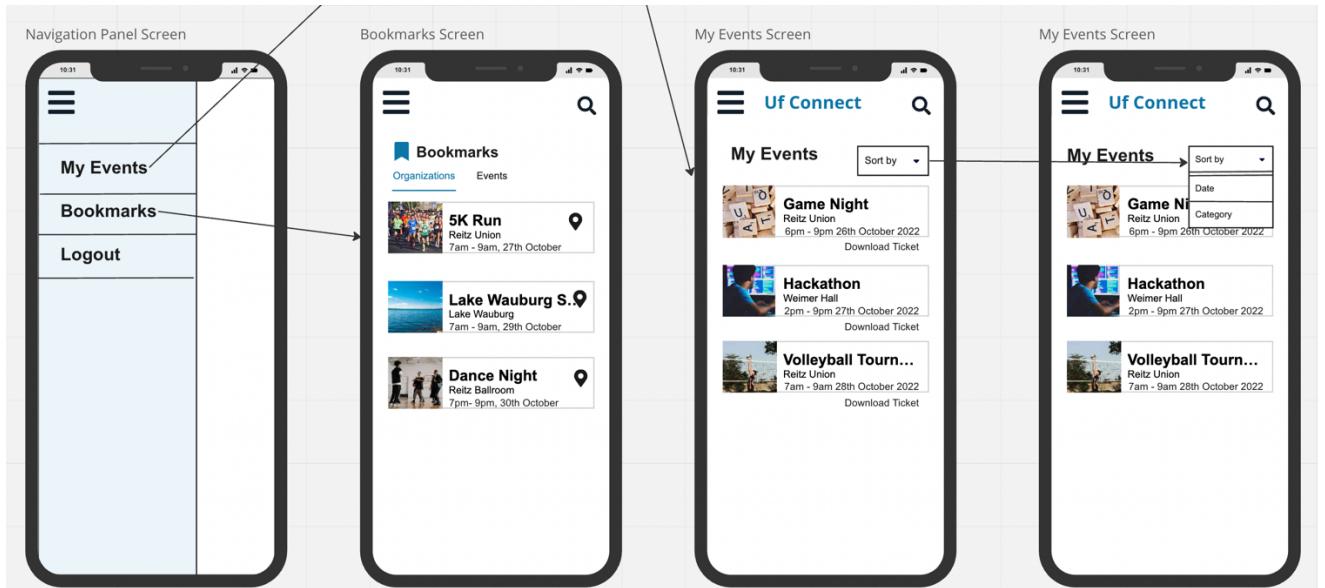


Final Design Solution: Design Mockup

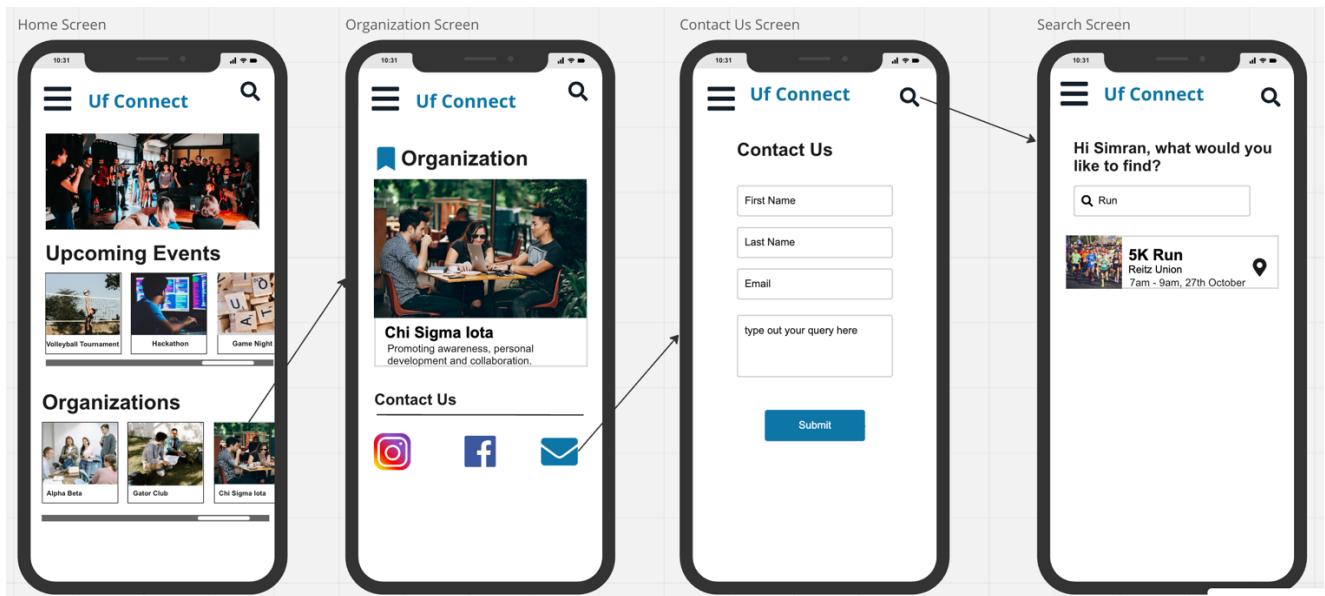
The UF Connect application solves the socializing difficulty encountered by international students at University of Florida. As shown below, it has several features ranging from browsing through upcoming events and social organizations, register for events, tracking tickets and details about the registered events, bookmarking events, sorting them by date and categories, to being able to contact social organizations for additional information.



The flow above demonstrates the feature to browse through events and social organizations. I have implemented tiles for each of the events and organizations, to allow the user to quickly browse through them, without finding it too wordy, since it provided just the essential information. Additionally, on clicking on a particular event, the user is directed to its detail page where they can register for an event and receive immediate feedback in terms of a popup, that gives them ample information about accessing their registered events and tickets and eliminates the scope for any confusion.



The feature in the above flow is the navigation bar, which enables ease of access for certain application features. The user can navigate to the 'My Events' page, where they can review the events, they have registered for, sort them in descending or ascending order of date and by different categories. Additionally, they can navigate to the 'Bookmarks' page, where they can review the events or social organizations they have bookmarked.



The above flow or sequence of screens covers the 'Contact Us' feature for social organizations. Through this feature, users will now be able to contact the correct social organization representative, who can address their queries and guide them through the process of signing up. Additionally, for providing easy access, the search functionality has been added to the application, using which the user can look up for events or organizations using keywords that match his needs.

How my user interface addressed the UX factors identified during the UX Analysis phase:

Primarily, I have tried to make the user experience convenient by providing easily accessible information about organizations and events on my application. I have tried using words, phrases, and icons that the users would be familiar with so that they can understand the application flow quickly, even if they are not very tech-savvy. Considering our applications' primary users are international students, I have tried to keep location references for the events and organizations so that they can navigate on campus using Google Maps. For ease of use, I have also kept the design minimal, focusing on the essential user needs.

The rationale for design decisions

My application primarily tries to bridge the socializing gap for a user in a new environment. The rationale behind the current application design was to adopt a consistent, user-friendly design throughout the entire program that makes the most sense to the user. The main sections in the app appear as headlines, and colors draw attention to crucial choices like submit and register while keeping the overall design minimal. By utilizing the user's mental models, I also sought to develop the app in a way that follows the user's natural logical flow i.e., they can browse through the events, click on a certain event to see its detail, and then register for it. On clicking the register button, I'm providing feedback to the user about successful user registration and ticket availability to avoid confusion. I developed the application flow in terms of tasks users might wish to do because user testing revealed that users desired an intuitive application that saves them time. In order to optimize user experience, I also tried to arrange components from top to bottom and left to right since that is how people often scan web pages.