The SNHU travel project was sponsored by the ChadaTech stakeholders, and this time around using the Agile methodology instead of the waterfall approach to development because ChadaTech stakeholders believe this will be more efficient due to the nature of the ever changing tends in the business of travel. For software development a popular framework based on the Agile philosophy is the SCRUM framework. This framework establishes key roles and responsibilities, development events, iteration structures, and provides a dynamic approach of development that allows for incremental development of the product. The SCRUM framework also emphasizes the empirical process and promotes a culture of transparency and constant communication.

The Scrum framework emphasizes the importance of the 5 main roles: Scrum master, product owner, testers, developers, and stakeholders. It all starts with the product owner assigned to the project. The product owner met directly with the SNHU travel agency to gather the business requirements the application needs to accomplish for the closure of the project. The deliverables are built by the product owner in form of Epics and user stories, which provide the testing team and the development team a structured hierarchy of functionalities to be developed on each development Sprint. The product owner also is responsible for communicating with the stakeholders any system limitations encountered in the development of any of the functionalities, the deliverables completed after each Sprint, the deliverables that will need to be pushed into upcoming sprints and gather any additional feedback that might change the direction of each upcoming sprints (new functionalities or functionalities not needed anymore). The product owner works very closely with the scrum master since the scrum master is the person that holds the scrum team accountable when the product owner is busy making sure the client is taken care of and working on the product backlog items.

The scrum master also provides the scrum team with organizational strategies that keep productivity and efficiency high by following agile theory and the scrum framework at every aspect of the development phases. The scrum framework requires discipline and attention to detail, and constant “re-steering” of the scrum teams by the scrum master, which is responsible for the scrum events such as daily stand-up meetings, sprint planning, sprint execution, and sprint retrospective. While developing the application for SNHU Travel, the scrum master planned the sprint based on the EPICs and user stories provided by the product owner, and throughout the sprint planning helped the testing team build their testing scenarios and the developing team to understand what the deliverables for each sprint cycle are. The scrum master takes care of maintaining transparency during each sprint by organizing scrum events, executing communication to outside of the scrum team, and builds dashboards that constantly show the progress being made and any obstacles or delays encountered on each sprint.

For the most part, the testing and developing team are the drivers of progress in each sprint, since they work together to test and then release into production the deliverables established for each sprint cycle. Each team has a lead which holds everyone accountable and takes care of communicating their progress and delays to the scrum master through the daily standups and scrum events, so that the developers can concentrate specifically in developing the deliverables. For the SNHU Travel application, agile theory was helpful in getting user stories completed because the sprints were planned with the notion that user stories might change throughout the development life cycle. At some point, the product owner informed the scrum team that SNHU Travel changed direction. SNHU Travel decided to build an application that helped their client look for Wellness Vacations instead of the initial direction of just concentrating in destinations based on deals and travel history. By having shorter sprints, the deliverables are constantly being taken by the product owner to present to the client, creating a quicker feedback loop from the client, and in turn helping the testing and development teams adjust to any changes to the user stories.

Coming back to the fact that the client decided to change direction and it required for the product manager to update some user stories, this is part of the reason that I believe Agile theory and Scrum framework combined, proved to be the right approach for the development of the SNHU travel agency application. To begin with, understanding the nature of the business the customer provides insight on the type of uncertainty that will be encountered throughout the development of the product. The travel business is constantly trying to adapt to different trends that require being flexible in the development process and having a development process that allows to be flexible allowed the team to quickly readjust. When the product owner learned the customer wanted to the SNHU Travel app to show Wellness Retreats as the vacations available due to a change in the trend in the business, the product owner updated the user stories that were impacted and passed them down to the Scrum Master and the scrum team in the sprint planning event (or earlier if feasible). The Scrum master quickly communicates the change, by updating communication dashboards, and directly meeting with the testing and developing team leads as soon as possible, so that another sprint planning occurs to ensure the new deliverable gets delivered at the end of the upcoming Sprint. At the same time, the scrum master ensures the backlog is updated to ensure the sprint execution does not become overloaded with the changes that are needed, and all upcoming scrum events will include the changes that happened on the current or last sprint.