

Fifth Quadrant

Living Golden

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Executive Summary

Problem Statement:

Wilfrid Laurier students experience a **disconnect of information on campus**. The current communication process for students typically results in vast amounts of emails that cause information overload for students and ultimately, the critical information students need gets lost or is not easily accessible in important moments.

Throughout the course of an academic year students experience various emotions that directly relate to critical moments on campus such as O-week or Midterms. Within these moments students need to have **access to quick and reliable information to provide support in these critical moments**.

Proposed Solution:

Living Golden is an application designed to ensure students not only have quick and reliable access to information they need for campus support but also provides an opportunity to show students various events and initiatives on campus.

- A digital app that uses machine learning to provide students with targeted recommendations for campus events and initiatives
- Quick access to Wellness and Academic support on campus
- A centralized location for students to find resources, register for events, and track and organize plans over the semester

Through secondary research provided by our Client Unless Design and primary research our team conducted, we have built the app knowing that it is imperative students have a centralized space to get critical information to support them social and academically to ensure a positive and healthy student experience.

Problem Space



Laurier's Student Wellness efforts have a communication problem. While the school offers a wide variety of support services, many students are unaware or uninformed, and unable to take full advantage of this support network when they need it most.



Goal

Direct first-year students to Laurier's mental health services at the time that they need them. These services include academic advising, wellness centre, accessible learning, writing skills and study centre.



Target Audience

First-year students whose mental health is negatively impacted by their academic performance and campus life.

How might we...

Effectively and promptly communicate mental health resources at these critical moments for students?

User Research

Meta-Analysis

To begin, a Meta-Analysis was conducted to see similarities and differences between the report Unless had given and prior research we had conducted.

Findings

1. There was a disconnect between the path Laurier chose to communicate to their students and the paths students perceived to receive information.
2. Wellness acts as a safety net to catch students when they fall rather than promote well-being in every aspect of the university lifestyle.
3. Navigating through fragmented elements of a system creates a fractured student experience.
4. The information found on the Laurier website is unclear.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with students from Laurier and other universities. From the interviews, we hoped to get a deeper understanding of the problems Laurier is having and also understand how other schools are handling these problems. In total, we had interviewed 15 students, 10 from Laurier, 5 from other schools including UofT, McMaster, and Conestoga.

Findings

1. Many schools suffer from vague and/or irrelevant communication practices
2. Laurier campus events and activities are under-marketed – and typically buried within irrelevant communication frameworks
3. Students suffering from depression and anxiety are less likely to proactively join clubs and events
4. Difficult to parse the services on the Wellness Centre page
5. Joining a club or association requires proactive action on the part of students
6. Students are so overwhelmed with school that they don't have time to seek help

Journey Map

A Journey Map was created to map out all the critical points a first-year student goes through. Everything from registering for courses, attending o-week, studying for exams was considered to fully understand the first-year experience. The action, feelings, pain points and interactions a student goes through during each critical point were looked at.

The full journey map can be found at:
https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOAIUcjQ=?invite_link_id=360121368613

THE FIRST-YEAR JOURNEY, SUMMARIZED



O-Week

A fun, light introduction
No academic stress (yet)



Post-Orientation

Fun stops; stress begins
Loneliness and homesickness
Fewer organized activities



First Classes

Overwhelming schedule
Academic stress
Little peer support



Midterms

Exhaustion and frustration
Self-driven time management
Discouragement

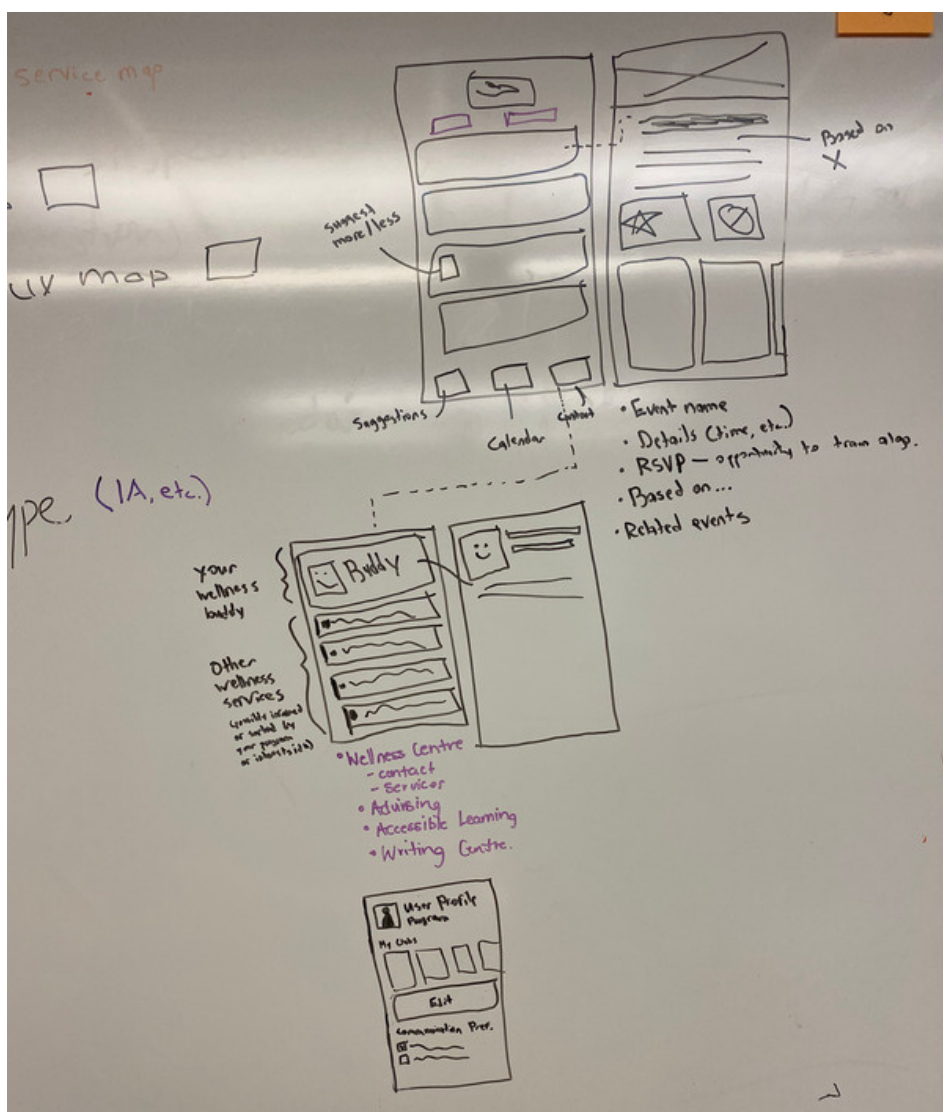


Exams

Solution & Prototyping

Low Fidelity Prototype

Through an in-person meeting, we created a sketch on the whiteboard to start visualizing the application.

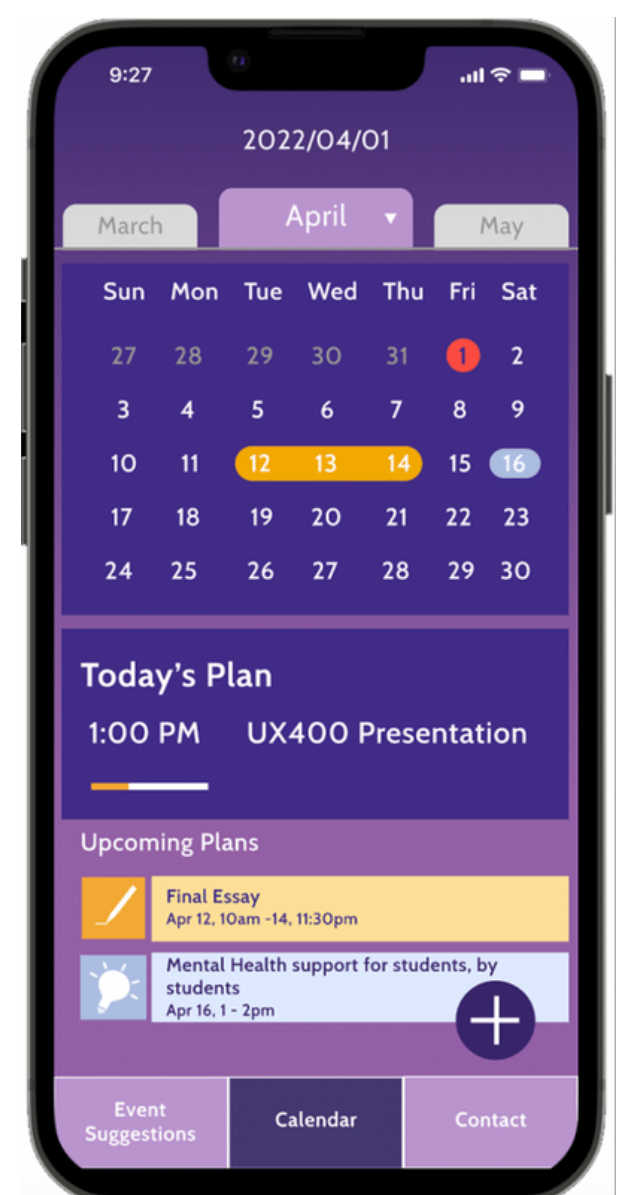
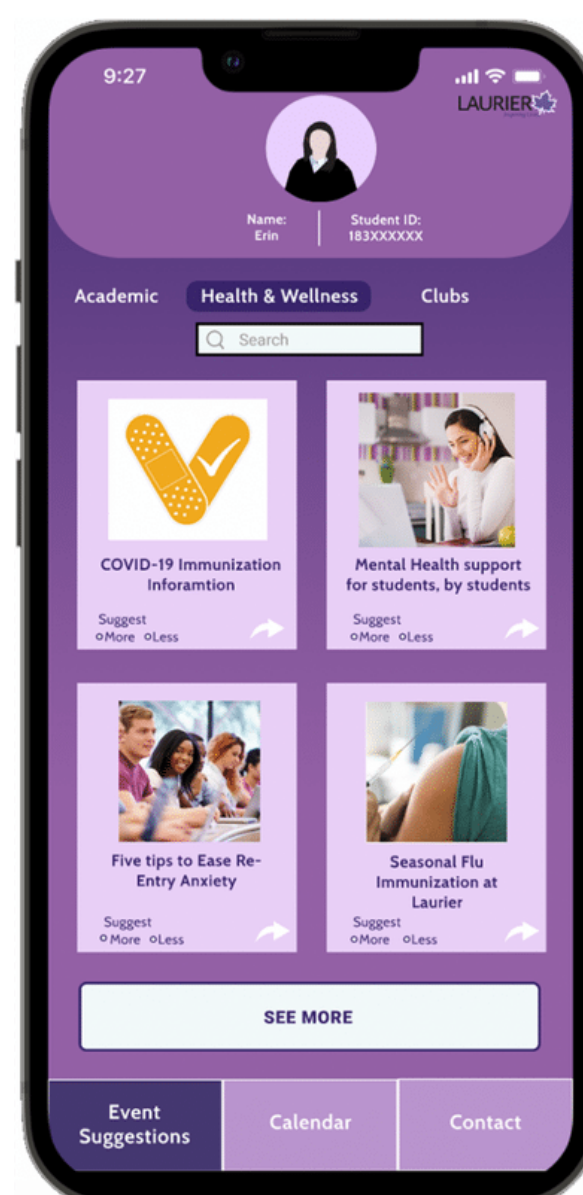


Medium Fidelity Prototype

A medium Fidelity Prototype was then created based on the sketch.

Components of the App includes:

- One place for all the on-campus event
- Built-in social features
- Integrated student's lives and schedules
- Quick access to Wellness services



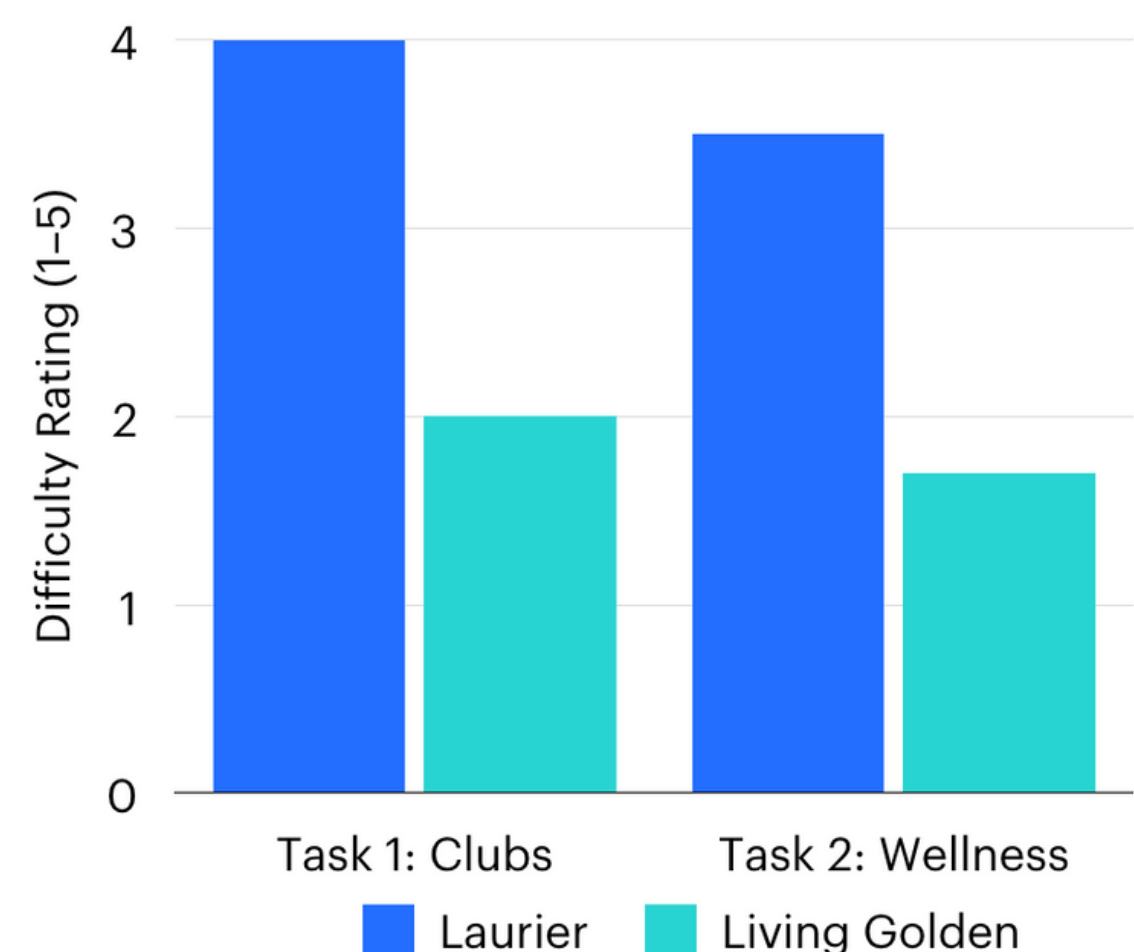
User Testing

To verify that the prototype is useable and easy to follow for incoming students during periods of stress, we conducted an A/B test: test 5 users on the Laurier website, and 5 users on our medium-fidelity prototype. We asked users to use a synchronous think-aloud protocol during the test.

Findings:

1. Currently, students usually just google Laurier information to find information
2. Users feel that our prototype is easier to find school information compared to the current school system.
3. Users have fewer clicks when they are testing our App compared to the current system

DIFFICULTY

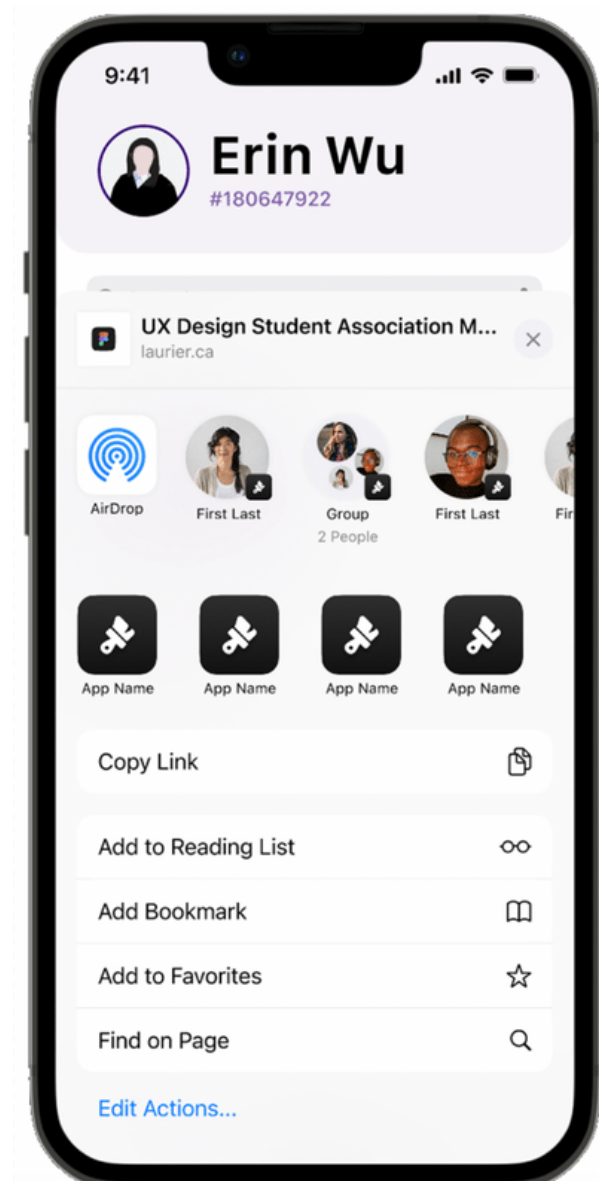
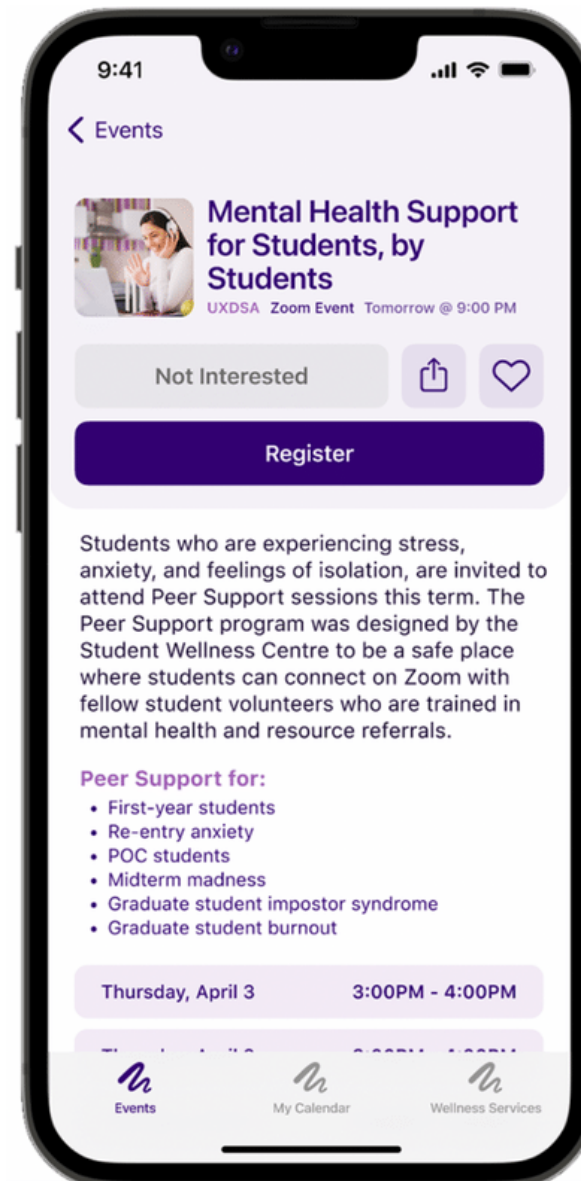
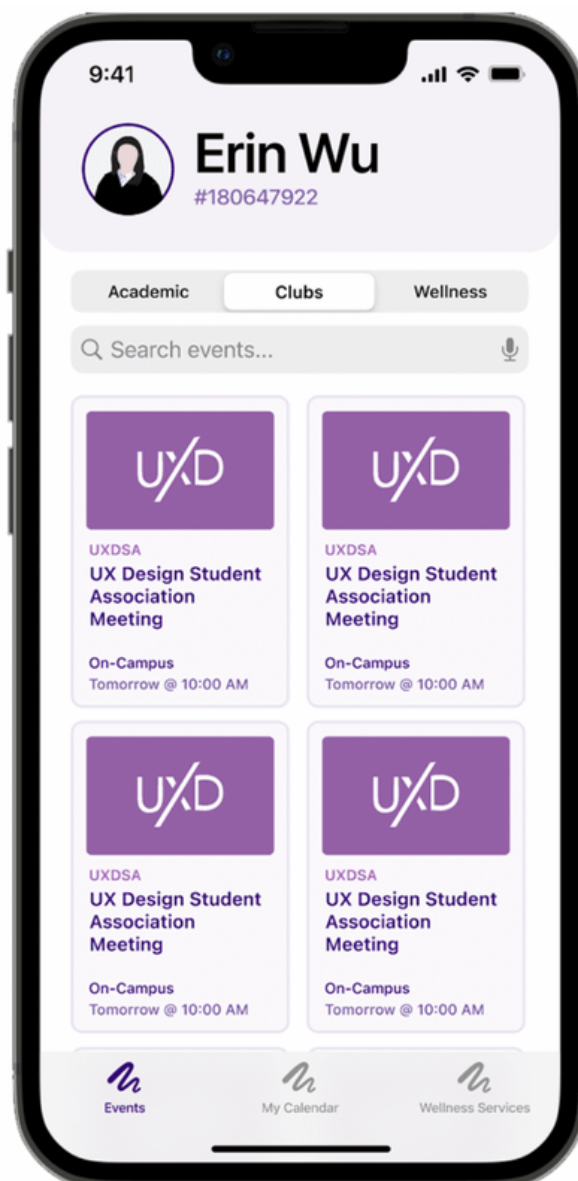




High Fidelity Prototype

From our user testing results, we produced a new high-fidelity prototype. Changes that we made include:

- Updating a number of language terms
- Placing greater emphasis on social events
- Reorganizing the IA of clubs and associations to fit students' mental model
- Improving information density and contrast



Implementation/Next Steps

This solution's practicality can be implemented in the next fall semester. A few steps that still need to be completed are outlined below:

Before the application is built (Spring 2022):

- contact Laurier Wellness Centre, Student Union, and other Laurier services to make sure they post their events and clubs in our application
- do a user test with the university before the application is published to ensure a smooth experience from the university side.

After the application is built (Summer - Fall 2022):

- make posters and QR codes of the application, and post them in school buildings and classrooms
- recommend this application through email before school starts
- mentioned the application on the residence survey that is filled out in June
- have mentors and dons suggest the application to students during O-Week.