Project Reflection

My application takes in data and overlays it on a map using the Google Maps JavaScript API. There are several datasets used including neighborhood names, boundaries, and local attractions such as museums. There are some one other planned datasets to be used including a population heat map and daily weather data. I also implemented several different travel layer options that were available via the Google API. The intention of the app was to find the best living location possible for new students at NYU. While this application was designed for that particular demographic, I designed it in a way that would easily allow for it to be altered for use by any group of people especially other college towns.

I started this hacking process by first doing some competition research of already existing solutions so that I could best see what the standard features were as well as see what possible features where not included. This allowed me to brainstorm efficiently since the entire hacking time was already limited. Once I had a solid idea of what my layout would be like, I looked over the datasets to pick out sets that I believed would be users make informed decisions on where to live once they were presented with said data.

Personally, the most challenging part of the hacking competition was learning how to use the many different APIs and how to apply the data. There were not many resources available on how to use these particular APIs, so I often had to resort to the documentation which could be overwhelming at times. While the learning the new programming skills was the most difficult, I spent the majority of my time during the competition exploring what other members were doing. In many situations, I found that other members were simply programming static features or hard-coding the data. I have learned from previous classes that this technique is highly discouraged and unprofessional.

My application saw the greatest improvement during phase two as I could see how the scoring phase was evaluated. This allowed me to then prioritize which areas of my application to best improve. This also allowed me to see what the judges deemed as successful applications during each phase. There were often moments when I believed the judges did not actually inspect the code on my own project because I often received high scores in areas that I only had aesthetic placeholders used instead of the actual technologies.

My application is unique because it is built and designed off existing housing portals which gives it the advantage of having familiar features and a familiar layout. The next step would be to flesh out the rest of the datasets and incorporate housing options from an existing house portal API such as Zillow or Nest.