

Graduation Planner

TAYLOR SLADE



Problem

- Students often **struggle to organize** their course plans, leading to missed prerequisites, unmet degree requirements, delayed graduation, and added stress.
- Graduation planning is often **confusing or inflexible**, making it harder for students and advisors to track academic progress efficiently.

Iterations & Changes

- Initial Idea:** Build pre-programmed course plans for every major at KU.
- Iteration:** Scope became too large and too school-specific for my timeline
- Change:** Switched to a dynamic file upload system where students upload their own degree plans, cutting back on time spent researching specific degree plans and manually adding majors
- Focus Adjustment:** Prioritized broader usability for students at any university, not just KU.

Impact

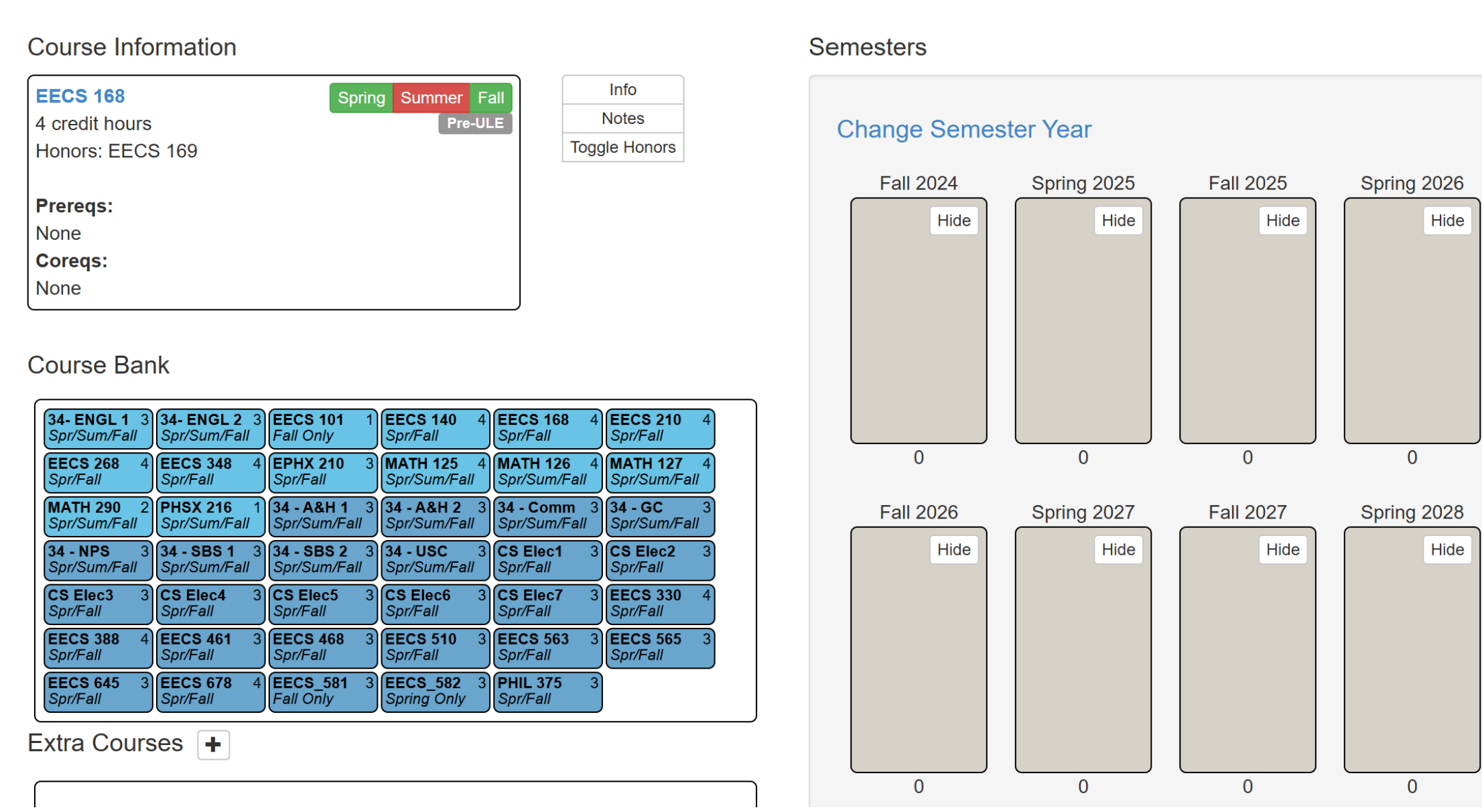
- Simplifies course planning for students, **reducing stress and confusion**.
- Helps students **stay on track for graduation** by clearly mapping out prerequisites and requirements.
- Provides academic advisors with an **easier way to audit and support student progress**.
- Has the **potential to improve graduation rates** by minimizing planning errors.

Solution

- Graduation Planner is a **web application** that helps students organize courses **semester-by-semester**.
- Students upload their degree requirements, and the site dynamically generates course options, making it **customizable** to different majors and universities.
- A **drag-and-drop interface** allows students to easily build semester schedules while checking prerequisites.
- Advisors can quickly audit student plans to **ensure degree progress and on-time graduation**.

Inspiration: current EECS gradplan website

- extremely helpful for my own degree planning
- friends and students of other majors expressed interest in having a tool like this available to them



Results

- Core functionalities built:
 - Drag-and-drop interface** allowing students to easily move courses into specific semesters for clear academic planning.
 - Semester organization feature** to help students visualize their full academic timeline.
 - Upload and parsing system that **reads degree requirement files** and dynamically generates a list of available courses.
- Current version demonstrates:
 - Successful **dynamic course loading**, adapting to different degree files.
 - Prerequisite checking**, ensuring students place courses in the correct sequence.
- Progress is ongoing:
 - Focus on expanding functionality, such as supporting multiple degree plans, improving file upload flexibility, and enhancing the user interface.
 - Continued development planned to polish the user experience and add new features based on user feedback.

Personal Challenge & Growth

- Faced challenges **managing project scope**, and building and designing flexible backend and UI.
- Improved time management skills** to stay on track throughout development.
- Strengthened web development skills**, especially in frontend and backend integration.
- Gained experience** in user-centered design, project adaptability, and maintaining focus while making necessary adjustments in scope and function.

Sustainability

- Plan to **continue development** after graduation, with plans to add features like multi-plan saving, course catalog integration, and advisor collaboration tools.
- Potential to open-source the project** to allow future contributors to expand and maintain it.
- Could **partner with universities or advising centers** for adoption and support.

