The goal of our system is to maximize student value by providing transparent qualitative and quantitative data to students. We aim to assist students such as ourselves to make more informed decisions when selecting course schedules. By providing a website-based solution that aggregates course information and data, we aim to be a one stop shop when selecting courses as opposed to the current situation of having to check many disparate sources. This solution will combine information from Rate my Professor, UW course evaluations, and new qualitative questions to better match students with courses and teachers.

Our project scope will be a master database that leverages data from multiple sources into one centralized source. A large portion of the project will thus be scraping data and wrangling it to be in a compatible format. Further, new data will need to be created for the additional metrics that no data source has. In addition to this we will provide a low fidelity mockup to showcase the use cases for our solution and the benefits of the solution. However, outside of the scope of the project is to create an entirely new website that the database powers due to time limitations. Further outside of the scope is to get new reviews and feedback from other students.

When we build the system, we have several assumptions. For users, we assume there are some of students willing to share their thoughts and rate classes, and also that the students who are willing to rate professors are objective and don’t have strong biases to classes. Also, since we are mainly focus the US colleges, so we also assume users are able to read and write in English, which means they can understand the information in our system.  Besides that, we also assume our target audience has access to the internet, computers and other mobile devices so that they can actually see our system.

There are several functionalities that are required for our system. For one, people should be able to use the search function to find courses they want to evaluate and read the information by providing courses’ name, partial name or abbreviation such as (INFO 300). Second, users should be able to see others’ comments, leave their comments, evaluate classes and manage their own comments. Third, the system should be able to provide users some objective information (such as credit info) and subjective information (such as comments). These aforementioned pieces will be accomplished through a low fidelity demo.  Lastly, the system should be able to provide some aggregated information (such as overall rating or average rating) for each class, so that users can see the course in a high-level perspective. This last functionality will be done by creating a centralized database that can be queried.

If our solution is implemented, some of the benefits it would provide is students will have first-hand experience/information from past students about courses that they are interested in when the time comes for registration, such as a professor’s teaching style and the difficulty of a course. This not only makes more effective learning and teaching by helping students sign up for classes that better suit their personalities and learning style, it also eliminates last-minute panic decisions when students find out the class/professor is not the best choice for them only after attending the first class (which is somewhat late to switch classes).

There are potential problems and risks that are associated with our solution. With this new course review system, there might be negative feedback on the professor that is harsh and sometimes not representative of actual performance, which might lead to unfair treatment of the professor. Also due to the nature of this system, students technically have more power over choosing a teacher or class, which might result in some classes not being occupied due to low ratings. Furthermore, some reviews could be subjective and biased possibly due to individuals’ performance in class.