Requirements Gathering Report

Methods

1. Interviews. The first interview conducted was structured, with the priorly prepared questions. However afterwards we realized that it is not the best approach in our case. Since we research the field we don't know much about and we are limited in time, it takes a long time to come up with the proper questions. It is more helpful to use semi-structured or not-structured interviews, so we switched to it in our next interviews. They give more qualitative data and the insights on the scheduling process our team was not aware of.
2. Also we have looked at the College Scheduling Policy document that is publicly accessible. It outlines principles to guide both the scheduling of credit courses and the use of instructional space at Douglas College.
   The link to the College Scheduling Policy

Findings

1. The faculty members express a general distaste for the way communication is handled among members when trying to book a meeting or submit their availability.
2. Many feel that the current system doesn't disclose enough information about faculty members availability.
3. Every term professors need to email the chair about their availability 1 year in advance. This is very hard for them to predict what free time they will have.
4. Some faculty members are dissatisfied with the fact that office hours can not be operated on zoom or any online platform.
5. Faculty members expressed that they have little to no direct control over what classes (in the department) that they will teach and at what time.
6. Chairs need to make sure that the classes are well aligned with other departments' classes, to ensure that students don't have required courses at the same time.
7. Many faculty members would like more integration to the online scheduling system (e.g., many professors still have to manually create their courses schedule outline). And from this system to be integrated with more quality of life services.

Challenges

1. Figure out which question should be asked
   a. Asking too broad may lead to vague answers.
   b. Giving unrelated questions may lead to getting wrong information.
   c. Avoid asking too personal or controversial questions.
2. Who to interview among the faculty members
   a. Some professors are busy, and emails may go unnoticed.
   b. There may be some schedule conflict between professors and students.
   c. Most of the instructors do not take part in schedule creation and decision making, so they cannot provide many details.
3. Technical Overload

a. Some professors used complex terms during the interview so sometimes it is hard to understand and ask follow up questions.
b. Interviewing an expert can be stressful to some of us.

Key insights

1. Many colleges and institutions use a "standard matrix" to plan out their courses.
2. There is a severe lack of conflict notices and avoidance methods in the current system, such as when booking a room for an exam (requires manual verification according to our findings). This can lead to scenarios where real-time conflict management is required (e.g., approval from Dean).
3. Only the chair can control or modify the existing schedule. Regular and temporary faculty members can submit their preferences to the chair but it's not up to their control what class they will teach in the end.
4. Communication systems suck. Relies on emails / informal meetings / manually contacting the person to determine their availability.
5. Faculty members can not view the overall schedule so they don't know whether their colleague is busy or free or a room is taken or not.