

# Proposal for Tiger Planner

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## Executive Summary

Today, the availability of education is greater than it has ever been in the past. More and more people are able to achieve higher levels of education whether through universities, community colleges, or online schools. Further, the amount of curricula offered at such institutions has become more diverse with the rise of technology and the introduction of more specialized fields of study. For many people, this growth provides a host of opportunities for success; however, the scheduling of these programs can be a daunting task, especially for new students, due to the amount of courses available.

The main target of this project is any student that has trouble scheduling his classes for each semester, specifically LSU students. Tiger Planner allows the user to input the courses that he needs to take for a given semester and outputs all of the different schedules that are possible. The student will be able to tailor his schedule to his preferences, so that he can attend classes during the hours that work best for him.

Currently, there are no other apps that offer similar features to Tiger Planner. Most students have to manually look up course times with their section availabilities and try to fit them into their respective schedules. Tiger Planner is customizable, easy to use, and inexpensive. It will be developed using open source codes and be implemented as a web app, making it free for the end user.

## **Gap in the Market**

The current market doesn't provide any comprehensive solution to scheduling classes. Students have to use several different resources to schedule their classes: Flowcharts, Course Catalogues, Rate my Professor, and Free College Schedule Maker.

Though all of these come at no cost to the user, a lot of time must be spent in order to use all of these programs and produce a suitable schedule. Moreover, this task can become even more difficult when the student needs to take classes that are part of different departments, especially for students who have multiple majors. Most departments at LSU do not work together to make sure that their course offerings do not overlap, making it difficult to even find one schedule that is possible for a given set of courses, let alone preferable.

## **Meeting the Market's Needs**

Tiger Planner will fill the gap in the market by producing schedules more quickly, with plenty of more options, and at no cost. Each user will be able to input the classes he needs to take, and Tiger Planner will generate all of the possible schedules. In addition, the resultant schedules will be able to be filtered based on preferred class times, and course availability.

## **Implementation**

### **Management**

Tiger Planner will be managed by its contributors, Chris, Kareem, Matthew, and Shaun.

## **Development**

Our application will be hosted on cloud technologies, with the frontend and backend on the AWS cloud. The frontend will be developed in PHP, CSS, HTML, and the backend will be developed in dynamoDB on AWS.

## **Marketing and Distribution**

Since our target audience -- LSU students -- is relatively localised, we will be focusing our advertising methods on more personal approaches rather than mass marketing or online advertising. We will be advertising through GroupMe chats and Discord servers for LSU classes, as well as word of mouth. Distribution will be through the user's browser of choice. No downloads are required to use Tiger Planner.

## **Monetization**

We plan to make our service 100% free for users. To generate revenue, we will run ads on our website. Our ads will be run within reason, and will not be a hindrance to the user experience, nor will they clutter the user interface.

## **The Problem and Our Solution**

The problem with the current solution, the university created my.lsu scheduling service, is that it doesn't combine the schedule booklet with the schedule request service. Therefore, scheduling conflicts are not visualized, or sometimes not even known, prior to scheduling. In addition, it is hard for students to know all possible schedules with their coursework, without manually considering for the different times of all different classes. Our solution seeks to visualize scheduling conflicts before scheduling occurs, and seeks to provide students with every possible version of their schedule, so they can choose the schedule that fits them.

## **Industry Need for Our Technology**

Already, students have access to third party apps that help to visualize their courses for their schedule. However, these third party applications do not allow students to select from LSU courses specifically, filter by their major, nor does it allow for students to visualize all possible schedules they have to choose from. Our solution intends to create a scheduling service catered to LSU students and their specific majors, and create a solution that visualizes all possible versions of their schedule, so that they can pick the one that suits them and their preferences.

## **Market Analysis/Primary Market/Secondary Market**

There is no similar competition for Tiger Planner that exists for LSU. This means our product will be the only one of its kind that provides this service for our target market.

The primary market is LSU students. The students who will benefit the most from this product are new students who are unfamiliar with the scheduling system, students who struggle with navigating the class scheduling system, and double majors whose classes in different majors will often have conflicting times.

## **Marketing Strategies**

### **Overview**

Tiger Planner wants to be the first resource that LSU students use when they begin planning their schedules for upcoming semesters. To achieve this, our product must provide an effective service that is easy to use and eliminates the hassles and frustrations that are encountered when using myLSU's scheduling system. Additionally, we would like to offer other features that can help our users customize their schedules to their preference. We would like to provide Tiger Planner for free to allow any students to use it and attract as many visitors as possible. Revenue can be generated from ads on our site that pay for each unique visitor to our site.

### **Primary Customer analysis and entry strategy**

Our entry strategy to the market is to provide our service free of charge for students to use. Revenue will be generated from ads on our site that pays for each unique visitor. When students see the ease of use and convenience our product provides, they will recommend our service to other students, drawing a greater number of visitors and increasing our revenue.

### **Core competency**

The core competency of our product is the convenience and useful features we provide for our users when they plan their class schedules. Tiger Planner will eliminate much of the hassle and excessive clicks that are necessary when navigating myLSU's course catalog and class registration system. In addition, we will provide features that are not available in myLSU's class registration system, such as preferences for time of day, minimizing or maximizing gaps, and professor and class ratings/reviews. We will also focus on adding more user requested features as our site functionality expands.

### **Sales Strategy**

## **Pricing**

Tiger Planner will be available to users for free. Because our revenue will be generated from advertisements on our site, we want to attract as many users as possible.

## **Positioning**

We plan on designing Tiger Planner to streamline the course scheduling process as much as possible. Tiger Planner should be the first resource that users think of when they begin to schedule classes.

## **Promotion**

Our site will be promoted through internet advertising and any channels that reach LSU students such as discords, GroupMes, and slack channels.

## **Place**

Because our product is a startup and a website, it can be created and managed from home and many other convenient locations.

# **Competition**

As far as we know, there is no similar product or service that LSU students can use. Therefore, our product will be the only resource of its kind for our target audience. However, there are some resources that provide services similar to features that have been frequently requested by potential users.

## **RateMyProfessor**

RateMyProfessor is a website that allows users to post reviews and rate professors according to their difficulty and other such attributes. It is the current market leader in professor ratings and an extremely popular resource that students use when deciding how to pick their courses. We want to be able to extract and display this information on Tiger Planner or offer a similar service that replaces what RateMyProfessor offers for LSU students.

## **Microsoft Excel**

Microsoft Excel is a spreadsheet application that is one of the biggest leaders of this market. Many students use this software to visualize and track their course schedules. We hope to offer a

much improved service on Tiger Planner that will completely eliminate the need for users to use Excel this way.

## **Development Strategies**

The primary method we will use to develop the web app is the evolutionary process model. We start by focusing on the main features to validate our application and iteratively add more features to create a customizable and tailored experience for the end user.

Initially, we will create a prototype of Tiger Planner that simply generates a list of possible schedules from a given input set of classes.

Second, we will implement the program to ensure its viability as a foundation to add more features.

Finally, we will iteratively add more features, such as filtering based time preferences. After receiving customer feedback, we can continuously edit and add more features to provide the best possible experience for the user.

## **Barriers**

Some barriers to entering the market we anticipate are:

1. Marketing Tiger Planner and promoting it enough so that students are aware of its existence
2. Developing the software to be fast, robust, and responsive enough to handle high load
3. Obtaining permission to use and post data regarding LSU classes, professors, and RateMyProfessor ratings

## **Critical Risks**

Currently, there is no competition that offers similar features to Tiger Planner, so our program does not require the user to transfer over or switch from a different application. Since the app will be primarily advertised via social media and free group messaging systems, all we need to ensure is that we deliver the product as specified. For Tiger Planner to become widespread, it needs to deliver a tailored experience and make scheduling easy for any student.

## **Interviews**

**Name**

Ashton Bourgeois (Face to face interview)  
Nicholas Leonik (Face to face interview)  
Evan Costello (Face to face interview)  
Jae Kweon (Face to face interview)  
Tommy Nguyen (Face to face interview)  
James Ensminger (Face to face interview)  
Christine Nguyen (Face to face interview)  
Cameron Martin (Face to face interview)  
Blake Bramley (Face to face interview)  
Nils Jernsletten (Face to face interview)

## **Would you be interested in our product?**

Yeah, it would be neat. I always thought it would be an interesting idea.

Yes, I would use it, especially if there are multiple sections to choose from for a course.

Yes, I would be interested.

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes, that would be quite helpful actually, it would take away a lot of the stress.

Very.

## **What features would you like to see?**

Showing multiple possible schedules, class data, ranks and reviews for classes and a rating for difficulty of schedule so that I can flex on people

I would like to have links to RateMyProfessor to show professor ratings or some similar system. I'd also like to see an option that shows how my selected classes fulfill requirements for my degree audit.

I'd like to be able to change the sorting or filter through the generated possible schedule. For example, to be able to set an earliest class time and see if it's possible. I'd also like to be able to sort based on whether on the schedule is balanced or if it heavy on a specific day. (Like tuesday and thursday heavy). To be able to put in multiple classes that I only want to take one of during the semester.. For example, say I have multiple elective options. To be able to see all of the possible schedules if only one elective was chosen. To integrate waitlist/section availability (to have some sort of note regarding the availability of each class..

I'd like to see it linked to Rate my Professor and the availability for each section

I'd like to see teacher quality on the schedule.

I would like to be able to prioritize certain classes over others when creating schedules and see professor ratings.

I'd like to see it displayed in calendar form. Color coded.

The ability to select a timeframe to fit the classes into.

Being able to set preferences for morning or evening classes, and being able to categorize the types of courses you could take based on your major.

Prioritizing specific classes to be at specific times.

## **How difficult is it for you to currently schedule classes?**

Learning to schedule classes was frustrating, but I feel that I am experienced at it now. However, new or less focused students might struggle to use the current system.

I think it's quite difficult to schedule classes as the system is now. I had an issue in the current system where if you are enrolled in a particular course, I cannot waitlist in a different section of that same course.

It isn't necessarily difficult but it is time consuming. I spend at least one to two hours doing what this program could do in seconds.

It usually takes me around 30 minutes to schedule my classes

About 30 minutes



Currently it's not that bad, however, when I was a freshman I had difficulty scheduling classes.

It takes me a long time because I'm transferring schools. It would be great if the app showed which courses are eligible to be transferred over to other schools. It pulls be cool if it were easy to use for people of all ages.

Easy, but that's because all of mine are one section a piece.

It usually takes at least 3 hours of planning and a good 5 hours of fixing schedule conflicts.

Pretty difficult, because I take 6. Especially with having to look up different sections and professors for each one.

## **What tools do you use to help schedule/plan classes?**

I use Microsoft Excel to help visualize and plan my schedule.

I currently use RateMyProfessor and Microsoft Excel to help choose and plan my course schedule.

Google calendar, the LSU course catalog, and Rate my Professor.

Schedule booklet, Rate my Professor

Free College Schedule Maker, Rate my Professor, Schedule Booklet

RateMyProfessor

Laptop. College Schedule Maker. Rate my Professor. Phone call/email.

I don't.

I use the LSU general catalog, the recommended path for my major, and the schedule booklet.

Pencil and a piece of paper. Oh, and RateMyProfessor.

## **Do you think our product would be a suitable replacement for the tools you currently use?**

This product would replace my need to use excel when scheduling classes.

Yes, I would no longer need to use Microsoft Excel to plan my schedule. However, I would probably still use RateMyProfessor in conjunction with the product to determine which classes I choose because it has more in-depth reviews.

As far as scheduling is concerned yes. I still may use Rate my Professor if it isn't integrated into the program.

Yes

Yes

Yes, I would use this product over RateMyProfessor

Yes.

Yes

Yes, very emphatically yes.

Yes.

**Are you aware of any current websites/applications that have similar functionality?**

No, but I believe there is a demand for it.

No

No

No

No

No, I don't think there are any services like this

BRCC has a program where you could check off which major you are, and what days and times you want to take classes.

No.

Absolutely not.

Nope.