

Project Deliverable 1 – Project Proposal

1. Project Title

Pods: An Ephemeral Group Coordination Platform for College Students

2. Project Team

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Role: Product Lead, Backend Engineer, System Design

3. Project Description

Pods is a lightweight social coordination platform designed to help college students form short-lived groups for everyday activities such as studying, going to the gym, attending events, or socializing. Instead of relying on group chats or social media, users can create or join “pods,” which are temporary activity-based groups that expire automatically after the activity ends. The system reduces social friction and decision paralysis by enabling intent-based, low-pressure coordination in real time.

4. Business Goals

The primary business goals of Pods are:

- Reduce social coordination friction by providing a faster, lower-pressure alternative to group chats and social media.
- Enable spontaneous engagement through ephemeral, intent-based group formation.
- Increase student participation in academic, social, and recreational activities.
- Demonstrate scalable coordination infrastructure that could extend beyond college campuses.
- Create value by saving users time and reducing missed opportunities for connection.

5. Main Features / Engineering Objectives

1. User authentication using email-based login (mocked for development).
2. Pod-based communities that scope activity discovery.
3. Activity posts with time window, capacity, and expiration.
4. Join request system for users to request participation.
5. Host approval workflow to accept or decline requests.
6. Temporary group chat created upon acceptance.
7. Automatic expiration and cleanup of posts and chats.

6. Scope

In Scope:

- User authentication
- Pod membership
- Activity post creation and discovery
- Join requests and approval
- Temporary group chat
- Automatic expiration logic

****Out of Scope:****

- Payments
- Location tracking
- Recommendation algorithms
- Persistent social feeds
- Integration with official university systems

7. Stakeholders

- College students (primary users)
- Student organizations (secondary users)
- Project developers
- CS 411 instructors and evaluators

8. Constraints

- Semester-long development timeline
- Limited development resources
- No access to proprietary university systems
- Need to avoid scope creep

9. Risks

- Low adoption in early stages
 - *Mitigation:* Focus on small pods that work with few users.
- Scope creep
 - *Mitigation:* Strict MVP definition and prioritization.

10. Appendix

- GitHub Repository: <https://github.com/>