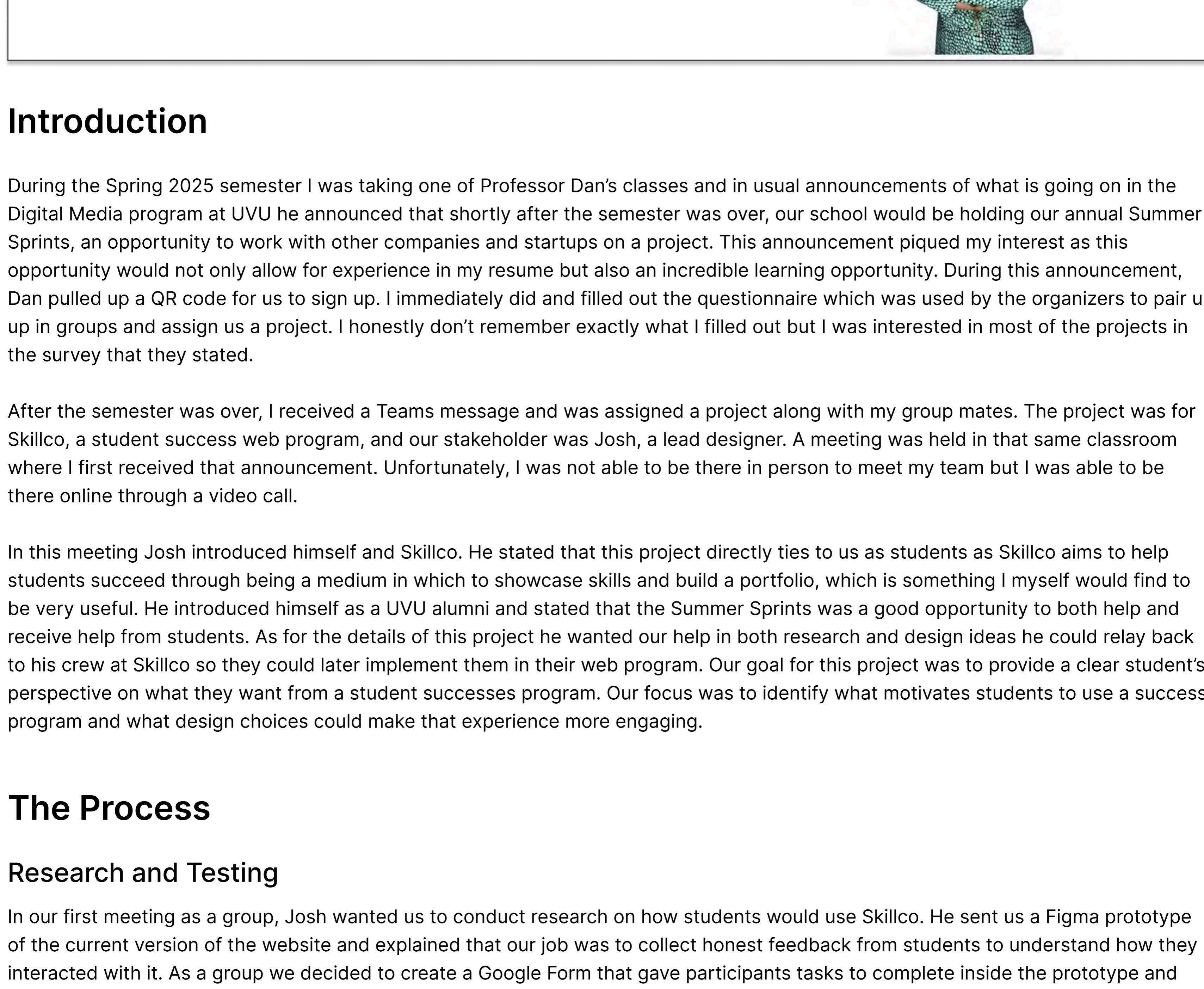


# The Summer Sprint: Building a Better Skill-Sharing Experience

A collaborative UX sprint redesigning Skillco's platform for student success.

BY ALAN MARTINEZ-DIAZ



## Introduction

During the Spring 2025 semester I was taking one of Professor Dan's classes and in usual announcements of what is going on in the Digital Media program at UVU he announced that shortly after the semester was over, our school would be holding our annual Summer Sprints, an opportunity to work with other companies and startups on a project. This announcement piqued my interest as this opportunity would not only allow for experience in my resume but also an incredible learning opportunity. During this announcement, Dan pulled up a QR code for us to sign up. I immediately did and filled out the questionnaire which was used by the organizers to pair us up in groups and assign us a project. I honestly don't remember exactly what I filled out but I was interested in most of the projects in the survey that they stated.

After the semester was over, I received a Teams message and was assigned a project along with my group mates. The project was for Skillco, a student success web program, and our stakeholder was Josh, a lead designer. A meeting was held in that same classroom where I first received that announcement. Unfortunately, I was not able to be there in person to meet my team but I was able to be there online through a video call.

In this meeting Josh introduced himself and Skillco. He stated that this project directly ties to us as students as Skillco aims to help students succeed through being a medium in which to showcase skills and build a portfolio, which is something I myself would find to be very useful. He introduced himself as a UVU alumni and stated that the Summer Sprints was a good opportunity to both help and receive help from students. As for the details of this project he wanted our help in both research and design ideas he could relay back to his crew at Skillco so they could later implement them in their web program. Our goal for this project was to provide a clear student's perspective on what they want from a student successes program. Our focus was to identify what motivates students to use a success program and what design choices could make that experience more engaging.

## The Process

### Research and Testing

In our first meeting as a group, Josh wanted us to conduct research on how students would use Skillco. He sent us a Figma prototype of the current version of the website and explained that our job was to collect honest feedback from students to understand how they interacted with it. As a group we decided to create a Google Form that gave participants tasks to complete inside the prototype and then questions afterward about how they felt using it.

We were able to get ten students to participate in our usability test. Most of them were UVU students from different years and backgrounds, which helped us get a wider range of opinions. Many of them described the site as clean and liked the colors and the progress snapshot section. Several students mentioned that they liked seeing the charts and percentages because it helped them understand their skill growth better. Some students did say that a few parts of the navigation were unclear, and that the site could use more visuals or examples to make things easier to follow.

When asked to rate the site on how easy it was to use, most participants gave it between a 7 and a 10. Overall they found Skillco simple to use but felt there was room to make it more engaging. A few students said they would like to see more color, pictures, and even short videos that explain features or show examples of skills. Others said they would like a better way to organize unfinished projects or plan for future goals.

From all this feedback, we started to see a clear direction for what could make Skillco better. We realized students wanted something that not only tracks their skills but also feels more personal and motivating. These insights helped guide our next steps as we began to focus on the visual layout and ways to make the experience more exciting and relatable for students.

Here is our questionnaire we wrote as a group to perform usability testing on a prototype Josh provided for us on students

### Mood Boarding

After we finished collecting the usability feedback, our next step was moodboarding. Josh wanted us to research features and designs from other websites that were similar to Skillco. The main goal was to find ideas and inspiration that could help improve the student dashboard and profile sections of the site. He really emphasized looking for design choices and features that could be included in a student's profile dashboard where they could show their projects and skills almost like a portfolio.

As a group we created a shared Figma file to collect everything. Each of us researched different websites and took screenshots of layouts, colors, and design ideas that stood out to us. The two main sites we looked at were Naukri and Skilljar. We studied how these platforms displayed user information, progress, and achievements in a clear and professional way. We dropped the screenshots into our Figma board and added notes about what we liked and how those same ideas could be adapted into Skillco.

We noticed that both Naukri and Skilljar had clean dashboards with strong visuals that made information easy to read. We liked how they organized profile sections with icons and headers and how they made accomplishments or skills more noticeable through small highlights and cards. As a group we agreed that Skillco could benefit from a similar approach to make student dashboards feel more personalized and professional at the same time.

This moodboarding stage helped us shape a clearer vision for what Skillco could look like. Seeing these examples side by side made it easier to imagine how a student's dashboard could feel more like a living portfolio that grows as they do.

Here is a compiled mood board we made as a team with design choices and features from competitor or similar web programs.

### Designing

Once we finished the moodboarding stage, Josh moved us into the design phase. He tasked our group with redesigning one of Skillco's existing features called the career roadmap. This feature matches the skills a student lists on their profile with a chosen career path and educational programs, and then gives them a score that shows how well their current skills align with that career.

Josh shared the original design files for the career roadmap with us, and our job was to rethink how this feature could look and feel more clear and motivating for students. We wanted to make it not only informative but also something that encouraged students to explore new goals and track their progress visually.

As a group, we each brainstormed and created our own Figma designs for the new roadmap layout. We shared ideas on how to present the matching score in a more visual way and how to simplify the steps for exploring different careers. Some of us focused on adding progress bars or badges, while others worked on improving color use, spacing, and overall layout. I personally aimed to make the design more student-friendly and easy to understand at a glance, so users could quickly see where they stand and what skills they still need to build.

By the end of this stage, we had several variations of the roadmap redesign, each with different visual ideas and approaches. This gave Josh and the Skillco team a variety of directions to consider when refining the final version of the feature.

Here is one of the redesigns that I did to the career roadmap feature in Skillco.

Here is a slight redesign to the projects tab in the career roadmap.

Here is one of my groupmates' design iterations of the Skillco dashboard, I think they did a great job on it.

### Presentation

After sharing our designs and research with Josh, we wrapped up our work with him and moved on to the final part of the Summer Sprint, which was presenting our project. Our team met in Dan's classroom to give our presentation and share what we had worked on. Unfortunately, one of our team members wasn't able to be there in person, but they were still able to present their part through a recorded video message.

During the presentation, we went through the process step by step, from the usability testing and moodboarding to the redesign of the career roadmap feature. It was a great moment to look back on how much we had learned and how our design thinking had developed through the weeks. We talked about what went well, what challenges we faced, and how we worked together to solve them.

One of the main points we reflected on was how important communication and preparation were during the sprint. Early on, our group spent time trying to figure out our main task, and we realized how much easier things would have been if we had asked more questions from the start. We also learned the value of coming prepared to meetings and making sure everyone knew what needed to be discussed or decided. More than anything, we learned not to be afraid of sharing ideas, even if they weren't perfect. Collaboration and open discussion made the design process more enjoyable and productive.

Presenting our project felt like a rewarding ending to the Summer Sprint. It gave us the chance to see how our hard work came together and to appreciate how much we had grown, not just in design skills but in teamwork and confidence.

### Conclusion

Now reflecting back upon this experience I was grateful and happy that I took on this opportunity of participating in Summer Sprints. I knew that I could gain experience with this but I didn't know exactly what I would learn. I can say that I learned a lot about how the industry operates and how assets such design files and Figma files are organized and operated. I learned a lot from Josh, especially to always use auto-layout in Figma.

He told our group multiple times this and even told this portfolio class when he paid us a visit one day.

Are there things in which I thought I could do better, the answer to that is yes. I wish I could've put in more effort in attending the meetings in person instead of through video call, I felt if I did that I could've suggested more ideas or have more input. I would say the main challenge I faced in this project and especially in the beginning was understanding what Josh exactly wanted. He would say many ideas and I felt that I couldn't keep up.

Another challenge was the many restrictions Skillco had in their design choices, for example I suggested a change to the skill-career match score feature. I wanted to implement the idea of a progress wheel that showed a percentage rather than whatever score out of five stars. However, I was met with a nice rejection of that design change and resorted back to the current scoring design of using stars albeit with a different visual approach. But other than those little challenges that are normal to face, I felt proud and accomplished to do something outside of a regular class and it felt productive. I felt that it helped me improve and strengthen my skills.

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