ALPACA.AI

LET'S CATCH UP!

UX CASE STUDY

CS247B: Design for Behavior Change (Win '24)
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PROJECT SUMMARY

We created **alpaca.ai,** an AI scheduling agent that helps **college students make social plans with friends in a fun, engaging, and efficient way.**

We wanted to **influence the social behavior** of college students, especially those in their final year at Stanford. Here at Stanford, flake culture runs rampant, and with busy Stanford schedules, **catching up can be incredibly difficult despite the best of intentions.**

Enter alpaca.AI. **Forget the hassle of coordinating a date, time, and place to meet** with friends. Just give your weekly schedule and who you want to meet up with, amd alpaca.ai will do the rest, automatically generating event cards with a date, time, and place that work with you and your friends.

With **less friction**, you can have **more fun** with social events and focus on the memories that matter before it's too late.

PROBLEM SPACE

👥 HOW WE FOUND OUR PROBLEM

How might we **improve the social habits** of **graduating seniors and coterms** who wish to socialize more?

After meeting and brainstorming, we decided we wanted our target audience to be **graduating seniors and coterms.** We thought of our friends, ourselves, and the issues we uniquely face as a starting point, and wanted to delve deeper into social life, a pressing issue of many final years. In this process we…

- Conducted a Literature review
- Conducted Comparative Research

LITERATURE REVIEW

In **our literature review** (link), we focused on articles that examined how **social behaviors manifest and change throughout the college years.** Overall, this gave us research backings behind the unique **social habits of college seniors**, which was our focus area. Here were some of the studies we looked at, and how they informed our perspective moving forward.

- "Longitudinal study of changes in ego identity status from the freshman to the senior year at college." (link)
  - Here, we found that male **college seniors felt more secure in their identity**. This began to feed into the idea that college seniors view their social interactions differently than other college students. This provided justification for building on existing relationships rather than exploring new friends.

LITERATURE REVIEW PT 2

- "The Impact of Social Relationships on College Student Learning during the Pandemic: Implications for Sociologists" (link)
  - By **understanding** the **negative effects on social interaction** that the **pandemic had**, we could focus on how to counteract those effects and encourage positive social effects and behavior.
- "What do students want socially when they arrive at college? Implications of social achievement goals for social behaviors and adjustment during the first semester of college". (link)
  - **This looks at frosh's social goals.** We wanted to further understand the difference between frosh and senior year in attempts to really cater to final-years.

LITERATURE REVIEW PT 3

- "Making the Most of College Friendships" (link)
  - This article talked about **making the most of college relationships and three different friendship network types**. This was useful for understanding how different people make friends from various perspectives, which was useful to include in our efforts.
- "Social Skills and Life Satisfaction of Lithuanian First- and Senior-Year University Students" (link)
  - Although in Lithuania, this also gave us an idea of the **unique things we could target in regards to the social life of seniors.**

LIT REVIEW INSIGHTS

Key insights across all literature reviews:

Freshman year to senior year, there are differences in social comfort, identity, and habits

- ○ With regards to our study, this means that our target audience— final-years, which includes senior+ populations at Stanford, has different social needs than frosh for example. With this, instead of catering something to facilitate new connections, we built on the older, more established connections.

- The importance of **social interaction to wellbeing** is key in college students.
  - ○ Results from the pandemic effects on social interactions and the life satisfaction of the Lithuanian college students showed that social interaction is important to wellbeing. Thus, in our intervention, we wanted to create something that increased meaningful social interactions.

- Combined, these two insights meant that we were looking to build on older, more established connections and with that facilitate meaningful social interaction. This was in contrast to other things like meeting people, getting to know them in a deeper way, or simply coordinating plans.

COMPARATOR STUDY

Final-year students looking to improve social interactions was our niche. As such, we explored spaces that were **social/scheduling solutions for college-aged students**. We looked at solution, problem, and audience comparators in those domains and came up with the following 2x2. On one axis, we put low vs high impact— how rewarding was each social interaction? On the other axis, we put high effort vs low effort— how demanding was each social interaction to make? **alpaca.ai** we considered to be **lower effort** (after the initial effort of importing calendar and contacts) and **high impact as meaningful plans** with friends are **more likely.**
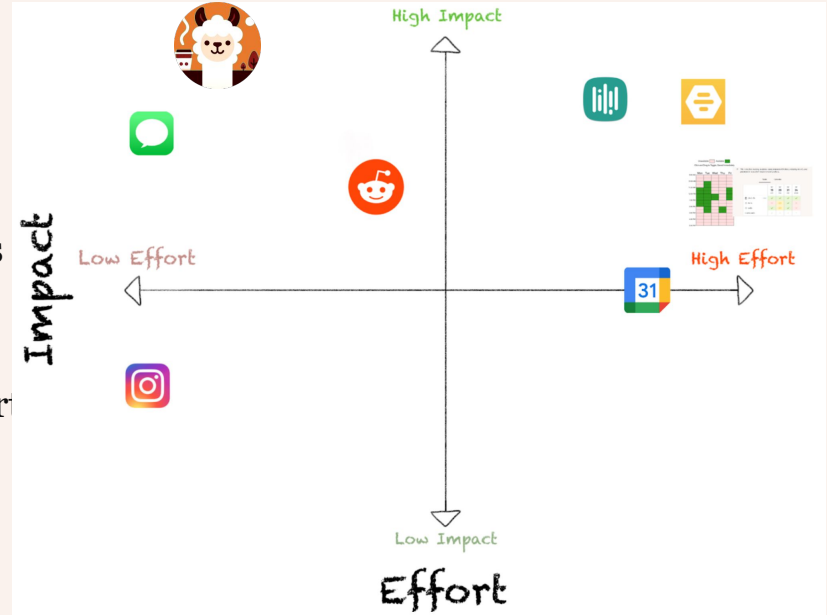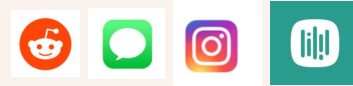
COMPARATOR STUDY

Our Comparators were as follows:

People: Stanford students in their final year who are interested in being more fulfilled by their social lives or habits.
Comparators: Reddit, iMessage, Instagram, YouCanBookMe

Problem: Everyone is busy and it's hard to find intentional social time.
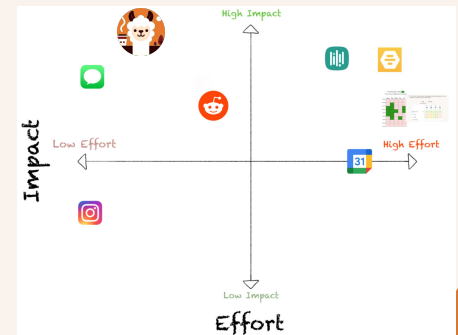*Comparators: When2meet, DoodlePoll*

Solution: Ways to schedule social time
Comparators: Bumble for Friends, Google Calenda...

Link to Comparator Slides and Research

COMPARATOR INSIGHTS

iMessage and Instagram are both **low in effort but iMessage has a greater impact** as you are speaking directly to individuals as opposed to portraying your ideal self on Instagram. Of course this comes with the prerequisite of having people to engage with on iMessage in a meaningful way.

When2meet and Doodle Poll are direct competitors so they are in similar spots to in the diagram. They are both used for scheduling events whose **impact varies based on what is being planned.**

BFF requires a **fair amount of effort** from the user but if the user is able to actualize and make friends then the **impact is substantial. YouCanBookMe** is not dissimilar from BFF with the exception that it takes a bit less effort as it is in a **professional environment** that does not demand the same social expectations as BFF.

Google Calendar is a **fairly high effort endeavor** and **using it to schedule social interactions is impactful** but it is not the whole value proposition of Google Calendar.

SYNTHESIZED INSIGHTS

In our secondary research we found that a way to **reduce friction for *users*' ability to engage in social interactions is to either create a space or to make scheduling easier.** Having people convene at a location is a prerequisite for a social outing. When2meet, Doodle Poll, and Google Calendar are all tools used to accomplish this. We accessed these tools to be high effort for various reasons. People have schedule conflicts, "committed" people end up flaking, and there are inertial forces that have to be overcome when making *something* happen. There is room in the market for scheduling made easy. All other explored competitors are in the business of making a space for groups. Many of these platforms cover a specific demographic. Connecting our target users of graduating Stanford students with heightened interests in interacting with others would be the differentiator for our product.
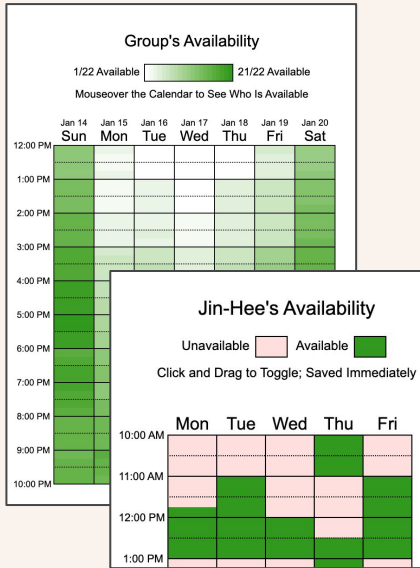
Scheduling Apps are Overly Formal
- Scheduling competitors such as when2meet and Doodle polls are too formal for casual social interactions
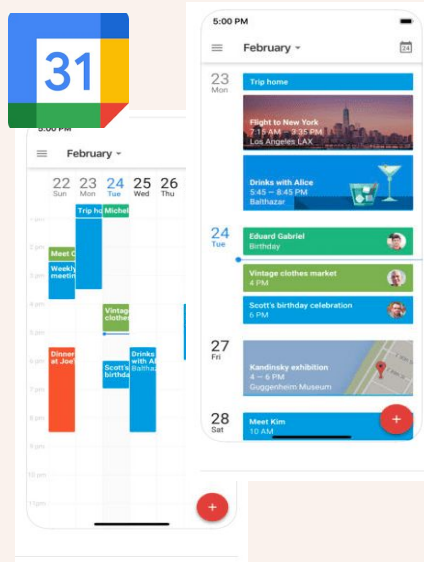
Informal Apps aren't Structured Enough
- Social apps like Instagram and iMessage were informal places to schedule things, but had high barriers to scheduling actual events.

CURRENT SOLUTIONS IN THE MARKET

when2meet can cause choice paralysis and is tedious to fill out.

Google Calendar tracks your schedule but is not a planner for new events.

iMessage requires a lot of back and forth to find overlapping time, including response delay.

alpaca.ai targets availability *and* fun social planning, worrying about all of the tedious stuff *for you.*

BASELINE STUDY

TARGET AUDIENCE

Our target audience is college **students in their final year, looking for more social interaction before they graduate.** We emphasized seniores and coterms.

This is important because **students in their last year face some of their final opportunities to meet up with friends** and socialize in the Stanford environment before going to the "Great Beyond" after Stanford.

A **sense of social fulfillment senior year**— aided by desired social habits—can contribute to social wellbeing, and **wellbeing, happiness, wellness**, is important to us all!
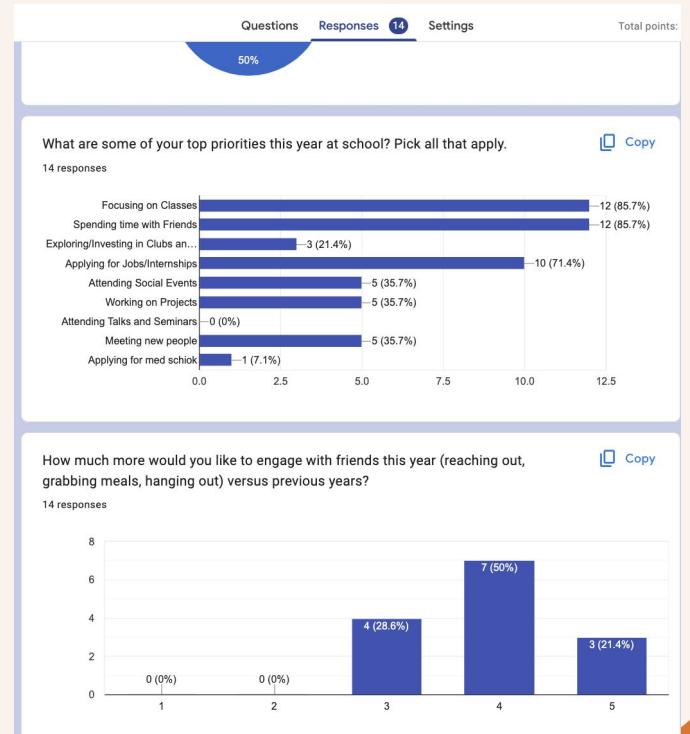
RECRUITMENT

Once we knew our problem space, we knew we needed to **recruit participants for our baseline study**.

We sent out a recruiting survey through our personal networks, **filtering for final years who wanted more socialization**. We got **14 total participants.** *Fun fact: the top two priorities (tied) were focusing on classes and spending time with friends!* We knew that we were going in the right direction.

- Screener & Baseline Guidelines

Questions   Responses 14   Settings   Total points:

50%

What are some of your top priorities this year at school? Pick all that apply.   Copy
14 responses

Focusing on Classes — 12 (85.7%)
Spending time with Friends — 12 (85.7%)
Exploring/Investing in Clubs an... — 3 (21.4%)
Applying for Jobs/Internships — 10 (71.4%)
Attending Social Events — 5 (35.7%)
Working on Projects — 5 (35.7%)
Attending Talks and Seminars — 0 (0%)
Meeting new people — 5 (35.7%)
Applying for med schiok — 1 (7.1%)
0.0   2.5   5.0   7.5   10.0   12.5

How much more would you like to engage with friends this year (reaching out, grabbing meals, hanging out) versus previous years?   Copy
14 responses

0 (0%)   0 (0%)   4 (28.6%)   7 (50%)   3 (21.4%)
1   2   3   4   5

RECRUITMENT PART TWO

We got **9 suitable (and willing) participants** for the next part of our study. We sent out the following fun, cute and hopefully engaging **email** to all participants informing them of the pre-study and baseline requirements.

In the email, we also **linked this intro doc** to put all the information in a concise and also informative way.

CONGRATS! YOU MADE IT! [plz open me]

We are thrilled to confirm your participation in our **CS247B study.** (AKA, we are sending major thanks to you.) Thank you so much for agreeing to join our survey around social life and habits! We *really* appreciate your willingness to help.
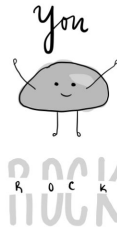
Everything you need to know is in *this doc*. **Please give it a look before Monday and let us know if you have any questions.**

The diary study **starts Mon 1/22.** We will be texting you throughout the week to check-in and hear more about your social activities.

Before the study starts, we would like to do a **quick, 10-15 minute interview** to gain more insight. One of us will reach out to you at some point today to try to schedule that, either in person or on Zoom.

Again, reach out if you have any questions or concerns. And thanks again for your time!

Cheers,
Team Alpaca: Cristobal, Ecy, Jin-Hee, Nolawi

Pre-Study Interviews

We then conducted **pre-study interviews** over Zoom and in-person. With our questions, we focused on the key emotions, thoughts, and stories behind three categories: Sociability Concerns, Stanford Culture, and Social Habits. Questions we had can be seen on the right.

- Our Pre-study interview guide

Sociability Concerns

- Do you find yourself wanting to be more social?
  - (If yes) What do you want to come from these social interactions?
  - Have they tried to change this behavior before?
    - What was your experience like? Would you consider it successful, and why or why not?

- What is keeping you from being more social?
  - Can you tell me about the last time you were *going* to engage in a social activity, but could not or decided not to?

Stanford Culture

- What communities do you engage with at Stanford?
  - How do these communities play into your experience on and off campus?
- Are there any aspects of the Stanford Campus and culture that keep you from being more social?
- What has been your trajectory of your social life at Stanford throughout the years?

Social Habits

- Now, can you tell me about the last time you had social plans with somebody? Tell me about it, from the moment you started making plans to the moment you left the plans.
  - Is there anything you'd do differently if you were to make these plans again? (This can be anything from the person to the location to the planning

KEY QUESTIONS

In our baseline study, we asked ourselves key questions that would give us more information about how frequently people interacted and in depth those interactions were. We came up with the following:

- How many social interactions did people have in a day?
    - What times did they reach out? Who did they reach out to? Did they initiate the plans?
    - How many times did they do things with others?
    - Were these interactions planned or unplanned?
    - Social interactions in the day
- How much time did you spend with that person?
    - What were the time, place, and nature of those interactions?

BASELINE DIARY STUDY

In the with our key questions, we came up with the following baseline study format:

- For five days, report on social habits
  - Receive texts at 12 pm, 5pm, 10pm as a reminder to input diary entry
    - Report on social things during that time period— when they reached out to someone and how they felt, for instance.

Some people were very responsive; others lost interest (as seen with screenshot on the right). About 7/9 people finished strong.
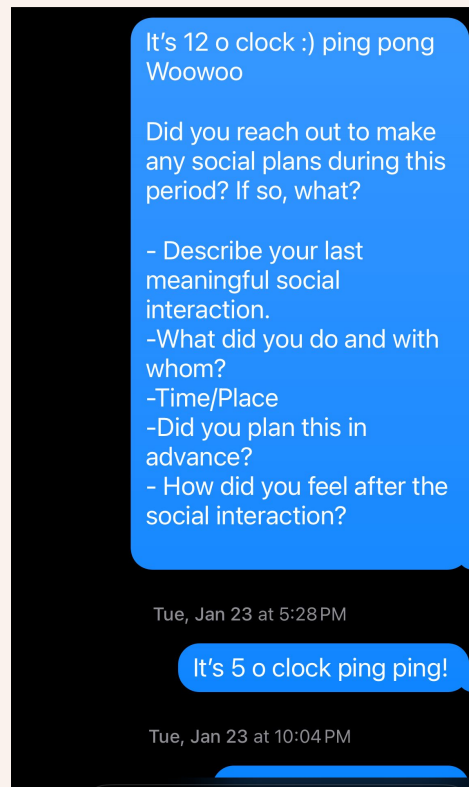
POST-STUDY INTERVIEW

We then interviewed participants on their study experience. Some questions we asked can be seen on the right. In this part, we aimed to get at **insights these final-years had when observing their social behaviors.**

- [Post study interview script](#)

Intro
- Thank you for being part of our study~ We really appreciate this, and it'll help with our class a lot. For context, there's a team of 4 of us.

Reflection
- In your pre-interview, you talked about hoping to _____.
    - How do you feel about that behavior after this week of diary study?
        - What did you notice?
- How did you feel about logging your behaviors this week?
    - What did you notice about your social behaviors?
    - Did you notice any patterns, cycles or loops in your social behaviors?
- Where and when did you find yourself engaging in social behaviors the most?
    - Compare with what their interviews said - find interesting things to ask about
- What would you have done differently this week regarding your social behaviors if you had a chance? What would you have done the same?
- What are your thoughts on the matter after engaging in this study? What changed? What stayed the same?
- How would you describe the relationship between engaging in the diary study and engaging in social interactions?
- How did your experiences this week compare to your own assumptions about your sociability?
- What things helped you make social interactions? What things made it harder to make social connections?

GROUNDED THEORY

After getting insights from the diary study, we **spent about 30 - 45 minutes putting key insights from voice memos and texts on Post-It notes.** We synthesized the data from the pre-study interviews, baseline study data, and post-study interviews in creating these. After our long transcribing session in-person, **we put the Post-It notes up on the whiteboard** in class. We then **organized the Post-Its into categories**, seeing themes that cropped up and writing about the connection between them.

From our affinity diagramming, we synthesized the post-it note insights into charts with a theme and observations. These are seen in the table following this post-it note section.

AFFINITY MAPPING INSIGHTS

Relationships

- Spending time with your romantic partner is a *given*, making time for platonic friends is variable.
- For **older platonic relationships: catching up with people** you've interacted with from the beginning of your Stanford experience provides a sense of **closure in the final year**

One insight here is that closure is an important factor for older, platonic relationships which final years tend to focus on more, supported by both the literature review and our affinity map.

SOME KEY INSIGHTS

Planned / planning interactions	**Preplanned interactions** are useful for **graduating students** as they have many **competing interests** and having a plan works better for them. **Reaching out** can have **high activation energy but high reward** - It is *convenient* to do planning on the weekends, for events that happen for the following week

One insight here is preplanned interactions are a plus for graduating students, but planning for them can be hard and takes effort.

SOME KEY INSIGHTS

Meals / mealtimes	• **Mealtimes** are an **opportune time to plan things** and usually end up in social spaces
	• Meals feel like an **ideal time to catch up**
	• **Scheduling meals** feels like a **hassle,** but once done is very satisfying
	• **People "have to eat anyway,"** so it doesn't feel like time is being "taken away from the day" if you overlap social time with meal time

A theme that crops up here is that meal times are ideal for catching up; in many ways they are the "ideal" event; something functional and fun.

GROUNDED THEORIES

After **digitally transcribing** the findings and **grouping** them with an affinity map, **we formed 5 theories**:

Theory 1: **Graduating students are grappling** with the idea of **losing the structure** from their college lives and then having to integrate into society.

Theory 2: **Spontaneously bumping** into old Stanford friends evokes feelings of urgency and nostalgia. These feed off each other and **lead to planned interactions immediately following the first interaction.**

Theory 3: The **scheduling and rescheduling** of social plans feels *tedious* **and** *difficult*, so they are active *barriers* to students spending planned social time with one another. *

Theory 4: As students go through their last year on campus, their desire to maximize the time they have left leads them to prioritize spending time with their older friends. This means they view spending time with **deeper connections more valuable than newer friendships**, which might still be more surface-level.

Theory 5: **Mealtimes are an opportune window for scheduling social time** because of the culturally social nature of meals, the physical spaces of dining on the Stanford campus, and the fact that you always map out time to eat during the day anyway.

GROUNDED THEORY INSIGHTS

We then **synthesized the theories into insights.**

- From Theories 1 and 2, **emotions that motivate** socialization of final years include f**ear of graduating, nostalgia, and a sense of urgency**. These emotions are the strongest and most salient senior year.
- From Theories 3 and 4, **people want to socialize with deep connections, but face friction** in doing so. It may be possible to capitalize off of the depth of the connections.
- From Theories 4 and 5, **mealtimes represent an opportunity to catch up with deep friends.** In this lies an opportunity not just to catch up, but also get to know close friends at a deeper level.

- Grounded Theory and synthesis link

GROUNDED THEORY KEY QS

From there, we considered key questions that emerged and that applied to our next design decisions.

- How can we encourage students for whom it is their last year to **make the most of their remaining moments?**
  - Design question: What metrics are we going to apply when deciding **what makes social interactions meaningful?**
- How can we encourage people to have **more interactions** with those that they believe are their **deepest connections?**
  - Design question: How can we design an **interface** that **reduces the friction** that people feel **when trying to schedule interactions?**

SYSTEM MODEL 1
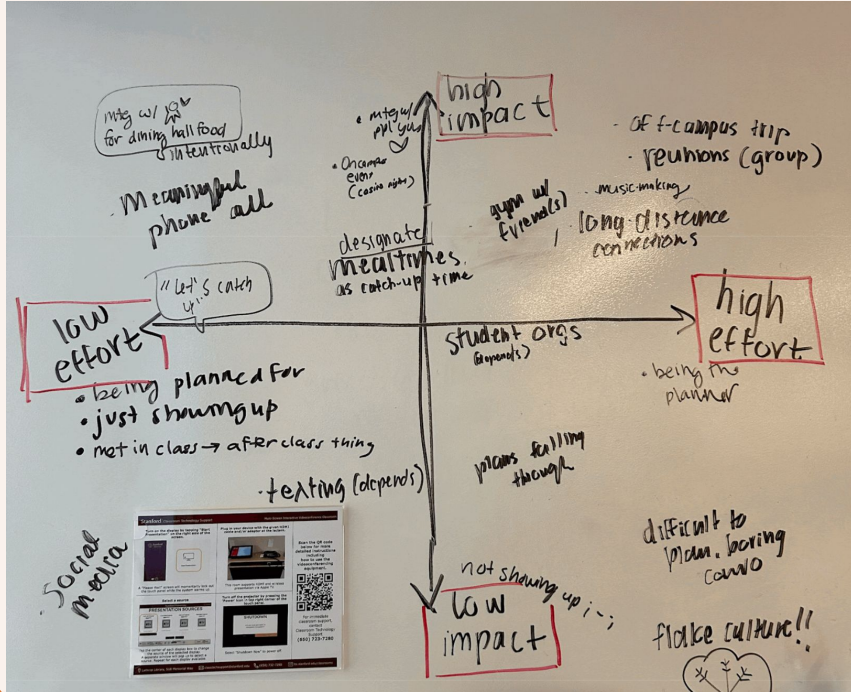
In this 2×2 model, we looked to map **common types of social events / experiences** from the framework of **effort versus impact**, as we knew from experience and as we saw from our baseline study people.

Our experience showed that the **events that had high impact** tended to be those that were **most obviously social in nature**, and those tended to **not be high effort,** such as going to the gym and talking on the phone. On the other end, **low impact** events included low-effort things like texting and social media, but often **higher-effort things** like student orgs, planned meals with not that well-known people, and having people flake on you.

SYSTEM MODEL 2
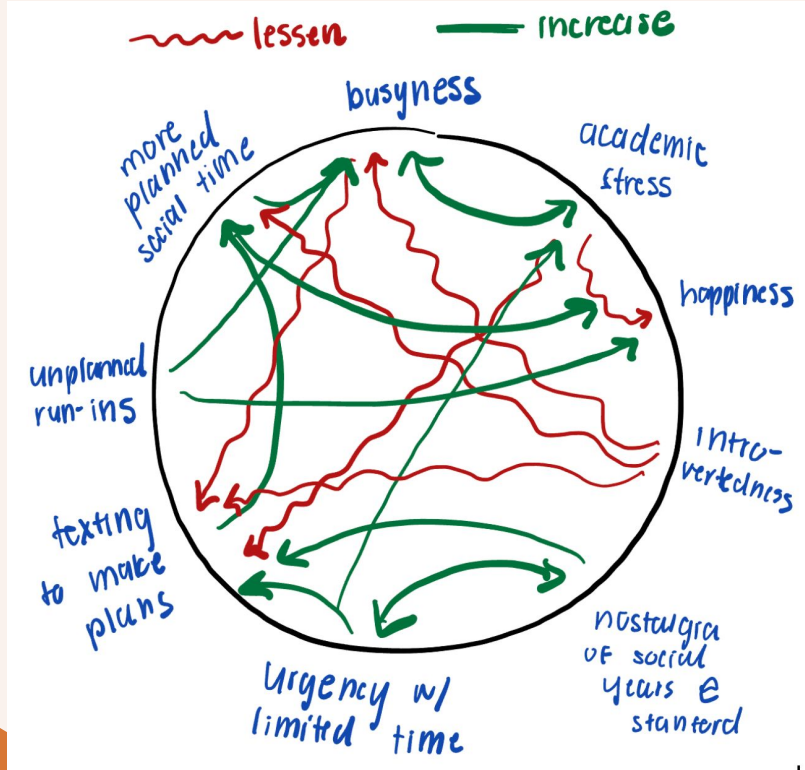
In this model, we highlighted **connections between different aspects of the social experience** for people for whom it's their last months at Stanford.

The modeling of connections in this context shows us that **urgency seems to be a massive driver of people's social experience,** both in terms of causing **stress and increasing the amount you reach out** to others to make plans. The connection circle was very helpful to **find the relationships** between many **factors that go into a Stanford senior's social life.**

Representative Persona #1

One of our selected representative personas represented the dilemma of **scheduling conflicts.**

Jane Arrillaga is modeled after the **senior year student who already has a job lined up, but wants to make the most out of the Stanford experience she has left.**

How? Through **attending fun events with friends,** of course! A few people we interviewed were going out into industry and wanted to do meaningful, fun activities they enjoyed with friends. They felt a sense of urgency.

REPRESENTATIVE PERSONA #2

The SL persona emerged from the **emotions we saw motivating social decisions in final years.** This included s**tress about the future and fears about making the most of the present moment.**

SL is scared his time with friends is fleeting and **nervous about his uncertain future and the changes to come.** From this stems a desire to somehow, anyhow maximize how he spends his time with friends.

This involves **saying yes to more things** and seeking events out more than he would have otherwise.

Drawing	Name	SL
	Activated Role	Graduating Student
	Goal	Have a meaningful final year at Stanford filled with social interactions with others.
	Motivation	He is graduating this year so he finds that his time is fleeting. He is at the end of a chapter in his life. Many people in his social circle will be harder to reach after graduation.
	Conflict	- Graduating creates a drastic life change that will restructure his life. - His social circle will change. - There are external stresses about future careers and living situations.
	Attempts to Solve	- Say yes to more random encounters. - Actively look for more on campus events. - Spend more time with others.
	Setting/ Environment	Stanford Campus
	Tools	Planner, Calendar, Social Circle
	Skills	Event planning, friendly personality
	More	- Participating in student orgs provides social interactions - Although academically Senior year can be less demanding, there are other life demands that keep people busy.

Representative Persona #3

Our final representative persona, S.D., was nicknamed **"Beyond Food"** because of the pattern of going (or wanting to go) **beyond mealtimes as her only planned social time.**

On the Stanford campus, an overwhelming majority of students use mealtimes as the only time to catch up with friends, and **making plans is often synonymous with "getting a meal."**

However, we've also found from our research tha**t folks want to do something "special" and do more with their friends.** So, we felt that S.D. stood at a unique *and* representative position that we wanted to address in our study.
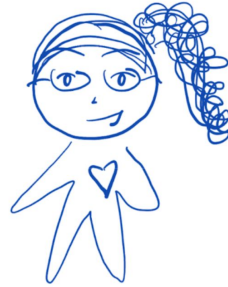
Name / Role: S.D. (she/her) - Beyond Food

Goal / Motivation: S.D. prioritizes spending social time with people and values spending people who she already feels close to. She seeks both to rejuvenate herself and be present for people who are important in her life. She glowingly described "the feeling where it feels like you've never been apart, one of those steady friendships." She also wants to engage in a variety of social activities.

Conflict: S.D. shared that academic stress makes her "retreat into [her] room," and is thus a barrier to her socializing. Another point of tension is wanting to make more varied plans, but finding it difficult to actually plan these things.

Attempts to Solve: resolving firmly and collaboratively with friends to do something specific (i.e. "karaoke night"), texting back and forth to make plans. The planning effort itself usually happens virtually with the tool of text communication and individual calendar apps such as Google or Apple Calendar.

Routines: During the weekend, S.D. will plan in advance for the week ahead, usually scheduling lunch or dinner with friends in order to catch up. They meet either at a self-op house or a dining hall on campus.

Habits: Plans the same setting of social time without much variance.

JOURNEY MAP #1

This journey map represents the process for Jane to go from seeing an event she wants to attend to potentially enjoying it with friends. **There is a lot that can go wrong with this process through— issues with scheduling, flake culture, heavy coordination**. We saw an opportunity to simplify this process through a potential intervention.

JOURNEY MAP #2

In S.L.'s journey map, we can see how he finds **social activities enriching**, and how he is m**ore driven to engage in social activities because of the horizon of graduation** – the horizon of change. Considering our intervention study, we brainstormed how we can allow S.L. to maximize their time remaining.

Methodologies: Throughout five days data was collected on participants. This diagram captures different events and insights related to how the participant, SL, engages in social interactions in his final year at Stanford.

Social Measure

Day Begins · Morning Classes · Work · Gym · Wilbur Lunch · Acapella Group · Late night events · Sleeping Prep

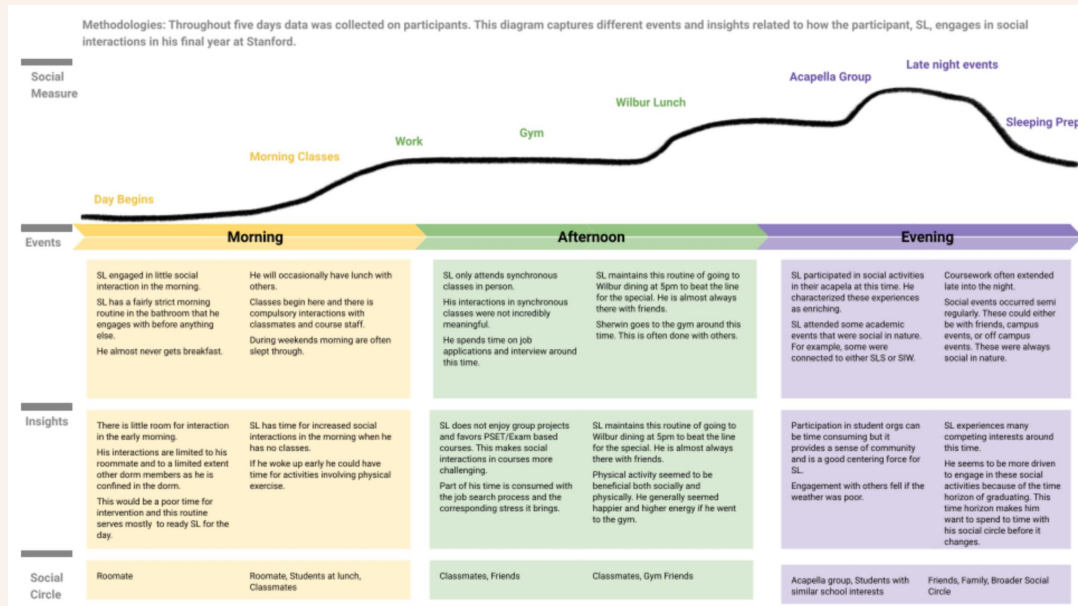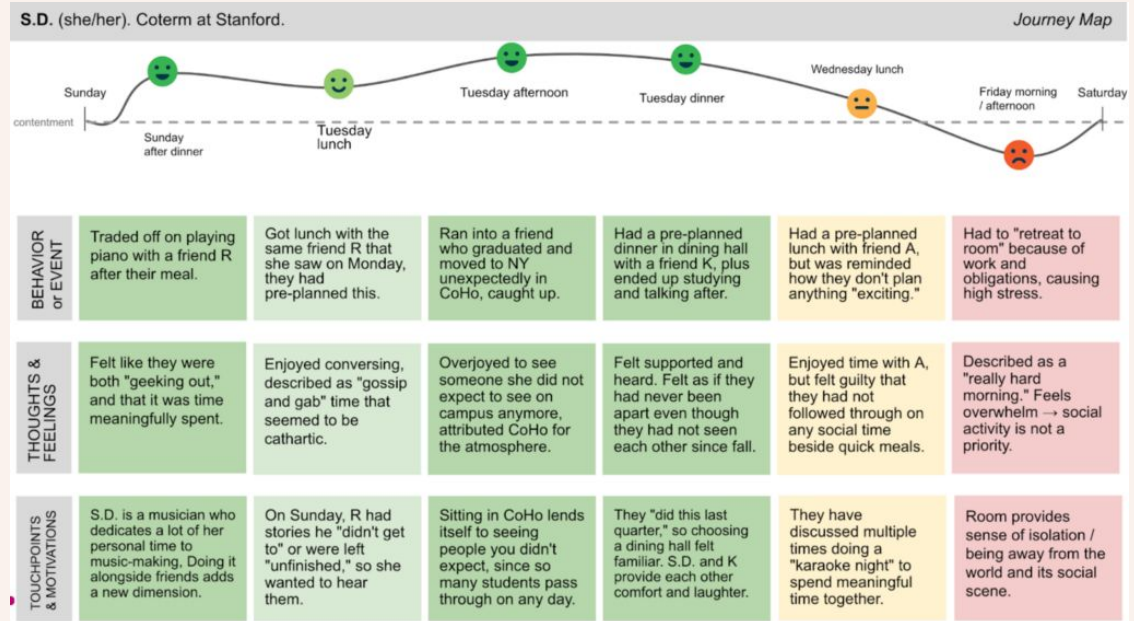| Events	Morning		Afternoon		Evening	
	SL engaged in little social interaction in the morning. SL has a fairly strict morning routine in the bathroom that he engages with before anything else. He almost never gets breakfast.	He will occasionally have lunch with others. Classes begin here and there is compulsory interactions with classmates and course staff. During weekends morning are often slept through.	SL only attends synchronous classes in person. His interactions in synchronous classes were not incredibly meaningful. He spends time on job applications and interview around this time.	SL maintains this routine of going to Wilbur dining at 5pm to beat the line for the special. He is almost always there with friends. Sherwin goes to the gym around this time. This is often done with others.	SL participated in social activities in their acapela at this time. He characterized these experiences as enriching. SL attended some academic events that were social in nature. For example, some were connected to either SLS or SIW.	Coursework often extended late into the night. Social events occurred semi regularly. These could either be with friends, campus events, or off campus events. These were always social in nature.
Insights	There is little room for interaction in the early morning. His interactions are limited to his roommate and to a limited extent other dorm members as he is confined in the dorm. This would be a poor time for intervention and this routine serves mostly to ready SL for the day.	SL has time for increased social interactions in the morning when he has no classes. If he woke up early he could have time for activities involving physical exercise.	SL does not enjoy group projects and favors PSET/Exam based courses. This makes social interactions in courses more challenging. Part of his time is consumed with the job search process and the corresponding stress it brings.	SL maintains this routine of going to Wilbur dining at 5pm to beat the line for the special. He is almost always there with friends. Physical activity seemed to be beneficial both socially and physically. He generally seemed happier and higher energy if he went to the gym.	Participation in student orgs can be time consuming but it provides a sense of community and is a good centering force for SL. Engagement with others fell if the weather was poor.	SL experiences many competing interests around this time. He seems to be more driven to engage in these social activities because of the time horizon of graduating. This time horizon makes him want to spend to time with his social circle before it changes.
Social Circle	Roomate	Roomate, Students at lunch, Classmates	Classmates, Friends	Classmates, Gym Friends	Acapella group, Students with similar school interests	Friends, Family, Broader Social Circle

JOURNEY MAP #3

Perhaps the most double-edged moment in S.D.'s journey map was the Wednesday **lunch**, since she **enjoyed her time with her friend, but also felt guilty that they had not followed through yet** on their plans to do karaoke.

This made us think about how we could intervene and get S.D. past the barriers that were preventing her from following through.

S.D. (she/her). Coterm at Stanford. *Journey Map*

|	Sunday	Tuesday lunch	Tuesday afternoon	Tuesday dinner	Wednesday lunch	Friday morning / afternoon
BEHAVIOR or EVENT	Traded off on playing piano with a friend R after their meal.	Got lunch with the same friend R that she saw on Monday, they had pre-planned this.	Ran into a friend who graduated and moved to NY unexpectedly in CoHo, caught up.	Had a pre-planned dinner in dining hall with a friend K, plus ended up studying and talking after.	Had a pre-planned lunch with friend A, but was reminded how they don't plan anything "exciting."	Had to "retreat to room" because of work and obligations, causing high stress.
THOUGHTS & FEELINGS	Felt like they were both "geeking out," and that it was time meaningfully spent.	Enjoyed conversing, described as "gossip and gab" time that seemed to be cathartic.	Overjoyed to see someone she did not expect to see on campus anymore, attributed CoHo for the atmosphere.	Felt supported and heard. Felt as if they had never been apart even though they had not seen each other since fall.	Enjoyed time with A, but felt guilty that they had not followed through on any social time beside quick meals.	Described as a "really hard morning." Feels overwhelm → social activity is not a priority.
TOUCHPOINTS & MOTIVATIONS	S.D. is a musician who dedicates a lot of her personal time to music-making, Doing it alongside friends adds a new dimension.	On Sunday, R had stories he "didn't get to" or were left "unfinished," so she wanted to hear them.	Sitting in CoHo lends itself to seeing people you didn't expect, since so many students pass through on any day.	They "did this last quarter," so choosing a dining hall felt familiar. S.D. and K provide each other comfort and laughter.	They have discussed multiple times doing a "karaoke night" to spend meaningful time together.	Room provides sense of isolation / being away from the world and its social scene.

contentment

INTERVENTION STUDY

IDEATION AND IDEA #1

After our baseline, personas, journey maps, and system models, we began answering our HMWs with brainstormed solutions. We came up 3 ideas.

AI Scheduler Buddy

- **PROS:**
- Reduces scheduling headache
- The spontaneity of it can make social life feel refreshing, like a surprise platonic date

- **CONS**
- Users may not trust an AI agent to be involved in their social life
- How easily could this accommodate a change in schedule?
- For actual product, would involve heavy tech stack
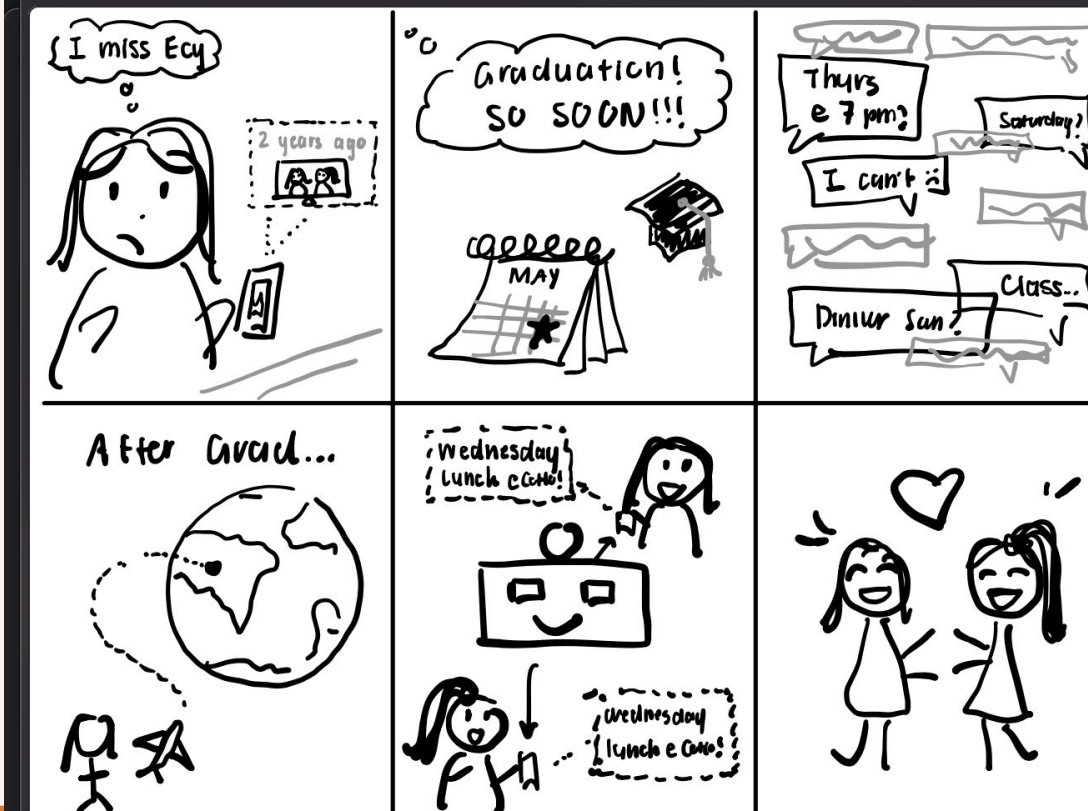
IDEA #1 INSIGHTS

For the **AI social planner, the most substantial benefit would be the reduction of friction generated by making social plans.** Our target users, graduating Stanford students, have packed schedules that make it challenging for them to make plans. **Schedule conflicts, long text chains, and delayed responses are not uncommon** among our population and this idea's value proposition is changing that. Introducing an outside agent to this system gives users the chance to get **pre-scheduled spontaneous social events that fit their day.**

The **core issue with this idea would be gathering the schedule for users and figuring the availability.** Schedules are also dynamic especially for these busy students. When coordinating plans between different users this issue becomes more prevalent. They should also be allowed to reject ideas which creates a more complex logic tree.

IDEA #2

Gamified Text Scheduler

- **PROS:**
- Encouraging people to make *progress* in some way
- Makes scheduling fun instead of a chore.

- **CONS:**
- Questions about intentions / ethics
  - Is it right for someone to hang out solely for points?

IDEA #2 SKETCH
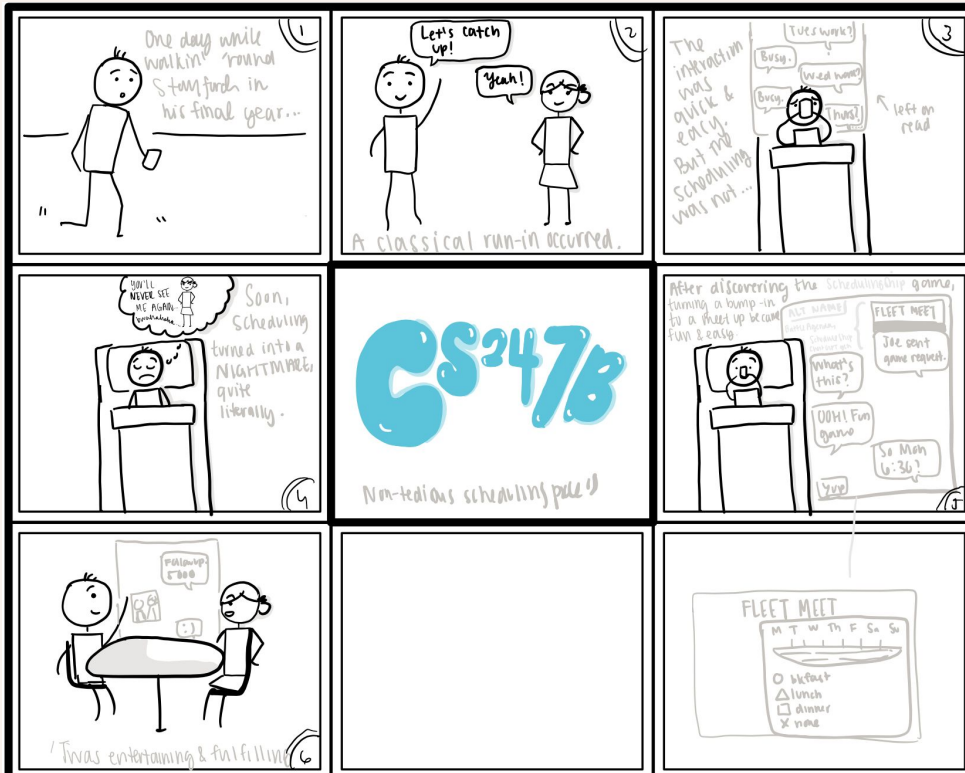
IDEA # 2 INSIGHTS

Considering the gamified text scheduler, we found that the benefits were largely the same from our first idea but with the **added benefit of creating a fun gaming experience for users when formalizing plans.**

The problem with this idea that we came across when presenting our storyboards was that **this solution was not directly related to the problem**. By adding a game to an already challenging task we might be addressing how boring scheduling can be but we are making it **more time consuming, by introducing friction,** to others.

IDEA #3

Dark Horse: Flake Fixer

- Rewards consistency
- Discourages Flaking
- Raises the stakes of social interactions.

- Ethical implications of tackling a "natural" behavior that sometimes occurs out of self-preservation?
- Monetary constraints of people who may not be able to commit

IDEA #3 SKETCH

IDEA # 3 INSIGHTS

The last idea on the deposit secured events **attempts to fix the flake culture that plagues Stanford.** To correct this behavior this solution raises the stakes for social interaction that would deter people from creating plans without intending to follow through and reward those who consistently attend events they plan.

The trouble with this idea is the **ethical dilemma that is created when introducing a monetary incentive.** It punishes individuals who have to perform an action out of "self-preservation". It also creates monetary constraints for some students.

INTERVENTION STUDY + RECRUITING

By the end of ideation we determined that the **AI Scheduler Buddy was the standout idea.**

The other solution had issues integral to how they operated but the AI Scheduler Buddy was only held back by problems that are not intrinsic but could be solved by designing a careful study**. The friction it removed** from our users was determined to be **more substantial** than the other two ideas.

From there we began to plan our intervention study out. **We recruited people were are in their last year on campus, plus their friends** who we are scheduling the interaction for. This included a mix of p**eople from our baseline study, plus new people** who still met the criteria of being a student in their final year. **We got about 9 participants.**

- [Intervention study planning link](#)

Intervention Study

[What?](#)
[How?](#)
[Who?](#)
[Key Question + Desired Data](#)
[Top 3 Ideas from Brainstorming](#)

What?

In creating our intervention study, we first considered which behaviors we wanted to encourage, and brainstormed the following:
- Healthy scheduling habits in order to make social plans *
    - Less friction in meeting friends
    - Non-tedious scheduling process
- Meeting old friends before you graduate
- Getting out of your room and seeing people who matter to you *

We found ourselves gravitating toward the ideas with an asterisk (*) because they inspired more ideation.

Next, we asked, what will the intervention be to encourage that behavior? We had already decided from ideation that we would move forward with the AI scheduler buddy, so we imagined our intervention to be the following: We will act as a Wizard of Oz agent who does the scheduling and planning for them and shares it with them as if we were an AI scheduling buddy/agent.

How?

Below is our procedure for conducting the study, including data collection plan:

INTERVENTION STUDY KEY QUESTIONS

In creating our intervention study, we first considered **which behaviors we wanted to encourage,** and brainstormed the following:

- **Healthy scheduling habits in order to make social plans**
    - **Less friction** in meeting friends and **non-tedious scheduling** process
- Meeting old friends before you graduate
- Getting out of your room and seeing people who matter to you

Next, we asked, **what will the intervention be to encourage that behavior?** We had already decided from ideation that we would move forward with the **AI scheduler buddy,** so we imagined our intervention to be the following: **We will act as a Wizard of Oz agent who does the scheduling and planning for them and shares it with them as if we were an AI scheduling buddy/agent.**

Our key question was: Will people hang out with their friends if the scheduling is done for them?

👥 INTERVENTION STUDY DESIGN

The study format was as follows:

1. Ask each participant to **send 3-5 times** that **they are free**. This gives the participant (and us) flexibility in terms of changes to their schedule.
2. Act as an **"AI"** (using the Wizard of Oz technique) that **generates 3-5 event plans/cards**, each containing a social activity they can choose to engage in. For example, an event card might read, **"8pm-9pm Monday @ Coho: Jazz Night!"** or "**3pm-4pm Tuesday @ The Oval: Afternoon Walk!**"
   a. Ask each of our participants to give the **name and number of 2-3 friends** who they'd **like to see this week.** We will *not* be directly asking for the friends' availability, since we will leave some agency to our participants to decide when to make plans.
      i. If the friends' schedule changes, then they can simply choose another event card.
   b. Create **events based on the times** that the participant is free, with varied **places or activities around campus**.
   c. **Contact** each of the people who the **participant wants to interact** with and **give them the event cards**. With this, they can choose to attend/not.
   d. Ask our participants to **let these people know that we will be contacting them** to schedule so that it's not out of nowhere.

INTERVENTION STUDY DESIGN PT 2

6. **Schedule as many social interactions for the participant as possible,** ideally one per day.
   a. **Survey** at least the participant **after the event**, plus their friend, if possible. This will gauge how they felt about the event that was planned for them.
7. **Interview** our participants after the study. (More on desired data below.)

SAMPLE EVENT CARDS

We sent out "AI generated" event cards as part of our intervention study; here were some examples.

Alpaca AI Suggestion...
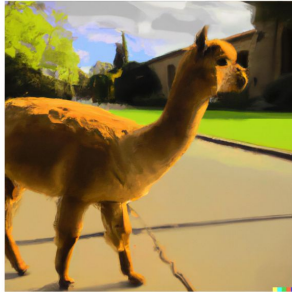
2/14 Wednesday 2:30 - 3pm
A Walk Around on a Beautiful Day

Alpaca AI Suggestion...
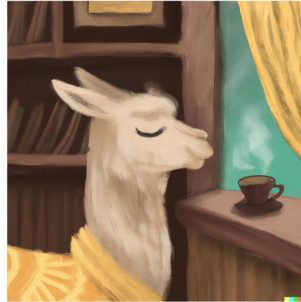
2/14 Wednesday 4 - 5 pm
CoHo

Alpaca AI Suggestion...

2/14 Wednesday 3 - 4 pm
Coupa Coffee Chat

POST STUDY INTERVIEW

After the Intervention study, we sent out a Google Form (n = 3) and got qualitative feedback to inform the next steps of the process.

- Google Form Responses

KEY INSIGHTS

Some key things we learned were:

- **Once generated**, the **event cards reduced the friction** to meet up with friends
- **Frontloading** weekly available times and contacts **lessened the burden** of social interactions later on
- An **"AI" scheduling** had different implications on initiative versus two people directly planning,
  - An AI can **feel particularly impersonal**, similar to a Calendly
  - Event cards were seen as fun and whimsical by participants
    - However, we noticed **the theming** (the alpacas on the cards and the fun feel) **made the AI more endearing** to interact with

SYSTEM MODEL #1

This feedback loop shows the how friction is reduced with event planning & meet up with event cards being sent out. After giving us the times available and friends to meet up with, we would generate the card, and in most cases, send it out to a friend. Thus, plans were automatically made and all people had to decide to do was meet up or reschedule until the next card was generated.
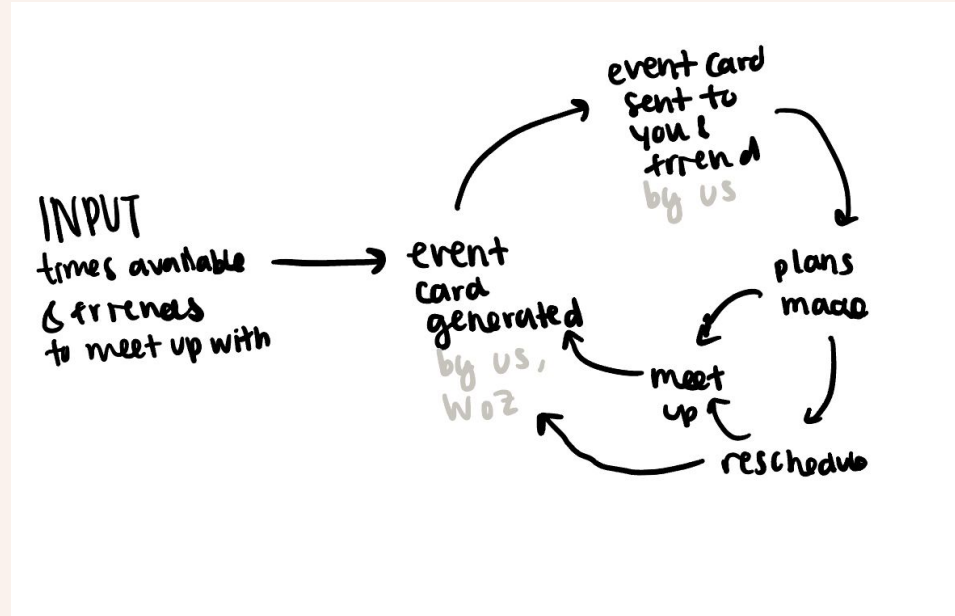
SYSTEM MODEL #2

This connection circle shows the relationship between AI generated events and meeting patterns. While our AI-generated events may help to reduce event stress and incidences of flaking while increasing the number of plans made (since that is automatic), it may increase feelings of formality, which is not ideal. Flaking, however, may increase the stress from coordinating events, while meeting up may lower the chances of flaking for the next time. Rescheduling though increases the chances of flaking. Hopefully through an AI-generated event, less stress and more plans can ultimately take place.
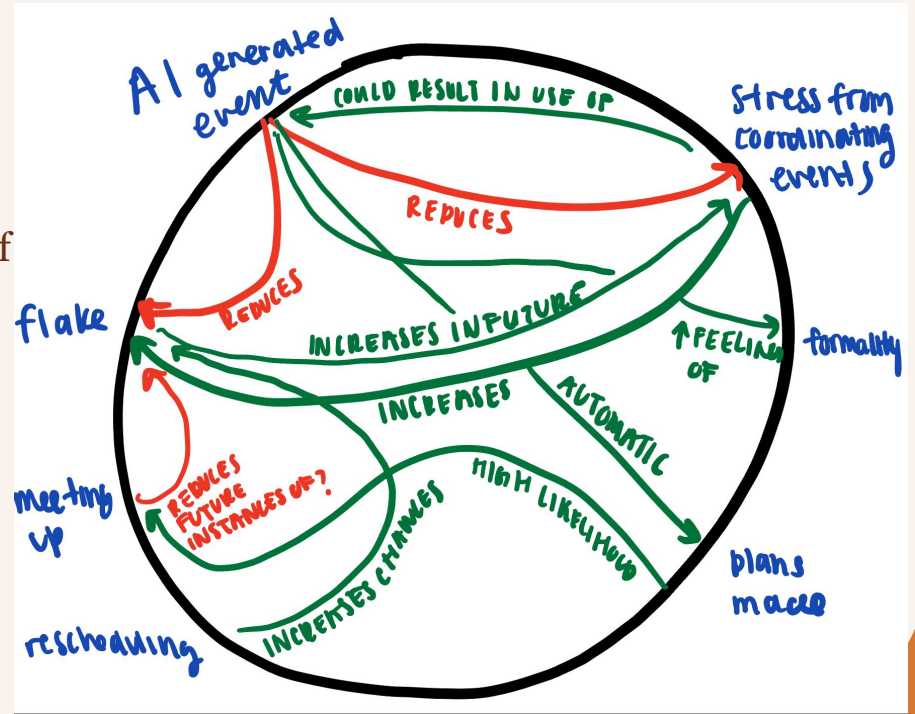
REFLECTION

From this, we noticed and did the following...

- People really **loved the idea of having the event cards**!
  - From this, we decided to include event cards with details in subsequent iterations
- **AI scheduling** can give off a **particularly business-like vibe**
  - From this, we decided to maintain the AI scheduling, but be mindful about the vibe that creates— we wanted less of business feel; more of a friendly feel, learning from our rainy day scenario as well.
- Having **automated scheduling of friends and schedules worked.**
  - We continued to work on this as a key portion of our app

SOLUTION DESIGN

ENTER OUR SOLUTION: ALPACA.AI

Solution:
alpaca.ai: an AI scheduling agent that helps you make social plans with friends!

alpaca.ai will finds overlapping time for you and friends to spend time together, plus creates fun options for what to do. Our needfinding revealed a desire (spend time with friends) and an obstacle (scheduling); our solution is effective because we remove the obstacle.

The Fogg Behavior Model (B=mat): high motivation to see friends + scheduling hard to do → alpaca.ai is a **facilitator** that ushers the action into happening.

Gamification and intrinsic motivation: what makes social time meaningful is the **intrinsic motivation** to spend time with your friends, so we considered, then decided against gamification / external rewards.

From our intervention study...
"Ooh, I like that I get these **options**!"

"What happens if I need to **change plans**?"

"The **alpaca** makes it feel so **cute** and **cozy**."

From our assumption testing...
"I trust [AI]. It's probably **smarter than me** anyway."

"It was **nice not having to think** about [the plan], but sometimes, _I_ want to plan something cute."

DESIGN ARCHITECTURE

Design Architecture

- Story Maps
- MVP Features
- System Paths
- Bubble Map
- Reflection

Further details on these can be found here.

STORY MAPS

Process
- We brainstormed separate sunny & rainy day scenarios on post-it notes.
- We read them out loud to each other and then combined all our stories on one gigantic story map.
- We noticed every story had 3 main components: **gathering info, scheduling people, and getting feedback**. We then used each one of these steps to figure out at least one corresponding feature in our MVP.

STORY MAPS
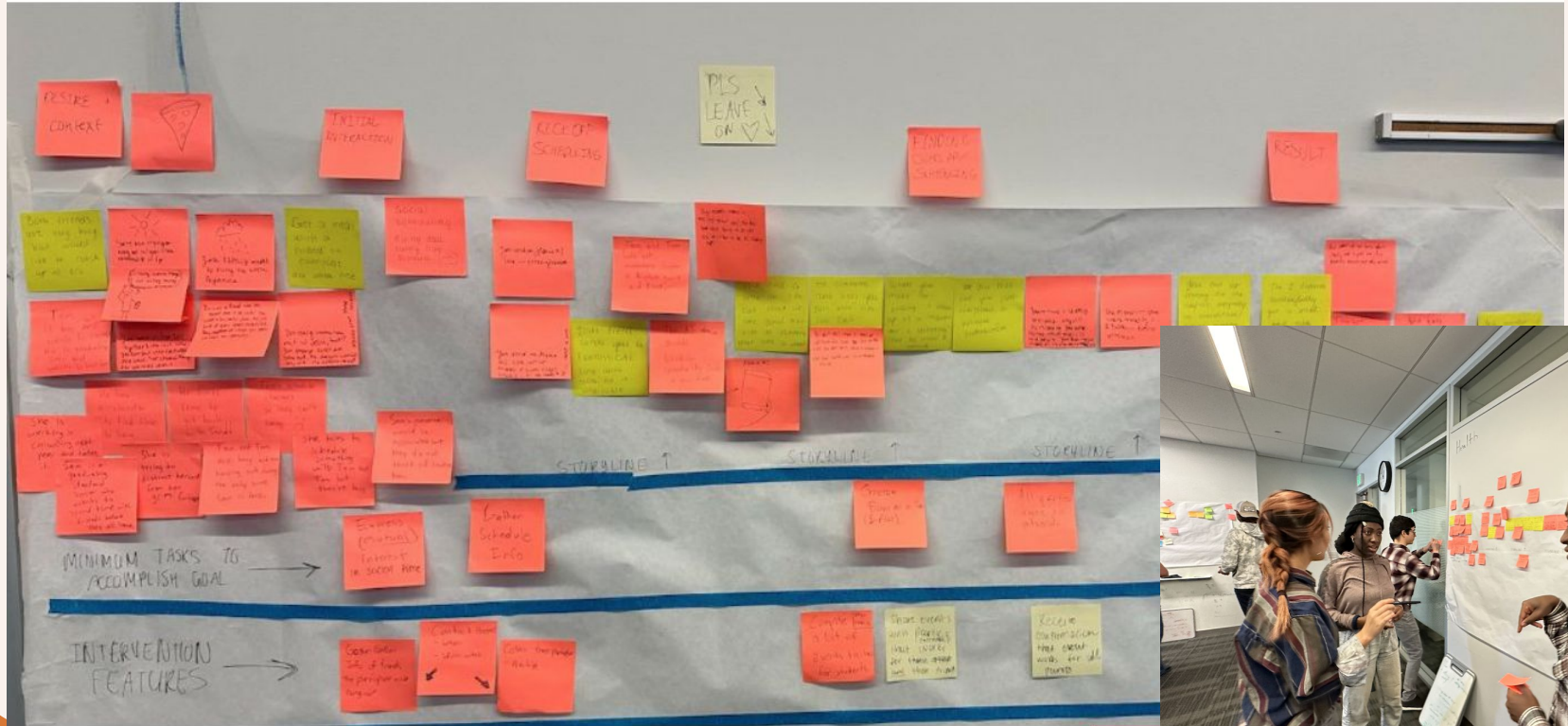
GATHERING INFO + SCHEDULING

DESIRE + context
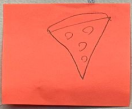
INITIAL INTERACTION

KICK OFF SCHEDULING

FI OV Sc

Both friends are very busy but would like to catch up w/ e/o

You're been trying to hang out w/ your friend Ayanna for a bit

You REALLY want to hang out with Ayanna...

Get a meal with a friend on campus: ask when free

They express interest in meeting up w/ you! You text but don't bring saying no so you link up when on the AI scheduling app.

Tam and Tom both get messages from a Alpaca genie and RSVP.

Tom but is busy and wants to hang. He is graduating soon and wants to have fun

You want to hang out together but your schedules don't always line up...

You meet a friend who you haven't seen in a while. You had lit a coffee shop recently but you mention all things you didn't like about their personality

You really wanna hang out w/ Jesus, that's why Alpaca Buddy makes it super easy!

Your friend sends you a fantastical link with sign he is available

The AI Alpaca Buddy Scheduler immediately finds a new time

You find a time on the cal that ur free and text him to confirm that time is already

He confirms and asks you just "book" on the cal

When you make booking it up a for a m that he more appro

You don't want to meet up w/ them but one, you lie to the one, you definitely have a chose - you can invite your choice around

Alpaca AI

He has a calendar to find time to hang.

He finds time to get lunch with Tom

Tam's schedule changes so they can't hang

Sam's presence would be appreciated but they do not think of inviting her.

She is working in consulting next year and hates it.

She is trying to distract herself from her grim future

Sam is a graduating Stanford Senior who wants to spend time with friends before they all leave.

Tam and Tom are busy and are hanging out during the only time Sam is free.

She tries to schedule something with Tam and Tom but they're busy

MINIMUM TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH GOAL ➡

Express (mutual) interest in social time

Gather Schedule Info

STORYLINE ↑

STORYLINE ↑

Generate Event at a Time (& Place)

INTERVENTION FEATURES ➡

Gather Contact Info of friends the participant wants to hang w/

Contact them
– When
– With who

Collect times participant is available

Compile a list of events tailored for students

Share even with particip that work for them and their fr

EVENT RESULTS/FEEDBACK
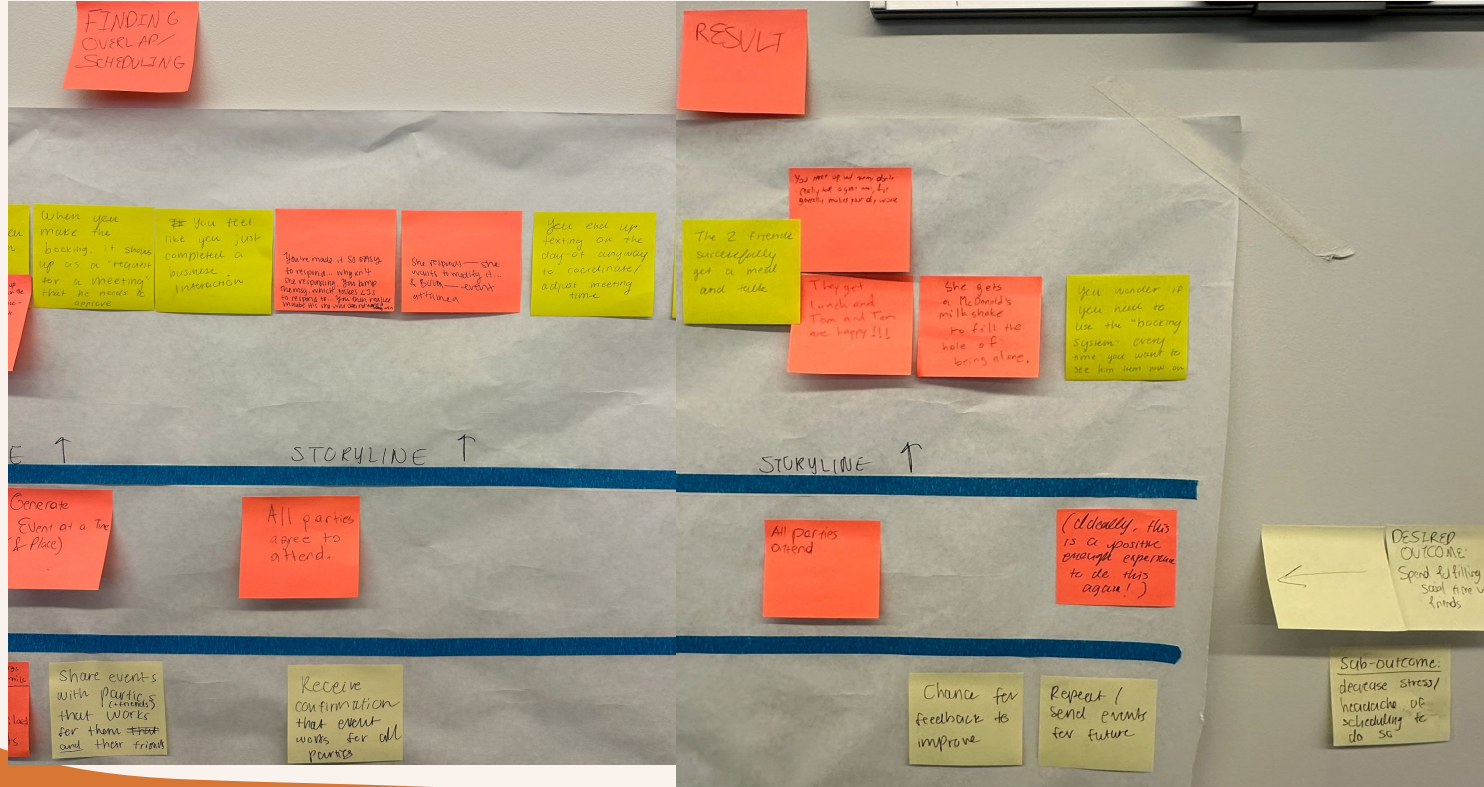
MVP Features

Based on our story maps, these were the things we picked out as the most important features:

1) Gathering info -> Gathering information about friends' contacts and times available.

2) Scheduling people -> "Alpaca AI" generating event cards and sharing them with relevant parties.

3) Scheduling people ->Getting confirmation that the event worked for parties.

4) Feedback -> Having a feedback mechanism so the system can learn about the success of the scheduling / event on its end.

SYSTEM PATHS: DESCRIPTION

- We decided to shift a little from our previous personas in this model to account for the personas that we thought matched our flows or could act as an extreme user.
- We started off with an "average Joe" user, labeled "Social(?) Senior" (best modeled by Jane Arrillaga) at the upper right. Per Krishnan's advice, we went from sticky-note to sticky-note and discussed how a user would accomplish that MVP task (i.e. "Gather schedule info") on an interface.
- We then tried to integrate other kinds of user personas ("First-Time User" to account for onboarding, "Chronic Flaker" to account for extreme user), but found much of the flow was the same.
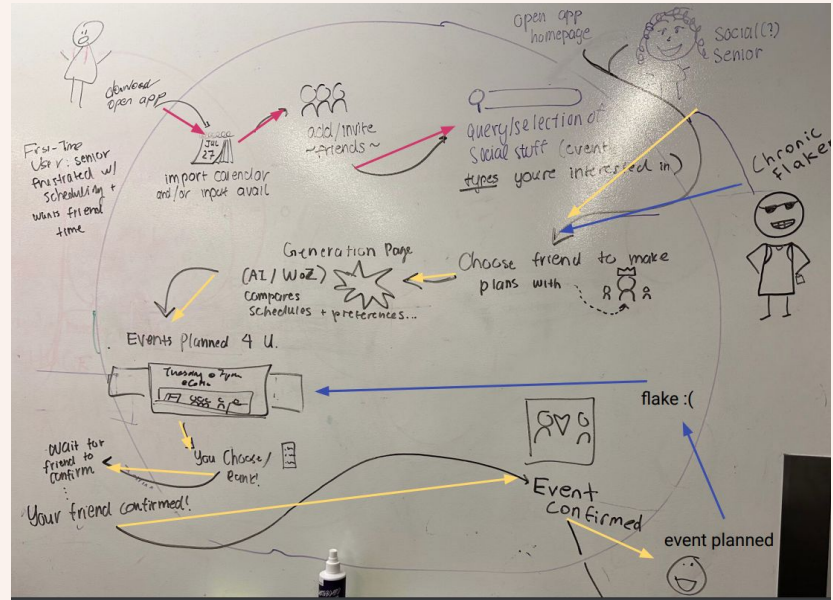
SYSTEM PATHS

Legend

- Pink: the First-Time User
- Yellow: the Social(?) Senior (+ everyone in overlapping sections)
- Blue: the Chronic Flaker
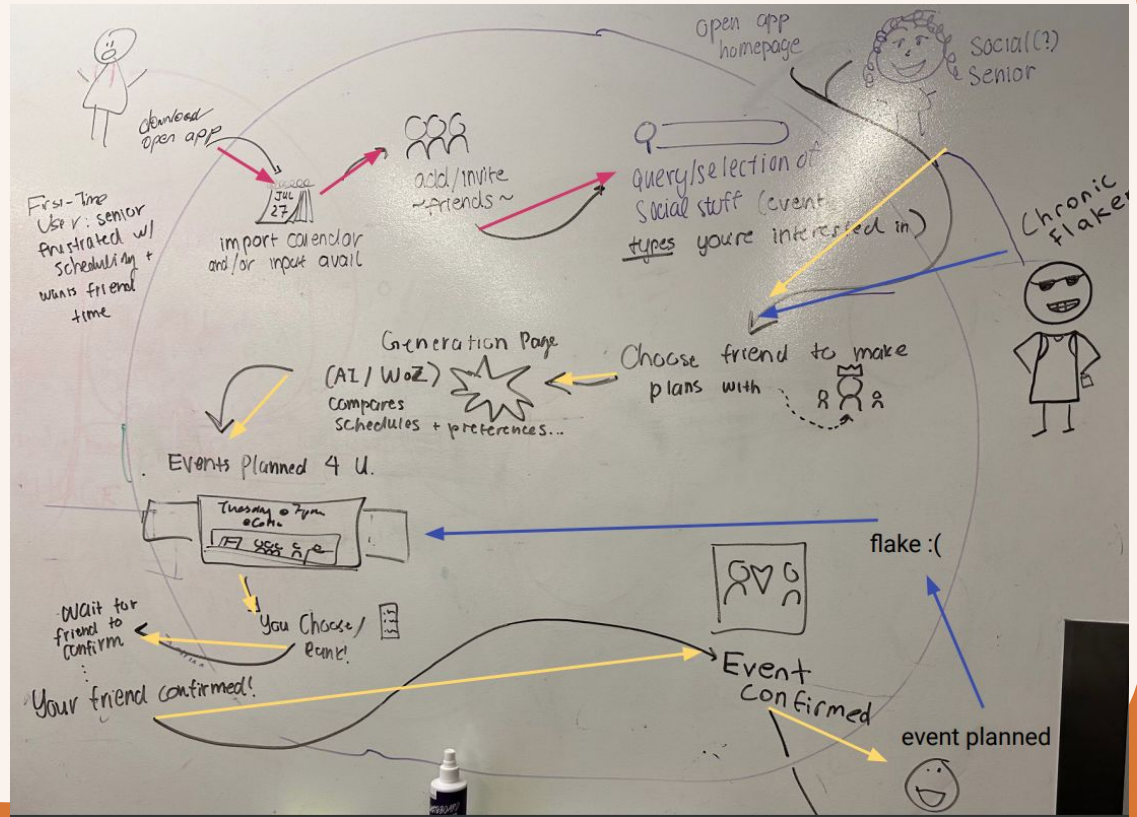
SYSTEM PATHS: INSIGHTS

- An overall insight was that, even with user persona variance, the necessary flow for gathering schedule info, presenting events, confirming events, etc. could remain mostly the same.
- Our team had a couple of *friendly* debates during this point; more than we've had up to this point in the process. They were regarding the following topics, which generated key insights:
  - How do we present the event options to a user?
  - Do we give 2 options? 3 options? Do we give any options at all?
  - Insight: choice is important for interest and agency, but too many options can be paralyzing.
- Is the user responsible for sharing these events with friends? Or should we handle all communication for them?
  - Insight: we want to keep a low barrier to event planning…
  - … but also want to operate at an early stage with few users.

BUBBLE MAP

- The bubble map shows the different components of our solution. In our map, the bigger the size, the more significant it is to the imagined interface. Krishnan described each Big Bubble as a tab in the navigation bar. We imagined [Availability - Home - Events] as our navbar, then Account as an upper-right feature. People could move from area to area using the navbar, or pressing on an upper right button for things such as Help or Settings or Account.
- Our process included an individual brainstorm of key components, a group discussion, then grow-as-you-go drawing on a whiteboard. Creating the bubble map allowed us to turn our MVP features and key flows from the system path to actually tangible elements of a solution we could interact with. One surprising insight was how much overlap there could be between tabs, since they're all tightly related (i.e. "schedule" or "recommended" appearing > 1x). Other key insights included how we might want a status (similar to LinkedIn "Open to Work") to increase user agency and how we can build on the campus events already happening.

BUBBLE MAP

REFLECTION

Each of these methods provided a different way to think about our problem space and what our solution could/would look like.

- The story maps allowed us to envision scenarios in which our product would help and hurt, which naturally led us to brainstorm ways to increase the positives and mitigate the negatives.
- Picking out MVP features allowed us to highlight the important things we the app should accomplish.
- The System paths diagram helped us to really begin to flesh out how our app should accomplish our goals and what a typical flow for a feature should look like
- The bubble map was instrumental in getting us to think about the layout of our product - we began to think about what things should be front and center and what could be hidden for users to make the flow as easy as possible.

The most helpful for us was the System Paths diagram - we had a lot of disagreements here with regards to what things should come before others in the flow, what makes the most sense for a user, etc. It really felt as if we began to think about what our user should and shouldn't expect from our app, and that set us on the right path to making a cohesive and helpful prototype.

ASSUMPTIONS

We did a 2x2 Assumption Map with the axis of "Important to Unimportant" and "Known to Unknown".

FULL ASSUMPTION MAP

UNIMPORTANT

Graduating students feel an urgency to be with friends.

Graduating students will move away from friends.

Dislike scheduling process enough

Some people enjoy the scheduling process.
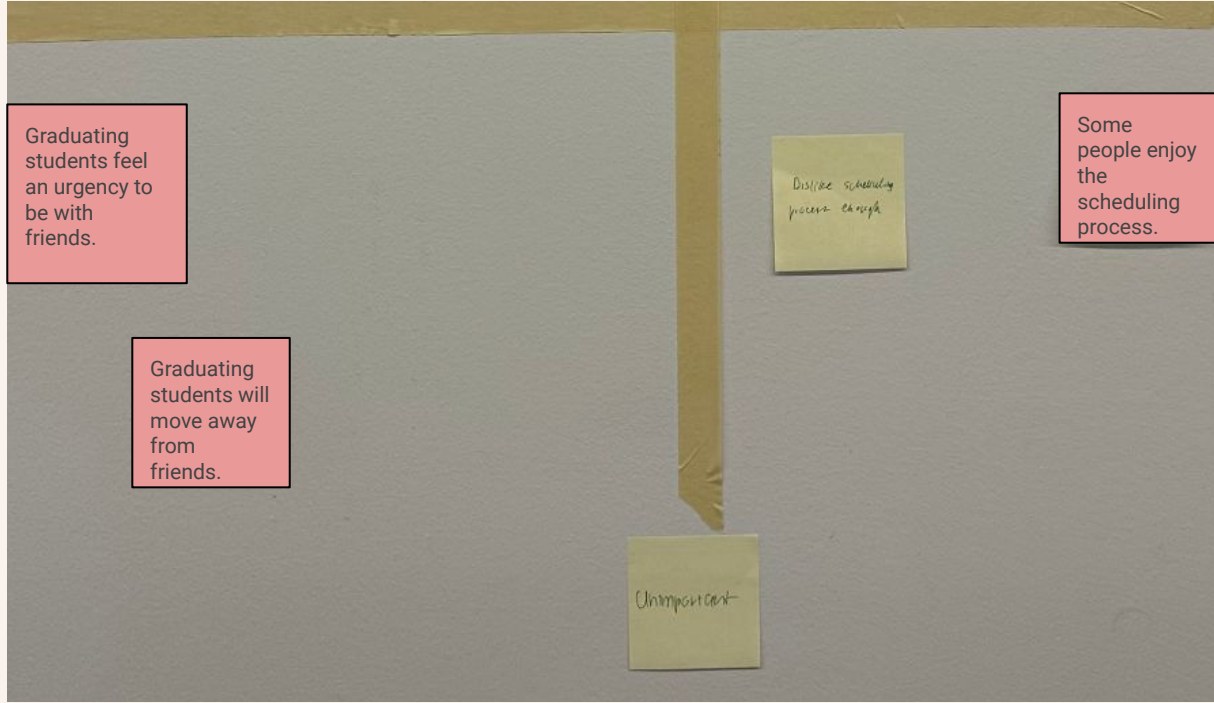
Unimportant

We had several unimportant assumptions that were concerning issues around the factual reality that graduating students will be facing, like moving away from friends next year.

These problems reveal a need for a solution but have no impact in what the solution will look like.

IMPORTANT + HAVE EVIDENCE
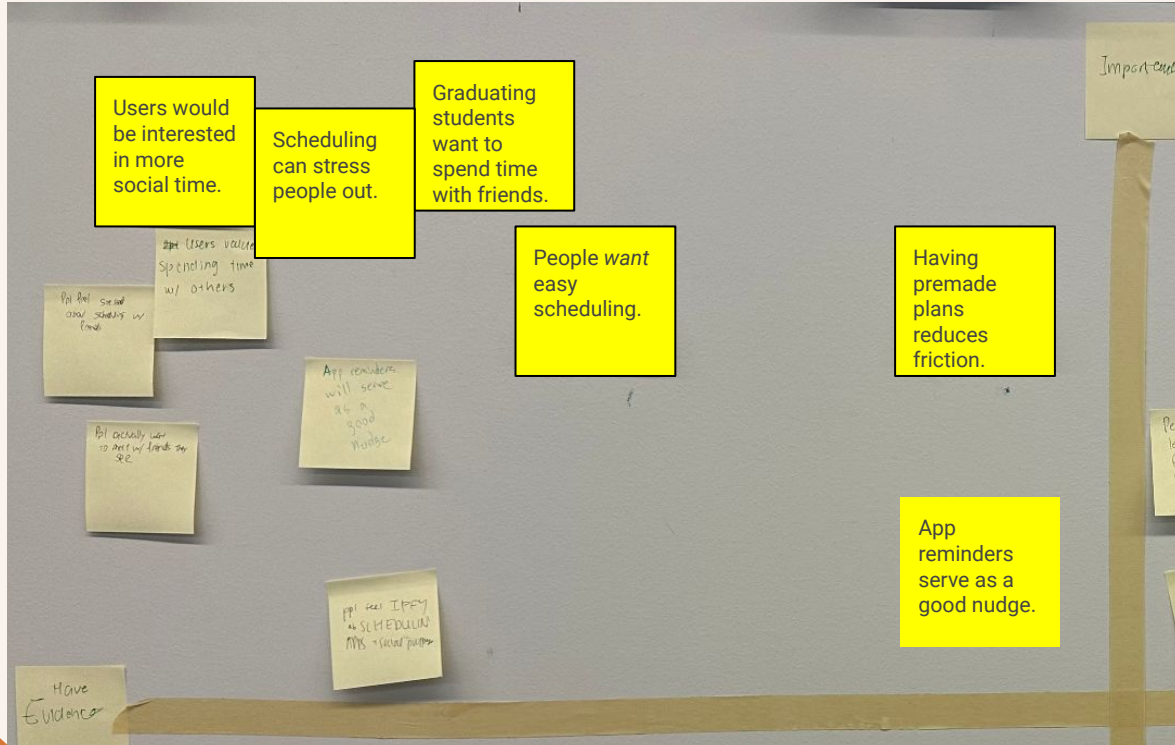
We had many assumptions that related to how hard scheduling can be and how much **friction** there is in the process. Our baseline study gave us ample evidence for these assumptions.

The other form of these kinds of assumptions related to **how people enjoy social interactions** with others.

IMPORTANT AND UNKNOWN QUADRANT

The important assumptions with no evidence largely revolved around different **logistical parts of a solution** or questions on the value proposition of the various solutions.

The takeaway assumptions were:

- People have calendars to import and if they do not then they willing to fill out their schedule.
- People are not only ok but would enjoy having plans made for them.
- People would trust an AI agent. They are comfortable with an AI agent doing this.
- Having plans made for someone reduces the friction of having a social interaction.
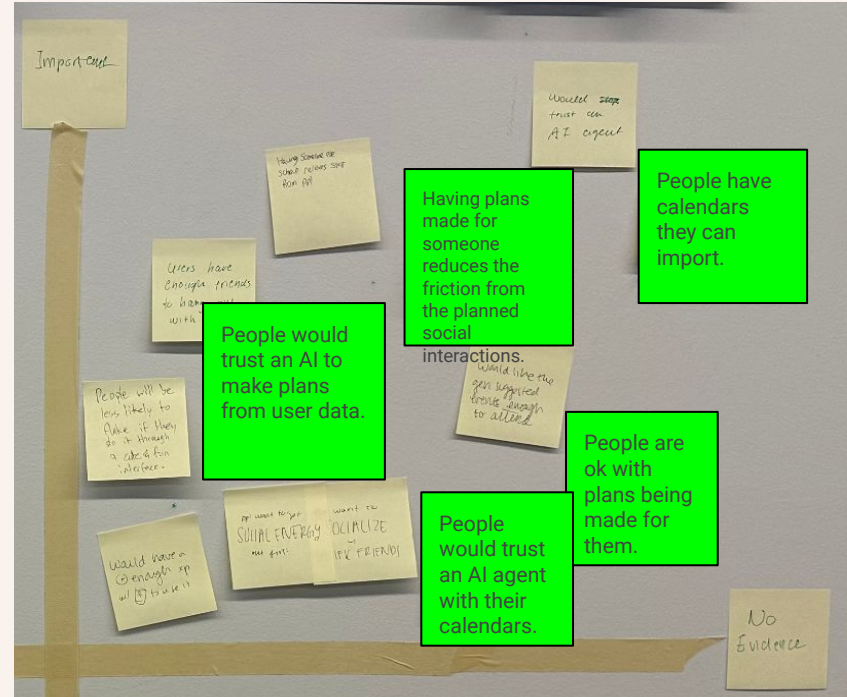
ASSUMPTION TESTING

For our assumption testing, we wanted to test the ones that were Important and Unknown.

Among those ones, we chose 3 that we thought would be insightful to test. These were:

- People like being given things to do rather than figuring it out on their own
- People would trust an AI agent to do their scheduling.
- Having someone or something else schedule relieves stress from people.

ASSUMPTION 1

1. **People are okay with being given things to do rather than figuring it out on their own.**
   - Test: tell participant to imagine they are traveling to London for spring break. Then present them with the options for an itinerary:
     - 1) a pre-planned itinerary that will be given to them that is based on their preferred hours of the day and what visitors of the past have enjoyed, or
     - 2) ask them to plan an itinerary for me and explain/outline the week of planning to me.
   - Measure: what is the preference between [not taking the time to plan + assigned itinerary] vs. [taking the time to plan + customized itinerary].

ASSUMPTION 2

2. **People would trust an AI agent to do tasks for them.**
   - Test: ask people to do two separate tasks -- one math and one logistical, while reminding them that they are allowed to use ChatGPT to help them do this, if they'd like.
     - The math equation is to solve [582 * 191 / 3] and explain how to solve such a problem.
     - The logistical task is to brainstorm 20 name ideas for a new sandwich shop.
   - Measure: do participants use ChatGPT? And for which tasks?

ASSUMPTION 3

3. Having someone or something else schedule relieves stress from people.

- Testing procedure: gather someone's calendar info for this week and next week. Ask them to find 3 times to catch up with a friend this week. Then, the researcher will find 3 free slots for the participant for next week.
- Measure: the stress level reported by the participant when doing the scheduling themselves, versus the stress level reported by the participant when they were scheduled for.

ASSUMPTION RESULTS AND INSIGHTS

- Assumption 1: 2/3 of the participants chose the assigned itinerary, but 2/3 of the participants, including one who chose the assigned itinerary, see flexibility as a requirement
  - This supports our assumption, but it seemed like flexibility was still a priority, even given the assigned itinerary
  - From here, we decided to continue to include an "edit event" feature to allow for that flexibility for our users
- Assumption 2: 3/4 of our participants used ChatGPT for the math problem, and 4/4 used ChatGPT for the brainstorming problem.
  - The results here, especially with the brainstorming problem, pretty clearly support our assumption
  - We believe we can move forward that AI can and would be trusted by our users for this task
- Assumption 3: People generally felt that having something scheduled for you removed the tediousness of looking through your schedule yourself.
  - This was not a very strong result, compared to our other two assumptions, which gives us pause that this app would be used
  - However, the general results do inspire us that we can use the app.

ASSUMPTIONS: WHAT'S NEXT

In general, our assumptions were proven correct, which was important in that it validated our general theories about what would help our target population.

- Our not-so-strong results for Assumption 3 suggest that future work might be done in making a test that would give us a clearer picture
  - Example: Literally having people schedule live something with a friend versus having one of the interviewers do it for them.
- The one assumption that we didn't check is whether people have calendars to import, and if not, whether they'd be willing to manually insert their calendar for the sake of the product
  - From personal experience, we do believe that a lot of people have digital calendars, but more personalized testing would be needed among the physical scheduling population.

WIREFLOWS

Our first wireflow is our onboarding wireflow. For this wireflow, we used our system paths diagram, since a lot of that time we spent fleshing out the onboarding process. For first-time users, we went through the on-boarding process in which we'd want to have little friction as they'd be a frustrated senior wanting better scheduling options. Although the work is frontloaded, later on, it makes it easier to schedule things.

Our second wireflow focuses more specifically on the action of scheduling an event with friends. This wireflow is a lot shorter on purpose, because it's supposed to reflect the ease of scheduling once onboarding happens. You select a friend, you let the AI do its work, you choose the event/activity that appeals to you both the most, and you change stuff as necessary. It's really that simple.

ONBOARDING WIREFLOW
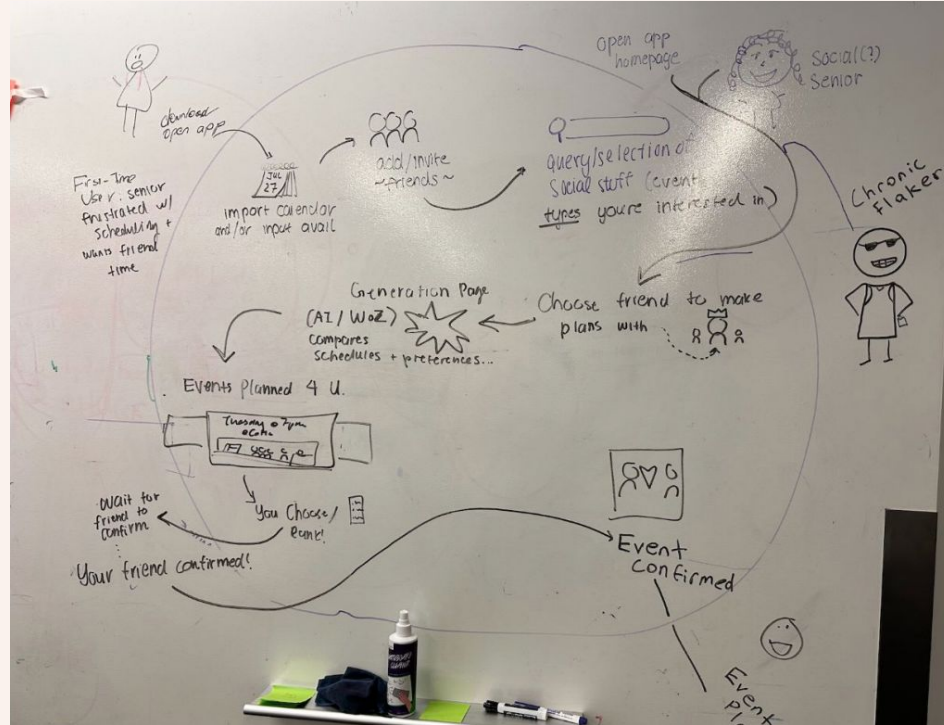
CREATING EVENT WIREFLOW
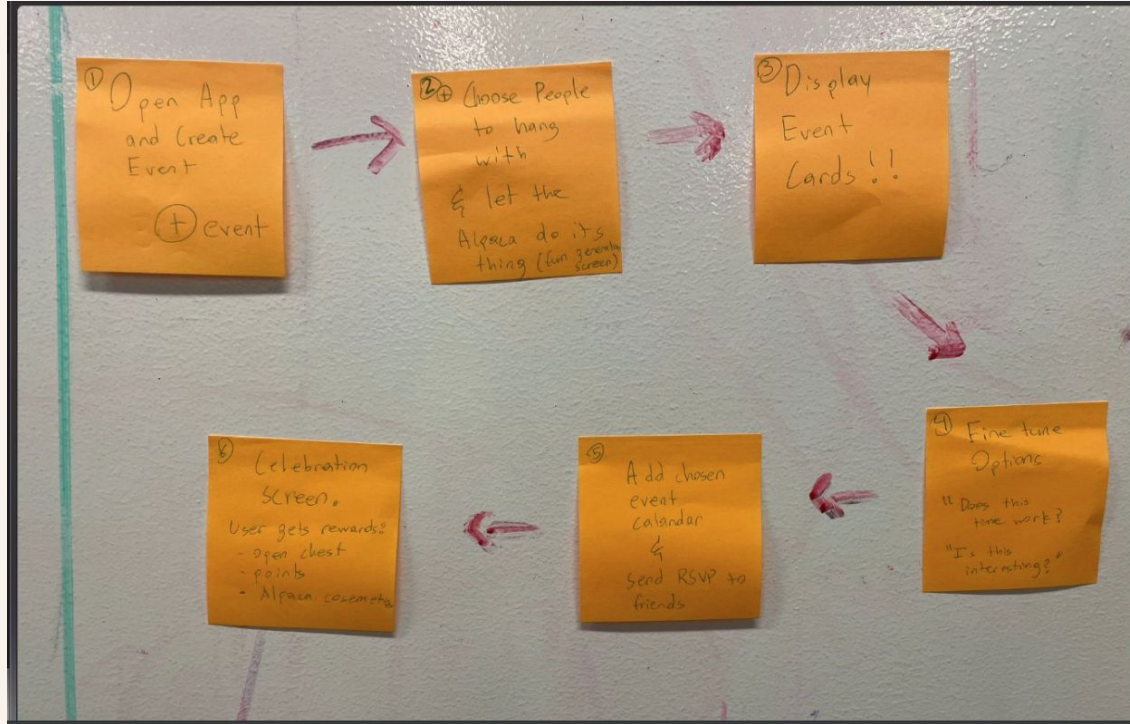
SKETCHY SCREENS

For each of the two wireflows above, we created two sketchy screens, reflecting low-fidelity prototypes of how we expect the app to work.
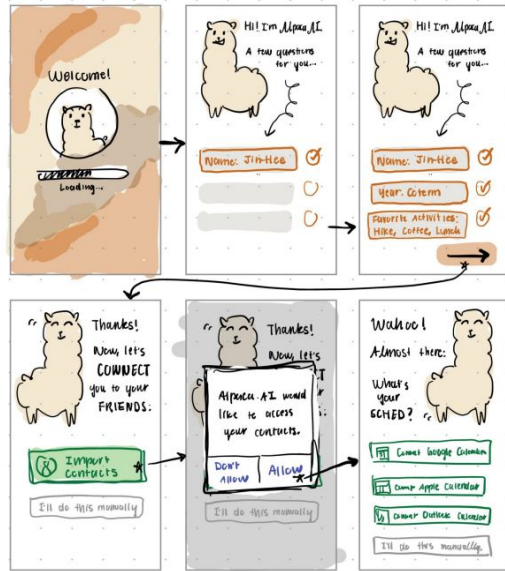
SKETCHY SCREENS: WIREFLOW 1

SKETCHY SCREENS: WIREFLOW 2
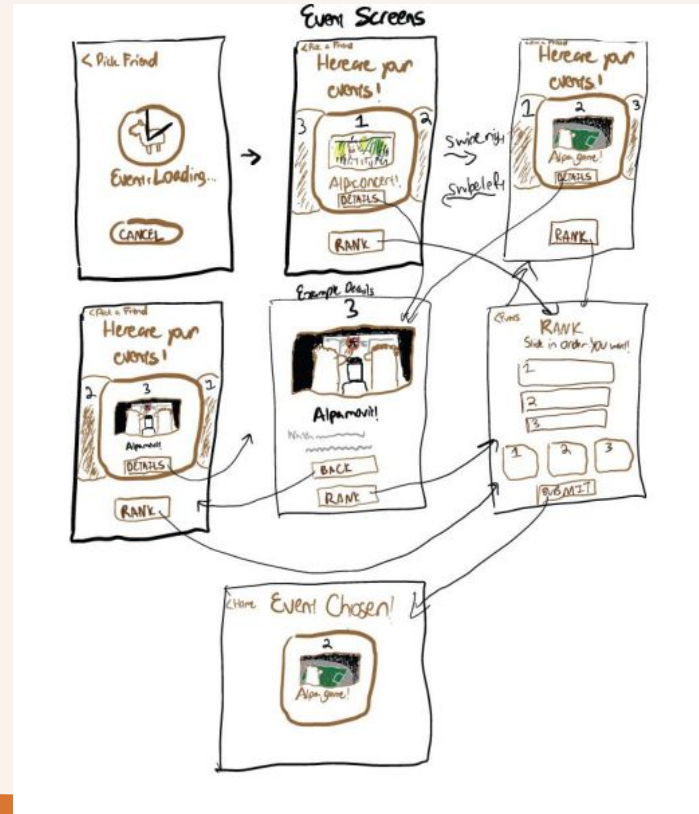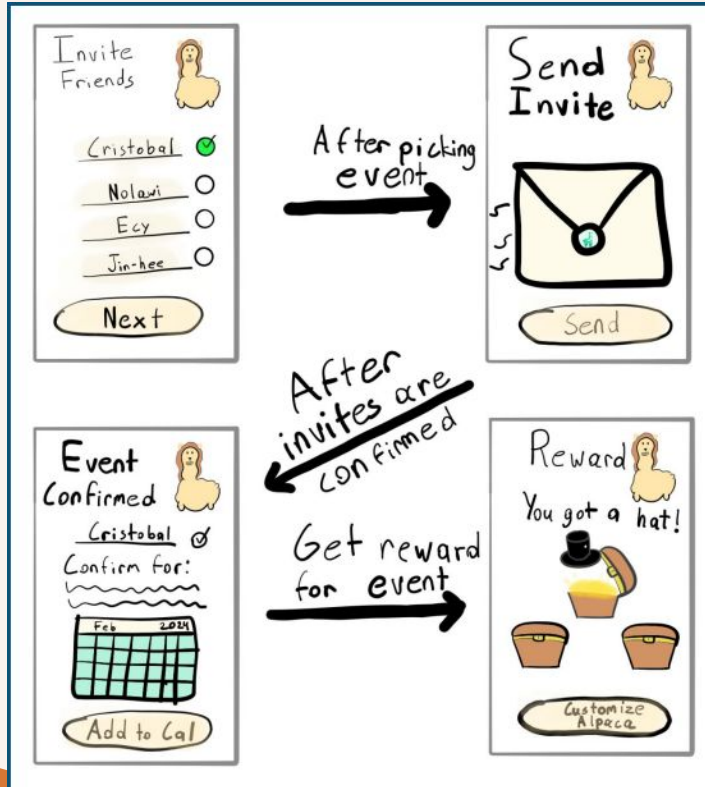
SKETCHY SCREENS: GROUP UI CRITIQUE

- Wireflow 1:
  - Through some group discussion we were able to finalize what exactly we wanted the dashboard tabs at the bottom to look like and what we expected it to be able to do.
    - Our tabs are: calendar, add event, and home, with profile being located from the home screen, to reflect what we thought would be the most important parts of the product for the users
- Wireflow 2:
  - We had group discussion and made final decisions on what we wanted the event choice screen to look like once the events are generated.
    - Rather than a sliding set of events to guarantee confirmation, we decided to make all the events show up in a list, and then have the user choose from their to confirm that event.

med-fi prototype

First Draft Prototype

Onboarding Flow:

- This flow is to help a first-time user to understand how the app works and what to expect by using the app.

Event Flow:

- This flow is to go through the central action of the product, which is to create an event that allows you to have a meaningful interaction with your friend.
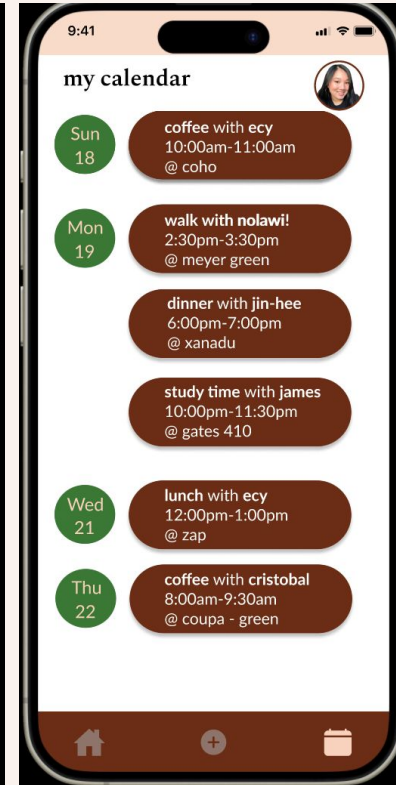
ONBOARDING FLOW

- We decided to have an avatar (Mr. Alpaca) to lead someone through onboarding, both to provide the kind of personal touch that we want to be central to the product and to provide the first friend to show off the app itself.
    - 10th Nielsen Heuristic: Help and Documentation
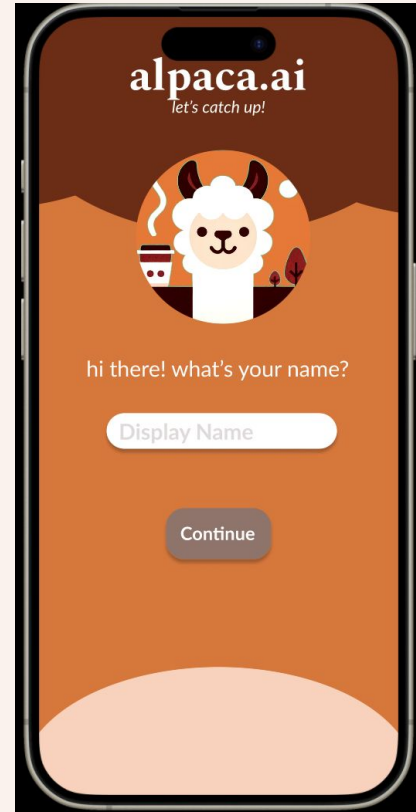
ONBOARDING FLOW (MORE PICS)
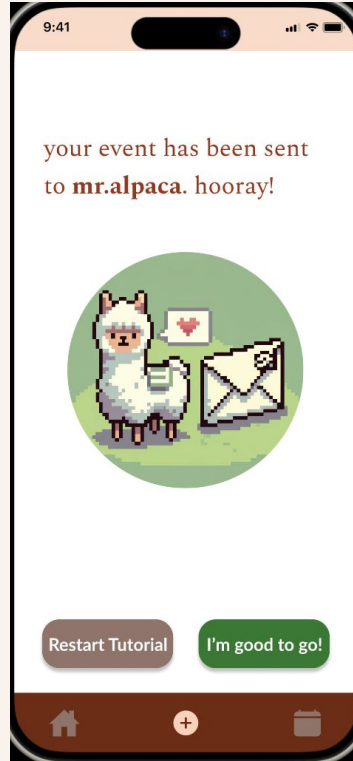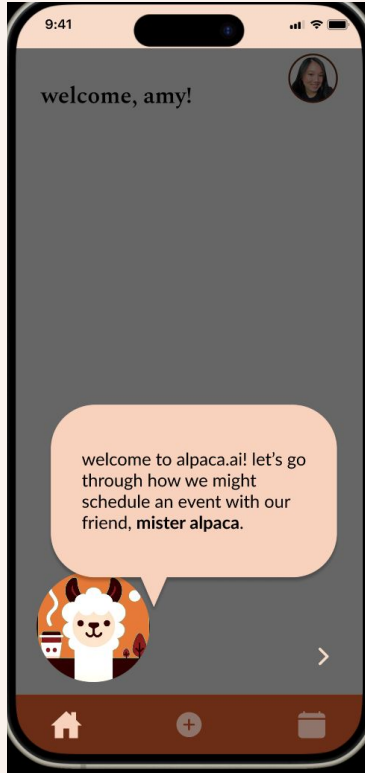
EVENT CREATION FLOW

- We decided to have the events show as a list, then have a confirmation before accepting that event and sending it.
  - 5th Nielsen Heuristic: Error Prevention
- We also decided to have the event show as a different color to show that it is still a pending event until the other party accepts it.
  - 4th Nielsen Heuristic: Consistency and Standards
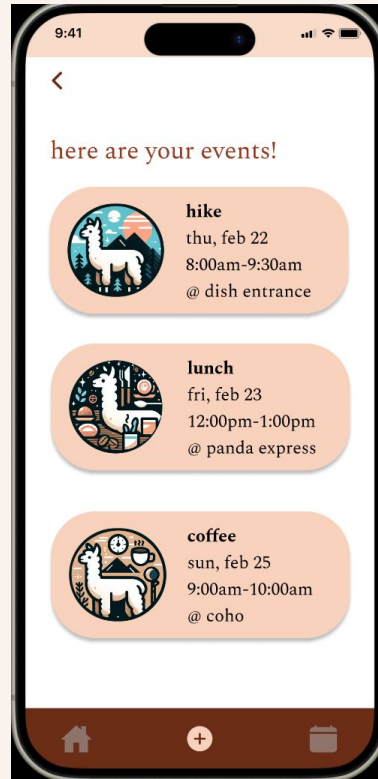
EVENT CREATION FLOW (MORE PICS)
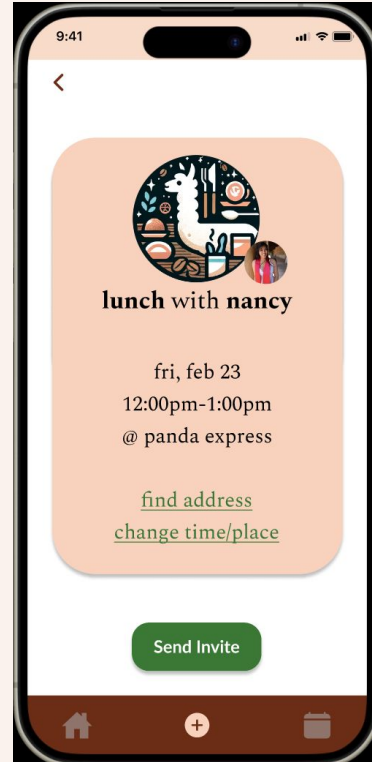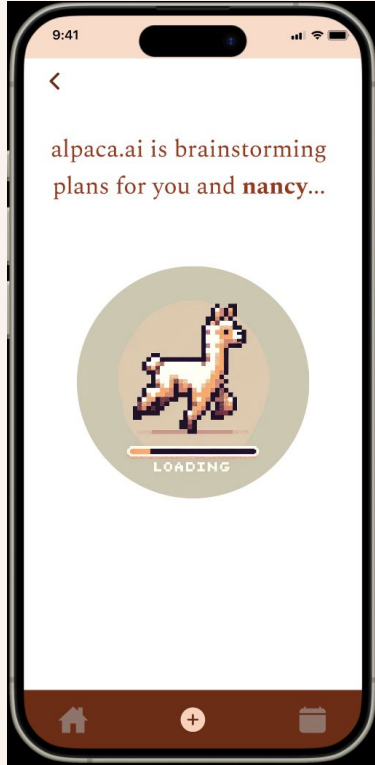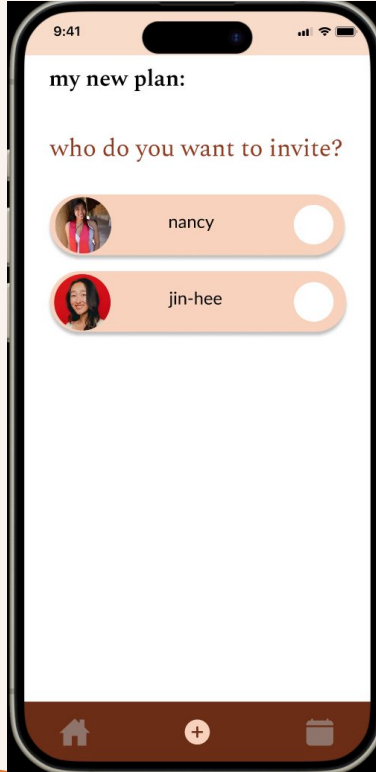
USABILITY TESTING: TASKS

**Tasks for User: Be able to easily go through the flows**

- Onboard into the app without any remaining questions on how the app works.
  - Put in phone number, import contacts to have a list of friends, and import calendar successfully
- Create an event without any problems
  - This should be made easier by a successful onboarding process.

USABILITY TEST: FEEDBACK

Biggest issues:

- Color scheme was a little jarring, especially with the text bubbles in the onboarding
  - We made the text bubble be orange with white text to better fit the scheme
- It was unclear / undistinguishable between a pending event and a confirmed event
  - We made the contrast between a set event and planned event more consistently inverted and mentioned it in our onboarding, along with accepting an event from someone else.
- It was unclear what editing an event might look like, even if it was in our wireflow
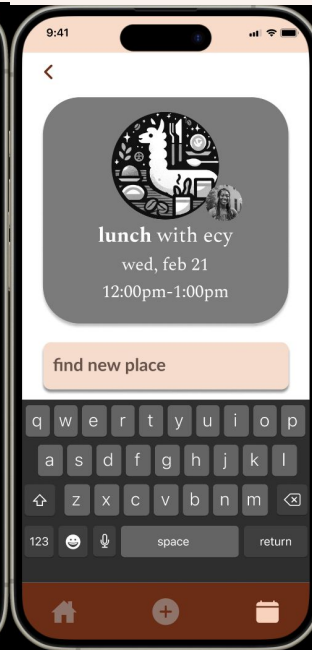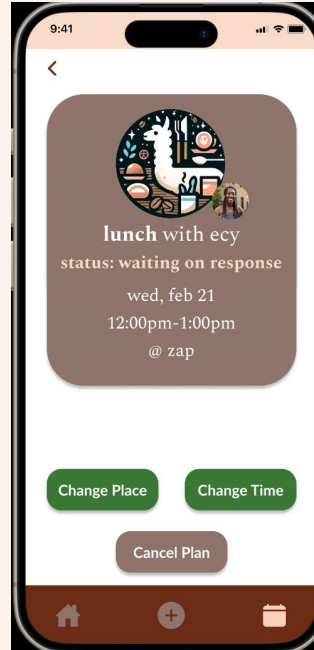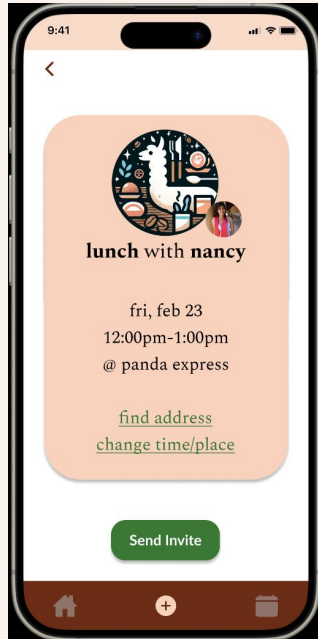 - We included that flow in our prototype.

ISSUE 1: THEME COLORS
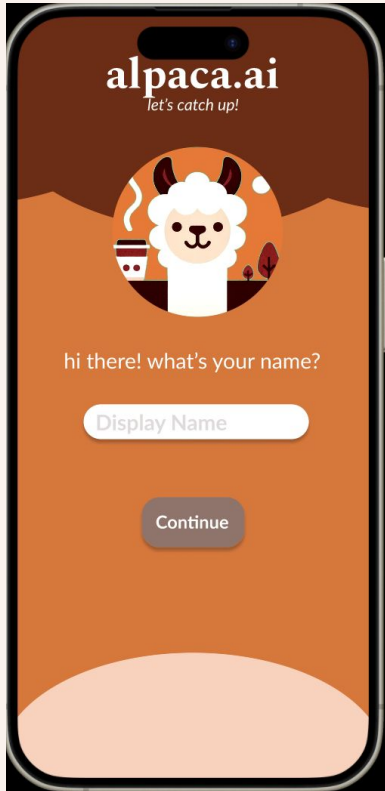
ISSUE 2: PENDING EVENT

ISSUE 3: EDITING AN EVENT

USABILITY TEST: REFLECTIONS

- This process allowed us to really grasp how our class (most of which is our target audience) would react to our idea.
- The feedback on different aspects of our app, but also their desire for more from the prototype really guided our next steps in our final prototype stage.
- Moving forward, we made sure to really take into account truly what the experience would/should be like for someone.
  - Meaning, rather than just giving someone a glimpse, really really trying to put ourselves in users' shoes to see what would need to be added to make it a real functional product rather than just a prototype as we see it.
  - One example of this: What does the screen look like if someone is trying to type something in? How does the keyboard fit into the layout of the app?

Moodboard & Style Tile

We decided to go with a friendly, warm, and quirky feel (as one might spy on this very presentation!) that embodied the nostalgia of catching up and the Stanford spirit of meeting up. The brown matched the alpaca, and the green evoked images of a green pasture or plant-based theme. We also felt that the orange palette was unique compared to existing popular apps in the market.

Moodboard

Style Tile

THE FINAL PROTOTYPE
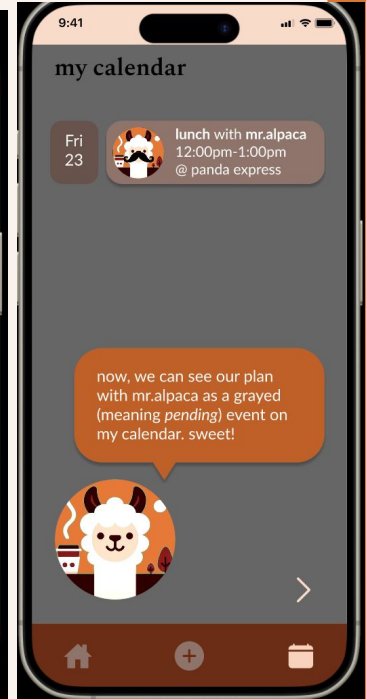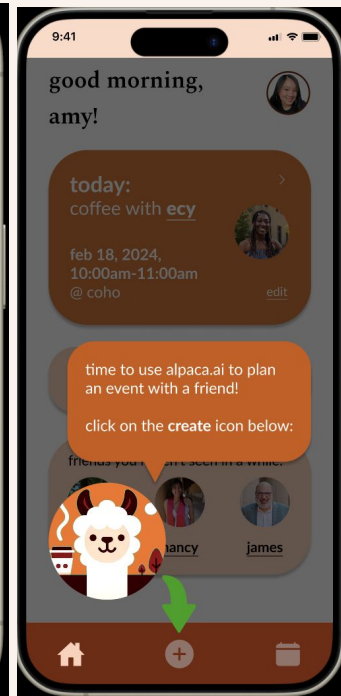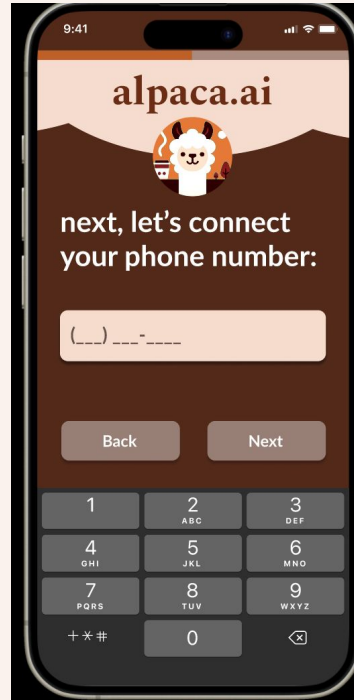
OUR FINAL PROTOTYPE(!!!)

Four Flows

- Onboarding Flow, Create Event, Edit Event (New!) and Accept Event (New!)

Happy Path:

1. Walk through onboarding. **mr.alpaca** will handle this for you, just follow his instructions!
2. Create a new event, inviting **nancy**.
   a. Confirm your pending event in the calendar: you can go home after sending your invite, then go to your calendar from the navbar, then see the new pending event!
3. Accept an incoming invite.
   a. To do this, just *go back home* from your calendar.
   b. You should see the calendar icon with a green (!) dot. Let's see what that's all about!
4. Edit an event.
   a. To do this, go back home. Let's change our plans – go to the calendar from the navbar.
   b. Edit lunch plans with **ecy**.

FINAL PROTOTYPE: ONBOARDING

- We changed our theme to have more of a darker brown in the background.
- We shifted our layout towards the top of the app to fit a keyboard to type in the user's name and number.
- We included the "pending event" theme change in the onboarding

FINAL PROTOTYPE: CREATE EVENT

- We decided to make the "pending event" theme change more apparent by inverting the letter colors and making the icon itself a darker color
- This gives a clearer idea of *state*, rather than making all events look one and the same. It also keeps everything in one place while showing distinct event states.

# FINAL PROTOTYPE: EDIT EVENT

- This flow was an addition from our first iteration based on user feedback. We included options to change the location and time of a non-confirmed event.

- Things change all the time! We wanted to accommodate our user needs of being able to change plans, which was a significant point of discussion in both our interviews and testing.

FINAL PROTOTYPE: ACCEPT EVENT

- This flow was also an addition based on user feedback and discussion with the teaching team in-class. We decided to place the event acceptance as part of the schedule tab.
- The small (!) gives notification that something needs your attention, and we wanted to display what invites looked like on both the sender/accepter ends.
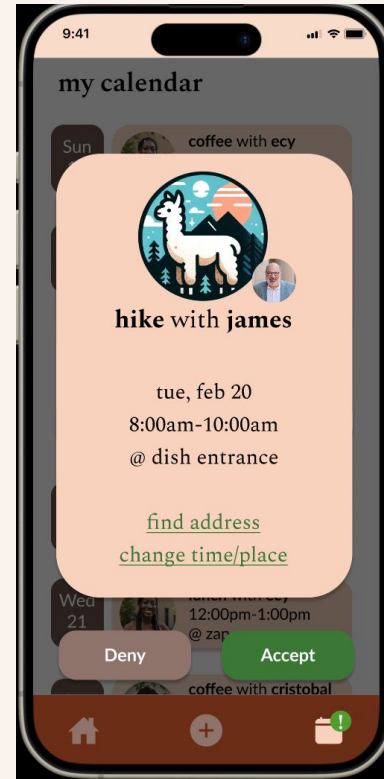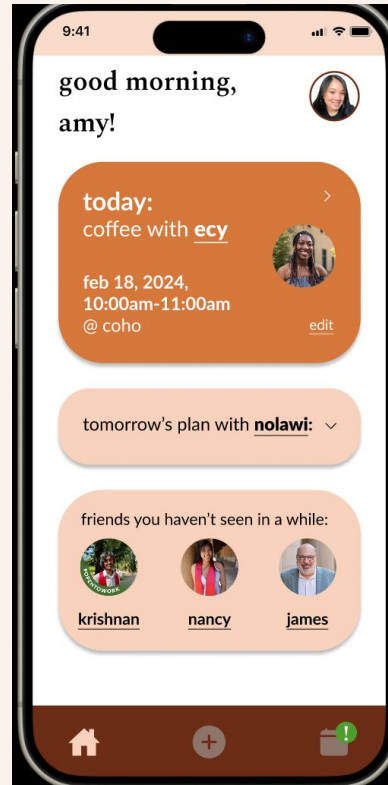
ITERATING, ITERATING...

Another piece of feedback we received on our first Figma prototype was about what happens before and after a hang out.

To tackle the before, we made the design decision to include the most pressing upcoming information on the users homepage, so they would see it every time they open the app. For example, on our homepage, you see today's event as a reminder with Ecy and tomorrow's event with Nolawi. That way, we put it "in your face" to remind you.

A future iteration would include some option to thank your friend or make follow-up plans after you hang out. We strayed away from a rating system of your friend because we thought the ethics of that could veer into a "Black Mirror" direction, but we are curious how we might tailor the event type more to the user and allow them to do more after seeing their friend, I.E. plan more events or set up a recurring event. We wanted to focus on our core features for this prototype, though, so ultimately left this as a "V-Next" feature rather than a V1.

CONCLUSION

ETHICS DESIGN FIC OVERVIEW

- [Here is a link to our ethics design fiction](#)

alpaca.ai is a social platform designed especially for final year students to easily catch up before they leave Stanford. In the **best of cases**, this results in **easier and more frequent social interaction** with the people you care about.

However, alpaca.ai is **also just another app** designed to do something very human and often very spontaneous or informal at Stanford: meet up. **When every meetup is a meeting facilitated by yet again another AI, what happens?** When everything becomes a commodity, even social time, what are the implications of that for society?

TAKEAWAYS

The Value of Physical Documentation
Whether on Post-It notes, the white boarded walls, or papers, our group often opted to **document things physically.** For our team, that was conducive to quickly brainstorming creative ideas. We were very tactile-oriented.

Workload
This class was lots of work to manage, and so we had to learn quickly how to distribute efforts while we worked together in a limited time frame. We learned our work-style was in-person and synchronous, and we managed to get a lot accomplished in 1.5 - 2 hour sessions. For a majority of the class, we split the work evenly and took different sections, and then came together and reviewed. At the end of the class, we divvied up the design fiction, write-up, and clickable prototype, coming up with a point person or two for each task who would then draft something for the rest of us to review and then work on.

Interview Skills
We learned a lot about best interview practices, but realize we also have a lot of room for growth. Having an interview that flows like a conversation and continually gets at key insights can be difficult. Many times, we learned how to generate questions that spanned a great breadth, but spontaneously building upon that to get into good depth was more difficult and takes greater skill.

A prime example of our tactile prowess ;)

Next Steps

What would we like to investigate further and/or develop further in our prototype?

To Investigate
- What would happen if catered the app *exclusively* to final year students?
- What would user retention be for the app?

To Improve
- From feedback, it was suggested that we had more user control with the AI. That would be something to improve and explore in future iterations of the app.

Additional Features to Develop
- Add clearer reminders of upcoming events
- Develop notifications
- Develop post-event reflections → customize what event types you like or are recommended
- Group events
- Add more features from user data like activity status and birthday reminders
- Allow users to import events to external calendars

Reflection

How will we approach our next behavior design efforts?

Cristobal: Moving forward I think that I will apply a thoughtful but systematic approach to design. Changing behaviors is an involved process that is about the audience you are trying reach just as much as the underlying design principles of the median you are applying to generate behavior change. The ideas behind understanding users and testers are vital. From interviewing to understanding the difference between saying and doing, these skills are vital to the design process. All these small steps build to something much larger.

Ecy: One thing I want to look at in the future is how to better use injunctive vs descriptive norms. I think also targeting a niche and exploring the uniquenesses within that would be interesting. One question that comes to mind after this project is: how could we have made it even more senior/last-year specific? What if we had created a sense of urgency and lack of time by showcasing examples of people who had graduated but felt a sense of social satisfaction before walking? What if the app deleted after a year of use? I think using the cognitive design principles in this class plus principles of social computing (like atomic networks in CS278) would be fascinating to delve into in future behavioral design efforts.

REFLECTION PT 2

How will we approach our next behavior design efforts?

__Jin-Hee:__ I appreciated how we tied in the conceptual things we learned in class into practice right away in our design process. In the future, I think it would be helpful to do our assumption testing even earlier on, since we found this fell to the backburner with the pressure of getting a prototype done. If I was to work with this (wonderful) team again, I'd like to continue our flow of mostly synchronous work time, since we work best and most efficiently in that way. It would also be helpful to have a longer period for needfinding to allow for more breadth and depth in our user research.

__Nolawi:__ I found the behavior design space to be really insightful. This class was my favorite design class, not only for the things that we did but for the team that we have. There's not really a lot that I can say should be improved, if anything I think that having more time and more interviews would be really insightful in terms of pinpointing problems and a possible solution.

THE END...

- Fun fact: our group chat name is... CS247Baddies ;)
- We spotted Krishnan in OldU while filming our Ethics Design Fic
- This class was a journey, thanks for the adventure!