

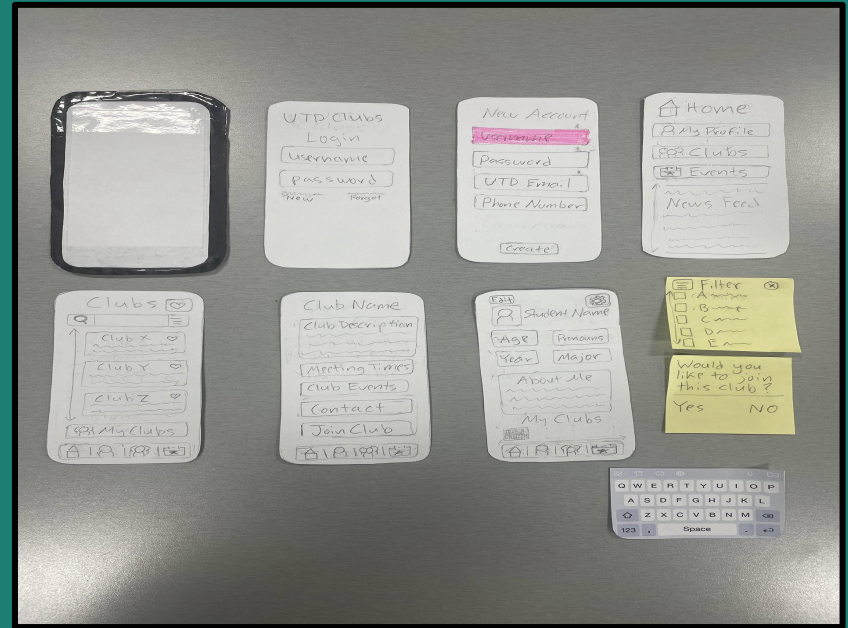
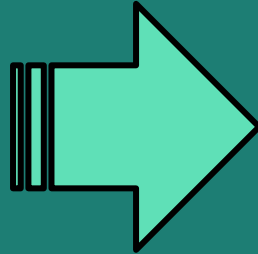
# Design Research Methods Semester Project



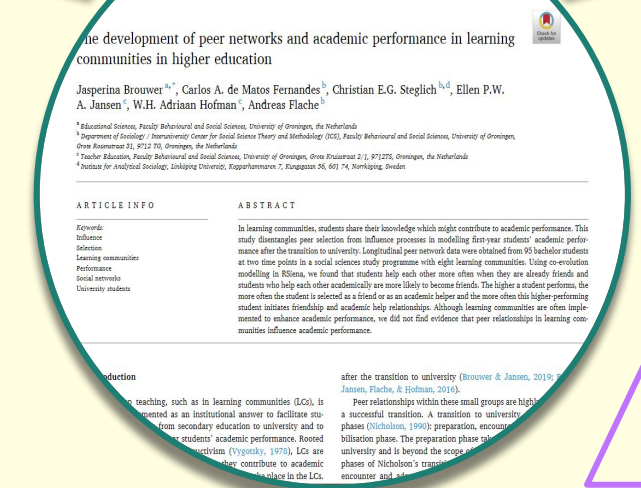
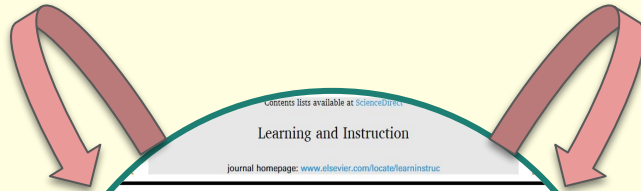
Created by: **Marissa, Sarah,  
Kaetlyn, James, and Vincent**

# Mobile Application Design

In this app we are aiming for Social Support, our app will connect students to help each other socialize more at UTD. This is club-bases and aims to help students connect through club activities.



# Secondary Research



Learning and Instruction

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/learninstruc](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/learninstruc)

The development of peer networks and academic performance in learning communities in higher education

Jasperina Brouwer<sup>a,\*</sup>, Carlos A. de Matos Fernandes<sup>b</sup>, Christian E.G. Steglich<sup>b,d</sup>, Ellen P.W. A. Jansen<sup>c</sup>, W.H. Adriaan Hofman<sup>c</sup>, Andreas Flache<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Educational Sciences, Faculty Behavioural and Social Sciences, University of Groningen, the Netherlands  
<sup>b</sup> Department of Sociology / Interuniversity Center for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS), Faculty Behavioural and Social Sciences, University of Groningen, Oostersingel 23, 9712 TS, Groningen, the Netherlands  
<sup>c</sup> Teacher Education, Faculty Behavioural and Social Sciences, University of Groningen, Oostersingel 2/1, 9712 TS, Groningen, the Netherlands  
<sup>d</sup> Institute for Analytical Sociology, Linköping University, Kopparbergsgränd 7, Fugavägen 56, 601 74, Norrköping, Sweden

**ARTICLE INFO**

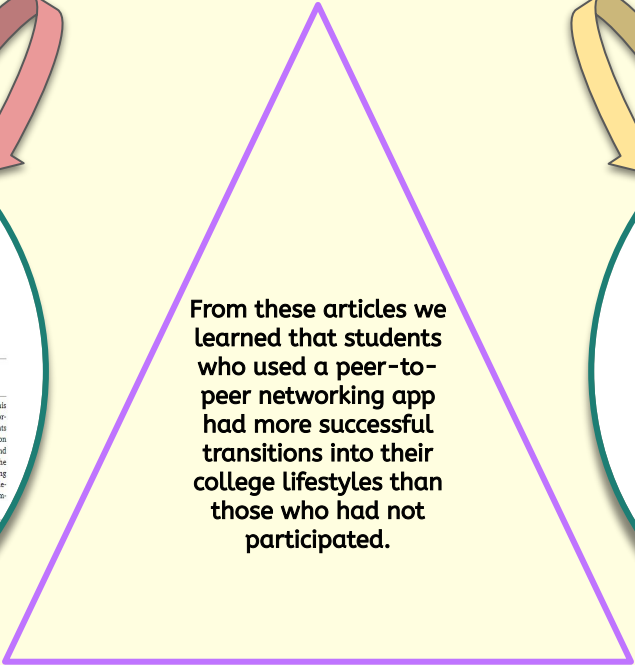
**ABSTRACT**

**Keywords:** Influence; Selection; Learning communities; Performance; Social networks; University students

In learning communities, students share their knowledge which might contribute to academic performance. This study disentangles peer selection from influence processes in modeling first-year students' academic performance after the transition to university. Longitudinal peer network data were obtained from 95 bachelor students at two time points in a social sciences study programme with eight learning communities. Using co-evolution modelling in RStim, we found that students help each other more often when they are already friends and students who help each other academically are more likely to become friends. The higher a student performs, the more often the student is selected as a friend or as an academic helper and the more often this higher-performing student initiates friendships and academic help relationships. Although learning communities are often implemented to enhance academic performance, we did not find evidence that peer relationships in learning communities influence academic performance.

**Introduction**

teaching, such as in learning communities (LCs), is presented as an institutional answer to facilitate students' transition from secondary education to university and to support students' academic performance. Rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) LCs are designed to facilitate students' academic performance. Rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) LCs are designed to facilitate students' academic performance. Rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) LCs are designed to facilitate students' academic performance.



From these articles we learned that students who used a peer-to-peer networking app had more successful transitions into their college lifestyles than those who had not participated.



Journal of Human Services: Training, Research, and Practice

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10-2018

**Effects of a Peer-To-Peer Mentoring Program: Supporting First-Year College Students' Academic and Social Integration on Campus**

Griselda Flores Ph.D.  
Harford Community College, grflores@harford.edu

Antonio G. Estudillo Ph.D.  
Monmouth University, West Long Branch New Jersey, aestudio1@monmouth.edu

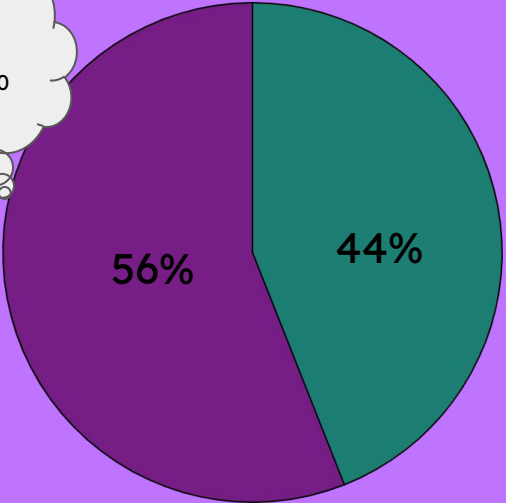
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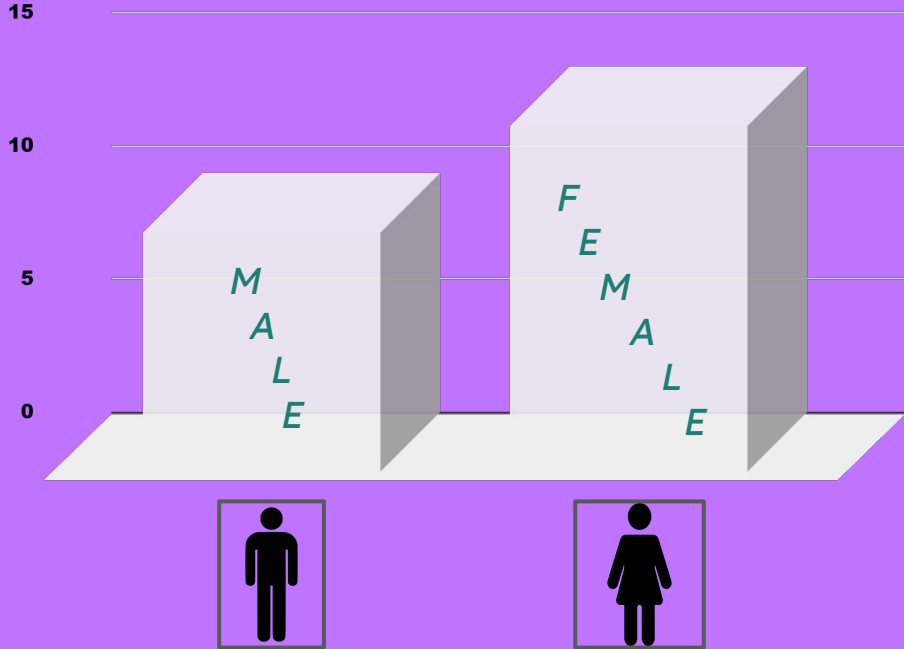
# Observational Research

Data recorded on 19/09/2020



- Number of students walking alone
- Number of students walking with a group

Number of Males and Females accounted for



# How do you feel?

*Interviewing The Students*

**83%**

of students do not consider themselves actively involved in campus life.



Attributes attached to majority percentage

- Loneliness
- Solitude
- Unsatisfied

**97%**

of students asked commute to campus and feel that it prohibits campus social involvement



Attributes attached to majority percentage

- Not involved
- Disconnected

**100%**

of students agree that UTD students would be happier when provided with support from their peers



Attributes attached when provided with support

- Happiness
- Involvement

**34%**

of students are involved in UTD clubs and activities



Attributes attached when not involved in clubs

- Disconnected
- Bored

**3%**

of students are involved in the UTD sports teams



Attributes attached to those uninvolved in UTD sports

- Unathletic
- Uninvolved
- Unhealthy

# Focus Group and Interviews

## Observations

- Clubs came up in just about every interview
- Clubs provided a better college experience
- Difficulty in using UTD website to find clubs or didn't even know of any resources to join a club
- Students wanted to join clubs to meet people with similar interests and make friends
- Clubs gave students a college social life

*“I think what will make a better experience for me at UTD would be a better way of finding groups. I know there are tons of different clubs but there’s not a great way to find them. There are those small, little bulletin boards that you see around campus, but with all the clutter of posters it’s hard to see them all. So when you walk around campus you don’t see posters you see clutter.”*

*“For me I would say even though there isn’t as much of like a huge campus culture there are certain clubs and organizations where I feel like i have met some really good friends.”*

*“It gets kind of tricky to answer mostly because I did join UTD around Spring 2020. That’s when we had to do all the COVID and pandemic things. So a lot of my social socialization was, I guess, warped because I just wasn’t able to join clubs and stuff like that...so I don’t really know what resources there is for me.”*

## Conclusion:

Based on the interviews and focus group the peer to peer support app should be a social support app focused on clubs where they can search/find and join clubs.



## WHO are we empathizing with?

UTD students who struggle with social interactions and may be introverted after the pandemic. The pandemic greatly affected UTD Students and now many lack a social life and aren't active on campus outside of class.

## What do they need to DO?

They need to be introduced to clubs and organizations on campus. They also need to be encouraged to step outside of their comfort zones to make friends, network, and maintain a healthy social life. They need to know and be reminded that everyone is going through similar problems.

## What do they HEAR?

- What advisors say "Be active in your college life, go to events and office hours."
- What family says "Make the most of your time here."
- What family says "This is an opportunity."
- What family says "Enjoy it while it lasts."
- What friends say "You should join this club."
- What the media says "UTD is one of the most depressive Universities."

## What do they SEE?

- Other students openly communicating with peers
- Students freely chatting with professors
- People eating together in the Student Union Center
- Students performing club activities together and having a good time
- Club relative signs everywhere they walk
- Posters indicating campus events
- People doing outdoor activities in the grassy areas on campus
- Groups of students walking around campus
- Individuals completing class work outside the S.U.C



## What do they DO?

- They go to their classes and then go home afterwards
- Study in open areas but keep to themselves
- Work on their laptops
- They take open tables or go elsewhere if a table is taken
- They have trouble reaching back to someone they met at school and keeping bonds/friendships
- They interact with each other online through apps like discord
- They have a hard time participating in class
- They keep to themselves and tend to be introverted
- They look down at their phones when walking alone

## What do they SAY?

- How do others communicate with strangers so easily?
- How can I learn to go out of my way to make strangers?
- How can I learn about more clubs on UTD?
- What would make it easier to meet others?
- I wish I could find others with similar interests to myself
- Why are so many others by themselves on campus?
- How did this group of individuals meet and become friends?
- How can I find a study group?
- What could assist me in finding a group of friends?

## PAINS

- Fear of being alone, loneliness
- Fear of being unaccomplished
- Fear of academic failure
- No social life
- Socially awkward
- Introvert
- No friends/intimate relationships
- No connections
- Lacks self confidence

## GAINS

- Find connections
- More opportunities
- Social Support
- Make friends with similar interests
- Gain self confidence
- Feels a part of something
- Feels self worth and worthy
- Have a better experience at UTD
- Have fun as a productive University student

## Other thoughts and motivations

UTD students currently need social support after the pandemic limited social interactions and shortened most students' University experience. UTD students are now back on campus wanting to make friends and connections with other students. Social support can bring the University back together as students can be given a way to make friends, be a part of something, make connections, have more opportunities, and an overall better experience at UTD.

# User Journey



**User:** UTD students who struggle to make new connections and friends at UTD

**Problem or Need (JTBD format):** When UTD students need a way to socialize on campus, they want to find people with similar interests so they can make friends, find connections, and enjoy their time at the University of Dallas.

	Step 1 Gets accepted into UTD	Step 2 Registers for classes	Step 3 Checks out campus before first day of class	Step 4 Attends first day of class and finds that people in class are overly introverted	Step 5 Gets discouraged and returns to just talking with his friends from his hometown on Xbox.
<b>What are they doing?</b>	Moves into dorms	Using schedule planner to register for classes	Hangs out around campus such as the student union.	Tries to make new connections and friends	Finds it difficult to make new connections
<b>What are they thinking?</b>	I did it, I made it into UTD and I'm ready to live the college life. 😊	What if my classes are hard or my professors are mean?	I don't know if I will actually be able to make friends here.	Why does this person seem like they don't want to converse? 😞	I wonder if I will ever make close friends here like I have in my hometown.
<b>What are they feeling?</b>	Excited, nervous	Anxious, worried	Depressed	Questioning, insecure	Defeated, discouraged



# User Journey

Step 6 Gets motivated again and tries to find clubs and organizations on campus	Step 7 Goes to the UTD website to find if any interest him	Step 8 Gets overwhelmed from the amount of clubs and confused by the layout of the website	Step 9 Reads about a club that could interest him	Step 10 Is lost on the process of joining the club and when school events are	Step 11 Loses his motivation and goes back to gaming
Takes action to find ways to join a UTD club	Finds he can search the UTD website to find clubs	Searches for clubs on UTD website and has trouble using it	Finds a club through the search bar specific to his interests	Searches how to join club and school events	Starts to play video games more often as a way to make new friends and have a social life
Maybe making friends through clubs and organizations will be easier.	This site is so confusing, there are too many options. 	Searching for a club specific to my interests is complicated.	This one club seems interesting but I'm still not sure.	I don't understand how to become a club member or what events are happening. 	At least I can socialize through Xbox since it's impossible to do at UTD.
Hopeful	Frustrated	Defeated	Unsure, questioning	Confused, frustrated	Defeated

# Meet Kaeden Travis

## Design Persona



### KAEDEN TRAVIS

STUDENT



19 YEARS OLD



DALLAS, TX



FRESHMAN



MECHANICAL  
ENGINEERING

### BIOGRAPHY

Kaeden is a first year mechanical engineering student at UTD who has a passion for mountain climbing and likes to play video games, like League of Legends and Overwatch. He has a pet goldfish. He wants to get involved on campus and find a group of people that have similar interests.

Whenever he has free time he plays ranked games of Overwatch and League with his friends from high school. Everyday he wakes up feeds his fish and listens to Lofi to get himself ready for the day. On the weekends he goes to the rock climbing gym to let off steam.

### PERSONALITY

nerd

introvert

active

kind

### MOTIVATIONS

- Finishing homework on time and receiving good grades
- Improving his physique by rock climbing
- Increasing his rank in overwatch and league

### FRUSTRATIONS

- Losing points on assignments for turning them in late
- Not meeting his body weight goals
- Not winning in video games

### REFERENTS AND INFLUENCES

Adventure

Fish

Friends

Video Games

### SCENARIO

Kaeden Travis just arrived at UTD as a freshman from Dallas TX and is struggling to meet friends. He tried talking to students at the Student Union and in his engineering classes, but is struggling to find people with his similar interests who would be willing to talk to him, so he decides to stick to his high school friends to hang out with outside of campus. He found a UTD peer-to-peer app on the app store and found many similar people like him who play the same video games and share the same hobbies. He befriended the people on the app quickly and joined a club where he is happier and more involved in campus life.

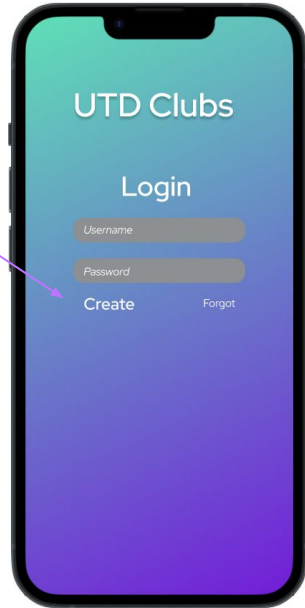
“

When I need a way to socialize on campus I want to find people with similar interests so that I can make friends and have a good time at the University of Texas at Dallas.

”

# UTD Clubs

**New User:**  
Switched to create  
instead of new inorder  
to stand out more



UTD Clubs

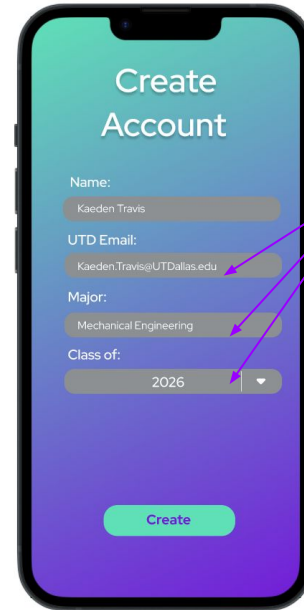
Login

Username

Password

Create [Forgot](#)

**User Information:**  
Takes information filled in during  
registration to give  
recommendation



Create Account

Name:

UTD Email:

Major:

Class of:

Create

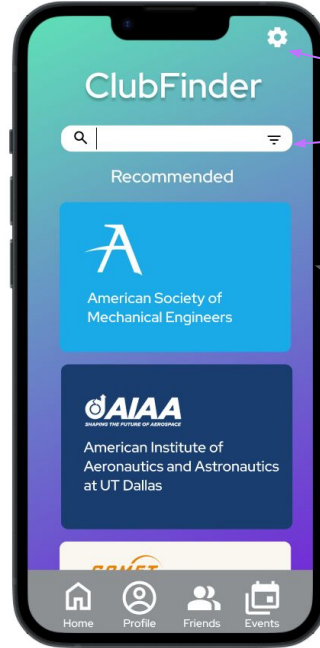
# UTD Clubs

## Removed news feed:

Took it off the home page due to feedback from usability testing

## Quick access:

At the bottom to quickly maneuver the app and go to where you need to



## Settings and filters:

To customize accessibility and search engine off of recommended to different filter

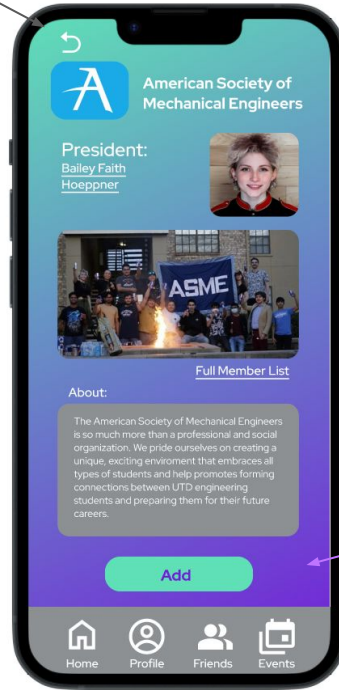
## Club List:

Default gives you recommended clubs that apply to you based of your account creation.

# UTD Clubs

**Link to profile:**  
Link to go to the presidents profile to find out more about them and what else they are doing

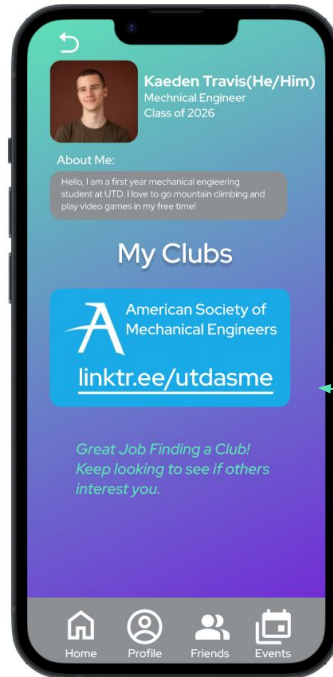
Back button



**Add:**  
Adds club to your profile to show that you are interested in it and gives access to socials and add upcoming events to the top of your events tab

# UTD Clubs

**Profile:**  
Option to add  
picture and about  
me to your profile



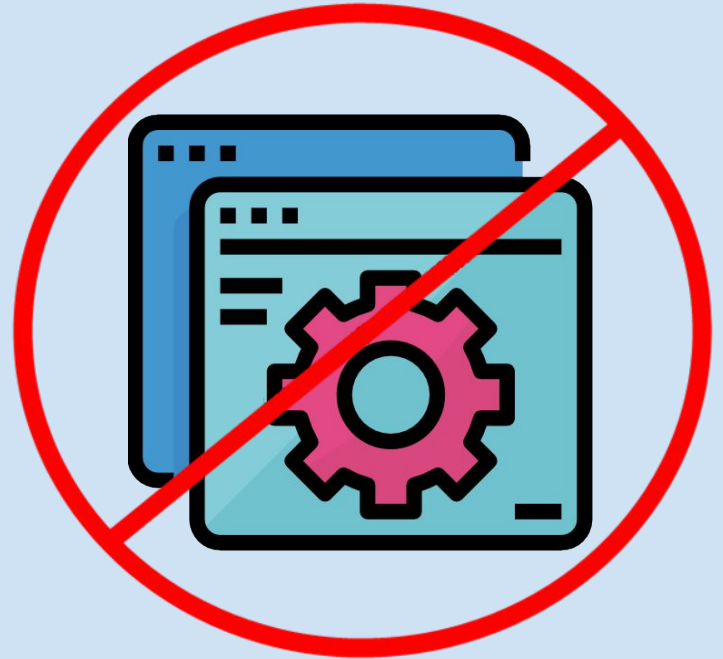
**Additional Socials:**  
Clubs you are in with  
access link to all other  
socials.

<https://www.figma.com/file/Z3DqoGlg6jGuLIsYSliZtq/DesignResearchProj?node-id=0%3A1&t=uqn uvBouDfw3lwHZ-1>



# What wasn't Included

- Roommate search
- Class notes tab
- Club/Organization of the week
- News Feed



# Summative Research

## Notes from UX test

- Login/create account screen is comprehensible
- Participant rated the app a 1 out of 10 for being confusing (1=not confusing and 10=very confusing)
- Participant didn't use the filter feature
- Participant said navigating through the app is "self explanatory"
- Participant said the app felt "cluttered"
- Participant said the app needs a "nice color scheme"



# Payment Plans

*Would Students Pay?*



100%

**of students believe that this app should be free on the App Store**



63%

**of students are ok with advertisements on the app than paying for it**

# What do you think?

## Reactions to App

01

"I think this app is going to be a great idea if executed well."

- Liked the general interface design
- Liked how we focused on finding clubs and organizations

02

"I believe that a lot of students at UTD would benefit from this app when provided with proper support from their peers."

- Liked the color scheme
- Felt that it should be free for every UTD student
  - Supported the addition of ads

03

"UTD students really needed an app like this, since the clubs page for the official UTD website is not helpful. This would help me find friends and join clubs easier."

- Enjoyed the newsfeed function
- Liked the filter function for discovering clubs based off of interests
  - Found it was easier to join a club this way

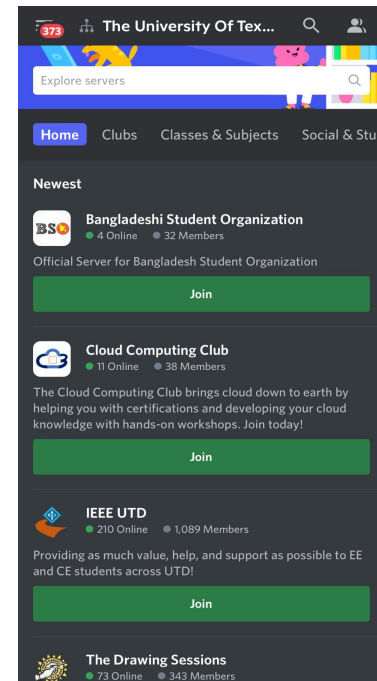
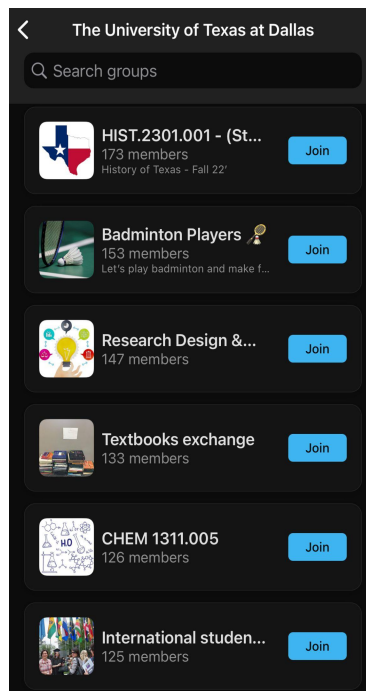
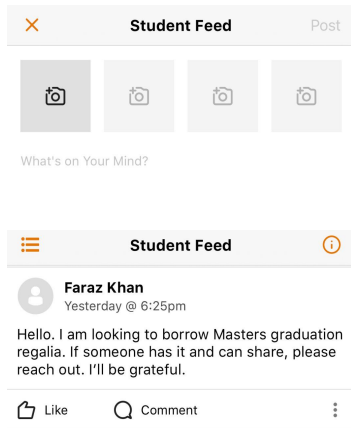
04

"I don't think I would ever use an app like this, but I think other people struggling will enjoy it."

- Thought the concept was a good idea but does not have a personal need for a peer-to-peer social club app at UTD
  - Considers themselves actively involved in campus life already

# Where We'll Advertise

- UT Dallas app
- Groupme
- Discord



# Measurements of the Apps Success

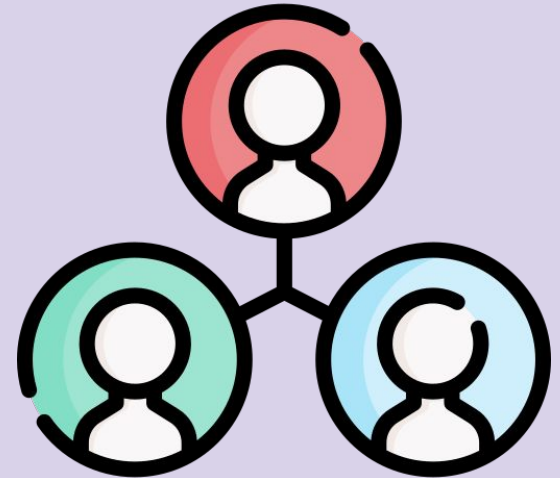
Ratings and Reviews



Student Surveys



Whether Club/Organization participation increases





# Summary

- UTD students struggle to find a college social life after COVID-19
- UTD students need a social support app
- The social support app needs to focus on UTD clubs on campus
- The app UTD Clubs resulted from our research
- The app's focus is searching/finding UTD clubs on campus and giving them a way to join clubs
- The app needs to be free
- The app will be advertised on discord, UTD app, and Groupme
- The success of the app will be measured by app store ratings and reviews, student surveys, and research on whether club/organization participation increases