



INST 710 - User Experience Research Methods

Understanding the Effectiveness of Different Communication Methods on Campus

P6 - Communications

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1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

Our overarching goal was to streamline the dissemination of crucial information, ultimately aiming to visualize a more connected and informed campus environment. To achieve our objective, we employed a systematic approach. Over two months, we formulated comprehensive survey questions, conducted interviews, created affinity maps, held visioning sessions, and ultimately developed a working prototype. To avoid inputting bias into our work, we utilized the narratives our participants gave to create our models and affinity diagrams. We did various interpretation sessions to gather important feedback versus one person choosing what was important and what was not. Additionally, we performed A/B testing to establish guidelines outlined in a "Guidelines for Communications" document.

1.2. Problem Statement

Dr. Heera Lee and Dr. Wayne Lutters presented the problem statement to us. Students of UMD are unaware of events happening on campus due to the overwhelming amount of information scattered across multiple platforms. They expressed their apprehensions over the efficiency of communication inside the INFO school. They desired the creation of an improved channel for "getting the word out" about everything occurring on campus. They expressed their need to know how students are informed about events on campus and at the INFO college. Our client was interested in determining which of the existing communication channels are effective and which are not. According to the Dean's Student Advisory Council, although students follow INFO's Instagram profile, they find the material "boringly" delivered. Students desired campaigns like "Student Takeover Days" and "Day in The Life" series. According to Dr. Wayne, "No one reads emails!" However, the most popular means of communication is email.

This multifaceted problem statement highlights the need for a holistic evaluation of communication methods, addressing the dispersion of information, engaging content delivery, and the efficacy of existing channels. The objective is not merely to identify areas of

improvement but to catalyze a transformative shift in communication practices, fostering a more connected and engaged campus community.

1.3. Goal

- **To understand the shortcomings of the current communication methods used**

Despite the widespread usage of social media, the efficacy of content distribution can be compromised if the content is viewed as irrelevant or uninteresting, as indicated by the feedback on the "boring" delivery of content on Instagram. Email and other current forms of communication might not be as successful as one would prefer. The remark that "no one reads emails" suggests a need for alternative methods that are more engaging and capture students' attention.

- **To help undergrad students be aware and keep track of the events happening on campus**

Undergrad students often face difficulty accessing event information due to its dispersal across multiple platforms, such as flyers, emails, and social media. This scattering of information can lead to confusion and cause students to miss valuable opportunities.

The sheer volume of information available to students can be overwhelming. With so many emails, notifications, and social media updates in our digital era, students could find it challenging to sort through the clutter and prioritize the events that interest them.

1.4. Research Question

Our team focused on improving communication and awareness for undergraduate students regarding events and updates on campus. Our goal is to streamline the dissemination of important information and enhance the overall student experience.

To achieve this, we are exploring the following questions:

1. How can we help undergraduate students stay informed about campus events and updates efficiently?

2. What are the current methods through which students receive essential information, and how effective are they?
3. Which communication platforms do students find easy to access and navigate?
4. What are the key events, announcements, or updates must students regularly be aware of?
5. What forms of communication do students prefer, and what factors contribute to this preference?
6. What types of events are students most interested in, and how can we tailor communication to meet those interests?
7. How frequently do students wish to receive updates about upcoming events?
8. Are there existing forms of communication that are currently inaccessible or challenging for students to use?
9. How can students easily keep track of the diverse events happening on campus?
10. What strategies can be implemented to create awareness among students about the various means of communication available to them?

By addressing these questions, we aim to enhance the flow of information, engage students more effectively, and create a more connected and informed campus community.

2. Study Design

The study design utilized within this research was interview and survey-based research methods to help us gain the most insights regarding our research prompt. The stages we followed from end to finish for this research were the following:

- a. Define research plan*
- b. Generate a survey and interview questions for both our participants and stakeholders.*
- c. Send out surveys to a broad undergraduate audience*
- d. Interview participants and stakeholders*
- e. Organize data in the form of an affinity diagram*
- f. Generate models (specifically an identity model and personas)*
- g. Show research results for round one of a wall walk*

- h. Design potential prototypes regarding research solutions with participant feedback and insights from the wall walk
- i. Reshare findings at our second round of wall walk, gaining insights for our latest prototype

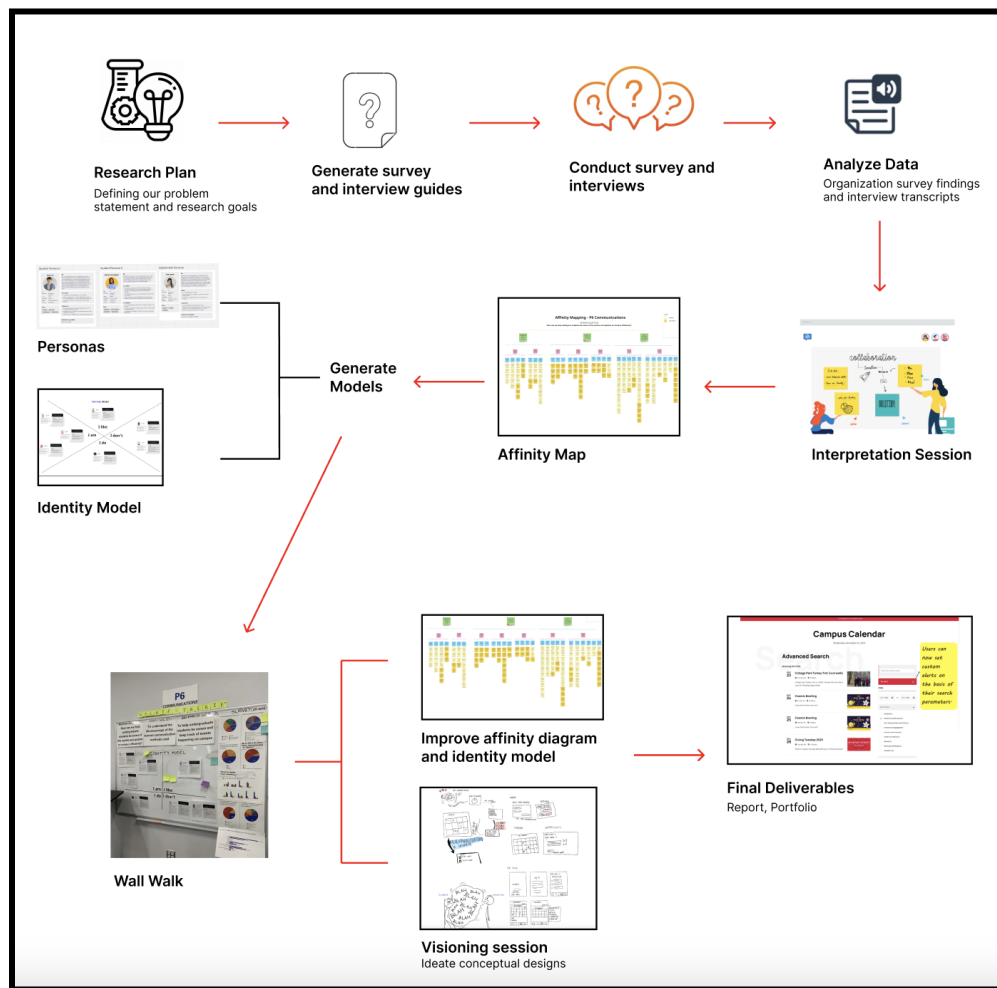


Figure 1. The Methodology Utilized for Research

2.1. Methodology

For our research, we utilized both interviews and surveys. We conducted **surveys** remotely through Google Surveys, and the **interviews** were conducted both remotely and in person, depending on the participant's preference.

We chose these research methods to:

1. Obtain quick and broad insights from participants through our survey and
2. Gain in-depth insights from participants utilizing interviews.

Combining surveys and interviews allowed us to gather their feedback and learn their pain points and preferences. We had a mixture of open-ended and closed-ended questions to give participants more of an opportunity to share their thoughts outside of what was asked, to get a whole picture, and to have the opportunity to share insights they would not have shared with an entire closed-ended interview approach.

These methods enabled us to obtain a personalized viewpoint of each student and stakeholder. To understand what works for the students and what does not, hear their views, and gather in-depth insights and quotes to help us create a product to help reach those pain points. Through our interviews with our stakeholders, we understood the University's limitations regarding communication, what is feasible, and what their wants are.

2.1.1. Survey

The survey structure was done with our research goals and questions in mind. We created a quick survey to ensure we get as accurate information from participants as possible. Keeping it simple enables a higher completion rate. The beginning portion of the survey focused on demographics, figuring out participants' backgrounds. Then, we shifted to understanding their behavior concerning communication, how they receive it, and their preferences. Lastly, we dived into questions that allowed us to gather insights on their pain points surrounding communication and improvement suggestions directly from the participants.

2.1.2. Interviews

The interview guide was a collaboration amongst the team where we sought to find open and close-ended questions. Questions that could give us the most in-depth insights and create a conversation where the participant can provide feedback comfortably. The structure of the guide focused on getting to know our participants. Then, it focused on the communication methods they are currently utilizing and their feelings regarding the available methods. We aimed to understand their pain points and frustrations; thus, we wanted to provide our participants a space to confidently elaborate on what works for them and what does not, letting them know any insights they give us will be beneficial, thus allowing our participant to dive deep and give thoughtful responses.

2.2. Recruitment and Demographics

Total number of participants for the survey: 17

Total number of participants for the interview: 6

We distributed the survey to participants who are undergraduates at the University of Maryland, College Park. We sought out students by emailing course professors, finding students in the common areas on campus, and through mutual connections. We sought out interview participants through the survey by having the following question at the end of our survey: *“If you are interested in participating in a quick 20-minute interview regarding the communication of events on campus, enter your name and email ID below, and we will reach out to you!”*

The interviews were in-person and online through Zoom, our conferencing platform. The interviews averaged around 20 minutes and were divided amongst the team to allow each member to conduct and take notes amidst the research process.

The chart below provides the demographics of our six interviewees. The names have been removed for privacy reasons.

Participant	Sex	Occupation	Grade Year
P1	Male	Student	Sixth Year
P2	Male	Student	Senior
P3	Male	INFO Sci Comms Team	NA
P4	Female	Student	Freshman
P5	Female	Student	Senior
P6	Female	INFO Sci Comms Team	NA

Table 1: Interview Participant Demographics

[Link to Excel Sheet containing Detailed Participant Notes](#)

2.3. Ethical Considerations

All team members completed the CITI Social and Behavior Research training to learn the ethics of interviewing human subjects. This training prepared us all for the appropriate measures to take when interacting with participants and ensuring we research as accurately and ethically as possible.

2.4. Statement of Positionality

As students, we would like to highlight our statement of positionality. Personal influences and experiences that can potentially seep into research should not be ignored. We are all current graduate students in the Human-Computer Interaction Program who utilize and have our own ways of keeping up with the communication existing on campus. We all have communication preferences that have been carried over from our experience in our undergraduate years and our preferences during our graduate program; thus, bias can begin to seep into research.

To avoid inputting bias into our work, we utilized the narratives our participants gave to create our models and affinity diagrams. We did various interpretation sessions to gather important feedback versus one person choosing what was important and what was not. Lastly, we rotated positions, having new interviewers and note takers per interview to not only allow everyone the experience to interview and note taking but also to limit bias.

3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

3.1. Interpretation Session

Upon the conclusion of our interview phase, our immediate focus shifted to the critical task of compiling detailed interview notes. The recorders entrusted with this task meticulously ensured that every key point and insightful observation was captured comprehensively during the interviews. Their diligence was paramount in preserving the essence of the interviews. Furthermore, to augment the accuracy and depth of these notes, we also employed audio recordings of the interviews. This additional data collection layer proved invaluable, enabling us to revisit and enrich our initial notes with finer details and subtleties that might need to be noticed or remembered. This step was crucial in constructing a thorough and nuanced account of each interview, setting a solid foundation for the subsequent stages of our analysis.

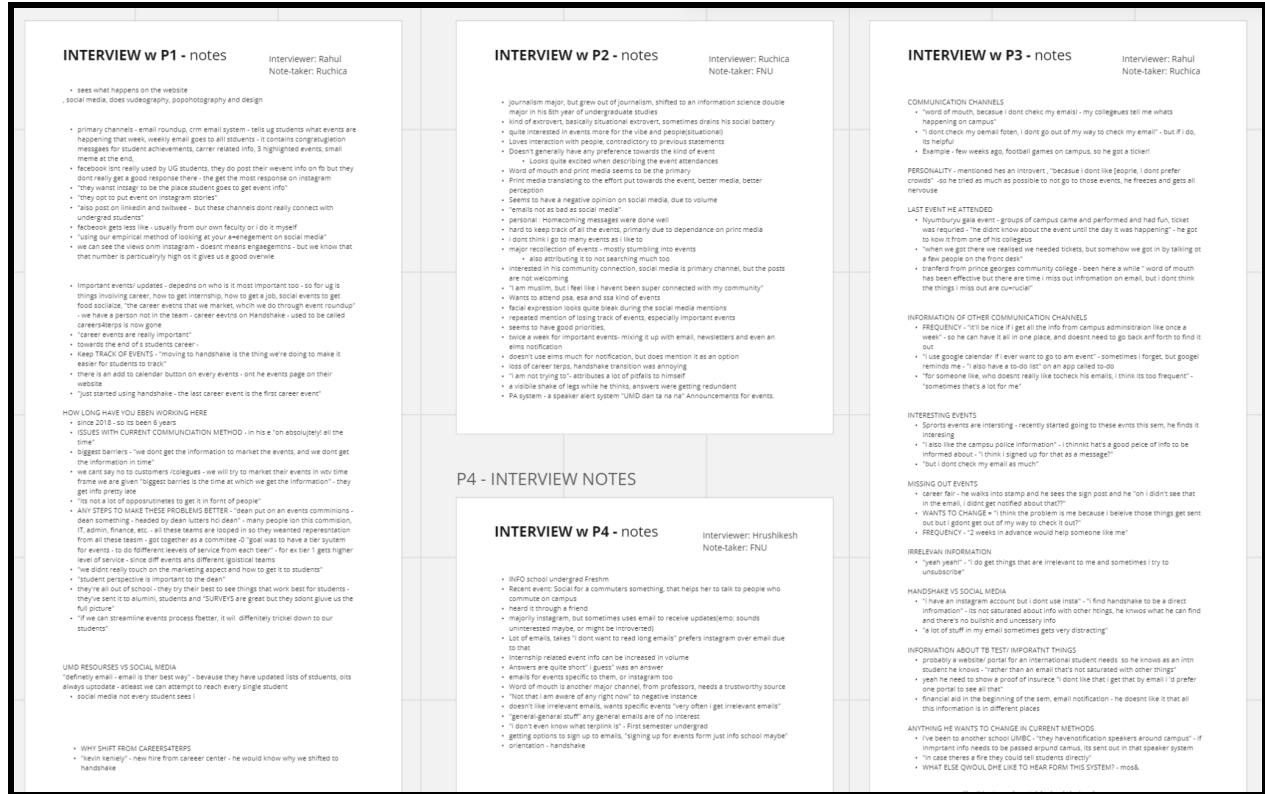


Figure 2. Sample-based Interview Notes

[Link to Miro Board containing Interview Notes](#)

The next pivotal step in our project was the interpretation session, a collaborative and analytical endeavor involving the entire team. This session was not just a mere review of the notes; it was an interactive and dynamic process. As the interviewers and recorders presented the notes, their familiarity with the interview context added a layer of depth to the information being shared. The other team members engaged actively with the presented material as critical responders. They questioned, debated, and offered different perspectives, ensuring our analysis was comprehensive and critically sound.

Interviewer(s)	Ruchica (STUDENT interview)	
Interps:	Ruchica, Prassanna, Rahul	
Recorder(s)	FNU Prassanna	
Date/Time:	10/30/2023	
ID#	NOTE	Captured / Comments
P01-01	Journalism major but grew out of it	
P01-02	He is a Situational Extrovert	sometimes his social battery drains out
P01-03	Intrested in events more for the vibe and people	prefers to have fun in events
P01-04	Has limited Social battery	
P01-05	No specific intrests on events	doesn't keep track of any particular events/ happenings on campus
P01-06	Prefers Word of mouth and print media to get information	
P01-07	Impressed by the work put in printed media graphics	likes physical formats of event/ information communication
P01-08	Visually appealing graphics intrests him to attend events	appreciates the art/ efforts put into designing an event graphic
P01-09	Negative opinion on getting communication from social media because of scattered information(Had a bleak expression while talking about)	scattered information on social media does not appeal to him
P01-10	"emails not as bad as social media"	
P01-11	He prefers text messages (personally liked how homecoming info was shared)	personal text message communication creates a deeper impact
P01-12	Hard to keep track of all the events because of my dependency on print media	only gets event information from physical flyers so is unaware of new or old events

Figure 3. Enhanced and Condensed Interview Notes
[Link to Excel Sheet containing Detailed Interview Notes](#)

3.2. Affinity Diagram

A key objective of this session was to distill the extensive notes into more focused and actionable insights. This process involved identifying the most striking or obvious points and uncovering underlying themes and patterns that could be pivotal in guiding our project forward. The end product of this rigorous exercise was a set of 'affinity notes.'

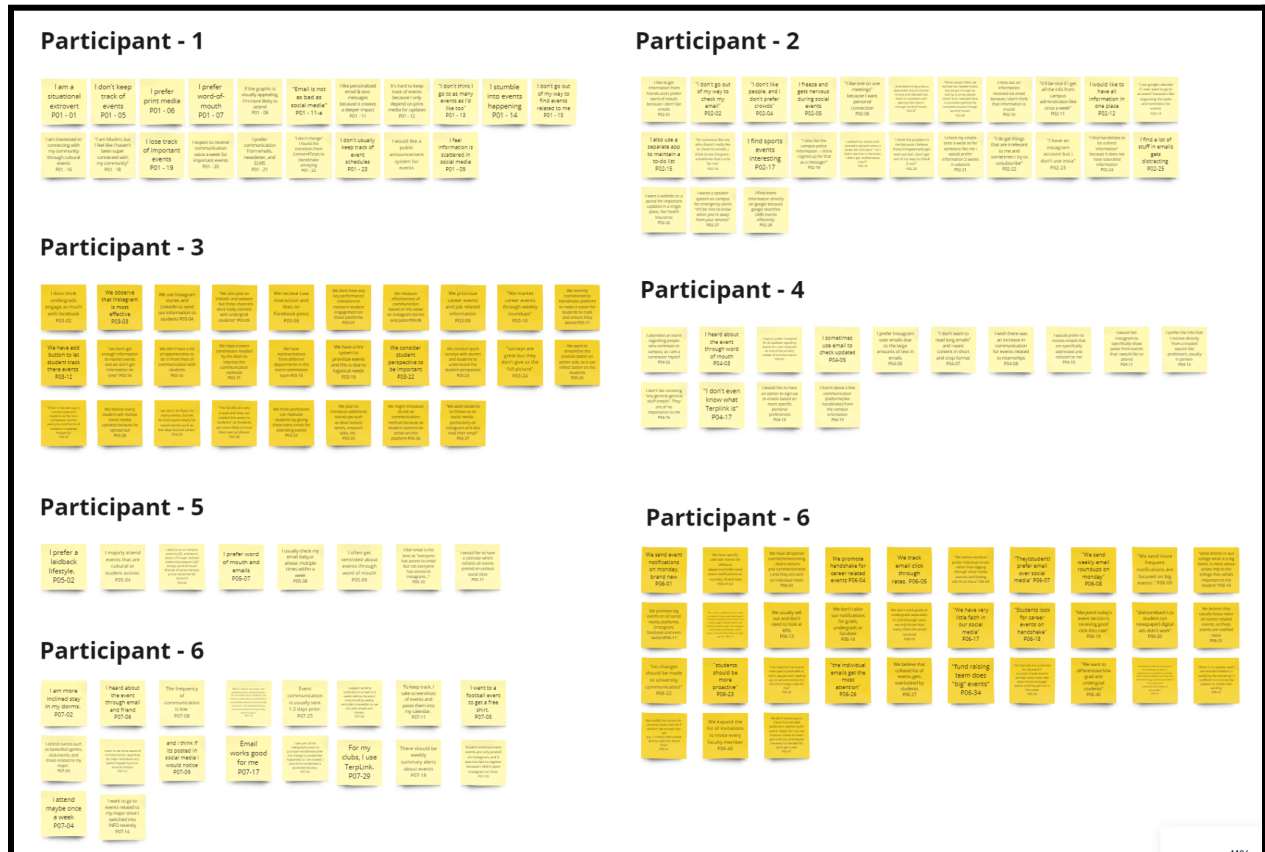


Figure 4. Affinity notes generated from interview notes

[Link to Miro Board containing Affinity Notes](#)

These notes were more than mere summaries; they represented a collective understanding and synthesis of the data, marking a significant transition in our project from data collection to deeper, more focused analysis. Creating these affinity notes was crucial, as they would form the backbone of our next phase, the affinity diagram.

The Affinity Diagram involves organizing notes from interpretation sessions into a hierarchy, emphasizing shared issues and themes among users. This step played a vital role in our interpretation and analysis process, enabling us to structure and comprehend the extensive data gathered during interviews. Under the iterative process of receiving guidance from Dr. Heera Lee, we first synthesized the yellow notes into blue notes and further into pink and green notes. This enabled us to filter the collected data and gain insight into the participants' experiences and perspectives.

Key takeaways from the above affinity diagram:

1. We started the Affinity Mapping process by adding the yellow sticky notes on the Miro Board.

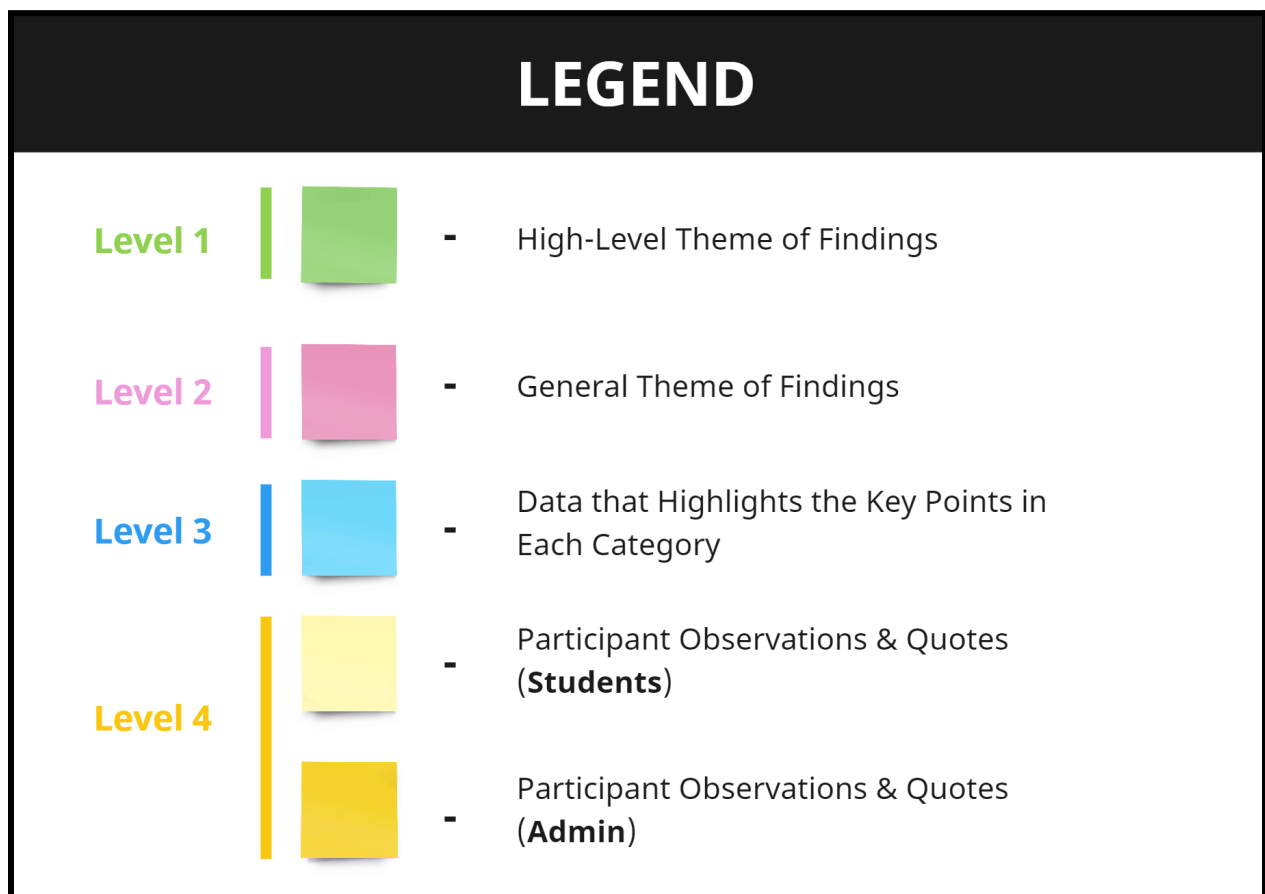


Figure 5: Legend for the Affinity Map

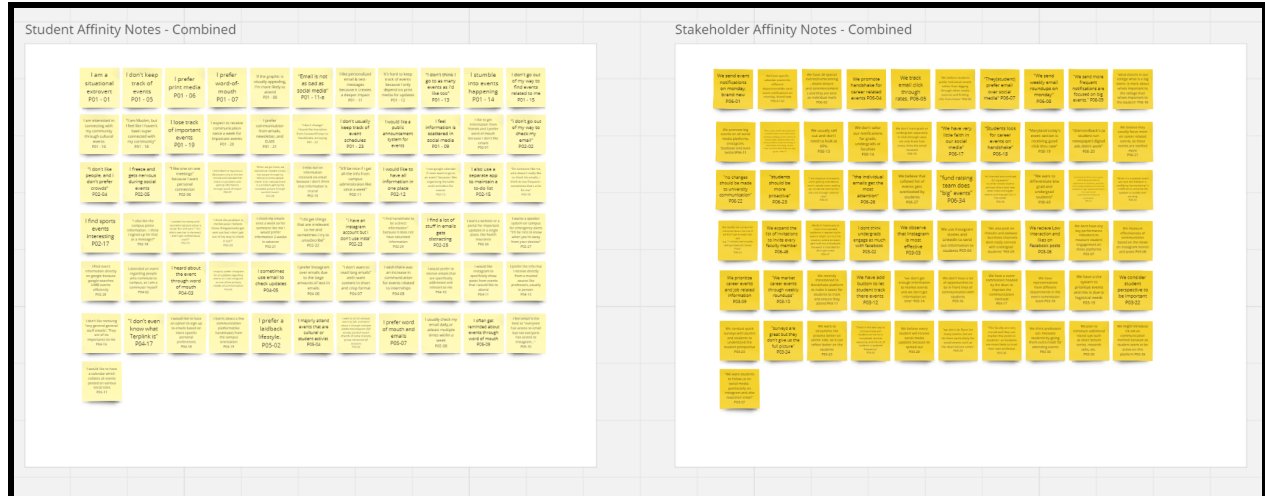


Figure 6. Iteration 1 - Affinity Notes on Miro Board

[Link to the Miro Board containing Affinity Notes](#)

2. All team members collaborated, reading and grouping the sticky notes to establish specific themes that aligned with each other.

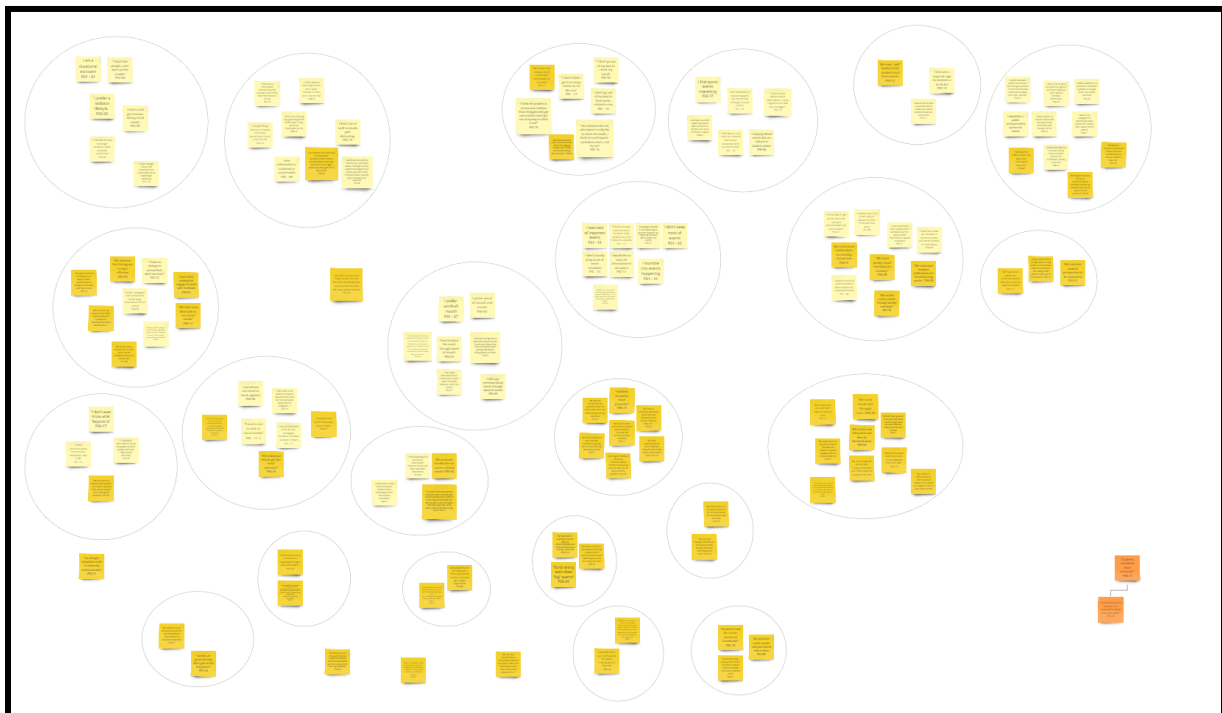


Figure 7. Iteration 2 - Affinity Notes on Miro Board

[Link to the Miro Board containing Affinity Notes](#)

3. This iterative process continued until we generated several categories on the board.

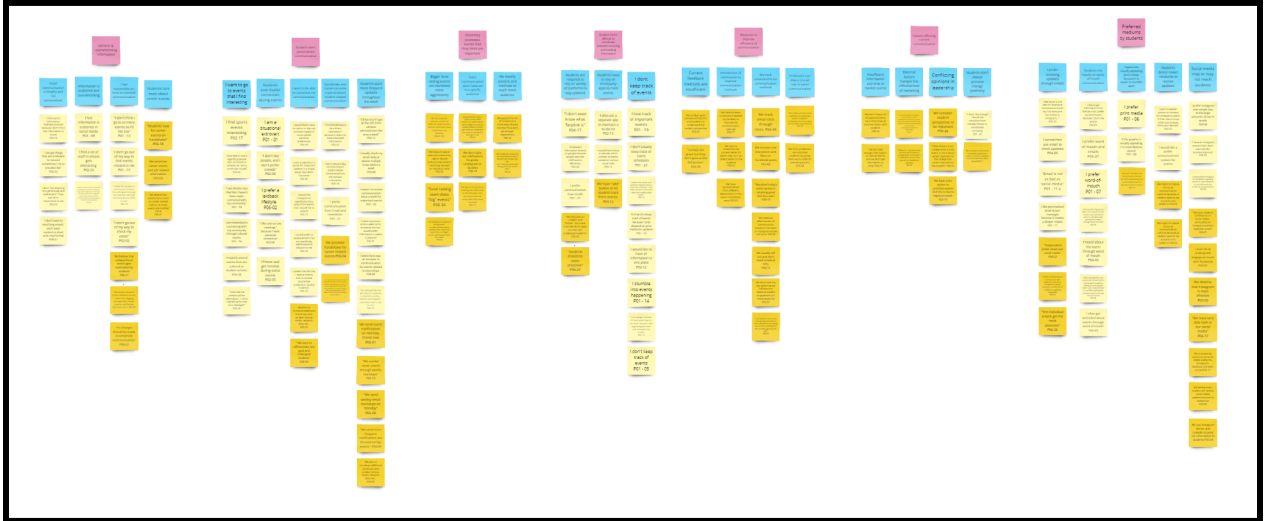


Figure 8. Iteration 3 - Grouping Affinity Notes into Levels

[Link to the Miro Board containing Affinity Notes](#)

4. Our team pinpointed three main themes, indicated by green labels. These labels capture the user story at the highest level and serve as navigation points for the rest of the diagram.
- Students struggle to keep track of the overwhelming amount of university communication they receive regularly.
 - The stakeholders enhance communication with clarity and active listening, promoting key university events and engaging students and alumni.
 - Students would like to receive communication tailored to them ONLY on particular platforms.

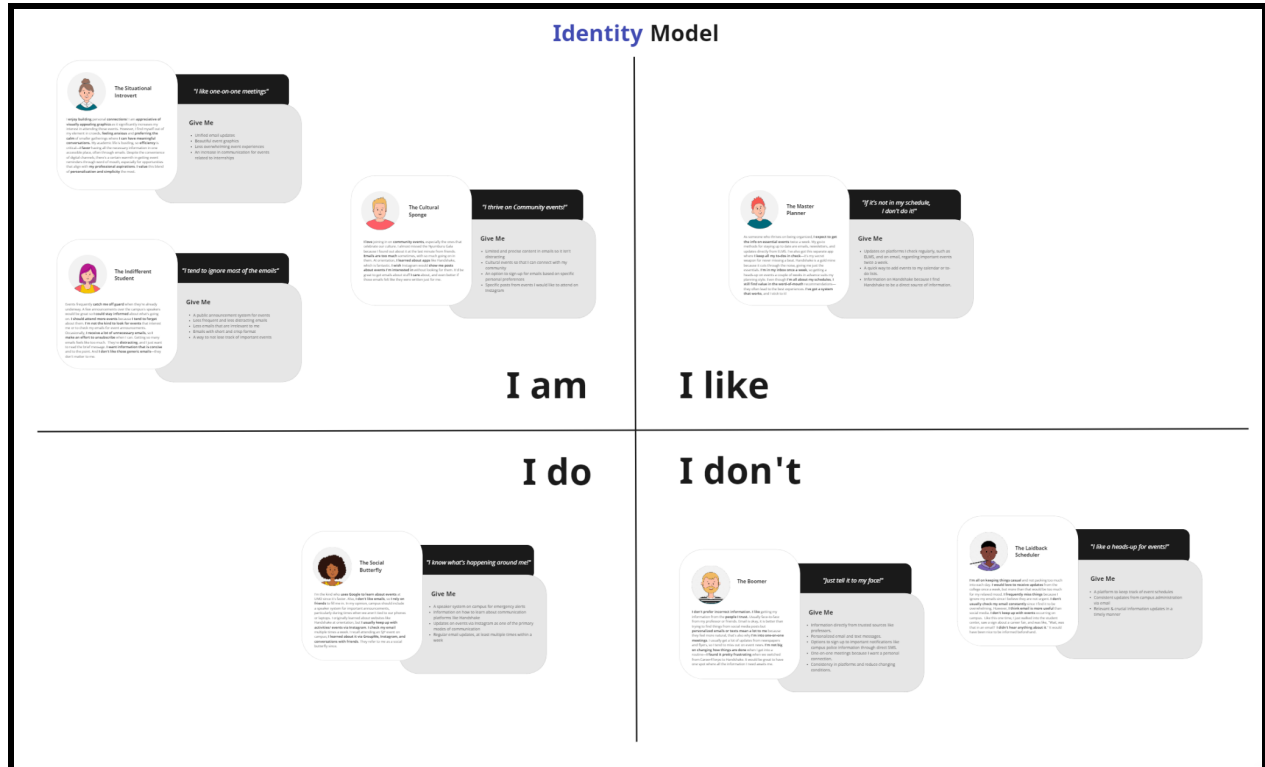


Figure 10. Identity Model

For a detailed view - [Link to the Miro Board containing the Identity Model](#)

The model helped us identify users based on their everyday behaviors and personalities. It gave us an overview of how users' identities shape their experiences and reactions to receiving communications from the university. It also highlighted what modes of communication are preferred by specific users and what influences them to pay attention to a received form of communication. Each identity was associated with a 'Give Me' section mentioning what changes should be made to the current communication methods.

For example, in the 'I am' section, there is an identity titled 'The Indifferent Student,' which is relatable for most students. Such students prefer receiving less irrelevant, less frequent emails that do not beat around the bush by keeping short and crisp. Similarly, each other's identity also mentions their preferences for an efficient communication system.

3.4. User Persona(s)

To showcase our target users' pain points and goals, we have created three user personas based on our findings from the Affinity Diagram. Two of these personas represent the students for whom this study was conducted. In contrast, the third persona represents the stakeholders who work on the administrative side of managing communication in the university. These fictional characters representing the target users and admins highlight the users' traits, frustrations, and needs.

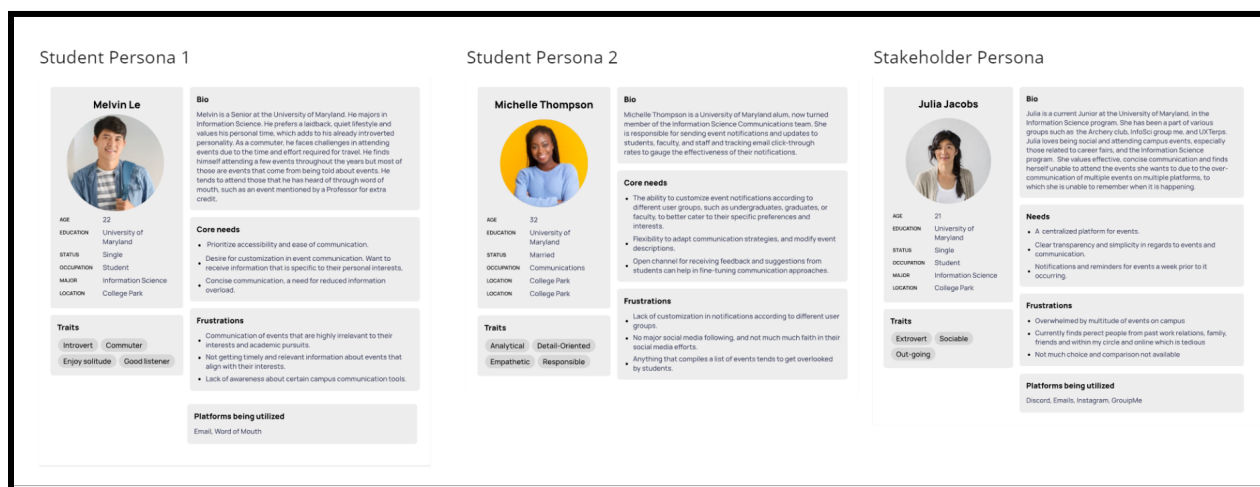


Figure 11. User Personas

For a detailed view - [Link to Figma containing the User Personas](#)

[Link to User Personas PDF](#)

The personas associated with identity models helped us manage an excellent pictorial flow of how different personalities and identities are affected by current communication modes during the wall walk sessions. Showcasing the users' and communication administrators' points of view enabled us to demonstrate both sides. It helped us pair the thought processes of both the target users and the entities responsible for handling the communication channels for the target users.

3.5. Wall Walk

The Wall Walk process bridges data and design, facilitating teams to craft user-centered solutions. This method encourages individuals to privately engage with data, allowing them to articulate their design ideas and perspectives based on user experiences. This individual reflection sets the stage for a collaborative group experience, fostering structured dialogue among team members, the data, and each other. The ultimate goal is to establish a shared direction for creating a product that resonates with user needs and expectations, promoting transparency and effective communication throughout the process (Holtzblatt & Beyer, 2016, pp. 253-256).

Our class was privileged to participate in a collaborative Wall Walk session alongside our client, Dr. Wayne Lutter, and other guests. This session provided a platform to present our product concept, detailed further in this report, and receive valuable feedback from diverse perspectives. The engagement allowed attendees to pose thought-provoking questions, challenging our ideas and prompting critical reflection on our design choices.

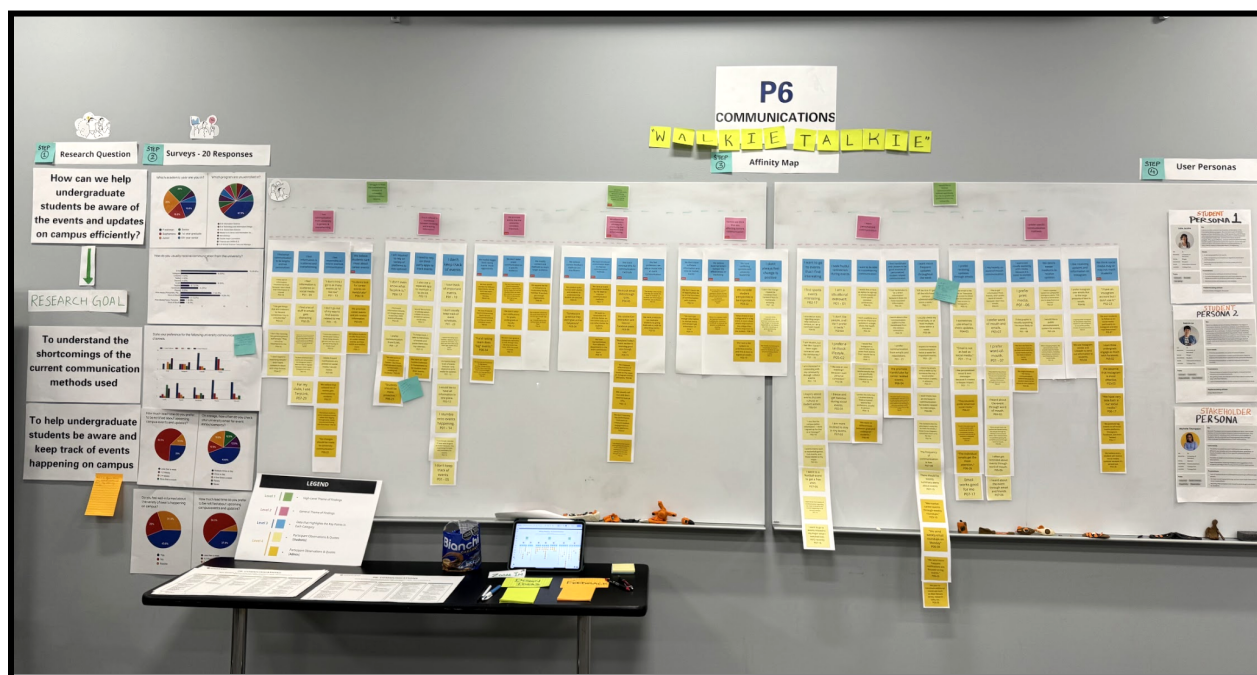


Figure 12. Final Wall Walk Pictures with feedback from guests - Affinity Map

[Link to more Wall Walk Images on Google Drive](#)

Post-session, we meticulously reviewed the raised issues and recognized the importance of incorporating this insightful feedback into our project. The feedback catalyzed refining the framework of our conceptual product designs, ensuring they align more closely with the needs and expectations of our users.

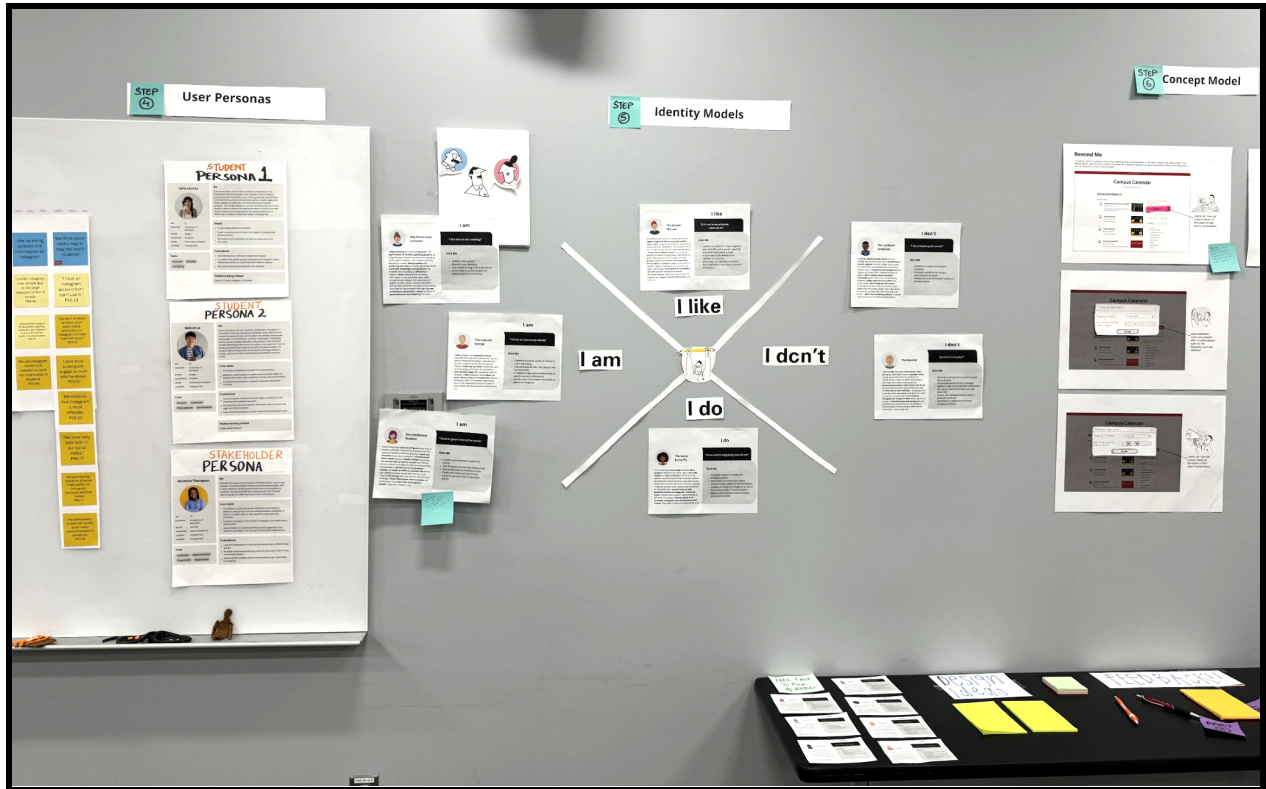


Figure 13. Final Wall Walk Pictures with feedback from guests - From left to right: User Personas, Identity Model, and Concept Model

[Link to more Wall Walk Images on Google Drive](#)

4. Outcomes and Core Findings

4.1. Visioning Session

During the recent visioning session, our team delved into a comprehensive review of our Journey Map and Affinity Diagram. This collaborative exercise served as a platform for each team member to share their design ideas and pinpoint opportunities using Miro's interactive features, such as comments and notes. Diving into the sketching phase, we meticulously categorized these insights into themes: hot ideas, technological considerations, identified issues, and general comments.

A pivotal aspect of our visioning process involved an extensive discussion and organization of the proposed ideas. The objective was to align them with specific sections and features on the university website and app, ensuring a holistic incorporation of the concepts generated by the team. We systematically classified our outcomes and findings during our meticulous data interpretation and analysis.

5. Issues and Hot Ideas

5.1. Issues

Addressing these challenges is crucial for an effective communication strategy. Some of the identified issues include the following:

- A. **Feedback Collection Difficulty:** Difficulty in obtaining consistent feedback due to student reluctance to participate in repetitive surveys.
- B. **Misuse and Disturbance Concerns:** Potential misuse and disturbance concerns with loudspeaker PA systems if not adequately monitored.
- C. **Limitation of Preferences:** Excessive preferences may limit students' opportunities to explore various miscellaneous events.
- D. **User Proficiency Concerns:** Ensuring users and staff are proficient in utilizing new systems or following guidelines.

- E. **Awareness Gap:** Lack of means to ensure students are well aware of the new communication methods and techniques on campus.

5.2. Hot Ideas

Several innovative ideas emerged from our discussions, each addressing the issues effectively. Notable proposals include the following:

- A. **Personalized News Feed:** Curating a tailored newsfeed for users based on their interests and preferences, ensuring they are consistently informed about relevant campus events.
- B. **Customizable Communication Dashboard:** Develop an individualized dashboard for users to tailor their information intake and actively engage with campus activities.
- C. **Information Packets:** Creating comprehensive information packets for different majors, distributed on joining day, containing resources to guide students on where and when to look for communication updates.
- D. **Integrated Career Events:** Encouraging professors to integrate career fairs and guest lectures into the curriculum, fostering valuable networking opportunities for students.
- E. **Weekly Event Email:** Implementing a weekly email system, delivered each Monday, highlighting upcoming events for the week and keeping students well-informed about campus activities.
- F. **Event Networking:** Enabling students to see who else is attending events, fostering connections and networking opportunities akin to platforms like LinkedIn.
- G. **Enhanced PA System:** Enhancing the campus PA system to broadcast additional campus-wide events, ensuring all students know about significant happenings.
- H. **Communication Guidelines:** Establish guidelines for the Information Communication team, defining the tone and specifying how, where, and when to disseminate information, along with the frequency of reminders.

5.3. Other (Comments)

In addition to the primary categories, our team acknowledged the importance of performing A/B testing on various event, workshop, and information graphics versions. This approach aims to understand students' perspectives and preferences regarding communication media, tone, and graphics. The insights gathered will be instrumental in establishing communication guidelines for stakeholders.

In summary, our visioning session was a collaborative exploration that identified challenges and proposed innovative solutions. The outlined hot ideas present a strategic roadmap toward enhancing university communication, fostering engagement, and addressing the diverse needs of our student community.

6. Product Concepts

Informed by insightful interviews, the affinity diagram, the identity model, and carefully crafted personas, our team embarked on a collaborative brainstorming session. The objective was to generate feature ideas that would elevate the functionality of <https://calendar.umd.edu/>, aligning them closely with the diverse needs of students. Concurrently, we developed comprehensive guidelines for University communications to foster improvement and inspire enhanced communication methods.

In our ongoing efforts to enhance the user experience on <https://calendar.umd.edu/>, we are introducing two new features to foster a sense of community belonging and streamline decision-making.

6.1. “Remind Me” Feature

To provide users with a more personalized event search and communication experience, we have introduced the "Remind Me" feature. This allows users to set custom email alerts based on

specific event parameters. Users now have the flexibility to define alert criteria and set the frequency of communication, ensuring a tailored experience that suits their needs.

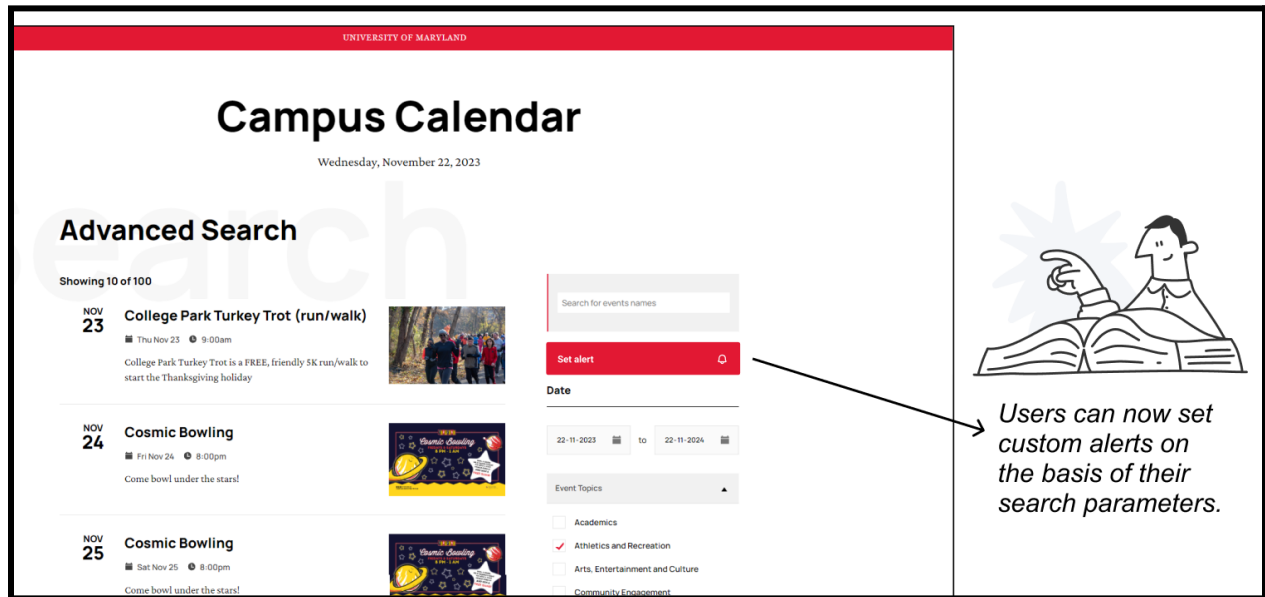


Figure 14. “Set Alert” Button Concept Design Image

For a detailed view - [Link to Figma containing Concept Design](#)

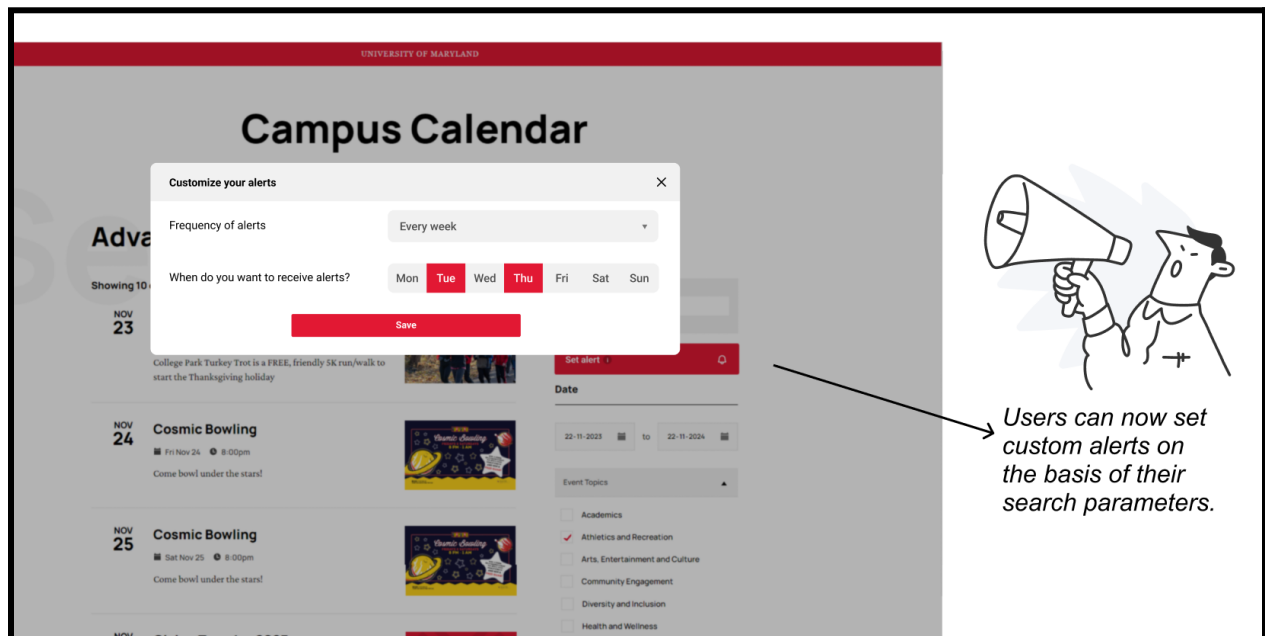


Figure 15. “Remind Me” Section Concept Design Image

For a detailed view - [Link to Figma containing Concept Design](#)

6.2. “Are You Attending” Section

To cultivate a sense of community and belonging and simplify the decision-making process, we have added a new "Are You Attending" section. This section allows users to mark their attendance for an event, irrespective of their registration status. Furthermore, users can see a list of other attendees for the event, fostering a communal atmosphere and facilitating social connections.

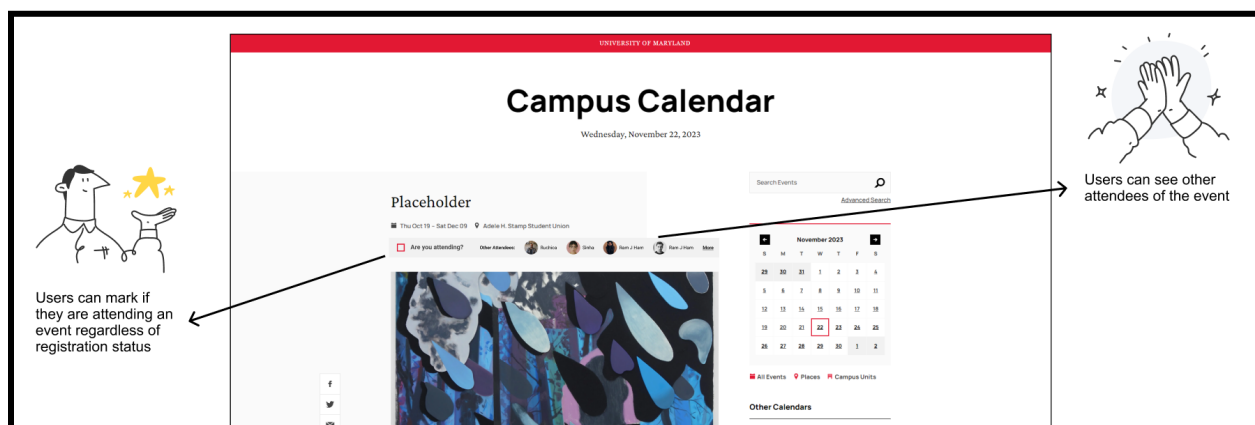


Figure 16. “Are You Attending” Section Concept Design Image

For a detailed view - [Link to Figma containing concepts](#)

6.3. Guidelines

In our commitment to enhancing communication strategies, we have developed a Stakeholder Guidelines Document. This is a comprehensive roadmap for fostering effective communication with students. This guide is designed to provide clear and actionable insights, offering stakeholders a systematic approach to enhance the overall communication experience. It features real-time event and information graphics examples, showcasing the evolutionary progression from previous versions to current iterations. These examples highlight improvements in graphics, refined wordings, enhanced hierarchy, and a finely tuned tone, offering a visual and conceptual journey that underscores our dedication to continuous enhancement and refinement.


Further, this document contains tangible examples that transcend theoretical guidance, providing stakeholders with a dynamic tool to align with best practices and foster a more effective and resonant communication approach. Through these real-world illustrations, the document encapsulates a commitment to the ongoing evolution of communication strategies, ensuring that the communication experience for students is not only streamlined but consistently elevated.

Link to the Stakeholders Guideline Document: [Stakeholder Guideline Document](#)

6.3.1. A/B Testing

To ensure the efficacy of these guidelines, we conducted **A/B testing** involving approximately 15 current UMD students. Typical email and visual communication examples were chosen for this test. The participants were presented with two options. One corresponds to a design style currently employed by the university. At the same time, the other is a redesigned version with design principles that ensure more engagement and attention from the user. The participants were tasked to choose which one they liked over the other and were also requested to provide a brief reason behind their choice. These results were included along with the guidelines to give the reader a better understanding of what the students prefer. The feedback received from the students was then incorporated into the guidelines mentioned before. The Stakeholder's Guide for University Communication.pdf provides detailed insights and practical advice on optimizing communication materials.

Link to the A/B Testing Form here: [Communication A/B Testing](#)



Guide for University Communication

SUBJECT LINE STRATEGIES

Objective: The subject line is the first point of contact and plays a crucial role in the open rate of an email. It should grab attention, spark curiosity, and encourage the recipient to open the email.

Techniques:

- Use of Power Words:** Words like "Exclusive," "Limited," and "Today Only," create a sense of urgency or offer.
- Personalization:** Including the recipient's name or a reference to their field of study can increase open rates.
- Clarity and Brevity:** Keep it short (under 50 characters) and straightforward, avoiding ambiguity.
- Question Format:** Pose a compelling question that the event answers.
- Avoiding Spam Triggers:** Stay away from overused sales words like "free," and "guarantee," which might trigger spam filters.

Examples:

Generic:	"Campus Event This Week"
Enhanced:	🌟 [Name], Don't Miss Our Exclusive Leadership Workshop!"
Urgency:	"Last Chance to Join Our Tech Pioneers Talk – Reserve Now!"
Personal Touch:	"For Future Marketers: A Session You Can't Miss, [Name]"

VISUAL APPEAL

Objective: Visually compelling emails can significantly enhance engagement. The design should reflect the university's brand and resonate with the student audience.

Key Elements:

- Consistent Branding:** Use university colors, logos, and fonts to maintain brand identity.
- High-Quality Images:** Related to the event, these should be eye-catching and relevant.

- Balanced Layout:** A clean, uncluttered design with a balance between text and visuals.
- Responsive Design:** Ensure the visuals are mobile-friendly and display well across devices.

Tips for Different Events:

- Academic Seminar:** Use professional, subtle imagery related to the topic.
- Sports Event:** Dynamic, high-energy photos of teams or previous events.
- Cultural Event:** Colorful and vibrant images that reflect the diversity and excitement of the event.

CONTENT STRUCTURE

Objective: To inform and persuade. The content should provide all necessary details about the event and motivate the reader to attend.

Structure Components:

- Engaging Opening:** Start with an intriguing statement or a relevant fact.
- Event Details:** Clearly state the what, when, where, and why of the event.
- Unique Selling Points (USPs):** What makes this event stand out? Guest speakers, networking opportunities, freebies, etc.
- Testimonials or Quotes:** From speakers or past attendees, if available.
- Closing Call to Action:** Make it easy for recipients to take the next step (e.g., register, learn more).

Example for a Guest Lecture:

Opening:	"Discover the Future of Renewable Energy!"
Details:	"Join us on [Date] with world-renowned expert Dr. Green at the Main Auditorium."
USP:	"An exclusive Q&A session will follow the lecture."
Testimonial:	"Dr. Green's insights into sustainable technologies are truly inspiring! – Prof. Smith"
CTA:	"Secure Your Seat – Limited Spots Available!"

Figure 17. Guidelines Highlighting Basic Communication Structure


For a detailed view - [Link to Guidelines pdf](#)

Results of A/B Testing:

Example 1

Option 1

Dean's Lecture Series & Reception:
A Conversation With Journalist David Platte
David Platte: Yale Rio, Real Works
Using Digital Information to Change the Physical World




📅 10/15/2023 10:00 AM | 📍 Main Auditorium

[Click here to register](#) | [Add to Calendar](#)

Option 2 ✓

Dean's Lecture Series & Reception:
A Conversation with Journalist David Platte
Using Digital Information to Change the Physical World



📅 10/15/2023 10:00 AM | 📍 Main Auditorium

[Click here to register](#) | [Add to Calendar](#)

Student Responses for Example 1

"The font is pretty big compared to option 1, especially the time date, and location. Different text colors make it easier to identify too."

"The picture speaks better to me"

"I am choosing option 2 because all the information including the time and venue is visible. This helps me to grasp the information quickly."

"Option 1 is more attractive, more visible"

"The highlighted title helps me make a quick decision on whether I want to read the content or not."


"Information is concise, I can see the dates clearly"

"1st picture looks nice but it doesn't give me any information because I don't know this dude"

Example 4

Option 1

Trump's Peace: The Absolute Accord and the Reshaping of the Middle East




📅 10/15/2023 10:00 AM | 📍 Main Auditorium

[Click here to register](#) | [Add to Calendar](#)

Option 2 ✓

Discover Trump's Peace Legacy: The Absolute Accord Covered in Exclusive Talk by Senior Journalist David Platte



📅 10/15/2023 10:00 AM | 📍 Main Auditorium

[Click here to register](#) | [Add to Calendar](#)

Student Responses for Example 4

"The face that big without anything is useless in option 1, at least in option 2 it shows an image from which people can get more information on the situation"

"The 2nd poster is better, using cartoon"

"Option 2 has a poster that gives a gist of the event and the whole presentation is professional comparatively."

"More data is always good, it captures my interest with the cartoon in option 2"

"The bold title and the use of images effectively convey a clear understanding of the content."

"More info, looks more inviting, I know what the speaker looks like. The 1st option seems like it's about a person's life story, and the 2nd one feels like it is about Trump and the journalist"

Figure 18. Guidelines: Student-Preferred Methods via A/B Testing

For a detailed view - [Link to Guidelines pdf](#)

7. Conclusion

Our project has been an eye-opening journey, exploring the complexities of communication methods on campus. Through a systematic and ethical approach, our diverse team of six Human-Computer Interaction graduate students deep-dived into campus communication to bridge the gap between students and the plethora of information dispersed across various communication platforms. Our study design, encompassing surveys, interviews, affinity mapping, and identity modeling, provided a holistic understanding of the challenges and preferences associated with communication.

The results of our findings revealed several key insights. Firstly, the current communication methods, including emails and social media, are not as effective as desired, with students expressing a need for more engaging and personalized content. The overwhelming volume of information and the scattered nature of event details contribute to students missing out on valuable opportunities. Our research questions delved into the intricacies of students' communication preferences, the effectiveness of existing channels, and strategies to enhance awareness.

Additionally, the Wall Walk session was vital in refining our understanding and translating insights into tangible solutions. Through the visioning session, we identified issues and innovative ideas to address students' communication challenges. The proposed features for <https://calendar.umd.edu/>, such as the "Remind Me" feature and the "Are You Attending" section, aim to bring a sense of community and streamline the decision-making process for all UMD students. Further, the Stakeholder Guidelines Document provides a comprehensive roadmap to the INFO school administration team for effective communication, integrating A/B testing results to ensure alignment with students' preferences.

In conclusion, our project sheds light on the intricacies of campus communication and presents actionable recommendations for improvement. By prioritizing personalization, engagement, and community building, we envision creating a campus environment where students feel more connected and informed. As we conclude this user research journey, we recognize the iterative

nature of the design process and the importance of continuous refinement to meet the evolving needs of the student community.

8. References

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9. Appendix

9.1. Appendix A: INFO Students Interview Guide

The following is the list of the interview questions that our team asked each of the **INFO student participants**:

1. What is your major and year of study?
2. Do you generally prefer an active and social lifestyle, or are you more inclined towards staying at home?
 - 2.1. Do you attend events on campus?
 - 2.2. If so, how often do you attend events on campus?
 - 2.2.1. What events do you typically go for?
3. Tell us about the most recent on-campus event that you attended and what the experience was like.
 - 3.1. How did you hear about the event?
 - 3.2. Do you think it was effectively communicated to you?
 - 3.2.1. If yes, why did it work well? If not, why not?
4. (If survey interviewee, use this Q) You mentioned in the survey you prefer using (channel 1, and channel 2) to receive updates from the university - Is there any particular reason you prefer using it?
5. (If new interviewee, use this Q) How often do you receive communication updates from the university?
 - 5.1. In your opinion is this too much, too little, or just right?
 - 5.2. How do you keep track of events you want to attend?
6. How often do you receive communication updates from the university?
 - 6.1. In your opinion is this too much, too little, or just right?
 - 6.2. How do you keep track of events you want to attend?
7. What are the most interesting events or updates you wish to be aware of?
 - 7.1. Do you think you're aware of events specific to your interests, identity, or culture?
 - 7.1.1. If so, how? If not, would you like to receive this kind of information?

8. Have there been an instance when a relevant event or update was not notified to you or you received information too late from the university?
 - 8.1. How did it affect you?
9. Have you ever received notifications from the university that you considered irrelevant or unnecessary?
 - 9.1. If so, can you provide an example?
10. When comparing university communication methods, such as Handshake and TerpLink, to social media platforms like Instagram and LinkedIn, which is better for reaching students?
11. Is there anything you would like to change about the way the university communicates with the students?

9.2 Appendix B: Communication Admin Interview Guide

The following is the list of the interview questions that our team asked each of the **communication administrators**:

1. What are the primary channels of communication you use to promote awareness about the events/ happenings on campus?
 - 1.1. How do you measure the effectiveness of these communication methods?
 - 1.1.1. What are the key performance indicators you track?
2. Of the channels you mentioned, which of these receives the maximum amount of student engagement?
 - 2.1. Why do you think students engage as much with this communication channel?
3. What are the most important events, announcements, or updates that students need to be aware of regularly?
 - 3.1. How often are these updates sent out to students?
 - 3.2. Are there any provisions created to help students keep track of these updates/information?
4. Does the university tailor its communication to different audiences, such as undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and alumni?
 - 4.1. If so, how?

5. Could you tell us about an instance where communication efforts fell short of expectations or didn't reach the intended audience?
 - 5.1. What were the challenges or shortcomings?
 - 5.2. How did the university overcome this issue for effective future communication?
6. When comparing university communication methods, such as Handshake and TerpLink, to social media platforms like Instagram and LinkedIn, which is better for reaching students?
 - 6.1. Was there any platform used previously by the university to send out communication? (Careers4Terps)
 - 6.1.1. If so, why was it discontinued?
7. Are there any initiatives in place to create awareness of any new means of communication on campus?
8. Is there anything you would like to change about the way the university communicates with the students?
 - 8.1. Is there anything you would like the students to do to help receive communication better?