Google Mentor

User Experience Design Challenge

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Introduction to the challenge

"Your school wants to strengthen the community by encouraging experienced students to connect with the new students and help them adjust to campus life. Design an experience that allows mentors and mentees to discover each other. Consider the needs of both mentors and mentees, including how someone may become a mentor and how to connect mentors to mentees."

-Prompt #2 Google design exercise

Design process and my work

With 7 days to complete the given challenge, I decided to spend 5 days in the design process, completing 2 of them on same day and remaining each on other. Following is the design process that I followed:

Step 1: Understand and research

Research questions
Student needs and life
Other communities
Interviews
Survey

Understanding the problem

"Your school wants to strengthen the community by encouraging experienced students to connect with the **new students** and help them adjust to **campus life.** Design an experience that allows mentors and mentees to discover each other. Consider the needs of both **mentors** and mentees, including how someone may become a mentor and how to connect mentors to mentees."

Research for
New students- strength, major, clubs
Campus life- events happening in overall semester, housing, on campus jobs
Mentors- researching about experience students, community, registration

Research questions provided me a framework for survey and interviews

Browse
Is there any platform to search for mentors?
How can students get connected to experienced people?
Is there any organization that provide information about seniors?

Search
How students will search for a mentor?
Are there any categories for them?
How would they trust them?
What are the types of problems?
What the are the basic needs of students?

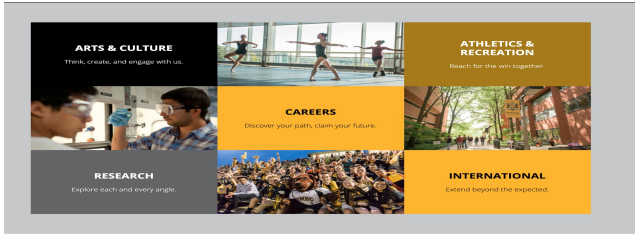
Career
Do students get any job guidance from mentors?
If yes, how will they implement in real life?

Experience
Is there any proof of experience?
What is the source of trust that mentor will guide in a right direction?
Is there any survey of such mentors?

Organization
How does organization will take care of such needs?
How will the mentor connect the students to campus?

Mentors
What are the needs of mentors?
What value will mentorship add to a mentor's career graph and university life?
What are the pressing problems that mentors face with freshmen students?

Looking at school website for research

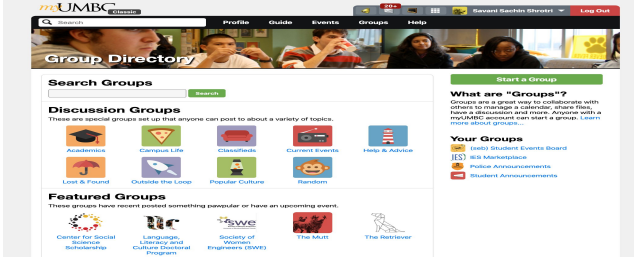


Sections and other curricular activities

The schools landing page demonstrates the departments, which the vision for new incoming students. Students only have limited source to find people of particular sections.

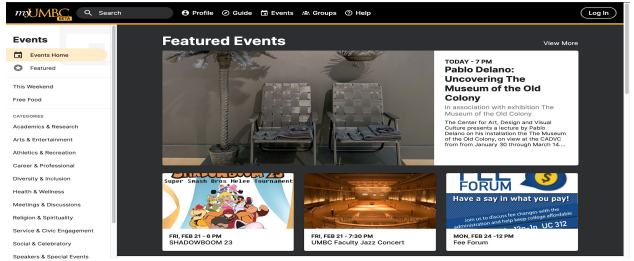
Graduate and undergraduate departments

This the core of every university where students can find and connect themselves with the professors and other faculty members.



Activity board and group participation

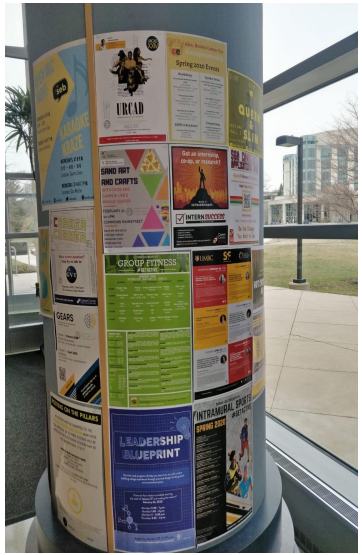
The event board i dedicated towards students and has a aim to bring students from different parts of countries together. This involves the engagement between them. But there is not particular scope to connect them previously.

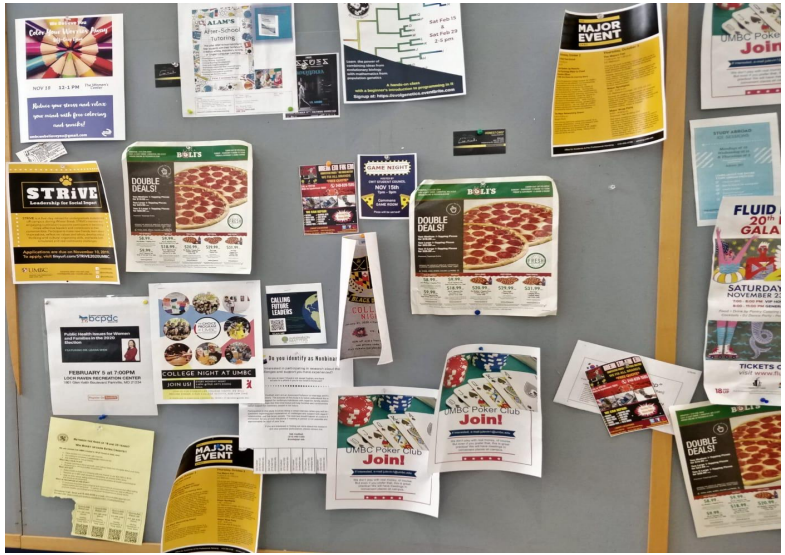


Events and clubs

There are many clubs and no upcoming events and students have to rely on the offices notices to find details.

Looking at schools campus for research





Commons poster board

Commons is a place where all the students come for study and eat snacks. This is the board on dorm area where students find all sorts of events and upcoming sessions. I observed them and came to the conclusion that there are limited resources and points of contact, often in case of specific interests.

Engineering department

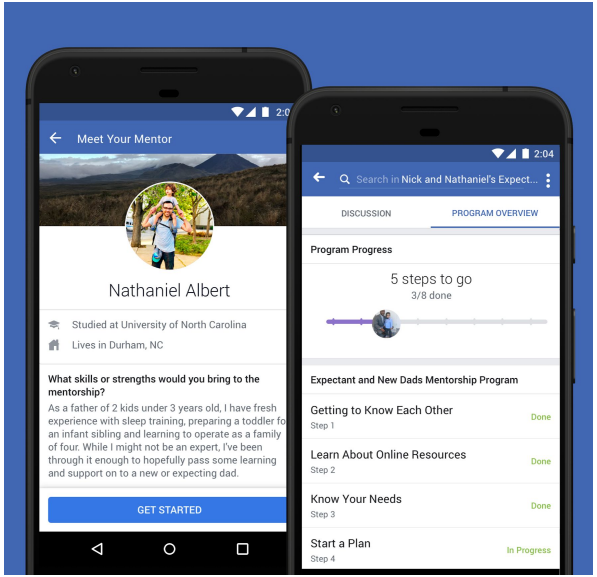
I observed students coming near the board pillar. No a single person came by and watched it.

What we can learn from others in different opportunity areas?

I made research about few communities who work for mentorship and I came across the Facebook's advance initiative.

Facebook Mentorship

Facebook has a mentorship program available to people within select groups with a focus on parenting, professional, or personal development. This means admins can offer this feature to members of their groups. Those who are members of groups using this feature can offer or find support. Members can determine how much time they want to spend together and what goals you want to work towards.



Students engagement and researching towards the success (Survey)

I made a small survey on how students receive information and how do they take decisions in career. I also saw the amount of experienced people helped the new incoming students in Spring 2020. Following was the survey rate:

Did you receive any guidance to choose UMBC?

32%

received

With how many seniors are you in contact with?

5.5/10

average

How satisfied you are with the amount of help you receive in campus?

3.8/10

average

I also made a small survey by asking my friends and students in college about how do they find for seniors of their interests. I was in conclusion that everybody had to struggle to make their networking strong. I also got to know that not everybody is outspoken and finds a mentor.

Communicating the users through interviews

I believe that communication is the key to determine and how things work. I decided to interview few people and ask about the overall experience in mentorship. I was able to emphasize and understand the journey and pain points of the experience.

10 Students
2 Career center managers
1 Student orientation employee
2 Alumni
1 Graduate admission program head

Step 2: Define

Insights
Why google ecosystem?
Personas
Working on problem statement

Conclusions I dropped into and need for mentorship

Rule book is not working

"Almost every department has a set of rules and a key to success. There are less students who follow them by ending to the wrong direction. There should be platform to connect a mentor and mentee."

Student needs a mentor

"Every student already has a faculty advisor. But not every professor is available all the time. They need a mentor to guide and help them throughout the career."

An application can be the best source to improve the community

"Nowadays everybody needs a little help while navigating freshman year in college. It is important to keep the networking strong. An application will make things easy. Google has best sort of ideas and has the power to connect the students worldwide."

Why Google Ecosystem?

Google has all sort of applications right from google keyboard, photos to that of calendar and maps. This innovative applications has made man life easy. You do not have to go and search for separate individual things. Each vertical is planned deliberately and brought into single platform. These user friendly applications have lot of scope in other sectors too.

How Google Mentor will get connected to other Google applications?

Google Forms

School community manages all the forms through google forms and extracts the data through it. Also, a mentee will get to know about students background and interests.

Google Hangouts

Google Hangouts will directly connect them to google mail and it will be platform for students to communicate

Google Mail

Google Mail is used in every university with different domain name. This is used to email the mentee or mentor directly.

Google Calendar

Students can manage the meetings and appointment through Calendar.

Identifying users needs through persona

Name	**Alice Rochester**	**Sara Johnson**	**Harry Lee**
Biography	Professor at UMBC love coding and singing. Enjoys football.	Student. Painter. Wanderlust.	Undergraduate student pursuing Bachelors in Mathematics. Loves playing chess.
Motivations	Loves teaching to the students. Creates practice test for them. Listens to various music. She finds time for singing and practices every week. Reads different coding books.	Sarah is nature lover. Looking at different scenic views, she gets motivated for painting. She looks for guidance. She loves writing notes.	Harry gets motivation from television and internet. He hunts for different types of mathematical problems. He also watches chess matches and participates in University clubs
Frustrations	Not enough time to speak with students due to limited hours. Wants to spread awareness for technology.	Sara always have to hunt for more artistry material. No proper guidance for Art stuff. She does not know about which watercolors to use.	Harry needs more books to read and research about different techniques. Always have to ask professor and go according to the office hours. Cannot manage sports and academics

Formulating the problem statement

Freshman year college students at UMBC often find that information about college activities and important extracurriculars is often not available via a single touchpoint. They often try to find mentors who will help them guide and navigate through the initial tough days of college life. Finding mentors is hit and miss approach for most of the students, as mentors who are aligned to the student's course and interests are hard to access.

An app that provides a transparent and a single point of contact platform to address all needs of mentors and new students (mentees) should help both stakeholders.

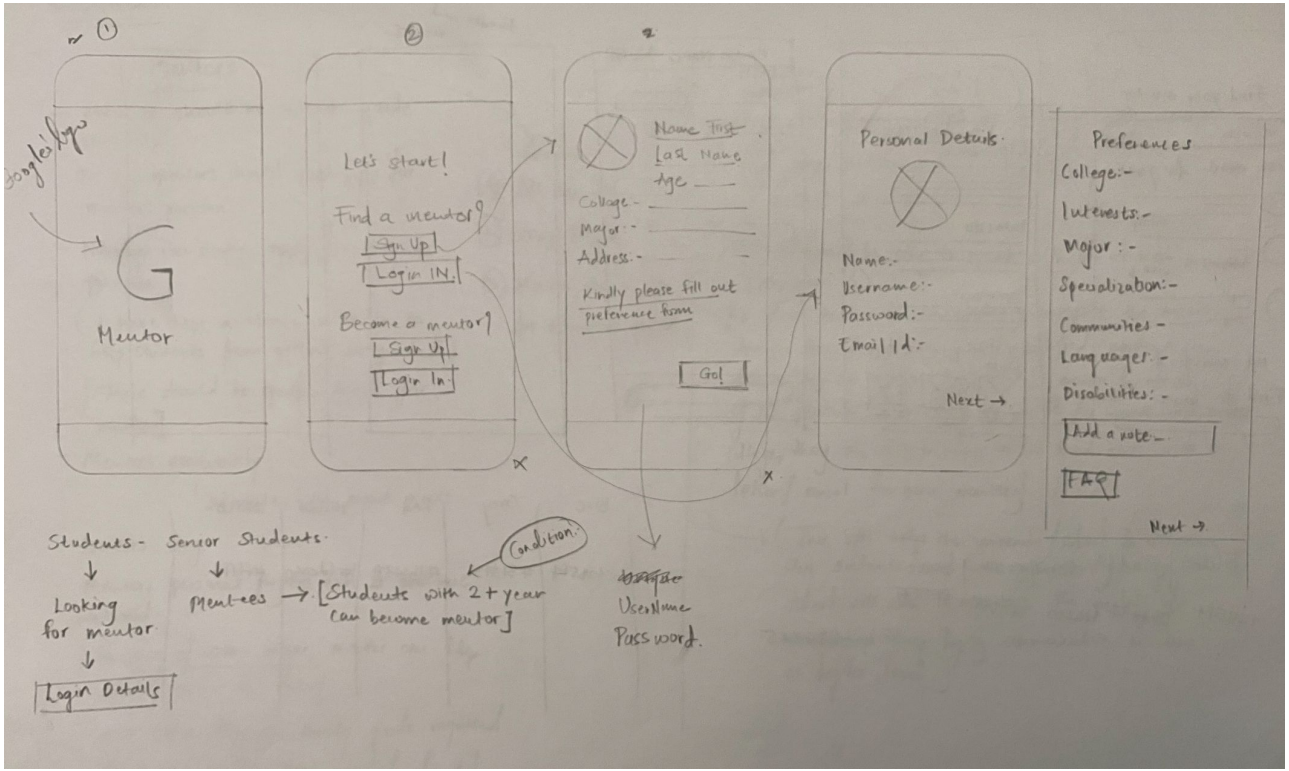
Step 3: Sketches

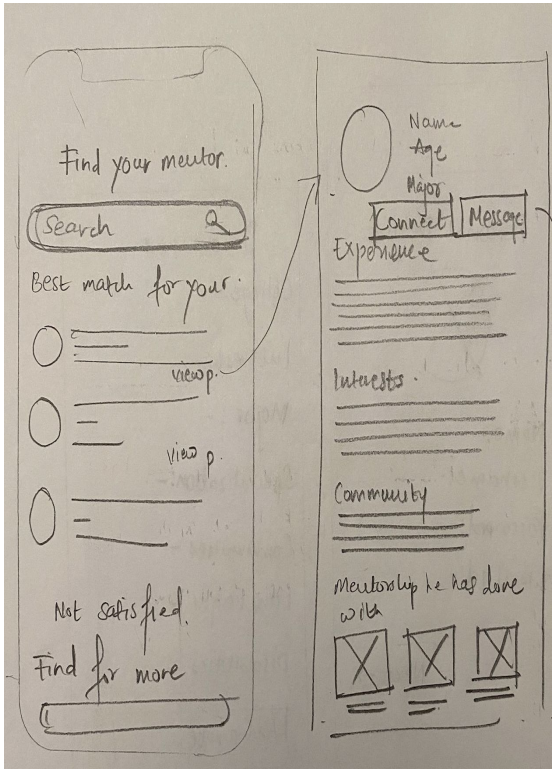
Rough sketches
Wireframe flow
Initial ideation of wireframes

Rough sketches and classmate's reaction

While thinking of application design by considering overall research and need of the problem statement, I illustrated following rough sketches and took feedback from my classmates about the designs. I used my mobile frame moulds which helped me design the outline of the mobile app. My university friends who have a strong coding and mobile development experience gave me feedback on how a person without any UI/UX design background would react to it.

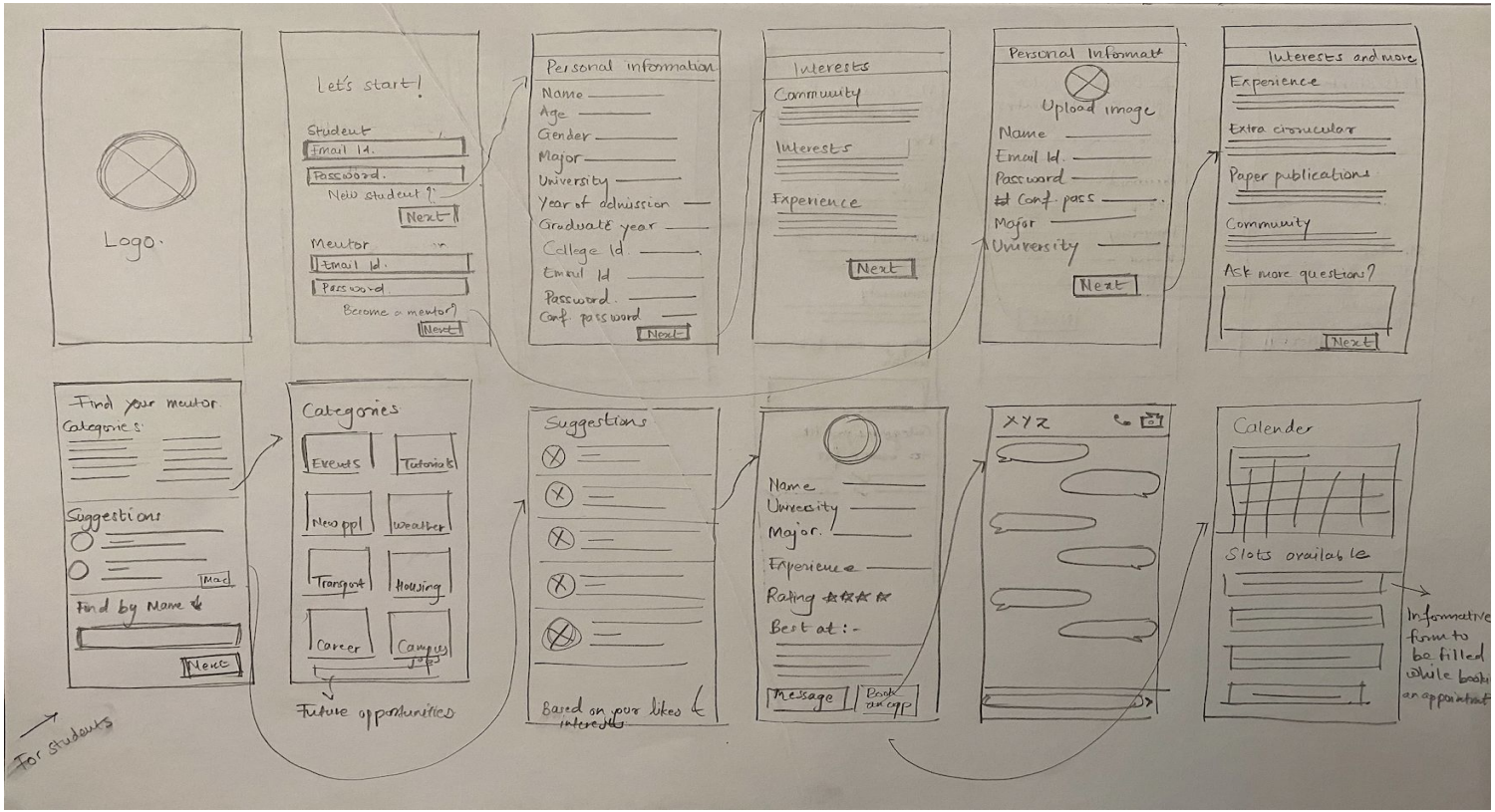
I came up with following rough sketches





Thinking that how the app would work, I made few rough sketches. Ideally there were too many cases and trial and error.

My rough sketch wireframe flow after thinking how app might work

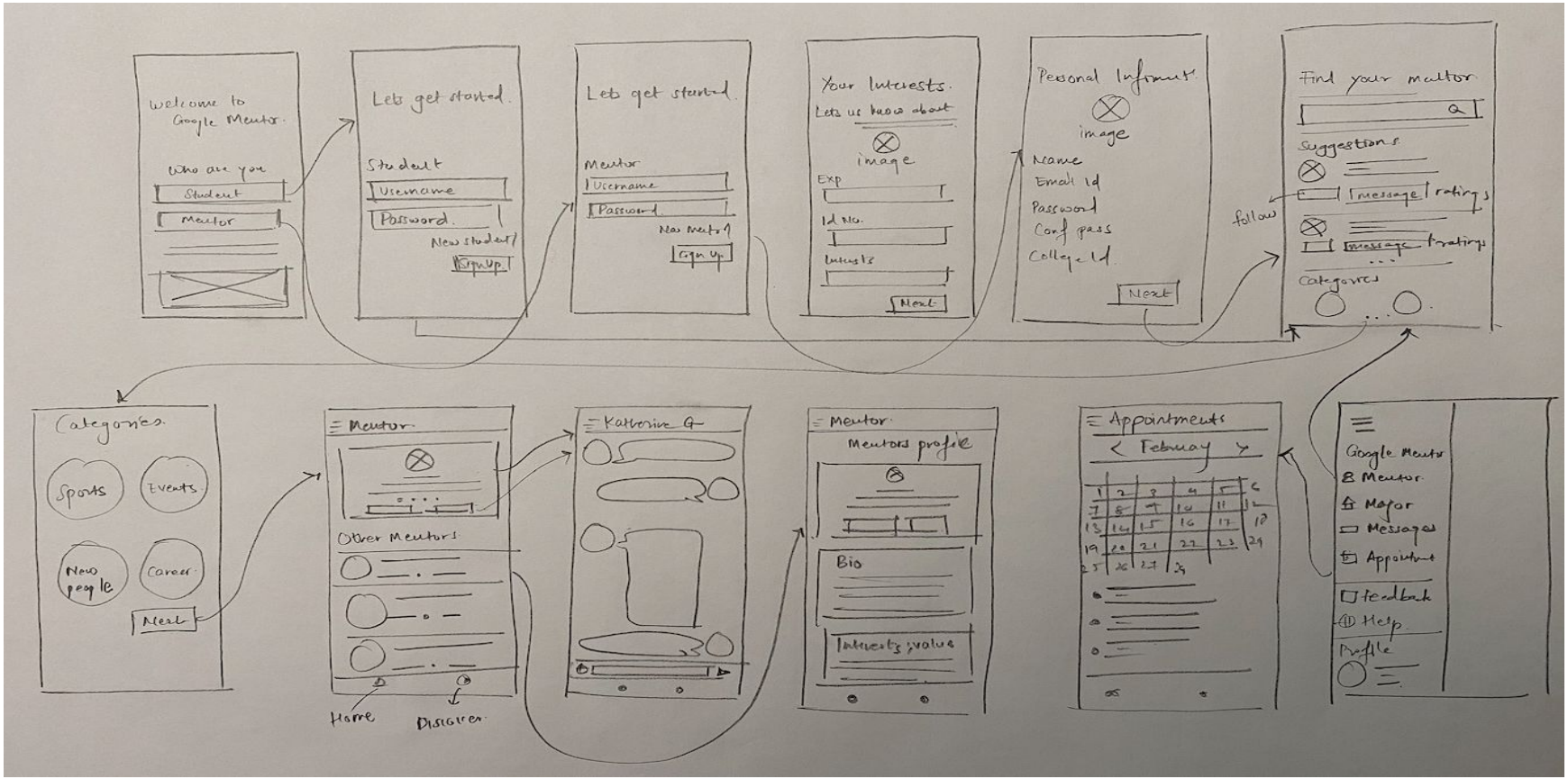


I created the wireframes of the screens and a rough workflow began to emerge. This gave a lot of clarity on how the app would actually look and function in the real world.

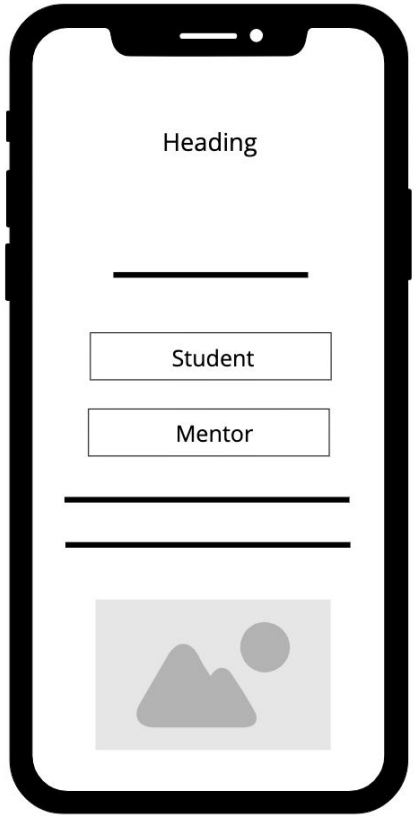
Step 4: Prototype

Finalizing ideas on paper
Low-fidelity prototype

Finalizing the ideas on paper



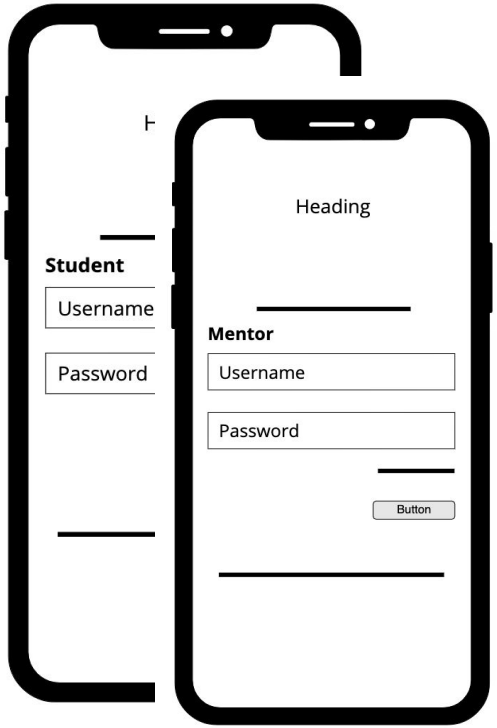
Low fidelity prototype landing page



As part of the Google Mentor, I aimed to to design the signing page in simple and user friendly way. This is the page where, student can choose who they are, so as the mentor and sign up according to it.

I also inserted a illustrative image in my high fidelity wireframe which indicates that seniors are uptaking the juniors towards the success.

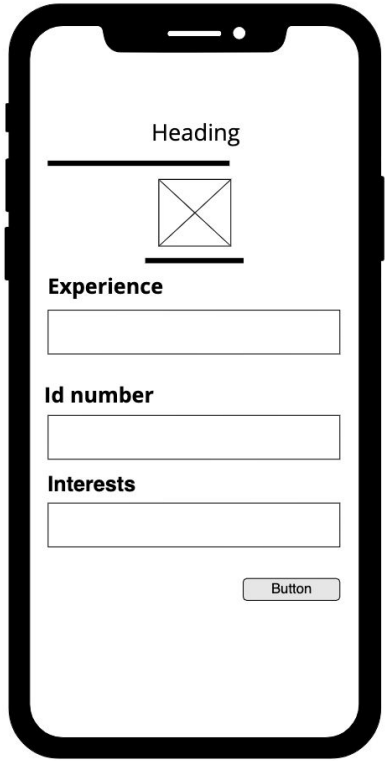
Low fidelity prototype sign in



As a integrated product from Google mentor, this is the secure entry point for students. This application will collect all the personal information from university's database and will save the time of students.

Also, I have made different signing up page for students and mentor respectively. I have also mentioned the option of "new" in case of new membership or new account login.

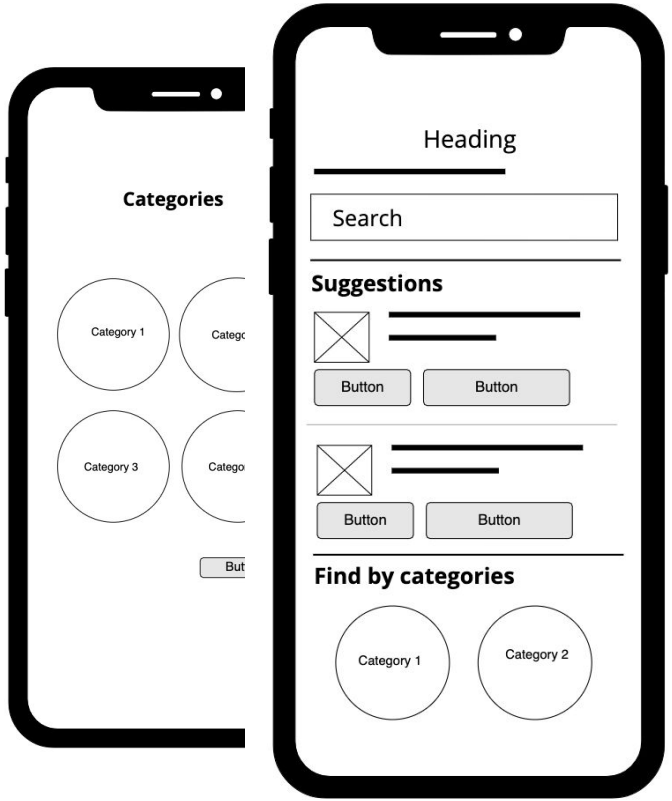
Low fidelity prototype fill form



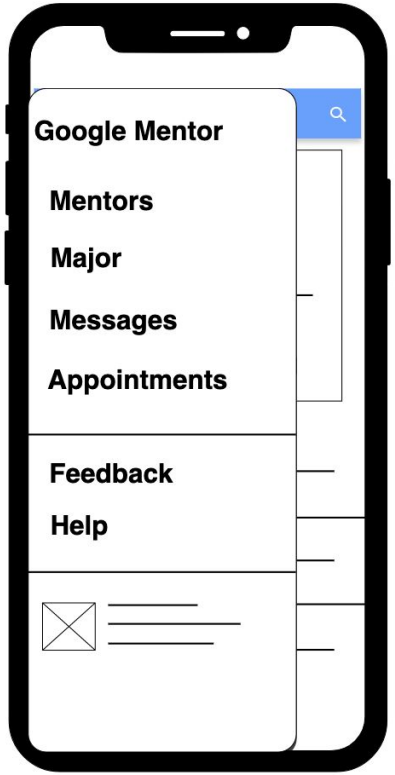
As a internal part of the application, I mentioned that Google forms can be the supportive inner tool for filling forms. This will redirect to google forms and collect the data in administrative database. Only the user have to fill the main details in order to make the further search easy. This will suggest mentor profiles for students.

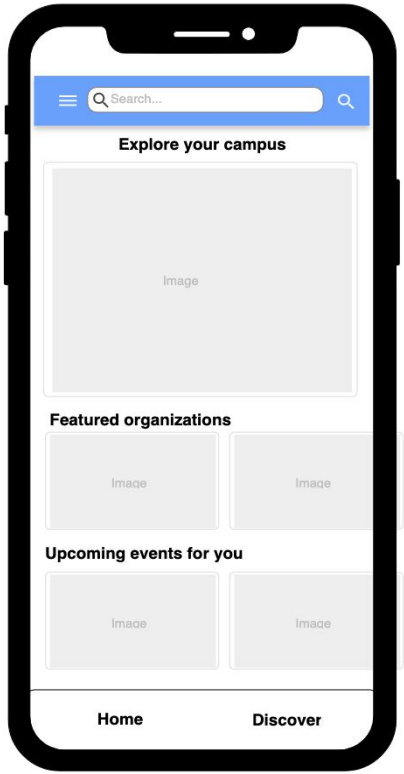
Low fidelity prototype Search and categories

Search screen will provide the mentor search functionality. This will allow the students to do simplex as well as complex queries. A simple query is search using on parameter such as name or ID or major.
A complex query will let users search using a combination of these parameters using logical operators (AND, OR, etc.).
Students can also search for all activities/requirements based on categories, a simplistic way to find important information at one place. This could help students in tackling pressing issues such as finding accomodation/housing, or help related to career queries.



Low fidelity prototype Menu and Explore campus





A simple menu with role-based menu items (mentors and students). This had to follow the overall app design language of google apps suite.

The explore campus screen will basically act as a virtual noticeboard with real-time and live updates of everything happening in and around the campus.

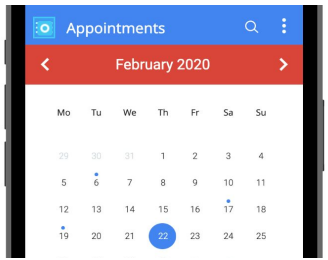
Step 5: Validation

Accessibility
User Analysis
Feedback
High-fidelity prototype
Reflection

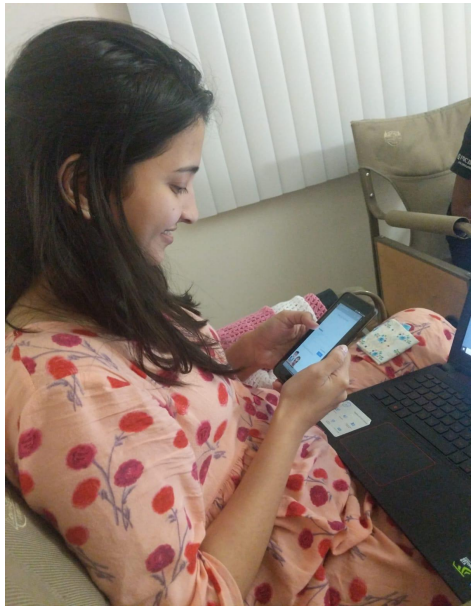
Accessible colors to create beautiful experience

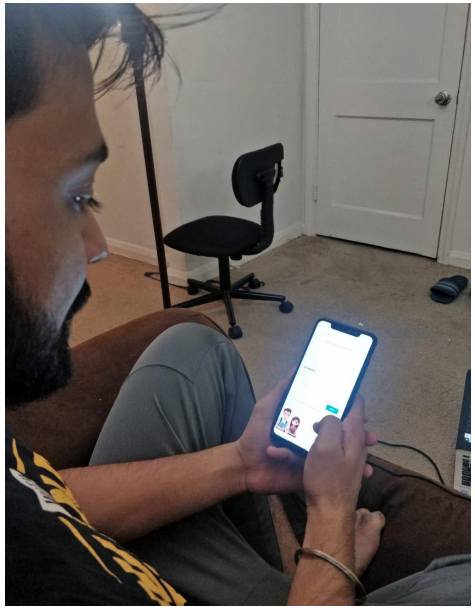
Throughout my UX journey, I have always believed in created beautiful experience for users. I have always focused on user centric designs. Less is more and it is beautiful and eye catchy as well. In my above designs I maintained the following color palette to make the application efficient and aesthetically good.

#4285F4 #31393C #DB4437 #FDCA40 #FFFFF



User Analysis and testing for an application





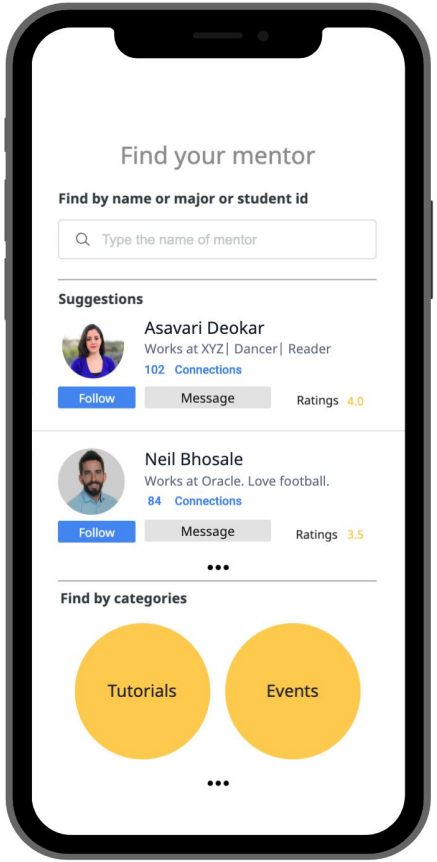
After implementing my final designs, I tested my prototypes on UMBC students who were looking for a surprise mobile application for mentorship. I observed that students enjoyed the platform and navigated throughout the application. They were also excited about launching their own profile and help the juniors regarding career and campus life in Baltimore.

What were users reactions through walkthrough?

“How does this application work? This is so amazing.”
-User 1

“How can we become mentor? I am excited for this tour. I am happy to help my juniors. These illustrative images are so funky and awesome.”
-User 2

“When did this application launched? Why was not it developed before me coming to UMBC?”
-Experienced user, alumni of UMBC

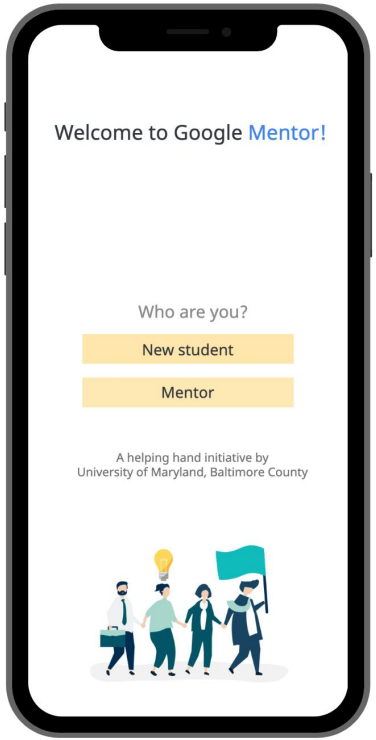


Google Mentor

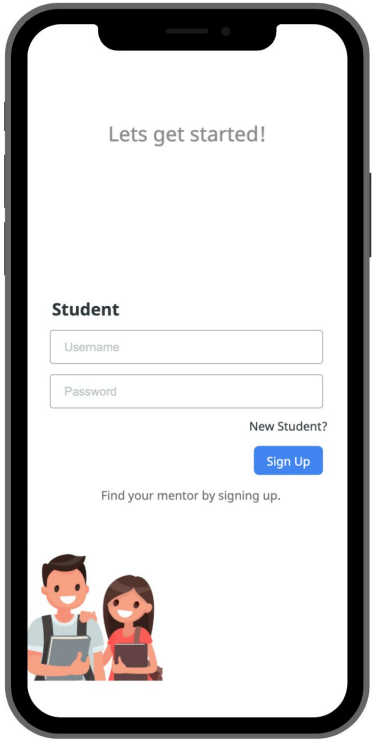
Gateway to an easy campus life

Final Design

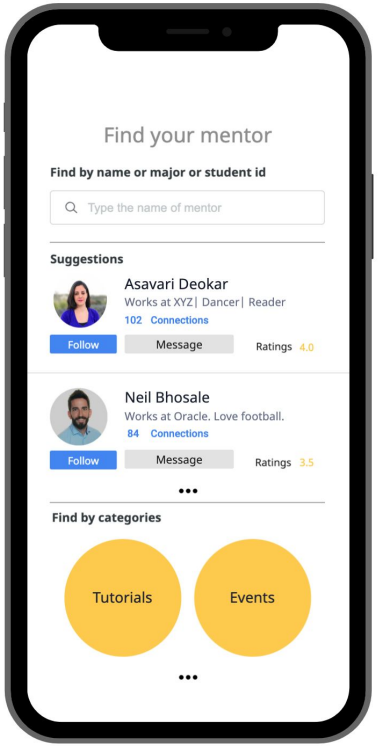
The final design



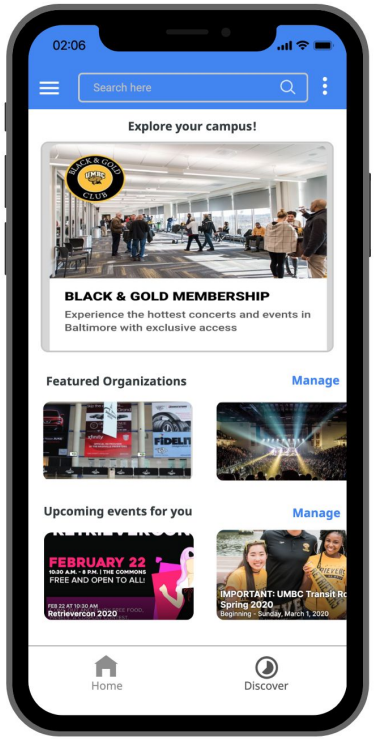
The first screen for mentors/New Students



Student sign-in page

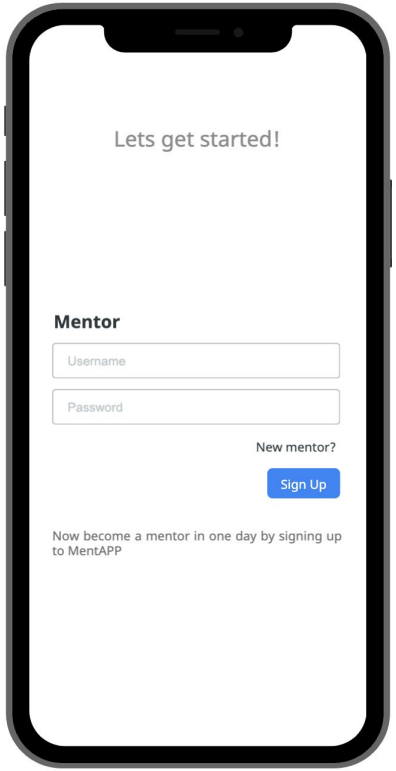


A simple page to find mentors using either Name, Major or Student ID

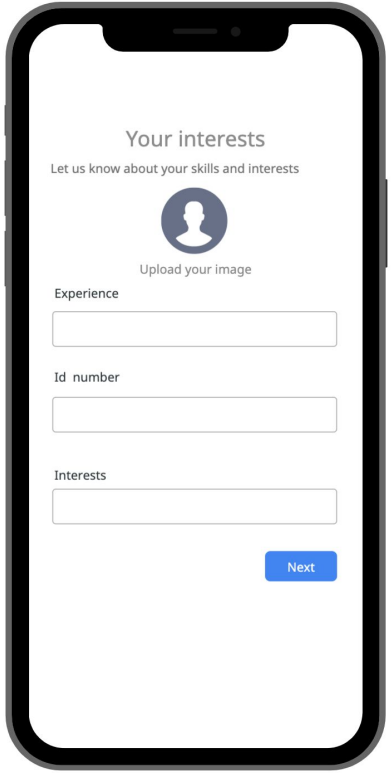


One stop shop for all student activities in the campus

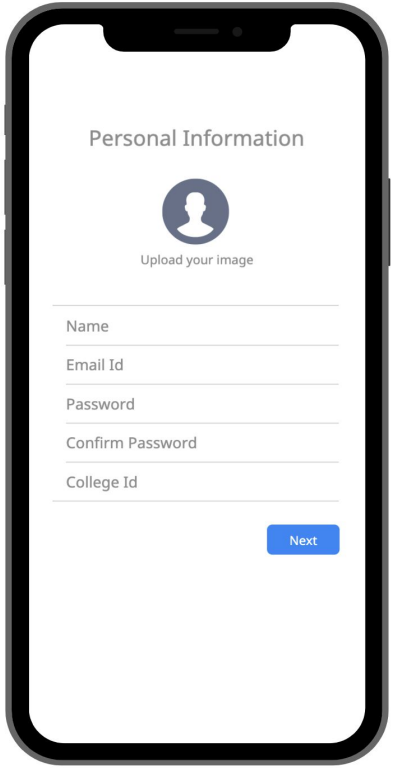
The final design



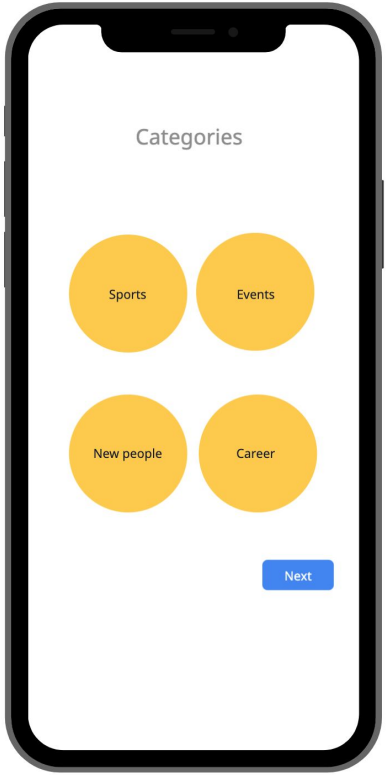
Sign in page for mentors



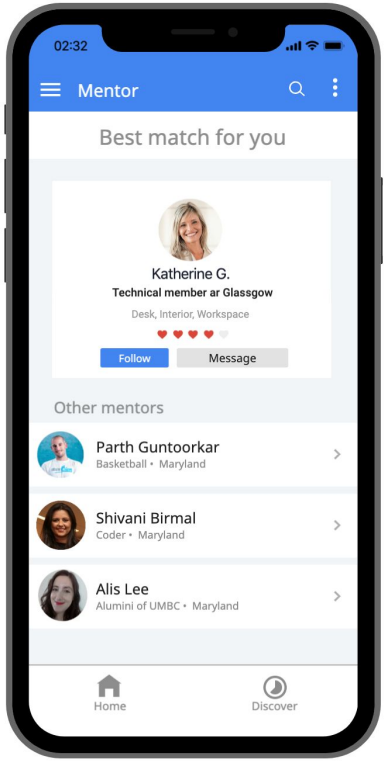
Student information page.



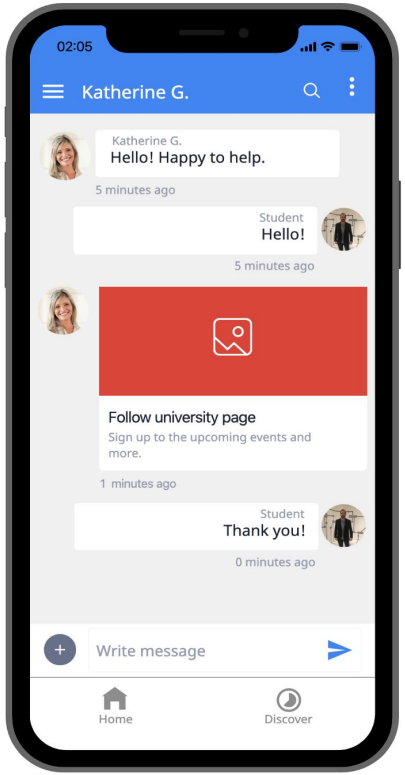
Student personal info page.



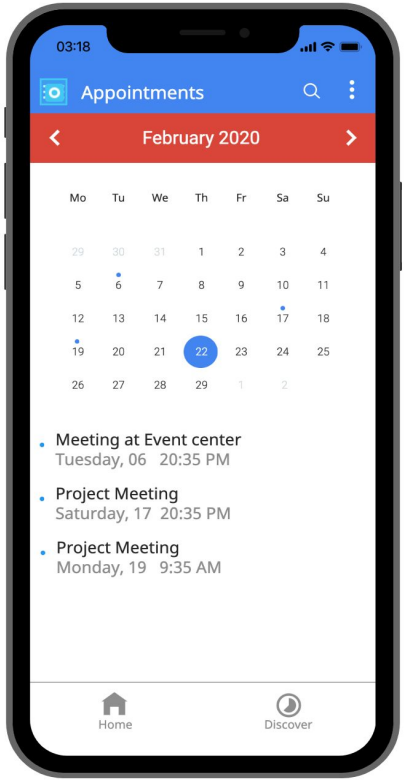
The final design



The app will give the best mentor matching the search criterion. The suggestions for the next best match will also be provided

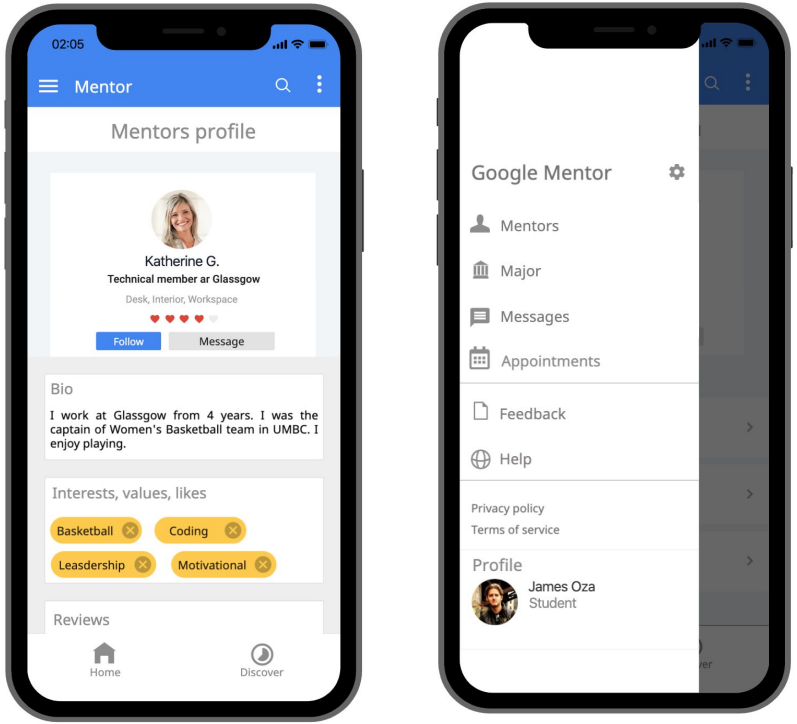


Chat/Messaging functionality



Students can schedule appointments with mentors on google calendar

The final design



Reflection

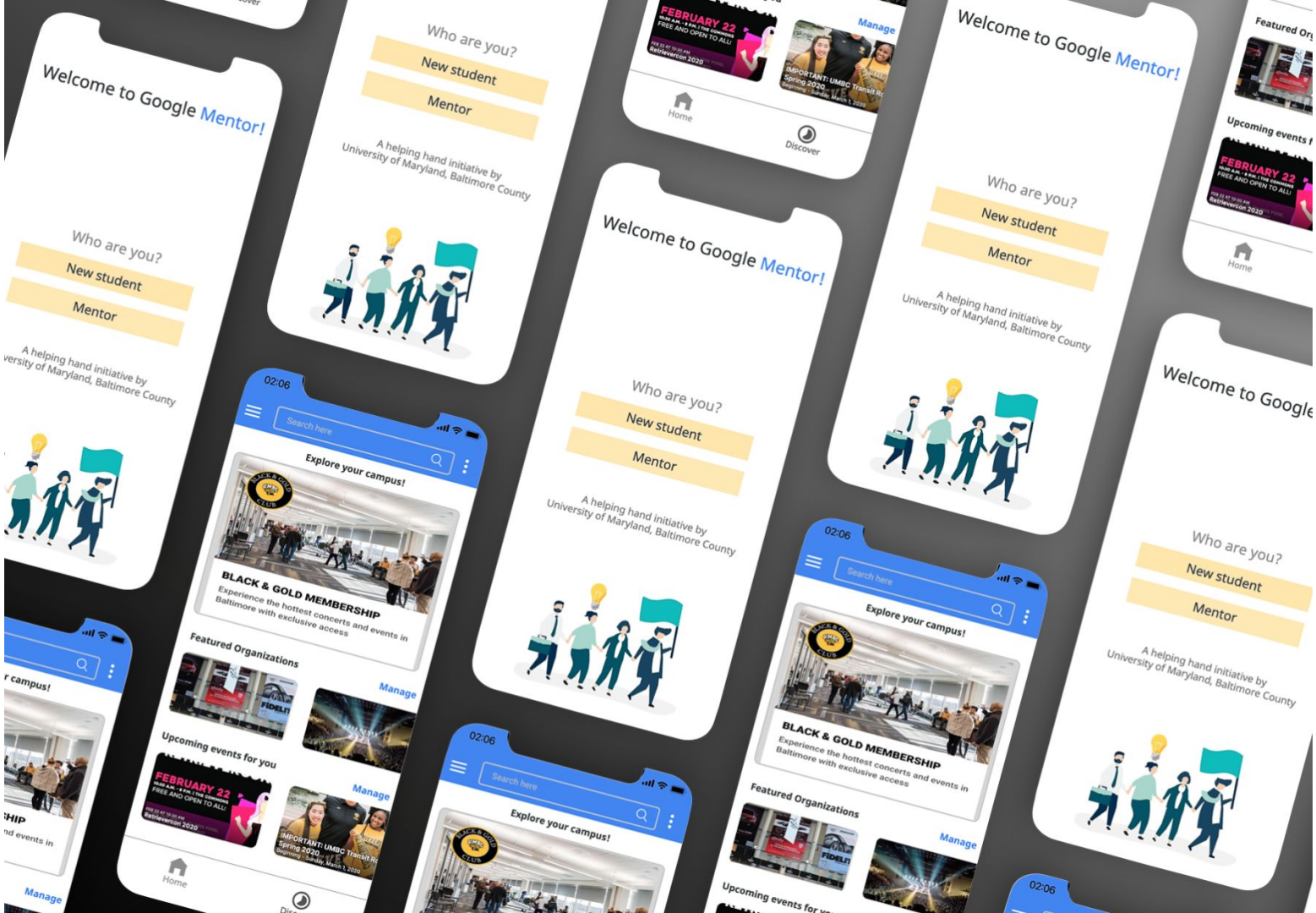
What if I had more time?

- More usability testing and sketches
- Would have worked more on hi-fi wireframes
- Bring my final designs to users and get detailed feedback
- Would have added more illustrative images to make app look beautiful
- I would added few animations in the middle of event pages to highlight the sections

My final thoughts

My aim was to focus on mentorship app and listen to users needs and problems. I analysed and planned what can be done to make a user friendly application to improve my school's community. This exercise was challenging for me and helped to create more and more user centric experiences.

Google Mentor is an mobile application which will help the students and experienced students in their academics. Everybody deals with the new campus life problems. This application will bring out the great connection between new students and alimuni.


Welcome to Google Mentor!
Who are you?
New student
Mentor
A helping hand initiative by University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Home
Discover
Manage
Explore your campus!
BLACK & GOLD MEMBERSHIP
Experience the hottest concerts and events in Baltimore with exclusive access
Featured Organizations
Upcoming events for you
FEBRUARY 22
FREE AND OPEN TO ALL!
IMPORTANT: UMBC Transit R...
Spring 2020
Search here
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Thank you for reading!

User Experience Design exercise