

Arizona Sustainability Navigator

UAT Student Partnership Proposal

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Status: Draft for review

Purpose

This proposal lays out a structured approach for engaging University of Advancing Technology (UAT) students to deliver the visual mockup, technical requirements documentation, and related design artifacts needed to advance the Arizona Sustainability Navigator through its 2026 development milestones.

The approach is modeled as a cross-disciplinary project with clear learning objectives, deliverable rubrics, and phase-aligned outcomes so that both the project and the participating students benefit from a rigorous, auditable engagement. It is designed to be taken to UAT Career Services as a formal internship placement request.

Project Context

The Arizona Sustainability Navigator is a statewide platform concept developed through the IEDC / Flinn Foundation Arizona Sustainable Economic Development Learning Lab. It aims to help small businesses, nonprofits, and community organizations identify, understand, and act on sustainability opportunities by simplifying access to fragmented resources across Arizona.

The initiative has completed its research phase — including a 125-respondent statewide survey, 12 stakeholder interviews, and a scan of 30+ tools and 50+ funding programs — and is now entering its design and planning phase. Pilots are anticipated in Phoenix and Surprise, with prototype development targeted for 2027 and grant applications scheduled for submission by November 2026.

This proposal addresses the design and documentation work scheduled between May and December 2026, specifically targeting the August 2026 mockup milestone and the December 2026 technical requirements milestone identified in the project overview.

Scope of Work

The work is organized into three phases, each producing a distinct, assessable set of deliverables aligned to the project's existing SMART goals.

Phase 1 — Discovery & Design Framework (May–July 2026)

- Synthesis of existing research into design inputs (user personas, journey maps, pain-point map).

- Refinement of the text-based wireframe into a structured information architecture document.
- Integration of expanded IEDC "soft sustainability" scope into content framework (cross-sector partnerships, entrepreneurial ecosystem support, community health impacts, workforce development, community engagement).
- Finalization of brand direction from existing logo concepts (Option A or Option B) with accompanying style guide.
- Event calendar structure and data model specification.

Phase 2 — Mockup Development & User Feedback (July–September 2026)

- Low-fidelity clickable mockup covering homepage, organization-type pathway, focus-area selection, curated resource view, partner directory, funding & incentives, and events calendar.
- Structured user feedback sessions with representative small businesses, nonprofits, and economic development agencies (design, facilitation support, and synthesis).
- Iterated high-fidelity mockup incorporating feedback.
- Final mockup package suitable for funder and coalition presentation (target: August 2026 per project Goal 1).

Phase 3 — Technical Requirements & Handoff (October–December 2026)

- Functional requirements document covering all surfaces from Phase 2.
- Technical architecture recommendations (front-end framework, CMS considerations, partner/resource data model, events intake pipeline, accessibility and hosting considerations).
- Development roadmap for 2027 build, with sequenced milestones and estimated effort bands.
- Final handoff package ready for the 2027 build team (target: December 2026 per project Goal 5).

Proposed Student Team Composition

The scope spans user experience, visual design, content strategy, and technical documentation. We recommend a cross-disciplinary team drawn from the UAT programs best aligned to each skill area. Two team sizes are proposed — UAT Career Services can advise on availability.

Option A — Four-Student Interdisciplinary Team (preferred)

Role	UAT Program	Responsibilities
Team Lead / UX	Human-Computer Interaction	User research synthesis and persona development Wireframe refinement and information architecture User feedback session design and facilitation Project coordination across the team

Role	UAT Program	Responsibilities
Visual Designer	Web Design or Advertising Art	Mockup development (Figma or equivalent) Brand direction finalization from existing logo options Style guide and component library Presentation-ready deliverables for funder pitches
Technical Analyst	Advancing Computer Science or Artificial Intelligence	Functional requirements documentation Technical architecture recommendations Data model for partner directory and events calendar 2027 development roadmap
Content Strategist	Digital Marketing or Business Technology	Soft sustainability content framework integration Plain-language resource copy aligned to survey findings Funder- and coalition-facing narrative support Stakeholder communication coordination

Option B — Three-Student Lean Team

If availability or budget constrains the engagement, a three-student team can cover the scope by combining the Visual Designer and Content Strategist roles under a single student from Web Design or Digital Marketing, with faculty advisor oversight compensating for the reduced headcount.

Project Timeline

The timeline below maps this engagement to the project's existing April–December 2026 roadmap. UAT operates year-round with multiple intake cycles and both on-campus and online students, so specific term alignment can be confirmed with Career Services during the application process.

Period	Project Milestones	Student Team Activity
May 2026	Onboarding and scope confirmation Faculty advisor alignment	Team kickoff; review of white paper and project overview Access to survey data and stakeholder interview notes
Jun–Jul 2026	Phase 1 deliverables complete Mockup development begins (Goal 1) Soft sustainability content framework drafted (Goal 2)	Research synthesis, IA, style guide, event data model First mockup iteration Content framework draft
Aug 2026	Mockup milestone (Goal 1 complete) Coalition formalization (Goal 3)	Final mockup delivered for funder and coalition review

Period	Project Milestones	Student Team Activity
	Event partner identification (Goal 6)	Support materials for coalition convening
Sep–Oct 2026	Funding strategy complete (Goal 4) Grant applications submitted Early prototype planning begins	Phase 3 begins: functional requirements Technical architecture recommendations
Nov–Dec 2026	Technical requirements complete (Goal 5) Coalition convening Preparation for 2027 build	Final technical requirements document 2027 development roadmap Handoff package

Learning Objectives

The engagement is structured to produce concrete learning outcomes that align with UAT program objectives. Each phase maps to one or more objectives. Students are expected to demonstrate proficiency across the following areas over the course of the project:

Cross-Team Objectives

- Translate applied research findings into actionable design requirements.
- Collaborate across disciplines on a real-world, multi-stakeholder civic technology project.
- Produce professional-grade deliverables suitable for funder and coalition review.
- Maintain written documentation and reflective journals aligned to UAT internship requirements.

Discipline-Specific Objectives

- **Human-Computer Interaction:** Conduct user research synthesis; produce information architecture and journey maps; design and facilitate usability testing with real users.
- **Web Design / Advertising Art:** Develop a visual design system from concept through high-fidelity mockup; produce a reusable component library and style guide.
- **Advancing Computer Science / Artificial Intelligence:** Produce functional and technical requirements documentation; recommend architecture suitable for handoff to an external build team.
- **Digital Marketing / Business Technology:** Translate research findings into plain-language content; support cross-functional coordination on a multi-stakeholder project.

Deliverable Rubrics

Each major deliverable is assessed on a four-level rubric. The rubric is designed to be used jointly by the project sponsor (Collaboration for Good), the faculty advisor, and UAT Career Services for grading purposes.

Criterion	Exemplary (4)	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Below Expectations (1)
Alignment to Research	Deliverable directly and traceably incorporates survey and interview findings.	Deliverable reflects research findings with minor gaps.	Partial alignment; some findings overlooked.	Research findings not meaningfully reflected.
Quality of Execution	Professional-grade, ready for external stakeholder use without revision.	Solid quality with minor polish needed.	Functional but requires notable revision.	Incomplete or below production standard.
Stakeholder Feedback Integration	Iterative improvements visibly reflect sponsor and user feedback.	Most feedback addressed thoughtfully.	Some feedback addressed; others ignored without rationale.	Feedback not meaningfully incorporated.
Documentation & Handoff Readiness	Deliverable can be picked up and used by a new team with no explanation.	Clear documentation with minor clarifications needed.	Documentation incomplete; verbal explanation required.	Documentation missing or unclear.
Professional Presentation	Suitable for funder pitch, board review, or public release.	Suitable for internal review with minor polish.	Requires significant reformatting for external use.	Not suitable for external presentation.

Proficient (3) is the minimum acceptable standard for project acceptance. Exemplary (4) reflects work suitable for direct use in funder and coalition presentations without sponsor revision.

Oversight & Quality Model

Three roles provide oversight across the engagement:

- **Project Sponsor (Tyler Butler, Collaboration for Good):** Owns acceptance of deliverables, access to research materials and stakeholders, and alignment with IEDC and coalition expectations.
- **Faculty Advisor (UAT):** Provides academic oversight, rubric-based grading, internship journal review, and escalation path for student-side issues.
- **Advisory Reviewer (Raymond Todd Blackwood):** Provides sanity-check reviews at phase gates, advises on technical architecture decisions, and serves as a tie-breaker between sponsor and faculty when design direction is contested.

Cadence

- Weekly 30-minute check-in between the student team and the Project Sponsor.
- Bi-weekly faculty advisor review aligned to UAT internship requirements.

- Phase-gate review at the end of each phase with all three oversight roles present.

UAT Engagement Plan

The path to engaging UAT is structured to respect the university's formal internship placement process while using existing relationships to accelerate the request.

Step 1 — Sponsor Review

Tyler reviews this proposal and provides feedback on scope, phasing, team composition, oversight model, and answers to the open questions in the following section. Revisions are incorporated before UAT outreach begins.

Step 2 — Warm Introduction

Raymond Todd Blackwood initiates contact with Robert Walker at UAT to frame the opportunity, share this proposal, and request guidance on the right path forward (on-campus internship placement, online student placement, or a hybrid cohort).

Step 3 — Formal Application

A formal internship request is submitted through the UAT internship application at uat.edu/internships, with this proposal attached as the supporting scope document. Contact to Career Services (careerservices@uat.edu) follows, referencing Robert Walker.

Step 4 — Team Formation

UAT Career Services and the faculty advisor identify and match students from the target programs. An onboarding meeting is scheduled with Tyler, the student team, the faculty advisor, and the advisory reviewer.

Step 5 — Kickoff

Phase 1 begins. The engagement follows the timeline, cadence, and rubric structure defined in this proposal.

Open Questions for Tyler

Before advancing to UAT, the following items should be confirmed:

- Does Collaboration for Good or the broader initiative have any budget allocated for this design and planning phase — for example, stipends for students, a faculty advisor honorarium, software licenses (Figma, prototyping tools), or a professional polish pass on the final mockup? Per the project overview, no build-phase budget has been identified in the documentation reviewed.
- Are there existing co-design materials from Phoenix or Surprise pilot planning that should be incorporated into Phase 1 inputs?
- Which logo option (A or B) is the current working direction, or is that decision still open?
- Is there a preferred tool ecosystem for the mockup (Figma, Webflow, other) or is the student team free to recommend?

- Who else — beyond Tyler, Amanda Jordan, and Jeanine Jerkovic — should be positioned as a stakeholder with review authority over deliverables?
- Is a statement of work, letter of agreement, or MOU between Collaboration for Good and UAT anticipated, or is the standard UAT internship placement agreement sufficient?

This is a draft proposal prepared for discussion. Content and scope are subject to revision based on feedback from the project sponsor and UAT Career Services.