

**DMI Capstone MC 4328.751**

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## **HallMatch: Campus Housing and Connection**

### **Executive Summary**

College students across the United States face two big, connected problems. They struggle to find affordable, suitable housing, and they also struggle to feel like they truly belong on campus. The places where students live can either support or weaken their sense of belonging. This affects grades, whether students stay in school, and their overall wellbeing. At the same time, the national housing crisis means that many students face housing insecurity, high rents, and a hard time finding good roommates near campus.

HallMatch is a campus housing and community app that would be included in students' tuition or housing fees. The app helps with both problems at the same time. Students can build detailed profiles, find and host events, and use a swipe style feature to match with roommates and housing. The matches are based on cost, distance from campus and key resources, and shared interests. The app also includes game-like features. Students earn stars when they attend or host events and when they build connections.

This report explains the problem HallMatch wants to solve, who the app is for, the current market and competitors, the financial model, diversity and global issues, possible solutions,

marketing strategies, and main challenges. It ends with an updated Lean Canvas that summarizes the core assumptions and direction of the venture.

## **Problem Statement**

Many students living in residence halls feel lonely and disconnected, even though they are surrounded by peers. This is especially true for international, first-generation, and low-income students, who face extra barriers such as language, cultural differences, and limited knowledge of campus resources.

At the same time, a large share of college students struggles to find affordable, stable housing and compatible roommates near campus. National studies estimate that more than a third of students at four-year institutions face housing insecurity, and a significant number experience homelessness. Common roommate search methods, like group chats and generic apps, are fragmented and unsafe. They often lead to poor matches that harm mental health, disrupt academics, and force stressful mid-semester moves.

HallMatch aims to solve this combined problem of social disconnection and housing insecurity. It helps students find affordable housing and compatible roommates, and it supports the real community where they live, so their basic needs and sense of belonging are addressed together.

## **Market Analysis**

HallMatch's primary users are undergraduate students aged roughly 18–24 who live in or near campus housing. This includes first- and second-year students in residence halls, who are forming their first friendships, know little about local housing, and depend heavily on university systems. First-generation, low-income, and international students are especially important segments because they face higher financial stress, more barriers to belonging, and unique challenges related to visas, culture shock, and small social networks. Upper-division students moving off campus also need help finding safe, affordable housing and compatible roommates while staying connected to campus life.

The paying customers for HallMatch are universities and housing providers. Research links stable housing and a strong sense of belonging to better academic performance, retention, and graduation rates, giving institutions a direct incentive to invest in tools that improve both housing outcomes and community. National data show that 36–48% of students at two- and four-year institutions face housing insecurity and a notable share experience homelessness, which has pushed campuses and states to explore new housing solutions.

The technology market already includes housing management systems, roommate-matching apps, and residence-life engagement tools, which confirms strong demand for digital solutions. However, most products focus either on logistics (applications, room assignments, maintenance) or on social engagement, not on both at once. HallMatch is designed to fill this gap by combining affordable housing and roommate matching with event discovery and community-building features in a single campus-specific platform.

## **Financial Projections**

We want this app to be completely accessible to every single college student on campus. If we charged students individually out of pocket, most people would not download it, which defeats the whole purpose of building a community. Instead, we are going to use a university-bundled model. The school will buy the platform from us, and the cost will be added directly into the students' regular tuition or housing fees as a small technology fee. This means the app is "free" for students to download, ensuring almost everyone on campus uses it. How we charge universities will depend on their size. For example, the smaller universities that enroll under 10,000 students will be charged a flat yearly fee of around \$35,000 depending on the size. For the much bigger universities that have roughly 30,000 students will be given a rate of \$6 per student making around \$180,000. Later on, we can make extra money by letting local businesses like coffee shops or restaurants near campus pay to put their events or coupons at the very top of our events calendar.

To keep the app running, our main expenses will go into three simple areas of building the app, data privacy and security, and selling to schools. For building the app part, we need to pay for the initial coding, setting up the swipe-style roommate matcher, and keeping the servers running so the app doesn't crash when thousands of students are on it. Because our app connects with official university housing systems, we have to spend money on high-level security to keep student data completely safe and follow school privacy laws. When we sell to schools it usually takes a university to buy new software some time. We will need to spend money on marketing to housing departments and helping campus staff learn how to use the platform.

## **Diversity and Global Implications**

Campuses are full of all kinds of college kids, including out-of-state students, first-generation students, and international students. Finding a roommate and fitting in is already tough, but it's even harder for these groups due to cultural differences or language barriers. Random housing assignments usually ignore this, which leaves a lot of kids feeling lonely or stuck with roommates who don't understand their lifestyle. Our app fixes this by making the profile setup and roommate matching process completely inclusive by adding the swipe feature that lets students filter matches by daily habits and cultural needs. This includes things like dietary restrictions, religious practices, or language preferences for international students who want to practice English or live with someone from home. Right now, schools handle this problem pretty poorly. In places like Europe or Asia, university housing is usually just a place to sleep; they don't really focus on community, leaving international students to figure it out on their own. In the U.S., schools often rely on outdated paper forms or chaotic Facebook groups where only the loudest, most extroverted students find roommates, leaving quieter or diverse students behind. By putting the roommate search and campus events into one simple app, we make the baseline experience fair for everyone. Every single college kid gets the exact same opportunity to find a great roommate, connect with their community, and feel like they belong on campus.

## **Competition**

For competition, there are two that stick out the most, Bunky and MeetYourClass, which are free student-only matching apps. There are others like Roomsurf and Spareroom, but it charges users to be able to use it. Bunky uses a system where students must both like each other before a

chat opens. MeetYourClass layers in class group chats as well as a campus feed. Allowing incoming freshmen to connect more with their year, and not just a roommate. For better compatibility, there's an app called CoHabby. This is the only app that calculates detailed scores from over 40 questions about lifestyle and living before you can message anyone. It covers details such as noise, sleep, study habits, guests, and cleanliness. Letting students know just how well they could get along before even interacting. Another one to mention is one more focused on housing first. Putting roommate discovery into housing listings so users can connect by unit, along with filters like gender, room type, and lifestyle tags.

## **Potential Solutions**

The first solution is to build and own our own platform in full. Combining a student profile, swipe-like UX for roommate and housing matching, and smart events calendar into one place. Selling it to universities as included in tuition or housing fees. We will need a way to create the app professionally with a team, data-sharing agreements, and some kind of integration with the university's housing office and student information system to handle verification and assignments. To introduce it, universities could showcase it during orientation.

A second option is to partner with or license an existing platform rather than creating anew. We would simply just need to add in aspects that the app is missing. And still find a way to connect with campus housing. Since all these already existing apps have a good product for matching, It would be just combining housing, matching, and events all together in one solid app.

## **Marketing Strategies**

To reach the target market with an active community participation, the app should be treated as an essential campus utility. Influencer campaigns, connection challenges, guerrilla marketing, and moments-based advertising ensure the app becomes part of student life.

Diverse campus leaders like resident assistants, student government, and club presidents will campaign for the app. Provide these ambassadors with “App Takeover” kits where they use their own social channels to showcase their success stories or highlight events through the app’s calendar. Instead of influencers, these campus leaders will have the campus connector status, which benefits students for portfolio work and getting the word out.

To drive app usage, there will be challenges that can be shared outside of the app, like TikTok and Instagram. Launching hashtags where students earn points within the app that can be linked to the university’s standard app. Completing profiles, joining a community group, or RSVPing to events with a leaderboard to ensure students are tapping in. Using success stories by sharing testimonials on social media without revealing private identities can build trust in the algorithm for living situations.

Moments-Based targeting and guerrilla marketing align with the academic calendar and take advantage of high-traffic physical locations, bridging the gap to the digital platform. Create short vertical videos like “How to find your perfect match in 30 seconds” and push notifications like “Study groups near you”, “De-stress events for exams” can be found on the calendar. QR codes can be placed in restrooms, dining hall napkin dispensers, laundry room machines, and more, and can have direct links to the App Store.

## **Limitations**

There are human barriers and technical challenges to being successful. Students often feel overwhelmed by mandatory campus apps. If the app is seen as another administrative tool rather than a social asset, engagement will drop and app fatigue will develop. If the app marketing feels top-down from the university, students will likely ignore it. Students may be resistant because there is no immediate value; engagement metrics are vital. Peer-driven is the best solution for these. The integration stability and privacy concerns are technical challenges because it relies on integration with university systems. Slow data, technical outages, and syncing with official housing portals can frustrate students. The biggest obstacle would be the privacy concerns because students value their privacy. Any perception that the app is tracing them for the university's benefit rather than personal gain. It can damage trust. The sales cycle is a long-term process that requires bureaucratic layers to make it clear that the benefits for housing departments can improve student retention and better insights into housing demand.

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## Housing and Campus Connection

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| Problem                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Solution                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Unique Value Proposition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Unfair Advantage                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Customer Segments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| <p>Residents feel socially disconnected in their residence halls and struggle to make meaningful connections with roommates, neighbors, and campus communities.</p> <p>Event and resource information is scattered across emails, flyers, group chats, and portals, so students miss opportunities that could improve their sense of belonging and wellbeing.</p> <p>There is no campus-specific, trusted way to match with compatible roommates and ideal housing based on proximity to classes, gym options, and daily routines.</p> <p><b>Existing Alternative</b></p> <p>University housing portals, emails, bulletin boards, and random group chats for events and roommate searches.</p> | <p><b>Campus Housing &amp; Community App (included in tuition/housing fees)</b> where every resident creates a profile (background, interests, traditions, building name, on/off-campus status, preferred distance to classes/gyms).</p> <p><b>Smart events calendar</b> that shows hall &amp; campus events for the week, with the most popular &amp; relevant ones (based on resident interest and location) at the top.</p> <p><b>Swipe-style roommate and housing matcher</b> that pairs students with compatible roommates and housing options using interests, budgets, proximity to classes, gyms, &amp; lifestyle preferences, building on patterns used by existing roommate apps.</p> | <p>One campus-specific app to help you find your people and your place: match with affordable housing and build real community where you live.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>Integration with your university's housing system (access to building data, room types, and campus locations) so recommendations can be personalized by distance to classes, gyms, and key facilities in ways external apps cannot easily copy.</p> <p>Bundling the app as part of tuition/housing fees, so adoption can become the default for residents rather than relying on individual downloads.</p> <p><b>Channels</b></p> <p>Orientation and move-in: QR codes in rooms, RA announcements, floor meetings, and welcome emails from Housing / Residence Life.</p> <p>Campus social media, student org partnerships, and links inside existing university portals/LMS.</p> | <p><b>Target customers</b></p> <p><b>Primary:</b> On-campus residents (especially first- and second-year students) who want community and compatible, affordable roommates.</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b> Students in off-campus student housing near campus; Residence Life and Housing departments seeking tools to improve belonging and address affordability issues.</p> <p><b>Early Adopters</b></p> <p>First-year students choosing housing, themed/living-learning communities, hall councils, RAs, and housing offices facing campus housing pressures</p> |
| <p><b>Cost Structure</b></p> <p>Product design and development (web/app), ongoing maintenance, and updates.</p> <p>Hosting, data storage, and integrations with campus systems.</p> <p>Campus onboarding and marketing: RA training, orientation sessions, printed materials, and support staff time.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p><b>Revenue Streams</b></p> <p>Campus-license / B2B SaaS: universities or housing providers pay an annual or per-bed subscription, bundling access into tuition or housing fees.</p> <p>Optional setup/customization fees to tailor the app to each campus' housing layout and community structure.</p> <p>Long-term: analytics and insights for Housing / Student Affairs about belonging, housing demand, and retention (sold to the institution, not individual students)</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |