For college students, especially those living on campus, it is hard to find and maintain a healthy eating pattern. There are many reasons for this. For instance, there are many fast food restaurants on or near any campus and little to no grocery stores nearby. In addition to the inaccessibility of many healthy food sources, many of the students’ funds are being used towards their education and unfortunately fast food becomes the cheapest and best option. What many University of Arizona students don’t realize is that there are healthier items and venues that are available and budget conscious on campus. The Bear Down Nutrition app for smartphones would be a beneficial tool for many students as well as faculty and visitors. Bear Down Nutrition would allow students to access nutritional information about the restaurants and food items on or near campus. These restaurants include non-chain and campus or Tucson-specific venues as well. By having access to such information students are more apt to make better, healthier, or at least more educated choices.

The application would work in two different ways. The first is one in which students search for food items that match their personal preferences and nutritional needs. By choosing this option users would be presented with a list of nutritional categories for which they would be able to filter. For instance, a specific calorie limit could be set for this search option. Other
categories include cholesterol, sugars, sodium, fat, and protein. The list would also include filters for peanut-allergy-safe items as well as vegetarian, gluten-free, and even vegan options. After the user has made their selections the Bear Down Nutrition application would calculate matches of places that met or fell within close range of the requirements. At this point the user would be presented with a list of restaurants with the menu items that matched the filters. If the user then makes a selection, the application would provide he or she with the walking distance of the restaurant from the users current location. The second way in which users can find information is by selecting the application’s ‘search by restaurant’ option. This option provides the users with a list of restaurants on or near campus. When the user has selected a venue, the restaurant’s menu appears and the user is allowed to make a selection. Once a selection has been made the nutritional information for the item or items appears on the screen. Once again, if the user approves of the item they can select it to be provided with the walking distance information.

It is important to note that the application was not designed to guilt its users in any way. It was, however, designed to educate its consumers. It is our hope that with the Bear Down Nutrition app users would be more likely to improve their dietary habits by making informative choices. It is not our wish that every person who uses the app chooses a salad over french-fries and a burger. Nevertheless, it is our hope that more and more of the app’s users begin to choose the small side of fries instead of the large, or at least be aware of the nutritional information that is in those large fries. More so, the app would provide users with nontraditional dietary needs insight into the places and foods that suit their lifestyle. For example, vegetarian and vegan consumers would be able to find menu items they could eat from with ease! We believe that a smarter choice in eating leads to not only a healthier, but happier lifestyle. It is, therefore, our
belief that the students and faculty at the University of Arizona would benefit from having the smartphone application.

University of Arizona is known for having an attractive student body, yet its on-campus restaurants do not have nutritional information displayed on their menus as one would expect. In fact, this information is not even easily accessible on the internet, and while it is somewhat available on the Student Union website, much of it is outdated. Because over 90% of surveyed students did not even know that this information is available whatsoever, and the need for more accessible information is apparent. Further complicating the issue, the “Freshman Fifteen” is a well-known phenomenon that refers to how many college freshman gain weight their first year when exposed to so many unhealthy food options and newfound freedom from their parents. However, Bear Down Nutrition proposes to help change this by giving more transparency to what college students are eating, among other improvements.

Clearly students want to be healthy and in shape, especially in such a warm climate here in Tucson where students don’t cover themselves up under layers of clothing. The problem is that the majority of available food on-campus is not healthy and no information on it is available, making actually living a healthy lifestyle quite a challenge. While living a healthy life, especially in this setting, will always be challenging, Bear Down Nutrition proposes to make it easier. The most straightforward way in which it will help students is by listing nutritional facts for each food item on restaurant menus. The mobile application Tapingo has shown that obtaining restaurant menus and listing them in application format is both possible and extremely easy to understand. Under each food option, calories are immediately listed, because most people watch calories more than anything else. And of course other information such as proteins, carbs, fat,
sodium, and even allergy-specific facts like dairy or gluten free, is listed when an item is clicked on, so that students know everything that they need to in order to make an educated choice about what to eat. As previously stated, the goal of Bear Down Nutrition is not to guilt students into eating a certain way, but to provide greater transparency and access to information on their health choices. Furthermore, it provides them with options that they otherwise might not have known existed, like Einstein’s hidden in the back of the Student Union. Given the atrocious line at Panda Express as an example, students are not currently making as healthy of choices as they said they wanted to when interviewed. 75% of interviewed students claimed that nutrition matters to them and that they would use Bear Down Nutrition while waiting in line at restaurants or while walking to get food, which are advantages of it being a mobile app. In addition to these innovations, Bear Down Nutrition offers special filters to students to find foods that fit their nutritional requirements. By being able to filter foods across different restaurants by minimum or maximum calories, grams of protein carbs and fat, by restrictions like dairy-free, and even walking distance, students explicitly know what options they have. With this in mind, they are highly encouraged to eat a meal that fits their desires as opposed to thinking with their stomach. Clearly some students would still choose to eat what tastes best, but on a macro level students would be making healthier eating choices because they are more informed. Just as access to and quality of information improves business decisions and profits, access to and quality of nutritional information improves students’ eating habits and empowers them to eat right.

Other than purely being useful for health purposes, Bear Down Nutrition exposes students to a wider range of food options than they would otherwise know. This gets smaller or lesser known restaurants more publicity while still displaying items from popular restaurants just
as much. Not to mention business would sharply increase from people with specific food needs like peanut allergies, dairy allergies, or vegetarian and vegan needs. Ultimately, there are no drawbacks to implementing the Bear Down Nutrition application into University of Arizona’s campus.

In order to actually implement the Bear Down Nutrition app, posters would be displayed around campus and partnership with Tapingo would be ideal. Tapingo already has demonstrated that a mobile app that makes ordering food simple and efficient is extremely popular on campus. Being advertised on Tapingo would appeal to the same demographic who would be interested in Bear Down Nutrition, and is the best way to get the name of the app around. If successfully advertised and implemented, not only would the student body become healthier, but also have a better understanding of nutrition for years to come in the midst of an unhealthy age for our country.

This application would assist essentially anyone near campus with the desire to become more educated about what they’re eating on or around campus. The biggest consumer of this app would most likely be the student body, particularly freshmen, because the students are the ones who are mostly likely eating on campus the most. For freshman, eating on campus and using a meal plan is more often than not the most cost-effective and the way to get food. Grocery stores are fairly difficult to access without a car and the price of groceries can really add up. All in all, while living on campus, eating on campus is by far the easiest way to go about things. Other consumers of this app may be teachers and faculty who also find themselves eating campus food often, or even visitors who want to be aware of what food options the University of Arizona
Based on previous experience, whether this app will cause more people to eat at IQ and Core rather than Burger King is somewhat up in the air. However, the goal is to provide everyone with simply the information about what they’re eating and give people a good sense of what nutritional value their food has. It’s surprising how many people don’t know that just a small serving of fries from Burger King is 340 calories and has up to 15 grams of fat. Also, many students are unaware that so-called healthy choices in reality aren’t as healthy as they think. For example the caesar salad wrap at IQ fresh (at least according to the nutritional facts on the students union’s website) is around 700 calories and may have up to 35 grams of fat. Just knowing the nutritional value of the food students eat will help them adjust their diets to suit their dietary needs and aid them in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Some may argue that there are other apps that function similarly to the idea of Bear Down Nutrition, such as WebMD or MyFitnessPal; however, based on personal experience we can claim that these apps often don’t have the nutritional information of most on campus eateries such as core, IQ, fuel, or any of the student union’s grills. Likewise, it’s incredibly time-consuming to try and match up what you’re actually eating on campus with similar options in the nutrition app’s database in both nutritional value and portion size. Others may say that the student union website already has nutritional information readily available for students. However, these menus are often outdated and much of the information isn’t correct, such as the heavily weighted calorie count of the meals at SABOR. Even if you aren’t incredibly health conscious I think most people would like to know if something they believed to be healthy for you was in reality high in fat or cholesterol. Not only does the existing website for student union nutritional information have outdated facts, they don’t specifically say which options if any are
gluten-free, vegetarian, or vegan. Many menus in the actually eateries have icons that will indicate if the foods serve are nontraditional-diet-friendly, however the website does not. Finally, even though there is a website that will suffice with a good portion of the information that the app will provide it still isn’t as easily accessible as one would think, and it’s completely inefficient for someone in a hurry. Everything is going mobile. It’s nice to have the information available online, but without an app very few students would actually go through the time to look up the food they’re eating and it’s nutritional content. This app would specifically cater to University of Arizona students, making it easy for them to select the meal that they are eating or select the nutritional value of the meals they want to eat. The University of Arizona already harbors students who are proactive about living healthy lifestyles and tend to care about personal health and fitness. Implementing this app would only make those student’s lives easier by providing them with everything they need to make truly healthy lifestyle choices at the touch of their fingertips.

It is no secret, even to the United States government, that obesity has become a serious problem, especially among young people. For this reason, the United States Department of Agriculture has commissioned a division of this department, called the Food and Nutrition Information Center, that focuses on treating and preventing obesity. They especially focus on proper nutrition and the ways that eating right can promote a healthy weight and a healthy lifestyle. For this reason, the United States Department of Agriculture would be an effective organization to oversee the production and management of the Bear Down Nutrition app. This organization has dedicated much time to researching nutrition, and they have developed many
proven theories as to the proper nutritional needs for different people, and how these needs can be met. They provide many resources that are available to anybody that is interested in improving their lifestyle and becoming healthier overall. However, although the resources are available, they are not generally advertised, so people may not be aware that they exist or make an active effort to access them. If the ideals promoted by this organization were integrated into the Bear Down Nutrition app, these ideas would be more easily accessible to the general public and more people would be inclined to integrate these principles into their daily lives. The partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture and the Bear Down Nutrition app would benefit both parties. The Unites States Department of Agriculture would be able to provide helpful data that would used to develop the app, and they would be able to support the production of the app financially. Additionally, since they already have a database of nutritional facts, these could be used for comparison to the campus restaurants that are documented in the app. This partnership would also be beneficial to the United States Department of Agriculture because one of their stated goals is to use nutrition to “attain and maintain a healthy weight, reduce risk of chronic disease, and promote overall health”. Therefore, since this app promotes health through the use of proper nutrition, the goals of this app would further promote the overall values of this organization. The partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture and the Bear Down Nutrition app would be profitable because the resources necessary for the successful production of the app would be present. The goals of certain branches of the United States Department of Agriculture are in line with the main use of the Bear Down Nutrition app. Since the goals of the two entities are similar, the partnership would be
smooth and in the end a quality product would be produced that promotes overall health and allows healthy nutrition to be achieved with more ease.

Video Introduction: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sz6JeDqzEds&feature=youtu.be