

Standardizing the Internship Program for Mason Athletics' Patriot Club and Advancement Teams

A Professional Readiness Experiential Program (PREP) Project Effort

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---- Client Testimonial ----

“It was great to work with our group of students and get them involved in what we do and also learned a lot from them when it comes to what students want in an internship program.”

- Kenia Olivo | Assistant Director, Development | George Mason Athletics

Introduction

The Mason Athletics Development department looks for committed interns to contribute to its daily active operations, expanding from event operations to administrative and communication activities. As the internship program grows, it is clear to see the growing opportunities to better set the interns up for success and support them. Without a strong and consistent structure in place, the athletics development department has struggled to operate effectively and efficiently.

Business Challenge

There are four problems that the Patriot Club within Mason Athletics is currently facing. Firstly, there is no formal internship training provided for new interns which leaves them unprepared and slows down their productivity. Secondly, there is no handbook specifically for interns to have as a reference point for department standards, work policies, accountability measures and attendance expectations that make it challenging for the department to plan and staff effectively, especially during busy seasons. Thirdly, they have a very basic scheduling method utilizing a calendar overlay on Microsoft Excel. Lastly, interns are inconsistently documenting their intern projects and assignments makes important information easily lost when new interns come in and have the possibility for them to do the same thing over and over again.

Activities Done to Address the Business Challenge

To address the challenges, we made sure we were working closely with Kenia Olivo Espinoza to make sure we precisely tackle it the way they expect us to. To help us give us a big picture of the challenges they faced, we first created an As-Is Diagram of the Mason Athletics Development Department to show where these challenges occur in the process. Then, we created a To Be Process Diagram to show what the improved processes will look like after addressing those challenges that we have identified with Kenia.

To address interns' concerns about documenting each intern's project accomplishments and roles, and an intern documentation website for interns to display their personal portfolio, resume, and personal assessments and competencies area, a shared internship experience using the Google Sites application. Interns can save their own work, create a portfolio using the template, and host a showcase at the end of the academic year for Directors of Athletics or faculty & staff of their degree program.

Another action was taken to address the department's scheduling systems. A scheduling app was specifically developed for Mason interns to schedule themselves to work and record their attendance, giving both the interns and supervisors a clearer picture of how the schedule looks each week.

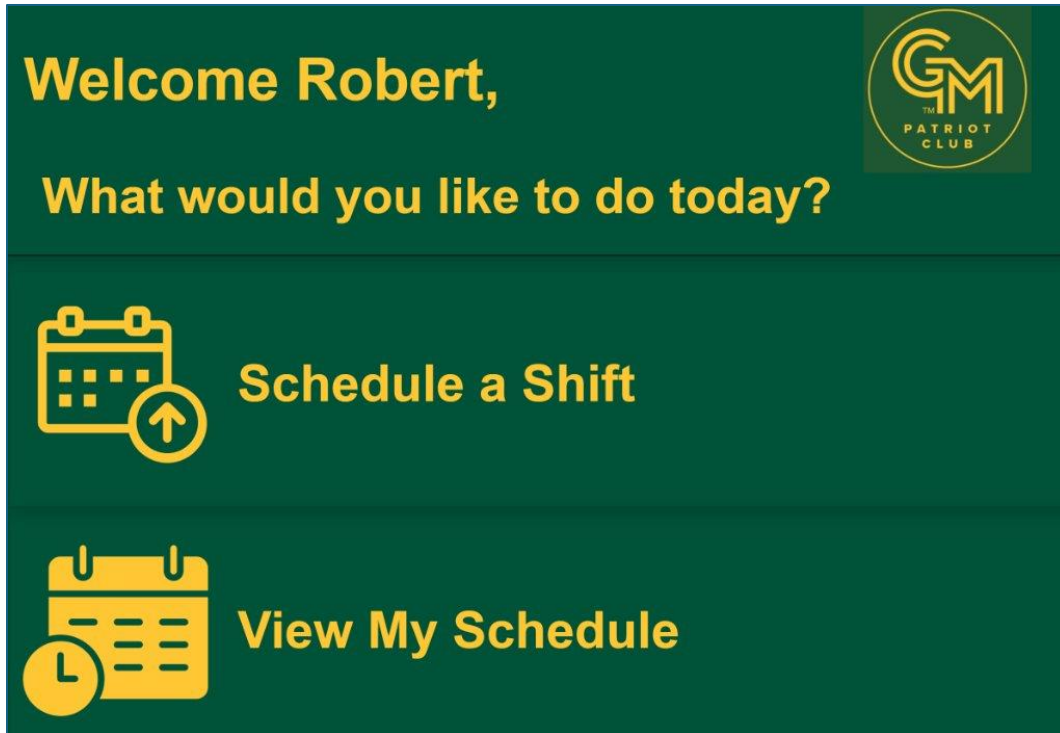


Figure 1. Students will be addressed from this page of the application to choose either Schedule a Shift or View their Schedule.

Figure 2. Students will schedule a singular shift using this page of the application.

Shift Scheduling

Title
Robert Daniels

* Start Date and Time
Select a date... [calendar icon] [dropdown] [dropdown] PM

* End Date and Time
Select a date... [calendar icon] [dropdown] [dropdown] PM

* Recurring Schedule?
 M Tu W Th F

* Role
Find items [dropdown]

* Location
[text input]

Back Submit

Figure 3. Students will schedule a recurring shift using this page of the application.

Your Scheduled Shifts

- Robert Daniels
Customer Service and Sales
4/20/2026 9:00 AM
- Robert Daniels
Graphic Design
4/20/2026 10:00 AM
- Robert Daniels
Customer Service and Sales
4/22/2026 9:00 AM
- Robert Daniels
Customer Service and Sales
4/24/2026 9:00 AM
- Robert Daniels
Customer Service and Sales

Back Download Entire Schedule

Figure 4. Students are allowed to view their scheduled shifts through this page of the application.

An intern handbook was also created to establish department-wide expectations around attendance, role responsibilities, and allows every intern to have a clearer understanding of their role within the department. A structured and standardized training set of modules to help walk through the interns on the key areas of the department, eliminating the need for on-the-spot training.



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Figures 5 and 6. Development Office Student Intern Handbook cover page and table of contents serving as an overview of the entire handbook.

Results & The Positive Impact

The solutions that we developed for the Mason Athletics Development Program are expected to bring meaningful improvements to their internship program throughout all four challenges they are currently facing. The intern documentation template gives interns a designed space to track their projects and achievements and pass the knowledge gained to the next interns. The specially developed scheduling app is expected to improve the interns' accountability and shift reliability by giving the supervisors and other interns a clear picture of the weekly schedule. The handbook will create a more standard and consistent experience for the interns, ensuring they all understand the expectations of the program. All these deliverables will enable the department to create a stronger and structured internship program that supports both the department and interns' daily operations.

Conclusion

We acknowledge that the Mason Athletics Development Department offers a strong internship program with real potential. Though it needs a few improvements and the right structures to support its program effectively and efficiently. With the opportunity to work closely with Kenia Ashton and the department, we identified the key challenges that held the program back and designed solutions tailored to the department's needs. The deliverables are the scheduling app that can be accessed on any kind of device, an intern handbook, training modules, and intern documentation are now fully in place, and the department now has the tools to operate with a more organized, effective, and consistent internship program for their current and incoming interns. The solutions developed for the department create a foundation to build on to ensure all the interns are set up for success from day one of their internships.

Coach Greg Pieczynski's Business Case

During the interim awaiting the assistance of the Development team of Mason Athletics, we were tasked with the opportunity to assist Coach Greg. We made multiple explanations and videos of new SOPs to assist him in the issues he was facing.

The first SOP was developed to create a rule that automatically sends emails, ensuring consistent and timely communication without requiring manual input from Coach Greg. This process helps streamline workflows, reduce response time, and improve overall efficiency by allowing users to automate repetitive email tasks.

A visual SOP was also created to establish a standardized method for setting up an Outlook rule that automatically moves emails containing recruiting-related content into designated folders. This improves organization within inboxes and ensures that important recruiting communications are easily accessible and properly categorized.

Our last SOP was for signing into OneDrive on Coach Greg's work account from his home desktop. This step helps eliminate confusion during the login process, ensures secure and proper access to files, and allows Coach Greg to efficiently navigate OneDrive's features.

PREP Student Reflection

We have thoughtfully reflected on our experience in the PREP program with Dr. Brian Ngac and have discerned that this opportunity provides access to many students interested in technical expertise. Although our project was not the most technical, Mason Athletics cultivated an environment where we developed opportunities in a technical solution like the scheduling application to elevate the intern experience.