

Process Improvement and Automation

# Mason's New Automation Center of Excellence

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Fiscal Transformation  
Boot Camp 2023

# Presentation Agenda

1. Who are we
2. What is an Automation Center of Excellence
3. What is Robotic Process Automation
4. What is our Mission and Vision
5. Timeline / What's on the Horizon



# Who are we?



**Rob Faber**

Program Director, Fiscal Services  
*George Mason University*



**Aileen Miller**

Senior Business Systems Analyst, Fiscal Services  
*George Mason University*



**Matt Bartles**

Lead Consultant, Intelligent Automation  
*Impact Makers*



# What is a Center of Excellence?

- A Center of Excellence (or CoE) is established to accelerate the progress and adoption of a specific technology, practice, or competency.
- The CoE is charged with solving chronic problems and achieving goals that show progress in its specific area.
- A CoE differs from other business departments by crossing traditional organizational boundaries to develop solutions.
- The CoE team is typically smaller than most departments, consists of personnel highly trained in their specific field, and deploys their specialized resources efficiently



- The Mason Automation CoE is charged with replacing manual business processes with automation
- Establish Automation-related policy and process
- Assist departments to identify, document, and automate manual processes
- Relieve associates from the strain of manual processes and enable them to focus on furthering the Mason mission
- Embed student interns to address chronic businesses problems, which gives them an advantage in the workforce

# What is the Automation Center of Excellence?



# What is Robotic Process Automation?

## RPA is ...

- Made with no-code / low-code technology
- Replaces logical, repetitive tasks
- Automates tasks between existing software

## RPA isn't ...

- Physical robots
- Replacement for complex problem solving
- Substitute for exceptional software

## RPA Can ...

- Use existing software like a human
- Move files and data
- Connect multiple legacy systems
- Extract structured data from documents
- Leverage ML and AI features
- Use simple 'if/then' logical structures



# How is RPA different than robotics?



Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is the application of robotics to the automation of manual business processes.

These two fields have many similarities and a few key differences:

- RPA focuses on software automation versus physical interactions
- RPA and robotics both use Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML)
- RPA typically uses low-code or no-code development whereas robotics uses semantic code



# What is Our Vision and Our Mission?

## Our Vision

*“We make business processes more efficient with intelligent automation by supporting the Mason community with low-code solutions, best practices, training and consultation”*

## Our Mission

- *We partner with the Mason community to automate business processes enabling faster, higher quality services to our students, faculty, and staff*
- *We prepare students with innovative business process automation skills to make an immediate, positive impact in their workplace*
- *We set the standard for automation best practices, common frameworks, and reusable components*

**What guides us?**



**How do we do it?**





# How are we delivering on our Mission?

*"The Mason Automation CoE partners with our community to automate business processes"*

- Over 100,000 units of work per year automated or in development
- 5 repetitive, manual processes automated & 45 additional use cases in the backlog
- Expanding to ITS and OSP to assist additional departments

*"We prepare students with innovative business process automation skills"*

- 3 interns are working alongside industry SMEs to learn process automation skills
- Automation qualification & certification program for interns in development

*"We set the standard for automation best practices"*

- Automation Playbook that defines all CoE activities completed
- Agile working methodology implemented
- Close partnership with ITS to ensure emerging technology risks are mitigated



# Automation CoE Maturity Model



## Prove

- Initiated within one department
- Processes are identified
- Low risk, mainly attended automations are used
- Establish relationship with Mason RPA Initiative



## Emerging

- Focus is on creating multiple production processes
- Initial security and privacy policies developed
- Initial standards and re-usable components established
- Center of Excellence (CoE) established

*Current State*



## Impactful

- Program spreads to other departments
- KPIs are refined, measured, and widely publicized
- Automation attributed to higher business agility and reduced operating expenses
- Robust pipeline of opportunities
- Enterprise platform for unattended automation completed



## High Performing

- Fully federated or decentralized CoE operating model in use
- Automation Operating Model is built out
- Continuous Improvement (CI) and continuous development (CD) are used across all automation efforts
- Programmatic inclusion of employee citizen-developers
- Automation is considered a competitive advantage



# Timeline of Mason's Automation CoE

Fall 2022 to Spring 2023

## Prove

- Mason staff onboarding soon
- Intern developer on staff
- Three Fiscal Services automations in operations and five in flight
- Twelve additional automations in the pipeline

Spring 2023 to Spring 2024

## Emerging

- Expand automation departments to include units outside Fiscal Services
- Collaborate with other state institutions and agencies on common automation initiatives
- Expand intern developer resources

Spring 2024 to Spring 2025

## Impactful

- Achieve ROI
- Expand staff
- Deploy distributed CoE groups in units





## Fiscal Transformation Boot Camp 2023

Recordings and information on  
future Boot Camps will be posted at  
<https://fiscal.gmu.edu/boot-camp/>

Questions?