

Interview - Mary Anne Reid

Seb Sangberg

All right, so what's the problem that you want us to help solve?

Ms. Reid

Okay, so on Sundays we have a community bus that goes to the mall, and it leaves at a certain time and returns at a certain time. What we are doing right now is we have these physical, and so just for the audio record, it's a physical sheet that says Sunday Mall Shuttle. It indicates that we need a signature to acknowledge that there's a \$10 charge to the student account, as there is a \$10 fee associated with this bus. It's an optional bus. People can take it if they'd like to go to the mall for the afternoon. So we need to record their name, student name, and we also need to record a process for signature that's acceptable to the business office. So I need to connect with them about what could be acceptable.

Seb Sangberg

Okay, could you tell us how you facilitate this and what other people do to make this work?

Ms. Reid

Yes. So what happens is one of our school block supervisors will actually arrive at the bus on the day, and I think we'd like to keep it so that they arrive on that day. And students come and sign up for the shuttle at the spot. So as they get onto the shuttle, they sign up. As they sign up, they write their name, hopefully legibly, and then they give their signature. And after that, we take that sheet and we have to take all the names and record them in another document, record the student account number in that document, and then have the signature page handed to our business office. yeah so the student account is then charged by the business office when that is submitted so each of these is on a different tab in an excel sheet currently and currently we are manually entering the names and that's pulling account codes from a different area

Seb Sangberg

So is this happening every Sunday or is it every second Sunday?

Ms. Reid

It's every Sunday.

Seb Sangberg

Throughout the entire year?

Ms. Reid

Throughout the entire year is the idea.

Mr. Gordon

So that sounds like a nice walkthrough, Ms. Reid. The next thing that we should dig into a little bit is listening to what Ms. Reid's described. What are some of the pain points that you can, just listening to that, I bet we can probably imagine that, but you can lead some questions along those lines.

Seb Sangberg

Where does it slow down? What's the real big problem? Is it time or is it effort that has to be put into charging these names into those business, to the business office?

Ms. Reid

Yeah, you hit the nail on the head. So it's both the sign-up process takes a lot of time and then being able to communicate that.

Mr. Gordon

Oh, yeah. Yeah, we're good. Yeah, sorry.

Ms. Reid

Okay. Thank you. Perfect.

Mr. Gordon

Good, Tiffany, good.

Ms. Reid

So the sign up is when the student sign up, being able to communicate that to heads of houses and associate faculty who are on duty is really important. And just confirming like they have another process on that side in terms of requesting student must request leave from their head of house to go on this bus. And I think so when I'm looking at this one of the pain points is like that sign up there's a huge group of people who are standing there waiting for the bus and have to sign their name and then write their signature we do like that it's on the spot because that way we're not getting people not showing up if they signed up in advance. That complicates things quite a bit. And we don't want people taking away seats since it is limited seat arrangements for students by signing up in advance. The other end of it is the time it takes to interpret the names. Not everyone writes the same equally and there are a lot of complications to it as well because A student might have two last names but only write one last name down. And then to find that information in the account and pull it is difficult sometimes.

Seb Sangberg

Have you guys ever used a form or any other way other than writing names to do the sign-up?

Ms. Reid

So, yes, we have used a Google form. And the pain point there was that we couldn't charge the student account directly. And we had people that weren't showing up for the buses.

Seb Sangberg

Are you able to share a copy of that form after? Just a copy of that?

Ms. Reid

Yeah. Well, this is the--

Seb Sangberg

Can we use the Google form to see how it works?

Ms. Reid

Oh, yeah, the Google form.

Seb Sangberg

Yeah, we can do that.

Ms. Reid

I can also leave you with a copy of this if you want to. Yeah. OK. So this is the physical one that we use regularly during the year when we don't have to have a signature. We have, in the past, used an electronic version. To my understanding, because I was not part of it, It was just an Excel sheet that people signed up with their name, so I don't actually know if it was a Google form. I'll check into that and get back to you. Yeah.

Seb Sangberg

Could you tell me how much you know, like as in-depth as you can go, about what the business office really needs for us to charge a school account directly? Do they need a signature? Can it be an e-signature? Does it have to be physical?

Ms. Reid

I'm going to have to get back to you about that. Yeah. But that's a good question, if we can have an e-signature.

Seb Sangberg

Has there been any thought about making a passport like you do for the clean casual days? Where you can use a \$25 passport for all 10 days. Where you can maybe have five allowed. And the system could check if you have any bus ride allowed. And then you only have to sign up once.

Mr. Gordon

Yeah, we're thinking of solutions now.

Ms. Reid

Those are interesting ideas. They're great ideas. Yeah, I think I would encourage you to keep thinking about ideas that would help solve this. Yeah, and make the process simpler.

Seb Sangberg

You did say you still wanted somebody there to be at the bus, taking note of names.

Ms. Reid

Yeah, because we want to make sure, I guess what I'm thinking about a little bit is breakfast attendance check-in. Like you've got somebody there, they can scan their QR code, and then it sends it to a system. In some ways, I wonder if that could help the process along. I don't know. Just something where we're collecting the name somehow at the beginning, getting a signature, whether that's electronic, I'm not sure about if that's allowed or not, and getting that information in a clean fashion that's simple to upload.

Seb Sangberg

Have you guys tried? I'm going to ask you more, but have you tried anything else?

Ms. Reid

Not to my knowledge.

Seb Sangberg

Just this year?

Ms. Reid

Yeah, it's just been this sheet. We did try to organize by houses, actually, at one time, but it was not that easy.

Mr. Gordon

I'd like to, thanks, Seb, but I'd like to just say a quick sidebar to the room. As you're listening, if you're like me, you're probably thinking of things, possible solutions we could have. We'll try to keep it focused on what's been tried and what's happening right now. And I think you've done a good job of keeping us focused on that, Seb. I have a question connected to something we've done in the past. Is it okay if I ask, Seb? Does anybody remember before the dining hall started to be renovated, we used to have a really nice pizza oven in the corner? I don't think we have space for that, so it's gone now. How did that work? How did that work with paying for the pizza? Because they didn't want to be dealing with payment at the pizza oven. Do you remember what we did?

Thomas Noone

It was their passport. It was a card, a piece of paper sold by the school store. And each time you write your name on it, and each time you got a piece of pizza, the lady there would use a Sharpie and cross off one of the pieces.

Mr. Gordon

Ms. Reid, let's imagine that we don't write software for you. Instead, something like... if they were to pay somewhere else... and then they get uses removed when they arrive at the bus. Would that be... can you see pain points with that process? It's a manual process, still...

Ms. Reid

Yeah, um, I wonder if students don't sign up [in advance]... and it's a Sunday... so they can't go to school stores and buy a passport.

Mr. Gordon

So they'd have to do that in advance. It is also a bit more money than the pizza card.

Ms. Reid

It's a bit more money. And so what would be the number that would be appropriate if it's every weekend of the year? Like these are all really good thoughts and questions.

Seb Sangberg

It would be four because it honestly depends on how many times you'll go. Like I've done once this year, but I don't know if I'll go again.

Ms. Reid

Right.

Seb Sangberg

In some cases, one might be enough.

Ms. Reid

And then what do you...

Mr. Gordon

And could cards be transferable? Could Neil buy a card? Well, sorry, bad example, because you probably wouldn't be going on the Sunday Mall shuttle Neil as a day student, but could one boarding student buy a card with 10 uses on it and take three of their friends and say, like, charge their three trips to my bus trip card?

Ms. Reid

Yes, we'd still need attendance.

Mr. Gordon

Yes, we would still need to keep... No, that's a good point. Yeah.

Ms. Reid

So that's an interesting idea.

Mr. Gordon

Yeah. What we're trying to do... and I'm not actually doing a great job of it... we're starting to think now of solutions. We are meant to be trying to understand problems. But.. by thinking of solutions and how it's been handled in an analog manner in similar but different situations in the past... it might help us explore this question a little bit more. Do you want to talk about outcomes and successes maybe? I think we're getting close to being ready to end of the interview. So I'll let you go... back to you here, Seb.

Seb Sangberg

I was actually going to ask you a question, too, about the database for the check-in app. Is this accessible with the QR code? Are those able to be used for other things rather than check-in?

Mr. Gordon

Short answer is yes, but the longer answer is we're not supposed to talk about the technical stuff right now. We're just focused on requirements. In terms of my teaching of this particular concept, or we're really meant to be discussing, the topic of this is, what is the name... requirements elicitation... this is kind of like what we're trying to do. We're not really [meant to be] focusing on the technical end of it. But yes, [the] short answer is yes, we could hook it in. And we probably would hook it in. Requirements discovery. There we are. Okay. All right. You want to take us to the next section?

Seb Sangberg

Um, yeah, I guess. How, exactly, would you want... perfect, like... a perfect solution would do, what, for this problem?

Ms. Reid

Simplify and clean up the data that we're getting.

Seb Sangberg

So it would go directly to the Business Office, and it could be... an access key? Made by the students and whoever is the TOD on the day... writing this on the clipboard? Those names would be written up?

Ms. Reid

Yes. So attendance for our knowledge and records and heads of houses knowledge and records. The charge cleaned up in some way. The student names being written more legibly and collected at site at that time. I don't know if there's anything else... I'm trying to think...

Mr. Gordon

I was thinking of the pain points that I think identifies the challenges you have right now. The names not being legible.

Ms. Reid

Yes.

Mr. Gordon

Getting the signatures that the business office requires.

Ms. Reid

Yes.

Mr. Gordon

And just frankly knowing who's on the bus.

Ms. Reid

And which house they're in.

Mr. Gordon

Okay.

Ms. Reid

Is nice as well.

Mr. Gordon

Yeah.

Seb Sangberg

Is there a possible complement a system where they pay on site? I know Go Goody's has a square. It's plugged into phones or even just the handheld. You tap... you can sign a name on that. You don't even sign a name because you're paying yourself with your own card. Almost everyone keeps a card and has a card on their phone. They just double click and can pay for stuff.

Ms. Reid

That's an interesting idea. It could be. My only hesitation around that is that if somebody doesn't have a mechanism to pay through Square.

Seb Sangberg

They have also a backup.

Ms. Reid

And we don't have square.

Mr. Gordon

So, yeah, we're talking a little bit... we're getting more into the technical side [again]... [talking about implementation]... but it is a good thing to bring up [for discussion]... is an on-the-spot payment a way to reduce that pain point? We can come back to you and explore it.

Ms. Reid

Yeah, and I actually would need to talk to the business office and see if that would be a feasible possibility. So it's a great idea. I'm not sure. Okay.

Seb Sangberg

Mr. Gordon, is there anything else you want me to go through between and outcomes and successes?

Tiffany Zhang

We still have one and a half minutes.

Mr. Gordon

Yeah. We can be shorter. The main thing is to avoid being longer. Anybody else have questions that have occurred that want to jump in?

Ms. Reid

Can I ask a question?

Mr. Gordon

Of course.

Ms. Reid

Have any of you... so you mentioned you used it once before? Have any of you used it before?

Mr. Gordon

The mall shuttle?

Ms. Reid

The mall shuttle.

Mr. Gordon

Yes.

Ms. Reid

So do you have some knowledge around pain points from a student side?

Mr. Gordon

That's a great question. I'm going to [ask] people to make sure you speak up. I just realized. We might not have picked up your [earlier] questions super well, but [I] just want [you] to use your loud voice when you ask your questions.

Nicholas Hwang

I think the way you can do it is, do you know how during the winter season, there are ski days every Sunday, and you sign up a form every time before doing that, and you just pay on this phone. I don't... like for those days... a signature is not required and the business office still charges my account. So I was wondering for like normal mall ... mall shuttles... can you do the same?

Mr. Gordon

That's worth exploring like why is there a difference in how those charges are handled. Good questions.

Ms. Reid

Great questions. Some things for me to follow up on.

Mr. Gordon

Any other things, friends, that you want to ask about or from your experience as a student? Thanks, Ms. Reid, that's a great idea. Because we've got your, as the faculty, organizing.

Ms. Reid

Yeah.

Mr. Gordon

From a student perspective, nothing else occurs?

Thomas Noone

Or what happens, I don't know personally because I haven't taken the shuttle, but if you do request leave and then you don't end up leaving, is there some kind of discrepancy there, or...?

Ms. Reid

So the list is sent back to the houses, but again, if it's a hard list to read, that's a challenge point. But that's why we're grouping it by house so that the houses could see who has gotten on that bus and then they're required to do a face-to-face check-in when they return.

Mr. Gordon

With their house people?

Ms. Reid

With their house, person on duty.

Seb Sangberg

I feel that that's a problem to be with the head of house between the students because if you request leave and then...

Thomas Noone

Let's say the bus was full...

Seb Sangberg

yeah and then you can just tell your head of house... ... say "oh the bus was full" because there's been times where I've requested leave and I was like oh I just changed my mind we're not going up tonight

Mr. Gordon

I see does that ever happen

Seb Sangberg

and that's never been a problem for me to

Mr. Gordon

...see there's, like, my thing... jumping in before people are done [talking]. 😊 Does anybody... have a question... does it ever happen that you get more signups than there are spots on the bus?

Ms. Reid

That's why we do it at the site as they're getting on the bus.

Mr. Gordon

I see. I see.

Seb Sangberg

There's definitely a lot of people. Yes.

Mr. Gordon

I understand that. And is there only one bus?

Ms. Reid

In the past it's been one bus, but it's two buses now.

Mr. Gordon

As our student numbers grow, we can see why it might need to be more than one bus.

Ms. Reid

So we had enough seats last week.

Mr. Gordon

Was it first come, first serve?

Ms. Reid

Yes.

Mr. Gordon

I see. That makes sense. Okay.

Seb Sangberg

Did we miss anything that you want to add?

Ms. Reid

I don't think so. It feels like a simple problem, but complicated. So I appreciate your thoughts and insights into this as you work through it.

Mr. Gordon

Yeah.

Seb Sangberg

And how can we follow up afterwards? I assume we're continuing on with this in the next couple weeks.

Mr. Gordon

Mmm-hmm. So we have, thank you, Ms. Reid. It's always much better to be talking about a real dilemma than a contrived one that I make up or that I make up with help from a large language model. So thank you for coming in and being a real person that we can speak to. We will be using this to learn more about the software development life cycle in this mod and in future mod students will be writing software within groups and organizing people who come into the room themselves rather than having me organize things. But this particular idea could get picked up by a group next month. On a practical level, I don't think we'll be writing code for this particular problem in this month for a variety of reasons, but it could be done in, I guess, mod three or thread two of this course when we're back for our second month together. OK, thanks, Ms. Reid.

Ms. Reid

Thank you all for your time.

Seb Sangberg

Thank you. Appreciate it. Thank you. And I'll leave it at that.

Mr. Gordon

Yep. Thank you. OK.