**Hackathon Portal Project Brief**

Niagara College - Toronto (NCT) organizes a hackathon every semester to promote student engagement, creativity, and collaboration in solving real-world problems. To streamline and enhance the hackathon experience for participants, mentors, judges, and program coordinators, NCT has decided to develop a comprehensive Hackathon Portal. This portal will centralize all activities related to the hackathon, making the process efficient and user-friendly for all stakeholders.

**Background**

The hackathon is a key event for NCT students and other GUS colleges. Students form teams of up to five members and work together to create innovative solutions within a set time frame. The event involves multiple stages, including registration, team formation, mentor assignments, project submissions, judging, and reporting. Currently, many of these tasks are managed manually through spreadsheets, emails, and other ad-hoc systems. This approach is time-consuming, prone to errors, and does not scale well as participation grows.

The hackathon is held during Reading Week and spans four days:

* **Day 1**: Participants are introduced to the challenge onsite at Mirvish, where they are tasked with creating a blueprint for their solution. The challenge document, containing all relevant details, will be shared with students on this day. Judges will receive the challenge briefing earlier via email.
* **Day 2 and Day 3**: Teams work independently, primarily focused on developing the software. During these days, students can use the portal to post updates or pictures to keep the excitement going. Mentors will be available for interaction via a chat or Q&A feature in the portal.
* **Day 4**: Teams present their final solutions to the judges onsite, including their blueprints and software. Teams will upload their final project files (e.g., code, presentations) to the portal before presenting. The system will generate a schedule for presentations, allowing coordinators to adjust the order if needed and mark groups that do not show up.

NCT envisions a robust digital solution that automates and centralizes these processes while allowing flexibility for future enhancements.

**Requirements for the Hackathon Portal**

**1.0 Registration Process**

* Students from all GUS colleges will be eligible to register for the hackathon. They must provide their college ID and indicate which college they represent.
* Individual profiles for students will be required. Profiles will include basic information and a verification process via email.
* Teams of up to five members can be formed. Team profiles will include a team name, logo, and a short bio or description.
* Team leaders will have privileges to manage their teams, including adding or removing members and updating team details.
* There will be no restrictions on team composition; teams can include members from different programs or semesters.

**2.0 Mentor Management**

* Mentors will play a critical role in guiding teams during the hackathon. Each mentor will have an individual profile within the system.
* Program coordinators will manually assign mentors to teams. Mentor assignments may vary depending on the theme and structure of each hackathon.
* Mentors will have access to a dedicated portal where they can view their assigned teams and any relevant briefing materials.
* Mentors will interact with teams during the hackathon using a chat or Q&A feature in the portal.

**3.0 Judging and Grading**

* Judges will have secure access to a dedicated portal to manage their responsibilities.
* A live grading system will be implemented, where judges can enter scores based on predefined rubrics. The system will automatically calculate team rankings.
* Judges will also provide comments and feedback for each team.
* The grading rubrics will be customizable by administrators to align with different hackathon themes.
* Teams will submit blueprints of their projects in various formats, such as PDF, Word, or PowerPoint. These submissions will be visible to judges through the portal, but students will not have access to the grading system.
* Judges will need access to a team's entire submission history (e.g., blueprints, final projects, comments) for informed decision-making.
* Teams will receive confirmation upon successful submission of their blueprints and final projects.

**4.0 Team and Student Profiles**

* Individual student profiles will display achievements and participation history in past hackathons. Profiles can integrate with social media for easy sharing.
* Team profiles will include updates, progress, and milestones. Teams can choose to share these publicly, with their mentors, or keep them private.
* Teams will also have a private space for sharing files, notes, or ideas among members.

**5.0 Communication and Notifications**

* The portal will automate notifications for critical deadlines and reminders, such as blueprint submission deadlines and final presentation schedules.
* Notifications will be configurable for different roles, including students, mentors, and judges.
* Program coordinators will have a dashboard to manage communications and send messages to specific groups or individuals as needed.

**6.0 Reports and Analytics**

* The portal will generate post-hackathon reports automatically, including team rankings, feedback summaries, and participation metrics.
* Analytics will track participant demographics, team performance, and mentor feedback, providing valuable insights for future events.
* Coordinators will have access to a live leaderboard visible only to them.

**7.0 Feedback Mechanism**

* After each hackathon, surveys will be conducted for students, mentors, and judges to provide feedback on the event.
* The system will compile survey data into reports to identify areas for improvement, segmented into themes like event organization and judging process.

**8.0 Certificates (once the participant submits the survey mentioned in 7.0)**

* Certificates of participation will be issued to all participants.
* Appreciation certificates will be provided for mentors and judges to recognize their contributions to the event.

**9.0 Future Scalability**

* The portal will be designed to support both mobile and web platforms, ensuring accessibility on all devices.
* Participation history and institutional records will be stored for long-term use.
* While external participants are not currently allowed, the portal will have the flexibility to accommodate additional features or user groups in the future.