Hello, I was the product owner for this project in the fall of 2023.

This letter was written on 12/4/2023 and is intended for the product owner of this project during spring 2024.

This letter contains advice for the new product owner of this project, challenges I faced as a product owner during the project, and my advice on how to avoid those challenges as a new product owner.

Here is my advice (in order) for the new product owner of this project:

1. Read the scrum requirements PowerPoint again.
    a. Specifically pay attention to the slides on user stories, acceptance criteria, and product backlog items (That's about 90% of the PowerPoint).
    b. If you have any questions about the content ask Kinser.

2. Read the advice for product owners in KinserPedia.
    a. This document contains general advice for new product owners written by past product owners in SE1 from fall 2023.

3. Read the project specification/requirements document again.
    a. Most of the user stories and acceptance criteria you write should come from this document.
    b. If you have any questions about the content ask Kinser.

4. Choose a backlog management tool/software.
    a. I used Jira to manage our team's backlog and organize our team's sprints.

5. Fill the backlog with product backlog items.
    a. This includes user stories, research items, technical improvements, and fixes.
    b. For the first initial grooming think about what needs to be done for your team to start sprinting.
    c. Ask other product owners for help if you are stuck.

6. Refine the product backlog items.
   a. Prioritize items (Small stories, research items, and bug fixes should be above larger user stories and epics).
   b. Break down PBIs further if there is a lot of acceptance criteria for a single PBI.

7. Write clear and concise acceptance criteria.
   a. Writing good acceptance criteria will help the team with writing sprint tasks.
   b. Acceptance criteria is equivalent to validation testing.
   c. Acceptance criteria should focus on what needs to be done not how it needs to be done.
   d. Include both the happy and unhappy path.
   e. Work with other product owners.

8. Write achievable sprint goals that reinforce learning concepts in the class.
   a. Think about the SMART acronym when writing sprint goals.
   b. Write goals around small PBIs and think about what learning outcomes are achieved when working with those PBIs (There is a lot of learning outcomes).
   c. Work with other product owners.

9. Repeat 6, 7, and 8 each sprint.

Here are the challenges I have encountered over the sprint:

1. During our initial grooming step my team and I identified too many user stories as sprintable when in reality only a couple of them were sprintable.

Your team will do the same thing because you are new to breaking down user stories. As the new PO, I advise you to plan for this risk and break down user stories into as many vertical slices as possible. Remember a user story needs to be completed during a sprint. If it's not completed then you failed in estimating the time needed to complete the user story.

2. During our first sprint planning some of my team thought the user stories I introduced were already completed which resulted in the development team struggling to write sprint tasks.

This mainly resulted from not having clear and concise acceptance criteria in user stories. My advice for you is to prioritize small user stories first. Then write clear and concise acceptance criteria that is testable for the smaller user stories. So if your team believes the task is already completed they can write tests that verify it is completed.

In summary, most of the challenges I faced as a product owner this semester could have been avoided by prioritizing smaller PBIs, writing simpler user stories, and writing clear and concise acceptance criteria for those user stories.

To help you get started as a new product owner our project's product backlog and sprint history is located on the project GitHub. (The product backlog still needs to be refined and reprioritized for your team).

Do your best and if you ever need help don't be afraid to talk to other team's product owners or Mr. Kinser.

Good luck,