MSF: Mason Salvation Force

Role:	Project Producer
Team Size:	24 developers across four disciplines
Timeline:	Two semesters (~24 weeks), shipped two weeks ahead of schedule
Engine:	Unity
Tools:	Trello, Discord, GitHub
Genre:	Co-op arcade platformer shooter
Outcome:	Shipped and featured in university capstone showcase

Project Overview

MSF: Mason Salvation Force is a chaotic co-op arcade platformer shooter blending pixel art, satire, and boss-based run-and-gun gameplay. The project demanded tight coordination across art, programming, audio, and design departments to deliver a polished multiplayer experience within an aggressive timeline.

As Project Producer, I was responsible for ensuring all teams had visibility into milestones, dependencies were tracked, blockers were resolved, and the project shipped on schedule. The game was completed two weeks ahead of deadline and featured in the university's capstone showcase.

Team Structure & Coordination

The 24-person team was organized into four departments:

Art: Character sprites, environment assets, UI elements, visual effects

Code: Core systems, multiplayer networking, gameplay mechanics, tools

Audio: Sound effects, music, audio implementation

Design: Level layouts, boss encounters, balancing, documentation

I developed all cross-functional coordination through Trello for task tracking, Discord for daily communication, and GitHub for version control. I maintained visibility across all departments to identify dependencies and potential conflicts before they became blockers, and later created consistent lead meetings to follow up on team development.

Production Responsibilities

Milestone Planning & Tracking: Defined project milestones from vertical slice through final polish. Maintained the Trello board to track progress against deliverables and ensure all teams understood upcoming deadlines.

Cross-Functional Communication: Facilitated communication between departments to ensure art assets matched code requirements, audio was implemented on schedule, and design documentation was actionable for implementation teams.

Blocker Resolution: Identified risks early and worked to remove roadblocks before they impacted the schedule. When bottlenecks emerged, I coordinated across teams to reallocate resources, adjust task priorities, or negotiate scope changes.

Scope Management: Made scope decisions to protect the schedule while preserving core gameplay experience. This included cutting features that posed unacceptable risk to the timeline and ensuring the team understood the reasoning behind those decisions.

Team Health: Maintained a communicative, transparent team culture. Addressed conflicts directly and worked to keep the team motivated, committed, and focused on realistic goals throughout production.

Production Challenges

Pipeline Bottlenecks: With four departments working in parallel, dependencies created natural bottlenecks. When one department fell behind, downstream teams were affected. I addressed this by identifying critical path items, adjusting task priorities, and facilitating direct communication between blocked teams.

Team Conflicts: A 24-person team inevitably experiences disagreements. I mediated conflicts by focusing on project goals rather than individual preferences, ensuring all voices were heard while keeping decisions tied to what would ship the best game on time.

Scope Pressure: Ambition exceeded capacity at multiple points. I led scope discussions to cut features that risked the timeline while protecting the core experience. These decisions were communicated transparently so the team understood the tradeoffs.

Outcome

MSF: Mason Salvation Force shipped two weeks ahead of the final deadline. All milestone goals—vertical slice, alpha, beta, and gold—were met on schedule. The game was featured in the university capstone showcase and is publicly available on Itch.io.

This project demonstrated my ability to coordinate cross-functional teams, manage scope against schedule, resolve blockers, and maintain team health under production pressure—skills directly applicable to supporting multiple titles in a live production environment.

Links

Play the Game: https://gonderlane.itch.io/mason-salvation-force

Portfolio: https://andresvalbuena.com/