Proposal: Provision of an Esports Computer Lab for Students
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https://its.uri.edu/rhody-esports/
Esports is a growing area of digital transformation and collegiate competition among universities. Esports provisions a pathway for increased social connections among students, alignment with new degree programs, increased university reputation, and a host of other benefits. It also provides a critical venue to close the gender and equality gaps through inclusion of wider demographics and non-traditional students in sporting events and campus communities. The following proposal covers support and engagement opportunities between URI IT, Union, and student interest groups.

“Based on current growth trends, by the end of the decade roughly half of all higher education institutions in the United States will have some affiliation with esports in an official capacity”

Esports Foundry, 2022 Report
The University of Rhode Island leads innovation in multiple areas. With robust student gaming clubs and sporting already well established, esports enthusiasts seek to expand on the professional spaces available for esporting events as well.

The Rhody Esports Coalition (REC) is a group of campus collaborators partnering to implement a small esports computer lab in the Memorial Student Union where both the student gaming club or any student interest groups could partake in competitive esporting.

Following is supporting data, survey and feedback results, as well as the project budget. REC now seeks to finalize spacing allocation for the esports lab, and then funding, equipment, and technology upgrades.

REC welcomes new members interested in collaborating on this project.

Please contact Michelle Rogers for inclusion in future planning meetings: rogersmd@uri.edu.

https://its.uri.edu/rhody-esports/
ESPORTS DATA

ESPORTS INDUSTRY

- Global esports revenue in 2021: 2 Billion
- 2020 esports global audience: 435.9 million
- 2020-2025 compound annual growth rate = 6%
- Top esports champions are age 20-24
- Esports audience at 540 million people in 2023.

COMPARING REVENUE

Industry Revenue Reports, 2018
- Gaming: 138 Billion
- Sports: 75 Billion
- US Films: 42 Billion

COMPARING GROWTH

Year over year growth:
- Esports 2018: 1 Billion
- NFL 2018: 8 Billion
- NBA 2018: 7.4 Billion

GROWTH

Global gaming market expected to double by $500 billion by 2030.
**Student Survey**

**URI Student Gaming Club Survey Results**

A survey of likert scale and multiple choice questions gauging esports interest was sent to the URI Student Gaming Club in February 2022, including alumni members.

Of 37 respondents 84% (n 31) said they were current members, and 87% said they were are full-time students (n 27). Findings reported here included all respondents.

**KEY FINDINGS**

**N = 37**

**Interest**
54% (n 20) of respondents were open to both informal and formal competitive esports programs.

**Participation**
73% (n 27) of respondents were interested in a structured esports program with both academic and athletic requirements for participation.

**Location**
Of respondents, 67% (n 16) felt having a central location on campus was critical. One respondent quoted, "Absolutely necessary, as it is synonymous with the presence of the organization… it makes it more open to newcomers as well."

**Experience**
79% (n 19) of respondents were interested in working with the campus on esport project implementations, and 48% (n 15) were interested in working in the esport industry after college.

**Community**
84% (n 31) expressed the moderate to extreme necessity of teams and clubs to their feeling of connectedness with the campus community.
Potential Impact

Paul Elliot with Varsity Esports Foundation conducted a study on current esports members.

The survey was sent to an undisclosed number of students in esports programs across the USA. A total of 40 survey responses were recorded, and no response rate measured.

KEY FINDINGS

(n = 40)

Improved GPA

Average GPA of players increased from 57.5% to 62.5% after joining an esports team.

Benefits

82% of respondents reported esports benefited their life.

Community

78% of respondents reported a sense of belonging from esports programs.

Source: https://www.varstyesportsfoundation.org/blog-list/survey-participation-esports-clubs
## PROPOSED BUDGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desktop Setup x 2:</strong> Dell Alienware R15 - $5,000, Monitor + Accessories - $1,000</td>
<td>$12,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internet Upgrade:</strong> Labor cost of running fiber from the distribution switch to the room. Cost of fiber cabling itself. Cost of 24 port gigabit managed switch with fiber uplink(s). Cost of equipment to mount switch (rack).</td>
<td>$5000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power Distribution:</strong> PDUs and added breaker.</td>
<td>$8000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Large Viewing Screen:</strong> 65” LCD TV installation for streaming</td>
<td>$2500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modular Cooperative Gaming Furniture</strong></td>
<td>$5500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$33,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grants may provide earlier deployment.

Initial beta-pilot will be run by the student gaming club.
Partnerships & Collaboration

Through collaboration across multiple departments and groups the esports program will be able to provide students a holistic and supportive university and team experience.

STUDENT GAMING CLUB
- Xan Allen, President
- Dylan Difilippo, Secretary

IT SERVICES
- Karlis Kaugars, CIO
- Michelle Rogers, Director of Teaching & Learning Services
- Katie Babula, Manager of AV Services
- Heath Loder, Endpoint Support
- Amanda Jensen, Project Leader
- Kevin Gray, Project Leader

ACADEMICS – UNION
- Bhavik Patel, Senior Information Technologist, Memorial Union
- Ryan Crowley, Coordinator of Operational Services, Memorial Union

NIRSA: COLLEGIATE ESPORTS
URI is a member of the national intramural association: NIRSA. Like many intramural groups NIRSA hosts annual esports competitions for the Rocket League video game competition.

https://nirsanet/nirsatag/esports/

STUDENT GAMING
URI already has a robust student gaming group that could utilize the esports lab, as well as any other students interested in competitive esports.

CONTACT
https://its.uri.edu/rhody-esports/ | rogersmd@uri.edu