**President’s Task Force on Athletics**

**Report of the Esports Subcommittee**

*Current status of WSU Esports:*

WSU launched an Esports varsity team in January, 2019. In addition to the Varsity team, WSU has a club team with over 80 members that has been in existence for several years.

Wichita State University’s Esports program provides students the opportunity to participate in competitive video games at the highest collegiate level, offers multiple degree paths in the Esports industry providing multiple applied learning opportunities and works with all students across campus to ensure student development. Wichita State Esports is developing a program identity that encompasses numerous elements of higher education. Not only will students compete against other institutions in competitions but Wichita State Esports is designing, developing, and deploying programming for applied learning opportunities, student development, and an Esports Management minor track. The intent is to engage students related academic programs such as the Media Arts program in Fine Arts and the Esports Minor in the College of Applied Studies as well as engage in applied learning experiences associated with Esports. Those may include, but are not limited to, helping to manage Esports events, Coaching Esports teams, leading Esports youth camps, and participating in other related programming such as mental health counseling.

*Varsity Esports competitions:*

Most intercollegiate competitions are online with some Local Area Network (LAN) competitions. Wichita State currently has four competitive varsity gaming teams: Overwatch, League of Legends, Counter Strike, and Rocket League. The varsity teams have competed against teams within [NACE](https://nacesports.org/), [TESPA](https://tespa.org/), [Collegiate Star League](https://www.cstarleague.com/), [AVGL](https://avglcollege.org/), [uLOL](https://ulol.na.leagueoflegends.com/), as well as a number of other tournament providers. Most of these have been online competitions. However, the WSU varsity Esports team participated in two of the “lands” during the Fall, 2019 semester.

*American Athletic Conference:*

Wichita State is currently the only institution in the AAC who has a Varsity E-Sport Team.  Of the other universities in the conference who have an Esports presence, it is at the club level only.

*WSU student involvement and support*

One indication of student support for Esports at WSU is the level of SGA funding the program has received. Currently SGA has allocated roughly $40,000 toward supporting staff salary and operating expenses. In addition, the WSU E sports varsity team hosts the Southeast High School Esport team once a week to compete. Each of those competitions bring about 30 high schoolers to campus where they interact with the WSU team and utilize the current Esports Hub. The number of participants in that event continues to grow each week.

In regard to recruitment activity, the number of student inquiries we received from the Fall, 2019 included communication from 42 students interested in participating in Esports at WSU. Of those, 24 were freshmen, 11 current WSU students, 4 transfer students, 2 graduate students and 2 were from high school sophmores.

With more emphasis on recruitment and promotion using strategies such as watch parties and prompt replies to student inquiries, we feel the level of student interest will surge.

*Faculty Support*

*WSU Faculty Senate*

Faculty Senate executive board members, Aleks Sternfeld-Dunn and Jeff Jarmin, met with Dean Shirley Lefever on February 13, 2020 to discuss the current status of WSU Esports and to strategize for soliciting faculty input regarding the intiative and faculty perspectives on the potential Esports Arena. It was decided the topic would be put on the next Faculty Senate agenda with the CAS Faculty representative, Whitney Bailey presenting the information.

*Collaboration with WSU Tech*

In order to capitalize on the shared interest between WSU and WSU Tech in building programming around Esports, WSU Tech has committed to supporting the Esports Staff salaries as well as student scholarships.

*Esports Governance*

The WSU Esports Varsity team is housed in Campus Rec, division of Student Affairs. At the national level, the NCAA recently announced it has no plans to develop an esports structure for the next five years nor have they licensed their image and structure to these competitions or teams.

*WSU Recruitment efforts*

The WSU Esports coordinator has met with WSU Admissions team to provide an overview of the team as well as academic and applied learning opportunities that are associated with Esports at WSU. We currently have a link on the [WSU Esports website](https://www.wichita.edu/esports) for interested students to request additional information about Esports at WSU.

*Collaboration with area High Schools:*

Working with two faculty at Maize Complete High School, the College of Applied Studies has provided an option for teachers who complete this training to gain WSU credit for the courses through our Market Based Tuition program. For more information, go to:

<https://www.highschoolesportsleague.com/high-school-partnership/#start-a-team>

*Esports Youth Camps:*

The WSU Esports coordinator and the Campus Recreation Center director recently met with personnel at Wichita Public Schools to support their efforts at launching Esports within their district. We are currently working with them to enroll their students into our summer Esport youth camp to be hosted at WSU this summer.

*Esports Arena*

*NOTE: Due to COVID-19, Midwest Esports has moved all of their events and tournaments online.  WSU is working with UEA and the developer to update the timeline for building the arena. Live events may return in Oct. 2020. Tentatively planning 2021 live event schedule.*

In keeping with the mission of the Division Student Affair, the Varsity Esports team is committed to holistically developing student athletes at WSU. The following outline highlights a “wishlist,” of applied learning opportunities which could be available to students and would positively impact the student culture on campus.

1. Collaboration with Wichita Public Schools
   1. The WSU vision for the Esports Arena on the Innovation Campus includes collaboration with USD 259 with the intended goal of shared benefits to both institutions in regard to both academics and competition.
2. Appplied Learning affiliated with Academic programs
   1. Applied Research opportunities could include but not limited to those with a focus on performance analytics, human factors, mental health wellness, new media, competition, psychology-development of social or communication skills in high stress environments.
   2. Sports management learning experiences might include, Event planning, Sports casting, ticket sales, event promotion, Youth development including STEAM and Esports camps etc.
   3. Shocker Studios and Digital Arts programs
   4. Applied Computer Science learning experiences
   5. Live streaming rooms where players can live stream their game play on Twitch, etc. can also be used for other live streaming opportunities, such as podcasting, digital content creation, influencer marketing, etc.
   6. School of Education learning experiences might include leading youth STEAM and Esport camps, serving as “camp Counselors” etc.
3. Simulation Learning Lab
   1. Associated directly with educational and cultural impacts. The simulation learning lab would use AR, VR, and other technologies to engage key stakeholders:
      1. Community Youth: STEM camps using the latest gaming titles; STE(A)M camps bringing a variety of uses of gaming-related or esports-centric activities as a way to engage underrepresented minority populations. These camps could be social justice initiatives using esports and gaming culture to integrate at-risk youth into the university cultural environment.
      2. WSU Students: simulation learning provides students in a variety of fields the opportunity to use simulated environments and “gamification” to enhance teaching and learning. These simulations could include exercise science, athletic training, play therapy, Air Force ROTC, Army ROTC, and provide sport management students the opportunity to run, manage, market, and leverage a simulation learning (or gaming) environment.
      3. Community members (e.g. students, alumni, and business partners): to interact with the latest technologies and how to produce in-house, multimedia productions.
4. Student-athlete Services Center
   1. Houses a facility and services for student affairs’ athletic and/or competitive teams
      1. **Varsity Esports**
      2. Bowling
      3. Rowing
   2. Students in these athletic areas need spaces for social development programming, debriefing, and development
   3. As these competitive team programs continue to grow and development, this space would allow the administration of the respective teams to be centralized and thus, share promotional or administrative resources
5. Community Epicenter
   1. Similar to that of the upstairs in the RSC, a large lobby area that not only can house a place for students but a large multipurpose space in which events, conferences, award ceremonies, and other occasions can be house in the new center
   2. Possibly include a small built in stage if there was ever a time in which not only the Esports entity houses a tournament or small-scale event but other competitions on campus as well can be help in this new building
      1. Engagement with Shocker Studios, WSU TV, or MRC, to provide some sort of in-house production value for the space

*MOU*

1. Stacia is drafting an MOU which will be framed around three main areas, people, time and resources.