RHODY ESPORTS

Proposal:
Rhody eLab &
Rhody Esports Club

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https://its.uri.edu/tls/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.

RATIONALE

"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 a 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 esports club or other 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 complete the initial build out for the esports lab and support the student club as they begin to expand.

REC welcomes new members interested in collaborating on this project.

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

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PROJECT GOALS

ESPORTS DATA

COMPARING REVENUE

Industry Revenue Reports, 2023
- US Gaming 0.5 Billion
- US Music: 17 Billion
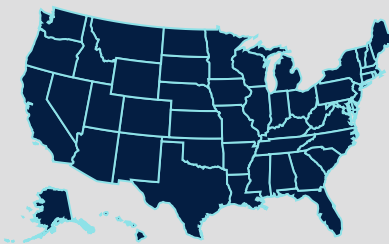- US Films: 9 Billion

COMPARING GROWTH

Year over year growth:
(last complete seasons)
- Esports: 300 Million
- MLB: 1 Billion
- NBA: 500 Million

COMPARING VIEWERSHIP

- 2023 League of Legends World
  Championship: 6.4 Million
- 2023 World Series: 9.11 Million
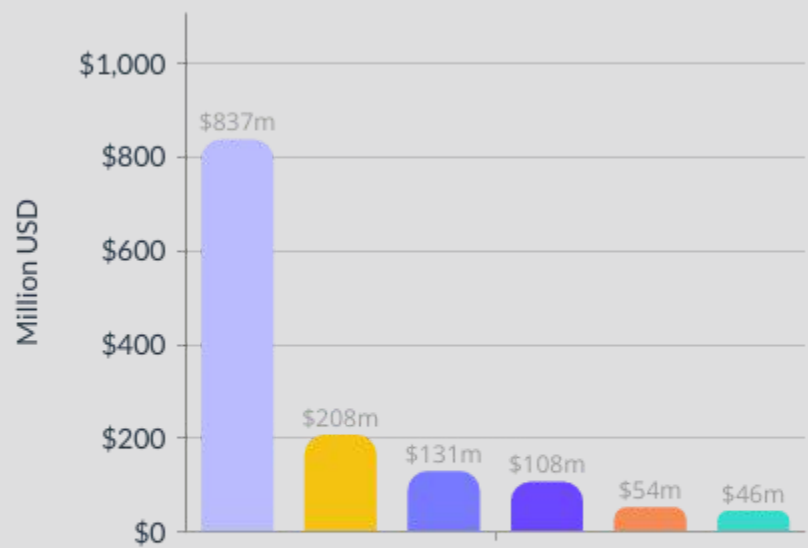- 2023 NBA Finals: 11.64 Million

US ESPORTS GROWTH

US is largest esports industry after China

CAGR 20%

Esports 2024-2032 Growth

Est 2025 Esport Revenue Streams

Source: https://influencermarketinghub.com/esports-data/#toc-2

Million USD

| $1,000 |
| $800 | $837m |
| $600 |
| $400 |
| $200 | $208m | $131m | $108m | $54m | $46m |
| $0 |

Segment

Sponsorship Media Publisher Fees
Merch/Tickets Digital Streaming

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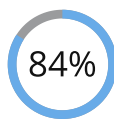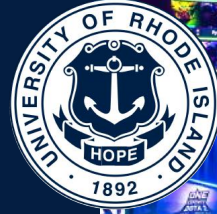
Community
84% (n 31) expressed the moderate to extreme neccesity of teams and clubs to their feeling of connectedness with the campus community.

84%

Student/Athlete Benefits

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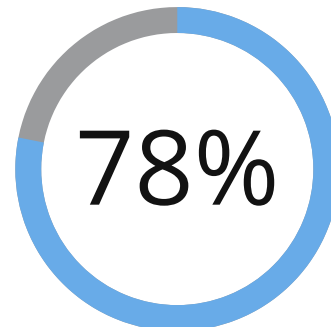Average GPA of players increased from 57.5% to 62.5% after joining an esports team.

Benefits
82% of respondents reported esports benefited their life.

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

78%

THE RHODY eLAB

Phase 1 of the Rhody Esports Project is to launch a small esports lab (eLab) in Memorial Union room 317.

The eLab will feature high performance computers to support esporting advancement at URI, with room to expand as interest and funding allow.

EQUIPMENT

eLab Machines:

- Dell towers
- Intel Core i7 Processors
- 16-32 GB RAM
- NVME SSD Hard Drive
- Nvidia GeForce RTX 3070/3050 Graphics Card
- 2 32" Dell monitors
- Razer Viper V3 Mice
- Razer Blackwidow V3 Keyboard
- HyperX Cloud III Headset

THE FUTURE

- Additional gaming stations
- Streaming capacity
- Consoles
- Viewing lounge

2024 PROJECT BUDGET

Budget for an initial start-up lab with six esports gaming stations and equipment, furniture and peripherals.

Desktop PCs x 6: Dell Tower - $2,000/PC x 6 stations	**$12,000.00**
Desktop Peripherals: Razer Keyboards and Mice. HyperX Headsets. $250/station x 6 stations	**$1500.00**
Monitors x 6: 300/monitor/station x 6 stations	**$1800.00**
Internet Upgrade: 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).	**$5000.00**
Power Distribution: PDUs and added breaker.	**$8000.00**
Large Viewing Screen: 65" LCD TV installation for streaming	**$2500.00**
Chairs: Kelista Swivel - 131/chair x 6 stations	**$786.00**
HVAC Upgrade: Condenser, Labor, Materials	**$3000.00**
Modular Cooperative Gaming Furniture	**$5500.00**
Total	**$40,086.00**

Grants may provide earlier deployment.

The eLab will be open to all esports interest groups.

TIMELINE

March '24

Phase 1
- ◦ Initial Launch of eLab
- ◦ Room build out
- ◦ Policy development
- ◦ Security definitions
- ◦ Network and HVAC upgrades

Sept '24

Phase 2
- ◦ Expand eLab: add 2 additional gaming stations
- ◦ Develop streaming capacity
- ◦ Create location for viewing parties

March '25

Phase 3
- ◦ Expand eLab: add 2 additional gaming stations
- ◦ Develop capacity for tournament play

Sept '25

University of Rhode Island Esports

Partnerships & Collaboration

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

STUDENT ESPORTS CLUB

- Nadia Sutyrina, President
- Snaha Pokharel, Vice President
- Calin Smith, Treasurer
- Skye Vrucak, Secretary

IT SERVICES

- Gabriele Fariello, CIO
- Michelle Rogers, Director of Teaching & Learning Services
- Katie Babula, Manager of AV Services
- Heath Loder, Endpoint Support
- Kevin Gray, Project Leader

MEMORIAL UNION

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

MEMBERSHIPS

URI is already a member of athletic organizations at the Varsity, Club, and Intramural level, which will allow Rhody Esports to scale and provide a high level of competition.

NIRSA: RECREATIONAL ESPORTS

URI is a member of the National Intramural-Recreation Sports Association: NIRSA.
https://nirsa.net/nirsa/tag/esports/

ECAC: INTERCOLLEGIATE ESPORTS

URI is a member of the Eastern College Athletic Conference, offering the potential for Club or Varsity level competition

https://www.ecacesports.com/

CONTACT

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