



## Part I: Follow-up Assessment Report Template

**Date of Follow-up Report Submission: 5/19/2020**

**Name of Department / Unit: Student Involvement**

**Name of Contact Person: Courtney James**

**Name of Person(s) Completing Follow-up Report: Courtney James**

### I. Follow-Up on Last Year's Assessment Report Recommendations

In FY19, the Office of Student Involvement utilized an internally-created survey to examine student organizations needs regarding planning on-campus programming. We learned student organizations are highly familiar with on-campus event resources; however, additional marketing needs to be done to educate students on how they can use these resources. Also, student organizations are challenged by finding funding sources, creating advertisement, promoting their events, and navigating the space reservation process. At the end of FY19, the Office of Student Involvement planned to create new event bases to help students navigate the event planning process, develop a marketing plan to help students understand how they can utilize the resources, and incorporate new training on funding sources.

Throughout fall and winter quarter, OSI worked to promote these resources through DeHub. A weekly Student Organization Newsletter was developed and sent to all listed officers in DeHub. On average, the newsletter had a 53% open rate, which assisted in promoting the message around available resources.

With spring quarter shifting to a virtual environment, rental equipment was not available. However, staff in OSI worked to develop video tutorials on funding sources and expanded the offerings of event bases for when in person events eventually restart. These videos were promoted in the Student Organization Newsletter and a newly created resourced- the Digital Engagement Network- or DEN.

In the fall, the SAF-B and CAF-B training was combine into one training so student organizations could learn about both funding sources. The training included new sections on fundraising within and outside the university and the process to rent OSI equipment. Also, CAF-B board members reached out to cultural organizations to help them navigate the funding process and plan on-campus events. The board funded 55 on-campus events, 26 more than last year. It is important to note that there were 26 more events than last year despite spring quarter being a virtual experience.



## **Part II: Annual Assessment Report Template: Alternative Reflection**

Academic Year: 2019-2020

**Date of Report Submission: 5/19/2020**

**Name of Department / Unit: Student Involvement (Esports)**

**Name of Contact Person: Courtney James**

**Name of Person(s) completing report or contributing to the project: Courtney James**

### **I. Reflection on Student-facing Program-areas**

In January 2018, DePaul University launched its Esports program. While the program itself is propelled through a distributive leadership model involving a variety of different offices, all student engagement components of the program- including the Gaming Center, competitive teams, events, and student organizations- fall under the purview of the Office of Student Involvement.

Frequently, we are asked “Why does DePaul have an Esports program?” Prior to winter quarter 2020, we only were able to respond with antidotal data and stories of how we believed it to be a retention tool and that students were creating community as a result of the program. In winter quarter 2020, we completed a sense of community survey to better answer the question as to why we have an Esports program through the use of data collected from students involved in the Esports community. This survey directly connects to OSI’s Program Area Map of “Sense of Belonging<sup>1</sup>.”

The Esports Sense of Community Survey was distributed with the knowledge that participant information would assist in “crafting narrative around the student experience surrounding Esports.” It was sent to the Esports at DePaul DeHub group and was shared in Discord. In total, we received 64 responses. In FY19, there were 1243 members of the Gaming Community (773 PC users and 470 console users). Using these numbers, roughly 5.1% of the community responded to the survey. Findings from the survey can be found in Appendix A of this document and should be read before continuing this report.

### **Response in Spring Quarter based on Survey Results**

When spring quarter turned to a virtual environment, there were some assumptions made that Esports would have a quick transition to a virtual environment because of the online nature of a lot of the games. While there were structures in place that allowed for parts of the program to continue to function smoothly (IE: Communication in Discord), there were other challenges we had to account for in the transition. First, with 48% of our community not involved in anything other than Esports, we knew that our touchpoints would potentially be the only ones that students had for a non-academic reason in their spring quarter. Because of that, we created a robust

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<sup>1</sup> This is one of the two Program Areas that this report focuses on for the FY20 Assessment Project.

communication plan that included weekly newsletters, Discord messages, Discord channel engagement, and social media outreach.

Second, with 63% of our community sharing that they now had either 1-2 friends or a regular group of friends thanks to Esports, we knew it would be critical to offer connection points since the students wouldn't be able to meet in person in the DePaul Esports Gaming Center. Because of that, we developed the DePaul Gaming League. The DGL offered the following:

- Six week season (four weeks of regular play and two weeks of playoffs) for Rocket League
- Six week season (four weeks of regular play and two weeks of playoffs) for Overwatch
- Six week season (four weeks of regular play and two weeks of playoffs) for League of Legends
- Four single day tournaments and championship series for Super Smash Bros.
- Single day tournament for Animal Crossing
- Single day tournament for Fortnite
- Single day tournament for Valorant

These events, while remote, still allowed for the community to organize. Students would both play the games but would also join in on a live chat on the DePaul Esports Twitch channel to be in community with one another.

In addition to the above listed tournaments, we had an opportunity to bring in one of DePaul's most beloved campus traditions- the Gnome Hunt- into the virtual space. While all of the tournaments allowed for community building, this event in particular tied directly into developing affinity for DePaul- something that Esports programming is mapped to do through our PAM<sup>2</sup>. In this event, a student "hid" gnomes around their Animal Crossing island and students could visit to virtually hunt for the hidden gnomes. In total, 46 students participated in the event and had the opportunity to be connected to one of our traditions through this program.

Third, while our survey showed that a small number of students decided to attend DePaul University because of the Esports program (5% said it was the main reason and 14% said it influenced their decision after a campus tour), we knew that the promotion of the program would be more critical than ever as a recruitment tool. Because of that, we opened up our DePaul Gaming Leagues to admitted students and fosters conversations in Discord surrounding the class of 2024.

### **Recommendations for Fall 2020 and Beyond for Esports Program**

As we move into Fall 2020 and beyond, the data collected from the Sense of Community Survey will be extremely helpful in developing the program. Our biggest challenge surrounding Esports continues to be that we have more interest and engagement than we have the staff capacity to handle. Knowing that realistically, additional staffing support will not come in the immediate

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<sup>2</sup> This is the second of two Program Areas that this report focuses on for the FY20 Assessment Project.

future, it will be more critical than ever to leverage data in the decision making process to guide decision making.

One such way we can do this is to continue to focus on building spaces that allow for students to connect with one another in a safe environment. As we know thanks to this survey, the majority of Gaming Center users (78%) use the space because it offers an in person connection to be around others with like interests, compete with others on their team, or meet new people. Based on the results of the survey and with feedback from the students, we developed a proposal to turn the Student Involvement Conference Room into a Gaming Center from 5-10pm each day and on weekends. Given the very visible location for OSI and seeing that knowledge of the Esports program helps influence some students' decision to attend, this space will have a secondary benefit of serving as a recruitment tool. To create this space, we will have some technology needs in order to leverage this opportunity for the future.

Most significantly from this survey, we have found that students who are involved in Esports aren't involved with anything else on campus and that they are finding strong friend groups through their Esports and gaming communities. Knowing that, it will be critical to continue to invest in structures that allow these communities to thrive. Throughout the summer and early fall, it will be imperative to redevelop the program's structure to accommodate this focus and invest in experiences that allow for community to be built.