

INTEGRATING ESPORTS PLAYBOOK

COLLEGIATE ESPORTS IN ATHLETICS

INTEGRATION CHALLENGES

Key challenges noted by all department directors

- Uncertainty among university stakeholders
- Publisher (game owner) control

Additional challenges noted by athletic directors

- Stigmas and stereotypes surrounding esports
- External regulatory concerns (e.g., NCAA)
- Gender equity concerns

HANDLING CHALLENGES

Use sport to control the narrative about esports

- Frame esports as sport (e.g., refer to players as “athletes”)
- Hold esports players to similar standards as traditional student-athletes

NOTABLE THEMES

All departments used sport resources, structure, and imagery to legitimize and support esports

Housing esports in athletic departments has physical and psychological benefits for the players

POPULARITY OF ESPORTS

100+ U.S. colleges and universities offer scholarships for esports

As esports become increasingly popular at U.S. colleges and universities, the question of where to house esports programs is raised.

Collegiate esports programs are spread across two departments (i.e., athletics and student affairs), but where is best?

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

- Use sport to package esports
- Hold esports players accountable to same standards as traditional athletes
- Emphasize that esports appeal to a broad segment of the campus community

CONTACT US

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Learn More: Pizzo, A.D., Jones, G.J., & Funk, D.C. Navigating the iron cage: An institutional creation perspective of collegiate esports. doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.33708.10888.



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