

Esports growing at SIUE

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EDWARDSVILLE - The international phenomenon that is [Esports](#) has found a home at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Department of Campus Recreation and growth on campus is a certainty.

[According to a report from Newzoo](#), a market analytics company, 380 million people worldwide will watch Esports this year, including 165 million Esports enthusiasts (frequent viewers as opposed to occasional viewers). The bulk of these enthusiasts

watch from North America, China and South Korea. According to espn.com, it is estimated that 427 million people worldwide will be watching some form of Esports by 2019.

Most commonly, Esports take the form of organized, multiplayer video game competitions, particularly among professional players. The global Esports marketplace generated \$325 million in revenue in 2015 and approximately \$493 million in 2016. [CNN](http://cnn.com) points out that streaming services and live events have turned casual gamers into serious stars, who can rake in seven-figure earnings and massive brand endorsements.

Most recently at SIUE, the Esports LAN (local area network) tournament took place in late October at the Student Fitness Center. The event drew approximately 30 students with a consistent 15 members staying through the entire event. The competitive games included League of Legends, Rocket League, Super Smash Brothers and Hearthstone. Many students participated for sheer enjoyment.

SIUE Esports Club President Michael Scott sees the club as a great place for students. “The Esports club consists of both casual and competitive gamer students, and is making our campus a more positive environment for anyone interested in video games by offering exceptional gatherings, tournaments and competitive teams,” he said. “The club offers a great experience for anyone that wants to make friends and enjoy themselves over the common love of playing video games. Additionally, the Esports club offers a great competitive environment for teams with a variety of games. All of these elements combine to make SIUE a great school for Esports.”

The SIUE Esports club began as a League of Legends club in 2013. The club has grown to more than 550 members on Facebook and more than 250 members on their discord (online chat communication portal). Many teams consist of League of Legends, Rocket League, Hearthstone, CS:GO, PUBG, Rainbow6S, Overwatch, Smash Melee and Smash 4. Among all the competitive teams, there are more than 50 competitive players this semester.

Steve Huffstutler, SIUE associate vice chancellor for information technology and chief information officer, indicated that a conversion of a current computer lab into a dedicated Esports space is a possibility. A dual space would be half competition-based and half console-based game space.

“Various entities on campus, including housing, student affairs, campus recreation, the Esports Club and information technology services have met to discuss facilities, equipment, technology and layout,” Huffstutler said. “As an institution, we recognize how Esports can positively impact student recruitment and retention.”

Huffstutler said that funding through internal sources is a possibility.

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River's rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 13,000.