

Esports Press Announcement

Friday Dec. 6

Today, Oakland University announces the establishment of esports as a varsity team sport.

Oakland is one of a growing number of higher education institutions around the country embracing esports, which is organized video game competitions that attract both students and spectators.

Oakland is the first Division 1 school in Michigan to establish a varsity esports program.

The team will begin competition in the fall of 2020.

Oakland University is also proud to announce a partnership with Team Detroit Renegades, a professional esports team based at GameTime in Auburn Hills. Working with OU student-athletes, Detroit Renegades will serve as mentors and provide expertise as Oakland launches esports initiatives.

To date, Oakland University has had active club esports teams through the Office of Student Involvement.

Today's announcement adds esports as a varsity sport, and will provide expanded opportunities for the club esports teams. We believe the club and varsity teams enhance the range of ways students engage on campus and with each other.

At Oakland, we are proud of promoting discovery and inquisitiveness. Growing the presence of esports at Oakland and establishing an esports team positions us to respond to the emerging opportunities of esports, and anticipate students' expectations and learning skills in the cyber age.

Universities must be open to new approaches to teaching, and new areas of exploration. The popularity, learning potential and student engagement possibilities with esports places Oakland in the forefront of translating what can only be described as a phenomenon into a relevant educational context.

Through esports, there is the potential to recruit and retain students, many of whom are studying STEM-related disciplines and computer science.

Esports is also a way to engage online students in OU campus culture.

Esports and Higher Learning:

Esports is about more than gaming. It's a popular and competitive approach to build teamwork and promote self-directed learning.

Interactive Multimedia is among the fastest growing academic fields, which draws upon a range of disciplines, including graphic design, journalism, music.

Establishing esports as a varsity team sport broadens the many ways we engage students and encourage critical-thinking skills.

OU will review which games students can play, focus on team-building skills, and support clear and enforceable regulations and standards as we move forward.