



NJCU eSports

Integrated Marketing Communication Plan

Maria I. Sanchez

New Jersey City University

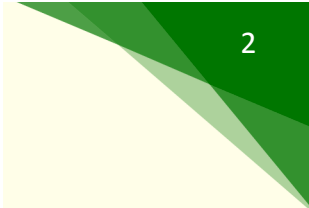
Dr. Kathleen Donohue Rennie, APR, Fellow PRSA

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CERTIFICATION OF AUTHORSHIP:

I certify that I am the author of this work and that any assistance I have received in its preparation is fully acknowledged and disclosed. I have also cited any sources from which I used data, ideas, or words, directly quoted, or paraphrased. This work was prepared by me specifically for this course.



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·Executive Summary·

New Jersey City University (NJCU) eSports is a labor of love — a grassroots project built in Fall 2020 for the NJCU gaming community. NJCU eSports is the University’s first co-ed competitive offering, operated as a club program in a partnership between athletics, student affairs and campus life. Led by head coaches, Joshua Case and Justin Flanagan, NJCU eSports is the only college e-gaming program backed by a university/college athletics department. The NJCU eSports program was built from 18 months of dialogue, research, planning and preparation and now is the ideal time for this program to reach new heights.

As Shawn Tucker, NJCU Associate Vice President and Director of Athletics commented, "Gaming is the fastest-growing form of entertainment in the world and the addition of eSports presents a great opportunity for NJCU students, adding another dimension to our robust intercollegiate offerings. This program has unlimited growth potential as it continues to evolve. As one of the first eSports programs in New Jersey, NJCU will once again be a leader in a competitive space in collegiate athletics."

Having an eSports team presents an opportunity to empower students in their interests and technical skills. Since eSports is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world, it is important that NJCU students know they can turn their love of video games into possible careers. Varsity-level eSports members compete in the National Association of Collegiate eSports (NACE), competing in games including Overwatch, League of Legends, Rocket League, Madden, FIFA, Super Smash Bros., Rainbow Six Siege, Call of Duty, Apex Legends, Tekken, and Fortnite. NJCU's eSports team for the inaugural Fall 2020 semester will primarily compete in Super Smash Bros. and Overwatch.

The debut of NJCU eSports was a success. The Fall 2020 season finished with the Super Smash Bros. Ultimate team taking home a championship; but something was missing. There was a huge public that was being cast aside, casual gamers! Much like physical sports, such as basketball, eSports can host intramural teams where members can enjoy the sport without the “pressure” of tournaments. In order to continue to build an eSports community at NJCU, and to develop the structure necessary for a varsity-level eSports program to flourish, the program created the NJCU eSports Gamer Group (Eg2). Eg2 engages casual gamers as well as the

competitive ones by hosting game nights, tournaments and developmental days for players looking to improve their skills or just to have some fun.

And, all the fun comes with life skills! Being a part of NJCU eSports showcases camaraderie, leadership, and ownership. The construction of this program is built on the notion of gaming has no bias. No matter the major, skill level, academic year, anybody can join, have fun, and earn career-enhancing skills like networking and leadership.

NJCU eSports is growing and working to create an inclusive community and reputation. Flanagan has seized opportunities for spreading the word about eSports' beneficial opportunities. He began engaging kids across New Jersey with the nonprofit foundation, Garden State eSports. Garden State eSports' mission is to create high-quality, student-centered experiences through scholastic eSports by providing the learning, competition, and the community needed for all students to use eSports as a platform to grow. Being a part of this nonprofit organization re-instills the program's values of creating a bountiful and positive gaming community.

But even after conducting months of internal and external research, ultimately the program is still new to the athletics program. Building a community is at the forefront of the program's goals.

Currently, NJCU eSports' communication is not organized strategically. Flanagan knows what the target public wants, but is seeking assistance with keeping members engaged and active. The program has opportunities to clarify and organize their messaging of building an online community of inclusivity. Especially with the impact of Covid-19, previous word of mouth communication is no longer affective. The goal of this strategic integrated marketing communication (IMC) plan is to provide research-based solutions to address NJCU eSport's marketing and communication challenges. This IMC plan will help NJCU eSports present clearer and more targeted messages about the value of membership for incoming students. The tactics provided in the plan will ensure that incoming members know about NJCU eSports and what makes NJCU eSports inclusive community beneficial. With the help of strategic marketing communication, NJCU eSports and Eg2 will be a smash hit!

·Research·

~Secondary Research~

- **Website content analysis**

- <https://njcugothicknights.com/sports/esports>
- The NJCU eSports homepage opens up with a self-made, promotional video, which is engaging, inviting, and creative. Leading with a specifically curated video creates differentiation from other sports/clubs on the NJCU campus. The video relays the sense of community enjoyed by students in NJCU eSports, but does not relay information of how to join the program.
- Opening promotional video can be seen here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ns5moStjyOU>
- Brand colors align with NJCU colors. (Green, white, yellow), linking the team to the university (you need to say why this is key – or it just picks up from example plan)
- Clear headings communicate what can be found within each section
- “ESPORTS” (homepage) section is cluttered with multiple repetitive thumbnails and links to the NJCU eSports promotional video. This under-utilizes homepage space, where important information such as social media links and an overview of the program should be.
- Last homepage update was on November 24, 2020.
- “Roster” section has impressive formatting of all the players’ names as well as their game divisions, gamer tag, year, and major. 43% of the current members are freshmen NJCU students.
- “Schedule” section has an organized and easy-to-read layout of all the past games and winnings, as well as a live countdown of when the next competition is. This is a great method of gaining viewers excitement and anticipation to watch an upcoming game.
- “NJCU eSports Recruitment Form” section automatically links to a google form:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSedO55dhYWIjd2deqiLNnPJNcWxDoTxV5Kd3YJPIDQQgUSknA/viewform>

- “In the Press” section lists all articles that have been written about the program. This builds the program’s image for interested applicants.
- “Join EG2: The eSports Gamer Group” section opens with the official flyer, which is not engaging as it does not clearly state key messages such as community building, inclusivity, or camaraderie; nor does it have an appealing design. The flyer effectively (IS THIS WHAT YOU MEAN?) states how the eSports division and the EG2 division are different. “EG2 will engage the casual gamers and the competitive ones by hosting game nights, tournaments and developmental days for players looking to improve.”
- Clearly states the eSports and Eg2 expectations, equipment requirements, and student behavioral rules.
- Social media links are stated at the very bottom of the eSports homepage as well as coach emails.
- NJCU eSports intramural counterpart, Eg2, is not listed within or linked to the club and organizations list on the NJCU website. This is not effective in engaging incoming students who want to see what the college offers other than academics. Missed opportunity for consumer visibility.
- Must work on site navigation, especially getting from NJCU’s main homepage to the athletics homepage, to the eSports homepage, then to the Eg2 section.

Content analysis of NJCU eSports current tactics:

• **Email content analysis**

- Main email from the website is NJCUESports@NJCU.edu. Program information is spread from the email, communications@njcu.edu.
- Since the addition of the program, a total of 13 emails from the athletic and intramural departments (via the emails stated above) have been sent.
- The dates of receipt of these emails are sporadic and inconsistent.
- Email content is reflective of upcoming tournaments and games. The announcement of the addition of Eg2 clearly stated a summary of the program, its requirements, and values of creating a community.

- Other emails include notes at the very bottom that include the Discord link, the email to get into contact with NJCU eSports, as well as the Twitch link to watch all their Varsity matches.
- Emails titled “E-Sports Schedule and Community Events” have a schedule of all the upcoming games for the season which is consistent with the schedule on the website.
- **Flyer content analysis**
 - Promotional flyer does not communicate key messages about the program, nor the Eg2 club. It does not state any means of having fun in an inclusive team building program which is unlike any other in New Jersey City University
 - Visually unappealing as the “NJCU eSports” logo is at the very corner of the flyer and the written text is off to one side while the other half of the flyer is empty space where social links could have gone instead.
 - Restates current social media platforms but not all of them.



- **Social media content analysis**

Information about the program across social media platforms as well as the NJCUEsports website is inconsistent. For example, the YouTube link provided for the program leads to the NJCU YouTube channel, which is not solely for the eSports program. Yet through social media platforms like TikTok, there is a link to a YouTube page solely dedicated to the

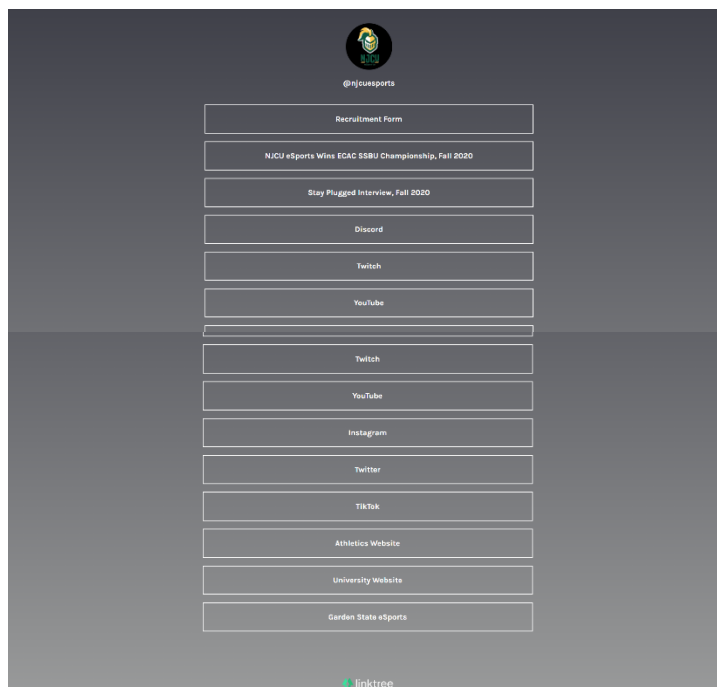
eSports teams and program. This is the same problem with the Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

A “LinkTree” was also found on three of the eight social media platforms. The “LinkTree” provides a clear concise list of links for every active social media platform as well as links to the homepage, recruitment forms, interviews, and the Garden State eSport website. The same content, in the same format, with no customization and planning, results in these tactics being unnecessary noise.

- LinkTree- <https://linktr.ee/njcuesports>

Inclusion of a LinkTree is highly efficient and saves time and work from posting individual links on each social platform. This LinkTree not only provides active forms of communication, but also communicates how the program has gained traction with earned media like interviews. The LinkTree also includes what the organization participates in, outside of program, such as its influence in the Garden State eSports organization.

- Includes recruitment form.
- Includes GothicKnight article “NJCU eSports Wins ECAC Super Smash Bros Ultimate Championship.” Showcasing capture of the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) championship in Super Smash Bros. Ultimate and stating No.1 rank placement in the ECAC.
- Includes “Stay Plugged Interview, Fall 2020” providing earned media interview on YouTube, with head coach Flanagan.
- Includes all active social media links, (Discord, Twitch, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok)
- Includes athletics website (<https://njcugothicknights.com/>)
- Includes University Website (<https://www.njcu.edu/>)
- Includes Garden State eSports link (<https://gsesports.org/>)

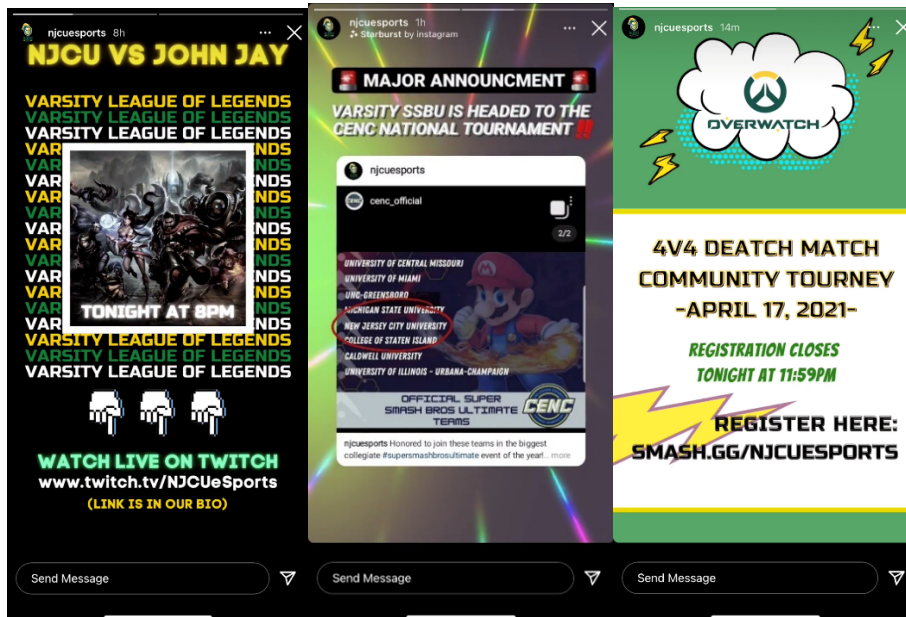


- Instagram- <https://www.instagram.com/njcuesports/>
 - Followers: 352
 - Following: 271
 - Average likes: From 10-30
 - Posts: 120
 - Engagement: Frequently responds back to comments with positivity and emojis. “Make sure to check us out!” Many comments encourage NJCUEsports to promote themselves through other promotional streaming accounts, where they can gain more viewers and traction.
 - Frequent and strategic usage of Instagram’s visual communication. Specially curated promotional posts about game information using “Instagram stories.”
 - Account posts showcase game information, results, upcoming matches, and program gear. They also curate posts about individual members, paired with portraits of the members, and a caption of appreciation for them. Effective in engaging viewers by communicating togetherness and appreciation that the program brings.

- Some of the posts also include activity calendars that the program has curated for a particular month. They include, varsity matches, movie nights, scrimms, and special events. An activity calendar for April has not been posted. These activity calendars are also only posted on Instagram, which greatly limits the audience they are reaching.

NJCU eSports March 2021		Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Varsity Smash Ultimate Official Match 8:00 Pm EST	2	3 Varsity Rocket League Official Match 8:00 Pm EST	4	5 Varsity League Of Legends Official Match 8:00 Pm EST	6 Overwatch FFA 8:00 Pm EST
	7 Movie Night 10:00 Pm EST		8 Varsity Smash Ultimate Official Match 8:00 Pm EST	9	10 Varsity Rocket League Official Match 8:00 Pm EST	11	12 Varsity League Of Legends Official Match 8:00 Pm EST	13 League of Legends TFT 6:00 Pm EST
	14 Overwatch Casual Scrimms 8:00 Pm EST		15 Varsity Smash Ultimate Official Match 8:00 Pm EST	16	17 Varsity Rocket League Official Match 8:00 Pm EST	18	19 Varsity League Of Legends Official Match 8:00 Pm EST	20 Valorant 3v3 Spike Rush Tourney 8:00 Pm EST
	21		22 Varsity Smash Ultimate Official Match 8:00 Pm EST	23	24 Varsity Rocket League Official Match 8:00 Pm EST	25	26 Varsity League Of Legends Official Match 8:00 Pm EST	27 Apex Ranked Run Snipers Only 8:00 Pm EST
	28		29	30	31			

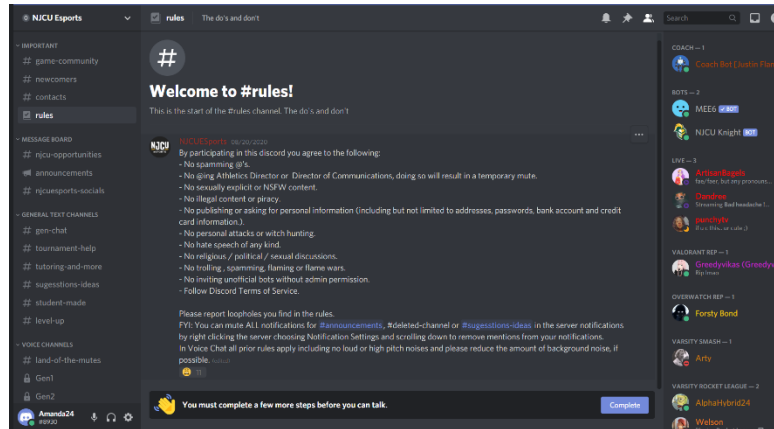
Info:
 Catch all varsity matches at : twitch.tv/njcuesports
 Join community events in the Discord:
[njcugothicknights.com/sports/esports](https://discord.com/invite/njcugothicknights.com/sports/esports)
 Got questions? Email njcuesports@njcu.edu



- Discord- <https://discord.com/invite/EXPxSK2>
 - Members: 293 but under 200 of them are online/active

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- Engagement: By far the most active platform. Daily engagements. Memes, game information, game invitations, competitions, program information and general topics are spoken about and shared.
- Rules section relays not only the server rules, but also communicates that toxicity within their gaming community will not be tolerated. The NJCU eSports server is a place of positivity and inclusivity for all.



- Twitch- <https://www.twitch.tv/njcuesports>
 - Followers: 128
 - Engagement: This platform was made almost 4 months ago and there are only 8 videos posted. This month has 5 videos posted which is the most engagement they have had. Each video yields less than 100 views.
 - “About” section does not showcase key messages of inclusivity nor positivity about the program. The “about” section is only one sentence: “NJCU's eSports Twitch; used to stream scrims, coaching sessions, matches and more.”
 - This platform is used to livestream, as well as upload past streams, onto page that is open to the public that consists of a large gaming population.
- TikTok- <https://www.tiktok.com/@njcuesports?lang=en>
 - Followers: 65
 - Comments:” wow,” “nice.” Responded to a comment that was interested in joining with “We would be happy to try out any NJCU student. For more information join our discord and message Coach Bot”

- Every video has links to their Twitch streams along with hashtags such as #esports #collegesports #smashultimate #leagueoflegends.
- Great usage of a popular platform and using humor to engage viewers using popular trends/sounds on the app.
- Does not relay any key messages, as they only post highlights and funny clips of their games and scrimmages.
- YouTube- https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSfaAideFcKtDCd0jIF_Lkg
 - Subscribers: 24
 - Less than 100 views per video
 - Comments: Only two comments on the entire channel, "congrats." No engagement with that comment.
 - No upload schedule apparent
 - Key messages are not relayed
 - Content consists of varsity match recordings, which is the same content on Twitch.
- Twitter- NJCUEsports
 - Followers: 2,316
 - Content: The exact same content posted on Instagram.
 - Engagement: Active, almost twice a week.
 - Hashtag usage such as: #esports #gaming #smashbros #jerseycitysteam #twitch #collegesports #supersmashbrosultimate
- Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Sports-Team/NJCUEsports-104197864670032/>
 - Followers: 20
 - Posts: 4
 - Average likes: 19
 - Comments: 0
 - Engagement: No follower engagement at all. Last post was on June 26, 2020.
 - There is no "bio" stating what or who NJCU eSports is and what they do.
 - Posts are about the start of the program and the deadline for registering.

- This social platform showcases that the program publics are not active on this platform.
- Snapchat- <https://www.snapchat.com/NJCUAthletics>
 - No longer active (Error 404), yet it is still posted as a form of communication on the eSports homepage.
 -

There was an aggressive shift in communication in 2020 due to Covid. This directly affects the communication attributes of each of these platforms. Depending on the form of social media, strategies in place to merge image and messages with the platform usage. How does this platform contribute to the NJCUeSports brand? However, communication is the same on almost every social media platform it is not strategic and does not use each platform's unique characteristics.

- **Content analysis of interview:**

- “Collegiate Esports ft. JUSTIN FLANAGAN, NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZDU>
- Viewers can watch an in depth and personal interview between head Coach Flanagan and SPINcast host, Kyle Taylor, on the “Stay Pugged In” channel. This video has 65 views and 233 subscribers. This interview here dives into the world of collegiate eSports. They speak of topics such as NJCUeSports key messages (IE...), program information, possible future practices, and member expectations.
- Earned media.

- **Content analysis of published articles:**

- “Competitive Gaming: Now a Varsity Sport in Barnegat”: <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/barnegat-slash-waretown/sections/education/articles/competitive-gaming-now-a-varsity-sport-in-barnegat>
- Earned media.
- Readers learn about New Jersey's inclusion of esports in universities/colleges and the benefits of it. The authors overall reasoning for this article was to showcase just how evident eSports have become and how the eSports world is inclusive to students who are not necessarily interested in physical sports.

- **Content analysis of best practices**

- “Just 2 It!”
 - This case study teaches about how IMC plans and campaigns are formatted, whether for a product, service, or organization. The specific case study tackles how a campus conducted strategic communication. This plan showcases that research and gathering information from the target audience will garner effective tactics that will directly help them.
- “Changing the meaning of “organ donor” among motorcyclists”
 - This case emphasizes the importance of having a strong key message linked to research findings that will have an impact on targeted publics. It is important to link tactics to specific objectives defined by research.
- Häagen-Dazs loves honey bees: let’s lick this problem:
 - This case focused on the importance of a good corporate social responsibility, strategy, and how important it is to promote ethical actions. Emphasizes the importance of meeting the demands and needs of the consumer.

~Primary Research~

- **Informal content analysis of In-class interview with head coach Justin Flanagan**

- Goal is to build a community.
- Justin Flanagan states that he considers the program a “Splinter sport or within a splinter category along with cheerleading.”
- Graphic Design, English, and Marketing departments are where the program heads have reached out to/collaborated with to engage students to join.
- Flanagan is on the fence about calling Eg2 a club because the program heads lose some control if they label it as that as it would then be run by department heads and no longer be student lead.
- Most engagement is conducted through Discord and hosted events.
- Since it is mainly currently student marketed, the program relies on word of mouth to spread information and awareness of the program’s existence.
- Varsity students get access to the esports lounge, which has 12 high end PC's, jerseys and the budget is primarily focused on them.

- Currently there are around 200 people in the program, but most of them are not active. Quarantine seems to have stunted potential growth within the community.
- No established budget
- They are setting up high schoolers and middle schoolers for future engagement through a non-profit organization called Garden State Esports.
- **Social media survey of target publics**
 - Based on secondary research, the majority of the members in the eSports program are freshman..
 - A survey (provided in the appendix) was conducted through social media and was only open to current college students (gamer and non-gamer). A majority of participants were freshman and underclassmen who are in the process of picking out a college to attend.
 - The survey is interested in exploring how Freshman college students as well as recently graduated high school students feel about collegiate eSports. The survey gains insight on how recent high school graduates gather information about potential colleges. Results can provide insight into how gamers feel within the community, which can tell the NJCU eSports program to actively push out the positive messaging and camaraderie that the program provides.
 - Results showed that newly graduated high schoolers research what sports and clubs are offered in order to enrich their college experience. One of the biggest channels of retrieving information is through emails, yet NJCUEsports does not have a regular email schedule in place, to reach their impressionable public.

~SWOT Analysis~

Strength(s): The NJCUEsports program offers not only a Varsity level team, but also a casual group, named Eg2. Both groups have upwards of almost 200 combined members but have had limited operating history since the program is fairly new. Competition is fairly low since no surrounding schools have strong gaming programs or clubs. Eg2 engages the casual gamers and the competitive ones by hosting game nights, tournaments and developmental days for players looking to improve. NJCUEsports utilizes many forms of communication that are useful in reaching their target audiences, such as: Instagram, Discord, Twitch, Twitter,

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Emails, and TikTok. The program uses these forms of communication to emphasize a community of inclusivity, positivity, and fun.

Weakness(s): Since NJCUEsports is fairly new building a community has been slow. The current pandemic has also had a strong effect on direct interaction with group members and coaches, which hinders comfortability and engagement. NJCUEsports has also not properly communicated a set schedule of meeting dates; nor have they established a regular email schedule to establish reliability. Most of the members who have joined, have not been active on the Discord for a majority of the time. Thus, reputation is localized. While the program has established members/a loyal following, it has not been able to gain leverage just using word of mouth to grow the community. They also have a limited budget for communicative activities/methods since it is student run. In terms of accessibility, website analysis has shown that finding information about NJCUEsports and its divisions is cumbersome. Flyer does not communicate any key messages or objectives.

Opportunities: Ultimately since NJCUEsports is relatively new, they need to build community first. They seek to expand the community by effectively communicating with key publics including middle schools, high schools, and even NJCU female students. They do have the capacity to grow, since they have been in the works of marketing towards middle and high schoolers by participating in a program called Garden State Esports. Through more reliable and regular communication methods/activities, NJCUEsports has the opportunity to expand its brand and grow its reputation. (i.e., social media engagement, email schedule)

Threat(s): Without effectively introducing the eSports programs to the community, the program may not gain enough business (members) to sustain activity and remain in business. New competitive threats may emerge as other colleges/universities can begin to adopt a gaming program or club.

·Planning·

Business Goal

To increase membership in NJCU eSports for both Varsity and Eg2 teams.

Communication Goal

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To build awareness of the positive community and opportunities that membership in NJCU eSports delivers to members.

Publics Analysis

Results from the in-class interview, as well as website content analysis, reveals that NJCU students can be recruited into the eSports program, but freshman are by far the most impressionable and better inclined to join new and emerging programs such as the eSports program., Currently, freshman make up 43% of the NJCU eSports roster.

Primary publics:

- Incoming NJCU freshmen who identify as non-gamers and/or casual gamers.
- NJCU students, ranging from freshman to senior

Secondary Publics:

- New Jersey students ranging from 14 years old to 19 years old, who have an interest in video games.
- The parents/guardians of incoming and current NJCU students.

Objectives

Communication Objectives:

1. To inspire 35% of NJCU freshmen students to watch and connect with NJCU eSports social media (Discord, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) by the Fall 2022 semester.
2. To increase freshman NJCU student engagement within the Eg2 division by 10% by the Spring 2022 semester.
3. To persuade 20% of NJCU freshmen to share the NJCUEsports program with a friend.
4. To inform 50% of incoming NJCU freshman students of the NJCU eSports Gamer Group (Eg2) by the end of the Fall 2021 Semester.

Key Messages

NJCU eSports key messages are:

- NJCU eSports is a positive online gaming community that benefits members mental health.
- NJCU eSports instills a competitiveness that does not equal toxicity.
- NJCU eSports is welcoming of all lifestyles and skill level. (i.e., casual gamers, female gamers, etc)
- NJCU eSports is so much more than just playing video games. Members benefit from the teambuilding, discipline, camaraderie, cooperation, and respect that come with participation.

Strategies

- To build close relationships with NJCU freshman and reinforce their beliefs of the benefits that the eSports program offers, through visual communication across media channels.
- Give NJCU freshman a compelling way to engage more genuinely and frequently with the NJCU eSports program by sharing the values of the program through multimedia channels.

Implementation

The Covid-19 pandemic has played a huge part in stunting NJCU eSports growth in reaching their target public. In the face of such an unforeseen circumstance, strategy is needed. The program needs to build relationships, awareness, and social media engagement.. If all content is the same, in the same format, with no customization and planning, NJCU eSports messages may be ignored as unnecessary noise. Placement and inclusion of key messages are important facets of the implementation of all tactics be successful..

Paid media

- Advertisements (**Helps meet objectives 3 and 4**)
 - The program can purchase ads in places where NJCU freshman and students will be able to find it. Places such as the NJCU website, on a shuttle bus, in the GothicTimes newsletter. **WHAT KEY MESSAGES NEED TO BE IN ADS?**

Earned media

- Pitch to appear on podcasts and website videos, much like the interview Justin Flanagan already had with SPINcast host, Kyle Taylor. Being a part of interviews and podcasts can aid in the spread of the program's messages and benefits of not only enrolling to NJCU, but also joining NJCU eSports. **(Helps meet objective 4) HOW CAN THE videos be leveraged on social and the Program's website? HINT: LINKS!**
- Contact promotional streaming accounts that commenters have suggested. (Via Instagram). Collaborating with these promoters can help reach a broader audience of young kids or high school students. **(Helps meet objectives 1, 3, and 4) Can these influencer relationships be leveraged? Socialized? Celebrated on the website?**

Shared media.

- Social Media Revision **(Helps meet objectives 1, 2, and 3)**
 - Utilize individual abilities of a specific platform such as using Twitter to personally engage with followers (via links, hashtags and ...) and Instagram to visually engage followers by creating infographics and results of matches and upcoming events.
 - Save time in linking all social platforms separately on all active accounts, by linking the already made LinkTree onto all platforms. Have a specifically curated bio for each platform that includes key messages of inclusivity and teamwork.
 - Create a social media content calendar to identify message and social frequency on each individual social platform in order to effectively reach target publics. Scheduled social posts via Hoot Suite.
 - Consider removing the program's Facebook page, since the target audience is not effectively reached through the platform. This is shown by not only the lack of posts, but engagement and followers. Freshman are not active on social media like Facebook.
 - Remove the program's Snapchat link on the eSports homepage. It is no longer an active and viable source of communication, so to have it still posted on the homepage is ineffective.
- Continue to create activity calendars. **(Helps meet objectives 1 and 2)**

- Activity calendars serve as the framework for what plans to share and promote across all marketing channels. A well thought out and organized activity calendar is excellent for brainstorming, maintaining consistency. A WHAT helps plan social media marketing and keeping serious and casual gamers engaged with the program. The same activity calendars that have been previously posted on Instagram, should be posted on active accounts like Discord and Twitter as well as in the “schedule” section on the eSports homepage.

Owned media

- Website update and revision (**Helps meet objectives 2 and 4**)
 - Enhance sight navigation by rearranging the game schedule to be most recent events at the top of the page, and oldest events towards the bottom. This change ensures that interested members know what events and games are going on as soon as they click the “Schedule” tab. They should not have to scroll to the very bottom to view new and updated information.
 - Re-design the homepage (“ESPORTS” tab) by including the program’s most important descriptors. This includes key messages, FAQ, and backstory. Information written in the release titled “NJCU Athletics Announces Addition of eSports,” should be front and center. This is to establish a repertoire and image between interested members and the NJCU eSports community. Also declutter the “ESPORTS” section of the website by removing NJCU eSports multiple thumbnails/links. There should only be one link to the promotional video on this particular section.
 - Update the Eg2 section of the website by including updated monthly activity calendars.
 - Not only do updates need to be done to the eSports website, but also to the University’s website. <https://njcugothicknights.com/index.aspx> . The intramural eSports division, Eg2, should be listed as a club offered by the school so that casual gamers feel welcomed in a casual gaming atmosphere. The NJCU eSports program considers themselves “an official combined varsity, club, and intramural program,” so Eg2 must be listed on the university’s main website.

- **Flyer revision and QR code (Helps meet objectives 1, 3 and 4)**
 - The NJCU eSports flyer must be redesigned with key messages, ways to register for the program, as well as contact links.
 - The revised flyer can implement a QR code. A QR code is a bar code that is used to provide easy access to online information through the digital camera on a smartphone or tablet. QR codes are a new creative way to drive traffic and connect with target publics. The eSports program can take advantage of this growing trend. It also creates differentiation from any other of the dozens of flyers posted around the NJCU campus. QR codes are free, easy to make and download, and can be spray painted (or added to flyers and social) anywhere on the NJCU campus (within regulation). Seeing a QR code around campus creates curiosity. The scanned QR code could either display the programs promotional video or their LinkTree. (attached in appendix)

Direct marketing

Direct marketing tactics can ensure that the target publics is reached without any third-party interference.

- **Email (Helps meet objectives 2 and 4)**
 - Establish a regular email schedule to establish reliability, organization, effective communication. Weekly or bi-weekly email updates of online matches, practice times, and scrimmages. Emails can also include active social media accounts as well as the link to the recruitment form. Many colleges launch massive e-mailing campaigns, sending communications to millions of students. Incoming freshman can receive promotional emails about NJCU eSports to help new students be a part of the NJCU community. Scheduling these emails can be when the new academic semester begins. Include what links? Include opt out to get more targeted list, engage people most likely to join...
- **Freshman orientation class (Helps meet objectives 2 and 4)**
 - All NJCU freshman are required to take the “Orientation to College” class, where they learn how to become an active member of the NJCU community. What students are given in that class is a “Student Handbook” that includes information about

events, clubs, and sports the University offers. NJCU eSpors can put a flyer in the orientation classes' handbook that DOES WHAT

- **Open House (Helps meet objectives 1,2,3, and 4)**
 - Open houses are events where students have a tour of a college campus and explore what opportunities are offered. Not only do open houses influence students, but also the parents, as they usually accompany their children. Parents play a big role in the decisions their child makes.. The NJCU eSports program can set up a stationary table as many other sports and clubs do and engage approaching students by using tchotchkes that covey the programs uniqueness. Tchotchkes are about building brand awareness, helping target publics remember key messages, and used to say thank you for their consideration in the program. WHAT MESSAGE as to be on these?
 - Tchotchkes
 - Lanyards with the emails and name NJCUeSports logo and colors.
 - Webcam cover
 - NJCU eSports stickers

·Evaluation·

Measuring impact is essential after implementation of an IMC process. Evaluation methods are key to analyzing if NJCU eSports core messages were effectively communicated with the target publics.

- 1) To determine if 35% of NJCU freshman were engaged with NJCUeSports social media by the Fall 2022 semester:
 - a) Measure social media impression growth by recording every @ mention and use of client's hashtags
(#esports #gaming #gamersofinstagram #jerseycitysteam #twitch #twitchstreamers #collegeesports #competitivegaming) over 5 months of the campaign.
 - b) Track the number of followers on each social platform and compare them pre and post implementation of the campaign

- c) Compare and contrast the amount of people commenting and interacting with each post pre and post campaign to determine if NJCU freshman have begun being more active towards eSports social accounts.
- 2) To determine if freshman NJCU student engagements within the Eg2 division, grew by X% by the Spring 2022 semester:
 - a) Track the amount of NJCU freshman who filled out the recruitment form pre and post campaign.
 - b) Record the number of viewers on each live Twitch event/tournament to determine the effectiveness of the program's communication skills.
 - c) Record the number of student engagement within the esports Discord to see if the engagement grew from less than half of the members being active to more.
 - 3) To determine if 20% of NJCU freshmen were persuaded to share the NJCUeSports program with a friend:
 - a) Track the amount of email responses from interested students pre and post campaign to determine if knowledge of NJCU eSports was shared.
 - b) Record the number of Discord members post campaign to determine if the number of members grew.
 - c) Track the number of visits to the eSports Lounge in the Gilligan Student Union Building (2nd floor)
 - 4) To determine if 50% of incoming NJCU freshman students were informed of the NJCU eSports Gamer Group (Eg2) by the end of the Fall 2021 Semester:
 - a) Conduct a survey with NJCU freshman at the end of the academic year, to determine their awareness of the eSports Gamer Group (Eg2) via email.
 - b) Conduct a focus group of each freshman orientation class at the end of the academic year to determine if freshman became more active with seeking out the eSport program.
 - c) Track attendance at Open House events to determine the number of new students who were interested in the program.
 - d) Record the number of views of the eSports promotional video (provided as a QR code), to determine if interested NJCU freshman relay any key messages.
 - e) Track membership growth, as well as numbers of inquires about membership and which channels the inquires are coming from

~Appendix~

Survey

Please answer the following questions with the provided answers:

1. Age? Younger than 15/15-18/ 19+
2. Year in school?
3. Do you consider yourself a gamer? yes/sort of/no
4. Has video games negatively affected your school attendance or work ethic? yes/no
5. Do you look at what clubs and sports are offered when you apply for universities/colleges? yes/no
6. Would you consider joining a gaming club? yes/ maybe/ no
7. Do you feel like gaming helps your eye and hand coordination? yes/no
8. How do you find the gaming community? fair/aggressive/personable
9. What is your most effective choice of receiving/gathering school information? School website/ email/ physical mail
10. Do you frequently check your email? Yes sometimes/no
11. Do you think teamwork and camaraderie are important? yes/ sort of /no

Please complete the following statement:

(12) If I did not play video games, I would be.....

Stressed/Bored/Doing better in school/Interacting with friends and family/Watching TV

(13) Playing video games gives me.....

Social skills/Stress relief/Hand eye coordination/Adrenaline rush/A place to escape/Inspiration

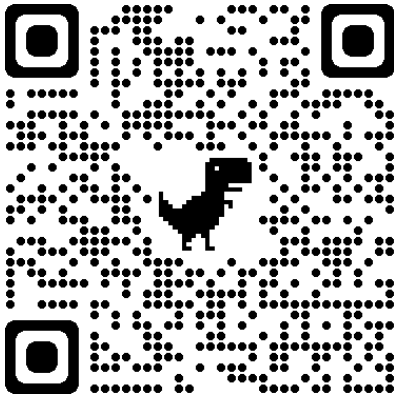
IMC Plan: NJCUeSports

Results:

1. More than half of the participants were 19 years old
2. Most were freshmen
3. Most said Yes
4. Most said No
5. 50/50 on the answers
6. Most said Yes
7. Most said yes
8. Most said Personable and the two people that said aggressive said they would play more games if there was a more positive environment surrounding them (i.e., esports lol)
9. All said Email
10. Most said yes
11. All said yes
- (12) Bored/stressed
- (13) Place to escape

QR Code(s)

NJCU eSports promotional video



NJCU eSports LinkTree

