

FDC HAPPENINGS



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*A group of five individuals sit or stand around a computer

Summer/Fall 2024 Program Proposals

Each semester, we seek proposals for sustained learning communities or seminars, or for a more involved series of workshops, or for hosting a significant one-time event (such as bringing in a prominent speaker). Our budget provides funding for such activities as we respond to evolving interests on campus.

We award up to \$5,000 per program, which can include an honorarium for a facilitator or speaker, honoraria for participants, supplies, travel expenses, etc. This funding can enable you to make a meaningful commitment of time and resources, helping participants to learn together, develop new skills, collaborate, and innovate.

All faculty, lecturers, and staff are eligible to submit a Program Request Form. Past recipients of this award are ineligible to be funded in two consecutive

application cycles. Preference will be given to new proposals as opposed to those repeating past programs. Significant modifications of past programs will be treated as if they were new programs.

Click [here](#) to visit the website for more information.

Click [here](#) to view the application.

Proposals are due March 11th.

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

2

From the FDC and Dean of Students Office

The Faculty Development Center and the Dean of Students Office invite faculty, lecturers, and graduate teaching fellows to apply for another round of mini-grants (up to \$250) to support student wellness in their teaching. The mini-grants projects are to take place during the summer or fall 2024 semester.



Applications will be evaluated based upon:

- the quality of the idea;
- the proposal's plan to evaluate the impact of the innovation; and
- the ability of the idea to be scaled up to work for larger numbers of students in different classes.

For this round of applications, we would also like to invite EMU students to collaborate with a faculty member to implement a wellness practice into a class. Students who participate in this opportunity will be awarded a \$100 honorarium for their time and efforts. Your innovation, done with a faculty member, lecturer, or graduate teaching fellow, would be put into practice during the summer or fall 2024 semester.

**Applications are due
March 11th.**

Click [here](#) to apply!

**Click [here](#) to visit our
website for more
information.**

**We thank the
Rec/IM and
E|Dining for their
support of these
mini-grants.**

upcoming

EVENTS

3

GENERATIVE AI SPEAKER SPOTLIGHTS

*Program #3: February 14th @ 12:30 PM
109B Halle Library or [Zoom](#)*

During the winter 2024 semester, the Faculty Development Center and the Office of Campus & Community Writing will host a series of four sessions related to generative AI. Click [here](#) to visit our webpage to learn more about each session. Program #3, facilitated by T. Daniel Seely, will explore how AI might help with analytic work (using linguistics as the model). Click [here](#) to register if you plan to attend any of the remaining programs.

*Click [here](#) to register.
February 19th @ 3-5 PM
109B Halle or [Zoom](#)*

BUILDING A CARING CLASSROOM

Join Dr. Cirleen DeBlaere and Dr. Jesse Owen from The Steve Fund for their faculty workshop, hosted by Ron Flowers' "Building a Caring Classroom" series. The Steve Fund is the largest non-profit mental health organization focusing on the mental health of students of color. The Steve Fund prioritizes diversity and inclusion, ensuring that mental health support is sensitive to the experiences and needs of marginalized students.

MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY SEMINAR

*March 8th @ 10 AM - 3 PM
300 Halle*

Share your strategies for addressing media and information literacy through a poster featuring a class activity, lesson, or pedagogical innovation. Poster formats can be flexible, and resources are available to assist with poster design and production. Complete the poster proposal form linked below by Friday, March 1st. Posters will also be shared on [EMU Digital Commons](#) (with presenter permission) for further dissemination after the event. Click [here](#) to register for the seminar.

*March 13th @ 12:30 PM
109B Halle and [Zoom](#)*

TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH ESPORTS

[EMU Esports](#) is on the fast track to become a top North American esports program. The program regularly redefines the scope of collegiate esports by working closely with academic and institutional departments alike. Join Zach Lewis, Esports Coordinator at EMU, for this informative session to learn how esports can be applicable to you in your teaching. Click [here](#) to register, and check out this week's blog for more information on this program.

STAY TUNED

Stay tuned to our newsletter for an exciting opportunity to apply for FDC research funding. On March 4, we will unveil a Call for Proposals for faculty-student teams to apply for funding (for up to two years) to support research on faculty-student partnerships. We are interested in research projects that address the value of student-faculty collaborations or partnerships, how they can be implemented effectively, and how these kinds of connections can become a key part of the culture of EMU. More to come!

upcoming EVENTS

scan the QR code to
access the links in
this issue



Click [here](#) to apply.

WAC SPRING INSTITUTE

On behalf of Ann Blakeslee and her team, we are excited to share the application for this year's WAC Spring Institute. We hope you will consider participating and that you will also share this information with your colleagues. Click [here](#) for more information about the WAC Institute. The program will run Tuesday through Friday, April 30 to May 3, 9 AM to 3:30 PM each day. Sessions will be in-person. The application deadline is February 23.

FACULTY SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY SHOWCASE

*Showcase will take place March 14th
@ 4-6 PM in the Student Center
Applications/Registrations due March 7th*

The Faculty Development Center and the Office of Research Development and Administration (ORDA) are excited to host the 2024 Faculty Scholarly and Creative Activity Showcase to celebrate scholarship and creative activities by EMU faculty. We invite all faculty and lecturers to display posters, journal articles, books, artwork, and videos or compact discs of performing art, etc. This display can highlight scholarly activities that were either disseminated/completed during 2023, or any current research that EMU community members are engaging in (or have recently engaged in), regardless of if/when it was disseminated. We are particularly interested in Gen AI research or projects featuring scholarly investigations around using Gen AI in the classroom. Click [here](#) to register.

Click [here](#) to participate.

Group meets Wednesdays from 1-3 PM

RESEARCH WRITERS COLLABORATIVE

Join Sarah Walsh to block out the time to set and achieve our writing goals, even given the other pressures we all face. The [Research Writers Collaborative](#) is an opportunity for faculty and full-time and part-time lecturers to support each other in setting and achieving realistic writing goals (i.e., developing a conference paper, drafting an article, revising a book chapter, etc.). These groups meet every Wednesday - join us as often as you can for these virtual sessions.

Partnership Spotlight



Dr. Ron Delph & Riley Coffee

**Department of History
and Philosophy**

In this partnership spotlight, Dr. Ron Delph (L) and Riley Coffee discuss their partnership work with Riley's thesis research, the skills they have learned through this process, and advice to others wanting to engage in this type of collaboration.

Esports in Education: A Practical Learning Supplement

By Zach Lewis

“Esports” is a word that means many different things to many different people. To many, esports is an entirely foreign concept while to others, it's the foundation of a digital lifestyle. For someone not acquainted with esports, the industry can seem bizarre. After all, how can competitive video gaming ever be considered normal, valuable, or even healthy?

Sports, in the traditional sense, are common - and have been common for thousands of years. People have always found a way to gamify their recreation with physicality in running, fighting, throwing, kicking, catching, and more. Esports, however, isn't really a physical activity; leaning instead into teamwork and reactive memory, it's almost entirely a battle of minds.

With new cultural and technological trends, however, a battle of minds is actually becoming a prominent part of humanity's standard entertainment. Never before have people been this computer literate. Never before have people consumed more digital content than they have now. And never before have people been so accustomed to stay-at-home activities in the face of a pandemic fallout.

Esports is here, and it's here to stay - particularly in the scholastic world. In 2014, Robert Morris University introduced the first ever scholastic esports scholarships. In one short decade, collegiate esports has come far, particularly ramping up in the last five years. According to the [2022 Esports Foundry Trends Report](#), by 2022, over half that year's programs had reached three years of age (with an estimated 500+ total programs).

To better understand this metric, however, the measure of what constitutes an esports program is important to consider. In the Esports Foundry report, the term “program” could refer to either student groups/organizations or university-backed programs. At the time, only about 20-25% of “programs” were actually supported by their university with full-time staff, operational funding, and facility space. In this regard, scholastic esports is still very much a grassroots movement for many universities.

Nonetheless, at Eastern Michigan University (EMU) and many other midwest universities, esports is finally stepping away from its humble beginnings. Leading our industry in many ways, [EMU Esports](#) is taking new and bold steps in developing the concept of what it means to be a collegiate esports program. Here are a few strategic initiatives that EMU Esports and select other major universities are engaging with to get ahead of the pack:

- Enhancing Student Engagement
- Developing Academic Integrations
- Enabling Career Development
- Offering Health & Wellness Programs
- Incorporating Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives
- Advancing University Technologies
- Facilitating Recruitment and Retention (Scholarship) Programs

While each of these strategies could be a book in and of themselves, education is the focus of today's discussion. Teaching and learning through esports is a powerful tool that is just now being discovered by top programs such as ours. The reason for this emerging trend lies in the classification of collegiate esports by university administrations. At some universities,

esports falls under athletics while at others, esports reports to student life or another similar department. To fall under anything other than athletics, esports finds itself as something of an anomaly on campus: not quite varsity, but not quite a club.

In this middle ground lies a core advantage for collegiate esports that is not easily replicated by most other university programs. Esports programs can grow as their own competitive organizations while incorporating hands-on learning experiences in a number of academic disciplines. By delivering unique interdisciplinary internship positions, esports programs can create value by utilizing students to simulate the collaborations of real-world business departments.

As a result, an esports program operates much like you'd expect a real world company to operate. While each "departmental" student group is responsible for their own field (marketing, broadcast, cinematography, computer science, graphic design, team management, etc.), cross-group collaboration becomes necessary to achieve challenging goals set by program management. By setting high standards, program directors can subtly encourage students to attempt solving large problems together, preparing them for what comes after college.

Group collaboration, then, also creates a catalyst for the individual students' desires to learn. While a student may begin an internship with limited experience outside the classroom, they find themselves wanting to live up to the expectations set by their similarly positioned peers. Then, in a carefully curated healthy co-working environment, expectation changes from being something daunting into being something to be conquered. With this motivation, a combination of professional guidance, personal research, and hands-on experience, each student becomes more capable of delivering skilled work in what is expected to be their field of expertise.

The commitment of an internship isn't where the positive influence of esports has to end, however. The esports co-working experience can be extended into regular classroom projects as well. Either by replicating a part of an internship or by piggy-backing off of an existing project, students across our campus can be given the opportunity to learn through esports. By becoming temporarily involved with an esports program, almost any student can accent their education with hands-on experience in an industry that is unlike anything they have experienced before.

All in all, esports is just now becoming a tool for teaching and learning at the university level. While it is certainly still growing and evolving regularly, the esports industry may very well become a model for future learning programs. Today, it is our responsibility to become a pioneer in an emerging industry that may provide our students with new and exciting opportunities.

With this said, I invite you to join me, and the Faculty Development Center, for a program focused on Teaching and Learning Through ESports on Wednesday, March 13, at 12:30 PM. This will be in the Faculty Development Center (109 Halle) and on Zoom. We hope you can join us for a fun conversation - you can register to attend here. Thank you for joining us for this interesting foray into a new arena for teaching and learning.

About the Author



Zach Lewis has worked or participated in collegiate esports for nearly the past decade at institutions such as Oklahoma State University, Limestone University, and now, Eastern Michigan University. Having earned his MBA in 2023, Zach's next goal is to build the greatest collegiate esports program in North America.