

CHAPTER 18.

PANEL: NAVIGATING UNIVERSITY STAKEHOLDERS

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ABSTRACT

Large universities are enormous enterprises with long histories, proud traditions, and institutional bureaucracy. Esports programs represent new directions, opportunities, and challenges for universities as they look to innovate with fledgling esports programs. Esports program directors have had to understand the power structures on campuses and work with many stakeholders to seek support and approval for creating these new initiatives. As more schools consider adding esports, each will need to consider the many stakeholders including students, faculty, alumni, athletics, communications, legal, admissions, IT departments, and many others.

This panel consisted of some of the key early adopters of collegiate esports from the University of Utah and Miami University (Ohio) who have successfully built highly-respected programs. The panel began with short overview presentations from both AJ and Glenn as they shared basic information about their esports programs and what they

do. The panel then went through some of the common and uncommon questions that are frequently asked.

Panelists

Mark Deppe led the effort to create the award-winning esports program at UCI that boasts a 100% graduation rate. Working closely with student leaders, administrators, faculty, and industry partners, Mark built a business plan that is both cost-neutral to the university and that broadly approaches the world of esports through the five pillars of Competition, Research, Community, Entertainment, and Careers. Mark was selected to serve as the inaugural commissioner for the North American Scholastic Esports Federation, helping connect learning to student interests.