

Turning students' passion for esports into career paths

St. Clair College drives visibility, growth and student success with Canada's first varsity and academic esports programs.



Customer profile



Higher Education | Canada



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Shaun Byrne

Professor, Esports Administration and Entrepreneurship Program, St. Clair College

Organization needs

To support students' interests in esports and help them pursue careers in sports management, media production, event management, entrepreneurship, team and league administration, and technical marketing, St. Clair College wanted to establish a varsity esports program as well as a two-year [Esports Administration and Entrepreneurship Program](#).

Organization results

- Increases visibility with events that attract 500,000 spectators.
- Has Rocket League team that's ranked in the top 10 in North America.
- Secures an average of 60 new enrollments each year.
- Facilitates numerous career paths in esports.
- Enables competition against NCAA Division 1 schools.

Solutions at a glance

- [Dell Alienware Aurora R12 gaming desktops](#)



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The esports industry generates nearly \$1 billion in revenue each year — and while increasing numbers of North American schools have varsity esports teams, few offer academic esports degrees. St. Clair College in Ontario was the first in Canada to offer both programs. Today, its top-ranked esports teams attract hundreds of thousands of event spectators. The college’s Esports Administration and Entrepreneurship Program is also increasing enrollment and enabling students to pursue careers as esports program managers, producers, livestream technicians and other emerging roles.

St. Clair College’s journey in esports started just a few years ago when its Windsor campus hosted the region’s first esports tournament. Part fun, part publicity, the event also served as a litmus test to gauge community interest in esports. At the time, there were only 10 varsity esports programs in North America. St. Clair’s event, Saints Gaming Live, was a huge success. Hundreds of spectators attended in person and thousands watched livestreams of game matches. The college decided to launch a varsity esports program and investigate the feasibility of adding an academic one.

Shaun Byrne, professor in the Esports Administration and Entrepreneurship Program and director of the esports varsity team at St. Clair College, says, “It’s impossible to ignore the value of esports when you walk into a building and see hundreds of people gathered playing video games.”

Even though St. Clair College has hundreds of faculty members who facilitate 135 diploma, degree and certificate programs, the college needed staff who were dedicated to esports. “Being a gamer or traditional coach doesn’t make you qualified to start an esports program,” Byrne explains. St. Clair College created strategic and tactical plans, formed seven Saints esports teams and established a 750-foot space with 12 Dell Alienware gaming desktops. “For 20 years,

we’ve provided students with an open gaming lab with 30 Dell Alienware machines, but our esports teams needed their own space to train and compete.”

Half a million spectators spell career opportunities

The Saints started playing — and beating — U.S. varsity esports teams at NCAA Division 1 schools. “Up to 500 people attended our annual Saints Gaming Live tournaments in person, and our livestream content reached over half a million views on Twitch and YouTube,” says Byrne.

Recognizing the career opportunities for students who were producing, observing, streaming, marketing and colorcasting events, St. Clair College launched Canada’s first two-year academic program devoted to esports. To help graduates quickly pursue different job roles, St. Clair College had Dell Technologies join the program’s advisory board. Byrne explains, “Dell helps ensure that our Esports Administration and Entrepreneurship Program supports industry trends and requirements.”



Supports students’ interests and facilitates growth.



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Top-ranked programs drive growth

Today, the Saints Rocket League team is ranked in the top 10 in North America, and most other Saints teams are in the top 20. “St. Clair College’s esports programs are some of the most successful in North America,” says Byrne. “Every year, our esports stream viewership is number one or two on the continent. And our esports programs are bringing in an average of 60 new students every year.”

To support the growth of both of these programs, the college added esports spaces in its new Zekelman Centre of Business and Information Technology. They include an arena with 64 Dell Alienware gaming desktops, three dedicated virtual reality spaces and a lounge with eight additional Dell Alienware gaming desktops. The Saints are also adding eight more esports teams and 50 additional scholarship positions for a new junior varsity program. “Having partners like Dell Technologies is critical to the growth and value of our esports programs,” Byrne concludes. “Because it understands the unique intricacies of the industry, Dell helps us equip students with the IT and business skills they’ll need to successfully pursue a variety of esports career paths.”

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