



GETTING AHEAD OF THE GAME WITH ESPORTS MANAGEMENT

If someone told Morgan Atwater (Business Administration) five years ago he'd be taking an esports management class in college, he wouldn't have believed them. For Atwater, video games were just a hobby and esports just something he watched his friends participate in.

But the sophomore is one of the students enrolled in this fall's Introduction to Esports Management course at UNC Greensboro's Bryan School of Business and Economics — the first of five major courses offered as a part of the new Esports Management major.

Housed in the Department of Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Hospitality & Tourism, students pursuing a B.S. in Hospitality and Tourism Management are able to opt in. The business degree – 120 credit hours with at least 36 credits at or above the 300-course level – will provide students with a strong foundation in the functional areas of business with additional coursework that dives into the dynamic business of competitive gaming.

"Esports is a business," said Dr. Erick Byrd, an Associate Professor in the department. "Therefore, we are approaching esports from the standpoint of how to develop, promote, manage, and host esports tournaments and related events. In essence, we are looking at this fast-growing segment of the event industry and training our graduates to be able to make this profitable for businesses, organizations, and communities."

A World of Possibilities

Atwater recalls learning about the new esports major during a sustainable development class taught by Byrd. The idea of an esports course caught his attention, despite the fact that Atwater is currently pursuing a degree in business administration.

"I was so surprised when Dr. Byrd told us about the course," said Atwater. "I've always been interested in esports and have always played video games. That, combined with the fact that Dr. Byrd was teaching, was enough to sell me on signing up."

Now, Atwater said he's 100 percent open to the possibility of a career in esports management — perhaps something on the branding side of things.

"There's something so exciting about the idea of interacting with other brands and helping my own esports team continue to grow," Atwater said.

Hands-on Experiences

Students taking classes in the Esports Management major will receive hands-on experience hosting events in the newly opened, state-of-the-art esports arena in UNCG's Moran Commons. The 3,300-square-foot space features 48 PCs, three gaming console bays, and a VR Oculus Quest 2 headset.

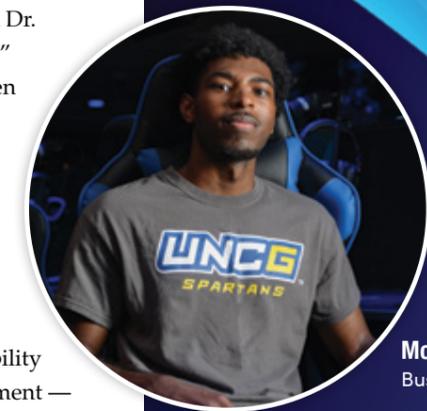
From hosting tournaments to managing brands, Byrd hopes that offering Esports Management as a major will allow students to plan and execute events and blaze their own paths within the burgeoning \$1 billion industry. Though only a select few esports management courses will be offered during Fall 2022, two additional electives will be available in 2023.

"Esports is an exciting segment of the event industry that could create multiple opportunities for communities. But all of this depends on sound planning, management, and execution," Byrd added. "This is what we will help our students learn." ■

Written by Mackenzie Francisco

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Morgan Atwater
Business Administration

Along with the choice for two electives, major courses for the Esports Management major will include:

- **STH 103 INTRODUCTION TO ESPORTS MANAGEMENT**
- **STH 251 DIVERSITY AND EQUITY IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM**
- **MKT 421 PROMOTION MANAGEMENT IN ESPORTS**
- **STH 433 ESPORTS, MEETING AND EVENT TOURISM**
- **STH 491 TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**

UNCG's new state-of-the-art gaming facility opened in April of 2022 in Moran Commons. It features:

- **3,300+ SQ. FT.**
- **48 PCS**
- **3 GAMING CONSOLE BAYS**
- **VR OCULUS QUEST 2 HEADSET**