First Reading: 4-19-2016

Second Reading: 4-26-2016

Pass: Yes

Other: N/A

Resolution 4-16-S Resolution to Support the Creation of an eSports Program and Dedicated Space at Western Kentucky University.

PURPOSE: For the Student Government Association of Western Kentucky University to support the Creation of an eSports Program and Dedicated Space.

WHEREAS: eSports can be defined as a form of sports where the primary aspects of the sport are facilitated by electronic systems, particularly video games, and

WHEREAS: League of Legends is the most played game in the world, with approximately 67 million players logging in each month, and

WHEREAS: World championships were first created in 2011 with prize money reaching $1 million; in 2013, the United States government decided to provide international professional players on American teams to use the same visa used by international athletes in the NBA, NFL, MLB etc, and

WHEREAS: The 2015 League of Legends world championship was watched by more people than the World Series of Baseball; 11,000 people attended the 2015 North American league finals held at Madison Square Garden and the 2014 world championship saw over 40,000 in attendance at a soccer stadium in Seoul, South Korea, and

WHEREAS: League of Legends has international reach with the following separate professional leagues: North America, Europe, South Korea, China, Taiwan/Hong Kong/Macau, Southeast Asia, Brazil, Latin America, Japan, Turkey, Post-Soviet States, and Oceania. In many countries the popularity is even greater than in America and thus it will give Western Kentucky University both an extended international reach and increased international prestige, and

WHEREAS: As with other professional sports, the popularity has given rise to demand for collegiate level competition and training, and

WHEREAS: Riot, which is the creator of League of Legends, created the North American Collegiate Championship in 2015 with a grand prize of $30,000 in scholarship money awarded to each player on the winning team, and over 1,200 colleges and universities entered the competition. In addition, there is the Collegiate Star League that has a regular season and tournament in which the winning team is awarded a total of $20,000 in scholarships, and

WHEREAS: Several private schools created the first eSports programs, which included a dedicated space, equipment, coaches, and scholarships. The eSports program at the University of California Irvine was the most recent program to be created, and the first state-funded university to do so. The size of League of Legends teams ranges from 15-20 players, and

WHEREAS: Riot has a policy to help grow the interest in larger universities by helping with costs of renovating space, and

WHEREAS: There is abundant interest from both national and international players in attending a school with eSport programs. For example, Robert Morris University Illinois received 2,000 emails from interested players upon their initial announcement about the program and questions from 34 other universities and the University of Pikeville was contacted by 850 players with interest, and

WHEREAS: It is likely that players will be interested in attending universities with eSports; the University of Pikeville also saw increased interest in opportunities for students to intern as coaches and the broadcasting aspect created an increased interest in their Film and Media Arts program, and

WHEREAS: The increase in interest from students who would never have considered or attended Western Kentucky University otherwise will make eSports a profit-generating program on campus, and

WHEREAS: The space that is created for this program should not only be used by teams, but also by registered student organizations, faculty research, and classes, and

WHEREAS: Having an eSports program would be ideal for the traditionally marginalized gaming community. Prospective students interested in attending a university with a thriving gaming atmosphere will want to attend Western Kentucky University, and

WHEREAS: The Student Government Association does not support the use of any fees or tuition increases in order to finance this project.

THEREFORE: Be it resolved that the Student Government Association of Western Kentucky University supports the Creation of an eSports Program and Dedicated Space.

AUTHORS: SGA Senator John Hay, SGA Senator Zachary Jones, WKU League of Legends Club President Nick Conrad, SGA President Jay Todd Richey

SPONSOR: Campus Improvements Committee

CONTACTS: SGA President Jay Todd Richey