Beyond University

BeeU Video Game

...where you're the main character!

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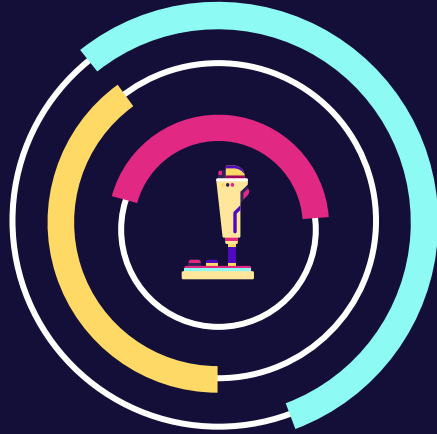
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Introduction to BU

Demographics

- BU is a private, not-for-profit institution
  - 4,395 undergraduate students
  - 2,147 graduate students
- Rated #15 in the Top 25 STEM institutions of 2019
  - 60% of BU students are pursuing a STEM degree
- Award-winning Computer Science Master's program

Residential

- Located in rural college town
- Highly residential campus
  - In a typical year, 80% of BU students live on campus
  - Due to COVID, 30% of BU students currently live on campus

Engagement

- Offers 300+ student organizations
- 90% of BU students are involved & engaged with at least one student club or organization

Virtual Programming via the

BeeU

Video Game

BeeU at BU!

Currently, our student affairs professionals, graphic design, and computer science students are collaborating to develop BeeU. Students were excited at the opportunity to work on this platform to expand their portfolio and increase social engagement among students.

Due to the impacts of COVID-19, many of our students not residing on campus, so we plan to utilize BeeU to create an engaging, virtual spring break that will allow students to "hang out" without risking the health of the community.

1. Since the university is suspending spring break this year, our virtual "spring break" will take place over a weekend and will be called BEEchy Spectacular Extravaganza (BEEch Bash for short)!
2. BeeU is designed for all students and offers customization in their avatar and honeycomb to celebrate their own identities and all students have the opportunity to engage with different cultural events associated with our many culture centers on campus.
3. Each "Adventure" will help students learn more about a campus resource, require work on a team to collaborate on various tasks, offer opportunities to gather Pollen, and be fun!

Gaming & Social Engagement

By being able to socially interact from the convenience and comfort of your home, platforms that incorporate life simulations have been a huge hit! Games like Sims, Minecraft, and Animal Crossing have all utilized different platforms with a similar concept: letting users develop worlds, stories, and friends. The popularity of simulation gaming has only increased use by college students during quarantine (Oputu, 2020).

Knowing the popularity of gaming with traditionally aged college students, **it is time for BU to innovate!** We're creating a gaming space, BeeU, that contributes to our positive campus culture and meets students where they are at!

Gamification

- "Gamification provides a range of acceptable actions, rules, time requirements, feedback mechanisms, and desired behaviors while providing opportunities for students to direct their experiences" (Des Armier et al., 2016, p. 65)

- Research shows that gamification promotes student engagement by allowing for competition and achievement rewards while allowing students to direct their experiences (Des Armier et al., 2016).

- A Gamification study added gaming components to a college course and found that 60% of the students in the course used video games regularly, 87.8% of students in the class reported enjoying playing classroom games, and 99.2% reported putting in effort to complete learning-based gamification elements added to their course (Des Armier et al., 2016).

Why Gaming?

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) surveyed over 27,000 first-year students from 63 institutions and found (Cole, 2017):

- Students reported spending more time in high school playing video games than on social media.
- "Video game use and social media use is pervasive with incoming first-year students."
- Utilizing gaming, something students report actively using, would allow BU to create programming that meets students where they are at!

Gaming & Engagement

Research shows that student engagement and video games have a positive relationship with student learning (Shu & Liu, 2019).

- We can use BeeU to increase student interaction online to facilitate student building meaningful friendships within the BU community.

Conceptual Framework

We utilize the student engagement framework from Schindler, Burkholder, Morad, and Marsh (2017) to measure the three indicators of student engagement.

- **Behavioral** - promoting interactions with others and participating in social activities
- **Cognitive** - students are provided motivation with high scores, prizes, and so on to play BeeU, also learning can be incorporated through BeeU in the classroom and other deeper ways of thinking other than traditional learning methods
- **Emotional** - BeeU is promoting a sense of belonging with the school and with each other
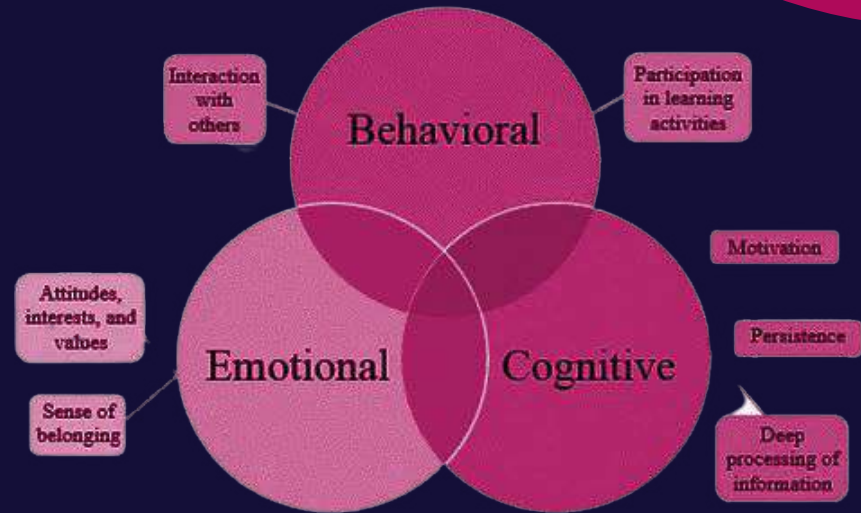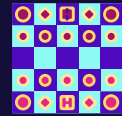
Benefits of Gaming

Stress Relief

Improved Problem Solving Skills

Gaining a Sense of Accomplishment

Memory Enhancement

Increased Brain Size and Connectivity

Opportunities for Socialization

(Accredited Schools Online, 2020)

What all of the BUZZ is about!

Research Oriented Approach

Sociological research shows that spending time with friends can improve academic performance (McCabe, 2019). This gaming system allows students to meet like-minded peers on campus to improve social and academic success.

First-Year Engagement

Research shows first-year students are actively involved in gaming. This approach will allow the school to meet students in an environment they are already comfortable with, especially students who may not have already had the chance to connect with others (Cole, 2012).
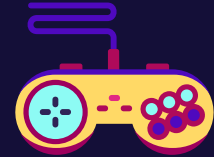
Campus Connections

Unlike other games, BeeU focuses on social interactions *within* our community. This will increase social engagement between BU students by offering a new avenue to meet classmates, peers, and make friends!

Access

The BeeU will be a social engagement platform for BU students. To create an account, one will need a current BU student ID.

All students will have free access to BeeU through their computers, the university's gaming hub, smartphones, and tablets.

BU works with students to provide them technology if they do not have access based on their income and all BU technologies also have access to BeeU!

BEEch Spectacular Extravaganza

In order to decrease travel and limit the spread of COVID-19, BU has removed a weeklong spring break from the calendar. So we're going virtual!

BU will be hosting the first annual BEEch Spectacular Extravaganza the weekend of March 19th-21st.

**Rude and/or inappropriate language has been blocked from the game and accounts that attempt to use harmful language towards others while playing will be suspended.

A Spring Break Alternative for COVID-19

Based on Research we estimate that **at least 65%of BU undergraduates would utilize this platform!**

- BEEch Bash is a Spring Break alternative due to COVID-19 regulations.
- BU offers students a space to be themselves, and make friends!
- Students will be able to use the platform to send messages, connect with other students, and explore a virtual campus!
- Students can customize their Bee avatar and honeycomb (virtual dormitory) to express themselves in the game!

How the game works:

Programming

Oh no! Our rivals, the Bears took all our honey! BU needs all our Bees to swarm together to solve the mystery and get our honey back. Complete Adventures by accessing various school resources to stop the Bears and save spring break!

Social Engagement

Each Adventure requires teamwork, so students are able to join and switch teams depending on what other Bees are active. Adventures require critical thinking skills, collaboration, and accessing school resources to support all our Bees in navigating campus life at BU which increases student engagement (Des Armier et al., 2016).

BEEch Spectacular Extravaganza

There are a variety of Adventures BU Bees will compete in teams to beat the Bears and save spring break. Completing Adventures will result in earning Pollen and gaining social connections on campus!

Here are some Adventures our Bees will undertake:

- Gather a team to play Volleyball against the Bears to gain clues.
- Search the library and use the library online system to look up books explaining Bear history.
- Grab a friend and go to the Outdoor Adventure Center in the Hive (student union) to check out climbing equipment so you can climb on top of the cliffs and find clues that the Bears left behind during their escape!

Collect Pollen to Earn Prizes!

Clothing In-Game or in-Real Life!

Decorate your personal avatar with in-game clothing options or save up Pollen for real life BU swag!

Decorate your Honeycomb

Want to decorate your residence hall room ("Honeycomb") in the game? Deck it out with some amazing items and invite your friends over... virtually!

School Supplies

You can spend your Pollen on school supplies! Need an extra notebook this semester? Spend 25 Pollen and get one, no problem!

Why Prizes?

Research shows that achievement awards help to increase student engagement (Des Armier et al., 2016).

BeeU Marketing Timeline

BeeU Instagram goes Live!

BeeU Instagram goes public and shares its first post! Coordinate with official university, student affairs pages, and student influencers to repost and begin the "Buzz".

BeeU

The game starts! Have student influencers post various times they will be gaming on Instagram and Twitter so students can do adventures with them.

March 1st

March 12th

Spring Break Mystery Event

March 5th

Instagram Clues

March 19th

BeyondU will post about a mystery Spring Break Extravaganza! Students will be able to guess what they think it will be on the Instagram story and via Twitter.

Student organizations and student influencers will be given strategic posts with coded messages that students can begin decoding to help them succeed in the BeeU game!

Marketing

BUZZING about BeeU!

- Instagram Campaign
  - There will be secret clues that will lead students to the main Adventure for Spring Break! Stay tuned so that you can get involved!
- We know this will be the next big thing on campus. We will advertise through our campus' Instagram, Twitter, and Tik Tok. Research shows that positive engagement with current social media can lead to increased engagement with what is being advertised (Cheung et al., 2020).

BEYONDU_BEES
Posts

beyondu_bees

beyondu_bees Doesn't campus look great in 2D?? Check out BUs new game BeeU! It'll launch March 19th for the BEEchy Spectacular Extravaganza!

Join in on the fun to meet fellow Bees, win prizes, and be in on the BUZZ🐝

See you Soon!

View Insights   Promote

BU Student Influencers

BU "All About the Buzz" Team

Universities have begun working with students with strong social media presence or are well known on campus to promote their institution online which has even helped to increase applications and enrollment (McKenzie, 2019).

In order to maximize student involvement in programming, BU works with student leaders across campus to promote new events!

A variety of student leaders and student organization accounts will post promotional content on their social media accounts (Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok) leading up to the release of the game, including our promo video. Once the game is released, Different students will have assigned posts sharing clues with their peers on how to solve the adventures and save BEEch Bash!

Marketing Contd.

What's the BUZZ?!

We will be focusing on gathering student influencers from these areas across campus

- **Residence Life:** BeeU will be promoted to all of the residence hall communities through RA's
- **Culture Centers**: BeeU will be advertised through each of the culture center's newsletters, social media, and e-boards.
- **Academics:** Academic Advisors and student TA's will be asked to promote through advising sessions, newsletters, and classes.
- **Student Activities and Services:** Student leaders will promote through large student organizations, Student Government, First Year Experience, etc. by sending out flyers/social media posts and promoting through incorporating BeeU into the culture of the institution.

BEEch Spectacular Extravaganza

is just the beginning...

We are thrilled to begin a new tradition that provides a spring break to all students, the fun doesn't stop here! **Utilizing gaming is an effective way to increase engagement among students,** (Schindler et al., 2017) and here are suggestions for future use:

- Virtual Orientation Programming
- Introduction to Campus Services
- Late Night Programming
- Holiday Celebration/ Recognition
- Campus Adventure Nights
- Culture Center Weeks

See You on March 19th!

Any questions?

Contact BeeU@BU.edu for any additional information on the development of the BU video game!

We additionally want to credit **Club Penguin** for creative design inspiration and **BenSound Music** for music in our promo video.

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