



STARS HOLLOW UNIVERSITY

STARS HOLLOW, PA



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN
A GLOBAL PANDEMIC



STARS HOLLOW UNIVERSITY

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COMMITTEE



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SHU GOALS

As community members of Stars Hollow, we commit to helping all SHU graduates:

- *Create goals that shoot for the STARS*
- *Identify societal needs and collaborate to address them*
- *Communicate effectively while engaging inclusively in a diverse society*
- *Consider the implications of their actions and the effect to the world in which they live*

SHU MISSION

To fulfill our promise to the Stars Hollow at large, we measure all SHU initiatives by the degree to which SHU demonstrates:

- *Continuous improvement for sustainability, inclusion, diversity, and equity*
- *Community and cultural engagement*
- *Critical thinking and problem solving*
- *Improved access to learning*

SHU'S PLANS TO INCREASE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

We understand that students in this virtual environment are lacking the engagement they previously had in person. We, as directors, are coming together in order to promote engagement, provide opportunities for students, and improve the connections with one another.

ABOUT US

Stars Hollow University is a public university founded in 1809 in suburban Stars Hollow, Pennsylvania. SHU is 8th largest university in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Undergraduate

Enrollment: 14,537 students

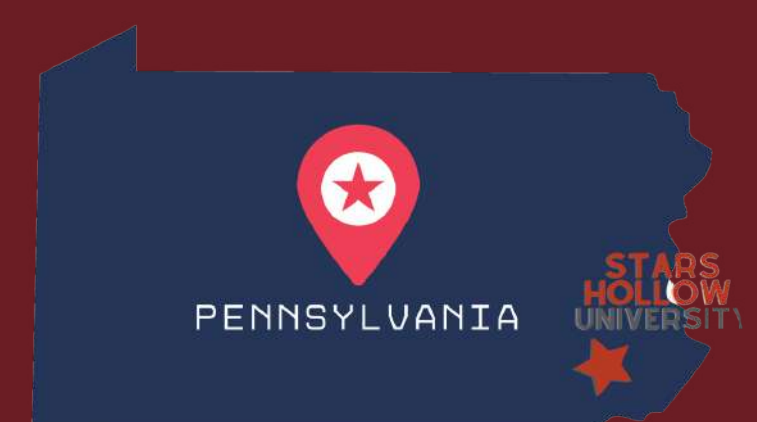
- 21%= First Year Students
- 3%= First Generation Students
- 17%= Post Traditional Students

Graduate Enrollment:

3,251 students

Doctoral Enrollment:

621 students





STARS HOLLOW UNIVERSITY

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FRAMING THE PROBLEM

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Higher Education has changed drastically over the last year. The realm of Student Affairs is no exception.

Students are not engaged as they would be in person and that is because we have not intentionally brought students together in spaces that foster connection.

Another common issue we are facing is typical student **Zoom Fatigue**, the difficulty to focus and engage due to spending excessive amounts of time online. If students find it hard to engage, they will feel less connected to the campus and community, straining their relationship with their education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENTATION/CASE STUDY

The purpose of this document is to explore interventions that may benefit SHU students during virtual learning caused by the Global Pandemic. We will present to you proposed interventions, intended effects, and how these align with our goals & mission and how to support and engage students during this time.

SHU STUDENT NEEDS:

CARE TEAM results

37% of students requested additional CARES ACT funding beyond the tuition discount

29% of students requested additional Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF II)

Our student wellness survey indicated 40% of campus students needed mental health services and wellness training.

CARE TEAM:

The SHU Care Team includes professionals at the University from various departments (Mental Health Services, Financial Aid, etc)

They help to support, monitor and engage in the improvement of student wellness. This is mentally, physically, and financially.



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INTERVENTIONS

Campus Recreation:

Esports Intramurals

- For the 2020-2021 school year, gyms have undergone massive state-mandated changes in their operational protocols. According to Governor Tom Wolf's plan to reopen Pennsylvania, gyms are permitted to open indoors at 50% capacity. As some students return to campus for fall 2021, our indoor facilities are not projected to keep pace with demand. Although digital fitness classes will continue through the 2021-2022 school year, we are branching into a new field of intramural sports, esports, to increase our reach throughout both the residential, commuter, and fully virtual Bear's community.



Mental Health Services:

Meditation Monday Seminar

- In order to actively support the mental health of our students struggling during the pandemic, SHU hopes to provide resources that help students now and in the future.



Student Leadership & Involvement:

Student Org Training

- We want our student leaders to be alongside us in this effort to improve engagement at SHU. Through a half-day training, we hope to provide new tech, tools, and tips for them to better engage their current members and in recruiting new ones.



Office of Housing:

Zoom-mate Program

- The Zoom-mate program will allow students to make community connections while the university remains in a virtual learning model.



EVIDENCE

A study conducted from 2014-2016 by Chaffin, Korey, Warnick, and Wood (2019) theorized that students engage in four important transitions over their college careers. The first of these focuses on social connections.

Students cited their main focus during their first year was acclimation and social connection. These connections make them feel included in the campus community, promoting retention. We hope that by offering these programs, students will feel more connected to the Stars Hollow campus community.

Kretovics quotes Kruger (2000) as affirming, "The next evolutionary step for student affairs may very well be the realm of distance education and virtual communities. One of the major criticisms of distance education has been the perceived lack of interaction between the students..." These programs will take SHU into its next evolutionary step by connecting students to each other and their campus communities.

Kuh et al. (2005) stated that "high levels of student engagement are necessary for and contribute to collegiate success." We at Stars Hollow University are doing everything we can to provide opportunities for student engagement during this uncertain time to ensure the academic and future career success of our students.



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Campus Recreation

BEAR'S ESPORT INTRAMURALS

Connecting with SHU's mission:

Esports supports SHU's goals by:

supporting continuous improvement for inclusion, diversity, and equity:

- Historically, gaming culture has had a reputation for racism and misogyny. (Smith, 2019) Adgate shared recent data from the McKinsey report, "In the U.S., there are over 20 million esports fans, 83% are male and 84% are younger than 35" (Adgate, 2020). With four year undergraduate completion rates being the lowest for men in that age group, the Esport Intramural program will create an extra incentive for these men to continue their studies. Also, by fostering a gaming environment beholden to the SHU code of conduct we are helping more diverse participation to change the larger gaming culture.
- Currently, students typically participate in intramural sports by building teams from inside their current majors, Greek organizations, clubs, etc. Their only interaction with the opposing team is at the particular match. The Discord platform allows people to message each other individually creating more opportunities to build connections outside of the traditional pathways.
- Typical intramural seasons are set up by sport. Students that do not excel in the particular sport do not register and disengage for the remaining seasons. Since there are multiple gaming possibilities, more people can engage throughout the entire academic year.

building a new avenue for community and cultural engagement:

- This program is designed for every level of student, staff, and faculty to participate socially. Building these social connections both vertically and horizontally will create a stronger sense of connection to SHU.
- Inspired by Cumming Police Chief David Marsh's "Gaming with the Chief," our Campus Security will also be collaborating with our esport intramural platform to build new campus connections. (Whitmire, 2021).

supporting the SHU players to improve their critical thinking and problem-solving skills:

- Multi-player games require teammates to work together and utilize other players' talents to complete the challenge. Teams have to resolve interpersonal issues to communicate effectively to identify ways to win the challenge. (CDW, 2020).

ESPORTS STATISTICS:

Viewership: "In 2020, 1.955 billion people were aware of esports, compare to 1.1 billion in 2016. The esports audience will reach 495 million worldwide in 2020, with 223 million defined as frequent viewers/enthusiasts & 272 million occasional viewers." (Adgate, 2020).

Esport flexibility:

Although many sports seasons have been cut or reduced dramatically during the pandemic only 23% of Esport competitions were outright canceled. (Adgate, 2020). Most were quickly reconfigured to virtual only events or in-person social distancing events.





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Campus Recreation

ESPORTS HIGHLIGHTS:

High student demand: In Spring 2020, State University of New York's, SUNY, reported that the 1st Chancellor Esports Challenge capped participation to 46 schools, 139 teams, and nearly 500 participating SUNY students.

Video games are multigenerational: The Independent reported that President Biden went viral on Twitter for playing Mario Kart on a traditional arcade machine in Feb. 2021



BEAR'S ESPORT INTRAMURALS

Benefits for the SHU community:

Multigenerational and multi-status participation:

- This is one of the only university programs currently running designed to engage all layers of the SHU community. Since it is being marketed to everyone from Bear's Safety Officers to department heads and international students to doctoral students, esports intramurals encouraging friendly interaction across traditional boundaries.

Responding to student interests:

- The last 10 years of residential interest surveys have ranked video games in the top 7 highest areas of student interest. This is one of the only areas of top students' interest that SHU has not addressed by building formal programming.
- The Bears' Video Game Club has been hosting LAN parties and Twitch parties on campus for the last 20 years demonstrating a campus interest.
- With less than 250 Varsity Esport Programs on campuses throughout the United States and less than 10 in Pennsylvania, this new intramural will gauge interest and feasibility of adding on a new varsity team to SHU. (CDW, 2020).

Technology challenges for the SHU community:

Equal access:

- **Internet Connectivity:** To date 287 internet hotspots have been loaned out to students. Since we are including the faculty and staff in this program more hotspots may be needed.
- **Computer Access:** To date, 2457 laptops have been loaned out through the SHU Technology Department to students. Faculty are issued laptops but staff may also need laptops to participate.
- **Devices:** Not all intramural games can be played on the same devices. Though with a computer, smartphone, and/or gaming console, the SHU community can register for at least one game type, they will not be able to register for every game type. SHU is not purchasing gaming consoles at this time.

New platforms:

- **Staff:** Since Discord and Twitch will be a new staffing responsibility, the Help Desk, Campus Recreation Staff, and the Office of Campus Diversity Equity and Inclusion will need training on how to process player complaints.
- **Participants:** We will need an addition technology help page added to the Esports tab of our website explaining some tutorial videos, Discord and Twitch contact information for technical help, and a clear explanation of how to report violations of Bear's community standards to staff.



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Campus Recreation

BEAR'S ESPORT INTRAMURALS

Marketing for Esports Intramurals:

Students

New student orientation: Since student orientation will be fully online, our Recreation Center staff will visit each cohort meeting to share our Esport Intramural announcements. During the virtual tour of our Rec Center we will remind them of our new program!

Virtual Involvement Fair: Our Rec Center staff will be hosting a Zoom Room for our new Esports Intramural Program.

Faculty and professors

New faculty induction: New SHU faculty undertake a full week University Orientation. During the "Meeting the Mentors" session, a Campus Recreation employee will be leading teambuilding programming. As part of that program our staff will encourage the mentor cohorts to register to compete. Our staff will remind them to participate as part of their tour of our facility.

Staff

New staff induction: New SHU employees undertake a full day University Orientation with the Human Resources Department. When they come to the Recreation Center, our staff will inform them of the new intramural and encourage the departments to participate as part of their tour of our facility.

Timeclock: Most SHU employees use a timeclock in their building. Since they have to frequent this location at least twice daily, we are going to post the signup and playoff information in these locations. In an effort to build a more inclusive and comprehensive Bear's community we want to ensure that the staff know how to participate.



WHOLE SHU COMMUNITY:

Posters: Although, most of campus is officially closed, the campus resources are all open. Since few groups are advertising in person, the posters will be highly visible at places like: Rec Center, Resource Pantry, etc.

Newsletters: Students have a Bear's Weekly Round-up, staff have a weekly campus news letter, and faculty and professors have a weekly development letter that are all sent out virtually on Tuesdays. By including our poster in each letter for sign ups and playoffs will remind people regularly of our events.

Social media campaign: By using the methods that current community is familiar with, our Instagram and Twitter pages, people would see our posts in their feeds. Discord and Twitch will also host posts for the new intramural community.

SHU's Campus Rec's First Intramural Esport Season!

Play your favorite games against your fellow Bears to build some SHU spirit!

How to play?

- Sign up your team by September 10th on SHU's Campus Rec website
- View your gaming schedule and play your matches through your [Discord](#) account



Three leagues:

- Undergrad track
- Graduate/doctoral track
- Faculty, professor, & staff track

Playoffs:

- Twitch viewing parties for friends to cheer you on as compete within your track
- Tack winners compete in best out of three series against the other tracks to win the season!





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Mental Health Services

ADDITIONAL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Founded in 2010, the Center for Contemplative Studies' mission is to create a culture for students, faculty, and the community to understand, apply and create a contemplative approach to life and learning.

shu.edu/centerforcontstudies

In these uncertain times, it is normal to experience increased feelings of stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns. As the university continues remote instruction in the spring semester, the Counseling Center will be offering online counseling services to enrolled students.

shu.edu/counselingcenter



MINDFULNESS MONDAY SEMINAR

Run by student volunteers from the Center for Contemplative Studies

Week 1

introduction to mindfulness

This week's focus is on mindfulness. We will discuss different **strategies** to manage stress.

- 30 minute resource sharing session -

Week 2

meditation for stress

This week's focus is on stress. We will discuss what causes stress and how we manage it

- 30 minute meditation session -

Week 3

mindfulness for educators

This week's focus is on mindfulness. We will discuss different **strategies** to manage stress.

- 30 minute resource sharing session -

Week 4

meditation and your brain

This week's focus is on the psychological benefits of meditation.

- 30 minute meditation session -

We hope that you understand and experience the usefulness of mindful practices and continue to utilize these newly learned strategies which can help reduce stress



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Mental Health Services

GOALS

Collaborate with others to solve problems and address societal issues

Communicate effectively while engaging inclusively in a diverse society

JUSTIFICATION

The Center for Disease Control declares the types of stressors that could arise during this time include widespread implications like...

- Loss of support services.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol and/or other substances.

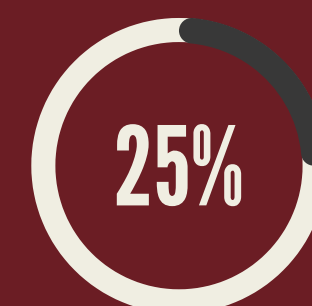
MARKETING

Social media campaign:

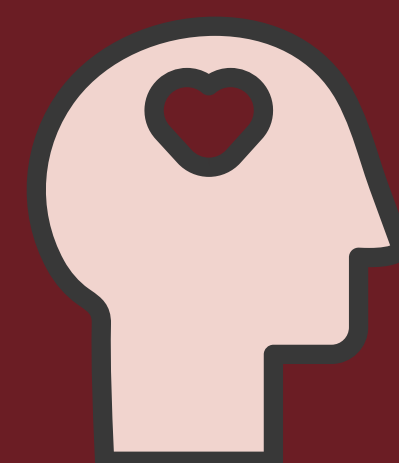
By using the methods that our current community is familiar with, our Instagram and Twitter pages, people will see our promotional posts in their feeds.



One in four young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 have a diagnosable mental illness.



More than 25 percent of college students have been diagnosed or treated by a professional for a mental health condition within the past year



MINDFULNESS MONDAY SEMINAR

CENTER FOR CONTEMPLATIVE STUDIES

**REDUCE
STRESS**

**IMPROVE
MOOD**



**MONDAYS
7-8 PM**

WEEK ONE



- Introduction
- Resources

WEEK THREE



- Mindfulness resources for educators

WEEK TWO



- Meditation basics
- Stress reduction practices

WEEK FOUR



- Mental health and meditation



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Student Leadership & Involvement

STUDENT CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

Our offices aren't the only one's involved in engaging our students virtually, but we are always about collaboration and coordination with our student clubs and organizations! The way we do that is through a training with all of our organizations.

TRAINING STUDENT LEADERS IN ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

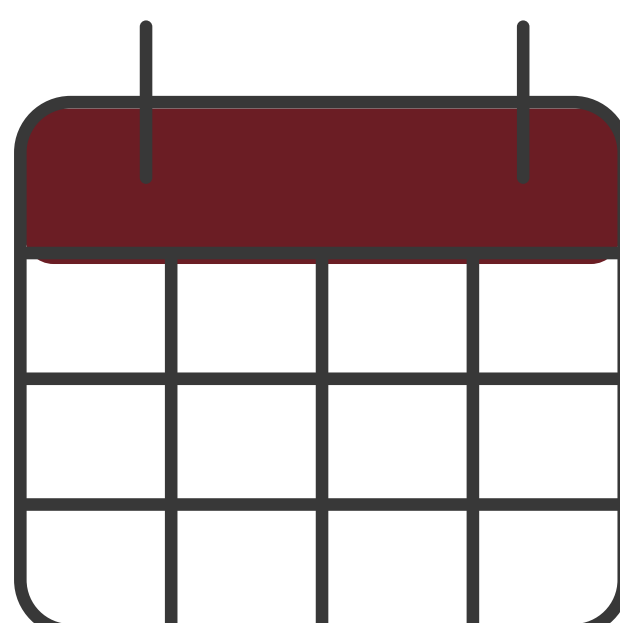


Presentations on the following:

- Utilization of zoom, skype, and other video meeting platforms
- Tips & Tricks of additional Tech Tools!
 - Jamboard, Padlet, Poll Everywhere, Mentimeter, etc.
- Discussion around Virtual Service
 - Tutoring, Card Making, Advocacy, Education, etc.
- How can we help?
 - Presenting various services the University has for students
 - StarsAlign - Platform for Clubs/Orgs
 - Additional Offices on campus
 - Discussion of how else we can help?
- Social Media Tips/Tricks
- Meetings to coordinate club meeting dates/times
 - Utilizing StarsAlign
 - Structuring Meetings dates based on the type of organization
 - Discussing with the clubs & orgs to solidify the dates, the structure will be similar to what is suggested below
- Virtual Involvement Fair

CLUBS/ORGS MEETING DATES

- Mondays
 - Service Orgs, etc
- Tuesdays
 - Music Clubs, Sports Clubs, etc
- Wednesdays
 - Fraternities & Sororities, etc
- Thursdays
 - Academic Orgs, etc
- Fridays
 - Political Organizations, etc



LIST OF STUDENT CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

Check for list of Clubs/Orgs at shu.edu/bearsclubs



Check out Clubs/Orgs & their events at StarsAlign.net



StarsAlign is like facebook for all the Clubs/Organizations and offices at SHU! A great place for you to go to see SHU events and for your Clubs/Orgs to promote themselves!

PARTNERSHIPS WITH OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS

Check for list of Clubs/Orgs at shu.edu/community



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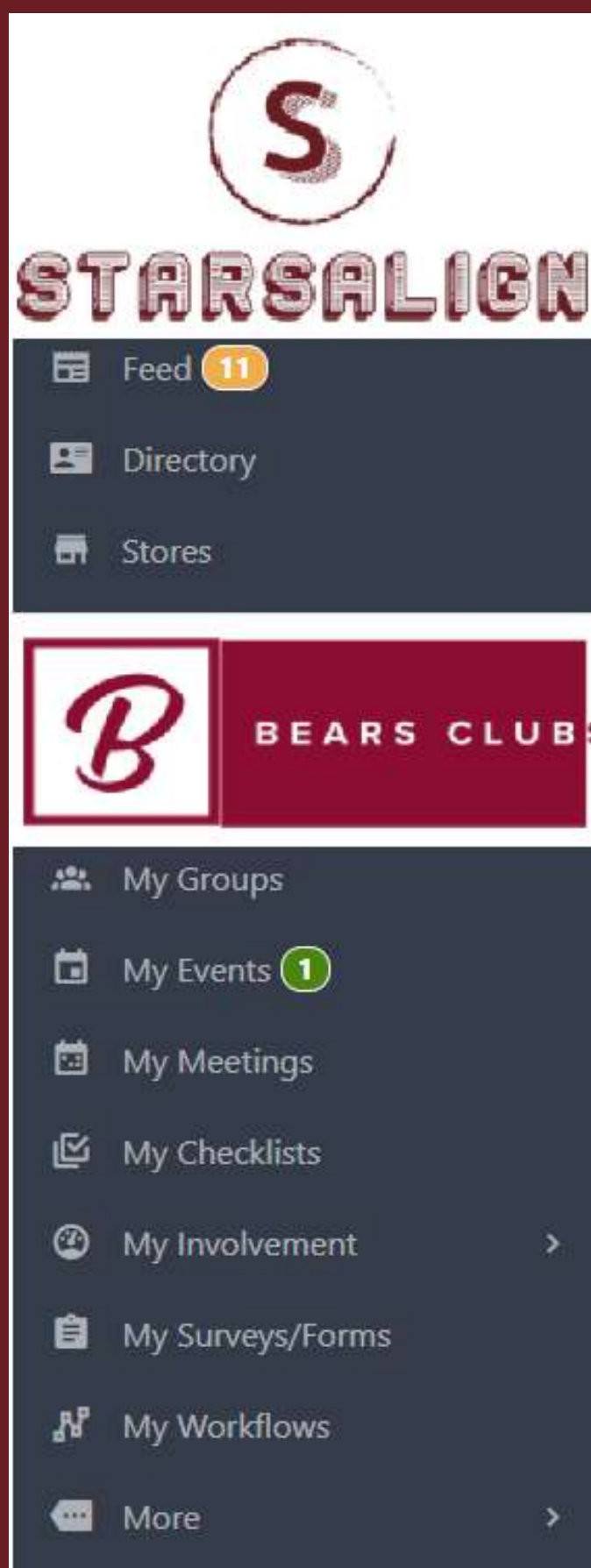
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Student Leadership & Involvement

STARS ALIGN

Look through your personalized feed at StarsAlign.net to see what club meetings and opportunities which suit your interests and beyond!

Members and officers can utilize club pages as a space to post, share, advertise, and more!



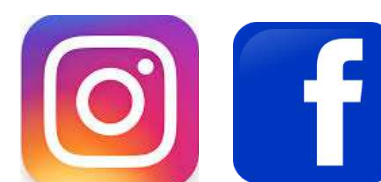
GOALS

- Collaborate with others to increase student engagement
- Improve our student leaders ability to engage with their members
- Introduce new tools and how to effectively use them to our student leaders

JUSTIFICATIONS

- Being able to reach student leaders to train them in improving their ability to reach their members and reach out to new ones will lead to better engagement.
- Structuring when certain clubs meet will help in students being able to easily see when to potentially meet
- Many clubs and organizations have similar struggles but don't take the time in order to discuss these issues with one another to learn from one another!

MARKETING



Email & Social Media

Sending out information about these tips and tricks and the event date where we will train student leaders.

Check below for the flyer for the event!

Marketing will be done through Instagram, Facebook, and STARSALIGN



The Office of Student Leadership & Involvement

STARS HOLLOW UNIVERSITY

STUDENT CLUBS TRAINING

Contact nmarcil@shu.edu
for more information



Sign up on
StarsAlign.net





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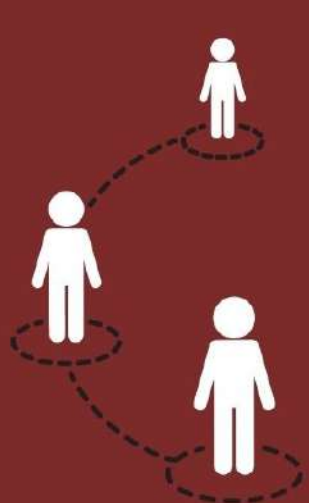
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Office of Housing

ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE HOUSING OFFICE

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, housing options were limited to students in need. The Zoom-mate program allows students maintain socialization as if they were on campus, while following CDC guidelines and SHU's virtual semester policies.

ZOOM-MATE PROGRAM



1. FILL OUT OUR ZOOM-MATE SURVEY

2. GET MATCHED WITH YOUR VIRTUAL ROOMMATE

3. REACH OUT AND GET TO KNOW THEM!



- Zoom-mate pairs are invited to submit an artistic representation of their virtual zoom room to @shuhousing for a chance to win \$500.
- Virtual RAs will be reaching out for virtual hall programs, monthly check-ins, and Bear pride!

Students will fill out the typical roommate survey and be paired with someone who may very well have been their roommate in a typical learning environment. Pairs are encouraged to reach out to one another and create an artistic representation of their virtual zoom room to our Instagram account for a social media contest.

Virtual Residence Assistants (VRAs) will be hired at normal salary, will be expected to reach out to assigned "residents" periodically, and virtual hall programs will be required to engage virtual residents

Justification:

The Zoom-mate program offers students the opportunity to build connections to the SHU community while VRA programming encourages involvement and overall success.

2019-2020 HOUSING

In the Fall of 2019, SHU housed 20,000 students on campus.

500 Residence Assistants hosted over 1,000 programs from August 2019 to March 2020.

Students were transitioned to remote learning following Spring Break, March 2020.

Since March 2020, 213 students have been living in on-campus residence halls due to special circumstances.





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Office of Housing

FEEDBACK

When surveyed, 70% of returning RAs expressed interest in becoming VRAs.

"My roommate became a great friend during my first year. I'm sad these incoming Bears won't have the same opportunity to meet each other during hall programs." -Brett, Senior

"My first-year neighbors and I would have trivia nights once a week in the common room! We kept the tradition alive this year and play trivia on Zoom every Tuesday." -Lauren, Sophomore

"I have been an RA every semester since sophomore year and I am looking forward to continuing that tradition while we are virtual!" -Jennifer, Senior RA



HALL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Virtual Resident Assistants will be required to host one Virtual Hall Program a month. Two weeks before each program, they will submit a summary of their idea and discuss it with other VRAs during monthly check-ins.

Program Suggestions:

Kahoot! Trivia Night

Utilize the interactive website Kahoot! to play trivia virtually.

Zoom Snack Social

Bring your favorite snack to the Zoom Room and tell us about it.

Virtual Game Night

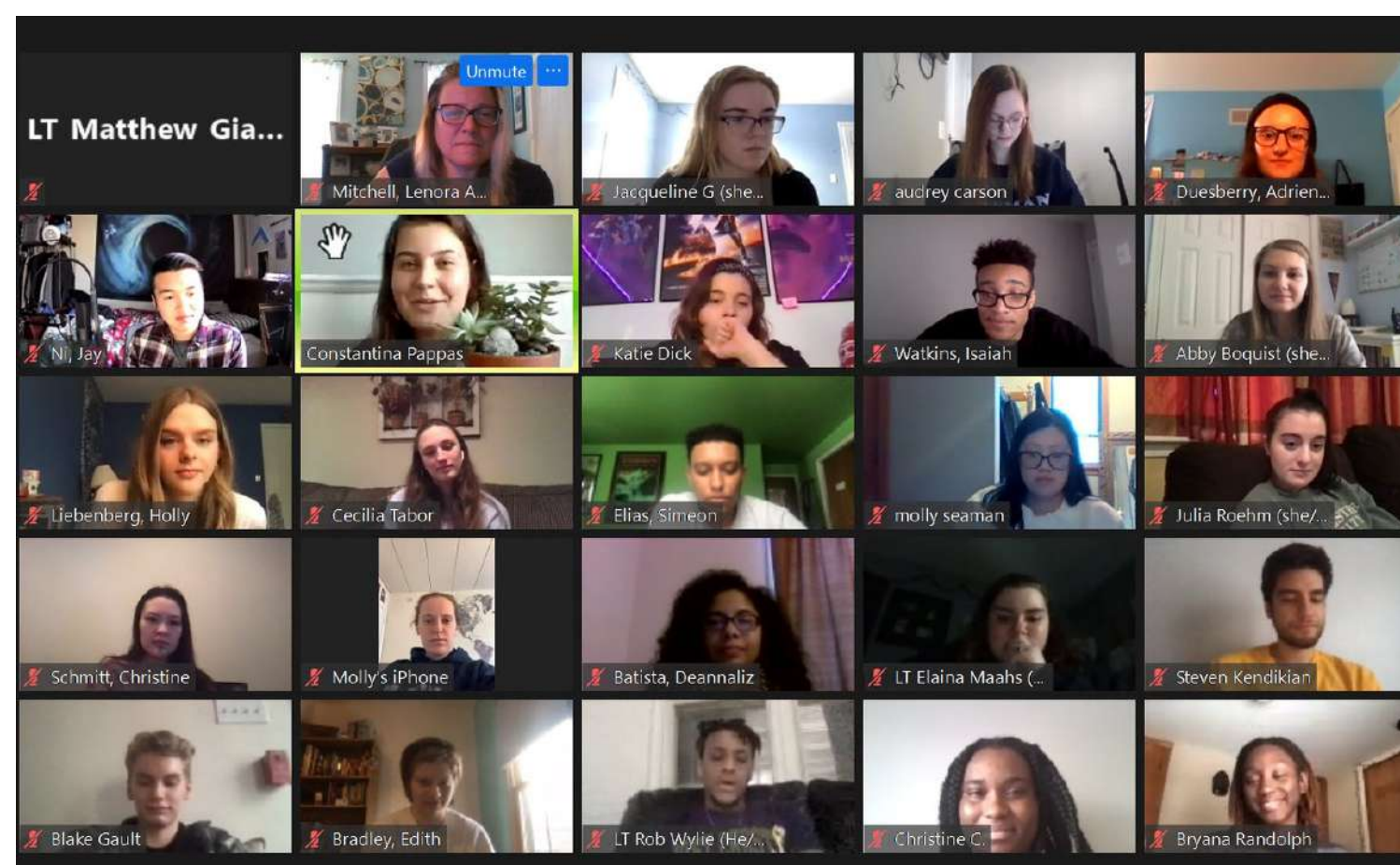
Play beloved board games such as Settlers of Catan and Monopoly online.

Zoom Background Contest

Whoever shows up with the most creative Zoom background, wins!



VIRTUAL HALL MEETINGS



Students will get to know their fellow 'residents' during virtual hall meetings and wellness check-ins

VRAs will also be able to partner up for programming, allowing students to get to know other halls



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Office of Housing

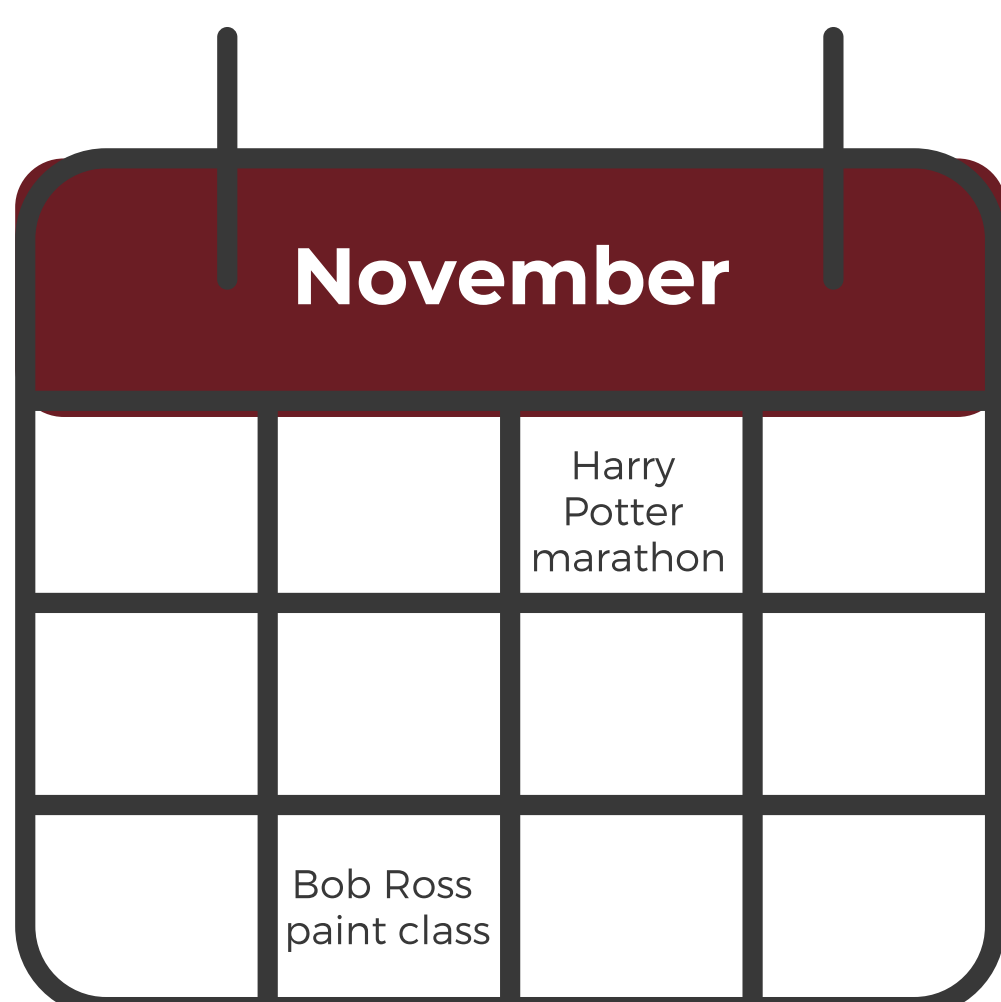
ACTIVITY DATABASE

An activity database will be available to each student as a form of connecting based on shared interests.

Activity/Affinity	Short Description	Name	Email	Name	Email
Painting	I really like painting landscapes with oil paints	Michael Foster	mfoster@shu.edu	Kate Lewis	klewis@shu.edu
Knitting	I've been learning to knit during the pandemic!	Alicia Lee	alee@shu.edu	Monica Roy	mroy@shu.edu
Cars	I'm into vintage cars.	James Zeigler	jzeigler@shu.edu	Pat Tully	ptully@shu.edu
Music	I love music. I've played guitar for 5 years	Olivia Sweeney	osweeney@shu.edu		
Reading	I love to read! My favorite book is Harry Potter!	Chris Jones	cjones@shu.edu	Izzy DiRenzo	idirenzo@shu.edu

This will be a platform for students to find similar interests within their virtual halls

Responsibility for the database will fall to the Virtual Residence Assistants. Databases may be shared among other VRAs but no contact information will be shared with other virtual halls without the students' permission.



Content can be used to inspire virtual hall programming based upon interests of the virtual residents.

COLLABORATION

While the main function of this database maintenance and facilitation will fall to the Virtual Resident Assistants, the inter-office collaboration will benefit the program.

The Office of Activities will offer VRA communication in order to keep VRAs informed about clubs and organizations on campus so they may recommend involvement to their virtual residents.

The Office of Leadership will offer training to VRAs to assist them in the facilitation of virtual programming





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Communications & Marketing



MARKETING

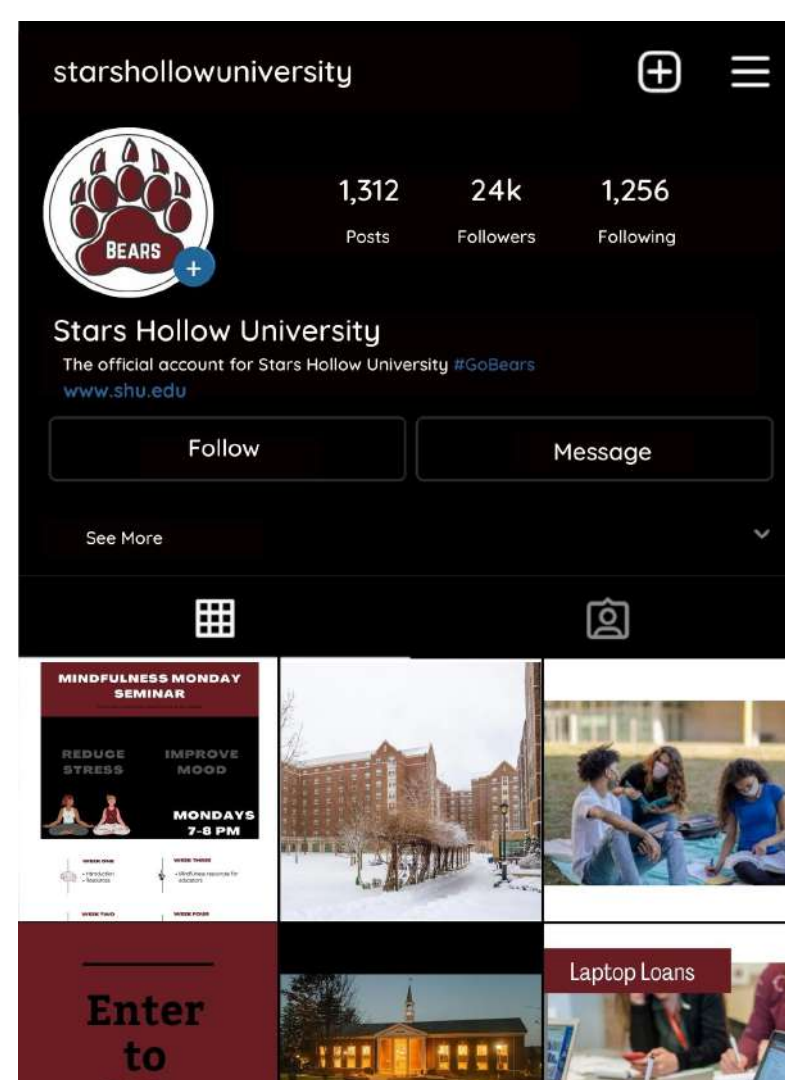
ALL DEPARTMENTS & COLLEGES

At SHU, each department, college, and residential hall has both an Instagram and Facebook account used to keep the community aware of SHU news. The social media accounts are managed by each program's secretary. Some programs delegate these tasks to work-study students and/or graduate assistants with interests in social media management, marketing, etc. while overseen by their staff mentors.



Instagram:

The official SHU Instagram account will feature event advertising and activity spotlights. Contests and incentives will be incorporated to attract more student followers and keep them informed.



Facebook:

The official SHU Facebook Page will be constantly updated with events and activity spotlights featured on Instagram as well as campus updates. It will be a site for connecting with students, faculty, and alumni.



Stars Hollow University



... College & University
... @SHU



EVENT SPECIFIC SOCIAL MEDIA

Speaker series and conferences:

Replays are hosted on the sponsoring groups' YouTube channel. They are listed by event title, speaker name, and date for easy reference.

New for esports intramurals:

Discord will host both the game schedule and the matches. Playoffs schedules will be shared with the entire league. The Twitch channel will broadcast the playoffs live. The SHU community can organize digital watch parties as well as attend an in-person outdoor watch party in the Quad on the projector screen.





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CITATIONS

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