Journey to an Education Metaverse

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Built On UMGC Developer's Certificate

- Augmented and Virtual Reality Design
- Courses in:
  - Interactive & Digital Design,
  - User Experience,
  - Game Design, and
  - VR & AR Design
- First offered in Spring, 2022
Immersive Pilot Objective

• Over a current target of two years, investigate the value of adding immersive content to UMGC’s educational offerings.

• If the recommendation is to do so, prepare a sustainable plan to implement this capability.
Current Implementation

- VictoryXR
  - Contracts
  - Platform – Crime Scene
- UMGC
  - Contract
- Meta
- EngageVR
  - Platform – Virtual Campus
  - Immersive worlds, objects
Current Plan

- **Year 1 (July, 2022 – June, 2023)**
  - Perform initial evaluations of the impact of immersive experiences and the creation of a virtual UMGC campus
  - Identify issues that need to be addressed if the decision is to move forward after the pilot
  - Explore operational, financial implications
  - Run as many pilot classes in a variety of different disciplines as is practical

- **Year 2 (July, 2023 – June, 2024)**
  - Test delivery modalities that were not accomplished in Year 1
    - Overseas students
    - Combined with a physical hybrid offering
    - Supporting a cohort as opposed to an individual class – perhaps complementing tutoring, other in-place support
    - 2D offerings
    - Utilizing ‘free’ platforms such as Altspace
  - Selectively add additional Program areas to Pilot
  - Solve for identified open issues
  - Prepare implementation plan if needed

- **Year 3 (July, 2024 - ...)**
  - Start transition
Pilot – Year 1

• Between 13 and 15 courses
  • Four to Five per semester, starting Fall, 2022
  • Arts & Sciences (SAS)-12, Business (BUS)-1, Cybersecurity & Information Technology (CIT)-1

• Headsets
  • Provided at no cost on loan to students

• One synchronous class/week - virtual hybrid
  • May change cadence of synchronous meetings for future courses

• All courses will focus on increased Engagement

• Several courses will use immersive simulations, e.g. Crime Scene Experience
Student Feedback From SPCH 100

- Scores were higher on all survey questions than other sections
- Success rate of 92%
- Student Feedback:
  - As a working student, raising a family, this option gave a student the option of attending in a virtual reality setting. Allowed her to connect with classmates.
  - A number said being an avatar reduced fear of speaking to faculty member and interacting with peers.
  - One student was agoraphobic, one suffered from PTSD; both had difficulty in 'real life' interacting with people but were comfortable in the classroom.

Students in SPCH 100 meet around a campfire as part of the course's virtual component. One student said they wished the class were longer.
Questions We Are Wrestling With

• 3D (headset) versus 2D (non-headset) access
  • When is 2D access good enough?
  • How to manage headset provisioning, costs

• Metaverse (virtual campus/worlds) versus Simulations
  • User licensing cost structure
  • Who to partner with, how to select

• Content design – what classes/experiences are candidates
  • How to document the immersive aspects of the class

• Overseas implementation and support

• Policy and compliance (including privacy and accessibility issues)

• Level of integration with the Learning Management System (LMS)

• How to use Immersive capabilities to strengthen academic, commercial partnerships