eSports 101: Careers & Representation in Gaming & Entertainment
Presented by The CSUEA & Pipelines Mobile

- **Panelists:**
  - Arabian Prince - Songwriter/Rapper/Founder - INOV8 Next Open Labs
  - Eric C. Wallace - VP of Gaming & Esports - Glo Navy & DigiGlo
  - Femi Okusanya - VP of Gaming & Esports - FaZe Clan
  - Kevin Hoang - Global Program Manager - Twitch
  - Moderated by Simone Nelson - Managing Director - The CSUEA

- **The CSU Entertainment Alliance Intro**
- **Pipelines Mobile Intro**

- **Kevin**
  - Started his career by forming an esports club at his campus
  - Was asked to help other colleges create those kinds of clubs as a part of twitch
- **Femi**
  - VP of content at FaZe Clan
  - They handle all of the content on all of the channels
  - Got to faze clan 3 years ago
  - Started in a living room and now have 60 people
  - He started at riverside and got his degree in mechanical engineering
- **Arabian Prince**
  - One of the founders of NWA
  - Nerds out on coding
  - Taught himself how to code and do animation
  - He did the original VFX for power rangers etc
  - Then worked on gaming products
  - Creating products to help the new virtual world we are all living in
  - Giving back to the inner city and spread that knowledge that he didn't get
- **Eric C. Wallace - digiglow and glo-navy**
  - Started as a gamer
  - First passion was the music business
  - Graduated with a degree in that
  - Watching YouTubers etc
  - Loves esports because it combines all of the things that he loves
- **Simone**
  - So in a sense you all made your own opportunities
  - Combine your talent, skills, intelligence, passions, and make a living
  - Where did esports begin?
  - Let's start with twitch since they are one of the biggest platforms - and you work with students all the time with scholastic and collegiate esports

- **Kevin**
  - Twitch and esports grew up together
  - Before twitch it was called justintv in 2007
  - It would have cost so much back then
  - 2010 they pivoted and saw that the biggest sector being watched was gaming
  - Name came from competitive starcraft
  - Live streaming took off shortly after
  - 2010-2015 college gaming tournaments and clubs got pretty big
  - Those clubs beat out fraternities and such in terms of size
  - Robert Norris University
  - 2016 UCI created the first ever public institution with a full esports program
  - As of today there are around 450 official esports programs
  - High schools are now adopting them a lot faster
- **Simone**
  - Scholarship opps within esports and partnerships between in person sports and gaming sports
- **Arabian Prince**
  - People used to bet and gamble on early arcade games (Pac-Man, Donkey Kong, etc.)
  - It has been around for a long time
  - He used to battle against fatality and quake
  - Now the money and prizes are huge
  - Millions of people competing
  - Look at riot and epic are doing
  - 100 million in esports prizes every year from epic, etc.
- **Kevin**
  - There is definitely a lot of money
  - Sharing what you like with a wider audience
  - Companies like epic games, with Fortnite, it has empowered creatives to monetize and to build new experiences
  - Students are paying off a lot debt with their winnings
  - Streamers are their own producers, business
  - Very empowering to teach these skills
- **Simone**
  - You are an entrepreneur when you are a streamer
  - Creating curriculum for students around this so they can launch their own clubs, businesses, etc.
  - If you are interested in that kind of course for your campus, let us know!
  - Femi, you went from one world to another - how was that transition?
- **Femi**
  - It was a company wide transition
  - People trying to repackage content but not making it organic to the platform it is for
  - 2012/2013 facetime was starting montages
  - This was before discord - all talking via skype and then creating a montage video
  - There are differences between the platforms and that is the most important thing you can learn - understanding the platform and the audience on that platform to market accordingly

- **Simone**
  - Where do you think the industry is going?
  - What's next?
- **Eric**
  - They have a lot of new things coming up - putting out a lot more content in general
  - New celebrity involvement
  - Companies that are only sticking to the competitive is not sustainable
  - Femi has the idea - content first and then esports as well
  - More companies are becoming entertainment companies
  - Winning championships is not sustainable
  - So the orgs are becoming more entertainment focused
- **Simone**
  - Your company highlights culture shifting - what does that mean? What is the involvement of the founder?
- **Eric**
  - He is 25 but considered an OG
  - A lot of other artists that are coming out today are big fans of his
  - He is influencing the entire hip hop scene in that way
  - He used gaming to build a community
  - Showing the diversity of gaming and creating new content
  - He is very authentic about his choices
  - He is a trend setter
- **Simone**
  - How are you monetizing your content?
- **Eric**
  - It is happening now and some are making money through content
  - Releasing more content soon
 - Also apparel and working on tournaments and apps and games and such
- **Simone**
  - Your thoughts on the next few years (Femi)
  - You mentioned the involvement of big brands and companies and commercialization
  - Is there fear around what that can do to this kind of organic community
- **Femi**
  - We are seeing a lot of brand and companies pouring money into the industry
  - He likens gaming to the early days of skateboarding, anime, etc.
  - Started as a small side community and with the internet
  - Gaming is becoming popular culture because our communities are much larger than we originally thought
  - All different kinds of gamers, etc.
  - In the future, more and more brands are going to want to come in and get exposure but gamers are the really the original trolls of the internet
  - Unapologetic and don't hold back and will let you know when we don't like something
  - HAVE to listen to the audience and talent and learned how to make things that are natural and organic
  - The internet can be unforgiving and never forgets
  - Documentaries are now coming out about the history of gaming
  - More and more notable names
  - Guessing a big documentary will be coming
  - What NINJA has done has been huge
  - But there still aren't global superstars and that is coming
- **Simone**
  - You are expanding greatly into the Asian market and European markets
  - Twitch rebranding to entertainment company
  - All of these jobs posted at twitch related to music entertainment etc.
  - What is currently happening with twitch in terms of the global media company and what is the future as a platform?
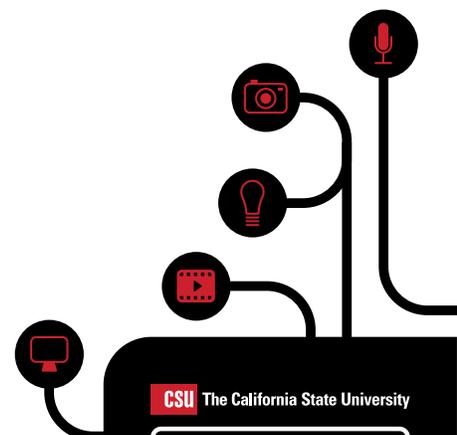
- **Kevin**
  - There is so much happening among different fields
  - Teachers using twitch to teach
  - People sharing their hobbies, etc.
  - Music is interesting for artists because it is one of the only ways for them to create live performances while there aren't physical concerts
  - Advising them on that - it shouldn't just be something you should do one thing on and then call it quits, it has to be consistent.
- **Simone**
  - Career opportunities for diverse people and the lack of representation etc?
  - Why do you think that is? How can we combat this besides what we are doing right now? How do we access the next generation and get the industry to look like what the world is?
- **Arabian Prince**
  - We have to see more people that look like the rest of the world doing this
  - It's a secret sauce
  - The problem is that the people who are making the money are not sharing how they are doing it
  - One of the things he is working on is SOLA - project in south LA - esports facility there with Oprah and Dre and etc.
  - Places where they can learn and practice and there are SO many jobs within the industry
  - Femi started because of his skills - the skills that he already had
  - Pushing schools to do what the CSU is doing and create programming for the entertainment arts and business
  - If anyone else wants to be involved - let them know
- **Simone**
  - You really do work to make a difference
  - How do you get your foot in the door?
- **Femi**
  - When he decided to leave engineering and pursue film
  - Swallowed up his ego and pride and went to as many film sets, etc and offered to do the menial tasks like getting coffee or making copies, etc.
  - At FaZe they have a guy who just started recently and they had a pop-up on Melrose in LA - he waited in line for hours with his resume and gave it to them and he was willing to go outside of his comfort zone to find opportunities
  - He works with them now - started as an intern and became a producer
  - Go out and talk to people
  - Put yourself out there
- **Eric**
  - You have to do what you have to do to get the position you want
  - Used to have a website where he interviewed entertainment professionals so he could get in and meet people and network
  - Started conversations that way
  - When you get into the internship - make it so they can't live without you
- **Kevin**
  - They have engineering internships right now - 20-30 spots - remote for next year but typically they have you work in SF and they pay for housing and food (in the building, etc.)
  - Favorite advice: go on linkedin and DM people who have cool jobs and do a short informational interview about what their day to day looks like etc.
  - There are hundreds of jobs in the space so narrow down the skillset
  - Even if you don't get in today - work in developing your skills in an outside industry and then go into the industry
  - Be authentic and curious

- **Simone**
    - Network, network, network.
    - Go to remote events - they are low to no cost and then you can DM and find on linkedin, etc.
    - BUILD YOUR NETWORK
- **Shari**
    - Arabian Prince is doing a giveaway gaming headphones!
    - Stay on and we will ask a trivia question
    - For those of us more interested in working on the corporate side - should we have a reel, etc?
- **Arabian Prince**
    - In this new world, you are your own brand - everything you do
    - Companies will look at what you have done and how you conduct yourself
- **Femi**
    - At FaZe it varies - the space is continually changing and growing and there are a lot of people coming into gaming fresh from other industries but ultimately look at the role you are going for and have intention about what you are doing
    - You will discover whether you need a streaming platform or not

- **Is there a specific major that is helpful to get into the industry?**

- **Eric**
    - All esports companies need all the positions any other
- **Arabian**
    - HR, etc.
    - Also - gaming companies need quality assurance aka game testers etc.
    - That's the easiest way to do it - they want people who know the game AND people who don't
    - Gaming companies love that
- **Shari**
    - Transferable skills - what you have that may not directly apply to the industry but is still useful for it
    - Look at the job posting carefully and look at what they are truly looking for

- **Rise of social games - do you think there will continue to be a shift in this direction or will there be a different shift**

- **Kevin**
    - Yeah - no one knows what is going to get big - among us and fall guys - you don't have to be a huge company to make new things
    - Esports needs to take a large look at itself and look how it can be more inclusive from all areas
    - AOC streaming channel got huge within 24 hours
    - Fortnite took off because of collabs and first party IP with avengers, etc.
    - Their big expansions and launches with Travis Scott on there - first time watching a concert like that
- **Arabian**
    - Covid blew up games that were not so big before
    - Fashion show in animal crossing game
    - Crazy what people are doing within games with things that are outside of games

- **How to gain notoriety and clout?**

- **Eric**
    - Collaborate with other people
    - Get out of your comfort zone
    - Each platform is different and then you can use that content to make it work
    - Work hard for it
- **Kevin**
    - Play the games you enjoy - if you don't like it, don't do it because people will see through it
    - Streaming into the void is a disservice to the craft
    - Utilize the click feature

- **As a woman with a love of gaming - what can we do to find a job and get a seat at the table in a male dominated field**

- **Arabian Prince**
    - Women streamers get more followers than men at this point
    - Getting more women to get their voice out there
    - Open the door - don't be afraid to do that
    - On the business side with big companies - they are looking for diversity and women now - but have a passion for it
    - Gamers won't be fooled - they want authenticity
- **Kevin**
    - Gaming has this huge problem with toxicity and underrepresentation
    - Gendered issues from the start - boys given more video games created a societal split between women and men in terms of hobbies so women have to face a whole host of other challenges when getting into gaming
    - There is so much more toxicity from men toward women
    - Men need to acknowledge that and also step in on the chats - stand up and say something
    - One of their new initiatives is meant to combat the digital divide in the institutions and the hardware - give more access to people to get into the space, etc.
    - In the black community - 83% play video games but only 2% work in the industry
    - Need to close the gap in that divide from the early stages of education and access to the internet, etc.
    - There is a lot of roadmapping that needs to be done
    - Part of the creators social impact team
    - Anykey is a great org that is pointing out all these issues in gaming as it relates to diversity
- **Femi**
    - They just started a diversity council - an internal group with will hold faze clan, talent, employees, etc accountable and make sure that the space is safe for everyone
    - This year - every single person on the talent side & the employees have undergone sensitivity and inclusion training
    - Now is the time for women
    - Every single dept has a female lead in it
    - Hope to model that for other places and companies as well