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Launch of *Life on the Edge* video game showcases skills and talents of students and faculty at MacEwan University

Edmonton – Fighting off viruses (including COVID-19) while also learning about cell biology are both features of the video game *Life on the Edge*, a four year project involving a team of talented faculty and students at MacEwan University.

A 21-member team (seven faculty members, 14 students) was involved in researching, developing and fine-tuning the game. This includes representatives from biological sciences, design, computer science and music.

“This is an exciting project that truly speaks to the love of learning, exploration and creativity that the faculty at MacEwan have at the heart of what they do,” says Dr. Annette Trimbee, president and vice-chancellor. “This is the type of interdisciplinary learning experience we want all MacEwan students to have and absolutely exemplifies MacEwan’s vision, Teaching Greatness.”

Life on the Edge is geared towards first-year biology students but can be enjoyed by a much wider audience as it entertains and educates about a timely topic that the public is hungry to learn more about right now.

“We’ve seen educational video games grow in popularity for elementary and high school students, but not as much for university students,” says Dr. Ross Shaw, project co-lead and assistant professor, Biological Sciences. “We believe *Life on the Edge* is going to be a solid teaching tool because the game has a professional quality and succeeds in giving the player advanced knowledge about biology.”

The team members also advanced their own skill set as they further their studies and prepare for the workforce.

“Our design students were able to put into practice the full design process from discovery research, ideation of game concepts, and prototyping to the creation of final illustrations and animations,” says Robert Andruchow, project co-lead and chair of the Department of Art and Design. “They did all of this within an interdisciplinary team just like they would in the industry.”

“I learned how to work with team members who aren’t in computer science as we tossed ideas back and forth to keep improving the game,” says Cory Efird, lead programmer and MacEwan Computing Science graduate. “For a project like this you have to find a balance between creative vision and technical constraints.”

There has also been collaboration with Ji Yae Bong, an Educational Technology professor at Concordia University in Montreal. This included real-world inclusion of the game in several biology classes over the last year. Overall, students had a high level of game satisfaction and a firm understanding of biology concepts. The results of this research will be presented at a conference later this year.

Life on the Edge will be free to download on the Steam gaming platform June 17.

Game website: <https://lifeontheedgegame.com/>

Video promo: <https://youtu.be/34OE4MkVchE>

Steam page: https://store.steampowered.com/app/1968040/Life_on_the_Edge/

For more information, please contact archerj24@macewan.ca

Founded in 1971, MacEwan University inspires its students with a powerful combination of academic excellence and personal learning experiences. Offering more than 65 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training, the university provides a transformative education in a creative, collaborative and supportive learning environment where creativity and innovation thrive. Located in Edmonton, Alberta Canada, MacEwan University offers a unique student experience that opens up diverse pathways for achievement and growth.