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## Georgia Library Spotlight - Valdosta State University, Odum Library, Board Game Collection & Gaming Program

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# GLA SPOTLIGHT

## Valdosta State University, Odum Library Board Game Collection & Gaming Program

Valdosta State University's Odum Library has a board game collection of over 125 games that range from familiar titles like Clue and Uno to contemporary classics like Catan and Ticket to Ride. The collection supports not only relaxation but collaborative and creative play with games like Dungeons & Dragons. The library also works to find and add game titles like Oceans that support academic departments at the university. Along with games, the library also has programming to support discovery of the collection as well as help establish a stronger foundation between students and librarians and between students and their peers.

The program, pre-pandemic, consisted of a variety of in-person events. Odum Library would host monthly game nights to allow students to meet up and connect with each other, as well as give the librarians an opportunity to teach some of the more obscure or difficult games in the collection. Odum Library also provided how-to-play sessions to showcase educational games for the classroom or team-building games for university departments and organizations. For tabletop role-playing games, the library created a



teaching series, Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) 1101, to help students learn and get comfortable with roleplaying and collaborative storytelling. In addition to the introductory classes, the library reached out to professors for a speaker series called Tabletop Role-Playing Game (TTRPG) & Academia. Its purpose was to explore the intersection of games and research and show students how each area can enhance the other.

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Odum Library has moved the programming online. At the start of the semester, the library hosted a trivia night for freshmen through Blackboard Ultra and has since been using Discord, a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) program, to share gaming

resources and host events. Teaching and playing tabletop role-playing games online has been fairly similar to previous experiences and continues to be a popular program. However, Odum Library has had to be creative with board game substitutions and has taken advantage of free online resources, from board game simulators to virtual escape rooms. Jackbox Games has also become a staple of game night, with its wide variety of games and simplicity, and it is the most consistently attended event. During International Game Week, the library tested out asymmetric play with a variety of puzzles and will be rolling out more of this type of gaming in the upcoming semester.

The library has kept up assessment throughout the shift from in-person to virtual programming, and email continues to be the best marketing tool for events. Though attendance is down by more than half across the board, the students that do attend continue to enjoy the programming, with 78% saying they enjoyed the events “a great deal” and 22% saying they enjoyed them “a lot.” Even though attendance numbers are down, the physical collection has

shown increased usage; the November 2020 numbers almost doubled those from 2019. So, while events this year look very different from previous years, Odum Library continues to foster the joy of gaming in students.

You can find out more about the collection and programming here: <https://libguides.valdosta.edu/odumgames/home>