REPORT
Advocacy Coordinator

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Christine Yachouh
SUBJECT: Advocacy Report 4
DATE: Thursday, November 26, 2015

UPDATE

- Executed the MacTalks campaign alongside MSU Peer Support Services
- In the process of MacTalks feedback with AST and planning committee
- Completed the planning for the Sustainability Campaign – execution this week
- Created an outline and began transition reports for executives

SERVICE USAGE

Figure 1: Highlighted in this graph is the total post reach during the MacTalks campaign. The first peak was specific to promoting “Where Are the Counsellors” event and the second for Thursday’s combined programming.
Figure 2: Combination of reactions, comments and shares to MacTalks posts.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

MacTalks

This year MacTalks was a two week campaign rather than a one-week in order to accommodate all of the programming and to ensure we had a larger focus on our topics of peer support, self-care and professional support, while also educating and creating community. These themes were shaped by myself, the UA Commissioner and our planning committee of the Peer Support Services. Reflecting on these decisions- the campaign was too large in scope and lacked a clear message. Promotion was also late and the approach we took (individual posters/day) made it difficult to prioritize events in advance.

Overview of Events

SHEC Secrets
- An opportunity for students to post secrets about themselves/their experiences in MUSC Atrium in a display format
- Attendance: This two-day event was cancelled by SHEC
- Promotion: General MacTalks cover photo when launched

Diversity Services Abilitieas
- Tea and discussion for students with disbiliteas to receive support and share experiences
- Attendance: 5-10
- Promotion: Regular programming outside of MacTalks- did not receive a lot of additional promotion, general cover photo

QSCC Board Games
- Destressor event by the QSCC
• Originally in MUSC Atrium and moved to Clubspace on Monday and general cover photo
• Attendance: 0
• Promotion: AST facebook status and posting in McMaster groups the day before

“Where Are the Counsellors?” Panel
• Designed for the Student Affairs office to provide a general understanding as to why this strategic priority has not been fulfilled, for students to ask questions and have a platform to express their thoughts
• Originally in MUSC Atrium and moved to 1280 on Monday
• Attendance: 1
• Promotion: MSU and You radioshow, graphic posted and shared on both Wednesday, Thursday, and posted in over 20 Facebook groups on Friday, and general cover photo

WGEN presents: The Aftermath
• Event focusing on the long term effects of trauma, specifically looking at sexual assault in its various forms. Our hope is to start a dialogue on how support for survivors mustn't be temporary.
• Attendance: 10-15
• Promotion: WGEN Facebook event, posts throughout weekend, and general cover photo

Movies for Mental Health
• Facilitated by Art with Impact, dinner and discussion of short film submission by students with topics of mental health
• Attendance: 15-25
• Promotion: Twitter, individual poster by company, shared post over the weekend and flyers handed out by facilitators ~2 hours prior to the event across MUSC, and general cover photo

Diversity Services Abiliteas
• Cancelled by abiliteas due to weather

SHEC Talks Self Harm
• In collaboration with COPE, a group peer-support session on self harm. Goals included increase understanding and empathy, banish judgment and fear, and reduce the number of people who feel alone and suffer in silence.
• Attendance: 10-15
• Promotion: Poster shared day prior and general cover photo

Peer Support Fair
• University and MSU services providing support to be in MUSC atrium to discuss resources for students. If students attended all tables, they would receive a MacTalks tee shirt
• Attendance: 20-25
• Promotion: Poster shared day prior and general cover photo

PSL’s Peer Support 101
• Workshop discussing ways to support your friends through active listening skills
• Attendance: 10 physical, 1-5 online via google hangouts
• Promotion: Facebook event, ~15 facebook shares of event on Thursday, 77 post shares of Thursday poster on Wednesday

Diversity Services Presents: Between the Lines
• A space for POC to share experiences with mental health
• Attendance: 10-15
• Promotion: Facebook event, 77 post shares of Thursday poster on Wednesday

QSCC’s Queer Mental Health
• A space for queer students to share experiences with mental health
• Attendance: 0
• Promotion: 77 post shares of Thursday poster on Wednesday and reached out to Engiqueers president to share with group/network

Maccess and HMSC’s Let’s Talk about Talk Campaigns
• A space for people who identify with madness/mental health concerns/mental illness etc. to discuss positives and negatives of talk campaigns
• Attendance: 2-5
• Promotion: Facebook event, post share on Friday

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Sustainability Campaign
• Occuring this week in MUSC at the Clubs tables where volunteers from AST, EA, SRA Science and MacGreen will educate students on sustainable practices and what sustainability means and is
• The campaign will focus waste reduction and specifically in the areas of paper, food, and plastic
• Fridge magnets have been designed to replace rave cards and will be distributed to students throughout the campaign
• Students will also be engaged in twitter contests to win prizes from MacGreen

Food Security Policy
• The policy is being worked on by AST executive and two UA committee members
• Policy will not be completed for this term but PCRs will be outlined to be continued for next year

Transition Reports
• In the past AST executive have not completed transition reports, so I’ve created a template for my team to be working on in the next month and will be providing feedback to them

**BUDGET**

T-Shirts (volunteer and give away)- $1623.89  
Underground Design- $537.47  
100 Buttons- $15.00  
AvTek (art with impact event)- $2243.72  
Art with Impact- $1000  
Avtek Counsellors event- $250.42

**VOLUNTEERS**

This term volunteers have been less engaged, but are still very good with social media promotion when asked and motivated to participate. Term two has been very busy for them and we have needed to schedule many alternate trainings, therefore we’ve been working a lot via email and social media. We have been trying to plan a team social in an effort to help get them re-engaged however the team does not have availability. On a brighter note, we have had people messaging the Facebook group asking about how to get involved with campaigns, and they proceeded to help with MacTalks and now the Sustainability campaign.

**CURRENT CHALLENGES**

After MacTalks, I am currently struggling to make recommendations for next year. Last year there was much more attention (and support from the university) brought to it with the launch of the Mental Health Strategic Priorities. This year, we struggled with promotion as well because it overlapped with the SRA election so post reach was not nearly as effective because they would become drowned out by SRA generals posts and candidate posts. Promotion can be improved for next year of course, however there is also always the [valid] critique of MacTalks as a talk campaign and not addresses different aspects of mental health and illness enough or well enough.

**SUCCESSES**

I’m excited to say that after a rigorous executive restructuring, I believe the AST has a sustainable executive structure that proved to provide adequate support and also be very productive in their roles and with their tasks. When the incoming Coordinator wishes to hire, I don’t expect any substantial changes to the structure.