



REPORT

From the office of the...

Spark Coordinator

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Wid Yaseen
SUBJECT: Spark Report #5
DATE: Friday, February 24th, 2016

UPDATE

A lot has happened since my last report! We launched Term 2 first-year registration for our mentorship program, hosted the Life After First-Year workshop, and are a day away from our second workshop of the term, Applicant Workshop.

SERVICE USAGE

Mentorship Program Registration

This term, we have 236 first-year students registered in our mentorship program. Below are some highlights of the student demographics:

First generation students: 41/236 (17%)

Off-campus students: 60/236 (25%)

International students: 36/236 (15%)

I am grateful for the support we received from the Student Success Centre and RezLife in promoting registration, and hope that this partnership continues in future years.

Mentorship Program Attendance

Given the on-going nature of Spark, attendance in the weekly sessions varies. Overall, there is an average turnout of 4-8 students across all groups (overall average of 5 students/group).

Life After First-Year Workshop

We had about 70 students come out to our Life After First Year workshop in January (incredible). It was a successful night, and many students stayed late to chat with the different representatives that we had at the event. More information about the event will be discussed below.

Staff Social

Adam is planning a team potluck for March 3rd! I'm excited to give TAs an opportunity to continue getting to know other volunteers on the team and take a break from their busy lives to hang out.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Mentorship Program

We have completed 4 of the 10 sessions for the term (almost halfway through!). Maha and Selina have worked hard to incorporate feedback from first term to revamp the sessions and improve their relevance for students. I've included a brief summary of the themes covered in the first four sessions below:

Session 1: Intro to Spark

This term, we had students meet in Clubspace for the first session where we did large ice breakers, had coffee and snacks, and helped students engage with the larger community within Spark. They then broke off into their groups for introductory activities where they met their TLs.

Session 2: Teamwork & Compromise

The goal of this session was to build a solid team dynamic to build community among students within each group. Some groups collaborated with other groups, which allowed for students to meet other groups as well. This term, we tried something new and gave each group money to order pizza/food for their group at this session. We hoped that this would entice students to come back for session #2 and help encourage attendance early on. We received positive feedback from TLs about this and I would recommend that we continue seeking new ways to encourage turnout in future terms (especially early on).

Session 3: Discover Your City

This session is always a favourite – students went off-campus to Locke St. coffee shops with their TLs and were given some money to spend with their groups. We received positive feedback from TLs; however, this session unfortunately fell on a heavy midterm week and turnout wasn't as high as expected. TLs have suggested we host a second off-campus session later in the term to compensate!

Session 4: Getting Involved

This session focused on finding involvement and job opportunities – just in time for reading week! TLs did mock group interviews with their groups and discussed opportunities on campus for support in applying for jobs, etc.

Winter Re-Training

Before the start of sessions, I held a brief re-training for TLs. I reviewed the feedback I received from Term 1, and planned a 2-hour training that was discussion-based and led by TLs and their experiences. We rotated through 4 big themes (retention, time management, session, support) and TLs discussed solutions to common challenges in small groups. I really liked this new short training model, and hope it continues in the future!

Co-Nights

This year, I separated re-training from co-TL contract/expectation time. Instead, we hosted 4 co-nights the week before the first session on each co's respective session night. Adam did an incredible job of planning a fun session to get to know other co's within the same session night and also fill out a contract that set expectations between each co-pairing. This new initiative that we implemented this term was a great success!

Weekly Training

This term, Maha and Selina have incorporated creative strategies to engage TLs at training! Training incorporates more small group discussions where TLs are leading many of the conversations, as well as activities that prompt TLs to share personal experiences from sessions that can help others. Given that some activities this term are repeated from first term, Maha and Selina are doing an incredible job of making training fresh and exciting despite this.

Life After First-Year Workshop

We collaborated with FYC, SCSN, and SOCS for this workshop. We hosted the event at 1280 and had a ton of free food – always a good idea. We had guest speakers come in to provide tips

and tricks for students in navigating student housing, landlords, and being a Community Advisor. The event had a brief introductory presentation, and ended with allotted time for students to chat with specific representatives at the event based on questions they had. Many stuck around way past the event time to engage in discussions and hear perspectives, which was really great to see. A huge shout out to David and Kristina for their hard work and success on this event!

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Applicant Workshop

On Sunday February 26th, Spark is collaborating with CLAY and Horizons to host Applicant Workshop. Kayla has done a wonderful job on all the promo material, and Kristina and David have spearheaded the planning and collaboration. The workshop hopes to reach out to students who are looking to strengthen their written applications and interview skills. We've used sponsored Facebook ads to hopefully reach out to a larger demographic of students on campus. I'm excited for another successful event, and look forward to reporting about it in my next EB meeting!

BUDGET

McMaster Student's Union
Dept. 0125 - SPARK
For the Nine Months Ending January 31, 2017

	Current	Prior Yr.	Current	Prior Yr.	Prior Yr.	Approved	% Budget
	Month	Month	YTD	YTD	YE	Budget	Used
	January	January	2016-17	2015-16	2015-16	2017	To Date
All:							
5003-0125 SPARK - OFFICE SUPPLIES			27.12			60.00	45.20%
5101-0125 SPARK - TELEPHONE				225.76	225.76	60.00	0.00%
6103-0125 SPARK - ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS	1,051.51		606.87	340.95	2,430.91	3,000.00	20.23%
6501-0125 SPARK - ADV. & PROMOTION	63.60		2,030.20	2,289.59	2,693.67	2,400.00	84.59%
6802-0125 SPARK - LEADER TRAINING	181.26		635.57	395.63	395.63	720.00	88.27%
7001-0125 SPARK - WAGES	344.09	338.82	3,960.19	5,575.31	7,786.32	6,600.00	60.00%
7101-0125 SPARK - BENEFITS	24.29	25.09	279.08	441.14	603.19	540.00	51.68%
Total All	1,664.75	363.91	7,539.03	9,268.38	14,135.48	13,380.00	56.35%

75.00%

VOLUNTEERS

Spark TLs are incredible, and my exec continue to work above and beyond. The great thing about Spark is that second term is a fresh opportunity for TLs. I've noticed many are more confident in their roles and abilities, and it has been very rewarding to see the incredible growth on the team in such a short time. I'm a proud mom.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

It's the end of February and people are inevitable tired. Engagement at training and session has not been a problem, but the team is tired. I'm excited for the upcoming staff social to re-energize, and hopefully the reading week gave everyone a chance to rest.

SUCSESSES

My team is incredible and everyday I'm proud for all the good that this service does. I'm excited to hear your feedback!