



REPORT

From the office of the...

Spark Coordinator

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Lindsay D'Souza
SUBJECT: Spark Report #6
DATE: Wednesday, January 31st, 2018

UPDATE

We have officially completed one month of Term 2 Spark!! This Thursday (Feb 1st) brought us to the end of our second week of sessions for the Winter Term and we have a lot coming up in terms of events and collaborations in the next couple of weeks! I am so excited for another term with this incredible team – they have been working hard to help support students for almost a whole school year now and that is A LOT to be proud of as a Coordinator – to see the impact my team has on first year transition.

SERVICE USAGE

Student registration opened in the second week of January. Last term there was cap of a maximum of 250 students (12-13 per group) however, this term we are experiencing lower registration numbers than usual for our service. We had decided last term that we are not capping the numbers for student registration this term because each group never has full attendance thus it makes no sense to turn students away from the support that Spark offers. Therefore, registration will stay open all term or students can email me and I will work with my Volunteer Coordinator Sehar to put them into a group. We are still promoting the program on social media for students to sign up and are posting/working with different networks like the Rep Network, Class of 2021, faculties, and the SSC. Right now, we have 113 students registered, however this is considerably low as we usually get anywhere between 200-250 students. Out of the 113, here are the demographics:

Demographics for the term:

20 International Students
9 First Generation Students
24 Off-Campus Students
97 registered did not attend the MSU Horizons Conference

We are hoping to expand in the coming month and appreciate any help!

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

December Planning

Each exec and myself spent the holiday break preparing and gearing up for Term 2. This included google hangout meetings to check in, set agendas, and ensure we knew what projects to work on during the break while also ensuring the exec took a break for themselves!

Winter Re-training

My exec team and I facilitated our staff retraining in BSB on Sunday January 14th from 9am-11am. We revisited important themes like session situationals, time management, conflict resolution, support, and logistics for volunteers/sessions. Having this retraining is really important for resetting expectations, reviewing goals, collecting feedback and motivating TL's for second term since their commitment of support can be tiring by the time second term rolls around. TL's had the opportunity to share with each other strategies, challenges, and takeaways from last term. This allows TL's to learn from each other and try something new with their students to offer improved support and contribute to overall retention of our service.

Session 1 + 2

For sessions this term we always revamp activities and switch around the timing of sessions so that they fall at more relevant times in a first year's schedule (Eg: Getting involved will be week #3 since apps are coming out now, whereas in first term it was session #6). This term session 1 was "Intro to Spark" where students got to hangout in clubspace and do large group icebreakers with all the students on each night before breaking off into their smaller groups. This introduction is supposed to be low-key and make students feel comfortable enough to come back for week 2. Week 2 was our traditional "Discover Your City Week". We decided when revamping sessions this term that starting off on less heavy topics will ensure students feel like they are making friends or a group of support before engaging in deeper discussions.

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Student Registration

As previously mentioned this will stay open all term! Students are welcome to register with the link online on the spark page of the MSU website or email me at spark@msu.mcmaster.ca to sign up. Students have until March 26th to sign up for the sessions program as the last week of sessions will be the first week of April.

Applicant's Workshop

As in previous years, Spark is teaming up again with MSU CLAY and MSU Horizons to put on our Applicant's Workshop for all students of every year. Getting Involved can be a challenging when you don't know where to start. We're here to make it a little easier. The event will be held in MUSC from 3pm-6pm on Sunday, February 11th. There will be 3 mini workshops, which include one-on-one mock interviews, group mock interviews, and tips on written applications as well as building your resume and cover letter. These workshops will equip students with the tools they need to better prepare themselves for both an MSU interview and real-world interview and provide exposure to the process. Students will also get the opportunity to mingle and chat with student volunteers who are familiar with MSU services like Spark, Horizons, and CLAY.

Off-Campus Living Workshop

Our off-campus living workshop will be happening in March! Our events Coordinators Lisa and Sarah are currently in the planning stages with this. By pairing up with partners who work in the off-campus offices as well as services who work with food security and the Hamilton community, we can provide first years with some insight on what life may be like after first year, who they can ask for help, and what they should be looking for in terms of living arrangements.

Staff Social #3 Spark Camping!

TL's don't always have the opportunity to see each other than weekly trainings or socials so we

thought we would make this one extra special in the area of team bonding! While it may be cold outside we are bringing the TL's Spark camping – an indoor sleepover experience. We will still have all the camping features (smores, twinkly lights as stars, and of course pitched tents). We have rented out big cozy carpeted room in the psych building and have Macapella and Mac Improv coming in to perform an evening show. In the morning, we have partnered with the club Lift Church to provide pancake breakfast. I'm SO excited!

BUDGET

ACCOUNT CODE	ITEM	BUDGET / COST
5003-0125	SPARK - OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$60.00
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$0.00
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$60.00
6102-0125	SPARK - ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS	3,000.00
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$2,294.40
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$705.60
6501-0125	SPARK - ADV. & PROMOTION	\$3,000.00
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$170.40
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$2,829.60
6802-0125	SPARK - LEADER TRAINING	\$750.00
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$406.60
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$343.40
TOTALS		
TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$6,810.00
TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$2,871.40
REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$3,938.60

*****Note:** the Adv & Promotions line is the only one not up to date – I'm waiting for the underground to send me an updated number and from my own tracking I have spent around \$2000 and have about \$1000 left

VOLUNTEERS

This team is still going strong! I was happy to see everyone at our Winter Retraining because they always have the most insightful ideas and support to offer one another. It makes me sad knowing I only have three more months! We switched up co-pairings for this term so TL's have the opportunity to work with someone new and make a new friend. Finally, a huge congratulations to Jane Luft, the incoming Spark Coordinator for the 2018-2019 school year. She will do great things!!

CURRENT CHALLENGES

As previously mentioned, student registration is lower than usual. We believe it may be due to not having the hype of Welcome Week and Clubsfest which gave us a lot more visibility and first years were excited to try a bunch of new things! We are using all of our regular promotional

strategies from last term so that social media groups and different networks are still receiving the same level of attention. Any support reaching out to groups or students is appreciated on our end!

SUCSESSES

An idea that myself and my Events Coordinators Lisa and Sarah had been playing around with last term was adding a small fundraising responsibility to their roles. This would provide greater flexibility for budgeting of our events/sessions. Before the break they send out a bunch of emails and we have gotten a lot of positive responses and donations. While I don't feel it is big enough to be a whole new position on the Spark exec team, I hope this is something we can add to the job description of the Events Coordinators in terms of smaller responsibility like sending out emails. This will affect our budgeting that is displayed above by only increasing the annual campaigns line by a few dollars as these roll in.

OTHER

I'm always happy to hear any feedback or answer any questions! Feel free to send me an email at spark@msu.mcmaster.ca

Here are some important upcoming dates for Spark that I will be discussing in future reports:

-February: Applicant Workshop, Staff Social, and upcoming sessions

-March: Off-campus Housing Workshop, transitioning Jane Luft our new PTM!!