



REPORT

From the office of the...

Spark Coordinator

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Jane Luft
SUBJECT: Spark Report 6
DATE: Thursday, January 31st, 2019

YEARPLAN UPDATE

The main updates since last report are that we have started our second term of the Sessions program; we are well on our way planning the Applicants' Workshop with CLAY, Horizons, First Year Council, and Maroons; and we have made some structural changes to our volunteer team and Sessions program.

The changes to our volunteer team include the loss of 2 volunteers and 1 executive member. I also made the role of being a Team Leader optional for my executive team this semester to alleviate some of their duties and ensure they aren't feeling overworked. This also worked nicely with our change to the Sessions program, being that we reduced the number of Spark groups from 5 to 4 groups per night. With fewer Team Leaders and fewer available rooms than we had last semester, this works out very nicely and will hopefully allow everyone on the team to fulfill their role in a way that works for them.

A lot of the major events and projects on my Year Plan have been checked off and the remaining plans are primarily finishing this term's Sessions, 2 more workshops, and a year-end social.

SERVICE USAGE

- "Reached" 9,644 people and gained 14 new likes on Facebook last month
- 113 students enrolled in Sessions program
- 8 groups registered through the new Group Registration Form

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Term 2 Registration Promo: In December, Spark began promoting the opening of our Term 2 registration through online campaigns and spreading the word via volunteers, Spark Ambassadors, and Spark partners. We also completed a promo video that captured some of Spark's activities over first semester. The aim of the video was to give students a better idea of what Spark is and ideally motivate them to register for our sessions program. We also used a new strategy for recruiting students this semester which was providing the option for students to register in groups with their friends, as we've noticed that

Spark groups with existing friends often have better student turnout and the option to register with friends may seem more inviting than registering alone.

Winter Re-Training: On the first weekend back from classes, we ran a re-training for our Team Leaders in Clubspace. At this training, we covered logistical details for the upcoming semester including new co-ships, changes to weekly trainings, and the promotional plan for the final weeks before Sessions began. We also took a portion of the training to address feedback from volunteers we received over the term and to explain to the team what steps have been taken to address the feedback. Finally, we went through a number of scenarios and challenges our volunteers face as Team Leaders and discussed in small groups ways to navigate them. Overall, the re-training was successful and allowed us to give our volunteers a refresher on their Spark responsibilities as well as motivate them in their roles for the last few months of the year.

Sessions Opening Ceremonies: During the first week of our mentorship program, we run “Opening Ceremonies” where all students meet in Clubspace for large icebreakers and learn a bit about Spark before breaking off into their small groups. This was a successful opening event that engaged students in a large group setting and hopefully got them excited for the upcoming semester.

Term 2 Sessions: Term 2 sessions have started up and a few changes have been made to better serve students and to adapt to changing conditions. Despite registration numbers, there are rarely a large number of students attending session every single week, and we’ve realized that 5 session groups each night is unnecessary. We have reduced the number of groups to 4, allowing each group to start with more students and also allowing us to adapt to the reduced number of rooms available to us. MUSC has enforced their weekly hour limit policy this semester, making it difficult for us to find space for all our Spark groups, but this change to 4 groups per night has helped to address this.

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Applicants’ Workshop: Spark has run this event in collaboration with CLAY and Horizons for the past couple of years but this year we have also involved First Year Council and Maroons. First Year Council will offer valuable outreach to first year students, helping Spark to fulfill our mandate. Maroons will be assisting by running the Livestream Q&A about applications and walking students from residence to the workshop.

Guidebook #3: Now in term 2, our Promotions & Publications Coordinator is working on developing our third guidebook of the year that will focus on academics. We will be moving towards developing a smaller guidebook that can be used in future years as a template requiring little re-design and saving costs in the future.

BUDGET

<i>ACCOUNT CODE</i>	<i>ITEM</i>	<i>BUDGET / COST</i>
5003-0125	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$0.00
OFFICE SUPPLIES	REMAINING IN LINE	\$60.00
6102-0125	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$2,981.04
ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS	REMAINING IN LINE	\$18.96
6501-0125	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$3,072.57
ADV. & PROMOTIONS	REMAINING IN LINE	-\$72.57
6802-0125	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$725
LEADER TRAINING	REMAINING IN LINE	\$25.00
<i>TOTALS</i>		
TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$6,810.00
TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$6,778.61
REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$31.39

Since last report, the major expenses have been paying the remaining balance to the Art Gallery for food, drinks, and service charges. This large invoice came out of Annual Campaigns but was mostly covered by the revenue generated through Formal ticket sales. Other expenses since last report include promotional materials for our Term 1 Registration and supplies for the last term of sessions (around \$100). I am close to reaching the total budgeted discretionary spending but additional expenses have been approved this year due to the changes in promotional material creation.

Future costs that are yet to be spent include snacks/materials for upcoming events (around \$50), money for the Discover Your City session (\$200-250) 1-2 guidebooks (around \$500 each), promotional materials for our final workshop of the year (\$200), and volunteer appreciation at the end of year (\$300-400). Considering these costs, I anticipate spending approximately \$1200 over budget in Adv. & Promotional costs and around \$700 over in Annual Campaigns.

VOLUNTEERS

We have faced a few challenges with volunteers over the past couple of months. Due to personal reasons, we had 2 volunteers leave their Team Leader positions. Due to the restructuring of session groups this term (4 groups per night instead of 5), this has not been an issue as we still have more than enough Team Leaders to lead each of the groups.

We also faced the challenge of losing an executive member which has been dealt with through various meetings with VP-Admin, Kristina Epifano, and a lot of communication with volunteers affected by this situation.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

At this point in the semester, things are running quite smoothly and we are gearing up for the final months of Sessions and events. The only challenge we are still trying to address is potentially getting an extra room for Wednesday and Thursday since we only have 1 MUSC room that 2 groups have to share right now. This takes away from the intimate setting Spark aims to create in small groups so we are hoping to speak with Josephine about potentially booking the Clubs boardroom without having to book it one month in advance every week (as per the standard process of booking the room).

SUCSESSES

I am SO proud of all the hard work my team has been doing to recruit students, lead sessions, and support first years and fellow Team Leaders. Special shoutout to our Sessions Coordinator, Anika Spasov, for all the extra work she's been putting in lately as executive roles have changed. She's been a great help to me in keeping Spark running smoothly over the past month.

OTHER

Nothing else for now! Feel free to reach out if you have any feedback/questions at spark@msu.mcmaster.ca or bring them up during Thursday's meeting! Thank you for taking the time to read this report.