



OPERATING POLICY - MSU SPARK

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 Spark will be a student-led, student-run service of the MSU that is devoted to setting the stage for student success in university through initiatives designed to:
 - 1.1.1 Provide students with small group environments that facilitate first-year growth, and build personal development and reflection skills for their undergraduate career;
 - 1.1.2 Encourage extracurricular participation by introducing first year students to campus services, clubs and leadership opportunities;
 - 1.1.3 Connect students to their peers and upper-year students to promote increased support on academic issues and associated first year challenges;
 - 1.1.4 Actively support the broader first year population by acting as a resource, identifying areas of need, and hosting workshops to address these areas.

2. OPERATING PARAMETERS

- 2.1 The structure of the Spark program shall be as follows:
 - 2.1.1 Participation in weekly sessions, which shall be comprised of small groups of first-year students and be led by two (2) non-first year, undergraduate Team Leaders. These sessions shall last the length of each term (Fall term and Winter term, respectively).
 - 2.1.1.1 Sessions will be between 1-2 hours and held once per week for the length of the term;
 - 2.1.1.2 The topics of each week's sessions will be planned by the Spark Coordinator in conjunction with the Vice-President (Administration) as necessary;
 - 2.1.1.3 A session may be comprised of leadership activities, presentations from speakers, discussions, journaling/reflection periods, games, and other activities deemed as appropriate by the Spark Coordinator;
 - 2.1.2 The provision of optional study groups and social events at various points throughout the term to promote building inclusive student learning communities;
 - 2.1.3 The provision of optional, open workshops twice each term to address the specific challenges faced by most first year students at relevant points throughout the year.

- 2.2 The opportunity to participate in the Spark program is available to all eligible first-year students at no cost to the participant.
- 2.3 Spark shall be guided by the following learning outcomes:
 - 2.3.1 Providing a sense of comfort, connection, and support within the McMaster University;
 - 2.3.2 Appreciating the importance and value of extracurricular university involvement;
 - 2.3.3 Demonstrating self-reflection and the ability to identify opportunities for individual growth;
 - 2.3.4 Clarifying academic, personal, and career-related goals, while also helping students to create a plan of action to accomplish them;
 - 2.3.5 Facilitating an improved suite of leadership skills, including communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution.
- 2.4 Incoming or current first-year students shall sign up for Spark through an online application process for each term, respectively.
 - 2.4.1 The eligibility requirements for participation are as follows:
 - 2.4.1.1 The applicant is currently (or will be, in that calendar year), a Level I student at McMaster University;
 - 2.4.1.2 The applicant has not completed the Spark program in a previous term or previous year.
 - 2.4.2 Participants who have a high potential to benefit from the program may be given priority. Examples of these demographics include, but are not limited to, students on academic probation and first-generation students. All other spots will be provided on a first come, first served basis;
 - 2.4.3 The Spark Coordinator shall set the appropriate cap for the number of first-year participants, based on available resources, including but not limited to, volunteer, budgetary, and logistical constraints;
 - 2.4.4 Online applications will ask students questions in order to allow for the creation of diverse session groups. These groups should aim to include students with differing personal goals, faculty, personality type, comfort level, and history of prior involvement, among other items ;
 - 2.4.5 The application information will remain confidential to the Spark Coordinator.
- 2.5 Spark shall aim to accomplish the following wherever possible:
 - 2.5.1 Forming and maintaining personal connections and relationships between students;
 - 2.5.2 Forming and maintaining personal connections between first year students and upper year students;

- 2.5.3 A certificate of completion shall be granted to participants who attend and participate in a minimum of 8 weekly sessions.
- 2.6 Additional recognition events for student participants may be planned at the discretion of the Spark Coordinator.

3. PERSONNEL STRUCTURE

- 3.1 The Spark Coordinator, who shall:
 - 3.1.1 Be responsible for the planning and promoting of Spark over the summer and managing Spark throughout the academic year;
 - 3.1.2 Perform duties outlined in the Spark Coordinator job description;
 - 3.1.3 Be hired by a hiring committee struck by the Executive Board that shall consist of:
 - 3.1.3.1 The Vice-President (Administration);
 - 3.1.3.2 The outgoing Spark Coordinator (if applicable);
 - 3.1.3.3 One (1) Executive Board member.
- 3.2 The Spark Volunteer Coordinator, who shall:
 - 3.2.1 Be responsible for the scheduling, supporting, and assisting with training of all volunteers;
 - 3.2.2 Perform duties outlined in the Spark Volunteer Coordinator job description;
 - 3.2.3 Be selected by the Spark Coordinator through an application and interview process.
- 3.3 The Spark Promotions Coordinator who shall:
 - 3.3.1 Be responsible for coordinating outreach and promoting the role of Spark for first year students;
 - 3.3.2 Perform duties outlined in the Spark Promotions Coordinator job description;
 - 3.3.3 Be selected by the Spark Coordinator by an application and interview process.
- 3.4 The Spark Sessions Coordinator(s) who shall:
 - 3.4.1 Be responsible for the research and development of all Spark sessions;
 - 3.4.2 Perform duties outlined in the Spark Sessions Coordinator job description;
 - 3.4.3 Be selected by the Spark Coordinator by an application and interview process.
- 3.5 The Spark Events Coordinator(s) who shall:
 - 3.5.1 Be responsible for creating and implementing inclusive social events for both Spark students and the broader first year community, as well as four (4) large scale workshops focused on first year success.
 - 3.5.2 Perform duties outlined in the Spark Events Coordinator job description;
 - 3.5.3 Be selected by the Spark Coordinator by an application and interview process.

3.6 The Spark Publications Coordinator, who shall:

3.6.1 Be responsible for the creation of engaging and informative materials for first year students;

3.6.2 Perform duties outlined in the Spark Publications Coordinator job description;

~~3.6.3~~ Be selected by the Spark Coordinator by an application and interview process

~~3.7~~ The Spark Outreach and Engagement Coordinator, who shall:

~~3.7.1~~ Be responsible for connecting with various first-year groups to partner in programming, collaborating with various McMaster services and enhancing Spark's presence on campus

~~3.7.2~~ Perform duties outlined in the Spark Outreach and Engagement job description

~~3.7.3~~ Be selected by the Spark Coordinator by an application and interview process

~~3.6.3~~

~~3.7.3.8~~ The Team Leaders, who shall:

~~3.7.13.8.1~~ Be student volunteers who lead the weekly sessions with first year students;

~~3.7.23.8.2~~ Regularly engage in informal meetings with Spark students;

~~3.7.33.8.3~~ Perform the duties outlined in the Team Leader job description;

~~3.7.43.8.4~~ Be selected by the Spark Coordinator through an application and interview process;