



REPORT

From the office of the...

Horizons Conference Coordinator

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Emma Tomas
SUBJECT: Horizons Report 7: Final Report
DATE: August 22 2019

YEARPLAN UPDATE

- The conference is over! We had a very successful, fun, and energetic weekend. We received positive feedback from staff and delegates.
- Planning Team transition documents are in progress.
- Thank you cards and emails are in the process of being distributed to our sponsors and partners.

SERVICE USAGE

- We have over 126 delegates registered so far and have offered financial aid (partially paid where the delegate pays \$117 + HST) to 9 students. This led to a total of 135 students registered for the conference, although only 129 attended the conference.
- We have had over 30 students request subsidized payments, but unfortunately, we are unable to offer so many spots. For this reason, we chose to offer partial subsidies to help the most people as possible on a first-come-first-serve basis. For next year, I would recommend keeping this subsidized system in place, but increasing promotions and communication with delegates so they are aware of the limited spots and request aid as soon as possible.
- Our staff team hired 48 Leadership Developers, 5 Events, and 1 media team members, so in addition to the 6 members of the Planning Team who will also be Leadership Developers we have 54 Leadership Developers.

STAFF TRAINING

- Staff training took place July 20th and 21st, in IAHS. We reviewed sessions and events, Anti-Opressive Practices, logistical components of the conference, and peer support. Khadijeh Rakie from the Equity and Inclusion Office came in to facilitate AOP and peer support, which received lots of positive feedback. The staff asked lots of questions which sparked interesting conversations that led to growth and personal development (the goal of training!). We split sessions and events training on to both days, which helped the staff retain

information and have opportunities to ask questions about the weekend without feeling overwhelmed.

- We had pizza lunch donated by Pizza Nova, LIFT pancake breakfast, as well as Starbucks coffee and tea. This was great for the team and did not add any costs to our budget since it was all donated! All we purchased was snacks, as well as the Altitude payment and the s'mores for the bonfire social. I would recommend contacting sponsors to help out with training (or anything!) because it seems that sponsors are more likely to donate physical products or gift cards instead of strictly monetary donations.
- Most staff did not provide their prop requests to me before the weekend, so I confirmed everyone's materials on the Sunday of training and purchased them on Monday so that the team would have until Friday to make their props. Everyone did so and they all looked great!
- We were very proud of the team and their willingness to engage with the training content, especially because most of the staff had not participated in Horizons before. I would encourage the next coordinator to set a continuous expectation that Horizons (both the planning team and full staff team dynamics) remain learning spaces that encourage growth and support. Although this may seem difficult, it is essential to ensure that everyone can grow – just as our delegates do – in a safe, inclusive, understanding environment.

FRIDAY JULY 26TH

- Friday went well! Delegate check in went smoothly. Housing & Conference services checked delegates into their room in the LP Lobby and they were very helpful and supported us with any unforeseen issues. The flow from picking up t-shirts, lanyards etc. in LP 109 to the lobby worked out very well, and delegates were not waiting long to get signed in. We also had ice breakers and mingling while delegates checked in before opening ceremonies.
- Opening ceremonies went great! We were in LRW B1007, which was a big step up from CNH in past years not only because of its aesthetic appeal, but it was also air conditioned, more spacious with tables for eating lunch, and had big screens to show our presentation. We recorded the 'key concepts skits' and added captions, all of which was well received by the conference. We also had a welcome from a representative of the City of Hamilton within the Economic Development sector. This helped with our goal of extending the delegate experience beyond campus and helped with the excitement of going downtown on Saturday!
- Faculty Day was lots of fun despite some significant miscommunications with some faculty rep coordinators. I would encourage better communication and more frequent reminders to ensure that the coordinators are planning for the event and are aware of the logistical components of it. I would recommend adding a snack station (like everyone grabs an extra granola bar to eat with their faculties) at this event, since there was a big break between lunch and dinner. We also requested that each faculty provide some sort of 'swag'

to their delegates to ensure that everyone felt appreciated and included (in previous years only Engineers walked away with cool prizes). This seemed to be well received and everyone was happy with their faculty gift!

- Dinner at 1280 was burgers, which was a big hit with everyone! Delegates had a staggered entrance because some sessions went long, which helped with lineups. However, it seemed like the seating was tight in 1280 if we had not had this staggering (some groups finished before some groups arrived), so I would recommend either formalizing a staggered entrance and/or ensuring that there were more than enough seats in 1280 for the conference.
- PJ Party was a hit! I was incredibly proud of how everything went and loved seeing the connections between delegates develop. We had LIFT bring pancakes as well as Red Frogs bring candy, so the delegates were very well fed and did not go to bed hungry. We chose not to hire a DJ, since they can be incredibly expensive, and we wanted to choose fun music for the delegates. However, it seems that no matter what music was chosen everyone wanted to pick songs. We did allow a few delegates to pick some clean songs, but the dance floor never filled up completely despite this engagement. Since AVTek is so expensive, I am unsure if the dance would be a good choice for the PJ Party next year.
- Goodnights also went great, and the delegates and staff were all able to go to bed before 12.

SATURDAY JULY 27TH

- Saturday was a busy but great day! We started off with a buffet breakfast at Centro, which was a good start to a busy day downtown. The only downside to this and current challenge were the distribution of meal cards. Although I stood at the exit and reminded everyone to put their meal cards in the collection bin, we are still missing multiple cards (that do have a fee should they remain unrecovered). I am optimistic that these cards can be recovered, however, I would recommend that an alternate arrangement be made to ensure something like this does not happen again.
- We were fortunate that the weather was not too hot, and the delegates had their own water bottles, however, I would suggest adding MSU bottles to our t-shirt/lanyard giveaway at check-in just to be on the safe side.
- I worked with the Art Gallery of Hamilton (AGH) to create a multisensory multimodal scavenger hunt, which was a great success! It gave delegates with a wide variety of abilities and interests an opportunity to engage with the art in a way that made them comfortable and happy. I would highly suggest that this be done again. We also encouraged staff to separate into different 'styles' of scavenger hunt, where one LD didn't do the scavenger hunt and just walked around the gallery, another was more competitive and the other was non-competitive but still participated in the hunt. This again gave delegates the opportunity to engage how they liked and compensated for a lack of parallel programming. I do think it would be difficult to run

parallel programming with the AGH given the limitations of staff and budget, but I believe this was a perfect solution that made most very happy.

- Success Fest and our whole-conference programming took place in the David Braley Health Sciences Centre (DBHSC) downtown. This location was beautiful, very accessible, and had more space than the Centre for Continuing Education (even though this space cost much more than the CCE). I would suggest working out an agreement with them should this space be chosen again. SuccessFest went well, as did the conference-wide programming (which included speed friending, card games, Q&As etc.), but more organization would have improved the events.
- We took photos and ate a Pizza Pizza lunch in front of the Hamilton sign at City Hall. This was a great way to introduce the delegates to the city, and it was logistically a very smooth transition between the AGH and DBHSC. It was also great that each location could be seen from the other, so we did not have to worry about delegates getting lost or confusion between rotations. Having said that, when we venture downtown it is difficult to predict or control the people who will be nearby us. We did encounter some protests at the City of Hamilton, although they were quiet and did not engage with anybody near us. We addressed this as a team at debrief, and I did not know of any related issues. I would recommend that the next coordinator investigate as best as possible the political/social/cultural climate of any area they choose to go to, so they can be prepared and anticipate any challenges. Our AOP training did touch heavily on situations that could arise when off-camps, so I was confident that the team could properly support delegates and each other if need be.
- We also had a four-member panel comprised of various individuals who are active in the greater Hamilton and McMaster community. It aimed to focus on community engagement and leadership. We chose a panel instead of keynote speakers in hopes that the delegates would be better able to connect with the speakers. We received feedback that it was a good idea, with the suggestion to include younger panelists with more relatable experiences and diverse backgrounds. I suggest that it be included next year but with also more opportunity for delegate questions.
- Finally, we had our Wellness Night in IAHS. We had therapy dogs, yoga, smoothie making, a movie, art, a jam session, SoBi bikes, and improv. This event catered to everyone's needs, and it seemed that the delegates had a great time. They even started card games in the lobby which was a blast. The SoBi bikes were an enormous hit, so I would recommend that again next year for sure. SoBi was not very cooperative and did not deliver bikes to the location we agreed upon, which was very stressful and unfair to the Events team. They did a great job at getting those bikes from all around campus and setting the entire night up, however, I would recommend persistent communication with SoBi as early as possible to ensure they can implement these requests early on. This problem happened at Horizons last year as well, so I

would suggest also scheduling extra time should they not deliver bikes next year either.

SUNDAY JULY 28TH

- Our last day was much more relaxing! Delegates and staff got to wake up at 8 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. respectively, which boosted the energy and morale of the team on a day that would typically be the most draining. We had breakfast at 1280, which was less expensive than Centro and still offered a good amount of food. We were disappointed that they ran out of fruit and pastries, but otherwise it was a very yummy and filling breakfast.
- Sessions ran well, and we delivered their group photos as well as Subway lunch to the groups during their chosen breaks.
- After closing ceremonies (that was lots of fun!) we took our conference-wide photo in Faculty Hollow. We chose this location because the stairs at DBAC were under construction, and it would be nicer to take a photo outside instead of in MUSC. However, it was quite hot outside and some people were waiting in the sun for too long. I would suggest investigating more photo options should the weather be too warm.
- We had a good check-out system with the help of Housing & Conference services that enabled guardians to pick up their delegates and drive through parking lot H. I would encourage the incoming PTM and H&C to use this system again, but to make sure that parking services opens this lot at least half an hour before scheduled pick up time because some parents do arrive very early. Housing & Conference services also provided a late check-out time free of charge, which removed a lot of hassle and confusion of storing bags in LP 109 or elsewhere. I would highly recommend requesting this option because it removed a lot of headaches.
- Our final debrief went very well! We had extra snacks and subway sandwiches, so everyone was able to have some food as we chatted. The most common suggestions were more free-time, a more relaxing Saturday (such as a free-time period), and warm-fuzzies to be available throughout the weekend so that delegates do not feel rushed to write their notes.
- Overall, I was, and still am, very proud and grateful for all the hard work of the entire staff team. They made amazing connections with delegates throughout the weekend and I am confident that they felt welcome at McMaster.

BUDGET

Below is the final budget outline.

Account Code	Revenue Source	Description	Per Unit Cost	Total Revenue	Currently Register	Final Revenue
3303-0124 HORIZONS - FEE REVENUE	Early Bird Pricing 1		\$200.00	\$8,000.00	\$19.00	3800
3303-0124 HORIZONS - FEE REVENUE	Early Bird Pricing 2		\$217.00	\$8,680.00	\$9.00	1953
3303-0124 HORIZONS - FEE REVENUE	Partially subsidized	Delegates in need of financial aid	\$117.00	\$1,053.00	9	1053
3303-0124 HORIZONS - FEE REVENUE	Regular Pricing		\$235.00	\$23,500.00	103	24205
3303-0124 HORIZONS - FEE REVENUE	MSU Budget		\$15,220.00	\$15,220.00		\$15,220.00
3802-0124 HORIZONS - OTHER REVENUE	Sponsorship	Ideally \$10,000 - extra \$3,000 to go to subsidies		\$7,000.00		5111
			Total Revenue	\$63,453.00		51342

CONFERENCE COSTS						
Expenditure	Description/Notes	Per Unit Cost or OG budget	Total Budgeted Cost	Spent to Date	Category	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Housing: Single Rooms				HOUSING BUDGET	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Housing: Double Rooms		\$25,048.68			
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Other Housing Costs	\$175.00	\$175.00	\$25,048.68		
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Sunday morning breakfast: 1280	10.95+servicecharge+manager	\$3,148.13			
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Saturday Morning Breakfast: Centro	Centro - included in G14	\$11.95	\$3,226.50		
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	MUSC Rooms		\$1,500.00	\$2,748.00	MUSC	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Delegate Sponsorship	Calculated above		\$0.00	Sponsorship	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Friday Lunch: Sandwiches	UM sandwiches for delegates and staff	\$4.00	All 1280 meals cost in G23	EVENTS BUDGET	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Friday Lunch & Dinner: 1280 Sandwiches / Burgers, Fries & Salad	Fajitas	9.99x270+ servicecharge+ man	\$3,490.25		\$0.00
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Sunday Lunch	Subway		\$1,228.59		\$1,228.59
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Saturday lunch	Pizza	\$700.00	\$447.60		\$457.60
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Saturday dinner	Deconstructed fajita	10.59x270+ servicecharge+ ma	\$4,092.17		\$10,252.38
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Conference Snacks		\$400.00	\$400.00		\$173.00
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	PJ Party!	Avtek: \$1172.85	\$1,100.00	\$1,172.85		\$1,172.85
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Conference Snacks		\$400.00	\$400.00		\$173.00
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	PJ Party!	Avtek: \$1172.85	\$1,100.00	\$1,172.85		\$1,172.85
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Successfest and Hamilton Programming	Buses and space in Hamilton - need to budget for accessible taxi	1186.57 (buses) + 637.00 (spac	\$1,754.32		\$1,823.57
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Events	Gifts and Costs Guest speakers and facilitators	\$50 from campus store + donat	\$0.00	\$0.00	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Events	Wellness Programming	\$50 yoga, 4x parking 8:45-10:1	\$200.00	\$245.00	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Events	Warm Fuzzy Materials, Signs and Misc. Event Materials	+	\$100.00	\$0.00	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Conference Gift	Frames and photos - \$1.5 per participant (frame and photo)	\$450.00	\$450.00	\$125.00	
6802-0124 HORIZONS - LEADER TRAINING	Leadership Training	Lunch and snacks on Saturday July 20th	\$300.00	\$100.00	\$50.00	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Conference Printing	Delegate and staff manuals	\$1,000.00	\$750.00	\$750.00	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Conference Shirts			\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Lanyards	Using 2018 lanyards - just need to purchase tags for inside lanyards	\$0.00	\$133.00	\$133.00	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Banner		\$210.00	\$210.00	\$210.00	
6501-0124 HORIZONS - ADV. & PROMO.	Promotions	\$200 (Textbooks4Change fundraiser), \$150 (staff registration), \$75 (delegate registration), \$35 (tabletop banner - May @ <Mac) = \$435 + Rave cards??	\$550.00	\$550.00	\$435.00	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Sessions Materials	Materials for sessions activities	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$199.75	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Sessions Props	Props for individual session groups (18x\$10 per group)	\$180.00	\$180.00	\$180.00	

CAMPAIGN	Sessions Props	per group]	\$180.00	\$180.00	\$180.00	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	LDL Expenses	Walkie-talkies + driving	\$35.00	\$1,260.00	\$1,502.00	V+L BUDGET
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	Misc. Emergency Monies	Conference Weekend	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL	Volunteer Appreciation/Social	Evening of July 20th - Bonfire + s'mores	120 for altitude, 150 for snacks	\$270.00	\$160.00	
6103-0124 HORIZONS - ANNUAL	Night Before Classes	Contribution to event with Spark			\$75.00	
		Total Cost		\$54,535.09	\$49,734.42	

VOLUNTEERS

- We had a wonderful staff team who worked tirelessly throughout the weekend. They were so enthusiastic and learned a lot from each other especially because their varied levels of experience with the Students Union and Horizons. More than half the team had not participated in the conference, or any other MSU service, before. It was great seeing them thrive and grow in their new roles, as well as the staff members who had participated in the conference before providing guidance and support.
- The team was very supportive of one another and formed strong friendships during the weekend that I have no doubt will continue to grow.
- We had one Media Events person to assist our Media & Design Coordinator. This dynamic seemed to work very well, although I would recommend hiring another person if the talent is available. This is a highly specialized position so it can be difficult to find someone who not only has the skills required but also fits the necessary conference-wide requirements.
- There were 5 Events team members in addition to the Events Coordinators, who bonded really well and had a great time at conference! I would recommend 5 members at most, and to try to integrate them with the other conference staff and delegates at all times possible. I would suggest introducing them by name at opening ceremonies to ensure delegates who wanted to chat with them already knew their names! Nevertheless, everyone wears their name tags at all times so they should be able to chat even if they do not remember everyone's names.
- A lot of the staff expressed their interest in applying to the conference again next year, which made me very happy.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

- The largest challenge throughout this process of planning and conference execution was team dynamic. I think that some interpersonal conflicts are inherent in planning a large-scale stressful event, but this team struggled more than most to maintain professionalism and respect in times of disagreement. I will be including some tips and suggestions in my transition report to aid the next coordinator in establishing a stronger set of expectations for their team.
- There are currently a few missing 'meal cards' from our Centro breakfast. I am emailing and reminding delegates and staff to email their cards into Housing & Conference services.

SUCSESSES

The conference is over, and it was a success! Everyone worked very hard, and it was an honor to see them make amazing impacts on delegates throughout the weekend! Despite all the challenges along the way, I am immensely grateful for this opportunity and proud of the work everyone did to get us here.

Below are the links used to collect feedback, if you wish to see individualized feedback about the conference.

The link to the typeform used to collect delegate feedback:

<https://applicantworkshop.typeform.com/report/zXWESP/KObmZTk60z8XTWAX>

The link to the typeform used to collect staff feedback:

<https://applicantworkshop.typeform.com/report/ItckdN/5W9JIRrUEpDkSXyJ>

REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Thankfully, there was enough food! We only received comments that on Friday the food was not enough for the long stretch between lunch and dinner, but other than that, the staff and delegates were satisfied with the food. I chose to buy snacks that were more satiating and a bit healthier (ex: rice cakes instead of fruit gummies) which I feel helped with this issue too. I would suggest adding in a snack-station at any afternoon conference-wide events (ex: faculty day, the panel, closing ceremonies) should the budget allow it.
- If possible, it would be great for the MSU to provide a more efficient way/tool for PTMs to send emails to upwards of 1000 people. To email the 7000+ first year students, we needed to send the same email to 200 participants at a time, and the Outreach Coordinators sent multiple rounds of emails to them. That was a lot of unnecessary time spent doing something a tool could have made more efficient. We thankfully did receive the email list by June 16th (the earliest date possible) and would suggest getting this list as soon as possible again because lots of our delegates found out about the conference via email.
- We struggled a lot with sponsorship. It seemed that due to government-wide cuts as well as general lack of available funds we did not receive a lot of sponsorship this year, despite the amazing work of the Sponsorship & Fundraising coordinators. Unfortunately, this aspect of the conference is a luck of the draw and somewhat out of our control. We suggest contacting potential sponsors with requests for gift certificates or material needs, because people seemed much more willing to provide that than any monetary donations. For example, Pizza Nova donated pizza lunch for the Saturday of staff training, which saved us \$200 from the budget. This kind of flexibility is essential to making the budget work out!
- Managing team dynamic, expectations, and action is definitely a challenging aspect of the coordinator role. I would be happy to work with the new Coordinator to help guide them in their process to managing and

preventing these issues, because they can be unexpected and cause significant stress.

- I hired the Planning Team before the February Reading Week, with the exception of two roles that had not been filled yet (one Sessions Coordinator and the Volunteer & Logistics coordinator). It was difficult that my term only started February 1st, so I had to complete a lot of work before then in order to reserve spaces and secure sponsorships that required a lot of advanced notice. I would recommend that the Coordinator begin at the start of Term 2 or push their hiring process back, so they are not interviewing candidates until the start of February.
- I would also suggest promoting the use of external support systems to facilitate staff trainings. We were fortunate that Khadijeh from EIO was so wonderful and able to help us by facilitating both Peer Support and Anti-Oppressive Practices training. Having this support outside the MSU was valuable, an immense source of support for myself and the V&C Coordinator and provided the staff the opportunity to ask questions they might have otherwise felt uncomfortable to ask to a peer. I would encourage developing this relationship early on so that training can remain a collaborative process that is specific to Horizons' needs. We also spoke with the Office of Community Engagement about facilitating a community engagement training (Josh facilitated one last year) but they deemed our needs to fit best within the context of AOP. We spoke with EIO and were able to include situational questions related to bias and judgment about the Hamilton area within this training. This was very helpful, especially because it was integrated in a way that was fluid and beneficial for learning, and I would recommend doing so again.

OTHER

Thank you all for the support and help throughout this conference planning and execution! As always, feel free to reach out if you have any feedback/questions at horizons@msu.mcmaster.ca or bring them up during Thursday's meeting. Thank you for taking the time to read my report.