



REPORT

From the office of the...

MSU WGEN Coordinator

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Nealob Kakar
SUBJECT: WGEN Report 5
DATE: Wednesday December 4, 2019 3:30

YEARPLAN UPDATE

Just as the weather has changed and students are transitioning into the new adventures of final intensive projects before the break, WGEN has done the same. Since the last report WGEN has had a very hectic event packed week as we just finished up our first campaign week of the season: TRANSforming Mac! In accordance with the year plan the executives and myself spent endless time planning and brainstorming and creating consultations, and inevitably implementing and creating a whole packed week of trans focused programming for the McMaster community. The week was a success and went along smoothly with minimal obstacles.

Following this very intensive week, WGEN has reached our year plan goal of having the service and events mimic the environment happening in the community, and so now we are in the midst of creating de-stressor events for this time of the year and being very available for support for folks whenever they may need it during this stressful time.

Additionally, hiring for the PTM position for the 2020-21 term has gone up on the MSU jobs website and preparations have been made. WGEN tabled at the MSU hiring fair and gained a lot of interest from passersby.

SERVICE USAGE

Since the last report in November, we have had an increase in one on one peer supports booked through the WGEN email that have happened after hours, and a decrease in the walk-in space usage. The increase in online one on one supports is because of the stress that exam and holiday season can induce and the need for support at irregular times as this next month can be full of a lot of tensions for students. In relation, the decrease in the walk in space usage is because folks are spending most of their time in libraries and are busy with studying at this time, as well as the result of the weather we have been having so we usually expect a decrease in usership and at times volunteer availability for shift covers due to the same reasons.

As noted in the last report, WGEN has started our survivors support group, and have thus far have had a steady number of folks come out to the group. The past weeks we initially expected a decrease in attendance, but to our surprise we increased in numbers.

Further, WGEN has had 8 peer support requests requested through the email, 5 folks come in for a binder, 3 for bras and about 5-8 folks come in/ reach out online since the last report for resources we offer.

Lastly, as always one of our biggest avenues of service usership is our online social media presence, online interactions as well as our email line. This past month WGEN has had one of the biggest interactions online due to TRANSforming Mac. On all of our socials we promoted our campaign week as well as made a statement for TDoR, and attained about 12 retweets and 17 likes, about a similar amount of shares on Facebook, as well as 16 Instagram shares. Additionally, we gained new followers from community members/organizations that hold similar mandates and visions as we do as a service. What was particularly interesting was that Sandy Shaw followed the WGEN account on twitter and promoted our campaign week and made a tweet on her personal twitter account without us asking at all.



PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

The biggest project we have had this past month was our annual campaign week” TRANSforming Mac. This was a week that was for Trans folks, and dedicated to creating workshops, social opportunities, resources and overall space for them to just exist on campus with the support of the WGEN community. The events that took place were as followed: Pronoun making, makeup and hairstyling tips and tricks/tutorials with free makeup to give away, resources workshop, free headshot event, sex 1x3 (trans sex education workshop), a



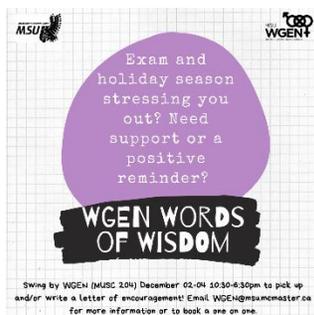
gender neutral clothing swap, a shopping trip to the mall, a trans BIPOC support group and a vigil and display for Trans Day of Remembrance. Overall, the week was super successful although we had our ups and downs in terms of rushing to do final last-minute details for the vigil, or not feeling as if our turnout wasn’t the greatest for particular events. It was successful as we had folks come out to all the events, even if it was just three people it still benefited those few people and aided them in ways they needed. Additionally, we saw many new faces at our events and folks that were interested in learning more about the service which was great, this was in part due to the fact that we had many external

folks share our promotions, and one of those was residence life which aided in getting first years to come out. Finally, one of the biggest successes this week was our clothing swap as we had about 30 or more attendees. Since this event was so successful, we will be doing it again later in the second semester.

Some of the feedback we got from attendees involved folks going out of their way to let us know that they are very thankful that we exist as a service, and that we are putting on this programming, additionally, we had folks that utilized our events for actual resource attainment and were grateful that we were providing so many resources to the community as well as social opportunities where trans folks are prioritized and given the space, leading to trans folks meeting one another within the community.

In addition to our campaign week we also had smaller events that we created in the space on a drop in basis such as painting sessions on Fridays, and puzzle making that were facilitated by safer space volunteers. These events have been low cost and contribute to interactions and engagements with the volunteers to our space outside of shift hours, and don’t have much commitment which has served as beneficial and can contribute to notions of destressing for our users and volunteers.

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES



As mentioned above WGEN is trying to create events that go with the theme of distressing during this time. This being said we have created a 3 day ongoing drop in event called “WGEN Words of Wisdom” happening from Monday December 02-Wednesday December 04 during our operating hours of 10:30 to 6:30. Folks are free to come out to the space and pick up a letter of affirmation and positive reminders, and to pay it forward by writing a letter and leaving it in the space as a positive gentle reminder for a future student. This event just portrays an ongoing community of support during this stressful time.

Additionally, on December 06, 2019 from 11:30-1:30 WGEN in accordance with the rest of the December 06 planning committee will be putting on the National Day of Violence Against women event happening in CIBC hall where there is a keynote, and a display of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. WGEN will be there to provide peer support at the event both through an online texting service number and in a room next door.



The Research and Social Political Advocacy coordinators have been working extensively on an online campaign event on accessible and inclusive language, and this will potentially be launched when we get back from the break in the second week of January.

Finally, we are in the midst of brainstorming what we would like to do for Black history month, as well as think of whether or not we have the resources or capacity to put on a stand alone event in January as we do not have any campaign weeks during that month. WGEN has been asked to be on the Black History Month Committee and this will help in figuring out what we would like to do for the community.

BUDGET

Thus far we have been in accordance with the tentative budget year plan that was made in the beginning of the year. For TRANSforming Mac, we underspent what was initially budgeted which was great. Additionally, in buying materials for that event we have a lot of excess leftover that we can use for our future campaign weeks which will help a lot in terms of the budget.

ACCOUNT CODE	ITEM	BUDGET / COST
	Promotional material	200
6501-0308	BIPoC posters	15
Transforming mac	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	624
	REMAINING IN LINE	1226
	Snacks	200
6102-0308	materials	300
Annual Campaigns	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	500
	REMAINING IN LINE	2300

TOTALS	
TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING	6950
TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING	2094.3
REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING	4855.7

VOLUNTEERS

The volunteers have been fulfilling their roles and excelling in the aid they have been providing towards events, and task delegation from the executives and myself. We had a volunteer appreciation for volunteers last week held in the space where folks could socialize, have snacks, play games and watch holiday movies. Additionally, a lot of the volunteers attended Eggnog and said that it was an awesome event that also contributed to them being appreciated by the MSU.

In relation to volunteers, we will be holding volunteer training part 2 in the new year on January 11 and 12 and have already booked the BSB rooms 104, 105 and 106. This two day training weekend will be a refresher training for our current volunteers and to address any questions they have had throughout the term, as well as train three new volunteers for the first time who will be joining the team during the second term.

In terms of the executive volunteers, we will be arranging a volunteer appreciation in the new year during the beginning of January as our timetables match up then, and they truly deserve a big appreciation for the endless efforts they have put into the first semester!

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Some of our current challenges revolve around the physical space. As noted in the last two EB reports we have had issues with the inaccessibility of the lighting. We concluded a while back to use tissues to filter out the fluorescents but was notified recently that we had to take it down as it was a safety hazard. We are in the midst of attempting to figure out different solutions to the space lighting as buying further lamps does not align without budget, and the solution to turn the lights off and have a lot of rechargeable lights is not ideal as the darkness of the space can contribute to unwelcomeness for folks that want to come in for immediate support, and also can look like the space is closed.

Additionally, one of the issues I have been running into is the underground and clarification around how funding works as I am still confused on how paying them works when we need to print on the day of and charge the funds to the account. The past week we have went to underground to print things for WGEN but have been told to go about paying for it in various different ways by different underground employees (signing the binder, charging it to the PO standing order, or filling out a new PO an account number).

SUCCESES

Some of the successes we have had has overall been TRANSforming Mac as a whole as we have had good turnout, online presence and interest from people and community members that we have not seen before. Additionally, in reflection to the whole of the semester WGEN succeeded in the goals we anticipated and have created an ongoing community of support.

Lastly, we have been very successful this month in attaining resources for the space and further gender affirming resources as they have finally been shipped out. We got a total of 20

packers donated to us and so far, we have had 5 folks take one which shows how beneficial this initiative has been for community members.