



REPORT

From the office of the...

Spark Director

TO: Members of the Executive Board

FROM: Mitchell German (He/Him)

SUBJECT: Spark Report #2

DATE: September 2nd, 2021

Year Plan Update

- The following objectives from the Spark Year Plan have been completed since EB Report #1 or are currently in progress.
- **1. Inter-Service Collaboration** → Spark is working alongside SHEC to conduct WW programming. This will help to enhance the reach of both our Services in the McMaster community.
- **2. Spark Online Discord Community** → Myself, the Spark AD (Vivien), and the P&P Coordinators (Irene and Josephine) are currently in the process of developing this so that it is ready to go by the first week of Sessions.
- **3. Team Leader Guidebooks** → These have been created by myself, the Spark AD and the P&P Coordinators and have been distributed electronically (PDF form) to the Team Leaders that have been hired for the 2021-22 year. I will attach a copy of the Team Leader Guidebooks under 'Miscellaneous' for you to reference should you wish to take a peek!
- **4. Spark Scholarship** → I have been working closely with the O&E Coordinators (Sofia and Abithiny) on the development of the Spark Mini-Scholarship and securing funding for this. At this point, we have requested the \$250 from the Special Projects Fund (VP Finance and AVP Services) and are awaiting a response.

Events, Projects, & Activities

General Service Usage

- Thus far, Spark has only conducted our Summer programming in the form of our Webinar Series. As will be elaborated on in this EB report, we had over 160 registrations!
- Spark has yet to open Session registration (this will come in the following weeks), but this is where we have the majority of usage from.

Projects & Events

Project 1: Summer Programming

Project Status: Completed

General Information:

- The Events Coordinators (Ester, Myra, Darshana) have decided to cut out the last Webinar that was supposed to take place in late August to ensure they can dedicate the appropriate time to the development of our Welcome Week event in collaboration with SHEC. I agreed and supported them in this decision.
- Spark hosted three Webinars throughout the month of July that took place via Zoom on the 16th, 17th, and 18th
- The first Webinar was titled “University Life” and the others were Spark Faculty Fest Days 1 and 2.
- All registrations took place through Eventbrite and the Zoom link was subsequently emailed to first years who registered. While this was a bit tedious, the benefit to using Eventbrite was that we could have an ‘Add-On’ on the sale where respondents could ‘subscribe’ to Spark promotional emails. This was done to help promote Spark registration for Sessions and future events. All emails were collected with consent from the first year, and they will NOT be used unless they ‘purchased’ the add-on to receive this type of communication.
- **Over the duration of the three days Spark’s Webinars ran, we had a total of 167 registrations.** Some Webinars had a greater attendance than others, as would be expected. The single most attended was the University Life Webinar.
- Spark also received a sponsorship from the McMaster Campus Store of 3 x \$25 gift cards. THANK YOU!
- Considering this was the first time Spark has ever run Summer programming, I would consider this a HUGE success. I am very proud of the Events Coordinators and the P&P Coordinators for their tireless work on this project.
- All Webinars were recorded with the intention to post them on the MSU YouTube channel. However, I recorded some to the ‘cloud’ on Zoom, and now, I cannot seem to find them. Any help would be greatly appreciated with this!

Project 2: Team Leader Hiring

Project Status: Completed

- All Team Leaders have been hired at this point! I am beyond proud of the resiliency and integrity that the Executive Team demonstrated during this hiring process. They are truly inspiring.
- Spark has hired a total of 36 Team Leaders for the 2021/22 year. The vast majority of the Executive Team will also be acting as TLs during the year as well.
- Received very positive feedback on Spark's hiring process (was shared in EB Report #1).
- Since being hired, we have conducted a Team Leader Welcome Event with our TLs that was mandatory to attend. During this time, we did icebreakers to allow the team to get to know each other a little bit better, and also shared some important upcoming logistical information.
- We have emailed a copy of the Spark Team Leader Guidebook to all the TLs. The purpose of this was keeping in mind that Executives, the AD, and the Director all receive a transition report to support them in their role. However, Team Leaders never have. The way I like to explain the Guidebook is that it is essentially a transition report for the TLs. This is particularly helpful for the Team Leaders who are brand new to their position.
- **We have virtual Team Leader training coming up on September 11 and 12.** This date was communicated to VP Admin (Christina) in June. This is mandatory for all TLs to attend, and it will cover the following: Spark-Specific Training, Session #1 Training, Maccess, PCC, Indigenous Cultural Competency/Safety (Stephanie George), SSC, and then MSU-Wide Training. This training **MUST** be completed in order for TLs to conduct Sessions. If there are valid reasons for TLs being unable to make training (i.e., MCAT test dates, employment training dates, etc.) then they will be sent a recording of the training.

Project 3: Spark Discord Community

Project Status: On-Going

- Spark is currently in the process of designing our Discord Community for our TLs and first years which is called the 'MSU Spark First Year Hub'
- If you are unfamiliar with Discord (I was too prior to using it for Spark), it is a very popular platform amongst first years that is similar to having a Facebook page with an enhanced functionality/accessibility.
- The Spark AD (Vivien) has been spearheading this initiative, and a draft has been made at this point. We have registered the Spark email (spark@msu.mcmaster.ca) as the Admin for the page.
- Currently, the channels include the following: Rules and Guidelines, Text Channels, Elective Channels, Housing/Living Channels, Study Channels, and Socializing Channels.
- To reiterate what I have stated previously, the purpose of creating this Discord is to help make an online Spark community where first years and TLs can freely chat, regardless of what Session time they are in. This will ensure that first years are receiving answers from TLs that have experience in the particular topic they are asking about, and also relieves individual TLs from the pressure to answer a question they are unsure about. It will also allow first years to meet other first years in Spark that are outside their Session time.
- All first years that register in Spark will be added to this Discord community.
- A concern we had was to ensure a safe(r) space is being upheld. This can be particularly challenging in online communities. To ensure this expectation is met, we will be posting 'Rules and Guidelines' as well as having TLs, Execs, the AD and myself monitor the posts that are being made. Additionally, we will create an anonymous feedback form to allow first years to disclose any issues they have experienced in the Discord channel if they are not comfortable going to a Spark TL, Exec, AD, Director, directly. Hopefully this isn't a situation that arises, but we are prepared to handle it in the event that it does.

Project 4: Spark Mini-Scholarship

Project Status: On-Going

- The O&E Coordinators (Abithiny and Sofia) have been working extremely hard on the development of the Spark Mini-Scholarship which will be valued at \$250.00 and titled the *MSU Spark Achievement in Leadership Award*.
- After speaking with both VP Admin and VP Finance, Spark was encouraged to apply for the Special Projects Fund (reviewed by VP Finance and AVP Services). We have submitted our application recently and are awaiting a response.
- This will be a pilot year, and if successful, it is my hopes to be able to add this to Spark's Operating Policy and include a budget line valued at approximately \$250.00 that this funding can be automatically pulled from yearly.
- Eligibility currently includes having attended either four (4) Sessions in both the Fall and Winter terms (total of 8 Sessions), or alternatively, 6 Sessions in the Winter term to accommodate for first years who registered for Spark later in the year.
- Additionally, there will be a brief application process for first years who apply that consists of answering the following questions/prompts (Max 200 words): 1. Reflect on a personal weakness that you have and explain how you were able to improve on this through the Spark program. 2. Describe your most meaningful Spark experience and what you learned from it. 3. If you could start one new Spark initiative or improve an initiative we already have, what would it be? How would it benefit first years?
- The description of the *MSU Spark Achievement in Leadership Award* is as follows:

The MSU Spark Achievement in Leadership Award is awarded to a first-year student who has demonstrated ample growth on a personal and community level through the Spark program. Additionally, the recipient will have demonstrated their enthusiasm and deep commitment to engagement in the Spark community.

- The TLs of the applicant will then score the first year using a 7-point Likert scale on the following categories: Collaboration & Initiative, Enthusiasm & Engagement, Reflection & Growth
- TLs will also be asked to write a brief (Max 100 words) statement on why the first year deserves the scholarship.
- The O&E Coordinators will review the applications (and any other Execs that want to be involved) and the recipient will be awarded the *MSU Spark Achievement in Leadership Award* at the Winter Closing Ceremonies. Additionally, they will receive a shoutout on our Instagram (if they are comfortable with this). Not only will this post recognize the first year for their contributions to the Spark program, but it will also help to promote the Spark Mini-Scholarship for future years (should it be included in the OP and is a success).

Project 5: Welcome Week Event with SHEC

Project Status: Upcoming

- Spark has been developing a virtual Welcome Week event in collaboration with SHEC titled “Wellness 1A03 – A First Year Guide to Navigating Party Culture and Stress Management”
- All registrations will take place via Microsoft Forms (Again, allows us to collect respondent emails so that we can contact them if they are comfy with Spark/SHEC promotional updates!)
- Will take place via Zoom on Sept 3 from 6:30-7:30pm EST.
- Both Spark and SHEC have posted on our Instagram and first years can follow us, tag a friend, and sign-up for the WW event to be entered to win a \$25 Campus Store gift card (donated by the McMaster Campus Store to Spark)
- Seeing as the Wellness 1A03 Event will touch on topics that individuals may find triggering (i.e., alcohol-use, marijuana-use, party culture, etc.) we have included a content warning in the caption of our Instagram post. Additionally, this has been included in the description of the Microsoft Form as well.
- Event will consist of 3 breakout rooms on Zoom: 1. Party Culture Jeopardy (SHEC), 2. Meditation/Yoga (Spark), 3. Wellness Workshop (by SWC).
- I am extremely proud of both the Spark and SHEC Executives for planning out such a valuable event for the first-year population, especially in the face of uncertainty with regards to WW funding. They were able to pull together a very professional and engaging low-cost alternative!
- Registration of the Wellness 1A03 Event is currently open! It can be found on the Spark and SHEC Instagram pages.

Project 6: Session Development/Registration

Project Status: Upcoming/Completed

- The Sessions Coordinators (Ryan, Kyobin, Vithuyan) have been working extremely hard throughout the duration of the Summer to develop Sessions that are both informative and engaging for the first-year population. I am extremely proud of them for all the dedication they have demonstrated thus far, and the first years are very lucky to have such passionate Sessions Coordinators.
- As per the Spark Year Plan and the structural changes to Sessions that I had outlined, there will be a total of 16 Sessions for the duration of the year (8 in Fall and 8 in Winter). The first 12 will be planned entirely by the Sessions Coordinators, and the others will be planned by the Sessions Committee and Spark Ambassadors (first years) under the supervision of the Sessions Coordinators.
- At this point, 8 Sessions are completed (the entire Fall term). The themes thus far include the following: Welcome to Spark, Spark School Survival Guide, Safe(r) Spaces and Social Advocacy, Self-Care, Thriving in the McMaster Community (Mac Resources), Student Living, Wellness, Optimism & Resilience.
- The Sessions Coordinators have shared all the Sessions that have been designed thus far with the entire Executive Team for feedback. At this point in time, they are being finalized based on this feedback.
- The first week of Sessions will begin on September 20th.
- Spark registration will open (hopefully) on September 1st and close around the 15th. We are currently working with the UG to develop promotional material.
- All registrations will take place through Microsoft Forms. The link will be included on our Instagram and on the MSU website under the Spark page. For reference, the rough draft of this registration MS Form can be found here (<https://forms.office.com/r/S2GqyspwYH>)
- The purpose for collecting the demographic information about first years that we do on the MS Form is to ensure that we can create diverse Session groups!
- Additionally, Spark has been working on creating an email list through registration for our past programming. Those who signed-up for this will be notified of Session registration opening via email when it does.

Project 7: First Year Formal

Project Status: Upcoming

- After speaking with VP Admin (Christina) and the FYC Coordinator (Julian), Spark is planning to move forward with preparing for First Year Formal
- This will entirely depend on the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic at that point.
- Traditionally, Spark hosts this in the Fall term. However, keeping in mind the uncertainty we face due to COVID-19 at this point, we will push it to the Winter term.
- We are going to 'loosely' plan for it, and avoid putting down any deposits until absolutely necessary.
- We will have to follow MSU, McMaster, and public health guidance to ensure that we keep the safety of the Spark community in mind.
- Are there any thoughts from the EB on the best way to approach this? If possible, I would love to be able to make First Year Formal happen. It is Spark's single largest event, and generates considerable profit for our Service.
- Will have to allocate part of the First Year Formal budget towards safety precautions.
- Would love to hear your thoughts during the EB Meeting!

Outreach & Promotions

Summary

- Spark’s P&P (Josephine and Irene) and O&E Coordinators (Sofia and Abithiny) have been extremely busy this Summer with increasing our outreach prior to first year registration for Sessions.
- We have shifted the focus of our Instagram away from hiring (Exec and TL positions) back towards first-year engagement.
- The P&P Coordinators have facilitated the development of a variety of different promotional tools for programming including: Spark Live Q&A, the Webinar Series, Executive Bios, and our Wellness 1A03 event.
- Coming up from a promotional perspective, we will be posting our Campus Tour Video (HUGE shoutout to Betta for her help and support), a graphic to promote the opening of registration for Sessions, and potentially a graphic to promote the MSU Spark Achievement in Leadership Award (hopefully). All of this will be posted within the same 2-week span to draw attention to our Instagram account to ultimately promote registration for Sessions.
- Outreach has been focused on securing funding for the MSU Spark Achievement in Leadership Award via the Special Projects Fund, connecting with stakeholders on campus to help promote Spark registration during lectures (i.e., sending profs promotional material to share), and structuring the Spark Ambassadors program.
- For the ‘Social Media Engagement’ section, you may notice some values significantly lower. I attribute this to the fact that the first EB report was submitted during TL hiring (where we regularly see a HUGE increase in engagement during).

Promotional Materials

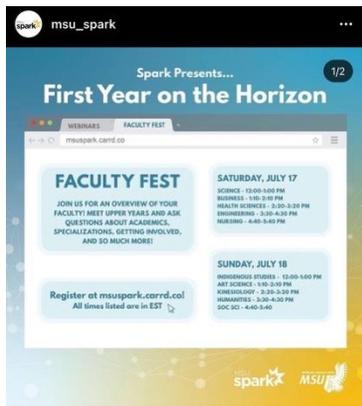
Summer Programming Promotional Content:



Likes: 62
Sends: 17
Saves: 12
Reach: 1,988



Likes: 187
Sends: 70
Saves: 62
Reach: 3,058



Likes: 118
Sends: 68
Saves: 19
Reach: 2,202



Likes: 121
Sends: 51
Saves: 22
Reach: 2,535

Meet the Team Campaign (Executive Bios)



Likes: 261
Sends: 34
Saves: 5
Reach: 3,094



Likes: 227
Sends: 27
Saves: 2
Reach: 2,959



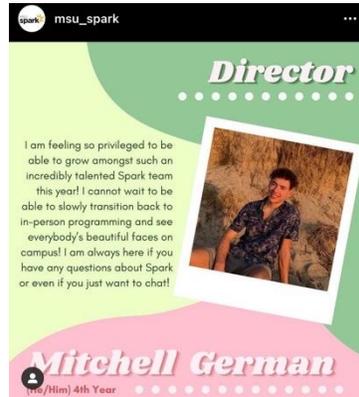
Likes: 173
Sends: 0
Saves: 0
Reach: 2,518



Likes: 198
Sends: 0
Saves: 1
Reach: 2,681

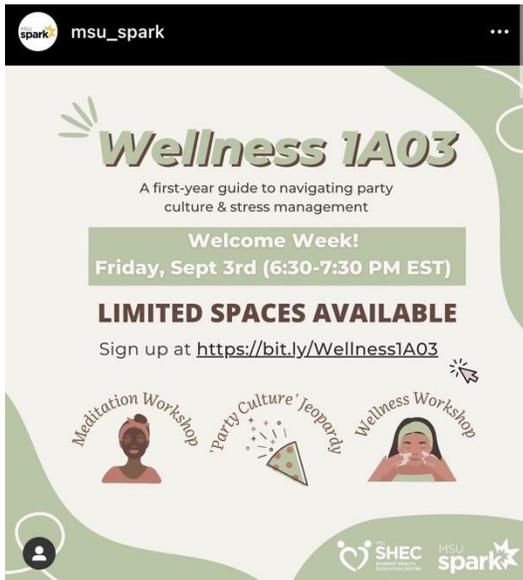


Likes: 162
Sends: 0
Saves: 0
Reach: 2,573



Likes: 145
Sends: 0
Saves: 3
Reach: 2,298

Wellness 1A03 Welcome Week Event (with \$25 Campus Store GC Giveaway):



Likes: 124
Sends: 11
Saves: 10
Reach: 2,491

Social Media Engagement Instagram (Last 30 Days)

Table 1: Instagram Engagement Insights

Insights	Start Values	Last Report Values	Current Values	Report Change (%)	Total Change (%)
Followers	4532	4532	5039	11%	11%
Impressions	46,090	46,090	31,595	-31%	-31%
Profile Visits	2,951	2,951	1,569	-47%	-47%
Website Visits	229	229	30	-87%	-87%
Reach	5,290	5,290	4,251	-15%	-15%

Twitter (Previous Month)

Table 2: Twitter Engagement Insights

Insights	Start Values	Last Report Values	Current Values	Report Change (%)	Total Change (%)
Followers				#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mentions				#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Likes				#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Impressions				#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Engagement				#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!

Facebook (Last 28 Days)

Table 3: Facebook Engagement Insights

Insights	Start Values	Last Report Values	Current Values	Report Change (%)	Total Change (%)
Likes	2,678	2,678	2,662	-1%	-1%
Reach	920	920	1474	60%	60%
Views	108	108	71	-34%	-34%
Engagement	129	129	183	42%	42%
Followers	2,817	2,817	2,800	-1%	-1%

Finances

- Budget plan has been submitted to VP Finance (JJ)
- Since EB Report #1, Spark has spent money on gift cards for TL appreciation (total of \$55). However, I have yet to actually make this purchase, but the PO has been approved.
- Spark has since requested additional graphics to be made by the UG but we have a standing order with them originally valued at \$1500.
- The O&E Coordinators secured a total of \$75 in Campus Store gift cards to be used as promotional material. We have agreed to indicate that they have sponsored this during programming they are used for.
- Submitted a Special Projects Fund proposal for \$250 to fund the MSU Spark Achievement in Leadership Award.
- Aside from that, there have been no changes!

Budget Summary

Table 4: Budget Tracker

Account Code	Item	Cost	Description	Date of Purchase
5003-0125	SPARK - OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$ 100 -		
	Total Spent in Line	\$ -		
	Remaining in Line	\$ 100 -		
6103-0125	SPARK - ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS	\$ 3,000 -		
	Total Spent in Line	\$ -		
	Remaining in Line	\$ 3,000 -		
6501-0125	SPARK - ADVERTISING & PROMOTIONS	\$ 2,600 -		
	Total Spent in Line	\$ 1,625 -	TL Hiring Graphics and Standing Order w/ UG	
	Remaining in Line	\$ 975 -		

6494-0125	SPARK - VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION	\$ 750 -		
	Total Spent in Line	\$ -	PO approved for \$55 but purchase has yet to be made	
	Remaining in Line	\$ 750 -		
6802-0125	SPARK - LEADER TRAINING	\$ 500 -		
	Total Spent in Line	\$ -		
	Remaining in Line	\$ 500 -		

Executives and Volunteers

- As usual, I am consistently impressed by the work that the Spark Executives do. Their passion for first-year success is truly inspiring. I have the utmost faith that they will continue to put out fantastic programming and work.
- Having just completed the busiest Summer that Spark has ever had before, the Executives are definitely feeling a little bit drained at the moment. Many of them are involved in Welcome Week outside of Spark, and have been busy with standardized tests throughout the Summer. I am so beyond proud of them for their dedication to the Service.
- To help and keep morale high and ensure the Executives are taking care of their wellbeing, I have consistently reminded them that I am always here to support them, and if they are feeling overwhelmed in their roles to take a well-deserved break.
- Overall, the morale is definitely still high at this point. We are quickly gearing up for the start of our yearly programming, and I am so excited to see all their hard work come to life!
- Seeing as TLs have been hired a bit earlier this year, we hosted a Welcome Event this Summer to help to keep them engaged with Spark. The role of TL thus far has been very minimal, especially for new TLs. We have done some logistical updates for the coming year, introduction posts on Facebook, distribution of the TL Guidebook, and returning TLs have helped represent Spark at some ClubFests/Service Fests to help and increase our outreach.

Successes

The Spark Team has MANY successes that I am proud to share:

- **Summer Programming** → All Executives were involved in our brand-new Summer programming to some capacity. While this was a novel situation for all of us, everyone's dedication led to engaging and impactful programming for first years. Huge shoutout to the Events Coordinators (Myra, Ester, Darshana) for taking on such a prominent leadership role and communicating with all the stakeholders involved (i.e., Welcome Week Reps from various faculties) and to the P&P Coordinators (Josephine and Irene) for designing beautiful promotional material. Having had over 160 attendees, Spark definitely made a lasting impact on the first-year population. We also received some fantastic feedback!
- **Hiring Team Leaders** → We have officially hired all of our Team Leaders for the year, and I am feeling so privileged to be able to work alongside so many passionate and dedicated TLs. We have been in contact with them through our Facebook page, and everybody has taken turns making an introduction post. The Executives have been so extremely welcoming to all the incoming Team Leaders and have worked diligently to create a safe(r) and welcoming space for everybody involved in Spark. We have also introduced our Team Leader Guidebook that we were proud to be able to share with the TLs to aid them in their transition into the role. Additionally, we held a new Welcome Event for TLs prior to the start of TL Training to help forge early relationships amongst everybody.
- **Sessions** → With the restructuring of Spark's Sessions this year and hiring 3 Sessions Coordinators for the first time, there was uncertainty with how this would look. However, I can confidently say that I am beyond impressed with the Sessions that have been made. The Sessions Coordinators (Ryan, Kyobin, Vithuyan) have created not only informative, but engaging Sessions in a virtual format for Fall term. This is an amazing accomplishment in and of itself. I am so proud of their work and cannot wait to see their Sessions come to life and the impact they have on first years.
- **Team Dynamic** → I say this time and time again, but this is one of the most supportive teams I have been part of. I have watched the Executives support each other throughout the busy Summer, taking on roles when others were busy with life (MCATS, Welcome Week, etc.). They have forged friendships beyond Spark, and I cannot wait to see the Spark team continue to thrive.

Challenges

Spark has experienced the following challenges thus far:

- **Zoom Videos** → Myself and the Events Coordinators were responsible for recording the Webinar Series to ensure the videos could be posted to the MSU YouTube page for those who could not make it. However, some of them I recorded to the “cloud” and I have been unable to find them. ***If anybody has any suggestions, I would greatly appreciate it.*** I want to be able to post these videos for first years to reference, and the Events Coordinators put a TON of work into this Webinar Series. Any help is appreciated!
- **Welcome Week Funding** → Having received approximately \$5000 to fund Welcome Week last year through WWSTAPC, Spark was hoping to receive some form of funding this year. However, after inquiring quite early, there was uncertainty until the very end. We decided to essentially give up on requesting this funding (alongside SHEC), and decided to do a low-budget alternative instead. It would have been helpful to receive some form of answer, whether ‘yes’ or ‘no’, instead of uncertainty. At the end, our Executives had already done a considerable amount of work, Welcome Week was less than 2 weeks away, and we didn’t want their efforts to go unappreciated. While I understand that there was confusion amongst MANY people involved in Welcome Week with regards to funding, (and I can only imagine how stressful this was), it was definitely a form of stress for Spark as well. Welcome Week is a fantastic opportunity for Spark to outreach to the incoming first-year population, especially considering our Service is exclusively for first years. However, after conducting the new Summer programming we were asked to in place of Horizons, it left us in a difficult budgeting situation.

Miscellaneous

- Please see below for images of Spark’s Team Leader Guidebook (New initiative for this year!)

Team Leader Guidebook (NEW INITIATIVE!)



In 2014, the MSU launched Spark as a pilot program after identifying the need to increase the support provided to the first-year population during their transition to life at McMaster. During that pilot year, Spark supported approximately 200 first years, empowered 20 Team Leaders, and truly proved the value of first-year mentorship programs. In 2015, the MSU ratified Spark as a fully-funded MSU service.

Spark is now in its 8th year of providing support to first-years and has grown exponentially. Today, Spark probably touches more lives than just about any other MSU service. Over the last three years, over 750 students have registered in Spark, and we now hire a team of approximately 45 Team Leaders and 12 Executive Members that all work together to help McMaster 'Shine Brighter'. Through workshops, social events, our weekly mentorship program, and online resources, Spark has become a central source across campus to help first-years in their transition into university.

Whereas Spark was simply a mentorship program during its pilot year, today we operate according to three main pillars. We still have our mentorship program, which you as a TL will play a huge role in. This consists of conducting weekly Sessions that are run by our Team Leaders and equip first years with the skills necessary to find success in first year, upper years, and later life. Then, we also have our workshops and social events that are designed and executed by our Events Coordinators, Events Committee, and T.L.s. Finally, we have our online resources on Instagram that first years can refer to which will help them to navigate McMaster life a little more easily.

CONTENTS

- 03 Welcome
- 04 History and Overview
- 05 Spark Lingo
- 06 Spark's Structure
- 07 The Important Role of Team Leaders
- 08 A Week in the Life of a Team Leader
- 09 Helpful Resources

Spark Lingo

Sparkling

[spark-ling] noun
A first year registered in Spark Sessions.

Spark

[to-erack] noun
Spelt wrong intentionally. A playful way to say Spark and used internally within the Service.

Team Leader (TL)

[tee-mer-lee-er] noun
You! The backbone of Spark. A truly WONDERFUL human being who is a literal ray of sunshine that Spark is beyond lucky to have. They support first years through Spark Sessions and regular check-ins.

Executives (Execs)

[ek-ek-er-ivez] noun
There are four different types of Executives within Spark! Those include the Sessions Coordinators (SC), Events Coordinators (EC), Promotions & Publications Coordinators (PPC), and Outreach & Engagement Coordinators (OEC). They are here to help support you in your role as a Team Leader, and they also help with many logistics of the Service within their roles! Don't be afraid to reach out to them, they'd love to talk with you!

Sessions

[seh-shunz] noun
These are developed by our Sessions Coordinators. When first years register for Spark, they are registering to attend the Sessions! They are 1 hour in length and will cover various themes that will help to enhance the first year experience and transition to McMaster. As a Team Leader, you will have your own Session group filled with first years from various programs!

Sessions Training

[seh-shunz train-ing] noun
This is a 1-hour weekly training for Team Leaders conducted by our Sessions Coordinators. They will help to teach you how to run the particular Session for that week. Think of it like an actual Session that you are attending where you are a first year, and the Sessions Coordinators are your T.L.s.

Pods

[p-oddz] noun
You will be put into pods this year that will contain one Spark Executive, and other Team Leaders with the same Session time as you! If you have any problems during Session, you can reach out to this Executive and they will help you. They will also communicate any updates within Spark to you.

Co-TL

[koh-tee-ell] noun
This is the Team Leader that you will be conducting Sessions with! You will both grow SO MUCH working together.

Retention Form

[ret-en-shun-for-m] noun
We ask that one TL from each Session time completes the Retention Form. This provides us with feedback about how many Sparklings are attending Session, and how they enjoyed the activities!

WELCOME

Dear Team Leader,

CONGRATULATIONS on becoming a Team Leader (TL) for the 2021/22 year, and welcome to the Spark family! If nobody has told you this yet, we are proud of you for taking on this role and you were chosen for a reason! With your help, we will bring Spark to new heights and you will impact the lives of hundreds of first years at McMaster. Team Leaders are truly the backbone of Spark, and we are beyond lucky to have you join the team.

Whether this is the first time you are a Team Leader, or you are already well-versed in the role of a TL, you are in for a Spark-tacular year! Not only will you play a pivotal role in supporting first years during their transition to McMaster, but you will also make lifelong friends and undergo oh so much growth! From attending your first Sessions training to conducting your last Session of the year, you will continuously learn more about the McMaster community, the constantly changing first-year experience, and about yourself! As in any role that you take on, there will be highs, and there will be lows. Supporting first years has its challenges, but is simultaneously extremely rewarding and impactful. Just know that you have an entire Spark Executive Team here to support you during every step of this new journey. We will support you during any failures you may experience, and celebrate your successes both inside and outside of Spark. **We are always here for you, so please don't hesitate to reach out.**

Also know that there is no 'correct' way to be a Spark Team Leader. Every TL that joins our team brings their own unique flair to supporting first years, and that is what we value! We value the diverse perspectives of our TLs because this makes Spark more resilient and able to support the broad population of first years at McMaster. With that being said, we cannot wait to see the positive impact you have on the lives of the first years you support through Spark.

Officially, welcome to the Spark family and we cannot wait to embark on this journey with you!

Your creativity will help Spark 'Shine Brighter'. Your dedication will change lives.

Be excited. Be resilient. Be passionate. Be YOU.

Sending joy,

[Signature]
Mitchell German (he/him)
MSU Spark Director

[Signature]
Vivien Trinh (she/her)
MSU Spark Assistant Director

SHINE BRIGHTER



Part-Time Managers

Director: The Director is responsible for overseeing Spark as a whole to ensure we fulfil its Operating Policy. They are the primary point of contact for the Assistant Director and the Executive Team, but they are here to support Team Leaders as well should you feel more comfortable going to them directly.

Assistant Director: The Assistant Director is directly responsible for supporting the Team Leaders, and this is your primary point of contact should any problems arise that we should be made aware of. They will support you through frequent check-ins, by organizing socials, Team Leader training, and more!

Executive Team

Events Coordinators (EC): The Events Coordinators organize and plan all Spark events and workshops throughout the year. Past events have included Hike and Hangout, Applicant's Workshop, Night Before Classes, and First Year Forum. They also manage the Events Committee, should you choose to be involved in that!

Sessions Coordinators (SC): The Sessions Coordinators design all of the Sessions that are included in Spark's Mentorship Program. They will teach you how to conduct each new Session weekly through Sessions Training, and help to manage the Sessions Committee should you choose to be involved!

Outreach & Engagement Coordinators (OEC): The Outreach & Engagement Coordinators help to develop relationships between Spark and various Hamilton and McMaster stakeholders, as well as help us to secure sponsorships throughout the year. They also manage the Spark Ambassadors program that first years can be involved in for further leadership development.

Promotions & Publications Coordinators (PPC): The Promotions & Publications Coordinators are the friendly faces behind all of our social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter). They design all of the graphics we post to help to promote events, as well as our publications that help first years in their transition.

NOTE: Despite the organizational structure of Spark as indicated above, please know that you can always go to whoever you are most comfortable with (Director, AD, Executives) should any issues arise.

(Continues to Next Page...)

THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF *Team Leaders*

As a Team Leader, you play a critical role in Spark's success and ability to impact the lives of first years. Simply put, without you there would be no Spark. As a Team Leader you are a role model, a smiling friend, and a source of support all wrapped into one AMAZING human being. With this in mind, it is crucial that you maintain this image as a positive role model both inside and outside of Spark.

In your role as a TL, your primary responsibility will be to conduct weekly 1-hour Spark Sessions for first years with your co-TLs. You will help facilitate discussions, group activities, and self-reflection which will all ultimately help first years in their transition to McMaster. To prepare for these Sessions each week, you will also attend a Sessions training facilitated by our wonderfully talented Sessions Coordinators. Arguably, this is one of the places you will experience the most growth as an individual by listening to the unique perspectives and lived experiences of your fellow TLs. Think of this training as an opportunity for you to attend a Session yourself! If you are interested in Sessions, ask about the Sessions Committee run by our Sessions Coordinators!

In addition to Sessions, you will help to conduct at least one event or workshop each semester that will give first years not registered for Sessions the opportunity to familiarize themselves with Spark and also gain valuable life skills. Past events have included Night Before Classes, First Year Format, and Hike and Hangout! If you are interested in events, ask about the Events Committee run by our Events Coordinators!

Finally, as a Team Leader, you will also engage with Sparklings informally outside of Sessions by performing regular check-ins. This makes a huge difference for first-years because they know they have somebody there for them that can act as a form of support, and is truly invested in their success. These can be conducted through Instagram, Facebook, or in any other way you are comfortable with.



A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF A *Team Leader*

MON	Classes <i>Session 1 (7pm-8pm, EDT on Teams)</i>
TUES	Classes
WED	Classes
THUR	Classes <i>Session 2 Training (6pm-7pm, EDT on Teams)</i>
FRI	Classes <i>Check-in with first years via Instagram</i>
SAT	
SUN	
MON	Classes <i>Session 2 (7pm-8pm, EDT on Teams)</i>

Helpful Resources

MacCESS
MacCESS is a service run by and for students who experience disability, chronic illness, mental health concerns, or inaccessibility. We offer a drop-in space, one-to-one peer support, community groups, events, and advocacy. If a student needs support dealing with accommodations, wants to be connected to disability community, or is interested in meeting others dealing with a similar lived experience we would love to be connected with them!
msumcmaster.ca/maccess
maccess@msu.mcmaster.ca

Pride Community Centre (PCC)
The MSU Pride Community Centre (PCC) is a service run for and by 2SLGBTQIA+ McMaster students. Along with challenging oppressive social attitudes and norms, we offer confidential peer-support and educational, gender-affirming, and safety/sex resources. If you're seeking support, desiring a sense of 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and/or have a passion for 2SLGBTQIA+ advocacy and are seeking to get involved, the PCC is the place to be!
msumcmaster.ca/pcc
pride@msu.mcmaster.ca

Diversity Services
MSU Diversity Services exists in order to celebrate, uplift, and advocate with the variety of diverse groups on campus within the realm of race, ethnicity, culture, faith, and Indigenous affairs. In order to accomplish this, we help to plan, support and promote events that allow McMaster students to fully experience the differences that make our campus unique. Recognizing the state of inequality on campus, our service acts to advocate for an inclusive environment in which marginalized groups feel welcome and free to embrace their identity.
msumcmaster.ca/diversity
diversity@msu.mcmaster.ca

Food Collective Centre (FCC)
The FCC seeks to help food insecure individuals to access food. If students are struggling to afford healthy, adequate, or regular food (particularly if they don't have campus meal plans), they might benefit from a referral to our service. The FCC and its programs (e.g., Lockers of Love) should mainly be considered to be a short-term solution to food insecurity; we can provide recommendations to other community food resources and financial supports, though, for longer term or more drastic needs. We also run fun, informative workshops and events that promote food skills, community building, and awareness of food systems and food insecurity.
msumcmaster.ca/fcc
fcc@msu.mcmaster.ca

Women & Gender Equity Network (WGEN)
WGEN is a service that caters towards women, trans folks, and non-binary folks, and survivors (of all genders) of sexual and gender based violence. We focus on building community through events, our safe(s) space, and support groups. We also provide peer support and free resources, such as gender-affirming gear, bras, and more. First years in Spark should be referred to us if they are part of any of the previously mentioned communities, and they would like to access peer support, a non-judgemental and safe(s) space, free resources, and a fun/supportive community of people with similar lived experiences!
msumcmaster.ca/wgen
wgen@msu.mcmaster.ca

Maroons
If first years are looking for ways to engage with the McMaster community, are interested in participating in intramurals, or want to show their McMaster spirit, refer them to any Maroons event, suggest they come visit us in the stands at varsity games, direct them to sign up for our free intramural teams, or suggest they apply to be a part of the team!
msumcmaster.ca/maroons
maroons@msu.mcmaster.ca

First Year Council (FYC)
FYC is the representative body for McMaster first years that serves to inform and speak for their needs. Elected council members are responsible for creating programming for the first-year population, advocate for areas and ideas that will benefit the first-year experience, and connect their peers with university resources. Being part of FYC is an excellent opportunity for first-years who are looking to get involved. TLs should refer Sparklings to FYC around September when elections for council seats open.
msumcmaster.ca/fyc
fyc@msu.mcmaster.ca

Macademicus
Macademicus works to make research about teaching and learning accessible! The aspect of Macademicus that's probably be most helpful to first years is our blog, which can be found at the link in our Instagram bio. For each blog post, our volunteers research different academic topics (studying, note-taking, etc.) so they can give the best tips and information to members of the MSU.
msumcmaster.ca/macademicus
macademicus@msu.mcmaster.ca

Student Success Centre (SSC)
The Student Success Centre helps students thrive and succeed through our programs and services. These include: academic and writing skills, career and employment, experiential learning, global opportunities, international student services, and more. The SSC offers 1:1 appointments, workshops/webinars, events such as career, volunteer and further ed fairs, and many online resources. Refer students for any inquiries about any of the topics areas listed above.
https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/
https://msucampus.mcmaster.ca/student-success@mcmaster.ca

You can also connect with them through their live chat to ask questions, get information and connect with their staff and student staff. Click the "chat with us" button on any page to get started.

Student Accessibility Services (SAS)
Student Accessibility Services (SAS) provides compassionate, individualized services for students with disabilities with an integrated support structure, including the facilitation of academic accommodations, programming and support services. We assist students with disabilities to reach their full potential with a service that aims for students to experience full participation, autonomy, empowerment, and equity. Please refer students as early as possible for any questions, support or registration.
sas.mcmaster.ca
sas@mcmaster.ca
905-525-9140 Ext:28652

Services include:
• Provision of Academic Accommodations
• Learning Strategies and Assistive Technologies support
• Student Support Services provided by a Student/Peer Support Specialist
• Transition Programming and MacStart Summer Transition Program
• Centralized Testing Centre for Accommodated Tests and Exams

Student Health Education Centre (SHEC)
The Student Health Education Centre (SHEC) is a peer-run health advocacy, information, and resource connection service for McMaster University students. SHEC employs a broad definition of the term "health", recognizing that wellbeing looks and feels different to each person. Our service provides free health supplies, referrals, and educational materials. SHEC reaches many different communities within the McMaster community through promoting four strategic priorities: sexual reproduction and wellbeing, empowered bodies, substance use, and mental wellbeing.
msumcmaster.ca/shec
shec@msu.mcmaster.ca

Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO)
The Equity and Inclusion Office operates according to four pillars:
1. Human Rights and Dispute Resolution (HRDR) - Provides consultation for our students, staff, faculty, and other member of the University community on issues related to human rights; Acts as an Intake Office for formal complaints of discrimination, harassment or sexual violence.
2. Inclusion and Anti-Racism Education Program - Provides education and support to students, staff, and faculty members through consultation meetings, workshops, special events, and discussion groups.
3. Accessibility Program - Legislation, policies, accommodations, resources regarding accessibility at McMaster.
4. Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office - Provides consultation/support for students/staff/faculty, training & workshops, support, resources for students/staff/faculty, peer educator program.
equity.mcmaster.ca
eio@mcmaster.ca
905-525-9140 ext. 27581

Emergency First Response Team (EFRT)
The Emergency First Response Team (EFRT) is a group of student volunteers who provide emergency medical services to the McMaster campus. TLs should advise first years to contact our service whenever they may have some form of medical emergency—big or small, physical or mental—while on campus. Responders are trained to assess and treat a variety of situations including musculoskeletal and soft-tissue injuries, airway and breathing compromises, intoxication or drug-related emergencies, mental health emergencies, and many more. We are a free and strictly confidential service, as the health and safety of our community comes first.
msumcmaster.ca/efrt
efrt@msu.mcmaster.ca
905-522-4135 or 88 from any McMaster campus telephone