



REPORT

From the office of the...
MSU SHEC Director

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Anika Anand
SUBJECT: MSU SHEC Report 3
DATE: October 20th, 2021

Year plan Update

Since submitting the second MSU SHEC Executive Board report in September, we have been extremely busy onboarding our team of peer support volunteers for the 2021-2022 school year. We have now managed to complete hiring for the entirety of our volunteer team, despite some road blocks along the way that pushed back our hiring timeline.

We have also developed an official/reduced warm-line operating schedule that is being facilitated by our returning peer support volunteers, at reduced capacity. This will be in place until new volunteers have received all the necessary required training. New volunteers will be scheduled for shifts, and hours will be expanded, after training (which will be occurring later this month).

Unfortunately, we are behind in terms of ordering paid promotions and additional health supplies. Thus far, only \$30 has been spent from our Advertising and Promotions budget line (6501-0116). This money was used to purchase a sign for the condom dispenser installed outside of MUSC 202, and a campus store gift card as an incentive for our Welcome Week event "Wellness 1A03 – A First Year Guide To Navigating Party Culture And Stress Management".

Events, Projects, & Activities

General Service Usage

As aforementioned, we have now opened our warm line via Tawk.to at reduced capacity to accommodate students accessing peer support before the entirety of our volunteer team is trained. I have attached a table below outlining the reduced capacity hours.

Day(s) of the Week	Hours of Operation (EST)
Monday - Thursday	11:30 AM– 12:30 PM
	6:30 PM– 8:30 PM
Friday	11:30 AM– 12:30 PM

	6:30 PM– 7:30 PM
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The warmline is being facilitated by our returning peer support volunteers, at reduced capacity. This will be in place until new volunteers have received all the necessary required training (Hopefully by the end of this month at the latest).

Each shift is run by two returning peer support volunteers, and monitored by an executive on call (EOC). EOCs are responsible for having Tawk.to open and monitoring whether volunteers are active and online. These executives are responsible for providing peer support if volunteers have not responded within a couple of minutes. They are then required to follow up with volunteers on shift about why they may have not been active/responsive to any incoming messages. This executive duty is crucial so that we ensure no potential visitors seeking peer support are missed/ignored.

Our dedicated promotions team is working to release/revamp an old UG graphic outlining these reduced hours so that we can effectively promote our warmline to the student population.

Projects & Events: PSV Hiring + Training (Complete + Ongoing)

Peer Support volunteer hiring/on-boarding has finally been completed! We have hired a total of 51 PSVs (not including executives). The last acceptance emails were sent out on October 8th 2021.

Next steps include ensuring that all PSVs can access mandatory MSU training modules/topics. This has been quite challenging, as we outlined to VP admin that our hiring timeline had been pushed back and that our volunteers would only be eligible for the last couple of training time slots. Despite this early warning and communication, many, if not all our newly hired volunteers have been unable to sign up for MSU training due to a lack of available spots. I would highly suggest/ask that any/all MSU training be recorded so that students who cannot make the time slots and availabilities are still able to access this crucial volunteer training material.

In terms of SHEC specific training, we will be holding a synchronous session on the 23-24th weekend of October which will include logistics, scenarios, and disability justice training. Asynchronous modules will be sent out to all SHEC volunteers, and will include peer support, substance use, harm reduction, and potentially empowered bodies. These have been released this week for volunteers to complete.

Projects & Events: SHEC Us Out! "Intro To SHEC Campaign" (Ongoing)

As shared in our previous Executive Board report, we have been working to release an intro to SHEC campaign, entitled "SHEC Us Out!".

The COVID-19 Pandemic and restrictions have changed how MSU SHEC operates on a daily basis. It was a primary goal, as outlined in the year plan, to increase service visibility and to ensure that McMaster students know how to access our services, as well as what those services look like in an online environment.

The campaign has been thoughtfully put together by our Resource and Advocacy Executives (RAEs) with guidance and collaboration from our Promotions Executives. This is the first campaign put together by our newly hired RAEs (new additions to the SHEC family). I am enormously proud of the work they have done, and believe that this was an excellent starter project for them to get more comfortable with the service and resources we offer.

The Campaign will be composed of 6 slides outlining: the basics about our service, the resources we supply, our 4 strategic pillars, warmlines details, Collective Care, and on campus distribution.

Projects & Events: Collective Care Collab With WGEN (Ongoing)

Collective Care is a remote free-resource-distribution program run by the MSU's Student Health and Education Centre (SHEC), and Women and Gender Equity Network (WGEN). An essential part of both of our services' mandates is to provide free resources (menstrual, safe(r) sex, childcare, gender-affirming, and other products) to students who may need them. Under normal circumstances, we were able to provide these services in person. However, given the COVID-19 pandemic, we still have extremely limited access

to our physical space and resources; this program was also more popular than our physical resource provision because of the anonymity and improved privacy it provides to students. For these two reasons, we hope to continue the Collective Care program this year and in the future.

Last year, Collective Care ran for approximately three months and used around \$2500 in funding, which came partially from our service budgets and external sponsors. This year, given that we will be running the program for eight months (the full school year) and anticipate greater popularity due to our longer promotional period, we project around \$8000-\$10000 in operating costs if we are able to secure enough funding.

Priority is given to requests for the most essential items, including gender gear, prescription medication costs, food, and essentials for children. We provide the highest gift card value for these items (usually around \$50-\$60+). Normal priority is given to smaller items that both our services provide in person, including menstrual and safe(r) sex items; we usually provide around \$15-\$35+ in gift card value. Finally, the lowest priority, around \$15-\$20+, is given to self-care requests or requests that can otherwise be covered by the MSU's Food Collective Centre.

So far, we have secured \$500 of funding from the MSU Services Special Projects fund and \$500 of funding from PACBIC. We have been in conversations with OPRIG about additional funding and a possible working partnership.

We hope to have this program up and running with the limited funds available after reading week, and plan to close the program when we run out of funds. We anticipate having to seek out much more external funding and are open to any suggestions the board may have.

Projects & Events: Bleed The North Information/Advocacy Collab (Upcoming)

Earlier on in the year, I had the pleasure of meeting with some lovely representatives from an organization called Bleed the North. Since then, I have been in contact with their Advocacy team in regards to a potential collaborative initiative this year. Bleed The North's Advocacy team works alongside politicians, grassroots organizations, and community members to create change. They strive to achieve menstrual equity through reforming policy and legislation. We hope to partner with them this year to address and tackle period poverty and menstrual injustice.

The team originally reached out to MSU SHEC in hopes of us promoting National Period Day on November 7th. We think this is an awesome opportunity to address topics including: gender inclusivity in mensuration, the dangers of period poverty, access to menstrual products, and even an opportunity for us, specifically RAE, to work alongside this organization to promote menstrual legislation in Canadian Politics.

Meetings are being organized, and a collaborative initiative is in the works.

Outreach & Promotions

Summary

As aforementioned, it was outlined as a primary goal in the year plan, to increase service visibility and to ensure that McMaster students know how to access our services, as well as what those services look like in an online environment. The service will be focusing on promotional strategies for our online operations to ensure that our services are visible and accessible to all students in the McMaster community.

Thus far, however we have been prioritizing hiring our volunteer team and creating a full roster of trained volunteers. We have yet to pay for promotional materials thus far. This is likely to be changing very soon, as hiring is finished, and training will be complete by the end of the month.

We are currently working to release the "SHEC us out!" Campaign, Collective Care promotional materials, and an updated Warmline hours/schedule post.

Social Media Engagement since the Previous Report

Instagram: Last 30 Days

- Accounts Reached: 1,159
- Impressions: 14,817 (+42%)
- Profile visits: 683 (+32.1%)
- Website Taps: 127 (+135%)
- Followers: 1,129 (+3.5%)

Facebook: Last 30 Days

- Page Reach: 759 (-55%)
- Page Views: 82 (+21%)
- Audience: 2,357 (+3%)
- Post reach: 741 (41%)
- Post engagements 38 (19%)

Finances

Budget Summary

Only \$30 has been spent from our annual budget thus far. We have been granted permission to visit the space, MUSC 202, in person on October 16th, at which time Gillian (AD) and myself (SD) will be conducting an inventory check-in. It is expected that after this time, we will finally place orders for health supplies and start to spend from our budget more.

Our largest financial partnership is with Public Health Hamilton, who provides SHEC with various free safe(r) sex and harm reduction items including oral barriers, lubricants and condoms.

Thus far (as mentioned above), we have received \$500 of funding from the MSU Services Special Projects fund, and \$500 worth of funding from PACBIC for our Collective Care Program. We plan on continuing conversations with OPRIG relating to additional Collective Care support.

ACCOUNT CODE	ITEM	BUDGET / COST
	Condom Dispenser Sign	\$5.00
6501-0116	WW Incentive Card	\$25.00
SUPPLIES	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$30
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$2770

	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	
	REMAINING IN LINE	

	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	
	REMAINING IN LINE	

	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	
	REMAINING IN LINE	

TOTALS	
TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING	\$8450
TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING	\$30
REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING	\$8420

Executives & Volunteers

Since the last EB report was submitted, we have created and released two anonymous feedback forms (1) for executives, and (2) for volunteers. Both of these forms were created through Microsoft forms, and are intended to welcome any comments or feedback from team members in order to better the operation of the services as a whole. These provide volunteers/executives with a place to anonymously submit any general or specific feedback they may have. These forms will remain open throughout the entirety of the year and will be checked periodically. For anything urgent, we ask that volunteers please directly email the director at shec@msu.mcmaster.ca, or the assistant director at atshecad@msu.mcmaster.ca. Individuals may also reach out to any of the following people directly depending on who they feel most comfortable addressing your concerns to:

- SHEC Volunteer Coordinator(s), Kevin Sanghoo Park (He/Him) and Natalee Moncada (She/Her) atshecvolunteer@msu.mcmaster.ca
- SHEC Assistant Director, Gillian Grant-Allen (She/Her) at shecad@msu.mcmaster.ca
- SHEC Director, Anika Anand (She/Her) at shec@msu.mcmaster.ca,
- MSU Vice-President Administration, Christina Devarapalli (She/Her) at vpadmin@msu.mcmaster.ca

Once all volunteers have been hired and trained, we plan on hosting a volunteer social so that all individuals have an opportunity to interact with their fellow team members and build a strong sense of community. This is crucial in terms of boosting morale and building a strong welcoming community, especially during times like these, where most school events and classes are taking place online.

Upcoming activities/opportunities for volunteers include training, and the chance to join one of our volunteer-led committees. Both our Events & Outreach and Resources & Advocacy teams plan on posting Microsoft form and relevant information by the end of the month on how to join each committee for the semester - with meetings starting shortly after!

Successes

Since our last report, we have created a weekly executive meeting time: Saturday's at 10 AM, during which time we meet as a large group to discuss any/all club happenings before breaking off into smaller groups of internal and external affairs lead by Gillian and myself respectively. We have found that this is an excellent way to ensure open channels of communication, and an organized thought processes while also fostering a sense of community and consistently gauging our executives morale and capacity.

Current Challenges

1. Lack of clarity for spending procedures + requests (including external funding)

I have reached out many times about additional funding pathways with little to no success. Any additional funding, I have acquired has been due to my own research, and that of my fellow PTMs. I am still quite confused where all of the money went from last years "Special Projects Fund". SHEC received well over \$1000 for the entire year, as just one service. When I addressed this issue at the last EB meeting I was told there was an additional "Special Projects Fund" with \$17000 of additional funding. I was emailed later that week, saying that this fund does actually not exist.

I need additional help locating external funding resources and navigating the application processes. I have expressed this many times but have received very little guidance on this process.

I would greatly appreciate additional help on this front, and am open to any suggestions the board may have.

2. *Inconsistent/last minute communication*

Overall, communication has been a consistent problem throughout the duration of my term, beginning during the transition period. This has impacted our timelines for executive hiring, volunteer hiring, training and even Welcome Week events. I have been extremely proactive in communicating with my entire team the MSU mandated training timelines and requirements. However, it doesn't seem to matter, because volunteers are unable to sign up for the allotted training periods and are expressing quite a bit of distress and confusion.

In the future, I think that any required materials/dates should be communicated well in advance with asynchronous options to ensure accessibility. This has been a sentiment shared by many of the MSU PTMs, as this is generally a very hectic time of year because services are creating and administering their own required training at this time.

It has also become evident that information seems to be selectively shared with PTMs. In other words, I often hear about pertinent MSU news (ie. Training) through other PTMs long before I hear anything from my superiors. In other words, if PTMs don't share this information with their peers, we do not hear about information until the week before.

As we are students, family members, friends, and MSU employees, it would be nice to have more advanced notice especially when juggling so many responsibilities at once. We are full time students, and I think often this is not appreciated enough.