



# REPORT

*From the office of the...*

## Spark Director

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TO: Members of the Executive Board  
FROM: Kyobin Hwang (She/Her)  
SUBJECT: Spark Report 3  
DATE: August 23, 2022

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### **Year Plan Update**

The past few months have undoubtedly been busy for Spark. Ahead of the school year, each executive role has been working diligently towards solidifying and executing programs, outreaching to the first-year students, and promoting the Service to our target group. As a team, we reached numerous milestones and goals that were set in the Year Plan:

1. Completed Team Leader Hiring: Spark has completed hiring 35 passionate volunteers that will support the Service throughout the year. I am incredibly grateful for the dedication my executive team has shown throughout the entire application process and I am excited to grow alongside the new members of the Spark family.
2. Completed summer programming: This year's summer program took the form of webinar series based on topics including: Transition to University, Faculty Fair, and Student Life. As will be discussed in subsequent sections, there was strong interest among incoming students, which was reflected in the registrant turnout.
3. Spark Scholarship: After months of planning and discussion with VP Admin, the Spark Scholarship has been added to Spark's Operating Policy!

### **Events, Projects, & Activities**

#### *General Service Usage*

Thus far, Spark has only conducted our Summer programming in the form of our Webinar Series. In all, we had 168 registrations! Spark has yet to open Session registration, but this is where we anticipate having the majority of usage from.

#### *Projects & Events: Project 1 (Completed) - TL Hiring*

- The Spark Team has completed the process of hiring Team Leaders (TLs) for the 2022/23 year.
- I am incredibly proud of the dedication demonstrated by the Executive Team during this hiring process. This would not have been possible without them.

- Spark has hired a total of 35 Team Leaders for the 2022/23 year. The vast majority of the Executive Team (n=8) will also be acting as TLs during the year as well.
- We received extremely positive feedback on Spark's hiring process (images of feedback is inserted in the "Successes" section of the report).
- Since being hired, we have conducted a Team Leader Welcome Social 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.
- In addition to the Welcome Social, Team Leaders were added to a Facebook group, where members have been posting introductions of themselves and interacting with one another.
- We have also emailed a copy of the Spark Team Leader Guidebook created by the previous Spark PTMs to all the TLs. By disseminating the guidebook, we hope that Team Leaders are more comfortable transitioning into the role.
- We have virtual Team Leader training scheduled on September 17, 2022. This is mandatory for all TLs to attend, and it will cover Spark-Specific Training as well as Session #1 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 along with a quiz to test their understanding of the key concepts that were discussed.

*Projects & Events: Project 2 (Completed) – Summer Programming*

- The Events Coordinators (Anika, Daniel, and Myra) planned a Summer Webinar Series based on the following themes: University Life and Faculty Fair on July 31, August 6, and August 7.
- Over the duration of the three days Spark's Webinars ran, we had a total of 168 registrations. Some Webinars had a greater attendance than others, as would be expected. The single most attended was the Faculty Fair Webinar, in which students had a chance to interact with representatives from each faculty.
- Spark also received a sponsorship from the McMaster Campus Store of a \$25 gift card, which was gifted to one of the attendees at random.
- I am incredibly proud of the Events Coordinators and the P&P Coordinators for their tireless work on this project.
- All Webinars were recorded and sent to registrants to reference at later points as they choose. The slide decks to each Webinars were also forwarded to registrants, so they can revisit key information from the presentations.

### *Projects & Events: Project 3 (On-Going) – First Year Formal Planning*

- The Events Coordinators (Anika, Daniel, and Myra) have also been working diligently towards planning First Year Formal, which is secured to take place on November 5, 2022.
- Venue booking and date selection were the major achievements with respect to First Year Formal Planning
- Michelangelo's was selected as the venue after comparing various options' price points, locations, and date availabilities.
- The date (i.e., Saturday, November 5, 2022) was selected after consolidating common first-year courses' midterm schedule (e.g., CHEM 1A03, PSYCH 1X03, MATH 1LS3, etc.).
- We also met with the First Year Council Coordinator to delineate each of the Service's responsibilities for the planning phase.
- Based on our discussion, Spark will be largely responsible for the groundwork logistics leading up to the event (i.e., venue booking, photographer booking, bus arrangement, ticket sales, etc.). On the other hand, First Year Council will be coordinating the more external/visible tasks for the event, such as theme selection, music playlist creation, coordination of volunteers on the day of the event, photobooth arrangements, etc.
- The next steps on Spark's end is confirming a photographer for the event and solidifying bus arrangements.

### *Projects & Events: Project 4 (On-Going) – Session Development and Registration*

- As mentioned in the previous report, the Sessions Coordinators (Deeptha, Nicholas, and Tuqa) have been working extremely hard to develop Sessions that are both informative and engaging for the first-year population. They are progressing in an incredibly timely manner and developing creative sessions for the year.
- At this point, 8 sessions are completed (the entire Fall term). The themes of these sessions include the following: *Welcome to Spark, Get to Know Your Campus, Get Involved on Your Campus, Tackling Expectations, Goal Setting, Overcoming Imposter Syndrome, Wellness, and Exam Season Destressing.*
- The Sessions Coordinators have shared all the sessions that have been designed thus far with the entire Executive Team for feedback.
- Materials for the first four sessions have been purchased.
- The first week of Sessions will begin on September 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Spark registration is currently open and will close on September 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Active promotion for Sessions registration across our social media platforms will begin on the week of August 29.
- 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 registration MS Form can be found here (<https://forms.office.com/r/XyBkzyZju4>)

- Additionally, Spark will be reaching out to individuals that expressed interest in sessions during one of our other programming (i.e., summer programming) and/or outreach efforts (i.e, SSC booth).

#### *Projects & Events: Project 5 (On-Going) – “What I Wish I Knew in First Year...” Reel*

- The Promotions and Publication Coordinators (Linda and Jadyn) are currently organizing an Instagram reel to promote sessions registration.
- This reel is anticipated to feature some of our newly recruited Team Leaders sharing something they wish they had known when they were in first year.
- We are currently in the process of collecting video clips from Team Leaders and are hoping.
- By looking at Spark’s previous social media insights, it is clear that Instagram reels effectively help the Service gain traction.
- With this in mind, we are hoping that the reel helps reach widespread first-year students to promote sessions registration.

#### *Projects & Events: Project 6 (Upcoming) – SSC Event and ClubsFest*

- The Student Success Centre has invited Spark to take part in their Student Services/Learning Fair booth on August 31.
- On September 6, Spark will also be partaking in ClubsFest '22.
- Both these events will give Spark an opportunity to promote sessions registration and inform first year students about the services we provide.
- Given the Outreach and Engagement Coordinators’ (Vithuyan and Milica) busy schedules with the Welcome Week booths, the Events Coordinators (Anika, Daniel, and Myra) have taken on the responsibility of both the SSC and ClubsFest booth.
- They are currently in the process of designing our booth and we are reaching out to other Executives to see if they can be present at the event.
- Team Leaders will also be asked to volunteer at the booth and represent the Service.
- We will also be handing out Spark swag at the event, including stickers and rave cards that overview the Service’s mission. Additionally, we will have a QR code directing interested students to the Spark Sessions registration form.

#### *Projects & Events: Project 7 (Upcoming) – Welcome Week Booths*

- The Outreach & Engagement Coordinators (Vithuyan and Milica) have taken the initiative to reach out to each Faculty Planner to seek further opportunities to promote Spark to the first-year students.

- In all, Spark has secured a booth at the following Faculty's variation of a "ClubsFest:" Science, Nursing, Kinesiology, Engineering, Health Sciences, and Arts and Sciences.
- The dates of the booths are dispersed during Welcome Week.
- Each of the booth will have a QR code for Sessions registration for students that are interested.
- Participating at these Welcome Week booths will undoubtedly help expose Spark to more first year students. I am truly grateful for my Outreach & Engagement Coordinators for coordinating the whole schedule on their own.
- Similar to the previously mentioned SSC and ClubsFest booths, Team Leaders will also be extended an opportunity to represent Spark at the Welcome Week booths alongside an Executive member or returning Team Leader.

### *Projects & Events: Project 8 (Upcoming) – Night Before Classes*

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Spark has not been able to hold its traditional "Night Before Classes" event for the past two years.
- Night Before Classes is an event in which first years can come and meet their peers and upper years in their faculties and go for a tour of their class buildings.
- The Outreach and Engagement Coordinators (Vithuyan and Milica) will be responsible for organizing this event.
- The date of the event has been confirmed: September 5, 2022.
- The logistics of the event has been solidified (i.e., materials needed, number of volunteers required, volunteer sign-up sheet, etc.)
- We are currently trying to secure the MSUC/Mills Plaza for the event.

## **Outreach & Promotions**

### *Summary*

As mentioned in the previous EB report, our primary form of outreach has been through the use of promotions to advertise the hiring of Executive and Team Leader positions. Therefore, we have been reaching out to only upper-year students at McMaster. However, with the hiring process being complete, we have shifted our focus to reaching the first-year population. This year, Spark has printed 5000 rave cards to put in each MSU swag bag. Given that each first-year is provided with the swag bag, I am grateful for this opportunity to increase exposure of the Service to our target population. The Promotions and Publications Coordinators (Jadyn and Linda) and the Outreach and Engagement Coordinators (Vithuyan and Milica) have been extremely busy this summer with increasing our outreach prior to first year registration for Sessions. The Promotions and Publications Coordinators have facilitated the development of a variety of different promotional tools for programming including Instagram reels, Executive Bios, and Sparked at Mac Campaign. In terms of future promotional plans, we will be posting a graphic to promote Spark's Night Before Classes

event, MSU Spark Achievement in Leadership Award, Sessions registration, and the “What I Wish I Knew in First Year...” reel. The Outreach and Engagement Coordinators have primarily been focused on reaching first-year students through the Faculty Welcome Week booths that have been scheduled.

*Promotional Materials*

**Team Leader Hiring Video (TL Hiring Campaign)**



**Views:** 7114

**Likes:** 141

**Sends:** 40

**Saves:** 37

**Reach:** 5560



**Views:** 8979

**Likes:** 139

**Sends:** 46

**Saves:** 36

**Reach:** 8998

## Sparked at Mac (TL Hiring Campaign)



**Likes:** 112

**Sends:** 0

**Saves:** 2

**Reach:** 2418



**Likes:** 115

**Sends:** 0

**Saves:** 2

**Reach:** 2538



**Likes:** 80

**Sends:** 2

**Saves:** 5

**Reach:** 2325



**Likes:** 117

**Sends:** 4

**Saves:** 8

**Reach:** 3113



**Likes:** 157

**Sends:** 18

**Saves:** 9

**Reach:** 3264

## Summer Programming Graphics



Likes: 100

Sends: 31

Saves: 17

Reach: 2616



Likes: 139

Sends: 55

Saves: 56

Reach: 2900

## Meet the Team Campaign (Executive Bios)



Likes: 236

Sends: 1

Saves: 3

Reach: 3423



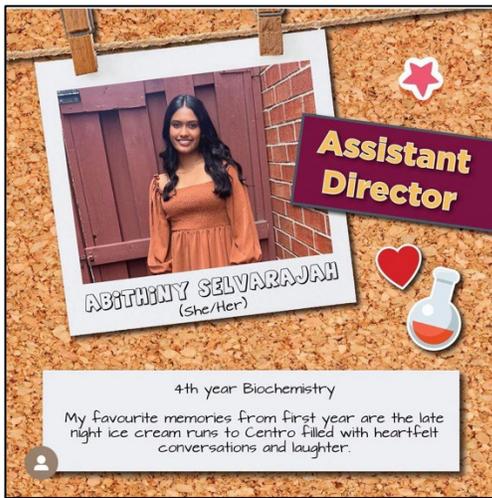
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**Reach:** 3532



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**Reach:** 3521



**Likes:** 139  
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**Reach:** 2484



**Likes:** 141

**Sends:** 0

**Saves:** 1

**Reach:** 2726



**Likes:** 205

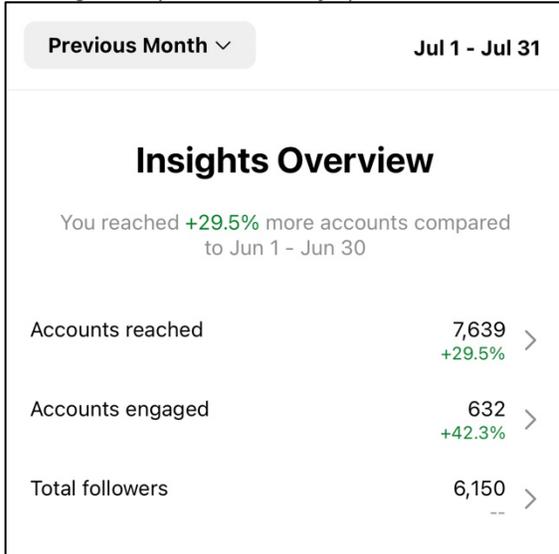
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**Saves:** 2

**Reach:** 3376

*Social Media Engagement since the Previous Report*

*Instagram (Last 30 Days)*



**Finances**

*Budget Summary*

In the recent months, Spark’s main expenses have been sourced from the Advertising & Promotion budget line (#6501-0125). With Team Leader recruitment complete, I have placed orders for Spark T-Shirts. Additionally, Spark has ordered lanyards for each Team Leader and executive member. We also purchased stickers to distribute to Service volunteers and users throughout the year, as well as rave cards promoting Sessions registration. All these physical promotional material purchases were possible due to the reallocation of \$300 from the Leader Training budget line (#6802-0125) to the Advertising & Promotions line (#6501-0125). With that being said, I want to take this opportunity to thank VP Finance (Sarphina Chui) once again for working with me to strategize ways to increase our funds for this year’s Advertising & Promotions line. I also want to thank the Underground Creative Director & Manager (Paula Scott) for her timely email responses and for turning my visions into a reality with the items she designs. Furthermore, Spark has started to pull from the Annual Campaigns budget line (#6103-0125). Notably, we submitted a venue down deposit for First Year Formal at Michelangelo’s. Additionally, we started to purchase Fall sessions #1-4 materials. To mark the end of Team Leader recruitment process, we drew from the Volunteer Appreciation line (#6494-0125) to send each executive member a gift card. We also used some of the funds in this line for the Team Leader Summer Social as well.

<b>ACCOUNT CODE</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>BUDGET / COST</b>
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<b>5003-0125</b>	<b>SPARK – OFFICE SUPPLIES</b>	<b>100</b>
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$50.00
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$50.00
<b>6103-0125</b>	<b>SPARK – ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS</b>	<b>3,700</b>
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$1916.19
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$1763.81
<b>6494-0125</b>	<b>SPARK – VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION</b>	<b>750</b>
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$280.00
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$470.00
<b>6501-0125</b>	<b>SPARK – ADV. &amp; PROMOTION</b>	<b>3,500</b>
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$2083.00
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$1416.99
<b>TOTALS</b>		
<b>TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING</b>		<b>\$8250.00</b>
<b>TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING</b>		<b>\$4329.20</b>
<b>REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING</b>		<b>\$3920.80</b>

### **Executives & Volunteers**

- As usual, I am consistently impressed by the work that the Spark Executives do. Their passion for first-year success is clearly evident through the work that they do in their respective roles.
- Having just completed a busy Summer, the Executives are definitely feeling 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. Additionally, I have been cancelling weekly executive meetings during busy periods (e.g., Welcome Week and Team Leader interview week), so everyone can take a well-deserved break.
- With the dedication demonstrated by the Team Leaders we have hired an entire TL team!
- We have hosted a Welcome Event this summer to help introduce Team Leaders to their roles and to each other. We have also done some logistical updates for the coming year, introduction posts on Facebook, and some Team Leaders have agreed to help at some ClubFests/Service Fests during Welcome Week and early September.
- Team Leaders have been sent the Team Leader Guidebook developed by the previous Spark Director (Mitchell German) and previous Assistant Director (Vivien Trinh). This is in hopes of easing their transition into the role.

## Successes

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

- **Increased Spark's presence leading up to the beginning of the school year:** Spark's Promotions and Publications Coordinators (Jadyn and Linda) and Outreach and Engagement Coordinators (Milica and Vithuyan) have been working diligently towards increasing Spark's presence leading up to the school year. From the Promotions and Publications standpoint, the Coordinators have requested to follow students from the incoming class' Instagrams to ensure that our social media content is effectively reaching the target population. As indicated in the screenshot of Spark's Instagram engagement insight above, we have reached +30% more accounts this month, with the majority of users coming from the incoming class of students. Furthermore, the Outreach and Engagement Coordinators have scheduled Welcome Week booths at many of the Faculty's Club Fairs. We look forward to engaging with students from various faculties through this means and informing them about the services we provide. Finally, Spark has printed 5000 rave cards that will be provided to each first-year student that picks up an MSU swag bag. Undoubtedly, this outreach method will help the Service reach a broad portion of first years and effectively promote Sessions registration to them.
- **Team Leader Hiring:** Team Leader hiring is always a stressful, time-consuming task in Spark. This year, we received 152 applications, interviewed 77 applicants, and selected 35 Team Leaders. Despite the ambitious timelines we set, everybody involved was beyond supportive in helping Spark meet these goals. All of the Executives completed every step by the proposed due date and worked diligently to ensure it was a hiring process we were all proud of. So far, we have been receiving phenomenal feedback from applicants—I have inserted some of the feedback we received in the "Miscellaneous" section of the report. Undergoing the Team Leader hiring process has undoubtedly grown my appreciation for the executive team. The commitment they demonstrated throughout the process truly inspires me to approach everything that I do with the same degree of enthusiasm and passion. We are all so excited to be able to welcome the new Team Leaders into the Spark family!
- **Summer Programming:** The Events Coordinators (Anika, Daniel, and Myra) took on a prominent leadership role in organizing the Summer Webinars. They communicated with all the stakeholders involved (i.e., Welcome Week Reps from various faculties) and to the P&P Coordinators (Jadyn and Linda) to design beautiful promotional material. Having had a total of 168 registrants, Spark definitely made a lasting impact on the first-year population. We also received some fantastic feedback!

## Current Challenges

Spark has been facing the following challenges:

- **Spark Scholarship Budget Line:** In a previous EB meeting, the Spark Scholarship had been augmented to Spark's Operating Policy. This means that two students registered in Spark Sessions will be awarded \$200 each for their distinguished contribution and engagement in Spark and broader McMaster community. To execute this element of the Operating Policy, Spark requires an additional \$400 in funds. While this addition has not been made to Spark's annual budget yet, I am hoping to meet with VP Finance in the coming days to discuss a plan.
- **Welcome Week scheduling:** The majority of Spark's executive members and volunteers are involved in Welcome Week. Given the conflicting commitments between their Welcome Week responsibilities and Spark's end-of-summer engagements, there have been some challenges scheduling volunteers for our events. Namely, it has been difficult finding executives that can represent Spark during the Welcome Week Faculty Club Fair booths. We have opened volunteer registrations to the Team Leaders as well to recruit more assistance. Recognizing that Welcome Week is a busy period for the majority of my executive members, I have been cognizant so as to ensure meetings do not exceed the designated timeframes. Additionally, I have made it clear that I am available to support them in any way they see fit and that they are always welcome to take a well-deserved break!
- **Lack of faculty diversity on TL team:** Stepping into my role, one of my goals was to recruit a Team Leader team comprised of individuals from diverse programs. In all, the majority of hired Team Leaders are from the Health Sciences program, followed by Life Sciences. Unfortunately, there is no representation from the Faculty of Engineering and there is limited number of individuals from the Commerce and Humanities programs. Recognizing that Spark is a Service intended to serve students of *all* faculties, we will brainstorm ways to help first years from Engineering, Commerce, and Humanities feel supported and heard when they have any faculty-specific questions.

## Miscellaneous

Below are some of the glowing feedback we received from the Team Leader interview process:

I think it was a great interview style! It gave people multiple opportunities to showcase their strengths, so maybe if they didn't perform to the best of their ability in one section, they could make it up in another! The Spark Exec Team was also very polite which made this a good interview experience:)

I think you guys did an amazing job at making it a comfortable space for interviewees and it helped us feel less nervous! I loved the orange vs clementine debacle

really well organized! all execs had great energy and everything was well explained

Overall I thought that the interview was really well organized and I really appreciated the effort that was put in by each spark executive to make us feel comfortable and reduce the stress of the experience.

The interview style was definitely new and not something I'd experienced before, but it was refreshing and fun!