



REPORT

From the office of the...
Spark Director

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Kyobin Hwang (She/Her)
SUBJECT: Spark Report 7
DATE: February 6, 2023

Year Plan Update

Over the past month, Spark has been focusing on starting our regular programming for second semester. As a team, we reached the following milestones and goals:

1. We have closed winter semester sessions registration! Overall, we have been able to retain many of the first years from the fall term. We are incredibly proud of the registration turnout!
2. Spark successfully executed the Wellness Bag initiative. All 200 bags were taken within the first two hours!
3. The Promotions and Publication Coordinators have launched the fall publication this past December. With 260 likes and 119 saves, the publication on McMaster University's Must Have Apps provided incredibly useful insight to the student population.

Events, Projects, & Activities

General Service Usage

Relative to the previous EB Report period, service usage has significantly increased. Namely, over 200 students visited the Spark booth to collect a wellness package organized by the Outreach and Engagement Coordinators. In fact, we had to turn several first-year students away due to limited inventory. Furthermore, we have been gaining many more social media followers after the launch of our fall publication. This has been reflected by the emails I have been receiving over winter break from first-year students expressing their interest in Spark. Finally, winter session registration closed with 120 registrants. While we have only ran two weeks of session to date, we have around 50 first years consistently accessing our weekly mentorship program.

Projects & Events: Project 1 (Completed) – Winter Sessions Registration

- We closed winter term session registration on January 17, 2023.
- We ended with 120 registrants, which is a huge success for Spark's winter sessions.

- The Promotions and Publication Coordinators (Jadyn and Linda) and Outreach and Engagement Coordinators (Milica and Vithuyan) worked incredibly hard to increase our registration numbers.
- In addition to posting our session registration graphics, the Promotions and Publication Coordinators (Jadyn and Linda) created a promotional reel to attract more first-year users on Instagram.
 - Here is the link to the reel:
https://www.instagram.com/reel/CnAH4zVKVak/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- The Outreach and Engagement Coordinators (Milica and Vithuyan) contributed to winter session registration by emailing all of the fall registrants and individuals that picked up the wellness bags.
- This term, we also reached out to Housing and Conference Services to promote our registration content. Specifically, the registration graphic was casted on all residence TVs and the Community Advisors of each building were asked to promote Spark sessions to their first-year students.
- Additionally, I contacted the First Year Council Coordinator to further disseminate registration to the first-year population.
- Archway was also incredibly helpful in promoting sessions registration to the first-year students. Specifically, the Archway Mentor Lead posted the registration graphic to their Teams channel.

Projects & Events: Project 2 (Completed) – Spark Fall Publication

- The Promotions and Publication Coordinators (Jadyn and Linda) worked diligently on Spark’s first publication of the year.
- The publication launched on November 29, 2022
- With 260 likes and 119 saves, the publication was a huge success!
- The topic is McMaster Apps, and the goal is to inform McMaster students of essential phone apps for university life (e.g., MacEats, MacQuest, McMaster Safety App, and McMaster Recreation App).

Projects & Events: Project 3 (Completed) – Spark Wellness Bags

- Spark ran the Wellness Bag initiative again this year.
- This initiative provided first-year students with free wellness bags filled with snacks and self-care items.
- Using the \$1450 we amassed through our kind sponsors, we were able to execute this event at MUSC’s Clubspace on December 7, 2022.
- 200 wellness bags were all distributed in the first two hours!
- We are grateful for all our campus sponsors for making this possible, including McMaster Alumni Association, McMaster Social Sciences Society, President’s Office, the Department of English and Cultural Studies, and the Campus Store.
- Additionally, I am thankful for my Outreach and Engagement Coordinators for seamlessly planning this initiative!
- This initiative was promoted on our social media and Community Advisors were asked to disseminate the promotional graphic to the first-year students on their residence floor.

Projects & Events: Project 4 (Ongoing) – Winter Sessions

- We have officially started winter sessions on the week of January 23, 2023.
- Despite our overall registration number of 120, we have had around 50 first-years students consistently attending sessions.
- The topics that are covered through winter sessions include the following: *Expectation Setting, Teamwork and Collaboration, Introduction to House Hunting, Hidden Gems on McMaster Campus, Positive Thinking, Culinary Skills 101, Goal Setting, Discover Your City.*
- For the “Culinary Skills 101” session, we are collaborating with the Food Collective Centre.
 - Specifically, first-year students will have a chance to learn and practice their culinary skills, while cooking a recipe in a real kitchen setting!

Projects & Events: Project 5 (Ongoing) – Spark Ambassadors Program

- Spark Ambassadors is an opportunity for first-year students to work alongside Spark’s Executive Team to learn more about what Spark does behind-the-scenes and further engage within the Spark community. It will provide first-year students with more of a leadership role within Spark and an opportunity to create some of Spark’s winter programming.
- The Outreach Coordinators (Vithuyan and Milica) started running this six-week program on October 17 for the 13 registered first-year students.
- To accommodate as many Ambassadors as possible, we have been providing both a virtual and in-person option to join the meetings.
- For the first two weeks of the program, the Ambassadors have been collaborating with the Session Coordinators to develop a session for the Winter term. Their session is called “Welcome (Back) to Spark,” and will be the first session for the Winter semester.
 - The Ambassadors have had the opportunity to conceptualize the session activity ideas and develop the session document that will be released to the Team Leaders. They were also extended the offer to lead training for the session they design.
- Furthermore, Spark Ambassadors collaborated with the Promotions and Publication Coordinators (Jadyn and Linda) to create session promotional graphics and reel. Here is the final product:
https://www.instagram.com/reel/CnAH4zVKVak/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- This program is scheduled to run in winter semester, and registration has closed on February 5, 2023.
- Below is the logistics with second semester’s Ambassador program that is scheduled to run between the week of February 6 – March 20:
 - *Outreach Coordinators:*
 - Week 1: Winter Intro to Spark Ambassadors Session
 - *Events Coordinators:*
 - Week 2: Talking about what a good event looks like, brainstorming events

- Week 3: Planning logistics, starting to put event plan together
- Week 4: Implementing and promoting event
- Be at the event helping out and stuff
- *Sessions Coordinators:*
 - Week 5: Bag packing
- *Director and Assistant Director:*
 - Week 6: Join a Spark executive meeting

Projects & Events: Project 6 (Ongoing) – Sessions and Events Committee

- The Session and Events Coordinators have been working with their subcommittees to prepare winter semester's programming.
- Both committees are comprised of Team Leaders that were interested in undertaking additional responsibilities by helping with either event or session planning.
- Sessions Committee has been planning Session 5 and 7, which are focused on positive thinking and goal setting, respectively.
 - They have completed the session documents and will now be responsible for running sessions training.
- Events Committee has been organizing a Valentines event for winter term, which will include activities such as speed friending, cookie decorating, and a candy gram.
 - This event is scheduled on February 9, 2023.
- Both committees seem enthusiastic about their roles and have already brought insightful ideas. I look forward to seeing all they will achieve!

Projects & Events: Project 7 (Upcoming) – Spark Your Heart Event

- The Event Coordinators (Anika, Daniel, and Myra) and Spark Events Committee have been planning a valentine's theme event.
- There will be cookie decorating, pin and bracelet making, candy grams, and valentine's day origami!
- This event is scheduled on February 9, 6:00PM-8:00PM, at KTH B105.
- Registration is currently live, and we have 63 registrants.
- 12 Team Leaders have agreed to volunteer at the event.

Projects & Events: Project 8 (Upcoming) – MSU Communications Team x Spark Housing Reel, "What's Good, McMaster" Series

- Spark is collaborating with the MSU Communications Team for an Instagram reel focused on housing.
- Given that many first-year students are currently in the process of looking for houses, we thought it may be valuable to share some house hunting tips and tricks in the form of a reel.
- The reel is premised around interviewing McMaster University students, asking them questions pertaining to housing.
- Below are the questions that were asked to McMaster students:
 - What are your go-to platforms for finding a student house?
 - How did you find your current student house?

- What is one piece of advice you would give to students currently looking for housing?
- What is something new you learned through house hunting?
- What's the most important thing to look for in a student house?
- What is an important thing to consider when searching for roommates?
- The reel has been filmed already featuring one of our Promotions and Publications Coordinators (Jadyn) and Marketing and Communications Assistant (Hayley Ma).
- It is anticipated to be posted in the month of February.

Projects & Events: Project 9 (Upcoming) – Winter Term Photos

- With the start of a new semester, we are taking another round of team photo.
- All Team Leaders and Executive members are invited to join us in the waterfall room on February 7, 2023, with their Spark attire.
- The Communications Officer, Will Dang, has kindly offered to take our photos.

Outreach & Promotions

Summary

The main promotional focus over the past two months has been winter sessions registration. For this term's session registration, we employed various outreach and promotional strategies. Namely, we promoted via the residence TV screens, Archway Mentor Teams Channel, previous Spark contacts, and social media graphics as well as reels. A combination of these strategies has shown to be incredibly effectively in gaining traction on our promotional content. Furthermore, we have promoted the Wellness Bag Initiative, Spark fall publication, and Spark Your Heart event. Prospective promotional efforts will be centered around Spark's winter publication and events (e.g., Hike into Spring, etc.).

Promotional Materials
Spark Fall Publication



Likes: 260

Sends: 69

Saves: 119

Reach: 4283

Exam Care Packages



Likes: 276

Sends: 297

Saves: 88

Reach: 4626

Sessions Registration - Graphic



Likes: 54

Sends: 102

Saves: 12

Reach: 2228

Sessions Registration - Reel



Plays: 12,065

Likes: 308

Sends: 56

Saves: 58

Reach: 8816

Spark Your Heart



Likes: 258

Sends: 224

Saves: 66

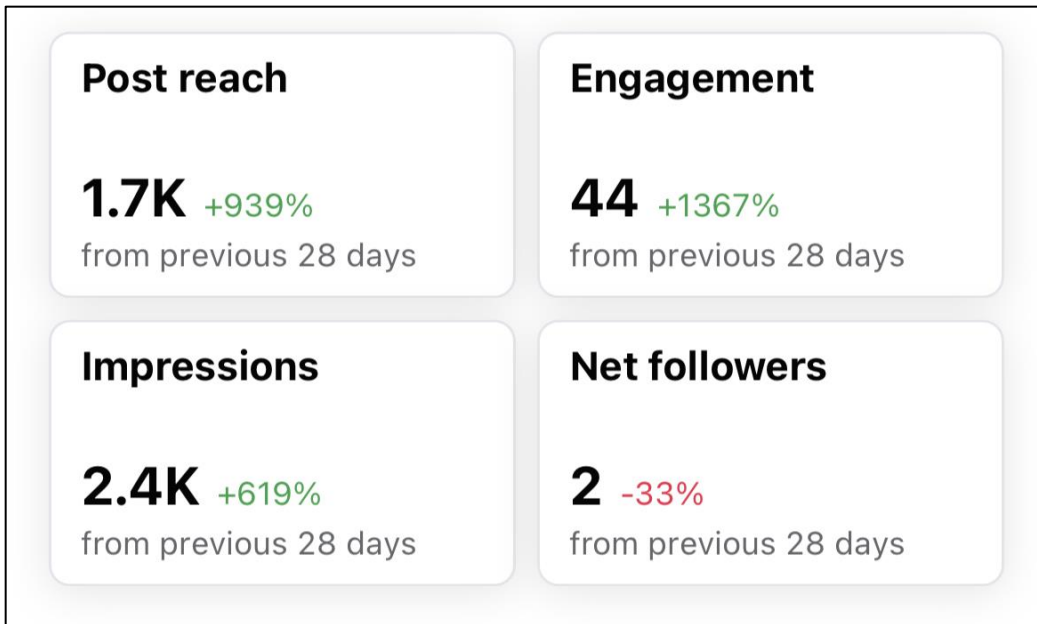
Reach: 4655

Social Media Engagement since the Previous Report

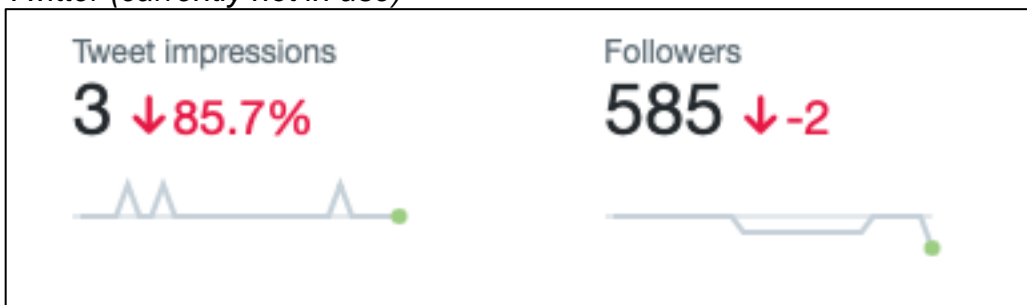
Instagram (December-January, since previous report)

Overview	
You reached +6.4% more accounts compared to Sep 24 - Nov 29	
Accounts reached	10.2K +6.4% >
Accounts engaged	1,043 -31.3% >
Total followers	6,185 -1.5% >

Facebook (since previous report)



Twitter (currently not in use)



Finances

Budget Summary

This past month, Spark's expenses have been sourced from the Annual Campaign (6103-0125), Advertising and Promotions (6501-0125), and Leader Training (6802-0125) budget lines. Specifically, we had to pull from the Annual Campaign line to purchase winter session materials, while the Advertising and Promotions budget line was used to generate graphics for the Exam Wellness Bag initiative and Spark Your Heart event. We did not have to spend any money to purchase wellness package materials as this was entirely covered by sponsor funds. Similarly, we did not have to pay any money for the session registration graphic as we reused the post from the previous semester to save on costs. To celebrate the end of winter sessions, we also celebrated with a pizza party with the Team Leaders at the last session training. The cost for this was fulfilled through the Leader Training line. The next large expense would be from the Annual Campaigns budget line (#6103-0125) to purchase materials for our Spark Your Heart event.

ACCOUNT CODE	ITEM	BUDGET / COST
5003-0125	SPARK – OFFICE SUPPLIES	100
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$50.00
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$50.00
6103-0125	SPARK – ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS	3,700
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$2570.42
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$1129.58
6494-0125	SPARK – VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION	750
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$280.00
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$470.00
6501-0125	SPARK – ADV. & PROMOTION	3,500
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$2577.50
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$922.49
TOTALS		
TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$8250.00
TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$5477.92
REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$2071.81

Executives & Volunteers

- The Executives are still regularly attending our weekly Exec Meetings and completing/following through with their initiatives as planned.
- I recognize they are all working incredibly hard despite their busy schedules, so I aim to keep meetings brief and intend to give them breaks periodically (e.g., during reading week and on weeks there are no new updates).
- Generally speaking, I think Team Leaders are beginning to feel the academic pressures that accompany this time of the year.
- We are trying to check-in on a more regular basis to support them as best as possible.
- There were two Team Leaders that admitted that they would like to step down from the role due to their demanding academics. While this was unfortunate, I support their decision to set boundaries for themselves.
- Team Leaders are still volunteering their time outside of Sessions to help Spark run events, which is fantastic! For the Spark Your Heart event, 12 Team Leaders expressed interest in volunteering!
- The Assistant Director (Abithiny) is currently planning a Team Leader winter social, which is scheduled to take place by the end of the month.

Successes

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

- **Spark Wellness Bags:** Given that this is our second year running this initiative, the planning process was relatively seamless. Based on our

takeaways from last year, the Outreach and Engagement Coordinators (Milica and Vithuyan) sought sponsor funds early. We are grateful for all our campus sponsors that provided us with a cumulative amount of \$1450 in funds. With the money acquired from our kind sponsors, we have purchased the necessary products and distributed wellness bags in MUSC Clubspace. I was incredibly proud to see the large line-up outside the room when we started the distribution. In fact, we completed handing out all 200 bags within the first two hours. This speaks to the amazing work done by the Promotions and Publications Coordinators (Jadyn and Linda) and the Outreach and Engagement Coordinators (Milica and Vithuyan). It was fulfilling to be able to give back to the first-year community in this regard!

- **Hiring Incoming Director:** While I recognize that I am not allowed to elaborate on this much and must maintain confidentiality, I am beyond excited to have selected the incoming Spark Director! I am super confident in my decision and think that Spark will be in great hands for the next year. I cannot wait to see all the amazing things that will be accomplished by the Service.
- **Cross-Campus Collaboration:** Spark has been collaborating with an extensive network of campus partners in recent months. Specifically, within the MSU, we have been working with FCC to plan the cooking session and have also filmed a joint reel with the MSU Communications team for their “What’s good, McMaster” series. For winter sessions registration, we have also substantially benefitted from connecting with Archway Mentor, Housing and Conference Services, and First Year Council. All of them played their part in disseminating our promotional content to their networks through various means (e.g., casting the promotional graphic on the TV screens, sharing it to their Microsoft Teams platform, emailing their contact, etc). Finally, McMaster Alumni Association, McMaster Social Sciences Society, President’s Office, the Department of English and Cultural Studies, and the Campus Store made our wellness bag initiative possible. Indeed, these past two months have truly reinforced the importance of bridging connections with those that share common goals.
- **Spark Reels:** The reel we posted for session registration has amassed over 12K views on Instagram. On average, all the reels that we have uploaded this year has garnered 10.3K views, which is a 504% increase from last year’s average reel views. Our Instagram platform has grown exponentially this past year. I am thankful for the Promotions and Publication Coordinators (Jadyn and Linda) for putting in the extra time to upload all our reels. Additionally, I am grateful to all the previous Promotions and Publication Coordinators in Spark’s history that have built up the platform to what it is today.

Current Challenges

Spark has been facing the following challenges:

- **Upper-Years Attending Spark Programs:** Over the past few months, we have had increasingly more upper-year students expressing interest in attending Spark's programming. For example, we had several upper years join the crafting event and we have also received an influx of emails and direct messages from upper-year students asking if they can register for the Spark Your Heart event. Given that Spark is a first-year service, we want to ensure that our programming is delivered to our intended student population. We are experiencing difficulty screening out upper-year students at events—there is no way to verify this. As of current, none of our promotional graphics explicitly states that the program is open to first-year students only; however, perhaps this is something we can consider for the future. Additionally, perhaps during registration, we can have a screening question asking if they are a first-year student.
- **Session Training Room Booking:** Due to a booking error from Housing and Conference Services, one of our session training rooms are too small to fit our needs. Thus, I have been in contact with them over the past two weeks to secure a new room for the Wednesday, 3:00PM-4:00PM, session training, but had no luck. Hopefully, we can find a bigger room to hold our weekly training. Any assistance with this would be much appreciated!

Miscellaneous

N/A