



# Year Plan

**MSU Spark  
Director  
Deeptha Ramakrishnan**

**2023–2024**



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## Introduction

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Hello Members of the Executive Board,

My name is Deeptha Ramakrishnan (she/her), and I'm entering my fourth year of the Health Sciences program. I've had the privilege to have been involved in Spark since my second year, as a Team Leader, followed by a Sessions Coordinator, and through my current role as Director. It's been an absolute privilege to have been involved with the service for the past 2 years, learning from those around me and growing as an individual, and I am both grateful and excited for this opportunity! I am beyond thrilled and appreciative of the chance to serve as Director this year, to continue Spark's mission of helping first year students in their transition to university, and to help Team Leaders and Executives find a community in which they feel supported.

As a student who had their first year of university entirely online, something I really craved was a community, where I felt supported, heard, and empowered. When I joined Spark at the beginning of my second year, I had no idea that this experience as a Team Leader, getting to know my fellow Team Leaders, Executives, and the first year students I interacted with, would enable me to find a place within my community where I felt as though I belonged. My time with this service has allowed me to make connections, life long friendships, and learn skills I otherwise wouldn't have. Spark has given me the strength to both value myself, and challenge myself as an individual, all of which has contributed to the person I am today. Without the friends I've met through my time in the service, I highly doubt that I would be fortunate enough to be the incoming Director, and to be writing this today.

When I was applying for this position, I still vividly remember something I wrote within my cover letter; that I wanted to be the side of a coin. By this, I mean that as a Director, I hope to be an individual who has the ability to further cultivate Spark's warm and welcoming environment, enabling a connection between both sides of the coin; the first year students, and the Team Leaders and Executives, all of whom the service serves in some capacity. I hope to be a leader who is approachable, that promotes creativity, expression and diversity, and one that is able to help those around them find their place within their communities, like how Spark has helped me.

I'm really looking forward to all the initiatives we have planned for this year, and am even more excited to meet the Executive Board and to work alongside you all as well. Thank you so much for taking the time to read this year plan (and apologies in advance for the length 😊)! Additionally, if you have any questions at any point in time, please feel free to reach out to me!



Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deeptha". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

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## Vision for Spark

<p><b>Overarching Vision (I.e., What is the <i>ultimate</i> goal you have for your Service?)</b></p>	<p>Spark's main function is that of a first year mentorship program, where first year students are placed in groups with other students and around 2-3 upper year students, known as Team Leaders. It serves to support students during their transition from high school to first year, and towards the end of the year, from first year to second year. Ultimately, a long-term goal I'd like to further champion is <b>horizontal growth</b>; where as broad a body of first years as possible are aware of Spark and its supports, and can engage in whatever aspects of the service they so choose, and where the body of Team Leaders who support these students are diverse, akin to our broader university community.</p>
<p>Description</p>	<p>Horizontal growth, in regards to supporting first years through their transition from high school to university, is a core overarching goal of Spark. This goal is rooted in the following facets of the service:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Spark Sessions and Mentorship Programming</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sessions are a core facet of Spark's mentorship program. They comprise weekly, one hour sessions with first year students and upper year mentors known as Team Leaders</li> <li>• These sessions consist of activities based on core themes pertaining to the first year experience and transition, such as personal growth and exploration, academic success and resources, and opportunity awareness.</li> <li>• Programming is created primarily by Sessions Coordinators, with contributions from the Sessions Committee of Team Leaders, and the Spark Ambassadors initiative (organized by the Outreach and Engagement Coordinators [more information about the Spark Ambassadors to follow])</li> <li>• Diversity of first year students, affectionately termed 'Sparklings', and Team Leaders partaking in Sessions programming is essential in achieving this goal</li> </ul> </li>   <li><b>2. Spark Events and Workshops</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working hand in hand with the Events Committee of Team Leaders, and the Spark Ambassadors, the Events</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Coordinators spearhead the creation and execution of events and workshops targeting the broader first year population (not only students registered in Spark programming)

- These events and workshops are both fun and informative, providing first year students the chance to destress, connect with peers and upper year students, and learn more about various topics
- Recalling the goal of horizontal growth, by targeting a larger body of first years, especially those that aren't enrolled in Spark programming, potential increases in Spark's brand awareness and service functions, alongside enrollment and retention, can hopefully be observed

### **3. Promotional Campaigns**

- Spark primarily utilizes Instagram as its main promotional platform, with graphics for various events, and campaigns for Spark Sessions and other related programming being published on this network. Facebook is also utilized for the promotion of Sessions registration, amongst other initiatives.
- The Promotions and Publications executives liaise with the MSU Underground to create promotional graphics and publication projects
- These promotional undertakings aim to inform first year students of resources available to them, both within and outside of the service, in hopes to ease their transition and overall first year experience

### **4. Outreach Initiatives**

- The Outreach and Engagement Coordinators facilitate various programming in hopes to increase interest of first years enrolled in Spark programming, enabling them to receive a more immersive experience within the service and all it has to offer
- Providing first year students with leadership opportunities through the Spark Ambassadors program, and celebrating achievement and passion in the service and its values through the Spark Stars and Spark Scholarship endeavours,

	<p>these initiatives aim to enable first year students to find their place within community and to connect with the service, increasing brand awareness and facilitating horizontal growth.</p>
<p>Benefits</p>	<p>Through the plethora of initiatives conducted by the aforementioned pillars of the service, Spark makes large strides towards its overarching goal of fostering horizontal growth; ensuring that incoming students are aware of the services, resources and opportunities that the service provides, while also reaching a larger, diverse body of students. This enables incoming students to feel better supported throughout their transition to university, contributing to a culture of warmth, encouragement and inclusivity that hopefully permeates into the greater McMaster community.</p> <p>Through its mission of supporting first year students, Spark aims to be a service accessible to all students regardless of program or background. By providing an environment where they feel confident and safe(r), exploring opportunities, and forging connections, Spark strives towards enabling first year students to grow and learn more about both themselves and the world around them, contributing to them finding their place within their communities, and converting McMaster into a place they can call “home”.</p>
<p>Year 1 Goals (2023/24)</p>	<p>This year, Spark’s goal is to firstly cultivate a team of Team Leaders who are of a variety of academic backgrounds. As a mentorship service geared towards being able to serve all first year students, it is imperative that the upper year mentors interacting with incoming students are also diverse, enabling the service to better support the various first years within the McMaster population. Additionally, while also ensuring Team Leaders are of diverse academic backgrounds, it is also important to ensure that first year students from all faculties are aware of Spark, its goals, and programming opportunities, in order to ensure that all interested students are able to partake. Something I hear often from upper year students is that they “wish they knew about Spark in their first year”, which is why these strides are imperative in our goal of better supporting and easing the transitions of first year students; making sure that all students who wish to engage with Spark are able to, to the capacity which they are comfortable. Also, it is integral to have Sparklings from a wide variety of programs, as it will enable the formation of broader networks amongst the first year students. Through diverse session groups and event attendees, students have the chance to meet and get to know</p>

	<p>individuals that they otherwise may not have had the chance to, in a safe(r) and supportive environment. This allows for exploration, exposure to new perspectives and opportunities, and growth for the first year students, something Spark strives to achieve.</p> <p>The extent of Spark’s reach to the first year population can be measured through demographics obtained through sessions registration. By including a field in the form that asks for student program, we can collate results in a visual (ie: pie chart) to observe the faculty distribution of Sparklings, and to identify faculties where we have lower enrollment and to plan adequate promotional and outreach strategies to ensure students of those programs are aware of Spark’s services as well. Other means to measure efficacy of our horizontal growth initiatives are monitoring Instagram followers and seeing an increase, representing that we are reaching more first years, and tracking diversity of faculty attendance at events that are open to students of all faculties, to see both the interest and awareness of Spark and its services amongst first year students. A more diverse Team Leader group is also indicative of Spark’s overall brand awareness and the interest of upper year students in our programming, and ensuring this takes place through our ‘TL Rep Program’ (name TBD) which occurs during hiring in attempts to ensure faculty representation is taken into consideration, and to account for factors that could increase representation of certain faculties or programs over others. Brand awareness success can be seen through attendance of first year wide initiatives and events, and increased collaboration with other services and organizations, such as Welcome Week, MSU services, and external partners.</p>
<p>Year 2 Goals (2024/25)</p>	<p>At the start of the school year, Spark typically experiences large waves of registration. With our current goals for horizontal growth, this number will hopefully grow. However, an occurrence we’ve observed over the years is low retention, where students sign up for sessions however never attend. In previous years, initiatives to curb this pattern have been implemented, such as 16 different sessions, 8 per semester, and other endeavours such as the Spark Ambassadors program, to foster more interest in Spark and its services amongst first year students, with the aim of increasing retention. I hope that the initiatives put in place during the 2023-2024 year to increase engagement with the service can work towards this trend, and I hope these can continue being cultivated in the 2024-2025 year, with the addition of new initiatives as well. Additionally,</p>



	<p>this year we plan to have increased Welcome Week presence, whether that be through attending faculty fairs, the Night Before Classes event, and other potential collaborations with MSU services or campus partners. This will hopefully also increase awareness surrounding Spark and its initiatives, and I find it fruitful to continue amending and growing such steps in the 2024-2025 year as well.</p>
<p>Year 3 Goals (2025/26)</p>	<p>2 years from now, I hope that the initiatives implemented for horizontal growth within the service would have begun showing results, enabling future PTMs to evaluate successes and identify future plans of action. The presence of a diverse team of Team Leaders and Sparklings will enable us to ascertain the fruits of these proposals, and to also better service the first year population as a whole. Additionally, in the year 2023-2024, we are planning on introducing a Promotions Committee of Team Leaders, who would assist the Promotions and Publications Coordinators with the generation of graphics and other promotional content, alongside publications. Ideally, this will increase the amount of content being outputted, and the diversity of content, enabling Spark to reach a wider audience. In 2025-2026, I hope to see long term successes with this initiative, an increase in publications (to potentially publish an anthology guide for students to access at the start of each semester), and a wide array of creative promotional materials that enable new individuals to discover Spark, and for those currently involved in the service to fully immerse themselves in the experience.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>Further contributing to horizontal growth is a goal that is only possible with the aid of individuals within Spark, collaboration with other MSU services, and liaising with on and off campus partners.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1. Within Spark</b></p> <p>Through the creation and promotion of Team Leader Committees (Current: Sessions, Events / New: Promotions, Outreach), individuals currently involved in the service as Team Leaders will have the ability to learn more about the service and contribute in a plethora of ways. This fosters creativity, and enables those involved in the service to grow truly passionate about it and its aims, and to spread that passion and joy to those around them, allowing new</p>

people to learn about Spark and to also take an interest in its programming.

**2. MSU Services**

*a. FYC*

- Typically, Spark collaborates with FYC for the planning and facilitation of First Year Formal
- Additionally, FYC is primarily comprised of first year students, who are also the target audience of Spark programming, highlighting a common goal between the services

*b. Maroons*

- Spark has previously collaborated with the Maroons for the exam care packages initiative
- This year, we would like to collaborate with the Maroons, potentially for a welcome week initiative in August, or for our Winter Welcome series in the Winter (or both!)

*c. Macademics*

- Spark has previously collaborated with Macademics for the creation of Summer Programming (in particular, the Sites and Services webinar)
- This is a relationship we are planning on continuing this year

*d. SWHAT*

- SWHAT is a service that a large proportion of the student body access, due to it being available for all years, therefore we believe a collaboration will be mutually beneficial
- This likely will be an event as a part of our Winter Welcome series in January, but further discussion is required

*e. FCC*

- Spark has traditionally collaborated with the FCC for our healthy eating/cooking session that normally runs in the Winter Semester (this past year, it was titled 'Mac-ster Chef').
- This is a partnership we hope to continue, and potentially even grow into a cooking and wellness related event

*f. Maccess + DEN*

- Typically feature in Team Leader training that happens at the beginning of each calendar year – a partnership we hope to continue

*g. SHEC*

- SHEC, a service focusing on the health and wellbeing of student, would be a lovely service to collaborate with on for

	<p>our Exam care packages! This is a collaboration we'd like to pilot this year.</p> <p><b>3. On/Off Campus Partners</b></p> <p><i>a. Archway</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a service which also aims to support first year students, we believe a collaboration event with Archway would be a mutually beneficial partnership</li> <li>• Additionally, Archway has a large population of students who live off campus or commute, which is a population Spark could better serve through its programming</li> </ul> <p><i>b. SCC</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SCC typically helps Spark with its 'Opportunities in the Community' sessions, where materials or resources will be provided regarding cover letters, resumes, and interviews</li> <li>• This year, we'd like to contribute this partnership, and potentially bring back the resume/cover letter + interview workshop from Spark years prior</li> </ul> <p><i>c. Welcome Week Coordinators</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This year, we aim to have a larger presence during Welcome Week, in order to reach as many first years as possible</li> <li>• We are opening these channels of communication early on, through the involvement of Welcome Week Coordinators and Reps at our Faculty Fair Summer Webinar Series</li> <li>• Additionally, we hope to be present at the faculty fairs of each faculty during Welcome Week, to engage with a greater body of first years in an in person environment</li> </ul>
<p>How can VP Admin support you?</p>	<p>The VP Admin can support both myself and the AD by making themselves approachable and available for feedback and meetings. Additionally, answering questions, providing resources and support will all help us in achieving our goal! This is my first time in a PTM role, and there are many new initiatives we are planning on implementing, so the opinion of the VP Admin is something I would greatly value in my decision making process. Lastly, as there are many logistical details behind Spark's programming, I'd appreciate timely communication from the VP Admin, and will also reciprocate.</p>



# Project/Events Timeline

## Spring/Summer Term

May	
Service Goal/Project/Event (#1):	Hiring of Executive Team Members
Why and how?	<p>The hiring of executive team members, especially a team that is comprised of diverse individuals who all are passionate about Spark and its vision, is very important in the success of the service throughout the year. As Director, this is especially important because I have to work closely alongside these individuals. Additionally, passion and initiatives are two things very important during this process, as executives are responsible for the creation of a lot of Spark's programming, therefore these traits are essential in cultivating a successful service this year. Below is the process I followed for ensuring this occurred:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Promotions:</b> After speaking to the outgoing Director and the outgoing VP Admin, I decided on the number of executives I wanted to have on my team, and got promotional material uploaded to the Instagram page, along with the job posting on the MSU Jobs website</li> <li>2. <b>Resumes and Cover Letters:</b> These were reviewed by both myself and my AD, and decisions were made after long discussions. After this, interview offers were sent out</li> <li>3. <b>Interviews:</b> Interview questions were generated by myself and my AD after brainstorming themes we thought would be important. We also attempted different question styles, such as reflective, situational, and a new 'tag yourself' format, where we could learn more about the applicant and their personality. Role specific questions were asked, and assignments were also given for candidates to complete, and for us to review prior to the interviews. Outgoing Director was also consulted when making</li> </ol>

	<p>decisions, and was provided video recordings of the interviews they wished to review. Interviews were conducted on Zoom, where questions were both read and pasted in chat for accessibility</p> <p>4. <b>Offers:</b> After long hours of discussion and deliberation, offers were sent out to 10 outstanding candidates! Rejections were also offered after the team was finalized, with an interest form for Team Leader hiring, in order to generate a mailing list</p>
<p>Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?</p>	<p><b>1. Professional School Considerations</b></p> <p>Many individuals being interviewed for our team expressed that they were considered for professional school. This did not negatively impact their application, but we foresaw challenges of having to replace team members if some ended up leaving. We mitigated this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a waitlist of candidates for each position, in order to be able to replace members who were leaving</li> <li>• To send out a form after the professional school acceptance date to team members who expressed that they were awaiting results, in order to determine whether they would still be eligible to be an executive member or not</li> <li>• Only sending out offers after the team was finalized, so we wouldn't have to backtrack or rearrange members at a later time</li> </ul> <p>We found this beneficial, as we ended up losing 2 members of our team, and this system enabled us to not have to reopen applications.</p>
<p>Who?</p>	<p>Outgoing Director, Assistant Director, executive candidates</p>
<p>Priority Level (highlight one)</p>	<p><b>High Priority</b>      Moderate Priority      Low Priority</p>
<p><b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#2):</b></p>	<p><b>May@Mac</b></p>

Why and how?	May@Mac is an opportunity for potential first year students to become aware of Spark, which, if they come to McMaster, they might be inclined to join. Additionally, the opportunity to talk to incoming students allows us to be more aware of their needs, enabling Spark as a service to better support this population
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p><b>1. Finding executive members to help at the booth</b></p> <p>Considering the fact that the executives are also students, and are currently on summer break and located in different areas, it could be challenging to find students to help at the booth. I combatted this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaching out as far in advance as I could, in order to know ahead of time what numbers were looking like, and to reach out to previous executives if needed</li> <li>• Ensuring executives could stay for as long as they chose, and that shifts were flexible, enabling them to be more inclined to drop by if they had time</li> <li>• By situating myself at the table for the entire duration, so incoming execs, if they chose to help out, wouldn't feel burdened by having to run a booth alone</li> </ul>
Who?	Current executives, previous executives
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority      Moderate Priority <b>Low Priority</b>
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#3):</b>	<b>Executive Onboarding: 2on1s, Personal Goals, and Year Plans</b>
Why and how?	In order to make executive members feel comfortable and confident in their roles, the onboarding process is extremely important. This is especially important for executives who either haven't been Team Leaders before, or who have no service experience. Executives in Spark are expected to be self sufficient to a certain degree, and it is extremely important that the members feel assured and supported in their roles to enable this. This was done through three major initiatives:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Personal Goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal goals gave executive members the opportunity to reflect upon past experience, their values, and their goals and aspirations for the upcoming year, both within their role and outside of it.</li> <li>• This also gave incoming executives the opportunity to ask any questions they may have about their roles, responsibilities, and for us as well to ask them any questions</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. 2on1s</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These were meetings with the Director, Assistant Director and the executive in question</li> <li>• Allowed us to have a chance to speak with each executive in private, review their personal goals, and alleviate any concerns in real time</li> <li>• Also getting to know them! We hadn't spoken to them individually after interviews, so this opportunity was very important in building camaraderie within our team</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. Year Plans</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition reports were provided from the previous year, enabling executives to have a starting point for their Year Plans</li> <li>• These documents serve to make their transition less stressful, and to make their roles manageable, through breaking their tasks and goals down to manageable and actionable steps</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<p>Potential difficulties?          How can you overcome them?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Managing Expectations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a Director, there are certain ideas I have of the service and it's direction. However, this year we have a diverse team with varying Spark experience. With this comes new ideas and growth for the service, but it also means that some important items could be missed, and the quality and depth of work provided might be lacking</li> <li>• Managing these expectations, and making them clear to my team in regards to quality is really important!</li> <li>• This can also be overcome through clear communication, and myself also adopting a patient and open mindset – change and difference have their</li> </ul> </li> </ol>



	benefits as well, and acknowledging that will help me overcome this difficulty and become a better leader
Who?	AD, incoming executives
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority <b>Moderate Priority</b> Low Priority

June	
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#1):</b>	<b>Team Leader Hiring Logistics</b>
Why and how?	<p>Determining a schedule for Team Leader hiring, comprising of a rough timeline, dates and deadlines are all important to ensure a smooth process. This is a very large endeavour our service undergoes annually, with us receiving upwards of 200 applications, conducting around 80 interviews, and narrowing it down to a team of 30 individuals, therefore it is absolutely imperative that we plan ahead of time, to prevent stress!</p> <p>Below is our most recent working timeline for our Team Leader hiring process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 13 – Applications Release</li> <li>• June 27 – Written applications close</li> <li>• June 28 – Marking commences for Executives</li> <li>• July 5 – Written application marking deadline</li> <li>• July 6 – Interview offers sent out</li> <li>• July 9 – Interview offer response deadline</li> <li>• July 11 – Interviews commence</li> <li>• July 15 – Interviews conclude</li> <li>• July 16 – Decisions made within Executive Team</li> <li>• July 17 – Offers sent out</li> <li>• July 23 – Deadline to accept offer</li> </ul>
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p><b>1. Scheduling Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As of now, we've had to bump our hiring timeline back by around a week, due to scheduling issues</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is challenging as this causes our interviews to be pushed back, resulting in executives having different commitments and might not be able to be as available as possible</li> <li>• This is challenging to overcome, but planning ahead of time and maintaining open lines of communication with our executives in order to be transparent about their availability is very crucial for us, in order to be able to adapt to changes going on</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Professional Exams and Summer Classes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many members of our executive team are writing their MCAT exams, or taking summer classes, which could limit their availabilities</li> <li>• Therefore, I believe it's very important to take this into consideration, as I wouldn't want to burn them out or stress them out</li> <li>• This can be mitigated through communicating potential deadlines ahead of time, and asking for their input in regards to times during the summer which they require extra support</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Executive Responsiveness and Initiative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When generating written application question, executive input is very important</li> <li>• However, with the number of new and younger executives we have, I foresee them being a bit more reserved and may be hesitant about fully speaking up and contributing their ideas</li> <li>• Therefore I will try to encourage open communication, and create an environment that is warm, supportive and positive, so they feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings</li> <li>• Ill also provide other avenues of contribution, such as private message or email, or even meetings, if they'd rather communicate that way</li> </ul>
Who?	AD, executives, team leader candidates
Priority Level (highlight one)	<p><b>High Priority</b>      Moderate Priority      Low Priority</p>

Service Goal/Project/Event (#2):	Summer Programming		
Why and how?	<p>Summer programming is one of the earliest opportunities for first year students to be aware of Spark. Running 2 different types of webinars will attract students from a variety of faculties who are interested in different things. This will allow them to learn more about opportunities within the McMaster community, and also more about their program of study and future endeavours. Both educational and fun, these webinars are a way through which Spark can increase brand awareness, enticing students from a wide variety of programs. This initiative is planned by our events coordinators, who have decided to have one webinar focusing on McMaster 'Sites and Services', which highlights MSU services and McMaster resources, and another featuring presenters from each faculty.</p>		
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p>Engagement of webinars might be unexpected, which could potentially disappoint the events coordinators, who have worked so hard on planning this initiative. Making sure that they feel supported, and that their hard work is appreciated is very important in mitigating this.</p> <p>Additionally, ensuring their wellbeing is prioritized during this time is important, as coordinators are focusing on First Year Formal and Team Leader hiring. Suggesting delegation, and frequent check ins, will help make sure that the coordinators aren't burnt out.</p>		
Who?	Events coordinators		
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority
Service Goal/Project/Event (#4):	Introducing Monthly Exec 1on1s		
Why and how?	<p>This is a new initiative I would like to pilot this year, where executive members meet with myself on a monthly basis, where they have the opportunity to share any ideas they're</p>		

	having, their successes, and their areas of difficulty. Executives are busy individuals, and the last thing I would want is for them to feel discouraged, unsupported, and alone. Therefore, these check ins both have the chance to foster camaraderie within the team, ensure tasks are completed, and that my team is doing well overall.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	I don't foresee any difficulties with implementing this initiative! Having 15 minute meetings with 10 individuals once a month is fairly feasible for me given my current schedule, and is something I will happily make time for.
Who?	Executives
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority      Moderate Priority <b>Low Priority</b>

July	
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#1):</b>	<b>Team Leader Offers and Onboarding</b>
Why and how?	<p>Once our Team Leader interviews are complete, it is important to select a team that is diverse, and brings different things to the table. This enables us to better support and service the first year population at McMaster. In order for this to happen, interview scores aren't the only metric of evaluation that should be used. Executive team member's input will be taken into consideration, alongside the Team Leader Rep Program, which will enable the highest scoring individual from each faculty to have a spot on our team.</p> <p>After offers have been submitted, onboarding the incoming team leaders is our next task. Many team leaders are new to the service, therefore highlighting its pillars, values and expectations are all important in the transition process. Additionally, establishing the importance of communication within the team, alongside generating other team norms, and conducting training, will all be very important in ensuring that our team leaders feel supported and confident within their roles.</p>

<p>Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Challenges with the Implementation of TL Rep Initiative</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since this is a new initiative we are piloting, there are bound to be challenges with its implementation</li> <li>• Whether that be difficulties in picking the best candidate per faculty, or faculty and program delineations, these are all challenges that are could arise</li> <li>• Thorough communication with the executives, AD, and consultation with the VP Admin for their advice could help us mitigate challenges</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Offer Decisions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In previous years, discussions for deciding candidates were always hours and hours long. There are many exceptional candidates, and only so few we can take, therefore deciding what the team leader team will look like is always a challenging feat</li> <li>• Ensuring that I am considering the opinions of those around me, while also balancing the fact that time is important and decisions must be made in a timely manner, is important in overcoming this challenge</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. Team Leader Training Day Scheduling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding a day in which 30-40 individuals are all available can be challenging</li> <li>• Since we want to plan a training, orientation and social in one event, attendance is imperative, however there could be challenges associated with this</li> <li>• Therefore, planning well in advance and taking into account feedback of busy time periods provided by executives and team leaders are all important</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<p>Who?</p>	<p>AD, executives, team leaders, Maccess (training), DEN (training)</p>
<p>Priority Level (highlight one)</p>	<p><b>High Priority</b>      Moderate Priority      Low Priority</p>

Service Goal/Project/Event (#2):	First Year Formal Logistics
Why and how?	<p>First year formal is an important event for the first year population, hosted jointly by Spark and the FYC. This event targets all first year students, and is a large scale undertaking, therefore successes could result in Spark becoming more well known, and more first years becoming aware of the service's goals and programming. In the month of July, planning venue and bus logistics for formal is essential, as these are the most challenging things to acquire and require communication with external partners. From here, liaising with the FYC is also important to include their sentiments on the event, and to work from there to generate a fun event for all first year students.</p>
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p><b>1. Ticket Sales</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last year, first year formal was unfortunately cancelled due to low ticket sales. Working with this precedent, I can anticipate challenges with ticket sales this year as well.</li> <li>• I plan to curb this by starting promotions early, and holding the formal in October or November, at the latest</li> <li>• Additionally, I plan to promote the event through welcome week, so first year students are made aware of this initiative and can possibly see it as an extension of welcome week</li> <li>• Also, enabling both students in first year to invite friends from other schools to join them could also increase ticket sales, along with fun promotional reels and graphics</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Liaising with First Year Council</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to FYC starting operations later than Spark, liaising with them likely will be a challenge, due to the fact that we'd like to book our event sometime early in the Fall semester</li> <li>• However, to my knowledge, FYC would have been newly hired by that time, which could pose to be challenging</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I plan to have a meeting with the VP admin very soon in order to discuss timing for first year formal and to see what steps we can take to mitigate this</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Timing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We planned to have first year formal in the Fall, however, this challenge goes hand in hand with the difficulties in working with FYC to plan an event by that time</li> <li>This requires further discussion with the VP Admin, outgoing FYC director, and outgoing Spark director for further feedback</li> </ul>
Who?	Events coordinators, FYC, VP Admin, outgoing Spark director
Priority Level (highlight one)	<p><b>High Priority</b>      Moderate Priority      Low Priority</p>
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#3):</b>	<b>Welcome Week Events (NBC, Event with Maroons) Planning</b>
Why and how?	<p>Outreach initiatives during Welcome Week, such as Night Before Classes and Faculty Fair presence, are important to ensure that first years from as many faculties as possible are aware of Spark and its services. A new initiative we would like to implement this year is a collaboration with Maroons, who have a large presence during Welcome Week, in order to broaden Spark's brand awareness in the greater McMaster community.</p>
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p>The Maroons collaboration event, due to it being a new initiative, might be challenging to organize given the rigidity of Welcome Week schedules. This can be overcome by talking to the Maroons Coordinator well in advance, in order to determine feasibility of this collaboration.</p> <p>NBC is traditionally held on labour day, and in previous years, campus buildings are typically locked during these days. Potentially changing the format of the event, or attempting to ascertain ahead of time which buildings are</p>

	open, or even attempting other types of tours on other days might be beneficial in solving this issue.
Who?	Outreach and engagement coordinators, Maroons
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority <b>Moderate Priority</b> Low Priority

August	
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#1):</b>	<b>Fall Sessions Finalized + Materials Purchasing</b>
Why and how?	With Sessions around the corner, finalizing Fall sessions, and ensuring that programming is diverse is very important. Additionally, making sure that feedback is provided to Sessions Coordinators by the other executive members is also integral in ensuring the best quality of sessions possible. Purchasing materials should be done this month as well to account for any potential delays that may occur.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Budgeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining how much money coordinators have available is very important in order for them to be realistic with their goals and expectations</li> <li>• Looking at the budget tracker and allocating funds accordingly is essential, to make sure that we have enough finances for both semesters</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Shipping Delays</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By ordering ahead of time, I hope to curb issues associated with shipping, however these can always happen</li> <li>• Looking into local alternatives for products if this happens is a potential solution as well</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Who?	Sessions Coordinators
Priority Level (highlight one)	<b>High Priority</b> Moderate Priority    Low Priority



Service Goal/Project/Event (#2):	Team Leader Social + Orientation
Why and how?	Now that Team Leaders have been newly appointed, its important to introduce them to the rest of the team, and enable them to begin forming connections with each other. Also, making sure they are aware of all expectations is also important as well, so they feel comfortable and confident within their role. Making this as fun and as engaging as possible will aid in setting the tone for the year and for the service, and will hopefully permeate in the way that team leaders conduct themselves throughout their time with Spark.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	The online format of the social might make it hard for team leaders to really converse and connect with each other, and also may make it challenging for the training to be engaging. Asking the executives for ideas and input, and consulting with the AD through the planning process is integral in viewing the situation in a variety of perspectives, and attempting to make the training as good as it can be.
Who?	Executives, Team Leaders, AD
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority <b>Moderate Priority</b> Low Priority
Service Goal/Project/Event (#3):	Sessions Registration Promotional Plan
Why and how?	Ensuring that as many first year students as possible are aware of Spark's services and programming is important in our mission to support as many students as possible. This goal is supplemented through a promotional plan, which is informative, engaging and creative, showing students the benefits of Spark and what they can find with the service, encouraging registration and sessions attendance.

<p>Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?</p>	<p><b>1. Generation of Promotional Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity is something that is fleeting, therefore there could be a situation where the Promotions Committee, or the Coordinators may be having a hard time coming up with ideas</li> <li>• In order to curb this, I would encourage starting well in advance to have time to brainstorm, and consult others for inspiration</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Timeline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotional materials take time to process through the UG, therefore ensuring that proposals are submitted as early as possible to provide enough time for communication of changes is important!</li> <li>• The UG aids all services, so being cognizant of their timeline and workload as well is important as well:)</li> </ul>
<p>Who?</p>	<p>Promotions and Publications Coordinator, Promotions Committee, UG</p>
<p>Priority Level (highlight one)</p>	<p>High Priority      <b>Moderate Priority</b>      Low Priority</p>
<p><b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#4):</b></p>	<p><b>First Year Formal Promotional Plan</b></p>
<p>Why and how?</p>	<p>Promoting First Year Formal in an effective manner is integral to ensure that as many tickets as possible are sold, and that as many first years as possible are aware of the event. Since this event is meant to serve first years, and help them have fun and meet new people, its important that students who are interested in attending are aware of the event. The Promotions Committee and Promotions and Publications Coordinators generating an effective strategy, alongside the Events Committee, is essential for the success of First Year Formal.</p>
<p>Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?</p>	<p><b>1. Burn Out</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the sheer amount of promotional plans and graphics the Promotions team and coordinators are responsible for, I worry that they might be burnt out,</li> </ul>

	<p>especially after a very busy summer and start to the school year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Therefore, making sure I am checking in with them often to make sure they're doing okay and are feeling supported is integral</li> </ul> <p><b>2. FYC Collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with other services can be challenging due to delays and scheduling</li> <li>• Therefore, communicating with them well in advance is very important to ensure that deadlines are met</li> </ul>
Who?	Promotions and Publications Coordinator, Promotions Committee, UG
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority <b>Moderate Priority</b> Low Priority

## Fall Term

September	
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#1):</b>	<b>First Year Formal Planning</b>
Why and how?	Completing the final details for first year formal and involving the First Year Council in decoration, theme, and other details. This enables us to also receive the opinions of first year students when planning this event, to ensure it reaches as broad an audience as possible, and that students will be more inclined to attend.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p><b>1. FYC Hiring Timeline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FYC operates on a timeline different from Spark, therefore I expect that there will be challenges in regards to our ideal timeline and what is feasible</li> <li>• Therefore, openly communicating with the FYC coordinator and setting new dates around what is possible, and being openminded throughout this process is also very important</li> </ul>

	<p><b>2. Events Coordinator Wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to a very busy summer, and an even busier school year, I don't want the events coordinators to feel burdened or stressed due to formal planning</li> <li>• Therefore, checking in on them often to make sure they're doing well and feel as though their concerns are being heard is something I will ensure to do</li> <li>• Also encouraging them to take breaks if needed to is something I will prioritize as well</li> </ul>
Who?	Events Coordinators, FYC
Priority Level (highlight one)	<b>High Priority</b> Moderate Priority      Low Priority
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#2):</b>	<b>Night Before Classes</b>
Why and how?	Outreach and Engagement's first initiative of the year, NBC is an iconic Spark event that typically receives a lot of interest from incoming students. This year, we hope to continue and grow this event to reach as broad a first year population as possible, to ensure that they are aware of Spark's initiatives and endeavours, encouraging them to join as well.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p>Due to night before classes running at the start of the year, getting help from current and previous team leaders is integral to balance comfort of all volunteers during the event. However, with people still being in different locations, and busy with other life developments, I can foresee challenges with having Team Leaders assist during events.</p> <p>To curb this, releasing sign ups well in advance, and having a shift system, can encourage team leaders to sign up to volunteer at the event.</p>
Who?	Outreach and Engagement Coordinators, Team Leaders
Priority Level (highlight one)	<b>High Priority</b> Moderate Priority      Low Priority

Service Goal/Project/Event (#3):	Fall Sessions Enrollment and Launch		
Why and how?	<p>Considered a core element of Spark’s programming, Sessions enrollment typically launches in September. Ensuring that as many students as interested enroll in Sessions is integral in achieving horizontal growth, and helping first year students feel supported within the McMaster community.</p>		
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Room Bookings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to hour sharing, and availability, rooms for sessions could potentially be hard to book out regularly for a whole semester</li> <li>• Planning session times well in advance, and booking an adequate number of rooms as early as over the summer, can help combat this problem</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Low enrollment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A possible challenge could be low enrollment in sessions</li> <li>• A revamped promotional strategy could help mitigate this problem, make first years more aware of Spark, and encourage them to join the service</li> </ul> </li> </ol>		
Who?	Promotions and Publications Coordinators, AD		
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority
Service Goal/Project/Event (#5):	Launch Spark Stars, and Spark Ambassadors Preparation		
Why and how?	<p>The Spark Stars program, implemented last year to reward Sparklings for attending sessions, is something we’d like to implement this year as well to motivate and engage students in Sessions programming. The Spark Ambassadors Program is for Sparklings who would like to get further involved in Spark, and learn more about the executive roles and responsibilities. These initiatives are very important for</p>		

	generating first year interest in the service, and for cultivating longevity within Spark.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<b>1. Interest from first year students</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A low amount of first year students, or a large amount of first year students interested in the Ambassadors program could make it challenging to facilitate, due to resources and discussions that occur</li> <li>• To curb this, further encouragement of Ambassador sign up can occur within sessions if enrollment is too low</li> <li>• If enrollment is too high, Ambassadors can be split into groups who rotate with different executives</li> </ul>
Who?	Outreach and Engagement Coordinators, Sparklings
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority <b>Moderate Priority</b> Low Priority

October	
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#1):</b>	<b>TL 1on1s with D/AD</b>
Why and how?	A modification to an existing initiative, I hope to retain Spark 1on1s with Team Leaders, and the D/AD. This is important ensure that Team Leaders feel supported in their roles, and that they have the opportunity to share any concerns they may have. This is also a chance for both myself and my AD to get to know volunteers on a personal level, and build connections within the team. New this year, Team Leaders have to attend one 1on1 per semester, and they can select which month of the semester they would like to attend. This eases the burden on us, and enables volunteers to check in when they would like and in a manner that works best with their schedules.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<b>1. Uneven distribution of check ins</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the new system, a potential difficulty could be some months being heavier than others</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This can be controlled through limited spots per month, however I don't see this as too large of a difficulty, and would rather volunteers select their 1on1 at a time that fits best for them</li> <li>• To alleviate the burden on the AD, as the Director, I will meet with some Team Leaders instead of them, so they don't have to meet with upwards of 25 individuals</li> </ul>
Who?	Team Leaders, D/AD
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority <b>Moderate Priority</b> Low Priority
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#2):</b>	<b>First Year Formal Facilitation</b>
Why and how?	Execution of first year formal! This will be a really rewarding experience for all involved with planning, as all their hard work will visibly come to fruition. This event and its execution will also benefit first year students within our community, aiding in the fulfillment of our service's mission.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	As with any event planning initiative, organizing last minute details can prove to be challenging, since things can pop up when you least expect it. Therefore, making sure to communicate with all parties involved, and to encourage Events Coordinators to bring any issues to my attention immediately, can help us navigate these unexpected situations.
Who?	FYC, Events Coordinators
Priority Level (highlight one)	<b>High Priority</b> Moderate Priority    Low Priority
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#3):</b>	<b>Interim D/AD Feedback Form</b>

<p>Why and how?</p>	<p>In order to grow as better leaders, feedback is required from our volunteers. Therefore, releasing a service form in the middle of the semester gives service volunteers the opportunity to give both myself and my AD any feedback. This enables us to read, reflect and grow from these comments, and implement changes in the latter half of the semester</p>
<p>Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?</p>	<p><b>1. Lack of responses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This could be possible, making it challenging for us to obtain feedback and improve</li> <li>• Encouraging volunteers to fill this out during group events such as sessions training can give everyone a designated time to be able to fill the form in, hopefully increasing submissions</li> </ul>
<p>Who?</p>	<p>Team Leaders, Executives, D/AD</p>
<p>Priority Level (highlight one)</p>	<p>High Priority      Moderate Priority      <b>Low Priority</b></p>
<p><b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#4):</b></p>	<p><b>Winter Intramurals Team Formation</b></p>
<p>Why and how?</p>	<p>As a form of volunteer appreciation and bonding, we'd like to bring back our Spark intramural team. Voting for which sport is selected will be released to all volunteers. Interest forms for this initiative will be released, and those interested will be eligible to sign up to join a team, with expenses covered by us! Allows team members to get to know each other in a context outside of programming, building bonds with each other and growing the Spark Family.</p>
<p>Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?</p>	<p><b>1. Too many individuals interested</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With intramural teams having capped numbers, if more than the number of players allowed on a team are interested, this could pose a challenge for registration</li> <li>• In this case, one option would be to consider signing up multiple teams, so all interested can participate, however this depends on the budget available</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If this doesn't work, maybe we could run two teams, one per semester, or have a social event where volunteers can play sports of their choice</li> </ul>
Who?	All volunteers
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority      Moderate Priority <b>Low Priority</b>

November	
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#1):</b>	<b>End of Sessions TL Social</b>
Why and how?	To boost morale of Team Leaders, and to reward them for their efforts this semester, we hope to host a fun Team Leader social. This helps to grow our Spark Family, through the forming of connections and relationships, and enables volunteers to grow more attached and passionate about the service, and treat it as though it were their own. This also can enable volunteers within the service to make new friends, learn and grow from each other.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p><b>1. Scheduling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the large quantity of team leaders, it can be challenging to find a time that works for everyone</li> <li>This can be overcome by planning well in advance, providing us with time to gauge volunteer opinion, and take their ideas and availabilities into consideration before concluding on a time and activity</li> <li>Locating activities on campus or in another proximal location can make it more accessible to more volunteers</li> </ul>
Who?	AD
Priority Level (highlight one)	<b>High Priority</b> Moderate Priority      Low Priority

Service Goal/Project/Event (#2):	Spark Sessions Feedback Forms (for TAs and First Years)
Why and how?	<p>Feedback from first years, the population whom we serve, is integral to ensure that we are covering topics within our programming which they find beneficial and useful. Asking for their opinions on formatting as well, and other programming ideas can help us create engaging programming that would interest them, and encourage them to sign up for Sessions.</p> <p>Team leader feedback is important since they are the individuals who are leading sessions, so their ideas and opinions on topics and formatting can help the Sessions Coordinators make Sessions that are smoother, and that better service the first year population.</p>
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p><b>1. Lack of response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing opportunity to fill in form during sessions, and including it in the weekly emails or messages so students are more likely to submit their thoughts could help us curb potential lack of response</li> </ul>
Who?	Sessions Coordinators, Sparklings, Team Leaders
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority <b>Moderate Priority</b> Low Priority
Service Goal/Project/Event (#3):	Winter Welcome Planning
Why and how?	<p>A new initiative we'd like to run this year, Winter Welcome takes inspiration from the SWHAT Wellbeing Week series of Events that ran last year. Collaborating with other MSU services sometime in January to host a different event a day focused on student wellness, friendship forming, and resources, this series of events would serve as a Winter rendition of Welcome Week! This event series enables us to collaborate with many MSU services and broaden our target audience, while also increasing Spark's brand awareness in</p>

	the greater McMaster community. It also forms and strengthens inter-service relationships, and enables volunteers between services, through collaboration, to form friendships and learn about opportunities they may otherwise not have known about.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p><b>1. Logistical Coordination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working alongside atleast 5 other services can be a lot of liaising and communication, which can be challenging for all involved</li> <li>Therefore planning and communicating well ahead of time, establishing regular meetings and setting expectations and deadlines are all important to ensure clear communication, progress, and minimal stress</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Timing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With January being a busy month after the holidays, and the start of a semester, finding a week that works for all services involved might be challenging</li> <li>However, planning well ahead of time will be useful to ensure that a week where services are available is selected</li> <li>Starting promotions ahead of time can also ensure that students are aware of the events, and will be able to attend</li> </ul>
Who?	Events Coordinators, Events Committee, Other MSU Services, D/AD
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority <b>Moderate Priority</b> Low Priority
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#4):</b>	<b>Fall Closing Ceremonies</b>
Why and how?	A new initiative, this closing ceremonies mimics the one traditionally held in March, where Sparklings who participate in Sessions this semester are celebrated and rewarded for their attendance. This would also be a good opportunity to push Winter sessions registration, and to display to

	Sparklings that they are a part of the Spark Family. This also serves to boost morale amongst the first year students, and the Team Leaders as well, as a reward for their contributions to the service.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<b>1. Spark Stars Requirements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I would like to be able to award Spark Stars to students who have attended this semester, however the current guidelines of Spark Stars is geared towards 2-semester commitment</li> <li>Therefore, changes in the requirements for receiving the award would have to be made to accommodate the implementation of a second closing ceremonies</li> </ul>
Who?	Outreach and Engagement Coordinators, AD
Priority Level (highlight one)	<b>High Priority</b> Moderate Priority      Low Priority

December	
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#1):</b>	<b>Review Winter Sessions + Place Orders for Winter Materials</b>
Why and how?	Akin to Fall Sessions, its best that this is completed prior to the New Year, due to the holiday and delays from Christmas present shipping. Implementing feedback obtained from the Fall prior to finalizing Winter Sessions will allow us to make improvements, and generate sessions that better support the first year population.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<b>1. Challenges with implementing feedback</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a past sessions coordinator, I've come to learn that sometimes, feedback can be hard to implement. However, there is the opinion that one doesn't want to disregard feedback that they've received.</li> <li>In this circumstance, I would help out the Sessions Coordinators by discussing ideas as to how to best consider the feedback, and to determine what next steps we can take</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accepting feedback can be challenging, so I would also make sure to check in on my coordinators to ensure they were well and felt supported</li> </ul>
Who?	Sessions Coordinators, D/AD
Priority Level (highlight one)	<b>High Priority</b> Moderate Priority      Low Priority
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#2):</b>	<b>Winter Sessions Promotions and Outreach Initiatives</b>
Why and how?	Building off of the existing momentum from Fall Sessions, devising a promotional and outreach plan for Winter Sessions registration will be beneficial to ensure retention, and diverse enrollment. Making sure students are aware of Spark and its services will be a key goal through this process.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p><b>1. Burn Out + Lack of Creativity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This would have been the second time that the coordinators are conducting initiatives for sessions registration.</li> <li>This enables them to feel comfortable, but it could also leave them struggling to find new ideas</li> <li>This, coupled with the fact that it is the end of the year, could result in the team feeling exhausted and lacking inspiration</li> <li>Therefore I would have meetings with them to provide suggestions, and make sure to check in on their health and happiness, since that is a priority!</li> <li>I could also set up a meeting with the UG for ideas about campaigns if the team were interested</li> </ul>
Who?	Promotions and Publications Coordinator, Promotions Committee, Outreach and Engagement Coordinators, Outreach Committee
Priority Level (highlight one)	<b>High Priority</b> Moderate Priority      Low Priority

<p><b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#3):</b></p>	<p><b>Holiday Warm Fuzzies for Team Leaders, Executives and Sparklings</b></p>		
<p>Why and how?</p>	<p>A new initiative, Holiday Warm Fuzzies are small holiday notes written for the Sparklings, Team Leaders, and Executives. This is to further grow the bond between all individuals involved in Spark, whether its first years, or upper year volunteers. This is also generally an initiative that I think would be sweet, and would make the days of those who receive notes. Team Leaders would write fuzzies for their Sparklings, Executives would be assigned Team Leaders to write Warm Fuzzies to, and both myself and the D/AD would write Warm Fuzzies for the executives and each other.</p>		
<p>Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?</p>	<p><b>1. End of Year Busyness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With exams and assignments, many volunteers will likely be busy and may not have time to contribute to the writing of Fuzzies.</li> <li>• To combat this difficulty, I would launch the initiative early on in the semester, and would set the due date for the fuzzies to be after exam period, so if need be, volunteers have extra time after their assignments and exams to write their notes</li> </ul>		
<p>Who?</p>	<p>The full team!</p>		
<p>Priority Level (highlight one)</p>	<p>High Priority</p>	<p>Moderate Priority</p>	<p><b>Low Priority</b></p>
<p><b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#4):</b></p>	<p><b>Interim Budget Evaluation</b></p>		
<p>Why and how?</p>	<p>To ensure that we have enough money available for initiatives in the Winter semester, an interim budget evaluation is necessary. After this evaluation, I would determine how much money each co-ship has for their remaining initiatives, and would host meetings to discuss feasibility of Winter plans based on remaining finances, and what our next steps will be. This ensures that we are</p>		

	prioritizing initiatives that will benefit the broader first year population, and serve to better support them.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p><b>1. Lack of financial resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There could very likely be a situation where a co-ship may not have enough money available to complete an initiative, or more than one initiative</li> <li>• This would require a discussion about where to allocate the remaining finances to best meet their goals and their plans</li> <li>• However, if money would have to be moved from other budget lines, I would request a meeting with the VP Finance to see what is possible, and would proceed from there, ensuring to be transparent in conversation and supportive of my team throughout the process</li> </ul>
Who?	Executives, VP Finance
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority <b>Moderate Priority</b> Low Priority
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#5):</b>	<b>Executive Social (with Secret Snowman[?])</b>
Why and how?	To celebrate the end of the year, and to reward the executives for their hard work, we would like to have a small social! This could be anything from a dinner, to a movie, to playing in the snow; my AD and I wanted to take the opportunity to spend some time with our executive team, and continue strengthening our existing bonds prior to the start of the Winter term. We also hope to potentially host a Secret Snowman gift exchange, if the team is willing.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p><b>1. Exams and Assignments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We do acknowledge that December is generally a busy time for people, so our executives may not be as available as we foresee to attend a social</li> <li>• However, we will try our best to make them aware of this well ahead of time, and ask for their input and availability prior to making any decisions</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the end of the day, though, if it turns out that our executive team isn't free, we can convert this to a virtual social over the Winter break, to better accommodate schedules</li> </ul>
Who?	Executives, AD
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority <b>Moderate Priority</b> Low Priority

## Winter Term

January	
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#1):</b>	<b>Winter Welcome Event Series</b>
Why and how?	Execution of our new initiative with the other MSU services, to foster bonding and a 'Welcome Week'-eque environment at the start of the Winter semester. Enables more students to find out about Spark, opportunities, and programming, and in advance of Winter sessions registration, is a great opportunity to promote Spark Sessions.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	Having to help facilitate a 5 day long series of events can be tiring on the events and outreach and engagement coordinators, so ensuring that I am regularly checking in on them (and the other services involved) to ensure that they are feeling well and doing well is paramount.
Who?	Events Coordinators, Outreach and Engagement Coordinators, Other MSU Services, D/AD
Priority Level (highlight one)	<b>High Priority</b> Moderate Priority      Low Priority
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#2):</b>	<b>TL Revival Training</b>



<p>Why and how?</p>	<p>Occurs at the beginning of Winter Sessions, and serves to remind Team Leaders of their expectations and responsibilities, and obtain and review any feedback from the previous semester. Also, this semester serves to reveal the new Team Leader pairings, and sessions times. Finally, a lovely bonding opportunity for Team Leaders to reunite after a few weeks of not seeing each other, further allowing our Spark Family to flourish.</p>
<p>Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?</p>	<p>I don't foresee many difficulties with this project, given the fact that Team Leaders have gone through training once before and have already been in their roles for a semester. However, if there are some executives who are newly Team Leading this semester, onboarding them could be challenging. I plan to curb this by reaching out well in advance to accommodate for this, and to make sure they feel comfortable during their transition into the Team Leader role.</p> <p>Additionally coordinating schedules at the start of a busy school year could be challenging. Communicating available dates well in advance, and potentially holding multiple training days could help to accommodate for fluctuating schedules.</p>
<p>Who?</p>	<p>Team Leaders, AD</p>
<p>Priority Level (highlight one)</p>	<p><b>High Priority</b>      Moderate Priority      Low Priority</p>
<p><b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#3):</b></p>	<p><b>Relaunch Spark Ambassadors and Spark Stars</b></p>
<p>Why and how?</p>	<p>Similar to the Fall semester, Spark Ambassadors and Spark Stars run in the Winter semester as well. These initiatives will continue to grow first year engagement and passion for Spark and its programming, leading to the cultivation and nurturing of future leaders in our McMaster community.</p>

<p>Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?</p>	<p><b>1. Making ambassadors programming engaging and new to Sparklings who have already participating, while also accounting for new Sparklings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A hazard that comes with different session programming per semester, is that many other aspects of the service do not change that drastically across semesters, such as the Spark Ambassadors initiative (as it is designed currently)</li> <li>• Therefore, if a student has participated in the Fall, there may be similarities with the programming in the Winter, potentially lowering engagement</li> <li>• Thus it is important to generate programming that is new and diverse for the Winter semester, to entice returning Sparklings</li> <li>• However, it is important to acknowledge that there would be some new Sparklings who would appreciate the foundational knowledge that the first semester provides, therefore discussing further with the Outreach and Engagement Coordinators as to how to best create and deliver programming to account for this is key</li> <li>• Some ideas include: two groups of Ambassadors (new and returning), and a mix of new and old programming</li> </ul>
<p>Who?</p>	<p>Outreach and Engagement Coordinators, D/AD</p>
<p>Priority Level (highlight one)</p>	<p>High Priority      <b>Moderate Priority</b>      Low Priority</p>

<p><b>February</b></p>	
<p><b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#1):</b></p>	<p><b>Team Leader Social</b></p>
<p>Why and how?</p>	<p>In the middle of the semester, Team Leaders may be feeling tired or overwhelmed with their academics and/or other commitments. Therefore, to brighten the mood, we hope to host another Team Leader Social. This helps to further grow camaraderie amongst the team, and to allow them to</p>

	opportunity to engage in fun activities while learning more about one another.		
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<b>1. Availability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Akin to other socials we've mentioned, finding a time during a busy school year where as many individuals as possible are able to attend a social is challenging</li> <li>• However by providing ample notice and taking Team Leader perspective into consideration, we can hope to find a time that works best for as many people as possible</li> <li>• Additionally, hosting multiple socials a semester enables greater opportunity for Team Leaders to be able to attend at least one!</li> </ul>		
Who?	AD		
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#2):</b>	<b>Exec Social</b>		
Why and how?	Similar to Team Leader socials, exec socials give executives the opportunity to come together and bond about topics and through activities that are not related to their Spark responsibilities. This ameliorates our overall team dynamic, something that will be crucial as the year begins to wrap up. Additionally, if we are unable to host our social in December, this would be a great opportunity to have a team gathering.		
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<b>1. Scheduling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the wide array of programs within our executive team, some individuals may be busier than others at this time of year, resulting in them being unable to attend the social</li> <li>• To accommodate this, we could maybe combine an executive meeting with a social, as all team members are available during that time, or we could run the social right after if executive members are available</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This ensures that as many members as possible are able to attend!</li> </ul>
Who?	Executives
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority <b>Moderate Priority</b> Low Priority
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#3):</b>	<b>Final Publication + Publication Anthology</b>
Why and how?	<p>With one a semester on average, the Promotions and Publications Coordinators are responsible for generating publications based on topics that first years would find useful. These are typically informative! Publications enable us to support first years in an asynchronous and remote format, and allow us to reach and support a wider body of the first year population, serving our service goals. This year, we hope to have more than one publication a semester if possible, due to the implementation of the Promotions Committee, however this is entirely dependent on the wellbeing, thoughts and workload of the Committee and Coordinators. The publication anthology is an initiative we hope to implement this year, which is a collection of all publications published this year, along with older ones from our service's history. This serves as an all encompassing resource for students to use for many years to come!</p>
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Publication Platform</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In previous years, we have attempted physical copies of publications, however we find that they are costly</li> <li>Therefore, we will likely stick to Instagram, or a magazine based site</li> <li>This also enables us to promote the publication in a variety of digital means, such as featuring it on our website.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Promotions Coordinators and Committee Burnout</b></li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publications are extensive tasks, and with all the other responsibilities the committee has, I would ensure that they are doing well and aren't taking on more than they can handle, since I wouldn't want them to be stressed or burnt out!</li> <li>• I would ask if they'd like to pursue the anthology project, and if they find that they're too occupied, I would see if other committees would be interested or available to help, and if that was proving ineffective, then I would shelve it for a future year</li> </ul>
Who?	Promotions and Publications Coordinators, Promotions Committee
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority <b>Moderate Priority</b> Low Priority

March	
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#1):</b>	<b>Winter Closing Ceremonies</b>
Why and how?	Similar to the Fall Closing Ceremonies, the Winter Closing Ceremonies would honour students from the Winter semester of Spark Programming. Spark Stars based on its updated requirements would also be awarded at this event, alongside Team Leader superlatives. The only difference would be the awarding of the Spark Scholarship, for whom eligible candidates from the Fall who have applied would be invited to attend. This marks the completion of Sessions for the year, and serves as an opportunity to thank all those that contributed and were involved in Spark this year, and to introduce the new PTMs for the incoming year.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<b>1. Awarding of the Spark Scholarship</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With so many exceptional candidates, this can be a hard decision for our Outreach and Engagement Coordinators</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Therefore, providing them with support, and offering to be available for any suggestions and discussions as the Director would be my way in helping them handle this difficulty</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Times</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While ample notice will be provided, due to the large amount of people who are attending the closing ceremony, there will be challenges in attendance</li> <li>• This could result in the Outreach and Engagement Coordinators having to set up other times to pick up their awards!</li> </ul>
Who?	Outreach and Engagement Coordinators, D/AD
Priority Level (highlight one)	<p><b>High Priority</b>      Moderate Priority      Low Priority</p>
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#2):</b>	<b>Organize and Order Spark Yearbook</b>
Why and how?	<p>An initiative that has been suggested in recent years but never fully implemented, this year we would like to bring back the Spark Yearbook. This contains photos from the whole year of Spark programming, and would be provided to Team Leaders in a print format. If these arrive by closing ceremonies, Team Leaders are able to get their peers to sign their Yearbooks. This serves as a nice keepsake for Team Leaders, and helps to leave a lasting memory of their experiences with the service, and its interconnected nature. It also serves as a thank you gift to them, for their commitment through the year!</p>
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p><b>1. Cost of printing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colour printing can be pricey, and printing upwards of 30 yearbooks may not be financially feasible</li> <li>• By budgeting for these well in advance, we can potentially reach out the UG and allocate a certain portion of the budget for this initiative based on the quotes received.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>2. Promotions Tasks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given how busy the Promotions and Publications Coordinators would be at this time of year, I would ensure to remind them to start working on this initiative throughout the year, so they don't have to struggle at the end of the year to create the Yearbook</li> <li>I would also have check ins with them to evaluate progress, and also how they were feeling with the workload, to manage accordingly</li> </ul>
Who?	Promotions and Publications Coordinators, Promotions Committee
Priority Level (highlight one)	<b>High Priority</b> Moderate Priority      Low Priority
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#3):</b>	<b>Final TL Social</b>
Why and how?	To celebrate the year and all the achievements and contributions of the Team Leaders, this serves as one final social. Ideally, we hope that the whole team is able to attend this social! This gives us the opportunity to wholeheartedly thank them for making our team what it is, and to inform them of upcoming opportunities, such as executive positions for the upcoming year.
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p><b>1. Scheduling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Like all other socials, given the large number of people on our team, it may be challenging to find a time that works with everyone</li> <li>However, with advanced scheduling, and a potential remote option as well, we will try our best to ensure that as many individuals as possible are able to attend our final social of the year</li> </ul>
Who?	D/AD, Full Team!

Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority
<b>Service Goal/Project/Event (#4):</b>	<b>Winter Sessions Feedback Form</b>		
Why and how?	Obtaining feedback from both Sparklings and Team Leaders is essential to help our service grow, our programming to improve, and for us to better be able to service the broader first year population. Through a feedback form, Sparklings and Team Leaders will be able to express what they liked and didn't like from sessions, and room for improvement. This will be collated in a document, and provided to future PTMs and Sessions Coordinators.		
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<b>1. Low response rate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging students and Team Leaders to fill out the feedback form is important to curb this</li> <li>This can be done through messaging or emailing the form out within sessions groups and within the Team Leader chat.</li> <li>Additionally, providing Sparklings the opportunity to fill this out during Sessions, and Team Leaders the opportunity to do so during the final sessions training could also help in this regard</li> <li>Also, including the form in the slides for the closing ceremonies could also allow people to fill it out, curbing the low response rate otherwise</li> </ul>		
Who?	D/AD, Sessions Coordinators		
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority

**April**



Service Goal/Project/Event (#1):	Final Exec Social		
Why and how?	An opportunity for both myself and my AD to thank our amazing executive team for all their hard work this past year! Gives us a chance to also highlight positions for next year, and overall celebrate our friendship and group growth over the past year. We will also, if finances permit, provide small gift cards to the executive team, as a token of our appreciation.		
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	Aside from scheduling, I do not foresee many challenges with this project.		
Who?	D/AD, executives		
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority
Service Goal/Project/Event (#2):	D/AD Feedback Form		
Why and how?	In order to reflect on our leadership throughout the past year, and to provide areas of note to future PTMs, we would like to send out one final feedback form. We hope this gives the chance for service volunteers to share their experiences, providing us with insight about the service, and ourselves.		
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	N/A		
Who?	D/AD		
Priority Level (highlight one)	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority

Service Goal/Project/Event (#3):	Executive Hiring with Incoming PTMs + Transitioning		
Why and how?	<p>As a newly minted PTM writing this Year Plan, I am experiencing first hand the challenges of stepping into a new role. Therefore, my AD and I would like to dedicate time in April to assisting the incoming PTMs with their transition. Through meetings, and making ourselves available for questions, we hope to better support their transition and ease any doubts and worries they may have. Additionally, when moving into executive hiring, we aim to be available to assist with reviewing applications, and myself, as the outgoing Director, to sit in on interviews and provide my insights. All in all, we hope to pass down the support and love we have received from past PTMs to help our successors feel supported within their roles, enabling them to foster a similar environment within their team next year.</p>		
Potential difficulties? How can you overcome them?	<p><b>1. Exam Season</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With exams overlapping with this transition period, and with both myself and my AD graduating at and around time, there will likely be a lot of scheduling conflicts</li> <li>• To curb this, we will encourage messaging or email amongst the four of us, to ensure that questions are answered, and that the incoming PTMs still feel supported in their roles</li> <li>• Additionally, we will hopefully create a group chat, so any one of the two of us can answer questions being addressed, for a faster response</li> </ul>		
Who?	D/AD, incoming D/AD		
Priority Level (highlight one)	<b>High Priority</b>	Moderate Priority	Low Priority

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## Increasing Spark's Presence

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This year I hope to see horizontal growth within Spark by increasing awareness of the student population about the service. I hope to build off of the service momentum created from last year, which was our first fully in-person year of Spark programming since the COVID-19 pandemic, and utilize the resources listed below to increase the presence of Spark within the McMaster community. Ultimately, as a result of this heightened service presence, we aim to see increased team leader applications, sessions registration, and events attendance from students across all faculties and programs.

### Service Webpage

The service webpage was updated last year with information regarding new outreach initiatives within Spark, such as the Spark Scholarship and Spark Stars program. This year, I hope to once again update the service's MSU page by including information about the committees that team leaders have the opportunity to join when involved in the service. This will allow team leaders to understand and be aware of the various learning opportunities and exposure to executive roles available to them when a part of the service, and may encourage future Sparklings to become more immersed in the service in the future.

Additionally, I hope to implement a running open feedback form accessible from the service webpage where Spark volunteers and users can provide ideas for various initiatives that they would like to see from the service, ask questions, or express concerns. These questions can be answered through email responses from myself or the AD, or through a potential social media series.

I am also interested in adding a section to include FAQ about the service, as well as graphics to make the webpage more bright and fun, if I would be permitted to do so. Finally, I think that including images from Spark Sessions may provide site visitors with an idea of what our service does and show and encourage engagement.

I hope to liaise with other services, and the MSU Marketing Team in order to obtain further ideas for our service's webpage, and to determine the extent to which our ideas can be implemented.

### Social Media

A large part of Spark's promotions is done through social media, more specifically through Instagram. Last year, we noticed successes through the reel format of promotions on the Instagram account. Thus, I hope to increase the frequency and vary the nature of our posted reels in order to increase awareness of the service and engagement from not only first year students but the entire McMaster community. In order to make this possible, upon consultation with the Promotions and Publications

Coordinators, I have decided to implement a Promotions Committee of Team Leaders. This committee will be facilitated by the Promotions and Publications executives, and will be made up of Team Leaders who are interested in and available to help with the creation of a variety of promotional materials throughout the year, such as reels, posts, and publications.

In order to increase our service's presence and engagement in the virtual space, it is important to ensure that Spark's promotional materials are not only professional but also personable. I believe that the implementation of the Promotions Committee will allow us to generate content that allows first years and the broader McMaster community to associate individuals with our service, giving it a human feel. This will allow students to 'put a face to the name' per se, and will hopefully make our service feel more approachable to individuals who may be less familiar with it. As a service tailed to mentorship and working with others, I find this aspect of our promotional plan to be the most integral, as showing who we are as a service will likely encourage students to discover more about themselves alongside us. The Promotions Committee brings a diverse team of individuals together to create unique content, increasing the applicability and relatable aspect of our content, appealing to a larger audience.

A new initiative that has been discussed in previous years is the implementation of TikTok. Due to the success found in our reels, we believe that there may be some merit in this platform. However, when considering factors such as the time required to amass a following, and the challenges associated with finding McMaster students, our target audience, on the platform, this is an idea that may be adapted or reconsidered. A potential alternative to TikTok would be to publish TikTok-style content on our Instagram through the reels feature to promote our initiatives, however the limitations of this will be discussed with Wooder and the MSU team.

Spark has also created a Discord server in previous years to provide a space for first-year students to connect with one another, ask questions, and learn more about Spark and its programming. However, the Discord server has previously had little to no activity throughout the year. This year, I hope to revamp the Discord server through increased online initiatives, improving accessibility of our service in light of the move to in person initiatives, as well as encouraging first year students to ask questions, and promoting discussion within various channels of the Discord. I also hope to discuss potential ideas for the Discord server, along with the other social media platforms, with the executive team and the team leaders, along with Wooder and the MSU team.

## **Merchandise & Apparel**

I plan to purchase sweaters (crewnecks, quarter zips, or hoodies) at the start of the year for all executives and volunteers. We also hope to purchase t-shirts for team leaders over the course of the summer. Both the T-shirts and crewnecks are intended to be used for service volunteers to wear during service related activities, in order to increase brand awareness and recognition of the service, and promote it to the

McMaster population. Additionally, I will ask volunteers to wear Spark merchandise when attending events or other large-scale events so that first year students are aware of who they can approach that is associated with the service. I also hope that team leaders who receive T-shirts during the summer months may be able to wear them during Welcome Week if they are at all involved, to help promote our service to first years and increase the service's on-campus presence. In order to further increase our service on-campus presence during Welcome Week, I am currently in the process of determining other merchandise that could be distributed and worn during Welcome Week. An example of such merchandise could include bucket hats. Further discussions with the Outreach and Engagement executives, who are responsible for Spark's Welcome Week initiatives, will be had to determine the best course of action in terms of merchandise and apparel.

## **Physical Promotions**

I plan to make use of multiple physical promotional pieces this year, including Rave cards, MSU TV advertisements, lanyards, and posters. Rave cards and advertisements on MSU TVs will be used to promote sessions registration at events such as ClubsFest or our Winter Welcome event. The MSU TV advertisements in particular can be used to share the UG generated graphics for our events and other initiatives throughout the year.

Lanyards will be distributed to all team leaders and executives at the beginning of the year, acting as a form of volunteer appreciation, and a means through which to increase awareness of the service across campus. I also hope to put up posters across campus to promote First Year Formal and sessions registration, as these are two of our large-scale initiatives over the course of the year. Posters can include a QR code and can be placed in locations across campus that first year students commonly visit, such as residence buildings, lecture halls, or MUSC. The QR code will direct first-year students to the sessions registration page, or First Year Formal tickets booking site, so that they can easily access the information required to partake in Spark events.

As someone who isn't very knowledgeable about physical promotions, I hope to have a meeting with Wooder and the team sometime soon to discuss effective options for our service!

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## **Team Management**

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As Director, I believe that a large part of my role is to establish an environment in which Executives and Team Leaders feel comfortable, confident and supported. In order for them to be able to not only perform their tasks, but to have the strength and take the initiative to brainstorm and implement new ideas, and to genuinely enjoy their

time within the role and find fulfillment and happiness through it, it is my responsibility to make sure, as a leader, to foster and encourage an atmosphere where volunteers feel loved, safe(r), and welcomed. Where they feel as though they belong, and that they are as much of what makes Spark what it is as the rest of us are. Through the implementation of the following initiatives, I believe that such a mindset can permeate through both my executive team, and my Team Leaders, resulting in an overall environment conducive towards growth and enjoyment.

## **Executive Management**

### **1on1s and Wellbeing**

A new initiative I would like to implement this year is monthly executive 1on1 meetings with myself. I believe this provides executives with an opportunity to express their opinions in a private environment without fear of reproach. It also enables them to express their progress, ideas, happy thoughts and challenges, so we can, as a team, work towards solutions. Executive members have a lot of responsibility within Spark, and are responsible for a plethora of initiatives. I believe 1on1 check ins allows members to feel as though they aren't alone in their roles, and that they are supported not only by myself but by the entire team.

Through 1on1s, I also hope to promote happiness and wellbeing amongst our team. By asking how executives are doing, whether their workloads are manageable or if they would benefit from support or reallocation, we can work towards cultivating an environment where team members understand the importance of prioritizing themselves and their overall wellness, and that they will reproduce this environment within the volunteers and Sparklings they interact with as well.

### **Feedback and Communication**

Something I personally value a lot is open and transparent communication. I believe that encouraging communication amongst our team, and leaving many avenues to do so, such as in person, through meetings, or through a text, will allow for members to feel comfortable expressing their thoughts. Diverse people harbour diverse ideas and diverse perspectives, which is an asset in a service like Spark that serves a diverse body of individuals. Therefore, by encouraging the sharing of such ideas, our service and the quality of our team will only improve, enabling us to better service the first year population.

Additionally, clear and open communication allows for the clear establishment of expectations, something that is integral in a team setting. It also enables those expectations to be contributed to and adapted according to a team, increasing their representativeness.

Through these open channels of communication, I aim to emphasize the importance of providing and receiving feedback, and how the implementation of feedback can greatly benefit our service. By using feedback forms, and asking during meetings for ideas and

opinions from executives, as a leader I can learn of mine and the service's areas of strength and growth, and plan accordingly.

### **Weekly Meetings**

Through weekly meetings, executive members can stay up to date on the happenings of Spark, and provide their feedback on initiatives and express their ideas. These meetings also serve as an opportunity for team members to get to know one another, and strengthen bonds. They also aid in the speedy relaying of information.

### **Emphasis on Creativity**

As a leader, I genuinely enjoy it when the individuals I work with are creative, expressing themselves and implementing new ideas that give them joy which they are passionate about. I hope to foster a similar environment within our team through the open communication I mentioned above.

### **Encouraging Leadership**

With the establishment of committees for each co-ship, executives now have the opportunity to lead teams in order to accomplish their shared goals. I believe this will foster further immersing and interest in Spark from both the executives and Team Leaders, allowing for diverse and creative programming and initiatives, and paving a path for service longevity.

I also believe the role of a leader is to provide leadership opportunities to others, so they too have the chance to become a leader, and to grow as an individual, something I hope to accomplish within the executive team through the committee system.

### **Socials and Appreciation Gifts**

By running multiple socials a semester, and by taking advantage of weekly meetings to insert bonding activities and other fun elements, I hope our executive team is able to get to know each other and foster lasting connections. Additionally, through appreciation gifts such as gift cards, and potentially Yeti water bottles (our team has expressed interest in this, I am unsure if it is feasible but we shall see), myself and my AD can physically show our team that we appreciate their contributions, and are there to support them and sustain them throughout their journeys both within and outside of their service, akin to a water bottle.

## **Volunteer Management**

### **Committees**

I would like to emphasize the committee system this year, and to highly highly encourage Team Leaders to join a committee. Previously, I have noticed that Team Leaders may have a hard time getting to know executives and each other, due to limited

available opportunities for interaction. Therefore, through the committees, I hope that Team Leaders will be able to grow closer to one another, be able to learn and grow from each other, and will be able to work alongside an executive member that they can rely on for support. It also gives them the opportunity to learn more about Spark and grow more immersed and passionate about its programming, enabling future involvement in the service, either as an executive or a PTM.

### **Socials (Large and Intra-Committee)**

Building upon the lack of opportunities for Team Leaders to interact with both each other and executive members, myself and my AD hope to increase the variety and frequency of Team Leader socials. Through large Team Leader socials, volunteers can realize and feel their importance in the Spark Family, make new friends and connections, and try things they maybe haven't before. It also gives them the opportunity to feel appreciated, and that they matter to Spark and the service, which is very true.

Through Intra-Committee bonding events, Team Leaders can get to better know the committee members and executives whom they work alongside, enabling better teamwork, and idea generation and implementation! It also allows those who are maybe a little more shy to get to know a smaller group of individuals prior to moving to a larger social! A new initiative, I believe these will really allow for Team Leaders to meet and grow connected to more individuals within the service.

### **Intramurals**

A Spark tradition, something I hope to continue this year is Spark Team Leader Intramurals. This gives Team Leaders the opportunity to interact in a setting outside of the service; by playing a fun sport! It enables bonding, teamwork, and is all in all a fun activity that better contributes to the wellness of those involved. I think this is a lovely way to build team positivity, and to enable service volunteers to grow closer.

### **1on1s**

Akin to the executive check ins, I hope to run 1on1s with Team Leaders alongside my AD. We hope to host a minimum of one of these per semester, with slots being open monthly, so Team Leaders can pick which month(s) to sign up for. We believe these chats provide us an opportunity to get to meet each Team Leader one on one, and really get to know them and their goals for their time in Spark, in order to better facilitate their achievement of them. Team Leaders enable Sparklings to grow and prosper, and we hope that Spark as a service enables Team Leaders to also experience the same developments, therefore through this initiative, we hope to be able to work towards achieving that.

Additionally, this also gives us the chance to see how they're doing, how their transition has been like alongside their Team Leader experience, and whether they'd require any



other support. It also enables Team Leaders to get to know us better, because as D and AD, they don't have as many chances to interact with us. As a leader, I genuinely enjoy the opportunity to get to know those I work alongside, and through this initiative I believe those connections can be formed between ourselves as PTMs, and our volunteers.

### **Feedback and Communication**

Emphasizing open communication through established platforms and mediums is something we hope to foster within our volunteer team, so they know that at any point in time, they can share ideas with us, or bring up any feedback they may have. Our goal of horizontal growth is ineffective if we are not receiving opinions from the myriad of individuals who are on our team, therefore we would like to actively emphasize the importance of communicating and sharing ideas and opinions, in order for our service to flourish.

Cementing expectations of timely and clear communication amongst the team provides a clear guideline for volunteers of what they are expected to uphold, and what they can expect us, as D and AD to uphold to them as well. It also enables their concerns and queries to be answered in a timely fashion, and for actionable steps to be taken. This also allows us to be aware of what is going on with the volunteers, and for them to know what is going on in the service, enabling them to feel that they are valued and that they are aware of the goings on in Spark.

### **Belonging and Appreciation Initiatives**

Making Team Leaders feel appreciated and as though they are a valuable part of Spark and that they belong here is absolutely essential. The job of the Team Leader is not an easy one; to put yourself out there and guide first years, and to be there to support their needs is challenging, especially when one is juggling their own life and obligations. Therefore, showing Team Leaders that they are appreciated, and that without them our service wouldn't be what it is today is absolutely integral. Even more so when Team Leaders may not be receiving Sparklings, a disheartening feeling, it is important to reinforce the fact that that is in no way a representation of the Team Leader, and that they are still an important part of our team regardless.

Providing appreciation gifts such as merchandise is a way in which we can physically show Team Leaders that they matter and that they're an essential part of the foundation of our service. This serves as memorabilia as well, to remind them of their positive memories throughout the year, and that they have a piece of their Spark Family, one they are a valuable part of, that they carry with them forever.

## Master Timeline

Month	Tasks
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiring of executive team members</li> <li>• Host a service booth at May@Mac</li> <li>• Onboarding of executives: 2on1s, personal goals, and year plans</li> <li>• Host Spark executive retreat</li> <li>• Hold weekly executive meetings</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold weekly executive meetings</li> <li>• Determine logistics of team leader hiring</li> <li>• Release and mark written team leader applications</li> <li>• Plan summer programming webinars in collaboration with welcome week coordinators and other MSU services</li> <li>• Host monthly 1on1s with executives</li> <li>• Begin planning for First Year Formal (reach out to FYC, venues, bussing companies)</li> <li>• Begin planning for summer programming (webinars: Sites &amp; Services, Faculty-Specific)</li> <li>• Develop promotion and outreach strategy for team leader hiring (e.g. create graphic, Instagram reels, reach out to Welcome Week Coordinators)</li> <li>• Manage social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook)</li> <li>• Brainstorm Spark Sessions themes and finalize themes for fall sessions.</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold weekly executive meetings</li> <li>• Host monthly 1on1s with executives</li> <li>• Conduct team leader interviews</li> <li>• Release team leader offers and onboard hired team leaders</li> <li>• Determine first year formal logistics (confirm bussing, venue)</li> <li>• Plan welcome week events (Night Before Classes, collaborative event with the Maroons)</li> <li>• Host first summer programming webinar (Faculty webinars)</li> <li>• Begin planning of the Spark Ambassadors program</li> <li>• Attend Brazen to speak with first year students about Spark</li> <li>• Post executive intros on Spark instagram account.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop fall sessions 1-5 and collect feedback from executives.</li> <li>• Finalize themes for winter sessions.</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold weekly executive meetings</li> <li>• Host monthly 1on1s with executives</li> <li>• Finalize fall sessions and purchase sessions materials</li> <li>• Host team leader social and orientation</li> <li>• Develop First Year Formal promotional plan</li> <li>• Do room booking for fall sessions</li> <li>• Planning for Goose Chase (scavenger hunt) event</li> <li>• Finalize details of Spark Ambassadors program</li> <li>• Plan Night Before Classes event</li> <li>• Maroons Collab Event</li> <li>• Host booths at Faculty Fests throughout welcome week</li> <li>• Host Welcome Week giveaway to increase engagement and gather contact information of interested first-year students.</li> <li>• Plan and host welcome week booths with team leader volunteers present throughout welcome week.</li> <li>• Increase Spark's on campus presence throughout welcome week by having team leaders present on campus in Spark merchandise.</li> <li>• Develop promotional materials for fall sessions registration</li> <li>• Connect with Welcome Week coordinators from various faculties to promote fall sessions registration to first-year students.</li> <li>• Develop fall sessions 6-8, finalize required materials.</li> <li>• Select and finalize sessions training days for the fall semester.</li> <li>• Begin creation of sessions graphics</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold weekly executive meetings</li> <li>• Host monthly 1on1s with executives</li> <li>• Continue planning of First Year Formal</li> <li>• Host the Night Before Classes event</li> <li>• Host fall sessions enrollment and launch fall sessions</li> <li>• Host team leader training and create team leader pairings for sessions</li> <li>• Launch feedback form to collect feedback from team leaders, executives, and sparklings on team leader training</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue planning for winter sessions, including collaborations with other MSU services.</li> <li>• Launch Spark Stars</li> <li>• Prepare for the Spark Ambassadors program</li> <li>• Create sparkling sessions attendance tracker</li> <li>• Develop this year's sponsorship list for programs such as Spark Stars and exam care packages.</li> <li>• Host the Goose Chase (scavenger hunt) event for first years to meet, talk, and learn about different locations on campus.</li> <li>• Launch First Year Formal ticket sales</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold weekly executive meetings</li> <li>• Host monthly 1on1s with executives</li> <li>• Host team leader 1on1s with the director and assistant director</li> <li>• Host First Year Formal</li> <li>• Launch a director and assistant director feedback form</li> <li>• Form Winter Intramural team</li> <li>• Finalize logistics of the Spark Ambassadors program</li> <li>• Continue planning of Spark's sponsorship package</li> <li>• Attend the Meet the Services fair</li> <li>• Promote the Spark Stars initiative to first-year students</li> <li>• Take team leader photos</li> <li>• Run the Normalizing Failure campaign</li> <li>• Hold weekly sessions and sessions training</li> <li>• Complete planning for winter sessions 1-4 and update materials list</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold weekly executive meetings</li> <li>• Host monthly 1on1s with executives</li> <li>• Host end-of-sessions team leader social</li> <li>• Release Spark sessions feedback forms for both team leaders and first years</li> <li>• Plan Winter Welcome event</li> <li>• Hold weekly sessions and sessions training</li> <li>• Receive and implement feedback on winter sessions 1-4</li> <li>• Complete planning of winter sessions 5-8 and update materials list.</li> <li>• Meet with Spark Ambassadors to create winter session</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect formal feedback from team leaders and Sparklings about sessions and sessions training.</li> <li>• Host Hike &amp; Hangout event</li> <li>• Reach out to sponsors for future initiatives (such as winter exam care packages)</li> <li>• Spark Ambassador program begins</li> <li>• Release first publication (current ideas include lost &amp; found, good electives)</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold weekly executive meetings</li> <li>• Hold monthly 1on1s with executives</li> <li>• Conduct interim budget evaluation</li> <li>• Host team leader social</li> <li>• Review all winter sessions and place orders for winter sessions materials.</li> <li>• Initiate promotions and outreach for winter sessions</li> <li>• Release holiday warm fuzzies for team leaders and Sparklings</li> <li>• Distribute exam care packages with spark Ambassadors and team leaders</li> <li>• Reach out to Sparklings to update them on their Spark Stars and Spark Scholarship progress</li> <li>• Release promotions for the Spark Scholarship</li> </ul>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold weekly executive meetings</li> <li>• Host monthly 1on1s with executives</li> <li>• Host team leader revival training</li> <li>• Promote Spark winter sessions registration (Instagram graphic, reels)</li> <li>• Outreach to Residence Life, Archway, FYC, MSU services to promote winter sessions registration</li> <li>• Outreach to recipients of exam care packages to promote Spark sessions registration</li> <li>• Create winter sessions attendance tracker</li> <li>• Relaunch the Spark Ambassadors program</li> <li>• Continue Spark Stars</li> <li>• Launch winter weekly sessions and sessions training</li> <li>• Collect feedback from team leaders, executives, and Sparklings on sessions training.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winter Welcome Event Series</li> </ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold weekly executive meetings</li> <li>• Host monthly 1on1s with executives</li> <li>• Host 1on1s with team leaders</li> <li>• Host team leader social</li> <li>• Host executive social</li> <li>• Continue weekly sessions and sessions training</li> <li>• Work with sessions committee and Spark Ambassadors to have them host a sessions training</li> <li>• Hold the Spark your Heart event (or another event developed by Spark Ambassadors)</li> <li>• Develop Spark Scholarship application</li> <li>• Release winter publication</li> <li>• Take team leader photos</li> </ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold weekly executive meetings</li> <li>• Host monthly 1on1s with executives</li> <li>• Plan and host Spark closing ceremonies</li> <li>• Organize and order the Spark yearbook</li> <li>• Host the final team leader social</li> <li>• Release winter sessions feedback form</li> <li>• Host the Spark Jeopardy event</li> <li>• Create the Spark Stars goodie bag items list and order goodie bag items</li> <li>• Review eligibility for Spark Stars and Spark Scholarship programs and send out emails to Sparklings.</li> <li>• Release Spark Scholarship applications</li> <li>• Release incoming executive team hiring promotions</li> <li>• Collect formal feedback from team leaders and Sparklings about Sessions training</li> </ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold weekly executive meetings</li> <li>• Host monthly 1on1s with executives</li> <li>• Hold the Un-Birthday Party event</li> <li>• Director, Assistant Director, and Executives write transition reports for incoming executive members</li> <li>• Promote executive hiring (Instagram takeovers, graphic)</li> <li>• Host final executive social</li> <li>• Release Director and Assistant Director feedback form</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transition incoming PTMs</li><li>• Hire incoming executive team</li></ul>
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## Miscellaneous

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N/A





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