



REPORT

From the office of the...

Spark Director

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Serena Bansal
SUBJECT: Spark Report 6
DATE: Dec 4, 2023

Yearplan Update

Hi Executive Board members! I am excited to share that Spark has been operating well in accordance with our year plan. This past month was undoubtedly the most eventful for our service so far. We held First Year Formal last week, which is a project that we've been working extremely hard on since the summer, so it was lovely to see it come to fruition in such a successful way. Earlier in November, we also held our annual Hike & Hangout event at Dundas Peak. This month, we completed our 8 weeks of Spark Sessions programming for the Fall semester, as well as Sessions Training for our amazing Team Leaders, who have shown outstanding commitment and enthusiasm over the weeks. As the semester comes to an end, we are wrapping up with our Spark Ambassadors programming in the coming week, as well as Spark Fall Closing Ceremonies, to recognize all the hard work our Executives and Team Leaders (TLs) put into the service and the commitment the Sparklings (first year students) have shown.

Events, Projects, & Activities

General Service Usage

Our service operations are currently paused, as we completed the 8 weeks of Fall Spark Sessions during the week of November 20-24th. Over the semester, we had great engagement from first year students. We are now preparing for Winter Spark Sessions programming, which will be launched on January 22, 2024.

Projects & Events: Hike & Hangout (Complete)

- Hike & Hangout is an annual event by Spark, where first year students are taken on a guided hike to Dundas Peak, and then come back to campus to enjoy hot chocolate, snacks, and board games.
- We had ≈ 20 students join us and they all seemed really enthusiastic about the event, which was amazing to see.
- A huge thank you goes out to our Events Coordinators (Ethan, Yaseen, and Ashley), as well as the TLs who volunteered at the event and showed outstanding engagement with the first year students.
- See Miscellaneous for photos.

Projects & Events: First Year Formal (Complete)

- Putting this event together was truly a collective effort, and there are so many people to thank for helping us pull it off. First of all, our Events Coordinators, Ethan and Yaseen, for spearheading the planning process and working on this event diligently since the summer. Our Promotions & Publications Coordinators (Linda and Katie) put together some amazing promotional material for the event this month. First Year Council, as well as the FYC Coordinator (Aryana), were a great team to work with and provided us with a lot of ideas and support from planning the event to setting up on the day of. The TLs who volunteered at First Year Formal were also so dedicated to their roles and were fantastic supports throughout the night. From booking CIBC Hall in the summer to building balloon arches on the day of, I am so grateful for every single person who worked on this event, and it was definitely a night to remember for Spark!
- We had ≈150 students attending First Year Formal. We provided appetizers and dessert, a photobooth, cotton candy machine (very kindly run by Red Frogs), DJ Migz (who the students were extremely excited about), and a karaoke machine. The students clearly had a great time, and it was wonderful to be able to organize what was hopefully a memorable night for them.
- Leading up to the event, we held an Instagram giveaway contest, where we gave the winner 2 free tickets. We also booked out Campus Connect, where we set up a photobooth as a teaser for the event, and a spin the wheel contest to give away candy and Spark merch, and 3 free tickets.
- Photos from First Year Formal will be provided in the next report. See Miscellaneous for Campus Connect photos.

Projects & Events: Fall Sessions (Complete)

- Our Sessions Coordinators (Sri, Ellen, and Shyreen) have put so much effort into Sessions and Sessions Training over the semester, and I am extremely proud of this accomplishment.
- Overall, we've seen amazing attendance for Spark Sessions this semester, with many Sessions times receiving 5-7 Sparklings each week.

I'm glad to see that our service was able to benefit and support students during their first semester at university!

- The overwhelming feedback we've received from our Team Leaders is that Sessions Training has been engaging and something they look forward to coming to each week. It's been lovely seeing the Team Leaders getting to know each other over the semester, which truly helps the service feel like a team.
- I'm excited to see what the Sessions Coordinators have in store for Winter Sessions programming, which is currently being developed.
- See Miscellaneous for photos.

Projects & Events: Spark Ambassadors (Ongoing)

- Spark Ambassadors has been progressing well since my last report. The program is spearheaded by our Outreach & Engagement Coordinators (Nick and Simran). We have ≈10 first year students registered with the program, and they seem to be very engaged.
- The Spark Ambassadors shadowed the Promotions & Publications Coordinators during the first 3 weeks of the program. They helped put together some reels for First Year Formal and drafted ideas for event graphics.
- The ambassadors are currently shadowing the Sessions Coordinators for 3 weeks to develop one of the Winter Sessions.

Projects & Events: Fall Closing Ceremonies (Upcoming)

- Spark Fall Closing Ceremonies is taking place on November 30th. Usually, Closing Ceremonies is held once at the end of the year, but we decided to hold it once a semester this year to recognize the Sparklings that participated in Fall Sessions. The Outreach & Engagement Coordinators plan this initiative.
- During Closing Ceremonies, each Co-Ship highlights what they've accomplished over the semester (e.g. events and initiatives). We also give small gifts or appreciation and certificates to Sparklings who've demonstrated outstanding commitment to the Spark mentorship program by attending at least 6 out of 8 sessions (21 students)

Projects & Events: Exam Care Packages (Upcoming)

- Spark distributes exam care packages to first year students across the university to commemorate their first exam period in university! Our Outreach & Engagement Coordinators have been planning what to include in the exam care packages.
- We plan to distribute 200 packages at our Craft, Coffee, & Coaching event (see below).
- We've reached out to organizations for sponsorships/donations and have kindly received \$250 from the Office of the President, \$250 from the Department of English and Cultural Studies, and snacks for the packages from the McMaster Humanities Society.

Projects & Events: Craft, Coffee, & Coaching (Upcoming)

- This is an exam de-stressor event in collaboration with the Maroons. It will be held in the 1280/Grind event space and is open to all students.
- The Grind will be serving beverages (coffee and tea) and baked goods available for purchase, and we will have activities such as friendship bracelet making and tote bag painting.
- Spark TLs and Maroons will be available as volunteers to assist first year students with their assignments and provide guidance as they prepare for their exams.
- As mentioned above, we will be distributing our exam care packages at this event on a first come first serve basis.

Outreach & Promotions

Summary

All of our promotional efforts this month have been directed towards First Year Formal advertising. We've made many Instagram reels in collaboration with FYC and Spark Ambassadors to get the word out about the formal, which have immensely boosted our social media engagement. We also filmed an interview style video with MSU Communications to promote the event.

Promotional Materials

First Year Formal ticket giveaway contest:



Likes: 226

Comments: 181

Shares: 119

Saves: 20

Reels:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CzJYMErLjGG/>

Views: 20246

Likes: 133
Shares: 283
Saves: 6

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CzZZe5apOD8/>

Views: 20835
Likes: 369
Shares: 159
Saves: 6

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CzpHWa-pYwW/>

Views: 14694
Likes: 95
Shares: 47
Saves: 1

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Cz6wFWWp8AB/>

Views: 16287
Likes: 201
Shares: 28
Saves: 1

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Cz9nxZWJk-a/>

Views: 12943
Likes: 103
Shares: 23
Saves: 2

Social Media Engagement since the Previous Report

Overall Engagement:

< Insights ⓘ

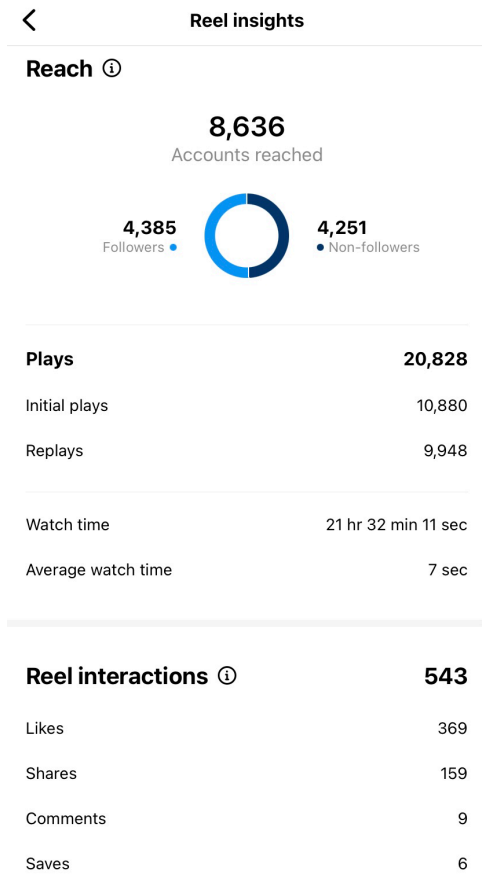
Last 30 Days ▾ Oct 30 - Nov 28

Overview

You reached **+173%** more accounts compared to Sep 30 - Oct 29

Accounts reached	19K	>
	+173%	
Accounts engaged	1,008	>
	+37.5%	
Total followers	6,227	>
	-0.2%	

Engagement from our top performing reel:



Finances

Budget Summary

This month, we've mainly spent from our annual campaigns budget line to purchase everything needed for First Year Formal (CIBC Hall, catering, DJ, photobooth, photographer, décor, etc.). We've made ≈ \$5400 from ticket sales, which is not included in the budget below. I've been speaking with the VP Finance to discuss our budget as we plan our initiatives for next semester.

ACCOUNT CODE	ITEM	BUDGET / COST
5003-0125		50
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	0
	REMAINING IN LINE	50
6103-0125		3700
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	10,265.01
	REMAINING IN LINE	-6,565.01
6494-0125		400

	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	197.82
	REMAINING IN LINE	202.18
6501-0125		
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	3600
	REMAINING IN LINE	1,780.25
	REMAINING IN LINE	1,819.75
6802-0125		
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	500
	REMAINING IN LINE	0
	REMAINING IN LINE	500
TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		8250
TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		12,243.08

Executives & Volunteers

- Morale has remained high amongst Executives and Volunteers. After a semester of Sessions, Sessions Training, and events together, I can tell that everyone is forming connections and building friendships. Despite everyone working so hard, it's incredible to see how enthusiastic they all still are about our final initiatives this semester.
- We took team photos earlier this month, which was a great bonding moment for us as a team and everyone had a lot of fun!
- Avery and I held 1-on-1 check ins for the TLs and Executives. It's been really nice being able to talk to everyone who is so dedicated to our service. We've received a lot of positive feedback and also ideas to make their experience even more enjoyable in the service, which we will be seriously considering as we move into the Winter semester.

Successes

- It's incredible to think that the semester is almost over; we've accomplished so much over these past few months. Everyone on this team has been so dedicated and deserves to be recognized for all their hard work. They have been outstanding in completing their tasks and taking the initiative to think of new ways to reach out to first year students through the service.
- Our biggest success this month has been First Year Formal. The Executives and Team Leaders were absolutely fantastic throughout the process of planning and execution, showed a lot of initiative, and helped make this event the success that it was.

Current Challenges

- We're not currently experiencing any major challenges. However, with exam season approaching and the fact that we still have events/initiatives happening this week and early next week, I want to ensure that everyone feels supported throughout. The Sessions Coordinators are busy with planning next semester's programming after just finishing Sessions this semester, which also presents a busy time for them.
- As Avery and I plan our programming for the Winter semester, we've received feedback from TLs, Sparklings, and Executives about some ways we can potentially reschedule sessions to better accommodate to first years. Some ideas we've had include shifting the evening Sessions time to earlier than 5:30-6:30pm, running more Sessions on Friday and less during the weekdays, etc. I'd love to hear your thoughts on how this might affect engagement!

Miscellaneous

Photos from Hike & Hangout



Photo from First Year Formal Campus Connect Promotions



Photo from Spark Session #8: Prepare and Care (Exam Prep and Self Care)

