



REPORT

From the office of the...

Spark Director

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Serena Bansal
SUBJECT: Spark Report 7
DATE: February 7, 2023

Yearplan Update

Spark's operations have been progressing well in accordance with our year plan! We wrapped up fall semester programming with Fall Closing Ceremonies to recognize the Sparklings that have shown commitment to the program, and distributed Exam Care Packages. With the start of winter semester, we began Winter Sessions this past week (January 29th) and Sessions Training. We are excited to continue the remaining 7 weeks of Sessions and work on our upcoming events and initiatives.

Events, Projects, & Activities

General Service Usage

Our service operations have resumed with the start of Winter Spark Sessions during the week of January 29th – February 2nd. We are looking forward to seeing great engagement from first year students this semester, as we did last semester.

Projects & Events: Craft, Coffee, & Coaching—Maroons X Spark (Complete)

- This was an exam distress event hosted in collaboration with the Maroons at the Grind.
- The Grind served coffee, tea, and baked goods for purchase, and we held activities such as tote bag painting and friendship bracelet making. Many students also attended just to use the area as a study space.
- The event was a big success, with students dropping in and out, and around 20-30 in the space at all times.

Projects & Events: Fall Publication (Complete)

- Each semester, Spark releases a publication on social media to provide information to first years on a topic that could help them out as they continue university.

- In the fall, our Promotions and Publications Coordinators (Linda & Katie), along with the TLs on the Promo Committee, produced our first publication, “Elective Speed Dating”, pictured below.
- The aim of this publication was to help first years identify some of their interests and highlight certain electives that might be well suited to them, through a creative quiz format.
- The post received high engagement on Instagram (Likes: 215, Shares: 83, Saves: 56)!



QUESTION 3:
If you could go on a weekend-trip, where would you go?

A. A small country-side town in Europe

B. A large, bustling city

C. See a Broadway show or play in New York

D. A camping trip in the mountains

E. Visit one of the Seven Wonders of the World



3 - 5 POINTS

ART 1T13

Creating art utilizing a range of media, including digital tools and creative research, students will gain an understanding of art, images and cultures of technology. No previous artistic experience is required.

Three hours; one term

Prerequisite(s): Registration in Level I or above of any program

Antirequisite(s): Enrolment in or completion of MMEDIA 2B06
Not open to students in the BFA program.

Learn about different art movements in the digital age and how they are applied to social media, activism, and much more!



6 - 8 POINTS

COMPSCI 1MD3

Introduction to fundamental programming concepts: values and types, expressions and evaluation, control flow constructs and exceptions, recursion, input/output and file processing. Three lectures, one tutorial (one hour); first term.

Prerequisite(s): One of MATH 1K03, 1LS3, Grade 12 Advanced Functions and Introductory Calculus U, Grade 12 Calculus and Vectors, or registration or credit in ARTSSCI 1D06.

Antirequisite(s): ENGINEER 1D04, IP13 A/B, IBEHS 1P10 A/B, MATH 1MP3, PHYSICS 2G03

Want to learn highly applicable skills in the real world? Through this class, you can learn some fundamentals of computer science that you can apply to virtually any field, web development, and research!



12 - 13 POINTS

SUSTAIN 1S03

An introduction to sustainability from an interdisciplinary perspective which examines the historical and societal lenses through which sustainability is viewed. Students will learn terminology, theories and concepts to effectively communicate across disciplines and on various topics of sustainability.

One lecture (three hours), one tutorial (one hour); offered in both terms

Need a more accessible course? This course is fully online and accessible to everyone! Learn about the differences you can make for a better and sustainable future!



14 - 15 POINTS

SCAR 2QQ3

Why are people often attracted to 'alternative' perspectives/religious movements? An examination of some marginal or marginalized groups, beliefs and practices and the ways they challenge and enforce 'received wisdom'. (Formerly RELIGST 2QQ3)

An intriguing course where you can learn about smaller religions and different conspiracies...

Projects & Events: Wellbeing Week Housing Hinge—SWHAT x Spark (Complete)

- We collaborated with SWHAT for their Wellbeing Week on an event called Housing Hinge, to provide information to first year students on how to find off campus housing, hosted in the Grind.
- The VP Education presented at the event and we held games and activities to encourage students to get to know each other in order to find potential roommates.
- We also created a survey/questionnaire through the platform Friendomatics to help match students together as roommates. The platform allows students to indicate their living preferences and matches them based on similar preferences.
- Survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VG3WCM6>
- We didn't have as many students fill out the survey as we had expected, so we are currently exploring other avenues to gather more responses, so that the matching process can work well.

Projects & Events: Winter Refresher Training (Complete)

- We completed our Winter Refresher Training at the beginning of January, to go over and remind TLs of Spark's policies as we entered Winter Sessions programming.
- Avery and I gathered a lot of the feedback we received from the 1-on-1 check ins we held with TLs and Execs and explained how we would be implementing it this semester.
- One of the points we emphasized was tips to promote Sparkling retention. We provided TLs with a list of actions they could take (e.g. sending weekly reminder emails/messages an hour before their session, creating a calendar invite and adding Sparklings to it).

Projects & Events: Winter Sessions (Ongoing)

- Winter Sessions began as of this past week and have been running smoothly! Leading up to Sessions, we promoted registration through multiple avenues, including:
 - A \$50 Campus Store gift card giveaway to one student who signs up and attends Session 1.
 - Distributing rave cards to students in residence by sliding them under doors.
 - An Instagram post explaining what Sessions are to first years who are unfamiliar and highlighting the Spark Achievement in Leadership Scholarship.
 - Sending emails to all the first years who registered for Sessions in the fall and who picked up our exam care packages.
- All these efforts led to around 80 Sparklings registering for Sessions. As we did last semester, we tried to sort Sparklings into a Session where at least one TL is in the same faculty as them.

- Sessions attendance has been high so far! I can already see many of the TLs implementing the strategies for Sparkling retention that we discussed during Winter Refresher Training.
- This semester, some of the Sessions themes we will run include networking and interview prep, cooking and nutrition (in collaboration with FCC), financial literacy, and exploring the city (where TLs and first years explore the Westdale area together).

Projects & Events: Spark Your Heart (Upcoming)

- Spark Your Heart is an annual Valentine’s Day themed Spark event. We are currently fleshing out the details, with a tentative date of February 15th.
- The event will have activities such as speed-friending, cookie decorating, etc. and will serve as an opportunity for first years to connect with each other.

Outreach & Promotions

Summary

Our promotional material has mainly been aimed at Winter Sessions registration this past month. Our engagement as dipped since last semester, as our focus has been on still posts rather than reels ever since First Year Formal wrapped up, but it is still high.

We redesigned our Sessions registration graphic to emphasize that our service is for first year students, which I believe has helped spread more awareness about our service. We are also planning to post more organic content and photos from Spark events and sessions on a regular basis to help our audience understand what Spark does!

Promotional Materials

Redesigned sessions registration graphic:



Finances

Sessions promo post:



SPARK STARS

Prizes awarded to first-year students who actively engage in Spark sessions.

ELIGIBILITY

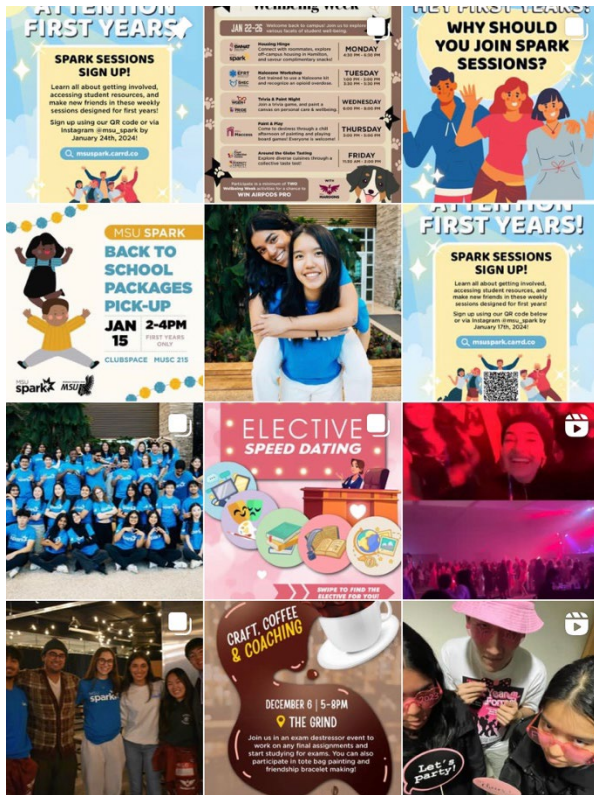
Complete 4 sessions in Fall & 4 sessions in Winter
OR
Complete 6 sessions in Winter

MSU spark

MAKE NEW FRIENDS & MEMORIES!

MSU spark

All posts since the last report:



Budget Summary

This month, we've mainly spent on Housing Hinge (AVTEK and the roommates matching survey), and on purchasing Sessions supplies. Since these are part of our annual campaigns, which has a maxed-out budget line due to First Year Formal, I've been speaking with the VP Finance on purchasing these supplies.

| ACCOUNT CODE | ITEM | BUDGET / COST |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|
| 5003-0125 | | 50 |
| | TOTAL SPENT IN LINE | 0 |
| | REMAINING IN LINE | 50 |
| 6103-0125 | | 3700 |
| | TOTAL SPENT IN LINE | 4765.01 |
| | REMAINING IN LINE | -1065.01 |
| 6494-0125 | | 400 |
| | TOTAL SPENT IN LINE | 197.82 |
| | REMAINING IN LINE | 202.18 |
| 6501-0125 | | 3600 |
| | TOTAL SPENT IN LINE | 1,780.25 |
| | REMAINING IN LINE | 1,819.75 |
| 6802-0125 | | 500 |
| | TOTAL SPENT IN LINE | 0 |
| | REMAINING IN LINE | 500 |
| TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING | | 8250 |
| TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING | | 1506.92 |

Executives & Volunteers

- Morale has been high amongst the Execs and TLs. Everyone seems really excited to come back after the break and start with Sessions again!
- We started our Spark ultimate frisbee intramural team this month, which received a lot of engagement. It's really great to see so many TLs come out to play, which just strengthens the bonds within our service.
- In February, Avery and I are very excited to start a new initiative to further create community within the service, Tag a TL. We will assign each TL another TL on the team that they have to find and tag on campus, and if successful, they will be given that TLs target to now tag. The TLs seems

really enthusiastic about this, and we hope it'll be something that carries on within Spark in future years!

Successes

- I'm really proud of how smoothly Sessions has started off. I can see that the Execs and TLs are taking initiative within the service and making Sessions a safe and enjoyable space for first years.
- It's also been great to see how the community within Spark has been flourishing since the beginning of the year. Most the TLs and Execs joined the service without having known each other, and I can tell that they've really gotten to know each other and enjoy spending time together in Sessions, Sessions Training, and even outside of Spark!

Current Challenges

- The only major challenge we're currently experiencing is trying to find a weekly meeting time for our Execs. They have expressed that they'd like to have in-person meetings with everyone present, which we had last semester and is the ideal scenario. However, we haven't been able to find a time when everyone is available during the week. Avery and I have been checking in with each co-ship and have had a few meetings with whoever can make it for the time being, but we hope to figure this out soon.