

SPARK!

IGNITE YOUR CONCORDIA EXPERIENCE

In order to assist students in taking full advantage of their post-secondary experience, the Dean of Students Office monitors the landscape and literature of post-secondary student experience. Two important aspects that are measured are the amount of time and effort students put into their collegiate experience and how the institution supports students in engaging in practices directly linked to student learning. With the desire to know more about how and why students engage in these activities, the Spark! campaign set out to:

1. Engage in a process of deep, integrative learning about student engagement, primarily focused on speaking with students in order to understand their reality.
2. Report on how and why students engage in extracurricular activities. And to catalogue/map the high-impact opportunities which currently exist for student engagement.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The effort students apply to activities that support their success

ENGAGEMENT AT CONCORDIA

Concordia has a large Engagement Gap. According to Concordia-specific data, there is a clear gap between student's intentions to engage in high-impact practices, and their completion in any by graduation.

High Impact Practices (HIPs)

Transformational practices that demand considerable time and effort, facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback.

Our HIPs

Learning communities
Culminating senior experiences
Research with faculty
Service-learning
Internships and field experiences
Studying abroad Student Leadership

Student Findings

1. Students engage outside the classroom in order to increase the market value of their university experience.
2. They will also engage to better themselves, build identity and connect with others; though how they do this varies widely.
3. Experiences outside the classroom which enable them to practice what they are learning is highly valued, specifically among business and engineering students
4. They desire to experience the campus in more ways than just classroom learning. They desire more physical and emotional support as well as collective spaces to connect with others.

Faculty and Staff

Faculty see “successful” students as those who have a good command of information which is useful after graduation. These students have spent time building interpersonal resilience and flexibility. While the concept of student engagement is not a well understand or widely applied construct amongst faculty and staff, there is recognition that it happens both inside and outside the classroom and impacts both academic and interpersonal development.

As **wayfinders for students** in their development, faculty highlighted some **barriers in supporting student engagement** including limited time, conflicting requirements for tenure applications, a gendered nature of emotional support work, and the changing demographic of the student body.

Faculty & Staff can be supported through:

A better understanding of student engagement as a development model

More latitude to develop as teachers, mentors, and coaches for students

Better information and connections between faculty and student services in order to provide meaningful references for resources.

GOING FORWARD

The Spark! Campaign will now begin to build on the work done throughout the Fall 2017 semester in order to develop an organized engagement strategy. The campaign will move ahead with the following three goals:

1. **Build a greater understanding of Student Engagement** amongst Faculty, Staff, and Students at Concordia by building stronger relationships with all stakeholders, creating collective space to bring them together, and building a network of Student Ambassadors.
2. Create more **effective communication about Student Engagement opportunities** through a website which hosts success stories of engaging students in an appealing format. The content will be shared throughout Concordia's media.
3. **Increase student engagement** through a year-long ongoing communication campaign (online and offline) with a diverse and engaging communication mix highlighting the success stories of engaged students and promoting the benefits of High Impact Practices.

There's a lot to do and we will need your help! In the coming months we will be moving quickly into new phases of our campaign; here are some ways you can be involved:

1. **Be aware, get ready to share!** Keep an eye out for the Spark! campaign opportunities for engagement and share throughout your networks whenever possible.
2. Help **shape the campaign!** We're always looking for fresh perspectives from experts in the community:
 - a. **Reach out** individually -- have a new High Impact Practice we should know about? Or an engaged student we should highlight? We want to hear about what you're up to!
 - b. Join an **advisory group** -- we cannot move forward without input from all perspectives of the university. Interested in joining? Email or call us with the info below!
 - c. Share info and news for our monthly digest -- **a community that learns** together grows together! Read or seen something relevant to our campaign? Send it along.

Contact us

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