6/29/20

**Spark Program Summary**

*Program Overview*

The Spark Education Lab is dedicated to investigate difficult challenges within the undergraduate experience and generate innovative solutions. Utilizing a trans-disciplinary cadre of students and a design thinking approach, the lab endeavors to make lasting change with the student voice at the center of its effort.

The goal is to provide undergraduate students the opportunity to contribute to making an exceptional educational experience here at the University of Utah.

*Student Activities*

During the 2019-2020 academic year, we approximately 15 students working on a variety of projects.

Transfer student work:

We had 8 students working on this that culminated in a number of presentations to discuss the issues around transfer students. In addition, the student prepared and submitted a proposal around the issues and some ideas on how to address the critical issue of student financial aid. This was submitted to Courtney McBeth as part of the strategy refresh.

Orientation:

We had 4 students working on issues around orientation prior to and after COVID. They created a new structure for all in person material that is being prepared by Adobe. In addition, they created a new structure and material for online orientation.

General Education:

We have had 2 students working on developing new communication strategies for General Education requirements here at the University of Utah. This was rolled out during Orientation with new student-oriented videos.

Major Maps: We have had multiple students working on the Major Map project. This has been released at [www.majormaps.utah.edu](http://www.majormaps.utah.edu). This effort will be continuing on and developing strategies for phase 2 and 3 which will integrate student unid’s to the content.

*Administrative Activities*

From an administrative perspective, the program is stable and effective. We have a good recruitment strategy to have a diverse group of students participate. They have been very engaged and are contributing greatly.

For the next year, we will refine and focus on a few projects such as major maps, program assessment, and also issues regarding the student experience around equity and inclusion.

We have requested $30,000 for the 2020-2021 fiscal year with the assumption that amount would be reduced by 2.5% based upon the budget discussions and decisions.

COVID-19 Response

In response to the COVID-19 crisis we had to make some minimal adjustments to our work and just moved all meetings to Zoom. There was a bit of disruption of work due to some budget concerns but it did not reduce the students effectiveness.

*Goals*

We will continue to work on projects and many of the students that worked with us in the past will continue working these next semesters. A major focus will be on equity and inclusion work, major maps, and assessment communication.

*Budget*

We have requested $30,000 for this next year with the assumption that will be reduced to 2.5 % based on current budgetary decisions.