



**PROGRAM
UPDATES**

**AMBASSADOR
EVENTS & UPDATES**

**STAFF SPOTLIGHT:
SOPHIA MCDONALD**

BEAR POWER PROGRAM UPDATES

*by Rachel Heinz, Director
and Caleb Hatz, Program Coordinator*

“
If you can't
fly then run,
if you can't
run then
walk, if you
can't walk
then crawl,
but
whatever
you do you
have to keep
moving
forward.”

MARTIN LUTHER
KING, JR.

Spring 2021 is an exciting time for Bear POWER. Our first cohort of students are preparing for their last semester and plan to graduate this May. This is a big step for our inaugural cohort to be able to walk across the stage come May; it is an empowering feeling to know all of their hard work has paid off. Our students are prepared and ready to enter into their area of concentration for competitive employment. Below are different areas for programmatic updates. Read on to learn more about what is happening on campus this semester!

Graduation: Graduation will be held on May 14th at 9:00 AM (subject to change due to COVID-19). Bear POWER students will be allowed to bring up to 6 guests to the ceremony. Bear POWER staff will be helping students apply for graduation and can offer programmatic support for up to 6 months after graduation! The Career Center is also a great support system for students and alumni, and their website can be found [here](#). Finally, Kim Roam and the Ambassadors are planning a graduation celebration, mortar board decoration event, and photo shoot for students, so keep your eyes open for more details coming soon!

Academic Support: Bear POWER is focusing on Community Engagement within the Academic Support Session for all students this Spring 2021. Aligning with the MSU Public Affairs

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BEAR POWER PROGRAM UPDATES (CONT.)

by Rachel Heinz, Director
and Caleb Hatz, Program Coordinator



*Photo description:
Students,
Ambassadors, and staff
met for a Bear POWER
Lunch in the Plaster
Student Union on
Friday, January 29th.*

pillars, we are spotlighting cultural competence and working on how to utilize our privilege to help marginalized groups. We are also emphasizing getting engaged with our community. For community engagement, we are organizing a “Community Needs Drive.” We will be looking for food, clothing, toiletries, etcetera, to donate to a local organization, so please be on the lookout for ways you can contribute to the project.

Internships/Job Readiness: Bear POWER students have officially started in their internships this semester, both on campus and in the community. Internship Seminar is a new course we have added that will help support students within their internships and build upon learning skills that will help them transition into the workplace once they graduate from the Bear POWER program. This class is designed to provide “real-world” experiences to help students excel. Typical sessions in this class will include job shadowing, guest presentations, working on verbal and written communication skills through reflections and presentations, and using Virtual Job Shadow, which is an online platform for learning and utilizing job readiness skills. Students will also have the opportunity to search and apply for jobs during the course this semester. Along with job skills, two representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation will meet with our students on February 3rd to discuss the in-take process for receiving and utilizing services from Vocational Rehabilitation as they transition into employment. We are excited about this partnership as it will offer many benefits and support to our students.



*Photo description:
Students,
Ambassadors, and
staff gathered for hot
chocolate as a
semester kick-off in
early January.*

AMBASSADOR UPDATES

by Becky Meyers, Event
Coordinator Chair for
Bear POWER
Ambassadors

Our Bear POWER Ambassador Leadership Team has been working hard to give students lots of opportunities for academic and social events throughout the semester. First, we have Bear POWER Lunches and Study Time at the beginning of each month to make sure students are prepared academically, mentally, and emotionally for the rest of the month. We are also hosting social events biweekly to encourage Bear POWER Students and Ambassadors to be able to escape the stress of classes and unwind with friends. We have various events such as trivia nights, painting classes, ice cream socials, and many others to provide a wide range of activities for all students to enjoy. We will also be having a week of events to congratulate our first class of Bear POWER graduates! We will be having dinners, dances, and lots of fun celebrating with friends, family, and faculty! These group events allow students to create friendships and memories that will last forever. Bear POWER is a family, so these events help us stay connected and continue to grow together!



UPCOMING BEAR POWER EVENTS

Bear POWER February Lunch
February 9, 2021
11:30 AM to 12:30 PM
Plaster Student Union

Bear POWER Valentines Night
February 10, 2021
7:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Hill Hall

Presidents' Day - NO CLASS
February 15, 2021

Braum's Ice Cream Night
February 24, 2021
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Braum's Ice Cream on Sunshine

Bear POWER March Lunch
March 5, 2021
11:30 AM to 12:30 PM
Plaster Student Union

Bear POWER Guided Paint Night
March 11, 2021
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM
Virtually via Zoom
Zoom link coming soon!

Spring Break - NO CLASSES
March 13-21, 2021

Bear POWER Bingo Night
March 30, 2021
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM
Virtually via Zoom
Zoom Link coming soon!

MSU BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: SOPHIA MCDONALD

by Hannah Peak,
Bear POWER Graduate Assistant



*Photo description:
Sophia is sitting at the
base of the PSU Bear
Statue in a black dress.
She is wearing a
maroon graduate cap
and is smiling.*

As the Bear POWER program continues to grow, we are expanding our team of dedicated people to provide support to students and to promote inclusion on MSU's campus. Learn more about Sophia McDonald, our newest graduate assistant, below!

1) Tell us a little about yourself!

I recently graduated from MSU with a B.S. in Psychology and am now working towards a Masters in Special Education with an emphasis in ASD. My career goal is to become a BCBA and work with kids that have autism. I was born and raised in Springfield, so I can give you all the good coffee/restaurant recommendations. In my free time I love to hike, kayak, do yoga and watch movies. But most importantly, I have 2 cat children: Maryjane and Benny!

2) What do you do as a Graduate Assistant?

As a graduate assistant I provide one-on-one advising support to the Bear POWER students in academics and social skills.

3) What are you most looking forward to, and what inspired you to work for Bear POWER? I wanted to work for Bear POWER because it is such a unique program! I have always been passionate about inclusion and wanted to have a meaningful job while in school. It seemed like the perfect fit! I am looking forward to getting to know the students, ambassadors, and staff!

4) If there was a movie written about you, what would it be called and who would play you?

If there was a movie written about me, it would be called something along the lines of An Organized Mess, and I would want Anna Kendrick to play me. Also, it would be a must that my cats guest starred in the movie!