

Recruiting Techniques and Influences on College Choice

Brittney Rochell, Dwayne Cartmell,
Shelly Sitton, and Shannon Ferrell

Oklahoma State University



Background

- Employers prefer agriculture and natural resources graduates
 - stronger interests
 - more extensive work experiences
 - prepared for careers in food, renewable energy, and the environment (Goeker et al., 2010).
- In agriculture, nearly 60,000 jobs v. 35,400 graduates yearly (Flynn, 2015)
- Therefore, deficit exists for qualified workers to fill these positions.

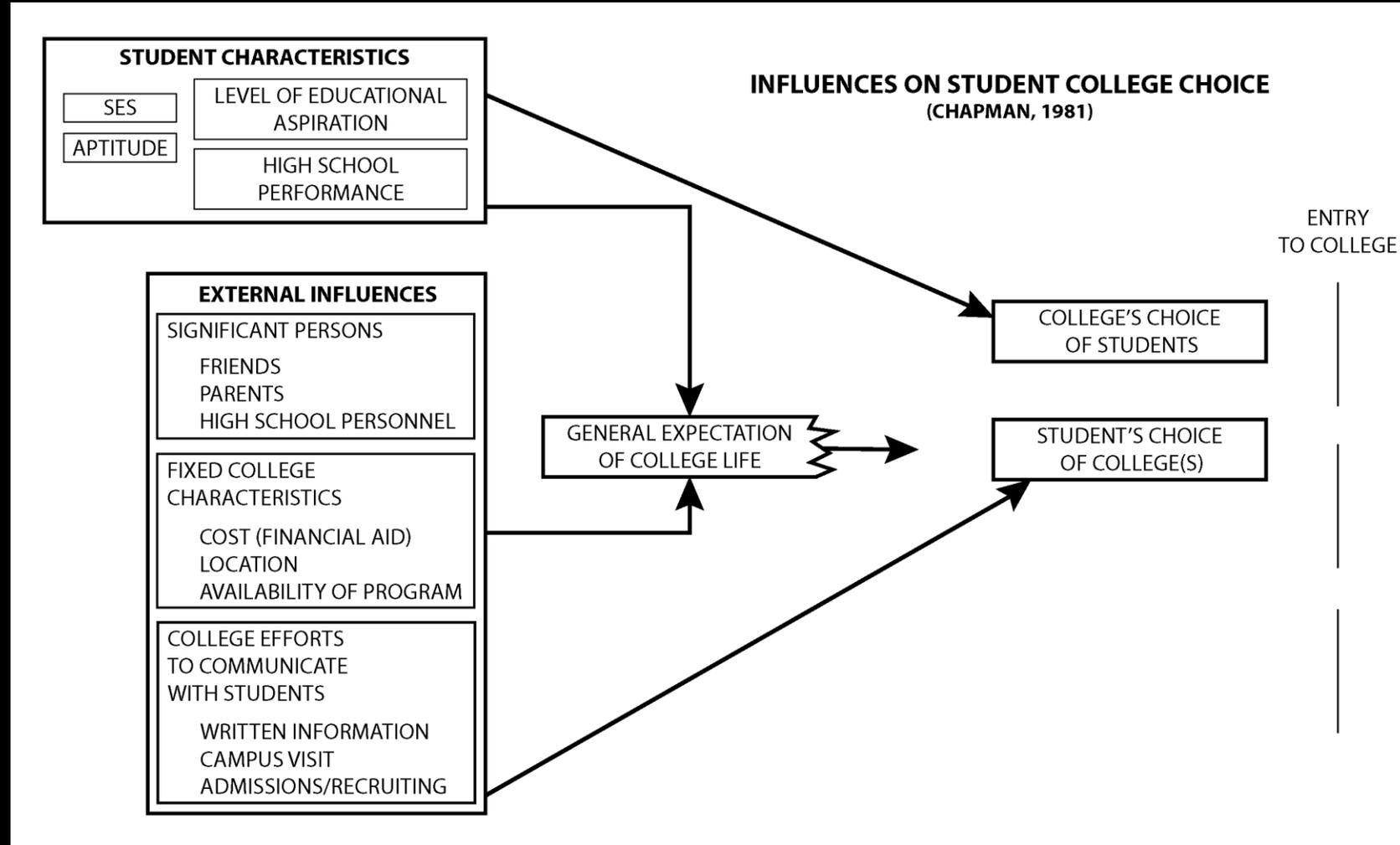


College Recruiting

- Major ag-program recruiting effects from campus visits and printed publications (Robinson, et al, 2007; Washburn, et al., 2002)
- Campus visits and printed publications two of the most popular recruitment tools (Herren, 2005; Herren, et al., 2011)
- Parent or guardian is most influential person in student's college an degree choice (Herren, 2005; Herren, et al., 2011; Rayfield, 2013)
- Conversely, a college website not useful (Robinson, et al., 2007).



Theoretical Framework: Chapman's 1981 Model of Influences on College Choice



Problem, Purpose & Objective

- With a clear need for more graduates in the work force, ways are needed to continue increasing the number of agriculture graduates.
- The purpose of this study was to gain insight into students' decisions to enroll in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) at Oklahoma State University (OSU).
- The objective of this study was to determine the effectiveness of recruiting techniques and other influences on college choice.



Methods, Data Collection & Analysis

- Population: Incoming freshmen in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (N = 478)
- Online instrument delivered via email links to all incoming OSU freshmen age 18 or older. This study represents a slice of the data.
- Descriptive survey methodology implemented a researcher-designed instrument consisting of 16 items created to address the objectives of this study. Qualtrics.com was used to collect data via a web-based instrument using Dillman Tailored Design Method ⁽²⁰⁰⁷⁾.
- 108 (22.59%) respondents
- Non-response



Validity & Reliability

- Review by panel of faculty and recruitment experts
- Pilot study with incoming transfers
 - Cronbach's Alpha



Results & Conclusions

- Typical respondent:
 - 18- or 19-year-old (97.2)
 - female (63.9%)
 - from Oklahoma (58.3%)
 - with a relative who attended OSU (82.0%)



Results & Conclusions

- Most effective recruitment techniques
 - mail (53.70%)
 - electronic media/internet (50.93%)
 - campus visits (46.30%)
- Least effective techniques
 - phone calls (18.52%)
 - local group events (22.22%)



Results & Conclusions

- Top three influences on university choice
 - campus environment (89.8%)
 - career opportunities after graduation (89.7%)
 - academic reputation (88.9%)
- Least important influences for university choice:
 - prominence of university athletic teams (42.1%)
 - availability of financial aid other than scholarships (47.2%)



Recommendations

- Future research should determine what makes a recruitment technique effective.
- Social media content should be evaluated for which university posts are more effective at directing prospective students to information.
- Additional research should determine when prospective students make their college and major choice to improve university recruitment efforts.



References

- Flynn, K. 2015. One of the best fields for new college graduates? *Agriculture*. Retrieved from: <https://nifa.usda.gov/press-release/one-best-fields-new-college-graduates-agriculture>
- Goeker, A., Smith, P., Smith, E., and Goetz, R. 2010. Employment opportunities for college graduates in the food and agricultural sciences, United States, 2010-2015. United States Department of Agriculture and Purdue University.
- Herren, C.D. (2005) Perceptions of influences on college choice by students enrolled in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Oklahoma State University. Edmon Low Library.
- Herren, C.D. (2011) Perceptions of Influence on college choice by students enrolled in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. *NACTA Journal*. Retrieved from: https://www.nactateachers.org/attachments/article/1259/Article9_Nacta_Sept2011.pdf
- Rayfield, J., Murphrey, T., Skaggs, C., & Shafer, J. (2013). Factors that Influence Student Decisions to Enroll in a College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. *NACTA Journal*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nactateachers.org/index.php/volume-57-num-1-march-2013/2033-factors-that-influence-student-decisions-to-enroll-in-a-college-of-agriculture-and-life-sciences>
- Robinson, J., Garton, B., & Washburn, S. (2007). The Influential Factors First-time Enrollees Utilize When Choosing a College of Agriculture. *NACTA Journal*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nactateachers.org/index.php/vol-51-num-2-june-2007-sp-1850083050/255-the-influential-factors-first-time-enrollees-utilize-when-choosing-a-college-of-agriculture>
- Washburn, S., Garton, B. & Vaughn, P. (2002). Factors Influencing College Choice of Agriculture Students College-Wide Compared with Students Majoring in Agricultural Education. *Proceedings of the 29th National Agriculture Education Research Conference*, Las Vegas, NV, 29, 1-15.

