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

**STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS**
- SES
- APTITUDE
- LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION
- HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

**EXTERNAL INFLUENCES**
- SIGNIFICANT PERSONS
  - FRIENDS
  - PARENTS
  - HIGH SCHOOL PERSONNEL
- FIXED COLLEGE CHARACTERISTICS
  - COST (FINANCIAL AID)
  - LOCATION
  - AVAILABILITY OF PROGRAM
- COLLEGE EFFORTS TO COMMUNICATE WITH STUDENTS
  - WRITTEN INFORMATION
  - CAMPUS VISIT
  - ADMISSIONS/RECRUITING

**INFLUENCES ON STUDENT COLLEGE CHOICE**
- COLLEGE’S CHOICE OF STUDENTS
- GENERAL EXPECTATION OF COLLEGE LIFE
- STUDENT’S CHOICE OF COLLEGE(S)

ENTRY TO COLLEGE
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


• 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.


