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LOOKING TO QUIT? RECRUITING COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS INTO AN
ONLINE SMOKING CESSATION STUDY

BY

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BA, SUNY Geneseo, 2011

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Masters in Public Administration in the Graduate School of
Binghamton University
State University of New York
2014

Accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
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Executive Summary

The Web-Assisted Tobacco Intervention (WATI), a research team from the University of Rochester, has been recruiting research subjects from community college campuses since 2012. Recruitment has proved to be difficult for the team and has slowed the progress of the research project. WATI is seeking to recruit community college students into a smoking cessation study. The WATI team relies upon the help of champions (representatives) at the participating community colleges to facilitate local recruitment efforts.

This capstone project seeks to discover effective and ineffective recruitment methods which have been used by the champions at the participating community colleges. The champions have first-hand knowledge of their particular campuses and the recruitment methods in use. In order to gain a better understanding of the role of the champions, this study incorporated the use of both surveys and phone interviews. Six champions participated in the interviews and twelve completed the survey. This research led to three key findings: 1) the champions at the participating community colleges are satisfied with the WATI team and acknowledge the benefits of the study for their campuses; 2) champions use a wide array of recruitment techniques with mass email, poster advertisements (e.g. tear-offs), and website banner ads identified as the most effective; and 3) the community college environment affects recruitment efforts and is an additional challenge to consider.

Based on these findings, I have put forth three recommendations the WATI team can take into consideration. These recommendations are as follows: 1) supplement the current champion system with additional recruitment methods identified as effective; 2) share this study with the participating champions and conduct further research on recruitment for research studies at community colleges; and 3) since the champions are satisfied with the current system, the WATI

team should continue to foster the relationships they have with the current champions while encouraging them to spend more time recruiting.

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Problem Statement

The University of Rochester Medical Center's Public Health Services department is responsible for performing many research studies. These studies benefit the public well-being of people in the United States and around the world. The Web Assisted Tobacco Intervention team, or WATI, is currently conducting a five-year National Cancer Institute (NCI) research study on the effects of web based tobacco intervention methods. The focus population is community college students who use tobacco-based products at high rates. The research program is in its third year and is currently focusing recruitment efforts on all students attending New York State community colleges.

Recruiting study subjects has proved difficult for WATI. The initial trial run, which was conducted last fall, failed to successfully promote the study. As of April 29, 2014, 943 users registered with the program, and 745 had actually participated in the intervention or comparison group (A.F. Wall, personal communication, April 29, 2014). Recruitment did not meet the required levels and the research team has been forced to start anew. In order for WATI's study to be considered successful, 1,425 community college students must participate. The trial run was only able to recruit and engage 37 students across 3 pilot community colleges (A.F. Wall, personal communication, October 25, 2013).

There are few studies on smoking that focus exclusively on community college students. Instead the majority of studies on smoking aggregate different types of student groups together. (Cohen & Brawer, 2009). Designing recruitment strategies for a specific population can be a daunting task. The characteristics of community college students are quite different than the characteristics of four-year college students. A limited number of past studies involving community colleges have grouped them with four-year institutions as opposed to separating the

two distinct college environments. Community colleges are diverse institutions with students coming from varying backgrounds; students tend to be more ethnically and racially diverse and are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Bailey, Jenkins, & Leinbach, 2005).

The problem of recruitment is important to WATI. First, the threshold of 1,425 students is necessary for the study to be considered successful. The lack of study subjects has stalled WATI's progress. Without the subjects, the study cannot continue into its next stage which involves data analysis and publishing the subsequent findings. Second, the NCI funding is reliant upon the recruitment. The delay created by recruitment issues puts the funding at risk. Without results, which are contingent on recruitment, the funding will end before sufficient results can be produced. Expanding the knowledge of recruitment strategies for community college students will benefit WATI's goals and mission.

This problem is also pertinent outside of WATI and its needs. Community college populations are a growing sector of education. There are few specific past examples of past studies on smoking among community college student bodies (Cohen & Brawer, 2009). Recruitment strategies are an integral aspect of research studies. Building the literature for successful recruitment techniques within the community college population can help future researchers conduct high quality research collecting data from this population.

Research Questions

This capstone project will seek to answer a variety of research questions, which will highlight the ongoing recruitment efforts of the WATI team. These questions are as follows:

1. What recruitment methods are effective or ineffective?
2. What have the champions at the various participating community colleges done to promote the WATI study?

Literature Review

An important aspect of any clinical trial is recruitment of research subjects. Attaining the required number of participants can be a daunting task for researchers and “many trials fail to reach their planned sample size.” (McDonald et al., 2006, p.1). Recruitment strategies are necessary to reach the desired results (Brintnall-Karabelas, 2011). Strategies used by researchers may range from the use of social media (e.g. Facebook and twitter), mass emailing potential participants, and person-to-person contact. The literature focusing on community college recruitment for tobacco intervention studies is somewhat limited (Prokhorov, et al., 2008). This literature review will also take into consideration clinical studies that do not focus on either community colleges or tobacco cessation research. The focus will be on reasons why potential subjects agree or refuse to participate in studies, general recruitment methods and channels, and recruitment of research subjects from community college campuses.

Reasons Why Potential Subjects Agree or Refuse or to Participate in Studies

Understanding why potential participants choose to participate in clinical studies can help formulate successful recruitment strategies. Altruism or a sense of being a part of something greater than themselves is a common reason for participants to join a study (Newington & Metcalfe, 2014; Williams, Entwistle, Haddow & Wells, 2007; George, Duran & Norris, 2014).

Describing the benefits of the study within the introductory stages will encourage individuals to participate for altruistic reasons. By offering an additional explanation of the “intended impact of the research on policy and practice,” researchers can enhance recruitment through altruism (Williams et al., 2007, p. 1453).

The other key reason subjects participate is to take advantage of the free health related benefits or potential financial benefits, such as cash, study participation may offer (Newington & Metcalfe, 2014; Williams et al., 2007). When considering the type of financial incentive, monetary incentives have the same effect as non-monetary incentives (Edwards et al., 2010). A non-monetary incentive may include the use of gift cards or a tangible gift such as a calculator. Using a monetary or non-monetary incentive has a positive effect on the “willingness to participate” (Treweek et al., 2011, p. 13). In fact, when incentives are used, the “odds of response are almost doubled” (Edwards, et al., 2010, p. 5).

In addition, understanding why potential participants refuse participation in clinical studies is critical (Brintnall-Karabelas, 2011). One reason potential subjects may refuse participation is because they do not fully understand the study (Brintnall-Karabelas, 2011; Williams et al., 2007; Williams, Irvine, McGinnis, McMurdo & Crombie, 2007). The educational benefits should be communicated early in the study (Brintnall-Karabelas, 2011). Education can include a simple verbal discussion, including factsheets, presentations, or the use of a website (Brintnall-Karabelas, 2011). There may be other reasons potential subjects refuse participation which research teams can identify by looking at data on the characteristics of past subjects who declined to participate. For example, ongoing studies with recruitment issues should revisit their protocols and consider changing their inclusion and exclusion criteria (Brintnall-Karabelas, 2011; McDonald et al., 2006). Taking into consideration “refusal data and

[making] simple modifications that would accommodate the needs of potential participants” would ensure additional refusals will not occur for similar reasons that have already been documented (Brintnall-Karabelas, 2011, p. 71).

Equally important as getting as many subjects to participate as possible is encouraging participant retention. This goal can be accomplished through various methods identified in the literature. First, giving participants access to their information sheets (any non-sensitive data collected on the participant which the researchers feel they can share) provides participants with a stronger sense of involvement in the study (Newington & Metcalfe, 2014). Second, ensuring non-English speaking participants can be fully involved in the study is important, which can be accomplished by supplying materials in additional languages. (Newington & Metcalfe, 2014; George et al., 2014). Third, diversifying the recruitment techniques by meeting with potential subjects in addition to advertising the study can help (Newington & Metcalfe, 2014; Bjornson-Benson et al., 1993). Other methods aimed at increasing participant retention include, designing studies around participants’ schedules, developing ways to easily identify and subsequently access eligible subjects, and ensuring recruiters are properly trained with the right set of knowledge and skills (Newington & Metcalfe, 2014).

While there is limited research on participation in smoking cessation programs, the findings of this research are interesting. The less a youth smoker (ages 13-18) smokes, the more apt he is to join the study (Backinger et al., 2007). The opposite is true of heavier adolescent smokers: they are more difficult to recruit but their retention rates are higher than light smokers (Backinger, et al., 2007).

General Recruitment Channels

In addition to understanding why subjects participate in research studies, researchers have identified a variety of different recruitment methods. Recruitment channels include the use of newspaper advertisements, direct mailing and the use of person-to-person contact or word of mouth (Robinson et al., 2007). Additionally, posters and brochures can be used to supplement other channels (Robinson et al., 2007). Diversity in recruitment channels can increase the effectiveness of a recruitment campaign (Bjornson-Benson et al., 1993).

The addition of media campaigns fosters diversity within the recruitment methodology of a study by increasing the amount of channels. A media campaign can include use of radio, television, posters, and internet advertising (Williams et al., 2007). Media allows the researchers to branch out and become “less constrained in the mechanisms they employ than direct communications between researchers and the potential participants.” (Williams et al., 2007, p. 1453). There is also evidence that media campaigns can spread altruistic feelings across a wider audience (Williams et al., 2007; Frates, Bohrer & Thomas, 2006). Facebook, for example, is a low cost alternative to traditional media advertising (radio, television, posters) which requires minimal personnel and includes powerful analytical tools (Chu & Snider, 2012). Past web-assisted tobacco cessation studies have increased recruitment by using Google AdWords, “medical Internet media,” social media, standard media, word of mouth, and broadcast email (Gordon et al., 2006; Heffner, Wyszynski, Comstock, Mercer & Bricker, 2013).

Community College Recruitment

In regards to the community college environment, researchers have used a wide variety of methods to recruit from community college campuses. These methods include the use of student newsletters, flyers, attendance at events, and announcements made by college professors

(Prokhorov et al., 2007). Having the community college professors provide the survey or handout any necessary documentation has proved to be particularly successful (Neenan, Lea, & Lesesky, 2012). In addition to the use of the professors, supplementary methods for administering surveys include in person contact or the use of remote methods (Marchand, Glenn & Bastani, 2013). The in person administrative method would involve either the primary investigator or someone else who is knowledgeable of the survey or clinical trial (Marchand et al., 2013). Remote methods include the use of outside resources such as local community college administrative staff, taking advantage of the media or the use of email or internet based surveys (Marchand et al., 2013). However, Marchand et al. reported that the remote methodology led to a “higher rate of incomplete or improbable responses” (2013, p. 7). While there is considerable research on recruitment of research subjects from community colleges in general, the literature on tobacco cessation studies conducted at community colleges is limited (Prokhorov et al., 2008). In regards to web-assisted tobacco cessation studies, no literature could be found describing previously used recruitment methods.

While the literature does highlight some reasons why potential subjects agree or refuse to participate in studies, general recruitment methods and channels, and recruitment of research subjects from community college campuses, WATI can still benefit from information gathered from the participating champions. In order to learn more about the methods implemented by the champions, I sent a survey and to all the champions and interviewed the champions from the community colleges that had recruited the most students for the WATI study.

Methodology

This section describes the data collection and analysis processes I used during the research study. In order to collect sufficient data to answer my research questions, I used a survey instrument and semi-structured phone interviews. This section will also describe both the strengths and limitations of my chosen data collection strategies and subsequent methods of analysis.

Data Collection

In order to understand and examine the recruitment strategies employed by the WATI team, I distributed a survey to local community college champions. The survey was also supplemented with the use of phone interviews. The WATI team supplied me with a contact list of its various connections at New York State's community colleges. These connections are known as champions, the individuals who do local recruitment at their respective community college campuses for the WATI study. I chose the champions as an appropriate population due to their recruitment responsibilities and proximity to their community college campus' population.

When determining my methods, I took into consideration the value of transparency. The IRB process inherently promotes transparency by requiring researchers to write out and explain their research in detail. I was required to submit my methodology for IRB approval. This process also promotes accountability as a researcher; I am now accountable to the IRB and the methodology I submitted. I received Binghamton IRB approval on March 5, 2014, which can be found in Appendix A.

Surveys. I received a list of 20 champions from WATI's primary investigator, and I sent my survey to each of them. The use of a survey allows for data collection on a larger scale and has the benefit of being relatively easy to administer. The survey tool was sent electronically to

champions via the use of their email addresses and surveymonkey.com. I first sent the survey to the champions on March 19, 2014. I then sent out a reminder on March 28, 2014. A total of twelve responded out of the population of twenty, which resulted in a response rate of 60%. One person accidentally submitted the survey twice, which I was able to identify and remove from analysis. The survey was confidential due to my ability to connect the survey to each corresponding champion and his or her community college, which I asked them to indicate on the survey.

I created the survey based on feedback from my internship supervisor at the University of Rochester, capstone professor and second reader. The survey can be found in Appendix B. It contained both open-ended and close-ended questions. The survey was designed to gather general recruitment information from the champions. In addition, it also asked which recruitment strategies are commonly used and are the most successful. Other topics relevant to this research and addressed by the survey include:

- Community college responsiveness (i.e. is the student body and administration receptive to research studies)
- WATI study advertisements (posters and flyers)
- Time spent every week on recruitment by the champion
- Questions regarding the WATI team and their support for the champions

Interviews. In order to supplement my survey, I also conducted semi-structured phone interviews. Interviewees were chosen from the ten most successful community college campuses. A successful campus was defined as those with the highest recruitment rate within the WATI study. I sent an email to the champions representing this population to let them know I would be contacting them. Phone interviews took place during the second half of the month of

March and lasted between 15 and 30 minutes. I was able to conduct six interviews. The interviews, like the survey, were confidential.

The interview questions sought to discover any additional topics the survey may not have addressed. This gave me a better understanding of the interviewee's local community college and their unique recruitment strategy or philosophy. The benefit of a semi-structured interview is the ability to have a conversation with a person. A survey, on the other hand, provides one-sided answers. Interviews also give the opportunity for follow-up questions. The interviews provided insight into why those particular champions and campuses had such high response rates. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

Due to the use of a small population (the champions), I used descriptive statistics (e.g. averages or percentages) to analyze and summarize the survey data. The small sample size precluded me from utilizing more advanced methods of statistical analysis. The results of the survey can be found in Appendix D. I recorded the interviews and took notes. Using the notes I took, I was able to identify key themes from the overall interview data by grouping different interview responses into distinct categories. Analyzing qualitative data thematically allows for a better understanding of the data. The open-ended responses found within the survey were also categorized by key themes and analyzed. I grouped responses for both the interview questions and the survey open-ended questions into categories which allowed me to see patterns I would have likely missed otherwise.

Strengths

The use of both the survey and phone interviews is the primary strength of my study. Mixed methods provide a more comprehensive view of the population and the data collected.

This allowed for triangulation which meant I could synthesize findings more easily by comparing data across both the interviews and survey. The survey alone would not have been able to delve as deeply into the nuances of community college study recruitment. The phone interviews allowed for more detailed responses from participants and a more focused viewpoint.

Another important strength of the study is the use of the WATI champions rather than community college students. These individuals have intimate knowledge of community college recruitment due to their unique role within both the WATI study and their campuses. Being able to both survey them and talk with them over the phone gave important feedback for the WATI team. Moreover, while the population was small, I was able to reach out to all champions instead of a sample with the survey. In addition, by doing the interviews after the survey, I was able to ask specific survey related follow-up questions.

Limitations

The first limitation of my study is the possibility respondents did not answer my survey or interview questions honestly. Respondents may fear that the WATI team will recognize who gave what answer. The respondents do not want to upset the sponsoring organization, WATI, and may have provided answers they believed WATI wanted to hear. In order to overcome this limitation, I ensured each respondent that his or her survey and interview were confidential.

Another limitation to my study is the small population size. I minimized this limitation by using a mixed methods approach. An additional limitation was my inability to do inferential statistics. The small population size meant I could only use descriptive statistics. The phone interviews also helped to alleviate this issue by allowing me to collect additional data. Finally, my response rate is also a limitation. The champions I was not able to contact may have had additional

pertinent information to share, which could have led to additional findings or recommendations emerging from my data analysis.

Findings

Based on descriptive statistics and the thematic coding used to analyze the data collected, three main findings emerged. The three findings are as follows: 1) the champions at the participating community colleges are satisfied with the current efforts of the WATI team and acknowledge the benefits of the study for their campus; 2) champions use a wide array of recruitment techniques with mass email, poster advertisements, and website banner ads identified as the most effective; and 3) the community college environment affects recruitment efforts and is an additional challenge to consider.

Finding #1: The champions at the participating community colleges are satisfied with the WATI team and acknowledge the benefits of the study for their campuses.

The interviews and survey data indicate that the champions believe the project is beneficial for their campus and are happy with the WATI team. During the phone interviews, all six stated they wished they could do more to help the team reach its goals. When asked in an open-ended question about the benefits of the WATI study's presence on their campus, 75% responded ($n = 9$) and all of those responses demonstrated the benefits of the study for their respective campus. Nine of the twelve champions completing the survey also agree that their students are enthusiastic about participating in research studies. The overarching theme was the way the study benefits the student body by adding to smoking cessation resources. The open-ended answers, which highlight this theme, include:

- “It provides another smoking cessation resource for students interested in quitting, particularly since we just became a tobacco free campus.”

- “This program really peeked [sic] the interest of students who expressed interest in quitting but need that extra push.”
- “Students are influenced by the opportunity to participate in ‘real’ research.”

The champions were also satisfied with the WATI team and their efforts. When asked if the WATI team was helpful and able to answer questions, 72.7% (n = 8) of survey respondents strongly agreed. All survey respondents either agreed, or strongly agreed, that the team was timely with their responses when contacted. The full results to these WATI team satisfaction questions are in table 1 below:

Table 1: Survey respondent’s satisfaction with the WATI team

Statement/Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree/Strongly Disagree
The University of Rochester (U of R) research team (WATI) is helpful and able to answer any questions I have regarding the study.	72.7% (n = 8)	27.3% (n = 3)	0%
The U of R research team (WATI) is timely with their responses.	50.0% (n = 5)	50.0% (n = 5)	0%
The WATI study was adequately described to me when I agree to recruit for it.	72.7% (n = 8)	27.3% (n = 3)	0%

Those who participated in phone interviews provided additional impressions of the team. Four interviewees indicated that they were impressed with WATI’s work and the passion the team exudes when discussing the project. For example, one interviewee stated that the “researchers were very passionate, enthusiastic and earnest; I think they explained it adequately and I knew what I was supposed to do...” Other interviewees expressed similar feelings towards the WATI team when asked about their interactions. Consistent with the interview feedback, one

survey respondent state that s/he is “quite pleased with the UR team, willingness to [help to] many extra miles, open to candid talks, very positive and supportive...” Overall, the champions are satisfied and even impressed with the champion recruitment system. They appreciate the role the study has on their campus and they understand their own role of recruiting within the study.

During the phone interviews, all six stated they wished they could do more to help the team reach its goals. However, the amount of time champions spend on recruiting for WATI each week is low. Seven respondents spend between 0 and 1 hour recruiting and four claim to spend between 1-5 hours. The minimal amount of time spent recruiting is an issue which poses an additional challenge for the WATI study. The issues I faced when conducting phone interviews also suggest some champions may not be fully committed to the WATI study. The six champions I talked with over the phone were willing to spare a few minutes of their day to have a conversation with me about WATI. However, when trying to contact other champions on my list, I met some resistance. One champion commented that she had already filled out the survey and did not want me to waste any more of her time. Others did not respond to my emails or voice messages I had left.

Finding #2: Champions use a wide array of recruitment techniques with mass email, poster advertisements, and website banner ads identified as the most effective.

The champions use a wide variety of resources and methods to recruit at their respective community college campuses. The recruitment resources come from both within their campus and the materials sent to them via the WATI team. For some, the WATI study is not their first research study they have recruited for: 41.7% of survey respondents ($n = 5$) reported they had recruited for studies before. One interviewee expressed concerns about the recruitment process based on previous focus groups in which she had participated. The interviewee’s concern was in

relation to the use of Facebook and Twitter as a recruitment method. According to the interviewee, “students [in the focus group] feel their social media is theirs and they don’t want interference from us folks who just want to bring health information to them.” However, three other interviewees reported that social media (i.e. Facebook and Twitter) is a viable method and one said, “Anything should be done and everything should be done to promote information about WATI.”

The most common recruitment channel used by champions is mass email with 91.7% (n = 11) of survey respondents using it. Table 2 below shows the methods used by the champions. Some interviewees reported difficulty with getting the mass emails sent out. College administrations are quite strict with the use of their email systems, and three of the champions I talked with had to go through administrative red tape to gain access. One interviewee stated that it took months to get approval, which set the study back on their campus. Another interviewee stated that their administration bans recruitment materials from their mass email system. However, the one campus that banned mass email is also one of the most successful in their recruitment efforts. This particular champion uses the “rotator” on the community college’s website. The rotator is a banner ad, located in the “current students” subsection of the website, which rotates through various advertisements of activities and events happening on campus. This rotator, put together by the marketing department of the college, is the only method used by the champion.

Table 2: Recruitment methods used by the champions

Recruitment Method	<i>% using method</i>	<i># using method</i>
Mass email	91.7	11
Tear-offs	66.7	8
Posters	58.3	7
Person to Person Contact	58.3	7
Word of Mouth	50.0	6
Tabling	50.0	6
Bulletin Boards	50.0	6
Video Screens	33.3	4
Card Handouts	33.3	4
Advertisements in Student Hangouts (e.g. Union, Lounges)	25.0	3
Brochures	16.7	2
Table Tents	8.3	1
QR Codes	8.3	1
Facebook	8.3	1
Twitter	0	0
Easels	0.0	0
Other (please specify)	50.0	6

The “other” category of recruitment methods on the survey uncovered some unconventional ways of recruitment such as something called “Newsflush” which are bathroom stall posters. Additional methods include referrals from the health office, health fairs, “healthful living instructors,” campus meetings, Blackboard/ANGEL systems, and champions making personal appearances in classes or training health teachers.

When asked about the success of the various methods listed in table 2 above, the most common response was “have not tried/ I don’t know”. Three survey respondents indicated mass email was an “extremely successful” method, two indicated “mostly successful,” and four indicated “modestly successful.” In addition, seven survey respondents rated person-to-person contact as either modestly or mostly successful. Other methods that were reported to be modestly successful include word of mouth, tabling, tear-offs, and the WATI posters. Table 3 below shows the champions’ responses to effective recruitment methods. I also asked survey respondents to

review the posters supplied by the WATI team, on a scale of 1 (ineffective) to 10 (effective), and they were relatively unimpressed with the posters. While responses did range, the average rating among the posters was a 4.2 out of 10 (standard deviation = 1). The results for each individual poster are in Appendix D.

Table 3: Champion success with recruitment methods

Recruitment Method	Not Successful	Modestly Successful	Mostly Successful	Extremely Successful	Have not tried/I don't know	Total Response Count
Mass Email	0	4	2	3	3	12
Word of Mouth	0	6	1	1	2	10
Tabling	1	4	1	0	4	10
Table Tents	0	0	1	0	5	6
Tear-offs	1	5	1	1	3	11
Bulletin Boards	0	3	1	0	3	7
Video Screens	0	3	0	0	4	7
Easels	0	0	0	0	6	6
QR Codes	0	2	0	0	4	6
Student Hangouts (e.g. Union, Lounges)	0	1	0	0	6	7
Facebook	1	0	0	0	5	6
Twitter	0	0	0	0	6	6
Brochures	0	2	0	0	5	7
Card Handouts	0	2	0	0	3	5
Posters	1	4	2	0	2	9
Person to Person Contact	0	3	4	0	2	9
Other	0	2	1	1	3	7

Finding #3: The community college environment affects recruitment efforts and is an additional challenge to consider.

As noted by Bailey, Jenkins & Leinbach (2005), community colleges are diverse institutions with students coming from varying backgrounds. Interviewees and survey respondents reflected this theme. Champions were concerned about the impact community college environment has when recruiting for research studies. One survey respondent

commented, “researchers do not always design questions in surveys that reflect an understanding of community college students and organizational structures.” Another respondent stated, “Recruitment is difficult as students are bombarded with so much information...” These sentiments are consistent with comments made during the phone interviews and when asked about the community college environment, three interviewees commented on the additional challenges it offers. One interviewee commented on time commitments, “I think people read it [the recruitment materials]. I think the message got out there, but I think they just considered it and said ‘no, this isn’t the right time for me’.” While taking classes, students can have a difficult time balancing their commitments appropriately. This same interviewee was also concerned with the commuter aspect of community colleges. Students have little connection with the campus and wish to attend class and leave as soon as it ends. They do not wish to participate in anything outside of their class commitments. Another interviewee expressed a similar concern and brought up the “tremendous turnover rate” of students which “complicates [WATI’s recruitment] philosophy.” Students attend community colleges for, ideally, two years and this adds to a lack of connection with their campus and the activities or events occurring there. The majority of students who attend see community colleges as stepping stones to something greater, either to a career or continuing their education.

Recommendations

The data I collected and analyzed identified both strengths and weaknesses associated with the recruitment methods used by WATI and the champions. Using these findings, I have three recommendations which I advise the WATI team and its champions to consider. The recommendations are as follows: 1) supplement the current champion system with additional methods which have been identified as effective; 2) share this study with the participating

champions and conduct further research on recruitment for research at community colleges; and 3) since the champions are satisfied with the current system, the WATI team should continue to foster the relationships they have with the current champions while encouraging them to spend more time recruiting. When creating these recommendations I took into consideration aspects of sustainability. I hope the recommendations I put forth within this capstone will lead to a more sustainable research study for the WATI team.

Recommendation #1: Supplement the current champion system with additional methods that have been identified as effective.

The champions are using a wide variety of methods to recruit from their campuses. The WATI team has suggested some methods which all champions use. However, some individual champions use other additional effective methods which WATI did not suggest. As reported in Finding 2, one of the most successful community college campuses is one that employs the use of the community college's website. The use of the website as well as the marketing department allowed the champion to reach the student body in an inexpensive and relatively easy manner by using a rotator on the college's website. This approach is in contrast to the most common approach pursued by others, mass email. I recommend that WATI suggest other champions explore using rotators on their college websites. Community college websites are used daily by their student bodies, and advertisements are pervasive on most. WATI can take advantage of this web space and the champions can take advantage of potential resources offered by their marketing departments.

The champions also reviewed the WATI team's supplied posters and found them relatively ineffective. This finding suggests that the team should consider reworking their posters. Designing successful posters is difficult and as such, the team should consider having

any newly designed posters reviewed by either the champions or students at the U of R or a local community college prior to using them.

As demonstrated by survey responses presented in Finding 2, the most effective form of recruitment is mass email. WATI should continue to encourage champions to use email as their primary recruitment method. However, for community colleges that cannot easily access their campus's email system, additional methods can be considered. Finding 2 demonstrates that the next most effective methods include, person-to-person contact and referrals, tear-offs, tabling, and the Blackboard/ANGEL systems used by most community colleges. These methods are not as effective as mass email according to the champions but they can be used to make up for the loss of access to mass email systems.

Recommendation #2: Share this study with the participating champions and conduct further research on recruitment for research studies as community colleges.

The champions are disconnected from each other and know little about the efforts of their counterparts at other community colleges. Sharing this study with the champions can act to bridge this gap in knowledge and increase transparency between the team and the individual champions. Findings 1, 2 and 3 show different interpretations of the role of the WATI study on campuses, the methods used and the problems associated with recruiting community college students, respectively. The first finding can help champions better understand the role the study has on their campus through the viewpoint of others. The second finding will help champions learn about various effective methods used on other campuses. Finally, the third finding will highlight the recruitment challenges faced by other champions and their interpretation of each challenge. Each champion is responsible for their own community college but giving them an opportunity to share knowledge and learn from one another is important.

In addition to sharing the report, I recommend that further research be conducted on community college recruitment. Inviting the local champions (from the Rochester area) to a focus group will allow ideas to emerge organically from within the champion system. A focus group will benefit the champions who do not have as much experience in research studies as well. This will give the inexperienced champions an opportunity to discuss recruitment with others who have more experience. This will also give them a chance to bounce ideas off one another. The role of diversity is an important aspect of community colleges, as discussed in the literature review (Bailey, Jenkins & Leinbach, 2005). The WATI team can acquire opinions from a diverse group of champions all at once and new ideas and methods may emerge. The more opinions and experiences shared openly among the champions and the WATI team will benefit the recruitment efforts for the study.

Recommendation #3: Since the champions are satisfied with the current system, the WATI team should continue to foster the relationships they have with the current champions while encouraging them to spend more time recruiting.

As demonstrated by the first finding, the champions are content with the current system. They appreciate the work the WATI team is doing and see this study as an opportunity and a benefit for their campus and student body. The team should continue to foster their relationships with the various champions which will ensure continued collaborative efforts. The champion system is not the problem affecting the recruitment at these community colleges. The champions I talked with over the phone are willing and able to recruit from their campuses, their own time and obligations permitting.

However, Finding 1 also demonstrates the lack of time champions dedicate to recruitment each week. WATI should encourage the champions to spend more time recruiting from their

respective campuses and learn why they spend so little time on the study. For example, WATI could encourage champions to spend more time recruiting by offering them monetary incentives. Providing compensation may give the champions more reason to actively recruit on their campuses. Additionally, learning about time commitments can become a part of the potential further research and focus groups mentioned in recommendation 2. Finally, WATI should continue to keep each champion up to date on the study as well as continue to supply him or her with any additional recruitment related information.

Conclusion

The champions are a critical component of the WATI research study and, more specifically, the recruitment process itself. The WATI team has built a strong network of individuals who see the benefits of the study for their respective community colleges. The individuals I talked with over the phone seem to be committed to helping the WATI project succeed. The findings and recommendations found within this capstone may be used to assist the WATI team in ensuring effective recruitment methods are being used.

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Appendix A

Human Subjects Research Approval

Date: March 5, 2014

To: Michael Dunn, CCPA

From: Anne M. Casella, CIP Administrator
Human Subjects Research Review Committee

Subject: Human Subjects Research Approval
Protocol Number: 3222-14
Protocol title: *Strategies for Recruiting Community College Students into
Research Studies*

Your project identified above was reviewed by the HSRRC and has received an Exempt approval pursuant to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations, 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) .

An exempt status signifies that you will not be required to submit a Continuing Review application as long as your project involving human subjects remains unchanged. If your project undergoes any changes these changes must be reported to our office prior to implementation. Please complete the modification form found at the following link:http://research.binghamton.edu/Compliance/humansubjects/COEUS_Docs.php

Principal Investigators or any individual involved in the research must report any problems involving the conduct of the study or subject participation. Any problems involving recruitment and consent processes or any deviations from the approved protocol should be reported in writing within five (5) business days as outlined in Binghamton University, Human Subjects Research Review Office, Policy and Procedures IX.F.1 Unanticipated Problems/adverse events/complaints. We require that the Unanticipated Problems/adverse events/complaints form be submitted to our office, found at the following link: http://research.binghamton.edu/Compliance/humansubjects/COEUS_Docs.php

University policy requires you to maintain as a part of your records, any documents pertaining to the use of human subjects in your research. This includes any information or materials conveyed to, and received from, the subjects, as well as any executed consent forms, data and analysis results. These records must be maintained for at least six years after project completion or termination. If this is a funded project, you should be aware that these records are subject to inspection and review by authorized representative of the University, State and Federal governments.

Please notify this office when your project is complete by completing and forwarding to our office the Protocol closure form found at the following link: http://research.binghamton.edu/Compliance/humansubjects/COEUS_Docs.php Upon

notification we will close the above referenced file. Any reactivation of the project will require a new application.

This documentation is being provided to you via email. A hard copy will not be mailed unless you request us to do so.

Thank you for your cooperation, I wish you success in your research, and please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions or require further assistance.

cc: file
Kristina Lambright

Diane Bulizak, Secretary
Human Subjects Research Review Office
Biotechnology Building, Room 2205
Binghamton University
85 Murray Hill Rd.
Vestal, NY 13850
dbulizak@binghamton.edu
Telephone: (607) 777-3818
Fax: (607) 777-5025

Appendix B

Survey Instrument

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Your participation will help the University of Rochester research team, WATI (Web-Assisted Tobacco Intervention) learn more about recruitment efforts at community colleges. The feedback from this survey will be used to create a better recruitment experience for research studies at community college campuses. This survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. All answers will be kept confidential. Your participation is voluntary. If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please contact me at mdunn7@binghamton.edu.

Do you wish to continue?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Section One: General Information

1. What community college campus do you attend and/or work for?
 - a. Fill-in-box
2. What is your affiliation with the community college? (select all that apply)
 - a. Full Time Student
 - b. Part Time Student
 - c. Faculty/Academic Professional
 - d. Administrator
 - e. Staff
 - f. Other (Fill-in-box)
3. What is your age?
 - a. 18-24
 - b. 25-34
 - c. 45-54
 - d. 55-64
 - e. 65 years or older
4. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

5. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
 - a. High school graduate or equivalent (GED)
 - b. Some college credit, no degree
 - c. Associate degree
 - d. Bachelor's degree
 - e. Master's degree
 - f. Doctorate degree
6. Have you participated in recruitment for a research study before?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. How did you hear about the Web Assisted Tobacco Intervention (WATI) research study?
 - a. Contacted directly by University of Rochester research team (WATI)
 - b. Through community college administration
 - c. Colleagues at other community college
 - d. Other (fill-in-box)

Section Two: Recruitment Questions

1. How do you recruit students for research studies such as the WATI study? (select all that apply)
 - a. Mass Email
 - b. Word of Mouth
 - c. Tabling
 - d. Table Tents
 - e. Tear-offs
 - f. Bulletin Boards
 - g. Video Screens
 - h. Easels
 - i. QR Codes
 - j. Student Hangouts (Union, Lounges)
 - k. Facebook
 - l. Twitter
 - m. Brochures
 - n. Card Handouts
 - o. Posters
 - p. Person to Person Contact
 - q. Other (fill in box)

2. Below is the same list of recruitment strategies, please rate how successful you have been with each:
 - a. [List again with stem style answers]
 - i. Not Successful
 - ii. Modestly Successful
 - iii. Mostly Successful
 - iv. Extremely Successful
 - v. Have not tried/ I don't know

Please tell me your level of agreement with the following statements:

3. Students at my community college are enthusiastic about participating in research studies like WATI.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly Disagree
4. Institutional leaders at my community college are supportive of research studies similar to WATI.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly Disagree
5. If your community college is not accepting of research studies, please tell us why.
 - a. Open text box
6. Below are pictures of recruitment flyers and posters for the WATI project. Please rate each on a scale of 1 (Ineffective) to 10 (Very Effective):
7. Are there any approaches to recruitment not described so far in this survey that you have used and would recommend?
 - a. Open text box
 - b.
8. Approximately how many hours a week do you spend recruiting for this study?
 - a. 1 – 5 hours
 - b. 5 – 10 hours
 - c. 10 – 15 hours
 - d. 15 – 20 hours
 - e. 20 or more

This section focuses on the WATI study. First, tell me about your level of agreement with the following statements:

1. The University of Rochester research team (WATI) is helpful and able to answer any questions I have regarding the study.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly Disagree
2. The University of Rochester research team (WATI) is timely with their responses.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly Disagree
2. The WATI study was adequately described to me when I agreed to recruit for it.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly Disagree
3. How do you communicate with the University of Rochester research team (WATI)?
 - a. Email
 - b. Phone
 - c. In person
 - d. Other (fill in box)
4. Please describe what benefit you see to participating in this study.
 - a. Open text box
5. Do you have any additional comments or concerns you would like to share?
 - a. Open text box

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Champion Semi-Structured Interview Questions and Protocol

Phone Introduction:

Hi, my name is Michael Dunn and I am representing the University of Rochester research team, Web Assisted Tobacco Intervention or WATI. This phone conversation is being recorded for transcription purposes and analysis. The data will be used to benefit the recruitment methods used by the WATI team at participating community colleges. Do you wish to proceed with the interview?

Semi-Structured Questions:

1. How long have you been recruiting for the University of Rochester research team, Web Assisted Tobacco Intervention (WATI)?
2. What is your affiliation with your community college?
3. Have you recruited for any other research studies aside from WATI?
4. What methods of recruitment do you use when recruiting from your campus?
5. Which of the discussed methods do you find particularly effective? Ineffective?
6. What challenges do you run into when recruiting from your campus?
7. [If mass emails were not brought up.] What is your opinion on the use of mass emails for study recruitment?
8. What is your opinion on using the internet for recruitment? In particular, Facebook and twitter?
9. Do you use any of the WATI team supplied recruitment materials, such as posters and table cards?
10. What is your opinion on tabling at events (attending events and setting up a table with information about the study as a recruitment method)?
11. Does your community college have designated smoking areas?
 - a. If so, do you use those areas to recruit for this study?
12. Do you feel that your community college (students, faculty, and administration) is accepting of research studies?
13. Do you wish to share any other details about your recruitment experiences?

Appendix D

Survey Results

1. Do you wish to continue?

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Yes	100.0%	13
No	0.0%	0

2. What community college campus do you attend and/or work for?

Responses
Cayuga CC
Onondaga Community College
Hudson Valley Community College
Jamestown Community College
Tompkins Cortland Community College
Mowhawk Valley Community College
Erie Community College
Niagara Community College
Monroe Community College
GCC

3. What is your affiliation with the community college? (select all that apply)

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Full Time Student	0.0%	0
Part Time Student	0.0%	0
Faculty/Academic Professional	41.7%	5
Administrator	50.0%	6
Staff	16.7%	2
Other (please specify)	8.3%	1

4. What is your age?

Answer Options	Percent	Count
18-24	0.0%	0
25-34	0.0%	0
45-54	16.7%	2
55-64	83.3%	10
65 years or older	0.0%	0

5. What is your gender?

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Male	8.3%	1
Female	91.7%	11

6. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

Answer Options	Percent	Count
High school graduate or equivalent (GED)	0.0%	0
Some college credit, no degree	0.0%	0
Associate degree	8.3%	1
Bachelor's degree	25.0%	3
Master's degree	50.0%	6
Doctorate degree	16.7%	2

7. Have you participated in recruitment for a research study before?

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Yes	41.7%	5
No	58.3%	7

8. How did you hear about the Web Assisted Tobacco Intervention (WATI) research study?

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Contacted directly by University of Rochester research team (WATI)	91.7%	11
Through CC administration	8.3%	1
Colleagues at other CC	0.0%	0

Other (please specify)	0
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9. How did you recruit students for research studies such as the WATI study? (select all that apply)

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Mass email	91.7%	11
Word of Mouth	50.0%	6
Tabling	50.0%	6
Table Tents	8.3%	1
Tear-offs	66.7%	8
Bulletin Boards	50.0%	6
Video Screens	33.3%	4
Easels	0.0%	0
QR Codes	8.3%	1
Student Hangouts (e.g. Union, Lounges)	25.0%	3
Facebook	8.3%	1
Twitter	0.0%	0
Brochures	16.7%	2
Card Handouts	33.3%	4
Posters	58.3%	7
Person to Person Contact	58.3%	7
Other (please specify)	50.0%	6

10. Below is the same list of recruitment styles described earlier, please rate how successful you have been with each.

Answer Options	Not Successful	Modestly Successful	Mostly Successful	Extremely Successful	Have not tried/I don't know	Response Count
Mass Email	0	4	2	3	3	12
Word of Mouth	0	6	1	1	2	10
Tabling	1	4	1	0	4	10
Table Tents	0	0	1	0	5	6
Tear-offs	1	5	1	1	3	11
Bulletin Boards	0	3	1	0	3	7
Video Screens	0	3	0	0	4	7
Easels	0	0	0	0	6	6
QR Codes	0	2	0	0	4	6
Student Hangouts (e.g. Union, Lounges)	0	1	0	0	6	7
Facebook	1	0	0	0	5	6
Twitter	0	0	0	0	6	6
Brochures	0	2	0	0	5	7
Card Handouts	0	2	0	0	3	5
Posters	1	4	2	0	2	9
Person to Person Contact	0	3	4	0	2	9
Other	0	2	1	1	3	7

11. Students at my community college are enthusiastic about participating in research studies similar to WATI.

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0
Agree	75.0%	9
Disagree	16.7%	2
Strongly Disagree	8.3%	1

12. Institutional leaders at my community college are supportive of research studies similar to WATI.

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	27.3%	3
Agree	72.7%	8
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0

Questions 13 through 17 asked respondents to rate the below posters. A picture of the poster was supplied and each was rated by the respondent on a scale of 1 (ineffective) to 10 (effective).

13.

So You're Ready to Drop Smoking to the Curb?

Join a Research Study & Earn Up to \$45.00

You will be paid for answering online surveys whether you stop smoking or not



You may be eligible to join if
you are:

An NYS Community College
student at least 18 years old
and already to quit in the next
3 months!



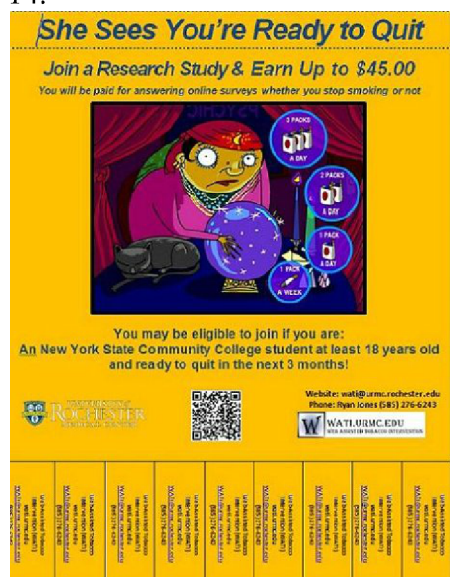
Website: wal@umc.rochester.edu
Phone: Ryan Jones (585) 275-6281



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Answer Options	Percent	Count
1	9.1%	1
2	9.1%	1
3	18.2%	2
4	27.3%	3
5	9.1%	1
6	9.1%	1
7	0.0%	0
8	9.1%	1
9	9.1%	1
10	0.0%	0

14.



Answer Options	Percent	Count
1	9.1%	1
2	0.0%	0
3	9.1%	1
4	9.1%	1
5	18.2%	2
6	9.1%	1
7	0.0%	0
8	45.5%	5
9	0.0%	0
10	0.0%	0

LOOKING TO QUIT? RECRUITING COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS INTO AN ONLINE SMOKING CESSATION STUDY


40

15.

***I'm Ready to Stop Smoking,
But How?***


**Join an Online Research Study & Earn Up to
\$45.00**

You will be paid for answering online surveys whether you stop smoking or not



You may be eligible to join if you are:
An NYS Community College student at least 18 years old and
ready to quit!

UNIVERSITY of
ROCHESTER
MEDICAL CENTER



Website: wati@urmc.rochester.edu
Phone: Ryan Jones (585) 276-6243

WATI.URMC.EDU
WATSON INSTITUTE FOR TOBACCO CESSATION RESEARCH

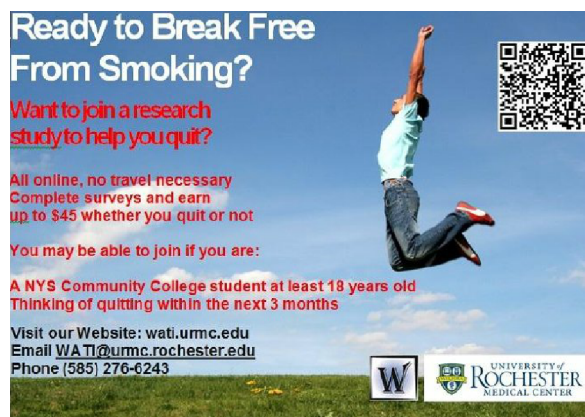
Answer Options	Percent	Count
1	0.0%	0
2	0.0%	0
3	0.0%	0
4	9.1%	1
5	9.1%	1
6	0.0%	0
7	18.2%	2
8	45.5%	5
9	18.2%	2
10	0.0%	0

16.



Answer Options	Percent	Count
1	9.1%	1
2	9.1%	1
3	9.1%	1
4	18.2%	2
5	18.2%	2
6	9.1%	1
7	9.1%	1
8	18.2%	2
9	0.0%	0
10	0.0%	0

17.



Answer Options	Percent	Count
1	10.0%	1
2	0.0%	0
3	0.0%	0
4	20.0%	2
5	10.0%	1
6	20.0%	2
7	10.0%	1
8	0.0%	0
9	20.0%	2
10	10.0%	1

18. Are there any approaches to recruitment not described so far in this survey that you have used and would recommend?

Response Text
Portal / Blackboard
no
We use posters with current students involved in positive activities, such as working out in the fitness room
The rotator on the Web Site for Current Students - Very successful.
blanket remote sites, I made personal appearances in classes to pitch the program, train health teachers and encourage their participation

19. Approximately how many hours a week do you spend recruiting for this study?

Answer Options	Percent	Count
0 hours	0.0%	0
0 - 1 hours	63.6%	7
1 - 5 hours	36.4%	4
5 - 10 hours	0.0%	0
10 - 15 hours	0.0%	0
15 - 20 hours	0.0%	0
20 or more	0.0%	0

20. The University of Rochester research team (WATI) is helpful and able to answer any questions I have regarding the study.

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	72.7%	8
Agree	27.3%	3
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0

21. The U of R research team (WATI) is timely with their responses.

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	50.0%	5
Agree	50.0%	5
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0

22. The WATI study was adequately described to me when I agreed to recruit for it.

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	72.7%	8
Agree	27.3%	3
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0

23. How do you communicate with the U of R research team (WATI)? (select all that apply)

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Email	100.0%	11
Phone	81.8%	9
In person	45.5%	5
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0

24. Please describe the benefits, if any that you see regarding your community college's support of the WATI study.

Response Text
It provides another smoking cessation resource for students interested in quitting, particularly since we just became a tobacco free campus.
This program really peaked the interest of students who expressed interest in quitting but need that extra push. Offering money to do so really got their attention
We will have an alternative venue for students to quit smoking.
benefits for students
It is an excellent incentive if someone is interested in quitting.
personal and financial benefit to our students, supports our smoke free campus policy
Students are influenced by the opportunity to participate in "real" research. UR physical presence is a plus, Regarding a university as an outside source for this, in other words, it's not something born and raised at NCCC
It is another way to get the word out that MCC is going Tobacco Free.
Supports Wellness Program & Tobacco-Free Initiative

25. Do you have any additional comments or concerns you would like to share?

Response Text
We do not do routine mass e-mailing to our students. The college Web site has proven more effective to get in touch with them.
I'm quite pleased with the UR team, willingness to many extra miles, open to candid talks, very positive and supportive. tying this UR program to an existing major, Health Studies, was a natural fit, administration would expect this. We have solid support from administration. Much of that comes from the fact that they don't know what to do about the smoking issue. Having WATI here a positive reflection on the college and especially Student Development.
Recruitment is difficult as students are bombarded with so much information, that they begin to not even see a new poster or flyer.