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College recruitment receptions: bringing the university to the student

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**COLLEGE RECRUITMENT RECEPTIONS:
BRINGING THE UNIVERSITY TO THE STUDENT**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

in

The School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development

By
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to see why students, who attended receptions in Texas, decided to enroll at Louisiana State University and to decide if the receptions are an effective method to recruit students in Texas. These receptions are considered special programming. While normal programming is effective, LSU has looked for ways to go above and beyond these methods. Special programming is another way to, “bring LSU to the student.” These informational receptions for Junior and Senior high school students and their parents have proven to yield students.

This reception format needed to be evaluated from the student’s perspective. It was necessary to evaluate all parts of the program to see what needs to be changed and to see if expansion of the program would be beneficial to the University.

A questionnaire was emailed to 102 reception attendees from both Dallas and Houston, TX. These attendees are now current students at LSU. The response rate was 24%. The study found that 60% of the respondents indicated that the reception did influence their decision to attend LSU. The number one factor that sold student on attending LSU was the campus visit. They also gave insight into the receptions and entire recruitment process.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW OF ADMISSIONS COUNSELING AND RECRUITMENT

“It is the overall mission of the Office of Recruiting Services to actively recruit prospective students to Louisiana State University (LSU) who have displayed academic and extracurricular excellence from a wide range of geographic areas and diverse demographic backgrounds” (Benoit, 2004, p. 1). The problem LSU is now facing is finding new ways to recruit these students. It is the goal of the Office of Recruiting Services to find innovative and effective ways to “bring in” talented students (Benoit, 2004, p. 1).

At Louisiana State University it is the job of an admissions counselor to recruit high school students and guide them throughout the college application process. Counselors have various ways of meeting and corresponding with students in the hopes of taking them from their high school to college in a smooth process. This counselor must be an advisor and friend to the students, the student’s parents, and to their current high school guidance counselor (Benoit, 2004).

Recruiters often work 12-15 hour days and live out of a hotel room in a different city every week. An average LSU out-of-state recruiter will spend 7 months of the year “on the road” (Benoit, 2004, p.58). Typically recruiters will travel from Baton Rouge on a Sunday to their designated city and return late Friday afternoon. However, the possibility of changing one student’s life makes it a very worthy profession.

Lloyd Thacker (2004 p. 8) outlines key issues that are important to the profession of college admissions counseling. A few of these are:

- Education is a process, not a product. Students are learners, not customers.
- The benefits and predictors of good education are knowable, yet virtually impossible to measure.
- Rankings oversimplify and mislead.
- A student's intellectual skills and attitude about learning are more important than where that student goes to college.
- Educational values are best served by admission practices that are consistent with these values.
- College admissions should be part of an educational process directed toward student autonomy and intellectual maturity.
- Colleges can be assessed but not ranked. Students can be evaluated but not measured.
- Student's thoughts, ideas, and passions are worthy to be engaged and handled with the utmost care.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The Office of Recruiting Services at LSU has historically used a variety of methods to recruit the incoming freshman class. They currently work from Recruitment Plus, a comprehensive software system created to coordinate admission and enrollment activities. They have a mailing system to send brochures and letters to all suspect, prospect, and applicant students and utilize telecounseling and web inquiries. Counselors make visits to high school and attend high school programming while also conducting the campus tour sessions, daily. Recently they have added the use of special programming.

Special programming can be defined as recruiting outside of the normal programming duties. Normal programming duties consists of going to high schools to meet with guidance counselors and their students. It also includes attending high school programs. These usually take place in high school gyms or large meeting areas. Recruiters are each issued a table to display their school table banner and recruitment brochures. Students along with their parents are invited to attend the “fair” and browse all of the different universities and colleges. They can stop, pick up brochures, fill out an information card to be placed on our mailing list, and ask the recruiter any questions that they may have. The student is provided with the email address and phone number of the recruiter so they may ask questions at any time. Recruiters are required to answer any student inquiries within 48 hours.

While normal programming is effective, LSU has looked for ways to go above and beyond these methods. Special programming is another way to, “bring LSU to the student.” One form of special programming that we have introduced is the reception format. Informational receptions for Junior and Senior high school students and their parents have proven to be effective. Could they be more effective? Since this is a new program, is it working? Are counselors delivering what the student is looking for? Why are these student’s enrolling at LSU?

In Louisiana, a reception is relatively simple to produce. However, it is always more difficult to set a precedent for recruiting in out-of-state markets. LSU currently has approximately 19% enrollment of non-residents. The largest and most rapidly growing out-of-state market is Texas with over one-third of currently enrolled non-resident students listing this as their home state.

LSU currently hosts several receptions in the greater Dallas/Fort Worth and greater Houston, Texas areas. Each fall semester LSU will host 3 receptions in Houston and 2 in Dallas for high school seniors interested in learning more about the university. In the spring LSU hosts 2 receptions in Houston and 2 in Dallas for interested high school juniors. In the month of July send-off parties will be held in Houston and Dallas. This is to encourage students to make the move to LSU.

The purpose of the Junior and Senior receptions is to get students interested in LSU. Student's who are on the Recruitment Plus system that qualify to meet current admissions standards, a 22 ACT or 1030 SAT along with a 3.0 academic GPA, will receive an invitation to the program (Appendix A). The invitation will arrive at their home approximately three weeks before the reception date. Students are asked to call or email an RSVP response. Students will also receive a phone call or email a week before the program date as a reminder for the event. The top ten "feeder schools" from each area will be mailed an invitation and will be asked to post the packet in the guidance office for any interested, qualified students.

The reception is held at the home of an LSU alumnus. The benefits of this are twofold. Students get to gather in a comfortable, informal setting in their home city to learn about LSU and they can see the success of people that have graduated from LSU and still returned to live and work in Texas. Other area alumni and parents of current or past students that are interested in sharing their story of LSU, and success thereafter are also invited to the receptions. Attendees will mingle for about one half hour and eat appetizers that the alumni hosts have provided. They then watch the LSU DVD followed by an hour long information session. During this session students are given an information packet filled with LSU materials and brochures. This includes an LSU

folder, poster, recruitment brochure, scholarship brochure, orientation brochure, housing and residential college brochures, honors college brochure, fast fact pennant, a “did you know” brochure, an LSU pen and magnet.

Students and parents are asked to voice any questions that have not been answered. Students generally leave very excited about LSU and ready to schedule a visit, if they have not already done so. Parents tend to leave more “at ease” than when they came and often state that they feel more secure about sending their students to Baton Rouge.

Summer send-off receptions are held to help “close the deal” with non-resident students. This is a chance for admitted students, from the same specified areas, to meet other students that have also been admitted to LSU. They can exchange information and see that they will not be alone when becoming a Tiger. This is also a chance for students to ask further questions about LSU.

With increasing enrollment standards and the implementation of the LSU Master Plan it is important to market ourselves to this non-resident population. LSU must see what recruiting measures “attract” out-of-state students to enroll.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The primary purpose of the study is to determine the influence of selected factors on the decision to enroll among currently enrolled freshman students at Louisiana State University who graduated from high school in Texas and were recruited at receptions to attend LSU.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to see why students, who attended receptions in Texas, decided to enroll at Louisiana State University.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. The first objective of the study was to determine if the students perceived that they were actively recruited by LSU while they were in high school and if not the students were asked to explain why they did not feel they were actively recruited
2. The second objective of the study was to determine what type of contacts the student had with their LSU admissions counselor during their Junior and Senior years of high school.
3. The third objective was to determine what type of correspondences the student received prior to attending the LSU sponsored reception in Texas and if the amount of correspondence was adequate.
4. The fourth objective of the study was to determine if the locations in Texas that LSU currently holds receptions are convenient for students to attend and to determine the length of time it took to travel to the receptions.
5. The fifth objective of the study was to determine if all the questions that were asked by the student about LSU were answered by the LSU representative and to list what questions were not answered.
6. The sixth objective of the study was to determine if the students perceived that the reception they attended influenced their decision to attend LSU or if some other experience influenced their decision to attend LSU and to list any suggestion they might have about improving future receptions.
7. The seventh objective of the study asked the students to list what sold them on LSU.

CHAPTER 2 – REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITMENT

The word admission is rooted in the Latin language and roughly translated means “to go towards the mission” (Jump, 2004). “The core of college admission is a college’s mission and those of us in the profession are in some sense missionaries spreading a gospel of empowerment, hope, and personal growth through education” (Jump, 2004, p. 16).

Historically, as people settled in the New World they realized that an education would be important for prosperity and to civilize the new frontier. Thereafter, Harvard University was created in 1636 with admissions standards for students that wanted to enter the university. All students had to be fluent in the languages of Latin and Greek. Yale University opened their doors in 1701 and made an understanding of Mathematics their only admissions requirement (Henderson & Swann, 1998).

Settlers were angered that their offspring were seen as not capable to attend the rapidly growing Universities in the New World and were tired of sending their children to England to receive an education. Soon, Universities went to having open admissions standards. This means that all students interested in attending college were admitted to any institution. According to Henderson and Swann (1998) the President of the University of Michigan stated that, “We have cheapened education as to place it within the reach of everyone” (p. 16). Many university presidents felt differently. Education was starting to be seen as a public service for the world (Henderson & Swann, 1998).

During the 1920’s many universities took on the practice of what is now known as admissions counseling. These University employees, “corresponded with prospective students, visited high schools, sent and received application forms, handled scholarship

and financial aid, greeted freshmen students, conducted orientation, and advised and counseled students” (Henderson & Swann, 1998, p. 21). Many private universities hired an employee with the title of admissions officer to go to high schools and spread the word of their university. This led to the founding of the governing body of college admissions, the National Association of College Admissions Counseling (NACAC) (Henderson & Swann, 1998). This organization now has many standards that all admissions professional are meant to follow.

Today, the College Board, a non-profit educational association, lists over 3500 schools in the United States. Universities, often along with their state governing educational boards, set admissions standards. These are ever changing and evolving. It is the job of admissions professionals to constantly inform the public of the changing enrollment standards. As an admissions counselor you are responsible for being a counselor and a teacher who assists students and families with making an important decision (Thacker, 2004).

OVERVIEW OF TODAY’S AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

The average high school student is a savvy consumer “shopping” for the institution of their choosing. They research colleges and come to visit with prepared questions. They ask for things such as graduation and retention rates, minority enrollment statistics, job placement rates, and how our students place into graduate and professional programs after their undergraduate degree is completed. They want hard facts and are not to be persuaded by hearing that we have fraternities and sororities on campus. Therefore, the admissions professional must be trained and savvy to help students see how he/she would fit, or not fit into our University. Seventy percent of current high school students plan on attending college (Muntz, 2004).

According to Pamela Kiecker, an independent educational consultant, 81.2% of students visit campus websites. While 74.1% read mail from the University and 74% admit to emailing and corresponding with a college admissions officer. She also explains that 53.7% of high school seniors will apply to five or more colleges. However 71.1% will still enroll at their first choice school (2005, p. 13).

INSTITUTIONAL RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Recruitment strategies can be dated back to the 1920's (Henderson & Swann, 1998). Though these strategies have evolved with time, many are still used along with the addition of the use of electronic media and special programming.

MAIL

According to Henderson and Swann "in the 1950s, admissions offices and any staff they had were first, and foremost, processors of the paperwork for prospective students" (1998, p. 30). Since admission's staff was kept in-office, they relied upon mail to spread the word of their University to prospective students. Neva Black states that, "Personalized letters to traditional students created by admissions staff are very important written communication tools" (1999).

There are various materials that are mailed to prospective students besides personalized letters. Some of these include; brochures (i.e. the college view book), DVDs, postcards, posters, invitations, and fliers (Benoit, 2004). Rob Glass, chairman of the Georgia Foundation for Independent Colleges Board of Advisors, believes colleges should "require each admissions counselor, tour guide, faculty member, and security staff member to read the college view book. The marketing message in this publication should resonate through the campus" (2004, p. 4).

PHONE/TELECOUNSELING

Shortly after the use of mail-outs, the idea of telecounseling was created. This is recruiting via phone. Often colleges will create call lists to work from. For example, admissions staffs might run a list of all high achieving students that they have on their database. They will then distribute the list among staff and have each employee call the students on the list to see if they have any questions about the University.

Student staff is sometimes also used to telecounsel. Current students will make calls after normal work hours to speak with prospective students about campus life and to let these students know the “student perspective” answers to their questions.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA/WORLD WIDE WEB

According to a survey administered by Ohio State University doctoral student, David Strauss, “the majority of students have access to the World Wide Web and have used the World Wide Web to some degree to access information about colleges” (1998, p.17). Kiecker states that “81.2% of high school students use electronic media as their main source of information about institutions of higher learning” (2005).

Many schools have forced students to enter the information age. Campuses such as Louisiana State University, Auburn University and the University of Georgia strongly encourage submission of on-line admissions applications and will print few paper applications.

CAMPUS VISIT PROGRAM

The campus visit program was created in the late 1960s and became a staple of recruitment by the 1970s (Henderson & Swann, 1998). Typically the campus visit will consist of a walking tour of the campus along with an information session given by an admissions counselor. Often the visit can also include other meetings that the student

may request, such as; financial aid, Honors College, housing, and any specific major of interest. Many campuses are now implementing a bus tour program in addition to the walking tour to accommodate families with disabilities and also to make the visit pleasant when there is inclement weather.

In a previous study, Wilkinson found that the campus visit program was the most effective recruitment activity among colleges of agriculture (1990). Alexander Astin, Director of the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA stated that, “the campus visit is the single most important reason high school seniors chose their college” (Henderson & Swann, 1998, p.48). This is the institutions chance to “show off” and show all of its strong points.

HIGH SCHOOL VISITS/COUNSELOR VISITS

The concept of the high school visit began when students could not always make it to different campuses to participate in the campus visit program. High school visits occur when admissions counselors go to the school during the day to meet with interested students and share information on their institution. These counselors are often “called upon to interpret the college environment they represent” (Henderson & Swann, 1998, p. 31).

Counselor visit are also conducted by recruiters throughout the year. This occurs when an admissions professional goes to the high school to meet with the guidance counselor. Many times this is to explain changes occurring in the University that will affect potential students.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

High school programming is typically when a high school invites admissions personal to their school in hopes they will visit with students and parents at night. This was created to involve the parent in the recruiting process. Since programs are typically held at night, unlike high school visits, parents are able to attend with their student (Henderson & Swann, 1998). Recently there has been a push to recruit the parent, not only the student. We must realize that this is a family decision.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMING AND RECEPTIONS

Special programming is designed to extend the university beyond its normal geographic area to reach an audience that may be unreachable by other recruitment techniques (Henderson & Swann, 1998). In her masters thesis Neva Black introduces the term "grassroots recruitment". She defines this as, "reaching out to small groups of individuals by going where they are to recruit them" (1999, p. v). Outreach recruitment has always been synonymous with special programming.

A specific aspect of special programming is the college reception. Receptions are informal or formal gatherings to show the student and their families how much they mean to the university. The purpose is for the student to feel wanted, appreciated, and well informed.

USE OF ALUMNI IN SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Many institutions are starting to use alumni as recruiters, specifically in regards to special programming. These alumni often live in the area that the programming is to take place and have access to resources that admissions staff may not have within reach. Using these alumni volunteers often helps to decrease cost and amount of travel for admissions offices (Hawkins, 1986). "The University of California at Santa Cruz, and

many other institutions, have formed an alumni/parents group to augment the admissions staff at receptions for interested students” (Williams, 1993).

In a prior survey on recruitment, admissions professionals were asked their opinions of the use of alumni as recruiters. All staff responded favorable and considered alumni recruitment helpful (Black, 1999).

PEER INSTITUTIONS USE OF SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

The University of Illinois (www.uillinois.edu) utilizes a similar reception program that is in place at LSU. However, they only hold receptions for students that have been admitted to the University. They also hold visit days for students from specific states.

During a conversation at a professional conference Jennifer Gay from the University of South Carolina did not state any specific receptions that the University holds off campus. They utilize recruiters for campus programs, college fairs, and informational presentations (personal communications).

Penn State’s website (www.psu.edu) states, “For students interested in admission to Penn State who live outside of Pennsylvania, the University provides a professional admissions counselor or trained alumni volunteer who informs students, families, and guidance/career counselors about Penn State's unique offerings”. They also host alumni receptions in key markets.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

A research study was conducted to assess if current LSU students who attended receptions in Texas perceived they were recruited by LSU and if the reception had any influence on their decision to attend LSU.

The survey instrument developed for this study is contained in Appendix C. Dillman's (2000) survey method procedures were followed for this research.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population consists of all 116 students who attended LSU receptions in the state of Texas during the 2003-2004 recruitment season and later enrolled at LSU. The state of Louisiana experienced two severe hurricanes in the fall of 2005 and at this time 14 students who attended the LSU receptions in Texas withdrew from the university. The withdrawal of these 14 students left the population size for this study at 102 students.

The students names were retrieved from the Recruitment Plus computer program. These students were flagged as reception attendees. The student's statuses were checked on the LSU Registrars system to make sure they were still enrolled in LSU classes. After confirming that the students were currently enrolled a list was generated that contained each student's name, LSU email address, and home email address.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT AND PROCEDURES

The investigator-constructed questionnaire included questions that were developed to accomplish the seven objectives of the study (Appendix B). Questions were asked about general LSU recruitment methods and also the LSU reception that the student attended in Texas. The instrument consisted of closed-ended, unordered

choice questions. No demographic questions were asked on the survey as that data was obtained through a secondary source, the Recruitment Plus computer program.

DATA COLLECTION

To accomplish the objectives of the study, the survey was emailed to the 102 students, requesting their participation and informing them of the purpose of the study. The study was emailed to their LSU email address because this account must be checked throughout the year for information on classes and fee bills.

In order to obtain the maximum percentage of surveys returned, Dillman's (2000) method of survey follow-up techniques were used:

1. If the questionnaire was not returned within 5 days after the initial e-mailing the non-respondents received a second survey via e-mail.
2. A third survey was e-mailed was sent to all non-respondents that did not return the second survey one week after the e-mailing of the second survey. The subject line of this e-mail was changed from "LSU Recruitment Survey" to "Texas Reception Information"
3. After the fourth week of the initial mailing all non-respondents received an additional copy of the survey. This survey was sent to their home e-mail address that was collected from the student during the recruitment process before they had received an LSU address.
4. Finally, all of the non-respondents who had a phone number listed in the student directory then received a phone call asking them to complete the survey.

As surveys were returned, the responses were logged onto a spreadsheet. The response rate from the e-mailed surveys was 6% ($n = 7$) after the first week. Because

of this low response rate the research resent the survey to all non-respondents and the heading of the survey was changed from LSU Recruitment Survey to Texas Reception Information. All non-respondents received yet another copy of the survey which was e-mailed to both their LSU e-mail address and to their home e-mail address that was used to recruit these individuals when they were in high school. After sending the survey to all non-respondents for the fourth time, the researcher attempted to find phone numbers for all of the non-respondents. Because of security changes at the university students have the right to not have any telephone information listed in the school directory. The researcher discovered that no administrator on campus has access to this information. This means that if a student denies access to their phone number that there is no way to obtain this information. The researcher obtained 25 phone numbers for non-respondents (these students had their phone numbers listed in the student directory). The researcher attempted to reach all 25 respondents and successfully contacted 8% ($n = 9$). All of the respondents contacted via phone completed the entire survey. The final response rate was 24% ($n = 25$).

ANALYSIS OF DATA

1. The first objective of the study was to determine if the students perceived that they were actively recruited by LSU while they were in high school and if not the students were asked to explain why they did not feel they were actively recruited. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the nominal and/or categorical data and the data from the open-ended question was grouped into categories.
2. The second objective of the study was to determine what type of contacts the student had with their LSU admissions counselor during their Junior and

Senior years of high school. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the data for this objective.

3. The third objective was to determine what type of correspondence the student received prior to attending the LSU sponsored reception in Texas and if the amount of correspondence was adequate. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the nominal and/or categorical data and the data from the open-ended question was grouped into categories.
4. The fourth objective of the study was to determine if the locations in Texas that LSU currently holds receptions are convenient for students to attend and to determine the length of time it took to travel to the receptions. Frequencies and percentage were used to summarize the data for this objective.
5. The fifth objective of the study was to determine if all the questions that were asked by the student about LSU were answered and to list what questions were not answered. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the nominal and/or categorical data and the data was from the open-ended question was grouped into categories.
6. The sixth objective of the study was to determine if the students perceived that that receptions they attended influenced their decision to attend LSU or if some other experience influenced their decision to attend LSU and to list any suggestions they might have about improving future receptions. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the nominal and/or categorical data and the data was from the open-ended question was grouped into categories.

7. The seventh objective of the study asked the students to list what sold them on LSU. The data obtained from the open-ended question was grouped into categories.

CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study was to assess if current LSU students who attended receptions in Texas perceived they were recruited by LSU and if the reception had any influence on their decision to attend LSU. A total of 102 students were surveyed via e-mail. The overall response rate was 24.0% ($n = 25$).

Gender of Respondents

The respondents were first described on the variable gender. The gender of the respondents was obtained from the Recruitment Plus Computer program. The majority of the respondents were female ($n = 16$, 64.0%) whereas 36.0% ($n = 9$) were male.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE ONE

The first objective of the study was to determine if the students perceived that they were actively recruited by LSU while they were in high school. The majority of the respondents perceived they were actively recruited by LSU ($n = 18$, 72.0%) and only 28.0% ($n = 7$) perceived they were not actively recruited by LSU. Individuals who perceived that they were not actively recruited by LSU were asked to explain their perceptions. Two of the respondents ($n = 2$) indicated that they did not receive recruitment material from LSU until they had completed their applications to LSU. Another two of the respondents ($n = 2$) indicated that they never really talked to anyone from LSU. The last three respondents ($n = 3$) felt that they did not receive enough stuff from LSU.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE TWO

The second objective of the study was to determine what type of contacts the student had with their LSU admissions counselor during their Junior and Senior years of high school. The respondents were asked to indicate the type of contacts they had

received from their LSU admission counselor by responding to the following categories: E-mail, Postcard/letter; Phone call; Face to face talk; and Other. The respondents were told to place an “x” by all correspondences that they remember receiving. The largest group of respondents ($n = 15$, 60.0%) indicated that they had some type of face to face talk with an LSU admissions counselor. The type of contacts received as reported by the respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Type of contacts reported by current Louisiana State University students who were recruited from Texas in 2003 and 2004.

Type of Contact	<u>N</u>	Percentage ^a
Face to Face talk	15	60.0
E-mail	13	52.0
Phone call	11	44.0
Postcard/letter	10	40.0
Other	0	0.0

^aPercentage of the total participants that responded. Percentage does not equal 100% due to multiple choice answers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE THREE

The third objective was to determine what type of correspondence the student received prior to attending the LSU sponsored reception in Texas and if the amount of correspondence was adequate. The respondents were asked to indicate the type of correspondence that they received prior to the reception that they attended by responding to the following categories: Mailed invitation; E-mailed invitation; and Phone call. Respondent could have received more than one type of correspondence about the reception. The largest majority of respondents ($n = 22$, 88.0%) indicated that they had received a mailed invitation to the reception. The type of reception correspondences received as reported by the respondents are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Type of correspondences received prior to the Texas reception as reported by current LSU students who were recruited from Texas in 2003 and 2004.

Type of Correspondences Received	<u>N</u>	Percentage ^a
Mailed invitations	22	88.0
E-mailed invitations	12	48.0
Phone calls	11	44.0

^aPercentage of the total participants that responded to each category. Percentage does not equal 100% due to multiple choice answers.

The majority of respondents ($\underline{n} = 23$, 92%) perceived that they received adequate amount of correspondence prior to the reception in Texas and only 8.0% ($\underline{n} = 2$) perceived that they did not receive an adequate amount of correspondences.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE FOUR

The fourth objective of the study was to determine if the locations in Texas that LSU currently holds receptions are convenient for students to attend and to determine the length of time it took to travel to the receptions. The reception location in Texas was convenient for 56.0% ($\underline{n} = 14$) of the respondents but 36.0% ($\underline{n} = 9$) of the respondents indicated that it was not convenient for them. Two individuals (8.0%) could not remember whether the location was or was not convenient for them.

The second part of the fourth objective was to determine the amount of travel time required for the respondents to attend the receptions. The respondents were asked to indicate the amount of time required to travel to the receptions by responding to the following categories: traveled less than 15 minutes to the reception; traveled 16-30 minutes to the reception; traveled 31-45 minutes to the reception; traveled 46-60 minutes to the reception; and traveled longer than 60 minutes to the reception. The largest group of respondents ($\underline{n} = 8$, 32.0%) indicated that they traveled less than 15

minutes to reach the reception location. The time it took to travel to the reception as reported by the respondents is presented in Table 3.

Table 3
The travel time required to reach the reception as reported by current Louisiana State University students who were recruited from Texas in 2003 and 2004.

Travel Time	<u>N</u>	Percentage
Travel less than 15 minutes	8	32.0
Travel time 16-30 minutes	4	16.0
Travel time 31-45 minutes	6	24.0
Travel time 46-60 minutes	4	16.0
Travel time over 1 hour	3	12.0
Total	25	100.0

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE FIVE

The fifth objective of the study was to determine if the LSU representative answered all the questions that the student had about LSU. The majority of the respondents ($n = 23$, 92.0%) indicated that the LSU representative answered all the questions that they had about LSU. Two (8.0%) of the respondents indicated that the representative did not answer all of their questions. If respondents did not feel all of their questions were answered they were asked to list what questions were not reported. Only one of the two individuals that indicated that not all of their questions were answered at the reception replied to this question and her question was in regard to the dorms on LSU's campus.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE SIX

The sixth objective of the study was to determine if the students perceived that the reception they attended influenced them to attend LSU or did some other experience influenced their decision to attend LSU. The second part of this objective was to ask respondents to list any suggestions they might have about improving future receptions. The reception positively influenced the decision of 60.0% ($n = 15$) of the respondents to attend LSU. Ten (40.0%) of the respondents indicated that it was not the reception that influenced them to attend LSU. If the respondents indicated that the reception did not influence them to attend LSU they were asked to explain what did persuade them to attend the university. Only 10 respondents provided additional information. Each of these responses was categorized. These categories included: scholarship received ($n = 5$), the visit to campus ($n = 3$), my mother went there and I use to live in Louisiana ($n = 1$), and I was accepted at LSU ($n = 1$).

Respondents were also asked to list any suggestion that they might have about improving future receptions. Only 12 (48.0%) of the respondents answered this question. Each of these responses was categorized. These categories included: invite current Texas enrolled students to perspective student parties ($n = 4$), have the presenter talk more ($n = 1$), have the receptions be more personal ($n = 1$), more about scholarships ($n = 1$), good job ($n = 1$), the whole experience was very comfortable, personal and informative at the same time ($n = 1$), make sure and talk about ranking programs ($n = 1$), keep track of Texas tigers ($n = 1$), recruit more than Houston, the Dallas kids are really liking LSU and there is little activity to recruit them ($n = 1$).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE SEVEN

The seventh objective of the study asked the students to list what sold them on LSU. Only 20 (80.0%) of the respondents answered this question. Each of these responses was categorized. These categories included: campus visit ($n = 12$), financial aid ($n = 7$), and tiger band ($n = 1$).

CHAPTER 5 – SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to assess if current LSU students who attended receptions in Texas perceived they were recruited by LSU and if the reception had any influence on their decision to attend LSU.

The major objectives in this study were:

1. The first objective of the study was to determine if the students perceived that they were actively recruited by LSU while they were in high school.
2. The second objective of the study was to determine what type of contacts the student had with their LSU admissions counselor during their Junior and Senior years of high school.
3. The third objective was to determine what type of correspondence the student received prior to attending the LSU sponsored reception in Texas and if the amount of correspondence was adequate.
4. The fourth objective of the study was to determine if the locations in Texas that LSU currently holds receptions are convenient for students to attend and to determine the length of time it took to travel to the receptions.
5. The fifth objective of the study was to determine if all of the questions that were asked by the students about LSU were answered by the LSU representative and to list which questions were not answered.
6. The sixth objective of the study was to determine if the students perceived that the reception they attended influenced them to attend LSU or did some other experience influence their decision to attend LSU. The second part of this objective was to ask respondents to list any suggestions they might have about improving future receptions.

7. The seventh objective of the study asked the students to list what sold them on LSU.

To accomplish the objectives of the study, the survey was emailed to the 102 students, requesting their participation and informing them of the purpose of the study. The study was emailed to their LSU email address because this account must be checked throughout the year for information on classes and fee bills.

In order to obtain the maximum percentage of questionnaire returns, the following follow-up techniques were used:

1. If the questionnaire was not returned within 5 days after the initial emailing the sample received a second email.
2. A third email was sent to students that did not participate after 5 days from the second email. The subject line of this email was changed from "LSU Recruitment Survey" to "Texas Reception Information"
3. Non-respondents received a fourth email sent to the home email address that was collected from the student during the recruitment process before they had received an LSU address.
4. Non-respondents then received a fifth and sixth email to their home and LSU email addresses.
5. The remaining students who had not responded to the questionnaire received the survey along with a friendly note. This consisted of how I would appreciate their help and that my thesis was dependant upon their participation.
6. Finally, the non-respondents who had a phone number listed in the student directory then received a phone call asking them to complete the survey.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

All respondents in this survey were between 19 and 20 years old and nine of the respondents are male (36.0%) and 16 female (64.0%). There was a 24% ($n = 25$) response rate.

The first objective of the study was to describe effective recruitment techniques used on currently enrolled students as LSU. The study shows that the respondents who received the most contact with their admissions officer (i.e. phone, email, face to face contact) felt as though they were recruited by LSU. In this study, 72.0% of the respondents perceived that they had been recruited.

The second objective was to determine students what form of contact the respondents had with their LSU admissions counselor. The largest group of students had face to face contact with an LSU admissions counselor but the second largest group of respondents had e-mail contact. These results indicate that most students received more than one type of contact with an LSU admission's counselor.

The third objective of the study was to determine if students received an adequate amount of correspondences prior to all LSU receptions that they attended. The majority (92.0%) of the respondents stated that they did have plenty of correspondence about the reception prior to the reception date. These students received a mailed invitation (88.0%), emailed invitation (48.0%), and/or a phone call (44.0%).

The fourth objective was to determine if the areas that LSU currently holds receptions are convenient for students to attend. The study shows that 56.0% of the respondents thought that the reception was in a convenient location. However 36.0% said the location was not convenient and 8.0% could not remember. The largest group

of respondents ($n = 8$, 32.0%) traveled under 15 minutes to get to the reception. However the second largest group ($n = 6$, 27.0%) traveled 31-45 minutes and three (12.0%) of the respondents traveled longer than an hour. This may be more of an issue of the amount of traffic on the road than actual mileage travel. Because alumni host these receptions in their home, the LSU admission counselor is limited in location availability.

The fifth objective was to determine if the LSU representative answered all questions that the student had about LSU. The majority of the respondent (92%) indicated that the admissions representative answered all of their questions. This indicates that the LSU representatives are well informed about the university.

The sixth objective of the study was to determine if the students perceived that the reception they attended influenced them to attend LSU or did some other experienced influenced their decision to attend LSU. The second part of this objective was to ask respondents to list any suggestions they might have about improving future receptions. Sixty percent of the respondents indicated that the reception did help influence their decision to attend LSU. They offered many suggestions for future receptions. These suggestions for the recruitment staff suggested that they should begin to recruit in Dallas and involve student from Texas that are currently enrolled at LSU in the receptions.

The seventh objective of the study was to determine what was it that sold students on coming to LSU. Visiting the LSU campus is the main selling point for majority of the students, if they get a chance to come and visit the campus they will attend LSU.

Many conclusions can be drawn from this study. It is proven that the receptions are a useful recruiting tool for the Office of Recruiting Services at LSU. However, the

other stand-out factor of this study is the campus visit program. Many students stated that the campus visit/tour is what influenced them to pick LSU.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I would suggest that future studies look at the effectiveness of bringing the University to the student versus bringing the student to the University. The study would need to look to see if the benefit is worth the cost for a fly-in/drive-in tour program.

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APPENDIX A

RECEPTION INVITATION

Greetings from the Office of Recruiting Services at Louisiana State University! We congratulate you on your academic accomplishments and wish you continued success. Our Dallas-Fort Worth Chapter of the LSU Alumni Association and the Office of Recruiting Services invite you to a reception to introduce you to the many opportunities available at LSU. This reception will give you a chance to learn more about our university by talking with alumni and representatives from Louisiana State University.

We hope you will be able to attend either of our receptions, which will be held on **Monday, November 8 and Wednesday, November 10** at the homes of local LSU alumni. Locations are as follows:

Monday, November 8, 2004

7 p.m.

**Home of Mr. and Mrs. Ron Young
802 Trail Lake Drive
Euless, TX
Metro (817) 267-5478**

Wednesday, November 10, 2004

7 p.m.

**Home of Mr. and Mrs. Ron Carver
2129 McDaniel Circle
Plano, TX
(972) 612-8684**

Directions to both receptions are enclosed. If you need further assistance with the location of the reception, please call the appropriate phone number above.

Please contact, by **November 5**, Linda Young at Metro (817) 267-5478 or you may contact Jean Marie Gilman at (225) 578-3899 to let us know which reception you will attend. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

We look forward to meeting you at one of our receptions.

Sincerely,

Jean M. Gilman
Assistant Director

**Louisiana State University
Office of Recruiting Services**

and the

**Dallas-Fort Worth Chapter
of the LSU Alumni Association**

*invite you and your parents to a reception
introducing you to the opportunities available at **LSU***

Monday, November 8, 2004

***Seven o'clock in the evening
at the home of***

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Young

802 Trail Lake Drive

Eules, TX

Metro (817) 267-5478

Wednesday, November 10, 2004

***Seven o'clock in the evening
at the home of***

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Carver

2129 McDaniel Circle

Plano, TX

(972) 612-8684

We hope that you will be able to attend one of our receptions.
Please contact Linda Young, **by November 5**, at
Metro (817) 267-5478 or the Office of Recruiting Services at
(225) 578-3899 to let us know which reception you will attend.

APPENDIX B
RECRUITMENT SURVEY

You are receiving this survey because you are a student from the state of Texas who attended an LSU sponsored reception such as an alumni hosted junior or senior reception or the summer send-off program. Participation in this survey is optional and no names or identifying information will be included in any publications that result from this study. Should you choose to participate in this study, please answer the questions listed below.

In order to complete this study you must first hit your **REPLY Button** and then you will be able to fill the survey out and send it back to me. Thank you for all of your time. I appreciate your help.

1. Do you feel as though LSU actively recruited you while you were a high school student?

YES____ or NO ____

If No, please explain why not?

2. What contact did you have with your LSU admissions counselor throughout your Junior and Senior years of high school? Please place an "x" by all correspondence you remember.

a. E-mail _____

b. Postcard/letter _____

c. Phone call _____

d. Face-to face talk _____

e. Other (please list): _____

Receptions

3. Reception correspondence: Please place an "x" by the correspondence if this is something that you received prior to the reception you attended.

- a. Mailed invitation _____
- b. Emailed invitation _____
- c. Phone call _____

4. Did you receive an adequate amount of correspondence with regard to the reception?

YES _____ or NO _____

If No, please explain what you would have preferred.

5. Was the location of the reception you attended convenient for you?

YES _____ or NO _____

6. Please indicate below how long it took you to travel to the reception?

Less than 15 minutes _____

16 to 30 minutes _____

31 to 45 minutes _____

46 to 60 minutes _____

Longer than 1 hour _____

7. Do you feel that the LSU representative(s) answered all questions you had about LSU?

YES _____ or NO _____

If No, what questions did they not answer? _____

8. Please list any suggestions you may have about improving future receptions. Suggestions may be for any of the following: recruiting staff, LSU clip, information session.

9. Did the reception influence you to attend LSU?

YES _____ or NO _____

If No, what did influence you to attend LSU? _____

10. What "sold" you on LSU? _____

Thank you again for your participation in this study. GEAUX TIGERS!!!

VITA

The author was born January 4, 1980, in Kirkwood, Missouri, and is the daughter of Ann and Bruce Gilman. She graduated from Highland High School in 1998 and completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree in mass communication from Southeast Missouri State University in 2002.

She has been employed at Louisiana State University since 2002. She began as an Admissions Officer in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. In the fall of 2004 she was appointed to the position of Coordinator for Out-of-State Recruitment in the Office of Recruiting Services. One year later she was promoted to the Assistant Director for Undergraduate Recruitment in the same office.

The degree of Master of Science will be conferred at the August 2006 Commencement ceremony.