



Skyline
COLLEGE
ACHIEVE

Skyline College Media Preferences Survey

Fall 2006

Introduction

During the fall semester of 2006, Skyline College participated in a national study of community college students and their media preferences. Nearly 35,000 students, including 874 students from Skyline participated in the on-line survey. The survey was designed and conducted by Interact Communications of Onalaska, Wisconsin. The results from the survey was intended to provide colleges with important data on internal communications, college publications, Webpage design and importance, Internet access, lifestyle activities, radio, television and newspaper preferences, and contact preferences. The information will be used to determine strategies appropriate for future marketing and communications to our students and the community, and will be incorporated into discussions on the college's web development and design.

Survey Respondent Profile

The majority of the survey respondents were female and between the ages of 16-25, with moderate distribution from other age groups. This closely matches the age groupings found in the general student population at Skyline College. The survey respondents also closely matched most of the ethnic segments found in the college student population including 16% Hispanic compared to 19% college-wide and 24% White compared to 23% college-wide, 1% African American compared to 4% college-wide and 43% Asian compared to 28% college-wide. It should be noted that there was no category on the survey for Filipino so it might be assumed that Filipino survey respondents selected the Asian category which is 19% college-wide. In addition, the majority of respondents noted transfer-seeking as their primary education goal which is consistent with the college-wide statistics on education goal.

Lifestyle Preferences

The student survey respondents were asked to indicate the type of radio format that was their favorite. The top three formats chosen were: Urban Rock, Alternative and Contemporary Hits. Students were then asked about the frequency of certain lifestyle activities. The top three activities selected as sometimes (all others were selected as not often, seldom or never) were: 1) Going to the coffee shop, 2) Going to the malls, and 3) Going to the movies. When asked about the frequency of newspaper usage, the overwhelming majority indicated that they either rarely or never read the daily, weekly or monthly newspapers.

Preferred Method of Contact

When asked to what degree the student liked being contacted by the college about important information via various stated methods, the majority of students (72%) responded that they preferred to be contacted via e-mail. Their second preferred method of contact was via mail and their least preferred methods were via phone either at work and or at home. Students were then asked about communicating with their professors and their advisors. The overwhelming majority indicated that they preferred either face-to-face meetings or e-mail with their professors and face-to-face meetings with their advisors.

Internet Access and Communication

Students were asked where they have access to the internet. The majority of those surveyed responded that they have access to the internet at home (96%) and at school (77%), while half (51%) responded that they access the internet from work. Students were then asked if they visited the college's website when choosing a college. The majority of respondents indicated that they visited the website. Students were then asked if the college used the web to communicate with students. The median response was favorable (agree). Students were also asked if the college effectively used the web to disseminate critical information and the median response was slightly less than favorable (somewhat agree). When asked whether the student made their decision to apply/not apply to a college based on the information in its website, the median response indicated agreement.

Class Schedule Distribution

Students were asked about their preferred way in which to receive the class schedule. Approximately half (51%) indicated that they liked to have it mailed to their homes, while about a quarter of the respondents (36%) indicated that they liked to either download the schedule (18%) or use the searchable college website (18%). The students were then asked about their preferred way in which to receive financial aid information. Nearly half responded they liked to receive the information by mail, while slightly less than a quarter indicated they liked to download the information from the college's website.

Conclusions

The information on Lifestyle Preferences indicates that malls, coffee shops and movie theaters may be the best venues for advertising. Information on newspaper preferences indicates that Skyline's largest population segment (18-25 year olds) does not read the paper regularly. Not the best venue for advertising. Students clearly prefer e-mail communication of college information over any other form of communication and dislike any type of phone contact. Students prefer one-to-one personal contact with

their professors and advisors/counselors over any other type of contact. Students prefer the class schedule to be mailed to their homes rather receive this information from the website. Students prefer receiving Financial Aid information by mail. This may indicate a need to reinstate the letter campaign to parents. Students validated the belief that the website is an important source of information when they rated the question about visiting a college website when choosing a college.

Recommendations

The survey results lead to three immediate conclusions: 1) Skyline needs to develop policies and procedures for communicating with students on a regular basis. This needs to be done often enough to be valuable, but not too often to overload and frustrate students, 2) Skyline should update its web site to make the college more attractive to new students, and 3) Skyline should use the survey results to tailor its current and future marketing efforts to its targeted audiences.