



Topical Survey-Fall 2007  
Marketing and Outreach Communication

*Executive Summary*

## Topical Survey-Fall 2007 Marketing and Outreach Communication

### Highlights

- Of the 8,480 students registered at the time of the survey, 792 responded to the survey (9% response rate).
- The majority of survey respondents reported that they learned about the college through word-of-mouth or referral. This has implications for the way in which the college manages its reputation and how it brands its image and is consistent with other service industries that heavily rely on referral-based marketing techniques.
- The majority of students (64%) responded that they use either the printed class schedule or the printed college catalog to find out about classes. This confirms the decision to reinstate the mailing of the class schedule.
- One third of the respondents indicated the college website as the way in which they usually find out about classes and student services at Skyline. This confirms our decision to upgrade the college website and to continue mailing the class schedule.
- When asked how they usually find out about events and activities that are happening on campus the majority (42%) response was flyer or posting on a bulletin board. This is consistent with the behavior of the majority of the Skyline students who are part-time and on campus intermittently or for the primary purpose of attending their classes. This behavioral characteristic lends itself to a communication method that is quick and easy to access, such as a flyer or posting.

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### Overview

The Skyline College Development, Marketing and Public Relations Office conducted a survey as part of its on-going effort to gather feedback from the college community and collect critical information on operational and planning topics of interest. The purpose of this survey was to gather information from current students on how they find out about classes, programs services and events on campus. The information from this survey will be used to improve the way in which the college communicates to students.

An invitation to survey was e-mailed to all students during the second week of the fall 2007 semester, and a link to the survey was posted on the college's homepage for two weeks. Of the 8,480 students registered at the time of the survey, 792 responded to the survey (9% response rate). The respondents were representative of the student population in terms of age (3% under 18, 33% 18-22, 20% 23-28, 19% 29-39, and 25% 40 or older) and enrollment status (55% continuing students, 13% first time, 17% returning). This and the relatively large sample size indicate that the responses are generally representative of the student population as a whole.

### Findings

When asked how they first learned about the college, the majority of respondents selected the three responses that imply word-of-mouth or referral (16% from a classmate, 27% from a family member, and 17% from a high school teacher or counselor). Another 23% responded to the "Other" category. The most common responses found in the "Other" category were: from a friend or that they live or grew up in the area near the college. Both of these responses indicate word-or-mouth or referral as the most common way that students learn about the college.

When asked how they usually find out about the classes that the college offers the majority of students (64%) responded that they use either the printed class schedule or the printed college catalog. About one third of the respondents indicated the website as the way in which they usually find out about classes at Skyline. This was consistent with the students' comments in question #5 about the best way to communicate with students.

When asked how they usually find out about the student services that are available on campus (e.g., counseling, financial aid and the Transfer Center), one third of the students responded that they use the college website, 24% responded that they find out through the class schedule or college catalog, 13% responded that they find out from an instructor, 11% responded that they find out from a counselor, and 10% indicated they find out from a classmate. The majority of responses found in the "Other" category were related to postings on bulletin boards and flyers. The was consistent with the comments in question #5 about best way to communicate with students.

When asked how they usually find out about events and activities that are happening on campus the majority (42%) response was flyer or posting on a bulletin board. Another 26% responded that they hear about events and activities from instructors or classmates, and 18% indicated that they use the college website to find out about events and activities. The majority of responses found in the "Other" category indicated that the student was not interested in events and activities on campus or was unaware that there are events and activities on campus.

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### Conclusions and Recommendations

The majority of respondents reported that they learned about the college through word-of-mouth or referral. This has implications for the way in which the college manages its reputation and how it brands its image and is consistent with other service industries that heavily rely on referral-based marketing techniques. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Apply the visual identify that was developed as a result of the research that was conducted for the Fresh Look Project and other research that has been done recently (i.e., 2006 Student Climate Survey).
2. Use the positive images that were extracted from the research to promote the reputation of the college (e.g., friendly environment, supportive faculty, helpful staff, cozy environment, serious and academically oriented students).

The majority of respondents indicated that they use the printed schedule and/or catalog to find out about classes. While we know that we currently distribute approximately 3,000 catalogs per year, we believe that students taking the survey may confuse the class schedule with the catalog. We are thereby assuming that the preferred method for finding out about classes is the class schedule. This confirms the decision to reinstate the mailing of the class schedule. The recommendations are as follows:

3. Continue mailing the class schedule each semester and increase its distribution.
4. Increase the number of targeted ads in the schedule of classes.
5. Continue to improve the quality of the ads as well scrutinize the choice of ads so as to maximize advertising for under-enrolled and new or struggling classes and programs and services.

One third of the students indicated that they use the website to find out about student services while 24% use the class schedule or college catalog. This confirms the college's decision to upgrade the college website and to continue mailing the class schedule. The recommendations are as follows:

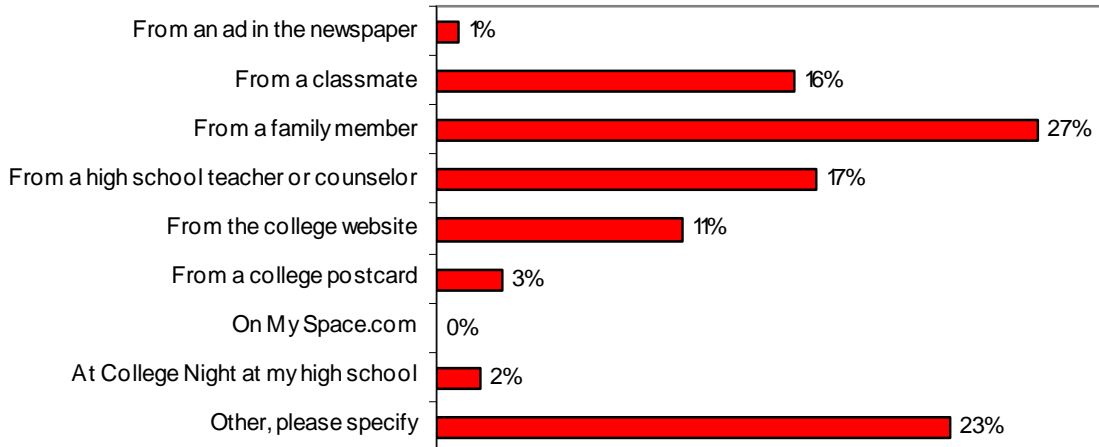
6. Provide adequate resources to upgrade the college website in a timely manner.
7. Create a referral book for faculty to refer students to the various student services.

One third of the students who responded to the survey reported that they find out about events and activities through posted flyers or flyers they receive in some other manner. This is consistent with the behavior of the majority of the Skyline students who are part-time and on campus intermittently or for the primary purpose of attending their classes. This behavioral characteristic lends itself to a communication method that is quick and easy to access, such as a flyer or posting. The recommendations are as follows:

8. Establish a bulletin board area or kiosk in building 6 where flyers on events and activities can be posted and more clearly designated areas in each building.
9. Develop an oversized poster advertising the numerous services available and where the student can go to access these services. The poster would then be placed in strategic areas such as high-use classrooms and lecture rooms.
10. Develop an e-newsletter that could be distributed to students on a regular basis informing them of events and activities on campus.

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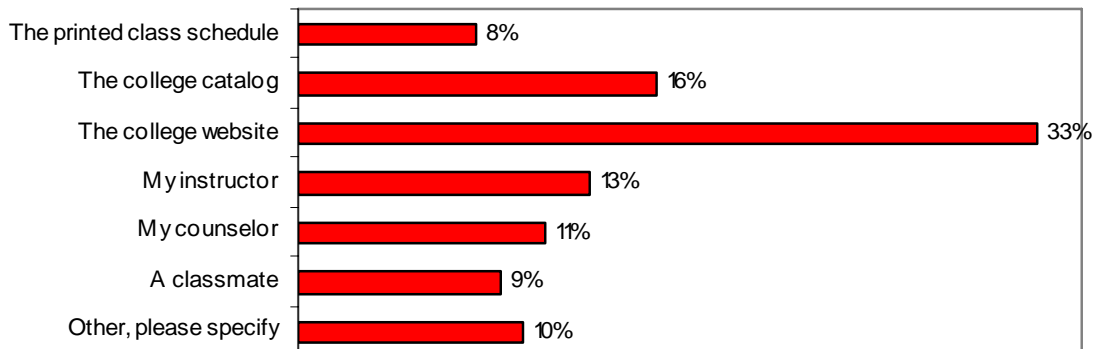
## 1. How did you first learn about the college?



## 2. How do you usually find out about the classes that the college offers?

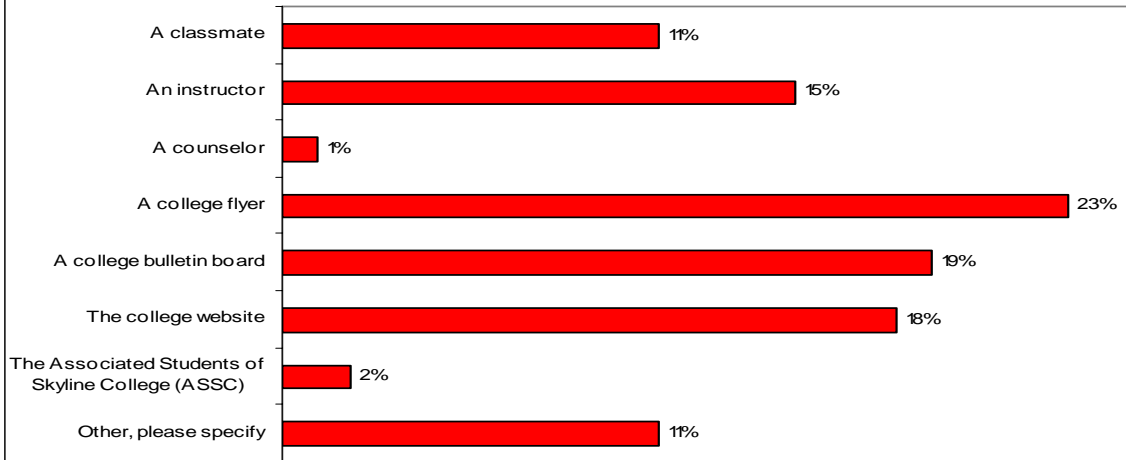


## 3. How do you usually find out about the student services that are available on campus (for example: counseling, financial aid and transfer center)?

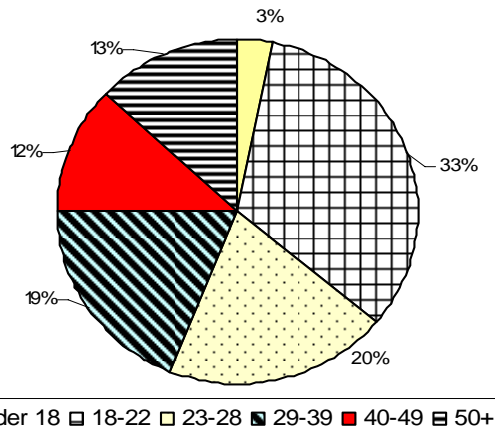


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## 4. How do you usually find out about events and activities that are happening on campus?



## 6. What is your age group?



## 7. What is your enrollment status?

