OKLAHOMA TECHNOLOGY CENTER SECONDARY STUDENT RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES: STUDENT AND RECRUITER PERCEPTIONS

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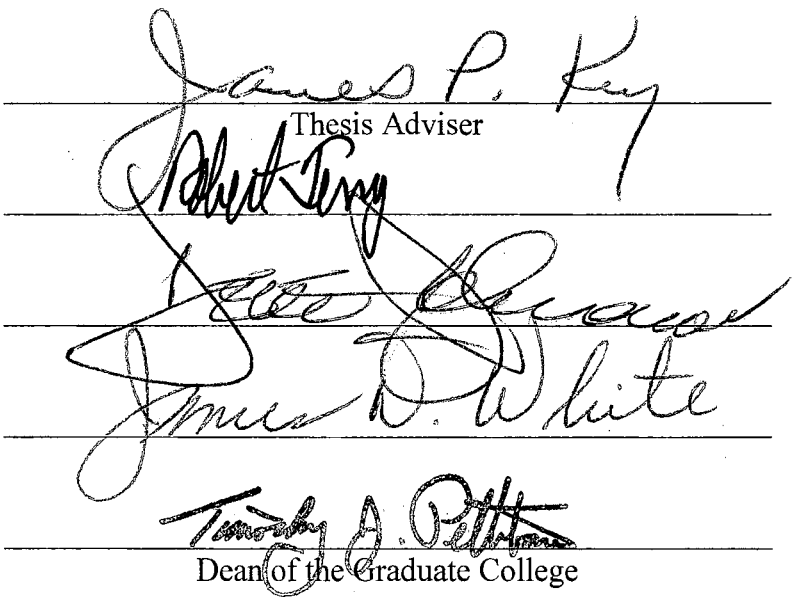

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Historians have noted that vocational education has been in our society for almost a hundred years in various forms, such as apprenticeship programs and on-the-job training. However, it was not considered formal education mandated by agencies, states, and federal legislation until the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917. This act and subsequent federal legislation mandated that states have adequate programs for vocational teacher education and provided federal funds to do so. The Smith-Hughes Act not only set the stage for vocational education, but it also designated funds to make it possible (Lynch, 1997).

Since vocational education's inception as formal education through the Smith-Hughes Act, it has been considered a success story by many. Thousands of lives have been positively affected by vocational education through its training of students and business and industry training. With vocational education's focus on training individuals for economic and career development, many others have been positively affected in an indirect manner. Vocational education has truly found its place in society and has made a lasting impression on our economic development (Lynch, 1997).

The success and legislative support of vocational education made it easy for Oklahoma technology centers to fill their programs and meet enrollment expectations in the past. However, more recently the Oklahoma vocational education system reached a

crossroads and had to deal with decreased enrollment numbers and interest in many of its programs. In an article appearing in the Stillwater News Press, Oklahoma, titled, *Shultz Says Denials Ring Hollow,* Dr. Fred Shultz, Superintendent at Meridian Technology Center, Stillwater, Oklahoma, stated that as a result of increased academic requirements and an elimination of previous math-science waivers for technology center students, statewide enrollment of high school juniors in Oklahoma technology centers was down nearly 10 percent in the 01-02 school year. He said that many technology centers across the state were affected even more dramatically. Autry Technology Center in Enid, Oklahoma, for example, reported that about 66 less high school juniors were attending classes there during the 2001-2002 school year compared to the previous school year. That was a 33 percent decrease. Shultz stated, "Many students simply can't go to a technology center because they can't fit it in their high school schedule" (Mitchell, 2001). As mentioned above, this situation was made worse through legislation (Oklahoma H.B. 2728) that increased high school graduation requirements of core classes (i.e. English, Math, Science). These increased academic requirements eliminated many enrollment choices such as vocational education for high school students by mandating specific classes. Further, the rapid change in the workplace made it difficult for technology centers to maintain program relevancy and student interest.

This study focused on the idea that Oklahoma technology centers must improve their marketing strategies through effective and efficient recruitment practices and address student perceptions and enrollment factors. In order for more students to benefit from Oklahoma technology centers, students must be aware of the opportunities and able to take advantage of them (Dehne, 1994; Kotler, 1995; Liu, 1998).

Rosen, Curran, and Greenlee (1998) suggested in their study that one method of determining factors that influence enrollment decisions is to examine the college or school choice from the high school student's perspective. They stated that this could be accomplished by reviewing relevant literature of the consumer decision-making process. Then analyze journals kept by high school seniors and surveys completed by prospective students. These items should be examined for evidence presented about how prospective students go through the choice process. Finally, these findings could then be compared to recruiting practices employed by institutions of education in order to provide guidance for more effective recruiting strategies.

This study utilized the concepts and ideas Rosen, Curran, and Greenlee's (1998) study discussed above, titled, *College Choice in a Brand Elimination Framework: The High School Student's Perspective* and Dehne's (1994) ideas regarding educational institution recruitment. However, the researcher applied their concepts to the vocational and technical education system in Oklahoma, in particular, Oklahoma technology centers. Further, this study was conducted due to the steady increase in interest regarding the potential role of marketing for education. Universities of Higher Education belatedly recognized that they must consider their marketing strategies by improving their recruitment practices if they are to remain viable in an increasingly competitive market (Hancock, 1996). More recently, now the vocational and technical education system in Oklahoma had to recognize the same.

Background and Setting

Vaughn (1991, p. 446) stated that vocational-technical education is no longer an alternative to academic education. It is vital for everyone's career preparation. In 1972 a group of economists and sociologists calling themselves the Club of Rome published *The Limits to Growth,* in which they predicted that population growth and the mismanagement of resources would soon exhaust the worlds supplies of food, fuel and minerals. When oil prices tripled the next year, these dire prophecies seemed to have been fulfilled. But the Club of Rome was wrong: skills and knowledge were applied to develop ways to conserve resources. The prices of resources have fallen since the first oil crisis, and population growth has slowed (Vaughn, 1991).

Today, however, the U.S. faces a drain that is proving more difficult to overcome than the depletion of natural resources. We are running out of skilled people. This situation is driving up the earnings of such people. More ominously, it is driving down the earnings of people who lack the education, skills, talent and inspiration that can improve our productivity. Vaughn (1991) stated that we need better training and more vocational education to help people move out of the increasingly devalued unskilled labor force and to meet the rapidly growing need for skilled labor.

American business has already made great efforts to help improve the educational system through reform. Probably the cheapest and most effective step that executives can take is to attend local school board meetings and fight for curriculum and textbooks that will teach children the basic skills that business needs. Most U.S. schools continue to neglect the children who will ultimately become the backbone of the economy: the 2/3 of high school graduates who will not earn a college degree. For those students, business

should encourage schools to introduce an alternative curriculum that would combine special coursework in the last two years of high school with two years of community college or technical training. This suggested curriculum is exactly what is followed in Oklahoma technology centers. The problem in Oklahoma is not reforming school curriculum to meet these needs, but to better inform the public and students of the benefits of Oklahoma technology centers and current opportunities. This can be accomplished through recruitment practices (Perry, 1992; Vaughn, 1991).

Some business leaders, human resource professionals and workforce researchers have become very outspoken regarding their beliefs about vocational-technical training and its purpose. Graham (1995) stated that some major trends are actively shaping work and business. Graham felt that there are 20 trends that are affecting everything from what we wear and how we think to how we spend our leisure time and what we do behind closed doors. Besides lifestyle trends, there are business indicators that influence how we will earn a living and conduct business. These livelihood trends have significant implications because our businesses and our jobs influence our thinking, as well as how and where we spend our money (Graham, 1995).

Graham (1995) stated that one of the most notable trends is the need for a better-trained workforce. A workforce is needed that is not only academically sound, but also, sufficiently trained in technical and vocational areas. He stated that technical training would replace college education in the future, for the most part. The cost of a college education is leveling off, an expected change since it's becoming more difficult to justify spending tens of thousands of dollars on an education with little return on investment. This can have a negative effect on a society that equates education with getting a good

job. Computer sophistication will become the primary prerequisite for obtaining and holding a good job (Graham, 1995).

Although, many legislators and educators feel that funds spent on vocational education should be utilized for other educational endeavors, many understand the importance of a trained and skilled workforce and agree with business leaders who promote a combination of academics and technical education. Rasmussen (2001) with *Techniques,* a publication specialized for vocational and technical education, interviewed Joe Maxwell, a Missouri legislator, successful businessman, lawyer and most importantly, a graduate of a vocational-technical training program who championed the cause of vocational-technical education. Mr. Maxwell led the effort to establish Linn State Technical College, Missouri's first fully accredited two-year institution devoted solely to vocational-technical training (Rasmussen, 2001). This institution is much like Oklahoma technology centers.

When Mr. Maxwell was asked what considerations did he point to in his support for vocational education, he gave the following answer:

"My basic philosophy has always been that we cannot succeed as a state and grow without the development of a skilled workforce. We need to expand the educational opportunities in technical and vocational training at all ages, whether one is starting off in high school or has worked at a job for a period of time and needs retraining. I think vocational and technical education should simply be a priority for states in order to achieve economic growth" (Rasmussen, 2001, p. 42).

Notable to this study's purpose, Mr. Maxwell stated the following when asked what was his personal view and advice to young people who are out there wrestling with the decision of whether or not to enroll in a vocational-technical education program:

"I would advise young people to keep all of their options open and to not close the door too quickly on pursuing their education at a technical school. They need to make a determination on what is in their best interest, and what they want to do with their lives" (Rasmussen, 2001, p. 43).

In order for Oklahoma technology centers to increase public awareness to the public and encourage more students to take advantage of vocational-technical education, they must improve their marketing practices. One method that can accomplish this task is to evaluate and improve current recruitment practices and address enrollment factors that influence prospective students. This study identified and evaluated recruitment practices of technology centers in Oklahoma. It examined these practices in order to see if they addressed factors that were associated with secondary students' technology center enrollment decisions. Vocational education will not lose its place in society because it is irrelevant or outdated, skills that vocational education provides are needed in today's society more than ever, but because it may be the best kept secret in education.

Significance of the Study

Implications

Student recruitment is not just a problem facing Oklahoma technology centers. Many educational institutions are facing the dilemma of trying to fill student vacancies. This issue of student recruitment has been drastically changing and with it the admissions

marketplace. Competition for students--especially those with strong academic records--has encouraged marketing and salesmanship on the part of desperate educational institutions, though purists demand that the institutions moderate such practices (Trachtenberg, 1994). As we attempt to address this situation, we must begin with the obvious, assess recruitment practices to see if they address factors associated with enrollment decisions.

Researchers, realizing the significance of the school enrollment choice/decision making process, have already conducted a variety of studies in this area. These studies have historically focused on the role of information sources in the selection process and on attributes that are considered to be important when making enrollment decisions (Chapman, 1993; Sekely, 1991; Shank, 1991).

Chapman (1993) conducted one of the most extensive studies exploring the university selection process. This study employed a meta-analysis to assess the overall college choice results from 80 surveys having over 55,000 respondents. The results were consistent with previous research that deemed quality of faculty, quality of educational programs, selection of programs of interest, and overall reputation as being the most important features of the college choice process (Shank, 1998).

Although this large body of research has provided recruiters with valuable information, the majority of this research has focused on the college choice and recruitment process. Only a small portion of research has been designated for vocational and technical schools, and even a smaller number for Oklahoma technology centers. This study attempted to fill this gap by providing individuals involved with vocational and technical education recruitment, specifically Oklahoma technology center recruitment,

with information to implement their marketing strategies more effectively through recruitment practices and address factors that influence enrollment decisions.

Problem Statement

There is a need to know: (1) significant factors that influenced secondary students' Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions, (2) students' perspectives on Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment, (3) Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices and (4) students' and recruiters' perceptions of recruitment practices. This information will allow Oklahoma technology centers to determine the effectiveness of Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices and enrollment factors that should be addressed in order to increase secondary student enrollment.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices, recruiters' and students' perceptions of recruitment practices, factors associated with Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions of selected secondary students and selected students' perspectives on Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment.

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed by this study and designed to allow for the study's structure:

1. What secondary student recruitment practices were being used by Oklahoma technology centers?
2. What were recruiters' and students' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices?
3. What differences existed between recruiters' and students' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices?
4. What factors influenced selected secondary students' Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions?
5. What were selected students' perspectives on Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment?

Assumptions

In order to facilitate this research study, the following assumptions were identified:

1. The modified Delphi technique that gathered the study's recruiter population archival data was completed to the best of the recruiters' abilities.
2. The questions asked on the student questionnaires that gathered the study's student archival data were answered to the best of the students' abilities.
3. The study's archival data was gathered as reported and appropriate for the study.

Scope

The following scope was utilized in this study:

1. The scope of this study included recruiters representing 16 Oklahoma technology center districts, 672 prospective students touring/visiting the Central Technology Center district, Drumright, Oklahoma, and 405 students enrolled at Central Technology Center district during the 2000 Fall/Winter term.
2. The study utilized archival data gathered from two Oklahoma technology centers, Meridian Technology Center, Stillwater, Oklahoma, and Central Technology Center, Drumright, Oklahoma. However, the researcher coordinated the data collection process of the study's archival data, as he was an employee of both institutions when the data was collected. Further, the researcher conducted the data analysis procedures of this study.

Definitions of Terms

The following definitions of terms were offered to provide clarity and consistency throughout the study:

Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education (ODCTE) - The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technical Education provides leadership, resources, and assures standards of excellence for a comprehensive statewide system of vocational and technical education. That system offers programs and services in 29 Technology center districts operating on 54 campuses, 399 comprehensive schools, 15 inmate-training centers, and two juvenile facilities. The department is governed by the State Board for

Vocational and Technical Education. The department also works closely with the State Department of Education and the State Regents for Higher Education to provide a seamless system of education for Oklahoma (Kunneman, 1998).

Oklahoma Technology Center - A vocational and technical education institution that is accredited and governed by the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technical Education and provides workforce education and economic development. These institutions not only provide training for secondary students within their districts, but also adult students. Further, services are provided for businesses and industries within the districts to foster economic development.

Recruitment - A school's process of utilizing promotional strategies to fill student vacancies, to make their presence felt in their communities, to keep others informed of its various activities, and establish distinctive profiles (Symes, 1998).

Recruiter - Vocational educator professional hired by an Oklahoma technology center to utilize various recruitment strategies to fill student vacancies.

Secondary Student - A student enrolled in a local comprehensive high school and is at least in the ninth-grade, but has not graduated.

Sending High School/Local Comprehensive (Secondary) School - A high school that is accredited through the Oklahoma State Department of Education and is part of an Oklahoma technology center district.

Summary

The development of Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices is a critical issue for Oklahoma technology centers in order to reach all students. This issue is

more important now than ever in the history of Oklahoma technology centers due to legislation and some educators, who do not support vocational education, hindering the continued success of vocational education. The issue is simply too important not to be addressed. The lack of successful Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices contributes to:

1. The lack of awareness about opportunities that these institutions provide to all students,
2. The loss of students who could benefit from these opportunities, and
3. A number of other negative effects of both the vocational education system and our society's economic development.

The lack of awareness about vocational education and training provided by Oklahoma technology centers could be the biggest factor in the system's enrollment decline besides legislative issues such as those discussed previously. This study attempted to provide information that could be utilized to increase awareness of Oklahoma technology centers by improving its marketing strategies through recruitment practices that address enrollment factors. This information was gathered to provide information to those who wish to increase awareness and enrollment of Oklahoma technology center programs and the system in general.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Kunneman (1998) stated that the demand from the market place for speed, quality, customization, timeliness, and a variety of products and services has changed the landscape for doing business. Also, the use of technology, the relentless speed of change, and the skills that working people need have changed the nature of work itself. The increasing pressure from these forces drives a constant search for better performance, from the simplest task to the most complex corporate strategy. The new reality is that the dynamic nature of student learning and performance turns this into a race without a finish (Kunneman, 1998). Further, these factors require businesses to pursue individuals who possess the necessary skills to compete for high quality jobs. Steen (1998) stated that businesses and industries demand individuals to acquire both high academic and vocational/technical skills in order to be successful on the job.

To even begin the workforce race, students must arm themselves with skills and knowledge that are necessary to compete in today's service and technology oriented society. As mentioned previously, businesses and industries are stating that the skills and knowledge needed for an individual to be successful in the workforce include both academics and vocational-technical training. Carnevale (1994) stated individuals

who are educated beyond high school are getting more technical training than those with only high-school educations once they are employed. However, the need for technical training continues to grow among all employees. Education and vocational-technical training tend to go together in the workforce. This training and education is required for success in any field regardless of whether it is business, medicine, information technology or a trade area. In fact, the fourth issue, volume fifty, of *Training and Development* illustrated the increased need for technical training. This report titled "Where will you be in 10 years?" stated technical training is seen as the area in which most individuals will need training or education in the future while the need for other forms of education, such as college, are decreasing. With this said, it is becoming more difficult for an individual to be successful by only obtaining an academic based education without any form of vocational-technical training. An individual must receive some type of technical or vocational training along with a sound academic knowledge base. Education and training that combines both vocational-technical and academic curriculum will allow an individual to get ahead of the rest and improve the chances of him/her being successful in the modern day workforce.

Vocational-technical training can take place at a vocational and technical education institution, such as an Oklahoma technology center, while a student is still in high school obtaining his/her academic education. However, most students are waiting to receive their vocational-technical training until they are on the job, which slows up their advancements and career opportunities. Further, by forcing employers to provide on the job vocational-technical training that compliments employees' academic education, employers are forced to be less efficient and pay huge expenses (Carnevale, 1994).

As mentioned earlier, business and industry demand that an employee not only meet high academic standards, but also have skills in the specific field that he/she is pursuing or vocational/technical training. How can a secondary student be prepared to compete under these requirements? One solution is that secondary students not only meet high academic standards at their local comprehensive school, but they also meet high vocational and technical training standards at their technology center.

Although, a combination of upper level academic classes and vocational and technical classes is a feasible option for Oklahoma secondary students, a small number are choosing to benefit from this opportunity. Many students in Oklahoma technology centers are students who have decided not to attend higher education institutions or take upper level academic courses at their high schools. As stated earlier, a high school diploma is not enough to compete in today's job market, so these students have made a good choice in choosing to take advantage of vocational and technical training. However, there are a large number of these students who have not made this choice. Also, there are a larger number of students who plan to attend a higher education institution and take upper level academic classes while in high school, but do not realize the opportunities that vocational and technical classes can provide along with academics (Arum, 1995). Furthermore, there are secondary students in Oklahoma that simply have not been made aware of the benefits of vocational and technical education due to poor marketing strategies and recruitment practices (Frisbee, 1997).

Current workforce demands require secondary students to plan for their futures much earlier than in past times. They must decide on a career path before they graduate from high school and take classes accordingly as soon as possible. However, due to

current legislation in Oklahoma such as H.B. 2728, secondary students must take more core-academic courses such as English, math, science and social studies in order to graduate. These requirements may have a huge impact on factors that influence enrollment decisions of secondary students in Oklahoma. Before this legislation, secondary students had more flexibility in their choice of classes, which allowed them to take advantage of elective or non-core classes such as those offered at technology centers and such as those desired by business and industry.

The question is how do vocational educators make all students aware of the benefits that vocational and technical training provides and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to take advantage of these benefits? The answer is to improve current vocational education marketing through recruitment practices that target all students and address factors that are associated with their enrollment decisions.

In short, due to current Oklahoma legislation requiring secondary students to take more academic based classes, increased employee requirements of business and industry and other factors associated with enrollment decisions, Oklahoma technology centers will be forced to become more efficient with their recruitment efforts in order to remain successful. Also, Oklahoma technology centers must become more efficient in order to make all secondary students aware of their opportunities so that all students can compete successfully in today's job market.

The review of related literature for this study was compiled from a selection of literature pertaining to the need for vocational-technical education, recruitment practices and factors associated with enrollment decisions. The review focused on areas related to

this study's research questions cited in Chapter I and began by illustrating the need for vocational-technical education. The areas of the review included:

- Determining the need for vocational-technical education.
- Determining recruitment practices.
- Determining factors that influence enrollment decisions.

Determining The Need For Vocational-Technical Education

A publication designed to address topics relating to the workforce and human resource development, *Training & Development*, performed a study in 1996 that attempted to predict future workforce training needs. The results of this study highlighted two main findings:

- Technology will have a great impact on how training is delivered, what training is required and future trends in the workforce.
- Vocational and technical training was seen as the area in which most individuals will need training.

Training in the U.S. workplace is a growing enterprise. Most available surveys just skim the surface of a vast national movement toward more training. However, Carnevale's (1994) report presented data that revealed in-depth just where and how much training has grown in all industries and across all worker groups over an eight-year period. The population included over 60,000 respondents.

Carnevale's (1994) study noted that essential trends in training on the job were optimistic. Formal company training in vocational-technical areas increased 45% from 1983 to 1991. The increases in training are broadly distributed among industries and

occupations, although the general distribution of increase tends to favor more highly skilled workers who possess post-secondary education. This emphasizes the workforce demand for both high-level academic backgrounds and vocational-technical training (Carnevale, 1994).

Significantly, Carnevale's (1994) study reported that all four of the categories of skill improvement training:

- schools (including high school, postsecondary, junior college, or technical institutes, and four-year or longer college programs)
- formal company training
- informal on-the-job training
- other types of training,

increased between 1983 and 1991. However, formal company training or on-the-job training, which addressed vocational-technical training needs, showed the biggest gain. The rapid shift in formal company training in technical areas demonstrates that more employers are committed to providing employer-based training for employees and are in need of employees with vocational-technical skills. This increased workforce demand of vocational-technical training and rapid change in technology illustrates the need for individuals to receive formal vocational-technical training. Further, with the acceleration of economic growth, these patterns in training and workforce demands probably will accelerate as well. Growth accelerates economic and technological change, and change encourages training (Carnevale, 1994).

Information technology (IT) is one of the most rapid growing careers in the current workforce. The need for qualified individuals to fill positions within the IT field

is increasing at a dramatically fast pace. However, many applicants for these positions are not obtaining the necessary education and training. Many are simply relying on four-year college educations that do not address the industry's needs (Steen, 1998).

Steen (1998) stated that a successful IT career will require foundation skills, business-related skills, and technical or vocational skills, each of which can be acquired in various ways. Although there are exceptions, people who enter the IT field today without a college degree could find their careers stalled later. For example, many management positions require a four-year college degree. However, without the necessary technical or vocational skills, it is difficult for an individual to obtain and maintain an IT career. Complicating matters, teaching up-to-date technical skills is often viewed as a weakness of four-year institutions. Due to these industry demands and lack of vocational-technical focus by universities, many IT professionals with or without degrees who want to pick up a new technical skill and maintain relevancy turn to technical training (Steen, 1998).

Steen (1998) interviewed several successful IT professionals regarding appropriate training and education for the field. When she asked Olimpia Borys, a systems consultant at Entex Information Services, in Bloomfield, Michigan about the importance of four-year degrees compared to technical training, Borys responded:

> I have many years of higher education but never earned a formal degree. I do not discourage getting a degree, but technical skills are more important in this field (Steen, 1998, p. 77).

Steen (1998) stated that Borys is not alone: Some people estimate that as many as half of all IT jobs could be filled by those without four-year degrees. However, these jobs will require vocational-technical training. On the other hand, advocates of four-year

degrees or college education say the programs that lead to these degrees are an excellent way to learn the foundation skills necessary to succeed in the ever-changing world of work: problem solving, communication skills, and, above all, the ability to continue learning. This dilemma not only emphasizes the need for vocational-technical training, but also the positive affects of complimenting it with college and/or academic based learning (Arum, 1995; Kang, 1989; Steen, 1998).

Although industry is demanding that successful employees obtain both an academic based education and technical training, few high school students are pursuing this track. In 1994, the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, conducted a study titled "National Assessment of Educational Progress High School Transcript Study" that highlighted the small percentage of high school students who took advantage of both college- prep classes and technical training. However, the study also illustrated that technology and technology-oriented occupations are witnessing an increase in the percentages (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

The September 2000 edition of *Techniques* published a portion of the U.S. Department of Education's study "*National Assessment of Educational Progress High School Transcript Study*" (1994). *Techniques'* article was titled "Technical Training: A Winning Combination." The article pointed out that high school student enrollment in technical training classes was decreasing, but there has been an enrollment increase in technology and communications technical training programs of students taking college-prep classes. It stated that college preparatory classes seem to be gaining in popularity while tech-only tracks have taken a back seat, but the merging of both academics and

technical training, especially in technology and communications (IT), has proven to be a win-win situation for students (Techniques, September, 2000).

Graham (1995), a human resource and training professional, published a report in *HR Focus*, titled "Twenty trends that will shape business careers." This report stated that technical training would replace college education in the future. The justification for this statement was mostly based upon trends in the workforce. Also, the cost of a college education is leveling off, an expected change since it's becoming more difficult to justify spending tens of thousands of dollars on an education with little return on investment. This can have a negative effect on a society that equates education with getting a good job. Computer sophistication will become the primary prerequisite for obtaining and holding a job (Graham, 1995).

Not only are current workforce trends and technology increasing the need for vocational-technical training for students pursuing college educations, research illustrates that vocational-technical training provides a safety net for those high school students who are not. Arum (1995) stated that the effects of high school vocational-technical education on students' odds of being unemployed and students' occupational attainment in the transition from school to work needed to be reevaluated. He conducted a study titled "Secondary Vocational Education and the Transition from School to Work." Arum not only researched secondary vocational-technical education from an advocate's viewpoint, but also an adversary. His final conclusion was that vocational education reduces the likelihood of attending college, as well as the risk of being unemployed (Arum, 1995).

Arum's (1995) findings indicated that vocational-technical secondary education is neither as pernicious nor as detrimental as some of its opponents have maintained. True,

it does inhibit students' chances of continuing on to college and thus inhibits their chances of entering the professions and other high-prestige occupations. However, it also serves as a safety net for those high school graduates who are unlikely to go to college. Fewer than half the American cohorts ever attain any postsecondary education (U.S. Bureau Of the Census, 1992). For those who do not, vocational-technical secondary training enhances the chances for employment, in general, and for employment in higher-quality jobs, in particular. The effects of vocational programs are very positive for this student population (Arum, 1995).

Although a combination of academic based education and vocational-technical training maybe a winning one, many business leaders are adamant that high schools should cater more to those students who will not be going to college through vocational-technical training. A focus on non-college bound students will assist these students in becoming better prepared for the workforce and society, which in turn will foster economic growth. Perry (1992) stated that the main problem in reforming the U.S. school system is not the lack of good ideas, but the failure of those ideas to spread once they succeed. American business has already made great efforts to help, but it can do no more. Probably the cheapest-and most effective- step that executives can take is to attend local school board meetings and fight for curriculum and textbooks that will teach students the skills business needs. Most U.S. schools continue to neglect the children who will ultimately become the backbone of the economy: the 2/3 of high school graduates who will not earn a college degree. For those students, business should encourage schools to introduce an alternative curriculum that would combine special coursework in the last

two years of high school with two years of community college or vocational-technical training (Perry, 1992, p. 132).

The curriculum that Perry (1992) described is the type of curriculum that Oklahoma technology centers currently utilize. In the majority of Oklahoma high schools, students are able to enroll in a technology center and attend vocational-technical training programs during their last two years of high school. There are currently 29 technology center districts and 54 sites or campuses in Oklahoma that serve all Oklahoma geographical areas except a few outlying areas. A student who elects to take advantage of this opportunity would attend his/her high school for one-half of the day and attend the technology center the other half. The student would choose to attend the technology center in the morning or the afternoon portion of their school day whichever met their needs or schedule. Further, the student would receive graduation credit by attending the technology center just as if he/she were attending his/her high school for the full day. However, under current Oklahoma legislation (Oklahoma H.B. 2728), he/she would only receive elective credit, not core academic credit (i.e. Math, English, Science). The student would complete his/her academic credits at his/her high school and his/her elective credits at his/her technology center (Accreditation Standards, Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, 2001).

Further, vocational-technical programs play a doubly important role for women. Vocational business programs, in which women are largely concentrated, enhance the likelihood of routine non-manual employment relative to non-employment, whereas trade and technical programs, in which a smaller number of women are enrolled, provide a path

to skilled manual occupations, which are still sex typed as masculine occupations (Arum 1995).

Arum (1995) stated that his study's findings have important implications for the current U.S. policy debate on the future of vocational education. Federal and state governments have recently shown renewed interest in vocational programs, after more than a decade of reduced funding and a decline in support for them. Although some educators have supported this renewed interest on vocational training in traditional high school programs, others have criticized vocational education on the grounds that it requires high financial inputs that generate questionable results in terms of positive occupational outcomes. The findings reported in Arum's (1995) study support claims by proponents of vocational education that vocational education programs do, indeed, have measurable occupational impacts and benefits for certain students. Arum stated that his study should provide added impetus to the efforts of educational reformers to revitalize occupational training programs in secondary schools. Also, other research studies have illustrated the positive economic benefits and value of vocational-technical training programs in high schools. These studies have justified the need for continued investments in vocational-technical training and have validated Arum's (1995) study's findings (Grasso, 1979; Meyer, 1982; Reich, 1992; Rumberger, 1984).

Determining Recruitment Practices

Groundwork

In her study of the American academic marketplace of the 1980s, Burke (1988, p. 53) quoted a department chairperson as saying "recruitment is tough, a time-

consuming job. Our procedures are very elaborate in order to ensure fairness." Many educational institutions such as universities, private comprehensive schools, and vocational and technical institutes spend an enormous amount of time and money in order to fill student vacancies. Further, most educational institutions do not simply want to fill these vacancies with warm bodies. Instead, they go to great lengths to appropriately place students that they feel are appropriate for a particular program.

In order to accomplish this task, special departments are created just to coordinate and implement the recruitment process. Most of these departments consist of counselors, assessment specialists, registrars, and support staff. All of these individuals work together to provide potential students with information regarding their institution, make them aware of opportunities that their institution provides, and guide them through their institution's enrollment process. As mentioned earlier, this orchestrated process has the overall goal and bottom line of increasing enrollment by filling student vacancies with appropriate students in appropriate programs.

Although most educational institutions recruiting students have the same overall goal, the objectives and strategies that educational institutions utilize can be quite different. Keever (1998) discussed in her study titled *Building Your Image On Campus,* what she felt was the most important aspect of student recruitment for an institution. She pointed out that an institution must create an image for itself or its competitors will do it for them. She went on to say, if that's not an incentive for an institution to manage its own perception to others, she did not know what was. Keever (1998) felt like building your image was not about brochures, logos, or web sites. Those are only supporting players. Image to others comes down to the people, the processes, and the partnerships

employed to recruit students. However, before identifying people, processes, and partnerships that will be most effective for recruitment on a campus, the audience must first be understood.

Keever (1998) felt like an audience regarding student recruitment included customers, team members, and partners. She provided the following information regarding audiences:

- Customers - The students an institution wishes to recruit.
- Team Members - Employees from the institution involved in the recruiting process.
- Partners - Individuals at the sites an institution will be recruiting at (i.e. local comprehensive schools) that will have an impact on the recruiting process (i.e. administrators, counselors, teachers, etc.).

Keever (1998) felt like each of the audience members is a critical component to the success of an institutions recruitment program. She provided the following suggestions as keys to success regarding the audience:

- Understand your customers,
- Select your team members well,
- Establish campus partnerships,
- Create customer-focused processes and programs,
- Be yourself, but stay focused on the objectives; and
- Measure your results.

No matter the recruitment practices that an institution utilizes, these suggestions provided by Keever (1998) should be kept in mind. Recruitment practices should be developed following these suggestions in order to maximize results.

Before an institution can promote its image to others, its must first decide who they are (Dehne, 1990). Dehne (1990) stated that many schools spend months, if not years, trying to answer the question: Who are we? He felt that during the process of trying to answer this all-important question, institutions fail to develop a shared vision of itself, which is the true bedrock of strategic planning.

Dehne (1990) stated that an institution must conduct a strategic-planning analysis in order to develop a shared vision. He provided the following questions to facilitate this process:

1. What does your institution do? How is the institutional mission expressed in the activities of the school?
2. What does your institution do better than others?
3. How does your institution answer the primary question of students: What can your school offer me?

Each of these questions contains a clear message, and answering them honestly will result in effective planning, better promotional programs, and institutional solidarity. Further, this process will enable an institution to show students what sets them apart, and why students will be making a good decision if they choose to enroll. The major question to be answered is: What sets you apart? Starting from the student perspective is the wisest route. Also, allowing students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, and individuals from

outside of your institution that have an impact on you r student recruitment to answer these questions will provide the best results (Dehne, 1990).

Once an institution has obtained a shared vision and begun to effectively promote its perceived image by managing its audiences, it can then successfully implement its recruitment practices. However, as mentioned earlier, this is too big of a responsibility for one individual. A big mistake of many institutions regarding its recruitment process is that it undervalues the importance of effective recruitment by not providing the needed resources, both human resources and financial. Most institutions rely on only one department to be responsible for its recruitment efforts.

Dehne (1994) contradicted Keever (1998) in regards to the team member audience of recruitment. Keever (1998) stated that the internal audience regarding recruitment was those employees who are involved with recruitment. She felt that it was vital for an institution to choose the right individuals to effectively accomplish recruiting goals. However, Dehne (1994) agreed with this idea, but felt like the recruitment process should involve all employees of an institution in order to be a success.

Dehne (1994) stated that student recruitment is crucial to the health, if not the survival, of educational institutions needing to fill student vacancies. He felt that most educational institutions conducting student recruitment had a false assumption that they should spend considerable time and energy in an attempt to increase the yield of applicants to enrollees. Instead, they should concentrate on increasing the number of applicants rather than expect to increase the number of applicants to enrollees. Despite the temptation to work on increasing the yield, the likelihood for success is limited in this

arena. Applying to a school generally is a rational decision, so a school must provide prospective students with rational reasons to enroll with them (Dehne, 1994).

In order for students to recognize why they should enroll in a particular school, campus visits are the only real predictors of enrollment. This is true whether your institution is attractive or not. A student who does not visit your campus is extremely unlikely to enroll. In fact, seven of ten prospective students rate the campus visit as the source that had the greatest impact on their decision to enroll. Over and over, students say, "as soon as I walked on campus, I knew this is where I wanted to go." This is where it takes more individuals than one to successfully recruit students. The entire staff and faculty must have the same-shared vision and promote the institution's image effectively in order for students to make the rational decision to enroll. For many students, the campus simply must "feel right." This must be achieved by the Chief CEO, the support staff, and everyone in between (Dehne, 1994).

Also, in order for an institution to promote a positive image, have a shared vision, and enable all faculty and staff members to make the recruitment process a success, a top to bottom effect must take place. Students, their families, and the public want better services from publicly funded educational institutions. Some institutions may have to revamp various operations to improve substantially. The key to re-engineering is the president's or superintendent's ability to communicate the need to improve the institution's competitive position and performance. Enrollment and retention levels will increase, as improvements in student services and satisfaction become evident. However, this must begin at the highest levels of the institution's hierarchy (Glenn, 1997).

Re-engineering and its focus on customer satisfaction have taken firm hold in the business world. Does it promise similar advantages for higher education? The question merits consideration, even though successful business concepts and strategies often are dismissed in academe as irrelevant, untested, even naïve (Glenn, 1997).

In the past, successful business concepts have seemed a poor fit with educational institutions that are somewhat removed from the vicissitudes of the market place. After all, the market place values the economic law of supply and demand; the academy values academic freedom. The marketplace pursues profits; the academy protects its nonprofit status. Despite these diametrical opposed tenets that separate the academy from the marketplace, higher education increasingly is being asked to meet the more exacting set of performance standards typical of profit-making enterprises (Glenn, 1997).

Strategic Planning

Once an institution has established the proper foundation and image, it can then successfully implement its recruitment practices if a strategic plan is in place. Many educational institutions utilize similar recruitment techniques, but many have found success when recruiting students with techniques that are somewhat unique to their institution. However, Alter (1999) pointed out that an institution should approach recruitment so it has a real strategy - not just a collection of tactical Band-Aids. So it makes sense to have a dominant strategy and then have varying techniques for this overall strategy that you can explain well. How do you pick the right strategy? Analyze your institution's history and the direction it wants to go from a larger organization perspective and design your plan around these goals and objectives (Alter, 1999).

Although many educators are approaching marketing with caution for it has the image of being primarily a function for profit-making enterprises and has been considered to be synonymous with selling and promotion, some educators are forming strategic plans to market their institutions responsibly. Responsible marketing in education, as called for by its terms of reference, is concerned with how to effectively bring students into contact with programs that are both beneficial and rewarding from the broadest sense of personal as well as societal fulfillment (Liu, 1998).

Liu (1998) proposed how the competencies of marketing contribute to integrating marketing strategies in educational institutional strategic planning. As mentioned above, many educators and scholars in the field of education marketing have long been advocating the importance of an educational institution being responsive to meeting the market demand and achieving customer satisfaction. This concept will become more relevant as competitions among educational institutions become keener. Due to these competitions, an integrated marketing strategy based on the identified positioning of the institution plays a crucial role in successful enrollment and long-term development of educational institutions. However, most paradigms and models of strategic planning for marketing are structured for businesses and industry. These organizations differ from educational institutions mainly because of their social responsibilities and the context in which decisions are made (Liu, 1998).

Further studies regarding educational institution strategic planning for marketing are needed to provide an appropriate context for education (Liu, 1998). However, Kotler and Fox (1995) had the most extensive and comprehensive discussions on the marketing planning and control system in institutions of education. These authors utilized the

product marketing approach and concentrated in student enrollment. They also focused on developing long-term relationships with target students. Scholars of this school of thought saw marketing planning as a response to meet and anticipate the needs of students within a competitive environment in terms of uncertain future demand, the changing composition of demand, and financial pressures. Although these approaches had a good deal of merit, they too tended to emphasize the student as a customer and the course/program as the product and have drawn from the product marketing in the manufacturing industry analogy (Liu, 1998).

Recruitment Techniques

Once an institution has successfully completed its strategic plan for marketing, it can then implement various recruitment techniques. Symes (1998) stated that schools have always engaged in promotional activities to make their presence felt in the community, to keep it informed of their various activities, and recruit new students. However, it is only since the era of marketing that they have engaged in more sophisticated forms of promotion designed to increase enrollments and establish distinctive profiles. Many of these forms of promotion are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Buzzell (1991) posed the question, what is it that motivates students to make career choices? He felt that the answers range broadly, from simply falling into an occupation to the deliberate pursuit of a lifelong career. However, he felt that among the variables, is how much I will earn.

Most people probably pursue careers that they believe will provide enough pay to allow them access to the good life-to have the garage into which you can put the two cars, and the two cars, and money to afford quality education for your children, and so on. Vocational education typically does not pay as much attention as they should to what a person can earn in a particular labor market with appropriate vocational education preparation. But portraying what a particular person could expect in lifetime earnings, or annual earnings, as a result of vocational education programs can be an effective recruitment strategy, especially if they are competing with the college track as a path to the good life. However, if this strategy is to work, obviously vocational education programs must have the state-of-the-art equipment and curricula necessary to prepare students for top line jobs (Buzzell, 1991).

Slavic departments at most North American universities are under siege. In early 1995, over faculty and student protest, the University of Washington proposed the elimination of its Slavic department. Then, the Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia killed its Russian program. In 1996, Ohio State University threatened to eliminate or merge its department, one of the most active in the USA. What was the rational behind this widespread dismantling of a discipline? Low enrollments (Khan, 1996).

Although, many small "unprofitable" academic departments such as Slavic studies have become victims of the supply and demand issue, Wayne State University in Detroit has had great success at maintaining high student enrollment in low demand programs. Khan (1996) provided the following suggestions:

- *Develop programs that satisfy graduation requirements and are not just considered electives.* Students surveyed at Wayne State University in other courses besides Slavic courses, while interested in Slavic courses, could not afford the time or money to take courses that wouldn't advance them towards their degrees. This experience underscored the validity of Robert Bowie's recommendations on how to design courses that satisfy more than one requirement and thereby appeal to a larger pool of students.
- *Advertise.* With multiple departments competing for the same pool of students, traditional recruitment methods, such as classroom fliers, and schedule announcements or advertisements in the campus paper, may no longer be enough. Resorting to more aggressive and innovative recruitment methods is no longer out of place.
- *Increase Visibility.* Since positive word of mouth is still the most effective means of building a department's reputation and attracting students, it is important to increase the visibility of a program or school.
- *Get students and keep them.* While a few students always will drop, it is important to limit attrition due to the lack of interest or boredom. The first day of class, therefore, is crucial and must be planned carefully. Arrange the presentation order beforehand and rehearse it thoroughly. Pay attention to time and pace. Keep the explanation of the course relatively brief and alternate it with short exercises that allow for student participation. Do not get bogged down in details; there will be time later in the course to explain things.

- *Catch potential students' interests early.* During recruitment activities, introduce a few fun exercises. The first exercise that is introduced should be intended to stimulate the students' general interest in the program or school.
- *Make the programs relevant.* Inform the students of how they can benefit from the programs in terms that they understand.
- *Make it personal.* Present information such as examples of past and current student projects that deeply involve students and have had a lasting impact on their lives.
- *Initiate discussions.* Robert Bowie, professor at Miami University in Ohio, suggests using an open format to facilitate discussions regarding the school and its programs, using a cordless microphone to move around the auditorium and having an assistant running a hand-held microphone for the audience.
- *Bring in guest speakers.* Having guest speakers whenever possible is one of the best ways to keep the students interested and involved. The utilization of current and past students can be successful.
- *Employ technology.*

Symes (1998) discussed the importance of impression management strategies that have become a focus of the educational dimension. He stated that there has become a recent upsurge of these strategies that can be traced to the context of marketing and consumer choice, which is now part of the prevailing orthodoxy of the modern school. Symes (1998) illustrated that schools are utilizing various types of "impression

management" strategies including school prospectuses and advertisements. He argues that the employment of a social semiotic framework to analyze educational promotional materials highlights the degree to which schooling, particularly those schools having to recruit students, continue to be shaped by market forces.

Symes (1998, p. 133) felt that one aspect of this shift is the degree to which the market has become an integral part of the educational endeavor. As its "invisible hand" has gained a stranglehold over schools and universities, so they have become more conscious of the need to engage in strategies such as advertising and promotion that are designed to shape the movement of this invisible hand. Symes (1998, p. 134) stated, following the lead of universities, many schools have begun to concern themselves with manipulating our symbolic economy, with influencing the educational choices of consumers. They have become involved in impression management, cooperate imaging and promotional strategies designed to enhance their market profile, to increase their share of the contracting educational market.

Marginson (1993) pointed out the semiotic politics of education are manifested not just in more sophisticated forms of advertising and promotion, but also in a range of other practices associated with the management of appearance. Arguably many of these practices that have developed in schools in the last few years were pioneered in the higher education sector and were policy-led. The introduction of the unified national system of higher education in 1991 was also accompanied by the adoption of corporate managerialist practices that were tethered to the competition and marketisation.

Smith (1992) discussed these issues and felt that they led institutions into focusing on impression management strategies, involving the development of coordinated sets of

signifying practices, across such areas as an institution's signage, stationary, publications, and advertisements. These were intended to delineate more precisely the image profile of the new institutions that emerged as a result of the amalgamations and to galvanize the interests of dispersed campuses and staff around a common set of symbols and semiotic principles.

It is within the area of the various textual communications made by schools, particularly those with its immediate community, that the most dramatic changes in this educational impressionism can be observed. These communications, which include, among other texts, newsletters, magazines, flyers, prospectuses, advertisements, videos and, increasingly, various forms of educational merchandise such as T-shirts and umbrellas, lavishly embossed with a school's iconography, constitute a vision of the school drawing on a selected representation of its culture. In addition to providing information about the school, these communications also serve to structure the social relations that the schools have with their communities (Keogh, 1995; Smith, 1991).

The transition to a more image-based approach to educational marketing is at its most striking in the prospectuses that some schools are now producing to promote themselves. As its name suggests, the prospectus, as distinct from the handbook, which documents the particular sets of protocols that underpin a school's organizational culture, provides a summary account of a school's immediate aspirations and an outline of its educational advantages and its assets. In this respect, the school prospectus bears a striking resemblance to those of the publishing and investment firms, which also issue sophisticated prospectuses to impress their clients and to procure business (Symes, 1998).

Durgin (1998) analyzed the rhetorical arguments of admission view-books and prospectuses in order to consider the brochures' effectiveness as communication vehicles. Her study was designed to help colleges achieve their admission recruiting goals and objectives; view-book introductions were analyzed in relation to social, economic, and psychological forces. She found that these forces influence the communication between colleges and prospective students.

Understanding how admission brochures' words assist in the recruiting process may help schools to recognize the impact that view-books' and prospectuses' words have on a student's decision to pursue a school's admission process and on a schools' achievement of its annual admission business and image goals. By recognizing the effects of the rhetorical associations that schools create with their competitors, and the expectations that students have of the school's rhetorical presentations, a comparison between the presumed and actual effects of the brochures can be identified (Durgin, 1998).

Although many schools are finding recruiting success through their prospectuses and brochures, many schools are becoming more aggressive by utilizing advertising. The Chadwick School, an elite college prep private school in California, has begun to turn to recruitment ads even though it already has a sufficient number of applicants. This practice reflects a trend seen at other elite schools, Mimi Baer, Executive Director of the California Association of Independent Schools, said. Chadwick's ads begin with the question, "*Concerned About Choosing the Right School for Your Child?*" Then they proceed to inform parents about some tantalizing references to small classes, superior teaching, and multiple opportunities. Finally, they end the ads by urging parents to "*Take*

a Look at Chadwick School," the only K-12 College Prep School in the South Bay of California (Merl, 1998).

When Chadwick school officials and other school authorities in the California area were asked why they used advertising when their schools already were having success filling student vacancies, they stated that they wanted to let more people know that they were there. They wanted to encourage diversity and get the best students. Also, they wanted to get the word to the larger community. They felt like if they did not, only those people who already knew about their schools were the ones who would apply, and that was not a necessarily good thing (Merl, 1998).

Besides advertising, educational institutions are utilizing various other recruitment techniques to increase student enrollment, such as:

- Internet Strategies
- Incentives, and
- Targeting Students At An Earlier Age.

Guernsey (1998) discussed four educational institutions', California State University, State University of New York at Buffalo, the University of Dayton, and the University of Missouri at Rolla, Web sites that they used for recruiting students. The institutions stated that the first step for successful recruiting through Web sites is to provide an easy-to-use informational site. Virtual tours should come next. On-line open houses that offer live chat with students, instructors, or presidents/superintendents are popular, too. Schools utilizing this strategy have reported attendance from hundreds of prospective students, including many from outside the U.S.

Most educational institutions are using the same Internet techniques for student recruitment. However, to differentiate themselves, a few institutions are trying other interactive experiments. Among the new strategies, (Guernsey, 1998) illustrated the following:

- Using Web sites to attract prospective students as young as 12 years old. They provide these students with an on-line space to keep track of their academic records throughout their secondary careers. This then provides them with an easier transition into their institution.
- Using the Web site to schedule open house dates and campus tours. If there is a scheduling conflict, the computer application points this out. A prospective student is able to choose areas of interest such as programs and campus departments. At the end of this scheduling process, the student can print off their customized schedule.
- Prospective students can subscribe to receive e-mail newsletters about the institution tailored to their interests.

Wilson (1996) discussed the Internet and how it has dramatically changed the way institutions recruit. He provided the following uses for the Internet regarding recruitment:

- The users network,
- Electronic mail.
- Electronic mailing lists,
- The World Wide Web,
- Searching for institutions using search engines.

- Searching for prospective students by placing information on WWW educational sites, and
- Creating an organizational presence.

Organizations and institutions are finding success in their recruitment efforts by providing prospects with incentives. One example of using incentives to successfully recruit is in the area of teachers. Many states in this country are faced with the problem of teacher shortages. A lot of effort has been put forth to more effectively recruit qualified individuals into teaching vacancies. New York City has sent recruiters as far away as Austria. St. Louis headhunters searched South Africa. Still, their efforts were not successful until they used incentives, such as signing bonuses. States that have implemented incentives into their recruiting process have seen enormous growth in the number of qualified applicants. However, experts in recruitment feel that bonuses and incentives get individuals attention, but they don't take the place of a systematic and coherent approach to recruitment (Ferdinand, 1999; Loupe, 1999; McKenna, 1998; Klara, 1999).

Although the literature regarding incentives for recruitment involved businesses and industries, the researcher feels that this approach could be beneficial for educational institutions if the proper incentives for prospective students were identified. More research is needed in this area to provide a framework for educational institution student recruitment.

More and more educational institutions are utilizing recruitment practices that target young adolescents. Vondracek Rainer, Matthias, and Wiesner (1999) pointed out that their study of vocational preferences of early adolescents found that young

adolescents, 10-to-13-year-olds, appeared to be remarkably "tuned in" to the world of occupations, suggesting greater realism than might be predicted on the basis of conventional career development theory. This research suggests that more of an emphasis regarding student recruitment, particularly for vocational education programs, should be placed on younger adolescents.

Although many educational institutions are finding that thinking out of the box regarding their recruitment practices is contributing to their institution's success, research still suggests that "word-of-mouth" or informal marketing is one of the most successful recruitment techniques. One of the best ways to improve an institution's informal marketing is through improving its services to current students. Several techniques can be used to accomplish this task, such as empowering employees to better address student needs and utilizing student questionnaires to identify student concerns and determine student perceptions. Institutions should not focus only on administrative and curricular issues, but on the whole student experience. If current students are not satisfied with their educational value received, they will be an institutions biggest obstacle for successful student recruitment (Browne, 1998; Corbitt, 1998).

Whatever strategic plan and specific recruitment techniques an institution decides to use, Satterfield (1991) provided the following list of the six most common recruiting mistakes:

- Interviews and nothing else,
- Bad presentations that do not provide the right information,
- Poor image,
- The wrong recruiters that are not properly trained or uninterested,

- Poor follow up, and
- Poor understanding of the prospective students.

Oklahoma Technology Center Recruitment Practices

There is a very limited body of research involving recruitment practices for vocational-technical education and an even more limited amount specifically relating to Oklahoma technology centers. However, the researcher obtained a study titled *Oklahoma Vo-tech High School Recruitment Survey.* The study was completed in 1998 by Donna Schooley, Public Relations Director, Autry Technology Center, Enid, Oklahoma. It provided an excellent resource regarding recruitment practices utilized by technology centers in Oklahoma.

The purpose of the study was to survey Oklahoma technology centers regarding their recruitment practices in order to share information between technology centers. The study was not intended to be a research study; therefore, the end results were not research based. However, the study provided a book full of ideas and suggestions to help technology centers and vocational educators make plans for recruiting high school students.

Schooley's (1998) survey was given to every technology center in Oklahoma represented at a Program Administrators meeting in November 1997 and mailed to those who could not attend. In addition, surveys were mailed to the Public Information Directors at each school. This technique resulted in responses from 24 campuses, representing 19 technology center districts. This represents almost 50% of the Oklahoma

technology center districts (Oklahoma Department of Career Technology Education, 2001).

The following Oklahoma technology centers were represented in the survey (Schooley, 1998):

- Autry Technology Center
- Canadian Valley Technology Center - Chickasha
- Canadian Valley Technology Center - El Reno
- Central Technology Center - Drumright
- Central Technology Center - Sapulpa
- Great Plains Technology Center - Frederick
- Great Plains Technology Center - Lawton
- High Plains Technology Center
- Indian Capital Technology Center - Muskogee
- Indian Capital Center - Tahlequah
- Kiamichi Technology Center - Hugo
- Meridian Technology Center
- Metro Technology Center
- Mid-Del Technology Center
- Northeast Technology Center - Pryor
- Northeast Technology Center - Afton
- Pioneer Technology Center
- Pontotoc Technology Center
- Red River Technology Center

- Southwest Technology Center
- Tri-County Technology Center
- Tulsa Technology Center
- Wes Watkins Technology Center
- Western Oklahoma Technology Center

The following is a summary of the survey and responses:

1. Do you conduct sophomore tours? If so, please describe and include time of year, length of tours, if all sophomores attend and how the tours are organized?
    - All of the schools did some type of sophomore tours. Fifteen gave tours or an orientation for all sophomores in their district. Five of the schools gave tours to all of the sophomores from their smaller high schools and tours for those who sign up at their larger schools. Two gave tours only if requested by the sending high schools.
    - One school reported that it integrated a panel discussion from business and industry into its tour for smaller high schools.
2. Do you offer organized tours/visits at other grade levels? If so, please explain.
    - All of the schools offered tours when requested, if staff and instructor time allowed. Most of the schools offered special program tours for eighth grade students. These programs included

career fairs/carnivals, career assessments, summer camps and career exploration activities.

- One school sponsored an event as part of eighth grade tours that it perceived as being very successful called *Career Paths*. This event featured business and industry booths with displays and demonstrations, in addition to a "Reality Store," where students shop for cars, housing, etc. on a fixed budget. These activities were all correlated to vocational-technical education opportunities.

3. What type of presence do you have in your sending high schools?

- All of the schools reported having an effective presence in their sending high schools. Many had coop counselors who spent much of their time in the sending high schools, technology center counselors visited the sending high schools regularly, and most technology centers reported being involved in sending high school activities when possible.
- One school presented each of its sending high schools with a large banner to hang in their gym or auditorium that displayed the technology center's name and stated that it supports the local high school.

4. Does your school have an annual open house event?

- Fifteen of the schools reporting hosted an annual open house. All of the events were open to the public, with the exception of one school, which geared theirs toward parents and students.

5. What contact do you have with parents at any grade level prior to their students' enrollment at the technology center?

   - Six of the schools indicated some type of personal contact with parents prior to enrollment, including involvement in recruitment sessions, meetings to explain career assessment results, or parent/student conferences to discuss plans of study. Most of the technology centers sent at least one promotional mailing to parents prior to students' sophomore years. Schooley stated that several of those responding requested ideas for this area.

6. Please describe any special events you have for sending high school administrators/staff?

   - Most of the technology centers hosted sending school superintendents, principal, and/or counselors meetings and several served lunch. Summer events such as camps and workshops were held at many schools with names such as *Workshop for Educators, Vocational Extravaganza, Teacher Technology Fair, and Summer Camp for Educators.*
   - The following events were reported individually by technology centers: Thanksgiving and Christmas luncheons for counselors and administrators at sending high schools, breakfasts and luncheons with business and industry guest speakers advocating vocational-technical education, and free computer training for sending high school teachers.

7. Do you utilize direct mailings in your high school recruiting efforts?

   - Very few schools had a direct mail program other than one or two letters mailed to students and/or parents.
   - One school reported a comprehensive direct mail program. It sent three letters to parents, one after sophomore tours, an invitation to its open house and a letter prior to enrollment. The parent letters were personalized. They told them about the advantages of the technology center and which program their child showed an interest in during sophomore tours. In addition, a personalized letter was sent to each sophomore student from the instructor of the program they preferenced at sophomore tours, with a brochure that described the program. Many instructors followed-up with phone calls, inviting students to spend a 1/2-day on the technology center campus in the Spring visiting their program of interest.
   - A few schools mailed letters inviting prospective students to "shadow" a program prior to enrollment.

8. What special programs have you implemented that are designed to increase high school student enrollment?

   - Summer programs/camps were held at many of the technology centers primarily for middle school-aged students.
   - "School-to-Work" activities designed to improve student awareness regarding career and vocational-technical education opportunities.

9. What recruitment practices are you utilizing that have not yet been mentioned?

   - Breakfast/luncheon for all sending high school counselors to explain plans for upcoming recruitment/enrollment processes and answer questions.
   - Provide sending high school counselors with a booklet, which outlines the technology center's enrollment process and programs.

Schooley's (1998) survey provided Oklahoma technology centers with an excellent resource regarding recruitment practices for high school students. This study elaborated on Schooley's ideas and survey. However, it utilized a more open-ended structure and qualitative method for gathering information regarding high school recruitment practices being used by Oklahoma technology centers in an attempt to further examine current recruitment practices. Further, this study not only attempted to identify current recruitment practices, but it also attempted to determine recruiters' and students' perceptions of the recruitment practices and factors influencing Oklahoma high school student technology center enrollment decisions.

Determining Factors That Influence Enrollment Decisions

Universities and other educational institutions have belatedly recognized that they must consider their marketing and recruitment practices if they are to remain viable in the increasingly competitive market. In order to provide a logical framework through which to evaluate recruiting practices, more needs to be known about the process, which students and individuals utilize in the decision process, specifically, college and school

choice. This section reported on studies and literature that were designed to examine and discuss college and school choice and the decision process in general. Specifically, this section provided an understanding of factors that influence enrollment decisions (Rosen, 1998; Hancock, 1996).

Student's Perspective of the Selection Process

In order to fully understand how recruiting activities can impact enrollment decisions, an examination of recruiting practices from the customer's perspective or the student's perspective is necessary. By combining what schools are doing with how prospective students react to these attempts to influence their choices, much can be learned which can assist educational institutions in selecting appropriate recruiting activities to deploy. By examining the selection process which a prospective student goes through as a case of brand elimination, the choice process can be examined more thoroughly thus providing institutions with insight into the appropriate timing of recruiting activities (Rosen, 1998).

Research has shown that consumers go through a somewhat structured decision making process, particularly for decisions in which they are highly involved. The stages of this process include:

- Identification of a problem,
- Information search,
- Evaluation of alternatives,
- Choice, and
- Post-purchase evaluation.

The more highly involved an individual is in the product/service being considered for purchase, the more deliberative the decision process becomes (Rosen, 1998).

Involvement in decision-making is defined as, "the activation of extended problem-solving behavior when the act of purchase or consumption is seen by the decision-maker as having high personal importance or relevance" (Engel, 1982, p. 24). Becoming highly involved takes place when the product is perceived as reflecting on one's self-image, when the product considered is costly, and the risks of a wrong decision are high or when there is strong outside reference group influence. According to this definition, school enrollment decisions qualify as a high involvement situation (Rosen, 1998, p. 75). Further, research suggests that in a situation characterized by high involvement, an individual will put more effort into processing information received (Petty, 1983). Consequently, it would be expected that individuals going through the Oklahoma technology center enrollment decision process would pay careful attention to information provided by the technology center recruiters (Rosen, 1998).

In the case of school enrollment decisions, there is research suggesting that the academic environment, organizational environment, recommendations of authorities (i.e. high school counselors, teachers, administrators, and parents), size, cost, social aspects, and influence of peers all influence the school choice process (Hallinan, 1990; Jencks, 1975; Rosen, 1998). Although all of these factors contribute to a students enrollment decisions, research suggests that recommendations of authorities consistently was one of the top two factors of influence (Rosen, 1998). However, other research suggests that personal visits were of higher relative importance as a source of information than family, friends, university publications, and their high school authorities which may lead one to

believe that personal visits are a bigger contributor to enrollment decisions (Barnes, 1993). Rosen, Curran, and Greenlee (1998) suggested that the difference in this data could be due to the number of years separating the studies involved. They felt that students have become more visually perceptive and therefore persuaded more by things that they can actually see.

Brand Elimination

One theory or practice of determining how students make school enrollment decisions and what factors influence their decisions is that of the "brand elimination" process. Narayana and Markin (1975) suggest that the brand elimination process provided a means of understanding consumer choice. In this approach, consumers are believed to narrow down the brands under consideration in a sequential process. Rosen, Curran, and Greenlee (1998) provided a synapses of this approach tailored to student enrollment decisions. This synapses is illustrated below in chart form (Figure 1).

Total Set (1)_____	Awareness Set (2)_____	Consideration Set (3)_____	Choice Set (4)_____	Decision Set (5)_____
All schools or Programs	Schools or programs which attract the student's attention	Schools or programs which spark the students interest for further investigation	Schools or programs to which the student applies	School or program where the student enrolls

Figure 1. Brand Elimination Process: High School Student's Perspective

The brand elimination model of consumer behavior begins with the total set of possible brands. However, consumers are only aware of a fraction of all possible brands and this is known as the awareness set. From the awareness set consumers are believed to select a smaller number of brands they are actually considering. This is called the consideration set. In the next phase the choice set is formed from still a further reduced number of alternatives. Finally, as illustrated in Figure 1, from this set a choice is made (Rosen, 1998).

The question is: when and how are students influenced the most in their enrollment decision process? Research suggest that parents, guidance counselors, other figures of authority, and personal visits appear to be the main source of information for students when making enrollment decisions (Hallinan, 1990; Jencks, 1975; Rosen, 1998). However, at which stage in brand elimination are parents more influential, at which stage does information received from the educational institution play an important role? Research suggests that an organization's ability to influence consumers is stronger during the awareness and consideration set development stages than it is at the time of choice. This suggests that educational institutions should be contacting students early in their decision process (Rosen, 1998).

Specific Programs or Majors

Research shows that not only are students influenced when choosing a specific school, but they are also influenced regarding specific classes or programs, such as vocational and technical programs. A student's past experiences with introductory courses, such as high school general business and technology classes and agriculture

mechanics classes, had a major influence on a student's decision to enroll in an Oklahoma technology center. These instructors played an important role in providing information and representing the field of study, which attracted or in some cases turned away students from continuing their studies in a particular field. Further, these instructors were able to provide information such as prestige, job security, rewards, and opportunities within the field. These factors are considered to be influential in regards to enrollment decisions of secondary students (Hafer, 1982; Stevens, 1993).

Job opportunities are important to students when deciding whether or not to enroll in a particular program. Willenborg, Pitts, and Lewison (1978) provided research that suggested student attitudes toward a major or field of study, such as a particular vocational or technical program, were related to course interest, job orientation, image, and earning potential; while actual selection of a program or major was related to interest in and relevance of the subject matter and potential job opportunities. Other research validated their findings by suggesting that faculty perceptions, job opportunities, and specific course offerings were important to selection of a program or major (Gaertner, 1980).

Markley and Huyck (1992) also researched factors that influenced students to choose a specific program of study. Their study found that three factors, that influenced students in this decision, emerged most frequently. They were discussed as follows:

- Previous courses (32.9%),
- A friend or relative other than a parent (31.0%), and
- A current professional in the particular field (30.30%).

Peer and Parental Influence

Maybe the biggest influence of secondary students is that of peer influence. Peer influence is widely believed to be a cause of both desirable and undesirable behaviors, attitudes, and values in adolescents (Hallinan, 1990; Urberg, 1991). Very little is known, however, about how peer influence is actually transmitted among peers. For example, Urberg, (1991) stated that research lacks a final conclusion regarding adolescents' major sources of peer influence.

Further, there are methodological difficulties in measuring peer influence. Similarity between adolescents at any one-time point may be due to either similar adolescents choosing each other as friends (selective association), or to initially dissimilar adolescents choosing each other as friends and becoming more similar as a result of the association (peer influence). Several studies have found that both influence and selection contribute to similarity among adolescents (Cohen, 1977; Cohen, 1983; Urberg, 1991).

Although there are some methodological challenges when determining the effect of peer influence on adolescents when they make decisions, Urberg (1991) validated the belief that in fact peer influence does have an impact on adolescents. Her study, *Locus of Peer Influence: Social Crowd and Best Friend,* discussed its impact. She found that peer influence occurs at different levels and is dependent on the depth of relationship between adolescents. She suggested that closer and more intimate relationships maybe more influential than more casual ones. Also, impact of peer influence is dependent on the personal characteristics of an adolescent such as whether or not they have low self-esteem or are high on conformity. Hallinan (1990) validated Urberg's (1991) findings.

Although peer influence has a major impact on adolescent decision-making, parental influence has a similar result with many adolescents. Research suggests that there is greater stability of early interests and a much more important role for early preferences than has been commonly assumed. Individual differences in both the content and timing of vocational preferences are assumed to be due, in large part, to socialization process, particularly those in the family and peer group. Indeed, because young adolescents are still quite dependent on their parents and the family context, parent-child interactions and family dynamics represent important influences on the timing and content of early vocational and educational preferences (Seligman, 1991; Vondracek, 1986; Vondracek, 1999). However, Jencks and Brown (1975) stated that although parental and peer influence has a big impact on adolescents' decisions, students' individual schools have a greater overall influence, as the students grow older. They concluded that high school students largely base their decisions, especially those involving education, on their schools' opinions, recommendations, beliefs, and philosophies. These high school influencers are usually a result of a schools demographics and faculty and are similar to those held by the schools' communities such as school boards.

Gender Differences

A growing proportion of educational institutions are beginning to develop and implement comprehensive marketing practices (Goldgehn, 1991; and Michael, 1993). Critical to the foundation of any successful marketing strategy is choosing the correct segmentation variables, target markets, and positioning the product/service. Historically,

educational institutions have not considered segmentation on the basis of gender. Likewise, target markets were not developed or implemented with gender difference in mind. However, based on the results of a study conducted by Shank and Beasley (1998), this strategic planning with the lack of concern for gender may be an oversight that hinders the recruitment process.

Shank and Beasley (1998) found in their survey of 183 undergraduate students at a large university that male and female students differed in the importance they placed on various attributes of a school. Although there were many similarities in the responses of men and women, women rated safety, diversity, and a broad range and variety of courses significantly higher in importance than did men. Further, Hayes, Walker, and Trebbi (1995) found similar results regarding important characteristics of females regarding their school enrollment decisions.

Another interesting difference between females and males regarding their enrollment decision processes is related to secondary markets. A significant difference was found between females and males regarding the perceived importance of parents in the school selection and enrollment process. Females believed parents were a more important source of information than did males. As such, parents become a more valuable source of information in the selection process. The strategic implication of this finding is related to the choice of a primary or secondary target market. If more female students are sought than parents need to be targeted. This translates into more campus visits for parents, more marketing literature sent into the homes of prospective students, and more customized information directed at parents (Shank, 1998).

For university recruiters and marketers to succeed, they must understand how their customers decide which educational institution to attend. In order to accomplish this task, recruiters and educational institutions must recognize the differences between males and females in their educational decision processes (Hayes, 1995, Sekely, 1991).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to determine Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices; recruiters' and students' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices, and factors associated with Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions of selected secondary students. The results of the study could be useful to individuals who want to examine Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices in order to determine whether they address factors that influence enrollment decisions. Specifically, this information will allow individuals to recognize inconsistencies between Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices and factors associated with Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions of selected secondary students. With this study's results, Oklahoma technology centers should be able to address enrollment factors in order to increase the number of students enrolled in their programs and to improve marketing efforts through recruitment practices.

In addition, the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education should benefit from this study's results by being able to assist and guide its technology

centers with more effective and relevant recruitment strategy recommendations for secondary students. Also, this study should identify factors that inhibit secondary students from enrolling in an Oklahoma technology center, such as scheduling and program relevancy, which could aid in the development of more effective recruitment practices.

Identification of Archival Data

The researcher utilized archival data for this study in order to answer the study's research questions. The archival data was obtained from two Oklahoma technology centers: Meridian Technology Center, Stillwater, Oklahoma and Central Technology Center, Drumright, Oklahoma. The archival data was gathered through two data collection techniques, a modified three-phase Delphi process and questionnaires. The modified Delphi process was used to gather data from Oklahoma technology center recruiters. It identified Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices and recruiters' perceptions of the practices. The questionnaires were administered in order to gather data from selected secondary students that identified enrollment factors and the students' perceptions concerning recruitment. The data gathered through the modified Delphi process and questionnaires provided archival data that the researcher utilized in order to address the objectives of the study listed in Chapter I. The modified Delphi process was conducted by Meridian Technology Center and the questionnaires were administered by Central Technology Center staffs. The researcher was an employee of both institutions during the times that the archival data was gathered and coordinated the data collection processes as part of his employment responsibilities.

The remainder of this chapter consists of sections that further explain the archival data utilized for the study and how it was gathered and analyzed. In addition, the study's design and populations are illustrated. The following sections are discussed in this chapter: (1) identification of the population; (2) research design; (3) instrumentation design and development; and (4) data collection and analysis.

Identification of the Population

The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education publishes a personnel listing of all professional vocational educators and staff throughout its local comprehensive schools and technology centers. The personnel listing available from the ODCTE designated what personnel were responsible for student recruitment in its technology centers. A list of coordinators and directors of student recruitment, including at least one from each Oklahoma technology center district, was compiled from the ODCTE personnel listing discussed above. From this list, at least one recruiter from each Oklahoma technology center district was mailed a first-round mailing of a modified three-round Delphi process that gathered the recruiter population archival data. Recruiters that responded to the first-round mailing compromised the recruiter population. The recruiter population was self-selected because it only included those recruiters who chose to respond to the first-round mailing.

Two student convenience populations were utilized for this study in order to collect information and data regarding both secondary students who were enrolled in Central Technology Center and students who were not enrolled, but were eligible and

considering enrollment. These populations were identified as the enrolled student population and the prospective student population, respectively.

The prospective student population was selected by identifying all eligible Central Technology Center secondary students who were not enrolled at Central Technology Center, but were considering enrollment. The students were determined to be making an enrollment decision due to the fact that they elected to tour Central Technology Center and complete an "interest form." Eligibility was determined by identifying all district students who met Central Technology Center's secondary student enrollment requirements (i.e. age, classification, credits, etc.). These students were included in the prospective student population in order to obtain data from students who were making an enrollment decision regarding their technology center. All of these students received and completed the prospective student population questionnaire when they arrived at Central Technology Center to tour the campus. These students consisted of students from each of Central Technology Center's local comprehensive secondary schools. These local comprehensive secondary schools consisted of Bristow, Cleveland, Cushing, Davenport, Depew, Drumright, Hominy, Kellyville, Keifer, Mannford, Mounds, Oilton, Olive, Ripley, Sapulpa, Stroud, and Yale. The researcher selected the Central Technology Center district archival data due to the districts large number of local comprehensive schools (17) and the range of schools within its district (Class 6A - large to Class B - small). This population should provide a good representation of other technology center districts in Oklahoma.

The enrolled student population consisted of all secondary students who were enrolled in a full-time program at Central Technology Center during the 2000-2001

school year. This population should provide a good representation of secondary students enrolled in other Oklahoma technology centers due to Central Technology Center's similar demographics. However, both of the student populations were determined to be "convenience populations" because the populations were limited to a particular technology center district, Central Technology Center, instead of utilizing a random sample.

In summary, the researcher utilized the following procedures to obtain appropriate student archival data and to determine the student populations:

- Selection of a technology center district that in the researcher's opinion would be fairly representative of other technology center districts in Oklahoma due to its size, variations of local comprehensive schools within its district and demographics. Further, a technology center district that had obtained and maintained data that appropriately addressed the study's relevant research questions and could be used for archival data.
- Limiting one of the student populations to students within the selected technology center district that were not enrolled, but were eligible and making a decision whether or not to enroll.
- Limiting the other student population to students who were classified as secondary students and were enrolled in a program at the selected technology center.

Research Design

The design of this study followed a systematic approach that characterizes educational research. It followed the concept discussed by Wiersma (2000) that all knowledge is derived from sense experience. But the result of this experience must take some kind of informational form so that knowledge can be generated. Information takes the form of data. Further, McMillan and Schumacher's (1997) idea of research was a central focus of this design. They believed that research is a systematic process of collecting and analyzing information (data) for some purpose. The following five steps were compatible with this study's design and provided the elements of its general, systematic approach:

1. Identifying the problem.
2. Reviewing information.
3. Collecting data.
4. Analyzing data.
5. Drawing conclusions (Wiersma, 2000).

In addition, this study followed the form of applied research. As Wiersma (2000) stated, applied research is differentiated by its purpose. The purpose of applied research is the solution of an immediate, practical problem. This study not only provided recruiters with a better understanding of vocational education recruitment practices and factors associated with vocational education enrollment decisions, but it also provided vocational educators, who desire to improve the marketing of vocational education through recruitment practices, with suggestions. The immediate problem was that of decreasing enrollment in vocational education classes.

Further, this study followed the design of descriptive research and tended to be more qualitative in nature by describing the phenomena primarily in words instead of numbers. However, the researcher quantified some archival data through various techniques in order to utilize descriptive statistics in a manner that answered the research questions.

The design of this approach has its origins in descriptive analysis, and was essentially an inductive process. It reasoned from the specific situation to the general conclusion (Wiersma, 2000). As discussed previously, the study utilized archival data gathered through a modified Delphi process and questionnaires. The archival data provided the researcher with data that addressed the study's research questions and allowed for descriptive analysis. The researcher utilized techniques that followed an inductive process by analyzing the following variables:

- Factors associated with Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions.
- Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices.
- Recruiter and student perceptions of student recruitment.

Furthermore, the researcher examined the variation through qualitative techniques and descriptive statistics.

Instrument Design and Development

Several sources of archival data were considered in the selection stages of archival data for this study. However, after reviewing several bodies of data, which were similar in nature, data suitable for this study were selected. Further, the instruments used for the selected archival data were appropriate for the research questions. The instruments

used to gather the study's archival data were very simplistic in form provided relevant data for the study's purpose.

The instrument used in order to gather data regarding Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices from Oklahoma technology center recruiters was a Delphi process. The modified Delphi process was designed and facilitated by Meridian Technology Center staff members, including the researcher, with the following considerations in mind:

1. Oklahoma technology centers have standard secondary student recruiting processes, but many recruiters utilize practices that are unique and may or may not be effective.
2. Most recruiters have preferences for the practices that they use based on their success or perceived effectiveness.
3. Most recruiters have past experiences with successful and unsuccessful recruitment practices and base their perceptions on these experiences.
4. Due to recruiters' past experiences, recruiters have formed valid perceptions of what recruitment practices they believe are the most effective.
5. Most recruiters utilize recruitment practices that they perceive as being effective more than those that they do not.
6. Most recruiters have based their practices and perceptions on their professional opinions and experiences instead of research and factors associated with secondary student enrollment decisions.

The modified Delphi process followed a three-phase design. The first-phase consisted of a letter discussing the process and requesting participation. It also began the process by asking the first question, "What secondary recruitment practices are you currently using?" After the results of this phase was analyzed and compiled, a second-round letter was sent to all of those responding. Those responding represented the self-selected recruiter population. The second-round letter asked the participants to rate all of the reported recruitment practices according to which practices they perceived to be the most effective. The recruiters rated the practices through a Lickert type scale ranging from one to four. The following is an explanation of the scale: 1 = not effective, 2 = somewhat effective, 3 = very effective, 4 = extremely effective. The final and third-phase of this process consisted of a letter sent to the recruiters that listed the reported recruitment practices in their ranked order. It requested that the participants make any changes or recommendations to the list they felt necessary.

Data gathered from two questionnaires was utilized to provide student archival data. The questionnaires gathered data regarding student perceptions concerning recruitment and enrollment factors. Each questionnaire was specifically designed for its intended student population, enrolled and prospective, and attempted to gather unique data. However, both questionnaires were designed to gather data that identified factors associated with Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions and student perceptions concerning recruitment. Also, one questionnaire attempted to gather data from its student population, enrolled students, that determined the students' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices in order to directly compare their perceptions with recruiters' perceptions of the top ten rated practices by recruiters. The

enrolled student population was determined to be valid, reliable and appropriate for this data due to their past experiences of being a technology center student and being previously involved with technology center recruitment practices.

The questionnaires utilized to gather data from the convenience student populations were developed by Central Technology Center staff, including the researcher, members from the research field and an Oklahoma technology center committee. The committee consisted of Oklahoma technology center administrators, counselors, instructors, and recruiters. The members of the research field consisted of doctoral students and graduates and researchers from the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. The committee and members from the research filed provided input for the design of the questionnaires based on their professional and educational experience and an understanding of this study's objectives and variables. Also, the questionnaires were piloted to Central Technology Center students that met the criteria of the student populations. Through the committee and researchers' input and results and recommendations of the pilot study, the questionnaires were developed by Central Technology Center staff members who coordinated the processes of the questionnaires. Based upon these procedures and the particular data gathered by the questionnaires, the researcher decided that the questionnaires provided appropriate archival data for the study's relevant research questions.

The following questions were included on the questionnaire utilized for the prospective students. It attempted to identify factors associated with Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions of secondary students deciding whether or not to enroll in a technology center and determine their perceptions of student recruitment:

1. What factors could prevent you from enrolling in a course at Central Technology Center?
2. What factors encourage you to enroll in a course at Central Technology Center?
3. Who is the most influential person in your life regarding educational decisions?
4. What recruitment practices has your Technology center recruiter or counselor used to encourage you to enroll in your Technology center or make you aware of opportunities?
5. What do you feel would be the most important thing that a Technology center could do to encourage or allow more high school students to enroll?
6. Would it benefit you if you received a math credit for high school such ass geometry while attending your Technology center?
7. Would you be more encouraged to attend your Technology center if the classes were shorter?

The following questions were included on the questionnaire utilized for the enrolled students. It attempted to identify factors associated with Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions of secondary students enrolled in a technology center and to determine their perspectives on recruitment.

1. If you were in charge of recruiting high school students for a technology center or were attempting to make high school students interested in enrolling in a technology center, what would you do?
2. What factors encouraged you to enroll in your technology center?

3. What factors discouraged you from enrolling in your technology center even though you chose to enroll?
4. What factors encourage you to continue your enrollment at your technology center?
5. What factors could possibly cause you to withdraw or not continue your enrollment at your technology center?

The questionnaire designed to determine secondary students' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices listed the top ten recruitment practices determined by the self-selected recruiter population through the modified Delphi technique. It requested that the student population rate the practices from not effective to extremely effective. The questionnaire utilized a Lickert type scale that ranged from one to four (1 = not effective, 2 = somewhat effective, 3 = very effective, 4 = extremely effective). The questionnaire's Lickert type scale was in accordance with the modified Delphi technique Lickert type scale used with the recruiter population.

The questionnaires illustrated above listed several options for each question that the participants selected. The questionnaires' options were developed through critical incident interviews, input gathered from a review committee, pilot studies and focus groups. These interviews and focus groups provided plausible options to include on the questionnaires. Also, each question included the option of "other" in case the participant's response was not listed. This option also provided a space for the participants to record their response and an explanation if they wished.

The questions were developed with the following considerations in mind:

1. Secondary students make enrollment decisions based on internal and external influences.
2. Secondary students make decisions based on definite reasons that may be unique, but many times are similar.
3. Secondary students may have unique perspectives regarding student recruitment compared to professional recruiters.
4. By understanding factors that influenced secondary students' Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions and student perspectives, Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices can become more effective.

In summary, the instruments described previously, gathered data utilized for the study's archival data. The archival data addressed the study's research questions and met the study's objectives stated in Chapter I. Further, the instruments that gathered the study's archival data were developed and implemented following suggestions regarding qualitative design provided by Creswell (1994).

Validity and Reliability

Although the study's archival data was gathered by two techniques, a modified Delphi process and questionnaires, the researcher identified and took extra steps to assure the study's validity and reliability. The researcher determined that the following strategies, noted by Merriam (1998), were followed by the archival data's instrumentation design, implementation and archival data analysis. The researcher

interviewed the individuals responsible for the study's archival data in order to identify steps taken in order to assure validity and reliability.

1. Triangulation - The researcher used multiple sources of archival data to make claims about factors associated with secondary Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions. Further, triangulation was accomplished by the use of critical incident interviews, focus groups, pilot studies, and review committee input for the development of the questionnaires.
2. Member Checks - Several members of the research environment and the vocational education profession examined the documents and instruments for accuracy.
3. Peer Examination - Early drafts were submitted to peers for review and feedback.
4. Participatory Modes of Research – The study was conceptualized with subjects of the study in order to receive guidance and feedback.
5. Researcher's Biases - The researcher made himself aware of his personal biases and acknowledged them throughout the study and analysis of archival data in an attempt to lessen their impact.

Also, the study followed suggestions made by Guba and Lincoln (1989) regarding reliability. They used the following terms: dependability and consistency. The question that they posed was whether or not the results were consistent with the data collected. Their criteria was used in order to achieve the study's reliability, which was:

1. Credibility - The researcher accurately represented the views of the subjects and the archival data in his conclusions. This was accomplished through peer and subject debriefings, which were conducted with peers and research committee members.
2. Transferability - This study's results were representative of similar settings because descriptive details of the reported data were provided to allow others to decide if the findings were in fact applicable and representative to other cases.
3. Dependability - All documents, notes and archival data were retained for inspection.
4. Confirmability - This was accomplished by checking interpretations and conclusions for researcher bias. It was also addressed in the study by including detailed excerpts from the raw data that supported interpretations and conclusions drawn by the researcher.

Data Collection and Analysis

For the recruiter archival data gathered through a modified three-round Delphi process, similar recruiting practices were grouped together. The practices were obtained through round-one of the modified Delphi process. From these groups of practices, a frequency distribution was used to analyze the number of times a particular recruitment practice was reported. Then, each group was represented by a summarizing recruitment practice and compiled into a list.

Next, in round-two of the modified Delphi process the recruiters rated each practice using a four-point Lickert type scale. The scale ranged from one to four, one was not effective, two was somewhat effective, three was very effective and four was extremely effective. This rating system provided quantitative data from qualitative reports. This quantitative data was used to establish averages or mean scores for each reported practice.

The third-round mailing of the modified Delphi process included a ranked list of the reported recruitment practices and their mean scores. It requested that the recruiters validate the list and rankings and make any necessary changes. However, the recruiters made no changes or suggestions. Therefore, the coordinator of the Delphi process decided to modify the Delphi process by stopping at the round-three mailing.

The Delphi process provided a list of Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices and their perceived effectiveness by the self-selected recruiter population. The results provided data to be analyzed and compared to similar data obtained from the enrolled student convenience population in order to identify differences between students' and recruiters' perceptions of recruitment practices.

For the student archival data gathered through the questionnaires, several techniques were used to analyze the data. As themes emerged from the "other" comment option and the "open-ended" or qualitative questions, a coding system was used to cluster or group the themes into reportable data. All like data was grouped together by thinking of the data in metaphors. Each group was designated a number and then grouped by these numbers. Further, the number of times a theme showed up was recorded as a frequency. This consisted of the number of times the theme emerged in comparison to the total

number of responses. This process pointed out the most and least frequently occurring themes. Also, the data obtained from the questionnaires was compiled and analyzed by using the following techniques:

- Frequency Distributions,
- Frequency Polygons, and
- Establishing Mean Scores or Averages.

After each population's archival data was compiled and analyzed, comparisons were made between the archival data's populations. Also, selected secondary student enrollment factors and students' and recruiters' perceptions on recruitment practices were determined. Further, the researcher identified differences between recruiter and student perceptions about specific recruitment practices. Also, the researcher determined emerging themes regarding factors that influenced secondary students' Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions. The major questions that the researcher asked when analyzing the study's archival data were:

1. What secondary student recruitment practices were being used by Oklahoma technology centers?
2. What were recruiters' and students' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices?
3. What differences existed between recruiters' and students' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices?
4. What factors influenced selected secondary students' Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions?

5. What were selected students' perspectives on Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment?

The coding system, ranked orders, frequency distributions, mean scores and clustered themes allowed comparisons to be made and analysis to be completed.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The results of the study were divided into five sections and were structured in a manner that correlates with the study's five research questions: (1) What secondary student recruitment practices were being used by Oklahoma technology centers? (2) What were recruiters' and students' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices? (3) What were the differences between recruiters' and students' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices? (4) What factors influenced selected secondary students' Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions? (5) What were students' perspectives on Oklahoma technology center student recruitment?

The study utilized archival data gathered from a modified Delphi technique and two questionnaires. The Delphi technique was administered to a self-selected recruiter population and consisted of three rounds or phases of mailings discussed in Chapter III. The questionnaires were administered to the two student populations. One student population consisted of secondary students not enrolled at Central Technology Center (Drumright, OK), but were prospective students during the 2000 Fall/Winter term. The other consisted of enrolled secondary students at Central Technology Center during the

2000 Fall/Winter term. The populations, data gathering methods and archival data were discussed in detail in Chapter III.

Oklahoma Technology Center Secondary Student Recruitment Practices

Research Question One asked: What secondary student recruitment practices were being used by Oklahoma technology centers? The first-round mailing of the modified Delphi technique gathered archival information that addressed this question. The Delphi technique was divided into three rounds of mailings. The first mailing was sent to at least one professional recruiter in every Oklahoma technology center district. There were 29 districts. A total of 38 recruiters received the first mailing. Out of the 38 recruiters, 16 responded which represented a 40% response rate. The second and third mailings were sent to the 16 recruiters who responded to the first mailing. All 16 of the recruiters followed through with the remainder of the Delphi technique and made up the self-selected recruiter population.

The first round mailing of the Delphi technique (Appendix A) requested that the recruiter do the following: Please list the recruitment strategies that you and your institution utilize, such as tours, school visits, etc. If these strategies are not self-explanatory, please include a brief summary. Those responding (N=16) reported 47 different recruitment practices. The following table (Table I) lists the recruitment practices that were reported in a random order:

TABLE I

A SUMMARY OF OKLAHOMA TECHNOLOGY CENTER SECONDARY STUDENT RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

1.	Counselors/advisors work with the sending schools as liaisons providing information through presentations, etc.
2.	Mass mailings of high school program brochures sent to all sending school sophomores and juniors.
3.	Special projects with 5th, 6th, and 7th grade students in the areas of career awareness and career exploration.
4.	10th grade tours of all sending school students.
5.	10th grade tours of only prospective sending school students.
6.	Sixth grade Carnival – sending school sixth graders spend two hours on campus for a career carnival. Each program is represented with a booth.
7.	A representative from student services visits each high school sophomore through their high school classes by making a presentation about the technology center and available programs. The students are then given an opportunity to sign up for Sophomore tours.
8.	Eligible students are given the opportunity to sign an "Intent to Attend" form – these forms can be used to communicate with students by instructors.
9.	Eligible students are given the opportunity to sign an "Intent to Attend" form – these forms can be used to communicate with students by Student Service representatives.
10.	Invite all Sophomore classes from sending schools to visit campus for assistance interpreting the ACT PLAN results with special emphasis on the career interest results and technology center opportunities.
11.	Sponsor a college/career fair with colleges and representatives from the technology center available to talk with juniors and seniors.
12.	"Career Fair" for all 8th graders with visits to the programs (technology center based).
13.	Sponsor a counselors meeting for all sending school counselors with a program related to vo-tech and the world of work.
14.	Career specialist or counselors work with sending school students with career planning and plans of studies.
15.	Sending school sophomores have the opportunity to spend approximately an hour in the program of their choice for a more in-depth visit.
16.	At the end of sophomore tours, have a panel of people representing the various types of vocations telling his/her background and skills needed to do well in their particular occupation.
17.	Hold a parent/student day or night at sending schools which provides an opportunity to let parents know what is offered through the technology center.

TABLE I (Continued)

18.	Sophomore Seminars – all sophomores from sending schools are divided into career clusters based on ACT PLAN results and taken to various locations on campus where panel members from those vocations are there for presentations and questions.
19.	At the end of school, hold a hot dog supper for all of the prospective students and their parents.
20.	Send letters to each prospective new student/parent.
21.	Administer the Sage assessment to all of the sending school sophomores. This provides an opportunity to visit with them concerning careers and technology center opportunities.
22.	Attend college and career nights at sending schools.
23.	Radio spots
24.	Television spots
25.	Newspaper ads.
26.	Sponsor activities and shows that interest high school students in order to create awareness.
27.	8th grade "Career Paths Expo" where every 8th grader in the county or district (AVTS) attends a session at a central site, where they are given the opportunity to learn about a variety of jobs, as well as go through a reality store.
28.	Former and current students talk to high school classes about the technology center and the enrollment process with technology center representatives.
29.	A "technology representative" that spends a ½ day at each high school twice a week or when possible.
30.	Teams of individuals visit each sending school to interpret the ACT Plan and conduct a technology center orientation.
31.	Show a video to sophomores from the sending schools illustrating the technology center.
32.	Hold an open house targeting secondary school sophomores and prospective students.
33.	Student enrollment interest lists are given to the appropriate instructors so that they can call the students and discuss the enrollment process and their program.
34.	Be available at sending schools during their enrollment periods to answer questions regarding the technology center.
35.	Host a "Carnival of Careers" for all sending school fifth graders. The students are toured through the campus, and then each program has a game or contest in the seminar center related to their program.
36.	Technology center and career information is mailed to each eighth grader in the spring.
37.	Hold interviews for prospective students.
38.	Work closely with sending school counselors – usually have at least two meetings with them during the year.

TABLE I (Continued)

39.	The Student Services team and support staff meet in a summer retreat to plan and evaluate recruitment activities.
40.	Structure sophomore tours to allow several schools to come the same day—utilize the whole day with activities and career tours.
41.	"Discovery Zone! Operation Careers!" this is one week set aside to introduce sixth grade students to a variety of careers and relate them to technology center programs.
42.	Eighth grade orientations – traditional presentation to the students at their home schools.
43.	Allow for individual classroom visitations to prospective students.
44.	Arrange for guest speakers to be part of the touring process to discuss goals, careers, etc.
45.	During tours, current students perform a skit relating to the technology center.
46.	Visit 5th and 6th graders from sending schools to discuss the technology center programs – using demonstrations and hands on activities.
47.	Hold luncheons with principals, counselors, and career teachers.

Recruiters' and Students' Perceptions of Recruitment Practices

Recruiters' Perceptions

Research Question Two asked: What were recruiters' and students' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices? The second-round mailing (Appendix B) of the modified Delphi technique gathered archival information that determined the recruiters' perceptions of the recruitment practices that they reported in the first-round mailing. The mailing listed all 47 of the reported recruitment practices in a random order and requested that the recruiters rate each practice separately by using a Lickert type scale. The following is an explanation of the scale: 1 = not effective, 2 =

somewhat effective, 3 = very effective, 4 = extremely effective. The following table (Table II) illustrates the results of the second round mailing. Table II illustrates compiled data from the second-round mailing of the modified Delphi technique. The mailing was sent to each recruiter in the recruiter population (N = 16). The mailing achieved a 100% response rate. The data was compiled by establishing a mean score for each separate recruitment practice. This was accomplished by developing an analysis table that listed each recruitment practice along with each recruiter's selection from the Lickert type scale (1 to 4). All of the recruiters' selections were added together for each practice and this number was divided by the total number of recruiters (N = 16) in the development of the archival data. This process provided a mean score for each recruitment practice. Also, each practice was ranked according to their mean score. The greater the mean score, the better the ranking (1 ranking = most effective, 47 ranking = least effective).

As Table II illustrates, several of the recruitment practices had the same mean score (e.g. 28 and 38 = 3.42). All practices were grouped together if they had the same mean score and their assigned numbers were utilized from Table I for easier interpretation.

Out of the 47 recruitment practices reported, the highest established mean score was 3.42, which was established for both practices 28 and 38. According to the Delphi technique's Lickert type scale (1 = not effective, 2 = somewhat effective, 3 = very effective and 4 = extremely effective), no practice was considered to be extremely effective (mean score = 3.5-4.0) by the recruiters. 35 or 74.46 % of the recruitment practices received a mean score of 2.5-3.49 (very effective) or more. The remainder of

the practices, 12, received a mean score between 2 and 2.49 (somewhat effective). None of the practices received a mean score less than 2 (1-1.99 = not effective).

TABLE II

A SUMMARY OF RECRUITERS' PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS OF IDENTIFIED RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

Rank	Mean	Practice *
1	3.42	28,38
3	3.36	37
4	3.25	1
5	3.2	10
6	3.18	34
7	3.17	13,14,47
10	3.10	15
11	3.09	29
12	3.08	5,43
14	3.0	27,33
16	2.92	4
17	2.91	30
18	2.9	40
19	2.83	3,20
21	2.82	41
22	2.81	7
23	2.75	6,16
25	2.73	18,39,44
28	2.7	12
29	2.67	8
30	2.64	9
31	2.58	2,11,31,46
35	2.5	42
36	2.45	35,36,45
39	2.36	17,21,32
42	2.18	26
43	2.17	22,23,24
46	2.10	19
47	2.0	25

* Refer to Table I for a detailed description of recruitment practices and their assigned numbers - only abbreviated descriptions illustrated in this table.

The third round mailing of the Delphi technique simply allowed the recruiter population to add to or elaborate on anything they had reported in round one and/or two. Also, the recruiters were given the opportunity to clarify information or ask questions. None of the recruiters took advantage of this opportunity so the Delphi technique was modified to end at the third mailing.

Students' Perceptions

The researcher utilized archival data gathered through Questionnaire #2 (Appendix E) to determine the enrolled student population perceptions of Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices. The researcher obtained 405 completed questionnaires from the enrolled student archival data. This population did not consist of a random sample. Instead, all of the secondary students enrolled in a Central Technology Center class during the 2001 Fall/Winter term and present the day that the questionnaire was administered completed the questionnaire. This student population represented the enrolled student population.

The questionnaire asked the participants to "Please rank the following recruitment strategies from 1 to 4 according to their effectiveness in encouraging high school students to enroll in a technology center by circling the best response." The questionnaire listed the top 10 practices as ranked by the recruiter population in random order. It utilized the exact Lickert type scale and rating system as the instrument used to determine recruiters' perceptions of the practices. Table III illustrates the data obtained through this questionnaire.

TABLE III

A SUMMARY OF ENROLLED STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TOP TEN RECRUITMENT PRACTICES AS DETERMINED BY RECRUITERS

Ranked Order	Mean	Practice *
1	3.11	10
2	2.99	15
3	2.88	37
4	2.69	34
5	2.68	14
6	2.66	38
7	2.57	1
8	2.49	13
9	2.46	28
10	2.23	47

* Refer to Table I for a reference of recruitment practices and their assigned numbers.

Differences Between Recruiters' And Students' Perceptions Of Oklahoma Technology Center Recruitment Practices

Research question three asked: What were the differences between recruiters' and students' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices? The researcher noted numerous differences between the recruiters' and students' perceptions of reported Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices based upon the data illustrated on Tables II and III. Archival data gathered through Questionnaire #2 (Appendix E) and Delphi Round 2 (Appendix B) was analyzed to gather this information. In order to completely and accurately present the data, the following table, Table IV, was formulated.

TABLE IV

A SUMMARY OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RECRUITERS' AND ENROLLED STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF REPORTED RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

Student Perceptions			Recruiter Perceptions		
Ranked Order	Mean	Practice *	Ranked Order	Mean	Practice *
1	3.11	10	1	3.42	28
2	2.99	15	2	3.42	38
3	2.88	37	3	3.36	37
4	2.69	34	4	3.25	1
5	2.68	14	5	3.20	10
6	2.66	38	6	3.18	34
7	2.57	1	7	3.17	13
8	2.49	13	8	3.17	14
9	2.46	28	9	3.17	47
10	2.23	47	10	3.10	15

* Refer to Table I for a reference of recruitment practices and their assigned numbers.

Factors That Influenced Selected Secondary Students' Oklahoma Technology Center Enrollment Decisions

Research question four asked: What factors influenced selected secondary students' Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions? Archival data gathered through Questionnaires #1 (Appendix D) and #2 (Appendix E) gathered relevant information. A random sample was not used to administer the questionnaires. Instead, the questionnaires were administered to all of the students within the student populations, Enrolled Students and Prospective Students. Also, participants were allowed to respond with more than one option to the questions. This affected the results and analysis of the data. In order to control this issue, the researcher analyzed total responses, instead of total respondents or participants. The questions on these questionnaires not only addressed factors that encouraged students to enroll or continue enrollment, but also addressed

factors that discouraged students from enrolling or continuing their enrollment. Some questions asked more qualitative or open-ended questions and others attempted to be more focused or direct in nature by asking questions with limited options as responses. However, the questions with limited options included an option of "other" in order to allow respondents to list responses that were not listed.

This section is broken up into two sections based upon the two student populations:

- Prospective Students
- Enrolled Students

The data was reported separately for each section or student population so that conclusions could be drawn from each. The archival data was gathered through two unique questionnaires for the two student populations. However, both questionnaires gathered data that answered "Research Question Four", which asked, What factors influenced selected secondary students' Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions? The researcher decided that both populations' archival data could provide useful information needed to answer the question, but unique and appropriate questions had to be analyzed according to the specific student population.

Prospective Students

Questionnaire #1 (Appendix D) provided archival data relevant to the prospective student population. A total of 672 prospective students completed the questionnaire.

Question one on Questionnaire # 1 (Appendix D) asked, "What factors could prevent you from enrolling in a course at Central Technology Center?" The question

listed four possible options; (1) Scheduling Problems: Athletics/Job/Graduation-Requirements (2) Lack Of Interest In Courses (3) Length Of Courses (4) Poor recommendations: Friend/Parent/School Official. Participants were asked to circle those that applied for options "Scheduling Problems" and "Poor Recommendations." Also, the question listed the option "Other" and allowed the respondents to list responses that were not listed as an option. Those responding (N=672) reported a stronger tendency toward "Scheduling Problems" (71.75 percent). This option contained three subsets: Athletics, Job and Graduation Requirements. These subsets' results were as follows: 35.13 percent said "Athletics"; 16.18 percent said "Job"; and 20.43 percent said "Graduation Requirements." Of the 672 participants (N=672) 871 responses were listed and used for this question's tabulation.

Table V illustrates the results and tabulations of all responses for "Question 1." The table is a summary of all responses' frequencies and their percents of the total responses.

There were several "other" responses listed by the participants for question 1. Although these responses were not at a high frequency (11 or less) or included in the totals or percentages, some were notable. Table V also illustrated those that were listed more than once in the "other" category.

TABLE V

A SUMMARY OF FACTORS THAT COULD HAVE PREVENTED PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS FROM ENROLLING

Factors	Frequency	Percent of Total
Scheduling Problems (Total)	625	71.75
-Athletics	306	35.13
-Graduation Requirements	178	20.43
-Job	141	16.18
Lack Of Interest In Courses	147	16.87
Poor Recommendations (Total)	62	7.11
-School Official	24	2.75
-Parent	21	2.41
-Friend	17	1.95
Length Of Courses	37	4.24
Total	871	100.00
Other:		
-Poor Grades/Behind In Credits	11	
-Interfering With College Plans/Coursework	8	
-College Requirements	8	
-Poor Attendance	6	
-High School Activities	5	
-Transportation Issues	3	

Question two on Questionnaire # 1 (Appendix D) asked, What factors encourage you to enroll in a course at Central Technology Center? The question listed four possible options:

- Future Job Opportunities
- Meet New People
- Interest In Programs
- Good Recommendations From:
    - Friend

- Parent
- School Official

The option of "Other" was also listed to allow for further comment or alternative responses. Respondents were asked to "circle those that apply" regarding the "Good Recommendations From" option. 672 students (N=672) responded to this question and 1118 responses were listed and used for tabulation. Some students listed more than one option.

Of those responding, there was a stronger tendency toward "Future Job Opportunities." "Future Job Opportunities" was selected 476 times out of 1118 total responses or 42.57 percent. The remainder of the responses were as follows: "Interest In Programs" 21.01 percent; "Good Recommendations" 19.76 percent; "Meet New People" 16.63 percent. The option "Good Recommendation" consisted of the following selections: Friend, Parent and School Official. These selections were tabulated as follows: "Friend" 8.22 percent; "Parent" 6.08 percent; "School Official" 5.45 percent. Table VI illustrated the summary and analysis of question two. Question two also consisted of the option "Other." However, no notable themes with any frequency were developed.

TABLE VI

A SUMMARY OF FACTORS THAT ENCOURAGED PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS TO ENROLL

Factors	Frequency	Percent of Total
Future Job Opportunities	476	42.57
Interest In Programs	235	21.01
Good Recommendations (Total)	221	19.76
Friend	92	8.22
Parent	68	6.08
School Official	61	5.45
Meet New People	186	16.63
Total	1118	100.00

Question three asked, Who is the most influential person in your life regarding educational decisions? The following options were listed: "School Counselor"; "School Administrator"; "Teacher"; "Parent"; "Friend"; "Other." An overwhelming number of responses resulted in "Parent." Out of 716 total responses, 422 or 58.93 percent were "Parent." On the other hand, only 6 students or .837 percent responded "School Administrator." "Teacher" and "Counselor" were somewhat more frequent than "School Administrator", 5.02 percent and 4.60 percent respectively, but not to a high degree. However, the respondents did select "Friend" at a higher frequency, 22.90 percent.

Several respondents listed an alternative response within the "Other" option. These responses and the ones discussed above were illustrated in Table VII.

TABLE VII

A SUMMARY OF PERSONS THAT COULD HAVE INFLUENCED PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

Individuals	Frequency	Percent of Total
Parent	422	58.93
Friend	164	22.90
Teacher	36	5.02
School Counselor	33	4.60
School Administrator	6	0.84
Other:		
Myself	24	3.35
Older Sibling	14	1.95
Aunt/Uncle	8	1.11
Grand Parents	6	0.84
Jesus/God	3	0.04
Total	716	100.00

Enrolled Students

Archival data gathered through Questionnaire #2 (Appendix E) was utilized to analyze relevant information from the enrolled student population. It also was utilized to answer the study's Research Question Four: What factors influenced selected secondary students' Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions? A total of 405 students (N=405) completed the questionnaire and were used to represent the defined population. However, some students listed more than one response. The total number of responses

were used for tabulation and analysis instead of the total number of respondents. Further, some responses were deemed unusable due to the fact they were not determined to be enrollment factors by the researcher. These "unusable" responses were not included in tables or analysis for tabulation either. All questions were qualitative in nature and asked open-ended questions without limiting or defining the questions' responses. They allowed students to discuss enrollment factors without being directed in predetermined areas. Further, the researcher attempted to gather archival data that validated the archival data obtained from the prospective student population regarding enrollment factors without promoting researcher bias. However, the researcher attempted to quantify the data so that it could be analyzed and interpreted in descriptive terms. The researcher identified themes that emerged from the archival data and determined frequencies as the themes occurred.

The following questions were asked on the questionnaire (Appendix E):

- What factors encouraged you to enroll in your technology center?
- What factors discouraged you from enrolling in your technology center even though you chose to enroll?
- What factors encourage you to continue your enrollment at your technology center?
- What factors could possibly cause you to withdraw or not continue your enrolment at your technology center?

The results and summaries of these questions were illustrated in four tables. The tables for these questions are: (1) Table VIII (2) Table IX (3) Table X (4) Table XI.

TABLE VIII

A SUMMARY OF POSITIVE FACTORS PERCEIVED BY ENROLLED STUDENTS

Factors	Frequency	Percent of Total
Future Career Opportunities	198	46.58
Specific Interests	89	20.94
Positive Recommendations From Others	40	9.41
Applied Learning/Hands-On	24	5.64
Technology Center's Positive Reputation/Image	21	4.94
New Experiences/Meet New People	20	4.70
Looked Fun	15	3.52
Receive Graduation Credits	10	2.35
Obtain A Good Job To Get Through College	8	1.88
Total	425	100.00

As with the other tables in this study, Table IX, which represents question two, is tabulated based upon total responses, not total participants. However, it is important to note that most student participants stated that nothing discouraged them from enrolling. The researcher felt that this phenomenon occurred because this question's population was enrolled students and the question asked them what factors discouraged them from enrolling. The question stated, "even though you decided to enroll", but the question may have still been confusing. However, Table IX illustrates question two's results in a

useable manner by not tabulating the responses that did not reveal factors. The researcher decided to consider these responses unusable.

TABLE IX

A SUMMARY OF NEGATIVE FACTORS PERCEIVED BY ENROLLED STUDENTS

Factors	Frequency	Percent of Total
Long Bus Ride	50	27.17
Technology Center Schedule (Back Late/Early Start)	35	19.02
Strange Place/Not Knowing Anyone	34	18.47
Missing Out On High School Activities/Social	33	17.93
Academic Credits/Graduation Requirements	32	17.39
Total	184	100.00

Table X and XI, which represented questions three and four, not only illustrated data that provided insight into Research Question Four: What factors influenced selected secondary students' Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions?, but it also provided data regarding student retention. It was the researcher's opinion that factors that influenced student retention would provide valuable insight into factors that influenced enrollment decisions.

TABLE X

A SUMMARY OF FACTORS THAT ENCOURAGED ENROLLED STUDENTS TO CONTINUE THEIR ENROLLMENT

Factors	Frequency	Percent of Total
Future Job Opportunities	93	22.96
Positive Learning Opportunities/Self Improvement	90	22.22
Influence From Other (Educators, Family and Friends)	80	19.75
Interest In The Program/Satisfied	57	14.07
Having Fun/Good Environment	53	13.08
Receive Graduation Credits	18	4.44
Applied Learning/Hands-On	14	3.45
Total	405	100.00

TABLE XI

A SUMMARY OF FACTORS THAT COULD HAVE CAUSED ENROLLED STUDENTS TO WITHDRAW

Factors	Frequency	Percent of Total
Poor Teaching Performance (Instruction & Attitude)	48	43.63
High School Schedule Conflict/Required Class	29	26.36
Other Students' Negative Behavior/Attitude	23	20.90
Bus Ride/Long Drive	6	5.45
Technology Center Schedule (Home Too Late)	4	3.63
Total	110	100.00

Table X, as with Table IX, only illustrated and consisted of responses that could be identified as enrollment factors. Only 110 responses were tabulated in the totals. All other responses were deemed unusable because they did not consist of an enrollment factor. Table X represented question four which asked, What factors could possibly cause you to withdraw or not continue your enrollment at your technology center? Most respondents stated that nothing could cause them to withdraw from their technology center. Also, several responses were listed for this question that were notable, but were only listed once and not included in the tabulation or table. These responses included; attendance policy, having to attend tech when the high school was out, poor equipment, and having to take an academic class at tech such as math.

Students' Perspectives On Oklahoma Technology Center Student Recruitment

The study's Research Question Five asked: What were students' perspectives on Oklahoma technology center student recruitment? Archival data gathered through Questionnaires #1 (Appendix D) and #2 (Appendix E) were utilized to obtain the information. The questionnaires were analyzed separately in order to gather the information from both of the student populations, prospective students and enrolled students. However, all questions addressed Research Question Five, but from both student populations' perspectives. The two questionnaires and student populations were analyzed and reported separately. This section is divided into two sections accordingly, prospective students and enrolled students.

Prospective Students

Archival data gathered through Questionnaire #1 (Appendix D) was analyzed to obtain relevant information from the prospective student population. It answered the study's Research Question Five: What were students' perspectives on Oklahoma technology center student recruitment? A total of 672 students (N=672) completed the questionnaire and were used to represent the defined population. However, some students listed more than one response. The total number of responses were used for tabulation and analysis instead of the total number of respondents.

The first question on Questionnaire #1 (Appendix D) asked, What would you do to encourage high school students to enroll in a technology center or make them aware of opportunities? The question requested that the respondents list the things that they would do. No options were given, respondents were allowed to list anything that they desired. The researcher intended to gather more qualitative and anecdotal information from this archival data.

Question one resulted in a strong tendency toward "tours of the campus and programs." 143 students or 25.49 percent listed some type of recruitment practice that the researcher determined as being related to campus or program tours. Also, 65 students or 11.58 percent were more specific regarding tours and suggested "interactive focused hands-on tours." The researcher separated these two responses into two distinct themes. Table XII illustrates the results and summaries. Only themes that developed from the responses were reported. Some responses were determined to be unusable or did not result in a theme. This resulted in only 561 total responses even though there were 672 respondents (N=672). All tabulations were derived from the 561 responses.

TABLE XII

A SUMMARY OF SUGGESTED RECRUITMENT PRACTICES FROM PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Recruitment Practice	Frequency	Percent of Total
Tours of Campus and Programs	143	25.49
Emphasize Jobs/Career Opportunities	92	16.39
Interactive Focused Hands-On Tours	65	11.58
More Involved and Visible At High Schools	65	11.58
Informational Brochure	50	8.91
Emphasize Opportunities for New Experiences and Meet New People	33	5.88
Emphasize Opportunities of Having Fun and That Programs Are Interesting	25	4.45
Recruitment Events (Career Fair, Open House and Camps)	23	4.09
Opportunities To Obtain College Credit	21	3.74
Success Stories of Students (Former and Current)	14	2.49
Videos	14	2.49
Mailings	9	1.60
Advertising	4	.71
Utilize Internet	3	.53
Total	561	100.00

The second question asked, What do you feel would be the most important thing that a technology center could do to encourage or allow more high school students to

enroll? The researcher determined that the question's archival data would validate responses and themes that emerged from the initial question. Also, other themes could develop from responses that were sparked by the first question. Out of 672 respondents (N=672), only eight themes emerged. Several themes that emerged from the first question were repeated such as "Job Opportunities" and "Interactive Focused Hands-On Tours", but there were new themes that developed such as "Offer A Better Variety Of Courses." Table XIII illustrates the results and tabulations of the question. Tabulations were derived from the total responses of developed themes instead of the total number of respondents.

TABLE XIII

A SUMMARY OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT PRACTICES ACCORDING TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Practices	Frequency	Percent of Total
Emphasize Job Opportunities	76	31.14
Interactive Focused Hands-On Tours	54	22.13
Offer A Better Variety Of Courses	51	20.90
Make It Easier For College Bound Students to Attend/Provide College Credit	26	10.65
Promotions/Advertising	17	6.97
More Involved And Visible At High Schools	9	3.68
Courses Count As Required Graduation Credits	7	22.86
Success Stories (Former and Current students)	4	1.63
Total	244	100.00

Questionnaire #1 (Appendix D) asked two other questions that the researcher determined to be timely and applicable for technology center recruitment of secondary students. As discussed previously in Chapter I and other sections throughout the study, secondary students in Oklahoma have been required to take an increased number of academic classes compared to anytime in the recent past. Oklahoma House Bill 2728 that was passed by legislation in 2000, requires high school students in Oklahoma to successfully complete the following "Carnegie Units": (1) four language arts; (2) three mathematics; (3) three sciences; (4) three social studies (5) two arts. A "Carnegie Credit" is credit given for the successful completion of a course that meets 40 minutes a day, five days per week, for at least 36 weeks, or equivalent of 120 clock hours within the school year. Also, high school students are required to take a minimum of eight elective units in order to graduate. Elective credits can be any class that is accredited and approved by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Technology center classes only count as elective credits according to H.B. 2728. Prior to H.B. 2728, a math and science unit could be waived from a high school student's graduation requirements, if he/she successfully completed two years of classes at a technology center (Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, 2000). By requiring high school students to take 15 required academic classes, as listed above, it is difficult for students to take classes at their technology centers since they only count as electives and can no longer waive a math and science credit. This problem is intensified since H.B. 2728 also increased the number of required academic classes such as math. The last two questions on Questionnaire #2 (Appendix E) provided archival data that would be valuable in attempting to alleviate the issues discussed regarding H.B. 2728.

Questionnaire #1 (Appendix D) asked, Would it benefit you if you received a math credit for high school such as geometry while attending your technology center. An overwhelming number of students responded "yes." 447 students or 75 percent stated that it would benefit them if they received a math credit for attending their technology center. Only 151 students or 25 percent stated that it would not benefit them.

Questionnaire #1 (Appendix D) also asked, Would you be more encouraged to attend your technology center if the classes were shorter (Example = 2hrs. instead of 3 hrs.)? The standard time of programs or classes at Oklahoma technology centers, including Central Technology Center, is approximately three hours. Students chose to attend their technology center class in the morning or the afternoon (e.g. 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. or 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.) and attend their high school classes during the opposite time frame. Due to Oklahoma H.B. 2728, many technology center recruiters feel that students may be more apt to enroll in a technology center class if the class was shorter. This would allow the student to attend more required high school graduation classes at their high school, but still take advantage of their technology center. Several technology centers in Oklahoma such as Moore Norman Technology Center and Meridian technology Center have implemented flexible scheduling or shortened blocks of classes for their students in an attempt to encourage more high school students to attend. However, there has been mixed results and further research is needed to draw conclusions. This question attempted to provide further research in this area.

Out of 672 students who responded to Questionnaire #1 (Appendix D) 600 responses were deemed "usable", 318 or 53 percent stated that they would not be more encouraged to attend if their technology center classes were shorter. However, 282

students or 47 percent stated that they would be more encouraged to attend their technology center if the classes were shorter.

The researcher noted that a number of students stated that if they liked their class at their technology center and were benefiting from it, why would they want to decrease the amount of time they spent in it. From these anecdotal responses, the researcher determined that some of the students responding that it would not encourage them to attend more if the classes were shorter in length, responded in this manner because they did not want to shorten the length of something they enjoyed not because they would not benefit schedule wise. Also, even though 53 percent of those responding stated that they would not be more encouraged to attend their technology center if the classes were shorter, 47 percent said that it would. A 47 percent enrollment increase would be extremely effective in all counts. The researcher decided that this issue is worthy of further research based on these results.

Enrolled Students

There was only one question analyzed of the enrolled student population that provided archival data addressing Research Question Five. Research Question Five asked, What were students' perspectives on Oklahoma technology center student recruitment? However, the question was qualitative in nature and attempted to gather anecdotal data. The researcher was able to identify emerging themes.

The last question on Questionnaire #2 (Appendix E) asked students, If you were in charge of recruiting high school students for a technology center or were attempting to make high school students interested in enrolling in a technology center, what would you

do? Once again, this question was utilized with the enrolled student population. Out of 405 total respondents (N=405), only 218 responses were determined usable by the researcher. The remainder of the responses did not consist of a valid recruitment practice or the respondent stated that they would do nothing more than what was already being done. All tabulations for this question were derived from the 218 total usable responses not the total number of respondents.

The following table, Table XIV, illustrates the results and tabulations for the last question on Questionnaire #2 (Appendix E).

TABLE XIV

A SUMMARY OF DESIRED RECRUITMENT PRACTICES ACCORDING TO ENROLLED STUDENTS

Practices	Frequency	Percent of Total
Interactive Focused Hands-On Tours	77	35.32
Emphasize Benefits (Job Opportunities and Credits)	52	3.85
More Involved and Visible At High Schools (Seminars, Presentations and Posters)	27	12.38
Emphasize Environment (Fun, Exciting, New Opportunities and Meet New People)	27	12.38
Success Stories (Former and Current Students)	20	9.17
Videos	6	2.75
Offer College Credits	6	2.75
General Tours	2	.91
Advertise More	1	.46
Total	218	100.00

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study was designed to provide Oklahoma technology centers and the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education with information that could improve Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices and their overall marketing plans in order to increase the number of enrolled secondary students. It was also designed to give a better understanding of how Oklahoma technology centers were recruiting secondary students and secondary students' perspectives and perceptions regarding student recruitment.

The following questions were designed to answer the basic focus of the study:

1. What secondary student recruitment practices were being used by Oklahoma technology centers?
2. What were recruiters' and students' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices?
3. What were the differences between recruiters' and students' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices?
4. What factors influence selected secondary students' Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions?

5. What were selected students' perspectives on Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment?

The study's archival data's populations consisted of three: (1) professional Oklahoma technology center recruiters who responded to the first-round mailing of a Delphi technique, a self-selected recruiter population (2) secondary students enrolled at Central Technology Center, Drumright campus, during the 00'-01'school year, enrolled student convenience population (3) secondary students attending a high school in Central Technology Center's district who were eligible to enroll in a Central Technology Center course, but were not enrolled in one at the time of the study, prospective student convenience population.

The technology center enrollment climate for secondary students in Oklahoma at the time of the study was in a slow but steady downturn. Legislation such as Oklahoma H.B. 2728 that increased academic requirements for high school graduation made it more difficult for secondary students to attend their technology centers. Also, the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education was in the process of evaluating the recruitment and marketing efforts of its technology centers throughout the state. These were certainly contributors to the high interest in the study and its results within the Oklahoma vocational and technical education system according to advocates and professionals of Oklahoma technology centers and the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. The researcher analyzed archival data consisting of data relating to Oklahoma technology center recruitment of secondary students and student enrollment factors so that assumptions could be made that may be helpful in alleviating

the issues of decreasing enrollment and assist with future marketing efforts through recruitment practices.

The study was designed to provide information to the following groups:

- Oklahoma technology centers wanting to gain information that may assist them in recruiting more effectively.
- The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education in an effort to assist Oklahoma technology centers with recruitment information and data regarding enrollment factors.
- Groups or individuals that wish to inform legislators and/or other decision-making groups of the study's results and information.

The study will provide those recruiting secondary students into Oklahoma technology centers information and recommendations that could increase student enrollment and improve the overall marketing plan of their institutions. Specifically, they could determine secondary student recruitment practices that were utilized in Oklahoma technology centers, students' and recruiters' perceptions of recruitment practices, student enrollment factors and students' perspectives on student recruitment.

Major Findings

Responses to the questionnaires that were analyzed to answer the study's five research questions were tabulated from the total number of usable responses that fit the designated population. One of the questionnaires had 672 (N=672) total respondents and the other had 405 (N=405). However, respondents were able to list more than one response on most of the questions. Tabulations were derived from the total number of

responses instead of the total number of respondents. Also, since most questions were qualitative in nature, the researcher identified themes that emerged from the responses and utilized a coding and ranking system, explained in Chapters III and IV, in order to analyze and report data in descriptive terms.

The remainder of Chapter V is divided into five sections that reflect the study's five research questions. Further, each section is discussed in terms of findings, conclusions and recommendations and general implications.

Recruitment Practices

The data indicated that 47 different recruitment practices were being utilized at the time of the study (see Table I). Although, some of the practices were similar in nature and only small aspects of the reported practices differentiated them from the others, many were unique. The data indicated that technology centers were not utilizing a set of standard recruitment practices that had been developed at a centralized location such as the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. Instead, it was concluded that Oklahoma technology centers were developing their recruitment practices within their individual districts, but there were consistencies throughout the state regarding Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices.

Perceptions of Recruitment Practices

Of the top 10 rated recruitment practices by professional recruiters, the highest rated practice received an average rating of 3.42 out of 4 (1=not effective, 4=extremely effective), the highest rated practice by students was 3.11. Also, the average rating for the

top 10 rated practices by recruiters was 3.17, and the average rating for the same 10 practices by students was 2.68. This data suggests that students perceived Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices as being less effective than recruiters. Specifically, students' overall average perceptions of practices were considerably lower than recruiters'. Table XV illustrates the recruiters' top 10 rated recruitment practices in a ranked order from 1 to 10 (1=most effective, 10=least effective) and students' ratings in ranked order of the same reported practices.

TABLE XV

A SUMMARY OF RECRUITERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF RECRUITMENT PRACTICES IN A RANKED ORDER

Recruiters Ranked Order	Practice *	Students Ranked Order
1	28,38	9,6
3	37	3
4	1	7
5	10	1
6	34	4
7	13,14,47	8,5,10
10	15	2

*Several of the recruitment practices received the same average rating for the recruiters, which caused them to receive the same ranking. However, none of the top 10 as rated by the students received the same rating. See Table I for a description of the recruitment practices with assigned numbers.

Differences Between Recruiters' and Students' Perceptions of Oklahoma Technology Center Recruitment Practices

Professional Oklahoma technology center recruiters tended to perceive Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices as being more effective than student perceptions of the same practices. Also, as noted in Table XV, students rated the top 10 most effective recruitment practices as reported by the recruiters differently than the recruiters. For example, practice "28" was ranked as being the number one most perceived effective recruitment practice by the recruiters and was ranked 9 out of 10 for the students.

Factors That Influence Selected Secondary Students' Oklahoma Technology Center Enrollment Decisions

There were numerous factors that both discourage students from enrolling in an Oklahoma technology center and discouraged students from continuing their enrollment once they were enrolled. However, there were strong tendencies toward several specific factors. Other factors were less frequently reported and some were unique.

Prospective students reported that the most critical and occurring factor that discouraged them from enrolling in a Oklahoma technology center was scheduling problems that resulted in conflicts that forced them to chose between technology center classes and other courses or activities. These scheduling problems and conflicts included the following listed from most frequent to least: (1) conflict with athletics (2) graduation

requirements (3) jobs. Also, a lack of interest in courses discouraged a large percentage of students to be discouraged from enrolling in an Oklahoma technology center.

Enrolled students reported five negative factors with considerable frequency. These factors were as follows: (1) Long bus ride and distance of travel (2) The technology center schedule, students reported having to leave too early and getting home too late (3) Attending classes in a strange place where they did not know anyone (4) Missing out on high school activities when they were at the technology center (5) Not receiving academic credits and being behind in required graduation credits.

Once students chose to enroll in an Oklahoma technology center and attend classes, certain factors discouraged them from continuing their enrollment. Enrolled Oklahoma technology center students reported that the following factors could cause them to withdraw their enrollment from an Oklahoma technology center: (1) Poor teaching performance, both instructionally and behaviorally (2) Conflict with their high school schedule such as a required class at their high school (3) Other students' negative behaviors and attitudes (4) Long drive or bus ride (5) Technology center schedule causing them to arrive home too late. These factors appeared with limited to high frequency when enrolled students were asked what factors could cause them to withdraw their enrollment.

Both of the archival data's student populations prospective students and enrolled students reported that "Future Job Opportunities" encouraged them to enroll in an Oklahoma technology center more than any other factor. Of 100 percent, 42.57 percent of the prospective student population chose "Future Job Opportunities" out of four possible factors or options. Out of 100 percent of the enrolled student population, 46.58 percent

stated "Future Job Opportunities." As stated previously, the prospective student population chose "Future Job Opportunities" out of four possible options; however, the enrolled student population reported this factor when asked: "What factors encouraged you to enroll in your technology center?" Their question was open- ended and did not list options. The researcher felt as if this resulted in a validation of the prospective student population's results and tendency to select "Future Job Opportunities." Also, "Interest In Programs" was selected by 21.01 percent of the prospective students and listed by 20.94 percent of the enrolled students. Other factors were listed by the enrolled student population and were selected by the prospective student population, but there was not a strong tendency toward them as with the two factors already discussed.

Regarding student retention, the enrolled student population responded that future job opportunities and self-improvement through positive learning opportunities were the factors that encouraged them the most to continue their enrollment at their Oklahoma technology center. These two factors combined, were listed 45.18 percent of the time out of 100 percent.

Friends and parents influenced the prospective student population regarding their educational decisions more than school counselors, teachers or school administrators. The option of "Parent" was selected by 58.93 percent of the students in the population and "Friend" was selected by 22.90 percent.

Selected Students' Perspectives On Oklahoma Technology Center Secondary Student Recruitment

Both the prospective student population and enrolled student population had numerous specific suggestions regarding Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices. They felt that these suggestions would be effective when recruiting high school students into Oklahoma technology centers. The suggestions that emerged with the greatest frequency, were "emphasizing career opportunities," "interactive focused hands-on tours" and "involvement and visibility at high schools." Both of the student populations listed these three recruitment suggestions with the highest frequency.

A considerable percentage of the prospective student population stated that more high school students would be encouraged to attend a technology center if technology centers would "offer a better variety of courses" and "make it easier for college bound students to attend" by offering college credit and alleviating scheduling conflicts.

The majority (75%) of the prospective student population would have benefited from receiving a required math credit while attending a technology center course.

Almost one-half (47%) of the prospective student population would have been more encouraged to attend a technology center if the classes were offered in shorter blocks of time.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Recruitment Practices

Although Oklahoma technology centers were attempting to increase student enrollment by implementing numerous secondary recruitment practices, most recruitment practices did not address student perceptions of recruitment and/or enrollment factors. Further, many of the reported recruitment practices were general and similar in nature and did not appear to be part of an overall marketing plan or theme. Recruiters should evaluate their recruitment practices in an attempt to address enrollment factors and align them with student perspectives in order to become more effective.

Perceptions of Recruitment Practices

Both students' and recruiters' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices were less than "extremely effective." However, the recruiters reported recruitment practices as being more effective than did the students. Recruiters should identify differences between their perceptions and students' perceptions of recruitment practices in order to address them.

Differences Between Recruiters' and Students' Perceptions of Oklahoma Technology Center Recruitment Practices

Students' and recruiters' perceptions of Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices differed. Not only did recruiters rate the reported recruitment practices as being

more effective than did the students, but the students' ranked order of the reported recruitment practices differed from the recruiters'. In order to improve Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices, recruiters should attempt to alleviate differences between their perceptions and students' perceptions of recruitment practices by aligning their practices with student perspectives.

Factors That Influenced Selected Secondary Students'
Oklahoma Technology Center
Enrollment Decisions

There were numerous factors that students reported as being limitations regarding their enrollment in the Central Technology Center district such as scheduling conflicts, lack of interest in courses, travel concerns, fear of a strange place, missing out on sending school events and academic/graduation credits.

Also, several factors were frequently reported as negatively affecting student retention by students who were enrolled in a Central Technology Center class such as poor teaching performance, high school schedule conflict, other students negative behaviors, long bus ride/vehicle drive and getting home too late.

However, there were numerous factors that students reported as having a positive influence on their enrollment in the Central Technology Center district such as future job opportunities, interest in programs, fun and interesting environment and good recommendations from others.

Also, several factors were frequently reported as having a positive affect on student retention by students who were enrolled in the Central Technology Center district

such as future job opportunities/self-improvement, influence from others, satisfied with their program and having fun/good environment.

If Oklahoma technology center recruiters considered these factors when designing their recruitment practices and marketing plans, they would become more efficient and effective in recruiting secondary students.

Furthermore, parents and friends were a positive influence concerning students' educational decisions to enroll in the Central Technology Center district. If Oklahoma technology center recruiters targeted parents and appropriate peer groups in their recruitment efforts, enrollment of secondary students would improve.

Selected Students' Perspectives On Oklahoma Technology Center Secondary Student Recruitment

Several recruitment practices were considered to be the most effective by both of the student populations such as interactive hands-on-tours, activities and information emphasizing job opportunities and being more involved at sending schools.

Oklahoma technology centers could increase their enrollment of secondary students if they implemented these practices.

Also, many more secondary students would enroll in an Oklahoma technology center if they received a required math credit while attending a technology center course or were able to waive a math requirement.

Furthermore, secondary students would be more encouraged to enroll in an Oklahoma technology center if the classes were not as long.

General Recommendations

Based upon the findings of this study, several recommendations were proposed in regard to successfully recruiting Oklahoma secondary students into Oklahoma technology centers and improving Oklahoma technology centers' marketing efforts through improved recruitment practices. These recommendations were made in two sections. The first section outlines recommendations for Oklahoma technology centers to consider in future endeavors attempting to recruit secondary students. The other section discusses recommendations for future studies, which could be conducted, that may add to this body of research. Also, the researcher provided general implications that he concluded as a result of this study.

Recruitment

In order to successfully develop Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment practices or improve practices, recruiters and/or the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education must know the student's perspectives and perceptions regarding student recruitment better than they do. This study identified numerous differences between recruiters' and students' perceptions of recruitment practices. Also, students' perspectives on recruitment practices tended to offer strategies that were not being utilized or at least identified areas for new emphasis. This study found that Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices have not evolved or changed over the last several years, and many technology centers were utilizing the same general practices. It does not appear that Oklahoma technology centers were attempting to identify and

develop new, unique practices through program evaluation and research techniques that may be more effective than what they were using.

It is recommended that Oklahoma technology centers assess this study's data regarding secondary student enrollment factors and address these factors through recruitment practices and other student services. This study identified numerous factors that both encourage and discourage secondary students regarding their Oklahoma technology center enrollment decisions. Further, this study identified factors that affect student retention that should also be addressed by Oklahoma technology centers in order to improve student enrollment figures.

It is further recommended that Oklahoma technology centers attempt to offer secondary students math credit for high school graduation while they attend a technology center course or offer a math waiver to students who successfully complete a technology center course. 75 percent of the prospective student population responded that it would benefit them if they received a math credit for high school graduation while attending their technology center. Also, technology centers should consider offering a more flexible schedule regarding their programs, specifically shorter classes in length. 47 percent of the prospective student population responded that they would be more encouraged to attend their technology center if the classes were shorter.

Research

This study was the first time Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices, students' and recruiters' perceptions of the practices and students' perspectives on Oklahoma technology center secondary student recruitment has been examined from a

scientific research approach. The amount of interest that it has generated from the participating technology centers and the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education is an indication that other related studies are desired from the Oklahoma technology center and vocational-technical education community.

Components of this study could include larger, more diverse populations who might offer statistics and data not available at the school used in this study, Central Technology Center. Also, random sampling could be used to validate this study's results.

It is recommended that an intensive statewide recruitment study be conducted by the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education to develop a comprehensive research based student recruitment plan, which can be implemented by all of the technology centers in the state. This study should attempt to provide sound suggestions that are based upon research findings. Technology centers could utilize the established suggestions and customize them to their unique needs and desires.

Another aspect of research could involve a student population made up of students who chose not to enroll in an Oklahoma technology center even though they were eligible. This population could provide data that may further improve recruitment practices and/or identify factors that should be addressed by Oklahoma technology centers.

General Implications

The researcher arrived at several conclusions and gleaned ideas from this study and felt it appropriate to discuss them. Although the Oklahoma technology center system has had great success throughout its history, those who are advocates of the system must

take steps to not only promote the system's success in order to meet accountability expectations and improve awareness, but also take additional steps to meet future demands by addressing relevant factors. A successful history can lead to complacency and an unsuccessful future. The system was founded by individuals with vision and dreams of meeting Oklahoma's future workforce and economical demands. Current individuals within the system and advocates of the system must continue their efforts in order to keep these hopes alive. By improving marketing and recruitment efforts, a positive step can be taken in this direction. However, the main objective should be to continuously assess and evaluate the entire system in order to identify weaknesses and improve services. This study attempted to address this objective in the area of Oklahoma technology center recruitment practices.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

DELPHI ROUND #1

USED IN GATHERING ARCHIVAL DATA

MARCH 1, 1999

«FirstName» «LastName», «Division»
«school»
«Address1»
«City», «State» «PostalCode»

Dear «sal» «LastName»:

I have been in a new position since a few months ago. One of the benefits of change is the opportunity to re-examine goals and seek a fresh approach to solutions. I have had the opportunity over the last few months to spend some time evaluating my departments current strategies regarding student recruitment, specifically secondary students. However, an evaluation would not be complete or effective without the input from outside experts as yourself.

I value your thinking and would ask you to share it with me. I realize the on-going responsibilities you are saddled with regarding your job duties, not to mention your personal commitments, but your assistance will be greatly appreciated. As part of a Delphi process, I am asking you, along with several others throughout our vocational system in Oklahoma, to re-examine our profession and shape a view of our future. This is not a random group!

Let's make a deal. I am asking for a portion of your time. In exchange, I would share my collective findings with you. A time schedule for three rounds of gathering information is enclosed for your review.

Frankly, this process will not be as successful without your thinking and input. I hope you can allocate time to participate. Please call or e-mail me, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Steve Tiger
Coordinator, Student Services

ST/pn
Enclosures

The Project: Development of a practical comprehensive recruitment plan for an AVTSs regarding secondary students.

The Goal: To increase the number of secondary students enrolled and benefiting from vocational-technical classes at their AVTS by assembling collective thought about current practices being utilized in the area of recruitment. Through evaluation, strategies will be recommended to enhance the recruitment process of secondary students for an AVTS.

The Process: To obtain information regarding current recruitment strategies being utilized by AVTSs, participants will be made up of selected experts in the area of AVTS recruitment throughout Oklahoma. This panel will provide diverse, independent, and thoughtful data about their recruitment process.

The Time Line:

Mail invitation (this document) and round one.	3-5-99	
Return of round one (with your help).	3-23-99	
Mail round two to panel.	3-26-99	
Return of round two.		4-9-99
Mail round three to panel.	4-14-99	
Return round three.		4-23-99
Mail preliminary findings.	4-30-99	
Return comments.		5-14-99

The Anticipated Result: A collective perspective and understanding of current recruitment strategies being utilized by AVTSs to provide broad direction to strategic and tactical planning for secondary recruitment programs.

Directions: Included is a question. Please answer the question to the best of your knowledge, and feel free to use the assistance of your colleagues. Next, please mail the document back to me or use e-mail. I will be sending you the remaining rounds with similar directions. Thanks!

E-Mail - stevet@meridian-technology.com

Round One:

Please list the following recruitment strategies that you and your institution utilize, such as tours, school visits, etc. If these strategies are not self-explanatory, please include a brief summary. Feel free to hand-write your response or use e-mail.

APPENDIX B

DELPHI ROUND #2

USED IN GATHERING ARCHIVAL DATA

Thank you very much for your participation in this study. I am confident that the information that you provide will be worthwhile. I will continue to keep you updated on this study's results.

This is the second round of the study, and involves rating each individual strategy that was presented as a result of your help. Please read each individual strategy and rate them from 1 to 4 by placing a "x" in the appropriate box. The following is an explanation of the scale **1 = not effective; 2 = somewhat effective; 3 = very effective; and 4 = extremely effective.** ***Simply indicate on the scale the number you choose for each strategy.*** Please reply back by April 9, 1999 by using e-mail. This will allow me to compile the results and send you round three for your final evaluation. I would like to thank you once again, and I look forward to this study's results.

You should be able to use your reply icon, which is part of your e-mail program, to send your results back to me. However, if you need my e-mail address, it is stevet@meridian-technology.com. Thank you!

	1 not effective	2 somewhat effective	3 very effective	4 extremely effective
(1) Counselors/advisors work with the sending schools as liaisons providing information through presentations, etc.				
(2) Mass mailings of high school program brochures to all sending school sophomores and juniors.				
(3) Special projects with 5th, 6th, and 7th grade students in the areas of career awareness and career exploration.				
(4) 10th grade tours of all sending school students				
(5) 10th grade tours of only prospective sending school students.				
(6) Sixth grade Carnival – sending school sixth graders spend two hours on campus for a career carnival. Each program is represented with booth.				
(7) A representative from student services visits each high school sophomore through their high school classes by making a presentation about the vo-tech and programs offered. The students are then given an opportunity to sign up for Sophomore tours.				
(8) Eligible students are given the opportunity to sign an "Intent to Attend" form – these forms can be used to communicate with students by instructors.				
(9) Eligible students are given the opportunity to sign an "Intent to Attend" form – these forms can be used to communicate with students by Student Service representatives.				
(10) Invite all Sophomore classes from sending schools to visit campus for assistance interpreting the PLAN results with special emphasis on the career interest results and vo-tech opportunities.				
(11) Sponsor a college/career fair with colleges and representatives from the vo-tech available to talk with juniors and seniors.				
(12) "Career Fair" for all 8th graders with visits to the programs (vo-tech based).				
(13) Sponsor a counselors meeting for all sending school counselors with a program related to vo-tech and the world of work.				
(14) Career specialist or counselors work with sending school students with career planning and plans of studies.				
(15) Sending school sophomores have the opportunity to spend approximately an hour in the program of their choice for a more in-depth visit.				
(16) At the end of Sophomore tours, have a panel of people representing the various types of vocations telling his/her background and skills needed to do well in their particular occupation.				
(17) Hold a parent/student day or night at sending schools which provides an opportunity to let parents know what is offered through vo-tech.				

(18) Sophomore Seminars – all sophomores from sending schools are divided into career clusters based on PLAN results and taken to various locations on campus where panel members from those vocations are there for presentations and questions.				
(19) At the end of school, hold a hot dog supper for all of the prospective students and their parents				
(20) Send letters to each prospective new student/parent.				
(21) Administer the Sage assessment to all of the sending school sophomores. This provides an opportunity to visit with them concerning careers and vo-tech.				
(22) Attend college and career nights at sending schools.				
(23) Radio spots				
(24) Television spots				
(25) Newspaper ads.				
(26) Sponsor shows that interest high school students.				
(27) 8th grade "Career Paths Expo" where every 8th grader in the county or district (AVTS) attends a session at a central site, where they are given the opportunity to learn about a variety of jobs, as well as go through a reality store.				
(28) Former and current students talk to high school classes to talk about vo- tech and the enrollment process with vo-tech representatives				
(29) A "technology representative" that spends a ½ day at each high school twice a week or when possible.				
(30) Teams of individuals visit each sending school to interpret the ACT Plan and conduct a vo-tech orientation.				
(31) Show a video to sophomores from the sending schools illustrating the vo-tech.				
(32) Hold an open house targeting secondary school sophomores and prospective students.				
(33) Student enrollment interest lists are given to the appropriate instructors to that they can call the students and discuss the enrollment process and their program.				
(34) Be available at sending schools during their enrollment periods to answer questions regarding vo-tech.				
(35) Host a "Carnival of Careers" for all sending school fifth graders. The students are toured over the campus, and then each program has a game or contest in the seminar center related to their program.				
(36) Vo-tech and career information is mailed to each eighth grader in the spring.				
(37) Hold interviews for prospective students.				
(38) Work closely with sending school counselors – usually have at least two meetings with them during the year.				
(39) The Student Services team and support staff meet in a summer retreat to plan and evaluate.				
(40) Structure sophomore tours to allow several schools to come the same day—utilize the whole day with activities and career tours.				
(41) "Discovery Zone! Operation Careers!" this is one week set aside to introduce sixth grade students to a variety of careers and relate them to vo-tech.				
(42) Eighth grade orientations – traditional presentation to the students at their home schools.				
(43) Allow for individual classroom visitations to prospective students.				
(44) Arrange for guest speakers to be part of the touring process to discuss goals, careers, etc.				
(45) Current students perform a skit relating to vo-tech during tours.				
(46) Visit 5th and 6th graders from sending schools to discuss vo-tech programs – using demonstrations and hands on activities.				
(47) Hold luncheons with principal's, counselor's, and career teacher's.				

APPENDIX C

DELPHI ROUND #3

USED IN GATHERING ARCHIVAL DATA

Thank you very much for your participation in the "Recruitment Strategy Study." I feel that the Delphi process, that we utilized, allowed us to gain some valuable insight into various recruitment strategies that are being used throughout the state's Area Vocational Technical Schools (AVTSs).

Not only can we analyze this study and it's data to evaluate our perceptions regarding the reported recruitment strategies, but we can identify strategies that are perceived to be effective that we were not previously aware of. Another possible extension of this study that may be useful to you, is to have your students rank these recruitment strategies or a portion of them in order to see if our perceptions as professionals match those of the students we are trying to recruit. You never know, maybe we are not in alignment with their (students) way of thinking. This is just a possible use of the study.

I have included a ranked order of each strategy along with the established mean for each strategy. The mean is based on the Lickert scale of 1 to 4, 4 being the most effective, that we used. I also included a copy of the round two survey for a reference of the strategies and the scale. The numbers under the "Strategy" column on the data report will correspond with the strategies listed on the survey. For example, when looking at the data report, you will see that strategy 28 and 38 have a mean of 3.42 and are ranked number 1. You can then refer to the survey to see what strategy 28 and 38 were.

If you have any questions or need assistance with the data report, please notify me at (405) 377-3333, ext. 254 or (e-mail) stevet@meridian-technology.com. Also, if you have any further comments or additions that you would like to add regarding this study, please let me know.

Thank you once again for your input. I hope that you will find this study to be useful.

Sincerely,

Steve Tiger
Coordinator, Instructional Services
Meridian Technology Center

Recruitment Strategy Study Data Report

Ranked Order	Mean	Strategy
1	3.42	28,38
2	3.36	37
3	3.25	1
4	3.2	10
5	3.18	34
6	3.17	13,14,47
7	3.10	15,29
8	3.08	5,43
9	3.0	27,37
10	2.92	4
11	2.91	30
12	2.9	40
13	2.83	3,20
14	2.82	41
15	2.81	7
16	2.75	6,16
17	2.73	18,39,44
18	2.7	12
19	2.67	8
20	2.64	9
21	2.58	2,11,31,46
22	2.5	42
23	2.45	35,36,45
24	2.36	17,21,32
25	2.18	26
26	2.17	22,23,24
27	2.10	19
28	2.0	25

Thank you very much for your participation in this study. I am confident that the information that you provide will be worthwhile. I will continue to keep you updated on this study's results.

This is the second round of the study, and involves rating each individual strategy that was presented as a result of your help. Please read each individual strategy and rate them from 1 to 4 by placing a "x" in the appropriate box. The following is an explanation of the scale **1 = not effective; 2 = somewhat effective; 3 = very effective; and 4 = extremely effective.** ***Simply indicate on the scale the number you choose for each strategy.*** Please reply back by April 9, 1999 by using e-mail. This will allow me to compile the results and send you round three for your final evaluation. I would like to thank you once again, and I look forward to this study's results.

You should be able to use your reply icon, which is part of your e-mail program, to send your results back to me. However, if you need my e-mail address, it is stevet@meridian-technology.com. Thank you!

	1 not effective	**2** somewhat effective	**3** very effective	**4** extremely effective
(1) Counselors/advisors work with the sending schools as liaisons providing information through presentations, etc.				
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(13) Sponsor a counselors meeting for all sending school counselors with a program related to vo-tech and the world of work.				
(14) Career specialist or counselors work with sending school students with career planning and plans of studies.				
(15) Sending school sophomores have the opportunity to spend approximately an hour in the program of their choice for a more in-depth visit.				
(16) At the end of Sophomore tours, have a panel of people representing the various types of vocations telling his/her background and skills needed to do well in their particular occupation.				
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(20) Send letters to each prospective new student/parent.				
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(34) Be available at sending schools during their enrollment periods to answer questions regarding vo-tech.				

(35) Host a "Carnival of Careers" for all sending school fifth graders. The students are toured over the campus, and then each program has a game or contest in the seminar center related to their program.				
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(37) Hold interviews for prospective students.				
(38) Work closely with sending school counselors – usually have at least two meetings with them during the year.				
(39) The Student Services team and support staff meet in a summer retreat to plan and evaluate.				
(40) Structure sophomore tours to allow several schools to come the same day—utilize the whole day with activities and career tours.				
(41) "Discovery Zone! Operation Careers!" this is one week set aside to introduce sixth grade students to a variety of careers and relate them to vo-tech.				
(42) Eighth grade orientations – traditional presentation to the students at their home schools.				
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(44) Arrange for guest speakers to be part of the touring process to discuss goals, careers, etc.				
(45) Current students perform a skit relating to vo-tech during tours.				
(46) Visit 5th and 6th graders from sending schools to discuss vo-tech programs – using demonstrations and hands on activities.				
(47) Hold luncheons with principal's, counselor's, and career teacher's.				

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE #1

Questionnaire

Central Technology Center
3 CT Circle
Drumright, OK 74030

Prospective Students - Enrollment Factors

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine factors that influence your enrollment decision to attend or not attend Central Technology Center. Your responses will be kept confidential and will allow Oklahoma Technology Centers to better serve your needs.

Please answer each of the following questions to the best of your ability by circling the appropriate response or responses. If more than one response applies, please circle more than one. If none of the options listed are suitable or you wish to add one, please circle "other" and comment on your response.

1.) What factors could prevent you from enrolling in a course at Central Technology Center?

Scheduling Problems:
(circle those that apply)
Athletics / Job / Graduation-Requirements

Lack of Interest in Courses

Length of Courses

Poor Recommendations from:
(circle those that apply)
Friend / Parent / School Official

Other
COMMENT:_____

2.) What factors encourage you to enroll in a course at Central Technology Center?

Future Job Opportunities

Meet New People

Interest in Programs

Good Recommendations from:
(circle those that apply)
Friend / Parent / School Official

Other
COMMENT:_____

3.) Who is the most influential person in your life regarding educational decisions **(circle only one)**?

School Counselor

School Administrator

Teacher

Parent

Friend

Other:
COMMENT:_____

Questionnaire

(Prospective Students - Recruitment Strategies & Enrollment Factors)

What would you do to encourage high school students to enroll in a Technology Center or make them aware of opportunities? Please list the things that you would do below *(Recruitment Strategies)*.

Please List
(example = tours)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Others:

What do you feel would be the most important thing that a Technology Center could do to encourage or allow more high school students to enroll *(Recruitment Strategies)*?

Please Comment Below

Would it benefit you if you received a math credit for high school such as geometry while attending your Technology Center *(Enrollment Factors)*?

(Please Circle One)

YES NO

Would you be more encouraged to attend your Technology Center if the classes were shorter (Example = 2hrs. instead of 3hrs.) *(Enrollment Factors)*?

(Please Circle One)

YES NO

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE #2

Questionnaire

(Enrolled Students - Recruitment Strategies)

When you were a sophomore student, your technology center recruiter, counselor, or high school counselor used several different recruitment strategies to provide you with information about your technology center and encourage you to enroll. Please think back to this time and determine which strategies worked the best in encouraging you to enroll.
Please rank the following recruitment strategies from 1 to 4 according to their effectiveness in encouraging high school students to enroll in a technology center by circling the best response:

RANK **STRATEGY**

_____ Former and current vo-tech students talk to high school classes about vo-tech and the enrollment process.
(circle only one) 1=not effective 2=somewhat effective 3=very effective 4=extremely effective

_____ Technology center counselors work closely with high school counselors to provide them with technology center information so that they can encourage students to enroll in a technology center.
(circle only one) 1=not effective 2=somewhat effective 3=very effective 4=extremely effective

_____ Hold interviews with high school students, who are interested in enrolling at a technology center, and explain the classes available for enrollment.
(circle only one) 1=not effective 2=somewhat effective 3=very effective 4=extremely effective

_____ Technology center representatives provide information about technology centers through class presentations at students' high schools.
(circle only one) 1=not effective 2=somewhat effective 3=very effective 4=extremely effective

_____ Invite all sophomore classes to visit the technology center campus to take a career assessment. After the students complete the assessment, technology center counselors assist them in interpreting their career assessment results and how they relate to technology center courses.
(circle only one) 1=not effective 2=somewhat effective 3=very effective 4=extremely effective

_____ Technology center counselors being available at students' high schools during their enrollment periods to answer questions and provide information regarding technology center courses.
(circle only one) 1=not effective 2=somewhat effective 3=very effective 4=extremely effective

_____ Sponsor programs related to technology centers and the world of work for students' high school counselors so that the high school counselors can better assist students in enrolling at a technology center.
(circle only one) 1=not effective 2=somewhat effective 3=very effective 4=extremely effective

_____ Technology center representatives work with high school students and assist them with career planning and plans of studies.
(circle only one) 1=not effective 2=somewhat effective 3=very effective 4=extremely effective

_____ Technology centers host luncheons for high school principals, counselors, and teachers to build closer relationships and keep them aware of technology center opportunities so they can assist their technology centers in enrolling students.
(circle only one) 1=not effective 2=somewhat effective 3=very effective 4=extremely effective

_____ High school students have the opportunity to spend approximately an hour in the program of their choice for a more in-depth visit before they enroll at a technology center.
(circle only one) 1=not effective 2=somewhat effective 3=very effective 4=extremely effective

Question

If you were in charge of recruiting high school students for a technology center or were attempting to make high school students interested in enrolling in a technology center, what would you do? (please use the other side, if you run out of room)

Questionnaire

(Enrolled Students - Enrollment Factors)

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine factors that influence your enrollment decisions regarding Central Technology Center. Your responses will be kept confidential and will allow Oklahoma technology centers to better serve your needs.

Please answer each of the following questions to the best of your ability. Feel free to list more than one response for each question.

1.) What factors **encouraged** you to enroll in your technology center?

2.) What factors **discouraged** you from enrolling in your technology center even though you chose to enroll?

3.) What factors encourage you to **continue** your enrollment at your technology center?

4.) What factors could possibly cause you to **withdraw** or **not continue** your enrollment at your technology center?

APPENDIX F

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Institutional Review Board approval was not required due to the utilization of archival data instead of the use of human subjects.

VITA

Stephen William Tiger

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: OKLAHOMA TECHNOLOGY CENTER SECONDARY STUDENT RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES: STUDENT AND RECRUITER PERCEPTIONS

Major Field: Agricultural Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, September 17, 1973, the son of Steve and Nancy Tiger, raised in Depew, Oklahoma.

Education: Graduated from Depew High School, Depew, Oklahoma in May, 1991; received Bachelor of Arts degree in Advertising and Business Education from the University of Central Oklahoma in May, 1995; received Master of Education degree in Educational Guidance/Counseling from the University of Central Oklahoma in June, 1996; received school administration Oklahoma state certification from Oklahoma State University in May, 1997; completed requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at Oklahoma State University in December, 2001.

Professional Experience: Crisis Counselor, FEMA, Project Heartland, Oklahoma City Public School System, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August, 1995–July, 1996; Counselor, Guthrie Public High School, Guthrie, Oklahoma, August, 1996–June, 1997; Coordinator, Special Education Services, Meridian Technology Center, Stillwater, Oklahoma, July, 1997–June, 1998; Coordinator, Student Services, Meridian Technology Center, Stillwater, Oklahoma, July, 1998–June, 1999; Director, Instructional Services, Meridian Technology Center, Stillwater, Oklahoma, July, 1999-June, 2000; Assistant Campus Director, Central Technology Center, Drumright, Oklahoma, July, 2000-Present.

Honors: Leadership Stillwater, 2000; Leadership Vo-Tech, 1999; Doctoral Study Grant, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and Oklahoma State University, 1998; Keynote Speaker, College of Education, University of Central Oklahoma, "President's Graduation Dinner."

Professional Organizations: Oklahoma Vocational Association – Student Services/Guidance & Administration, American Association of Career and Technical Education.