

# Improving the Awareness of UBC Recreation

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## Background

Campus Recreation has been shown to boost performance in academia, create a better mental and physical state, decrease levels of stress and anxiety, and acts as a great stepping stone to provide a smooth transition from high school to university for incoming students.<sup>1</sup> However, awareness of these campus recreation programs is a major factor that limits the participation rates. This project aims to bring awareness of campus recreation to a specific population, which is first year, female engineering students. This research addresses that gap by interviewing samples of the population to determine the most effective methods to increase campus recreation awareness.



## Project Design

The findings presented here are drawn from a project entitled: Improving the Effectiveness of UBC Recreation Communication Channels. It included surveys and semi-structured interviews exploring campus recreation and how it can be improved.

**INCLUSION CRITERIA:** First year, female engineering students enrolled in the engineering program, aged 17-21. By choosing first year students, it can be assumed that they are less aware of UBC recreation opportunities as they are new to campus.

**SURVEY:** A ranking survey was distributed to 50 members of our population which had participants rank which method would be most effective to least effective in increasing awareness for UBC Recreation.

**INTERVIEWS:** 8 respondents from our survey followed up with a short, qualitative interview.

**SAMPLE:** 8 first year, female engineering students enrolled in the engineering program at UBC completed the survey and then followed up with a semi-structured interview.

## References

<sup>1</sup>Aspinall, P., Mavros, P., Coyne, R., & Roe, J. (2013). The urban brain: Analyzing outdoor physical activity with mobile EEG. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 49, 272-276  
<sup>2</sup>Button, K. S., Ioannidis, J. P., Mokrysz, C., Nosek, B. A., Flint, J., Robinson, E. S., & Munafò, M. R. (2013). Power failure: Why small sample size undermines the reliability of neuroscience. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 14(5), 365. doi: 10.1038/nrn347  
<sup>3</sup>Maharaj, C., Blair, E., & Chin Yuen Kee, S. (2018). The motivation to study: an analysis of undergraduate engineering students at a Caribbean university. *Journal Of Further & Higher Education*, 42(1), 24-35. doi:10.1080/0309877X.2016.11889  
<sup>4</sup>Mikkonen, J., & Raphael, D. (2010). *Social determinants of health: The Canadian facts*. Toronto, ON: York University School of Health Policy and Management

**POPULATION JUSTIFICATION:** The justification for choosing a 17 to 21 year old female population is that gender and age are also social determinants of health.<sup>4</sup> Age of females was negatively correlated with physical activity engagement, while the age of males was positively correlated with physical activity.<sup>3</sup> The specification for only engineering students to be included in the study was due to the fact that engineering students face a relatively large workload in comparison to other academic disciplines, and their time management towards leisure activities may be affected.<sup>2</sup>

## Findings

After conducting 8 semi-structured interviews, 3 common themes emerged as to increasing awareness of UBC Campus Recreation opportunities.

1. When asked which social media outlet was used most, the most popular answer was Facebook or Instagram.
2. Participants preferred email updates about future UBC Recreation opportunities
3. Participants also preferred having a UBC Recreation representative speak shortly before lectures to provide updates on future UBC Recreation opportunities.

## Most Effective Awareness Strategies from Greatest to Least Effective

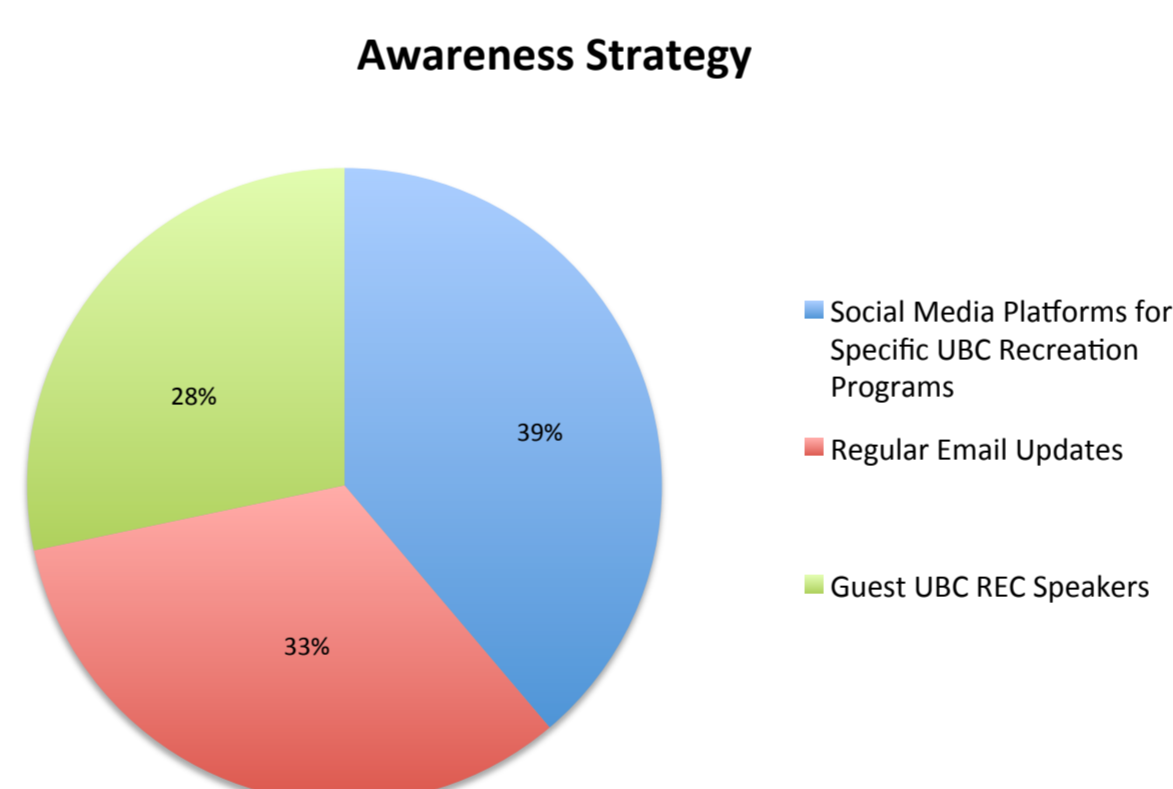


Figure 1: Illustrates the percentages of votes for each awareness strategy. Social Media Platforms for Specific UBC Recreation programs had the most votes, Regular email was second in votes, and Guest UBC REC Speakers had the least amount of votes

- When asked how she would like to hear future UBC recreation opportunities.

**Interview quote:** "In class, it seems like we are always educated on abroad programs, or science opportunities, but I think UBC Rec should be addressed more in class as well to enhance the involvement of students. So, hearing more about it through a quick minute before class starts would be nice."

- If you knew more about UBC Recreation opportunities and their updates, would it make you want to join their program?

**Interview quote:** "Yes, if I was more aware of what they offer then there's a higher chance of me finding something I would want to join"

## Discussion

**IMPLICATIONS:** From the findings it can be seen that the most effective strategy in promoting UBC Recreation awareness was "Social Media Platforms for Specific UBC Recreation Programs". Perhaps if UBC Recreation pursues this strategy of having specific social media platforms for different programs (eg. aquatics, intramurals, tennis, fitness, or rowing, etc), a greater amount of students from this population may be aware of UBC Recreation opportunities that best fit them.



Figure 2: shows from greatest to least, the most effective perceived awareness strategy.

**LIMITATIONS:** There were some challenges that occurred when carrying out our study, mainly during the data collection process. One problem was finding students that fit our population description. To address this challenge, interviewers went to multiple buildings around campus that hold first year engineering classes during busier hours of the day to approach possible participants. Another challenge is the effect of living on campus - a confounding variable present in this study. As location of residence was not part of any of the restrictions when choosing participants, this may have caused some differences in the data collection process. The small sample size of our study is also a limitation to the implications of the findings. The problem with having a small sample size is that it "has a reduced chance of detecting a true effect"<sup>4</sup> As data collection only came from females, this was also another limitation to the implications of the results in this study.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The first recommendation for increasing awareness for UBC Recreation is the "Social Media Platforms for Specific UBC Recreation Programs". The second most voted for strategy was the "Regular Email Updates" method. This method includes giving consistent email updates for different UBC Recreation programs that interests students. The "Guest UBC REC Speakers" strategy had the least votes among the three, which involves having representatives of UBC Recreation come speak to classes prior to lecture.

## Acknowledgement

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Partners

