

Student **R**ecruitment **I**nitiatives **C**ontest

For Occupational Therapy & Occupational Therapy Assistant
Educational Programs



Submitted from

**Western Wisconsin Technical College
La Crosse, Wisconsin**

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OPEN YOUR EYES TO OTA

Western Wisconsin Technical College

Submitted by

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Activity took place on April 22, 2004. A second event took place during OT Month, April 2005. In addition, seven 30–60 minutes tours have been conducted during the summer and fall semesters of 2004 in which the materials were used.

Individuals who contributed to the project

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Hostesses

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Second-year OTA Student
Second-year OTA Student

Adaptive Equipment Poster Session

Kevin Callahan
Candy Howe
Jaimie Johnson
Diane Lunde
Ann Nelson
Angie Reglin
Karla Stockman
Janet Zidon

First-year OTA Student
First-year OTA Student

Discussion and suggestions were gathered from OTA Advisory Committee.

OPEN YOUR EYES TO OTA

The Initial Plan

Background Information

The OTA Program at Western Wisconsin Technical College was experiencing low enrollment, as well as poor retention of students. All of the traditional methods of marketing were implemented and faculty was spending an enormous amount of time visiting high schools to no avail. Students entering the program appeared not to be committed to the profession or did not have a clear understanding of the academic rigors of the program. With the budget for marketing being significantly reduced, as well as staff, the occupational therapy assistant faculty needed to try something new, which would be more cost effective for the program, geared toward interested parties, and time effective for the faculty. The overall goal is to obtain students who are truly interested in the field of occupational therapy and want to become an occupational therapy assistant.

Description	Open House during OT Month with an emphasis placed on the learning that takes place in the OTA program. Guests have the chance to meet with occupational therapy assistant students and discuss college life, projects, courses material and the program with them. A light lunch was served to allow faculty and occupational therapy assistant students to meet the guests, talk about the occupational therapy assistant profession and answer any questions. Twenty-three different self-directed activities were available so guests would have a hands-on experience. First- and second- year occupational therapy assistant students were available for the guests to interact with and ask questions. Printed materials about the profession, program, and admission were provided. Admissions advisors were onsite.
Target Audience	High school students and undecided college students who are interested in a medical profession, have an interest in the arts and sciences, or in the field of occupational therapy.
Contact	<p>Invite letters sent to the guidance counselors in the technical college's district. Contact information including the guidance counselor's name and high school district was provided by High School Relations. Large and small posters with a catchy design and colors were also sent with the letter for the high school to post or to send home with interested students. A follow-up letter was sent two weeks prior to the event to schools that did not have any students/guests who pre-registered. Confirmation letters were sent to schools that had students/guests that registered for the event two weeks prior to the event.</p> <p>Posters were distributed at Western Wisconsin Technical College's main campus and extended campuses, as well as in the dormitories and select areas at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.</p> <p>Names and addresses of the attendees were collected and given to the admissions advisors for future reference.</p>
Participation goal	Target was 10 guests. Twenty-two individuals registered and attended the event.

OPEN YOUR EYES TO OTA

Steps to Planning and Initiating the Event

Steps	Procedure	Faculty Time
Design a poster	Meet with marketing department 3 months prior to event to design a poster that would catch the eye of high school students. Bold colors, picture of OTA students featuring both genders, and the events of the day bulleted.	1 ½ hours
Adaptive equipment project	Assignment first-year students complete as part of a class. They make an adaptive piece of equipment for a community member and present the project during a poster session in which they are required to discuss the project, how it benefits the individual, steps taken during the development, etc.	No additional time—part of the course
Letters of invite	List of addresses of high school guidance counselors from High School Relations was obtained. Letter of invite and follow-up letter confirming the guest registration or reminding them of the event. Include directions to the event with a contact telephone number (in case they get lost) in the second letter. Administrative assistant completed the mailing of the letters.	1 hour
Development of one page brochure	Colored brochure with picture of students in action with bulleted areas about the profession and the program. This is not as intimidating for high school students as our official brochure is. This is now updated annually.	1 ½ hours
Folders for the guests	<p>Purchase colorful folder with school logo on it.</p> <p>Items included in our folder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor plan of the labs and events. • Brochure from AOTA—place school logo on back • One-page brochure (see above) • WWTC OTA Fact Sheet • WWTC OTA Job Shadow sheet and requirements • WWTC OTA official brochure • Admission Application • WWTC Program Fees brochure • Open Letter to Potential OTA Students—AOTA • Tips for Living—Healthy Computing—AOTA • Backpack Strategies—AOTA • Top 10 Emerging Practice Areas—AOTA • Faculty business cards attached to inside of folder <p>All of the above items are available to the administrative assistant. She made copies as needed and assembled the materials in the folders. Work study could complete this task</p>	½ hour
Contact College personal	Contact operator, Student Services, Admissions, marketing, school and local newspaper, etc., so individuals requesting information can be addressed appropriately and for additional public relations and event coverage.	45 min
Tables	Reserve table and chairs for registration area. Reserve tables or space for lunch area. If needed, place a note on the tables stating they are reserved and what times.	
Reserve labs	Reserve labs and rooms used for the event so no other event is scheduled	10 min

	during the same time.	
Admission advisors	Have a space for the advisors to meet privately with the guests to answer questions or assist with the application. Make signs for the advisors with their names visible. Note the location on the floor plan of events.	
Promotional items	We ordered pencils printed with “WWTC Occupational Therapy Assistant” which we included in the folder. We also obtained promotional items from marketing and guests were able to choose an item upon registration.	1 ½ hour
Registration	Administrative assistant was the contact person for registration. She collected the demographics of the guest student and which high school they attended. She made name badges and a registration form. Second-year students greeted the guests and confirmed that the information on the registration form was correct. They explained the events of the open house and directed the guests to the poster session and labs.	
Release of information	Cards or forms signed by guests and students in case photos are taken. This is handled in class and at the registration table.	10 min
Displays	Display board promoting the OTA program was placed in the hallway. Display board depicts OTA students participating in lab activities as well as information about the OTA Program, job market, and the college. The student display case focused on occupational therapy in the area of mental health. Student projects were displayed in various labs. All of these displays were previously developed by students or faculty prior to the initiation of the Open House so minimal time was spent touching up or setting up the materials.	20 min
Signs	Signs were placed at the entrances directing guests to the labs. Registration table was located outside the elevators once the guests arrived to our floor. Signage for the labs, lunch, admission, etc., was made by the receptionist and administrative assistant. Faculty developed the list of signs.	15 min
Lunch	Build-your-own-sandwiches, chips, cookies, and beverages were served. Administrative assistant ordered the food items, faculty picked it up. To save costs, the second-year students placed the sandwich meat, cheese, breads, lettuce, cookies, etc. on or in platters and bowls. Plates and napkins to match the colors of the posters and folders were purchased to follow the theme. Colored flat sheets from the lab were used as table cloths covering large carts the food was placed on. Additional food items stored on lower shelf of the carts for replenishing. This was covered by the sheets. Students completed this task prior to the event starting so it could be quickly rolled out to the serving area during the event. Don't forget to make a sign stating the lunch is for the OTA Open House so other students on campus don't eat the food. Administrative assistant made table tents with the theme and colors.	45 min.
Lab activities	This can vary depending upon what the program wants to showcase. We chose activities where we had materials readily available--quick to set up and low cost to the program. We also chose activities that were interesting, maintained the guest's attention, and had directions that could be easily written/ followed. All of the activities were typed on a single page, placed in a plastic sheet, with the list of materials/equipment needed, as well as the location of the materials in the lab placed on the back of the page (for ease of set up by other faculty and for time efficiency). Events at	

Floor Plan	Have a floor plan of your labs with the activities in each area listed.	
Promotional Kit	The above directions for the activities, handouts, contacts, sample folder, supplies, and promotional items were organized in a travel file. This is used for tours, school visits, and for future open houses. Activities can be geared towards the audience touring the labs, advanced biology—physical rehab activities; psychology students—mental health and occupational based activities; middle school—adaptive equipment, splinting or projects they can take back with them. Pencils were ordered using neutral colors for both genders. Small inexpensive materials such as splint blanks, spatula, in-hand manipulatives, table tents, goniometers, etc. are kept in the kit for ease of set up. A large rolling suitcase with large inexpensive items such as sock aid, reacher, various adaptive equipment, socks, shoe, etc. is kept packed for ease of set up and used when taken to outside events. Space to add more expensive items such as a splint pan, raised toilet seat, cutting board, etc. is present and added prior to departure to a school activity. Faculty purchased the materials or gathered equipment/materials previously purchased. Administrative assistant organized the kit.	2 hours

To-do list the day of the event

- ❖ First-year students—set up adaptive equipment presentations
- ❖ Second-year students—set up food and registration table
- ❖ Faculty—pick up food, set up lab activities, music, replenish lunch items, break down activities, clean up labs
- ❖ Administrative assistant—registration materials, signage, available for phone calls or securing additional information for guests
- ❖ Admission Advisors—materials for admission
- ❖ Receptionist—set up signs at entrances, assist with any problems that may arise
- ❖ Custodians—set up tables and chairs
- ❖ Faculty and second-year students monitor the labs throughout the event
- ❖ Everyone—relax and enjoy the day

OPEN YOUR EYES TO OTA Evaluation of the Event

Guests, parents, and guidance counselors' comments include

“Worth our time to come. It was great talking to the OTA students.”

“I learned a lot about Occupational Therapy.”

“Well organized. We will come again with more students.”

“It was fun and we get to take things home with us.”

“Thanks for lunch. It was nice to be interactive without having someone ‘talk’ to me the whole time. I was able to meet others who are interested in the program as well.”

We set our goal for 10 guests. We had 24 guests register; 22 guests arrived. The day went smoothly and the guests were engaged with a majority of the activities. Lunch allowed for a natural break and guests chose when they wanted to break for lunch. The guests were interactive with the occupational therapy assistant students who were presenting and asked questions relating to the manufacturing of the adaptive equipment.

Initially the admissions advisors were not busy. Most of the questions occurred after lunch, and 6 guests approached them with questions. Both admissions advisors were busy at the same time and several guest waited to talk to them about course requirements for admission.

Four guests who attended the Open House were admitted to the program during Fall Semester 2004. All of the other guests are still in high school, parents, or guidance counselors.

Suggestions from the Advisory Committee include: late afternoon hours so that parents can attend, advertise to the general public via radio or other media, increase the number of schools contacted.

The materials developed for the event were organized into a kit which has proven to be an effective promotional tool for tours of the labs and program. Both faculty members have set up various activities without input from each other in a minimal amount of time and gear the activities towards the audience. Faculty obtains information prior to the tour regarding the type of tour; general, a specific class such as anatomy and physiology, and the ages of the individuals touring the facility. The activities have been used for middle school; high school; and faculty from elementary, middle, and high schools. Since the initial work has been completed, updating/revising the material and organizing material for certain groups has been completed with efficiency. Work study students can complete certain tasks, such as cutting out the finger gutter splints or collating the materials for group tours. Lists and files were maintained so reproduction of the event or activities for tours can be completed with ease. A list of the printed materials can be given to the administrative assistant and she has full access to all of the materials.

Since the kit has been developed it is ready for the next open house which will occur during April 2005.

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Cost of the Event
April 2004

Folder for each guest:

2-pocket folder with college logo	\$0.770
OTA Program Fact Sheet (2-sided)	0.050
OTA Job Shadow Information (1 side).....	0.025
OTA Program Brochure.....	0.800
OTA Information Sheet (color—1 side)	0.200
WWTC Program Fees Brochure.....	0.800
Wisconsin Technical College System Application.....	0
AOTA Building Skills Brochure	0
AOTA Open Letter to Potential Students (1 side).....	0.025
AOTA Tips for Living (2-sided).....	0.050
AOTA Backpack Strategies (1 side).....	0.025
AOTA Top 10 Emerging Practices (2-sided)	0.050
Business Card—Doreen Olson.....	0.025
Business Card—Chris Krueger	0.025
Total Cost per Folder.....	\$2.845
Total Cost (25 folders)	\$71.125

Other Costs (* items will be used for all tours two or more years):

Trexco—OT promotional items *	\$207.00
Miles Kimball—engraved pencils*	27.28
Leather rounds*	9.99
Paper products*	12.55
Food for lunch (served guests, OTA students and faculty)	72.13
Office supplies for kit*	13.99
Posters	22.00
Mailings (bulk mail through college)	0
Copy costs for letters	3.60
Total	\$368.54

Total cost for 2004 \$439.66

Projected Costs for Open House for 2005

Lunch	\$75.00
Paper Products	15.00
Folders with information.....	75.00
Posters.....	25.00
Copy Costs for letters.....	5.00
TOTAL PROJECTED COST	\$195.00

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Event Cost

April 2004

(continued from previous page)

Resources used for the event/s (see plan for specifics)

Marketing Department
High School Relations Department
Student Services—Admission advisors
Administrative assistant
AOTA Web site
Trexco—OT promotional items
Miles Kimball—pencils

TOTAL number of faculty hours for 2 faculty members – 29 hours (14.5 hours each)

Developing the event and materials	20 hours
Set up on the day of the event	3 hours
Interacting with guests during the event	4 hours
Clean up	2 hours

Two second year students were released from Fieldwork to assist and host the event for a total of 10 hours (5 hours each student).

First-year students completed the adaptive equipment project for a class. Poster session was scheduled during their lab hours, which coincided with the Open House Event.

Administrative assistant hours have not been calculated in the overall since she completed tasks between other projects. She projects that she may have spent 5 hours preparing for the event, mailing, and organizing materials for future events.

Total hours for the event 44 hours. Projected labor hours for the 2005 event: 27 with projected faculty hours at 12 (average of 6 hours each faculty).

OPEN YOUR EYES TO OTA

Summary

“Open your Eyes to OTA” is based on a self-paced interactive open house targeted for high school students and undecided college-age students who may be interested in the field of occupational therapy or a medical profession. Students were greeted by second-year students and presented with materials about occupational therapy, the program, maps, and events set up in six labs. Guests were able to meet and discuss the adaptive equipment poster session presented by first-year OTA students. They also participated in various self-paced activities with step-by-step instructions and materials for a “hands-on” experience typical of the learning that takes place in the OTA Program. Admission advisors were available to guide and answer questions the students, parents, or guidance counselors may have had regarding the program or admission to the college. A light lunch was provided in which second-year students and faculty joined the students to answer questions or provide additional information about the field of occupational therapy. Faculty and second-year OTA students (4 individuals) also supervised the self-paced activities on a casual basis and discussed how those activities affect an individual receiving occupational therapy services or why an OTA student learns those activities.

Two faculty members and an administrative assistant organized and completed the majority of the work. Supportive assistance from Marketing, High School Relations, Student Services, and OTA students were available prior to and during the event. Total cost of the event was \$439.66 with some free materials provided by the marketing department and AOTA. Projected cost for 2005 will be \$195.00. Total faculty hours for 2004 were 29; number of projected hours for 2005 is 14.

“Open Your Eyes to OTA” was a three-hour event that received rave reviews from the guest students, parents, and guidance counselors who attended. Best of all, the activities and materials from this event were organized so they can be used for other events. The activities can be easily geared for short tours of the labs, career fairs, and for audiences ranging from middle school students to elementary and high school faculty. The activities can be set up and taken down with a minimal amount of time by one faculty member.