



# Implementing Strategies to Encourage Summer Enrollment

OACC Student Success Leadership Institute  
September 13, 2019

**Benjamin Cohen and Camielle Headlam**  
**Postsecondary Education, MDRC**

# Introductions

- Name
- College
- Any summer enrollment initiatives or activities at your college **or** something you did this summer

# Our Time Today

1. In-depth look at the EASE messages & behavioral science principles
2. Which of the two EASE strategies should my college adopt?
3. The planning process
4. Next steps

# Two Strategies to Encourage Additional Summer Enrollment:

## INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN



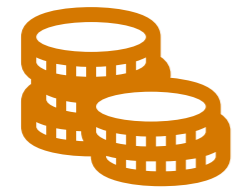
6 e-mails, 2 letters, and 1 postcard

## INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN & TUITION ASSISTANCE

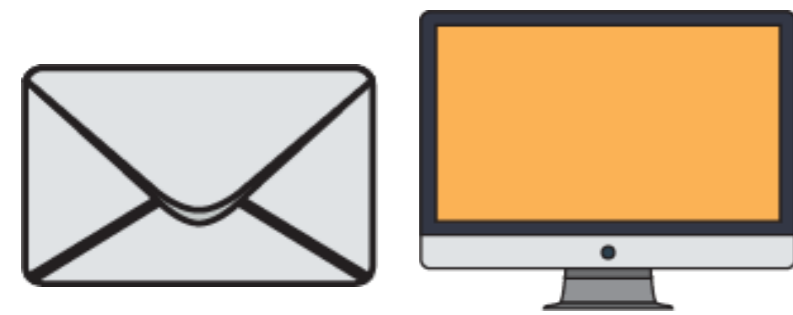


Messaging +  
Last-Dollar Grant

# The Tuition Assistance Grant...



**Last-Dollar**



**Marketed through an Informational Campaign**



**Simplifies messaging around summer funding**

**Keep these  
Key Features**

# The Informational Campaign...



**Mentions financial aid (Pell Grant or last-dollar grant)**



**Includes multiple messages**



**Uses multiple modes of communication**



**Incorporates behavioral science principles**

**Keep these  
Key Features**

# How Do the Messages Work?

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# What is behavioral science?

- Studies how people **actually behave**
- Draws on research from psychology and economics, among others, about **decision-making** and **action**
- Allows us to change how we approach problem-solving by being more reflective about **predictable patterns of behavior**





**By nature, we are social and influenced by our peers.**

## **Social Influence**

Persuasion by society, peers, or a person of influence can affect people's decisions and actions. People tend to follow what they think other people are doing.

# Reframe options using social influence

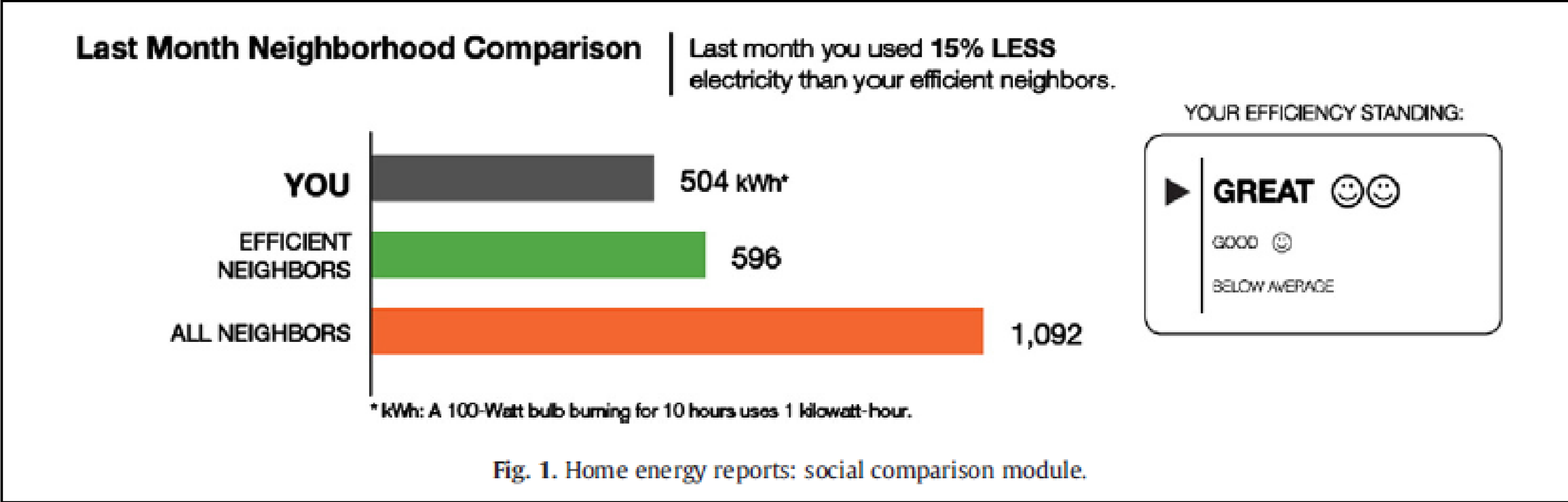


Fig. 1. Home energy reports: social comparison module.

(Allcott, 2011)

As you may have heard around campus, many of your classmates are signing up for summer courses to get the most out of their time at Columbus State. The exciting new changes to the Pell Grant\* means that **you will have funding for summer courses that you do not need to pay back.**

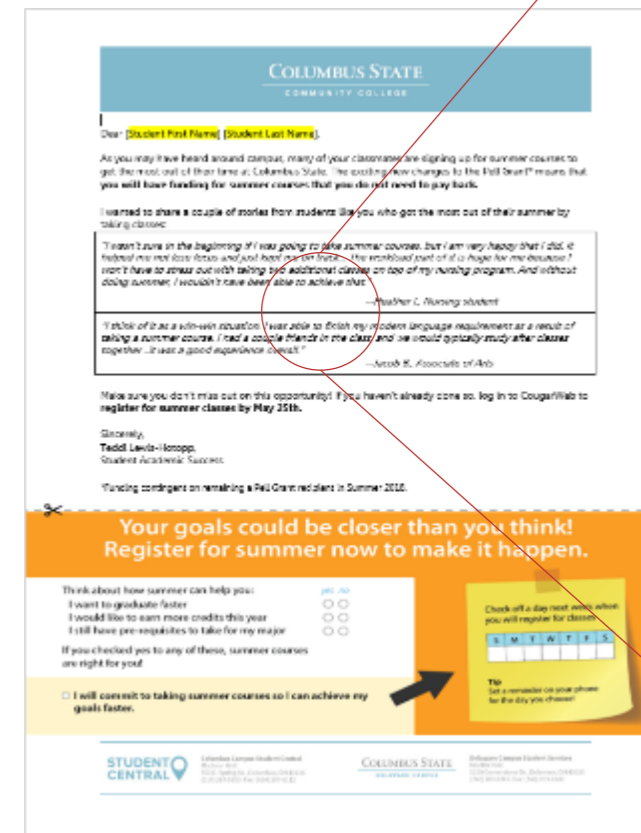
I wanted to share a couple of stories from students like you who got the most out of their summer by taking classes:

*"I wasn't sure in the beginning if I was going to take summer courses, but I am very happy that I did. It helped me not lose focus and just kept me on track... The workload part of it is huge for me because I won't have to stress out with taking two additional classes on top of my nursing program. And without doing summer, I wouldn't have been able to achieve that."*

*--Heather I., Nursing student*

*"I think of it as a win-win situation. I was able to finish my modern language requirement as a result of taking a summer course. I had a couple friends in the class, and we would typically study after classes together...it was a good experience overall."*

*--Jacob B., Associate of Arts*



## Social Influence

## Summer registration is now open!

Taking summer classes is the best way to stay on track towards getting your degree. In fact, many of your classmates at MTC attend summer classes to graduate faster. I want to make sure you don't miss out on this opportunity.

Hi [Student Name],

**Summer registration is now open!**

Taking summer classes is the best way to stay on track towards getting your degree. In fact, many of your classmates at MTC attend summer classes to graduate faster. I want to make sure you don't miss out on this opportunity.

Secure your spot in the classes you need by taking a few minutes to register for summer courses right now. Follow these simple steps to enroll:

1. Log in to [MyMTC](#).
2. Use your academic plan to find classes that you need to take (click on "View Academic Plan").
3. Search for Summer 2017 courses (many MTC courses are offered in summer)
  - ✦ Click "Find Courses" and choose the 2017 Summer period
4. Register for your summer classes by going to the "Register" tab

Keep in mind that you are eligible for the new **year-round Pell Grant\***. This means you have funding available for summer courses!

If you need advice, take 15 minutes this week while on campus to check in with me. You can contact me at [advisor.state.edu](mailto:advisor.state.edu) or [1000-3000-3000](tel:1000-3000-3000) to schedule a quick advising session.

Sincerely,  
[Name]  
Academic Advisor

\*Funding contingent on remaining a Pell Grant recipient in Summer 2018.

## Social Influence

**Breaking down a task into actionable steps and simplifying information has been shown to improve outcomes.**

## **Implementation Prompts**

Encouraging people to plan the steps they will take to complete a task can move people from intention to action.

# Standard Informational Postcard

**FOOD BANK FOR NEW YORK CITY  
LOCATIONS NEAR YOU**

**COME TO FOOD BANK OFFICES** listed here between March 11 and April 9 to receive

- More information about the Paycheck Plus bonus
- And a \$50 gift card

**COME IN TODAY TO LEARN MORE!**

For other locations or questions call  
646-981-6111

**Capital One Bank**  
356 Fulton St., 2nd Fl., Brooklyn, NY 11201  
Tue-Wed, 10am-7pm | Thu, 10am-8pm | Sat, 9am-5pm

**Bed-Stuy Restoration Plaza**  
1392 Fulton St., Brooklyn, NY 11216  
Tue-Wed, 10am-5pm | Thu, 10am-6pm | Sat, 9am-2pm

**St. George Santander Bank**  
15 Hyatt St., 3rd Fl., Staten Island, NY 10301  
Tue-Thu, 12pm-7pm | Sat, 9am-5pm

**Northern Manhattan Improvement Corp.**  
76 Wadsworth Ave., New York, NY 10033  
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**Community Kitchen and Pantry of West Harlem**  
252 W. 116th St., New York, NY 10026  
Tue-Thu, 9am-3pm | Sat, 9am-3pm

# Postcard Redesigned with Behavioral Science Insights

**SIGN UP FOR PAYCHECK PLUS – DONE!**  
Follow these 3 easy steps to get your \$50 gift card and much more...

1  **Choose a location and time to visit by March 29**

**Check off one location:**

**Capital One Bank**  
356 Fulton St., 2nd Fl.,  
Brooklyn, 11201

MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
closed	10-7	10-7	10-8	closed	9-5

**Community Kitchen & Pantry of West Harlem**  
252 W. 116th St., New York, 10026

MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
closed	9-3	9-3	9-3	closed	9-3

2  **Write down when you will go:** Date  Time  AM/PM

3  **Stop by and have a short conversation with Food Bank staff to learn how you can earn a \$2000 bonus next year**

**Get your \$50 gift card!**

For other locations or questions call 646-981-6111

**Implementation prompt**

Dechausay, Anzelone, & Reardon (2015)

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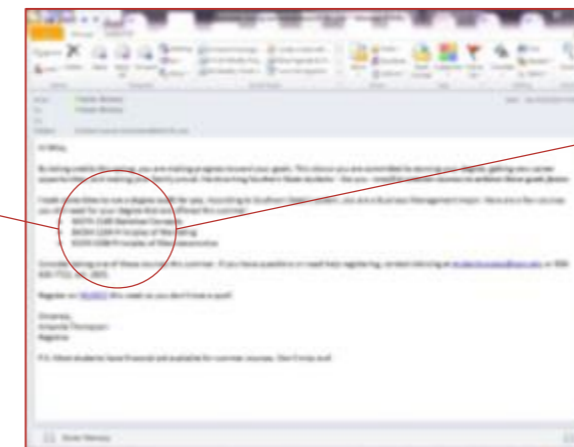
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Tue-Thu, 9am-3pm | Sat, 9am-3pm

**Significant increase in meeting attendance**



Secure your spot in the classes you need by taking a few minutes to register for summer courses right now. Follow these simple steps to enroll:

1. Review your Degree Audit Report in [CougarWeb](#) (click “My Degree Audit”) and write down courses that you haven’t taken yet.
2. Search Summer 2018 courses [here](#) (almost all courses are offered in summer).
3. Choose the classes with days and times that will work with your summer schedule.
4. Register for your summer courses:
  - ❖ Log in to [Cougar Web](#)
    - If you forgot your Cougar ID, username, login name, or password, click [here](#) or call 614-287-5050
  - ❖ Click “Schedule My Classes” to register.

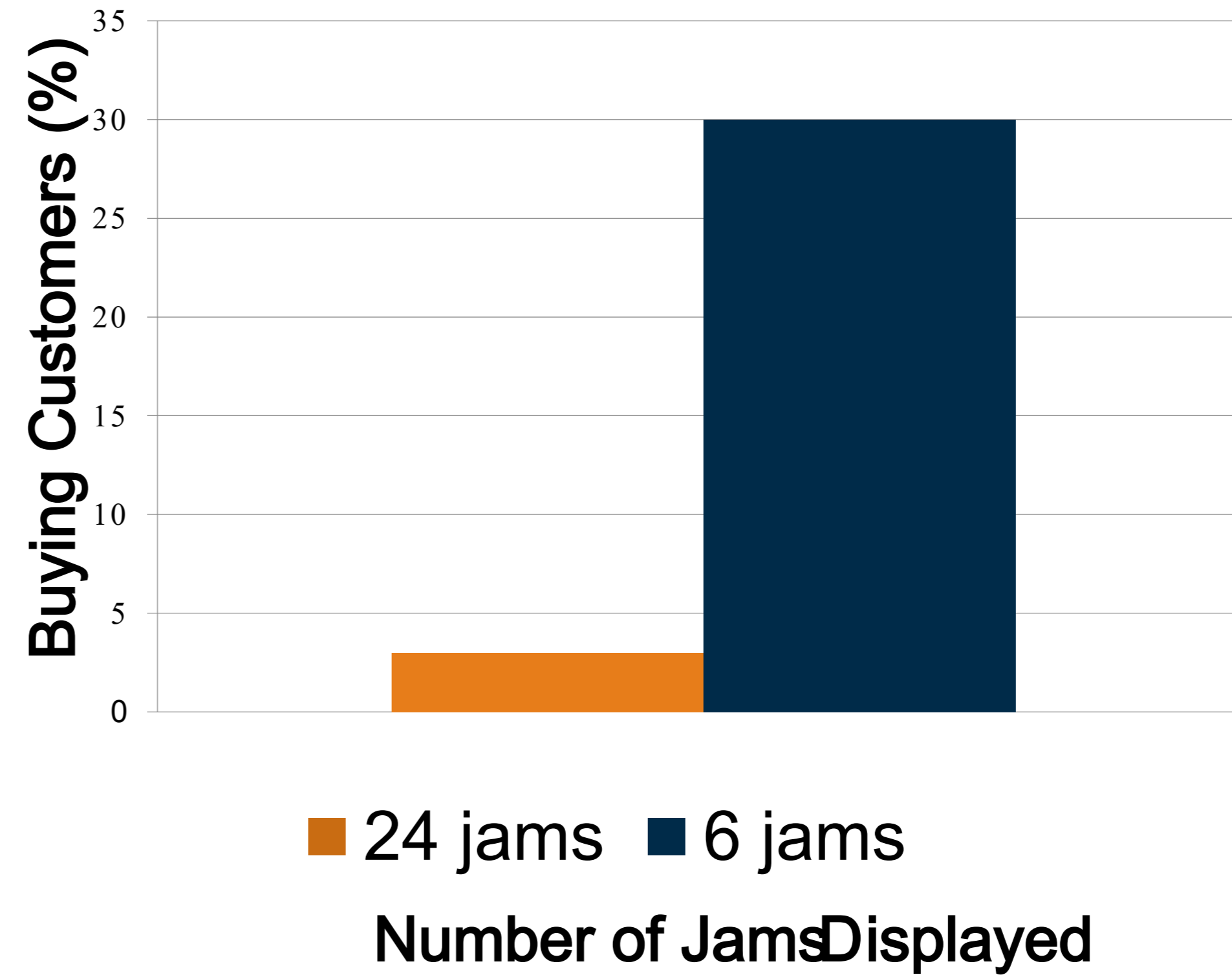


## Implementation Prompt

**The mental resources we use to pay attention and understand and remember information are more fallible than we often recognize.**

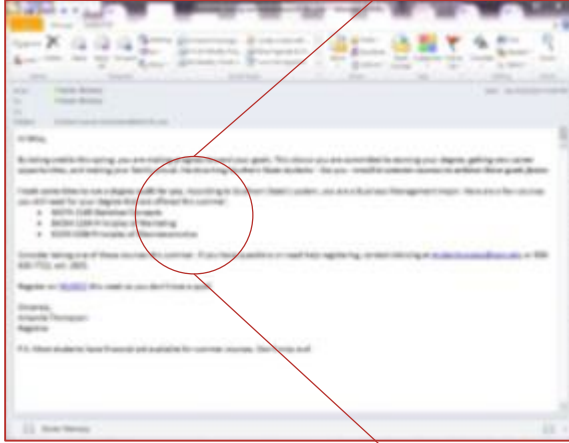
## **Choice Overload**

People can have a difficult time making a decision when faced with many options.



## How many course options are given to students?

Iyengar, Sheena S., & Lepper, M. L., (2000)



I took some time to run a degree audit for you. According to [redacted] system, you are a Business Management major. Here are a few courses you still need for your degree that are offered this summer:

- MATH 1160 Statistical Concepts
- BADM 2204 Principles of Marketing
- ECON 2206 Principles of Macroeconomics

**Simplify course options – Make course decision-making easy for students**

# Activity

**What behavioral science techniques does the following message use?**

## Protect your flight (recommended)

✓ Avoid change fees. Protect your trip.

3 reasons you might need travel protection: 

1. Your ticket is non-refundable and you're too sick to travel
2. You get injured and can't make your flight home
3. Your traveling companion has a covered medical emergency and can't travel

[View terms, conditions and plan sponsors](#) 

Select Yes or No to continue booking \*

**Yes, I want Cancellation Protection for my trip to New York.**

 64,971 customers protected their flight in the last 7 days

No, I'm willing to risk my \$226.60 trip.

Mary got \$468 back when she cancelled her flight to ... [Read more](#)

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loss aversion

Simplification







Social influence

# **Which Strategy Should My College Use?**

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# A Closer Look

Topic	Info Campaign	Info Campaign + Tuition Assistance
<b>Effectiveness</b>	 Positive impact on student academic progress (smaller)	  Positive impact on student academic progress (larger)
<b>Message Simplicity</b>	 Personalized Pell estimate message harder to implement	  Simple messages, very easy to implement
















I strongly recommend you take at least [recommended number of courses] summer [course/courses], because this is financial aid you **do not have to pay back**. Don't miss out on the opportunity to take advantage of your funding and get ahead in your education.

Your grant award will depend on how many summer courses you take. Use this chart\* to determine how many courses you should plan to take this summer:

If you take...	You may receive up to...
1 to 5 credits	[remaining Pell]
6 to 8 credits	[1/2-time Pell award]
9 to 11 credits	[3/4-time Pell award]
12 or more credits	[Full-time Pell award]



# A Closer Look

Topic	Info Campaign	Info Campaign + Tuition Assistance
<b>Effectiveness</b>	 Positive impact on student academic progress (smaller)	  Positive impact on student academic progress (larger)
<b>Message Simplicity</b>	 Personalized Pell estimate message harder to implement	  Simple messages, very easy to implement
<b>Tuition Assistance Disbursement</b>	  Not necessary	 Requires financial aid to disburse grants
<b>Upfront Cost</b>	  Lower cost (staff time only)	 Higher cost (staff time & tuition assistance)
<b>Revenue Generated</b>	 Positive (smaller)	  Positive (larger)

# Summary

- **If you can identify the upfront funding, consider implementing the informational campaign + Tuition**
- Both have **positive ROI, but...**
- **The informational campaign paired with the last-dollar tuition assistance grant has a larger impact** on student academic progress
- The additional revenue generated from increased enrollment **likely offsets cost of tuition assistance**
- **If no upfront funding, implement the informational campaign only**

# Discussion Questions

- Who are the right people to weigh in on selecting a strategy?
- What funding sources could you use to cover the grant?

# What's the Planning Process?

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# Timeline and Checklist

## **Fall Semester**

- Identify coordinator
- Identify relevant departments
- Determine target population
- Determine how you will send personalized e-mail messages
- Understand process for mailing personalized letters
- Customize the messaging templates
- Create a timeline for sending messages

# Timeline and Checklist (cont'd)

## **Spring Semester**

- Identify target population
- Launch the campaign
- Estimate students' Pell Grant funding and send personalized messages
- Create and send personalized course recommendations
- Award the tuition-assistance grants (if doing Strategy 2)
- Complete the campaign

## **Summer Term**

- Determine how to continue the strategy each year

# What Are the Next Steps?

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# Next Steps

- Identify coordinator
- Identify relevant departments
- Determine target population

# When You Get Back to Campus...

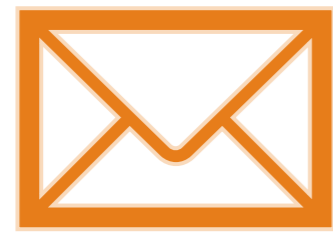
Choose a strategy: Have conversations on your campus with the right people

# By Late Fall

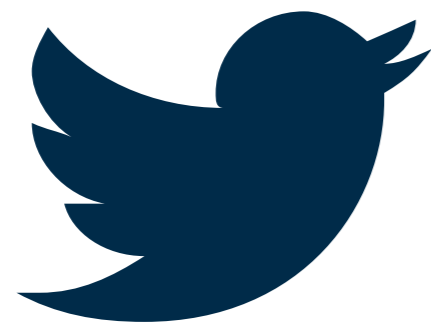
- Have a coordinator identified
- Have relevant departments identified
- Determine how you'll send the messages
- **Attend the EASE workshop at Holistic Student Supports Institute with your EASE team**

# Questions?

## Contact:



[Camielle.Headlam@mdrc.org](mailto:Camielle.Headlam@mdrc.org)  
[Benjamin.Cohen@mdrc.org](mailto:Benjamin.Cohen@mdrc.org)



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