Research Week 2017: Social Media Report

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Duration: February 6-10, 2017
Social Media Platform: Twitter
User Name: @ECSU_RW
Hashtag: #ECSURW17

Objective

Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) aims to enhance the Research Week experience for
undergraduate students by integrating social media, utilizing the platform Twitter, as a way to
obtain honest and quantifiable feedback from students. Additionally, the platform is utilized to
disseminate information to students regarding events and activities taking place during the week.

Summary

As a way to obtain honest and quantifiable feedback from students, in addition to,
enhance the Research Week experience, the social media team utilized the ECSU Research
Week Twitter account: @ECSU_RW and crafted the hashtag #ECSURW17. To promote the
Research Week Twitter page and hashtag, each team member used their personal Twitters and
followed the Research Week page. Then, the team developed a week long social media
competition using Twitter that encouraged participation and feedback from students of ECSU.
The competitions took place each day throughout the week and included prizes for the winners.
The competition for the week is as follows:

- Monday: "Most Tweets" - The ECSU student who tweeted the most utilizing the
  hashtag #ECSURW17 was chosen as the winner and won a prize.
- Tuesday: "Randomizer" - An ECSU student who utilized the hashtag
  #ECSURW17 was chosen at random as the winner and won a prize.
- Wednesday: "Capture Your Favorite Event" - Students were encouraged to take
  pictures of his or her favorite event and include a caption explaining why the
  event was his or her favorite. One tweet aligning with the criterion was selected at
  random and a student won a prize.
- Thursday: "Guess the Picture" - The student who correctly guessed the image first
  was chosen as the winner and won a prize. A pixelated image was displayed
  beginning Monday and grew more clear each day leading up to Thursday.
  Thursday a winner was announced.
- Friday: "Poster Session Randomizer" - Students were encouraged to attend the
  poster session and capture a picture of their favorite poster. Students were
  encouraged to write a small caption detailing what he or she enjoyed about the
  respective poster. A winner was selected at random.

The social media team encouraged students to participate in the Research Week events
and provide their feedback utilizing Twitter, incorporating the hashtag #ECSURW17. Those

students who did not have a Twitter account were recommended to sign up for one in order to participate in the week's competition. Students who already had Twitter accounts were recommended to participate and share information about Research Week.

From an accessibility standpoint, the team created a QR code for students so that they could access the Research Week Twitter page by simply scanning the code from their mobile device. The QR code and information regarding the Twitter competition were printed on pamphlets and distributed to students and faculty.

The social media team tweeted live from multiple events, posted about the Research Week schedule, and engaged with many of the followers, creating an interactive social media presence with the students. Upon the conclusion of the week's events and participation, the Twitter page had gained 19 followers, the team had given away multiple prizes to the winners of the competitions, and utilization of the Twitter platform had produced honest and quantifiable feedback.

Methodology

In quantifying the feedback received from the Twitter @ECSU_RW account during Research Week, the team used four different relevant categories: Impressions, Retweets, Hashtag Clicks, and Likes from the Tweet Activity feature available through Twitter. Impressions were relevant in regard to how hashtags and followers make a difference in the number of people who see the tweets about research week. Retweets provided exposure to a broader base of students on Twitter if a tweet was retweeted. Hashtag Clicks revealed how many students were actually interested in learning more about the significance of #ECSURW17. Lastly, Likes were pertinent in determining whether posted tweets were interesting or not. The Tweet Activity categories chosen for the 2016 Research Week Report were utilized again for the 2017 report because of their consistency in providing understandable feedback from students. The four categories selected by the team are provided in the table below along with their respective denotations:

Tweet Activity	
Impressions	Times people saw this tweet on Twitter
Retweets	Times people retweeted this tweet
Hashtag Clicks	Clicks on the hashtag(s) in this tweet
Likes	Times people liked this tweet

*All information in chart is provided by Twitter.com

It should be noted that tweet activity data collected only derived from the @ECSU_RW account; statistics were not included that involved tweets sent to @ECSU_RW or those that involved the team's personal Twitter accounts. This was done in order to prevent the skewing of data, which could have occurred if follower responses were accounted for and if the team utilized their personal accounts to promote the Twitter competition. A procedure was implemented in order to best gather and quantify the data from Impressions, Retweets, Hashtag Clicks, and Likes. Every day during Research Week the Twitter competition began at 9:00 am and ended at

5:00 pm. After 5:00 pm, team members collected the categorical data (e.g. Impressions, Retweets, Likes, and Hashtag Clicks) for each day of competition and organized that data using a Google Sheets spreadsheet. Next, the team calculated the averages for each of the four categories for each day and used these averages to produce line graphs that show the change in Impressions, Retweets, Likes, and Hashtag Clicks throughout the week. The following are figures that display: a tweet from the @ECSU_RW account, a screenshot of the spreadsheet that was used to organize the data collected, a series of graphs revealing the averages for each of the four categories, and a Twitter poll survey.
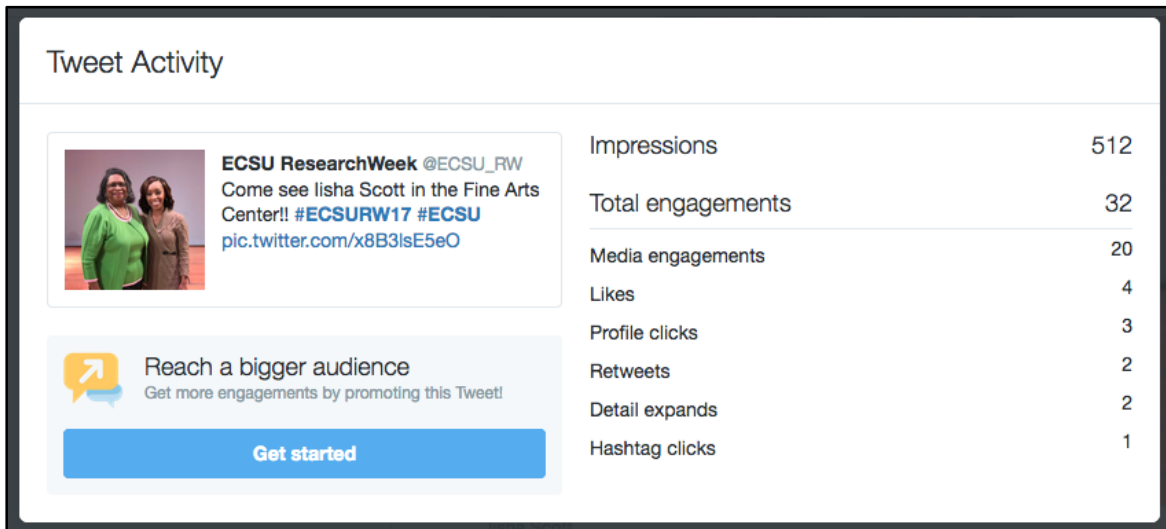

Figure 1: Picture of @ECSU_RW tweet during final Friday, February 10, 2017 session

MONDAY - FEBRUARY 6

# Times @ECSU_RW Tweeted Today :	13	
# Total times OTHER Retweeted @ECSU_RW Tweets :	2	
# Total times OTHER Liked @ECSU_RW Tweets :	2	
OTHER Notes :		Winner of the Monday's competition (@king_lighskin) retweeted and liked ecsu_rw post / like and retweet from picture of an event and the schedule

MONDAY - FEBRUARY 6 TWEET ACTIVITY

Post #	Impressions	Retweets	Likes	Hashtag Clicks	Notes
1	73	0	0	0	
2	107	0	0	1	picture of pixelated image
3	99	0	0	6	
4	132	1	0	2	picture of schedule for monday
5	58	0	0	0	
6	58	0	1	0	picture at an event (internship opportunity)
7	50	0	0	1	
8	60	0	0	1	picture at an event (internship opportunity)
9	62	0	0	1	picture at an event (internship opportunity)
10	124	0	0	0	picture at an event (african americans in STEM)
11	39	0	0	2	
12	52	1	1	1	winner of monday competition
13	48	0	0	0	posting of twitter voting

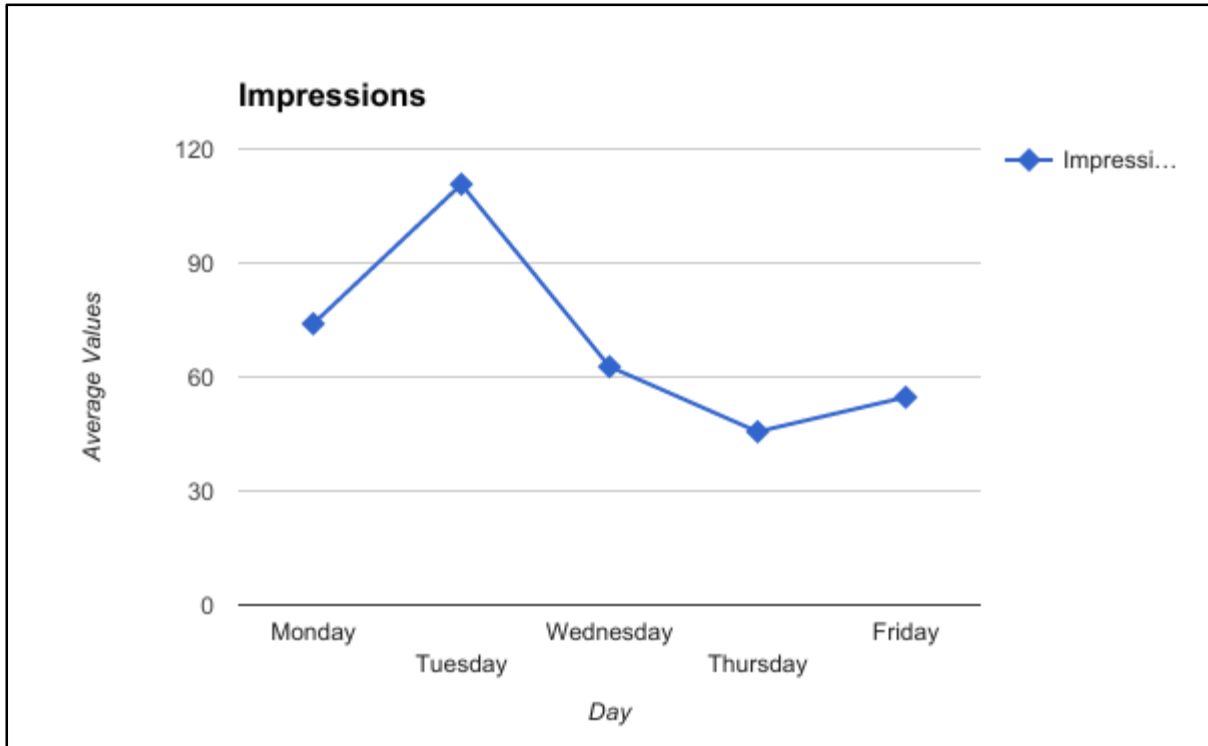Figure 2: Collection of Tweet Activity for Monday, February 6, 2017

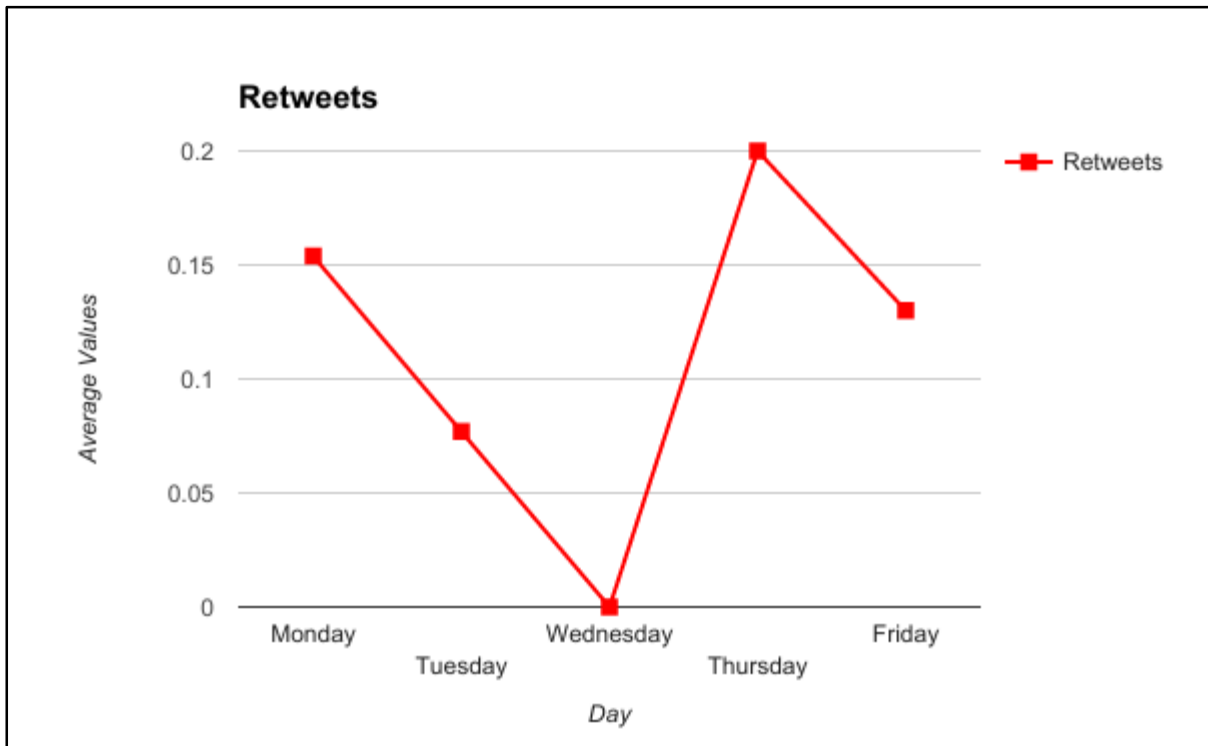Figure 3: Graph displaying the average Impressions for each day of Research Week

Figure 4: Graph displaying the average Retweets for each day of Research Week
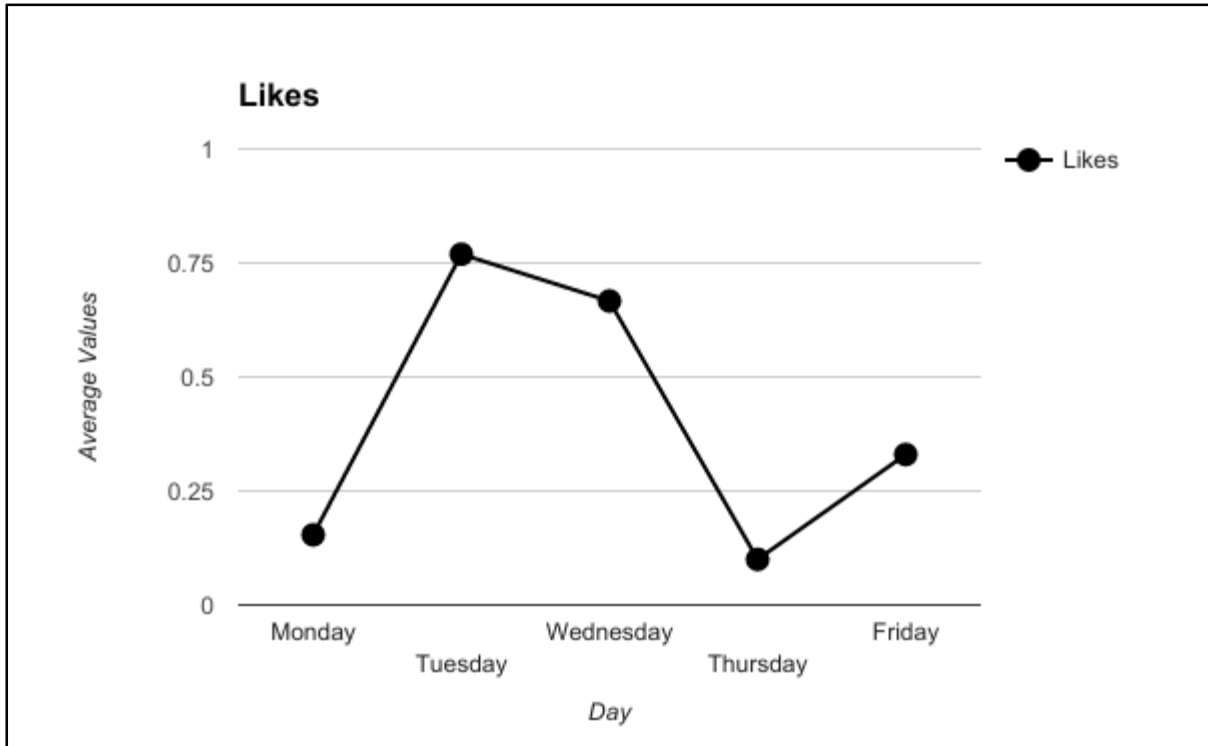
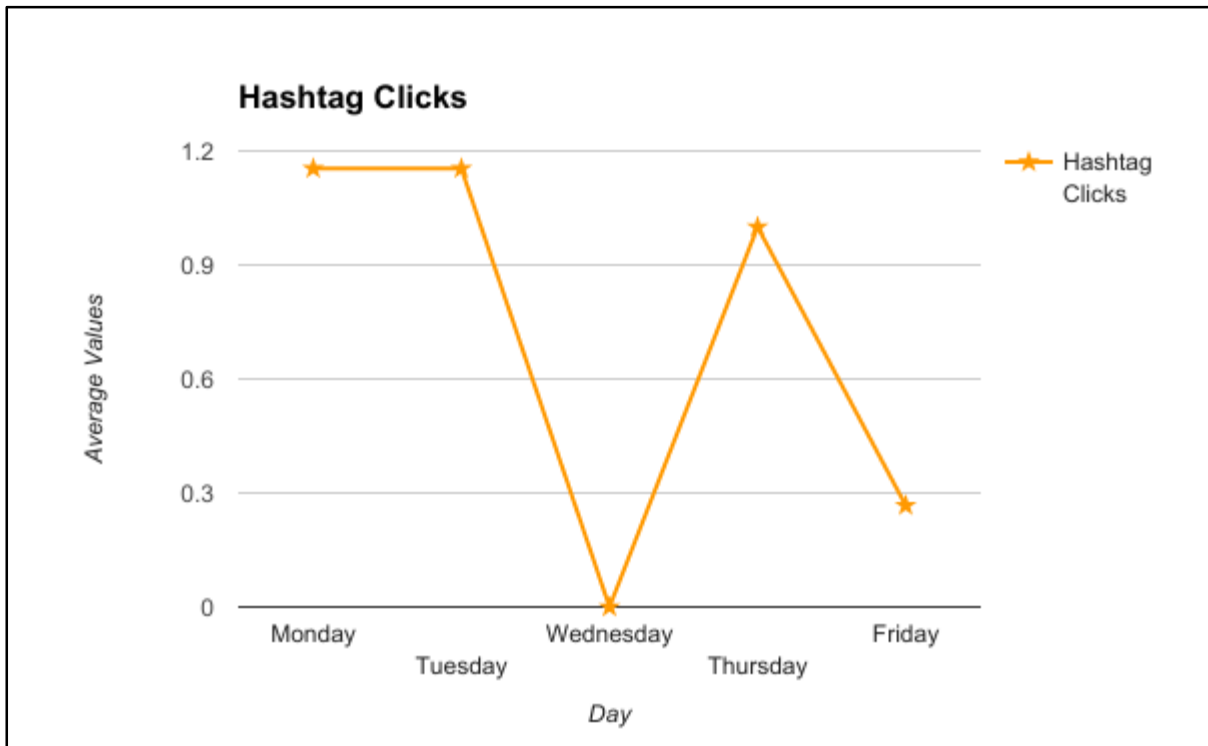Figure 5: Graph displaying the average Likes for each day of Research Week

Figure 6: Graph displaying the average Hashtag Clicks for each day of Research Week
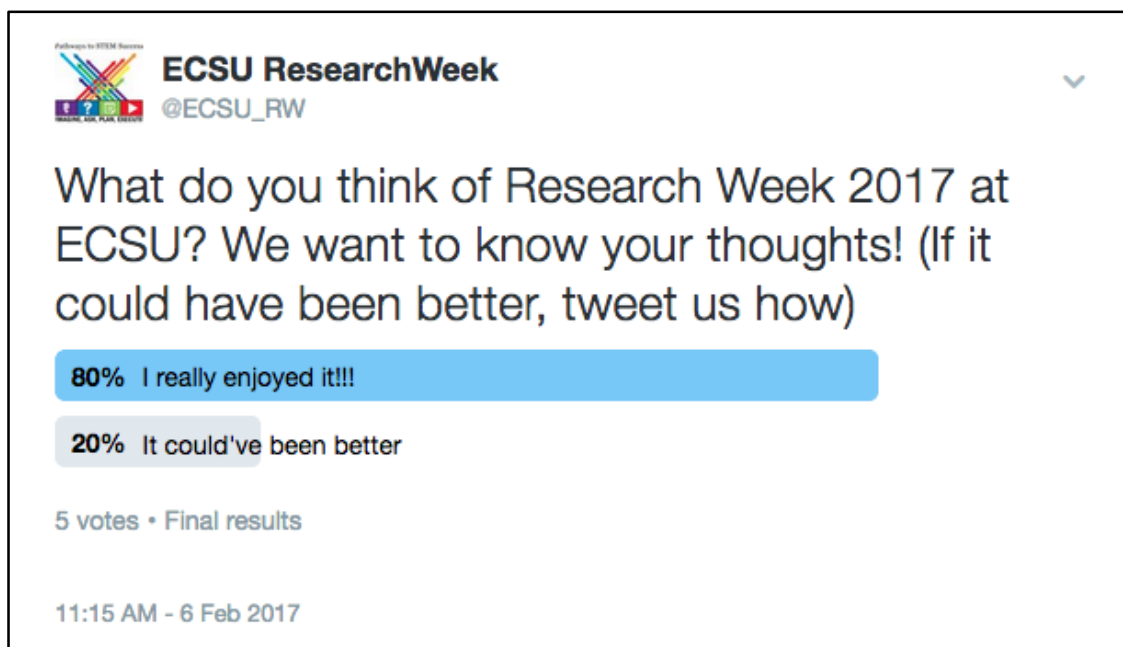
Figure 7: Twitter survey feedback from students

Results & Analysis

According to Figures 3 and 5, Tuesday had the highest average number of Impressions and Likes from the entire research week. On this day, a tweet was posted during a 5:00-7:00 pm session that contained an image of speaker, Dr. Robert George, presenting. Another image was posted the same day between 11:00-12:00 pm featuring speakers from the Trichome Hairs session. The use of media incorporated tweets, such as tweets that contained pictures generated a significant amount of Impressions according to the collected data, meaning that a large number of people saw the particular tweet, increasing the potential for tweet interaction. The value of media incorporated tweets is illustrated in observing Figure 3, particularly Friday. On this specific day, Iisha Scott, Meteorologist from WVEC TV-Channel 13, was a guest speaker and a tweet containing an image of her was posted. Also, the tweet contained #ECSURW17, in addition to, the #ECSU hashtag. Though Friday's average Impressions were lower than that of Tuesday, by observing the trend, it can be inferred that the average number of Impressions increased slightly from Thursday to Friday with the incorporation of media and an additional hashtag.

The highest average of Retweets occurred on Thursday according to Figure 4. Based on the collected data, the greatest number of Impressions and Retweets during this day derived from tweets related to the "African-Americans in STEM" session and the session regarding "Changing the Look of Diversity and Inclusion." Tweets related to these sessions explicitly included the session names and generated student engagement involving Retweets.

It is important to consider that the Twitter account gained 19 followers during the 2017 Research Week. This gain is low considering that a year prior, the account obtained 31 followers, creating an overall total of 50 followers. These observations are significant in keeping in mind whether or not the competition participation encompasses all 50 followers or only the 19 that followed the account for the 2017 Research Week duration.

Conclusion

During the 2017 Research Week, as mentioned prior, the @ECSU_RW Twitter account gained 19 new followers in comparison to the 31 obtained during the 2016 Research Week. Based on the data collected, the most popular days were Tuesday and Thursday.

The team did not calculate the times at which tweets were posted; however, time may have played a role in influencing the number of people that saw the team's tweets during a particular time. For the future, if the team takes into account the time when tweets are posted, such as before noon or during the evening, these records could possibly show a connection between time and the likelihood of student engagement with the social media contest.

On Thursday, based on Figure 4, the usage of media and buzzwords may have contributed to the reason why some students were encouraged to Retweet during Thursday's sessions. According to Dictionary.com, a buzzword is a word or phrase, often sounding authoritative or technical, that is a vogue term in a particular profession, field of study, popular culture, etc. A few of the phrases that appeared in some of our tweets were: African-American, STEM, inclusion, and diversity. These words could be considered popular among today's culture, which provides a possible explanation as to why the tweets posted containing the buzzwords produced student interaction in the form of Retweets.

To promote Research Week events, emails were sent out the Friday prior to Monday's start of Research Week events. In observing the data featured in Figure 6, Monday had the highest average number of Hashtag Clicks. This average may have been influenced by the promotion via email that began the Friday prior. Though the promotion of Research Week began on Friday, when Monday's events began, the new hashtag, #ECSURW17, may have generated curiosity among those followers who were unfamiliar with the hashtag's meaning. Therefore, this curiosity possibly prompted some followers to click on the new hashtag, generating the high average. In regard to future research weeks, it is recommended that promotion begin earlier, so that more students can be informed about the events in advance and can plan to participate.

The incorporation of a social media contest continues to show consistency in contributing to the results gathered from Retweets/Likes. As previously noted, "Retweets reveal if followers thought a tweet was valuable enough to share again." To clarify, if a follower is featured as the winner of a daily competition in a tweet posted by the @ECSU_RW account, that follower is likely to retweet or like that tweet because it contains content valuable enough to share again --- the follower is the winner of some contest. Particularly, the tweet appears on the feed of the person who originally tweeted the tweet, in addition to, whoever retweeted the tweet.

Based on Figure 3, observe the dramatic change in average Impression results from Tuesday to Friday, which may have been influenced by tweet exposure, specifically using hashtags. Friday the team incorporated #ECSU, in addition to #ECSURW17 while tweeting live from the event featuring Iisha Scott. Using #ECSU, which is more of a commonly known hashtag along with #ECSURW17, may explain the increase in average Impressions during this particular day.

Once Research Week concluded, the team tallied the results of a Twitter survey that was posted Monday in order to gather feedback from students during the week. According to Figure 7, 80% of people who took the survey "enjoyed it" and 20% thought "it could've been better". Out of the 19 new followers gained during the 2017 Research Week, it is inferred that only five of those followers took the survey. Unfortunately, this means that possibly only 26% of the new followers gained actually took the survey, which may need to be heavily considered if the survey

exemplifies beneficial feedback from our followers, as well as gathered data when it comes to understanding the 2017 Research Week.