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Subject: Phone calls to Dr. Burrough's office at North General Hospital

Location: My office, Teachers College

Time: Approx 1:05, then 2:00

After exchanging emails with Dr. Valentine Burroughs, who is the Medical Director and Chairman of the Department of Medicine at North General Hospital (and on the IUME Task Force on Supplementary Education), I called his office to set up an appointment. He instructed me to call Nancy Santos.

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I called today just after 1pm. The woman who answered spoke very quickly, giving me a sense of impatience. I asked to speak with Nancy Santos. She said she was on lunch. I asked when she would be getting back, and she asked who I was. I said I wanted to schedule an appointment with Dr. Burroughs, and she asked if it was medical. I said no, an informational interview. I told her I had already been in touch with Dr. Burroughs. She said she could transfer me to Nancy Santos' email. I asked if I could call back.

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Later, when I called back, the same person answered. She told me Nancy Santos was not in and again asked who I was. I told her I had called earlier. She told me she'd transfer me to voice mail and that Nancy would call me back at her convenience.

When I deleted my message before hanging up (I wasn't quite happy with the information I had given), the voicemail did not allow me to record another. Instead it asked if I wanted the directory, and after punching in the first four letters of her last name, I got her extension: 4184. I was connected to Nancy Santos' line, and when I got a person, I asked, is this Nancy Santos? I explained who I was and what I wanted, and after telling me that Dr. Burroughs was going out of town, she said we could set up an appointment for next week.

We set up an appointment for Monday, May 7 at 2:00. Initially she said 2:30 and I asked if there was anything just a little earlier. She said he has a meeting at 1pm, and it often runs overtime. She said, "if you don't mind waiting," we could set our appointment for 2:00. I agreed.

#### My thoughts

I became very frustrated with the receptionist who answered the phone. Of course Dr. Burroughs is a busy man and perhaps Nancy Santos is a busy person as well. While on the phone with the receptionist, I felt intimidated and defensive, eventually thinking of her as hostile. What does the average person calling the hospital feel?

I was surprised to get Nancy Santos on the phone and even more surprised that she was friendly and accommodating. In telling me that Dr. Burroughs was going out of town, I expected her to try to get me off of the phone rather than to set up an appointment. Also, I thought she'd try to set up an appointment for weeks later, rather than only one week later.