

## Introduction to Alumni and Current Student GE Survey

As part of its effort to get feedback on the current GE Program, in March 2009 the GE Design Team carried out surveys of current and past students. These surveys represent one set of “data points” used by the Design Team as we gathered information from a variety of sources and stakeholders in the revisioning of GE on our campus. The survey instrument is attached. To our knowledge, this is the first such survey administered on our campus on the attitudes of current and former students toward GE. We hoped to find out what students liked and disliked about GE and to collect their suggestions for improving GE.

The only difference in the two surveys was the tense of the questions: current students answered questions posed in the present tense, alumni, retrospectively. Questions focused on overall qualities of the General Education program using closed-ended questions that asked students to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements on a Likert scale. The survey also encouraged students to provide open-ended comments on any aspect of GE they wished.

The survey was not “scientific” in that it was not administered to a random sample of current and former students. Current students were recruited to the survey by being approached in the BMU around lunch time and asked to fill out a survey. The survey was also administered to a group of EOP students and a meeting of students in the College of Natural Sciences. We received a total of 164 responses to the survey. The alumni survey was administered via email using the database of alumni that have graduated in the last ten years. The survey was sent to approximately 5,000 alumni. Some number of email addresses were invalid. We received a total of 224 responses to the alumni survey. Again, this is not a random sample and cannot be extrapolated to all current students or all recent alumni.

Results of the closed-ended questions were compiled in SPSS and basic frequencies tabulated. That information is presented in the summaries found at this link. To test a hunch expressed by some members of the GE Design Team, responses from current students were disaggregated by gender, but no significant differences were found in the patterns of response by gender. Open-ended comments were reviewed and coded, and their frequencies tabulated.

The two reports found at this link present the results and the GE Design Team’s interpretation of these data for the revisioning of GE. If you have any questions about the survey or its analysis, please contact the GE Design Team.