

# **General Education Task Force**

## **Quantitative Summary of Survey Comments and Student Focus Group Comments**

### **Overview**

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This assessment of the perceptions of Missouri State University faculty and students was conducted during the spring of 2011 at the request of the General Education Task Force. The survey project consisted of 3 related studies: 1) an online Likert scale survey of faculty with several additional open-ended questions, 2) a similar online Likert scale survey of students with several open-ended questions, and 3) focus group interviews with students using a questionnaire protocol. All surveys and protocols were developed by members of the Task Force. The general purpose of the surveys was to gather information concerning the perceived content, structure, and satisfaction of the general education program at MSU.

### **Methodology**

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Online surveys with faculty and students plus selective focus groups with students were conducted in Spring 2011. Approximately 540 faculty members responded to the survey, with 164 of them providing answers to at least one of the three open-ended questions. Approximately 1184 students responded to the survey, with specific input from 576 students to at least one of the three open-ended answers. Three focus groups were conducted with students with a total of 14 participants. The open-ended questions from both online surveys were analyzed for perceptions and themes concerning the general education program. This analysis identified strengths, weakness, and ways to improve the general education program identified by the respondents. The qualitative data responses from student surveys were coded by two students from the task force working together to identify themes. Next, data were reviewed according to the codes and themes. Some adjustments were made to the codes and themes during the process. The student focus group qualitative transcripts were analyzed by two students, one from the previous student analysis team and one new participant, using the same codes and themes identified from the student surveys with some additional or deleted category modifications. Frequency counts and percentages based on the number of responses obtained were calculated to present a quantitative analysis of the qualitative data. A summary report was prepared and approved by the Task Force. The following tables represent the quantitative analysis of the comments reported on the surveys and in the student focus groups.

## Student Survey Responses

### Quantitative Picture of Comments

<b>Possible Gen Ed Program Goals (n=46)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1. World/Cultural Knowledge	9	49.5%
a. Philosophy		
b. Political Systems	1	2
c. History	1	2
d. Literature & Fine Arts	1	2
e. Foreign Language		
f. Religions	1	2
2. Physical Activity & Health	2	4
3. Science of Natural World	1	2
a. Sustainability	1	2
4. Basic Skills	8	17
a. Oral Communication	1	2
b. Written Communication	1	2
c. Reading	2	4
d. Listening Skills		
e. Math		
f. Personal Finance	2	4
g. Organizational Skills	1	2
h. Study Skills	1	2
5. Proficiency in research skills, information literacy, and critical thinking	1	2
6. Ability to integrate knowledge and apply to everyday life; understand connections between disciplines	5	11
7. Personal Development	25	54
a. Decision-making Abilities	4	9
b. Professional Skills	7	15
c. Responsibility, Respect and Self Awareness	8	17
d. Leadership and Ability to Deal With Conflict	2	4
e. Moral Reasoning, Ethics, & Social Justice	4	9
<b>Strengths/Advantages of Current Program (n=529)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1. Variety of Courses Offered (Choice)	109	21%
a. Honors Components	3	<1
b. Co-curricular options	2	<1
2. Breadth of Topics	227	50
a. Science, Math, Writing, Humanities, Social Sciences		
3. Relevant Information	94	18
4. Faculty		
a. Common experience for all students	4	<1
b. Logical Thinking	7	1
c. Computer skills	11	2
d. English	22	4

e. PLS	4	<1
f. Public Affairs	12	2
g. Self-Understanding	9	1
h. Ethics	2	<1
i. PSU	1	<1
j. Science	12	2
k. Culture/Diversity	10	2
l. PED	1	<1
m. Humanities	10	2
n. GEP 101	7	1
o. COM	19	3.5
p. MTH	17	3
q. Arts	5	1
r. HST	6	1
4. Focus on Understanding Perspectives	32	6
5. Professors/Pedagogy	34	6
a. Integration of Subjects	5	1
b. Easy	2	<1
c. Good professors/teaching	25	5
d. Challenging	2	<1
6. None	14	3
<b>Weaknesses of Current Program (m= 576)</b>	Frequency	Percent
1. Complaint about classes		
a. Unimportant classes	41	7%
b. PED	85	14.5
c. CIS	31	5
d. Two Sciences	13	2
e. Arts	10	1.5
f. Humanities	5	<1
g. GEP 101	22	4
h. Add Foreign Language	3	<1
i. Add Personal Finance	16	3
j. PLS	6	1
k. COM	4	<1
l. ECO	2	<1
m. PSY	1	<1
n. ENG	4	<1
o. HST	7	1
p. MTH	4	<1
2 Professors/Pedagogy	181	31
a. Bad professors	51	9
b. GAs/TAs	6	1
c. Class size too large	17	3
d. Class doesn't fulfill purpose	17	3
e. Too easy	34	11
f. Not enough hands-on	7	1

g. Too hard	37	6
h. Course drift	12	2
3. Lack of Variety	25	4
a. Online/summer options	3	<1
4. Number of Requirements	54	9
4. Public Affairs	21	3
a. Too little	16	3
b. Too much	5	<1
<b>Improvements to Gen Ed (n=535)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1. Add/Remove Specific Class	99	18.5%
a. Remove PED	17	3
b. Add personal finance	25	5
c. Add math	1	<1
d. One science only	15	3
e. Remove GEP (especially for transfer students)	17	3
f. Remove CIS	11	2
g. Add foreign language	6	1
h. Remove Arts	7	1
2. Alter a Specific Class	79	15
a. PLS	12	2
b. PED	45	8
c. HST	4	<1
d. COM	9	2
e. CIS	7	1
f. ENG	13	2
3. Create more Options	82	15
a. More options in Gen Ed	64	12
b. More online	3	<1
c. More honors	2	<1
d. Add waivers	13	2
4. Improve Professors/Pedagogy	114	21
a. Better professors	57	11
b. Smaller class size	9	2
c. Easier workload	19	3.5
d. Add waivers	13	2
5. Reduce the # of Required Classes	72	13
6. Change Overall Structure	96	18
a. More tied to major	49	9
b. Better advising	4	<1
c. More focus on diversity issues	9	1
d. Add public affairs	16	3
e. More standardization of classes	10	2
f. Require hours not categories	5	<1
g. Better integrated material	3	<1