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Graduating Senior Survey: Summary of Items Relating to General Education Fall 2008 and Fall 2009

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UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA

ST. PETERSBURG

Graduating Senior Survey
Summary of Items Relating to General Education
Fall 2008 and Fall 2009

February 12, 2010

Institutional Research Office

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Executive Summary

Graduating Senior Surveys (GSS) provide valuable institutional information that is useful for program and service improvement. Additionally, survey instrument can be tailored to meet specific accrediting body requirements. For example, in spring 2008, the GSS was modified to include questions that addressed NCATE and AACSB concerns and in fall 2008 a bank of questions relating to General Education Assessment were added to the instrument. This report focuses on the subset of questions relating to general education and presents results from fall 2008 and fall 2009.

The survey is structured such that College of Business (COB), College of Education (COE), and College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) graduates are routed to specific banks of questions. After capturing demographic information, CAS graduates were routed to the bank of questions relating to general education. In fall 2008, of 96 CAS graduates, responses to the GE bank of questions were obtained from 73 students; and in fall 2009, 58 responses were obtained from 69 CAS graduates. GSS response rates for CAS are equivalent to those of COB and COE and these response rates are typical of graduating senior surveys.

GSS survey items were grouped by general education area: Ability to Communicate (3 items), Quantitative Skills (3 items), Knowledge of Natural Sciences (3 items), Knowledge of Social Sciences (3 items), Knowledge of Historical Perspectives (4 items), Knowledge of Fine Arts (4 items), ALAMEA (2 items), Knowledge of Major Works and Issues (2 items), and Knowledge of Literature and Writing (3 items). In a two-part format, respondents were asked if their courses at USFSP improved their abilities in specific GE areas, and whether or not these GE areas were important to their future careers or education.

Percent distributions are presented in Table 1. Below are the more salient findings.

- With regard to importance to future career or education, students consistently rated Ability to Communicate highest
- Importance of Knowledge of Social Sciences was rated highly
- Students consistently rated skill levels in the area of Communication higher than other areas
- Both Quantitative Skills and Knowledge of Natural Sciences received the lowest ratings of skill levels
- From 2008 to 2009, there was an increase in skill rating of Knowledge of Natural Sciences yet a decrease in perceived importance to future career or education
- The skill level rating for two areas within Knowledge of Social Sciences increased from 2008 to 2009
- Knowledge of Fine Arts and ALAMEA consistently received low skill level ratings
- Ratings of importance of Literature and Writing decreased from 2008 to 2009

Comparison of Student Success Survey Items Relating to General Education (GE) in Fall 08 and Fall 09

This bank of questions relating to GE was asked of students graduating with a

Please think about your GE courses and

1. Assess your skills in these areas: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N/A=Not Apply, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree
2. Indicate if these skills are important to your future career or education

	Fall 2008						Fall 2009					
	Total	SA/A	N/A	D/SD	Yes	No	Total	SA/A	N/A	D/SD	Yes	No
GE Area: Ability to Communicate												
1. Making appropriate communication choices by focusing on audience and purpose	73	86.3	8.2	5.5	90.6	9.4	58	81.0	12.1	6.9	92.3	7.7
2. Applying appropriate form and content in oral, digital, written and visual communication	73	91.8	5.5	2.7	94.1	5.9	56	85.7	8.9	5.4	94.9	5.1
3. By applying basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving, and technical proficiency in the development and document of oral, digital, written and visual communication	74	94.6	4.1	1.4	98.0	2.0	56	92.8	3.6	3.6	97.4	2.6
GE Area: Quantitative Skills												
1. Applying arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and statistics to solve problems in a wide range of disciplines	74	40.5	43.2	16.2	75.5	24.5	54	57.4	27.8	14.8	71.8	28.2
2. Representing and evaluating basic quantitative information numerically, graphically, and symbolically	74	52.7	35.1	12.2	79.2	20.8	54	66.7	20.4	12.9	74.4	25.6
3. Using mathematical and logical reasoning to create and evaluate the validity of arguments and solve problems in a wide range of disciplines	75	50.7	34.7	14.7	78.0	22.0	55	63.7	23.6	12.7	70.3	29.7
GE Area: Knowledge of Natural Sciences												
1. Understanding and practicing the scientific method of inquiry	74	52.7	29.7	17.6	84.3	15.7	56	75.0	19.6	5.4	75.0	25.0
2. Working with tools and methods used by scientists to study the natural world	74	45.9	40.5	13.5	78.0	22.0	56	64.3	26.8	8.9	71.4	28.6
3. Describing how natural science research informs societal issues, including ethics	74	51.4	32.4	16.2	86.0	14.0	58	79.3	13.8	6.9	77.8	22.2
GE Area: Knowledge of Social Sciences												
1. Demonstrating the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social scientists use to investigate the human condition and the nature of social organization	72	70.8	12.5	16.7	94.3	5.7	56	87.5	8.9	3.6	92.3	7.7
2. Understanding the roles by race, age, gender, ethnicity, economic status, environment in influencing human social interaction	71	74.6	8.5	16.9	98.1	1.9	57	91.2	5.3	3.5	94.7	5.1
3. Understanding/explaining/interpreting the ethical dimensions of human behaviors and the formation of social, cultural and/or religious values	71	71.8	11.3	16.9	96.2	3.8	56	85.7	8.9	5.4	94.9	5.1
GE Area: Knowledge of Historical Perspectives												
1. Understanding the history of human civilizations, societies and cultures and the human experience	75	64.0	21.3	14.7	90.0	10.0	57	77.2	19.3	3.5	91.9	8.1
2. Applying interpretations of human experience to past and present civilizations through the study of political, social, cultural, environmental, and intellectual issues	75	69.3	18.7	12.0	89.9	10.2	56	82.1	16.1	1.8	92.1	7.9
3. Situating primary historical records in their proper contexts and constructing historical arguments based on these contextualized historical records	74	63.5	24.3	12.2	86.0	14.0	56	78.6	17.9	3.5	86.5	13.5
GE Area: Knowledge of Fine Arts												
1. Describing the relationship of the fine arts to everyday life	73	53.4	31.5	15.1	78.0	22.0	56	53.6	35.7	10.7	75.7	24.3
2. Explaining social, historical, cultural, intellectual and/or ethical contexts works of creative expression	73	63.0	24.7	12.3	84.0	16.0	56	60.7	32.1	7.2	72.2	27.8

	Fall 2008						Fall 2009					
	Total	SA/A	n/a	D/SD	Yes	No	Total	SA/A	n/a	D/SD	Yes	No
GE Area: Knowledge of Fine Arts (Continued)												
3. Identifying the techniques and principles appropriate to the study of the fine arts	74	54.1	33.8	12.2	77.6	22.4	56	51.8	39.3	8.9	71.4	28.6
4. Identifying the creative process, its traditions and achievements	74	58.1	28.4	13.5	81.3	18.8	56	57.1	33.9	9.0	67.6	32.4
GE Area: ALAMEA												
1. Providing an analysis of historical or contemporary social, political, economic, environment, and/or cultural life in one of these regions	74	56.8	29.7	13.5	81.3	18.8	55	63.6	25.5	10.9	86.5	13.5
2. Identifying the contemporary connections between these regions related to global issues, themes, and/or conflicts	73	56.2	28.8	15.1	85.4	14.6	55	69.1	23.6	7.3	86.8	13.2
GE Area: Knowledge of Major Works and Issues												
1. Examining how culture, environment, race, gender, and/or values and ethics impact research and theories in a particular discipline	74	75.7	6.8	17.6	94.0	6.0	53	86.8	7.5	5.7	81.1	18.9
2. Critically analyzing the primary texts and major documents or works (including visual and musical) of a particular discipline	73	78.1	5.5	16.4	94.1	5.9	54	79.6	11.1	9.3	78.4	21.6
GE Area: Knowledge of Literature and Writing												
1. Identifying primary literature and crucial sources in a particular discipline	73	75.3	5.5	19.2	92.2	7.8	54	81.5	12.9	5.6	78.4	21.6
2. Organizing and evaluating primary and secondary sources into effective evidence for a cohesive analysis	73	75.3	5.5	19.2	96.1	3.9	53	81.1	11.3	7.6	78.4	21.6
3. Writing a well organized analysis of primary and secondary sources in a particular discipline	72	76.4	5.6	18.1	96.1	3.9	54	79.6	11.1	9.3	80.6	19.4