

## **Evaluation of J-Term 2014 Student Survey Summary Report**

### **Executive Summary**

As part of an evaluation of J-Term, a 32-item survey was sent to 954 students who participated in the 2014 J-Term. Usable surveys were received from 382 students for a response rate of 40%. Student respondents were asked a series of questions that addressed placement of course in curriculum, the J-Term process, the course experience, level of engagement, alignment with J-Term goals, comments on advantages and disadvantages, and recommendations.

Summary highlights from the survey include the following:

- Courses fulfilled a variety of curricular requirements including Areas of Inquiry (35%), majors (34%), electives (30%), and minors/concentrations (11%). There was a higher percentage of individuals taking courses in their major last year (43%) (Table 1).
- Students rated J-Term fair information and registration information positively. 19% of respondents disagreed that housing information was adequate and 15% disagreed that the J-Term website provided useful information (Table 2).
- Over three-quarters of students agreed that the experience provided an opportunity to take a course “I would not normally take” (Table 3).
- Respondents agreed that courses included meaningful discussions, encouraged students to work together, advanced learning, and challenged students (Table 4).
- On average, respondents agreed that their experience fit the goals for J-Term (Table 5).

New items to the instrument this year included:

- This course provided an intensive learning experience (81% agreed)
- This course provided an experiential learning opportunity (89% agreed)

- This course provided an integrative learning experience (88% agreed)
- The most common suggestions for improvement included expanding offerings, increasing the break between semesters, improving food service quality and hours, and enhancing communication (Figure 1).

### **Evaluation of J-Term Student Survey Summary Report**

The J-Term Oversight Committee developed an evaluation of J-Term 2014. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide useful information for decision making related to improving future J-Term experiences. To help answer the evaluation questions a survey of students was conducted. The following findings summarize results from the student survey.

#### **Methodology**

The J-Term Oversight Committee and Institutional Research and Assessment staff developed a survey instrument. A Qualtrics online survey was distributed to students who participated in J-Term 2014 via email. Out of 954 distributed surveys, 382 were returned for a return rate of 40%. The survey instrument asked a series of questions that addressed placement of course in curriculum, the J-Term process, the J-Term experience, level of engagement, alignment with J-Term goals, recommendations, and comments on advantages and disadvantages. Descriptive statistics were calculated including frequencies and means. Open-ended responses were reviewed and coded to generate overall themes.

#### **Results**

The most common curriculum placement for J-Term courses was to fulfill and Area of Inquiry (AOI) requirement, as a course in a students' major, or as an elective (see Table 1).

Table 1: Placement of J-Term Course in Curriculum

Please indicate the placement of this course in your curriculum (check all that apply)				
Item	2013		2014	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Course in my major	167	43%	131	34%
Course in my minor or concentration	48	12%	43	11%
Course fulfills an Area of Inquiry requirement	131	33%	135	35%
Course is an elective	101	26%	115	30%

Students provided positive feedback on the J-Term process. 72% agreed that the J-Term fair provided useful information. 77% of respondents agreed that they were provided with adequate information for registration. Fewer students (48%) agreed that they were provided with adequate information for housing. 52% of respondents agreed that the J-Term website provided useful information.

Table 2: Feedback on J-Term Process

Please provide feedback on the J-Term process.						
Item	% Strongly Disagree	% Disagree	% Neither Agree nor Disagree	% Agree	% Strongly Agree	Mean
J-Term fair provided useful information	2%	4%	22%	37%	35%	3.99
I was provided with adequate information for registration	2%	7%	14%	53%	24%	3.90
I was provided with adequate information for residence hall housing	7%	12%	33%	31%	17%	3.39
J-Term website provided useful information	3%	12%	34%	34%	18%	3.52

A majority of students agreed that the J-Term experience provided an opportunity to take a course they would not normally take (76%).

Table 3: Feedback on J-Term Experience

Please provide feedback on the J-Term experience						
Item	%	%	%	%	%	Mean

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Provided an opportunity to take a course I would not normally take	2%	9%	13%	31%	45%	4.09

Over 80% of all respondents agreed that courses included meaningful discussions, encouraged students to work together, advanced learning, and challenged students.

Table 4: Student Involvement and Engagement in Course

We want to learn more about student involvement and engagement in the course						
Item	% Strongly Disagree	% Disagree	% Neither Agree nor Disagree	% Agree	% Strongly Agree	Mean
Course included meaningful class discussions	1%	6%	4%	34%	55%	4.36
Course encouraged students to work together	1%	5%	7%	34%	53%	4.33
I have put a great deal of effort into advancing my learning in this course	1%	6%	11%	41%	42%	4.17
I have been challenged to learn more than I expected	1%	8%	11%	34%	47%	4.18
I am working up to my potential in this course		7%	9%	41%	42%	4.17

Students provided high ratings for items associated with the stated J-Term program level goals. Highest ratings included: good learning experience; provided an experiential learning opportunity; provided an integrative learning experience; improved ability to integrate skills and knowledge from different sources and experiences; and better understand that important issues rarely have one, simple solution.

Table 5: J-Term Student Goals

We want to learn more about your experience in the context of the goals for J-Term						
Item	% Strongly Disagree	% Disagree	% Neither Agree nor Disagree	% Agree	% Strongly Agree	Mean
This course included challenging intellectual and creative work	1%	5%	9%	41%	45%	4.23
This course promoted high levels of student achievement		6%	12%	40%	42%	4.19
I learned how to think about and solve problems through a combination of in and out-of-class experiences	1%	7%	12%	36%	44%	4.15
I better understand that important issues rarely have one, simple solution	1%	3%	9%	38%	49%	4.31
I worked to apply what I learned in different settings	1%	4%	12%	40%	43%	4.21
I collaborated with others to solve problems and master difficult material	3%	11%	11%	36%	39%	3.98
I improved my ability to use my educational experiences to analyze civic and global issues	2%	7%	15%	34%	43%	4.08

Table 5: J-Term Student Goals (Continued)

Item	% Strongly Disagree	% Disagree	% Neither Agree nor Disagree	% Agree	% Strongly Agree	Mean
I improved my ability to integrate skills and knowledge from different sources and experiences		2%	8%	45%	44%	4.32
This course helped me to synthesize, integrate, and apply knowledge	1%	2%	11%	39%	47%	4.29
This course provided an intensive learning experience	1%	5%	13%	35%	46%	4.21
This course provided an experiential learning opportunity	1%	3%	8%	34%	55%	4.38
This course provided an integrative learning experience	1%	2%	9%	38%	50%	4.36
My J-Term course was a good learning experience	1%	2%	4%	30%	63%	4.54
I would recommend taking a J-Term course to other students		1%	5%	24%	70%	4.61

Open-ended comments offer additional details about students' experiences. Many of the same themes from last year's participants were reflected in the comments on advantages and disadvantages of J-Term. The most common suggestions for improvement included expanding offerings, increasing the break between semesters, improving food service quality and hours, and enhancing communication.

Figure 1

Most Frequent Responses to Open-Ended Questions on the Student Survey

Question	Comment
Please share any comments about the advantages and disadvantages of taking a J-Term course (N = 156)	<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to earn credits, complete AOI, lighter schedule (n = 36)</li> <li>• Unique learning experience (n = 22)</li> <li>• Opportunity to travel (n = 20)</li> <li>• One class focus (n = 20)</li> </ul> <p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short break, rushed transition to spring semester (n = 23)</li> <li>• Fast pace, lack of time, stress, limited depth, intensive course, workload (n = 15)</li> <li>• Additional expenses – course, travel, housing, food (n = 6)</li> <li>• Campus environment – limited activities, resources (n = 6)</li> <li>• Short course limits full development of understanding (n = 5)</li> <li>• Food service – quality, variety, convenience, cost, hours (n = 4)</li> <li>• Seminar organization – poorly structured course (n = 2)</li> </ul>
Suggestions to improve Drake's J-Term (N = 98)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More offerings – number of courses, travel, AOI, experiential learning (n = 14)</li> <li>• Break before start of spring semester (n = 9)</li> <li>• Food service – quality, convenience, cost, <u>hours</u> (n = 9)</li> <li>• Communication – more information, process details, cost, housing, meal plans, course information at fair (n = 6)</li> <li>• Cost – housing, extra travel, additional costs, accessibility/support (n = 5)</li> <li>• Accessibility to services/buildings (n = 4)</li> <li>• More preparation for abroad experiences, improved communication and organization (n = 4)</li> <li>• Resources to make travel seminars affordable (n = 3)</li> <li>• Let first year students take courses (n = 3)</li> <li>• Balance available courses for all colleges/schools esp. CBPA, SJMC (n = 3)</li> <li>• Cap class size for specific courses (e.g., art) (n = 2)</li> <li>• Increase class size (n = 1)</li> </ul>