

Evaluation of J-Term Student Survey Summary Report

Executive Summary

As part of an evaluation of J-Term, a 26-item survey was sent to 688 students who participated in the 2013 J-Term. Usable surveys were received from 392 students for a response rate of 57%. 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 majors (43%), Areas of Inquiry (33%), electives (26%), and minors/concentrations (12%) (Table 1).
- Students rated J-Term fair information and registration information positively. 30% of respondents disagreed that housing information was adequate (Table 2).
- Over 90% of students agreed that the experience provided a unique opportunity (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).
- Most respondents would recommend J-Term because of the unique learning experience, opportunity to travel, benefits of taking one class at a time, benefits of getting credits in a shortened format or to fulfill an AOI, and the experiential learning opportunities (Figure 1).

- The most common suggestions for improvement included expanding offerings, improving food service, enhancing communication, considering housing needs and access, improving registration, and adding a break before spring semester (Figure 1).

Evaluation of J-Term Student Survey Summary Report

The J-Term Oversight Committee developed an evaluation of J-Term 2013. 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 2013 via email. Out of 688 distributed surveys, 392 were returned for a return rate of 57%. 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 in students' major (43%). One-third of J-Term courses were taken to fulfill an Area of Inquiry (AOI) requirement and over one-quarter were taken 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	Count	Percentage
Course in my major	167	43%
Course in my minor or concentration	48	12%
Course fulfills an Area of Inquiry requirement	131	33%
Course is an elective	101	26%

Students provided positive feedback on the J-Term process. 84% agreed that the J-Term fair provided useful information. Over 70% of respondents agreed that they were provided with adequate information for registration. Fewer students (42%) agreed that they were provided with adequate information for housing.

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%	3%	11%	43%	41%	4.17
I was provided with adequate information for registration	5%	12%	12%	48%	23%	3.74
I was provided with adequate information for housing	13%	17%	27%	27%	15%	3.15

A majority of students agreed that the J-Term experience provided a unique opportunity to learn (over 90%) and provided an opportunity to take a course they would not normally take (64%).

Table 3: Feedback on J-Term Experience

Please provide feedback on the J-Term experience						
Item	% Strongly Disagree	% Disagree	% Neither Agree nor Disagree	% Agree	% Strongly Agree	Mean
Provided a unique opportunity to learn in this course	2%	2%	5%	45%	46%	4.31
Provided an opportunity to take a course I would not normally take	5%	11%	20%	27%	37%	3.80

Over three-quarters 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	4%	5%	7%	37%	47%	4.18
Course encouraged students to work together	3%	5%	10%	22%	56%	4.29
I have put a great deal of effort into advancing my learning in this course	1%	4%	12%	39%	44%	4.20
I have been challenged to learn more than I expected	2%	7%	12%	35%	45%	4.14
I am working up to my potential in this course	2%	4%	12%	39%	43%	4.17

Students provided high ratings for items associated with the stated J-Term program level goals. Highest ratings included: good learning experience; promoted high levels of student achievement; helped me to synthesize, integrate, and apply knowledge; learned how to think about and solve problems through a combination of in and out-of-class experiences; and improved my ability to integrate skills and knowledge from different sources and experiences.

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	2%	4%	10%	42%	41%	4.17
This course promoted high levels of student achievement	1%	4%	9%	41%	45%	4.24
I learned how to think about and solve problems through a combination of in and out-of-class experiences	3%	5%	10%	34%	48%	4.21
I better understand that important issues rarely have one, simple solution	2%	4%	13%	34%	47%	4.18
I worked to apply what I learned in different settings	2%	6%	10%	37%	46%	4.19
I collaborated with others to solve problems and master difficult material	3%	6%	14%	35%	41%	4.10
I improved my ability to use my educational experiences to analyze civic and global issues	4%	6%	14%	35%	41%	4.05

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	3%	2%	10%	42%	43%	4.20
This course helped me to synthesize, integrate, and apply knowledge	2%	3%	8%	45%	42%	4.22
As a result of this experience, I plan to take another J-Term course	6%	6%	20%	26%	42%	3.90
My J-Term course was a good learning experience	2%	3%	5%	27%	63%	4.45

Open-ended comments offer additional details about students' experiences. Few students (n = 24) indicated that they would not recommend J-Term. The most common reason for not recommending J-Term include the accelerated pace, rigor, and stress. Others commented on the campus environment. Most respondents indicated that they would recommend J-Term to another student because of the unique learning experience, opportunity to travel, benefits of taking one class at a time, benefits of getting credits in a shortened format or to fulfill an AOI, and because of the experiential learning opportunities. Many of these same comments were reflected in the comments on advantages and disadvantages of J-Term. One additional theme for disadvantages was the short break before the start of the spring semester. The most common suggestions for improvement included expanding offerings, improving food service, enhancing communication, considering housing needs and access, improving registration, and adding a break before spring semester.

Figure 1

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

Question	Comment
Please give us some reasons you said you would not recommend J-Term to another student (N = 20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated pace, demanding rigor, stress (n = 5) • Campus environment - limited campus facilities and activities (recreation, food service hours, library) (n = 3) • Expensive housing (n = 2) • Poor food quality (n = 2) • Not worthwhile experience (n = 2) • Course specific complaints (n = 2)
Please give us some reasons you said you would recommend J-Term to another student (N = 279)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chance to take a unique course, course would not normally take, different learning experience (n = 22) • Opportunity to travel/study abroad (n = 18) • Beneficial to focus on one class at a time (n = 16) • Easy way to complete credit, get class out of the way, lighten semester load (n = 13) • Fulfill AOI (n = 7) • Experiential learning, practical application, learning outside classroom (n = 5)
Please share any comments about the advantages and disadvantages of taking a J-Term course (N = 231)	<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to earn credits, complete AOI, lighter schedule (n = 17) • Opportunity to travel (n = 11) • Unique learning experience (n = 8) • One class focus (n = 3) <p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast pace, lack of time, stress, limited depth, intensive course, workload (n = 25) • Food service – quality, variety, convenience, cost, hours (n = 10) • Short break, rushed transition to spring semester (n = 10) • Housing – difficult, cost, communication, doors locked (n = 10) • None (n = 6) • Campus environment – empty (n = 6) • Travel seminar organization and added travel expenses (n = 4) • Timing of commitment and production casting (n = 1)

<p>Suggestions to improve Drake's J-Term (N = 211)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More offerings – number of courses, travel, AOI, experiential learning (n = 31) • Food service – quality, convenience, cost, hours (n = 26) • Communication – earlier information, process details, cost, housing, meal plans, course information at fair (n = 22) • Housing – cost, access, information, temperature (n = 18) • Improve and streamline registration process (n = 18) • Break before start of spring semester (n = 15) • Equity in course rigor (n = 8) • Faculty organization – travel (n = 6) • More things open on campus (n = 5) • Cost – housing, extra travel, additional costs, accessibility/support (n = 4)
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