

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

As part of an evaluation of J-Term, a 15-item survey was sent to 1022 students who participated in the 2015 J-Term. Usable surveys were received from 455 students for a response rate of 45%. 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 (38%), Areas of Inquiry (34%), electives (29%), and minors/concentrations (15%) (Table 1).
- Students rated J-Term fair information and registration information positively. 30% of respondents agreed that housing information was adequate, which is up 11% from last year's findings. (Table 2).
- 69% of students agreed that the experience provided an opportunity to take a course they would not normally take. (Table 3).
- Respondents agreed that courses included meaningful discussions, encouraged students to work together, advanced learning, challenged students, and required them to work up to their potential.(Table 4).
- On average, respondents agreed that their experience fit the goals for J-Term (Table 5).
 - This course provided an intensive learning experience (90% agreed)

- This course provided an experiential learning opportunity (93% agreed)
- This course provided an integrative learning experience (90% agreed)
- New items were added to the instrument this year regarding the residence halls. Students who lived in the residence halls during J-Term agreed that the residence halls provided an opportunity to engage in programs/activities.(Table 6)
- Over 50% of students indicated that they planned to take another J-Term course.
(Table 7)
- 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 (Figure 1).
- The most common suggestions for improvement included expanding offerings, improving food service, enhance 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 Implementation Committee developed an evaluation of J-Term 2015. 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 Implementation Committee and Institutional Research and Assessment staff developed a survey instrument. A Qualtrics online survey was distributed to students who participated in J-Term 2015 via email. Out of 1022 distributed surveys, 455 were returned for a return rate of 45%. 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, comments on advantages and disadvantages, and residence halls programming and activities. Descriptive statistics was 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 (38%). 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	193	38%
Course in my minor or concentration	74	15%
Course fulfills an Area of Inquiry requirement	170	34%
Course is an elective	146	29%

Students provided positive feedback on the J-Term process. Of these students, 69% agreed that the J-Term fair provided useful information. This is 15% fewer than the 2013 J-Term survey report. Over 70% (76%) of respondents agreed that they were provided with adequate information for registration. 40% of students agreed that they were provided with adequate information on housing, 37% neither agreed nor disagreed. Less than 50% (48%) found the J-Term website to be useful.

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	Response	Mean
The J-Term fair provided useful information	4%	3%	25%	35%	34%	346	3.9
I was provided with adequate information for registration	4%	7%	13%	50%	26%	455	3.9
I was provided with adequate information on residence hall housing	10%	13%	37%	22%	18%	246	3.3
The J-Term website provided useful information	5%	9%	37%	32%	17%	353	3.5

On average, students agreed that the J-Term experience provided an opportunity to take a course they would not normally take (69%).

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	Response	Mean
J-Term provided an opportunity to take a course I would not normally take.	4%	13%	15%	27%	42%	484	3.9

Over three-quarters of all respondents agreed that courses included meaningful discussions, encouraged students to work together, advanced learning, challenged students, and that the courses required them to work up to their potential

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	Response	Mean
The J-Term course included meaningful class discussions	1%	5%	6%	33%	55%	426	4.3
The J-Term course encouraged students to work together	1%	7%	7%	27%	58%	430	4.3
I have put a great deal of effort into advancing my learning in this course	1%	4%	9%	37%	50%	451	4.3

I have been challenged to learn more than I expected	1%	3%	10%	34%	52%	449	4.3
I am working up to my potential in this course	1%	3%	8%	37%	51%	447	4.3

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; included challenging, intellectual and creative work; 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. The majority of students would recommend taking a J-Term course to other students. (93%)

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	Response	Mean
This course provided an intensive learning experience	0%	3%	7%	38%	52%	452	4.3
This course included challenging intellectual and creative work	0%	3%	6%	41%	50%	449	4.3
This course promoted high levels of student achievement	0%	3%	9%	41%	46%	452	4.3
This course provided an experiential learning opportunity	0%	3%	4%	33%	60%	435	4.4

I learned how to think about and solve problems through a combination of in and out-of-class experiences	0%	6%	10%	33%	50%	432	4.2
I collaborated with others to solve problems and master difficult material	2%	9%	9%	38%	42%	427	4.0
I improved my ability to integrate skills and knowledge from different sources and experiences	0%	2%	7%	42%	48%	444	4.3
This course provided an integrative learning experience	0%	2%	7%	39%	51%	445	4.3
This course helped me to synthesize, integrate, and apply knowledge	0%	2%	7%	40%	50%	445	4.3
I better understand that important issues rarely have one, simple solution	1%	4%	6%	36%	53%	432	4.3
I worked to apply what I learned in different settings	0%	6%	9%	38%	46%	438	4.2
I improved my ability to use my educational experiences to analyze civic and global issues	2%	6%	13%	34%	45%	416	4.1
My J-Term course was a good learning experience	0%	1%	3%	30%	65%	448	4.5
I would recommend taking a J-Term course to other students	1%	1%	6%	24%	69%	446	4.6

This year questions regarding the Residence Halls were added to the J-Term survey.

Seventy-six out of the 455 students who participated in the survey lived in the residence halls during J-Term. On average, students felt the residence halls provided an opportunity to engage

in hall programs and activities(65%) and over half of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the programming offered by the residence halls. (56%) (Table 6)

Table 6. Residence Halls Programming/Activities

Please indicate your level of agreement regarding programming and activities in the residence halls							
Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Response	Mean
The residence halls provided me an opportunity to engage in hall programs/activities.	4%	5%	26%	46%	18%	76	3.7
I am satisfied with the residence hall programming offered.	3%	11%	30%	36%	21%	76	3.6

As a result of their J-Term experience, over 50% of students indicated that they plan to take another J-Term course. When asked about the difficulty level of transitioning from J-Term to Spring semester, 36% said that it was difficult, 37% said it was not difficult, and 21% neither agreed nor disagreed. (Table7)

Table 7. Additional Questions

Please indicate your level of agreement								
Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does not apply	Response	Mean
As a result of this experience, I plan to take another J-Term course	2%	4%	11%	23%	32%	29%	455	4.6
The transition from J-Term to Spring semester is difficult	10%	27%	21%	23%	13%	6%	455	3.2

Open-ended comments offer additional details about students' experiences. Feedback about the J-Term process indicated that students would recommend better communication regarding J-Term, including earlier information, process details, registration, and website (n=28). Most respondents indicated that they felt they met the goals of 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 (n=43). 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, adding a break before spring semester, improving food service hours and options, enhancing communication, considering housing needs and access, and having more buildings open on campus.

Figure 1

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

Question	Comment
Please share any feedback about the J-Term process. (N = 138)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication – earlier information, process details, registration, website (n = 28) • Accelerated pace, demanding rigor, stress (n = 13) • Campus environment - limited campus facilities and activities - recreation, food service hours, library (n = 12) • Housing - communication, costs (n = 11) • Cost - billing (n = 10)
One goal of J-Term is to provide intensive, experiential, or integrative learning experiences for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chance to take a unique course, course would not normally take, different learning experience (n = 43) • Experiential learning, practical application, learning outside the classroom (n = 17)

<p>students. Please comment on your experiences in relation to this goal. (N = 204)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to travel/study abroad (n = 7) • Easy way to complete credit, get class out of the way, lighten semester load (n = 5) • Fulfill AOI (n = 4) • Beneficial to focus on one class at a time (n = 4)
<p>Please share any comments about the advantages and disadvantages of taking a J-Term course (N = 169)</p>	<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to earn credits, complete AOI, lighter schedule (n = 19) • Unique learning experience (n = 16) • Opportunity to travel (n = 13) • One class focus (n = 13) • No additional tuition (n=7) <p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short break, rushed transition to spring semester (n = 21) • Fast pace, lack of time, intensive course, workload (n = 17) • Cost – billing (n=10) • Food service – quality, variety, convenience, cost, hours (n = 5) • Housing – difficult, cost, communication, doors locked (n = 3) • Campus environment – empty (n = 2)
<p>Suggestions to improve Drake's J-Term (N = 128)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More offerings – number of courses, travel, AOI, experiential learning (n = 22) • Break before start of spring semester (n = 22) • Communication – process details, cost, housing, meal plans, course information (n = 22) • Housing – cost, access, information, temperature (n = 18) • Food service – quality, convenience, cost, hours (n = 16) • Cost – housing, extra travel, additional costs, billing system, accessibility/support (n = 11) • More things open on campus (n = 7) • Courses – assignments do not extend into Spring, better course descriptions (n=5) • Equity in course rigor (n = 3)