



**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST. PETERSBURG**

**Graduating Senior Survey**

# Preliminary Findings – Summary of Questions Relating to General Education Student Success Survey Administered to Fall 08 Graduates Total Response (N=209)

## Executive Summary

The Graduating Senior Survey is a locally developed instrument that is administered to students that apply and are eligible to graduate each semester. This annual general purpose survey addresses numerous areas of concern to the university. As part of the continuous improvement of this survey, a bank of questions relating to USF St. Petersburg's General Education program was added to the survey in fall 2008. This particular bank of questions was segmented to students that earned degrees from the College of Arts and Sciences. The number of respondents to the fall 2008 survey totaled 209. The average number of responses to the general education area questions was 75.

Students were asked to rate their skills in the various areas of general education as well as to indicate if these skills were important to their future careers or education.

Findings from the Graduating Seniors Survey suggest that the majority of students rate as strongly their abilities in communication skills (86.3%-91.8%) and to a lesser extent their abilities in social sciences (70.8%-74.6%), major works and issues (75.7%-78.1%), and literature and writing (75.3%-76.4%). And between one-quarter and one-third of students rated their skills strongly in natural science (29.7%-35.1%), fine arts (24.7%-33.8%), and ALAMEA (28.8%-29.7%).

## Findings

Please refer to Table 1 below for summary information on responses.

On ***ability to communicate***, the majority of students (86.3% - 91.8%) indicated they had skills in this area of general education and noted that these skills were important to their future careers or education.

In terms of ***quantitative skills***, findings suggest that while the majority of students rate as strongly their abilities in "applied skills" (94.6%); between thirty and forty percent of respondents indicated that USF St. Petersburg had contributed very little to their development in the area of "representing information" or "using mathematical reasoning in problem-solving."

One-third of students indicated that USF St. Petersburg had contributed very little to their development in the area of ***natural sciences***. However, the majority of respondents indicated that these skills were important to their future careers or education.

In the area of ***social science***, close to one-half of students (46.5%-51.0%) indicated that USF St. Petersburg had contributed favorably to their development in the area of general education; but

the majority indicated these skills were important to their future careers or education.

On *knowledge of historical perspectives*, findings show that the majority of students (64.0%-69.3%) rate their abilities strongly in the area of historical perspectives; and the majority of students (86.0%-90.0%) indicate these skills are important to their future careers or education.

On *knowledge of fine arts*, findings show that the majority of students (53.4%-63.0%) rate their abilities strongly in the area of fine arts; and the majority of students (86.0%-90.0%) indicate these skills are important to their future careers or education.

On *ALAMEA*, approximately one-half of students (56.2%-56.8%) indicated they had skills in this area of general education and the majority noted that these skills were important to their future careers or education.

On *Major Works and Major Issues*, the majority of students (75.7%-78.1%) indicated they had skills in this area of general education and noted that these skills were important to their future careers or education.

In the area of *Literature and Writing*, the majority of students (75.3%-76.4%) indicated they had skills in this area of general education and noted that these skills were important to their future careers or education.

Table 1  
 Survey Items Relating to General Education – Percent Responses

For the following set of questions, please think about your general education courses.

1. On a scale of Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD)... Rate your skills in each area.
2. Indicate Yes or No if you believe these skills are important to your future career or education

<b>Q34 Ability to Communicate</b>	<b>Rate Your Skill-level</b>			<b>Importance</b>	
	<b>SA/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D/SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Making appropriate communication choices by focusing on Audience and purpose	86.3	8.2	5.5	90.6	9.4
Applying appropriate form and content in oral, digital, written and visual communication	91.8	5.5	2.7	94.1	5.9
By applying basic principles of critical thinking, problem-solving, and technical proficiency in the development and documentation of oral, digital, written and visual communication	86.3	8.2	5.5	98.0	2.0
<b>Q35 Quantitative Skills</b>	<b>SA/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D/SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Applying arithmetic, algebra, geometry and statistics to solve problems in a wide range of disciplines	94.6	4.1	1.4	75.5	24.5
Representing and evaluating basic quantitative information numerically, graphically, and symbolically	52.7	35.1	12.2	79.2	20.8
Using Mathematical and logical reasoning to create and evaluate the validity of arguments and solve problems in a wide range of disciplines	50.7	34.7	14.7	78.0	22.0
<b>Q36 Knowledge of Natural Sciences</b>	<b>SA/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D/SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Understanding and practicing the scientific method of inquiry	52.7	29.7	17.6	84.3	15.7
Representing and evaluating basic quantitative information numerically, graphically, and symbolically	52.7	35.1	12.2	78.0	22.0
Describing how natural science research informs societal issues, including ethics	51.4	32.4	16.2	86.0	14.0
<b>Q37 Knowledge of Social Sciences</b>	<b>SA/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D/SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Demonstrating the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social scientists use to investigate the human condition and the nature of social organization	70.8	12.5	16.7	94.3	5.7
Understanding the roles by race, age, gender, ethnicity, economic status, environment in influencing human social interaction	74.6	8.5	16.9	98.1	1.9
Understanding/explaining/interpreting the ethical dimensions of Human behaviors and the formation of social, cultural and/or religious values	71.8	11.3	16.9	96.2	3.8
<b>Q38 Knowledge of Historical Perspectives</b>	<b>SA/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D/SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Understanding the history of human civilizations, societies and cultures and the human experience	64.0	21.3	14.7	90.0	10.0

<b>Q38 Knowledge of Historical Perspectives (Continued)</b>	<b>SA/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D/SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Applying interpretations of human experience to past and present civilizations through the study of political, social, cultural, environmental, and intellectual issues	69.3	18.7	12.0	89.8	10.2
Situating primary historical records in their proper contexts and constructing historical arguments based on these contextualized historical records	63.5	24.3	12.2	86.0	14.0
<b>Q39 Knowledge of Fine Arts</b>	<b>SA/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D/SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Describing the relationship of the fine arts to everyday life	53.4	31.5	15.1	78.0	22.0
Explaining social, historical, cultural, intellectual and/or ethical contexts works of creative expression	63.0	24.7	12.3	84.0	16.0
Identifying the techniques and principles appropriate to the study of the fine arts	54.1	33.8	12.2	77.6	22.4
Identifying the creative process, its traditions and achievements	58.1	28.4	13.5	81.3	18.8
<b>Q40 ALAMEA</b>	<b>SA/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D/SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Providing an analysis of historical or contemporary social, political, economic, environment, and/or cultural life in one of these regions	56.8	29.7	13.5	81.3	18.8
Identifying the contemporary connections between these regions related to global issues, themes, and/or conflicts	56.2	28.8	15.1	85.4	14.6
<b>Q41 Major Works and Major Issues</b>	<b>SA/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D/SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Examining how culture, environment, race, gender, and/or values and ethics impact research and theories in a particular discipline	75.7	6.8	17.6	94.0	6.0
Critically analyzing the primary texts and major documents or works (including visual and musical) of a particular discipline	78.1	5.5	16.4	94.1	5.9
<b>Q42 Literature and Writing</b>	<b>SA/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D/SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Identifying primary literature and crucial sources in a particular discipline	75.3	5.5	19.2	92.2	7.8
Organizing and evaluating primary and secondary sources into effective evidence for a cohesive analysis	75.3	5.5	19.2	96.1	3.9
Writing a well organized analysis of primary and secondary sources in a particular discipline	76.4	5.6	18.1	96.1	3.9

Note: Response categories coded as SA/ A; N/A; or D/SD.

Actions Taken:

This information was forwarded to the GE Committees for use by the GE Taskforces.

Appendix 1 includes detail for all response categories.

Appendix 1

Detail: Number and Percent Responses for All Response Categories

For the following set of questions, please think about your general education courses.

1. On a scale of Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD)... Rate your skills in each area.
2. Indicate Yes or No if you believe these skills are important to your future career or education

<b>Q34 Ability to Communicate</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Making appropriate communication choices by focusing on Audience and purpose	20 27.4%	43 58.9%	6 8.2%	4 5.5%	0 0.0%	48 90.6%	5 9.4%
Applying appropriate form and content in oral, digital, written and visual communication	25 34.2%	42 57.5%	4 5.5%	2 2.7%	0 0.0%	48 94.1%	3 5.9%
By applying basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving, and technical proficiency in the development and document of oral, digital, written and visual communication	20 27.4%	43 58.9%	6 8.2%	4 5.5%	0 0.0%	49 98.0%	1 2.0%
<b>Q35 Quantitative Skills</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Applying arithmetic, algebra, geometry and statistics to solve problems in a wide range of disciplines	29 39.2%	41 55.4%	3 4.1%	1 1.4%	0 0.0%	37 75.5%	12 24.5%
Representing and evaluating basic quantitative information numerically, graphically, and symbolically	11 14.9%	28 37.8%	26 35.1%	8 10.8%	1 1.4%	38 79.2%	10 20.8%
Using Mathematical and logical reasoning to create and evaluate the validity of arguments and solve problems in a wide range of disciplines	10 13.3%	28 37.3%	26 34.7%	9 12.0%	2 2.7%	39 78.0%	11 22.0%
<b>Q36 Knowledge of Natural Sciences</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Understanding and practicing the scientific method of inquiry	13 17.6%	26 35.1%	22 29.7%	9 12.2%	4 5.4%	43 84.3%	8 15.7%
Representing and evaluating basic quantitative information numerically, graphically, and symbolically	11 14.6%	28 37.8%	26 35.1%	8 10.8%	1 1.4%	39 78.0%	11 22.0%
Describing how natural science research informs societal issues, including ethics	13 17.6%	25 33.8%	24 32.4%	8 10.8%	4 5.4%	43 86.0%	7 14.0%
<b>Q37 Knowledge of Social Sciences</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Demonstrating the appropriate methods, technologies; and data that social scientists use to investigate the human condition and the nature of social organization	25 34.7%	26 36.1%	9 12.5%	5 6.9%	7 9.7%	50 94.3%	3 5.7%
Understanding roles by race, age, gender, ethnicity, economic status, environment in influencing human social interaction	27 38.0%	26 36.6%	6 8.5%	5 7.0%	7 9.9%	52 98.1%	1 1.9%
Understanding/explaining/interpreting the ethical dimensions of human behaviors and the formation of social, cultural and/or religious values	28 39.4%	23 32.4%	8 11.3%	5 7.0%	7 9.9%	50 96.2%	2 3.8%
<b>Q38 Knowledge of Historical Perspectives</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Understanding the history of human civilizations, societies and cultures and the human experience	26 34.7%	22 29.3%	16 21.3%	9 12.0%	2 2.7%	45 90.0%	5 10.0%
Applying interpretations of human experience to past and present civilizations through the study of political, social; cultural, environmental, and intellectual issues	25 33.3%	27 36.0%	14 18.7%	7 9.3%	2 2.7%	44 89.8%	5 10.2%
Situating primary historical records in their proper contexts and constructing historical arguments based on these contextualized historical records	24 32.4%	23 31.1%	18 24.3%	7 9.5%	2 2.7%	43 86.0%	7 14.0%

<b>Q39 Knowledge of Fine Arts</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Describing the relationship of the fine arts to everyday life	18 24.7%	21 28.8%	23 31.5%	9 12.3%	2 2.7%	39 78.0%	11 22.0%
Explaining social, historical, cultural, intellectual and/or ethical contexts works of creative expression	19 26.0%	27 37.0%	18 24.7%	8 11.0%	1 1.4%	42 84.0%	8 16.0%
Identifying the techniques and principles appropriate to the study of the fine arts	17 23.0%	23 31.1%	25 33.8%	8 10.8%	1 1.4%	38 77.6%	11 22.4%
Identifying the creative process, its traditions and achievements	17 23.0%	26 35.1%	21 28.4%	9 12.2%	1 1.4%	39 81.3%	9 18.8%
<b>Q40 ALAMEA</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Providing an analysis of historical or contemporary social, political, economic, environment, and/or cultural life in one of these regions	16 21.6%	26 35.1%	22 29.7%	8 10.8%	2 2.7%	39 81.3%	9 18.8%
Identifying the contemporary connections between these regions related to global issues, themes, and/or conflicts	17 23.3%	24 32.9%	21 28.8%	9 12.3%	2 2.7%	41 85.4%	7 14.6%
<b>Q41 Major Works and Major Issues</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Examining how culture, environment, race, gender, and/or values and ethics impact research and theories in a particular discipline	26 35.1%	30 40.5%	5 6.8%	10 13.5%	3 4.1%	47 94.0%	3 6.0%
Critically analyzing the primary texts and major documents or works (including visual and musical) of a particular discipline	24 32.9%	33 45.2%	4 5.5%	9 12.3%	3 4.1%	48 94.1%	3 5.9%
<b>Q42 Literature and Writing</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Identifying primary literature and crucial sources in a particular discipline	23 31.5%	32 43.8%	4 5.5%	11 15.1%	3 4.1%	47 92.2%	4 7.8%
Organizing and evaluating primary and secondary sources into effective evidence for a cohesive analysis	23 31.5%	32 43.8%	4 5.5%	11 15.1%	3 4.1%	49 96.1%	2 3.9%
Writing a well organized analysis of primary and secondary sources in a particular discipline	24 33.3%	31 43.1%	4 5.6%	10 13.9%	3 4.2%	49 96.1%	2 3.9%