

# Campus Student Conversation about General Education and Choosing Major

Notes

Feb. 22, 2018

Recital Hall

Note taker: Dana Wassmer

## Introduction:

- We are here today to include student voices and experiences in discussions with your college's leaders about how the college can better serve students.
- Figuring out which courses to take can be confusing. CRC wants to change the way it recommends courses to students so that you can save time and save money. The college already lets you know what courses you need to take to complete a major. Now, the college needs a process to let you know which specific General Education (GE) courses you should consider given your major.
- It also seems like a good idea to understand how you currently choose your major. This is your chance to let the college know how you make your choices and what your values and interests are in making those choices.

## Question 1: What is General Education (GE)?

- The broad area covers a wide variety of courses for multiple majors.
- Students get a wide variety of courses; provides you with very general knowledge that people should know for their career/job.
- Institute of higher learning; GE is the building blocks of higher education.
- GE what you have done in high school repeated here.
  - GE is what holds students back and leads to decreased graduation rates.
- GE gives the basis for lifelong education; preparation for a job; is the basis for real life/job.
  - It can hold some people back because students have different [level of] understanding.
- GE is the basic foundation/necessity for everyday life (e.g., Math, English).
- [Some] GE is a big waste of time (e.g., HIST is outdated and not relevant to today's issues) but can also open [your] mind/perspective.
  - Is influenced by [students' own] interest [or disinterest on the subject matter], strict teachers and that may lead to failing/dropping out of the course.
- GE allows us to explore different fields.
- GE helps you be an informed citizen.
- Learning how to write; which makes the rest of the curriculum easier (even Math).

## Question 2: How many of you would prefer to have a lot of different GE course options rather than just a few?

- [Observed] the vast majority of students preferred more options while only a few don't care.
- Let teachers be more open to different teaching methods to make learning/passing easier.
- Offer more GE courses that are more specific/related to the major.

### Question 3: With which student do you identify more, Student A or Student B?

#### Student A

**A1:** I want to get a good paying job as soon as I can.

**A2:** I don't want to spend any more time or money getting my college degree than I absolutely have to.

**A3:** I want to take courses in the subject that interests me most and avoid taking courses in other subjects as much as possible.

#### Student B

**B1:** I want to learn things while I'm at college that help me better understand myself and the world around me.

**B2:** I want to take the opportunity while I'm at college to study things I didn't realize were even an option before I came to college.

**B3:** I want to leave college able to easily make the transition from one job to another in case my initial career plans don't work out.

- More students identified with Student A vs. B.
- Only 1 student (out of 150?) did NOT identify at all with Student A.
- Only 3 students did NOT identify at all with student B.
- 10-15% identified most with characteristic A1.
- ~30% identified with A2
- ~10% identified with A3.
- ~5-6% identified with student B1.
- ~3% identified with student B2.
- ~4% identified with student B3.
- ~15% identified with BOTH student A and B.
  - NOTE: some voted more than once.
- When I started school, I was Student B. Now that I am older, I am Student A. I do not have the time & money [to be Student B]; it's crunch time for me.
- It can be frustrating; I can understand being "grounded/well-rounded" but at a certain point, I just need skills (to get a job).
- I wish GE could be toned-down or be more related to my major/interest.
- I feel the opposite [to crunch time comment]; people are communicating primarily through social media/technology and therefore it is more important to have [face-to-face] interactions with each other.
- GE should be wide in variety but once you have your major, you can focus on that.
- Scheduling is the most important factor in my selection of GE.
  - I work from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.; I had to extend my schooling extra 2 semesters because I could not get the needed courses; it made me want to drop out.
  - ~30% of the audience expressed that scheduling is an issue for them.

**Question 4: How Many Prefer to Take GE Courses That are Related to Your Major?**

- Majority (~70%) said they preferred to take GE courses that are related to their major.
- Only a handful (<5%) said they preferred to take GE courses outside/unrelated to their major.

**Question 5: How Do You Choose Your GE Courses Now?**

- I look at the GE sheet and find the ones that are most similar to what I want to major in.
  - Scheduling is an issue (make sure the course times do not conflict; make sure the time does not conflict with work schedule; make sure I have other time available for other obligations/responsibilities).
- My goal is to transfer.
  - I choose courses that would overlap with the GE & transfer.
  - The more GE, the more opportunities to branch out and get a minor.
- I want to transfer to Sac State
  - I want classes within my major but also want to take classes outside my major (e.g. music performance)—however, some are not transferable.
  - Increase the variety [and breadth] of transferable courses.
- I want to take GE that is similar to my major.
  - Time is money. I want to finish my education in the shortest [amount of] time. But if I do not know what my major is, it will take more time.
  - I would like to see more marketing or events that show what classes are doing before I take them. Otherwise you have to take a whole class just to figure out something's not right for you.
- ~60% say they know/have identified their major.
- 5% say they are 'kind of' sure of their major.
- 2% say they do not know what major they want [yet].

**Question 6: How Did You Choose Your Major?**

- I took a bunch of classes and choose the major based on what I have taken.
  - [6 (4% of the) people say they related to this comment]
- 25 people (~17%) said they knew their major when they came to CRC.
- My previous counselors were not helpful, but here [at CRC], a counselor had me take the Myer-Briggs test that showed me a bunch of different [career] areas [and salary potential] and we figured out the requirements needed for that major/career. The most helpful part was getting a list of career options, when I didn't even know most of them existed.