

Report of the Results of the Fall 2008
BGeX Faculty Member, Peer Facilitator, and Student
Introduction Weekend Feedback Surveys



Office of Institutional Research

November 2008

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

As part of a comprehensive effort to collect information about the BGeXperience (BGeX) Program, the BGeX Assessment Advisory Committee slightly modified the student feedback survey about the weekend introduction that was used in 2005 and 2006. This survey was administered in optically-scannable printed format to students during the final session of the 2008 BGeX Introduction on Sunday, August 24, 2008. 2,387 survey responses were obtained from students, indicating a 75% response rate, which was comparable to that of prior years. A web-based survey about the introduction weekend was also developed for faculty members and peer facilitators, which included some of the same items that appeared in the student survey and also contained some items asking participants to compare this year's students with those of past cohorts according to several characteristics. As with the student survey, both multiple-choice and open-ended items were included. 80 faculty members and 86 peer facilitators provided responses to the survey, which resulted in response rates of 67% and 64%, respectively. Multiple-choice items were analyzed by noting frequencies on all items. Responses on the items that compared this year's and previous year's programs and students were only analyzed for faculty members and peer facilitators who had participated in BGeX previously. Open-ended responses were analyzed by categorization into themes. All analyses were carried out by the Office of Institutional Research except students' open-ended responses, which were thematized by the BGeX program staff members. The Fall 2008 survey results for all three groups were compared for similar items to results from Fall 2005 and 2006 surveys.

RESULTS

Faculty Members and Peer Facilitators

As noted on the next page, larger percentages of faculty participants gave responses of "much less so than last year" or "less so than last year" to all of the survey items about the introduction weekend than gave responses of "much more so than last year" or "more so than last year." This pattern was reversed for peer facilitators, who gave a more positive response to all items about this year's program except for one: students' developing an understanding of what is expected of them as students at BGSU, about which a higher percentage of peer facilitators felt last year's program more effectively accomplished.

How would you compare this year's BGeX weekend introduction to that of previous years in terms of the following?

	“much more so than last year” or “more so than last year”		“much less so than last year” or “less so than last year”	
	Faculty Members 2008	Peer Facilitators 2008	Faculty Members 2008	Peer Facilitators 2008
students’ engagement in group activities	15%	27%	25%	20%
students’ developing an understanding of what is expected of them as students at BGSU	10%	15%	39%	21%
my development of relationships with students	14%	49%	49%	12%
students’ development of relationships with each other	15%	42%	47%	9%
students’ comfort in discussing ideas that were important to them	22%	42%	41%	15%
students’ ability to begin to reflect on values and value conflicts	19%	27%	32%	12%
students’ ability to begin to clarify their thinking about their own values	21%	30%	34%	15%

Open-Ended Comments

Faculty members and peer facilitators responded to two open-ended items about the introduction program, as noted on the next page.

Please provide any additional feedback on how this fall's BGeX weekend introduction compared to that of previous years.

Twenty-six faculty members provided responses to this item. Ten of these concerned the feeling that the abbreviated Introduction did not provide enough time for the program to accomplish its objectives. An additional seven negative responses concerned the perception that the program was disorganized; several of these related to the complaints over the shortened time period. Three participants stated that it was too early in the semester to provide useful feedback. The remaining six responses concerned the lack of need for experienced BGeX faculty members to repeat the training, a positive comment about Campus Fest, concern over lack of time to discuss the common reading, and other generally positive responses.

The fifteen responses to this prompt from peer facilitators clustered into seven comments concerning problems related to the shorter time period, three positive responses (two of which referenced the benefit of the shorter session), three negative responses that concerned students' interests and energy levels (with reference to problems associated with the abbreviated schedule), one negative reaction to lack of time devoted to a discussion of the common reading, and one comment that was specific to the course and faculty member.

Please provide any recommendations on how the BGeX weekend could be improved in the future.

Thirty-three faculty members provided recommendations. Three of these were specifically about returning to the earlier multi-day schedule, and an additional 15 were related to organizational problems related to the compressed time schedule for the one-day program. Five faculty members recommended providing time for discussion of the common reading. Three recommendations were to retain the one-day schedule. Two recommended that faculty members be included in the first meeting with students and the peer facilitator. One comment concerned lack of additional compensation for faculty members, and another concerned general organizational problems. One faculty member commented that supporting materials needed to be changed to better reflect the activities of the one-day session. One person said that veteran BGeX faculty members should not be required to undergo the same training. One commented that feedback information about the Introduction should be obtained from students.

Peer facilitators provided 27 recommendations/comments. As with the faculty members, seven of these were explicitly about not having enough time in the abbreviated session, and an additional twelve comments concerned difficulties with the compressed time schedule that could be related to the schedule change. Three of the peer facilitators opined that having resident advisors join the initial meeting of students and peer facilitators was not useful. The additional five comments covered a variety of issues, including other activities and the common reading, which are consistent with information provided by students.

As noted below, faculty members tended to give very positive responses about the introduction program in previous years, underscoring the seriousness of their less positive reactions concerning this year's BGeX introduction.

	“strongly agree” or “agree”		“strongly disagree” or “disagree”	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
The students in my group were active participants.	99%	97%	1%	3%
As a result of the Introduction, the students in my group gained an understanding of what will be expected of them as BGSU students.	77%	81%	12%	10%
The students in my group critically reflected on values and value conflicts at a satisfactory level.	84%	86%	14%	8%
I believe the relationship I developed with students during the Introduction will carry over to my BGeX class, helping create an environment that is conducive to learning.	94%	86%	2%	10%
	“positive” or “very positive”		“negative” or “very negative”	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
Overall, my experience with the BGeX Introduction has been . . .	80%	65%	6%	13%

As shown below, peer facilitators' evaluations of the BGeX Introduction in previous years were also very positive. Since the plurality of their responses about this year's program indicated that it was neither better nor worse than previous year's introductions, it can be concluded that peer facilitators feedback about this year's session was also positive.

	“strongly agree” or “agree”		“strongly disagree” or “disagree”	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
The students in my group were active participants.	95%	96%	5%	2%
As a result of the Introduction, the students in my group gained an understanding of what will be expected of them as BGSU students.	85%	89%	7%	9%
The students in my group critically reflected on values and value conflicts at a satisfactory level.	76%	74%	24%	17%
I believe the relationship I developed with students during the Introduction will carry over to my BGeX class, helping create an environment that is conducive to learning.	92%	91%	7%	4%
	“positive” or “very positive”		“negative” or “very negative”	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
Overall, my experience with the BGeX Introduction has been . . .	78%	81%	5%	0%

Faculty members and peer facilitators were also asked to compare this year’s BGeX students with those of previous cohorts in terms of preparation and engagement. The plurality of both groups indicated that this year’s students are more engaged, and larger percentages indicated that students were better prepared this year rather than less well prepared.

As I compare this year’s first-year students in my BGeX class with other first-year students with whom I have worked in the past 2-3 years, this year’s students seem . . .

	“strongly agree” or “agree”		“strongly disagree” or “disagree”	
	Faculty Members 2008	Peer Facilitators 2008	Faculty Members 2008	Peer Facilitators 2008
better prepared academically	25%	24%	12%	15%
better prepared for each class	24%	39%	9%	18%
more engaged	48%	61%	13%	24%
more likely to participate in discussions	48%	63%	13%	12%
more likely to use their time effectively	12%	36%	9%	12%

Open-Ended Comments

Please provide any additional feedback on how this fall’s first-year students compare to other first-year students with whom you have worked in the past 2-3 years.

Twenty-seven faculty members provided comments. Six noted that it was too early in the semester to provide useful feedback. Six stated that the Fall 2008 students were similar to those in past cohorts. Five noted that students were better/easier to work with than in past years. Two faculty members commented that students were less motivated/engaged than in past years. Five comments were made in relation to specific disciplines/classes taught. The remaining three comments concerned student diversity, student preparedness (it was unclear if the person making the comment was saying that this year’s students were more or less prepared), and the negative consequences of the abbreviated schedule.

Nineteen comments were provided by peer facilitators. Seven indicated that this year’s students are more engaged/motivated/excited. Six noted that this year’s students are less mature/engaged/enthusiastic than students in previous years. Two peer facilitators stated that it was too early to tell about this year’s students. One provided mixed positive and negative comments about this year’s students. One commented about the particular class that she was working with. Another opined that the students were tired after the very full day of activities required by the abbreviated schedule.

Students

Students, as in past years, provided positive feedback about the introduction session.

	“strongly agree” or “agree”			“strongly disagree” or “disagree”		
	2005	2006	2008	2005	2006	2008
I was an active participant in my group.	63%	71%	61%	7%	4%	5%
Involvement in the Introduction facilitated my understanding of what will be expected of me as a BGSU student.	66%	71%	79%	8%	6%	4%
The relationships I developed with other students in my group was beneficial.	73%	78%	73%	4%	3%	4%

	“strongly agree” or “agree”			“strongly disagree” or “disagree”		
	2005	2006	2008	2005	2006	2008
Involvement with my Introduction group helped me to feel comfortable discussing issues that were important to me.	55%	58%	65%	8%	8%	6%
The BGeX Introduction has helped me to critically reflect on values and value conflicts.	47%	48%	65%	16%	15%	7%
The BGeX Introduction experience has clarified my thinking about my own values.	40%	37%	58%	20%	22%	11%
I expect the BGeX Introduction experience to influence my future actions as a student at BGSU.	40%	42%	60%	21%	20%	10%
	“very positive” or “positive”			“very negative” or “negative”		
	2005	2006	2008	2005	2006	2008
My overall experience with the BGeX Introduction has been . . .	71%	73%	70%	5%	5%	13%

Open-Ended Comments

Students were asked to respond to the question: *In what 3 ways do you believe the BGeX Introduction has most influenced you?* using three prompts of *As a result of my involvement in the BGeX Introduction, I ...* 6,008 total responses were received for the Fall 2008 survey and were classified as followed by the BGeX staff:

1,765 – responded that they felt more comfortable after the Introduction, understood what was expected of them, were better prepared for class, felt more confident and less afraid or nervous

1,677 – responded to the values discussion, diversity on campus, viewpoints, understood better who they were and why they were making specific choices, had more tolerance for others

1,535 – responded about meeting new friends, their BGeX professor and peer facilitator, and knowing where to go for help if they need it, felt closer to their classmates

433 – responded that they felt more familiar with campus and the Bowling Green community, learned where their classrooms were, gained a sense of community, acclimated to the dorm lifestyle

327 – responded with general positive comments (e.g., “looking forward to the class” , “learned a lot”)

200 – responded about getting involved in groups, that they learned about various campus organizations and understood more about balance between clubs and academics

95 – responded with general negative comments (e.g., “I am bored”, “it was a waste of time”)

These responses were similar to those generated from the same questions by students in Fall 2005 and 2006.

CONCLUSIONS

Faculty members who responded to the survey were generally less positive about the Fall 2008 BGeX introduction program, compared to that of previous years, while the reverse was generally true for peer facilitators. For both groups, open-ended comments focused upon (mostly) negative consequences of the abbreviated weekend introduction, organizational and scheduling problems that also related to the format change, and dissatisfaction with lack of time to discuss the common reading. The plurality of both groups indicated that this year's students are more engaged, and larger percentages indicated that students were better prepared this year rather than less well prepared. These two findings provide context for other assessments of the Fall 2008 BGeX program that will be available after the conclusion of the semester. As in past years, student participants were positive about the program and its perceived benefits to them. It is recommended that a less condensed BGeX introduction session be considered for next year. Further, the combined first session with peer facilitators and resident assistants might be reconsidered. Finally, the role of the common reading in the BGeX introduction program should be addressed.