



DATE: 18 April 2002

TO: Michelle Hall
Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

FROM: Rebecca Hite, Director
General Studies Program

RE: Results of 1999-2000 Exit Survey

Overall, I am pleased with the numbers from this Exit Survey. When I look at the questions that pertain specifically to my contact with the students (which is the only part that I can be responsible for since GSTU is a "degree program" only with no faculty or classes), I find that the majority of the students are giving marks of 3 or better. For example, for "satisfied with program," the percentages of responses of 3 or better are 94.9% for the BGS and 94.1% for the AGS. The 2 areas that concern me are "usefulness of advice" and "concern for students" which have numbers at 20% for a 1 response. This seems to also be reflected in the written comments by students.

The comments are critical, but I also believe that they are unfair. Unfortunately, I am the General Studies program, so all comments become very personal in nature. Since I first took this job, I have been very overworked, which even Dean Miller and Dr. Doucette would agree with. The number of majors is very high (over 250), and that is an inordinate amount of work for someone who is also teaching 3 classes. I know that there were times when I might have been abrupt with the students, but I would also note that General Studies majors are frequently difficult students to please. They usually come to this major as a last resort; they are already angry at someone or some department and that is often transferred to me. Students frequently want immediate attention, which is rarely possible. I believe, however, that this problem is being alleviated by the relocation to a larger office and the addition of a secretary and 2 adjunct advisors. Four people are now handling the work that I did by myself, and I am sure that this improvement will be reflected in future numbers. When personality conflicts arise, students can now see another advisor.

I will take serious issue with any statements to the effect that I do not give accurate advice, or that I have made mistakes that prevented a student's graduation. I would not still be in this job if that were true. I am graduating 60-70 students each semester, a very high number, which means

that students are being moved through the program in a very timely fashion. The GSTU curriculum is difficult for students to understand, especially those who are only in it for one or two semesters before graduation, which is most of them. Delays in graduation are always the result of students who do not exactly follow advising advice, which must be done to the letter in GSTU.

General Studies majors are people who want to get out of school as quickly as possible and they don't care how. It is certainly unfair for these same students, who have left other majors for reasons of dissatisfaction or low GPAs, to then complain that General Studies is not giving them everything they want - it is. It is getting them graduated. I am not insensitive to the results of the Exit Survey, but they must be kept in perspective, especially as concerns GSTU since it is completely unlike any other major on campus. I am addressing student concerns, and I am confident that the numbers after 2000 will show an improvement in student satisfaction with the General Studies program.