

GSC/WEST Quality of Life Survey Report Documentation

I. Introduction to Documentation

The GSC/WEST Quality of Life Survey was conducted as a collaboration between the Graduate Student Council (GSC; Heather Cox, Marissa Mock, and Steve Pracko) and Women in Engineering, Science, and Technology (WEST; Magdalena Bak, Cynthia Collins, and Sarah Heilshorn), which are both groups affiliated with the California Institute of Technology. This survey was conducted **from May 16, 2003 for approximately one month.**

This documentation presents the survey design and protocol, including the methods of reaching Caltech graduate students and the incentives offered for participation in the survey.

II. Subject Recruitment

A. Advertising of Survey

1. Pre-Survey Letter

The pre-survey letter was distributed by hand on Monday, May 12, 2003. A list of graduate students and mail codes obtained from the Graduate Studies office was used. It contained 960 names, or 220 fewer than the number of enrolled graduate students. The list was divided by mail code among six volunteers. Each volunteer hand-delivered letters to the buildings covered by that mail code, referring to the list from the Graduate Studies office.

In a number of buildings on campus, graduate student mailboxes are color-coded to distinguish them from those of other Caltech students and employees. In these buildings, it was possible to deliver letters to graduate students who did not appear on the list of mail codes. For this reason, we distributed more than 960 paper letters.

2. Flyers

Flyers were posted around campus on Monday, May 12, 2003. Four different flyers were used. Each flyer encouraged students to fill out the survey and provided the web address for the survey.

3. Newsletter advertising

The survey was advertised on the first page of the May 2003 GSC Newsletter. An e-mail notification of the publication of the Newsletter is sent to all graduate students.

4. E-mail notification

The GSC e-mail list was repeatedly used to contact graduate students about the survey. The list contains 1199 e-mail addresses, which is nineteen more addresses than the number of graduate students officially enrolled during the 2002-2003 academic year. The e-mail announcing the opening of the survey was sent on Friday, May 16, 2003 at 8:04 am. Reminder e-mails were sent on Monday, May 26, 2003 at 11:01 pm, Wednesday, June 11, 2003, at 10:42 pm, and Thursday, June 19, 2003, at 6:12 pm. The reminder e-mail sent on Wednesday, June 11, 2003 contained a broken link to the survey; a correction was sent at 9:47 am on Thursday, June 12, 2003.

B. Response Rate

We received 726 responses before the close of the survey at 5:00 pm on June 20, 2003. One additional response was received on Saturday, June 21, 2003 and was also incorporated into the data.

After removing blank, duplicate, and partial duplicate responses, we had a total of 682 unique responses. (Partial duplicates were often caused by a respondent pressing “submit” before the survey was completed.) There are 1181 registered graduate students, so the survey achieved a 58% response rate.

C. Prize Distribution

Each survey respondent could receive a \$3 certificate to a campus coffee shop, The Red Door Café, by printing the page at <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~prize/surveyprize.html> and typing or handwriting their name in the form. \$2 towards each certificate was donated by the Women’s Center, and \$1 toward each certificate was donated by Caltech Dining Services.

If the respondent also chose to submit this form, an email was sent to a site separate from the survey responses, at prize@caltech.edu.

These email entries were eligible to win:

- \$250 cash--\$125 donated by WEST, \$125 donated by GSC
- a free smoothie, mug, and T-shirt from Jamba Juice—donated by Jamba Juice, S. Lake
- lunch or dinner for two at the Mediterranean Café – donated by Med Café, S. Lake
- 2 gift certificates for the Cheesecake Factory (\$25 each) – donated by Caltech Dining Services
- 2 Dining Cards for Caltech dining facilities (\$25 each) -- donated by Caltech Dining Services
- 2 Movie-and-snack packs (\$25 each) -- donated by Caltech Dining Services
- 5 vouchers for Avery Dining Hall (\$5 each)-- donated by Caltech Dining Services
- 5 vouchers for Broad Café (\$5 each)-- donated by Caltech Dining Services

659 prize-entry emails were received. On May 23, 2003, two “Early Bird” respondents were chosen to receive the gift certificates to the Cheesecake factory by the following method: 1. a random number was generated, 2. The prize server was accessed, and the email with the ID number corresponding to the random number was opened. The ID numbers were simply a chronological count of the order in which emails were received.

On June 20, 2003, the remaining prizewinners were chosen by a similar method. Each three-digit random number was generated one digit at a time by drawing slips of paper out of 3 separate containers. The first container contained the digits 0 – 6, and the other two containers contained the digits 0 – 9. In no case did the number drawn not correspond to a survey email. The emails on the prize account were deleted following the drawing.

III. Statistical Analysis

Carla van Beselaere, a graduate student in the Humanities and Social Science division, created frequency tables of the data for each question and broke down the data demographically for all questions, using STATA. The frequency tables created in this way were used to provide data for the reports.

Simple statistical analyses were done in cases where there was a question as to whether a difference between populations was significant. To compare two groups, a z-test was used; to compare more than two groups, a chi-squared test was used. Multivariate statistics were not employed.

We reject the null hypothesis (no difference in response) at $\alpha = 0.05$, which corresponds to a confidence interval of 95% ($p = 0.05$) and a z-score of 1.96.