

## Questions for General Chemistry Focus Group

Fall '99

*Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to be here today. The Chemistry Department is interested in understanding how students perceive the General Chemistry course, such as, what aspects of the course are beneficial, and what aspects are problematic. As you may know, we have also been conducting multiple choice surveys. However, focus groups such as this one have the unique advantage of gathering information without constraining students to a predetermined set of responses. My name is Dennis Jacobs, and I will be asking you as a group a number of questions over the next hour. I would like you to be completely honest with me. Don't sugar-coat your answers. Nothing you say will offend me. I assure you that all of your responses will be held in complete confidence. Nobody knows you are here and no identifying information will leave this room. I would like to ask you permission to tape record our discussion so that I can more accurately record your responses after we finish today. I will destroy the tapes and not link you with any of your comments. Are all of you comfortable with this?*

Introductory Question: Please tell us your name, where you are from, and your intended major. If you're unsure about your major, that's O.K. Tell us what you're thinking about pursuing as a major.

### Students in Traditional Section (CHEM 117)

1. Think back to the chemistry you learned in high school. In what ways is CHEM 117 similar to or different than your High School chemistry experience?
2. What has been your greatest challenge in adjusting to college courses?
3. What would you say has been the most productive way for you to learn Chemistry? (for example, attending lecture, taking notes, performing experiments in the lab, reading the textbook, working through homework problems, taking exams, etc. )
4. What activity within CHEM 117 has been a waste of your time?
5. In what ways, have the lectures in CHEM 117 affected your understanding or interest in Chemistry?

6. How do you use lecture notes in this course?
7. How do you use the textbook “Chemistry: The Central Science”?
8. When do you read the chapter that is being presented in lecture?
9. How do you practice solving problems?
10. What is the greatest challenge in coming up with a correct solution to a problem?
11. How do you use the Solution Manual as a resource?
12. Have you every tried studying Chemistry with a group of your peers? If so, how has that worked for you?
13. What have been your experiences with any of the tutoring resources on campus?
14. How does your experience in CHEM 117 lab interface with what you are learning in the classroom?
15. How do you prepare for exams?
16. What are your views on the exams you have taken in CHEM 117?
17. In what ways do you see your experience, of taking General Chemistry, impacting your future?
18. Besides CHEM 117, the department offers CHEM 113 and CHEM 115. What are your impressions of these courses?
19. We have talked about the role that lectures, labs, and various resources have had on your learning of Chemistry. Have we missed anything?
20. This is the final question I have for you. What recommendations would you make to the Department of Chemistry for improving the General Chemistry course?

*Thank you again for taking the time out of your schedule to participate in today's Focus Group. In the weeks to come, we will carefully review your comments as we seek to find innovative ways to improve the General Chemistry course.*

## **Students in Alternative Section (CHEM 113)**

1. Think back to the chemistry you learned in high school. In what ways is CHEM 113 similar to or different than your High School chemistry experience?
2. What has been your greatest challenge in adjusting to college courses?
3. What would you say has been the most productive way for you to learn Chemistry? (for example, attending lecture, taking notes, performing experiments in the lab, reading the textbook, working through homework problems, taking exams, etc. )
4. What activity within CHEM 113 has been a waste of your time?
5. In what ways, have the lectures in CHEM 113 affected your understanding or interest in Chemistry?
6. How do you use lecture notes in this course?
7. How do you use the textbook "Chemistry: The Central Science"?
8. When do you read the chapter that is being presented in lecture?
9. How do you go about tackling your homework problems each week?
10. What is the greatest challenge in coming up with a correct solution to a problem?
11. How do you use the Solution Manual as a resource?
12. What has been your experience with the Tuesday tutorials? How does studying in a group affect your learning of Chemistry?
13. What have been your experiences with any of the tutoring resources on campus?
14. How does your experience in CHEM 113 lab interface with what you are learning in the classroom?
15. How do you prepare for exams?
16. What are your views on the exams you have taken in CHEM 113?

17. In what ways do you see your experience, of taking General Chemistry, impacting your future?
18. Besides CHEM 113, the department offers CHEM 115 and CHEM 117. What are your impressions of these courses?
19. We have talked about the role that lectures, labs, and various resources have had on your learning of Chemistry. Have we missed anything?
20. This is the final question I have for you. What recommendations would you make to the Department of Chemistry for improving the General Chemistry course?

*Thank you again for taking the time out of your schedule to participate in today's Focus Group. In the weeks to come, we will carefully review your comments as we seek to find innovative ways to improve the General Chemistry course.*