Eco Advice Project
Aggregate Feedback from the Pilot Audience

February 2008
1. Determine whether an advice column concept can provide the basis for a meaningful academic experience for students who want to learn to communicate environmental science to the public

2. Consider whether student-produced research and writing can provide the public with credible, relevant, engaging and practical information about the sustainable use of natural resources
**Primary Elements**

1. **A graduate level class** to teach students how to research and communicate consumer-oriented environmental science to the public
   - Fifteen students enrolled in the class, which was taught by Stanford environmental science and writing faculty in the autumn quarter of 2007.

2. **A pilot audience** consisting of a network of family and friends. The role of the pilot audience was to connect our faculty and students with the American public.

3. **Questions submitted by the pilot audience** about environmental issues and the use of natural resources, particularly from a consumer perspective.

4. **Student research and writing** to answer the questions. The students selected questions for their assignments, and based on instruction in class, proceeded to research and write answers.

5. **Sample columns** featuring a few examples of the students' work, posted on a password-protected website.

6. **Evaluation of the columns** by the pilot audience.
Sample Columns Autumn 2007

4 Columns
- 7 Q&A, each with supplemental information titled “Digging Deeper”; each of the four columns also had a “Did You Know” item at the end
  - Column 1: Coffee cups & packing peanuts
  - Column 2: Hybrid cars
  - Column 3: CFLs and LEED
  - Column 4: Cat litter and diapers

- Available online at ecoadvice.stanford.edu
  - ID: ecoadvice
  - Password: stanford
The Pilot Audience: 50 “Family & Friends”

• Developed via outreach by the teaching team and students in the class
• 50 people signed up; many submitted questions
• 25 provided feedback on the pilot columns
  – 5 evaluated all 4 columns
  – 1 evaluated 3 columns
  – 10 evaluated 2 columns
  – 9 evaluated 1 column
• Not designed to be a true demographic representation of the U.S. population
• Reasonable geographic diversity except for the South
  – “Overweighted” in the San Francisco Bay Area, where Stanford is located, and in Maine, where students from a high school class and their families participated with enthusiasm
People from 12 States Evaluated the Pilot Columns

The number from each state is shown on the map

[Map of the United States with numbers indicating the number of people from each state evaluated the pilot columns.]
Combined Ratings by Pilot Audience

The following slides contain data, including charts and graphs, that combine your ratings for the four pilot columns. We found your written comments and suggestions quite useful, but chose not to include them in this summary due to length and some overlap. We did share your feedback regarding strengths and areas for improvement with our students and our faculty sponsor.
Aggregate Ratings for Answers

# = %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strong Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strong Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engaging</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to Read</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to Understand</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credible</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbiased</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aggregate Ratings for “Digging Deeper”

# = %
Aggregate Ratings for “Did You Know”

# = %

[Bar chart showing ratings for different attributes such as Easy to Understand, Relevant to My Life, and Enjoyable.]
Preferences for Length of Answer and “Digging Deeper”

**Answer**
- 87% Too Long
- 10% Just Right
- 3% Too Short

**Digging Deeper**
- 75% Too Long
- 18% Just Right
- 7% Too Short
Aggregate Responses to the Question: “Did you learn anything new?”

- Yes: 86%
- No: 14%
One or Two Q&A per Column?

*Asked in Column #4 Survey Only*

\[ N = 13 \]

- **Two Q&A**: 7 responses
- **One Q&A**: 4 responses
- **No Preference**: 2 responses
Thank you from the teaching team and students involved in the Eco Advice Pilot Project. If you have questions about the aggregate data or other questions or comments, email Nancy Peterson, project manager at nancy.peterson@stanford.edu.