

## 2016-17 ALUMNI SURVEY A RESEARCH BRIEF

### Research Briefs

Research Briefs are short publications prepared by the Departments of Academic Effectiveness and Assessment (AEA) and Institutional Research (IR) that are intended to provide relevant information which assists in the performance improvement process used by St. Petersburg College (SPC). Research Brief topics include, but are not limited to, student achievement, state accountability measures, institutional survey results, student enrollment, and faculty/adjunct compensation.

### Introduction

SPC annually conducts the Recent Alumni Survey to measure alumni satisfaction with SPC's education programs. The Recent Alumni Survey specifically collected information related to career preparation, preparation for continuing education, and the current employment information and educational status of former students. The data collected is used for the state-required annual Placement and Follow-up Report and as supplemental information to meet continuous improvement initiatives in workforce programs.

Graduates are sent one survey to complete, even in cases where they may have earned multiple degrees within the same year. In these cases, the reported number of surveys sent and responses received are counted once per degree or certificate awarded to the student.

### Responses

The Recent Alumni Survey was administered to 7,301 graduates from Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science (AS), Certificate programs (CT, ATD, ATC, PSAV, and PSVC), Bachelor of Science (BS), and Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degrees. The 2016-17 graduates were first contacted by email and asked to complete an online survey. Those who did not respond to the initial email were sent two additional email reminders at two-week intervals. At the end of the two weeks following the third email contact, a paper copy was mailed, and two weeks later, if no response was received, a second paper copy was mailed. A fourth e-mail message was the final point of contact with those who had not yet responded. Nine-hundred and twenty-three surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 12.6%. Table 1 summarizes the response rate by degree or certificate awarded.

Table 1  
*Respondents by degree or certificate*

| Degree or Certificate Awarded | Number Graduated | Number Responded | Percent Responded | Percent of Total Responses |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| BS/BAS                        | 1,099            | 188              | 17.1%             | 20.4%                      |
| AA                            | 3,895            | 415              | 10.7%             | 45.0%                      |
| AS                            | 905              | 155              | 17.1%             | 16.8%                      |
| CT/ATD/ATC/PSAV/PSVC          | 1,402            | 165              | 11.8%             | 17.9%                      |
| TOTAL                         | 7,301            | 923              | 12.6%             | N/A                        |

This was the thirteenth year that graduates were initially contacted electronically. The survey of 2016-17 graduates received 406 (44.0%) of the 923 responses online. This is a decrease from the survey administered to 2015-16 graduates, which resulted in 489 (47.8%) online returns, and a decrease from the survey administered to 2014-15 graduates, which resulted in 478 (45.7%) online returns. The overall response rate showed a decrease of nearly one percent (0.8%) in 2016-17 compared to the previous year, as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Three year return rate*

| Graduate Year Surveyed | Number Surveyed | Number Responded | Percent Responded | Number of Online Responses | Percent of Responses Online |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2016-17                | 7,301           | 923              | 12.6%             | 406                        | 44.0%                       |
| 2015-16                | 7,641           | 1,024            | 13.4%             | 489                        | 47.8%                       |
| 2014-15                | 6,557           | 1,046            | 16.0%             | 478                        | 45.7%                       |

## Results

Almost half of the respondents (48.0%) from all degree and certificate programs reported that continuing their education was their main goal in completing a degree or certificate. "Change career fields" was the second most frequently selected goal among respondents (16.8%). A closer look by program at responses to "The main goal in completing a degree or certificate" indicated that over one-third (36.4%) of the bachelor's degree-seeking students selected "Continue my education." The majority of the AA students (68.1%) selected "Continue my education" while almost two-thirds of the AS students (64.5%) and over half (55.8%) of the CT, ATD, ATC, PSAV, and PSVC students selected "Continue my education" or "Change career fields", as depicted in Table 3.

Table 3

*Main goal in completing a degree or certificate at SPC by program*

| What was your main goal in completing a degree or certificate at SPC? | BS/BAS | AA    | AS    | CT/ATD/ATC/<br>PSAV/PSVC | TOTAL |
|---|--------|-------|-------|--------------------------|-------|
| Change career fields  | 11.2%  | 8.2%  | 38.7% | 24.2%                    | 16.8% |
| Continue my education   | 36.4%  | 68.1% | 25.8% | 31.5%                    | 48.0% |
| Earn more money   | 10.7%  | 7.0%  | 14.2% | 10.3%                    | 9.6%  |
| Get a promotion   | 12.3%  | 1.7%  | 1.9%  | 9.1%                     | 5.2%  |
| Meet certification/training needs                                     | 5.9%   | 2.4%  | 2.6%  | 5.5%                     | 3.7%  |
| Obtain employment   | 15.0%  | 7.2%  | 12.9% | 13.3%                    | 10.9% |
| Other   | 8.6%   | 5.3%  | 3.9%  | 6.1%                     | 5.9%  |
| Total Responses   | 187    | 414   | 155   | 165                      | 921   |

Participants were allowed multiple responses to the question, "Which of the following were you able to accomplish after obtaining your degree or certificate?" "Continue my education" was selected most often (66.0%), followed by "Earn more money" (26.4%); "Obtain employment" (21.9%); "Meet certification/training needs" (17.2%); and "Change career fields" (16.5%).

A strong majority of respondents (94.2%) indicated that they were satisfied with the help they received from SPC in meeting their goal(s). When asked, "How well did SPC help you meet your above goal", more than one-third (41.6%) of survey respondents indicated that SPC did "Exceptionally well" in helping them meet their goal, and 39.5% indicated "Very well" as depicted in Table 4.

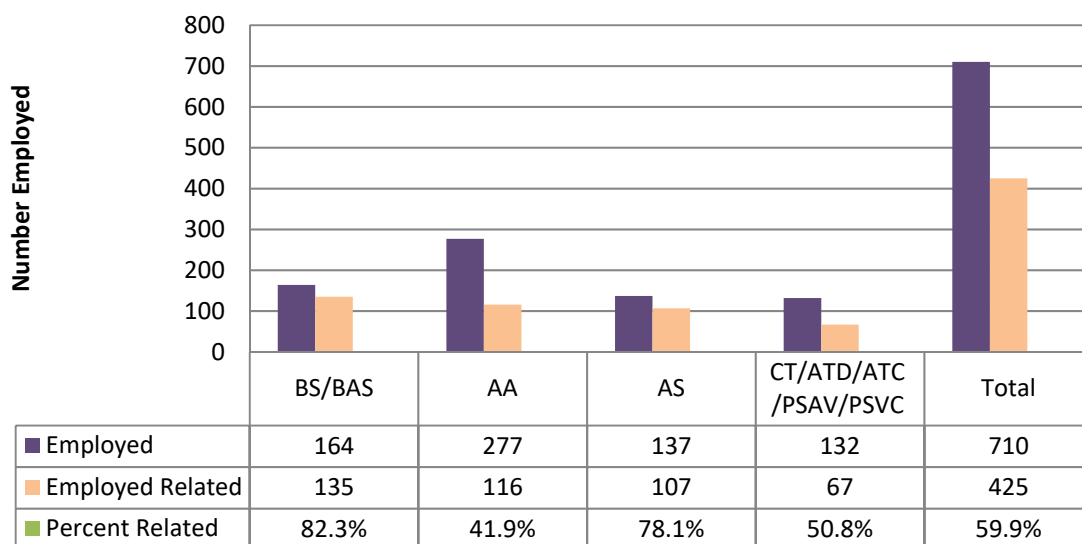
Table 4

*Satisfaction by degree or certificate awarded*

| How well did SPC help you meet your above goal? | BS/BAS | AA    | AS    | CT/ATD/ATC/<br>PSAV/PSVC | TOTAL |
|---|--------|-------|-------|--------------------------|-------|
| Exceptionally Well                              | 42.5%  | 43.6% | 44.5% | 32.7%                    | 41.6% |
| Very Well                                       | 39.8%  | 40.9% | 38.1% | 37.0%                    | 39.5% |
| Adequately                                      | 11.3%  | 10.9% | 12.9% | 21.2%                    | 13.2% |
| Poorly  | 4.3%   | 2.2%  | 0.6%  | 3.0%                     | 2.5%  |
| Not At All                                      | 2.2%   | 2.4%  | 3.9%  | 6.1%                     | 3.3%  |
| Total Responses                                 | 186    | 413   | 155   | 165                      | 919   |

Results from the survey indicated that over three quarters of the respondents (77.9%) were currently employed. Sixty percent (59.9%) of those employed indicated their current position was related to their educational field as shown by Figure 1. The completers of workforce degree programs (BS/BAS, AS, and Certificate) reported higher field-related employment levels in a range of 50.8% to 82.3%, while graduates of the AA program reported lower (41.9%) field-related employment. Fifteen respondents indicated that they were currently in the military, with six in the reserves and six on active duty.

Figure 1  
What is your current employment status?



The majority of the 710 employed alumni (98.3%) provided their wage per hour and/or approximate annual equivalent earnings. The average amounts earned by program are varied. While the most frequently reported hourly wage range for BS/BAS students (50.0%) was \$25.00 or more, AS students (27.2%) reported earning \$15.00-\$19.99 and \$25.00 or more in even amounts, and Certificate students (36.4%) and AA students (38.1%) most frequently reported earning \$10.00-\$14.99. Table 5 summarizes wage per hour and annual salary.

Table 5  
Hourly wage by degree or certificate awarded

| Hourly Wage/<br>Approximate Annual      | BS/BAS | AA    | AS    | CT/ATD/ATC/<br>PSAV/PSVC | TOTAL |
|---|--------|-------|-------|--------------------------|-------|
| Less than \$10.00 (less than \$21,000)  | 0.0%   | 20.5% | 2.9%  | 4.7%                     | 9.5%  |
| \$10.00 - \$14.99 (\$21,000 - \$30,999) | 12.5%  | 38.1% | 17.6% | 36.4%                    | 27.9% |
| \$15.00 - \$19.99 (\$31,000 - \$41,999) | 23.8%  | 16.5% | 27.2% | 27.1%                    | 22.2% |
| \$20.00 - \$24.99 (\$42,000 - \$51,999) | 13.8%  | 8.8%  | 25.0% | 12.4%                    | 13.8% |
| \$25.00 or more (\$52,000 or more)      | 50.0%  | 16.1% | 27.2% | 19.4%                    | 26.6% |
| Total Responses                         | 160    | 273   | 136   | 129                      | 698   |

In response to the question, "Are you continuing your education at SPC or another college/university?" almost two-thirds (63.1%) of the 897 responded that they were. Over four-fifths of AA graduates (85.6%), one-fourth (25.1%) of the baccalaureate graduates, nearly half of AS graduates (49.0%), and almost two-thirds of Certificate (63.1%) completers were continuing their education. Of those continuing their education, nearly two-thirds (64.1%) of AA students were enrolled full-time, while over

half of AS (62.2%) and Certificate (52.5%) students were enrolled part-time. About one third of BS/BAS students were enrolled part-time (37.0%) or full-time (30.4%), with another third not responding regarding their enrollment (32.6%). Tables 6 and 7 summarize continuing education and enrollment status by awarded SPC degree.

Table 6  
*Continuing education by degree or certificate awarded*

| Are you continuing your education at SPC or another college/university? | BS/BAS | AA    | AS    | CT/ATD/ATC/PSAV/PSVC | TOTAL |
|---|--------|-------|-------|----------------------|-------|
| Yes   | 25.1%  | 85.6% | 49.0% | 63.1%                | 63.1% |
| No  | 74.9%  | 14.4% | 51.0% | 36.9%                | 36.9% |
| Respondents   | 183    | 403   | 151   | 160                  | 897   |

Table 7  
*Enrollment status by degree or certificate awarded*

| Enrollment Status          | BS/BAS | AA    | AS    | CT/ATD/ATC/PSAV/PSVC | TOTAL |
|----------------------------|--------|-------|-------|----------------------|-------|
| Part-time                  | 37.0%  | 29.9% | 62.2% | 52.5%                | 38.7% |
| Full-time                  | 30.4%  | 64.1% | 31.1% | 37.6%                | 52.3% |
| Unknown                    | 32.6%  | 6.1%  | 6.8%  | 9.9%                 | 9.0%  |
| Total Continuing Education | 46     | 345   | 74    | 101                  | 566   |

The majority of students (95.5%) reported continuing their education in Florida. Over half (54.9%) of the respondents furthering their education indicated re-enrolling at SPC, and 23.1% reported transferring to the University of South Florida. Students who were continuing their education were also asked if they were enrolled through the University Partnership Center (UPC), and twenty-one (3.9%) of the 532 respondents indicated that they were enrolled through the UPC. Table 8 presents details of respondents' attendance at various universities and colleges.

Table 8  
*Institutions where students are continuing their education*

| Institutions    | TOTAL |
|-----------------|-------|
| SPC             | 54.9% |
| USF             | 23.1% |
| UF              | 4.3%  |
| UCF             | 2.8%  |
| FSU             | 1.8%  |
| Other In-State  | 8.5%  |
| Out of State    | 4.5%  |
| Total Responses | 506   |

The graduates continuing their education were asked "How well did SPC prepare you for continuing your education?" Satisfaction levels were notable with 82.5% of the respondents indicating that their SPC studies prepared them either "very well" or

“exceptionally well” for continuing their education. Details of students’ satisfaction by degree or certificate awarded are illustrated in Table 9.

Table 9  
*Satisfaction with SPC preparation for continued education by degree or certificate awarded*

| How well did SPC prepare you for continuing your education? | BS/BAS | AA    | AS    | CT/ATD/ATC/<br>PSAV/PSVC | TOTAL |
|---|--------|-------|-------|--------------------------|-------|
| Exceptionally Well  | 35.3%  | 42.4% | 40.6% | 36.6%                    | 40.7% |
| Very Well   | 47.1%  | 40.6% | 43.5% | 43.0%                    | 41.8% |
| Adequately  | 17.6%  | 15.5% | 14.5% | 12.9%                    | 15.1% |
| Poorly  | 0.0%   | 1.2%  | 1.4%  | 3.2%                     | 1.5%  |
| Not at all  | 0.0%   | 0.3%  | 0.0%  | 4.3%                     | 0.9%  |
| Total Responses   | 34     | 335   | 69    | 93                       | 531   |

When asked, “Would you recommend your program at SPC to others?” 805 respondents (93.1%) selected “yes.” Table 10 provides a break down by degree program or certificate awarded.

Table 10  
*Recommending SPC program to others by degree or certificate awarded*

| Would you recommend your program at SPC to others? | BS/BAS | AA    | AS    | CT/ATD/ATC/<br>PSAV/PSVC | TOTAL |
|--|--------|-------|-------|--------------------------|-------|
| Yes  | 93.7%  | 95.4% | 92.6% | 86.8%                    | 93.1% |
| No   | 6.3%   | 4.6%  | 7.4%  | 13.2%                    | 6.9%  |
| Total Responses                                    | 175    | 390   | 149   | 151                      | 865   |

The 2016-17 Recent Alumni survey administration process included survey questions to assess the graduates’ level of satisfaction in areas of general education outcomes. Graduates were asked to rate their preparation of general education skill areas on a 5-point Likert scale with labels from “1-Poor” to “5-Excellent.”

Based on the results, graduates believe SPC prepared them in the majority of their general education skills areas as shown in Table 11. Of the 25 outcome areas, 2 outcomes received mean scores of 4.5 or higher, 19 received mean scores between 4.0 and 4.4, and 4 received a mean score of 3.8.

Table 11  
*College Preparation Ratings for Recent Graduates*

| <i>General Education Outcomes</i><br>(Five point rating scale with five being the highest) | <i>N</i> | <i>Item Ratings</i> |           |
|--|----------|---------------------|-----------|
|  |          | <i>Mean</i>         | <i>SD</i> |
| <i>Communicating clearly and effectively with others through:</i>                          |          |                     |           |
| Speaking   | 885      | 4.2                 | 0.8       |
| Listening  | 881      | 4.3                 | 0.8       |
| Reading  | 881      | 4.3                 | 0.8       |
| Writing  | 881      | 4.2                 | 0.8       |
|  |          |                     |           |
| <i>Your use of mathematical and computational skills:</i>                                  |          |                     |           |
| Comfortable with mathematical calculations   | 883      | 3.8                 | 0.9       |
| Using computational skills appropriately   | 880      | 4.0                 | 0.9       |
| Accurately interpreting mathematical data  | 881      | 3.8                 | 0.9       |
|  |          |                     |           |
| <i>Using the following forms of technology:</i>  |          |                     |           |
| Email  | 878      | 4.6                 | 0.7       |
| Word Processing  | 874      | 4.4                 | 0.8       |
| Spreadsheets   | 876      | 3.8                 | 1.0       |
| Databases  | 873      | 3.8                 | 1.0       |
| Internet Research  | 876      | 4.4                 | 0.8       |
|  |          |                     |           |
| <i>Thinking logically and critically to solve problems:</i>                                |          |                     |           |
| Gathering and assessing relevant information   | 878      | 4.4                 | 0.7       |
| Inquiring about and interpreting information   | 875      | 4.3                 | 0.7       |
| Organizing and evaluating information  | 876      | 4.3                 | 0.7       |
| Analyzing and explaining information to others   | 875      | 4.2                 | 0.8       |
| Using information to solve problems  | 874      | 4.4                 | 0.7       |
|  |          |                     |           |
| <i>Working effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>                           |          |                     |           |
| Participating as a team player (e.g., group projects)                                      | 867      | 4.3                 | 0.8       |
| Working well with individuals from diverse backgrounds                                     | 865      | 4.4                 | 0.7       |
| Using ethical courses of action  | 866      | 4.5                 | 0.7       |
| Demonstrating leadership skills  | 866      | 4.3                 | 0.8       |
|  |          |                     |           |
| <i>Appreciating the importance of lifelong learning:</i>                                   |          |                     |           |
| Showing an interest in career development  | 867      | 4.4                 | 0.7       |
| Being open to new ideas and challenges   | 865      | 4.4                 | 0.7       |
| Willingness to take on new responsibilities  | 867      | 4.4                 | 0.7       |
| Pursuing additional educational opportunities  | 866      | 4.4                 | 0.8       |

### Conclusion

Results from the 2016-17 Recent Alumni Survey (2016-17 SPC Graduates) indicated that over three-fourths (77.9%) of the graduates who responded are currently employed. Over half of those (59.9%) are employed in a field related to their studies. The BS/BAS and AS programs reported the highest rate of related employment (82.3% and 78.1% respectively).

Wage earnings varied by degree or certificate awarded. Overall, 26.6% of respondents reported wages of \$52,000 or more (down from 36.0% in 2015-16), and 27.9% reported wages between \$21,000 and \$30,999 (up from 21.4% in 2015-16). The highest wages were reported most often among BS/BAS and AS respondents, at 50.0% (down from 56.2%) and 27.2% (down from 42.8%) respectively. Additionally, AA degree respondents reported the highest rate of continued education (85.6%), and 64.1% of those were enrolled full-time. Overall, nearly two-thirds (63.1%) of SPC graduates are pursuing further education.

SPC graduates also reported high levels of satisfaction in the areas of general education outcomes associated with the general education skills. Most recent alumni (97.6%) reported SPC had prepared them adequately for continued education, and the majority of respondents (93.1%) would recommend their program to others.