



2006-07 EMPLOYER SURVEY RESULTS A RESEARCH BRIEF

Research Briefs

Research Briefs are short publications prepared by the Department of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IRE) 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 an Employer Survey designed to measure employer satisfaction with SPC graduates. Specifically, the Employer Survey was designed to gain insight into an employer's perceptions of the quality of hired SPC graduates, and identify an employer's willingness to support various college activities such as student training or placement.

The focus of the Employer Survey is to evaluate graduates from Bachelors of Science/Bachelors of Applied Science (BS/BAS), Associate in Science/Associate in Applied Science (AS/AAS) and certificate programs. These programs focus on preparing students to enhance their skills, knowledge, reach higher levels of income, and increase personal/professional growth.

Data Collection

The Recent Alumni Survey was administered to 2006-07 SPC graduates. Graduates were asked to provide the name and address of their employer and to allow SPC to contact their employer. The Employer Survey was then sent to employers of SPC graduates who were working in a field related to their education.

The survey includes questions relating to the employer's perception of their employee's (recent SPC graduate) aptitude in key general education competencies and foundational skill areas. Additional questions include the employee's major job responsibilities; employee wage information; willingness of the employer to hire another SPC graduate; and any additional skills or areas of knowledge that the employer would recommend. The last section of the survey contains a list of opportunities for employer involvement at SPC.

Employer surveys were sent out to two hundred and fifty-seven employers. One hundred and fifteen surveys were returned resulting in an overall response rate of 44.8%. Employers of upper-division alumni had a 49.2% response rate and employers of lower-division alumni had a response rate of 31.8%. Table 1 provides a break down of the number of recent alumni surveys, and employer surveys sent and returned, by upper and lower division classification. It should be noted that of the 191 employer surveys sent to employers of upper-division graduates, 164 were sent to college of education graduate employers. This group of recent alumni does not need to provide name and address information, as it is already supplied from a state of Florida generated report.

Table 1
Response rate by program

Program Type	Alumni Surveys Sent	Alumni Surveys Returned	Employer Surveys Sent	Employer Surveys Returned	Return Rate
<i>Lower Division Programs * (AS/AAS, and Certificate Programs)</i>	1,549	231	66	21	31.8%
<i>Upper Division Programs (BS/BAS)</i>	503	151	191	94	49.2%

* Note: Table Revised: 09-01-09

The employer survey included questions that enable employers to rate graduates' achievement in the following categories: communication, computational, technical, problem solving, people, and lifelong learning skills.

Results

All twenty-five key general education competencies and foundational skill areas received mean scores between of 4.0 and 4.6 on a 5-point Likert scale (5 indicates 'excellent'). This response scale also included a 'Not Applicable' (NA) rating. The percentage of employers responding to the identified skill items ranged between 64.3% and 99.0%. Other notable survey results include:

- One hundred percent (100.0%) of the employers responding indicated they would hire another SPC graduate.
- Sixty-three percent (62.9%) responding to the question regarding hourly compensation indicated their employees earn \$15.00 - \$19.99 per hour (\$31,000 - \$41,999 annually).
- Fifty-one percent (51.3%) of respondents expressed an interest in participating in two of the College's employment activities. The most popular areas if interest were a willingness to provide opportunities for student co-op/internship placement (83.0%) and to assist in job placement of graduates (54.2%). [Note: The total exceeded 100% because this question allowed multiple responses by survey respondents.]

Employers indicated high levels of satisfaction with graduates' general education outcomes. All twenty-five outcomes received mean scores between 4.1 and 4.6. Three of the five skill areas with the highest level of satisfaction (mean of 4.6) were in the area of 'Work effectively with others in a variety of settings'. They included:

- participates as team player (e.g., groups, projects),
- works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds, and
- uses ethical courses of action.

The outcome with the lowest mean rating (4.1), 'demonstrates leadership skills', was also from the 'Work effectively with others in a variety of setting' area. It also had the greatest standard deviation. This variation in reporting perceived leadership skills may be the result of how leadership skills are defined by the respondents.

The other two skill areas with the highest level of satisfaction (4.6) included the use of email and the openness to new ideas. Details can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2
2006-07 Overall Employer Responses

General Education Outcomes (Five point rating scale with five being the highest)	Item Ratings			
	N	Mean	SD	N/A*
<i>Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:</i>				
Speaking	115	4.5	0.78	---
Listening	114	4.5	0.76	---
Reading	112	4.5	0.63	2
Writing	113	4.5	0.70	1
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	106	4.4	0.68	7
Uses computational skills appropriately	106	4.4	0.69	7
Accurately interprets mathematical data	105	4.4	0.72	7
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	109	4.6	0.65	5
Word Processing	106	4.5	0.72	7
Spreadsheets	82	4.3	0.83	32
Databases	91	4.4	0.78	23
Internet Research	106	4.5	0.67	9
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	115	4.4	0.78	---
Inquires and interprets information	115	4.4	0.76	---
Organizes and evaluates information	115	4.4	0.76	---
Analyzes and explains information to others	115	4.3	0.79	---
Uses information to solve problems	115	4.4	0.78	---
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., groups projects)	114	4.6	0.75	---
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	115	4.6	0.73	---
Uses ethical courses of action	115	4.6	0.74	---
Demonstrates leadership skills	115	4.1	1.04	---
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	115	4.5	0.79	---
Open to new ideas and challenges	115	4.6	0.78	---
Willing to take on new responsibilities	115	4.5	0.82	---
Pursues additional educational opportunities	115	4.4	0.77	---

Note: The survey allowed employers to select N/A if a competency was non-applicable for an employee.

Table 3 displays a breakdown of each outcome for the lower division technical programs (AS/AAS, and Certificate Programs). The table includes the number of responses and the mean response for each outcome. Employers indicated high levels of satisfaction with 21 lower division graduates' general education outcomes. All twenty-five outcomes received mean scores between 4.2 and 4.8.

Table 3
Employer Survey Response for Lower Division (AS/AAS, and Certificate Programs)

General Education Outcomes (Five point rating scale with five being the highest)	Item Ratings			
	N	Mean	SD	N/A*
<i>Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:</i>				
Speaking	21	4.6	0.68	---
Listening	21	4.6	0.68	---
Reading	21	4.6	0.60	---
Writing	20	4.6	0.69	1
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	20	4.3	0.80	1
Uses computational skills appropriately	20	4.4	0.75	1
Accurately interprets mathematical data	20	4.2	0.88	1
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	15	4.7	0.46	5
Word Processing	15	4.7	0.72	4
Spreadsheets	14	4.6	0.76	6
Databases	15	4.3	0.88	5
Internet Research	17	4.7	0.47	4
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	21	4.5	0.81	---
Inquires and interprets information	21	4.6	0.75	---
Organizes and evaluates information	21	4.7	0.66	---
Analyzes and explains information to others	21	4.5	0.81	---
Uses information to solve problems	21	4.5	0.81	---
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., groups projects)	20	4.8	0.72	---
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	21	4.6	0.74	---
Uses ethical courses of action	21	4.7	0.73	---
Demonstrates leadership skills	21	4.4	0.98	---
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	21	4.8	0.54	---
Open to new ideas and challenges	21	4.7	0.91	---
Willing to take on new responsibilities	21	4.6	0.93	---
Pursues additional educational opportunities	21	4.5	0.81	---

Note: The survey allowed employers to select N/A if a competency was non-applicable for an employee.

Table 4 displays a breakdown of each outcome for the upper division programs (BS/BAS). Employers indicated high levels of satisfaction with general education outcomes for the 94 upper-division graduates'. Twenty-five outcomes received mean scores between 4.1 and 4.6 with the 5 being the highest.

Table 4
Employer Survey Response for Upper Division Programs (BS/BAS)

General Education Outcomes (Five point rating scale with five being the highest)	Item Ratings			
	N	Mean	SD	N/A*
<i>Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:</i>				
Speaking	94	4.4	0.80	---
Listening	93	4.5	0.77	---
Reading	91	4.5	0.64	2
Writing	93	4.5	0.70	---
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	86	4.4	0.65	6
Uses computational skills appropriately	86	4.5	0.68	6
Accurately interprets mathematical data	85	4.4	0.68	6
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	94	4.6	0.68	---
Word Processing	91	4.5	0.72	3
Spreadsheets	68	4.3	0.84	26
Databases	76	4.4	0.76	18
Internet Research	89	4.5	0.69	5
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	94	4.4	0.78	---
Inquires and interprets information	94	4.4	0.76	---
Organizes and evaluates information	94	4.4	0.77	---
Analyzes and explains information to others	94	4.3	0.79	---
Uses information to solve problems	94	4.4	0.78	---
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., groups projects)	94	4.6	0.75	---
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	94	4.6	0.74	---
Uses ethical courses of action	94	4.6	0.74	---
Demonstrates leadership skills	94	4.1	1.04	---
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	94	4.5	0.83	---
Open to new ideas and challenges	94	4.6	0.75	---
Willing to take on new responsibilities	94	4.5	0.80	---
Pursues additional educational opportunities	94	4.4	0.77	---

Note: The survey allowed employers to select N/A if a competency was non-applicable for an employee.

At the end of the survey, employers had the opportunity to provide additional comments. Analysis of these qualitative comments presented several main strengths possessed by SPC graduates: great rapport with students, parents and staff, well-prepared, professionalism, committed, responsible, and team player.

Conclusion

Overall, results suggest employers are satisfied with St. Petersburg College graduates' performance in the workplace. Employers rated most individuals as exhibiting a high level of preparatory skills as indicated by the above average ratings in the majority of skill areas.

In summary, the survey outcomes indicate that AS/AAS degree, BS/BAS degree, and certificate programs are achieving their intended objective of adequately preparing students for the workplace by enhancing their skills, knowledge, and increasing personal and professional growth.