2007-08 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 Bachelor of Science/Bachelor 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 2007-08 SPC graduates. Graduates were asked to provide the name and address of their employer, and whether they would 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 this employee should have obtained while at SPC. The last section of the survey contains a list of opportunities for employer involvement at SPC.

Employer surveys were sent out to three hundred and seven employers. One hundred and thirty-two surveys were returned resulting in an overall response rate of 43.0%. Employers of upper-division alumni had a 48.4% response rate and employers of lower-division alumni had a response rate of 30.0%. 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 217 employer surveys sent to employers of upper-division graduates, 173 were sent to employers of college of education graduates. This group of recent alumni does not need to provide employer name and address information, or give permission to contact them, as the contact

information is already supplied by the state of Florida, which requires that all college of education graduate employers be surveyed.

Table 1

Response rate by program

Program Type	Alumni Surveys Sent	Alumni Surveys Returned	Employer Surveys Sent	Employer Surveys Returned	Return Rate
Lower Division Programs (AS/AAS, and Certificate Programs)	1,435	306	90	27	30.0%
Upper Division Programs (BS/BAS)	589	209	217	105	48.4%

The employer survey included questions that enabled 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 4.0 and 4.5 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:

- Almost one-hundred percent (98.5%) of the employers responding indicated they would hire another SPC graduate.
- Almost seventy percent (68.5%) responding to the question regarding hourly compensation indicated their employees earn between $15.00 and $19.99 per hour ($31,000 to $41,999 annually).
- Almost fifty-four percent (53.8%) of respondents expressed an interest in participating in two of the College's employment activities. The most popular areas of interest were a willingness to provide opportunities for student co-op/internship placement (76.1%), and to assist in job placement of graduates (47.9%). [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, with all outcomes receiving mean scores between 4.0 and 4.5. Two of the skill areas with the highest level of satisfaction (mean of 4.5), were in the area of 'Work effectively with others in a variety of settings', and are listed below.

- Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds, and
- Uses ethical courses of action.

The outcome with the lowest mean rating (4.0) 'Demonstrates leadership skills', was also from the 'Work effectively with others in a variety of settings' area, and had the greatest standard deviation. This variation in reporting of perceived leadership skills may be the result of how leadership skills are defined by the respondents. Overall employer ratings of the graduates' general education outcomes are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
2007-08 Overall Employer Responses

General Education Outcomes (Five point rating scale with five being the highest)	Item Ratings			
	N	Mean	SD	N/A*
Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:				
Speaking	132	4.3	0.84	---
Listening	131	4.4	0.84	---
Reading	130	4.4	0.79	---
Writing	129	4.3	0.85	1
Use mathematical and computational skills:				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	124	4.1	0.85	8
Uses computational skills appropriately	123	4.2	0.81	9
Accurately interprets mathematical data	121	4.2	0.8	11
Use the following forms of technology:				
E-mail	126	4.5	0.77	6
Word Processing	121	4.4	0.79	10
Spreadsheets	96	4.2	0.84	34
Databases	98	4.2	0.82	33
Internet Research	110	4.4	0.78	19
Think logically and critically to solve problems				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	131	4.2	0.88	1
Inquires and interprets information	131	4.2	0.9	1
Organizes and evaluates information	131	4.3	0.89	1
Analyzes and explains information to others	128	4.2	0.95	3
Uses information to solve problems	131	4.2	0.87	1
Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:				
Participates as team player (e.g., groups projects)	131	4.4	0.91	1
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	130	4.5	0.86	1
Uses ethical courses of action	130	4.5	0.78	2
Demonstrates leadership skills	129	4.0	1.05	3
Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:				
Shows interest in career development	129	4.4	0.87	3
Open to new ideas and challenges	130	4.4	0.84	2
Willing to take on new responsibilities	131	4.4	0.87	1
Pursues additional educational opportunities	128	4.3	0.86	4

*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 twenty-four lower division

graduates' general education outcomes. Twenty-four outcomes received mean scores of 4.0 or higher, while the remaining one received a mean score of 3.8.

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*
Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:				
Speaking	27	4.3	0.86	---
Listening	27	4.4	0.75	---
Reading	27	4.6	0.64	---
Writing	27	4.4	0.79	---
Use mathematical and computational skills:				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	25	4.0	0.87	2
Uses computational skills appropriately	24	4.1	0.85	3
Accurately interprets mathematical data	24	4.2	0.76	3
Use the following forms of technology:				
E-mail	22	4.5	0.80	5
Word Processing	19	4.4	0.84	8
Spreadsheets	15	4.1	0.99	12
Databases	15	4.3	0.88	12
Internet Research	17	4.4	0.86	10
Think logically and critically to solve problems				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	27	4.2	0.96	---
Inquires and interprets information	27	4.3	0.95	---
Organizes and evaluates information	27	4.3	0.91	---
Analyzes and explains information to others	26	4.1	1.09	1
Uses information to solve problems	27	4.3	0.81	---
Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:				
Participates as team player (e.g., groups projects)	27	4.4	0.89	---
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	27	4.5	0.70	---
Uses ethical courses of action	26	4.7	0.63	1
Demonstrates leadership skills	25	3.8	1.07	2
Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:				
Shows interest in career development	27	4.3	0.90	---
Open to new ideas and challenges	26	4.3	0.85	---
Willing to take on new responsibilities	27	4.3	0.86	---
Pursues additional educational opportunities	25	4.2	0.91	2

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 105 upper-division graduates. All twenty-five outcomes received mean scores between 4.0 and 4.5.

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*
Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:				
Speaking	105	4.3	0.84	---
Listening	104	4.3	0.87	---
Reading	103	4.4	0.83	---
Writing	102	4.2	0.87	1
Use mathematical and computational skills:				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	99	4.2	0.85	6
Uses computational skills appropriately	99	4.2	0.80	6
Accurately interprets mathematical data	97	4.2	0.81	8
Use the following forms of technology:				
E-mail	104	4.5	0.76	1
Word Processing	102	4.4	0.79	2
Spreadsheets	81	4.2	0.81	22
Databases	83	4.1	0.81	21
Internet Research	93	4.4	0.77	9
Think logically and critically to solve problems				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	104	4.2	0.86	1
Inquires and interprets information	104	4.2	0.89	1
Organizes and evaluates information	104	4.2	0.89	1
Analyzes and explains information to others	102	4.2	0.92	2
Uses information to solve problems	104	4.2	0.89	1
Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:				
Participates as team player (e.g., groups projects)	104	4.4	0.92	1
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	103	4.5	0.91	1
Uses ethical courses of action	104	4.5	0.81	1
Demonstrates leadership skills	104	4.0	1.05	1
Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:				
Shows interest in career development	102	4.4	0.86	3
Open to new ideas and challenges	104	4.5	0.85	1
Willing to take on new responsibilities	104	4.4	0.88	1
Pursues additional educational opportunities	103	4.3	0.85	2

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

Conclusion

Overall, results suggest that 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.