

## 2008-09 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 and Planning (IRP) 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.

### Responses

The Recent Alumni Survey was administered to 4,451 graduates from Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science/Associate in Applied Science (AS/AAS), Certificate programs (CT, ATC, PSAV, and PSVC), Bachelor of Science (BS), and Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degrees. The 2008-09 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 for the final contact. One thousand, two hundred and two surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 27.0%. 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
BS/BAS	710	241	33.9%
AA	2,255	554	24.6%
AS/AAS	845	276	32.7%
CT/ATD/ATC/PSAV/PSVC	641	131	20.4%
TOTAL	4,451	1,202	27.0%

*Note: Individual students were surveyed only once, even if they had received multiple degrees.*

This was the fifth year that graduates were initially contacted electronically. The survey of 2008-09 graduates received 670 (55.7%) of the 1,202 responses online. This is an improvement from the surveys administered to 2007-08 and 2006-07 graduates, which resulted in 536 (52.2%), and 300 (45.6%), online returns, respectively. In addition to the increase of online responses over the past three years, the overall response rate showed a slight increase of almost two percent (1.6%) in 2008-09 over 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
2008-09	4,451	1,202	27.0%	670	55.7%
2007-08	4,045	1,027	25.4%	536	52.2%
2006-07	3,953	658	16.6%	300	45.6%

## Results

Over half of the respondents (54.6%) from all degree and certificate programs reported that continuing their education was the main goal of completing a degree or certificate. "Change career fields" was the second most frequently selected goal among respondents (14.0%). A closer look by program at responses to "The main goal in completing a degree or certificate" finds that over half (59.2%) of the bachelor's degree-seeking students selected "Continue my education and "Earn more money." Over three-fourths of the AA students (77.4%) selected "Continuing my education" while nearly three-fourths of the AS/AAS students (71.3%) selected "Change career fields," "Continue my education," and "Earn more money." Over half of the CT, ATC, PSAV, and PSVC students (55.1%) selected "Continue my education" and "Change career fields."

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/AAS	CT/ATD/PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Change career fields	10.9%	4.6%	31.2%	22.8%	14.0%
Continue my education	48.3%	77.4%	24.9%	32.3%	54.6%
Earn more money	13.0%	5.2%	15.2%	13.4%	10.0%
Get a promotion	6.3%	1.8%	4.8%	3.9%	3.7%
Meet certification/training needs	5.9%	1.8%	8.2%	11.0%	5.1%
Obtain employment	10.1%	4.8%	11.9%	11.8%	8.3%
Other	5.5%	4.3%	3.7%	4.7%	4.4%
Total Responses	238	541	269	127	1175

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 (67.5%) as an accomplishment, followed by "Earn

more money” which was selected 24.1%; “Meet certification/training needs,” 20.1%; “Obtain employment,” 18.6%; and “Change career fields,” 14.8%.

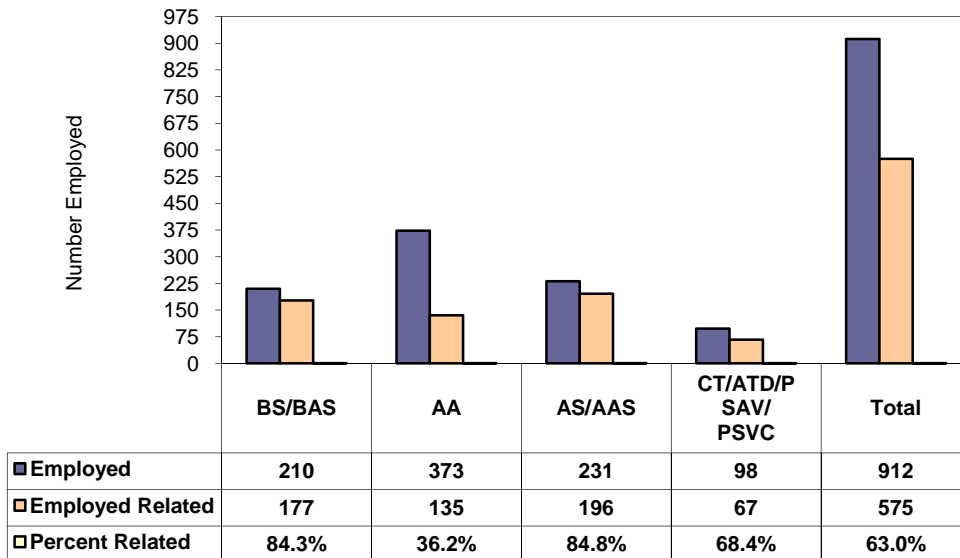
The majority of respondents (96.6%) indicated that they were satisfied with the help they received from SPC in meeting their goal(s). When asked “How well did SPC help you meet your above goal”, almost half (45.7%) of survey respondents indicated that SPC did “Very well” in helping them meet their goal, and 39.3% indicated “Exceptionally 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/AAS	CT/ATD/PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Exceptionally Well	47.1%	37.0%	39.8%	33.8%	39.3%
Very Well	39.2%	49.5%	43.8%	46.2%	45.7%
Adequately	11.3%	10.8%	11.7%	14.6%	11.5%
Poorly	0.8%	1.1%	1.8%	3.1%	1.4%
Not At All	1.7%	1.6%	2.9%	2.3%	2.0%
Total Responses	240	554	274	130	1198

Results from the survey indicated that three-fourths of the respondents (76.3%) were currently employed. Sixty-three percent (63.0%) 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/AAS, and Certificate) reported higher field-related employment levels in a range of 68.4% to 84.8% while graduates of the AA program reported (36.2%) field-related employment. Respondents indicated that five were in active military service while four are in military reserves.

**Figure 1**  
*What is your current employment status?*



The majority of the 912 employed alumni (99.7%) provided their wage per hour and/or approximate annual equivalents earnings. Although the amounts earned varied by program, the most frequently reported wage for the respondents was between \$10.00 and \$14.99 (\$21,000 to \$30,999 annually). Table 5 summarizes wage per hour and annual salary.

Table 5  
*Hourly wage by degree or certificate awarded*

Hourly Wage/ Approximate Annual	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Less than \$10.00 (less than \$21,000)	4.8%	33.0%	1.3%	2.0%	15.2%
\$10.00 - \$14.99 (\$21,000 - \$30,999)	12.1%	39.7%	23.6%	19.0%	27.1%
\$15.00 - \$19.99 (\$31,000 - \$41,999)	21.3%	11.5%	15.7%	23.0%	16.1%
\$20.00 - \$24.99 (\$42,000 - \$51,999)	14.0%	7.0%	36.7%	24.0%	17.9%
\$25.00 or more (\$52,000 or more)	47.8%	8.8%	22.7%	32.0%	23.8%
Total Responses	207	373	229	100	909

More than half (65.5%) of the 1,190 alumni responding to the survey question, "Are you continuing your education at SPC or another college/university?" answered that they were, and the vast majority of AA graduates (89.5%) reported that they were continuing their education. Over one-third (36.4 %) of the baccalaureate graduates, just under fifty percent of AS/AAS (46.1%) and fifty-eight percent (58.1%) of the Certificate completers reported continuing their education. Of those continuing their education, about two-thirds (66.3%) of AA students were enrolled full-time, while over half of AS/AAS (53.6%), and sixty-three percent (62.7%) of the certificate students were enrolled part time. 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/AAS	CT/ATD/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Continuing Education	36.4%	89.5%	46.1%	58.1%	65.5%
Respondents	239	551	271	129	1190

Table 7  
*Enrollment status by degree or certificate awarded*

Enrollment Status	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Part-time	56.3%	30.6%	53.6%	62.7%	40.3%
Full-time	24.1%	66.3%	40.0%	29.3%	53.8%
Unknown	19.5%	3.0%	6.4%	8.0%	5.9%
Respondents	87	493	125	75	780

The majority of students (93.4%) reported continuing their education in Florida. Almost half (45.0%) of the respondents furthering their education indicated re-enrolling at SPC, and 30.6% reported transferring to the University of South Florida. Table 8 presents details of respondents' attendance at various Florida state universities and colleges.

Table 8  
*Institutions where students are continuing their education*

Institutions	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
SPC	10.4%	39.3%	85.1%	73.9%	45.0%
USF	49.4%	36.0%	1.0%	6.5%	30.6%
UF	0.0%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%
UCF	2.6%	3.3%	1.0%	0.0%	2.7%
FSU	0.0%	2.3%	1.0%	0.0%	1.7%
Other In-State	15.6%	11.0%	5.0%	8.7%	10.5%
Out of State	22.1%	3.7%	6.9%	10.9%	6.6%
Total Responses	77	483	101	46	707

The graduates continuing their education were asked "How well did SPC prepare you for continuing your education?" Satisfaction levels were notable with 97.9% of the graduates indicating that their SPC studies prepared them from "adequately" to "exceptionally well" for continuing their education. Details of students' satisfaction by degree or certificate awarded can be seen 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/AAS	CT/ATD/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Exceptionally Well	34.5%	31.6%	34.1%	42.5%	33.4%
Very Well	45.2%	51.7%	48.8%	35.6%	49.0%
Adequately	15.5%	15.6%	13.8%	17.8%	15.5%
Not at all	4.8%	0.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.9%
Poorly	0.0%	0.8%	1.6%	4.1%	1.2%
Total Responses	84	487	123	73	767

When asked, "Would you recommend your program at SPC to others?" 918 respondents (96.2%) selected "yes." Table 10 provides a break down by degree program or certificate awarded.

Table 10

*Recommending SPC program to others by degree of certificate awarded*

Would you recommend your program at SPC to others?	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Yes	94.9%	97.5%	95.6%	92.6%	96.2%
No	5.1%	2.5%	4.4%	7.4%	3.8%
Total Responses	137	516	206	95	954

The 2008-09 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.

Based on the results, graduates felt SPC adequately prepared them in the majority of their general education skills areas as shown in Table 11. Of the 25 outcome areas, 20 outcomes received mean scores of 4.2 or higher, one received a mean score of 3.9, and four received means of 3.8.

Table 11

*College Preparation Ratings for Recent Graduates*

<i>General Education Outcomes</i> <i>(Five point rating scale with five being the highest)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Item Ratings</i> <i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Communicating clearly and effectively with others through:</i>			
Speaking	1187	4.2	0.77
Listening	1184	4.3	0.70
Reading	1181	4.3	0.74
Writing	1179	4.2	0.76
<i>Your use of mathematical and computational skills:</i>			
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	1187	3.8	0.89
Using computational skills appropriately	1184	3.9	0.84
Accurately interpreting mathematical data	1182	3.8	0.87
<i>Using the following forms of technology:</i>			
Email	1186	4.7	0.63
Word Processing	1186	4.5	0.74
Spreadsheets	1185	3.8	1.02
Databases	1178	3.8	1.00
Internet Research	1182	4.5	0.71

Table 11, continued  
*College Preparation Ratings for Recent Graduates*

<i>General Education Outcomes</i> (Five point rating scale with five being the highest)	<i>Item Ratings</i>		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Thinking logically and critically to solve problems:</i>			
Gathering and assessing relevant information	1186	4.4	0.69
Inquiring about and interpreting information	1184	4.3	0.71
Organizing and evaluating information	1187	4.4	0.70
Analyzing and explaining information to others	1179	4.3	0.75
Using information to solve problems	1173	4.4	0.70
<i>Working effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>			
Participating as a team player (e.g., group projects)	1183	4.4	0.74
Working well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	1185	4.4	0.71
Using ethical courses of action	1182	4.5	0.66
Demonstrating leadership skills	1177	4.3	0.78
<i>Appreciating the importance of lifelong learning:</i>			
Showing an interest in career development	1183	4.5	0.67
Being open to new ideas and challenges	1182	4.5	0.65
Willingness to take on new responsibilities	1180	4.5	0.65
Pursuing additional educational opportunities	1182	4.5	0.69

## Conclusion

Results from the 2008-09 Recent Alumni Survey (2008-09 SPC Graduates) indicated that over seventy-six percent (76.3%) of the graduates who responded are currently in the labor market. Nearly two-thirds of those (63.0%) are employed in a field related to their studies. The AS and Certificate programs reported the highest rate of related employment (79.9%).

Wage earnings varied by degree or certificate awarded; BS/BAS respondents reported highest earnings most often, AS/AAS and certificate programs together reported that over half of the respondents (58.3%) earned between \$42,000 and \$51,999, or above; while the majority of AA degree respondents reported lower wage earnings. However, AA degree respondents reported the highest rate of continued education (89.5%), and 66.3% of those were enrolled full-time. As a whole, about two-thirds of SPC graduates are pursuing further education (65.5%).

SPC graduates also reported high levels of satisfaction in the areas of general education outcomes associated with the general education skills. Recent alumni (97.9%) reported SPC had prepared them adequately for continued education, and the majority of respondents (96.2%) would recommend their program to others.