

## 2009-10 EMPLOYER SURVEY RESULTS 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 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 2009-10 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. Although employers are surveyed one time per graduate, some graduates may have earned multiple awards. Therefore, the number of surveys administered and responses received are reported for each degree or certificate the student was awarded.

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.

Two-hundred and eighty-five (285) employer surveys were sent out to employers. One-hundred and five (105) surveys were returned resulting in an overall response rate of

36.84%. Employers of upper-division alumni had a 32.37% response rate, and employers of lower-division alumni had a response rate of 48.71%. Table 1 provides a breakdown 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 two-hundred and seven (207) employer surveys sent to employers of upper-division graduates, one-hundred and sixty-four (164) were sent to employers of College of Education graduates. This group of recent alumni does not need to provide employer contact information or give permission to contact them, as the contact information is already supplied by the state of Florida. The State requires that all College of Education graduate employers be surveyed. Graduates of programs other than the College of Education must provide their permission to SPC before the College can survey the employer.

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 LD Certificate Programs)	1583	446	78	38	48.71%
Upper Division Programs (BS/BAS and UD Certificate Programs)	823	221	207	67	32.37%

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

**Results**

Key findings from the 2009-10 Employer Survey include:

- One-hundred percent (100%) of the employers responding indicated they would hire another SPC graduate.
- More than fifty percent (56.52%) 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).
- Thirty-seven (37) unique employers expressed an interest in participating in one or more of the College's five suggested employment activities. The most popular areas of interest among those willing to participate were providing opportunities for student co-op/internship placement (72.97%), assisting in job placement of graduates (43.24%), and serving on an advisory committee (37.84%). [Note: The total exceeded 100% because this question allowed multiple responses by survey respondents.]

All twenty-five key general education competencies and foundational skill areas received mean scores between 4.1 and 4.6 on a 5-point Likert scale (5 indicates "excellent"). This response scale also included a "Not Applicable" (NA) rating. The two categories with satisfaction levels consistently over 4.4 were:

- Communicate clearly and effectively with others
- Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning

The outcome with the highest mean rating (4.6) was “Uses ethical courses of action” from the “Work effectively with others in a variety of settings” area. The outcome with the lowest mean rating (4.1) was “Demonstrates leadership skills” from the “Work effectively with others in a variety of settings” area. “Demonstrates leadership skills” had the greatest standard deviation (1.00). 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**  
*2009-10 Overall Employer Responses*

<i>General Education Outcomes</i> <i>(Five point rating scale with five being the highest)</i>	<i>Item Ratings</i>			
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N/A*</i>
<i>Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:</i>				
Speaking	104	4.4	0.81	1
Listening	102	4.4	0.84	1
Reading	101	4.5	0.73	1
Writing	100	4.5	0.76	3
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	104	4.2	0.82	18
Uses computational skills appropriately	103	4.3	0.78	13
Accurately interprets mathematical data	103	4.2	0.83	14
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	104	4.5	0.81	4
Word Processing	104	4.5	0.77	16
Spreadsheets	103	4.2	0.88	38
Databases	103	4.2	0.86	34
Internet Research	103	4.4	0.80	14
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	102	4.3	0.83	1
Inquires and interprets information	102	4.2	0.84	1
Organizes and evaluates information	103	4.2	0.91	1
Analyzes and explains information to others	103	4.2	0.89	1
Uses information to solve problems	102	4.2	0.91	1

Table 2 continued next page

Table 2, continued  
 2009-10 Overall Employer Responses

<i>General Education Outcomes</i> <i>(Five point rating scale with five being the highest)</i>	<i>Item Ratings</i>			
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N/A*</i>
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., groups projects)	104	4.5	0.81	1
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	104	4.5	0.78	2
Uses ethical courses of action	103	4.6	0.73	2
Demonstrates leadership skills	104	4.1	1.00	1
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	104	4.4	0.81	2
Open to new ideas and challenges	104	4.5	0.81	1
Willing to take on new responsibilities	104	4.4	0.80	2
Pursues additional educational opportunities	104	4.4	0.83	7

\*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 LD Certificate Programs). The table includes the number of responses and the mean response for each outcome. Employers indicated high levels of satisfaction with lower division graduates' general education outcomes. Of the twenty-five outcomes, eighteen received a mean score of 4.4 or higher. The remaining seven had mean scores between 4.2 and 4.3.

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

<i>General Education Outcomes</i> <i>(Five point rating scale with five being the highest)</i>	<i>Item Ratings</i>			
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N/A*</i>
<i>Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:</i>				
Speaking	38	4.6	0.83	1
Listening	37	4.4	0.94	1
Reading	37	4.7	0.68	1
Writing	37	4.6	0.73	2
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	38	4.2	0.92	7
Uses computational skills appropriately	37	4.3	0.87	5
Accurately interprets mathematical data	37	4.2	0.92	6

Table 3 continued next page

Table 3, continued  
 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>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	38	4.6	0.82	4
Word Processing	38	4.6	0.78	15
Spreadsheets	38	4.4	1.03	22
Databases	38	4.4	0.98	17
Internet Research	38	4.6	0.73	9
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	36	4.4	0.88	1
Inquires and interprets information	36	4.4	0.81	1
Organizes and evaluates information	37	4.2	1.02	1
Analyzes and explains information to others	37	4.2	0.99	1
Uses information to solve problems	36	4.3	1.04	1
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., groups projects)	38	4.5	0.99	1
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	38	4.5	0.87	1
Uses ethical courses of action	38	4.5	0.77	1
Demonstrates leadership skills	38	4.2	1.06	1
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	38	4.5	0.80	1
Open to new ideas and challenges	38	4.5	0.77	1
Willing to take on new responsibilities	38	4.4	0.95	1
Pursues additional educational opportunities	38	4.5	0.85	3

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 and UD Certificate Programs). Employers indicated high levels of satisfaction with general education outcomes for upper-division graduates. All outcomes received mean scores of 4.0 or higher.

**Table 4**  
**Employer Survey Response for Upper Division Programs (BS/BAS and UD Certificate Programs)**

<i>General Education Outcomes</i> <i>(Five point rating scale with five being the highest)</i>	<i>Item Ratings</i>			
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N/A*</i>
<i>Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:</i>				
Speaking	66	4.4	0.80	---
Listening	65	4.4	0.79	---
Reading	64	4.4	0.75	---
Writing	63	4.4	0.77	1
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	66	4.2	0.76	11
Uses computational skills appropriately	66	4.3	0.73	8
Accurately interprets mathematical data	66	4.2	0.78	8
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	66	4.5	0.81	---
Word Processing	66	4.4	0.77	1
Spreadsheets	65	4.2	0.83	16
Databases	65	4.1	0.80	17
Internet Research	65	4.4	0.82	5
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	66	4.3	0.80	---
Inquires and interprets information	66	4.2	0.86	---
Organizes and evaluates information	66	4.1	0.86	---
Analyzes and explains information to others	66	4.1	0.84	---
Uses information to solve problems	66	4.2	0.85	---
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., groups projects)	66	4.6	0.70	---
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	66	4.5	0.73	1
Uses ethical courses of action	65	4.6	0.71	1
Demonstrates leadership skills	66	4.0	0.96	---
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	66	4.3	0.81	1
Open to new ideas and challenges	66	4.4	0.84	---
Willing to take on new responsibilities	66	4.5	0.71	1
Pursues additional educational opportunities	66	4.3	0.83	4

*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 the AS/AAS degree, the BS/BAS degree, and the Certificate programs are achieving their intended objective of adequately preparing students for the workplace, by enhancing their skills, increasing their knowledge, and instilling a desire to build on personal and professional growth.