

## 2011-12 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 (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 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 2011-12 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 sixty (260) employer surveys were sent out to employers. One-hundred and forty-two (142) surveys were returned resulting in an overall response

rate of 54.6%. Employers of upper-division alumni had a 50.0% response rate, and employers of lower-division alumni had a response rate of 63.6%. 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 one-hundred and seventy-two (172) employer surveys sent to employers of upper-division graduates, one-hundred and twenty-six (126) were sent to employers of College of Education (COE) graduates. COE recent alumni do 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)	1624	332	88	56	63.6%
Upper Division Programs (BS/BAS and UD Certificate Programs)	1160	303	172	86	50.0%

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 2011-12 Employer Survey include:

- Ninety-nine percent (99.3%) of the employers responding indicated they would hire another SPC graduate.
- Almost fifty percent (47.3%) of the employers 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).
- Approximately fifty percent (52.1%) of respondents expressed an interest in participating in one or more of the College's five suggested employment activities. The areas of most interest among those willing to participate were providing opportunities for student co-op/internship placement (64.9%); providing opportunities for job placement of graduates (51.4%); and providing input about education/training needs for the employer's workforce area (50.0%). [Note: The total may exceed 100% because this question allowed multiple responses by survey respondents.]

Of the twenty-five key general education competencies and foundational skill areas, seven received mean scores of 4.5 on a 5-point Likert scale (5 indicates "excellent"), with the remaining eighteen receiving mean scores between 4.1 and 4.4. This response

scale also included a “Not Applicable” (NA) rating. The three categories with satisfaction levels consistently over 4.3 were:

- Communicate clearly and effectively with others
- Use the following forms of technology
- Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning

The outcomes with the highest mean rating (4.5) were “Reading” from the “Communicate clearly and effectively with others” category; “E-mail” and “Internet Research” from the “Use the following forms of technology” category; “Participates as team player (e.g., groups projects),”, “Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds,” and “Uses ethical courses of action” from the “Work effectively with others in a variety of settings” category; and “Open to new ideas and challenges” from the “Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning” category. 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. Overall employer ratings of the graduates’ general education outcomes are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*2011-12 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	141	4.4	0.7	0
Listening	141	4.4	0.8	0
Reading	140	4.5	0.7	1
Writing	139	4.4	0.7	2
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	121	4.2	0.8	18
Uses computational skills appropriately	127	4.3	0.8	11
Accurately interprets mathematical data	122	4.2	0.8	17
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	134	4.5	0.7	4
Word Processing	118	4.4	0.7	20
Spreadsheets	94	4.3	0.8	43
Databases	100	4.3	0.8	37
Internet Research	111	4.5	0.8	26
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	139	4.3	0.8	0
Inquires and interprets information	139	4.3	0.8	0
Organizes and evaluates information	138	4.3	0.8	0

<i>General Education Outcomes</i>	<i>Item Ratings</i>			
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N/A*</i>
<i>(Five point rating scale with five being the highest)</i>				
Analyzes and explains information to others	139	4.2	0.9	0
Uses information to solve problems	138	4.3	0.8	0
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., groups projects)	138	4.5	0.9	1
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	138	4.5	0.8	1
Uses ethical courses of action	137	4.5	0.8	2
Demonstrates leadership skills	135	4.1	1.0	4
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	138	4.4	0.9	1
Open to new ideas and challenges	137	4.5	0.8	2
Willing to take on new responsibilities	137	4.4	0.9	2
Pursues additional educational opportunities	132	4.4	0.8	7

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 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. Fourteen outcomes received mean scores of 4.5 or higher, while the remaining eleven received mean scores between 4.0 and 4.3.

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

<i>General Education Outcomes</i>	<i>Item Ratings</i>			
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N/A*</i>
<i>(Five point rating scale with five being the highest)</i>				
<i>Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:</i>				
Speaking	55	4.5	0.8	0
Listening	55	4.5	0.7	0
Reading	55	4.5	0.7	0
Writing	55	4.5	0.7	0
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	46	4.2	0.9	7
Uses computational skills appropriately	50	4.2	0.9	2
Accurately interprets mathematical data	48	4.2	0.9	5
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				

<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>
E-mail	51	4.6	0.7	3
Word Processing	41	4.5	0.7	13
Spreadsheets	34	4.3	0.8	20
Databases	38	4.3	0.8	16
Internet Research	42	4.5	0.7	12
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	55	4.3	0.8	0
Inquires and interprets information	55	4.3	0.8	0
Organizes and evaluates information	55	4.3	0.8	0
Analyzes and explains information to others	55	4.2	0.9	0
Uses information to solve problems	55	4.3	0.8	0
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., groups projects)	55	4.6	0.7	0
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	55	4.5	0.8	0
Uses ethical courses of action	54	4.5	0.8	1
Demonstrates leadership skills	53	4.0	1.0	2
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	55	4.5	0.8	0
Open to new ideas and challenges	54	4.5	0.8	1
Willing to take on new responsibilities	55	4.6	0.8	0
Pursues additional educational opportunities	52	4.5	0.8	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. One outcome received a mean score of 4.5, while the remaining twenty-four received mean scores between 4.1 and 4.4.

**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	86	4.4	0.7	0
Listening	86	4.4	0.8	0
Reading	85	4.4	0.7	1
Writing	84	4.4	0.7	2
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	75	4.3	0.7	11
Uses computational skills appropriately	77	4.3	0.7	9
Accurately interprets mathematical data	74	4.3	0.7	12
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	83	4.5	0.8	1
Word Processing	77	4.4	0.8	7
Spreadsheets	60	4.3	0.8	23
Databases	62	4.3	0.8	21
Internet Research	69	4.4	0.8	14
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	84	4.3	0.9	0
Inquires and interprets information	84	4.3	0.8	0
Organizes and evaluates information	83	4.3	0.8	0
Analyzes and explains information to others	84	4.1	0.9	0
Uses information to solve problems	83	4.3	0.9	0
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., groups projects)	83	4.4	0.9	1
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	83	4.4	0.9	1
Uses ethical courses of action	83	4.4	0.9	1
Demonstrates leadership skills	82	4.1	1.0	2
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	83	4.3	0.9	1
Open to new ideas and challenges	83	4.4	0.8	1
Willing to take on new responsibilities	82	4.3	0.9	2
Pursues additional educational opportunities	80	4.3	0.8	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 all 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.