

2011-12 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 (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 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.

Graduates are sent one survey to complete, even in cases where they may have earned multiple degrees within the same year. In these cases, the reported number of surveys sent and responses received are counted once per degree or certificate awarded to the student.

Responses

The Recent Alumni Survey was administered to 5,971 graduates from Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science/Associate in Applied Science (AS/AAS), Certificate programs (CT, ATD, ATC, PSAV, and PSVC), Bachelor of Science (BS), and Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degrees. The 2011-12 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, one hundred and fifty-nine surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 19.4%. 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	Percent of Total Responses
BS/BAS	1,050	275	26.2%	23.7%
AA	3,187	524	16.4%	45.2%
AS/AAS	958	237	24.7%	20.4%
CT/ATD/ATC/PSAV/PSVC	776	123	15.9%	10.6%
TOTAL	5,971	1,159	19.4%	N/A

This was the eighth year that graduates were initially contacted electronically. The survey of 2011-12 graduates received 471 (40.6%) of the 1,159 responses online. This is a decline from the surveys administered to 2010-11 and 2009-10 graduates, which resulted in 570 (44.7%) and 576 (46.0%) online returns, respectively. Additionally, the overall response rate showed a decline of approximately four and three-quarters percent (4.7%) in 2011-12 compared to 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
2011-12	5,971	1,159	19.4%	471	40.6%
2010-11	5,294	1,275	24.1%	570	44.7%
2009-10	4,929	1,255	25.5%	576	46.0%

Results

Almost half of the respondents (47.7%) 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 (19.1%). A closer look by program at responses to "The main goal in completing a degree or certificate" indicated that almost half (45.6%) of the bachelor's degree-seeking students selected "Continue my education." The majority of the AA students (66.1%) selected "Continuing my education" while over half of the AS/AAS students (58.7%) selected "Change career fields" or "Continue my education." Over half of the CT, ATD, ATC, PSAV, and PSVC students (64.3%) selected "Continue my education" or "Change career fields", as depicted in Table 3.

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/ATC/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Change career fields	11.0%	10.2%	37.0%	40.7%	19.1%
Continue my education	45.6%	66.1%	21.7%	23.6%	47.7%
Earn more money	14.6%	7.1%	15.3%	11.4%	11.0%
Get a promotion	6.2%	2.5%	3.8%	3.3%	3.7%
Meet certification/training needs	1.5%	2.5%	3.8%	9.8%	3.3%
Obtain employment	16.1%	7.3%	14.5%	10.6%	11.2%
Other	5.1%	4.4%	3.8%	0.8%	4.1%
Total Responses	274	522	235	123	1,154

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 (62.8%), followed by "Earn more money," 26.1%; "Obtain employment," 22.1%; "Change career fields," 18.3%, and "Meet certification/training needs," 14.8%.

A strong majority of respondents (95.0%) 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 (42.3%) of survey respondents indicated that SPC did "Very well" in helping them meet their goal, and 36.5% indicated "Exceptionally well" as depicted in Table 4.

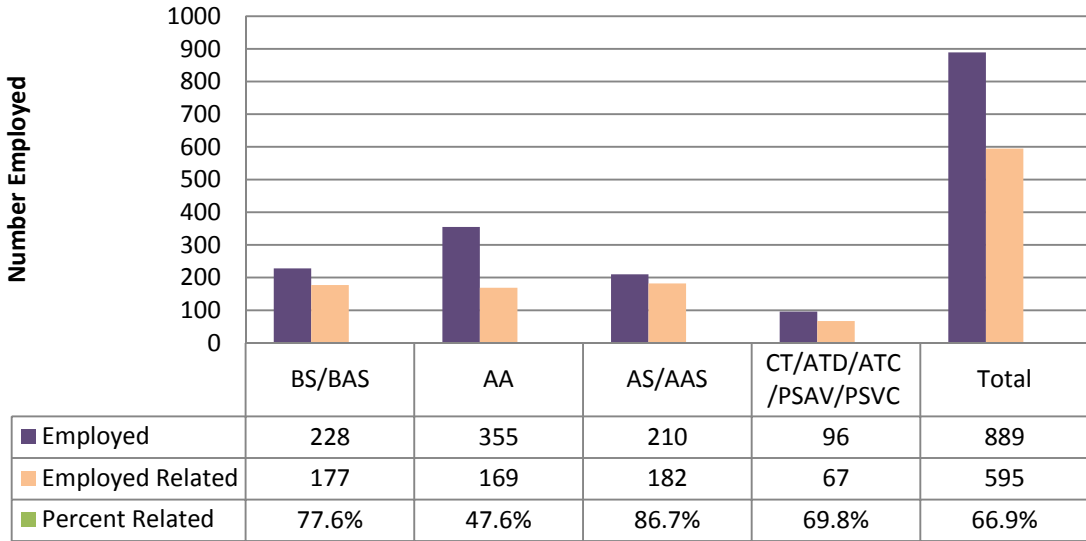
Table 4

Satisfaction by degree or certificate awarded

How well did SPC help you meet your above goal?	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ATC/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Exceptionally Well	39.6%	35.3%	38.5%	30.9%	36.5%
Very Well	38.8%	44.0%	42.7%	42.3%	42.3%
Adequately	15.8%	16.7%	15.0%	17.1%	16.2%
Poorly	1.8%	2.1%	1.3%	4.9%	2.2%
Not At All	4.0%	1.9%	2.6%	4.9%	2.9%
Total Responses	273	521	234	123	1,151

Results from the survey indicated that over three-fourths of the respondents (77.7%) were currently employed. Sixty-seven percent (66.9%) 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 69.8% to 86.7%, while graduates of the AA program reported lower (47.6%) field-related employment. Seven respondents indicated that they were currently in the military, with all seven in the reserves.

Figure 1
What is your current employment status?



The majority of the 889 employed alumni (97.5%) provided their wage per hour and/or approximate annual equivalent earnings. The average amounts earned by program are varied. While the most frequently reported hourly wage range for BS/BAS students was \$25.00 or more (43.2%), Certificate students reported earning \$15.00-\$19.99 (32.6%), AS/AAS students most frequently reported earning \$25.00 or more (30.1%), and AA students reported earning \$10.00 - \$14.99 (31.4%). 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/ATC/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Less than \$10.00 (less than \$21,000)	4.5%	27.3%	4.8%	4.4%	13.6%
\$10.00 - \$14.99 (\$21,000 - \$30,999)	16.2%	31.4%	17.7%	21.7%	23.2%
\$15.00 - \$19.99 (\$31,000 - \$41,999)	20.7%	12.8%	20.1%	32.6%	18.7%
\$20.00 - \$24.99 (\$42,000 - \$51,999)	15.3%	10.2%	27.3%	18.5%	16.5%
\$25.00 or more (\$52,000 or more)	43.2%	18.3%	30.1%	22.8%	28.0%
Total Responses	222	344	209	92	867

In response to the question, "Are you continuing your education at SPC or another college/university?" more than half (61.5%) of the 1,131 responded that they were. The majority of AA graduates (82.0%), over one-third (34.8%) of the baccalaureate graduates, and approximately fifty percent of AS/AAS (53.5%) and Certificate (49.6%) completers are continuing their education. Of those continuing their education, about two-thirds (62.4%) of AA students were enrolled full-time, while half of AS/AAS

(50.4%), over half (60.0%) of the certificate students, and over half (54.3%) of the BS/BAS 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/ATC/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Yes	34.8%	82.0%	53.5%	49.6%	61.5%
No	65.2%	18.0%	46.5%	50.4%	38.6%
Respondents	270	510	230	121	1,131

Table 7
Enrollment status by degree or certificate awarded

Enrollment Status	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ATC/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Part-time	54.3%	32.3%	50.4%	60.0%	40.9%
Full-time	31.9%	62.4%	39.8%	31.7%	51.7%
Unknown	13.8%	5.3%	9.8%	8.3%	7.5%
Total Continuing Education	94	418	123	60	695

The majority of students (91.4%) reported continuing their education in Florida. Almost half (46.9%) of the respondents furthering their education indicated re-enrolling at SPC, and 21.9% reported transferring to the University of South Florida. Students who were continuing their education were also asked if they were enrolled through the University Partnership Center (UPC), and twenty-four (3.7%) of the 665 respondents indicated that they were enrolled through the UPC. Table 8 presents details of respondents' attendance at various universities and colleges.

Table 8
Institutions where students are continuing their education

Institutions	TOTAL
SPC	46.9%
USF	21.9%
UF	3.1%
UCF	3.3%
FSU	1.5%
Other In-State	14.8%
Out of State	8.6%
Total Responses	616

The graduates continuing their education were asked "How well did SPC prepare you for continuing your education?" Satisfaction levels were notable with 77.6% of the respondents indicating that their SPC studies prepared them either "very well" or "exceptionally well" for continuing their education. Details of students' satisfaction by degree or certificate awarded are illustrated 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/ATC/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Exceptionally Well	41.2%	31.3%	29.0%	49.2%	33.7%
Very Well	40.0%	44.9%	44.7%	40.7%	43.9%
Adequately	14.1%	20.8%	24.6%	6.8%	19.4%
Poorly	4.7%	2.7%	0.9%	1.7%	2.6%
Not at all	0.0%	0.3%	0.9%	1.7%	0.5%
Total Responses	85	403	114	59	661

When asked, "Would you recommend your program at SPC to others?" 1,028 respondents (94.5%) selected "yes." Table 10 provides a break down by degree program or certificate awarded.

Table 10

Recommending SPC program to others by degree or certificate awarded

Would you recommend your program at SPC to others?	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ATC/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Yes	94.2%	94.9%	95.5%	91.3%	94.5%
No	5.8%	5.1%	4.5%	8.7%	5.5%
Total Responses	260	490	223	115	1,088

The 2011-12 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 with labels from "1-Poor" to "5-Excellent."

Based on the results, graduates believe SPC prepared them in the majority of their general education skills areas as shown in Table 11. Of the 25 outcome areas, 5 outcomes received mean scores of 4.5 or higher, 16 received mean scores between 4.0 and 4.4, and 4 received mean scores between 3.8 and 3.9.

Table 11
College Preparation Ratings for Recent Graduates

General Education Outcomes (Five point rating scale with five being the highest)	Item Ratings		
	N	Mean	SD
Communicating clearly and effectively with others through:			
Speaking	1,118	4.2	0.8
Listening	1,109	4.3	0.8
Reading	1,111	4.3	0.8
Writing	1,107	4.2	0.8
Your use of mathematical and computational skills:			
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	1,115	3.8	0.9
Using computational skills appropriately	1,113	4.0	0.9
Accurately interpreting mathematical data	1,113	3.8	0.9
Using the following forms of technology:			
Email	1,113	4.6	0.7
Word Processing	1,110	4.5	0.8
Spreadsheets	1,102	3.9	1.0
Databases	1,102	3.9	1.0
Internet Research	1,112	4.5	0.8
Thinking logically and critically to solve problems:			
Gathering and assessing relevant information	1,114	4.4	0.7
Inquiring about and interpreting information	1,110	4.3	0.7
Organizing and evaluating information	1,110	4.4	0.7
Analyzing and explaining information to others	1,114	4.3	0.8
Using information to solve problems	1,109	4.4	0.7
Working effectively with others in a variety of settings:			
Participating as a team player (e.g., group projects)	1,108	4.3	0.8
Working well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	1,108	4.4	0.7
Using ethical courses of action	1,109	4.5	0.7
Demonstrating leadership skills	1,110	4.3	0.8
Appreciating the importance of lifelong learning:			
Showing an interest in career development	1,110	4.4	0.7
Being open to new ideas and challenges	1,109	4.4	0.7
Willingness to take on new responsibilities	1,109	4.5	0.7
Pursuing additional educational opportunities	1,109	4.4	0.8

Conclusion

Results from the 2011-12 Recent Alumni Survey (2011-12 SPC Graduates) indicated that almost eighty percent (77.7%) of the graduates who responded are currently employed. Over half of those (66.9%) are employed in a field related to their studies. The BS/BAS and AS/AAS programs reported the highest rate of related employment (77.6% and 86.7% respectively).

Wage earnings varied by degree or certificate awarded, but remained similar to the results in the 2010-11 Recent Alumni Survey, with 28.0% of respondents reporting wages of \$52,000 or more (up from 27.4% in 2010-11), and 23.2% reporting wages between \$21,000 and \$30,999 (up from 21.1% in 2010-11). The highest wages were reported most often among BS/BAS and AS/AAS respondents, at 43.2% (down from 49.2%) and 30.1% (up from 22.5%) respectively. Additionally, AA degree respondents reported the highest rate of continued education (82.0%), and 62.4% of those were enrolled full-time. Overall, nearly two-thirds (61.5%) of SPC graduates are pursuing further education.

SPC graduates also reported high levels of satisfaction in the areas of general education outcomes associated with the general education skills. Most recent alumni (97.0%) reported SPC had prepared them adequately for continued education, and the majority of respondents (94.5%) would recommend their program to others.