

## 2012-13 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 2012-13 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 seventy-six (276) employer surveys were sent out to employers. One-hundred and eighty-one (181) surveys were returned resulting in an overall response

rate of 65.6%. Employers of upper-division alumni had a 64.1% response rate, and employers of lower-division alumni had a response rate of 69.1%. 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 ninety-five (195) employer surveys sent to employers of upper-division graduates, one-hundred and twenty-seven (127) 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)	1647	370	81	56	69.1%
Upper Division Programs (BS/BAS and UD Certificate Programs)	1254	323	195	125	64.1%

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 2012-13 Employer Survey include:

- Ninety-nine percent (99.4%) of the employers responding indicated they would hire another SPC graduate.
- Almost forty percent (39.2%) 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).
- Over fifty percent (55.2%) of respondents 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 (68.0%), providing opportunities for job placement of graduates (45.0%), and serving on an advisory committee (39.0%). [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, eight received mean scores between 4.5 and 4.6 on a 5-point Likert scale (5 indicates "excellent"), with the remaining seventeen 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 at 4.3 or higher were:

- Communicate clearly and effectively with others
- Use the following forms of technology
- 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” 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” category. Overall employer ratings of the graduates’ general education outcomes are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*2012-13 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	178	4.4	0.7	1
Listening	177	4.4	0.8	1
Reading	174	4.4	0.7	3
Writing	176	4.3	0.8	2
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	157	4.2	0.8	22
Uses computational skills appropriately	164	4.3	0.8	15
Accurately interprets mathematical data	159	4.2	0.8	19
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	177	4.5	0.7	2
Word Processing	152	4.5	0.8	27
Spreadsheets	139	4.3	0.8	40
Databases	136	4.3	0.8	43
Internet Research	156	4.5	0.7	23
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	176	4.3	0.8	2
Inquires and interprets information	174	4.3	0.8	3
Organizes and evaluates information	175	4.3	0.8	3
Analyzes and explains information to others	175	4.2	0.8	3
Uses information to solve problems	176	4.3	0.8	2
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., group projects)	178	4.5	0.8	1
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	179	4.5	0.8	0
Uses ethical courses of action	178	4.6	0.7	1

<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>N/A*</i>
Demonstrates leadership skills	178	4.1	1.0	1
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	176	4.5	0.8	2
Open to new ideas and challenges	178	4.4	0.8	1
Willing to take on new responsibilities	177	4.5	0.8	2
Pursues additional educational opportunities	174	4.4	0.8	5

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. Four outcomes received a mean score of 4.5, while the remaining twenty-one received mean scores between 4.1 and 4.4.

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

<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>N/A*</i>
<i>Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:</i>				
Speaking	55	4.4	0.8	1
Listening	55	4.3	0.8	1
Reading	54	4.3	0.8	1
Writing	55	4.2	0.8	1
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	48	4.2	0.8	8
Uses computational skills appropriately	53	4.3	0.8	3
Accurately interprets mathematical data	50	4.1	0.9	6
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	55	4.5	0.9	1
Word Processing	38	4.3	1.0	18
Spreadsheets	37	4.3	0.9	19
Databases	38	4.4	0.9	18
Internet Research	42	4.5	0.8	14

<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>N/A*</i>
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	55	4.2	0.9	1
Inquires and interprets information	55	4.3	0.9	1
Organizes and evaluates information	55	4.3	0.9	1
Analyzes and explains information to others	55	4.2	0.9	1
Uses information to solve problems	55	4.3	0.9	1
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., group projects)	56	4.4	1.0	0
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	56	4.4	0.9	0
Uses ethical courses of action	56	4.5	0.8	0
Demonstrates leadership skills	56	4.1	1.1	0
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	55	4.5	0.9	0
Open to new ideas and challenges	55	4.3	1.0	1
Willing to take on new responsibilities	55	4.3	1.0	1
Pursues additional educational opportunities	54	4.3	0.9	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 and UD Certificate Programs). Employers indicated high levels of satisfaction with general education outcomes for upper-division graduates. Ten outcomes received mean scores between 4.5 and 4.6, while the remaining fifteen 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> (Five point rating scale with five being the highest)	<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	123	4.4	0.7	0
Listening	122	4.4	0.7	0
Reading	120	4.5	0.7	2
Writing	121	4.4	0.8	1

<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>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	109	4.3	0.8	14
Uses computational skills appropriately	111	4.4	0.8	12
Accurately interprets mathematical data	109	4.3	0.8	13
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	122	4.5	0.7	1
Word Processing	114	4.6	0.7	9
Spreadsheets	102	4.3	0.8	21
Databases	98	4.3	0.8	25
Internet Research	114	4.5	0.7	9
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	121	4.4	0.7	1
Inquires and interprets information	119	4.3	0.7	2
Organizes and evaluates information	120	4.3	0.7	2
Analyzes and explains information to others	120	4.2	0.8	2
Uses information to solve problems	121	4.3	0.8	1
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., group projects)	122	4.6	0.7	1
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	123	4.5	0.7	0
Uses ethical courses of action	122	4.6	0.6	1
Demonstrates leadership skills	122	4.1	0.9	1
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	121	4.5	0.7	2
Open to new ideas and challenges	123	4.5	0.7	0
Willing to take on new responsibilities	122	4.5	0.7	1
Pursues additional educational opportunities	120	4.4	0.8	3

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.