

2013-14 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 2013-14 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 fifty-five (255) employer surveys were sent out to employers. One-hundred and forty-one (141) surveys were returned resulting in an overall response

rate of 55.3%. Employers of upper-division alumni had a 51.6% response rate, and employers of lower-division alumni had a response rate of 64.4%. 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 eighty-two (182) employer surveys sent to employers of upper-division graduates, one-hundred and twenty-two (122) 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)	1788	267	73	47	64.4%
Upper Division Programs (BS/BAS and UD Certificate Programs)	1163	260	182	94	51.6%

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 2013-14 Employer Survey include:

- One-hundred percent (100.0%) of the employers responding indicated they would hire another SPC graduate.
- Over forty percent (45.3%) 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).
- Over forty percent (45.4%) 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 (65.6%), providing opportunities for job placement of graduates (45.3%), and serving on an advisory committee (45.3%). [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, six received a mean score of 4.5 on a 5-point Likert scale (5 indicates "excellent"), with the remaining nineteen receiving mean scores between 4.1 and 4.4. This response scale also included a "Not Applicable" (NA) rating. The two categories with satisfaction levels consistently at 4.4 or higher were:

- Communicate clearly and effectively with others
- Use mathematical and computational skills

The outcomes with the highest mean rating (4.5) were “Reading” from the “Communicate clearly and effectively with others” category, “E-mail” and “Word Processing” from the “Use the following forms of technology” category, and “Participates as a team player,” “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. 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
2013-14 Overall Employer Responses

<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	141	4.4	0.8	0
Listening	141	4.4	0.7	0
Reading	141	4.5	0.7	0
Writing	141	4.4	0.7	0
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	129	4.4	0.7	11
Uses computational skills appropriately	128	4.4	0.7	11
Accurately interprets mathematical data	128	4.4	0.7	12
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	139	4.5	0.7	1
Word Processing	123	4.5	0.7	17
Spreadsheets	104	4.2	0.8	36
Databases	111	4.2	0.8	29
Internet Research	124	4.4	0.7	15
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	140	4.4	0.8	0
Inquires and interprets information	140	4.3	0.8	0
Organizes and evaluates information	140	4.4	0.8	0
Analyzes and explains information to others	140	4.3	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., group projects)	139	4.5	0.8	0

<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>
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	140	4.5	0.7	0
Uses ethical courses of action	139	4.5	0.8	1
Demonstrates leadership skills	137	4.1	1.0	2
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	136	4.4	0.8	3
Open to new ideas and challenges	139	4.4	0.8	0
Willing to take on new responsibilities	137	4.3	0.8	1
Pursues additional educational opportunities	137	4.4	0.8	2

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. Ten outcomes received mean scores between 4.5 and 4.6, while the remaining fifteen received mean scores between 4.2 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	47	4.5	0.9	0
Listening	47	4.4	0.7	0
Reading	47	4.5	0.7	0
Writing	47	4.5	0.7	0
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	42	4.4	0.7	4
Uses computational skills appropriately	42	4.5	0.7	4
Accurately interprets mathematical data	40	4.4	0.7	6
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	46	4.4	0.7	1
Word Processing	37	4.4	0.7	10
Spreadsheets	32	4.3	0.8	15
Databases	36	4.2	0.8	11

<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>
Internet Research	38	4.4	0.7	9
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	47	4.4	0.8	0
Inquires and interprets information	47	4.4	0.8	0
Organizes and evaluates information	47	4.5	0.7	0
Analyzes and explains information to others	47	4.4	0.8	0
Uses information to solve problems	46	4.4	0.8	0
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., group projects)	46	4.6	0.8	0
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	47	4.6	0.8	0
Uses ethical courses of action	46	4.6	0.7	1
Demonstrates leadership skills	47	4.2	1.0	0
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	47	4.5	0.8	0
Open to new ideas and challenges	47	4.4	0.9	0
Willing to take on new responsibilities	47	4.3	0.9	0
Pursues additional educational opportunities	46	4.5	0.7	1

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. Five outcomes received mean scores between 4.5 and 4.6, while the remaining twenty 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	94	4.3	0.7	0
Listening	94	4.4	0.7	0
Reading	94	4.4	0.7	0
Writing	94	4.4	0.7	0

<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>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	87	4.3	0.7	7
Uses computational skills appropriately	86	4.4	0.7	7
Accurately interprets mathematical data	88	4.4	0.7	6
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	93	4.6	0.7	0
Word Processing	86	4.5	0.7	7
Spreadsheets	72	4.2	0.8	21
Databases	75	4.2	0.8	18
Internet Research	86	4.4	0.7	6
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	93	4.3	0.8	0
Inquires and interprets information	93	4.3	0.8	0
Organizes and evaluates information	93	4.3	0.8	0
Analyzes and explains information to others	93	4.2	0.9	0
Uses information to solve problems	92	4.3	0.8	0
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., group projects)	93	4.5	0.8	0
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	93	4.5	0.7	0
Uses ethical courses of action	93	4.5	0.8	0
Demonstrates leadership skills	90	4.1	1.0	2
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	89	4.3	0.8	3
Open to new ideas and challenges	92	4.4	0.7	0
Willing to take on new responsibilities	90	4.3	0.8	1
Pursues additional educational opportunities	91	4.3	0.8	1

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.