

2014-15 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 2014-15 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-eight (258) employer surveys were sent out to employers. One-hundred and fifty-one (151) surveys were returned resulting in an overall response rate

of 58.5%. Employers of upper-division alumni had a 61.8% response rate, and employers of lower-division alumni had a response rate of 52.7%. 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 sixty-five (165) employer surveys sent to employers of upper-division graduates, one-hundred and seventeen (117) 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)	2127	350	93	49	52.7%
Upper Division Programs (BS/BAS and UD Certificate Programs)	1180	234	165	102	61.8%

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 2014-15 Employer Survey include:

- Ninety-nine percent (99.3%) of the employers responding indicated they would hire another SPC graduate.
- Almost forty percent (38.0%) 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 sixty percent (63.6%) 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 (60.4%), providing opportunities for job placement of graduates (53.1%), and serving on an advisory committee (49.0%). [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, ten received a mean score of 4.4 on a 5-point Likert scale (5 indicates "excellent"), and fourteen received mean scores between 4.1 and 4.3, with the remaining one receiving a mean score of 3.9. This response scale also included a "Not Applicable"

(NA) rating. The two categories with satisfaction levels consistently at 4.3 or higher were:

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

The outcomes with the highest mean rating (4.4) were “Reading” and “Writing” from the “Communicate clearly and effectively with others” category, “E-mail” and “Internet Research” from the “Use the following forms of technology” category, “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 “Shows interest in career development,” “Open to new ideas and challenges,” “Willing to take on new responsibilities,” and “Pursues additional educational opportunities” from the “Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning” category. The outcome with the lowest mean rating (3.9) 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
2014-15 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	149	4.3	0.8	1
Listening	149	4.3	0.9	1
Reading	147	4.4	0.7	3
Writing	147	4.4	0.7	3
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	135	4.2	0.8	15
Uses computational skills appropriately	136	4.2	0.8	14
Accurately interprets mathematical data	134	4.2	0.8	16
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	146	4.4	0.8	4
Word Processing	129	4.3	0.8	20
Spreadsheets	108	4.1	0.8	42
Databases	113	4.1	0.8	34
Internet Research	131	4.4	0.8	18
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	148	4.2	0.9	2
Inquires and interprets information	147	4.2	0.9	3
Organizes and evaluates information	147	4.2	0.9	3

<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>
Analyzes and explains information to others	147	4.1	1.0	3
Uses information to solve problems	147	4.1	1.0	3
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., group projects)	149	4.3	1.0	1
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	149	4.4	0.9	1
Uses ethical courses of action	145	4.4	0.9	5
Demonstrates leadership skills	146	3.9	1.1	4
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	146	4.4	0.8	1
Open to new ideas and challenges	147	4.4	0.9	0
Willing to take on new responsibilities	146	4.4	0.9	1
Pursues additional educational opportunities	141	4.4	0.8	6

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. Eleven outcomes received mean scores between 4.5 and 4.7, and the remaining fourteen received mean scores between 4.0 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	49	4.6	0.7	0
Listening	49	4.5	0.8	0
Reading	49	4.6	0.7	0
Writing	48	4.6	0.7	1
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	44	4.4	0.8	5
Uses computational skills appropriately	45	4.4	0.8	4
Accurately interprets mathematical data	44	4.4	0.8	5
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				

<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>
E-mail	46	4.5	0.8	3
Word Processing	35	4.4	0.8	14
Spreadsheets	32	4.3	0.8	17
Databases	33	4.3	0.8	14
Internet Research	45	4.5	0.8	4
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	49	4.4	0.9	0
Inquires and interprets information	49	4.4	0.9	0
Organizes and evaluates information	49	4.4	1.0	0
Analyzes and explains information to others	49	4.3	0.9	0
Uses information to solve problems	49	4.4	1.0	0
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., group projects)	49	4.4	1.1	0
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	49	4.6	0.9	0
Uses ethical courses of action	47	4.4	1.0	2
Demonstrates leadership skills	47	4.0	1.2	2
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	47	4.7	0.8	1
Open to new ideas and challenges	48	4.5	0.9	0
Willing to take on new responsibilities	48	4.6	0.8	0
Pursues additional educational opportunities	45	4.6	0.7	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. Twenty-three outcomes received mean scores between 4.0 and 4.4, while the remaining two received a mean score of 3.9.

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	100	4.2	0.8	1
Listening	100	4.2	0.9	1
Reading	98	4.3	0.7	3
Writing	99	4.3	0.8	2
<i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	91	4.1	0.8	10
Uses computational skills appropriately	91	4.1	0.8	10
Accurately interprets mathematical data	90	4.1	0.8	11
<i>Use the following forms of technology:</i>				
E-mail	100	4.4	0.8	1
Word Processing	94	4.3	0.8	6
Spreadsheets	76	4.0	0.9	25
Databases	80	4.1	0.8	20
Internet Research	86	4.3	0.8	14
<i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	99	4.1	0.9	2
Inquires and interprets information	98	4.1	0.9	3
Organizes and evaluates information	98	4.1	0.8	3
Analyzes and explains information to others	98	3.9	1.0	3
Uses information to solve problems	98	4.0	0.9	3
<i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>				
Participates as team player (e.g., group projects)	100	4.3	1.0	1
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	100	4.3	0.9	1
Uses ethical courses of action	98	4.4	0.8	3
Demonstrates leadership skills	99	3.9	1.1	2
<i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i>				
Shows interest in career development	99	4.3	0.8	0
Open to new ideas and challenges	99	4.3	0.8	0
Willing to take on new responsibilities	98	4.3	0.9	1
Pursues additional educational opportunities	96	4.3	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.