

## 2014-15 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 6,557 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 2014-15 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. A fourth e-mail message was the final point of contact with those who had not yet responded. One thousand and forty-six surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 16.0%. 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	1115	216	19.4%	20.7%
AA	3250	462	14.2%	44.2%
AS/AAS	1026	212	20.7%	20.3%
CT/ATD/ATC/PSAV/PSVC	1166	156	13.4%	14.9%
TOTAL	6,557	1,046	16.0%	N/A

This was the eleventh year that graduates were initially contacted electronically. The survey of 2014-15 graduates received 478 (45.7%) of the 1,046 responses online. This is an increase from the survey administered to 2013-14 graduates, which resulted in 411 (39.4%) online returns, and a percent increase from the survey administered to 2012-13 graduates, which resulted in 513 (40.9%) online returns. Additionally, the overall response rate showed a decrease of approximately one and one-half percent (1.6%) in 2014-15 compared to the previous year even though 644 additional graduates were surveyed, 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
2014-15	6,557	1,046	16.0%	478	45.7%
2013-14	5,913	1,042	17.6%	411	39.4%
2012-13	5,978	1,255	21.0%	513	40.9%

## Results

Almost half of the respondents (48.5%) from all degree and certificate programs reported that continuing their education was their main goal in completing a degree or certificate. "Change career fields" was the second most frequently selected goal among respondents (16.7%). A closer look by program at responses to "The main goal in completing a degree or certificate" indicated that over half (51.2%) of the bachelor's degree-seeking students selected "Continue my education." The majority of the AA students (67.7%) selected "Continuing my education" while over half of the AS/AAS students (51.4%) selected "Change career fields" or "Obtain employment." Over half of the CT, ATD, ATC, PSAV, and PSVC students (55.8%) 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	14.9%	7.4%	31.1%	26.9%	16.7%
Continue my education	51.2%	67.7%	18.4%	28.8%	48.5%
Earn more money	8.4%	7.6%	11.8%	9.6%	8.9%
Get a promotion	5.6%	2.6%	6.1%	8.3%	4.8%
Meet certification/training needs	3.7%	2.2%	6.1%	3.8%	3.5%
Obtain employment	9.3%	6.9%	20.3%	18.6%	11.9%
Other	7.0%	5.6%	6.1%	3.8%	5.7%
Total Responses	215	461	212	156	1044

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 (66.7%), followed by "Earn more money" (29.1%); "Obtain employment" (22.0%); "Change career fields" (17.6%); and "Meet certification/training needs" (17.1%).

A strong majority of respondents (95.5%) 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", more than one-third (38.2%) of survey respondents indicated that SPC did "Very well" in helping them meet their goal, and 41.2% indicated "Exceptionally well" as depicted in Table 4.

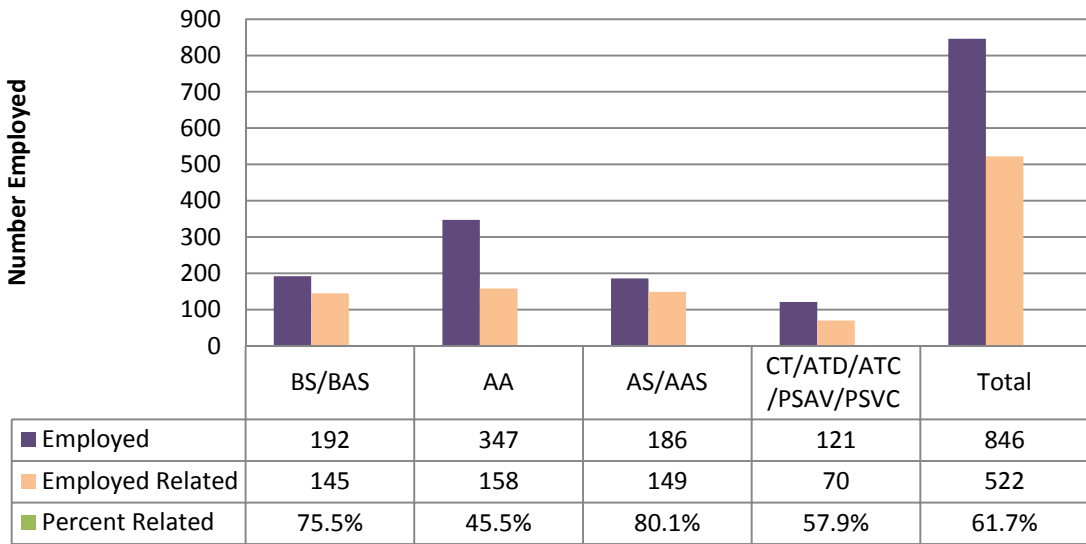
Table 4

*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	46.3%	42.0%	42.0%	30.8%	41.2%
Very Well	33.3%	39.9%	37.7%	40.4%	38.2%
Adequately	16.2%	14.6%	17.0%	19.2%	16.1%
Poorly	3.2%	2.4%	1.9%	3.2%	2.6%
Not At All	0.9%	1.1%	1.4%	6.4%	1.9%
Total Responses	216	459	212	156	1043

Results from the survey indicated that over four-fifths of the respondents (81.3%) were currently employed. Sixty-two percent (61.7%) 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 57.9% to 80.1%, while graduates of the AA program reported lower (45.5%) field-related employment. Sixteen respondents indicated that they were currently in the military, with ten in the reserves and six on active duty.

Figure 1  
*What is your current employment status?*



The majority of the 846 employed alumni (98.0%) 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 (50.0%) and AS/AAS students (32.4%) was \$25.00 or more, Certificate students (28.8%) and AA students (32.0%) most frequently reported earning \$10.00-\$14.99. 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)	2.1%	24.0%	3.8%	3.4%	11.7%
\$10.00 - \$14.99 (\$21,000 - \$30,999)	11.7%	32.0%	19.2%	28.8%	24.1%
\$15.00 - \$19.99 (\$31,000 - \$41,999)	21.8%	16.1%	15.4%	26.3%	18.7%
\$20.00 - \$24.99 (\$42,000 - \$51,999)	14.4%	7.0%	29.1%	21.2%	15.6%
\$25.00 or more (\$52,000 or more)	50.0%	20.8%	32.4%	20.3%	29.9%
Total Responses	188	341	182	118	829

In response to the question, "Are you continuing your education at SPC or another college/university?" more than half (63.4%) of the 1,020 responded that they were. The majority of AA graduates (82.8%), over one-third (35.7%) of the baccalaureate graduates, and over half of AS/AAS (55.1%) and Certificate (56.9%) completers were continuing their education. Of those continuing their education, over half (58.9%) of AA students were enrolled full-time, while half of AS/AAS (50.9%), almost half of BS/BAS (47.4%), and

almost half (48.3%) of Certificate 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	35.7%	82.8%	55.1%	56.9%	63.4%
No	64.3%	17.2%	44.9%	43.1%	36.6%
Respondents	213	447	207	153	1020

Table 7

*Enrollment status by degree or certificate awarded*

Enrollment Status	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ATC/PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Part-time	47.4%	36.2%	50.9%	48.3%	41.7%
Full-time	32.9%	58.9%	36.8%	46.0%	50.2%
Unknown	19.7%	4.9%	12.3%	5.7%	8.0%
Total Continuing Education	76	370	114	87	647

The majority of students (92.6%) reported continuing their education in Florida. Half (50.5%) of the respondents furthering their education indicated re-enrolling at SPC, and 22.9% 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 thirty-four (5.6%) of the 606 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	50.5%
USF	22.9%
UF	4.3%
UCF	3.3%
FSU	2.2%
Other In-State	9.3%
Out of State	7.4%
Total Responses	580

The graduates continuing their education were asked "How well did SPC prepare you for continuing your education?" Satisfaction levels were notable with 80.4% 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	42.4%	36.8%	38.1%	24.7%	35.9%
Very Well	40.9%	43.3%	44.8%	51.8%	44.4%
Adequately	9.1%	17.7%	15.2%	11.8%	15.5%
Poorly	6.1%	2.2%	1.9%	10.6%	3.8%
Not at all	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	0.3%
Total Responses	66	356	105	85	612

When asked, "Would you recommend your program at SPC to others?" 939 respondents (93.2%) 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	92.3%	95.0%	95.2%	86.8%	93.2%
No	7.7%	5.0%	4.8%	13.2%	6.8%
Total Responses	207	440	208	152	1007

The 2014-15 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, 8 outcomes received mean scores of 4.5 or higher, 13 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

<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>Communicating clearly and effectively with others through:</i>			
Speaking	1018	4.2	0.8
Listening	1010	4.3	0.7
Reading	1012	4.3	0.7
Writing	1011	4.3	0.7
<i>Your use of mathematical and computational skills:</i>			
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	1015	3.8	0.9
Using computational skills appropriately	1010	4.0	0.9
Accurately interpreting mathematical data	1010	3.8	0.9
<i>Using the following forms of technology:</i>			
Email	1015	4.6	0.7
Word Processing	1010	4.5	0.8
Spreadsheets	1012	3.9	1.0
Databases	1012	3.9	1.0
Internet Research	1015	4.5	0.7
<i>Thinking logically and critically to solve problems:</i>			
Gathering and assessing relevant information	1007	4.4	0.7
Inquiring about and interpreting information	1004	4.4	0.7
Organizing and evaluating information	1005	4.4	0.7
Analyzing and explaining information to others	1005	4.3	0.7
Using information to solve problems	1005	4.4	0.7
<i>Working effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>			
Participating as a team player (e.g., group projects)	1005	4.4	0.7
Working well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	1005	4.5	0.7
Using ethical courses of action	1005	4.5	0.7
Demonstrating leadership skills	1006	4.4	0.8
<i>Appreciating the importance of lifelong learning:</i>			
Showing an interest in career development	1010	4.5	0.7
Being open to new ideas and challenges	1007	4.5	0.7
Willingness to take on new responsibilities	1004	4.5	0.7
Pursuing additional educational opportunities	1006	4.4	0.7

### Conclusion

Results from the 2014-15 Recent Alumni Survey (2014-15 SPC Graduates) indicated that over four-fifths (81.3%) of the graduates who responded are currently employed. Almost two-thirds of those (61.7%) are employed in a field related to their studies. The BS/BAS and AS/AAS programs reported the highest rate of related employment (75.5% and 80.1% respectively).

Wage earnings varied by degree or certificate awarded, but remained similar overall to the results in the 2013-14 Recent Alumni Survey, with 29.9% of respondents reporting wages of \$52,000 or more (down from 30.5% in 2013-14), and 24.1% reporting wages between \$21,000 and \$30,999 (up from 22.2% in 2013-14). The highest wages were reported most often among BS/BAS and AS/AAS respondents, at 50.0% (up from 49.3%) and 32.4% (up from 25.3%) respectively. Additionally, AA degree respondents reported the highest rate of continued education (82.8%), and 58.9% of those were enrolled full-time. Overall, over half (63.4%) 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 (95.9%) reported SPC had prepared them adequately for continued education, and the majority of respondents (93.2%) would recommend their program to others.