

2015-16 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 7,641 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 2015-16 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 twenty-four surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 13.4%. 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	1205	213	17.7%	20.8%
AA	3786	448	11.8%	43.8%
AS/AAS	905	164	18.1%	16.0%
CT/ATD/ATC/PSAV/PSVC	1745	199	11.4%	19.4%
TOTAL	7,641	1,024	13.4%	N/A

This was the twelfth year that graduates were initially contacted electronically. The survey of 2015-16 graduates received 489 (47.8%) of the 1,024 responses online. This is an increase from the survey administered to 2014-15 graduates, which resulted in 478 (45.7%) online returns, and an increase from the survey administered to 2013-14 graduates, which resulted in 411 (39.4%) online returns. However, the overall response rate showed a decrease of approximately two and one-half percent (2.6%) in 2015-16 compared to the previous year even though 1,084 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
2015-16	7,641	1,024	13.4%	489	47.8%
2014-15	6,557	1,046	16.0%	478	45.7%
2013-14	5,913	1,042	17.6%	411	39.4%

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 (15.8%). A closer look by program at responses to "The main goal in completing a degree or certificate" indicated that almost half (47.4%) of the bachelor's degree-seeking students selected "Continue my education." The majority of the AA students (69.1%) selected "Continue my education" while over half of the AS/AAS students (55.8%) and almost half (47.7%) of the CT, ATD, ATC, PSAV, and PSVC students 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	9.5%	9.2%	31.9%	24.1%	15.8%
Continue my education	47.4%	69.1%	23.9%	23.6%	48.5%
Earn more money	14.2%	6.5%	10.4%	14.6%	10.3%
Get a promotion	6.2%	2.2%	5.5%	10.1%	5.1%
Meet certification/training needs	3.8%	2.7%	4.9%	9.5%	4.6%
Obtain employment	11.4%	5.4%	19.6%	15.6%	10.9%
Other	7.6%	4.9%	3.7%	2.5%	4.8%
Total Responses	211	446	163	199	1019

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 (64.7%), followed by "Earn more money" (29.0%); "Obtain employment" (22.8%); "Meet certification/training needs" (21.4%); and "Change career fields" (16.8%).

A strong majority of respondents (96.6%) 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 (41.3%) of survey respondents indicated that SPC did "Very well" in helping them meet their goal, and 39.3% indicated "Exceptionally well" as depicted in Table 4.

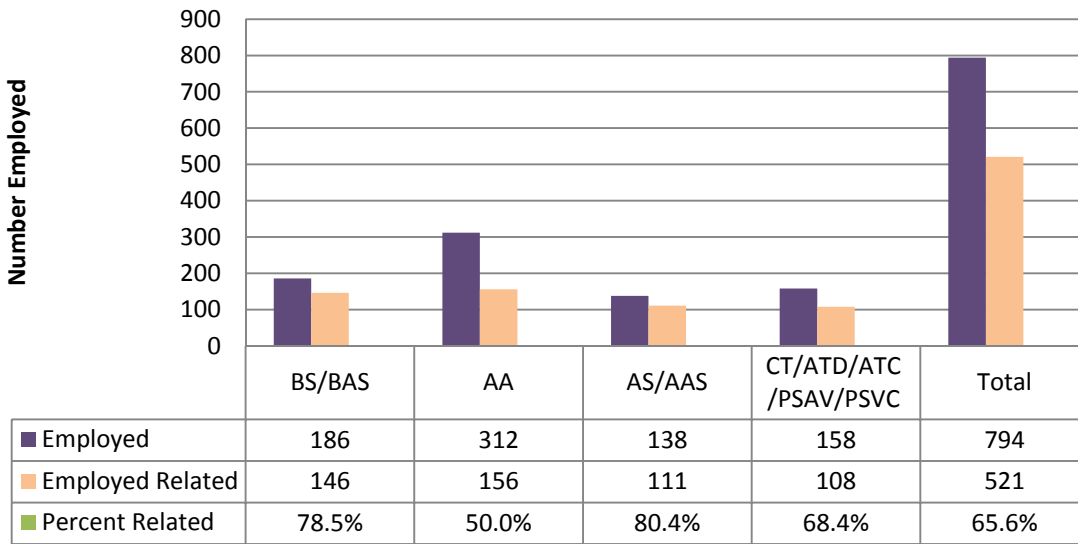
Table 4

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	39.2%	39.8%	47.9%	31.3%	39.3%
Very Well	42.6%	43.4%	33.7%	41.4%	41.3%
Adequately	14.8%	14.4%	14.1%	22.2%	16.0%
Poorly	2.4%	1.3%	2.5%	2.0%	1.9%
Not At All	1.0%	1.1%	1.8%	3.0%	1.6%
Total Responses	209	445	163	198	1015

Results from the survey indicated that over three quarters of the respondents (78.8%) were currently employed. Sixty-six percent (65.6%) 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 68.4% to 80.4%, while graduates of the AA program reported lower (50.0%) field-related employment. Sixteen respondents indicated that they were currently in the military, with seven in the reserves and eight on active duty.

Figure 1
What is your current employment status?



The majority of the 794 employed alumni (99.6%) 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 (56.2%), AA students (28.8%), and AS/AAS students (42.8%) was \$25.00 or more, Certificate students (29.5%) 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)	1.6%	17.3%	3.6%	7.1%	9.2%
\$10.00 - \$14.99 (\$21,000 - \$30,999)	6.5%	27.9%	17.4%	29.5%	21.4%
\$15.00 - \$19.99 (\$31,000 - \$41,999)	21.1%	17.0%	18.1%	24.4%	19.6%
\$20.00 - \$24.99 (\$42,000 - \$51,999)	14.6%	9.0%	18.1%	18.6%	13.8%
\$25.00 or more (\$52,000 or more)	56.2%	28.8%	42.8%	20.5%	36.0%
Total Responses	185	312	138	156	791

In response to the question, "Are you continuing your education at SPC or another college/university?" more than half (62.1%) of the 997 responded that they were. The majority of AA graduates (83.1%), over one-fourth (26.8%) of the baccalaureate graduates, and over half of AS/AAS (51.9%) and Certificate (60.5%) completers were continuing their education. Of those continuing their education, over half (61.2%) of AA students were enrolled full-time, while over half of AS/AAS (62.7%), BS/BAS (58.2%), and

Certificate (62.7%) 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	26.8%	83.1%	51.9%	60.5%	62.1%
No	73.2%	16.9%	48.1%	39.5%	37.9%
Respondents	205	437	160	195	997

Table 7

Enrollment status by degree or certificate awarded

Enrollment Status	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ATC/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Part-time	58.2%	33.9%	62.7%	62.7%	45.4%
Full-time	23.6%	61.2%	24.1%	25.4%	46.0%
Unknown	18.2%	5.0%	13.3%	11.9%	8.6%
Total Continuing Education	55	363	83	118	619

The majority of students (93.4%) reported continuing their education in Florida. Over half (57.3%) of the respondents furthering their education indicated re-enrolling at SPC, and 17.9% 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 (4.1%) of the 587 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	57.3%
USF	17.9%
UF	3.1%
UCF	4.0%
FSU	0.9%
Other In-State	10.2%
Out of State	6.6%
Total Responses	548

The graduates continuing their education were asked "How well did SPC prepare you for continuing your education?" Satisfaction levels were notable with 79.3% 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	48.1%	41.0%	35.5%	33.6%	39.6%
Very Well	36.5%	40.4%	38.2%	40.2%	39.7%
Adequately	5.8%	16.9%	26.3%	25.2%	18.7%
Poorly	3.8%	1.1%	0.0%	0.9%	1.2%
Not at all	5.8%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Total Responses	52	349	76	107	584

When asked, "Would you recommend your program at SPC to others?" 896 respondents (94.7%) 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	95.5%	97.6%	93.9%	88.0%	94.7%
No	4.5%	2.4%	6.1%	12.0%	5.3%
Total Responses	202	413	148	183	946

The 2015-16 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, 4 outcomes received mean scores of 4.5 or higher, 17 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 (Five point rating scale with five being the highest)</i>	<i>Item Ratings</i>		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Communicating clearly and effectively with others through:</i>			
Speaking	972	4.2	0.8
Listening	968	4.3	0.7
Reading	970	4.3	0.7
Writing	966	4.3	0.8
<i>Your use of mathematical and computational skills:</i>			
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	969	3.8	0.9
Using computational skills appropriately	967	4.0	0.8
Accurately interpreting mathematical data	968	3.8	0.9
<i>Using the following forms of technology:</i>			
Email	965	4.6	0.7
Word Processing	966	4.5	0.7
Spreadsheets	964	3.9	1.0
Databases	963	3.9	1.0
Internet Research	967	4.4	0.8
<i>Thinking logically and critically to solve problems:</i>			
Gathering and assessing relevant information	968	4.4	0.7
Inquiring about and interpreting information	967	4.3	0.7
Organizing and evaluating information	967	4.4	0.7
Analyzing and explaining information to others	968	4.3	0.8
Using information to solve problems	968	4.3	0.7
<i>Working effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>			
Participating as a team player (e.g., group projects)	959	4.3	0.8
Working well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	958	4.4	0.7
Using ethical courses of action	957	4.5	0.7
Demonstrating leadership skills	957	4.3	0.8
<i>Appreciating the importance of lifelong learning:</i>			
Showing an interest in career development	956	4.4	0.7
Being open to new ideas and challenges	956	4.5	0.7
Willingness to take on new responsibilities	956	4.4	0.7
Pursuing additional educational opportunities	958	4.4	0.8

Conclusion

Results from the 2015-16 Recent Alumni Survey (2015-16 SPC Graduates) indicated that over three-fourths (78.8%) of the graduates who responded are currently employed. Almost two-thirds of those (65.6%) are employed in a field related to their studies. The BS/BAS and AS/AAS programs reported the highest rate of related employment (78.5% and 80.4% respectively).

Wage earnings varied by degree or certificate awarded, but remained similar overall to the results in the 2014-15 Recent Alumni Survey, with 36.0% of respondents reporting wages of \$52,000 or more (up from 29.9% in 2014-15), and 21.4% reporting wages between \$21,000 and \$30,999 (down from 24.1% in 2014-15). The highest wages were reported most often among BS/BAS and AS/AAS respondents, at 56.2% (up from 50.0%) and 42.8% (up from 32.4%) respectively. Additionally, AA degree respondents reported the highest rate of continued education (83.1%), and 61.2% of those were enrolled full-time. Overall, nearly two-thirds (62.1%) 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 (97.9%) reported SPC had prepared them adequately for continued education, and the majority of respondents (94.7%) would recommend their program to others.