RESEARCH BRIEF

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

EMPLOYER SURVEY FOR 1999-2000 WORKING GRADUATES

This report summarizes the opinions of all employers who were identified by SPC graduates as hiring them to use the skills obtained from their studies. The survey process and design continues to follow guidelines initially established by the Institutional Assessment Group. The Employer Survey was designed to measure employer satisfaction with graduates' preparation for work. Specifically, the purposes of the survey were:

- to attain insight into employer perceptions regarding technical and performance skills of SPC graduates,
- to gain information to supplement college data for Performance Based Incentive Funding, and
- to identify employers who might be willing to support various college activities or to provide opportunities for student training or placement.

Working students who graduated in the 1999-2000 reporting year and who completed the Graduate Survey identified the employers who would receive the Employer Survey form by (1) indicating that their work was related to their studies, (2) agreeing that their employer could be contacted, and (3) giving the name and address of the employer. One hundred fifty-two businesses were contacted. There were 129 surveys returned for a response rate of 84.9%.

The purpose of this effort continues to be to gauge employers' perceptions regarding the educational and training preparation of their employee. The findings of the Employer Survey of 1999-2000 graduates are summarized below:

- Employers indicated very high levels of satisfaction with SPC graduates' technical and performance skills. Four of the 10 skills received a mean score of 6 or higher on a 7-point scale, where 7 equals excellent:

    (1) possesses necessary reading skills,
    (2) participates as a team player,
    (3) chooses ethical courses of action; and
    (4) works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

    For these skills, the percentage of employers responding with a rate of 6 or higher ranged between 67.5% and 82%.

    Employers were also satisfied with the remaining skill areas, which received a mean score of 5.1 to 5.8. These areas were:

    (1) uses written communication skills effectively
    (2) uses oral communication skills effectively
    (3) possesses effective computer skills
    (4) possesses necessary mathematics skills
    (5) exhibits an appropriate level of responsibility and self-management, and
    (6) acquires, interprets and uses information effectively

    For these skills, the percentage of employers responding with a rate of 5 or higher ranged between 51.1% and 65.9%.

- Ninety-six percent (96.1%) of the employers indicated they would hire another SPC graduate. One (0.8%) employer indicated they would not hire another SPC graduate.
- The majority of the employers (88.4%) reported that SPC graduates earned $9.00 or more per hour.
- Employers of 1999-2000 graduates expressed an interest in participating in two of the college's activities: 50.4% (65) were interested in providing input about the educational and training needs for their workforce; 46.5% (60) expressed a willingness to assist in job placement of graduates.

Employer responses with respect to technical and performance skills of 1999-2000 SPC graduates were compared to responses of employers who were questioned about 1998-99 SPC graduates. In the preceding year, 143 of the 280 employers who were surveyed responded for a response rate of 51.1%.

Employers were asked about the performance in the same skill areas. Table1 shows each skill, the mean of the responses, and the percentage of employers responding 5, 6, or 7 on the 7-point scale. All areas have shown a slight decrease, yet four remained with a rating of 6 or higher as shown in the table below.

Table 1.

1998-99 Employer Responses Compared to 1999-2000 Employer Responses

Competencies and Foundation Skills	1998-99						1999-2000					
	N	Mean	Employer Rating			N	Mean	Employer Rating				
			5	6	7			5	6	7		
Possesses necessary readking skills	143	6.4	9.8%	26.6%	60.8%	128	6.3	11.7%	29.7%	52.3%		
Uses written communication skills effectively	143	6.2	15.4%	34.3%	46.2%	129	5.8	22.5%	31.0%	34.9%		
Uses oral communiction skills effectively	143	6.1	16.8%	30.8%	41.3%	127	5.8	22.0%	33.3%	31.5%		
Possesses effective computer skills (e.g. computing, word proc.)	143	5.3	20.3%	23.8%	34.3%	129	5.1	22.5%	24.0%	27.1%		
Possesses necessary mathematics skills	143	5.5	19.1%	36.8%	25.7%	128	5.2	27.3%	28.9%	22.7%		
Exhibits an appropriate level of responsibility and self-management	143	6.0	15.4%	29.4%	44.8%	129	5.8	16.3%	22.5%	41.1%		
Chooses ethical courses of action	143	6.1	10.5%	36.4%	44.8%	129	6.0	17.8%	27.1%	43.4%		
Participates as a team player	143	6.2	9.1%	31.5%	49.7%	129	6.0	18.6%	19.4%	48.1%		
Works with individuals from diverse backgrounds	143	6.1	9.8%	34.9%	47.6%	129	6.0	1.5%	29.5%	44.2%		
Acquires, interprets and uses information effectively	143	6.0	18.1%	33.6%	39.9%	129	5.7	21.7%	32.6%	30.2%		

Likewise, there was a slight decrease in willingness to hire another SPC graduate. In the 1999-2000 year this item was rated at a 96.1%; in 1998-99 it was rated 97.0%. In contrast, 88.4% of the 1999-2000 graduates earned $9.00 per hour compared with 85.5% of the previous year graduates'. In addition, a slight decrease in several categories of employer's willingness to participate in college activities occurred, yet two areas showed an increase. (See Chart 1) The activities that demonstrated a slight increase in 1999-2000 compared to 1998-99 were:

- Serve on Advisory Committee
  (34.1% 1999-00; 30.7% 1998-99) a difference of 3.4%
- Participation in job fairs/other community events
  (38.0% 1999-00; 30.1% 1998-99) a difference of 7.9%

Chart 1
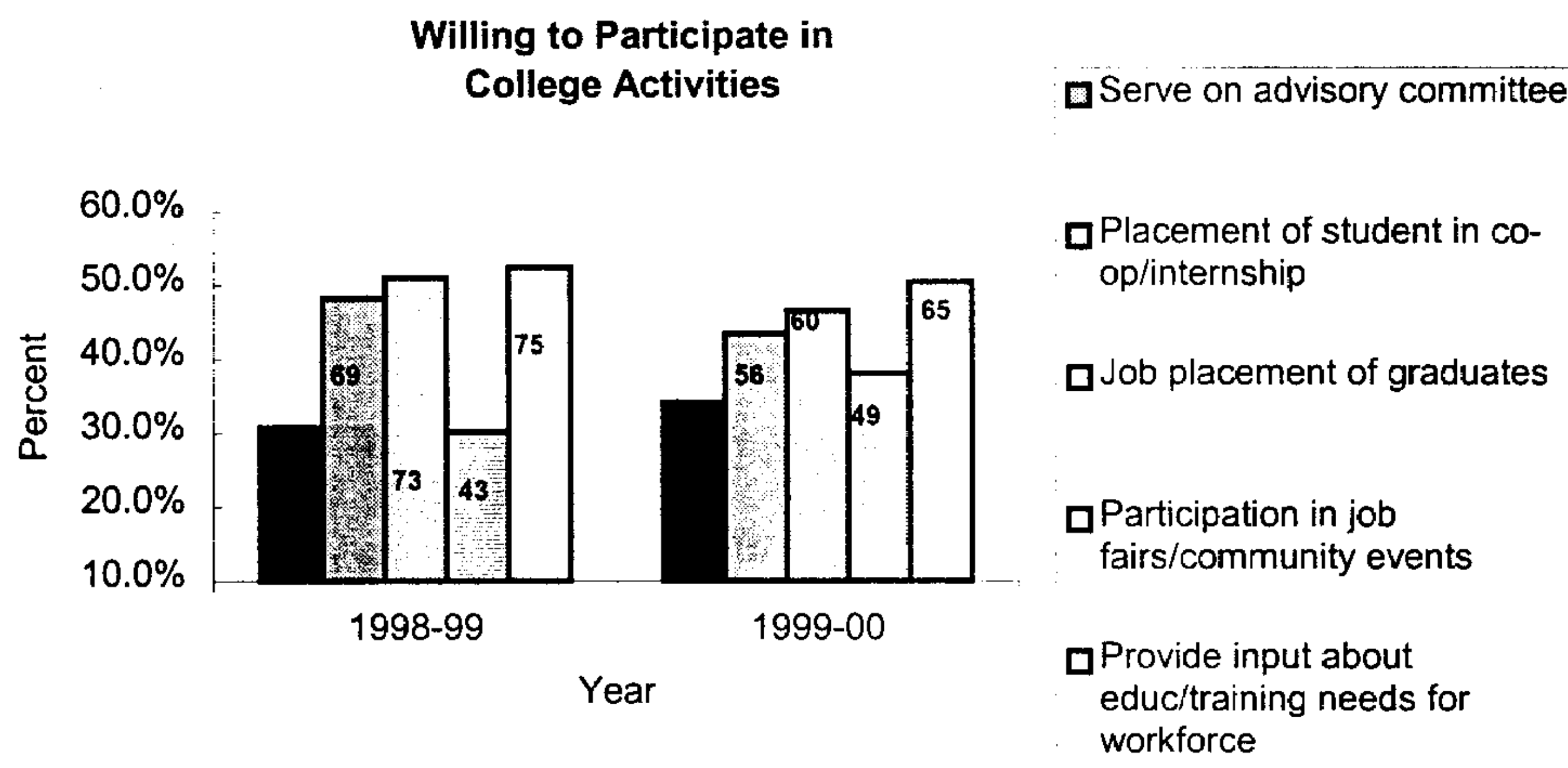
In conclusion, responses from this and all other surveys to date have continued to indicate that employers are satisfied with SPC programs and training provided to its graduates. The results indicate that A.S. degree and Postsecondary Vocational Certificate programs are achieving their intended objective of preparing students for work.

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