RESEARCH BRIEF

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

EMPLOYER SURVEY FOR 2000-2001 WORKING GRADUATES

This report summarizes the opinions of employers of 2000-2001 SPC graduates. 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, 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 2000-2001 reporting year and who completed the Recent Alumni 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. Two hundred sixty-two businesses were contacted. There were 110 surveys returned for a response rate of 42.0%.

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 2000-2001 graduates are summarized below:

- Employers indicated very high levels of satisfaction with SPC graduates' technical and performance skills. Eight 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,
    (4) works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds
    (5) uses written communication skills effectively,
    (6) exhibits an appropriate level of responsibility and self-management,
    (7) uses oral communication skills effectively; and
    (8) acquires, interprets and uses information effectively

    For these skills, the percentage of employers responding with a rate of 6 or higher ranged between 76.1% and 90.0%.

    Employers were also satisfied with the remaining skill areas, which received a mean score of 5.1 to 5.3. These areas were:

    (1) possesses effective computer skills
    (2) possesses necessary mathematics skills

    For these skills, the percentage of employers responding with a rate of 5 or higher ranged between 57.9 % and 58.2%.

Additional items asked of employers showed:
- Ninety-six percent (96.4%) would hire another SPC graduate. Four (3.6%) employers did not respond.
- The majority of SPC graduates earned $9.00 or more per hour. This was reported by 89.1% of employers.
- Finally, employers of 2000-2001 graduates expressed an interest in participating in two of the college's activities. 51.8% (57) were interested in providing input about the educational and training needs for their workforce; 47.3% (52) expressed a willingness to assist in both job placement of graduates and placement of student in co-op/internship.

Employer responses with respect to technical and performance skills of 2000-2001 SPC graduates were compared to responses of employers who were questioned about 1999-2000 SPC graduates. In the preceding year, 129 of the 152 employers who were surveyed responded for a response rate of 84.9%.

Employers were asked about the performance in the same skill areas both years. 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 increase, yet two remained with a rating of 5.

Table 1

1999-2000 Employer Responses Compared to 2000-2001 Employer Responses

| | | | 1999-2000 | | | | | 2000-2001 | | |
| | | | Employer Rating | | | | | Employer Rating | | |
Competencies and Foundation Skills	N	Mean	5	6	7	N	Mean	5	6	7
Possesses necessary reading skills	128	6.3	11.7%	29.7%	52.3%	110	6.5	6.4%	30.0%	60.9%
Uses written communication skills effectively	129	5.8	22.5%	31.0%	34.9%	110	6.2	13.6%	39.1%	41.8%
Uses oral communication skills effectively	127	5.8	22.0%	33.3%	31.5%	107	6.1	17.8%	35.5%	41.1%
Possesses effective computer skills (e.g. computing, word proc.)	129	5.1	22.5%	24.0%	27.1%	110	5.3	22.7%	30.0%	28.2%
Possesses necessary mathematics skills	128	5.2	27.3%	28.9%	22.7%	107	5.1	22.4%	29.9%	28.0%
Exhibits an appropriate level of responsibility and self-management	129	5.8	16.3%	22.5%	41.1%	109	6.2	13.8%	25.7%	53.2%
Chooses ethical courses of action	129	6.0	17.8%	27.1%	43.4%	110	6.3	12.7%	27.3%	53.6%
Participates as a team player	129	6.0	18.6%	19.4%	48.1%	110	6.4	8.2%	21.8%	64.5%
Works with individuals from diverse backgrounds	129	6.0	1.5%	29.5%	44.2%	109	6.3	11.9%	27.5%	56.0%
Acquires, interprets and uses information effectively	129	5.7	21.7%	32.6%	30.2%	109	6.1	15.6%	33.9%	42.2%

Likewise, there was a slight increase in willingness to hire another SPC graduate. In the 2000-2001 year this item was rated at a 96.4%; in 1999-2000 it was rated 96.1%. Similarly, 89.1% of the 2000-2001 graduates earned $9.00 per hour compared with 88.4% of the previous year graduates'. There was a slight decrease in several categories of employer's willingness to participate in college activities. However, two areas showed an increase. (See Chart 1) The activities that demonstrated a slight increase in 2000-2001 compared to 1999-2000 were:

- Placement of student in co-op/internship
  (47.3% 2000-01; 43.4% 1999-00) a difference of 3.9%)
- Job placement of graduates
  (47.3% 2000-01; 46.5% 1999-00) a difference of .8%)
- Provide input about education/training needs for your workforce
  (51.8% 2000-01; 50.4% 1999-00) a difference of 1.4%)

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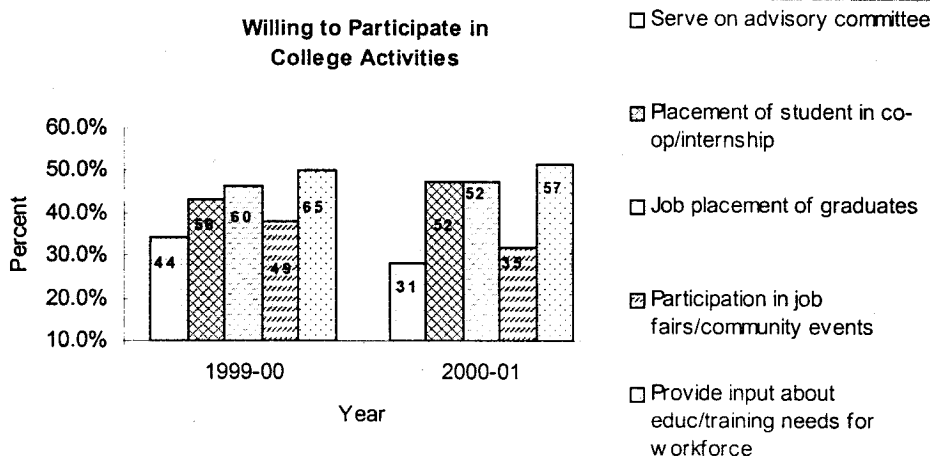
In conclusion, responses from this and all surveys from previous years continue to indicate that employers are satisfied with SPC programs and training provided to its graduates. The results indicate that A.S. degree and Postsecondary Vocational Certificate programs are achieving their intended objective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

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