SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS OF 2001-2002 WORKING SPC GRADUATES

As in the past years the Institutional Research Office (IR) has conducted an Employer Survey designed to measure employer satisfaction with graduates' preparation for work. This report summarizes the opinions of all employers who were identified by St. Petersburg College (SPC) working graduates. Specifically, the Employer Survey was designed:

- to attain insight into employer perceptions of SPC graduates, and
- to identify employers willing to support various college activities or to provide opportunities for student training or placement.

Working students who graduated in the 2001-2002 reporting year and who completed the Recent Alumni Survey in 2002-2003 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 ninety-three businesses were contacted. There were 103 surveys returned for a response rate of 53.4%. It is important to keep in mind that the number of respondents in each of the categories varied.

The purpose of this effort continues to be to gauge employers' perceptions regarding the educational and training preparation of their SPC employee. The findings of the Employer Survey of 2001-2002 graduates are summarized below:

Employers indicated very high levels of satisfaction with SPC graduates' technical and performance skills. All 10 skills received a mean score of 6 or higher on a 7-point scale, where 7 equals excellent. The percentage of employers responding to the identified skills ranged between 62.4% and 87.2%.

- Ninety-seven percent (97.1%) of the employers would hire another SPC graduate.
- The majority of SPC graduates earned $9.00 or more per hour. This was reported by 95.1% of employers.
- The majority of employers of 2001-2002 graduates expressed an interest in participating in three of the college's activities. 57.3% (43) expressed a willingness to assist in job placement of graduates; 55.7% (39) were interested in providing input about the educational and training needs for their workforce; and 52.2% (36) expressed a readiness of placement of students in co-op/internship.

Employer responses to technical and performance skills of 2001-2002 SPC graduates were compared to employers responses to the same skills of 2000-2001 SPC graduates. In the preceding year, 110 of the 262 employers who were surveyed responded for a response rate of 42.0%.

Table 1 shows each skill, the mean of the responses, and the percentage of employers responding 5, 6, or 7 on the 7-point scale. The mean score of the skills differed by no more than .1 for all skills except "Possesses effective computer skills." The mean score of this skill increased by .4% from 5.8 in 2000-2001 to 6.2 in 2001-2002.

Table 1

2000-2001 Employer Responses Compared to 2001-2002 Employer Responses

Competencies and Foundation Skills	N	Mean	2000-2001 Graduates Employer Rating 5	6	7	N	Mean	2001-2002 Graduates Employer Rating 5	6	7
Possesses necessary reading skills	110	6.5	6.4%	30.0%	60.9%	102	6.5	9.8%	22.5%	6.4.7%
Uses written communication skills effectively	110	6.2	13.6%	39.1%	41.8%	103	6.2	13.6%	30.1%	50.5%
Uses oral communication skills effectively	107	6.1	17.8%	35.5%	41.1%	102	6.0	20.6%	26.5%	45.1%
Possesses effective computer skills (e.g. computing, word proc.)	110	5.8	22.7%	30.0%	28.2%	95	6.2	18.6%	24.5%	46.1%
Possesses necessary mathematics skills	107	5.9	22.4%	29.9%	28.0%	91	6.0	17.8%	19.8%	42.6%
Exhibits an appropriate level of responsibility and self-management	109	6.2	13.8%	25.7%	53.2%	103	6.1	19.4%	20.4%	51.5%
Chooses ethical courses of action	110	6.3	12.7%	27.3%	53.6%	103	6.4	18.4%	17.5%	62.1%
Participates as a team player	110	6.4	8.2%	21.8%	64.5%	103	6.3	14.6%	20.4%	58.3%
Works with individuals from diverse backgrounds	109	6.3	11.9%	27.5%	56.0%	103	6.2	9.7%	25.2%	55.3%
Acquires, interprets and uses information effectively	109	6.1	15.6%	33.9%	42.2%	103	6.0	18.4%	22.3%	48.5%

Employers of graduates from both years expressed support for the College's educational programs. 97.1% employers of 2001-2002 graduates stated they would hire another SPC graduate as the need arises. This represents a slight increase (.7%) from the previous years' rating of 96.4%.

Employers were also given an opportunity to provide comments in open-ended question format. Specifically, employers were asked: "Please specify any additional skills or areas of knowledge in their field you believe the SPC graduate should have (but does not have) to meet your needs." Three of the most frequently mentioned skills that employers are looking for in potential employees were: communication skills, interpersonal relations skills, and computer skills. Technical and organizational skills were also considered important qualities of future employees.

In conclusion, the results achieved remains encouraging and indicate that employers are satisfied with SPC programs and training provided to its graduates. SPC is succeeding in its mission of providing its graduates with the skills and knowledge necessary to enhance the quality of their lives.

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