

## 2016-17 EMPLOYER SURVEY RESULTS A RESEARCH BRIEF

### Research Briefs

Research Briefs are short publications prepared by the Departments of Academic Effectiveness and Assessment (AEA) and Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) 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 an Employer Survey designed to measure employer satisfaction with SPC graduates. Specifically, the Employer Survey was designed to gain insight into an employer's perceptions of the quality of hired SPC graduates and identify an employer's willingness to support various college activities such as student training or placement.

The focus of the Employer Survey is to evaluate graduates from Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Applied Science (BS/BAS), Associate in Science/Associate in Applied Science (AS/AAS), and Certificate programs. These programs focus on preparing students to enhance their skills, knowledge, reach higher levels of income, and increase personal/professional growth.

### Data Collection

The Recent Alumni Survey was administered to 2016-17 SPC graduates. Graduates were asked to provide the name and address of their employer and whether they would allow SPC to contact their employer. The Employer Survey was then sent to employers of SPC graduates who were working in a field related to their education. Although employers are surveyed one time per graduate, some graduates may have earned multiple awards. Therefore, the number of surveys administered and responses received are reported for each degree or certificate the student was awarded.

The survey includes questions relating to the employer's perception of their employee's (recent SPC graduate) aptitude in key general education competencies and foundational skill areas. Additional questions include the employee's major job responsibilities, employee wage information, willingness of the employer to hire another SPC graduate, and any additional skills or areas of knowledge that this employee should have obtained while at SPC. The last section of the survey contains a list of opportunities for employer involvement at SPC.

Two-hundred (200) employer surveys were sent out to employers. One-hundred and forty-five (145) surveys were returned resulting in an overall response rate of 72.5%.

Employers of upper-division alumni had a 72.3% response rate, and employers of lower-division alumni had a response rate of 72.9%. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the number of recent alumni surveys and employer surveys sent and returned by upper and lower division classification. It should be noted that of the one-hundred and forty-one (141) employer surveys sent to employers of upper-division graduates, one-hundred and ten (110) were sent to employers of College of Education graduates. This group of recent alumni does not need to provide employer contact information or give permission to contact them, as the contact information is already supplied by the state of Florida. The State requires that all College of Education graduate employers be surveyed. Graduates of programs other than the College of Education must provide their permission to SPC before the College can survey the employer.

**Table 1**  
*Response rate by program*

Program Type	Alumni Surveys Sent	Alumni Surveys Returned	Employer Surveys Sent	Employer Surveys Returned	Return Rate
Lower Division Programs (AS/AAS, and LD Certificate Programs)	2258	311	59	43	72.9%
Upper Division Programs (BS/BAS and UD Certificate Programs)	1148	197	141	102	72.3%

The employer survey included questions that enabled employers to rate graduates' achievement in the following categories: communication, computational, technical, problem solving, people skills, and lifelong learning.

## Results

Key findings from the 2016-17 Employer Survey include:

- Ninety-nine percent (98.6%) of the employers responding indicated they would hire another SPC graduate.
- Forty-seven percent (46.6%) of the employers responding to the question regarding hourly compensation indicated their employees earn between \$15.00 and \$19.99 per hour (\$31,000 to \$41,999 annually).
- Nearly two-thirds (63.4%) of respondents expressed an interest in participating in one or more of the College's five suggested employment activities. The most popular areas of interest among those willing to participate were providing opportunities for student co-op/internship placement (48.9%), providing opportunities for job placement of graduates (45.7%), and serving on an advisory committee (41.3%). [Note: The total may exceed 100% because this question allowed multiple responses by survey respondents.]

Of the twenty-five key general education competencies and foundational skill areas, one received a mean score of 4.5 on a 5-point Likert scale (5 indicates "excellent"), and twenty-four received mean scores between 4.1 and 4.4. This response scale also included a "Not Applicable" (NA) rating. The categories with satisfaction levels consistently at 4.3 or higher were:

- Communicate clearly and effectively with others
- Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning

The outcome with the highest mean rating (4.5) was “E-mail” from the “Use the following forms of technology” category. “E-Mail” has been among the top-rated outcomes each year since the 2013-14 Employer survey. The outcome with the lowest mean rating (4.1) was “Demonstrates leadership skills” from the “Work effectively with others in a variety of settings” category. “Demonstrates leadership skills” has been the lowest-rated outcome each year since the 2006-07 Employer survey.

Overall employer ratings of the graduates’ general education outcomes are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**2016-17 Overall Employer Responses**

<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>N/A*</i>
<b><i>Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:</i></b>				
Speaking	143	4.3	0.8	0
Listening	143	4.3	0.9	0
Reading	143	4.3	0.8	0
Writing	141	4.3	0.9	2
<b><i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i></b>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	121	4.3	0.9	21
Uses computational skills appropriately	123	4.4	0.8	19
Accurately interprets mathematical data	120	4.2	0.9	22
<b><i>Use the following forms of technology:</i></b>				
E-mail	141	4.5	0.7	1
Word Processing	131	4.4	0.8	12
Spreadsheets	119	4.2	0.9	24
Databases	125	4.3	0.8	18
Internet Research	127	4.4	0.8	16
<b><i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i></b>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	143	4.3	0.9	1
Inquires and interprets information	143	4.2	0.9	1
Organizes and evaluates information	143	4.2	0.9	1
Analyzes and explains information to others	142	4.2	1.0	2
Uses information to solve problems	142	4.2	1.0	1
<b><i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i></b>				
Participates as team player (e.g., group projects)	142	4.3	1.0	2

<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>N/A*</i>
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	143	4.4	0.9	1
Uses ethical courses of action	143	4.3	1.0	1
Demonstrates leadership skills	141	4.1	1.1	3
<b><i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i></b>				
Shows interest in career development	142	4.3	1.0	2
Open to new ideas and challenges	143	4.3	1.0	1
Willing to take on new responsibilities	143	4.3	1.0	1
Pursues additional educational opportunities	138	4.3	1.0	5

Note: The survey allowed employers to select N/A if a competency was non-applicable for an employee.

Table 3 displays a breakdown of each outcome for the lower division technical programs (AS/AAS, and LD Certificate Programs). The table includes the number of responses and the mean response for each outcome. Employers indicated high levels of satisfaction with lower division graduates’ general education outcomes. Twenty-five outcomes received mean scores between 4.1 and 4.4.

**Table 3**  
*Employer Survey Response for Lower Division (AS/AAS, and LD Certificate Programs)*

<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>N/A*</i>
<b><i>Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:</i></b>				
Speaking	43	4.3	0.9	0
Listening	43	4.3	0.8	0
Reading	43	4.3	0.8	0
Writing	42	4.3	0.8	1
<b><i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i></b>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	31	4.2	0.9	11
Uses computational skills appropriately	33	4.4	0.7	9
Accurately interprets mathematical data	29	4.1	0.9	13
<b><i>Use the following forms of technology:</i></b>				
E-mail	42	4.4	0.7	0
Word Processing	34	4.2	0.9	9
Spreadsheets	32	4.1	0.9	11
Databases	35	4.2	0.9	8
Internet Research	36	4.3	0.9	7

<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>N/A*</i>
<b><i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i></b>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	43	4.3	0.8	0
Inquires and interprets information	43	4.2	0.8	0
Organizes and evaluates information	43	4.2	0.8	0
Analyzes and explains information to others	42	4.3	0.7	1
Uses information to solve problems	43	4.3	0.8	0
<b><i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i></b>				
Participates as team player (e.g., group projects)	42	4.4	0.9	1
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	43	4.4	0.8	0
Uses ethical courses of action	43	4.4	0.8	0
Demonstrates leadership skills	42	4.2	0.9	1
<b><i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i></b>				
Shows interest in career development	43	4.3	0.9	0
Open to new ideas and challenges	43	4.3	0.9	0
Willing to take on new responsibilities	43	4.4	0.9	0
Pursues additional educational opportunities	39	4.4	0.8	3

Note: The survey allowed employers to select N/A if a competency was non-applicable for an employee.

Table 4 displays a breakdown of each outcome for the upper division programs (BS/BAS and UD Certificate Programs). Employers indicated high levels of satisfaction with general education outcomes for upper-division graduates. Three outcomes received a mean score of 4.5, while the remaining twenty-two received mean scores between 4.0 and 4.4.

**Table 4**  
*Employer Survey Response for Upper Division Programs (BS/BAS and UD Certificate Programs)*

<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>N/A*</i>
<b><i>Communicate clearly and effectively with others through:</i></b>				
Speaking	100	4.4	0.8	0
Listening	100	4.3	0.9	0
Reading	100	4.4	0.8	0
Writing	99	4.3	0.9	1

<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>N/A*</i>
<b><i>Use mathematical and computational skills:</i></b>				
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	90	4.3	0.9	10
Uses computational skills appropriately	90	4.3	0.9	10
Accurately interprets mathematical data	91	4.3	0.9	9
<b><i>Use the following forms of technology:</i></b>				
E-mail	99	4.5	0.7	1
Word Processing	97	4.5	0.7	3
Spreadsheets	87	4.3	0.9	13
Databases	90	4.3	0.8	10
Internet Research	91	4.5	0.7	9
<b><i>Think logically and critically to solve problems</i></b>				
Gathers and assesses relevant information	100	4.3	0.9	1
Inquires and interprets information	100	4.2	0.9	1
Organizes and evaluates information	100	4.2	1.0	1
Analyzes and explains information to others	100	4.1	1.1	1
Uses information to solve problems	99	4.1	1.0	1
<b><i>Work effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i></b>				
Participates as team player (e.g., group projects)	100	4.3	1.1	1
Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	100	4.4	0.9	1
Uses ethical courses of action	100	4.3	1.0	1
Demonstrates leadership skills	99	4.0	1.2	2
<b><i>Appreciate the importance of lifelong learning:</i></b>				
Shows interest in career development	99	4.3	1.1	2
Open to new ideas and challenges	100	4.3	1.0	1
Willing to take on new responsibilities	100	4.3	1.1	1
Pursues additional educational opportunities	99	4.2	1.1	2

Note: The survey allowed employers to select N/A if a competency was non-applicable for an employee.

## Conclusion

Overall, results suggest that employers are satisfied with St. Petersburg College graduates' performance in the workplace. Employers rated most individuals as exhibiting a high level of preparatory skills as indicated by the above average ratings in all skill areas.

In summary, the survey outcomes indicate that the AS/AAS degree, the BS/BAS degree, and the Certificate programs are achieving their intended objective of adequately

preparing students for the workplace, by enhancing their skills, increasing their knowledge, and instilling a desire to build on personal and professional growth.