

RESEARCH BRIEF

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Report on the Survey of 1992-93

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Graduates of St. Petersburg Junior College

St. Petersburg Junior College (SPJC) has been working for several years to identify core effectiveness measures related to the College's mission, and to develop indicators to assess the improvement of the quality and efficiency of its management, instruction, and services. The effectiveness indicators developed by SPJC include all five statewide accountability measures along with other college-specific indicators used for institutional management.

This 1992-93 Graduate Survey was undertaken to obtain data about one key indicator -- graduate satisfaction with programs and services at SPJC. The survey was created to assess whether the 1992-93 graduates achieved their goals, and what factors effect that achievement. There was also an interest in assessing the extent to which limited enrollment programs within the State University System kept our graduates from attending their first choice college and from studying their first choice major.

Description of the Study

During 1992-93, 1858 A.A. and 737 A.S. (2595 in sum) students graduated from SPJC. In Summer of 1994, the Office of Institutional Research (IR) conducted extensive telephone surveys asking the College's graduates about their post-SPJC activities, and the extent to which the College assisted them in reaching their goals. A follow-up mail survey was conducted of all graduates who were not reached by phone. Overall 53% of the graduates responded shown in Table 1 by degree earned.

TABLE 1

	A. A.	A. S.	Total
No. of Graduates	1858	737	2595
Phone responses	866	250	1116
Mail responses	152	90	242
Total responses	1018	340	1358
Unreachable			34
Response Rate	54.8%	46.1%	53.0%

The survey consisted of five parts. All graduates completed the first part of the survey that contained general questions pertaining to the graduates' initial plans after graduation, whether these plans changed, satisfaction with programs and services at SPJC, and the value of their SPJC experience overall. Based on the respondents' current activities, they were referred to one of the other parts of the survey that asked questions either about college attendance, work, military service, or other occupation. The last question on the survey was open-ended, soliciting comments and suggestions about the respondents SPJC experience.

Student Demographics

To minimize the length of the survey, demographic information about the graduates was acquired from the SPJC student record system. The respondents of the survey were found to be typical of their graduating class in terms of gender (majority female), age (between 29 and 30 years), ethnicity (majority white), average GPA (between 3.1 and 3.3), and average number of semesters attended (between 10 and 13). Since the respondents were also typical of other SPJC graduating classes, the results from this study may be used to generalize about other recent graduating classes.

Findings

1. More than 85% of the graduates felt their SPJC overall experience was very valuable or somewhat valuable. Over 83% of the graduates were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with SPJC's programs and services.

2. In terms of primary goals after graduation shown on Table 2, approximately 71% of the graduates planned to go to college, and approximately 28% planned to work. Over 92% achieved their primary goal. No demographic characteristics significantly affected goal achievement in this study. These percentages suggest that SPJC has a positive impact on its graduates and that the college provides the assistance needed by students to enable them to reach their goals.

TABLE 2

	A. A. Count	A. S. Count	Total Count
Exit Plan*			
4 year College	865 89.7%	40 12.9%	905 71.1
Work	94 9.8%	268 86.7%	362 28.4%
Military Service	5 0.5%	1 0.3%	6 0.5%
Exit Plan Total	964	309	1273
	100%	100%	100%
Achieved Exit Plan**			
4 year College	805 93.1%	23 57.5%	828 91%
Work	90 95.7%	254 94.8%	344 95.0%
Military	5 100%	1 100%	6 100%
Achieved Plan Total	900	278	1178
	93.4%	90.0%	92.5%

* The percentage of respondents in each degree.

** The percentage of those whose exit plan identified the particular activity.

3. Of the 1358 survey respondents, 66% indicated that they were enrolled in college. Of these 66% were full-time students, 19% were part-time students, and 15% did not indicate type of attendance. The majority (94%) of the college enrollees were of A.A. graduates. Most of the students (80%) reported they were attending a Florida public university. The majority were attending the University of South Florida, although other popular choices included Florida State University, the University of Florida, and the University of Central Florida. Table 3 shows the number of respondents attending the various types of colleges and universities.

TABLE 3

Type of Institution	A. A. Count	A. S. Count	Total Count
Total In-State Public 4+ Year	695 81.5%	13 40.6%	708 80.0%
Total In-State Public 2 year	45 5.3%	12 37.5%	57 6.4%
In-State Private	42 4.9%	4 12.5%	46 5.2%
Out-of-State Public 4+ Year	19 2.2%	—	19 2.1%
Out-of-State Public 2 Year	4 0.5%	—	4 0.5%
Out-of-State Private	41 4.8%	3 9.4%	44 5.0%
Unrecognizable College Name	7 0.8%	—	7 0.8%
Total	853	32	885
	100%	100%	100%

4. A. A. graduates reported no strong preference related to choosing a college or major first following graduation from SPJC, with 51% choosing a major first and 49% choosing a college first. The location of the college appears to be the most predominant consideration when choosing a four-year institution (44%). Over 70% of the A.A. graduates are attending their first choice college and over 71% of the A.A. graduates are enrolled in their first choice major. Although approximately 28% of the graduates indicated they are not studying what had been their preferred major, limited enrollment programs appear to have had minimal effect on enrollment in the preferred major while "personal preferences" was the most compelling reason for change to a different major.

5. With respect to employment, 79% of the graduates reported they were employed. This varied by degree. A. S. graduates (92%) were more likely to be employed than A.A. graduates (75%). A.A. graduates who chose to work rather than attend a four-year institution reported the decision generally was money-related, with 47.9% stating financial situation and 10.3% stating family obligations.

6. The A.S. degree is designed to prepare graduates for employment rather than enrollment in a four-year institution for further study. Of the 92% who reported they were employed, almost 93% were employed in-field. Their median income was higher than for A.A. graduates with the highest income earning programs being reported for health-related majors. The three highest income earning programs were Dental Hygiene, Physical Therapy Assistant, and Nursing; the three lowest were Interior Design Technology, Veterinary Technology and Office Systems. Most A.S. degree graduates remain in the Tampa Bay area with over 86% reporting employment in either Pinellas or Hillsborough counties. These percentages suggest that SPJC's vocational programs are providing the needed training for students to obtain employment while meeting the job availability needs of the geographical area.

Conclusion

Many valuable insights were achieved by questioning SPJC graduates. In order to continue to learn about student opinion regarding their SPJC experience, the college has formed a task force whose mission it is to design a series of surveys to obtain student satisfaction with programs and services. The first of these was the Enrolled Student Survey which was administered in October 1995. Other surveys are being developed which will ask for student opinions when they apply for graduation and within one year following graduation. A copy of the complete report of the Graduate Survey of 1992-93 is available at each campus library.