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Comparison of Degrees and Certificates Awarded to Credit FTE Earned

The purpose of this brief is (1) to discuss the college credit degrees and certificates offered at St. Petersburg Junior College in the 1999-2000 reporting year, (2) to compare the number of awards in these programs among the 28 community colleges, and (3) to compare credit FTE earned by the colleges and its relationship to the number of awards.

In 1999-2000 SPJC offered the Associate in Arts (A.A.), the Associate in Science (A.S.), and the Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degrees and two certificate programs, the Postsecondary Vocational Certificate (P.S.V.C.) and the Advanced Technical Certificate (A.T.C.).

- The A.A. degree, consisting of 60 credits of lower division courses including a core of general education courses, is the traditional transfer degree that permits students to enroll at the universities to complete baccalaureate studies.
- The primary objective of the A.S. degree was to prepare students for employment rather than university transfer. However, legislation was passed so that beginning Fall 2000 A.S. degree students would be able to transfer this degree as well. To meet this mandate, a differentiation in vocational degrees has been implemented. The A.S. degree requires general education courses from the core of courses taken by A.A. degree students; the A.A.S. degree does not meet that requirement. To date, the community colleges and state universities have articulated five A.S. degrees (Business Administration, Electronics Engineering Technology, Hospitality & Tourism Management, Nursing, and Radiography) as being fully transferable. They are working together to develop additional transferable A.S. degrees. Other A.S./ A.A.S. degree holders may also transfer into the State University System, but their course work will be evaluated on an individual basis.
- The Post Secondary Vocational Certificate, designed to prepare students for entry level employment in a specific area in less than two years, encompasses many of the same vocational courses as the A.A.S./A.S. degrees. Credits earned can be applied to the degree program.
- Students completing the vocational degree may earn the Advanced Technical Certificate (A.T.C.) in programs of no more than 24 credits that concentrate on a specialized area in the field.

Table 1 shows the 1999-2000 distribution of college-credit degrees and certificates awarded by category (A.A., A.S./A.A.S., A.T.C., and P.S.V.C.) in the 28 community colleges. Among college-level completions, the A.A. degree is the award most frequently bestowed by community colleges; the A.S./A.A.S. is next highest. The same is true at SPJC where A.A. degrees represented the majority at 58.3%, followed by A.S. (22.7%), P.S.V. Certificates (18.4%), and finally A.T.C. (0.6%). When comparing SPJC's performance to other colleges in the Florida Community College System, SPJC ranked third (3rd) in the total awards shown; only two community colleges, Miami-Dade (1st) and Valencia (2nd) ranked higher.

Table 1
Florida Community College System Degrees and Certificates
1999-2000

Colleges	AA		AS		ATC		PSVC		Total Graduates	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank	Number	Rank	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
Brevard	1,318	8	329	13	0		53	15	1,700	8
Broward	1,384	7	697	2	3	4	672	1	2,756	4
Central Florida	540	17	266	15	0		60	13	866	18
Chipola	214	23	44	26	0		22	19	280	24
Daytona Beach	794	12	462	8	0		164	5	1,420	11
Edison	681	14	260	16	0		156	7	1,097	15
Fla. C.C. @ Jax	1,787	3	644	4	0		54	14	2,485	5
Florida Keys	80	28	64	24	0		20	20	164	27
Gulf Coast	403	20	178	20	0		22	19	603	21
Hillsborough	1,145	10	394	10	0		148	8	1,687	9
Indian River	619	16	341	12	16	2	223	4	1,199	13
Lake City	172	26	136	21	0		98	9	406	23
Lake Sumter	176	25	78	23	0		7	24	261	25
Manatee	653	15	232	17	1	5	14	22	900	17
Miami-Dade	2,961	1	1,037	1	0		4	25	4,002	1
North Florida	83	27	15	27	0		11	23	109	28
Okaloosa-Walton	697	13	358	11	0		79	11	1,134	14
Palm Beach	1,457	6	430	9	8	3	41	18	1,936	7
Pasco-Hernando	394	21	210	18	0		87	10	691	19
Pensacola	827	11	481	7	0		47	17	1,355	12
Polk	436	19	193	19	0		52	16	681	20
St. Johns River	343	22	78	23	0		14	22	435	22
St. Petersburg	1,716	4	668	3	17	1	541	2	2,942	3
Santa Fe	1,539	5	531	5	0		148	8	2,218	6
Seminole	533	18	303	14	0		162	6	998	16
South Florida	183	24	57	25	0		16	21	256	26
Tallahassee	1,278	9	114	22	0		65	12	1,457	10
Valencia	2,452	2	500	6	0		278	3	3,230	2
System Total	24,865		9,100		45		3,258		37,268	
Percent of Total	66.72%		24.42%		0.12%		8.74%		100.00%	

Table 2 shows the total credit FTE earned by colleges in 1999-2000. College Preparatory courses provide remedial instruction and are considered less than college level. However, for FTE purposes they are calculated as credit FTE and, therefore, included in the total. Note that based on credit FTE, SPJC ranks fourth (4th); in total FTE it ranks sixth (6th).

Typically there is a correlation between the course type and award, but students move among course types as necessary to meet the requirements of their degree or certificate. Most of the courses required for an A.A. degree are classified as Advanced and Professional (A&P); while most of the A.S. and A.A.S. courses are Postsecondary Vocational (PSV). These two areas are comprised of college credit courses that are potentially transferable to a university. College credit certificates (P.S.V.C. and A.T.C.) consist of PSV courses only.

In 1999-2000, SPJC ranked sixth (6th) in the number of FTE earned in the A&P category while it ranked fourth (4th) in the number of A.A. degrees awarded. Similarly, the college ranked third (3rd) in the number of A.A.S./A.S. degrees awarded and first (1st) or second (2nd) in certificates.

Table 2
Florida Community College System (Total Credit FTE)
1999-2000

Colleges	A&P		PSV		College Prep		Credit FTE		Credit + Non-Credit FTE	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank	Number	Rank	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
Brevard	3,571.4	10	1,557.4	9	397.3	14	5,526.1	10	6,813.6	11
Broward	7,068.4	3	3,672.6	2	2,013.2	2	12,754.2	3	13,355.2	4
Central Florida	1,778.3	18	541.1	21	252.6	17	2,572.0	20	3,322.0	18
Chipola	625.3	25	185.9	26	61.0	25	872.2	25	1,243.7	25
Daytona Beach	3,226.4	11	1,061.4	12	560.8	10	4,848.6	12	9,847.8	5
Edison	2,758.6	13	1,037.9	13	449.2	12	4,245.7	14	4,372.8	15
Fla. C.C. @ Jax	5,612.7	5	2,513.7	5	794.2	7	8,920.6	5	15,322.2	2
Florida Keys	383.4	28	238.7	25	25.9	28	648.0	27	676.7	28
Gulf Coast	1,628.2	19	864.9	15	205.1	20	2,698.2	18	3,310.6	19
Hillsborough	5,203.0	7	1,776.5	8	1,144.8	4	8,124.3	6	8,604.6	9
Indian River	2,527.8	14	1,862.9	6	223.8	19	4,614.5	13	9,321.4	7
Lake City	553.2	26	358.5	22	90.1	24	1,001.8	24	1,557.3	24
Lake Sumter	784.6	23	303.9	24	98.2	23	1,186.7	23	1,238.8	26
Manatee	2,512.5	15	784.6	16	409.5	13	3,706.6	15	3,827.0	16
Miami-Dade	15,696.1	1	5,603.6	1	4,204.0	1	25,503.7	1	29,596.2	1
North Florida	391.7	27	114.9	27	50.4	27	557.0	28	914.1	27
Okaloosa-Walton	2,058.8	16	778.0	17	176.4	21	3,013.2	17	3,527.4	17
Palm Beach	5,968.2	4	973.5	14	721.3	8	7,663.0	7	8,676.0	8
Pasco-Hernando	1,262.7	22	692.1	19	245.7	18	2,200.5	21	2,480.6	21
Pensacola	3,137.6	12	1,317.0	10	527.6	11	4,982.2	11	6,573.6	13
Polk	1,600.7	20	722.2	18	304.2	16	2,627.1	19	2,957.1	20
St. Johns River	1,387.9	21	352.5	23	103.1	22	1,843.5	22	2,459.4	22
St. Petersburg	5,455.9	6	2,547.4	4	944.6	5	8,947.9	4	9,344.4	6
Santa Fe	4,406.3	8	1,824.0	7	820.6	6	7,050.9	8	7,759.9	10
Seminole	2,017.5	17	1,237.4	11	356.3	15	3,611.2	16	6,754.4	12
South Florida	662.4	24	70.5	28	58.9	26	791.8	26	2,395.5	23
Tallahassee	4,312.7	9	611.3	20	617.8	9	5,541.8	9	5,881.0	14
Valencia	8,296.7	2	2,744.8	3	1,974.1	3	13,015.6	2	13,704.5	3
System Total	94,889.0		36,349.2		17,830.7		149,068.9		185,837.8	

When the number of awards (Table 1) is compared to credit FTE (Table 2), three patterns emerge. Approximately one-third (35.7%) of the colleges ranked the same in credit FTE earned and the number of degrees and certificates awarded. A little less than one third (31.5%) ranked higher in the number of FTE earned than degrees/certificates awarded. The remaining colleges (31.5%) ranked higher in the number of graduates produced than credit FTE earned. SPJC belongs in this group. The college demonstrated a high degree of effectiveness ranking third (3rd) in the number of college-level completions while it ranked fourth (4th) in reported credit FTE.

Summary

Historically, the operating funds for the Florida public community colleges were based on student FTE enrollment. In general, colleges that had higher FTE enrollment received more dollars than institutions that had low student FTE enrollment. However, recently there is more emphasis on student achievement. Incentive programs have been established to reward student outcomes. For example, Performance Based Program Budgeting (PBB) rewards colleges for the number of A.A. graduates; Workforce rewards colleges for graduates in vocational programs and for their in-field placements. Cohort tracking of students with 18 college credits shows that after four years about one-third of SPJC students graduate whether or not college preparatory courses were taken. This means that the college ranks high in terms of funds earned through these programs. For the past four consecutive years, SPJC ranked fourth (4th) or higher in the amount of dollars allocated under the PBB program. (For more information about PBB funding, please refer to Research Brief Volume 10 Number 1.) Under the Workforce program, SPJC increased its ranking in the performance allocation for Associate Science Degrees from fourth (4th) highest in fiscal year 1999-2000 to third (3rd) in 2000-2001 resulting in an increase of 30.2% over the previous year.