

# RESEARCH

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# BRIEF

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## SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS OF 2002-2003 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 willingness to support various college activities or to provide opportunities for student training or placement.

Working students who graduated in the 2002-2003 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 eighty-four businesses were contacted. There were 93 surveys returned for a response rate of 51.0%. 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 2002-2003 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 68.8% and 88.1%.

- Ninety-six percent (96.0%) of the employers indicated that they would hire another SPC graduate.
- The majority of SPC graduates earned \$9.00 or more per hour. This was reported by 95.7% of employers.
- Finally, employers of 2002-2003 graduates expressed an interest in participating in two of the college's activities. 49.5% (46) were interested in providing input about the educational and training needs for their workforce; 44.1% (41) expressed a willingness to assist in placement of student in co-op/internship.

Employer responses to technical and performance skills of 2002-2003 SPC graduates were compared to employer's responses to the same skills of 2001-2002 SPC graduates. In the preceding year, 103 of the 193 employers who were surveyed responded for a response rate of 53.4%.

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 "Uses oral communication skills effectively", "Possesses effective computer skills"; and "Works with individuals from diverse backgrounds" increased by .1%; and for the skill area "Acquires, interprets and uses information effectively" the mean score increased by .2% for 2002-2003.

**Table 1****2001-2002 Employer Responses Compared to 2002-2003 Employer Responses**

Competencies and Foundation Skills	2001-2002 Graduates					2002-2003 Graduates				
	N	Mean	<u>Employer Rating</u>			N	Mean	<u>Employer Rating</u>		
			5	6	7			5	6	7
Possesses necessary reading skills	102	6.5	9.8%	22.5%	64.7%	93	6.5	9.7%	20.4%	67.7%
Uses written communication skills effectively	103	6.2	13.6%	30.1%	50.5%	93	6.2	12.9%	23.7%	54.8%
Uses oral communication skills effectively	102	6.0	20.6%	26.5%	45.1%	93	6.1	17.2%	21.5%	51.6%
Possesses effective computer skills (e.g. computing, word proc.)	95	6.2	18.6%	24.5%	46.1%	87	6.3	14.0%	28.0%	47.3%
Possesses necessary mathematics skills	91	6.0	17.8%	19.8%	42.6%	90	6.0	20.4%	29.0%	39.8%
Exhibits an appropriate level of responsibility and self-management	103	6.1	19.4%	20.4%	51.5%	92	6.1	11.8%	26.9%	49.5%
Chooses ethical courses of action	103	6.4	18.4%	17.5%	62.1%	92	6.3	14.0%	23.7%	57.0%
Participates as a team player	103	6.3	14.6%	20.4%	58.3%	92	6.3	14.0%	19.4%	57.0%
Works with individuals from diverse backgrounds	103	6.2	9.7%	25.2%	55.3%	92	6.3	12.9%	25.8%	54.8%
Acquires, interprets and uses information effectively	103	6.0	18.4%	22.3%	48.5%	92	6.2	12.9%	33.3%	45.2%

Employers of graduates from both years expressed support for the College's educational programs. Over ninety-five percent (95.7%) of the employers of 2002-2003 graduates indicated they would hire another SPC graduate as the need arises. This represents a slight decrease (1.4%) from the previous years' rating of 97.1%.

In conclusion, responses from this and all other surveys to date have continued 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.

If you have any additional questions or comments, please contact Dr. Carol Weideman via [weideman.carol@spcollege.edu](mailto:weideman.carol@spcollege.edu) or extension 5234.