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REPORT ON THE SURVEY OF ENTERING STUDENTS SESSION I, II and III 1996-97

The Survey of Entering Students is part of the college-wide assessment program at St. Petersburg Junior College (SPJC). The primary purpose is to obtain an overall picture of the needs and expectations of in-coming students and learn more about the factors and influences that lead them to apply to SPJC. This summary report presents the findings from the Survey of Entering Students for Session I, II and III 1996-97 at the College.

RESPONDENTS

One thousand three hundred and one (1301) surveys were returned by students applying for admission to the College during 1996-97. Sixteen percent (16%, 302) planned to take classes at the St. Pete/Gibbs Campus, 44% (521) at the Clearwater campus, 32% (326) at the Tarpon Springs Center, 6% (75) at the Health Education Center, 1% (7) at the Allstate Center, and 1% (9) at other sites. The table below shows the student demographics of the surveyed students. The majority of students applying (56.5%) were 24 years of age or less, female (60.4%), and white (83.6%). About one-third (32.5%) had graduated from high school less than a year ago and planned on earning an AA degree and transferring to a four year college (52.0%)

	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
AGE			PRIMARY REASON ENROLLING		
19 and under	465	36.9	AT SPJC		
20 - 24	247	19.6	Earn AA/Transfer to 4-year College	615	52.0
25 - 39	348	27.6	Earn AS/Cert New/Different Career	316	21.8
40 - 54	159	12.6	Take Courses to Up-grade Job Skills	101	9.0
55 or over	41	3.3	Take Courses for New/Different Career	76	5.4
Total	1260	100.0	Take Courses for Personal Enrichment	86	9.9
			Other	53	1.9
			Total	1247	100.0
GENDER			PLAN TO TAKE CLASSES		
Female	598	60.4	During the day	826	65.4
Male	392	39.6	In the Evening	397	31.8
Total	990	100.0	On the Weekend	138	2.8
			Total	1261	100.0
ETHNICITY			PREFER TO ATTEND CLASSES		
American Indian	12	1.0	Weekday mornings	495	40.2
Asian Pacific Islander	38	3.1	Weekday afternoons	143	11.6
Black/Non-Hispanic	72	5.8	Weekday evenings	334	27.2
Hispanic	67	5.4	Anytime during week	130	10.6
White	1032	83.6	Anytime during weekend	41	3.3
Unknown	14	1.1	No Preference	87	7.1
Total	1235	100.0	Total	1230	100.0
YEARS SINCE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION OR GED			PLAN TO ENROLL		
Less than 1 year ago	391	32.5	Primarily for Credit - Full-time	600	51.2
1 - 3	179	14.9	Primarily for Credit - Part-time	504	38.9
4 - 5	93	7.1	Primarily Not for Credit	88	9.9
More than 5 years ago	549	45.5	Total	1192	100.0
Total	1212	100.0			

ENROLLMENT PREFERENCE

The majority of students (51.2%) planned to enroll full-time and preferred to take classes during the day (65.4%). More students preferred weekday mornings (40.7%) than afternoons (11.8%) or evenings (27.6%) but 10.8% were willing to take classes any time during the week. Fifty one percent (51%) of the students who planned to enroll part-time would have preferred to enroll full-time given other circumstances or conditions. The top three conditions cited by the students were, "Job Responsibilities and Schedules," "Finances," and "Family Responsibilities".

INFORMATIONAL SOURCES/MEDIA ABOUT SPJC

Perspective students were asked to identify the major sources and media used to obtain information about the College. "Materials Mailed to Students," "High School Presentations," "Materials Students Picked-Up," "St. Petersburg Times," and "Material from Display Rack" were the most noted. The five lowest sources included, "Internet/World-Wide Web," "Tampa Tribune," "Local Papers," "Weekly Planet," and "Weekly Challenger." Other informational sources/media used to learn about SPJC by students were "Friends," "Parents/Family," "Other Students Attending SPJC," and "Live In Close Proximity to Campuses".

FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISION TO ATTEND SPJC

"Proximity to Home," "Courses/Programs Offered," "Cost," "Friends' Recommendations," and "SPJC's Reputation" were the top five factors identified by students as influencing the decision to attend SPJC. The five factors identified least were "Contact with Faculty or SPJC Staff," "SPJC Staff Visits to High Schools or Place of Employment," "Music, Arts or Theater," "Athletics," and "Clubs or Organizations." Other factors that influenced students decision to attend the college were varied but several related to contacts that they had with individuals (professionals, advisors and counselors) that had knowledge about and/or recommended the College. It is interesting to note that "High School Presentations" was cited as a major source by which students acquired information but "SPJC Staff Visitations to High Schools or Place of Employment" was not a major factor that influenced their decision to apply to the College.

EXPECTED IMPORTANCE OF OFFICES AND SERVICES

Students were asked to rate how important they expected 19 offices and student support services would be to them on a ten-point (10) scale. Overall student ratings on the offices and services occupied a broad spectrum, ranging from a mean of 8.43 to 4.90. "Academic Advising" was the highest rated service and "Student Activities (clubs and organizations)" was the lowest rated service overall. The top five rated services were: "Academic Advising" (8.43), "Library" (7.97), "Career Counseling and Related Services" (7.93), "Access to Computer Labs" (7.88) and "Financial Aid" (7.67). The five lowest rated offices and services overall were: "Help in Reading Skills" (5.65), "Volunteer/Community Services Experiences" (5.54), "Services to Disabled Students" (5.42), "Student Publications," (4.95) and "Student Activities" (4.90).

RATINGS ON EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTACTS WITH SPJC STAFF AND PUBLICATIONS

When asked to rate the effectiveness of their contacts with staff members and publications prior to applying to the College, "Contact with SPJC Staff During Campus Visits" was ranked the highest with a mean of 8.09 on a ten-point (10) scale, followed by "Visit by SPJC Staff to School or Work" (7.93), "Information/Content of College Publications" (7.93), "Clarity of College Publications" (7.82), and "Telephone Contact with SPJC Staff" (7.74).

CONCLUSION

Many valuable insights were gained about the perceived needs, expectations and the level of importance of the College's various offices and support services for in-coming students. In order to continually learn about and improve the quality of the academic and student support services of the College, and as an aid to unit planning at the departmental level, the Survey of Entering Students will be administered each session.