

RESEARCH BRIEF

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EVALUATION OF THE SPJC FACTBOOK

Introduction

Since 1992-1993, the Office of Institutional Research publishes and distributes, annually, the SPJC FactBook to the Board of Trustees, all college administrators, program directors and libraries and selected outside constituents. In Spring 1999, between two and three weeks after the publication was issued, 200 surveys were sent to recipients of the publication asking them to give their opinion regarding the usefulness of the information contained in the 1998-99 edition. Forty-six (46) surveys were returned (5 Cabinet Level, 24 Other Administrative, 14 Program Directors, 3 Others) for a return rate of 23%.

Discussion of Findings

When asked about the information in general contained in the publication, respondents felt a good cross-section of campus operations was represented (31, 67.4%). Most felt the information was understandable (31, 67.4% easy to understand; 11, 23.9% somewhat easy to understand). The majority of the respondents (45, 97.8%) indicated that the FactBook contains just the right mix of tables and graphs and that the graphs contained just the right amount of statistical support (40, 87.0%). For each item in the survey, Table 1 shows the number and percent of respondents selecting each item choice.

Three items asked about specific sections contained in the publication. There were mixed responses to the item asking about the "History of SPJC." Four (4, 9.5%) respondents felt the section should be continued in the current format and 7 respondents (16.7%) felt it should be expanded. However, more felt the section should be consolidated in some manner. Twelve (12, 28.6%) thought the section should be condensed and 18 (42.9%) felt only the major highlights should be listed. As a result, we are working with Institutional Advancement to develop an historical graphic that will list major highlights of the college to be placed in the front of the publication; the current format will become an appendix at the back of the publication. Look for this change to occur with the 2000-2001 publication of the SPJC FactBook.

The last two items addressing specific sections of the publication asked which would be least useful and most useful to the respondent. The greatest number of respondents were undecided (18, 39.1%) about the section they felt would be least useful to them. About one-fourth (26.1%) felt the facilities section would be least useful.

Most respondents checked multiple sections as being most useful to them resulting in 87 responses in all.

Of this number ten respondents (10, 11.5%) reported they were undecided. The four sections that ranked highest were student enrollment (27, 31.0%), outcomes/indicators (15, 17.2%), and academics (14, 16.1%).

The last item asked about the overall usefulness of the publication. Forty (40) of the 45 respondents indicated that it would be useful. Specifically, 19 (42.2%) responded that the SPJC FactBook would be very useful to them and an additional 21 (46.7%) indicated that it would be somewhat useful to them.

In the section asking for comments, four (4) respondents complimented the publication using terms such as "good job," "excellent," or "outstanding" and seven (7) indicated that they have used the data for reports, to verify information for state reporting and to share information about the college with the business community.

Two respondents felt the print quality was poor or that the graphs would be easier to understand if they were printed in color. The 1999-2000 publication will show graphs in color. In the past, the publication has been printed in-house; however, we are working with Institutional Advancement to arrange out-sourcing the next printing of the publication. One respondent felt that printing was not required but that the data should be shown on a Web page. The 1998-99 SPJC FactBook currently is available at <http://www.spjc.cc.fl.us/central/ir>, however a limited number of copies will continue to be printed.

A suggestion was made to add a table showing five years of annual funded enrollment (in terms of total FTE) by site. This table will appear in the 1999-2000 edition. One respondent asked that cost accounting data by unit or department be added. This will not be added due to the volume of cost data. There are several hundred departments reported in unrestricted funds alone for which revenue and three expense categories (Personnel, Operating Costs and Capital Outlay) would be required. A Cost Analysis Report, submitted annually to the state, provides summary information by function for instructional disciplines and support categories. However, an explanation of the underlying formulas and account codes upon which the data are based would be required making the table unwieldy.

Finally it was suggested that headcount and FTE for all sites be shown on all tables rather than home campus on some tables and collegewide totals on others. We are unable to comply with this request for a number of reasons including:

1. Headcount numbers shown on all tables are unduplicated numbers. In order to unduplicate student headcount the home campus is used as a control so that if a student takes courses on multiple campuses there is a ruling guide to determine where the individual should be counted. To count a student on each site where he/she is enrolled in a class would result in a duplicated headcount.

2. Enrollment headcount by program is generated from the student major whether or not the student is actually taking a course in the major. Consequently site headcount may/may not be equal to the program major headcount. Additionally, if the program is offered on more than one campus it would not be possible to identify the number by program by site, especially if the student were taking

courses at more than one campus. Thus, for this table type unduplicated collegewide headcount is shown.

3. Graduation headcount by program is generated from the student major in which the degree or certificate was awarded. This information is influenced by the same issues as enrollment by program. Again, only collegewide unduplicated headcount is shown.

4. Enrollment in courses (FTE) is reported to the state in broad categories such as "Distributive," "Health," "Office," "Trade and Industrial," or "Public Service" rather than at the department level. The data is provided based on where the course is taught (as is required by the state) rather than who administers the course. Thus, it is not possible to show FTE data by department; however, FTE by site is available in the publication.

TABLE
Number and Percent of Respondents Answering Each Survey Item

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
• I feel the FactBook contains		
a. just the right mix of tables and graphs	45	97.8%
b. too many graphs	0	0.0%
c. too many tables	1	2.2%
• I feel that graphs contained in the FactBook contain		
a. too much statistical support	3	6.5%
b. just the right amount of statistical support	40	87.0%
c. not enough statistical support	3	6.5%
• I feel the "History of SPJC" contained in the FactBook should		
a. be expanded	7	16.7%
b. be condensed	12	28.6%
c. list major highlights only	18	42.9%
d. be eliminated	1	2.4%
e. be continued in current format	4	9.5%
• Overall I feel the information displayed in the FactBook is		
a. easy to understand	31	67.4%
b. somewhat easy to understand	11	23.9%
c. somewhat difficult to understand	4	8.7%
d. difficult to understand	0	0.0%
• Overall I feel the information contained in the FactBook represents		
a. a good cross-section of campus operations	31	67.4%
b. only a limited number of campus operations	8	17.4%
c. undecided	7	15.2%
• I feel the section of the FactBook tables and graphs that will be <u>most useful</u> to me will be		
a. student enrollment	27	31.0%
b. academics	14	16.1%
c. outcomes/indicators	15	17.2%
d. facilities	7	8.0%
e. personnel	5	5.7%
f. finance	9	10.3%
g. undecided	10	11.5%
• I feel the section of the FactBook tables and graphs that will be <u>least useful</u> to me will be		
a. student enrollment	2	4.3%
b. academics	2	4.3%
c. outcomes/indicators	3	6.5%
d. facilities	12	26.1%
e. personnel	5	10.9%
f. finance	4	8.7%
g. undecided	18	39.1%
• Overall the FactBook will be		
a. very useful to me	19	42.2%
b. somewhat useful to me	21	46.7%
c. undecided	4	8.9%
d. not useful at all	1	2.2%