



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA

ST. PETERSBURG

USF St. Petersburg Alumni Survey
AY0607 – AY0708

Sections from Full Write-up (6.16.09)
Pertaining to General Education

Institutional Research Office
Re-issued: 3.9.10

USF St. Petersburg Alumni Survey: Full Write-up AY0607 – AY0708

Executive Summary

This report is based on analysis of survey items received from one hundred and fifteen respondents to the USF St. Petersburg Alumni Survey. This document includes three sections: USFSP responses and comparative data from 4-year public institutions; responses by year of graduation; and General Education findings. The Alumni Survey was conducted in late-fall 2008/early-spring 2009; the adjusted response rate was 7.5% and the resulting Standard Error (SE) was $\pm 8.8\%$.

Findings suggest that USF St. Petersburg graduates are successful as measured by the large proportion of respondents that are employed or are continuing their education. 76.1% of respondents indicated that they were employed; 6.2% indicated they were continuing their education; and 9.7% indicated they were employed and continuing their education. Only 5.3% of respondents indicated that they were unemployed at this time.

Of those students that were currently employed, 74.8% earned salaries in the \$20,000 to \$50,000 range. More than one-half of students obtained a job prior to graduation (52.2%) and all but 3.3% had found employment within one year of graduation. The majority of respondents (76.8%) indicated that their degree/major was related to their occupation; and 76.6% indicated that USFSP had prepared them very well or at least adequately for their present occupation.

Lastly, the survey includes items relating to institutional success; as 91.2% of respondents indicated that USFSP was their 1st choice for a university and 81.4% indicated that if they could start over, they would again choose USFSP. Also, 69.0% of respondents indicated that the quality of education at USFSP was about the same or better than that of other colleges. Lastly, 87.6% indicated that USFSP had improved their quality of life.

The Alumni Survey also includes questions relating to general education; and findings suggest that USF St. Petersburg has contributed to student success in general education areas such as: English Composition, Social Sciences, and Critical Thinking Skills. Findings however also suggest some slight weaknesses in Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Fine Arts.

Background

Campus specific graduation data became available for USF St. Petersburg beginning in spring 2005. Through summer 2008, the number of USFSP graduates totaled 2,890. Of these, 465 (16.1%) completed graduate degrees and 2,425 (83.9%) completed undergraduate degrees. Please see [Table 1](#) for a distribution of total USFSP graduates by Academic Year (AY); where each AY includes fall, spring and summer semesters.

It was determined that a reasonable group to survey would include 1,620 students that graduated in AY0606 and AY0708.

Table 1
Distribution of Total USFSP Graduates by Academic Year (AY)

Degree	AY 0405*	AY0506	AY0607	AY0708	Total
Graduate	85	122	136	122	465
Undergraduate	384	679	668	694	2,425
Total	469	801	804	816	2,890

Note:

*AY0405 includes only spring 2005 and summer 2005.

Sample and Instrument

The USF St. Petersburg Alumni Survey utilized a paper-and-pencil instrument developed by American College Testing, Inc. (ACT). The ACT “Alumni Survey” that was selected is suitable for use by four-year universities. Students were sent a first-class mailing that included a cover letter, the survey, the ACT list of majors, and a postage-paid business reply envelope.

The proposed survey window was December 2008 through January 2009. A follow-up contact was scheduled for early-January with the contingency that depending on response rates—a second follow-up might be required. The follow-up contact was sent in electronic form during the first week in January. An analysis of survey response rates for both contacts suggested that non-response rates would persist regardless of additional contacts. The survey closed at the end of January.

Normally, surveys would be bundled and sent to ACT for processing and analysis. However, in consultation with ACT, it was determined that data processing and analysis for this sized sample might not be cost effective and USFSP results would not be included in the national norms. Instead, surveys were tallied and analyzed locally and a normative data report was purchased from ACT for use in comparison of results.

Response Rates and Standard Error Calculations

Based on the distribution of graduates by semester, it was determined that a reasonable sample draw would include graduates in AY0607 and AY0708 for a total of 1,620 students. After eliminating duplicate records (students who received undergraduate and graduate degrees) and records that contained no contact information, the adjusted sample totaled 1,541. By the close of the survey, five surveys had been returned to the IR Office as “Non-deliverable” which further reduced the usable sample size from 1,541 to 1,536.

Surveys were received from 115 respondents for an adjusted response rate of 7.5% which represents a Standard Error (SE) of $\pm 8.8\%$. To reach an SE of $\pm 5.0\%$ for a population of this size; 307 responses or a 20% response rate would have been required. For perspective, a 10% response rate (N=153) would have only improved the SE to $\pm 7.5\%$. All told, although it would have been preferable to have obtained a larger response rate and lower SE, the results found herein are still very useful to the University.

General Education Findings

General Education at USF St. Petersburg includes nine areas: English Composition; Quantitative Methods; Natural Sciences; Social Sciences; Historical Perspectives; Fine Arts; ALAMEA (African, Latin American, Middle Eastern or Asian Perspectives); Major Works and Issues; and Literature and Writing. The ACT Alumni Survey includes twenty-four items that typically relate to general education issues; and of these twenty-four items, seven relate directly to areas of USF St. Petersburg’s General Education program.

Table 2 subsets the seven survey items that relate more directly to areas of USF St. Petersburg’s General Education program. On six of the seven items relating to general education, between 64% and 90% of respondents indicated that USF St. Petersburg had contributed “somewhat or very much” to their personal growth in the areas of English Composition, Social Sciences, Fine Arts, Natural Sciences and one of the two areas within Quantitative Methods. However, 45% of respondents indicated that USF St. Petersburg had contributed “very little” to: “Understanding and applying mathematics in your daily activities” the second of two areas in Quantitative Methods.

Table 2
Subset of Alumni Survey Items Relating to USF St. Petersburg General Education Area

	Very Much		Somewhat		Very Little	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>USFSP GE Area: English Composition</i>						
Writing effectively	63	55.8	39	34.5	11	9.7
<i>USFSP GE Area: Quantitative Methods</i>						
Understanding graphic information	22	19.8	51	45.9	38	34.2
Understanding, applying mathematics in your daily activities	23	20.7	38	34.2	50	45.0
<i>USFSP GE Area: Social Sciences</i>						
Understanding different philosophies and cultures	50	45.0	45	40.5	16	14.4
Understanding the interaction of people and their environment	56	49.6	40	35.4	17	15.0
<i>USFSP GE Area: Fine Arts</i>						
Understanding and appreciating the arts	31	27.9	40	36.0	40	36.0
<i>USFSP GE Area: Natural Sciences</i>						
Understanding and applying scientific principles and methods	30	26.5	47	41.6	36	31.9