

# **The Entering Student Survey**

**St. Petersburg College**

**2003-2004**



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The Entering Student Survey (ESS) developed by St. Petersburg College is part of a comprehensive college-wide assessment program to ensure that the College delivers quality academic and support services to our students. The 2003-2004 iteration of the ESS was available to matriculating students in a paper and pencil version and in an electronic version. Only eleven students selected to complete the non-electronic version of the survey. The primary purpose of the ESS is to get a demographic picture of the students entering the College, discover what factors influence their decision to apply to the College, discern how they learned about the College, measure their perception of the importance to them of various academic and student support services and determine their satisfaction with a mixture of contact method used by the College. There were 168 surveys returned from students who were applying to the College during academic year 2003-2004. However, not every student answered every question and some responses were not included for technical reasons. As a consequence, the number of responses (N) may vary from question to question.

The survey has five major sections:

- Section A      Demographic and Academic Information of the Students
- Section B      Factors Influencing Students' Decision to Apply
- Section C      Sources and Media Through which Students First Learned about the College
- Section D      Rating the Importance of nineteen Offices and Student Support Services Areas
- Section E      Effectiveness of Student Contacts

The ratings for Sections D are based on a 7-point scale with "Critical" (7) being the highest possible rating and "Unimportant" (1) the lowest.

The ratings for Section E are based on a 7-point scale with "Excellent" (7) being the highest rating and "Poor" (1) the lowest possible rating.

A copy of the survey is included as Appendix A in the hard copy version of this report. The remainder of this report is a summary of the survey data with commentary.

## **Section Demographic and Academic Information of the Students**

The demographic profile and academic background of the 168 respondents (N) to the “Entering Student Survey” are summarized in the following narrative, tables, and charts.

Forty three percent of the respondents were younger than 25 years of age.

Two thirds of the respondents were female.

Seventy eight percent of the respondents were from Pinellas County, while an additional ten percent of the respondents identified neighboring counties as their place of residency. Only two percent of our students resided outside Florida.

Fifty nine percent of the responding students stated that it had been more than five years since they graduated from high school.

Seventy seven percent of the respondents listed their ethnicity as “White” while the second largest group, with eleven percent of the total selected “Black” as their ethnicity.

As it would be expected, the largest group of respondents was from St Petersburg/Gibbs Campus representing twenty four percent of the total.

This year the primary reason for attending the College was to pursue an A.A. degree. Over the history of this survey the pursuit of an A.A. has been the most often stated reason of attending the College. However, last year the pursuit of an AS/Cert./New Career was the most often given response to this inquiry. This is based upon and consistent with the disproportionately large number of students that answered our survey last year from the Health Education Center.

Fifty seven percent of our respondents plan to attend the College part-time.

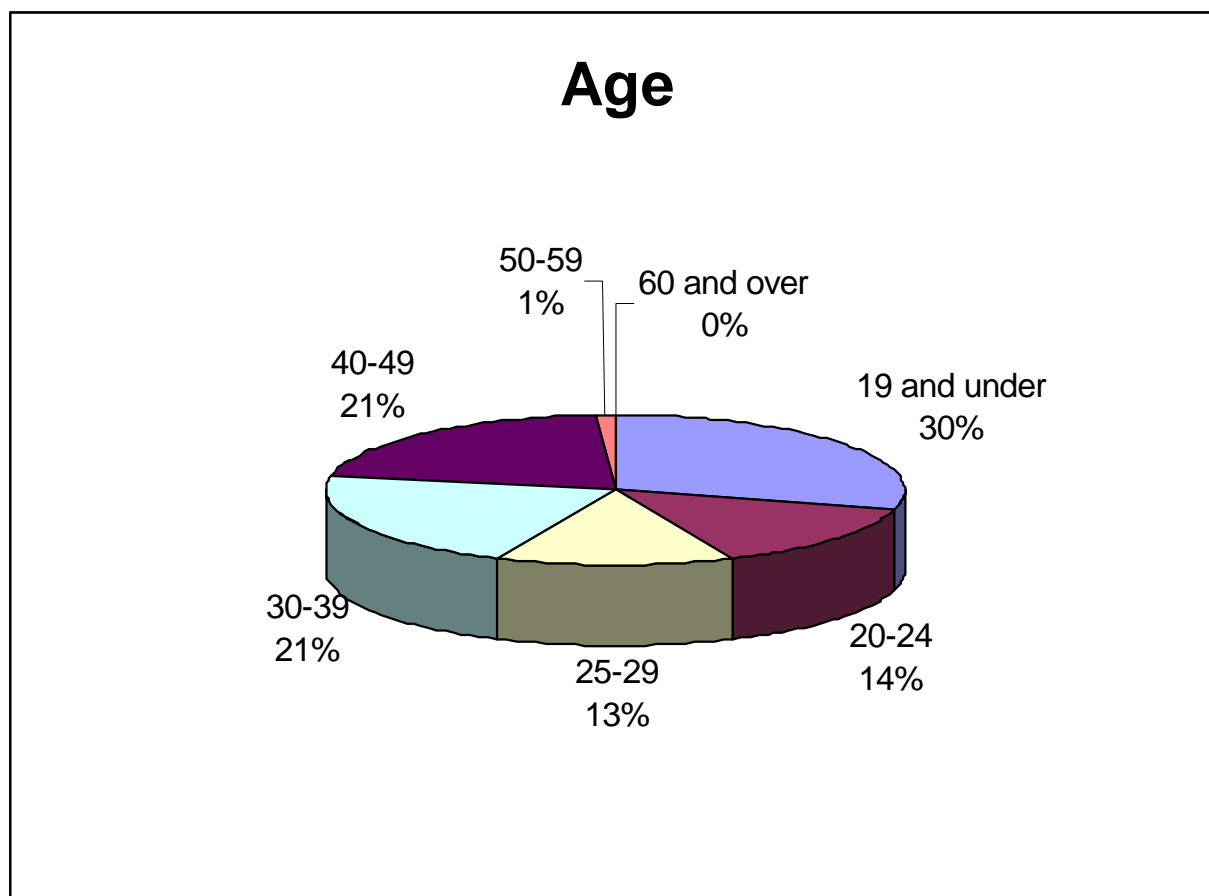
Of the fifty seven percent of our students that are attending part-time, fifty nine percent of that group would rather be full-time. The primary reasons that prevented responding students from attending full-time are the following: “Job Responsibilities”, “Finances” and “Family Responsibilities”. SPC can significantly impact student financial resources via increased scholarships and grants.

Thirty one percent of our respondents already have an academic degree.

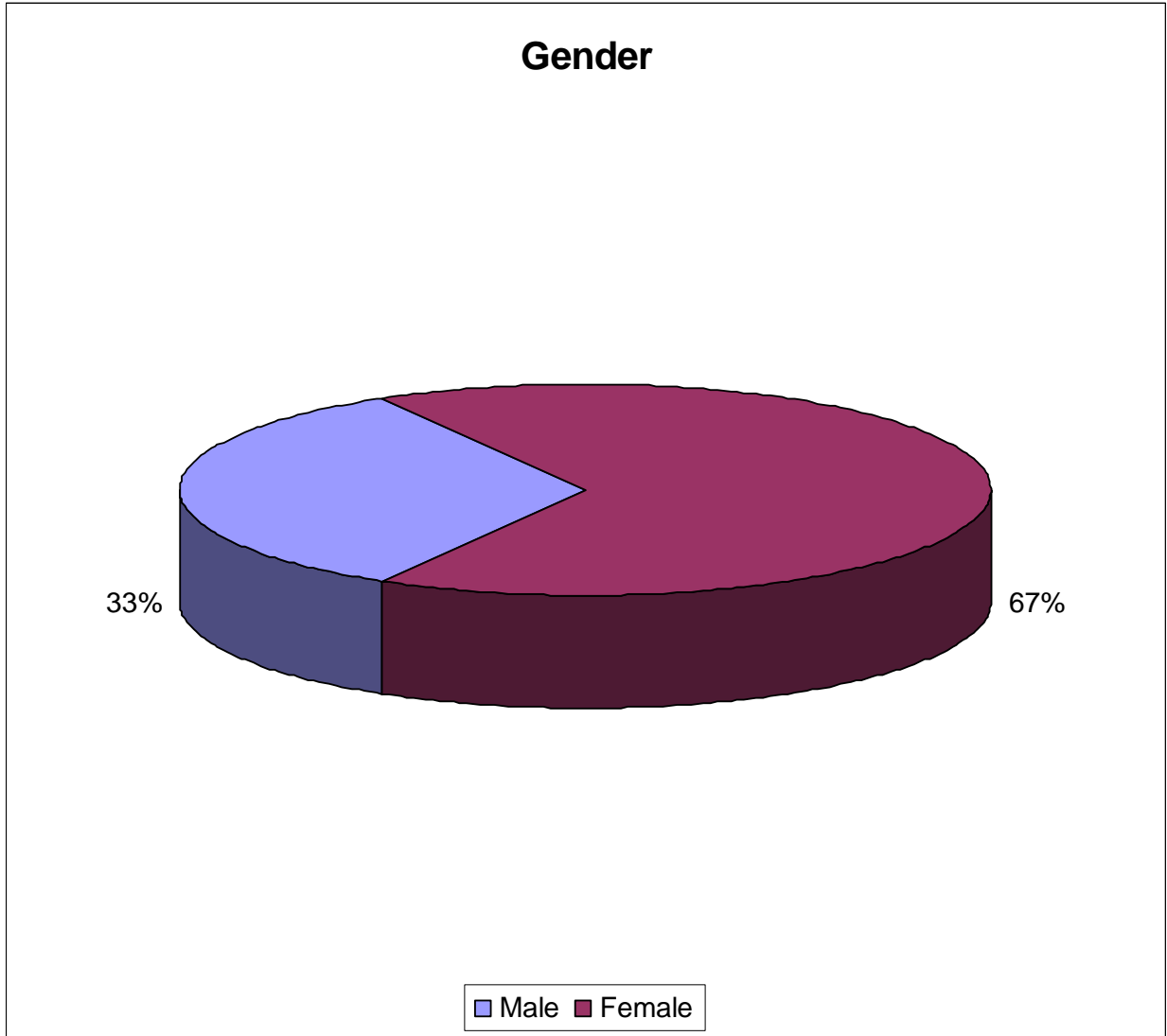
Sixty six percent of our students plan to work more than sixteen hours per week while attending college and twenty seven percent plan to work full-time or more.

## Background/Demographic Information on Entering Students 2003/2004 Tables and Charts

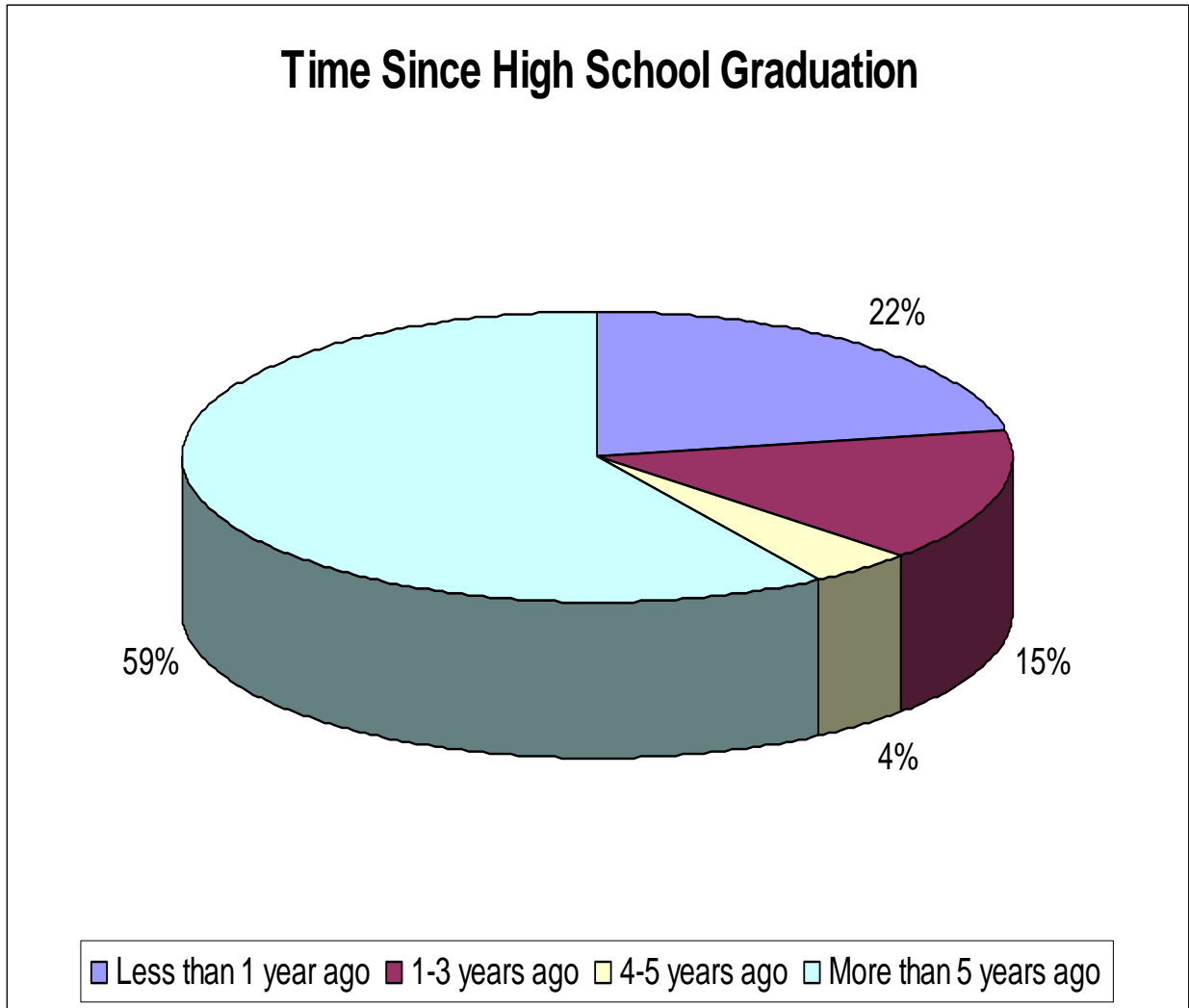
Ages	Number	% of Total
19 and under	49	29.17%
20-24	24	14.29%
25-29	22	13.10%
30-39	36	21.43%
40-49	35	20.83%
50-59	2	1.19%
60 and over	0	0.00%
Responses	168	



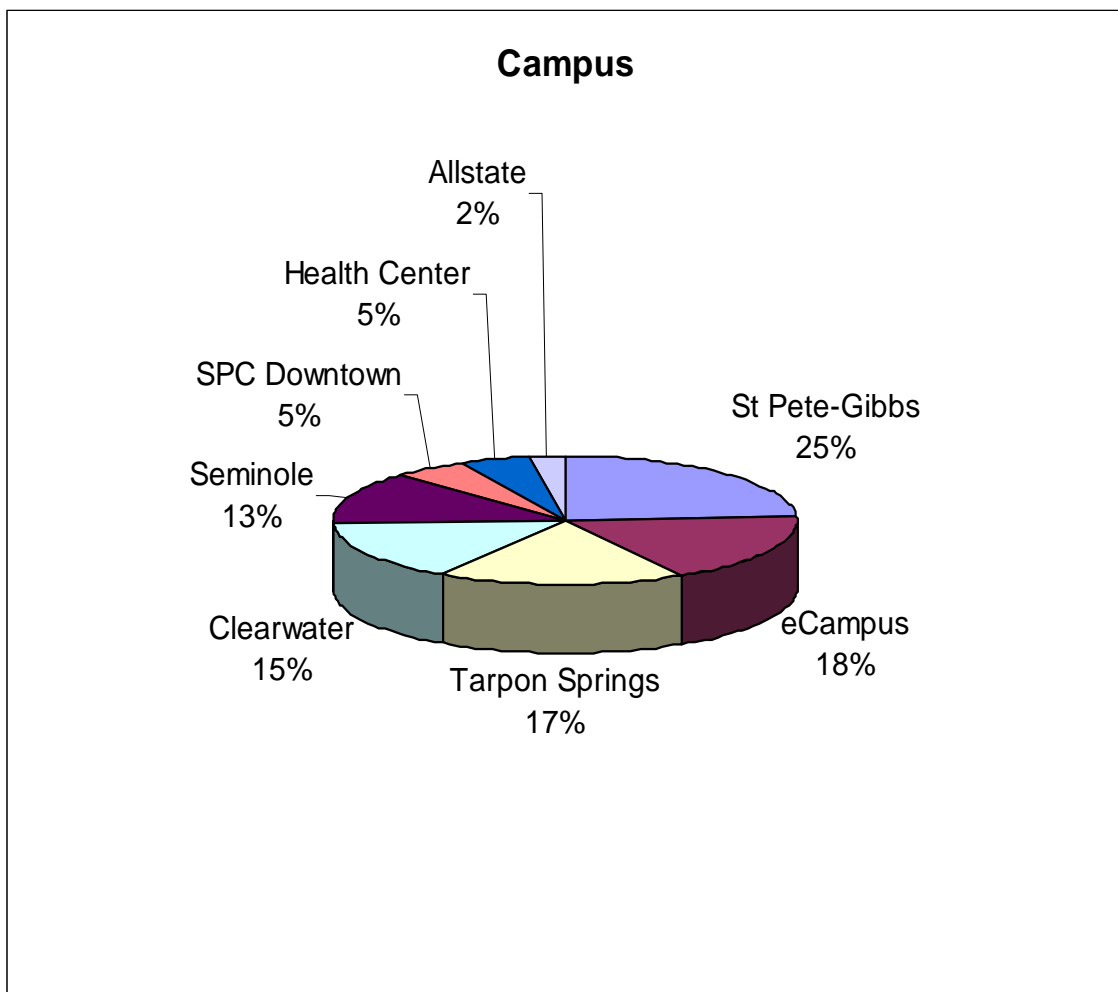
Gender	Number	% of Total
Male	55	33.33%
Female	110	66.67%
Responses	165	



Time Since High School Graduation	Number	% of Total
Less than 1 year ago	37	22.02%
1-3 years ago	25	14.88%
4-5 years ago	7	4.17%
More than 5 years ago	99	58.93%
Responses	168	



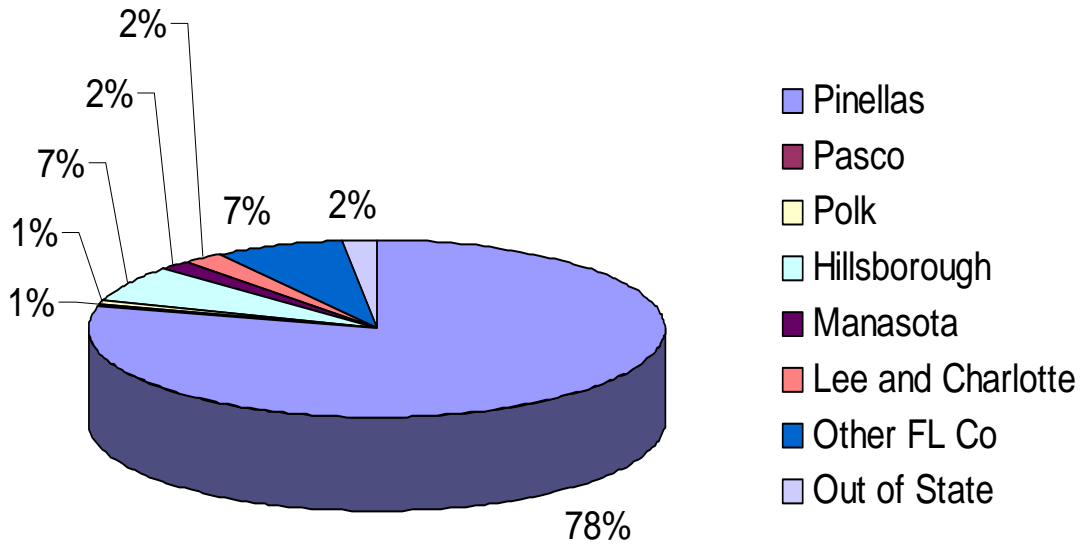
Campus	Number	% of Total
St Pete-Gibbs	40	23.81%
eCampus	30	17.86%
Tarpon Springs	29	17.26%
Clearwater	26	15.48%
Seminole	22	13.10%
SPC Downtown	9	5.36%
Health Center	8	4.76%
Allstate	4	2.38%
<b>Responses</b>	<b>168</b>	



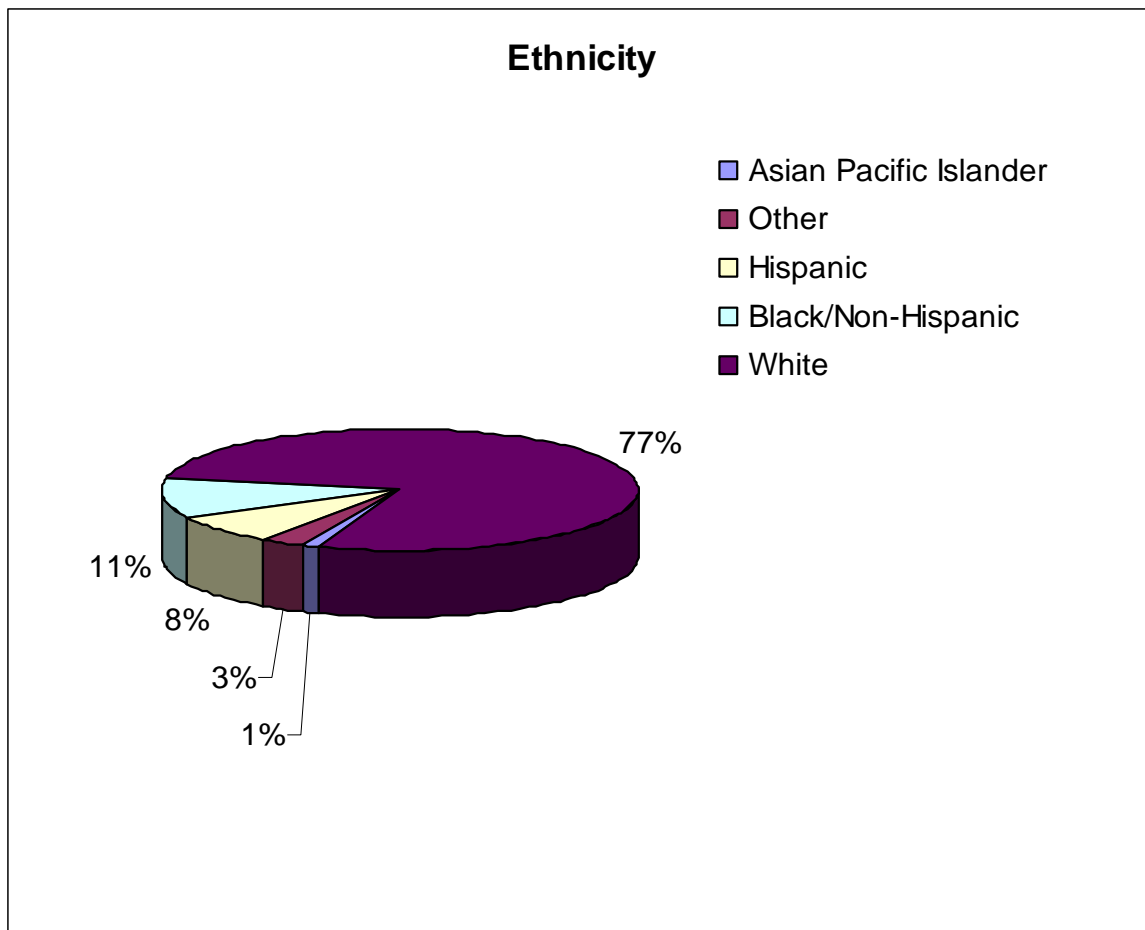
## Location by Zip Code

Zip Code	Respondents	% of Total	County
33841	1	0.60%	Polk Co
33701	5	3.01%	Pinellas Co
33702	5	3.01%	Pinellas Co
33703	3	1.81%	Pinellas Co
33704	4	2.41%	Pinellas Co
33705	2	1.20%	Pinellas Co
33706	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
33707	5	3.01%	Pinellas Co
33708	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
33709	3	1.81%	Pinellas Co
33710	6	3.61%	Pinellas Co
33711	6	3.61%	Pinellas Co
33711	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
33712	2	1.20%	Pinellas Co
33713	3	1.81%	Pinellas Co
33714	2	1.20%	Pinellas Co
33716	3	1.81%	Pinellas Co
33755	3	1.81%	Pinellas Co
33756	3	1.81%	Pinellas Co
33759	3	1.81%	Pinellas Co
33760	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
33761	2	1.20%	Pinellas Co
33762	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
33763	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
33764	2	1.20%	Pinellas Co
33765	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
33770	4	2.41%	Pinellas Co
33771	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
33772	5	3.01%	Pinellas Co
33773	3	1.81%	Pinellas Co
33774	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
33776	3	1.81%	Pinellas Co
33777	2	1.20%	Pinellas Co
33778	4	2.41%	Pinellas Co
33781	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
33785	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
34652	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
34653	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
34655	2	1.20%	Pinellas Co
34667	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
34668	4	2.41%	Pinellas Co
34669	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
34677	3	1.81%	Pinellas Co
34683	6	3.61%	Pinellas Co
34684	5	3.01%	Pinellas Co
34685	2	1.20%	Pinellas Co
34689	1	0.60%	Pinellas Co
34690	2	1.20%	Pinellas Co
34691	2	1.20%	Pinellas Co
34695	2	1.20%	Pinellas Co
34698	4	2.41%	Pinellas Co
33556	1	0.60%	Pasco Co
24091	1	0.60%	Out of State
24698	1	0.60%	Out of State
96319	1	0.60%	Out of State
32058	1	0.60%	Other FL Co
32321	1	0.60%	Other FL Co
32547	1	0.60%	Other FL Co
32640	1	0.60%	Other FL Co
32713	1	0.60%	Other FL Co
32792	1	0.60%	Other FL Co
32803	1	0.60%	Other FL Co
32925	1	0.60%	Other FL Co
33145	1	0.60%	Other FL Co
33147	1	0.60%	Other FL Co
33308	1	0.60%	Other FL Co
34202	1	0.60%	Other FL Co
34208	2	1.20%	Manasota
34208	1	0.60%	Manasota
33604	2	1.20%	Hillsborough
33614	1	0.60%	Hillsborough
33615	1	0.60%	Hillsborough
33624	4	2.41%	Hillsborough
33625	1	0.60%	Hillsborough
33629	1	0.60%	Hillsborough
33635	1	0.60%	Hillsborough
33948	1	0.60%	Lee and Charlotte
33971	1	0.60%	Lee and Charlotte
34110	1	0.60%	Lee and Charlotte
34112	1	0.60%	Lee and Charlotte
Responses	166		

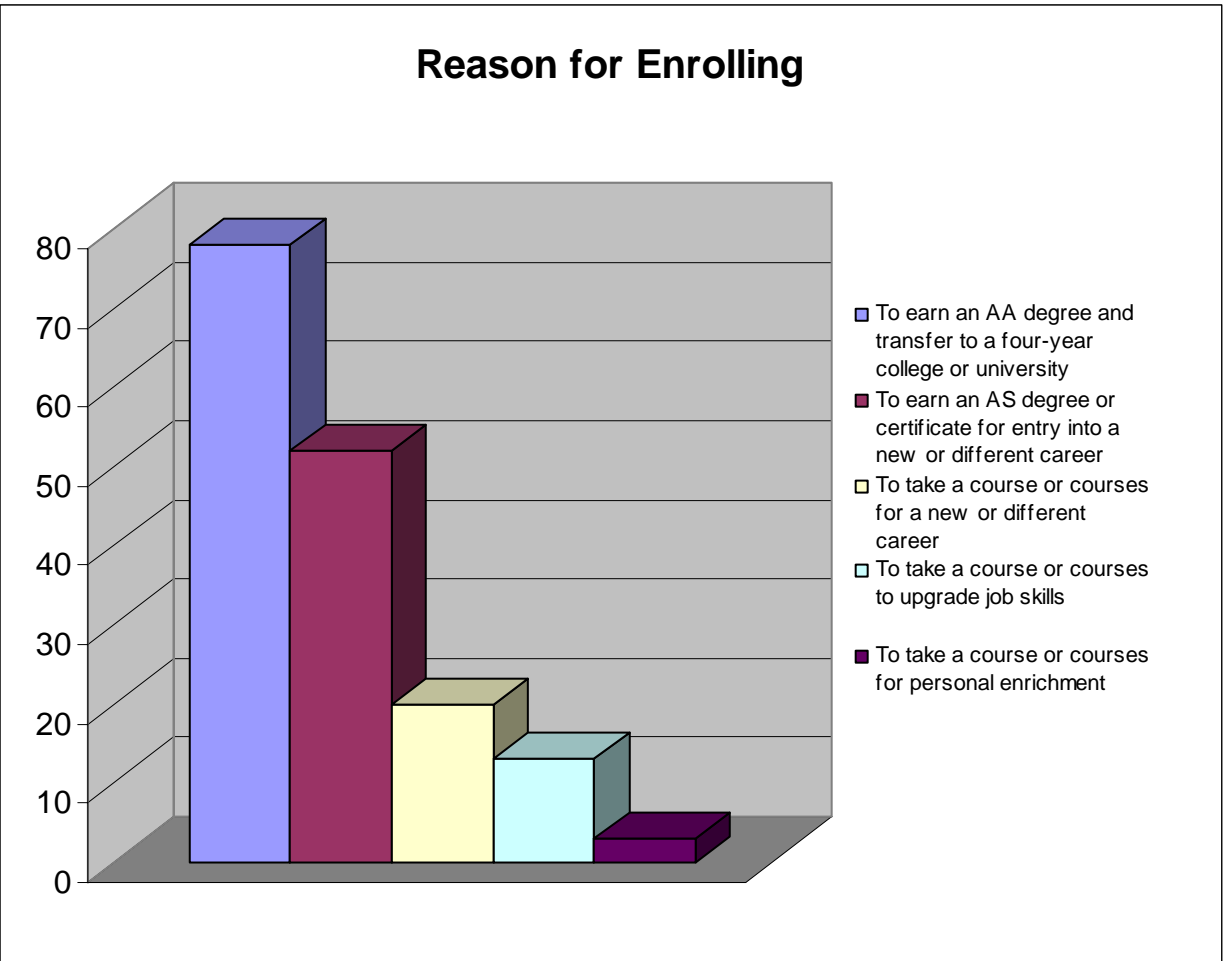
### Location by Zip Code



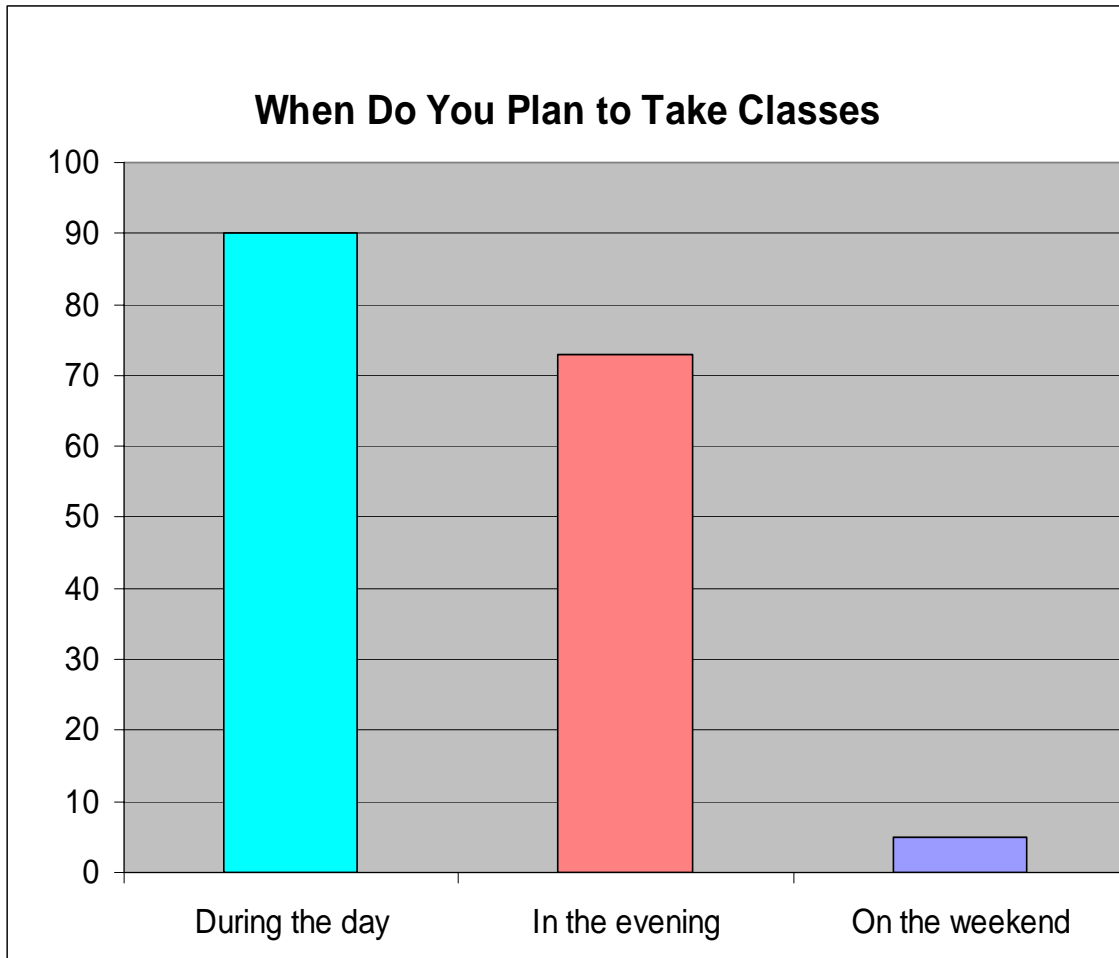
Ethnicity	Number	% of Total
Alaskan Native	0	0.00%
American Indian	0	0.00%
Asian Pacific Islander	2	1.19%
Other	5	2.98%
Hispanic	13	7.74%
Black/Non-Hispanic	18	10.71%
White	130	77.38%
<b>Responses</b>	<b>168</b>	



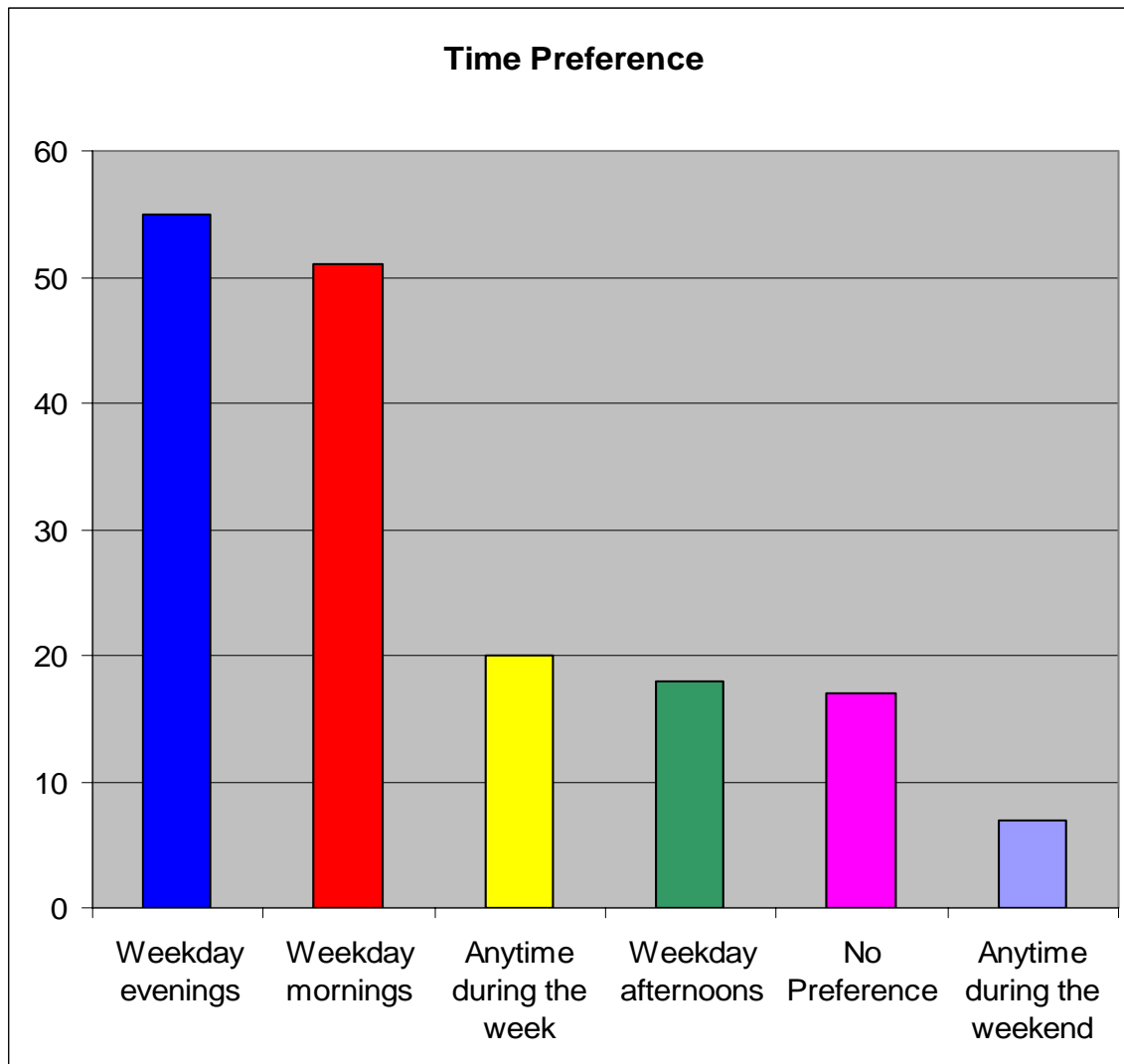
Reason for Enrolling	Number	% of Total
To earn an AA degree and transfer to a four-year college or university	78	46.99%
To earn an AS degree or certificate for entry into a new or different career	52	31.33%
To take a course or courses for a new or different career	20	12.05%
To take a course or courses to upgrade job skills	13	7.83%
To take a course or courses for personal enrichment	3	1.81%
<b>Responses</b>	<b>166</b>	



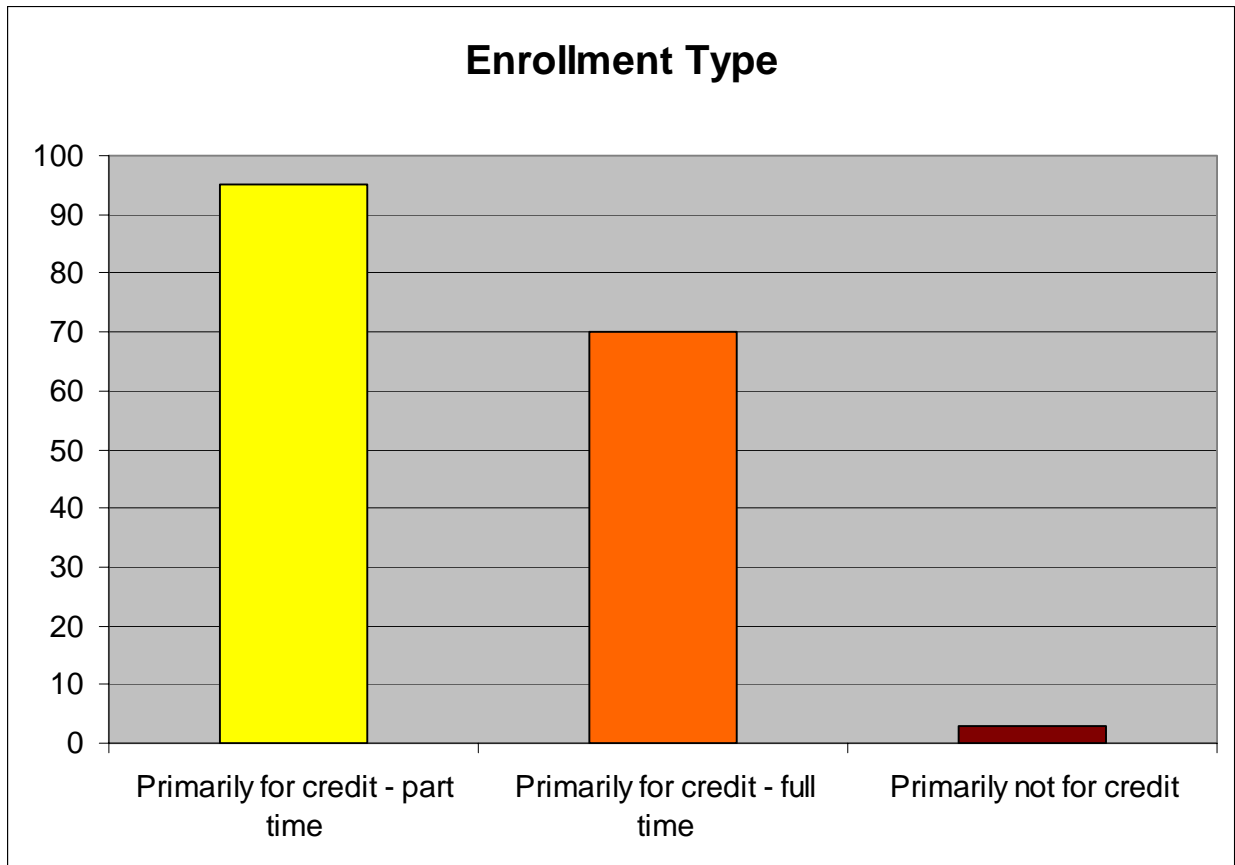
When Do Plan to Take Classes	Number	% of Total
During the day	90	53.57%
In the evening	73	43.45%
On the weekend	5	2.98%
<b>Responses</b>	<b>168</b>	



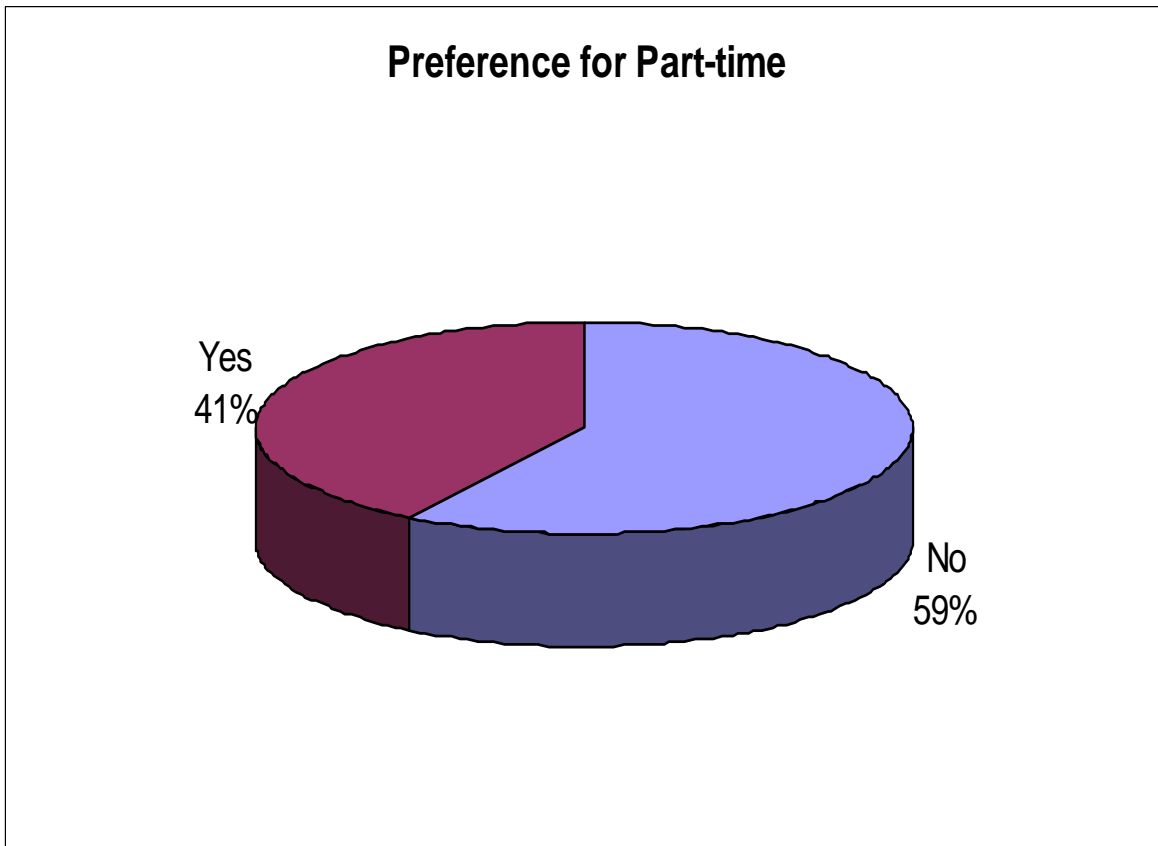
Time Preference	Number	% of Total
Weekday evenings	55	32.74%
Weekday mornings	51	30.36%
Anytime during the week	20	11.90%
Weekday afternoons	18	10.71%
No Preference	17	10.12%
Anytime during the weekend	7	4.17%
<b>Responses</b>	<b>168</b>	



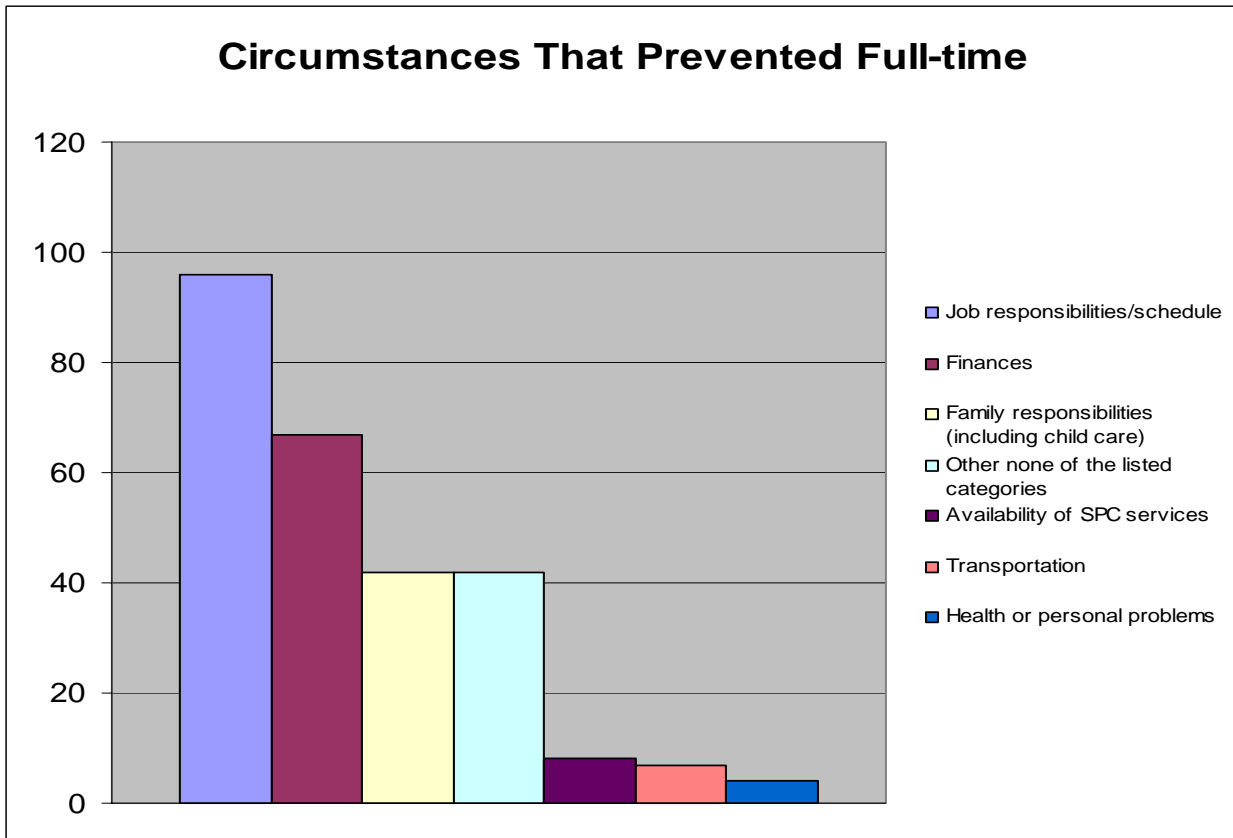
<b>Enrollment Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Primarily for credit - part time	95	56.55%
Primarily for credit - full time	70	41.67%
Primarily not for credit	3	1.79%
<b>Responses</b>	<b>168</b>	



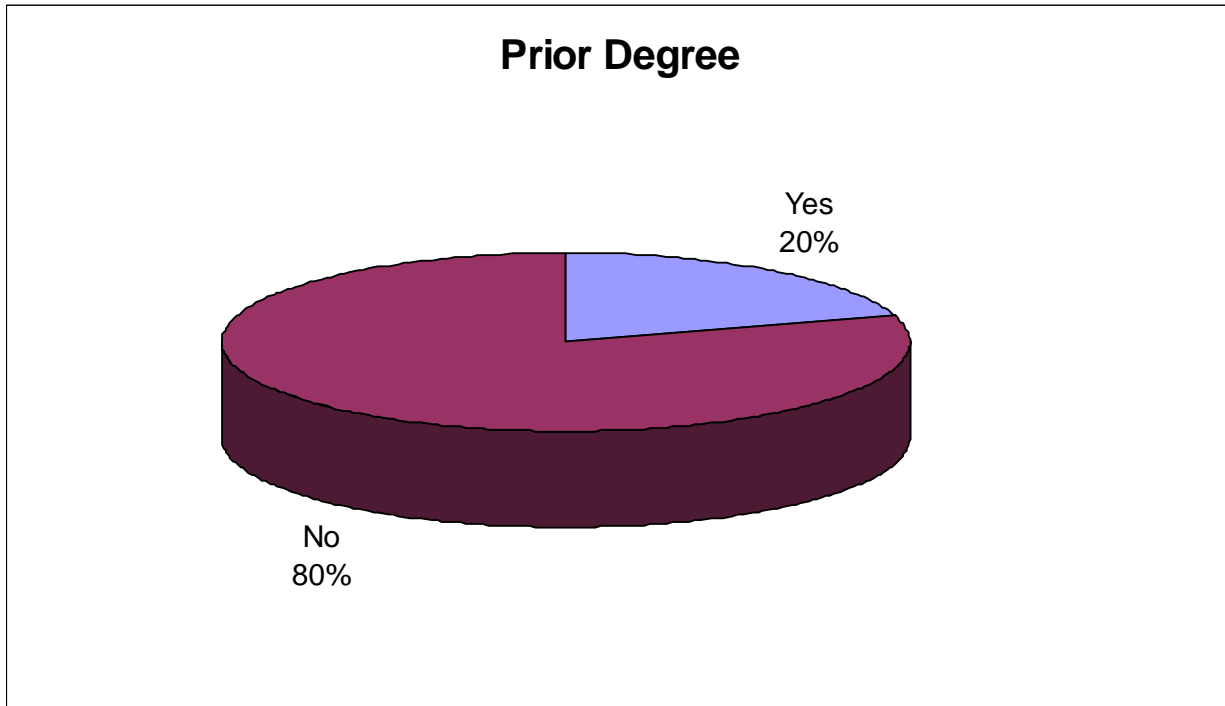
Preference For Part-time	Number	% of Total
No	57	58.76%
Yes	40	41.24%
Responses	97	



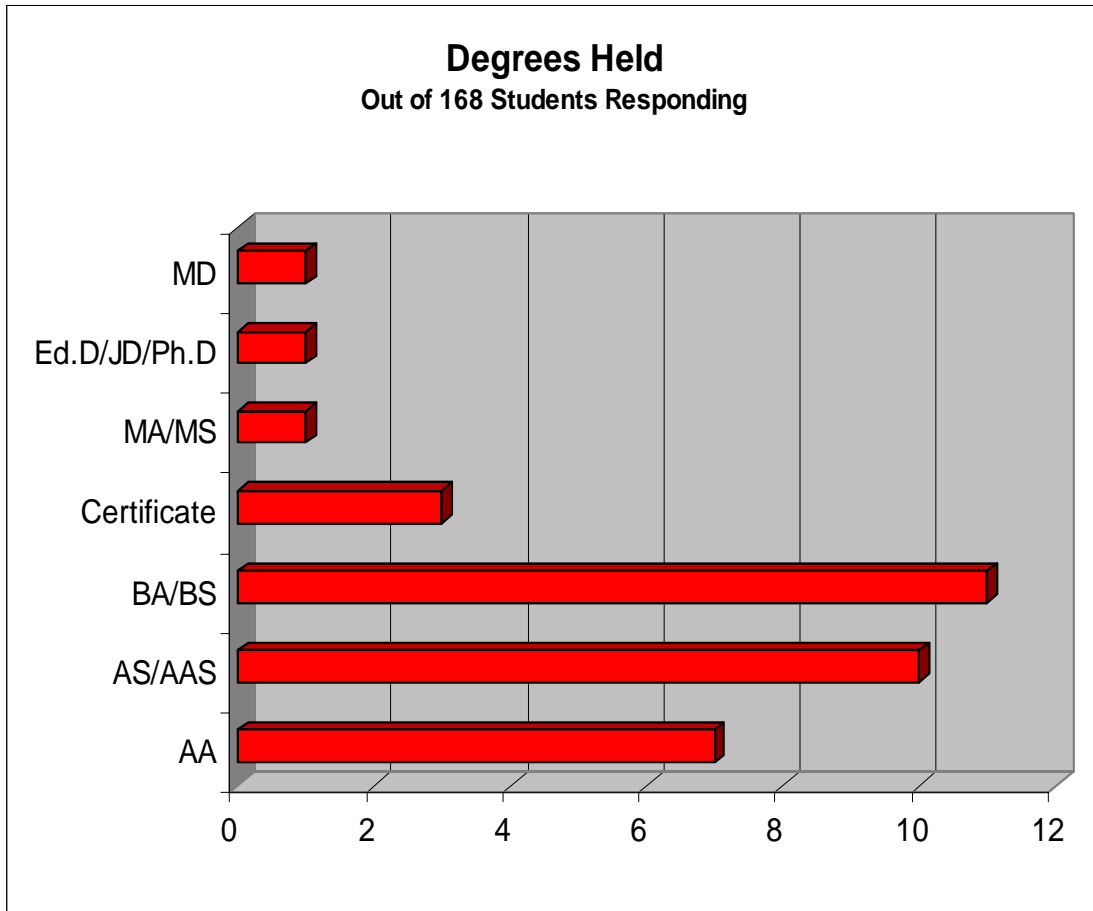
Circumstances That Prevented Full-time	Number	% of Total
		Divided by 168
Job responsibilities/schedule	96	57.14%
Finances	67	39.88%
Family responsibilities (including child care)	42	25.00%
Other (none of the listed categories)	42	25.00%
Availability of SPC services	8	4.76%
Transportation	7	4.17%
Health or personal problems	4	2.38%
<b>OTHER</b> - Distance	2	1.19%
<b>OTHER</b> - apprehension of the collegiate atmosphere	1	0.60%
<b>OTHER</b> - Certificate Program at another school	1	0.60%
<b>OTHER</b> - community service hours	1	0.60%
<b>OTHER</b> - I may choose to switch to full time later in the session	1	0.60%
<b>OTHER</b> - I would take more courses but they require pre-req's I need to finish first	1	0.60%
<b>OTHER</b> - I'd like time to myself for other studies or recreation.	1	0.60%
<b>OTHER</b> - laid off twice after submitting my 03-04 FAFSA	1	0.60%
<b>Responses</b>	<b>275</b>	



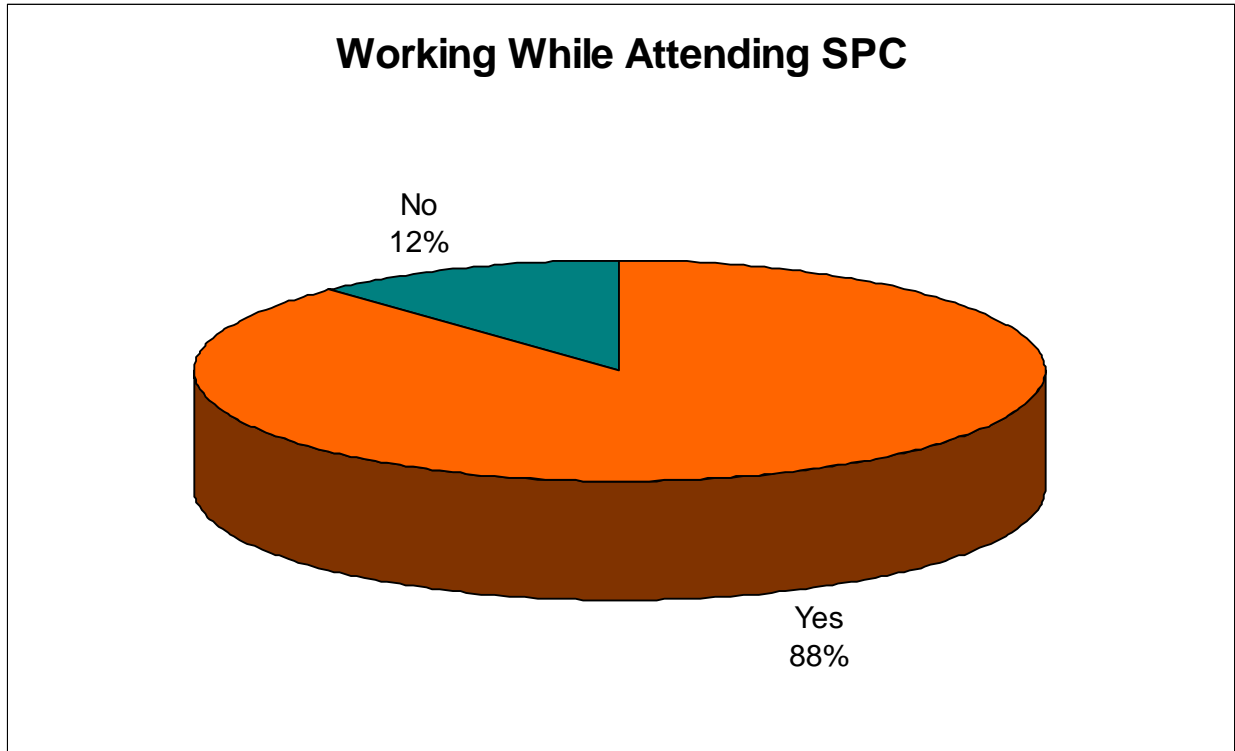
Prior Degree	Number	% of Total
Yes	34	20.24%
No	134	79.76%
Responses	168	



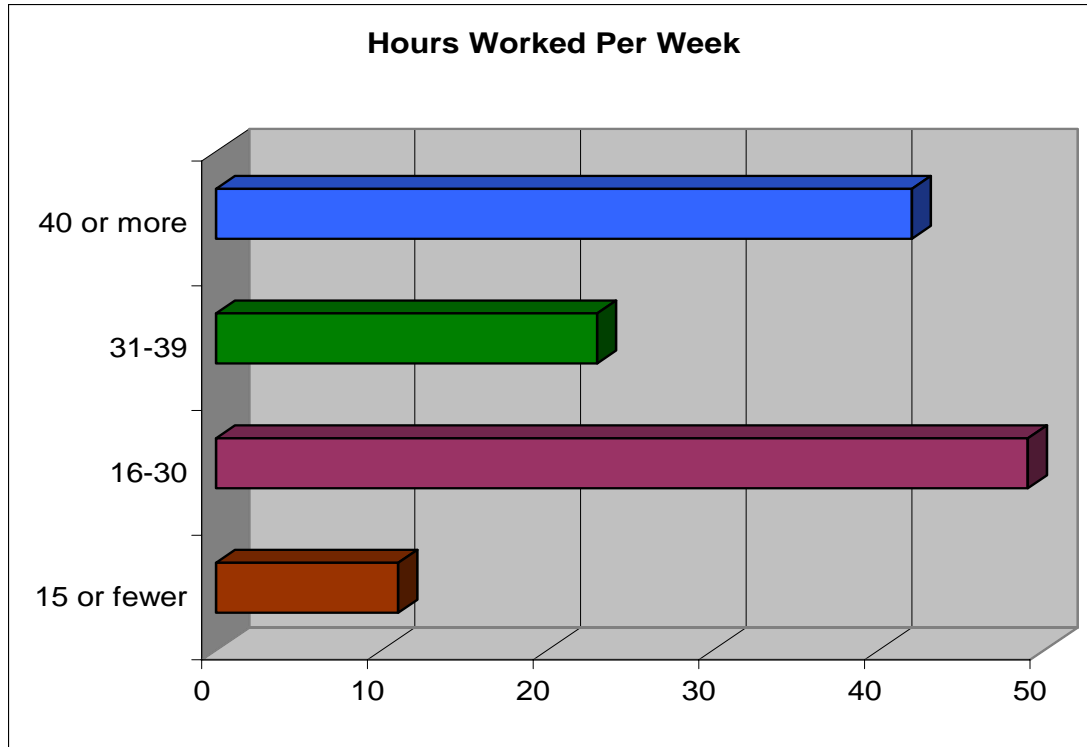
Degrees Held	Number	% of Total
		Divided by 168
AA	7	4.17%
AS/AAS	10	5.95%
BA/BS	11	6.55%
Certificate	3	1.79%
MA/MS	1	0.60%
Ed.D/JD/Ph.D	1	0.60%
MD	1	0.60%
<b>Responses</b>	<b>34</b>	



<b>Working While Attending SPC?</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Yes	147	88.02%
No	20	11.98%
<b>Responses</b>	<b>167</b>	

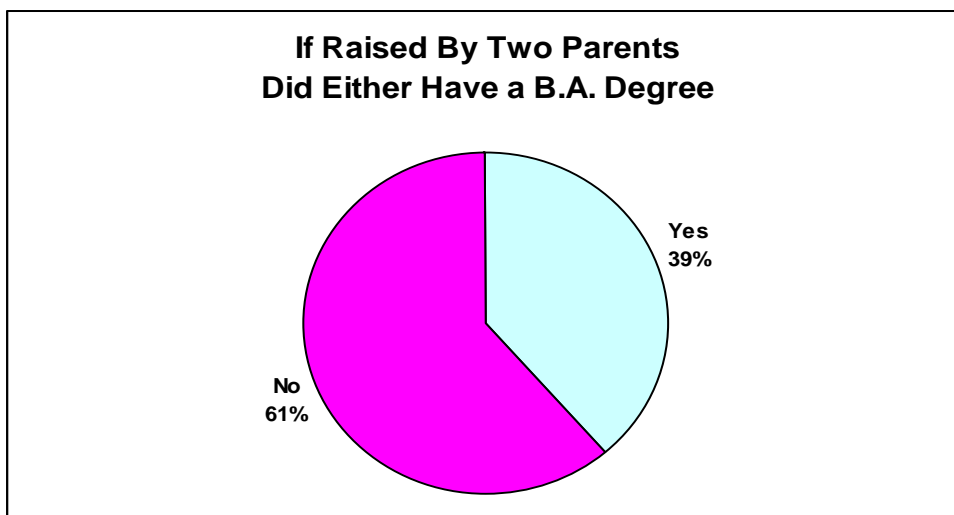
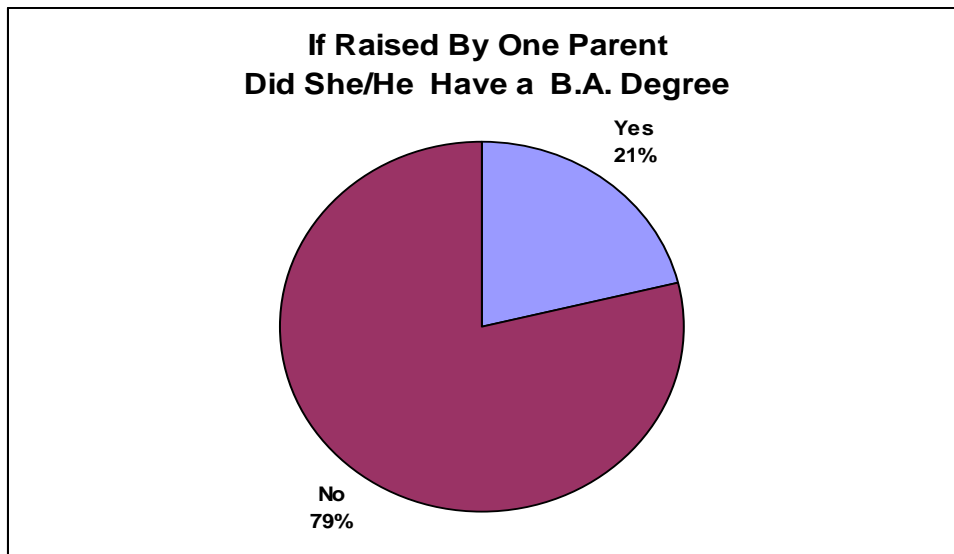


Hours Worked Per Week	Number	% of Total
15 or fewer	11	6.55%
16-30	49	29.17%
31-39	23	13.69%
40 or more	42	25.00%
Responses	125	Divided by 168



<b>If Raised By One Parent Did They Have a B.A. Degree</b>			
	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	
		Divided by	168
Yes	18	10.71%	21.18%
No	67	39.88%	78.82%
<b>Responses</b>	<b>85</b>		

<b>If Raised By Two Parents Did Either Have a B.A. Degree</b>			
	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	
		Divided by	168
Yes	54	32.14%	38.57%
No	86	51.19%	61.43%
<b>Responses</b>	<b>140</b>		



## Section B – Factors Influencing the Decision to Attend SPC

Students were asked to identify factors that influenced their decision to apply to the College. The six most often given responses are listed below in descending order.

### 2003/2004 Responses

- Courses or Programs Offered
- Close to Home
- Cost
- Ease of Transfer to a State University
- Academic Reputation
- Financial Aid Available

Student responses are identical to last years top five responses ( listed below) with the exception of the insertion of “Ease of Transfer to a State University” in the number four position.

### 2002/2003 Responses

- Courses or Programs Offered
- Close to Home
- Cost
- Academic Reputation
- Financial Aid Available

Moreover, the five least listed factors (categories provided on the survey) are identical to 2002/2003 responses. These responses are listed below.

### 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 Responses

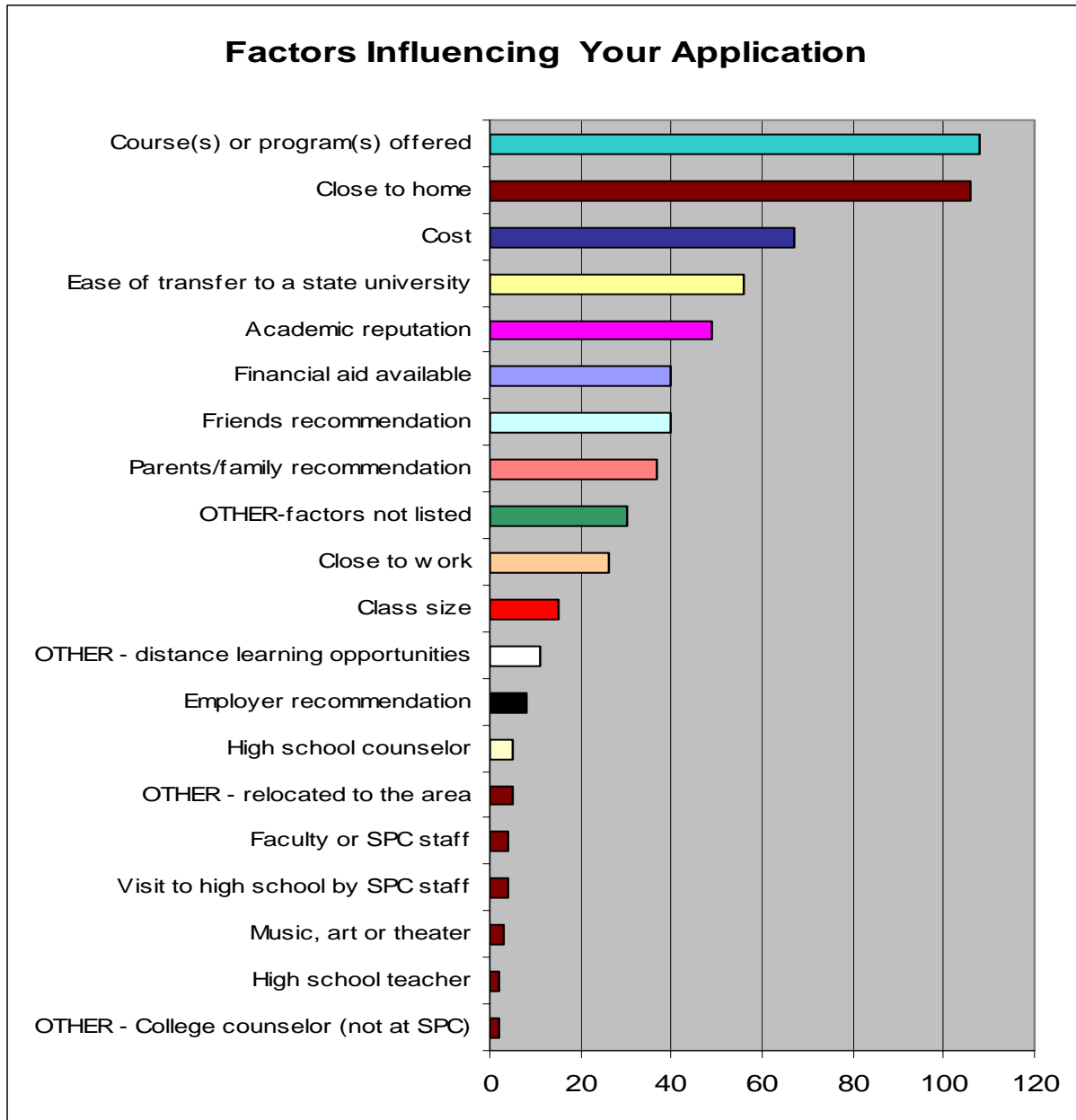
- Music, Art, or Theater
- High School Teacher
- Athletics
- Club or Organizations
- Visit by SPC Staff to HS/Employer

Student responses are remarkably consistent from year to year on this survey question. It is instructive to observe that the programs offers by the College are the most important factor in determining if students will apply to the College. Being close to home is the second most important drawing factor, while the relative low cost of our programs is the third most important consideration for the responding students. On the other hand “Music, Art, or Theater”, “High School Teacher”, “Athletics”, “Club or Organizations” or “Visit by SPC Staff to HS/Employer” have little influence on most of our students’ decisions to apply.

The table below lists all the responses to this survey item including “Other” responses where students wrote in factors not enumerated on the survey.

## Factors Influencing the Decision to Attend SPC Table and Chart

Factors Influencing Your Application	Number	% of Total
	Divided by	168
Course(s) or program(s) offered	108	64.29%
Close to home	106	63.10%
Cost	67	39.88%
Ease of transfer to a state university	56	33.33%
Academic reputation	49	29.17%
Financial aid available	40	23.81%
Friends recommendation	40	23.81%
Parents/family recommendation	37	22.02%
Close to work	26	15.48%
<b>OTHER</b> -factors not listed	25	14.88%
Class size	15	8.93%
<b>OTHER</b> - distance learning opportunities	11	6.55%
Employer recommendation	8	4.76%
High school counselor	5	2.98%
<b>OTHER</b> - relocated to the area	5	2.98%
Faculty or SPC staff	4	2.38%
Visit to high school by SPC staff	4	2.38%
Music, art or theater	3	1.79%
High school teacher	2	1.19%
<b>OTHER</b> - College counselor (not at SPC)	2	1.19%
<b>OTHER</b> - Career Services at the Unemployment center	1	0.60%
<b>OTHER</b> - I need to take a math class to continue my AA degree	1	0.60%
<b>OTHER</b> - NEED TO RAISE GPA	1	0.60%
<b>OTHER</b> - Two year college	1	0.60%
<b>OTHER</b> - Prior student	1	0.60%
Athletics	0	0.00%
Clubs or organizations	0	0.00%
Visit to place of employment by SPC staff	0	0.00%
<b>Responses</b>	<b>618</b>	



On this chart "OTHER-factors not listed" includes responses where the students marked "Other" on the survey with no written in response and where the written in responses appeared only once.

## Section C - How Did You Learn About SPC

Students were asked to identify how they learned about the College by selecting from a roster of categories or by writing in their own responses. The five most frequently listed sources for learning about the College were:

- Internet/World Wide Web
- SPC Television Station
- Other (unspecified category)
- St. Petersburg Times
- Material Mailed to You

The five least used methods of learning about the College from the survey's roster of categories were as follows:

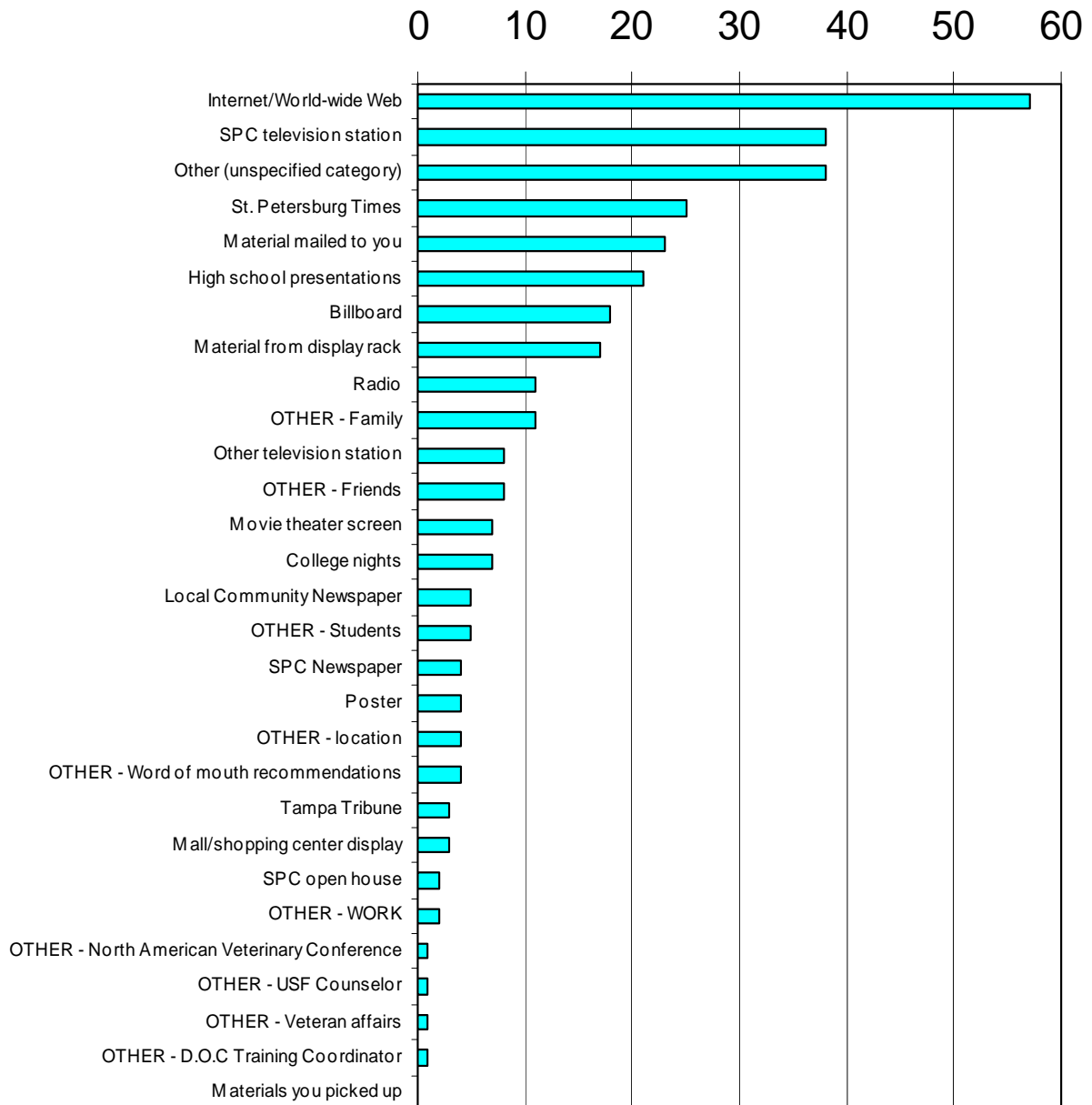
- Posters
- Tampa Tribune
- Mall/Shopping Center Displays
- SPC Open Houses
- Materials Picked Up By You

The College's web site and television station are powerful tools for getting out the College's message while the five methods listed on our least used list may not be worth the College's resources required to provide them. A complete list of the methods used to learn about the College is provided in the following table and chart.

## How Did You Learn About SPC Table and Chart

How Did You Learn About SPC (Sources/Media/Events)	Number	% of Total
		Divided by 168
Internet/World-wide Web	57	33.93%
SPC television station	38	22.62%
Other (unspecified category)	38	22.62%
St. Petersburg Times	25	14.88%
Material mailed to you	23	13.69%
High school presentations	21	12.50%
Billboard	18	10.71%
Material from display rack	17	10.12%
Radio	11	6.55%
<b>OTHER</b> - Family	11	6.55%
Other television station	8	4.76%
<b>OTHER</b> - Friends	8	4.76%
Movie theater screen	7	4.17%
College nights	7	4.17%
Local Community Newspaper	5	2.98%
<b>OTHER</b> - Students	5	2.98%
SPC Newspaper	4	2.38%
Poster	4	2.38%
<b>OTHER</b> - location	4	2.38%
<b>OTHER</b> - Word of mouth recommendations	4	2.38%
Tampa Tribune	3	1.79%
Mall/shopping center display	3	1.79%
SPC open house	2	1.19%
<b>OTHER</b> - WORK	2	1.19%
<b>OTHER</b> - North American Veterinary Conference	1	0.60%
<b>OTHER</b> - USF Counselor	1	0.60%
<b>OTHER</b> - Veteran affairs	1	0.60%
<b>OTHER</b> - D.O.C Training Coordinator	1	0.60%
Materials you picked up	0	0.00%
<b>Responses</b>	<b>329</b>	

## How Did You Learn About SPC



## Section D – Rating of Importance of College Offices/Services

On the Entering Student Survey, students were asked to rate how important they thought 19 listed offices/services would be to them. The five offices/services perceived as the most important were:

- Academic Advising
- Financial Aid
- Library
- Career Counseling
- Access to Computer Labs

The five judged the least important were:

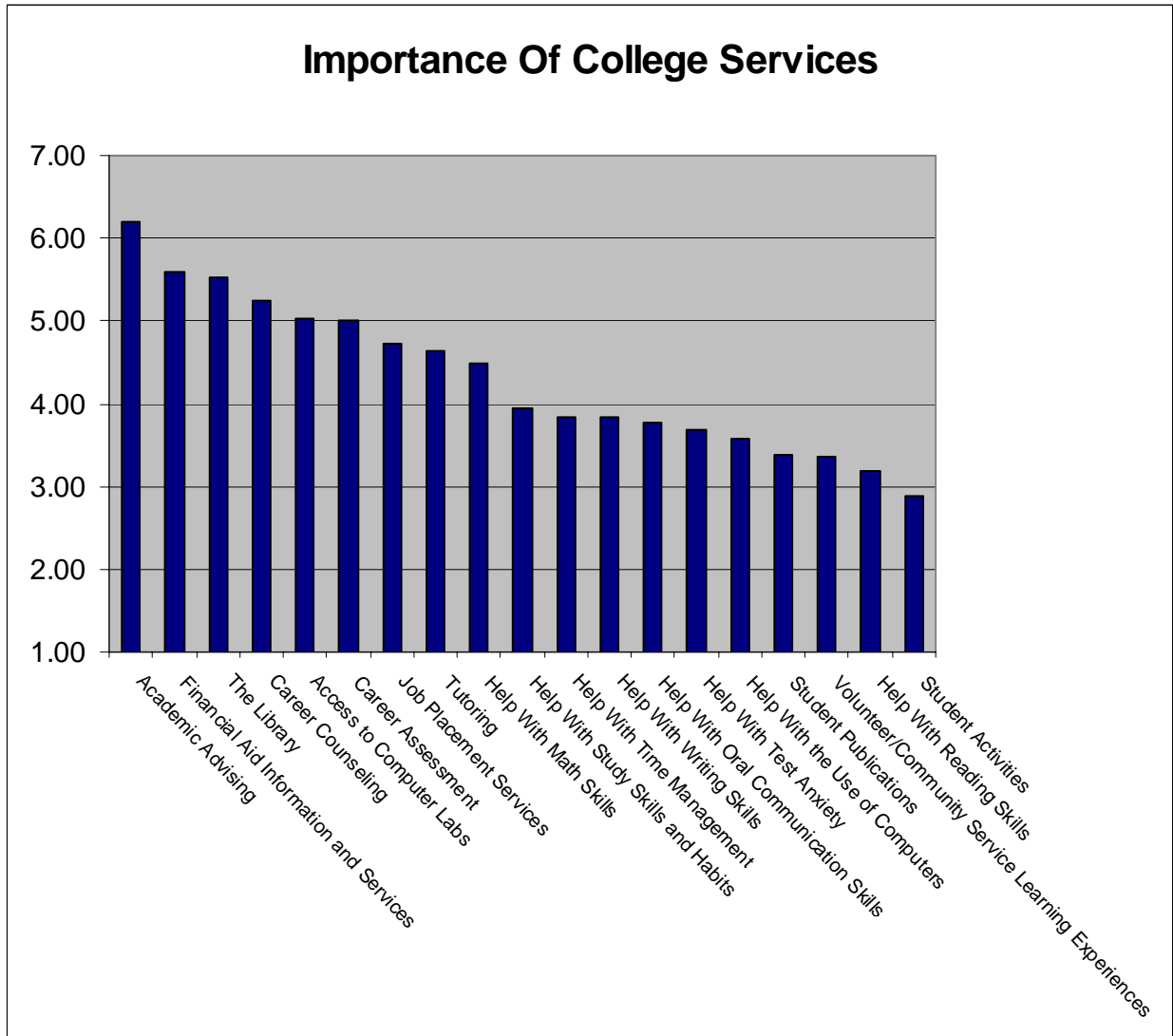
- Help With the Use of Computers
- Student Publications
- Volunteer Experiences
- Help With Reading Skills
- Student Activities

Of the nineteen offices/services address in this survey “Academic Advising “, “Financial Aid”, and “Library” have appeared on the top five list regarding their importance for many years (for as long as I can remember) while “Student Activities” has been at or near the bottom of the list of all offices/services. Below is a table and chart with a complete roster of the nineteen offices/services and their mean importance scores. A “7” score indicates that the office/service is considered “Critical” important while a “1” score indicates that it is considered “unimportant”.

## Expected Importance of College Offices/Services Table and Chart

Importance of College Offices/Services	
	Mean
Academic Advising	6.21
Financial Aid Information and Services	5.59
The Library	5.52
Career Counseling	5.26
Access to Computer Labs	5.04
Career Assessment	5.00
Job Placement Services	4.74
Tutoring	4.63
Help With Math Skills	4.49
Help With Study Skills and Habits	3.94
Help With Time Management	3.84
Help With Writing Skills	3.84
Help With Oral Communication Skills	3.77
Help With Test Anxiety	3.68
Help With the Use of Computers	3.57
Student Publications	3.39
Volunteer/Community Service Learning Experiences	3.37
Help With Reading Skills	3.18
Student Activities	2.89

Based on a 7-point scale (7) "Critical" to (1) "Unimportant"



## Expected Importance of College Tutoring (Help Areas)

The table below separates the specific tutoring areas from the other College offices/services to focus on student expectations concerning how much help they envision needing in these specific skill areas. Students are most concerned about getting help with math and least concerned about getting help with reading.

Expected Importance of College Tutoring (Help Areas) Segregated from other Offices and Services

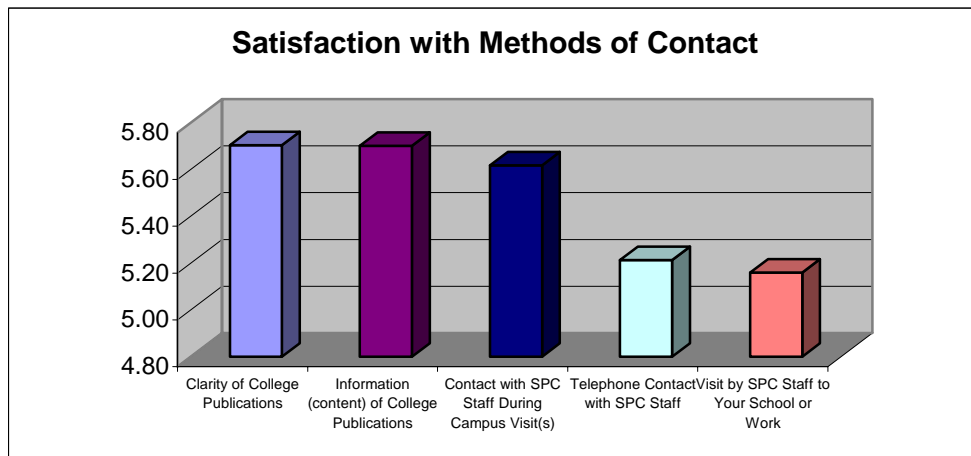
Based on a 7-point scale (7) "Critical" to (1) Unimportant"	Mean
	Rating
Help in Math	4.49
Help in Study Skills	3.94
Help in Time Management	3.84
Help in Writing	3.84
Help in Oral Communication Skills	3.77
Help in Test Anxiety	3.68
Help in Use of Computer	3.57
Help with Reading Skills	3.18

## Section E - Effectiveness of Contacts

On the Entering Student Survey, students were asked to rate how effective they judged each of five methods of contacting them. The table below lists the various contact modalities in descending order by satisfaction of contact as judged by the responding students. All five received ratings above (5.16) on the 7-point scale which indicates students were rather pleased with all of the College’s efforts to contact them. “Clarity of Publications” was rated highest while “Visits by SPC Staff to Your School or Work” was rated the lowest.

### Effectiveness of Contacts Table and Chart

<b>Satisfaction with Methods of Contact</b>	
<small>Based on a 7-point scale (7) "Excellent" to (1) "Poor"</small>	<b>Mean</b>
Clarity of College Publications	<b>5.70</b>
Information (content) of College Publications	<b>5.70</b>
Contact with SPC Staff During Campus Visit(s)	<b>5.62</b>
Telephone Contact with SPC Staff	<b>5.21</b>
Visit by SPC Staff to Your School or Work	<b>5.16</b>



## Conclusion

Students entering St. Petersburg College programs encompass a rather broad range of age categories with more than half the respondents to this survey being over the age of 24 years. Women continue to hold a large majority at the College with a sixty seven percent of the respondents being of the female gender. Seventy eight percent of the responding students live in Pinellas County while an additional ten percent reside in neighboring counties. Only two percent live outside of Florida. The ethnic background of the responding students is similar to that of Pinellas County as a whole with seventy seven percent reporting their ethnicity as white, ten percent as black and eight percent as hispanic. A broad range of academic goals brings students to the College. But the largest group in this survey was in pursuit of an A.A. degree. Only twenty percent of the incoming students have any kind of college degree. Students are split about five to four between planning to take classes during the weekday and evening. Only a few of the respondents plan to take classes on the weekend. The vast majority of our students plan on working while attending college and a quarter plans to work full-time or more. Just over forty percent of the incoming students who completed the survey believed they will be attending college full-time; however, when you compare their expectation to what actually happens (“Factbook” information) you find that only about one fourth of our students actually do. Of those that are part-time students but wish to be full-time, the circumstances that most often prevent them from attending full-time are “Job Responsibility”, “Finances” and “Family Responsibilities. Of these three areas the College has the most ability to help with finances through scholarships and grants. Although the College is limited in its ability to assist with job and family responsibilities multiple class options and child care may help some students with these problems.

When asked “What factors influenced your decision to apply to SPC?” the “Courses or Programs Offered” was the most important factor followed by “Close to Home” and “Cost”. On the other hand, “Music, Art, or Theater”, “High School Teacher”, “Clubs or Organizations”, “Athletics” and “Visit by SPC Staff to HS/Employer” were not very important to most students. However, these seemingly unimportant factors may have been the motivating factors that caused these responding students to come to St. Petersburg College.

When asked, “Through what sources/media/events have you learned about SPC?” a mixture of high and low technology approaches seemed to be effective in getting the College’s message out. “Internet/World Wide Web” and “SPC TV Station” led the way followed by “Other (unspecified category)”, “St. Petersburg Times”, and “Material Mailed to You”. However, it appears that “Posters”, “Tampa Tribune”, “Mall/Shopping Center Displays” “SPC Open Houses” and “Materials Picked up by you” do not have a large impact on our students learning about the College.

When asked “How important do you expect each of the following offices/services to be to you?” students responded that “Academic Advising”, “Financial Aid”, “Library”, “Career Counseling”, and “Access to Computer Labs” were the most important. “Help with the Use of Computers”, “Student Publication”, “Volunteer Experiences”, “Help in With Reading Skills” and “Student Activity” were relatively unimportant to the respondents.

When asked to rate the effectiveness of the five contact methods all received marks above (5.16) on the 7-point rating scale. Thus all were viewed by the students as effective according to the College's criteria of being at or above a 5 on a 7-point satisfaction scale.

Each department/unit of the College should review the findings of this survey so they may better align their efforts to the needs and expectations of our incoming students.