



INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH EVALUATION A RESEARCH BRIEF

Research Briefs

The dissemination of relevant information is a critical component of the performance improvement process. Research briefs are one mechanism used by St. Petersburg College (SPC) for this purpose. Research Briefs are short publications prepared by the Department of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IRE) that are intended to provide relevant important information regarding a variety of College-related topics. These topics include, but are not limited to, student achievement, state accountability measures, institutional survey results, student enrollment, and faculty/adjunct compensation.

Introduction

On an annual basis, the department surveys the faculty and staff of St. Petersburg College to determine their satisfaction with the services and products provided by Institutional Research (IR). The survey was administered electronically using the college e-mail system during a three-week window in December 2006.

Results

There were a total of 54 responses to the survey. Chart 1 shows the percentage of each category type responding to the survey. The majority of responses (87.1%) were from faculty and administrators. When the respondents were asked if they had ever accessed the IR website prior to responding to the survey, 16 (29.1%) indicated they had while 38 (70.9%) indicated they never used the website. Of those respondents that specified they used the IR website, the majority (60.0%) said they used the website 1-11 times a year (Chart 2). Also, respondents indicated that the website was easy to use. Survey respondents were asked to rate their overall level of satisfaction of the IR website from very satisfied to very dissatisfied. The majority (86.7%) of the 15 respondents were satisfied or very satisfied and while thirteen percent (13.3%) were neutral on their level of satisfactions.

Chart 1. Primary Role of Respondents

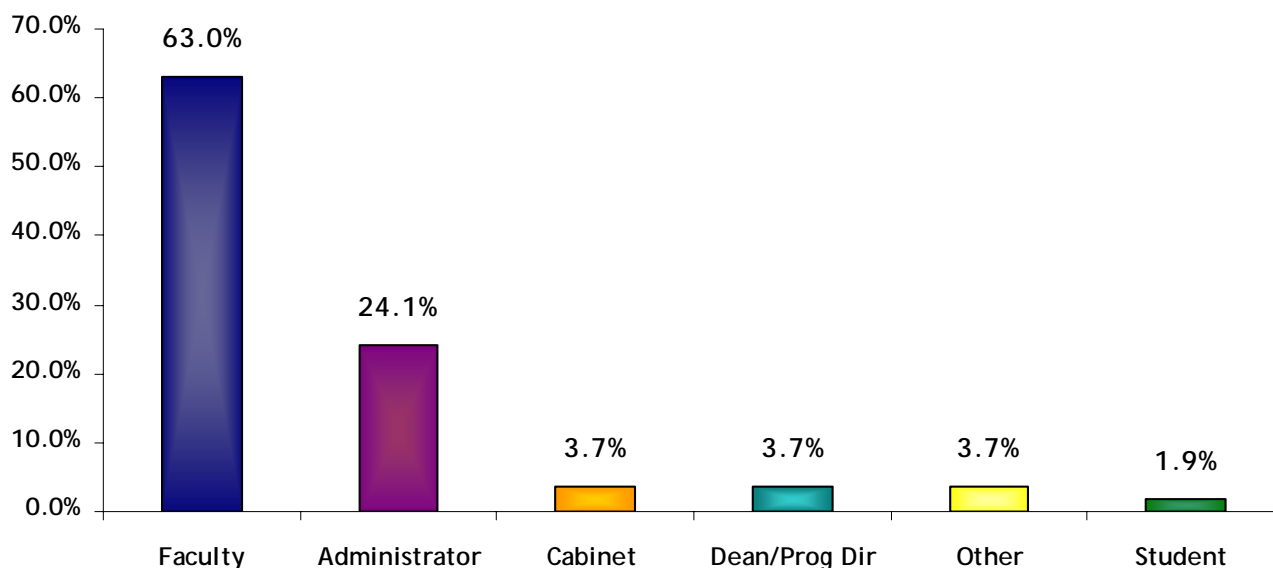
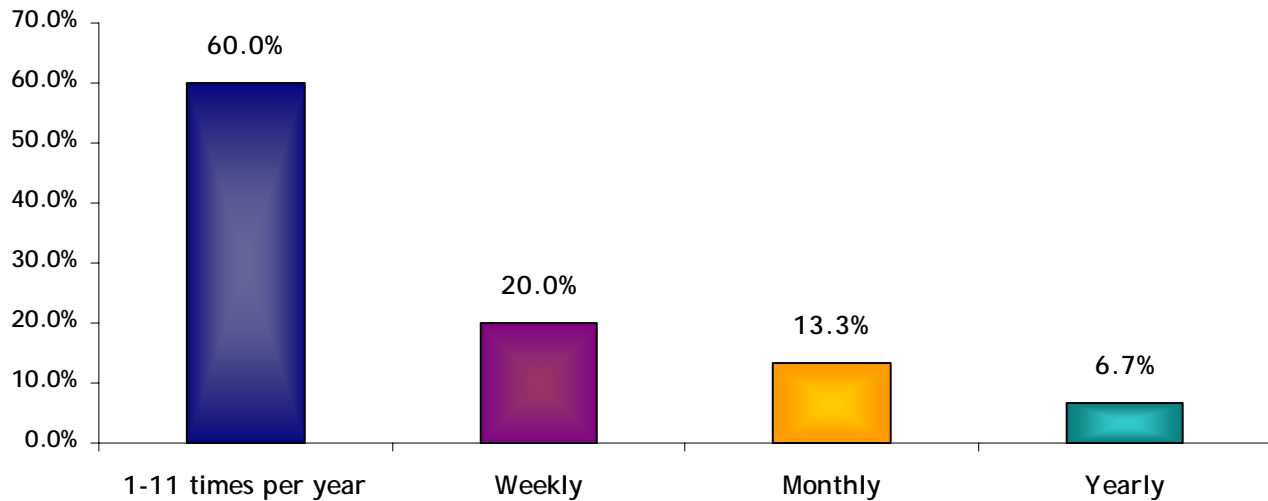




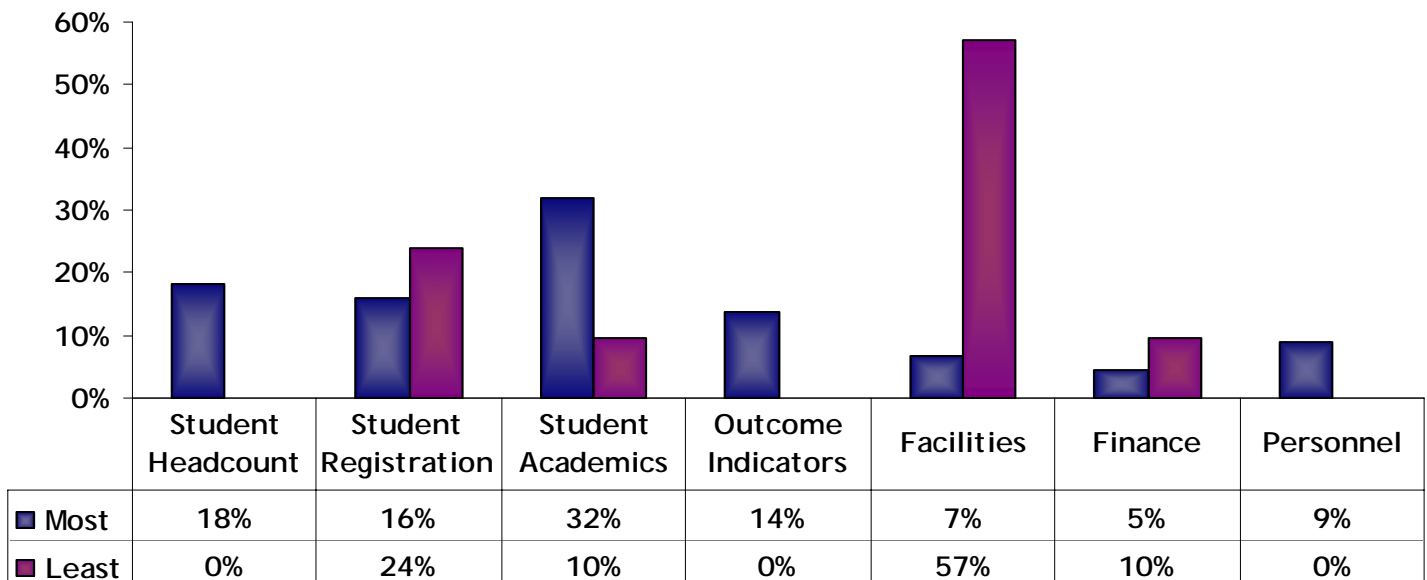
Chart 2. Frequency of Use of IR Website



IR produces the SPC Factbook each year and posts an electronic version to the IR website. Topics include a brief college history, a description of the service area, and data related to the College's student body, academics, personnel, financial position, facilities, and outcomes indicators. Twenty of the 49 respondents to this question indicated they used the SPC Factbook. These survey participants indicated forty-five percent (45.0%) used it yearly, forty percent (40.0%) 1-11 times year, ten percent (10.0%) monthly, and five percent (5.0%) used it weekly.

Respondents use the data in the publication for various reasons and were given the option to select multiple areas for the most/least used sections of the SPC Factbook. The sections used most frequently was Student Academics (program enrollments, etc.) and the least used section was Facilities. Chart 3 shows percentages identified as being most and least used sections of the SPC FactBook.

Chart 3. Most/Least Used Sections of the Factbook





When asked about the importance and helpfulness of data in their review and decision-making process, the majority of the respondents (75.0%) reported that both Opening and End-of-Fall data was equally important with the remaining responses being equally distributed. Overall, eighty-five percent (85.0%) of the respondents indicated that the layout and appearance of the tables and graphs in the Factbook were easy to follow and understand.

The survey contained two questions about the Research Briefs. The first was to determine how often the users read the publications on the IR website and the second was how useful the data was in the briefs. The results indicated that 11 (73.3%) of the 15 respondents have read the publications and found the data very or somewhat useful.

Table 1 shows the responses to the question, "Which of the following reports do you use on a regular basis?" Responses indicate that the majority of respondents use the enrollment report on a frequent basis. It should be noted that the respondents were given the opportunity to select more than one response.

Table1. Regular Used Reports

Reports	No.	Percent
Accountability	5	12.8%
Alumni Survey	5	12.8%
Employer Survey	8	20.5%
Enrollment	21	53.8%

The survey contained a section directed specifically to individuals who had made requests of IR for information or services which were not included as part of the regular publications. These items pertained to the office staff and service received. Results of 19 respondents indicate 10 (52.6%) were satisfied with the knowledge of the IR staff, timeliness of response, and availability of information, 8 (42.1%) neutral, and 1 (5.3%) dissatisfied.

Survey respondents were given the opportunity to identify two services they found most helpful in their work and would like to receive from IR. There were a total of 35 respondents choosing a combination of services. The four most highly requested services were: Produce more short reports comparing SPC to the other Florida community colleges; produce more short reports on topics to assist in management decisions; assist departments with developing their own surveys to improve customer service; and work with program directors to facilitate processes whereby departments could conduct their own surveys/evaluations to support the unit plan.

Survey participants were given the opportunity to include additional comments. Almost all of the comments received were positive, such as, "IR does an excellent job", "The data you provide is excellent" or "As a new faculty member I find it easy to use." The survey identified that some of the Factbook tables contained print that was too small and hard to read. IR continues to work to improve the website and the availability of data.

According to survey responses, it appears that the Office of Institutional Research has accomplished the task of providing accurate information and reporting services to its users. However, it was interesting that only 29.1% of the respondents had ever used the Website prior to completing the survey.