



Wisdom to make a difference.

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Class of 2016 Alumni Survey Findings

In April 2017, Keene State College surveyed alumni who received bachelor’s degrees in fiscal year 2016. The primary purposes of the survey were to determine the percentage of recent graduates employed or pursuing further education in areas related to their undergraduate studies at KSC. The survey also included items assessing satisfaction with the College, and the degree to which key components of a KSC education contributed to obtaining employment in one’s field.

There were 924 unduplicated bachelor’s degree recipients in fiscal year 2016, and the College had valid contact information with permission for email contacts on 579 of these (63% of the class). The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment sent email survey invitations to these alumni, and 174 provided usable responses, for an initial overall response rate of 30%.

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KEY FINDINGS

- Overall, findings were similar to previous years. One year post graduation, respondents were typically either employed or in graduate study, and most said that their KSC education had prepared them well for what they are doing now. These findings have been consistent since KSC began conducting this survey.
- Alumni continue to view their KSC education positively. Consistent with findings from the Class of 2015, 87% reported being satisfied with their KSC Education; 83% would recommend KSC to friends or siblings as a good place to go to college.
- One year after graduation, 94% of the respondents are employed or engaged in graduate education.
- Eighty-eight percent of the respondents reported that they are employed; 7% indicated that they are not employed by choice (for example, to care for family members or enroll in graduate study), and the remaining 5% reported that they are unemployed and seeking work. Although, the unemployment level among recent alumni has been steadily increasing since initially assessed in 2013, it remains lower than the national 5.5% unemployment rate for college graduates under age 25 (<http://www.epi.org/publication/class-of-2016/>).
- Among employed respondents, 76% reported that their current position is closely related or somewhat related to their studies at KSC; of these, 86% reported that KSC had prepared them well or very well for their current work. When asked to rate how well specific components of a KSC education prepared alumni for work, 90% selected “Well” or “Very Well” for their major or majors, 68% selected one of those options for extra and co-curricular activities, and 52% did so for the ISP.
- When asked to indicate the KSC experience that best prepared alumni for what they currently do, experiential learning activities were the most common response (37%), followed by personal/professional/academic skill acquisition (12%) and work-study (10%).
- Twenty-four percent of the respondents reported that they had enrolled in one or more graduate education programs at some point after graduating from Keene State College. Of these, 94% were master’s degree programs, and 6% were doctoral programs.
- Forty-two percent of respondents indicated they were likely or very likely to stay engaged with KSC through attending College events, 32% through philanthropic support.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Overall Satisfaction with KSC Education

Two measures of alumni global satisfaction with their KSC education were included in the current Alumni Survey. Each asked alumni to rate their agreement with statements expressing a type of overall satisfaction.

- *I would recommend KSC to friends or siblings as a good place to go to college:* 83% “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.”
- *Overall, I am satisfied with my KSC education:* 87% selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.”

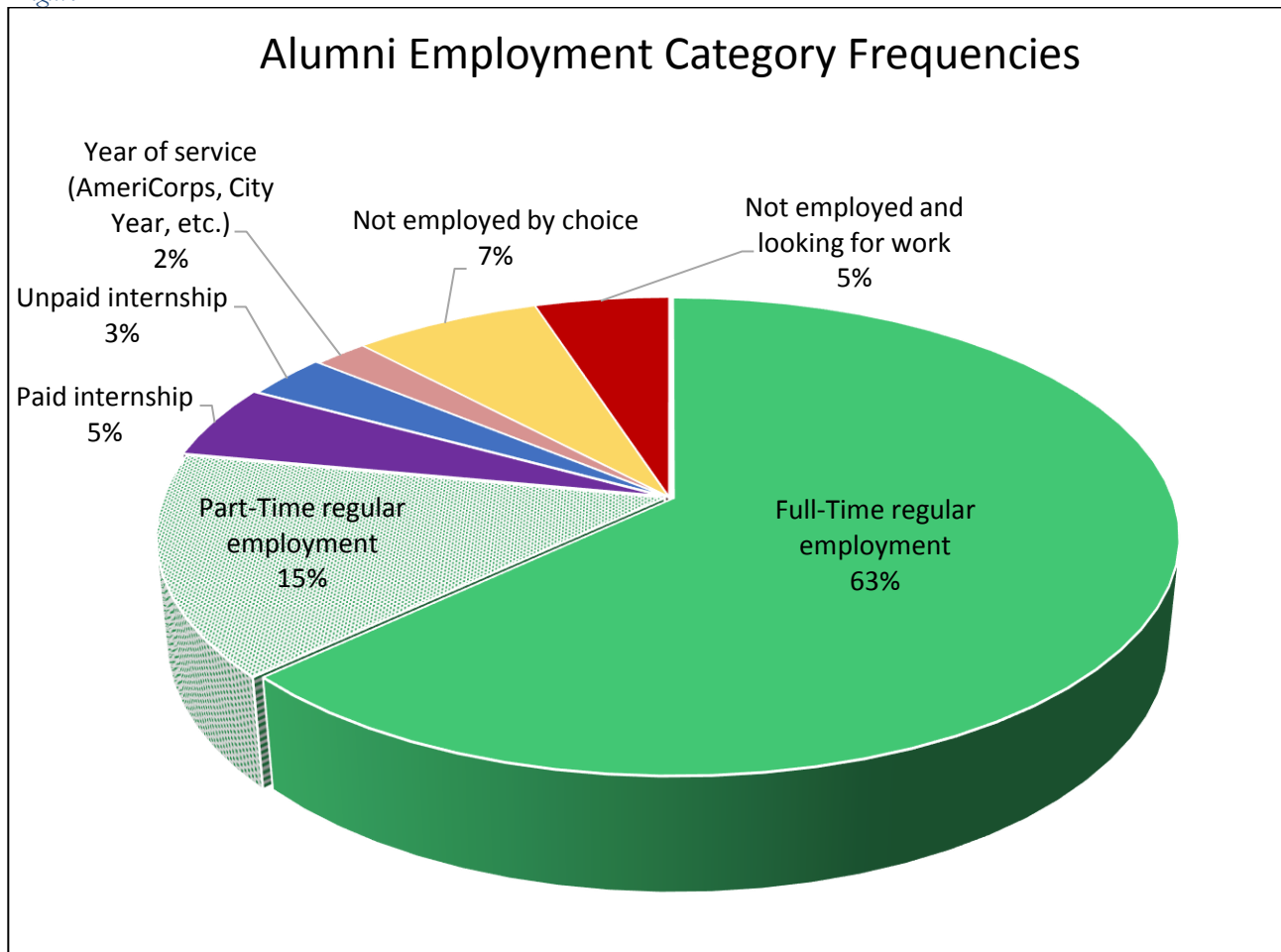
Findings from the two measures are comparable with those obtained from the class of 2015 survey-the first to assess alumni satisfaction.

Employment Findings

Level of Alumni Employment

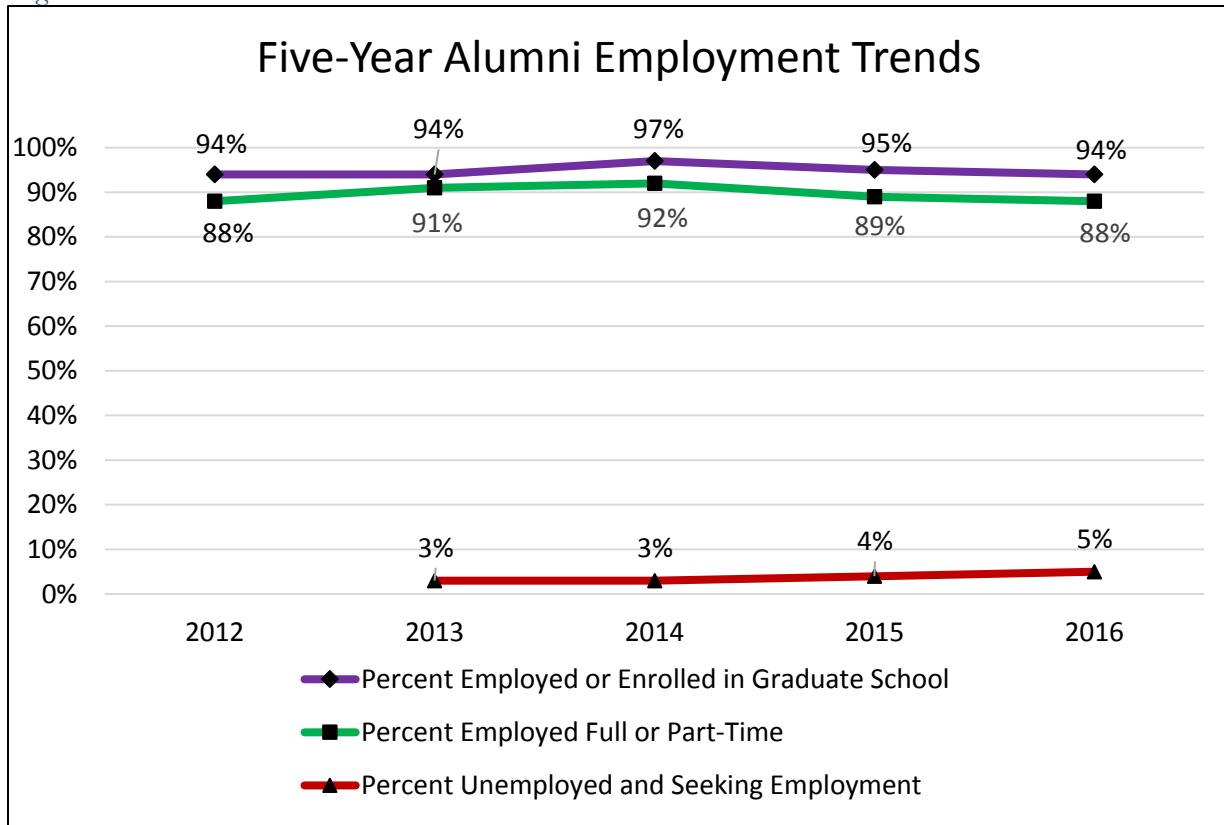
The great majority of the respondents (88%) were employed in some capacity at the time of the survey. Figure 1 summarizes the full employment category breakdown.

Figure 1



When findings from the past five years are compared (Figure 2), the percentages employed and employed/enrolled in graduate school reached a peak in 2014, but both dropped during the past two years to the 2012 levels. The “Unemployed and seeking employment” employment category choice was provided for the first time in the 2013 survey. This percentage has increased from 3% in 2013 to the current rate of 5%. However, it remains lower than the national 5.5% unemployment rate for college graduates under age 25 (<http://www.epi.org/publication/class-of-2016/>).

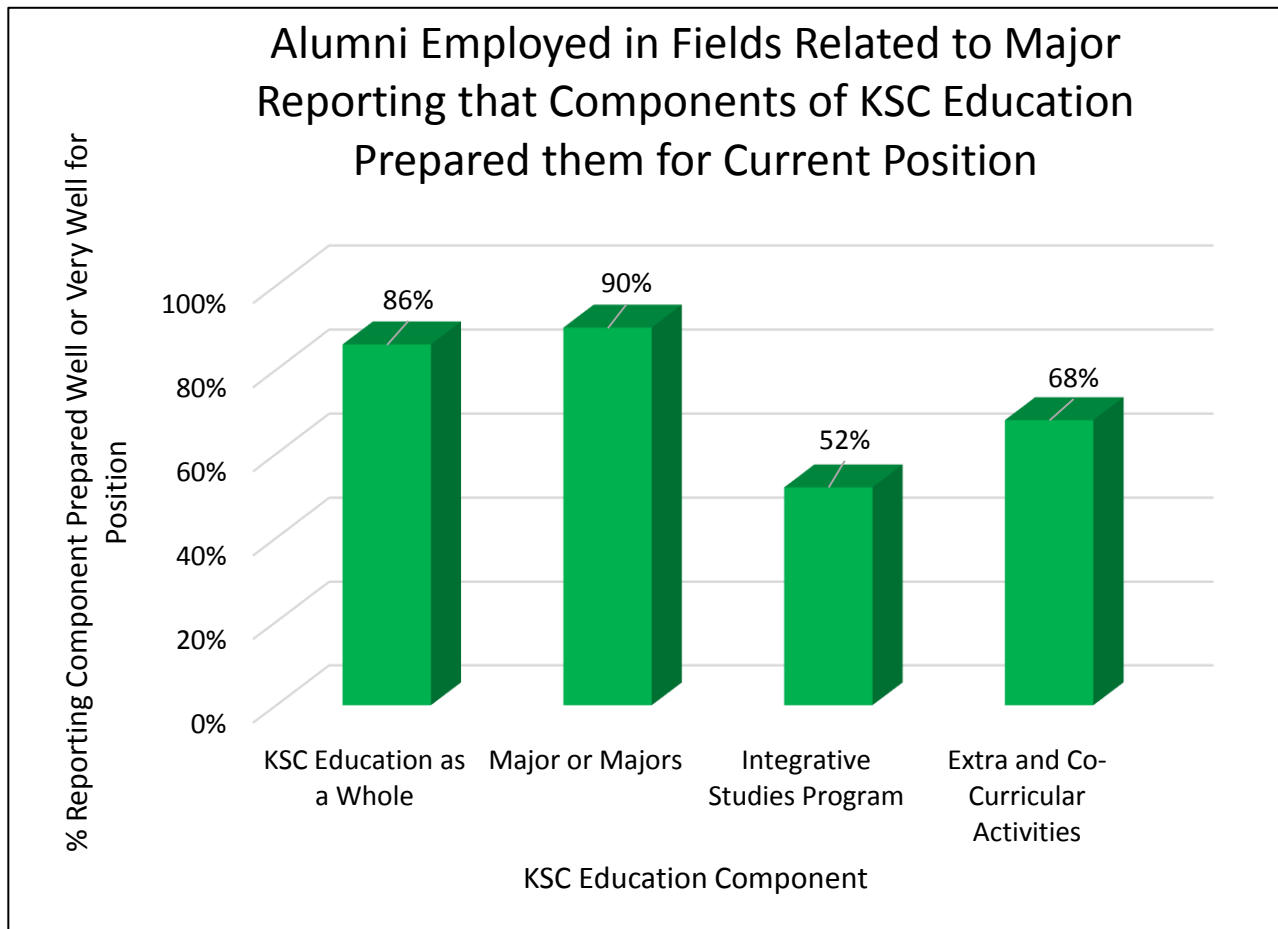
Figure 2



Satisfaction with KSC's Preparation for Employment

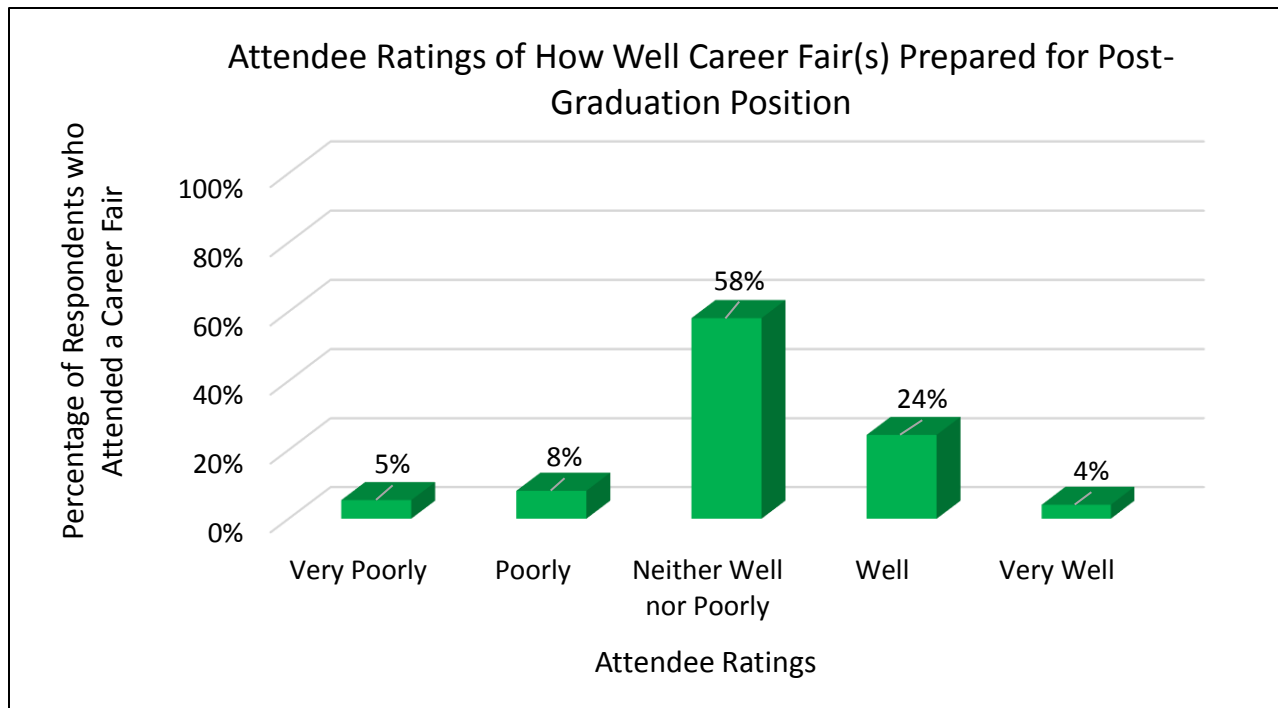
Preparation from coursework and extra/co-curricular activities. Among employed students, 76% reported that their current position is closely related or somewhat related to their studies at KSC. Of these, 86% reported that their KSC education as a whole prepared them well or very well for their current work (Figure 3). When asked to assess how well key components of their education prepared them for their current position, 90% selected “Well” or “Very Well” for their major or majors, but 68% selected one of those options for extra and co-curricular activities, and 52% did so for the ISP.

Figure 3



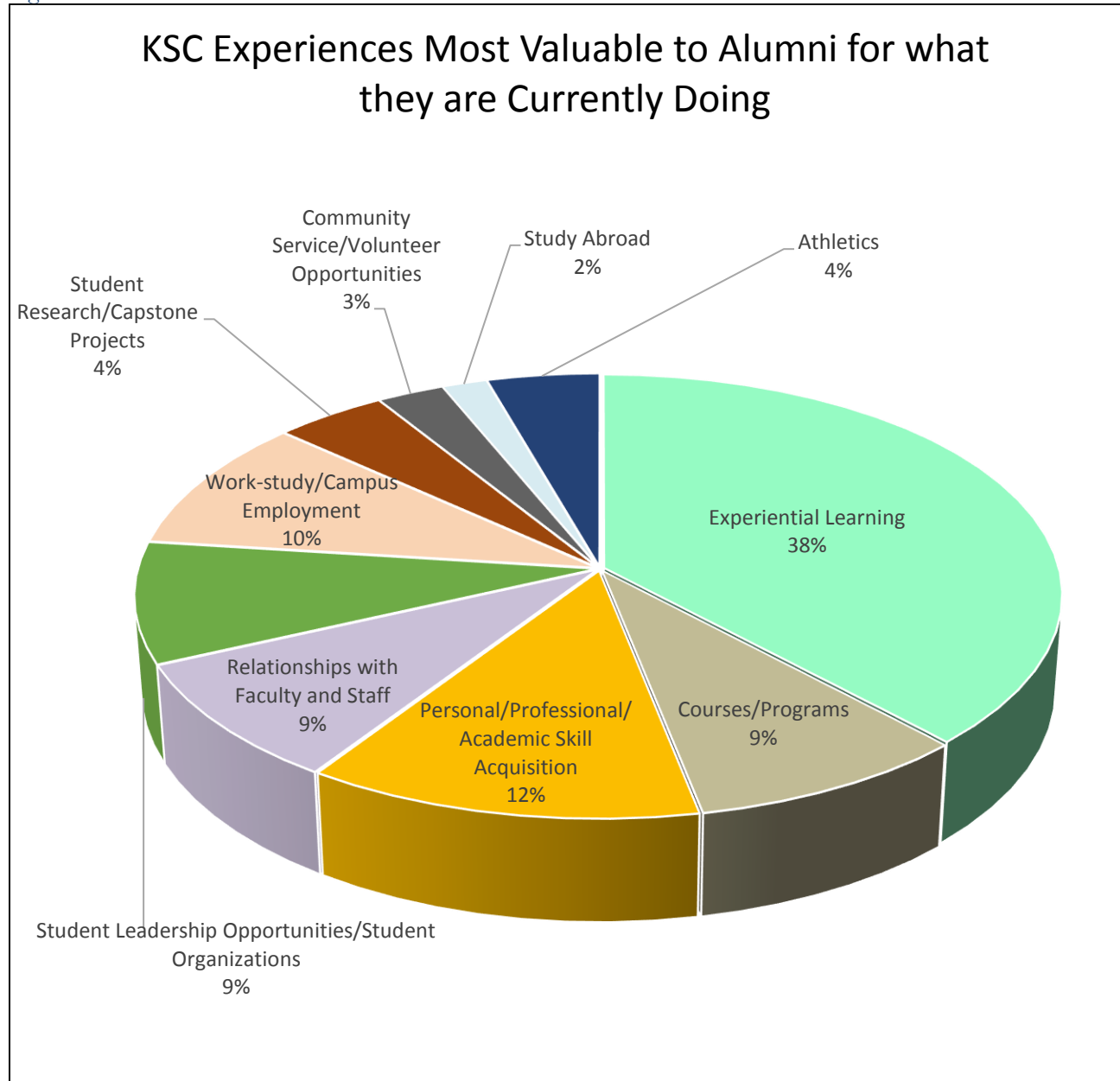
Preparation from Career Fairs. In the spring and fall of each academic year, KSC hosts the Your Future Fair during which students and alumni may meet potential employers and internship sponsors. For the first time, the Alumni Survey included two questions asking alumni to assess their experiences with these fairs. The first item asked alumni if they had ever attended one of KSC’s career fairs. A majority of respondents (55%) did so. Those who attended were then asked, “How well did the fair or fairs you attended prepare you for finding a position after graduation?” Although 28% selected “Well” or “Very Well,” the neutral, “Neither Well nor Poorly” option was by far the most common choice (Figure 4). This may in part be because career fair attendees may be more interested in obtaining a position than in career preparation. Future Alumni Surveys should supplement this item with an item asking how much career fair attendance contributed to obtaining a position after graduation.

Figure 4



Specific KSC experiences most valuable for current work. The survey asked, “What experience did you have at KSC - inside or outside the classroom - that has proved most valuable for whatever you are doing now in your life?” Figure 7 summarizes the frequency of common themes in response to this question. Provided below are example comments for each theme. Internships, student teaching, and other related forms of experiential learning were by far the most common response to this question. Other key themes included personal/professional/academic skill acquisition, work-study, courses/programs, and relationships with faculty and staff.

Figure 5



- *Experiential Learning (42 comments)*

Completing the Marlborough Partnership program prepared me the most for my future teaching career. The extra experience working in the classroom alongside experienced teachers allowed me to learn how to be confident teaching and I was able to gain so much knowledge I wouldn't have had without this program. I wouldn't have had the same great experience at Keene State without this program.

I had 3 internships in total. One at Rockwell Automation as a safety intern. One semester at Disney World, as a safety intern. Last internship was at Liberty Mutual Insurance where I was offered a full time position.

- *Professional/Academic Skill Acquisition (14 comments)*

How to be a better person by listening to other people and seeing things from their point of view which might be a new way of thinking that I didn't know about or didn't even consider. Made lifelong friends who I cherish as much as family. Developed as a person from being the one who thought that they knew everything to wanting to be the person that strives to learn everything.

Being able to balance multiple responsibilities at once between 4 different classes as well as keeping a social life and a job is something that has helped me multitask in the life after college. I did benefit greatly from the classes I took, but learning how to be independent, navigate on your own without your parents, and learning how to truly take responsibility for your future is something I value from my college experience at Keene.

- *Work-study/Campus Employment (11 comments)*

Working as a student employee in the NOC and Community service office was a great foundation for experience and learning. I was able to gain skill sets such as time management, professionalism and constructive communication.

Being a Tutor for the Aspire program provided me with the skills and practice to work in a classroom setting. My experience as an Administrative Head Tutor gave me the skills to lead a classroom of students through material that I received my degree in.

- *Courses/Programs (10 comments)*

Learning all different areas of studies through the ISP curricular programs. Gives everyone a more well-rounded education rather than just their particular field for their major.

While enrolled at KSC I was involved in many valuable classes that have helped me get to where I am as a young professional. I am very lucky to have had such a positive higher education experience. I think that said experience has really helped me in my life after College.

- *Relationships with Faculty and Staff (10 comments)*

The dedicated and passionate professors.

Mentorship of professors.

- *Student Leadership Opportunities/ Student Organizations (10 comments)*

I was an editor for The Equinox and it helped me land my first job at a production company in Los Angeles right out of college.

TKE. Being in a fraternity prepared me to be in a business setting and conduct meetings as a professional.

- *Student Research/Capstone Projects (5 comments)*

Honors thesis - prepared me for hard work that grad school entails

My psychology major and research experience with psychology department faculty

- *Athletics (5 comments).*

I was also part of the cross country and track team at KSC and that has had a huge impact on my life. It taught me leadership skills, how to manage my time effectively, how to cope with stress, and gave me lifelong friendships.

Member of the KSC Women's Lacrosse team from 2012-2016, taught me some life lessons that have helped after graduation. For example, time management.

- *Community Service/Volunteer Opportunities (3 comments)*

Alternative Break trips made the person I am today. Excellent program that really pushes people to grow in ways they wouldn't normally. I led several AB trips and they helped me develop not only more social skills, but also planning and budgeting. It is easy to directly relate the skills I learned during those trips to skills I need for the job I have today. They also help you develop and strengthen your passions.

My favorite experience I had looking back would be being a part of the Alternative Break community. From my first trip to the Dominican Republic learning about the water crisis, to leading a trip to North Carolina to learn about wild cats and animal rights. These are memories and knowledge that I still have with me that I will never forget.

- *Study Abroad (3 comments)*

Because of my experiences abroad, I applied to jobs teaching abroad and was offered one! Being able to study in Ecuador while at KSC gave me the confidence I needed to step outside of my comfort zone and learn firsthand about the language and cultures I had been studying. I am so thankful for the experiences and opportunities Keene has provided for me.

Studying abroad at the University of Limerick during my junior year has made me more adaptable and independent and focus on improving myself and I'm thankful for Keene State for letting me go on that adventure.

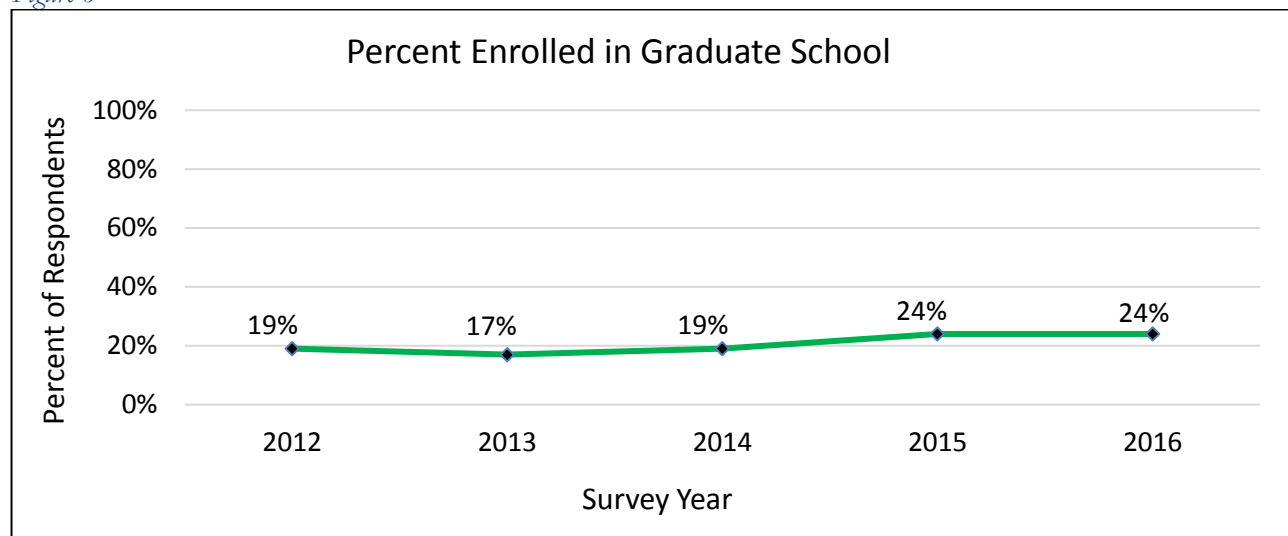
Graduate Education

A sizable minority of the respondents (24%) reported that they had enrolled in graduate education since graduating from Keene State College, with most of these seeking master's degrees (94%). The most commonly reported general field of study for advanced degrees was education (30%). Most enrolled in institutions in New Hampshire or surrounding states in New England or the Northeast. However, some enrolled in programs as far away as Oklahoma State University, North Carolina State University, and San Diego State University.

Consistent with findings obtained from prior years, a preponderance of those enrolled in graduate education reported that their program was closely related (71%) or somewhat related (18%) to their studies at KSC; of these, 88% judged that KSC had prepared them well or very well for this next step in their education.

The percentage who had enrolled in graduate education increased from 19% for the Class of 2012 to 24% for the current class (Figure 5).

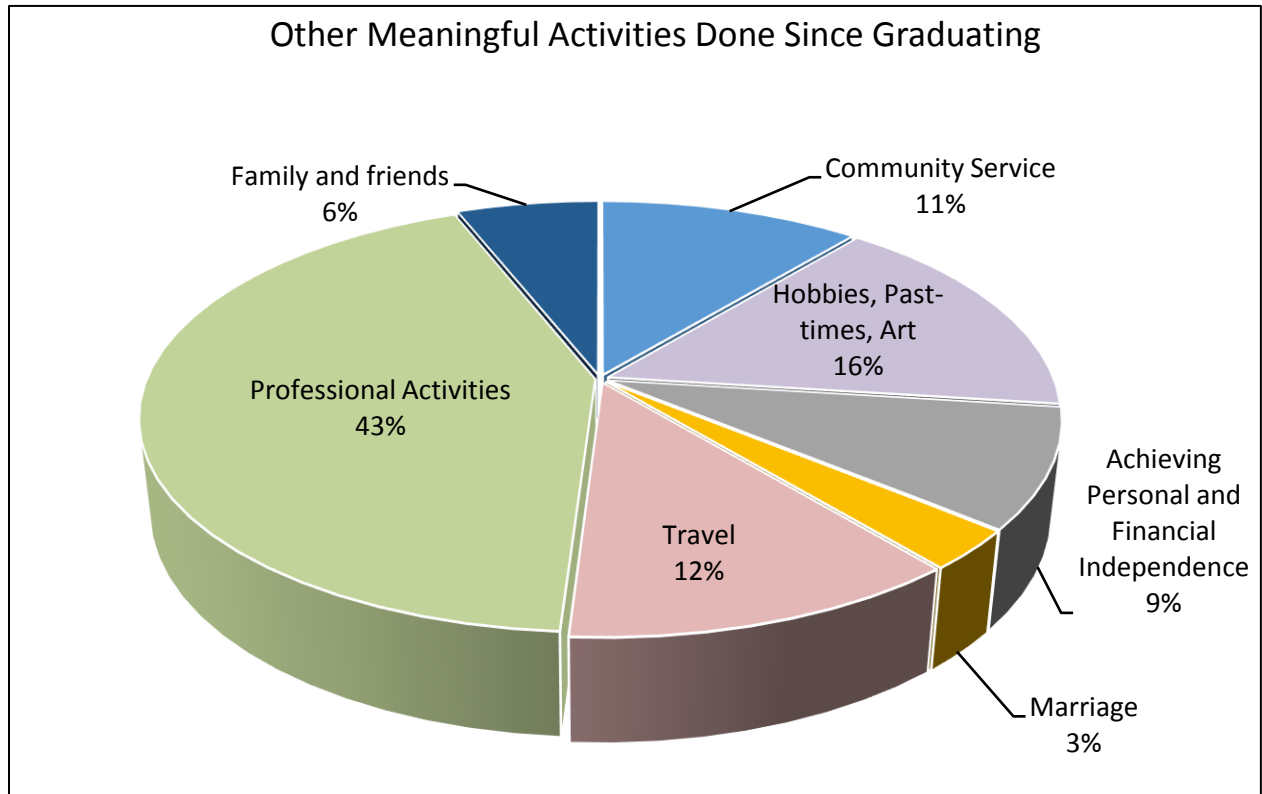
Figure 6



What Else Are Alumni Doing?

The survey asked respondents, “Besides employment and further education, what else are you doing that is meaningful to you five years after graduation?” Figure 6 summarizes the frequency of common themes in response to this question. Listed below are the themes and example comments. Key themes were professional activities, hobbies/past-times/art, travel, and community service.

Figure 7



- *Professional Activities (41 comments)*

I moved to Washington, D.C. to pursue my dream in politics. Before my internship with the DCCC, I worked as an intern on Capitol Hill for Rep. Loeb sack (IA-02). I've been trying to figure out my career goals, and I'd eventually love to be the Director of Communications for a Representative. I'm hopeful that my time at the DCCC will provide me with those skills.

I will be graduating with my MEd in a few weeks and then moving to Nicaragua! I will be teaching 4th grade Language Arts and Social Studies at an American school in Managua, Nicaragua.

- *Hobbies/Pastimes/ Art (15 comments)*

Playing as a community member in the Keene State Chamber Orchestra.

Working on writing a novel.

- *Travel (11 comments)*

Exploring the Marshall Islands and fully immersing myself in a different culture and community.

Since graduating a year ago, I have been lucky enough to travel for three and a half months in Oregon and for four months in Patagonia, Chile. Both times I was technically working as a river guide but for two companies that both do environmental conservation work. One on a river that has threats from nickel mining in Oregon and in Chile the river has threats from hydroelectric. In August, I will go to northern Quebec, Canada to work a seven-day wilderness trip on a river that also has a hydroelectric threat. This is what is meaningful to me. I hope it can stay that way.

- *Community Service (10 comments)*

After graduation, I started my own non-profit called For the Love of Edie. As many of my classmates and professors knew my senior year at Keene State, my aunt tragically lost her life at the hands of her husband leaving her two young boys without parents. My family brought them in and we have recently adopted my aunt's two young sons. Nick and Jack, I now call my brothers. As a nonprofit organization, For The Love Of Edie aims to commemorate my aunt, Edie and help others who have been affected by or live with mental illness as well as other ailments. Through community events, our goal for the non-profit is to raise awareness, provide information, and connect people. Our first community event was this past September, the Walk for Edie which we raised double of what we expected. It is our hope that in the years to come, the walk will continue to grow in terms of participation and its impact on the community as a charitable and memorable event. All proceeds from the Walk For Edie and any future donations made to For The Love Of Edie will go directly to the 501(c) (3) charitable foundation in memory of Edie Black. Proceeds will be used to support future events, raise awareness among communities and help support annual scholarships in the name of Edie Black. The first scholarship will be given this coming June!

I spent a month volunteering teaching and helping with childcare in Ghana after graduation.

- *Achieving Personal and Financial Independence (9 comments)*

I moved out of my parents and became independent. It was huge for me because it was how I was able to grow and learn more about myself as an adult.

Bought a car and am financing it on my own. It's not a big deal but I'm proud of it.

- *Friends and Family (6 comments)*

I am currently taking care of elderly grandparents who are unable to transport themselves to appointments or to buy groceries.

I help out my friends who are currently enrolled at KSC find jobs and better their experience through sharing insights I learned through the employment and graduation process.

- *Marriage (3 comments)*

Got married to a fellow Keene State alum.

Planning my wedding.

Future Engagement with College

Alumni were asked to rate their likelihood of using each of four approaches to staying engaged with KSC. Shown in Figure 8 are the percent selecting “Likely” or “Extremely Likely” for each approach. Attending Keene State College events received the highest percentage of likely responses (42%) followed by supporting the college philanthropically, volunteering through the Alumni Association, and other means. Other means reported included attending sporting events and professional workshops.

Figure 8

