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Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

## Findings from the Class of 2018 One-Year-Out Alumni Survey

Each year, Keene State College administers a one-year-out survey to alumni who graduated during the previous year. In October 2019, Keene State College surveyed alumni who received bachelor’s degrees in fiscal year 2018. The primary purposes of this annual survey were to assess rates of employment, enrollment in graduate education, and to assess alumni satisfaction with how well their KSC degree prepared them for what they are currently doing. This report summarizes the findings obtained from the Class of 2018 and compares them to findings from prior graduating classes.

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## KEY FINDINGS

- The findings were largely consistent with prior year findings. Within a year following graduation, nearly all respondents (98%) were employed or in graduate study, and most (86%) said that their KSC education had prepared them well for what they are doing now.
- Although alumni satisfaction levels had declined a small degree in previous years, it increased with the 2018 graduating class. The percentage reporting being satisfied with their KSC Education is 92%; up from 84% in 2017. Additionally, the percentage who would recommend KSC to friends or siblings increased from 84% in 2017 to 93%.
- Eighty-six percent of the respondents reported that they are employed—down slightly from 90% in 2017; 7% indicated that they are not employed by choice (for example, to care for family members or enroll in graduate study), and 1% reported that they are unemployed and seeking work.
- The 98% employed or enrolled in graduate school equaled the 2017 percentage, and the 1% who are unemployed and seeking employment is also unchanged from last year. This percentage is considerably lower than the national 5.3% unemployment rate for college graduates under age 25. (<https://www.epi.org/publication/class-of-2018-college-edition/>)
- Among employed respondents, 86% reported that their KSC education as a whole prepared them well or very well for their current work, 87% did so for their major or majors, 72% selected one of those options for extra and co-curricular activities. These figures, satisfaction with KSC's preparation, were just slightly lower than the previous year but the rate of satisfaction for the Integrative Studies Program (ISP) increased from 42% to 59%.
- Alumni reported that experiential learning activities were the KSC experiences that best prepared alumni for what they currently do (22%), followed by courses/programs (19%), and extracurricular activities (14%).
- Eighteen percent of the respondents—down from 22% in 2017, reported that they had enrolled in one or more graduate education programs at some point after graduating from Keene State College. Of these, 67% were master's degree programs.
- Forty-eight percent of respondents indicated they were likely or very likely to stay engaged with KSC through attending College events held near where they live, 42% through attending on-campus events, and 38% indicated they would volunteer through the Alumni Association. Thirty-five percent indicated a likelihood of supporting the college philanthropically.

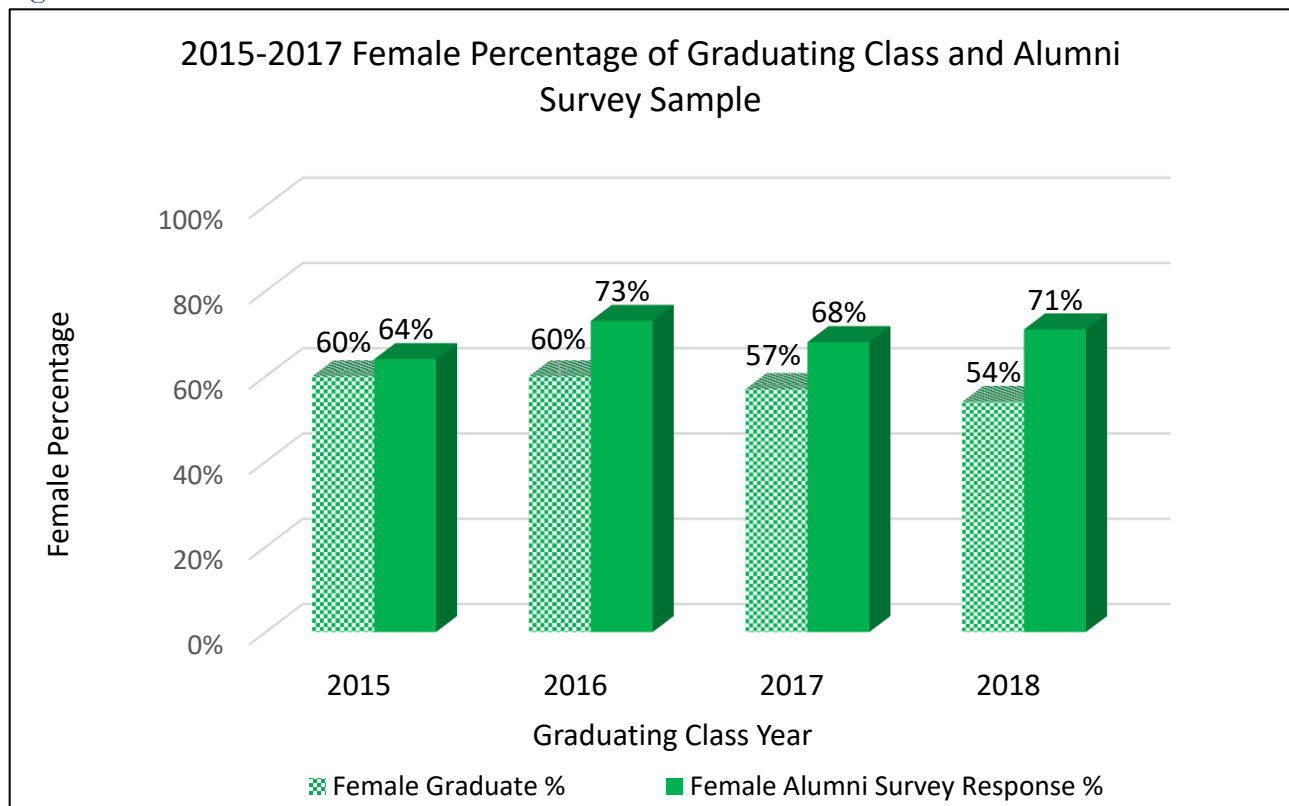
## DETAILED FINDINGS

### Potential Impact of Sample Bias on Findings

There were 952 unduplicated bachelor's degree recipients in fiscal year 2018, and the College had valid contact information with permission for email for 539 of these (57% of the class). The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment sent email survey invitations to these alumni and 137 provided usable responses for an overall response rate of 25%. Given this rate, it is possible that the sample bias influenced the survey's findings. For example, because women are more likely than men are to complete online surveys, the findings may be more representative of female alumni than of the population as a whole.

Consistent with this general pattern, the Class of 2018 was 54% female, but the sample was 71% female. Nevertheless, this pattern of female overrepresentation occurred in each of the past three Alumni Surveys, so this type of sample bias does not impede prior year comparisons (Figure 1). Further, across the full set of alumni surveyed in the past three years, men and women did not significantly differ in their employment status or being either employed or enrolled in graduate school.

Figure 1



Another possible means by which the response rate could bias the findings of the study would be if employed students were more likely to complete the survey than unemployed students were. Pride in one’s post-graduate employment may motivate alumni to complete the survey. Nevertheless, phone survey data from members of the Class of 2015 who did not complete the initial online 2015 Alumni Survey yielded the same employment percentage as that obtained in the online survey. Based on this finding, it is not likely that response rate effects employment percentage.

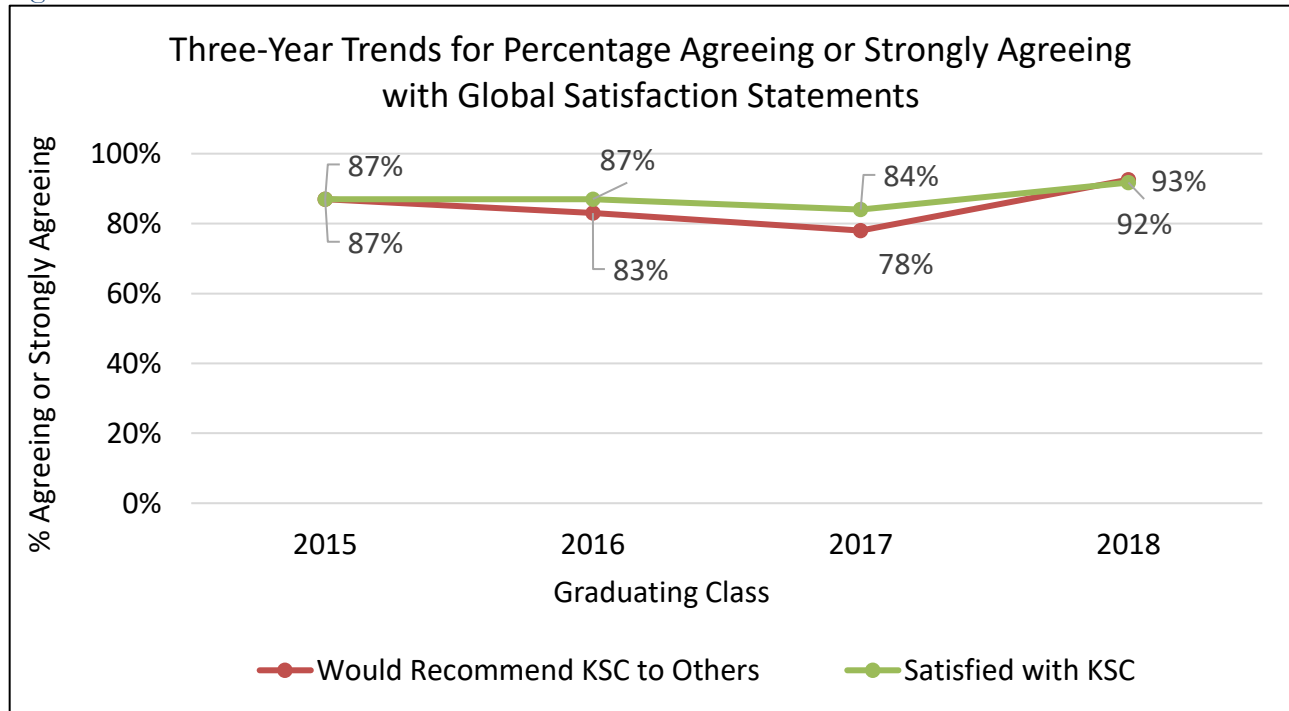
### Satisfaction with KSC Education

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:* 93% “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.”
- *Overall, I am satisfied with my KSC education:* 92% selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.”

Findings from the two measures indicate that global satisfaction with one’s KSC Education has increased since 2017 (Figure 2). This is particularly true for the recommend-to-others measure for which the agree/strongly agree percentage has gained 14 percentage points in the last year.

Figure 2

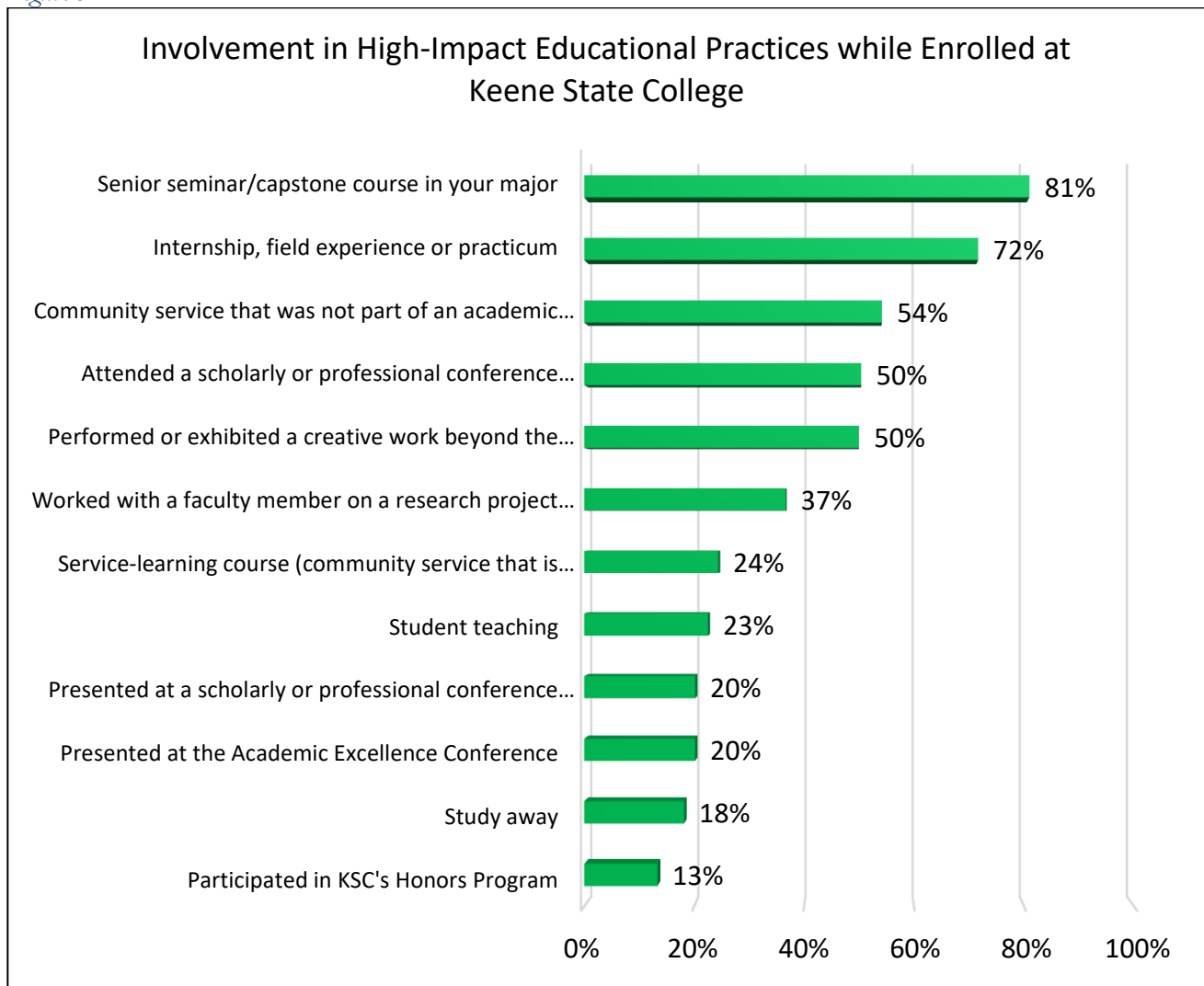


## Involvement in High-Impact Educational Practices

Research by Kuh (2008) and others found that participating in high-impact educational practices (HIEPs) enhances student engagement, retention, and academic success. Specific examples of HIEPs include undergraduate research, global learning, internships, and service learning experiences. The Alumni Survey asked participants whether they had participated in each of a set of ten HIEPs. Kuh recommends encouraging all students to participate in at least two HIEPs during their undergraduate program. Nearly all graduates (96%) met this goal with 99% participated in at least one HIEP.

Practices most frequently reported include senior seminar/capstone course (81%), and internship, cooperative education, or practicum (72%). Practices reported by 20% or fewer of the sample included participating in KSC's Honors Program, presenting at an external scholarly conference, presenting at the Academic Excellence Conference, and studying away.

Figure 3

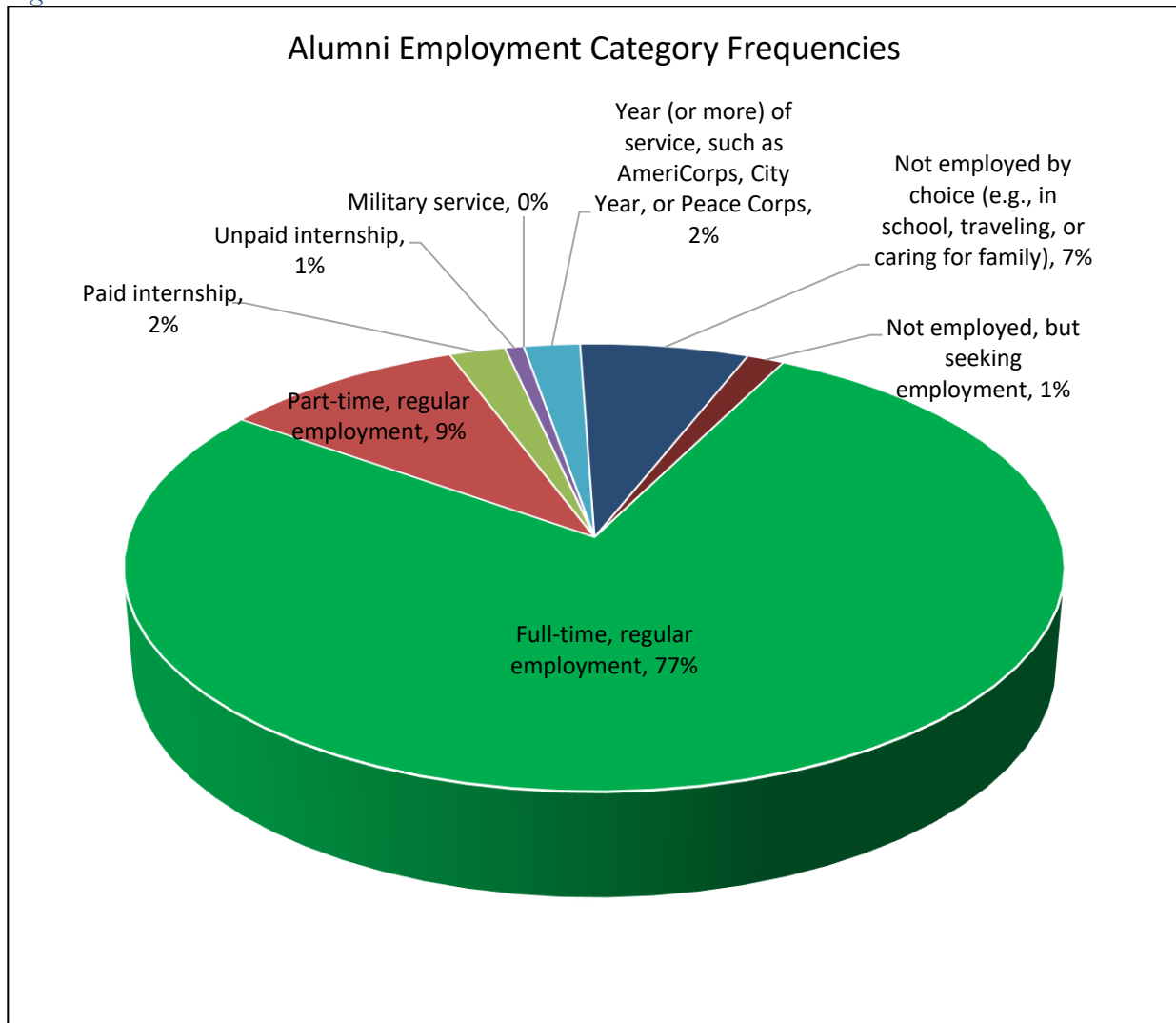


## Employment Findings

### Level of Alumni Employment

The great majority of the respondents (92%) reported some form of employment. Figure 4 summarizes the full employment category breakdown. More than three-quarters of respondents reported full-time employment, 9% part-time employment, 2% a year-of-service, and 1% an unpaid internship. Most of those unemployed were so by choice (7% of sample). Only 1% of the sample were unemployed and seeking employment.

Figure 4

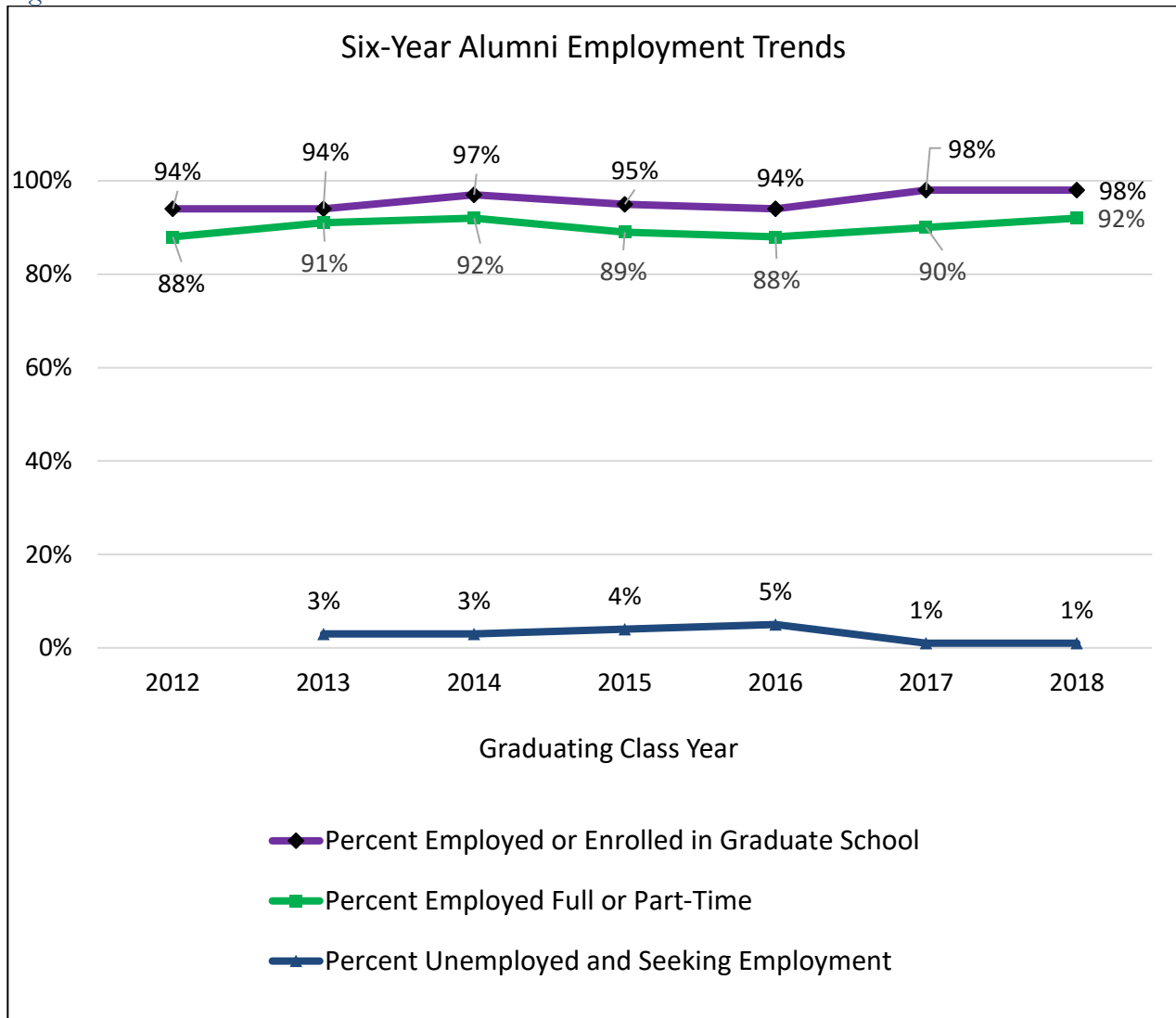


## Employment Trends

The percentage employed or in graduate school remains high at 98% (Figure 5). The percentage employed either full- or part-time (92%) exceeded the percentages from the prior three years. The 1% selecting “Unemployed and seeking employment” equaled the rate from last year. It remains much lower than the national 5% unemployment rate for college graduates under age 25.

(<https://www.epi.org/publication/the-class-of-2018/>)

Figure 5

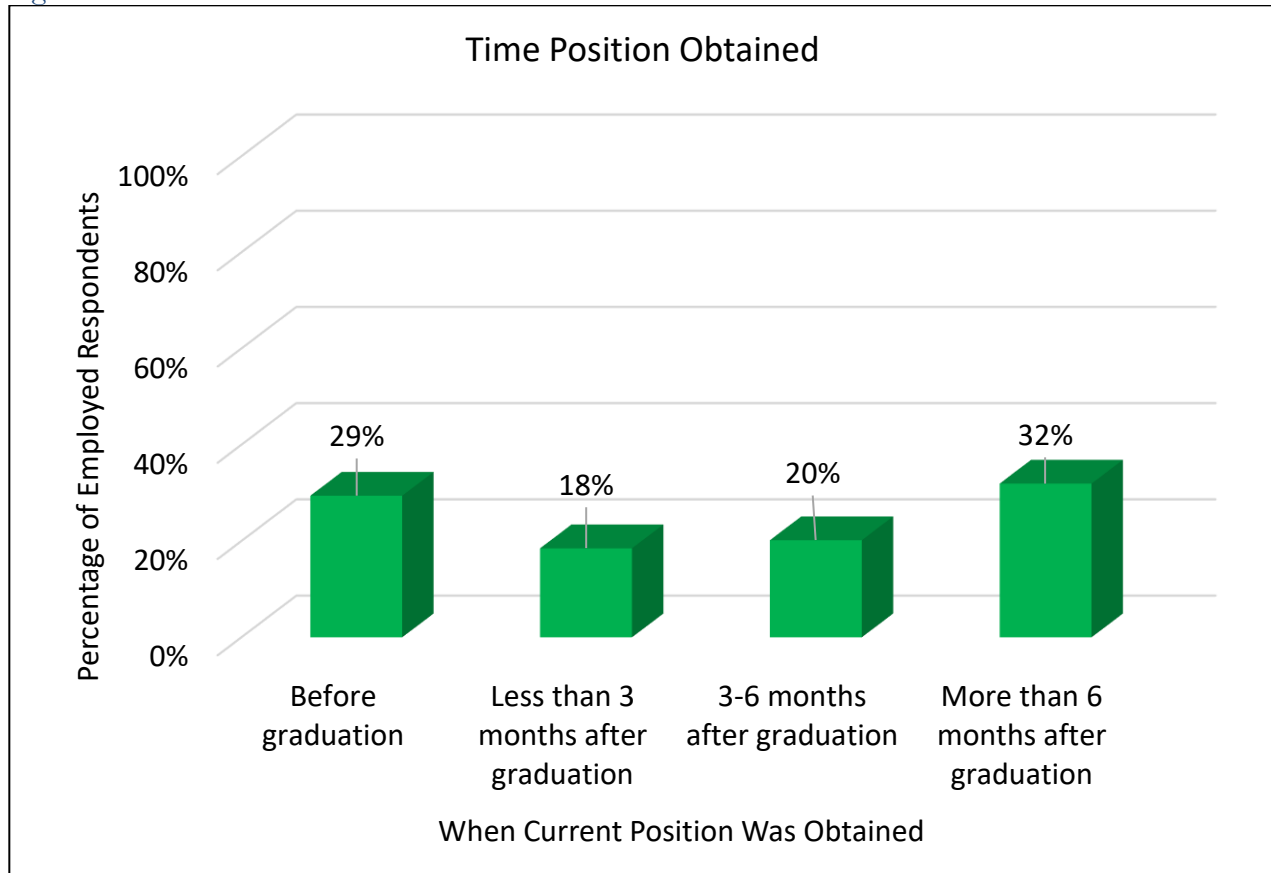


Note: the employment item in the 2012 Alumni Survey did not include an “Unemployed and seeking employment” choice.

## Time Required to Obtain Employment

Among those employed, the two most common responses to the question asking when they obtained the position were “Before graduation” (29%) and “More than six months after graduation” (32%). This indicates that many of those who did not obtain employment while still a KSC student experienced a prolonged period of unemployment before finally landing a position (Figure 6).

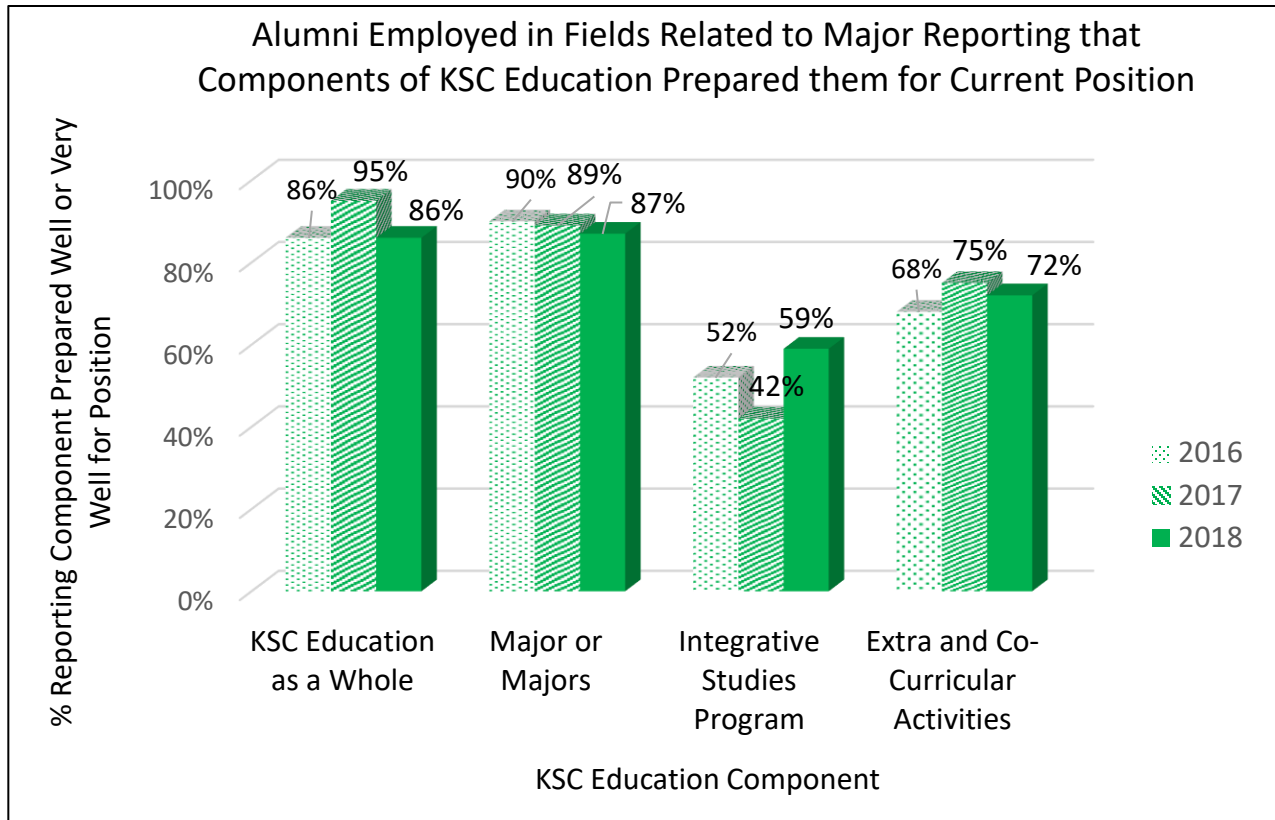
Figure 6



## Satisfaction with KSC's Preparation for Employment

Among employed students, 86% reported that their current position is closely related or somewhat related to their studies at KSC. Additionally, 86% reported that their KSC education as a whole prepared them well or very well for their current work (Figure 7). When asked to assess how well key components of their education prepared them for their current position, 87% selected “Well” or “Very Well” for their major or majors, but 72% selected one of those options for extra and co-curricular activities, and 59% did so for the ISP. This full set of items first appeared in the 2016 survey. Preparation satisfaction decreased for KSC education as a whole and also decreased slightly for extra-curricular activities and for courses in major, but it increased for ISP courses.

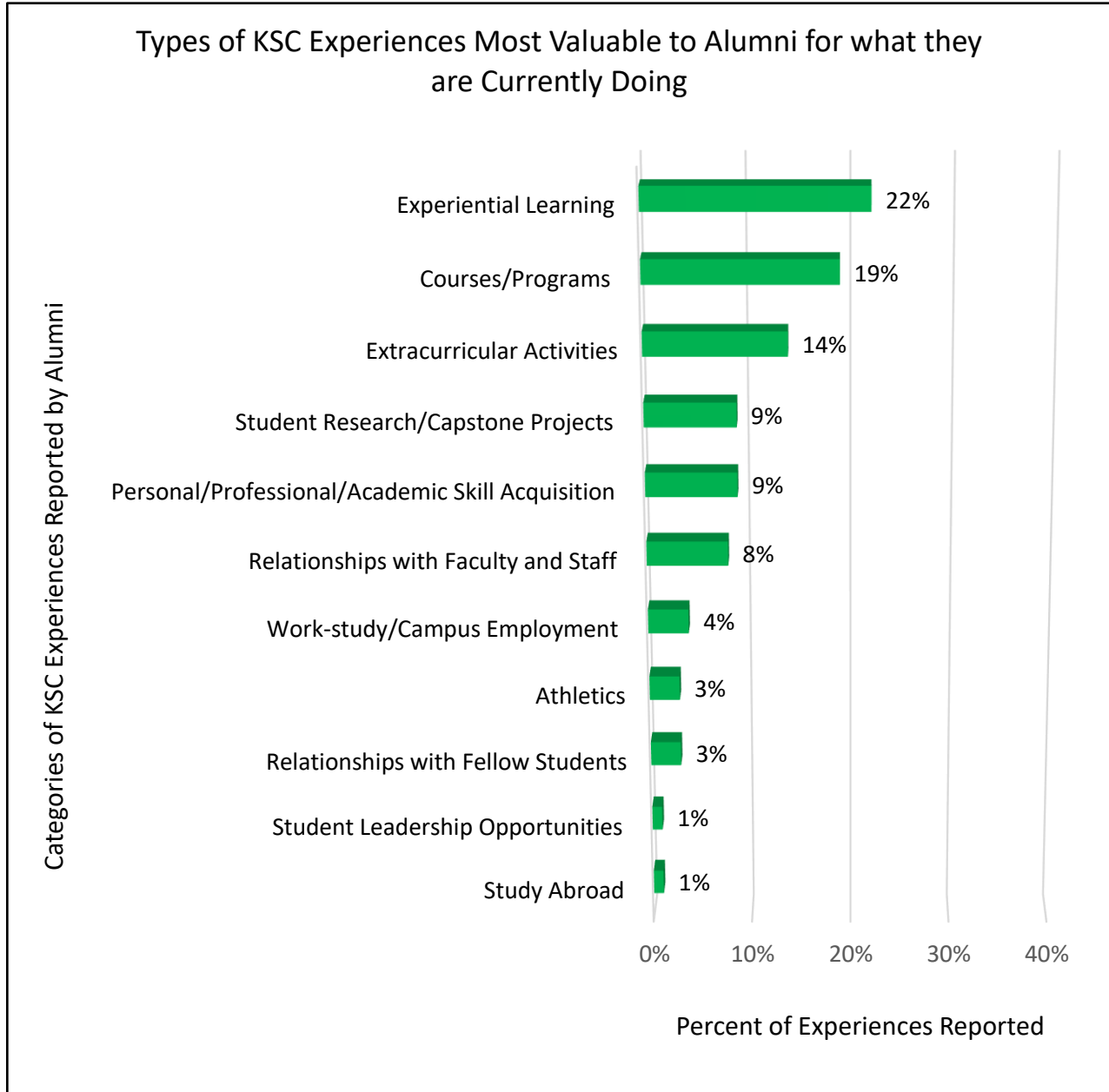
Figure 7



### 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 8 summarizes the frequency of common themes in response to this question. Provided below are example comments for each theme. Alumni most frequently provided examples of experiential learning such as internships and student teaching (19%). Other key themes included courses/programs, extracurricular activities, and student research and capstone projects.

Figure 8



Representative examples of each of the categories of responses presented in Figure 7 include the following (all comments taken verbatim from 2018 Alumni Survey):

- *Experiential Learning (22 comments)*

My senior internship, as well as my other internships throughout my college career. Working with a college football team, ice hockey teams, and many other sports as a student athletic trainer has prepared me most for my career as a full-time athletic trainer at a division 1 high school.

My internship at Cheshire TV. I wouldn't be able to encourage enough that KSC should seriously consider partnering with the station. The resources it has would be able to help the Film and Journalism departments beyond measure.

- *Courses/Programs (19 comments)*

The ability to take a course about marketing in the arts world has prepared me the most for my life post-graduation.

My exposure to real world issues throughout pursuing my BA in Criminal Justice has been the most valuable.

- *Extracurricular Activities (14 comments)*

I participated in the Alternative Break program. This program made me feel connected on campus, which allowed me to feel comfortable meeting other students and faculty members. I also learned to feel more comfortable participating in my courses and other programs on campus. It also shifted how I saw my future and shaped what I wanted to do with my life, due to the impact community service had on me during these trips.

The TRiO program helped me so much! Words cannot describe how much they impacted my life.

- *Student Research/Capstone Projects (9 comments)*

Participating in Senior Capstone projects and Practicum based work outside the classroom. The Capstone allowed me to focus on a specific topic within my field of study that I was passionate about and provided me the opportunity to gain insight on some of the important themes featured within my field of study. The Practicum engaged us in real world experiences in the Keene community where I was able to apply my education from the classroom into scenarios faced in the work force. In pursuing my Post-Graduate Dietetic Internship, I found that these two experiences also helped prepare me for the studies in which I would be performing in beyond Keene State. In addition, the Career Advising staff at Keene State were extremely beneficial in providing me with excellent advice and skills when applying for occupations and preparing for job interviews with potential employers.

Research, research, research! I was given this opportunity to work on my PhD AND have all my tuition covered because of my research experience.

- *Professional/ Academic Skill Acquisition (9 comments)*

I worked with the Keene Public Library on their Capital campaign project and fabricated a scale model of their new and renovated facility my sophomore year. I was also a part of a Collaborative Design Project that allowed me to travel to Rwanda and Uganda to research and gather data on a design of a Pre-Primary school in a rural village that would address the need for alternative pedagogues in developing countries.

I spent hours studying in the Mason Library and was able to develop an organized and productive work ethic. I learned how to time manage and use my resources to further my education.

- *Relationships with Faculty and Staff (8 comments)*

All of my professors were tough on getting the work done and getting it done right, and that's only helped me in the rest of my life, ensuring I'm thorough and efficient with my work and to always commit wholly to something!

A number of professors did an incredible job of mixing life-lessons and advice into their classrooms. I look fondly back on what I consider friendships, with many of the faculty and staff.

- *Work-study/ Campus Employment (4 comments)*

Having a work study job really taught me how to work with a professional team. Studying away taught me that I could live and learn on my own.

My many jobs on campus provided me with communication and time management skills that have been extremely useful for me since I am still enrolled in school and working part time.

- *Athletics (3 comments).*

Being a student-athlete seemed to be the busiest I could ever get, until I started law school. Not to mention, I work on top of this.

KSC swim team.

- *Relationships with other Students (3 comments)*

My friendships and memories are what I have most from Keene State.

Making connections with peers while at Keene state that still stand today. I feel I created a network of professionals I can call on still to this day.

- *Student Leadership Opportunities (1 comment)*

Leading work with others without the leadership of a professor.

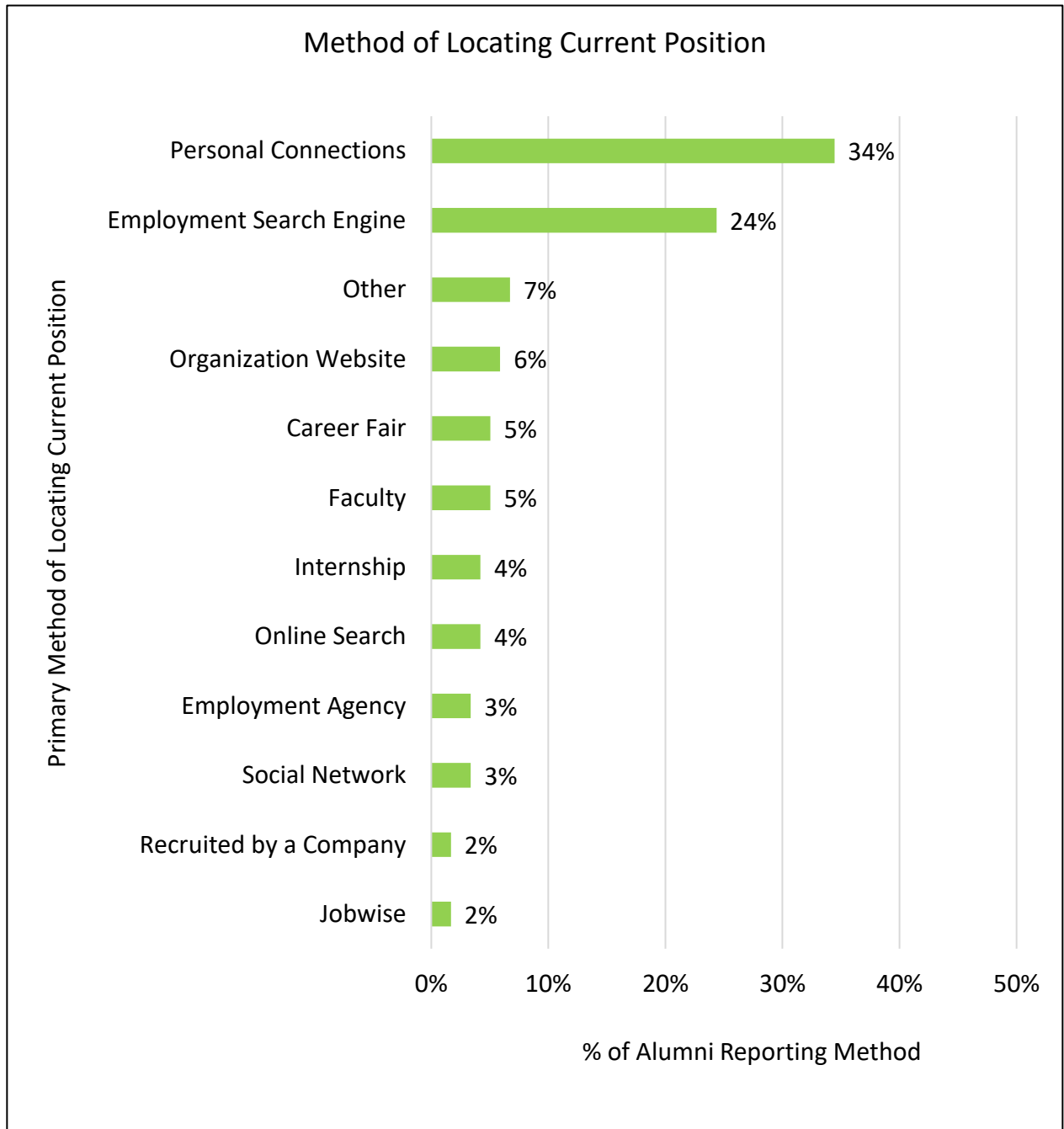
- *Study Abroad (1 comment)*

Study abroad.

## Job Search Methods

*Primary methods of locating current position:* Employed alumni reported using personal connections (34%) and public-/private-sector web-based employment search engines (24%). Five percent used career fairs and 2% used KSC's JobWISE site (Figure 9).

Figure 9

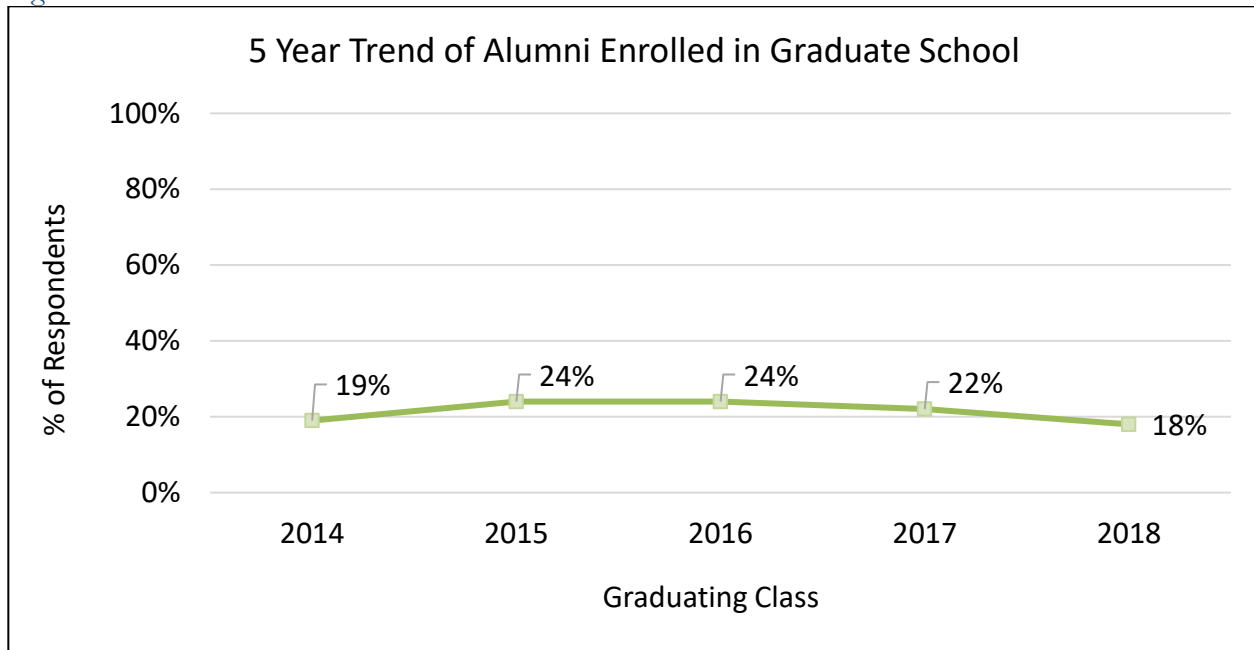


## Graduate Education

A sizable minority of the respondents (18%) reported that they had enrolled in graduate education since graduating from Keene State College (Figure 10). This percentage is slightly lower than the previous years, which is likely due to the lower unemployment rate obtained for this graduating class. The most commonly reported general field of study for advanced degrees was education (20%). Most enrolled in institutions in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and other surrounding states in New England and the Northeast. However, some enrolled in programs as far away as California, Oregon, and Nevada.

Consistent with findings obtained from prior years, 83% of those enrolled in graduate education reported that their program was closely related or somewhat related to their studies at KSC. Of these, 95% judged that their KSC education as a whole had prepared them well or very well for this next step in their education.

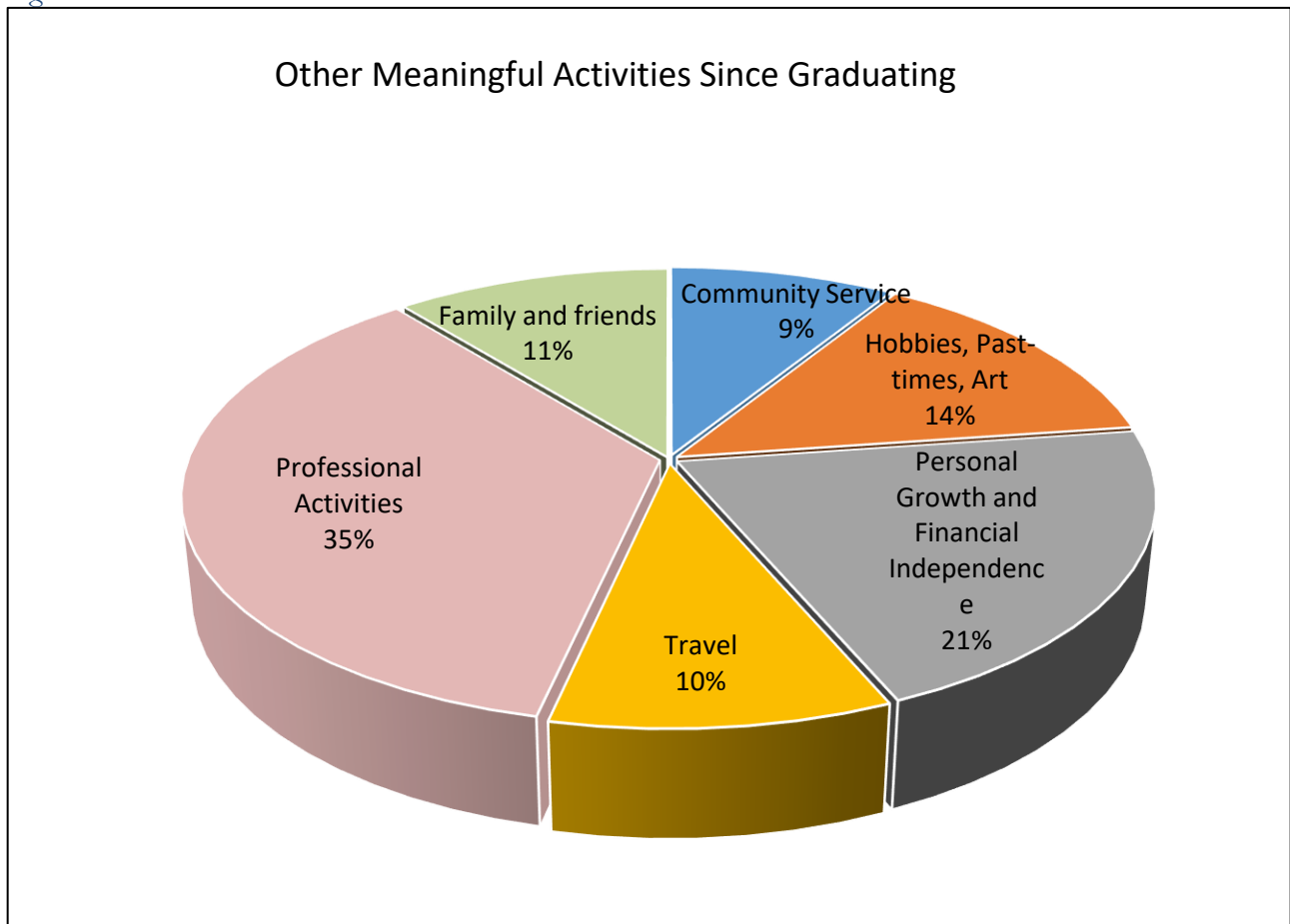
Figure 10



## What Else Are Alumni Doing?

The survey asked respondents, “Besides employment and further education, what else are you doing that is meaningful to you in this first year after graduation?” Figure 11 summarizes the frequency of common themes in response to this question. Listed below are the themes and example comments. Key themes were professional activities, professional growth and financial independence, community service, hobbies/past-times/art, travel, and family/friends.

Figure 11



Representative examples of each of the categories of responses presented in Figure 11 include the following (all comments taken verbatim from 2018 Alumni Survey):

- *Professional Activities (34 comments)*

Working as a social media specialist applying my skills from both filmmaking and media, along with applying my passion for filmmaking by working on side projects.

To become a Registered Dietitian with a focus on Community Nutrition and Youth Education.

- *Personal Growth and Financial Independence (20 comments)*

I am applying the skills I learned throughout college on how to live on my own in the real world, and in my own apartment.

I've been able to afford to move out of my mothers house and support myself which is the ultimate goal and probably the most fulfilling thing I've done since graduation.

- *Hobbies/Pastimes/Art (13 comments)*

I am focusing on learning a new hobby each year. This year happens to be DJ'ing.

I am practicing ink drawing.

- *Friends and Family (10 comments)*

I am spending time with family and friends, and improving myself more so I can be the best version of myself possible.

Keeping in touch with lifelong friends made through this close-knit community.

- *Travel (9 comments)*

I am traveling, interning, and living on the beach!

I've been traveling with my now husband who has started his career as an officer in the United States Marine Corps.

- *Community Service (8 comments)*

Continuing community service opportunities and maintaining relationships built while at Keene State.

I volunteer for CASA in New Hampshire as a court appointed advocate to advocate for the best interest of children who have been removed from their home in regards to abuse or neglect by DCYF. I work on the case for upwards of a year to either reunify the child with their parent(s) or to push for adoption.

## Future Engagement with College

Alumni were asked to rate their likelihood of using each of four approaches to staying engaged with KSC. Shown here are the percent selecting “Likely” or “Extremely Likely” for each approach. Attending Keene State College events occurring near where alumni live received the highest percentage of likely responses (48%), followed by attending KSC events on campus (42%), and volunteering through the Alumni Association (38%), as well as supporting KSC philanthropically (35%). Other means reported included a desire to promote the college to high school students and supporting current KSC students.

Figure 12

