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Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

## Findings from the Class of 2019 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 2020, Keene State College surveyed alumni who received bachelor’s degrees in fiscal year 2019. 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 2019 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, all respondents (100%) were either employed, in graduate study or both, and most (90%) said that their KSC education had prepared them well for what they are doing now.
- Although alumna's 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 remains high at 90%. Additionally, the percentage who would recommend KSC to friends or siblings also remains high at 92%.
- The percent employed or enrolled in graduate school remains high and none of the respondents reported that they were unemployed and seeking employment, only unemployed by choice while attending graduate school.
- 35% of the respondents reported that they obtained their current positions before they graduated though 29% took more than 6 months after graduation to find their current positions and 14% agreed that the Covid-19 pandemic made finding a job more difficult.
- 90% of the respondents reported that their KSC education as a whole prepared them well or very well for their current work, 87% said that their major or majors prepared them well or very well.
- Alumni reported that experiential learning activities were the KSC experiences that best prepared them for what they currently do (30%).
- 33% 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, 100% were master's degree programs.
- 40% of respondents indicated they were likely or very likely to stay engaged with KSC through attending on-campus events, 38% through attending College events held near where they live, and 25% indicated they would volunteer through Alumni Association.

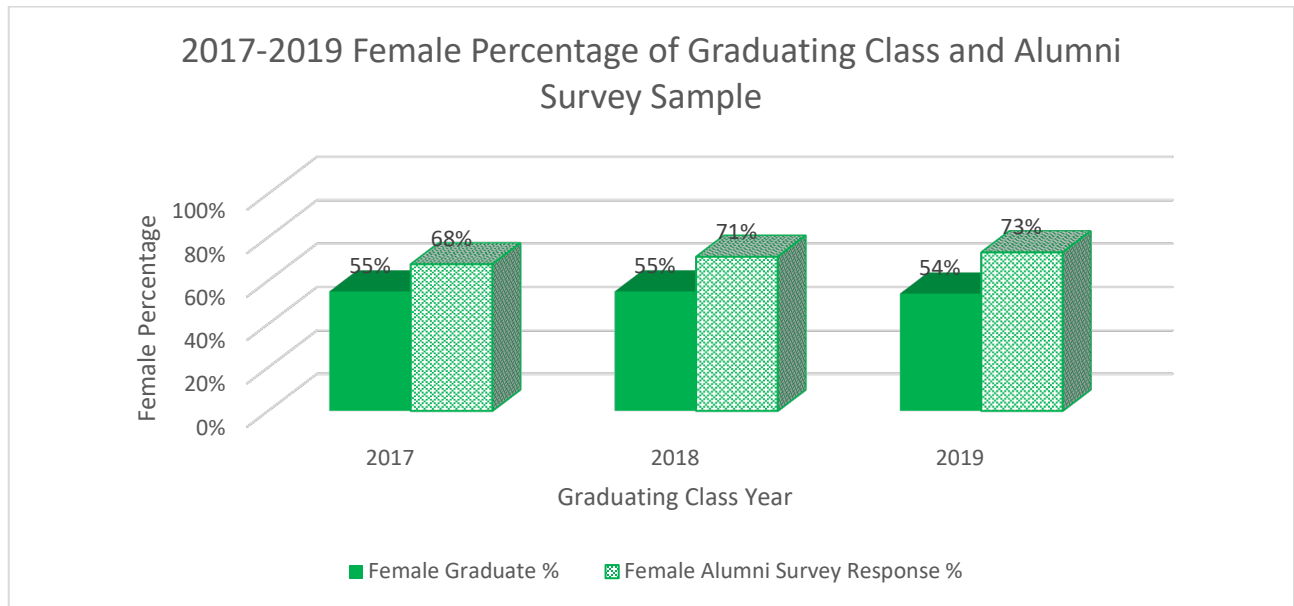
## DETAILED FINDINGS

### Potential Impact of Sample Bias on Findings

There were 759 unduplicated bachelor's degree recipients in fiscal year 2019, and the College had valid contact information with permission for email for 476 of these (67% of the class). The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment sent email survey invitations to these alumni, and 87 provided usable responses for an overall response rate of 18%. 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 2019 was 54% female, but the sample was 73% female. Nevertheless, this pattern of female overrepresentation occurred in each of the most recent 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. Pride in one's post-graduate employment may motivate alumni to complete the survey.

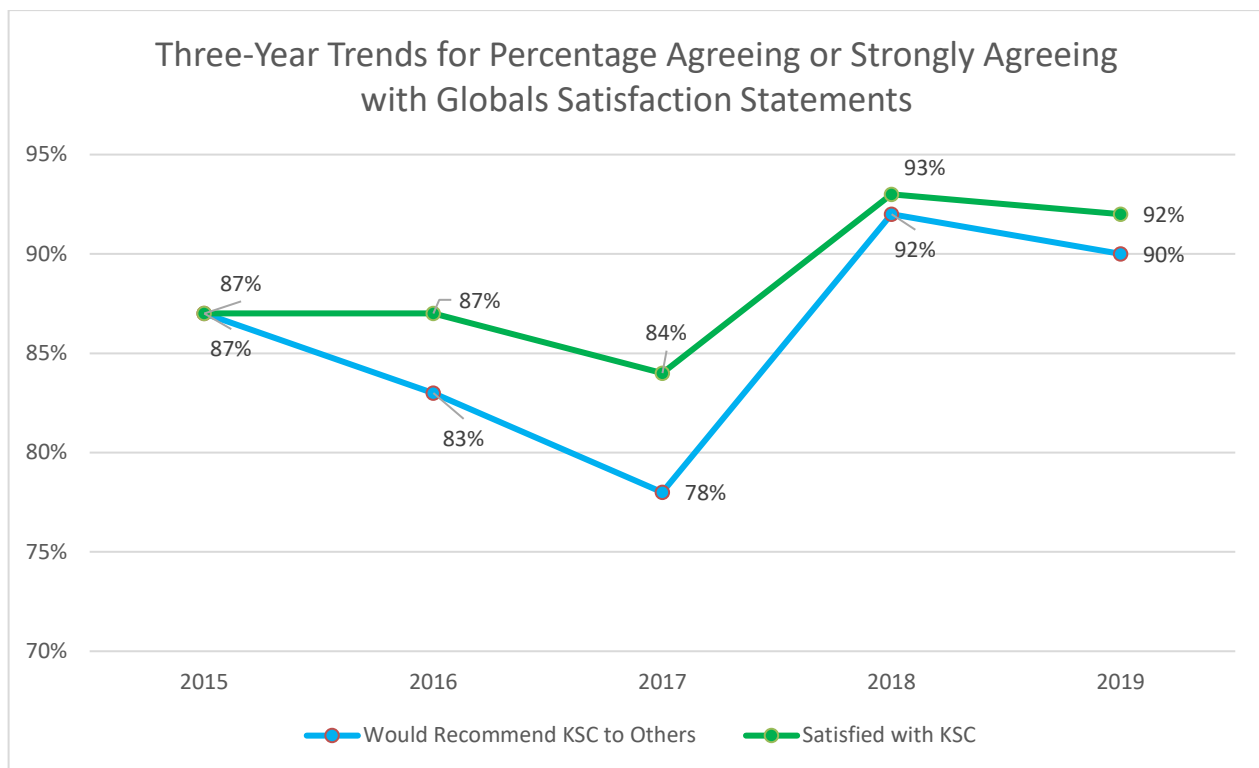
## Satisfaction with KSC Education

Two measures of alumni global satisfaction with their KSC education were included in the current Alumni Survey. 84% of respondents answered this set of questions which 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: “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.”*
- *Overall, I am satisfied with my KSC education: “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 increased in the past two years.

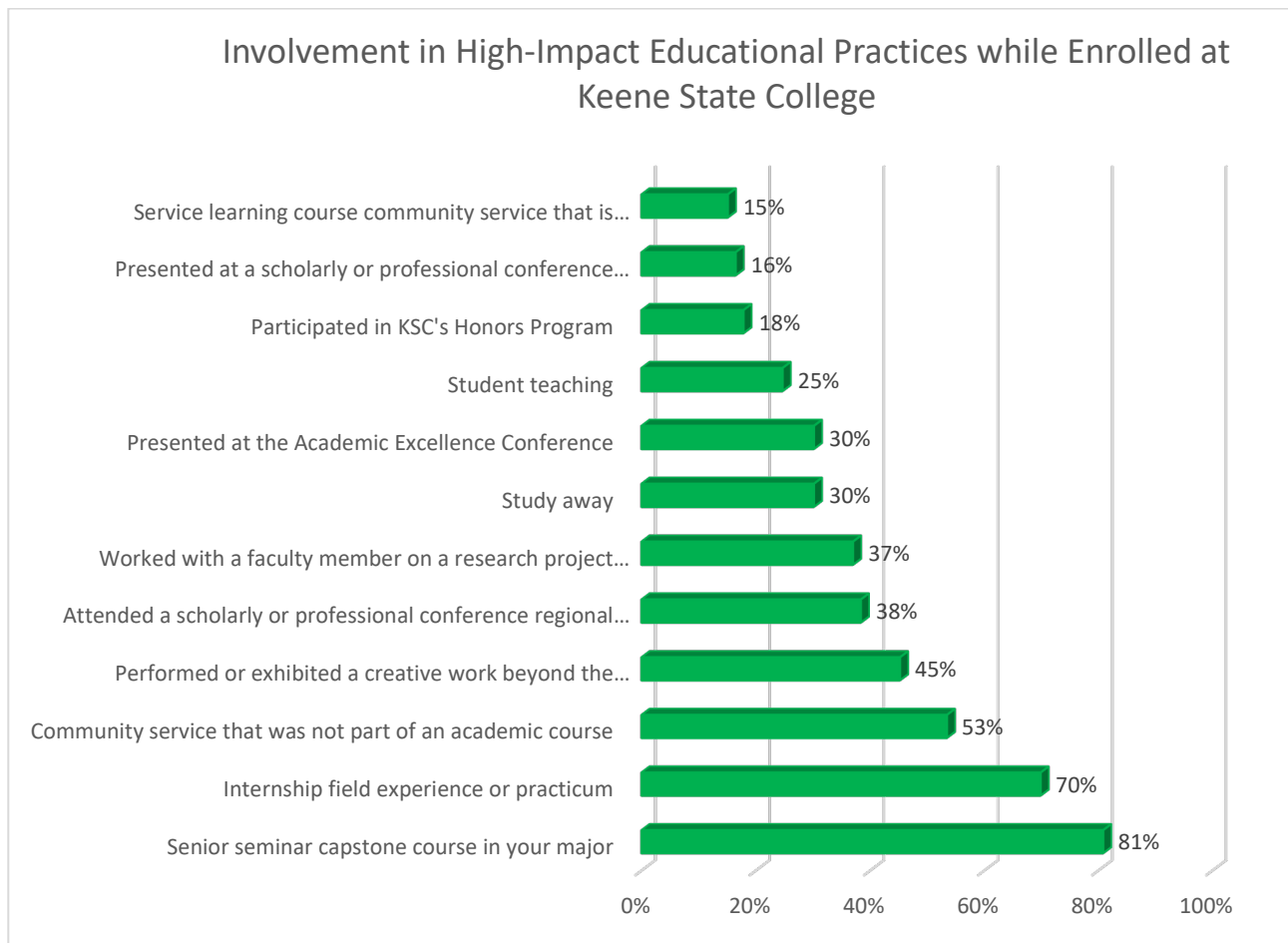
Figure 2



*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. Of the 84% of those alumni responding to this question, (77%) met this goal; 82% participated in at least one HIEP.

*Figure 3*

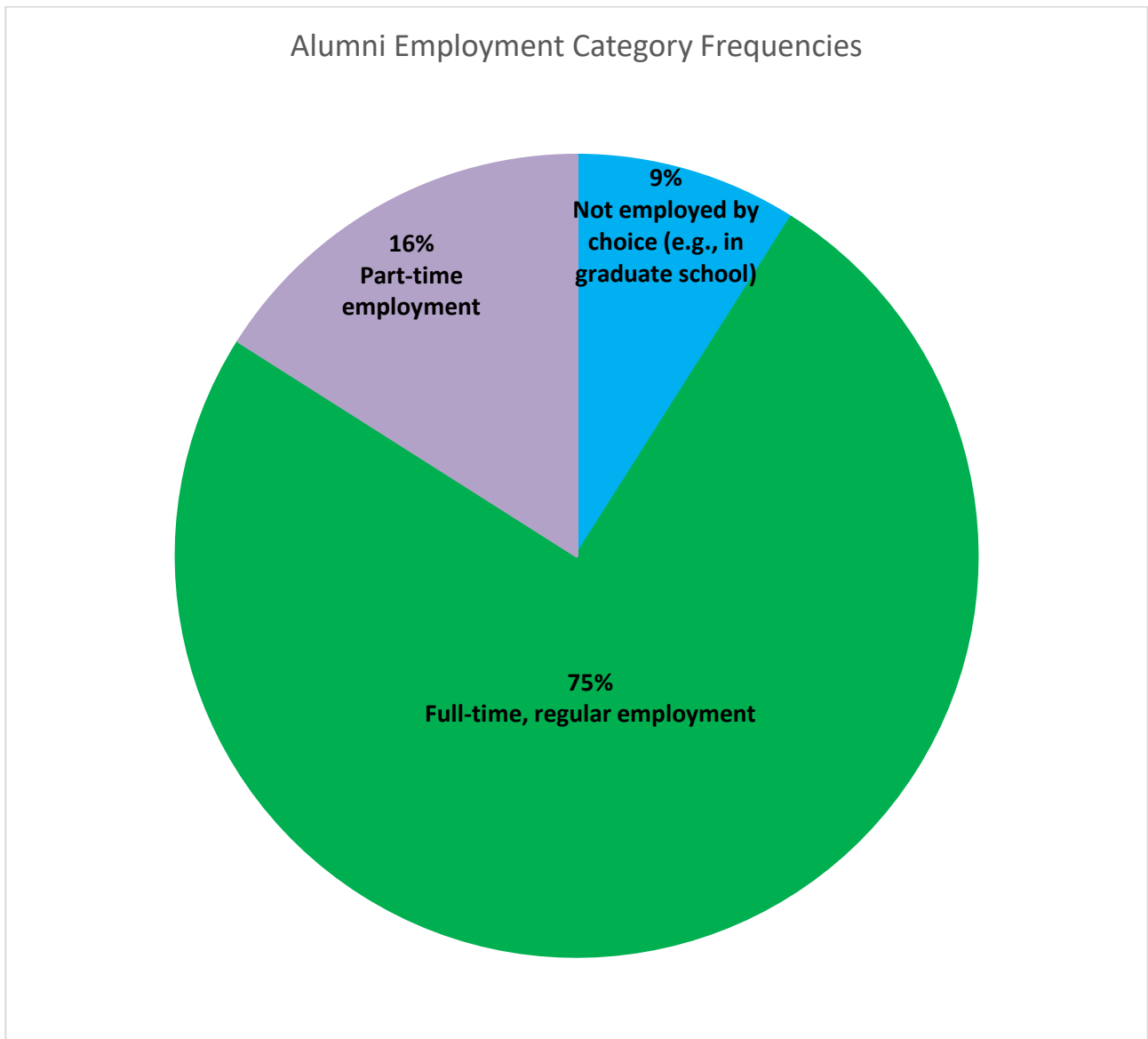


## Employment Findings

### *Level of Alumni Employment*

100% of the respondents provided an employment status, 9% of these alumni reported that they were not employed due to attending Graduate School. Figure 4a summarizes the employment status breakdown.

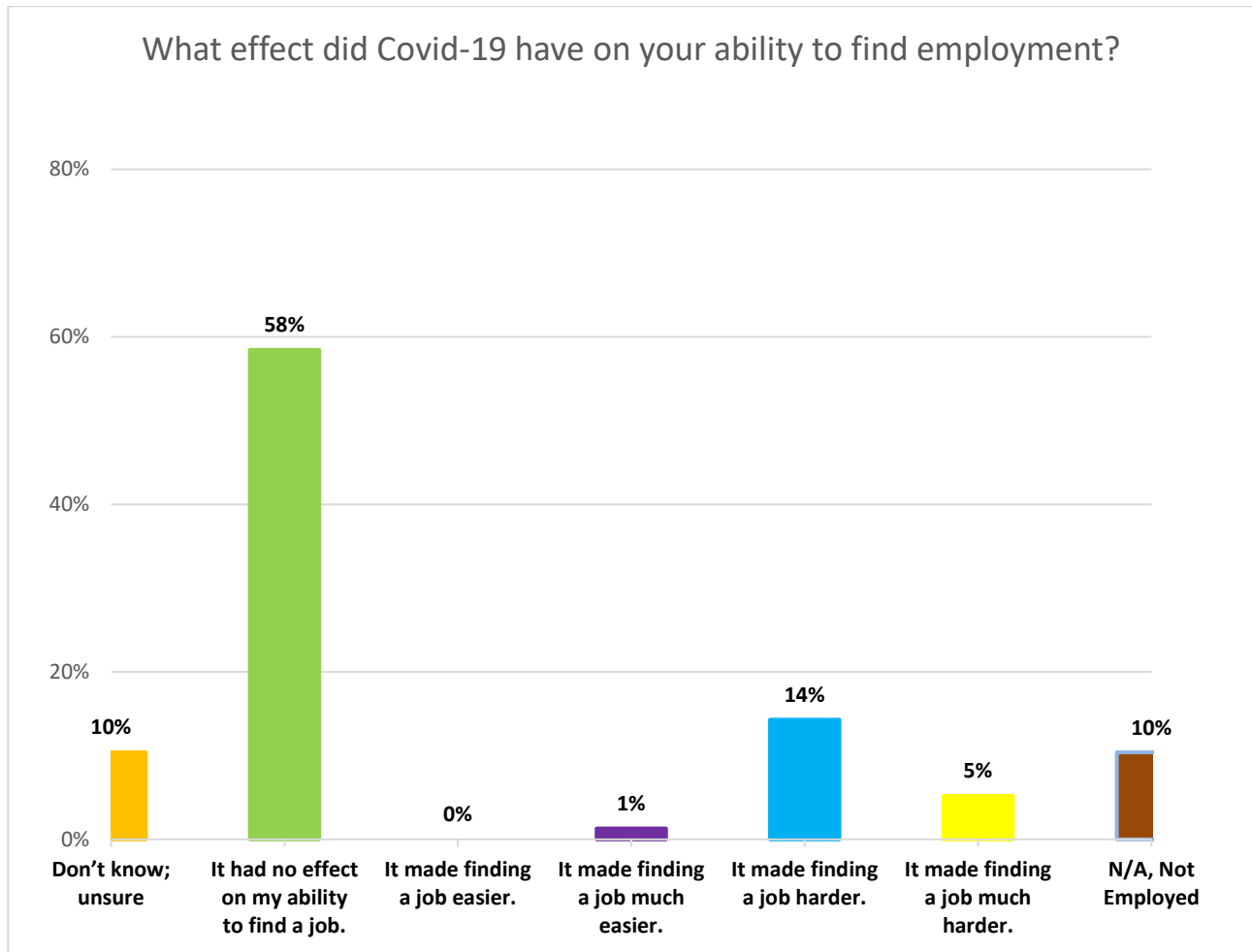
*Figure 4a*



## Impact of Covid-19 on Alumni Employment

89% of the Alumni Survey respondents answered this question about how Covid-19 impacted their ability to find employment. Figure 4b below shows the effect of Covid-19 on alumni employment searches, 0% of the respondents reported that Covid-19 made finding a job easier.

Figure 4b

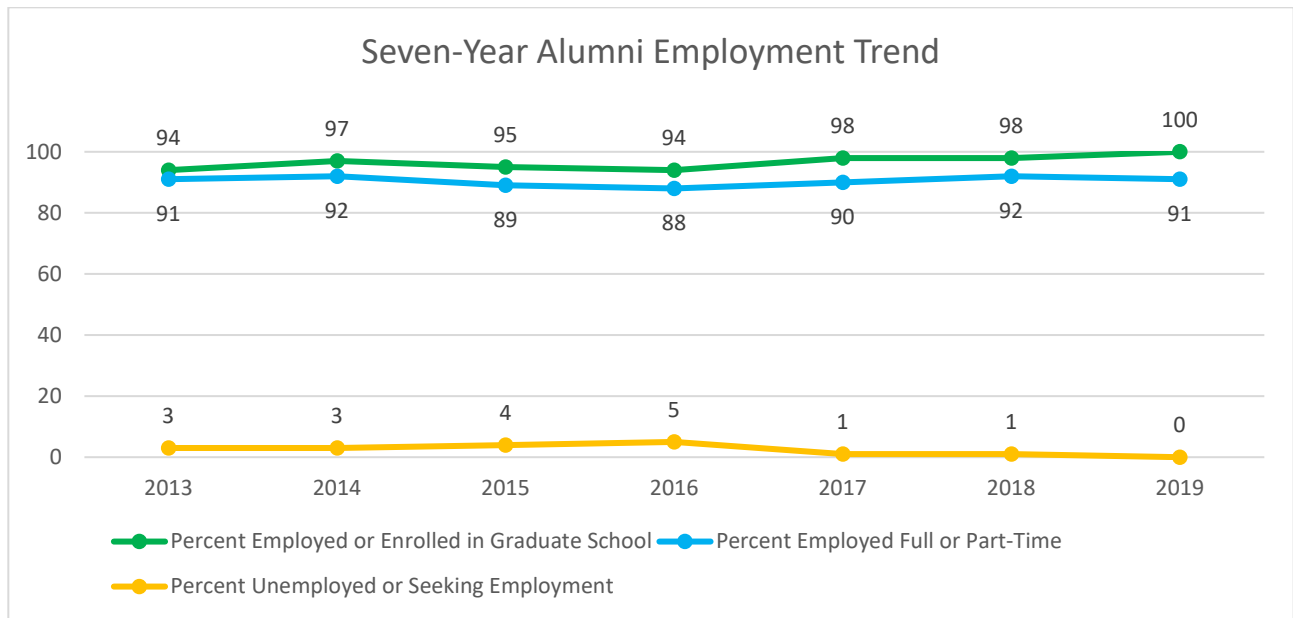


*Employment Trends*

All 100% of the respondents reported that they were either employed or enrolled in Graduate School (Figure 5). The percentage employed either full- or part-time decreased 1% from the prior two years. Those reporting that they were “Unemployed by Choice” due to being enrolled in a Graduate Program was 9%, however, no one reported that they were “Unemployed and Seeking Employment.” This is certainly much lower than the national 7.2% unemployment rate for recent (Jan 2016- Dec 2020) college graduates.

(<https://www.statista.com/statistics/633660/unemployment-rate-of-recent-graduates-in-the-us/>).

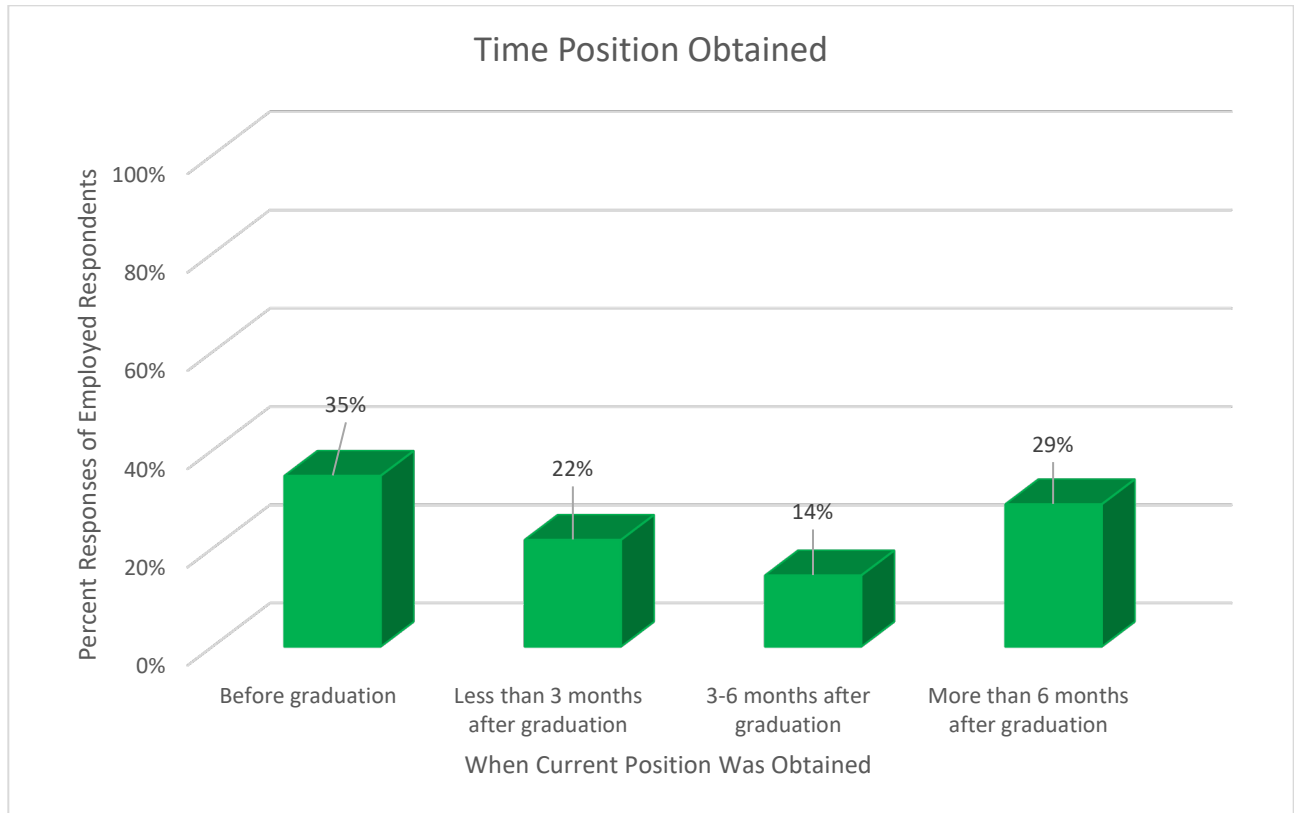
*Figure 5*



### *Time Required to Obtain Employment*

80% of the respondents answered this question which asked how long after graduation did they find their current employment. The two most common responses were “before graduation” and “more than six months after graduation.” 36% of these respondents were able to find employment within 6 months of graduation (Figure 6).

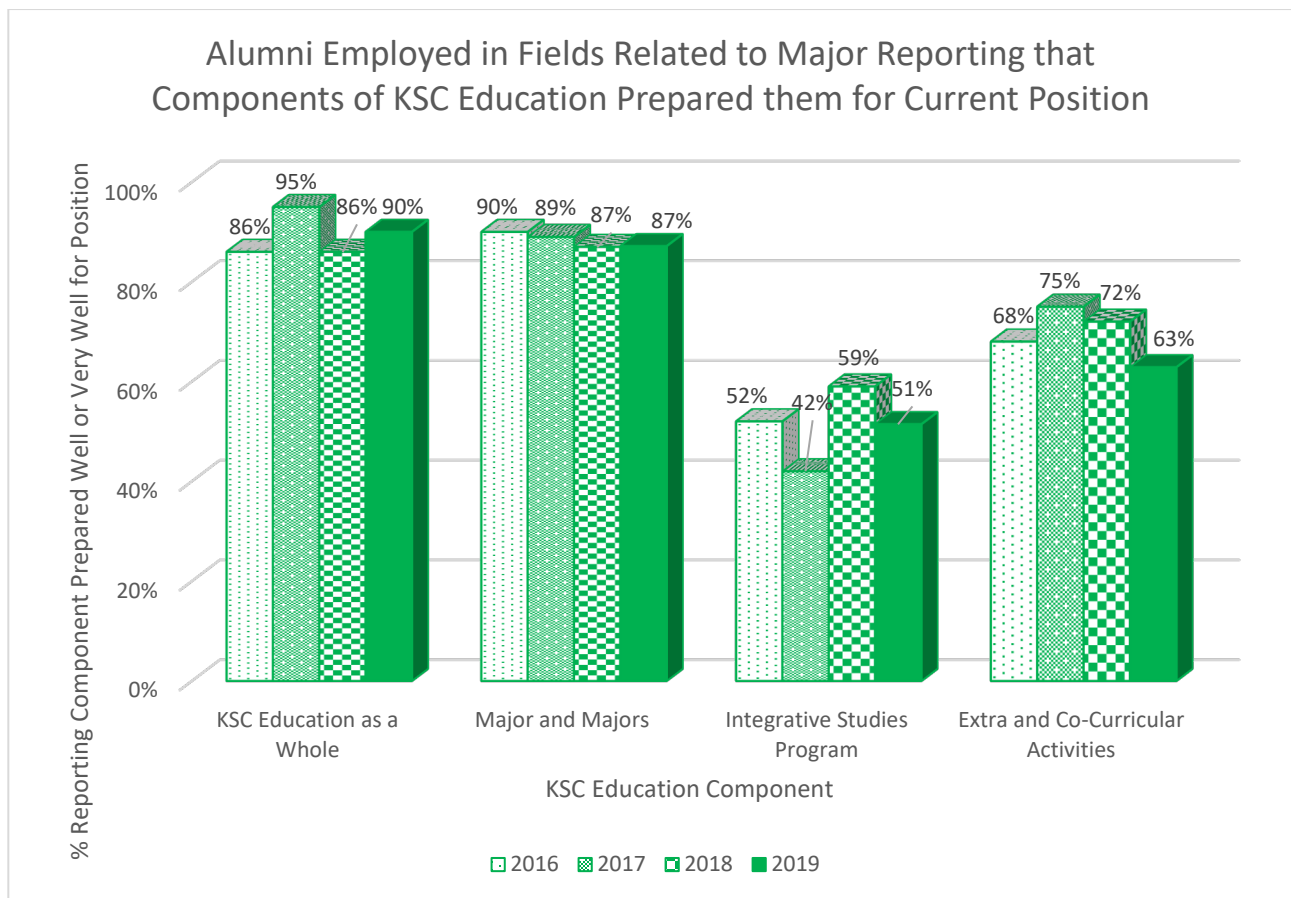
*Figure 6*



*Satisfaction with KSC's Preparation for Employment Preparation from Coursework and Extra/Co-curricular Activities*

This question asked alumni to assess how well each of these key components of their education prepared them for their current position and those who answered “Well” or “Very Well” are reported in (Figure 7). Of the 79 % of alumni who responded to this series of questions and 87% reported that their current position is closely related or somewhat related to their studies at KSC. This year there was an increase from last year in those reporting that their KSC education as a whole prepared them for their current work.

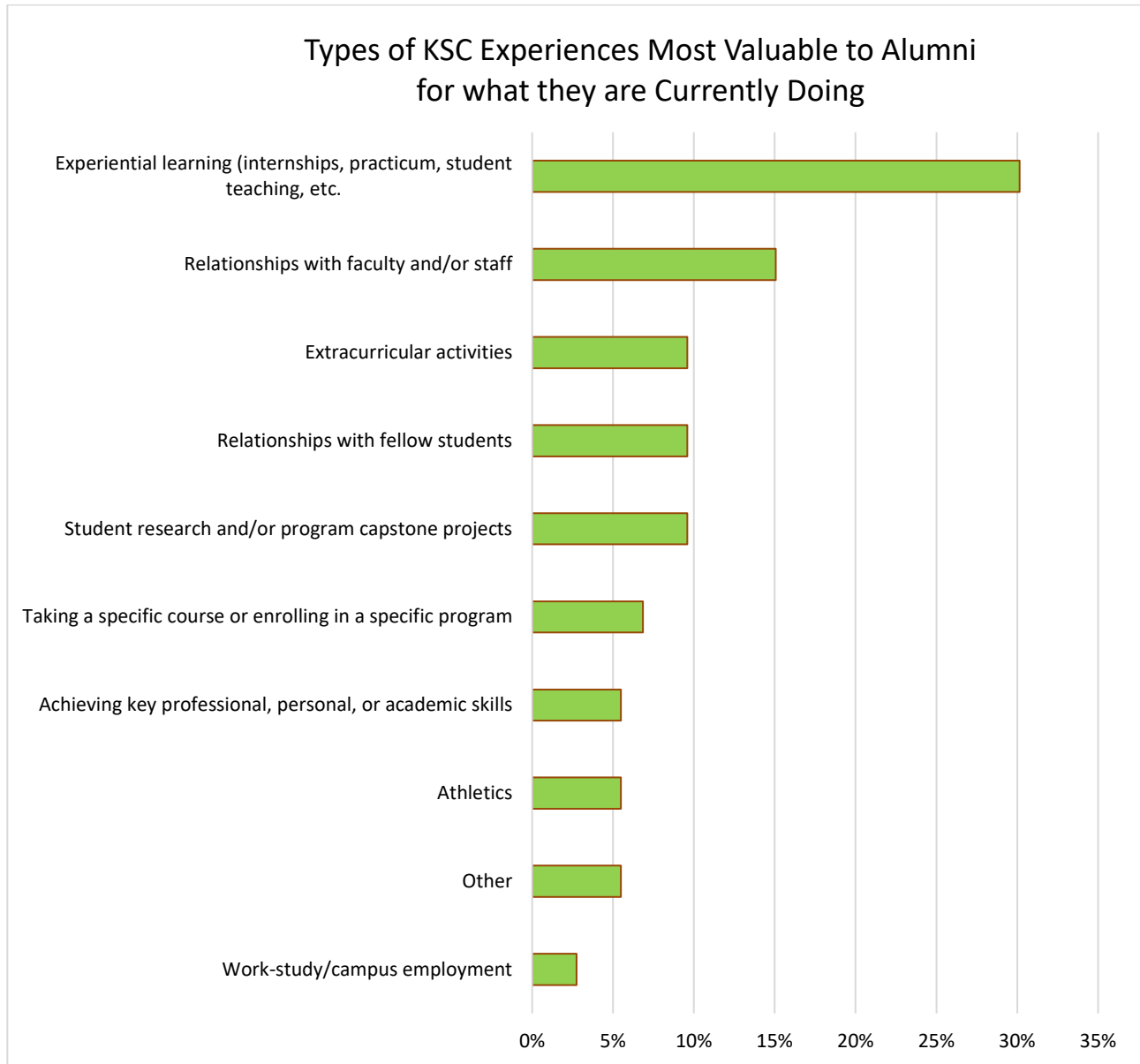
Figure 7



## Specific KSC Experiences Most Valuable for Current Circumstances

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?” Below (Figure 8) is a summary of the frequency of some common themes in response to this question. Also provided are some example comments (where provided) for these themes.

Figure 8



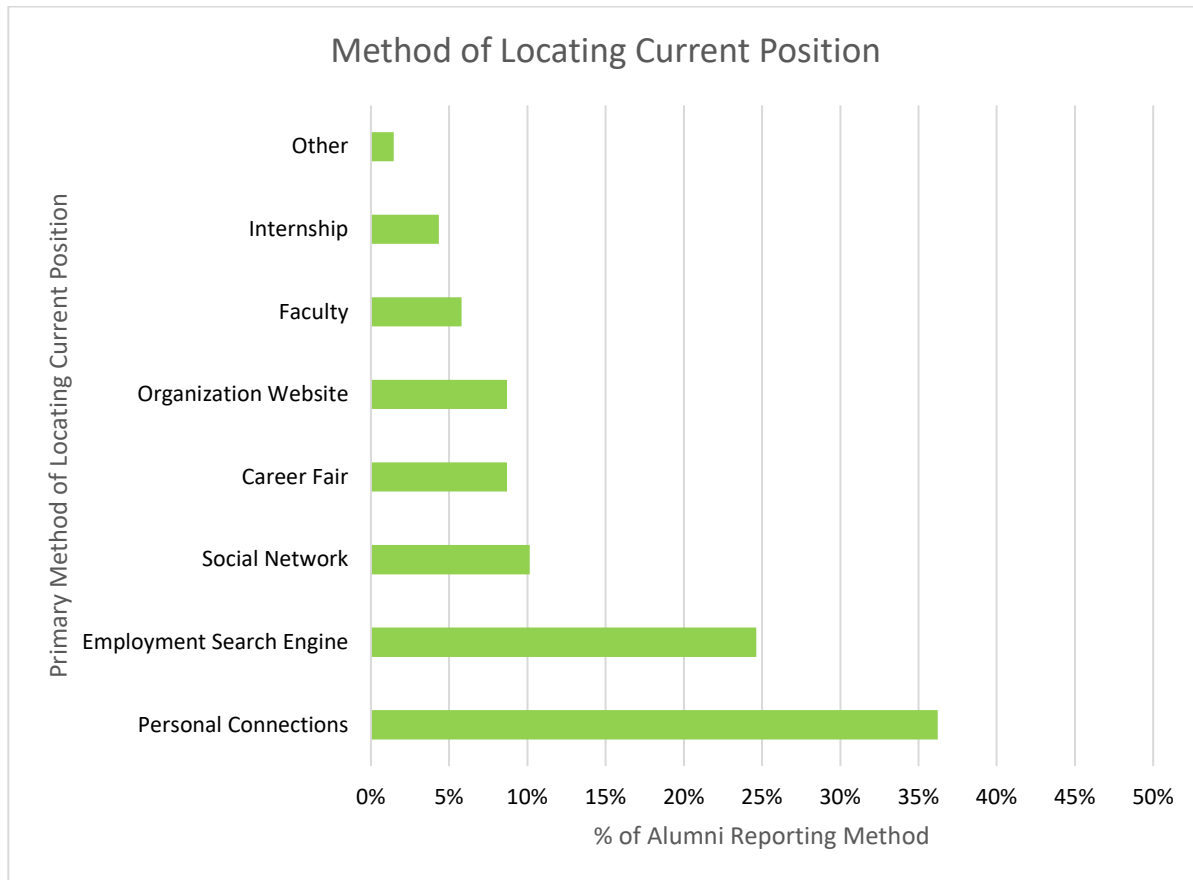
Comments provided for the themes presented in Figure 8 above:

- *Relationships with Faculty and Staff (11 comments)*
  - *Geography professors Cusack, Brehme, and Davis*
  - *Dr. Barlow/Dr. Stevenson; Forest Seymor*
  - *I adored the faculty that I worked with In both communications and management. Halford, Simoneau, Akkoor, and many others. They made learning so interesting and relevant*
  - *Dr. Jeff Halford*
  - *My independent study with Dr. Stemp*
  - *Halford and Pantesco*
  - *I took Forgiveness and Reconciliation with Leaf Seligman and then I worked with her for three semesters afterwards as a TA/co teacher. This experience of teaching and learning about the world through a restorative justice lens combined with my experience at the Child Development Center and my expansive Early Childhood Education program, I learned about how different systems in this world work together and more about where my place is within those systems.*
  - *My advisor Tom Durnford made my time at Keene State worth it. Without him I don't know if I would feel fulfilled in terms of education.*
  - *The nursing professors were exceptional*
  - *Dr. Davisson & Dr. Jeff Halford. They encouraged my academic growth, helped me in my research, and pushed me to want to pursue higher education as a career. I am forever thankful to them.*
  - *Worked closely with Dr. Angela Barlow as a research assistant*
  
- *Courses/Programs (5 comments)*
  - *Geology at KSC*
  - *Graphic Design Program*
  - *Holocaust Cinema*
  - *Medical Nutrition Therapy II, Nutrition Major*
  - *My English Literature Major helped me to get accepted for my Master's degree at U.N.H.*
  
- *Achieving key professional, personal, or academic skills (3 comments)*
  - *Time management, teamwork, communication, self-discipline*
  - *Professionalism in the workplace and writing papers*
  - *Senior capstone*
  
- *Other (3 comments).*
  - *Time management, teamwork, communication, self discipline*
  - *Professionalism in the workplace and writing papers*
  - *Senior capstone*

## Job Search Methods

These are the primary methods that the respondents used to locate their current position. 79% of respondents answered this question matrix and provided the answers shown in (Figure 9). Personal Connections was by far the method most selected as the means for finding the position that these respondents currently hold.

Figure 9

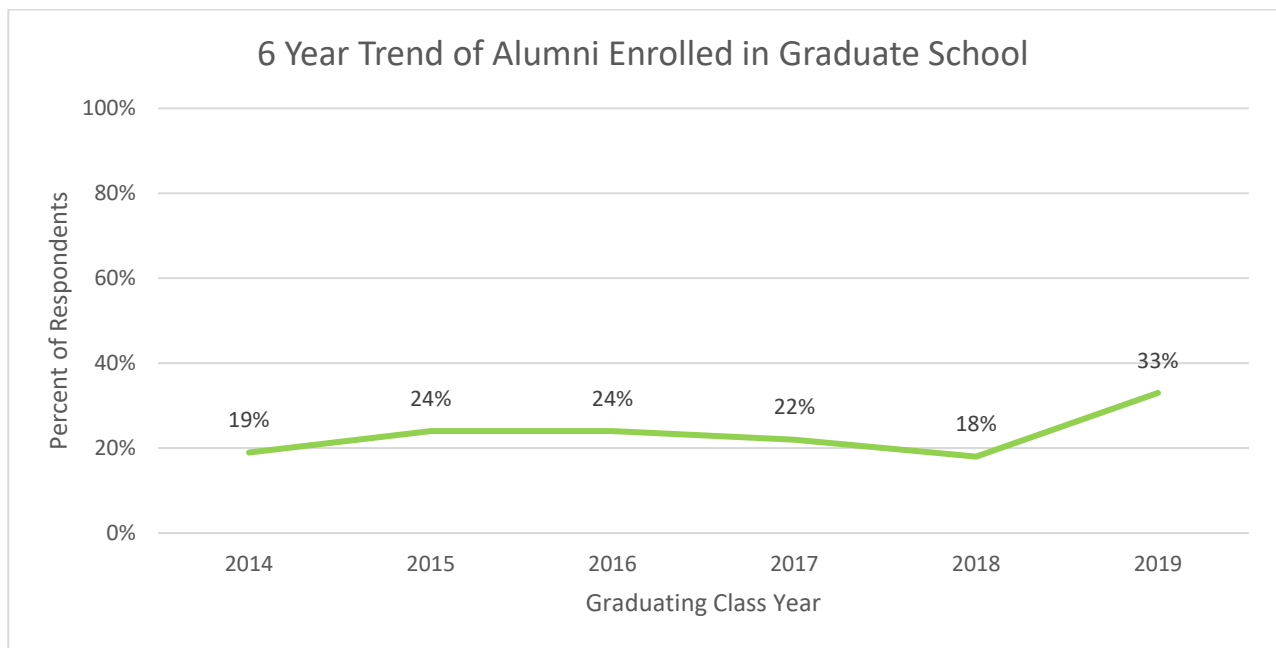


### Graduate Education

90% of the alumni who took this survey answered this question and of those, the percent reporting that they had enrolled in graduate education since graduating from Keene State College increased significantly this year (Figure 10). The most commonly reported general field of study for advanced degrees was education (27%). Most of the institutions these respondents were enrolled in are located in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont and New York. Though Virginia, the DC area, Florida and South Carolina were also mentioned.

Consistent with findings obtained from prior years, a preponderance of those respondents enrolled in graduate education reported that their program was closely related (54%) or somewhat related (38%) to their studies at KSC; while 88% judged that their KSC education as a whole had prepared them well or very well for this next step in their education.

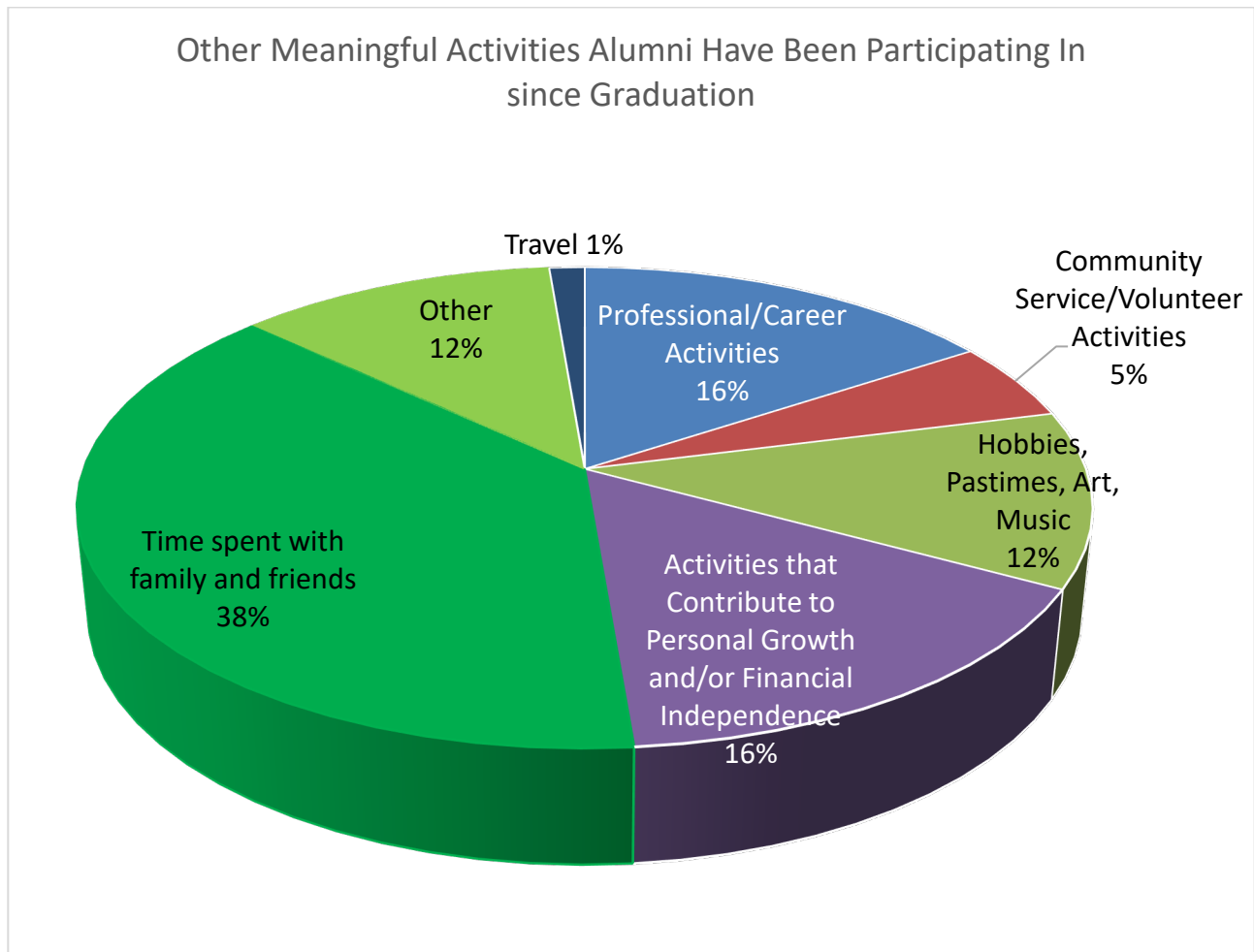
Figure 10



### What Else Are Alumni Doing?

The survey asked respondents, “Besides employment and further education, what else are you doing that is meaningful to you five years after graduation?” The survey provided a list of selections to choose from which were: Time spent with family and friends; Community Service/Volunteer Activities; Hobbies, Pastimes, Art, Music; Activities that Contribute to Personal Growth and/or Financial Independence; Travel, and an “Other” category. The chart (Figure 11) summarizes the frequency of common themes in response to this question. From the 87% of those responding to this question, only one respondent answered “travel” this year, as opposed to 10% the previous year, it is quite likely that this decrease is due to the pandemic. Additionally, 33% of the “Other” responses were “All of the Above.” Still other answers to “Other” were: writing a masters thesis, coaching and other athletic activities on my own, and Internship.

Figure 11



*Future Engagement with College*

Alumni were asked to rate their likelihood of using each of four approaches to staying engaged with KSC. Shown here (figure 12) are the 99% of respondents who answered this series of questions and selected “Likely” or “Extremely Likely” for each approach.

*Figure 12*

