



Wisdom to make a difference.

Office of Institutional Research

2013 Graduating Senior Survey

Keene State College annually surveys graduating students, asking them about their overall satisfaction with their time at KSC as well as various activities they may have engaged in. The survey is administered online as part of the registration for commencement. In spring 2013, there were 999 graduating seniors who provided usable responses to the survey. A separate report shared the results of open-comment items. This report provides a detailed analysis of the quantitative survey items.

KEY FINDINGS

- Almost all KSC seniors (92%) report that they have felt welcome at KSC. By large majorities they also report that they have felt like they belong at the college; that they have felt physically safe on campus, that their academic program has challenged them to do their best work; that they would recommend KSC to others; and that they are satisfied with their education. Respondents were a little less likely to agree that KSC provides academic and social support or someone to talk to when a problem arises. Responses to this section of the Graduating Senior Survey were consistent with responses to similar items on the 2011 Campus Climate Survey.
- Seniors who participated in high-impact educational practices (particularly internships and performing or exhibiting a creative work beyond the classroom) were significantly more likely than their peers to agree with the statements in the first bullet above. Those who participated in high-impact practices were also more likely to *Strongly Agree* that they had experienced these outcomes. Each of the high-impact practices was a significant predictor of one or more positive outcomes, expressed by responses of *Strongly Agree* to the statements above. Students who participate in high impact practices are not only more likely to have a positive college experience than their peers, they are more likely to feel strongly about their experiences at KSC. This finding has important implications for long-term involvement with the college after graduation. For example, students who participated in Study Away, and those who took service-learning courses are more likely than all other graduating students to *Strongly Agree* that they would recommend KSC to others, so these are alumni who might be tapped to assist with recruitment activities.
- Almost all seniors (92%) reported that they expect to be employed in the coming year. Of these, only 16% reported that they had already found and accepted employment. (Readers should note that most respondents completed this survey in March or April, well before commencement.) Among those who had already secured employment, about two-thirds (68%) reported that their position was either *Closely Related* or *Somewhat Related* to their undergraduate studies at KSC. One-third of the respondents (34%) reported that they expect to enroll in further education during the coming year, and 11% of these had already been offered and accepted admission to a degree or certificate program. Almost all of these (97%) reported that their further education was either *Closely Related* or *Somewhat Related* to their undergraduate studies at KSC.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Section 1: Overall College Experience

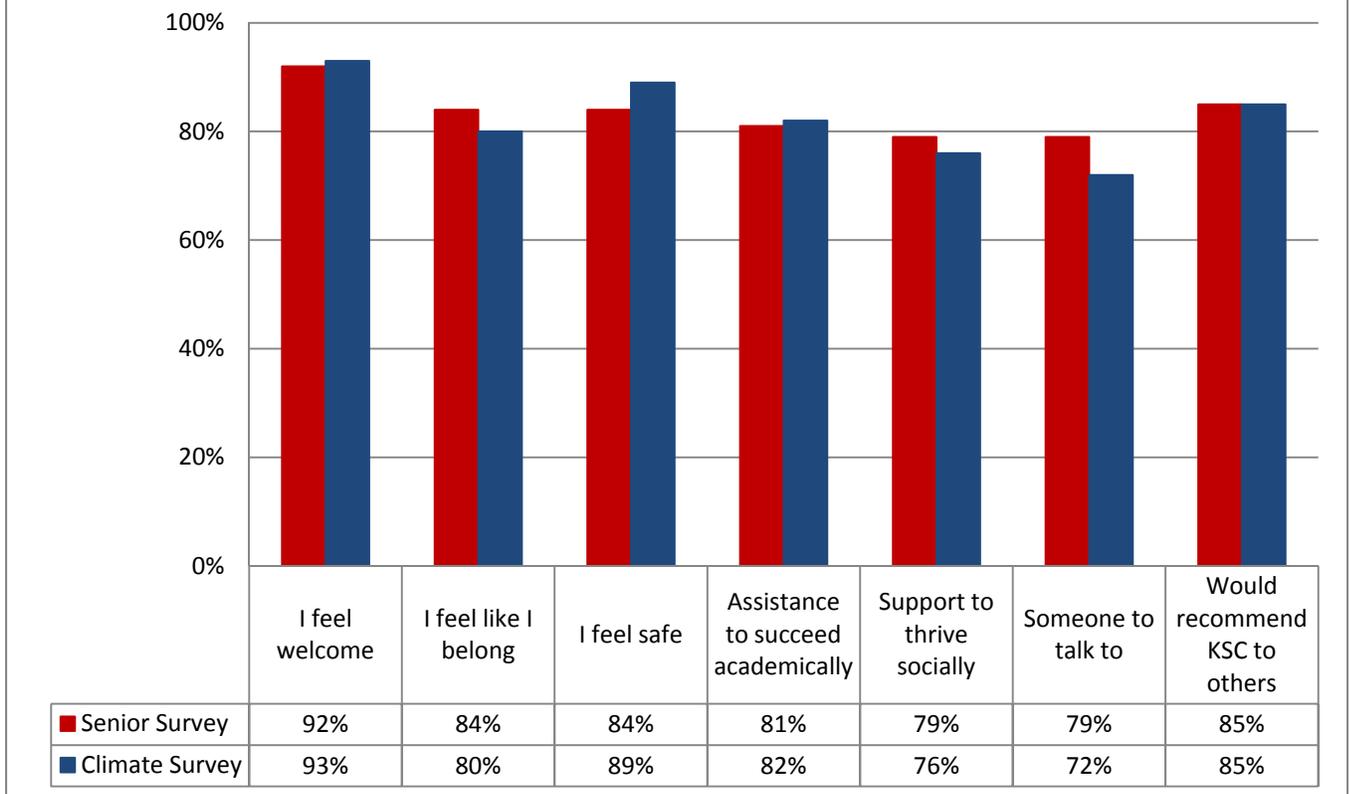
The first portion of the survey used Likert-type items to elicit an overall rating of the respondent's college experience. The following table shows the percentage of respondents who *Agreed* or *Strongly Agreed* with each statement in this section of the survey.

Percentage of Graduating Seniors Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Each Statement Rating the Overall College Experience

Statement	% Agree + Strongly Agree
I have felt welcome at KSC.	92%
I have felt like I belong here.	84%
I have felt physically safe on campus.	84%
My academic program has challenged me to do my very best work.	85%
KSC has provided the assistance I needed to succeed academically.	81%
KSC has provided the support I needed to thrive socially.	79%
When I have had a concern or a problem, there has been a faculty or staff member that I could talk to.	79%
I would recommend KSC to friends or siblings as a good place to go to college.	85%
I am satisfied with my Keene State College education.	87%

Some of the items in this section of the survey were taken from the 2011 Campus Climate Survey, to allow comparison of responses across two points in time. The following graph compares the responses from the two surveys. As this graph shows, the responses are similar, even though the climate survey occurred 18 months prior to this one and was completed by students at all levels of study. This stability of responses over time suggests that readers can interpret the responses to this survey with a high degree of confidence. Almost all KSC students report that they have felt welcome. By large majorities they also report that they have felt like they belong at the college; that they have felt physically safe on campus, that their academic program has challenged them to do their best work; that they would recommend KSC to others; and that they are satisfied with their education. On both surveys KSC students were a little less likely to agree that KSC provides academic and social support or someone to talk to when a problem arises.

Comparison of Responses from the Graduating Senior Survey and the Campus Climate Survey



Section 2: Participation in High Impact Practices

Next the survey asked respondents to indicate which of a series of high impact educational practices they had participated in during their time at KSC. The table below shows the percentage of respondents who indicated participation in each one.

A special word needs to be said here about undergraduate research. Many respondents indicated that they had participated in one form or another of officially sponsored undergraduate research (e.g., Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship). But those who responded that they had participated in these experiences did not always match the list of actual participants, and the written comments about research from these students included everything from introductory literature reviews to major laboratory experiences outside of class. At Keene State College, faculty and staff have struggled in recent years to define undergraduate research in a way that will be as clear and obvious as internships or study away, so that everyone will know who has participated and who has not. The results of this survey indicate that students share that definitional struggle. Because of this apparent confusion, the survey items related to research have been omitted from this analysis.

Percentage of Graduating Seniors Who Report Participating in Each High Impact Educational Practice

High Impact Practice	% Who Participated
One or More Service-Learning Courses	31%
Internship, Co-operative Education, or Practicum (other than Student Teaching)	53%
Student Teaching	22%
Senior Seminar or Capstone Course in the Academic Major	84%
Presented at Academic Excellence Conference	16%
Attended a Scholarly or Professional Conference	36%
Presented at a Scholarly or Professional Conference	16%
Performed or Exhibited a Creative Work beyond the Classroom	46%
Participated in Study Away	15%

Next chi-square analysis was used to determine whether the pattern of responses in Section 1 of the survey (above) differed for students who participated in the various high-impact practices. Statistically significant differences were found in several cases, as shown in the tables below:

**Statistically Significant Chi-Square Comparisons of Outcomes for Participants in High-Impact Practices
(Agree plus Strongly Agree)**

Outcome	High-Impact Practice	% Agree + Strongly Agree	χ^2	df	p
I felt like I belong at KSC	Student Teaching	89%	4.46	1	.035
	No Student Teaching	83%			
My program challenged me to do my very best work	Internship	88%	8.63	1	.003
	No Internship	82%			
KSC provided assistance to succeed academically	Internship	84%	4.06	1	.044
	No Internship	79%			
KSC provided assistance to succeed academically	Performed/Exhibited	84%	4.34	1	.037
	Did Not Perform/Exhibit	79%			
KSC provided support to thrive socially	Performed/Exhibited	82%	4.49	1	.034
	Did Not Perform/Exhibit	77%			
If I had a concern there was faculty/staff to talk to	Service-Learning	84%	6.06	1	.014
	No Service-Learning	77%			
If I had a concern there was faculty/staff to talk to	Internship	82%	6.29	1	.012
	No Internship	76%			
If I had a concern there was faculty/staff to talk to	Presented at AEC	87%	6.00	1	.014
	Did Not Present at AEC	78%			
If I had a concern there was faculty/staff to talk to	Presented at Conference	87%	6.00	1	.010
	Did Not Present	78%			
If I had a concern there was faculty/staff to talk to	Performed/Exhibited	82%	5.30	1	.021
	Did Not Perform/Exhibit	76%			
If I had a concern there was faculty/staff to talk to	Study Away	87%	5.66	1	.017
	Did Not Study Away	78%			
I would recommend KSC to friends or siblings	Capstone Course	86%	5.15	1	.023
	No Capstone Course	79%			

The table above demonstrates that some of the individual high-impact practices are significant predictors of a more positive overall college experience. Students in these programs perceive higher levels of both challenge and support than their classmates who do not participate in them, and importantly, they make closer connections with faculty and staff members who can help them navigate challenging periods of college life – inside or outside the classroom.

Internships and performing or exhibiting a creative work beyond the classroom were significant predictors of multiple positive outcomes. There were 255 graduating seniors who did both an internship and one or more performances or exhibitions of creative work during their time at KSC. When these 255 students who did both were compared to students who had done neither of these activities, the chi-square analysis showed a strong pattern of better outcomes for students who did both. The following table displays these results.

**Statistically Significant Chi-Square Comparisons of Outcomes for Participants Who Did Both Internship and Creative Performance or Exhibition beyond the Classroom
(Agree plus Strongly Agree)**

Outcome	Internship Plus Performance/Exhibition	% Agree + Strongly Agree	χ^2	df	p
My program challenged me to do my very best work	Both	89%	4.86	1	.028
	Neither	83%			
KSC provided assistance to succeed academically	Both	88%	8.38	1	.004
	Neither	78%			
KSC provided support to thrive socially	Both	84%	5.76	1	.016
	Neither	75%			
If I had a concern there was faculty/staff to talk to	Both	86%	11.16	1	.001
	Neither	74%			
I would recommend KSC to friends or siblings	Both	89%	5.08	1	.024
	Neither	82%			
I am satisfied with my KSC experience	Both	91%	5.85	1	.016
	Neither	84%			

The findings from Section 1 of the survey (above) showed that most KSC seniors reported positive outcomes overall, but they were a little less likely to agree that KSC provides academic and social support or someone to talk to when a problem arises. Students who participated in both an internship and a creative performance or exhibition beyond the classroom were more likely to have positive experiences in precisely the areas where students overall were less likely to agree. That is, participating in both an internship and a creative performance or exhibition beyond the classroom makes it more likely that the overall college experience will be not just good but outstanding.

Within an overall pattern of positive responses, sometimes significant differences were found based on the willingness of students to express enthusiasm through a response of *Strongly Agree*. The following table shows the high-impact practices that were statistically significant predictors of positive outcomes when responses of *Strongly Agree* were compared to all other responses.

**High-Impact Practices that are Statistically Significant Positive Predictors of Outcomes
(Based on %Strongly Agree)**

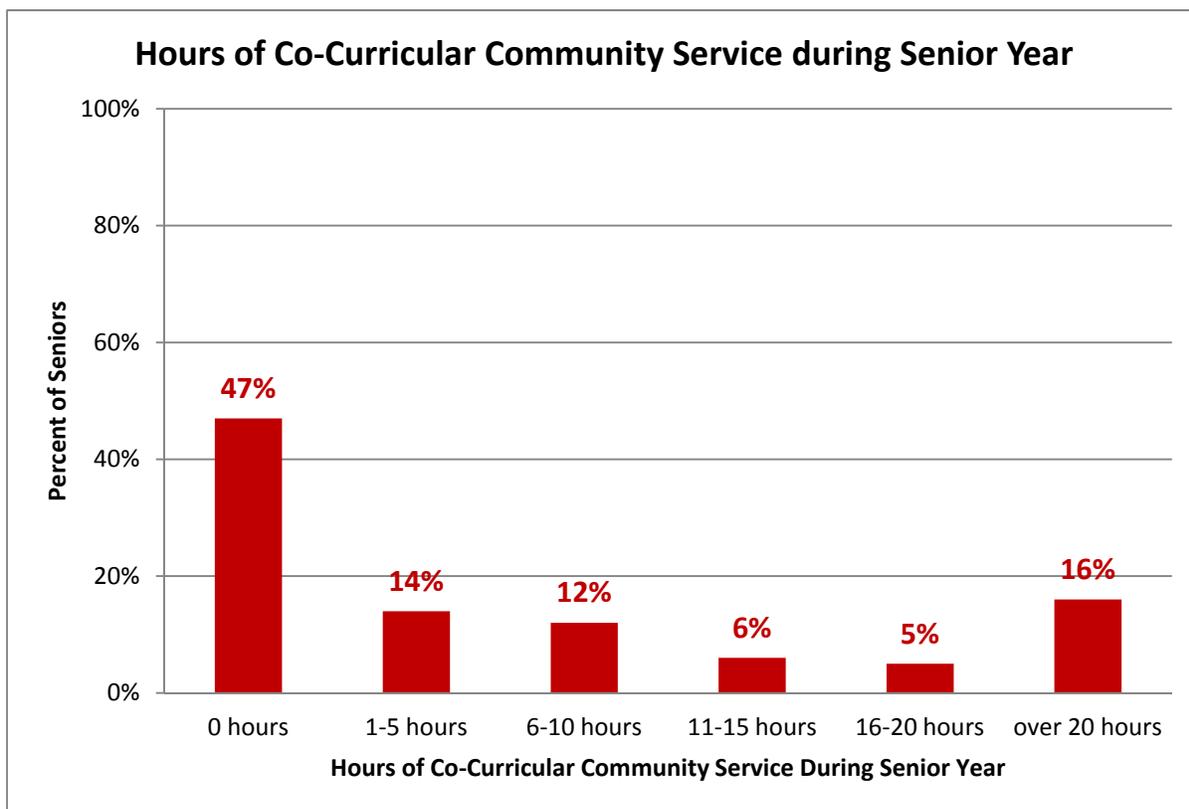
Outcome	High-Impact Practice Significant Predictors
I have felt welcome at KSC.	One or More Service-Learning Courses Internship, Co-operative Education, or Practicum Senior Seminar or Capstone Course in the Major Performed or Exhibited a Creative Work beyond the Classroom Study Away
I have felt like I belong here	Internship, Co-operative Education, or Practicum Senior Seminar or Capstone Course in the Major Performed or Exhibited a Creative Work beyond the Classroom Study Away
My academic program challenged me to do my very best work	One or More Service-Learning Courses Internship, Co-operative Education, or Practicum Student Teaching Senior Seminar or Capstone Course in the Major Presented at the Academic Excellence Conference
KSC has provided the assistance I needed to succeed academically	One or More Service-Learning Courses Internship, Co-operative Education, or Practicum Senior Seminar or Capstone Course in the Major Presented at a Professional or Scholarly Conference Performed or Exhibited a Creative Work beyond the Classroom Study Away
KSC has provided the support I needed to thrive socially	Internship, Co-operative Education, or Practicum Senior Seminar or Capstone Course in the Major Performed or Exhibited a Creative Work beyond the Classroom Study Away
When I have had a concern or problem, there has been a faculty or staff member I could talk to	One or More Service-Learning Courses Internship, Co-operative Education, or Practicum Presented at Academic Excellence Conference Attended a Professional or Scholarly Conference Presented at a Professional or Scholarly Conference Performed or Exhibited a Creative Work beyond the Classroom Study Away
I would recommend KSC to friends or siblings as a good place to go to college	One or More Service-Learning Courses Study Away
I am satisfied with my KSC education	One or More Service-Learning Courses Internship, Co-operative Education, or Practicum Performed or Exhibited a Creative Work beyond the Classroom Study Away

As this lengthy table shows, each of the high-impact practices was a significant predictor of one or more positive outcomes, expressed by responses of *Strongly Agree*. Students who participate in high impact practices are not only more likely to have a positive experience than their peers, they are more likely to feel strongly about their overall experience at KSC. This finding has important implications for long-term involvement with the college after graduation, since students who feel strongly connected to the institution are those most likely to remain connected in later years. Students who participated in Study Away, and those who took service-learning courses are more likely than all other graduating students to *Strongly Agree* that they would recommend KSC to others, so these are alumni who might be tapped to assist with recruitment activities, for example.

While each high-impact practice was a significant predictor of strong positive responses about at least one outcome, there were some practices that were associated with strong positive responses on many outcomes: study away (7), internship (7), performing or exhibiting creative works beyond the classroom (6), service-learning courses (6), and capstone courses (5). These are the high-impact practices that are the strongest predictors of positive outcomes for their participants. While the great majority of students (84%) report that they had a senior seminar or capstone course in their major, far fewer students engage in these other top-tier high-impact practices.

Section 3: Community Service

The next section of the survey asked students about their participation in co-curricular community service. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents reported that they had participated in community service (outside of course requirements) during their time at KSC. The following graph shows the number of community service hours for all seniors during their final year of enrollment.



For respondents who had ever participated in co-curricular community service, the survey next asked five questions with Likert-type responses about the value they derived from their service. The following table shows the percentage of respondents who *Agreed* or *Strongly Agreed* with each item.

**Percent of Respondents Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with
Each Statement about Community Service
(among Seniors Who Had Ever Participated in Community Service During College)**

Statement	% Agree + Strongly Agree
Participating in community service helped me understand and appreciate cultural and human differences	80%
Participating in community service helped me understand and analyze the connectedness of societies worldwide	76%
Participating in community service helped me assess my personal skills and growth areas	83%
Participating in community service helped me develop effective leadership skills	80%
I have a responsibility to serve the community	83%

Section 4: Employment and Further Education

The fourth section of the survey asked graduating students about employment, and 92% responded that they expect to be employed in the coming year. Of these, only 16% reported that they had already found and accepted employment. (Readers should note that most respondents completed this survey in March or April, well before commencement.) Among those who had already secured employment, about two-thirds (68%) reported that their position was either *Closely Related* or *Somewhat Related* to their undergraduate studies at KSC. Respondents provided information on employers and job titles, and these have been shared with the KSC Alumni office.

This section also asked about plans for further education. One-third of the respondents (34%) reported that they expect to enroll in further education during the coming year, and 11% of these had already been offered and accepted admission to a degree or certificate program. All but one of these (97%) reported that their further education was either *Closely Related* or *Somewhat Related* to their undergraduate studies at KSC. As with information on employment, the information about degree programs and institutions for these alumni has been shared with the Alumni office.