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*Office of Institutional Research*

## **2013 Graduating Senior Survey: Most Engaging Experiences**

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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 2012, there were 999 graduating seniors who provided usable responses to the survey. A full report of the survey results will be shared separately. This report deals solely with the responses to this open-ended survey question: **During your time at KSC, what one experience - inside or outside the classroom - most engaged your interest and challenged you to grow?**

Responses were analyzed using emergent-theme coding. While the question asks respondents to name only one experience, many students wrote about more than one, and codes were assigned for each theme mentioned. Most respondents gave permission for their words to be shared with the person or department they wrote about, as a way of saying thank you to those who had made a difference in their time at KSC. Each of those comments has been shared with the people involved. Since individuals have already been thanked, this summary focuses on the larger themes within the responses, and names of particular faculty and staff members have been omitted here.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

- The great majority of respondents wrote about academic experiences. The largest number of comments praised faculty and academic majors, study away, student teaching and education methods courses, internships, and capstone courses. Graduates from all three academic schools praised faculty who cared about them, and who challenged them to think in new ways, and they looked back with pride on mastering courses that were difficult but worth the effort. In addition there was a group of comments that focused on the theme of service-learning and other community service that bridges curricular and co-curricular experiences.
- Respondents also wrote about the value of activities that were entirely outside the classroom. These comments clustered around student organizations and student leadership, athletics and recreational sports, residence life, student employment, and the orientation team. While the students wrote about the particular places outside of class at KSC that they had connected, the broader themes that underlie all of these comments are the opportunity to challenge oneself in new and uncomfortable ways, to develop deep and lasting relationships, to learn teamwork and leadership skills, and to connect out-of-class activity either to academic work or to future careers. Each of these co-curricular venues provided that opportunity for these graduating students.
- No matter whether respondents wrote about academic or co-curricular experiences, the overarching themes were the same: students' best experiences at KSC were ones that challenged them to leave

their comfort zone, to try new and difficult things, to develop leadership skills, and to explore the connection between academic endeavors and future careers, all in the context of deep and supportive relationships. This finding is consistent with the scholarly literature, that students who find a deep and meaningful connection to the college are those who persist to graduation, and those connections can occur either inside or outside the classroom.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### *Academic Experiences*

The great majority of respondents wrote about academic experiences. The largest number of comments praised faculty and majors, study away, student teaching and education methods courses, internships, and capstone courses. In addition there was a group of comments that focused on the theme of service-learning and other community service that bridges curricular and co-curricular experiences.

A special word needs to be said here about undergraduate research. Many respondents mentioned “research” in their response to this survey question, and in other parts of the survey, some of these same students 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 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 and creative experiences 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 it is not clear what types of experiences students refer to when they mention research, that theme is omitted here, and those comments have been categorized instead with the setting in which the student did the research, such as senior capstone courses.

### *Faculty, Departments, and Majors*

There were 205 comments that praised specific faculty members or academic departments or the value of a course or a major in general. Graduates from all three academic schools praised faculty who cared about them, and who challenged them to think in new ways, and they looked back with pride on mastering courses that were difficult but worth the effort. These are examples of comments in this category:

#### ***During your time at KSC, what one experience - inside or outside the classroom - most engaged your interest and challenged you to grow?***

“My most engaging, and life changing, experience at Keene State College was taking the advanced graphic design class first semester my senior year. I feel like I learned more about what designing would feel like in the 'real world' versus the classroom. I feel like, although I learned a great deal in the rest of my art/design classes, this class really put my future into perspective. I think that this class either makes you or breaks you as a designer, and I feel very confident about my design abilities moving on from that class.”

“Inside of the classroom one experience that most challenged me to grow was the idea of how much my professors wanted me to succeed. All of the professors that I've had throughout my time at Keene State have made me feel comfortable enough to tell them that I am a struggling college

student, and can't always afford the books. They would go to many ends to help me to get the book whether or not if they were busy. Some would even let me borrow their copy of the book after class.”

“The experience which engaged my interest and challenged my personal growth was taking a course with Professor \_\_\_\_\_. I cannot describe just one experience because the overall course changed my life. I learned more about myself, others and the world in this class than ever before. Though closed-minded at first to this professor's unique way of teaching, I was able to accept the experience and let the course into my life. I believe every college student should have the opportunity to find themselves, grow as a person and really let an experience change them for the better. No matter where I go and what I do, I will always reflect back on that semester and acknowledge how it opened my eyes to a whole new way of living and being.”

“The ability to share a relationship with your professors, which would not be possible if always in a class of 50 or more.”

“I took [a math course] because I had a free spot in my schedule and a friend recommended it as something I'd like.... This class changed my life. I began taking math classes as a fun stress-relief and soon found that I had much more than a minor. I decided to stay an extra year to complete the last few credits to double major, and the total experience of these classes has definitely impacted my focus within [my other major].... I cannot express how much appreciation I have for our Math department, and especially Professor \_\_\_\_\_. In Math I found true inspiration and encouragement, and that has made all the difference to me.”

“... My advisors have been a tremendous help to me over the years. Both have pushed me to accept and take on new and exciting challenges, while also helping me keep in line with my academic choices. I am proud to have had them as both professors and advisors.”

“My professors. They really helped me to push myself, and to think outside the box. Not everything has to be straight-forward and obvious... some things you just need to research more, and think harder in order to achieve your answer, or what you were aiming to create.”

“My global engagement study with the KSC Honors Program and Professor \_\_\_\_\_. Professor \_\_\_\_\_ teaches a rigorous class, and challenged me more than any other professor at KSC. I had her for African Women's Writing as well as the Global Engagement: South Africa course. She encouraged thought provoking, intellectual answers that helped me to learn and grow as a student. My ideas about the world have been shaped tremendously by her vast open-mindedness, and excitement to teach about a country so misunderstood.

“Professor \_\_\_\_\_, a teacher who most would say is a hard teacher and well that is because he is. However that is because he wants to challenge you to improve not to fail. He really showed me that hard work is what will bring you progress in life not just an easy grade received on a paper.”

### ***Study Away***

Study Away was the focus of 147 comments. Respondents wrote at length about the challenge of figuring out how to manage on their own in another country, and the life-changing value of living in another culture for a time. These are examples of comments in this category:

***During your time at KSC, what one experience - inside or outside the classroom - most engaged your interest and challenged you to grow?***

“Studying abroad. It has taught me how to be more independent, mature, see things differently with cultures and being more open and to become more responsible. It was an experience of a lifetime that I am very glad I took. It has shown me what is out there in the world and how to be on my own, while gaining social skills. I am more self-confident and can prepare for anything now.”

“My study abroad experience gave me a different outlook on the world and the education it provided. It was amazing to see how different cultures interacted and learned at a college level. It made me a more independent thinker and pushed me work outside the box in more situations. I am more apt to take chances and make mistakes, rather than do what is comfortable. It was an experience that I cannot wait to continue to build off of.”

“My study abroad experience in Torino Italy had to be the most extreme challenge and growth period of my time at KSC. There, not only was I in unfamiliar surroundings, but in a different culture and language. The learning curve was quick as very few people spoke English. With one semester of learning Italian and 8 years of French, I made my way around markets, everyday life, and an architectural firm absorbing my surroundings. Although their technologies were almost identical to ours, their perception of life and how it is supposed to be spent was dramatically different. During my travels and time in Italy, I not only gained invaluable professional experience and knowledge, but a new outlook on priorities and global awareness.”

“Studying abroad was the most amazing experience I have ever had. I learned so much about myself and the world. I received an education that would not have been possible anywhere else.”

“Studying away in Australia for a semester really helped me become more independent. After studying abroad I think I am definitely ready to graduate and be on my own.”

***Student Teaching and Education Methods Courses***

There were 94 respondents who wrote about their experiences in student teaching and/or the education methods courses. Being in a real classroom was both challenging and rewarding for these students, as these comments show:

***During your time at KSC, what one experience - inside or outside the classroom - most engaged your interest and challenged you to grow?***

“My methods II class was the class that I changed the most and challenged me to be the best I could be. I grew from being shy to very confident. The teacher ... gained my interest and challenged me to be a great teacher. [She] was a great teacher, I felt like I learned so much in her class for Methods II that I will use what I learn in the future. I loved the education so much that I am applying to graduate school here at Keene State.”

“Student teaching has challenged me more than any single class, or any entire semester, at KSC. That said, those classes and those semesters prepared me well for it.”

“As an elementary education major, I have to say that student teaching was the best experience of my whole college career. Everything I had done prior to student teaching definitely prepared me for

success in the classroom. I had never felt as engaged or as challenged as I did when I was in a school for 14 weeks. It truly solidified my desire to be a teacher. It was the greatest opportunity.”

“Student Teaching has most engaged my interest and challenged me to grow at Keene State College. It is great being in the classroom every day and gives me a peek into what the rest of my life will be like. Even though I spent all of my time doing work for student teaching, whether it is planning, making worksheets, creating activities, etc., I know it is what I want to do because I love it all.”

“The methods classes I took for education challenged me to grow as a person. It was during this time that I transformed from a student to a teacher. I gained confidence throughout this experience. On my last day of placement, I received a beautiful goodbye from my students. I know that I can have a powerful influence on children and this gives me hope for the future of education. The professors throughout this experience challenged me to overcome fears. By the end of the experience, I was no longer nervous or afraid. I am very thankful for the memories I was able to take from my experience.”

“All of the opportunities to teach before student teaching really helped me grow as a person. Freshmen year, I was so quiet and could not see myself teaching a class of real students. The many opportunities that we were given to even just teach our classmates or a small group of 3 or 4 students helped me be prepared. Now I am not quiet like I used to be. I have no problem teaching a class and have so much more confidence in myself. If I did not get all of these experiences before student teaching, I don't think that I would have been as successful.”

### ***Internships***

There were 65 comments about the value of internships and other field-based education (except for student teaching, which is detailed above). Graduating students wrote about seeing how their academic work fit in with real world situations, and about the value of internships in establishing employability and opening professional networks. These are examples:

#### ***During your time at KSC, what one experience - inside or outside the classroom - most engaged your interest and challenged you to grow?***

“My internship really made my courses come together and be applied in a real world setting. It made me excited to continue onward with my life and pursue my career.”

“In the summer of 2011, I worked as an intern at a summer internship at the Arkansas Center for Space and Planetary Sciences. During my time there, I extracted magnesium isotopes from basalts and Martian meteorites to see if the masses are similar or different. Surprisingly, the mass of the isotopes are the same on earth, Mars, and the moon. What makes it interesting is that they are made possibly by the same material as chondrite meteorites, which are the oldest meteorites in the Solar System. Later in my life I want to go to graduate school to get a Ph.D. and become a planetary geologist and learn more about the solar system and beyond!”

“My internship at the Monadnock Community Hospital in the Cardiac Rehabilitation program. This internship forced me to come out of my comfort zone and apply the knowledge I have learned the last four years. It also gave me a clear [understanding] of what I want to do upon graduating, along with helping me gain confidence in the field of Exercise Physiology. The people I worked with were very helpful and welcoming which allowed me to be comfortable with asking questions to gain more

information on certain topics (stress testing, cardiac rehab classes, health assessments, blood pressures, etc.). It made me grow as an individual because it was a very hands-on experience and I was put right into the flow, as opposed to shadowing and observing.”

“I will have to say this semester, my internship at the CDC has challenged me the most. It's a big interest with me working with children and nutrition and I think that being put in a classroom and conducting sensory activities and cooking activities with them makes me realize the vast opportunities my major in nutrition could provide for me.”

“My internship at Mary's Place for my HLSC 492- intern substance abuse/ addictions. My supervisor at Mary's Place and my professor for the seminar have been so kind and helpful. I have gained so much from working at Mary's Place, it made me confident that this is the right occupation for me and certainly a population that I am interested in working with. Mary's Place is a transitional living house for women who have been incarcerated. It is great, this is a type of treatment that I am confident in.”

“My internship really helped me to gain experience for not only my resume, but for myself as well. I feel that it was very beneficial to participate in an internship during my time here at Keene State; learning about your field of study is an amazing way to prepare yourself for the ‘real world,’ but actually getting real world experience is also just as beneficial...”

“Having the opportunity to take an internship class within my major was extremely beneficial to my academic and professional goals. The professor in charge of the course provided the tools for her students to seek out their own internship based on personal preference. I was able to choose a non-profit organization that directly aligns with my future career path and feel incredibly fortunate to have had this chance to strengthen my skills and knowledge in my field of study. Being an intern for the organization I felt most passionate about has changed my life. This course made it possible for me as a student and an aspiring social worker to prove myself in a professional setting and even now continue to build the basis for my post-graduate career.”

### ***Capstone Courses***

There were 59 comments about capstone courses. Respondents were proud of their accomplishments in these courses, and many wrote about the value of seeing all their prior coursework come together into a meaningful whole. The following are sample comments for this theme:

#### ***During your time at KSC, what one experience - inside or outside the classroom - most engaged your interest and challenged you to grow?***

“The senior seminar ... helped me really feel connected to my major, to my classmates, and also to myself. It was a profound growth experience, and it was great to share it in such a safe and non-judgmental environment.....”

“... My senior capstone with Professor \_\_\_\_\_ was one of the most difficult classes that I have enrolled in, however it was also one of the most interesting classes. She was so tough on us as writers, however this pushed me to only submit excellent work. I produced some of my best work in this class, and am so proud of the final product that I had to present to the ... department. When it came time to present my project, I felt so confident, because [the professor] prepared us so well for this. I am thankful to have had her as a professor, because she pushed me and allowed me to see the

work that I am capable of. While taking this class, my feelings did not match up with what I am professing now, and at times I felt like I wanted to quit. However, in the end it was all worth it, and I am so proud of myself, my work, and my accomplishments. I know for a fact my senior capstone would not be as good as it was, if I did not have [her] as my professor for this course. She is an excellent professor, who has taught me a lot and for that I am thankful!”

“My senior seminar class was the most uplifting and exciting experience of my college career at Keene State. It made me believe in my abilities and my peers are all wonderful people to be around. I cannot stress enough how important it is to make sure that not only your teachers expect your best work but you must only accept for yourself what you think is the best work you could have possibly done.”

“...Senior Seminar class was the most engaging and interesting class I have ever taken here. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ inspired me to really explore my passion and what I wanted to commit my life too. The semester long writing project was designed to allow students to pick a topic that was most interesting to them and really allowed me for the first time to have the freedom to write about something I was most passion about....”

“... My senior seminar project required groups of students to head out into the community, enter the world outside of the classroom, interact with professionals, and truly think critically about problems in their immediate area. Every single finished project was accepted into the Academic Excellence Conference. Overall it was a great experience, in a great program, at a great school. I will absolutely remember my time here as a positive experience. Thank you.”

### ***Service-Learning and Community Service***

Forty-three comments mentioned service-learning or co-curricular community service. These students wrote about seeing the world from a new perspective, meeting new challenges, gaining leadership skills, and the core value of service to others, as these comments show:

#### ***During your time at KSC, what one experience - inside or outside the classroom - most engaged your interest and challenged you to grow?***

“The service learning project with Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ and the Cheshire Coalition for Tobacco Cessation. It was a great teamwork opportunity and we knew that the work we were doing could make a difference. Doing classroom work does not measure up to the work done to help others.“

“Constructing a community intervention through the local YMCA's Family Fit program as part of a semester-long behavior change project. I was able to have meaningful and engaging interactions with YMCA staff and members while building a family's personalized intervention plan. The project encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and learn new skills which I will carry with me as I continue into professional career.”

“My alternative spring break trip to Washington, DC working with the homeless. It opened my eyes to a whole other world and new perspective.”

“Participating in KSC's Alternative Spring Break for three years changed my life significantly. I traveled to different areas of the country to participate in numerous community service projects. I've worked in South Carolina with Habitat for Humanity as well as New Orleans, Louisiana with United

Saints. This past spring break I also had the opportunity to lead my very own trip to the Florida Everglades to help three national parks. Through these experiences I achieved a greater understanding of diversity, service and leadership. Students from all areas of campus can come together to accomplish incredible things on an ASB trip. By the end of a roller coaster week of community service we become a close knit family and that's one experience at KSC I wouldn't trade for the world."

"My service commitment with the sorority I joined on campus made my experience much more enriched and satisfying."

"I created Relay for Life of Keene State College as a freshman, and have been able to develop it through my time now as a senior. Bringing an event I am invested in and a cause I am extremely passionate about to my campus and being so supported has been more amazing than I can say. It certainly hasn't always been easy, and I have worked very hard to make it a success, while also getting others to be a part of the event. Still, all the challenges were more than worth it, as I witnessed first-hand that KSC is truly a community that is dedicated to making our world a better place. If you want to do something new and different, KSC is more than open to letting you do that, while offering guidance, and independence, as long as you're willing to put in the work necessary make your idea a reality. Everything I put into Relay and other community service ventures here at KSC have made me a better student and person, and there is no doubt that I will use the skills I developed here every day for the rest of my life."

### ***Co-Curricular Experiences***

The theme of service, displayed above, bridges the broad categories of academic and co-curricular experiences. Respondents also wrote about the value of activities that were entirely outside the classroom. These comments clustered around student organizations and student leadership, athletics and recreational sports, residence life, student employment, and the orientation team. While the students wrote about the particular places at KSC that they connected, the broader themes that underlie all of these comments are the opportunity to challenge oneself in new and uncomfortable ways, to develop deep and lasting relationships, to learn teamwork and leadership skills, and to connect out-of-class activity either to academic work or to future careers. Each of the venues described below provided that opportunity for these graduating students.

#### ***Student Organizations and Student Leadership***

There were 51 comments about student organizations and student leadership. These respondents wrote glowingly about the value of relationships that will last beyond their college years, and about leadership skills gained through student organizations. The following comments are examples:

#### ***During your time at KSC, what one experience - inside or outside the classroom - most engaged your interest and challenged you to grow?***

"Greek Life, and my sorority, Phi Sigma Sigma. Phi Sigma Sigma has forever changed my life. I will never really leave Keene because a part of me will always be here, and that is Phi Sig. I have made lifelong connections and friends, gotten to experience things people only dream about and learn and grow from the women I associate with. Greek life is not for 4 years, it's for life."

“Being an active member of KSC Pride, from general member to Eboard, has really enriched my life experience”

“The college process in general has engaged and challenge me to grow. I am a first generation college student. Three out of four of my grandparents as well as my mother did not speak English as their first language. Going to college was very important to me and my family. Being accepted into Keene State College was a huge accomplishment! I took this opportunity as a challenge to do my best with my time spent here and to make a difference. I became very involved on campus in many different areas such as student government, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Kappa Delta Pi, Alternative Spring Break and more. This institution has provided me with endless opportunities to develop and grow as an individual. The experiences I have had and the relationships I have developed with both students, faculty/staff members, and the community, is something that I am very thankful for and will cherish forever. It is hard to imagine that my time here as an undergraduate has come to an end, but I plan to continue to have a relationship with the Keene State community after graduation.”

“... Student Government really challenged me to grow.... It put me into a leadership position that I wasn't really used too. I learned everything from how to communicate with professionals to how to run an event. The group of people I worked with and our advisor ... were fantastic and made me feel like I was part of something important. I loved every second of it, even the challenging pieces. I would recommend all new students to be a part of it or at least find an organization or club that give them the same feeling.”

“When the environmental outing club taught me to rock climb freshman year it certainly engaged me physically and mentally. I met many of my friends through the club. I stayed involved in the club and became president for 3 semesters.”

“Being a part of Social Activities Council, a student organization on campus, has allowed me to use what I've learned in the classroom, in a professional setting when working with the artists/performers who come to our campus. I've also gotten to attend leadership retreats and conferences as part of SAC which have educated and motivated me to work hard and stay motivated during my time at Keene State College as well as after. I would say this organization has been a major cause of my motivation on campus as well as helping me come out of my shell.”

“The journalism conferences that I went on through The Equinox were fantastic and made me want to continue studying journalism.... The Equinox was the one experience that challenged me the most and gave me the most professional and real world experience with journalism. I highly recommend people interested in journalism participate in it.”

“As president of the KSC Architecture Club and AIAS Chapter (American Institute of Architecture Students), I was able to develop my leadership skills, network professionally, and attend conference at the regional and national levels. After much work, we now have the honor of hosting one of these conferences at KSC in the Fall of 2013....”

### ***Athletics and Recreational Sports***

Twenty-eight graduating students wrote about the value of participating in varsity athletics or recreational sports. They wrote with passion about the dedication that was required, the time-management skills they learned, and the teamwork and leadership skills they gained, and the relationships that were forged in team play. These are sample comments in this category:

***During your time at KSC, what one experience - inside or outside the classroom - most engaged your interest and challenged you to grow?***

“Playing for the KSC softball team was the best experience I have ever had. Such a huge commitment teaches a student time management skills and how to prioritize. On top of that, sharing so much emotion that comes with intensity, victory and defeat only brings a group of girls together. We created a family away from our families, which is what every college student needs.”

“Being on the dance team because even though we all shared a common passion for dance, we all had different dance capabilities that it made an exciting challenge to grow into an unstoppable force of entertainment. Being on a team with 18 girls of different dance backgrounds and interests helped me to learn and appreciate the importance of diversity. We are more than a team of athletes, we are a close knit family who love and appreciate one another in separate and unique ways which makes us stand out in our performances and any community we visit for competitions or fundraisers. That is something you cannot typically find out there in the workforce so it's important to treasure in the memorabilia of your heart forever....and ever. Nevertheless my passion for dance has instilled in me a variety of skills for any future position that I will pursue in the workforce. I learned on how to manage my time, cooperate with others, be an active listener and most importantly be a quick learner which is crucial to finding and maintaining a successful career in this ever changing world of expanding opportunities.”

“The Men’s Rugby club when I first arrived made sure I could quickly meet new people and engage in multiple activities, but the guys also made sure I was getting my work done first and foremost for my classes. The coursework and professors within the History department really helped me to expand my horizons in terms of academic interests, and talking to my friends made me decide to explore other educational experiences once I was done with the work required to graduate.”

“I honestly believe that being part of the Keene State Women's Soccer team has challenged me to grow and has taught me a lot about myself. It has taught me about my mental strength and the capacity I have to endure things that I didn't know I could. I worked so hard to be part of something and all my efforts paid off whether it was shown on or off the field. I met lifelong friends and have learned so much about myself and the world through this experience of being part of a team and working together to strive for success.”

“The one experience at KSC that has most engaged my interest and challenged me to grow is being a part of the woman's rugby team. I've been with this team since my first semester freshman year. I started as just a player and slowly began to pick up tasks for the eboard as they needed help. I then went on to become vice president and then captain for my last two years at KSC. As a part of this team I've been able to gain lifelong friends, Division 4 finalists and participate in a 24 hour rugby game for a world record and most importantly was a part of a group of ruggers who raised over \$11,000 for breast cancer and colorectal cancer research. This team has helped me grow greatly as a person in ways such as paperwork, administration, communication, and leadership skills. It has been a challenging past couple of years as we lost 10 of our starting players including eboard members going into my junior year but I am proud to say that I am one of the players that helped the team to get back on its feet and to where it is today. Without being a part of this team over the past 4 years I would not have been pushed to my limits and have the skills I have now. I feel that without this team, I would not feel as if I belonged as well in Keene. They have made all the difference in my time and my experiences and as cliché as it sounds, I would not be the person I am today without this team, players past and present.”

## ***Residence Life***

Twenty-two students wrote positive comments about living or working in residence halls. As the following comments show, they described the developmental challenge of learning to get along with roommates, great and lasting friendships that developed in residence halls, and the skills gained through leadership positions.

### ***During your time at KSC, what one experience - inside or outside the classroom - most engaged your interest and challenged you to grow?***

“The experience of living on campus is where I learned many life lessons, gained experiences and matured as a person. This was true from when I arrived as a freshmen and meet my roommates for the first time and carried through my 3 years of being an RA.”

“Dorm life - learning & putting into practice my morals and learning to handle living with others”

“Living in the dorms is the biggest growing experience anyone can have. It challenges you to get along with and meet new people, and it's the first step in teaching you how to live on your own.”

“That would be living at the LLC it really inspired me to serve my community.”

“I became involved in the Residence Hall Organization (RHO) as a first year student. I knew I had found my place at Keene State, but had no idea the impact it would have on me the following years. As a graduating senior I have attended 3 national conferences and about 8 regional conferences for RHO. At these conferences I had the chance to talk with other leaders around the world about their residential experiences and how to make Keene State a better community for everyone. The National Association of College and University Residence Halls (NACURH) is the largest run student organization in the world and to be a part of that representing Keene has been an honor. I have contributed many things to this campus and it is because of my involvement with RHO. I worked to change the current housing policy as a sophomore to gender inclusive housing. I also worked on writing the bid for the School of the Year award given by NEACURH. In 2010-2011 Keene State was awarded School of the Year, the highest award a NEACURH member school could attain. RHO has also given me the chance to discover who I am as an individual and what is important to me. RHO has started an advocacy initiative project to start a student group for students who are in recovery or think they might have a problem. I have also presented at regional and national conferences ranging from strengths of a person to the topic of alcohol and drugs and their effect on leadership. I feel as if I have represented Keene State in a positive manner in the last 4 years on a school, regional, and national level. I have made a difference.”

“I decided to become a Resident Assistant during my junior year here at Keene. This was definitely a big step for me and really challenged me to go outside my comfort zone and become a role model and leader on campus. Through my position I was able to meet so many amazing individuals and really understand what it means to be a team player and how to create an awesome community of students by bringing people together who may not share common interests or communicate at all. With this leadership role I was able to develop my communication and social skills extensively, learn how to present myself as an authority figure and also learn how to facilitate and conduct effective conflicts whatever that might entail. This was truly a life changing experience and it has definitely shaped me into the more confident, organized, responsible, and mature adult that I am today.”

“Being an RA was such an eye opening experience. I loved meeting all the people that I came into contact with and doing experiences of programming, working in teams, and having a ball!”

### ***Student Employment***

There were 12 comments about the value of student employment, particularly as it connected either to academic work or future careers. These are examples:

#### ***During your time at KSC, what one experience - inside or outside the classroom - most engaged your interest and challenged you to grow?***

“... Working for Aspire as a tutor has been wonderful as it connected my work with my subject. I know Organic Chemistry far better for having taught it, and that experience has given me confidence for moving forward with my career after graduation.”

“I was an SI leader for Brain and Behavior in the Fall of 2012 and I thoroughly enjoyed the process. I felt that I grew as an individual through my personal and learning skills, as well as being a peer educator outside of the classroom. I took a great deal of what I learned as an SI with me to pursue my love for working with others in the field of Social Work.”

“I would say working for the IT Group has challenged me to grow as an IT professional. I have been able to acquire theory from my classes and then turn it into practice at the IT Group. Wei Lu of the computer science department has contributed an excellent amount to my networking skills at a basic and advanced level. I used networking tools for basic troubleshooting of a faculty member or students computer when working at the helpdesk. I have also got to apply my more advance skills when troubleshooting bigger issues within functioning of the Keene State College network. The practices at the IT Group Helpdesk have helped me to advance my communication, interpersonal, and technological skills. Working at the IT Group has also given me a great understanding and appreciation of high quality customer service. With customer service focused support from \_\_\_\_\_ and the problem solving support of Aaron Rothberg, I have been put in a place where I can move forward with confidence in my capabilities as an IT professional. I recommend that all computer science students try working at the helpdesk for it will give them a better appreciation for their area of study. The skills that I have acquired in class and practice that I have acquired at the helpdesk have gotten me to take advantage of working for IT departments outside of school as well. All of the experiences will serve me well when I move forward to work at a great company, such as Google.”

### ***Orientation Team***

Nine respondents commented on the value of serving on the Orientation Team. There they developed leadership skills and bonded with other leaders. These are sample comments:

#### ***During your time at KSC, what one experience - inside or outside the classroom - most engaged your interest and challenged you to grow?***

“I was an Orientation Leader this past school year. It really opened my eyes as a person who has really grown up with the KSC community over the past four years. The program helped me continue to be outgoing, but also strengthen my leadership skills. I am not a shy person, but trying to keep control of peers close to your age was intimidating. However, I was able to get over that intimidation

factor and strive to success with my group. It was a one of a kind experience that I wish I had applied for the two years prior. Being an Orientation Leader was a touching experience for me. Meeting such great people who I call my "fellow O leaders" and meeting new students is something I will never forget for the rest of my life.”

“... being an orientation leader was ... a huge highlight for me. This past year I worked with brilliant people who had goofy personalities like me. It was a great experience being able to welcome new students with all different emotions about entering college. Being the "mama duck" of a group of students, I know I made an impact on many of their lives and will continue to have a connection with them....”

“... Being an Orientation Leader helped me immensely and I was able to be a role model for under class men. There are many people on this campus who are extremely supportive and will do anything to help you. It is well appreciated.”