In spring 2011, Keene State College surveyed recent graduates (one year and five years post-graduation) as part of a larger system-wide study. Alumni received invitations to participate in two different ways. Those for whom the Alumni Center had email addresses received email invitations to respond online. Those for whom no email address was available and those who did not respond to the previous email invitations received hard copy surveys by mail. In all, one or more invitations were successfully sent to 1812 alumni to participate in the survey, and 325 responded, an 18% overall response rate. The response rate differed by alumni class year: 21% for graduates from 2010 and 14% for those from 2006. Response rates for alumni surveys are characteristically low. In general, surveys with low response rates have participants who respond either very positively or very negatively about the topic of the survey. Those with neutral or mixed opinions are less likely to be in such response pools. Readers should interpret the following findings in terms of this response rate, as being representative of those alumni who feel connected enough to the College to respond, and who feel that they have something important to say about their student experiences.

Responses were first analyzed for all respondents together. Throughout this analysis, responses of Not Applicable were treated as missing data, so the percentages reported here represent the opinions only of alumni who had any experience with the item in question. Then responses were disaggregated by class year and by the academic school of the student’s first major. Where statistically significant differences emerged in these secondary analyses, they are reported here. In addition, responses were compared between this survey and a similar survey conducted in 2008 (which surveyed graduates from 2003 and 2007), and any important differences in the findings of the two studies are noted here as well. Readers should exercise some caution in interpreting these comparisons, however, in part because of the low response rates overall. Some of the comparative findings are predictable. For example, those who graduated before the economic downturn of recent years would be expected to have different employment experiences than those who graduated more recently. Similarly, the differences in mission and curriculum from one academic school to another and the different national job markets for various majors are sufficient to explain some of the differences across schools. Further, comparison among academic schools is complicated by students with double majors. In these analyses only the school of the first major was considered. In light of these cautions, some of the comparisons may warrant further investigation to confirm or refute the findings.

Key Findings

- A large majority of respondents indicated satisfaction with KSC, both generally and in terms of particular elements of their college experience:
  - 89% reported satisfaction with their overall KSC experience.
  - 85% would recommend KSC to others.
  - 78% report that their education was a good investment.
  - 77% would choose KSC again, if they had it to do over.
• Respondents gave strong satisfaction ratings to the safety of the campus (92%), interaction with faculty in their major (90%), and required courses in their major (84%). They reported a lower level of satisfaction with the diversity of the study body (33%), Greek life (34%), and undergraduate research opportunities (38%).

• There were some significant differences in satisfaction across respondent groups:
  o Alumni who graduated in 2010 were significantly more satisfied with their experiences in international study than were their peers from the class of 2006 (72% in 2010 compared to 48% in 2006).
  o Alumni with first bachelor’s degrees from Professional and Graduate Studies were significantly more satisfied than were their peers from the other two schools with their experiential learning opportunities, including internships (84% compared to 63% for Sciences and Social Sciences and 49% for Arts and Humanities).
  o Alumni with first bachelor’s degrees from Arts and Humanities were significantly more satisfied with course scheduling than were respondents from the other two schools (82% compared to 69% for Sciences and Social Sciences and 62% for Professional and Graduate Studies).

❖ The majority of respondents described their KSC experience as promoting student learning and development:
  79% agreed that faculty were concerned about student learning and development.
  73% reported that the College provided support for students in academic difficulty.
  72% agreed that they were challenged by their academic work.
  68% stated that use of Mason Library contributed to their academic success.
  67% indicated that the College atmosphere emphasized and encouraged academics.

❖ Strong majorities affirmed that their KSC education improved their abilities in important areas:
  Critical thinking (80%)
  Effective communication (79%)
  Leadership (72%)
  Participating as a citizen in the community (71%)
  Gaining admission to graduate or professional school (66%)

❖ 87% of respondents are presently engaged in some combination of employment and further education.
  8% report that they are unemployed and are looking for work.
  These findings represent a predictable change—given the current economic climate—from the 2008 survey (surveying graduates from 2003 and 2007), who reported then that 94% were engaged in some combination of employment and further education, and 3% were unemployed and looking for work.
  Similarly, the annual salaries of employed alumni from the 2011 survey are generally lower than for the employed alumni who responded in 2008.

❖ About half of respondents who are employed (49%) rated their preparation for employment as 4 or 5, on a scale where 1 = Not at All and 5 = Completely.
  Employed alumni from the School of Professional and Graduate Studies rated their preparation for employment significantly higher than did alumni from the other two schools (61%, vs. 48% for Arts and Humanities and 41% for Sciences and Social Sciences).

❖ In the open comment section of the survey, a request for more internship opportunities was a recurring theme.
Respondents

The survey asked respondents to provide their KC ID numbers. These allowed response data to be linked to institutional data. Of the 325 respondents, 322 provided usable ID numbers. Of these, 63% \( (n = 202) \) were 2010 graduates, and the remaining 37% \( (n = 120) \) were graduates from 2006.

The respondents represented a broad range of undergraduate and graduate study at KSC. Three of the respondents received associate’s degrees only. Five respondents received both associate’s and bachelor's degrees. Of all the respondents who received bachelor's degrees, one person was awarded three degrees, 17 received two degrees, and 300 received one degree. Six of the respondents received only graduate diplomas.

Satisfaction

The survey began with a set of satisfaction items, asking respondents to rate their level of satisfaction with several elements of their college experience. The response scale for this section of the survey was a five-point semantic differential scale (1 = Poor to 5 = Excellent). The graph displays the percentage of alumni who responded with either 4 or 5 on this scale for each item. As this graph shows, respondents indicated strong satisfaction with KSC overall. They reported similar high levels of satisfaction with the safety of the campus, faculty interaction, and courses in their major. Alumni reported lower levels of satisfaction with the diversity of the study body (33%), Greek life (34%), and undergraduate research opportunities (38%).

General Satisfaction Rates
(Percentage Responding 4 or 5, with 5 = Excellent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage Responding 4 or 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Learning</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Major Courses</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Scheduling</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/Security of Campus</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Opportunities</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of Student Body</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Opportunities</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Study</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Life</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics of Any Kind</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSC Overall</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alumni who graduated in 2010 gave significantly higher ratings to international study than did their peers from the class of 2006 (72% for the 2010 class compared to 48% for 2006). No other items in this section had significant differences by alumni class year. The satisfaction ratings for undergraduate research opportunities declined somewhat from the 2008 survey (46%) to the present survey (38%).

There were important differences among alumni from the three academic schools in their satisfaction ratings. Alumni from the School of Professional and Graduate Studies reported significantly higher satisfaction with the experiential learning element of their KSC experience (84%) than did their peers who graduated with majors in the School of Sciences and Social Sciences (63%) or the School of Arts and Humanities (49%). Experiential learning includes internships, which were mentioned explicitly by several respondents in the open comment section, below. Alumni from the School of Professional and Graduate Studies also expressed significantly higher satisfaction in their student leadership opportunities (79%) than did alumni from the other two schools (63% each). Respondents from the School of Arts and Humanities were significantly more satisfied with their course scheduling than were their peers from the other two schools (Arts and Humanities 82%, Professional and Graduate Studies 62%, Sciences and Social Sciences 69%).

**About the Keene State College Mission**

The survey asked four questions that were labeled as “About Our Mission.” These questions used a five-point semantic differential response scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*). As the following graph shows, about two-thirds to three-fourths of these alumni gave positive ratings (4 or 5) to each of these items.

**Agreement with Statements about the College Mission**

(Percentage Responding 4 or 5, with 5 = *Strongly Agree*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KSC atmosphere emphasized academics and encouraged academic development.</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSC provided support for students in academic difficulty.</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty were concerned about student learning/development.</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Mason Library contributed to my academic success.</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Keene State College Office of Institutional Research

Report prepared by Cathryn Turrentine, Ph.D., Director, August 2011
Abilities

The survey asked respondents to rate how much their education at KSC had improved their abilities in various areas. Again the responses were gathered on a five-point semantic differential scale (1 = Not at All, 5 = Significantly). The following graph shows the percentage who gave responses of 4 or 5.

My KSC Education Improved My Ability to …
(Responses of 4 or 5, with 5 = Significantly)

Two of these questions were asked on the 2008 survey, and there were important differences in responses for both of them. In 2008, only 45% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their KSC experience had improved their ability to participate as a citizen of their community, compared with 71% in 2011. Similarly, in 2008, only 46% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their time at KSC had improved their ability to gain admission to graduate or professional school, compared with 66% in 2011.
Opinions about KSC

Next the survey asked respondents to share their opinions about their time at KSC. Responses for this section used a five-point semantic differential scale (1 = No, 5 = Absolutely). The following graph shows the percentage who responded with 4 or 5, indicating strong agreement.

To What Extent …
(Percentage Responding 4 or 5, with 5 = Absolutely)

There was one significant difference in these responses based on the academic school of the respondent. While the large majority of alumni from all three schools reported that their education was a good investment, those from Professional and Graduate Studies were significantly more likely than those from Sciences and Social Sciences to believe so (85% vs. 72%).
**Enrollment in Further Study**

The survey asked about further study. One-third \((n = 107)\) indicated that they had enrolled in a college, university, or professional school since graduating from Keene State College. The following chart displays the number who enrolled in each type of further education. These figures total more than 107 because some alumni report enrolling in more than one type of program since graduation.

**Bachelor Degree Recipients Who Enrolled for Further Study**

![Bar Chart: Bachelor Degree Recipients Who Enrolled for Further Study]

**Current Community Service**

The survey asked respondents whether they presently volunteer in their community. A majority (55%) answered yes. There were no significant differences in this response by class year or academic school.
Employment

The Alumni Survey asked respondents about their employment, both during their last year at KSC and in the present. Most respondents (77%) reported that they had worked at least some during their last year at the College. Half of the respondents worked 0-20 hours, while 27% reported that they worked more than 20 hours per week while enrolled at KSC. Respondents from the 2010 class were significantly more likely not to have worked at all during their final year in college (27%) than their peers from the class of 2006 (15%).

The survey asked respondents to indicate their current employment/enrollment status. As the following chart shows, 87% of these respondents are engaged in some combination of employment and further study, and 8% are unemployed and looking for work. There are marked differences in the responses to this survey item compared to the 2008 survey, whose respondents graduated at least a year before the 2008 economic downturn. In that survey, 94% were engaged in some combination of employment and further education, and only 3% were unemployed and looking for work.

Current Employment/Enrollment Status of Respondents

For the current survey, those who are employed are most commonly working in New Hampshire (39%), Massachusetts (19%), or Connecticut (16%). A significantly higher percentage of the 2010 graduates are working in New Hampshire (46%) compared to respondents who graduated in 2006 (28%); and a higher percentage of the 2006 cohort is employed outside New England (20%), compared to the more recent graduates (7%).

Among those who are employed, 65% report that they are working in a field related to their college major. The most common field of employment is education (32%), followed by health care (10%) and retail/sales (also 10%). There were significant differences among the three schools in the rate of in-field employment (Professional and Graduate Studies 80%, Sciences and Social Sciences 65%, Arts and Humanities 47%).
There are important differences in the annual salaries of respondents between the 2008 survey and the 2011 survey. The following table displays these data. The differences likely reflect the impact of the economic downturn which began in 2008.

### Self-Reported Annual Salaries of Respondents to the 2008 and 2011 Alumni Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Salary Range</th>
<th>2008 Survey*</th>
<th>2011 Survey*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$29,999 or less</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $74,999</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 or more</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages total more than 100% due to rounding.

Eighty-five percent of employed respondents indicated that they had found employment either before graduation (28%) or within 6 months after graduation (57%).

The survey asked employed respondents to rate how well Keene State College had prepared them for the demands of their current position, using a 5-point semantic differential scale (1 = Not at All, 5 = Completely). About half of respondents who are employed (49%) rated their preparation as 4 or 5 on this scale. Alumni of the School of Professional and Graduate Studies rated their preparation for employment significantly higher than did alumni of the School of Sciences and Social Sciences (61% compared to 41%).

### Willingness to Volunteer for Alumni Activities

The survey closed with a series of questions about respondents’ willingness to participate in certain alumni activities. The following graph shows the percentage who indicated interest in each activity.

#### Percentage Who Are Willing to Engage in Each Alumni Activity
Open Comments

The survey closed with an opportunity for open comments, and 56 respondents provided them. Most of these were simply clarifications of previous responses (e.g., “I am too involved at home to get involved. That is the only reason I say ‘no’”). A few of the responses provided new content. The most common of these (n = 7) mentioned the need for more internships. The following are examples:

- “Would have liked more career-specific internship opportunities.”
- “I feel that KSC should of required internships & helped students find them. It was very difficult to find a job because I had no experience when I first graduated.”
- “Please offer future students more internships.”