In April and May 2015, Keene State College surveyed alumni who received bachelor’s degrees in 2014. The purposes of the survey were to determine how many recent graduates are employed or pursuing graduate education, whether their employment or graduate education is related to their undergraduate studies at KSC, and how well their KSC experiences prepared them for this next step in their lives. The survey was conducted online with email invitations and follow-up reminders. The College had valid contact information with permission for email contacts for 538 graduates, and usable responses were received from 181 of these, for an overall response rate of 34%. This is a very high response rate for this type of survey. This document presents findings from the current survey (Class of 2014) with comparisons to findings for the Class of 2013.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- **Both employment and enrollment in graduate education are up slightly for the Class of 2014, compared to the prior graduating class at one year post-graduation.** There were substantial increases in the percentage of respondents who reported that their KSC education had prepared them well or very well for their current employment or graduate program.

- One year after graduation, 97% of the Class of 2014 respondents are either employed or engaged in graduate education. This is a somewhat higher rate of employment and/or further education than the Class of 2012 at one year post-graduation (94%).

- Ninety-two percent of the Class of 2014 respondents reported that they are employed in some way. This is up slightly from 91% for the prior year.

- Only 2.8% of respondents report that they are unemployed and looking for work. This compares to a New Hampshire statewide unemployment rate of 3.9% in March 2015 (Massachusetts = 4.8%, Connecticut = 6.4%, Rhode Island = 6.3%, New York = 5.7%). This is similar to the finding for the prior year, in which KSC graduates were less likely to be unemployed and seeking work than the general population of New Hampshire and the other states from which KSC recruits students.

- Among those who are employed, more than three-fourths (77%) report that their current position is related to their studies at KSC (the same percentage as the prior year), and 88% of those indicated that KSC had prepared them Well or Very Well for this employment (compared to 81% for the Class of 2013).
• Nineteen percent of respondents have enrolled in a graduate-level degree program since leaving KSC, mostly pursuing master’s degrees. This is up from 17% for the cohort that graduated in 2013. Most of those enrolled in further education report that they are also employed in some way.

• Among those who are engaged in graduate education, 87% reported that their current studies are related to their studies at KSC (up from 83% in 2013), and 96% of those judged that KSC had prepared them Well or Very Well for this next step in their education (up from 87% in the prior year).

**Detailed Findings**

**Employment**

The great majority of the respondents (92%) indicated that they were employed in some capacity at the time of the survey, in the following types of employment.

- 67% full-time regular employment
- 20% part-time regular employment
- 2% paid internship
- 1% unpaid internship
- 3% a year or more of planned service (such as City Year, AmeriCorps, or Peace Corps)
- 5% not employed by choice (while in school, travelling, or caring for family, etc.)
- 3% not employed and seeking employment

Of the 51 respondents who were employed part-time, or in an internship, or who indicated that they were not employed by choice, 31% reported that they were also enrolled in further education.

The majority of employed respondents indicated that they had found their current employment either before graduation (28%) or less than three months after graduation (31%). Another 25% found their current position between three and six months after graduation. Only 16% reported that it had taken longer than six months to find their current employment.

More than three-fourths (77%) of employed respondents reported that their current position is either CloselyRelated (49%) or Somewhat Related to their studies at KSC (28%). Among those who said their employment was related to their studies, 88% indicated that their undergraduate studies at Keene State College had prepared them either Well or Very Well for this position.

**Graduate Education**

Nineteen percent of respondents reported that they had enrolled in a graduate-level academic degree program since leaving KSC. As in previous years, these respondents overwhelmingly indicated that their further education is either Closely Related (76%) or Somewhat Related to their studies at KSC (28%). Among those who said their employment was related to their studies, 96% of those who are in programs related to their undergraduate studies judged that KSC had prepared them either Well or Very Well for this next step in their education.
What Else Are Alumni Doing?

The survey asked respondents, “Besides employment and further education, what else are you doing that is meaningful to you in this first year after graduation?” Respondents described a broad range of interesting and developmentally appropriate activities, including exploring independent living, travel, community service, and spending time with friends and family. The following is a sampling of responses.

Besides employment and further education, what else are you doing that is meaningful to you in this first year after graduation?

Keene State’s motto really motivated me; I have gone forth to serve. I moved to an urban city and am completing several hundred hours of community service. I am giving back and decreasing the dropout rate. I took the opportunity to move to a new region and really discover who I am now that I no longer identify as a college student.

Discovering my love of working with and being around young children, and maintaining leadership roles that (largely stemming from KSC i.e. Orientation Staff) leave me feeling fulfilled and optimistic.

Living on my own in a new place

I am serving my community what could be more meaningful!!

Traveling, seeing the rest of the United States.

Spending time with my horse and family

I have recently presented at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL, and was appointed to as the Student Board Member for the Polar Geography Specialty Group for the AAG. I am a Graduate Research Assistant for the Arctic Social and Environmental Systems Research Lab (ARCES) at the University of Northern Iowa. I currently study the spatiotemporal winter migration dynamics of the Taimyr Reindeer Herd in Taimyr, Russia.

This summer, I will be interning at Physicians for Human Rights in Boston, MA for the Program on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

This past year has been one of the most interesting years of my life, one month after graduation I packed my car up and moved to Washington, then spent 3 months living on a glacier in Alaska. After returning from Alaska I lived near Seattle, WA while climbing the major volcanic peaks, and working at REI. Unfortunately the winter wasn't the best and I was laid off from working at a ski resort in Washington. At this point I saw opportunities to grow professionally and as an individual in Portland, Oregon. I am now residing there waiting to hear back about some mountain guiding positions in the area. No amount of college can prepare you for how difficult the job market is for recent graduates my age.

Working in the profession I love

I have since moved out of my family's house and lease my own apartment, have purchased my first car, and continue to enjoy the outdoors. Also, the senior seminar film I made has been screened in Hollywood, CA and Boston, MA. Pretty exciting!
What Remains Meaningful from Their Time at KSC?

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?” Responses covered a wide range of experiences, with various forms of out-of-class involvement and leadership receiving the most comments, and relationships with faculty receiving the second highest number. The following is a sampling of responses.

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?

KSC's ties to the community off campus, my involvement on campus, a focus on high impact learning experiences, and classroom studies all tied together to give me a well-rounded opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge I need to run political campaigns. Through networking opportunities I developed with the College Republicans and classes in the Political Science department, I've paired theory and practice to land a job in my field immediately after graduation.

Being very involved in school organizations allowed me to come out of my shell and to learn what I need to do to succeed.

Being involved and a leader on campus has taught me the tools and confidence in my position now.

College is not only about getting a degree, it's about networking and exploring who you are. Participating in extracurricular activities, such as Residence Hall Organization (RHO), gave me different skills that could not be taught in a classroom. I believe my participation in these activities set me apart from other college graduates.

Being a part of Greek Life was definitely the most valuable part of my experience at Keene.

Being a resident assistant has best prepared me for dealing with people and problem solving like no other experience I ever could have encountered. I loved every minute of it, whether I realized it or not. I wish everyone had the responsibility and opportunity to be such an important and influential campus leader.

My relationships with my professors have remained extremely important to me. The work that I am doing now was heavily influenced by their guidance. I pursued graduate school due to my professors continued interest in my life and studies after I had graduated from Keene. Attending Keene State College gave me the opportunity to create lasting bonds with professors who are established professionals in my field and are at the same time incredible, inspiring, and supportive mentors both in and out of the classroom.

Keene State Safety major professors taught me the skills to be able to find information, like reading regulatory standards, that I need in my job to make me successful. Keene State has allowed me to network with dozens of safety professionals at ASSE meetings and keep those relationships after graduation. It also taught me how to keep up the reputation of being the best and most well known Safety school in the northeast by being well prepared for my first job right out of school!

The KSC Mathematics Department has proven most valuable for my new career in teaching. The professors were unbelievably supportive and I am so thankful for that. One specific thing that has helped me is being pushed to partake in Mathematics Conferences. My first talk was my sophomore year, and I did one every year and then ended up writing and publishing a paper. These are things
that I didn't realize I could do and they have helped me become a better speaker, communicator and more. I will definitely keep in touch.

Working for The Equinox at Keene State College changed my life and my career path. In fact, it launched my career, and is to what I owe my current job. That, and the devoted team behind the KSC Journalism Department…. Whatever comes next for me, I know I'll owe it to my time with that paper, and to the incredible Journalism Department.

It was definitely the hands-on teaching experiences I was able to receive during my 4 years at KSC that have prepared me the most for what I've been doing in my profession. I also find all of the leadership experiences I immersed myself in have been invaluable in my transition into the field of education. Being able to draw from these experiences have been very beneficial thus far, and I'm sure they will be in the future, too.

All of the scientific research and studies from my classes definitely helped prepare for my new biodiversity assessment internship. I'm grateful for the GIS training from the geography department and the international development analyses I learned in my international affairs classes. I'm well prepared for my international career in biodiversity conservation because of the education I received in my undergrad at KSC.

… I feel as though the most valuable experience I had while attending Keene State was my two internships. You can only learn so much within the classroom, but you can really get a sense of what work will be like after college, by getting that hands-on experience and additional responsibilities.

Senior Capstone was very beneficial to see how what we learned is used in the "real world".