Class of 2012 Survey

In February and March 2013, Keene State College surveyed alumni who received bachelor’s degrees in May 2012. The purposes of the survey were to determine how many recent graduates are employed or pursuing further education, whether their employment or further 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. During spring break follow-up phone calls reached a small number of additional respondents who were asked to respond to a condensed version of the survey.

There were 827 May graduates, and the college had valid contact information with permission for email contacts on 626 of these (76% of the class). Email survey invitations were sent to these 626 alumni, and usable responses were received from 235, for an overall response rate of 38%. This is a very high response rate for this type of survey.

Alumni surveys about employment and further education tend to draw a disproportionate number of responses from those who are employed or accepted to graduate school. To combat this problem, each of the messages about the survey indicated that KSC was interested in hearing how things are going for these alumni, even if life after college was not going as planned. Then in data analysis, responses of those reached by phone in the second phase of the study (the original non-responders) were compared to the earlier online responses and found to be statistically indistinguishable. Given these efforts and the high response rate, readers should be able to infer that responses are fairly representative of the overall Class of 2012.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- Less than one year after graduation, 94% of the respondents are either employed or engaged in further education.
- Among those who are employed, about three-fourths report that their current position is related to their studies at KSC, and 85% of these indicated that KSC had prepared them *Well* or *Very Well* for this employment.
- About one in five respondents is engaged in further study, mostly pursuing master’s degrees.
- Among those who are engaged in further education, 95% reported that their current studies are related to their studies at KSC, and 87% judged that KSC had prepared them *Well* or *Very Well* for this next step in their education.
- When asked what else they are doing, besides work and further education, that is meaningful to them in this first year after graduation, respondents cited a wide variety of interesting and developmentally appropriate activities, including setting up a local food bank, travel, physical exercise, figuring out how to live on their own, wedding preparations, art work, brewing their own beer, and rescuing dogs.
Detailed Findings

Employment

The great majority of the respondents (89%) indicated that they were employed in some capacity at the time of the survey, in the following types of employment:

- 56% full-time regular employment
- 26% part-time regular employment (about one fourth of these are engaged in further education)
- 1% paid internship
- 3% unpaid internship
- 2% a year or more of planned service (such as City Year, AmeriCorps, or Peace Corps)
- 11% not employed (half of these are engaged in further education)

The majority of employed respondents indicated that they had found their current employment either before graduation (27%) or less than three months after graduation (36%). About another quarter (23%) found their current position between three and six months after graduation. Only 13% reported that it had taken longer than six months to find their current employment.

The most common methods that employed respondents used to find their current position were online job posting sites (32%), networking unrelated to KSC faculty or staff (28%), employer website (15%), and through prior employment (12%).

About three-fourths of employed respondents reported that their current position is either Closely Related (47%) or Somewhat Related to their studies at KSC (26%). Among those who said their employment was related to their studies, 85% indicated that their undergraduate studies at Keene State College had prepared them either Well or Very Well for this position.

Further Education

About one in five respondents reported that they are presently engaged in further education, with most of these seeking master’s degrees. These respondents overwhelmingly indicated that their further education is either Closely Related (71%) or Somewhat Related (24%) to their undergraduate studies at KSC, and 87% judged that their studies at KSC 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 setting up a local food bank, travel, physical exercise, figuring out how to live on their own, wedding preparations, art work, brewing their own beer, and rescuing dogs.
Career-Related Experiences

The survey asked respondents to indicate which of a list of career-related experiences they participated in while at Keene State College. The following list displays their responses. They could indicate more than one activity, so the following percentages do not total to 100%:

- 27% did volunteer work
- 43% held a part-time job
- 33% were employed during the summer
- 17% had an unpaid internship
- 9% had a paid internship
- 1% had a co-op experience
- 21% did student teaching
- 3% had a clinical experience
- 9% did undergraduate research
- 7% did a field study

Three-quarters of the respondents had one or more of these experiences.

The survey also asked, “If you did undergraduate research or one or more internships, please comment on the extent to which these experiences helped to prepare you for the next step in your life.” The responses indicate that these experiences are invaluable in helping students learn how their classroom studies translate to the world outside KSC. For example, one respondent commented,

Internships helped me to realize that I enjoyed teaching/tutoring more than original research. This helped me to figure out what I wanted to do before enrolling in graduate school.

And another wrote,

My internship helped teach me the skills of working in a real world environment with people who were of various ages and with various work experience. I learned to work with adults twice my age and how to follow rules, think for myself with the guidance of a mentor, work in a team and do other things on real projects. This experience is unparalleled to just school work experience. Someone is holding you much more accountable.