

First Destination Alumni Survey: Class of 2016

INTRODUCTION: The First Destination Alumni Survey is designed to help Paul Smith's College (PSC) track the placement of recent graduates. The First Destination Alumni Survey results are used by the College to gauge the success of PSC graduates and to improve academic programming if needed.

METHODOLOGY: The 2016 First Destination Alumni Survey was administered to all August 2015, December 2015, and May 2016 graduates. The survey was administered to seniors who will participate in the May Graduation Ceremony at the time they received their regalia. The survey was then distributed online six months after graduation. Non-respondents are mailed a paper survey four months after the online survey is distributed. One more follow-up is conducted by calling each non-respondent. Career Services also search on social media such as Facebook and Linked-in to determine if non-respondents were employed or attending school after they graduated.

A total of 220 graduates were administered the survey with 184 surveys returned for an eighty-four (83.6%) response rate. As seen to the right, Baccalaureate degree graduates have a higher participation rate in the 2016 First Destination Alumni Survey than associate degree graduates.

	Class of 2016	Baccalaureate Degree Graduates	Associate Degree Graduate	TOTAL
Total graduates surveyed	220	160	60	100%
Respondents to survey	184	136	48	100%
Response rate	83.6%	85.0%	80.0%	100.0%

RESULTS:

EMPLOYMENT AND FURTHER EDUCATION. As seen below, the 2016 First Destination Alumni Survey respondents were more likely to be employed than the four prior graduating classes. That said, respondents were less likely to pursue additional education.

5-Year Response Rates	Class of 2016	Class of 2015	Class of 2014	Class of 2013	Class of 2012
Total employed	91%	90%	86%	85%	85%
Total further education (ACCEPTED)	7%	9%	13%	14%	14%
<i>Overall employed or further education</i>	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%

Associate degree graduate respondents were more than three times as likely to indicate they were accepted to a degree program than the Baccalaureate degree graduate respondents. This is shown to the left. In fact, all the associate degree graduate respondents that specified that they were continuing their education were accepted into bachelor's degree programs.

BY Degree	Baccalaureate Degree Graduates	Associate Degree Graduate	TOTAL
Total employed	94.10%	83.30%	91.30%
Total further education (ACCEPTED)	4.10%	14.60%	7.10%
Overall employed or further education	98.50%	98.40%	98.40%

For the Baccalaureate degree graduate respondents, all but one respondent was accepted into a master's degree programs. One Baccalaureate degree graduate respondent said that he/she was pursuing another Bachelor's degree.

SATISFACTION WITH PSC. Graduates were also asked about how satisfied they were with their PSC education. Approximately three-fourths (73.4%) percent of the respondents completed the satisfaction portion of the survey. Percentages are based on the number of responses submitted for each question noted below.

As seen to the right, most graduate respondents felt that he/she was prepared for their career and thought their PSC studies were very useful in their chosen field. Interestingly, Baccalaureate degree graduates were less

BY Degree	Percent of Respondents that Agreed:		
	Baccalaureate Degree Graduates	Associate Degree Graduates	TOTAL
PSC education prepared you for your current occupation or studies	94.9%	94.4%	94.8%
Usefulness of PSC education in your field/industry	66.7%	82.4%	70.4%

likely to indicate that their PSC education was useful than Associate degree graduate respondents. Only two-thirds (66.7%) of the Baccalaureate degree graduate respondents thought their PSC education was very useful for their field while over eighty percent (82.4%) of the Associate degree graduate respondents thought their PSC education was useful for their field.

SUMMARY: Almost all 2016 First Destination Alumni Survey respondents indicated that they were either employed and/or had been accepted into a program of study beyond their earned PSC degree. The results are similar to prior graduating classes. Further, 2016 graduate respondents stipulated that their PSC education had prepared them for their career. That said, there were marked differences between baccalaureate and associate degree graduate respondents. Associate degree graduate respondents were more likely to pursue further educational opportunities. On the other hand, baccalaureate degree graduate respondents were less likely to indicate that their PSC education was useful in their field.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Future alumni surveys should determine if graduates are employed in a field that is related to their area of study. In previous years, this had been determined by the administrators of the survey. However, the graduates may have a different perspective on their choice of employment and if it is related to their PSC education.
- Additionally, information about graduate satisfaction of a PSC education as it relates to further education should be ascertained.
- Graduates should be contacted four years after graduation to determine if their employment situation has changed or if they have completed a program at a level beyond their PSC degree. Satisfaction levels should be reassessed to see if attitudes about a PSC education has shifted in light of having more time to be immersed in a career and time to pursue their academic and professional goals.
- Finally, graduates should be asked about the impact the co-curricular activities they participated at PSC on their career and education after they left PSC.