

Overview: Alum Survey Conducted Spring 2014

This report provides an analysis of results from the 2014 Wellesley College Alum Survey. We sent out an online survey to a list of alums provided to us by Wellesley's Alumnae Association. We also generated a list of other department-affiliated students. We define and refer to "Department Affiliated Students" as those who are not majors or minors, but who indicate they "took one or more course," were an "independent major," "worked with certain faculty," and "other."

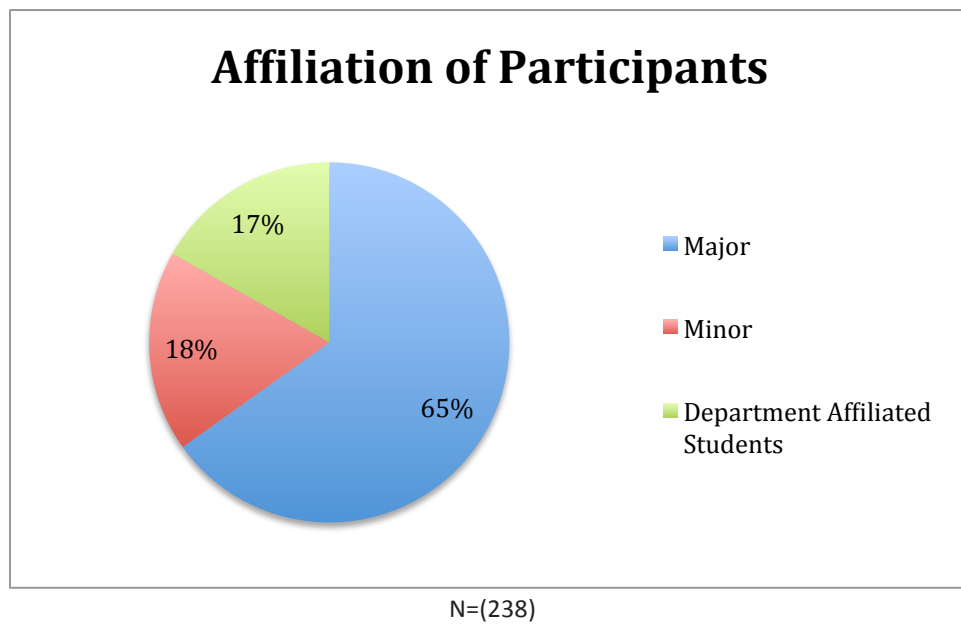
513 alums received the survey. 241 alums responded. However, 3 respondents skipped the majority of questions. Therefore these results are based upon 238 respondents (45% response).

The report is organized in three parts. Part I discusses respondents' department affiliation. Part II discusses respondents' connection to the department. Part III covers the department's role in employment and internships opportunities before and after graduating from Wellesley.

Part I: Major, Minor and Affiliated Students

The figure below offers a breakdown of the three types of former students who responded to our survey. Most of the people who responded were WOST/WGST majors.

Figure 1



We then looked at the respondents by their graduation year. The further out students are from their graduation year, the less likely they are to be in contact with us.

Figure 2

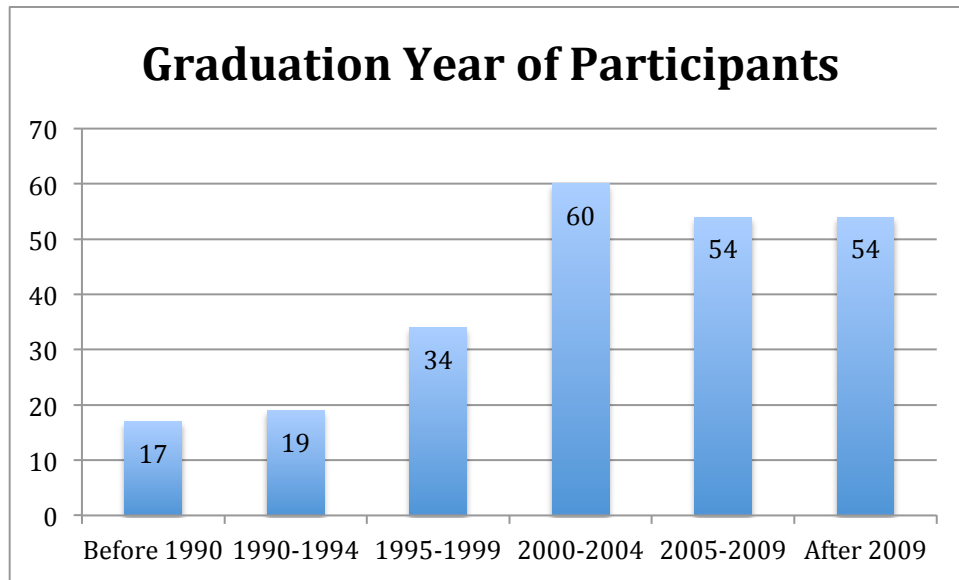
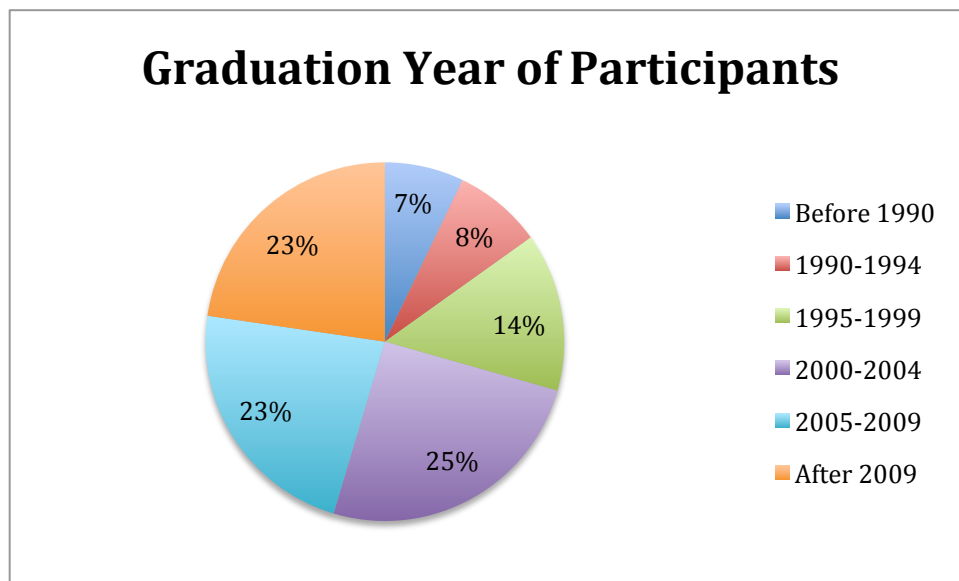


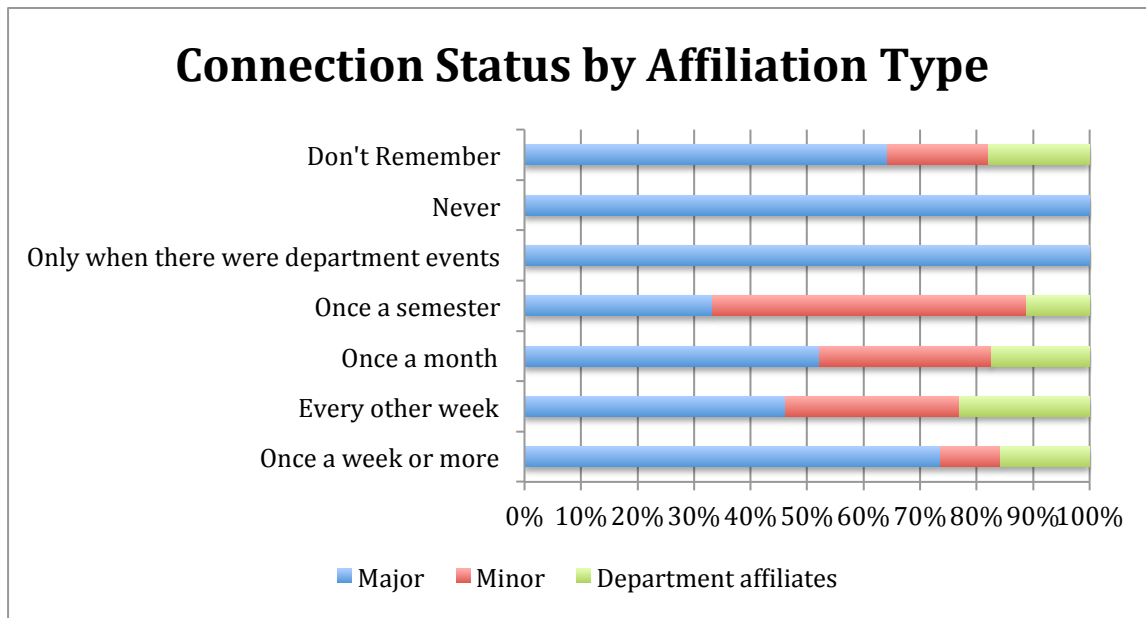
Figure 3



Part II: Connection to the Department

Through Facebook, email, or some other form alums are connected, there is a group of alums who are in frequent contact regardless if they are a major, minor or department affiliate. Others “check in” on occasion and some report having limited contact.

Figure 4



To further compare the majors and minors, we examined how frequently they are in contact with faculty. 82% of the majors are in touch with faculty at least once a month or more. 76% of the minors are in touch at least once a month or more. In effect, there is minimal distinction between whether alums that stay in touch with faculty were majors or minors.

Figure 5

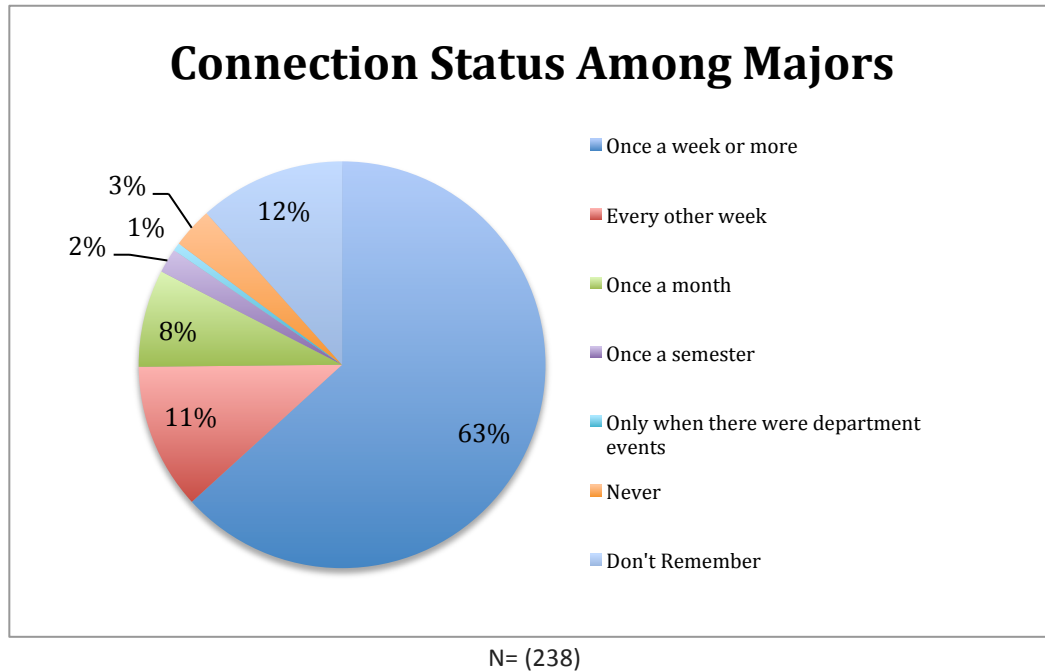
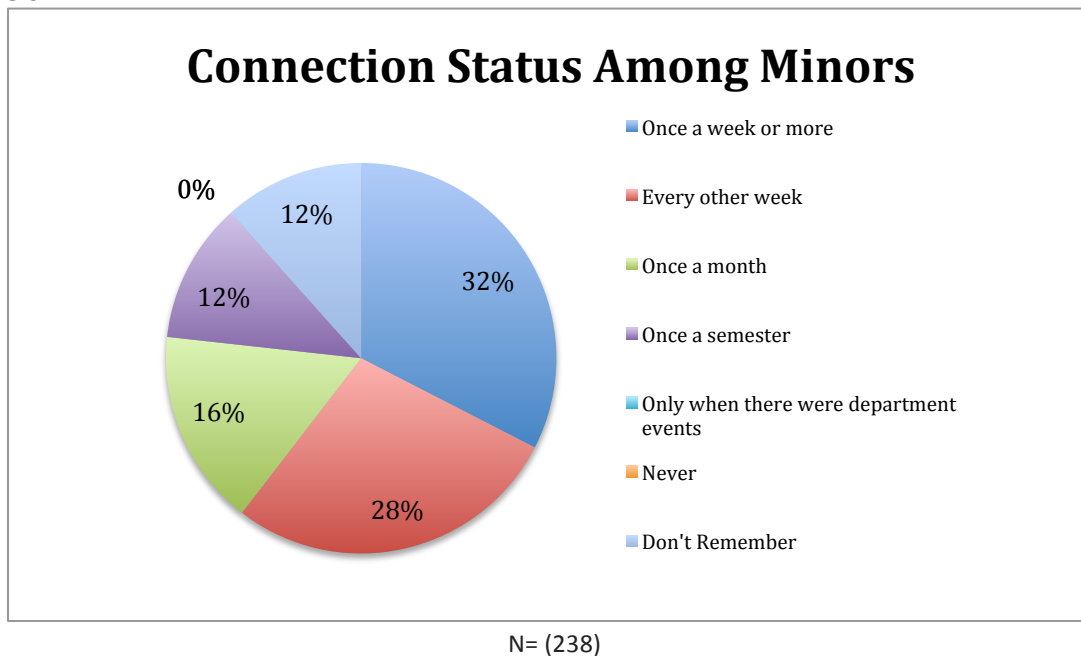
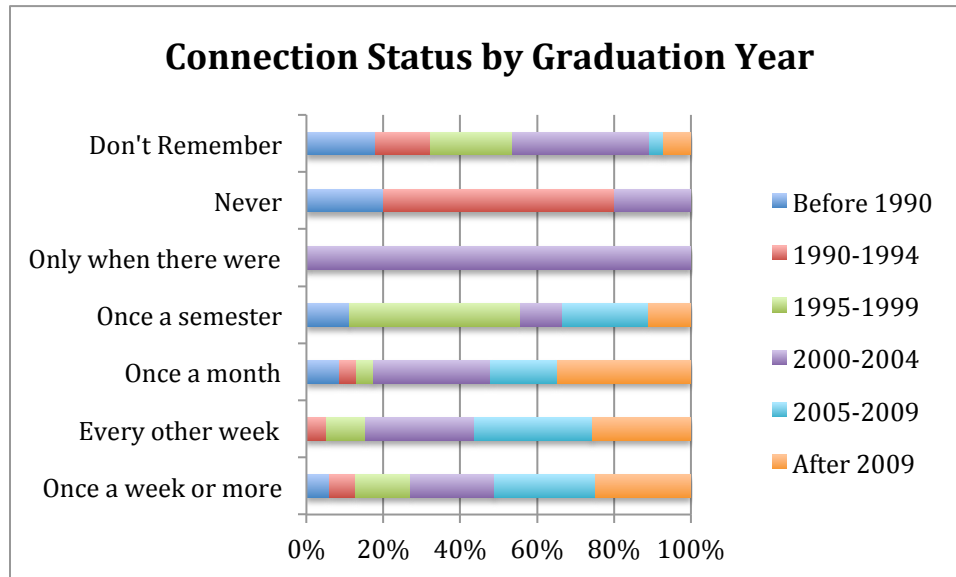


Figure 6



We hypothesized that the recent graduates might be in closer contact with the department's faculty. Indeed, recent graduates are more likely to be in contact often and this finding was particularly salient among the 2005-2009 cohort.

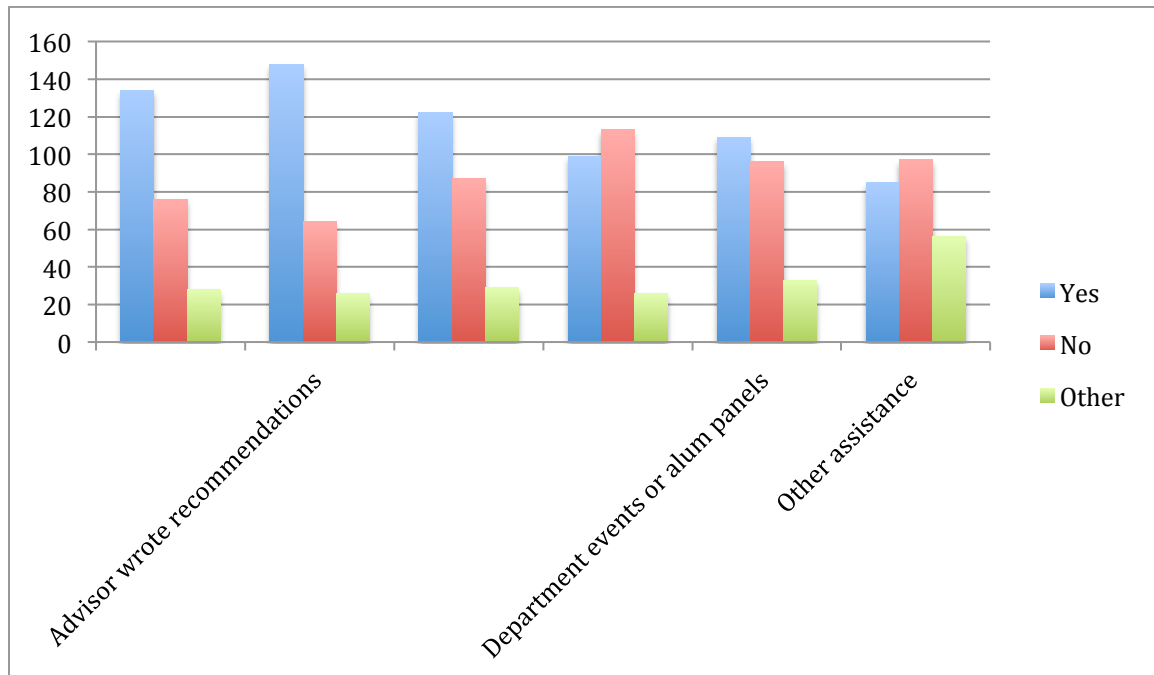
Figure 7



Part III: Faculty Involvement in Alums' Professional, Internship and Postgraduate Educational Development

We asked our alums whether the department was helpful in seeking employment opportunities and/or internships during their time at Wellesley. Department faculty were most helpful to alums by writing letters of recommendation, especially the advisor, though other department faculty also wrote recommendations. Students found it helpful at the time they were at Wellesley that faculty posted or sent email information about employment opportunities and/or internships. At the time they were students, respondents were more evenly divided about whether department events or alum panel were helpful in securing job opportunities. They may have been more helpful in assuring students that they would find employment as a WGST major or minor. Interestingly, department faculty also facilitated professional or personal connections to help students find jobs or internships. Almost half of the students report the helpfulness of faculty in this way. (N=99).

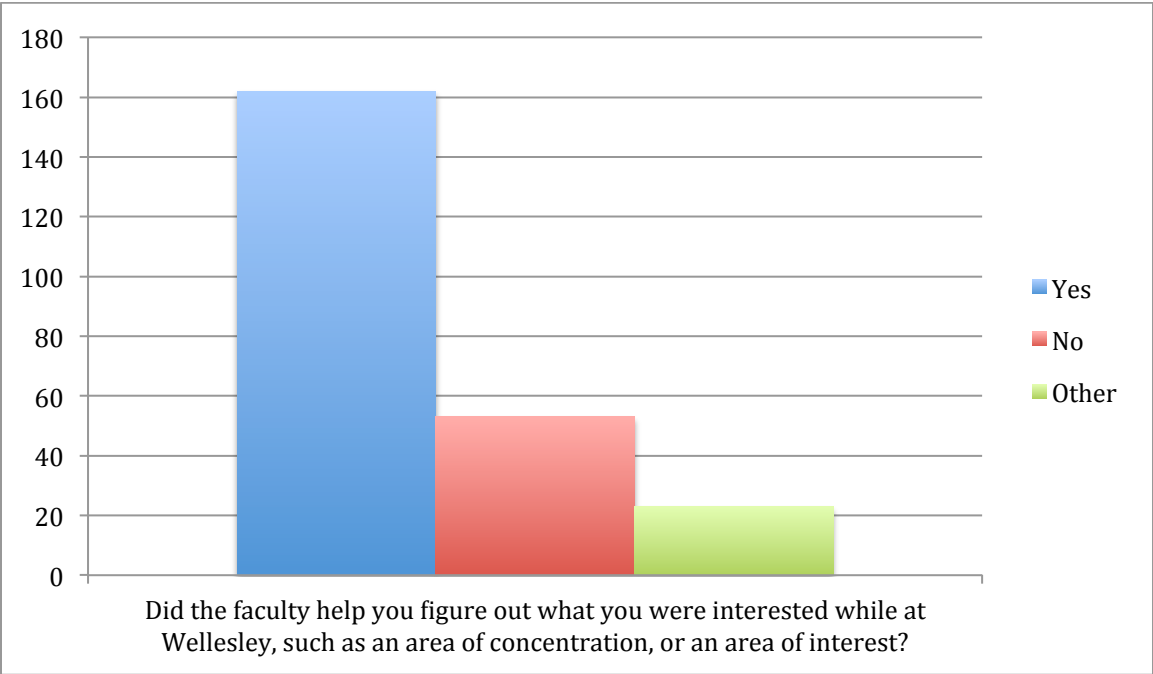
Figure 8



Question 5	Yes	No	Did not answer
Department posted or emailed information about opportunities	134	76	28
Advisor wrote recommendations	148	64	26
Other department faculty wrote recommendations	122	87	29
Department faculty facilitated professional or personal connections	99	113	26
Department events or alum panels	109	96	33
Other assistance	85	97	56

Figure 9

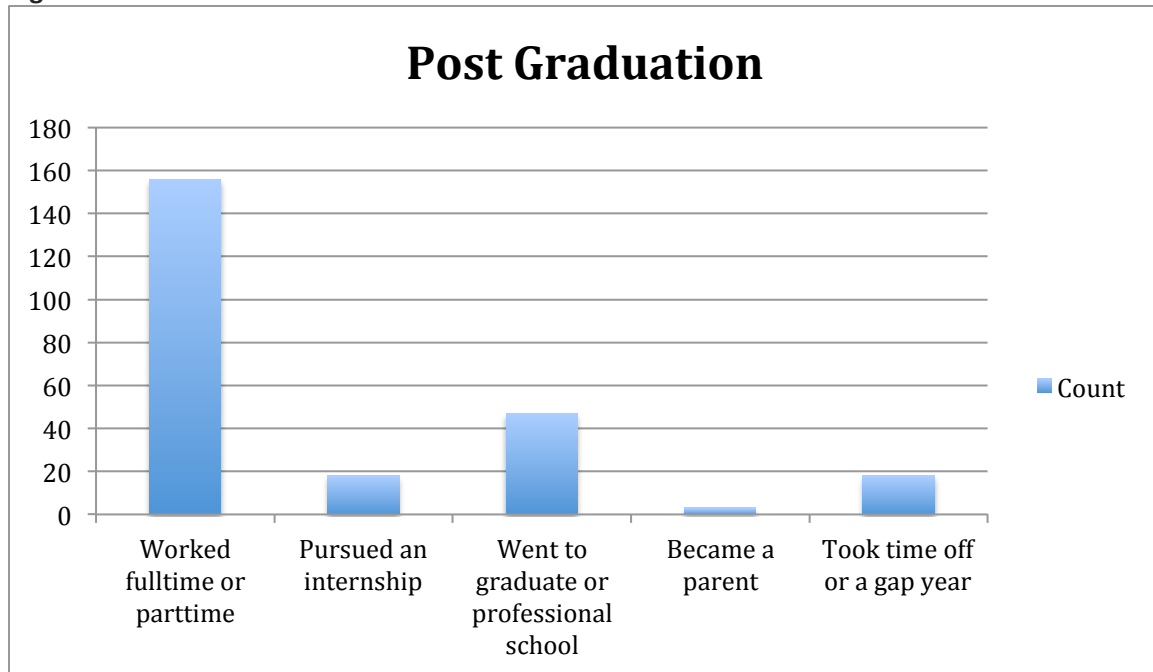
We also report that alums were asked if faculty helped figure out what they were interested in while at Wellesley. 69% of respondents (N=162). In short, we report that the WOST/WGST faculty, some of whom are no longer in the department, have been extremely helpful to students outside the classroom and beyond their studies at Wellesley. Faculty have gone the extra mile in helping them find jobs, write numerous letters, and act in an advisory capacities above and beyond the call of our jobs.



	Yes	No	Other
Did the faculty help you figure out what you were interested while at Wellesley, such as an area of concentration, or an area of interest?	162	53	23

We also asked respondents what they did immediately after graduating from Wellesley. (They could check all that applied).

Figure 10

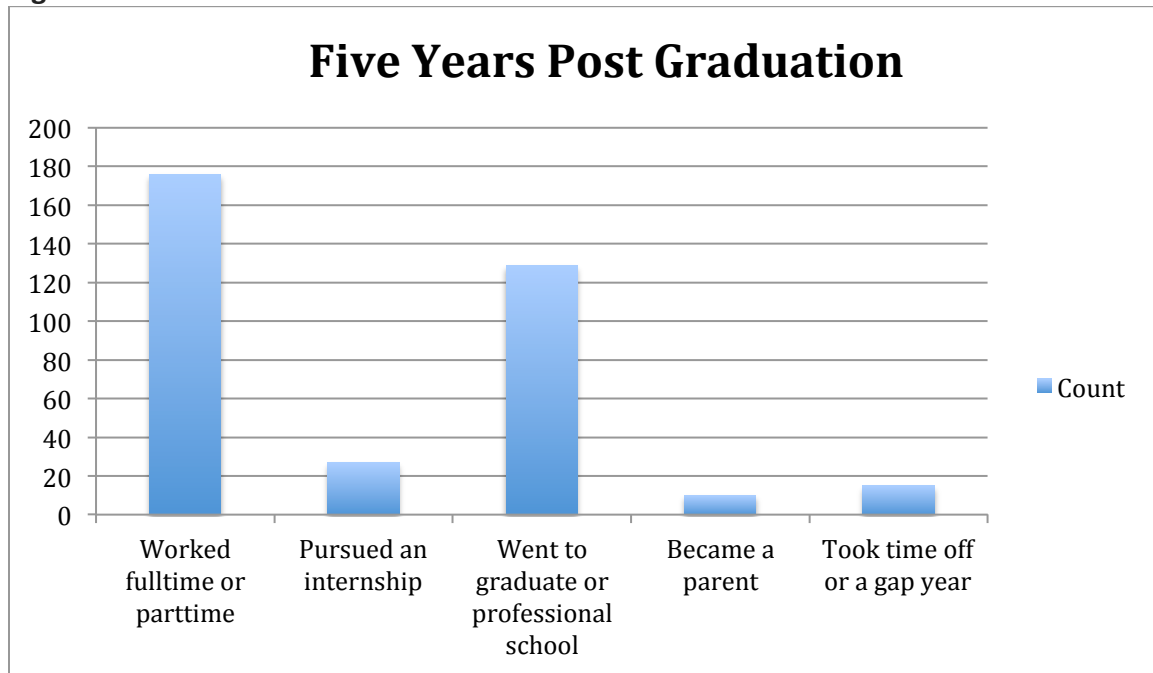


Worked fulltime or parttime	156
Pursued an internship	18
Went to graduate or professional school	47
Became a parent	3
Took time off or a gap year	18

The majority of our students went to work fulltime or part time upon graduating from Wellesley, which appears to be fairly normal. A smaller group went directly to graduate or professional school. However, when we look at the next figure (Figure 11), we learn that after being in the labor force for a period of time, a large number went onto receive graduate or professional degrees. (We note that we only asked this question to students who graduated in the classes of 2008 or prior classes)

In the future, we will look to determine if there is any variation across classes.

Figure 11



Worked fulltime or parttime	176
Pursued an internship	27
Went to graduate or professional school	129
Became a parent	10
Took time off or a gap year	15

Our alums report that they presently hold a variety of jobs and as we suspected they can do anything with a BA degree in WGST. We asked them for their job titles and they is a large range from Cardiologist to lawyer to education Specialist (World Bank), to community health (neonatology nurse) to President and CEO and comedian. Surprisingly, 22% received PhD's in a variety of fields. As to other advanced degrees 34% received MA degrees, MPH degrees 13%, JD degrees 19%, PhD degrees 22%, MD Degrees 8%. 28% selected "other" and their advanced degrees include MPhil, MBA, Ed.M, MSW, MFA Film, Pastry MA and Dance Studies.

We received hundreds of response to questions about how the department helped students. Here are some selected examples that characterize the alum responses. We have taken out any names of individuals.

1. "As WGST is a multidisciplinary department, it is easy to have many varied interests that can be overwhelming. However, faculty members offered very good and sound guidance and advice on careers and post graduate programs. I will always treasure the numerous conversations with my advisor on career paths! Courses were also very insightful and inspiring and provided great opportunities for discussion and intellectual development."
2. "My advisor helped me find internships while I was a student. She recommended which internships would be good for me, motivated me to apply and wrote letters of recommendation. She helped me in many ways as well: motivating me to be a good student at Wellesley, motivating me to be an excellent person in general...she did more than what she had to support me intellectually and emotionally. She was a feminist mentor indeed, believing in my own strength and power, and guiding me to grasp them, to empower myself and be as competent as ever. She was always available! Weekends included! And I did with her an Independent Study and my thesis. She helped me as a mentor, as a role model, even as a friend. She believed in me and still does and this makes a whole lot of difference in my life."
3. "Wow - I don't know where I can begin to start describing the many ways that the department and professors helped me throughout my time at Wellesley and after! The very first WGST course I took changed the way I saw the world and locked down my decision to be a WGST major, because it was so engaging and immediately changed the way I saw the world. The faculty were always there for me, and I frequently went to office hours or made appointments to talk to them about academics and professional/life advice. They are consistently accessible and encouraging for me, even though I am an alum. My WGST professors are some of the smartest, most helpful, and generally stellar people I have ever met. Also, because of the department, I was able to create an amazing independent study project that I had an empowering mentorship with. I was also able to work as a research assistant for a professor, which was an amazing and deeply interesting opportunity. I think about my classes often since graduating (concentrations in Women, Work and Families and Latin@ studies have been very useful and pertinent to my personal and professional lives)."
4. "Every WOST faculty member acted as a mentor - they cared deeply about the success of their students, both during and after their time at Wellesley. My main advisor wrote a letter of reference for my first job out of college, and 3 years later wrote a letter of recommendation for my Ph.D. program. Without their support, I would not be a professor."

In short, individual faculty and the department as a whole have advised and mentored respondents both during the time they were students at Wellesley and after they had graduated. We are delighted that so many of them took the time to write and be a part of this external review. Social media, particularly our departmental Facebook page has reconnected us with our alums in new ways, for instance, last year, they wanted to know what was happening on campus with the “Sleep Walker” and how our faculty and the institution as a whole was responding. On occasion there are interesting exchanges between students who have never met because they graduated at different times. We also use this page to post jobs that come our way and we keep them informed of other events occurring in our department. In short, we remain socially engaged in the lives of our alums even at a distance.