

**HEDS Alumni Survey
Final Report
March 2013**

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ABOUT THE STUDY

The Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) Alumni Survey is a 111-question survey designed to assess the long-term impact of undergraduate education, including postgraduate education and employment. Skidmore is particularly interested in how the undergraduate experience contributed to personal development and whether alumni felt prepared for work, graduate school, etc.

The survey was designed to be completed by recent alumni and is typically administered to individuals five and ten years after they completed an undergraduate degree. The HEDS Alumni Survey is administered every other year and nearly 30,000 alumni from 77 different institutions have participated in the survey since 2001.

Spring 2012 was the first time Skidmore participated in the HEDS Alumni Survey. A key benefit to participating in this survey was that all of the New York Six schools (Skidmore, Colgate, Hamilton, Hobart & William Smith, St. Lawrence, and Union) participated and we were able to obtain aggregated comparison peer data for the first time.

There are two comparison groups for Skidmore: NY6 schools and all HEDS schools participating in the study. Statistical testing could only be done for Skidmore versus NY6 schools as Skidmore was not provided the total HEDS data set. In several areas means were tested but percentages are reported here along with significance values. Responses were obtained from the Class of 2001 (ten to eleven years after graduation) and the Class of 2006 (between five and six years after graduation).

METHODOLOGY

The survey was administered through HEDS with invitations coming from a Skidmore email address. Alumni with valid email addresses on record received a pre-notification postcard and three email requests. Alumni without emails received two paper copies of the instrument. The initial invitations were sent near the end of April 2012 and the survey closed on May 21, 2012. An incentive was offered for a chance to win one of two \$100 gift cards (Amazon.com or Skidmore Shop) for responding.

The total Skidmore response rate was 24% (280/1171). The Class of 2001 rate was 20% and the Class of 2006 was 27%. For all HEDS schools the response rate was 21%. The rate is not available for NY6 but should be similar.

As is usually the case, women were overrepresented in the response group: 73% of respondents from Skidmore's Class of 2001, compared with 60% for NY6 schools. For the Class of 2006, 74% of Skidmore's respondents were female, compared with 62% for NY6 schools.

Table 1 presents the percent of students at Skidmore and NY6 schools in each of eight fields of study. A greater percentage of respondents from Skidmore majored in Fine Arts or Business and Management than did respondents from NY6 schools for both graduating classes. Fewer Skidmore alumni majoring in Natural Sciences/Math and Computer Science responded to this survey than did alumni from NY6 schools. Interestingly, few Engineering majors responded.

Table 1.

Major Field of Study	Class of 2006		Class of 2001	
	Skidmore	NY6	Skidmore	NY6
	%	%	%	%
Fine Arts	17	8	17	6
Humanities	27	25	25	24
Social Sciences	30	35	26	38
Natural Sciences/Mathematics and Computer Science	12	23	14	23
Business and Management	11	3	14	5
Education	2	3	5	3
Engineering	0	2	0	1
Nursing	0	0	0	0
Total number of responses	224	707	133	416

FINDINGS

Faculty Interactions and Classroom Experiences

Alumni were asked a series of questions about their interactions with faculty and their classroom experiences at their undergraduate institutions. Alumni from Skidmore, NY6 schools, and HEDS schools had generally positive impressions of faculty at these schools and of their interactions with faculty; there were no significant differences in percent of alumni responding "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" to these questions. Interesting observations included:

- *Faculty genuinely interested in students:* Between 90% (Skidmore) and 94% (NY6 and HEDS) of alumni from the Class of 2001 and 93% (HEDS) to 95% (Skidmore) from the Class of 2006 agreed.
- *Faculty genuinely interested in teaching:* Between 93% (Skidmore) and 95% (NY6) of alumni from the Class of 2001 and 93% (HEDS) and 95% (NY6) from the Class of 2006 agreed.
- *Faculty provided prompt and useful feedback:* Between 86% and 89% of alumni from Skidmore and both comparison groups (both classes) agreed.
- *Faculty involvement outside of class:* Between 81% (Skidmore 2001) and 90% (NY6 2006) of alumni found that faculty were "willing to discuss issues outside of class" and 76% to 79% of alumni thought that faculty were "interested in students' growth outside of academics."

Alumni were slightly less enthusiastic about non-classroom interactions with faculty but again, there were no significant differences in the percentage of alumni reporting "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" to these questions from the different groups of schools. The numbers were generally higher for Skidmore alumni from the Class of 2006 than for the Class of 2001. For example,

- 79% of Skidmore alumni from the Class of 2006 reported that non-classroom interactions had a *positive influence on their personal growth*, compared with 71% of those from the Class of 2001.

- Likewise, the percentage of Skidmore alumni who found that non-classroom interactions with faculty had a *positive influence on their intellectual growth* was 74% for the Class of 2001 and 81% for the Class of 2006.
- Only 62% of 2001 Skidmore alumni and 65% of 2006 Skidmore alumni found that non-classroom interactions with faculty had a *positive influence on their career goals*.
- Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the 2001 Skidmore alumni developed a *close relationship with at least one faculty member* and 72% of the 2006 alumni did the same.
- Finally, nearly three-quarters of Skidmore alumni (72% of 2001, 70% of 2006) were *satisfied with their informal interactions with faculty*.

When asked about their classroom experiences, alumni from Skidmore, NY6 schools, and HEDS schools had similar responses. The following are the percentages of respondents who reported “Often” or “Very Often.”

- Between 81% (Skidmore 2001) and 88% (NY6 2001) of respondents from Skidmore and both comparison groups (both classes) reported that faculty *posed challenging ideas*.
- Between 55% (NY6 2006) and 61% (Skidmore 2001) reported that faculty asked them to *apply concepts to actual situations*.
- Between 52% (NY6 2006) and 60% (Skidmore 2006) reported that faculty asked them to *critique ideas and principles*.
- Between 63% (HEDS 2001) and 71% (Skidmore 2006) reported that faculty asked them to *argue for or against a particular point*.
- Between 59% (Skidmore 2001) and 66% (Skidmore 2006) reported that *faculty challenged students’ ideas* and 56% (Skidmore 2001) to 66% (NY6 2006) reported that students *challenged each other’s ideas*.

Questions about exams and assignments elicited similar responses from alumni across the schools and years. Again, percentages reflect respondents who answered “Often” or “Very Often”.

- Fifty-four percent (54%) of Skidmore alumni from the Class of 2006 reported that they *solved problems* “Often” or “Very Often” compared with 60% of NY6 alumni ($p < .05$; Five-point scale; Means: Skidmore 3.55; NY6 3.77;). This was the one significant difference in this group of questions.
- When asked about *using course content to address a problem not presented in the course*, 28% of 2001 Skidmore alumni reported that they did this compared with 37% of 2006 Skidmore alumni.
- Fewer than half of respondents reported that they gave *oral presentations*; the range was 43% (NY6 2001) to 50% (Skidmore 2006).
- Between 59% (Skidmore 2001) and 66% (HEDS 2006) reported that they *connected what they learned in multiple courses*.
- Between 59% (Skidmore 2001) and 68% (Skidmore 2006) reported that they *argued for or against a particular point of view* and defended their argument.
- Between 65% (HEDS 2006) and 73% (Skidmore 2001) *compared or contrasted topics or ideas* from a course.
- Between 63% (Skidmore 2001) and 71% (Skidmore 2006) *pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of a particular argument* or point of view.
- And between 84% (HEDS 2006) and 91% (Skidmore 2001) *wrote essays* “Often” or “Very Often.”

Working Across Differences

Responses on questions about interactions across racial, ethnic, religious, and political difference were not encouraging. Statistically significantly fewer Skidmore alumni than NY6 alumni from the Class of 2006 responded “Often” or “Very Often” to four of the five questions in this group.

- *Made friends with a student of a different race*: Skidmore 34%, NY6 39% ($p < .05$), HEDS 50% (Means: Skidmore 3.17, NY6 3.35; 5-point scale).
- *Made friends with a student from another country*: Skidmore 20%, NY6 30% ($p < .001$), HEDS 39% (Means: Skidmore 2.67, NY6 3.06; 5-point scale).
- *Had serious discussions with faculty with different political, social, or religious opinions*: Skidmore 19%, NY6 27% ($p < .01$), HEDS 27% (Means: Skidmore 2.64, NY6 2.93; 5-point scale).

- *Had serious discussions with students of differing political, social, or religious opinions*: Skidmore 39%, NY6 45% ($p < .05$), HEDS 54% (Means: Skidmore 3.26, NY6 3.43; 5-point scale).
- The one question for which Skidmore alumni reported higher figures than NY6 alumni was “*had serious discussions with students about different lifestyles and customs*”: Skidmore 55%, NY6 45%, HEDS 59%.

There were statistically significant differences between Class of 2001 Skidmore and NY6 alumni on questions about interactions across difference. Further, the percentage of Skidmore alumni reporting “Often” or “Very Often” to these questions was generally lower for the Class of 2001 than for 2006.

- *Made friends with students from a different race*: Skidmore 26%, NY6 41% ($p < .001$), HEDS 48% (Means: Skidmore 2.97, NY6 3.37; 5-point scale).
- *Made friends with a student from another country*: Skidmore 10%, NY6 25% ($p < .001$), HEDS 34% (Means: Skidmore 2.54, NY6 2.96; 5-point scale).
- *Had serious discussions with faculty with different political, social or religious opinions*: Skidmore 12%, NY6 25% ($p < .05$), HEDS 25% (Means: Skidmore 2.54, NY6 2.82; 5-point scale).
- Fewer Skidmore alumni reported having *serious discussions with students with different political, social, or religious opinions*: Skidmore 38%, NY6 42%, HEDS 49%.
- The one question for which Skidmore alumni reported higher figures than NY6 alumni was “*had discussions with students about different lifestyles and customs*”: Skidmore 51%, NY6 43%, HEDS 54%.

Impact of Undergraduate Experiences

Alumni were asked to rate how their undergraduate experience contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in several areas. For a complete list of the areas addressed, see Table B1 (Appendix B). Table 2 presents the items for which there were statistically significant differences in the responses from Skidmore alumni and those from NY6 schools; significance was based on the means, not on the frequencies. Questions were answered on a four-point scale; presented here are the percent of alumni who responded “Sufficiently” or “Considerably”. Note that the percent of Skidmore alumni who reported “Sufficiently” or “Considerably” for quantitative literacy and effective speaking was lower for the Class of 2006 than for the Class of 2001. The percent of Skidmore alumni who reported “Sufficiently” or “Considerably” for civic engagement, intercultural knowledge, and ethical reasoning increased from 2001 to 2006.

Table 2.

To what extent did your experience as an undergraduate contribute to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	Class of 2006			Class of 2001		
	Skidmore	NY6	P value*	Skidmore	NY6	P value*
Quantitative literacy	60%	75%	<.001	73%	74%	NS
Effective speaking	64%	74%	<.05	70%	71%	NS
Civic engagement	44%	50%	<.10	39%	53%	<.01
Intercultural knowledge and competence	61%	65%	NS	50%	61%	<.10
Ethical reasoning	75%	67%	NS	63%	73%	<.10

*significance based on Means, not Frequencies

Alumni were asked to what extent their activities as an undergraduate contributed to their personal development after they graduated (see Table B2 in Appendix B for a complete list of the activities). Although there were no significant differences between the percentage of Skidmore and NY6 alumni who participated in internships or research with a faculty member, it is worth commenting on these items because of their relevance to the Transition and Transformation initiative. For the Class of 2001, 24% of Skidmore alumni reported participating in internships, compared with 32% of NY6 alumni and 23% of HEDS alumni. The numbers for the Class of 2006 were Skidmore 34% (an increase over the 2001 number), NY6 36%, and HEDS 40%. Twenty-three percent (23%) of Skidmore alumni from the Class of

2001 reported working with faculty on a research project, compared with 32% of NY6 alumni and 25% of HEDS alumni. For the Class of 2006 the numbers were: Skidmore 41%, NY6 36%, and HEDS 29%; as with internships, the number of alumni from 2006 who reported doing research was higher than that from 2001.

For several experiences, alumni were asked to provide the extent to which each “contributed to your learning and personal development after you graduated.” The scale consisted of “no experience as an undergraduate,” “very little,” “somewhat,” “sufficiently,” and “considerably.” To allow for analyses, alumni indicating “no experience” were considered to have not participated in the activity in question (See Appendix Table B2 for percent participating). Therefore, the percentages in Table 3 are of those “participating” in each activity. Only three items had significant differences (Skidmore v. NY6). For those participating in “performing arts/music,” Skidmore alums in the Class of 2006 were more likely than NY6 alums to indicate that participation contributed to personal development after college. For the Class of 2001, Skidmore alums were less likely than NY6 peers to cite “community service” and “research with faculty” participation as contributing to “knowledge, skills, and personal development after graduation.” See Appendix Table B2 for the entire list of activities.

Table 3.

<u>Of those indicating participation in the activity, to what extent did your experience with each of the following as an undergraduate contribute to your knowledge, skills, and personal development after you graduated?</u>	Class of 2006			Class of 2001		
	Skidmore	NY6	P value*	Skidmore	NY6	P value*
Performing arts/music	54%	42%	<.05	57%	47%	NS
Community service	41%	46%	NS	30%	40%	<.05
Work with faculty on research	69%	67%	NS	44%	59%	<.05

4-point scale; percent answering “Sufficiently” or “Considerably”

*Significance based on Means, not Frequencies

Preparation for Life After College

Alumni were asked a series of questions about how well their undergraduate experience prepared them for various activities. The percentages presented below reflect those alumni who reported that they were “Sufficiently” or “Considerably” prepared.

Graduate or professional school: Only 64% of 2001 Skidmore alumni felt that they were prepared for graduate or professional school upon graduation, compared with 77% of NY6 alumni ($p < .01$) and 79% of HEDS alumni. That percentage increased to 73% for Skidmore alumni from the Class of 2006 compared with 77% of NY6 alumni and 80% of HEDS alumni.

Current career: About two-thirds of alumni from all schools and both classes felt that they were prepared for their current career; the range was 64% (Skidmore) to 69% (HEDS) for the Class of 2001 and 63% (Skidmore) to 70% (HEDS) for the Class of 2006.

Social and civic involvement: Half of Skidmore alumni from 2001 (51%) felt that they were prepared for social and civic involvement, compared with 60% of NY6 alumni ($p < .10$) and 65% of HEDS alumni. Fifty-three percent (53%) of Skidmore alumni from the Class of 2006 felt they were prepared, compared with 59% of NY6 alumni and 68% of HEDS alumni.

Interpersonal relationships and family living: About two-thirds of alumni from Skidmore and both comparison groups (both classes) felt that they were prepared for interpersonal relationships and family living. The range was 59% (Skidmore) to 66% (HEDS) for the Class of 2001 and 60% (Skidmore) to 67% (HEDS) for the Class of 2006.

Managing finances, maintaining health, creating a home: Fewer than half of alumni from Skidmore and both comparison groups (both classes) felt that they were prepared for the financial and personal responsibilities of post-graduate life. The ranges were 41% (Skidmore) to 44% (HEDS) for alumni from the Class of 2001 and 36% (Skidmore) to 45% (HEDS) for the Class of 2006. This concern was also mentioned in the open-ended comments by several alumni (see “In Their Own Words”).

Continued learning: Two-thirds of alumni from Skidmore and both comparison groups (both classes) felt that they were prepared for continued learning on their own or outside of a degree program after college. The ranges were 60% (Skidmore) to 66% (HEDS) for the Class of 2001 and 62% (NY6) to 69% (Skidmore) for the Class of 2006.

Overall Satisfaction with Undergraduate Experience

Alumni were asked two questions about their overall satisfaction with their undergraduate education. For the first question (four-point scale), “How connected do you feel to your undergraduate institution?” there was a nearly significant difference between Skidmore Class of 2006 alumni and NY6 alumni ($p < .057$), with 34% of Skidmore alumni reporting a “very strong connection”, compared with 41% of NY6 alumni and 47% of HEDS alumni (Means: Skidmore: 3.14; NY6: 3.26). A significant difference was found between Skidmore and NY6 alumni for the second question (five-point scale): “How satisfied have you been with your undergraduate education?” with 44% of Skidmore alumni reporting “Very satisfied”, compared with 52% of NY6 alumni ($p < .05$) and 52% of HEDS alumni (Means: Skidmore: 4.21; NY6: 4.38.)

There were no significant differences in responses to either question for the Class of 2001. The range for “connection to undergraduate institution” was 31% (Skidmore) to 37% (HEDS) and for “satisfaction with undergraduate education” was 37% (Skidmore) to 38% (NY6 and HEDS).

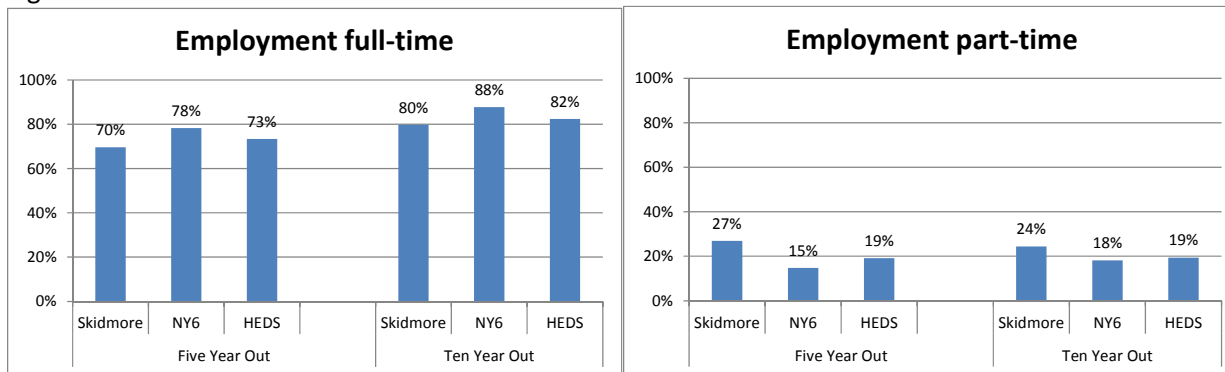
Employment (Figure 1)

Alumni were asked to indicate their current employment situation; they were allowed to check as many options as applied, so in some cases the numbers add up to more than 100%.

Five years after graduation (Class of 2006), 70% of Skidmore alumni reported that they were employed full time, compared with 78% of NY6 alumni ($p < .05$) and 73% of HEDS alumni. More Skidmore alumni were employed part-time (27%) or in multiple jobs (24%) five years after graduation than were NY6 alumni (15% working part-time [$p < .05$]; 16% in multiple jobs) or HEDS alumni (19% working part-time; 16% in multiple jobs). Eight percent (8%) of Skidmore alumni were not employed but were seeking employment five years after graduation, compared with 6% of both NY6 and HEDS alumni. Five percent (5%) of Skidmore alumni were not employed by choice five years after graduation – a figure similar to the comparison groups.

Ten years after graduation (Class of 2001), 80% of Skidmore alumni reported that they were employed full time, compared with 88% of NY6 alumni and 82% of HEDS alumni. Again, a greater percentage of Skidmore alumni were working part-time (24%) or in multiple jobs (19%) ten years after graduation than were NY6 alumni (18% working part-time; 16% in multiple jobs) or HEDS alumni (19% working part-time; 17% in multiple jobs). Six percent (6%) of Skidmore alumni were not employed but were seeking employment ten years after graduation compared with 3% for both NY6 and HEDS alumni. Seventeen percent (17%) of Skidmore alumni, 9% of NY6 alumni, and 11% of HEDS alumni were not employed by choice ten years after graduation.

Figure 1.



The survey asked alumni a series of questions about their first job and their current job. Table 4 presents the items for which there were statistically significant differences in the responses from Skidmore alumni and those from NY6 schools. In all cases Skidmore alumni responded with lower percentages.

Table 4.

	Class of 2006			Class of 2001		
	Skidmore	NY6		Skidmore	NY6	
	%	%	P value*	%	%	P value*
First job: Related to desired career	62	71	<.05	59	64	NS
First job: Found work meaningful	66	75	<.05	61	74	<.05
First job: Paid enough to support lifestyle	52	66	<.05	59	66	NS
First job: Paid health insurance benefits	62	77	<.05	64	76	<.05
Current job: Paid enough to support lifestyle	61	76	<.05	80	85	NS
Current job: Paid health insurance benefits	70	84	<.05	85	88	NS

*Significance based on Means, not Frequencies

Relevance of undergraduate education to job: There were no significant differences in responses among alumni from Skidmore, NY6 schools, or HEDS schools on the two questions regarding relevance of undergraduate education to first job or current job (“Was related to my undergraduate major” and “Used important skills I gained as an undergraduate”).

Between 51% (NY6) and 57% (HEDS) of alumni from the Class of 2001 reported that their first job related to their undergraduate major, as did 55% (NY6) to 59% (Skidmore) of the Class of 2006. Alumni’s current jobs related to their undergraduate major only slightly more: 59% (NY6) to 66% (Skidmore) of the Class of 2001 and 59% (NY6) to 65% (Skidmore) of the Class of 2006.

First jobs used skills learned as undergraduates for roughly three-quarters of respondents: 75% (Skidmore) to 78% (HEDS) of the Class of 2001 and 73% (Skidmore) to 79% (HEDS) of the Class of 2006 responded that their first job used undergraduate skills. Current jobs were more relevant to undergraduate education: 86% of alumni from the classes of 2001 and 2006 (all schools) responded that their current job used skills that they gained as an undergraduate.

Job related to desired career: The first jobs of Skidmore alumni related slightly less to their desired career than did those of alumni from NY6 or HEDS schools. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of Skidmore alumni from the Class of 2001 reported that their first job related to their desired career, compared with 64% of NY6 and 66% of HEDS alumni. Sixty-two percent (62%) of Skidmore alumni from the Class of 2006 said so, compared with 71% of NY6 and 69% of HEDS alumni. The numbers were better for alumni’s current jobs: 85% of Skidmore, 87% of NY6, and 88% of HEDS alumni from the Class of 2001 reported that their current job is related to their desired career. The corresponding numbers for the Class of 2006 were: 81% of Skidmore, 88% of NY6, and 84% of HEDS alumni reported that their current job relates to their desired career.

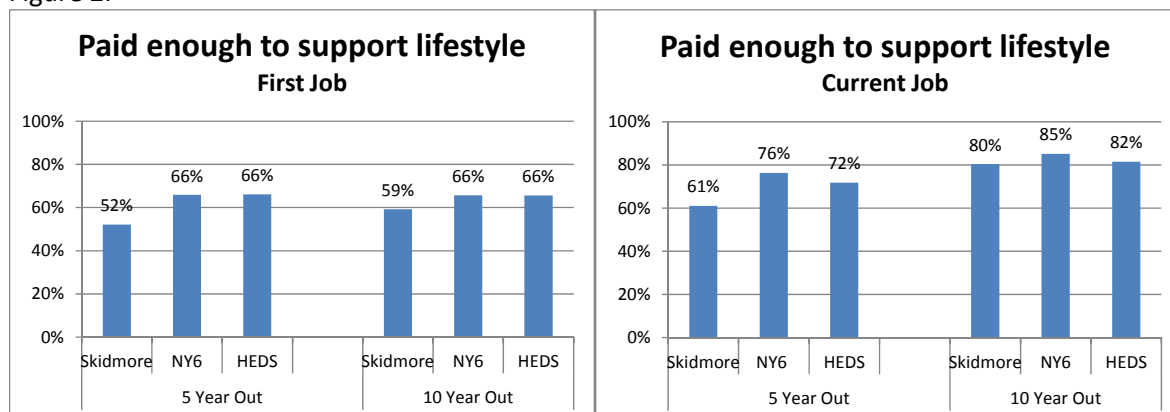
Meaningful job: Skidmore alumni found their first job slightly less meaningful than did alumni of NY6 or HEDS schools: 61% of Skidmore, 74% of NY6 ($p<.05$), and 75% of HEDS alumni from the Class of 2001 found their first job meaningful. Skidmore alumni from the Class of 2006 reported slightly better results: 66% found their first job meaningful, compared with 75% of NY6 ($p<.05$) and 76% of HEDS alumni. Alumni's current jobs were more meaningful than their first jobs: 88% of Skidmore, 91% of NY6, and 92% of HEDS 2001 alumni reported their current job was meaningful. For the Class of 2006, 81% of Skidmore alumni, 88% of NY6 alumni, and 86% of HEDS alumni found their current job meaningful.

Continued to grow and learn in job: Asked whether their first job allowed them to continue to grow and learn, 79% of Skidmore alumni, 84% of NY6 alumni, and 83% of HEDS alumni from the Class of 2001 responded "Yes." The numbers were similar for the Class of 2006: 76% of Skidmore alumni, 83% of NY6 alumni, and 84% of HEDS alumni responded "Yes". Alumni fared much better in their current job: for the Class of 2001, 92% of Skidmore alumni, 94% of NY6 alumni, and 94% of HEDS alumni responded that their current job allows them to continue to grow and learn. For the Class of 2006 the figures were: 90% Skidmore, 91% NY6, and 90% HEDS.

Satisfaction with job: Alumni generally found their first job less satisfying than their current job. Seventy-one percent (71%) of Skidmore Class of 2001 alumni found their first job satisfying, compared with 77% of NY6 alumni and 79% of HEDS alumni. For the Class of 2006, 73% of Skidmore alumni, 77% of NY6 alumni, and 78% of HEDS alumni found their first job satisfying. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of Skidmore alumni from the Class of 2001, 93% of NY6 alumni, and 93% of HEDS alumni found their current job satisfying, as did 85% of Skidmore, 90% of NY6, and 88% of HEDS alumni from the Class of 2006.

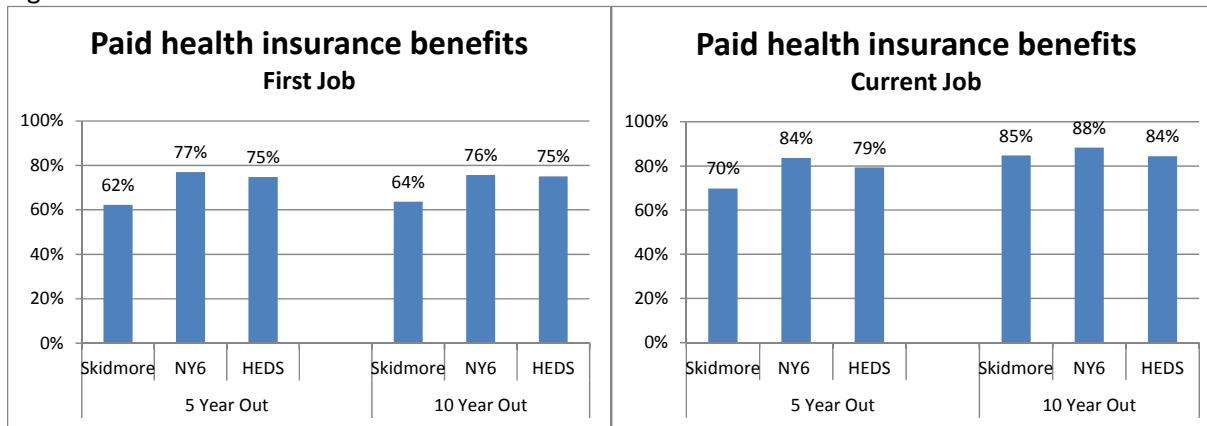
Job supported lifestyle: Slightly more than half of Skidmore alumni reported that their first job paid enough to support their lifestyle (Figure 2); more alumni from NY6 and HEDS schools reported this to be true, with a significant difference between Skidmore and NY6 alumni ($p<.05$). Alumni from the Class of 2001 fared better in their current job, with Skidmore alumni (80%) nearly approaching the numbers for NY6 and HEDS alumni. Only 61% of Skidmore alumni from the Class of 2006 reported that their current job paid enough to support their lifestyle; the difference between that and NY6 alumni (76%) was significant ($p<.05$).

Figure 2.



Job paid health insurance benefits: The first jobs secured by Skidmore alumni were less likely to pay health insurance benefits than were first jobs taken by alumni from either NY6 or HEDS schools (Figure 3). Only 64% of Skidmore Class of 2001 alumni received health insurance benefits from their first job, compared with 76% ($p<.05$) from NY6 schools and 75% from HEDS schools. The numbers were similar for the first jobs for alumni from the Class of 2006. Only slightly more Skidmore alumni from the Class of 2006 (70%) reported that their current job pays health insurance benefits and the difference with NY6 alumni was significant (84% $p<.05$).

Figure 3.



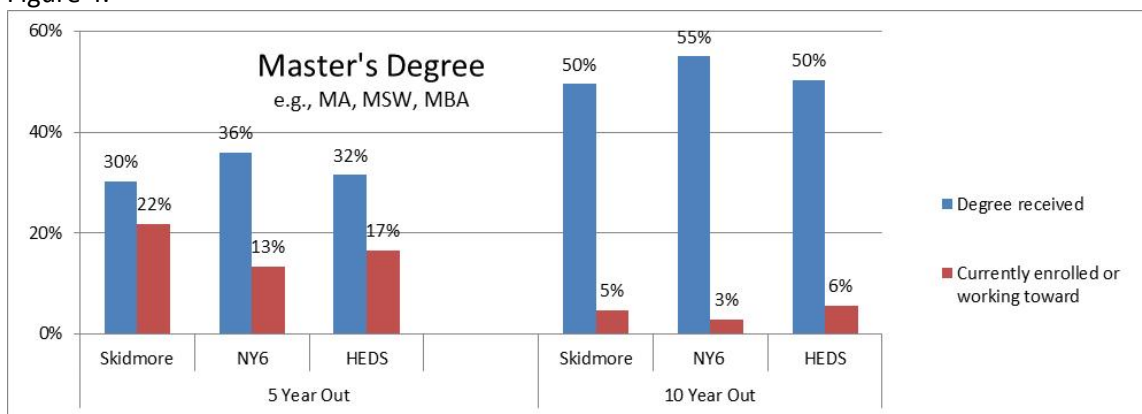
When first paying job was secured: Between one-quarter and one-third of all respondents secured their first paying job while enrolled as an undergraduate, with no significant differences among the institutions. For the Class of 2001 the range was 27%-30% and for the Class of 2006 the range was 32%-36%. Nearly half of respondents secured their first paying job within six months after graduation: 49%-51% for the Class of 2001 and 42%-48% for the Class of 2006. For 8% of Skidmore alumni, 13% of NY6 alumni, and 15% of HEDS alumni from the Class of 2001 it took more than one year to secure a paying job. For the Class of 2006, 11% of alumni took more than a year to secure a paying job (11% of NY6 and HEDS alumni).

Further Education (Figure 4)

Five years after graduation, 30% of Skidmore alumni were in graduate school full-time, compared with 22% of NY6 alumni and 29% of HEDS alumni. Sixteen percent (16%) of Skidmore alumni were in graduate school part-time, compared with 12% of NY6 and HEDS alumni. Ten years after graduation, 11% of Skidmore alumni were in graduate school full-time, compared with 3% of NY6 alumni ($p < .05$) and 10% of HEDS alumni. Seven percent (7%) of Skidmore alumni, 7% of NY6 alumni, and 8% of HEDS alumni were in graduate school part-time.

Five years after graduation, slightly fewer Skidmore alumni (30%) received a Master's degree than NY6 alumni (36%) but more Skidmore alumni (22%) were currently enrolled in a Master's program than were NY6 alumni (13%; see Figure 4). Ten years after graduation the figures were more similar for students who had received a Master's degree (Skidmore 50%, NY6 55%) and those currently enrolled in a Master's program (Skidmore 5%, NY6 3%).

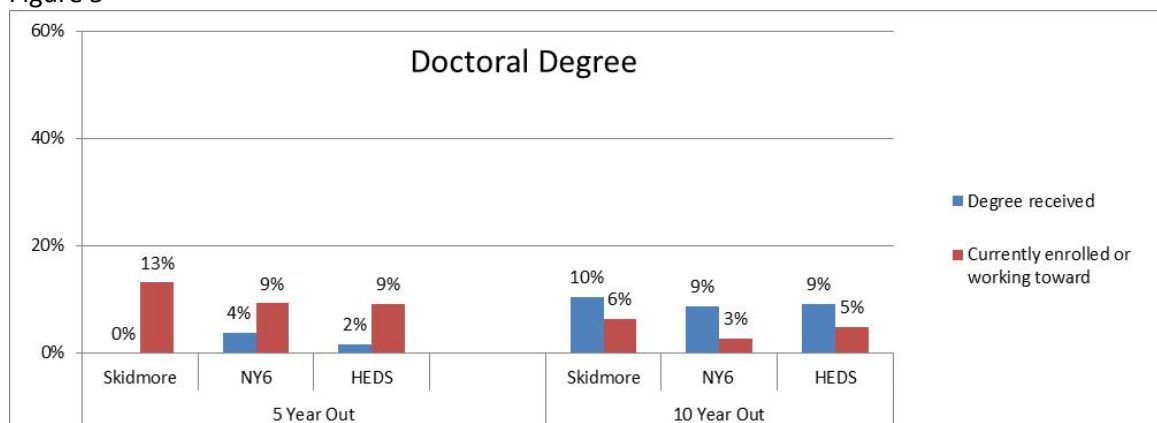
Figure 4.



Similarly, five years after graduation no Skidmore respondents (0%) reported earning a doctoral degree, while 4% of NY6 alumni and 2% of HEDS alumni did so. However, a slightly greater percentage of Skidmore alumni were currently enrolled in doctoral programs than were alumni of NY6 or HEDS schools five years after graduation. The

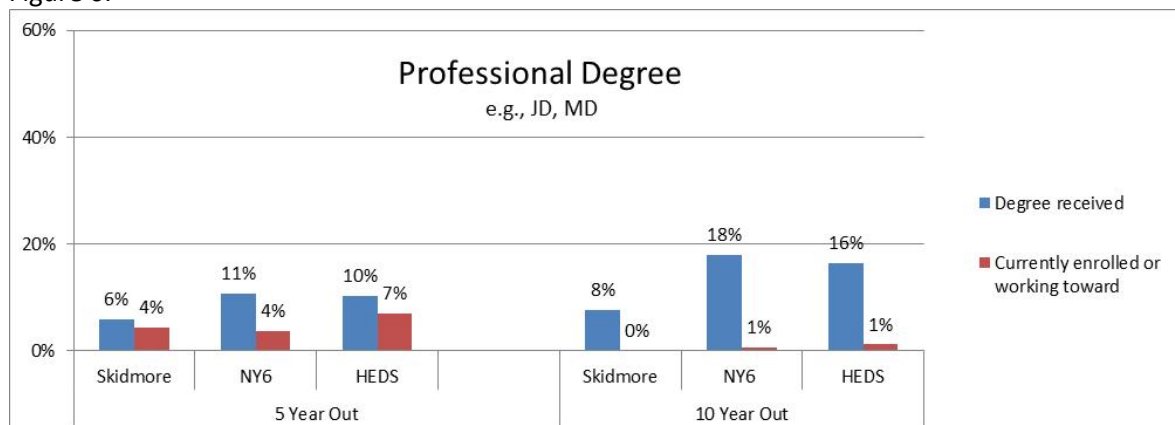
numbers of alumni in doctoral programs were similar for Skidmore, NY6, and HEDS alumni ten years after graduation (see Figure 5).

Figure 5



Significantly fewer Skidmore alumni five and ten years after graduation reported earning a professional degree (e.g., J.D., or M.D.) than alumni from NY6 or HEDS schools (see Figure 6). For the Class of 2006, 6% of Skidmore alumni, 11% of NY6 alumni ($p < .05$), and 10% of HEDS alumni had received a professional degree. For the Class of 2001, 8% of Skidmore alumni, 18% of NY6 alumni ($p < .05$), and 16% of HEDS alumni had received a professional degree.

Figure 6.



Debt and Income (Table 5)

Significantly more Skidmore alumni from the Class of 2001 did not secure a loan to pay for college than did alumni from NY6 schools (56% vs. 37%; $p < .05$). This figure was more similar for Class of 2006: Skidmore 52%, NY6 46%.

Alumni were asked to report “your current income before taxes” by selecting one of 15 income ranges. The means presented here are estimated from categorical midpoints. Skidmore males and females were found to earn significantly less ($p < .05$) than their counterparts from NY6 schools.

Table 5.

Your Current Income Before Taxes		
5 Years Out (Class of 2006)		
	Skidmore	NY6
Male	\$55,789	\$71,178
Female	\$46,111	\$54,569
Total	\$48,630	\$60,863
10 Years Out (Class of 2001)		
	Skidmore	NY6
Male	\$96,346	\$108,613
Female	\$63,043	\$84,845
Total	\$72,158	\$94,712

In Their Own Words

Of the 110 respondents from the Class of 2001, 91 responded with a narrative comment to at least one of the four open-ended questions. For the Class of 2006, 137 of the 170 respondents wrote at least one narrative comment. The four open-ended questions were:

- 1) If you answered “sufficiently” or “considerably” to the question on how much your undergraduate experiences prepared you for continued learning on your own or outside of a degree program (e.g., learning a new language, professional certification, learning a craft) – please describe that experience here.
- 2) If you indicated “other” in the question on experiences you had as an undergraduate that contributed to your learning and personal development after you graduated, please describe that experience here.
- 3) From the perspective you have gained since graduation, what do you especially value about your undergraduate experience?
- 4) Please use this space to elaborate on any of your responses on this survey or on any aspect of your undergraduate experience.

Selected recurring concepts are presented here, organized in general categories rather than by question.

Academic Quality: Many of the comments reflected Skidmore alumni’s appreciation for a liberal arts education in general: the small classes, the flexibility of the curriculum, and close relationships with faculty. Respondents felt that Skidmore helped them develop critical thinking skills, appreciate interdisciplinarity, and become life-long learners. Many respondents commented on the quality of teaching at Skidmore: “I especially value the handful of teachers at Skidmore that really challenged me, setting high standards and expectations for their students.”

Diversity and peer relationships: A handful of respondents commented on the lack of diversity among students and faculty, the lack of interaction between people of different races, religions, or economic backgrounds, or their negative experiences at Skidmore. “I think that the place where my Skidmore experience was lacking was diversity. I did not have the opportunity to interact with people from different religious, ethnic, or socio-economic backgrounds as much as I would have liked. [white]” “Skidmore does a really horrible job with diversity. They think that having multicultural clubs is the answer, but they have to do a lot more in a school with such a small minority population. They seem to continue to ignore this and it makes me very sad. As an alumnus [multi-racial], I’ve decided to no longer attend alumni events for this very reason. I feel out of place at alumni events and the Skidmore staff do not seem to notice these issues or just don’t care.”

Many respondents commented on the strong friendships they developed at Skidmore and many found their classmates to be smart and interesting: "Whenever I introduce someone to a former classmate, I always hear responses that my Skidmore friends are so interesting, smart, and otherwise amazing." Others commented on the lack of intellectual stimulation among the students and apparent drug and alcohol use: "I found the Skidmore student body to be vastly apathetic. The students were lazy and too focused on partying." One respondent felt marginalized as an economically disadvantaged student: "As a first-generation college graduate [white] and a person coming from a low-income household, I often felt alone in my experiences. It made me less likely to participate in events on and off campus. In addition, I rarely participated in class because of my discomfort, and my grades suffered as a result."

Transition and Transformation: Respondents found that a focus on civic engagement and service learning made them better citizens: "I appreciate that my experience at Skidmore made me a very civic-minded and politically engaged person." Students in the natural sciences praised research opportunities: "The mentors I had while conducting my research opened doors for me that I never thought were possible." But some students felt that they were not well prepared to conduct research: "My major did not prepare me nearly well enough in the area of statistics and experimental design." Several students noted that their study-abroad experiences were invaluable: "Studying abroad was the smartest decision I ever made. I returned to the US believing I could accomplish any goal I hoped to accomplish in life. It was the most empowering feeling I've ever experienced."

Preparedness for life after college: One respondent felt that his Skidmore experience prepared him well for a career: "I especially value how my major prepared me for the business world. As a business major at Skidmore we did a lot of team collaboration, problem solving of real business situations, and presentations in an actual business setting. All of which I value greatly and still remember as a crucial part of my career training."

A handful of respondents from a variety of disciplines commented that they felt unprepared for life after college: how to find a job, what jobs were available, how to manage finances, or unprepared for work in their field. "I had no idea what to do with my degree (Social Sciences) after I was finished." "I did not feel very prepared when I actually stepped out into the actual business of [Visual and Performing Arts]. I was not equipped with any audition material or guidance on where or how to find auditions and get jobs." "I think that going to a college without graduate students left me with no idea whatsoever what graduate school would be like. I was heavily encouraged by most of my professors to apply to graduate school. I was accepted to a Ph. D. program and immediately realized I had no idea what I'd signed myself up for. I burned out after three years and haven't done anything related to my major (Natural Sciences) since." "I was happy with [my major] department while at Skidmore, but I now feel that there should have been a greater emphasis on specific technologies that are prevalent and real-world problem solving. Just one class that was focused on professional technology solutions would have been very helpful." "I think more information about careers that would be a good fit for one's interests - as well as requiring various courses on budgeting, personal finance, the realities of the work world, etc. - would have been extremely helpful to have."

Cost of Skidmore: Several respondents commented on the cost of Skidmore and the lack of financial aid.

Other: Respondents also commented positively on the value of athletic programs, the Tang Teaching Museum, and the Scribner Library.

The Office of Institutional Research
Skidmore College

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March 21, 2013

Appendix A: All Participating HEDS Institutions

Number of Respondents per Institution		
	10 Years Out (Class of 2001)	5 Years Out (Class of 2006)
Beloit College	68	90
California State - Monterey Bay	38	97
Clark University	25	143
Colgate	47	95
College of Saint Benedict	122	163
Davidson College	105	121
Drew University	37	53
Earlham College		140
George Washington University	128	350
Hamilton	101	144
Haverford College	42	67
Hobart & William Smith	90	93
Kenyon College	120	140
Lake Forest College	24	49
Linfield College	49	96
Luther College	165	156
Mills College	41	98
Oglethorpe University	26	20
Pepperdine University	42	91
Randolph College	29	43
Randolph-Macon College	25	36
Rollins College	22	26
Saint Anselm College	121	133
Scripps College	78	122
Sewanee: U. of the South	103	158
Skidmore	108	169
St. Lawrence	71	146
St. Olaf College		144
Trinity University	89	110
Tufts University		195
Union College	60	100
University of Miami		303
University of Notre Dame		622
Willamette University	95	117
Wittenberg University	83	88
Valid Cases	2287	4718

Appendix B. Supplementary Tables

Table B1.

To what extent did your experience as an undergraduate contribute to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	5 Year Out			10 Year Out		
	Skidmore	NY6	HEDS	Skidmore	NY6	HEDS
Careful reading	83%	87%	86%	85%	85%	85%
Critical thinking	89%	93%	92%	89%	93%	91%
Creative thinking	79%	80%	78%	85%	80%	79%
Information literacy	86%	85%	87%	87%	87%	88%
Quantitative literacy	60%	75%	74%	73%	74%	74%
Effective writing	87%	89%	87%	90%	87%	87%
Effective speaking	64%	74%	72%	70%	71%	71%
Teamwork	68%	71%	73%	69%	70%	72%
Problem solving	72%	78%	79%	81%	77%	78%
Civic engagement	44%	50%	60%	39%	53%	57%
Intercultural knowledge and competence	61%	65%	70%	50%	61%	67%
Ethical reasoning	75%	67%	77%	63%	73%	74%
Integrative thinking	83%	81%	84%	78%	80%	82%

4-point scale – answered “Sufficiently” or “Considerably”

Table B2.

% Indicating Participation in:	5 Year Out			10 Year Out		
	Skidmore	NY6	HEDS	Skidmore	NY6	HEDS
Student or campus government	5%	5%	14%	6%	6%	15%
Intercollegiate athletics	12%	24%	23%	12%	23%	24%
Intramural sports	4%	7%	17%	1%	7%	15%
Student publications	5%	3%	11%	4%	5%	12%
Performing arts/music	16%	11%	23%	20%	10%	22%
Political organizations or clubs	9%	8%	19%	7%	6%	19%
Community service	12%	13%	44%	6%	13%	37%
Religious groups	2%	4%	19%	2%	4%	16%
Internships	21%	22%	41%	13%	17%	39%
Study abroad	34%	43%	49%	28%	35%	42%
Service organizations	8%	9%	29%	7%	10%	24%
Multicultural student groups	3%	4%	15%	3%	6%	14%
Work with faculty on research	22%	19%	29%	10%	18%	25%
Independent study	25%	20%	31%	20%	20%	31%
On-campus employment	22%	20%	39%	14%	20%	39%
Off-campus employment	13%	7%	24%	10%	8%	28%

Of those indicating participation in the activity, to what extent did your experience with each of the following as an undergraduate contribute to your knowledge, skills, and personal development after you graduated?	5 Year Out			10 Year Out		
	Skidmore	NY6	HEDS	Skidmore	NY6	HEDS
Student or campus government	30%	32%	38%	31%	35%	40%
Intercollegiate athletics	56%	65%	38%	55%	70%	38%
Intramural sports	31%	34%	51%	22%	31%	49%
Student publications	30%	27%	42%	27%	31%	39%
Performing arts/music	54%	42%	52%	57%	47%	51%
Political organizations or clubs	44%	40%	50%	30%	36%	48%
Community service	41%	46%	83%	30%	40%	82%
Religious groups	39%	35%	39%	33%	33%	36%
Internships	61%	65%	58%	54%	61%	56%
Study abroad	84%	89%	54%	88%	91%	47%
Service organizations	56%	46%	54%	29%	41%	49%
Multicultural student groups	24%	33%	38%	30%	35%	36%
Work with faculty on research	69%	67%	47%	44%	59%	45%
Independent study	72%	72%	47%	73%	67%	48%
On-campus employment	65%	63%	64%	53%	58%	67%
Off-campus employment	66%	61%	39%	50%	54%	45%

4-point scale; percent answering "Sufficiently" or "Considerably"