

## Spring 2015 Survey of Graduating Seniors

During spring 2015, Portland State University (PSU) surveyed graduating seniors about their undergraduate experiences and post-graduation plans. The survey was emailed to 2,112 students who had applied to graduate with a bachelor's degree at the end of Spring Term. A total of 667 students (32 percent) completed the survey. Respondent demographic characteristics closely mirrored those of the PSU undergraduate population.<sup>1</sup>

This paper summarizes the initial survey findings. Complete data tables are included in Appendix B.

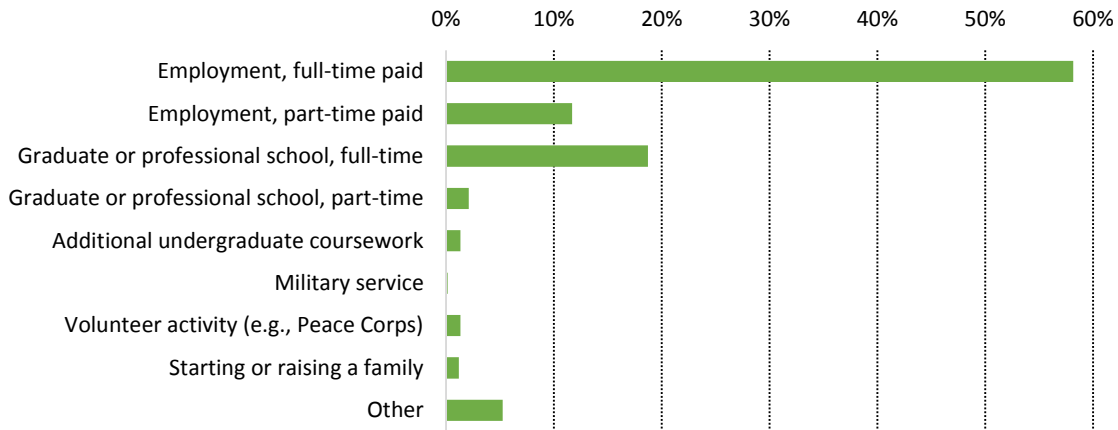
### HIGHLIGHTS

- The majority of respondents – 70 percent – planned to work, either full time or part time, after graduation.
- Over one in five respondents – 21 percent – planned to continue their education by entering graduate or professional school; many planned to continue their studies in graduate programs at PSU.
- Of those who planned to work, nearly two-thirds planned to work in the Portland metro area.
- In addition to their studies and campus involvement, about three-quarters of respondents had worked during their undergraduate careers at PSU.
- For most students, the PSU experience included a variety of campus activities and community involvement.

### Plans after Graduation

Employment. The majority of respondents – 70 percent – indicated that they planned to work after graduation, while another 21 percent said they planned to attend graduate or professional school. Included among those who planned to work were 58 percent who planned to work full time and 12 percent who planned to work part time. Of those who planned to attend graduate or professional school, 19 percent planned to attend full time and two percent planned to attend part time. In total, nine out of ten of PSU's graduating seniors (91 percent) planned either to work or attend graduate school after graduation. (See Figure 1.)

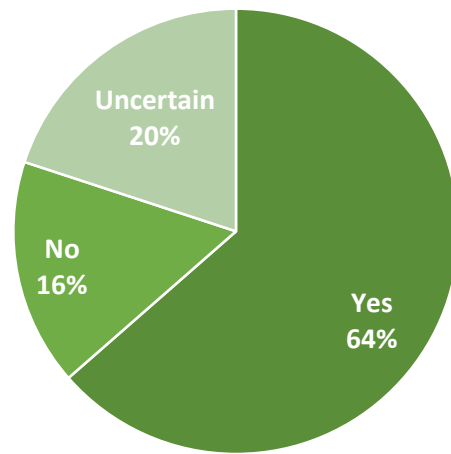
Figure 1: What is MOST LIKELY to be your main activity upon graduation?



N = 667  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

Of those who planned to work, 64 percent planned to do so in the Portland metro area, compared to 16 percent who planned to work elsewhere. The remaining students (20 percent) were uncertain. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2: Do you plan to work in the Portland metropolitan area?

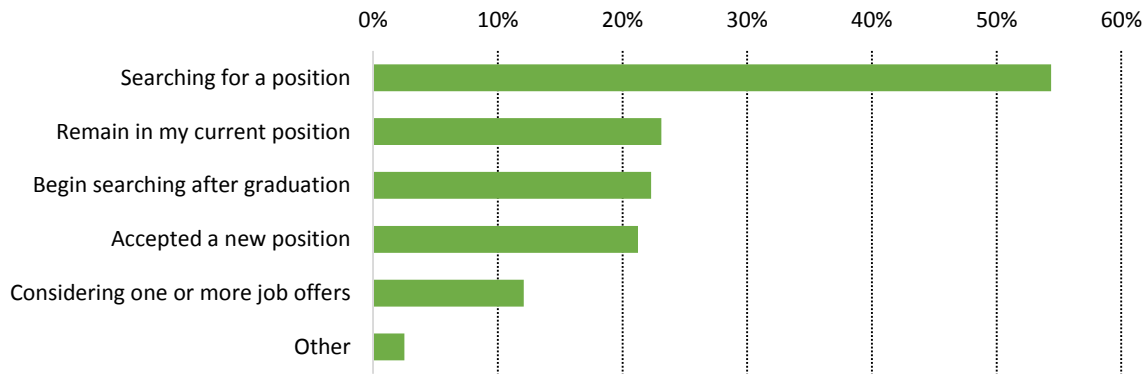


N = 461  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

While most respondents expected to work after graduation, not all had found their “dream job.”<sup>2</sup> About three out of four planned to look for a new position after graduating. This included those who anticipated searching for a new position immediately after graduation (54 percent) and those who planned to begin searching sometime later (22 percent).

On the other hand, many students had more concrete plans. About a quarter of respondents planned to remain in their current positions, 21 percent had accepted a new position, and another 12 percent were considering one or more job offers. (See Figure 3.)

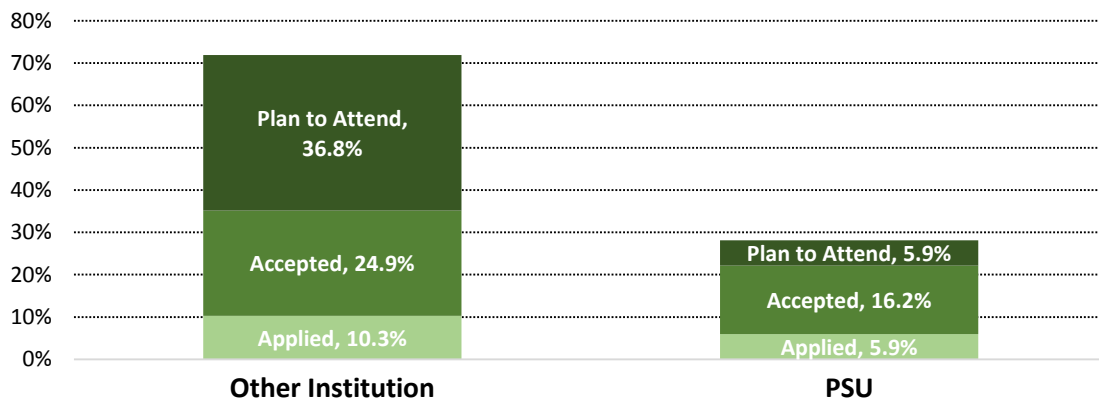
Figure 3: Which of the following best describes your employment plans immediately after graduation? (Check all that apply.)



N = 462  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

**Graduate or Professional School.** As mentioned above, more than one in five graduating seniors planned to attend graduate school after completing their bachelor’s degrees at PSU. About 22 percent of these students had applied or been accepted at PSU and another six percent planned to attend PSU in future. A larger group, 35 percent, had applied or been accepted at another institution and another 37 percent planned to attend another institution in future. (See Figure 4.)

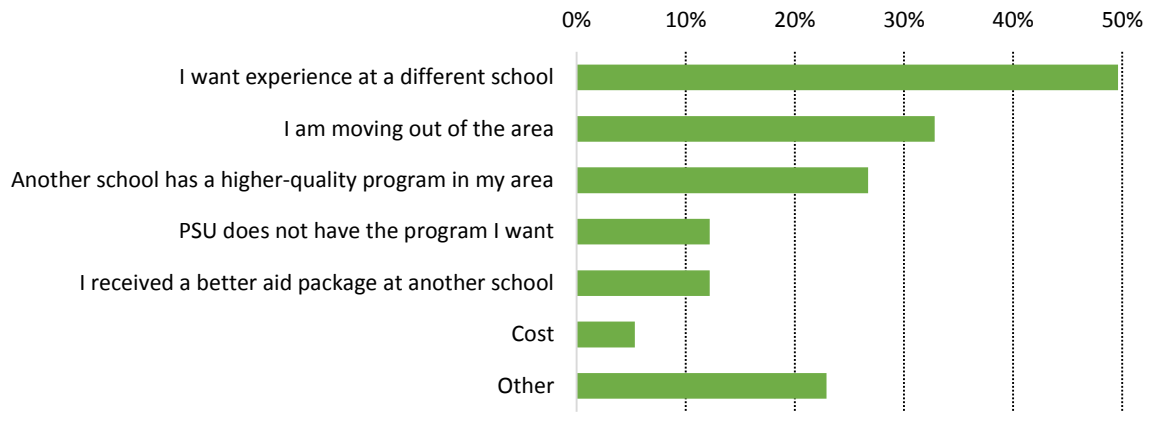
Figure 4: Which of the following best describes your graduate or professional school status after graduation?



N = 185  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

**Choice of Institution.** When asked about their reasons for choosing to attend a school other than PSU, about half said they wanted an experience at a different school. Additionally, about a third said they were moving out of the area, and a quarter felt that another school would have a higher quality program in their field of study. Cost of attendance was a factor for only about five percent of this group. (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5: Why have you chosen to go to a school other than PSU? (Check all that apply.)



N = 131  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

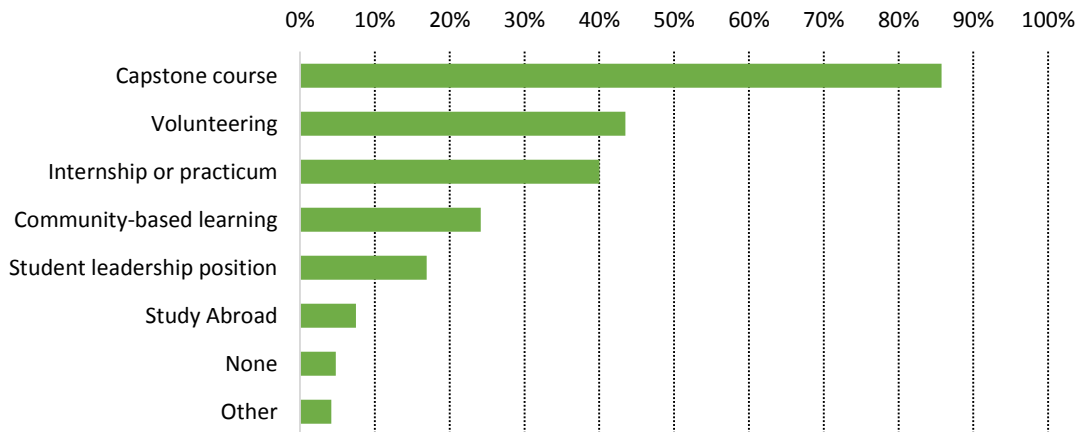
## The Portland State Experience

**Engagement.** PSU students are involved in many activities on campus and in the community and this group of graduating seniors was no exception. In addition to coursework in their majors, many students had participated in Capstone Courses, been involved in volunteer or community-based activities, or had gained internship or other work experience.

**Community-Based Learning.** Senior Capstone courses are part of the University Studies general education requirements and are intended to prepare students to be productive and engaged citizens. Each community-based learning course is designed to bring students from a variety of disciplines together to apply what they have learned in the classroom to issues facing the Portland metropolitan area.<sup>3</sup>

Not surprisingly, then, 86 percent of graduating seniors reported having participated in the Capstone Program. Many students also had been involved in other community-based experiences, including volunteering (44 percent), internships (40 percent), community-based learning courses (24 percent), student leadership positions (17 percent), and study abroad experiences (7 percent). Less than five percent of graduating seniors reported not having been involved in any of these experiences. (See Figure 6.)

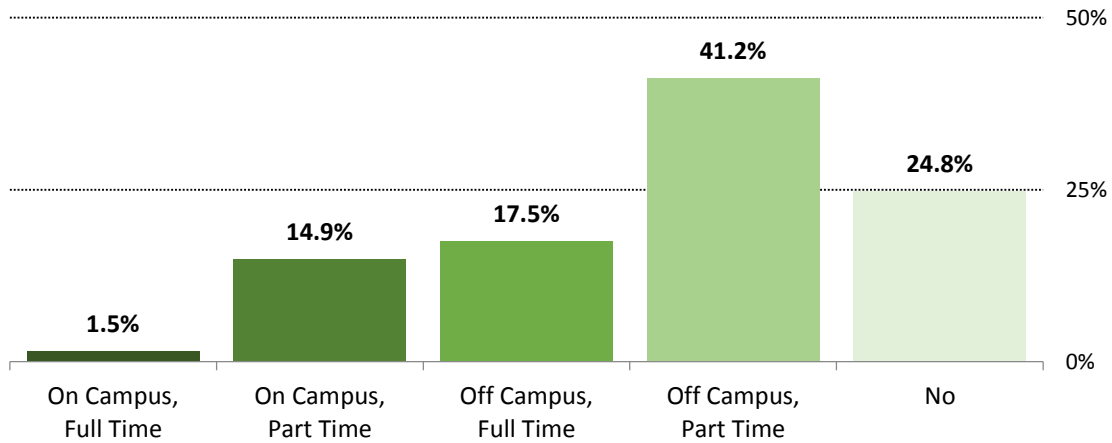
Figure 6: Did you participate in any of the following experiences while studying at PSU?



N = 462  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

**Student Employment.** In addition to coursework and student activities, about three-quarters of respondents reported that they had worked while pursuing their degrees. About 41 percent had worked in part-time, off-campus jobs, while another 18 percent had worked in off-campus, full-time jobs. About 15 percent had worked on campus, part time, and another two percent had worked on campus, full time. Taken together, about 19 percent of respondents had worked full time and about 56 percent had worked part time. Only about a quarter of respondents indicated that they had not been employed for pay while enrolled at PSU. (See Figure 7.)

Figure 7: Were you employed for pay during your enrollment at PSU?

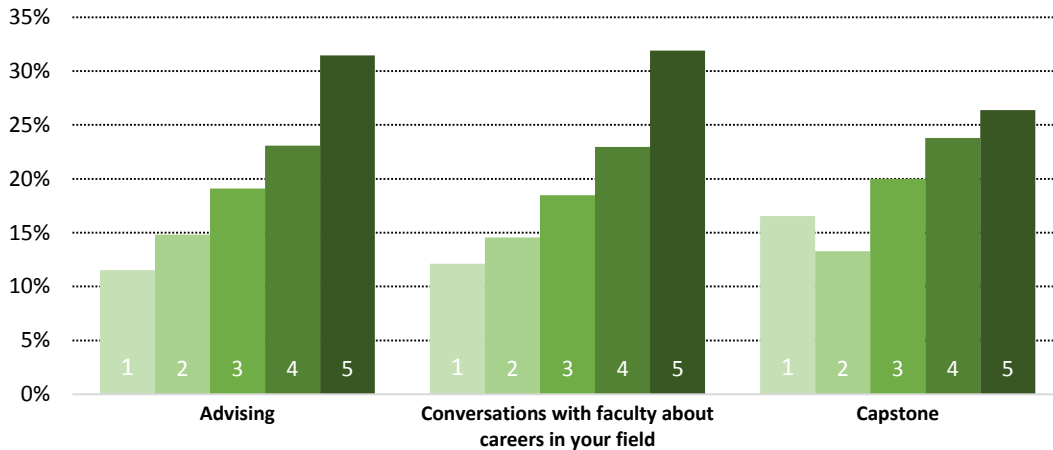


N = 656  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

**Student Services.** Students were asked to use a five-point scale to rate how helpful various student services were in helping them plan for careers or graduate or professional education. While many students reported that they had not used these services, responses show that "Advising" and "Conversations with Faculty about Careers" were the most helpful to students in developing their post-graduation plans. Responses regarding the Capstone Program were

more mixed, but also showed that students found it a helpful resource in developing their future plans. (See Figure 8.)

*Figure 8: Share of respondents indicating helpfulness of the following student services in career or graduate/professional school planning. (1 = not helpful at all; 5 = very helpful)*



Note: Limited to respondents who rated each service. N varies by service. See Appendix B for complete data tables.  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

## Conclusion

PSU’s survey of spring 2015 graduating seniors offers some initial insights into students’ experiences at Portland State and their post-graduation plans. Most respondents indicated that they planned to work or continue their education following completion of their bachelor’s degrees. Of those planning to work, nearly two-thirds planned to do so in the Portland metro area and more than a quarter of those planning to attend graduate or professional school planned to enroll in a program at PSU. While students took part in on-campus activities and used a variety of student services, most also worked while enrolled as undergraduates.

All indications are that the graduating seniors of spring 2015 were a diverse group of students, with well-rounded experiences, poised for success.

<sup>1</sup> Please see Appendix A for a complete profile of the respondents and survey recipients.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that this question allowed students to select multiple responses. For example, if a student’s plans immediately after graduation included remaining in her current position and searching for a new position, she could appropriately indicate that in her response. Therefore, these percentages do not sum to 100 percent.

<sup>3</sup> University Studies, Portland State University, Senior Capstone Courses, accessed July 15, 2015, available at <https://www.pdx.edu/unst/senior-capstone-courses>.

## Appendix A: Respondent Profile

Students					
General Population of Seniors			Respondents		
Total	2,112		Total ( <i>Response Rate: 31.6%</i> )	667	
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Gender</b>		
F	1,225	58.0%	F	445	66.7%
M	858	40.6%	M	210	31.5%
N	29	1.4%	N	12	1.8%
<b>Admissions Status</b>			<b>Admissions Status</b>		
GED	13	0.6%	GED	3	0.4%
Pre-HS Grad w/ no Coll Cred	371	17.6%	Pre-HS Grad w/ no Coll Cred	109	16.3%
Pre-HS Grad w/ Coll Cred	79	3.7%	Pre-HS Grad w/ Coll Cred	23	3.4%
HS Grad w/ 0-11 Coll Cred	50	2.4%	HS Grad w/ 0-11 Coll Cred	13	1.9%
HS Grad w/ 12-29 Coll Cred	45	2.1%	HS Grad w/ 12-29 Coll Cred	15	2.2%
Transfer 30-44 Hrs	97	4.6%	Transfer 30-44 Hrs	34	5.1%
Transfer 45-89 Hrs	498	23.6%	Transfer 45-89 Hrs	153	22.9%
Transfer 90-134 Hrs	760	36.0%	Transfer 90-134 Hrs	260	39.0%
Transfer 135+ Hrs	112	5.3%	Transfer 135+ Hrs	31	4.6%
Post Bac (General)-PB	74	3.5%	Post Bac (General)-PB	21	3.1%
Other	13	0.6%	Other	5	0.7%
<b>Citizenship</b>			<b>Citizenship</b>		
Citizen	1,952	92.4%	Citizen	641	96.1%
Non-Res Alien (Non-US Citizen)	51	2.4%	Non-Res Alien (Non-US Citizen)	6	0.9%
Res Alien (Permanent Resident)	101	4.8%	Res Alien (Permanent Resident)	20	3.0%
Substantial Presence/NRA	8	0.4%	Substantial Presence/NRA	0	0.0%
<b>Residency</b>			<b>Residency</b>		
Non-Resident	286	13.5%	Non-Resident	84	12.6%
Resident	1,826	86.5%	Resident	583	87.4%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	17	0.8%	American Indian or Alaskan Native	3	0.4%
Asian	173	8.2%	Asian	32	4.8%
Black or African American	68	3.2%	Black or African American	16	2.4%
Hispanic / Latino	215	10.2%	Hispanic / Latino	68	10.2%
Multi-Ethnic	121	5.7%	Multi-Ethnic	36	5.4%
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	16	0.8%	Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	4	0.6%
White	1,502	71.1%	White	508	76.2%

*Spring 2015 Survey of Graduating Seniors*

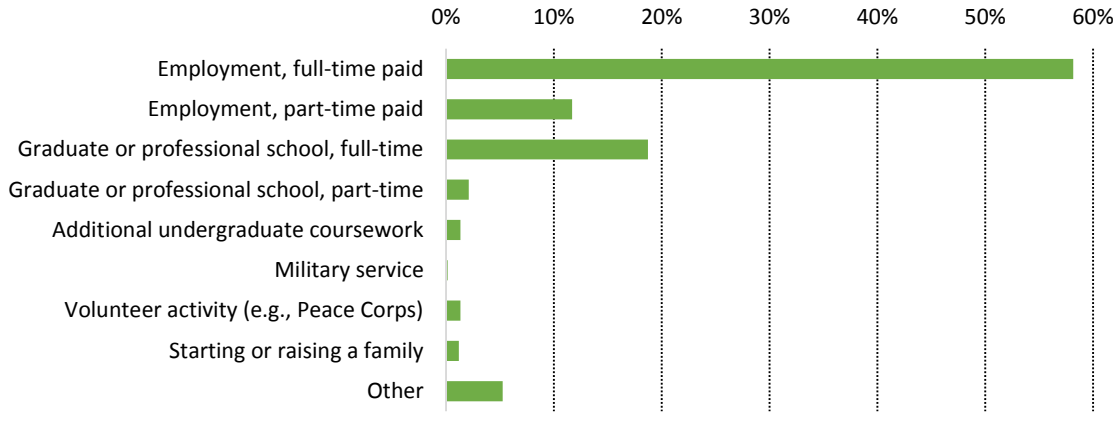
---

<b>Degree Applications</b>					
<b>Overall</b>			<b>Respondents</b>		
Total	2,152	100%	Total	675	100%
<b>Degree</b>			<b>Degree</b>		
BA -- Bachelor of Arts	701	32.6%	BA -- Bachelor of Arts	220	32.6%
BFA -- Bachelor of Fine Arts	8	0.4%	BFA -- Bachelor of Fine Arts	3	0.4%
BM -- Bachelor of Music	15	0.7%	BM -- Bachelor of Music	7	1.0%
BS -- Bachelor of Science	1,428	66.4%	BS -- Bachelor of Science	445	65.9%
<b>Top Majors</b>			<b>Top Majors</b>		
Psychology	184	8.6%	Psychology	54	8.0%
Health Ed	160	7.4%	Gen Studies Social Science	40	5.9%
Gen Studies Social Science	120	5.6%	Health Ed	39	5.8%
Gen Studies Arts and Letters	97	4.5%	Criminology & Criminal Justice	39	5.8%
Biology	93	4.3%	Gen Studies Arts and Letters	29	4.3%
Speech Communication	85	3.9%	Art	27	4.0%
Criminology & Criminal Justice	80	3.7%	Biology	26	3.9%
Art	78	3.6%	Mechanical Engineer	22	3.3%
Gen Studies Science	73	3.4%	Bus Ad: Accounting	21	3.1%
Mechanical Engineer	68	3.2%	Gen Studies Science	21	3.1%



## Appendix B: Results

What is MOST LIKELY to be your main activity upon graduation?

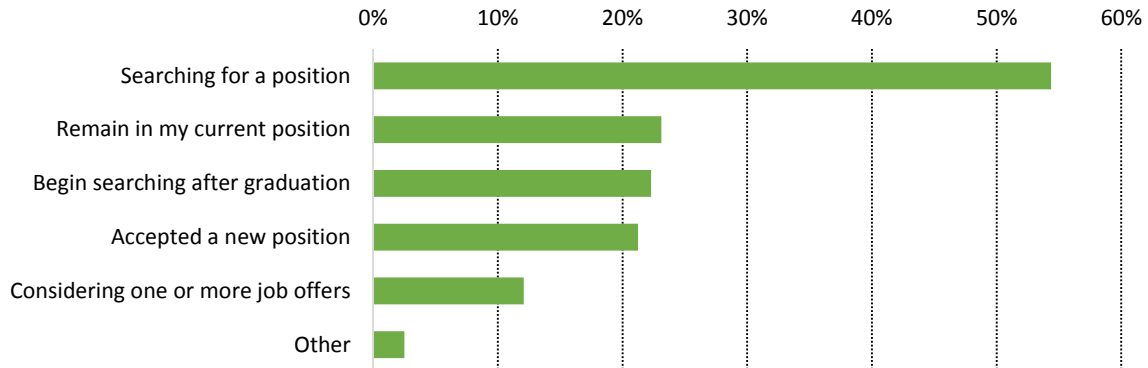


N = 667

Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

What is MOST LIKELY to be your main activity upon graduation?	Share	Response
Employment, full-time paid	58.2%	388
Employment, part-time paid	11.7%	78
Graduate or professional school, full-time	18.7%	125
Graduate or professional school, part-time	2.1%	14
Additional undergraduate coursework	1.3%	9
Military service	0.1%	1
Volunteer activity (e.g., Peace Corps)	1.3%	9
Starting or raising a family	1.2%	8
Other	5.2%	35
Total	100.0%	667

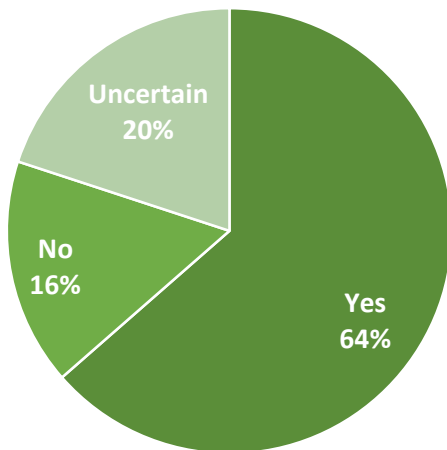
Which of the following best describes your employment plans immediately after graduation? (Check all that apply.)



N = 462  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

Which of the following best describes your employment plans immediately after graduation? (Check all that apply.)	Share	Response
Searching for a position	54.4%	261
Remain in my current position	23.1%	111
Begin searching after graduation	22.3%	107
Accepted a new position	21.3%	102
Considering one or more job offers	12.1%	58
Other	2.5%	12
Total respondents		462

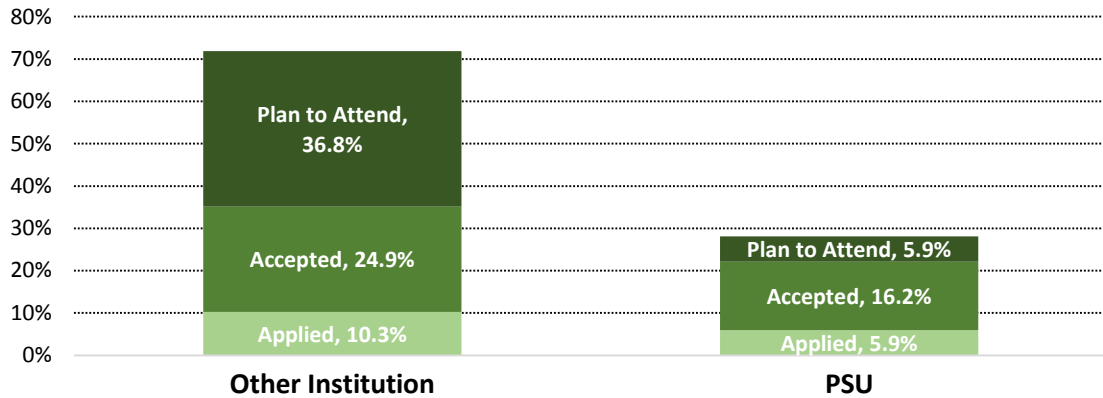
Do you plan to work in the Portland metropolitan area?



Do you plan to work in the Portland metropolitan area?	Share	Response
Yes	63.6%	293
No	16.5%	76
Uncertain	20.0%	92
Total	100.0%	461

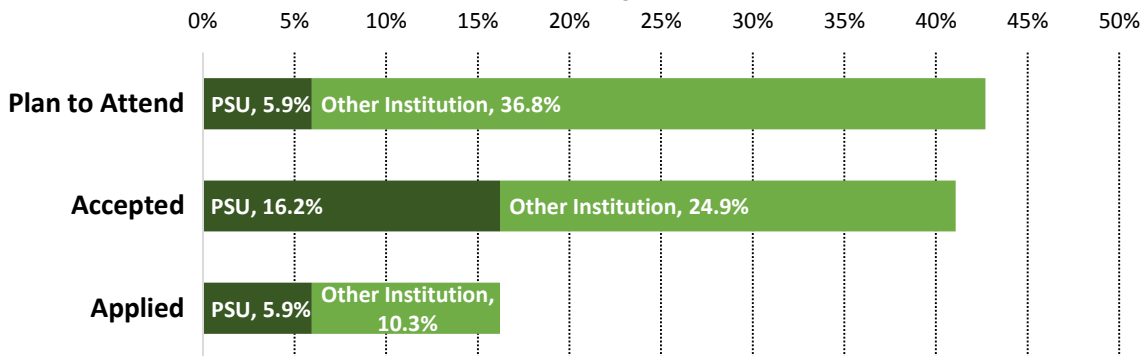
N = 461  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

Which of the following best describes your graduate or professional school status after graduation?



N = 185  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

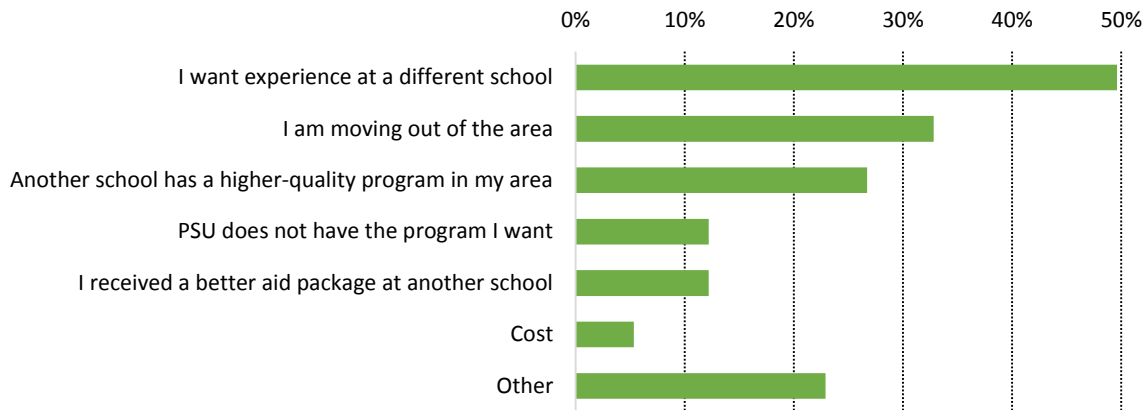
Which of the following best describes your graduate or professional school status after graduation?



N = 185  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

Which of the following best describes your graduate or professional school status after graduation?	Share	Response
Applied for graduate/professional school	10.3%	19
Applied for graduate/professional school at PSU	5.9%	11
Accepted into a graduate/professional program	24.9%	46
Accepted into a graduate/professional program at PSU	16.2%	30
Plan to attend graduate/professional school at a later date	36.8%	68
Plan to attend graduate/professional school at a later date at PSU	5.9%	11
Total	100.0%	185

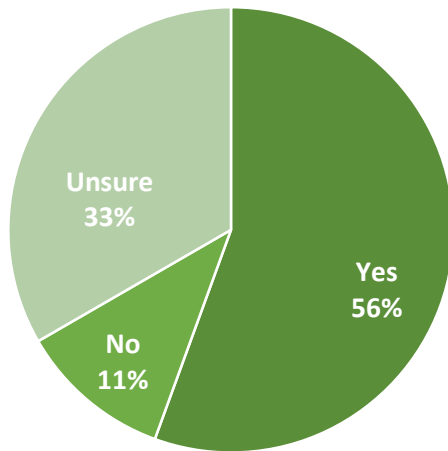
Why have you chosen to go to a school other than PSU? (Check all that apply.)



N = 131  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

Why have you chosen to go to a school other than PSU? (Check all that apply.)	Share	Response
I want experience at a different school	49.6%	65
I am moving out of the area	32.8%	43
Another school has a higher-quality program in my area	26.7%	35
Other	22.9%	30
PSU does not have the program I want	12.2%	16
I received a better aid package at another school	12.2%	16
Cost	5.3%	7
Total Responses		131

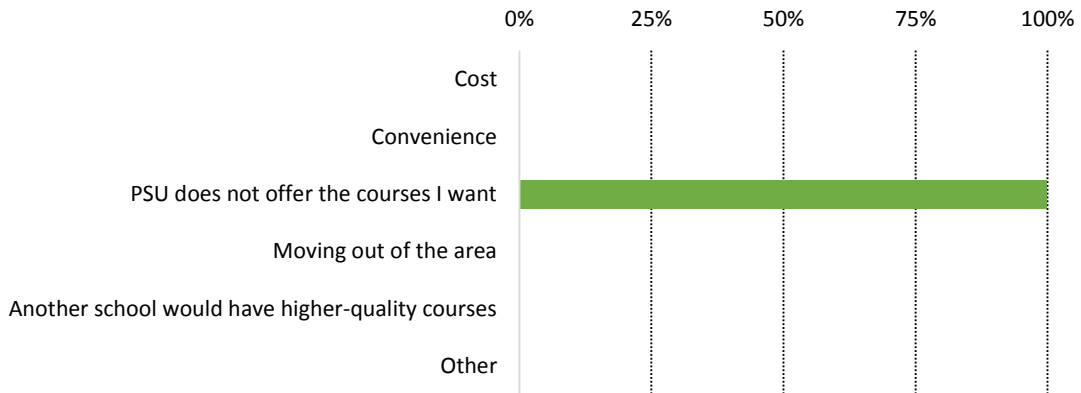
Do you plan to enroll for additional undergraduate coursework at PSU?



Do you plan to enroll for additional undergraduate coursework at PSU?	Share	Response
Yes	55.6%	5
No	11.1%	1
Unsure	33.3%	3
Total Responses	100%	9

N = 9  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

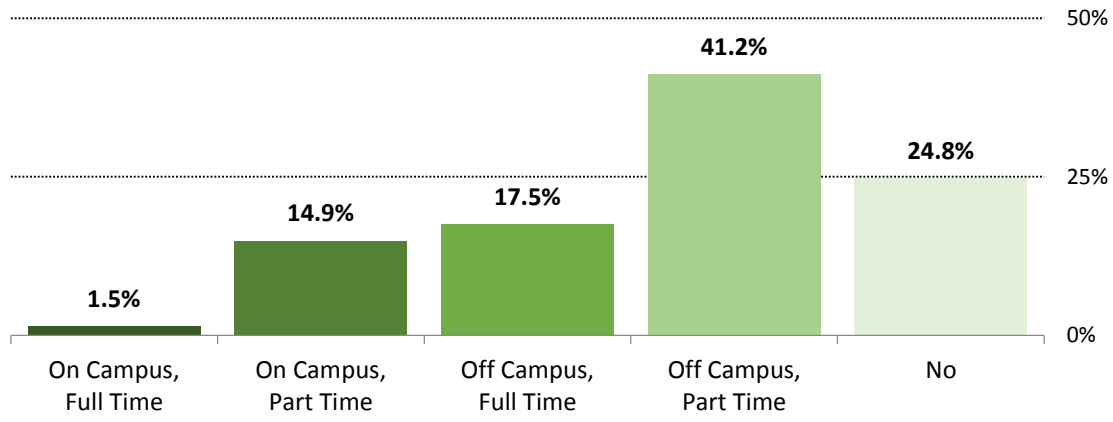
If not, why have you chosen to go to another school? (Check all that apply.)



N = 1  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

If not, why have you chosen to go to another school? (Check all that apply.)	Share	Response
Cost	0.0%	0
Convenience	0.0%	0
PSU does not offer the courses I want	100.0%	1
Moving out of the area	0.0%	0
Another school would have higher-quality courses	0.0%	0
Other	0.0%	0
Total Responses	100.0%	1

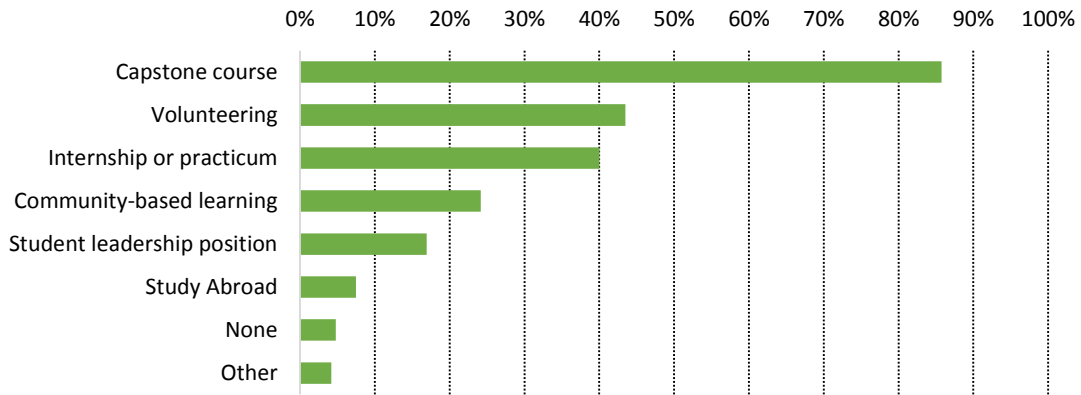
Were you employed for pay during your enrollment at PSU?



N = 656  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

Were you employed for pay during your enrollment at PSU? (Full time = 40 hours per week.)	Share	Response
Yes, on-campus job, full-time	1.5%	10
Yes, on-campus job, part-time	14.9%	98
Yes, off-campus job, full-time	17.5%	115
Yes, off-campus job, part-time	41.2%	270
No	24.8%	163
Total Responses	100.0%	656

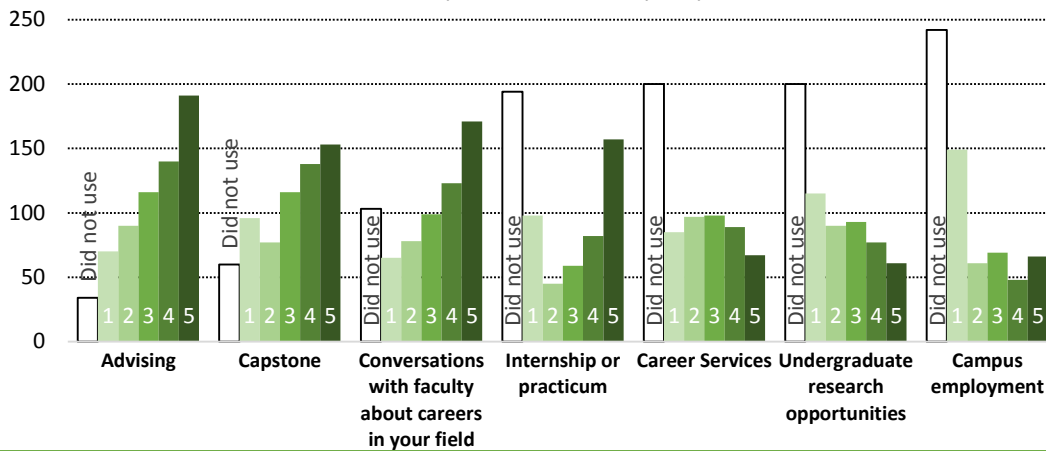
Did you participate in any of the following experiences while studying at PSU?



N = 462  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

Did you participate in any of the following experiences while studying at PSU? (Check all that apply.)	Share	Response
Capstone course	85.8%	572
Volunteering	43.5%	290
Internship or practicum	40.0%	267
Community-based learning	24.1%	161
Student leadership position	16.9%	113
Study Abroad	7.5%	50
None	4.8%	32
Other	4.2%	28
Total Responses		667

Number of respondents indicating how helpful the following student services were in career or graduate/professional school planning.  
(1 = not helpful at all; 5 = very helpful)

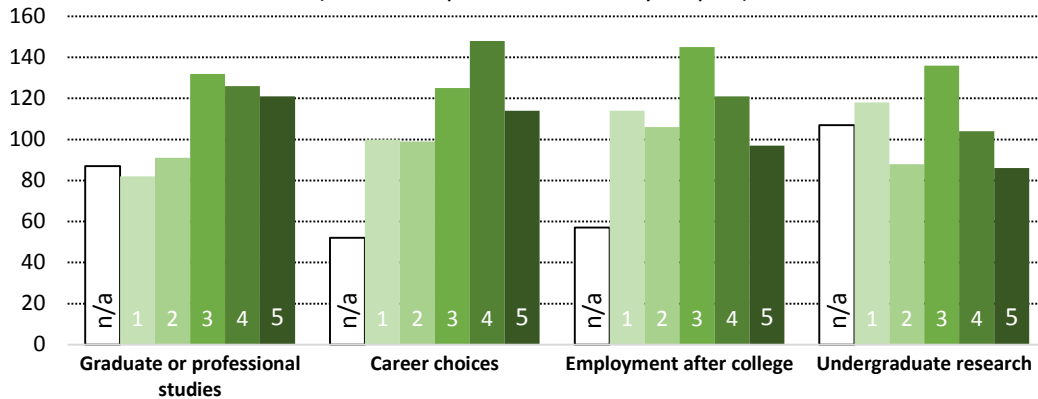


N varies by service. See table.  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

Please use the following scale to indicate how helpful the following student services were in your career or graduate/professional school planning.							
(1 = not helpful at all; 5 = very helpful)	1	2	3	4	5	Did not use	Total
Advising	70	90	116	140	191	34	641
Capstone	96	77	116	138	153	60	640
Conversations with faculty about careers in your field	65	78	99	123	171	103	639
Internship or practicum	98	45	59	82	157	194	635
Career Services	85	97	98	89	67	200	636
Undergraduate research opportunities	115	90	93	77	61	200	636
Campus employment	149	61	69	48	66	242	635
Other	20	8	10	4	9	157	208
Please use the following scale to indicate how helpful the following student services were in your career or graduate/professional school planning.							
	1	2	3	4	5	Did not use	Total
	Share of ranked responses					Share of All	
Advising	12%	15%	19%	23%	31%	5%	100%
Capstone	17%	13%	20%	24%	26%	9%	100%
Conversations with faculty about careers in your field	12%	15%	18%	23%	32%	16%	100%
Internship or practicum	22%	10%	13%	19%	36%	31%	100%
Career Services	19%	22%	22%	20%	15%	31%	100%
Undergraduate research opportunities	26%	21%	21%	18%	14%	31%	100%
Campus employment	38%	16%	18%	12%	17%	38%	100%
Other	39%	16%	20%	8%	18%	75%	100%



Number of respondents indicating how helpful their academic department was in preparing them for the following.  
(1 = not helpful at all; 5 = very helpful)



N varies by individual option. See table.  
Source: PSU Senior Exit Survey, Spring 2015

Please use the following scale to indicate how helpful your academic department was in preparing you for the following:							
(1 = not helpful at all; 5 = very helpful)	1	2	3	4	5	n/a	Total
Graduate or professional studies	82	91	132	126	121	87	639
Career choices	100	99	125	148	114	52	638
Employment after college	114	106	145	121	97	57	640
Undergraduate research	118	88	136	104	86	107	639

Please use the following scale to indicate how helpful your academic department was in preparing you for the following:							
(1 = not helpful at all; 5 = very helpful)	1	2	3	4	5	n/a	Total
	Share of ranked responses					Share of All	
Graduate or professional studies	15%	16%	24%	23%	22%	14%	100%
Career choices	17%	17%	21%	25%	19%	8%	100%
Employment after college	20%	18%	25%	21%	17%	9%	100%
Undergraduate research	22%	17%	26%	20%	16%	17%	100%