

POST-COLLEGIATE LIFE SURVEY

Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Geneva, New York 14456

Classes of 1979, 1982, 1985, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2009, and 2010

Dear Alumnus/Alumna:

Greetings once again to the Classes of '79, '82, '85, '89, '93, '97, '01, '05, '06 and a new greeting to the classes of '09 and '10! Your help is being requested in this ongoing (now monumental) sociological study of post-collegiate life among our graduates. As a member of one of these classes you are part of a very special research project that has now become a tradition at HWS with response rates that are unparalleled in any research on college graduates. Indeed, this study is unique in all of higher education because it has kept going for so long and because so many of you continue to respond.

If you are a member of the class of '79, '82 or '85 you first received a Post-Collegiate Life Survey in 1987. The response to that survey was unprecedented (860 of you responded or 76%)! In the 1991 version of this survey the class of '89 was added and 1,151 of you responded (70%). About every four years thereafter I have continued to follow up by contacting each class previously surveyed and adding new cohorts to the study as well. I am extremely grateful that each time the majority has responded and many of you have sent in extra thoughts and comments. Reports on these surveys and related articles are available at my HWS Post-Collegiate Life Survey Project web site (<http://people.hws.edu/perkins/PCLrep.htm>).

The last survey took place in 2007 so in 2011 it's time to check back in with all of you to see what changes have taken place, what issues and experiences remain as persistent themes, and what new patterns are emerging in your lives. This year I am adding graduates from the classes of 2009 and 2010. Again the intention of this survey is to gain a more accurate picture of current life styles among graduates and assess the diversity of life transitions that have been experienced since college. All graduates of the eleven classes are being contacted by email (if available) or by regular mail and asked to complete the Post-Collegiate Life Survey regardless of whether or not you participated previously. Participation is anonymous as in past surveys and voluntary, of course, but every member of these classes is urged to respond so that all views and experiences among graduates from a variety of backgrounds will be adequately represented. The survey takes only about 15 minutes to complete and there are no other requirements or obligations associated with participating in this study.

The survey has traditionally concentrated on questions about 1) friendship patterns, 2) family transitions, 3) postgraduate education and vocational experiences, 4) health concerns such as alcohol use, smoking, eating patterns, and exercise, 5) personal value priorities, and 6) forgiveness in personal relationships. In the last two surveys and again in 2011, I have also included a series of questions asking you to reflect on the value of your HWS education from your vantage point today. These questions about HWS are particularly useful for evaluating what we provide to students in the long run.

As most of you know from past participation, this ongoing study is only about hearing your thoughts and experiences—no requests for money will follow, no other obligations are involved, and no strings attached. If you would like to see the aggregate results, I will be happy to provide them, and if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

I am very grateful for your help and continued interest in this study!

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