

**THE POST-COLLEGIATE LIFE SURVEY OF GRADUATES
OF HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES**

**REPORT ON
POST-GRADUATE PURSUITS, ASSESSMENTS OF
HWS ACADEMIC AND CO-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES,
AND WILLINGNESS TO RECOMMEND HWS TO FUTURE STUDENTS**

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INTRODUCTION

The Post-Collegiate Life (PCL) Survey is an ongoing research project designed and conducted by Professor Perkins at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (HWS) that assesses the social and vocational life course experiences of our graduates through a comprehensive survey (<http://people.hws.edu/perkins/PCLrep.htm>). The study was initiated in 1987 as an anonymous mail survey and at that time included the classes of 1979, 1982, and 1985. Subsequently, the survey has been conducted seven more times (1991-92, 1995-96, 1999-2000, 2003-04, 2007-08, 2011-12, and 2019-21). The option to respond to an online version of the same survey, also anonymously, was introduced in 2007-08. Graduates could choose to respond via U.S. mail or the internet and both options of response have remained available in subsequent administrations of the survey. Although both options for response were administered in formats where respondents remained anonymous, there was a separate mail and internet mechanism allowing respondents to provide an independently returned acknowledgement of participation in the survey, thus allowing for targeted follow-up of non-responders. Twelve more graduating classes were included over time (classes of 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2017, and 2018). Thus, the latest survey in 2019-21 included 15 graduating classes. All members of the selected graduating classes residing in the United States with a valid mail address or email address (or residing abroad with a valid e-mail address) were sent the PCL Survey and at least two subsequent invitations were sent to non-responders.

The PCL Survey explores post-collegiate experiences and attitudes on a variety of specific topics including graduate school training, occupational activities, family and parenting experiences, health and well-being, personal values, and social relationships. Beginning with the 2003-04 survey for the purpose of the 2004 Middle States accreditation review, the survey was expanded by adding a special focus section of 17 questions asking graduates to reflect on their undergraduate academic and co-curricular experiences and to assess the degree to which these experiences may have enhanced their intellectual capacities and improved their professional lives. These questions have remained in all subsequent administrations of the PCL survey. Additionally, in the 2007-08 survey, two more assessment questions about graduates' perspectives on the direction of HWS for the future and their willingness to recommend HWS to future students. These questions have also been retained in the subsequent surveys.

Given that the primary objective of this report is to provide an overview of HWS graduates' assessments of their academic and co-curricular experiences, the responses on all 19 assessment questions are included in this report. Data are drawn from the four most recent surveys of selected graduating classes, specifically, the 2003-04 survey of seven graduating classes (N= 1,483; 54% response), the 2007-08 survey of nine graduating classes (N=1,895; 53% response), the 2011-12 survey of 11 graduating classes (N=2,024; 46% response), and the 2019-21 survey of fifteen graduating classes (N=2,230; 35% response). The declining response rates observed over the last two decades were expected for three reasons. First, declining response rates to surveys, in general, has become a common experience as the population of the United States has been exposed to an increasingly large number of daily surveys (i.e., the growth of the internet and the increased ease of surveying has produced some survey fatigue). Second, achieving high response rates among graduates of the same class cohort over long periods of time becomes more difficult as it becomes harder to maintain correct contact information and to maintain the interest of graduates with less frequent contact and fewer personal connections to the institution as they grow older. Third, the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic which emerged during the most recent survey administration are likely to have deflated response rates to some degree.

The response rates from HWS graduates are, nevertheless, still remarkably high compared to the notoriously low response rates experienced in surveys of alums from other colleges and universities. Indeed, response rates for the HWS PCL survey have always been more than double what is often reported by other schools (see Appendix A) and, likewise, much higher than what is achieved in voluntary course evaluation surveys of undergraduates at HWS when conducted online outside of the classroom. Furthermore, it has been noted elsewhere in a study of six institutions of higher education that lower response rates to graduate surveys do not necessarily translate to unrepresentative results in terms of respondents' demographic characteristics or their evaluations of their college experience.¹ Also, survey results may be especially likely to be representative when the number of graduates responding is large and respondents are obtained by using the entire population of a graduating class as the sampling frame for that class rather than obtained from a preselected sample drawn from the larger population. The HWS PCL surveys have all produced quite large sample sizes and have used the entire graduating class cohort as the sampling frame in each survey (see Appendix B for a comparison of the college and graduating class cohort in the 2019-21 PCL survey sample to that of the actual population of these HWS graduates). In short, the PCL survey remains a standout among surveys of college graduates for its relatively high response rates and potential for representing a wide range of its graduating classes, despite the difficulties of reaching graduates over several decades in multiple surveys and the national trend of declining survey response rates.

Notes to readers:

- 1) There is a large amount of data presented in this report as a result of the many survey questions, graduating cohorts, and multiple time-periods involved in this research. This report is intended for a general readership, nonetheless. So visual charts are included for ease of interpretation in most instances.
- 2) To further simplify the presentation, this report dispenses with inserting all the details of confidence intervals around the percentages that describe the basic results of the latest survey as well as statistical tests of significance in reporting differences among time-periods. Because the sample sizes involved are very large, the margins of error in reports of basic percentages for survey items are no more than + or – 2 to 3% when reporting observed percentages close to 50% and far less when reporting very small or very large observed percentages. When the report describes differences between percentages in comparing the results for different groups, the differences described as notable or large are statistically significant.
- 3) The goal of this report is simply to provide the basic information about how HWS graduates have responded to PCL survey questions about their post-collegiate educational and occupational attainment as well as their retrospective evaluations about their HWS education and willingness to recommend HWS to future students. The purpose here is not to provide speculative interpretation as to why certain patterns appear. Also, the purpose is not to make recommendations based on the results, but rather, to simply provide the facts available from this extensive research project on HWS graduates (although there is much to celebrate or highlight here depending on the readers interests). Thus, no overall summary or general conclusion is provided. Various items presented in the following sections may be of interest to different readers.

¹ Lambert & Miller, 2014.

HWS GRADUATES' EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND VOCATIONS

The educational attainment of HWS graduates for the latest PCL survey (2019-21) is reported separately for two groups: 1) respondents of the selected graduating classes between 1979 and 2014, and 2) respondents of the classes of 2017 and 2018. The groups were examined separately regarding post-collegiate educational pursuits and degree attainment because members of the most recent graduating classes may not have had the requisite amount of time to enroll in and complete some degrees related to their vocational goals. Moreover, enrollment and completion of degrees may have been significantly disrupted for these most recent graduates due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which occurred within 2-3 years of their graduations from HWS.

The majority (58%) of HWS graduates who graduated between 1979 and 2014 had subsequently obtained an advanced degree by the time they completed the survey (sometime between 2019 and 2021). Also at this time, 5% of graduates were currently enrolled in an advanced degree program. Overall, 61% of graduates had either obtained an advanced degree or were currently enrolled in an advanced degree program.

Among survey respondents from the classes of 2017 and 2018, 8% had completed an advanced degree and 27% were currently enrolled in an advanced degree program. Overall, 34% of graduates from these two classes had either obtained an advanced degree or were currently enrolled in an advanced degree program.

Combining the respondents from all HWS classes surveyed, graduates had completed a wide variety of advanced degree programs. The most common degrees reported were, in order of prevalence, M.A. (15%), M.S. (10%), M.B.A. (7%), J.D./L.L.B. (7%), Ph. D. (4%), M.S.W. (2%), M.D. (2%), M. Ed. (1%), M.P.A. (1%), M.F.A. (1%), M.P.H. (1%). Additionally, 12% of graduates obtained other types of advanced degrees including, but not limited to, M.Div., M.S.N., M.S.E., D.D.S., D.V.M., Sci. D., Ed. D., M. Arch., and M. Phil. programs.

HWS graduates were asked to briefly indicate their current occupation. These descriptions were coded into occupational categories that were then grouped for the purpose of this report (see Table 1). The most common occupational groups for all HWS graduates are in the fields of administration, management, and personnel work; business; and education and academic research. These have been and continue to be the most prevalent occupational categories among graduates of HWS. There are significant disparities in occupational outcomes between graduates of both Hobart College and William Smith College, however. Hobart College graduates are particularly overrepresented in the field of business, whereas William Smith College graduates are overrepresented in the fields of education and academic research, and as homemakers or childcare providers.

TABLE 1

Vocational Fields of All HWS Graduates and by College in 2019-2021 PCL Survey

<i>Occupation Group</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Hobart</i>	<i>William Smith</i>
<i>Administration, management, and personnel work</i>	20%	21%	19%
<i>Business</i>	17%	28%	9%
<i>Education and academic research</i>	16%	10%	20%
<i>Health care related professions, counselors, therapy, and clergy</i>	9%	6%	10%
<i>Media and communications, advertising, fundraising, writing, publishing, arts, and entertainment</i>	7%	5%	8%
<i>Legal, law, and policy professions</i>	6%	8%	5%
<i>Science, technology, engineering, and math fields</i>	5%	6%	5%
<i>Full-time student</i>	5%	3%	6%
<i>Homemaker or childcare provider</i>	4%	<1%	7%
<i>Social services, government, police</i>	4%	4%	5%
<i>Other[†]</i>	4%	5%	3%
<i>Clerical work, skilled labor, unskilled labor</i>	2%	2%	2%
<i>Unemployed</i>	2%	1%	2%

[†]The “other” category includes occupations ranging from military service to chefs to fitness instructors.

ASSESSMENT OF HWS ACADEMIC AND CO-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES

This section presents data drawn from 17 questions on how graduates evaluate their HWS academic and co-curricular experiences in the order in which they were presented in the survey. These questions were included in the last four Post-Collegiate Life Survey administrations (2003-03, 2007-08, 2011-12, and 2019-21). (See Appendix C for the exact wording, response categories, and format of these questions.) For each of these questions the data from the 2019-21 survey are first presented in terms of how all respondents (combining all selected graduating cohorts from 1979 to 2018) most recently responded to the question (labeled as “A” in figures). Second, data on responses to the same question from each of the four surveys are presented to give a comparison of how evaluations of HWS based on the same question may be changing over time-periods (labeled as “B” in figures). To make assessments drawn from each survey time-period comparable, only graduates within the last 15 years of graduation are considered from each survey administration. (Otherwise, a comparison of all data at each survey time-point would include an expanding range of graduates over time with an increasingly older average age of respondents.) Thus, Table 2 below presents the subsets and characteristics of the respondents in the time-period comparisons (“B” figures) that will follow for each question.

TABLE 2
Sample Characteristics of Selected Respondent Groups Used for Time-Period Comparisons

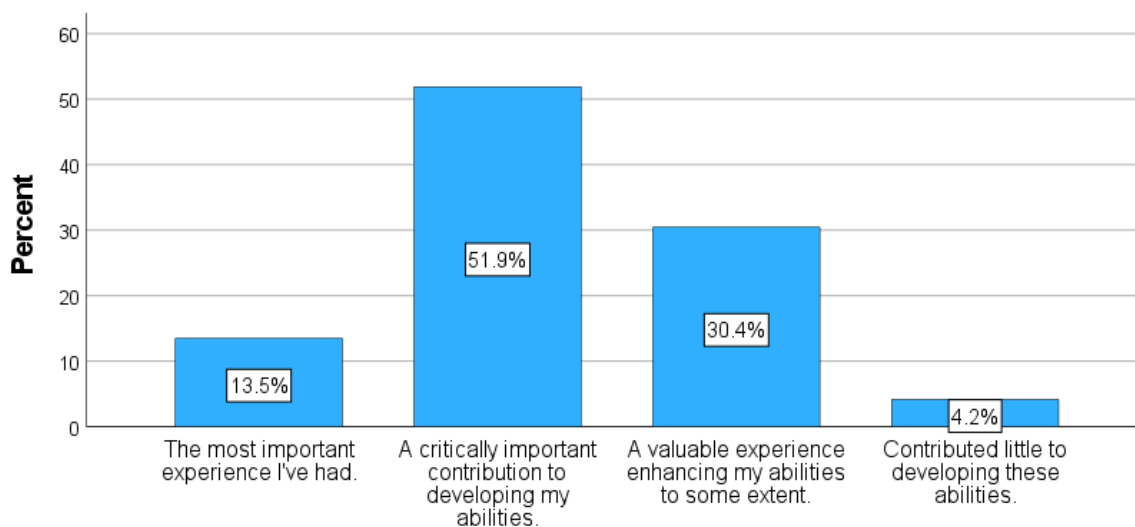
<i>Survey Time-Period</i>	<i>Graduating Class Cohorts</i>	<i>Sample Size (n)</i>	<i>Mean Age</i>
2003-04	1989, 1993, 1997, 2001	839	30.5
2007-08	1993, 1997, 2001, 2005	958	29.2
2011-12	1997, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010	1,027	27.5
2019-21	2005, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018	1,065	29.6

Evaluation Question 1 Results

Almost all HWS graduates (96%) say their undergraduate education was a valuable experience, at least to some extent, in enabling them to read, write, and think more clearly in their daily lives. Almost two-thirds (65%) believe that it was a “critically important contribution” or “the most important experience” they have had in enabling these skills (see Figure 1A).

FIGURE 1A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Survey Indicating the Importance of Their Undergraduate Education in Enabling Them to Read, Write, and Think More Clearly

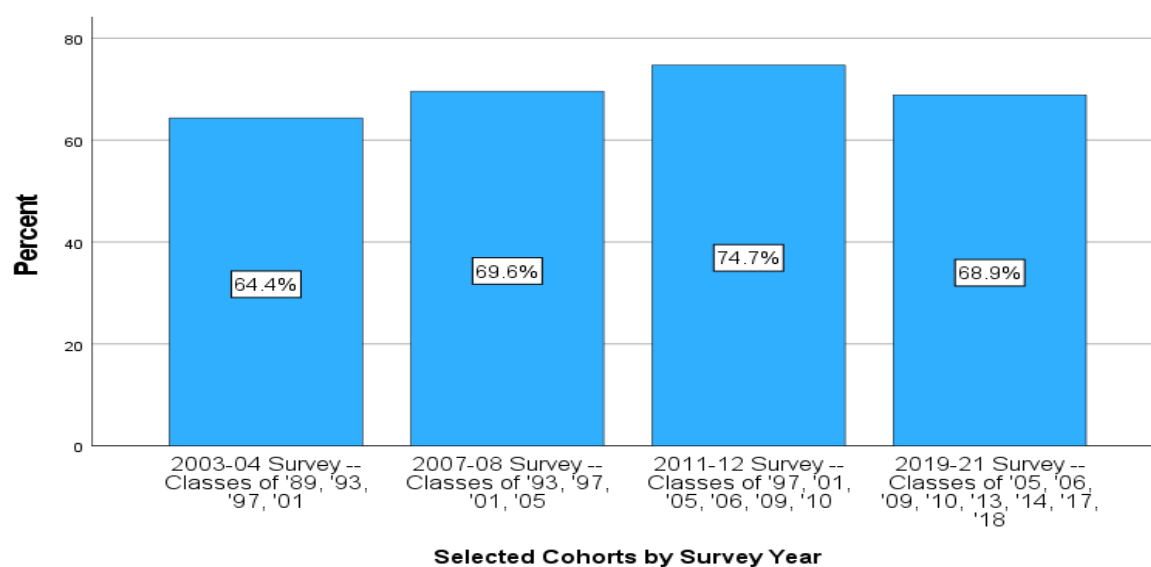


For alums who had graduated within the last 15 years, there were slight increases in indicating their HWS education was a “critically important contribution” or “the most important experience” in enabling them to read, write, and think in their daily lives in the 2007-08 and 2011-12 surveys. In the 2019-21 survey, that figure declined to 69% (see Figure 1B).

FIGURE 1B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time-Periods Indicating Their Undergraduate Experience Was a “Critically Important Experience” or the “Most Important Experience” in Enabling Them to Read, Write, and Think More Clearly

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

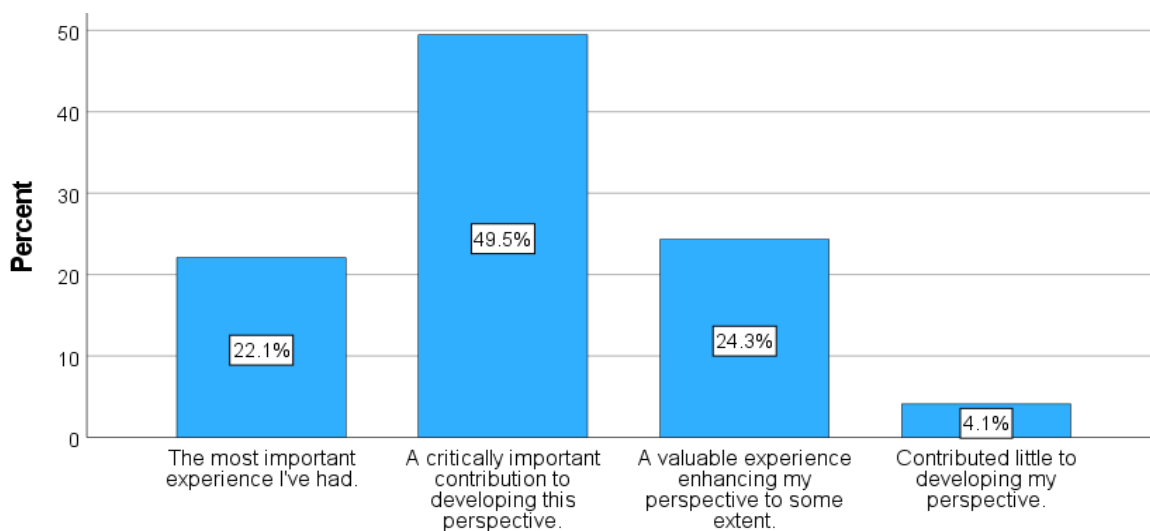


Evaluation Question 2 Results

About half (51%) of all graduates participated in an off-campus study program. Of those participating in an off-campus study program, 96% said that it was an important experience in developing a perspective on global interdependence and cross-cultural diversity. More than one in five graduates (22%) who participated in such a program said that it was “the most important experience” they have had in shaping their global and cultural outlook (see Figure 2A).

FIGURE 2A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Who Participated in an Off-Campus Study Program Indicating the Importance of that Program in Developing a Perspective on Global Interdependence and Cross-Cultural Diversity

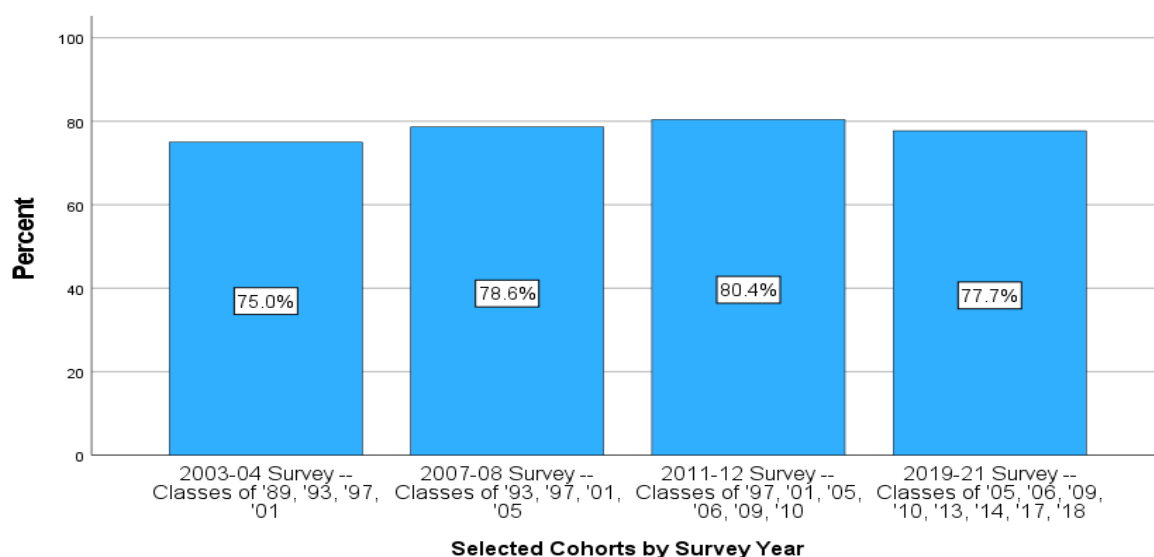


There is no clear or appreciable trend over time in the reported importance of off-campus study programs in developing a perspective on global interdependence and cross-cultural diversity between the 15-year post-collegiate cohort groups (see Figure 2B). At all time-points, about three-quarters (75-80%) rated the experience highly.

FIGURE 2B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods Who Participated in an Off-Campus Study Abroad Program Indicating That Their Off-Campus Study Program Was “The Most Important” or a “Critically Important Experience” in Developing a Perspective on Global Interdependence and Cross-Cultural Diversity

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

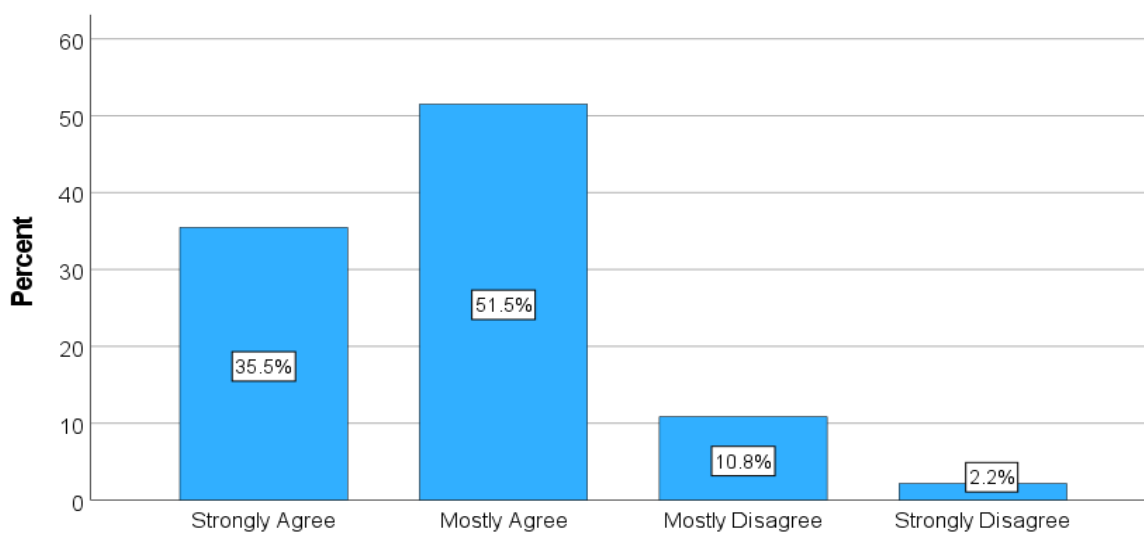


Evaluation Question 3 Results

A large majority (87%) of graduates “strongly” or “mostly” agree that their HWS education gave them important skills to live in a diverse world, regardless of any off-campus study experience (see Figure 3A).

FIGURE 3A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Agreeing/Disagreeing That Their HWS Education Gave Important Skills (Practical or Otherwise) to Live in a Diverse World, Regardless of Participation in Off-Campus Study

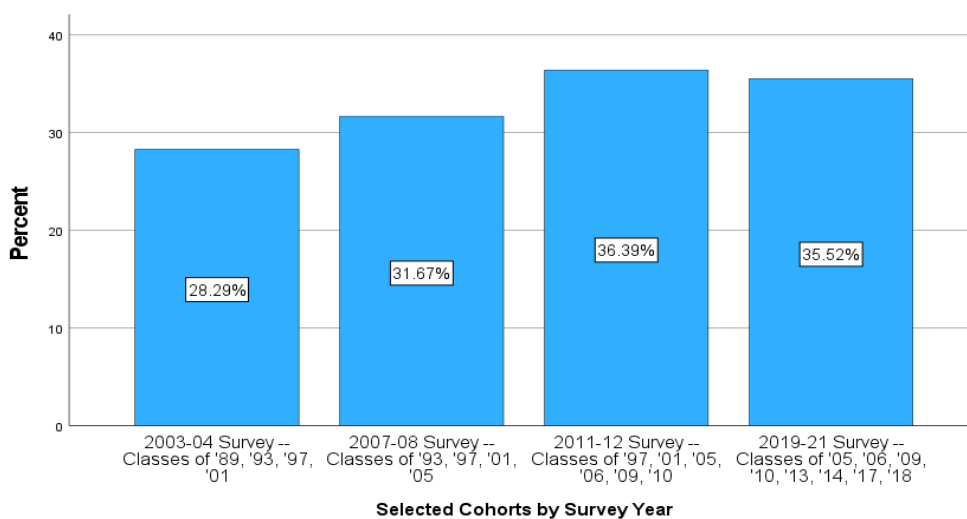


Between 2003-04 and 2011-12 there was a notable increase in post-graduate cohort groups “strongly” agreeing that their HWS education gave them important skills (practical or otherwise) to live in a diverse world, regardless of off-campus study experience see Figure 3B).

FIGURE 3B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods “Strongly” Agreeing That Their HWS Education Gave Important Skills (Practical and Otherwise) to Live in a Diverse World, Regardless of Participation in Off-Campus Study

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

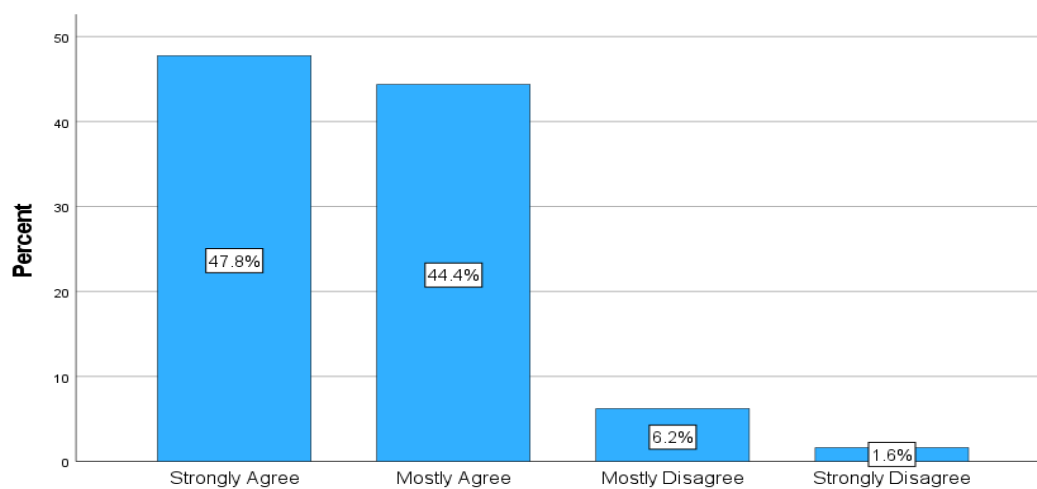


Evaluation Question 4 Results

More than nine in ten HWS graduates (92%) agree that the interdisciplinary studies offered at HWS were a valuable experience in their intellectual development (see Figure 4A).

FIGURE 4A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Agreeing/Disagreeing That the Interdisciplinary Studies Offered at HWS Were a Valuable Experience in Their Intellectual Development

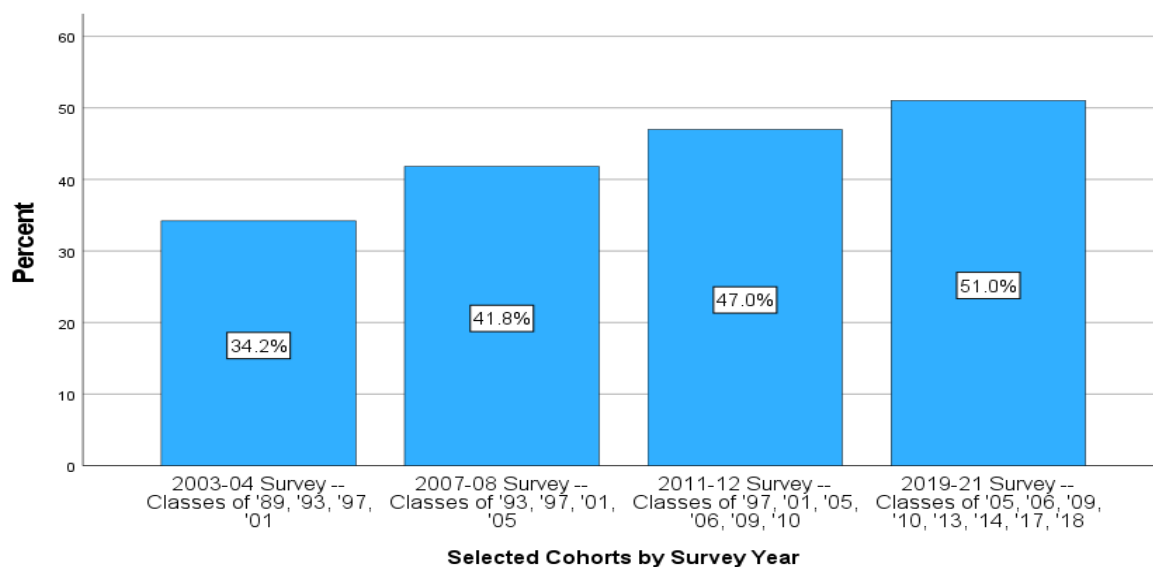


There has been a steady increase over time in the percentage of recent graduates “strongly” agreeing that the interdisciplinary studies offered at HWS were a valuable experience in their intellectual development (see Figure 4B). More than half of alums within 15 years of graduation in the 2019-2021 survey “strongly” agreed that the interdisciplinary studies were valuable.

FIGURE 4B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods “Strongly” Agreeing That the Interdisciplinary Studies Offered at HWS Were a Valuable Experience in Their Intellectual Development

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

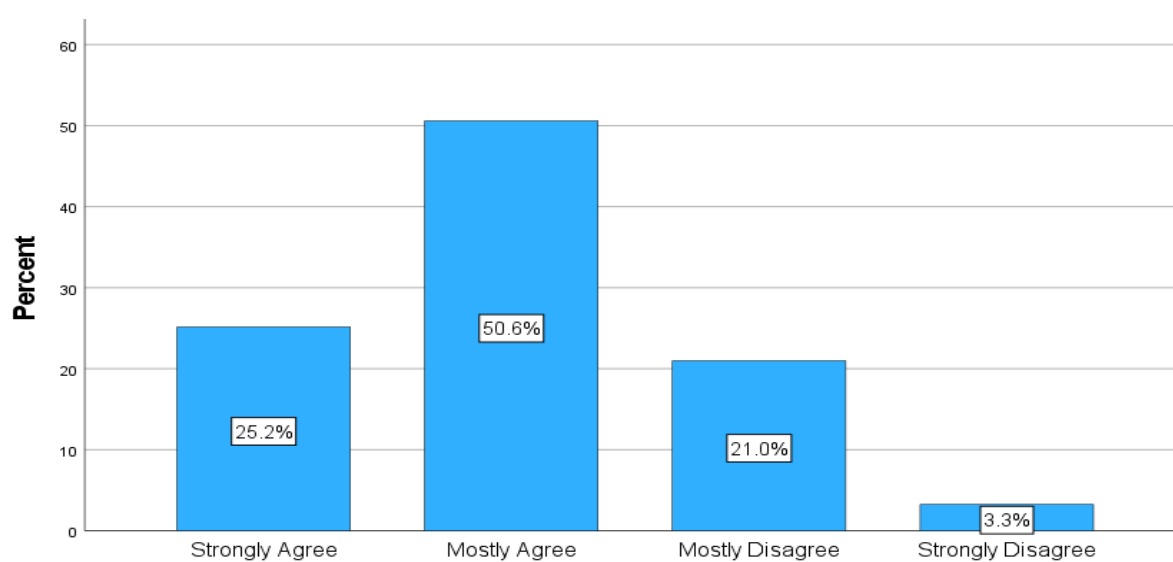


Evaluation Question 5 Results

About three-quarters (75%) of graduates agree that their HWS education cultivated in them an understanding of the public good and public needs (see Figure 5A).

FIGURE 5A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Agreeing/Disagreeing That Their HWS Education Cultivated in Them an Understanding of the Public Good and Public Needs

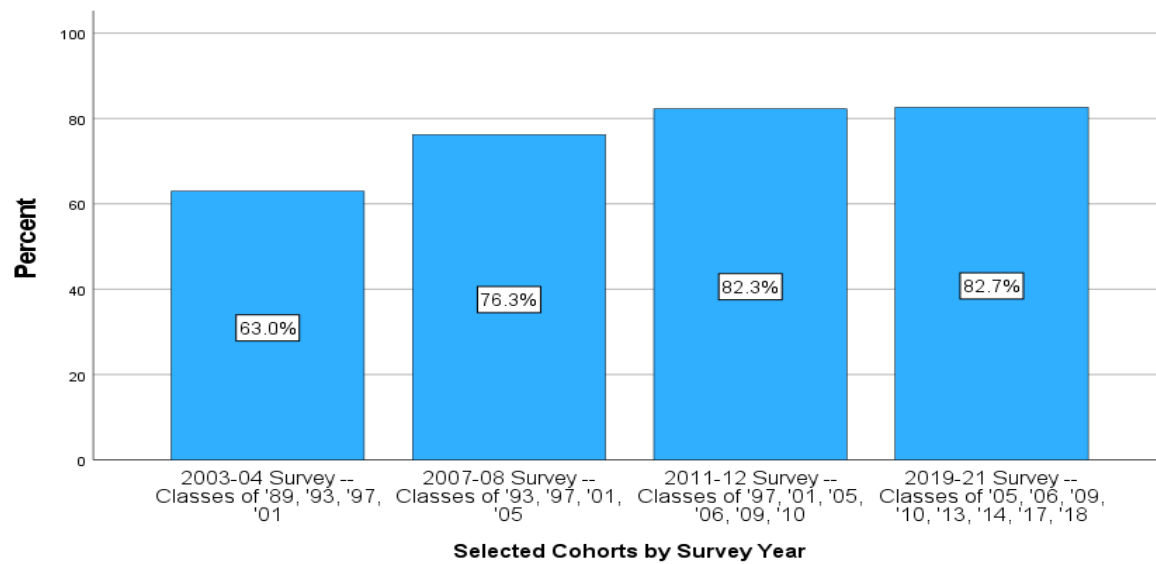


Between 2003-04 and 2011-12 there was a notable increase in the reported importance of the HWS education in cultivating an understanding of the public good and public needs from recent graduates surveyed in 2003-04 compared to 2007-2008. That increase was smaller from 2007-08 to 2011-12 (see Figure 5B).

FIGURE 5B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods “Strongly” or “Mostly” Agreeing That Their HWS Education Cultivated in Them an Understanding of the Public Good and Public Needs

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

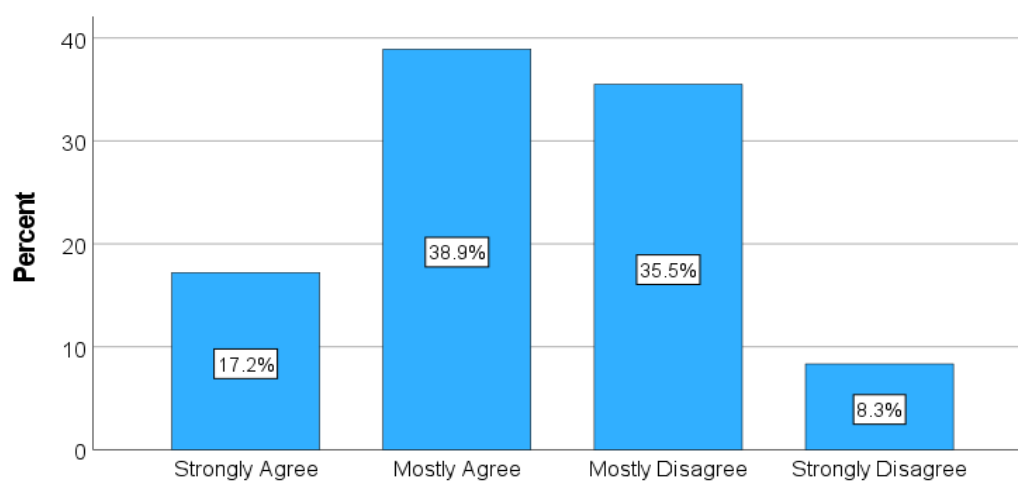


Evaluation Question 6 Results

Slightly more than half (56%) of graduates agree that their HWS experience helped develop a commitment to public service (see Figure 6A).

FIGURE 6A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Agreeing/Disagreeing That Their HWS Experience Helped Develop in Them a Strong Commitment to Public Service

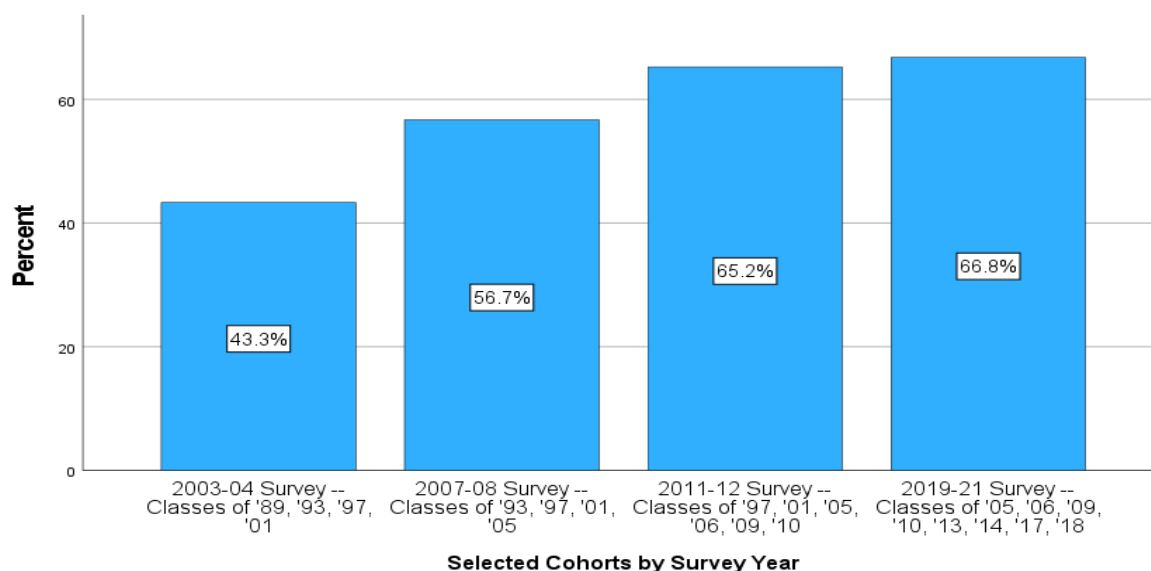


There has been a substantial and consistent increase over time, however, of alums within 15 years of graduation indicating they “mostly” or “strongly” agree that their HWS experience helped develop a commitment to public service. The percentage agreeing rose from 43 to 67% (see Figure 6B).

FIGURE 6B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods “Strongly” or “Mostly” Agreeing That Their HWS Experience Helped Develop in Them a Strong Commitment to Public Service

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

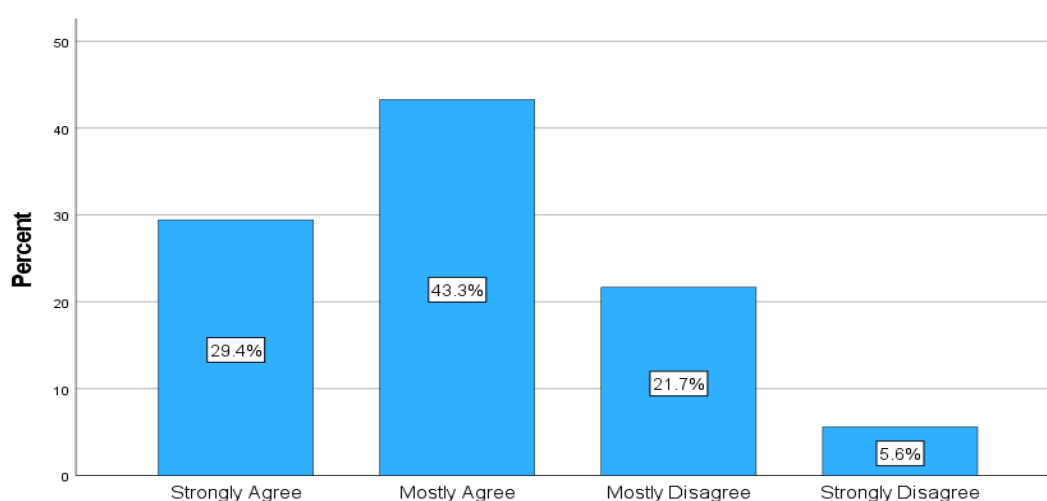


Evaluation Question 7 Results

Close to three-quarters (73%) agree that their educational experience at HWS allowed them to gain an understanding of differences and inequalities in gender, race, and class that have been helpful in their post-collegiate lives (see Figure 7A).

FIGURE 7A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Agreeing/Disagreeing That Their Educational Experience at HWS Allowed Them to Gain an Understanding of Differences and Inequalities in Gender, Race, and Class That Have Been Important in Their Post-Collegiate Lives

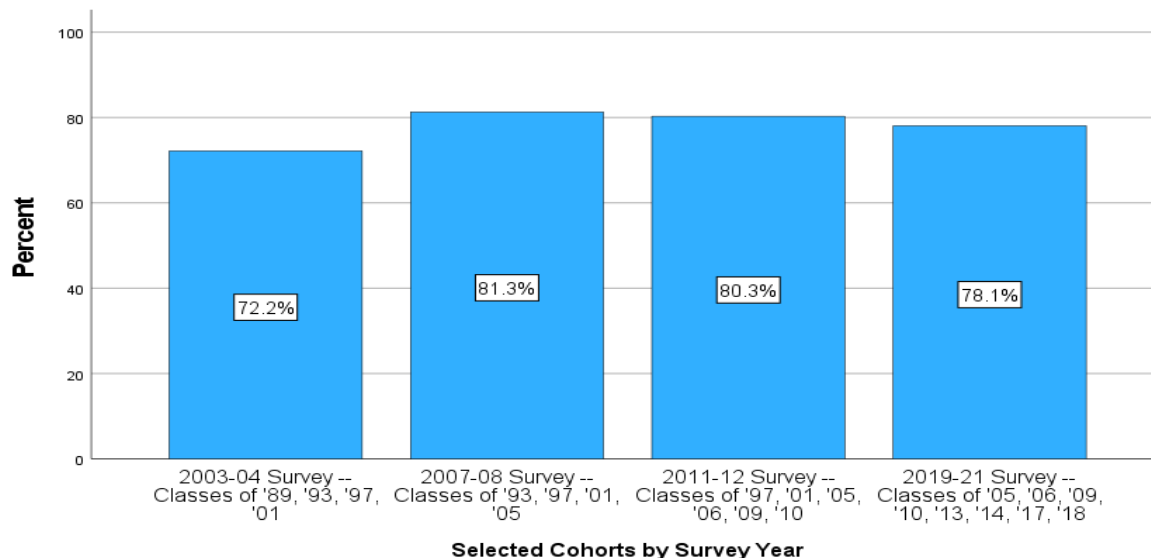


From 2003-04 to 2007-08, there was a slight increase amongst alums within 15 years of graduation “mostly” or “strongly” agreeing that their educational experience at HWS allowed them to gain an understanding of differences and inequalities in gender, race, and class. Since that time about 8 out of 10 recent graduates have continued to agree with that assessment of their educational experience (see Figure 7B).

FIGURE 7B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods “Strongly” or “Mostly” Agreeing That Their Educational Experience at HWS Allowed Them to Gain an Understanding of Differences and Inequalities in Gender, Race, And Class That Have Been Important in Their Post-Collegiate Lives

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

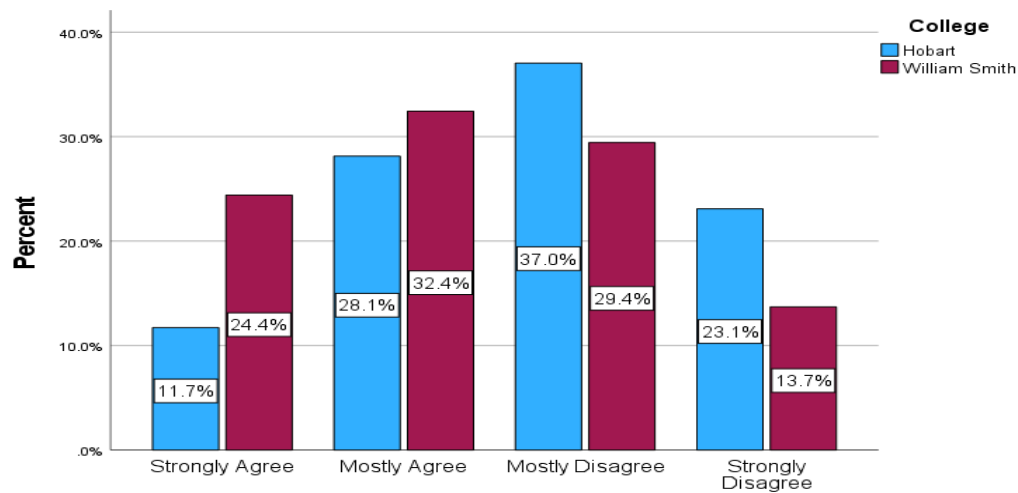


Evaluation Question 8 Results

More than half of William Smith graduates (57%) “mostly” or “strongly” agreed with the statement that the coordinate system was useful in helping them gain a deep understanding of gender differences. Significantly less Hobart graduates (40%) “mostly” or “strongly” agreed, however, with that statement. For graduates of both Colleges the nuanced positions of “mostly agree” and “mostly disagree” were more prominent than the “strong” opinions in each direction.(see Figure 8A).

FIGURE 8A

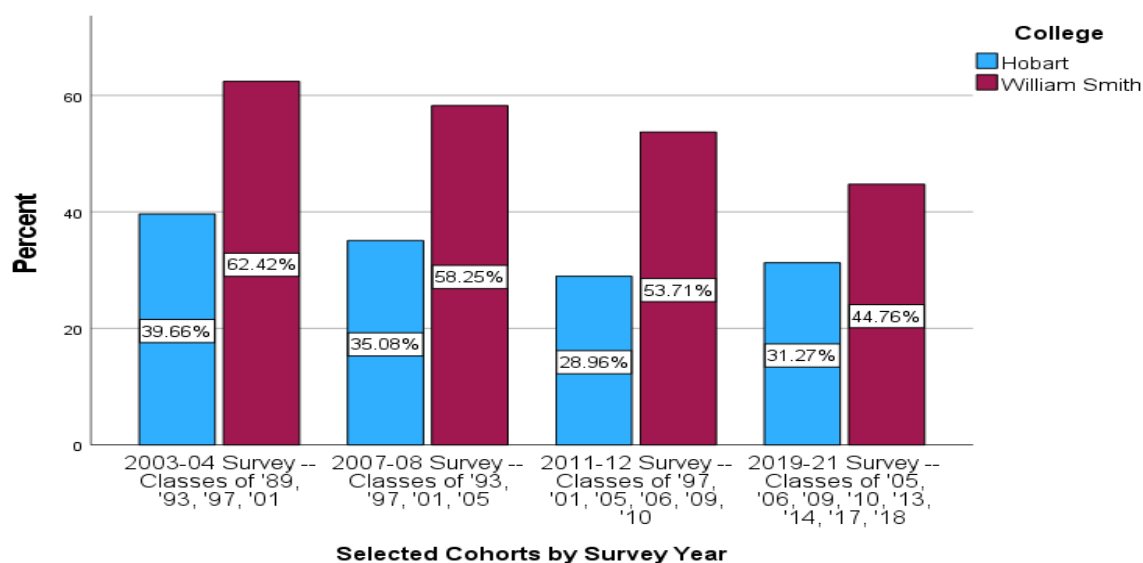
Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Agreeing/Disagreeing That the Coordinate System Was Useful In Helping Them Gain a Better Understanding of Gender Differences



Amongst graduates of both Hobart and William Smith College, there has been a significant and consistent decrease over time, however, in the reported importance of the coordinate system in helping students gain a deep understanding of gender differences (see Figure 8B).

FIGURE 8B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods “Strongly” or “Mostly” Agreeing That the Coordinate System Was Useful in Helping Them Gain a Better Understanding of Gender Differences (Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

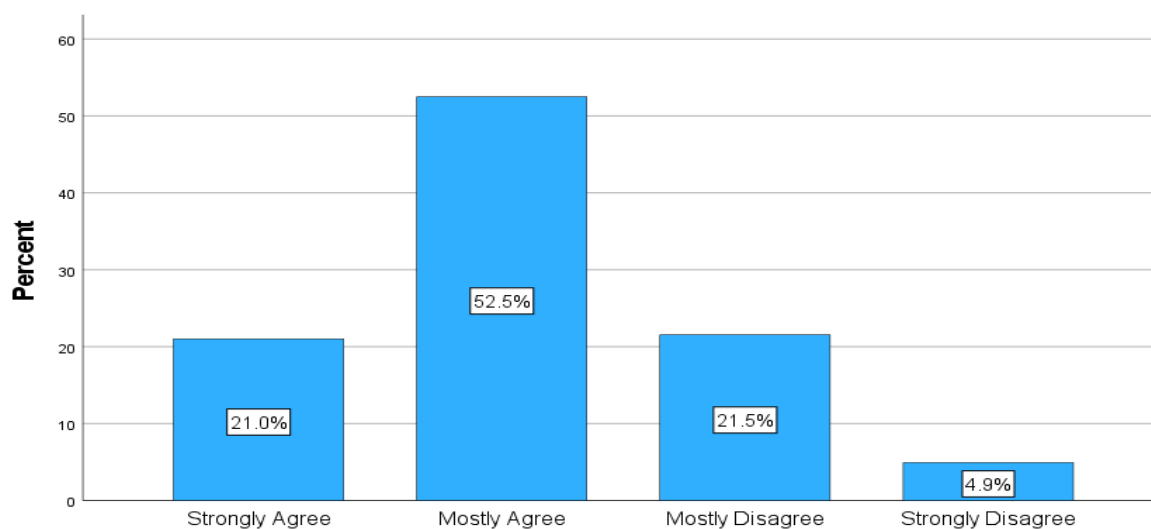


Evaluation Question 9 Results

Almost three-quarters (74%) of graduates agree that their HWS education was important in helping them reflect ethically on their actions in their post-collegiate life (see Figure 9A).

FIGURE 9A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Agreeing/Disagreeing That Their HWS Education Was Important in Helping Them Reflect Ethically on Their Actions in Their Post-Collegiate Life

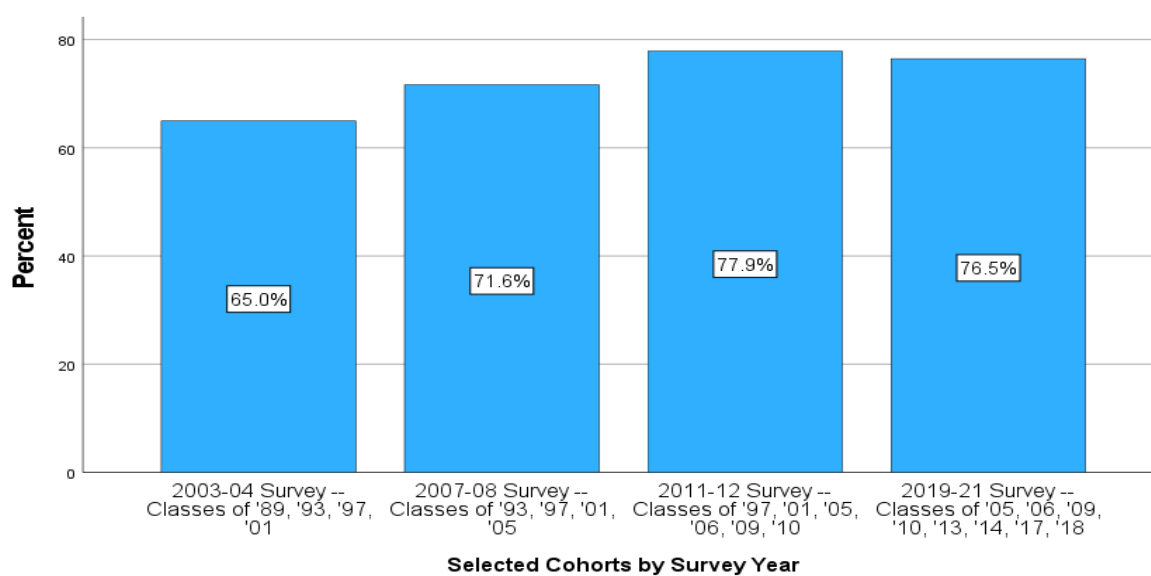


There was a notable increase in the percentage of recent HWS graduates “mostly” or “strongly” agreeing that their HWS education was important in helping them reflect ethically on their actions in post-collegiate life (see Figure 9B).

FIGURE 9B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods Agreeing That Their HWS Education Was Important in Helping Them Reflect Ethically on Their Actions in Post-Collegiate Life

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

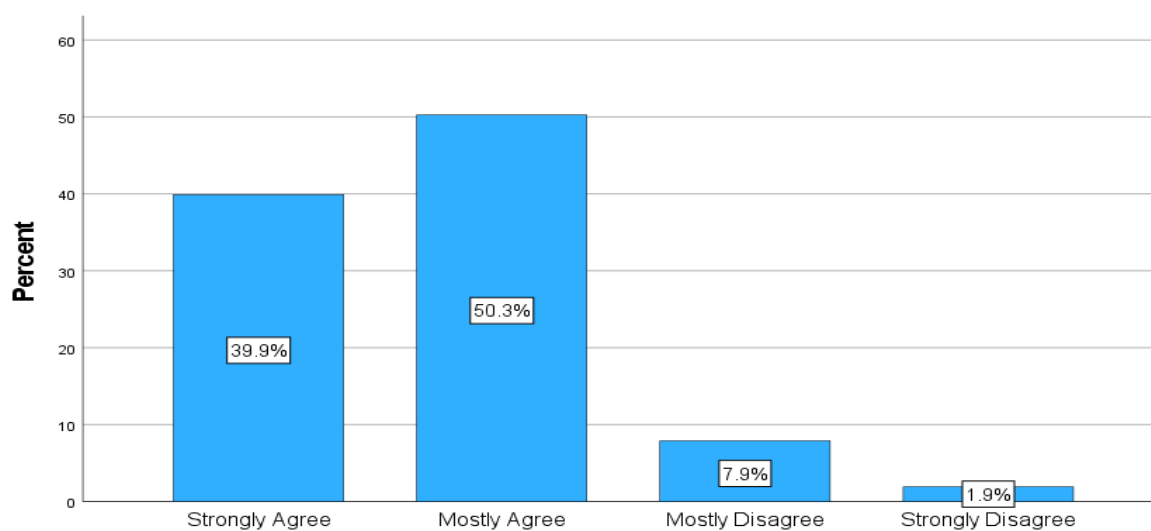


Evaluation Question 10 Results

Nine out of ten graduates (90%) agree that their HWS education prepared them well for their post-HWS educational and vocational pursuits (see Figure 10A).

FIGURE 10A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Agreeing/Disagreeing That Their HWS Education Prepared Them Well for Their Post-HWS Educational and Vocational Pursuits

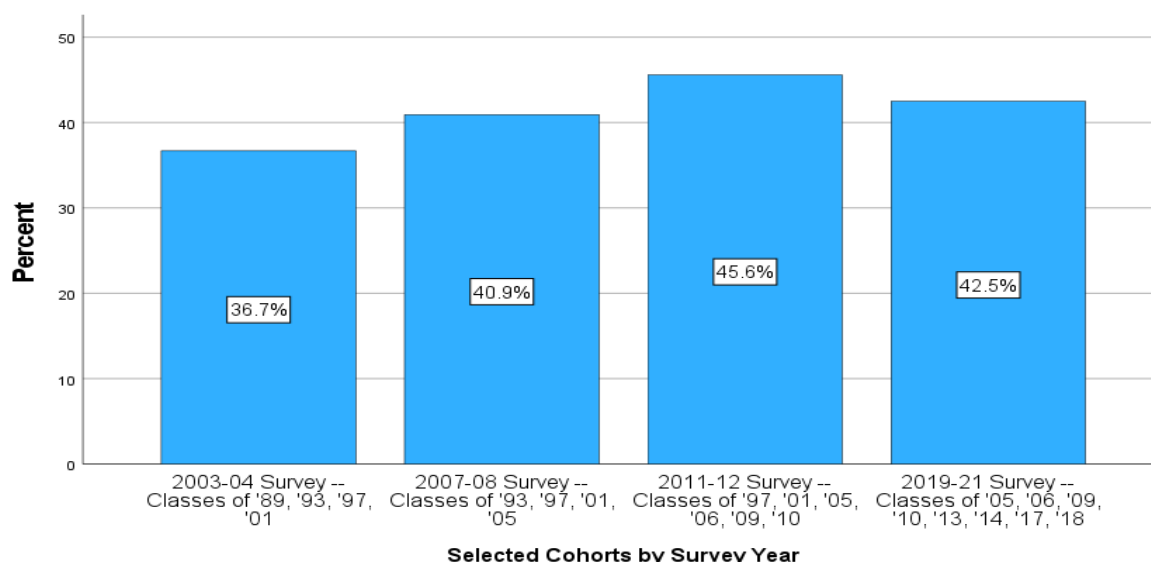


There was a notable increase from 2003-04 to 2007-08 and from 2007-08 to 2011-12 in the percentage of alums within 15 years of graduating “strongly” agreeing that their HWS education prepared them well for subsequent educational and vocational pursuits, with that trend reversing slightly in the 2019-21 survey (see Figure 10B).

FIGURE 10B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods “Strongly” Agreeing That Their HWS Education Prepared Them Well for Their Post-HWS Educational and Vocational Pursuits

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

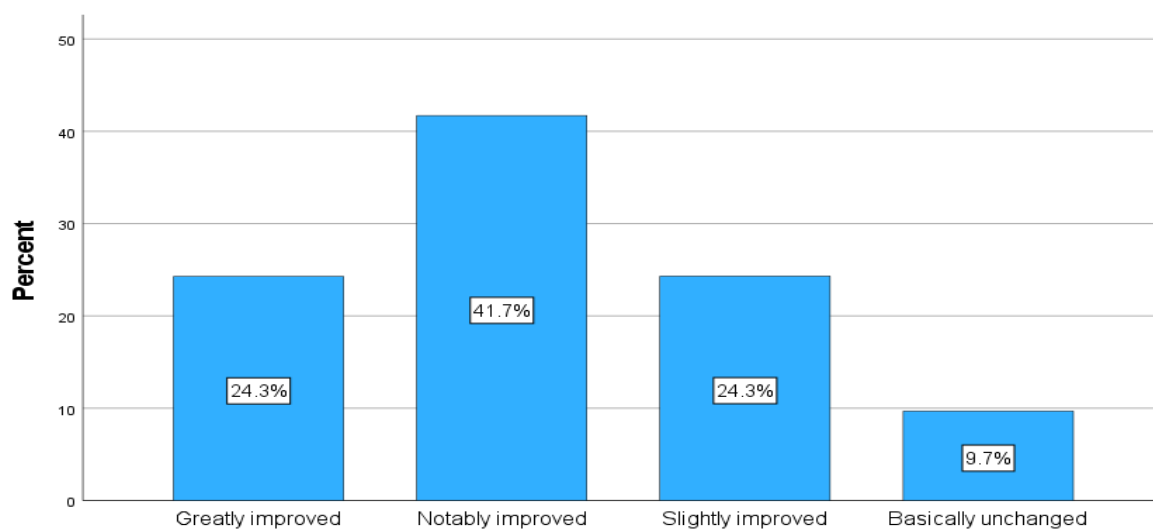


Evaluation Question 11 Results

Nine out of ten graduates (90%) responded that their ability to reason quantitatively improved because of their HWS education. Two-thirds (66%) indicated that that their ability to reason quantitatively “greatly” or “notably” improved because of their HWS education (see Figure 11A).

FIGURE 11A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Indicating the Extent to Which Their Ability to Reason Quantitatively Improved as a Result of Their HWS Education

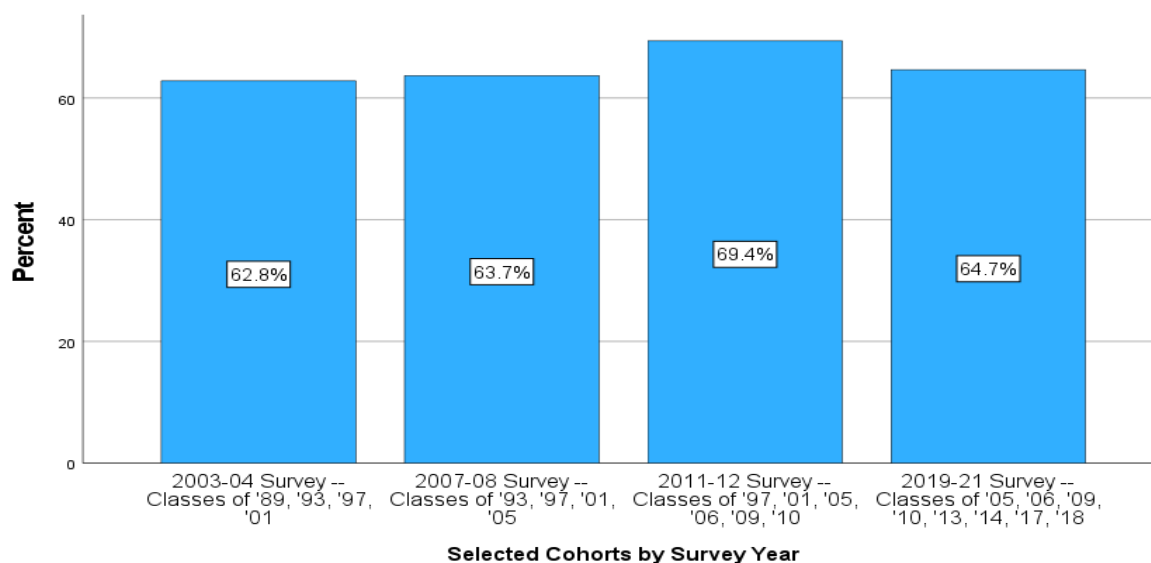


Over 60% of recent HWS graduates indicated that their ability to reason quantitatively improved “greatly” or “notably” because of their HWS education in each time-period with the highest rate occurring in the 2011-12 survey (see Figure 11B).

FIGURE 11B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods Indicating That Their Ability to Reason Quantitatively Either “Greatly” or “Notably” Improved as a Result of Their Education

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

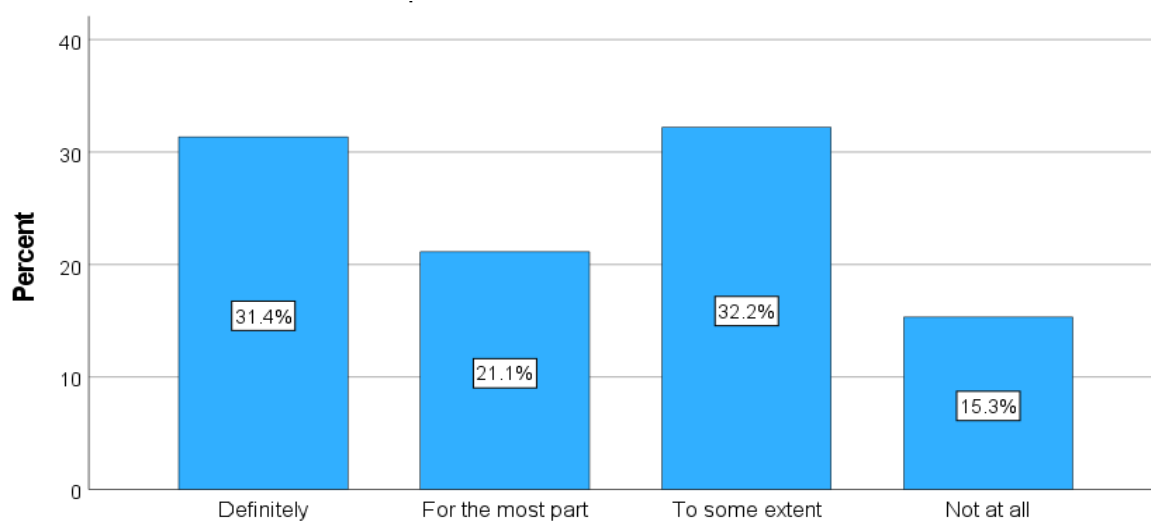


Evaluation Question 12 Results

About two-thirds of graduates (65%) indicated that they had taken a course at HWS involving scientific inquiry. Of those graduates, 85% say that it has been of value in their subsequent professional or leisure interests (see Figure 12A).

FIGURE 12A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Indicating the Importance of Their Classes Involving Scientific Inquiry in Subsequent Professional and Leisure Interests

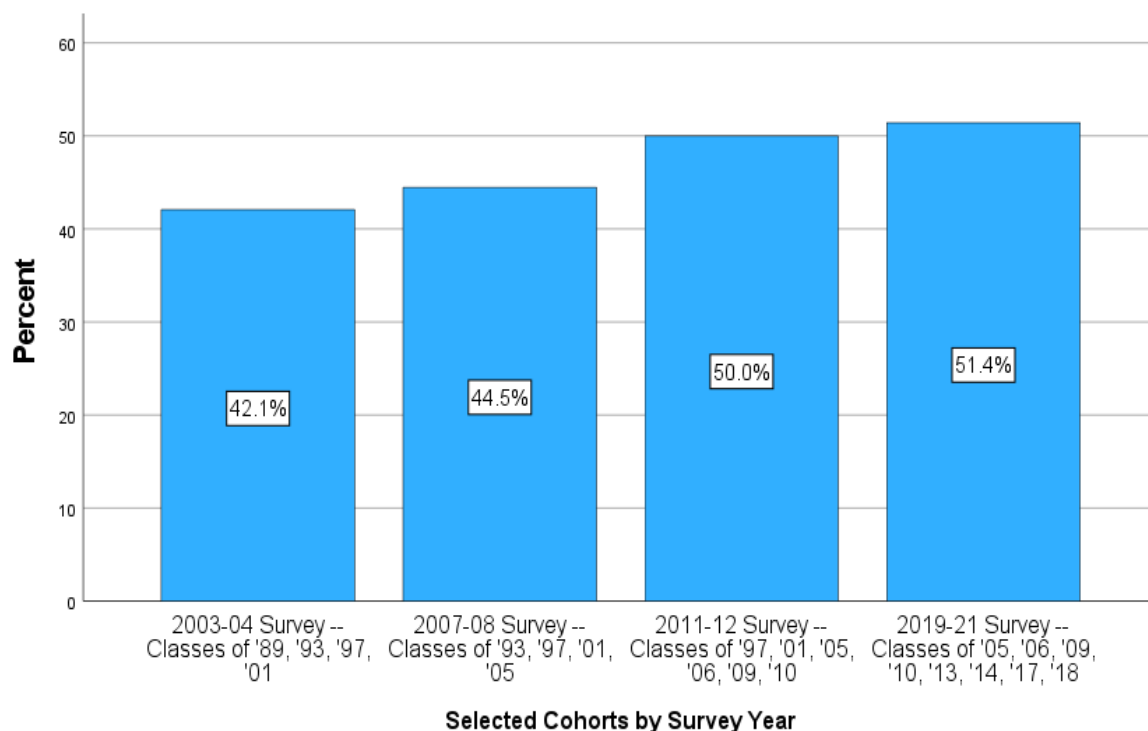


There has been a consistent rise amongst cohorts of HWS graduates indicating that classes involving scientific inquiry were “definitely” or “for the most part” important in subsequent professional or leisure interests (see Figure 12B).

FIGURE 12B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods Who Took a Course in Scientific Inquiry Saying That it Has “Definitely” or “For the Most Part” Been of Value in Their Subsequent Professional or Leisure Interests

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

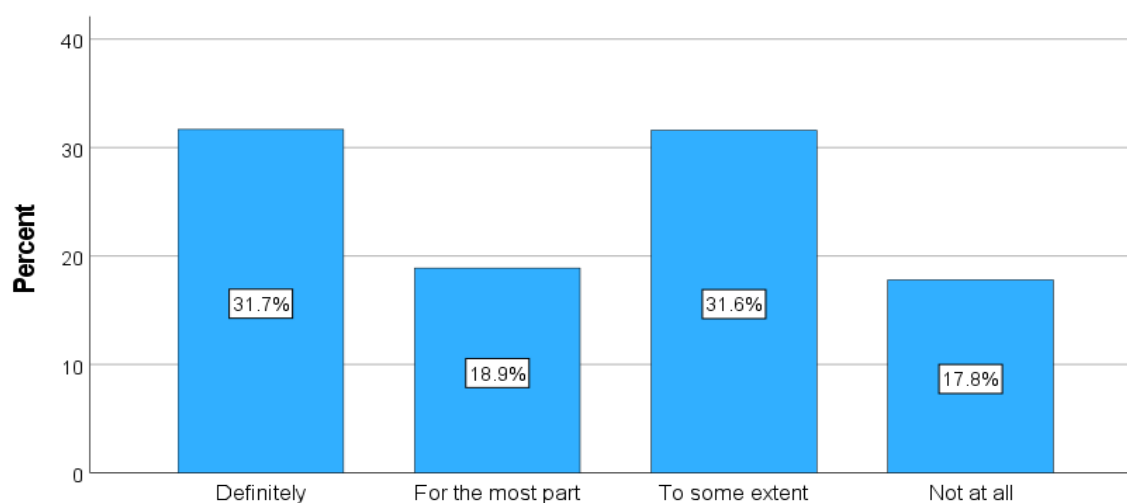


Evaluation Question 13 Results

A majority (62%) of graduates took a course in the fine or performing arts during their time at HWS. Of those taking a course in the fine or performing arts, 83% say that it has been of value of in their subsequent professional or leisure interests (see Figure 13A).

FIGURE 13A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Indicating the Importance of Their Fine or Performing Arts Classes in Subsequent Professional and Leisure Interests

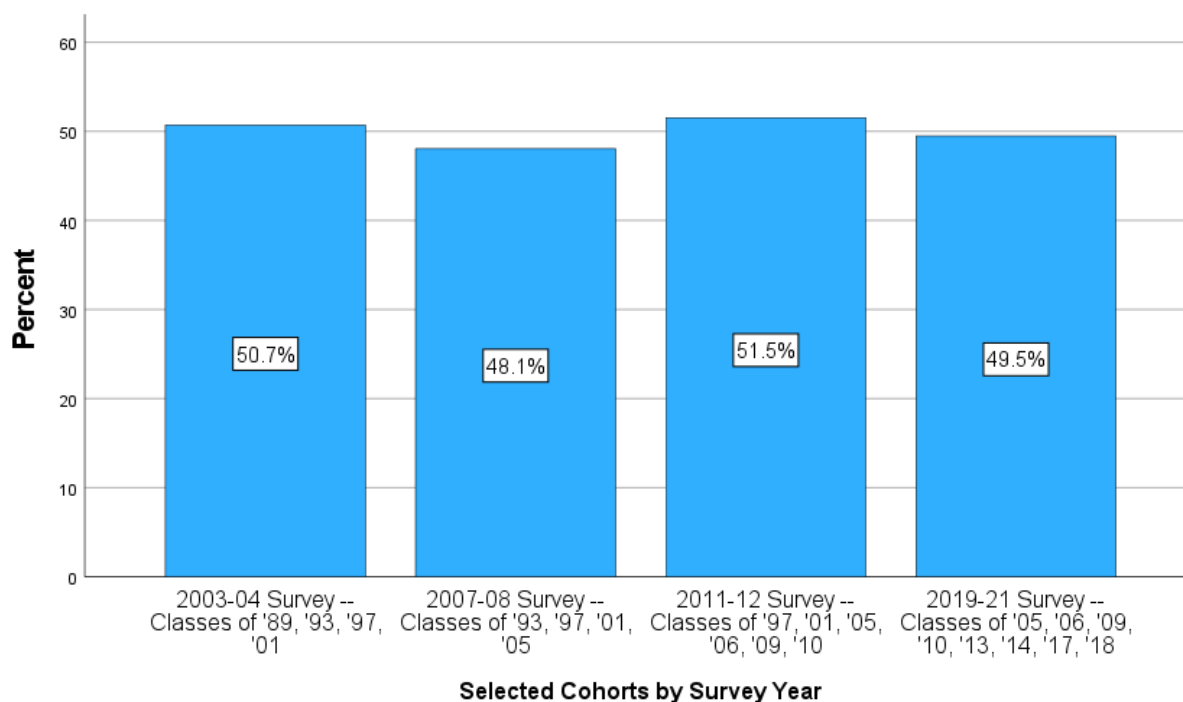


In each time-period of the last four PCL surveys, about half of all alums in cohorts of recent HWS graduates indicated that their coursework in the fine or performing arts was “definitely” or “for the most part” important in their subsequent professional or leisure interests (see Figure 13B).

FIGURE 13B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods Who Took a Course in the Fine or Performing Arts Indicating That it Has “Definitely” or “For the Most Part” Been of Value in Their Subsequent Professional or Leisure Interests

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

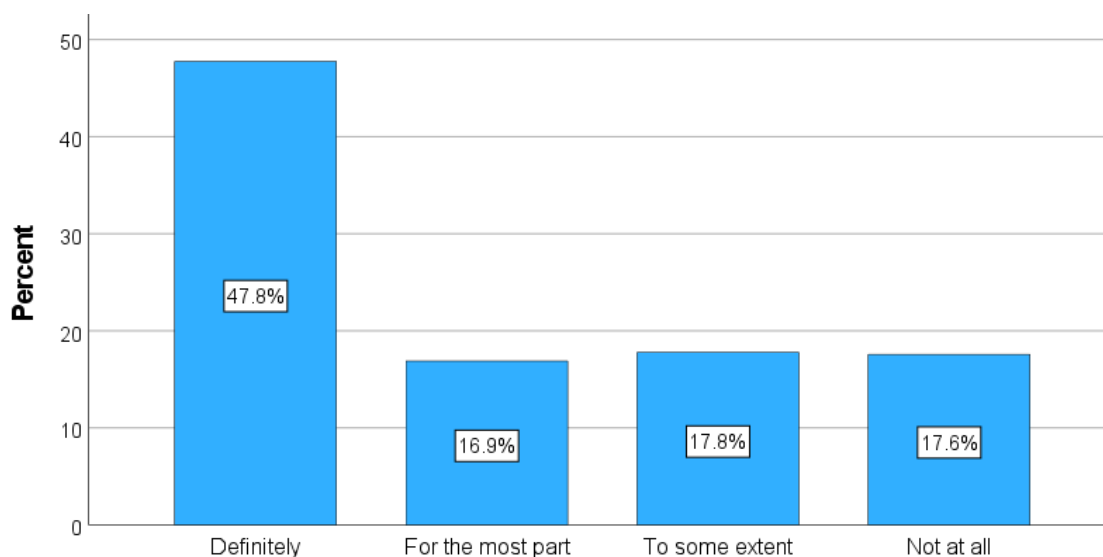


Evaluation Question 14 Results

Slightly less than half (44%) of graduates were involved in intercollegiate athletics during their time at HWS. Of those who were student-athletes, 82% reported that athletics enhanced their learning experience at HWS with almost half indicating the most affirmative response option of “Definitely” (see Figure 14A).

FIGURE 14A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Who Participated in Intercollegiate Athletics Indicating If This Involvement Enhanced Their Learning Experience

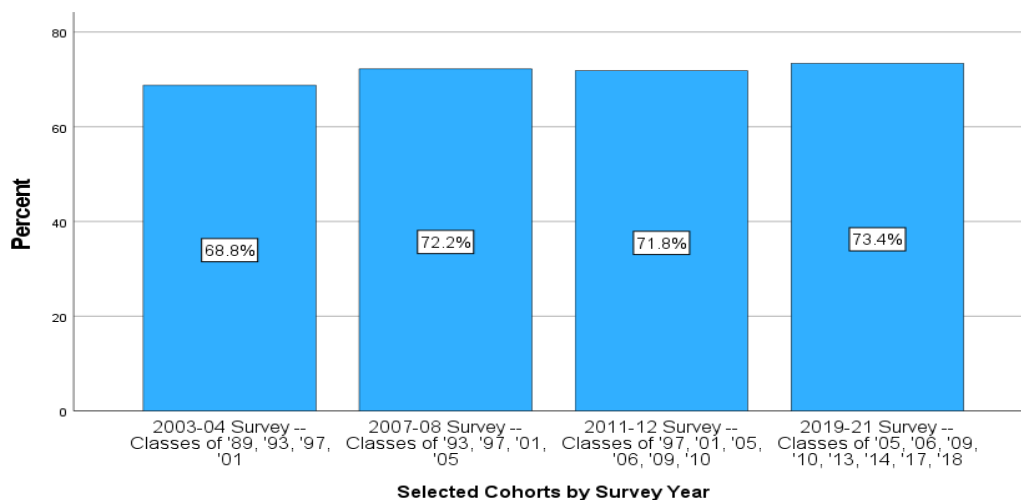


Between the 2003-04 and 2019-21 PCL surveys, there was a slight increase among recent HWS graduates indicating that participation in intercollegiate athletics “definitely” or “for the most part” enhanced their learning experience (see Figure 14B).

FIGURE 14B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time-Periods Who Participated in Intercollegiate Athletics Indicating That Their Participation “Definitely” or “For the Most Part” Enhanced Their Learning Experience at HWS

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

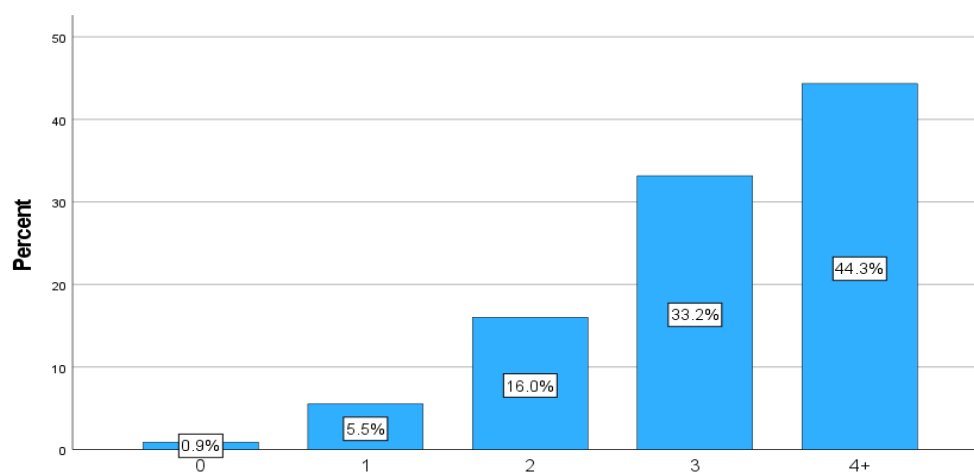


Evaluation Question 15 Results

More than three-quarters (78%) of graduates lived at least three years on campus (see Figure 15).

FIGURE 15

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 by How Many Years Spent Living on Campus

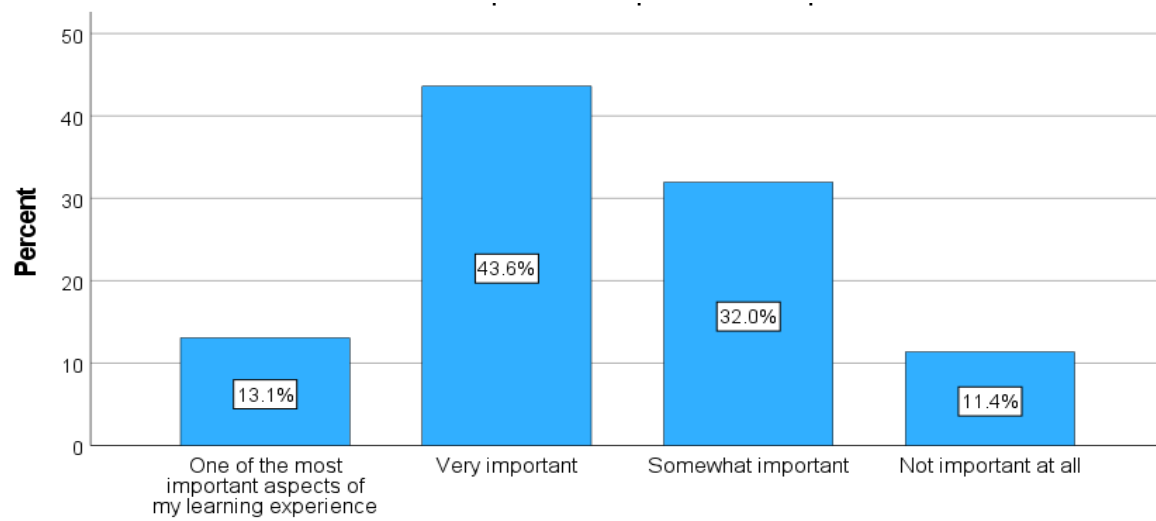


Evaluation Question 16 Results

A large majority (89%) of graduates indicated that having the majority of HWS students in residence at HWS was at least somewhat important to their educational experience and personal development (see Figure 16A).

FIGURE 16A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Indicating the Importance of HWS Being a Majority Residential Campus on Their Educational Experience and Personal Development

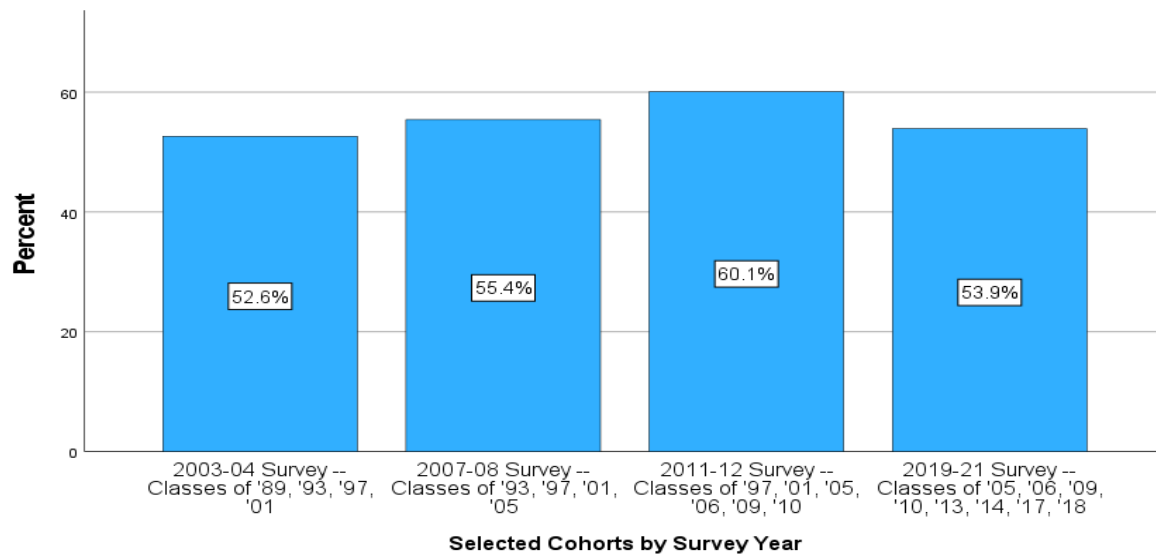


Among recent HWS graduates who lived at least one year on campus, there was an appreciable increase in the indication that HWS being a majority residential campus was “one of the most important aspects” or a “very important” aspect of their educational experience up through the 2011-12 survey. This pattern reversed in 2019-21 (see Figure 16B).

FIGURE 16B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods Saying That HWS Being a Majority Residential Campus Was Either “One of the Most Important” or a “Very Important” Aspect of Their Educational Experience and Personal Development

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

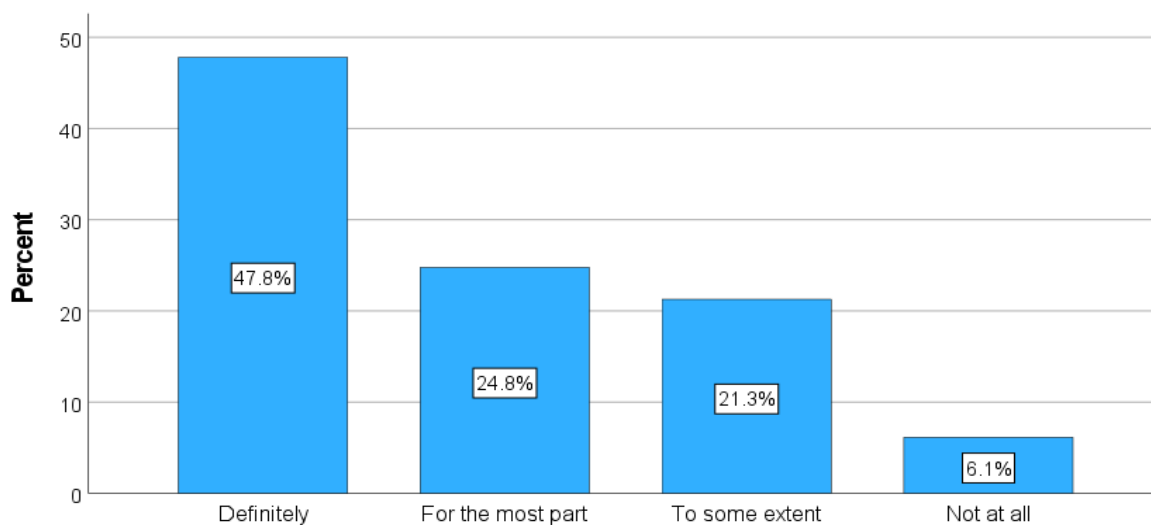


Evaluation Question 17 Results

Well over half of HWS graduates (61%) continued their education or got a job related to their major within two to three years after graduation. For those graduates that continued education or got a job related to their major, 94% reported that the curriculum in their major was important, at least to some extent for their post-collegiate work or study (see Figure 17A).

FIGURE 17A

Percent of HWS in 2019-21 Indicating the Importance of What They Learned in Their Academic Major to Their Post-Collegiate Work or Study (For Respondents Who Continued Their Education or Got a Job Related to Their Major within 3 Years After Graduation)

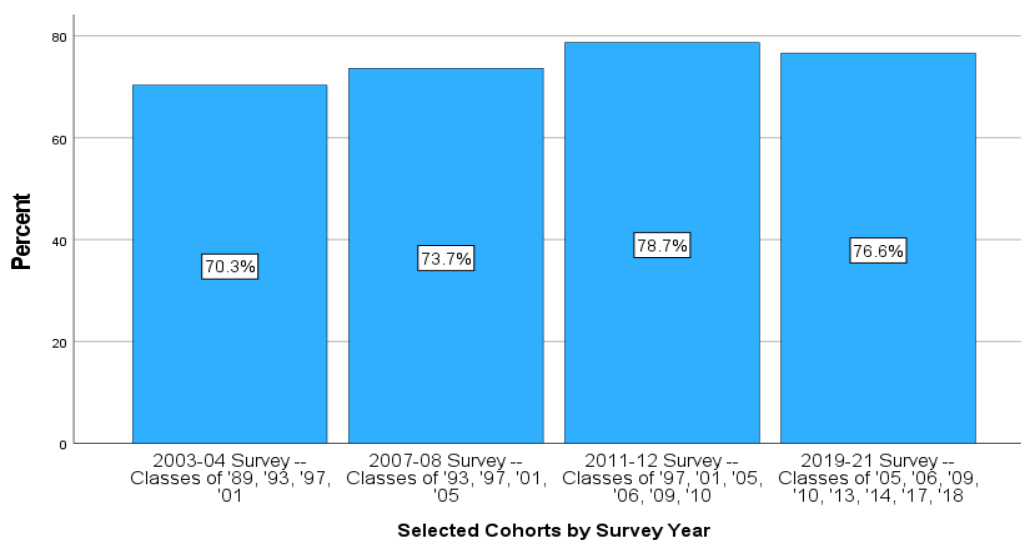


For those who continued education or got a job related to their major within three years of graduation, there was an 8% increase amongst recent HWS graduates from 2003-04 to 2011-12 in their indication that what they learned in their academic major was “definitely” or “for the most part” important in their post-collegiate work or study (see Figure 17B).

FIGURE 17B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Four Time Periods Indicating That What They Learned in Their Academic Major at HWS Was “Definitely” or “for the Most Part” Important in Their Post-Collegiate Work or Study (For Respondents Who Continued Their Education or Got a Job Related to Their Major within 3 Years After Graduation).

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

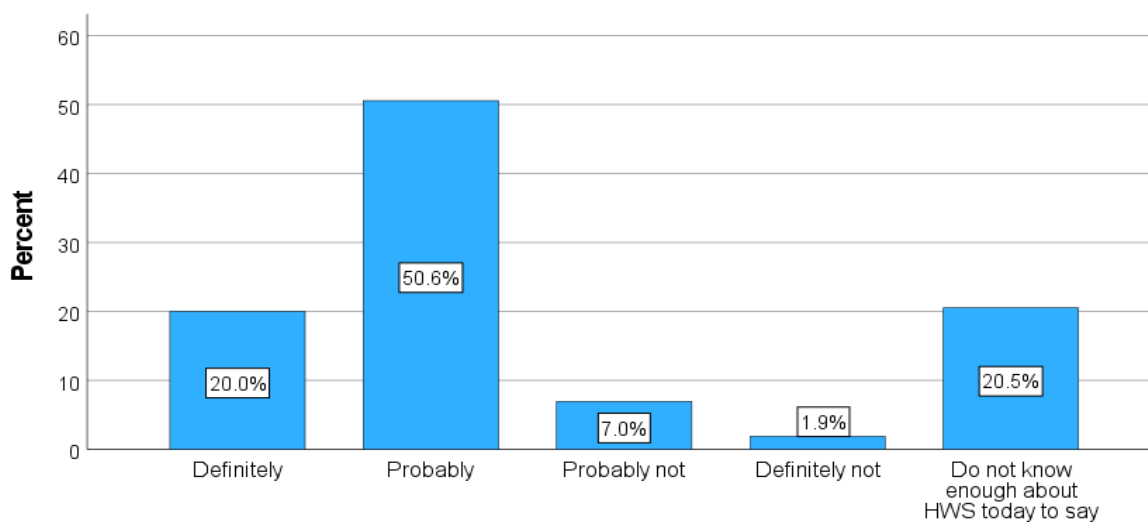


ASSESSMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN HWS' FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND WILLINGNESS TO RECOMMEND HWS TO FUTURE STUDENTS

Evaluation Question 18 Results

Over two-thirds of graduates (71%) think that HWS is “probably” or “definitely” on the right track for the future while less than one in ten (9%) think “probably” or “definitely” not. About one-fifth of graduates (21%) reported not having enough information to make a decision (see Figure 18A).

FIGURE 18A
Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Indicating Whether or Not the Colleges Are on the Right Track for the Future



Recent HWS graduates indicating that they “do not know enough” about HWS to make a judgement on whether or not HWS is on the right track for the future was highest (15%) in 2007-08 and lowest (11%) in 2011-12 (see Figure 18B).

FIGURE 18B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Three Time Periods Indicating That They “Do Not Know Enough About HWS” to Say Whether or Not the Colleges Are On the Right Track for the Future

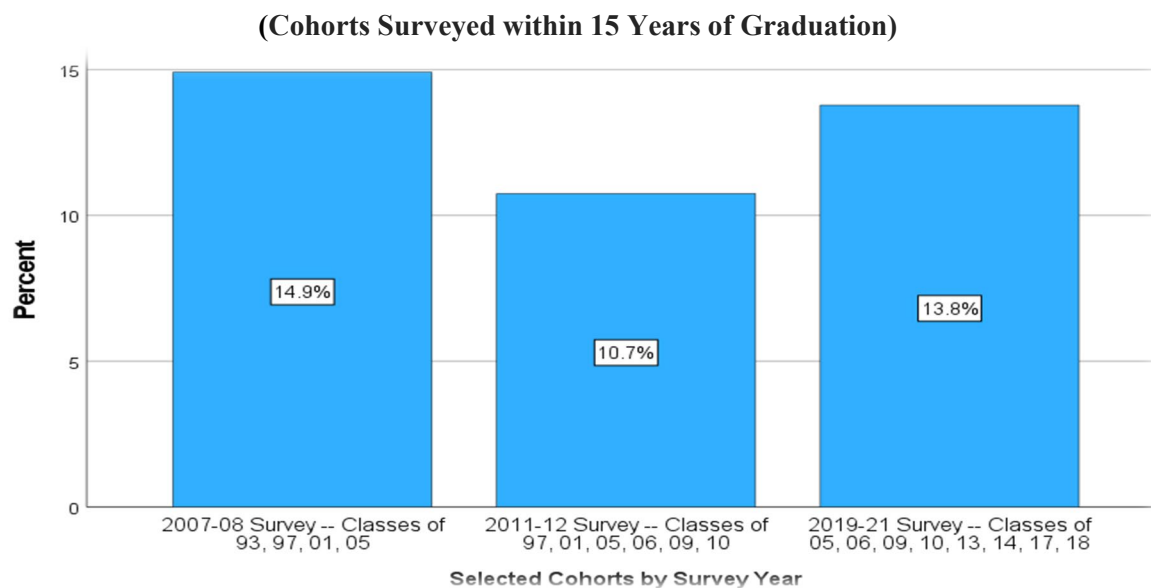
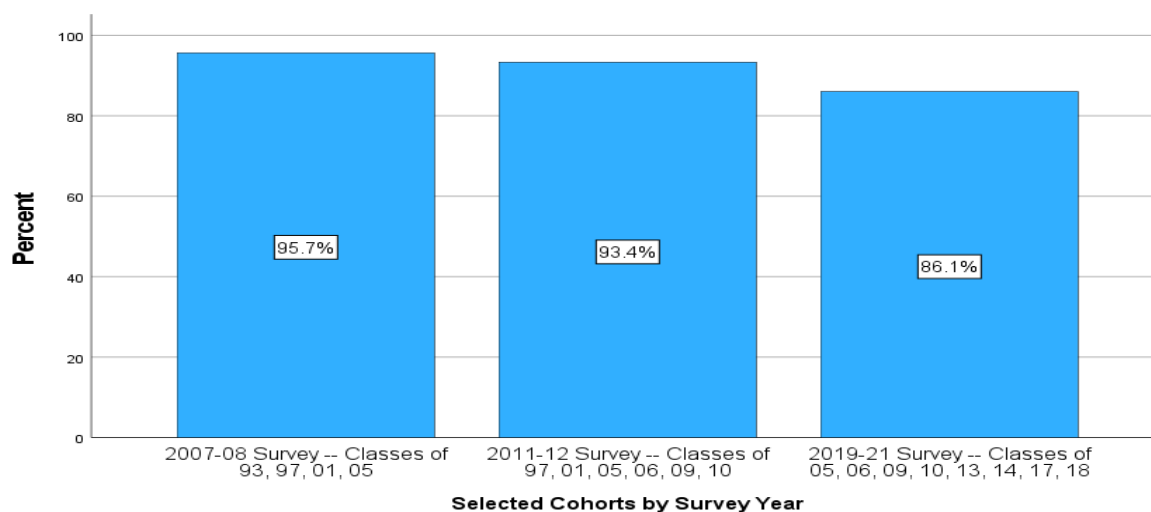


Figure 18C below excludes those who do not know enough about HWS to make a judgment on whether or not the Colleges are on the right track for the future. For students who do know enough to make a judgment, a very large majority of recent HWS graduates across the last three administrations of the PCL survey say that HWS is “definitely” or “probably” on the right track for the future. The percentage expressing this opinion has trended downward 10% (from 96% to 86%) across time.

FIGURE 18C

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Three Time Periods Saying That They “Definitely” or “Probably” Think the Colleges Are on the Right Track for the Future (Excluding Those That Say They “Do Not Know Enough” About HWS to Make a Judgement)

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)

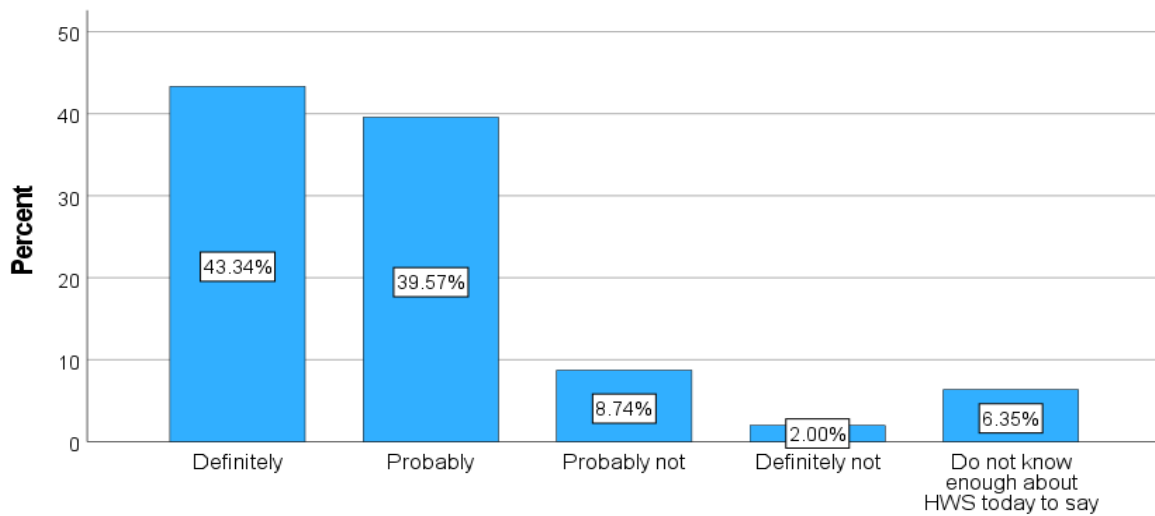


Evaluation Question 19 Results

More than four-fifths of respondents (83%) would “probably” or “definitely” recommend HWS to prospective students for a good preparation for post-collegiate life while 11% would “probably” or “definitely” not, and 6% indicated they did not know enough about HWS today to answer (see Figure 19A).

FIGURE 19A

Percent of HWS Graduates in 2019-21 Indicating Their Willingness to Recommend HWS to Prospective Students for a Good Preparation for Life

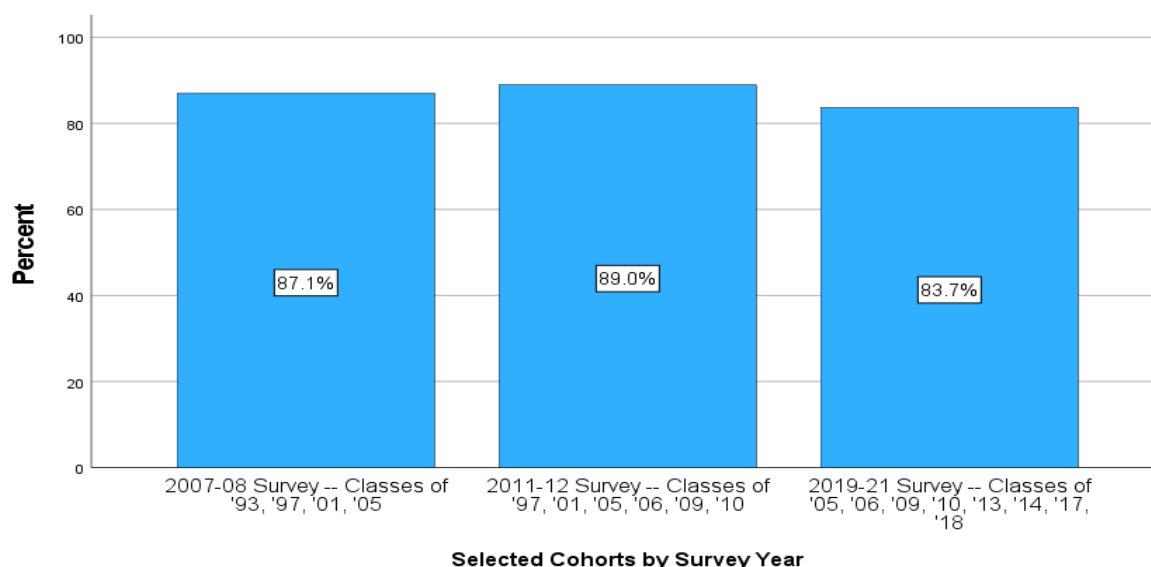


There has been no appreciable trend in the large majorities of recent HWS graduates indicating that they would “definitely” or “probably” recommend HWS to prospective students for a good preparation for post-collegiate life (see Figure 19B). Among recent graduates only three to four percent across time-periods indicate that they do not know enough about HWS today to make a judgement about whether they would recommend it to a prospective student for a good preparation for life (not pictured here).

FIGURE 19B

Percent of Recent HWS Graduates Across Three Time Periods Indicating That They Would “Definitely” or “Probably” Recommend HWS to Prospective Students for a Good Preparation for Life

(Cohorts Surveyed within 15 Years of Graduation)



APPENDIX A

RESPONSE RATES FOR SURVEYS OF GRADUATES AT OTHER COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The HWS Post-Collegiate Life (PCL) Survey has continually achieved response rates far higher than what is typical of surveys of graduates conducted by other colleges and universities. The 2019-2021 response rate was 35.2%, with 2,230 respondents from a population of 6,339. The 6,639 number is the total of graduates from the selected years that had a valid US mailing address or a valid e-mail address. This appendix provides examples of response rates for surveys of graduates of other institutions.

Several structural factors contribute to surveys of college graduates typically receiving lower response rates than other types of surveys. These include decreased affinity and attachment to one's college or university after graduation, the association of alum surveys with efforts to fundraise, and inaccurate or missing contact information.² In one study that compared a survey results from graduates with that of current students from the same institutions, current students responded at rates about double that of graduates, and in some cases more than double.³

Surveys of graduates reported in this appendix range from those administered to graduates one year post-graduation, administered to all alums, and administered to graduating classes 10 years post-graduation. These surveys were found after first conducting a google search with key words and phrases such as "college/university alumni surveys", "repeated alumni surveys", and "surveys of college graduates". They were then chosen to have a variety of institutions represented, thus making the comparison between the PCL results and other institutions more robust. Kansas State, for example, is a large, public research university with an expansive alumni base. Cornell University, an Ivy League institution, boasts a high reputation and significant financial resources to reach graduates. Swarthmore is a private liberal arts college, as is HWS. The HEDS report compiles statistics from many institutions with varying student population sizes, demographics, curricular programs, and student involvement opportunities.

See Appendix A Table below for the list of response rates for graduate surveys conducted by other institutions as identified for this report. Of all the other collegiate alum surveys identified reporting response rates, Swarthmore stands out with a relatively high response rate similar to HWS. In the 2013 alumni survey, the Swarthmore response rate was 50%. In 2017, the rate was 40%. In 2020, the rate was just 31%. In their 2020 report, Swarthmore notes that "the reduced response rate over the last decade is consistent with survey response rates nationally and among peer institutions."⁴ Cornell's 2013 survey of alums obtained a response rate of just 14%.⁵ Kansas State University, a large public university, administers a survey to graduates one- and four-years post-graduation.⁶ The survey is distributed to a sample of 60-75% of the previous years' graduates. Unlike Cornell and Swarthmore, the Kansas State alum surveys have not seen a consistent decline. There has been year-to-year variation, and even notable response rate upticks over some five year spans. In 2001, the first year Kansas State conducted this survey, the response rate was 31% for graduates one year after graduation and 41% for four-year alums. Those figures were 50% and 49% respectively in the 2007 survey.⁷ ⁸ However, the most recently reported

² Lambert & Miller, 2014, p. 41.

³ Lambert & Miller, 2014, p. 45.

⁴ 2020 Swarthmore Alumni Survey

⁵ 2013 Cornell Alumni Survey Results

⁶ Kansas State Alumni Surveys Homepage

⁷ 2007, One-Year Alumni Survey University Summary Report

⁸ 2007, Four-Year Alumni Survey University Summary Report

survey mirrors that of other schools in more recent times. That survey, conducted in 2019, received a response rate of just 15%.⁹

The HEDS Alumni Survey is administered to over 50 participating institutions for the previous year's graduates. Reed College, one of the participating institutions, presents both its unique findings as well as response rates for all participating institutions over multiple years of administration: 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.^{10 11}

In the 2015-2016/2016-2017 administrations of the survey¹², in which 59 institutions participated, the average response rate was 26% with a low of 2% and a high of 62%.^{13 14} The 2018-2019 HEDS Survey report had 81 participating institutions, and the average response rate was again 26% with a low of 2% and a high of 56%.¹⁵ The 2020-2021 HEDS Survey had 62 participating institutions, and the average response rate was 25%. The range in this administration was a low of 8% and a high of 52%.¹⁶

⁹ 2019, Kansas State Alumni Survey University Report

¹⁰ HEDS 2018-2019 Summary Report/Reed College Survey Results

¹¹ HEDS 2020-2021 Summary Report/Reed College Survey Results

¹² Institutions administered the survey in either 2015-2016 or 2016-2017, and the data presented is for both rounds.

¹³ Principia College has 323 undergraduate students for the fall 2023 semester, and the smaller student body makes reaching the alumni base significantly easier.

¹⁴ Principia College- Information Overview. <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=Principia&s=all&id=148016>.

¹⁵ This range excludes the 2% reported by Prescott College and 62% reported by Principia College in the 2015-16/2016-17 report because those figures were also included in the 2018-2019 report.

¹⁶ This range excludes response rates reported in the 2018-2019 report. The 8% and 52% figure are from surveys conducted in 2019-2020 or 2020-2021. The 8% figure comes from Earlham College and the 52% figure comes from the University of Saint Katherine.

APPENDIX A TABLE
EXAMPLES OF GRADUATE SURVEY RESPONSE RATES

Institution	Year(s) of Survey Administration	Type of Survey (Paper, Email, Web)	Survey Purpose	Response Rate
Swarthmore College	2020	unspecified	Alumni employment/educational outcomes	31.0%
Kansas State University	One-Year Post-Undergraduate Survey (2001, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011)	unspecified	Post-collegiate outcomes, importance of Kansas State education	39.2% average
Kansas State University	Four-Year Post-Undergraduate Survey (2001, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011)	unspecified	Post-collegiate outcomes, importance of Kansas State education	37.8% average
Kansas State University	Post-Undergraduate Surveys (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019)	electronic via email/electronic via Qualtrics	Post-collegiate outcomes, importance of Kansas State education	19.8% average
Cornell University	2013 Survey of Class of 2002	electronic via email	How employment, post-collegiate outcomes, and on-campus area of study influence donor status and feelings of connection to the university	14.0%
HEDS Survey (59 Institutions)	2015-2016 2016-2017	electronic via Qualtrics	Quality and impact of undergraduate experience and post-collegiate outcomes	26.0% average
HEDS Survey (81 Institutions)	2018-2019	electronic via Qualtrics	Quality and impact of undergraduate experience and post-collegiate outcomes	26.0% average
HEDS Survey (62 Institutions)	2020-2021	electronic via Qualtrics	Quality and impact of undergraduate experience and post-collegiate outcomes	25.0% average

APPENDIX B

RESPONDENT REPRESENTATIVENESS

This appendix provides a brief overview of how the respondents to the 2019-2021 PCL survey compare with population characteristics of all HWS graduates with known email or U.S. mailing addresses in the selected graduating classes. (See the Appendix B Table below). William Smith College is overrepresented by 8%, which is in line with general survey research that shows women tend to respond to survey requests at higher rates than men.¹⁷ The distribution of respondents by graduating class year is close to that of the actual class year distribution for the population of graduates in cohorts that formed the sampling frame for 2019-21. There is, however, a tendency in these data for the oldest graduating class cohorts to be slightly overrepresented while the youngest cohorts of graduating classes tend to be slightly underrepresented. This pattern of slight bias which runs in the opposite direction of what has been previously described for other institutions may be explained by the fact that in the HWS PCL surveys, the same cohorts have been repeatedly contacted by the same researcher since the inception of the study. This history of previous participation for respondents may have aided in establishing a connection with the project and confidence that the researcher is collecting the data only for the purposes of the research as described. In contrast most of the graduates contacted in other settings are part of studies where they are usually only contacted for one study or perhaps one additional follow-up study at most. In those instances, newer cohorts' more recent connections to the institution may be the determining factor where more recent cohorts produce higher response rates.

APPENDIX B TABLE

Distribution of Respondents by College and Graduating Class Year

	<i>Respondent %</i>	<i>Population %</i>
<i>Hobart College</i>	40.8%	48.7%
<i>William Smith College</i>	59.2%	51.3%
<i>Class of 1979</i>	7.4%	4.7%
<i>Class of 1982</i>	8.8%	5.4%
<i>Class of 1985</i>	8.2%	5.7%
<i>Class of 1989</i>	9.7%	8.0%
<i>Class of 1993</i>	7.8%	6.8%
<i>Class of 1997</i>	5.0%	5.6%
<i>Class of 2001</i>	5.3%	6.0%
<i>Class of 2005</i>	5.5%	6.4%
<i>Class of 2006</i>	5.3%	6.3%
<i>Class of 2009</i>	6.4%	6.5%
<i>Class of 2010</i>	6.4%	7.3%
<i>Class of 2013</i>	6.0%	7.4%
<i>Class of 2014</i>	6.1%	7.6%
<i>Class of 2017</i>	6.1%	8.2%
<i>Class of 2018</i>	5.9%	8.0%

¹⁷ Lambert & Miller, 2014, p. 45.

APPENDIX C

POST-COLLEGIATE LIFE SURVEY QUESTIONS MEASURING HWS ACADEMIC AND CO-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES, CONFIDENCE IN HWS' FUTURE DIRECTIONS, AND WILLINGNESS TO RECOMMEND HWS TO FUTURE STUDENTS

The following list of survey items were used for assessment of graduates' perspectives on their HWS experiences in the context of a larger Post-Collegiate Life Survey that focused on a variety of topics about graduates in life course perspective. The items below provide the exact wording with their response categories. The question numbers presented here are not the original numbers reflecting placement in the survey (i.e. these questions were not the very first questions asked of respondents) but the question numbers do correspond to the question numbers in this report and also indicate the order in which these questions were asked in the survey. Question numbers 1 through 17 were included in all four survey administrations providing data for this report (2003-04, 2007-08, 2011-12, and 2019-21). Questions 18 and 19 were added into the 2007-08 survey continued thereafter.

1. Thinking back to your undergraduate education at HWS, in general how important was it compared to other prior and subsequent educational experiences in enabling you to read, write and think more clearly in your daily life?

- ☐ The most important experience I've had.
- ☐ A critically important contribution to developing my abilities.
- ☐ A valuable experience enhancing my abilities to some extent.
- ☐ Contributed little to developing these abilities.

2. As an undergraduate did you study for one or more terms in an HWS off-campus program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how important was that experience for you in developing a perspective on global interdependence and cross-cultural diversity.

- ☐ The most important experience I've had.
- ☐ A critically important contribution to developing this perspective.
- ☐ A valuable experience enhancing my perspective to some extent.
- ☐ Contributed little to developing my perspective.

Strongly agree
Mostly agree
Mostly disagree
Strongly disagree

Please indicate your personal level of agreement with each of the following

- | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 3. Regardless of any off-campus study, the rest of my HWS education gave me important skills (practical and otherwise) to live in a diverse world. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. The interdisciplinary studies offered at HWS were a valuable experience in my intellectual development. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. My HWS education cultivated in me an understanding of the public good and public needs. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. My HWS experience helped develop a commitment to public service. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. I gained an understanding of differences and inequalities of gender, race and class through my HWS educational experience that has been helpful to me in post-collegiate life. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. The coordinate system dividing HWS into men's and women's colleges, in particular, was useful in helping me gain a deeper understanding of gender differences. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. My HWS education has been important in helping me reflect ethically on my actions in post-collegiate life. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. Overall, my HWS education has prepared me well for my subsequent educational and vocational pursuits. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
11. As a result of my HWS education, my ability to reason quantitatively was:
- ☐ Greatly improved ☐ Notably improved ☐ Slightly improved ☐ Basically unchanged

12. Did you take courses at HWS involving scientific inquiry? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, have these experiences been of value to you in your subsequent professional or leisure interests?

- ☐ Definitely ☐ For the most part ☐ To some extent ☐ Not at all

13. Did you take any courses in the fine or performing arts? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, have these experiences been of value to you in your subsequent professional or leisure interests?

- ☐ Definitely ☐ For the most part ☐ To some extent ☐ Not at all

14. Were you involved in intercollegiate athletics at HWS? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, did this involvement enhance your learning experience at the Colleges?

- ☐ Definitely ☐ For the most part ☐ To some extent ☐ Not at all

15. For how many of your undergraduate years did you live in a campus residence?
- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4+ |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

16. As you know, most of the HWS student body resides on campus. Was that important to your educational experience and personal development?

- ☐ One of the most important aspects of my learning experience ☐ Very important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Not important at all

17. Within 2 or 3 years after graduation did you continue your education or get a job in a field related to your major?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, was what you learned in your academic major at HWS important for this post-collegiate work or study?

☐ Definitely

☐ For the most
part

☐ To some extent

☐ Not at
all

18. Based upon what you know, do you think the Colleges are currently on the right track for the future?

☐ Definitely

☐ Probably

☐ Probably not

☐ Definitely not

☐ Do not know enough
about HWS today to say

19. In general, would you recommend HWS to prospective students for a good preparation for life?

☐ Definitely

☐ Probably

☐ Probably not

☐ Definitely not

☐ Do not know enough
about HWS today to say

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