

Creative Economy Challenges: Retention of Queen's Graduates in the Greater Kingston Area

A KEDCO/Queen's University Collaborative Study

Prepared by: The Monieson Centre, Queen's School of Business

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Introduction

“...the inflow of new residents to Kingston – not least its students – represents a growth opportunity for the city, provided it improves its capacity to retain top talent.” Dr. John McHale, Queen's School of Business, Business Forecast Lunch, Kingston, ON, December 2008.

“We are completely looking past these students. It's a vastly under-utilized pool of intellectual capital that is basically just being thrown away.” Dr. Yolande Chan, Queen's School of Business, Business Forecast Lunch, Kingston, ON, December 2008.

The need to retain top talent has not been lost on the Kingston Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO). Recognizing that Queen's University attracts some of the best and brightest minds from Canada and beyond, KEDCO commissioned a study to determine factors that affect the retention and attraction of knowledge workers in general, and specifically Queen's graduates.

The Monieson Centre and Career Services at Queen's School of Business, Queen's University Student Affairs, and Queen's Career Services collaborated on the resulting study. Entitled ***“Creative Economy Challenges: Retention of Queen's Graduates in the Greater Kingston Area”***, the project had three emphases:

1. Determining challenges that exist in connecting students with Kingston;
2. Identifying, from a student's perspective, the challenges that exist in hiring Queen's graduates; and
3. Determining key factors that influence the retention of students in Kingston.

Within these broad emphases, the research sought to examine:

1. Knowledge flows - how information about local job opportunities and student availability is circulated,
2. Entrepreneurship - an examination of talent-based or creative economy opportunities for our graduates, and
3. Knowledge worker recruitment and retention - an exploration of the motivation of the Net or Millennial Generation employees and what matters to Queen's graduates.

A series of focus groups consisting of third year, fourth year, and graduate students was held to determine over 50 questions used in a campus wide, online student survey. A

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subset of the student questions was used in an online survey of alumni. The survey sought answers surrounding three themes:

1. What are alumni and student attitudes regarding Kingston?
2. What are alumni and student intentions regarding looking for employment in Kingston?
3. What matters to alumni and students in making their job/location decisions?

Responses were received from more than 3,000 alumni and approximately 900 students. Approximately 6 per cent of students identified themselves as coming from the Kingston area, which is consistent with the overall enrolment figure. 171 respondents said they originated from Ontario East, roughly bounded by the region east of the Greater Toronto Area to the Ontario-Quebec border, and north to and including Ottawa.

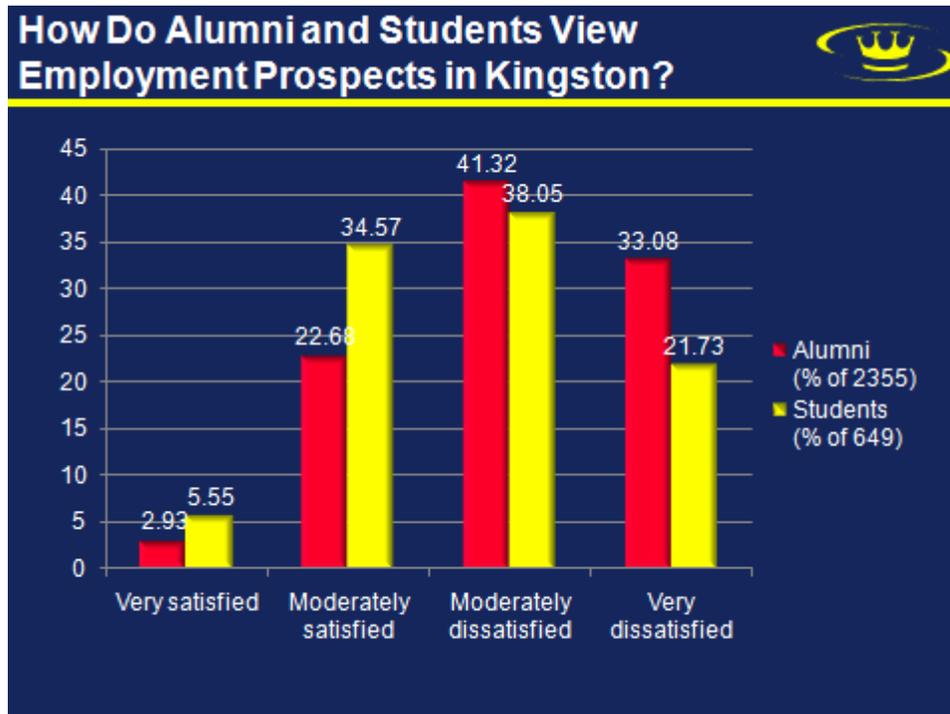
The research produced two key results:

1. Employment prospects are critical to retaining students locally.
2. Students are more likely to stay in Kingston if they feel like they are part of the community.

The View of Employment Prospects in Kingston

Queen's University's full-time enrolment as of November 1, 2008 is over 17,300 students. Of these, almost 2,700 are graduate student. Information supplied to the Queen's University Senate shows that the average entering grade was 87.3 per cent, with presented marks ranging upwards from 80 per cent. Students come from across Ontario, across Canada and around the world, with 6.5 per cent of the student population originally coming from the greater Kingston area. Students come to Kingston to obtain their university education at Queen's; they are not coming to Queen's so they can find employment in Kingston. That said, each year Queen's graduates a potential talent pool of bright, motivated students who offer significant intellectual capital. Kingston area businesses and industry have an opportunity to capture a portion of this talent pool.

However, the survey results illustrate a challenge in retaining current Queen's graduates, and, indeed, in recruiting knowledge workers to the Kingston area. **While students and alumni both indicate employment prospects are the most important factor in deciding where to live, both groups express strong dissatisfaction with Kingston's employment prospects.**



Student comments on post-graduation employment in Kingston are generally negative, with the following responses being fairly representative: *“There were no openings that match my background. Again, Kingston has too few hi-tech companies.”*, and *“I do not want to live in Kingston on graduation. I would rather live in Ottawa, Toronto or Montreal [because of the] better relationship with the city, more options for growth and promotion, and friends in those cities.”* However, one Queen’s initiative with prospective employers shows promise in retaining Queen’s graduates in the Kingston area. *“My program has a matching system for placement post-graduation. I am considering Kingston.”*

Students and alumni are consistent in their thinking around preferred employment. The top five sectors in order of preference are:

1. Business, finance, administration
2. Natural & applied science
3. Art, culture, recreation, sport
4. Primary industry
5. Social science, education, government service, religion

Within this ranking, two trends emerge. If students and alumni are more interested in health occupations, they are more likely to be satisfied with employment prospects in

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Kingston. This is not surprising as Queen's Faculty of Health Sciences, Kingston General Hospital, Hotel Dieu Hospital, and Providence Care are all major employers in Kingston. There is also the perception among both students and alumni that sales and service is Kingston's largest employment sector. However, sales and services is the least popular choice of employment for Queen's students and alumni.



The Job Search

Analysis of the survey results examined the resources both students and faculty used in looking for employment. Alumni use online search engines and personal and family contacts the most often. However, they are more satisfied with the results achieved when using faculty contacts, personal or family contacts, or newspapers.

The first choice of students when looking for employment is Queen's Career Services online job postings followed by other online search engines. Students are happiest with the results when using community employment offices and newspapers.

This suggests those established in the workforce are more likely to turn to their personal networks to find new advanced opportunities in the workforce. New graduates, often competing for entry level positions are more likely to be successful during face to face

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meetings with facilitators at community employment offices than they are when searching on line.

The Alumni Experience

Kingston is not necessarily on the radar of Queen's alumni once they start looking for employment. In fact, almost half of alumni did not think of Kingston as a viable place to work, as illustrated by the following comments:

"I have found that there are only really part time minimum wage opportunities available in Kingston and found that if I wanted more in my field Ottawa would be a better place to live."

"Kingston had limited employment opportunities in my field and I also returned to university to do another degree in another city."

"I had no desire whatsoever to remain in Kingston following my graduation from Queen's. I would not have accepted a job in Kingston for under \$100, 000 a year"

"Kingston was never an option for employment. Always planned to return to hometown"

About a quarter of respondents have looked for work in Kingston:

"There are research opportunities here at Queen's and also teaching and research opportunities at Royal Military College and St. Lawrence Community College. There are several engineering jobs that I'm interested in here in Kingston as well."

"I have looked for, and am now employed permanently in Kingston, working for Queen's University."

"I am currently employed as a labour relations analyst with the Ontario Government. Kingston is a regional hub for the OPS, and so I often keep my attention attuned to potential opportunities to move back to Kingston or travel there for conference/training opportunities."

"I have been applying to various Registered Nursing positions at KGH, HDH and KFL&A."



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“Simply put - I will move to Kingston tomorrow if I find a job in my field, even if this means a (decent) cut in my wages.”

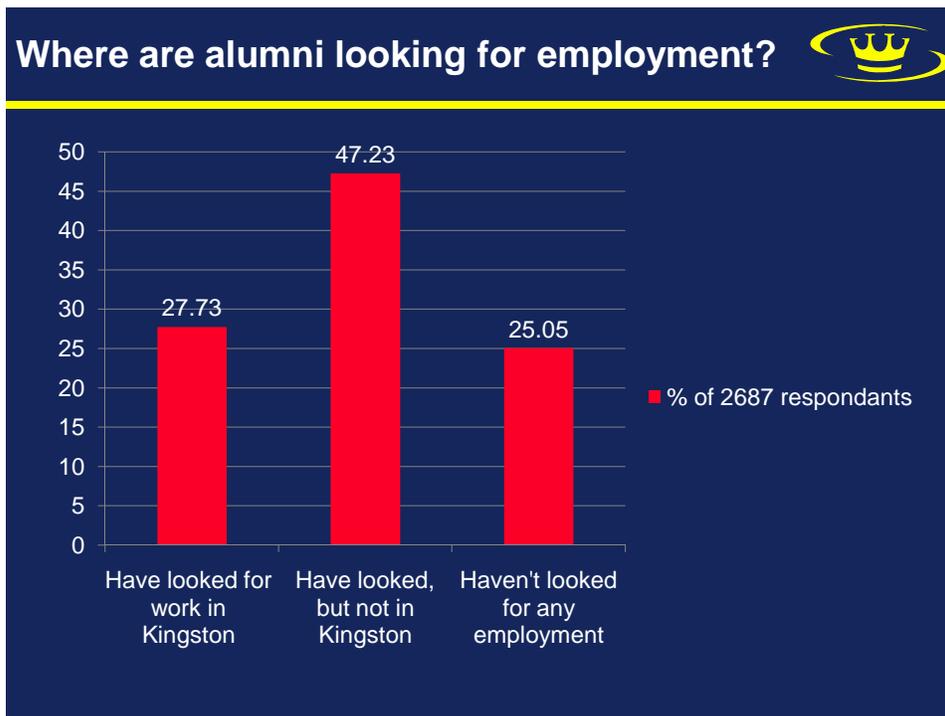
Approximately one quarter of respondents have not looked for employment at all. It can be assumed that a large number of the latter group are in graduate school, and it is not known how many of these will seek employment in Kingston.

“I've started graduate school since leaving Queen's undergrad.”

“I am still currently a student at Queen's University pursuing my doctorate in Psychology.”

“I have not yet left Queen's. After my undergrad, I returned here for graduate school. I do not anticipate looking for employment here as I have already spent 6 years here and am looking forward to moving somewhere new.”

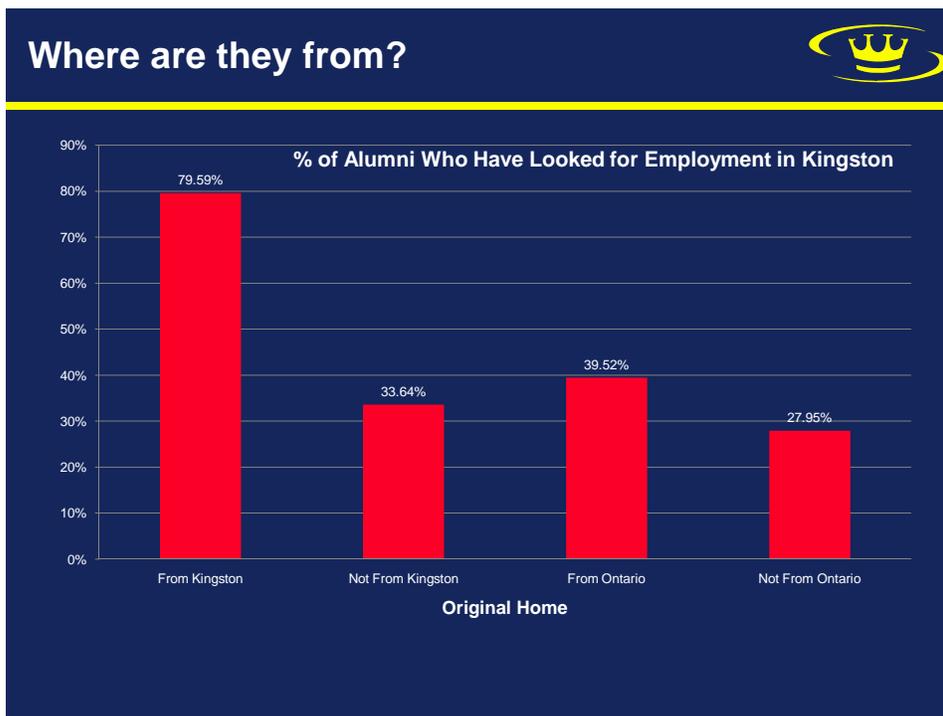
“I have looked for employment as an undergraduate student in Kingston and had a very difficult time securing any sort of meaningful employment. I will not be looking in Kingston for employment after my PhD, as there are simply very few opportunities here. Additionally, I dislike the city and am not satisfied with the amount of diversity of culture present outside (and to a lesser extent inside) the academic community.”



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Of those who have looked for work in the area, four in five were originally from the Kingston region. This reflects the findings that the top five drivers for alumni seeking employments were:

1. Proximity to family and friends
2. Access to places of worship
3. Restaurants
4. Socio-economic conditions
5. The Kingston community (including residents and municipal government)



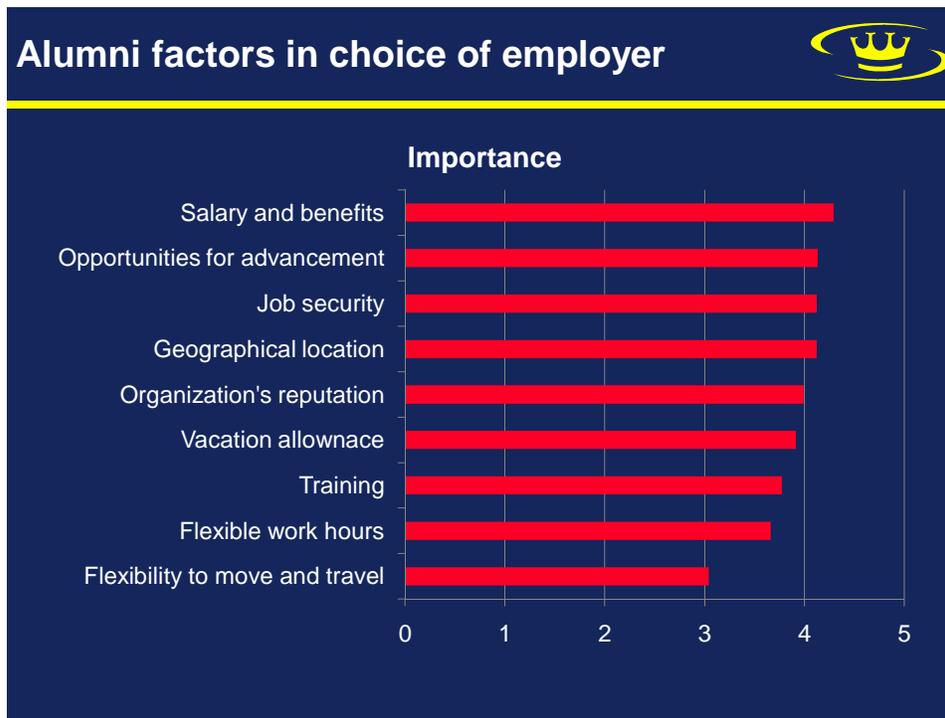
Alumni Comments

“Kingston is a wonderful city, centrally located relative to Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto, which is large enough to support many commercial ventures, yet small enough to feel like an intimate community.”

“I enjoy the small neighbourhood style, lots of parks, access to the water, easy travel distance to larger city centres (Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal), ability to use the train service, the market - in general, the ability to lead a small town life in a city setting.”

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Regardless of where alumni are looking for employment, the most important factor when considering a job is salary and benefits. The fact that almost 50 per cent of alumni did not consider Kingston when looking for work may be reflected in comments suggesting they expect to find better salaries in bigger cities, or that there is no employment in Kingston that matches their training.



Alumni Comments

“Kingston is not a significant commercial centre which would enhance prospects for career advancement.”

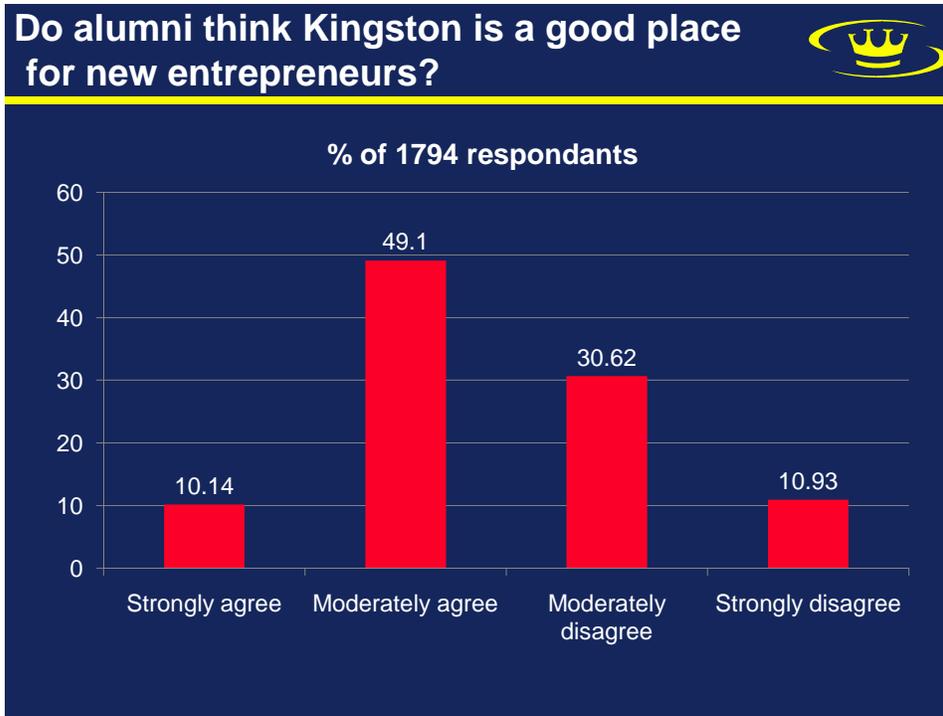
“I am currently completing graduate school. I will be looking for employment outside of Kingston upon graduation. In my field of study, direct recruitment to a faculty position is not possible and international experience is a must.”

“I am currently looking for employment for engineering positions but have found no suitable opportunities in Kingston.”

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“As a law student in securities law, Kingston had nothing to offer. I would have been happy to work with the law firm, if it existed in the area of my interest. Even a law firm doing some corporate or commercial law would perhaps draw me to Kingston”

On a positive note, more than 60 per cent of alumni either moderately or strongly agree with the statement that Kingston is a good place for entrepreneurs.



Students' Post-Graduation Employment Plans

The student portion of the survey involved those in third year, fourth year, and graduate studies. As such, it is not surprising that 78 per cent of respondents had not yet looked for employment. Of those who had investigated employment opportunities, 21.6 per cent had looked in Kingston and 78.4 had not.

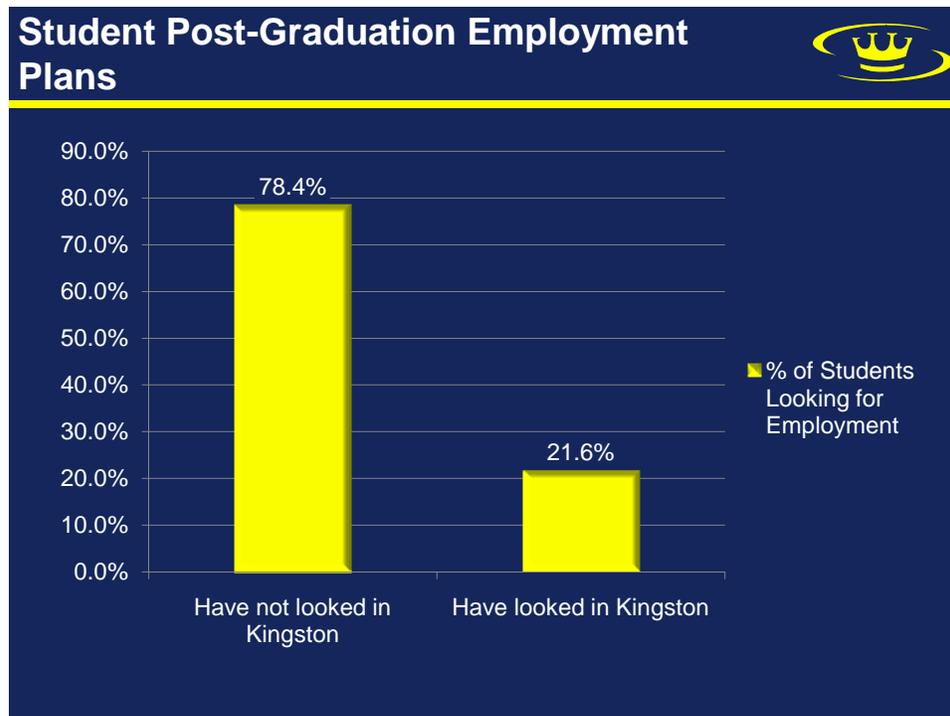
Those looking for employment in Kingston note job fairs in nursing and an established link between their program and local employers. Kingston businesses and industries should look to the success of job fairs in recruiting Queen's students. Other students state they enjoyed Kingston and want to stay in the city.

Student Comments

"I am satisfied with the overall layout of the city. The downtown core has everything that a student would ever need. The historical look and British colonial garden-city feel is a major plus."

"I am satisfied with the easy access to public transit. For me, it is quite easy to move around the city by bus. "

"This is where I live. I don't live anywhere else, and any time I make an effort to get involved outside the Queen's bubble, I'm welcomed. "



The responses of those who are not considering Kingston fall into six general categories. Put succinctly, a number of respondents simply do not consider Kingston as a place for post-graduation employment. They are only in Kingston because they want to attend Queen's. Some plan to return home when they graduate from Queen's. In common with some alumni, other students are looking for employment in larger cities (Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal) or outside of Canada, either because they feel salaries will be better, or they perceive a larger city to be more "exciting" and offer an opportunity to mix with their peers. A number of respondents say there are no opportunities in their field in

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Kingston, with some stating they knew this when they came to Queen's. Those with ambitions for the academy note it is generally not a good idea to be employed by the same institution from which their graduate degree was granted. A final factor is a generally unhappy experience in Kingston due to a perceived negative attitude of the Kingston community toward Queen's students.

Student Comments

"To be honest, part of the lack of desirability to remain in Kingston after graduation stems from the inhospitable and often hostile attitude that some Kingston residents have towards Queen's students. Their perception of us as outsiders and disturbances undermines our economic and community contributions to the city and make us feel wholly unwelcome here. Very little of me desires to remain in a community that has been so hostile and derisive of my presence."

"Look at the programs Queen's offers. There is no way Kingston could handle the number of students that graduate here. Law, health sciences, commerce, education ... It is a world class university not a world class city."

"A lot of what is studied at Queen's is not pursued in industry, community, commerce, etc. outside of university. This is why many people leave. Queen's is a world-class university that delivers a range of courses that lead to things much bigger than what Kingston has to offer."

"Kingston is a small town where there are no young professionals. As a single young professional, it would be difficult to meet a partner here. To me, it seems the demographic in Kingston is young students or older settled families/retired people. If there were more successful people in their 20s in Kingston, I would be more likely to stay."

"As a Queen's student I feel that people in Kingston look down on me, and don't want me in their city."

"I will not be staying in Kingston once I finish my undergraduate degree, and so I have not looked for employment here."

"Don't want to stay in Kingston."

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"I am currently conducting a job search for full-time employment in Kingston, but I am having a difficult time finding a job with a comparable salary level to my graduate student stipend."

"I am looking for [a] post-doctoral [appointment] after my PhD degree in Queen's. Conventionally, people would not stay in the same University they obtained their PhD degree."

"Not much employment for my discipline in Kingston. I knew that going in."

"I have not applied to many post-graduation jobs thus far, but am considering looking in Kingston. The drawback to working in Kingston is that it is a smaller city, so there are many more job opportunities in larger places."

"Again, as my intent was to return to BC, my search for post-graduation employment focused on that area. Generally, it is quite difficult to find employment in my area in smaller urban centres."

"There were no openings that match my background. Again, Kingston has too few hi-tech companies."

"I have not yet looked for post-graduation employment but when I do, I will consider Kingston."

"I have attended a recent nursing career fair, with local employers offering full time jobs upon graduation."

"I am looking for employment in a city that has more opportunities to meet people like myself (i.e., young professionals)."

"I don't think Kingston can offer me a good job with a good salary after I graduate."

"I am a music major and need to live in a more vibrant city to pursue positions that will pay enough to live off of and I also am displeased with Kingston as a city and therefore do not want to stay longer than I have too."

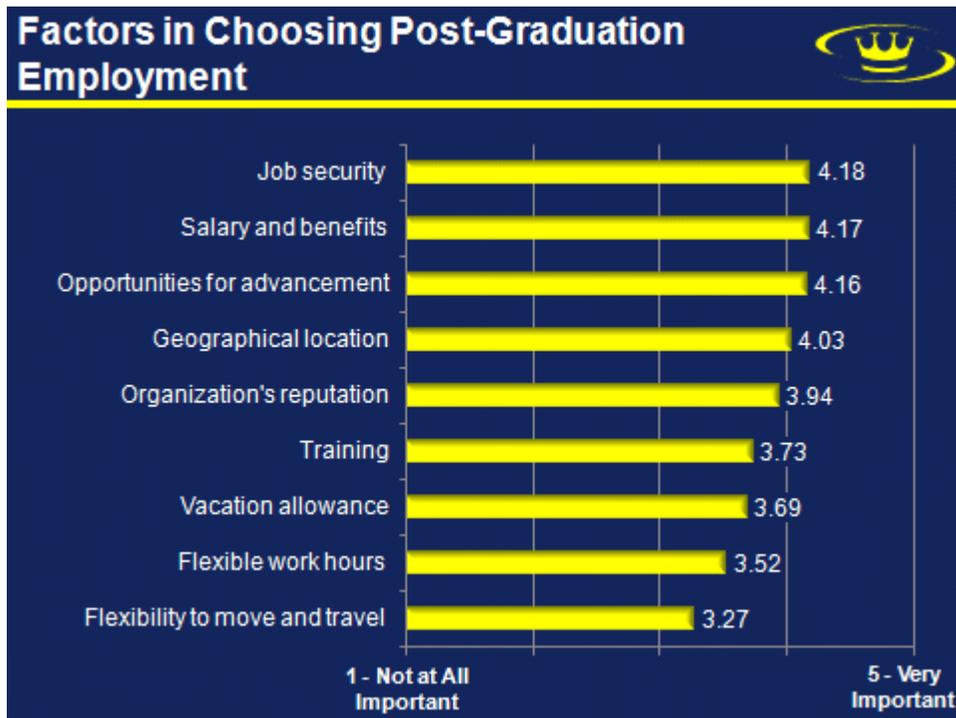
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"I have been just begun to look for post-graduate employment. I would not be opposed to working in Kingston, but I feel as though there are limited options for high paying quality jobs. Additionally, the current economic climate is not good at all for young graduates."

"Need more full-time quality jobs suitable for graduates."

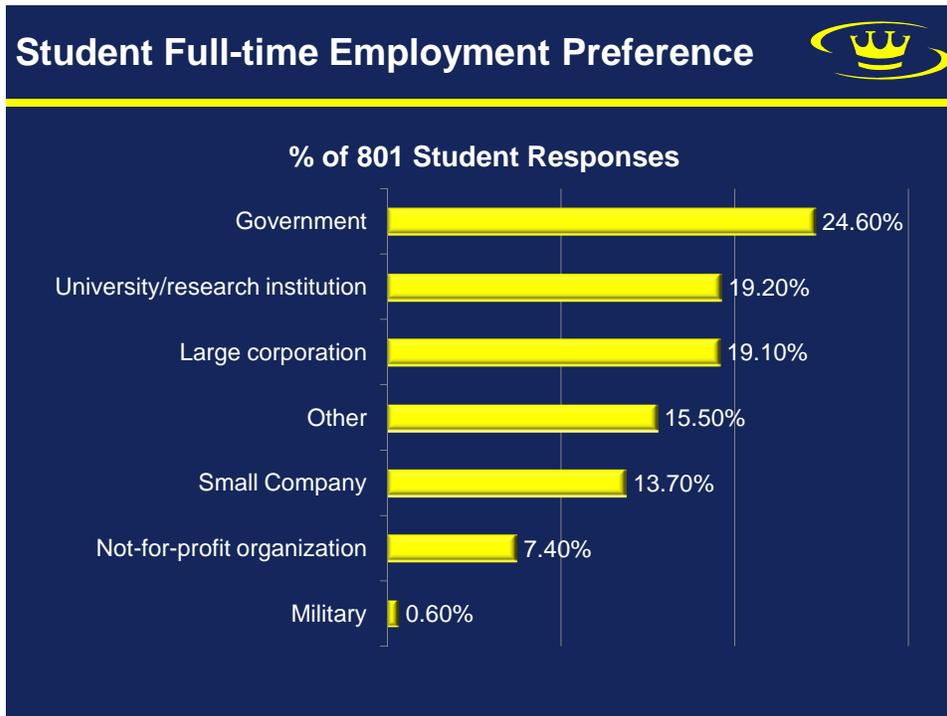
"There just aren't enough opportunities to retain. Only so many spots for lawyers and accountants. No market for investment bankers."

The comments generally reflect students' ranking of factors in choosing post-graduation employment. There is a perception that Kingston does not offer employment that meets the salary expectations or opportunities for advancement found in larger centres.



Student Full-time Employment Preference

Students were asked about the type of employment they would prefer post graduation. The relatively high number of those choosing the government sector coupled with the results that almost four in five respondents have not looked for employment in Kingston may reflect the perception that there is not a significant provincial and federal presence in the Kingston region or that the types of employment offered do not suit the students' training. Similarly, a significant preference for large corporations, and university/research institution positions coupled with a high percentage of student who are not considering Kingston as a place to look for full-time employment may reflect a perception of there not being many large corporations in Kingston, and the acknowledgement that those seeking employment in the academy generally do so at institutions other than those from which they received their degree.



Approximately one in five students prefer to work in either a small company or with a not-for profit organization. The military is the choice of a very small percentage of students. Of those choosing “Other”, 36 per cent prefer the Education sector, 20 per cent are seeking employment in Health, 10 per cent plan to start their own business and 14 per cent are unsure.

Student Comments

"I'm an academic by profession. I would prefer to stay in the University environment but will probably have to look elsewhere."

"I'm planning on becoming a high school teacher."

"(I'd like to work at a) small, interesting company interested in research or development of new technologies."

"A large scale engineering firm would be best, preferably managing projects considering my degree from Queen's."

"I would want to start in a firm or organization that has international recognition, opening the possibility for international advancement."

"I want to work for the Government of Ontario but I'm not sure what I would like to do yet."

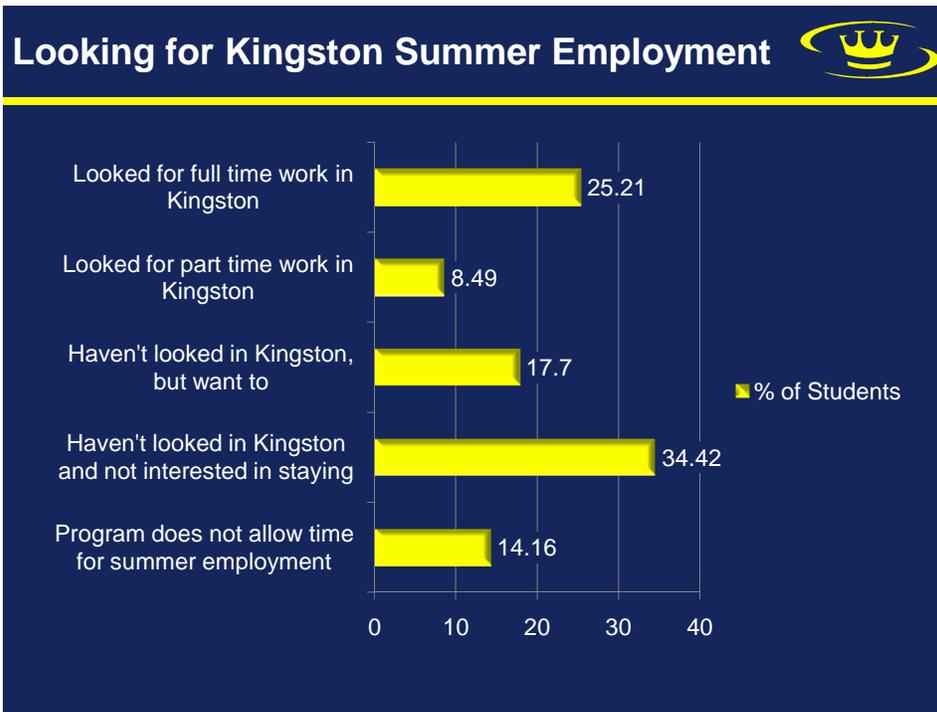
"I would like to work in a hospital as a clinical psychologist"

"The Government as an employer would be one of the most stable institutions to work for. Presumably the job would have a fair wage as well as appropriate accompanying benefits."

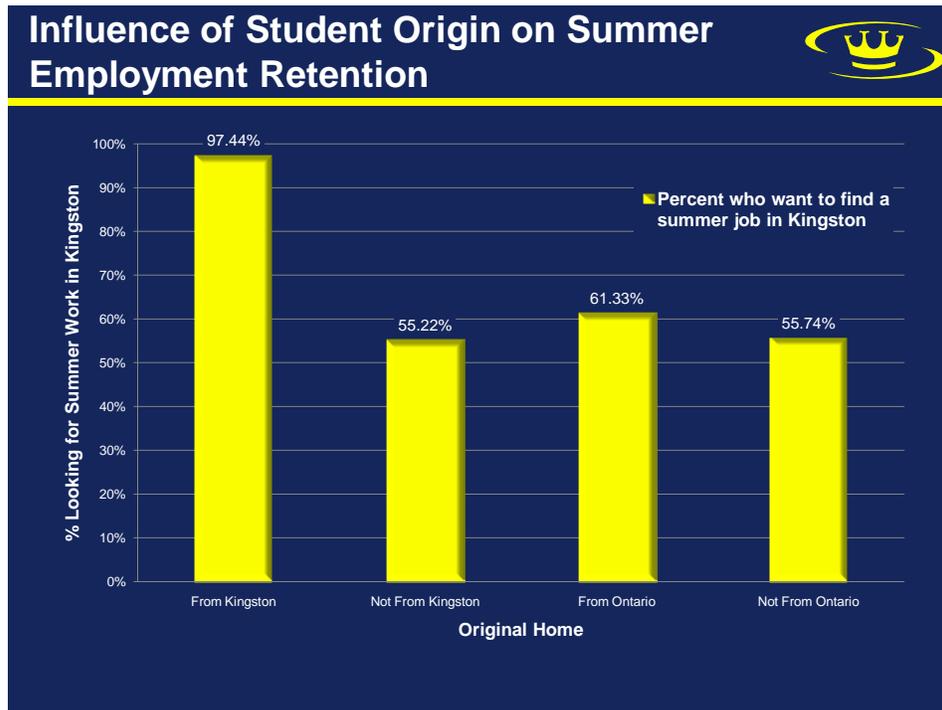
"In my field (Geology), large corporations tend to pay much more for recent grads than other employers."

Student Summer Employment

Comments in the student survey indicate students are more likely to have a favourable view of Kingston if they spend summers in the city. Indeed, the results show a majority of students have either looked for summer employment in the Kingston area, or wish to. It is unclear if 12-month leases for off campus housing are a motivating factor in a desire to work in Kingston during the summer, but fully 50 per cent of students show a desire to stay in Kingston, while approximately one-third have no intention of staying.

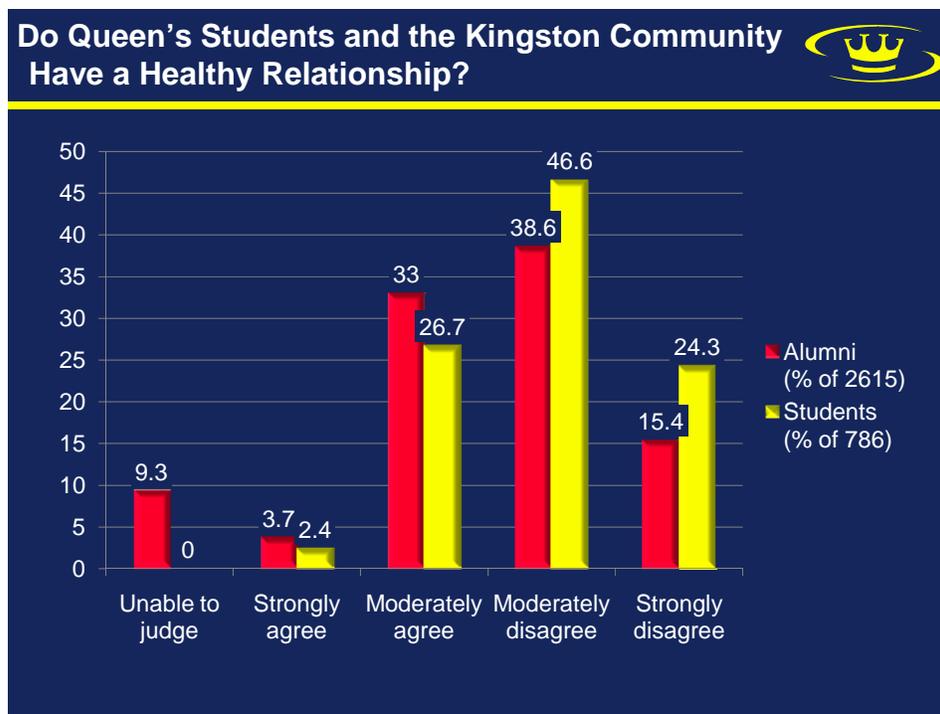


While it is clear and expected that those originally from Kingston would look for summer employment here, more than half the students from outside Kingston, and outside the province would work in Kingston during the summer if employment was available.



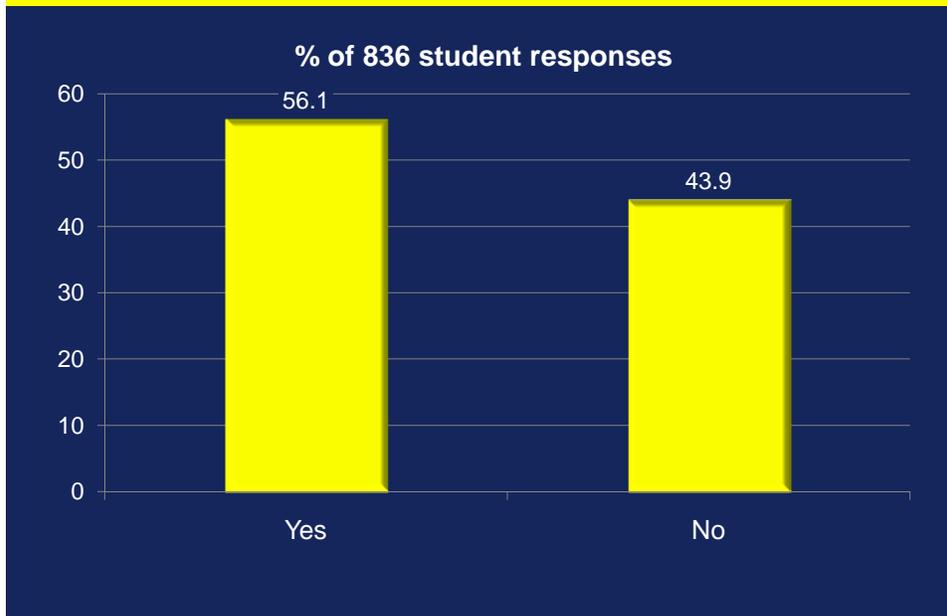
A Question of Attitude

As evidenced by comments regarding post-graduation employment, a factor in deciding where to look for a job is student attitude toward Kingston and, by extension, the perceived attitude of the Kingston community toward Queen's students. When asked whether Queen's students and the Kingston community have a healthy relationship, alumni are more positive than students. There may be two reasons for this: 1) alumni may be looking back on their days at Queen's more fondly than they did when they were attending the university and/or 2) students' perception of the relationship with the community is deteriorating.



Of the 836 students who responded to the question “Do you consider yourself to be a member of the Kingston community?”, 56.1 per cent said “Yes”, while 43.9 per cent replied “No”. This is mixed news. Considering that only 6.5 per cent of Queen's students come from Kingston, the city has engaged about half of those originating elsewhere. However, a full 40 per cent of students feel no attachment to Kingston. Further, although more than half of students consider themselves part of the community, this does not translate into wanting to stay in Kingston after graduation. Almost 80 per cent of those looking for post-graduation employment are not considering Kingston.

Do Students Feel Part of the Kingston Community?



Student Comments

A sampling of both positive and negative comments includes:

Positive

“Although most of my days are spent on campus and at class, which is not being part of the larger community, I am often walking and shopping downtown, go out for dinners, and generally out and around in the community. I think everyone at Queen's contributes to the Kingston community in some form.”

“Although I live in the ghetto and spend most of my time at home or on campus, ever since I started to play in the Kingston Women's Soccer League I feel like this is my home. By shopping and spending money on services throughout the city I feel like I am contributing to Kingston's economy and am therefore part of the community.”

“I volunteer, work, and provide for the community. I should be considered as an equal to the non-student members.”

Negative

“I'm viewed as an intruder and I feel like one. I consider myself to be more a member of the city community from which I'm from and to which I return at holidays.”

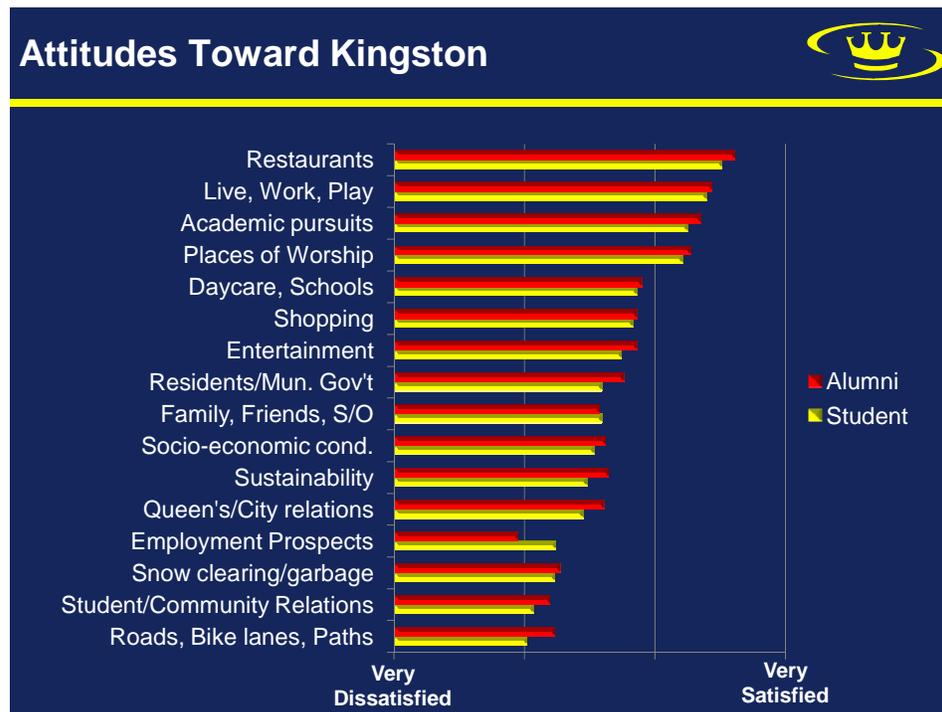
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“The municipality doesn't care about us.”

“Stop making us feel unwelcome. It's expected that we spend our entire school period being told to leave but as soon as we have a degree all that changes and we suddenly matter. That doesn't go over well with us.”

“I am part of the Queen's student community, which while being IN Kingston, is very different from the Kingston community.”

More insight into whether students and alumni feel part of the Kingston community is gained through examining overall attitudes toward Kingston. Students and alumni were asked to rank their satisfaction in 16 categories. Results show both students and alumni are most satisfied with Kingston's restaurants, proximity of places to live work and play and the opportunities for further academic pursuits. They are least satisfied with snow clearing and garbage pickup, the relationship between students and the Kingston community, maintenance of roads and bike lanes, and, as mentioned previously, the prospects for obtaining employment.



Student Comments

Although both students and alumni express satisfaction with aspects of Kingston, students' comments clearly show dissatisfaction with the way they perceive they are viewed by the Kingston community.

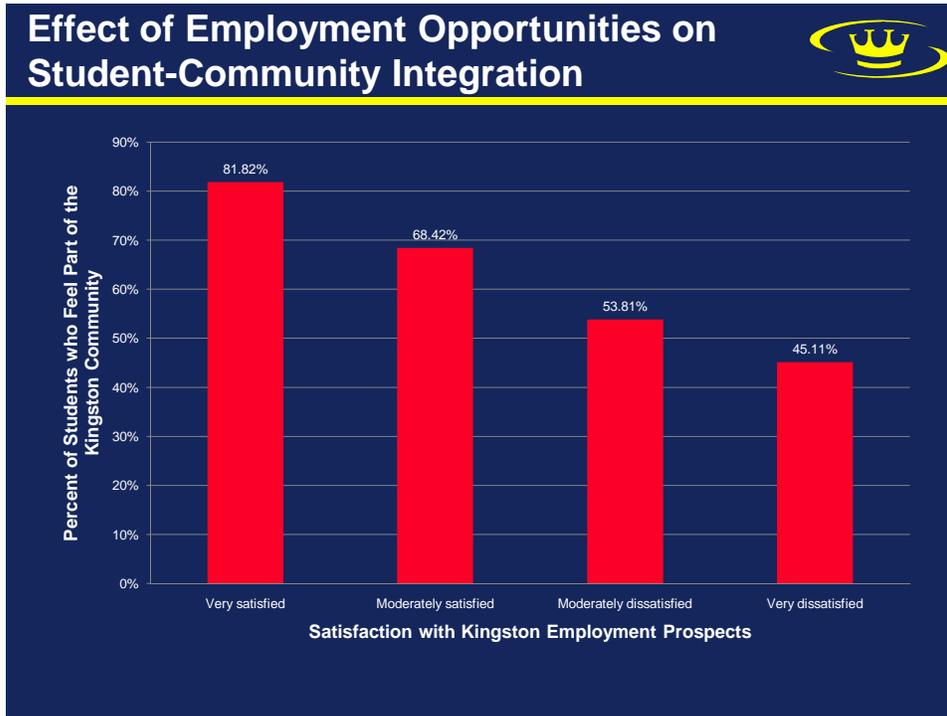
"If Kingston is interested in retaining Queen's grads to work in the community, maybe they should pay attention to us when we are students. The quality of services provided in the student 'ghetto' is far less than the quality of services provided elsewhere in the Kingston community (e.g., garbage collection, snow removal)."

"Snow removal is slow. Prospects for employment seem to be mostly at the post-secondary institutions. Not many visible sustainability efforts."

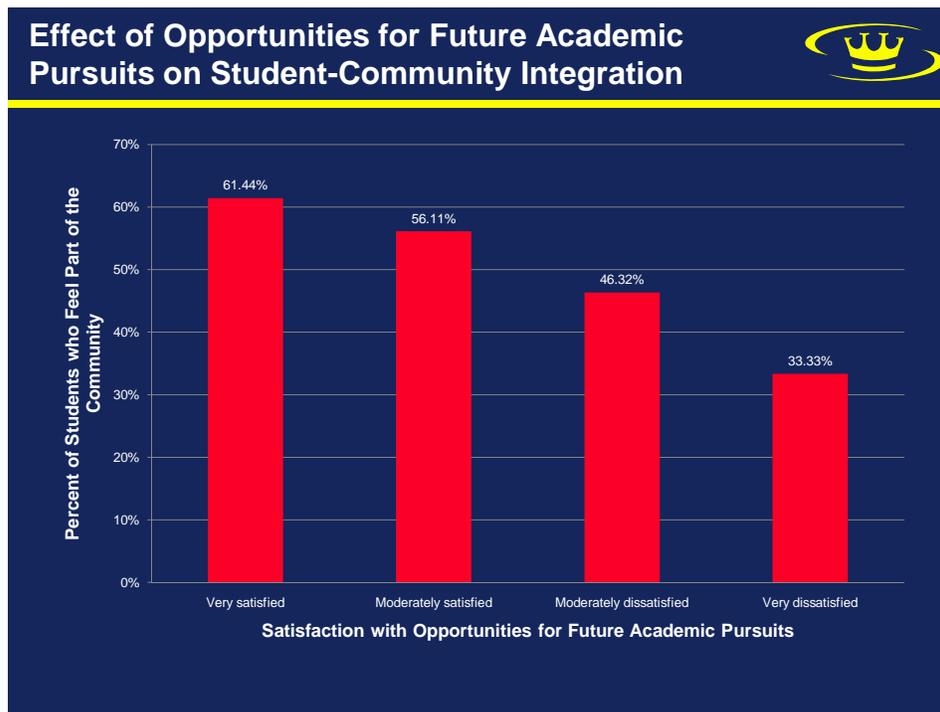
"The citizens of Kingston who are not a part of Queen's University make the city a negative place to be, as a student. Their anger and frustration, and attacks on the Queen's community make Kingston extremely undesirable as a place to live. The way in which they give [grief] to students for ... partying ... (we all know which night I am referring to) is ridiculous considering what the establishment of Queen's and the students do for this city, in regards to jobs (construction, around campus), money (the revenue students bring to Kingston), and many other social outlets (volunteering around the city)."

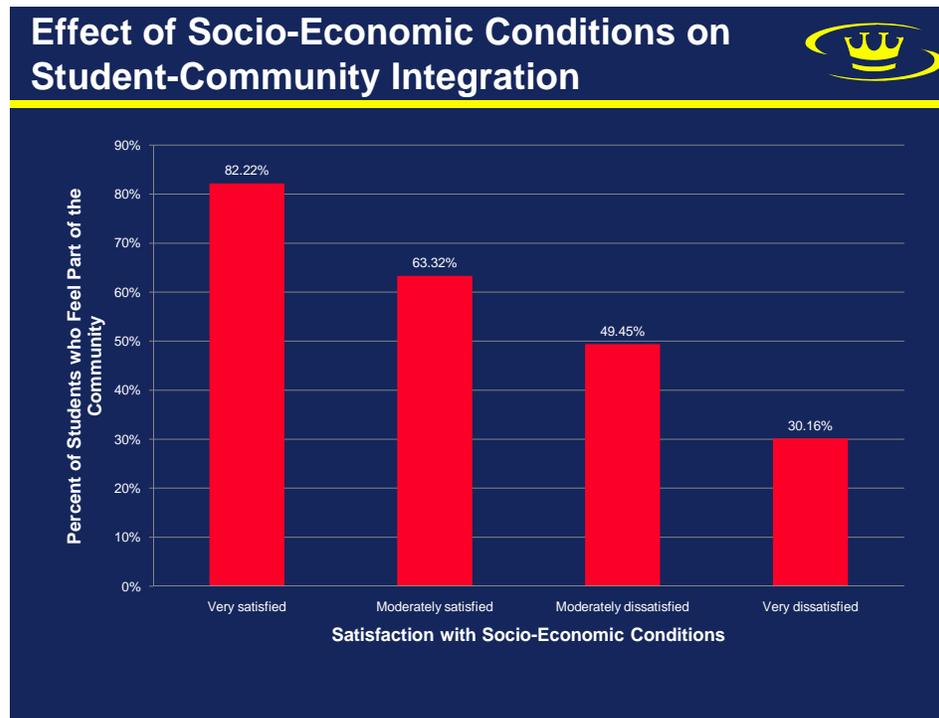
"I grew up in Kingston and never had any problems with Queen's students. We got along quite well as they were my student teachers, tutors, baby-sitters, and involved in helping throughout the community. I do not believe that has changed, but I know the attitude towards Queen's students from the Kingston community has definitely changed. I get labelled as a "rich snob" or a "partier" by the Kingston community and I am sick of it."

Despite those negative comments, it must be remembered that 56.1 per cent of Queen's student indicate they do feel part of the Kingston Community. Within that group, those who are either very satisfied or moderately satisfied with employment prospects in Kingston are more likely to feel part of the community.



Other high-ranking factors in student community integration are the opportunities for further academic pursuits and satisfaction with socio-economic conditions.





Speaking specifically of employment prospects, for students, there is a correlation between their satisfaction with employment opportunities in Kingston and their perception of availability of occupations in:

1. Social Science/education/government service/religion
2. Natural & applied sciences
3. Business, finance, administration
4. Art, culture, recreation & sport
5. Health
6. Research

For alumni, there is a correlation between their satisfaction with employment opportunities in Kingston and their perception of availability of occupations in:

1. Business, finance, administration
2. Natural & applied science
3. Art, culture, recreation, sport
4. Primary industry
5. Social science, education, government service, religion

Students' Solutions for Retaining Queen's Graduates

Students were vocal in their criticism, and their praise, of the Kingston area, and their reasons for contemplating whether or not to remain in Kingston post-graduation. They also took the opportunity to offer suggestions on how to improve the retention of Queen's graduates. As expected, there are recurring themes. A big issue for community life is improving snow removal, garbage pickup, public transportation, road and bike lane maintenance, and especially recycling. Placing recycling bins in the downtown area would go a long way in improving students' perceptions, as would instituting a green bin composting system and making recycling pickup more user friendly. These factors affect students while they are in Kingston and influence the decision to remain. Employment is key. The perception is that there are just not enough desirable jobs in Kingston to entice Queen's graduates to stay. A sample of the students' comments on the retention of Queen's graduates in Kingston follows:

"Kingston needs a strong industry in order to attract and support an intellectual population and the niche professions that they are active in."

"This is very much based on the development of a suitable industrial base for the city. McJobs will not be sufficient to retain the target demographic - this will require significant infrastructure investment and active solicitation with concessions to bring firms to Kingston. Taking advantage of Kingston's unique geographic position among four large urban centres (Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, and Syracuse) would require reinvestment in areas such as port facilities and increasing air links (i.e., AC flying into not just Toronto, but also Ottawa and Montreal). Queen's may have a role in developing knowledge-based companies also, using PARTEQ and other resources to generate innovative ideas that are less centred on heavy industry and hence independent of infrastructure."

"To retain students in the hard sciences and engineering, you need to encourage more soft industry (software companies, engineering design firms, etc.) to build here in Kingston."

"Kingston should attract more industry in the field of information technology and sustainability research."

"We need to know more about the business, finance, and administrative occupations offered in Kingston. Students are exposed to Princess St. and the lower-income region north of Princess, but other parts of Kingston are not made known to us. If Kingston has a 'business sector' I have yet to ever hear a thing about it. I only know the down town core and the box store-mall area."

"I think it boils down to a question of whether or not students feel welcomed in Kingston. I think Queen's does a fairly good job of attracting students due to its reputation, but the

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stereotype is that the Kingston community wants us to leave as soon as possible. Waterloo does a much better job of connecting the community with its two universities.”

“Kingston should encourage businesses, and probably large corporations like Microsoft and RIM, to do business in Kingston just like other small cities like Waterloo are doing. This way the city's economy would improve greatly and will attract large number of people to move in here.”

“I think efforts should be made to attract larger businesses and perhaps corporations that would hire and keep young professionals in Kingston. Creating more lucrative jobs is sure to keep young people around.”

“There needs to be job opportunities in the areas that people are obtaining their degrees in. A lack of jobs in engineering, commerce, nursing and teaching all make retaining students in these fields difficult”

“Events on campus to get us to know the Kingston area and its possibilities for us would be helpful.”

“I believe if Kingston were to clearly advertise the many job opportunities here in a wide variety of fields and disciplines (if these job opportunities do exist), the number of Queen's students staying in Kingston would increase.”

“I don't know if Kingston has “one-stop shopping” for students as far as providing opportunities for students and potential employers to get together throughout the students' time in Kingston.”

“Are there any prominent industries within commutable distance to Kingston that students are training for? Maybe that will impact the retention of graduated students in Kingston.”

“Maybe there could be a special “Kingston job fair” so students feel that Kingston wants them to stay”

“I don't know enough about employment opportunities in Kingston. It's not that I don't like Kingston - I do. I just don't know what my options are here. I think maybe Career Services should have more sessions on local employers instead of large companies from elsewhere.”

“I think that Queen's needs to promote the employment of students within the Kingston area upon graduating. Students in engineering specifically should be exposed to various manufacturing firms. I am aware that there are some in Kingston however I did not find out through Queen's.”

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“Kingston should offer incentives to Queen's grads to stay in Kingston.”

“Students anticipate earning far more than what certain companies are able to afford. Programs to assist these employers to hire and retain viable staff would definitely benefit the Kingston community.”

“I feel advertising local jobs in a more effective manner, improving facilities and services for youngsters, and offering municipal tax incentives taxes to locate here permanently would help retain Queen's graduates.”

“I believe that Kingston needs to provide more relevant job opportunities for graduating students. Given that Kingston is a relatively small city, the jobs would need to provide either more benefits or higher salaries in order to retain students.”

“We have the best business school, and yet a good portion of our entrepreneurs go back to the big city. The brains our Queen's graduates have could develop Kingston wonderfully. The economic potential for Kingston exists and needs to be developed into a sustainable environment

“Kingston will always be at a disadvantage compared to large centers such as Toronto as it simply doesn't have the diversity and amenities metropolitan areas do and unless a large influx of foreign immigrants move into the city this is unlikely to change. Kingston should focus on sustainable development (reducing sprawl, more bike paths, better bus service) and the advantages it has as a smaller center (slower pace of life, proximity to natural areas, safe communities, the lake). Also, Kingston has failed miserably in recent years to take advantage of one of its biggest advantages - the waterfront. The huge condo towers built on Block D are hideous and turn what should have been kept as public property into private development. Much smaller centres have managed to preserve and display their waterfronts to much greater advantage.”

“Better bus system, more entertainment (arts, symphony, concerts), more accessible shopping (downtown is scary because of homeless, and cold in winter, the Cataraqui mall is too far from downtown - 30 min bus ride is ridiculous).”

“I think because Queen's has such an international/interprovincial/province-wide draw it is hard to keep students who want to be near loved ones ultimately. That said, it would be more attractive to the 20-something looking for somewhere to live for the next little while if high-paying jobs were more obviously available and transportation to trendy major metropolitan centres (Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa) was cheaper and more frequent.”

“More activities for young professionals. Make it seem like a “cool” place to live. Most stores also target the young crowd or the older crowd. There is not much for in between.”



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“Maybe the community could offer more options and make more of an effort to reach out to Queen's students so that we know what's out there and the types of jobs that are available. That would give us more incentive to stay if we knew there were great jobs available here.”

“I think that Kingston is a really great city with a lot to offer, however students do not really see it. Maybe making more public transit or advertising events and services in the community would help. For example, I went to the Fort Fright at Fort Henry this year, but had never been to the Fort before. It seems like a really interesting place but I had never heard about it before. Connecting students to the city other than through the university would probably make more students stay.”

Key Conclusions

If Kingston wishes to retain Queen's students post graduation, it is critical to improve the both the availability and the perception of the ability of employment for which the students are trained. Comments by students indicate many do not feel there is employment in their fields. However, it is not clear whether they have even looked, as many are not even considering Kingston as a place to live post-graduation. While the perception that there are no jobs is evident in comments received, of equal concern, also shown by comments, is that students feel alienated from the community. It is clear that those students who feel part of the Kingston community are more likely to seek employment in Kingston. Thus, increasing the number of students who consider themselves part of the community also increases the number willing to consider Kingston as a place to live and work after they graduate.

Kingston has the opportunity to address the fact that many students are only in Kingston for their education, and plan to either return to their hometowns, or move to a bigger city when looking for employment. Queen's has attracted these students to Kingston; now Kingston can find ways to convince them to stay. This can be accomplished by increasing employment opportunities available for students after they graduate, and making students feel more welcome.

Employment

- Employment prospects are critical to retaining students locally. To retain Queen's students and alumni, it is important to increase both the availability and the perception of employment in:
 - Business, finance, administration
 - Natural & applied science
 - Art, culture, recreation, sport
 - Primary industry
 - Social science, education, government service, religion
 - Research
- Students who find summer employment in Kingston, and thus stay in the city, are more likely to have a favourable view of Kingston.
- Many students perceive they will not be able to find post-graduation employment in their field of training or at a salary level comparable to larger centres.
- Students perceive there is a lack of “lifestyle” activities in Kingston consistent with young professionals.
- Students and alumni who are interested in health occupations are satisfied with employment prospects.
- Alumni are more satisfied when using personal networks (faculty contacts, personal/family contacts) during their job search. Students who use community employment offices and newspapers are most satisfied with the results.

Community

- The majority of alumni and students do not believe there is a healthy relationship between Queen's students and the city. In fact, almost one quarter of students feel strongly that the relationship is not healthy. However, despite this, a slight majority of students consider themselves to be part of the Kingston community
- Students and alumni are most satisfied with social aspects of Kingston (restaurants, shopping, entertainment, places of worship).
- Students and alumni are least satisfied (and most vocal) about infrastructure (snow removal/garbage pickup, road/bike lane/path maintenance) student-community relations, and employment prospects.

Attraction and Retention Strategy

City Implications

1. Focus on developing employment prospects:
 - a. Strengthen the overall employment base
 - b. Implement policies that generate new economic opportunities in Social Science, Education; Natural & Applied Sciences; Business & Finance; Art, Culture, Recreation & Sport; Health; and Research.
 - c. Increase perception of the types of employment available in the Social Science, Education, Government Service & Religion sector. For example, Kingston is a regional headquarters for both the provincial government and Corrections Canada, However, there may be a perception that a limited range of career opportunities exist at Corrections Canada.
 - d. Promote cost benefits of living in Kingston compared to other larger centres as an argument to salary concerns.
 - e. Promote summer employment in Kingston as a viable economic alternative to students contemplating returning to their hometowns.
 - f. To increase the likelihood of students obtaining meaningful summer employment, increase on-campus recruiting/advertisements and the awareness of sought-after jobs at Kingston community job centres.

2. Foster student-community integration:
 - a. Continue to improve Town-Gown relations at both Council and administrative levels.
 - b. Avoid hypercritical responses to student issues. There is a danger that prolonged and constant criticism will alienate a valuable economic resource. This comment is not aimed solely at homecoming and the Aberdeen Street party. Students acknowledge Aberdeen Street is viewed negatively by Kingston residents. However, they perceive their other complaints (snow removal/garbage and recycling pickup/ bike lanes etc.) are ignored, and that it always comes back to the Aberdeen Street party.
 - c. Improve city services in all areas of the city. Because alumni favour personal networks when seeking employment, it is important that prospective contacts be able to be positive in their responses. While they may praise good restaurants, poorly maintained infrastructure and a perceived lack of services can negatively affect the recruitment and retention of highly qualified candidates.
 - d. Improve city services in student residential areas, specifically snow removal and garbage/recycling pickup. A perceived difference in service

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between the student area and the rest of the city is a factor in leading students to believe they are not welcome. If they don't feel equal to non-student citizens while at Queen's they are less likely to want to become a Kingston citizen once they graduate.

3. View both students in Kingston and alumni as marketers of the city:
 - a. In both instances, a positive experience will make them ambassadors for the city. At the same time, negatives experiences will also be passed along to friends and family who may be considering employment in Kingston.

Employer & University Implications

1. Continue to develop academy-industry-community partnerships
 - Expand student-employer matching programs
 - Develop more summer and post-grad internships
 - Just as MBA students are often sponsored by employers to study at the university, consider creating other programs where employers sponsor students in return for a commitment to work with the firm for a period of time after graduation
 - Promote off-campus volunteer opportunities and Kingston events to students
 - Encourage media to highlight positive Queen's student and alumni contributions
2. Raise awareness of local businesses through recruitment
 - Address the perception that there is a void of 25 to 30 year old professionals in Kingston
 - Actively recruit young graduates satisfied with their Queen's experiences and the Kingston community to represent local businesses to students
 - Promote firms with an interest in sustainability
 - Develop employment opportunities with room for advancement
 - Further utilize on-campus recruitment opportunities (e.g., job fairs).
3. Think locally to compete globally
 - Look to Queen's faculty and students to provide research and consulting services to Kingston businesses. This provides an opportunity for graduate and undergraduate students to be involved in local business and industry while still at Queen's, providing the potential for a positive experience that can carry over once they graduate. It also exposes students

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to employment opportunities within businesses that might otherwise not be known

- Acknowledge the pool of local talent and harness it to improve Kingston's global competitiveness

Kingston has the potential to tap into an important talent pool at Queen's University. Students accepted at Queen's have shown a commitment to their education (87 per cent entering grade on average) and their community (volunteering and extracurricular activities), and represent some of the brightest and best potential employees and entrepreneurs. Their commitment can be extended to Kingston employers and industry if students are made more aware of the employment possibilities, and if they perceive they are a welcome part of the Kingston community. One comment during a focus group session resonates. The student asks, "Why are you telling me you want me to stay in Kingston after I graduate, when you've spent the last four years (as a student) telling me you DON'T want me here?" Kingston must face the challenge that in order to retain students and benefit directly from their intellectual capital, the city must not only have desired jobs available, it must also embrace Queen's students as viable candidates for these jobs, and provide appropriate city services and messages of welcome.

