

# Results from the Senior Survey 2020

## Methodology

The link to an online survey was emailed to each full-time member of the senior class who, as of May 20, 2020, was anticipated to graduate by May 2020. Employees and other non-traditional students were excluded from the population. Initial invitations were sent on May 20<sup>th</sup> and the last responses were received on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Of the 426 seniors who graduated between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020, 249 responded with their primary activity after graduation (at a minimum) for an overall response rate of 58%.

## Highlights

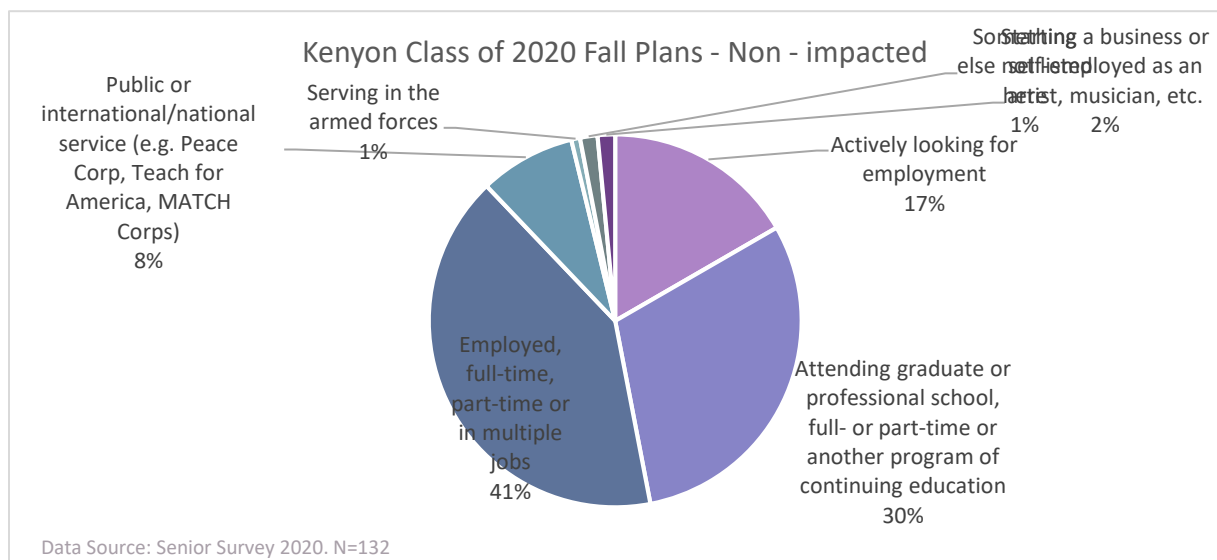
As of May 2020, respondents to the Class of 2020 Senior Survey indicated that:

- 45% has had their post-graduate plans altered by COVID-19.
- 53% has not had their post-graduate plans altered by COVID-19.
- 2% did not answer.

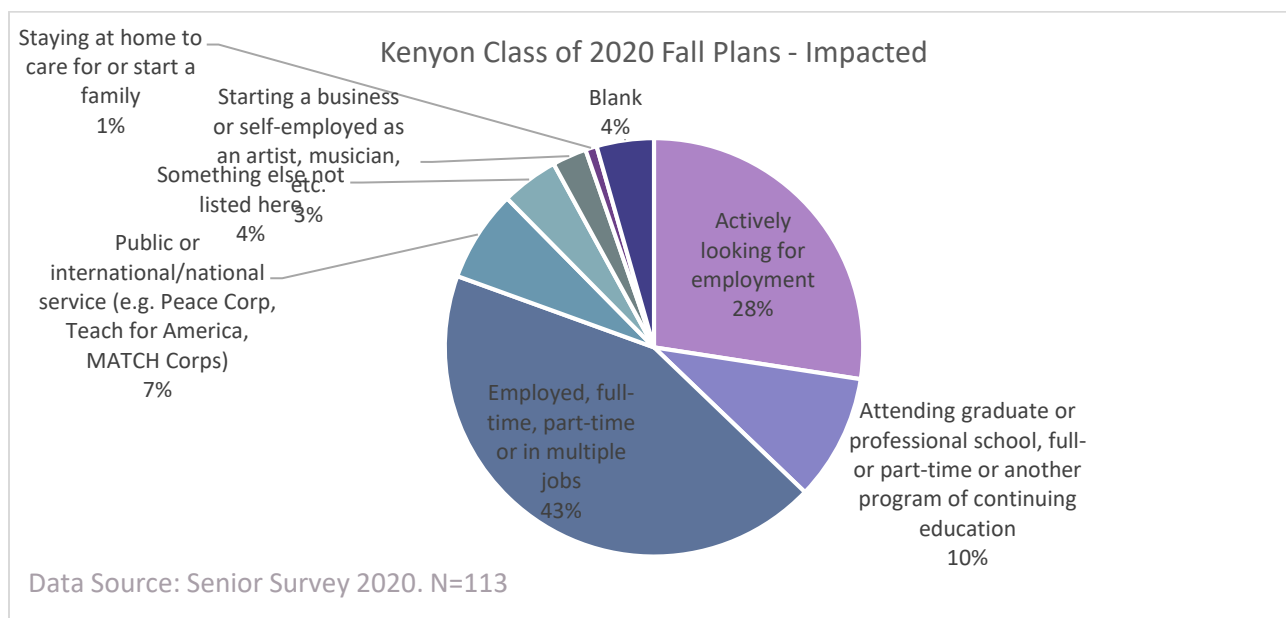
## The Plans for the Class of 2020

We wanted to see how the plans for the Class of 2020 were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, so we first asked seniors to identify whether or not their post-graduate plans were affected by COVID-19. 45% of students responded that their plans had been altered by COVID-19 (which included plans being discontinued (19%) and plans being postponed (27%)), while 53% responded that their post-graduate plans were not altered by COVID-19.

Of those whose plans were **not** impacted by the virus, 59% of non-impacted students indicated that employment was their first priority, whether it was being employed full time, part-time, or multiple jobs (41%), actively seeking employment (17%), or starting one's own business (2%). Of those who indicated employment, 49 respondents (35% of total non-impacted student pool) reported a full-time position, 4 respondents (3%) reported a part-time position. 30% indicated that they would continue their education in the fall. Most of these students had already enrolled or been accepted into a graduate or professional school program (95% of total), and others were planning on continuing their education but had not yet enrolled or been accepted (5% of total). 8% of non-impacted graduates planned on participating in a volunteer or service program. A small percentage of non-impacted students (1%) planned on serving in the U.S. Military, while another small number of students (1%) planned on doing something other than employment, education, service, or military.



Of the 113 students (45%) whose post-graduate plans **were** impacted by COVID-19, 47 impacted students (19% of total) had their plans discontinued and 66 impacted students (27% of total) had their plans postponed. 74% of students whose post-graduate plans were impacted by COVID-19 placed employment as a top priority, whether it was employment in a full-time capacity, part-time capacity, or multiple jobs (43%), actively seeking employment (27%), or starting one's own business (4%). 13 impacted respondents (12% of total impacted-student pool) reported full-time employment, and 7 respondents (6%) reported part-time employment. 10% indicated that they were planning on continuing their education in the fall. 7% of impacted respondents planned on participating in a volunteer or service organization. 1% of respondents were planning on staying home to care for or start a family. A small number of students (4%) planned on doing something other than employment, education, service, or staying at home. 4% of respondents whose post-graduate plans were impacted by the virus left this section blank.



## Employment and Volunteer/Service

Of those students whose plans were **not** impacted by COVID-19, just under half of the senior class respondents (49%) reported they were undertaking full-time employment, part-time employment, or volunteer/service work positions. The survey gave these respondents the opportunity to provide information on the nature of their work.

41% of the non-impacted survey respondents (54 respondents) stated that they would be employed full-time or employed part-time in the fall. Students who selected one of these employment categories had an option to give further information about the nature of their work. 100% of employed respondents selected a description of their work. The majority of these non-impacted respondents (80%) selected that their work is part of the private sector. The remaining non-impacted respondents indicated their work was in the public sector. In addition, 54% of employed non-impacted respondents indicated that they would be working for a for-profit organization. From the open-response question in which respondents could state their position or title, popular fields of work for these graduates include finance, education, and research.

In addition, 8% of the non-COVID impacted survey respondents (11 respondents) stated that they would work volunteer or service positions in the fall. 73% of these 11 students who reported that they would conduct volunteer or service work stated that they had teaching positions. Popular employers listed by students included City Year, Teach for America, and AmeriCorps.

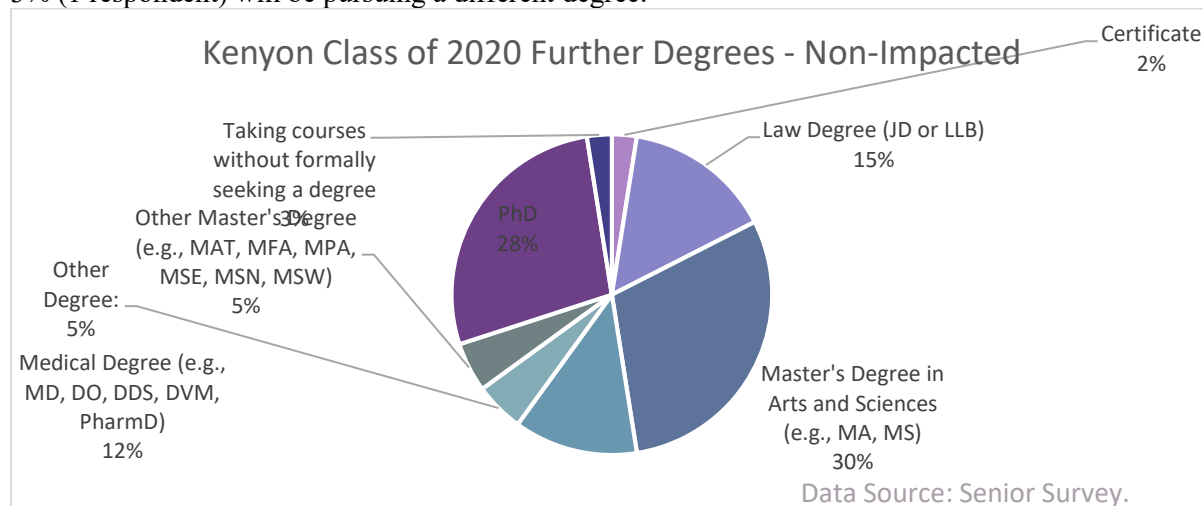
Of those students whose plans **were** impacted by COVID-19, just over half of the senior class respondents (51%) reported that they had initially planned on undertaking full-time employment, part-time employment, or volunteer/service work positions. 43% of the survey respondents (49 respondents) impacted by COVID-19 stated they were planning on being employed full-time or employed part-time in the fall. Of these 49 respondents, 25 respondents (51%) had their original post-graduate plan discontinued, and 24 respondents (49%) had their original post-graduate plan postponed. Out of the 25 respondents whose post-graduate plans to work full-time or part-time were discontinued, 15 respondents (60%) are now actively seeking employment, 7 respondents (28%) reported being employed full-time or part time, 2 respondents (8%) reported they are staying at home to start or care for family, and 1 respondent (4%) reported they are starting a business/self-employed. Out of the 24 respondents whose post-graduate plans to work full-time or part-time were postponed, 14 respondents (58%) reported being employed full-time or part-time, 9 respondents (38%) reported actively seeking employment, and 1 respondent (4%) responded they were doing something not listed. 100% of those whose post-graduate plans were postponed due to COVID-19 but still report being employed full-time or part-time reported a job in the private sector at a for-profit organization.

In addition, 7% of the survey respondents (8 respondents) whose plans were impacted by COVID-19 stated they had planned to work volunteer or service positions in the fall. Of the 8 respondents, 7 reported their positions were postponed and 1 reported the position to be discontinued. Top employers were reported to be Fulbright, Peace Corps, and City Year. 50% of those planning on working a volunteer or service position reported they are now actively seeking employment, 13% (1 respondent) is employed full-time or part-time, 13% (1 respondent) is continuing with volunteer or service work, 13% (1 respondent) is enrolled in graduate school, and 13% (1 respondent) is pursuing something not listed on the survey.

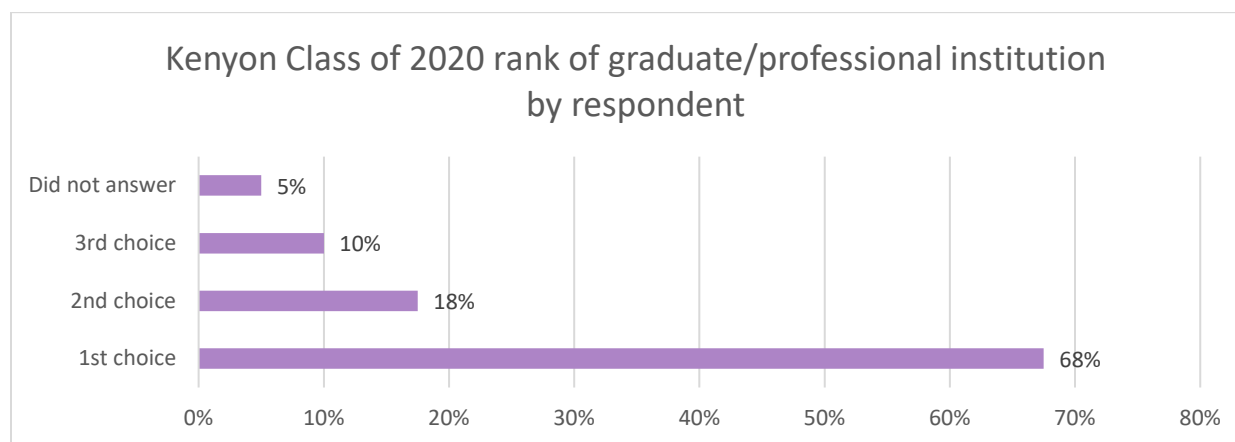
## Graduate and Professional School

Of the Class of 2020 whose plans were **not** impacted by COVID-19, 30% indicated that their post-graduation plans included graduate or professional school. 95% of these students (38 respondents) had been accepted at or had enrolled in a graduate program for the fall. The remaining 5% (2 respondents) planned to pursue further education in the fall, but they had not enrolled in a program as of the time they completed the survey.

Non-impacted students who stated they had been accepted at or had enrolled in a graduate/professional program for the fall were asked to provide details on the type of degree they were pursuing. Of these students, 35% (14 respondents) will be pursuing a master's degree, 28% (11 respondents) will be pursuing a PhD, 15% (6 respondents) will be pursuing a law degree, and 13% (5 respondents) will be pursuing a medical degree. 3% (1 respondent) will be pursuing a certificate, while 3% (1 respondent) will be pursuing a different degree.



Non-impacted students who planned to attend graduate or professional school were successful in getting admitted to their top choice programs. The majority (68%) were planning to attend their first choice of graduate or professional program, and 18% were planning to attend their second choice of program. Only 4 respondents (10%) indicated that their program was their third choice. 2 students who indicated they will be attempting a further degree did not respond to the question about rank.



Data Source: Senior Survey 2020: N=40.

Of the Class of 2020 whose plans **were** impacted by COVID-19, 10% indicated that their post-graduation plans included graduate or professional school. 82% of respondents (9 respondents) reported their program was postponed, while the other 18% (2 respondents) reported their program was discontinued. Of the 11 respondents whose post-graduate plan to attend graduate or professional school was discontinued or postponed due to COVID-19, 36% (4 respondents) report still planning on attending graduate or professional school as their next step, 27% (3 respondents) report being employed either full-time or part-time, and 36% (4 respondents) report actively seeking employment.

Of the 4 respondents still planning on attending graduate or professional school in the immediate future, 50% will be attempting to achieve certificates while 50% will be attempting to achieve a master's degree. Of the 3 respondents who reported full-time or part-time employment, 66% (2 respondents) reported a job in the private sector while 33% (1 respondent) reported a job in the public sector.

## Students with Other Plans

Other options for respondents whose post-graduate plans were **not** impacted by COVID-19 included the 1% of students serving in the U.S. military. An additional 2% of students indicated that they had plans to do something that did not include working or attending graduate or professional school. These responses included taking a gap year or not applying for a job.

Other options for respondents whose post-graduate plans **were** impacted by COVID-19 included 3% (3 respondents) of students who reported starting a business or self-employed as an artist/musician, 1% (1 respondent) who reported staying home to start or care for family, and 4% (5 respondents) who reported something not listed on the survey. 4% (5 respondents) left this section blank.

## Conclusions

The Class of 2020 is faced with a peculiar situation – the COVID-19 pandemic has forced employers to discontinue or postpone opportunities in all fields. With this in mind, the Class of 2020 is adapting to the challenges. The pandemic impacted more respondents than expected, with 45% of respondents reporting postponement or discontinuation of their intended post-graduate plan. Compared to previous years this is unprecedented. COVID-19 impacted those intending to enter the workforce on a higher scale than those planning to attend graduate school, which has led to an increase in the number of students seeking employment as of survey completion. Based on the respondents' ability to navigate the job market pre-pandemic (66% of respondents seeking employment reported having a position post-graduation), it is reasonable to predict future success for those impacted by the pandemic. Kenyon College fosters an educated student body that is capable of success in all climates, and the Class of 2020 is no different. Kenyon students will also be attending graduate school at an increased rate compared to previous years (30% of non-impacted students are attending graduate school, 10% of impacted students were planning on attending graduate school, compared to 17% of students in 2019 and 13% of students in 2018). It will be interesting to see if the increase in graduate continues to increase as the years go on. It will also be interesting to see how the percent of students with full or part-time employment changes in the coming years as the impact of COVID-19 becomes more of a non-factor.