Your Generation

How many Amherst alumni have started a business? How many have started a family? How satisfied are alumni with their lives? How satisfied are they with their college?

Last spring 42 percent of all living alumni through the Class of 2008 took part in a survey. The results reveal much about Amherst graduates as a whole, and also about the Amherst experience and the value of a liberal arts education.

The college has analyzed the survey responses across six generations. (The youngest alumni received a different, shorter survey.)

The information on these pages is but a small sampling of 22 pages of survey results, all of which are available at www.amherst.edu/alumni/survey.
WHAT YOU’RE DOING AND HOW MUCH YOU LIKE IT

**WORK LIFE**

**TOP CAREERS**

Alumni are most likely to work in these fields:

- BUSINESS
- LAW
- EDUCATION
- HEALTH

**JOB TITLES FOR STUDENTS JOINING THE WORKFORCE DURING THE Past 10 Years**

The career center’s own research shows that “Amherst students are drawn to opportunities in sectors where they are challenged daily, able to apply their analytical skills, stimulated intellectually and expected to make an impact,” says Career Center Director Ursula Olenzer. “Many of our new graduates choose to begin their careers in fields or industries where they can put their values and skills to work, like education.” Examples of popular first jobs for new Amherst graduates include teacher/teaching assistant, analyst, legal assistant/paralegal and research technician. “I have seen some growth in developer jobs,” Olenzer says, “but otherwise job titles chosen by new graduates have remained fairly consistent over the past 10 years.”

**WHAT ELSE You’re Doing**

Not content to work for someone else, many alumni have started companies. Notably, 5 percent of Post-World War II respondents are currently developing start-ups.

**PERCENT WHO ARE Employed Full-Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WORLD WAR II</th>
<th>POST-WORLD WAR II</th>
<th>BABY BOOMER</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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</table>

**PERCENT WHO HAVE STARTED A COMPANY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>World War II</th>
<th>Post-World War II</th>
<th>Baby Boomer</th>
<th>Early Coed</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Millennial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERCENT CURRENTLY DEVELOPING A START-UP COMPANY</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

89 percent are “very” or “generally” satisfied with their careers.

**THE GREATEST CAREER SATISFACTION COMES WITH AGE.**

Among World War II respondents, 96 percent are satisfied with their careers thus far. That number is 95 percent for the Post-World War II generation, 90 percent for Baby Boomers and Early Coed alumni, 87 percent for Gen Xers and 82 percent for Millennials. The oldest alumni are most likely to report being “very” satisfied.

Society of the Alumni President Kirsten Poler ’88 is among those who stepped away from a career to raise children. She wishes people would focus not on “What have you done since Amherst?” but on “Who have you become since Amherst?”
SURVEY

MARRIAGE, KIDS AND OLD FRIENDS → HOME LIFE

PERCENT WHO HAVE A Spouse or Partner

- World War II: 82%
- Post-World War II: 90%
- Baby Boomer: 88%
- Gen X: 85%
- Millennial: 51%

are “very” or “generally” satisfied with their lives right now

“Some of the key predictors of happiness are engaging in meaningful work and having close relationships,” says Professor of Psychology Catherine Sanderson. A liberal arts education prepares students for careers and volunteer activities that are personally meaningful, she says, and the Amherst environment “fosters close personal relationships.”

70% have at least one child

The most common number of children is two. Among the younger generations, 68 percent of Gen Xers and 12 percent of Millennials have at least one child.

FRIENDSHIPS

Even 70 years out of college, alumni maintain connections with Amherst, most often through their friendships. Here are the percent who are regularly in touch with classmates or college friends.

- World War II: 78%
- Post-World War II: 86%
- Baby Boomer: 93%

GRADUATE EDUCATION

PERCENT WHO HAVE ENROLLED IN A DEGREE PROGRAM SINCE GRADUATING FROM AMHERST

- World War II: 78%
- Post-World War II: 89%
- Baby Boomer: 91%
- Early Coed: 82%
- Gen X: 85%
- Millennial: 77%

THE GREATEST LIFE SATISFACTION COMES WITH AGE.

In each of the older five generations, 92 or 93 percent are satisfied with their lives, compared to 88 percent of Millennials. World War II and Post-World War II alumni are those most likely to be “very” satisfied.

OF THOSE, PERCENT WHO ENROLLED IN A DEGREE PROGRAM IMMEDIATELY AFTER COLLEGE

- World War II: 52%
- Post-World War II: 67%
- Baby Boomer: 47%
- Early Coed: 31%
- Gen X: 23%
- Millennial: 19%

TOP DEGREES

Most common graduate/professional degree by generation:

1. DOCTORATE | POST-WORLD WAR II AND GEN X
2. LAW | BABY BOOMER, EARLY COED, MILLENNIAL
3. MASTER OF ARTS | WORLD WAR II

The “doctorate” result excludes law and medicine. Among those earning doctorates, the most popular fields are in the humanities—except among Millennials, who most often earn doctorates in the social sciences.
## How Well Did Amherst Prepare You To...

(Percent selecting “more than adequately” or “very well”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WORLD WAR II</th>
<th>POST-WORLD WAR II</th>
<th>BABY BOOMER</th>
<th>EARLY COED</th>
<th>GEN X</th>
<th>MILLENNIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write clearly and effectively?</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquire new skills and knowledge on your own?</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think analytically and logically?</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think critically?</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand social problems?</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use quantitative tools?</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read or speak a foreign language?</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### How Amherst Will Use the Data

The survey will help the college make plans for its future. “We are gratified that Amherst prepared alumni across generations to write; acquire new skills and knowledge; and think analytically, logically and critically,” says Provost Peter Uvin. “These are crucial skills for their careers and their lives.” Regarding quantitative tools, he points out that the newly renamed Department of Mathematics and Statistics has one of the highest growth rates on campus. “We have aggressively invested in faculty and student support resources in this area,” he says. “The language situation is more disconcerting; while there is a three-decade growth in the proportion of students who judge themselves well prepared in terms of foreign language skills, the number is still too low in our globalizing (but also increasingly English-speaking) world. This is one of the reasons that one of the four core committees in the strategic planning process deals with internationalization of the liberal arts, and questions of language education are being discussed there.”