

Alfred University's 2002 graduates succeed in a tough economy

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A recently completed survey of Alfred University's 2002 graduates shows 95 percent are either employed or attending graduate school, a surprisingly high number considering the state of the economy in the year since they were graduated, said Kathy Woughter, director of Alfred University's Career Development Center. "We are pleased that the graduates who responded to the survey (75 percent of the 630 people who received their degrees from Alfred University in 2002) maintained a strong outcomes rate related to employment and graduate school," said Woughter, noting that the "percentage of graduates still seeking work (4 percent) has actually decreased from the previous year." At this time last year, 7 percent of the 2001 graduates who responded to the annual survey indicated they were still looking for work. "The employment rate of our '02 graduates is most impressive when we compare that to national figures that indicate a 3.6 percent drop in the number of graduates who were employed," said Woughter, citing the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). "We expect our usual strong employment rates in fields like engineering and accounting, " said Woughter, "but one of the most gratifying results in our 2002 survey of graduates is the employment rate we are seeing among those graduating with degrees in art." Among those receiving BFA degrees who responded to the survey, 82 percent were employed; 14 percent were in graduate school and four percent were still seeking work. For those who received Master of Fine Arts degrees, 100 percent were employed. Numbers were comparable among those who received a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts degree through the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, with 80 percent of the respondents indicating they were employed and seven percent in graduate school. "Those are very strong numbers," said Woughter, and particularly gratifying to Woughter, who received a grant from the Eastern Association of Colleges and Employers to develop ways of connecting art graduates with jobs. "Art students define career success differently than many other students, and their beginning jobs out of college reflect that," she said. This year's survey included, for the first time, a question that asked "Are you still making art, or involved in art, in a way that was not mentioned before?" The question, Woughter said, was included so that art graduates "don't have to make the difficult choice among answers that don't really fit" what they are doing. "Among those receiving a BFA degree, 12 of our 70 respondents said they consider themselves freelance artists or self-employed artists; nine are currently showing and selling their work at galleries, festivals or in residency programs, and many more are creating art to show. Several of them have taken seemingly unrelated jobs to support themselves, but they continue to pursue their more artistic career goals." Among those who received a BA degree in Fine Arts, 10 of 15 said they were making art or were involved in art, with three of them actively showing their work in galleries and exhibitions. One is preparing to dance competitively. The difficult economy is reflected in the starting salaries reported by survey respondents, according to Woughter. "Starting salaries for AU graduates have dropped across the board, which is consistent with Salary Survey, a quarterly report issued by NACE. Among the 475 respondents to the survey of '02 graduates, 70 percent were employed; 28 percent were in graduate school; four percent were still looking for work; and one percent said they were not seeking employment. The total is greater than 100 percent, Woughter noted, because some students report they are going to graduate school and working full-time. Among those who received their bachelor's degrees in 2002, 66 were employed; 32 percent were in graduate school; four percent were seeking employment and one percent was not seeking employment. Those who received master's or doctoral degrees in 2002, 83 percent said they were employed; 15 percent remained in graduate school to pursue additional studies; two percent were not seeking employment, and only one of the 110 graduate-degree respondents was still seeking work. While 2002 AU graduates are working around the world, the largest percentage of them (372 of the 475 respondents) are located in the Northeast, with 284 remaining in New York State. In addition to outcome rates for the School of Art & Design, rates for AU's other colleges and school are: College of Business - Among bachelor's degree recipients, 69 percent were employed, 28 percent were in graduate school and nine percent were still seeking work; among MBA degree recipients, 100 percent were employed. College of Engineering and Professional Studies - Among B.S. degree recipients, 48 percent were employed; 48 percent were in graduate school and three percent were still seeking work. Among master's and doctoral degree recipients, 62.5 percent were employed; 37.5 percent continued in graduate school and three percent were not seeking employment. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences - Among recipients of a baccalaureate degree, 66 percent were employed; 32 percent were in graduate school; three percent were still seeking work; and three percent were not seeking work. Among those who received master's degree in education or professional studies, 94 percent were employed; three percent remained in graduate school and three percent were still

seeking work. School of Ceramic Engineering and Materials Science- Among those who received B.S. degrees in ceramic engineering or materials science, 51 percent were employed; 47 percent were enrolled in graduate programs and four percent were still seeking work. Among those who received master's or Ph.D. degrees, 79 percent were employed and 21 percent remained in graduate school.