69 percent planned to be employed upon graduation, according to senior poll

By Brittany Anas Camera Staff Writer Boulder Daily Camera

If you go

What: University of Colorado spring commencement

When: 8:30 a.m. Friday

Where: Folsom Field

More info: commencement.colorado.edu

Graduating University of Colorado senior Kayla Griffith has a one-way plane ticket to New Zealand.

The economics and international affairs major said she's been working throughout college -- mostly in the restaurant industry -- and is ready to take a break, travel and see the world before launching a career. Griffith, who also completed an international reporting certificate, said her ideal career would be in international development.

"I figure I'm not married and don't have kids yet, so now's the time to travel," said Griffith, after picking up her graduation cap and gown from the CU Bookstore on Wednesday.

CU will award 6,084 degrees to graduates at the spring commencement ceremony Friday morning at Folsom Field. The ceremony begins at 8:30 a.m., and officials are recommending early arrival, given construction on U.S. 36 and bag screening at stadium entry points that is part of this year's increased security plan.

Graduating Buffaloes have shown in recent years that they like to roam. According to the university's senior future plans surveys, up to 7 percent of graduating senior respondents have indicated their post-graduation plans involve traveling. Travel seemed to peak in 2009 amid the recession when job prospects were gloomier for new graduates.

Preliminary results from 2013 released Wednesday show an increase in the number of students planning to enter the workforce. The percentage of graduates who plan to go on to graduate school is about the same.

The survey reveals that about 3 percent of graduates will travel -- but several students interviewed leading up to graduation said they planned to cram in some travel before they enter full-time jobs in the "real world."

Mechanical engineering graduating senior Aaron Katz is weighing a couple of job offers in the oil industry. He's pushed back his start date to the end of the summer so he can have an adventure-packed summer.

Shortly after graduation, he's planning to go rafting along the Colorado River's Cataract Canyon. Then, he's taking a road trip to Alaska along a route that will take him through Canada, and he'll make stops along the way to rock climb.

"It's a 6,000-mile trip -- which is like two oil changes along the way," Katz said.

Kylie Spivak, a graduating senior from Kentucky, said she's planning to take the Law School Admission Test in June. She's refining her summer travel itinerary but plans to teach HIV awareness and prevention in Kenya through her friend's new nonprofit.

The full 2013 Seniors' Future Plans Survey will be completed next month. But the early data made public Wednesday shows 69 percent planned to be employed upon graduation.

Of those planning to enter the workforce, 54 percent expected full-time employment to be their principal activity after graduation, an increase from 48 percent in 2012. Expectations of part-time employment were reported by 15
percent of the 2013 graduating seniors, according to the early data.

About 14 percent of graduating seniors plan to go on to graduate school, compared with 13 percent last year.

Other plans include student teaching, internships, volunteering and military service.

Betty Yacob, a molecular, cellular and developmental biology student from Ethiopia, said she is planning to work in a lab after graduation to help her narrow down whether she wants to go to graduate school for medicine or pharmacology.

Graduating senior Darian Crosby, an integrative physiology student from Aurora, said he wants to pursue a master's degree, and his dream job would be a strength and conditioning coach with the NFL or NBA.

On Wednesday afternoon, at a craft table set up in the bookstore for students to personalize their caps or stoles, he detailed his to thank his mom and dad.

"I'm thanking them for their support, love and inspiration," Crosby said.

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