

North Carolina State University

2013 Incoming Freshmen Survey:

Executive Summary

Survey Methods

NC State conducted its annual survey of entering first-year students during the summer of 2013. After attending New Student Orientation students were e-mailed an invitation to complete the survey online. At the start of the Fall semester students who had not attended orientation were also invited to participate.

The survey response rate was 63.5 percent (N=2,717 of 4,278). Due to their high response rates, women are slightly overrepresented among survey respondents.

Student Background

About 40 percent of incoming first year students said they come from a small town (26.2%) or rural area (13.1%), while 27 percent come from a large city (12.6%) or urban area (14.7%).

Over 70 percent of first-year students reported coming from a household consisting of four or more people (72.5%). Sixty-four percent reported being the only household dependent currently enrolled in college (63.8%) and another 36 percent reported two or more household dependents in college.

Forty-six percent of respondents reported a family income of more than \$100,000 per year. African American, Asian American, and Hispanic respondents were three times more likely than white respondents to report a family income of \$30,000 or less in 2012 (20.4%, 18.8%, 18.5%, and 5.1%).

The vast majority of respondents reported that they planned to bring a laptop computer to campus (98.6%) with only 3 percent planning to bring a desktop computer.

Applying to NC State

About 10 percent of respondents reported that NC State was the only school to which they applied while almost 30 percent said they had applied to "five or more colleges" including NC State (29.1%). Men were more likely than women (13.4% vs. 9.0%) and Whites (11.4%) were more likely than Asian Americans (6.3%), Hispanics (7.1%) to report having applied "only to NC State." Respondents in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (18.9%) were most likely and those in the Poole College of Management (4.7%) least likely to report having applied "only to NC State." Over two-thirds of respondents said that NC State was their first (58.3%) or only choice (9.2%) among colleges to attend.

The vast majority of respondents were "moderately" or "very satisfied" with university (94.8%) and departmental (94.8%) admissions processes. About 42 percent of respondents reported that after applying for admission to NC State they received a letter from someone at NC State other than the Admissions Office (42.1%). Respondents were more likely to report having received a call from a current student (28.5%) than from a faculty/staff member (15.7%) or NC State alumni (7.3%).

Students were most likely to rate the availability of intended program of study (41.3%), the level of support for their intended major (40.6%), and the academic reputation of NC State (39.9%) as having a "very strong influence" in their decision to attend NC State. When asked to identify the single most influential factor in their decision to attend NC State, students most commonly reported "academic reputation" (28.5%), "level of support for intended major" (16.9%), and "availability of program" (13.3%). 14 percent of respondents considered the financial aspect of attending NC State critical in their decision-making, saying that either cost (8.6%), scholarships/financial aid available (4.4%), or the Pack Promise Program (0.5%) was the most influential factor in their decision to attend NC State.

Almost 65 percent of respondents said they had used NC State's Virtual Advising Center website (64.5%). The majority of all users were pleased with the website, giving it a rating of "excellent" (19.7%) or "good" (59.1%).

Paying for College

Eighty percent of students said they had submitted the FAFSA. Students reported receiving financial aid in the form of grants and scholarships (61.2%), loans (47.2%), and other (VA benefits, ROTC, gifts from family other than parents, etc.) (13.2%). One-fourth of students reported that they received no financial aid at all (25.7%).

The vast majority of respondents said they would cover their educational expenses, at least in part, using "family resources (parents, relative, spouse, etc.)" (92.4%). 44 percent of incoming students reported that family resources would cover \$10,000 or more of their first year expenses. 71 percent of respondents said they would use their "own resources (savings from work, other income)" to help cover educational expenses, although many of these students said they would be contributing less than \$1,000 towards their expenses (39.3%).

About 69 percent of respondents reported that they would rely on some form of "aid that does not need to be repaid" to help cover educational expenses. Almost a fourth of those students receiving grants or scholarships said they would be getting \$10,000 or more from such funding to put towards expenses (23.1%). Half of respondents reported relying on "aid that must be repaid" as a financial resource (51%). Fifteen percent of respondents said that they would be taking out \$6,000 or more in loans that must be repaid to cover their first year expenses (15.3%).

Preparation for College

Half of incoming students said they felt "very well prepared" for college by their own efforts (50.5%) or by their high school (50.6%). However, 9 percent said they were "not very well prepared" for college by their high school.

Nine percent of respondents indicated they had participated in one or more of four different pre-college programs: Educational Talent Search, Upward Bound, GEAR UP, or Early College.

Respondents were asked to rate their current level of development and their perception of the importance of each of 36 knowledge, skills, and personal development goals NC State has for an undergraduate education. The 36 goals were grouped into three categories, representing those related to 'general education' (e.g., mathematical skills, writing effectively), 'personal development' (e.g., time management, ability to handle stress), and 'world views' (e.g., ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds, sensitivity to racial equity). Respondents consistently gave higher ratings to the importance of the goals than to their current level of development of the goals. However, it is important to point out that large majorities of students believe the individual goals are important, and also believe that they have already developed them to a reasonable degree. Each of the goals received an average "importance" rating of at least 3.2 on a 4-point scale, with the exception of "capacity to engage with/respond to creative works and evaluate their significance" which received an average rating of 3.0. 28 of the 36 knowledge, skills, and personal development goals received an average "current development" rating of 3.0 or better on a 4-point scale. Goals that ranked high in both current development and importance include *potential for success*, *taking responsibility for my own behavior*, and *working effectively as part of a team*. Those goals ranking high in importance, but low in development include *speaking effectively*, *ability to handle stress*, *time management*, and *understanding issues and problems facing the world*.

In response to a question asking them to comment in their own words on what they are most concerned or nervous about in starting their first semester at NC State, students most frequently mentioned issues related to their academic *performance/workload* (37.2%), the *transition to college* (28.2%), *time management* (18.8%), and *social life* (18%). When asked about what they were excited about the most common responses related to *social life* (43.8%), *classes/learning* (32.5%), *campus life/involvement* (25%), *transition to college* (22.6%) and their new-found *independence* (18.4%).

Educational Intent

Almost 80 percent of respondents said they were "certain" (43.2%) or "very certain" (35.6%) of their choice of college major. Respondents in the Division of Academic and Student Affairs were far more likely than others to be "uncertain" (33.2%) or "very uncertain" (12.3%) of their major. Incoming students in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences were also slightly more likely than others to say they were "uncertain" (24%) or "very uncertain" (4%) about their major. Students in the College of Engineering (91.7%), College of Design (89.7%), and College of Textiles (87.3%) were most likely to say that they were "certain" or "very certain" of their choice of college major.

The vast majority of respondents said they intended to complete their bachelor's degree in 4 years or less (91.1%). Those in the College of Sciences (98.6%) were most likely and those in the College of Engineering (80.2%) were least likely to intend to complete their degree within 4 years.

Over half of respondents reported that their primary goal or objective for attending NC State is to "obtain a bachelor's degree as preparation for graduate or professional school" (53.7%). Women (59.7%) were more likely than men (47.3%) to report that their primary goal or objective is to "obtain a bachelor's degree as preparation for graduate or professional school." African Americans (68.5%), and Hispanics (67.7%), and Asian Americans (60.3%) were more likely than White respondents (52.2%) to report that their primary goal or objective is to "obtain a bachelor's degree as preparation for graduate or professional school." Men (41.1%) were more likely than women (31%) to report that their primary goal or objective is to "obtain a bachelor's degree as preparation for a career." The majority of respondents in the College of Sciences (81.2%), College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (74.3%) reported that their primary goal or objective for attending NC State is to "obtain a bachelor's degree as preparation for graduate or professional school." Respondents in the College of Design (56.9%), and College of Textiles (51.8%) were more likely than those in other colleges to report that their primary goal or objective for attending NC State was career preparation.

Over two-thirds of respondents reported that their highest intended level of education was a Master's degree or higher (70.8%). Women (74.8%) were more likely than men (66.8%), and Asian Americans (84%), African Americans (81.9%), and Hispanics (74.4%) were more likely than Whites (69%) to report that they intend to obtain a Master's degree or higher. The vast majority of respondents in the College of Sciences reported that they intend to obtain a Master's degree or higher (91.2%). Respondents in the Colleges of Sciences were also more likely than respondents in other colleges to say they planned to earn a doctoral degree or medical degree (29.4% and 25.3%). Respondents in the Colleges of Humanities and Social Sciences and Management were most likely to say they planned to earn a law degree (13.4% and 10.8%).

Almost one-fourth of respondents (24.0%) said they would not be seeking employment after graduation, most likely indicating their intention to attend graduate or professional school. Among those who will be seeking employment after graduation, respondents were much more likely to report that they will seek employment "anywhere" (29.3%) or "anywhere in the United States" (33.2%) than to report that they will seek work "in North Carolina only" (13%). Of respondents who will be seeking employment immediately after graduation, respondents in the Colleges of Design (45.3%) were most likely to report that after graduation they will seek employment "anywhere." Respondents in the College of Education (37.1%) were most likely to report that they will seek employment "in North Carolina only."

Participation in Co-Curricular Activities and Employment

Almost half of incoming students reported that they intend to work either on- or off-campus during their first year at NC State (48.2%). Among respondents who plan to work off-campus during their first year (23.9%), almost 60 percent said they would be working 10 hours or less per week (58.6%) and another 34 percent said they would be working 11 to 20 hours per week (34.3). Similarly, among those working on-campus (one-in-three students), over half said they would be working 10 hours or less per week (57.6%), and another 36 percent said they would be working 11 to 20 hours per week.

From a list of 33 co-curricular activities and programs, respondents indicated greatest interest in study abroad/national student exchange (60.3%), intramural sports (48.1%), indoor open recreation (44.8%), organizations/clubs related to your major (44.4%), and volunteer services (42.1%). There were persistent gender differences in interest in participating in the various activities. In general, women expressed more interest than men in activities and programs related to community service, personal development, art, and diversity, while men expressed more interest than women in activities and programs related to athletics, such as intramural and club sports.

Of respondents who indicated they would be interested in participating in one of the numerous religious organizations on campus, the largest number expressed an interest in Campus Crusade for Christ (15.2%).

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