

North Carolina State University 2013 Incoming Freshmen Survey: Highlights

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).

NC State's academic reputation is very influential in the decision to attend NC State. Although more than two-thirds of respondents applied to three or more colleges including NC State, a majority of incoming students said that NC State was their first or only choice among colleges to attend. *Academic reputation* was most frequently reported as the single most influential factor in the decision to attend NC State, followed by *level of support for intended major* and *availability of program*.

Students feel well prepared for college by their high school and by their own efforts. The vast majority of incoming students said they were at least "somewhat well" prepared for college both by their high school and by their own efforts.

Students are nervous but excited! 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, almost 40 percent of students mentioned issues related to their academic performance or managing the workload and another 30 percent commented on the transition to college. When asked about what they were excited about the most common responses related to social life, classes/learning, and campus life/involvement.

High achievement is important to incoming students. More than 50 percent of incoming students say their *primary goal or objective for attending NC State* is to "obtain a bachelor's degree as preparation for graduate or professional school." 70 percent of respondents have plans for post-baccalaureate studies leading to a Master's degree or higher.

Students are helping to pay their college expenses. 70 percent of incoming students say they will be putting their own resources (savings from work, other income, etc.) toward the cost of their NC State education. Almost 50 percent of students intend to work either on- or off-campus during the school year. Additionally, about 50 percent of students say they will be taking out loans that must be repaid to cover their first year expenses.

Incoming students report room to grow on various knowledge, skills, and personal development goals. Respondents consistently gave higher ratings to the importance of each of 36 different knowledge, skills, and personal development goals that the University has for them than to their current level of development of the goal. Most notably, *ability to handle stress* and *time management* ranked high in importance, but low in development. Goals ranking high in both current development and importance include *potential for success*, *taking responsibility for my own behavior*, and *ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds*.

Incoming freshmen are interested in various co-curricular activities and organizations. Among 33 co-curricular activities and programs, first year students expressed greatest interest in *study abroad/national student exchange*, *intramural sports*, *indoor open recreation*, *organizations/clubs related to major* and *volunteer services*.

Location is not a determining factor in future employment plans of incoming students. Among those planning to seek employment after graduation, respondents were much more likely to report that they will seek employment "anywhere" or "anywhere in the United States" than to report that they will seek work "in North Carolina only."

For more information on the 2013 Incoming Freshmen Survey contact:
Dr. Nancy Whelchel, Associate Director for Survey Research
Institutional Research and Planning
Phone: (919) 515-4184
Email: Nancy_Whelchel@ncsu.edu