

North Carolina State University 2017 Incoming Freshmen Survey: Highlights

NC State conducted its annual survey of incoming freshmen prior to and at the beginning of the Fall 2017 semester. Eligible students included all incoming NC State freshmen at the beginning of the Fall 2017 semester. Of the 4,634 eligible incoming freshmen, 3,093 returned usable surveys for a response rate of 66.7%.

NC State's academic reputation is very influential in students' decisions to attend. Although more than 80 percent 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, with over one-fourth of incoming freshmen reporting this, followed by *availability of program* and *level of support for my intended major*.

High achievement is important to incoming students. Almost half of incoming students said their *primary goal or objective for attending NC State* is either to “obtain a bachelor’s degree as preparation for graduate school,” or to “obtain a bachelor’s degree in preparation for a career.” Over two-thirds of respondents plan to pursue a degree beyond a bachelor’s degree.

Incoming students report room to grow on various general education, personal development and world view goals. Respondents consistently gave higher ratings to the importance of each of 38 different general education, personal development and world view goals asked about than to their current level of development of those goals. However, goals ranked relatively high in current level of development compared to other goals were typically similarly ranked high relative to other goals in terms of their importance. There were some exceptions, most notably for *time management* and *ability to handle stress* which were both ranked high in importance, but low in development. Goals ranking high in both current level of development and importance include *ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds*, *taking responsibility for my own behavior*, *ability to plan and carry out projects independently*, *working effectively as part of a team*, *listening attentively*, and *experiencing personal growth*.

Students are helping to pay their college expenses. One-third of incoming students reported that they will be contributing at least \$1,000 of their own resources to their first year education expenses at NC State, with five percent contributing at least \$6,000. Over half of respondents said that they will be taking out loans that must be repaid, with more than ten percent taking out loans of at least \$10,000 to contribute to their first year educational expenses. Nearly 55 percent intend to work either on or off campus during their first year at NC State.

Various NC State services given high marks by incoming freshmen. Incoming freshmen gave high ratings to the NC State admissions process, with 95 percent said they were at least “moderately satisfied,” and 50 percent saying they were “very satisfied.” Over 80 percent of incoming students gave positive ratings to the NC State academic services website, with 25 percent saying the academic services website was “excellent.” More than three-fourths of respondents said they were at least “moderately satisfied” with the NC State financial aid process.

Incoming students agreed that New Student Orientation was useful in preparing to begin college at NC State. Over 90 percent of incoming students reported with levels of agreement that they were satisfied with the attention they received from their college/department, information/advice to plan their schedule, and the time spent with their college/department during New Student Orientation. While over 90 percent of respondents said that New Student Orientation provided useful information related to a number of topic areas, roughly one-fourth of respondents expressed levels of disagreement over Orientation having provided useful information about *what to expect when living with a roommate on-campus or living off-campus* and *how to navigate NC State's physical campus*. As a result of their participation in New Student Orientation, two-thirds of respondents said they “strongly agree” that they were excited to start their first semester at NC State.

Students feel well prepared for college by their high school and by their own efforts. Over 90 percent of incoming students said they were at least “somewhat well” prepared for college both by their high school and by their own efforts. Nearly half of incoming students said they were “very well” prepared for college by both their high school and by their own efforts.

Anticipated experiences both excite and concern incoming students. In response to two questions asking them to comment in their own words – one about what they’re excited for in coming to NC State, and one about what they’re concerned for - students expressed similar topic areas in their responses to both questions. Students were most likely to say that they were most excited about social life, learning, the intellectual environment, adapting to NC State, campus life and independence in coming to NC State. Similarly, students were most likely to say that topics they were nervous about in coming to NC State included academic performance, adapting to NC State, social life, time management and independence.

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