

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

2019 Incoming Freshmen Survey: Highlights

NC State conducted its annual survey of incoming first year students prior to and at the beginning of the Fall 2019 semester. Eligible students included all incoming NC State first year students at the beginning of the Fall 2019 semester. Of the 4,772 incoming first year students in a four-year degree-seeking program eligible to complete the survey, 2,823 returned usable surveys for a response rate of 59.2%. Respondents from the Agricultural Institute have been excluded from the analyses presented in the following reports so that the data presented reflects the views and circumstances of students pursuing a four-year baccalaureate degree.

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

High achievement is important to incoming students. While half of respondents said that their primary goal/objective for attending NC State was to obtain a bachelor's degree "in preparation for a career," over two-thirds of respondents reported that they ultimately planned to pursue a master's, doctoral, or professional degree. More than 90 percent reported that they anticipated completing their bachelor's degree in four years or less.

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 by both their high school and by their own efforts, with nearly half saying that they were "very well" prepared for college by both their high school and their own efforts.

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 the 49 different general education, personal development, and world view goals asked about than to their current level of development of them. However, goals ranked relatively high in current level of development compared to other goals were similarly ranked high in importance relative to other goals as well. There were some exceptions to this, most notably for *time management*, *ability to manage ongoing stressors*, *speaking effectively*, and *gaining clarity in my career direction*, which were ranked high in terms of importance but low in development. Some goals ranked high in both development and importance, including *ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds*, *taking responsibility for my own behavior*, *working effectively as part of a team*, *ability to plan and carry out projects independently*, and *experiencing personal growth*.

Students report using various sources, including their own money, to pay for their college expenses. Almost three-fourths 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 about five percent contributing at least \$6,000. Just under half of respondents said that they will be taking out loans that must be repaid; however, nearly 15 percent said they would be taking out loans of at least \$6,000 to help cover their first year educational expenses. A slight majority reported that they intend to work either on or off campus, or both, during their first year at NC State.

Various NC State services given high marks by incoming freshmen. Incoming first year students gave high ratings to the NC State admissions process, with over 95 percent saying they were at least “moderately satisfied” and over half saying they were “very satisfied” with the process. Almost 85 percent gave a rating of “excellent” or “good” to the NC State Admissions website. Over 80 percent of incoming students gave a positive rating of the NC State Academic Advising Services website, with over 56 percent saying the academic services website was “excellent.” More than 80 percent of respondents also 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 80 percent of incoming students said they were satisfied with the attention they received from their college/department, the information/advice to plan their schedule, and the time spent with their college/department during New Student Orientation. Nearly two-thirds of respondents said they “strongly agree” that as a result of their participation in New Student Orientation they were excited to start their first semester at NC State.

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 are excited about in coming to NC State, and one about what they are concerned with – students expressed similar issues in their responses to both questions. Students were most likely to say that they were most excited about things pertaining to their social life, learning, the intellectual environment on campus, adapting to NC State, campus life, independence of being a college student, potential opportunities on campus and in their careers, and career planning services. Similarly, students were most likely to say that issues they were nervous about in coming to NC State included adapting to NC State, their academic performance, social life, independence of being a college student, and time management.

For more information on the 2019 Incoming Freshmen Survey, contact:

Anthony Sbarra, MPA
Institutional Research Analyst
Office of Institutional Research and Planning
300 Peele Hall
Phone: (919) 515-7520
Email: atsbarra@ncsu.edu
Posted: December, 2019