

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

2020 Incoming First-Year Student Survey Introduction, Methods, and Student Demographic Profile

Introduction

This series of reports presents findings from the 2020 Incoming First-Year Student Survey at NC State University. Each year since 1972, students beginning college at NC State in the Fall semester have been asked to participate in the survey. NC State's Institutional Strategy and Analysis office is responsible for administering the survey, analyzing the data, and preparing and distributing reports on results to various units on campus. The online survey is administered shortly after New Student Orientation in the summer before classes begin, and closes two weeks after the start of the semester. In the survey, students are asked about their experiences with the application process and deciding to enroll at NC State; their satisfaction with various NC State services and programs; how they are paying for their education; their preparation for college and their educational goals; what they are excited and concerned about in starting their first year of college; and a variety of demographic information.

This introductory report describes the survey's methodology, and compares the demographic profile of the 2020 first-year class to that of survey respondents with respect to their gender, race/ethnicity, and their college. A separate report, "[2020 Incoming First-Year Student Survey: Overall Results](#)," focuses on overall results. Links to tables with results by gender and race/ethnicity, and by college, are available online through the "[2020 Incoming First-Year Student Survey: Table of Contents](#)."

Survey Administration

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, unlike in past years, New Student Orientation was held virtually. While students were invited to participate in the survey shortly after they attended their on-campus New Student Orientation session in past years, in 2020 students were invited to participate in the survey on August 5, after all the virtual sessions had concluded. The first day of classes was August 10, but due to the increasing number of COVID-19 positive cases among undergraduates, on August 24 all classes were switched to online delivery. On August 31, the decision was made to have all students leave campus, and continue the semester remotely. The survey closed on September 4, meaning that while some students completed it just prior to or shortly after arriving on campus, others completed it either after classes moved to all online, or, for a relatively few, when they had left campus. Forty-three percent of students who submitted the survey took it on a mobile device (42.7%).

Incoming first-year students were sent an email from NC State Chancellor Randy Woodson inviting them to participate in the survey. Survey nonrespondents were sent up to four email reminders to participate while the survey. As an incentive for participating, 20 respondents who completed the survey by Monday, August 24, 2020 were randomly selected to each win a \$20 Amazon.com eGift card. In addition, two students who completed the survey by the final deadline of Friday, September 4, 2020 were randomly selected to each win a \$50 Amazon.com eGift card.

Population and Survey Respondents

Based on Fall 2020 Census data, of the 4,747 students in all academic programs who were eligible to participate and have their responses recorded for final analyses, a total of 2,785 of them submitted usable surveys (58.7%). 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.

Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Tables 1-2)

Women were significantly more likely than men to participate in the 2020 Incoming First-Year Student Survey. While women account for half of the incoming first-year class, they make up just over 55 percent of survey respondents.

Table 1: Gender of the Incoming First-Year Class and Survey Respondents

Gender	Incoming First-Year Class		Survey Respondents		Response Rate
	%	N	%	N	%
Women	50.1%	2,377	55.6%	1,549	65.2%
Men	40.9%	2,370	44.4%	1,236	52.2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>4,747</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>2,785</i>	<i>58.7%</i>

Although participation in the survey varied somewhat by race/ethnicity, the racial/ethnic breakdown of survey respondents generally mirrors that of the incoming first-year student population. Among survey respondents, 70 percent are white, over 11 percent are Asian, seven percent are Hispanic, five percent are African American/Black, over four percent are multi-racial, and less than one half of a percent are American Indian. The remaining one percent of respondents are of another or unknown race/ethnicity.

Table 2: Race/Ethnicity of the Incoming First-Year Class and Survey Respondents

Race/Ethnicity	Incoming First-Year Class		Survey Respondents		Response Rate
	%	N	%	N	%
African American/Black	5.8%	275	5.1%	141	51.3%
American Indian	0.4%	21	0.3%	9	42.9%
Asian	11.1%	525	11.5%	319	60.8%
Hispanic	6.6%	315	7.1%	197	62.5%
White	69.8%	3,313	70.0%	1,950	58.9%
Multi-racial	4.9%	234	4.7%	131	56.0%
Other/Unknown	1.3%	64	1.3%	38	59.4%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>4,747</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>2,785</i>	<i>58.7%</i>

Academic Units (Table 3)

Table 3 presents enrollment data for the incoming first-year student population at the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester compared to that of survey respondents by academic unit. While the distribution of academic units of survey respondents closely mirrors that of the population, given their higher response rate relative to other colleges, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the College of Engineering are slightly overrepresented among survey respondents, while the Poole College of Management and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences are slightly underrepresented due to their relatively lower response rates.

Table 3: Classification by Academic Unit

Academic Unit	Incoming First-Year Class		Survey Respondents		Response Rate
	%	N	%	N	%
Agriculture and Life Sciences	8.6%	409	9.6%	266	65.0%
Design	2.2%	106	2.2%	62	58.5%
Education	2.4%	114	2.6%	72	63.2%
Engineering	31.5%	1,495	33.9%	944	63.1%
Natural Resources	4.5%	214	4.2%	116	54.2%
Humanities and Social Sciences	8.6%	407	7.6%	211	51.8%
Sciences	13.4%	635	13.9%	387	61.0%
Textiles	2.9%	137	2.8%	79	57.7%
Management	9.1%	431	7.3%	204	47.3%
Exploratory Studies	15.1%	717	14.3%	398	55.5%
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>98.3%</i>	<i>4,665</i>	<i>98.3%</i>	<i>2,739</i>	<i>58.7%</i>
Agricultural Institute	1.7%	82	1.7%	46	56.1%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>4,747</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>2,785</i>	<i>58.7%</i>

For more information on the 2020 Incoming First-Year Student Survey, contact:

Anthony Sbarra, MPA
 Institutional Research Analyst
 Institutional Strategy and Analysis
 300 Peele Hall
 Phone: (919) 515-7520
 Email: atsbarra@ncsu.edu
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