

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

2021 Incoming First-Year Student Survey Introduction, Methods, and Student Demographic Profile

Introduction

This series of reports presents findings from the 2021 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 2021 first-year class to that of survey respondents with respect to their gender, race/ethnicity, and their college. A separate report, "[2021 Incoming First-Year Student Survey: Overall Results](#)," focuses on overall results. A link to a dashboard with results by gender, race/ethnicity, and college is available online through "[2021 Incoming First-Year Student Survey: Table of Contents](#)."

Survey Administration

The Incoming First-Year Student Survey opened on July 13 and closed on August 30. Shortly after they attended their on-campus New Student Orientation session over the summer, 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 in the survey. As an incentive for participating, ten respondents who completed the survey by Tuesday, July 20, and ten participants who completed the survey by Tuesday, August 10 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 Monday, August 30 were randomly selected to each win a \$50 Amazon.com eGift card.

To decrease the overall length of the survey for any given respondent, the 2021 Incoming First-Year Student Survey utilized a split-half design method in which students were randomly assigned to three groups (Class A, Class B, and Class C), each of which only saw certain questions. The specific sections/questions on the survey were divided into three groups (1, 2, 3, and 4), each with about the same number of questions. While all respondents were presented with the questions in group 1, only those respondents in Class A saw the questions in group 2, only those in Class B saw the questions in group 3, and only those in Class C saw the questions in group 4.

Population and Survey Respondents

Based on Fall 2021 Census data (i.e., two weeks after the first day of classes on August 16th), of the 4,982 students in all academic programs who were eligible to participate and have their responses recorded for final analyses, a total of 2,850 of them submitted usable surveys (57.2%).¹

¹Respondents 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 2021 Incoming First-Year Student Survey. While women account for slightly more than half of the incoming first-year class, they make up just under 60 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	53.2%	2,651	59.2%	1,687	63.6%
Men	46.8%	2,331	40.8%	1,163	49.9%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>4,982</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>2,850</i>	<i>57.2%</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, almost 70 percent are white, 11 percent are Asian, eight percent are Hispanic, six percent are African American/Black, five 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	6.1%	303	5.9%	169	55.8%
American Indian	0.4%	19	0.2%	10	52.6%
Asian	10.3%	515	10.6%	303	58.8%
Hispanic	8.1%	403	8.3%	236	58.3%
White	69.9%	3,482	69.1%	1,969	56.6%
Multi-racial	4.2%	211	4.8%	137	64.9%
Other/Unknown	1.0%	49	1.1%	27	55.1%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>4,982</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>2,850</i>	<i>57.2%</i>

Academic Units (Table 3)

Table 3 presents enrollment data for the incoming first-year student population at the beginning of the Fall 2021 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, the College of Sciences, and the College of Engineering are slightly overrepresented among survey respondents, while the Wilson College of Textiles is 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	8.3%	413	8.8%	252	61.0%
Design	2.5%	125	2.6%	73	58.4%
Education	3.0%	151	3.2%	90	59.6%
Engineering	31.5%	1,571	33.3%	950	60.5%
Natural Resources	5.3%	264	4.7%	133	50.4%
Humanities and Social Sciences	9.1%	453	9.2%	261	57.6%
Sciences	12.8%	635	13.7%	389	61.3%
Textiles	2.8%	137	2.3%	65	47.5%
Management	9.3%	462	8.3%	236	51.1%
Exploratory Studies	15.5%	771	14.1%	401	52.0%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>4,982</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>2,850</i>	<i>57.2%</i>

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