

May 2016 Future Plans Survey Introduction, Research Methods, and Response Rates

This series of reports presents findings from the May 2016 Future Plans Survey (FPS), conducted at NC State University. The survey is designed to collect specific information on students' plans following graduation, including detailed information on employment, graduate/professional school attendance, and participation in career-preparation activities while at NC State. This introductory report provides the history of the project and an overview of the research methods. Additional reports on the overall survey results, college-level results, and departmental summaries, as well as a copy of the questionnaire, can be found [online](#).

Survey Background

Historically, the Career Development Center (CDC) and the college career service offices used various means to collect information from NC State's seniors on their 'future plans' at the time of their graduation. While these diverse strategies provided useful information for some units, without a systematic, centralized process for collecting information, it was difficult to get a good picture of the future plans for NC State graduates as a whole. In addition, centralizing the project in the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) provided a more efficient and cost-effective mechanism for both administering the survey and providing reports on the results. To accomplish these objectives, OIRP developed and administered the pilot Future Plans Survey in December 2010, working with the CDC and the college career service offices to develop an overall research design and questionnaire that would meet the needs of individual units on campus as well as that of the University as a whole.

Research Design

The Future Plans Survey is administered semiannually, coinciding with December and May graduation. In addition, OIRP administers a modified version of the survey in early fall as a follow-up to the December and May surveys for the previous academic year. Specifically, the "Survey of Recent Graduates" is geared towards December/May survey respondents who said they were intending on finding full-time employment but had not done so by the time they completed the survey, as well as to those who had said they were uncertain of their plans. Those who did not participate in the December/May Future Plans Survey, or who graduated in the first summer session, are also invited to participate in the follow-up Survey of Recent Graduates.

OIRP is solely responsible for preparing the survey for online administration, identifying the survey population and sending email invitations and reminders about the survey to students as appropriate, collecting and analyzing the data, and preparing and distributing reports on results.

All undergraduate students who have applied to graduate as of about five days prior to graduation day are asked to participate in the FPS. The online survey goes live about two weeks prior to graduation day, and is scheduled to close two to six weeks after graduation. The May 2016 Future Plans Survey was in the field from April 28, 2016 through May 27, 2016, with commencement being held on May 7.

On April 28, all students who as of that day had applied to graduate were sent an email invitation from the Chancellor. The first follow-up reminder email was sent to non-respondents from their college Dean on May 4. The second reminder came from college Associate Deans on May 9. The third reminder came from the Executive Director of the Career Development Center on May 16, and the fourth reminder and final reminder came from the Associate Director for Survey Research on May 24 and May 27. On each of the days that reminders were sent to non-respondents, invitations were emailed to those who had applied to graduate during the intervening period. Drafts of the invitation and four follow-up emails are available in Appendix A. In addition to the emails sent by OIRP, OIRP encouraged various administrators in the colleges and departments (e.g., Associate Deans for Undergraduate Programs, College and Department Coordinators for Advising) to contact their students directly. Some students, therefore, might have received additional requests to participate in the survey.

Incentives were offered to encourage participation in the survey. Eight respondents who completed the survey by midnight on graduation day (May 7) were randomly selected to each receive a \$25 Amazon.com gift card. In

addition, one respondent who submitted the survey by the final deadline of May 27 was randomly selected to receive a \$100 Amazon.com gift card.

Response Rates

The May 2016 FPS population consists of the 3,528 undergraduate students who submitted the online application for degree as of May 7. Of these students, 1,880 participated in the Future Plans Survey for an overall response rate of 53.3 percent. Participation in the survey however, varied by college, ranging from a high of 66.4 percent in the College of Textiles to a low of 48.5 percent in the College of Sciences.

Table 1: Response Rate, Overall and by College

	May 2016 Graduating Class	Percent of Population	Survey Respondents	Percent of Survey Respondents	Response Rate
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences	412	11.7%	202	10.7%	49.0%
College of Design	119	3.4%	70	3.7%	58.8%
College of Education	108	3.1%	71	3.8%	65.7%
College of Engineering	872	24.7%	483	25.7%	55.4%
College of Natural Resources	206	5.8%	102	5.4%	49.5%
College of Humanities & Social Sciences	595	16.9%	296	15.7%	49.7%
College of Sciences	431	12.2%	209	11.1%	48.5%
College of Textiles	211	6.0%	140	7.4%	66.4%
Poole College of Management	545	15.4%	289	15.4%	53.0%
Division of Academic & Student Affairs	29	0.8%	18	1.0%	62.1%
Total	3,528	100.0%	1,880	100.0%	53.3%

For more information about the Future Plans Survey contact:

Dr. Nancy Whelchel, Associate Director for Survey Research

Office of Institutional Research and Planning

Box 7002

NC State University

Phone: (919) 515-4184

Email: nancy_wchelchel@ncsu.edu

Posted: July, 2016

May 2016 Future Plans Survey

Appendix A: Email Invitation and Follow-Up Reminders

Email Invitation (April 28, 2016)

To: All May 2016 students submitting the online application for degree form
From: "NCSU Chancellor Randy Woodson" <studentsurveys@ncsu.edu>
Subject line: "Future Plans Survey - How's it going?" OR
"Future Plans Survey - Calling all graduating seniors"

Dear [title] [last name]:

Congratulations on your upcoming graduation from NC State! As Chancellor of the University, I am interested in knowing what is next in store for you. Perhaps you have already accepted a job, are still looking, or haven't yet started. Maybe you are going on to graduate or professional school. Or maybe you are following other dreams, or simply don't know yet. Whatever your plans may be, we would like to hear about them.

Please take less than 10 minutes of your time to complete the Future Plans Survey. You can access it through your platform of choice (e.g., mobile device, tablet, laptop) at:

<http://go.ncsu.edu/future.plans>

(If the link does not work, please copy and paste it into your browser.)

You will need to enter your NC State Unity ID [**unity id**] to access the survey.

As a show of our appreciation for your time, 8 respondents who complete the survey by midnight on graduation day (May 7, 2016) will be randomly selected to each win a \$25 Amazon.com gift card code, sent via email. In addition, all respondents who submit the survey by the May 27, 2016 deadline will be entered into a drawing in which one person will be randomly selected to win a \$100 Amazon.com gift card code, sent via email.

Your participation is voluntary, but we sincerely hope to hear from you. Collecting this information is the best way we have of learning where our students go after graduation. The aggregate-level information from the survey is helpful to share with prospective NC State students and their parents, with current students who are planning their future path, and even with employers when making salary offers to students. Your responses are confidential - it will not be possible to identify any individual respondent in the information we provide to these groups.

Please note that you might also be contacted about completing the Graduating Senior Survey, which is different from the Future Plans Survey. Both surveys are very important to us, and quick and easy to do. I appreciate your doing both.

Remember, as an NC State alumnus/alumna, the Career Development Center will continue to provide services to you for one year after graduation.

Thank you again for your help with this important effort to learn more about the activities of our recent graduates. If you have any questions about this survey, please call the Office of Institutional Research and Planning at (919) 515-6438 or email studentsurveys@ncsu.edu.

Sincerely,
Randy Woodson, Chancellor
NC State University

First Follow-Up Email (May 4, 2016)

To: All May 2016 students submitting the online application for degree form not yet responding to the survey
From: "NCSU [College]" <studentsurveys@ncsu.edu>
Subject line: "Please take the Future Plans Survey" OR
"Don't forget to take the Future Plans Survey"

Dear [title] [last name]:

About a week ago, the Chancellor e-mailed to ask you to take just a few minutes of your time to let us know about your plans following graduation. As [dean title] of the [college name] I am interested in knowing what is next in store for you. As of about 9 A.M. today, we have not yet heard from you. We value your feedback as it will better enable us to help current and future graduates, and will give us the opportunity to showcase the myriad of activities in which our graduates engage.

Please take less than 10 minutes of your time to complete The Future Plans Survey available at:

<http://go.ncsu.edu/future.plans>

(If the link does not work, please copy and paste it into your browser.)

You will need to enter your Unity ID [**unity id**] to access the survey.

Eight (8) students who complete the survey by midnight on graduation day (May 7, 2016) will be randomly selected to each receive a \$25 Amazon.com gift card code, sent via email. All respondents who complete the survey by the May 27, 2016 deadline will be entered into a drawing in which one person will be randomly selected to win a \$100 Amazon.com gift card code, sent via email.

Your participation is voluntary, but we sincerely hope to hear from you. Collecting this information is the best way we have of learning where our students go after graduation. The aggregate-level information from the survey is helpful to share with prospective NC State students and their parents, with current students who are planning their future path, even with employers when making salary offers to students. Your responses are confidential - - it will not be possible to identify any individual respondent in the information we provide to these groups. In addition, we will share the information we gather in this survey with colleges and departments so that they also know how their respective students are doing.

Remember, as an NC State alumnus/alumna, the Career Development Center will continue to provide services to you for one year after graduation.

Thank you again for your help with this important effort to learn more about the future plans of our undergraduate students. If you have any questions about this survey, please call the Office of Institutional Research and Planning at (919) 515-6438 or email studentsurveys@ncsu.edu.

Sincerely,
[College Dean]
[College]

Second Follow-Up Email (May 9, 2016)

To: All May 2016 students submitting the online application for degree form not yet responding to the survey
From: "NCSU [college name]" studentsurveys@ncsu.edu
Subject line: "Future Plans Survey – How's it going?"

Dear [title] [last name]:

Congratulations on your recent graduation from NC State! I'm emailing to remind you that you have not yet completed the Future Plans Survey. We at the [college name] are very interested in knowing what your plans are following graduation. Whether you have already accepted a job, are looking for a job, or are planning to attend graduate school, travel the globe, or raise a family, you can tell us about it in the Future Plans Survey.

Please take just five minutes to complete the online survey at:

<http://go.ncsu.edu/future.plans>

(If the link does not work, please copy and paste it into your browser.)

You will need to enter your Unity ID [**unity id**] to access the survey.

Knowing what our students are doing following graduation is an essential measure of how well the University is preparing you to meet your goals. In addition, the aggregate-level information from the survey is helpful to share with prospective NC State students and their parents, with current students who are planning their future path, and even with employers when making salary offers to students.

Eight of your fellow graduates who submitted the survey by graduation have already been randomly selected to each receive a \$25 Amazon.com gift card. As an added incentive, one more person who submits the survey by the May 27 deadline will be randomly selected to win a \$100 Amazon.com gift card.

Your participation is voluntary, but we sincerely hope to hear from you. Collecting this information is the best way we have of learning where our students go after graduation. The aggregate-level information from the survey is helpful to share with prospective NC State students and their parents, with current students who are planning their future path, and even with employers when making salary offers to students. Your responses are confidential - - it will not be possible to identify any individual respondent in the information we provide to these groups.

Please note that you might also be contacted about completing the Graduating Senior Survey, which is different from the Future Plans Survey. Both surveys are very important to us, and quick and easy to do. I appreciate your doing both.

Remember, as an NC State alumnus/alumna, the Career Development Center will continue to provide services to you for one year after graduation. Please visit <http://careers.ncsu.edu/> for more information.

Thank you again for your help with this important effort to learn more about the future plans of our undergraduate students. If you have any questions about this survey, please call the Office of Institutional Research and Planning at (919) 515-6438 or email studentsurveys@ncsu.edu.

Sincerely,
[associate dean name]
[associate dean title]
[college name]
NC State University

Third Follow-Up Email (May 16, 2016)

To: All May 2016 students submitting the online application for degree form not yet responding to the survey
From: "NC State Career Development Center" <studentsurveys@ncsu.edu>
Subject line: "Please take the Future Plans Survey" OR
"Don't forget to take the Future Plans Survey"

Dear [title] [last name]:

Congratulations on your recent graduation from NC State! On behalf of your department, college and the university I'm emailing you this reminder about the Future Plans Survey, and asking you to take just 5 minutes to let us know what you're doing now as an NC State alumni. The survey closes on Friday, May 27 - - please don't miss this opportunity to share your experiences with us!

Whether you have already started a job, are still looking, have applied to graduate school, or have absolutely no idea what lies ahead, please give us an update in our brief online survey at:

<http://go.ncsu.edu/future.plans>

(If the link does not work, please copy and paste it into your browser.)

You will need to enter your Unity ID [**unity id**] to access the survey.

Eight of your fellow graduates who submitted the survey by graduation have already been randomly selected to each receive a \$25 Amazon.com gift card. As an added incentive, we will randomly select one more person who submits the survey by the May 27 deadline to win a \$100 Amazon.com gift card code, sent via email. For just 5 minutes of your time, that could be you!

Your participation is voluntary, but we sincerely hope to hear from you. Collecting this information is the best way we have of learning where our students go after graduation. The aggregate-level information from the survey is helpful to share with prospective NC State students and their parents, with current students who are planning their future path, and even with employers when making salary offers to students. Your responses are confidential - - it will not be possible to identify any individual respondent in the information we provide to these groups.

Remember, as an NC State alumnus/alumna, the Career Development Center will continue to provide services to you for one year after graduation. Please visit <http://careers.ncsu.edu/> for more information.

Thank you again for your help with this important effort to learn more about the future plans of our undergraduate students. If you have any questions about this survey, please call the Office of Institutional Research and Planning at (919) 515-6438 or email studentsurveys@ncsu.edu.

Sincerely,
Dr. Arnold Bell, Executive Director
Career Development Center
NC State University

Fourth Follow-Up Email (May 24, 2016)

To: All May 2016 students submitting the online application for degree form not yet responding to the survey
From: "Institutional Research and Planning" <studentsurveys@ncsu.edu>
Subject Line: "Last chance to take the Future Plans Survey!" OR
"Final Request: Take the Future Plans Survey!"

Dear [title] [last name]:

Congratulations on your recent graduation from NC State! Please take just 10 minutes of your time to let us know about your post-graduation plans. Go to the Future Plans Survey online at:

<http://go.ncsu.edu/future.plans>

(If the link does not work, please copy and paste it into your browser.)

You will need to enter your Unity ID [**unity id**] to access the survey.

The deadline for completing the survey is Friday, May 27. We will randomly select one person who submits the survey by the deadline to win a \$100 Amazon.com gift card code, sent via email.

Your participation is very important! Leaders across NC State rely on results from this survey for their reporting and decision making. The summarized results are also helpful to share with prospective NC State students and their parents, with current students, and with prospective employers. You can see results from last semester's Future Plans Survey on our website at <http://oirp.ncsu.edu/srvy/stdnt/future-plans/dec15>.

Please don't miss this opportunity to share your experiences and help NC State, your college, and department not only celebrate the successes of their students but, very importantly, learn where NC State needs to make improvements to better prepare current and future students.

Please note that you might also be contacted about completing the Graduating Senior Survey, which is different from the Future Plans Survey. Both surveys are very important to us, and quick and easy to do. I appreciate your doing both.

Thank you again for your help with this important effort to learn more about the future plans of our undergraduate students. If you have any questions about this survey, please call the Office of Institutional Research and Planning at (919) 515-6438 or email studentsurveys@ncsu.edu.

Sincerely,
Nancy Whelchel, Ph.D.
Associate Director for Survey Research
Institutional Research and Planning
NC State University

Final Follow-Up Email (May 27, 2016)

To: All May 2016 students submitting the online application for degree form not yet responding to the survey
From: "Institutional Research and Planning" <studentsurveys@ncsu.edu>
Subject line: "Future Plans Survey – Closing Today"

Good morning new graduates!

If you are receiving this email, you have not yet completed your May 2016 Future Plans Survey, which asks about the upcoming plans of all new NC State grads. The survey closes at midnight tonight – today is the last day for you to complete the survey and be entered into the random drawing for a chance to win a \$100 Amazon.com gift-card.

To start the survey or continue where you left off, click the link below:

<http://go.ncsu.edu/future.plans>

You will need to enter your Unity ID [**unity id**] to access the survey. This survey takes about 7 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions about this survey, please call the Office of Institutional Research and Planning at (919) 515-6438 or email studentsurveys@ncsu.edu.

Sincerely,
Nancy Whelchel, Ph.D.
Associate Director for Survey Research
Institutional Research and Planning
NC State University