

December 2017 Future Plans Survey Executive Summary

Survey Methods

NC State conducted its semiannual Future Plans Survey of graduating seniors in the weeks immediately before and after December 2017 graduation, with commencement being held on December 15. The final population used in analysis consists of those undergraduate students who had applied to graduate by the day prior to commencement and were conferred degrees. The December 2017 Future Plans Survey had a response rate of 55%, with 723 of the 1,308 graduates participating.

Plans Following Graduation

Eighty-two percent of students graduating in December said that their primary plan in the year after graduation was to be employed, with over half of students reporting that they had already obtained employment for the coming year and just over one-fourth saying they were currently seeking or planning to seek employment. Fifteen percent of students indicated that their primary plan was to attend graduate/professional school.

Post-Graduation Employment Among Those Accepting a Full-Time Position

Ninety percent of graduating seniors who said they had obtained employment indicated that they would be working full-time.

Forty-six percent of graduating seniors at NC State who had obtained full-time employment reported going on interviews for three or more positions in their most recent job search, and just over half received more than one job offer. About 80 percent of students said the position in which they would be working was for a *private, for profit business or organization*, with an additional nine percent saying they would be working for the *federal, state, or local government*. Two-thirds of those with full-time employment said the position in which they would be working was “directly related” to their major.

NC State graduates obtaining a full-time non-internship position reported an average starting salary of \$53,251 (median = \$56,250). One-fourth of those having secured full-time employment upon graduation said they had received a signing bonus for the position in which they would be working, and of those, close to half said it was for \$5,000 or more. Just over half of students who said they would be working outside of North Carolina reported that they had received an offer for a relocation package.

Eighty-one percent of graduating seniors indicated they would be working in North Carolina, with about 60 percent saying they would be working in the Research Triangle area (e.g., Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill). The companies and organizations hiring the greatest number of NC State December graduates were NC State University, MetLife, and SAS.

Among a number of resources used in the job search process, students obtaining full-time employment were most likely to say that an *internship/externship* had been helpful in their job search (47%), followed by *career fairs at NC State* (33%).

Just over half of graduates who had obtained a full-time position said they started their job search six or more months before graduation. By contrast, 85 percent of students who indicated at the time of the survey that they were seeking but had not yet found a position said they began their job search *less than* six months before graduation, with four-in-ten saying they had not begun their job search until within two months graduation.

Graduates Seeking Employment

About one-fourth of the December 2017 graduates indicated that they were planning to obtain employment in the coming year, but as of the time they completed the survey they had not yet found a position or had not yet begun their search. Two-thirds of those who reported that they were currently looking for a job said that they had gone on an interview for at least one position during their most recent job search, with one-fourth having gone on interviews for three or more different positions.

Twenty-two percent of current job seekers said that they had received at least one job offer. When these students were asked why they had not yet accepted a job offer, the most common reasons cited included the job not being a good fit for their interests or career goals, dissatisfaction with the proposed compensation (e.g., salary too low), or currently being in the process of negotiating or considering one or more offers.

Further Education

Fifteen percent of the 723 graduates who submitted the December 2017 Future Plans Survey said they were planning on going to graduate/professional school. One-third said at the time of the survey that *they have been accepted and know where they will be going* and an additional five percent said *they have been accepted but are still undecided on whether or not or where they will actually attend*. Sixty-one percent said *they have applied, but have not yet been accepted* (37%) or *they have not yet applied, but plan to do so within the next year* (24%).

Almost all students who said they had been accepted to graduate school and knew where they would be going said they would be staying in North Carolina, and three-fourths of all those going on to graduate school would be attending NC State University. All respondents with confirmed plans for graduate school said they would be attending their first choice school.

The majority of those who had been accepted into a program and knew the school they would be attending said they would enrolling in a master's degree program, with a small number enrolling in a doctoral or professional program, or some other type of degree granting program.

About 40 percent of those who said they had been accepted to graduate/professional school and knew where they would be going indicated that they had received funding and/or awards as part of their acceptance into their program of study. The most commonly awarded type of funding was research assistantships.

NC State Career-Related Experiences and Resources

About two-thirds of the students reported having had an *internship/externship or job in their field of study*, and one-fifth of students said they had participated in a *class project specifically designed to work with a company/organization outside of NC State*, and/or on a *research project with a faculty member*.

More than half of those who participated in an *internship/externship or job in field* and who had found or were seeking employment said the experience was “very helpful” in obtaining a job offer. In addition, while just 11 percent of students had had a *co-op* experience, more than half of them also reported the experience being “very helpful” in securing a job offer.

Over half of all graduating seniors who submitted the Future Plans Survey said they had gone to a career services office on campus, with the vast majority of these students giving very favorable ratings of the services they provided.

Use of career services offices varied by college: Eighty-five percent of students in the College of Textiles (COT) said they gone to an NC State career services office at least once, with a large majority of them going to the COT career services office. By contrast, just 45 percent of students in the College of Natural Resources said they had used any of the career services offices asked about.

Two-thirds of students said they had used *ePACK*, the NC State Career Development Center’s internship and job posting website, and/or had *attended a career fair*.

When asked about their overall satisfaction with the career guidance they received from their academic department/college, two-thirds of students said they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied.”

Feelings about the Future

Overall, the December 2017 graduates have a positive outlook on their futures. When asked which statement comes closest to how they were feeling about their future, 81 percent of respondents said that they were either “very excited” or “excited,” while 19 percent of respondents answered that they were “a bit confused/uncertain” or “very confused/uncertain.” The vast majority of students, however, report that they feel “very prepared” or “somewhat prepared” for their future career paths (91%).

For more information about the Future Plans Survey contact:

Suzanne Crockett, Assistant Director for Survey Research
Office of Institutional Research and Planning
Box 7002
NC State University
Phone: (919) 515-6438
Email: sacrocke@ncsu.edu

Posted: March, 2018