

May Undergraduate Future Plans Survey Executive Summary

Introduction & Survey Methods

NC State conducted its semiannual Undergraduate Future Plans Survey of graduating seniors in the weeks immediately before and after May 2020 graduation period. Because of COVID-19, there was no formal commencement ceremony; instead, the final population used in analysis consists of those undergraduate students who had completed the application to graduate by May 7 and who were conferred degrees. The May 2020 Undergraduate Future Plans Survey had a response rate of 56.2%, with 2,111 of the 3,756 graduates participating in the survey.

Plans Following Graduation

Two-thirds of students graduating in May said that their primary plan in the year after graduation was to be employed, with 40 percent of students reporting that they had already obtained employment for the coming year and one-fourth saying they were currently seeking or planning to seek employment. Just under one-third of students indicated that their primary plan was to attend graduate/professional school.

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

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

Half of the NC State graduating seniors who had obtained full-time employment reported going on interviews for three or more positions during their most recent job search, and 44 percent received more than one job offer. Seventy-seven percent of students said the position in which they would be working was for a *private, for profit business or organization*, and 13 percent said 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 \$57,437 (median = \$61,250). Over 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, over 60 percent said it was for \$5,000 or more. In addition, seven percent said they had received company shares as a part of accepting their job offer, with over half of these few individuals estimating the value of their shares to be \$10,000 or more. Sixty percent of the students who said they would be working outside of North Carolina reported that they had received an offer for a relocation package.

Two thirds of graduating seniors indicated they would be working in North Carolina, with 47 percent saying they would be working in the Research Triangle area (e.g., Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill). The companies/organizations hiring the greatest number of May graduates were Cisco Systems and the United States Air Force.

Among a number of resources used in the job search process, almost half of students obtaining full-time employment said that an *internship/externship* had been helpful in their job search. Other common resources used were *career fairs at NC State*, *personal connections within the company*, *LinkedIn*, and *family/friends/classmates/coworkers*.

Over three-fourths of graduates who had obtained a full-time position said they started their job search six or more months before graduation. Fifty-four percent reported receiving the offer for the position they accepted six or more months prior to graduation. Two-thirds 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.

Graduates Seeking Employment

One-fourth of the May 2020 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. Sixty-three percent of those who reported that they were actively 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 in four having gone on interviews for three or more different positions.

Sixteen 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 reason cited was that the company/organization was *not a good fit*. Many also mentioned that their job search was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further Education

Just under one-third of the 2,111 graduates who submitted the May 2020 Undergraduate Future Plans Survey said they were planning on applying to or going to graduate/professional school. Seventy-six percent said at the time of the survey that *they have been accepted and know where they will be going* and an additional three percent said *they have been accepted but are still undecided on whether or not or where they will actually attend*. Twenty-one percent said *they have applied, but have not yet been accepted (7.3%)* or *they have not yet applied, but plan to do so within the next year (13.7%)*.

Over two-thirds of 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 46 percent said they would be attending NC State University. Eighty-eight percent of respondents with confirmed plans for graduate school said they would be attending their first-choice school.

Two-thirds of those who had been accepted into a program and knew the school they would be attending said they would be enrolling in a master's degree program. Nineteen percent of students indicated they would be enrolling in a doctoral degree program, and another 16 percent indicated they would be enrolling in a professional degree program.

Fifty-four 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 scholarships.

NC State Career-Related Experiences and Resources

Sixty-six percent of May 2020 graduates reported having had an *internship* and between one-fifth and one-third of students said they had participated in *research with faculty*, *a class project*, *volunteer work in their field of study*, and/or *a job in their field of study*. Over 60 percent of those who participated in a *co-op*, and who had looked for employment, said the work-related experience was “very helpful” in obtaining a job offer. Over 50 percent of those who participated in an *internship* and/or *a job in their field of study* also rated the experience as “very helpful.”

Just under two-thirds of all graduating seniors who submitted the Undergraduate Future Plans Survey said they had gone to a career services office on campus, with the vast majority of these students giving favorable ratings of the services they provided.

Use of career services offices varied by college. Students from the College of Design, Wilson College of Textiles, and the Poole College of Management tended to use their career services offices at higher rates and also visited them more frequently. Students whose college does not have its own career service center were more likely to use the NC State Career Development Center.

About 70 percent of students said they had used *ePACK*, the NC State Career Development Center’s internship and job posting website, and/or *attended a career fair*.

When asked about their overall satisfaction with the career guidance they received from their academic department/college, 68 percent of students said they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied.”

Feelings about the Future

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the May 2020 graduates generally have a positive outlook on their futures. When asked which statement comes closest to how they were feeling about their futures, 95 percent of respondents said that they were either “very excited” or “fairly excited.” The vast majority of students also report that they feel “very prepared” or “somewhat prepared” for their future career paths (93.1%).

Prepared by: Hannah McQueen

For more information about the Undergraduate Future Plans Survey contact:

Institutional Strategy and Analysis
Box 7002
NC State University
Phone: (919) 515-6438
Email: studentsurveys@ncsu.edu