

Combined Future Plans Surveys and Survey of Recent Graduates: Academic Year 2012-2013 Graduates Introduction, Research Methods, and Response Rates

This series of reports presents combined results from the December 2012 and May 2013 Future Plans Surveys, and the September 2013 Survey of Recent Graduates. The Future Plans Survey (FPS) and Survey of Recent Graduates (SRG) are 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 background on the surveys and an overview of the research methods. Additional reports on the overall survey results, college reports, departmental summaries, as well as a copy of the questionnaire, can be found at http://upa.ncsu.edu/srvy/stdnt/future-plans/ay12_13.

Background and Research Methods

The Future Plans Survey and Survey of Recent Graduates began as a collaborative effort between NC State's University Planning and Analysis office (UPA) and the Career Development Center (CDC). Career service offices in various colleges, specifically the Poole College of Management, and the Colleges of Textiles, Design, and Agriculture and Life Sciences, also provided critical support for the project.

Historically the 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, rather than having individual units using their resources to collect information from their respective students, centralizing the project in UPA provided a more efficient and cost-effective mechanism for both administering the survey and providing reports on the results.

To accomplish these objectives UPA worked with CDC and the college career service offices to develop an overall research design and questionnaire that would meet the individual needs of the CDC and colleges as well as that of the University as a whole. UPA administered the pilot Future Plans Survey in December 2010. Based on experiences with and feedback on the pilot survey, the survey was revised for the May 2011 administration, and again slightly revised for the May 2012 administration.

The Survey of Recent Graduates, administered in September, was developed as a follow-up survey to the FPS. The SRG is aimed at reaching out to graduates from the past year who indicated that at the time they completed the FPS they had not yet found full-time employment, had not yet decided on or been accepted into graduate school, or were still undecided on their plans. In addition, graduates from the previous academic year who did not complete the FPS are also invited to participate in the SRG. The SRG, therefore, enables us to provide a more complete picture of the employment and further education of NC State's graduates from the previous academic year, taking into consideration those who might have taken a few months beyond graduation to obtain employment or gain acceptance to graduate/professional school.

The Future Plans Survey is administered to all graduating seniors in the weeks surrounding December and May graduation. In fall 2012 commencement was on December 15, and the FPS was in the field from December 6, 2012 through January 18, 2013. In spring 2013 commencement was on May 11, and the FPS was in the field from May 2 until May 31. (The December survey has a longer post-graduation field time because of the winter holidays.) The September 2013 Survey of Recent Graduates was in the field from September 4, 2013 through October 2, 2013.

When administering the December and May Future Plans Surveys, eligible respondents are identified using NC State's Application for Degree file. The population for the September Survey of Recent Graduates is based on the most up-to-date graduation file as well as response sets from the December and May Future Plans Surveys. The final population for the combined surveys, therefore, includes all alumni who graduated in December 2012 or May 2013.

Response Rates

A total of 4,805 undergraduate students received baccalaureate degrees from NC State in Fall 2012 (n=1,451), Spring 2013 (n=3,154), or the first Summer session in 2013 (n=200). 2,835 of these graduates responded to the December 2012 FPS, the May 2013 FPS, and/or the September 2013 SRG, for an overall response rate of 59 percent. (To clarify, if a student responded to their FPS in December or May, and then completed the follow-up SRG in September, only their record of responses from the September SRG - - i.e., the most current information - - is included in the combined dataset used in these reports.)

Participation in the combined surveys varied by college. The College of Engineering and the College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences had the highest response rates (66.1% and 64.8%, respectively), and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences had the lowest (52.1%). The College of Engineering is overrepresented in the overall results, with their students making up only 21.5 percent of the population, yet 24 percent of the survey respondents. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences is underrepresented in the overall results, with their students making up 21 percent of the population, yet only 18.6 percent of survey respondents.

Table 1: Response Rate, Overall and by College

College/School	AY 12-13 Population		FPS/SRG Respondents		Response Rate
	N	%	N	%	%
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	1,010	21.0%	526	18.6%	52.1%
College of Design	142	3.0%	80	2.8%	56.3%
College of Education	196	4.1%	122	4.3%	62.2%
College of Engineering	1,031	21.5%	681	24.0%	66.1%
College of Natural Resources	309	6.4%	179	6.3%	57.9%
College of Humanities and Social Sciences	1,121	23.3%	605	21.3%	54.0%
College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences	162	3.4%	105	3.7%	64.8%
College of Textiles	192	4.0%	122	4.3%	63.5%
Poole College of Management	630	13.1%	404	14.3%	64.1%
Division of Academic and Student Affairs	12	0.2%	11	0.4%	91.7%
Total	4,805	100%	2,835	100%	59.0%

Table 2 provides an overview of from which specific survey the responses included in this report are drawn. Among those who graduated in December 2012, the December FPS record was used for 67.8 percent of them, and the September SRG for the remaining 32.1 percent (19.6% who had previously completed the December FPS but indicated at that time they either had not obtained employment or knew where they would be attending graduate/professional school, and 12.5% who had not responded to their December FPS). Among those who graduated in May 2013, the May FPS record was used for 70.4 percent of them, and the September SRG for the remaining 29.6 percent (15.4% who had previously completed the May FPS but indicated at that time they either had not obtained employment or knew where they would be attending graduate/professional school, and 14.2% who had not responded to their May FPS).

Of the 2,835 survey records included in these reports, 19.4 percent come from the December 2012 FPS, 48.9 percent from the May 2013 FPS, and the remaining 31.7 percent from the September 2013 SRG. The September SRG responses include those who had previously completed the December or May FPS but indicated at that time that they had not yet found employment or been accepted to graduate/professional school (16.3%), and those who had not originally responded to their FPS (15.3%). The September SRG responses also include students who graduated in the first Summer session of 2013 and were invited to complete the Survey of Recent Graduates. Altogether, 28.6 percent of the survey results in these reports come from those who graduated in December 2012, 68.8 percent from those who graduated in May 2013, and 2.6% from those who graduated in Summer 1 2013. (Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%).

Table 2: Survey Results Included, by Semester Graduated

Survey Results Included in Report	Graduated December 2012		Graduated May 2013		Graduated Summer 1 2013		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
December FPS	550	67.8%	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	551	19.4%
May FPS	1	0.1%	1,373	70.4%	12	16.4%	1,386	48.9%
September SRG	260	32.1%	577	29.6%	61	83.6%	898	31.7%
<i>September SRG: FPS respondent</i>	159	19.6%	300	15.4%	4	5.5%	463	16.3%
<i>September SRG: FPSnonrespondent</i>	101	12.5%	277	14.2%	57	78.1%	435	15.3%
Total	811	28.6%	1,951	68.8%	73	2.6%	2,835	100%

For more information on the Future Plans Survey contact:
Dr. Nancy Whelchel, Associate Director for Survey Research
University Planning and Analysis
Box 7002
NCSU
Phone: (919) 515-4184
Email: Nancy_Whelchel@ncsu.edu
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