

Combined Future Plans Surveys and Survey of Recent Graduates: Academic Year 2014-2015 Graduates Introduction, Research Methods, and Response Rates

This series of reports presents combined results from the December 2014 and May 2015 Future Plans Surveys and the September 2015 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 an overview of the research method and response rates. Additional reports on the overall survey results, college reports, departmental summaries, as well as a copy of the questionnaires, can be found [online](#).

Research Methods

The Future Plans Survey is administered to all graduating seniors in the weeks surrounding December and May graduation. In fall 2014, commencement was on December 18, and the FPS was in the field from December 9, 2014 through January 19, 2015. In spring 2015, commencement was on May 9, and the FPS was in the field from April 30 until May 31. (The December survey has a longer post-graduation field time due to winter holidays.)

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 in December or May, or who graduated in Summer I, 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 September 2015 Survey of Recent Graduates was in the field from September 2, 2015 through October 1, 2015.

3,187 of the 4,866 graduates receiving baccalaureate degrees in AY14-15 were invited to complete the September 2015 Survey of Recent Graduates. Of those invited, 30 percent graduated in December 2014, 64.8 percent graduated in May 2015, and 5.2 percent graduated in Summer I 2015. About 70 percent of those invited were graduates who had not completed the FPS (69.1%), while the remainder of the graduates invited had completed the December or May Future Plans Survey and were invited to take the SRG in order to follow up on their status of employment or plans for graduate school (30.1%).

Table 1: Population Invited to Take the Survey of Recent Graduates, by Semester Graduated

Semester Graduated	Graduates		Invited to take SRG				Total invited to take SRG	
			Dec/May FPS Nonrespondents		Dec/May FPS Respondents*			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
December 2014	1,369	28.1%	652	29.6%	303	30.8%	955	30.0%
May 2015	3,326	68.4%	1,392	63.2%	674	68.5%	2,066	64.8%
Summer I 2015	171	3.5%	159	7.2%	7	0.7%	166	5.2%
Total	4,866	100%	2,203	100%	984	100%	3,187	100%

*FPS respondents 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.

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 graduation file from the previous academic year and 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 2014, May 2015, or Summer I 2015.

Response Rates

As shown in Table 1, a total of 4,866 undergraduate students received baccalaureate degrees from NC State in Fall 2014 (n=1,369), Spring 2015 (n=3,326), or the first summer session of 2015 (n=171). 3,162 of these graduates responded to the December 2014 FPS (n=571), May 2015 FPS (n=1,577), or the September 2015 SRG (n=1,014). Thus, the response rate for the combined surveys for the 2014-2015 academic year is 65 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 Design had the highest response rate, with 85.3 percent of AY14-15 graduates participating in the survey. Following with the next highest response rates were the College of Textiles (71.7%), College of Engineering (71.5%), and College of Education (71.0%). The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the College of Natural Resources had the lowest response rates (55.7% and 55.6%, respectively). The College of Engineering is slightly overrepresented in the overall results, with their students making up only 22.5 percent of the population, yet 24.7 percent of the survey respondents. Conversely, the College of Sciences (COS), College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS), and College of Natural Resources (CNR) are slightly underrepresented, with COS students making up 12.6 percent of the population but only 11.4 percent of the respondents, CALS graduates making up 11.6 percent of the population but only 9.9 percent of the respondents, and CNR students making up 6.6 percent of the population but only 5.7 percent of the respondents.

Table 2: Response Rate, Overall and by College

College/School	AY 14-15 Population		FPS/SRG Respondents		Response Rate
	N	%	N	%	%
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	564	11.6%	314	9.9%	55.7%
College of Design	150	3.1%	128	4.0%	85.3%
College of Education	155	3.2%	110	3.5%	71.0%
College of Engineering	1,093	22.5%	781	24.7%	71.5%
College of Natural Resources	322	6.6%	179	5.7%	55.6%
College of Humanities and Social Sciences	1,000	20.6%	640	20.2%	64.0%
College of Sciences	613	12.6%	362	11.4%	59.1%
College of Textiles	205	4.2%	147	4.6%	71.7%
Poole College of Management	720	14.8%	471	14.9%	65.4%
Division of Academic and Student Affairs	44	0.9%	30	0.9%	68.2%
Total	4,866	100.0%	3,162	100.0%	65.0%

Table 3 provides an overview of from which specific survey the responses included in this report are drawn. Among those respondents who graduated in December 2014, the December FPS record was used for 68 percent of them, and the September SRG for the remaining 32 percent – 17.3 percent 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 14.7 percent who had not responded to their December FPS. Among those respondents who graduated in May 2015, the May FPS record was used for 69.6 percent of them, and the September SRG for 30.4 percent – 16.2 percent 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 percent who had not responded to their May FPS.

Of the 3,162 survey records included in these reports, 18.1 percent come from the December 2014 FPS, 49.9 percent from the May 2015 FPS, and the remaining 32.1 percent from the September 2015 SRG. The September SRG responses were fairly evenly divided between those who had previously responded to their FPS (16.2%) and those who had not (15.8%). Altogether, the make-up of the combined FPS/SRG results closely mirrors that of the population, with 26.5 percent of the respondents coming from those who graduated in December 2014, 70.4 percent from those who graduated in May 2015, and 2.2 percent from those who graduated in Summer I 2015.

Table 3: Survey Results Included, by Semester Graduated

Survey Results Included in Report	Graduated December 2014		Graduated May 2015		Graduated Summer I 2015		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
December FPS	570	68.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.5%	571	18.1%
May FPS	0	0.0%	1,569	69.6%	8	11.6%	1,577	49.9%
September SRG	268	32.0%	686	30.4%	60	87.0%	1,014	32.1%
<i>September SRG: FPS respondent</i>	145	17.3%	365	16.2%	3	4.3%	513	16.2%
<i>September SRG: FPSnonrespondent</i>	123	14.7%	321	14.2%	57	82.6%	501	15.8%
Total	838	26.5%	2,255	70.4%	69	2.2%	3,162	100%

For more information about the Future Plans Survey contact:
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