

Combined Future Plans Surveys and Survey of Recent Graduates: Academic Year 2016-2017 Graduates Introduction, Research Methods, and Response Rates

This series of reports presents combined results from the December 2016 and May 2017 Future Plans Surveys and the September 2017 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 methods and response rates. Additional reports on the overall survey results, college reports, and department summaries, as well as copies of the questionnaires, can be found on the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) [website](#).

Research Methods

The Future Plans Survey is administered to all graduating seniors in the weeks surrounding December and May graduation. In Fall 2016, commencement was held on December 16, and the FPS was in the field from December 6, 2016 through January 13, 2017. In Spring 2017, commencement was held on May 13, and the FPS was in the field from May 2 through May 26. (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 or Summer II, 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 2017 Survey of Recent Graduates was in the field from September 5 through October 4.

3,519 of the 5,215 graduates receiving baccalaureate degrees in AY16-17 were invited to complete the September 2017 Survey of Recent Graduates. Of those invited, 27.2 percent graduated in December 2016, 59.4 percent graduated in May 2017, and 13.3 percent graduated in Summer I or Summer II 2017. Seventy-two percent of those invited were graduates who had not completed the FPS (71.6%), while 28.4 percent of the graduates invited had completed the December or May Future Plans Survey, but had indicated at that time that they were seeking or planning to seek employment or had not yet been accepted to graduate/professional school or did not yet know where they would be enrolling. These students were invited to take the SRG in order to follow up on their status of employment and/or plans for graduate school.

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 2016	1,313	25.2%	633	25.1%	325	32.5%	958	27.2%
May 2017	3,433	65.8%	1,417	56.3%	675	67.4%	2,092	59.4%
Summer I 2017	165	3.2%	164	6.5%	1	0.1%	165	4.7%
Summer II 2017	304	5.8%	304	12.1%	0	0.0%	304	8.6%
Total	5,215	100%	2,518	100%	1,001	100%	3,519	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 and the responses used in semester-specific reports on results are identified using the graduation file for that semester. 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 2016, May 2017, or the summer sessions of 2017.

Response Rates

As shown in Table 1, a total of 5,215 undergraduate students received baccalaureate degrees from NC State in Fall 2016 (n=1,313), Spring 2017 (n=3,433), Summer I 2017 (n=165) or Summer II 2017 (n=304). 3,259 of these graduates responded to the December 2016 FPS (n=544), the May 2017 FPS (n=1,687), or the September 2017 SRG (n=1,028). Thus, the response rate for the combined surveys for the 2016-2017 academic year is 62.5 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 81.3 percent of AY16-17 graduates participating in the survey. Following with the next highest response rates were the College of Education (69.8%), College of Textiles (68.9%), and College of Engineering (68.2%). The College of Engineering is slightly overrepresented in the overall results, with their students making up only 23.3 percent of the population, yet 25.4 percent of the survey respondents. The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is slightly underrepresented in the results, with their students making up 20.4 percent of the population, but only 18.7 percent of the respondents. Similarly, students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences make up 12 percent of the population, but comprise only 10.4 percent of the respondents.

Table 2: Response Rate, Overall and by College

College/School	AY 16-17 Population		FPS/SRG Respondents		Response Rate
	N	%	N	%	%
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	624	12.0%	340	10.4%	54.5%
College of Design	128	2.5%	104	3.2%	81.3%
College of Education	129	2.5%	90	2.8%	69.8%
College of Engineering	1,216	23.3%	829	25.4%	68.2%
College of Natural Resources	385	7.4%	227	7.0%	59.0%
College of Humanities and Social Sciences	1,066	20.4%	608	18.7%	57.0%
College of Sciences	607	11.6%	387	11.9%	63.8%
College of Textiles	257	4.9%	177	5.4%	68.9%
Poole College of Management	803	15.4%	497	15.3%	61.9%
Total	5,215	100.0%	3,259	100.0%	62.5%

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 2016, the December FPS record was used for 70.5 percent of them, and the September SRG for the remaining 29.4 percent – 18.7 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 10.7 percent who had not responded to their December FPS. Among those respondents who graduated in May 2017, the May FPS record was used for 73.2 percent of them, and the September SRG for 26.7 percent – 15.7 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 11 percent who had not responded to their May FPS.

Of the 3,259 survey records included in these reports, 16.7 percent come from the December 2016 FPS, 51.8 percent from the May 2017 FPS, and the remaining 31.5 percent from the September 2017 SRG. The September SRG responses were comprised about equally between those who had not responded to the FPS and those who had. Altogether, the make-up of the combined FPS/SRG results closely mirrors that of the population, with 23.4 percent of the responses coming from those who graduated in December 2016, 69.7 percent from those who graduated in May 2017, 2.6 percent from those who graduated in Summer I 2017, and 4.2 percent of those who graduated in Summer II 2017. Those graduating in May 2017, however, are slightly overrepresented in the results, as May 2017 graduates make up only 65.8 percent of the population, but 69.7 percent of respondents. This likely comes as a result of significant promotional activities of the FPS conducted by colleges, departments, faculty, and advisors at the time of spring commencement, yielding a higher response rate for the May survey (58.7%) than the December survey (51.7%).

Table 3: Survey Results Included, by Semester Graduated

Survey Results Included in Report	Graduated December 2016		Graduated May 2017		Graduated Summer I 2017		Graduated Summer II 2017		Total	
	N	%	N	N	N	%	N	%	N	%
December FPS	539	70.5%	3	0.1%	1	1.2%	1	0.7%	544	16.7%
May FPS	0	0.0%	1,663	73.2%	11	12.9%	13	9.5%	1,687	51.8%
September SRG	225	29.4%	607	26.7%	73	85.9%	123	89.8%	1,028	31.5%
<i>September SRG: FPS respondent</i>	143	18.7%	356	15.7%	1	1.2%	0	0.0%	500	15.3%
<i>September SRG: FPSnonrespondent</i>	82	10.7%	251	11.0%	72	84.7%	123	100.0%	528	16.2%
Total	764	23.4%	2,273	69.7%	85	2.6%	137	4.2%	3,259	100%

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