

Combined Future Plans Surveys and Survey of Recent Graduates: Academic Year 2019-2020 Baccalaureate Graduates Introduction, Research Methods, and Response Rates

The 2019-2020 Academic Year (AY19-20) reports present combined results from the December 2019 and May 2020 Future Plans Surveys and the September 2020 Survey of Recent Graduates. The Future Plans Surveys (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 results, including an executive summary, interactive dashboards, and copies of the questionnaire, can be found on the Institutional Strategy and Analysis (ISA) [website](#).

Research Methods

The Future Plans Survey population includes all seniors who have submitted an “application for degree” and been approved by their academic department to graduate at the end of the current semester. The survey is administered in the weeks surrounding fall and spring commencement exercises. In Fall 2019, commencement was held on December 19, and the FPS was in the field from December 10, 2019, through January 15, 2020. In Spring 2020, there was no commencement ceremony due to COVID-19 precautions. However, the FPS was in the field from April 28, 2020, through May 27, 2020, a period that mimics the traditional timing of the survey in spring semesters.

The Survey of Recent Graduates, administered in September, is a follow-up survey to the FPS. Any student who did not participate in the FPS when they graduated in either December or May, along with those who received their degree after either Summer I or Summer II (and therefore were not invited to participate in the FPS that academic year), are invited to participate in the SRG. In order to get updated information from them, SRG invitations are also sent to all graduates from the past year who indicated that, at the time they completed either the December or May 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. The September 2020 Survey of Recent Graduates was in the field from September 1 through September 30.

The final survey population for the combined FPS and SRG surveys is all those who received a baccalaureate degree during the academic year, i.e., December 2019, May 2020, and 2020 Summer I and II. For respondents who completed both the FPS and the follow-up SRG, only their data from the SRG are retained. For respondents who graduated in multiple semesters during the academic year (e.g., were double majors), and submitted the FPS in both December and May, or who submitted an FPS and an SRG, only their data from the most recent survey is retained. More detailed information on the SRG population can be found in Appendix A.

Response Rates

A total of 5,545 undergraduate students received baccalaureate degrees from NC State in the 2019-2020 academic year (Table 1). This includes 1,313 students who graduated in December 2019, 3,764 who graduated in Spring 2020, and 468 who graduated in the Summer I (n=194) or Summer II (n=274) sessions of 2020. After retaining their most recent survey record, a total of 3,250 graduates are included in the AY FPS/SRG results (58.6%).

Due to their low participation rates, with just under 30 percent responding to the invitation to participate in the SRG, Summer I and II graduates are slightly underrepresented in the AY FPS/SRG results. While over half of the Fall 2019 graduates are included among respondents, with 56 percent participating in either the FPS or SRG, Spring 2021 graduates had the highest participation rate (63.2%) and as such are slightly overrepresented among survey respondents.

Table 1: AY19-20 FPS/SRG Response Rate, Overall and by Semester Graduated

Semester Graduated	AY19-20 Population		FPS/SRG Respondents		Response Rate
	N	% of population	N	% of respondents	%
Fall 2019	1,313	23.7%	738	22.7%	56.2%
Spring 2020	3,764	67.9%	2,379	73.2%	63.2%
Summer I 2020	194	3.5%	58	1.8%	29.9%
Summer II 2020	274	4.9%	75	2.3%	27.4%
Total	5,545	100%	3,250	100%	58.6%

While no college had fewer than 50 percent of its graduating seniors respond to the FPS/SRG in the 2019-2020 academic year, participation did vary by college. The College of Education had the highest response rate, with 75 percent of their graduates participating in the survey (75.2%; Table 2). Other colleges with high response rates include the College of Design (69.7%), the Wilson College of Textiles (64.3%), and the College of Engineering (64.0%). As such, these colleges are slightly overrepresented among survey respondents.

Graduates from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the Poole College of Management, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences had relatively lower participation rates (53.4%, 53.7%, and 54.2%, respectively) and are therefore slightly underrepresented in the results.

Table 2: AY19-20 FPS/SRG Response Rate, Overall and by College

College/School	AY 19-20 Population		FPS/SRG Respondents		Response Rate
	N	% of population	N	% of respondents	%
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	689	12.4%	368	11.3%	53.4%
College of Design	165	3.0%	115	3.5%	69.7%
College of Education	125	2.3%	94	2.9%	75.2%
College of Engineering	1,410	25.4%	903	27.8%	64.0%
College of Natural Resources	349	6.3%	194	6.0%	55.6%
College of Humanities and Social Sciences	1,052	19.0%	570	17.5%	54.2%
College of Sciences	673	12.1%	403	12.4%	59.9%
Wilson College of Textiles	207	3.7%	133	4.1%	64.3%
Poole College of Management	875	15.8%	470	14.5%	53.7%
Total	5,545	100.0%	3,250	100.0%	58.6%

Overview of Responses Included in Final Results

Table 3 provides an overview of from which specific survey the responses included in this report are drawn. Among those respondents who graduated in Fall 2019, the December FPS record was used for 70 percent of them (70.5%), and the September SRG record was used for the remaining 30 percent (29.5%). Among Spring 2020 graduate respondents, the May FPS record was used for 73 percent, while the September SRG record was used for 27 percent. All responses of Summer I and II graduates come from the September SRG.

Table 3: Survey Results Included, by Semester Graduated

Survey Results Included in Report	Graduated December 2019		Graduated Spring 2020		Graduated Summer I 2020		Graduated Summer II 2020		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
December FPS	520	70.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	520	16.0%
May FPS	0	0.0%	1737	73.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1737	53.5%
September SRG	218	29.5%	642	27.0%	58	100.0%	75	100.0%	993	30.6%
Total	738	100%	2379	100%	58	100%	75	100%	3250	100%

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Appendix A: Survey of Recent Graduates Population and Response Rate

The Survey of Recent Graduates 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 enroll in graduate/professional school. This appendix further breaks down the composition of the population for the September 2020 SRG and the survey responses included in the AY reports.

Of the 5,545 graduates receiving baccalaureate degrees in AY19-20, 3,871 were invited to complete the September 2020 Survey of Recent Graduates (Table 4). Sixty percent of those invited had not completed the Future Plans Survey when asked to do so when they graduated in either December or May (60.2%), and 12 percent were Summer I or II graduates who had not been invited to participate in the FPS (11.7%). The remaining 28 percent of those who were invited to participate in the SRG had submitted their FPS when they graduated in either December (7.7%) or May (20.1%), but had indicated at that time that they did not have confirmed plans for after graduation. Altogether, 25 percent of the SRG population had graduated in Fall 2019, 64 percent in Spring 2020, and 12 percent in either Summer I or II, 2020 (*data not shown*).

993 of the 3,871 AY19-20 graduates invited to participate in the SRG submitted their survey, for an overall response rate of 25.7 percent. Graduates who had previously submitted their FPS, but who had unconfirmed plans at the time, were most likely to submit the SRG and update their information, with 491 of the 1,085 in this group participating in the SRG (45.2%). (As a reminder, the responses from the FPS submitted when they graduated are included in the combined FPS/SRG academic year results for those who did not participate in the SRG when asked to do so.) Close to 30 percent of the students who had graduated during Summer I or II in 2020 - who had not been invited to participate in the FPS - submitted the SRG. Those who had not submitted their FPS when they graduated in either fall or spring were least likely to participate in the SRG, with just 16 percent submitting their SRG.

Table 4: Survey of Recent Graduates Response Rate, by type of respondent

Group	Population		Respondents		Response Rate
	N	% of population	N	% of respondents	
FPS respondent (<i>with unconfirmed plans</i>)	1,085	28.0%	491	49.4%	45.2%
FPS nonrespondent	2,332	60.2%	370	37.3%	15.9%
Summer I or II graduate	454	11.7%	132	13.3%	29.1%
Total	3,871	99.9%	993	100.0%	25.7%