

North Carolina State University

2013 Sophomore Student Survey:

Executive Summary

Survey Methods

NC State conducted its biennial survey of sophomore students during the spring 2013 semester. Eligible students had completed 45-59 credit hours, excluding those who entered NC State as a new freshman in Fall 2012.

The online survey had a response rate of 26 percent (634 of 2,443 eligible sophomores).

General Satisfaction

Over 95 percent of respondents said they plan to complete their degree at NC State. Almost two-thirds of respondents agreed strongly that they made the right decision to attend NC State and that they would still choose to attend NC State if starting over. However, about 10 percent of respondents reported having seriously considered leaving NC State, and a very small number said they had actually left and returned. The most common reasons for thinking about withdrawing or transferring from NC State were related to the desire for a different or stronger academic program, or due to campus life issues (e.g., inability to make friends, difficulties getting involved in campus life, large campus size) or personal reasons (e.g., feeling homesick).

Academic Environment and Faculty Contributions

Nearly all respondents (95%) rated the learning environment on campus as either "strong" or "very strong," and about 85 percent agreed that *experiences at NC State have stimulated an interest in an intended field of study* and that they *consider what they have been learning in classes valuable*.

A majority of respondents gave positive ratings to various items related to quality of instruction at NC State. When asked about the *overall quality of instruction at NC State*, over 80 percent of respondents said they were either "very satisfied" (14%) or "satisfied" (69%). Students were most likely to be "very satisfied" with *how effectively instructors use instructional technology in teaching/learning activities* and *respecting diverse talents and ways of learning*. The only areas related to instruction for which more than 10 percent of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied were *how quickly instructors provide feedback on work* (13%) and the *helpfulness of feedback on work* (11%).

Other than getting routine *academic* (44%), *professional* (30%), or *non-academic* (12%) *guidance from faculty*, or *working with a faculty member on campus activities* (25%), fewer than 10 percent of the sophomores indicated they had had a mentoring experience with a faculty member (e.g., working on a research or extension project). However, among those with any such mentoring experience ratings of its contribution to

their personal and professional growth were overwhelmingly positive. *Assisting in teaching a class/lab, routinely getting non-academic guidance, and routinely getting professional guidance* were the experiences most likely to have contributed “a great deal” to the personal and professional growth of students.

Ratings for satisfaction with academic advising were generally positive, with a majority of respondents being either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with each of the 13 items asked about. Respondents were most likely to be “very satisfied” with *advisor’s knowledge about requirements for current major or major of interest* (44%), *amount of time given during advising sessions* (36%), and *accessibility of primary advisor* (36%) and *advisor providing needed information about academic courses/programs* (36%). Students were most likely to be dissatisfied with *advisor keeping me informed about my academic progress* (17%).

Campus Climate and Safety

A large majority of respondents agree that there is visible leadership to help foster diversity on NC State’s campus (85%). Students overall were even more likely to agree that NC State is committed to helping minorities succeed (95%). However, unlike perceptions of leadership to help foster diversity, agreement varies by race/ethnicity, with 59 percent of white students compared to 41 percent of students of color saying they “strongly agree” that NC State is committed to helping minorities succeed.

With two notable exceptions, 45 percent or more respondents said that the campus is “strongly supportive” of the various student groups asked about (e.g., women, African Americans, students with disabilities). Only one-third of respondents said the campus is “strongly supportive” of transgender students, and 39% said the campus is “strongly supportive” of gay, lesbian and bisexual students. Students who self-identified as a member of the GLBT community were slightly more likely than those who identified as heterosexual or straight to believe the campus is nonsupportive of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students (18.2% vs 10.0%), and of transgender students (22.7% vs 11.5%).

A sense of community at NC State is perceived as important by the majority of sophomores and, for the most part respondents who say it is important for them to experience a sense of community while at NC State believe that they actually experience such community to at least some extent. However, about 10 percent of respondents who believe it is “very important” to experience a sense of community say they actually experience it only a to a small extent or not at all at NC State.

About 80 percent of respondents were satisfied with the availability of public information about crimes on campus (81%) and information about crime prevention and safety on campus (79%). However, while about three-fourths of respondents said they knew how to report suspicious or threatening behavior, less than half said they were "very likely" to report such behavior to campus authorities.

Sophomores' ratings of safety varied greatly depending on campus location and time of day, with outdoor locations at night receiving the lowest ratings. More than two-thirds of respondents reported feeling "very safe" in campus residence halls during the day/early evening, as compared to only 12 percent saying they felt "very safe" outside on the grounds of the campus at night. More than half of women respondents reported feeling "not very safe" or "not at all safe" outside on the campus grounds at night (56%) and using the parking lots, garages, and/or decks on campus at night (56%).

Student Services

Respondents were generally satisfied with academic services at NC State. With very few exceptions, at least two-thirds of respondents said they were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with each of the 29 individual services provided by or related to the library, information technology, career services, the bookstore, and academic assistance and tutoring.

Overall, of the 29 individual services asked about respondents were most likely to have expressed satisfaction with several items related to the library. More than one-third of respondents said they were "very satisfied" with *library hours of operation* (51%), *access to online library resources* (40%), *access to databases and resources* (37%), and *effectiveness of library resources and services in improving the learning experience* (37%). On the other hand, a couple of library services - - *space for group work* and *space for individual student work* – were among the only ones of the 29 different specific services asked about that 10 percent or more of respondents expressed dissatisfaction (15% and 10%, respectively).

More than 20 percent of respondents said they were "very satisfied" with five of the eight different specific areas related to information technology asked about. Respondents were most likely to be "very satisfied" with *help desk assistance with solving problems* (25%), and most likely to be *dissatisfied with availability of wireless on campus* (17%).

One-fourth or more of respondents were "very satisfied" with each of the different areas related to career services asked about. They were most likely to be "very satisfied" with *help with preparing for interviews, resumes, etc.* (32%) and with *access to employment opportunities* (31%).

More than 20 percent of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with *opportunities to be involved with faculty on their research*.

Sophomores' ratings for non-academic service areas varied greatly, with anywhere from 8 percent to 31 percent of respondents saying they were "very satisfied" with a particular service. More than three-fourths of sophomores were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with *campus recreation* (89%), the *bookstore* (82%), the *campus police department* (77%), *on-campus shuttle/transportation services* (76%), and *health services* (76%). Respondents were most likely to be "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with *parking* (42%), *dining services* (20%), *financial aid application/award process* (12%), and *financial aid disbursement process* (11%). In general, ratings for quality of staff tended to be slightly higher or mirror those for the service itself.

Sophomores were asked to evaluate several of the university's online systems. About three-fourths of respondents were satisfied with the ease of use of the *online billing system*, the *online course registration system*, and the *online financial aid system*.

About one-in-ten respondents do not believe they *have the financial resources they need to finish college*. Two-thirds of respondents had some form of financial aid at NC State, the vast majority of whom were satisfied with their financial aid package. Majorities of all those with financial aid gave positive ratings to the customer service skills of the financial aid staff in various areas, with at least one-third rating them as "excellent."

Knowledge, Skills, and Personal Development

Sophomores were asked the extent to which NC State contributed to their development of 36 individual goals that the University has for their overall education. A majority of sophomores said NC State contributed at least "somewhat" to each of the individual goals, but they generally gave highest ratings to NC State's contribution to the development of a range of goals related to their personal development, followed by those related to general education, and, lastly, those related to their world view.

Sophomores were most likely to think NC State contributed "very much" to developing their *potential for success* (52%), *taking responsibility for my own behavior* (51%), *personal growth* (54%), *ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds* (49%), *using critical thinking skills* (47%), *working effectively as part of a team* (46%), *applying analytic skills* (45%), *using technologies appropriate to my discipline* (45%), and *understanding and respecting diverse cultures, values, and perspectives* (45%).

While still rated positively by a majority of respondents, potential areas for improvement include *capacity to engage with and/or respond to created works and evaluate their significance* (26%), *appreciating the humanities* (25%), *appreciating differences in sexual orientation* (23%), *understanding the present as it relates to history* (20%), *ability to handle stress* (20%), *developing and sustaining an active and healthy lifestyle* (22%), *being involved in public and community affairs* (22%), *applying social science methods to understand human behavior* (20%), each of which one-fifth or more respondents said NC State contributed "very little" or "not at all" to their development.

Employment and Extracurricular Activities

Just over one-half of sophomores said they were employed during the 2012-2013 academic year, with half of them working only off campus. While about one-fifth of the employed students work only one to five hours per week, one-fifth of those working off campus, and 16 percent of those working on-campus said they work more than 20 hours per week. A slight majority of the employed sophomores said their job takes either "some" (51%) or "a lot" (5%) of time away from their school work.

Among the campus activities and organizations asked about, respondents most commonly reported involvement in *intramurals/recreational sports/club teams and organizations/clubs related to their major*, with about 40 percent saying they participate in such activities. Sophomores were also asked the frequency with which they participated in various campus activities. Students were most likely to report at least occasionally participating in *community service/volunteer work* and in *workshops, seminars, speakers, etc. outside of class*, with about three-fourths saying they had done so at least once at NC State during AY12-13. Respondents were least likely to have ever participated in *multicultural/diversity events/programs* or *co-curricular activities*, with about half of respondents saying they had "never" participated in these types of activities at NC State.

Sophomores are generally satisfied with opportunities for involvement on campus. Two-thirds or more of respondents reported being at least "satisfied" with each of the opportunities asked about, with the exception of *weekend activities on campus for students*, for just under half were satisfied.

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Posted: September, 2010