

North Carolina State University

2016 Sophomore Student Survey:

Executive Summary

Survey Methods

NC State conducted its triennial survey of second-semester sophomore students during the Spring 2016 semester. The eligible population consisted of all NC State students who were classified as sophomores at the beginning of the Spring 2016 semester and who had completed between 45 and 59 credit hours.

The survey, administered online, had a response rate of 40 percent (1,102 of 2,756 eligible sophomores).

General Satisfaction

Over 95 percent of respondents said they plan to complete their degree at NC State. Almost 60 percent of respondents “strongly agree” that they made the right decision to attend NC State and that they would still choose to attend NC State if starting over. However, one-in-ten reported having seriously considered leaving NC State, and a very small number said they had actually left and came back. The most common reasons for thinking about withdrawing or transferring from NC State were related to *dissatisfaction with their academic program, personal reasons* (e.g., homesickness, roommate issues) or *campus life* (e.g., difficulties getting involved in campus life, not liking the campus atmosphere).

Academic Environment and Faculty Contributions

Nearly all respondents (97%) rated the *learning environment on campus* as either “strong” or “very strong,” and about 90 percent agree that they *consider what they have been learning in classes valuable*.

A majority of respondents gave positive ratings to eight of the nine items related to quality of instruction at NC State. When asked about the *overall quality of instruction at NC State*, about 80 percent of respondents said they were either “very satisfied” or “satisfied”. Students were most likely to be “very satisfied” with *how effectively instructors use instructional technology in teaching/learning activities* and the extent to which their instructors *carefully explain performance expectations*. However, 10 percent or more of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with the *extent to which instructors considered different learning styles*, the *helpfulness of instructor feedback on work*, and *how quickly feedback on work was provided*.

While many students said they *regularly met with faculty for academic* (42%), or *professional* (30%) *guidance*, or *worked with faculty on campus activities* (25%), 10 percent or fewer of the sophomore respondents reported having *worked on a research project, extension/public service, or independent study project with faculty*, or *assisted in teaching a class/lab*. However, ratings of a mentoring experience’s contribution to

their personal and professional growth among those with any such mentoring experience were highly positive. Students were most likely to say *assisting in teaching a class/lab* contributed “a great deal” to their personal and professional growth (37%).

Ratings for satisfaction with academic advising were generally positive. Respondents were most likely to be “very satisfied” with their advisors’ *help in understanding degree requirements for their current major or major of interest* (32%), the *accessibility of their primary advisor* (30%), their advisors’ *concern for their academic success* (30%), and their advisors *talking with them about their academic progress* (29%). Students were most likely to be dissatisfied with their advisors *helping them to think about co-ops, internships, and other activities to gain work-related experiences* (18%).

Students saying they had a professional academic advisor were slightly more likely than those assigned a faculty advisor to be satisfied with the various aspects of advising asked about.

Campus Climate and Safety

Almost all respondents agree that *NC State is committed to helping minorities succeed* (95%) and over 90 percent agree that *there is visible leadership from the Chancellor/other administrators to help foster diversity on campus*. However, agreement varies by race/ethnicity, with 59 percent of white students compared to 40 percent of students of color saying they “strongly agree” that *NC State is committed to helping minorities succeed*, and 54 percent of white students compared to 34 percent of students of color saying they “strongly agree” that *there is visible leadership from the Chancellor/other administrators to help foster diversity on campus*.

With one exception, 40 percent or more respondents said that the campus is “strongly supportive” of the various diverse student groups asked about (e.g., *women, African Americans, students with disabilities*). While one-third said the campus is “strongly supportive” of *transgender students*, nine percent said the campus is “mildly non-supportive” or “strongly non-supportive” of *transgender students*. Students who self-identified as a member of the GLBT community were slightly more likely than those who did not self-identify as a member of the GLBT community to believe the campus is non-supportive of *transgender students* (18% vs 9%).

Experiencing a sense of belonging or community at NC State is perceived as important by the overwhelming majority of sophomores, and most respondents, especially those who say it is important for them to have such an experience, indicate that they actually do experience such a community to at least “some extent.” However, about 10 percent of respondents who believe it is “very important” to experience a sense of community at NC State say they actually experience it only “to a small extent” or “not at all.”

Sophomores were asked how safe they feel in different campus locations during the day and at night. 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*, whereas less than 20 percent said they felt "very safe" *using parking lots, garages and/or decks, and being outside on the grounds of the campus at night*.

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the *availability of public information about crimes on campus* (88%) and *information about crime prevention and safety on campus* (83%). However, while about three-fourths of respondents said they *knew how to report suspicious or threatening behavior*, just half of them said they were "very likely" *to report such behavior to campus authorities*.

Student Services

Respondents were generally satisfied with academic services at NC State, with no more than 5 percent of sophomores saying they were "very dissatisfied" with any single item in the six academic services areas asked about (academic assistance and tutoring; research support; library services; career services; information technology).

Library services received the highest ratings of all academic service areas evaluated. In particular, respondents said they were "very satisfied" with *library hours of operation* (41%), *access to online library resources* (36%), *helpfulness of staff* (34%), *access to databases and resources* (32%), and *effectiveness of library resources/services in improving learning experiences* (30%). However, sophomores gave less favorable ratings to *space for group work* and *space for individual student work*, with more than 10 percent of respondents expressing dissatisfaction.

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 *availability of wireless on campus* (26%), but they were also most likely to be "dissatisfied" (11%) or "very dissatisfied" (3%) it.

Nearly 70 percent of respondents said they were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with *career services overall*, and over half of respondents were at least "satisfied" with each of the items related to career services. They were most likely to be "very satisfied" with *the helpfulness of staff* (23%).

With regards to satisfaction with research support, 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 five percent to 32 percent of respondents saying they were "very satisfied" with a given service. More than three-fourths of sophomores were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with *University recreation*, the *University Police Department*, *health services*, the *bookstore*, and *counseling services*. Respondents were most likely to be "dissatisfied"

or “very dissatisfied” with *parking* (45%), *dining services* (15%), *financial aid application/award process* (14%), and *housing and residence life* (12%). 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. More than two-thirds of respondents said they were at least “satisfied” with the ease of using the *course registration system*, the *financial aid system*, and the *billing system*.

About two-thirds of respondents reported receiving some form of financial aid at NC State, and the majority of respondents who did receive financial aid indicated satisfaction with their financial aid package (80%). However, nearly one-in-ten respondents do not believe they *have the financial resources they need to finish college*. Large majorities of all those with financial aid gave positive ratings to the customer service skills of *financial aid advisor*, *reception*, and *phone staff*, with at least one-third of respondents rating them as “excellent.”

Knowledge, Skills, and Personal Development

Sophomores were asked the extent to which NC State contributed to their development on 40 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.

Sophomores were most likely to think NC State contributed “very much” to *taking responsibility for their own behavior* (53%), *experiencing personal growth* (51%), their *potential for success* (49%), their *ability to plan and carry out projects independently* (47%), their *ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds* (46%), *valuing learning as a lifelong process* (46%), and *working effectively as part of a team* (45%).

While still rated positively by a majority of respondents, one-fifth or more of respondents said NC State contributed “very little” or “not at all” to their development of *a capacity to engage with and/or respond to created works and evaluate their significance*, *appreciating the humanities*, *ability to handle stress*, *being involved in public and community affairs*, *developing and sustaining an active and healthy lifestyle*, *appreciating differences in sexual orientation*, *applying social science methods to understand human behavior*, and *creating/distributing information and knowledge using multiple communication forms*.

Employment and Extracurricular Activities

Just over one-half of sophomores said they were employed during the 2015-2016 academic year, and about one-half of employed sophomores said they were working 10 hours or less per week. Respondents who worked off campus were more likely than those working on campus to report working more than 20 hours per week (21% vs. 8%,

respectively). More than half of the employed sophomores said their job takes either “some” or “a lot” of time away from their school work.

Among the campus activities and organizations asked about, respondents most commonly reported involvement in *organizations/clubs related to their major* (42%) and *intramurals/recreational sports/club teams* (36%). Sophomores were also asked about the frequency with which they participated in various campus activities. Students were most likely to report participating in *workshops, seminars, speakers, etc. outside of class* and *community service/volunteer work*, with about three-fourths of respondents saying they participated in such activities at least “one to two times a year.” Respondents were least likely to have ever participated in *multicultural/diversity events/programs* or *co-curricular activities*, with a little under half of respondents saying they had “never” participated in these types of activities at NC State.

Seventy percent of sophomore respondents report participating in community service during their time as a student at NC State. Students were most likely to report participating in community service sponsored by the *University* (59.0%), an *NC State club* (50.8%), or an *academic college, department, or course* (39.9%). Of students who participated in community service, over 80 percent indicated that the experience contributed “very much” (30.8%) or “somewhat” (50.8%) to their personal and professional growth.

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 which just over half indicated being satisfied.

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