

# North Carolina State University

## 2017 Incoming Transfer Student Survey:

### Executive Summary

#### Survey Methods

NC State conducted its annual survey of incoming transfer students during the summer of 2017. After attending New Student Orientation, students were e-mailed an invitation to complete the survey online. At the start of the Fall semester, students who had not attended Orientation were also invited to participate. The survey closed at the end of the first full week of classes during the fall semester.

The online survey achieved a 47.9% response rate, with 608 of the 1,269 eligible incoming transfer students to have their responses recorded and included in analyses submitting the survey. Due to their high response rates, women are slightly overrepresented among survey respondents. In terms of race/ethnicity, African American/Black respondents are slightly overrepresented while Asian, Hispanic and White respondents are slightly underrepresented.

#### Experiences Prior to Enrolling at NC State

Incoming transfer students were asked how many colleges/universities they attended before enrolling at NC State. Nearly three-fourths (74.0%) reported that they attended just one institution before enrolling at NC State, while another 18.6 percent reported that they attended two institutions previously. Seven percent said that they had attended at least three institutions before enrolling at NC State.

Over 90 percent of incoming transfer students said that NC State was their top choice university to transfer to (91.1%), with 39 percent saying that NC State was their “only choice” and 52.1 percent saying it was their “first choice.”

Thirty percent of incoming transfer students rated “academic reputation” (30.5%) as being the *single most influential factor in deciding to attend NC State*, followed by “availability of program” (22.6%) and “location” (13.4%). “Level of support for my intended major” (9.1%) and “cost” (4.5%) were also rated as the most influential factor by a sizable number of students.

More than 90 percent of incoming transfer students said that they were either “very” (48.5%) or “moderately satisfied” (43.0%) with the admissions process. Nearly 40 percent of respondents said that they *received a letter from someone other than Admissions Office* after applying for admission to NC State (39.3%). Fewer students reported they had received a phone call from *an NC State faculty or staff member* (16.6%), *a current NC State student* (11.1%) or from *a graduate of NC State* (4.2%).

#### Goals

More than 90 percent of respondents said their primary/goal objective for attending NC State was to obtain a “bachelor’s degree for graduate school preparation” (48.1%) or a “bachelor’s degree or certificate in preparation for a career” (43.4%). Over eight percent reported it was either to earn a “bachelor’s degree for career change” (4.8%), to “improve knowledge/skills for current profession” (2.0%), take “courses of personal interest” (0.5%) or “other” reasons (1.2%).

Incoming transfer students overwhelmingly reported that they anticipated taking somewhere from two to three years to complete their bachelor's degree at NC State. One-third of transfer students reported that they intended to complete their bachelor's degree in two years (33.1%), about one-fifth said they anticipated taking two and a half years (21.1%) and one-fourth said they anticipated taking three years (25.9%). A small number said that they planned to complete their bachelor's degree in less than two years (7.4%).

More than two-thirds of respondents reported that they intended to earn a graduate or professional degree after completing their bachelor's degree. Forty percent anticipated earning a master's degree (40.3%), while another 27.1 percent plan to pursue a doctoral or other professional degree.

More than 90 percent of respondents reported that they were either "very certain" (57.9%) or "certain" (34.1%) in their choice of college major; levels of certainty among incoming transfer students varied by college. Students in the College of Textiles and the College of Natural Resources were more likely than others to be uncertain about their major (16.7% and 15.9%, respectively).

While 40 percent of incoming transfer students said that after graduation they will be seeking work "in North Carolina only" (39.8%) over one-fourth said they would seek work "anywhere in the USA" (27.7%). The remainder reported that they would see work "anywhere – location is not important" (30.5%) or "outside the USA only" (1.9%).

### General Education, Personal Development and World View Goals

Incoming transfer students were asked about their current level of development and importance of 38 individual goals that the University has pertaining to general education, personal development and world views. Students consistently gave a higher average rating of importance compared to their current level of development of each goal. At least 40 percent of respondents reported that their own current level of development was "excellent" for only 14 of the 38 goals asked about, while at least half of respondents rated all but one of the goals asked about as "very important." However, goals that ranked relatively high in importance tended to also be ranked relatively high in respondents' perceived current level of development. Notable exceptions include *time management*, which despite having the second-lowest average rating of all 38 goals in terms of current level of development was rated by incoming transfer students as being their most important goal, on average. Other goals that rated significantly higher in importance than development include *ability to handle stress*, *working to my potential*, *speaking effectively* and *gaining clarity in my future career direction*.

#### *General Education Goals:*

Three-fourths of respondents said their current level of development was "excellent" or "good" on 15 of the 17 general education goals asked about. They were most likely to say that their current level of development was "excellent" for *ability to plan and carry out projects independently* (46.9%), *listening attentively* (43.3%) and *comprehending written and oral information* (40.5%). In contrast, more than one-fourth of respondents said their current level of development was either "fair" or "poor" for *speaking effectively* (31.1%), *capacity to engage with/respond to artistic works and evaluate significance* (28.0%), *using mathematical skills* (24.8%) and *applying scientific methods of inquiry* (24.3%). Close to 90 percent of respondents rated all but one of the 17 general education goals as

being “very” or “moderately important.” They were most likely to rate *comprehending written and oral information* (86.1%), *listening attentively* (85.5%), *ability to plan and carry out projects independently* (83.7%), *consider all options when solving problem and thinking through implications of selecting one alternative* (80.4%) and *effectively analyzing and evaluation evidence/arguments/claims/beliefs* (80.2%) as being “very important.” At least 10 percent of respondents reported that the *capacity to engage with/respond to creative works and evaluate significance* (18.7%) and *applying scientific methods of inquiry* (10.2%) was “slightly” or “not at all important” to them.

**Personal Development Goals:** At least two-thirds of respondents gave a rating of “excellent” or “good” to all but one of the 13 personal development goals asked about. Respondents were most likely to say that their current level of development was “excellent” for *taking responsibility for my own behavior* (59.1%), *recognizing and acting on ethical principles* (44.9%), *working effectively as part of a team* (44.4%) and *experiencing personal growth* (43.1%). Conversely, respondents were most likely to rate their current level of development as being “fair” or “poor” on *being involved in public and community affairs* (36.6%), *ability to handle stress* (31.6%), *time management* (30.3%) and *developing and sustaining an active and healthy lifestyle* (29.5%). Over 95 percent of incoming transfer students rated 12 of the 13 personal development goals as being “very” or “moderately important.” In particular, a large majority of students said that *time management* (90.8%), *ability to handle stress* (88.3%), *working to my potential* (88.1%), *taking responsibility for my own behavior* (87.7%) and *experiencing personal growth* (85.5%) were “very important” to them. The only item which more than five percent of respondents indicated was “slightly” or “not at all” important to them was *being involved in public and community affairs* (8.8%).

**World View Goals:** At least 80 percent of respondents said that their current level of development was either “excellent” or “good” to all eight of the world view goals asked about. Respondents were most likely to say that their current level of development was “excellent” for their *ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds* (56.7%), *sensitivity to issues associated with racial equity* (46.4%), *appreciating differences in sexual orientation* (44.8%) and *understanding and respecting diverse cultures, values, and perspectives* (44.3%). Over 15 percent of respondents said their current level of development was “fair” or “poor” to *understanding issues and problems facing the world* (19.3%), *appreciating differences in sexual orientation* (17.6%), *sensitivity to issues associated with gender equity* (15.2%) and *understanding the present as it relates to historical events* (14.7%). At least 75 percent of respondents said that *ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds* (83.1%), *understanding and respecting diverse cultures, values, and perspectives* (76.9%) and *understanding issues and problems facing the world* (76.8%) were “very important” to them. Respondents were most likely to say that *appreciating differences in sexual orientation* (14.5%), *sensitivity to issues associated with gender equity* (9.2%) and *sensitivity to issues associated with racial equity* (5.4%) were either “slightly” or “not at all important” to them.

### **Finances and Paying for College**

One-fourth of respondents reported that “\$10,000 or more” of their first year educational expenses would come from *family resources* (26.0%). Nearly 30 percent of students reported that they would be receiving at least \$6,000 in *aid that does not need to be repaid* (28.7%). Well over half of incoming transfer students reported that they will have loans that must be repaid, with more than 40 percent reporting at least \$3,000 in *aid that must be repaid* and 12 percent having \$10,000 or more in loans.

While almost 80 percent of the incoming transfer students reported using their own resources to help pay for their first year at NC State, most are contributing relatively smaller amounts. Seven percent say they will be personally responsible for either “\$6,000-\$9,999” (4.0%) or “\$10,000 or more” (3.4%) of their first year expenses, and 58.2 percent say they will be contributing less than \$3,000.

When asked if they had submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), eight-in-ten incoming transfer students (79.4%) said that they had done so.

A majority of incoming transfer students said that they were receiving grants and scholarships (56.0%) or loans (51.5%). Fewer students reported receiving some other type of financial aid (11.5%). One-fourth of reported that they would be receiving no financial aid at all (25.4%).

Three-fourths of incoming transfer students reported that they would be employed during their first year at NC State (74.6%). Employed respondents were more likely to say that they would be working off campus (52.4%) than on campus (23.9%). However, about one-fourth of employed transfer students said they would be working both on and off campus (27.7%). Respondents who said that they would be working off campus were much more likely than those planning on working on campus to report working more than 20 hours per week (28.4% vs 9.6%, respectively). Respondents planning on working on campus were more likely than those working off campus to say that they would be working either 11-20 hours per week (46.0% vs 38.8%, respectively) or 1-10 hours per week (44.4% vs 32.8%, respectively).

### **Satisfaction with NC State Services**

When asked to evaluate the NC State Academic Services website, over 80 percent of respondents gave it a rating of “excellent” (28.7%) or “good” (53.6%). Incoming transfer students were similarly satisfied the NC State financial aid process, with 85.1 percent of respondents saying that they were either “very” (41.9%) or “moderately satisfied” (43.2%).

### **New Student Orientation**

Incoming transfer students were more likely to “strongly agree” that the advice they received from their college/department prior to attending Orientation as opposed to during Orientation helped them plan their course schedule (46.7% vs 35.4%, respectively). They had generally similar opinions about the attention they received from their college/department prior to and during Orientation, with 42.4 percent saying they “strongly agree” they were satisfied with the attention they received prior to attending Orientation and 40 percent saying they “strongly agree” they were satisfied with the attention they received during Orientation.

Over 95 percent of students agreed that various types of information they received during Orientation was useful. They were most likely to “strongly agree” that they got useful information on *prohibition of sexual violence, relationship violence, and stalking* (62.8%) and *resources available if I need help preventing or reporting sexual violence* (56.9%). Incoming students were most likely to disagree that Orientation provided useful information about *how to navigate NC State’s physical campus* (20.6% “disagree” and 5.7% “strongly disagree”) and *what to expect when living with a roommate on-campus or living off-campus* (24.6% “disagree” and 4.6% “strongly disagree”).

At least 95 percent of respondents also said that they either “strongly agree” or “agree” that as a result of their participation in Orientation, they are *excited to start my first semester at NC State; can articulate the importance of civility and respect in an educational setting; identify how my behavior may impact my community; feel better prepared to start my first semester at NC State; and can identify opportunities to engage with people different from myself*. However, over eight percent of respondents said that they either “disagree” (6.7%) or “strongly disagree” (1.5%) that as a result of their participation in Orientation that they *felt more comfortable having conversations with others around our differences*.

### **Demographic and Family Background Characteristics**

Over half of respondents reported that they were “very well” prepared for college by their own efforts (54.3%), while only one-third said that high school prepared them well for college (32.6%). Respondents were significantly more likely to report that they were “not very well” prepared for college by their high school as compared with their own efforts (22.2% vs 3.0%). Over 95 percent of respondents reported that they were either “very well” (62.5%) or “somewhat well” (32.9%) prepared for further study by their previous institution.

Approximately one-third of incoming transfer students reported that they will be taking less than 15 credit hours in their first semester at NC State (31.6% taking 12-14 credit hours, and 3.2% taking fewer than 12 credit hours). The most common reasons for students being enrolled in fewer than 15 credit hours included *want to be able to make better grades* (46.4%); *need to work* (37.7%); *courses wanted were not available* (35.5%); *was advised to carry a lighter load by my advisor* (29.0%); and *combination of credit hours would have been too much if I took another big course at the same time* (26.8%).

A majority of respondents (59.5%) reported having come from a “moderate sized” or larger city, with 29.4 percent reporting that they came from a “moderate size city,” 12.3 percent from a “large city” and 17.8 percent from an “urban area.” Over one-fourth percent reported coming from a “small town” (26.4%), while 14.1 percent said that they were from a rural area.

Just under two-thirds of incoming transfer students had at least one of their parents/guardians earn a college degree (62.0%).

About one-third of respondents (34.4%) reported that their family’s combined 2016 pre-tax income was over \$100,000 with 15.6 percent reporting it was over \$150,000 and 7.5 percent reporting it was over \$200,000. Conversely, 31 percent of incoming transfer students reported that their family income was \$50,000 or below, with 18.2 percent saying it was “\$30,000 or less.”

Nearly 60 percent of respondents (58.3%) indicated that they came from a household with three or more members financially supported by their parents/guardians, including themselves, while 17.7 percent said that they were their parents/guardians only dependent.

About two-thirds of incoming transfer students said that they were the only dependent in their household currently enrolled in college (66.8%), while 27 percent said they were one of two dependents in college and 6.2 percent said they were one of three or more.

### **In Their Own Words: Anticipating Life at NC State**

Respondents were given the opportunity to answer open-ended questions pertaining to what they are most excited about and most concerned about in coming to NC State. Transfer students were most likely to mention being most excited about various aspects of learning (16.7%), the intellectual environment (13.2%), opportunities (10.8%), social life (9.7%), campus life (8.5%), adapting to NC State (8.2%) and independence (5.2%). Some of the most common categories that students mentioned in being excited about were also mentioned as being the most concerned about. Students were most likely to mention being most concerned about various aspects of their academic performance (19.3%), adapting to NC State (18.3%), social life (10.7%), transportation (7.8%), time management (6.0%) and instruction (5.2%).

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