

2018 Incoming Transfer Student Survey: Executive Summary

Survey Methods

NC State conducted its annual survey of incoming transfer students during the summer of 2018. 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 49.3% response rate, with 661 of the 1,341 incoming transfer students eligible to have their responses recorded and included in analyses submitting the survey. Due to their high response rates, women were slightly overrepresented among survey respondents. In terms of race/ethnicity, African American/Black and multi-racial students are slightly overrepresented, while white students are slightly underrepresented.

Experiences Prior to Enrolling at NC State

Over 70 percent of incoming transfer students reported that they attended one institution before enrolling at NC State (71.3%), while another 20.9 percent reported that they attended two institutions previously. Eight percent said that they had attended at least three institutions before enrolling at NC State.

Ninety percent of incoming transfer students said that NC State was their top choice university to transfer to, with 38 percent of those students saying that NC State was their “only choice” and 51.9 percent saying it was their “first choice.”

One-fourth of incoming transfer students rated “academic reputation” as being the *single most influential factor in deciding to attend NC State*, followed by “availability of program” (19.4%), “location” (13.9%), and “future career opportunities” (10.0%).

More than 90 percent of incoming transfer students said that they were either “very” (50.6%) or “moderately satisfied” (40.8%) with the NC State admissions process. Half of respondents said that they received some *communication from outside the Admissions Office* (49.9%) after applying for admission to NC State. Fewer students reported they had received a phone call from *an NC State faculty or staff member* (15.3%), *a current NC State student* (9.8%), or from a *graduate of NC State* (3.6%).

Goals

Almost half of respondents said their primary goal/objective was to earn a “bachelor’s degree or certificate for career preparation” (47.8%), and 43.9 percent said it was to earn a “bachelor’s degree for graduate school preparation.” The remaining respondents reported it was either to earn a “bachelor’s degree for career change” (4.1%), to “improve knowledge/skills for current profession” (2.2%), to take “courses for personal interest” (0.5%), or for “other” reasons (1.6%).

Incoming transfer students overwhelmingly reported that they anticipated taking in the range of two to three years to complete their bachelor's degree at NC State. Nearly 40 percent reported that they intend to complete their bachelor's degree in two years (38.7%), 20 percent said they anticipated taking two and a half years (20.1%), and one-fourth said they anticipated taking three years (24.9%).

Two-thirds of respondents reported that they intended to earn a graduate or professional degree after completing their bachelor's degree at NC State. Almost 40 percent anticipated earning a master's degree (38.1%), while another 28 percent plan to pursue a doctoral or other professional degree.

Incoming transfer students were overwhelmingly certain of their choice of college major, as over 92 percent reported that they were either "very certain" (56.2%) or "certain" (36.2%) in their choice. Students in the Wilson College of Textiles (76.9%), the College of Education (66.7%), and the College of Engineering (65.1%) were most likely to be "very certain" of their college major. Those entering in the College of Design were most likely to be uncertain in their choice of major, with over 12 percent saying they were either "uncertain" (8.3%) or "very uncertain" (4.2%). Over 10 percent of respondents in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the College of Education were uncertain about their choice of major.

Incoming transfer students evenly split on their likelihood of participating in a Study Abroad program with just over one-third saying they "definitely will" (15.2%) or "probably will" participate (20.4%), and just under one-third saying that they would "probably not" (21.5%) or "definitely not" participate (11.3%). The remaining respondents said that they would "maybe" participate in a Study Abroad program (31.6%).

While 40 percent of incoming transfer students who indicated that they will be seeking work after graduation said that they will be seeking work "in North Carolina only," 31 percent said they would seek work "anywhere in the USA." The remainder reported that they would seek work "anywhere – location is not important" (27.0%) or "outside the USA only" (1.8%).

General Education, Personal Development, and World View Goals

Incoming transfer students were asked about their current level of development and their importance of 45 individual goals that the University has pertaining to general education, personal development, and world views. Students consistently gave a higher average rating to the importance of a goal compared to the rating they gave to their current level of development of it. At least one-third of respondents reported that their own current level of development was "excellent" for 30 of the 45 goals asked about, while at least half of respondents rated all but one of the goals asked about as "very important."

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 third-lowest average rating of all 45 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 included *ability to manage ongoing stressors; gaining clarity in my career direction; developing and sustaining an active and healthy lifestyle; speaking effectively; ability to set and accomplish goals; recovering from emotional setbacks; and understanding issues and problems facing the world.*

General Education Goals:

Three-fourths of incoming transfer students said their current level of development was ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ on 15 of the 19 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* (48.1%), *listening attentively* (46.6%), *understanding the need for sustainability as the pursuit of balanced, ethical solutions that are economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially just* (41.4%), and *gathering relevant information or evidence* (40.1%). In contrast, more than one-fourth of respondents said their current level of development was either “fair” or “poor” for *speaking effectively* (33.3%), *capacity to engage with/respond to artistic works and evaluate significance* (33.1%), *using mathematical skills* (25.7%), and *applying scientific methods of inquiry* (25.0%).

At least 90 percent of respondents rated 17 of the 19 general educational goals as being “very” or “moderately important.” They were most likely to rate *listening attentively* (85.0%), *comprehending written and oral information* (83.3%), and *ability to plan and carry out projects independently* (80.2%) as being “very important.” They were by far most likely to consider *capacity to engage with/respond to creative works and evaluate their significance* (23.6%) as being “slightly” or “not at all important” to them, followed by *applying scientific methods of inquiry* (11.9%) and *using mathematical skills* (9.7%).

Personal Development Goals:

At least two-thirds of respondents gave a rating of “excellent” or “good” to all but one of the 18 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* (56.0%), *believing more time and effort will lead to increased learning* (53.9%), *working effectively as part of a team* (46.4%), *recognizing and acting on ethical principles* (44.2%), *experiencing personal growth* (43.2%), and *seeing projects through to completion* (42.8%). 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* (35.7%), *time management* (30.4%), *ability to manage ongoing stressors* (30.1%), and *developing and sustaining an active and healthy lifestyle* (27.2%).

At least 90 percent of respondents rated all 18 personal development goals as “very” or “moderately important” to them. In particular, a large majority of students said that *time management* (85.9%), *taking responsibility for my own behavior* (85.9%), *seeing projects through to completion* (84.8%), *ability to set and accomplish goals* (83.4%), *experiencing personal growth* (82.8%), *ability to manage ongoing stressors* (82.6%), and *working effectively as part of a team* (80.6%) were “very important” to them. The only items which more than five percent of respondents indicated were “slightly” or “not at all important” were *being involved in community affairs* (7.2%) and *expressing my opinion when others disagree* (5.0%).

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* (56.2%), *sensitivity to issues associated with racial equity* (49.4%), *appreciating differences in sexual orientation* (49.0%), and *sensitivity to issues associated with gender equity* (45.3%). Despite being given a development rating of “excellent” by a large number of respondents, *sensitivity to issues associated with gender equity* was also given less favorable ratings by a sizable number of incoming students. Over 15 percent of respondents said their current level of development was “fair” or “poor” to *sensitivity to issues associated with gender equity* (15.5%), as well as to *understanding issues and problems facing the world* (18.8%) and

At least three-fourths of respondents said that *ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds* (82.9%), *understanding issues and problems facing the world* (76.8%), and *understanding and respecting diverse cultures, values, and perspectives* (75.6%) were “very important” to them. Respondents were most likely to say that *appreciating differences in sexual orientation* (10.7%) was “slightly” or “not at all important” to them.

Finances and Paying for College

Over half of incoming transfer students reported that they will have loans that must be repaid (53.7%), with more than 40 percent reporting at least \$3,000 in *aid that must be repaid* (41.7%) and 10.3 percent having “\$10,000 or more” in loans. Nearly 30 percent of students reported that they would be receiving at least \$6,000 in *aid that does not need to be repaid* (29.2%). Almost three-fourths of incoming transfer students will be getting financial support from family, with over 20 percent saying that “\$10,000 or more” of their first year educational expenses at NC State would come from *family resources* (21.3%). Finally, over 80 percent of incoming transfer students reported using their own resources to help pay for their first year at NC State. However, most are contributing relatively smaller amounts. While seven percent say they will be personally responsible for either “10,000 or more” (4.0%) or “\$6,000-\$9,000” (3.0%), of their first year expenses, more than one-third say they will be contributing less than \$1,000 (34.2%) of their own money.

About 80 percent of respondents said they had submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (80.2%).

Incoming transfer students were asked to identify what types of financial aid that they had received. A majority of respondents said that they were receiving grants and scholarships (56.0%), and nearly half said that they received loans (49.0%). Fewer students reported that they were receiving some other type of financial aid (9.8%). Almost one-fourth reported receiving no financial aid at all (23.8%).

Over 70 percent of incoming transfer students reported that they would be employed during their first year at NC State (71.3%). Employed respondents were more likely to say that they would be working off campus (53.0%) than on campus (21.4%). One-fourth said they would be working both on and off campus (25.6%). Respondents who said they would be working off campus were more likely than those planning to work on campus to report working more than 20 hours per week (31.0% vs 13.9%, respectively). Over one-fourth of respondents who reported that they will be working both on campus and off campus during their first year at NC State said they would be working only 1-10 hours at each location (27.5%), while 20.6 percent said they would work 11-20 hours at both their on campus and off campus jobs. About ten percent said they would work more than 20 hours at each job.

Satisfaction with NC State Services

Over 80 percent of respondents gave the NC State academic services website a rating of “excellent” (26.1%) or “good” (55.6%), and when asked to evaluate the NC State Admissions website, 83.4 percent of respondents gave it a rating of “excellent” (30.5%) or “good” (52.9%) rating.

Incoming transfer students also reported that they were satisfied with the NC State financial aid process, as nearly 85 percent said they were either “very” (40.7%) or “moderately satisfied” (44.0%).

New Student Orientation

Incoming transfer students were more likely to “strongly agree” that the information/advice they received from their college/department prior to Orientation compared to during was helpful in planning their course schedule than to “strongly agree” the information/advice they got during Orientation was helpful (47.6% vs 33.8%, respectively). They had generally similar opinions about the attention they received from their college/department, with 42.4 percent saying they “strongly agree” they were satisfied with the attention they received prior to attending Orientation, and 40.7 percent saying they “strongly agree” they were satisfied during Orientation.

Almost all students agreed that during Orientation they were provided useful information about various topics. They were most likely to strongly agree they got useful information about *the prohibition of sexual violence, relationship violence, and stalking at NC State* (65.3%); *the resources available to me if I need help preventing or reporting sexual violence* (64.8%); and *the tactics I can use to be an active bystander to prevent or disrupt violence* (62.2%).

Nearly all incoming students also agreed that New Student Orientation had achieved the program’s goals of helping prepare students to enter and be successful at NC State. They were most likely to “strongly agree” that as a result of attending Orientation they were *excited to start [their] first semester at NC State* (71.7%) and that they were *aware it is my personal responsibility to adhere to the academic and behavioral expectations of the university* (64.4%). The only item that more than 10 percent of respondents said they either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” on was *I can better envision what my day-to-day life may be like in my first year at NC State* (12.5%).

Demographic and Family Background Characteristics

More than half of respondents reported that they were “very well” prepared for college either by their last institution (65.4%) or by their own efforts (59.5%). However, less than one-third of incoming transfer students said that they were “very well” prepared by their high school (32.2%), while 23.1 percent said that they were “not very well” prepared for college by their high school.

Nearly 45 percent of incoming transfer students reported that they will be enrolled in fewer than 15 credit hours during their first semester at NC State (40.8% taking 12-14 credit hours, and 3.0% taking fewer than 12 credit hours). The most common reasons for students being enrolled in fewer than 15 credit hours include *want to be able to make better grades* (50.6%), *need to work* (34.4%), *courses wanted were not available* (32.8%), *was advised to carry a lighter load by my advisor* (30.0%), and *the combination of credit hours would have been too much if I took another big course at the same time* (25.5%).

When asked to indicate the type of geographic area they came to NC State from, 30 percent of incoming transfer students indicated that they were from a small town, and another 30 percent said they were from a moderate size city. However, students were slightly more likely to report coming to NC State from an urban area (15.2%) than a rural area (12.9%).

Almost one-third of incoming transfer students said that they were a first generation college student, with 16.7 percent reporting that no parent/guardian of theirs had ever attended college, and 14.7 percent reporting that at least one parent/guardian had attended college but never earned a degree.

More than one-third of respondents reported that their family income was over \$100,000 (34.9%), with 17 percent reporting it was over \$150,000, and 8.5 percent reporting it was “more than \$200,000.” Conversely, 30.5 percent of incoming students reported that their family income was \$50,000 or below, with 17.9 percent saying it was “\$30,000 or less.”

More than 70 percent of respondents (70.9%) indicated that they came from a household with three or more members financially supported by their parents/guardians, including themselves, while 11.3 percent said they were their parents/guardians only dependent, and 17.9 percent said their parents/guardians had two dependents.

Over two-thirds of respondents reported that they were the only dependent in their household currently enrolled in college (67.8%).

In Their Own Words: Anticipating Life at NC State

Respondents were given the opportunity to answer two open-ended questions pertaining to what they are most excited about and most concerned about in coming to NC State. Incoming transfer students were most likely to mention being excited about various aspects of learning, the intellectual environment; social life; campus life; opportunities, such as internships, career resources, and getting involved on campus; and adapting to NC State. Some of the most common categories that students mentioned 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; adapting to NC State; social life; time management; the intellectual environment; and independence over their daily lives.

For more information on the 2018 Incoming Transfer Student Survey, contact:

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