

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

2019 Incoming Transfer Student Survey: Executive Summary

Introduction

NC State conducted its annual survey of incoming transfer students during the summer of 2019. After attending Transfer 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 41.8% response rate, with 546 of the 1,305 incoming transfer students eligible to have their responses recorded and included in analyses submitting the survey. Due to their higher response rates, women are slightly overrepresented among survey respondents.

Experiences Prior to Enrolling at NC State

Incoming transfer students were first asked how many institutions they attended before coming to NC State. Three-fourths of respondents reported that they attended one institution before enrolling at NC State, while 17.8 percent reported that they previously attended two institutions.

Over 90 percent of incoming transfer students said that NC State was their top choice university to transfer to (92.2%), with 41.1 percent saying that NC State was their “only choice” and 51.1 percent saying it was their “first choice.”

Nearly 30 percent of incoming transfer students rated “academic reputation” (28.9%) as being the *single most influential factor in deciding to attend NC State*, followed by “availability of program” (17.5%), “location” (14.7%), and “future career opportunities” (9.5%).

Almost 90 percent of incoming transfer students said they were either “very” (48.8%) or “moderately satisfied” (40.5%) with the NC State admissions process. Over one-fourth of respondents said that they received some *communication from outside the Admissions Office* (27.2%) after applying for admission to NC State. Fewer students reported they had received a phone call from *an NC State faculty or staff member* (10.1%), *a current student* (7.0%), or from a *graduate of NC State* (2.8%).

Goals

More than half of respondents said their primary goal/objective for attending NC State was to obtain a “bachelor’s degree in preparation for a career” (51.0%), and 42 percent said it was to earn a “bachelor’s degree for graduate school preparation.”

While a very small number of incoming transfer students intend to complete their bachelor’s degree in less than two years (4.2%), the vast majority say it will either take two years (37.1%), two and a half years (20.4%), or three years (25.5%) to complete their degree.

More than 60 percent reported that they intended to ultimately earn a degree beyond a bachelor’s degree (62.4%), with 27.1 percent reporting they plan to pursue a doctoral or professional degree.

Incoming transfer students were overwhelmingly certain of their choice of college major, as well over 90 percent reported that they were either “very certain” (56.1%) or “certain” (36.9%) in their choice. Students in the College of Design (80.0%), the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (62.9%), the College of Education (62.5%), the College of Sciences (60.4%), and the College of Engineering (59.5%) were most likely to report being “very certain” of their choice of college major. Those entering in the College of Education, however, were also most likely to be uncertain in their choice of major, with 12.6 percent saying they were either “uncertain” (6.3%) or “very uncertain” (6.3%) in their choice. Ten percent of respondents in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences also expressed uncertainty in their choice of major (10.5%).

Only about one-third of incoming transfer students reported that it was likely they would participate in a Study Abroad program while an undergraduate student at NC State, with 12.9 percent saying they “definitely will” participate and 15.5 percent saying they “probably will.” About 14 percent said they would “definitely not” participate in a Study Abroad program (13.8%).

While just over one-fourth 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” (26.0%), 38.5 percent said they would see work “anywhere in the USA.” The remainder reported that they would seek work “anywhere – location is not important” (33.4%) 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 importance of 49 goals that NC State 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. One-third or more of respondents reported that their current level of development was “excellent” for 34 of the 49 goals asked about, while at least half of respondents rated all but two of the goals asked about as being “very important” to them. 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 third lowest average rating of all 49 goals in terms of current level of development, had the second highest average rating of importance among all the goals asked about. Other goals that rated significantly higher in importance than development included *ability to manage ongoing stressors* and *recovering from emotional setbacks*.

General Education Goals:

At least two-thirds of respondents said their current level of development was “excellent” or “good” on 20 of the 22 general education goals asked about. They were most likely to say their current level of development was “excellent” for *listening attentively* (47.8%), *ability to plan and carry out projects independently* (46.9%), *appreciating the humanities* (43.3%), and *using technologies appropriate to my discipline* (42.1%). In contrast, more than 20 percent said their current level of development was “fair” or “poor” for *speaking effectively* (35.5%), *the capacity to engage with/respond to artistic works as creator, designer, performer, or audience member; and evaluate their significance* (35.3%), *using mathematical skills* (29.4%), *applying scientific methods of inquiry* (22.8%), and *applying social methods to understand human behavior* (21.1%).

Over 90 percent of respondents rated 19 of the 22 general education goals asked about as being “very” or “moderately important.” They were most likely to rate *listening attentively* (81.9%), *considering all options when solving a problem and thinking through the implications of selecting one alternative over another* (81.6%), *comprehending written and oral information* (80.3%), and *ability to plan and carry out projects independently* (80.0%) as being “very important.” At least 10 percent of respondents reported *the capacity to engage with/respond to artistic works as creator, designer, performer, or audience member; and to evaluate their significance* (24.7%), *appreciating the humanities* (16.1%), and *using mathematical skills* (10.2%) as being “slightly” or “not at all important.”

Personal Development Goals:

At least two-thirds of respondents said their current level of development was “excellent” or “good” on all 19 of the personal development goals asked about. Respondents were most likely to say that their current level of development was “excellent” for *believing more time and effort will lead to increased learning* (61.7%), *taking responsibility for my own behavior* (60.6%), and *valuing learning as a lifelong process* (57.2%). Conversely, respondents were most likely to rate their current level of development as being either “fair” or “poor” to *being involved in public and community affairs* (33.2%), *ability to manage ongoing stressors* (32.8%), *time management* (32.5%), *recovering from emotional setbacks* (29.2%), and *developing and sustaining an active and healthy lifestyle* (26.7%).

Over half of incoming transfer students rated each of the personal development goals as being “very important” to them, and over 95 percent rated all but one of the 19 goals asked about as being “very” or “moderately important” to them. In particular, a large majority of students said that *taking responsibility for my own behavior* (89.0%), *time management* (87.1%), *experiencing personal growth* (83.1%), *seeing projects through to completion* (83.1%), *ability to set and accomplish goals* (82.8%), and *ability to manage ongoing stressors* (81.5%) were “very important” to them. The only item more than five percent of respondents indicated as being “slightly” (7.2%) or “not at all important” (1.4%) to them was *being involved in public and community affairs*.

World View Goals:

More than 80 percent of respondents said their current level of development of each of the eight goals related to their world view was either “excellent” or “good.” Incoming transfer students were most likely to say that their current level of development was “excellent” for *ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds* (60.5%), *appreciating differences in sexual orientation* (51.8%), and *understanding and respecting diverse cultures, values, and perspectives* (50.4%). However, respondents were also most likely to rate their current level of development as “fair” or “poor” for *appreciating differences in sexual orientation* (17.2%), along with *sensitivity to issues associated with gender equity* (16.7%) and *understanding issues and problems facing the world* (14.9%).

Over 90 percent of respondents rated seven of the eight listed world view goals as “very” or “moderately important.” A rating of “very important” was given by at least three-fourths of respondents to *ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds* (81.9%), *understanding issues and problems facing the world* (79.3%), *understanding and respecting diverse cultures, values, and perspectives* (78.8%), and *sensitivity to issues associated with racial equity* (76.5%). Respondents were most likely to say that *appreciating differences in sexual orientation* (11.9%) and *sensitivity to issues associated with gender equity* (8.9%) were either “slightly” or “not at all important” to them.

Finances and Paying for College

Twenty percent of incoming transfer students reported that “\$10,000 or more” of their educational expenses for their first year at NC State would come from *family resources*. About 30 percent reported that they would be receiving at least \$6,000 in *aid that does not need to be repaid*. Just over half will be using loans to pay their education expenses, with 22.8 percent having \$6,000 or more in such loans and 12.5 percent having “\$10,000 or more.” While nearly 80 percent of incoming transfer students reported using their own resources to help pay for their first year at NC State, most are contributing relatively smaller amounts. About 10 percent say they will be personally responsible for either “\$6,000-\$9,000” (5.4%) or “\$10,000 or more” (4.0%) of their expenses for their first year at NC State, while nearly one-third reported they will be contributing “less than \$1,000” (32.2%).

Eighty percent of respondents reported that they had submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Three-fourths of incoming transfer students reported they would be employed during their first year at NC State. Employed respondents were more likely to say they would be working off campus (61.1%) than on campus (21.1%); however, 17.8 percent said they would be working both on and off campus. Respondents who said they would be working off campus were much more likely than those planning to work on campus to report working more than 20 hours per week (30.4% vs 12.1%, respectively). The relatively few transfer students who reported that they will be working both on campus and off campus during their first year at NC State typically reported that they will work a relatively small number of hours at each location, with about one-third of them saying that they will be working 1-10 hours at each of their on campus and off campus jobs. However, 18 percent said they would work 11-20 hours at each of their on and off campus jobs, and ten percent said they would work more than 20 hours both on campus and off campus during their first year at NC State.

Satisfaction with NC State Services

When asked to evaluate the NC State Admissions website, 82.2 percent gave a rating of “excellent” (32.0%) or “good” (50.2%), and when asked to evaluate the NC State Academic Advising Services website, 80.6 percent of respondents gave a rating of “excellent” (31.6%) or “good” (49.0%).

Incoming transfer students reported overall satisfaction with the NC State financial aid process, as 85.4 percent of respondents said they were either “very” (38.4%) or “moderately satisfied” (47.0%) with it.

Transfer Student Orientation

Incoming transfer students were more likely to “strongly agree” that the information/advice they received from their college/department prior to Orientation as opposed to during Orientation helped them to plan their fall course schedules (50.0% vs 36.6%, respectively). They had generally similar opinions about the attention they received from their college/department prior to and during Orientation, with 46.2 percent saying they “strongly agree” they were satisfied with the attention they received prior to attending Orientation, and 44.1 percent saying they “strongly agree” they were satisfied during Orientation.

Over 90 percent of incoming transfer students agreed that Transfer Student Orientation provided useful information about a number of different policies, practices, and resources. They were most likely to “strongly agree” that they got useful information about *the prohibition of sexual violence, relationship violence, and stalking at NC State* (70.5%) and *the resources available to me if I need help preventing or reporting sexual violence* (68.2%).

Nearly all incoming students also agreed that Orientation had achieved the program’s goals of helping prepare students be successful at NC State, with over 95 percent of respondents saying they either “strongly agree” or “agree” to all but one item asked about. They were most likely to “strongly agree” that as a result of attending Orientation they were *excited to start my first semester at NC State* (68.3%).

Demographic and Family Background Characteristics

More than 60 percent of respondents reported that they were “very well” prepared for further study by their last institution (64.6%). While 61.3 percent said they felt “very well” prepared for college from their own efforts, less than one-third of incoming transfer students said that they were “very well” prepared by their high school (32.2%), with 20.5 percent saying they were “not very well” prepared for college by their high school.

Nearly 40 percent of incoming transfer students reported that they will be enrolled in fewer than 15 credit hours during their first semester at NC State (38.8% taking 12-14 credit hours, and 2.9% 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* (49.7%), *need to work* (37.6%), *courses wanted were not available* (37.0%), and *the combination of credit hours would have been too much with another big course* (32.8%).

When asked to indicate the type of geographic area they came to NC State from, over 40 percent of incoming transfer students reported they were from a “rural area” (19.2%) or a “small town” (23.8%), while just over one-fourth came from a “large city” (11.2%) or an “urban area” (14.9%).

About 70 percent of incoming transfer students had at least one of their parents/guardians earn a college degree (69.5%).

More than two-thirds of respondents reported that their family’s 2018 pre-tax income was \$100,000 or less (68.4%), with just under one-third saying it was \$50,000 or less (32.9%). About 13 percent of incoming students reported that their family income was higher than \$150,000 (12.8%).

About half of respondents (51.1%) indicated that they came from a household with four or more members financially supported by their parents/guardians, including themselves, while 13.1 percent said that they were the only person financially supported in their family.

Just under two-thirds of incoming transfer students said that they were the only dependent in their household enrolled in college (65.5%), while 29.7 percent said they were one of two dependents enrolled in college, and 4.8 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 two open-ended questions pertaining to what they are most excited about and most concerned about in transferring to NC State to continue their academic careers. Students were most likely to mention being excited about various aspects of the intellectual environment on campus, learning, social life, and campus life. 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 adapting to NC State, their academic performance, social life, campus life, the intellectual environment on campus, independence, and classroom instruction.

For more information on the 2019 Incoming Transfer Student Survey, contact:

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