

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

2020 Incoming Transfer Student Survey: Highlights

NC State conducted its annual survey of incoming transfer students prior to and at the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester. Eligible students included all incoming NC State transfer students at the Fall 2020 Census date. Of the 1,446 incoming transfer students enrolled in a four-year degree-seeking program eligible to complete the survey, 691 returned usable surveys for a response rate of 47.8%

NC State's academic reputation is very influential in students' decisions to attend. About 90 percent of incoming transfer students said that NC State was their “first” or “only choice” of colleges to transfer to continue their academic careers. *Academic reputation* was most frequently reported as the *single most influential factor* in their decisions to attend NC State, with over one-fourth of respondents reporting this, followed by *availability of program*.

High achievement is important to incoming students. While nearly half of respondents said that their primary goal/objective for attending NC State was to obtain a bachelor's degree “in preparation for a career,” over 60 percent reported that they ultimately planned to pursue a master's, doctoral, or professional degree. About 85 percent said they anticipated completing their bachelor's degree in three years or less after transferring to NC State.

Students feel well prepared for college by their previous institution and their own efforts, but less so by their high school. About 95 percent of incoming transfer students said they were at least “somewhat well” prepared for further study by their previous institution, and for college by their own efforts; well over half said both prepared them “very well.” In contrast, nearly one-fourth said that they were “not very well” prepared for college by their high school, with only about 30 percent saying they were “very well” prepared by their high school.

Incoming students report room to grow on various general education, personal development, and world view goals. Respondents consistently gave higher ratings to the importance of each of the 49 different general education, personal development, and world view goals asked about than to their current level of development of them. However, goals ranked relatively high in current level of development compared to other goals were similarly ranked high in importance relative to other goals as well. There were some exceptions to this, most notably for *time management* and *ability to manage ongoing stressors*, which were ranked high in terms of importance but low in development. Some goals ranked high in both development and importance, including *taking responsibility for my own behavior*; *ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds*; *listening attentively*; and *experiencing personal growth*.

Students report using various sources, including their own money, to pay for their college expenses. Over 40 percent of incoming transfer students reported that they will be contributing at least \$1,000 of their own resources to their education expenses for their first year at NC State, with over seven percent contributing at least \$6,000. Nearly half of respondents said that they would be taking out loans and other financial aid that must be repaid, with eight percent having at least \$10,000 in such aid. Two-thirds of incoming transfer students reported that they intend to work either on or off campus, or both, during their first year at NC State.

Various NC State services given high marks by incoming transfer students. Incoming transfer students gave high ratings to the NC State admissions process, with over 90 percent saying they were at least “moderately satisfied” and 53 percent saying they were “very satisfied” with the process. Over 85 percent gave a rating of “excellent” or “good” to the NC State Admissions website. Over 80 percent of incoming transfer students gave a positive rating to the NC State Academic Advising Services website, with over one-third saying the website was “excellent.” Finally, 88 percent of respondents also said they were at least “moderately satisfied” with the NC State financial aid process.

Incoming transfer students report various reasons for taking a lighter course load in their first semester at NC State. Over 40 percent of incoming transfer students reported being enrolled in fewer than 15 credit hours during their first semester at NC State. The most common reasons given for taking a lighter course load were: *want to be able to make better grades; need to work; combination of credit hours would have been too much with another big course; and courses not available.*

Anticipated experiences both excite and concern incoming transfer students. In response to two questions asking them to comment in their own words – one about what they are excited about in coming to NC State, and one about what they are concerned with – students expressed similar issues in their responses to both questions. Students were most likely to say that they were most excited about things pertaining to learning, social life, campus life, classroom instruction, the intellectual environment on campus, and career planning. Similarly, students were most likely to say that issues they were nervous about incoming to NC State included the COVID-19 pandemic, classroom instruction, their academic performance, adapting to NC State, and social life. While students were also asked to describe how the COVID-19 pandemic affected their plans for continuing their college careers at NC State, 18 percent of responses to the question asking about their concerns also talked about the ongoing pandemic.

For more information on the 2020 Incoming Transfer Student Survey, contact:

Anthony Sbarra, MPA
Institutional Research Analyst
Office of Institutional Research and Planning
300 Peele Hall
Phone: (919) 515-7520
Email: atsbarra@ncsu.edu
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