

# NC STATE UNIVERSITY

## 2018 Alumni Survey Executive Summary

### Survey Methods

Alumni who received a bachelor's degree from NC State from Summer Session II in 2012 through Spring 2015 were surveyed during the Spring semester of 2018 (N=15,772). Contact information (a mailing address and/or e-mail address) was obtained for 14,591 alumni. Those alumni with a valid mailing address were sent a personalized letter inviting them to complete the online survey, followed by up to five reminders to nonrespondents, which included another personalized letter, a postcard, and several e-mails. Incentives consisted of random drawings among respondents to win Amazon eGift cards of varying amounts.

A total of 2,527 eligible surveys were completed for a response rate of 17.3 percent.

### Overall Satisfaction

Overall, respondents were very satisfied with the quality of the undergraduate education provided by NC State. Over 90 percent rated their overall undergraduate education as “very strong” (54.7%) or “strong” (39.6%), and a similar percentage believed that NC State prepared them “a great deal” (57.3%) or “some” (33.1%) to be competitive with graduates from other institutions. Four-in-five alumni said that they “strongly agree” that they were proud to have graduated from NC State, while another 17 percent said they “agree.” Almost all respondents said they would recommend NC State to a friend (93.9%).

Nine-in-ten alumni reported that they either “strongly agree” (67.0%) or “agree” (23.1%) that they would choose to attend NC State again if they were starting over. Respondents were less certain that they would choose the same major of study, with about two-thirds reporting they “strongly agree” (43.0%) or “agree” (24.6%).

Alumni whose first full-time permanent position was directly related to their major were more likely to agree that they would choose the same major field of study (80.8%) compared to those whose major was only somewhat related (68.3%). Similarly, those whose current employment is directly related to their major were more likely than those in positions somewhat related to their major to choose that same major if they were starting over (83.4% vs 66.9%)

### Connection to NC State

More than 40 percent of alumni reported feeling either “very connected” (13.7%) or “moderately connected” (28.4%) to NC State. However, 63 percent said it is either “very important” (34.1%) or “moderately important” (29.2%) for them to feel a connection to NC State.

Alumni for whom it is very important to feel connected to NC State were more likely to say they have such a connection. For example, 31 percent who said it is “very important” to feel connected to NC State also feel “very connected” to the institution. In comparison, more than two-thirds of the few alumni who said it is “not at all important” to feel connected to NC State said that they are “not at all connected.”

Alumni were most likely to report feeling connected to *NC State as a whole* (29.6%), *an individual alumnus/a* (17.5%), *an NC State athletics team* (13.7%), or to *their academic department/degree program* (12.3%). More than half of alumni said they stay connected to NC State through *social media* (59.1%), *e-mail* (57.8%), and *the university website* (52.1%). Notable numbers also said they rely on a *college or department website* (30.0%), *GoPack.com* (29.7%), or *mailings sent to their residence* (27.1%) to stay connected to NC State.

Many alumni reported having participated in a number of different NC State-related activities since graduating. The most common activities participated in were an *NC State athletic event* (64.0%), *using an NC State facility (e.g., recreational facilities or libraries)* (36.3%), and *attending a university event (e.g., Red and White Week, or an arts performance)* (28.2%). Almost 40 percent of respondents said they have been a member of the Alumni association, with 18 percent saying they are currently a member. Just over one-in-five alumni said they had made a philanthropic gift to NC State.

## Post-Graduation Activities

Over two-thirds of respondents said their primary activity during the year after completing their undergraduate degree was working full-time (68.6%), with another six percent saying they were a self-employed/contractor (3.9%), working for a service program (e.g., Peace Corps) (1.3%), or serving in the military (0.9%). Nearly 20 percent of alumni reported attending graduate/professional school either full-time (17.4%) or part-time (1.7%) the year after they graduated.

## Post-Graduation Employment

### *First Full-Time Permanent Position*

Seventy percent of those alumni seeking employment had found a permanent full-time position within six months of graduation, including nine percent who said they were going to continue in a position in which they had been working prior to graduating. Among this group, one-third had accepted a new position to begin after graduation prior to their commencement, while 26 percent found a position within six months after graduating. Those going on to graduate/professional school (22.4%) were more than twice as likely as those who did not (10.4%) to report taking over one year to obtain their first full-time permanent position after graduating.

Half of alumni reported that their first full-time permanent position was “directly related” to their major (50.3%), while over one-fourth said it was “somewhat related” (27.3%).

Alumni felt well-prepared for their first post-graduation job, with over one-third saying they had “excellent” preparation by NC State, (35.8%), and another 43 percent rating their preparation as “good.”

The overall average starting salary for alumni’s first permanent full-time position was about \$44,670, with the median starting salary at \$42,500. One-in-five alumni reported earning a starting salary of under \$30,000 (19.3%), while another one-in-five earned at least \$60,000 (19.9%). Starting salaries varied widely by college, with College of Engineering graduates most likely to have earned at least \$60,000 (53.6%). Alumni from the College of Sciences (33.3%), the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (32.0%), and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (28.1%) were most likely to have earned under \$30,000 per year in their first full-time job after graduating from NC State.

The resources that were most commonly reported by alumni as being helpful in locating and acquiring their first full-time permanent position were an *internship* (24.5%), *personal connection(s) within the company/organization* (18.1%), *family/friends/classmates/co-workers* (17.3%), *the NC State University Career Center/Career Development Center* (14.5%), *a job posting via ePack* (13.9%), *an on-campus career fair* (12.1%), or through finding a position on the *internet* (11.6%).

### **Current Position**

Over 80 percent of Summer 2012 through May 2016 graduates responding to the survey reported being employed full-time at the time of the survey (81.8%). Six percent reported working part-time (5.6%), and another four percent were self-employed/contractors (3.5%). At the time they responded to the survey, four percent of alumni said they were unemployed and looking for work (4.1%). The remaining five percent were not employed and not looking for work. However, current employment status varied based on alumni enrollment in graduate/professional school. Half of alumni currently enrolled in graduate/professional school reported working full-time (50.7%), while 87 percent not enrolled in graduate/professional school were working full-time. One-fourth of alumni enrolled in graduate/professional school reported that they were not employed and not currently seeking employment, as of the time of the survey.

Nearly half of respondents said that they had been in their current job less than two years (48.8%), with almost 30 percent saying they started within the past year (28.6%). Just under one-third of those who graduated in 2012 (31.4%), and over 20 percent of those who graduated in 2013 (21.0%) had been in their current position for four or more years. Among alumni who graduated in 2012, 23 percent have been in their current position for less than one year, compared to 29 percent of those who graduated in 2014, and 32 percent of those who graduated in 2015.

Alumni reported earning an average salary of \$54,852 in their current full-time position. More than one-fourth said they were earning \$70,000 or more in their current position (26.6%), but 12 percent reported earning under \$30,000. Six-in-ten alumni who graduated from the College of Engineering reported earning \$70,000 or more in their current position (59.5%). Conversely, over half of graduates from the College of Education (53.1%), and over 40 percent of College of Humanities and Social Sciences (42.6%) and College of Natural Resources (41.9%) graduates reported earning under \$40,000 in their current position.

Nearly two-thirds of currently employed alumni are working in the private sector (64.9%), 13 percent are in academia (12.6%), 12 percent work for the federal, state, or local government (11.6%), and eight percent for a private non-profit organization. Only three percent said they are self-employed (2.9%). The most common industries where alumni are currently working include education (7.8%), engineering (7.6%), health care (6.1%), computer software/hardware (4.9%), and technology (4.7%).

Three-fourths of currently employed alumni reported working in jobs either “directly” (45.1%) or “somewhat” related (31.3%) to their major at NC State. Those currently working in a position unrelated to their major were slightly more likely to be doing so “by choice” (13.8%) than “not by choice” (9.8%)

Alumni gave positive ratings to how well NC State prepared them for their current position, with one-third rating their preparation as “excellent” (32.8%) and over 40 percent rating it as “good” (41.9%).

Half of currently employed alumni said they were working in the Research Triangle area (49.4%). One-in-five are working in North Carolina but outside of the Triangle (21.1%), while 28 percent are working out of state (28.4%). A very small number reported working outside the United States (1.1%).

### **Further Education**

Since receiving their undergraduate degree from NC State, one-third of respondents have attended graduate/professional school. Fifteen percent of all alumni have already completed an advanced degree, and another two percent have completed one degree and are currently seeking a second. Thirteen percent are currently seeking their first degree. Among alumni who have not either started or completed an advanced degree, over 60 percent said they had either “high” (25.7%) or “moderate” (36.0%) interest in attending graduate/professional school.

The majority of those who completed a graduate degree earned a Master's degree (86.6%), while 10 percent earned a Professional degree, and two percent earned a Doctoral degree. Among those currently enrolled in graduate/professional school, half are seeking a Master's degree (51.2%), while the other half are seeking a Doctoral degree (26.1%) or a professional degree (24.9%).

Among those who already earned a Master's degree, the most common degree obtained was a Master of Science (33.1%), followed by a Master of Arts (9.3%), Master of Accounting/Accountancy (7.4%), and Master of Education (5.3%). Among those currently enrolled in a Master's degree program, the most common programs include Master of Science (24.7%), Master of Business Administration (15.5%), Master of Education (7.2%), and Master of Arts (5.7%).

Ten percent of alumni who already completed an advanced degree earned a Professional degree. The degree most commonly earned among this small group was a Juris Doctor (43.2%), followed by a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (18.2%). Among those currently enrolled in a professional program, 27 percent are seeking a Doctor of Medicine (27.2%), 20 percent a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (19.6%), and 14 percent a Juris Doctor (14.1%).

The majority of those going on to seek a graduate/professional degree stayed in North Carolina (57.0%), with over one-third attending NC State (34.5%). Other institutions NC State undergraduate alumni most commonly reported attending for graduate/professional school included UNC Chapel Hill (4.8%), Campbell University (3.7%), East Carolina University (3.3%), and Duke University (2.7%).

Well over half of alumni attending graduate/professional school said they received financial support (58.3%). The most common type of support received was scholarships (30.2%), followed by research assistantships (22.0%), teaching assistantships (15.3%), and honors/awards (14.1%).

Half of those completing a graduate/professional degree said their NC State undergraduate education provided "excellent" preparation for their post-grad education, with another 37 percent rating it as "good."

One-third of respondents had taken a continuing education class; six percent took both for-credit and not-for-credit classes (6.4%), 20 percent took non-credit classes (19.7%), and eight percent took for-credit classes (7.6%). Nearly nine-in-ten alumni who took a continuing education course did so through NC State's McKimmon Center for Extension and Continuing Education (87.9%). Almost 30 percent said those continuing education course(s) had a "very significant" impact on their professional career (29.0%), and another 39 percent said it had a "somewhat significant" impact (39.1%). Similar numbers said the course(s) had a "very significant" (31.6%) or "somewhat significant" (40.5%) impact on their personal life.

Over half of all alumni reported that they were likely to enroll in continuing education/professional development courses in the future. Those who already took a course are somewhat more likely than those who have not to have said it is "very likely" they will do so in the future (21.0% vs 11.4%).

## **Undergraduate Education Goals**

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 49 undergraduate education goals for their current professional and personal lives, and their satisfaction with the extent to which their undergraduate education contributed to their development of those skills in each of these areas. Alumni were asked about skills in five areas: communication, problem solving, professionalism, their general education, and diversity/global awareness. Alumni ratings for importance of each goal were typically higher than ratings for NC State's contribution to their development.

### *Importance of Skills*

At least half of respondents rated all but eight of the skills asked about as being “very important” to them currently, and for only three skills did more than 10 percent of respondents report that skill as “not at all important” to them.

Skills most likely to be rated as currently “very important” by alumni were:

- Communication skills overall (90.7% “very important”)
- Problem solving skills overall (89.8%)
- Understanding written and oral information (87.4%)
- Conducting work activities in an ethical manner (86.2%)
- Adapting to changing circumstances (83.2%)
- Professional skills overall (81.6%)
- Working under pressure (81.4%)

Skills most likely to be rated as “not at all important” to them currently were:

- Appreciating the arts (e.g., music, art, theater, dance, crafts) (16.7% “not at all important”)
- Appreciating the humanities (e.g., literature, philosophy, religion, history) (13.9%)
- Applying social science method to understand human behavior (10.6%)
- Appreciating differences in sexual orientation (9.8%)
- Acquiring an awareness of new scientific knowledge and discoveries (8.1%)
- Formulating and testing hypotheses (6.2%)
- Understanding issues associated with gender equity (6.1%)

### *NC State’s Contribution to Development of Skills*

While few alumni indicated that NC State had “not at all” contributed to their development of the skills asked about, for only 11 out of 49 items did at least half of respondents say that NC State contributed “very much” to their development.

Skills for which NC State was most likely to have contributed “very much” to their development, according to alumni, were:

- An overall education (65.8% “very much”)
- Working in teams (57.4%)
- Working independently (56.7%)
- Working under pressure (56.2%)
- Problem solving skills overall (54.0%)
- Understanding the basic concepts in a broad range of disciplines (51.7%)
- Critically analyzing and evaluating ideas/information (51.0%)

Skills for which NC State was most likely to have contributed “not at all” to their development, according to alumni, were:

- Appreciating the arts (e.g., music, art, theater, dance, crafts) (11.6% “not at all”)
- Appreciating differences in sexual orientation (10.3%)
- Understanding issues associated with gender equity (8.4%)
- Applying social science methods to understand human behavior (7.6%)
- Understanding issues associated with racial equity (7.2%)
- Developing and sustaining an active and healthy lifestyle (7.0%)
- Appreciating the humanities (e.g., literature, philosophy, religion, history) (6.4%)

### Importance vs Development

As previously mentioned, with few exceptions, alumni on average gave higher ratings to their importance of a skill than to the extent to which NC State contributed to their development of that skill. The differences between these ratings were especially large for:

- Communication skills overall (1<sup>st</sup> in Importance [average Importance rating of 3.90] vs 22<sup>nd</sup> in Development [average Development rating of 3.28])
- Adapting to changing circumstances (5<sup>th</sup> [3.82] vs 25<sup>th</sup> [3.27])
- Keeping current with skills/knowledge in my field (13<sup>th</sup> [3.73] vs 33<sup>rd</sup> [3.21])
- Professional skills overall (6<sup>th</sup> [3.80] vs 18<sup>th</sup> [3.32])
- Conducting work activities in an ethical manner (4<sup>th</sup> [3.84] vs 14<sup>th</sup> [3.37])

Overall, communication skills were rated as more important than other types of skills asked about, while diversity/global awareness skills were typically seen as relatively less important than skills in other areas. Alumni were also less likely to say that NC State made a significant contribution to their development of skills related to diversity/global awareness than to those in other areas.

### Undergraduate Experiences

Nearly two-thirds of alumni with such an experience “agree” that *participation in an internship/co-op/student teaching* had a positive impact on their career. *Undergraduate research and community service or a service learning project* were also likely to have a lasting impact on alumni among those with such experiences. Over 60 percent of alumni indicated that they either “agree” (33.6%) or “tend to agree” (27.5%) that their physical education course(s) at NC State had a *positive influence on their current exercise/health habits*. While over half of alumni agreed that their foreign language courses *helped me gain an appreciation for other cultures*, fewer alumni said that *the ability to communicate in a language other than English has proven helpful in my current profession*; over 17 percent disagreed that speaking another language was helpful in their current profession.

About 55 percent of Alumni Survey respondents indicated they had some type of international experience while an undergraduate at NC State, either through NC State or for some other reason. One-in-five participated in an NC State Study Abroad program either for a summer or short-term session (13.7%) and/or for a semester or longer (6.9%). Five percent participated in an international service trip organized by NC State, four percent went on a non-NC State service trip, and two percent conducted a research project outside the U.S.. Seventeen percent had not traveled abroad, but had participated in an on-campus international program or activity.

Close to 60 percent of those not participating in an international Study Abroad or Service Learning trip said they did not do so because of *financial constraints* (59.1%), with another 27 percent saying they could not because of *personal, family, or employment obligations*. Just under one-fourth said they were *not interested in available programs* (23.0%).

Over three-fourths of alumni with any such NC State-sponsored international experience (either local or abroad) said that it contributed “a great deal” to *helping better appreciate people with diverse perspectives or from different cultures* (76.6%), and close to two-thirds said it contributed “a great deal” to *helping better understand problems and issues facing the world* (64.0%). Alumni were slightly less likely to have said their international experience did “a great deal” to *have positive impact on work attitudes and skills* (59.4%) and were least likely to believe their international experience did “a great deal” to *help improve problem-solving skills* (49.7%). Those who participated in multiple international experiences were most likely to say their experience contributed “a great deal” to all four of the learning outcomes.

Nearly half of alumni said their undergraduate experience included an *internship* (48.2%). Work-related experience was also obtained by notable numbers of alumni through *employment or a part-time job in a field related to their academic major* (21.4%), *student teaching* (10.7%), or through a *Cooperative Education Program* (6.9%). One-in-five alumni reported that they participated in *research with a faculty member* (20.0%).

Four-in-five alumni reported that they participated in at least one student organization or club while an undergraduate student, with over one-third having participated in three or more organizations (35.3%). The most commonly reported organizations that alumni participated in while an undergraduate included *organizations/clubs related to their major* (34.5%), *intramural recreational sports/club teams* (26.9%), an honor/professional fraternity/sorority (15.3%), religious groups (14.7%), *social fraternity/sorority* (14.6%), the *University Scholars Program* (13.3%), and *service groups/organizations* (10.3%). Nearly half of those participating in any club/organization said they held a leadership role (47.3%); over 60 percent of those who held a leadership position said that NC State contributed “very much” to their development of *effectively leading/guiding others* (62.2%).

### **Current Behaviors**

More than one-third of alumni said they volunteer for a non-profit, charity, or community group once per month or more, with almost 10 percent saying they do so at least once per week (8.7%). Over 20 percent, however, said they “never” participate in such volunteer activities (22.1%). Over one-third of those who currently volunteer “once per week or more” compared to about one-in-five of those who “never” volunteer said that NC State contributed “very much” to their development of *being involved in public and community affairs*.

The large majority of alumni indicated they currently engage in physical exercise at least once per week (83.5%), with more than one-in-five saying they exercise on a daily basis (22.4%). Over three-fourths of those who exercise on a daily basis (76.6%) believe that their college education contributed either “very much” or “somewhat” to their development of *developing and sustaining an active and healthy lifestyle*.

While a notable number of NC State alumni said they “never” attend arts or cultural events (19.7%), over one-fourth said in the past year they attended such events at least once per month (27.3%).

More than half of alumni said they keep up with current events in the news “daily” (52.3%) and another one-fourth do so “several times a week” (24.1%).

Alumni are less likely to read for leisure, with just under 20 percent saying they do so “daily” (18.6%) and one-fourth doing so “several times a week” (26.7%). Over 15 percent of alumni said they read for leisure either “less than once per month” (11.5%) or “never” (4.3%).

### **For more information on the 2018 Alumni Survey, contact:**

Dr. Nancy Whelchel, Director for Survey Research  
Institutional Strategy and Analysis (ISA)  
300 Peele Hall  
NC State University  
Phone: (919) 515-4184  
Email: [Nancy.Whelchel@ncsu.edu](mailto:Nancy.Whelchel@ncsu.edu)

**Reports prepared by:**

Anthony Sbarra, MPA, Institutional Research Analyst  
Institutional Strategy and Analysis (ISA)  
300 Peele Hall  
NC State University  
Phone: (919) 515-7520  
Email: [atsbarra@ncsu.edu](mailto:atsbarra@ncsu.edu)

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