

Combined Future Plans Surveys and Survey of Recent Graduates

Academic Year 2016-2017 Graduates

Executive Summary

Survey Methods

NC State conducted its semiannual Future Plans Survey (FPS) of graduating seniors in the weeks immediately surrounding graduation in December 2016 and May 2017, and administered a follow-up Survey of Recent Graduates in September 2017 to fall and spring graduates who indicated having unconfirmed employment/graduate school plans at the time they submitted the FPS, graduates who did not complete their initial FPS when invited to do so, and students graduating in Summer I or Summer II, who had not been invited to take the FPS. The final population used in analysis consists of those undergraduate students who had been conferred an undergraduate degree between Fall 2016 and Summer II 2017. Combining the data from the December and May Future Plans Surveys and the September Survey of Recent Graduates yielded a response rate of 63%, with 3,259 of the 5,215 seniors who had been conferred degrees in the academic year 2016-2017 participating.

Plans Following Graduation

At the time they completed their most recent survey, four out of five students graduating in AY16-17 that their primary plan over the following year was to be employed, with a little over 60 percent of the graduating seniors/new alumni reporting that they had obtained paid employment and about 15 percent reporting that they were currently seeking or planning to seek paid employment. Twenty percent of students indicated that their primary plan after graduation was to attend graduate/professional school.

Post-Graduation Employment Among Those Accepting a Full-Time Position

Ninety-one percent of graduating seniors who said they had obtained employment indicated that they would be working full-time.

Half of graduating seniors at NC State who had obtained full-time employment reported going on interviews for three or more positions in their most recent job search, and half received job offers for two or more positions. About 75 percent of students said the position in which they would be working was for a *private, for profit business or organization*, with an additional 11 percent saying they would be working for the *federal, state, or local government*. Over 60 percent of those with full-time employment said the position in which they would be working was “directly related” to their major.

NC State graduates obtaining a full-time non-internship position reported an average starting salary of \$48,885 (median = \$48,750), an increase of \$1,537 from the average starting salary reported by FPS respondents graduating in AY15-16 (\$47,348). One-fifth of those having secured full-time employment upon graduation said they had received a signing bonus for the position in which they would be working, and of those, about half said it was for \$5,000 or more. Half of students who said they would be working outside of North Carolina reported that they had received an offer for a relocation package.

Three-fourths of graduating seniors indicated they would be working in North Carolina, with about half saying they would be working in the Research Triangle area (e.g., Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill). The companies and organizations hiring the greatest number of NC State seniors graduating in AY16-17 were Cisco, NC State University, and the US Navy.

Among a number of resources used in the job search process, students obtaining full-time employment were most likely to say that an *internship/externship* had been helpful in their job search (38%), followed by *career fairs at NC State* (26%).

Fifty-eight percent of students who had obtained a full-time position said they started their job search six or more months before graduation. By contrast, three-fourths of students who indicated at the time of the survey that they were seeking employment but had not yet found a position said they began their job search *less than* six months before graduation, with close to half saying they had not begun their job search until within two months of graduation.

Graduates Seeking Employment

Of the 15 percent those who reported at the time of the survey that they were currently looking for a job, three-fourths said they had gone on an interview for at least one position during their most recent job search, with just under one-third having gone on interviews for three or more different positions.

A lack of job offers, however, was not necessarily due to a lack of engagement in job search activities. Among all those seeking employment who had interviewed for at least one position, just one-fourth reported receiving an offer; among those having gone on interviews for three or more positions, only one-third had reported receiving any offers. When these students were asked why they had not yet accepted a job offer, the most common reasons cited included unsatisfactory compensation/pay, currently being in the process of negotiating or considering one or more job offers, or the job not being a good fit for their interests or career goals.

Further Education

One-fifth of the 3,259 graduating seniors who had submitted the FPS/SRG said they were planning on going to graduate/professional school. About 85 percent of those respondents said at the time of their most recent survey *they have been accepted and know where they will be going*, with an additional one percent who said *they have been accepted but are still undecided on whether or not or where they will actually attend*. A small number said *they have applied, but have not yet been accepted* (4%) and about one-in-ten said *they have not yet applied, but plan to do so within the next year*.

Over two-thirds of students who said they had been accepted to graduate school and knew where they would be going said they would be staying in North Carolina, with nearly half of all those going on to graduate school attending NC State University (48%). About 85 percent of respondents with confirmed plans for graduate school said they would be attending their first choice school.

About two-thirds of those who had been accepted into a program and knew the school they would be attending said they would enrolling in a master's degree program, with one-third enrolling in a doctoral (14%) or professional program (19%).

Fifty-eight percent of respondents with confirmed graduate/professional school plans indicated that they had received funding and/or awards as part of their acceptance into their program of study, with scholarships, research assistantships, and teaching assistantships identified as the most common forms of funding awarded.

NC State Career-Related Experiences and Resources

Around two-thirds of the students reported having had an *internship/externship or job in their field of study*, and over one-fifth of students said they had participated on a *class project specifically designed to work with a company/organization outside of NC State and/or a research project with a faculty member*.

While less than ten percent of students reported participating in a *co-op, co-ops*, along with *internships/externships*, were more likely than other types of work-related experiences to be viewed by those with such experiences as “very helpful” in securing employment.

Just over half of all graduating seniors who submitted the Future Plans Survey said they had gone to a career services office on campus, with the vast majority of these students giving very favorable ratings of the services they provided. About three-fourths of students having ever gone to the College of Textiles career services office rated its services as “excellent.”

Use of career services offices varied wildly by college: 90 percent of students in the College of Textiles (COT) said they gone to an NC State career services office at least once, with three-fourths of them going to the COT career services office on more than two occasions. By contrast, just 19 percent of students in the College of Education said they had used any of the career services offices asked about.

About two-thirds of students said they had used *ePACK*, the NC State Career Development Center's internship and job posting website, and/or had *attended a career fair*.

When asked about their overall satisfaction with the career guidance they received from their academic department/college, two-thirds of students said they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied.”

Feelings about the Future

Overall, NC graduates of the academic year 2016-2017 have a positive outlook on the future. When asked which statement comes closest to how they were feeling about their futures, 84 percent of respondents said that they were either “very excited – I'm confident this is what I want to do at this time” or “excited – I'm fairly sure this is what I want to do at this time.” A small percentage of respondents answered that they were “a bit confused/uncertain – I'm not really sure what I want to do at this time” or “very confused/uncertain – I don't know what I

want to do at this time” (14%). Almost all students, however, report feeling “very prepared” or “somewhat prepared” for their future career paths (93%).

For more information about the Future Plans Survey contact:

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