

Combined Future Plans Surveys and Survey of Recent Graduates

Academic Year 2017-2018 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 2017 and May 2018, and administered a follow-up Survey of Recent Graduates in September 2018 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 2017 and Summer II 2018. Combining the data from the December and May Future Plans Surveys and the September Survey of Recent Graduates yielded a response rate of 62%, with 3,368 of the 5,414 seniors who had been conferred degrees in the academic year 2017-2018 participating.

Plans Following Graduation

At the time they completed their most recent survey, four out of five students graduating in AY17-18 said that their primary plan over the following year was to be employed, with 60 percent of the graduating seniors/new alumni reporting that they had obtained paid employment and about 17 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-three percent of graduating seniors who said they had obtained employment indicated that they would be working full-time.

Just over half of graduating seniors at NC State who had obtained full-time employment reported going on interviews for three or more positions during their most recent job search, and half received offers for two or more positions. Seventy-six percent of students said the position in which they would be working was for a *private, for profit business or organization*, with an additional ten 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 \$50,666 (median = \$51,250), an increase of \$1,781 from the average starting salary reported by FPS respondents graduating in AY16-17 (\$48,885). 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, 56 percent said it was for \$5,000 or more. Four percent of graduates indicated receiving company shares as part of their job offer, with about half reporting that the value of the shares was \$10,000 or more at the time of the

job offer (*note: questions related to company shares were asked only in the May 2018 FPS and September 2018 SRG*). Fifty-one percent of students who said they would be working outside of North Carolina reported that they had received an offer for a relocation package.

About three-fourths of graduating seniors with full-time employment 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 AY17-18 were NC State University, Cisco, 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* (27%).

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, over 80 percent 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 half saying they had begun their job search less than two months prior to graduation or after graduation.

Graduates Seeking Employment

Of the 13 percent those who reported at the time of the survey that they were currently looking for a job, two-thirds 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.

Among all those seeking employment who had interviewed for one position, just 13 percent reported receiving a job offer; similarly, among those having gone on interviews for three or more positions, only 30 percent had reported receiving any offers. When those who had received an offer were asked why they had not yet accepted a position, the most common reasons cited included the job that had been offered not being a good fit for their interests or career goals, unsatisfactory compensation/pay, and dissatisfaction with the job location.

Further Education

One-fifth of the 3,368 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* (5%) 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/professional school and knew where they would be going said they would be staying in North Carolina, with nearly half continuing at NC State University (48%). Eighty-eight percent of respondents with confirmed plans for graduate school said they would be attending their first choice school.

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 30 percent enrolling in a doctoral (13%) or professional program (17%; most commonly a DVM or JD).

Fifty-four 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*, 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*.

Although only seven percent of students reported participating in a *co-op, co-ops*, along with *internships*, 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/Survey of Recent Graduates 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. While just 11 percent of students reported ever having gone to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences career services office, 90 percent of those who had rated its services as “excellent” (47%) or “good” (43%).

Use of career services offices varied wildly by college: Eighty-six percent of students in the Wilson College of Textiles (WCOT) said they gone to an NC State career services office at least once, with two-thirds of them going to the WCOT career services office on more than two occasions. By contrast, just 21 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 2017-2018 have a positive outlook on the future. When asked which statement comes closest to how they were feeling about their futures, 94 percent of respondents said that they were either “very excited” or “excited.” Similarly, almost all students said they felt “very prepared” or “somewhat prepared” for their future career paths (94%).

For more information about the Future Plans Survey contact:

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Posted: June, 2019