

Combined Future Plans Surveys and Survey of Recent Graduates: Academic Year 2017-2018 Graduates Introduction, Research Methods, and Response Rates

This series of reports presents combined results from the December 2017 and May 2018 Future Plans Surveys and the September 2018 Survey of Recent Graduates. The Future Plans Survey (FPS) and Survey of Recent Graduates (SRG) are designed to collect specific information on students' plans following graduation, including detailed information on employment, graduate/professional school attendance, and participation in career-preparation activities while at NC State.

This introductory report provides an overview of the research methods and response rates. Additional reports on the overall survey results, college reports, and department summaries, as well as copies of the questionnaires, can be found on the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) [website](#).

Research Methods

The Future Plans Survey is administered to all graduating seniors in the weeks surrounding December and May graduation. In Fall 2017, commencement was held on December 15, and the FPS was in the field from December 5, 2017 through January 12, 2018. In Spring 2018, commencement was held on May 12, and the FPS was in the field from May 1 through June 6.

The Survey of Recent Graduates, administered in September, was developed as a follow-up survey to the FPS. The SRG is aimed at reaching out to graduates from the past year who indicated that at the time they completed the FPS they had not yet found full-time employment, had not yet decided on or been accepted into graduate school, or were still undecided on their plans. In addition, graduates from the previous academic year who did not complete the FPS in December or May, or who graduated in Summer I or Summer II, are also invited to participate in the SRG. The SRG, therefore, enables us to provide a more complete picture of the employment and further education of NC State's graduates from the previous academic year, taking into consideration those who might have taken a few months beyond graduation to obtain employment or gain acceptance to graduate/professional school. The September 2018 Survey of Recent Graduates was in the field from September 4 through October 3.

3,461 of the 5,414 graduates receiving baccalaureate degrees in AY17-18 were invited to complete the September 2018 Survey of Recent Graduates. Of those invited, 26.4 percent graduated in December 2017, 60 percent graduated in May 2018, and 13.5 percent graduated in Summer I or Summer II 2018. Seventy-four percent of those invited were graduates who had not completed the FPS (73.8%), while 26.2 percent of the graduates invited had completed the December or May Future Plans Survey, but had indicated at that time that they were seeking or planning to seek employment or had not yet been accepted to graduate/professional school or did not yet know where they would be enrolling. These students were invited to take the SRG in order to follow up on their status of employment and/or plans for graduate school.

Table 1: Population Invited to Take the Survey of Recent Graduates, by Semester Graduated

Semester Graduated	Graduates		Invited to take SRG				Total invited to take SRG	
			Dec/May FPS Nonrespondents		Dec/May FPS Respondents*			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
December 2017	1,338	24.7%	604	23.6%	311	34.3%	915	26.4%
May 2018	3,582	66.2%	1,502	58.8%	575	63.4%	2,077	60.0%
Summer I 2018	188	3.5%	167	6.5%	10	1.1%	177	5.1%
Summer II 2018	306	5.6%	281	11.0%	11	1.2%	292	8.4%
Total	5,414	100%	2,554	100%	907	100%	3,461	100%

*FPS respondents who indicated that at the time they completed the FPS they had not yet found full-time employment, had not yet decided on or been accepted into graduate school, or were still undecided on their plans.

When administering the December and May Future Plans Surveys, eligible respondents are identified using NC State's Application for Degree file and the responses used in semester-specific reports on results are identified using the graduation file for that semester. The population for the September Survey of Recent Graduates is based on the graduation file from the previous academic year and response sets from the December and May Future Plans Surveys. The final population for the combined surveys, therefore, includes all alumni who graduated in December 2017, May 2018, or the summer sessions of 2018.

Response Rates

As shown in Table 1, a total of 5,414 undergraduate students received baccalaureate degrees from NC State in Fall 2017 (n=1,338), Spring 2018 (n=3,582), Summer I 2018 (n=188) or Summer II 2018 (n=306). A total of 3,368 of these graduates responded to the December 2017 FPS (n=599), the May 2018 FPS (n=1,840), or the September 2018 SRG (n=929). Thus, the response rate for the combined surveys for the 2017-2018 academic year is 62.2 percent. (To clarify, if a student responded to their FPS in December or May, and then completed the follow-up SRG in September, only their record of responses from the September SRG - - i.e., the most current information - - is included in the combined dataset used in these reports.)

Participation in the combined surveys varied by college. The Wilson College of Textiles (WCOT) had the highest response rate, with 72.8 percent of AY17-18 WCOT graduates participating in the survey. Following with the next highest response rates were the College of Engineering (68.5%), College of Design (66.4%), and College of Education (65.8%). The College of Engineering is slightly overrepresented in the overall results, with their students making up only 24.7 percent of the population, yet 27.2 percent of the survey respondents. The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is slightly underrepresented in the results, with their students making up 19.4 percent of the population, but only 17.5 percent of the respondents.

Table 2: Response Rate, Overall and by College

College/School	AY 17-18 Population		FPS/SRG Respondents		Response Rate
	N	%	N	%	%
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	642	11.9%	361	10.7%	56.2%
College of Design	128	2.4%	85	2.5%	66.4%
College of Education	120	2.2%	79	2.3%	65.8%
College of Engineering	1,335	24.7%	915	27.2%	68.5%
College of Natural Resources	432	8.0%	255	7.6%	59.0%
College of Humanities and Social Sciences	1,053	19.4%	588	17.5%	55.8%
College of Sciences	604	11.2%	382	11.3%	63.2%
Wilson College of Textiles	250	4.6%	182	5.4%	72.8%
Poole College of Management	850	15.7%	521	15.5%	61.3%
Total	5,414	100.0%	3,368	100.0%	62.2%

Table 3 provides an overview of from which specific survey the responses included in this report are drawn. Among those respondents who graduated in December 2017, the December FPS record was used for 73.7 percent of them, and the September SRG for the remaining 26.3 percent – 16.7 percent who had previously completed the December FPS but indicated at that time they either had not obtained employment or knew where they would be attending graduate/professional school, and 9.6 percent who had not responded to their December FPS. Among those respondents who graduated in May 2018, the May FPS record was used for 76.9 percent of them, and the September SRG for 23.1 percent – 11.7 percent who had previously completed the May FPS but indicated at that time they either had not obtained employment or knew where they would be attending graduate/professional school, and 11.4 percent who had not responded to their May FPS.

Of the 3,368 survey records included in these reports, 17.8 percent come from the December 2017 FPS, 54.6 percent from the May 2018 FPS, and the remaining 27.6 percent from the September 2018 SRG. The

September SRG had a slightly higher number of responses from those who had not responded to the FPS than those who had. Altogether, the make-up of the combined FPS/SRG results largely mirrors that of the population, with 24 percent of the responses coming from those who graduated in December 2017, 69.8 percent from those who graduated in May 2018, 2.2 percent from those who graduated in Summer I 2018, and four percent of those who graduated in Summer II 2018. Those graduating in May 2018, however, are slightly overrepresented in the results, as May 2018 graduates make up only 66.2 percent of the population, but 69.8 percent of respondents. This likely comes as a result of significant promotional activities of the FPS conducted by colleges, departments, faculty, and advisors at the time of spring commencement, yielding a slightly higher response rate for the May survey (58.8%) than the December survey (55.3%).

Table 3: Survey Results Included, by Semester Graduated

Survey Results Included in Report	Graduated December 2017		Graduated May 2018		Graduated Summer I 2018		Graduated Summer II 2018		Total	
	N	%	N	N	N	%	N	%	N	%
December FPS	597	73.7%	1*	<1%	1*	1.4%	0	0.0%	599	17.8%
May FPS	0	0.0%	1,806	76.9%	15*	20.5%	19*	14.1%	1,840	54.6%
September SRG	213	26.3%	543	23.1%	57	78.1%	116	85.9%	929	27.6%
<i>September SRG: FPS respondent</i>	135	16.7%	275	11.7%	5	6.8%	6	4.4%	421	12.5%
<i>September SRG: FPSnonrespondent</i>	78	9.6%	268	11.4%	52	71.2%	110	81.5%	508	15.1%
Total	810	24.0%	2,350	69.8%	73	2.2%	135	4.0%	3,368	100%

*Some students who apply to graduate in the fall or spring semester submit their FPS but ultimately do not graduate in that semester. In these cases, their responses are not included in the December or May FPS reports, but are included in the combined academic year dataset if they graduate in a different semester within that academic year. As a reminder, if a student submits more than one FPS, or submits both the FPS and the SRG, only their most recent survey response is included in the academic year report.

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