

North Carolina State University

2012-2013 Graduating Senior Survey:

Executive Summary

Survey Methods

NC State conducted its triennial survey of graduating seniors during the 2012-2013 academic year (AY12-13). Eligible students were those who were graduating in either December 2012 or May 2013.

The online survey achieved a 51.2 percent response rate, with 2,358 of the 4,607 eligible seniors submitting the survey. There were no significant gender or racial/ethnic differences between survey respondents and the AY12-13 graduating senior class. Seniors from the College of Engineering and the Poole College of Management are slightly overrepresented among survey respondents, and those from the College of Design and the College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences are slightly underrepresented.

Student Goals and Intentions

Respondents were most likely to have said their primary goal for attending NC State was to "prepare for a new career or profession" (45.4%) or to "prepare for graduate/professional school" (36.3%). More than three-fourths of respondents (76.1%) said they "fully accomplished" their primary goal.

Over forty percent of respondents reported that as of the time they completed the survey they were still *actively seeking* or were *planning on seeking employment* (43.5%). One-fourth of respondents said that they had already *accepted a full-time job* (18.2%) or a *part-time job* (0.9%) for after graduation or that they *would continue in their current position* (4.6%) or be serving in the military (1.1%). Approximately one-fifth of respondents said that they *planned to go on to graduate or professional school either full-time* (18.9%) or *part-time* (3.1%). Students who completed the survey closer to commencement, however, were more likely than those completing it earlier in the year to have secured post-graduation employment (26.9% vs 11.4%).

Almost half of respondents (46.8%) said it took them longer than four years to graduate. The most commonly reported reason for taking longer than four years to graduate was *changed majors* (42.4%), followed by *wanted/advised to take a lighter courseload* (22.4%), and *could not get needed classes* (20.8%). Interestingly, the proportion of students saying they took longer than four years to graduate because they were *graduating with more than one major* has noticeably declined since when the question was last asked in AY09-10, from 23.5% at that time to 12.9% in AY12-13. Over one-fifth of respondents in AY12-13 also reported that *time spent working* had slowed down their academic progress (22.4%).

About ten percent of the graduating seniors said they had “seriously considered” withdrawing or transferring from NC State (7.5%), or that they had actually withdrawn and then returned (2.8%). The most commonly reported reasons for considering or actually leaving NC State related to *curriculum/program* (e.g., program or major offered), and *personal reasons* (e.g., health, family, or friends), with more than one-third giving such reasons. Over ten percent of those who had considered leaving or who had left and returned said they did so for financial reasons (11.3%)

Academic Environment and Faculty Contributions

More than 90 percent of respondents (93.9%) said they *would recommend NC State to a friend*, and 85.9% said they *would choose NC State again if they could start over*. Graduating seniors were less likely, however, to say they *would choose the same major again* (65.5%).

Half of respondents rated the intellectual environment on campus as “very strong” (51.2%), and another 46.0% rated it as “strong.” Although opinions for each item were overwhelmingly positive, respondents were much more likely to give a rating of “excellent” to the *quality of instruction in their major* (66.1%) and to the *overall education they received* (63.2%) than to the *quality of instruction overall* (33.6%).

Large majorities of respondents indicated they were satisfied with instruction in their major, with 43.2% saying they were “very satisfied” with overall instruction. In looking at specific aspects of teaching, graduating seniors were most likely to be “very satisfied” with instructors’ *effective use of instructional technologies in learning and teaching activities* (39.4%), *carefully explaining performance expectations* (39.3%), the *extent to which class discussion is encouraged* (34.7%) and instructors’ *ability to motivate me to do my best* (37.4%).

About half of the graduating seniors said they had regularly met with faculty to get *academic guidance* (52.4%) or *professional guidance/support* (46.0%). A substantial number of students also reported working with faculty on *campus activities* (24.6%), on an *independent study project* (21.6%), or on a *research project* (20.5%). Regardless of the type of mentoring experience, majorities of respondents said it contributed “a great deal” to their personal and/or professional growth.

Services for Students

Academic Services

Sixty percent or more of respondents expressed satisfaction with each of the various aspects of academic advising, library services, information technology, and career

services asked about. For only a few specific areas did more than 10 percent of respondents say they were dissatisfied with the service.

Academic Advising: One-third or more graduating seniors were “very satisfied” with each area of academic advising asked about, ranging from 44.4% being “very satisfied with *advisors’ providing accurate information about degree requirements*, to 32.7% being “very satisfied” with *advisors knowledge about post-graduation employment options*. Although still relatively small numbers, students were more likely to be “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with the various academic advising services than with any other services asked about.

Library Services: While large majorities of graduating seniors were satisfied with library services, the individual library services asked about received the highest and, in contrast, also the lowest satisfaction ratings of all the specific services listed. Students were most likely to be “very satisfied” with the library’s *hours of operation* (52.6%) and least likely to be “very satisfied” with *training to use library and information resources* (26.5%) and *space for group work* (26.2%). Fifteen percent of the graduating seniors said they were either “dissatisfied” (13.1%) or “very dissatisfied” (1.7%) with *space for group work* in the libraries.

Information Technology: With one exception, more than one-fourth of graduating seniors said they were “very satisfied” with each specific aspect of information technology services asked about. Students were most likely to be “very satisfied” with *wireless access on campus* (36.4%), and least likely to be “very satisfied” with *training for technology I need to use* (22.3%). However, “dissatisfaction” with information technology services was very low, with only five percent or fewer students saying they were dissatisfied with any of the areas of information technology asked about.

Career Services: Graduating seniors were less likely to express an opinion about career services than they were for the other services asked about, indicating less direct experience with career services. Among those expressing an opinion, satisfaction levels were generally consistent, with about one-third saying they were “very satisfied” with each specific area related to career services.

Non-Academic Services

Ratings for non-academic service areas varied greatly, with anywhere from 13 percent to over 40 percent of respondents saying they were “very satisfied” with a particular service. More than three-fourths of graduating seniors were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with *campus recreation* (89.4%), the *bookstore* (82.6%), *on-campus shuttle/transportation services* (81.7%), *health services* (78.3%), the *registrar’s office* (77.3%), and the *financial aid disbursement process* (75.3%). Alternatively, respondents were most likely to be “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with *parking* (36.3%) and *dining services* (13.3%).

Ratings for quality of staff associated with a particular service were generally similar to or slightly higher than those for the service itself. Notable exceptions were that respondents were much more likely to be "very satisfied" with the staff associated with *dining services* and with *parking* than they were with services in general (30.2% vs 20.2%, and 13.0% vs 19.9%, respectively).

Seventy percent of graduating seniors reported receiving some sort of financial aid. Almost half of those who received aid (46.9%) were "very satisfied" with their aid package, and another 43.7 percent were "moderately satisfied." About 40 percent or more financial aid recipients rated *financial aid advisor staff* (42.9%), *reception staff* (42.8%), and *phone staff* (38.1%) as "excellent."

Knowledge, Skills and Personal Development

Three-fourths of respondents (74.4%) said NC State met their *intellectual growth* needs "very well." Respondents were slightly less likely to report that their *personal growth* needs were "very well" met (62.5%) and even less likely to say their *career training* needs were "very well" met (50.8%).

Respondents were asked to rate NC State's contribution to 39 specific goals for undergraduate education. Eighty percent or more of the graduating seniors said that NC State contributed "very much" or "somewhat" to their development of all but four of the specific areas asked about. Overall, higher ratings were given to the university's contribution to goals related to general education and personal development than to world view goals.

General Education Goals: Graduating seniors were most likely to say their education at NC State contributed "very much" to *using critical thinking skills* (70.6%), *ability to plan and carry out projects independently* (66.9%), and *applying analytic skills* (66.8%). More than 20 percent indicated that NC State had contributed "very little" or "not at all" to their development of the *capacity to engage with and respond to creative works and evaluate their significance* (24.2%), and to their *appreciating the humanities* (21.7%).

Personal Development Goals: Respondents gave the highest ratings to the extent to which NC State contributed to their development of *potential for success* (68.1%), *taking responsibility for my own behavior* (67.1%), *valuing learning as a lifelong process* (66.2%), *experiencing personal growth (e.g., self-discipline, responsibility, self-awareness, etc.)* (64.7%), and *working effectively as part of a team* (63.8%). More than 20 percent indicated that NC State had contributed "very little" or "not at all" to their development of *being involved in public and community affairs* (22.6%), and *developing and sustaining an active and healthy lifestyle* (22.4%).

World View Goals: Graduating seniors were most likely to say their education contributed “very much” to their *ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds* (59.3%) and *understanding and respecting diverse cultures, values, and perspectives* (57.5%).

Work-Related Activities, Employment, and Extracurricular Involvement

Over one-third (36.9%) of respondents reported having had a co-op, internship, practicum, or field experience as part of their major while at NC State. Eighty percent of those which such experience said it contributed “very much” to their personal and professional growth, and more than 30 percent (31.3%) said they received a job offer from their employer.

Nearly three-fourths of respondents (73.6%) indicated that they were employed during their senior year. More than 60 percent of the employed students (61.6%) worked only off campus, one-fourth worked on campus only (24.6%), and the remaining 13.8 percent worked both on and off campus. Students working off campus were much more likely than those working on campus to work more than 20 hours per week (33.9% vs. 13.9%, respectively). Students who were employed on campus were more likely than those employed off campus to report *working in jobs directly related to their major* (38.5% vs 26.6%).

From a list of extracurricular activities, respondents were most likely to report participation in *organizations/clubs related to their major* (44.8%), followed by *intramural/recreational sports/club teams* (33.5%). Nearly two-thirds of respondents said they had attended at least one NC State concert, performance, or exhibit while a student at NC State (64.2%).

More than half (52.8%) of respondents reported participating in a community service project through NC State. Of those who had a community service experience, almost half said the experience contributed “very much” to their personal and professional growth (47.6%), and another 38.4 percent said it contributed “somewhat.”

Campus Climate and Campus Safety

A vast majority of respondents agreed either “strongly” (63.1%) or “somewhat” (33.8%) that *NC State is committed to helping minority students succeed*. Respondents were less likely to agree, however, that *NC State has visible leadership from the Chancellor and other administrators to foster diversity on campus* (51.9% “agree strongly” and 37.2% “agree somewhat”).

Three-fourths or more of respondents felt the campus climate was at least “mildly supportive” toward each of the various groups asked about (e.g., Women, African Americans, those with disabilities, etc.), with two exceptions. Although the majority of

respondents felt the campus climate was at least “mildly supportive” toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual (70.9%) or transgender (62.0%) students, respondents were more than twice as likely to say the campus was “nonsupportive” toward these students than any other group asked about.

More than three-fourths of respondents said they “never” (40.9%) or “seldom” (38.7%) were concerned with their personal safety on campus.

For more information on the 2012-2013 Graduating Senior Survey contact:
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