

Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity

Exit Surveys of Separating Faculty

October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

Exit Interviews of Separating Faculty

October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015

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Overview

Faculty who separated from NC State between October 1, 2014 and September 30, 2015

According to the university's Human Resources Information Management System (HRIMS), a total of 124 permanent full-time faculty separated from NC State from October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015 (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of Separated Faculty by Tenure Status and Academic Unit for October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015; Number of Survey Respondents

College/Academic Unit	Non-Tenure Track	Pre-Tenure	Tenured	Total Separated Faculty	Respondents (Response Rate)
DASA	2			2	1
CALS	4	2	9	15	12
Design	1		1	2	1
Education	2	2	4	8	3
Engineering	1	4	4	9	4
Natural Resources	2		5	7	5
CH&SS	32	3	6	41	13
Sciences	16	1	4	21	9
Textiles	2	1		3	1
Veterinary Medicine	5		1	6	5
Management	5		4	9	1
Provost Unit	1			1	0
Total Faculty	73	13	38	124	55

Of the 124 separating full-time faculty, 50 completed an exit questionnaire, 4 completed an exit interview, and one person completed both a questionnaire and an interview, yielding a total response rate of 44%.

Thirty four (67%) of the full time tenured and tenure track faculty who separated from NC State completed the survey, but only 29% (21/73) of non-tenure track exiting faculty did so. At least half of exiting faculty in the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Design, Natural Resources, Veterinary Medicine and the Division of Academic and Student Affairs participated in the Exit Survey. The Poole College of Management and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences had low response rates. However, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences has a very large number of lecturers, who are

on short term contracts, which makes it difficult to know whether they are actually separating or whether they will be rehired to teach again in the next semester. Five of the nine tenured and tenure track faculty who separated from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences completed the Exit Survey. Note that the correspondence between Human Resources' list of separating faculty and the list of faculty invited to respond to this survey is not perfect, particularly for non-tenure track faculty, because the final list of exiting faculty was not known when invitations were issued in spring, summer and fall 2014.

Women and men responded at similar rates (Table 2). White faculty made up 67% of the survey respondents, which is close to their 72% share of the separating faculty. None of the three Hispanic faculty completed an exit survey. Asian faculty responded at lower rates than all other groups of faculty, except Hispanic faculty.

Table 2. Demographics of Separating Faculty and Exit Survey Respondents.

Demographic Group		Number Separating	Number of Respondents	Response Rate
Gender	Female	52	19	37%
	Male	72	25	35%
	Prefer not to answer		4	
	Unknown		8	
Race / Ethnicity	White	90	37	41%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	10	2	20%
	Black	3	1	33%
	Hispanic of any race	3	0	0
	American Indian	1	2	>100%
	Two or More	2	2	100%
	Prefer not to answer		4	
	Other/Unknown	15	7	47%

Fifteen respondents were employed at NC State five years or less (Fig. 1). Among the 21 non-tenure track respondents, 11 stayed 5 years or less. The longest-serving non-tenure track faculty member was on the NC State faculty for 38 years. Among tenured and tenure track faculty, the median length of service was 24 years. Three years seemed to be a time of risk for this group; four tenure track faculty separated after three years.

Factors in Leaving

Circumstances under which Faculty Separate from NC State

Almost half, 25 or 45%, of the faculty respondents separated from NC State to retire. The retirement age ranged from 60 on up; seven retired between the ages of 60 and 65; ten between the ages of 66 and

69, and five were age 70 or older; five did not provide their age. Twenty respondents left NC State voluntarily, not for retirement; two left because their contracts were not renewed and eight left for other or unknown reasons. The other reasons listed included a J1 scholar and whose visa ended (NTT), health issues and lack of funding (NTT), better opportunities elsewhere (NTT), contracted to teach one semester only (NTT), and disability (TT).

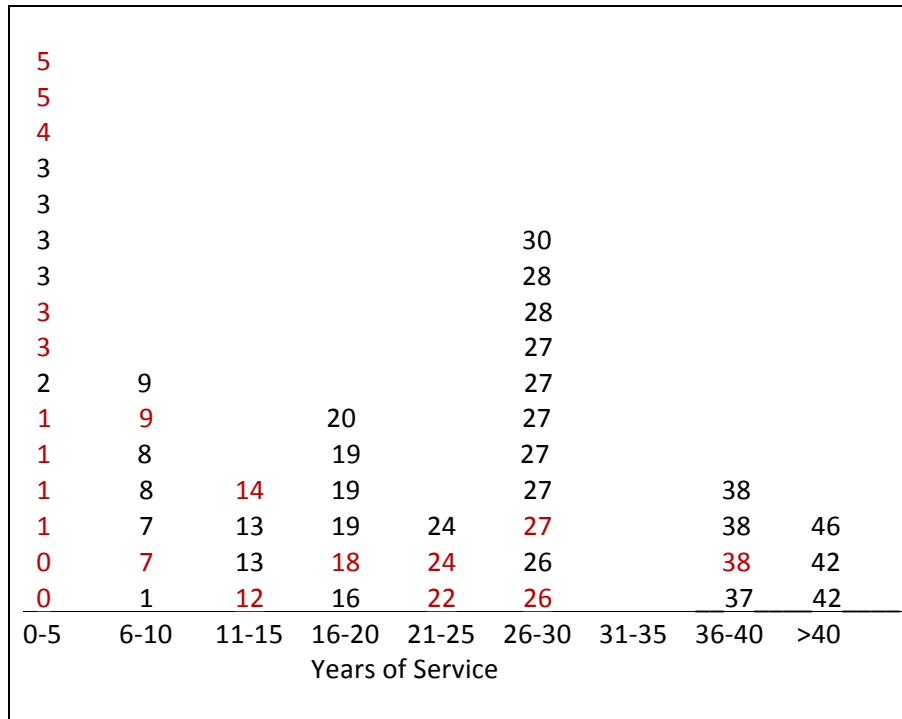


Figure 1. Stem and leaf diagram of number of years of service at NC State before separation (red indicates non-tenure track faculty, black indicates tenured and pre-tenure faculty).

Table 3. Circumstances under which you are leaving

	Tenure Track	Non-Tenure Track
Leaving voluntarily	14	6
Denied tenure/Contract not renewed	0	2
Retirement	18	7
Other	1	6
No response	0	1

Employment Plans and Counter-Offers

Of the 55 respondents, 27 actively looked for another position and an additional 14 did not actively look, but did follow up on unsolicited contacts. Six respondents (3 non-tenure track and 3 tenure track/tenured) reported that NC State made them an unsolicited counter offer to encourage them to remain at NC State, eight (5 tenured/tenure track and 3 non-tenure track) asked for a counter offer and were given one. One of the non-tenure track respondents asked for a counter offer but was not given one. The rest of the respondents did not ask for or receive a counter offer to stay at NC State.

Of the thirty non-retiring faculty, 22 had accepted a new position, were considering an offer, or were seeking a new position at the time they completed the exit survey. Eighteen of those were going to positions at other universities, including University of Maryland (2), Oregon State, Oklahoma State, University of Arizona, Texas A&M, Emory, Rochester Institute of Technology, Northwestern, Tianjin University, and University of the Philippines. Faculty taking positions outside of academia reported moving to the American Quarter Horse Association, RAND Corporation and Lenovo.

Table 4. Employment Plans after Leaving NC State

Employment plans	Non-Retiring	Retiring
Seeking Position	2	0
Considering Offer	1	0
Accepted a New Position	19	0
Self-Employment	3	6
Other	3	7
No Paid Employment	1	12
No Response	1	0

Table 5. Type of new position

Academia	18
Government	0
Non-profit organization	2
Business/Industry	3
Other	4
No paid employment	13

Roughly half of the retiring faculty had no plans for future paid employment. About a quarter planned to pursue self-employment and the remaining quarter indicated other plans including continuing work on grants and sponsored research at NC State (2), phased retirement at NC State (2), consulting and volunteering with courts, governments, mental health groups and other opportunities in the community (2), and part time employment.

Faculty who are leaving to take a new position were asked how influential several characteristics or experiences were in their decision to accept the new position. Professional development and advancement opportunities, a collegial environment, and resources and support such as funding, equipment and staff were the most influential factors attracting faculty to new positions (Table 6). Environments that are welcoming with respect to gender and racial and ethnic diversity, institutional prestige, salary, and geographic location also averaged somewhat influential in drawing faculty to new positions.

Table 6. How Influential Were Characteristics of Your New Position in Your Decision to Accept This Particular Offer?

Characteristics of New Position	Very (3)	Somewhat (2)	Not Very (1)	Not at All (0)	Not Applicable (0)	Mean
Professional Development Opportunities	14	3	2	1	0	2.5
Collegial Environment	11	7	0	2	0	2.4
Resources; e.g. funding, equipment, staff	6	11	1	2	0	2.1
Welcoming re Gender	8	7	2	1	2	2.0
Welcoming re Racial Diversity	8	5	1	2	4	1.8
Institutional Prestige	7	5	4	3	1	1.7
Salary	3	10	5	2	0	1.7
Geographic Location	5	8	2	3	2	1.7
Personal Benefits	3	8	3	5	1	1.4
Welcoming re GLBT	4	5	4	3	4	1.3
Tuition Waivers for Dependents	3	1	3	5	8	0.7
Benefits for Spouse	1	2	5	7	5	0.6
Benefits for Dependents	1	2	5	5	7	0.6
Child Care	1	2	2	6	9	0.5
Employment Opportunities for Spouse	2	0	3	8	7	0.5
Benefits for Domestic Partner	1	0	4	5	10	0.4

When asked to elaborate on what it is about the new position that made it a particularly attractive offer, faculty responses supplied more detail. Eight faculty provided comments about the new department being a better match for their research and collaboration interests, their discipline being highly valued at the new institution, moving to a new department having higher quality research or to a more prestigious department. Five respondents mentioned higher salaries at the new institution and five provided

information about better support, resources and facilities for research, teaching, and/or collaboration. Four respondents were attracted by a more collegial atmosphere and environment, better support of faculty, and better opportunity to impact the department. Four respondents mentioned or had received better opportunities for advancement and for pursuing career and personal goals at the new location. Three faculty were attracted by a lighter teaching load and a more flexible schedule. Two felt that the new institution would appreciate and reward their efforts. Two respondents reported that the new institution provided better options for their families, including reduced tuition for dependents, and one felt that the new institution values diversity and is welcoming to the LGBTQ population. Two respondents cited geographic and other external reasons for being attracted to the new position.

Three faculty provided comments about why they are leaving NC State for a non-academic job. All three would have preferred to stay in academia but found a non-university setting that offered some of what they like about faculty work without the negative work environment. Two reported bad work environments in their NC State department or college that they described as “toxic” or “complacent”.

NC State – Related Factors Influential in Decision to Leave

We also asked faculty departing voluntarily but not retiring about factors at NC State that were influential in their decision to leave. The responses are tallied in Tables 7a and 7b, in order from most influential to least, separately for non-tenure track faculty and for tenured and tenure track faculty. Professional development and advancement opportunities at NC State were the most influential factors in the decision for non-tenure track faculty to leave NC State, followed by lack of resources and support, such as funding, equipment and staff. Salary and lack of appropriate reward for work were also influential.

Table 7a. Non-Tenure Track Faculty: How Influential Were Characteristics or Experiences at NC State in Your Decision to Leave?

Characteristics or Experiences at NC State	Very (3)	Somewhat (2)	Not Very (1)	Not at All (0)	Not Applicable (0)	Mean
Advancement opportunities	6	2	0	1	1	2.2
Resources; e.g., funding, equipment, staff	4	3	1	1	1	1.9
Salary	3	4	0	2	1	1.7
Lack of appropriate reward for your work	2	4	2	1	1	1.6
Lack of appropriate recognition for your work	2	3	2	2	1	1.4
University/college/department	2	3	1	3	1	1.3

policies or procedures						
Lack of Respect for your work	2	3	1	3	1	1.3
University/college/department Leadership or management	1	4	2	2	1	1.3
Isolation	1	4	1	3	1	1.2
Employee Benefits	1	3	2	3	1	1.1
Conflict with the head of your unit (e.g., dept head or dean)	2	2	1	4	1	1.1
Lack of collegiality	3	0	1	5	1	1.0
Annual review process	1	2	3	2	2	1.0
NTT promotion process	1	3	0	2	1	0.9
Conflict with other faculty	2	1	1	4	1	0.9
Prestige of NCSU, your college or department	0	0	2	6	2	0.2

For tenured and tenure track faculty the most influential factors in their decision to leave NC State were the leadership or management of the university, college or department, professional development and advancement opportunities at NC State, salary, lack of appropriate reward for their work, and resources and support such as funding, equipment and staff (Table 7b).

Table 7b. Tenured and Tenure Track Faculty: How Influential Were Characteristics or Experiences at NC State in Your Decision to Leave?

	Very (3)	Somewhat (2)	Not Very (1)	Not at All (0)	Not Applicable (0)	Mean
University/College/department leadership or management	7	4	3	0	1	2.13
Advancement opportunities	6	5	1	1	2	1.93
Salary	4	6	2	2	1	1.73
Lack of appropriate reward for your work	5	5	0	5	0	1.67
Resources; e.g., funding, equipment, staff	4	4	4	0	3	1.60
Lack of respect for your work	5	3	1	5	1	1.47
Isolation	5	3	0	4	3	1.40
Lack of collegiality	6	1	0	5	3	1.33
University/college/department policies or procedures	2	5	4	3	1	1.33
Employee Benefits	2	5	3	3	2	1.27
Lack of appropriate recognition for your work	3	4	0	7	1	1.13
Conflict with the head of your unit	3	3	2	4	3	1.13
Prestige of NCSU, your college or department	1	4	6	2	2	1.13

Conflict with other faculty	2	3	1	6	3	.87
Annual review process	1	2	3	8	1	.67

Primary Reasons for Leaving

Faculty leaving voluntarily were asked to briefly summarize their primary reasons for leaving. Three non-tenure track faculty described situations related to their non-tenure track status: low salary and minimal raises, no way to move from a non-tenure track position to a tenure track position, and funding for their program being cut. Two non-tenure track faculty listed wanting to be near family and to have the flexibility to spend more time with family. Two described negative work environments in their departments, including infighting among department members. One faculty member moved to an institution to be in a department that has more faculty doing similar types of research and collaboration. One international faculty member's visa period ended and a contributing factor for one faculty member was a serious health issue.

Tenured and tenure track faculty echoed some of the NTT faculty reasons for leaving and added some additional reasons. Four tenured and tenure track respondents cited the political climate in North Carolina and lack of support for higher education. Four faculty described low salaries and lack of resources for research and teaching, lack of appreciation and opportunities, dissatisfaction with job expectations, and disagreement with the direction of the college administration. Two departing faculty, both white, cited harassment and discrimination as the primary reason for leaving, one based on religion and the other based on race and gender. One of these was asked to report the situation to OEO but did not do so, fearing that it would make life more difficult in the department. One made the comment that they didn't believe that any female could be successful as a department head in their college. Three departing faculty provided comments indicating that they were primarily drawn to new opportunities for themselves or their spouse.

Circumstances under which departing faculty would consider staying

Faculty leaving voluntarily but not retiring were asked if there were any circumstances under which they would have considered staying at NC State. Six respondents provided comments stating that if pay, benefits and terms of service, raises and counteroffers were better they would have considered staying. One mentioned that the NC State salary for their spouse, a NTT faculty member, was so low that they couldn't afford to stay. Two mentioned that if they had been treated more respectfully during the negotiation process for their counteroffer they might have felt that it was more sincere. Four of the comments about compensation were intertwined with concerns about feeling valued at NC State.

Three faculty indicated that they would have considered staying if their mix of responsibilities had been modified to better match their interests and strengths. Two respondents said that if department leaders had been able to address climate issues and handle problematic faculty they might have considered

staying. Two mentioned more external factors such as visa issues and geographic location. Four people wrote that they could not think of any circumstances under which they would have stayed at NC State. Some faculty did not indicate that they were retiring at the beginning of the survey, but their comments indicate that they are in some sense retiring. Two of these faculty wrote that they plan to continue by doing phased retirement or continuing to teach part time.

Satisfaction of Faculty Leaving Involuntarily

Only two respondents reported that they were leaving involuntarily, either because their contract was not renewed or they were denied tenure. These two were either somewhat or very satisfied with their relationships with the head of their units and with other faculty, with collegiality in the department, with respect for and recognition of their work, with equitable treatment with respect to race, sexual orientation, national origin and age. They both were “not very satisfied” with rewards for their work. One of these faculty report being “not very satisfied” with university, college or department policies, equitable treatment due to gender, child care, tuition waivers for dependents, salary, their own personal benefits, and benefits for domestic partners, for dependents, or for a spouse,

Tenure and Promotion

The Tenure Process

Of the 33 tenured and tenure track faculty respondents, ten had not gone through the tenure process, some because they were hired with tenure. Seventeen had gone through the tenure process more than 10 years ago, and five of the respondents had gone through the tenure process within the past ten years.

The five respondents who had gone through the tenure process within the past ten years were asked further questions about their experience with the tenure process. Three reported that they were strongly encouraged by their department head to feel confident that they would receive tenure. One responded that they were “neither encouraged nor discouraged” by their department head. One did not answer this question. Three provided comments about the advice given to them by their department head and/or department colleagues about going through the tenure process, ranging from a statement that if you do the work in your SME tenure is a breeze to a statement that the department head was very confused. One faculty member hired as an associate professor without tenure reported not being given much advice, but feeling very worried.

They were also asked to comment on their perceptions of the clarity and fairness of the tenure process. Three provided comments and all reported that the process was fair and clear.

Those who did not go through the tenure process were also asked about the advice that they received about going through the process. Five responded that they were hired with tenure or it was not

applicable. Two were strongly encouraged to go up for tenure, one was somewhat encouraged and one was somewhat discouraged.

Those who had gone through the tenure process within the past 10 years and those who had not gone through the tenure process at all were asked whether they would have liked a tenure clock extension. Thirteen responded “no” and two did not respond.

Promotion to Full Professor

Tenure track faculty who were hired as assistant or associate professors and were either associate or full professors when they separated from NC State were asked questions about the process of promotion to full professor. Eleven respondents were promoted to full professor more than ten years ago. Seven respondents went through the process of promotion to full professor within the past ten years. Of those seven, four reported being strongly encouraged to pursue full professorship, two were neither encouraged nor discouraged, and one was somewhat discouraged. All were promoted to full professor. All who were strongly encouraged to pursue full professorship wrote that they were strongly supported and given good advice by their department head, their mentors and colleagues. The respondent who reported being somewhat discouraged from pursuing promotion reported that they tried at various times under various department heads and were ultimately successful.

Five associate professors reported that they did not go through the promotion process. Four of these reported that they were neither encouraged nor discouraged and one reported being somewhat encouraged to apply for promotion. One wrote that if there had been a way to switch to a teaching assistant professor position, that might have been attractive.

Those who were promoted to full professor within the past ten years or who did not apply for promotion were asked about their perceptions of the clarity and fairness of the promotion process. The responses were mixed. One felt that the process was biased and not clear, one felt that the process was clear; and one felt that the rules are clear and fair, but that their department colleagues do not always understand or appreciate work outside their own field of study and that promotion would not be worth subjecting themselves to the departmental discussions involved in the process.

Those who were promoted within the past ten years also were divided on the questions of clarity and fairness of the process and criteria. Two wrote that the process was fair and/or clear. Two wrote that the process was clear or fair but that the criteria were not clear. One felt that the process was not completely fair, and one felt that if someone’s case is a bit borderline, the process is very unclear and open to unfairness, that ideas about how many papers, how many graduate students and other political considerations can influence the outcome.

The Non-Tenure Track Promotion Process

Six exiting faculty started as lecturers. One of these faculty became a teaching associate professor and one was promoted to senior lecturer. The other four were lecturers when they separated from NC State. One respondent started as an instructor and was an instructor at the time of separation, and one started and finished as a senior lecturer.

One exiting faculty member started as a postdoc and was an NTT associate professor at the time of leaving NC State.

Six exiting faculty started as NTT assistant professors. Five of them did not go through the promotion process. One of these reported that they were “somewhat encouraged” to pursue promotion. Two reported that they were “neither encouraged nor discouraged”. One of these respondents wrote that “There seemed to be almost no interest in promotion of NTTs (specifically within the department, but also the college).”

One NTT assistant professor did go through the promotion process and was promoted to associate professor. This respondent reported being “strongly encouraged” to pursue promotion and had this to say: “In my case I was considered two times (in two different departments). The first department did not provide any advice while the second department assigned a mentor to advocate for my promotion. I believe that having a mentor made a huge difference (along with having a strong promotion package). My mentor evaluated my dossier and provided key information for how to improve it. My mentor also advocated for my promotion to the voting faculty in the department. When I first considered the promotion process there were no clear rules for how to promote NTTs. However, I believe that my case forced to issue to some extent. I do not think my initial attempt at promotion was taken seriously by the first department.”

Four exiting faculty started as NTT associate professors. None of them went through the promotion process to full professor. One respondent wrote that “The guidelines aren't clear. There's not a lot of precedent for NTT promotion to full professor so the process might not be smooth.”

Climate and Inclusivity

Perceptions of Inclusivity

Separating faculty were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that they felt treated with respect during their employment at NC State, that they felt welcomed and included in their department, and that NC State is welcoming and inclusive of people of all races, cultures and beliefs. They were also asked whether they would recommend taking an academic position in their department to a friend. The responses are summarized by gender in Table 8a, by minority status in Table 8b, and by tenure status in Table 8c. Results for Black/African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian, and faculty who identify with two or more racial/ethnic groups are combined into one category labeled “Minority” in Table 8b.

There were no statistically significant differences in the response patterns among groups (Fisher’s exact test and Cochran Mantel Haenszel test for equality of means); however, two of the four respondents who declined to indicate their gender felt that they were not treated with fairness and respect and that they were not welcomed and included in their department and three of these four would probably or definitely not recommend their department to a friend. In addition, three of the seven minority respondents would probably or definitely not recommend their department to a friend.

Over all, the respondents tended to agree, but tepidly, that they were treated with fairness and respect, that they felt welcomed and included in their departments, and that NC State is welcoming and inclusive of people of all races, cultures and beliefs. The means for these questions were 0.76, 0.69, and 0.74, respectively, where the scale was 2 (strongly agree), 1 (agree), 0 (neither agree nor disagree), -1 (disagree), and -2 (strongly disagree). In answer to the question of whether they would recommend their department to a friend, the respondents answered “Maybe”; their mean response was 0.16, where the scores ranged from 2 (definitely yes) to -2 (definitely not), with 0 indicating maybe.

Table 8a. Satisfaction and perceptions of inclusivity by gender

	Overall, I was treated with fairness and respect during my employment at NC State.						
	Strongly Agree (2)	Agree (1)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (0)	Disagree (-1)	Strongly Disagree (-2)	N	Mean
Men	8	10	3	3	1	25	0.84
Women	6	7	4	1	1	19	0.84
Prefer not to answer	1	0	1	2	0	4	0.00
	Overall, I felt welcomed and included in my department.						
Men	9	8	4	2	1	24	0.92
Women	8	4	3	1	3	19	0.68
Prefer not to answer	1	0	1	1	1	4	-0.25
	NC State is welcoming and inclusive of people of all races, cultures and beliefs.						
Men	7	12	2	2	2	25	0.80
Women	4	9	4	1	1	19	0.74
Prefer not to answer	1	1	2	0	0	4	0.75
	Would you recommend an academic position in your department at NC State to a friend?						
	Definitely Yes (2)	Probably Yes (1)	Maybe (0)	Probably Not (-1)	Definitely Not (-2)	N	Mean
Men	7	4	3	7	4	25	0.12
Women	3	9	3	1	3	19	0.42
Prefer not to answer	1	0	0	2	1	4	-0.50

Table 8b. Satisfaction and perceptions of inclusivity by minority status

	Overall, I was treated with fairness and respect during my employment at NC State.						
	Strongly Agree (2)	Agree (1)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (0)	Disagree (-1)	Strongly Disagree (-2)	N	Mean
Minority*	1	5	1	0	0	7	1.00
White	12	12	7	4	2	37	0.76
Prefer not to answer	2	0	0	2	0	4	0.50
	Overall, I felt welcomed and included in my department.						
Minority	2	3	0	1	0	6	1.00
White	14	9	7	2	5	37	0.68
Prefer not to answer	2	0	1	1	0	4	0.75
	NC State is welcoming and inclusive of people of all races, cultures and beliefs.						
Minority*	1	4	2	0	0	7	0.86
White	10	16	5	3	3	37	0.73
Prefer not to answer	1	2	1	0	0	4	1.00
	Would you recommend an academic position in your department at NC State to a friend?						
	Definitely Yes (2)	Probably Yes (1)	Maybe (0)	Probably Not (-1)	Definitely Not (-2)	N	Mean
Minority*	2	0	2	2	1	7	0.00
White	8	12	4	6	7	37	0.22
Prefer not to answer	1	1	0	2	0	4	0.25

*Minority includes Asian, Black/African American, American Indian, Hispanic/Latino, Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian, and faculty who identify with two or more ethnic/racial groups.

Table 8c. Satisfaction and perceptions of inclusivity by tenure status

	Overall, I was treated with fairness and respect during my employment at NC State.						
	Strongly Agree (2)	Agree (1)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (0)	Disagree (-1)	Strongly Disagree (-2)	N	Mean
Tenured / Tenure Track	10	11	4	5	2	32	0.69
Non-Tenure Track	4	9	4	1	0	18	0.89
Overall Mean							0.76
	Overall, I felt welcomed and included in my department.						
Tenured / Tenure Track	13	7	4	3	4	31	0.71
Non-Tenure Track	5	6	3	1	2	17	0.65
Overall Mean							0.69
	NC State is welcoming and inclusive of people of all races, cultures and beliefs.						
Tenured / Tenure Track	8	15	5	1	3	32	0.75
Non-Tenure Track	4	7	5	2	0	18	0.72

Overall Mean							0.74
	Would you recommend an academic position in your department at NC State to a friend?						
	Definitely Yes (2)	Probably Yes (1)	Maybe (0)	Probably Not (-1)	Definitely Not (-2)		Mean
Tenured / Tenure Track	7	9	3	9	4	32	0.19
Non-Tenure Track	5	3	3	3	4	18	0.11
Overall Mean							0.16

Suggestions for providing a more welcoming experience

Several exiting faculty provided responses to the question of what actions on the part of faculty, leadership, programs or policies would have helped make them feel more welcomed, included, or treated fairly and respectfully. The comments and suggestions fall into several broad categories: issues specific to NTT faculty; communicate that faculty and their fields of research are valued; collegiality and departmental and college politics; mentoring and orienting new faculty; and diversity and inclusion.

The non-tenure track faculty provided several suggestions about including and recognizing NTT faculty: (1) make grant and award programs available to all faculty, not just tenure track faculty; (2) include NTT faculty in department social and professional events; (3) acknowledge the contributions that NTT faculty make to the department; (4) treat NTT as colleagues, not second-class citizens. One suggested creating a formal pathway from NTT to tenure track positions, particularly for Target of Opportunity hires. This suggestion reoccurs comments by several respondents in later sections.

In general, several faculty commented that they didn't feel valued at NC State. The actions or lack of actions that conveyed this were lack of personal contact from administrators, lack of respect, recognition or reward for certain areas of research, and lack of interest by department colleagues in getting to know the individual's research. Several wrote about lack of collegiality and lack of social interaction with their department colleagues, or about too much favoritism in the department.

Faculty remembered negative experiences or neglect they experienced when they were new faculty. Their recommendations included a stronger mentor/new faculty program, inclusion of new faculty from the first day, ensuring that new faculty attend New Faculty Orientation, protecting new faculty from heavy teaching loads (e.g., 3 courses in a semester), and providing adequate TA resources.

One respondent recounted several instances of religious insensitivity and pressure: efforts by department colleagues to proselytize to Christianity, Christmas displays in the department head's office, department retreats held on important non-Christian holidays and Christian prayers at official university functions.

One respondent wrote about the negative impact that lack of childcare and parental leave in her early years had on her career.

General satisfaction

The exiting faculty were invited to comment on the most positive aspects of being on the faculty here and on the most serious barriers or concerns that they had about being on the faculty. Working with students and interacting with faculty colleagues were highlights for a great many faculty. The freedom to teach and research areas of interest was a very positive experience for many, and several faculty mentioned the ability to work on issues that are important in the world and the land grant mission.

Most positive aspects

Faculty had wonderful things to say about their experience at NC State. Faculty greatly appreciated working with faculty colleagues. Nineteen respondents wrote about their appreciation for the other faculty in their departments and across the campus. Here is one comment: “I had wonderful faculty colleagues at NCSU. My department, and my program in particular, are full of generous, intelligent, well-respected faculty who are a joy to work with.”

“The students” was the next most common response to this question. Fifteen respondents wrote that their students were the most positive aspect of being at NC State. One wrote “Fun to be in a university community. Love the students. They keep me motivated. I like the interactions with them. I am proud of awards I got while here. I feel like I made an impact.”

Others wrote with appreciation about the support of their department head, the staff in the department, the Engineering Online staff, a positive administration, mutual respect and a collaborative atmosphere. Several wrote about the collegial environment in their department: “The department and college leadership appreciate and work hard to create a good environment for NTT faculty, for diversity, and for gender equity.” A couple wrote about resources and good relations with industry.

Five respondents wrote that the freedom to follow their own interests in research, teaching and service, the flexibility and the independence offered by NC State were very important and greatly appreciated. Six of the respondents said that being able to do work that matters and provide service was important to them, particularly being able to work on research that had practical applications to real problems in North Carolina and around the world; two specifically mentioned the NC State’s land grant mission.

One simply wrote “I generally like most aspects of my employment at NC State.”

Most serious barriers and concerns

Exiting faculty raised several types of barriers and concerns. Funding, budget cuts and lack of resources were cited by eleven of the exiting faculty. One mentioned that over the years support for their program had declined dramatically. Three respondents cited lack of raises and low salaries and two of them mentioned inequity in salaries and salary inversion.

Leadership, department climate and difficult colleagues were also of concern to many. Eight faculty wrote that their college leadership was their most serious concern. Several cited poor or dysfunctional leadership skills of the college or department administration. One felt that the university administration favors the Colleges of Sciences and Engineering and neglects the rest of the colleges. Several had difficulties with bureaucracy, red tape, frustration with the Business Office, lack of support for faculty managing grants. One faculty member wrote that serious concerns regarding conflicts of interest were their main reason for leaving the faculty: “There is a direct conflict of interests between having academic freedom and research-based Extension programs, and seeking financial support from an association with strong ties to industry.”

Eleven faculty cited the lack of a route for non-tenure track faculty to transition to tenure track positions or any kind of career advancement, treatment of non-tenure track faculty as second class citizens, and pay for non-tenure track faculty. Two comments from non-tenure track faculty illustrate some of the issues:

It was difficult to hear insensitive statements from tenured faculty about NTT faculty.

The adjunct salary and benefits for someone with a PhD is insulting. At least when I was a graduate student, I had health insurance.

Seven faculty wrote about negative department environment or difficult colleagues, and the department head’s lack of ability to manage these issues. Lack of mentoring and difficulty progressing from associate to full professor for underrepresented minority faculty, and gender discrimination were cited by three respondents. One faculty member described being unprepared to deal with an increasing number of students with mental health problems and one faculty member described lack of support for outreach and engagement activities. Two faculty used the space to say that they had not experienced any serious barriers.

Exiting NC State

Experiences with the Exit Procedures

Exiting faculty were asked what suggestions they have for improving the exit procedures. Several faculty had gotten no information about exit procedures. The responses are grouped into several categories: (1) suggestions to improve communication, (2) suggestions to improve the knowledge of department heads and HR personnel about the exit procedures and to improve timeliness of processing grant transfers and retirement plans; and (3) suggestions for the exit survey.

Eleven faculty either hadn’t heard anything about exit procedures or had other comments about the lack of communication about exiting the faculty and/or retiring. The following suggestions were offered:

- Provide a checklist and information (brief) so that one knows what to expect.

- Provide more clarity related to benefits/insurance changes, including COBRA, and be more proactive in supervising the transition.
- Provide information about maintaining email and library access, ongoing projects, parking, lab management, safety issues, cleaning out the office and giving stuff away, etc.
- HR check in with new retirees to see if all is working as it should.
- End the relationship on a more personal note than an email.

There were also several suggestions about training department heads, about service by HR personnel, the College research office, and about timeliness of processing. Problems encountered included lack of knowledge by the department head, providing accurate information about the smooth transition of health care from one institution to another, transfer of grants, counseling about health care benefits, and timely processing of retirement account forms.

Three respondents wrote that it all went smoothly and they had no suggestions for improvements. One said that the process requires a lot of handholding to complete all the paperwork.

Retirement

We also asked the retiring faculty specifically about their experiences with procedures for retiring. Most retiring faculty were satisfied or very satisfied with the retirement procedures (Table 9). Fourteen respondents attended an NC State retirement seminar. All of those respondents found the retirement seminars either somewhat informative (7) or very informative (7).

Table 9. Overall, how satisfied were you with the administrative procedures related to retiring from NC State? (e.g., transitioning health insurance, library privileges, parking)

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Did Not Respond
4	13	2	2	4

Retiring faculty provided suggestions to improve the retirement process and comments about their experiences. They are grouped into comments about experiences with Human Resources staff, general suggestions, phased retirement, and general comments.

Retirees’ experiences with HR staff have been variable. Five wrote that their NCSU Benefits officer was very helpful (including three with glowing thanks for Margot Henion) and four had the opposite experience. Several wrote that there was a lot of paperwork and that there are serious questions that need to be answered and would be difficult to answer without help. Making a mistake could be costly or irrevocable. The ORP transitions and health care options were particularly complicated. Two wrote that it would help to have a road map or checklist so that retirees can be sure that important things don’t get

lost. They also mentioned that materials and information come in from various sources not controlled by NC State, which makes it difficult to keep track.

Most of the retiring faculty plan to stay engaged with NC State in the future. Three of the 25 retiring faculty indicated that they plan to take phased retirement and 16 faculty (64%) indicated that they plan to stay somewhat or very involved with NC State after retirement.

Two of the faculty participating in phased retirement provided comments about the program. Here is what they had to say.

The phased retirement program enabled gradual succession by others who will assume my responsibilities. This has been a very positive process for our department, college, and me personally. I have recommended the program to other colleagues.

The phased requirement rules prohibit faculty on phased retirement receiving summer grant support. This discourages those considering phased retirement from continuing to seek grants. It would help both the individuals and the university if the regulations were changed such that non-state funds, such as grant funds, were allowed on phased retirement (that is an allowance to exceed 50% of annual pay calculated on base state salary). This could only have a NET POSITIVE effect on funds as any person receiving grant salary also pays F&A so the state receives more funds but does not pay any additional salary.

Final Thoughts

Faculty, particularly those on the tenure track, tend to stay at NC State for a long time. Twenty five of the 55 survey respondents were exiting to retire. The median length of service for tenured and tenure track faculty was 20 years. For non-tenure track faculty the median length of service, however, was only 5 years. Almost all of the faculty who separated from NC State in the 2014-15 academic year who responded to the Faculty Exit Survey separated voluntarily. Only two non-tenure track reported that they were leaving because their contract ended and no tenure track or tenured faculty left involuntarily.

This report is intended to be a resource for NC State's administrators, deans and department heads. We hope that you have found useful insights and strategies for enhancing the working environment for all employees in your units. The report contains in-depth information on what factors drew the separating faculty to their new positions or caused them to seek a change or to retire at this particular time. It includes their reflections on the most positive aspects of working at NC State and their concerns and frustrations related to working here. It further provides suggestions about how to make NC State's environment more welcoming and inclusive, about what might have induced exiting faculty to stay here longer, and about improving the procedures for exiting and retiring faculty.

We would like to thank the faculty who took the time to complete the Faculty Exit Survey to share their experiences and insights for this report. This report provides a map for enhancing the faculty experience at NC State.