

# SECURING SUCCESS

CLASS OF 2017 FIRST DESTINATION  
SURVEY REPORT



Center for Career and Professional Development  
Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- *WCU has more students who are employed or continuing their education, as well as fewer students who are still seeking employment after graduation, than the national average.*
- Western Carolina University opted to use a success rate, which is defined as the percentage of graduates who reported being employed, full-time or part-time, or in continuing education. Although placement rates are but one tool of measurement to define success, universities are often ranked based on this criterion. *The success rate for our Class of 2017 FDS was 95.7%.*
- Out of the students who reported being employed full-time and providing an address of employment, *81% of these students work in the state of North Carolina. Of these students, 45% report staying in the Western District and 21% report staying in the Southwestern District of North Carolina.* This suggests recent graduates are moving to hometown districts and further developing these regions.
- Salary information collected for the WCU Class of 2017 FDS is based on low reporting rates. Given this, readers should not extrapolate these findings to the general population.

## SURVEY DETAILS

- *This is the first year Western Carolina University has conducted a First Destination Survey (FDS). Our survey is based off of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) First Destination Survey and utilized the same survey questions to participate in national benchmarking against other universities.*
- The NACE First Destination Survey captures information regarding how new college graduates fare in their careers within six months of graduation. The first national survey was conducted in 2014 and included more than 200 colleges and universities nationwide, representing 274,000 graduates.
- **Western Carolina University's First Destination Survey was administered to a population size of 2,439 students who graduated as part of the class of 2017, including graduates from Summer 2016, Fall 2016, and Spring 2017.**
- Normally the timeline for collection of data spans one full year; however, since the university piloted the survey this year, *the data collection timeline spanned a period of three months between October 2017 – December 2017.*
- The NACE First Destination Survey is measured by what is called a Knowledge Rate, which is defined as reliable and verifiable knowledge **regarding graduates'** first-destination career outcomes. This could include knowledge obtained through surveys, social media, national organizations, faculty reports, or any other reliable/verifiable source. *The knowledge rate for our Class of 2017 FDS was 48%.*

# STUDENT SUCCESS

## METHODS AND POPULATION SIZE

The First Destination Survey was administered to the graduating class of 2017. This population of students consisted of graduates from Summer 2016, Fall 2016, and Spring 2017. The total eligible population size for this survey was 2,439 students. Survey collection was conducted from October 1, 2017 to December 30, 2017. Catamount and personal email addresses were utilized and graduates were reminded to fill out the survey every six weeks.

**KNOWLEDGE RATE:** Collection of data included information gathered through the FDS survey, social media, the National Clearinghouse, the Department of Public Instruction, WCU Department of Human Resources, WCU Department of Graduate Studies, and departmental and faculty knowledge.

# 48%

## KNOWLEDGE RATE

*(Includes: survey, clearinghouse, social media and other data)*

# 95.7%

## SUCCESS RATE

*(employed or continuing education, or both)*

## KEY FINDINGS



68.2% Employed  
Full- or Part-Time



27.5% Enrolled in  
Continuing Education



2.8% Seeking  
Employment

## Primary Activity by College

Current Primary Activity	Total Unduplicated	CAS	COB	CEAP	CET	CFPA	CHHS
Employed full time (avg. 30+ hours per week)	64.5%	49.8%	76.2%	65.5%	86.7%	66.7%	57.5%
Enrolled in a program of continuing education	27.5%	37.3%	19.1%	26.5%	10.8%	13.0%	35.8%
Employed part time (avg. <30 hours per week)	3.7%	7.3%	0.4%	3.5%	1.2%	14.8%	2.5%
Seeking employment	2.8%	3.1%	3.6%	3.1%	0.0%	3.7%	2.8%
Serving in the U.S. military	0.8%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	1.9%	1.1%
Planning to continue education but not yet enrolled	0.4%	0.7%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Participating in a volunteer/service program (Peace Corps)	0.3%	0.0%	0.4%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

\* Total Unduplicated counts the individual students whereas the counts by college indicate where degrees were earned. Since some students earn degrees from more than one college the totals may not match.

# GRADUATES WORK

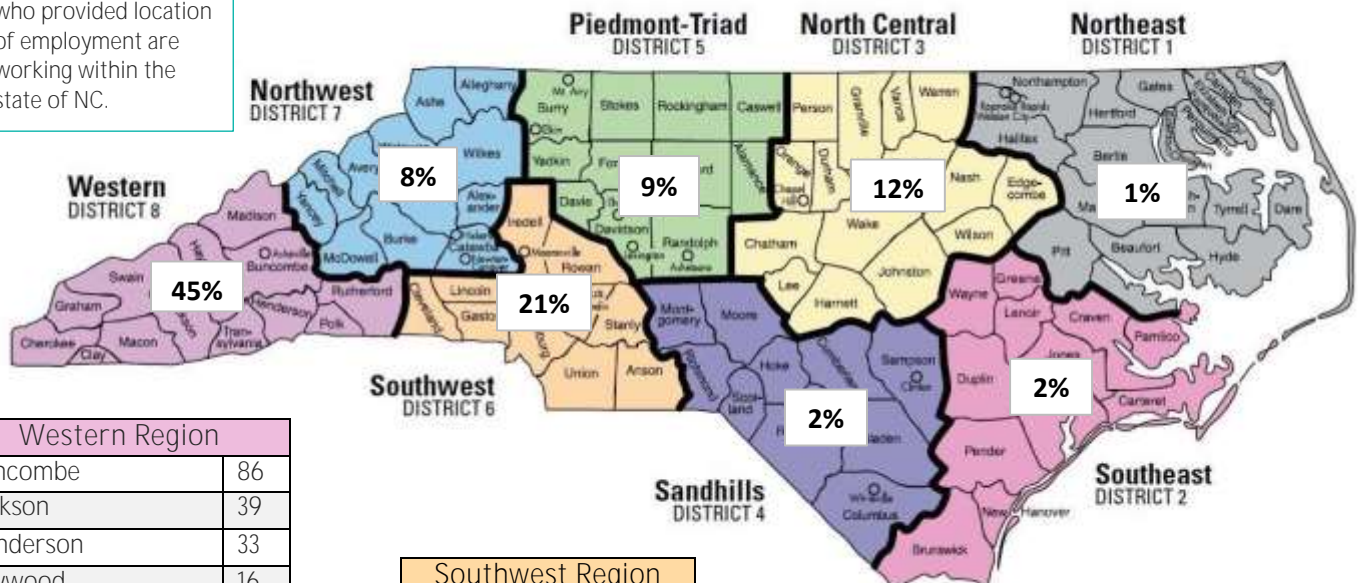
## Full Time Employment by State\*

State of Employment	Total Unduplicated
North Carolina	450
<i>% employed in NC</i>	<i>81%</i>
South Carolina	23
Georgia	13
Florida	10
Tennessee	8
California	7
Massachusetts	6
Pennsylvania	6
Colorado	5
Maryland	4
Virginia	3
Indiana, New York, Ohio, Texas	2
Connecticut, District of Columbia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, Washington	1
Total U.S. Respondents	556

\*Respondents reporting full-time employment as their primary activity and providing address of employment

## N.C. Employment by Regions and Counties

81% of respondents who provided location of employment are working within the state of NC.



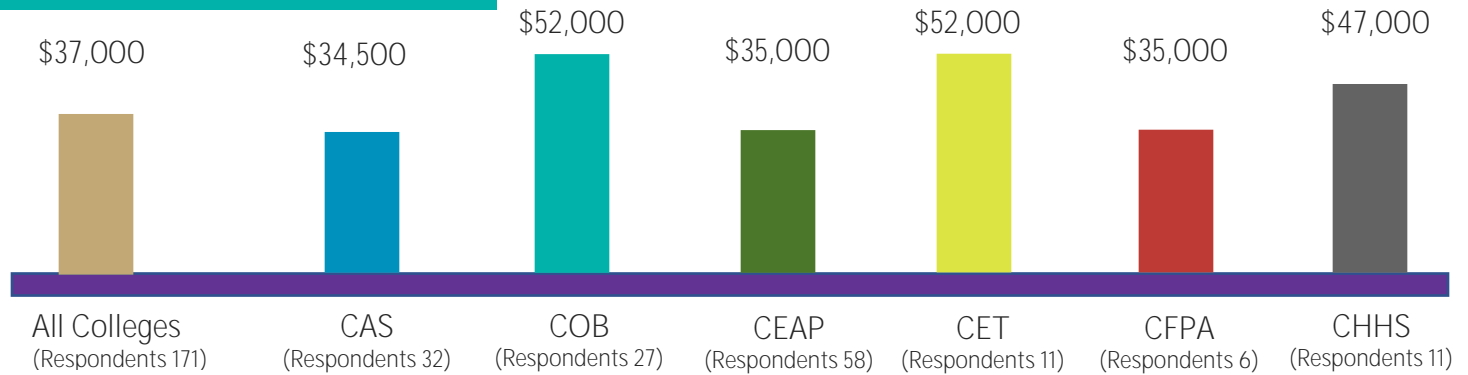
Western Region	
Buncombe	86
Jackson	39
Henderson	33
Haywood	16
Macon	10
Swain	8
Transylvania	7
Cherokee, Rutherford	4
Clay, Madison, Polk	1
Graham	0
TOTAL	210

Southwest Region	
Mecklenburg	67
Gaston, Iredell	9
Cleveland, Union	4
Cabarrus	3
Lincoln, Rowan	2
Anson, Stanly	0
TOTAL	100

# SALARY & EDUCATION

## Median Income by College\*

\*Respondents reporting full-time employment as their primary activity and who provided annual incomes

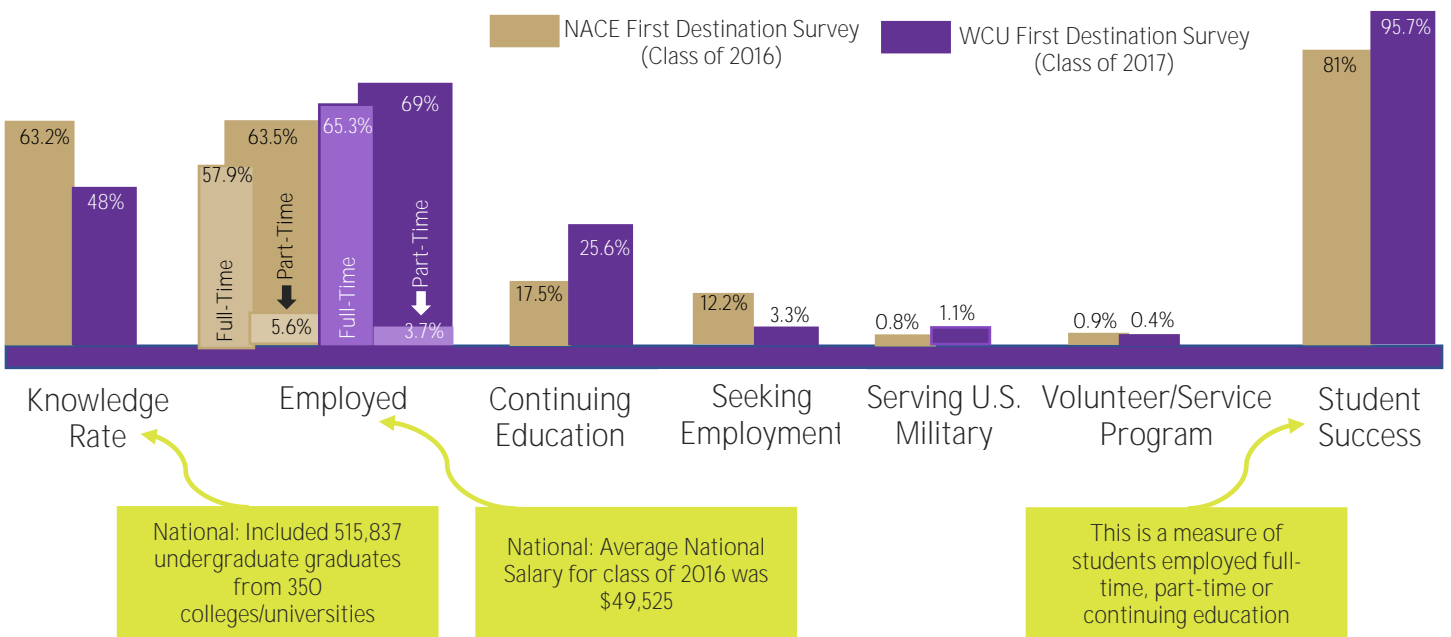


## Subsequent Enrollment\*

	Count	Percentage
Western Carolina University	134	41%
Other UNC System College/University	36	11%
NC Community College System	29	9%
NC Private College/University	20	6%
Out-of-State Public College/University	64	20%
Out-of-State Private College/University	40	12%
<b>TOTAL ENROLLED</b>	<b>323</b>	

\*Respondents reporting enrolled in program of continuing education as their primary activity

## National Comparison\*



\*Comparison data for this chart includes undergraduate students only and is obtained from the NACE Class of 2016 First Destination Survey, <https://bit.ly/2qhN2l8>.