

PACK POLL 2011, Spring

Almost 1,500 undergraduates recently completed a survey called the "The Pack Poll." My students and I are trying to make this a regular poll and an institution on campus (this was the second Pack Poll we've conducted). In short, we plan to run a version of the Pack Poll every semester, and we will eventually make all of the data and summaries of results available on a website. Over time, by asking some questions each time, we will establish long term trends of students' opinions. We want current and future students to see what past and present students think about the issues of the day.

The Pack Poll was sent to students randomly. Every undergraduate student had an equal probability of being asked to take the survey. Overall, we sent the survey to about 7,000 students, and over 1,600 students started taking the survey, almost 1,500 completed it, for a response rate of 23 percent. A survey this large means that our estimates have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 2.5 percent.

Many people who conduct surveys worry about low response rates: do people who reply accurately stand for those who don't reply? Honestly, we don't always know the answer, but our best research suggests that low response rates are not a problem for most surveys if everything else is done properly. In fact, most telephone surveys conducted by companies like Gallup have less than 20 percent response rates, and they are usually very accurate, so the Pack Poll did as well or better than the standard in that regard.

More importantly, we can examine how well we sampled the student body by comparing the campus demographics to our sample of students. We did not do as good of a job this time, but overall we believe our polling data is a reasonable approximation of the undergraduate student body here at N.C. State. Some areas of concern are that we have a greater percentage of white and female respondents, and "juniors", than truly exists. One solution would be to "weight" the survey data to emphasize the responses of groups that were not sufficiently part of our sample, but we have not done that in this report.

There are other sources of error too when measuring opinions. Many students took the time to e-mail me directly and ask about these kinds of potential. There is no perfect way to measure the thoughts you may or not have in your head, but there are some methods that work better than others. In a survey, we have to make choices about the number of answer options we provide, so we can summarize opinions. And if we asked about things students might not care about, we usually allow for respondents to answer, "No Opinion." Many polls manufacture opinions by forcing people to choose among options they might not endorse, or might not have ever thought about. As you will see, many students do not have opinions about a lot of issues.

We will try to publish a few columns in The Technician next week, and the paper will dedicate a significant amount of space during exam week to covering a subset of questions on the poll. Meanwhile, this report reproduces the basic findings.

1. To start, what year in school are you considered?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Freshman	305	19%
2	Sophomore	400	25%
3	Junior	452	28%
4	Senior	448	28%
	Total	1,605	100%

2. What college is your planned degree in?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	CALS/CNR	403	25%
2	CHASS/Design	433	27%
3	PAMS/Engineering	478	30%
4	COM	140	9%
5	Textiles	40	2%
6	Education	77	5%
7	First Year College	12	1%
8	Don't know	25	2%
	Total	1,608	100%

3. Do you approve or disapprove of the firing of former men's basketball head coach, Sidney Lowe? (Note: Lowe officially resigned as NCSU coach)

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Disapprove	19	1%
2	Disapprove	84	5%
3	Approve	559	35%
4	Strongly Approve	366	23%
5	No Opinion	585	36%
	Total	1,613	100%

4. Do you consider NCSU to be a party school?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	149	9%
2	No	1,227	78%
3	No Opinion	205	13%
	Total	1,581	100%

5. How many parties in an average week do you go to?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	0	867	55%
2	1	475	30%
3	2	184	12%
4	3	44	3%
5	4	6	0%
6	5	3	0%
7	6	1	0%
8	7	1	0%
9	8	0	0%
10	9	0	0%
11	10	1	0%
	Total	1,582	100%

6. Regardless of whether or not you go to any parties, how many nights of the week on average do you drink alcohol?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	0	691	44%
2	1	377	24%
3	2	238	15%
4	3	157	10%
5	4	74	5%
6	5	17	1%
7	6	17	1%
8	7	9	1%
9	8	0	0%
10	9	0	0%
11	10	3	0%
	Total	1,583	100%

7. On average, how many alcoholic drinks (e.g., beer, wine, hard alcohol) do you consume per day?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	0	1,014	64%
2	1	242	15%
3	2	119	8%
4	3	74	5%
5	4	57	4%
6	5	27	2%
7	6	23	1%
8	7	3	0%
9	8	6	0%
10	9	2	0%
11	10	9	1%
	Total	1,576	100%

8. How often do you consume energy alcoholic drinks such as Sparks or Four Loco?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	At least once a week	17	1%
2	Less than once a week	132	8%
3	I've tried it once or twice, but that's it	570	36%
4	I've never drank this product	867	55%
	Total	1,586	100%

9. Do you believe that energy alcohol drinks should be banned from being sold in the state of North Carolina?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	412	26%
2	No	774	49%
3	No Opinion	400	25%
	Total	1,586	100%

10. Turning to politics, did you vote in the November, 2010 Midterm elections?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes, I voted	514	33%
2	No, I chose not to vote	815	52%
3	No, because I was not eligible to vote	238	15%
	Total	1,567	100%

11. Did you vote in the 2011 Spring NCSU student body elections on Tuesday, March 29?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes, I Voted	658	42%
2	No, I did not vote	908	58%
	Total	1,566	100%

12. Did you (check all that apply):

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Attend a debate or candidate forum?	49	3%
2	Run for office in this election	9	1%
3	have a close friend who ran for office	276	19%
4	see a lot of signs for candidates running for office	1,423	96%
5	see an ad or story in The Technician about the election	641	43%
6	Vote in a previous study body election	588	40%
7	"Liked" a facebook page of a candidate	290	20%

13. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Approve	483	31%
2	Disapprove	642	41%
3	No Opinion	441	28%
	Total	1,566	100%

14. All in all, do you think things in our country are:

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Generally headed in the right direction	368	24%
2	Generally headed in the wrong direction	694	45%
3	Unsure	497	32%
	Total	1,559	100%

15. Did you ever take part in a program like “Kids Voting”?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	No	913	59%
2	Yes	466	30%
3	I don't know	179	11%
	Total	1,558	100%

16. Did this voting program include classroom activities or even focused family discussions about the importance of voting?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	No, just voting	254	55%
2	Yes, it was comprehensive	211	45%
	Total	465	100%

17. In high school, how many classes overall did you take that included a significant amount of discussion about current local, national, and international events?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	0	112	7%
2	1	270	17%
3	2	411	26%
4	3	330	21%
5	4	230	15%
6	5	87	6%
7	6	50	3%
8	7	18	1%
9	8	15	1%
10	9	2	0%
11	10	30	2%
	Total	1,555	100%

18. Thinking about issues in the news, do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly favor	451	29%
2	Favor	380	25%
3	Oppose	239	16%
4	Strongly oppose	266	17%
5	No Opinion	204	13%
	Total	1,540	100%

19. Do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to legally form civil unions?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly favor	496	32%
2	Favor	464	30%
3	Oppose	144	9%
4	Strongly oppose	161	10%
5	No Opinion	273	18%
	Total	1,538	100%

20. Do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to adopt children?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly favor	494	32%
2	Favor	444	29%
3	Oppose	187	12%
4	Strongly Oppose	186	12%
5	No Opinion	228	15%
	Total	1,539	100%

21. Do you think your father favors or opposes allowing gays and lesbians to adopt children?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly favors	91	6%
2	Favors	271	18%
3	Strongly opposes	386	25%
4	Opposes	371	24%
5	Don't know or Can't say	419	27%
	Total	1,538	100%

22. Do you think your mother favors or opposes allowing gays and lesbians to adopt children?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly favors		198	13%
2	Favors		396	26%
3	Opposes		304	20%
4	Strongly opposes		285	19%
5	Don't know or Can't say		357	23%
	Total		1,540	100%

23. Do you think that gays and lesbians are born gay or choose to be gay?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Born gay		688	45%
2	Choose to be gay		505	33%
3	No Opinion		348	23%
	Total		1,541	100%

24. Next, do you agree or disagree with the following statements that some people make about race.

“Irish, Italians, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up.

Blacks should do the same without any special favors.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	299	20%
2	Agree	423	28%
3	Neutral	409	27%
4	Disagree	257	17%
5	Strongly Disagree	127	8%
	Total	1,515	100%

25. What about this statement?:

“Over the past few years blacks have gotten less than they deserve.”

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	39	3%
2	Agree	167	11%
3	Neutral	426	28%
4	Disagree	531	35%
5	Strongly Disagree	351	23%
	Total	1,514	100%

26. Next, what about this statement?:

“It’s really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.”

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	170	11%
2	Agree	319	21%
3	Neutral	397	26%
4	Disagree	408	27%
5	Strongly Disagree	221	15%
	Total	1,515	100%

27. Turning to topics in the news, do you know what President Obama’s religion is?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Christian	822	56%
2	Jewish	0	0%
3	Muslim	232	16%
4	Buddhist	5	0%
5	Hindhu	2	0%
6	Atheist	12	1%
7	I don’t know	407	28%
	Total	1,480	100%

28. True or false: President Obama is a practicing Muslim

#	Answer	Response	%
1	True	176	12%
2	False	873	61%
3	I don’t know	391	27%
	Total	1,440	100%

29. True or False: President Obama was born in the United States.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	True	1,048	70%
2	False	224	15%
3	I don't know	234	16%
	Total	1,506	100%

30. Now, we want to know a little bit more about you so we can better understand

how different people feel about the issues.

How do you get most of your news about national and international issues? From:

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Television	402	27%
2	Newspapers	74	5%
3	Radio	78	5%
4	Internet (but mostly sites like CNN, New York Times, News & Observer)	758	51%
5	Internet (mostly independent sites & blogs)	186	12%
	Total	1,498	100%

31. When you watch news on television, do you get most of your news about national and international issues from:

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Network News (ABC, CBS or NBC)	565	38%
2	CNN Cable news	254	17%
3	FOX Cable news	206	14%
4	MSNBC Cable news	50	3%
5	The Daily Show and/or Colbert Report	239	16%
6	Other	173	12%
	Total	1,487	100%

32. On Fox Cable, how many days in an average week do you watch the following shows?

#	Question	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Responses	Mean
1	Sean Hannity	1,368	41	16	17	2	2	1	3	1,450	1.12
2	Glenn Beck	1,343	64	22	7	5	7	0	2	1,450	1.14
3	Evening News: Special Report with Bret Baier	1,322	67	19	20	3	6	0	5	1,442	1.17
4	Evening: The Fox Report with Shepard Smith	1,316	74	22	14	9	3	0	6	1,444	1.18
5	The O'Reilly Factor	1,286	95	27	17	9	10	1	5	1,450	1.23

33. On MSNBC, how many days in an average week do you watch the following shows?

#	Question	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Responses	Mean
1	Rachel Maddow	1,354	54	14	11	2	2	0	3	1,440	1.11
2	Hardball with Chris Matthews	1,332	74	23	6	3	1	0	1	1,440	1.11
3	Lawrence O'Donnell	1,413	10	9	3	0	0	0	1	1,436	1.03
4	Morning Joe	1,382	33	11	4	1	6	0	1	1,438	1.08

34. What is your sex?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Male	702	47%
2	Female	796	53%
	Total	1,498	100%

35. What is your overall GPA, as best you know?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Less than 2.0	23	2%
2	2.00-2.50	122	8%
3	2.51-3.00	331	22%
4	3.01-3.50	486	32%
5	3.51-4.0 or higher	537	36%
	Total	1,499	100%

36. What racial group do you primarily identify yourself as a member?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	White/Caucasian	1,242	83%
2	Black/African-American	86	6%
3	Asian-American	68	5%
4	Hispanic	35	2%
5	Native American	10	1%
6	Other	58	4%
	Total	1,499	100%

37. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Republican	506	34%
2	Democrat	370	25%
3	Independent	428	29%
4	Other	196	13%
	Total	1,500	100%

38. You might not know, but what is your best estimate of your family's annual income?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Over \$250,000	130	9%
2	At least \$100,000 but less than \$250,000	442	30%
3	At least \$50,000 but less than \$100,000	455	30%
4	\$50,000 or less	272	18%
5	Unsure	197	13%
	Total	1,496	100%

39. Do you think the Tea Party movement does a good job of representing your political views?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	167	11%
2	No	592	40%
3	No Opinion	739	49%
	Total	1,498	100%

40. Would you consider yourself to be a born again Christian?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	514	34%
2	No	982	66%
	Total	1,496	100%

41. Are any of your personal contacts practicing Muslims?

#	Question	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does not apply to me	Responses	Mean
1	Family	46	1,383	30	28	1,487	2.03
2	Friends	573	737	170	17	1,497	1.75
3	Colleagues at Work	192	747	293	257	1,489	2.41
4	Classmates	751	245	490	10	1,496	1.84

42. As we finish the survey, we are going to ask you questions about Islam since this religion is in the news a lot lately. Which of the following is the name for the holy book of Islam?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Bible	5	0%
2	Torah	92	6%
3	Veda	4	0%
4	Quran	1,386	93%
5	Dhamma	3	0%
	Total	1,490	100%

43. Which of the following is the holy city of Islam?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Rome	4	0%
2	Bethlehem	93	6%
3	Qufu	11	1%
4	Mecca	1,361	91%
5	Rajgir	20	1%
	Total	1,489	100%

44. Which of the following is Islamic religious holiday?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Ramadan	1,206	81%
2	Rosh Hashanah	178	12%
3	Vesak	29	2%
4	Kumbh Mela	66	4%
5	Epiphany	4	0%
	Total	1,483	100%