



October 2017

THE CLASS OF 2017

# STUDENT SURVEY

# REPORT

Results from NACE's annual survey of college students

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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# ABOUT THE SURVEY

*The Class of 2017 Student Survey Report*, the 11th in this series of reports first published in 2007, details the attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes of graduating seniors. Key areas of focus include students' job outlook; their success in the job search; their conceptions of "career readiness"; their preferences and expectations for a job; how they search for jobs; and their internship/co-op experience. In addition, this report provides comparisons with earlier reports, notably the first, which was conducted pre-recession. In framing the information presented in this report, it is important to note these data represent a "snapshot" of the months *prior* to graduation, and therefore may not necessarily represent students' attitudes and outcomes in the months following graduation.

Through NACE's college members, this survey collected viable data from 21,194 college students across all degree and year levels; the focus of this report is the 4,213 bachelor's degree students who indicated that they would be graduating—or already had graduated—during the 2016-17 academic school year (July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017), and were thus members of the Class of 2017. Data collection took place from February 15, 2017, to April 30, 2017.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Among the Class of 2017, 70.8 percent of students planned to enter the work force and 23.2 percent planned to continue their education, the closest resemblance of any graduating class to the Class of 2007 in 10 years.
- The Class of 2017 did see a modest improvement to the landing rate, although this "success" did not come close to the prolific Class of 2007.
- When it came to how important students felt that various career readiness competencies were to successfully transition into the work force, students had an "all-around" perspective.
- The most highly preferred aspects of a job/ employer were (1) the opportunity to develop job-specific skills; (2) the opportunity to develop applied skills; (3) job security; (4) friendly co-workers; and (5) a good benefits package.
- A high starting salary was most widely cited as the deciding factor between two otherwise identical job offers.



- For African-American men and women, the preference for a diversity-conscious employer was so intense that it was the single most important of 18 job/employer attributes.
- The most highly sought-after benefits included (1) 100 percent employer-paid medical insurance; (2) a company-matched 401(k) plan; (3) guaranteed annual salary increases; (4) dental insurance; (5) “family-friendly” benefits; (6) life insurance; and (7) tuition reimbursement for advanced education.
- Employer websites continued to be, by far, the most widely used resource and considered the single most useful. Other perennial standouts include family, friends, and faculty.
- Among the Class of 2017, 85.6 percent of students who had begun the job search had visited the career center—either at the office or on the website—at least once in the past academic year.
- Each graduating class since 2013 has had at least 60 percent of students participate in an internship and/or co-op at some point in their college career. As results for the classes of 2011 through 2017 indicate, students have gradually become more likely to have had a paid position.
- An internship’s effect on job-search success is highly dependent on whether the position was paid and whether the position was with a private-sector company.

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