



NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

The 2007 Sophomore Survey Report

**Office of Planning and Institutional Research
Northern Arizona University**

Spring 2007

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Introduction

The spring 2007 was the sixth consecutive year that Northern Arizona University conducted a survey of sophomore students. This survey assesses student satisfaction and opinions about their experiences at the university, while also addressing specific questions that must be reported to the Arizona Board of Regents for the Undergraduate Consolidated Accountability Report. The following report focuses on the results from the spring 2007 administration of the sophomore survey.

Methods

The 2007 Sophomore Survey was administered via a web-based application that was open to all sophomore students. The Office of Planning and Institutional Research surveyed all students whose academic level in PeopleSoft was flagged as sophomore (students with cumulative units between 30-59) in fall 2006 and / or spring 2007¹. The survey consisted of multiple-choice and open-ended questions in an electronic format. Questions addressed satisfaction in key areas, perceived development of certain essential skills, time management, success in social areas, and opinions about the university environment and services. All eligible students were notified of the survey through electronic mail. Incentive prizes were offered to encourage students to participate in the survey.

The survey was available on-line for students to respond for one month in the spring 2007. The sampling error² associated with a 724 person sample drawn from a population of 2,435 is ± 3.1 percent. The survey sample was similar to the overall population of sophomores on most characteristics examined. Table A (in Appendix A) shows the characteristics of the survey sample compared to the whole sophomore population at NAU.

Summary of Key Results

General Satisfaction Ratings by Content Area

The 2007 Sophomore survey evaluates student satisfaction in four general content areas. These areas include: their overall NAU experience, faculty, general academics, and campus features. The 2007 sophomores are very positive in rating their overall experience at NAU.

- Ninety-seven (97%) percent of sophomores rated their overall experience as either “good” or “excellent.” Ninety-three percent (93%) of sophomores plan on completing their bachelor’s degrees at NAU, and almost nine out of ten (86%) sophomores would still choose to attend NAU if they could start over.
- The mean satisfaction value for the quality of faculty instruction was 7.50 and for the availability of faculty 7.69 (on a scale of 1-10).

¹ For survey administrations in 2004, 2005, and 2006 the population was based upon sophomore students who had between 40 and 59 total cumulative earned hours and greater than 29 cumulative NAU earned hours. The 2007 administration marks a slight change in the definition of choosing the sophomore population that will be utilized from 2007 forward.

² The sampling error describes the probable difference between interviewing everyone in the population versus interviewing a sample drawn from this population. For example, if 80% of the sophomore sample indicated satisfaction in a specific content area, the actual population parameter falls in the range of 77% - 83% (80% +/- 3%) satisfaction

- Greatest satisfaction is reported for the student's ability to register for desired courses (7.83), followed by the variety of classes offered (7.26), the liberal studies courses in general (7.03), and the challenge of academic coursework (7.02).
- Students overall were satisfied, reporting a mean of 7.00 or greater for all eight dimensions. The highest satisfaction was reported with the on-campus computer labs (7.85) and campus safety (7.81) and the lowest, though still greater than 7.00, with the total social life (7.05) and the campus social life (7.24).

Skills and Abilities Development

Sophomores were asked about the extent that their NAU education has facilitated their development in a variety of skill areas in addition to how successful they are at a variety of personal abilities.

- The highest rated skill areas facilitated by their NAU education were "learning effectively on own" (73%) and "thinking critically and analytically (71%). Speaking clearly and effectively was a skill area in which their NAU education has had a limited impact (less than 50% responding "quite a bit" or "very much").
- When asked to evaluate their ability on a variety of skills key to academic success on a scale of 1-10, students indicated success (rounded 8.0 or higher) for self reliance (8.21), performing academically (7.78) and making friends (7.65). Overall, time management was the lowest rated ability with a mean of 7.04

Student Evaluation of NAU Support and Services

Sophomores were given the opportunity to evaluate a variety of NAU services and the general campus environment.

- Students perceived the greatest amount of support from NAU in providing the aid they needed to succeed academically. In evaluating their relationships with other students, faculty, and administrative personnel and offices, students rated their relationships with other students the highest.
- Eighty-five percent (85%) of sophomores indicated they were satisfied with the academic advising services they have received and 79 percent of respondents indicated academic advising was available when needed.
- Overall, eighty-six percent (86%) of students were satisfied with services they received at the Registrar's office.

Why Students Chose NAU?

- Students were asked to rate the importance of a given list of reasons for attending NAU on a scale of 1-10 (1=very unimportant and 10=very important). The top five reasons for attending NAU were class size (7.56), cost of tuition and fees (7.33), specific reputation of a major or program (7.26), availability of financial aid (6.96) and faculty availability (6.89). The least important reasons included for coming to NAU included not being able to go to the college of first choice (3.29) and athletics (3.62).

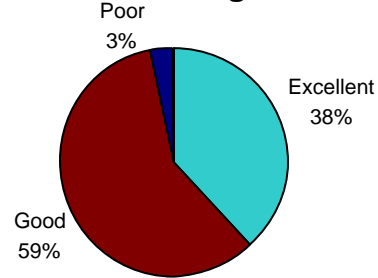
Summary of Responses on the 2007 Sophomore Survey

I. General Satisfaction Ratings by Content Area

Overall NAU Experience

NAU sophomores are very positive in rating their overall experience at NAU to this point. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of sophomores surveyed said their experience thus far was either “good” or “excellent.” Ninety-three percent (93%) of sophomores plan on completing their bachelor’s degrees at NAU, and almost nine out of ten (86%) sophomores would still choose to attend NAU if they could start over.

Overall Rating of NAU

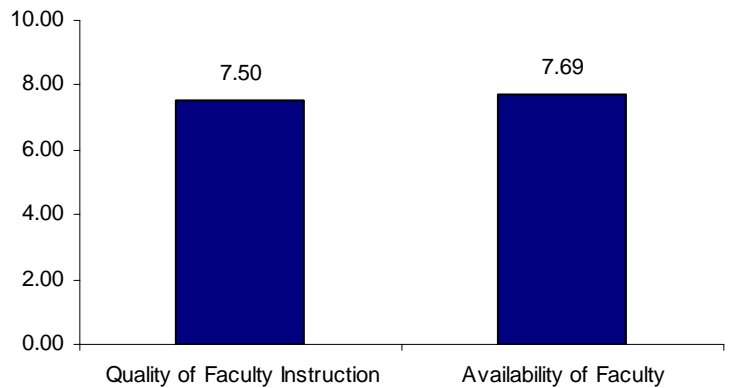


Faculty at Northern Arizona University

Consistent with findings from past Sophomore, Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys, the 2007 sophomores are satisfied with both the quality of faculty instruction and the availability of faculty (such as for office hours or meeting before / after class).

Sophomores were asked to rate their satisfaction with both the quality and availability of faculty on a scale of 1-10 (1=very dissatisfied and 10=very satisfied). The mean satisfaction value for the quality of faculty instruction was 7.50 and for the availability of faculty 7.69.

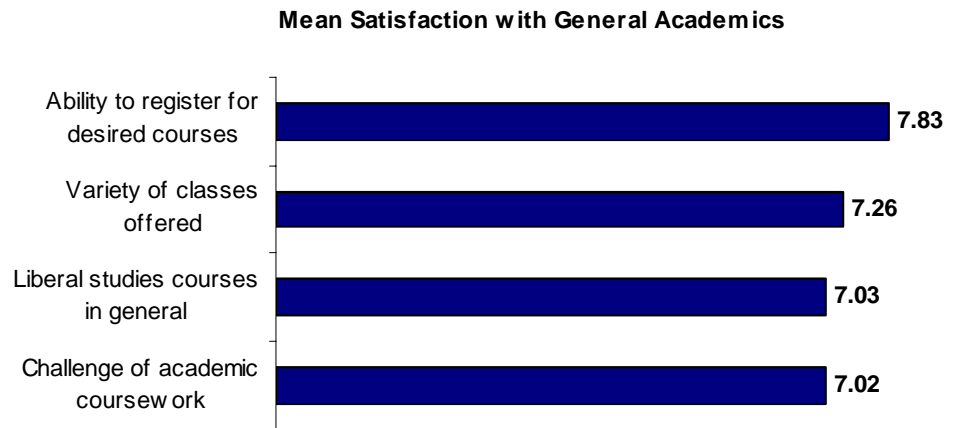
Mean Satisfaction with Quality and Availability of Faculty



General Academics

Overall students report satisfaction in the four areas measuring satisfaction with general academics. Again, students were asked to rate their satisfaction with specific content areas on a scale of 1-10 (1=very dissatisfied and 10=very satisfied).

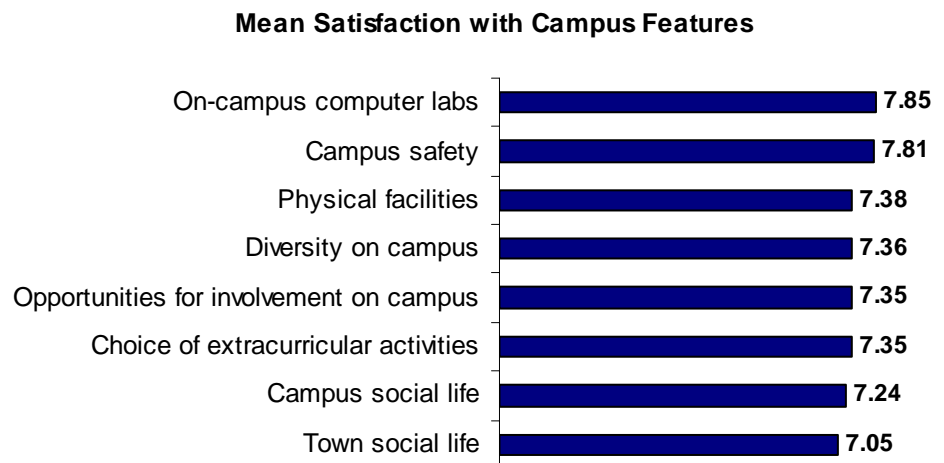
Greatest satisfaction is reported for the student's ability to register for desired courses (7.83), followed by the variety of classes offered (7.26), the liberal studies courses in general (7.03), and the challenge of academic coursework (7.02).



Campus Features

Asked to rate their satisfaction with several dimensions of the campus on a scale of 1-10 (1=very dissatisfied and 10=very satisfied).

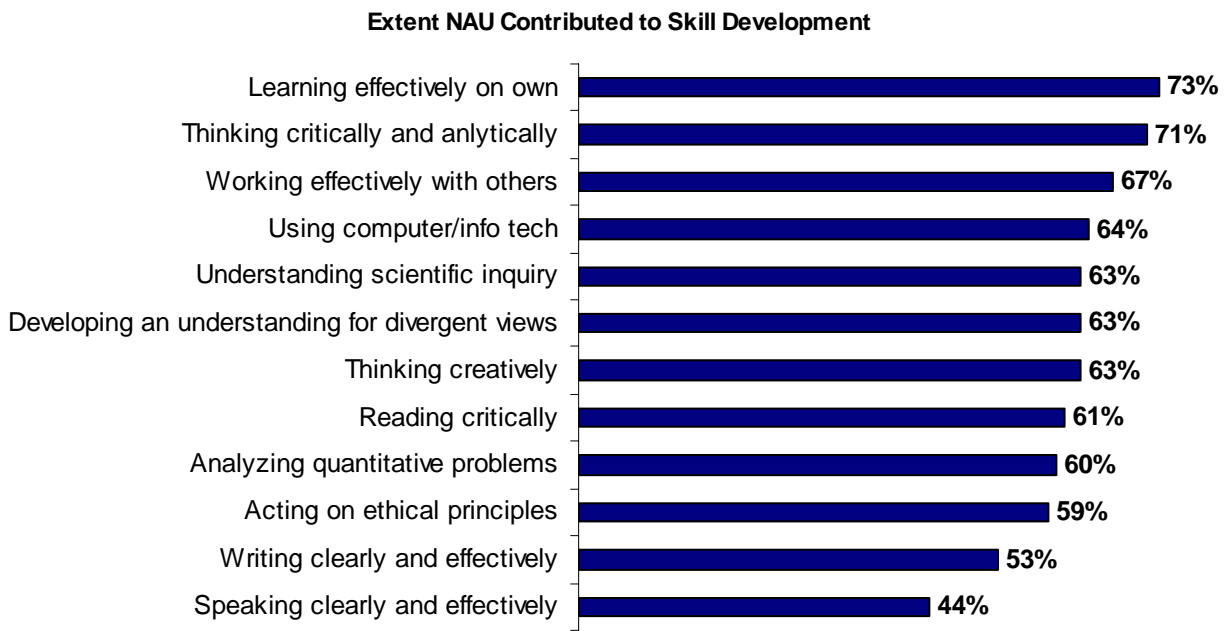
Students overall were satisfied, reporting a mean of 7.00 or greater for all eight dimensions. The highest satisfaction was reported with the on-campus computer labs (7.85) and campus safety (7.81) and the lowest, though still greater than 7.00, with the total social life (7.05) and the campus social life (7.24).



II. Skills and Abilities Development

Extent that NAU Has Facilitated Skill Development

Sophomores were asked to evaluate the extent that their NAU education has facilitated their development in a variety of skill areas. Possible response categories included “very little,” “some,” “quite a bit,” and “very much.” While the proportion of sophomores indicating that their NAU education has contributed significantly to their development of specific skills varies from a low of 44 percent for speaking clearly and effectively to a high of 73 percent for learning effectively on their own, it should be kept in mind that these are respondents that, on average, have two to three years of courses still to take at NAU. Yet, many of these skill categories are the objectives of the liberal studies curriculum that are generally taken by first-year and sophomore students³.



Time Management

Surveys of incoming NAU students indicate that time management is a salient issue for entering students. When asked to rate on a scale of 1-10 how successful they are at time management, students rated themselves at a mean of 7.04. The below table provides a breakdown of how sophomores at NAU report spending their time in a typical 7-day week.

³ It should be noted that NAU participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), a national survey that provides norms by which to compare NAU respondents to ascertain the extent that NAU is similar or dissimilar to comparable universities. For these skill development questions, NAU’s NSSE 2005 respondents (which are first-year and seniors students) scored about the same as the national norms when asked the extent that their experiences at NAU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in these areas. NAU’s first-year students were slightly less likely to report that NAU contributed to their ability to write clearly and effectively and speak clearly and effectively when compared to first-year students at other doctoral intensive institutions. NAU did not participate in the NSSE survey in 2006, but will again in 2007.

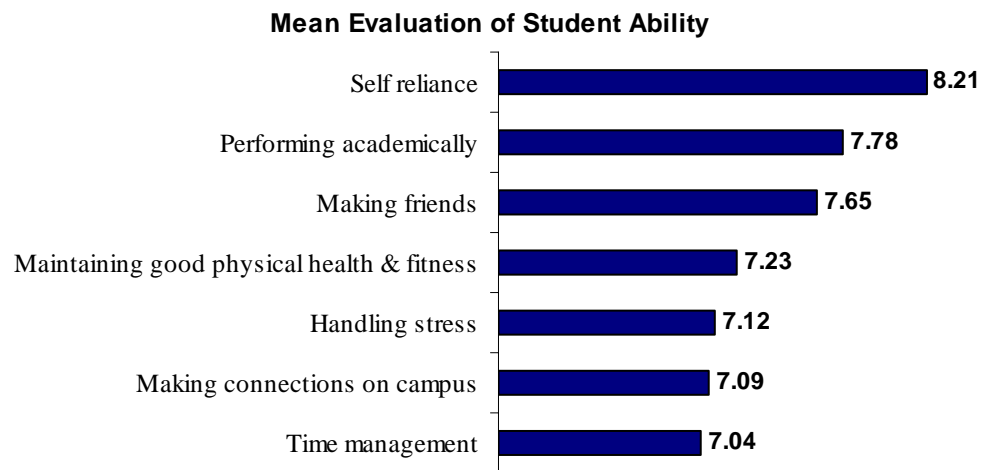
Time Management⁴

Time Management	0 hrs/wk	1-5 hrs/wk	6-10 hrs/wk	11-15 hrs/wk	16-20 hrs/wk	21-25 hrs/wk	26-30 hrs/wk	30+ hrs/wk
<i>Preparing for class</i>	0%	16%	29%	21%	16%	11%	5%	3%
<i>Working for pay on campus</i>	70%	4%	5%	7%	7%	3%	2%	2%
<i>Working for pay off campus</i>	63%	3%	5%	6%	6%	7%	5%	6%

No student reported spending zero hours a week preparing for classes, however, 45 percent of the respondents reported spending ten hours or less preparing for class. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the sophomore respondents reported spending 11–25 hours a week preparing for class. Only eight percent of respondents spent more than 25 hours a week preparing for class.

The majority of students do not work for pay on campus (70%). Eighteen percent (18%) of students working-off campus work more than twenty hours a week, compared to only seven percent of students working on-campus.

In addition to time management, students were asked to rate how successful they were on a scale of 1-10 on a variety of abilities indicative of academic success (1=very unsuccessful and 10=very successful). This figure summarizes the student ratings of their abilities. Students indicated success (rounded 8.0 or higher) for self reliance (8.21), performing academically (7.78) and making friends (7.65).



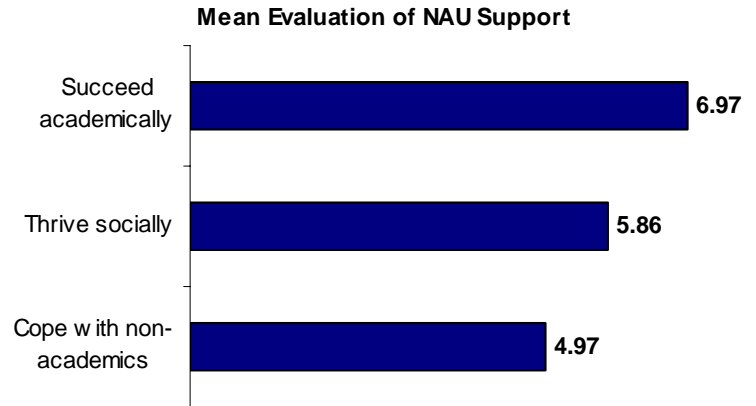
⁴ It should be noted that NAU participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement, a national survey that provides norms by which to compare NAU respondents to ascertain the extent that NAU is similar or dissimilar to comparable universities. For this time management section, NAU's 2005 NSSE freshmen respondents spent significantly less time preparing for class and significantly more time working for pay on campus and less time working for pay off campus. NAU's NSSE senior respondents spent significantly more time working for pay on campus and significantly less time working for pay off campus, but spent the same amount of time as the national norm preparing for class. NAU did not participate in the NSSE survey in 2006, but will again in 2007.

III. Student Evaluation of NAU Support and Services

Given the multitude of options students face when choosing a college, evaluating how NAU students perceive the university environment in terms of services offered, relationships with key players, and general customer service in departments is an important initial step in identifying weaknesses that can be improved and strengths that can be modeled.

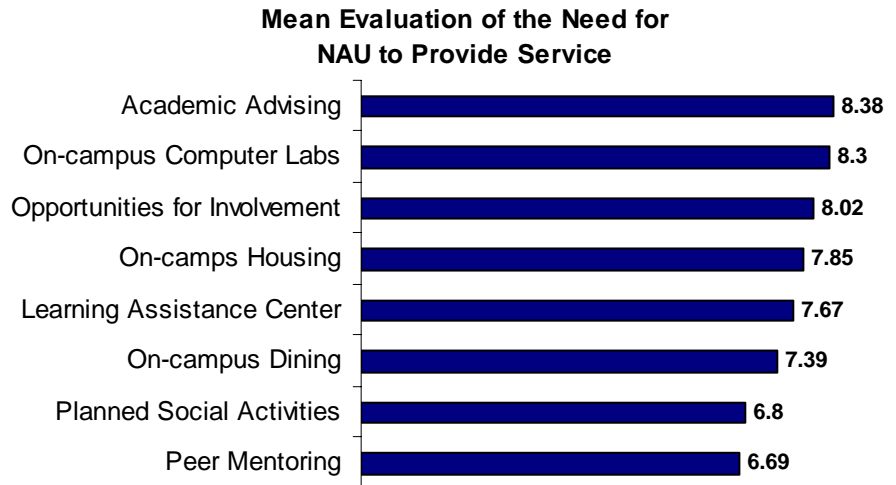
Student Perception of Support on Campus

Students were asked to rate on a scale of 1-10 the level of support NAU provides in a variety of areas (1=very little and 10=very much). As may be expected, NAU provided the greatest support in helping students succeed academically (6.97) and the least support in helping students cope with non-academic responsibilities (4.97).



Student Assessment of University's Need to Provide Services

NAU sophomore students were asked to rate the importance of the University providing a variety of services on a scale of 1-10 (1=unimportant and 10=very important). The top rated services for the University to provide included academic advising (8.38), on-campus computer labs (8.30), opportunities for involvement (8.03), and on-campus housing (7.85).



While still rated high on a scale of 1-10, less important services included peer mentoring (6.69) and planned social activities (6.80).

Student Evaluations of Campus Relationships

Another aspect of the campus environment is student evaluations of the quality of relationships that they have with key players at NAU. These key players include other students, faculty members, and administrative personnel and offices. Sophomores were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 7, the number that best represented the quality of their relationships with these three groups.

Student Evaluation of Campus Relationships

<i>Relationship with:</i>	Scale Value 1	Scale Value 7	Mean
Students	Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of Alienation	Friendly, Supportive, Sense of Belonging	5.75
Faculty	Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic	Available, Helpful, Sympathetic	5.31
Administrative Personnel & Offices	Unhelpful, Inconsiderate, Rigid	Helpful, Considerate, Flexible	4.51

Students evaluated their relationship with other students the highest (5.75) of the three categories. Their relationships with faculty were rated at 5.31 on the 7.00 scale and relationships with administrative personnel and offices were 4.51 on the 7.0 scale.

Sophomore Student Experience with Academic Advising

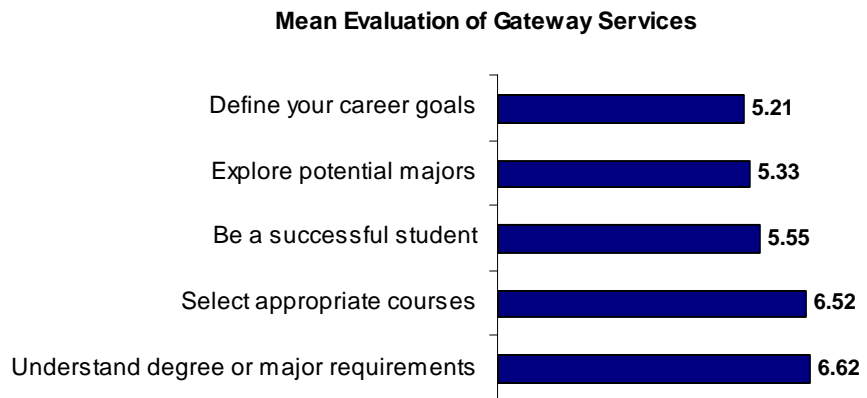
Academic advising had historically been identified as an area in need of improvement on a variety of surveys conducted at NAU over the past several years. In the 2007 administration of the Sophomore survey, 85 percent of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their academic advising to this point in their NAU education and 79 percent indicating that academic advising has been available when they needed it.

Eighty-three percent (83%) of respondents indicated that they had received advising from the Gateway Student Success Center (N=601). Of these 601 respondents, 86 percent reported a Gateway advisor was available when they needed assistance. The 601 students that received advising from Gateway

were asked to rate the variety of help they received on a variety of services from the staff on a scale of 1-10 (1=very little and 10=very much).

Excluding those students that indicated they did not receive a given service from Gateway, students

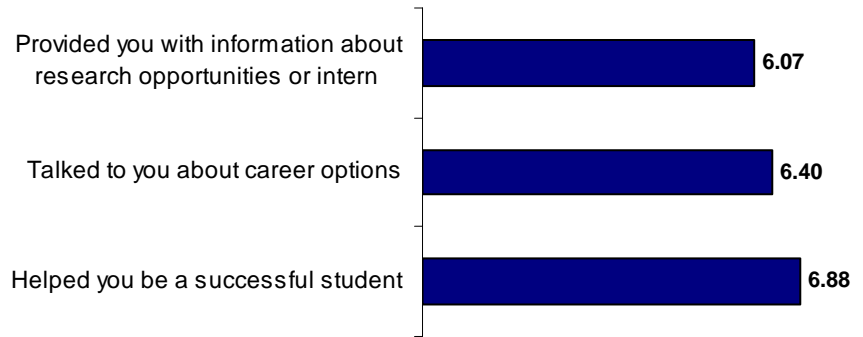
reported the greatest help in understanding degree or major requirements (6.62) and selecting appropriate courses (6.52). The lowest rate area for help from the Gateway Center was helping sophomores definite their career goals (5.21).



Seventy-six percent (76%; N=550) of the respondents had received advising from their major department. Ninety-one percent of these individuals reported an academic advisor was available when they needed assistance. Thirty-five percent of these respondents reported having meet with their major advisor once, 36 percent reported having met twice, and 27 percent had met with their major advisor three or more times. The below figure summarizes the extent that the major department advising helped the respondents in the various categories on a scale of 1-10 (1=very little and 10=very much).

When asked to rate the extent of help received from their major department's advising on a scale of 1-10 for three specific areas, the highest rated area was helping them be a successful student (6.88) followed by talking about career options (6.40) and information on research opportunities or internships (6.07).

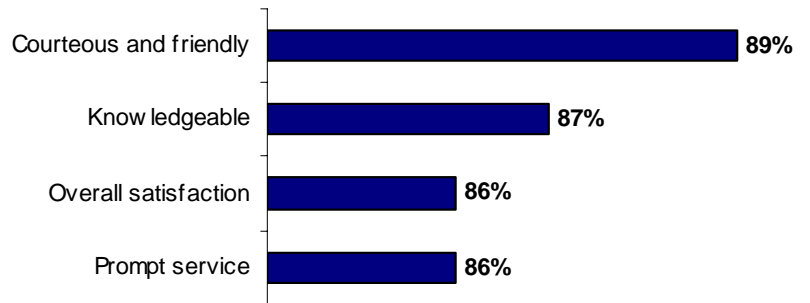
Mean Evaluation of Major Advising



Sophomore Student Experience and Evaluation of NAU's Registrar's Office

Fifty percent (50%) of respondents had contact with the Registrar's office (N=361). Of those that had contact with the Registrar's office, 27 percent were via phone, 64 percent were in person, and nine percent were via email / website.

Satisfaction with Registrar's Office



Overall, 86 percent of respondents that had contact with the Registrar's office were satisfied. Eighty-nine percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the office was courteous and friendly. Nearly nine out of ten respondents reported the staff to be knowledgeable (87%) and that they received prompt service (86%).

Sophomore Student Ratings of the Course Registration Process

Students were asked to rate NAU's Louie registration system. On a scale of 1-10 (1=poor and 10=excellent), the overall mean value was 6.95. Forty-seven percent of the students indicated that they were unable to register for a desire course while at NAU.

Students were asked to check all other problems they may have had with the registration system. Ninety-eight students skipped this section and these results are based upon a total of 626 respondents that indicated a problem with registration. The two most commonly report problem was the lack of variability in class times (68%) and filled classes (64%). Nearly

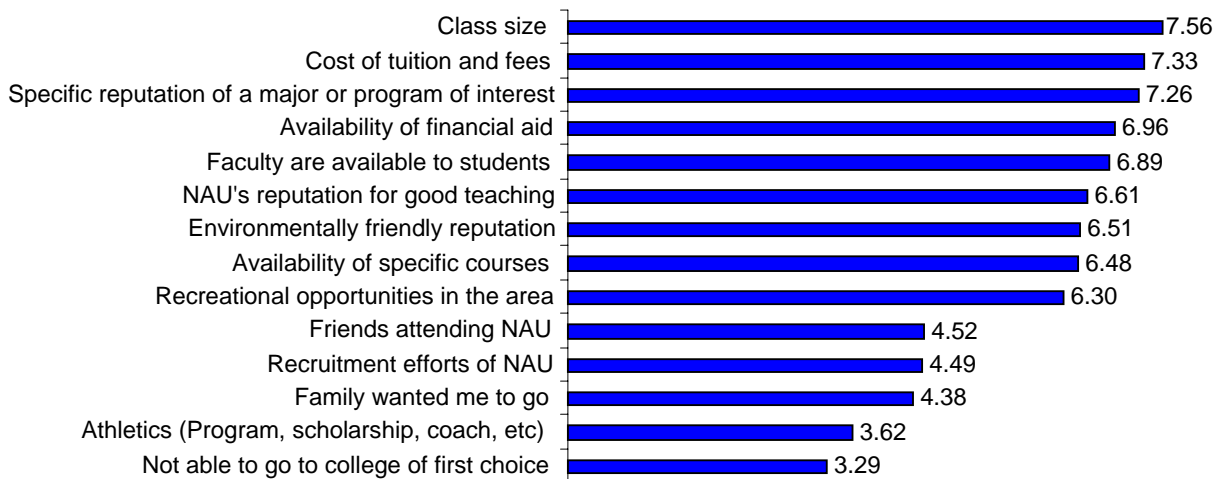
Problem with Registration	%	N
Lack of variability in class times	68%	425
Filled classes	64%	403
Unable to register for class(es) because of incorrect prerequisite information in system	32%	197
System overload-unable to sign on	27%	170
Current registration system is not student-friendly	22%	136
Not easy to find a list of current classes that are open and available	22%	140
No full list of classes on paper	16%	98
Other	11%	71
Computer lab hours don't coincide with registration times	4%	26

1/3 of students reported they were unable to register for a class because of incorrect prerequisite information in the system (32%) and nearly three out of ten students were unable to sign onto the system because of overload. The other problems reported included: the registration system not being user-friendly (22%), unable to find a list of open classes (22%), no full list of classes available on paper (16%), and computer lab hours (4%). Seventy-one students reported an “other” registration problem

IV. Why NAU?

Students were asked to rate the importance of a given list of reasons for attending NAU on a scale of 1-10 (1=very unimportant and 10=very important). The top five reasons for attending NAU were class size (7.56), cost of tuition and fees (7.33), specific reputation of a major or program (7.26), availability of financial aid (6.96) and faculty availability (6.89). The least important reasons included for coming to NAU included not being able to go to the college of first choice (3.29) and athletics 3.62).

Mean Importance Rating for Reasons to Attend NAU



The Office of Planning and Institutional Research welcomes feedback concerning this and other studies and how they can continue to be improved.

APPENDIX A. 2007 Sample and Population Demographics

The 2006 survey sample was similar to the overall population of seniors on most characteristics examined. As is common in survey research, females are overrepresented as survey respondents. It is unclear how, if at all, this discrepancy in the sample population affect the overall results of this study.

Sample and Population Demographic Comparison - 2007		
	Survey Participants	All Sophomores
Group Size	724	2435
Sampling Error		3.1%
Gender		
Female	69%	58%
Ethnicity		
American Indian	4%	5%
Asian American	2%	2%
Black/African American	2%	3%
Hispanic/Latino	8%	11%
International	1%	1%
White	79%	75%
Not Specified	3%	3%
Age (average)	21	21
AZ Resident	74%	75%
CUM GPA	2.92	2.65
Campus		
Flagstaff Mountain Campus Student	96%	91%
Statewide	2%	4%
Online	1%	3%
Yuma	<1%	2%

APPENDIX B. Descriptive Statistics for Scale Ratings

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
To this point in your NAU education, how satisfied have you been with each of the following areas? (scale 1-10)			
Quality of faculty instruction	717	7.50	1.78
Availability of faculty	720	7.69	1.90
Challenge of academic coursework	721	7.83	1.78
Variety of classes that are offered	719	7.26	2.05
Ability to register for desired courses	723	7.03	2.28
Liberal studies courses in general	719	7.02	2.15
Opportunities for involvement on campus	716	7.35	2.01
Choice of extracurricular/out-of-class activities (clubs, student government, recreation, Greek Life, etc.)	717	7.35	2.14
Campus social life	713	7.24	2.16
Town social life	717	7.05	2.22
Diversity (e.g. in study body and faculty)	717	7.36	2.15
Campus safety	714	7.81	1.96
Physical facilities	719	7.38	2.02
On-campus computer labs	720	7.85	2.01
How successful are you at each of the following? (scale 1-10)			
Time management	720	7.04	2.07
Handling stress	721	7.12	2.14
Making friends	720	7.65	2.18
Maintaining good physical health and fitness	722	7.23	2.23
Performing academically	720	7.78	1.91
Self reliance	721	8.21	1.88
Making connections on campus	716	7.09	2.23
To what extent does NAU emphasize each of the following? (scale 1-10)			
Providing the support you need to thrive socially	715	5.86	2.45
Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	717	6.97	2.10
Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	717	4.97	2.69
How important is it for the university to provide sophomores with the following university services? (scale 1-10)			
Peer mentoring	718	6.69	2.50
Academic advising	720	8.38	2.01
Learning assistance centers	716	7.67	2.30
On-campus housing	714	7.85	2.39
Planned social activities	713	6.80	2.54
Opportunities for recreation	714	8.02	2.14
On-campus computer	715	8.30	2.03
On-campus dining	713	7.39	2.52

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
To what extent has the Gateway Center helped you: (scale 1-10)			
Define your career goals	599	5.21	3.03
Explore potential majors	600	5.33	3.11
Understand degree or major requirements	601	6.62	2.91
Select appropriate courses	597	6.52	2.89
Be a successful student	599	5.55	2.91
To what extent has your major department advising: (scale 1-10)			
Helped you be a successful student	546	6.88	2.74
Provided you with information about research opportunities or intern	546	6.07	3.15
Talked to you about career options	546	6.40	3.15
How would you rate NAU's Louie/PeopleSoft registration system?-	720	6.95	2.30
How satisfied were you with the web format?-	274	7.26	2.24
How satisfied were you with the interactive TV format?-	34	6.44	2.68
How successful has NAU been in integrating technology into the learning environment?-	711	7.13	1.98
Rate the Importance of the Following Factors as They Relate to Your Decision to Attend NAU: (scale 1-10)			
Availability of financial aid (loan, scholarship, or grant)	716	6.96	3.19
Availability of specific courses	719	6.48	2.95
Cost of tuition and fees	712	7.33	2.81
Class size	718	7.56	2.64
Friends attending NAU	715	4.52	3.21
Family wanted me to go	717	4.38	3.19
Faculty are available to students	716	6.89	2.81
Recreational opportunities in the area	717	6.30	2.93
Athletics (program, scholarship, coach, etc.)	715	3.62	3.06
Environmentally friendly reputation of NAU	718	6.51	3.03
NAU's reputation for good teaching	716	6.61	2.90
Not able to go to college of first choice	709	3.29	3.09
Recruitment efforts of NAU	718	4.49	3.06
Specific reputation of a major or program of interest	718	7.26	2.93