

2001 Alumni Survey Report



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Northern Arizona University 2001 Alumni Survey Report

Background and Purpose

- Although NAU has conducted phone surveys of its alumni over the past four years, this information has not been summarized and examined.
- The purpose of this report was to look at the surveys from the past four years (with an emphasis on 2001) to see what the alumni have been doing, what they think about their experiences here at NAU and how this has changed over time, and to identify some factors that may be affecting their satisfaction.

Research Design

- The sample for the 2001 study was 415 students, most of whom (95%) graduated in 1997 or 1998. This sample size yields an error rate of $\pm 5\%$.
- This sample was representative of the graduates during the 1997-98 fiscal year in terms of ethnicity and age. The sample, however, included a higher percentage of females, Education graduates, and statewide students.
- The method of administration was a phone survey. The Social Research Laboratory was provided with a list of 2868 alumni with telephone numbers in their records, and all of these numbers were called. Of those attempted, 525 successfully reached a survey candidate, and the response rate for these was 79%.

What Do the Results of the 2001 Survey Tell Us?

- Most of the alumni respondents have been engaged in work (95%) and/or graduate/professional school activities (70%) since graduation. Of those working, 85% have jobs related to their major, and the job categories most frequently reported included Teaching/Education, Business, and Health. Of those completing or in graduate school, most (79%) have pursued master's degrees.
- Alumni satisfaction was generally high in most cases, with the highest being with overall university experience (99%) and the NAU faculty (98%). Advising in liberal studies (67%) and career goals (62%) were not rated as high.
- The majority of respondents felt their education helped their development in certain basic areas (broad general education, work skills, critical thinking, working with others, and independent learning), with the exception of using computer/information technology (41%).

- Factors affecting the respondents' satisfaction with their overall experience included how satisfied they were with their career preparation, the faculty, the advising they received in their major and with career goals, and their perception of development in the six basic areas.
- In all areas of satisfaction, there was some increase in the 2001 alumni survey from the 1998 graduating senior survey (the year most of the alumni respondents graduated), either in general satisfaction, those giving the highest rating, or both.
- In the four years of the alumni survey, most factors have remained stable. On three of the factors (overall experience, faculty, and career advising), there was a pattern of increasing general satisfaction combined with a decrease in those giving the highest rating. Attendance in graduate/professional school is at its highest point in 2001.
- The colleges rating high on important factors such as career preparation, career advising, and relation of postgraduate employment with major included Education, Health Professions, and Hotel & Restaurant Management.

Future Directions

- Improvement may be needed in several important alumni areas, including career preparation, career advising, and the development of proficiency in using computer/information technology. These three areas had ratings that were much lower than other areas assessed.
- The alumni survey provides very important and useful information, but is limited in several ways. The survey should be continued with a revised set of questions.

Northern Arizona University Alumni Survey Report

Spring 2001

Introduction

For the past four years, Northern Arizona University has been surveying its alumni in order to keep track of their graduate school and/or employment activities, and to have them reflect on their experience at the university. In addition to postgraduate activities, the alumni are asked to rate their satisfaction on such topics as the faculty, career preparation, advising, the extent to which they were helped in the development of certain basic skills, and their overall experience.

Along with other assessment activities (i.e., the graduating senior survey), the information obtained from the alumni surveys is very important to the university, allowing it to highlight strengths and to identify areas that may be in need of improvement. The alumni survey results can also be compared to their corresponding senior survey results (in most cases, three years earlier) to see if the opinions of the alumni have changed since they have been out in the workforce and/or in graduate/professional school and have had time to reflect on the true value of their education and experiences. Like NAU, most universities survey their alumni annually. To date, however, the information from the four years of alumni surveys at NAU have not yet been summarized and used in any way, apart from responses on several key questions that are used for accountability reports.

It is the purpose of the current report to present the relevant information that is provided by the most recent alumni survey at NAU (Spring 2001). The data from the 2001 survey will be summarized, and several variables that may be affecting the overall satisfaction of the alumni with their experience at NAU will be examined. In addition, the results from the 2001 survey will be compared to the results of the 1998 graduating senior survey (the year that most of the alumni respondents graduated). Next, the results of the last four alumni surveys will be examined together for possible trends over the past four years. Finally, key data across all four years will be presented for each of the ten colleges at NAU. The above data will then be discussed in terms of highlights and areas where improvement may be necessary. In addition, the shortcomings of the survey will be discussed along with suggestions for future administration.

Method

The 2001 Northern Arizona University alumni survey was administered by phone by the Social Research Laboratory to a sample of former students, most of whom graduated in the fall of 1997, spring 1998, or summer 1998 (approximately three years out of college). The Social Research Laboratory was provided with a list of students who had graduated in the above semesters. From this list, there were a total of 2868 alumni with telephone numbers in their records that were attempted. Out of the 2868 phone numbers attempted,

525 successfully reached a survey candidate (the expected person was at the number and they graduated from NAU), and 415 of those agreed to participate in the survey. This number was similar to the number of alumni surveyed in past years, and it yields an error rate of $\pm 5\%$. The participation rate was 79% from the survey candidates that were successfully contacted.

The survey consisted of 32 forced-choice and open-ended questions. The first question was a screening question, asking which year the respondent graduated from NAU. The survey was not continued if the respondent answered that they did not graduate from NAU. See Appendix B for a list of the survey questions.

For each question, the frequencies for each of the response choices were compiled and reported as a percentage. In the sections below where inferential statistics are reported, the frequency data were used in chi-square cross-tabulation analyses, in most cases to look at whether one variable (frequency of responses on a certain question, year of survey, college) influenced the responses on a certain question from the survey beyond chance levels. It should be noted that one should use caution when interpreting statistical data. While the information from the statistical tests used below is informative, it should only be used as another way to look at and make sense of the numbers.

Summary of Responses to the 2001 Survey Questions

Demographic and Background Questions

- Of the 415 respondents to the 2001 survey, 139 (34%) were male and 276 (67%) were female.
- The age range was 21 to 62, with a mean of 30.
- 59% of the respondents graduated in 1998, while another 36% graduated in 1997.
- Table 1 shows how the demographic and background information of the 2001 survey respondents compares to all graduates during the fiscal year of 1997-98. The table shows that while the survey sample was quite similar to the above population on such factors as ethnicity and age, there does seem to be some oversampling of alumni who are female, whose major area fell under education, and who entered NAU as transfer students.

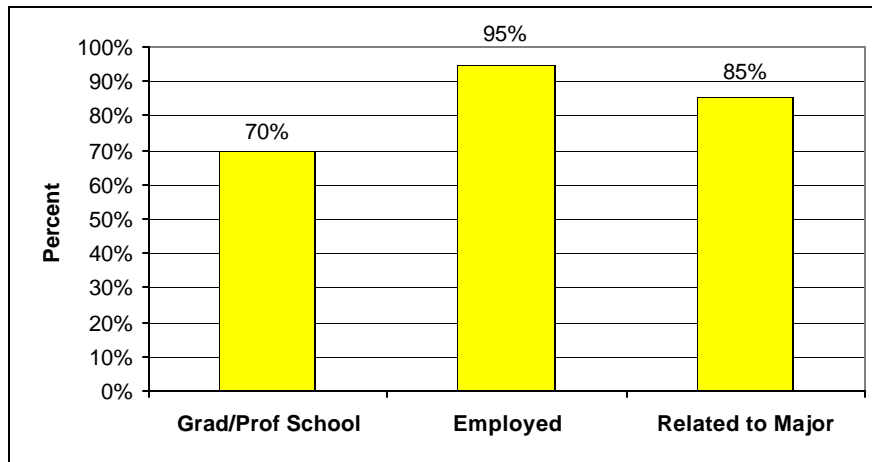
Table 1. Demographic and background characteristics of the 2001 survey respondents and all graduates during the fiscal year 1997-98.

Characteristics	Survey Sample	FY 1997-98 Graduates
Age	30	29
Gender		
Male	34%	42%
Female	67%	58%
Ethnicity		
White/Caucasian	82%	81%
Hispanic	9%	9%
Native American	5%	5%
African American	1%	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1%	2%
Other/Unknown	1%	2%
College/School		
Arts & Sciences	12%	21%
Business Administration	7%	12%
Communication	10%	7%
Ecosystem Science & Management	2%	3%
Education	35%	18%
Engineering & Technology	4%	4%
Fine Arts	1%	4%
Health Professions	7%	9%
Hotel & Restaurant Management	4%	2%
Social & Behavioral Sciences	11%	16%
Other	6%	3%
Location		
Flagstaff	80%	89%
Statewide	20%	11%
Transfer		
Yes	64%	47%

Postgraduate Activities

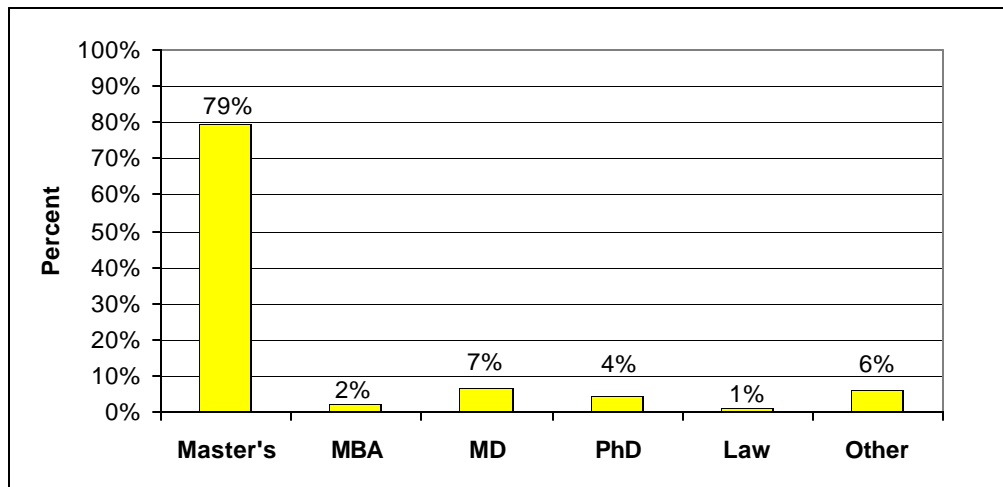
- 70% of the respondents have pursued (or are pursuing) a graduate or professional education since graduation from NAU.
- 95% of the respondents reported that they have been employed since completing their studies. Of those who have been employed, 85% are working in jobs that are related to their major field of study.

Figure 1. Postgraduate school and employment activities of the 2001 alumni survey respondents.



- The degrees that have been pursued (or are being pursued) by the respondents included master's degrees (79%), M.B.A. (2%), M.D. (7%), Ph.D. (4%), law (1%), and other degrees, including postgraduate certificates (2%).

Figure 2. Degrees pursued by the respondents who reported that they have attended, or are attending, graduate or professional school.



- Employment activities reported by the respondents were grouped into categories in order to better represent the types of work that the alumni from the 2001 survey have been engaged in. Table 2 below shows the frequency and percentage of respondents reporting jobs in each of the established categories.

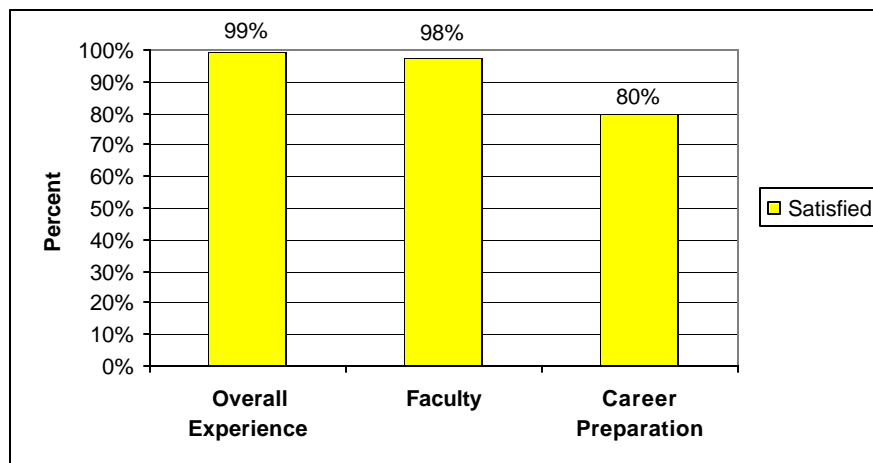
Table 2. Frequency and percentage within each category of jobs as reported by the respondents to the 2001 alumni survey.

Job Category	Frequency	Percentage
Teaching/Education	152	39%
Business/Managerial/Administration	63	16%
Legal/Criminal Justice	14	4%
Science/Research	13	3%
Advertising/Sales/Public Relations	23	6%
Psychology/Behavioral Science/Human Services	20	5%
Engineering	15	4%
Journalism (TV/Newspaper)	10	3%
Computer-Related	7	2%
Health-Related	30	8%
Arts	7	2%
Government	6	2%
Military	7	2%
Coaching	3	1%
Service Industry	19	5%

Satisfaction Questions

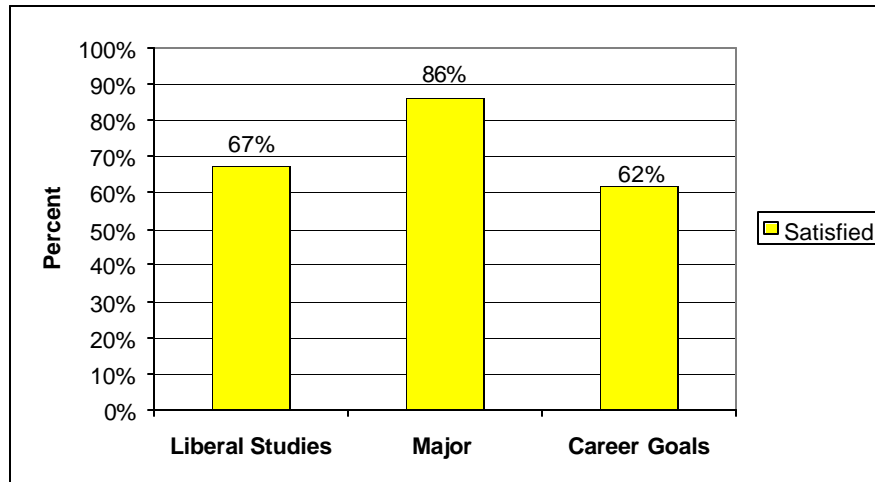
- Almost every respondent (99%) rated their overall experience at NAU as either “excellent” or “good.”
- Satisfaction with NAU faculty was also very high (98%), though satisfaction with how well NAU prepared the alumni for their careers (80%) was somewhat lower.

Figure 3. Satisfaction with overall experience, NAU faculty, and career preparation: Percentage of alumni responding “excellent” or “good” on the 2001 survey.



- 86% of the respondents were satisfied (rating of “excellent” or “good”) with the advising that they received in their major field.
- 62% were satisfied with the advising they received with their career goals.
- 67% were satisfied with the liberal studies advising that they received.

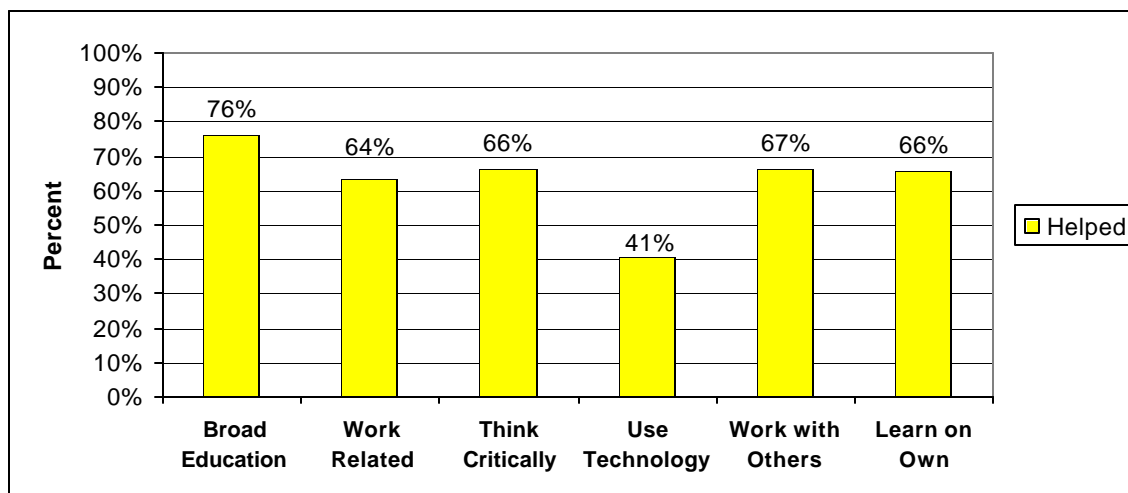
Figure 4. Satisfaction with advising in liberal studies, the major field, and with career goals: Percentage of alumni responding “excellent” or “good” in 2001.



Skills Developed at NAU

- The survey asked respondents to rate the extent to which their NAU education helped their development in certain areas that are helpful in the workplace: acquiring a broad general education, acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills, thinking critically and analytically, using computer and information technology, working effectively with others, and learning effectively on their own.
- 76% of the respondents stated that NAU helped them “very much” or “quite a bit” in acquiring a broad general education.
- Perceptions of help were also high in the areas of work-related knowledge/skills (64%), critical thinking (66%), working with others (67%), and learning on their own (66%).
- One area that did not rate as well was the development of skills in using computer and information technology, as only 41% felt they were helped “very much” or “quite a bit.”

Figure 5. Perceptions of help in the development of skills: Percentage of alumni responding “very much” or “quite a bit” on each of the six areas.



Other Questions of Interest

- 33% of the respondents stated that they had participated in a research or creative project with a faculty member during their time at NAU.
- 31% changed their major at least once while working on their undergraduate degree.
- 94% believed that the value of their NAU education was worth the cost in the long run.

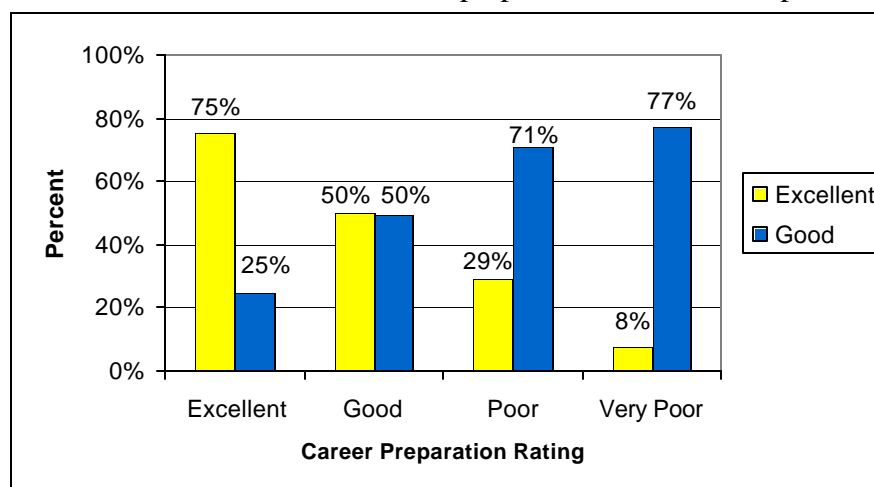
Factors Affecting Overall Satisfaction

While almost every respondent (99%) rated their satisfaction with their overall experience at NAU as satisfactory (at least “good”), less than half of these (44%) believed that their experience was “excellent.” In this section, some of the other more specific factors that may have had an effect on these ratings will be examined. This includes most of the questions reported on in the previous section. Only those questions that had a significant effect on overall experience rating are reported below.

Satisfaction with Career Preparation

- The respondents’ ratings of their satisfaction with the extent to which their academic experience at NAU prepared them for their career had a significant influence on their ratings of the overall experience¹.
- Figure 6 shows how those who were most satisfied with how well they were prepared for their careers were more likely to rate their experience as “excellent.”

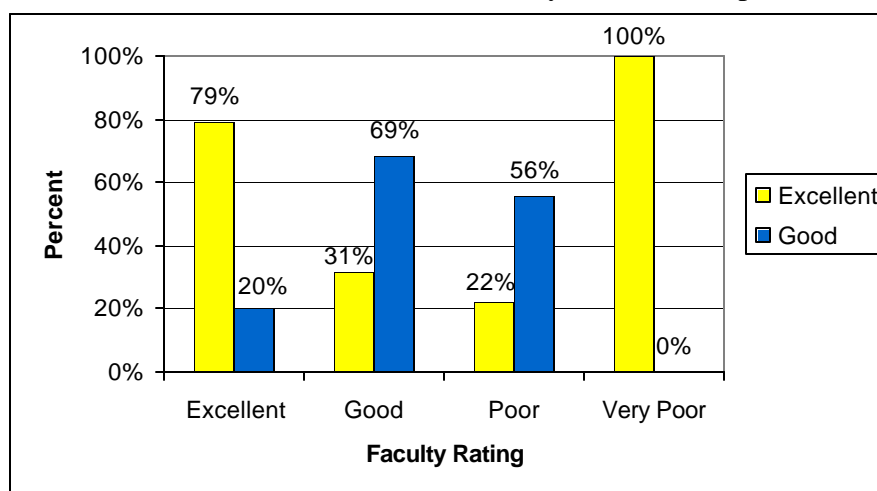
Figure 6. The effect of satisfaction with career preparation on overall experience rating.



Satisfaction with Faculty

- Faculty satisfaction rating also had a significant influence on the respondents' rating of their overall experience².
- Figure 7 shows that those alumni who rated the NAU faculty as "excellent" were more likely to rate their overall experience as "excellent."

Figure 7. The effect of satisfaction with NAU faculty on overall experience rating.



Satisfaction with Advising in the Major and with Career Goals

- Other important factors that significantly influenced the respondents' overall satisfaction rating were advising in the major³ and advising with career goals⁴.

- Figures 8 and 9 show that respondents who were most satisfied with the advising they received in these two areas were more likely to rate their overall experience as “excellent.”

Figure 8. The effect of satisfaction with major advising on overall experience rating.

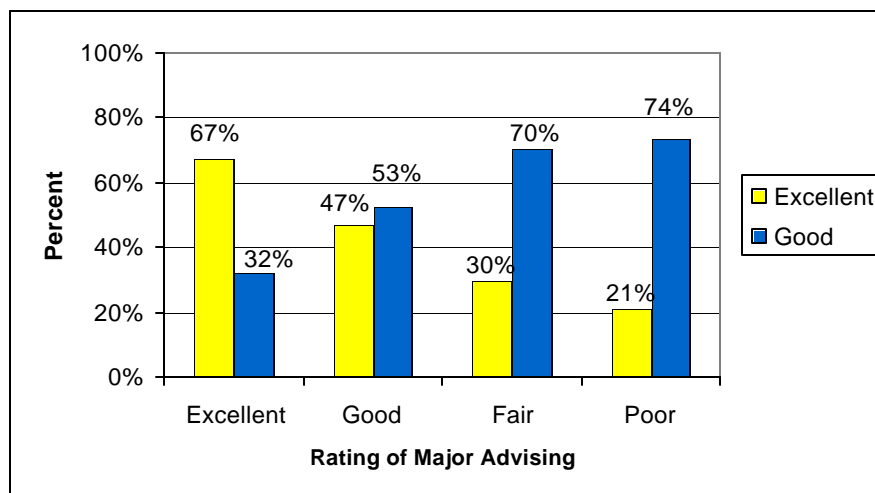
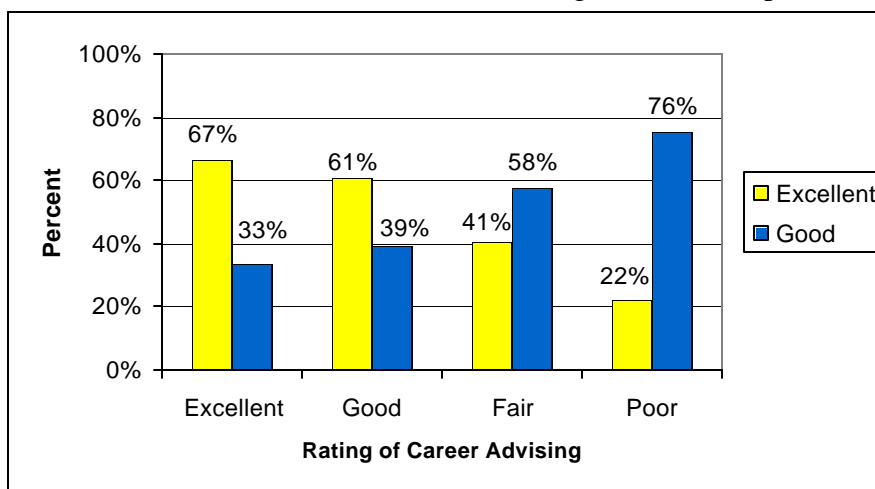


Figure 9. The effect of satisfaction with career advising on overall experience rating.



Perception of Skill Development

- The respondents’ perceptions of how much their NAU education facilitated their development in acquiring a broad general education⁵, in acquiring work-related knowledge/skills⁶, in thinking critically and analytically⁷, in using computer and information technology⁸, in working effectively with others⁹, and in learning effectively on their own¹⁰ all significantly affected how they rated their overall experience.

- For all of these areas, respondents who stated that their education contributed to their development “very much” were more likely to rate their overall experience as “excellent” (See Figures 10-15).

Figure 10. The effect of skill development (broad general education) on overall experience rating.

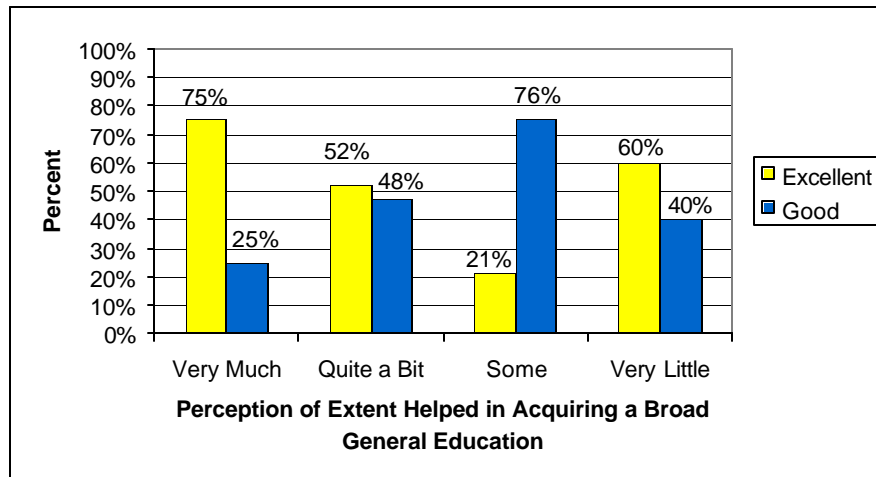


Figure 11. The effect of skill development (work-related knowledge/skills) on overall experience rating.

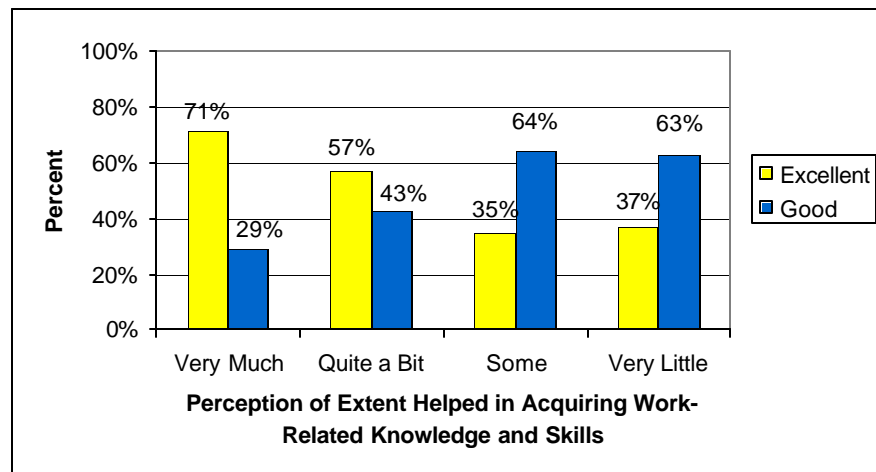


Figure 12. The effect of skill development (critical/analytical thinking) on overall experience rating.

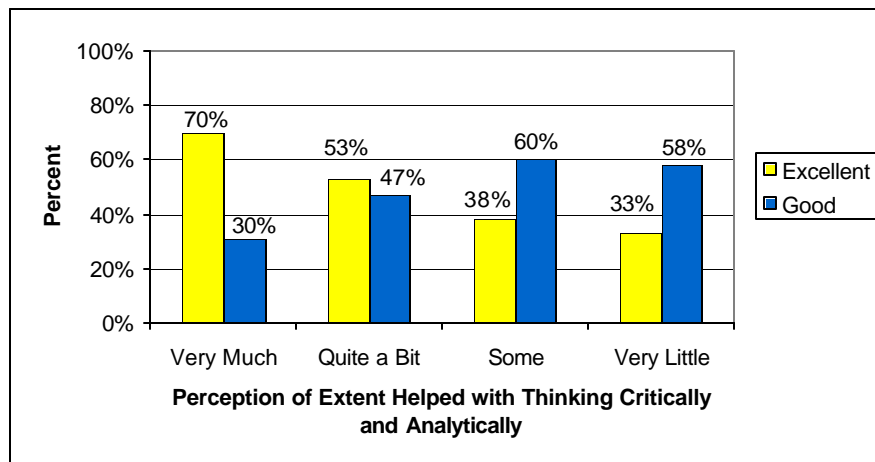


Figure 13. The effect of skill development (using computer/information technology) on overall experience rating.

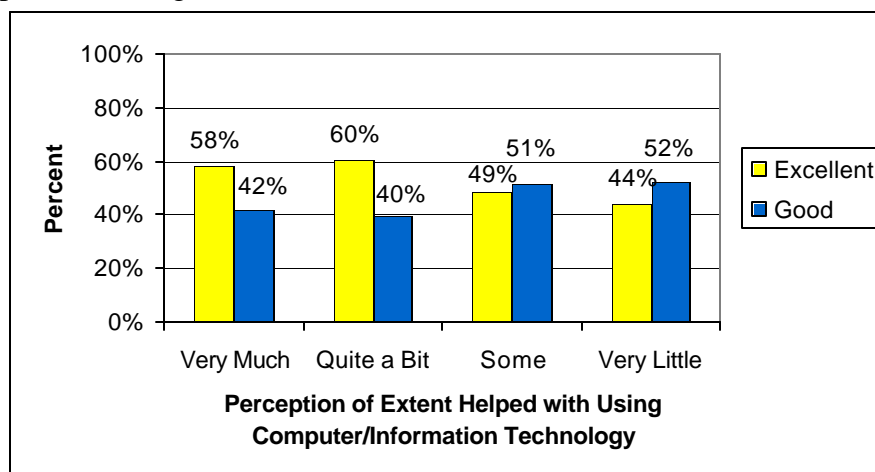


Figure 14. The effect of skill development (working effectively with others) on overall experience rating.

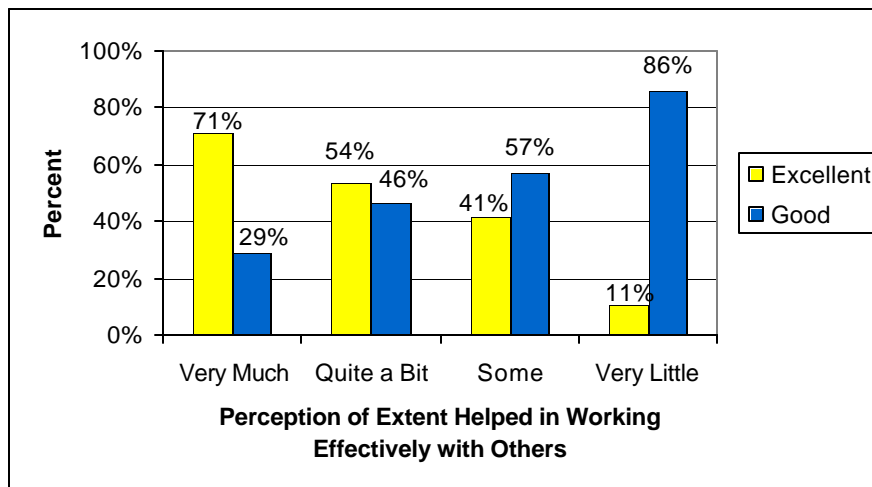
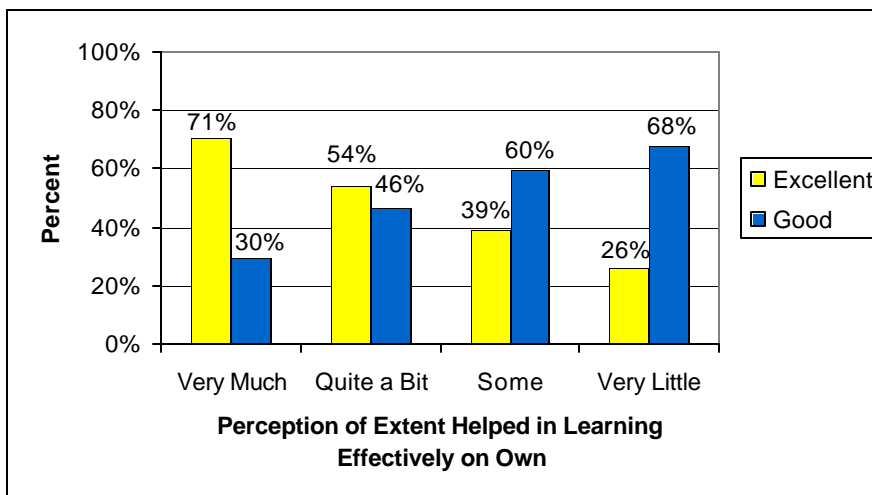


Figure 15. The effect of skill development (learning effectively on own) on overall experience rating.



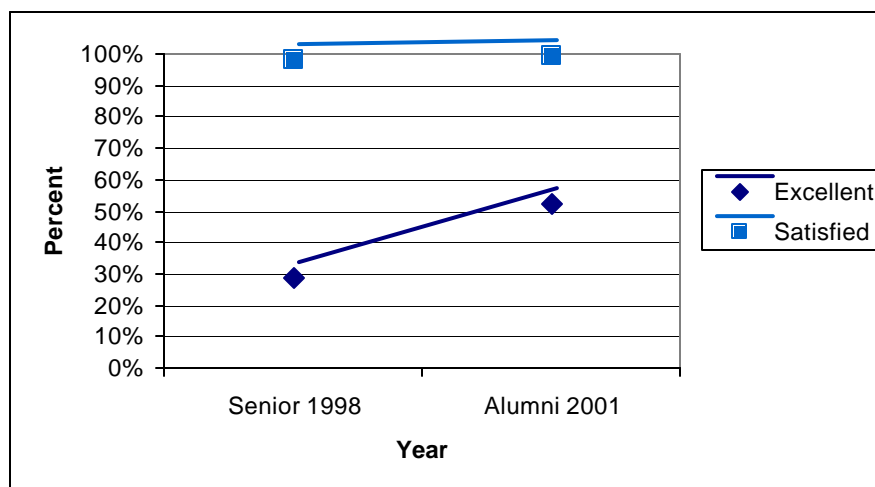
The Effect of Time: 1998 Senior Survey and 2001 Alumni Survey

In addition to the alumni survey, Northern Arizona University has also conducted a survey of its graduating seniors for the past four years. As alumni are generally contacted three years after graduation, it is possible to compare the 2001 alumni survey results to the 1998 senior survey results. This could show (to a certain extent) if the opinions of the 1998 graduates have changed over time as a result of being in the workforce for several years. The hypothesis would be that since they have had time to apply the skills that they had learned, their opinions about their experience at NAU would improve. It should be noted that on several questions (overall experience, faculty, career preparation), the response options differ somewhat between the two surveys¹¹.

Satisfaction with Overall Experience

- 98% of the seniors in 1998 were generally satisfied (“very satisfied” or “satisfied”) with their overall experience at NAU. Three years later, on the 2001 alumni survey, this increased to 99% (those that rated “excellent” or “good”). This increase was not significant¹².
- On the other hand, when all response choices were included, the percentage of students who were the most satisfied (“very satisfied” or “excellent”) with their overall experience increased from 29% for the 1998 seniors to 52% for the 2001 alumni. In this case, the difference between the two years was significant¹³.

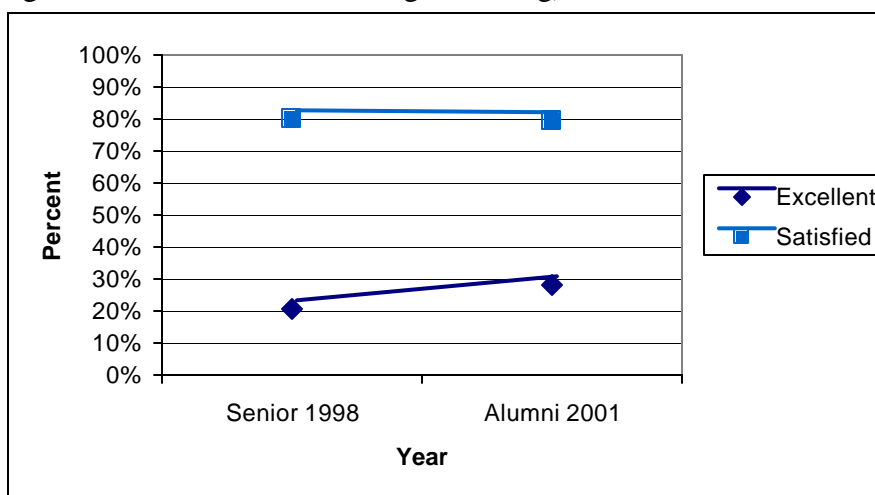
Figure 16. Overall experience ratings from the 1998 senior survey to the 2001 alumni survey (for general satisfaction and the highest rating).



Satisfaction with Career Preparation

- General satisfaction with career preparation (ratings of “excellent” or “good”) remained stable from the 1998 senior survey to the 2001 alumni survey¹⁴, as 80% of the respondents on each survey were satisfied.
- When the highest rating of “excellent” is isolated from all response choices, there was a significant increase¹⁵ from 21% in the 1998 seniors to 28% in the 2001 alumni.

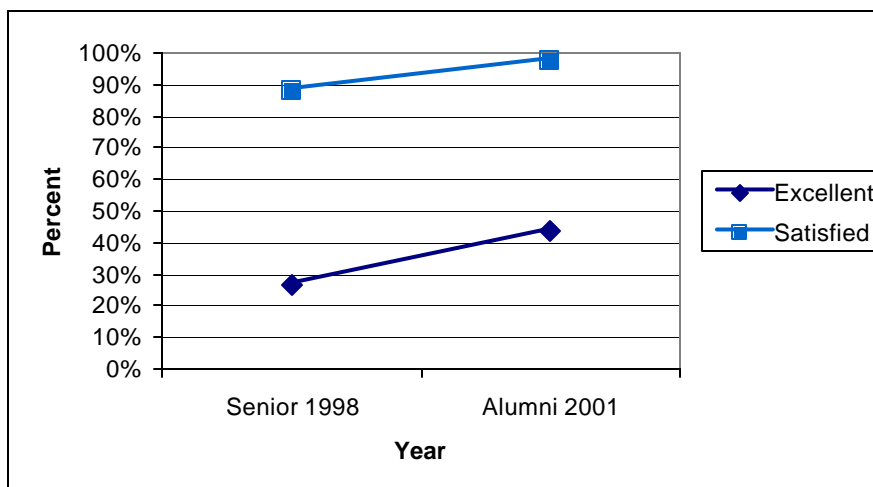
Figure 17. Career preparation ratings from the 1998 senior survey to the 2001 alumni survey (for general satisfaction and the highest rating).



Satisfaction with Faculty

- In terms of general satisfaction (ratings of “excellent” or “good”), 89% of the senior respondents in 1998 were satisfied with the NAU faculty, while 98% of the alumni respondents in 2001 were satisfied. This increase was significant¹⁶.
- When all response options are considered, 27% of the seniors in 1998 rated their satisfaction with the NAU faculty as “excellent.” For the alumni in 2001, this figure increased significantly¹⁷ to 44%.

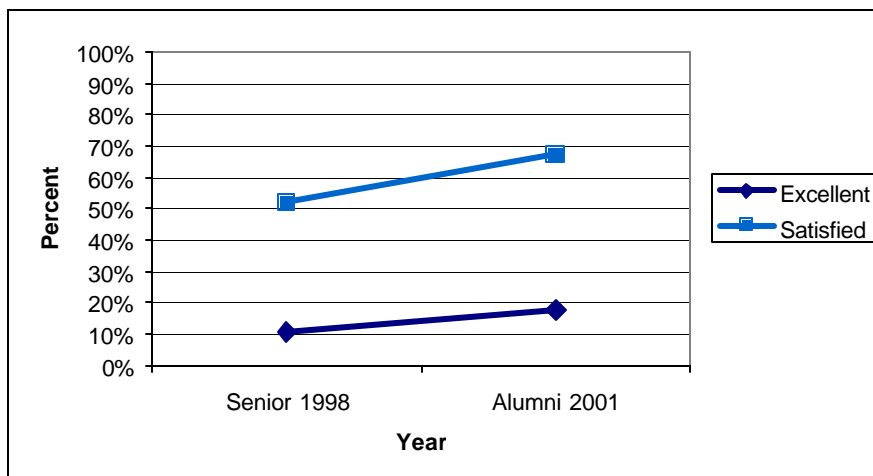
Figure 18. Faculty satisfaction ratings from the 1998 senior survey to the 2001 alumni survey (for general satisfaction and the highest rating).



Satisfaction with Advising

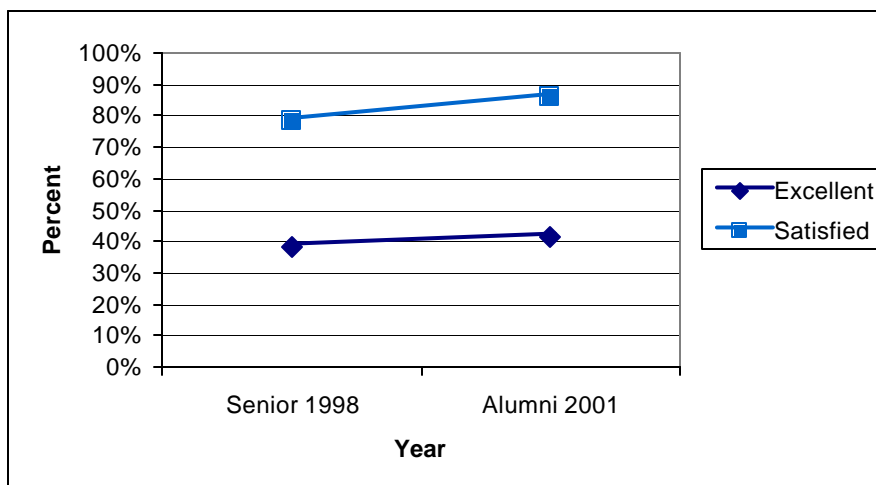
- For liberal studies advising, general satisfaction increased significantly¹⁸ from 52% of the 1998 senior respondents to 67% of the 2001 alumni respondents. The percentage of respondents who rated their satisfaction with their liberal studies advising as “excellent” also increased significantly¹⁹, from 11% to 18%.

Figure 19. Satisfaction ratings for liberal studies advising from the 1998 senior survey to the 2001 alumni survey (for general satisfaction and the highest rating).



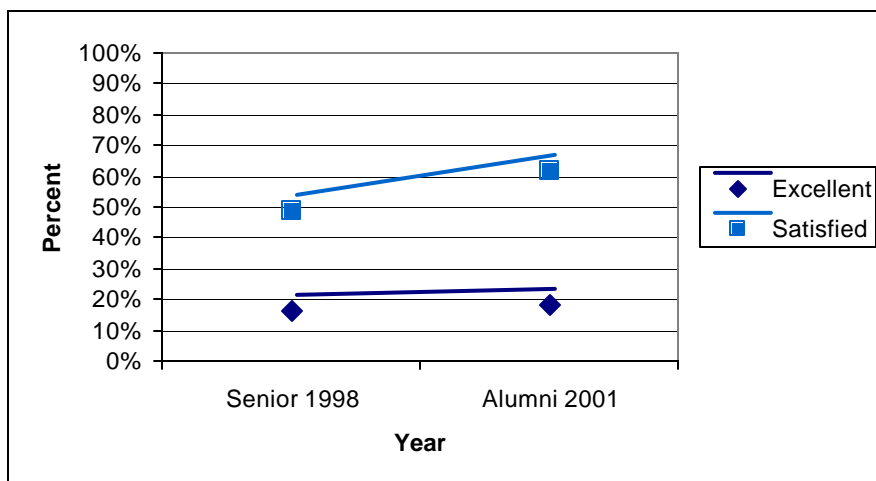
- For advising in the major area, general satisfaction²⁰ and ratings of “excellent”²¹ also increased significantly. In 1998, 49% of the senior respondents were satisfied, while 62% of the alumni respondents in 2001 were satisfied. Ratings of “excellent” increased from 38% in 1998 to 41% in 2001.

Figure 20. Satisfaction ratings for major advising from the 1998 senior survey to the 2001 alumni survey (for general satisfaction and the highest rating).



- For advising with career goals, similar trends were observed: general satisfaction²² and differences across all response choices²³ again increased from the 1998 senior survey to the 2001 alumni survey. 49% of the respondents were satisfied in 1998, and this increased to 62% for the 2001 alumni respondents. While ratings of “excellent” in this case did not change greatly (17% to 18%), it was ratings of “good” that increased the most, from 32% in the seniors to 44% in the alumni.

Figure 21. Satisfaction ratings for career advising from the 1998 senior survey to the 2001 alumni survey (for general satisfaction and the highest rating).



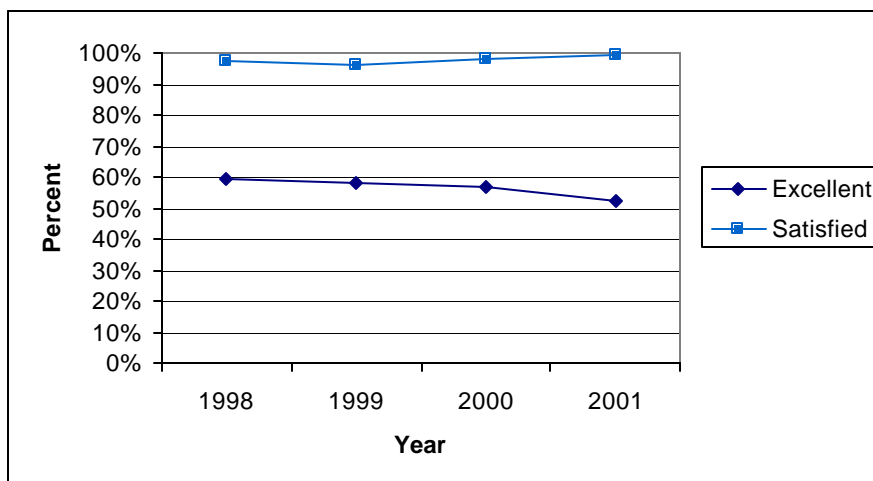
Trends in Alumni Satisfaction (1998-2001)

Have the opinions of NAU alumni three years after graduation changed over the years? While the above section compared the responses of the 2001 alumni sample to its corresponding graduating senior sample to see if opinions changed since graduation, this section will compare the 2001 responses to the past three alumni samples (1998-2000) to see if opinions have changed over the four-year survey period. It should be noted that the response options have changed somewhat over the survey period (See Note #11 at end of report). In addition, the skill development section was changed in 2001, so this cannot be compared to the 1998-2000 surveys. Results are reported only for areas that showed significant changes.

Satisfaction with Overall Experience

- If general satisfaction (the top two ratings) is considered, 97% were satisfied with their overall experience in 1998, 96% in 1999, 98% in 2000, and 99% in 2001. The differences among the four years were significant²⁴.
- If satisfaction is restricted to those who gave their experience the highest possible rating, then this leaves 59% in 1998, 58% in 1999, 57% in 2000, and 52% in 2001. This slight downward trend was statistically significant²⁵.

Figure 22. Alumni ratings of overall experience by year (for general satisfaction and the highest rating).

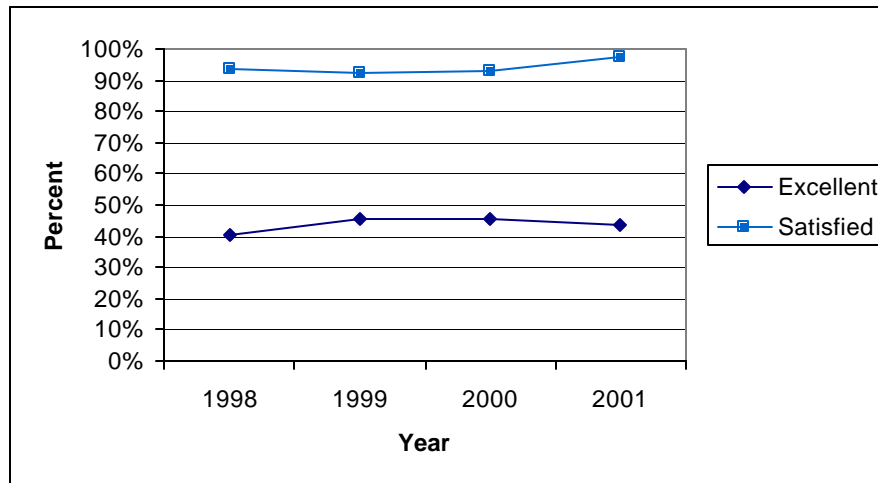


Satisfaction with Faculty

- From 1998 to 2001, the frequency of respondents rating the faculty at least “good” were 93%, 93%, 93%, and 98% for the respective years. The increase in 2001 was found to be significant²⁶ in comparison to the first three years.

- 40% of the respondents gave the faculty their highest rating in 1998, along with 46% in 1999, 46% in 2000, and 44% in 2001. The differences among the years were significant²⁷.

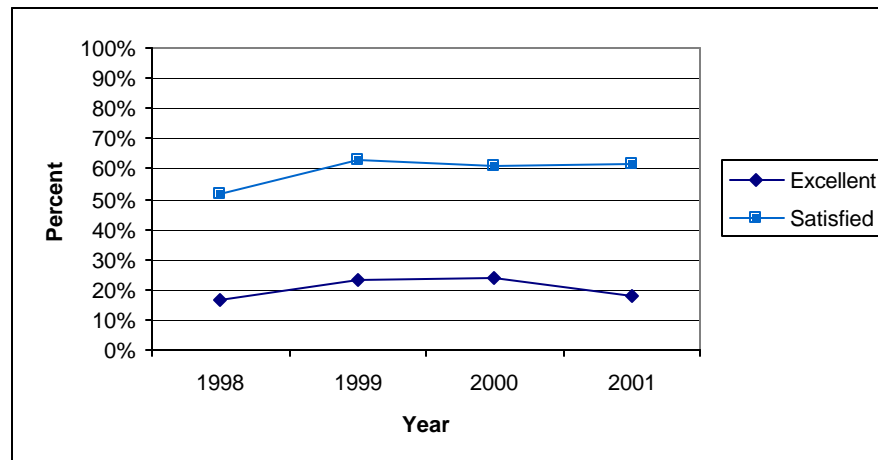
Figure 23. Alumni ratings of faculty satisfaction by year (for general satisfaction and the highest rating).



Satisfaction with Career Advising

- If general satisfaction is considered, 52% of the respondents were satisfied with the career advising they received in 1998, 63% in 1999, 61% in 2000, and 62% in 2001. The differences among the years were significant²⁸.
- If satisfaction is restricted to those who gave the highest possible rating of the career advising that they received, then there were 16% in 1998, 23% in 1999, 24% in 2000, and 18% in 2001. The differences among the years were also significant in this case²⁹.

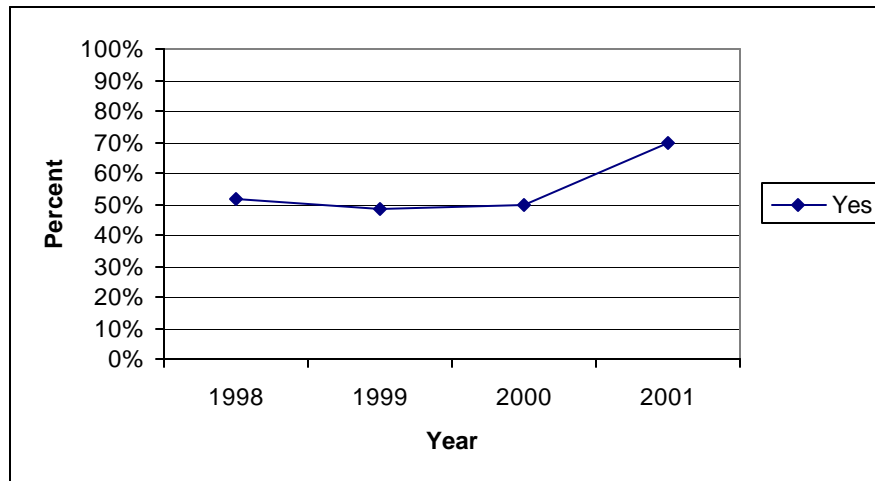
Figure 24. Alumni ratings of satisfaction with career advising by year (for general satisfaction and the highest rating).



Graduate/Professional Education

- The percentage of alumni who stated that they have attended, or are attending, graduate or professional school has increased significantly³⁰ to 70% in 2001 from 50% in 2000, 49% in 1999, and 51% in 1998.

Figure 25. Percentage of alumni reporting that they have attended, or are attending, graduate or professional school by year.



Selected Variables by College over the Four-Year Period

On the alumni surveys, the respondents are asked to give their major field of study while at NAU. From this information, each respondent was coded as to which college they attended within the university. Since dividing the respondents up in this way results in a very small group size for some of the colleges with lower enrollment, the data was pooled from all four years of the survey period (1998-2001). Even with the four years pooled together, some colleges still have a very small sample size, so caution is encouraged with any interpretations made from the following data.

- Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents in each of the colleges compared to the degrees awarded for each college during the 1997-98 fiscal year. The sample appears to be over-represented by Education graduates.

Table 3. Number of respondents and percentages from each college over the four-year period (1998-2001) compared to percentages of degrees awarded from each college in the fiscal year 1997-98 (when the majority of 2001 respondents graduated).

College/School	Pooled Data 1998-2001 Surveys		1997-98 Graduates	
	N	%		%
Arts & Sciences	196	12%		20%
Business Administration	157	9%		11%
Communication	118	7%		8%
Ecosystem Science & Management	33	2%		4%
Education	584	35%		19%
Engineering & Technology	65	4%		4%
Fine Arts*	29	2%		3%
Health Professions	118	7%		10%
Hotel & Restaurant Management	42	3%		4%
Social & Behavioral Sciences	171	10%		17%
Other^	148	9%		

* includes Performing Arts

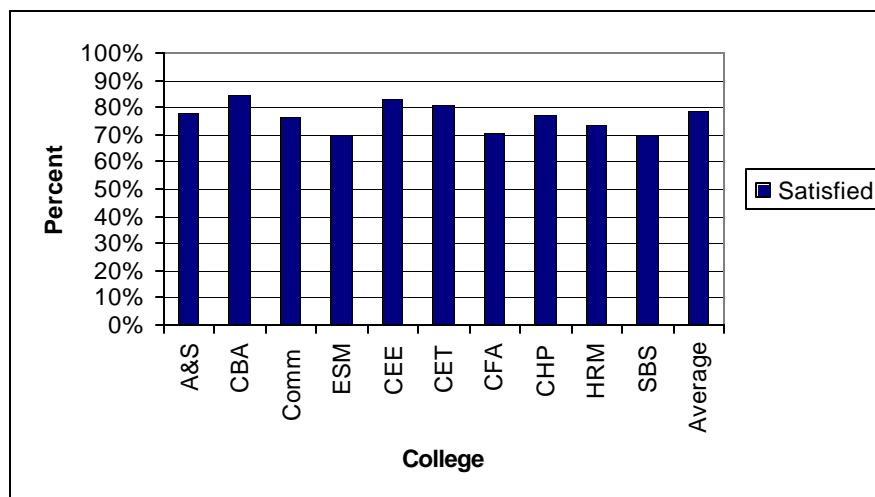
^ includes interdisciplinary (Liberal Studies, Women's Studies) and double majors in different colleges

- From this pooled data coded by college, it is possible to look at some of the variables that have been discussed above and see how each of the colleges are performing, and if some colleges have been rated better on certain factors than others.
- It should be pointed out that on certain important factors, such as satisfaction with overall experience, faculty, and major advising, there were no significant differences among the colleges. In addition, as noted above, the skill development questions were changed in 2001, so these could not be pooled.
- The factors that are focused on below are others of importance that turned out to be significant, and these included career preparation, career advising, and whether postgraduate employment is related to the major field studied at NAU.

Satisfaction with Career Preparation

- The first important factor that differed significantly among the colleges at NAU was the respondents' rating of how well their academic experience prepared them for their expected career³¹.
- With an overall average of 79% who were at least satisfied across the colleges, Business Administration (84%) and Education (83%) rated highly with alumni for their career preparation, while Ecosystem Science and Management (70%), Social and Behavioral Sciences (70%), Fine Arts (70%), and Hotel and Restaurant Management (74%) rated lower.

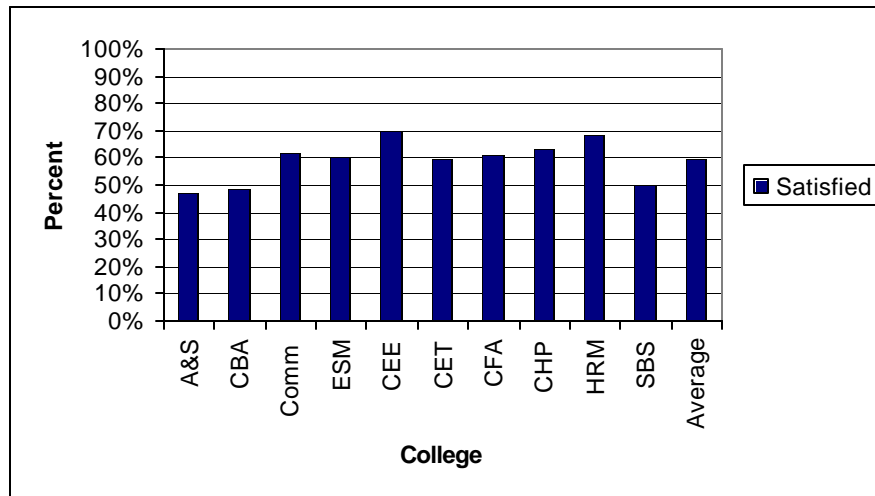
Figure 26. Respondents' satisfaction with their career preparation by college and NAU average (1998-2001).



Satisfaction with Career Advising

- The respondents' satisfaction with their advising for career goals has also differed significantly between the colleges over the past four years³².
- With an overall average of 60% who were at least satisfied, Education (70%), Hotel and Restaurant Management (68%), and Health Professions (64%) rated highly with alumni on career advising; Arts and Sciences (47%), Business Administration (49%), and Social and Behavioral Sciences (50%), on the other hand, rated lower with the alumni respondents.

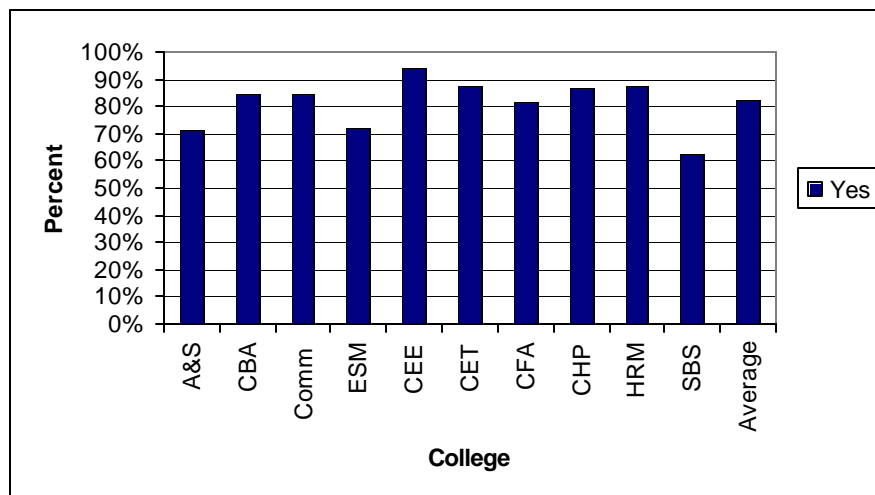
Figure 27. Respondents' satisfaction with career advising by college and NAU average (1998-2001).



Relation of Postgraduate Employment with Major

- The final important factor that differed significantly among the colleges was the number of alumni who reported working at jobs that were related to their major field of study at NAU³³.
- Overall, 82% of the respondents reported that their jobs were related to their majors. The colleges with the most alumni reporting they had jobs in their major field were Education (94%), Hotel and Restaurant Management (88%), Engineering and Technology (87%), and Health Professions (87%). Those with lower numbers included Social and Behavioral Sciences (62%), Arts and Sciences (71%), and Ecosystem Science and Management (72%).

Figure 28. Respondents reporting that their jobs were related to their major field of study by college and NAU average (199-2001).



Discussion

What Do the Results from the 2001 Survey Tell Us?

- Almost all (95%) of the alumni have been employed since graduation, and 85% of those have jobs related to their major at NAU. The most frequent categories of jobs reported included teaching/education (39%), business/managerial/administration (16%), and health-related (8%).
- Graduate/professional school is another activity that many alumni have engaged in (70%). Of these, most (79%) have pursued master's degrees (not including M.B.A.).
- General satisfaction was high on most important factors. Almost all were satisfied with their overall university experience (99%) and the NAU faculty (98%), while the vast majority was satisfied with major advising (86%) and career preparation (80%).
- Satisfaction with other areas of advising, including liberal studies (67%) and career goals (62%), was not as high.
- The effects of other factors on overall satisfaction rating were analyzed. Those that were most influential included satisfaction with faculty, career preparation, major and career advising, and perception of development in the six basic skill areas. In all cases, if the highest rating was given on the factor, a rating of "excellent" was much more likely for overall satisfaction.
- The influence of time was examined in two different ways. First, the 2001 alumni survey was compared to the 1998 graduating senior survey (the year most of the alumni respondents graduated) to see how perceptions of the same group of students have changed. Second, the four years of alumni surveys were compared to look for trends between different groups over time.
- In most areas, satisfaction improved in the three years since the 1998 graduates were surveyed. The improvements occurred either in general satisfaction, those giving the highest possible ratings, or both.
- Over the four years of alumni surveys, most factors have remained rather stable. For those that have changed significantly (overall experience, faculty, and career advising), the trend was an increase in general satisfaction (ratings of "excellent" or "good") combined with a decrease in ratings of "excellent."
- Attendance in graduate/professional school was around 50% in the first three years, but jumped to 70% in the 2001 survey.

- All factors were also compared between the ten colleges on campus. Significant differences between the colleges were found for career preparation, career advising, and the relation of postgraduate employment to college major. Education rated high on all three factors, while Hotel & Restaurant Management and Health Profession each rated highly on the latter two factors.

Future Directions

- The results show that most factors are generally rated high by the alumni, and that their opinions have improved since they graduated three years ago
- Three areas that may be of concern include career preparation, career advising, and development in proficient use of computer and information technology. These areas are all very important for students entering the workplace, and they tended to be rated lower than the other areas by alumni who have been in the workplace for several years.
- The annual survey of NAU alumni has provided some important and useful information, but it may be limited in several ways. First, some of the questions ask the respondents to reflect back on topics from the beginning of their NAU careers (i.e., liberal studies advising). These types of questions are better dealt with on the graduating senior survey. Another limitation is that there is not enough of a focus on the current work and school activities of the alumni.
- The alumni survey should be revised for future administration to address the limitations discussed above. Most importantly, a greater number of questions should be included about the current activities of the alumni. For example, the new survey might ask about if they remained in Arizona after graduation, salary information, satisfaction with current employment situation, as well as more formalized questions to obtain reliable data about employment, graduate programs, and degrees. For comparison purposes, a certain level of consistency with the graduating senior survey should be kept (i.e., satisfaction with overall experience, faculty, career preparation, and major and career advising).

Comments

At the end of the survey, the respondents were given a chance to provide any additional comments that may not have been reflected in the questions. 27% of the respondents made a comment of some sort. An attempt was made to use some of these comments as they related to certain response choices (i.e., very satisfied/excellent or very dissatisfied/very poor) on some of the questions. These analyses, however, were not very helpful and did not add any descriptive value to the results. Thus, they were left out. Future surveys will continue to solicit open-ended comments from the respondents, and hopefully they will be more useful as the sample that is reached grows.

Conclusion

This was the first attempt to analyze and summarize the results of the alumni surveys that have been carried out between 1998 and 2001. The results have shown that alumni satisfaction is generally high (though there are some areas of concern), that the opinions of this group have improved in many cases in the three years since the 1998 graduating senior survey, and that there has not been considerable change over the four years of the survey period. In addition, some factors that may have had an influence on the overall experience of former NAU students were explored and discussed. The annual alumni survey is an important exercise because it assesses the opinions of NAU graduates who have had some time to reflect on their experiences at the university. While some changes are necessary, the alumni survey should continue to provide valuable information in the future.

Notes

1. $\underline{X}^2(6) = 88.91, p < .05.$

2. $\underline{X}^2(6) = 155.24, p < .05.$

3. $\underline{X}^2(6) = 36.73, p < .05.$

4. $\underline{X}^2(6) = 36.07, p < .05.$

5. $\underline{X}^2(6) = 67.62, p < .05.$

6. $\underline{X}^2(6) = 34.87, p < .05.$

7. $\underline{X}^2(6) = 36.58, p < .05.$

8. $\underline{X}^2(6) = 18.03, p < .05.$

9. $\underline{X}^2(6) = 45.52, p < .05.$

10. $\underline{X}^2(6) = 45.17, p < .05.$

11. On the 2001 alumni survey, the response options for all three questions were “excellent,” “good,” “poor,” and “very poor.” On the 1998 senior survey, the response options for overall experience were “very satisfied,” “satisfied,” “dissatisfied,” and “very dissatisfied,” while for faculty and career preparation, they were “excellent,” “good,” “fair,” and “poor.” The response options for the three advising questions were the same on both surveys (“excellent,” “good,” “fair,” and “poor”).

12. $\underline{X}^2(1) = 2.43, p > .05.$

13. $\underline{X}^2(3) = 45.00, p < .05.$

14. $\underline{X}^2(1) = .01, p > .05.$

15. $\underline{X}^2(3) = 8.21, p < .05.$

16. $\underline{X}^2(1) = 23.15, p < .05.$

17. $\underline{X}^2(3) = 39.99, p < .05.$

18. $\underline{X}^2(1) = 15.40, p < .05.$

19. $\underline{X}^2(3) = 17.40, p < .05.$

20. $\underline{X}^2(1) = 7.83, p < .05.$

21. $\underline{X}^2(3) = 9.02, p < .05.$

22. $\underline{X}^2(1) = 12.30, p < .05.$

23. $\underline{X}^2(3) = 17.00, p < .05.$

24. $\underline{X}^2(3) = 10.60, p < .05.$

25. $\underline{X}^2(9) = 22.11, p < .05.$

26. $\underline{X}^2(3) = 12.41, p < .05.$

27. $\underline{X}^2(9) = 19.96, p < .05.$

28. $\underline{X}^2(3) = 11.05, p < .05.$

29. $\underline{X}^2(9) = 21.23, p < .05.$

30. $\underline{X}^2(3) = 48.04, p < .05.$

31. $\underline{X}^2(11) = 23.75, p < .05.$

32. $\underline{X}^2(11) = 57.88, p < .05.$

33. $\underline{X}^2(11) = 174.03, p < .05.$

Appendix A

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Appendix B

2001 Alumni Phone Survey

Hello, may I speak to (*state name of person on list*)? My name is (*state your first and last name*), and I am calling from the Social Research Laboratory at Northern Arizona University. We are conducting a short survey of NAU graduates, and we would like to ask you a few questions. All of your answers will be confidential. Is this a good time?

1. First, in what year did you complete your undergraduate work at NAU?

1. 1997
2. 1998
3. A different year
4. Did not graduate from NAU

2. What was your major in your undergraduate work at NAU?

3. Did you attend NAU starting as a freshman or did you transfer to NAU from another college or university?

1. started NAU as a freshman (skip to question 6)
2. transferred in

4. From which college or community college did you transfer?

5. In which year of study did you transfer to NAU (i.e. freshman, sophomore, etc.)?

6. When thinking about your undergraduate years at NAU, how would you rate your overall experience - was it excellent, good, poor, or very poor?

1. excellent
2. good
3. poor
4. very poor

7. How would you evaluate your overall satisfaction with the faculty at NAU - excellent, good, poor, or very poor?

1. excellent
2. good
3. poor
4. very poor

8. How well do you believe your academic experience at NAU prepared you for your expected career - was the preparation excellent, good, poor or very poor?

1. excellent
2. good
3. poor
4. very poor

9. During the years you were completing your degree at NAU, how often were courses needed for your liberal studies requirements *unavailable* in the semester that you needed them- often, sometimes, rarely, or never?

1. often
2. sometimes
3. rarely
4. never
5. don't know/no opinion

10. How often were courses required for you major *unavailable* in the semester that you needed them - often, sometimes, rarely, or never?

1. often
2. sometimes
3. rarely
4. never
5. don't know/no opinion

11. Did you attend the majority of your classes at the Flagstaff campus or at statewide sites?

1. Flagstaff campus
2. statewide sites
3. don't know/no opinion

12. Approximately how often did you meet with an advisor in your *major department* in the last two years of your program of study?

1. four or more times a semester
2. two or three times a semester
3. once a semester
4. not even once a semester
5. never
6. don't know/no opinion

13. How would you evaluate the *liberal studies* advising you received at NAU - excellent, good, fair, or poor?

1. excellent
2. good
3. fair
4. poor
5. don't know/no opinion

14. How would you evaluate the advising you received concerning your *future career goals* - excellent, good, fair, poor?

1. excellent
2. good
3. fair
4. poor
5. don't know/no opinion

15. How would you evaluate the advising you received in your *major program* of study - excellent, good, poor, or very poor?

1. excellent
2. good
3. fair
4. poor

16. When you were trying to complete your academic work, how available were university computer labs or computer work stations - always available, usually available, rarely available, or never available?

1. always available
2. usually available
3. rarely available
4. never available
5. don't know/no opinion

17. Did you pursue (or are you pursuing) a graduate or professional education since completing your undergraduate degree at NAU?

1. No (skip to question 20)
2. Yes
3. Don't know/no answer (skip to question 20)

18. Have you applied to or been accepted by a graduate or professional program?

1. Have not applied
2. Applied but wasn't accepted by any (skip to question 20).
3. Yes

19. What degree do you plan to complete or did complete in this program?

20. Have you been employed since completing your undergraduate degree at NAU?

1. No (skip to #23)
2. Yes
3. Don't know/No answer (skip to #23)

21. Was any of your employment related in any way to your major program of study at NAU?

1. No
2. Yes
3. Don't know/No answer

22. What are the two most recent types of employment you have had since completing your undergraduate degree at NAU? (PROBE FOR LAST 2 POSITIONS)

23. To what extent has NAU contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development **in acquiring a broad general education.**

1. Very much
2. Quite a bit
3. Some
4. Very Little

24. To what extent has NAU contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development **in acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills.**

1. Very much
2. Quite a bit
3. Some
4. Very Little

25. To what extent has NAU contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development **in thinking critically and analytically.**

1. Very much
2. Quite a bit
3. Some
4. Very Little

26. To what extent has NAU contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development **in using computing and information technology.**

1. Very much
2. Quite a bit
3. Some
4. Very Little

27. To what extent has NAU contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development **in working effectively with others.**

1. Very much
2. Quite a bit
3. Some
4. Very Little

28. To what extent has NAU contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development **in learning effectively on your own.**

1. Very much
2. Quite a bit
3. Some
4. Very Little

29. Did you participate in any research or creative projects with a faculty member, either in or outside of class, during your time at NAU?

1. No
2. Yes
3. Don't Know/No answer

30. Approximately, how many times did you change your major while you worked on your undergraduate degree at NAU? (DON'T READ THE RESPONSES, JUST RECORD THE CATEGORY THAT FITS HIS/HER ANSWER.)

1. Never changed major
2. 1 time
3. 2 times
4. 3 times
5. 4 times or more
6. Don't know/no opinion

31. Do you believe that the value of your education at NAU was worth the cost in the long run?

1. No
2. Yes
3. Don't know/No answer

32. Thank you for your time! Do you have additional comments on the educational experience you had at NAU? (WRITE DOWN WHAT HE/SHE SAYS IN HIS/HER WORDS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.)