



NAU Distance Learning Student Satisfaction Survey

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Methodology

The Social Research Laboratory (SRL) at Northern Arizona University (NAU) was commissioned to conduct a survey of 407 randomly selected students enrolled in NAU's Distance Learning program (NAU-DL). NAU-DL provides educational facilities and services in 30 campus locations throughout Arizona utilizing traditional on-site facilities, Instructional Television (ITV) classes, and online courses. NAU-DL provides services that include: evening and weekend classes; advising and financial aid and; networking with community institutions, employers, and other schools to maximize the student's opportunity to complete college level courses.

This survey was designed to evaluate how well NAU-DL delivers educational services by measuring the attitudes, behaviors, and experiences of enrolled Distance Learning students. The survey questionnaire measures student satisfaction with services received. To assess student satisfaction, 407 NAU Distance Learning students were asked to identify facilities that they are familiar with or use and to rate specific services based on a grading scale of A, B, C, D, or F. The traditional grading scale was utilized due to the familiarity students have with this type of grading system.

The survey instrument was developed by NAU Distance Learning personnel working in collaboration with Social Research Laboratory staff. Once the survey instrument was finalized, it was thoroughly pre-tested before data collection was initiated. The survey was administered between October 1 and October 14, 2005. Calling took place Sunday through Saturday, with morning, afternoon and evening shifts (9am-9pm). The average time to complete the survey was nine minutes. Twenty-three trained interviewers conducted the telephone survey.

The contact information for Distance Learning students was provided by Distance Learning to the SRL. The list was based on the official Fall 2005 census and included currently enrolled Distance Learning Students who were 18 years of age or older. The sample was drawn from a total population of 5,456 students from 30 Distance Learning campuses in Arizona (see Appendix A, Table 1). Student contacts were randomly selected from the population by a computer. In addition, attempts were made to contact all students from four of the campuses where the distance learning student population contains 20 or fewer students. These campuses were over-sampled to ensure that the smaller campuses were adequately surveyed and represented. These four campuses are Aravaipa, Keams, Fort Defiance, and Whiteriver.

The "sampling error" associated with a 407-person sample drawn from a population of 5,456 adult students is +/- 4.67 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. "Sampling error" is a social science term that describes the probable difference between interviewing everyone in a given population and interviewing a sample randomly drawn from that population. The percentages obtained in telephone surveys such as these are estimates of what the percentage would be if the entire population had been surveyed.

Thus, if 50 percent of those in the sample are found to agree with a particular statement, the actual percentage of agreement in the population from which the sample is drawn would be between 45.33% and 54.67% (50% +/- 4.67%). The 95 percent confidence level means that this +/- 4.67 percent margin of error would occur in 95 out of 100 samples of this size drawn from the total population of NAU Distance Learning students. Sampling error increases as the sample size is reduced therefore, in comparing the responses of different subgroups within the sample (e.g., men versus women), sampling error tends to increase.

The data collected is analyzed to evaluate the students' general attitudes and experiences with the program and to assess various indicators for improving program quality and accessibility. For questions that ask the respondent to rate a service on a scale from "A through F," scores range from 4.0 to 0.0 resulting in five letter grade categories that have a range of 0.8. ("A" = 4.0-3.2, "B" = 3.19-2.4, "C" = 2.39-1.6, "D" = 1.59-0.8, and "F" = 0.79-0). In order to assess student satisfaction with services, the mean of the grading scale is reported and represents the average grade. In the Executive Summary and Survey Results sections of this report, "A" and "B" grades are described as very satisfied, a "C" grade is described as satisfied and "D" and "F" grades are referred to as dissatisfied. In addition to the mean (average), the mode (most frequently-given answer), and relative frequency (the actual percentage of students who answered the specific question) are reported. All questions are not answered by all respondents because screening questions within the survey allow respondents to skip questions that are not relevant to them.

The percentage of valid responses is reported for each question. In calculating percentages, all figures are rounded off to whole numbers. Therefore, total percentages to some questions may total 99 or 101 percent. In some tables, "don't know" and/or "refused" responses are considered to be "missing data" and are excluded from the calculations.

Survey Implementation

The fielding of the survey was conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technology. CATI is a system where computers are employed to increase the accuracy, flexibility, and efficiency of telephone surveys. The computer system maintains a database of phone numbers, engages the sampling process, schedules callbacks, and records the disposition of each call. Interviewers are trained on interviewing protocol and use of the CATI system prior to fielding of the survey. Interviewers view survey questions on a computer screen in a programmed sequence and record respondents' answers using a keyboard. Data entry errors are minimized using this system.

Once a phone contact was initiated, trained interviewers introduced the survey to potential respondents by identifying the name of the calling center and the purpose of the survey. Respondents were assured that nothing was being sold or solicited, and they were guaranteed confidentiality of their responses. Respondents were told the survey would take approximately 10 minutes to complete and were asked for their consent to take the survey.

Every effort was made to obtain the highest possible completion rates. Several techniques helped achieve this goal. Survey fielding utilized an established pattern of callbacks to

minimize non-sampling errors that occur when certain types of people are available to answer the phone at particular times of the day. Also, a refusal conversion process helped to maintain the integrity of the original sampling framework and minimize non-response bias in sampling. In the refusal conversion process, declined interviews were reattempted using a prescribed call-back schedule. The first time a respondent declined to participate in the survey, the respondent was coded as a “soft-refusal.” The telephone number was returned to the sample database and called again by a skilled “refusal converter,” an interviewer specially trained to convert refusals into completed interviews. If a respondent refused a second time, they were coded as a “hard refusal” and their number was removed from the sample database.

Telephone numbers that were busy, rang without answer, or answered by an answering machine were called a minimum of ten times at different hours of different days before being removed from the sample database. Once “dead,” another phone number in the sample was substituted for the original number. This “call-back” procedure minimized the possibility of nonrandom bias.

Quality Control

The Social Research Laboratory utilized several quality checks in the collection of data. All interviewers were trained in telephone survey interview techniques methodology prior to interviewing. After several general training sessions, interviewers received training specific to this project and continued to practice the survey until maximum proficiency was reached. Once an interviewer was prepared to administer the survey, supervisors performed frequent and regular monitoring of calls and data collection. Supervisors were trained to check on the accuracy and validity of data collection through the CATI system that allows the supervisor to view the data as it is collected. Each calling shift held a pre-shift meeting that prepared interviewers on updates and changes in survey procedures. Interviewer and calling center staff meetings were held on a regular basis during the fielding of the survey to address questions or concerns.

Executive Summary

A telephone survey of 407 currently enrolled NAU Distance Learning students was conducted from October 1-14, 2005 by the Social Research Laboratory at Northern Arizona University. The purpose of the survey is to evaluate the attitudes of NAU-DL students regarding the quality and availability of services provided by NAU Distance Learning. Within the summary of findings below, responses are reported with the mean (average), mode (most frequently-given answer), and relative frequency (the actual percentage of students who answered the specific question). Many times, a specific question was not answered by all of the students surveyed as these questions did not pertain to them. The grades are based on an A-F scale, with "A" as the highest grade and "F" as the lowest grade ("A" = 4.0-3.2, "B" = 3.19-2.4, "C" = 2.39-1.6, "D" = 1.59-0.8, and "F" = 0.79-0). Within the following description, "A" and "B" grades are described as very satisfied, a "C" grade is described as satisfied and "D" and "F" grades are referred to as dissatisfied.

Important findings of this survey include:

- ❖ Overall, when asked to grade the job NAU Distance Learning is doing, students are very satisfied. The mean grade for the job that NAU-DL is doing is 3.48 ("A"); the mode is 4 ("A"); and the relative frequency is 99 percent.
- ❖ Students are very satisfied with the business needs assistance they receive from NAU-DL campus staff; with a mean of 3.25 ("A"); a mode of 4 ("A"); and a relative frequency of 26 percent.
- ❖ Students are also very satisfied with NAU-DL campus staff for their ability to return phone calls and messages in a timely manner. Their mean rating is 3.35 ("A"); the mode is 4 ("A"); and the relative frequency is 26 percent.
- ❖ Students are very satisfied with the ability of the NAU-DL advising staff to help them achieve their goals and objectives, for offering assistance in a timely manner, and the knowledge they have regarding the students' degree. The mean grade for the advisor's ability to help students achieve their goals and objectives is 3.46 ("A"); the mode is 4 ("A"); and the relative frequency is 88 percent. The mean grade for the timeliness of advisor assistance is 3.36 ("A"); the mode is 4 ("A"); and the relative frequency is 89 percent. The mean grade for advisors' knowledge of the students' degree is 3.56 ("A"); the mode is 4 ("A"); and the relative frequency is 88 percent.
- ❖ Over half (52%) of NAU-DL students receive advising from their local NAU campus and 20 percent utilize the academic department offering the degree that they seek.
- ❖ Overall, students are very satisfied with the availability of the courses that are required for their degree. The mean rating for course availability is 2.98 ("B"); the mode is 3 ("B"); and the relative frequency is 98 percent.

- ❖ Overall, when asked about three types of learning settings, traditional classroom setting, web-based classes and ITV classes, students are very satisfied with traditional classroom settings, with a mean grade of 3.66 (“A”), a mode of 4 (“A”), and a relative frequency of 89 percent. Students do not rate web-based classes as highly as traditional classes, giving them a mean grade of 2.82 (“B”), with a mode of 3 (“B”) and a relative frequency of 82 percent. Instructional Television (ITV) class setting was given the lowest rating, with a mean grade of 2.61 (“B”), a mode of 3 (“B”), and a relative frequency of 48 percent.
- ❖ Students rated the quality of assistance they receive from the computer lab at NAU. While a very small percentage of students answered this question, (relative frequency is 1%), the mean grade is 3.25 (“A”), with a mode of 4 (“A”).
- ❖ Given the option to choose additional office hours to receive assistance with their business needs, students most prefer weekday evenings (47%) and Saturday mornings (31%).
- ❖ Students’ preferred class meeting times are evening classes (38%), online or Internet (30%), and weekday evenings and/or weekend mornings (23%). Students’ preference for a class meeting location is near home (42%) or online (31%).
- ❖ Distance Learning students prefer utilizing the online methods for finding classes, with LOUIE as the most frequently used method (38%); 21% use the online Distance Learning pages. Over one-quarter (27%) utilize their advisor to arrange their class schedules.
- ❖ Students are most likely to access the internet from home (84%). Some students (12%) say they access the internet from work.
- ❖ Over half (56%) of NAU Distance Learning students are full-time paid employees (32-40 hours/week). A further 13% work more than 40 hours per week.

Survey Results

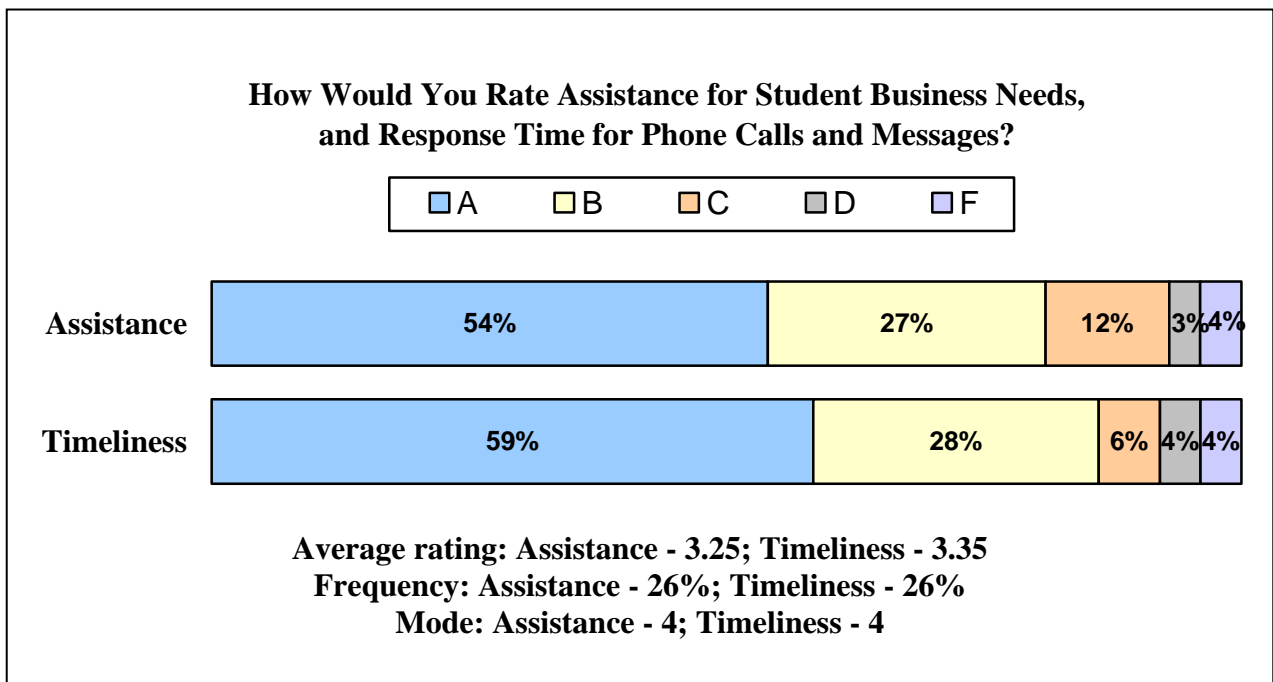
I. Ratings and discussion of campus business-needs services

All NAU Distance Learning (NAU-DL) students were asked if they use campus business needs services. Those who said they did were asked to rate the business needs assistance they receive (N=106) and the time it takes for NAU-DL staff to return phone calls and messages related to business needs (N=107) [see Figure 1]. A grading scale of “A” to “F” was used to measure the level of satisfaction students have with business needs services.

Within this subgroup, the majority of students (81%) are very satisfied with the assistance they receive with their business needs; they award their experience with “A’s” (54%) or “B’s” (27%). Twelve percent are satisfied (“C”), and a smaller number (7%) are dissatisfied (“D” or “F”). The mean rating for business needs assistance is 3.25 or a low “A” grade average; the mode is 4 (“A”); and the relative frequency is 26 percent.

Similarly, most NAU-DL students are very satisfied with the time it takes local NAU campus staff to respond to their phone calls and messages (N=107). Eighty-seven percent of the students grade response time as very satisfied, with an “A” (59%) or “B” (28%), a further six percent of students are satisfied (“C”), and almost the same number (8%) are dissatisfied (“D” or “F”). The mean grade is 3.35, or an “A” grade average; the mode is 4 (“A”); and the relative frequency is 26 percent.

Figure 1: Business Needs Assistance (Assistance - N=106; Time - N=107)



In comparing the three methods of obtaining business needs assistance, through the local NAU campus office, the DL Service Center, and online using LOUIE, the majority of students are very satisfied with all three methods of business needs assistance (87%, 77% and 80% respectively).

Table 1: Rating Business Needs Assistance (N=106)

	Local NAU Campus Office		DL Service Center		Online Using LOUIE		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A	44	59%	7	54%	2	40%	4	31%
B	21	28%	3	23%	2	40%	3	23%
C	8	11%	1	8%	1	20%	3	23%
D	1	1%	0	--	0	--	2	15%*
F	1	1%	2	15%	0	--	1	8%
Total	75	100%	13	100%	5	100%	13	100%

*Students who grade business assistance with a “D” in the “other” category seek assistance from themselves or their cohort.

Student ratings of NAU staff response time in returning phone calls and messages (N=107) reflect similar high levels of satisfaction. Students seeking help from the local NAU campus offices are very satisfied in regard to timeliness of response (89%). The majority of those using the DL Service Center are also very satisfied (83%), and those using LOUIE are also very satisfied with 100 percent selecting an “A” grade [see Table 2].

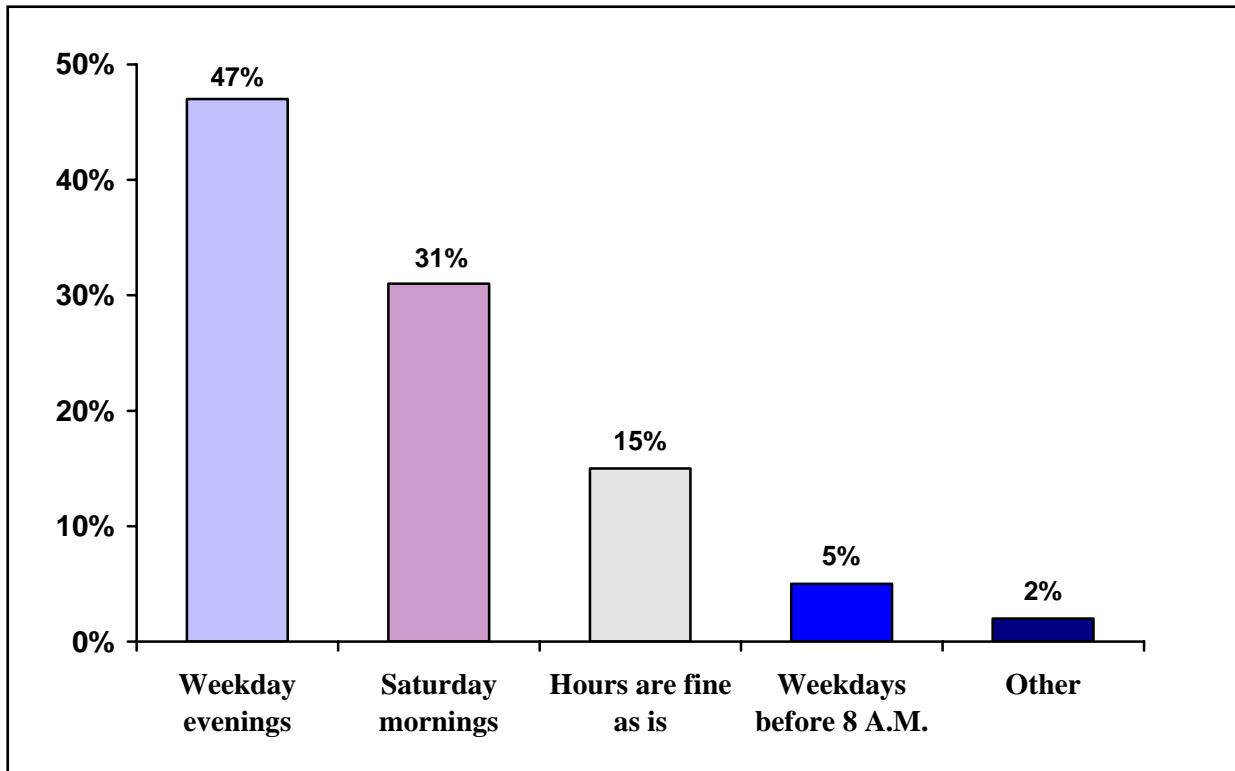
Table 2: Rating Timeliness of Business Needs Staff (N=107)

	Local NAU Campus Office		DL Service Center		Online Using LOUIE		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A	46	60%	9	75%	5	100%	3	23%
B	22	29%	1	8%	0	--	7	54%
C	5	7%	0	--	0	--	1	8%
D	2	3%	0	--	0	--	2	15%*
F	2	3%	2	17%	0	--	0	--
Total	77	102%	12	100%	5	100%	13	100%

*Students who grade timeliness with a “D” in the “other” category seek assistance from their cohort or via email/telephone.

Students were also asked to choose the most convenient office hours (N=118), should additional hours become available. Almost half (47%) identified “weekday evenings” as the most convenient for office hours, while 31 percent selected “Saturday mornings” [see Figure 2].

Figure 2: Most Convenient Time for Additional Office Hours (N=118)



II. Ratings and discussion of academic advising services

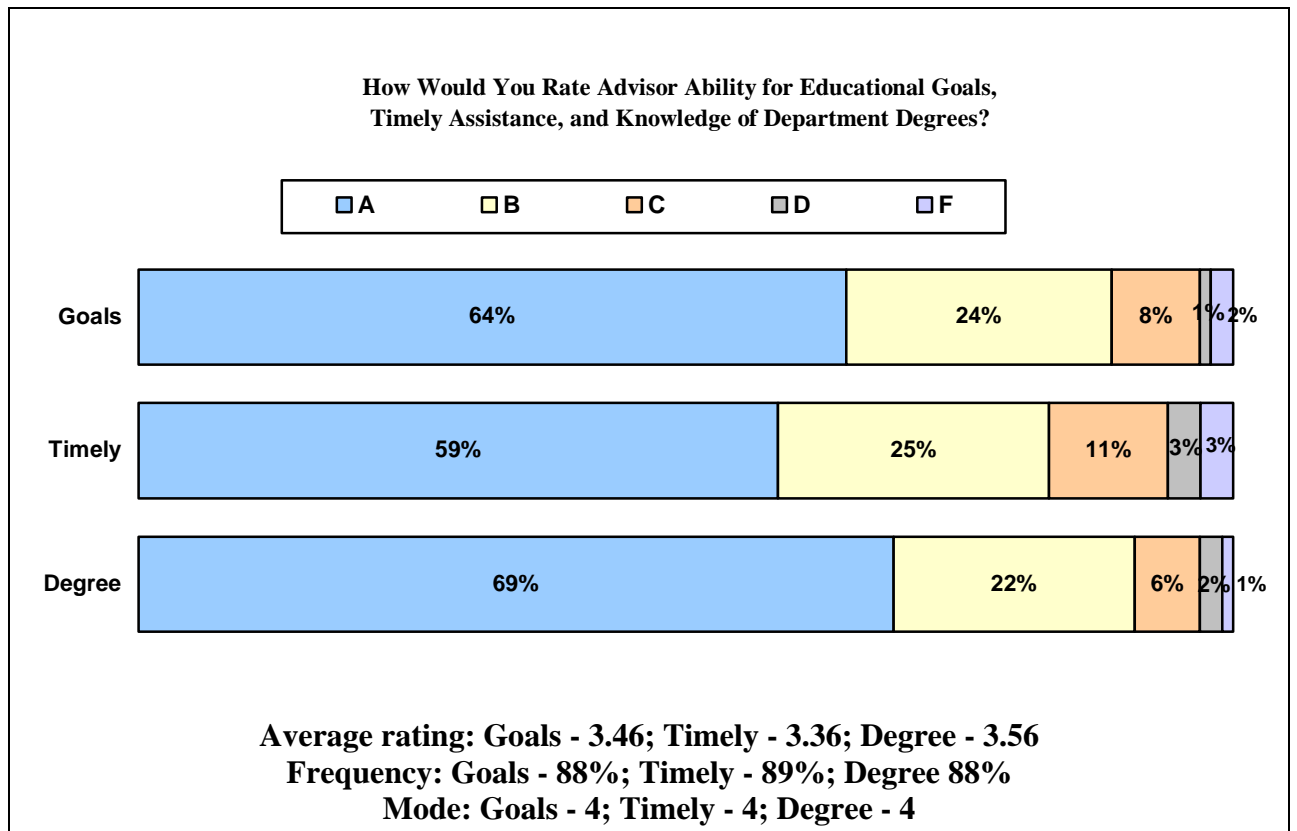
NAU Distance Learning students were asked to rate the academic advising services they receive including: the ability of their advisors’ to help them achieve their educational goals and objectives (N=358), their advisors’ capability to assist them in a timely manner (N=360), and their advisors’ knowledge of the requirements of the students’ degrees (N=356) [see Figure 3]. A grading scale of “A” to “F” was used to measure the students’ level of satisfaction with academic advising services.

The students rate academic advising services very highly. Eighty-eight percent of respondents are very satisfied with their advisors’ ability in helping them achieve educational goals and rate the advisors with “A’s” and “B’s”, a further eight percent of students are satisfied with advisor goal achievement (“C”) and just three percent rate advising as unsatisfactory (“D” and “F”). The mean rating for advisor ability in achieving goals and objectives is 3.46, or an “A”; the mode is 4 (“A”); and the relative frequency is 88 percent.

Similarly, academic advisors receive a high rating for offering assistance to distance learning students in a timely manner. Eighty-four percent of respondents are very satisfied with the advisor timeliness (“A” and “B”), a further 11 percent rate timeliness as satisfactory (“C”). Only six percent choose unsatisfactory grades (“D” and “F”). The mean rating for advisor timeliness is 3.36, or an “A” grade; the mode is 4 (“A”); and the relative frequency is 89 percent.

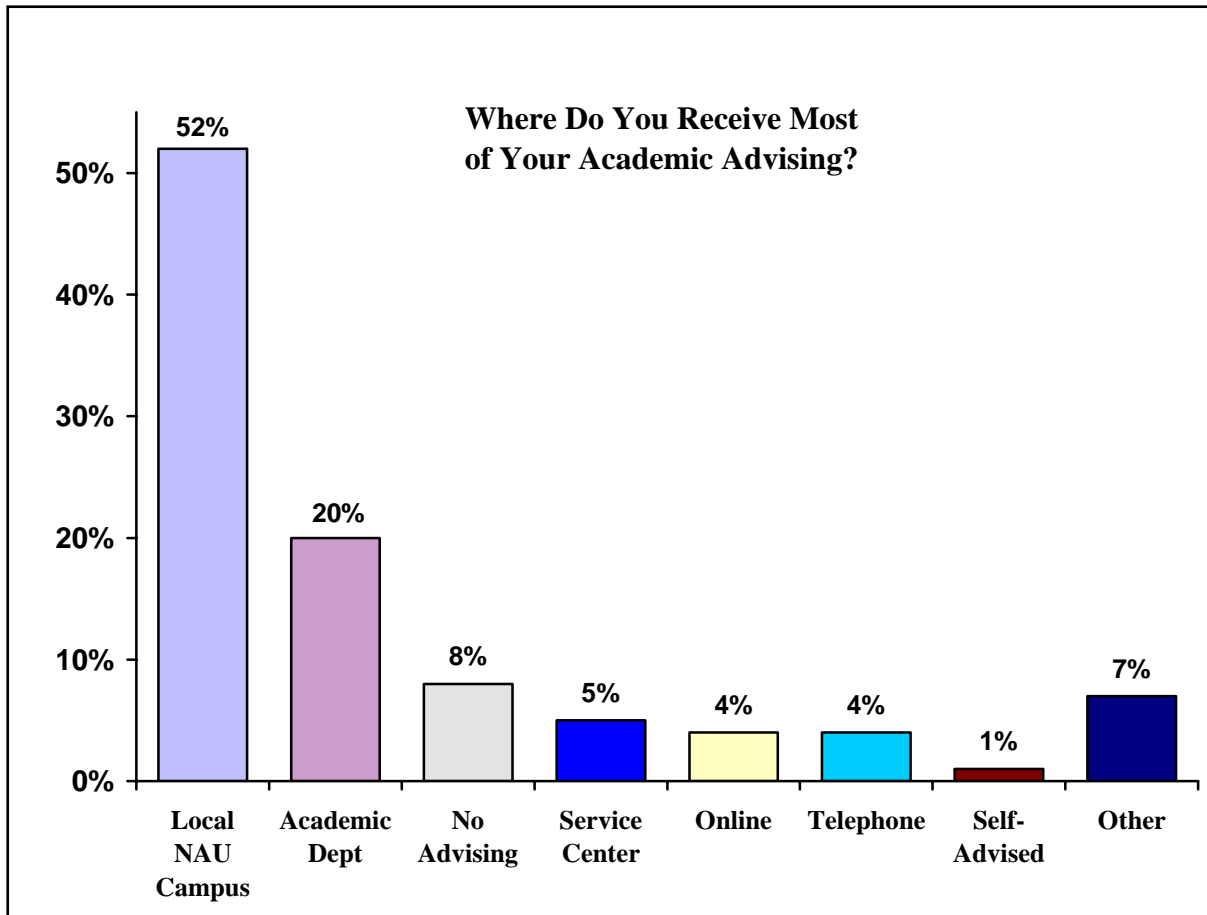
Similarly, NAU-DL advisor knowledge of the requirements of student degrees is highly rated. Ninety-one percent of the respondents are very satisfied with their advisors’ knowledge regarding their area of study, grading them with “A’s” and “B’s;” a further six percent find advisor knowledge satisfactory (“C”). Only three percent of the respondents are dissatisfied (“D” and “F”). The mean rating for advisor knowledge of the requirements of the students’ degrees is 3.56, or an “A” grade; the mode is 4 (“A”); and the relative frequency is 88 percent.

Figure 3: Advisor Assistance (Goals - N=358; Time - N=360; Degree - N=356)



NAU-DL students are more likely to seek academic advising (N=405) at a local NAU campus (52%) or the academic department that is offering their degree (20%) [see Figure 4]. Some respondents prefer online/email, or telephone arrangements (8%). A very small percentage of students use the NAU service center (5%). However, eight percent say they do not get advising at all and only one percent report that they are self-advised.

Figure 4: Where Students Seek Advising (N=405)

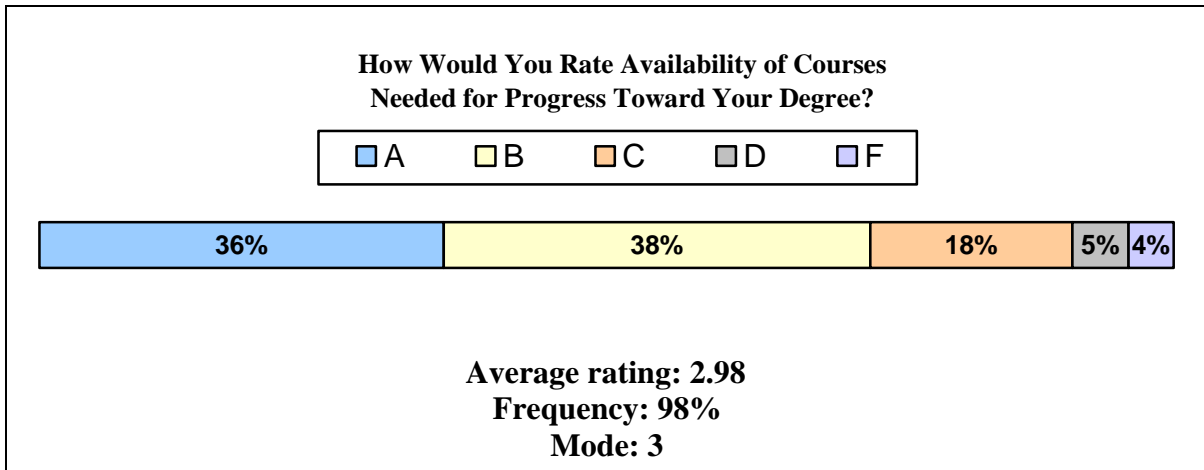


III. Ratings and discussion of courses and schedules

This section of the survey report explores the NAU-DL students' experiences and attitudes toward the availability of courses needed to fulfill degree requirements: their preferred meeting time and location; how they would rate different types of class settings; and the methods they use to search for available classes.

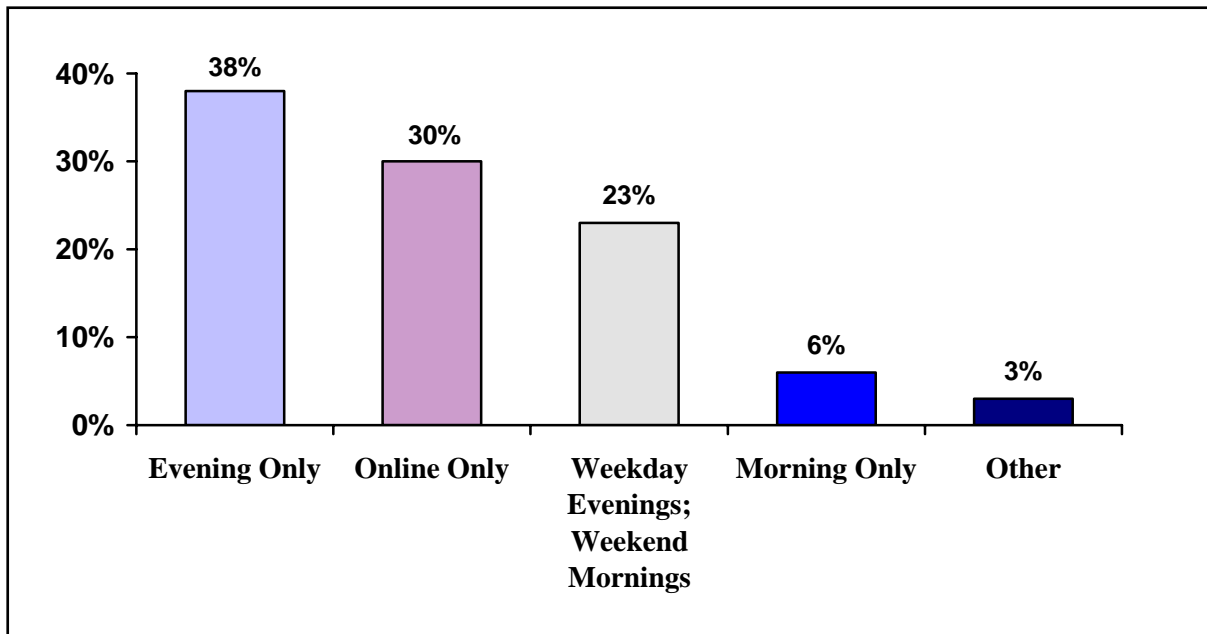
On average, students are very satisfied (“A” and “B”) with the availability of classes that they need to make progress towards their degree (N=397). The “A’s” and “B’s” total 74 percent, and 18 percent are satisfied (“C”) [see Figure 5]. Only nine percent are dissatisfied, rating availability with “D’s” and “F’s.” The mean rating for availability of courses is 2.98, or a high “B” average; the mode is 3 (“B”); and the relative frequency is 98 percent.

Figure 5: Course Availability (N=397)



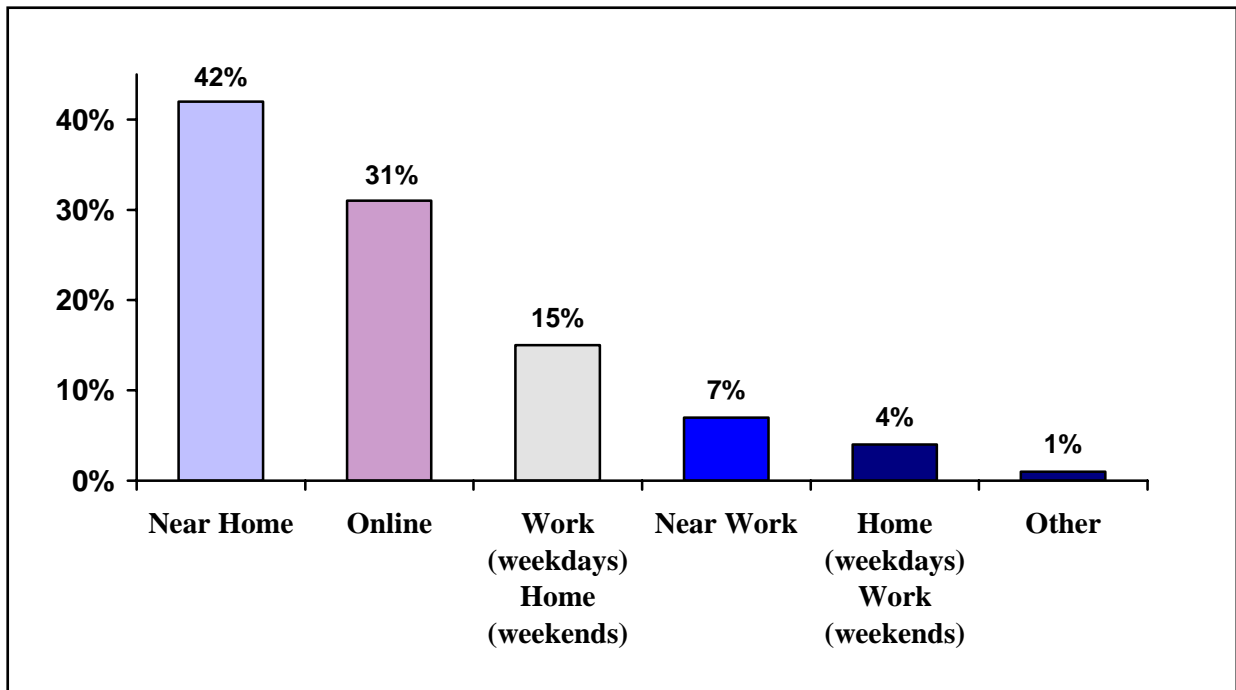
Distance Learning students were asked to disclose their preferences for class meeting time (N=407) and location (N=407). Students prefer to attend class in the evenings only (38%) or exclusively online (30%) [see Figure 6]. Additionally, nearly one-quarter (23%) favor weekday evenings and weekend mornings.

Figure 6: Preferred Class Meeting Time (N=407)



NAU-DL students also like attending school close to home (42%) or via the Internet (31%) (N=406) [see Figure 7]. The majority of students who use the Internet are most likely to do so from home (84%). In addition, when students were asked their primary reason for attending NAU (N=403), they indicate convenience, flexibility, and location (32%); available classes, programs, and degrees (28%); and online courses and/or degrees (9%) [see Question #33 in the Annotated Questionnaire].

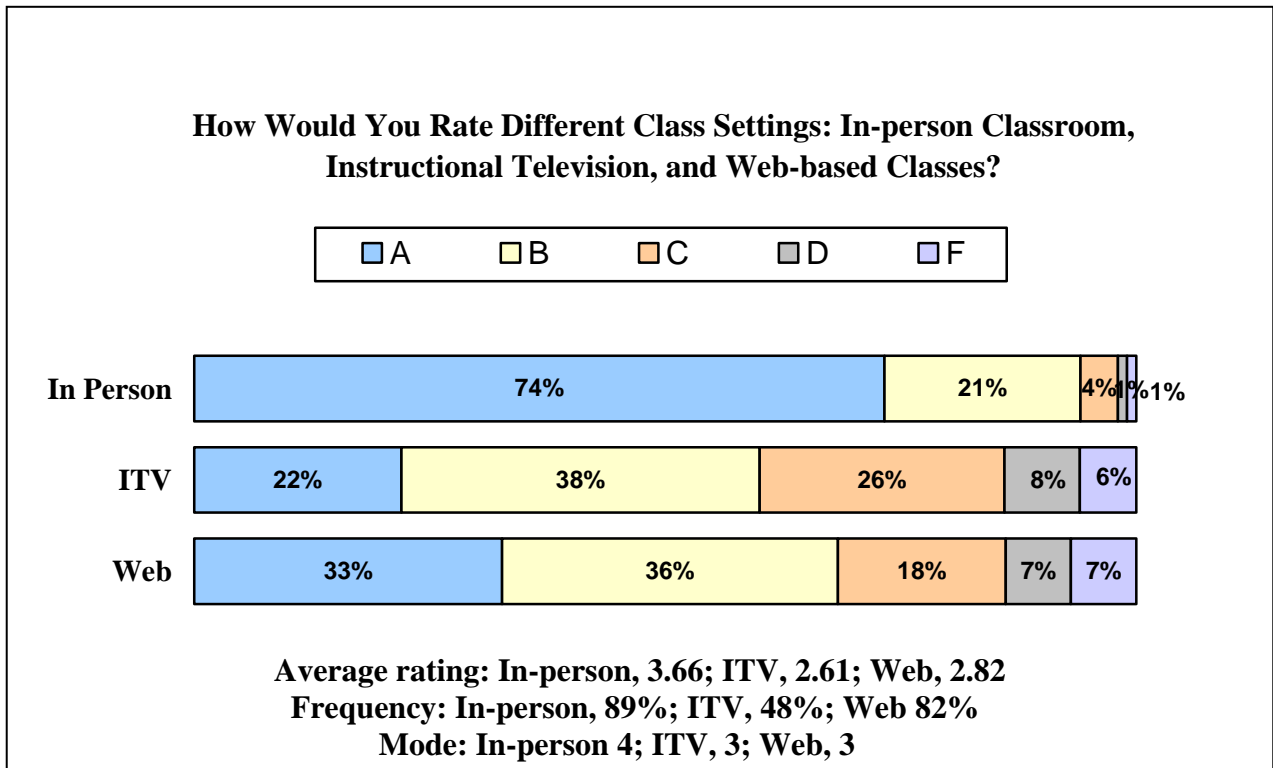
Figure 7: Preferred Class Meeting Location (N=407)



Students can choose from three modes of delivery when taking classes through NAU Distance Learning: traditional in-person, Instructional Television (ITV), and web-based delivery. Students in the program were asked to rate each mode of delivery [see Figure 8].

Traditional classroom settings (N=363) are rated the highest, with almost all of the students (95%) saying they are very satisfied (“A” and “B”) with this setting, a further four percent of the students rate the traditional classroom as satisfactory (“C”), while less than two percent of the students rate it as unsatisfactory (“D” and “F”). The mean rating for in-person classroom settings is 3.66 or a strong “A”; the mode is 4 (“A”); and the relative frequency is 89 percent.

Figure 8: Rating Class Settings (In-Person - N=363; ITV - N=195; Web - N=335)

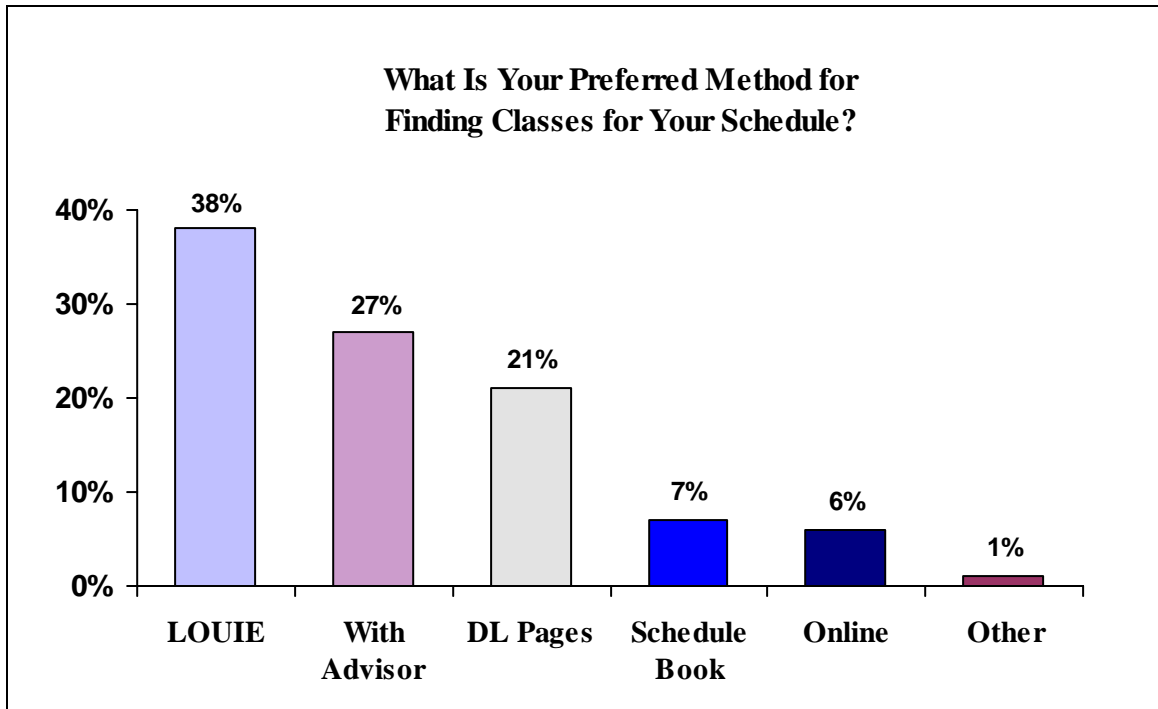


Students selected web-based classes (N=335) as the second most desirable class format with 69% saying they are very satisfied (“A” and “B”). Almost one-fifth of respondents rate it as satisfactory (18%), while 14 percent of students who take web classes are dissatisfied. The mean rating for web classes is 2.82, or a strong “B”; the mode is 3 (“B”); and the relative frequency is 82 percent.

In assessing students’ perception of ITV (N=195), 60 percent of students who take ITV classes are very satisfied with the format (“A” and “B”). In comparison, almost all (95%) of the students graded traditional in-person classroom settings in the same range. Fourteen percent of those who attend ITV classes are dissatisfied with this type of learning setting. The mean rating for ITV classes is 2.61, or a low “B”; the mode is 3 (“B”); and the relative frequency is 48 percent.

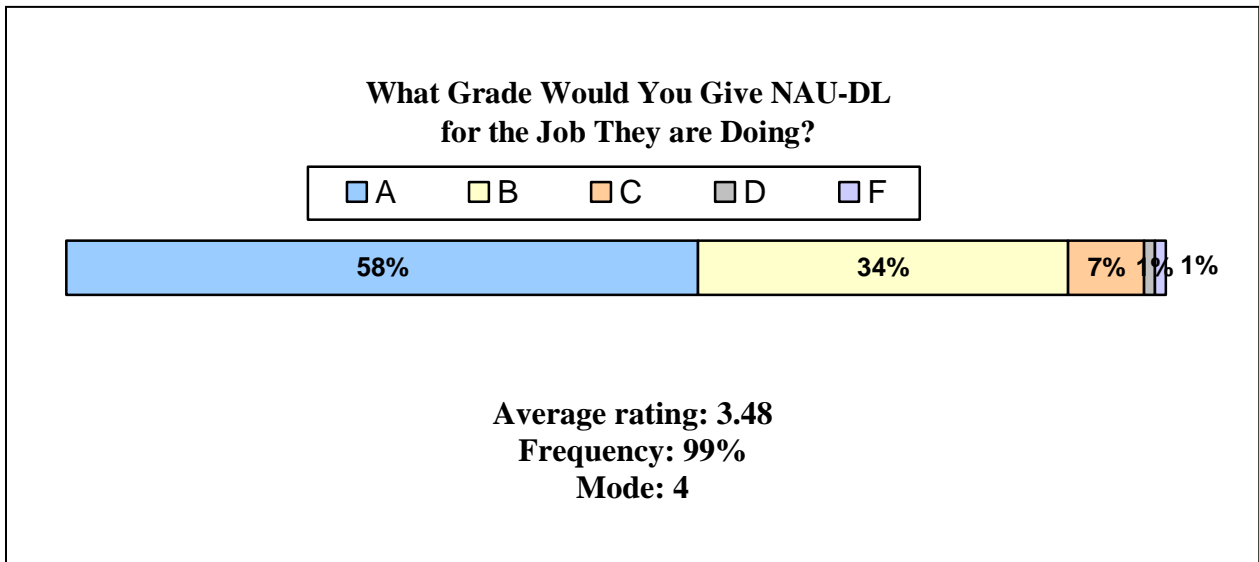
Distance Learning students were asked their preferred method of finding classes for their schedule. Online with the LOUIE system is the most favored method (38%), followed by working with an advisor (27%) [see Figure 9]. Just over one-fifth (21%) of students prefer the Distance Learning web pages specifically and six percent did not specify the online method that they used. The remaining eight percent use a schedule book (7%) or some other tool (1%).

Figure 9: Preferred Method of Finding Classes (N=404)



The Distance Learning students were asked to rate the overall performance of the program staff “for the job they are doing” (N=403). Overall, the majority of the students (92%) are very satisfied (“A” and “B”) with their performance [see Figure 10]. A small portion of the students rate it as satisfactory (7%). And only two percent say they are dissatisfied with the overall performance. The mean rating is 3.48, or a solid “A”; the mode is 4 (“A”); and the relative frequency is 99 percent.

Figure 10: Overall Rating of Distance Learning Staff (N=403)



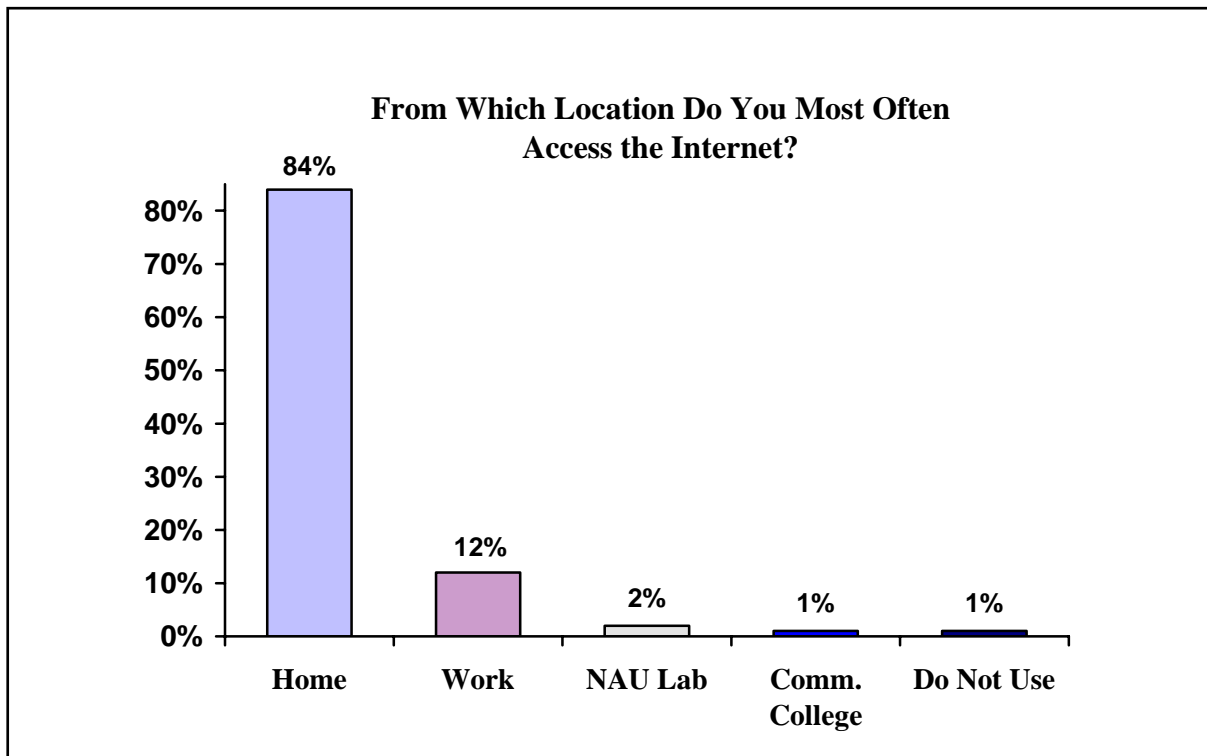
IV. Rating and discussion of online access

This section of the survey report summarizes Distance Learning students' use of the Internet and other services; including NAU email accounts, computer labs and WebCT.

NAU-DL students access the Internet (N=406) more often from home (84%) than from any other location, while 12 percent say they access the Internet from work [see Figure 11]. The remaining four percent use the NAU computer lab (2%), a community college (1%), or do not use the Internet at all (1%).

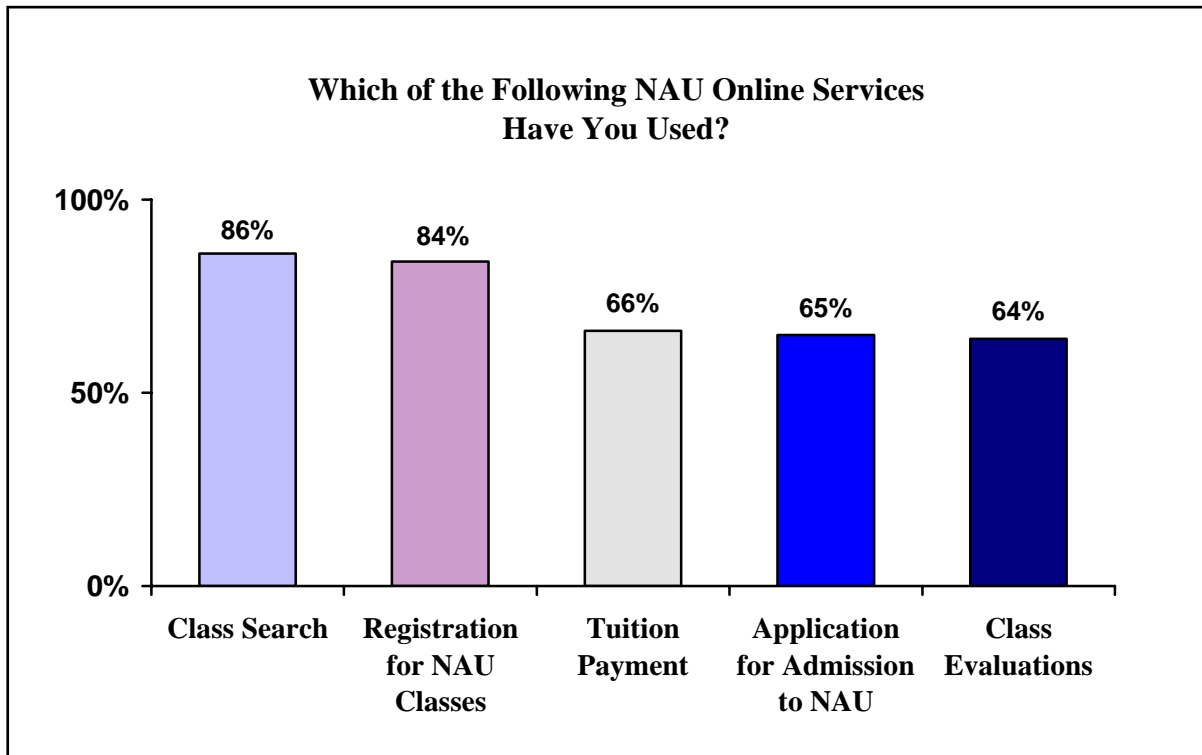
Students who said they use NAU computer labs (N=8, or 1%) were asked to rate the quality of assistance they received. Of those eight, only four rate its quality of assistance. Three students award lab staff assistance with an "A" and one of them grades it with a "D." The mean rating for assistance received from the computer lab is 3.25, or a low "A" and the mode is 4 ("A").

Figure 11: Location of Internet access (N=406)



There are several online services available to and used by Distance Learning students. Respondents were asked to choose all of the services they use from a list provided by the interviewer. Of the students who used online services (N=396), 65% used the online Application for Admission to NAU, 64% used online class evaluations, 86% used online class search to find classes, 84% used online registration for NAU classes, and 66% used online tuition payment [see Figure 12].

Figure 12: NAU online services used (N=1447 - multiple response categories)



Students were asked if they used any other NAU online services. Fifty-two percent (N=206) say that they do use other NAU online services. Of these, 91% use the library or bookstore, WebCT, Webmail or email and LOUIE. Of these, over one-third (35%) use the library and bookstore online services. WebCT classes and email services comprise 26 and 20 percent respectively. Ten percent of students report using LOUIE, a total of six percent use NAU online services specifically to check their financial aid status (4%), grades and transcripts (2%). The remaining four percent use a variety of other online assistance [see Question #25 verbatim responses in the Annotated Questionnaire].

All Distance Learning students were asked how they use the NAU email account they are issued upon admission to the university. Nearly half of the students (48%) say they use the account for school correspondence. Twenty-six percent do not use it at all, and 15 percent have NAU email forwarded to their primary account. Only a small portion (4%) of respondents says they use NAU email as their primary email account.

Students who use NAU email (N=286) were then asked how often they use their NAU account. The majority (79%) uses it at least every week; 12 percent use it about once a month; and the remaining 10 percent use their NAU email account once or twice a semester.

The students who reported that they do not check their NAU account (N=102) were asked why they do not check their NAU account. Forty percent say they either do not know how to forward mail from NAU to their primary account; or they receive a large amount of “spam” or “junk” email. Twelve percent are not sure how to use it; and others are not aware they have an NAU account (9%). Forty-one students say there are “other” reasons they do not check their NAU email account. Of these “other” reasons specified, 56 percent involve lack of need for the account and 41 percent are related to the use of another email or WebCT account.

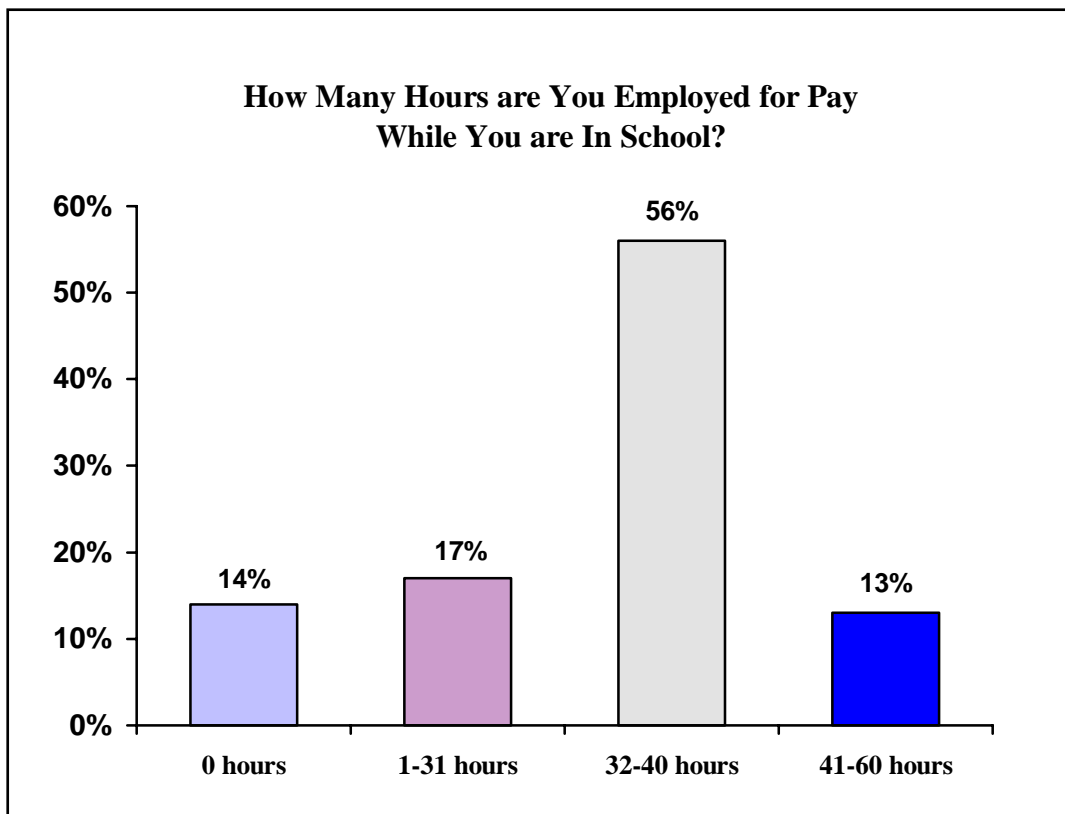
V. The Students

The last section describes the student in terms of the type of student (cohort or open enrollment), their age, weekly hours of paid employment, how they pay for their tuition, the main reason for taking classes at NAU, and why they choose to attend NAU.

NAU-DL students (N=401) are more likely to take classes at their own pace (58%) rather than enroll with a cohort (42%). Over half (54%) of NAU-DL students are between 20 and 35 years of age, 41 percent are 36 to 55 years old, and five percent are over 56.

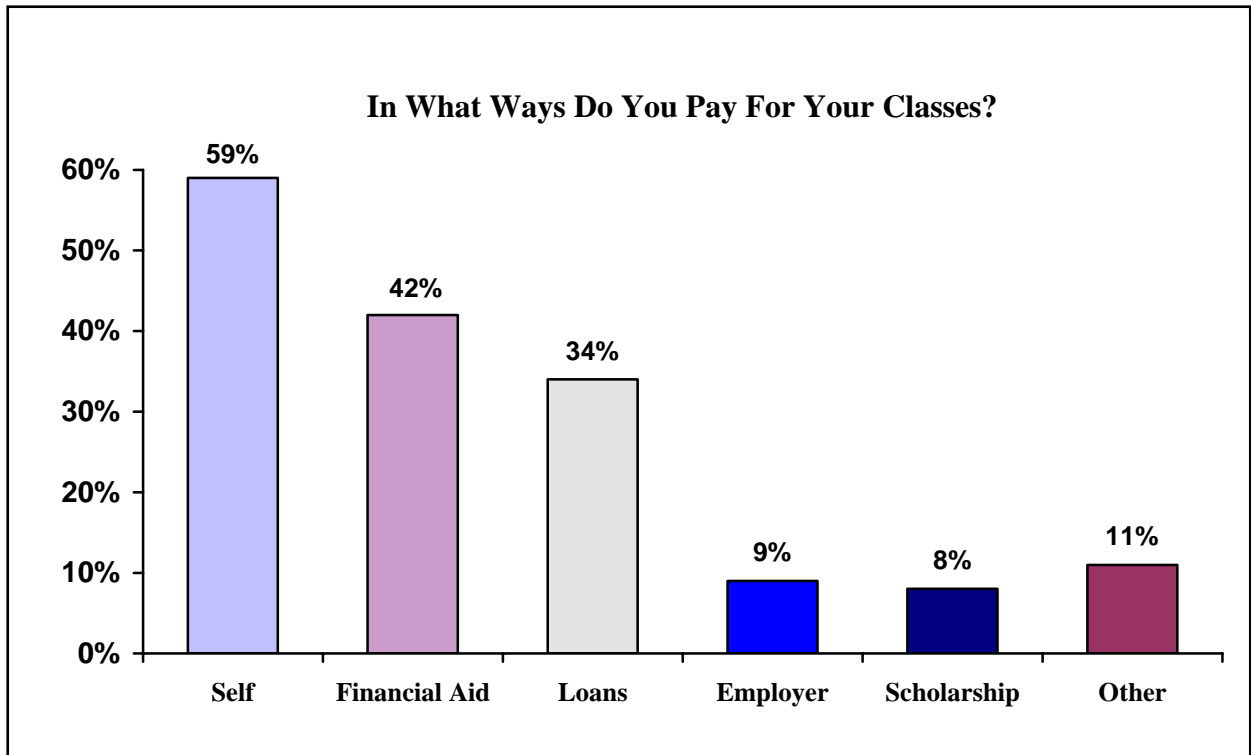
All respondents were asked to disclose the number of hours per week that they work for pay (N=407) [see Figure 13]. The actual number of hours worked has been recoded into four ordinal categories that include: overtime, full time, part time, and not employed for pay. Overtime is defined as 41-60 hours per week, full time is 32-40 hours per week, and part time is 31 hours per week or less. Over half (56%) of the Distance Learning students are employed full time while only 17 percent are part time employees. The remaining 27 percent either work overtime (14%) or are not employed for pay (13%).

Figure 13: Hours of paid employment (N=407)



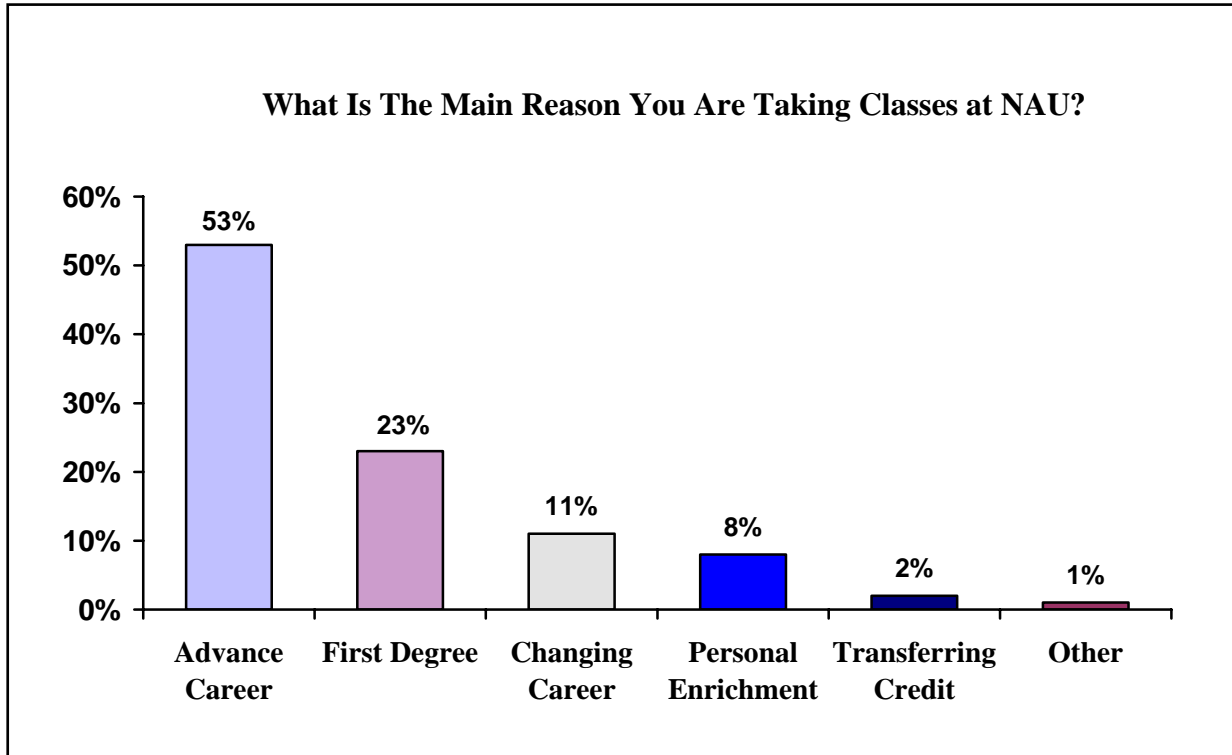
Students were asked how they pay for tuition, and were able to give multiple responses (N=405) [see Figure 14]. More than half (59%) say that they pay for at least some part of their own tuition. Forty-two percent rely upon some sort of financial aid. About a third (34%) receive student loans. Almost one-tenth (9%) have an employer that covers their tuition. Eight percent have a scholarship. Six percent are using a payment plan. Four percent rely on a relative or parent to help with tuition. One percent report that military programs help with their tuition bills.

Figure 14: How NAU DL Students Pay for Tuition (N=405)



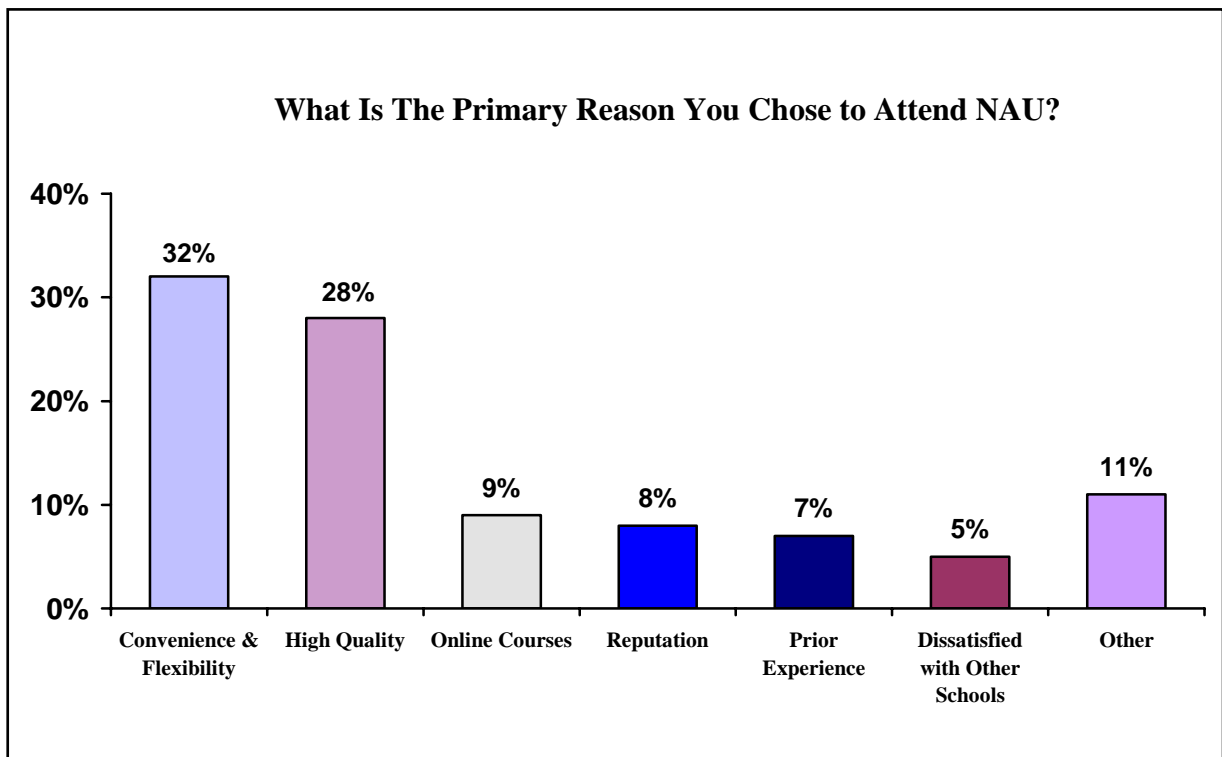
The respondents were asked to select the main reason they are taking classes at NAU and the primary reason they choose specifically to attend NAU (N=407) [see Figure 15]. Over half (53%) of the students are taking classes to advance or develop their current career. Approximately one-quarter of the students (23%) are attending to gain their first degree or prepare for a professional career. Eleven percent say they are changing their career. The remaining 11 percent are attending NAU for personal enrichment (8%), transferring credits to another school (2%), or other reasons (1%) [see Question 31a of Annotated Questionnaire].

Figure 15: Main Reasons for taking classes at NAU (N=407)



Convenience, flexibility, and campus location are the primary reasons distance learning students choose to attend NAU (32%) [see Figure 16]. High quality and availability of classes, programs, and degrees follow closely with just over a quarter of the students selecting this category (28%). The next three selections include online course and degree availability (9%); NAU's good reputation and is recommended by others (8%), and prior experience with, or an affinity towards NAU (7%). Others are dissatisfied with the alternative university choices in Arizona (5%). Four percent chose NAU for its ability to help them advance in their careers. A few respondents select NAU's willingness to work with other institutions, schools, and the community (3%), or because NAU is affordable (3%). One percent chose NAU for the ease of admission.

Figure 16: Primary Reason for Attending NAU (N=403)



APPENDIX A:
DISTANCE LEARNING POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

Table 1: Distance Learning Population Distribution

CAMPUS	N	Percent
Distance Learning	1115	20%
Tucson	929	17%
East Maricopa	862	16%
Paradise Valley	443	8%
Central Phoenix	436	8%
West Maricopa	411	8%
Prescott	154	3%
Scottsdale	129	2%
Thatcher	123	2%
Show Low	110	2%
Signal Peak	103	2%
Kingman	81	2%
Lake Havasu City	71	1%
Bullhead City	54	1%
Chinle	59	1%
Kayenta	34	1%
Verde Valley	39	1%
Tuba City	40	1%
Apache Junction	37	1%
Globe	31	1%
Chandler/Gilbert	26	0.5%
Payson	25	0.5%
Ganado	25	0.5%
Nogales	24	0.5%
Page	23	--
Holbrook	23	--
Aravaipa*	17	--
Keams Canyon*	16	--
Fort Defiance*	10	--
White River*	6	--
Total	5456	100%

*Campuses which contain 22 students or less were over-sampled where contact attempts were made for all students from those campuses.

**NAU DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENT SATISFACTION
ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE
Fall 2005**

Introduction and Screening Questions

1. Hello, my name is (*Interviewer: state your first and last name*) and I am calling from Northern Arizona University's Social Research Laboratory. I am not selling anything or asking for donations of any kind. May I speak with (*State first and last name of respondent on list*)?

If correct person on the phone → continue

NAU is developing long range plans for distance learning. NAU Distance Learning regularly surveys students to help us to better understand student needs for programs and services. Your answers will be used to help us improve the student services we offer.

The survey will only take about 5 minutes to complete. Do you have some time now to complete this short survey?

If yes →

2. All your answers are voluntary and confidential and will only be reported as part of a group response. If I should come to any questions you would rather not answer, just let me know and I will go to the next question. OK?

If no → When would be a better time to call you back?

If someone else and now have correct respondent on the phone →

1. Hello, my Name is (*Interviewer: state your first and last name*) and I am calling from Northern Arizona University's Social Research Laboratory. NAU is developing long range plans for distance learning. NAU Distance Learning regularly surveys students to help us to better understand student needs for programs and services. Your answers will be used to help us improve the student services we offer.

The survey will only take about 10 minutes to complete. Do you have some time now to complete this short survey?

If yes →

2. All your answers are voluntary and confidential and will only be reported as part of a group response. If I should come to any questions you would rather not answer, just let me know and I will go to the next question. OK?

If no → When would be a better time to call you back?

Campus – Service

3. Where do you go to take care of MOST of your student business needs?

	N	Percent
Online using LOUIE	294	74%
A local NAU campus office	78	20%
DL Service Center	13	3%
Other	14	4%
Total	399	101%

3a. What “other” place do you go to take care of business needs? [Recoded into categories]

	N	Percent
Email/telephone	5	39%
Self/cohort	4	31%
Professor	2	15%
Other	2	15%
Total	13	100%

4. What is the name of the NAU local campus business office? [Recoded into categories]

	N	Percent
Tucson	13	19%
Pima	8	11%
Paradise Valley	8	11%
Flagstaff	6	9%
East Maricopa	4	6%
Show Low	4	6%
Gilbert	4	6%
West Maricopa	3	4%
Prescott	3	4%
Phoenix	3	4%
Lake Havasu	2	3%
Chandler	2	3%
Tuba City	1	1%
Other	9	13%
Total	70	100%

5. How would you rate the assistance you received for your student business needs?

	N	Percent
A	57	54%
B	29	27%
C	13	12%
D	3	3%
F	4	4%
Total	106	100%

6. In terms of assistance with your student business needs, how would you rate the response time of the local NAU campus staff in returning phone calls and messages?

	N	Percent
A	63	59%
B	30	28%
C	6	6%
D	4	4%
F	4	4%
Total	107	101%

7. Now, I would like you to think about office hours for assistance with your business needs. If additional office hours were available, which hours would be most convenient?

	N	Percent
Weekday evenings	55	47%
Saturday mornings	37	31%
Office hours are fine	18	15%
Before 8 AM on weekday mornings	6	5%
Other	2	2%
Total	118	100%

Advising

8. Where do you receive MOST of your academic advising?

	N	Percent
Local NAU campus office	210	52%
Academic department offering the degree	80	20%
I don't receive academic advising	33	8%
DL Service Center	22	5%
Online	14	4%
Telephone/Email	14	4%
Self-advised	5	1%
Other (23 did not specify)	27	7%
Total	405	101%

9. What is the name of the NAU local campus advising office? [Recoded into categories]

	N	Percent
Tucson	56	28%
Maricopa (East & West)	25	12%
Paradise Valley	18	9%
Phoenix	17	8%
Gilbert/Chandler	10	5%
Prescott	8	4%
Lake Havasu	7	3%
Aravaipa	6	3%
Thatcher	5	3%
Flagstaff	5	3%
Scottsdale	4	2%
Central Arizona	4	2%
Mohave	3	2%
Apache Junction	3	2%
Other	23	11%
Don't know	10	5%
Total	204	102%

10. How would you rate your advisor's ability to help you achieve your educational goals and objectives?

	N	Percent
A	228	64%
B	87	24%
C	30	8%
D	5	1%
F	8	2%
Total	358	99%

11. How would you rate your advisor's capability in offering assistance in a timely manner?

	N	Percent
A	213	59%
B	90	25%
C	39	11%
D	9	3%
F	9	3%
Total	360	101%

12. How would you rate your advisor's knowledge of the requirements of your degree?

	N	Percent
A	246	69%
B	79	22%
C	22	6%
D	4	1%
F	5	1%
Total	356	99%

Courses/ Schedule

13. How would you rate the availability of courses needed to make academic progress toward your degree?

	N	Percent
A	143	36%
B	149	38%
C	72	18%
D	19	5%
F	14	4%
Total	397	101%

14. Which of the following BEST describes your preferred meeting time?

	N	Percent
Evening classes only	156	38%
Online (web) classes only	120	30%
Evening class in week/morning class at weekend	94	23%
Morning classes only	24	6%
Other	13	3%
Total	407	100%

14a. “Other” preferred class meeting time

Verbatim responses include:

- Weekends
- Open anytime
- Later evening classes (after 5:30 pm) to accommodate work schedules
- Evening during school year and summer online courses
- More ITV classes needed
- Combination of online and evening classes
- Anything but online

15. Which of these BEST describes the preferred location of your classes?

	N	Percent
Classes near my home	172	42%
Only online classes	126	31%
Class near work weekdays/near home weekends	59	15%
Classes near my work	29	7%
Class near home weekdays/ near work weekends	17	4%
Other	3	1%
Total	406	100%

15a. “Other” preferred class location

Verbatim responses include:

- NAU needs its own meeting location, not high schools or community colleges
- In class—it seems like teachers online don’t really care
- Home and work are the same area

16. How would you rate traditional in-person classroom settings?

	N	Percent
A	267	74%
B	76	21%
C	15	4%
D	3	1%
F	2	1%
Total	363	101%

17. How would you rate Instructional Television, ITV?

	N	Percent
A	42	22%
B	74	38%
C	51	26%
D	16	8%
F	12	6%
Total	195	100%

18. How would you rate online or web-based classes?

	N	Percent
A	111	33%
B	120	36%
C	59	18%
D	23	7%
F	22	7%
Total	335	101%

19. When looking for classes to take at NAU, what is your preferred method for finding classes for your schedule?

	N	Percent
Online – Louie Course Search	154	38%
Working with an advisor to identify classes	107	27%
Online – Distance Learning Pages	85	21%
Using a printed schedule book	29	7%
Online – not sure if Distance Learning/Louie	25	6%
Other	4	1%
Total	404	100%

19a. "Other" preferred method of finding classes

Verbatim responses include:

- Word of mouth and previous experience with professors
- They tell me what classes to take; I don't get to choose the time
- Find out by myself
- Online, schedule book, and with an advisor

20. Overall, what grade would you give Distance Learning for the job they're doing?

	N	Percent
A	234	58%
B	136	34%
C	27	7%
D	4	1%
F	2	1%
Total	403	101%

Online Access

21. If you use the internet, from which location do you MOST often access it?

	N	Percent
Home	341	84%
Work	48	12%
NAU computer lab	8	2%
Community college	5	1%
I do not use the internet	3	1%
The library	1	--
Other	--	--
Total	406	100%

22. How would you rate the quality of assistance from the staff at the NAU computer lab?

	N	Percent
A	3	75%
B	--	--
C	--	--
D	1	25%
F	--	--
Total	4	100%

23. Which of the following NAU online services have you used? Select all that apply.

	N	Percent
Application for Admission to NAU	256	65%
Class evaluations	255	64%
Class search to find classes	340	86%
Registration for NAU classes	333	84%
Tuition payment	263	66%

**Multiple response totals*

24. Do you use any other online NAU services?

	N	Percent
Yes	208	52%
No	193	48%
Total	401	100%

25. "Other" online services you have used [Recoded into categories]

	N	Percent
Library/Bookstore	71	35%
WebCT/Classes	54	26%
Webmail/Email	41	20%
LOUIE	20	10%
Financial aid	8	4%
Grades/Transcripts	3	2%
Other	9	4%
Total	206	101%

Verbatim responses include:

- Veteran services; college of education
- Use everything NAU offers online
- Teacher certification for secondary prep
- Portfolio
- Portal
- My NAU and technology
- Menu searches
- Just a catalog
- Anything available that I can use

26. All students get an email account when they are accepted to NAU. Which of the following statements below BEST reflects how you use your NAU email account?

	N	Percent
I use my NAU email account for school correspondence	197	48%
I do not use my NAU email account at all	104	26%
NAU email is forwarded to my primary account	61	15%
NAU is my primary email account (I use it the most)	18	4%
I use my NAU account and another account equally	17	4%
I didn't know that I had an NAU email account	10	3%
Total	407	100%

27. Still thinking about email, how often do you check your NAU account?
[asked of those students who report using their NAU email account]

	N	Percent
Daily	115	40%
Weekly	110	39%
About once a month	34	12%
About once or twice every 2 months	14	5%
Once or twice a semester (once or twice within 4 months).	13	5%
Total	286	101%

28. Please tell me which best describes the reason you do not check your NAU account?

	N	Percent
I don't know how to forward my NAU email to my primary account	20	20%
I get a lot of information, SPAM emails	20	20%
I do not understand how to use my NAU email account	12	12%
I didn't know that I had an NAU email account	9	9%
Other	41	40%
Total	102	101%

28a. "Other" reason you do not check your NAU account? [Recoded into categories]

	N	Percent
Don't need/No use	15	56%
Have other account(s)/WebCT	11	41%
Other	1	4%
Total	27	101%

Verbatim responses include:

- I use WebCT
- There is no reason for me to have it; I just use WebCT
- I'm not interested
- I use the email through the online classes
- I use my own email
- I prefer face to face contact with my advisor over using email
- I don't have time to check it
- I use my work email account
- I have another primary email account

The Student

29. Are you a cohort student, that is a student seeking the same degree with the same group of students, OR are you an open enrollment student, taking classes at your own pace, with a variety of students?

	N	Percent
An open enrollment student, taking classes at your own pace with a variety of students	234	58%
A cohort student, proceeding through your degree with the same group of students	167	42%
Total	401	100%

30. On average, how many hours a week are you employed for pay while you are in school? [recoded into categories]

	N	Percent
Zero hours/week	55	14%
1-31 hours/week	70	17%
32-40 hours/week	229	56%
41-60 hours/week	53	13%
Total	407	100%

31. What is the MAIN reason you are taking classes at NAU?

	N	Percent
Career development/ advancement	217	53%
For my first degree; to enter a professional career field	94	23%
A change of career	43	11%
Personal enrichment-to learn	31	8%
To satisfy new job requirements	13	3%
To transfer credits to another school	6	2%
Other	3	1%
Total	407	101%

31a. “Other” main reason you are taking classes at NAU

Verbatim responses include:

- The administration process was more accessible
- Convenience

32. In what ways do you pay for your classes? Select all that apply.

	N	Percent
I am paying for education	240	59%
Financial Aid	170	42%
Loans	137	34%
Paid for by my employer	37	9%
Scholarship	32	8%
Payment Plan	24	6%
Parents or relatives	18	4%
Armed forces	3	1%
Other	1	0%

**Multiple response totals*

33. What is the primary reason you chose to attend NAU? [Recoded into categories]

	N	Percent
Convenience/Flexibility/Location	128	32%
Good, available classes/programs/degrees	114	28%
Online courses/Degrees	36	9%
Recommended/Good reputation	34	8%
Prior experience/Affinity to NAU	28	7%
Dissatisfaction with other schools/class size	19	5%
To further education/career	17	4%
Affordable/Financial aid/Scholarships	12	3%
Works with community/institutions/schools	12	3%
Simple entry criteria	3	1%
Total	403	100%

Verbatim responses include:

- The flexibility of courses, because I am a working professional
- Location, convenience, and course offerings
- Accessibility—I did not have to drive to Arizona State University
- The University of Arizona doesn’t offer my degree
- They offered so many classes in the evening and I have to work
- The master’s program was available there and the distance learning option was available
- The Distance Learning Program, accessibility from work, availability of classes and a great master’s program

- The cohort classes were the best and fastest option at NAU, and they were better than other universities
- I could get my master's faster than I could get a certificate from Pima Community College; plus I have tuition reduction which isn't offered at the community college
- It was affordable and it was recommended by other professionals as a good academic program
- It is the most financially appealing school in the area, and the closest. I have gone through the program; some of the professors are inspirational
- Cost, location, and availability of the Cohort Statewide Program
- NAU is the most accessible and better than ASU who were rude and had no interest in a returning student
- Smaller campus compared to ASU or U of A. It fulfilled scheduling needs
- I've been to ASU; NAU is much more attentive to students' needs
- I liked how people treated me during my undergraduate years and I enjoyed the professionalism at this school
- I have a master's prior to this through NAU and my daughter attended NAU. This is my second master's.
- I'm familiar with NAU and the allure of NAU versus other colleges. NAU has a great feel to it. They offered the degree online that I want.
- Online course are offered more often than other schools
- Online courses offered so I can finish my degree online
- NAU offers the educational technology program online
- They accepted all my transfer credits and it was because they offered the bachelor's degree online.
- Employer offers credit through NAU
- Pima Community College and NAU have a partnership regarding my major
- NAU has an association with the local community college and being able to get a degree in my own city
- To get my master's and to advance my education and to make more money
- I chose NAU to have an education and to find a good job someday
- They let me in
- My fiancé is in law school at U of A so I moved to Arizona. NAU's program did not require GREs so I was able to get into a program faster than U of A.
- I don't have to write a thesis for my masters
- I heard it's the best teaching college and it has distance learning
- NAU was recommended by a college, it has accreditation and previous experience told me there was availability of open enrollment
- It was recommended by a co-worker
- I heard good things from other people, and I can finish the course quickly

34. Campus location of NAU-DL student

	N	Percent
Tucson	84	21%
Distance Learning Center	78	19%
East Maricopa	45	11%
Central Phoenix	37	9%
West Maricopa	30	7%
Paradise Valley	29	7%
Prescott	12	3%
Scottsdale	12	3%
Holbrook	9	2%
Lake Havasu City	9	2%
Showlow	7	2%
Aravaipa	6	2%
Chinle	5	1%
Signal Peak	5	1%
Thatcher	5	1%
Apache Junction	4	1%
Verde Valley	4	1%
Fort Defiance	3	1%
Bullhead	3	1%
Chandler/Gilbert	3	1%
Kingman	3	1%
Payson	3	1%
Other	11	3%
Total	407	101%

35. Age of NAU-DL student [Recoded into categories]

	N	Percent
20-35	221	54%
36-55	166	41%
56 and over	20	5%
Total	407	100%