



**NORTHERN ARIZONA
UNIVERSITY**

Office of Planning and Institutional Research

**2016
Sophomore Survey
Report**

**NAU 2016 SOPHOMORE SURVEY
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Northern Arizona University has conducted a survey of sophomore students for more than 10 years. The survey assesses student satisfaction and opinions about their experiences at the university. The following report focuses on the results from the spring 2016 administration of the sophomore survey and highlights significant changes over the years of the study.

Consistent with prior years, the 2016 survey respondents are highly satisfied with their overall experience at NAU. The last three years have seen significant growth in enrollment, which continues to apply pressure on advising resources, particularly at the departmental level. However, overall reported availability of advising services has stabilized for the last two years, and areas of improvement have been seen with respondents indicating a greater degree of understanding regarding their degree requirements and selection of appropriate courses. Among other highly rated areas are opportunities for involvement on campus, student safety, and challenge of academic coursework.

The university's continued investment in technology and emphasis on STEM and writing skills over the last decade are reflected in sustained skill development gains, with the greatest increases since 2005 including the use of computer/technology, understanding scientific inquiry, and writing clearly and effectively.

METHODS

The 2016 Sophomore Survey was administered via a web-based application open to all sophomore students. The Office of Planning and Institutional Research surveyed all students whose academic level was flagged as sophomore (students with 30-59 cumulative units completed) on March 29, 2016¹. The survey consisted of multiple-choice and open-ended questions in an electronic format. Questions addressed satisfaction in key areas, perceived development of certain essential skills, time management, success in social areas, and opinions about the university environment and services. All eligible students were notified of the survey through electronic mail.

The survey was available online for students to respond for a period of four weeks in spring 2016. The sampling error² associated with a 495 person sample drawn from a population of 4,391 is ± 4.15 percent. As expected, the survey sample was similar to the overall population of sophomores on most characteristics examined, except for gender. Appendix A shows the characteristics of the survey sample compared to the sophomore population at NAU at the time the sample was drawn.

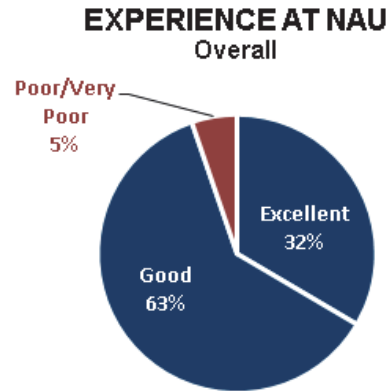
A longitudinal comparison of results across all years of the study is only available for select student evaluation areas. The survey instrument underwent a significant revision in 2007 and again in 2011. Appendix B summarizes select evaluation results from the 2008-2009, 2011, 2012, 2014, and 2016 surveys. (The 2013 administration was a shortened version of the complete survey with only selected items asked.) For earlier study results (2002-2007) please refer to the Office of Planning and Institutional Research website at nau.edu/pair/surveys/.

¹ For survey administrations in 2004, 2005, and 2006 the population was based upon sophomore students who had between 40 and 59 total cumulative earned hours and greater than 29 cumulative NAU earned hours. The survey administrations after 2007 mark a slight change in the definition of choosing the sophomore population.

² The sampling error describes the probable difference between interviewing everyone in the population versus interviewing a sample drawn from this population. For example, if 80 percent of the sophomore sample indicated satisfaction in a specific content area, the actual population parameter falls in the range of 76% - 84% (80% +/- 4%) satisfaction.

KEY RESULTS

NAU sophomores remain very positive in rating their *overall experience at NAU* to this point in their academic careers. Ninety-five percent (95%) of sophomores surveyed said their experience thus far was either “Good” or “Excellent.” Ninety-three percent (93%) of sophomores **plan on completing their bachelor’s degrees at NAU**, while 83 percent **would still choose to attend NAU** if they could start over.



	Definitely No	Probably No	Probably Yes	Definitely Yes
Do you plan to complete your bachelor's degree at NAU?	3%	4%	17%	77%
If you could start over again, would you still choose to attend NAU?	4%	13%	42%	41%

Highest "Top Box" Positive Responses

Satisfaction with opportunities for involvement on campus	47%
Satisfaction with campus safety	46%
Satisfaction with the availability of faculty	44%
Smooth advising transition from Gateway to major department	43%
Satisfaction with the challenge of academic coursework	43%

Lowest "Top Box" Positive Responses

NAU helping students cope with non-academic responsibilities	16%
Students able to explore own background through class projects	16%
Gateway has helped define career goals	20%
NAU providing support to help students thrive socially	21%
Made aware of the goals and purposes of the Liberal Studies Program	21%

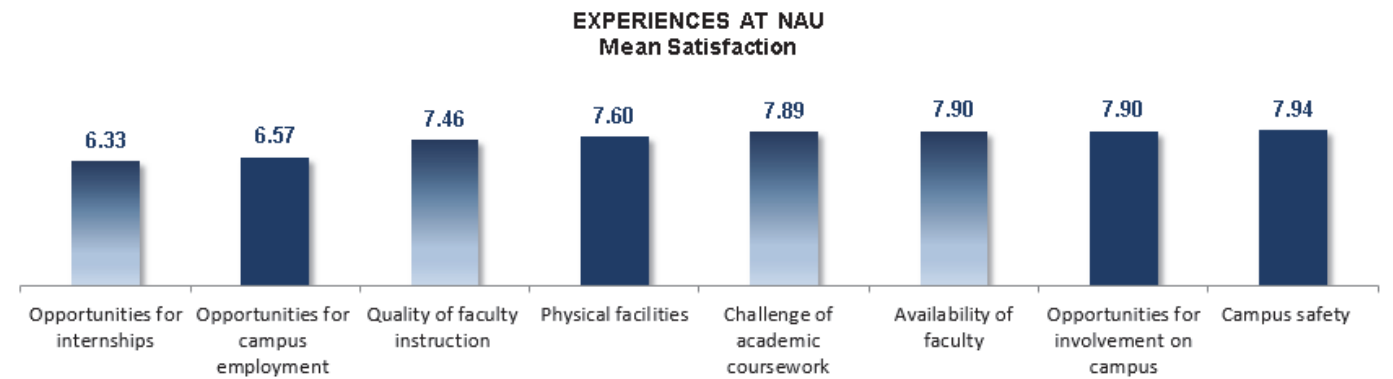
The percentages above reflect the amount of student responses that responded “9” or “10” on a scale of 1-10, “5” on a scale of 1-5, or “4” on a scale of 1-4.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES BY CONTENT AREA

EXPERIENCES AT NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with eight specific content areas on a scale of 1-10 (1 = “Very Dissatisfied,” 10 = “Very Satisfied”). Greatest satisfaction measured from the four areas of general academics is reported for the **Availability of faculty** (7.90), the **challenge of academic coursework** (7.89), followed by the **quality of faculty instruction** (7.46), and the **opportunities for internships** (6.33).

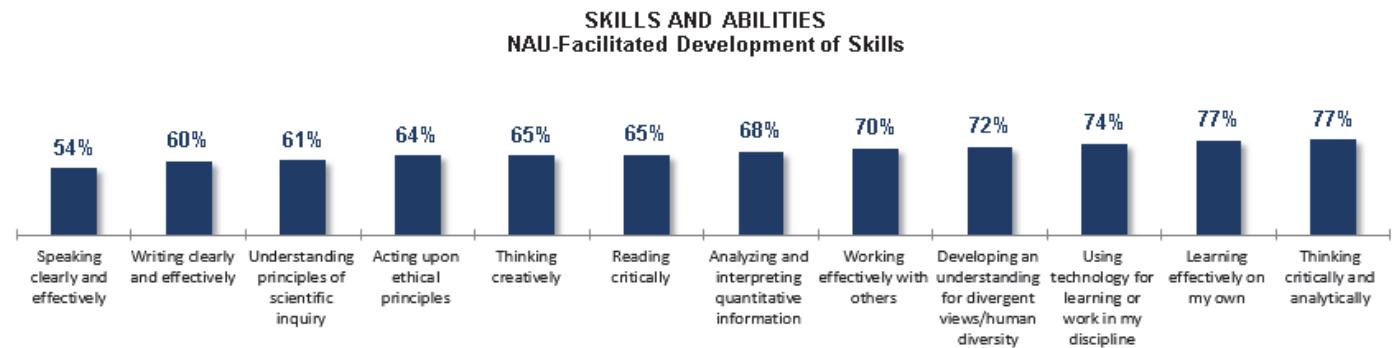
Students were also asked to rate their satisfaction with four additional overall dimensions. The highest satisfaction was reported with **campus safety** (7.94), followed by **opportunities for involvement on campus** (7.90), **physical facilities** (7.60), and then **opportunities for campus employment** (6.57).



SKILLS AND ABILITIES

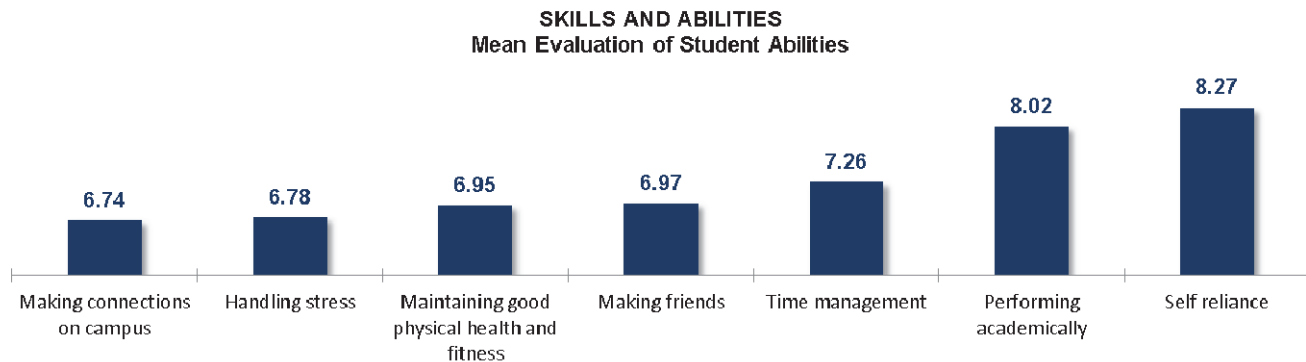
Skills

Sophomores were asked to evaluate the extent that NAU has facilitated their development in a variety of skill areas. Possible response categories included “Very Little,” “Some,” “Quite a Bit,” and “Very Much”. The proportion of sophomores indicating their NAU education has contributed significantly (“Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” responses) to their development of specific skills varies from a low of 54 percent for **speaking clearly and effectively** to a high of 77 percent for **thinking critically and analytically** and **learning effectively on my own**. Please note these are respondents who, on average, have two to three years of courses still to take at NAU. Yet, many of these skill categories are the objectives of the liberal studies curriculum generally taken by first-year and sophomore students.



Abilities

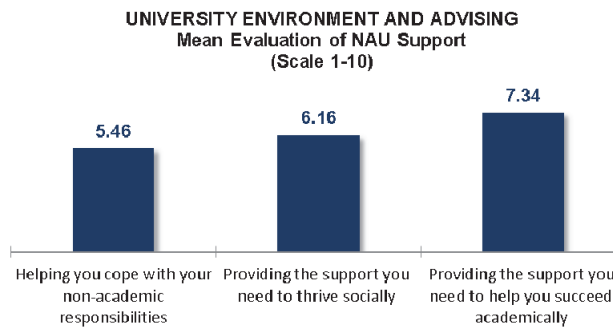
Students were asked to rate how successful they were, on a scale of 1-10, on a variety of abilities indicative of academic success (1 = “Very Unsuccessful,” 10 = “Very Successful”). Students indicated most success in abilities for *self-reliance* (8.27) and *performing academically* (8.02), while *handling stress* (6.78) and *making connections on campus* (6.74) were rated the lowest.



UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING

NAU Support

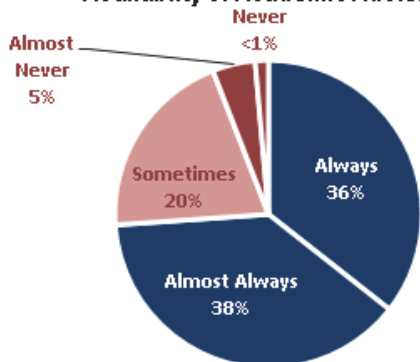
Students were asked to rate on a scale of 1-10 the level of support NAU provides in a variety of areas (1 = “Very Little,” 10 = “Very Much”). Students indicated NAU provided the greatest support in *helping them succeed academically* (7.34) and the least support in *helping them cope with non-academic responsibilities* (5.46).



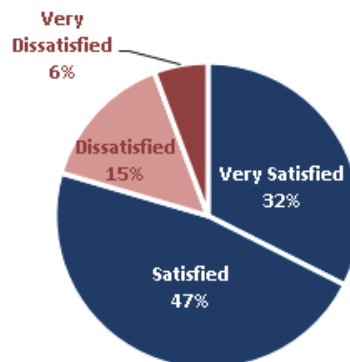
Academic Advising

Academic advising had historically been identified as an area in need of improvement on a variety of surveys conducted at NAU over the past several years. In the 2016 administration of the Sophomore Survey, 74 percent indicated that academic advising had been available when needed either “Always” or “Almost Always.” Nearly 80 percent indicated they were “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied” with academic advising, with those responding they were “Very Satisfied” seeing the largest change from 25 percent in 2014 to 32 percent in 2016.

UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING
Availability of Academic Advising



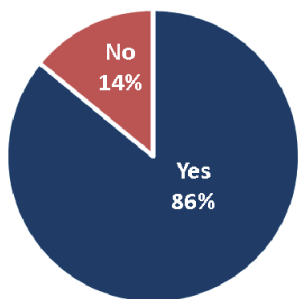
UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING
Satisfaction with Academic Advising



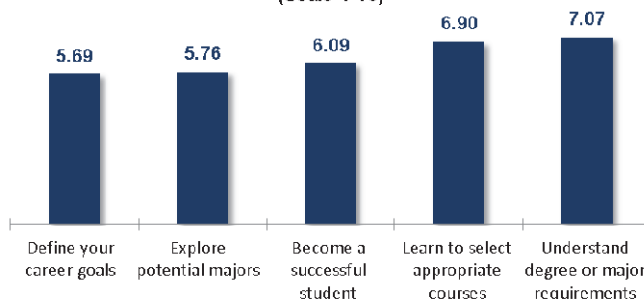
Gateway Success Center

About 86 percent of sophomores surveyed have received advising from the Gateway Success Center. These students were then asked to what extent the Gateway Success Center helped them in specific areas on a scale of 1-10 (1 = “Very Little,” 10 = “Very Much”). The students reported the greatest help in ***understanding degree or major requirements*** (7.07) and ***selecting appropriate courses*** (6.90). The lowest rated area for help from the Gateway Success Center was helping sophomores ***define their career goals*** (5.69).

UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING
Received Advising from Gateway



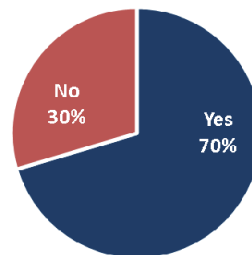
UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING
Mean Evaluation of Gateway Services
(Scale 1-10)



Major Department Advising

About 70 percent of the sophomores surveyed responded they are receiving advising from their major department. These students were then asked to describe the advising transition from Gateway Success Center to the college for advising in their major on a scale of 1-10 (1 = “Very Confusing,” 10 = “Very Smooth”), and about 69 percent rated the transition as smooth (7 to 10).

UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING
Receiving Advising from Major Department



UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING

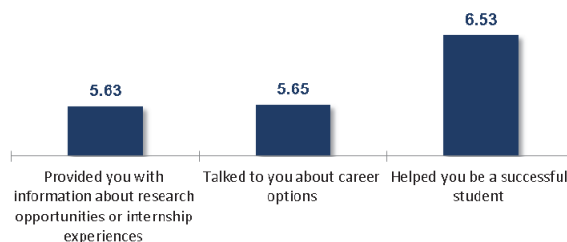
How would you describe the advising transition when you were transferred from Gateway to your college for advising in your major?

Very Confusing								Very Smooth	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4%	3%	4%	8%	6%	6%	11%	14%	12%	32%

When these students were asked to rate the extent of help received from their major department’s advising on a scale of 1-10 for three specific areas, the highest rated area was ***helping them be a successful student*** (6.53) followed by ***talking about career options*** (5.65) and ***provided information on research opportunities or internships experiences*** (5.63).

LOUIE/PeopleSoft

UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING
Mean Evaluation of
Major Department Advising Services
(Scale 1-10)



Students rated **NAU's LOUIE/PeopleSoft registration** on a scale of 1-10. Of the respondents, 64 percent provided a rating from 7-10, and 11 percent rated the system on the low end (1-3). The remaining students (25%) gave the system an average rating (4-6).

UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING

How would you rate NAU's LOUIE/PeopleSoft class registration system?

<i>Poor</i>									<i>Excellent</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5%	1%	5%	6%	7%	12%	22%	20%	11%	11%

Technology

When asked **how successful NAU has been in integrating technology into the learning environment** on a scale of 1-10, the majority of the students rated favorably on the high-end of the scale with 67 percent responding from 7 to 10.

UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING

How successful has NAU been in integrating technology into the learning environment?

<i>Very Unsuccessful</i>									<i>Very Successful</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2%	2%	2%	6%	11%	11%	15%	25%	12%	15%

LIBERAL STUDIES

Sophomores were surveyed with two questions about the Liberal Studies program. On a scale of 1-5, students were asked **to what extent NAU made them aware of the goals and purpose of the Liberal Studies program**. The responses indicate 47 percent were aware of the goals and purpose (rating either 4 or 5). When asked **to what extent their learning has benefited from Liberal Studies courses taken so far**, 47 percent (rating 4 or 5) believed they have benefited from the courses.

LIBERAL STUDIES

To what extent has NAU made you aware of the goals and purpose of the Liberal Studies Program?

<i>Not at All</i>					<i>Very Much</i>
1	2	3	4	5	
16%	12%	24%	26%	21%	

Don't know what Liberal Studies are ... 2%

LIBERAL STUDIES

To what extent has your learning benefited from the Liberal Studies courses that you have taken so far?

<i>Have Not Benefited</i>					<i>Highly Benefited</i>
1	2	3	4	5	
12%	15%	24%	26%	21%	

Don't know what Liberal Studies are ... 2%

DIVERSE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Sophomore students were asked to rate the presence of diverse learning in seven key areas on a scale of 1-4 (1 = "Strongly Disagree," 4 = "Strongly Agree"). Students that "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" with the diverse-related statements ranged from 90 percent for both **instructors encourage students to contribute different perspectives in class** and **improving my understanding of other countries and cultures is important to me** to 69 percent for **I am able to explore my own background through class projects**. The following questions were

derived from the *2010 Diverse Learning Environments Survey* administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA and implemented beginning with the 2011 Sophomore Survey.

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Instructors encourage students to contribute different perspectives in class	3%	7%	61%	29%
Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures is important to me	2%	8%	52%	38%
Instructors value individual differences in the classroom	4%	9%	63%	24%
I feel comfortable sharing my own perspective and experiences in class	4%	13%	58%	26%
Instructors encourage students from diverse backgrounds to work together	4%	15%	59%	22%
I often discuss ideas and concepts from class with other students	7%	17%	54%	23%
I am able to explore my own background through class projects	7%	25%	52%	16%

RESULTS FROM HISTORICAL SURVEYS

The Sophomore Survey underwent major revisions beginning with the 2007 administration, and again in 2011, which prohibit the comparison of all results across all years of the study. However, several questions and answer sets have remained consistent since the first administration of the survey in 2002. The results summarized below provide a comparison for the years of study 2005-2009, 2011-2016. For earlier study results (2002-2004) please refer to the Office of Planning and Institutional Research website at nau.edu/pair/surveys/.

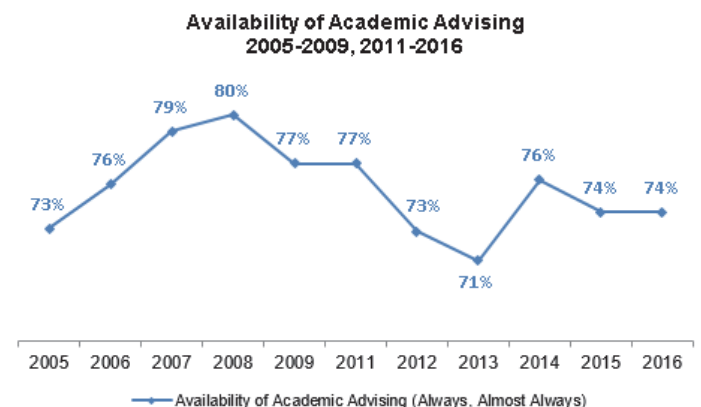
OVERALL SATISFACTION RATINGS

Overall satisfaction, assessed by asking students how they would rate their **overall experience at NAU** thus far, has remained consistently high (averaging 96%) across the last eleven years of this study. In 2016, 83 percent of students reported they would “Definitely” or “Probably” **start over again at NAU** given the opportunity, which is just below the average of 85% over recent years.



AVAILABILITY OF ACADEMIC ADVISING

The proportion of students reporting that academic advising has “Always” or “Almost Always” been available to them increased steadily from 2005 to 2008, from 73 percent to 80 percent. This positive feedback began to diminish in 2009 and reached a low of 71 percent in 2013 before bouncing back during the 2014 survey. It has remained steady at 74 percent for 2015 and 2016.



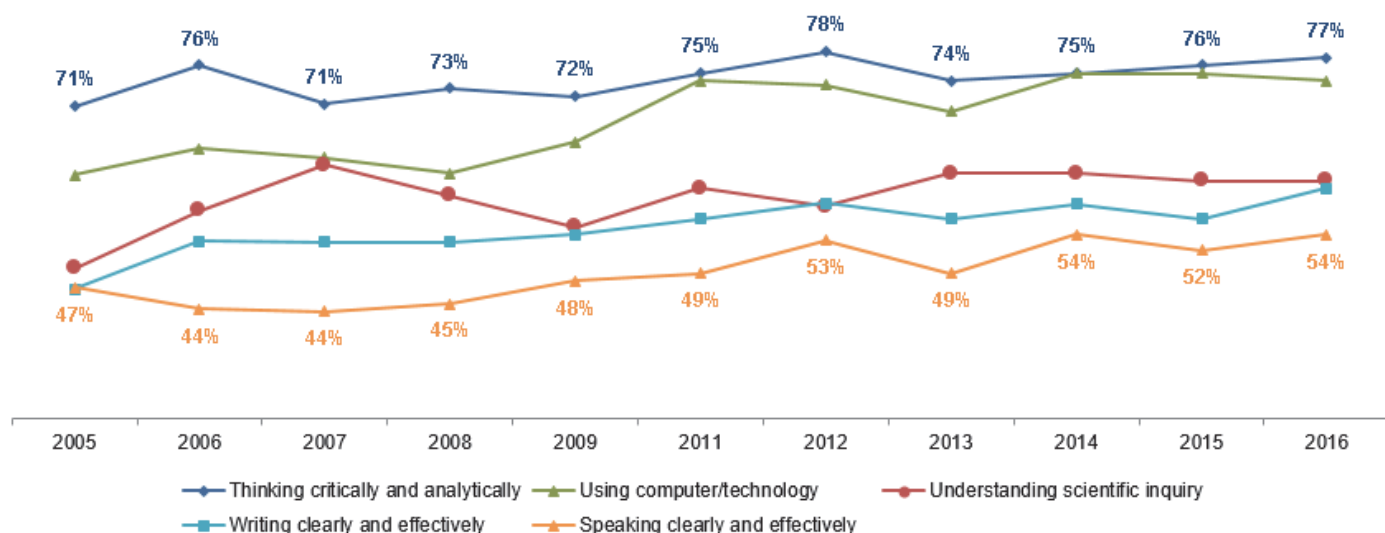
SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Students are asked to report to what extent NAU has facilitated their development in a variety of key skills (listed below). The 2016 survey shows that while there may be fluctuation from year to year, overall skill development continues to be rather consistent, with **writing clearly and effectively** showing the greatest increase over the prior year. The categories of **using computer/technology**, **analyzing quantitative problems**, **acting on ethical principles**, and **writing clearly and effectively** show the greatest increases since 2005.

EVALUATION OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT AT NAU
Responses "Very Much" or "Quite a Bit"

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Thinking critically and analytically	71%	76%	71%	73%	72%	75%	78%	74%	75%	76%	77%
Learning effectively on own	69%	75%	73%	75%	75%	76%	76%	75%	75%	77%	77%
Using computer/technology	62%	65%	64%	62%	66%	74%	73%	70%	75%	75%	74%
Develop understanding for divergent views	62%	71%	63%	66%	67%	68%	69%	64%	70%	73%	72%
Working effectively with others	62%	70%	67%	70%	71%	68%	68%	64%	66%	67%	70%
Analyzing quantitative problems	56%	61%	60%	60%	59%	66%	68%	66%	66%	70%	68%
Thinking creatively	60%	65%	63%	64%	62%	64%	67%	63%	63%	66%	65%
Understanding scientific inquiry	50%	57%	63%	59%	55%	60%	58%	62%	62%	61%	61%
Reading critically	56%	67%	61%	59%	62%	61%	64%	60%	61%	63%	65%
Acting on ethical principles	51%	59%	59%	60%	61%	61%	62%	59%	61%	63%	64%
Writing clearly and effectively	47%	53%	53%	53%	54%	56%	58%	56%	58%	56%	60%
Speaking clearly and effectively	47%	44%	44%	45%	48%	49%	49%	53%	49%	54%	52%

Comparison of Selected Skills



APPENDIX A: SAMPLE AND POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2016 survey sample was similar to the overall population of sophomores on most characteristics examined. As is common in survey research, females are overrepresented as survey respondents.

	Survey Participants	All Sophomores on March 29, 2016
GROUP SIZE	495	4,391
SAMPLING ERROR		4.15
GENDER		
Male	25%	43%
Female	75%	57%
ETHNICITY		
Asian American	3%	2%
Black / African American	2%	3%
Hawaiian	<1%	<1%
Hispanic / Latino	21%	22%
Native American	1%	2%
White	65%	60%
Two or More	6%	6%
International	1%	5%
Not Specified	<1%	<1%
CUMULATIVE GPA	3.32	3.00
CAMPUS		
Flagstaff Mountain Campus	95%	93%
Community Campuses	2%	4%
Online	3%	3%

APPENDIX B: MEAN VALUE RATING COMPARISONS

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (based on a scale of 1-10)	2008		2009		2011		2012		2014		2015		2016	
	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
To this point in your NAU education, how satisfied have you been with each of the following areas?														
Quality of faculty instruction	657	7.64	521	7.67	1,223	7.57	905	7.53	880	7.45	587	7.49	487	7.46
Availability of faculty	662	7.80	524	7.81	1,206	7.87	894	7.80	882	7.80	588	7.90	486	7.90
Challenge of academic coursework	660	7.93	521	7.99	1,224	7.91	894	7.97	876	7.75	589	7.92	485	7.89
Opportunities for involvement on campus	652	7.68	515	7.76	1,130	7.72	844	7.98	880	8.03	590	8.18	453	7.90
Opportunities for campus employment*	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,036	5.66	801	5.94	880	6.96	588	7.30	438	6.57
Campus safety	660	7.97	515	8.17	1,154	8.05	858	8.03	878	8.18	590	8.32	463	7.94
Physical facilities	658	7.39	521	7.49	1,198	6.92	877	7.67	881	7.69	589	7.60	476	7.60
Opportunities for internships*	NA	NA	NA	NA	857	6.18	678	6.39	876	7.42	586	7.39	384	6.33
How successful are you at each of the following?														
Time management	660	7.22	522	7.39	1,231	6.97	917	7.17	877	7.12	589	7.09	491	7.26
Handling stress	661	7.37	523	7.29	1,232	7.05	909	7.09	880	6.96	588	6.69	491	6.78
Making friends	660	7.67	522	7.56	1,231	7.23	908	7.37	879	6.98	587	6.94	490	6.97
Maintaining good physical health and fitness	658	7.52	520	7.34	1,234	7.25	909	7.37	879	7.14	588	6.85	490	6.95
Performing academically	658	7.98	523	8.12	1,232	7.82	911	7.88	879	7.90	587	7.75	489	8.02
self reliance	660	8.40	523	8.53	1,231	8.16	907	8.29	875	8.19	588	8.00	491	8.27
Making connections on campus	658	7.21	520	7.13	1,230	6.82	905	6.90	875	6.56	589	6.63	490	6.74
To what extent does NAU emphasize each of the following?														
Providing the support you need to thrive socially	652	5.94	518	6.28	1,229	6.21	905	6.33	878	6.20	588	6.24	492	6.16
Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	657	7.27	518	7.50	1,229	7.32	903	7.46	879	7.44	590	7.45	491	7.34
Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	655	5.11	519	5.40	1,229	5.38	905	5.59	878	5.44	590	5.53	491	5.46
To what extent has the Gateway Center helped you:														
Explore potential majors	528	5.25	430	5.50	980	5.56	709	5.71	725	5.52	492	5.43	421	5.76
Understand degree or major requirements	529	6.65	430	7.10	982	6.85	709	6.98	725	6.89	493	6.82	422	7.07
Learn to select appropriate courses	529	6.45	430	6.78	982	6.51	712	6.71	726	6.79	493	6.71	422	6.90
Become a successful student	528	5.48	428	5.84	981	5.65	708	5.91	728	5.74	493	5.83	421	6.09
Define your career goals	530	5.11	430	5.33	982	5.40	708	5.63	725	5.42	492	5.40	420	5.69

How would you describe the advising transition when you were transferred from the Gateway to your college for advising?*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	878	7.54	2.6	606	7.46	2.6	568	7.36	2.7	385	7.23	2.7	293	7.33	2.7	
To what extent has your major department advising:																					
Helped you be a successful student	508	6.98	2.6	414	7.17	2.5	1,090	6.91	2.7	780	6.90	2.6	696	6.61	2.9	464	6.75	2.8	345	6.53	2.8
Provided you with information about research opportunities or internship experiences	508	6.02	3.1	418	6.09	3.1	1,092	6.09	3.0	780	6.07	3.0	696	5.80	3.2	464	5.94	3.1	348	5.63	3.3
Talked to you about career options	508	6.27	3.0	415	6.28	3.0	1,093	6.23	3.0	778	6.19	3.0	694	5.87	3.1	466	5.95	3.1	347	5.65	3.2
How would you rate NAU's Louie/PeopleSoft registration system?	657	6.98	2.3	522	7.47	2.0	1,224	6.68	2.4	908	6.67	2.3	877	6.70	2.3	589	6.72	2.3	491	6.77	2.3
How successful has NAU been in integrating technology into the learning environment?	647	7.35	1.9	518	7.63	1.8	1,232	7.26	2.0	907	7.18	2.0	874	7.03	2.1	590	7.10	2.1	492	7.18	2.1

* New questions implemented in the 2011 survey instrument.