



NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

The 2013 Sophomore Survey Report

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

NAU 2013 SOPHOMORE SURVEY
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INTRODUCTION

Northern Arizona University has conducted a survey of sophomore students for more than ten years. This survey assesses student satisfaction and opinions about their experiences at the university. The following report focuses on the results from the spring 2013 administration of the sophomore survey and highlights significant changes over the years of the study.

METHODS

The 2013 Sophomore Survey was administered via a web-based application that was open to all sophomore students. The Office of Planning and Institutional Research surveyed all students whose academic level was flagged as sophomore (students with 30-59 cumulative units completed) on March 8, 2013.¹ The survey consisted of multiple-choice and open-ended questions in an electronic format. Unlike in previous years, the 2013 sophomore survey instrument was significantly shortened to include only questions addressing the university contribution to perceived development of certain essential skills, campus climate, academic advising and the most influential faculty members. All eligible students were notified of the survey through electronic mail. Incentive prizes of three \$100 NAU Bookstore gift cards were offered to encourage students to participate in the survey.

The survey was available online for students to respond for six weeks in spring 2013. The sampling error² associated with a 984 person sample drawn from a population of 3,557 is ± 2.66 percent. The survey sample was similar to the overall population of sophomores on most characteristics examined, except for gender. For analytical purposes all cases were weighted to account for oversampling of female respondents. 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 2007-2013 surveys. For earlier study results (2002-2004) please refer to the Office of Planning and Institutional Research website at nau.edu/pair.

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.

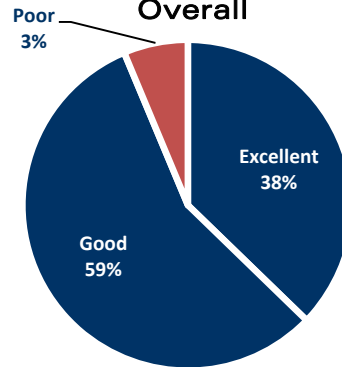
² The sampling error describes the probable difference between interviewing everyone in the population versus interviewing a sample drawn from this population. For example, if 80 percent of the sophomore sample indicated satisfaction in a specific content area, the actual population parameter falls in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

RESULTS

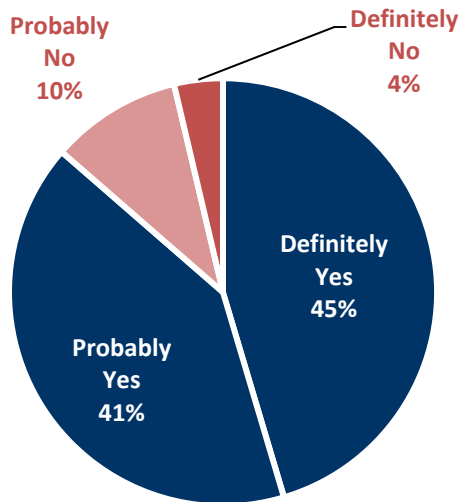
OVERALL EXPERIENCE AT NAU

NAU sophomores are very positive in rating their *overall experience at NAU* to this point in their academic careers. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of sophomores surveyed said their experience thus far was either “Good” or “Excellent” and 86% indicated they would choose NAU again.

EXPERIENCE AT NAU Overall



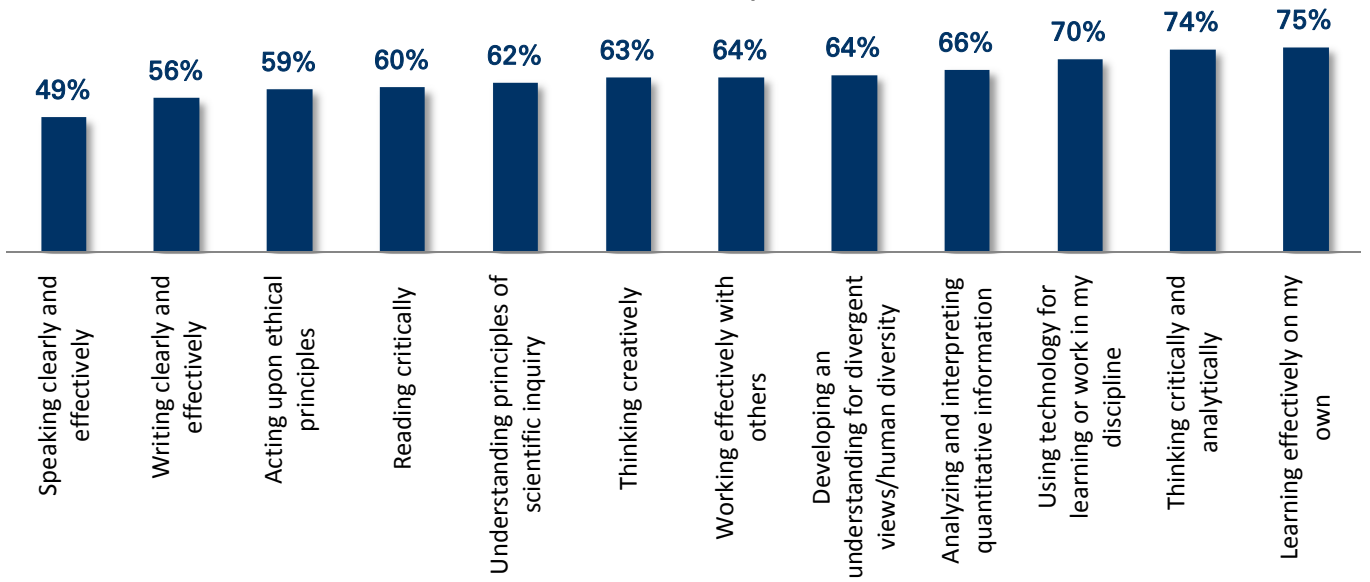
Choosing NAU Again



SKILLS

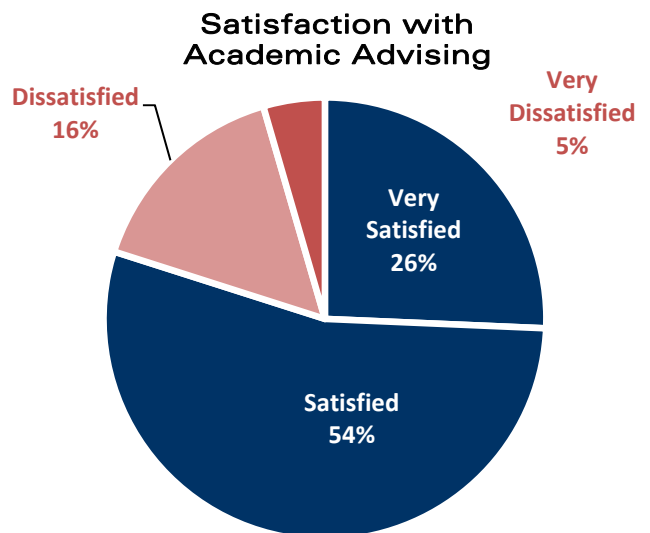
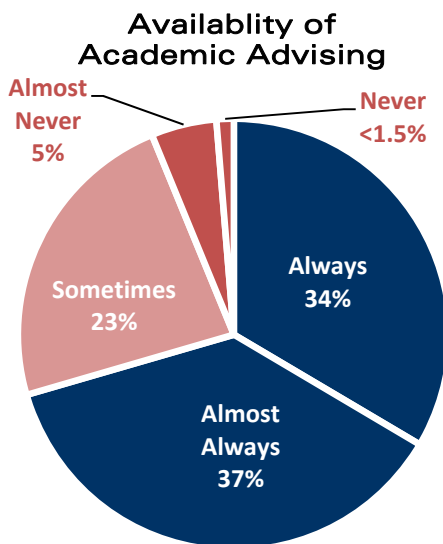
Sophomores were asked to evaluate the extent that NAU has facilitated their development in a variety of skill areas. Possible response categories included “Very Little,” “Some,” “Quite a Bit,” and “Very Much”. The proportion of sophomores indicating that their NAU education has contributed significantly (“Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” response) to their development of specific skills varies from a low of 49% for *speaking clearly and effectively* to a high of 75% for *learning effectively on my own*. These are respondents that, on average, have two to three years of courses still to take at NAU. Yet, many of these skill categories are the objectives of the liberal studies curriculum that are generally taken by first-year and sophomore students.

NAU-Facilitated Development of Skills



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 2013 administration of the Sophomore Survey, 71% indicated that academic advising had been available when needed either “Always” or “Almost Always” and nearly 84% indicated they were “Satisfied” or “Very satisfied” with academic advising to this point in their NAU education.



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 statement ranged from 88% for *instructors encourage students to contribute different perspectives in class* to 70% 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 for the first time in 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%	10%	53%	30%
Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures is important to me	4%	12%	51%	33%
Instructors value individual differences in the classroom	3%	11%	60%	26%
I feel comfortable sharing my own perspective and experiences in class	3%	14%	57%	27%
Instructors encourage students from diverse backgrounds to work together	3%	20%	54%	23%
I often discuss ideas and concepts from class with other students	5%	18%	51%	26%
I am able to explore my own background through class projects	5%	25%	51%	19%

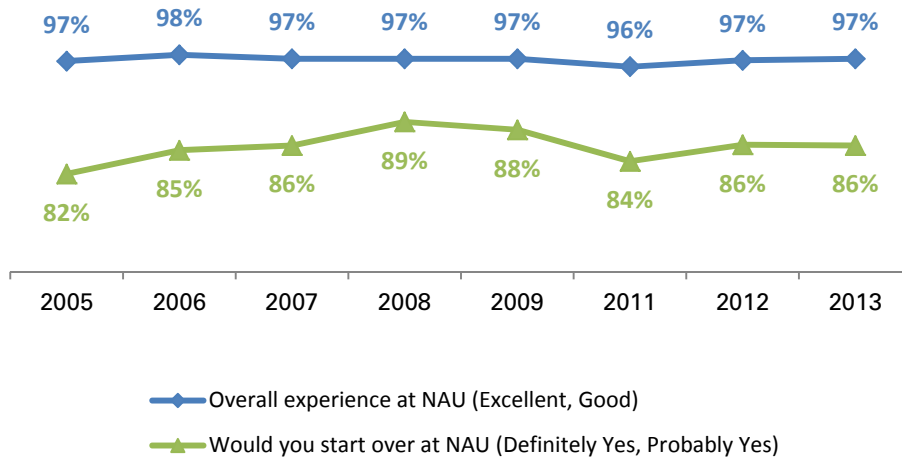
RESULTS FROM HISTORICAL SURVEYS

The Sophomore Survey underwent major revisions beginning with the 2007 administration, and again in 2011, that 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 and 2012. For earlier study results (2002-2004) please refer to the Office of Planning and Institutional Research website at nau.edu/pair.

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 97%) across the last eight years that this study was conducted. In 2013, 86% of students reported they would “Definitely” or “Probably” *start over again at NAU* given the opportunity. This is consistent with the average of 86% over recent years.

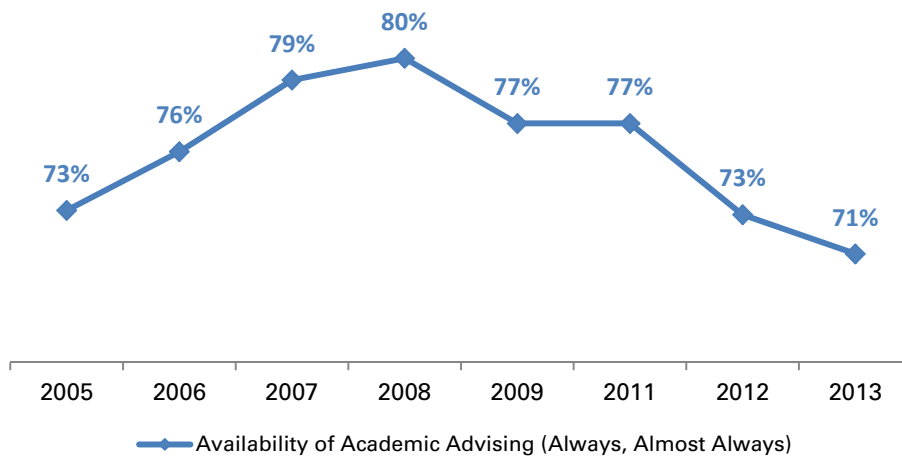
Overall Satisfaction Ratings: 2005-2009, 2011-2013



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% to 80%. This positive increase began to diminish in 2009, and is now below the 2005 level.

Availability of Academic Advising: 2005-2009, 2011-2013



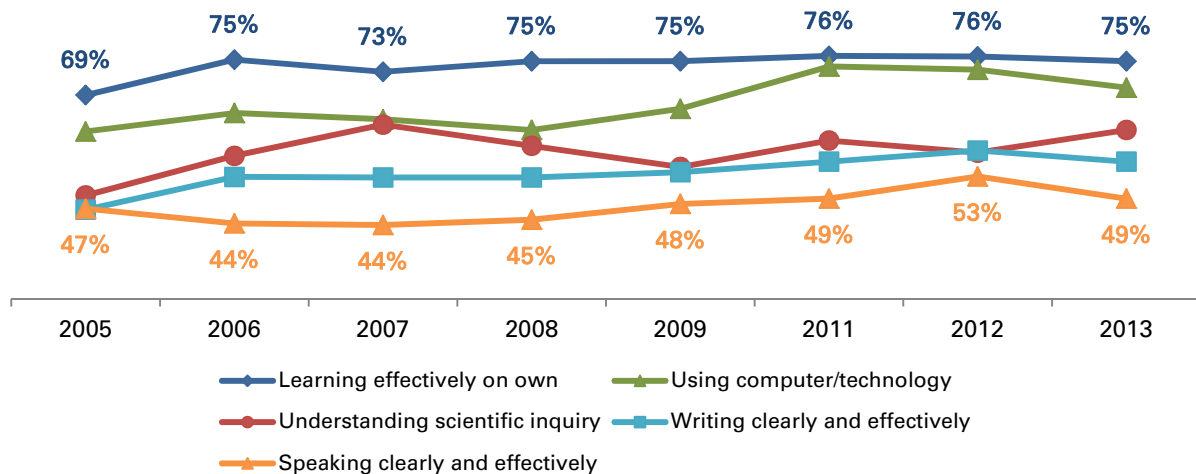
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Students are asked to report to what extent NAU has facilitated their development in a variety of key skills (listed below). The 2012 survey shows moderate increases in nearly all areas of skill development compared to the last survey administered in 2011 with *speaking clearly and effectively* showing the greatest increase over the previous year. While any year to year comparison for a given skill likely shows fluctuation, overall skill development appears to be rather consistent.

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

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

Comparison of Selected Skills



DIVERSE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

In spring 2010 the university participated in a nationally piloted Diverse Learning Environments Survey administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA. In 2011 a set of questions from the pilot's classroom module were incorporated into the university's annual Sophomore Survey. The results has been fairly consistent across the years, in 2013 ranging between 70 percent for respondents agreeing or agreeing strongly with a statement "*I am able to explore my own background through class projects*" and 88 percent agreeing or agreeing strongly that "*instructors encourage students to contribute different perspectives in class.*"

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following:	2010 (HERI)	2011	2012	2013
Instructors encourage students to contribute different perspectives in class	93%	90%	89%	88%
Instructors value individual differences in the classroom	86%	86%	86%	86%
Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures is important to me	90%	87%	87%	84%
I feel comfortable sharing my own perspective and experiences in class	84%	83%	84%	84%
Instructors encourage students from diverse backgrounds to work together	83%	77%	78%	77%
I often discuss ideas and concepts from class with other students	78%	74%	76%	77%
I am able to explore my own background through class projects	63%	70%	69%	70%

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE AND POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2013 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 8, 2013
GROUP SIZE	984	3,557
SAMPLING ERROR	2.66	
GENDER		
Male	34%	44%
Female	67%	56%
ETHNICITY		
Asian American	1%	1%
Black / African American	3%	3%
Hawaiian	0%	0%
Hispanic / Latino	20%	19%
Native American	3%	3%
White	67%	64%
Two or More	5%	6%
International	2%	4%
Not Specified	<1%	<1%
CUMULATIVE GPA	3.06	2.83
CAMPUS		
Flagstaff Mountain Campus	94%	92%
Community Campuses	3%	4%
Online	3%	4%