



**NORTHERN ARIZONA
UNIVERSITY**

Office of Planning and Institutional Research

2014 Sophomore Survey Report

NAU 2014 SOPHOMORE SURVEY
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Northern Arizona University has conducted a survey of sophomore students for over 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 2014 administration of the sophomore survey and highlights significant changes over the years of the study.

Consistently with previous years' data, the 2014 survey respondents are highly satisfied with their overall experience at NAU. Years of substantial enrollment growth put pressure on the advising services and their reported availability has been declining since 2008 until this year when it bounced back. Respondents are especially positive about smooth advising transitions from Gateway to major department. Among other highly rated areas are student safety, opportunities for involvement on campus, and challenge of academic coursework.

The university's investments in technology and emphasis on STEM and writing skills over the last decade are reflected in reported skill development gains with using computer/technology, understanding scientific inquiry and writing clearly and effectively showing the greatest increases since 2005.

METHODS

The 2014 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 20, 2014.¹ The survey consisted of multiple-choice and open-ended questions in an electronic format. Questions addressed satisfaction in key areas, perceived development of certain essential skills, time management, success in social areas, and opinions about the university environment and services. All eligible students were notified of the survey through electronic mail. Incentive prizes of ten \$25 Amazon (amazon.com) 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 2014. The sampling error² associated with an 885 person sample drawn from a population of 3,776 is + 2.88 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.

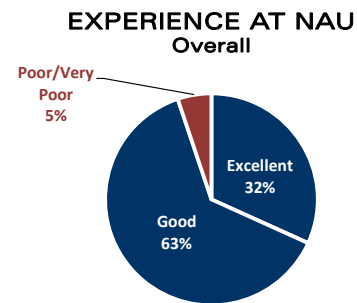
A longitudinal comparison of results across all years of the study is only available for select student evaluation areas. The survey instrument underwent a significant revision in 2007 and again in 2011. Appendix B summarizes select evaluation results from the 2007-2009, 2011, 2012 and 2014 surveys. (The 2013 administration was a shortened version of the complete survey with only selected items asked.) 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.

KEY RESULTS

NAU sophomores are 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-six percent (96%) of sophomores **plan on completing their bachelor’s degrees at NAU**, while 86 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?	2%	2%	19%	77%
If you could start over again, would you still choose to attend NAU?	3%	11%	45%	41%

Highest "Top Box" Positive Responses

Satisfaction with campus safety	47%
Smooth advising transition from Gateway to major department	45%
Satisfaction with opportunities for involvement on campus	42%
Satisfaction with the challenge of academic coursework	40%
Satisfaction with the availability of faculty	39%

Lowest "Top Box" Positive Responses

NAU helping students cope with non-academic responsibilities	14%
Students able to explore own background through class projects	14%
Opportunities for internships	14%
Gateway has helped define career goals	18%
Learning has benefited from the Liberal Studies courses	18%

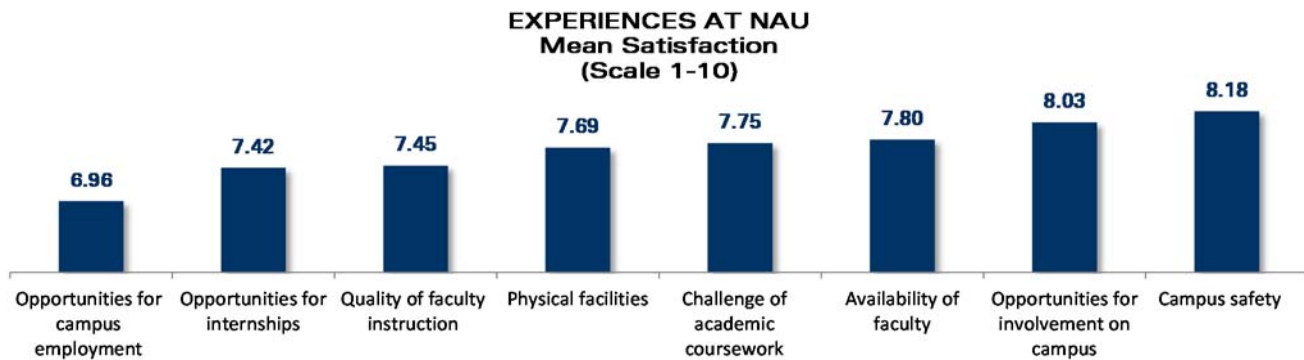
The percentages above reflect the amount of student responses that responded “9” or “10” on a scale of 1-10, “5” on a scale of 1-5, or “4” on a scale of 1-4.

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* (7.80), the *challenge of academic coursework* (7.75), followed by the *quality of faculty instruction* (7.45), and the *opportunities for internships* (7.42).

Students were also asked to rate their satisfaction with four additional overall dimensions. The highest satisfaction was reported with *campus safety* (8.18), followed by *opportunities for involvement on campus* (8.03), *physical facilities* (7.69) and the lowest rating, *opportunities for campus employment* (6.96).



SKILLS AND ABILITIES

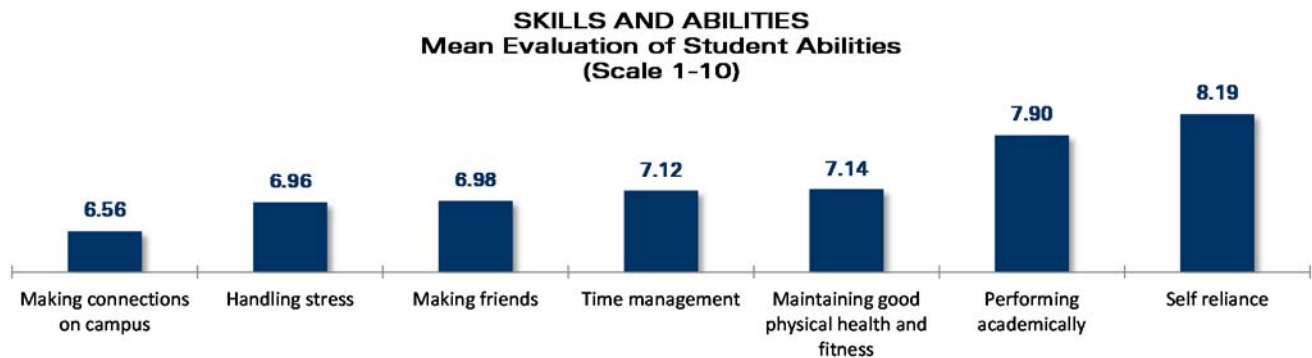
Skills

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 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 54 percent for *speaking clearly and effectively* to a high of 75 percent for *using technology in my discipline, thinking critically and analytically*, and *learning effectively on my own*. Please note that these are respondents that, on average, have two to three years of courses still to take at NAU. Yet, many of these skill categories are the objectives of the liberal studies curriculum that are generally taken by first-year and sophomore students.



Abilities

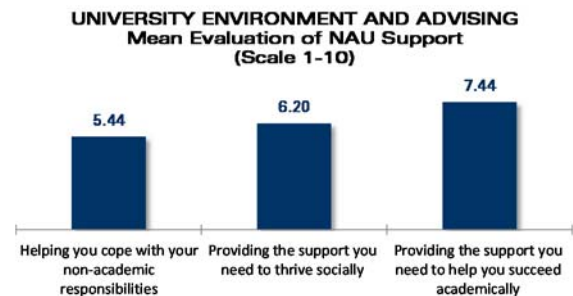
Students were asked to rate how successful they were, on a scale of 1-10, on a variety of abilities indicative of academic success (1 = “Very Unsuccessful,” 10 = “Very Successful”). Students indicated most success in abilities for *self-reliance* (8.19) and *performing academically* (7.90), while *handling stress* (6.96) and *making connections on campus* (6.56) were rated the lowest.



UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING

NAU Support

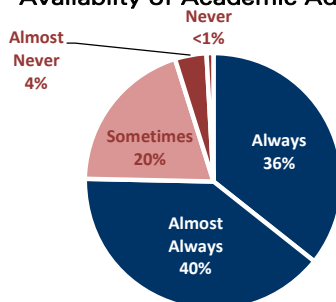
Students were asked to rate on a scale of 1-10 the level of support NAU provides in a variety of areas (1 = “Very Little,” 10 = “Very Much”). As may be expected, students indicated that NAU provided the greatest support in *helping them succeed academically* (7.44) and the least support in *helping them cope with non-academic responsibilities* (5.44).



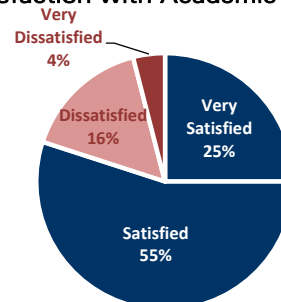
Academic Advising

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 2014 administration of the Sophomore Survey, 76 percent indicated that academic advising had been available when needed either “Always” or “Almost Always” and nearly 80 percent indicated they were “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied” with academic advising to this point in their NAU education.

UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING
Availability of Academic Advising



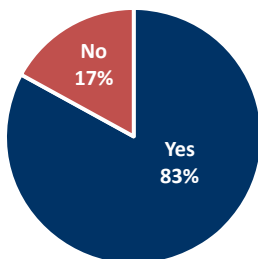
UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING
Satisfaction with Academic Advising



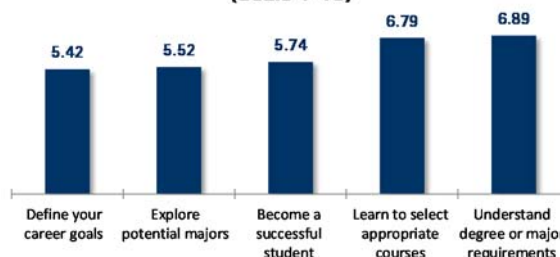
Gateway Success Center

About 83 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** (6.89) and **selecting appropriate courses** (6.79). The lowest rated area for help from the Gateway Success Center was helping sophomores **define their career goals** (5.42).

UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING
Received Advising from Gateway



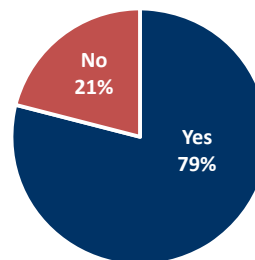
UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING
Mean Evaluation of Gateway Services
(Scale 1-10)



Major Department Advising

About 79 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 major on a scale of 1-10 (1 = “Very Confusing,” 10 = “Very Smooth”), about 68 percent rated the transition as smooth (7 to 10).

UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING
Receiving Advising from Major Department

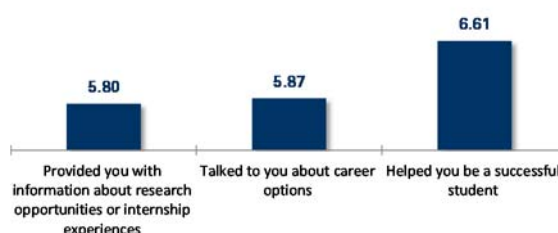


UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING
How would you describe the advising transition when you were transferred from Gateway to your college for advising in your major?

Very Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very Smooth
	5%	3%	5%	4%	7%	8%	9%	14%	14%	31%	

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** (6.61) followed by **talking about career options** (5.87) and **provided information on research opportunities or internships experiences** (5.80).

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



LOUIE/PeopleSoft

Students *rated NAU's LOUIE/PeopleSoft registration* on a scale of 1-10. Of the respondents, 62 percent provided a rating from 7-10, and 10 percent rated the system on the low end (1-3). The remaining students (28%) 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	
4%	3%	3%	5%	10%	13%	21%	20%	11%	10%	

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 65 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%	1%	3%	4%	11%	14%	18%	22%	13%	12%	

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*. Only 47 percent indicated they 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*, 43 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	
12%	14%	24%	27%	20%	

Don't know what Liberal Studies are ... 3%

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	
13%	16%	26%	25%	18%	

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 statement ranged from 90 percent for *instructors encourage students to contribute different perspectives in class* 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 in the 2011 Sophomore Survey.

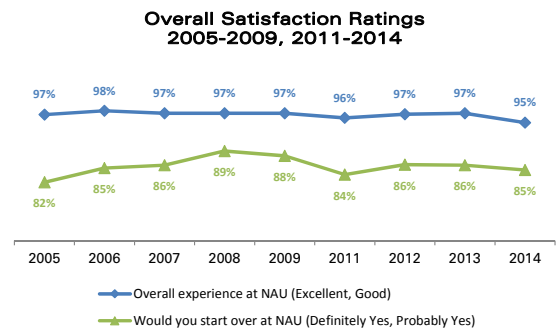
Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Instructors encourage students to contribute different perspectives in class	2%	8%	61%	29%
Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures is important to me	4%	10%	51%	35%
Instructors value individual differences in the classroom	3%	11%	62%	24%
I feel comfortable sharing my own perspective and experiences in class	4%	12%	63%	21%
Instructors encourage students from diverse backgrounds to work together	2%	19%	58%	21%
I often discuss ideas and concepts from class with other students	5%	20%	53%	22%
I am able to explore my own background through class projects	4%	27%	55%	14%

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, 2011-2014. For earlier study results (2002-2004) please refer to the Office of Planning and Institutional Research website at nau.edu/pair.

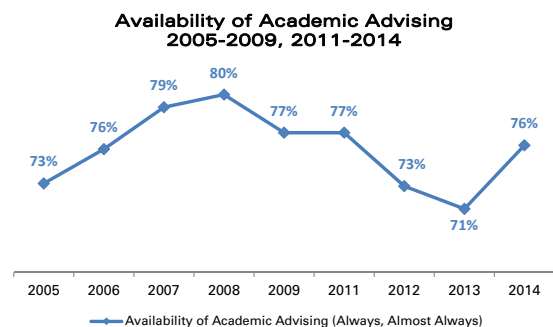
OVERALL SATISFACTION RATINGS

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 nine years that this study was conducted. In 2014, 85 percent of students reported they would “Definitely” or “Probably” **start over again at NAU** given the opportunity. This is consistent with the average of 86 percent 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 increase began to diminish 2009 and reached a low of 71 percent in 2013. The rating bounced up to 76 percent for the 2014 survey.

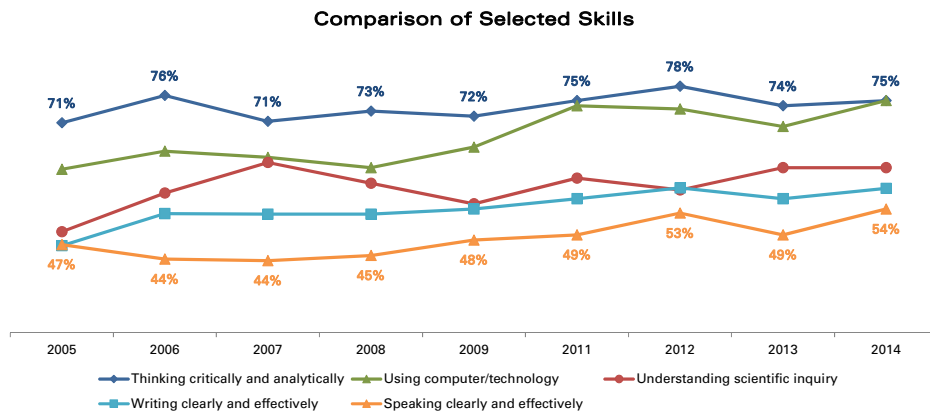


SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Students are asked to report to what extent NAU has facilitated their development in a variety of key skills (listed below). The 2014 survey shows fairly consistent ratings in nearly all areas of skill development compared to the last the few surveys with **using computer/technology**, **understanding scientific inquiry** and **writing clearly and effectively** showing the greatest increases since 2005. 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	2014
Thinking critically and analytically	71%	76%	71%	73%	72%	75%	78%	74%	75%
Learning effectively on own	69%	75%	73%	75%	75%	76%	76%	75%	75%
Using computer/technology	62%	65%	64%	62%	66%	74%	73%	70%	75%
Develop understanding for divergent views	62%	71%	63%	66%	67%	68%	69%	64%	70%
Working effectively with others	62%	70%	67%	70%	71%	68%	68%	64%	66%
Analyzing quantitative problems	56%	61%	60%	60%	59%	66%	68%	66%	66%
Thinking creatively	60%	65%	63%	64%	62%	64%	67%	63%	63%
Understanding scientific inquiry	50%	57%	63%	59%	55%	60%	58%	62%	62%
Reading critically	56%	67%	61%	59%	62%	61%	64%	60%	61%
Acting on ethical principles	51%	59%	59%	60%	61%	61%	62%	59%	61%
Writing clearly and effectively	47%	53%	53%	53%	54%	56%	58%	56%	58%
Speaking clearly and effectively	47%	44%	44%	45%	48%	49%	53%	49%	54%



When comparing mean value rating across years (2007 to 2014), it appears that satisfaction with **opportunities for involvement on campus** had gradually increased from a low of 7.35 in 2007 to a high of 8.03 in 2014 yet the students' perception at successfully **making friends** and **making connection on campus** has decreased from 7.65 and 7.09 in 2007 to 6.98 and 6.56 in 2014, respectively. Please see Appendix B for Mean Value Rating Comparisons.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE AND POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2014 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 20, 2014
GROUP SIZE	885	3,776
SAMPLING ERROR		2.88
GENDER		
Male	31%	44%
Female	69%	56%
ETHNICITY		
Asian American	2%	2%
Black / African American	2%	3%
Hawaiian	<1%	<1%
Hispanic / Latino	20%	18%
Native American	2%	2%
White	65%	64%
Two or More	6%	6%
International	2%	5%
Not Specified	0%	<1%
CUMULATIVE GPA	3.24	2.95
CAMPUS		
Flagstaff Mountain Campus	95%	94%
Community Campuses	2%	3%
Online	3%	3%

APPENDIX B: MEAN VALUE RATING COMPARISONS

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (based on a scale of 1-10)

	2007			2008			2009			2011			2012			2014		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
To this point in your NAU education, how satisfied have you been with each of the following areas?																		
Quality of faculty instruction	717	7.50	1.8	657	7.64	1.7	521	7.67	1.8	1,223	7.57	1.8	905	7.53	1.9	880	7.45	2.1
Availability of faculty	720	7.69	1.9	662	7.80	1.8	524	7.81	1.8	1,206	7.87	1.9	894	7.80	2.0	882	7.80	2.0
Challenge of academic coursework	721	7.83	1.8	660	7.93	1.7	521	7.99	1.7	1,224	7.91	1.7	894	7.97	1.8	876	7.75	1.9
Opportunities for involvement on campus	716	7.35	2.0	652	7.68	1.8	515	7.76	1.8	1,130	7.72	2.1	844	7.98	2.0	880	8.03	2.2
Opportunities for campus employment *	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,036	5.66	2.7	801	5.94	2.8	880	6.96	2.9
Campus safety	714	7.81	2.0	660	7.97	1.9	515	8.07	1.8	1,154	8.05	1.9	858	8.03	1.9	878	8.18	2.0
Physical facilities	719	7.38	2.0	658	7.39	1.9	521	7.49	1.9	1,198	6.92	2.3	877	7.67	2.0	881	7.69	2.1
Opportunities for internships*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	857	6.18	2.4	678	6.39	2.4	876	7.42	2.9
How successful are you at each of the following?																		
Time management	720	7.04	2.1	660	7.22	2.0	522	7.39	2.1	1,231	6.97	2.2	907	7.17	2.2	877	7.12	2.3
Handling stress	721	7.12	2.1	661	7.37	2.1	523	7.29	2.2	1,232	7.05	2.2	909	7.09	2.2	880	6.96	2.4
Making friends	720	7.65	2.2	660	7.67	2.2	522	7.56	2.2	1,231	7.23	2.4	908	7.37	2.4	879	6.98	2.5
Maintaining good physical health and fitness	722	7.23	2.2	658	7.52	2.0	520	7.34	2.1	1,234	7.25	2.2	909	7.37	2.2	879	7.14	2.2
Performing academically	720	7.78	1.9	658	7.98	1.7	523	8.12	1.7	1,232	7.82	1.9	911	7.88	1.9	879	7.90	2.0
Self reliance	721	8.21	1.9	660	8.40	1.7	523	8.53	1.7	1,231	8.16	2.0	907	8.29	1.9	875	8.19	2.0
Making connections on campus	716	7.09	2.2	658	7.21	2.2	520	7.13	2.3	1,230	6.82	2.4	905	6.90	2.3	875	6.56	2.5
To what extent does NAU emphasize each of the following?																		
Providing the support you need to thrive socially	715	5.86	2.5	652	5.94	2.5	518	6.28	2.3	1,229	6.21	2.3	905	6.33	2.4	878	6.20	2.5
Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	717	6.97	2.1	657	7.27	2.0	518	7.50	2.1	1,229	7.32	2.1	903	7.46	2.1	879	7.44	2.1
Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	717	4.97	2.7	655	5.11	2.6	519	5.40	2.6	1,229	5.38	2.6	905	5.59	2.6	878	5.44	2.7
To what extent has the Gateway Center helped you:																		
Explore potential majors	600	5.33	3.1	528	5.25	3.0	430	5.50	3.0	980	5.56	2.9	709	5.71	3.0	725	5.52	3.1
Understand degree or major requirements	601	6.62	2.9	529	6.65	2.8	430	7.10	2.6	982	6.85	2.8	709	6.98	2.7	725	6.89	2.8
Learn to select appropriate courses	597	6.52	2.9	529	6.45	2.8	430	6.78	2.7	982	6.51	2.8	712	6.71	2.8	726	6.79	2.8
Be a successful student	599	5.55	2.9	528	5.48	2.8	428	5.84	2.7	981	5.65	2.8	708	5.91	2.8	728	5.74	2.9
Define your career goals	599	5.21	3.0	530	5.11	3.0	430	5.33	2.9	982	5.40	2.8	708	5.63	2.9	725	5.42	3.0

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS
(based on a scale of 1-10)

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

	2007			2008			2009			2011			2012			2014		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	878	7.54	2.60	606	7.46	2.64	568	7.36	2.71
To what extent has your major department advising:																		
Helped you be a successful student	546	6.88	2.7	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
Provided you with information about research opportunities or internship experiences	546	6.07	3.1	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
Talked to you about career options	546	6.40	3.1	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
How would you rate NAU's Louie/PeopleSoft registration system?																		
	720	6.95	2.30	657	6.98	2.32	522	7.47	1.96	1224	6.68	2.40	908	6.67	2.31	877	6.70	2.3
How successful has NAU been in integrating technology into the learning environment?																		
	711	7.13	1.98	647	7.35	1.85	518	7.63	1.80	1232	7.26	2.00	907	7.18	1.97	874	7.03	2.1

* New questions implemented in the 2011 survey instrument.