

Office of Strategic Planning, Institutional Research, and Analytics

# 2023 Sophomore Survey Report

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Northern Arizona University has conducted a survey of sophomore students for more than 10 years, dating back to 2002. The survey assesses student satisfaction and opinions about their experiences at the University. The following report focuses on the results from the Spring 2023 administration of the sophomore survey and calls out key similarities and differences from previous years. NAU did not conduct sophomore surveys in 2020 and 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consistent with prior years, the 2023 survey respondents were highly satisfied with their overall experience at NAU. Availability of faculty, the challenge of academic coursework, and opportunities for involvement on campus were among the areas of greatest satisfaction. Students reported that NAU had facilitated their development in a variety of skill areas, such as learning effectively on one's own and using technology for learning or working in one's discipline. Based on the averages, students indicated most success in abilities for *self-reliance* and *performing academically*, while *making friends* and *making connections on campus* were rated the lowest. Compared to the prior years, the 2023 results showed consistent ratings for the Louie/PeopleSoft registration system and for technology integration into the learning environment. In addition, the 2023 respondents reported strong support for the statement that improving an understanding of other countries and cultures is important and that instructors encourage students to contribute different perspectives in class.

# **METHODS**

The 2023 Sophomore Survey was administered via a web-based application open to all sophomore students. The Office of Strategic Planning, Institutional Research, and Analytics surveyed all students whose academic level was flagged as sophomore (students with 30-59 cumulative units completed) on March 19, 2023<sup>1</sup>.

All eligible students were notified of the survey through electronic mail. The survey was available online for students to respond for a period of two weeks in Spring 2023. The sampling error<sup>2</sup> associated with a 376-person sample drawn from a population of 4,312 is  $\pm$  4.83 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.

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.

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, then again in 2011, 2019, and a minor revision was made in 2022. Appendix B summarizes select evaluation results from the 2012, 2014-2019, and 2022-2023 surveys. (The 2013 administration was a shortened version of the complete survey with only selected items asked.)

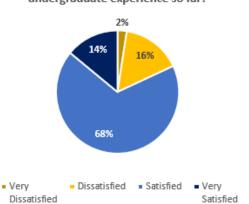
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For survey administrations in 2004, 2005, and 2006 the population was based upon sophomore students who had between 40 and 59 total cumulative earned hours and greater than 29 cumulative NAU earned hours. The survey administrations after 2007 mark a slight change in the definition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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 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 positive in rating their satisfaction with their overall experience at NAU to this point in their academic careers. Eighty-two percent (82%) of sophomores surveyed said they are either "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied." Ninety-five percent (95%) of sophomores *plan on completing their bachelor's degrees at NAU*, while 76 percent *would still choose to attend NAU* if they could start over.

In general, how satisfied are you with your overall undergraduate experience so far?



	Very			Very	Total
	Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied	Responses
In general, how satisfied are you with your	2%	16%	68%	14%	100%
overall undergraduate experience so far?	9	58	252	52	371

\*\*Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding\*\* 371 out of 376 students responded.

	Definitely	Probably	Probably	Definitely	Total
	no	no	yes	yes	Responses
Do you plan to complete your	3%	3%	30%	65%	100%
bachelor's degree at NAU?	10	10	112	240	372

\*\*Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding\*\*

372 out of 376 students responded.

	Definitely	Probably	Probably	Definitely	Total
	no	no	yes	yes	Responses
If you could start over, would you	7%	17%	51%	25%	100%
choose NAU again?	27	63	189	93	372

\*\*Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding\*\*

372 out of 376 students responded.

The Top Box below looks at all thirty-three questions from the survey related to NAU's affect on student satisfaction, success, and educational experience and summarizes the top and bottom five topics where students rated the question with the highest ratings, indicating a greatly positive response.

The percentages below reflect the amount of students 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.

# Highest "Top Box" Positive Responses

Development With Learning Effectively On My Own	43%
Development With Using Technology For Learning Or Working In A Discipline	38%
Satisfaction With Availability Of Faculty	35%
Improving Personal Understanding Of Cultures Is Important To Students	34%
Developing An Understanding For Divergent Views/Human Diversity	32%

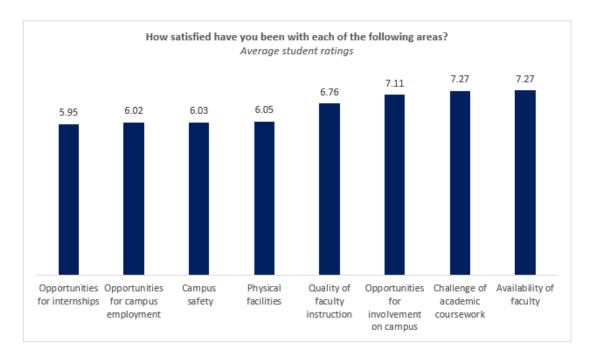
# Lowest "Top Box" Positive Responses

Often Discuss Ideas And Concepts From Class With Other Students	15%
The Extent Learning Benefited From The Liberal Studies Courses Taken So Far	14%
General Satisfaction With Overall Undergraduate Experience So Far	14%
Development With Speaking Clearly And Effectively	<b>12</b> %
NAU Has Made You Aware Of The Goals/Purpose Of The Liberal Studies Program	<b>12</b> %

#### **EXPERIENCES AT NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY**

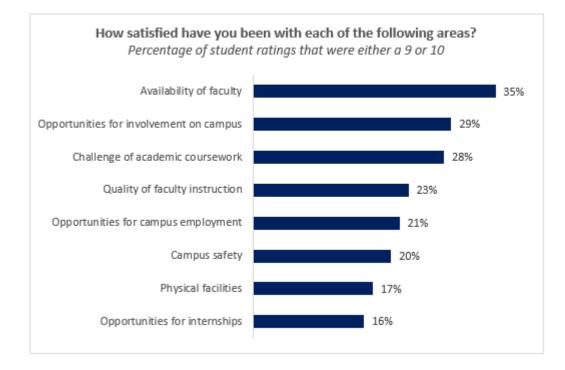
Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with eight specific content areas on a scale of 1-10 (1 = "Very Dissatisfied," 10 = "Very Satisfied"). The top three greatest average satisfaction among the areas in question were reported for the *availability of faculty* (7.27), *challenge of academic coursework* (7.27), and the *opportunities for involvement on campus* (7.11).

The bottom three average satisfaction ratings came from *opportunities for internships* (5.95), *opportunities for campus employment* (6.02), and the *campus safety* (6.03).



The following graph displays the average student ratings for each area of satisfaction out of a possible 10.

A considerable number of NAU students responded on the positive extreme (either a 9 or 10 out of 10) to many areas of satisfaction. The following graph displays the percentage of students that responded with a 9 or 10 rating to each area of satisfaction, indicating they were very satisfied.



#### To this point in your NAU education, how satisfied have you been with each of the following areas?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Availability of faculty	1%	4%	2%	4%	10%	11%	16%	17%	16%	19%
Opportunities for involvement on campus	2%	1%	4%	6%	10%	10%	17%	20%	11%	18%
Challenge of academic coursework	1%	1%	2%	4%	11%	13%	20%	20%	11%	17%
Quality of faculty instruction	2%	3%	6%	6%	10%	12%	19%	19%	9%	14%
Opportunities for campus employment	7%	4%	9%	10%	11%	13%	11%	13%	9%	12%
Campus safety	8%	2%	8%	10%	17%	10%	14%	12%	10%	10%
Physical facilities	4%	5%	7%	11%	14%	14%	15%	12%	7%	10%
Opportunities for internships	5%	4%	8%	10%	19%	14%	12%	13%	5%	11%

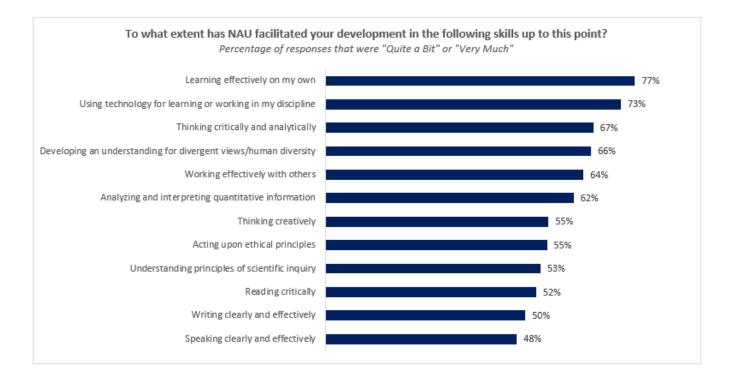
\*\*Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.\*\*

#### **SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

#### <u>Skills</u>

Sophomores were asked to evaluate the extent that NAU has facilitated their development in a variety of skill areas. 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 48 percent for *speaking clearly and effectively* to a high of 77 percent for *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.

A significant number of NAU students responded positively to many skillsets. The following graph displays the percentage of students who responded with "Quite a Bit" or "Very Much" to each area of satisfaction, indicating they felt NAU facilitated their development with the skills in question.



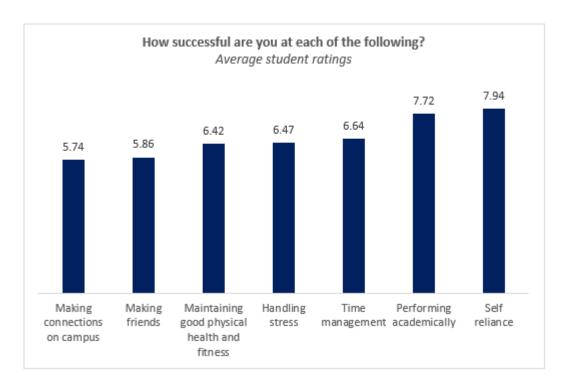
#### To what extent has NAU facilitated your development in the following skills up to this point?

	Very Little	Some	Quite a Bit	Very Much
Learning effectively on my own	8%	15%	34%	43%
Using technology for learning or working in my discipline	8%	18%	35%	38%
Thinking critically and analytically	6%	28%	40%	26%
Developing an understanding for divergent views/human diversity	12%	22%	34%	32%
Working effectively with others	10%	26%	38%	26%
Analyzing and interpreting quantitative information	11%	27%	37%	25%
Thinking creatively	13%	31%	36%	20%
Acting upon ethical principles	16%	29%	34%	21%
Understanding principles of scientific inquiry	15%	32%	32%	22%
Reading critically	13%	35%	33%	20%
Writing clearly and effectively	14%	36%	33%	16%
Speaking clearly and effectively	20%	32%	35%	12%

\*\*Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.\*\*

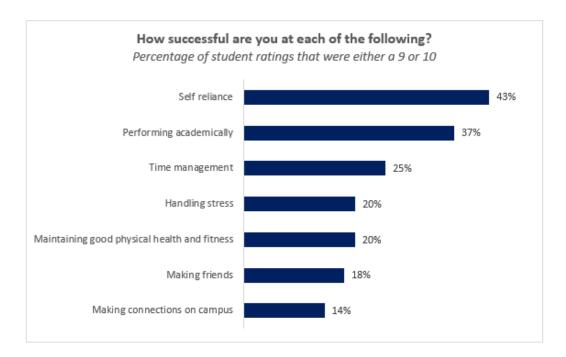
#### **Abilities**

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"). Based on the averages, students indicated most success in abilities for *self-reliance* (7.94) and *performing academically* (7.72), while *making friends* (5.86) and *making connections on campus* (5.74) were rated the lowest.



The following graph displays the average student responses for success in each ability out of a possible 10.

A significant number of respondents responded with extremely positive ratings. The following chart shows the percentage of ratings that were extremely positive (either a 9 or 10 out of 10), indicating students found much success in that ability.



#### How successful are you at each of the following? On a scale of 1 (Very Unsuccessful) to 10 (Very Successful)

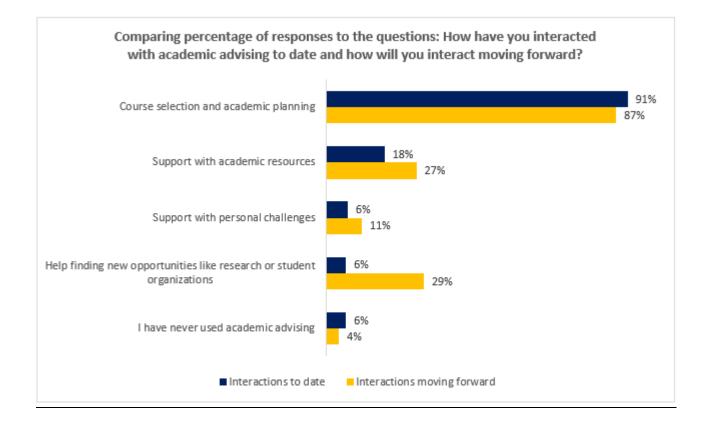
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Self reliance	1%	1%	1%	2%	6%	9%	12%	25%	20%	24%	
Performing academically	1%	1%	1%	5%	3%	9%	20%	24%	20%	17%	
Time management	3%	2%	7%	6%	11%	15%	19%	12%	12%	13%	
Handling stress	4%	3%	6%	6%	10%	16%	19%	16%	11%	9%	
Maintaining good physical health and fitness	4%	2%	4%	9%	14%	15%	18%	15%	10%	9%	
Making friends	8%	5%	9%	10%	10%	16%	14%	12%	7%	10%	
Making connections on campus	7%	5%	8%	8%	17%	15%	16%	10%	8%	7%	

\*\*Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.\*\*

#### UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVISING

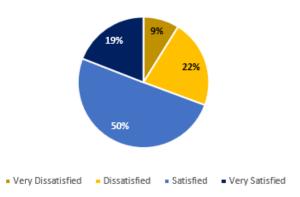
#### **Academic Advising Interaction**

Students were asked to select the types of interaction they have engaged in with academic advising and their plans to interact with academic advising to date and in the future. Of the responses, 91 percent of students indicated that they have asked academic advising to help with *course selection and academic planning*, and 29 percent hope to use academic advising for *help finding new opportunities like research or student organizations* (29%).



#### Academic Advising Satisfaction

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 2023 administration of the Sophomore Survey, 69 percent indicated they were "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with academic advising, a six percent decrease from 2022. To this point in your NAU career, how satisfied have you been with your academic advising experience?



#### LOUIE/PeopleSoft

Students rated **NAU's LOUIE/PeopleSoft registration** on a scale of 1-10. Of the respondents, 54 percent provided a rating from 7-10, and 13 percent rated the system on the low end (1-3). The remaining students (33%) gave the system an average rating (4-6).

On a scale of 1 (Poor) to 10 (Excellent) 4 5 6 7 2 3 8 9 1 10 5% 3% 5% 8% 11% 15% 22% 17% 9% 6%

\*\*Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.\*\*

#### **Technology**

When asked *how successful NAU has been in integrating technology into the learning environment* on a scale of 1-10, most of the students rated favorably on the high-end of the scale with 64 percent responding from 7 to 10.

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

On a scale of 1 (Very unsuccessful) to 10 (Very successful)

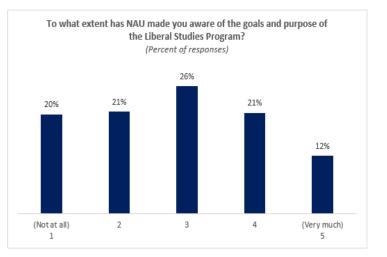
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2%	2%	3%	4%	12%	14%	20%	23%	11%	9%	
***										

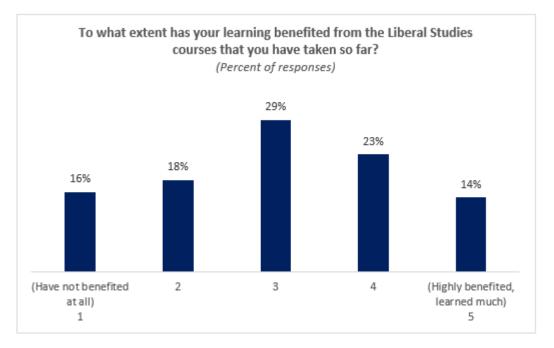
\*\*Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding. \*\*

#### 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 33 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**, 37 percent (rating 4 or 5) believed they have benefited from the courses.





#### **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 who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" with the diverse-related statements ranged from 91 percent for *improving my understanding of other countries and cultures is important to me, to* 66 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.

	Strongly			Strongly
	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures is important to me	4%	5%	57%	34%
Instructors encourage students to contribute different perspectives in class	4%	9%	60%	27%
Instructors value individual differences in the classroom	4%	11%	63%	22%
Instructors encourage students from diverse backgrounds to work together	5%	13%	63%	18%
I feel comfortable sharing my own perspective and experiences in class	8%	17%	58%	17%
I often discuss ideas and concepts from class with other students	9%	20%	56%	15%
I am able to explore my own background through class projects	8%	25%	50%	17%
**Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.**				

#### Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following related to instruction in class.

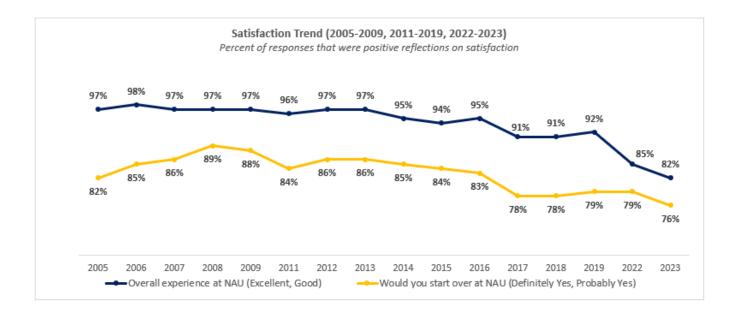
# **RESULTS FROM HISTORICAL SURVEYS**

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, 2011-2019, 2022-2023.

In 2022, a minor change was made to the third question regarding students' overall satisfaction with their undergraduate experience. In the 2022 administration, the question was, *in general, how satisfied are you with your overall undergraduate experience so far?* compared to, *how would you rate your overall experience at NAU so far?* in prior administrations. Students evaluate this question on a scale of "Very Satisfied to "Very Dissatisfied."

#### **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 94% of respondents stating they were "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied") across the last sixteen years of this study. In 2023, 76 percent of students reported they would "**Definitely**" or "**Probably**" start over again at NAU given the opportunity. Both the positive ratings for **overall experience at NAU** and if students would **start over again at NAU given the opportunity**, decreased by three percent from the 2022 survey administration.



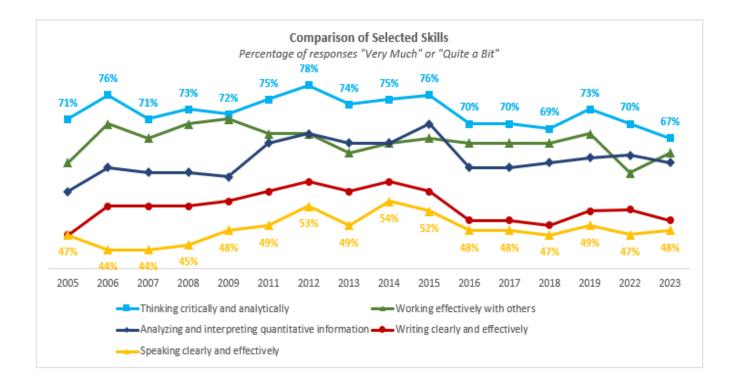
#### SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Students are asked to report to what extent NAU has facilitated their development in a variety of key skills (listed below). *Learning effectively on my own* (77%) and *using technology for learning or working in my discipline* (73%) ranked among the highest skill development.

Evaluation of Skill Development at NAU																
		Р	ercenta	ige of re	esponse	es "Very	Much"	' or "Qu	ite a Bi	t"						
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023
Learning effectively on my own	69%	75%	73%	75%	75%	76%	76%	75%	75%	77%	77%	72%	76%	81%	77%	77%
Using technology for learning or working in my discipline	62%	65%	64%	62%	66%	74%	73%	70%	75%	75%	72%	72%	72%	76%	77%	73%
Thinking critically and analytically	71%	76%	71%	73%	72%	75%	78%	74%	75%	76%	70%	70%	69%	73%	70%	67%
Developing an understanding for divergent views/human diversity	62%	71%	63%	66%	67%	68%	69%	64%	70%	73%	70%	70%	66%	69%	69%	66%
Working effectively with others	62%	70%	67%	70%	71%	68%	68%	64%	66%	67%	66%	66%	66%	68%	60%	64%
Analyzing and interpreting quantitative information	56%	61%	60%	60%	59%	66%	68%	66%	66%	70%	61%	61%	62%	63%	63%	62%
Acting upon ethical principles	51%	59%	59%	60%	61%	61%	62%	59%	61%	63%	61%	61%	56%	58%	62%	55%
Thinking creatively	60%	65%	63%	64%	62%	64%	67%	63%	63%	66%	57%	57%	54%	57%	53%	55%
Understanding principles of scientific inquiry	50%	57%	63%	59%	55%	60%	58%	62%	62%	61%	56%	56%	58%	59%	60%	53%
Reading critically	56%	67%	61%	59%	62%	61%	64%	60%	61%	63%	56%	56%	54%	55%	58%	52%
Writing clearly and effectively	47%	53%	53%	53%	54%	56%	58%	56%	58%	56%	50%	50%	49%	52%	52%	50%
Speaking clearly and effectively	47%	44%	44%	45%	48%	49%	53%	49%	54%	52%	48%	48%	47%	49%	47%	48%

\*\*Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.\*\*

The following five skills were selected and analyzed over time as they overlap with the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) which sends a survey to First-Year and Senior students to gauge their satisfaction with the characteristics and quality of their undergraduate education.



The 2023 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 April 2, 2023
GROUP SIZE	376	4,312
SAMPLING ERROR	4	1.83
GENDER		
Male	27%	38%
Female	73%	62%
ETHNICITY		
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%	2%
Asian	1%	2%
Black/African American	3%	3%
Hispanic/Latino	23%	24%
International	<1%	<1%
Native Hawaiian/Oth Pac Island	<1%	<1%
Not Specified	<1%	1%
Two or More Races	5%	6%
White	66%	60%
CUMULATIVE GPA	3.40	3.16
CAMPUS		
Flagstaff Mountain Campus	97%	96%
Community Campuses	<1%	<1%
Online <sup>1</sup>	2%	3%

<sup>1</sup>Online includes Personalized Learning as of the 2019 report.

## **APPENDIX B: MEAN VALUE RATING COMPARISONS**

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS																											
(based on a scale of 1-10)	2012		2014			2015				2016			2017			2018			2019	2022					2023		
-	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	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	905	7.53	1.9	880	7.45	2.1	587	7.49	2.0	487	7.46	2.0	547	7.33	2.1	968	6.95	2.2	632	7.24	2.1	456	6.94	2.2	372	6.76	2.3
Availability of faculty	894	7.80	2.0	882	7.80	2	588	7.90	2.0	486	7.90	2.0	542	7.8	1.9	961	7.41	2.2	632	7.58	2.1	451	7.27	2.3	366	7.27	2.3
Challenge of academic coursework	894	7.97	1.8	876	7.75	1.9	589	7.92	1.9	485	7.89	1.9	545	7.75	1.9	970	7.57	1.9	632	7.57	1.9	456	7.37	1.9	371	7.27	2.0
Opportunities for involvement on campus	844	7.98	2.0	880	8.03	2.2	590	8.18	2.1	453	7.90	2.2	511	7.52	2.2	911	7.41	2.2	632	7.19	2.3	419	6.98	2.3	347	7.11	2.2
Opportunities for campus employment	801	5.94	2.8	880	6.96	2.9	588	7.30	2.9	438	6.57	2.8	477	6.27	2.6	854	5.86	2.7	632	6.01	2.6	390	6.22	2.7	315	6.02	2.7
Campus safety	858	8.03	1.9	878	8.18	2	590	8.32	1.9	463	7.94	2.0	519	7.22	2.4	940	6.85	2.4	632	7.49	2.2	438	7.06	2.3	364	6.03	2.6
Physical facilities	877	7.67	2.0	881	7.69	2.1	589	7.60	2.1	476	7.60	2.2	529	6.75	2.4	950	7.33	2.2	632	7.16	2.3	441	7.55	2.2	368	6.05	2.4
Opportunities for internships	678	6.39	2.4	876	7.42	2.9	586	7.39	2.9	384	6.33	2.6	424	5.92	2.5	776	5.65	2.5	632	5.84	2.4	350	5.91	2.4	273	5.95	2.4
How successful are you at each of the following?																											
Time management	907	7.17	2.2	877	7.12	2.3	589	7.09	2.2	491	7.26	2.2	547	6.98	2.3	881	6.96	2.2	632	7.07	2.1	395	6.75	2.21	374	6.64	2.3
Handling stress	909	7.09	2.2	880	6.96	2.4	588	6.69	2.3	491	6.78	2.4	549	6.39	2.6	884	6.77	2.3	632	6.77	2.2	395	6.41	2.3	373	6.47	2.3
Making friends	908	7.37	2.4	879	6.98	2.5	587	6.94	2.5	490	6.97	2.7	547	6.62	2.6	882	6.40	2.6	632	6.47	2.6	397	5.56	2.75	374	5.86	2.6
Maintaining good physical health and fitness	909	7.37	2.2	879	7.14	2.2	588	6.85	2.4	490	6.95	2.4	548	6.58	2.4	880	6.50	2.3	632	6.44	2.4	397	6.38	2.33	374	6.42	2.3
Performing academically	911	7.88	1.9	879	7.90	2.0	587	7.75	2.0	489	8.02	1.9	547	7.83	2.0	882	7.67	2.0	632	7.8	1.9	397	7.68		374	7.72	1.8
Self reliance	907	8.29	1.9	875	8.19	2.0	588	8.00	2.1	491	8.27	2.0	545	8.15	2.0	885	8.25	1.9	632	8.19	1.8	396	7.93		374	7.94	1.9
Making connections on campus	905	6.90	2.3	875	6.56	2.5	589	6.63	2.4	490	6.74	2.6	549	6.37	2.5	880	6.15	2.4	632	6.17	2.3	395	5.44	2.54	373	5.74	2.5
How would you rate NAU's LOUIE/PeopleSoft registration system?	908	6.67	2.3	877	6.70	2.3	589	3.72	2.3	491	6.77	2.3	550	6.44	2.4	806	5.74	2.7	632	6.34	2.5	392	6.49	2.28	375	6.31	2.3
How successful has NAU been in integrating	007	7.10	2.0	074	7.02	2.1	500	7.10	2.1	402	7.10		5.40	C 07						7.00			7 17		275	6.00	
technology into the learning environment?	907	7.18	2.0	874	7.03	2.1	590	7.10	2.1	492	7.18	2.1	548	6.87	2.3	808	6.55	2.2	632	7.06	2.0	392	7.17	2.14	375	6.93	2.0

In the 2019 survey, four sets of questions were removed which were previously asked in prior years. For the purposes of this analysis, since the four questions did not return in the 2022 survey nor the 2023 survey, they were not included in this rating comparison.