



University of North Florida
Office of Institutional
Research

Special Research Report:

Survey Evaluation of
Current UNF
Baccalaureate Graduates

By
Ronald J. Polland, Ph.D.
Assistant Director
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Bldg. 1, Rm. 2206
University of North Florida
4567 St. Johns Bluff Road, S.
Jacksonville, FL 32244-2645

Survey Evaluation of Current UNF Baccalaureate Graduates

Ronald J. Polland, Ph.D.

Assistant Director of Institutional Research, UNF

Introduction

The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) conducted a study of UNF students who graduated with baccalaureate degrees during Spring 2002. The purposes of the study were to measure levels of student satisfaction with the programs and services offered at UNF, to identify programs and services that need to be improved, and to learn more about the personal experiences of students while at UNF.

The OIR obtained from the Office of Alumni Services the names, home addresses, and e-mail addresses of all students scheduled to graduate in Spring 2002 with baccalaureate degrees. The OIR developed a web-based survey and posted it to the CSDWEB server for students to access. E-mails inviting students to participate in the study were sent to approximately 936 students. In addition, follow-up e-mails and regular postal letters were mailed out two weeks and four weeks after the initial announcements. The OIR received 245 completed surveys for a response rate of 26 percent.

Survey Instrument

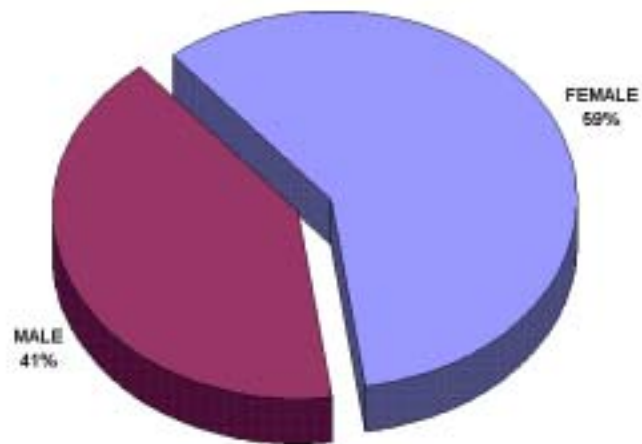
The survey instrument (Appendix A) consists of single response and multiple response questions. There are 28 numbered question statements containing a total of 137 answerable items. Of the 137 items, 118 require closed-end responses while 16 require free-responses. The survey grouped these items into seven sections: (1) Demographics; (2) Contributions to Personal Growth; (3) Academic Advising; (4) Evaluation of Courses Taken; (5) Quality and Frequency of Services Used; and (6) Final Comments and Suggestions.

The rationale and basis for the questions on this survey came from prior surveys conducted by the Office of Alumni Services and the Office of Career

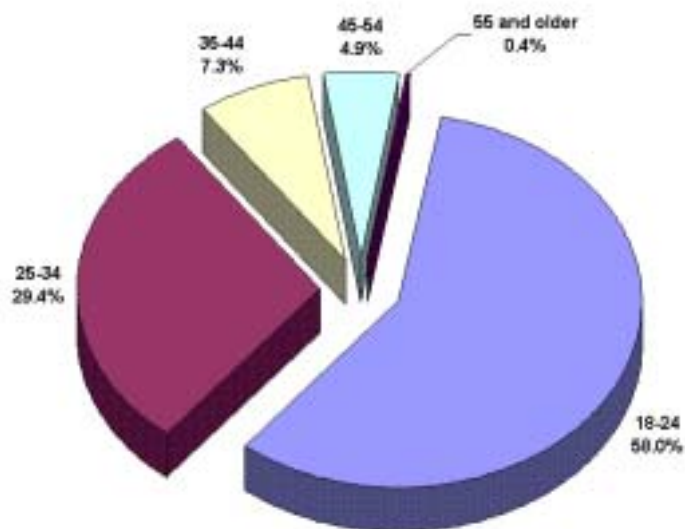
Development at UNF as well as from similar surveys conducted by other universities and colleges¹.

Results

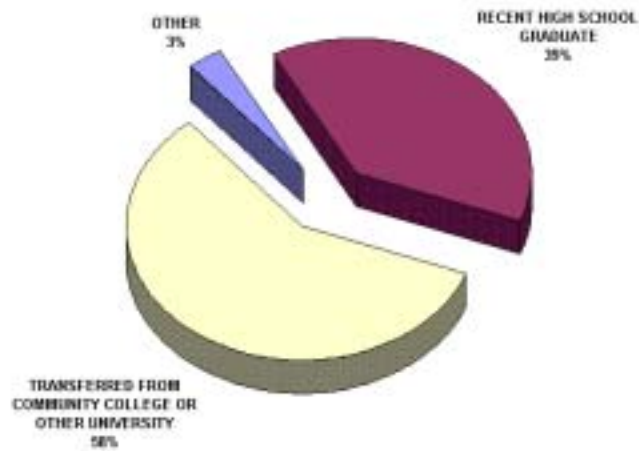
To determine if the obtained sample (n=245) was a representative sample of the population at large (n=936), the distribution of demographic variables in the sample was compared to the population. The distribution of males and females in the total population of graduates usually ranges from 58 to 60 percent for females and 40 to 42 percent for males. There were 144 females (59%) and 101 males (41%) in the completed survey sample. Thus, the sample is representative of the population with respect to gender.



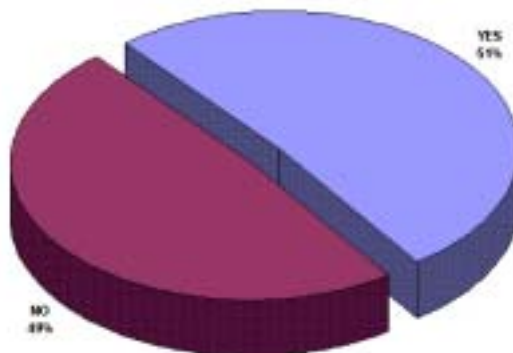
Most of the respondents (58%) in this sample were between 18 and 24 years old. In the total population, this proportion ranges from 58 to 60 percent.



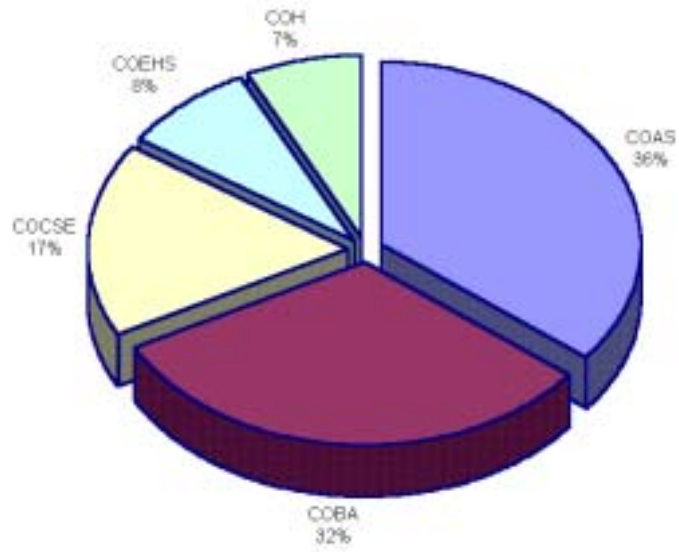
Most of the respondents are transfers from a community college or another university.



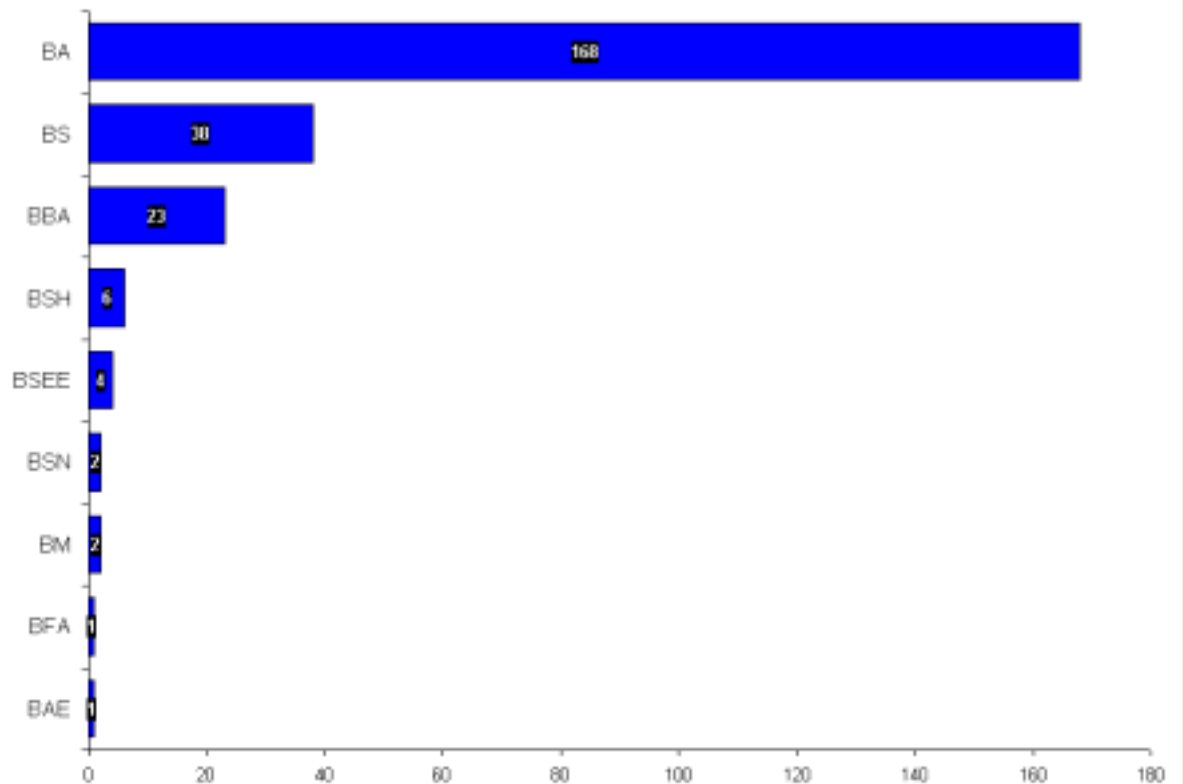
About 51 percent of the respondents plan on attending graduate school within the next year.



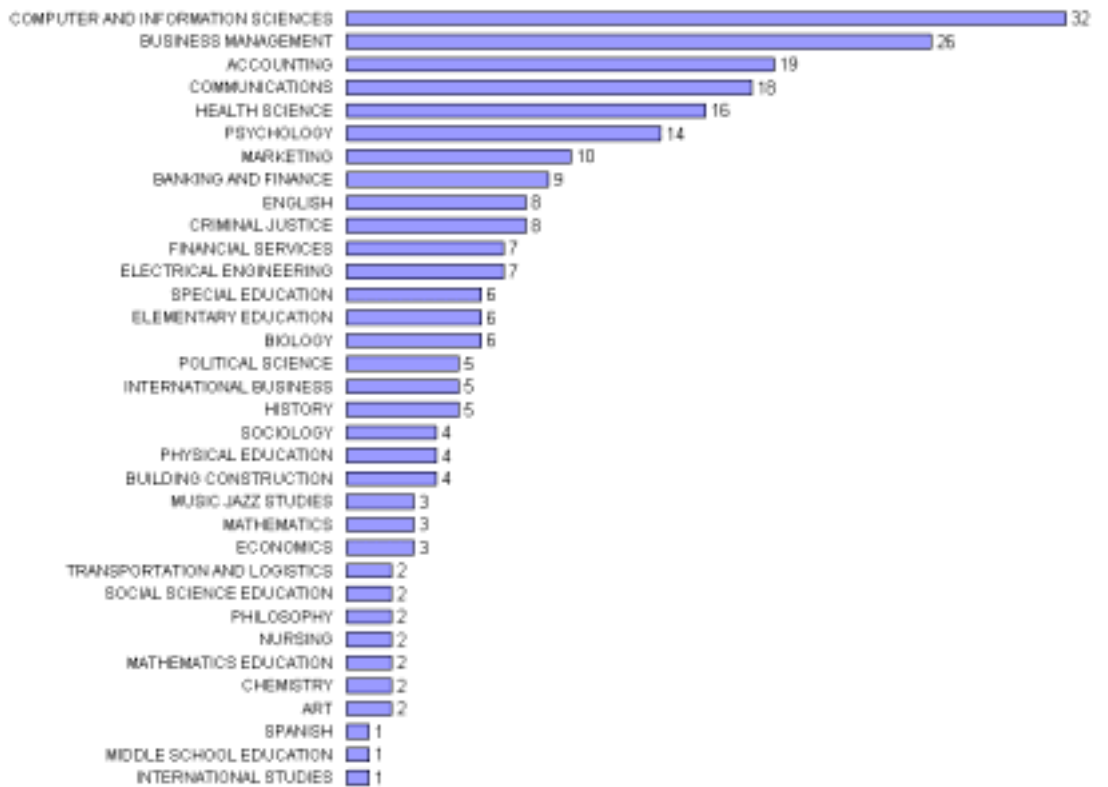
More than two-thirds of all graduates got their degrees in the College of Arts & Sciences (36%) and the College of Business (32%).



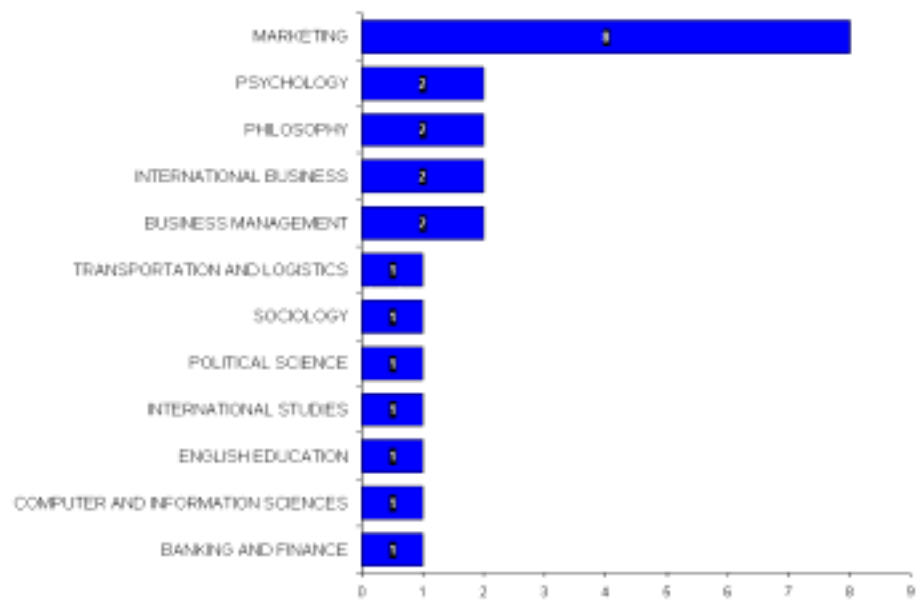
Respondents were asked to indicate what type of Bachelor's Degree they were to receive. More than two-thirds (68%) indicated the Bachelor of Arts was their first degree. About 72% also indicated the BA as their second degree choice.



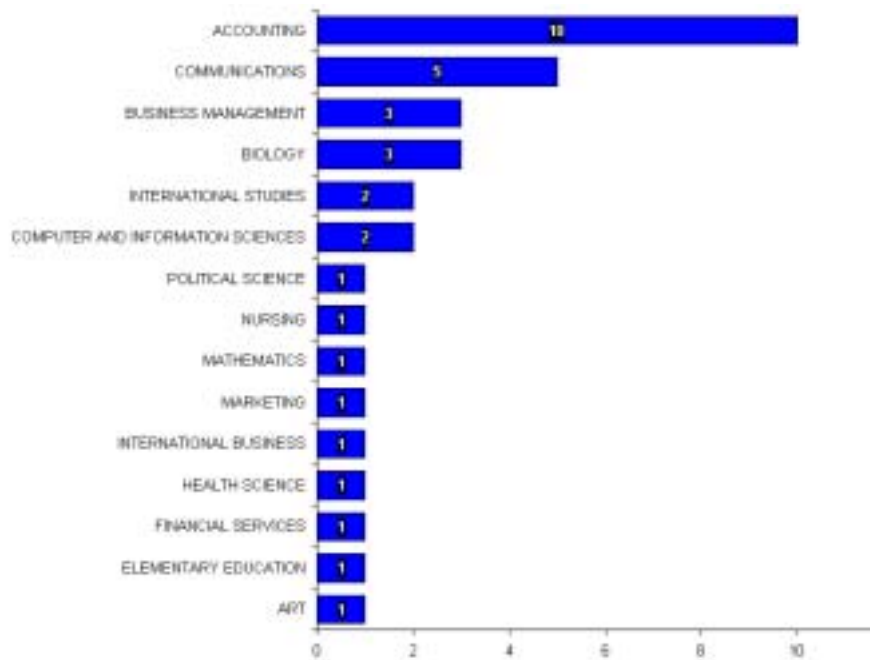
The most frequent choices of a first major were Computer and Information Sciences and Business Management.



The most frequent choice of a second major was marketing.



Most graduates (86%) never changed their major during their Junior or Senior year. For the 14 percent who did change majors, all of them changed in their Senior Year. The most frequent choice of a prior major was Accounting.

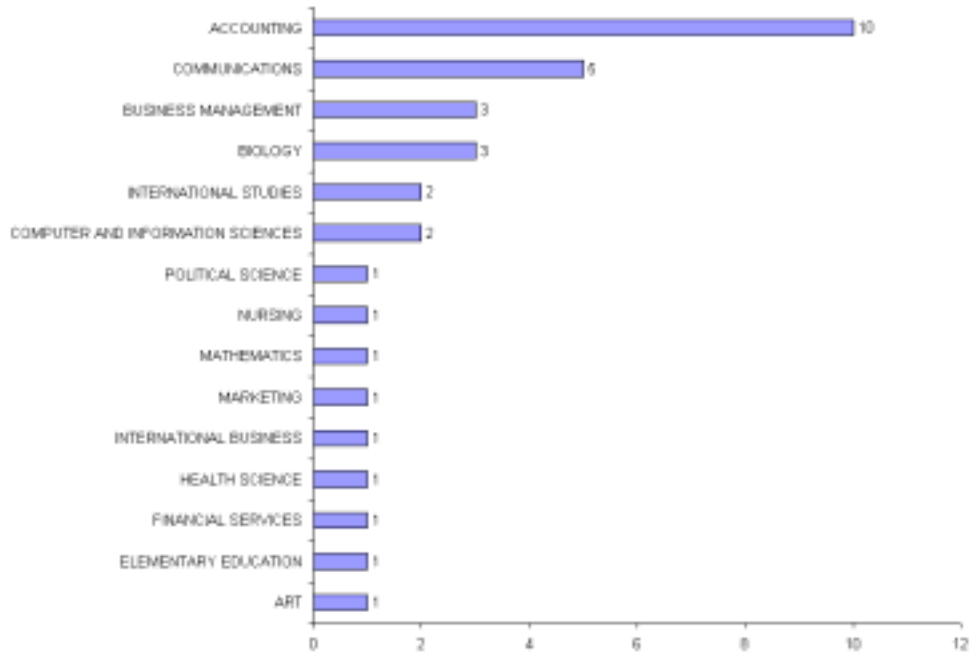


When asked if they would change their major if they could do it all over again, 18 percent said, “Yes,” while 82 percent said, “No.”

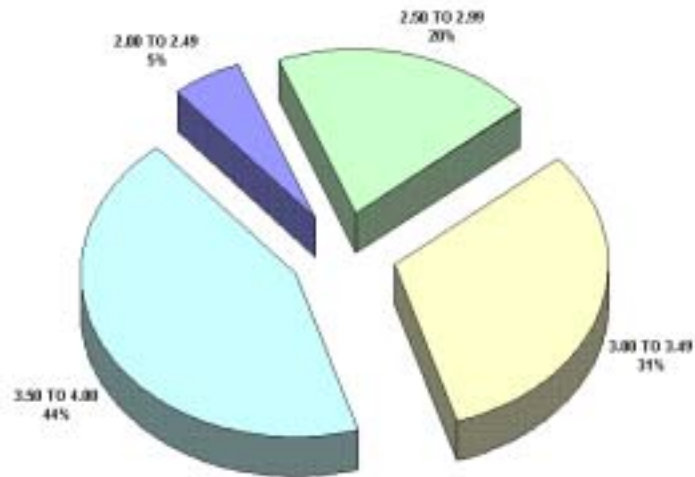


For graduates who are working, most indicated that their organization’s primary business activity is in Education (23%). Medical/Health Care ranked third with 16% while about 17% of the business activities were not classifiable (Other).

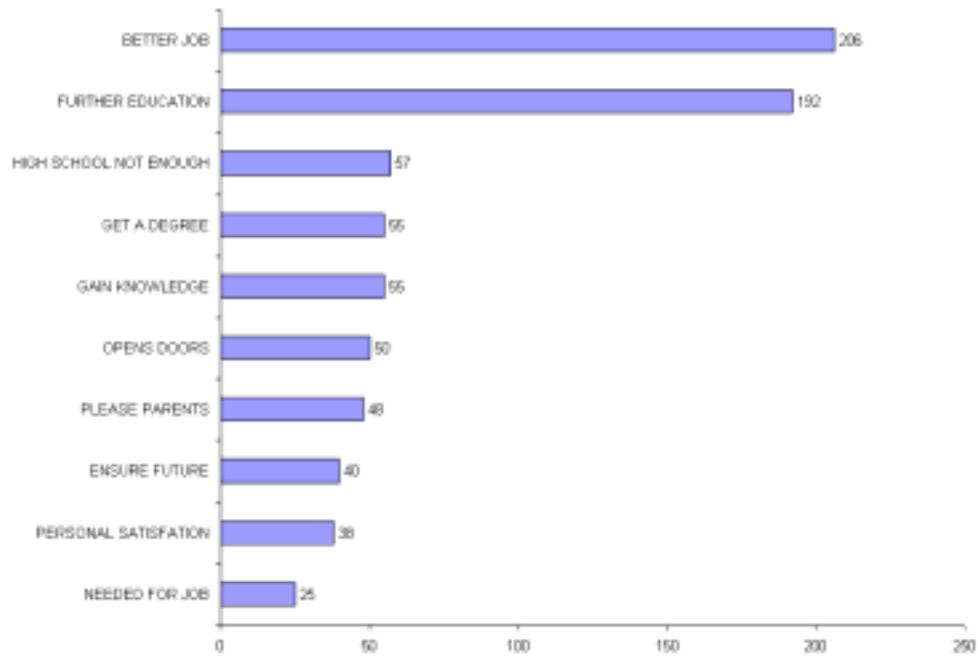
For the 18 percent who said they would choose a new major, that choice would most likely be Accounting.



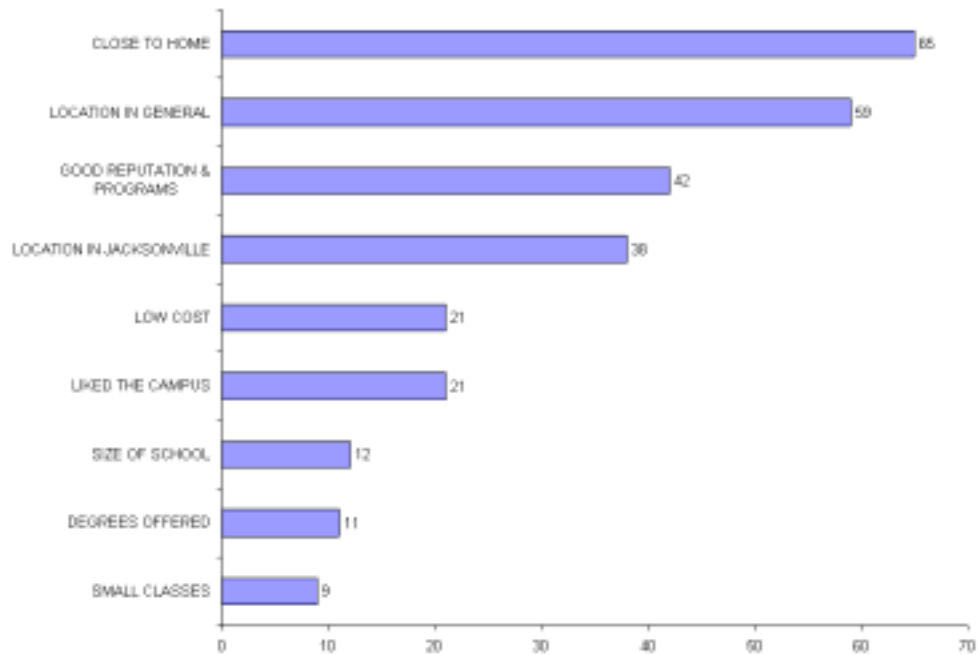
Two-thirds of graduates had overall GPA's of 3.0 or higher.



When asked why they chose to go to college, most reported answers that related to “Getting a better job” (206 people) and “Furthering education” (192 people).

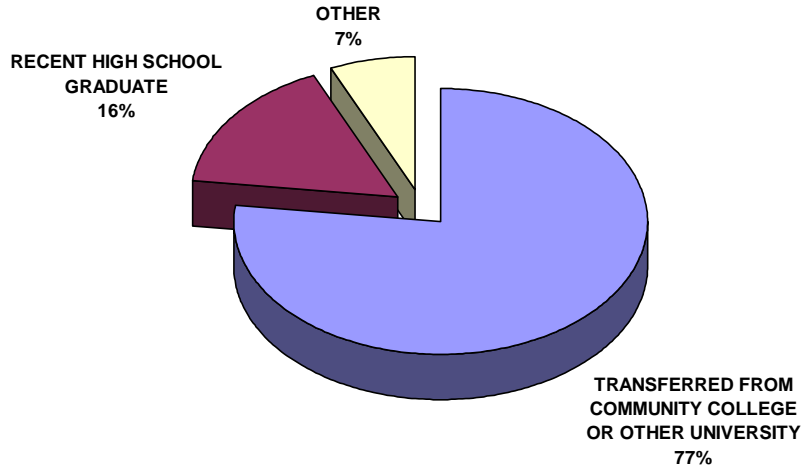


When asked why they chose to go to UNF, the majority of answers reflected its “location” relative to their homes and jobs.



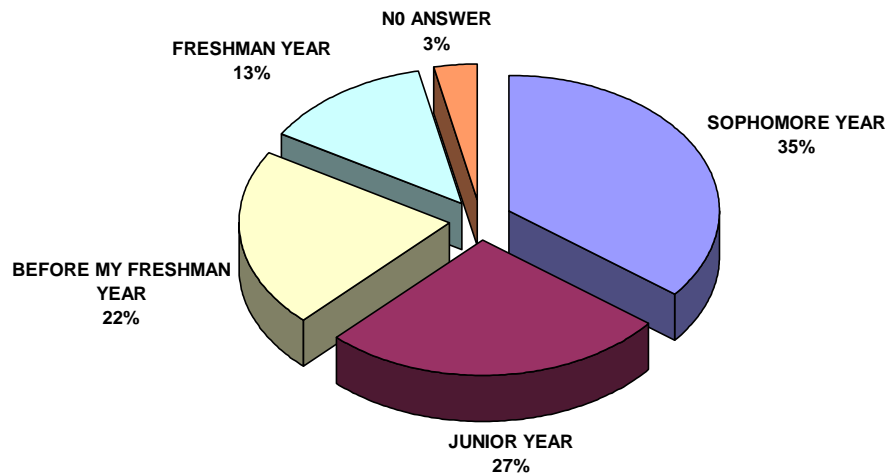
When asked if they would choose UNF again,

What was your entry status when you started your first semester at UNF?



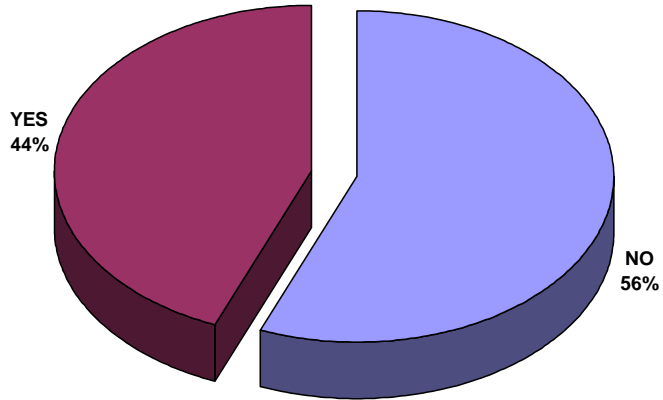
Most of the student chose their major in their sophomore year (35 percent), 27 percent chose their major in their junior year, and 22 percent chose their major before they even began their freshman year.

In which academic year did you choose your major?



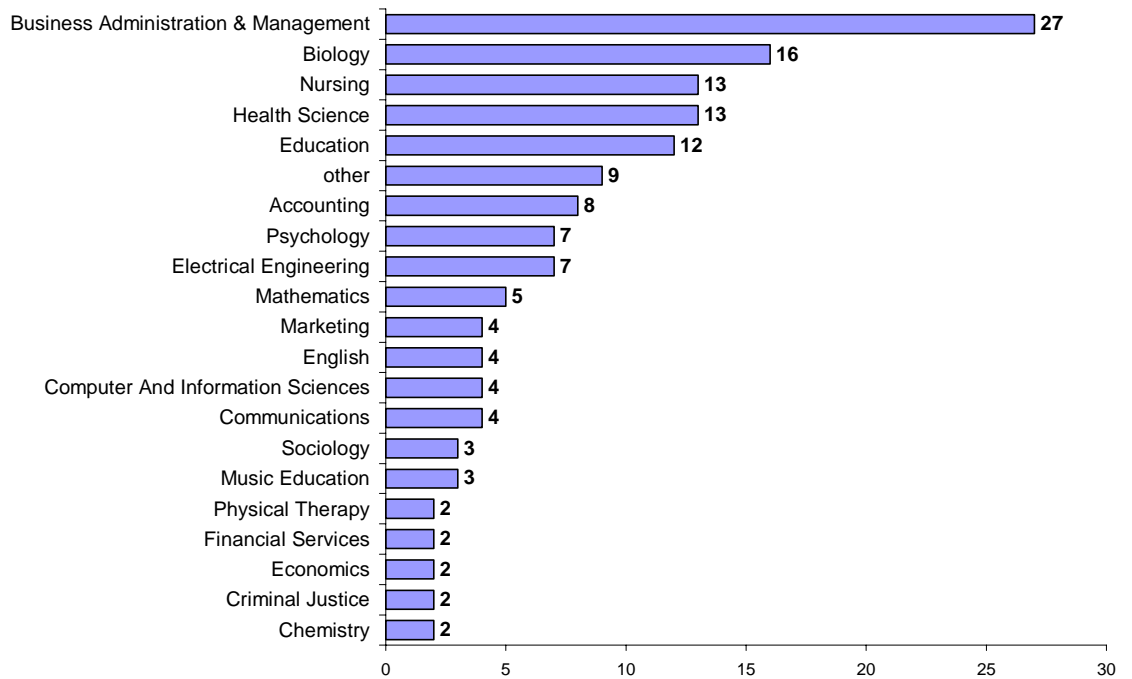
Almost half of those asked about switching majors (44 percent) indicated that they had switched their graduation major from a prior major while attending UNF.

Did you switch to your graduation major from another major?



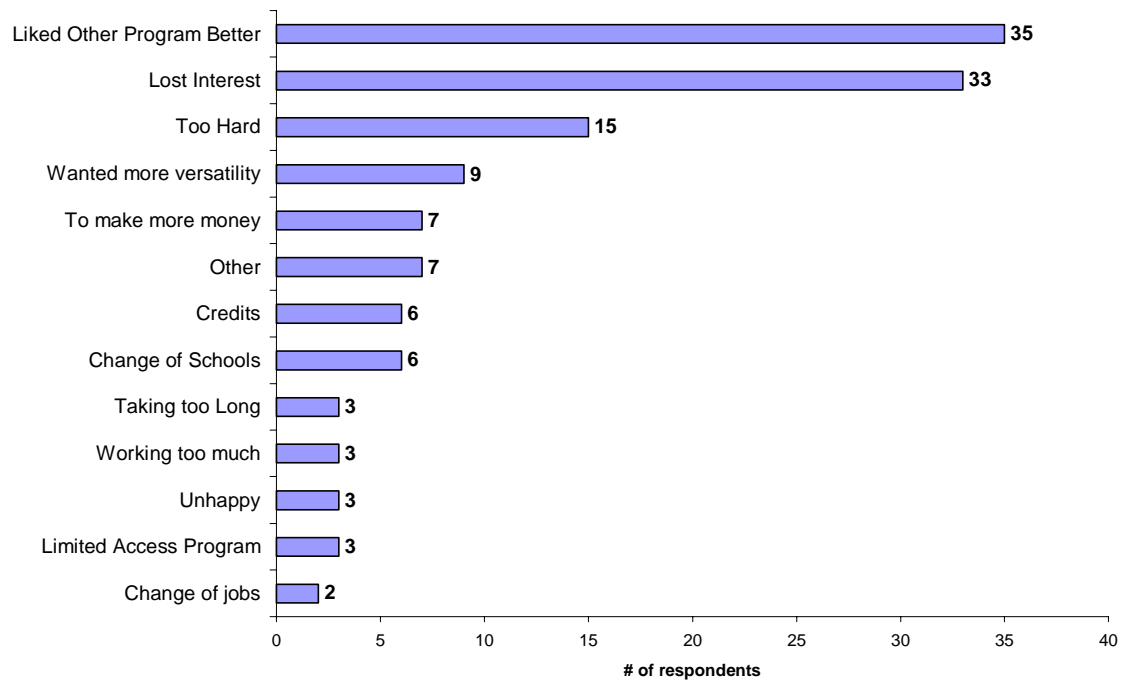
The most common major prior to changing was Business Administration & Management.

What was your prior major before you switched?



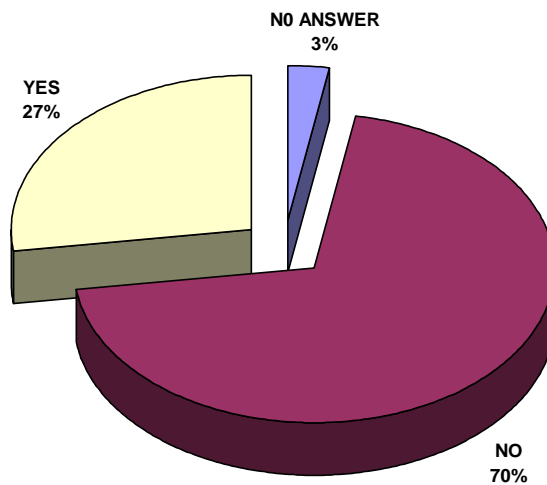
Most people who switched majors did so because they liked another program better or they had lost interest in their current program of studies.

For what reasons did you change your major?



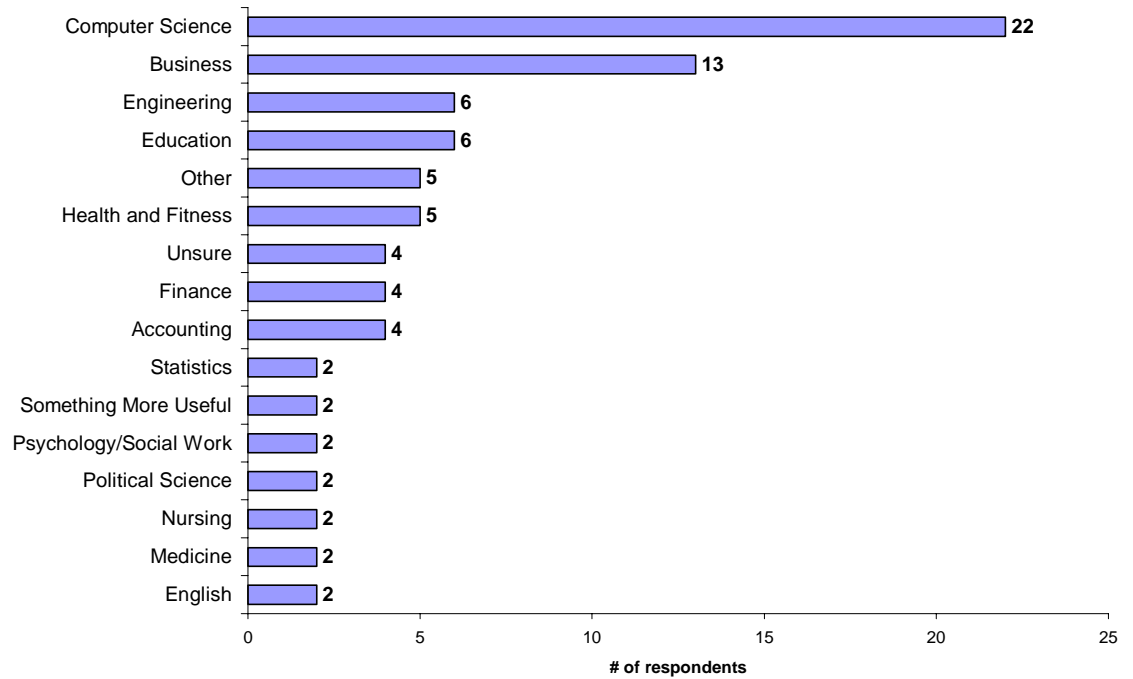
When asked if they would choose a different major for their degree if they could do their undergraduate education over again, 27 percent said they would choose a different major while 70 percent said they would not switch majors.

If you could do it all over again, would you choose a different major for your degree?



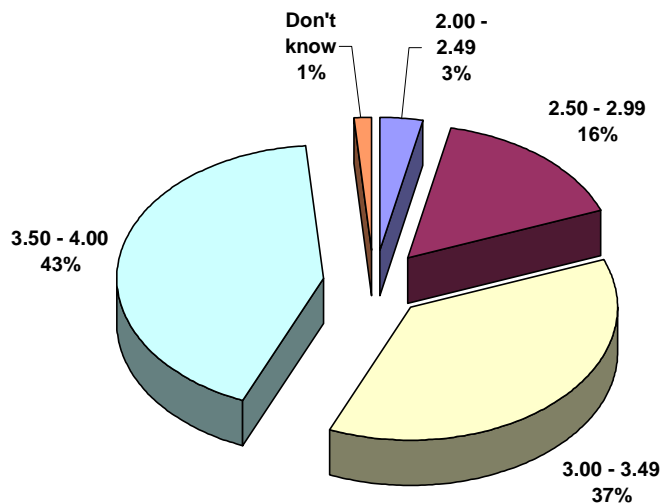
For those wishing to do it over again, most indicated that they would major in Computer Science.

If you could do it over again, what would be your new choice of major?



When asked what their GPA was upon entering UNF, 43 percent had GPA's ranging from 3.5 to 4.0 while 37 percent had GPA's in the 3.0 to 3.49 range.

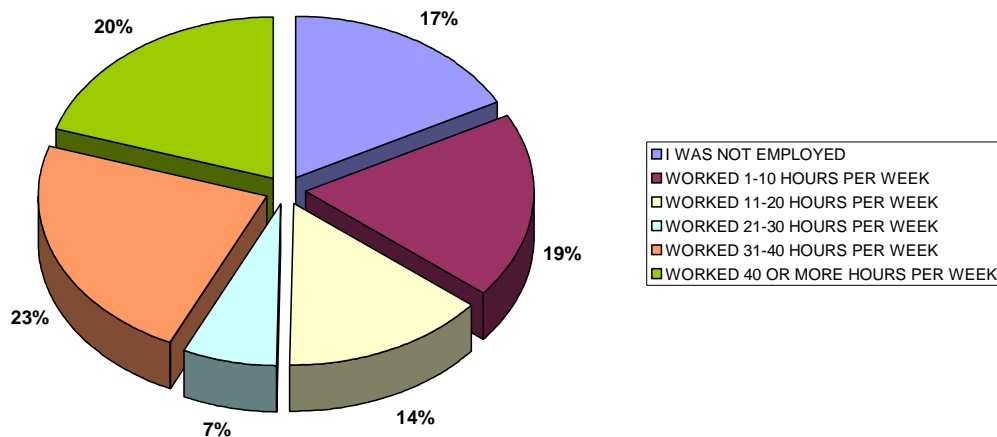
What was your overall GPA?



About 17 percent of respondents indicated that they did not work at all during their time at UNF. The rest of the respondents were equally split among the remaining choices: 19 percent indicated that they worked only 1 to 10 hours per

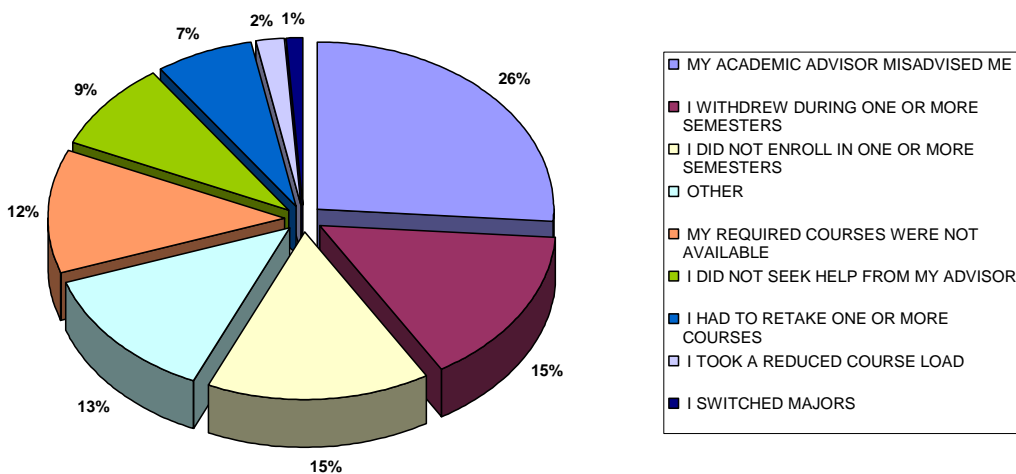
week, 14 percent indicated 11 to 20 hours per week, 23 percent indicated 31 to 40 hours per week, and 20 percent indicated that they work 40 or more hours per week.

While in school, about how many hours did you usually work for pay?



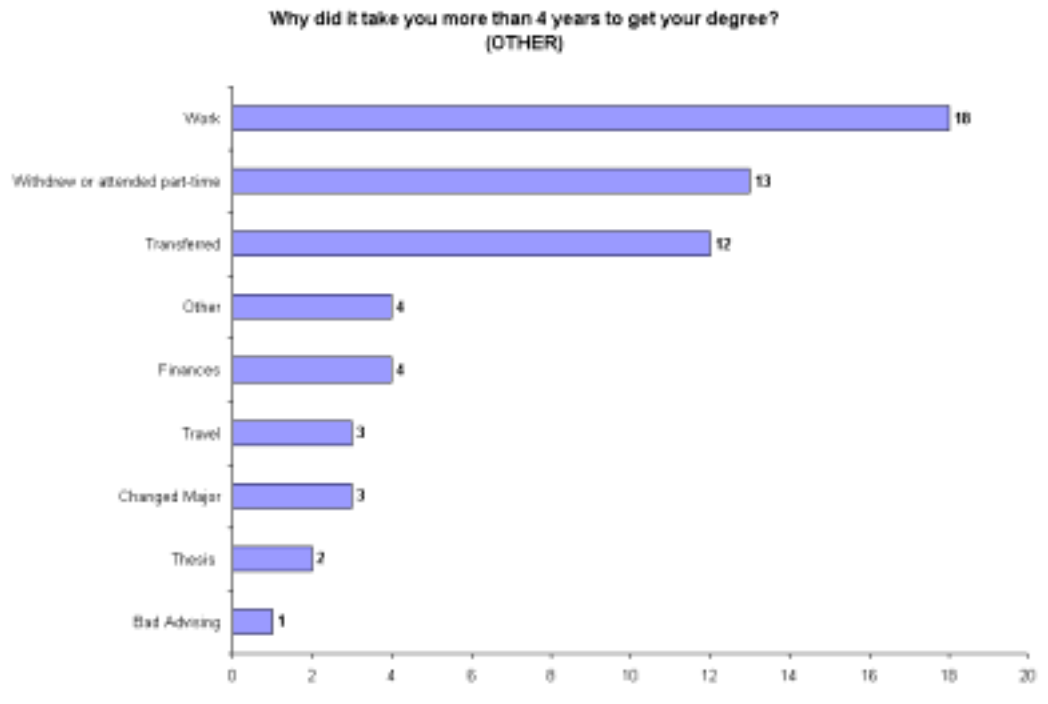
When asked if it took more than four years to complete their degree, 26% of those who answered, "Yes," said that their academic adviser misadvised them.

If it took more than 4 years to complete your degree, please indicate the reasons why?

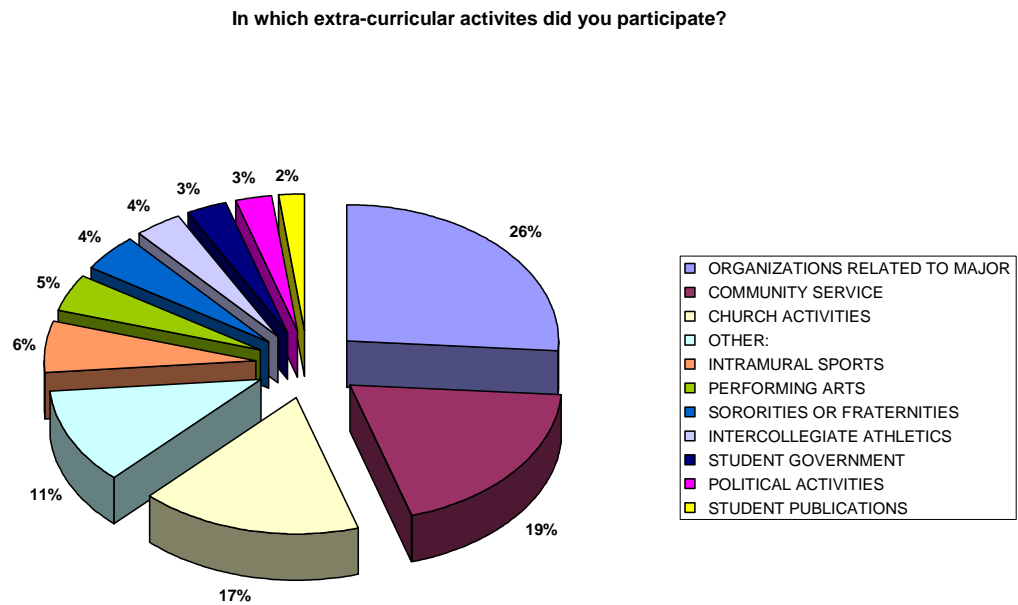


About 15 percent indicated that they withdrew during one or more semesters while another 15 percent indicated that they did not enroll in one or more

semesters. About 13 percent indicated that they had other personal reasons for taking longer than four years. Other frequent responses included having to work and attending school part-time.



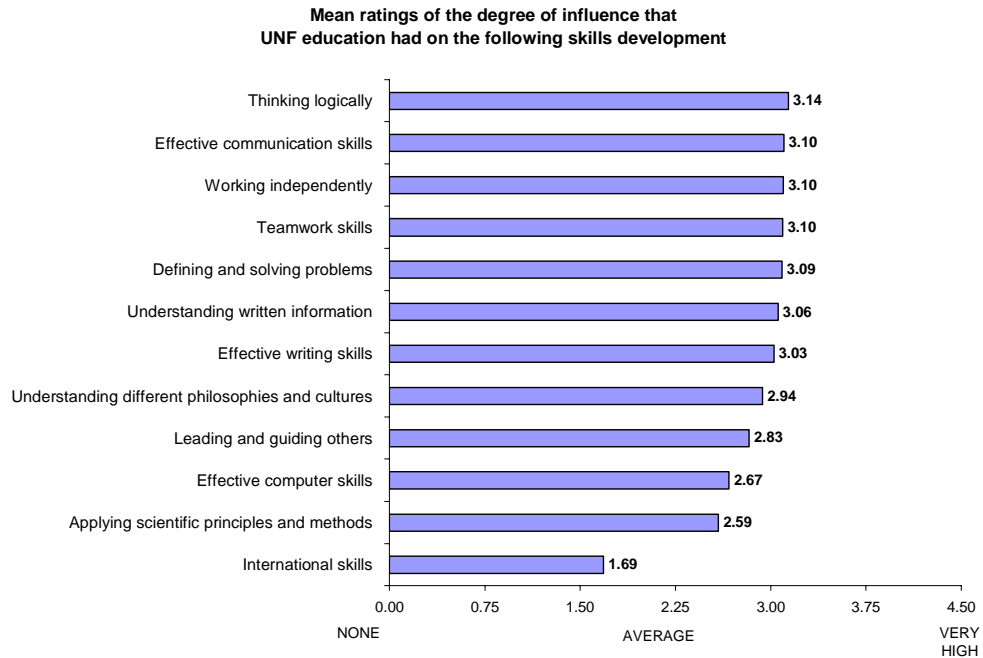
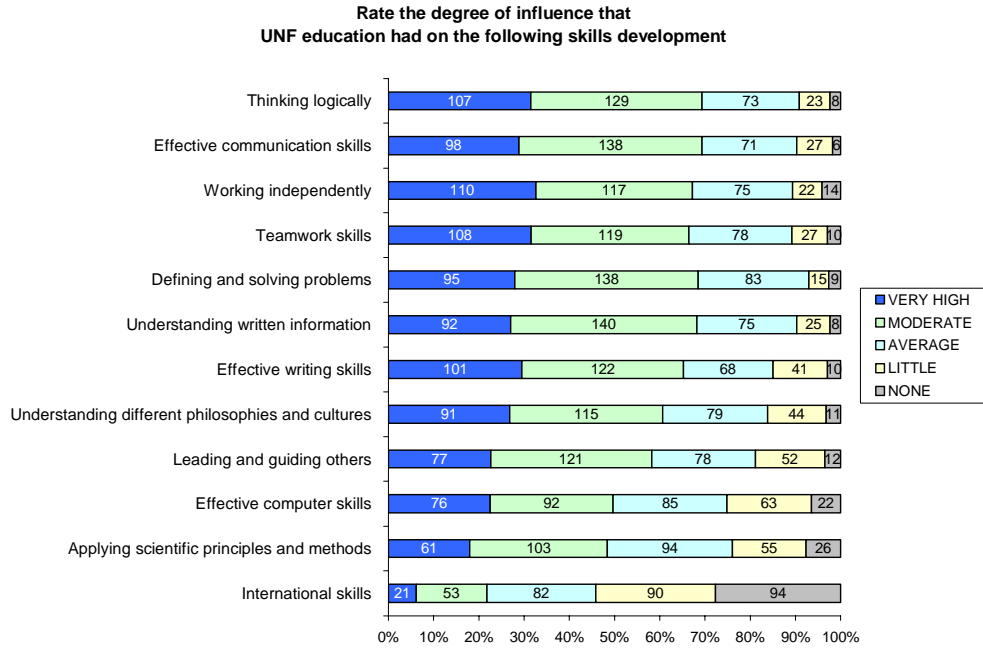
Graduates generally participated in extracurricular activities that were related to their major.



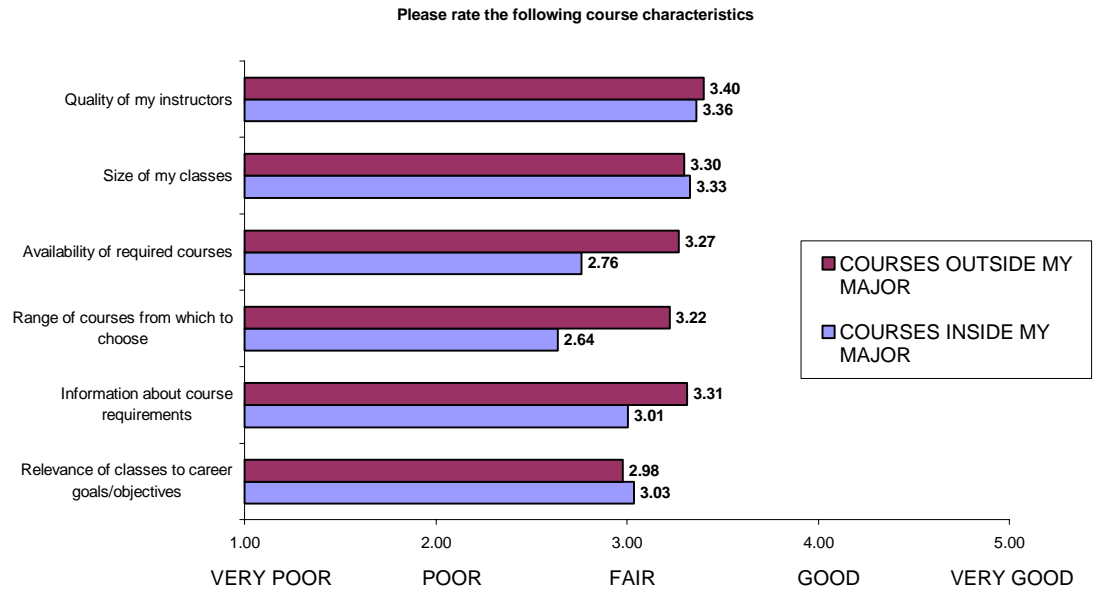
About 26 percent indicated that they were involved in activities with organizations related to their major. About 19 percent were involved in activities

that were community service based. Seventeen percent of their activities involve church-related activities.

Graduates were asked to rate the degree of influence that UNF education had on the development of several skills. Graduates rated "thinking logically" as being the highest and following those in ranking were effective communication skills, working independently, and teamwork skills. International skills were ranked last.

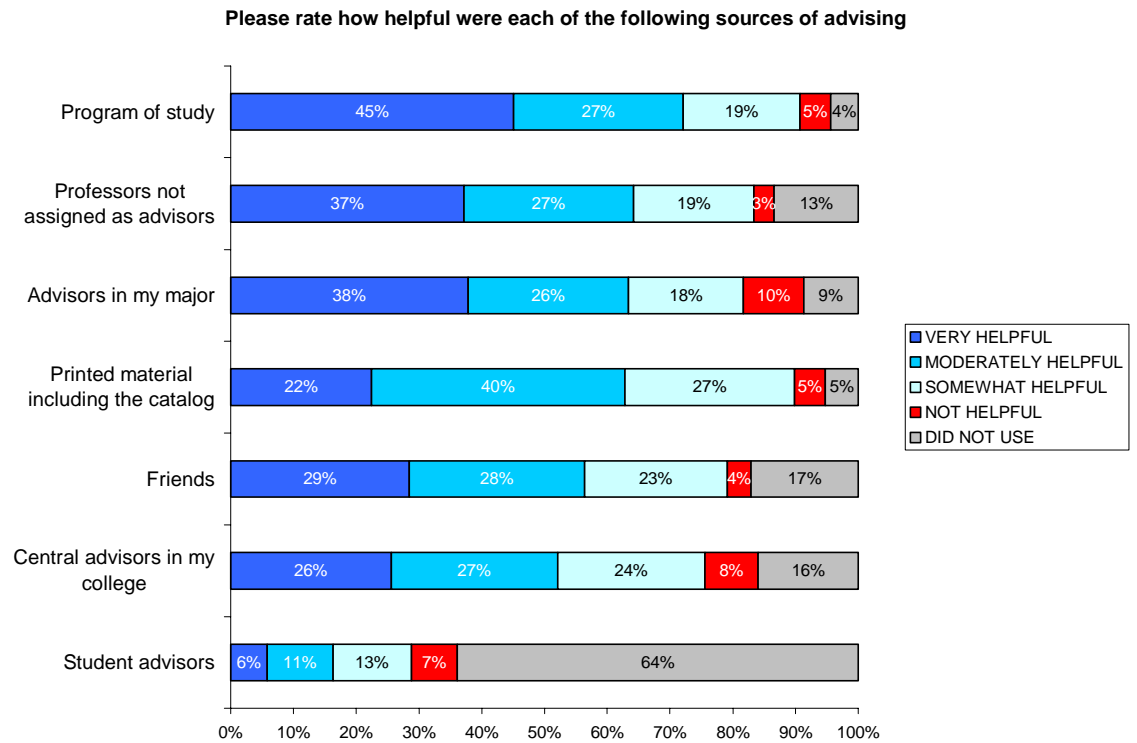


Graduates were asked to rate courses on the basis of six characteristics: (1) quality of their instructors, (2) size of their classes, (3) availability of required courses, (4) range of courses from which to choose, (5) information about course requirements, and (6) relevance of classes to career goals and objectives.

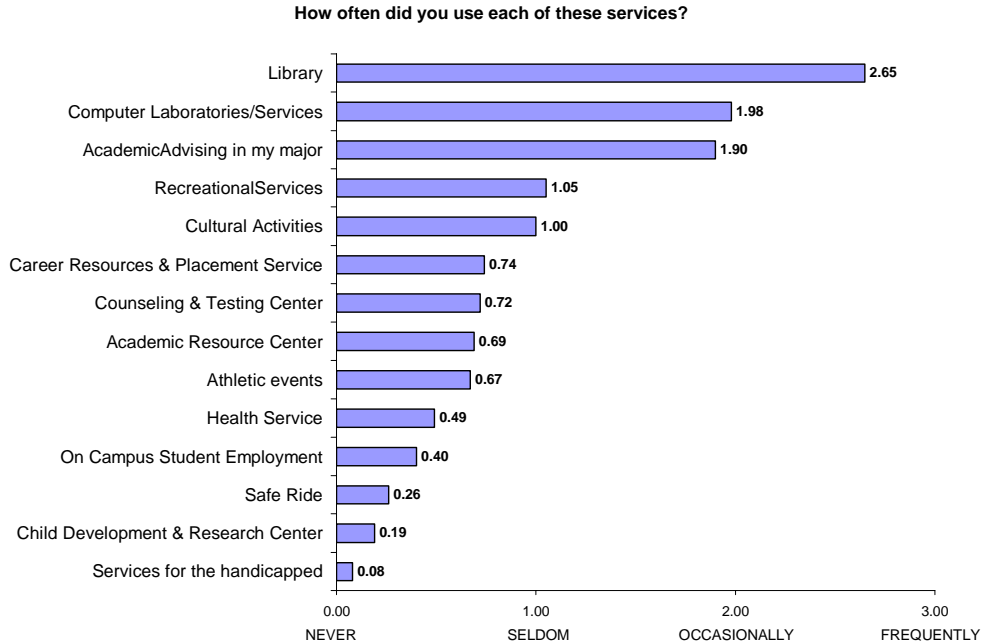


Graduates were asked to rate these characteristics according to whether the courses were outside of their major or inside the major. "Quality of instructors" received the highest rating for courses inside their major and courses outside major. For courses inside their major, "The range of courses for which to choose" received the lowest rating while "courses outside their major" and "relevance of classes to career goals and objectives" received the lowest rating.

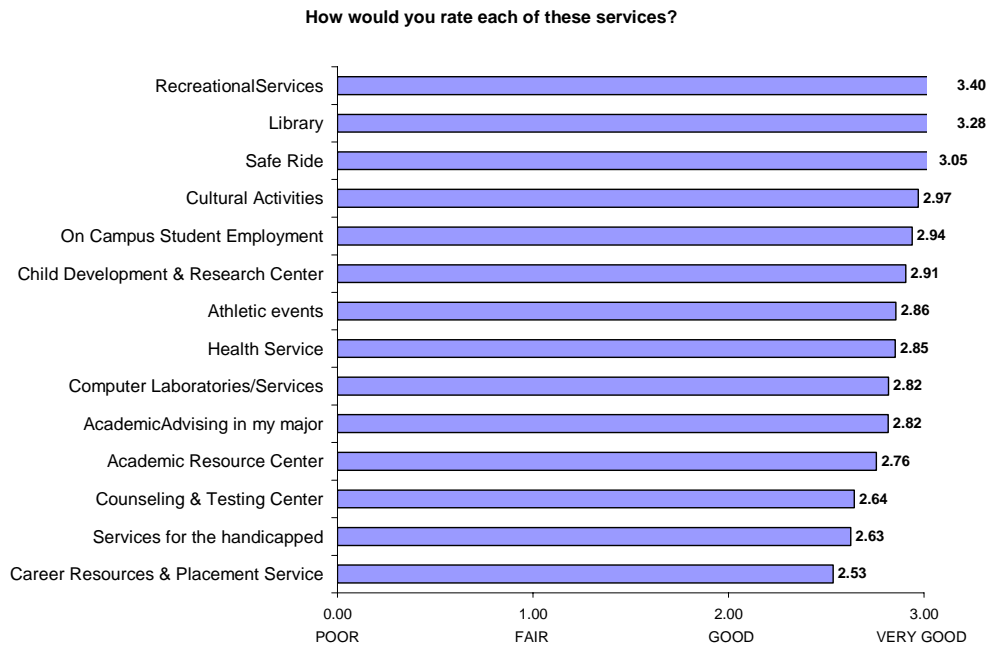
Graduates were asked to rate the utility of seven sources of advising. Overall, they rated "Program of study" to be the most helpful while "Central advisors in my college" were rated least helpful. About 10 percent and eight percent rated "Advisers in their major" and "Central advisors in their college" as being "Not helpful at all." Respondents indicated that student advisers were the least used resource.



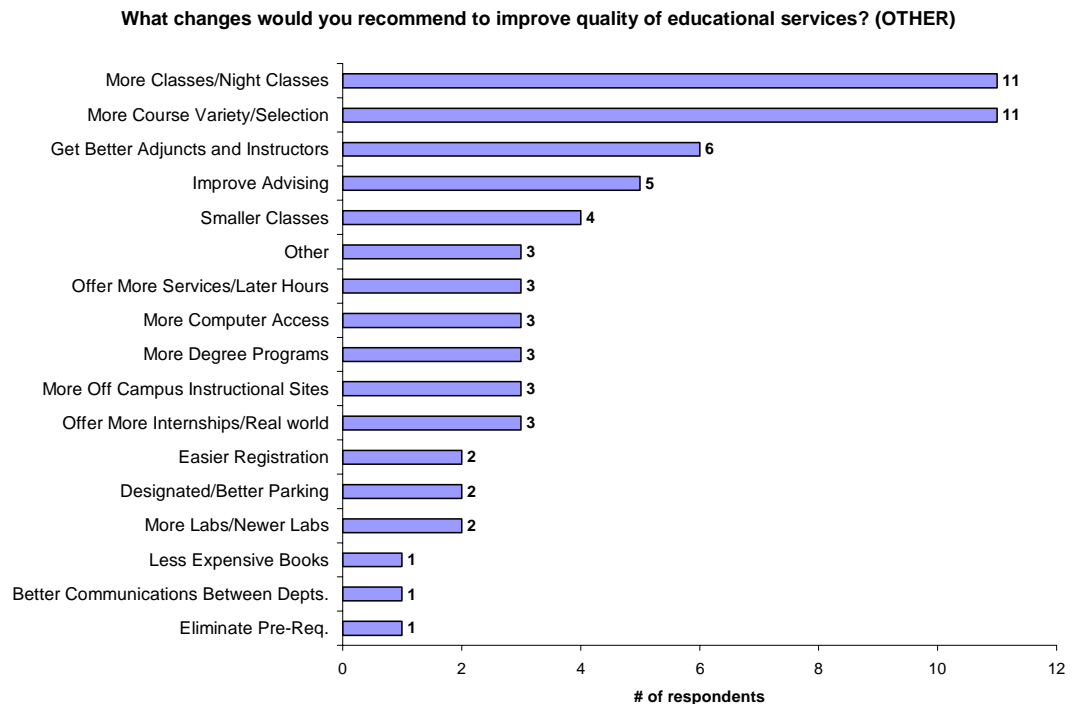
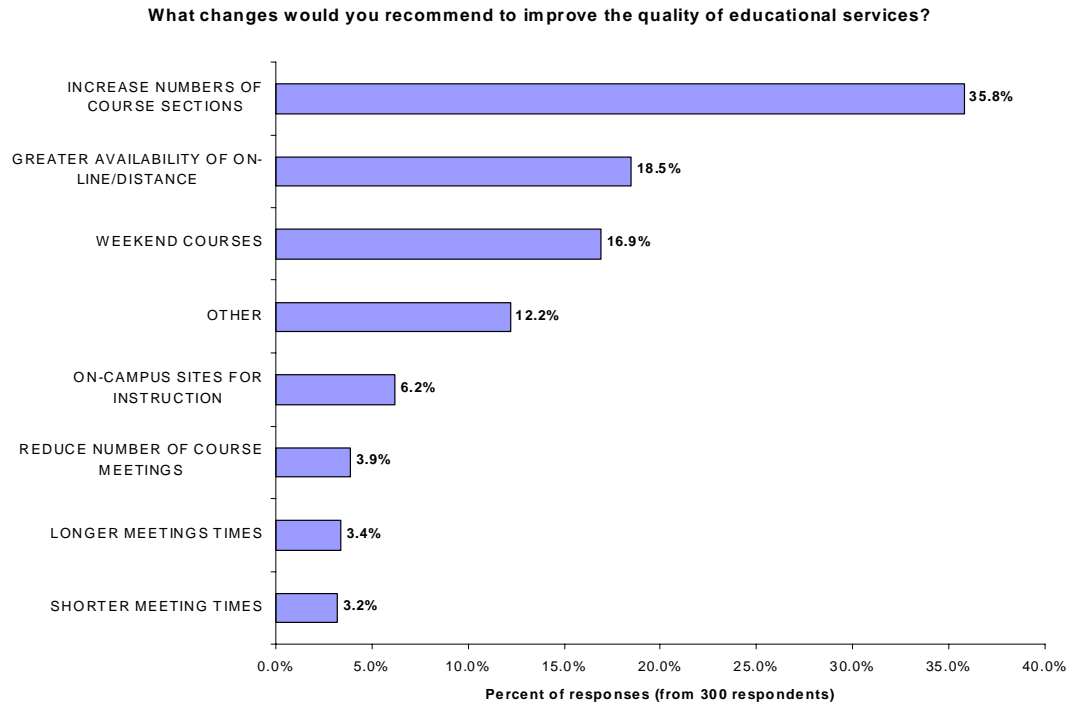
Respondents were asked to indicate how often they used certain types of services at UNF as well as to rate the quality of these services. Of the services listed, respondents rated the library as the most frequently used service while services for the handicapped was rated the least frequently used.



The library and recreational services were rated the most effective or received the highest quality rating while career resources & placement services received the lowest rating.

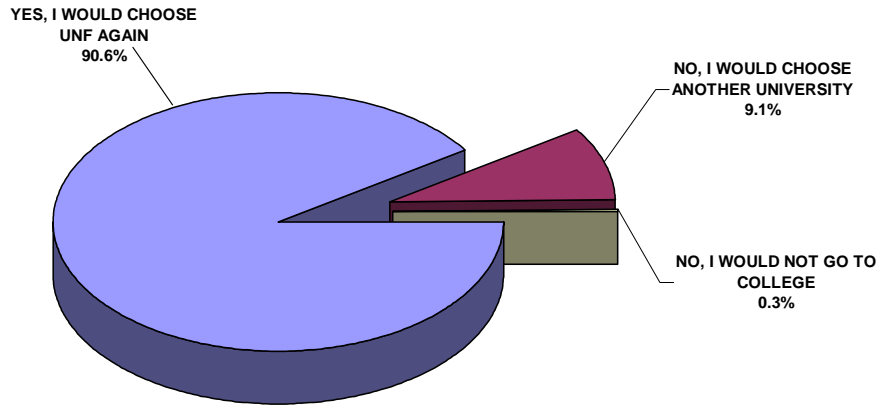


Graduates were asked to indicate what changes they would recommend to improve the quality of educational services. Thirty-six percent said they would increase the number of courses or core sections available. Almost 19 percent wanted greater availability of online or distance learning courses. About 17 percent said they would like to have weekend courses. About 17 percent said they would like to have weekend courses.



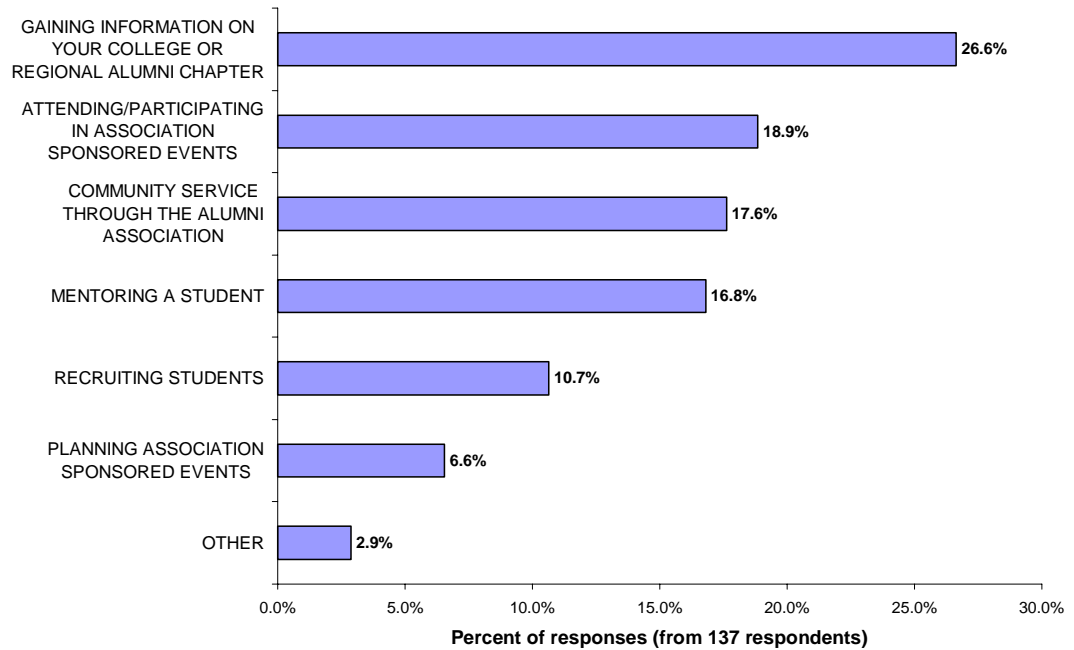
Asked if they could redo their college education at UNF, more than 90 percent indicated that they would choose to go to UNF again while less than 10 percent indicated that they would choose another university or college.

If you could do it over, would you come to UNF?



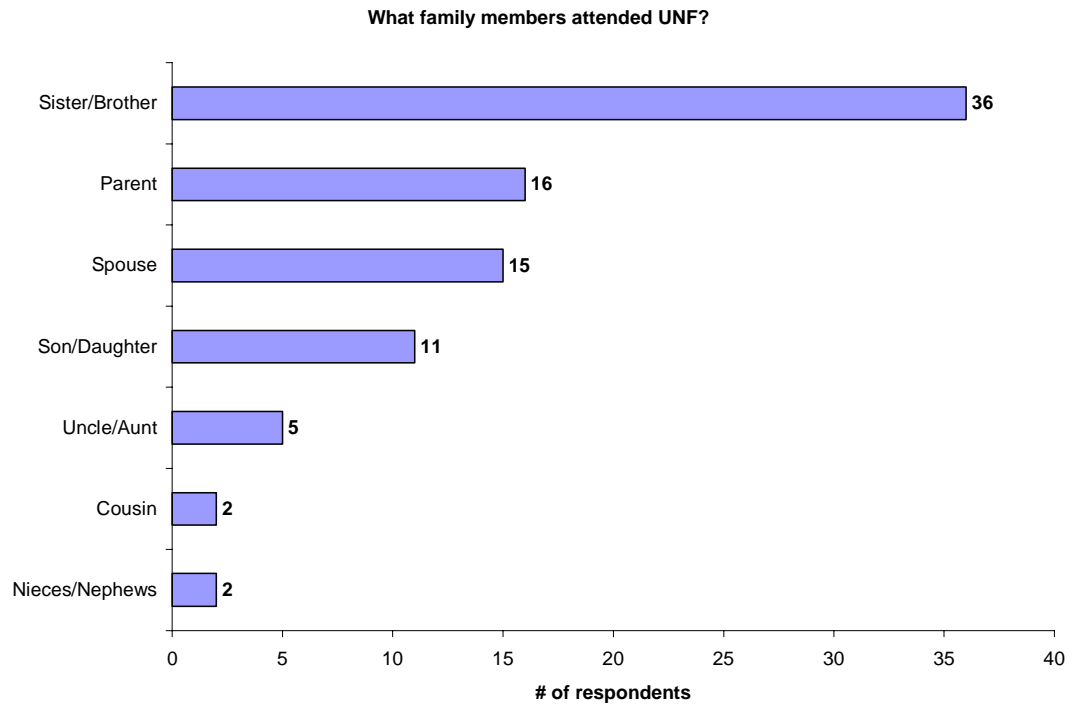
When asked to indicate in which of the following Alumni Association activities they would be interested, more than 26 percent said that “Gaining information on your college or regional Alumni chapter” was most important to them.

In which of the following Alumni Association activities would you be interested?

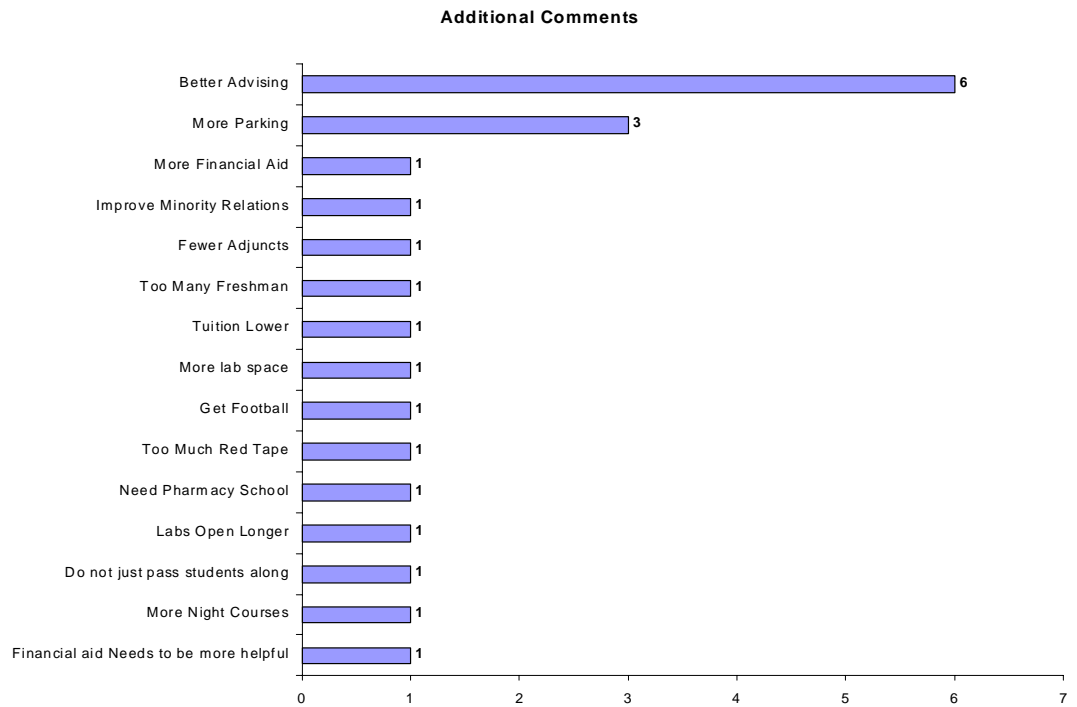


Attending/participating association sponsored events, community service to the Alumni association, and mentoring students were also frequently mentioned.

For respondents who had a family member attend UNF, most reported that a sister or brother had attended UNF.



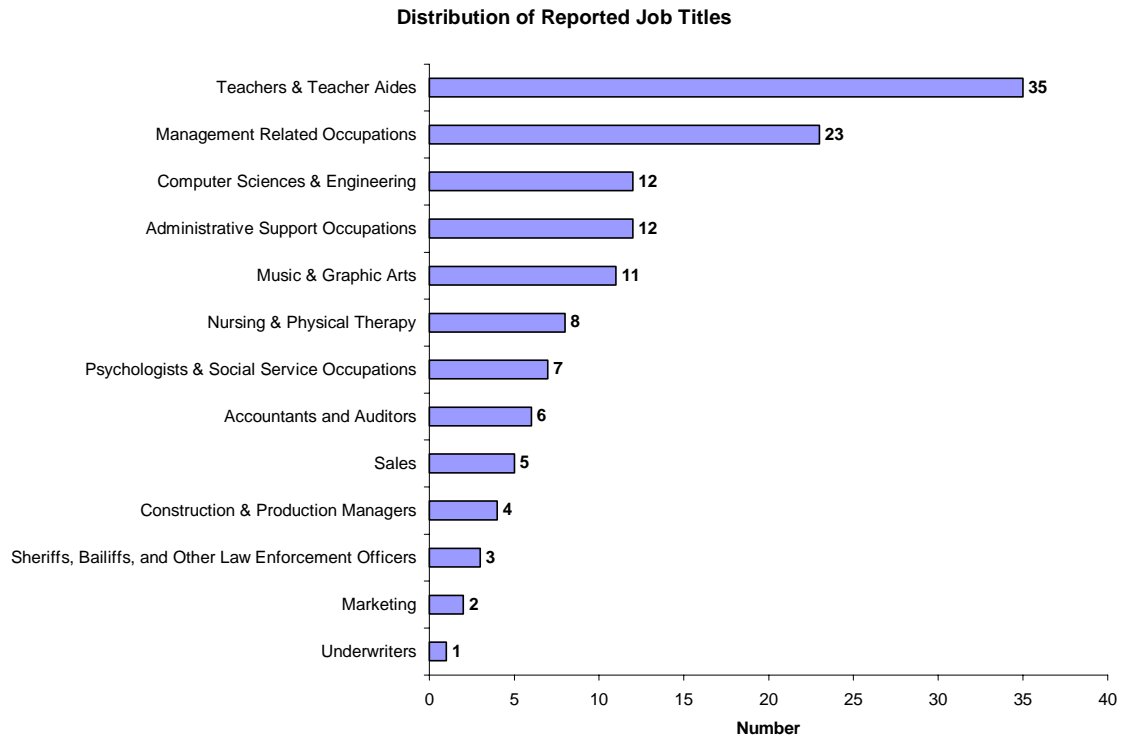
In the additional comments section, very few took the opportunity to add additional changes. Of those who did, most indicated, “ Better advising.”



Additional Analyses

Profiles by Degree Major

For those graduates who are currently employed, the majority work as Teachers or Teacher Aides followed by Management Related Occupations.



This result is not surprising given that Psychology and Elementary Education were the two most reported majors.

Gender characteristics

An analysis of the questionnaire items by gender revealed a number of differences (Table 1). Women tended to have lower starting salaries and higher GPA's than men. Women use the library much more frequently than men while men use the Academic Resource Center and Health Services more frequently than women. Men participated in Intramural Sports more often than women.

Job characteristics

An analysis of the relationship between one's chosen major and their choice of job showed a number of differences (Tables 2a – 2c). Majors indicated as being most closely related to the respondent's job were Special Education, Finance, English, Nursing, and Health Administration. Least closely related were Political Science, History Education, Art, and Biology.

The degree majors of students who felt that their experiences at UNF best prepared them for their current jobs were Math Education, Music, Special Education, Math, Statistics, Finance, Building Construction and Building Management. Those majors feeling least prepared were Political Science, History Education, and Secondary Education.

The degree majors having the highest starting salaries were Electrical Engineering, Transportation & Logistics, and Physical Therapy. The lowest starting salaries were for majors in Math Education, Music, English, Literature, Secondary Education, and Art

Time To Complete Degree

A breakdown of the reasons why it took longer for some students to complete their degree shows that “My Academic Advisor Misadvised Me” was the most frequently mentioned reason, followed by "My Required Courses Were Not Available," and "I Withdrew During One Or More Semesters." The majors having the most respondents indicating, “My Academic Advisor Misadvised Me” were Math, Philosophy and Political Science.

Course Evaluations

Tables 4a – 4b contain an analysis of respondents’ ratings of their courses taken inside their majors. Although the overall ratings were fairly high (ranging from an average of 3.43 to 4.5), the majors rated highest overall were Math Education, Mathematics, Building Construction, History, Transportation & Logistics, Spanish, Biology, Music, and Philosophy. Lowest rated were Financial Services, Health Administration, Fine Arts/Visual Arts, and Electrical Engineering.

Discussion.

As was mentioned in the introduction, the obtained sample was slightly different than the population survey. Not only were there difference in terms of gender, there were also differences in terms of age. Most of the graduates who did not return their surveys appear to be in the 25 to 34 age range.

Two ways that one can interpret the results of the survey: one is to focus solely on the positive results such as the high percentage of respondents indicated that they would come back to UNF and who felt that their major was highly related to their current line of work. A second way to look at the results is to pay attention to those students who are less than fully satisfied with their experiences at UNF. The three questions which relate most highly to this approach are how well you feel your experiences at UNF prepares you for your current job, if you could do it over again would you switch to a different major, and the questions pertaining to satisfaction with academic advising. One should also pay attention to the additional comments made by students as to how the quality of services could be improved. In particular students want to have a greater number of course sections and courses offered as well as increasing the range of courses offered in their major. While obtaining a job after graduation is one of the main goals of attending college, it is not the only one. Therefore, one should not measure success solely by whether students are adequately placed in occupations related to their program of study. Personal growth is an important aspect of a college education and therefore one should pay attention to how graduates responded on those questions.

UNF caters to a high number of students who both go to school and who work. Consequently the needs of students who work while going to school are going to be different than those who work minimally or did not work at all. Being able to take required courses at non-traditional times is very important.

Also working students will not be able to avail themselves of all the services that are available at UNF. The obvious exception is the library – because it is an essential resource for college students to use.

Students who attend part-time and who work are less likely to complete their degree in the four-year time allotment.

ⁱ Longitudinal Study of 1989 Frosh as 1993 Seniors. Report 1994-01. Title: The 1993 College Student Survey: A Longitudinal Study of 1989 CIRP

College After Transfer: A Survey of the Curricular Experiences of General College Students Who Transfer Within the University By Cathrine Wambach