



# Office of Research, Planning, and Effectiveness Graduate Follow-up Survey Report (2013)

## I. Introduction

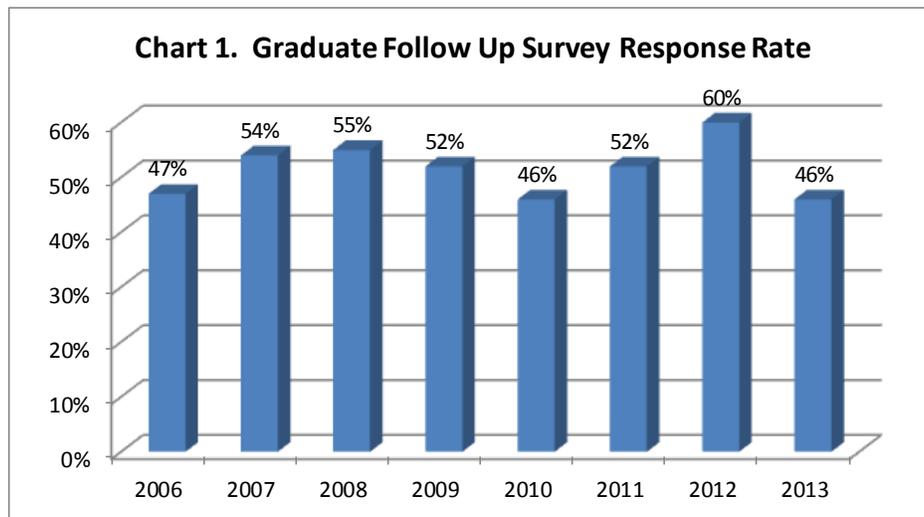
The purpose of the Graduate Follow-up Survey is to gather opinions on graduate satisfaction with the NMC experience. Results from the survey help us understand the employment and transfer status of graduates. In order to measure learning on the general education outcomes, graduates provide a self-assessment on learning outcome achievement.

### Highlights

- 46% of all graduates from July 2011 through June 2012 responded to the survey
- 90% of responding graduates reported they had accomplished their primary educational goal
- 88% were satisfied or very satisfied with the preparation they received from NMC
- Of those working in their degree field, 83% found work in northwest Michigan and 94% reported they are satisfied or very satisfied with their career choice
- NMC's 2012 placement rate is 90% (% of graduates employed and/or continuing education)
- 91% of responding graduates agreed an NMC education is a good value for the money
- 94% of responding graduates agreed NMC is a good place to meet one's learning objectives or educational goals

## II. Methodology

The Graduate Follow-up Survey was administered to NMC graduates who received an award between July 2011 and June 2012. Graduates from 2011 were surveyed in May/June 2012. Graduates from spring 2012 were surveyed by Research Services in December 2012. Of the 674 total graduates in the accessible population, 311 responded to the survey, for a response rate of 46%. Chart 1 highlights past Graduate Follow-Up Survey response rates.



Responding graduates have the following characteristics: 55% (172) occupational program and 45% (139) liberal studies graduates; 55% female and 45% male; and mean age of 32 years (median=27 years). Notable is the fact that respondent age varies slightly by program area, with mean age of occupational graduates at 34 years (median=30 years) and mean age of liberal arts graduates at 29 years (median=25 years).

The Graduate Follow-up Survey instrument can be found here:

<https://intranet.nmc.edu/depts/orpe/research/Files/GraduateSurvey-2012.pdf>

### III. Results

#### Educational Goal

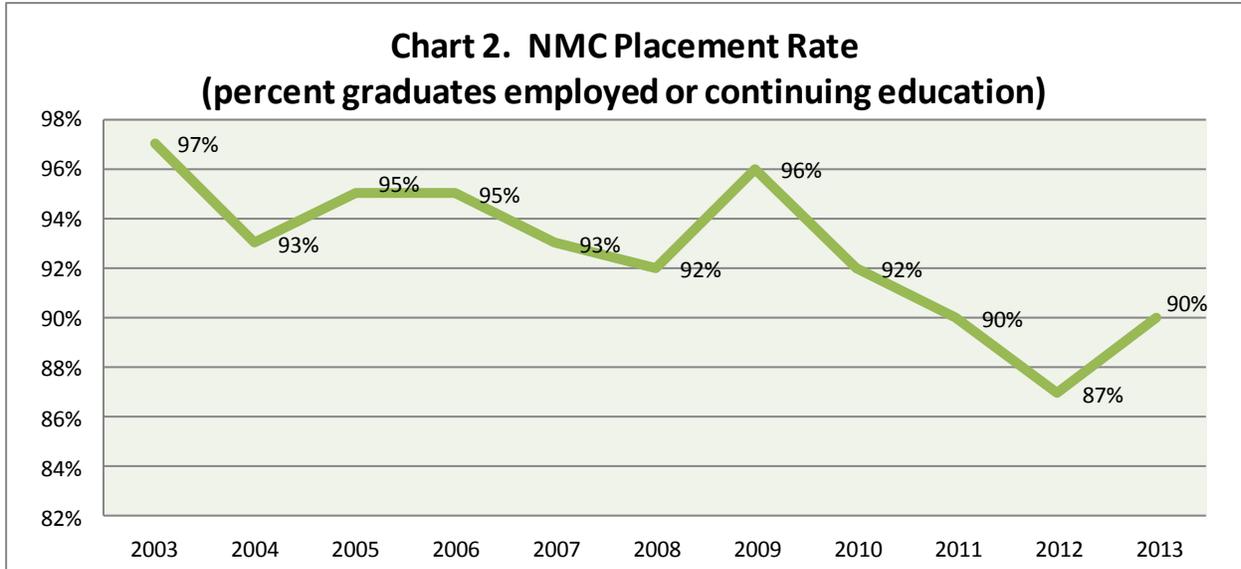
Approximately 83% of respondents indicated their primary goal was to earn an NMC Associate degree, with a plan either to transfer for a 4-year degree or find a job (Table 1). This is down slightly from approximately 90% in 2012.

The majority of responding graduates (90%) reported they had accomplished their educational goal while attending NMC; this result is similar to 2012, but lower than previous years' (91% in 2012, 95% in 2011, 97% in 2010, 95% in 2009, 96% in 2008, and 94% in 2007).

<b>Table 1. Primary Goal</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
To earn an NMC Associate degree and then transfer to a 4-year college or university	154	49.5	49.5
To earn an NMC Associate degree and then find a job	105	33.8	83.3
To earn some general education credits and then transfer to a 4-year college or university	14	4.5	87.8
To earn an NMC certificate	14	4.5	92.3
To learn skills for a new job or to advance in a job	13	4.2	96.5
For personal interest only	3	1.0	97.4
Other: Please specify	8	2.6	100
Total	311	100	

#### Employment and Continuing Education Status

Approximately 74% of respondents reported they are employed, which is a slightly lower reported percentage than recent years (76% in 2012, 81% in 2011, and 78% in both 2009 and 2010). Irrespective of employment status, 46% reported continuing their education, which is an increase from 37% in 2012 (52% in 2011, 58% in 2010). NMC's overall placement rate (graduates either employed or continuing their education) is 90%. This is a slight increase from last reported results (87%), but remains low in comparison to placement rates over the course of the last 10 years (Chart 2). The current rate of placement does, however, meet NMC's target placement rate of 90%.



Note: NMC's target of 90% has been the reported MI state average in the past

Of the 80 responding graduates reporting they were not employed, approximately half (44%/35) reported that they were not seeking work. Twenty-two respondents (17 occupational, 5 liberal arts) indicating they were seeking work were neither employed nor continuing their education. Represented occupational programs are included in Table 2.

<b>Table 2. Occupational program of study for respondents seeking work - not employed or continuing education,</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Admin Support Specialist Cert.	1
Associate Degree Nursing	3
Business Administration General	1
Business Administration Management	1
CIT-Office Applications Specialist	1
Computer IT-Infrastructure	1
Construction-Electrical Certificate	1
Culinary Arts	1
Dental Assistant	1
Engineering Tech-Marine	1
Landscaping and Nursery	1
Maritime Engineering Officer	1
Renewable Energy-Electrical	1
Renewable Energy-HVAC	1
Web Developer	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>

Of all respondents employed in their field of study (43%), 83% were employed in Northwest Michigan (Table 3). Also, 82% of graduates employed in their field in Northwest Michigan were employed in Grand Traverse County (Table 4). Approximately 68% of employed occupational graduates reported they were employed in a field related to their degree, a slightly lower percentage than that reported in recent years (70% in 2012, 78% in 2011, and 82% in 2010).

**Table 3. Students currently employed in a field related to their NMC degree or certificate, by region.**

	Count	Column N %
Northwest Michigan	111	82.8%
Other Michigan region	13	9.7%
Outside Michigan	10	7.5%
Total	134	100.0%

**Table 4. Students employed in a field related to their NMC degree or certificate in Northwest Michigan, by county.**

	Count	Column N %
Grand Traverse	89	81.7%
Kalkaska	6	5.5%
Antrim	4	3.7%
Benzie	3	2.8%
Emmet	2	1.8%
Manistee	2	1.8%
Charlevoix	1	0.9%
Leelanau	1	0.9%
Wexford	1	0.9%
Missaukee	0	0.0%
Total	109	100.0%

Of those responding graduates employed in a field related to their degree, approximately 94% indicated they are satisfied or very satisfied with their career choice. This is down slightly from 2012 (97%), but higher than previous surveys (93% since 2007). Respondents employed in a field related to their degree most frequently cited Munson Medical Center as their employer (Table 5). Munson was cited as an employer by 19 of responding graduates, which compares to 23 in 2012 and 30 in 2011. Table 6 identifies the top employers of NMC responding graduates *not* employed in a field related to their degree.

**Table 5. Employers Most Frequently Cited by Responding Graduates Employed in their Degree Field**

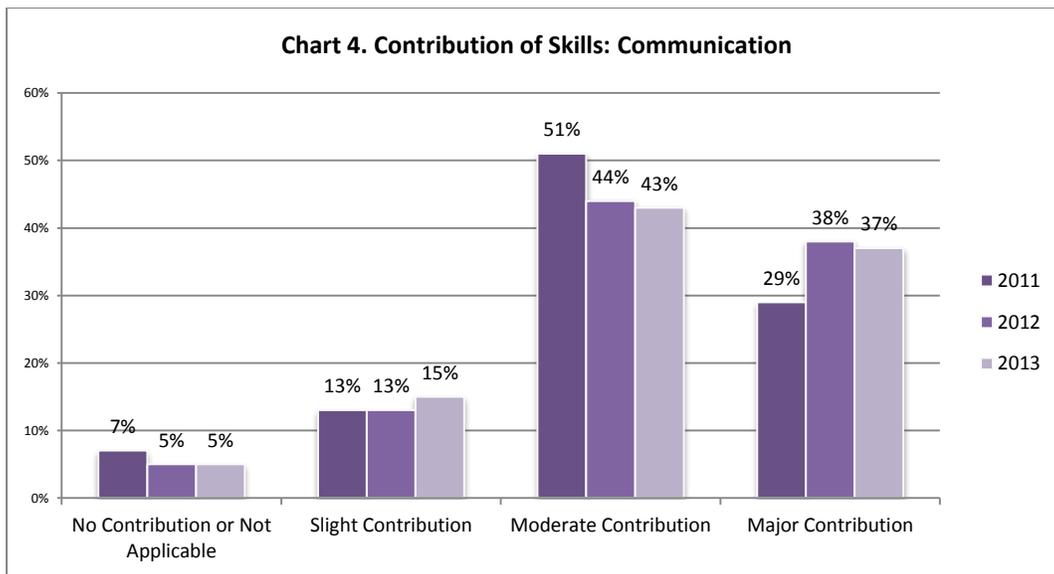
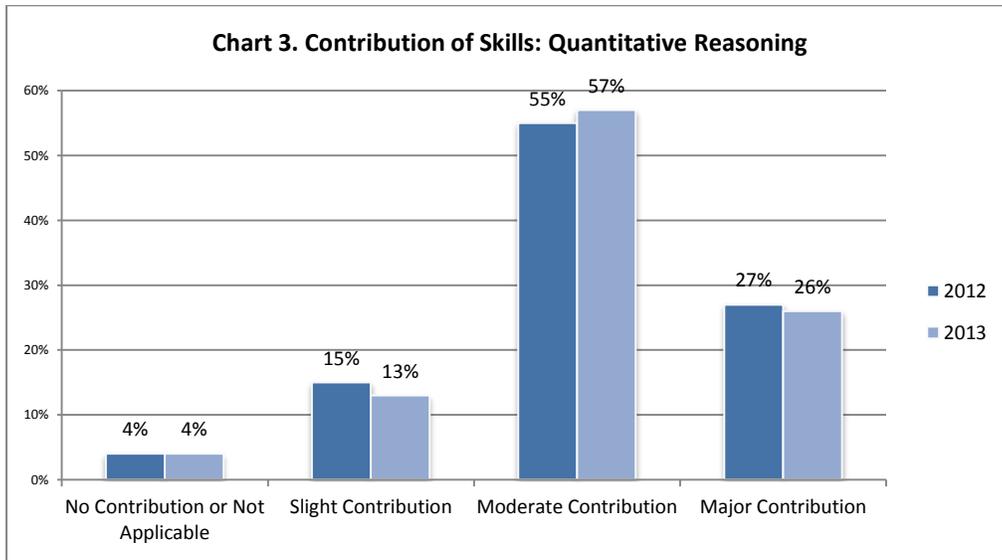
MUNSON MEDICAL CENTER	19
NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE	7
BORTZ HEALTH CARE	3
GRAND TRAVERSE PAVILLIONS	3
KALKASKA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL	2
SAFETY NET	2
SKILLED MANUFACTURING	2
TRAVERSE CITY AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2
TOP LINE ELECTRIC	2
WINDEMULLER ELECTRIC	2

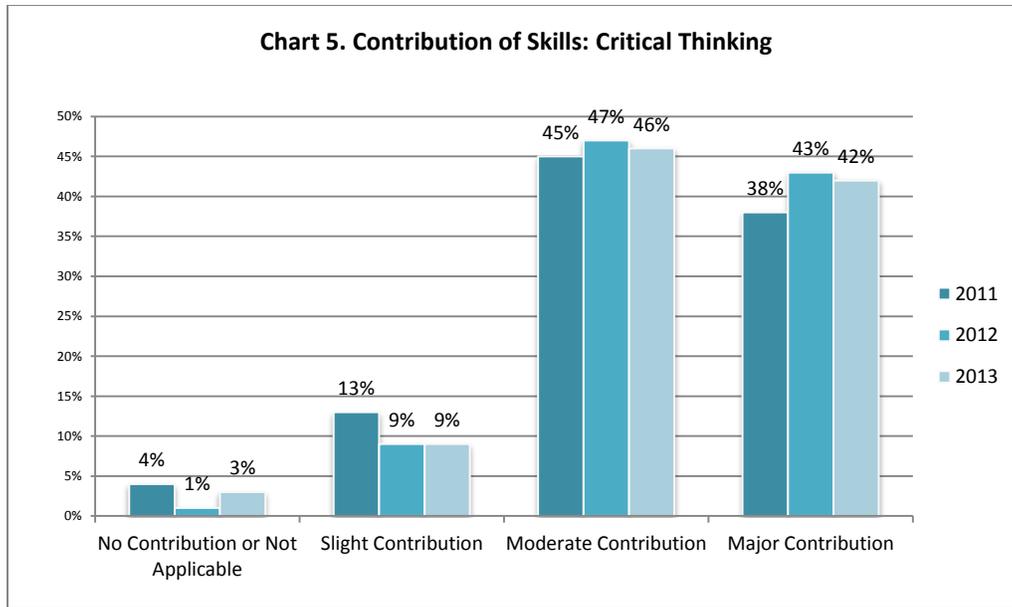
**Table 6. Employers Most Frequently Cited by Responding Graduates *not* Employed in their Degree Field**

NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE	3
CHERRY REPUBLIC	2
GRAND TRAVERSE RESORT	2
MEIJER INC	2

**General Education Outcomes**

Graduates were asked how much their educational experience at NMC had contributed to their growth in three broad skill areas: quantitative reasoning (newly adopted as a general education outcome in spring 2010), communication, and critical thinking skills. The results indicate that NMC has been a value added experience for responding students. The number of respondents indicating their experience at NMC had a major to moderate contribution to their quantitative reasoning skills (83.3%) was one percent higher than last year, whereas communication and critical thinking marks were slightly lower (see Charts 3-5).





Graduates were asked to grade their level of competency upon graduation on each of three general education outcomes (Table 7), using a scale ranging from 0 – 1.0 (Deficient) to 3.5 – 4.0 (Proficient). When considering student perceptions, results are positive, with approximately 98% of respondents rating themselves sufficient or above in their ability to analyze their thinking and that of others in resolving issues. Furthermore, 99% reported that their ability to analyze information gathered from observation, experience, or communication was sufficient or proficient and 95% rated their ability to accurately use numbers, etc. and ability to analyze information as sufficient or proficient.

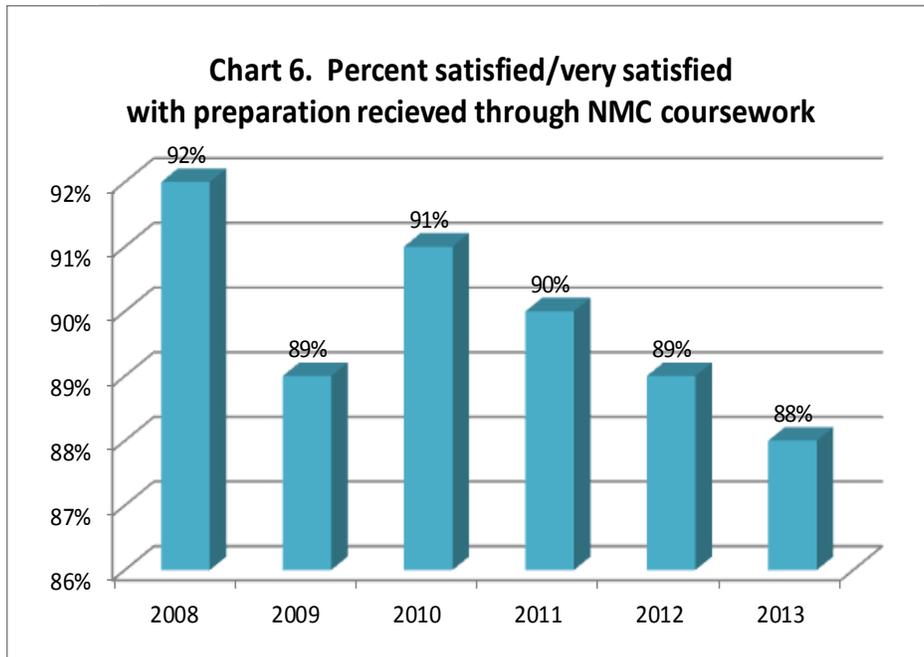
When compared with the Fall 2012 Critical Thinking Artifacts Analysis, graduates’ perceptions of competency far exceed actual performance on artifacts, with approximately 12% to 58% scoring sufficient or higher in three scored areas as compared to sufficient/proficient scores in the 90% range highlighted below.\*

Table 7. Graduate perceptions of competency on the general education outcomes.	Deficient to Developing		Sufficient to Proficient	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Ability to accurately use numbers, symbols, measurements, and the relationships of quantities to make sound decisions or predictions.	15	4.9%	290	95.1%
Ability to analyze your thinking and that of others in resolving issues.	7	2.3%	299	97.7%
Ability to analyze information gathered from observation, experience, or communication.	3	1.0%	303	99.0%

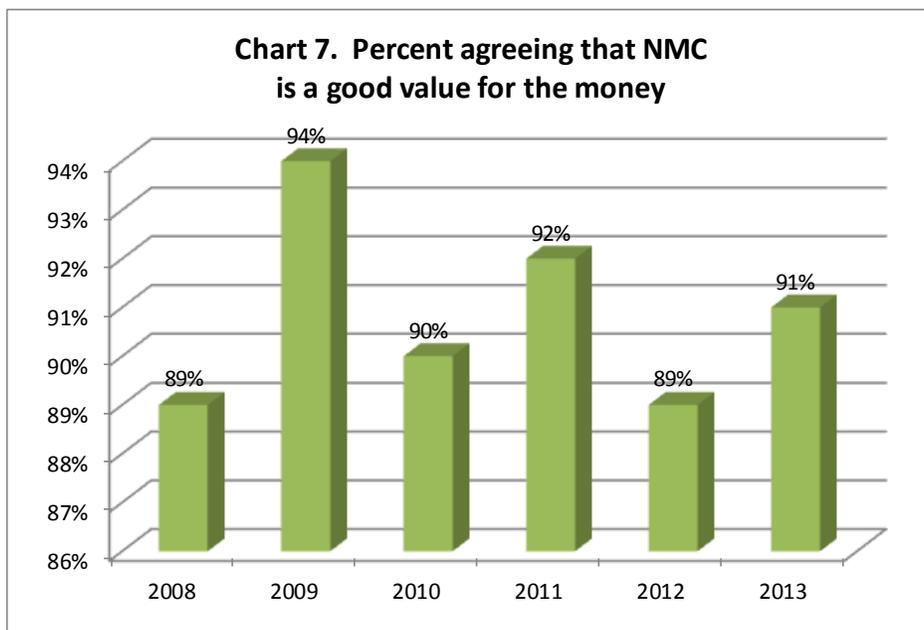
\*It should be noted that this is not a direct comparison of student data points

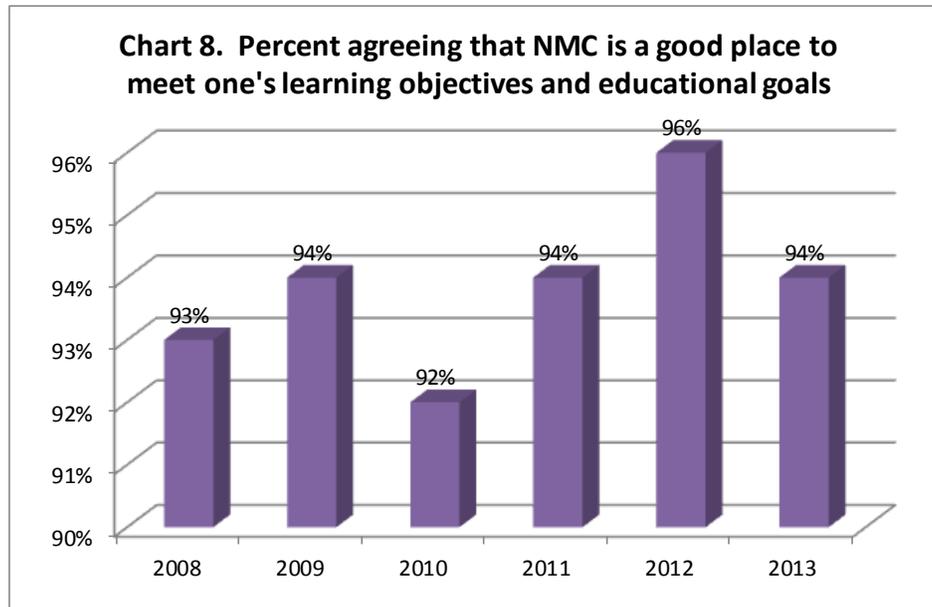
**Overall Satisfaction**

Overall, 88% of responding graduates indicated they are satisfied or very satisfied with the preparation they received through their coursework at NMC (Chart 6).



Approximately 91% of responding graduates agreed or strongly agreed that NMC is a good value for the money (Chart 7), and nearly 94% agreed NMC is a good place to meet one’s learning objectives and educational goals (Chart 8).





#### IV. Conclusion

The data indicate that graduates continue to be satisfied with NMC on the characteristics assessed, including preparation received through coursework, a place to meet one's learning objectives and educational goals, and value for the money. Results also indicate that responding graduates believe their educational experiences at NMC contributed to their growth in quantitative reasoning, critical thinking and communications.

One suggested area for further research is NMC's placement rate. Target for placement of graduates (90%), for either employment or continued education, is just being met. After a continuous decline in placement rate, the last Graduate Follow-Up Report suggested "...keep monitoring placement rates and reassess after this coming year's survey results." Though the current placement rate slightly improved (from 87% to 90%), it notably remains at the minimum.

With regard to open ended comments, feedback was varied and primarily quite positive. Specific comments will be forwarded to respective academic and services areas. One area of concern cited more often than others focused on advising information. Graduates mentioned advising information they received was inconsistent at times and mentioned a desire for more frequent adviser communication. NMC is currently working on developing a culture of advising and a process in which students connect with the same adviser every semester. This initiative should improve the consistency and accuracy of information to students and meet their needs for more frequent touch points.

All data are available from the Office of Research, Planning, and Effectiveness. Please contact Dr. Cathlyn Sommerfield ([csommerfield@nmc.edu](mailto:csommerfield@nmc.edu)) with any questions or comments.