THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

Spring 2013

First Year Experience Program (FYE)

Mid Semester Survey Report

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Mid-Year Freshman Survey is designed to assess the freshman students' opinion about their experience from their first day at AUC until the day of the survey administration (March 8th, 2013)
The survey was developed by the Office of Data Analytics and Institutional Research (DAIR) in cooperation with the Core Curriculum Office. The survey was distributed to the students on the 4th day of the FYE program in March 8th, 2013. Nine hundred and twelve students (890) participated in the FYE program and 275 students completed and returned the survey (30.9%).

Methodology and Organization of the Report

It should be noted, as a technical comment, that we removed missing responses from the analysis section and analyzed the entire survey without missing data. We trust removing missing data will paint a clear picture of the FYE student's opinions who participated in the Mid semester day.

This report is divided into five sections. In the **first section**, students' experience with AUC's services and facilities is presented in a frequency table. In the **second section** students' evaluation of their academic experience is presented. In the **third section**, students' levels of agreement with several general statements about their life at AUC are presented. In this third section, the survey responses values are collapsed into the four categories of "Combined Agree" (Strongly Agree and Agree); "Combined Disagree" (Strongly Disagree and Disagree); "Neutral" and "NA" (not applicable). In the **fourth section**, student's spending hours studying outside the class room is presented. In the **fifth section**, open ended question is presented.

Section I

Students' distribution by section is shown in Table 1 page 5.

Students reported gender as follows: 49.6% 'Female' and 50.4% 'Male'.

Students' experience with AUCs' services and facilities:

In this section we present students' options to their exposure to AUCs' services and facilities during the first semester. The value of responses was Yes/No.

- **When we asked students if they:**

  - **Participate in the first-year experience program**, students reported 'yes'=82.9%, 'no'=15.6%, 'NA'=1.5%
  - **Declare a major**, students reported 'yes'=16.5%, 'no'=82.4%, 'NA'=1.1%
  - **Use the library facilities**, students reported 'yes'=90.4%, 'no'=9.2%, 'NA'=0.4%
  - **Use the writing center,** students reported 'yes'=17%, 'no'=81.5%, 'NA'=1.5%
  - **Use Turnition.com**, students reported 'yes'=67.9%, 'no'=29.2%, 'NA'=3%
  - **Learn about the core curriculum requirements**, students reported 'yes'=86.7%, 'no'=11.9%, 'NA'=1.5%
  - **Access the student portal**, students reported 'yes'=79.3%, 'no'=19.3%, 'NA'=1.5%
  - **Access and use the blackboard**, students reported 'yes'=97.8%, 'no'=1.8%, 'NA'=0.4%
  - **Access and use the web for students**, students reported 'yes'=53.2%, 'no'=41.6%, 'NA'=5.2%
  - **Join any extracurricular activity**, students reported 'yes'=55.6%, 'no'=43%, 'NA'=1.5%
  - **Attend a cultural event**, students reported 'yes'=28.1%, 'no'=70.4%, 'NA'=1.5%
  - **Read AUC announcements in your email account**, students reported 'yes'=92.9%, 'no'=6%, 'NA'=1.1%
  - **Follow AUC's standards for academic integrity**, students reported 'yes'=90.4%, 'no'=7.4%, 'NA'=2.2%
  - **Make new friends**, students reported 'yes'=95.6%, 'no'=3.7%, 'NA'=0.7%
  - **Visit the Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS)**, students reported 'yes'=38.2%, 'no'=58.8%, 'NA'=2.9%
  - **Feel need to seek support for psychological difficulties?(i.e. problems with your friends, family, emotions?),** students reported 'yes'=8.9%, 'no'=86.7%, 'NA'=4.4%

Descriptive Analysis for Section I

Table 1

Section #	Frequency	Percentage
1	9	3.3%
2	12	4.4%
3	13	4.8%
4	16	5.9%
5	14	5.2%
6	7	2.6%
7	10	3.7%
8	11	4.1%
9	8	3.0%
10	9	3.3%
11	13	4.8%
12	9	3.3%
13	8	3.0%
14	16	5.9%
15	11	4.1%
17	11	4.1%
19	13	4.8%
20	10	3.7%
21	14	5.2%
22	15	5.6%
23	14	5.2%
24	7	2.6%
25	11	4.1%
26	9	3.3%
Total	270	100.0%

Missing (n= 5)

Table 2

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	135	50.4%
Female	133	49.6%
Total	268	100.0%

Missing (n=7)

Figure 2

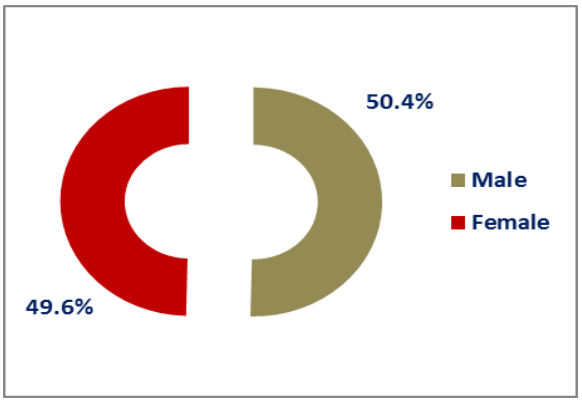
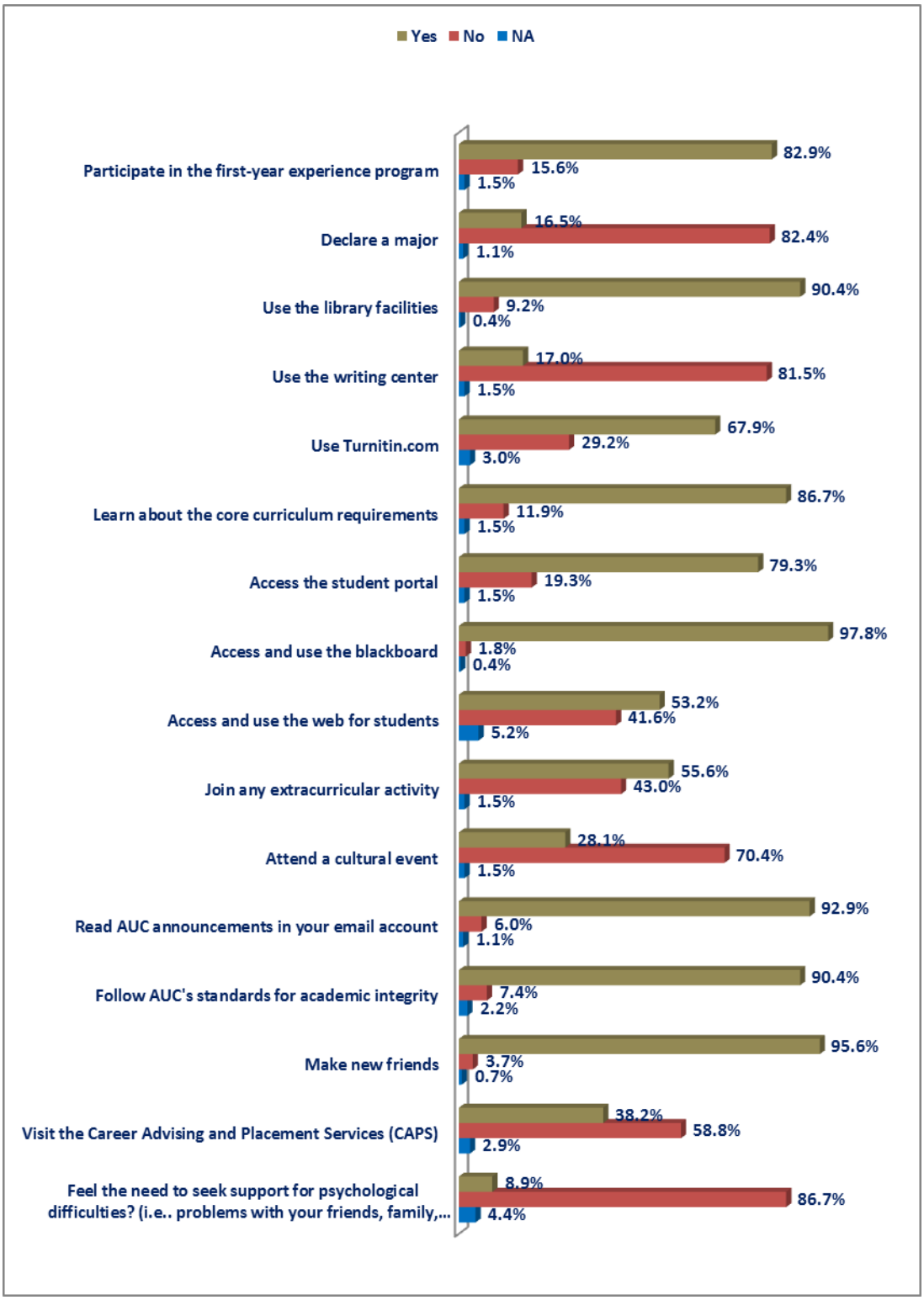


Table 3

	Yes	No	NA	Total	Missing
Participate in the first-year experience program	223	42	4	269	6
	82.9%	15.6%	1.5%	100.0%	
Declare a major	45	224	3	272	3
	16.5%	82.4%	1.1%	100.0%	
Use the library facilities	245	25	1	271	4
	90.4%	9.2%	0.4%	100.0%	
Use the writing center	46	221	4	271	4
	17.0%	81.5%	1.5%	100.0%	
Use Turnitin.com	184	79	8	271	4
	67.9%	29.2%	3.0%	100.0%	
Learn about the core curriculum requirements	234	32	4	270	5
	86.7%	11.9%	1.5%	100.0%	
Access the student portal	214	52	4	270	5
	79.3%	19.3%	1.5%	100.0%	
Access and use the blackboard	266	5	1	272	3
	97.8%	1.8%	0.4%	100.0%	
Access and use the web for students	143	112	14	269	6
	53.2%	41.6%	5.2%	100.0%	
Join any extracurricular activity	150	116	4	270	5
	55.6%	43.0%	1.5%	100.0%	
Attend a cultural event	76	190	4	270	5
	28.1%	70.4%	1.5%	100.0%	
Read AUC announcements in your email account	249	16	3	268	7
	92.9%	6.0%	1.1%	100.0%	
Follow AUC's standards for academic integrity	244	20	6	270	5
	90.4%	7.4%	2.2%	100.0%	
Make new friends	260	10	2	272	3
	95.6%	3.7%	0.7%	100.0%	
Visit the Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS)	104	160	8	272	3
	38.2%	58.8%	2.9%	100.0%	
Feel the need to seek support for psychological difficulties? (i.e.. problems with your friends, family, emotions?)	24	235	12	271	4
	8.9%	86.7%	4.4%	100.0%	

Figure 3


Yes
No
NA
Participate in the first-year experience program
82.9%
15.6%
1.5%
Declare a major
16.5%
82.4%
1.1%
Use the library facilities
90.4%
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17.0%
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79.3%
19.3%
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Access and use the blackboard
97.8%
1.8%
0.4%
Access and use the web for students
53.2%
41.6%
5.2%
Join any extracurricular activity
55.6%
43.0%
1.5%
Attend a cultural event
28.1%
70.4%
1.5%
Read AUC announcements in your email account
92.9%
6.0%
1.1%
Follow AUC's standards for academic integrity
90.4%
7.4%
2.2%
Make new friends
95.6%
3.7%
0.7%
Visit the Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS)
38.2%
58.8%
2.9%
Feel the need to seek support for psychological difficulties? (i.e.. problems with your friends, family,...
8.9%
86.7%
4.4%

Section II

Students' evaluation of their academic experience:

- For the question, **Manage your time effectively**, 4.8% of students reported 'Very Easy', 46.9% reported 'Easy', 42.1% reported 'Difficult', 5.9% reported 'Very difficult' and 0.4% reported 'NA'.

- For the question, **Understand what is expected academically,** 18.9% of students reported 'Very Easy', 58.9% reported 'Easy', 20.4% reported 'Difficult', 1.1% reported 'Very difficult', and 0.7% reported 'NA'.

- For the question, **Develop effective study skills,** 8.9% of students reported 'Very Easy', 63.5% reported 'Easy', 25.5% reported 'Difficult', 1.8% reported 'Very difficult' and 0.4% reported 'NA' .

- For the question, **Establish meaningful connections with faculty**, 13.3% of students reported 'Very Easy', 56.5% reported 'Easy', 23.6% reported 'Difficult', 2.2% reported 'Very difficult' and 4.4% reported 'NA' .

- For the question, **Find out where to go for academic advising**, 39.6% of students reported 'Very Easy', 48.5% reported 'Easy', 10% reported 'Difficult', 1.1% reported 'Very difficult' and 0.7% reported 'NA' .

- For the question**, Find out where to go for student services**, 19.3% of students reported 'Very Easy', 52% reported 'Easy', 20.1% reported 'Difficult', 1.9% reported 'Very difficult' and 6.7% reported 'NA' .

- For the question, **Use your AUC e-mail,** 72.1% of students reported 'Very Easy', 26.1% reported 'Easy', 1.1% reported 'Difficult', 0.4% 'Very difficult' and 0.4% reported 'NA'.

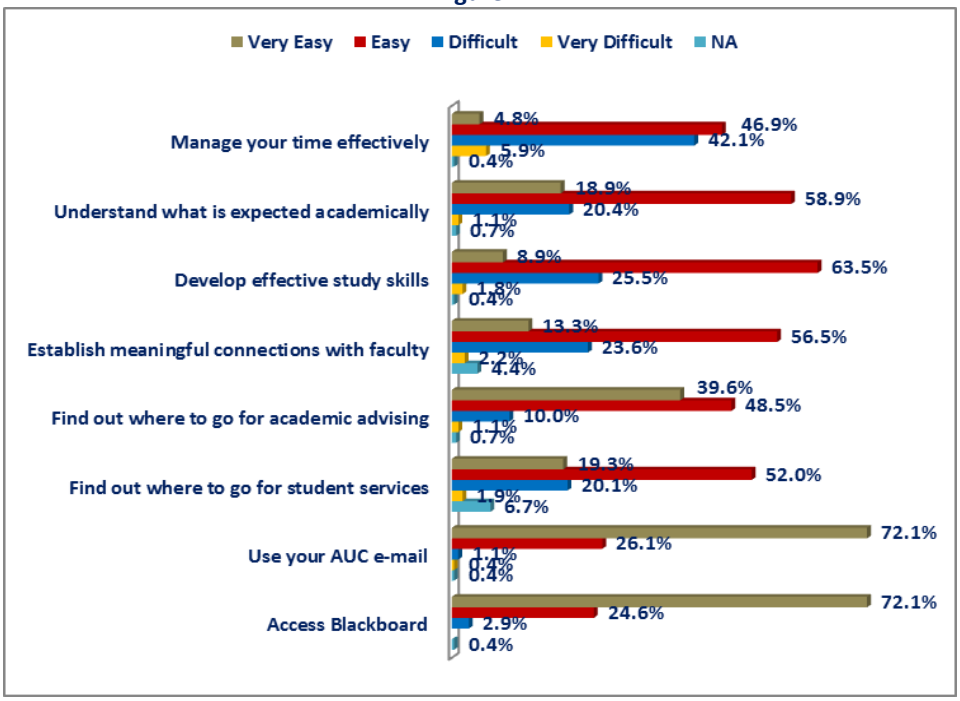
- For the question, **Access blackboard,** 72.1% of students reported 'Very Easy', 24.6% reported 'Easy', 2.9% reported 'Difficult', no one reported 'Very difficult' and 0.4% reported 'NA'.

Descriptive Analysis for Section II

Table 4

	Very Easy	Easy	Difficult	Very Difficult	NA	Total	Missing
Manage your time effectively	13	127	114	16	1	271	4
	4.8%	46.9%	42.1%	5.9%	0.4%	100.0%	
Understand what is expected academically	51	159	55	3	2	270	5
	18.9%	58.9%	20.4%	1.1%	0.7%	100.0%	
Develop effective study skills	24	172	69	5	1	271	4
	8.9%	63.5%	25.5%	1.8%	0.4%	100.0%	
Establish meaningful connections with faculty	36	153	64	6	12	271	4
	13.3%	56.5%	23.6%	2.2%	4.4%	100.0%	
Find out where to go for academic advising	107	131	27	3	2	270	5
	39.6%	48.5%	10.0%	1.1%	0.7%	100.0%	
Find out where to go for student services	52	140	54	5	18	269	6
	19.3%	52.0%	20.1%	1.9%	6.7%	100.0%	
Use your AUC e-mail	196	71	3	1	1	272	3
	72.1%	26.1%	1.1%	0.4%	0.4%	100.0%	
Access Blackboard	196	67	8	-	1	272	3
	72.1%	24.6%	2.9%	0%	0.4%	100.0%	

Figure 4



Section III

Students' levels of agreement with several general statements about their life at AUC:

- For the question, ***The mid semester FYE 4th day is helpful***, 34.3% of the students reported 'combined agree', 31.7% reported 'combined disagree', 33.2% reported 'neutral' and 0.7% reported 'NA'.

- For the question, ***The workshop conducted by the registrar is useful***, 33% of the students reported 'combined agree', 7.9% reported 'combined disagree', 38.2% reported 'neutral' and 21% reported 'NA'.

- For the question, ***The workshop conducted by the Freshman advisers is helpful***, 48.1% of the students reported 'combined agree', 10.1% reported 'combined disagree', 26.5% reported 'neutral' and 15.3% reported 'NA'.

- For the question, ***The workshop conducted by the Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS) is helpful***, *33.5%* of students reported 'combined agree', 4.9% reported 'combined disagree', 33.8% reported 'neutral' and 27.8% reported 'NA'.

- For the question, ***Transition from school life to the university went smoothly*****,** 53% of students reported 'combined agree', 16.7% reported 'combined disagree', 29.2% reported 'neutral' and 1.1% reported 'NA'.

- For the question, ***I have a positive experience at AUC since the beginning of classes***, 70.5% of students reported 'combined agree', 4.8% only reported 'combined disagree', 24% reported 'neutral' and 0.7% reported 'NA'.

- For the question, ***I was able to achieve a social life and academic balance***, 72.2% of students reported 'combined agree', 4.4% reported 'combined disagree', 22.6% reported 'neutral' and 0.7% reported 'NA'.

- For the question, ***I was able to develop my time management skills*****,** 48% of students reported 'combined agree', 13.7% reported 'combined disagree', 37.6% reported 'neutral' and 0.7% reported 'NA'.

- For the question, ***I was able to register for the courses I wanted***, 49.8% of students reported 'combined agree', 20.8% reported 'combined disagree', 24.9% reported 'neutral' and 4.5% reported 'NA'.

- For the question, ***Faculty members were available during the office hours***, 70.7% of students reported 'combined agree', 3.7% reported 'combined disagree', 18.5% reported 'neutral' and 7% reported 'NA'.

- For the question, ***Faculty members were available for consultation outside of class*****,** 60.2% of students reported 'combined agree', 5.6% reported 'combined disagree', 26.8% reported 'neutral' and 7.4% reported 'NA'.

- For the question, ***Classroom facilities were adequate for the needs of my courses***, 80.7% of students reported 'combined agree', 2.2% reported 'combined disagree', 16.4% reported 'neutral' and 0.7% reported 'NA'.

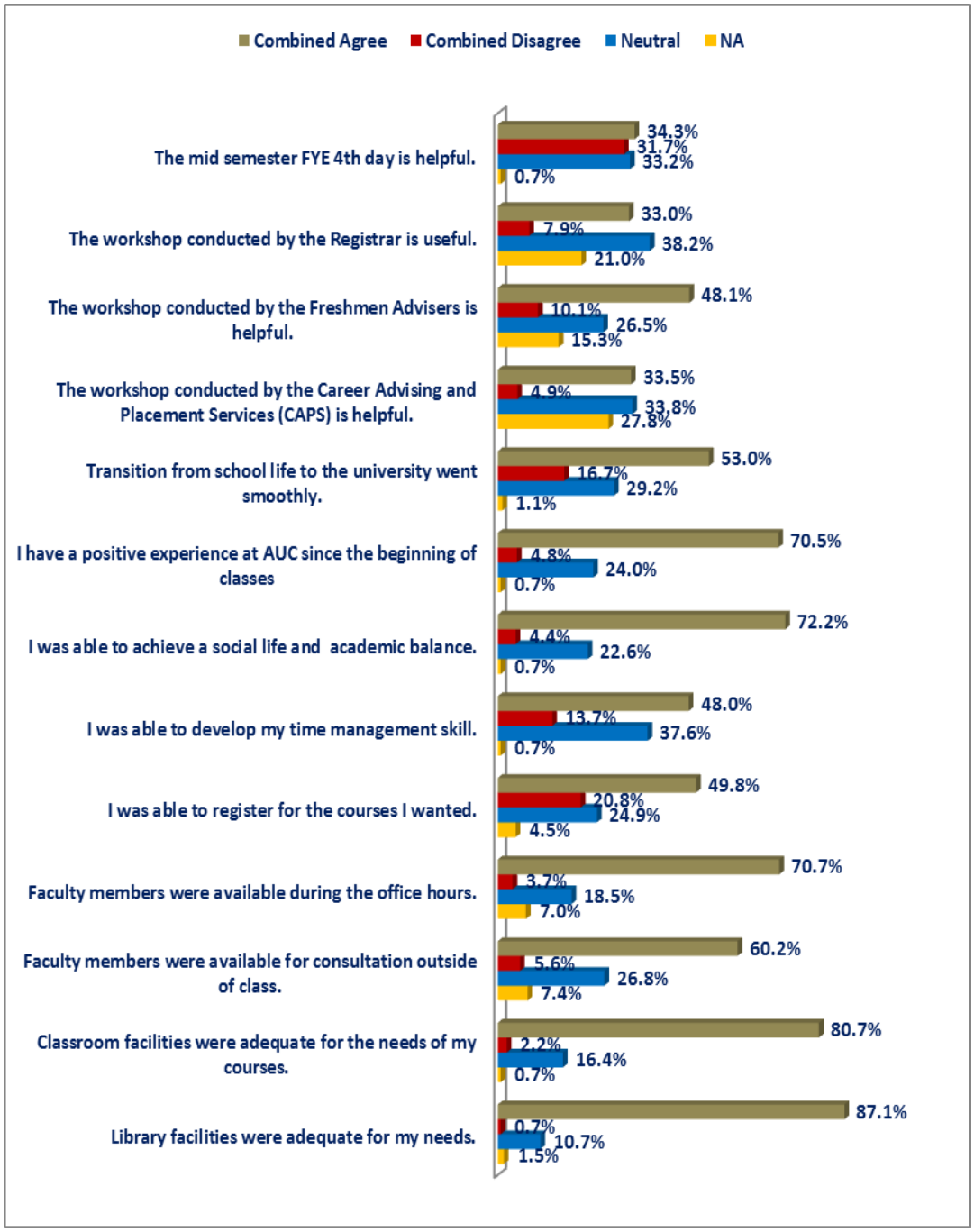
- For the question, ***Library were adequate for my needs***, 87.1% of students reported 'combined agree', 0.7% reported 'combined disagree', 10.7% reported 'neutral' and 1.5% reported 'NA'.

Descriptive Analysis for Section III

Table 5

	Combined Agree	Combined Disagree	Neutral	NA	Total	Missing
The mid semester FYE 4th day is helpful.	93	86	90	2	271	4
	34.3%	31.7%	33.2%	0.7%	100.0%	
The workshop conducted by the Registrar is useful.	88	21	102	56	267	8
	33.0%	7.9%	38.2%	21.0%	100.0%	
The workshop conducted by the Freshmen Advisers is helpful.	129	27	71	41	268	7
	48.1%	10.1%	26.5%	15.3%	100.0%	
The workshop conducted by the Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS) is helpful.	89	13	90	74	266	9
	33.5%	4.9%	33.8%	27.8%	100.0%	
Transition from school life to the university went smoothly.	140	44	77	3	264	11
	53.0%	16.7%	29.2%	1.1%	100.0%	
I have a positive experience at AUC since the beginning of classes.	191	13	65	2	271	4
	70.5%	4.8%	24.0%	0.7%	100.0%	
I was able to achieve a social life and academic balance.	195	12	61	2	270	5
	72.2%	4.4%	22.6%	0.7%	100.0%	
I was able to develop my time management skills.	130	37	102	2	271	4
	48.0%	13.7%	37.6%	0.7%	100.0%	
I was able to register for the courses I wanted.	134	56	67	12	269	6
	49.8%	20.8%	24.9%	4.5%	100.0%	
Faculty members were available during the office hours.	191	10	50	19	270	5
	70.7%	3.7%	18.5%	7.0%	100.0%	
Faculty members were available for consultation outside of class.	162	15	72	20	269	6
	60.2%	5.6%	26.8%	7.4%	100.0%	
Classroom facilities were adequate for the needs of my courses.	217	6	44	2	269	6
	80.7%	2.2%	16.4%	0.7%	100.0%	
Library facilities were adequate for my needs.	236	2	29	4	271	4
	87.1%	0.7%	10.7%	1.5%	100.0%	

Figure 5


Combined Agree
Combined Disagree
Neutral
NA
The mid semester FYE 4th day is helpful.
34.3%
31.7%
33.2%
0.7%
The workshop conducted by the Registrar is useful.
33.0%
7.9%
38.2%
21.0%
The workshop conducted by the Freshmen Advisers is helpful.
48.1%
10.1%
26.5%
15.3%
The workshop conducted by the Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS) is helpful.
33.5%
4.9%
33.8%
27.8%
Transition from school life to the university went smoothly.
53.0%
16.7%
29.2%
1.1%
I have a positive experience at AUC since the beginning of classes
70.5%
4.8%
24.0%
0.7%
I was able to achieve a social life and academic balance.
72.2%
4.4%
22.6%
0.7%
I was able to develop my time management skill.
48.0%
13.7%
37.6%
0.7%
I was able to register for the courses I wanted.
49.8%
20.8%
24.9%
4.5%
Faculty members were available during the office hours.
70.7%
3.7%
18.5%
7.0%
Faculty members were available for consultation outside of class.
60.2%
5.6%
26.8%
7.4%
Classroom facilities were adequate for the needs of my courses.
80.7%
2.2%
16.4%
0.7%
Library facilities were adequate for my needs.
87.1%
0.7%
10.7%
1.5%

Analysis for the "Neutral" item in question #3 and compare it with the Neutral percentage during Fall 2012:

Table 1:1 shows the items where students reported a high neutral percentage. The survey questions related to students' activities, time management, services and questions related to faculty members.
Here we site literature regarding survey neutral items that suggest students may be evasive or indifferent when they report neutral (1).

Table 1:1

Mid Semester Survey Questions	Neutral Percentage	
	Spring 2013	Fall 2012
The mid semester FYE 4th day is helpful	33.2%	35.2%*
The workshop conducted by the Registrar is useful.	38.2%*	38%*
The workshop conducted by the Freshmen Advisers is helpful.	26.5%	31.7%*
The workshop conducted by the Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS) is helpful.	33.8%	37.7%*
Transition from school to the university went smoothly.	29.2%*	25.20%
I have a positive experience at AUC since the beginning of classes	24.0%	29.1%*
I was able to achieve a social life and good academic standard.	22.6%	25.2%*
I was able to develop my time management skill.	37.6%*	37.2%*
I was able to register for the courses I wanted.	24.9%	26.5%*
Faculty members were available during the office hours.	18.5%	22.7%*
Faculty members were available for consultation outside of class.	26.8%	32.6%*
Classroom facilities were adequate for the needs of my courses.	16.4%	23.9%*

(1) Note: **"Baumgartner and Steenkamp (2001) proposed respondents might choose a middle category such as neutral "due to evasiveness . . . indecision . . . or indifference" (p. 145). None of these reasons would indicate a truly middle position and might be more equivalent to unsure".**

References: Baumgartner, H., & Steenkamp, JB.
E. M. (2001). Response styles in marketing research: A cross national investigation. *Journal of Marketing Research, 38*, 143156.

***Percentage increased in the Spring 2013 comparing with the Fall 2012**

Section IV

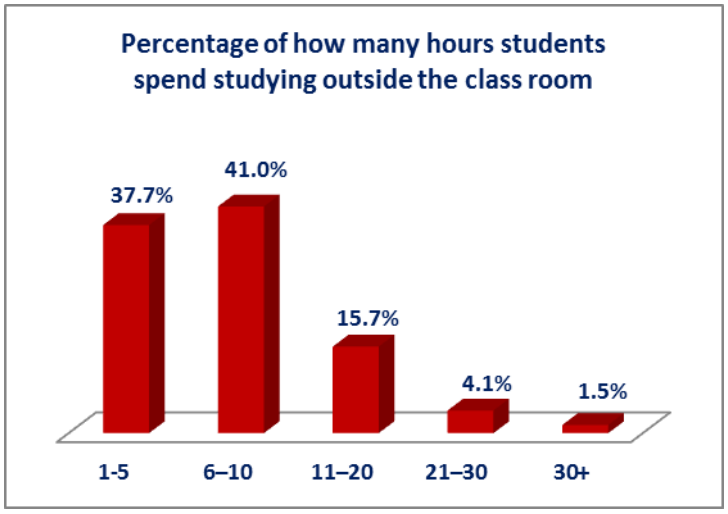
In a typical week, how many hours do you spend studying outside the classroom?

Table 6

In a typical week, how many hours do you spend studying outside the classroom?	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	101	37.7%
6–10	110	41.0%
11–20	42	15.7%
21–30	11	4.1%
30+	4	1.5%
Total	268	100.0%

Missing (n=7)

Figure 6



Section V

How do you describe your experience at AUC?
[Please indicate if you had a positive experience or if you faced any problem(s)]?

Methodology: The open ended question was categorized into four categories: Positive comments, Negative comments, General comments and Suggestions. The Positive comments were assessed using the count frequency in MS Word. The words that appeared most frequently were aggregated and then enumerated as dominant themes.

I: Positive comments:

♠ **Dominant theme: Beneficial, Wonderful, Interesting, Useful, Overwhelming, Great and positive experience:**

- It's great so far; I socialized and had great time.
- A really nice experience exceeding all my expectations (4)*.
- A unique experience in both academic and social life (6).
- Very interesting (4).
- Interesting (6)
- Very welcoming (3).
- Good (22).
- Helpful.
- Fantastic/awesome (13).
- Enjoyable/fun (13).
- I find it kind of exciting and way easier than I thought.
- It's very effective; I am enjoying AUC and my new life.
- Successful (3)
- It's pretty nice (2)
- Great so far…
- My experience has been good so far (5).
- Challenging in a way that it's getting out the best in me.
- Useful, funny and helpful (3).
- So far so good (9).
- Optimistic and beneficial.
- Better than I expected, love it.
- Generally okay (3).
- AUC is a very good university.
- New and exciting (2).
- Entertaining (2).
- It's an interesting experience. It adds new things to my life (3).
- Informative, useful and should continue on the way it is (2).
- It is intellectual and an eye opening experience.
- Full of new discoveries, every day I learn new things about the Egyptian culture because I'm Syrian. I'm so happy to be part of AUC community.
- It's very helpful. I got to know new things I never knew about. The system is very good. I can see that education at AUC is very good, I'm enjoying AUC.
- The FYE was useful and the peer leader was awesome.
- I'd like to specially thank our peer leader Mohamed Sameh for his outstanding efforts to help us by any means possible.

*Number of repeating time

- It's very interesting and I expect more. Thanks to Mohamed Sameh, peer leader, for his great effort and he always meet me on campus to check if anything going wrong with me.
- A lot different than what I expected, but overall it is a good experience.
- Actually, it is a good experience and explores the university facilities in a short time on the other hand, there might have been some difficulties at the beginning but that passed.
- I'm still glad I've chosen AUC as my college as it gave the opportunity to study all the things I wanted outside of my career through its core curriculum program.

♠ **Dominant theme: Learning new skills & time management:**

- My experience at AUC is nice and the most important thing is that it taught me how to think, question everything and be creative.
- Very helpful experience learned a lot.
- A very good experience, new and nice, full of discoveries.
- Different from my expectations, I'm learning a lot from different professors, who are very helpful. The variety of cubs is also great.
- I learned a lot since I came here.

♠ **Dominant theme: Making New Friends and participate in activities:**

- It was fun, AUC became my first home, there is no one at home waiting for me, hence I spend most of the time at the uni. I hope I enjoy my time here.
- The social life is very nice.
- It was actually fun and I got to know a few people.
- Made a lot of friends
- Joined a lot of activities

♠ **Dominant theme: Smooth transition and adaptation:**

- It was easy, nice and sociable.
- I was able to be/learn to be independent (4).
- Everything is going smoothly until now.
- A continuation of high school.
- The transition went fairly smoothly and I had some time management issues at first, but I'm adjusting now.
- It was a smooth nice transition from high school to university.
- My experience at AUC has been great. The transition from school to university went very smoothly.

♠ **Dominant theme: Different from school**

- It's very challenging (4).
- Different (2).
- Harder than I expected but very useful.
- Still getting used to it.
- It was a good experience, but transition between school and university wasn't easy. It took me some time to get used to the university life and manage my time well (2).
- My experience with AUC is completely different than what I have been used to in school. The liberal arts is a program that I have not been previously introduced to. Therefore it was a completely new experience.
- Very tough at the beginning and hard to get accustomed to.

II: Negative comments:

- Hard.
- Shocking and exhausting, rewarding.
- FYE is a waste of time and effort. A totally boring misuse of resources.
- It was pointless, time wasting and has infringed upon me to do it even though it's my second semester at AUC. I have midterms, conferences and other commitments to worry about, yet I still have to be just for the sake of just being present which is ridiculous.
- It was a better outlook for AUC, but I feel bad about my courses.
- A little bit confusing, but it's ok.
- A bit difficult, but useful.
- It's useful, but the FYE should be readapted to suit the idea of putting people in new places and new people.
- The academic life needs effort.
- I don't really know what's the benefit of attending FYE if it's my second semester here at AUC & I already know almost everything; it's just a waste of time.
- It's ok, but maybe a bit long.
- It was good, but a bit boring especially during the interactive sessions.
- Pleasant yet time consuming and exhausting. Registration isn't good and not fair.
- Facilities are perfect especially the library.
- It was good without considering the registration period because I can't register for the courses I want it and the banner was not open until 1:15am.
- By far enjoyable although the work is demanding.
- Registration is unfair.

III: General:

- I wish I could involve myself more in many other extracurricular activities, as there are many activities that are available here but I didn't have idea about.
- No comment.
- It's good up till now, but I think it's not the right time to judge.
- Not bad.
- So far good in terms or academics and social sciences.
- I like my classes so far.
- It was a nice experience, but I faced at the beginning some problems because of the social life, but now I get used to the situation.
- It's a magical experience, but I am still aiming for more.
- Blackboard is accessible through computers and laptops, yet it takes a lot of time to work on tablets.
- The social aspects of this university are great and the classrooms, facilities etc. are also great, but sometimes the advisors fail to provide sufficient information.
- Mostly it's great fun unless you drive by car. Somebody should address the traffic control issue in front of the AUC. It's crazy how some students drive so don't encourage to crash.
- It was very good. I faced some difficulties though. I expected to learn more from FYE. A question I really want to find an answer of why do we have to come today while we have midterms?
- I wish more there were buses leaving before 1:15pm.
- What I didn't like was that I wasn't able to manage my time between social life and my studies.
- Faculty are superb except for a few people.

IV: Suggestions:

- I think the academic rules and regulations should have been presented in any of the days at the beginning.