NOVA Feeder High Schools
Guidance Counselor & Career Specialist
Survey

Research Report No. 21-06

Document Prepared by
Kukovich & Associates
Public Relations and Marketing Communications

Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment
Northern Virginia Community College

March 2006
NOVA Feeder High School Guidance Counselor & Career Specialist Survey

Table of Contents

Executive Summary ........................................................................................................................................ 1
Section I: Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 2
Section II: Summary of Survey Responses ................................................................................................. 3
Section III: Actual Survey Responses ......................................................................................................... 9
  A. List of Participating Schools .................................................................................................................. 9
  B. Survey Instrument and Results ............................................................................................................. 11
Appendix A: Nova Feeder High School Counselor Questionnaire .............................................................. 30

Kukovich & Associates
Public Relations and Marketing Communications

March 2006
NOVA Feeder H.S. Guidance & Career Counselor Survey

Executive Summary

Kukovich & Associates (K&A) designed an in-depth questionnaire to be used in telephone interviews with guidance counselors and career specialists at high schools that provide large numbers of NOVA students. It was designed to gather data from those who often play a very important role in a high school student’s decision regarding higher education.

In advance of the call from K&A, the Dean of Students at each of NOVA’s six campuses sent a letter to individuals who would be asked to participate. The prospective participants were informed of the study and were advised that they would receive a call within a week or so. Interviews began on Friday, February 10, 2006. By March 3, 2006, 59 telephone interviews had been completed at 50 northern Virginia high schools. An impressive 75% of those schools asked to participate did so. Most interviews lasted at least 30 minutes, and many were 40 to 60 minutes in length. Many of the guidance counselors and career specialists interviewed indicated that they were pleased that NOVA was conducting such a study.

A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

NOTE: It should be pointed out that our interviews included 14 directors of guidance and 17 guidance counselors, who work with students throughout their entire high school experience. In addition, interviews included 23 career specialists, who work with students only during their college/career exploration process in the junior and senior year, maintain the college/career resource materials and schedule visits by colleges and universities. (The schools control this point of contact.)

We also interviewed three (3) Directors of Student Services and two (2) “other” educational professionals.

It was clear in this research project that NOVA’s strongest contacts are with the career specialists, who were far more informed and positive about NOVA. There is a definite need to develop a way to communicate better with guidance counselors and to keep them updated on NOVA’s programs and directions. This will be important because these professionals are a vital source of influence early in the high school process. By knowing NOVA more fully, these professionals may be inclined to consider NOVA as a more viable head start opportunity for their prospective college students.
SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

In late December of 2005, Kukovich & Associates (K&A), a Pittsburgh-based educational marketing and communications firm, was retained by Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) to develop and implement a college-wide marketing and communications plan designed to increase public awareness of NOVA and to attract more students to its six campuses, two centers, and extended learning program. While the overall plan was to be completed within a six-month period, the College also desired that K&A determine whether it could uncover any short-term strategies to attract more high school graduates to the incoming Fall 2006 class and perhaps impact the size of the Summer 2006 class.

Senior members of the K&A staff spent substantial time during the months of January and February 2006 at NOVA, talking with a broad range of staff and administrators. Efforts focused on first meeting with senior administrators; following those meetings, K&A visited each campus and had a series of intensive meetings with individuals from NOVA. Members of the firm met with those responsible for working with high school students and counselors, with other prospective students, and with financial aid applicants. Additionally, K&A met with the public relations and publications staff responsible for producing NOVA's recruiting and information materials, such as the Catalog, the course schedule and various brochures. The purpose of these meetings was to provide K&A with knowledge of what was currently being done at the College.

K&A also reviewed the College’s strategic vision, “Gateway to the American Dream,” as well as approximately five years of data compiled by NOVA’s Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment.

The next phase in our efforts was to undertake some research to explore how NOVA is perceived among its key constituencies. At the forefront of that group are the College’s contacts at its feeder high schools.
SECTION II: SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

1. In an effort to understand which acronym (NOVA or NVCC) the counselors and their students used when referring to Northern Virginia Community College, they were asked to share their opinions on which version they preferred. Of the 50 participants who responded, 80% said NOVA, 16% said both NOVA and NVCC, and 4% said NVCC. Since NOVA was the overwhelming choice of this group, it would seem wise for the College to establish a policy mandating the consistent use of NOVA in all of its materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOVA</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVCC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. When asked to rate their own understanding of NOVA on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being outstanding), about 79% rated their understanding an eight or higher. Specifically, 44 of the 56 respondents rated their understanding of NOVA an eight or higher. Only five respondents rated their understanding of NOVA at five or below. While the results indicate a solid understanding of NOVA by a majority of counselors, it should be remembered that the rating is self-reported. (NOTE: Some of those interviewed chose half-point scores, such as 8.5, as noted below.)

The top four answers were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratings</th>
<th>Number of Counselors</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Participants were asked to identify which NOVA campus they knew best, the campuses they knew something about and those they knew nothing about. Some identified more than one campus in the various categories. Not surprisingly, slightly over 35% named the Annandale Campus as the one they knew best. The next highest was Alexandria, with just over 20%.

The new Medical Education Campus (MEC) was the least known campus. While we are aware that MEC is a newcomer to the NOVA family, it will be important to help build awareness since the healthcare explosion could be a major driver of NOVA’s enrollment in the future. Not a single participant felt they knew MEC extremely well. Seventeen respondents said they knew
something about it, and 29 said they knew nothing about it. Of the 17 respondents who were familiar with the campus, responses were generally high praise for the beautiful facility and range of programs offered. Their source of information was usually based on an on-site visit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Known</th>
<th>Least Known</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annandale</td>
<td>Medical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>Loudoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manassas</td>
<td>Woodbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodbridge</td>
<td>Manassas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loudoun</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Education</td>
<td>Annandale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. When asked if they considered NOVA a good educational choice for a substantial number of their students, the responding participants overwhelmingly said “yes” and were generous in their praise of NOVA’s educational programs. Of the 59 participants who answered the question, 54 (92%) said yes; they considered NOVA a good educational choice for a substantial number of their students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Yes, with Qualifications</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Guidance counselors and career specialists were then asked how good of a job they thought NOVA did in communicating educational opportunities to students at their schools. They were asked to select a number from 1 to 10 (with 10 being outstanding and 1 being very poor). The overall average score of the respondents was 6.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Number of Counselors</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. To measure whether or not the “word is out” effectively on NOVA’s affordability, the participants were asked whether they believed the parents and students were aware of how affordable NOVA was relative to other educational options. Seventy-nine percent of respondents thought the parents and students were aware.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aware</th>
<th>Somewhat Aware</th>
<th>Not Aware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6b. Since only about 13% of NOVA’s students receive financial aid, guidance counselors and career specialists were asked if they could comment on any barriers to students applying for financial aid. Among the most frequently given answers were:

- No financial need on the part of their students relative to NOVA’s costs.
- The presence of large Asian, Hispanic and other immigrant populations that do not qualify for financial aid.
- The lack of knowledge that financial aid even exists at NOVA.
- The difficulties encountered by students in completing the FASFA.

7. When asked to comment on NOVA’s greatest strengths, most participants responded:

- Range and diversity of programs
- Affordability
- Accessibility
- Quality programs
- Transfer options
- Career path preparation

8. Participants were asked to name NOVA’s greatest weaknesses. The most frequent responses given were:

- Public perception of NOVA as a weak institution
- Lack of strong NOVA public presence
- Lack of assertiveness
- Lack of information to students
- Limited/inconsistent communication with counselors
- Application/placement tests

It is interesting to note that no one discussed quality of programs as a weakness. In fact, often the participants indicated that one of NOVA’s weaknesses was that it was not getting the word out about the quality of its programs.

9. To get some sense of what the guidance counselors knew or thought they knew about NOVA’s academic programs, they were asked to identify five programs that came to their mind when they thought of NOVA. Many programs were randomly cited, but those named most often were:

- Medical Education/Healthcare Programs
- Automotive Technology
- Associate Degree Programs
- Business & Accounting
- Certificate Programs
10. All survey participants were again asked whether or not they could recommend NOVA as a solid educational choice for a large number of their students. (This question is similar to Question #4). Response dropped slightly from 91% to 86% (49 of 57 respondents). Some did raise the public perception issue, but said the perception wasn’t accurate.

Four respondents who said “no” reported that they were in schools where the vast majority of students went to four-year colleges. The other four said they weren’t sure. It is clear that NOVA has a very strong positive image with the counselors in these schools.

11. A list of six NOVA programs was read to the counselors and they were asked in which of them they encouraged their students to participate. Some participants felt unqualified to respond. The results are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer Classes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree/Pathways</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate Programs</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Enrollment</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Learning Studies</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors Program</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of summer classes, most guidance counselors and career specialists indicated that they recommended summer programs on a “case-by-case” basis. Typically, they would suggest a summer class at NOVA to either an advanced student seeking a challenge or to a student who needed to make up a course in order to graduate.

Since the first summer session starts before the high school year ends, a number of those interviewed commented on how difficult it was for their students to attend summer classes due to NOVA’s summer schedule. During the regular school year, a student might be granted “time off” to attend NOVA, but that is difficult to do the last few weeks of the regular school term.

Only seven participants interviewed were aware of NOVA’s campus honors programs and only a few knew much about the honors programs. If NOVA seriously wants to begin to deal aggressively with the perceptions, such as “13th grade” and “easy”, it must promote the quality of its programs to parents and prospective students to a much greater degree in its materials and core messages. The guidance counselors and career specialists are much more aware of the quality programs that exist at NOVA than are the prospective students and their parents.

12. Counselors and specialists were asked whether NOVA kept them up-to-date on its programs and services. There were two parts to this question. Part A asked if a NOVA counselor contacted them. Of those participants responding, 63% said yes and 37% said no.

Part B asked guidance counselors and career specialists if the frequency of the contact was just right, too often, or too little. The guidance counselors and career specialists were split 50-50
between “just enough” and “should contact more.” Most of that group blamed themselves for not encouraging more contact. In addition, some counselors commented on their belief that NOVA should be talking more directly to the students at the schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Does a NOVA Counselor contact you?</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. If, yes how would you describe the frequency?

i. Too often 0
ii. Just enough 20
iii. Should contact more 20

13. Participants were asked to describe how their students view NOVA. For the most part, the perceptions of NOVA varied according to each school’s perception of the college. In high schools where attendance at four-year colleges was seen as the norm, NOVA was generally not seen as a choice, and comments were more negative (i.e., 13th grade; the place for losers). But NOVA was often perceived as a first-choice for college students with limited financial means (especially if they intended to transfer, were career oriented, or wanted to strengthen their academic record before moving on to a four-year college).

14. Guidance counselors and career specialists were asked to estimate the number of their students who go on to NOVA following graduation. Only about half of respondents knew “off the top of their heads” how many attended, while others had to look it up to be sure. A handful of counselors and specialist who looked up the number of graduates attending NOVA expressed surprise at how many of their students went to NOVA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th># of High Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While many of these numbers are self-reported, it is evident that a very large percentage of students who choose community college choose NOVA. In fact, this information raises some questions that should be looked at in more detail concerning how much larger this market will grow.
15. In an attempt to ascertain perceptions about NOVA’s promotional and informational material, guidance counselors and career specialists were asked to describe their feelings about these materials by answering several questions. Interestingly, while “catalogs” were not among the choices listed in the survey instrument, enough counselors and specialists raised it on their own to make it the second highest publication selected by the respondents. A fair number also expressed great frustration with their difficulty in obtaining NOVA’s course catalogs. The majority of respondents said it was their most useful tool. In general, publications were described as “adequate” but not memorable. Several respondents indicated that the number of “small” pieces was irritating and difficult to deal with.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Do the materials provide sufficient information?</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Is the information understandable?</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Are the pieces appealing to students?</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. What materials would you like more of?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Posters [image, not informational]</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Catalogs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(item raised by counselors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Major Specific Program Brochures</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Financial Aid Information</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Parents Brochure</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. Honors Brochure</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION III: ACTUAL SURVEY RESPONSES

The following are more detailed responses received from the high school guidance counselors and career specialists who participated in the telephone survey facilitated by Kukovich & Associates (K&A) as part of NOVA’s market research project. The schools and counseling staff contacted were provided by the student development team members from NOVA’s six campuses.

A. List of Participating Schools

1. Annandale High School
2. Arlington Career Center
3. Arlington High School
4. Battlefield High School
5. Brentsville District High School
6. Broad Run High School (Loudoun)
7. Broad Run High School (Woodbridge) (2 interviewees)
8. Centreville High School
9. Chantilly High School
10. Dominion High School
11. Fairfax High School
12. Fairfax County Public
13. Falls Church High School
14. Fauquier High School (2 interviewees)
15. Forest Park High School (2 interviewees)
16. Freedom High School
17. Gar-Field High School
18. George Mason Jr./Sr. High School
19. Hayfield High School
20. Heritage High School
21. Herndon High School (2 interviewees)
22. Hylton High School
23. J.E.B. Stuart High School
24. Lake Braddock High School
25. Langston High School
26. Liberty High School (2 interviewees)
27. Loudoun County High School
28. Loudoun Valley High School
29. Madison High School
30. Manassas Park High School
31. Marshall High School
32. McLean High School
33. Mount Vernon High School
34. Mountain View School (2 interviewees)
35. New Directions Alternative High School
36. Oakton High School
37. Osbourne Park High School (3 interviewees)
38. Osbourne East
Over the course of three weeks from mid-February until early March 2006, Kukovich & Associates conducted 59 telephone interviews in 50 high schools in northern Virginia. Most were major feeder schools to NOVA.

Those interviewed included:

- 23 Career Counselors
- 17 Guidance Counselors
- 14 Directors of Guidance
- 3 Directors of Student Services
- 2 Others
B. Survey Instrument and Results

**NOTE:** Not all participants answered all questions so that the totals for each question may or may not equal 59. *In addition, the comments presented in this report were recorded by the Kukovich & Associates survey facilitator and editing was kept to a minimum.*

Prior to the start of the actual questionnaire, Kukovich & Associates asked the counselors how they thought of and referred to Northern Virginia Community College.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NOVA</th>
<th>NVCC</th>
<th>BOTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1. How would you rate your own understanding of “NOVA”?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“1”= Not Very Good</th>
<th>10 = Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.5, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.5, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10, 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2. What campus do you feel you know best?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annandale</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loudoun</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manassas</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Ed.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodbridge</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Some participants named more than one campus

**3. How well do you know the other campuses?**

*Rate as Know it Well – Know – Don’t Know*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Know It Well</th>
<th>Know</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annandale</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loudoun</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manassas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Ed.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodbridge</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Do you consider NOVA to be a good educational choice for a substantial number of your students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Yes, with Qualifications</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Yes. My job isn’t to get every student into an Ivy League school. My job is to get to know the students and help them find the right career options. For many, NOVA is a great college option. But for whatever reason, the reputation is it’s ‘Just NOVA. It’s really not college, it’s just 13th grade.’”

“Yes and no! NOVA is a great option for students who need nurturing for a 4-year school or who want a career.”

“We know it is a quality place with quality programs, but people don’t see it that way. Parents don’t hold their head high and say, “My child is going to NOVA.”

“Oh yes! Most of the students I work with have disabilities. If they aren’t sure of what they want or are unprepared, they do well at NOVA. The transfer of credit to Virginia schools is a great option. Not specific tracks, but a great outreach to college.”

“Definitely I do! NOVA is a great transitional place: small classes, more personal touch. I often use myself as an example. If I could have received a 4-year degree, I never would have left NOVA.”

“Without a doubt.”

“Very – even for students looking to pursue a B.A., especially if they have money issues. NOVA is an excellent choice for them.”

“Yes. I’ve been to several meetings there, including a dinner with the administration.”

“I’m always recommending NOVA to our students. It has a good reputation in some ways. Some kids think it’s for losers though.”

“NOVA is an excellent alternative for late bloomers, an excellent chance for students to do better — a good second chance for those who have messed up. Also, it is a good opportunity for special needs students and ESL students.”

“The emphasis is on teaching. The professors are often on the faculty of other colleges. Also programs tend to lean toward jobs available in the area.”

“Yes, it’s growing. Parents are finding it financially viable for their children to go to NOVA for two years and then transfer to a four-year college. Plus NOVA is becoming stronger academically.”

“Yes, it’s fantastic. It offers all students an opportunity for college. It offers all students an opportunity to get an education. It has small classes, outgoing instructors. And it is sensitive to students’ needs.”

“Absolutely. It’s the number one option for students from our school.”
“Yes. We have a very diverse population. Many of our students are first generation Americans or the first in their families to go to college. NOVA is a great economic alternative for these students.”

“I do, but with some caveats. Students often go to NOVA because they can’t get into a four-year school straight out of high school. The problem is they tend not to work hard in high school and think that NOVA is the easy road to transferring to a four-year college. Many students just aren’t prepared. I saw a statistic recently that the average student takes 3.7 years to complete a two-year program because they have to take high school courses to make up for the lack of preparation.”

“Yes. We hear nothing but great reports about the quality of courses. We have a great success rate among students who go there — whether it’s for two years or to transfer to a four-year school. Also, there is a good success rate in the certificate programs.”

“It’s a good step to build a student’s confidence. It does more than provide a college experience. It provides an opportunity for students to further their education, build self-esteem and save money, while taking classes that can transfer to a four-year school.”

“The majority of our kids go to Lord Fairfax, which does a great job of promoting its programs. NOVA is not well known here. They should consider scholarships — Lord Fairfax is very generous with scholarships.”

“Most of our kids go to Lord Fairfax. They visit us many times during the year and we have an articulation agreement with them.”

5. Based on your personal experiences, how good of a job does the College do in communicating its educational opportunities to students at your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“NAME came to talk with me about programs at Alexandria. He met with eight or nine kids and explained the programs very clearly and made NOVA sound like a very open place. Seven of those kids have registered!”

“They do an excellent job telling us what they have. I am very impressed by them.”

“It’s gone from a one to a four or five in the past three years.”

“They do a great job.”

“They’re very good at notifying me about Open Houses, programs, etc.”
“NAME still comes to Fairfax even though it’s no longer his responsibility. He knows the school very well and does a fantastic job. Each year 80 to 100 kids come to listen to him.”

“Ours are special needs students. We could really use specific information about what NOVA has available for them. It would really be great if someone could come here and talk.”

“To tell you the truth, we don’t have a lot of interaction with the counselors. We have contact with a few at Annandale.”

“NAME is very good. He plans a campus visit for our students each year and he comes to our school. I often refer students to him who I know haven’t sent in requests for transcripts because I might not know what they want to do.”

“They don’t get information out to the general public very well.”

“Whatever we can do to alleviate barriers is helpful.”

“They give excellent workshops at the Alexandria Campus so we (guidance counselors) can help keep our students informed.”

“There’s a lot of room for improvement on both ends (NOVA and our school).”

“No matter how much I beat the NOVA drum, I still hear ‘my parents don’t think it’s a good school.’”

“In terms of having an actual person come and schedule a visit, it doesn’t really happen. I get mailings that I pass on to students. The personal contact simply isn’t there. One of the largest areas of need is financial aid. I’ve been trying to arrange for someone to talk about the process. It’s like pulling teeth to get someone here. So far this year, nothing has happened.”

“I don’t know what more they could do.”

“As far as I know, they come to campus only once a year to answer questions from students who already decided to go there – and that’s at our invitation. They don’t compete. I would love for them to make people/students aware of the good jobs they can get with a NOVA education. It prepares students for real careers. They don’t promote that at all.”

“I don’t think they do enough PR. They need to toot their own horn more, get out into the community, talk about what’s happening there. NOVA has so much for students and adults.”

“They’ll come to college nights, but beyond that I don’t think they market themselves here. Maybe it’s an unspoken agreement with Lord Fairfax so they don’t tread one another’s community college territory.”

“I’d like to work with NOVA to bring someone in monthly to work with kids and educate them about these career and educational opportunities.”

“NOVA needs to be more proactive and persistent to change the mentality of it being a last option. I don’t see them being visible enough in the schools. If they’re going to fulfill their mission, I think they have to do that.”
“Anytime I’ve called and asked for someone to come and talk, they’re here in a flash.”

“In the past, very little interaction. But this year it has changed. We’ve found the new person has truly tried to provide more information. She’s sending brochures, flyers, keeping our office up to date on events and activities and providing whatever is needed for us to give to students.”

“They always have difficulty with financial aid.”

6. Do you think students and parents in the region are aware of how affordable NOVA is relative to other higher educational options?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Parents are very critical. We have many incredibly engaged parents and they feel that Fairfax County will prepare them for ‘name’ schools. There also is a population who isn’t using that model, however – the first generation immigrants.”

“Yes, affordable is understood.”

“I’d guess so, but I’m not sure.”

“Students are; parents don’t all speak English. There is a language barrier.”

“Yes, I believe they are.”

“There is a lack of understanding by families as to the financial aid available out there.”

“We have a financial aid night and talk about it. NOVA is also included as an option at these meetings.”

“Our student body tends to be a little older — some already are on their own. I don’t know how much of a role parents play in their post-secondary options.”

“The students I see here are aware of it, but I don’t really get a lot of feedback about aid. I think many just miss the deadline. You have to be a very needy student to get aid.”

“They understand how affordable it is, but we still have a lot of families who say ‘NOVA – NO WAY.’ There’s a stigma attached, particularly among the Vietnamese and other Asian populations. It may have to do with their perception of the quality of the education.”

“I’m not familiar with the grants and scholarships available at NOVA.”

“They probably opt themselves out without applying because they don’t think they can qualify.”

“I think so. I don’t know if they think of it (the price) as reasonable as much as they are just aware how expensive four-year colleges are.”
6b. We know that only about 13% of NOVA’s students currently receive financial aid. Can you comment on that?

“First of all, parents are intimidated by the financial aid process. Parents referred to NOVA also are frustrated by not having people call them back. It’s a communications issue. It’s a hassle to call and call and not get a call back. That’s what I’ve been hearing from parents and that’s what I experienced.”

“A lot of our students are illegal aliens and can’t apply for aid.”

“NOVA should work with our college and career specialists – appear at our financial aid workshops.”

“80 percent of my kids get free or reduced lunch.”

“Financial aid deadline is too early; it’s such a bargain that students don’t think they need it. We’re trying to correct that by hiring a part-time financial aid counselor.”

“We encourage every student to apply and offer help to parents to learn about aid that is available.”

“We don’t talk about money here in Falls Church. We even have trouble getting kids to apply for the Falls Church Educational Association Scholarship.”

“A big barrier is eligibility. Not all students are US citizens. Those who need financial aid don’t get it due to federal restrictions.”

“Yes, but not good enough for the mentality of the parents. It’s a problem with parents and kids.”

“Our students are Hispanic and Asian and don’t have a clue about financial aid. They never apply.”

“NOVA doesn’t advertise financial aid. The kids find out when they go there and are often surprised that they can apply.”

“I don’t know why they don’t apply for financial aid. We have three parent nights (Hispanic, Korean and general) to discuss financial aid.”

“I don’t think some know that financial aid applies to two-year schools.”

“The barriers here are that students don’t listen. I have student financial aid workshops here.”

“NOVA’s priority deadline is March 1. Our kids don’t come to NOVA until August 15. Lots of kids don’t apply because they just don’t know that you can apply at a two-year school.”

“It’s inexpensive. For $2,000 a year, they can pay it. They don’t apply for that reason.”

“I’ve been to NOVA workshops where they say money is available, but students say they don’t qualify or at least that’s what they’re told by NOVA. I don’t know why that would happen.”
“I think a lot of our kids who apply to NOVA don’t qualify for financial aid. We try to push parents to fill out the FAFSA, but you never know. I think the feeling is, ‘Why bother?’”

“I think they know, but it’s not worth the effort. Also, a lot of our students are undocumented and many others don’t think they can get financial aid at NOVA.”

“I’m surprised at that figure. I’m finding with my students that the perception of financial aid is negative. Somehow it’s viewed as a debt that has to be paid back and that’s bad. I’m trying to educate them.”

“Many think they don’t need it.”

“Kids think that because it’s NOVA, they don’t have to complete the FASFA. It needs to be more clear and promoted with the career specialists.”

7. In general, what do you think are NOVA’s greatest strengths?

- Range and Diversity of Courses 19
- Affordability 12
- Accessibility 12
- Quality Education 10
- Personal Attention 10
- Transfer Program 5

“Accessibility.”

“Affordability.”

“NOVA is extremely affordable and top shelf if you seek one-on-one help. I can’t sing praises enough.”

“Getting out to the schools and talking about their campuses and programs.”

“Accessibility. How can you beat open enrollment?”

“Offers a wide range of programs and is well connected with the state system. It is one the best community college systems I’ve ever seen.”

“From what I hear from students, I would say quality and affordability. They have an excellent faculty.”

“Variety, diversity and the degree programs they offer.”

“Everything they do is positive. They’re phenomenal.”

“Variety and career paths that a student can take.”

“I know it’s a good school, but there still is the view that you’re a two-year school. Some kids say it’s easier, so I’ll go there and then move on.”
“Open admissions policy; range of courses; ease with which students can transfer.”

“Affordability, location and varied programs.”

“They do a really good job of attracting minority students.”

“It offers a quality education at a very affordable price with few barriers to entrance.”

“They provide a great basic education that students need if they’re going to transfer.”

“Small classes, excellent instruction, transfer of courses.”

“It’s just a wonderful, democratic American institution. It accepts everyone as they are and brings them to the level of getting where they want to go.”

“The cost and the wide variety of degree and certificate programs. They also have terrific teachers — people who really want to be teachers.”

“How great it is for students who come out of ESL courses and can go to NOVA. Otherwise, these students would not be able to go to college.”

“NOVA is very welcoming. Their placement testing is excellent. They are helpful to kids transferring to a four-year college. They get the start they need with strong counseling staff and help with transition.”

“Very good at sizing up needs of students new to this country. Very affordable, flexible schedule, wide variety of course offerings, helpful.”

“Its community-based programs. They’re always trying to assess the needs of the community to better serve their population.”

“Personally, I think NOVA and its academic programs are a gold mine in our backyard. I would like to see the college representatives build more of a relationship with us.”

“It allows anyone to pursue a higher education, but at the same time allows students to pursue training for a more fulfilling and satisfying lifestyle.”

“They get a lot more than what they pay for at NOVA.”

8. What are NOVA’s greatest weaknesses?

A large number of those interviewed did not identify any weaknesses at NOVA. By far the two most cited weaknesses were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Perception</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Sufficient Public Information about NOVA</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Its public perception that only losers go to NOVA. Teens are unique creatures. Those who are snotty say ‘Oh, so you’re going to NOVA.’”
“Like all commuter schools, getting students involved in campus activities.”

“There are real problems with the online application. It’s not as clean as it could be. It is difficult to indicate graduation/when you plan to enroll.”

“Increased marketing of individual programs that prepare students for their next step. Need to emphasize the successes.”

“People don’t know enough about the options it provides as an alternative.”

“A few times a year a person could meet with students in an information session and give them an application right there.”

“The perception that NOVA is where you go if you can’t get into a four-year school. The application process usually happens after the student graduates, so there’s no chance of me being involved in the process.”

“The stigma attached to enrolling at NOVA. Kids don’t want to say they’re going to NOVA. They’d rather say that they’re going to George Mason.”

“NOVA is not doing a good job of attracting Caucasian students.”

“One big weakness is the Medical Campus. It is a beautiful facility, but they are doing a mediocre job of promoting it. I’ve never gotten a good response there. I’m reluctant to promote the medical facility.”

“Perception. Unfortunately, at my school there is the perception that if your kids go to NOVA, they couldn’t go anywhere else.”

“One weakness is that they don’t have information for students available at the NOVA campus. It would be helpful if they were more friendly to students who stop by to visit with their parents. Maybe have a checklist for students that encourages them to get information from their high schools.”

“NOVA needs to convey that it has a professional technology program that will lead to jobs and fulfill the employment needs of Fairfax County. People don’t realize that 60 percent of the jobs in Fairfax County won’t require a four-year degree.”

“It seems to me that sometimes students get lost in the shuffle at NOVA. They don’t seem to have sufficient counselors and advisors to guide students in selecting their courses. This group of students needs more hand holding, a more personal touch.”

“I don’t know, but the fact that I don’t know that I’ve been accepted is a barrier. NOVA needs a written piece of some kind that deals with how to:
1. Complete your application,
2. Take the placement test, and
3. Register for classes.”

“Communications is a real issue – a major weakness. I think they’re trying to be everything to everybody and as a result things fall through the crack. It is very difficult to find and sustain a contact person there. Perhaps they’re simply trying to do too much.”
We are receiving conflicting information from our contact at NOVA. The counselor doesn’t seem to be sure of the right answers to our questions and that causes many problems.”

“They don’t do a good job of educating kids about the variety of programs available at NOVA. They are always friendly, but not assertive, not proactive.”

“Lack of contact with the high school by NOVA counselor.”

“Perception, navigability of the admissions application process and lack of helpful information.”

9. What five academic programs come to your mind when you think of NOVA?


Top Five Academic Programs Mentioned
- Medical Education – Good quality – Exploding health care field
- Auto Technology – Career-specific course – grads in demand
- Associate Degree Programs
- English Composition 101 – Comparable to all colleges – rigorous
- Certificate Programs
- Business

Other Frequently Mentioned Programs
- Transferability of Credits
- Dual Enrollment
- Hospitality
- Art Design
- Veterinary Medicine
- ESL Program
- Computer and Technology classes

10. Do you feel that you can recommend NOVA as a solid educational choice for a large number of your students?

Yes  No  Not Sure
49   4        4

“It’s a very good transition for kids who want to stay in the area or ‘test the waters.’”

“Absolutely.”

“I would recommend it to the appropriate students without reservation.”

“Yes, but one mother told me I was incompetent for recommending it. I get negative comments like that.”

“Yes, for 20 percent of our students. About 100 in a class of 500 will consider NOVA. Eighty-six percent of our graduates go on to college.”
“Yes, I think I can for the motivated student. It’s not an easy school. It’s a great starting point –
gives everyone a chance.”

“Can you hear it in my voice? Of course.”

“Yes, I can and do. NOVA is really a good option for my students. At this school, a high
percentage of our kids head to NOVA.”

“I can recommend it for many, but not for a large majority.”

“Without the ‘large number’ qualifier in the question, I would say yes, definitely. I don’t
recommend NOVA over a four-year school, but I recommend it all the time as a solid
alternative.”

“The other colleges see NOVA as more of a transition program. NOVA has to find ways to
communicate that feature NOVA positively to the students to dispel the current image.”

“Class sizes are smaller and the quality of education is just as good as a traditional four-year
school.”

11. Do you encourage your students to participate in any of the following NOVA
programs? If yes, why? If no, why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Summer Classes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Dual Enrollment</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Associate Degree/Pathways</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Certificate Program</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Distance Learning Studies</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Honors</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I wasn’t aware they had honors programs.”

“Parents need to know more about the summer programs.”

“I think NOVA should promote summer classes directly to students through high school, college
and career centers.”

“I do encourage students to participate in NOVA programs.”

“I didn’t know about distance learning studies or about NOVA’s honors program.”

“The schedule is an impediment to our students attending summer classes. The problem is
when summer classes start because our school year ends so late.”

“My students aren’t ready for these programs.”

“To promote summer courses, NOVA needs to coordinate its course schedule better with the
schools. We have very different calendars and that impacts summer enrollment.”
“We’re registering students for next year now – February and March. NOVA should try to reach these students immediately after registration. It might be a good time for a representative to come and talk with students about what’s available or explore in-depth the students’ interests.”

“They can only attend the second summer session. The first session is during AP testing and final exams and we don’t recommend that students attend.”

“The honors programs could be promoted more.”

“To promote summer school, you might want to conduct a brief survey to see what courses students are interested in.”

“Summer? Good luck. First, give them a reason for it. These kids are looking desperately for a few weeks off. It’s difficult to get them to go to a course lasting a few weeks. Selling summer – that’s a hard one.”

“Summer? The problem with summer classes is that to get high school credit, they need two semesters, unless they take it for college. If you want to promote summer classes, you need to explain the program.”

“That’s a problem because NOVA starts so early. Kids are still going to high school.”

“Yes to most, no to distance learning and honors. Our parents do not want their children going there for honors classes. Dual Enrollment is awesome. My own daughter did it and she walked into college as a sophomore.”

“Dual enrollment, not much. Advanced Placement at our school is free. Fewer and fewer kids are doing this.”

“Come and talk about financial aid. My students need more information about it.”

12. I’d like you to think about NOVA’s efforts to keep you up-to-date on its programs and services.

   a. Does a NOVA Counselor contact you? Yes 31 No 18
   b. If yes, how would you describe the frequency of the contacts?
      i. Too often 0
      ii. Just enough to do the job well 20
      iii. Should contact more frequently 20

   “It’s my fault [that NOVA isn’t here more often]. We should invite him over more.”

   “Current counselor is great. He does onsite workshops and makes them accessible to counselors.”

   “In terms of students, NOVA visits two times a year. I’d like to see them try more – maybe four times each year.”

   “I think counselors should come a bit more since NOVA has to work hard to reach students. Counselors come maybe once a year.”
“It’s more likely that we contact them. Last year we contacted them to have seniors tested at the high school for placement. I would like to see NOVA take more initiative — get into the high schools and meet with students one on one. Why not register students here at the high school? I would also like to see more information given to students about placement testing.”

“Counselor relationship is fine, but how often do they see students?”

“Yes, they see students about three times a year at planned, advertised events.”

“I would like to see more contact. We use to have a great counselor, but she passed away and there hasn’t been any contact recently.”

“They need to send a representative here just like all the colleges do. They need to fill in the gaps. We take advantage of the NOVA has to offer. We need to see faces from NOVA.”

“Directly? No. It filters down via e-mail and flyers.”

“We do not see the counselor on our campus. Someone from NOVA needs to be here to touch base and be in touch. Talk with students on available summer classes and financial aid information. There is little or no contact with students.”

“In the past, it was perfect. The counselor would check in monthly by calling or dropping in. Now it’s rare. Maybe once a school year.”

“We do participate in ‘NOVA day,’ but I think it should be held earlier in the year. By April, most kids have already decided what they’re going to do.”

“We do have a great relationship with Financial Aid. They come to campus to do workshops. When we had students visit and meet with student services people at NOVA, they’ve been great with counseling and helping with schedules.”

“I don’t know that the counselors actually come here to see students.”

“This is the time we could use NOVA counselors in the building. A lot of kids going to community college could use someone from there to come and talk to them RIGHT NOW [February-March]. This is a critical time to reach out to them.”

“They probably come more than any other college representative.”

“I think we’ve contacted them more than they’ve contacted us. We need more contact with them. We get a lot of information in the mail and that’s OK as far as it goes. At our invitation, a student service person came last year to talk about dual enrollment. They need to see students more.”

“I’m taking a bus load of kids to NOVA (Woodbridge) on March 17.”

“I don’t know whether NOVA counselors see students here or not.”
“They need to see kids more. My population probably has never thought about college until they get here. We tell them NOVA is the next step. NOVA needs to come and bridge that gap and make them feel welcome.”

“The biggest obstacle is the application and the testing. If they did that at our high school that would be good.”

“We are fortunate to have a liaison with the counselor from the Manassas Campus. He’s highly regarded. Relatively speaking, we see him a lot. He comes to our school when we arrange for him to come — at our invitation five or six times a year. He sees students two or three times a year.”

“No one comes from NOVA. They should meet with me or our community college person. Also as far as I know, no NOVA representative sees students here.”

“She does a good job. There isn’t enough contact, though. That’s one of the things NOVA does that is archaic. One or two times a year doesn’t cut it. I would do more. This is your recruiting area!”

“They don’t contact us at all.”

“I call them and ask for information and am told I can get it online. I don’t have a course list at all. NOVA has lots to offer, but I can’t sit at my computer all day trying to find it.”

“They send me loads of print materials, mail and e-mails. That’s how we communicate and it works fine. They come in person one time a semester.”

13. How do your students view NOVA?

“Fall back, 13th grade, not even a safety school.”

“I got my start, cut my teeth, proved myself at NOVA.”

“Fuzzy.”

“I haven’t heard of any negative issues with NOVA. This is a tough audience. Many are Harvard, Ivy League educated.”

“Depends — some say it’s great; some say it’s for losers; depends on family expectations and peers.”

“Our students respect NOVA.”

“Oh, it’s NOVA. My students understand the financial benefits, though. A friend of mine told me he went to NOVA and then to Georgetown.”

“In general, most students don’t see it as college until you talk with them about it. You need to educate them about NOVA.”
“Depends. Some students think they’re above NOVA and they probably are. Others need it and view it very positively. Most of our students would view it as a step down, but that’s not NOVA’s fault.”

“My son attended NOVA. His description is that ‘NOVA caught me when I fell and put me back on the road to successful graduation.’ When he talks about his college experience, he says that NOVA saved him. He is the only one of his high school friends who got a college degree.”

“I just spoke to 700 high school juniors. I said to them: ‘Don’t comment or laugh about those who choose NOVA. It’s affordable, it’s a smart choice, it’s one of the top community colleges in the country.’”

“The stigma attached is more so with the parents than with the students. It has changed over the years. It is getting better.”

“My students’ choices are very limited. They view NOVA as the top and only choice for them.”

“I feel I’m seeing a trend toward less snickering and more acceptance.”

“I think that at our school, we have a pretty high regard for NOVA.”

“NOVA’s reputation has gotten a lot better. It’s viewed as a place to go for higher education. However, for different cultures, it has different stigmas. Some cultures (Asian and Indian) won’t consider NOVA as an option.”

“Many of our kids view it as a good first step.”

“The overwhelming majority of our students go on to a four-year college. They think of NOVA as the place you go if you could not get into a four-year college. It’s not a place you go by choice. We also have a large population of ESL students. The group sees NOVA as another opportunity – a necessary stepping stone without which they would be lost.”

14. What would you estimate is the percentage of students from your high school who attend NOVA after graduation?

“Seventy percent of our students go to NOVA.”

“Fifty-seven percent in a recent survey said they plan to continue on to community college after graduation. The majority would certainly attend NVCC.”

“Of my students, about 50 percent are NOVA-bound.”

“About 40 percent say they are going – probably more like 20 to 25 percent do go.”

“Forty-three percent go to a two-year school. I don’t know how many go specifically to NOVA.”

“We’re running around 37 percent.”

“Thirty-five percent from the class of 2005.”
“Two years ago, 161 of our graduates went to NOVA – 25 percent of the class.”

“Around 30 to 35 percent each year. It’s been very consistent.”

“Thirty percent say they’re going to NOVA.”

“About 10 percent go to NOVA.”

“Last year, 27 percent went to a two-year school, including NOVA.”

“I’d guess-timate that about 20 percent go to NOVA.”

“About 14 percent”

“Fourteen percent attend two-year schools. The majority of those go to NOVA.”

“Seven or eight percent.”

“Five to seven percent.”

“Eighty percent go to a four-year college. About 10 percent go to NOVA.”

“Our first graduating class is this June. My best guess-timate is that 50 or 60 of our 140 graduating seniors will go to NOVA.

15. How would you describe the materials NOVA provides to your students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Do the materials provide sufficient information?</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Is the information understandable?</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Are the pieces appealing to students?</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. What materials would you like more of?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Posters (image, not informational)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Catalogs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Major-specific brochures</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Financial aid materials</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Parents brochure</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. Honors brochure</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“More honors brochures to emphasize the academic programs.”

“Haven’t seen any materials lately. I’m probably not a good person to ask.”

“I have seen the catalog and it is understandable and has sufficient information.”

“NOVA materials are helpful, but students mostly go to the Web site.”

“Materials are OK. Could really use a nice brochure highlighting academics, financial aid and other strong features.”
“Most of the information comes from us. Students don’t get much from NOVA. The catalog is understandable, straightforward, but not appealing. We show the students how to use it.”

“The materials I have on Loudoun are very informational. I do think that having an honors brochure would be a good idea.”

“I could use more catalogs. I usually ask for a few, but they seem to be hard to get.”

“The catalog is the best piece. It is easy for the student to see what it takes to get into certain programs. The viewbook seems like a waste to me. What’s valuable are handouts — how to apply, where to get started, how to take placement tests, directions to campus.”

“I wouldn’t say the material is appealing, but it is understandable. I’d like more of all. They only send us a bunch of little cards and maybe some catalogs.”

“Our students want paper applications. Right now, NOVA’s applications are tacky.”

“Parents need to be more knowledgeable about what NOVA has to offer. They need to understand that their child is not a failure if he goes to NOVA.”

“They do a fine job. Whenever I call, someone is always able to answer my question immediately. That’s important because I am usually calling with a student standing beside me in need of a quick response.”

“We’re invited to ‘NOVA day,’ but don’t receive any materials.”

“NOVA’s Pathways brochure is ‘just right.’ Not too much information, colorful, attractive, well done. I’ve had no trouble with the materials I have received. I do have a suggestion. NOVA might try to produce colorful brochures focused on how students should go about the application process. So many students seem lost. A lot of our students need handholding. It would be very helpful for our population.”

“NOVA needs to do a better job of promoting itself”

“We don’t have much material to pass on to students – that would be a much more effective way to market NOVA and reach potential clients. The best time to reach our students is in January.”

“I love the course catalog. It’s easy to read and look through. A parent’s brochure would be good. As to other materials, we get pretty inundated with things like book marks.”

“I don’t think they have much of anything. They don’t make it easy.”

“The catalog is hard to get. I had to go there to get one. Right now I have a 2004-05 catalog. I’ve personally gone to (CAMPUS) to get a current one and can’t get it.”

“Materials are getting better. I like some of the material I’ve been seeing. The big problem is the need to get to parents with the message that it’s a great and viable option. Parents don’t want to be at a cocktail party saying my kid goes to NOVA. I do think the perception is changing.”
“I really would like to have more catalogs. I wish they would provide more.”

“Need more posters, brochures, etc., but simplify the material and do a better job of explaining the benefits of going to NOVA.”

“What I see doesn’t provide information on cost and quality of programs.”

“We really need a catalog. I have a small brochure and that’s it.”

“I would like more of everything. Repetition is how they learn. We could use anything and everything NOVA can give us.”

“NOVA could use more financial information and more information on certificate programs.”

16. Any additional comments you’d like to make?

“It would be good to have more information about student activities and student life. Also it’s hard to find the cost per credit hour. I think it should be more prominent, especially since it’s in NOVA’s favor.”

“They need to reach out in friendly, creative ways to provide information on their programs. Talk more about the articulation agreement.”

“The problem is that NOVA is seen as not there relative to four-year colleges.”

“It would be good if someone from NOVA came to our Tuesday staff meetings.”

“NOVA’s community-mindedness is very impressive. The College really makes an effort to be known and to help schools and the community.”

“We’re pretty strong in our relationship with NOVA. We really push.”

“We have an Asian student adopted into a single family home where there are language issues. She needed a science course and did three summer courses at NOVA through her mom’s initiative. The student didn’t want to do it and after the first class, she was overwhelmed. But after the third class, she felt welcomed and liked it.”

“I think NOVA does an excellent job. Their mission is difficult, but they do the job. For a two-year college, you won’t find much better.”

“I would really like them to get more in the schools. Placement testing at school, help kids register at school. I’d also like them to provide a Spring field trip to the Annandale Campus (we did this in the past). As for financial aid, look for new ways to encourage parents to apply for aid.”

“For us, it’s been a great relationship. We’ve been fortunate to establish a relationship with key people at NOVA.”

“More than anything else, NOVA should be addressing the ‘myth’ that it’s not for bright kids.”
“Woodbridge does a great job of letting us know what’s going on. They have a high school day on March 17 and provide an opportunity for seniors who’ve already applied to take placement tests and register for classes. They have a panel of students to talk about their experiences and answer questions. NOVA provides lunch. We’re taking juniors there too so that they can see what’s offered.”

“I have an idea for on-site registration that I spoke to the provost about last week. We discussed setting up a program for students who have not yet been accepted. We would identify them and take them on a field trip to NOVA to discuss their educational plans. The counselors would come to NOVA to do an on-site registration.”

“We’re sold on NOVA. I can’t say enough good things about it.”

“These kids are coming to NOVA because they want something. It should be made easy for them to find it.”

“In the last couple of years, we’ve had a NOVA representative come to talk to kids and to take them on field trips to NOVA campuses. We hope to continue this.”

“I love NOVA. It’s a great resource. Community colleges have a great mission, but they’re not necessarily educating kids about how those career preparation courses provide training for jobs and careers.”

“Recently, I’ve seen more of an effort on their part to establish a working relationship.”

“Someone from NOVA should come to our school in the Spring after college acceptances have gone out. Talk to the kids about NOVA as a choice. Those kids who find out they’re not going to a four-year college immediately as they planned are confused and somewhat lost.”

“I think we’re lucky to have such a strong community college here. I wish NOVA did more to inform parents and students about itself.”

“I have to say, in term of the Woodbridge Campus, their effort and outreach has been outstanding. We look forward to increasing and building that relationship over the years. NOVA counselors are always accessible and they follow-up. I give them an ‘A’ for effort.”

“NOVA could be a good choice for our students. Their facilities and teaching quality are excellent based on my personal experience. We just need the information to share with our students.”

“NOVA has to find a way to kick-up its image. It is a great place.”
APPENDIX A

NOVA FEEDER HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Counselor Name: ____________________________________________
High School : ________________________________________________
Phone: ______________________________________________________

***********

1. Using a scale of 1 to 10, with “1” being not very good and “10” being outstanding, how would you rate your own understanding of Northern Virginia Community College?

___ 1   ___ 2   ___ 3   ___ 4   ___ 5   ___ 6   ___ 7   ___ 8   ___ 9   ___ 10

2. What campus do you feel you know the best? (LET COUNSELOR NAME)
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

3. How well do you know the other campuses? Let me review them with you; then rate each as “Know It Well,” “Know” or “Don’t Know”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Know It Well</th>
<th>Know</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>____________</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annandale</td>
<td>____________</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loudoun</td>
<td>____________</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manassas</td>
<td>____________</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Education</td>
<td>____________</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodbridge</td>
<td>____________</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Do you consider NOVA a good educational option for a substantial number of students from your high school?

If yes, why? _________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

If no, why not? ________________________________________________
5. From your personal experiences, how good of a job does the College do in communicating its educational opportunities with students at your school. Use a scale of 1 to 10, with “1” being not very good and “10” being outstanding.

___ 1   ___ 2   ___ 3   ___ 4   ___ 5   ___ 6   ___ 7   ___ 8   ___ 9   ___ 10

6. Do you think students and parents in the region generally are aware of how affordable NOVA is relative to other higher educational options?

7. In general, what do you think are NOVA’s greatest strengths?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

8. What are its greatest weaknesses?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

9. What five academic programs come to your mind when you think of NOVA?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________
10. Do you feel that you can enthusiastically recommend NOVA as a solid educational choice for a large number of your students?

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

11. Do you encourage your students to participate in any of the following NOVA programs? If yes, why? If no, why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Summer Classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Pre-College Remedial Classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. College-Level Credit While in High School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Associate Degree Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Certificate Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Distance Learning Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

12. I’d like you to think about NOVA efforts to keep you counselor up-to-date on its programs and services.

a. Does an NOVA counselor contact you? ___ Yes ___ No
b. If yes, how would describe the frequency of that contact:
   i. Too often ___
   ii. Just enough to do the job well ___
   iii. No enough; should contact me more often ___

13. How do your students view NOVA? (LEAVE OPEN ENDED)

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

14. What would you estimate is the percentage of students from your high school who attend NOVA after graduation?

________________________________________________________________
15. How would describe the materials NOVA provides to your students?

   a. Do the materials provide sufficient information? ___ Yes ___ No
   b. Is the information understandable? ___ Yes ___ No
   c. Are the pieces appealing to students? ___ Yes ___ No

16. If you could change one thing about how NOVA reaches out to prospective students, what would it be?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________