USM Early Alert System:
A Program for First Year Students

UNIVERSITY of SAINT MARY

Office of Student Success

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Overview

- Purpose
- Identification of At-Risk Students
  - Pre-Enrollment
  - Post Enrollment
- Management – Office of Student Success
- Program Process Flow
- Intervention Resources
- Response Report
- Additional Considerations
- References

Identification of At-Risk Students

- **An at-risk student can be defined as a student who possesses one or more attributes or characteristics associated with higher rates of attrition among college students.**

- **Risk factors which can be identified *pre-enrollment* and believed to be relevant to USM student population:**

  - Low standardized test scores
  - Poor high school/other college record
  - Low socioeconomic status
  - Uncertainty about program of study (undecided)
  - First generation college student
  - Late applicant
  - Non-athlete
  - English as a second language

Student Readiness Inventory

- For first year freshman
- All freshman will be required to take it during registration
  - Assesses academic discipline, academic self-confidence, commitment to college, communication skills, emotional control, general determination, goal striving, social activity, social connection, and study skills
  - SRI produces a Academic Success Index
  - SRI produces a Retention Index

Identification of At-Risk Students

- **Risk factors which can be identified *post-enrollment* and believed to be relevant to USM student population:**

    - Excessive number of absences
    - Low 20th day grades
    - Mid-term grades (D or F)
    - Conditionally admitted
    - Lack of socialization on campus
    - Non-involvement in student activities
    - Self expressed concerns about adjustment, grades, dropping out, and/or personal or family problems (OSS has been notified of)
    - Transcript requests
    - Late enrollment for following semester classes
    - Not declaring a major by the start of their sophomore year
    - More than one expressed behavioral/academic concern by faculty, staff, or CARE Team report.

Management

- The successful implementation of a early alert system is based on not only the quick and accurate identification of attrition prone students, but the ability for an institution to provide immediate attention and assistance to students.

- This response should focus on teaching needed stills or lead to changes in behavior, and it requires a shared effort of instructional and student services staff.

Program Process Flow

Identification reports

- Office of Student Success identifies post-enrollment risk factors via attendance, 20th day grade, and midterm grade reports for both Fall and Spring semester (Data obtained via Registrar, IT, Faculty)

- OSS identifies level of risk by review of pre-enrollment risk factors and additional post-enrollment concerns.

1st level of Intervention

- If the student has missed 3 classes or has a 20th day grade below a C: OSS contacts class instructor and asks them to reach out to student via email or phone call to express concern/offer assistance/make them aware of the resources available to them.
- If the student is an athlete, their coach/athletic director is also notified.
- If the student has been conditionally admitted or is on probation, the ARC is also notified.
- OSS will follow up with instructor/coach/ARC after 48 hours of notification to get response report on each identified student.

- If a first year student has 3 or more pre or post enrollment risk factors and/or low SRI index scores, he/she will be contacted directly by the OSS at the 4th, 8th and 16th week of each semester as a general quality check and sharing of resources available.

2nd Level of Intervention

- If student is non-responsive to initial contact from instructor, coach or ARC representative:
  - The OSS will reach out to the student directly a week after the 1st intervention was initiated and recommend that he/she set up a time to come in to meet with a Student Success Coordinator and/or their Academic Advisor.
  - Instructor/Coach will be notified and sent response report update.
  - Their Academic Advisor/FYE Instructor is also notified.

- If 1st intervention leads to referral to the campus counselor or ARC services, a general quality check by the OSS will be initiated 2 weeks following the referral.

Intervention Resources

- **Faculty/Class Instructor**
  - Can provide guidance/support for individual students as willing/able, and recommend students seek additional resources. Can encourage students to attend department/subject specific study groups.

- **Academic Advisor/FYE Instructor**
  - Provides academic guidance and support, works with student to develop plan for progression to graduation.

- **Office of Student Success**
  - Acts as liaison for students. Provides individual guidance on major selection, career services, and connecting students to all levels of resources – including peer mentors

- **Athletics Department**
  - All Student Athletes are held to an attendance policy and coaches are committed to their academic engagement and performance.

- **CARE Team**
  - Handles all behavioral and conduct referrals/concerns

- **Student Life**
  - Connects students to Campus Activities and provides student support via RA's, RD's, and Orientation Leaders/Mentors

- **ARC**
  - Provides tutoring, study skills, time management planning, disability accommodations.

- **Campus Counselor**
  - Provides counseling, stress and adjustment management strategies, confidential support for family and personal concerns

- **Campus Ministry**
  - Spiritual support and guidance

Sample Instructor Email/Letter - Grades

Dear (Student Name),

The University of Saint Mary has implemented an early alert system to give you the opportunity to address your status with sufficient time remaining in the semester to improve your grades. I am writing because I noticed you are having difficulty in my (full class name) class.

If your performance continues at this level, you will no doubt earn a poor grade and may be in danger of failing. I urge you to contact me to seek help in improving your performance. Please see me during my office hours or make an appointment by emailing.

Please note that _____, Student Success Coordinator (or academic advisor) has been CC on this email. I recommend that you contact (Student Success Coordinator/Academic Advisor Name) at (email address) to discuss strategies for improving your overall academic record. Below, I have included a list of additional campus resources that may be helpful to you.

Your academic success is important to me, your advisor and others at USM. While we will do all we can to assist you, it is up to you to take the initiative.

Link for resources:

Sincerely,

(Faculty Name & Contact Information)

NOTE: This sample email communication is adapted from the University of Vermont's Mid-term Warning Letter.

Sample Instructor Email/Letter - Attendance

Dear (Student Name),

The University of Saint Mary has implemented an early alert system to give you the opportunity to address your status with sufficient time remaining in the semester to improve your chances for success. I am writing because you have 3 unexcused absences in my (full class name) class.

As listed in your syllabus, your grade is impacted by attendance (explain attendance policy here). I urge you to contact me to address any concerns or additional help that you may be needing with this course. Please see me during my office hours or make an appointment by emailing.

Please note that _____, Student Success Coordinator has been CC on this email. (Student Success Coordinator Name) is readily available to hear your concerns, connect you with additional USM resources and work on time management strategies.

Your academic success is important to me, your advisor and others at USM. While we will do all we can to assist you, it is up to you to take the initiative.

Sincerely,
(Faculty Name & Contact Information)

NOTE: This sample email communication is adapted from the University of Vermont's Mid-term Warning Letter.

Response Report

Student Name/ID	
Email sent/call made?	Yes or No
Did the student respond? If yes please provide details on their response	Yes or No, response details:
Was a referral made? If yes, who?	Yes or No, referred to:
Do you have an additional comments or recommendations that may be helpful in assisting this student?	
OSS's actions taken/Referrals	

Additional Considerations

- Key points of communication with students regarding Early Alert System
    - Orientation – OSS explains early alert system to students.
    - Notification listed in faculty syllabus:
        - Sample from Joe Cuseo at Marymount College, CA as sourced by University of Iowa's Early Intervention Task Force Final Report: I am committed to your success in this course and at this university. I may, therefore, refer you to other persons and/services available to help you achieve academic success. In turn, if you are referred, you will be expected to comply with the referrals. Please understand that such referrals are not a form of punishment, rather they are intended to help you.
- ***All academic concerns regarding non-first year students should be submitted to the CARE Team through Maxient***
- Reporting on Early Alert System will be done at the end of each semester and data summary provided to participating faculty and staff.
- Accuracy of SRI will be assessed at the end of the academic year.