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University of Kentucky Early Alert System Outcomes Fall 2007

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During the fall of 2007, a total of 4,657 alerts were submitted by faculty and staff for 2,518 distinct students. Of these alerts, 2,418 alerts were submitted for first-time, full-time students (1,320 distinct students). Only 99 of the total alerts came from individual submissions - all the others came from spreadsheets, e.g., from downloads from Blackboard or the MathClass.org homework system. The reasons for alerts submitted and the frequency distribution (NOTE: a referral for one student may have indicated more than one reason for the alert) are displayed in Table 1.)

Table 1

	All UK students		First-time, full-time Students	
	Total # Alerts	Distinct Students	Total # alerts	Distinct Students
Midterm grade of D or E	2945 (62%)	1448	1902 (68%)	917
Poor performance on tests or quizzes	1293 (27%)	1201	639 (23%)	587
Homework assignments not completed or of inconsistent quality	249 (5%)	217	147 (5%)	119
Missed classes (at least 2-3 in the first weeks)	175 (4%)	168	68 (2%)	66
Habitually late (more than 10 minutes on a regular basis)	55 (1%)	55	37 (1%)	37
Disruptive behavior in class	4 (<1%)	2	4 (<1%)	2
Other (would prefer to discuss with advisor)	17 (<1%)	17	9 (<1%)	9

The bulk of the alert referrals came from an SAP report of midterm grades and did not come from any particular faculty member or college dean's staff. Most of the alerts indicating poor test scores came from spreadsheets submitted as a result of the specific request from the Arts & Sciences Dean's Office to the Math faculty and teaching staff of MA108, 109 and 123 and to the CHE104, 105 teaching staff. An important question is whether there is a particular trend in the poor test scores alerts and to begin to target support staff interventions more intentionally, e.g., does the student just need to improve test-taking skills or is there a combination of factors such as chronic absenteeism along with lack of homework scores which might indicate a more holistic approach to student intervention is needed?

Table 2 shows what we could have predicted: students with no alerts had superior academic preparation (see HS GPA and ACT) and had higher first fall GPAs than those who were issued an alert of some kind. Also, students with mid-term alerts performed somewhat below the level of those who received alerts earlier in the semester.

Table 2

First-time, full time students	N	HS GPA	ACT Comp	First Fall GPA
Students with a midterm alert issued	917	3.26	22.8	2.06
Students with an alert (other then midterm) issued	403	3.33	22.8	2.20
Students with no alerts issued	2516	3.58	25.1	3.08

While the results of the table above may be predictable, the Early Alert System allows for the institution to try and intervene with these potentially low performing students. As see in Table 5, the alert process itself has the potential to salvage students' grades. Midterm grade alerts for first-time, full-time students are compared in Table 5 for some selected courses with typically high DEW rates. As one would expect, the DEW rates are considerably higher for those who received the alerts. The experiment for actively engaging faculty and teaching staff (particularly in these selected courses) shows that this is a good resource for future, more intrusive strategies for student success.

Table 3

	Fall 2007 academic standing for first-time, full-time students WITH an ISSUED MIDTERM alert		Fall 2007 academic standing for first-time, full-time students WITHOUT an ISSUED MIDTERM alert	
	A, B or C	D, E or W	A, B or C	D, E or W
BIO 102	53 (57%)	40 (43%)	289 (84%)	54 (16%)
CHE 104	12 (27%)	33 (73%)	261 (74%)	93 (26%)
CHE 105	13 (14%)	83 (86%)	705 (84%)	138 (16%)
ENG 104	44 (58%)	32 (42%)	1292 (91%)	123 (9%)
HIS 108	26 (36%)	46 (64%)	295 (81%)	67 (19%)
MA 108R	25 (24%)	81 (76%)	285 (64%)	163 (36%)
MA 109	47 (36%)	83 (64%)	947 (80%)	233 (20%)
MA 123	23 (40%)	35 (60%)	299 (84%)	56 (16%)
PSY 100	47 (47%)	53 (53%)	824 (87%)	119 (13%)

While mid-term grade alerts were generally indicative of student final performance, it is not clear what effect advisor meetings or the late withdrawal window had in the intervention process. It is important to ascertain the reason why in some courses, e.g., ENG 104 and BIO 102, students were able to improve substantially upon their midterm grades; perhaps faculty became more aware of student learning needs by having adapted their courses to submit midterm grades and thus became more intentional in their interventions; it is not clear why BIO 102 students tended to improve between midterm and final grades so much more dramatically than those in CHE 105. Integrated Academic Services staff will begin exploring more aggressive approaches to advisor and other types of interventions for students who have been referred for having bad grades at midterm -- including ways by which faculty and advisors can work together more intentionally and with data-driven strategies.