

Program Title: Early Warning Program
Institution: University of Michigan - Dearborn
Innovation Category: Academic Advising and Student Academic Improvement

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Website: <https://umdearborn.edu/academics/success-dearborn/m-success/early-warning-reports>

Project Description: The Early Warning program is designed for faculty to communicate with advisors and academic support staff on student attendance and students not showing signs of academic success before a final grade is determined. This program is designed to help students devise a plan for better academic success with university staff before consequential actions take place affecting the student's standing at the university.

The Early Warning program, in its current form, was piloted Fall 2016 and launched campus wide Winter 2017. In Fall 2019, academic support staff were added to the triage of the alerts, including our Tutoring Coordinator, Writing Center Coordinator, Disability Services Intake Coordinator, Librarians, and Financial Aid counselors. Faculty are prompted to submit reports at week 4 and week 7 of the semester. Faculty, via the Early Warning Report, are asked to review their class roster, mark which students are "at-risk" of failing their course, select why this is the case from a list of alert reasons, and provide an optional comment to provide more context to the early warning. This process is all done via email, in a generated report sent from the Education Advisor Board's (EAB's) Navigate platform. The alerts are then sent to advisors or academic support staff assigned to the student, notifying them of the reason for the alert as determined by the faculty member. The outreach plan to students is currently determined by the individual staff's department. The Fall 2019 changes to the Early Warning Program expands the program to refer students to campus offices outside of Academic Advising. This has allowed for a more coordinated care approach to student success on campus.

Project Objectives: The Early Warning program fits into a larger Academic Affairs Student Success Strategic Plan (SSSP) spanning 2016-2021

- 1) Enhance overall tracking, collection, and dissemination of student data (SSSP)
 - Utilize EAB's Navigate platform across the university to better serve students
 - During Fall 2019, collaborate with the Student Success Initiatives Coordinator to on-board librarians to the M-Success platform and create template for library research alerts.
 - During Fall 2019, collaborate with the Student Success Initiatives Coordinator to on-board Tutoring Services to the M-Success platform and create template for Tutoring Recommended alerts.
 - By Fall 2020, collaborate with Faculty and Advising to increase faculty participation in the Early Warning program.
- 2) Provide focused interventions for FTIAC and transfer students (SSSP)
 - More effectively leverage the Early Warning program

- By end of the 2019-2020, develop a plan for targeted outreach to higher-risk courses for early warning alerts to increase faculty engagement and participation, and monitor rates through EAB's Navigate.
- By end of 2019-2020, improve collaboration between academic advising and the campus learning centers and Supplemental Instruction through implementing EAB's Navigate.
- By Fall 2020 collaborate with Advising to define Early Warning responses to promote consistent intervention across units.

Target Population: The Early Warning program is meant to support all students. Considerable discussion centered around targeting students enrolled in high "drop/early-withdraw (DEW) courses. Ultimately, we decided to continue targeting all students with this specific program.

Quantifiable/Qualifiable Outcomes: We have seen desired, measurable, and anecdotal evidence supporting the impact of this program.

Quantitative:

Faculty Response Rate: Fall 2018 - 18% | Winter 2019 - 23% | Fall 2019 - 24%
 Students marked "At-Risk": Fall 2018 - 587 | Winter 2019 - 643 | Fall 2019 - 881
 Percentage of Cases Closed: Fall 2018 - 78% | Winter 2019 - 78% | Fall 2019 - ongoing

Recommendations to Tutoring Services from Faculty Early Warning Report - 61
 Recommendations to Writing Center from Faculty Early Warning Report - 12
 Recommendations to Disability Services from Faculty Early Warning Report - 6

Fall 2018 - Winter 2019 Retention following Early Warning program
 Attended meeting with Advisor and Retained - 93.90%
 Did not attend meeting with Advisor and Retained - 79.20%

Qualitative: Wendy* was identified as "at-risk" by her professor through the early warning alert, due to poor performance on a test, with a D in the class at the time of the report. Four days later, an advisor was assigned to Wendy's case, and within seven days of the initial alert, Wendy met with her advisor. Wendy explained she has a job outside of class, contributing to her poor test performance. Additionally, she disclosed concerns about her choice of major and her financial aid for the following semester. Her advisor suggested meeting with her professor, career services, and financial aid. Lastly, the advisor helped Wendy pick future cross-listed classes in her major just in case she ultimately changed her major down the road. Looking ahead, Wendy finished her class with a C, an improvement from the D she had prior to the alert, and she enrolled in the two courses discussed with her advisor the following semester, in which she received a B and C-.

*Student's name changed

Challenges/Problems Encountered:

The University of Michigan - Dearborn's advising centers are decentralized across five offices; the four colleges and our first year and transfer advising office. The decentralization of advising has been a challenge to overcome, as our advisors have different demands and expectations from their Deans and Directors. To remediate this challenge, our Student Success Initiatives (SSI) Coordinator, who oversees the Early Warning program, put together an Advisor User

group, comprised of one advisor from each advising unit, to plan and create centralized expectations and triage plans for all incoming early warnings.

Additionally, our advisor's caseloads are sometimes quite heavy which creates problems triaging early warnings in a timely manner. To support our advisors, our SSI Coordinator worked with academic support offices, like Tutoring Services and the Writing Center, to support our students marked "at-risk" by faculty. There are now custom alerts that are automatically sent to academic support units instead of advising. This helps advisors and students.

One last challenge we encountered with our Early Warning program is the timing. With decentralized advising, students have different registration dates and requirements for meeting with their advisors. This poses a problem for advisors who are receiving alerts on students during the same time as registration appointments. We are currently reevaluating the timeline for our Early Warning program to support all advising offices.

Evaluation Approach: Those responsible for assessment related to this program include our Student Success Initiatives Coordinator, Academic Success Coordinator, Director of START (serving first year and transfer students) Advising, and Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Student Success. This team evaluates the program on a semester basis, reviewing all of the above metrics, as well as other factors, to determine the program's success. Data collection was standardized in Winter 2018 and EAB's Navigate houses all of the data used to evaluate this program. The addition of academic support units in the Early Warning program launched Fall of 2019. We are eager to evaluate the impact of these additions at the conclusion of this semester.

Value Proposition, Financing Strategy and Return-On-Investment Indicators: The purchase and commitment to use EAB's Navigate across campus was made through the Provost's Office. The Early Warning program is one of many processes enhanced or created because of this tool. Beyond the price of the vendor, there are no additional funds required to finance this program. The initiative requires time of various stakeholders.

Potential for Replication: There is potential for replication of our Early Warning program. Adjustments or questions to be considered:

- Who will manage this program? What campus stakeholders are needed to replicate and implement this program successfully?
- How does Advising work on your campus? Is it centralized or decentralized? If it is decentralized, what are the individual expectations from each office and for their students?
- What academic support units can and should be included at the deployment of the program? How are these staff members trained to support students at-risk?
- What are the deadlines for students to add/drop/withdraw from courses? When are midterms?
- How will you get faculty to participate? How will they learn and stay informed of the impact of this program?

Utilizing EAB's Navigate platform allows this process to be easily coordinated from start to finish. However, other systems have the ability to collect early warning reports from faculty. The key to our Early Warning program is the ability to automate alerts to advisors and academic support staff, then close the loop with faculty once they meet with students. This piece will require some additional processes in place with or without EAB's Navigate.

Vendor Involvement: Navigate, EAB's student success management platform, is the tool used to send, collect, and triage early warnings from faculty and staff.

Requisite Program Manager Competencies: Reviewing the ACPA & NASPA professional competencies for higher education administrators, the competency areas of "Leadership" and "Assessment, Evaluation, and Research" have proven to be essential for the Early Warning leadership team to effectively execute this program. To generate faculty and staff participation, our team had to create and articulate a clear vision for the Early Warning program. To support the vision, our leadership team has used the metrics to demonstrate and prove the importance of this program across the university. We continue to assess and evaluate the program's effectiveness while researching best practices for implementation.

Additional Resources:

EAB's Navigate for 2-year institutions <https://eab.com/products/navigate-for-community-colleges/>

EAB's Navigate for 4-year institutions

<https://eab.com/products/navigate-for-four-year-institutions/>

Date Published: February 17, 2020