

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE  
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 2117S  
Date of Senate Approval 01/19/17

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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

**APC 18: Required Use of Academic Alerts in all 100-level Courses**

**Effective Date: Fall 2017**

**Add:** In the Faculty Handbook, section [5.2.1.1 Reporting Grades and Returning Student Work](#), before "[Entering Final Grades](#):"

Entering Academic Alerts

Academic Alerts during the semester identify struggling students so that both the instructor and Advising and Learning Support can help them achieve academic success; they also recognize students who are performing well. Instructors in 100-level courses are required to enter Academic Alerts via their OnePort account for all students in these courses by the end of the fifth week each semester; in addition, faculty members are encouraged to enter Academic Alerts for all of their courses by the end of the fifth week, as well as follow-up alerts by the end of the tenth week of each semester. Faculty members needing additional information on entering alerts should contact OneStop.

**Impact Statement:** Academic alerts are shared with the student, the student's academic advisor, and OneStop professional staff, and students must meet with their instructor in order to remove the alert. For a faculty member teaching two-three 100-level courses, entering alerts should require no more than 60-90 minutes a semester. No academic units outside of OneStop will be affected by this change, although individual faculty will be. No substantial changes to staffing needs, student needs, or course offerings are expected.

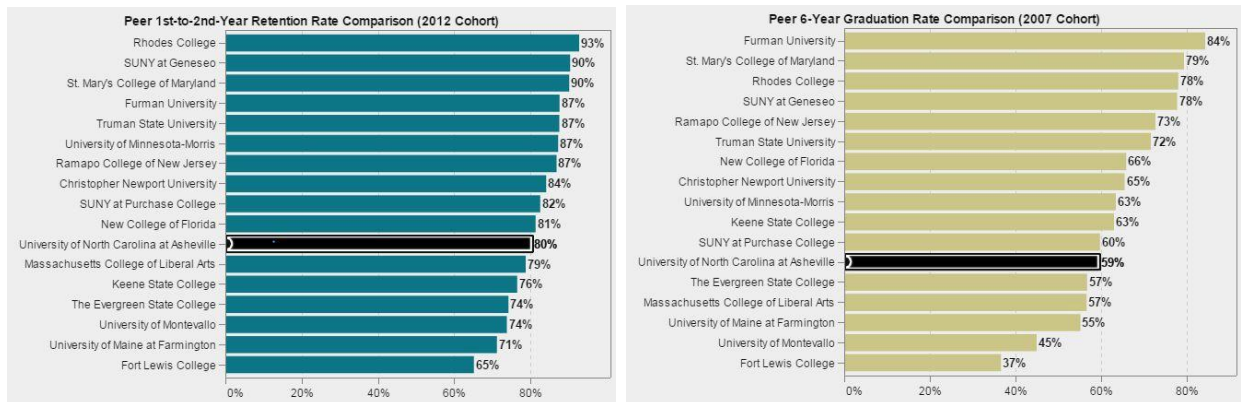
**Rationale:** [UNC Policy Manual Chapter 400.1.5\(R\)](#) requires all institutions to use and regularly improve an Early Alert system:

**E. Early Warning System Plan**

Effective with the start of the Fall 2014 semester, each campus will have an early warning system (EWS) to alert relevant campus personnel to signs of poor academic performance by a student or of behavior likely to lead to a student not making Satisfactory Academic Progress. Each campus will submit a comprehensive intervention plan to General Administration that describes how students are identified by the EWS, what campus staff or faculty are notified when a student is identified by the EWS, and how the staff or faculty member is to respond. Interventions may include written communication with students, phone calls or text messages, face-to-face meetings with campus personnel, and/or formal programs involving extended student participation.

The EWS should specify what interventions will be used, who will be responsible for them, how warnings will be communicated to responsible personnel, and how interventions will be tracked and reported. Each campus will identify strategies to assess the effectiveness of its EWS and use the results for ongoing improvement.

Similar systems are now used in colleges and universities nationwide, including some our peers (St. Mary's; Minnesota-Morris) which lead UNC Asheville in retention and graduation rates:



Finally, by encouraging clear, explicit feedback and face-to-face conversations about success and failure, academic alert systems reinforce the promise implicit in the best liberal arts educations: that small class size and strong faculty-student relationships matter.

In this proposal, the required point of feedback by the end of the fifth week provides an opportunity for students to withdraw from the course if they so choose. The second point, encouraged no later than the tenth week, allows students time to change behaviors or seek academic support before the end of the semester.

Institutional data reinforce the high cost of failing to alert students, as well as the positive impact academic alerts have on student success:

- In AY 2015-16, 83.3% of UNC Asheville students earning a D, F, or U in a course **never received** a formal Academic Alert about their performance (n=1825; first-year n=368).
- However, when students **received** an Academic Alert in AY 2015-16 (n=803), 14.8% of those students withdrew from the course and 39.7% went on to earn an A, B, or C.

When faculty use this system, nearly 55% of students with academic difficulties achieve a positive outcome of timely withdrawal or a grade of A, B, or C. In AY 2015-16, that success rate combined with this policy could have potentially helped first-year students convert 200+ D/F/U grades to A/B/C/W grades.

Given the relatively low time commitment required by faculty and our twin commitments to academic rigor and student success, this proposal represents a fairly low-risk, potentially high-reward practice.