Advising Strategies for Students on Academic Probation

Web Event Handout

Overview

In 2010 and 2013, the NACADA Probation/Dismissal/Reinstatement Issues Interest Group sponsored webinars in which panelists shared information and strategies for assisting students who are on academic probation, facing dismissal, or seeking reinstatement. Laying the foundation for this topic, they discussed how we define “student on academic probation,” factors that place students at risk for being placed on probation, typical probationary policies, stakeholders responsible for supporting students on academic probation, and the role and responsibilities of those who advise these students. Institutional programs that are supportive of this student population were discussed and useful resources shared.

Webinar participants have responded to these events with appreciation for the information, ideas, and materials previously shared and requests for additional strategies to assist them in meeting the needs of these struggling students. PDR Issues Interest Group Chair Joy Cox has responded to those requests with the development of a Pocket Guide and recruitment of articles for NACADA’s quarterly e-publication, Academic Advising Today, on this topic. Joy returns to the AdvisorConnect venue with authors from these publications to discuss the good work being done at their institutions to help academically at risk students find their way to successful degree completion. Topics to be addressed include:
- What happens when chronically struggling students are given another chance?
- Maximizing the use of an early alert system through advisor outreach
- Individualizing an academic probation program through institutional partnerships and selective technology systems

Pre-Webcast Activity Suggestions

View the 2010 NACADA Webinar, Advising Students on Academic Probation, available on the NACADA YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQ-QnpSM-OI&feature=youtu.be

View the 2013 NACADA Webinar, Advising Students on Academic Probation, available for purchase from the NACADA Store at http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Product-Details/ID/REC051CD.aspx
References and Recommended Resources


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Starfish is an early alert tool that is accessed through the course management system Blackboard to support academic success at East Carolina University. Through Starfish, faculty can inform students of their academic performance within a course and connect students to appropriate support resources through difficulty notifications or kudos. Advisors have the ability to track notifications raised on their advisees.

**Would you like daily or weekly emails?**
Advisors have the ability to receive daily or weekly emails notifying them of raised flags/kudos. To set up your Tracking Item Summary:
1. Once in Starfish (accessed through Blackboard)—go to **PROFILE ➔ EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS**(top right corner–photo)
2. Scroll down to the area titled **Tracking Item Notifications**
3. Set-up your notification preferences. You can choose to be notified daily, weekly, or immediately about flags/kudos on your advisees.

**Tracking**
Tracking allows you to view flags/kudos raised on your advisees. This feature will allow you to see a history of notifications or you can search by the student’s name and view their profile page.

**List Format**
1. Once in Starfish—go to **STUDENTS ➔ TRACKING**
2. Select appropriate connection (select Add Filters* for more options—change dates/semester, items, etc.)
3. Once you have your list—you can sort by clicking on the various categories (student name, item name, creation date, etc.)

**Profile Format**
1. Click on a student’s name at any time to open up the student’s profile page in a separate window.
2. Select **TRACKING** to see the history of the student’s flags/kudos.

*Add Filters (Tracking) can be used to narrow down your flagged advisees by Academic Standing or Classification.

**ADD FILTERS ➔ Tracking Items:** Choose Tracking Type and Item Name from drop down boxes  
**Attributes:** Select Add Attribute, and choose attribute (Academic Standing, Overall GPA). Define Specific Value.

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**How can advisors use Starfish?**
Advisors can view their advisees’ flags and kudos through weekly/daily emails and tracking reports. It is recommended to follow-up with advisees through one or more of the following:
- Email
- Phone Calls
- Individual Meetings

**Why should advisors follow-up with students who received notifications?**
- To hold honest conversations about academic progress, especially with students who may be in academic difficulty
- To connect students with resources such as the Pirate Tutoring Center, Austin Math Lab, Writing Center, Counseling Center, etc.
- To intervene with academic suggestions such as course drops / withdrawal
- To facilitate the advisee-advisor relationship through concern about their success
- To provide positive reinforcement to students with kudos

**Having Difficulty Managing Follow-up?**
- Set aside time each day or week for follow-up.
- Prioritize follow-up during busier times (i.e. registration week and weeks prior).
- If you cannot follow-up with all flags, focus on difficulty flags, 3 or more flags, and also the students who may be on probation or warning.
- You can use a blind copy with your emails, but try to limit “canned” messages.

_Sometimes short, personal emails are more effective than detailed, generic messages. Remember, many students are reading emails on their phone._
12/21/2012

«Primary_First_Name» «Primary_Last_Name»
«Home_Address_Line1»
«Home_Address.City», «Home_Address_State_Code» «Home_Address_Zip_Code»

Dear «Primary_First_Name»:

Our records indicate that your previous term grades have put you below SPEA standards for good academic standing. This places you on academic probation for the Spring 2013 semester and places a hold on your account that will prevent you from registering for Fall 2013 until you meet the requirements outlined below.

The SPEA Probation policy states:
1. Students will be placed on academic probation if any of the following occur:
   a. IU cumulative grade point average (GPA) falls below 2.0,
   b. Semester GPA falls below 2.0, or
   c. With at least 12 credits in the major, the SPEA GPA falls below 2.3.
2. Students will be informed of their probationary status by letter.
3. SPEA students on academic probation are required to participate in an approved intervention program provided by SPEA during their first semester on academic probation.
4. SPEA students will be continued on probation when their semester GPA is a 2.0 or above but their cumulative IU GPA is below 2.0.

To help you return to good academic standing and as part of your probation terms, you must:
1. Attend a meeting with your academic advisor no later than January 30, 2013 to complete your probation contract. Please call (317) 274-4656 to schedule your appointment.
2. Complete the SPEA online Academic Self-Assessment prior to your first appointment (https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/spea_self_assessment). In addition, when you meet with your academic advisor, be prepared to discuss strategies that will help you move to good academic standing.
3. If this is the first time you are on probation, you must participate in an approved intervention program, either the Success Skills workshop or Design your own Success Program. When you meet with your academic advisor, together you will determine the best option:
   a. Student Success Skills workshop: The success skills workshop consists of a four-hour program to help you identify your strengths, set goals, and talk about barriers to success. The workshop will be scheduled on a Friday in the spring from 8 am-12 pm (check in will be at 7:45 am). Your advisor will give you more information on the workshop during your upcoming appointment.
   b. Design your own Success Program: The Design your own Success Program is an opportunity for students, in consultation with their academic advisor, to identify areas in which they need to focus efforts to return to good standing. Students will commit to four hours of campus based programming (time mgt workshops, study skills, math assistance center, writing center, etc…) to help you meet your academic goals for the term and help return you to good standing.
4. Have a second advisor meeting to discuss academic planning and discuss academic progress. We recommend that you schedule this meeting before the start of priority registration (March 2013) and no later than the end of the semester.

SPEA’s Good Standing policy is as follows:
Students are in good academic standing when their semester and cumulative grade point averages are 2.0 or above, and their GPA in all courses included in the SPEA major requirements is at least 2.3. Students must be in good academic standing to graduate.

If you have any questions about your academic status, please email or call SPEA Student Services, infospea@iupui.edu or (317) 274-4656. We wish you the best as you work toward improving your academic standing.

Sincerely,

Terry Baumer, Ph.D.
Executive Associate Dean
cc: Student File
**1. Please complete the following:**

- **Name**
- **Student ID Number**
- **Major**
- **Date**
- **Credits last semester**
- **Credits this semester**
- **Work hours per week last semester**
- **Work hours per week this semester**

**2. Please list courses your courses from Spring 2013 (or last semester attended).**

- **Course 1**
- **Course 2**
- **Course 3**
- **Course 4**
- **Course 5**
- **Course 6**

**3. Using the key you created above, select information about each course under the designated category.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Difficulty (1 is least difficult)</th>
<th>Hours Studied per Week</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>Course 6</td>
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</table>
4. Which study skills issues contributed to your previous academic performance?

- [ ] Note taking
- [ ] Test anxiety
- [ ] Challenging textbook/reading
- [ ] Difficult course
- [ ] Incompatible learning style with teaching style
- [ ] Course load too heavy
- [ ] None

Other (please specify)

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5. Which career/academic major issues contributed to your previous academic performance?

- [ ] Not confident about choice of major
- [ ] No academic goals or future plans
- [ ] Unsure of strengths and talents
- [ ] Unaware of Career Services
- [ ] None

Other (please specify)
*6. Which family/social adjustment issues contributed to your previous academic performance?

☐ Adjustment to academic expectations
☐ Adjustment to college culture
☐ Separation from family and friends
☐ Finding suitable housing
☐ Roommate troubles
☐ Loneliness
☐ Home or family problems
☐ Involvement with campus organizations
☐ None

Other (please specify)

*7. Which personal issues contributed to your previous academic performance?

☐ Inadequate financing of college
☐ Physical or mental health problems
☐ Substance abuse issues
☐ Too much stress/tension/anxiety
☐ Learning disability
☐ Lack of motivation
☐ Lack of effective time management
☐ Prioritizing work and academics
☐ None

Other (please specify)

*8. Of the issues you selected in Question 4 - 7, what were the top three that negatively impacted your academic success?

Issue 1

Issue 2

Issue 3
Academic Self Assessment

9. Other than the issues stated above, were there further complications that you would like to inform us of to better guide your individualized intervention program?

*10. What specific actions will you take next semester to return yourself to good academic standing?
   (Be sure to list SMART goals - Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely - meaning, more specific than "study more")

*11. Of the probation programs discussed in your letter, which program would you most like to participate in and successfully complete as part of your individualized intervention program?
   - [ ] SPEA Student Success Skills workshop
   - [ ] Design your own Success program

*12. To complete this survey, copy and paste this link into a different tab in your web browser to schedule your initial probation advising appointment:

http://spea.iupui.edu/students/services/requests.php

You MUST select PROBATION under Reason for Visit.

Type FINISHED in the box below once you have requested an appointment. You will be notified in your IUPUI email when the appointment is scheduled.
Panelists will discuss the work being done at their institutions to help academically at risk students find their way to successful degree completion. Topics to be addressed include:

- What happens when chronically struggling students are given another chance?
- Maximizing the use of an early alert system through advisor outreach
- Individualizing an academic probation program through institutional partnerships and selective technology systems

Role of Academic Support Office at Grade Processing

- Mandated to inform students that their academic standing has changed
- Students STRONGLY encouraged to meet with an ASO advisor-2-3 days of walk-ins
- Academic standing changes based on any semester or term where at least 6 credits are taken and the student earns below a 2.0 semester/term GPA

Background

Academic suspension (1 year away)
Academic dismissal (3 years away)

Exceptions: Students with extenuating circumstances who have resolved their issues are able to petition their time away

Rationale for the Program

Due to insufficient time between grade processing and the first day of classes, we were unable to inform students (phone calls, emails and letters) of changes in their academic status.
The Essence of the Option 3 Program

Option 1:
- Take full time away to resolve issues
- Reapply and return to the university after a year

Option 2:
- Spend six months away
- Complete at least two classes at another university or through Independent Study
- Petition to return to the university

Option 3:
- Return to school immediately and participate in the Option 3 program.

Steps for Participating in the Option 3 Program

- Indicate (in writing) the intent to participate in the program by the first week of school
- Attend an Option 3 workshop during the second week of school

* Some students were disqualified from participating in the program due to university policy and requests from academic departments

Academic Choice Response Sheet — academic_choice_sheet.pdf

For more detailed explanations of these choices, students should refer back to the original e-mail.

Option 1:
- Take full time away to resolve issues
- Reapply and return to the university after a year

Option 2:
- Spend six months away
- Complete at least two classes at another university or through Independent Study
- Petition to return to the university

Option 3:
- Return to school immediately and participate in the Option 3 program.

Purpose of Option 3 Workshops
1. Connect students with staff members
2. Help students decide which option is best for them
3. Encourage students to utilize campus resources
4. Teach basic study skills

Changes in Students’ Academic Standing the Semester After Participating in the Option 3 program (2010 – 2012)

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<th>Winter 2012</th>
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<td>67.02%</td>
<td>61.22%</td>
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<td>SUSPENSION</td>
<td>29.78%</td>
<td>33.67%</td>
<td>29.54%</td>
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<td>WITHDREW FROM CLASSES</td>
<td>3.19%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>7.95%</td>
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Positive Aspects of the Program

Through the Option 3 workshops and one-on-one meetings, we:
- Formed connections with students who avoided contact in the past
- Including students who had significant issues
- Explained academic policies in detail
- Helped students consider their circumstances with regard to their academic decision making process
- Referred a greater number of students to appropriate resources (i.e. counseling)
Concerns and Challenges

– Demands on staff time and resources
– No follow up with students over multiple semesters
– FERPA induced vagueness in letters, e-mails and workshops
– What to do with students who don’t show up to the workshops?

The Bottom Line

• The Option 3 Program provided contact with a greater number of students than at a typical Grade Processing
• Practical reasons and Complexity
• Very time consuming for staff at one of the busiest part of the semester
• Staff have to really feel that the return is worth the investment

Is it better to take time away from school?

Suspended students who:

+ Take time away
+ Work with advisors/peer coaches during their first semester back

88%-95% are still in school a semester later

• Seems like better outcome that 62-67% on Option 3.
• Are they really different populations?

Kelly Reddick
East Carolina University

Early Alert @ ECU
Adopted Starfish Retention Solutions™ Early Alert System in fall 2011

Fall 2014 at ECU
14775 flags (difficulty notifications)
+20319 kudos (positive)
35,094 TOTAL Notifications (fall 2014)

14179 unique students with a flag/kudos for fall 2014
ECU has approximately 21,500 undergraduate students

GOAL: Discuss advisors’ capabilities with an early alert system and practices at ECU to maximize benefits

East Carolina University’s Early Academic Alert Intervention Process

Step 1: Faculty Raise Flag/Kudo Notifications
Called “kudos” and “flags”, these notifications are sent to the students ECU email account and copied to specific campus support.

Step 2: System Generated Email is Sent to Student
• Type of flag and course is identified
• Faculty can provide additional comments
• Support services are identified

Step 3: Advisor and Network Follow-up
• Flags/kudos can be viewed anytime
• Follow-up emails are sent when appropriate
• Communication with faculty (when appropriate)
Sample Flag to Student

Types of Flags/Kudos

- Low/Test Quiz Scores
- Unsatisfactory Coursework
- Concerned
- Feedback
- Attendance related
- Off to a Good Start
- Keep up the Good Work
- Outstanding Academic Performance
- Showing Improvement

System Generated Email

Subject: Low Test Quiz Scores

Hi Will – Hope you are enjoying this warm weather! I saw that you had a flag for your Ethics course and wanted to make sure everything was going okay. Let’s talk soon!

Kelly

Notification Summary Received by Advisors

Quick view of flags included in the email

System Generated Email Notification Summary

Subject: Low Test Quiz Scores

The Flag: Low Test Quiz Scores has been raised by Kelly Redick for Starfish Student

Flag Details

- Student: Student Name (Phone: )
- Email: kredick@example.com
- Class: Fall 2014
- Course: Ethics
- Instructor: Professor Name

Quick view of the email

Detailed information regarding the flags

Reaching Out to Students in Academic Difficulty

- Current systems allows advisors to filter students based on current GPA, academic standing, class, etc.
- Must be knowledgeable about systems capabilities
- Prioritizing at-risk students is key
- Immediate access to notifications allows immediate outreach

Approach to Outreach/Follow-up

- Short, informal emails that show concern and initiate a conversation can be effective
- Phone calls are encouraged, especially for those who may have received multiple flags
- Individual meetings are preferred, but may be less realistic
- If time permits, follow up with kudos (positive reinforcement)

Why put in the extra work?

- Initiates conversation with students who may be struggling academically
- Facilitates rapport earlier in the semester
- Encourage honest conversations
- Allows connection to academic resources
- Opportunity for academic suggestions

Sample Advisor Email

Hi, Will – Hope you are enjoying this warm weather! I saw that you had a flag for your Ethics course and wanted to make sure everything was going okay. Let’s talk soon!

Kelly

Trying to figure out where a student is in their semester cycle
**Student Responses**

Hi Ms. Reddick,

Thank you for the concern. I think most of my flags have come up from my Greek class. The book for the class was unavailable for awhile and I got behind. However I have been discussing these issues with my professor and I think we have most things worked out, along with my absences as I spent some time out of town for my sister’s wedding. He has been nothing but completely understanding. If you would like to meet with me, I think that would be a good idea. Whenever you think would be best just let me know. Thank you.

Ethan

Hi Ms. Reddick,

Thank you for your concern. I did not do as well on the first test as I would of hoped but I think after doing the first test I was able to see how I needed to do and I am determined to do better. I also plan on going to tutoring. Thank you.

Savannah

Ms. Reddick,

Thank you for your concern in regards to my academic success. It is a good feeling to have someone on your side cheering for you. I saw that you said we can meet Friday (tomorrow). How about 9:00 a.m.? Thanks once again for your concern.

**Primary Concern**

**TIME & TIMING**

- Difficult to balance high advising load with increased notification volume
- Majority of notifications are received during busiest point in the semester

**Strategies for Managing Follow-up**

- Set aside time each day/week for follow-up
- Prioritize follow-up during busier times (registration, orientation, etc.)
- If you cannot follow-up with all flags, focus on difficulty flags, 3 or more flags, and students who may be on academic probation or warning
- You can use blind copy with your emails, but try to limit “canned” messages

**Increasing Advisor Buy-in**

- Individual meetings with directors and department heads
- Advisor Trainings
- Easy-to-use advisor guides
- Provide student survey results and student responses to follow-up

**However, none of this would happen without Faculty Buy-In!**

- Provost support (newsletters & emails)
- Early Alert Project Manager (meets with Deans & Chairs)
- Trickle down effect (Department chair to professors)
- Faculty Trainings & Guides
- Newsletters
- Sharing survey results from students, advisors, and faculty
- As advisors, discuss with department faculty about how you are using it and benefits

**Kristin Lively**

**IUPUI**
School of Public and Environmental Affairs

Individualized an academic probation program through institutional partnerships and selective technology systems
- Campus programming option
- Self-assessment
- Early warning system

Good standing requirements
- 2.0 semester and cumulative GPA
- 2.3 major GPA

Spring Semester 2013 timeline

12/21
- Probation/dismissal review
- Letters sent to students

1/30
- Self-assessment completed
- Deadline for 1st advising meeting
- Probation Contract
- Discussed intervention

2/1
- Emailed students who did not complete self-assessment

2/5
- Emailed student to remind them of seminar

2/8
- Success Skills Seminar

March
- 2nd Advising appointment
- Reviewed intervention program
- Plan for upcoming semester
- Removed hold

5/9
- Probation dismissal review

Self-Assessment

- SurveyMonkey
- Guides students through identifying reasons for low grades
  - Previous semester’s courses
  - Academic
  - Career/Major
  - Family/Social Adjustment
  - Personal Issues

Self-Assessment

- Students set goals
- Select intervention option
  - Success Skills Seminar
  - Design Your Own Success
Results
• Enriched conversations
• Trends – big picture
• SurveyMonkey
  – Tracking and follow up

First Advising Meeting
• 1st three weeks
• Review self-assessment
• Probation contract
• Identify program
  – Success Skills Seminar
  – Design Your Own Success

Success Seminar
Four-hours – 1 time offering
• Time Management
• Goal Setting
• Learning Styles
• Study strategies & class prep
• GPA
• Resources
• Probation policies

Design Your Own Success
• Review resources
• Select/narrow options
• Student must commit to 4 hours of campus-based programming

Campus Resources
• Advisor contacted offices
  – Tutoring Center
  – CAPS group sessions
  – Academic and Career Development
  – Multicultural Center
• Created a list of resources

2nd Advising Meeting
• Student submits signed attendance form if Design your Own Success Program
• Plan for upcoming semester
• Allow student to register
• ~ mid-semester
Fall 2012 Results

- 61 on probation after Fall 2012
- 38 enrolled in Spring

12 Completed the Workshop

- 10 returned to good standing
- 1 critical probation
- 1 dismissed
- Average Fall GPA 1.519
- Average Spring GPA 2.655

13 Design Your Own

- 4 good standing
- 5 critical probation
- 1 continue on probation
- 3 dismissed
- Average Fall GPA 1.67
- Average Spring GPA 2.044

12 Waived or Did Not Complete

- 4 good standing (one technically did not but graduated)
- 1 transferred out of SPEA
- 2 continued on probation
- 6 dismissed
- Average Fall GPA 1.31
- Average Spring GPA 1.32

Fall 2014 Results

- 73 students on probation after spring 2014
- 38 enrolled in fall

18 Completed the Workshop

- 8 returned to good standing
- 7 continue on probation
- 3 dismissed
- Average Spring GPA 1.41
- Average Fall GPA 2.23
12 Design Your Own

- 6 good standing
- 3 continue on probation
- 3 dismissed
- Average Spring GPA 1.31
- Average Fall GPA 2.05

8 Waived or Did Not Complete

- 5 good standing
- 1 continued on probation
- 2 dismissed
- Average Spring GPA 1.28
- Average Fall GPA 1.81

FLAGS
Fostering Learning Achievement and Graduation Success

- Early student performance alert
- Faculty provide feedback on student attendance and performance in class
  - Class attendance
  - Homework
  - Quizzes
  - Participation
  - Behavior
  - Recommended action (meet with instructor or advisor, go to tutoring)

FLAGS

- Advisors review performance of assigned advisees and contact those who have been “flagged,” whether they are on probation or in good standing
- Discuss instructor evaluation and options for succeeding in class

Concerns/Strategies

- Collaboration
- Self-assessment provides helpful info
- Choice during “crisis” is empowering
- Exposed students to campus resources
- Accountability is key
- Check FLAGS prior to advising appointments
  - Can direct conversations
Academic Advising Strategies for Students on Academic Probation

Panelists:
Kristin Lively, Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis
Kelly Reddick, East Carolina University
Cynthia Wong and Julie Preece, Brigham Young University
Moderator: Joy Cox, Chair, NACADA Probation/Dismissal/Reinstatement Issues Interest Group

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