



INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

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SEAMLESS PERFORMANCE ALERT INTERVENTION SYSTEM (PAIS): ACCOUNTABILITY AND OUTCOMES

The issues of accountability and outcomes are critical to improving student success and retention. As a result of targeted efforts to address ongoing declines in retention, Baltimore City Community College is successfully reversing this trend through an innovative model, the Performance Alert and Intervention System (PAIS).

PAIS is aligned with the official grade-reporting function linked to the faculty portal. Grades and student performance concerns (identified by faculty) are monitored and intervention provided by student success advisors in the Student Affairs Division at key points during the semester—i.e., 3rd week, 7th week, and 15th week. As an early intervention model, it seeks to identify students who are experiencing academic challenges throughout the semester. It takes into account the “whole student experience,” including interpersonal relationships that extend outside the classroom, reinforcing the personal connections needed to promote student success.

This seamless performance alert system supports the outcomes of improved student retention and success and is an excellent accountability measure. It requires collaboration between the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Divisions, as well as interdivisional partnerships between Student Development and Enrollment Management. It is designed to yield significant outcomes in BCCC’s retention and student success efforts.

Process and Outcomes

Once faculty send an alert to the Student Success Center, the Center follows up within 48 hours to confirm. Identified students are contacted to meet with student success advisors within 72 hours to discuss strategies for improvement. When appropriate, referrals are made to other college and community resources.

The PAIS was launched in fall 2009. By mid-term, 13% of the 22,002 grades reported received an alert code; and of the 1,143 class sections identified, 46% of these sections had at least one alert code forwarded by mid-term. During this initial pilot, 54% of faculty utilized the PAIS for at least one class by mid-term, and 35% of the 7,375 students (unduplicated count) received at least one alert code.

In fall 2009, the largest number of alerts was for missing assignments (25%), followed by quiz/test performance (24%). Most revealing are the number of alerts received for issues of attendance, such as never attended, stopped attending, and absenteeism. The largest numbers of alerts were received from the computer, math, science, and engineering departments.

As a result, customized interventions have been implemented by the Student Success Center and continue to be developed to support students who receive an alert code. Currently, students are provided with resources that include personal advising and referral for counseling support as appropriate; customized workshops to support improvement in quiz/test performance, time-management and organization skills; planning for academic success; and identification of support that will assist them in addressing personal and behavioral challenges.

The Student Success Center maintains an electronic retention-tracking database to support PAIS and help document and monitor interventions; analyze patterns, student success outcomes, and strategies for addressing educational plans; and provide tutoring, career services, workshops, and intrusive advising. Targeted groups include First Year Experience/honors, college athletics, academic probation/readmits, career and employment services internships, dual enrollment, and third attempts.

PAIS and Retention Implications

Data from the Student Success Center retention tracking system for fall 2009 were merged with PAIS files and analyzed in an unduplicated fashion to identify students who responded to communication from the Center. These students were divided into two groups:



- Responders: responded to communications from the Student Success Center
- Non-Responders: did not respond

Students who were contacted by the Student Success Center, and followed up, demonstrated a significant change. Retention is an important by-product, fostering strong internal partnerships and building supportive relationships. The PAIS yielded these retention outcomes for students who engaged fully in the processes: African American women, retention rate was 81% in comparison to 62% for those who did not respond; African-American men, 74% in comparison to 55% for those who did not respond. The retention rate was 77% for all others, in comparison to 69% for those who did not respond, and 79% for all groups overall in comparison to 62% for those who did not respond.

The Performance Alert Intervention System has had tremendous impact on student academic and social success. It is an effective system for intervening early and continuously. As a result, we will:

- Explore development of policy to institutionalize PAIS formally by making it a requirement for mid-term grades.
- Promote internal and external partnerships necessary to address the projected increase in the number of students identified through PAIS and formally document them.
- Centralize coordination, customize interventions, and expand units responding to alert codes based on type of intervention required—i.e., utilizing teams in Tutorial Services, Disability Services, TRIO-Student Support Services, the Student Success Center, and others—to follow up and enter results into the Retention Tracking Database.
- Continue to evaluate PAIS, collect and compare data, draw conclusions relevant to improving retention and student success.

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