Northwestern’s Early Alert Plan

Our Early Alert Plan was developed to aid efforts in best serving student’s persistence towards graduation. The plan has multiple goals, among them: 1) assisting students in thriving (and realistically surviving for some) academically and 2) assisting students in connecting with the university. If we accomplish these two goals, students will persist at higher rates of success to graduation as well as with richer levels of learning. We know the data are clear; when a student drops out, the chance of their earning a degree at all is diminished, as well as Northwestern’s reputation suffers. The Northwestern Early Alert Plan is designed to maximize each student’s likelihood of success at achieving graduation from Northwestern if they are willing and determined to do what it takes to be successful. Our role is to be vigilant in looking for signs where early intervention will increase the likelihood of student success and persistence.

We ask you to use the Early Alert Plan as an efficient way to identify students who seem to be at risk, allowing us to intervene with students while there is still time to improve their experience at NWHSU. Early Alert means early intervention assisting students who are facing challenges, NOT early in a trimester or year; we want to know of student challenges when they occur regardless of time of year or trimester. To engage the Early Alert Plan, please complete the checklist form found at www.nwhealth.edu/student-affairs/early-alert/. In sharing information, please be specific about your concerns and as to what you have attempted (i.e. talked with Student Affairs, talked with other instructors, or the Associate Dean of the student’s program) to help facilitate our identifying appropriate influencers in the student’s life. There is no space limitation in the dialogue box so please use the space judiciously to tell us what is most important as we work together to assist students. Information from faculty and staff is sent to the Director of Academic Success Center and University Counselor (Becky Lawyer) who will process the information. A committee of administrators and faculty gathers weekly to review Early Alert cases to determine the best course of action to assist each student.

But how will I know if a student is struggling?

Often the potential warning signs that are the easiest to spot are the behavioral changes exhibited by students such as:

- the student who has repeatedly underperformed on an assignment, quiz or test
- the well-kept student who now appears in class (or at work) untidy and with poor hygiene or the student who appears overly tired, having difficulty staying awake repeatedly, etc.
- the student who has not kept commitments attending class, completing assignments or is repeatedly ill, missing work obligations, etc.
- the student who has noticeable changes in mood such as being overly argumentative or aggressive or the talkative student who is now is silent
- the student who has shared with you and/or you overhear with persistent and growing complaints with roommates, with family, with faculty/staff, with workers or in general
- the student who is unresponsive to your repeated attempts to contact them
- other information that suggests the student is not connecting with the NWHSU community, in general or is involved in a personal or other crisis such as a family crisis – divorce, death, financial, etc.

Please note, this process is not meant to address cases of emergency such as suicide threat or threat of harm to others. In such cases please follow Northwestern’s Emergency Response Procedures.

Early Alert Team

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Brianna Klein  Administrative Specialist, School of Massage Therapy
Becky Lawyer  Director of Academic Success Center and University Counselor (Chair)
Michele Renee  Assistant Professor, School of Massage Therapy
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