

Project Report: Contacting Students Placed on Academic Warning at TESC July 1, 2004

Executive Summary

In 2003-2004 summer through spring quarters:

- 26% of the ACWAR students were freshmen
- 25% of the ACWAR students were sophomores
- 29% of the ACWAR students were juniors
- 20% of the ACWAR students were seniors

Since there does not seem to be any significant risk for any particular class level, no additional outreach measures for any particular class level are indicated. Since most students contacted seemed to have problems with either motivation or physical or mental health, referrals to academic advising and health and counseling services were most common, but these results do not suggest any immediate additional outreach measures. New outreach advising tools could be designed to address motivation. Or perhaps a yearly invitation to an advising appointment with an advisor or another SASS office staff member would be in order, to help all students be aware of the support services available to them, get some perspective on their academic achievements through a review of the year's accomplishments, and help them feel that they are on track with their academic and career goals.

Description of Project

In the summer of 2003 Academic Advising began collaborating with Enrollment Services and Registration and Records to attempt to contact all of the students placed on academic warning. An advisor was asked to contact each student by phone and/or email to offer support and suggestions for success strategies, and gather some information about why students were losing credit. We have done this one-on-one outreach project for four consecutive quarters: Summer 03 through Spring 04.

Methods

As evaluations and reports of no credit came in from faculty, Registration and Records would generate a letter to each student who received no credit or less than 75% of the credits for which they had registered. The letter informed them that they were being placed on academic warning, and let them know the consequences of this status (see sample letter attached in Appendix A). Then registration would send academic advising a copy of the letter, with a copy of the student's academic history attached.

In Academic Advising, a peer advisor would set up an Excel spreadsheet for each quarter. As the ACWAR (academic warning) letters came in, the peer advisor would search in Banner by each student's A number, and locate contact information and more detail on the student's academic history. Once all the student information was listed in the quarterly ACWAR database, the peer advisor would forward the hardcopy of the letters on to the advisor.

I. The Database Spreadsheet

The ACWAR database spreadsheet contained one line for each student, listing the following kinds of data:

Basic information:

student's name, A number, date of letter sent to student by registration, type of letter/acwar status (whether student earned no credit, or received less than 75% of the credits for which they had registered)

Statistical information:

what year the student is in school, credits earned as compared to how many credits they registered for in the quarter for which they were placed on academic warning, number of credits for which they registered as compared to how many they earned for the previous 3 quarters

Contact information:

address, email, phone(s), attempted dates and types (phone or email) of contacts

Results of attempts to contact student, and information that the student gave regarding their reasons for losing credit:

If we were unable to contact student this was indicated; if contacted we indicated whether the loss of credit was primarily a consequence of family or living situation, financial difficulties, conflict w/faculty or program content/delivery, motivation, academic preparedness, mental/physical health, or other. We also indicated when the no credit report was an institutional mistake, and the student actually expected to receive credit for that quarter. We collected detail on the reasons that they were unable to earn full credit, the student success plan (arrived at after discussion with advisor), and any referrals that were made by advisor (see sample page attached in Appendix B).

II. The Contact and Data Recording Process

From this spreadsheet, a list of students and their A numbers was generated and emailed to all Academic Advising staff, the directors of Key Services, Access Services, First People's Advising Services and the administrator for the Tacoma campus, with a request to review the list and indicate any students with whom their staff were currently working. If a student was currently working with another academic advisor or staff from any of the other support centers, the academic advisor would not contact that student. Although the response to these emails was spotty, it seemed that most students were not currently working with a SASS staff member, and would therefore need to be contacted.

The academic advisor would begin calling and emailing the students. If a phone number was disconnected, she would try email immediately. If a student did not have an email listed, and the

phone was disconnected or a wrong number, the student was considered “unable to contact”. If two phone attempts were made with no success, the student was then emailed. If no response to the email was received within 10 days, the student was considered “unable to contact” for the first two quarters. For winter 2004 and spring 2004 a new category was added which allowed us to make a distinction between students for whom we had no good contact information and students who did not respond to attempts to contact them when it was clear we had reached their answering machine and/or emails were not returned as undeliverable. If a student was contacted, the advisor made notes on the reasons the student gave for losing credit, how they were doing in the current quarter, including the plan for success that was developed during the conversation, and any referrals that were made to offices or support services or staff on campus. The information on dates and types of attempts to contact the student, and any information gained through talking with the student was entered into the ACWAR spreadsheet database, and a mark was entered into a column generally indicating the reasons given by the student for loss of credit, for ease of quantitative analysis (see Appendix B).

Data and analysis

The following represents our findings by academic quarter. In some cases, data is presented both inclusive of and exclusive of information on students from the Tacoma campus. The Summer Tacoma data was strikingly different, and many more Tacoma students were placed on academic warning in the Summer, since they generally submit their evaluations once a year after their program completes in the spring. We did not separate tribal program students from the Olympia campus data.

Olympia Campus Summer 2003

Unable to contact	51
Family/living situation	9
Financial	4
Conflict w/faculty or program	8
Motivation	11
Academic preparedness	5
Mental/physical health	17
Other	1
Mistake	9
Total ACWAR Students this quarter	115

Tacoma Campus Summer 2003

Unable to contact	9
Family/living situation	0
Financial	0
Conflict w/faculty or program	0
Motivation	0
Academic preparedness	0
Mental/physical health	0
Other	0
Mistake	2
Total ACWAR Students this quarter	11

Olympia and Tacoma Fall 2003

Unable to contact	23
Family/living situation	0
Financial	1
Conflict w/faculty or program	1
Motivation	5
Academic preparedness	1
Mental/physical health	5
Other	3
Mistake	5
Total ACWAR Students this quarter	44

Olympia and Tacoma Winter 2003 - 2004

Do not contact – student RLA or already working with other staff	5
Unable to contact student – wrong number, bad email or no email address	10
No response to phone calls or emails	31
Family/living situation	4
Financial	1
Conflict w/faculty or program	6
Motivation	4
Academic preparedness	3
Mental/physical health	15
Other	1
Mistake	5
Total ACWAR Students this quarter	85

Olympia and Tacoma Spring 2004

Do not contact – student RLA or already working with other staff	14
Unable to contact student – wrong number, bad email or no email address	4
No response to phone calls or emails	15
Family/living situation	2
Financial	1
Conflict w/faculty or program	3
Motivation	8
Academic preparedness	4
Mental/physical health	3
Other	1
Mistake	5
Total ACWAR Students this quarter	60

Responses by percent of ACWAR students each quarter

Reason given for losing credit	Olympia& Tacoma Summer 2003	Tacoma Summer 2003	Olympia& Tacoma Fall 2003	Olympia& Tacoma Winter 2004	Olympia& Tacoma Spring 2004
Did not attempt to contact – student already working with someone, RLA or mistake				6%	23%
Unable to contact (includes bad phone/email and no response)	44%	82%	53%	12%	7%
No response to phone calls or emails				36%	25%
Family	8%		0%	5%	3%
Financial	3%		2%	1%	2%
Conflict	7%		2%	7%	5%
Motivation	10%		11%	5%	13%
Academic Preparedness	4%		2%	3%	7%
Mental/physical health	15%		11%	18%	5%
Other	1%		8%	1%	2%
Mistake	8%	8%	11%	6%	8%
N=	115	11	44	85	60

Graphic data on reasons that students gave for losing credit can be found in Appendix C, attached.

Findings

Reviewing this data by quarterly totals, we notice that a much higher proportion of students received no credit in fall and winter than received partial credit. There is no indication that any one class is more likely to receive an academic warning than any other. No class level seems to be significantly more at risk.

The following patterns can be observed from the data gathered on the ACWAR students:

Quarterly Totals

Quarter	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	Received no credit	Received < 75% credit
Summer 2003	33	27	32	23	49	66
Tacoma Summer 2003	1	1	3	6	5	6
Fall 2003	7	8	18	11	35	9
Winter 2004	20	22	29	14	69	16
Spring 2004	20	22	9	9	29	31
Totals	81	80	91	63	187	128

Yearly Percentage Totals By Class

2003-2004 total	Freshmen	Sophomore	Juniors	Seniors	Received no credit	Received < 75% credit
Percentages including Tacoma	26%	25%	29%	20%	59%	41%
Percentages excluding Tacoma	26%	26%	29%	19%	60%	40%

Time invested

A significant amount of time was spent attempting to contact each student, and tabulating information on dates and types of attempts to contact the student, and any information that was shared if contact was made.

Average number of attempts made to contact each student

Outcome of Attempts	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Total Yearly Average
Students successfully contacted	2.4	2.3	2.6	2.4	2.43
Students not successfully contacted	3.6	2.3	3.7	2.8	3.3

Other Project Activity and Time required per student

Time required to build data base entry with basic info per student	5 minutes
Average time spent in making phone calls/leaving messages/sending emails for each attempt at contact	2 minutes
Average time spent in conversation with student successfully contacted	15 minutes
Time spent entering data for student successfully contacted	5 minutes
Time spent entering data for student not successfully contacted	3 minutes
Time spent per student on paper files	5 minutes

For each student not successfully contacted, we spent 20 minutes on attempts to contact and documentation. And for each student successfully contacted, we spent 35 minutes on attempts to contact, discussion and documentation.

Recommendations

Purpose of the project: The usefulness of this data should be reviewed. A determination should be made as to which if any of the data on ACWAR students should be collected and tabulated in the future, and for what purposes the data should be collected. It should be decided if this is a statistical exercise, meant to discover patterns in what kind of students lose credit and/or for what reasons, or if this project will be evaluated on the efficacy of the advisor outreach. If the latter, then desired outcomes should be identified; for example, the students contacted should be monitored to see if they are less likely than students not contacted to lose credit in following quarters. This would be a way to evaluate if the investment in time created measurable results. If the project is to continue, clarity of objectives could lead to a necessity for a procedure for follow up to be discussed and initiated.

Methodology: The initial letter from Registration and Records should include the request for students to contact a particular advisor in academic advising to discuss their academic standing and academic plans. It could include the contact information for that advisor, or the phone

number and email for advising intake, with the suggestion to make a phone or in-person appointment with that/an advisor at the earliest possible convenience. Academic advising could follow up this letter with another letter or email, with the same suggestion and information. The appointment could be required, as in our conditional admit policy.

Using a form letter or email would save quite a bit of time spent trying to contact the students, time perhaps better spent in actual advising of the same population. Almost all of the contacted students acknowledged that they did receive the letter from registration, so mail seems to be the most reliable method of attempting contact. This could significantly increase the number of students successfully contacted. This change in methodology would also mirror the change in procedures for notifying students whose internship contracts the deans have declined to sign: it would let the students know that we are available to them, but would place the responsibility on the student for initiating further contact. Two letters of this sort could function as the two attempts at phone contact that, on the average, were required for successfully reaching a student during the project last year.

Conclusions: Since there does not seem to be any significant risk for any particular class level, no additional outreach measures for any particular class level are indicated. Since most students contacted seemed to have problems with either motivation or physical or mental health, referrals to academic advising and health and counseling services were most common, but these results do not suggest any immediate additional outreach measures. New outreach advising tools could be designed to address motivation. Or perhaps a yearly invitation to an advising appointment with an advisor or another SASS office staff member would be in order, to help all students be aware of the support services available to them, get some perspective on their academic achievements through a review of the year's accomplishments, and help them feel that they are on track with their academic and career goals.

Appendices

Appendix A – sample Academic Warning letter to student from Registration and Records.

Appendix B – sample page from ACWAR database spreadsheet

Appendix C- Yearly totals of reasons students gave for losing credit - graphic display

Attached.

APPENDIX A – sample Academic Warning letter to student from Registration

(date)

(student name and address)

Dear _____,

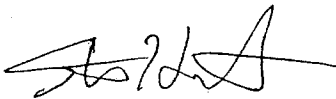
Evergreen is committed to making your entire educational experience meaningful. We recognize that balancing hectic lives with educational goals can be challenging, and sometimes overwhelming, affecting a student's ability to succeed academically. As part of ensuring your success, Evergreen carefully monitors academic progress of each student.

Your academic record has come to my attention. According to our records you were registered for six (6) credits or more for Fall Quarter 2004 and received no credit (see attached Academic Standing Evaluation Report). In accordance with our Academic Progress Policy, you are being placed on Academic Warning for the next two quarters for which you are or were registered for. While on warning, if you (a) receive less than three-fourths of the credit for which you register, or (b) receive an incomplete, you will be required to take a Leave of Absence for one year. **If you believe our records are in error, please contact us immediately in order to avoid potential problems with other administrative offices.**

The college offers a variety of services designed to help you become more successful. The Learning Resource Center and the services provided by Student Support Services and Activities are a few of the resources available to help you make the most of your academic career. At the bottom of the enclosed Academic Standing Policy, you will also find a list of resource services we strongly encourage you consider utilizing. Once you have completed two successful quarters in which you earn at least seventy-five percent of your credit, the Academic Warning status will be removed.

Your success is an important ingredient to help enhance the positive reputation of our entire community. In many ways, your success is our success. We are willing to help, but you must take the first step. Please contact Elaine Hayashi-Petersen, at (360) 867-5195, for any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

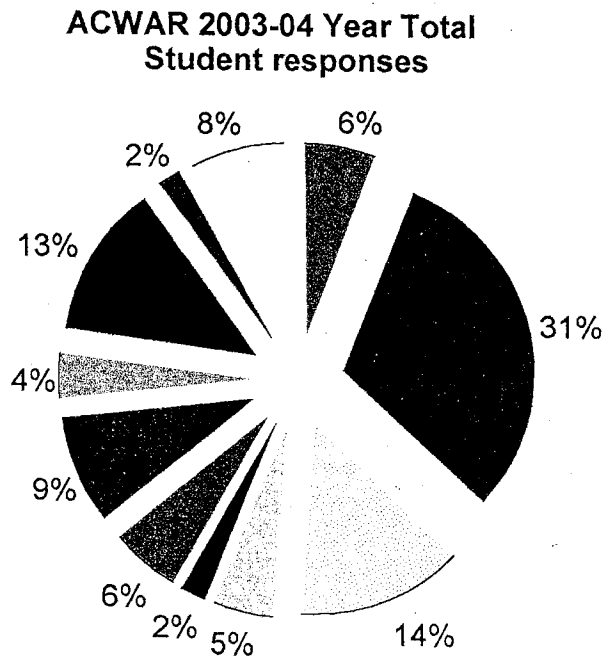


Steve Hunter
Associate Vice President
for Enrollment Management

Appendix C – Student responses

Total of all campuses by percent of reasons students gave for losing credit:

Reason for losing credit	2003-2004 year total
Did not attempt to contact advisor already working with someone, RTA or mistake	6%
	31%
No response to phone calls or emails	14%
Family	5%
	2%
Conflict	6%
	9%
Academic Preparedness	4%
	13%
	2%
Mistake	8%



Total *excluding Tacoma* by percent of reasons students gave for losing credit:

Reason for losing credit	2003-2004 year total
Did not attempt to contact student already working with someone else or mistake	6%
	30%
No response to phone calls or emails	15%
Family	5%
	2%
	6%
	9%
Academic Preparedness	4%
	13%
	2%
Mistake	8%

ACWAR 2003-04 Year Total Student responses excluding TACOMA

