

Fall 2024 Early Alert Pilot Report

In the fall 2024 semester, the Chico State HELP Team launched an Early Alert pilot program in alignment with the objectives of the Advancing Equity Project. The following report shares the goals, participants, and outcomes of that pilot program. The report concludes with the challenges faced during the initial pilot term and current proposed solutions for the pilot's second term.

Goals

The goal of the Fall 2024 Early Alert Pilot was to assess the viability of an academic Early Alert system to identify students who are not meeting course expectations for attendance and/or academic performance. Once identified, the goal is to offer those students the support they need to succeed academically *before* the student receives a poor grade on their transcript.

Process

Participating instructors were provided with a link to a web-based form which would allow them to submit the name, student ID number, related course, and current grade for students of concern. This form fed the submitted information into Chico State 360 where it was then distributed to an appropriate academic advising or support program team based upon the student's unique program membership or declared major. Departments and programs identified as responding units were provided with dashboards and reports via Chico State 360 to alert them when Early Alerts came in for their unit. Staff were asked to initiate up to three attempts to connect with the student to understand what factors were influencing their academic participation and performance and to connect the student with additional resources and guidance as appropriate. Participating instructors and staff members were provided with a [Early Alert Flow Chart.pdf](#) to facilitate understanding of, and provide guidance for, the processing of Early Alerts.

Participants

Faculty Participants

Five courses participated in the pilot, taught by a total of 41 instructors. One additional course, ACCT 202, initially agreed to participate in the pilot program, but withdrew before engaging.

| Course | Count of Instructors |
|-----------|----------------------|
| CHEM 111 | 5 |
| ENGL 130W | 11 |
| HIST 130 | 9 |
| JOUR 130W | 6 |
| POLS 155 | 10 |

Staff Participants

Fifteen units, comprised of 44 staff members, served as Early Alert responders.

| Department/Unit | Count of Staff responders |
|--|---------------------------|
| Academic Advising Programs (AAP) | 7 |
| College of Agriculture Student Success & Retention Office (AGR) | 2 |
| College of Behavioral & Social Sciences Student Success & Advising (BSS) | 5 |
| College of Business Student Advising & Services (BUS) | 6 |
| College of Communication & Education Student Success Team (CME) | 2 |
| College of Engineering, Computer Science, & Construction Management Student Success Center (ECC) | 3 |
| College of Humanities and Fine Arts Success Studio & Advising (HFA) | 2 |
| College of Natural Sciences Student Success Lab & Advising (NSC) | 1 |
| Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) | 3 |
| MESA Engineering Program/Chico Stem Connections Collaborative (MESA) | 3 |
| NCAA Athletic Advising & Compliance (NCAA) | 1 |
| PATH Scholars Foster Youth Program (PATH) | 2 |
| REACH Student Success Center (REACH) | 4 |
| TRIO Student Support Services (TRIO) | 2 |
| Veteran Education and Transition Services (VETS) | 1 |
| Total Count of Responders | 44 |

Student Participants

The five participating courses included a total of 2,716 unique students

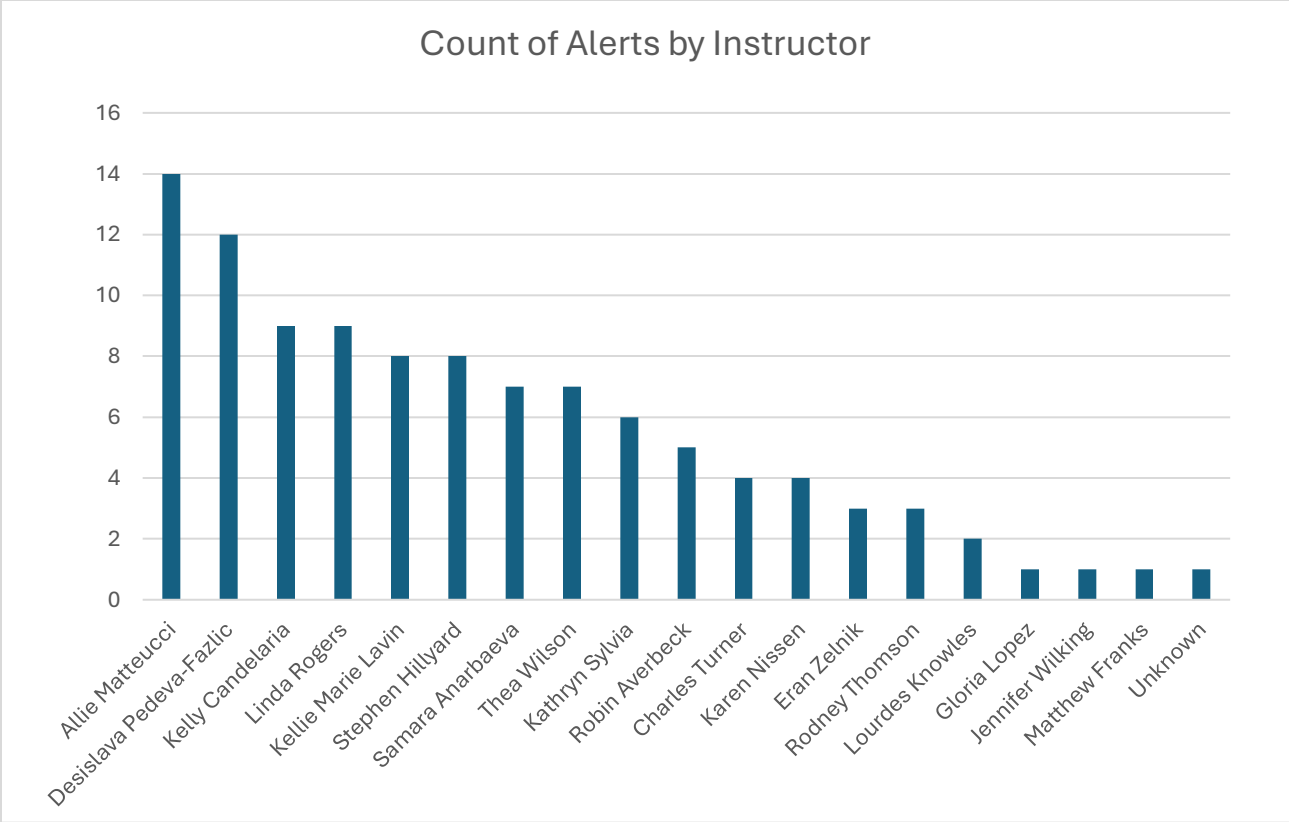
| Course | Count of students |
|-----------|-------------------|
| CHEM 111 | 313 |
| ENGL 130W | 623 |
| HIST 130 | 939 |
| JOUR 130W | 275 |
| POLS 155 | 953 |

Outcomes

A total of 105 Early Alerts were submitted during the Fall 2024 semester.

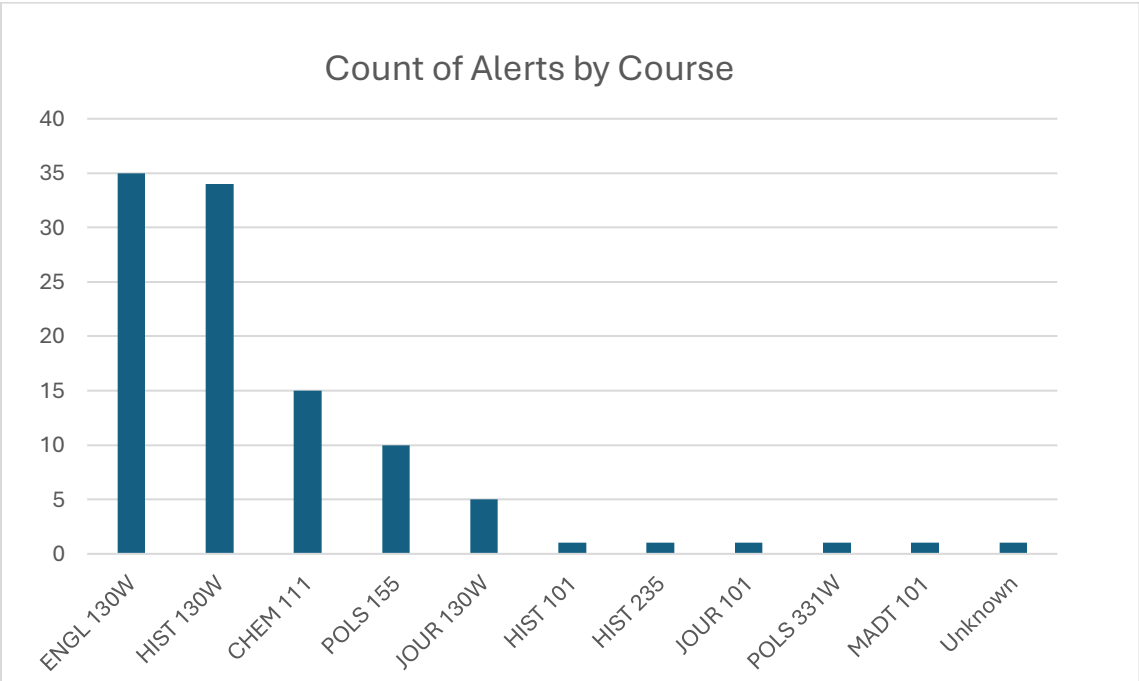
Alerts by Instructor

Of the 41 participating instructors, 19 instructors (46%) submitted at least one alert, while the remaining 22 instructors (54%) submitted none. Of the 19 instructors who engaged with the pilot, the number of submissions ranged from 1-14, with an average of 5.5 submissions per instructor.



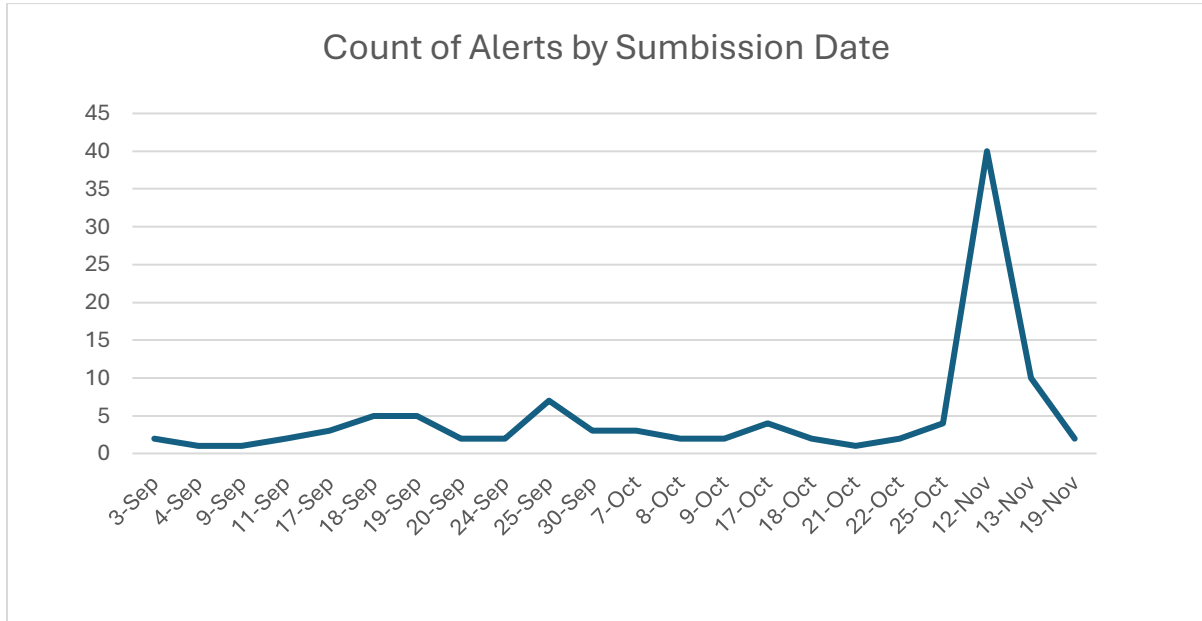
Alerts by Course

Of the five participating courses, 99 alerts were submitted. An additional six alerts were submitted for non-participating courses, for a total of 105 alert Submissions.



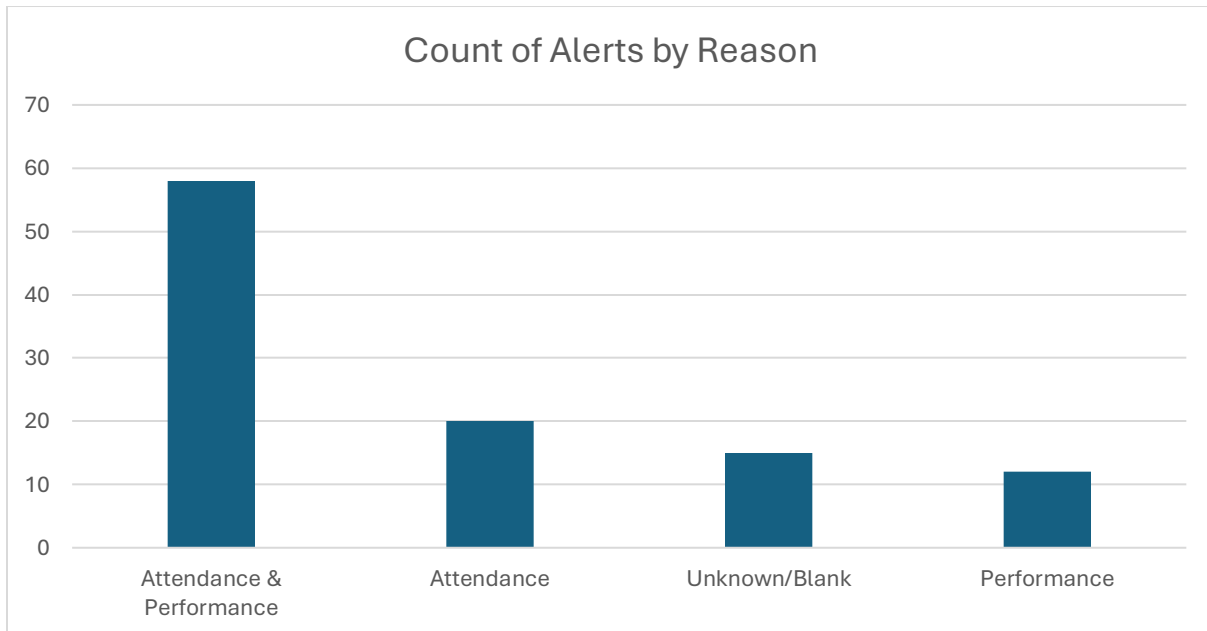
Alerts by Submission Date

Early Alerts were accepted from the date of the pilot launch on August 30, 2024, until the final date for students to drop classes on November 15, 2024. The majority of alerts were received late in the system, following the “last call” notice for alert submissions.



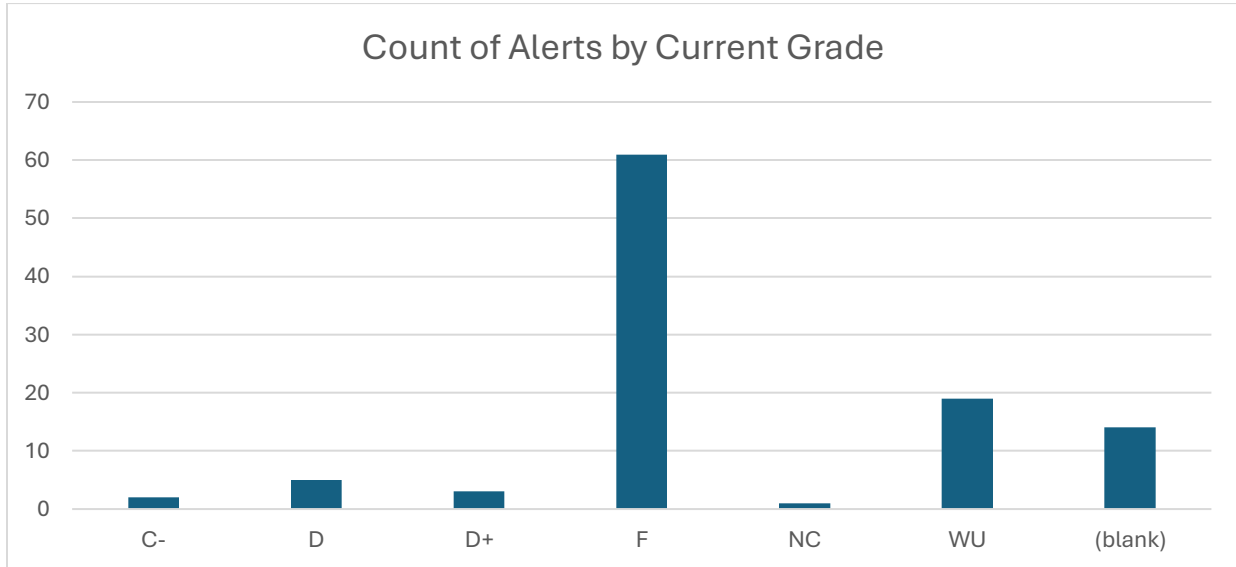
Alerts by Reason

Instructors were offered the opportunity to indicate if they were submitting an alert based on student attendance, student academic performance, or both. Of the 105 alerts submitted, 20 (19%) were for attendance, 12 (11%) were for academic performance, 58 (55%) were for both attendance and performance, and another 15 (14%) were submitted without a specified reason.



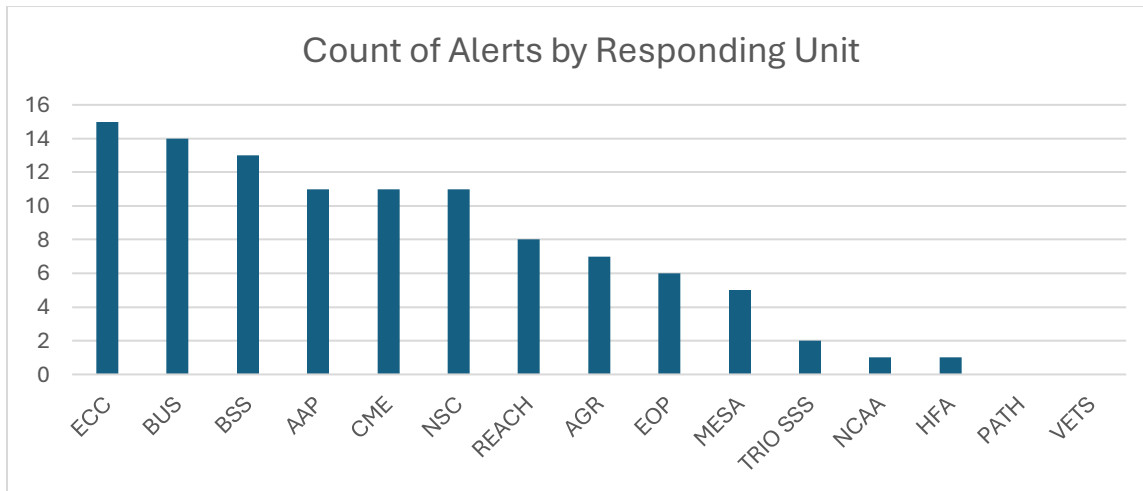
Alerts by Current Grade

Instructors were offered the opportunity to indicate the student's current grade as part of the submissions process. The vast majority of alerts (77%) indicated that the student in question was failing the course at the time of submission.



Alerts by Responding Unit

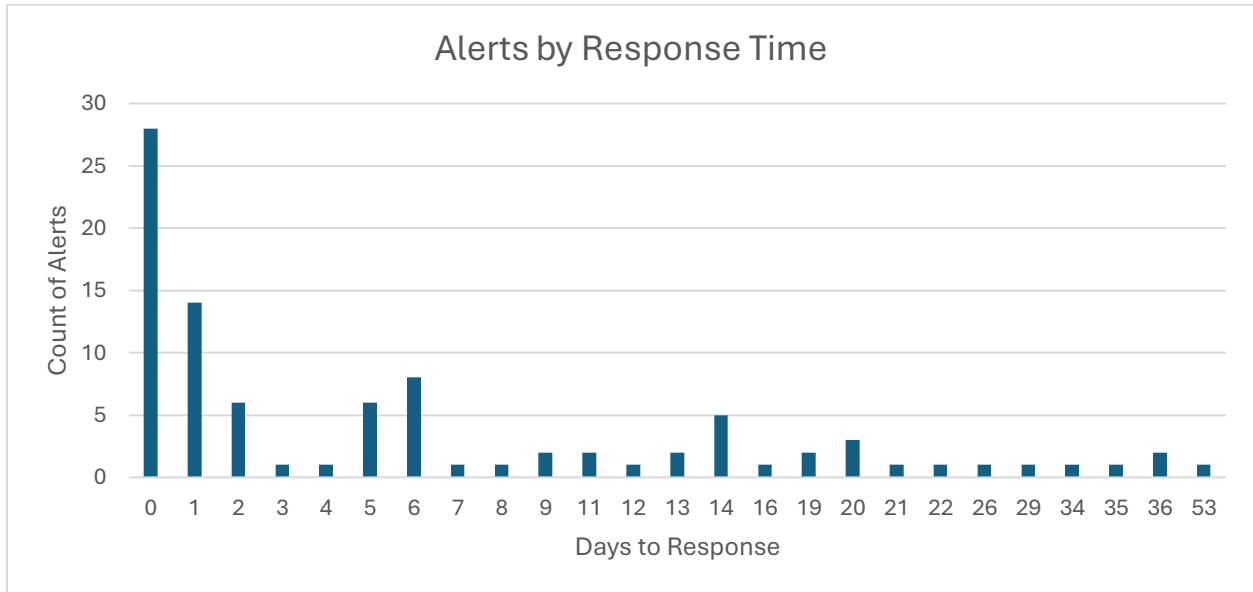
The number of Early Alerts received by each responding unit ranged from 0-15 alerts, with an average of 7 alerts per unit.



Alerts by Response Time

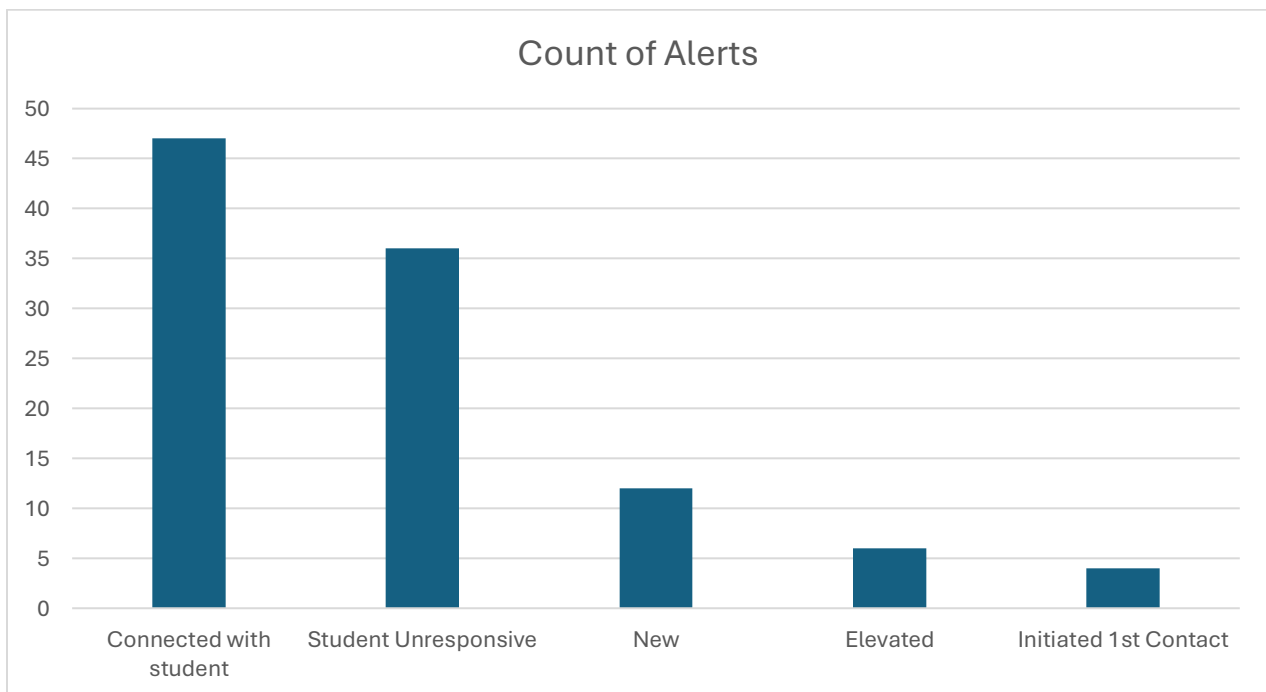
A function was established within CS360 to track the amount of time it took for responding units to update the status of a new alert. Response times ranged from 0-53 days, with an average of 3.7 days until the first status update.

Note: A total of 12 alerts did not experience a status change and were excluded from the response timeline data



Alerts by Final Status

Responding staff were able to update alerts through multiple statuses. Of the 105 alerts received, 47 alerts (45%) were closed with a status of “Connected with Student”, 36 alerts (34%) were closed with a status of “Student Unresponsive”, and 6 alerts (6%) were closed with a status of “Elevated”. A total of 16 alerts (15%) were not closed out and remain open with 12 still in “New” status and 4 in a status of “Initiated First Contact”.



Alerts by Student

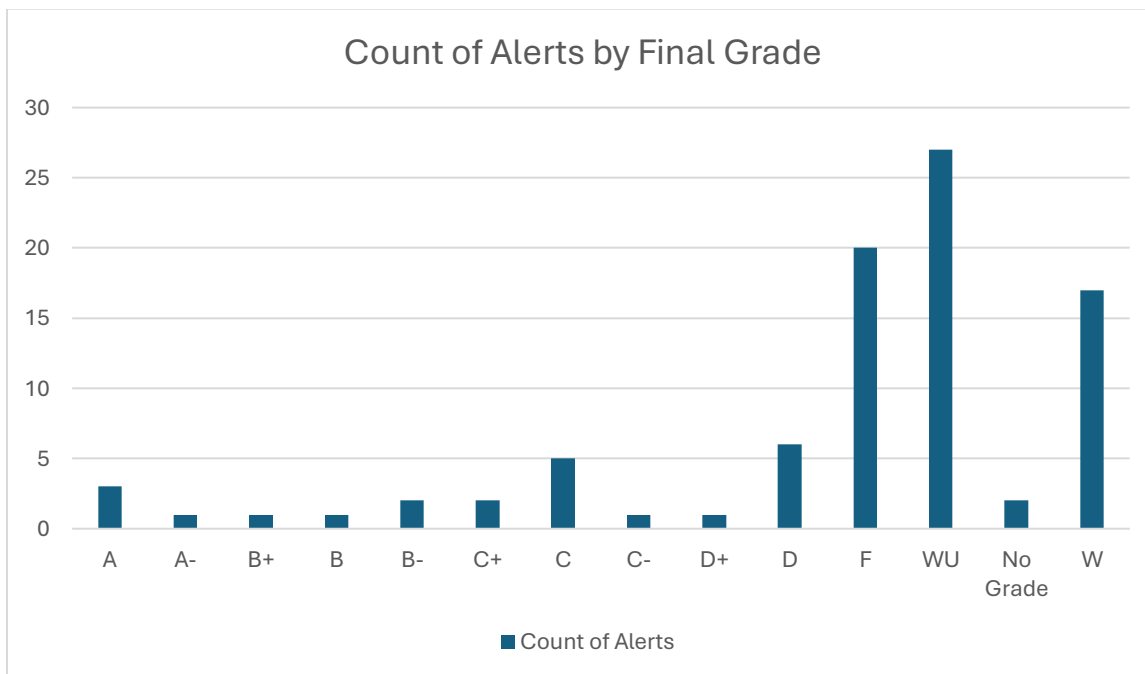
Of the 2,716 students participating in the pilot program, 105 Early Alerts were submitted for 88 unique students. A total of 15 students had multiple alerts submitted for them.

| Number of Alerts Issued | Count of Students |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 0 | 2,628 |
| 1 | 73 |
| 2 | 13 |
| 3 | 2 |

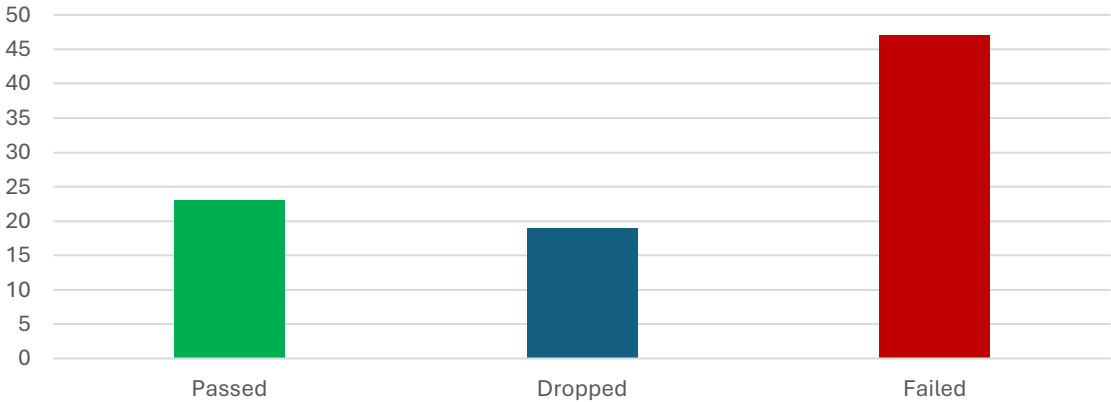
Of the 15 students who had multiple alerts, 13 of them had multiple alerts for the same class. One student was enrolled in two separate pilot courses and received alerts for each. The final student was enrolled in two separate pilot courses, but the data submitted on one of their alerts was insufficient to determine which course it was in relation to, resulting in the alert being eliminated from further analysis.

Alerts by Grade Outcome

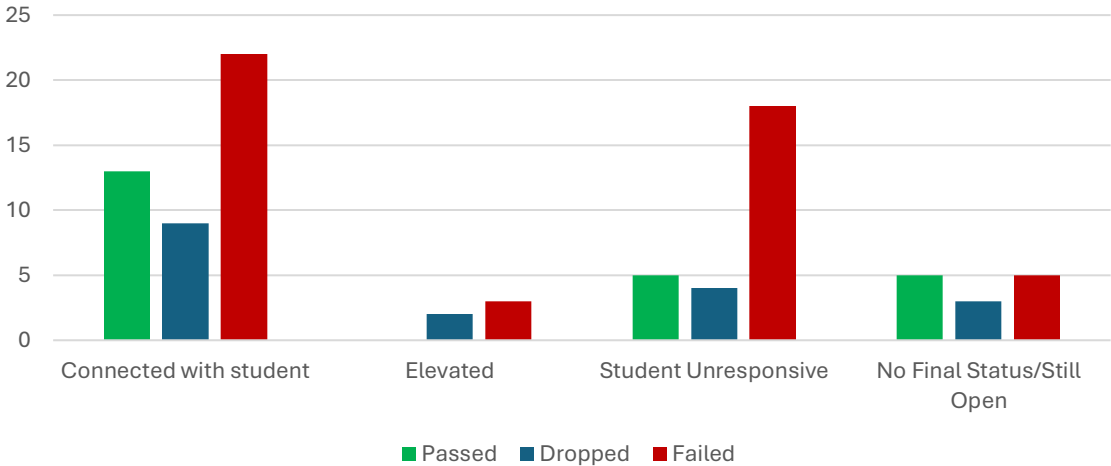
A total of 89 unique grades were recorded in relation to the Early Alert pilot program, of which 23 (26%) ended with an outcome of a passing, 19 (21%) ended with an outcome of dropping, and 47 (53%) ended with an outcome of failing.



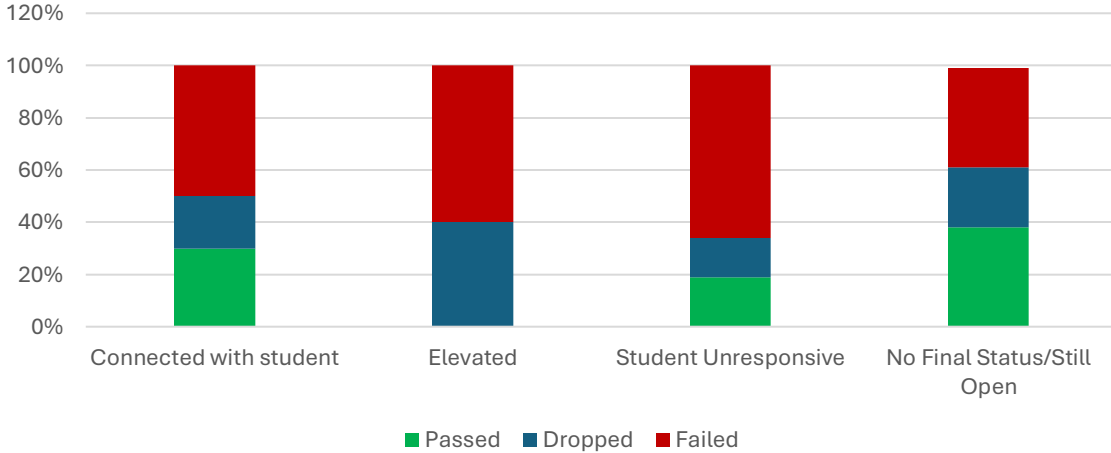
Count of Alerts by Outcome

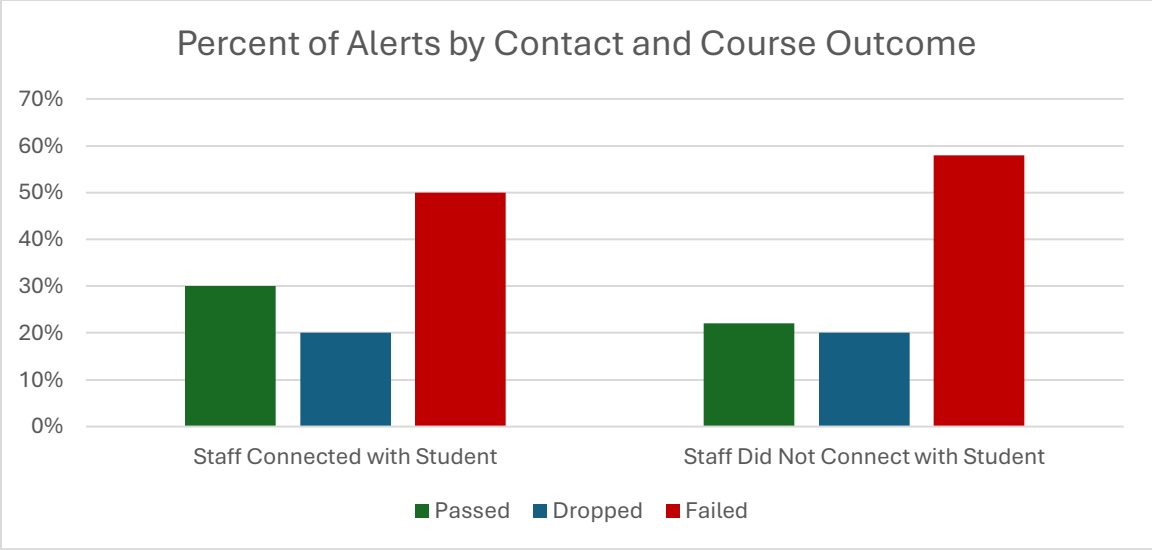


Count of Alerts by Outcomes and Final Status

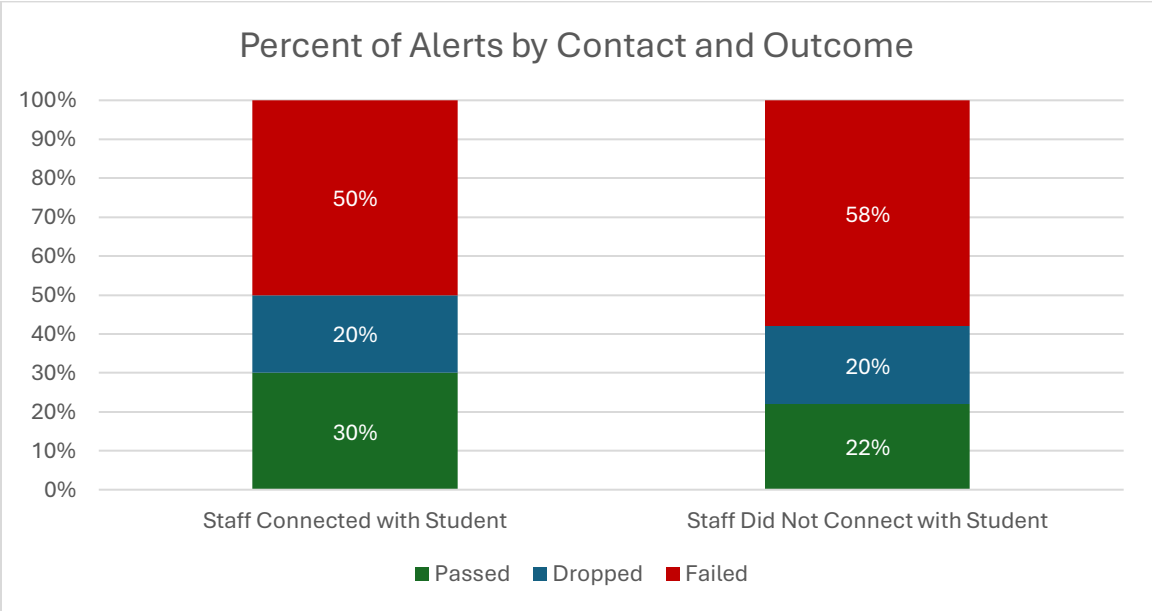


Percent of Alerts by Outcomes and Final Status





While the spring Early Alert pilot results demonstrate room for improvement, positive outcomes have been identified. The resulting data demonstrates that 30% of students who responded to outreach from a staff member passed their classes, compared to 22% of students who did not receive, or were not responsive to staff outreach. Similarly, 50% of students who responded to outreach from a staff member failed their classes, compared to 58% of students who did not receive or were not responsive to outreach. Students who did and did not connect with a staff member were equally likely to drop their course.



Challenges

- Instructors initially received two automated email communications regarding a submitted alert which included 1) confirmation of submission and 2) notice of final status. Participating instructors desired more information about the movement of a submitted alert from one stage to the next
 - **Solution:** Instructors will now receive four automated email communications for each alert submission including 1) confirmation of submission 2) notice of who an alert is assigned and when 3) notice when the alert status is updated and who made that update 4) notice of the final alert status when the alert is closed and who closed it.
- The final status options for Early Alerts included “Resolved”, “Elevated”, and “Student Unresponsive”. The use of the term “resolved” in alert communications caused a lack of clarity around roles and anticipated outcomes between staff and faculty.
 - **Solution:** Final status options have been updated to include “Connected with Student”, “Elevated”, and “Student Unresponsive”.
- Staff responders reported feeling caught off guard by an unexpected influx of alerts late in the term, following the final call for alerts before the course drop deadline. There was also a sense of frustration about being able to do little to support a student so late in the term.
 - **Solution:** The Early Alert submission window was minimized for the second term of the pilot to span from the end of the add/drop period to two weeks before the drop deadline to allow staff adequate time to conduct outreach. Email communications will be sent out by the HELP Team every two weeks during the secondary pilot to remind instructors to submit alerts for students of concern. All staff responders will be included in these communications. These emails will also include information about options available to students and strategies for supporting students based upon upcoming enrollment-related dates and deadlines.
- Some responding units voiced serious concerns about the ability to scale this program beyond the pilot courses given the amount of time required to conduct three attempts of outreach to each student and appropriately document outreach activity.
 - **Solution:** Expectations for staff to conduct outreach to students has been reduced from three attempts to two attempts to more appropriately match current staffing. Students will still receive three outreach attempts including one from the instructor prior to alert submission and two from the responding department. Additionally, a Student Learning Fee Proposal was submitted to request funding for paraprofessionals to support Early Alert response efforts.
- Support program partners who are preparing to migrate away from their current Advisor system have pointed out that the system being piloted does not allow for instructors to submit alerts for positive student behavior or kudos.

- **Solution:** The HELP Team is requesting demonstrations of full TargetX capabilities, as well as full Sales Force Education Cloud capabilities to better understand options to integrate positive feedback for students.
- Faculty have struggled to locate and accurately provide ID numbers for students and as required by the current submission form.
 - **Solution:** The HELP Team will continue working with the Division of IT to explore Canvas integration opportunities.
- Adoption is a challenge amongst both instructors and responding staff members.
 - **Solution:** Consultation meetings will be scheduled with responding units that did not appropriately act on and update Early Alerts for their areas. Academic Affairs partners will be consulted related to instructor adoption.

Recommendations

1. Run the pilot program for a second term

Recommendations for forward movement with the Early Alert pilot include running the pilot for a second term with the above-mentioned solutions in place.

2. Increase responder roles

Response to early alerts will require more personnel and more diverse campus roles in order to successfully scale. Integration of peer responders and housing personnel is recommended, particularly for first year students.

3. Investigate solutions to the issue of attendance

Data demonstrates that lack of course attendance is a primary concern for student academic success. Further investigation should be carried out to determine if attendance concerns are specific to first year courses, specific to this institution, or if the concern is more widespread throughout the higher education environment. A literature review should be conducted to identify any promising strategies to set students' expectations for attendance early and often in their undergraduate career.

4. Identify an established system

This pilot program leveraged customizations to the CRM to run. It is highly recommended that the campus identifies and transition to utilizing a delivered Early Alert system for improved user experience and collaboration for both submitters and responders.