Early Alert System:
Guide to Creating and Submitting Notifications

Institutional Research, Assessment and Analysis

07/29/2021

Guide to Creating and Submitting Notifications

Contents

Guide to Creating and Submitting Notifications

Overview

Coastal Carolina University (CCU) is committed to increasing student retention, persistence, and success. One of the many ways the University can do this is by using the early alert system. This is designed to quickly identify students who may be at risk of academic difficulty or failure and connect them with campus resources.

Faculty often have the most daily contact with students. As such, faculty may be able to identify alarming academic and non-academic behaviors that can greatly impact a student's chance of success. By identifying these behaviors and creating an alert, faculty and staff are better informed to connect students with campus resources such as Academic Advising, Academic Coaching Experience Department, Counseling Services, Accessibility & Disability Services, the Tutoring and Learning Center, the Dean of Students Office, etc.

Concerns about a Student's Mental Health or Safety

Do not submit an early alert for emergency situations concerning a student's mental health or safety. The resources for these situations are listed below:

- *CHANT Intervention Team (linked):* The CHANT Intervention Team (C-IT) is composed of representatives from across campus whose mission is to identify and address student behaviors that are concerning or disruptive to the campus community. The C-IT collaborates to assist students who are struggling to maintain adequate functioning due to behavioral, psychological, or medical concerns. If you are not sure if a student's behavior calls for a C-IT referral, you are advised to go ahead and take the steps to do so. You do not have to determine the level of concern; the C-IT will do that for you. To create a C-IT referral, visit the Student Advocacy and Intervention website linked above. You can also contact them at sai@coastal.edu or 843-349-416.

- *Student Conduct (Dean of Students Office):* The student conduct process is aimed at investigating, responding to, and resolving instances of alleged misconduct both on campus and in the surrounding communities, in order to foster a safe academic and social environment for all students. To better understand the conduct process, or to report a conduct incident, please visit the Student Conduct website (linked), dso@coastal.edu or 843-349-4161.

- *Counseling Services:* Crisis situations include when students are experiencing psychological emergencies such as suicidal behavior, sexual assault or psychotic thoughts. Students can show up and be seen during regular office hours (M-F, 8:30am – 5pm). Services are offered after hours by contacting Public Safety at 843-349-2911 and requesting a counselor. To contact Counseling Services during regular office hours, call 843-349-2305.

- *Department of Public Safety:*
  843-349-2911

Protecting Student Privacy & Adhering to FERPA

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is designed to protect the privacy of student records. CCU conforms to the law regarding conditions under which confidential records will be released. Under FERPA, CCU personnel are permitted to share information from student education records with other school officials who have legitimate educational interests. As such, reporting a student concern does not violate FERPA; *however, the means by which faculty report the concern could become a FERPA violation, if not done correctly.*

Guide to Creating and Submitting Notifications

What is the Early Alert System?

CCU is currently using a module in Anthology (formerly CampusLabs) as an early alert system. The early alert system provides a platform for faculty and staff across campus to communicate information regarding a student's academic and non-academic behaviors. This allows individuals that frequently interact with a student the ability to identify trends inside and outside of the classroom. Being able to identify these trends could be valuable in many instances, such as planning a course schedule and guiding a student to campus resources.

When a success notification is submitted, members of the student's success network can view and respond as needed. The student's success network is made up of faculty and staff that frequently interact with a student. Depending upon the student's major and involvement on campus, these individuals might include academic advisors, academic coaches, athletic advisors, and/or mentors.

What is a Success Notification?

There are three types of success notifications: *alert*, *update*, or *encouragement*. This document is focused on alerts and updates, but feel free to submit encouragements for a student for positive behaviors.

- An **alert** is sent to the student's success network ***requesting that an action be taken*** with the student. For instance, a faculty member may submit an alert when a student has performed poorly on a major exam. In this case, the student's success network could reach out to the student to arrange a meeting or to refer the student to academic resources.

- An **update** is sent to the student's success network indicating any change (or continuing behavior) with the student that ***does not require action***. For instance, a faculty member may submit an update that the student has indicated that they have begun full-time employment off-campus. This does not require a member of the student's network to reach out to the student; however, it may be beneficial for them to know for future interactions with the student.

- An **encouragement** provides the student a positive, strategy-focused feedback to help them feel recognized and supported in their academic journey. Encouragements have pre-defined types (or categories) and can either be set as *private* (only the author and the student) or *all* (the entire success network that is connected to the student).

Who Sees Success Notifications?

The user creating the notification can select different options for allowing others to view it:

1. By default, students cannot see success notifications, except for encouragements.
2. Professional staff – all connected faculty and staff, excluding peer advisors (peer advisors are often graduate assistants).
3. Full network – all connected faculty, staff, and peer advisors.
4. Specific network members – allows the user to select specific faculty and staff that are connected to a student in the system, such as advisors, academic coaches, athletic advisors, etc.
5. Additional audience members – allows the user to select faculty and staff that are not on the student's success network, such as Associate Deans, etc.

When to Send an Alert?

Do not use the early alert system to create an alert for a student that has never attended class. Contact the Registrar's Office or refer to policy STUD-SENA 332 for more information regarding mandatory absence reporting.

Guide to Creating and Submitting Notifications

Prior to submitting an alert, *faculty should attempt to provide classroom or private interventions.* Faculty should continue having open and honest communication with students, while using the early alert system as a resource to communicate valuable information about a student's progress and to seek assistance from others in the student's network.

The earlier an alert is sent, the better chance we have of encouraging or helping the student to overcome obstacles and retain them in the classroom/program. In general, an alert should be sent as soon as a student meets one or more of the following criteria AND action from the student's support network is being requested:

- Student is in jeopardy of meeting the absenteeism limit where they will automatically fail.
- Student has a low quiz, exam, or assignment grade.
- Student has below a "C" average.
- Student has missed assignments and/or exams that significantly affect the student's grade.
- Student cannot mathematically pass a course.

Some coordinated courses may have other specific criteria. If you are teaching one of these courses, you will receive specific alert submission deadlines from a course coordinator or department chair.

General alert submission deadlines:

- Up to a week before submitting interim grades or after the student's grade has changed significantly from their interim grade.
- Five days before the last day to withdraw, especially if you are recommending the student consider dropping the course.

Note: Alerts should not be sent when the student continues to exhibit the same behavior. For instance, once an alert is submitted indicating poor academic performance, a member of the success network contacted the student, and the alert is closed, any future notifications concerning the same academic behavior should be created as updates.

When to Send an Update?

Updates **do not require any action to be taken** with the student. You may document correspondence with a student (emails, in-person interactions, phone, etc.) using updates. Members of the student's network will then can follow up with that student about the information in future interactions. **Do not paste written correspondence into an update.**

Sample reasons to send an update might include:

- Student has been verbally referred to tutoring.
- Student has made improvements in course.
- Student is continuing to struggle in course (once an initial alert has already been submitted).
- Student shared information reasons for missing class.

Guide to Creating and Submitting Notifications

How to Create a Success Notification

If you are teaching a course, there are two ways you can submit a notification.

From Moodle:

Beginning in FA21, all Moodle pages will be pre-populated with the Early Alert System block. If you course does not have the block, you can add it to your course pages by following these directions:

1. In a course page, turn editing on.
2. In the hamburger menu, select "Add a block."
3. Select "HTML" option.
4. On the new block, open the gear dropdown menu and select "Configure HTML block."
5. In the "content" section, select to expand the menu (arrow pointing down).
6. Select the "html" button (</>).
7. Paste the following code

<iframe src="https://coastal.campuslabs.com/beaconv2/widget/Notation" width="350" height="450" frameborder="0"></iframe>

8. Select "save changes."

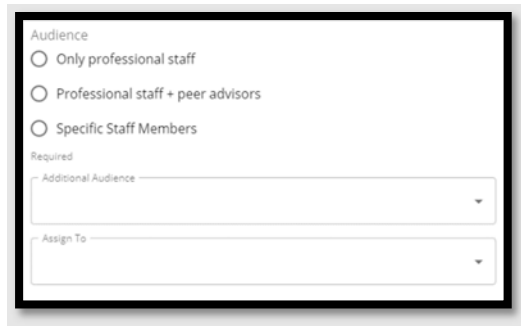**To submit a notification from the Moodle block:**

1. Select "Create Notation" button.

2. A new window will open prompting you to pick a notification type.
   a. Update should be used when information sharing but does not require action.
   b. Alert should be used when requesting action from a staff member.
   c. Encouragement should be used to recognize and support a student.
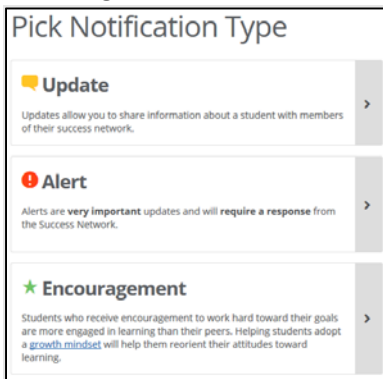
3. Search for the student in the "name or External ID of Student" in the top search box. You may search by first name, last name, or email address. As you type, options for students on your current course rosters should automatically display.

4. Indicate who should know about this notification. For most alerts, selecting "Professional staff + peer advisors" is appropriate. See *Who Sees Notifications?* section above for who this includes.

Guide to Creating and Submitting Notifications

5. Select appropriate categories. You may select as many as needed.
   a. **Academic alert** can be used when the information you are sharing is related to the student's academic performance in your course.
   b. **Academic Coaching Referral** is used to refer a student to the Academic Coaching Experience Department for a 1-1 coaching appointment.
   c. **Excessive absences/no contact** should be used when a student has missed three consecutive class meetings AND there has been no communication concerning the absences. Do not use this option for students who have NEVER attended.
   d. **Notes** can be used to share any information that does not fit into any of the other categories.

6. Select appropriate reasons (described below). You may select as many as needed.
   a. **A1-Frequent absences** should be used when a student's absences, either consecutive or non-consecutive, are beginning to impact their ability to be successful in your course.
   b. **A2-Missing/Late Assignments (significant impact)** should be used when a student has not submitted work or submitted work late, and that behavior is negatively impacting their grade to a level of concern. For example, this behavior has caused the student to lose full letter grades on their assignment or is pulling their class average down.
   c. **A3-Low test/quiz/assign. score (significant impact)** should be used when a student's score on class work is at a level of concern. For example, a low score on a first quiz may indicate the student needs assistance with study strategies for your course even if the quiz will not prevent them from being successful in the course overall.
   d. **A4- Danger of failing (unlikely to pass course)** should be used when the student's grade is below a C. However, with appropriate changes, the student can pass the course.
   e. **A5- Mathematically impossible to pass course** should be used when a student cannot pass the course and you believe the student should speak with their academic advisor about their options for withdrawal from the course.
      i. The following text may be useful in the description box for this type of alert: "Strongly recommend dropping the course."
   f. **N7-Missed meeting** can be used when the student scheduled a meeting with you but did not attend with no communication regarding the absence.
   g. **N8-Referred to other campus resource** can be used when referring the student to a campus resource outside of the student's success network such as the Writing Center. This DOES NOT officially refer the student like the "Academic Coaching Referral" category.
   h. **N9- Financial Issue** can be used if a student has shared financial concerns with you and you want to share that information with their success network.
   i. **N1** to **N6** should be used for advising appointments only.

   j. **NACED1 to NACED3** should be used for the Academic Coaching Experience Department notes only.

7. Provide additional information or details in the "alert details" or "update details" box. Please consider FERPA when providing information here.

8. Select "Create Alert" or "Create Update" button.

From CampusLabs:

1. Log in to https://coastal.campuslabs.com/faculty using your CCU credentials.

2. Select "Success Notifications" in the upper right-hand corner.


3. Select Alert or Update from "Pick Notification Type"
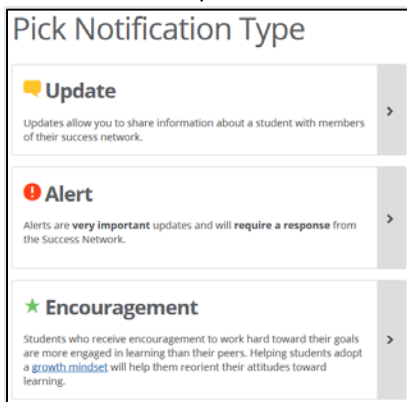
4. Look up student in Search bar. You may search by first name, last name, or email address. As you type, options for students on your current course rosters should automatically display.
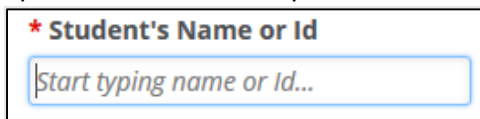
5. Students will not be able to see alerts and updates on their stream. However, it is a best practice to assume students will have access to any information you provide.

6. Indicate who should know about this alert. For most alerts, selecting "Full Network" is appropriate. See *Who Sees Notifications?* section for who this includes.
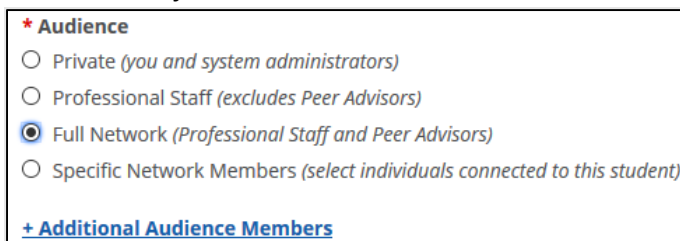
Guide to Creating and Submitting Notifications

7. Select appropriate categories and reasons. You may select as many as needed. For details, see points 5 and 6 in the Moodle directions above.

8. Provide additional information or details in the "description" box. Please keep in mind FERPA guidelines when providing information.

9. Click the "Save" button to submit the notification. You will need to fill in all areas with an asterisk before you may save the notification.

From Beacon (for select staff):

1. Login to https://coastal.campuslabs.com/beacon using your CCU credentials.

2. There are two search bars available. One is available near the top of the screen and is available on all pages. The other is available only on the Students tab. Search for and select a student in either of these search bars. You may search for students by first name, last name, or email address.

3. Select "Create Notification" under the Stream in the Student Report.

4. Select Notification type

   a. Select "alert" if you are referring the student to a campus resource such as Academic Coaching Experience Department.

   b. Select "update" to document correspondence with a student (emails, in-person interactions, phone, etc.).

5. Follow the directions above to finish creating and submitting a notification.

Tips for Submitting a Success Notification

General guidelines for submitting a success notification:

- Select appropriate categories and reasons. This will help when tracking the student's progress later.
- Only provide what information is necessary. Information that is necessary but considered sensitive is best shared with follow-up verbal communication.
- Be mindful of the audience when submitting notifications.
- Speak to the student prior to submitting a notification when appropriate. This will help the student understand that other faculty and staff may be contacting the student about resources and that the student is not in trouble.
- **Do not include specific details about a student's medical, financial, or personal well-being. Even if the student shares personal details with a faculty or staff member, the student may not be comfortable with having those details shared with others.**

Helpful information to include in the notification:

- Any communications you've had with the student about the issue.
- The name of the course the student is enrolled in (e.g. ENGL 101).
- If the student is allowed to make up work.
- Changes that may indicate deteriorating academic focus (disclosure of major life event, drop in attendance).
- Disengagement in the classroom.

- Resources you feel could be beneficial to the student's success.

It is best to limit specific details that might make a student less likely to communicate with those on their success network. For instance, providing the information that a student did not perform well on the first exam will provide enough information to provide a student with resources. Providing the exact grade is unlikely to change the approach to helping the student.

Below are some basic examples.

Instead of: Matt scored a 17 on the first exam. I do not believe he will pass the class.

Try: Matt has consistently attended class; however, he scored a low grade on his first exam. I am concerned about his progress in the course. I have spoken to him about resources available and referred him to the Academic Coaching Department.

Instead of: Sarah failed her first in-class assignment as she did not finish in time. She communicated that she has issues with dyslexia, yet she does not have any documentation for accommodations.

Try: Sarah is consistently attending class and putting forth effort. However, it appears that some personal issues are impeding her success. I have referred her to the appropriate resource on campus and encouraged her to follow-up with her advisor.

What Happens Next?

For an alert, at least one member of the student's success network (professional or faculty advisor, academic coach, or athletic advisor) attempts to contact the student within 2 business days. There will be three attempts to contact the student over the course of 6 business days. The success network member will update and then close the alert when the outreach process is complete (i.e. the student was contacted or the student did not respond to all three attempts at contact.

In some cases, the success network member may need to contact the individual that submitted the alert if further information is needed. Also, in some cases, multiple members of the student's success network will reach out to the student.

The success network member may ask for a meeting or refer the student to appropriate campus resources. If a meeting is schedule, the success network member will later update the alert with notes about the meeting. For example, a brief description of the meeting or if the student missed the meeting. For an update, nothing further will happen but the student's success network will still be notified of the update.

Questions?

For questions, contact earlyalert@coastal.edu