# ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT SUCCESS ALERT

## Promoting a Culture of Persistence, Success, and Completion

A new Student Success Alert system was adopted in Spring 2015 with proactive strategies to alert at-risk students by offering individualized interventions. This report summarizes the effect of the alert system during 2015 and 2016 as well as student and faculty perceptions of these efforts.

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# Assessment of Student Success Alert

## PROMOTING A CULTURE OF PERSISTENCE, SUCCESS, AND COMPLETION

Frederick Community College has pledged to substantially increase graduation rates by 2025 by focusing on strategies to create a unified culture of persistence, success, and completion. To that end, the Early Alert system was reviewed and the Student Success Alert (SSA) was implemented in Spring 2015, adopting a proactive strategy to alert at-risk students by offering individualized interventions.

Furthermore, the College adopted two Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in assessing the effectiveness of this initiative:

1. End of semester course completion rates and
2. The utilization rate of the Early Success Alert by faculty members

Thereafter, two surveys were designed and conducted at the end of the Spring 2015 and Spring 2016 semesters to gauge the perceptions of students and faculty members about the SSA form and process. This assessment is organized in four sections:

1. The SSA Utilization
2. The Course Completion Rate
3. The Result of the Faculty Survey
4. The Result of the Student Survey

## Executive Summary

1. The withdrawal rate was 7% in Spring 2016 and declined by three percent compared to the inception of the SSA.
2. The Success Rate increased by two percent since the inception of the SSA.
3. 41% of the students who received the SSA successfully completed their courses.
4. 23% of students reported they did not receive the SSA email that was sent by their instructors. This rate is an indication that more students received the SSA in 2016 compared to 2015 (51%).
5. 74% of the students reported that the contact with their instructor(s) helped in having them successfully complete their courses. This rate was higher (89%) in 2015.
6. All faculty ratings were higher based on 2015 responses compared to 2016.
7. 71% of faculty reported that the SSA form was easy to use and 88% agreed the form was easy to locate.
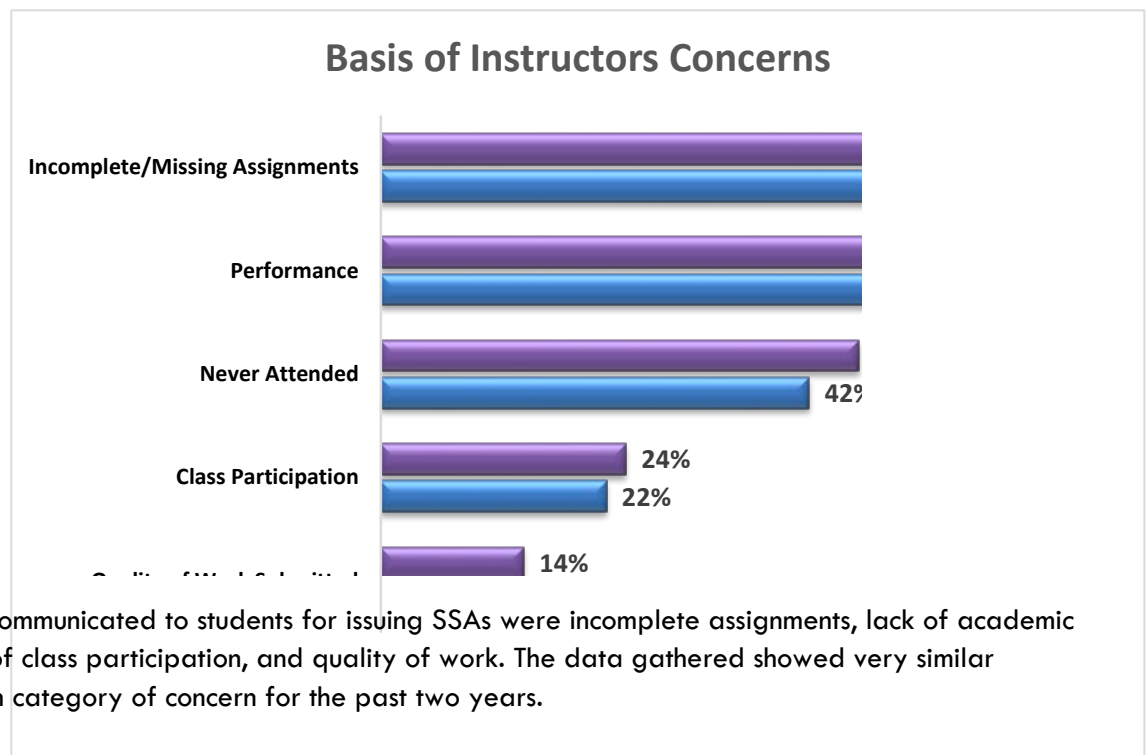
8.  70% of faculty agreed the SSA form has all necessary components to guide students toward success.
9.  58% of faculty agreed that overall the SSA enhances the culture of persistence.
10. 59% of faculty agreed the SSA helps the students to succeed.

# SSA Use

The College has been using the SSA form since Spring 2015 which allows faculty members to alert students who were not performing optimally in their classes. Several professional development sessions were conducted for full-time and adjunct faculty members to inform them about the importance of utilization of the form, where to access it, and how to use it. In Spring 2016, Instructors emailed 1,656 duplicated SSAs to 966 students and in Spring 2015, Instructors emailed 1,775 duplicated SSAs to 1,091 students. Data retrieved from PeopleSoft indicated that faculty members issued 28% more SSAs in Spring 2016 compared to the same semester in 2014 while seven percent fewer SSAs were issued between Spring 2015 and Spring 2016.

**SSA Utilization Rate**

| Spring 2014 | Spring 2015 | Spring 2016 |
|:-----------:|:-----------:|:-----------:|
| 1,289 | 1,775 | 1,656 |
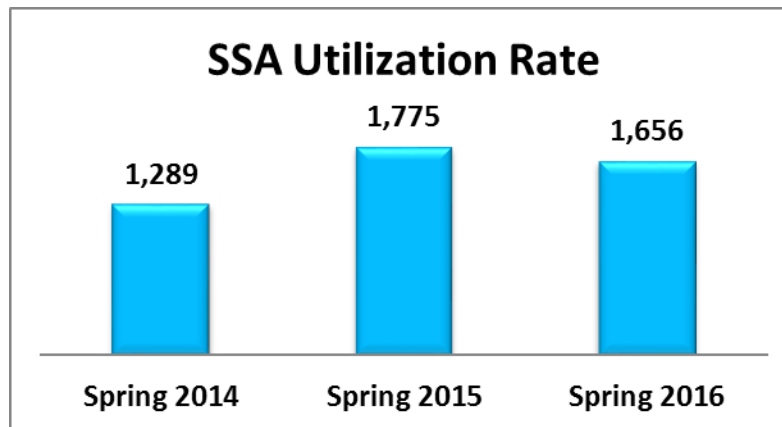
The College collects data on the factors faculty determined were areas of concern impeding student success. The reasons instructors cited for issuing alerts are shown on the graph below.

## Basis of Instructors Concerns



- Incomplete/Missing Assignments
- Performance
- Never Attended — 42%
- Class Participation — 24% / 22%
- Quality of Work Submitted — 14%

The main concerns communicated to students for issuing SSAs were incomplete assignments, lack of academic performance, lack of class participation, and quality of work. The data gathered showed very similar percentages in each category of concern for the past two years.

# A Positive Trend: Course Completion Rate

The SSA process and form was adopted in Spring 2015 and the positive grade trend indicates that the utilization of the alert is improving students success.  The withdrawal rate has declined three percentage since Spring 2014. In addition, F grades declined one percent in Spring 2016 in comparison to 2015 while A grade increased by one percent.
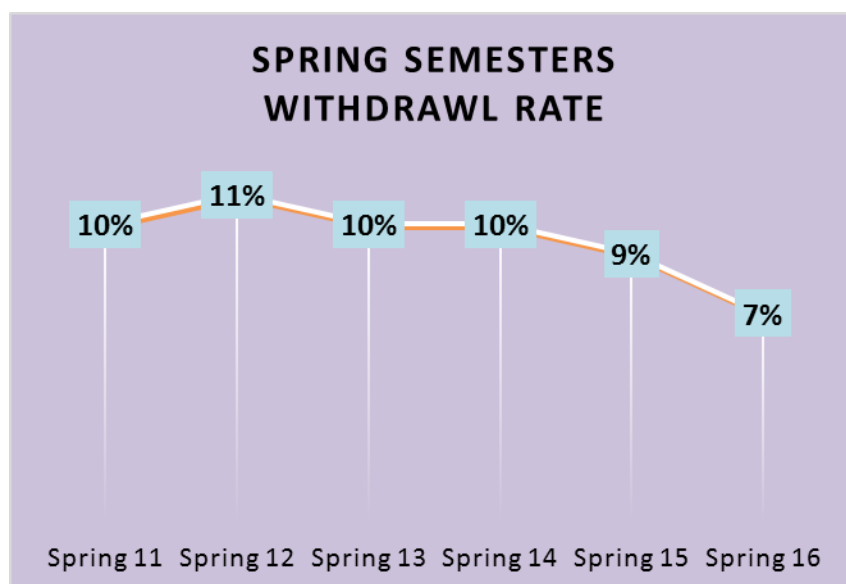


| All Students -Grade Distribution: Spring 2011-Spring 2016 | | | | | | | | | | | | | Only Students Received SSA | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Spring 2011 | | Spring 2012 | | Spring 2013 | | Spring 2014 | | Spring 2015 | | Spring 2016 | | Spring 2015 | | Spring 2016* | |
| Grade | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| A | 5721 | 34% | 5539 | 33% | 5446 | 34% | 5547 | 35% | 5274 | 35% | 5643 | 36% | 31 | 2% | 45 | 3% |
| B | 4188 | 25% | 4217 | 25% | 3948 | 25% | 3869 | 25% | 3758 | 25% | 3867 | 25% | 171 | 10% | 132 | 8% |
| C | 2185 | 13% | 2080 | 13% | 2102 | 13% | 2038 | 13% | 2079 | 14% | 2207 | 14% | 225 | 13% | 234 | 14% |
| D | 727 | 4% | 721 | 4% | 770 | 5% | 759 | 5% | 710 | 5% | 775 | 5% | 170 | 10% | 187 | 12% |
| S | 434 | 3% | 479 | 3% | 434 | 3% | 283 | 2% | 312 | 2% | 318 | 2% | 34 | 2% | 65 | 4% |
| F | 1620 | 10% | 1566 | 9% | 1601 | 10% | 1550 | 10% | 1702 | 11% | 1592 | 10% | 726 | 42% | 615 | 38% |
| U | 84 | 1% | 104 | 1% | 125 | 1% | 46 | 0.3% | 75 | 0.5% | 83 | 1% | 59 | 3% | 65 | 4% |
| Z or I | 69 | 0% | 63 | 0% | 73 | 0% | 46 | 0.3% | 13 | 0.1% | 131 | 1% | 2 | 0.1% | 20 | 1% |
| W | 1724 | 10% | 1818 | 11% | 1573 | 10% | 1581 | 10% | 1324 | 9% | 1147 | 7% | 303 | 18% | 251 | 16% |
| Total Grades | 16752 | 100% | 16587 | 100% | 16072 | 100% | 15719 | 100% | 15247 | 100% | 15763 | 100% | 1721 | 100% | 1614 | 100% |
| Successful | 13255 | 79% | 13036 | 79% | 12700 | 79% | 12496 | 79% | 12133 | 80% | 12810 | 81% | 631 | 37% | 663 | 41% |
| Unsuccessful | 3497 | 21% | 3551 | 21% | 3372 | 21% | 3223 | 21% | 3114 | 20% | 2953 | 19% | 1,090 | 63% | 951 | 59% |
| AU (Audit) | 130 | | 130 | | 101 | | 118 | | 139 | | 114 | | 30 | | 27 | |

It is important to note the success rate of students who received SSA increased from 37% to 41% while the withdrawal rate declined from 18% to 16%.

# Faculty Survey

In Spring 2015 and 2016, the Center for Teaching and Learning distributed an online survey to full- and part-time faculty to gauge their perceptions concerning the SSA form and the process.

| Year | Full-Time | | | Adjunct | | | Not Identified | Total Survey Received |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Survey Sent | Survey Received | Response Rate | Survey Sent | Survey Received | Response Rate | Responses | |
| 2015 | 101 | 26 | 26% | 400 | 44 | 11% | 6 | 76 |
| 2016 | 102 | 33 | 32% | 384 | 60 | 16% | 10 | 103 |

In Spring 2016, more faculty responded to the survey compared to Spring 2015. The response rates for both faculty categories, however, remain low.  In order to have a 95% confidence level, 229 completed surveys would have needed to be completed to generalize the results with a 5%+/- margin of error. In Spring 2016, the response rates for full-time and adjunct faculty were 32% and 16% respectively. Because, neither group had a large enough sample size to perform statistical analysis, a comparison between full-time and adjunct faculty responses was not performed.

In both 2016 and 2015, more than 70% of the respondents reported that they used the SSA form while 28% and 24% indicated that they did not in respective years.
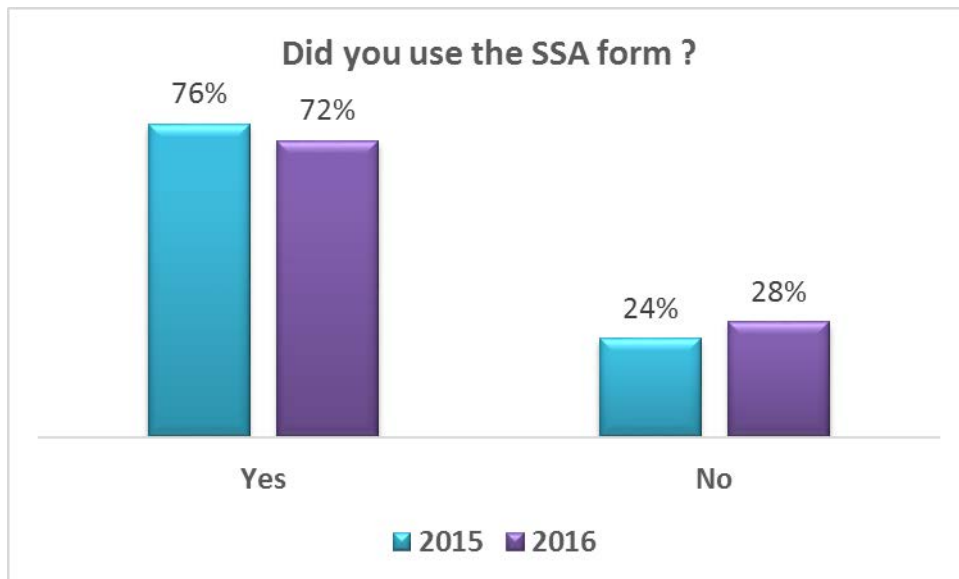
Faculty members who did not use the SSA form cited the following reasons:

| Reasons for Not Using the SSA | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2015 | | 2016 | |
| | Adjunct | Full-Time | Adjunct | Full-Time |
| I was not aware that the SSA form existed. | 5 | | 6 | |
| I did not know how to access the SSA form. | 4 | | 1 | |
| I did not have any students who needed to be alerted in Spring. | 4 | 1 | 8 | 1 |
| I used my own form. | 1 | | 5 | 2 |

**Full-Time Faculty:**
➡ I used the SSA form in Fall 2015 but there was no impact.

**Adjunct Faculty:**
➡ I chose not to send alerts this semester but have sent them in the past.
➡ I connect with my students personally when they are behind. My view, a "form" letter is not so useful for students. They benefit more from personal attention.
➡ I understand the philosophy of prompting a student who might need to increase his/her academic awareness but the title of success alert is misleading.
➡ In the past, I have found the SSA form helpful for students who were ""not aware"" of their situation.

More than one-third (31% in 2015 and 34% in 2016) of the faculty members reported that none of the students responded to the SSA emails.
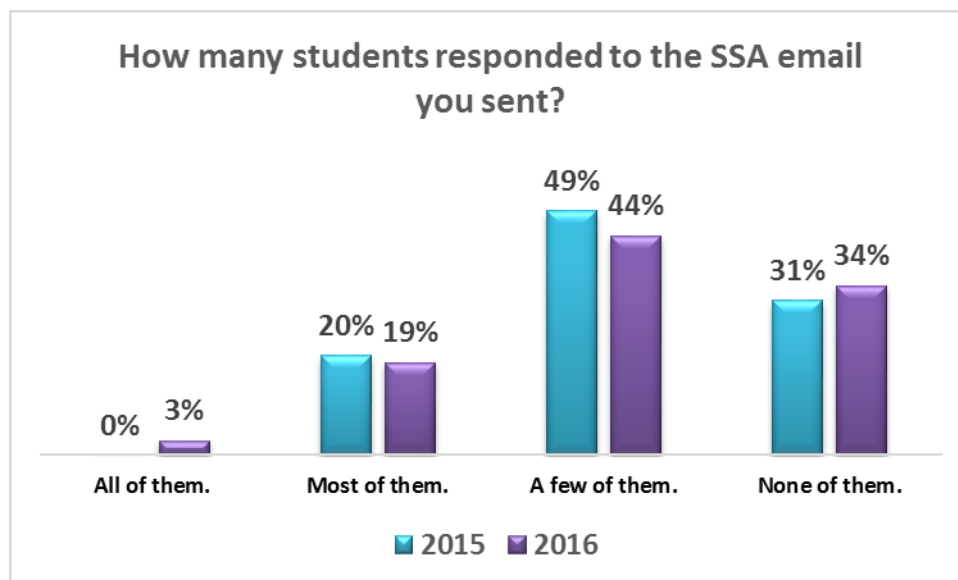
The analysis in this report is based on the perceptions of the faculty members who used the SSA with the first three questions in the survey referencing the SSA form.

*Comments from Faculty:*

➡ *'I don't think this helped my struggling student at all. The students don't know the purpose of the form or what steps to take if they receive it. I also did not get any communication from anybody regarding my student even though it supposedly gets automatically submitted to the department.'*

➡ *' I love the idea behind the SSA, and liked using it. However, the students I used it for, with one exception, didn't acknowledge the receipt of the note. The SSA should also be set up to automatically go to the supervisor/counselor of any cohort the student is a part of (Athletics, MSS, SS.*

➡ *'I think the wording could be changed to be a little friendlier and welcoming. It seems to me that students are afraid to receive an SSA rather than welcome it as an opportunity to succeed.'*
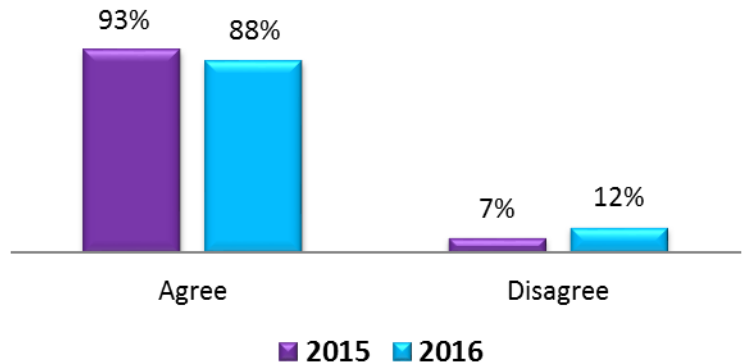
➡ *'The form and process makes sense. However, my experience has been students do not check their email on a regular basis or respond to emails. Using the form shows the commitment of the college, which is important. I have better luck with texting my students and using the Remind.com alerts that can be sent out through texting. I always get a response back when texting students. Maybe the SSA can go through a texting system rather than an email system.'*

Overall, faculty thought that the form was easy to use and to locate and about 29%, however, disagreed that the SSA form had all of the necessary components to guide students toward success.
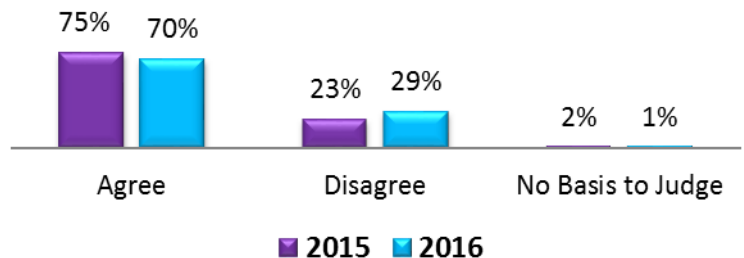
### The SSA form is easy to use.

| | Agree | Disagree |
|---|---|---|
| 2015 | 96% | 4% |
| 2016 | 94% | 6% |
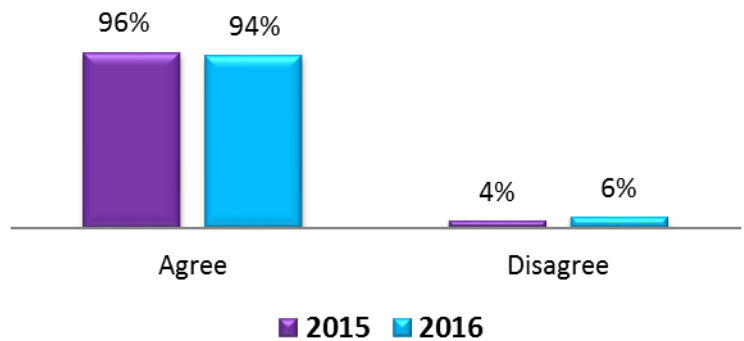
### The SSA form is easy to locate.

| | Agree | Disagree |
|---|---|---|
| 2015 | 93% | 7% |
| 2016 | 88% | 12% |

### The SSA form has all neccessary components to guide students toward success.

| | Agree | Disagree | No Basis to Judge |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2015 | 75% | 23% | 2% |
| 2016 | 70% | 29% | 1% |

The following two questions referenced the utilization impact of SSA form on student success as perceived by faculty.

**Comments from Faculty:**

➡ *"I thought that the SSA was confusing to some students. Honestly, I was not advising all students to persist in the class. Some were very concerned about their grades because they were transferring to competitive programs and had had a rough start to the class. For those students, and for the students who were not completing the work, I advised withdrawing from the class when it became nearly impossible for them to get the grade that they needed. The entire SSA talked about remaining in the class except for the one paragraph in the middle that I wrote which advised them to withdraw. This was very confusing to them. I would prefer that this not be a form letter. It feels impersonal and prevents me from having the honest communication that I need with my students."*

➡ *"I use SSAs often. I don't think a student who has received one has ever passed my class. Usually once students have stopped trying, they don't resume. I wish the SSA triggered an outreach from a counselor that included an explanation of repercussions (especially in terms of financial aid) of failing the class."*
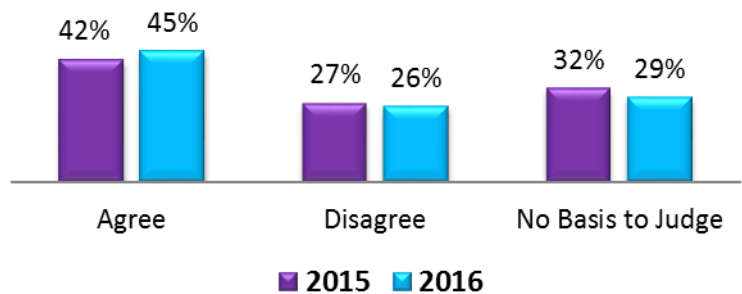
In 2016, 54% of the faculty agreed that students who had received the SSA persisted in the class. This response was confirmed by the grade distribution of Spring 2016 students. The "unsuccessful" rate of all Spring 2016 students was 19% compared to 59% of the students who had received SSAs. This comparison is reported on page four of this report.

**Students who received the SSA persisted in the class.**

| | Agree | Disagree | No Basis to Judge |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2015 | 46% | 49% | 5% |
| 2016 | 54% | 43% | 3% |
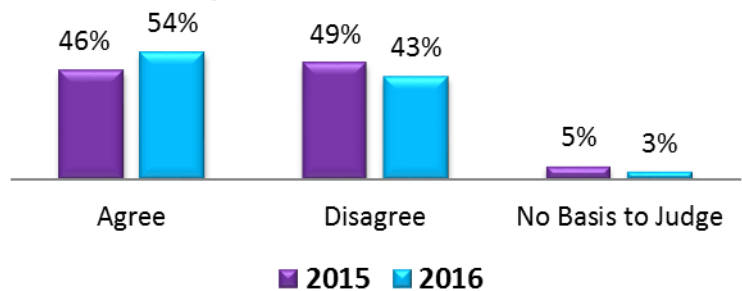
**Students who received the SSA were appreciative of this communication.**

| | Agree | Disagree | No Basis to Judge |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2015 | 42% | 27% | 32% |
| 2016 | 45% | 26% | 29% |

Forty-five percent of the faculty respondents agreed that students who had received SSAs were appreciative of this communication, which was three percent lower than last year. Approximately one third of the faculty members indicated that they had "no basis to judge" as to whether students were appreciative of the communication.

The College designed the SSA form in part to support efforts to enhance the culture of persistence. In 2016, 58% of faculty agreed that utilization of the SSA form enhances the culture of persistence and 29% percent disagreed with the statement. Thirteen percent indicated that they did not have a basis to judge.  The agreement ratings were 15% higher in 2015 compared to those in 2016.
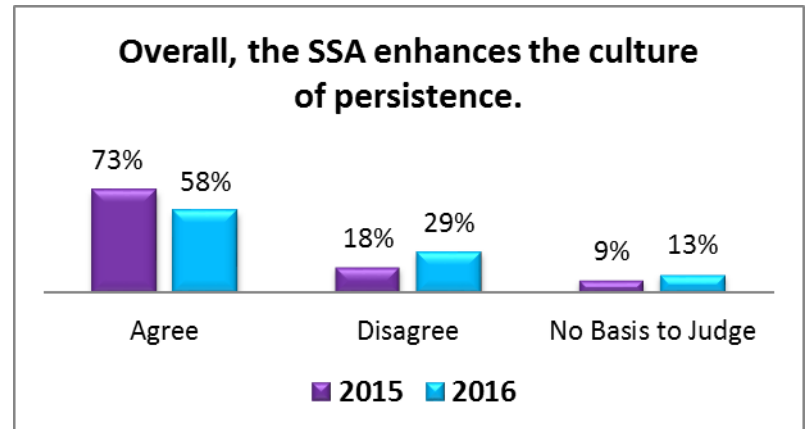
**Comments from Faculty:**

➡ *"The form and process makes sense. However, my experience has been students do not check their email on a regular basis or respond to emails. Using the form shows the commitment of the college, which is important. I have better luck with texting my students and using the Remind.com alerts that can be sent out through texting. I always get a response back when texting students. Maybe the SSA can go through a texting system rather than an email system."*

➡ *"This is an excellent idea and is sure to make a difference in students' abilities to persist. However, it was never known if the student actually received the SSA, or opened their email to view it, or if the student followed through with getting the extra help they needed to be successful in the course week of class and definitely by the end of the second week of class, for students who have already fallen behind (not turned in assignments or skipped class).  Maybe tie it in to financial aid or some other institutional mechanism. Early intervention is key in student retention and success."*

➡ *"It is a good tool but I would prefer the ability to customize the message so it sounds as if I wrote it. The wording is not something I would typically say, and my students know this. Since all the alerts say the exact same thing, it does not seem that it is perceived as genuine."*

**Overall, the SSA enhances the culture of persistence.**

| | Agree | Disagree | No Basis to Judge |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2015 | 73% | 18% | 9% |
| 2016 | 58% | 29% | 13% |

Lastly, faculty were asked whether they agreed with the statement "Overall, the SSA helps the student to succeed".  In 2016, 58% of them answered positively, while 32% disagreed. Ten percent of faculty members surveys reported that they had no basis to judge. The number of faculty who agreed with this statement dropped by 3% between 2015 and 2016.

**Overall, the SSA helps the student to succeed.**

| | Agree | Disagree | No Basis to Judge |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2015 | 61% | 26% | 13% |
| 2016 | 58% | 32% | 10% |
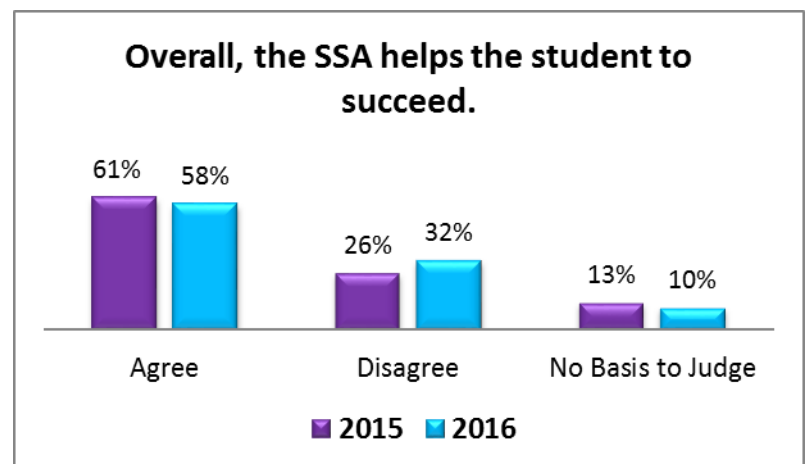
The next section of the report related specifically to professional development activities provided to full-time and adjunct faculty members.

The responses to the questions posed to faculty are detailed in the tablebelow:

| Please indicate your experiences with and/or interest in the following. | 2015 | | 2016 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Adjunct Faculty | Full-Time Faculty | Adjunct Faculty | Full-Time Faculty |
| I attended a professional development activity or information session that explained the use of the SSA form. | 17 | 21 | 13 | 20 |
| | 45% | 55% | 39% | 61% |
| I received information about how to use the SSA form prior to the start of classes. | 26 | 21 | 33 | 21 |
| | 55% | 45% | 61% | 39% |
| I am interested in participating in activities/sessions focused specifically on the SSA form. | 8 | 10 | 7 | 5 |
| | 44% | 56% | 58% | 42% |
| I am interested in professional development or information sessions about student success in general. | 25 | 15 | 27 | 16 |
| | 63% | 38% | 63% | 37% |

The full transcripts of comments by faculty members are reported in Appendix I.

# Student Survey

In Spring 2016, 966 at-risk students received the Student Success Alert (SSA) form encouraging them to meet with their instructors and seek assistance using different resources available to them on campus. At the conclusion of the semester, students received a "robocall" informing them of an upcoming online survey. Students were emailed a link to a questionnaire designed to gauge their perceptions of the SSAs received from their instructors.

In 2016, only 84 students completed the survey compared to 284 students in 2015. Although, the methodology for survey distribution and the questionnaire were the same, the completion rate was very low in Spring 2016.

Seventy-three percent of the 2016 students reported that they received an alert from their instructors and opened it compared to 42% in Spring 2015.

## Do you recall receiving Student Success Alert email from your instructor?

| | 2015 | 2016 |
|---|---|---|
| Yes. I received and opened it. | 42% | 73% |
| Yes. I received it and did not open it. | 7% | 5% |
| No. I did not receive it. | 51% | 23% |

The students were asked to report if they *met or communicated with their instructor(s) after receiving the SSA email(s)*. Of the respondents who reported that they received and opened the email in 2016, 65% of them indicated that they met or communicated with their instructor compared to 69% in 2015.

## Did you meet/communicate with your instructor after receiving the email(s)?

| | 2015 | 2016 |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 69% | 65% |
| No | 31% | 35% |

*Comments from Students:*
- He is always so informative and helpful, easy to reach. I feel like I received great help.
- I feel that the contact really helped me with the courses I've had this semester. It helped me show what I needed to do in order to get through the classes.
- I loved receiving it- lifesaver.
- It felt like the teacher was more personable, which is very nice!
- It helped a lot. (3 Responses)
- It helped me focus on the areas of concern and improvement.
- It helped me understand what I needed to work on and alerted me.
- It made me realize that I was struggling in the class, and I needed to put a better effort into studying.
- It motivated me to put more effort into the class.
- It reminded me to focus and really put into it the effort that the instructor was to teach the class.
- It shows the teacher cares...I'm not another number.
- It was a kick in the butt to keep moving again.
- It's nice to talk about personal progress with the instructor.
- Talking to my professor about improving my grade but that did not work so I have to retake the class.

- The instructor gave me more tips, techniques, and extra credit opportunities to help me improve.
- We worked it out. I received the help I needed--plus some suggestions for where to get help that had not occurred to me. I ended up with a B in the course.
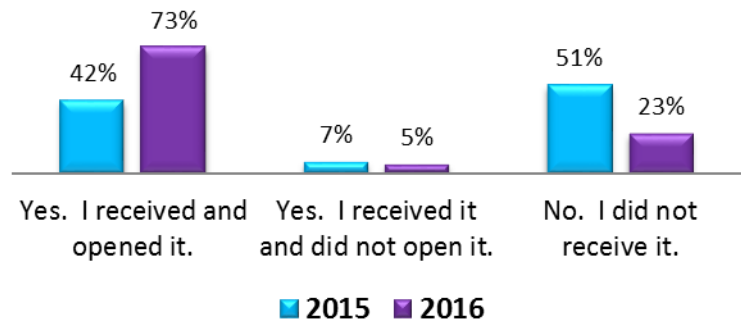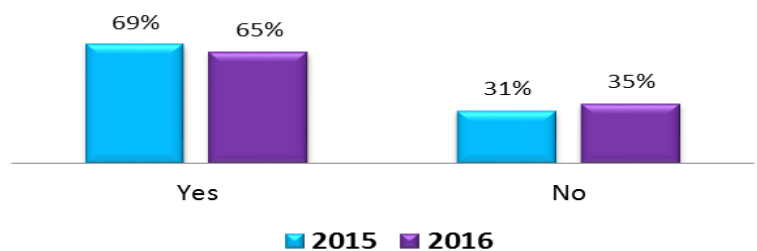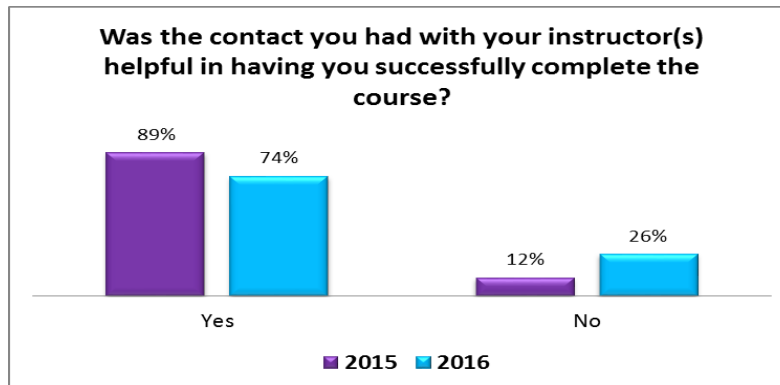
Seventy-four percent of the respondents reported that the contact with their instructors was helpful representing 15% drop between 2016 and 2015.

**Was the contact you had with your instructor(s) helpful in having you successfully complete the course?**

- Yes: 89% (2015), 74% (2016)
- No: 12% (2015), 26% (2016)
- Legend: ■ 2015  ■ 2016

Students were asked to report "*Why didn't you meet/communicate with your instructor?* Verbatim responses of students who reported that they had received the alert but did not meet with their instructors are detailed below.

- ➡ I didn't even receive a student success early alert email, as far as I know (10 Responses)
- ➡ Car problems
- ➡ Forgot
- ➡ I already dropped out the class. Dealing with bad anxiety, I thought the worse would happen and decided to avoid the situation.
- ➡ I communicated with my English Professor and am now following up by email. She said she would work with me to assist me in catching up with my studies. A very good professor. I am emailing her now. I am also emailing my 3 other professors to inquire as to will they allow me to catch up/get an incomplete temporarily and finish up with successful grades. I met with a Student Success Advisor Mr. Kelvin V. Harrison on Thursday April 28, 2016, a very good counselor, & he has helped me explore my options for success. Essentially contacting each professor and see if they will allow me to catch up. So far my English professor has said she will. Now I will email all four of my professors and see if the 3 other teachers will allow me to receive an incomplete temporarily and catch up in short order. Frederick Community College is a really good college and I intend to pass all of my classes if I can make my case with the remaining 3 professors. I have had some osteoporosis issues in the last 3 weeks, I am feeling better getting physical therapy, but refuse to use a disability excuse as a reason for being behind in class. My reasoning is that it is all about ability not disability. The curriculum is the curriculum and I can do the work. I want this education and need the knowledge as well as the grades. I will make no excuses but will make a case for my teachers to allow me to finish my classes with passing grades. Each teacher will of course have to decide for themselves if the deadlines and their particular sensibilities allow them to let me catch up. The FCC college is a good college campus with good teachers, staff, and students, I am very impressed, even if at this juncture I have not impressed FCC, FCC has impressed me, sincerely. I will know more on Monday or as soon as my professors meet or respond to my request. I will do my best to make good on the opportunity for advanced education I have been provided. Most of my education has been through tutelage, one on one mentoring, and on the job training in

➡ journalism. I will redouble my efforts and double again to gain the knowledge and grades to accomplish my goals. I'll see what the professors will or will not allow me to do.

➡ I do not understand why I am receiving this? I did not see an email from any instructor regarding my progress...I have an A in Art 100 and a B in BI102. I dropped Chemistry 101 months ago...

➡ I haven't had the chance

➡ I was already in communication with my instructor about my progress in class.

➡ I was not aware of the importance

➡ I was not informed of this 'Student Success Early Alert' by anyone till now.  I have been out of school with meningitis and have been communicating with my teachers about how to make up what I have missed.

➡ Just felt too embarrassed to talk to the instructor.

➡ Prefer to take the class with a different instructor.

➡ She didn't reply.

➡ Their office hours are during the times I work at my job.

➡ Yeah, I met him the first day of class. Yeah, I communicated with.

Students were asked "*What do you think the College can do to encourage struggling students to successfully complete their courses?*" Students offered 37 comments. All students' comments are reported verbatim below:

➡  Actually send these emails successfully first so I know what you're talking about.

➡ Allowing them to make up some assignments or do something to make grade better.

➡ Approach them and have some help on campus for them. It is at times difficult going to school with family and work. It is a real struggle especially taking two major courses at the same time. We need help on campus or from the instructor.

➡ Communicate better.

➡ Counselors and/or teachers should encourage struggling students to meet with them once a week for the remainder of the course to come up talk about what's causing them to struggle. Some students just need someone to talk to and are not going to volunteer themselves for different reasons.

➡ Don't know. I am not a struggling to complete my courses, this professor is just HORRIBLE AT HER JOB! ALL 6 PEOPLE HAVE 69% or less.

➡ Good communication between teacher and student.

➡ Guide the student towards success and believing in them!

➡ Have more professors like Dr. Mueller she is kind, understanding and breaks done any assignment or lecture to where you can understand. She also makes you feel comfortable enough to ask questions.

➡ I cannot think of any improvements.

➡ I don't think the college needs to do anything. The passing grade should be enough of an incentive for the student, so they don't have to retake the class.

➡ I emailed my professor and she never responded back, just continued to send the pre-written ""contact her"" emails as she is probably required to do by the college. I would encourage FCC to make their teachers respond to students instead of assisting in their failure by ignoring them.

➡ I personally have struggled with the Math course. My suggestion would be to have some of the unnecessary work removed and have the class streamlined in order to assist those like myself be

successful. This would prevent them from having to repeat the course multiple times and increase the graduation rate.

➡️ I think the college does a good job of encouraging students with successful completion. I find the stem lab and tutoring offered to be very beneficial.

➡️ I'm not sure, but offer more tutoring times with teachers the students feel comfortable with.

➡️ Incentivize learning with money like the Norwegians do.

➡️ Inform or remind the instructors to be patient with all students as not all students or coming directly out of high school. Especially when you talk with them to let them know where you stand.

➡️ It was informative and encouraging. I think it was good coaching.

➡️ Just get them to meet with instructors to go over a plan for success.

➡️ Make sure that the instructor is actually willing to meet with you, mine did not.

➡️ Math courses online homework does not match course objectives and work instructor is great. Curriculum is awful.

➡️ Maybe have more opportunities to meet with professors.

➡️ More bonus points/extra credit for bad test takers.

➡️ None of my courses are over yet, so how can I have completed them yet?

➡️ Personally I was struggling with depression, probably make it known to the students that they do not have to go through this alone and there are resources for them.

➡️ Possibly mandate at least one tutoring session.

➡️ Provide one on one tutoring instead of group tutoring and encourage instructors to provide help to students to be successful and to improve their grades.

➡️ Some students just need to talk but I think it's important that other teachers be sensitive when students try to reach out.

➡️ Success alerts tutoring.

➡️ Teach new students how to use Blackboard before the semester begins. I already have 3 advanced degrees - but the last one was over 14 years ago. Blackboard was not in use when I achieved my MAT from Hopkins. If I knew that I could sign into Blackboard before the course started and read the syllabus and gotten started on the assignments ahead of time, it would have been very helpful. Especially as the first week of the semester was compromised with the bad weather and classes were cancelled.     Also, the tutoring time provided was not helpful to meet my personal schedule. Further, when I did make arrangements to attend the tutoring the tutor did not show up. The tutoring was late in the day and not helpful for daytime students.     The content should also be cut down to reasonably allow the students to comprehend the material. The instructor basically just reviewed the objectives and answered a few questions, but the comprehension of the material was left up to the students.

➡️ The college could next time give better study techniques for tests and quizzes.

➡️ The College/FCC is not at fault in any way, shape or form in my view. Andragogy, the teaching of adults learners I think in my case as a 58 year old student is perhaps a different process than teaching younger adults. That being said it is still my responsibility to follow the guidelines and course curriculum. I attend college to profess nothing the teachers are the professors, I am in college to learn, not prove what I might already now based on life experience and having learned some things along my path in life. It is not the colleges responsibility to fit in with me, rather for me to get with the program, and I will, this is my goal and intention. I am not being a sycophant, I just don't see any other way. Perhaps a little slack as I am respectful, grateful, and sincere, I am asking in my classes for consideration, as I have a lot to offer as a volunteer, years

of experience, want to be a teacher, and have worked with a multitude of top motivational speakers in the country, I can be a great asset to students, as I have succeeded in life. I hold press credentials but my legs and back are essentially worn down by the heavy weight of electronic news gathering equipment. My mind is still sharp however and I am looking to be a writer/producer instead of a videographer/editor. I hope to add value as a college instructor one day. Even now I am willing to volunteer, encourage,& inspire students interested in news, filmmaking, etc., and I have the contacts in the Washington D.C. area to assist young people in these career choices. Yet I have no degree. In short what I think the college can do to help struggling students to successfully complete their courses is to keep me around, I want to contribute to the college, the economy, and society.

➡ The email response that was automated painted a very dismal picture compared to the reality of the situation and seemed to be a huge downer when I fact I recovered from the low test score the email needs to be a little easier to read.

➡ There have to one on one lecture, and also learning centers have to have seasoned instructors.

➡ They can provide more tutoring and advice to students.

➡ Use the books in class that we pay for instead of writing everything that in the book on the board.

➡ Well, I can see that what the college is currently doing is helping me with my struggles. However, I normally talk to my instructors and see if I have any problems regarding to class and they try to do whatever they can to help me in getting through the class sessions.

# Action Plan:

➡️ The College will continue monitoring the utilization of SSAs as well as providing professional development to faculty members to increase the use of the form.

➡️ The College will encourage faculty and students to repsond to the survey at a higher rate to be able to generalize the responses to all students and faculty and improve the SSA process.

# Appendix I – Faculty's Comments

| Full Time Faculty Comments |
|---|
| Please share your opinion about the form, process and the philosophy of enhancing the culture of persistence at FCC using the SSA as a communication tool between faculty and students.(a) |
| *The form letter approach concerns me. While there is an opportunity to add one small section of wording, the rest of the message is a form letter. Students pick up on this. Also, as faculty members pointed out when this was being piloted, the tone of the letter doesn't fit for all professors and all situations.    *In some cases, the student SHOULD consider withdrawing. I understand the emphasis on persistence for those who have a shot of being successful, but for others it is not realistic. Using the persistence message very early in the semester is a great idea, but once a student has ignored the message of persistence and has not come to class, turned much (if anything in), etc. persistence is not necessarily a good thing. In the old form, there was a box to check about how the student should consider withdrawing. After the first several weeks of the semester, I think there should be another option of a different letter that talks about withdrawing. Having someone show up only rarely, and usually late, is incredibly disruptive to a class, especially if there are group projects involved. If a student has missed too much to pass, then there needs to be an option other than the cheery ""you can do this, let's work together"" message. |
| Helpful tool to assist student success. |
| I am still amazed at how many students refuse help or advice. Two students this semester made me feel as if I were invading his/her privacy. One student did come to see me and would be considered a success story. We will find out after the final project. For improvement, I think it would be more beneficial to let the instructor write the message to the student. Sometimes what is pre-written really does not help the student or the instructor. |
| I dislike having to use the letter.  I would prefer the letter be the default, but to have an option of writing my comments myself.  The prewritten letter is nothing like my style, and it is obvious that it is automatically generated.  When I am sending a second alert, it is even more inappropriate to have the pre-prepared letter.  I usually add the following to the comment section: ""NOTE: The rest of this letter is automatically generated.  This paragraph is written completely by me.""  And then I follow with the specifics.    I think the letter is a great addition for those who were not using the Early Alerts (back when they were early alerts).  But for those of us who have always used them effectively, it is less effective now than before. |
| I dislike our current SSA for the following reasons:  1. It is not easy to find, unless someone actively shows how to get it.  2. There is no option to not using the generic message. I absolutely hate that message. It actually stopped me from sending SSA to several students. I would like to be able to create my own, personal message to each student. 3. I have no idea who else gets the email I sent out and what is done afterwards. There is no communication or follow up from anyone, so it just feels like a waste of time. |
| I don't know if the current form helps more than its previous version.  Some students respond and persist, most don't. I feel as though something else in addition to th form is needed because students are bad about checking their email. I do feel as though the form is good to keep track of when and how often we reach out to students. |
| I have noticed that more students respond to the SSA compared to what I experienced with the previous Early Alert. However, due to the letter format, I don't feel comfortable sending more than one SSA per student per semester because it seems disingenuous to send out the same letter/. That means that students that received the SSA within the first few weeks did not receive another one. Part of me thinks that is okay, as students are given notice that they are not on the path to success and we shouldn't have to send constant reminders, but another part of me thinks some students would benefit from additional reminders. |

I like that there is way to tailor part of the message, but sometimes the verbiage in the standard message is not applicable to the student's situation. This may cause confusion.    While I think the system is worthwhile to generate the success alert, it has little to no benefit for students who don't check their FCC email accounts.    Also, I think a flow chart or detailed explanation of the Success Alert process should be provided to faculty. What is the next step? Did the student receive/read my message? Did the student seek out services suggested by the alert?

I strongly disliked the pre-set letter that inserted our comments into the center. It made for an awkward letter.  As faculty, we each address our students in our own style, and so we should be able to write the letter completely from scratch if we so choose. So maybe it's best to have an option:   Option 1: write own letter to student  Option 2: current system where we check the boxes and write the comments which get inserted into a template letter.    NOTE: The previous question on this survey asked ""The students who received the SSA form persisted"" which is really not a valid question because sometimes, the students should not continue in the class and it's best for them to drop and try again the following semester. So persisting in a class should not be a measure of success. I'm not sure if you're using persistence as a measure of success but just FYI.    Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share our thoughts with you.

I use it in all of my classes but wish there was a second one that could be sent out. I always send one after the first lecture exam and then another one after the lab exam so I wish they weren't both the same. Maybe I am one of the few instructors who send out more than one Student Success Alert but it would be nice to have a second version to send out to those students who received the first alert.

It is a good tool but I would prefer the ability to customize the message so it sounds as if I wrote it. The wording is not something I would typically say, and my students know this. Since all the alerts say the exact same thing, it does not seem that it is perceived as genuine.

The ability to send a specific and more personal message greatly assists students to be supported to succeed. I am satisfied with the use of the tool as it exists.  Thanks.

The form needs to be formatted correctly to accommodate instructor comments. When attempting to indicate areas of concern, what the students needs to do, etc. the result is one continuous sentence or a jumbled mess. This reflects very poorly on the faculty member who is trying to convey an important message to students.

The form needs to be redesigned so instructors can make changes.  Right now, this is not possible, so when the student receives the notice the instructor comments get mixed together with the existing form letter.  The letter needs to be: 1. Used as a possible guide.  2. The instructor needs to be able to write his/her own letter to the student.  The instructor should still be able to check the boxes, but the instructor needs to be able to write his/her own letter to the student.    This would be great if you can make it happen.    Thank you.

The process and philosophy behind the SSA is an important part of the teacher/student relationship, and I like the fact that we have such a system.  There are ways it can be improved upon however.  First, you can submit the alert without checking any of the areas of concern, and then that portion of the auto-generated letter just has an incomplete sentence in it.  Second, it would be nice to have a preview dialogue window showing exactly how the letter is going to look with the option to cancel the submission so you can go back and make changes.  Finally, I would prefer if less of the letter is auto-generated.  With the faculty comment section being in the middle, I struggled with being able to write my comments in such a way that they addressed the concerns I wanted to voice to the student yet still flowed with the structure and tone of the rest of the letter.

The SSA is an important step toward promoting student persistence at FCC, and I am glad to see this process implemented at FCC.     I want to provide feedback to improve these processes. My dominant experience has been that SSAs are helpful when students are continuing to attend class, but may not be turning in assignments. In cases where students are still attending class regularly, I follow up with them face-to-face after submitting an SSA. I learned this semester that SSAs were going to students' SPAM folders. Also, students do not check FCC e-mail regularly. SSAs have not been effective in encouraging students who have stopped attending classes to return.    I believe that follow up communication, whether forwarding SSAs to students' personal e-mails or follow-up including phone calls to students, would improve these processes.     I used to phone students who stopped attending regularly, and students who received phone calls were more persistent than those who received e-mails. Phone calls are more personal and show that a faculty member is personally invested in a student's persistence because we care enough to call.     During Week 13, I noticed that student phone information was no longer visible on Peoplesoft rosters, so it was not possible to phone students.     I'm glad to see SSAs and hope the college will continue expanding and improving this communication process, particularly in regard to follow-ups with students.

The tool itself is easy enough to use. What is lacking for me is whether or not the alert is actually used by students and to what extent the use is tied to ""persistence"". I've used early alerts every semester and have not had one student talk with me after sending the alert. I have approached students and discussed my reason for sending the alert, my concerns, etc., but have yet to have a student take the lead.   I appreciate all the work that went into revising this tool, and would love to hear how others use it.   Thanks!

Tone needs to be more neutral.  My students know it's form letter, but aren't sure who who is writing to them.  It is not my voice and I feel dishonest signing my name to it.

## Adjunct Faculty Comments

Actually I was disappointed in the response level of students.  This was a very difficult semester.  Students seemed to be in a ""semester of I don't really care"" mode of performance.

Although the form is a good idea, the wording could be better. Most of the students who receive the letter from me is because they do not hand in their work by the well stated given deadlines.  When I send the Student Alert, the most popular request is for me to allow them to submit late work. This goes against my syllabus. I honor those students who make the effort and honor my deadlines. To accept late work because someone chose not to submit on time, disrespects those who did the work. (My syllabus states if a student is having an issue they may contact me prior to a deadline and I will try to assist. I provide my phone number and email.)   I have added the following wording to my letters:    Your current grade is _____. I will do my best to help you succeed from this point forward.    This sentence lets the student know I will help them but I will not go back and allow them to submit work that they have missed.  Most students who have a true issue will contact me prior to the deadline and accommodations are made.

I believe this is a very positive tool for helping to keep students informed and motivated.

I don't think this helped my struggling student at all. The students don't know the purpose of the form or what steps to take if they receive it. I also did not get any communication from anybody regarding my student even though it supposedly gets automatically submitted to the department.

I genuinely like the concept and the format. It might be helpful to offer a few more options ... when a student (as I had this semester) persists in not working, participating, responding. Maybe a stronger option for SSA # 3 or 4?    I like the changes that have evolved ... the letter format is more encouraging and supportive in tone.

I like the system and plan to use it more often. However, if students are not coming to class or have fallen behind they may not even be checking their email.

I love the idea behind the SSA, and liked using it.  However, the students I used it for, with one exception, didn't acknowledge the receipt of the note.  The SSA should also be set up to automatically go to the supervisor/counselor of any cohort the student is a part of (Athletics, MSS, SSD, Veterans, etc.)

| |
|---|
| I reached out to one student via SSA. They never attended a class, responded to my emails, or responded to the SSA. I believe this is an outlier in the norm, though the SSA communication did not help me reach the student. |
| I think it's been very useful in terms of having a system in place for us to communicate with students about their success. I have used it three or four times this semester with three different students. However, as an adjunct, I find my own lack of understanding as to how the system works once I send the SSA troubling, and I'm not sure whether that's my fault or not.    More problematic is that I never received any communication back from those students nor did I have any indication that counseling was tracking them and their success on the other end, which I would have appreciated. I felt as if I threw my concerns about them out into the cloud and then...... nothing. I have no idea what happens to that concern, other than the student gets an email from me. As an adjunct, my understanding of the system is from full-time colleagues: that someone from counseling picks up the ball once I send out the SSA and touches base with the student. But I found it troubling that I never received follow up from anyone at FCC, so I knew the student had the additional support they needed.    Is that a correct assumption? That counseling does receive and contact these students once they've been sent an SSA?    Thanks for all you do, and I hope this is useful feedback. |
| I think the wording could be changed to be a little friendlier and welcoming. It seems to me that students are afraid to receive an SSA rather than welcome it as an opportunity to succeed. |
| I thought that the SSA was confusing to some students. Honestly, I was not advising all students to persist in the class. Some were very concerned about their grades because they were transferring to competitive programs and had had a rough start to the class. For those students, and for the students who were not completing the work, I advised withdrawing from the class when it became nearly impossible for them to get the grade that they needed. The entire SSA talked about remaining in the class except for the one paragraph in the middle that I wrote which advised them to withdraw. This was very confusing to them. I would prefer that this not be a form letter. It feels impersonal and prevents me from having the honest communication that I need with my students. |
| I use SSAs often. I don't think a student who has received one has ever passed my class. Usually once students have stopped trying, they don't resume. I wish the SSA triggered an outreach from a counselor that included an explanation of repercussions (especially in terms of financial aid) of failing the class. |
| I used the form when a student was in danger of failing the class and/or missed an important assignment. What I didn't care for was the existing language that I was unable to change or delete. In 100 percent of the cases, the language didn't fit what I was trying to express and may have negated the intent of my message. This survey should have included the existing language and asked how instructors would modify it if given a chance. |
| I would rather the email not be a form letter. I would prefer to alter the contents so students can know if wrote to them personally and so I can tailor the content for each student. |
| It would be nice to receive student feedback from the email. |
| Many of the students still do not check their FCC email, so they weren't receiving the SSA communications.    The check mark options are good, but I think that there should also be options for effort demonstrated and attitude in class or towards the course. I also think that there needs to be more of an emphasis on replying to the email or meeting with the instructor regarding the SSA and the student's future in the class.    It would be great to also have a positive version of this to send to students doing well with check boxes for positive things (grade overall or on a specific assignment, effort shown, attitude, helping other students, volunteering/participating in class, etc.) |
| Most students could care less about one more e-mail in their inbox or letter sent home. Although the SSAs encourage students to seek a conference, 95% of the time the student does not initiate said conference unless specifically approached by me. Personally, I follow-up on the SSA with a telephone call to the student. Shock. Students definitely respond to a call: some get their act together and persist and others say they're going to put more effort into the course and don't. |
| My students this semester did not read most of what I sent to them by email. |
| On this survey, you need a fourth button of unsure/don't know. |
| Sadly, I think once a student makes the decision to stop coming to class, they often stick with it. |
| SSA is a good way to communicate with the student. Filling out only 2 forms is not enough data to find if the student will successfully complete the course. Of the two forms filled out, 1 dropped the class and the other was not heard from. I would like to see the overall results from the college. |

The form and process makes sense. However, my experience has been students do not check their email on a regular basis or respond to emails. Using the form shows the commitment of the college, which is important.     I have better luck with texting my students and using the Remind.com alerts that can be sent out through texting. I always get a response back when texting students.     Maybe the SSA can go through a texting system rather than an email system.

The form is cumbersome and finding it can be a challenge even though I have used it in a number of previous semesters.     I do not feel it is effective in getting students to improve and succeed.

The form is fine as a one time effort to ensure that students know that an instructor is available to help them get back on track.  However, it is fairly useless after the first application and becomes less and less useful for students who get themselves into a hole more than half way through the semester since salvaging the academic situation becomes less and less possible even with extensions.   Students do not fail out because of a lack of instructor communication, as this survey seems to be implying, they fail due to a lack of motivation/interest, minimal basic skills, external factors that FCC has no control over, poor self-regulation (i.e planning, study skills, impulse control, etc.)  The students who received these alerts generally do not respond to them.  Sometimes they respond to a personal communication and encouragement, but an institutional communication will rarely mean something to this type of student.

The SSA communication form is a fine instrument to send to students, but the one problem is that those students most at risk have stopped using their FCC email. I have a few students who have not responded to these letters and it appears that they are not opening their emails.   I had a group activity in class where students had to work together on a project over a 2 week period of time. The one complaint that was universal was that some students never opened or responded to emails to their FCC accounts.   Good Idea but limited success.

The SSA is a terrific first step tool, I think.  It is a good way to reach out a hand to a student who is struggling and make contact that is more ""official"" than a simple Faculty-to-Student email.     The idea behind the SSA is great as a way to encourage student success and it does enhance the culture of persistence at FCC -- I have seen proof of this in a past semester, not this one.     I think it is just a first step, however.  I would make two suggestions to build on the SSA:   1) give the instructor the option to cc Counseling and Advising, Registration, Veterans or Womens services, SOMEONE else who can follow up with additional services if needed.     2) this is the big one, I feel -- there should be a follow up SSA for instructors to send to students who don't respond to the first one.  A ""second"" try to reach the student.  Many times I will send the SSA to students who don't show up in the first week or two of class. They may attend occasionally after that and instead of sending the SAME SSA again, it would be nice to have a follow-up or second option to reach out to them.

There needs to be some follow-up assistance. No one sees this form except for student and teacher. If student ignores, where does it leave us? Perhaps others need copied, such as student advisors, department managers,etrc.

Think it's a great idea, but too much is scripted.

This is an excellent idea and is sure to make a difference in students' abilities to persist.  However, it was never known if the student actually received the SSA, or opened their email to view it, or if the student followed through with getting the extra help they needed to be successful in the course. For example, I never received a single email from the Writing and Tutoring Center regarding any student who had received an SSA and subsequently attended a session. I did receive many emails from the Writing and Tutoring Center for students who attended due to it being a required assignment built into my course.   An idea to consider is mandatory tutoring. Another idea to consider is intervention by the end of the first week of class and definitely by the end of the second week of class, for students who have already fallen behind (not turned in assignments or skipped class).  Maybe tie it in to financial aid or some other institutional mechanism. Early intervention is key in student retention and success.     Lastly, the form letter did not necessarily speak to the specific situation causing the fill in portion to be out of sync with the message as it said contact your instructor immediately while in most cases, the instructor has already communicated with the student in person and via email and the student has not taken steps to remedy their falling behind or missing classes. More direct and specific intervention is needed.

Comment from a faculty who did not report the status:

-I not only send the alert but I speak with the student for my in-seat classes. Most often they ignore the alerts and me after they are sent.     -I did have one student this semester who approached me but ended up dropping the class because he was dealing with too many personal issues.    -One student did comment on the ""canned"" format of the letter.  She is still in my class and will be failing as she did not improve her attendance or submission of assignments.  In fact, her grade has dropped since the first alert was sent to her.

# Appendix III – SSA Process

**What is the Student Success Alert?**

FCC's Electronic Student Success Alert encourages you to send an alert message through PeopleSoft to any "at-risk" student in your class. The alert will send a **personalized electronic letter** to students' MyFCC email account that:

- Notes the concerns you have identified on the Student Success Alert form.
- Encourages the student to meet with you to discuss success strategies.
- Links to a web page of academic and support services and resources.
  http://www.frederick.edu/student-resources/student-success-alert.aspx
- Alerts an advisor or other FCC staff that the student is "at-risk," which prompts other support services to be enacted.
- Generates a copy sent to your email for your records.

This is a sample of how the email will appear:

Dear [Student's First Name]:

I hope this letter finds you well and eager to complete my [Name of class] course. Your success is important to me, and I believe our communication is the first step towards this goal.

In short, I am concerned about your [checked concerns] in my class, and I would like to discuss these issues immediately. Please contact me at [instructor email], so that we can make arrangements to talk about a plan for change.

[Additional comments, if any, will appear here]

Learning is a partnership between student and teacher that requires communication, hard work, and persistence. FCC provides a number of college services and resources, free of charge, to students. Please take the time to review these resources prior to our discussion: www.frederick.edu/successalert.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

[instructor name]

Student ID: [student ID] Student name: [student name]

**Why Should I Use Student Success Alerts?**

The alert invites struggling students to have a conversation with you.  Why?  Because early and direct interaction between struggling students and the faculty who teach them is a proven, effective means for encouraging students to improve, persist in, and complete their courses and degrees.  Plus, the alert system prompts other FCC support services to reach out to struggling students.

**When Do I Use It?**

Timing can vary, although early intervention is key.  As experienced educators, you may recognize that most semesters _and_ students have a "rhythm" to them.  The chart below offers suggestions for timing the alert:

**Suggestions for Timing the Alert**

| Issues Which Could Prompt Early Alert | 15-Week Session | 7-Week Session | 8-Week Session |
|---|---|---|---|
| Student never participated in course activities but is still enrolled | By week 2 | By week 1 | By week 1 |
| Sporadic attendance and/or participation | By week 3 | By week 2 | By week 2 |
| Ongoing poor performance, participation, grades as of current date | By week 6 | By week 3 | By weeks 3-4 |
| Approaching the end of the semester and/or the last day to withdraw; concern over student's ability to earn passing grade and/or complete the course | By weeks 9-10 | By weeks 4-5 | By week 5 |

**How Do I Send a Student Success Alert?**

1. Login into **PeopleSoft** and go to your **Class Roster.**
2. Click on the **Attendance (Fin. Aid)/Student Success Alert Roster** tab located on the top-right of the screen
3. Click **Student Success Alert** for the student.
4. Check off the concern(s) you want noted in the Student Success Alert letter.
5. Write additional comments to be included in the letter as you deem appropriate.
6. Click **Send Email. [You should receive an email copy.]**

**Student Success Alert**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Instructor ID** | 1000825 | Harris II,James R | **Date** | 02/12/2015 |

**Student ID**

**Term**       2109

**Class Nbr**       1183       **Session**  Regular       **Class**  1
                                                           **Section**

**Please identify the basis of your concern:**

☐ Attendance                    ☐ **Incomplete/Missing Assignments**

☐ **Test / Quiz Grades**        ☐ **Quality of Work Submitted**

☐ **Class Participation**

**Additional Comments**

[                                                        ]

[ Send Email ]        [ Cancel ]

This is a sample of how the email will appear:

Dear [Student's First Name]:

I hope this letter finds you well and eager to complete my [Name of class] course. Your success is important to me, and I believe our communication is the first step towards this goal.

In short, I am concerned about your [checked concerns] in my class, and I would like to discuss these issues immediately. Please contact me at [instructor email], so that we can make arrangements to talk about a plan for change.

[Additional comments, if any, will appear here]

Learning is a partnership between student and teacher that requires communication, hard work, and persistence. FCC provides a number of college services and resources, free of charge, to students. Please take the time to review these resources prior to our discussion: www.frederick.edu/successalert.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

[instructor name]

Student ID: [student ID] Student name: [student name]