

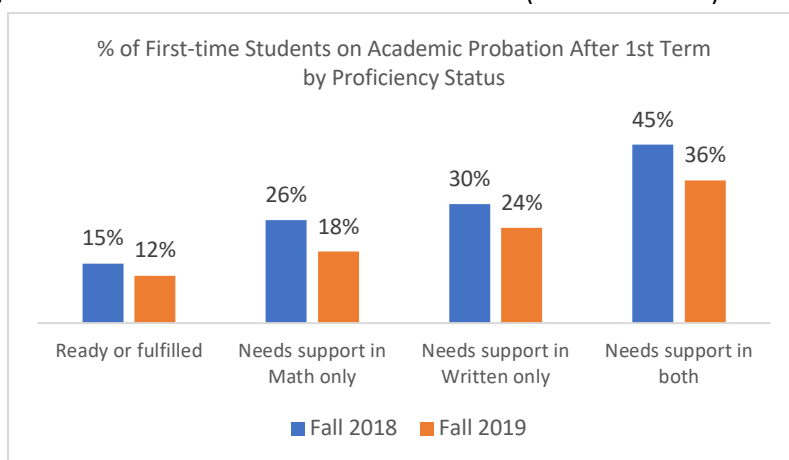
Data to Findings to Action Early Alert Campaign in First-Year Coursework

California State University San Marcos

In Spring 2019, Institutional Planning & Analysis at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) presented data to the EO 1110 Leadership Committee that showed students who entered needing support in math and written communication were more likely to be placed on academic probation after their first term and less likely to re-enroll for their second term. Recognizing the need to identify and channel additional support to struggling students earlier in the semester, a cross-divisional workgroup including the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the Dean of Students Office, Readiness & Success Services, and Institutional Planning & Analysis launched a pilot project in Fall 2019 that aimed to increase engagement with the Cougar Care Network, CSUSM's early alert system.

This project involved the Dean of Students Office contacting faculty instructors in three high-enrollment first-year courses and asking them to "check the pulse" in their classrooms and to submit Cougar Care Network referrals for each student exhibiting signs of struggle. Faculty in these courses, which included the new introductory mathematics course for students in Quantitative Reasoning Categories III and IV (MATH 101), both halves of the new stretch course sequence in Written Communication (GEW 101A and 101B), and CSUSM's first-year seminar (GEL 101), received messages at weeks 3, 6, 9, and 12 of the Fall term asking them to look for and report aberrant attendance patterns, missing or incomplete assignments, significant changes in academic performance, or any other behaviors that endangered students' ability to succeed in their course. These messages not only asked them for referrals but also contained important information on support resources for students, warning signs that could indicate students in distress, and academic policies including withdrawals, incomplete grades, and academic probation.

Preliminary data suggest that CSUSM's combined efforts in Fall 2019 were successful in reducing overall first-term probation rates from 21% to 17% (see Figure 1 for breakdown by proficiency). The *Check the Pulse* campaign appears to have been effective in promoting instructor referrals. From Fall 2018 to Fall 2019, total referrals through the Cougar Care Network increased from 770 to 985 (a 28% increase). Total referrals for first-time college students in their first term of study increased from 186 to 301 (a 62% increase). Further data analysis is needed to assess the effectiveness of the campaign and the impact of these interventions on student success. CSUSM will evaluate the project in Spring 2020 with the intent of developing a recommendation regarding whether this strategy should continue.



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