

Report on First Alert for Fall and Spring, 2006-2007

At the end of the Fall 2006 semester, we sent a preliminary report on the First Alert data from that semester rather than waiting to cover the combined Fall-Spring figures as had been done in the past. The reason was a marked increase in Fall referrals, a figure that exceeded the 1150 sent to us for the entire year 2005-2006. The report that follows is our standard year-end report, combining both semesters for the 2006-2007 academic year, 1158 referrals for Fall and 624 for Spring.

The same procedures have been followed each year:

- 1) Faculty members referred students with low grades or excessive absences in one or more of their classes.
- 2) Multiple attempts were made to contact the students—email, telephone calls, and letters.
- 3) Students who responded were assessed and given information about how to improve their academic performance. Depending on individual needs, this included signing them up for study skills sessions, informing them about free tutoring on campus, explaining university policies that affect their academic standing, and referring them to other campus agencies such as the Counseling Center, Career Services, and others.
- 4) All faculty members who referred a student were kept up to date on the work we were doing with their student(s).
- 5) At the end of each semester, participating faculty were asked to fill out an evaluation form.

This report focuses on the students who were sent to First Alert during the academic year 2006-2007.

Demographics

The tables below show both numbers and percentages of students in each category. Comparisons of First Alert referrals to those in the general university population are made for gender and classification. Of the students referred to First Alert, 51.1% were male and 48.9% female. They were classified as 38.0% freshmen, 26.4% sophomores, 18.0% juniors, and 17.5% seniors. With regard to ethnicity, White - Non Hispanic students constituted a majority at 65.3%, African-Americans made up 21.9%, Hispanics were 11.2%, and Other (Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and International) comprised 1.6%. In terms of gender and ethnicity, male and African-American students were somewhat overrepresented in comparison to their numbers in the general university student body. Also, freshmen were referred for help more often than were students in any other classification.

Gender		
	Male (910)	Female (871)
First Alert	51.1%	48.9%
SHSU Student Body	41.3%	58.7%

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Classification					
	Freshman (673)	Sophomore (471)	Junior (320)	Senior (315)	Graduate (2)
First Alert	38.0%	26.4%	18.0%	17.5%	0.1%
SHSU Student Body	20.5%	20.3%	21.3%	24.2%	10.4%

Ethnicity				
	White – Non Hispanic (1163)	African-American (390)	Hispanic (199)	Other*
First Alert	65.3%	21.9%	11.2%	1.6%
SHSU Student Body	71.6%	13.5%	11.6%	3.3%

*"Other" is defined as Native-American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and International

Results

Success is defined for this program as passing the class for which a student was referred, dropping it, or resigning from school. When a student drops a class that he or she is failing, the likelihood of remaining in school is increased. If that one class is excluded from the grade point average and increased effort can be focused on the remaining courses, the student is less likely to be suspended or placed on probation. The same may be said for resignation from school. Students who are failing all of their classes late in the semester and know they cannot make any marked improvement can get a fresh start by withdrawing and then returning the next semester. Again, the grade point average remains at a manageable level upon the student's return. The percentage of First Alert students who withdraw from all classes is small (4.7%).

The first table below indicates the overall success rate of First Alert as defined by the above criteria. This one-semester success rate compares closely to that 2005-2006 rate of 65.0%, indicating that the much higher volume of referrals did not appear to have a negative effect on the program. The second table further breaks down this success.

Overall Success Rate		
Successful*	1097	62.0%
Not Successful**	684	38.0%

*Successful = Passed, dropped, or resigned

**Not Successful = Grade of F

Outcomes									
	Course Grade A	Course Grade B	Course Grade C	Course Grade D	Course Grade F	12 th Class Day Drop	Dropped Course	Withdrew	Incomplete
Referrals	69	166	320	244	684	21	188	84	5
Percent	3.9%	9.3%	18.0%	13.7%	38.4%	1.2%	10.6%	4.7%	0.3%

The three tables that follow indicate outcomes by classification, gender, and ethnicity.

First Alert Outcome by Classification										
	Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior		Graduate	
Referrals	673		471		320		315		2	
Percent	38.0%		26.4%		18.0%		17.5%		0.1%	
Successful*	376	56.0%	283	60.0%	200	62.5%	236	75.0%	2	100.0%
Not Successful**	297	44.0%	188	40.0%	120	37.5%	79	25.0%	0	0.0%

First Alert Outcome by Gender				
	Male		Female	
Referrals	910		871	
Percent	51.1%		48.9%	
Successful*	538	59.0%	559	64.0%
Not Successful**	372	41.0%	312	36.0%

First Alert Outcome by Ethnicity										
	White-Non Hispanic		African American		Hispanic		Other		Total	
Referrals	1163		390		199		29		1781	
Percent	65.3%		21.9%		11.2%		1.6%		100.0%	
Successful*	711	61.0%	237	61.0%	131	66.0%	18	62.0%	1097	62.0%
Not Successful**	452	39.0%	153	39.0%	68	34.0%	11	38.0%	684	38.0%

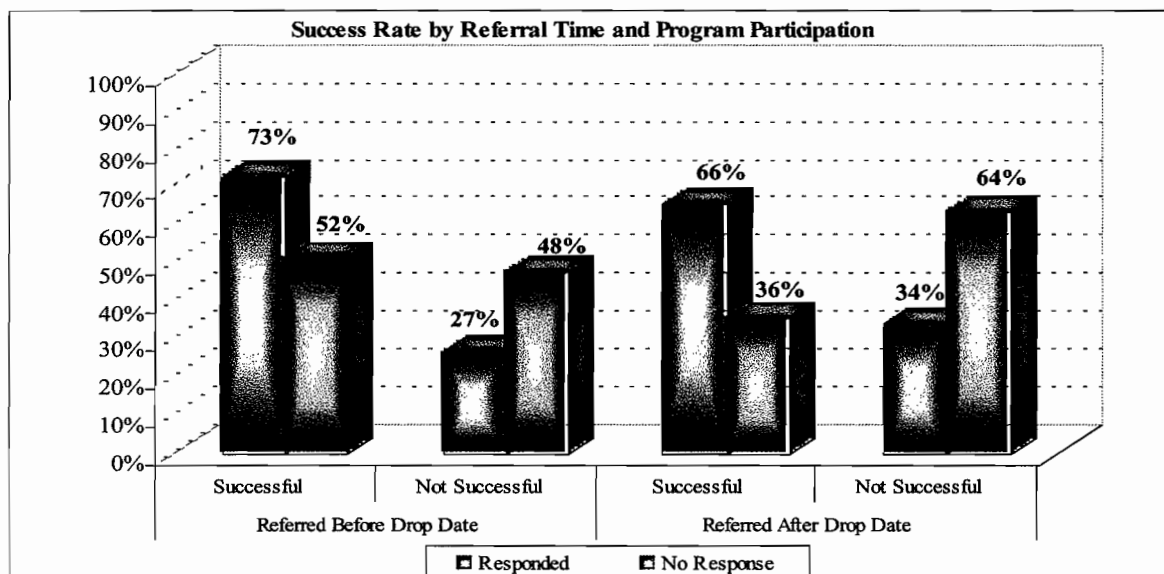
The reasons that faculty refer students can be seen on the first table below, and the importance of early referral is shown on the second one. Those who were sent to the program before the drop date had a higher rate of success than did those who were sent afterward.

Reason for Referral								
	Frequent Absences		Poor Grades		Both		Other	
Referrals	488		848		434		11	
Percent	27.4%		47.6%		24.4%		0.6%	
Successful*	284	58.0%	584	69.0%	222	51.0%	7	64.0%
Not Successful**	204	42.0%	264	31.0%	212	49.0%	4	36.0%

Success Rate by Referral within the Drop Date				
	Before Drop Date		After Drop Date	
Referrals	1474		307	
Percent	82.8%		17.2%	
Successful*	943	64.0%	154	50.2%
Not Successful**	531	36.0%	153	49.8%

Student success was also measured by whether or not the students responded to our attempts to reach them as shown on the table below. The graph that follows ties together early referral and student response to the referral, indicating that the highest level of success was achieved by those who were referred before the drop date and then responded promptly to our efforts to reach them and offer help.

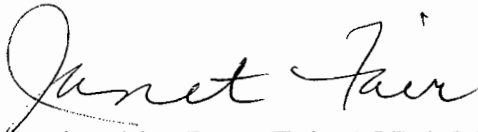
Success Rate by Student Response				
	Responded		No Response	
Referrals	985		796	
Percent	55.3%		44.7%	
Successful*	707	72.0%	390	49.0%
Not Successful**	278	28.0%	406	51.0%



Finally, the 89 faculty members who referred students were asked to complete a questionnaire evaluating the First Alert program. While they had the option to submit it by mail or online, almost all of the 81 respondents chose the latter. Anonymity was assured, though a number of people chose to write comments and sign their name. Five questions were asked to which the respondent was to assign a rating from 4 to 1, with 4 indicating “Strongly Agree,” 3 as “Agree,” 2 as “Disagree,” and 1 as “Strongly Disagree.” The table below indicates a mean satisfaction rate with the program of 3.78. It seems evident that First Alert is popular with the Sam Houston faculty and will continue to be used by them.

Faculty Evaluation of the First Alert Program	
Questions	Mean
Contacts or attempts to contact the student appeared to be prompt.	3.8
Initial feedback to me about my referral was timely.	3.8
I was updated about the student as needed.	3.6
I plan to use First Alert again	3.9
I would recommend this program to other faculty members.	3.8

Early intervention remains one of the most significant aspects of the First Alert program. The data show that students sent early in the semester have the best chance of improving their academic performance. Therefore, faculty need to be encouraged by their department chairs and deans to notify First Alert as soon as a student shows signs of failure or non-attendance. Furthermore, professors could assist their students by listing the drop and resignation dates in their syllabi and pointing them out to their classes at the start of each new semester. Although the First Alert program coordinator will continue to make all faculty and graduate teaching assistants aware of the program, department chairs can be most helpful in seeing to it that no one is overlooked.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet Fair". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "F".

Submitted by Janet Fair, M.Ed, M.A.

Assistant Director

Academic Support Programs

Student Advising and Mentoring Center

Report on First Alert for the Academic Year 2007-2008

The following is our standard year-end First Alert report combining both semesters for the 2007-2008 academic year. The total number of referrals for the year came to 1441, with 911 in the Fall and 530 in the Spring.

The same procedures have been followed each year:

- 1) Faculty members referred students with low grades or excessive absences in one or more of their classes.
- 2) Multiple attempts were made to contact the students—email, telephone calls, and letters.
- 3) Students who responded were assessed and given information about how to improve their academic performance. Depending on individual needs, this included but was not limited to signing them up for study skills sessions, informing them about free tutoring on campus, explaining university policies that affect their academic standing, and referring them to other campus agencies such as the Counseling Center, Career Services, and others.
- 4) All faculty members who referred a student were kept up to date on the work we were doing with their student(s).
- 5) At the end of each semester, participating faculty were asked to fill out an evaluation form.

Demographics

The tables below show both numbers and percentages of students in each category. Comparisons of First Alert referrals to students in the general population are made for gender and classification. Of those who were referred to First Alert, 50.1% were male and 49.9% female. They were classified as 41.9% freshmen, 24.0% sophomores, 18.8% juniors, and 15.3% seniors. With regard to ethnicity, White Non-Hispanic students constituted a majority at 59.7%, African-Americans made up 26.6%, Hispanics were 11.4% and Others (Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander and International) comprised 3.2%. In terms of gender and ethnicity, male and African-American students were somewhat overrepresented in comparison to their numbers in the general university student body. Also, freshmen were referred more often than were students in any other classification.

Gender		
	Male (722)	Female (719)
First Alert	50.1%	49.9%
SHSU Student Body	43.2%	56.8%

Classification				
	Freshman (604)	Sophomore (346)	Junior (271)	Senior (220)
First Alert	41.9%	24.0%	18.8%	15.3%
SHSU Student Body	22.8%	23.0%	25.3%	28.9%

Ethnicity				
	White Non-Hispanic (860)	African-American (383)	Hispanic (164)	Other* (34)
First Alert	59.7%	26.6%	11.4%	2.3%
SHSU Student Body	70.1%	14.7%	12.4%	2.8%
<i>*"Other" is defined as Native-American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and International</i>				

Results

Success is defined for this program as passing the class for which a student was referred, dropping it, or resigning from school. When a student drops a class that he or she is failing, the likelihood of remaining in school is increased. If that one class is excluded from the grade point average and increased effort is focused on the remaining courses, the student is less likely to be suspended or placed on probation. The same may be said for resignation from school. Students who are failing all of their classes late in the semester and know they cannot make any marked improvement, can get a fresh start by withdrawing and then returning the next semester. Again, the grade point average remains at a manageable level upon the student's return. The percentage of First Alert students who withdraw from all classes is small (6.9%).

The first table below indicates the overall success rate of First Alert as defined by the above criteria. This is somewhat higher than the previous year's success rate of 62.0%. While the difference is not great, it should be noted that more referrals were sent last year (1782) than this year (1441). The second table further breaks down the figures on success.

Overall Success Rate		
Successful*	1005	69.7%
Not Successful**	436	30.3%

*Successful = Passed, dropped, or resigned

**Not Successful = Grade of F

Success Rate by Grade									
	A	B	C	D	F	12 th Class Day Drop	Dropped	Withdrew	Incomplete
Referrals	57	173	266	195	436	19	191	99	5
Percent	4.0%	12.0%	18.5%	13.5%	30.3%	1.3%	13.3%	6.9%	0.3%

The three tables that follow indicate outcomes by ethnicity, classification, and gender.

First Alert Outcome by Ethnicity										
	White Non-Hispanic		African-American		Hispanic		Other		Total	
Referrals	860		383		164		34		1441	
Percent	59.7%		26.6%		11.4%		2.3%		100.0%	
Successful*	598	69.5%	265	69.2%	123	75.0%	19	55.9%	1005	69.7%
Not Successful**	262	30.5%	118	30.8%	41	25.0%	15	44.1%	436	30.3%

First Alert Outcome by Classification								
	Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
Referrals	604		346		271		220	
Percent	41.9%		24.0%		18.8%		15.3%	
Successful*	367	60.8%	262	75.7%	205	75.6%	171	77.7%
Not Successful**	237	39.2%	84	24.3%	66	24.4%	49	22.3%

First Alert Outcome by Gender				
	Male		Female	
Referrals	722		719	
Percent	50.1%		49.9%	
Successful*	470	65.1%	535	74.4%
Not Successful**	252	34.9%	184	25.6%

The reasons that faculty refer students can be seen on the first table below, and the importance of early referral is shown on the second one. Those who were sent to the program before mid-semester had a much higher success rate than did those referred later on.

Reason for Referral							
	Frequent Absences		Poor Grades		Both		Other
Referrals	373		684		361		23
Percent	25.9%		47.5%		25.1%		1.6%
Successful*	238	63.8%	542	79.2%	206	57.1%	19 82.6%
Not Successful**	135	36.2%	142	20.8%	155	42.9%	4 17.4%

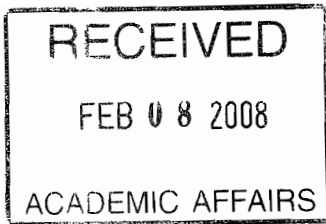
Finally, the 150 different professors who referred students over the two semesters were asked to complete an online questionnaire evaluating the First Alert program; we received 69 responses. Although anonymity was assured, a number of people submitted comments and signed the form. Five questions were asked to which the respondent was to assign a rating from 4 to 1, with 4 indicating “Strongly Agree,” 3 as “Agree,” 2 as “Disagree,” and 1 as “Strongly Disagree.” The table below shows a mean satisfaction rate with the program of 3.78. It seems evident that First Alert is well-received by the Sam Houston faculty who make use of it.

Faculty Evaluation of the First Alert Program	
Questions	Mean
Contacts or attempts to contact the student appeared to be prompt.	3.8
Initial feedback to me about my referral was timely.	3.7
I was updated about the student as needed.	3.6
I plan to use First Alert again.	3.9
I would recommend this program to other faculty members.	3.9

Early intervention remains one of the most important aspects of the First Alert program. The data show that students referred early in the semester have the best chance to improve their academic performance. Therefore, faculty need to be encouraged by their department chairs and deans to notify First Alert as soon as students show signs of failure or non-attendance. Although the First Alert program coordinator will try to make all faculty and graduate teaching assistants aware of the program, department chairs can be of great help by seeing to it that no one is overlooked.



Submitted by Janet Fair, Assistant Director
 Academic Support Programs
 Student Advising and Mentoring Center



Report on First Alert for Fall 2007

This report covers First Alert referrals for the Fall semester of 2007. An additional report encompassing the entire academic year will be sent to you at the end of the Spring semester. In all, we received 911 referrals, the second highest semester total since the program's inception almost six years ago. The following procedures were used for all referrals:

1. Faculty members referred students with low grades or excessive absences in one or more of their classes.
2. Multiple attempts were made to contact the students—email, telephone calls, and letters.
3. Students who responded were assessed and given information about how to improve their academic performance. Depending on individual needs, this included signing them up for study skills sessions, informing them about free tutoring on campus, explaining university policies that affect their academic standing, and referring them to other campus agencies, as needed.
4. All faculty members who made referrals were kept up to date on the work we were doing with their student(s).
5. At the end of each semester, participating faculty were asked to fill out an evaluation form.

This report focuses on the students who were sent to First Alert during the Fall 2006 semester.

Demographics

The tables below show both numbers and percentage of students in each category. Comparisons of First Alert referrals to those in the general university population are made for Gender and Classification. Of the students referred to First Alert, 48.5% were males and 51.5% female. They were classified as 41.5% freshmen, 22.7% sophomores, 19.0% juniors, and 16.8% seniors. With regard to ethnicity, White Non-Hispanic students constituted a majority at 59.7%, African-Americans were 26.8%, Hispanics were 11.9%, and Other (Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and International) comprised 1.6%. In terms of gender and ethnicity, male and African-American students were somewhat overrepresented in comparison to their numbers in the general university student body. Also, freshmen were referred for help far more often than were students in any other classification.

Gender		
	Male (442)	Female (469)
First Alert	48.5%	51.5%
SHSU Student Body	43.0%	57.0%

Classification				
	Freshman (378)	Sophomore (207)	Junior (173)	Senior (153)
First Alert	41.5%	22.7%	19.0%	16.8%
SHSU Student Body	26.5%	22.6%	23.7%	27.2%

Ethnicity				
	White – Non Hispanic (544)	African-American (244)	Hispanic (108)	Other* (15)
First Alert	59.7%	26.8%	11.9%	1.6%
SHSU Student Body	70.2%	14.7%	12.4%	2.7%

*"Other" is defined as Native-American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and International

Results

Success is defined for this program as passing the class for which a student was referred, dropping it, or resigning from school. When a student drops a class that he or she is failing, the likelihood of remaining in school is increased. If that failing class is excluded from the grade point average and increased effort can be focused on the remaining courses, the student is less likely to be suspended or placed on probation. The same may be said for resignation from school. Students who are failing all of their classes late in the semester and know they cannot make any marked improvement can get a fresh start by withdrawing and then returning the next semester. Again, the grade point average remains at a manageable level upon the student's return. The percentage of First Alert students who withdraw from all classes is small.

The first table below indicates the overall success rate (68.3%) of First Alert as defined by the above criteria. This one-semester success rate compares fairly closely to that of Fall 2006 (64.4%) which brought more students to the program (1150) than were sent this Fall (911).

Overall Success Rate		
Successful*	622	68.3%
Not Successful**	289	31.7%

Successful* = Passed, dropped, or resigned. Not successful** = Grade of F

The three tables that follow break down the outcomes by classification, gender, and ethnicity.

First Alert Outcome by Classification								
	Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
Referrals	378		207		173		153	
Percent	41.5%		22.7%		19.0%		16.8%	
Successful*	218	57.7%	154	74.4%	132	76.3%	118	77.1%
Not Successful*	160	42.3%	53	25.6%	41	23.7%	35	22.9%

First Alert Outcome by Gender				
	Male		Female	
Referrals	442		469	
Percent	48.5%		51.5%	
Successful*	271	61.3%	351	74.8%
Not Successful*	171	38.7%	118	25.2%

First Alert Outcome by Ethnicity

	White-Non Hispanic		African American		Hispanic		Other		Total	
Referrals	544		244		108		15		911	
Percent	59.7%		26.8%		11.9%		1.6%		100.0%	
Successful*	373	68.6%	163	66.8%	78	72.2%	8	53.3%	622	68.3%
Not Successful*	171	31.4%	81	33.2%	30	27.8%	7	46.7%	289	31.7%

The next two tables indicate the importance of early referral to the program.

Success Rate by Month Referred

Month	August		September		October		November		December	
Referrals	23		574		251		58		5	
Percent	2.5%		63.0%		27.6%		6.4%		0.5%	
Successful*	10	43.5%	414	72.1%	165	65.7%	29	50.0%	5	100.0%
Not Successful*	13	56.5%	160	27.9%	86	34.3%	29	50.0%	0	0.0%

Success Rate by Referral within the Drop Date

	Before Drop Date		After Drop Date	
Referrals	725		186	
Percent	79.6%		20.4%	
Successful*	504	69.5%	118	63.4%
Not Successful*	221	30.5%	68	36.6%

The reasons that faculty refer students can be seen on the first table immediately below, and the difference in success for students who do respond to our attempts to reach them compared with the lower degree of success for those who do not respond is shown on the subsequent table.

Reason for Referral

	Frequent Absences		Poor Grades		Both		Other	
Referrals	214		463		228		6	
Percent	23.5%		50.8%		25.0%		0.7%	
Successful*	142	66.4%	358	77.3%	118	51.8%	4	66.7%
Not Successful**	72	33.6%	105	22.7%	110	48.2%	2	33.3%

Success Rate by Student Response

	Responded		No Response	
Referrals	594		317	
Percent	65.2%		34.8%	
Successful*	436	73.4%	186	58.7%
Not Successful**	158	26.6%	131	41.3%

Finally, faculty members who referred students were asked to complete a questionnaire evaluating the First Alert program. This was available on-line, and anonymity was an option for all participants. Forty-nine faculty members (41.8%) returned the questionnaire.

Five questions were asked to which the respondent was to assign a rating from 4 to 1, with 4 indicating "Strongly Agree," 3 as "Agree," 2 as "Disagree," and 1 as "Strongly Disagree." The Faculty Evaluation of the First Alert Program table below indicates a mean satisfaction rate at or above 3.6 on each of the five questions, with faculty ratings of 3.9 on two of the five criteria. It seems evident that this program continues to be popular with the Sam Houston faculty and will continue to be used by them. Their willingness to send students, to evaluate the service, and to respond so positively indicates their satisfaction.

Faculty Evaluation of the First Alert Program	
Questions	Mean
Contacts or attempts to contact the student appeared to be prompt.	3.8
Initial feedback to me about my referral was timely.	3.7
I was updated about the student as needed.	3.6
I plan to use First Alert again.	3.9
I would recommend this program to other faculty members.	3.9

Early intervention is still one of the most significant aspects of the First Alert program. The data show that students who are sent to the program early have a better chance of improving their academic performance. Therefore, faculty should continue to be encouraged by their department chairs and deans to notify First Alert as soon as a student shows signs of failure or non-attendance. In addition, faculty should be made aware of the drop and resignation dates for each semester so they can put them in their syllabi as well as point them out to their students at the beginning of each semester. Although the First Alert program coordinator will continue to make all faculty and graduate teaching assistants aware of the program, department chairs can be most helpful in seeing to it that no one is overlooked.



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