**First Alert**

**What is First Alert?**

The First Alert program is designed to identify student’s class deficiencies early and throughout the entire semester to help them succeed. In this program, the professors and the Student Success Center will engage with the students to identify their problems. Contact by phone, e-mail, or letter will be done to discuss all opportunities to get on a path for success. It is entirely the student’s responsibility to respond. Perhaps tutoring is needed or better time management. Perhaps the student needs to learn how to organize the class content for better understanding. Whatever the problem might be, Panola College is committed to the success of our students.

**The Benefits of Using First Alert!**

Each semester, data is collected on our First Alert students to determine if they are successful. Success is defined for this program as passing that class with a “C” or better, dropping it, or resigning from school. Success increases with early identification of deficiencies, whether it is poor attendance or poor note taking. When a student drops a class that he or she is failing, the likelihood of remaining in school is increased. The same may be said for resignation from school. It allows for the grade point average to remain at a manageable level upon the student’s return.

The rate of success for First Alert or similar programs across the country was 65% for the 2005-2006 academic year. Of interest is the success rate of students according to the month in which they were referred. Students identified and referred in the first half of the semester were 50% more successful than students referred in the last half of the semester. Data show that early referral has a positive effect on the student’s success.

**Procedures of First Alert**

1. Faculty refers students to the Students Success Center with low grades or excessive absences in on or more of their classes.
2. A contact is sent back to the professor acknowledging receipt of the referral.
3. Multiple attempts are made to contact the students including e-mails, telephone calls, and letters.
4. Students who respond are assessed and given information about how to improve their academic performance. Depending on individual needs, this includes signing them up for study skills, informing them about tutoring opportunities, explaining university policies that affect their academic standing, and referring them to other campus agencies.
5. Faculty members are kept up to date on work we are doing with their students.
6. At the end of each semester we solicit participating faculty members’ program evaluations for information on what we are doing well and where we can improve.