

At the Crossroads: Case-Based Insights into Student Retention, Academic Probation, and Institutional Response

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ABSTRACT

Academic probation serves as formal notice to students whose academic performance falls below institutional standards. To enhance the student journey, universities should develop early academic warning systems, targeted advising, and structured support services to promote academic recovery and ultimately reduce student attrition rates. Without deliberate strategies, students at an elevated risk of attrition could easily be lost in the rhythm of a semester as timely interventions were not typically implemented. However, within recent years, proactive, data-informed interventions, in alignment with its tagline “dedicated to your future”, saw the FSS developing supports for students struggling academically such as intrusive advising and mandated support programs. Such supports have been implemented to improve persistence and graduation outcomes among students placed on academic probation. This paper presents two case studies that analyze student retention risk factors within the higher education context. Employing a standardized, research-informed risk assessment framework grounded in early warning system theory and supported by qualitative transcript analysis, the study highlights how cumulative and unaddressed risk factors markedly increase the propensity for student withdrawal from the university. Key findings indicate that compounding risk factors such as repeated programme changes or unresolved external pressures substantially elevate the risk of student attrition. The case studies underscore the need for proactive advising, clear institutional policies, and tailored support mechanisms as essential strategies for promoting student persistence and success in higher educational institutions.

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