

Course Signals

Redefining "early" to support student success

Traditionally, colleges and universities have used final grades to signal academic success. But we know that even by midterm, time is already running out for meaningful interventions. Today, we have better data about the factors that contribute to student success or student failure. And we are using that data to develop early intervention programs that can help get students back on track early.

Course Signals is an innovative early intervention system that warns students who are at risk of underperforming in a course and facilitates timely faculty interventions. With Course Signals, institutions can improve student success by identifying at-risk students as early as the second week of the semester and then helping them find the guidance and support they need to get back on track.

Course Signals is built on a powerful predictive model developed by Purdue University's John Campbell, Ph.D. and now associate vice president at The Rosen Center for Advanced Computing. Launched at Purdue as a pilot program in 2007, the software has been tremendously successful and today helps almost 6,000 Purdue students every semester stay on course. An intuitive stoplight tells students if they are performing well, holding steady, or underperforming in a course, and prompts at-risk students to take action. Using Course Signals, faculty can also intervene more easily with suggestions on what kind of actions students can take to improve their grades.

Integrate information across your campus

Today, campus sources for data about students vary greatly and come from different systems, applications, and vendors. Course Signals' predictive model draws on multiple data sources to create a more complete picture of a student's academic performance. SunGard Higher Education has built on Purdue's work to create a next-generation application architected to work with course management and student information systems as well as SunGard Higher Education's Banner Relationship Management, our enterprise CRM solution, and DegreeWorks, our student advising and degree audit tool.

Leverage your data to customize your predictive model

By taking advantage of data beyond the gradebook—data that your institution has already captured in its course management and student information systems—you can build highly predictive models that address the unique character of your student population. At-risk indicators can be as flexible as the questions you want to ask: How many times has a student visited the CMS and what did he do there? What accounts for the higher attrition rates we see among first-generation and transfer students?

In short, you can put the data in these management systems to work and build a predictive model that is right for your school and aligned with the retention strategies you have in place.

Research calling for "intrusive" advising—active, engaged, and early institutional support—is ubiquitous. How, then, can we design, develop, and deploy retention strategies that recognize and foster the potential of all students?

Foster a more comprehensive understanding of student behavior

Data from Course Signals can also be fed back into Banner Relationship Management or DegreeWorks. Because your institution's advising staff has a better window into how a student is performing in the present, they can act more immediately to help students before they abandon a program of study, or worse, leave school discouraged and unprepared for their futures.

Automate processes and gain efficiencies

With Course Signals, you can give faculty what they need and want—an early alert system that is easy to use and personalize. Course Signals allows faculty to automate communications with their students for faster, yet still personalized, interventions. And because the stoplight feature displays directly in your course management system or can be delivered through email, students have a greater chance of getting the news about their standing in a course faster.

Faculty and students appreciate Course Signals. Faculty can identify and track at-risk students more easily. Students know that their instructors—and their institution—care about their success, and that a guiding hand is there to help them should they need it.

With Course Signals, institutions can help every student stay on track and achieve the academic goals that are so important to their success.

Services to Support Student Success

SunGard Higher Education consultants provide planning and implementation services to enhance your institution's ability to support better academic performance and persistence. We conduct an investigative analysis of your institution's current state for identifying students at risk in particular courses that includes interviews, focus groups, and a review of programs, practices, and policies. We work with your leadership team to develop a vision and strategy for student success that incorporates Course Signals with your other retention initiatives. Our services focus on best practices for training your faculty to customize Course Signals to effectively communicate with their students. We can also provide on-campus consultation and advising as you implement Course Signals at the beginning of an academic term and help you develop a performance plan that defines key success indicators and measures the impact of Course Signals on student success, persistence, and graduation rates.

To learn more, visit www.sungardhe.com/signals or contact us at signals@sungardhe.com.

About SunGard Higher Education

SunGard Higher Education serves colleges and universities worldwide. Today, 1,600 higher education organizations, 10 million students, and thousands of education communities rely on SunGard Higher Education's broad portfolio of solutions and expert guidance to find better ways to teach, learn, manage, and connect. To learn more, please visit www.sungardhe.com.