Catch Me if You Can:
Targeting At-risk Students to Stop the Academic Slide

University of Central Florida

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UCF FACTS

- 42,000 students
- Up 10,000 in 4 years
- 5 academic colleges & 1 school
- Metropolitan university
- 4yr public institution
- 55% FTIC, 45% Transfer

Academic Advising

- Advising not required
- Advising offices in each college/school
- First Year Advising & Exploration
- Faculty advisors in colleges – not required by all
Program Objective

To identify students who may be headed toward academic difficulties and assist them before they are placed on academic probation.

Criteria of Program

Select students who meet one or both of the following:

- Most recent term GPA is less than a 2.0, but cumulative remains above a 2.0 (not on probation)
- Most recent term GPA drops more than 1.0 below previous UCF cumulative GPA

Findings

- GPA Drop
- Even Distribution between colleges
- Trend holds with other cut points
GPA Drop

Distribution in colleges

Suggestions & Assumptions

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Student profile

- Excellent initial performance then “slide” for 2-3 terms before probation
- Environment change from high school & CC
  - larger classes
  - away from home
  - part time to full time and courses in the major for transfers
- Slide can be due to financial, personal or academic reason

Approach

- General letter from the college with an invitation for an appointment and a list of resources
- Email from CECS with an invitation for an appointment, a list of resources, and an online advisement request form

Online Approach

- Web based query
- Sample report
- Automatic email
- Web form response
- Advisor response
- Database for followup
Pilot Results

- Two colleges selected students with a drop of 1.0 and those below a 2.0
- Colleges sent out 150-300 notices
- Pilot based on summer 2003 data
- Poor response to letters/emails

Future

- Compare fall 2003 probation list to at risk student list
- Update online version to
  - Allow for more control of data
  - Different letters to different populations
- Expansion to all colleges
- Performed by the Registrar’s Office
- Consider required advisement for at risk students prior to next registration

Audience Participation

- Examples of other at risk student programs
- Questions?