Early Retention Alert

- What is Early Retention Alert?
  - Early Retention Alert is a student retention program being piloted by the Connections Center, Admissions Department, Counseling Department, Financial Aid Department, and EAP (English for Academic Purposes) Faculty at the Dale Mabry campus of HCC.

- What is the purpose of Early Retention Alert?
  - By identifying “at risk” students early, help can be provided to these students immediately. As a result, the likelihood of these students completing their academic program is increased.

- What happens when a student is identified in Early Retention Alert?
  - Once a student is identified, a case is created and a notification is sent to the appropriate staff member or resource who can initiate communication with the student. The case will continue to be developed until the student is no longer “at risk” or until the case can be closed.

- What is the future of Early Retention Alert?
  - Currently, Early Retention Alert is being piloted by specific departments at the Dale Mabry campus of HCC. However, HCC will have the software and experience to institutionalize the effort at all HCC campuses after September 30, 2014.
Retention Alert Pilot Objectives
(as defined by Grant, pg. e25)

Objective:
- By Sept. 2014, at least 50% of Hispanic students flagged in pilot of Early Alert system will be retained to the following semester.

Indicators
- 9.1 By December, 2013, at least 75 Hispanic students who are at risk of dropping out, as identified in Early Alert system, will participate in at least one in-depth advising session and receive prescribed services.
- 9.2 By Sept. 2014, this cohort (75 students) will be tracked electronically with new software to determine retention outcomes.
The changed portion has to do with indicator 9.1 of this objective. It states that the cohort of students will have been identified and will have received their first in-depth advising session by December 2013.

This change was due to the following issues:

- Training of Grant staff was completed during the summer of 2013, however, the software part of the system was not fully functional until the month of November. By the time the software was functional, another training for staff was needed to refresh everyone on use of the system.

- Once the software was functional, we were then offer training to other faculty & staff members of other departments (outside of the grant) that would be involved in the pilot. Accommodating these trainings extended through to December 5th.

- The first eleven days of the month of December were the only week when students would be on campus prior to the Winter break. These days are usually filled with the final projects and exams of the semester. This did not leave sufficient time to have students referred, contact them and have an advising session with them. Because of this, it was decided to commence piloting in January 2014.
Faculty & Faculty trained to use Retention software & Process

- Faculty Trained to contribute Retention Alert cases:
  - April Muchmore-Vokun (EAP Program Manager/Faculty)
  - Barbara Smith-Palinkas (EAP Faculty)
  - Roberto Yañez (EAP Faculty)
  - Rachel DeSanto (EAP Faculty)
  - Francoise Hutchison (EAP Faculty)
  - Jennifer Hwang (EAP Faculty)
  - Larisa Zaks (EAP Faculty)
  - Elizabeth Key-Reiner (Counseling Faculty)

- Faculty trained to contribute and work Retention Alert cases:
  - Francoise Hutchison (EAP Faculty/ EAP Advisor)
  - Jennifer Hwang (EAP Faculty/ EAP Advisor)
  - Larisa Zaks (EAP Faculty/ EAP Advisor)

- Staff trained to contribute and work cases:
  - Karla Solis (Director of Academic Advisor)
  - Maikelyn Lopez (Academic Advisor)
  - Justine Naylon (Academic Advisor)
  - Sean Johnson (Director of Financial Aid)
  - Greyses Hernandez (Financial Aid Staff)
  - Lorianna DeLaPaz (Financial Aid Staff)
  - Elizabeth Key-Reinor (Counseling Faculty)
  - Angela (Counseling Staff)
  - Eabony Wilson (Counseling Staff)
  - Laurie Ragsdale (Director of Admissions)
  - Eric Matos (Project Manager, Title V)
Retention Alert Pilot Process

Student case is contributed (a student is identified & Referred to Retention Alert by a professor or staff)

Student’s Case is created & received at The Connections Center (DLRC 105)

Within 24 hours, the Student Case is assigned to Connections Center Staff

Notes of meeting, referrals & resources provided to the student are entered on Webadvisor.

Student attends appointment and receives in-depth advising, resources, referrals and follow-up tasks (as needed).

Reassign (add) case to include appropriate departments for follow-up advising.

Each department adds notes to case as they interact with students

Student is contacted and an appointment is made for an in-depth Advising session with Connections Center Staff.

These steps are repeated as needed until Case meets closure criteria and is closed by Connections Center Staff.
Results of the Retention Alert Pilot

- **Objective was reached:**
  - 155 student cases were successfully created through use of the manual contribution capabilities of the Retention Alert software.
  - Just over half of these students (82) completed the Retention Alert process.
  - Over half (51) of those completing the Retention Alert process were successfully retained. The group retained represented 62% of the 82 students participating in the pilot and thus, surpassed the 50% retention rate to meet the grant objective.
Lessons to consider for expansion & institutionalization of Retention Alert (continued)

Technical involvement:

- HCC’s technical staff was very willing to help answer questions they are however, located on a different campus. This required coordination of appointments & travel to address technical issues.

- the Retention software was also new to them and as such, they also had to make requests for assistance. This required additional coordination to engage software representatives.

- The software representative was not local and thus required further coordination of appointments to address issues via phone conference. This made resolution of any technical issue a lengthy process.

- Delays in obtaining answers increased time constraints and rendered us incapable of maximizing the full potential of the Retention Alert software.
Lessons to consider for expansion & institutionalization of Retention Alert (continued)

- Administrative engagement, support, and oversight is imperative to accommodate the additional tasks brought on to participating staff and thus, encourage their continued participation. Limitation of participating staff leaves limited advising opportunities for students. More specifically, the limited access to advisors in The Connections Center required students to make advising appointments. While many students came in to set the appointment, many never came again for the actual appointment. It is possible that more students may be served if there are more available advising staff to meet with students upon their first contact.

- 6 department heads, their staff and faculty all demonstrated a willingness to participate and were trained. However, most showed inability to stay actively engaged with the pilot while continuing to perform their daily duties.

- 5 of fifteen trained to work cases did so throughout the pilot.

- 4 of the nine-teen trained to contribute cases did so.

- 3 of the six departments involved designated specific staff to actively participate.

- 2 of the six departments involved participated in the contribution of cases.

- 1 of the six departments involved provided the in-depth advising sessions to students.