TO: The Academic Senate

FROM: Committee on Instruction and Curriculum

SUBJECT: Best Practices for Using the Early Alert System and the Frequency of Assessments

PURPOSE: For Action by the Academic Senate

ACTION REQUESTED: That the Academic Senate approve the following “Best Practices” for Using the Early Alert System and the Frequency of Assessments

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: In a referral from the Executive Committee, which was in response to a discussion at SSAC (Student Success Assessment Committee), CIC was asked to consider the issue of assessment of student progress in courses, in terms of developing the best instructional strategies to improve student learning via meaningful feedback. At its meeting on April 20, 2009 CIC voted unanimously to recommend that the following statement be posted to the web as “Best Practices”.

CIC Recommendation:
Best Practices for Using the Early Alert System and the Frequency of Assessments

Faculty may use the Early Alert System (available through week 6 of each quarter via Blackboard) to notify students of their progress in courses to allow time for performance improvement before the end of the quarter. In general, if a faculty member chooses to use the Early Alert System, it is recommended to provide feedback regarding student progress in courses before the mid-point in a course so that students have the opportunity to modify behaviors and thereby improve performance. Furthermore, if frequent assessments (more than three during a quarter) are provided to students, they have multiple opportunities to modify their learning practice.

However, it is recognized that the nature of course evaluations and their scheduling will necessarily vary from course to course as appropriate to the course/instructor's objectives. There is good reason to believe that students should be given the opportunity to experience a variety of teaching/learning situations. Students can benefit from earlier and more frequent evaluations of progress in courses, and improve learning and performance based on the feedback from the instructor.