

Title: Tracking Students Admitted in Exceptions Windows: A Model Developed to Inform Institutional Effectiveness Decisions and Student Success Strategies

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Abstract: Annually, a small percentage of students not meeting qualified admissions standards are admitted into Kansas public 4-year institutions. To help these students succeed, the KBOR mandated academic support services and individual educational plans. ESU Institutional Research responded by designing a student tracking model to inform decisions and strategies supporting student success.

The Exceptions Tracking Model (ETM) identifies each annual cohort by demographic characteristics, at-risk factors, and pre-college academic preparation to create an entry snapshot. The cohorts can be analyzed individually or compared by trends across any of these tracking variables.

The ETM tracks cohort term specific retention rate data by major, thus tracking both institutional departure and movement among majors. This data informs administrators, deans, chairs, and faculty members of the challenges some students may be experiencing within certain disciplines and majors. Tracking individual student progress is essential to aligning support services and actualizing academic planning on a term-to-term basis.

Student success is tracked by monitoring credit hour completions, grade point averages, and graduation data. A semester-by-semester analysis of credit hours completed and grade point average show a short term academic evaluation of the cohort. Based on findings, students not meeting pre-determined thresholds can be matched with additional support services, resources, and guidance to enhance academic success. The end result is cost efficiencies via directing resources specifically where needed instead of blanketing resources to groups.

The tracking of degree completion and time to completion finalizes this model. Ideally, the model provides up to date information that tracks each student through the duration of their educational experience. In the long run, this set of data will inform the effectiveness and efficiencies of the overall plan designed to align services and expertise in assisting exceptions admits in meeting their educational goals.