

The Use of Blackboard Predict in UMBC's Student Success Support Ecosystem

In FA17, UMBC validated Blackboard Predict against a homegrown First Year Intervention (FYI) alert program, which asks faculty (at midterm) to identify freshmen and transfer students at risk of earning a final grade of D or F (<https://lrc.umbc.edu/alerts>). While faculty FYI participation rates have varied over time, typically about 55% of those who receive an FYI Alert earn a C or better final grade. We compared SP17 Bb Predict *and* FYI results, to see if using both could help us intervene with *any* at-risk undergraduates earlier in a term, when they have more time to turn around poor performance.

GOALS

- Validate Bb Predict against a homegrown intervention of 20 +years.
- Identify *any* at-risk undergraduates without increasing faculty workload.
- Intervene with students earlier in a term than in the past.

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Based on an initial pilot, UMBC found Bb Predict was 87% accurate in predicting C or better final grades by week 4 of the FA16 term (<https://doit.umbc.edu/news/?id=65634>). In SP17, we deepened this analysis to 10 high-enrollment “gateway” courses with relatively high Bb usage and compared both Bb Predict and FYI results for each.

SUCCESS MEASURES

Among other things, we found Bb Predict does a better job of predicting who will succeed, but the FYI program is better at predicting who will fail. Using Bb Predict and FYI together was better than either approach alone. Together, the use of the two systems would have reduced the number of type II errors (students who would not have received an alert but failed) and the number of type I errors (students who would have received an alert but passed).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

It is important to note that UMBC is intentionally *not* sharing Blackboard Predict findings with students directly. We are even hesitant to share them with faculty, lest they bias assessment of students too early in a term. Instead, a university-wide Persistence Committee is using our Blackboard Predict and other student success findings to more accurately target at-risk students for existing nudge campaigns encouraging them to use proven help resources.



INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

FA17 Students 13,662 (11,234 UG)
1-yr Retention Rate 88%
6-yr Graduation Rate 63%

Freshmen Demographics

- Gender: 56% men; 44% women
- Living on campus 70%
- Race/Ethnicity: 60% non-White
- 1st Generation College: ~12%

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