



Research Brief #175

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Impact of Communication on MAP Usage

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At the request of the Title V grant activity committee on Communications Management, the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness conducted an analysis to determine the impact of mass emails sent to students with regard to their progress in their program of study. The email communication was customized to indicate the specific number of units that the student had completed, and provided a list of the necessary steps students should complete at each interval of units completed. Students were informed that “tracking progress is easy through the My Academic Plan (MAP) tool and were encouraged to check their progress by logging into myCanyons and clicking on My Academic plan. The impact of the communication sent on March 7th and 8th, 2018 on student activity in the My Academic Plan (MAP) system was examined.

The following research question was addressed:

- How does MAP add/change activity in spring 2018 compare to the prior two spring semesters (spring 2016 & spring 2017)?

These results are intended to assist the College in assessing the impact of communications to students with regard to students tracking their progress toward completion.

Methodology

An Informer report (SS_DEG) on students’ activities in MAP were used and analyzed with SPSS to code add dates and change dates to either be prior to, or after the email communication. Frequencies were then compared across the time points.

Results

Of all of the students who were enrolled in the spring term ($n=16,452$)¹, 90% were sent the email. The 10% that were not sent the email had lower enrollment units (median 1.3 vs. 9.0 for those who were sent the email). Out of those who received the email, 38% had a MAP on file prior to the communication and less than 1% added a MAP within 45 days after the communication was sent.

¹ Excludes ISAs.

All MAP activity was assessed between the prior two years and the current year for the time period after the communication was sent. Figures 1 and 2 provide details.

Table 1. Number of students *adding* MAP by 10-day intervals before and after email communication by year

	Added MAP within 10 days prior to email (Feb. 25 th –Mar. 6 th)	Number of students <i>adding</i> MAP in 30-days after email	Added MAP within first 10-day period (Mar. 7 th – Mar. 18 th)*	Added MAP within the second 10-day period (Mar. 19 th – Mar. 28 th)	Added MAP within the third 10-day period (Mar. 29 th – Apr. 7 th)
2018	34	222	65	108	49
2017	144	441	280	91	70

*This 10-day period includes the 18th since some students were sent the communication on March 8th.

Add activity over the 30-day period after the communication, increased by 550% in 2018 whereas it increased by 200% in the previous year. For change activity, over the 30 days following the communication, there was a 380% increase in the number of students changing their MAP in comparison to 137% increase in the previous year.

Table 2. Number of students *changing* MAP by 10-day intervals before and after email communication by year

	Changed MAP within 10 days prior to email (Feb. 25 th –Mar. 6 th)	Number of students <i>changing</i> MAP in 30-days after email	Changed MAP within first 10-day period (Mar. 7 th –Mar. 18 th)*	Changed MAP within the second 10-day period (Mar. 19 th –Mar. 28 th)	Changed MAP within the third 10-day period (Mar. 29 th - Apr. 7 th)
2018	139	674	195	289	190
2017	205	487	289	137	61

The email communication had a greater impact on prompting students to check their progress and make changes to existing MAPs than it did for prompting students to add a new MAP. Both activities were higher in the year with the communication than in the previous year.

Recommendations

Upon review of the results, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Explore the implications of these results for communications management planning.
- Consider different types of communications that may have an impact on students adding a MAP, separate from students checking their progress (changing MAP).

For more detailed information on this research brief, stop by the Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness office located in BONH-223 or Preeta Saxena, Senior Research Analyst of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at 661.362.3072.