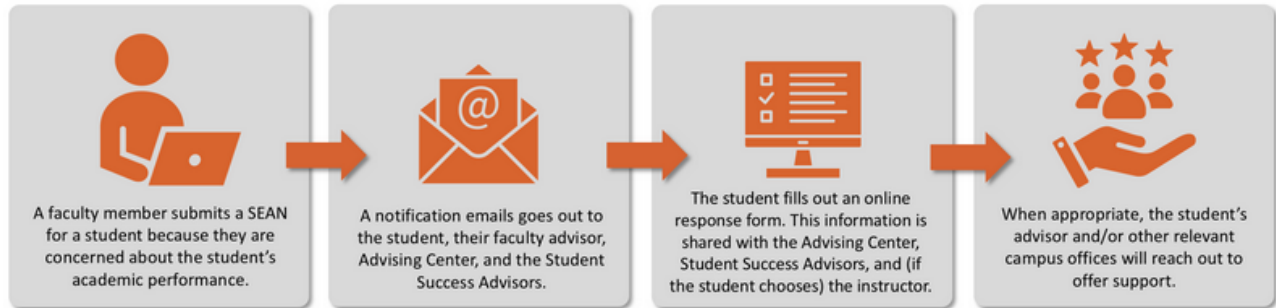# SEAN Best Practices

The Student Early Alert Notification (SEAN) system is an online tool that assists faculty members in communicating with students when they have concerns related to academic performance. This document is intended to provide guidance on how and when to make use of the system.

WHEN TO SUBMIT A SEAN REPORT

How do you determine when an academic issue rises to the level where submitting a SEAN is appropriate? For relatively minor issues—for instance, a student misses a class or gets a low grade on a single assignment—it is usually best to try to contact the student directly by email prior to submitting a SEAN.

Below are some diagnostic questions that you may wish to consider when deciding whether to submit a SEAN. If the answer to one or more of these questions is "yes," submitting a SEAN is appropriate:

➔ Will the issue (e.g. missing assignments, poor attendance, low grades, etc.) potentially have a significant effect on the student's course grade?
➔ Has the student been unresponsive to previous communications?
➔ Is there a pattern of behavior that suggests there may be other underlying issues?
➔ Could the student benefit from being connected to additional resources?
➔ Do you think there may be value to alerting key members of the Student Academic Affairs and Dean of Students staff to the issue?

TIPS and GUIDELINES

When possible, before submitting a SEAN, try to reach out to the student directly.
Sometimes students are surprised to receive a SEAN, are not familiar with the purpose of the system, or may believe the system to be punitive. When appropriate, consider sending an email to a student prior

to submitting the SEAN explaining that it is not a punitive measure and is instead designed to make sure they are connected with support resources.

Include a personalized message with your specific concerns.
Remember that the student will see anything you write on the form, so use the same tone that you would if you were sending an email directly to the student. Try to be supportive, while also being specific about your reasons for concern. For example:

> Hi [student name], I noticed that you missed our last three classes and didn't turn in the assignment that was due yesterday. Is everything ok? We also have an exam coming up next week and I'm worried that you may have missed important material. Please turn in the assignment as soon as you can and also get in touch with me so we can figure out how to get you caught up.

Recommend a course of action.
Provide guidance for what the student can do to address the issue(s). For instance, should they contact you? Are there campus resources (e.g. peer learning, Dean of Students, etc.) that they should consider using? For example:

> Hi, [student name]. I know you are going through a lot this semester and I want to make sure you have the support you need. If you are not in touch with them already, I would really recommend contacting the Dean of Students Office. They have a lot of resources to support students who are dealing with difficult situations and I think they could be really helpful for you.

If you think the student should consider withdrawing from the course, explain why.
It can be disconcerting for students to receive a SEAN telling them they should drop the course. If you think it may be in a student's best interest to consider withdrawing from your course, explain why. For instance, is it no longer possible for them to get a passing grade based on the assignments or exams that have already been administered? Will receiving a low grade in the current class potentially cause issues in the future (e.g. when the course is a prerequisite for another course)?

Post-SEAN Outreach

The Advising Center sends a personalized email to each student who receives a SEAN in order to offer support and (when appropriate) to connect students with relevant offices or resources. Faculty advisors are also strongly encouraged to reach out whenever an advisee receives a SEAN to offer support and/or an invitation to meet.