CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
AND
SADDLEBACK
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

#90-0024
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FISCAL YEAR</th>
<th>ID NUMBER</th>
<th>COLLEGE</th>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
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<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>90-0024</td>
<td>Irvine Valley</td>
<td>Saddleback</td>
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**PROJECT TITLE**

**Early Alert: A Research Pilot Project**

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<th>ELIGIBLE PROGRAM</th>
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<td>Grant = $52,300</td>
<td>E --- Improvement of Trad. Instruction Prog</td>
<td>Pilot Model</td>
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<tr>
<th>PROJECT PRODUCT</th>
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<th>PROJECT DIRECTOR</th>
<th>PROJECT SUPERVISOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jerry Rudman, Psychology Instructor &amp; Matriculation Coordinator</td>
<td>Clella Wood, Dean Bus, Phys Sci, Math &amp; Techno</td>
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**PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION**

The project will evaluate the ability of early alert to improve course retention, reduce course withdrawal, form a better match between student needs and support service resources, provide quality tutoring, involve faculty as a referral source and as early alert advisors.
Early Alert: A Research Pilot Project

This proposal is a plan to implement and thoroughly evaluate a well-conceived early alert program. The early alert research project includes:

1) efficient collection of information from instructors about students who are having academic problems in their classes,
2) mailing customized letters to the students,
3) contacting students who fail to respond to the early alert letter,
4) intervention by faculty "early alert" advisors,
5) channeling students to the most appropriate support service,
6) development of a tutorial pool to assist student, and
7) a comprehensive evaluation of the program.

The project will use a true experimental design to determine if a well-conceived and properly monitored early alert model can improve student outcomes. The project is Aimed at eliminating the shortcomings of the common early alert programs found at community colleges. The project will evaluate the ability of early alert to improve course retention, reduce course withdrawal, form a better match between student needs and support service resources, provide quality tutoring, involve faculty as a referral source and as early alert advisors.

The project will serve to help students obtain their educational goals, help faculty develop a greater understanding of the problems students experience and a deeper understanding and appreciation of the support services available to students, help the college fulfill its mission of serving students. The results of this research project will provide valuable information and guidance to other colleges who are struggling to provide a meaningful follow-up and intervention process to their students.

The project objectives include:

1) formation of an advisory committee,
2) an annotated bibliography based on a thorough review of the educational research literature on early alert,
3) design and implementation of a scannable early alert roster to collecting faculty referrals,
4) recruitment and training of faculty to serve as early alert advisors,
5) recruitment and training upper division and graduate students to serve as specialist tutors, and
6) student tracking and comprehensive evaluation of the project.

The proposed project addresses the Board of Governors’ 1989-90 Basic Agenda Priorities by taking steps to improve the follow-up component of matriculation in order to improve the retention of students and to facilitate the completion of their educational goals, and by establishing a method to establish and maintain a productive working relationship between student services personnel and instructional faculty.
1. Specific Educational Program Being Addressed

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE THE proposal IS ADDRESSING

The purpose of this proposal is to improve student success in completion of the educational goals and retention in courses. As identified in Article 1, Sections 56654(b) and (d) of the California Administrative Code, the proposed project involves "'Innovation' --substantive change and reform in...process and resources intended to improve educational outcomes," and "Program Development" -- development of a program through researching, planning, better utilizing instructional and student service resources, adding needed staff, and by providing a mechanism for evaluating and fine tuning the program. The proposed project also addresses the Board of Governors’ 1989-90 Basic Agenda Priorities by taking steps to improve the effectiveness of student services through supporting the follow-up component of matriculation in order to improve the retention of students and to facilitate the completion of their educational goals, and by establishing a method to establish and maintain a productive working relationship between student services personnel and instructional faculty. In summary, the project goals, which support the Board of Governor's Agenda objective to improve student services, include:

1) facilitating a better match-up between students and existing student services,
2) providing students additional support resources which are not presently in place,
3) by establishing a more productive working relationship between student services personnel and instructional faculty with a common goal of helping students, and
4) by imposing a well-conceived evaluation mechanism to allow fine-tuning and valid evaluation of the program's effectiveness.

Working with the office of Admissions and Records, Counseling staff, Academic Senate, and the IVC Matriculation Steering Committee, this project will build upon previous experience gained with an early alert process during a spring, 1990 pilot test. The proposal is a plan to set in place a well-conceived early alert program. The plan includes development of a method to efficiently collect from instructors at mid-semester information on student progress and use that information to "connect" faltering students with the proper support service(s), and to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan in terms of student outcomes (e.g., grades, retention).
2. Specific Problems Being Addressed

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS PROPOSAL Is ADDRESSING
There is a critical need to develop, implement and evaluate a well-conceived early alert program. It is important to study the potential for early alert to properly match students to the institution's resources, to provide essential staff and resources where none currently exist, and to thoroughly evaluate the program’s effectiveness in helping students achieve their educational goals.

1. Early alert failure.
   Many attempts at some form of early alert are failures. A telephone survey conducted at Irvine Valley College in 1988 revealed that many surrounding community colleges have experienced limited to no success with an early alert program. Some of these colleges have, at least temporarily, abandoned their unique versions of early alert follow-up. An ERIC search found few articles on the design and evaluation of early alert models. The few articles reporting evidence favoring the effectiveness of early alert suggest the use of well-conceived models which integrate the support of the admissions office, instruction, support services, and institutional researchers. Clearly, many colleges have not been able to implement an early alert model which results in any measurable positive impact on students. Such failures may be due to any or some combination of the following: lack of commitment to effective intervention, relying solely on such simple methods as mailing a letter of concern to the student's home, resistance by instructors who are asked to complete cumbersome forms, lack of follow-up by the institution when students make no attempt to seek help, no attention to student tracking and program evaluation, inaccessible or non-existent support service resources, and no attempt to direct students to the most appropriate support services. The literature suggests that the successful early alert model requires careful planning, adequate staff to directly contact and connect students with the appropriate service(s), adequate and appropriate services, and a comprehensive student tracking evaluation plan.

2. Course failure rate is high.
   Not unlike the experience at most community colleges, students are experiencing a high failure rate at Irvine Valley College. The course failure rates for all credit granting courses were 35.9% and 35.1% for the fall semester of 1988 and spring semester of 1989, respectively. Moreover, the failure rate for specific courses routinely exceeds 40%.

   A student's failure in a community college course incurs considerable costs. Student costs include time spent in the course, psychological stress, and impeded progress toward education goal(s). At least some instructors may feel somewhat demoralized to see a significant portion of their students fail or withdraw each semester. Finally, course dropout costs money; it is not unusual for the average-sized community college in California to lose over $1 million in funds due specifically to course withdrawals
3. Programming support is required.
Irvine Valley College needs an efficient, cost effective method for gathering information from instructors about students who may benefit from support service intervention. A programming specialist is needed to design "early alert rosters" which use scanning technology to generate an early alert database for counseling and to facilitate mailing of customized letters to students. The roster design will enable instructors to simply bubble-in information in order to identify and make referrals for faltering students.

4. Support staff needs.
The literature (Lupack, Barbara, Early Alert: research students in time, 1983, ED239568; Martinez, Roberto, Early Alert: academic achievement as the focus of intrusive counseling, 1985, ED255281) suggests that human contact is essential to a successful early alert program. Staff dedicated solely to facilitation of early alert are needed to meet with each student referred to the program to 1) discuss the nature of the student's problems in his or her course(s), 2) to decide, with the student, the most appropriate intervention service, 3) to assure that the student connects with the service, 4) to phone students who do not report to the early office, 5) to collect follow-up data regarding the student's progress, 6) to collect evaluation information from students using the various services, and 7) to maintain records and data for the research component.

Our existing counseling staff lacks sufficient size and time to properly support the comprehensive early alert research project proposed here. The early alert project requires funds to pay faculty advisors. The project director will train the faculty advisors for early alert duty.

Finally, the college needs a much larger pool of qualified tutors to support the early alert research project. Tutors will be recruited from neighboring 4-year institutions. The tutoring expertise required will be determined via the spring 1990 pilot test data, a survey of instructors, and a review of courses having relatively large failure rates.
3. Population To Be Served

POPULATION TO BE SERVED BY THIS PROJECT

1. Students.
The primary focus will be all matriculants: first year students who are new to college in the fall semester of 1990 and spring semester of 1991 (approximately 1,350 students). An advantage of studying this group is that first time students tend to comprise a "high-risk" group. In addition, the college already has a system in place for tracking matriculants. The tracking system will provide valuable research and evaluation data. The secondary focus will be students in courses which usually have high failure and attrition rates. It is anticipated that early alert intervention counseling and the support services will enable a significant portion of students to achieve their educational goals.

2. Faculty.
An estimated 100 full and part-time instructors will be served. These faculty will be able, through a convenient and efficient method, to refer their faltering students to campus resources. Faculty, many of whom are over extended by large teaching assignments and committee work, will be able to initiate help for their students. It is anticipated that working as early alert academic advisors, faculty will develop a greater respect for the role of student support services. Faculty may also benefit from the increased numbers of students succeeding and completing their courses.

3. Student services staff.
Student service staff will benefit by having a greater percentage of students appropriately matched to the services provided by their services. Student service staff also stand to benefit from the more frequent, positive interaction with faculty. Should early alert prove effective, the evaluation data and reports will provide tangible evidence to the institution that support service staff play an essential role in helping students succeed; this positive feedback will provide a strong sense of validation and motivation to the support staff.

4. The college.
The college will benefit as course dropout rates decline and the percentage of continuing students increases. College officials will have assurance that positive actions are being taken to match faltering students to the most appropriate support services, and that, through these actions, more students are fulfilling the mission of the college.

5. Other colleges.
The proposed research project will provide a thorough evaluation of a well-developed and staffed student follow-up program, better known as early alert. Time, people and funds constitute valuable resources; we must determine if early alert can be effective in
the community college setting. If early alert isn't effective, it will be best to channel our resources to other areas. A review of the educational research literature reveals that few community colleges have properly planned, staffed and evaluated an early alert program. It is essential that a properly designed student follow-up and intervention program be evaluated. It is important to determine just how effective a follow-up program can be in helping students. It is important to identify the costs, strengths and problems of such a program. Other colleges should benefit from our experiences and findings.
4. Objectives

[SEE “WORKPLAN” SECTION IN THIS DOCUMENT.]
5. Workplan Narrative

ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVE 1:
Establish a college advisory committee for project implementation.

BENCHMARK:
A list of advisory committee members and functions they serve.

1.1 The project coordinator will convene a meeting of college staff to serve in an advisory capacity for implementing the project, as resource personnel as the project continues and to participate in the evaluation process. Personnel will consist of representatives from admissions and records, the academic senate, counseling and guidance, the vice president of instruction, the vice president of student services, and representatives from several student service functions at the college. Key personnel will include the project director and a research advisor.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:
1. Were the advisory committee members convened?
2. What is the representation of the team?
3. What specific function did they serve?
4. Were project schedules developed?
5. Were project tasks identified?
6. Were the activities completed on schedule?

DATA TO BE COLLECTED:
1. A list of the advisory committee members and the function they served.
2. Copies of the meeting agendas and minutes.
3. Copies of the project schedules.
4. List of project tasks.

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE: August 30, 1990
PERSON RESPONSIBLE: Project Coordinator
BUDGET IMPLICATION: Clerical

OBJECTIVE 2:
Conduct preliminary research. Review most recent educational literature for information on early alert/follow-up intervention for high risk college populations. Examine college data base to identify courses having high failure and drop rates.

BENCHMARK:
An annotated bibliography of literature on early alert. Data base of "high risk" courses. Survey of faculty opinion survey about the types of interventions that would most likely help students succeed in their courses.
2.1 The research advisor will conduct a search of the educational literature. Relevant findings will be assembled into an annotated bibliography. Student tracking and course data will be examined to identify courses which traditionally have low success and retention rates.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:
1. Was the literature conducted?
2. Was the annotated bibliography written?
3. Did the literature search identify useful guidelines for implementing a successful early alert program? If so, what?
4. Were methods for data collection and evaluation suggested? If so, what?
5. Was a list of "high risk" courses identified? Does this list suggest the need for certain types of intervention strategies?
6. Was the survey of faculty conducted? If so, what sorts of interventions do faculty feel will help their students?

DATA TO BE COLLECTED:
1. Copy of the annotated bibliography on early alert.
2. Point by point summary of the annotated bibliography research.
3. Table of high risk courses.
4. Survey instrument.
5. Results of faculty survey.

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE: July 1 - July 15, 1990
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE: Research advisor
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS: Professional time
Clerical
Travel time

OBJECTIVE 3:
Advisory committee meets several times to plan the project in detail.

BENCHMARK:
Advisory committee reviews, critiques, and adopts finalized plan for the early alert project.

3.1 In light of preliminary research activity (objective 2) findings, advisory committee will meet to review project coordination, design, goals, objectives, activities, evaluation, implementation strategies, time lines, and resources. Committee will adopt procedures for project operation.

3.2 Recruitment, screening and supervisory responsibilities will be assigned for the 1) intern, "early alert academic advisors" counselors, and 2) the tutorial pool.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:
1. Did the advisory committee meet?
2. Were the preliminary research findings taken into consideration when planning the detailed project? If so, what influence did the preliminary research findings have?
3. Were decisions made about project details concerning the project's structure, time lines, responsibilities, evaluation, and dissemination? Are these decisions documented for use in the final report?

4. Did individuals accept supervisory responsibilities for the project's temporary support staff?

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE: July 1 - August 30, 1990
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE: Project director
Members of advisory committee
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS: Professional time
Clerical assistance

OBJECTIVE 4:
Design supporting software.

BENCHMARK:
Early alert roster which minimizes time and effort needed for instructors to indicate the names and suggested help for faltering students. Information on completed roster should efficiently generate customized letters to students and database for early alert counselor and research component.

4.1 Programming consultant will design software to support an early alert roster. Roster will contain the following information in Scantron readable format: name of course, name of instructor, course ticket number, name of student, student id number. Roster will contain bubble-in spaces for gathering instructor input. Completed rosters will read into Scantron full page scanner in order to generate the early alert database

4.2 Programming consultant will design software or implement existing software which generates customized letters to early alert students.

4.3 Programming consultant will customize data base for ease of use by early alert counselors.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS
1. Was the early alert roster developed?
2. Did the roster contain scannable information about the course, instructor and students?
3. Was the roster easy for instructors to complete?
4. Did the roster successfully read into a full page scanner?
5. Did the scanned roster generate customized letters?
6. Did the scanned roster generate a data base which was useful to counselors?

DATA TO BE COLLECTED:
1. Sample of the completed early alert roster.
2. Sample printout of the early alert data base.
3. Software design specifications.

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE: August 30, 1990
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE:  
Project coordinator  
Dean of Admissions and Records  
Programming consultant  
Scantron Company representative  

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:  
Resource materials  
Hourly cost:  
Project coordinator  
Programming consultant  
Professional fee (Scantron Co.)  
Clerical assistance  

OBJECTIVE 5.  
Recruit and train faculty volunteers to serve as early alert academic advisors.  

BENCHMARK:  
Faculty volunteers trained to facilitate early alert contacts with students.  

5.1  Project director will recruit faculty to serve on the early alert project.  
5.2  A subgroup of the advisory committee will design and administer training sessions to the early alert advisors. Training will cover 1) the program design and goals, 2) record keeping, 3) familiarization with the variety of student support services available on campus, 4) follow-up of students who do not respond to the early alert letter, 5) how to conduct sessions and, 6) confidentiality.  

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:  
1. Were faculty successfully recruited to serve as advisors?  
2. Were the volunteers trained?  
3. Did the faculty advisors successfully facilitate the early alert program? How many students reported to the early alert advisors? What type and how many referrals were made by the early alert advisors? How many students actually reported to the services? Did the advisors contact students who did not initially report? What happened to those students?  
4. Did the early alert advisors maintain proper records?  
5. How did the early alert advisors feel about the project?  

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE:  
August 15, 1990 - June 1, 1991  

PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE:  
Project coordinator  
Research advisor  
Faculty advisors  

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:  
Hourly costs:  
Project coordinator  
Research advisor  
Faculty advisors  
Travel time  
Clerical
OBJECTIVE 6:
Recruit and train upper division and graduate students to form a tutoring pool.

BENCHMARK:
By mid-fall semester, 1990, a pool of tutors will be available to assist students referred by the early alert counselors.

6.1 The research advisor will develop a list of tutoring expertise needed for the project by examination of data accumulated on high risk courses, data from the faculty opinion survey on tutoring needs, review of the literature survey, and through discussions of the advisory committee.

6.2 The project coordinator will develop job descriptions for the early alert tutors. Job descriptions will identify the type of tutors needed in terms of subject matter expertise, level of education completed, availability to the program, etc. Job descriptions will be distributed to job placement offices at IVC and surrounding universities.

6.3 The job placement office will coordinate employment and board approval of all tutors hired for the project.

6.4 The advisory committee will develop training guidelines for the tutors. The project coordinator will assure that tutors are familiarized with the nature and purpose of the project, and the tutoring guidelines.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:
1. Did the research advisor develop a list of needed tutors? What types of tutors were identified?
2. Was the tutor job description developed?
3. Were the job descriptions distributed to the various college job placement offices?
4. Were tutoring guidelines developed?
5. Were tutors hired? How many?
6. Did tutors meet with the students referred from the early alert counselors? How many students? For what subject matter areas?
7. Did students benefit from the tutoring? How did students rate the tutoring assistance?

DATA TO BE COLLECTED:
1. List of tutors needed.
2. Tutor job description.
3. Tutor guidelines.
4. Frequency distribution showing frequencies of students tutored, hours of tutoring, broken down by subject areas.
5. Student outcome analysis showing persistence rates and grade averages.
6. Results of survey from students receiving tutoring.

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE: August 15 - September 30, 1990
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE: Project coordinator
Tutors
Research advisor
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS: Hourly costs:
  Research advisor
  Tutors
  Project coordinator
  Clerical
  Travel

OBJECTIVE 7:
Initiate fall, 1990 early alert program.

BENCHMARK:
  In-service faculty. Generate and distribute early alert rosters to instructors.
  Initiate student contacts and support service intervention.

7.1 During the fall, 1990 in-service week, the project coordinator will conduct an
in-service to familiarize faculty with the early alert project.
7.2 Just before the alert rosters are distributed to faculty, the project coordinator will
write a letter explaining the role faculty must play in supporting the early alert
program. The letter, which will include instructions for completing the rosters, will
be distributed to all faculty.
7.3 During the sixth week of the fall semester of 1990, the office of admissions and
records will generate early alert rosters and distribute them to faculty.
7.4 As completed early alert rosters are returned to the admissions and records
office, clerks will run them through the Scantron machine. Customized, initial
contact, early alert letters will be sent to students.
7.5 A data base will be accumulated which contains the following information:
student's name, student's id, student's phone number, name of course, ticket
number of course, name of instructor making a referral, type of concern(s)
instructor has for student, recommended intervention(s) instructor has
suggested. The data base will list students in alpha order, by last name. The
data base will be maintained for research and evaluation purpose. Copies of
the data base will be sent to the early alert advisors for their use when meeting
with students.
7.6 Early alert academic advisors will begin meeting with students who respond to
the early alert letter. Advisors will make referrals to appropriate support service
offices. The advisors will record the names of students they see, the outcome of
the session, and any referral(s) they make.
7.7 Early alert advisors will phone and attempt to schedule appointments with those
students who have not responded to the early alert letter.
7.8 Support service centers on campus will maintain independent records of
students referred from the early alert program.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:
  1. Did the project coordinator present an early alert in-service during the fall, 1990
     in-service week?
2. Did the project coordinator write a description of the project and distribute this information to faculty?
3. Were the early alert rosters generated and distributed to faculty during the sixth week of instruction?
4. Did faculty complete the rosters and return them as requested? If not, what percentage of faculty failed to respond? Why did they fail to respond?
5. Did the admissions and records clerks scan the returned rosters and generate and mail letters to students? How many letters were sent? What types of concerns about students did instructors indicate on the completed rosters? What was the frequency for each of those concerns?
6. How many and what percentage of students responded to the early alert letter?
7. How successful were the early alert advisors when they tried to contact students who had not responded to the early alert letter? What percent and number of these students reported to the early alert advisors?
8. What was the outcome of the early alert advising sessions? How many students? Having what types of problems? Referred to what services?
9. Is there any evidence that students receiving early alert services experienced more favorable academic outcomes?

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE: August, 1990 - June, 1991
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE: Research advisor
Project coordinator
Admissions and records clerks
Early alert academic advisors
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS: Materials
Duplication
Clerical
Hourly costs:
Project director
Academic advisors
Research advisor

OBJECTIVE 8:
Evaluate the fall semester of 1990 program.

BENCHMARK:
Convene advisory committee, decide upon changes needed for the fall early alert process.

8.1 Research advisor will accumulate and format evaluative data from the fall, 1990 semester.
8.2 Project coordinator will interview various faculty, and support staff for informal evaluation of the fall program.
8.3 During the January, 1991 in-service week, the project coordinator will convene the advisory committee. The committee will review the fall evaluative data,
consider input from early alert academic advisors and support service staff and make process adjustments for the spring semester program.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:
1. Did the project coordinator conduct informal interviews with faculty and various support service staff? What criticisms, opinions, suggestions were expressed?
2. Did the research advisor collect, analyze and report on the fall early alert data?
3. Did the advisory committee meet during January of 1991 to discuss and evaluate the fall program? What program adjustments were made in that meeting? Were the recommended changes made?

DATA TO BE COLLECTED:
1. Project coordinator’s notes accumulated during interviews of faculty and support staff.
3. Minutes of the advisory committee at the January, 1991 meeting.

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE: December 1990 - January 30 1991

PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE: Project coordinator
Research advisor

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS: Clerical assistance
Duplication

OBJECTIVE 9:
Evaluate both components and the overall early alert program.

BENCHMARK:
An evaluation report to be included in the final project report.

9.1 The research advisor will develop and apply a true-experimental design to evaluate the effectiveness of early alert intervention to help students. Students referred via the early alert rosters will be assigned randomly to two groups. The early alert process will be imposed on students in group one, the "treatment" subjects. Students in group two, the "control" subjects, will purposely NOT be contacted. Students who are contacted but fail to report for early alert advisors shall comprise a third category. The research advisor will compute and compare within-semester course retention, semester GPA and units completed/units attempted for students in each of the three groups.

9.2 Under the guidance of the research advisor, the early alert faculty advisors will maintain, for later analyses, a data base including type of problem identified during advisement, the referral made, and the referral outcome. Later analyses will determine the relative types of problems, and the effectiveness of the various interventions.

9.3 The research advisor will develop feedback surveys to be distributed to those involved with the early alert program: faculty, admissions and records, faculty advisors, tutors, support service staff, and students.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:
1. Were students identified through the early alert rosters divided into "treatment" and "control" groups? When compared with the control students, did students receiving early alert contact and intervention achieve better within-term persistence, GPA, and units achieved/units attempted figures?

2. Were data accumulated regarding the frequency of students reporting to early alert, their problems, and their interventions? What do these data reveal about the students and early alert?

3. Were surveys of the various early alert components developed, distributed, analyzed and reported? What do these surveys reveal?

DATA TO BE COLLECTED:
1. Student academic data: within-semester persistence, GPA and rate of units achieved/units attempted.
2. Early alert advisement log: name of student, type of problems identified during counseling session, recommended intervention, follow-up.
3. Survey information from all components.

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE: July, 1990 - June, 1991

PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE: Research advisor
Early alert advisors

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS: Hourly costs
Research advisor
Early alert advisors
Clerical
Duplication
Graphic arts

OBJECTIVE 10:
Evaluate the project and report on Irvine Valley's early alert project.

BENCHMARK:
Distribution of a final report on the project.

10.1 The research advisor will compile all research and evaluation analyses and format them for inclusion in the final report.
10.2 The project coordinator will gather all project related documents and combine them into a final report.
10.3 The advisory committee will review the final report and complete an evaluation of the project.
10.4 A notice of availability of the final report, including resource materials will be disseminated to California community colleges and other appropriate educational and research agencies.
10.5 The project coordinator and research advisor will be available for on-site college visits to report on their activities.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:
1. Were the research reports compiled and was a final report prepared?
2. Was this document reviewed by individual concerned with the project?
3. Were evaluations completed by appropriate project participants?
4. Was a notice of report availability prepared and distributed?

5. Did project staff conduct any site visitations or present the findings at any appropriate conferences or workshops? When and where?

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE: July 1990 - June 1991
PERSON RESPONSIBLE: College administrators
Project director
Research advisor

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS: Hourly costs:
Project director
Research advisor
Clerical assistance
Duplication
Graphic art
6. Expected Outcomes

EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

A. OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND IMPACT OF THE PROJECT:

Objective 1.
The broad based representation on the project's advisory committee will benefit commitment to making early alert work, promote support for additional efforts to better match students' needs to support services and will enhance the working relationship between instruction and student services.

Objective 2.
The literature survey will accumulate the most recently published information on college and university early alert programs. The annotated bibliography developed from the literature survey will be a valuable resource for shaping this project and will be useful to other colleges doing early alert planning and evaluation. The analysis of the college's course performance database will identify a list of courses which traditionally have high failure and dropout rates. This list of "high risk" courses will be useful for the early alert project as well as other efforts to better prepare and advise students into courses.

Objective 3.
The advisory committee's coordination and supervision of this project will encourage institutional commitment to this project and will develop an added sense of concern and commitment to helping students achieve the educational goals.

Objective 4.
The early alert roster and the associated programming will provide the college with: 1) an efficient, accurate method to gather faculty input about students having academic difficulties, 2) more effective academic advisement and intervention because the early alert advisors will have, via the early alert database, readily available information about the student, 3) on-line generation of customized letters to initiate the early alert contacts with students, 4) a database for research and evaluation of the program.

Objective 5.
The recruitment and training of faculty to serve as early alert advisors will provide for intrusive early alert advisement and follow-up. Our preliminary review of the literature indicates that human contact is an essential ingredient of a successful early alert program. Faculty involvement will create greater support for this and other programs and services designed to help students. Faculty participation will encourage an increase in positive interaction between faculty and student service staff.

Objective 6.
The recruitment and training of an early alert tutoring pool will provide students with much better tutoring than is currently available. The survey of faculty will provide the first ever attempt to systematically determine the tutoring needs of our student population. The project will provide an incentive to support a high quality tutoring pool in the future.

Objective 7.
Early alert letters and advisors will give the various support services a higher "profile" on campus. The research orientation of this project will provide for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the various support services.

Objectives 8 and 9.
The fall semester data analysis will provide valuable information for assessing the project and incorporating changes in the spring semester.

Objective 10.
The January, 1991 faculty and staff in-service will provide an additional opportunity to promote the program and to gather additional input from faculty and staff regarding any need to adjust the project.

Objective 11.
The spring version of the early alert project will benefit changes suggested by the fall data analysis, the January in-service presentation, and the advisory committee review.

Objective 12.
The final evaluation and report will assist Irvine Valley and other colleges who want to know 1) the relative costs and resources required to conduct an early alert process, 2) the relative effectiveness of different components of early alert in helping students, 3) the benefits of faculty assuming a greater role in the early alert process, and 4) the overall effectiveness of an early alert model when evaluated using a true experimental design.

OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF POTENTIAL FOR CONTINUED SUPPORT:
The project will implement a carefully planned early alert project. The project will incorporate 1) a broad based advisory committee, 2) an efficient method for gathering information about students who are having academic problems in their classes, 3) more than the usual level of faculty involvement, 4) student tracking, 5) intrusive advisement, 6) a pool of tutors, 7) a true experimental design for evaluation, and 8) design features suggested by a survey of the educational research literature. If early alert can truly make a difference, this study should find ample evidence to support that notion. Some variation of this early alert model is very likely to continue beyond expiration of the grant if the evaluation component demonstrates that early alert helps students complete more courses, achieve better grades, and/or make more use of the student support services available to them. If the project finds weak or no evidence that early alert helps students, it will be wise to direct our efforts and resources towards programs having more payoff for our students.
OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF POTENTIAL ADAPTATION TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS

All colleges should benefit from the thorough planning and evaluation proposed for this project. Most, if not all, findings of this study will be directly applicable to other colleges who are contemplating an early alert follow-up program.
7. Evaluation Plan

[NO “EVALUATION” ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.]
8. Dissemination Plan

DISSEMINATION PLAN

A notice of availability of the final report, including resource materials will be disseminated to California community colleges and other appropriate educational and research agencies. The project director and/or research advisor will present the design and outcomes of this project at the annual Asilomar research conference.
9. Budget Narrative

[NO “BUDGET NARRATIVE” ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.]