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Date: March 11, 2026

Subject: Closing the Accountability Gap: Addressing Student Non-Responsiveness in Faculty Performance Metrics

I. Background & Current Context

In recent semesters, the University has made commendable strides in streamlining the Early Alert and advising outreach process. Faculty have noted that advisor response times to outreach flags have significantly improved, with most follow-ups occurring within 24–48 hours.

However, a systemic “dead end” has emerged. A high volume of faculty notifications conclude with statuses such as: “Multiple attempts to reach the student have been made with no reply,” or “Student indicated they would discuss the matter with the faculty member.” While the advisor has fulfilled their duty, the underlying issue—the student’s academic risk—often remains unresolved. Furthermore, **the expectation that students respond to professional outreach and take responsibility for their learning outcomes is frequently unmet, leading to a breakdown in the support pipeline.**

II. The Problem: Structural Tension in Faculty Evaluation

This dynamic creates an inequitable burden on faculty members through three primary channels:

1. **DFW Rate Accountability:** Faculty are evaluated, in part, on DFW (D, F, and Withdrawal) rates. When a student ignores/disregards both faculty and advisor outreach, the faculty member remains the sole party "accountable" for that student's failure in the eyes of institutional data.
2. **SB1 and "Yelp-Style" Evaluations:** Under Senate Bill 1 (SB1) student evaluations weigh heavily into faculty evaluation. Current customer style/student review culture, faculty face "retaliatory" evaluations from disengaged students. Students who ignore/disregard outreach or continue to lack accountability after outreach efforts may correlate with increased review of "course difficulty" or “the faculty member is the problem” as a grievance, putting some faculty in a position to consider compromised academic standards to protect performance reviews.
3. **The Incentive for Grade Inflation:** There is an indirect but palpable pressure to inflate grades or lower standards to mitigate negative DFW outcomes and hostile student reviews, which undermines the long-term integrity of YSU’s academic mission.

III. Proposed Action

We move that the Academic Senate form a joint working group—including representatives from the **Academic Standards Committee** and **Teaching and Learning Committee and interested faculty members**—to undertake a study of the "Student Response Gap", report on the findings and propose policy changes that align student accountability with faculty performance metrics.

The working group should investigate the following considerations:

- **Student Accountability Metrics:** Investigating Advisors 'communication and engagement' post alert comments with student's final grades to determine if there is a statistically significant correlation between DFW rates and student responses an engagement.

If there is a correlation -

- **Refinement of "Next Steps":** Defining a clear institutional protocol for when a student remains non-responsive to advisor outreach or continues to do poorly after indicating they will make an effort to change (e.g., mandatory holds or required success seminars). Establish a timely follow-up mechanism to support students' personal commitments to their courses.
- **Contextualized DFW Metrics:** Developing an ongoing timely mechanism to "weight" or "audit" DFW rates against documented faculty/advisor outreach attempts. Faculty should not be penalized for DFW outcomes where student non-responsiveness is documented.
- **Evaluation Cross-Checking:** Creating a system where student evaluations are cross-referenced with their engagement data (e.g., participation in Early Alert interventions) to provide context during annual faculty reviews.

IV. Conclusion

We cannot expect faculty to guarantee student success when the students themselves opt out of the support systems provided. To maintain high academic standards and faculty morale, we must bridge the gap between our intervention efforts and our evaluation metrics.