Starfish Early Alert FAQ for Faculty

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Why does LBCC need an academic performance based early warning system?

Starfish is an opportunity to help students who are struggling in your course. When we help students complete individual courses, we increase persistence from term to term as well. Ultimately, better retention and persistence will lead to more students graduating and transferring; a critical achievement for students hoping to improve their quality of life.

What is Starfish Early Alert?

Starfish is a robust online platform that:
1. Engage students academically
2. Facilitate communication between students, faculty, and staff
3. Activate support networks for students
4. Support retention and persistence from term to term
5. Increase graduations and transfers

How can Starfish Early Alert help me as an instructor?

Starfish Early Alert makes it quick and easy to engage with students and provide feedback about their performance in your course. You can use the Progress Survey feature to batch-raise Kudos and Flags for all students in your class(es). It's as easy as clicking boxes next to student names from your course roster. Progress Surveys are launched weeks 4 and 9 of the 16-week semester.

How can Starfish Early Alert help my students?

There are two clear benefits for students:
1) You can give them timely feedback about their performance in your course
2) you can activate support resources quickly and easily by raising a flag or referral.

Once you have activated supports for a student, you can rest assured that the student will receive the necessary supports in a timely fashion, and you will also receive updates from Starfish when a service provider has rendered a service. This is called "closing the loop."

STARFISH EARLY ALERT FEATURES

What features does Starfish Early Alert have that will enhance my students' classroom experience?

As an instructor, you will be able to raise Kudos, Flags, and Referrals for the students in your classroom based on their performance. While Flags and Referrals help connect students to the resources and information that they need to be successful in the classroom, Kudos provide important positive feedback, letting a student know that they are on the right track. Throughout the pilot phase of Starfish Early Alert, many students shared gratitude that their instructor recognized their hard work in the classroom!

What impact could Starfish have on Long Beach City College?

Preliminary data from other colleges suggests that students who received feedback from Instructors through Starfish were more likely to succeed in the course and persist from term to term.

Additionally, Starfish has the potential to reshape and improve the way we communicate with students at LBCC and guide them into our various student support services. By providing a more streamlined method of referral. Rather than providing all students with all of the places that they can go for help, Starfish can be leveraged to provide each student with the right level of support for their situation.

Finally, every note, kudo, and flag entered into Starfish is information that will assist all Counselors who work with this student in the future. By building a robust profile of a student's progress and challenges, we can increase the likelihood that they will be encouraged to utilize the right resources and supports at the right time to promote their academic development at LBCC.

Over time, we hope to use data from Starfish to help streamline our approach to serving students as they progress toward graduation.

Why is retention important for Long Beach City College Students?

Starfish Early Alert provides an avenue by which the college can identify students needing support and facilitate access to those supports early on. As more students stay on track, more students will graduate and transfer.

Starfish Early Alert also directly aligns with the College's Strategic Plan and Guided Pathways framework for retention and completion.

COUNSELOR INVOLVEMENT

How are Counselors involved with Starfish Early Alert?

Counselors can intervene on your behalf when a student needs additional assistance. When a student is marked with an "Academic Progress Concern" flag, the Counseling Department will attempt to schedule the student for an appointment to create an academic recovery plan.

How will I be notified when a Counselor is working on a flag?

Counselors interventions are triggered for students who are flagged for Academic Progress Concern. Once a flag is picked up by a Counselor in Starfish Early Alert, the Counselor can provide updates on the resolution of that flag through notes and comments sent through the system. Also, when a flag is resolved, you will receive an email notification alerting you that the flag has been closed.

What kinds of supports do Counselors offer before resolving a flag?

Action plans created for students by Counselors will be tailored to the needs of the individual student. As such, interventions can vary in type and scope. Possible interventions may include academic, personal, and career counseling, referrals to specialized services, workshops, and educational planning. In some instances, Counselors may also reach out to you to obtain additional information about the student to help inform the creation of a holistic action plan for the student.

How long will it take a Counselor to respond to a flag?

Several unknowns must be considered when a student is referred to the Counseling Department. One important consideration is whether or not the student will respond when they are contacted for an appointment. Regardless of the unknowns, the Counseling Department is committed to contacting all students for whom the Academic Progress Concern flag is raised to intervene as quickly as possible. To assist the Counseling Department in this effort, please include any notes about the student's academic standing and performance in the class. This will help the Counselor create a plan for your student's academic recovery.

Given the highly individualized nature of a counseling session, the length of time it may take to resolve each flag can vary greatly. With that said, the Counseling Department aims to resolve each flag within two weeks or less. Remember that you can check the status of a flag that you have raised by logging into Starfish.

INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY INVOLVEMENT

How much time will it take for me to use Starfish for my class?

Progress Surveys are released twice each primary term and require about 15-20 minutes of your time. Progress Surveys are easiest to complete if you have an up to date grade book to reference. You may also choose to raise kudos, flags, and referrals manually throughout the term, but this is not required. You can use Starfish as much or as little as you see fit for your class; however, the more you use the tool, the more engaged your students will be. Progress Surveys will be launched weeks 4 and 9 of the 16-week semester. The Progress Survey will remain open for ten days.

Why use Starfish if I could just talk to the student on my own?

When you use Starfish to raise kudos, flags, and referrals, you are creating a record of your efforts to support, and in some cases intervene, with the students in your class. Your actions within Starfish become records that can be used to inform Counseling appointments or other service providers (depending on their role in Starfish). In other words, by using Starfish, you create a record for future use while activating a network of just-in-time support with just a few clicks.

How do I begin using Starfish as a faculty member?

- Attend a [training session](#) to learn more about the function and features of Starfish Early Alert and set up your user profile
- Participate in the Progress Surveys weeks 4 and 9 of each semester
- Introduce Starfish Early Alert on the first day of class (and include a section about it on your syllabus)

Why is my student asking me about Starfish?

It is possible that your student may be enrolled in a course in which the instructor is actively using Starfish Early Alert in their course.

Starfish Early Alert was released campus-wide Fall 2018. It is a unique tool that connects faculty and students in a virtual environment to facilitate individualized course performance feedback for each student. Feedback, in the form of kudos, can provide students with positive encouragement while flags can alert students to performance concerns and trigger appropriate supports.

DOCUMENTATION AND CLOSING THE LOOP

Who receives a message when I create a flag?

Attendance and Missing Assignment flags notify the student via email (and text if they have opted in.) Academic Progress Concern flags notify both the student and the Counseling

Department to initiate a Counselor intervention. Any referrals will notify the student and the appropriate service area. In some cases, additional departments may be notified, such as Athletics or Veteran Student Services.

Who can see the notes that I enter into Starfish when creating a flag?

The notes entered when raising a flag are sent to the student via email. All language in these comments should be student-centered. Counselors will see the comments, as well as other service areas such as Athletics or Veteran Student Services if the student has a connection to them. Instructors cannot see flags raised by other instructors. Only Counselors have that level of access. Include information in Starfish that you would be comfortable sharing with the student directly.

Who can see the notes that Counselors make in Starfish?

Comments that Counselors make on flags will be visible to the instructor who raised the flag as well as other counselors. Additionally, Counselors can add Counseling Notes to a student's profile, which can only be viewed by other Counselors. To contact students, Counselors use the message feature. Instructors cannot see these messages but students can.

How will I know when a flag has been resolved?

Starfish automatically emails the flag raiser when the item has been resolved. Also, you will receive a completion comment from the Counseling Department when a flag is closed. Counselors may also send additional updates of information after a student has come in for an appointment.

Can I track attendance in Starfish?

Yes, eventually. This is one of the features we are working to roll out as quickly as possible. The goal is to have this feature available in the near future.

SUPPORT

What kind of support is available to Faculty who use Starfish?

Group and individual hands-on training are available each term. These trainings are designed to familiarize faculty with the various Starfish features. The training schedule can be found on the LBCC Starfish webpage. One-on-one training can also be provided as needed.

Progress Survey Parties take place during weeks 4 and 9 of the 16-week semester. These parties are an opportunity for faculty to complete the progress survey for their courses(s) in the company of other faculty and IT support.

Where can I find resources to answer common questions, solve common issues, or learn more about Starfish?

Go to the "related links" section on the LBCC Starfish webpage. Included are the faculty handout, instructional guide, and short-how to videos.

Who do I contact if I have a technical issue while using Starfish?

FACULTY AND STAFF: Starfish support for faculty and staff only can be requested through the Helpdesk. From the IITS Helpdesk page, click Institutional Software under Application Dev & Support, and select Starfish from the drop-down menu.

STUDENTS: All support for students is provided through the Student Technology Help Desk.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Where can I send my suggestions or ideas for improvement?

Ensuring that Starfish Early Alert meets the needs of faculty and students is critically important. Your feedback is valuable and will allow us to revise and refine the tool to best meet your needs. You can email us at starfishsupport@lbcc.edu.

How often is Starfish updated to reflect the feedback of participants?

All feedback provided is reviewed throughout the academic year. Some changes can be made instantly, while others may require larger conversations, as they could have implications that must be considered. We encourage you the provide any feedback that you may have, no matter what it is. We value your input as a Starfish user.