

Faculty FAQ's for Using Starfish

National Louis University

What is Starfish and why are we using it?

Starfish is an Early Alert Retention program used by more than 200 institutions across the country. NLU has used Starfish since 2014 as a way to identify students that are having trouble in a class or need assistance so that we can proactively provide this support and, ultimately, keep them enrolled at the institution.

What is the role of faculty with Starfish?

Because faculty have the most formal interaction with students, you play a critical role in early identification of students that are having trouble in a course, need academic assistance, have stopped attending a course, or are displaying troubling behaviors. Faculty are asked to use Starfish to notify staff of these concerns proactively so that outreach can occur.

Where can faculty find the Starfish site?

In the NLU portal, click on the "Faculty/Staff" tab. In the Employee Services section on the top left, the link for Starfish can be found. When you click on this link, you will automatically be signed in to the Starfish site. In the site you can find links to your Progress Surveys and all of the students enrolled in your course(s) during the current term.

What is asked of faculty?

During the second week of the course, faculty will be asked to complete a Starfish Progress Survey. You will receive notification of the survey via your NLU email. Surveys are typically open during the second week of the course, but specific dates will be indicated in your email. Progress Surveys are designed to provide quick feedback on what you have observed to date in your course. Specifically, faculty are asked to indicate any of the following for a student in their course, with comments when necessary:

- Attendance Concern: it is critical that faculty raise this flag if a student has not yet attended or logged in to a course
- In Need of Academic Assistance: if early work indicates a student needs academic assistance or tutoring in the areas of writing, research, math, science and/or study skills, this flag sends a referral to Library and Learning Support for outreach. Faculty can expect to receive notification when student has received academic support services.
- Kudos: send encouragement to a student that is doing well in your course so far

Do I have to complete a Progress Survey?

It is essential that you complete a Progress Survey even if there are no issues to report in your course and all students are attending and doing well so that we know the status of each student. You can do this simply by going to the survey and clicking submit. If you receive a survey for a course such as a Dissertation, Internship, etc. for which a survey isn't appropriate, please ignore the survey.

What happens after a flag is raised?

When a flag is raised, the student will receive an automatically generated email to their NLU account with important information and links based on the flag. Any comments you enter will be visible to the student in this email as well. For attendance concerns, the assigned academic advisor will also be notified and follow a protocol of outreach. Academic Assistance referrals go to Library and Learning Support, who will contact the student to make an appointment.

What other ways can I use Starfish?

There are many additional ways to help your students succeed and get assistance throughout the term. You can manually raise flags for students throughout the terms for such things as Tutoring Referrals, Attendance Concerns for students that might stop attending your course in the middle of the term, and In Danger of Failing flags if a student is going to fail your course. You can raise these types of flags at any time during a term by going to your Starfish account, selecting a student from the Students tab, clicking on their name, and raising a Flag or Referral.

How can you track what happens after a flag is raised?

When a flag for things such as an Attendance Concern or In Danger of Failing is cleared by the academic advisor, you will receive a notification email in your NLU email account. The advisor's comments will be included so that you can see the outcome of this outreach. Faculty can expect Library & Learning Support to clear academic assistance flags when the student has received academic support services and to provide the faculty with a detailed account of that support via an email notification.

Are faculty being monitored on their Starfish usage?

We do keep track of faculty completion of Starfish surveys and a report on overall faculty completion of Progress Surveys is provided each term, and was 80% in Summer 2015, so you are expected to utilize Starfish to help your students.

Who should you contact with any questions or concerns about using Starfish?

You can contact Steve Neer, Executive Director of Advising and Retention, at Stephen.neer@nl.edu or 312-261-3031 with any questions.