

FALL 2020

Important Dates

ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORT #1

RIT Main Campus

Opens Monday, September 7 at 7 AM EST
Closes Sunday, September 27 at 11 PM EST

RIT Croatia & RIT Dubai

Opens Monday, September 21 at 7 AM EST
Closes Sunday, October 11 at 11 PM EST

RIT Kosovo

Opens Monday, October 5 at 7 AM CEST
Closes Sunday, October 18 at 11 PM CEST

ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORT #2

RIT Main Campus

Opens Monday, October 5 at 7 AM EST
Closes Sunday, October 25 at 11 PM EDT

RIT Croatia & RIT Dubai

Opens Monday, October 19 at 7 AM EST
Closes Sunday, November 8 at 11 PM EST

RIT Kosovo

Opens Monday, November 2 at 7 AM CET
Closes Sunday, November 15 at 11 PM CET

STARFISH TRAINING

To learn more about how to use the Starfish system, attend one of the sessions below. Sessions will be virtual via Zoom. Registration is required through the RIT Center for Professional Development website:

<https://www.rit.edu/fa/cpd/starfish-academic-alert-instructors-and-advisors>

- Thursday, September 10 at 9 AM
- Friday, September 18 at 10 AM
- Monday, October 12 at 10 AM
- Tuesday, October 20 at 1 PM

Beyond the Alerts

Starfish as an Instructional Resource

Carmala Garzione, Ph.D., Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs

With the first academic progress report opening on September 7th, I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight Starfish as an instructional resource available to you. As you will see in the "Starfish Spotlight", Starfish can be a powerful tool to communicate with students. With the variety of instructional modes that we are offering, and the possibilities of students having to quarantine or isolate, it will be important to communicate your concerns and student expectations early and often. Starfish allows you to communicate directly with your students and ensures that their advisors are informed (see page 3) of your concerns. Students value your feedback and the care you have shown in your alert, as well kudos comments (highlighted in the survey results on page 4). I hope in reviewing Beyond the Alerts you can see how your communications impact students and support their academic success at RIT.

Many thanks for all that you are doing to support your students.

Starfish Spotlight

Mike Eastman, PhD

Associate Dean,
College of
Engineering
Technology



Mike Eastman was instrumental in guiding the implementation of Starfish, and served on the Starfish Advisory Group. He continues to be an active supporter of Starfish. We asked Mike to share with us his perspective on Starfish.

I am a firm believer in the concept of an academic alert system. Because instructor feedback from multiple courses collects in a single location, advisors can quickly and more accurately understand which students need support. In turn, advisors can be more effective in their outreach, which leads directly to student success. As we have all become more comfortable with the capabilities of Starfish, faculty have become more appreciative of the ability for advisors to capture feedback from multiple classes and paint a much more accurate picture of student struggles. This was especially true when RIT went remote in the spring semester and receiving timely information regarding student progress in courses was so essential.

In our college, our faculty and advisors have highly collaborative relationships. Over time and through education, we have seen increased utilization of the Starfish system by faculty, which in turn helps the advisors do their valuable work. Our Dean, who fully embraces Starfish, has organized workshops for our faculty and advisors to help ensure we have consistent messaging and a coherent, effective strategy of student support within our college. His commitment helps establish CET's culture of collaborative student support.

I believe the next stage in our development with Starfish is to be more intentional with when and how we assess student performance across the curricula. I find this to be interesting work because it involves using the academic alert system, which is focused on student success, to drive evidence-based teaching and learning practices. We know that early and frequent low-stakes assessments can help students understand their academic progress. By coupling those teaching strategies with the academic alert system, we can achieve a win-win. Not only will the student receive more-frequent feedback, but the instructor receives valuable information earlier in the semester that can be used to identify student needs. By creating an environment where students, faculty, and advisors develop an earlier understanding of student performance, we can be more proactive and more effective in helping wayward students get back on course.

Robyn Pope

Student,
Applied Statistics
and Actuary
Sciences



Robyn Pope is a second-year student from Virginia, majoring in applied statistics and actuarial science. Robyn shared that she struggled in her first year at RIT. When COVID arrived in March and courses transitioned to remote instruction, Robyn's balance of work and academics became even more challenging. We interviewed Robyn to learn more about her experience and use of Starfish.

Robyn had positive insights to share. She noted that Starfish was useful for setting up appointments with her advisor, and it was convenient that the appointments populated into her personal calendar. Robyn also noted that Kudos helped with motivation. She stated, "The kudos really help, they boost my confidence. When I get it (a kudos), it makes me happier and I know where I stand in the class."

Additionally, Robyn stated that academic alerts help her to realize that she needs to focus more on a course. She said, "A lot of the time, the alerts come with a teacher note. The teacher notes are very useful to me. If there are comments, then we know what we are doing well or what we need to improve on." Robyn expressed that instructor comments made the alert feel personalized, and were especially helpful if they included a plan of how she could get back on track in the course.

When asked what Robyn would want instructors to know from a student about using Starfish, she provided insightful feedback. Robyn said, "at a C+ some professors send Kudos of *Keep up the Good Work*, while others (at a C+) send an alert to improve." She expressed concern because each instructor designs their course differently, and uses different thresholds for how and when they send alerts and kudos, it is very helpful to let students in your classes know what to expect about how and when you typically alert students.

Instructor Tip:

































At the beginning of the semester, inform students why and when they should expect an alert or kudos in your course. For additional course design information regarding Starfish [visit our website](#).

Access to Alert Information in Starfish

Access to information in Starfish is based upon each user's role and their relationship to the student. Do you know who can see your comments in Starfish or what communications a student receives?

The chart below maps how alert information is shared with the student and the student's success network. Information on the table is specifically related to alerts; for more information on the visibility of other features within Starfish, visit our [website](#).

Click on the linked icons below to view examples of the communications sent or find detailed Starfish instructions.

	Student	Instructor	Primary Academic & Support Advisors	Advising & Department Leadership
Alert raised by instructor via manual process or report	Automated  		 	 
Comment added on an alert by an advisor	Optional 	Optional  		
Comment added on an alert by an instructor	Optional 			
Alert cleared by instructor			 	 
Alert cleared by advisor		Optional 	 	 
 No Visibility  Email from Starfish  Sent in Recent Tracking Item Daily Summary Email  Viewable in Starfish in the Student Folder				

Starfish Enhancements

Recently, the following new features and updates have been added to Starfish:

Mobile Responsive Student Dashboard & Profile *Feature enabled for Students*

In August, a system update occurred making Starfish more mobile-friendly for students. The student dashboard and profile pages were updated in Starfish to be mobile responsive and allow for easier set-up and navigation by the student.

"Select All" Feature *Feature enabled for Instructors and Advisors*

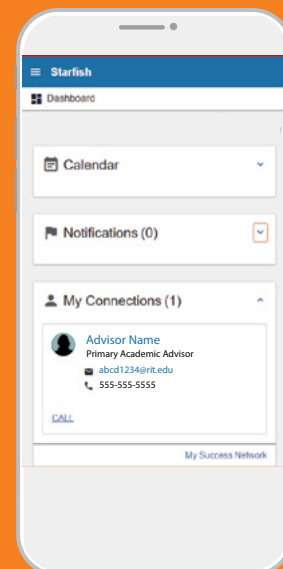
The "Select All" feature allows users to perform bulk actions (message, resolve, alert, or add success plans) when taking action on students data on the My Students or Tracking tabs. Utilize the filters to add criteria (i.e., course section, academic alerts, etc.) to limit the list of students in the My Students and Tracking tabs. Once the list is defined, use the "Select All" button at the top of the screen. The "Select All" maximum is 15,000 students or items. If you reach this limit, you will be prompted to adjust your filters before making a selection. For more information on how to add filters, visit our [website](#).

Student Status *Feature enabled for Advisors*

In the Starfish student folder, the Overview tab will now display a student's status from SIS (i.e., Active, LOA, etc.). This allows advisors to quickly filter their student list to view students who are on a leave of absence.

Non-Registered Status *Feature enabled for Advisors*

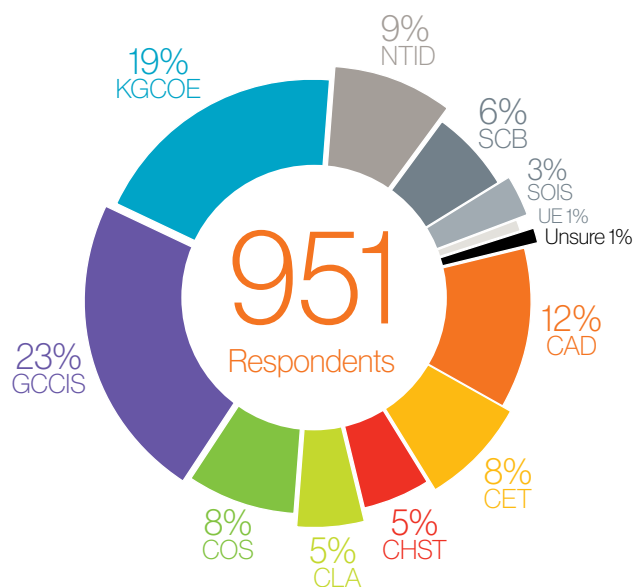
In the Starfish student folder, the Overview tab will also contain the student's status code for the non-registered outreach process. This allows advisors to filter students by non-registered status and communicate with different groups accordingly.



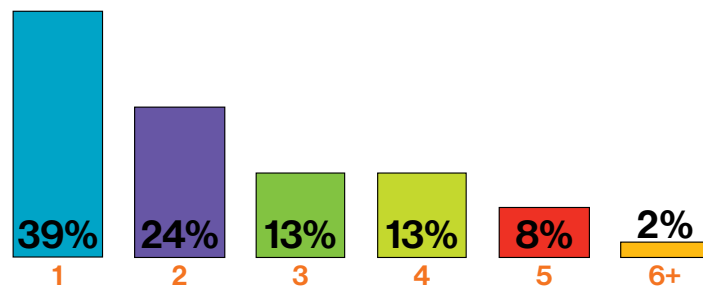
What do RIT Students Say About Using Starfish?

The summary data below is from the Starfish student user survey conducted after the fall 2019 term.

Who Responded?



Years Attended RIT



Alerts & Kudos Sent

26%

of students received an alert in Fall 2019*

53%

of students received a kudos in Fall 2019*

Of the students who reported receiving an alert...

62% indicated **the instructor included personalized comments**

77% of the respondents that stated the instructor included personalized comments, also **said the instructors comments were helpful**

78% of the respondents that stated the instructor included personalized comments, **expressed that the instructor cared about my success in the course**

Advising Appointments

88%

of students self-scheduled their appointments in Starfish during the 2019-2020 academic year*

88%

of students shared scheduling is easy in Starfish

Students reported the following after receiving an alert:



85% understood their instructors concern about their performance

77% were motivated to improve their performance

63% felt encouraged to meet with their instructor

77% met with either an instructor and/or advisor

* based on Starfish system data