

SPRING 2021

## Important Dates

### ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORT #1

RIT Main Campus & RIT Dubai

Opens Monday, February 15 at 7 AM EST

Closes Sunday, March 7 at 11 PM EST

RIT Croatia

Opens Monday, February 8 at 7 AM EST

Closes Sunday, February 28 at 11 PM EST

RIT Kosovo

Opens Monday, February 15 at 7 AM CET

Closes Sunday, February 28 at 11 PM CET

### ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORT #2

RIT Main Campus & RIT Dubai

Opens Monday, March 15 at 7 AM EST

Closes Sunday, April 4 at 11 PM EST

RIT Croatia

Opens Monday, March 8 at 7 AM EST

Closes Sunday, March 28 at 11 PM EST

RIT Kosovo

Opens Monday, March 15 at 7 AM CET

Closes Sunday, March 28 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>

- Wednesday, February 24 at 10 AM
- Tuesday, March 2 at 2 PM
- Friday, March 19 at 9 AM
- Thursday, March 25 at 10 AM

# Beyond the Alerts

## Working as a Team to Support Student Success

*Hillary McCormick, Academic Advisor*

Over the past year, many of us have adapted to a new normal of getting out of bed, grabbing a cup of coffee, and settling into our new workspace. The pandemic has required all of us to work differently than we have in the past and nudged us to connect in ways that we haven't before. Connecting with each other has become more important than ever. It has also become vital to support students through a variety of technological resources, such as Starfish.

When instructors raise manual alerts and submit Academic Progress Reports through Starfish, advisors can utilize this information to build a more comprehensive picture of each student's academic progress at RIT. Advisors reinforce the instructors' guidance and provide additional tools, such as Zoom links to tutoring services or contact information for the Academic Success Center. In our department, advisors and department leads identify alert trends and partner with instructors to offer additional study sessions.

Utilizing a holistic approach builds a community of support for students. A team approach to student success helps maintain a connection with students in a time when these connections have become critical.

# Communicating With a Student's Advisor Through Starfish

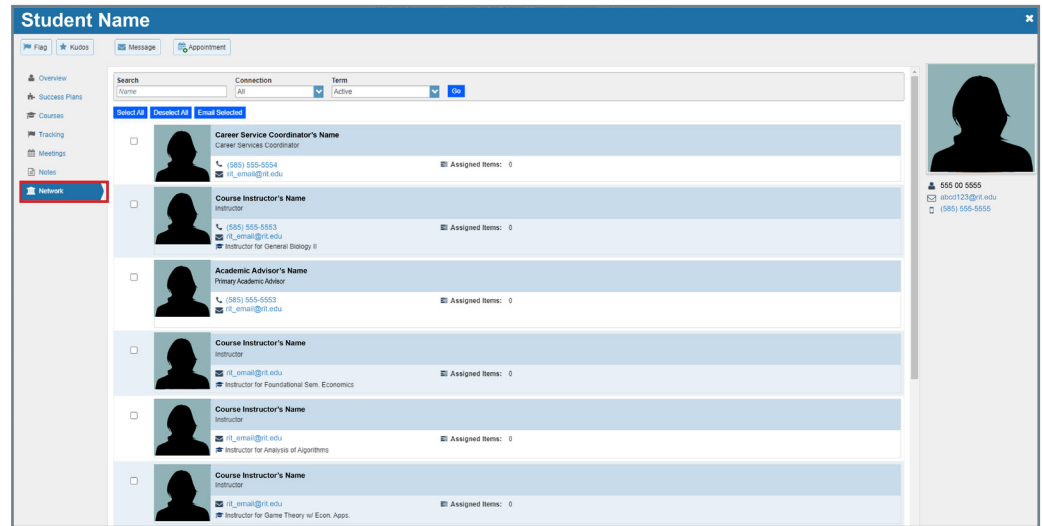
As an instructor, there are times when you may need to communicate with a student's academic advisor. For example, if an instructor is concerned that a student is becoming disengaged or the student has not attended class for an extended period of time, they may contact the academic advisor for assistance. Knowing how to send communications through Starfish can aide in the team approach of supporting students. When the communication is sent through Starfish, it will be stored in the student record and visible by the instructor and the advisor.

Follow the steps below to send an email message to a student's advisor in Starfish. **For more detailed instructions, visit our website.**

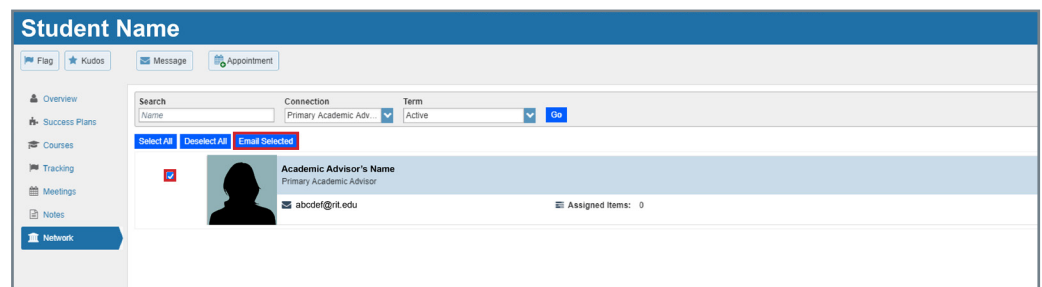
## How to message a student's advisor in Starfish

1. Navigate to the student folder in Starfish.

2. Select the *Network* tab.



3. Select the box next to the individual listed as the Primary Academic Advisor in the student's *Network*.



4. Click the "Email Selected" button at the top of the screen. A new pop-up window will open.

5. Include a *Subject* and type your message in the box provided.

6. Click "Submit."

A screenshot of a 'Send Email' pop-up window. It has a title bar with a close button. Inside, there are 'To' and 'Subject' fields, both containing placeholder text. Below them is a large text area for the 'Email' (message body). At the bottom left is a checkbox labeled 'Send copy of note to yourself'. At the bottom right are 'Cancel' and 'Submit' buttons. A red asterisk icon and the text 'Required fields' are at the bottom left.

The emails are saved in the student's Starfish folder on the Notes tab, but are only visible to the sender and recipient of the email.

***Please note:*** the student does not receive a copy of this email message.

# Starfish Spotlight

## Hillary McCormick

Academic Advisor,  
Kate Gleason  
College of  
Engineering



Hillary McCormick has been an advisor for eight years in the Kate Gleason College of Engineering's Mechanical Engineering department. Her team's approach to helping students includes using Starfish to partner with instructors and department leadership.

Hillary provided the following insight in regard to supporting instructor recommendations:

*Advisors benefit when instructors use Starfish to alert students. The supportive comments in alerts give students a path forward. These comments allow advisors to encourage students to follow through with the instructors' recommendations. For example, if the instructor wants to see the student during office hours, advisors can circle back to the student and encourage them to attend. A good comment can be the perfect invitation to office hours, and the advisor can give a student the push they need to make that daunting click on an instructor's Zoom link.*

Additionally, Hillary uses a team approach to assisting students with multiple alerts:

*If I have multiple alerts on a student, I will message the instructors listed in the student's Starfish Success Network to get a pulse check [on the student]. Is the student fading in just one class, or is this a trend? I can collect information from the other instructors and piece the puzzle together to see the bigger picture for the student. The more information I have as an advisor, the better I can direct the student to resources or an alternate plan of action.*

Hillary has developed a good rapport with students, instructors, and college leadership to help students succeed at RIT.

Hillary recently accepted a new position in the Saunders College of Business. We want to thank Hillary for her contributions to the Starfish Advisory Group, recognize her accomplishments as an advisor in KGCoe's Mechanical Engineering department, and wish her continued success in her new position.

## Dr. Sandra Connelly

Principal Lecturer,  
Thomas H. Gosnell School  
of Life Sciences



Dr. Sandra Connelly is a principal lecturer for the general biology courses in the Thomas H. Gosnell School of Life Sciences. As biology is a required course for many majors, Dr. Connelly communicates with advisors throughout many colleges and departments. This Spotlight will highlight Dr. Connelly's use of supportive comments and effective work with advisors across multiple departments. Dr. Connelly believes in the importance of the Starfish system, which is demonstrated by her consistent use and the number of alerts and kudos sent every semester.

Dr. Connelly emphasized the importance of alerting her students, not only for "the students to know where they stand" in a course but also to share the information with the advisors and program directors. The comments she provides are exceptionally thoughtful and always encourage students to keep achieving. She stated, "I would love to have the bandwidth to send an alert or update to every student." However, in order to be most effective with her time and feedback, she has designed her course to send alerts and kudos when the Academic Progress Reports are open. She then focuses on sending kudos to the top 4-5 students in each course and alerts to students who are struggling.

As a faculty advisor, Dr. Connelly says her role has helped her realize how important instructor comments are to students. "I try to think from a student's perspective: 'If I was getting 5-6 alerts, could I handle the messages being sent?'" Therefore, she always tries to provide encouraging words to the student. Dr. Connelly also reflected, "Only 3%-5% of students get back to me, but just because there is silence doesn't mean there isn't recognition."

With regard to advisors following up on alerts, she stated "As faculty, we look forward to working with and appreciate advisors who connect with their students." Dr. Connelly expressed the importance, as an instructor, of being included on alert follow up from advisors. It helps faculty be aware of the resources offered to the student by the advisor, as well as the student's plan to move forward.



# Let Us Direct Your Attention To...

Starfish has delivered new functionality that RIT users have continuously requested. We are excited to announce *Direct Links*. *Direct Links* will minimize the steps for RIT users to access Starfish.

When embedded in an email communication, *Direct Links* allow the recipient to follow a link to complete their RIT authentication and land on the linked page in Starfish.

Here are ways *Direct Links* will be used:

- **Academic Progress Reports and Reminders**

When instructors receive an email notification about Academic Progress Reports, a *Direct Link* will be included. By clicking on this link, instructors will be taken to the *Instructor Reports* tab in Starfish where they can immediately review their open Academic Progress Reports. **[Click here to see a sample of the new communication.](#)**

- **Students Scheduling an Advising Appointment**

Advisors can now send a student a *Direct Link* to their calendar in order to schedule an appointment in Starfish. **[Click here to see specific details on how to access your scheduling Direct Link.](#)** *Please note: To access the scheduling page within Starfish, the student must already have an established relationship with the calendar owner.*

- **Starfish Access From Daily Email Summary**

The daily email summary will now contain a *Direct Link* in each alert to allow users to access their dashboard in the Starfish system.



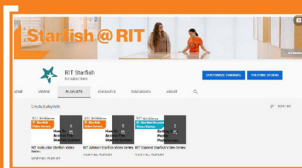
## Beyond the Alerts

### New RIT Starfish YouTube Channel!

Need a Starfish refresher? This semester we launched an RIT Starfish YouTube Channel. The channel features the Starfish Video Series, which offers brief "how-to" videos about the most used Starfish features. There are three different YouTube Playlists to choose from: **Instructor**, **Advisor**, and **Student**. Select your playlist to get started.

In addition to the YouTube playlists, we have placed the how-to videos on the corresponding page of the Starfish website. Each video will appear at the top of the corresponding page and include captioning.

Have an idea for a new video? Send us an email at [Starfish@rit.edu](mailto:Starfish@rit.edu)



### SPRING 2020 Important Dates

**ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORT #1**  
RIT Main Campus, RIT Croatia, & RIT Dubai  
Opens Monday, February 3 at 7 AM EST  
Closes Sunday, February 23 at 11:00 PM EST

RIT Kosovo  
Opens Monday, February 10 at 7 AM CET  
Closes Sunday, February 23 at 11:00 PM CET

**ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORT #2**  
RIT Main Campus, RIT Croatia, & RIT Dubai  
Opens Monday, March 2 at 7 AM EST  
Closes Sunday, March 29 at 11:00 PM EDT

RIT Kosovo  
Opens Monday, March 9 at 7 AM CET  
Closes Sunday, March 29 at 11:00 PM CEST

#### STARFISH TRAINING

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- Tuesday, February 4, from 2 PM - 3 PM
- Wednesday, February 12, from 10 AM - 11 AM
- Tuesday, March 10, from 1 PM - 2 PM
- Tuesday, March 17, from 3 PM - 4 PM
- Wednesday, March 25, from 9 AM - 10 AM

## In Case You Missed It...

If you are just discovering our Starfish newsletter, past issues are always accessible on our **[website](#)**. Every issue features a spotlight on Starfish users. Additionally, product updates and enhancements are also featured.

Here is a sample of past articles:

- Course Design with Alerts in Mind by Michael Starenko
- Clearing Alerts in Starfish
- Instructor Comments for Academic Alerts
- Starfish as an Instructional Resource by Dr. Carmala Garziona
- Access to Alert Information in Starfish