



# Starfish Early Alert

## Minot State University

April 19, 2016 – ND Legislative Branch Higher Education Committee

*Presented by*

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*Dr. Daniel Clayton, Assistant Professor Chemistry  
Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Starfish Committee Member*



# What is Starfish Early Alert?



- ✦ An early warning and student tracking system
- ✦ A student success tool that helps the campus community identify which students are at risk and engage with those students, helping lead to their success

# Previous Early Alert System



- ✦ Used homegrown system – manual process using Adobe forms program for results
- ✦ Students from the following programs included in report: POWER (TRiO student support), Athletics, Veterans Services and Enhanced Success Program (ESP) - with the opportunity to report on other students
- ✦ Timeliness of reporting suffered due to labor intensity – interventions may have been too late
- ✦ Software was to be phased out

# Starfish Early Alert Implementation



- ✦ Mid June - Kevin Harmon, Vice President for Student Affairs spearheaded a committee of key leaders from across campus including administration, faculty and staff
- ✦ June 29, 2015 - Starfish Early Alert kickoff meeting
- ✦ August 18, 2015 – “Go Live”
- ✦ August 20, 2015 - introduction to faculty and staff at Mini Convocation Sessions
- ✦ First week of classes – letter sent to students
- ✦ September 3, 2015 - staff training
- ✦ September 7, 2015 - deployed first Early Alert Report

Team effort with many kudos to all committee members!

# Starfish at Minot State University



- ★ A collaborative effort between the **faculty** and **advisors** at **Minot State University** to ensure student success and persistence.

## Goals

### Phase I:

- ★ Improve communication among students, faculty, and staff through increased faculty access and efficiency of contacts with students and support services/referrals
- ★ Attain faculty support and increase faculty usage of Starfish Early Alert system
- ★ Increase usage of Starfish Early Alert system

### Phase II:

- ★ Increase overall term-to-term persistence rates as well as course completion rates for students
- ★ Increase faculty usage of Starfish Early Alert system
- ★ Increase usage of Starfish Early Alert system

# How Does Starfish Early Alert Work?



- ★ Starfish interfaces with PeopleSoft to bring information on all students from CampusConnection to the Starfish system
- ★ Directory pictures of faculty, advisors, staff and students are also pulled into the system
- ★ A student's information is placed onto one page for easy accessibility, whereas there may be several pages to view in CampusConnection

## Rachel Lands

Phone: (757) 622-4437 Cell Phone: 512-635-6257 Institution Email: [rsafavian@starfishsolutions.com](mailto:rsafavian@starfishsolutions.com) | Preferred Email: [qyaskn@starfishsolutions.com](mailto:qyaskn@starfishsolutions.com)

[Raise Flag](#) [Add Note](#) [Invite Student](#)

<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<b>APPOINTMENTS</b>	<b>GRADES</b>	<b>NOTES</b>	<b>FLAGS</b>
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### Recent Flags

- Flagged for Counseling Referral
- Flagged for Behavior Concern

Student Id: rands4255 Phone: (757) 622-4437  
Preferred Email: [qyaskn@starfishsolutions.com](mailto:qyaskn@starfishsolutions.com) Cell Phone: 512-635-6257  
Institution email: [rsafavian@starfishsolutions.com](mailto:rsafavian@starfishsolutions.com)

Note: FERPA standards protect student data



[Report inappropriate photo]

# Specific Expectations



## Instructors

- Raise flags manually when appropriate
- Submit Early Alert Reports twice each semester (first report for enrollment is mandatory)
- Watch for 'close the loop' message or clear flags if appropriate

## Academic Advisors

- Receive email notifications from Starfish
- Record follow up actions in Starfish:
  - Add notes
  - Clear flags

## Students

- Receive email notifications when flagged
- Contact instructor, advisor, or appropriate support office

## Support Staff

- Access student cohorts in Starfish (i.e., Athletics, Veterans Services, Native American Services)
- Contact students if appropriate
- Record follow up actions in Starfish:
  - Add notes
  - Clear flags

# Flags



Flag Name	Description
<b>Academic Concern</b>	Raise this flag when a student is not participating in class, not turning in assignments, or is receiving unsatisfactory grades. Emails will go to student and advisor. Notes are required to detail the specific concerns, and these notes are viewable by the students.
<b>Attendance Concern</b>	Raise this flag when a student is not attending class regularly. Emails will go to student and advisor. Notes are required, and these notes are viewable by students.
<b>General Concern</b>	Raise this flag to express any concerns you have about a student. Tammy Wolf will receive these flags and refer or contact student as appropriate.
<b>In Danger of D, U or F (appears on 6<sup>th</sup> week report only)</b>	Raise this flag when a student is in danger of receiving a D, U, or F. Emails go to student and advisor. These are URGENT messages; profile email notification settings will be overridden.
<b>Kudos</b>	Raise this flag to comment on a student's class-related accomplishment. Email goes to student. Notes are viewable to the student.
<b>Never Attended</b>	Raise this flag to report if a student has never attended a single class session or completed an academically related activity in an online course.

# Early Alert Report (Raise the Flag)



- Instructors may flag students manually or through an Early Alert Report by simply checking the appropriate boxes and clicking *Submit*. They will also add notes where appropriate or required.

Home Appointments Students ▾ Profile ▾ Admin [help](#) | [feedback](#)

ALL STUDENTS FLAGS **FLAG SURVEYS**

Survey:

Review your student roster, select any observed issues if any and submit the survey. The survey should be submitted even if there are no observed issues.

Name ▾	No Flags	Poor Attendance	Participation	Work Life
<a href="#">Albright, Randy</a>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Andrews, Randy</a>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Berger, Jeff</a>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Chappell, Jeff</a>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Fisher, Jim</a>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Fore, Jim</a>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Gilmore, Lexy</a>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Hand, Sara</a>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Heck, Deb</a>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Ivanov, Deb</a>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Jennings, Max</a>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Johnson, Max</a>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Jordan, Grant</a>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Page 1 of 1    Displaying students 1 - 26 of 26

# Example of Message sent to student/advisor



**From** MSUEarlyAlert@mino:stateu.edu  
**Reply To** MSUEarlyAlert@mino:stateu.edu  
**BCC**  
**Subject** Attendance Concern in Introduction to Microbiology

Dear Rachel,

Your instructor has expressed an Attendance Concern in Introduction to Microbiology.

You can be successful in your academic studies, and attending class is the first step to accomplishing your goals. Missing class content can affect your grades and academic performance. It is not too late to change your attendance habits.

Here are additional comments from your instructor:

*Rachel missed 3 classes this month.*

MSU has many resources that can aid your effort to improve academic performance and assist with personal concerns. Please reply to this email to contact your instructor or consider contacting your advisor for resources and suggestions for improvement.

We care about your success!

Sincerely,

MSU Early Alert Team

# Clear the Flag and Close the Loop



Advisor (or instructor) Closes the Loop. Instructor receives email.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Blackboard interface. The main content area is a form titled "Mark 1 Flag as Cleared". The form includes a "Cancel" and "Submit" button at the top right. Below the title, there is a question: "Are you sure you want to mark the Academic Concern flag for Alexsea Davis as cleared?". Underneath this is a "Comment:" section with the instruction "Add comments indicating why the flag is being marked as cleared." and a large text input field. Below the comment field is a section titled "Close the Loop:" with the instruction "Write a message in the field below to the person who created the flag [redacted] to let them know that the flag is being marked as cleared and why. If this field is left blank, no message will be sent." and another large text input field. At the bottom of the form, there is a "Required fields" indicator (a red asterisk) and another "Cancel" and "Submit" button. The background shows the Blackboard navigation menu with options like "Home", "Students", "My Students", "Teaching", and "Early M".

# Mandatory Enrollment Reporting



- ★ Registrar's Office switched their mandatory enrollment reporting at the beginning of the spring semester from paper reporting to the Starfish Early Alert system
  - ★ Early Alert Report opens after the last day to add classes – includes Never Attended flag
  - ★ Faculty are required to report only those students who have never attended, however, all flags are available on the survey
  - ★ Previously students received communication after being dropped, now the communication is sent immediately when the flag is raised giving them time to contact the instructor and rectify the situation

*“Switching from the manual process to a savvy, intuitive electronic process saves our office, faculty and administrative assistants a great deal of time. Report information is quick and easy!”*      Rebecca Ringham, Registrar



# Starfish Statistics

# Fall Semester Statistics



- ★ 143 different involved flag raisers
- ★ 1,281 Total unique students with flags/kudos
- ★ 2,526 Total flags/kudos raised
- ★ 1,955 Survey items (889 flags, 1,066 kudos)
- ★ 571 Manually raised items (336 flags, 235 kudos)

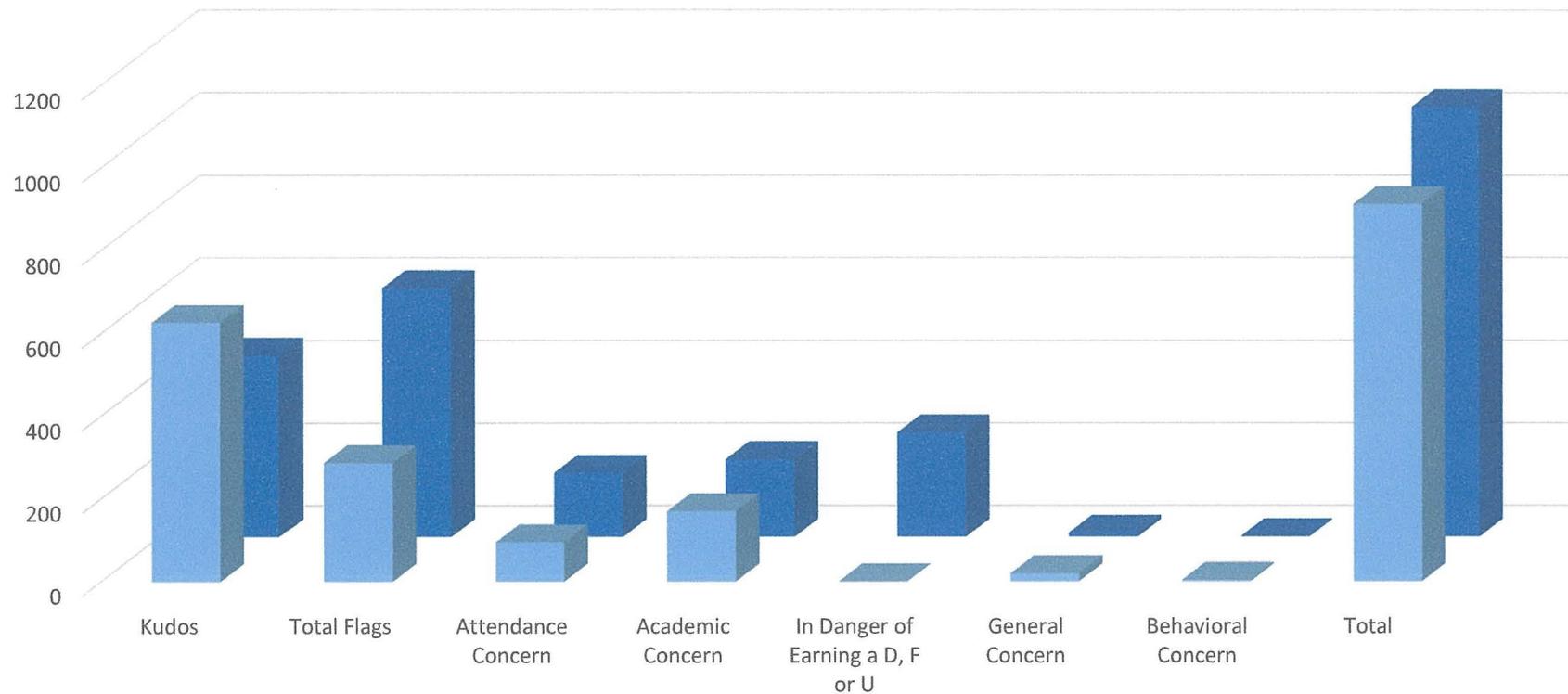
*“The Starfish early alert system has improved the ability of the Veterans Services office to provide referrals to Minot State University and Community resources in a timely manner, resulting in an increase of successfully completed courses taken by students using military educational benefits at Minot State University. The faculty buy in, and reporting of class attendance, has allowed Minot State University to reduce the amount of money charged for VA debts and over-payments when a student using benefits enrolls but never attends class or completely withdraws before the first day of the term.”*

Andy Heitkamp, Director of Veterans Services

# Fall Semester Statistics



■ Fall 2015 3rd Week Early Alert Report   ■ Fall 2015 6th Week Early Alert Report



# Spring Semester Statistics



- ★ 189 different involved flag raisers
- ★ 1,386 Total unique students with flags/kudos
- ★ 2,693 Total flags/kudos raised
  - ★ 1,479 kudos
  - ★ 1,214 academic
    - 396 academic concerns
    - 307 attendance concerns
    - 309 In Danger of Earning a D, F, or U
    - 194 Never Attended
    - 8 General Concern

# Starfish Early Alert Highlights and Efficiencies



- ✦ All students are included in Starfish Early Alert
- ✦ Transparency across campus - collaboration
- ✦ Pictures included in student record
- ✦ Kudos appreciated by students
- ✦ Faculty appreciate that the program is not mandatory
- ✦ Advisor is included in the communication and can address concerns with the student
- ✦ Students receive first hand information from instructor immediately, not through advisor

*"I think the early alert system helps us as coaches and the students as individuals recognize a struggle they might have. Half the battle is just that recognition. I think it is a very important part of recognizing both strengths and weaknesses of a student athlete."*

Ben Kaszeta, Head Volleyball Coach

# Starfish Early Alert Highlights and Efficiencies



- ★ Time savings with automation of early alert report and enrollment reporting
- ★ 1,000 pieces of paper saved in enrollment reporting process – along with the time needed for collection
- ★ Communication, Communication, Communication!

*“Use of Starfish for enrollment reporting has helped immensely to improve the efficiency of the enrollment reporting process, as well as the level of customer service to our students because they receive an advance email before they are dropped for non-attendance. The earlier processing of the enrollment reporting through Starfish helps keep us in compliance with Federal Title IV student aid regulations by providing an earlier means of communicating students who signed up for classes but aren’t attending, which helps us avoid disbursing federal, state, and institutional financial aid to students who aren’t eligible.*”

*Starfish also provides a source of information for my office when we are evaluating Satisfactory Academic Progress appeals. It helps to confirm whether students who file an appeal are actually back on track academically before appeals are reviewed.”*

Laurie Weber, Director of Financial Aid

# Starfish Going Forward



- ★ Future impact on retention and graduation rates
- ★ Increase close the loop and clear the flag actions
- ★ Possible implementation of automatic flags
- ★ Collaboration with ND University system technology services to implement development requests
- ★ More student involvement in program
- ★ Starfish Connect module

*“We have done grade checks with students and professors in the past, but Starfish allows the communication to go directly to athletics as well as students. I believe the effectiveness of Starfish will only increase as professors become more familiar and it becomes part of their routine.”*

Brock Wepler, Head Baseball Coach

# Thank You For Making A Difference!



*"I made a  
difference for  
that one."*



# Questions and Contact Information



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