Starfish Tutorial/Manual for Students at Valley City State University

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Introduction

Starfish is a tool that Valley City State University has adopted to enhance student success and facilitate more efficient communication among students, faculty and staff. Primarily, Starfish is a tool that presents early warnings, tracking of student progress as well as an ability to communicate and schedule appointments with the success network. Starfish is easily accessed through your Blackboard account log in.

This is my first time using Starfish, what should I do?

To begin using Starfish:
- Login to Blackboard as you normally would.
- Click the "Starfish" tab
- Set up and edit your profile!

Navigating Starfish
Tabs

As a student you will see the following tabs when you log into Starfish:

- **Home**—This is the tab that will allow you to edit your profile, view any upcoming appointments you may have, view your success path (what steps or tasks you need to accomplish) as well as your success network.
- **Success Network**—This tab provides information about the various offices/resources and personnel available at VCSU to guarantee your success.

Simply click on that tab that corresponds to the function you want to perform. For example, to see services in success network, click "Success Network"

My Success Path
"My Success Path" is found at the top of your home tab in Starfish. The box will only be populated and expand when there is some new information regarding your path towards

achieving your successful goals. Faculty, the Retention Coordinator and your advisors may be able to create a plan with you. You may see this plan in your "Success Path." The plan may include personal goals, career goals or academic goals with a plan for achieving these goals. The plan could also include recommended actions that will help you accomplish your stated goals.

My Success Network

Valley City State University offers a variety of services that will help you succeed and accomplish your goals. Your Success Network is similar to a catalog where you can find a detailed list of these services. At the top of the Starfish homepage you will see these services listed under the "Success Network" tab. The Success Network will allow you to:

- Find out which Valley City State University staff members work in the different services, their hours of operation and where the service is located.
- Find the contact information for service providers
- Schedule appointments directly with service providers

Editing Your Profile

Your profile is how you customize information in Starfish, including your picture, contact information, weekly update preferences, and appointment reminders. This information is only disclosed to certain faculty and staff members and people with whom you make appointments.
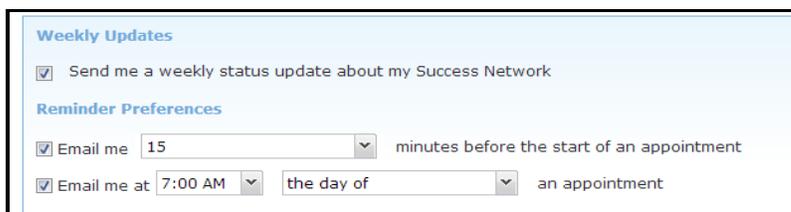
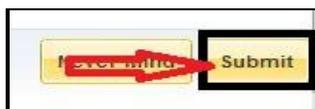1. Click on your name in the top right corner

2. Begin filling out as much of your profile as possible.
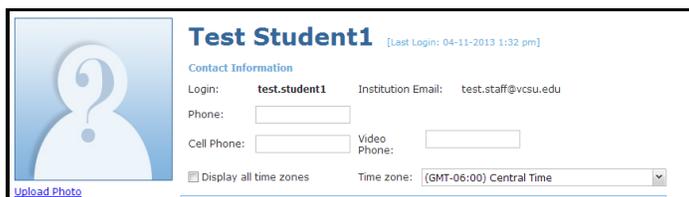
3. Select your weekly update and reminder preferences. You can choose to receive weekly updates about your Success network. You can also choose how you want to receive email appointment reminders.

4. Click Submit!

Note: This information is private and is only disclosed to select faculty and staff members and people with whom you make appointments.

Viewing Your Instructor's Profile

Scheduling Appointments

With Starfish you can easily schedule appointments with faculty, staff members and different service providers including the retention services, your academic advisors, the learning center among others.

Instructor Appointments

If your instructor and advisor have set up office hours in Starfish, you may be able to make an appointment to meet with them during their available hours. To do this, click on the name of the instructor or, either under "Courses I'm Taking" or "My Success Network."

Note: If your instructor or advisor has not set up office hours in Starfish, you will not have the option of scheduling an appointment with them.
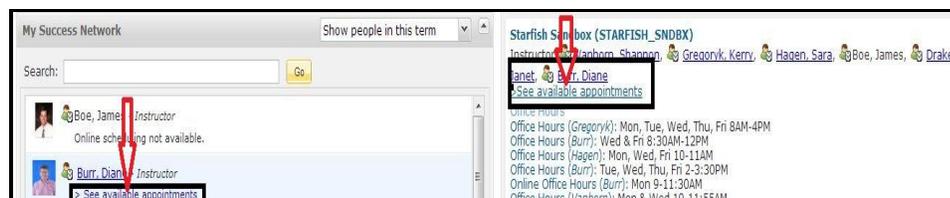
You can also make an appointment by clicking on the drop down arrows beside the instructor's name:

Please click on this link below to see a helpful video on scheduling appointments:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tkHJQJk644

Adding Appointments

1. Always click on available appointments on the Starfish homepage to see when the instructor is available.

2. The instructor's calendar will open. The **bolded** dates on the calendar indicate days with available appointment times.

3. Click on a day to view available times.

4. Click on Sign Up to choose an appointment time. In this example, the student is signing up for an appointment time of 8:00 am.

5. The Add Appointment window will open. Be sure to read the information carefully.

Note: Starfish will send you a reminder of this appointment to your student email account.

Edit/Cancel Appointment

1. Click "See available appointments" link located on the Starfish homepage.
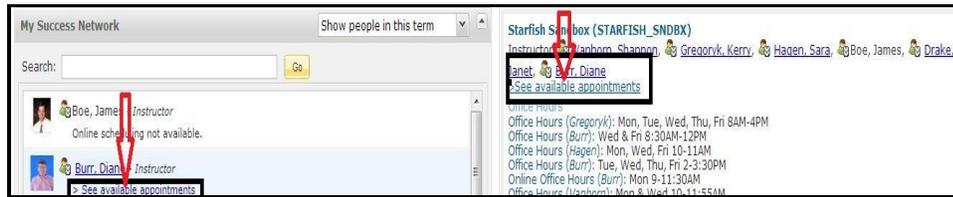
2. The instructor/staff's calendar will open. Navigate to the day and time of your appointment.

3. Click the ⬛ icon next to your appointment. This will open the Appointment menu. From this menu, you may choose to Cancel or Edit the appointment.

4. Click the Cancel or Edit link and fill in the appropriate menu and click submit.

Flags

To increase communication among faculty, students, and staff, Starfish enables users to "flag" a student in order to alert relevant faculty, staff and support network in the university to various concerns about a student. Instructors may possibly "raise a flag" if they are concerned about a student's academic performance, emotional state, attendance among other concerns. Flags may be raised manually by the faculty/staff member or automatically by certain events such as when a student's grade drops below a designated percentage. Flags may be assigned due dates to ensure that concerns are addressed on a schedule that encourages success.

Kudos

Faculty and staff may also use Starfish to grant "Kudos" to acknowledge student success. "Kudos" can be given for "Outstanding Academic Performance" to acknowledge your efforts towards academic success.

Starfish Assistance

If you are having difficulty scheduling an appointment, please contact the instructor, staff member or service directly. For other questions or concerns with Starfish please call the Office of Retention Services at 701 845 7306.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is the Purpose of Starfish?**

It is highly recommended that you log into Blackboard regularly and access Starfish every day to make appointments with student support services and to keep in regular contact with your instructors and advisors.

2. **How Do I find out about My Success Network?**

If you ever forget what services we have available at Valley City State University, simply log into Starfish and click on your Success Network to see all the available resources.

3. **Where are my instructor's office hours located?**

When you click on the Starfish tab, on the homepage under courses you are taking you will see your instructors listed as well as their available appointments. Please note however that not all instructors have set up appointments in Starfish. In this case, contact the instructor directly or refer to your syllabus.

4. **What do I do when I have received a "Flag"?**

You will receive an email with different instructions depending on the flag you received. Follow the instructions given in the flag email. You can also contact the Retention Coordinator directly for assistance on what steps to take.

5. **Who will be able to see if a flag is raised on me?**

Your privacy and rights are important to us at Valley City State University. Therefore, the only faculty and staff that can see raised flags and kudos are those who need to know about the flag in order to provide you the necessary support and guidance and help you get to the right resources you may need.

6**. Who do I contact with questions about Starfish?**

Please contact the Retention Office at 701 845 7306

NOTE: This manual was adopted, with permission, from the University of North Carolina Greensboro Student First Office.