Starfish

Dutchess Community College: Tracking Student Success Trends with Starfish

Dutchess Community College, State University of New York,

Poughkeepsie, New York

Dutchess Community College (DCC) is located in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. and is one of 30 community colleges within the State University of New York system. DCC serves a wide range of more than 9,000 students, some of who were at the top of their class, and some of who struggled through school. DCC offers the lowest tuition per semester in the state of New York, and is wholly committed to student success.

Prior to implementing Starfish in Fall 2014, DCC was struggling to provide a comprehensive advising approach to keep students on track for success. "Faculty had the opportunity to fill out a form regarding student concerns only twice a semester," said Angela L. Rios, Director of Advising Services for the Academic Coaching and Transfer Center at Dutchess. "Two advisors would receive the forms, then reach out and meet with the student. After meeting with the student, we wouldn't see them again. There was no way to track how much contact we had with students, except through manual spreadsheets."

Rios and her team implemented Starfish with the goals of:

• Establishing a caseload management advising system

• Tracking outreach to students

• Following student success actions to measure the outcomes

Tracking Student Success With Starfish

Dutchess integrated Starfish into their advising practices and culture, enabling academic coaches to more easily manage their large caseloads. "Starfish has

DUTCHESS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

"Starfish provides a universal picture of where any student is at any moment"

- Angela K. Rios, Director of Advising Services for the Academic Coaching and Transfer Center

52.7% Of students who met with an advisor improved their GPA

74% Of students flagged in Starfish met with an advisor

28% Increase in students who met with an advisor after being flagged in Starfish

allowed academic coaches to look specifically at their caseload and not only see names and faces, but also flags and concerns related to the challenges each student faces," said Rachel Mead, Assistant Director of Advising Services.

The advising and academic coaching teams now use Starfish to manage their appointments, flag students with specific at-risk factors, such as low midterm GPAs, track specific student challenges, and track progress through notes. "It is really helpful that any of our advisors can access a student's information," said Rachel. "We no longer have to rely on one individual to provide comprehensive advising."

Dutchess continues to expand their Starfish usage by including more offices across campus in their referral system, including financial services, accommodative services, and the tutoring centers. "Starfish provides a universal picture of where any student is at any given moment," said Rios.

A Greater Understanding of Student Success Trends on Campus

Through information and data available in Starfish, the college has a better understanding of the challenges

students face. "Reporting is critical to caseload management," said Rios. "Knowing how many of your students face specific challenges or are struggling through a specific course is essential for the advising team and overall college administration in determining how we can best help our students succeed."

The advising team has already uncovered interesting trends with their Starfish data:

- **Meeting with an advisor:** Students flagged in Starfish were much more likely to meet with an advisor. 74% of students flagged in Starfish met with an advisor, while only 56% of students not flagged in Starfish met with an advisor.

- **Increased GPAs:** Students who were flagged in Starfish and subsequently met with an advisor have much higher GPAs than those who did not meet with an advisor; more than 50% increased their GPAs.

- **Improved midterm grades:** Students who meet with an advisor are much more likely to improve their midterm grades than students who do not meet with an advisor.