



"Starfish has increased faculty, staff and student communication while helping to break down long-standing institutional silos."

- David Mosely, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives

Lamar Institute of Technology, Beaumont, Texas

Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT) is a two-year career and technical education institution within the Texas State University System and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission On Colleges (SACSCOC). LIT serves over 7,300 students, around 52% of which are part-time and 52.3% who identify as a minority. LIT is dedicated to providing career and technical skills training that help transform lives and drive economic vitality in the surrounding communities.

In 2015, LIT established a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges decennial accreditation process. One of SACSCOC's core requirements is that an institution must set an institutional goal related to improving student learning. LIT stakeholders chose to think big, setting out to influence the campus learning environment to ultimately increase student success.

With lean resources and a decentralized advising structure, the LIT QEP Steering Committee recognized that they would need a partner to support achieving this goal. "We don't have a large staff, so we needed a tool to help us leverage the resources we have in order to provide the best support to our students," said David Mosley, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives. Therefore, LIT implemented Starfish in Fall 2015 to improve communication across campus and allow instructors to raise concerns about specific students if needed.

24%

Increase in one-year persistence since 2014

50%

Of 2020 KPIs already completed

100%

Attendance reporting

1,600

Over 1,600 Kudos sent since 2015

66%

Faculty progress survey response

10,600

Over 10,600 flags raised since 2015

"We wanted a tool that all stakeholders could engage with and touch, including faculty, staff and students," said Angela Hill, Dean of Student Success and the Executive Director of the Teaching and Learning Center. "We found that in Starfish."

Readjusting the Fabric of the Institution

Quickly, LIT staff and faculty began using the Starfish tools to track and implement programs never before done at LIT. "Starfish is changing the institutional fabric of our school," said Mosley. Today, LIT uses Starfish to manage attendance, submit progress surveys, make appointments, keep track of student meetings via the kiosk feature, and share information via notes.

Based on positive feedback from initial users and the ease of collecting data through Starfish, LIT implemented a mandatory campus-wide attendance policy. In addition, LIT integrated their Blackboard LMS system with Starfish,

allowing advisors and other faculty to view grades within Starfish, and identify students who were not passing classes earlier in the semester, thus providing more time to help students boost their grades and stay in good standing. "Starfish has created a culture of shared information, and it has helped encourage faculty and student accountability," said Mosley.

Impacting Outcomes

"Starfish has been the saving grace for our QEP," said Mosley. "We believe, and have the data to prove, that Starfish is the reason we're changing the outcomes for our students." During the Fall 2018 semester, 100% of faculty reported attendance and 66% of faculty surveys were completed. Most significantly, since 2014, LIT's institutional one-year persistence rate has increased 24%, from 44.8% to 57.1%. Mosley noted that the time of this increase is not coincidental with the time that the QEP and Starfish were implemented on campus.