DanYELL’S Corner: Tutoring Center Not Up to Par

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Anna, can we make this a deck under the headline: Danyale Green is *The Metropolitan’s* business manager, and this is the first installment of her opinion column, DanYELL’S Corner.

What an exciting year it is for Metropolitan State University. With a new parking ramp on campus and the highly anticipated science building and student center—complete with a fitness facility— opening soon, it’s probable that the university will experience an influx of enrollment soon. I’ll bet the new student center will be a great place for students to study up and hopefully get great marks in their classes. It’s obvious that the administration really wants students to have access to facilities that will help them to make the best of their academic opportunities.

Or do they?

With a host of tutoring options offered at Metro, surely students can get the help they need.

Or can they?

I’ll never forget one of my first visits to the Center for Academic Excellence. As a Minneapolis resident, I chose to do a walk-in session at the Midway Center because it’s a much shorter commute. I’d have happily made an appointment if that were an option. Unfortunately, unlike at the Saint Paul campus, students are not allowed to make appointments. Tutor sessions are provided on a walk-in basis only.

I had a take-home midterm, and I needed help, big time. I arrived, whipped out my student ID, and was placed with a tutor who shall remain nameless.

It was a mess!

About 15 minutes into my 60 minute session, my student tutor told me that he hadn’t done algebra in a while and needed to read a bit to refresh his memory — odd since it was the middle of the semester and he was an algebra tutor. At the 30 minute mark, a second student was added to our session, and I was assured that to accommodate the two of us, we would both receive 120 minute sessions as opposed to the 60 minute daily limit. Then, 60 minutes into my session, the tutor informed us that we would have to leave and come back in an hour as the Center for Academic Excellence closes every day from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. for lunch. After returning from lunch and completing the 60 remaining minutes, of which much of my time was wasted because the tutor was going back and forth between myself and the other student, my session was promptly ended, even though no other students were waiting to get help. I was told I could come back the next day to get help completing my exam, which I did. In the end, I earned a C- for all of my hard work and anguish.

To be honest, I’ve got no complaints about getting a new student center, a parking lot or a fitness facility, but the fact is that’s not why we pay tuition. Much more crucial is having access to resources that will impact our academic performance. Most of us know what it’s like to go to class, listen intently, take notes and still walk away feeling less than comfortable applying the concepts. What we need in the Center for Academic Excellence is a huge overhaul of the rules and common practices. Tutors should have to prove that they possess a working knowledge of the subject matter. Scheduling practices and time limits should be refined and should include some provision for the facility to stay open through the lunch hour. We deserve it. We pay for it, and no new buildings should be more important than ensuring that students have proper access to this vital resource.