Econ Project Outline

Topic Statement

The current tutoring system is broken. Each department pays their own tutors for specific classes, and those tutors are only registered to tutor for those specific classes. Each tutor could tutor for many classes, including ones outside their department, but are not able to due to departmental restrictions. If each department pooled together, they could hire tutors to cover a wider breadth of classes while paying the same number, or even fewer, tutors. This is almost an inverse case of the tragedy of the commons where if the departments pooled resources, the students would be better off for it. However, each department is acting in their own best interest so the students have less supports available to them.

Why should you care? Why do I care?

To be honest, there's no reason for you to care. This won't affect the vast majority of faculty and staff or students. However, it will have a significant impact on the students that do Florida Poly's tutoring services. Let me tell you why you care by telling you why I care. For students who are struggling, tutoring is a last line of defense before they drop out. When I was taking Statistics, my professor, Xuebo Liu, was very kind but not a very good professor. When the midterm rolled around, I knew I was in trouble and a week before the exam, I started going to tutoring every day I could. The tutor never showed. With two days before the exam, I went to the department chair and told him that his tutor wasn't coming even though he was logging hours as though he was. Of all the tutors employed at the time, I'm sure that there was more than just the one who would have been able to help me, but he was the only one that was listed as a stats tutor and I didn't know who else to go to. Had every tutor listed every class they were comfortable tutoring in, I would have had a much less stressful time by going to someone who could help. This goes for students today as it did for me. Tutors are only listed for a specific class at a specific time, and if a student is not available at that time, then they're out of luck. If tutors listed every class they could tutor for, then help would be much more accessible to those in need.

Literature Review

In the stone ages (1990), Martha Maxwell of Appalachian State University conducted a literature of studies on tutoring to determine if tutoring really does help. *Does Tutoring Help? A Look at the Literature* found that "the small number of studies on college tutoring provide no consistent evidence that underpiepared students who are tutored improve either their grades or their grade-point averages." While grades did not necessarily improve, the author found that students who attended tutoring stayed in school longer than those who did not. Finally, they concluded that new studies would need to be done as tutoring methods evolve.

Twenty years later, at Western Washington University, Erik Cooper wrote *Tutoring Center Effectiveness: The Effect of Drop-In Tutoring*. Using data collected from the university's tutoring center during the 2007-2008 school year, they found that "students who visited the TC more than 10 times per quarter had approximately 10% higher rates of persistence and approximately 0.2 points higher average GPA's than students who infrequently visited or who do not visit the TC during their first year of college."

References

- Maxwell, M. (1990). Does Tutoring Help? A Look at the Literature. *Review of Research in Developmental Education*, *7*(4).
- Erik Cooper (2010) Tutoring Center Effectiveness: The Effect of Drop-In Tutoring, Journal of College Reading and Learning, 40:2, 21-34, DOI: 10.1080/10790195.2010.10850328

Plan For Analysis

I love data and want to go to each department chair and ask how many tutors they have and for what classes. If they'll let me have it, I'll also collect data on how many hours they work each week. This should give me a good baseline to work with on an optimization problem to try and maximize the amount of tutoring hours available to students across the widest breadth of classes possible while also minimizing costs to departments.