Instructor Visitation

Visitor: Prof. Neal Maroney
Instructor: Mathew Lutey.
Course: QMBE 4400 Summer 2017.
Date of visit: 7/18/17 from 6-7:30pm
Student present: 4 of 5
Where: KH208 computer lab

Background:

Mr. Lutey is conducting a small course in beginning stats for "pre" MBAs. Three of the students showed up on time and the fourth shows up late regularly because of a job commitment. I observed the first half of class where Matt went over assigned problems in Chapters 8 and 9 of the stat book pertaining to hypothesis testing/confidence intervals and Type I and Type II errors. My visit was prearranged.

Impressions:

- Matt was well prepared for class. Matt has a command of the material and use of spreadsheets to solve and illustrate examples.

- He was clear about the learning objectives for this class.

- Matt spoke clearly and concisely.

- Mr. Lutey communicates well with his students and students were actively engaged.

- He actively solicits feedback and makes sure each student understands the example that he is working out. He works the room, asking students about aspects of the problem being worked.

- He poses questions and presses for answers appropriately knowing when to let the student off the hook when they don't know.

- He praises students when appropriate.

- Matt took time to go back and review anything that students did not understand. If that was going to take too much time, then he offered to meet them individually after class.

- Students responded positively to Matt's inquiries. Matt commented at one point that a student was studying a lot and the student responded that he "kind of liked the stuff." For a statistics course this is definitely a complement.

- Matt emphasizes problem solving. This is a proven way to engage the students in active learning.

Comments/Recommendations:

- Matt is doing well in the classroom, especially for his first time teaching for us. He shows command of the classroom and command of the subject. He is prepared and cares for students.
- As always there is room for improvement, but it is more about presentation than any other aspect of course management.
    - I found that using Excel exclusively alienates students. There needs to be more of a mix between working problems on the board and some in excel.
    - In the past, students have said to me that they did not like excel because they didn't take their test on it. This is not a problem in Matt's course where they can use excel on tests.
    - Matt is working on "Guruship" status in Excel and it shows, but sometimes automating functions makes it so it is "too automatic". The students need to see what's under the hood.
    - There should be more graphical descriptions of what is going on. Animations or simple graphs on the board would be useful for students to turn concepts into numbers.
    - The concept behind each problem should be emphasized more. Students need to be continually reminded why they are doing the problem
    - As with all of us, we need to strive be clearer about the objectives of each lecture and provide a bridge from one topic to the next.
    - I do not know whether this is true for Matt, but a general caution: I have observed a tendency for TAs to be a little too aggressive in what they expect students to learn. This is a normal tendency, but be careful of setting expectations too high.
    - Another caution: small classes are easier to manage. As the class size grows professors must be more organized and regimented in their approach.