

Intercollegiate Athletics Committee
Subcommittee to Assess Academic Services to Student-Athletes
Review of Tutorial Program
2002-2003 Academic Year

Introduction

The subcommittee to Assess Academic Services to Student-Athletes is charged by the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee to review and make assessments of academic services provided to student-athletes. Specific recommendations of the subcommittee are focused to improve the caliber and scope of the academic services provided to student-athletes.

Procedure and Results

Area for review by the subcommittee for the 2002-2003 academic year focused on the Tutorial Program as overseen by the Academic Support Program Services. This review was facilitated using a standardized interview that was developed by the subcommittee and Academic Support Service staff. The interviews were conducted during the spring/summer of 2003. The following questions were used for the interview:

1. Did you utilize the Hewitt Academic Center tutoring Center tutoring program (individual tutoring, group tutoring, or supplemental instruction) during the 2002-2003 (fall or spring) school year? If yes, proceed to question 2. If no, ask what courses they would identify as the most likely course for which they would want a tutor in the future and terminate the interview.
2. In what ways has the tutoring program contributed to your success as an undergraduate at UNL?
3. In what subject(s) did you receive tutoring?
 - a. What were the most effective learning strategies used with your tutor?
 - b. What were the least effective learning strategies?
4. What specific skills can you identify that your tutor helped improve this past year?
5. If a student athlete asked you to describe the tutor and tutoring program from this past year, what three words would you use to describe these?
6. Do you have any recommendations for improving the tutoring program for student athletes? If yes, please explain.

One hundred and thirty (130) student-athletes were randomly selected to participate in the aforementioned interview. Male and female athletic programs were represented. Eighty-five (85) student-athletes responded. The following is a break down of responses to question 1 (see Table 1). The responses are presented here inasmuch as “no” respondents did not complete the interview.

Q1: Yes; n = 41

No; n = 44

Accordingly, over 50% of the respondents did not use the tutoring program; however, the following responses were delineated regarding courses tutors would have been desirable for. Note that not all “no” respondents provided input regarding specific tutoring needs. All responses are included and have been resorted. No attempt was made to develop statistical analyses of the responses.

Table 1. “no” responses for Q1

No
No -- Biological Sciences in general
No -- Biology , Lab 101 and English
No - Accounting and Finance
No -- Accounting and Finance Classes. Anything mathematically based.
No -- Accounting and Finance Classes. She is graduating in May, but felt it was helpful for accounting and finance.
No - Chemical engineering major so he just seeks help within his department.
No -- Chemistry
No -- Chemistry
No -- Did not use program this academic year. Would have considered a tutor in his American Sign Language Class.
No -- Did not use programs. Did not consider for any classes Fall or Spring Semesters.
No -- Did not use programs. No class need.
No -- Did not use services. Only considered using a tutor for Math freshman year.
No -- Did not use tutorial services this academic year. None of his classes this past year were challenging enough to warrant the services.
No -- Did not utilize tutorial program during current academic year. Management 250 would have been only class considered for tutorial support during the 2002-2003 academic year.
No -- Did not utilize tutorial program this academic year. Courses which may have been considered for tutorial support may have been Biology 111 (Microbiology and Human Anatomy)
No -- Did not utilize tutorial programming services. However, he considered tutors for Mech 310 (Engineering) and MGM 373 (Mechanics of Elastic Bodies).
No -- Did not utilize tutorial programs during the 2002-2003 academic year. There were no tutors hired for the courses in computer science which he may have considered a tutor.
No -- Did not utilize tutorial programs. Support may have been considered for Business Law or Management classes, if need had existed.
No -- Did not utilize tutorial service this academic year. Economic lasses would have been the most likely courses she may have used tutors, if needed.
No -- Differential Equations
No -- Economics
No -- Graduating in May. Never used tutoring, needed to understand things on her own.
No -- Hard for him because his an architecture major to find tutors. Physics, structures class.
No -- High level accounting classes and finance classes.
No -- History
No -- History and Political Science

No -- Math
No -- Math 314 and Mechanical Engineering
No -- Maybe a math class.
No -- Maybe Math.
No -- Mechanical Engineering Classes would be helpful.
No -- Most courses were nursing courses. Pediatrics during the Fall semester may have been most likely class to use tutorial program.
No -- Never utilized tutorial services. Astronomy course may have been the only course for which he would have considered using the tutorial program.
No -- Physics 141 and Philosophy 106
No -- Physics in the future.
No -- Upper Level Business, Economics or Finance
No -- Won't need any.
No didn't use the tutoring program services this year. *EDPS, he might want to tutor for an Ed Pych class next year
No, never felt the need for a tutor.

In hindsight, students appeared most likely to have solicited tutoring assistance in math courses; however, the greatest number of “no” respondents perceived no need for tutoring. Clearly, specific tutoring needs are evident for students who did not use the tutoring program. This information should be helpful to Academic Program Services staff in developing future tutoring programs. Student-athletes could potentially receive more “advise” up front regarding the possible need for tutoring as they proceed through their academic programs.

Table 2 summarizes responses to Q2. One negative comment regarding the tutoring program’s impact was identified. In general, student athletes perceived that the tutoring program improved the probability for success in their respective academic programs. Students felt, that, study skills and grades were improved, they become better organized in all their courses, and obtained skills applicable to current and future courses (e.g., exam taking, study skills, etc).

Table 2. Responses for Q2

Assisted with better understanding of class material. Better note taking. Provided a boost of confidence regarding learning abilities.
Assisted with getting good grades on exam; assisted with understanding and completing homework.
Assisted with getting good grades; it helped him look at material by using different methods of studying.
Assisted with taking exam; helped breakdown problems to better understand material.
Better idea of what to study; someone to contact for help
Better study skills: time management; what to look for in textbooks; better at reading & understanding information; helps to have someone double check you

Break down assignments, Change perspective, SI was not as beneficial
Excellent - covers all the information in your course.
Excellent help to academic success; helped to prepare and excel on exams; assisted with reinforce the understanding of material.
Greater knowledge of subject area
Help explain material -- better individual work.
Help explain on a different level than the professor can. You can relate to the tutor better and understand what they are talking about better. More successful in the class due to having a tutor.
Helped him in Math, carrying a good grade in Math
Helped increase/improve study habits; increased note taking ability
Helped me get better grades; taught him more than what he learned in class; understood the information better.
Helped me with confidence
Helped out a lot; what to study, important material; organized, organizing material.
Helped prepare for exams; access to the computer lab
Helped with reviewing for exams; assisted with better understanding homework
Helped with test grades and understanding concepts.
Helps him learn the material; to do better in the class
I know for our team academic goals it has helped me stay on track for those goals and passing classes.
If you have any questions they can answer them and it helps you to understand the term better.
Increased grade point average. Increased devotion of subject material.
It has contributed greatly to my success. Having someone who can break this down to the necessary level for learning is very beneficial.
It has increased his test scores; assisted with understanding subject.
Kept me focused on goals and objective of the class.
Motivates me to study.
None - it was pretty bad
Not much since she didn't use regularly.
Nothing -- did not learn anything; student said he did not try to learn material.
One-on-one attention. Help stay organized.
She couldn't understand (language barrier) her calculus teacher so her tutor assisted her in understanding the material. She scored a higher grade in her math class with the tutorial support as opposed to if she did not have the support. She was more motivated to do her homework when she had help from a tutor.
Showed/taught him how to study for exams; taught him how to take better notes; how to better utilize group discussion.
SI - helped for tests, prepared him better for exams; Tutor - catch up when falling behind from missing
SI moved slower; able to understand material better; smaller group
The Supplemental Instruction for Sociology helped her get a higher grade in the class than if she hadn't attended.
The tutor for Economics helped her do better in the class due to the techniques she used to make it easier to understand.
They helped you review. Didn't help very much, didn't think was very good. Didn't seem prepared.
Tutor for Econ helped her organize.
Understanding concepts; helped with note taking; kept him on task.

Table 3. Responses for Q3

Agronomy – Genetics
 Astronomy – SI
 Astronomy 103 - Tutor Fall 2002-2003
 Astronomy 103 SI
 Astronomy, algebra
 Biomechanics
 Calculus and Economics
 Chemistry
 Chemistry
 Classical mythology
 Comm. 311, Poli Sci. 100
 Econ. 211
 Economics
 Economics
 Economics 211
 Finance; Accounting; Political Science
 Math
 Math 100A and Sociology 101
 Math 101, Astronomy 103
 Math 104
 Math 107
 Math 203
 Math, Anthro, Astr SI
 Math, History, Astronomy
 Math, Political Science, English and Psychology
 Math; Sociology
 Microbiology
 MicroEconomics (212)
 Nutr, Math, Poli Sci.
 Physics
 Physics
 Political Science
 Political Science and Nutrition
 Political Science and Sociology
 Psychology
 SI: SOC I; Tutor: Nutr.
 Soc I
 Sociology 101 and Astronomy 103
 Sociology Supplemental Instruction in Fall semester, a little tutoring (not regularly scheduled, only as needed) for Criminal Justice in spring semester.
 STATS and Accounting

Question 3 (Table 3) identified specific courses that students received tutoring and (or) supplemental instruction for. In addition, Q3a and 3b inquired about the most effective and least effective learning strategies, respectively, used during the tutoring process. Students identified 19 subject areas that they received tutoring assistance for. The greatest number of students received assistance in mathematics courses. Interestingly, students who did not receive tutoring also identified mathematics as an area they may have benefited from tutoring/supplemental instruction assistance.

Practice problems and review sessions were identified frequently from students as the most effective means of acquiring learning strategies (Q3a; Table 3a). Review sessions were presented in a number of formats; including, exam reviews, outlining specific course material/lecture notes, review of textbook materials, etc. Students also commented that review of practice problems, and tests/quizzes were helpful. Also, course organization and study skills were acknowledged as beneficial means of learning course materials within the tutoring environment.

The majority of students did not identify any specific factor that impeded the learning process (Q3b; Table 3b). Those students who did identify specific issues that could be interpreted as barriers to learning were mainly concerned with the

Table 3a. Responses for Q3a

Different for different subjects, it helped with reviewing practice tests and previous quizzes, learn each detail of reading material and to utilize class notes in study habits.
Exercises from the book.
Good worksheets to explain material; Used grease board to show steps; tutor used a timeline to teach materials; taught how to read textbook more effectively.
Homework problems. Reviewing material
Key terms, answered questions
None effective
Organizing notes, reviewing lecture notes.
Outlining; going through & practice problems; rewrite notes in a more organized manner
Outlines of chapters; outline of lectures
Political Science helped with organizing her thoughts on how to write the one paper, which information would be most effective to include in the paper.
Practical problems and concepts
Practice and asking questions.
Practice problems; went over old exams
Practice test and quizzes
Practice tests, group questions, reviewing material
Practice tests, worksheets each week.
Provided examples, large amount of time spent on homework and problem solving.
Question-Answer session
Repeated exercises. Worksheets - problem solving.
Review of practice problems; review sheets
Review sheet was used.
Review sheets
Review sheets made available; question and answer session; drew pictures of cell structure; step-by-step over material to breakdown material
Review sheets, went over notes
Review tests, visuals
Review textbook; open discussion with tutor
Review worksheets; practice problems; provide an outline; exchanged notes
Reviewed class material
Reviewed the book, quiz a little
Reviewing text materials, practice exam
Reviewed text questions at end of chapter; reviewed study guides; taught note taking techniques and graphing layouts with understanding.
Step-by-step instruction; assisted with how to better gather material and understand information.
Studying notes daily; provided quizzes during sessions; review sessions
Suggested flashcards for final
Techniques to memorize, note taking, flashcards, practice problems, remembering formulas
The ability to ask questions that he did not know during group discussion; provided a renew sheet

None
None - all were helpful
None - didn't suggest many to choose from.
Not applicable.
Nothing
Reading out of the math textbook
SI leader was not a good communicator (student thought of SI as a time when you could ask questions and discuss what wasn't understood from lecture) SI leader would go over exact same things covered in lecture, rather than addressing questions that student had. Perhaps leader a little young, lacked skills of communicating concepts beyond what was covered in class.
Sometimes didn't explain clearly.
Sometimes tutor would go on tangents and get off the subject
Things that she could have done on her own time (reviewing study guide).
Too many people in a group
Tutor tried teaching materials he remembered covering when tutor took class which weren't covered in the current materials which student need assistance with.
Tutor: not very patient, not focused on the student, needs lots of time; SI: has to focus on group, can't answer all questions, kept moving on with lesson even if didn't get it
Watching me do the work
Weren't any

The responses to Q4 (see Table 4) were in context similar to the responses to Q3a. This can be interpreted as meaning that student-athletes believed that the most effective means of presenting learning strategies also translated into specific skills that were used to improve performance in the classroom. Again, it appears that the skills students had acquired during tutoring/supplemental instruction could be applied to all learning environments, not just the specific course the student was receiving assistance for.

Table 4. Responses for Q4

All study skills; organizing information; preparing for exams
Analytical skills; study skills increased
Analyzed problems better; assisted with reading, and understanding material more clear.
Assisted with problem solving.
Assisted with time management of material; pick-out important words from textbook.
Better note taking; test preparation
Breaking down material
Completing homework, repetition as a study tool.
Different or more effective notes to study for exam. Analyze material. Review notes more often rather than leave it until night before exam.
Effective outlining techniques and created study skill to write notes in margins of reading materials.
Find the main points in class; what to study

Going over notes the same day of class
How to study, note cards.
Identify key terms; apply these terms to society & specific situations
Improved with problem solving. Memorization of formulas.
In Math remembering process of calc. rules
Increase study time of materials; plan ahead
Just basic concepts that I didn't understand.
Math skills
More confidence with math skills and communication skills
None
None - didn't meet very often because she wasn't very helpful.
Note taking increase; how to read notes; taught shorthand note taking skills
Nothing
Nothing
Organizational skills
Outlining notes and preparing for tests
Outlining the book
Picking out the important things to focus on
Problem solving; to better understand principles and concepts of material; step-by-step process improves
Regular study habits; studying every day
Repetition, reviewing; take in tape record, reviewing what you missed in notes; note taking
Reviewing problems and material each week helps.
Reviewing work, note organization and broad concepts rather than very detailed.
Solving complex problems.
Solving problems step-by-step.
Student learned better analysis skills by using keywords to break down how questions are worded on tests.
Studying skills - what to study, what is important; note-taking; paying more attention, staying focused.
Time management
Understand different formulas; set up problems better; increased reading skills; increased note taking ability.
Understanding the homework.

Student-athletes described their experiences with tutors and the tutoring program in Table 5. Two respondents described their interactions with the tutor negatively (e.g., boring, ill prepared). Commonly, student-athletes commented that tutors were “helpful,” “beneficial,” and “reliable.” Clearly, responses to Q5 are dependent on personality issues and interactions between tutors and student-athletes. Based on the responses to Q5, it appears that Academic Program Services are doing a good job matching tutors with student-athlete needs.

Table 5. Responses for Q5

Student didn't have any due to lack of good experience
Always available. Easy to contact tutors. Tutors make you feel comfortable and not stupid.
Beneficial, supportive, and flexibility
Beneficial; advantage; easy
Boring; good, personality (good)
Effective, helpful, convenience
Effective, helpful, efficient
Excellent, dependable, truthful
Excellent, effective, worthwhile, worth your time
Excellent, helpful, achieving
Free, effective and worthwhile
Friendly, nice. Ill prepared, didn't come with any suggestions or materials. Not very aggressive, she would just say "so, what do you want to know."
Good to excellent; time management; effective
Good, enlightenment, helpful
Great, helpful, interested (positive)
Great, helpful, caring
Helpful (very)
Helpful, accessible, excellent
helpful, advantage, recruiting tool
Helpful, available, convenient.
Helpful, beneficial, organized (SI)
Helpful, caring, interesting
Helpful, easy, effective
Helpful, efficient, organized
Helpful, encouraging, positive
Helpful, free, available
Helpful, good, worthy
Helpful, limited, flexible
Helpful, reliable, and good experience.
Helpful, responsible and patient
Helpful, time management, and assists in improving study skills.
Helpful, unavailable, organized
Helpful. Smart program to utilize. Free.
Helpful; available; organized
Helpful; worthwhile; nice/respectful
Helps you understand.
Outstanding; beneficial; successful

No
No -- her classes weren't needing tutorial support, maybe had she had other classes she would have used the programs more.
No -- it is pretty good
No suggestions - thinks it is good as it is, nothing to improve.
No suggestions, everything was good.
No suggestions, no recommendations, never had any problems.
None
None
None
None
Not really
Student had good success so has no suggestions.
Trouble finding micro tutor and more available to choose from.
Watch how many student-athletes each tutor takes on. Tutor didn't have enough time to spend with me.
Yes -- more group activities; have tutor better understand the instructors - teaching methods
Yes -- need more tutors to have flexible hours.

Synthesis Statements

The results of the interview viewed exclusively of other programs within Academic Planning Services indicate that the mission and outcomes of the tutoring/supplemental instruction program are well grounded and effective. Reviewing the tutoring program inclusively within the context of outcome assessments for graduation rates and grade-point average reinforces the athletic program's commitment to student-athlete success. The following points could be considered in reviewing and developing the tutor program. Several of these suggestions may already be in place inasmuch as they are being forwarded independent of consultation with the Academic Program Services Staff.

1. Current interview focused on comments from student-athletes. Future assessments may consider input from tutors.
2. Although it appears that communications are good among Hewitt Center Staff and student-athletes, staff should consider in-term feedback (interviews) with a sample of student athletes regarding experiences and effectiveness of the tutoring program.

3. Many students who did not “use” the tutoring program identified in hindsight that they may have solicited tutoring for one or more courses. Suggestion: continue to make all student-athletes (regardless of assumed academic abilities) aware of tutoring services.
4. Continue to aggressively seek top-quality tutors. Ensure that tutors are not spread to thin.