A COMPLICATED SYSTEM

Purdue tutoring investigated by a student.

The Purdue Tutoring Website can be found at the link below:

PURDUE.EDU/TUTORING

For more information on the Academic Success Center follow the link below:

PURDUE.EDU/ASC

The Decentralized System
BY KAYLEIGH M CAVE

After a conversation with Katie Dufault, Director of Purdue's Academic Success Center (ASC), the confusion and difficulty of Purdue's decentralized tutoring programs becomes clear. There are plentiful resources provided to Purdue students free of charge, but finding one that fits a students' needs can be a difficult process. The ASC provides Academic Coaching, which instructs students on effective studying and learning techniques; ASC also provides Supplemental Instruction for a variety of courses, which is done in a group setting. There are additional program-specific group sessions that provide students with assistance such as COSINE, which provides different blocks of time where students can come in and receive help with first-year science courses. There are also programs that offer 1:1 services. For example, the Polytechnic BEST program, ECE Tutoring and Help Rooms, and the BCMentors Program, among many more. The problem with Purdue's decentralized system is one that Katie works on solving with Purdue's Tutoring Website, but her information can only be as good as what others provide her with.

Mismatched Expectations

After discussing with tutoring program coordinators, I identified an issue that many mentioned. That is, students have a different expectation of tutoring versus the expectations of faculty and staff.

- Students are expecting a 1:1 experience where the tutor works directly with the course material, helping them with problems on assignments. Students want direct assistance on problems from an instructor.
- Faculty and Staff understand tutoring as a primarily group experience in which the tutor explains problems related to the material, but does not directly explain the problems assigned. Students are expected to work amongst each other and to learn by teaching each other.

The Tutoring Stigma

Another issue I was able to identify while discussing Purdue's decentralized system was the stigma around the word and concept of tutoring itself.

While talking with Katie Dufault, one thing she mentioned when asked "What do you wish more people knew about Academic Success?" was how important it is to normalize tutoring, and how important it is for students to get help before they need it. The normalization of tutoring would ultimately allow for greater student success.

One way this misconception is being addressed is the way in which tutoring is talked about on-campus. Cyndi Lynch explains that the BEST program is designed to provide students with mentoring and personal success coaching as opposed to what students consider to be tutoring.

While this reframing does not break the tutoring stigma, it allows programs a way to communicate their services to students without the negative connotation.

"

"The analogy I like to use when discussing tutoring and student success is a personal trainer at a gym. Your personal trainer will motivate you and let you know how to improve, but they are not going to do the work for you."

Cyndi Lynch
BEST program