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I started as a tutor for University College Action Center the second semester of my freshman year not knowing the degree to which this job would shape my next three years at OU. Through the training I have received and the experiences I have had in tutoring sessions, I have become a better student, communicator, and leader. This program has given me the opportunity to lead training sessions and interact with other tutors in such a way that I have gained the confidence to lead others in a large group setting. My experience over the last five semesters has lead me to believe in myself as a tutor and enabled me to understand the process of learning in a much deeper way. This understanding of learning has overlapped tremendously with my own academic endeavors at OU and been a major reason for my success as a student.

I am excited for another school year with the program and hope to finish strong as a senior approaching graduation in May of 2012. I plan to continue helping the program by volunteering for one or two of the many “student success seminars” we hold each semester. These topics of student success range from note-taking to test anxiety/preparation and are sometimes presented by our undergraduate tutoring staff. After last semester I also plan on expanding the number of subjects I tutor for the program and trying to start new Action Centers (large group tutoring sessions) like the Introductory Microbiology one we started last semester.

The best and most rewarding part of my job as a tutor is the opportunity to work with my peers at OU. There is nothing like the look on someone’s face when they finally understand a topic they previously thought to be incomprehensible. Last semester I had the chance to tutor a student who was on her third and final try to pass Introductory Zoology. She had all but given up on passing this class when her parents suggested she try the academic assistance OU offers. This student showed up every week to both of the sessions we offered and it was obvious that she was determined to understand the material necessary to succeed. After working with her and seeing the transformation of her outlook on learning take place, I realized how powerful of a program we have at OU. She not only passed the class but made a B. Even though it is great that she passed the class, I believe the revolution of her approach to learning is an even greater and certainly longer lasting accomplishment. This conversion of thought from the prospect of learning as a necessary means to an end to the idea that learning can be fulfilling and interesting in and of itself is a normal occurrence at the University College Action Center.

Submitted by Mark E. Walvoord, Director, Student Learning Center, University of Oklahoma

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