Evaluating and Making Recommendations for the 
Geneva Boys & Girls Club Teen Center Tutoring Program

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

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Abstract

This service learning project — completed for the Masters of Arts in Teaching program at Hobart and William Smith Colleges — focused on evaluating the current state of the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center tutoring program and generating a collection of recommendations for its continued development and improvement. Key personnel belonging to different stakeholders in the program were interviewed along with a lead tutor (or “Civic Leader”) and 18 current Teen Center tutors were surveyed to develop a baseline understanding of the program’s current state. These qualitative data, combined with an investigation of literature concerning successful aspects of after school academic programs more broadly, informed the identification of current challenges faced by the tutoring program. A collection of recommendations is provided that may help address these challenges.

Introduction

The Geneva Boys and Girls Club is a local chapter of the Boys and Girls Club of America and provides a suite of after school services to students in the Geneva community. Foremost among the services are; supervision of children who cannot return home until later in the day, interpersonal/social development through Club programs, and academic support through tutoring and related programs. For the purposes of this service learning project — which was completed for the Masters of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) program at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in the spring of 2017 — I focused on evaluating the current state of the tutoring program at the Club Teen Center and developed a collection of recommendations
for its continued development and improvement. It is worth noting here that this project was part of a series of projects completed by M.A.T. students focusing on various aspects of the Boys and Girls Club of Geneva.

Evaluation of the tutoring program was accomplished through interviews with administrators at the Club, community service staff members at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (HWS), email correspondences with a lead tutor (or “Civic Leader”), and a survey administered to current Teen Center tutors. The challenges I identified and recommendations I provided are pertinent to the Club’s recently increased interest in providing more robust academic support for its students.

**Methodology**

To gain an initial understanding of the tutoring program’s current state, key administrative individuals were interviewed. Chris Lavin, the Director of the Club was interviewed to gather information on the operational logistics of the tutoring program and the Club’s vision for the program moving forward. Jeremy Wattles and Katie Flowers, both leaders in the HWS Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL) and organizers of the tutors, were interviewed to obtain an understanding of the tutor recruitment, placement, training, and responsibilities. Predetermined target questions were used to guide these conversations, but other topics were also discussed. A lead tutor, or “Civic Leader”, was also interviewed via email. The purpose of this email interview was to clarify aspects of the tutoring program from a tutor’s perspective.
To gain a broader understanding of the program from the perspective of tutors, an internet based survey was administered to current Teen Center tutors via SurveyMonkey® to evaluate their level of involvement, motivation for tutoring, typical experience at the Club, and profile them academically (by major and minor). The tutors were also surveyed to gauge their interest in potential changes to the tutoring program. The majority of questions were structured as multiple choice with an option to provide open ended feedback, one question inquiring about the tutor’s typical experience tutoring used a Likert scale, and a question asking tutors to provide their academic major(s) and minor(s) was opened ended. The survey questions asked were as follows:

- What is your academic major?
- What are your major(s) & minor(s)? Please indicate your planned major(s) and/or minor(s) if you have not declared but know what they will be.
- Are you in (or planning to apply for) the TEP (Teacher Education Program) at HWS?
- How many semesters have you been involved with the Boys & Girls Club tutoring program (include current semester)?
- How many students do you generally work with each time you are at the club?
- Which of the following describes your typical experience at the club?
- Would you like to be involved with more programming at the B&G club beyond Power Hour?
- Would you like it if the tutoring program was structured more like a Big Brother Big Sister model in which you would be paired with 1 or 2 students at the Club and did more with them than just tutoring?
Would you volunteer tutor at the Boys & Girls Club without being paid?

Are you planning on tutoring at the Boys and Girls club next year?

Finally, I investigated literature on successful after school academic programs to determine common attributes that could adopted or adapted by the Club.

**Findings**

Analysis of the data collected revealed both areas of success and specific aspects that could benefit from improvement. Additionally, an investigation of other successful tutor programs — at Boys & Girls Clubs across the country and in other contexts — informs the analysis and ultimately the recommendations made.

**Successful Tutoring Programs**

Reviewing publications on after school academic programs indicated a few important considerations regarding potential outcomes. First, after school programs can indeed be successful in helping students achieve greater academic success. Specifically, students can develop positive attitudes towards academic content and improve their performance on examinations (Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982). There is also evidence that, implemented correctly, after school programs can increase the diligence with which students pursue their homework (Kane, 2004). However, for the best chance of yielding positive results, a tutoring program must employ several specific strategies. These include tutor training and proactively pairing tutors and students.
Training tutors is an important first step. One or more training sessions can provide a variety of benefits to tutors themselves and to the program overall. Training can increase tutor confidence, which can help make them more comfortable and ultimately more effective when working with students. Training is also an opportunity to provide tutors with a basic set of pedagogical tools that they can employ during their work (Hock, Pulvers, Deshler, & Schumaker, 2001). From a logistical perspective, training provides an opportunity to communicate important protocols and establish expectations of tutors.

Pairing students and tutors is another important aspect of tutoring programs. Particularly, pairing in a 2:1 student-tutor ratio or lower is best. Pairing provides consistency for both parties and allows for the development of more meaningful relationships over time, which also increases accountability for both parties. Pairing can also help to ensure that the services provided by tutors are distributed more evenly (Baker, Rieg, & Clendaniel, 2006). Baker et al. also found that having a program coordinator, maintaining less structured snack and play time, utilizing tutors who have an academic investment in education (education majors, minors, etc.) positively influence a tutoring program.

Program Structure

As discussed previously, the tutoring program at the Club exists at an intersection of efforts from the Club itself, the local public school district, and Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Each of these entities contribute to the tutoring program in specific ways.
The B&GC itself is the host for the program. The Club provides the physical location where the tutoring program takes place. The Boys & Girls Club members receiving tutoring work with tutors in the Club’s Teen Center at the Geneva Community Center during the Club’s “Power Hour” program. This is a one hour block of academic work time that all students at the Club on a given day are required to attend. During this time, they are expected to work on homework and can receive help from tutors. Students and tutors use the Club’s resources like classrooms, computer labs, and supplies while working. Additionally, the Club contributes to the compensation of the tutors through funding received from the 21st Century Grant. Currently, all tutors are funded through the 21st Century Grant.

The Geneva City School District’s (GCSD) main involvement with the program is through the students who are receiving support. The students attending the Club are almost exclusively GSCD students (occasionally, a student outside of the local district will attend). GCSD also supports the program by providing access to professional teachers who are also compensated through the 21st Century Grant. Currently, the teachers who choose to work at the Club work with Club staff and HWS tutors to help the tutoring program address ELA and Math requirements and increase its effectiveness overall.

Hobart and William Smith Colleges, via its Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL), recruits, organizes, and supplies the tutors from the HWS student body. Prior to the 2016-17 academic year, the CCESL also provided funding for tutor compensation through the America Counts program. This source of funding may return in the future. Three categories of tutors currently exist and are organized by the CCESL; HWS Tutor
Core, American Counts, and America Reads. Of these three, HWS Tutor Core and America Counts tutors are present at the Teen Center. America Reads Tutors work with younger students at the Club’s Goodman Street location. The Tutor Core and America Counts tutors have the same responsibilities at the Teen Center. The difference in naming is primarily due to the previous sources of funding for particular tutors. Tutors hired through the America Counts program used to receive compensation through grant funding received by HWS for the America Counts program while the Tutor Core tutors were compensated through 21st Century Grant funding. As mentioned, all tutors at the Teen Center are now funded through the 21st Century Grant. Beginning in the fall of 2017, the two naming conventions will no longer be used. Instead, all tutors funded through the 21st Century Grant or American Counts funding will be called HWS Tutor Core tutors.

Students are recruited each year via campus email, references by current tutors, targeting specific student groups such as those in the colleges’ Education Department, and tabling on campus. To apply, tutors complete a standard application and submit a resume. When applying, students may indicate a preference for the Teen Center or Goodman Street location, but assignments are made based largely on distribution needs. Tutors are accepted with a preference for those interested in working with children and young adults. There is also a preference for younger tutors in hopes that they will stay with the program longer.

Currently, 36 HWS student tutors work at the Teen Center. Tutors are primarily working with the 5th and 6th grade students with a small portion working with 7th, 8th, and higher grade levels. America Counts tutors are currently focused on working with 6th grade
students to address discrepancies between student performance and grade level standards in ELA and math. Stakeholders would like to increase the reach of tutors to more grade levels, but funding is a limiting factor. At its current rate of $9.70 per hour, minimum wage constrains the number of tutors that can be hired.

Tutors are split into two groups, one that works at the Club on Mondays and Wednesdays and a second that works on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Each day that tutors work they spend 2 hours at the Club. Their main commitment is providing academic assistance during the 1 hour Power Hour. The groups are determined by a combination of needed distribution and student availability. Amongst the tutors, a few are granted the responsibility of lead tutor or “Civic Leader”. These tutors are responsible for the attendance and general guidance of other tutors. Tutors do not work on Fridays. Instead, a meeting is held between Club staff and administration, GCSD teachers, and lead tutors. Other tutors are encouraged and may choose to attend. These meetings provide a weekly opportunity for all parties involved in the tutoring program to discuss ongoing efforts, evaluate their current standing, and make adjustments for the immediate future.

Tutors are also responsible for contributing to evaluation of students and the tutoring program more broadly. The Club maintains a folder for each student containing pertinent academic information and a log of tutoring progress. Tutors are required to update this log after each tutoring session for the appropriate student. The Friday meetings offer an opportunity for feedback on the program during its active period. At the end of each college
semester, tutors complete a feedback survey and meet as a group for a discussion lead by the Civic Leader tutors with the intent of generating constructive feedback for the program.

Beginning in the 2016-17 academic year, the Club began having tutors spend two hours at the Club each day they worked instead of just one for Power Hour. Tutors arrive a bit earlier than the beginning of Power Hour to organize and prepare for Power Hour. After Power Hour is over, the tutors spend approximately 30-45 minutes participating in other activities with students, such as playing the in the gym. Since beginning this two-hour requirement, the Club has noticed significant positive change in terms of the development of relationships between students and tutors. Having this unstructured interaction time has deepened connections between existing student-tutor pairs and fostered the development of new ones. As a secondary effect, Club administrators and staff have noticed students being more focused and productive during Power Hour. This has been attributed to the extended amount of time tutors are spending at the Club and the deeper relationships that have developed.

Survey Responses

Responses from 18 current HWS tutors provided insight into the tutors’ perspectives on various aspects of the tutoring program. The results of this survey are provided below as a series of charts and short descriptions.
The first question asked tutors to report their current academic class. Results indicated that the current tutor cohort is fairly evenly distributed over academic classes, with slightly fewer seniors participating (Figure 1).

*Figure 1. Responses to first survey question inquiring about the academic class of current Teen Center tutors.*
The second question asked tutors to report their academic major(s) and minor(s). The 18 respondents cover 21 different academic areas either as a major or minor (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Responses to second survey question inquiring about the academic majors and minors of current Teen Center tutors.
When asked if they were either currently in or planning to apply for the Teacher Education Program (TEP) at HWS, 15 tutors indicated that they were not, 2 indicated that they were, and 1 had not considered it (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Responses to third survey question inquiring about current Teen Center tutor’s involvement with the Teacher Education Program in the Education Department at Hobart and William Smith Colleges.
Tutors were also asked to indicate how many semesters they have been involved with tutoring program. Responses indicated that most tutors had been involved for a single semester. There is a clear trend towards less involvement over time (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Responses to fourth survey question asking tutors to report the number of semester they have been involved with the Teen Center tutoring program.
When responding to a question inquiring about the number of students a tutor typically works with, half the tutors indicated that they worked with 4 or more students each time they worked at the Club. The remaining 9 tutors indicated that they worked with 3 or fewer students (Figure 5).

![Bar chart](image)

**Figure 5.** Responses to a survey question inquiring about the number of students tutors typically work with on a typical day while tutoring at the Club.
In a related question, tutors were asked to pick a description that best matched with their typical experience at the Club. Eight tutors indicated that they typically work with the same pair/group of students, but that the pair/group had some variability. The remaining responses were split between more and less fluid situations (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Responses to a Likert scale survey question asking student to choose the description that best matched their experience working with students while tutoring at the Club.
Looking to the future, tutors were asked if they would like to be involved with programming outside of the Power Hour tutoring. A significant majority of tutors indicated that they would indeed like this (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Responses to a survey question asking tutors to indicate whether or not they would like to be involved with programming outside of the Power Hour tutoring program.
In an effort to determine the tutors’ attitude towards a paired tutoring system, they were asked to respond to the hypothetical situation of their involvement being structured more like a Big Brother Big Sister program, where they would be paired with one or two students and did more with them than just tutoring. A majority of tutors indicated that they would like this. The 3 respondents who indicated “it depends” mentioned qualifiers such as, “if there were enough tutors as their are students” and “...it would be beneficial to create a close relationship with the students, but I getting to know all of the kids.” (Figure 8).

![Figure 8](image)

Figure 8. Responses to a survey question asking tutors to indicate whether or not they would like a hypothetical structure for the tutoring program in which the tutors have a more developed relationship with students.
To evaluate the current tutors’ motivations for participating in the tutoring program, they were asked if they would volunteer tutor without being compensated monetarily. Surprisingly, a significant majority of tutors indicated that they would indeed volunteer their time as a tutor (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Responses to a survey question asking if they would be willing to volunteer tutor at the Club instead of being paid.
Finally, tutors were asked if they were planning on participating in the tutoring program next year. Again, a significant majority of tutors indicated that they did indeed plan on participating again (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Responses to a survey question asking if current tutors are planning to participate in the tutoring program next year.

Identified Challenges

Through the information gathered using the evaluation methods described above, I have identified a few areas that currently present challenges to the program. Some are challenges that were directly expressed by administrators during interviews while others were inferred from examining interview and survey data more holistically. These challenges include the turnover rate of the tutors, funding, and the lack of evaluation methods for tracking student progress.
In terms of the turnover rate of tutors, most tutors do not remain with the program for more than a few semesters at a time (Figure 4). This can make it difficult for students and tutors to build meaningful relationships with one another, which ultimately impacts the effectiveness of the tutoring program. Having a high turnover rate also prevents some important actions from being taken, such as pairing students with tutors and providing sufficient tutor training. Over the past year, the Club has moved to having tutors spend two hours at the Club each time they come instead of one. This change has allowed tutors to engage in more activities outside the Power Hour and built stronger relationships with the students. Responses to the final survey question suggest that this additional time spent at the Club may be influencing tutors to consider continuing their participation in the program (Figure 10).

Funding used to compensate tutors is another challenge. As mentioned previously, as minimum wage has increased over time the Club has found it increasingly difficult to allocate enough funding to maintain, let alone expand, the tutoring program. With the minimum wage set to incrementally increase up to $15.00 per hour in by the mid 2020’s this will almost inevitably remain as an issue, and is likely become more pressing (New York State, 2016).

Another identified challenge is the lack of methods for evaluating student’s progress academically as a result of the tutoring program. Administrators both at the Club and the HWS CCESL office indicated that it would be beneficial for them to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the tutoring program. This information is critical for obtaining future funding and legitimizing the program in terms of effectiveness. There is a robust ELA evaluation
Recommendations

Based on the information gathered from the sources discussed previously, I have identified a collection of specific areas that could benefit from changes, additions, or improvements. This section details the recommendations I have generated to improve the tutoring program. Presented first are refinements of the tutoring program in its current state followed by suggestions for further development and expansion.

Collecting Information About Tutors and Students

A first suggestion for refining the current program is to collect information about student interests, skills, and career goals compliments collecting this information on tutors. Being informed about what students are interested in and what their aspirations are fosters a more holistic understanding of them, both as students and as people. This could generate natural connections between staff members and students and amongst the students themselves. The most powerful application of this information, however, is pairing it with similar information collected about the tutors.

Gathering information on tutors’ majors, minors, career goals, skills, and interests during the tutor application process and combining it with the information about students could be used to inform a more strategic system of tutor placement. For example, pairing a
student with a tutor who is majoring in an area related to one of the student's interest. Possessing a knowledge of tutor and student interests, skills, and goals could inform a system of pairing tutors with individual students or small groups of students. Currently, connections form naturally and informally between tutors and students at the Club. Anecdotal evidence suggests that students who find themselves personally connected to a tutor are more willing to complete academic work during Power Hour. In their investigation, Baker, Rieg, & Clendaniel (2006) found that an important component of a successful after school academic support program is the intentional pairing of students with tutors. On a basic level, the consistency offered by intentional pairing allows a stronger relationship to form between the tutors and students. Establishing consistency and a positive relationship early on enables students to feel comfortable receiving academic assistance more quickly. Intentional pairing also eliminates the issue of some students and tutors developing relationships quickly and easily while others may struggle or never develop a substantial relationship. In this way, pairing ensures that all students receive the same level of commitment and service from tutors.

Using the information collected about students and tutors, they can be paired according to interests, skills, and aspirations. For example, a student interested in ancient Egypt could be paired with a tutor who is a history major. A student who likes to play sports might be paired with a tutor who is a team athlete. The first benefit offered by this method of pairing is that the students and tutors automatically share a common interest. Beyond this, the tutor may be able to help the student explore their interest more deeply. This helps
deepen the connection between students and tutors, which, in turn, increases the willingness of both parties to work with each other during the Power Hour. Of course, this can also make working together more enjoyable. In some cases, a tutor may be able to help a student explore a potential career or field of study. This would be especially helpful to older students at the Club who may be considering entering the workforce or continuing their education in the future. Additionally, these outcomes may even entice students to continue attending the Club as they grow older.

**Inform HWS CCESL of Club Programming**

Communicating plans for upcoming programming outside of the tutoring program (computer lab, art studio, theater, etc.) to the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL) is the first step towards a more integrated tutoring program. Being aware of the types of programs that will be happening at the Club in the near future would inform decisions that CCESL makes regarding tutor recruitment and placement. If the tutors become more integrated in Club programming outside of the tutoring program — an idea I will discuss later — this would be an important routine to follow.

**Tutor Training**

While some training for Teen Center tutors does exist, there are several opportunities for the expansion of tutor training in ways that address specific needs and program goals. The importance of tutor training was investigated in two studies conducted by Hock, Pulvers,
Deshler, and Schumaker (2001). Training tutors can increase their level of confidence before beginning their work with students, provides an expectation of professionalism, and provides opportunities to establish important protocols and expectations.

One approach would be to have Geneva Middle and High School teachers work with the Club to facilitate a short training program. Even a single afternoon or a day long program would be beneficial. Given that students at the Club work on a variety of academic subjects, training should focus less on content and more on good teaching practices and strategies. Teaching tutors basic pedagogical skills such as how to ask good questions, probe for understanding, relate information, and prompt critical thinking would give the tutors a basic toolset they can apply during their work. Training should also be used as an opportunity to explain the logistics of Power Hour to the tutors. For example, how many students will they work with, who will be their direct superiors, and what will be their responsibilities. To bootstrap off of an existing tutor training program, the HWS Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) could be contacted to inquire about their Teaching Fellow training program. It may even be worth inquiring about having Club tutors attend the Teaching Fellow training program that occurs just before the start of each semester.

Make Volunteer Positions Available

As indicated in the survey data from current tutors, a significant majority would be willing to work as a tutor in a volunteer capacity. Opening up the tutoring program to include volunteer positions may be an effective way to increase the number of tutors available to the
Club. However, a combination of paid and volunteer positions presents an interesting problem in that both volunteers and paid tutors would be expected to complete the work despite being compensated unequally. One way to address this would be to preferentially award paid positions to certain applicants for the tutoring program and offer volunteer positions to the remaining applicants. Preference might be based on past experience at the Club and/or the applicant’s deemed level qualification for the position. Applicants offered a volunteer position could be informed that they would have an opportunity to obtain a paid position in the future. This would help to alleviate the awkward difference in compensation and give the volunteers something to aspire to. Another method could be to compensate volunteers in another way, which I will discuss in the “Reader’s College and/or Education Department Course” section.

System for Sharing Academic Resources

Establishing an organized system of sharing academic resources between the school district and the Club would help address the issue of students not having school work to do during Power Hour. The Google Classroom platform or simply a Google Drive folder that is shared between Club tutors, Club staff members, and district teachers could facilitate the sharing of resources. District teachers — preferably teachers of current Club students — could be asked to place copies of their classwork and homework materials in the digitally shared folder. Tutors and Club staff members would then be able to access these resources in instances where students do not have anything to work on during Power Hour. Over time,
this shared resource would naturally be built up into a substantial library of materials. As an added benefit, it could also help facilitate sharing of resources between teachers in the district.

For a system like this to be effective, the materials must be organized in the online platform. Within the master shared folder, subfolders should be created for each grade. Within each grade subfolder, subfolders should be created for each subject. A standardized file naming system should also be developed and anyone contributing to the folder should adhere to it. One example of a file naming system would be “subject_topic”. For example, an 7th grade science teacher adding a worksheet on cell organelles to the 7th grade science folder might name the file “lifescience_cellorganelles”. Any other file added by a life science teacher would have the same “lifesciene” subject indicator, which would allow all the materials related to life science to be located easily. The topic indicator (in this case “cellorganelles”) allows users to easily identify the specific content of the file.

Implement Use of Online Learning Platforms

Another way to address students who don’t have work to do during Power Hour is to implement the use of free online learning platforms such as Khan Academy and Codecademy. Khan Academy offers a collection of videos paired with mastery style live-feedback problems organized by subject and grade level. A particularly useful resource is Khan Academy’s “The World of Math” which organizes every math subject from basic counting to advanced calculus. The platform breaks down the topics into over 1,200 discrete skills that are
mastered by correctly answering enough questions. It is also gamified in that students can
“level up” and win badges for achieving certain levels of proficiency in skills and topics. The
platform also constantly evaluates the student’s level of proficiency and adjusts the type and
difficulty of problems presented. New topics can only be accessed once a student has
achieved mastery of critical preceding skills. New topics are introduced through short videos
that students can replay as often as they’d like. To use this platform to its fullest potential
students should create Khan Academy accounts. Once students have an account and profile,
they can be added to classes managed by Club administrators, staff, tutors, and their
teachers. This provides for a convenient platform to gauge student progress and identify
areas of proficiency and struggle. This could also serve as a viable method for evaluating
student academic progress at the Club, specifically in mathematic concept and skill
proficiency.

Another online platform that could be implemented is Codecademy, a web-based
platform for learning computer coding. It offers instruction for 12 different programming
languages and works similar to Khan Academy by breaking learning down into small
manageable chunks. While using the platform, students get to see the results of their coding
live and can progress through the course at their own rate. Both Khan Academy and
Codecademy offer opportunities to fill in gaps in academic work during Power Hour with
engaging and productive activities.
Student’s Teachers Contribute to Academic Folders

The current academic folder system employed at the Club is an important form of qualitative data collection. It could be improved further by asking teachers of students at the Club to contribute to the folders on a regular basis, perhaps biweekly or monthly. Developing a simple form for the teachers to fill out would make data collection easier to complete and minimally time consuming for the teachers. The form should ask teachers to rate the student on a Likert scale in areas such as academics, behavior, social skills, attendance, and emotional state. For example, the Likert scale options for the academic rating might be “struggling academically”, “emerging academically”, “meeting expectations”, and “exceeding expectations”. Providing an opportunity for teachers to provide open-ended commentary on students would also be valuable.

Collect Aggregate Academic Information

Academic information on students would be a valuable asset for the Club to have from an evaluation perspective. However, collecting specific academic information (i.e., grades) for each student could be difficult due to privacy issues and legal ramifications the school district could face for sharing personal student information with an outside entity. A potential method of addressing this issue would be to collect academic information (GPA, class grades, etc.) anonymously. While it would be valuable to know each student’s individual academic information, the Club does not necessarily need this to do meaningful analysis. Being able to
track a group of students over time would still be a valid method of evaluating effectiveness and personal academic information would not be needed. Instead of using metrics for each student, group metrics could be calculated and used for evaluation. Groups might consist of all the students in a grade, the students in a particular teacher’s class, or even random groups of students. The grouping method would have to be determined in cooperation with the school district. The district could even generate these group metrics internally and provide the Club with them to further maintain the anonymity of students.

*Reader’s College and/or Education Department Course*

The Teen Center should work with HWS to create a reader’s college and/or an Education Department service learning course in which the students enrolled would work at the Club as tutors. This would offer another way of obtaining additional tutors that do not need to be compensated monetarily. Instead, they would be compensated with academic course credit. In addition to working as tutors, these students could be responsible for further evaluation and development of the tutoring program. As I will discuss in the “Beyond Tutoring” section, these students could also be involved in and responsible for developing additional Club programming.

*TEP Program Placements*

The HWS Education Department’s Teacher Education Program (TEP) offers yet another opportunity to obtain additional tutors. These students are training to be teachers
and, beginning in their sophomore year, must complete placements consisting of a minimum of 40 hours of in-classroom teaching assistance each semester. Instead of completing this time in a traditional classroom environment, some of the TEP students could complete placements as tutors at the Club. Alternatively, students in a traditional classroom environment could complete a portion of their 40 hours each semester as a tutor at the Club. These tutors would also not need to be paid and would have the additional benefit of having a vested interest in education and an applicable skill set. This has been discussed in the department and they are willing to consider the Geneva Boys and Girls Club as a placement for TEP students; however, this will require additional conversations.

Moving from Tutoring to Mentoring

Perhaps the most substantial — and potentially the most effective — recommendation I will make is to begin transitioning the tutoring program to more of a mentoring program in which tutors, as mentors, are involved with much more than just Power Hour. Responses to survey questions by current tutors indicated that they would like for the program to move in this type of direction.

By involving them in other Club programs, relationships between mentors and students would be developed further and in new contexts. With the previously mentioned information collection, mentors could be assigned to facilitate different programs in the Club’s facilities. For example, a mentor majoring in computer science might facilitate a 3D printing program while a mentor majoring in dance could facilitate an introductory dance
program in the theater. If these mentors were enrolled in the reader’s college or education department course discussed previously, part of their coursework could be designing new programming for the Club in addition to facilitating programs. Being able to consistently offer this type of programming may also entice older students to attend the Club more frequently. It may also engage students from a broader academic and personal background, which has been shown to facilitate a more positive learning environment for all involved (Cosden, Morrison, Gutierrez, & Brown, 2004). Moving towards a mentor program with deeper HWS mentor integration in Club activities is the natural evolution of the existing tutoring program.

**Conclusions**

This service learning project aimed to identify challenges faced by the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center as it continues to develop its academic tutoring program. Information gathered from interviews and surveys revealed specific areas that require attention and others that could benefit from improvements. The recommendations provided here are intended to be used at the Club’s discretion and are open to manipulation as the Club considers its next steps in developing the tutoring program. It is also important to keep in mind that the recommendations made here should be considered in concert with the recommendations made by the other groups of M.A.T. students in the 2017 cohort. My hope is that my work, in combination with the work of my peers, will provide some value to Club administrators, staff, and partners as they continue to develop the services they offer to the Geneva community.
References


