Toys’n MORE Math Meeting  
Friday, April 12, 2013  
2:00 – 5:15 p.m.  
The Nittany Lion Inn

Attendees:  
Terry Allison, Alison Bonner, Rick Brazier, Siobhan Brooks, Cathy Cohan, Angela Fishman, Javier Gomez-Calderon, Charles Helou, Nicole Hill, Anatoli Ivanov, Kevin Maxwell, Ge Mu, Heather Parizek, Chris Rager, Kristin Sciulli, Regina Tarselli  
Via Polycom: Johanna Lombard, Janeen Madison, Dan Parrish

1. Welcome  
Javier Gomez-Calderon, Toys’n MORE Math Coordinator, opened the meeting by thanking everyone for their participation and hard work in Toys’n MORE, and for caring about the students. Javier estimated that sixty-five percent of students are not prepared for college math when they enter college, and those students have really benefitted from the tutoring and have had good experiences in the classroom. The project has gained good attention for Penn State and hopefully will result in a higher retention rate of engineering students.

2. Assessment  
Cathy Cohan, Toys’n MORE Assessment Coordinator, distributed the Toys’n MORE paper that will be presented at the annual American Society for Engineering Education convention this June. The paper includes extensive math tutoring data and shows that taking the Math 97 tutoring course does not guarantee success in a math course; however, Math 22 students enrolled in Math 97 seem to have greater success than students who take Math 97 as help for Math 26, 40, or 140. It was discussed that Math 22 and 26 should not be taken simultaneously, as the students may put their focus on Math 22 since it is likely that they understand it better. Another suggestion was that instead of taking Math 22 and 26 simultaneously, students take Math 41. Eight campuses are using Math 97.

Hazleton campus does not use Math 97 for Toys’n MORE courses, but instead uses gateway quizzes and allows students to retake tests after 3 hours of documented tutoring. Additional testing is more work for the instructors, so they have used Toys’n MORE funds to hire proctors for the retests. They have had success with this system.

Toys’n MORE funding is ending soon, so it is important to make sure that funds to continue these tutoring programs be secured at your campus. Concrete data could help you secure these funds, so contact Cathy if you would like further data explanation.

3. Fayette Math  
Nicole Hill, Math instructor at Fayette campus, uses a combination of Math 97 and retesting to help her students succeed in their classes. Students are allowed one retest per test. The retest grade is worth 80% and the original test grade is worth 20%. Most grades go up with a retest but not all of them. Peer tutors are used, but it is a challenge to find peer tutors who are capable of tutoring well. Nicole meets with students in small groups to tutor them. Nicole then showed a
short interview she did with 3 Math 97 students, asking them why they took the course and what their opinions were of it. All 3 students said the course was worthwhile and they were glad they took it. One student did not do the retesting but regretted not having done it.

4. Group Discussion

Tutoring and Math 97: The consensus seems to be that Math 97 is a worthwhile course, where students can build relationships and study skills in an informal setting. However, the 50 minute course that most campuses have is not sufficient. At Brandywine campus, students in Math 97 must attend class a minimum of 2 hours per week (1 hour twice), and only professional tutors are used for upper level classes. Math 97 is a special topic course and has a limit of 3 years, so if it is to continue it would become Math 10. Approval for this by the Faculty Senate is pending. The best situation would be if students were prepared for college math when they leave high school, but sadly that is not usually the case.

Sustaining tutoring programs after Toys’n MORE funds end: Brandywine, DuBois, Greater Allegheny, and York all have administrations that support their tutoring programs and feel that their respective programs will continue. Fayette is unsure of what tutoring programs will be continued at their campus.