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Student named tutor of the year by tutor association

By **Dawn Pauli**, contributing writer

To help the students he tutors in the **Academic Skills Center** (ASC), Matthew Kleinberg attends classes, does the homework and takes the quizzes and tests with them.

This kind of initiative is why he recently was named Tutor of the Year for 2004 by the Michigan Tutorial Association (MTA).

"I make it a policy to sit through the storm like they do. It helps me see how a professor does things and see where their questions lead," said Kleinberg, a spring 2004 graduate with a dual major in mathematics and economics.

Kleinberg is a supplemental instruction (SI) leader and peer tutor for math, economics and physics.

"He is willing to do what it takes to reach students," said Beth DeVerna, tutor coordinator. "Matt's students succeed in large part because of the job he's done. He has a knack for making students comfortable enough to ask all the questions they need so they understand a concept."

As a tutor, Kleinberg finds creative and innovative ways to teach the material. He provides his students practice tests, quizzes, formula sheets, definition sheets and calculator tutorials. He plays Jeopardy with the SI groups, rewarding the students with candy for correct answers. He also started a tradition and throws a pizza party at the end of each of his SI sections.

Kleinberg has worked in the ASC 20 hours a week for the past three and a half years.

"Matt's bound by the university rule to work only 20 hours per week, but he realistically puts in an extra five to 10 hours every week," DeVerna said. "He's one of the most dedicated employees I have ever had working in the Academic Skills Center."

When Kleinberg graduated this spring, he took a job as an assistant to a vice president at Flagstar Bank in the Loss Mitigation Department. Although he has moved on to the next phase in his life, he continues to assist at the ASC. He arranged two-hour lunches each day with his employer, and instead of eating, he's back at the ASC as a supplemental instruction leader for a pre-calculus course.

"I enjoy helping people," Kleinberg said. "I know firsthand what it feels like to struggle with classes. I want to help others so they don't have to go through what I went through."

Kleinberg knows he's doing his job when students pass the class and move on to the next one.

"I don't want to see them the next semester for the same class," he said. "It's not always my fault, but it feels like I didn't do my job if they don't pass."

Not only does Kleinberg assist students, his extraordinary work has helped professors, too.

In a nomination letter, Curtis Chipman, professor of mathematics, said Kleinberg provides him feedback on the areas students are having difficulty with, ultimately benefiting the entire class.

Candidates for the award are rated on criteria including community service work, acting as a role model and showing initiative and creativity.

Kleinberg will receive a \$200 award and a plaque at the MTA annual conference this fall.

"I am the president of the Michigan Tutorial Association this year, so it is my good fortune that I get to present this prestigious award to one of our own," said Charles Clark, director of the Academic Skills Center.

Kleinberg plans to wrap up his SI and tutoring career after the summer semester, and future plans include working on a master's degree in economics.

"When Matt leaves, there will be a big hole to fill in the ASC program," DeVerna said.

For more information on the ASC, visit the [Academic Skills Center](#) Web site.

SUMMARY

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