Answering the call: How changes to the salience of job characteristics affect college students' decisions

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Abstract

College students often make employment decisions with incomplete information, particularly about compensation. As a result, they may rely on misleading heuristics (such as assuming that interesting or prosocial jobs pay badly) and overlook campus positions that would support both their financial needs and their development. We test whether highlighting job characteristics changes students' application behavior in a preregistered field experiment and find that it does. Increasing the salience of a tutoring job's monetary benefits nearly tripled application rates (a 196% increase). In contrast, messages emphasizing prosocial, career, or social benefits had no effect, despite students reporting these as their primary motivations for applying. The study highlights the incongruencies in college students' decision making alongside a simple, low-cost strategy for recruiting college students to enriching campus jobs.

I. Introduction

College students make employment decisions with incomplete information about jobs, particularly around wages. When compensation is uncertain, students may rule out otherwise attractive opportunities, especially those perceived as volunteer or public-service-oriented, because they are unsure whether those roles meet their financial needs. This information friction has real consequences. In 2020, 40 percent of full-time undergraduates and 74 percent of part-time students worked while enrolled (Irwin et al. 2023), many out of necessity (Perna and Odle 2020). Yet students often select jobs that provide wages alone rather than positions that combine income with career development (Perna and Odle 2020), despite enrolling in college in part to improve their long-run labor market prospects (Oreopoulos and Petronijevic 2013; Heckman, Humphries, and Veramendi 2018). Meanwhile, enriching campus positions such as tutoring, peer mentoring, and research assistantships offer paid work alongside opportunities to develop skills, explore careers, and contribute to communities, but students may not fully recognize their economic value.

These informational barriers are likely to matter most for students with fewer resources and less access to informal networks. Students who are first-generation or low-income and who lack social networks to hear about opportunities may especially struggle with informational barriers when trying to find work that supports their goals (Arcidiacono et al. 2025; Hamilton and Morgan 2018; Ioannides and Loury 2004; Lareau 2003). Given that a third of undergraduates are eligible for the Pell Grant (Scott-Clayton and Minaya 2016), understanding how information shapes employment decisions is critical for expanding access to capacity-building work. The type of employment students undertake during college can shape their

academic and labor market trajectories (Davis 2023; Scott-Clayton 2012; Scott-Clayton and Minaya 2016).

Growing research provides evidence that students systematically misperceive earnings across occupations, often underestimating pay in public-service roles while overestimating earnings in alternative careers (Rothstein and Rouse 2011; Christian, Ronfeldt, and Zafar 2024). When accurate compensation information is absent, students may rely on misleading heuristics, such as the belief that interesting jobs pay badly, and choose suboptimal options (Baron 2014; Gigerenzer and Gaissmaier 2011). These dynamics may be especially relevant for education-related positions like tutoring, where students may incorrectly assume roles are volunteer-based or low-wage despite offering competitive hourly pay. As many states raise starting teacher salaries (Sun et al. 2025; Zamarro et al. 2024), understanding whether and how salary information should be emphasized in recruitment for education roles becomes increasingly important. Yet how colleges can most effectively recruit students into these campus-based positions remains an open question.

Economic theory suggests that job-related benefits become salient, and thus more influential in decision-making, when they stand out relative to other options, are surprising, or are prominently displayed (Bordalo, Gennaioli, and Shleifer 2012, 2022). The salience of specific information affects behavior, including whether a person applies for a job, because attention-grabbing stimuli tend to be overweighted relative to other information (Taylor and Thompson 1982). For campus jobs like tutoring that may satisfy multiple student goals, certain attributes will likely be more salient than others, particularly those that resolve key uncertainties about feasibility.

In this preregistered field experiment, we test how emphasizing different job attributes affects college students' engagement and application behaviors. Rather than identifying stable preferences for monetary versus non-monetary job characteristics, our design examines how making specific benefits salient influences behavior in a real-world hiring context. In partnership with a large public university, we randomly assigned students to receive either a generic tutor recruitment email or one of four treatment emails highlighting a different benefit of tutoring. Students assigned to treatment received messages emphasizing either the monetary benefit, the prosocial benefits, the social benefits, or the career benefits of tutoring. By comparing responses across these messages, we assess which types of information are most likely to influence application behavior when students have incomplete information about job attributes, including compensation.

We find that making the monetary benefits of tutoring salient tripled the likelihood that students applied to become tutors. Emphasizing the other benefits had little additional impact beyond the status quo recruitment messages. These findings provide evidence that information frictions play an important role in students' job choices, particularly when compensation may be uncertain or not commonly associated with a given role. They also suggest that broad communications that clearly convey key job attributes can help expose students to enriching opportunities and encourage applications when such messages reduce uncertainty about job feasibility.

Building on this insight, we conducted a follow-up study to conceptually replicate our finding and to test whether emphasizing the monetary benefits alongside another benefit produced different recruitment outcomes relative to monetary messaging alone. We find broadly consistent results. Across monetary message types, application rates were similar, though largest

for messages emphasizing both the monetary and prosocial benefits. This pattern suggests that once compensation information is made clear, emphasizing additional non-monetary attributes may have limited incremental effects.

These findings have direct implications for university recruitment and workforce development. Students' need for financial security shapes the jobs they pursue, and when they are uncertain whether a job meets their financial needs, they may overlook opportunities that also offer meaningful developmental benefits. Our research highlights a simple and cost-effective strategy for recruiting college students to roles that allow them to explore careers, develop skills, build social networks, and engage with the community. Highlighting the financial benefits of enriching jobs, particularly when pay is under-communicated or counter to common perceptions, can substantially increase the likelihood that students seek out more information and apply. More broadly, our study provides causal evidence that concerns about public service jobs being undervalued in terms of financial or labor market returns (Blazar et al. 2024; Goldhaber et al. 2023; Rothstein and Rouse 2011) translate into measurable changes in student behavior, and that resolving wage uncertainty through targeted communication can expand access to enriching opportunities.

In Section II, we provide background on how college students navigate occupational experiences and how insights from behavioral economics might inform tutor recruitment. We describe the intervention in Section III, outline our data sources and empirical strategy in Sections IV and V, present results in Section VI, and conclude with policy implications in Section VII.

II. Background

A. How college students navigate occupational experiences

Most college students work, and more students work more hours today than in the past (Baum 2023; Scott-Clayton 2012, 2017). While employment can help students cover tuition and living expenses, it may also compete with their academic obligations. For example, students working long hours in off-campus service jobs often face negative effects on credit accumulation and grades (Darolia 2014; Davis 2023; Stinebrickner and Stinebrickner 2003). By contrast, research on the Federal Work Study program shows that students who shift from non–work-study jobs to subsidized on-campus roles tend to work fewer hours and experience better academic outcomes (Scott-Clayton and Minaya 2016). Ultimately, however, financial constraints often dictate which jobs they pursue, just as such constraints later limit graduates' appetite to enter public service careers like teaching (Rothstein and Rouse, 2011).

Importantly, the type of job matters not only for academic persistence but also for how students build career skills, social networks, and connections to their communities. College students seek employment that balances financial security with opportunities to develop skills and explore interests (Perna 2010). Tutoring is one such role. Paid tutoring positions can simultaneously meet students' financial needs, foster peer and community connections, provide a sense of purpose, and help develop transferable skills relevant to future careers (Dickinson 1999). In this way, tutoring exemplifies the kind of enriching employment that supports both student development and broader social goals.

B. Behavioral insights for college student recruitment

Because tutoring can benefit both college students and the K–12 students they serve (Robinson and Loeb, 2021)—and because college students often face imperfect information when searching for jobs—well-designed recruitment strategies may increase take-up and generate gains for both groups. The literature on behavioral interventions may inform effective

recruitment practices. Individuals struggle to assess multiple data points on costs and benefits as they make complex decisions (Simon 1982; Tversky and Kahneman 1974). To address this challenge, people often rely on various heuristics to navigate this cognitive load, with information more "front of mind" or with greater salience receiving more weight in the decision evaluation process (Iyengar and Lepper 2000; Choi and Fishbach 2011; Bordalo, Gennaioli, and Shleifer 2022). Research provides evidence that individuals pick the path or options with the most salient benefits or least salient costs, and that interventions can elevate the salience of more ancillary costs and benefits to sway decision-making (for example, Ensaff et al. 2015; Thaler and Benartzi 2004; Madrian and Shea 2001; Kristensson, Wastlund, and Soderlund 2017).

College students' job decisions may be unduly influenced by assumptions about the benefits different roles provide. Employers may lose out on high-quality applicants if they fail to communicate to prospective hires the full benefits of the positions. One (likely already salient) benefit of tutoring might be the opportunity to engage in prosocial work—helping kids in the local community (Eisenberg et al. 2013). In a recent survey of tutors, the vast majority reported that their desire to support students in the local community was an important factor in becoming a tutor (Jochim, Daramola, and Polikoff 2023). This work may indicate that prosocially-motivated tutor could be more effective and more desirable to recruit.[1] Other students might be motivated by the opportunity to engage with their peers. College students often have a strong desire to feel like they belong (Fink, Frey, and Solomon 2020; Gopalan and Brady 2020; Walton et al. 2023) and the opportunity to join a cohesive peer group may not only increase applications

[1] The psychological literature posits prosocial motivation may improve workers' effort and efficiency (Grant and Shandell 2022), as highlighted in one study finding a high correlation between health care workers who had higher baseline prosocial attitudes and their patients' outcomes (Brock, Lange, and Leonard 2016).

but build a stronger tutoring corps. Studies find that individuals are willing to forego pay in order to work with their friends (Bandiera, Barankay, and Rasul 2010) and sometimes can be more productive when collaborating with known peers (Grant and Shandell 2022). Beyond the prosocial and social benefits of tutoring, employers could highlight the work-oriented benefits of tutoring. One such benefit might be career advancement opportunities. Many undergraduate students report they are primarily motivated to tutor because of the on-the-job training that might increase their chances of getting a job (Dickinson 1999; Jochim, Daramola, and Polikoff 2023). Students interested in education-related careers, in particular, may see the obvious benefits of serving as a tutor. Finally, the clearest benefit of a paid tutoring position is the wages students receive. This job characteristics may be particularly important for recruiting for positions, like tutoring, that often rely on unpaid volunteers, and thus may not be commonly associated with pay. McBride et al. (2009), for example, found that introducing financial stipends as recruitment incentives proved effective in attracting a more diverse pool of tutoring candidates, and those who received stipends were more likely to persist as tutors.

An ongoing debate addresses whether emphasizing the extrinsic benefit of wages would result in suboptimal hiring—recruiting individuals who are only motivated by money—and whether emphasizing extrinsic rewards supplants intrinsic motivation. When and how to emphasize intrinsic versus extrinsic benefits to motivate behavior is one of the core debates in behavioral science (Akin-Little et al. 2004; Dweck 2013; Lemos and Verissimo 2014; Scott-Clayton 2011). In one study, researchers find that emphasizing the intrinsic benefits of teaching results in 2.8 percentage points *fewer* high performing high schoolers choosing to pursue an education major while messages emphasizing the extrinsic benefits (for instance, salary and working conditions) *increases* the share of low-performing students interested in teaching by 1.8

percentage points (Ajzenman et al. 2021). Another study similarly finds suggestive evidence that extrinsic rewards are slightly more effective at recruiting adolescents to a summer jobs program (Bhanot and Heller 2022). Beyond education, research finds that emphasizing the personal benefits (for example, long-term career stability or personal challenge and growth opportunities) of becoming a police officer is more effective—particularly for women and people of color—than traditional approaches that appeal to a sense of public service or their potential positive impact on the community (Linos 2018). Taken together, these studies suggest that recruitment messaging can shape application and career choice behaviors across institutional contexts, populations, and time horizons. Although this study focuses on recruiting college students for tutoring jobs, our findings contribute to broader research on applying behavioral principles to improve recruitment and worker well-being, including—but not limited to—teacher recruitment efforts.

III. Intervention setting

We implemented the intervention at Grand Valley State University (GVSU), a public university in Michigan. GVSU enrolls about 20,000 undergraduates each year—about 88% of students attend full-time, and 25% of students received the income-based federal Pell Grant (U.S. Department of Education 2024). About 81% of GVSU students are white, 6% are Hispanic, 4% are Black, and 3% are Asian.

In 2020, GVSU developed a tutoring service called "K-12 Connect" to connect college tutors with Michigan K-12 students. College tutors were paid between US$14.47 and US$17.70/hour and could work about 10-15 hours a week, meeting with their students about 2-3 times a week. Campus job hourly rates ranged from US$10.10/hour to US$17.70/hour. Prior to the start of the intervention analyzed in this study, about 700 college tutors had held virtual

tutoring sessions with 2,500 students across the state. As K-12 tutoring demand increased, GVSU struggled to recruit enough college tutors and decided to test different strategies to ensure sufficient tutors to support local students' needs.

A. Treatment description

We developed four email message variants to test against a control group email, examining whether (a) *any* motivational messaging increased tutor sign-up relative to a generic recruitment message and (b) whether *specific* motivations for tutoring were more effective. The intervention included an initial email in June 2022 and a follow-up email a week later recruiting students to apply to be tutors starting in the fall 2022 semester. Treatment emails varied in their subject lines, the email body description of the program benefits, and the application link text. We designed the four treatment condition recruitment emails to make a different benefit of tutoring salient to recipients. We show an example of how the recruitment email text and subject lines vary by condition in Table 1 (full details of each email in the Appendix). At a high level, the four treatment messages emphasized the following benefits of tutoring:

- *Monetary*: Emphasized that tutoring was a paid position
- *Prosocial*: Emphasized the academic benefits to the tutored children in the community
- *Career*: Emphasized that tutoring would impart career skills
- *Social*: Emphasized that students could meet more GVSU peers through the tutoring program
- *Control*: General recruitment

Emails were clearly labeled as coming from "GVSU K-12 Connect" with a gvsu.edu email, assuring students of the validity of the messages.

IV. Data sources and descriptive statistics

A. Data

Our main outcomes of interest were (1) whether students opened the email, (2) whether students clicked through to the application, (3) whether students applied to become a tutor, (4) whether students were hired as tutors. We later were able to examine (5) whether students were employed as tutors six months after the intervention as a measure of long-term impact. GVSU tracked email engagement through their email distribution platform and linked that data to students' tutoring applications and hiring data before sharing the de-identified data file with the research team.

Open rates are a commonly used metric to understand the success of an email marketing campaign, but it does not necessarily indicate people are *reading* the email. In this study, each email had a unique ID embedded in the body of the email which allowed the University's office of communication to track whether students opened the email and clicked through the link. Students could sign up for tutoring by either clicking through the links sent via the control or treatment messages, or by navigating themselves to the tutor website. Due to data privacy, the research team only observes a student as having completed an application if they did so via the emailed application link. As a result, GVSU received applications during the intervention period which were not linkable to treatment status. Thus, any overall application and hiring rates reported in this study should be considered an undercount since students could sign up to become tutors in other ways. This should only bias the results of this analysis if students had a differential likelihood of applying via other means across conditions; because treatment assignment was random, we believe it is unlikely that students interested in tutoring in each of the control and treatment conditions would have had different rates of applying through other

avenues and not through the emailed application link. For the primary study, the research team did not have access to application data outside of those collected for the intervention.

In addition to indicators of email engagement and application/hiring, GVSU shared students' responses on applications where they indicated their interest in becoming a tutor. The application comprised several sections[2], including a section added at the end of the application that incorporated both open-ended and multiple-choice questions to inquire into the motivations driving students to pursue tutoring roles with an explicit statement that the information collected in those responses would not be used in hiring decisions.

GVSU also provided limited student information, including students' sex, an indicator for whether the student was white or non-white (the university flag for whether students identify as white versus any other ethno-racial category), students' year of enrollment in school (for instance first year, sophomore), whether the student was an in-state or out-of-state student, if they were an education major, and whether they were over the age of 25.

B. Experimental sample

All 15,860 undergraduate students enrolled at GVSU as of June of 2022 were included in the experimental sample. First year students who were starting in the fall 2022 term were not eligible for the study, as they were not yet considered enrolled. Our sample included about 7% rising first years (students who enrolled in the summer 2022 term as their first GVSU semester), 24% rising sophomores, 26% rising juniors, and 43% rising seniors (all students in their fourth year or beyond are categorized as "seniors," hence a larger share of seniors). About 38% of the

[2] The application explored whether applicants had prior experience with tutoring in general or specifically with K-12 Connect, and how they became aware of the K-12 Connect program. Furthermore, the application sought insights into subject preferences, such as interest in tutoring math, English Language Arts (ELA), or serving as a high school Academic mentorship tutor. Additionally, applicants were prompted to outline their commitment levels and specify their availability to serve as tutors.

sample was enrolled in the summer 2022 term. About 60% were female, 19% were non-white. GVSU was unable to provide more detailed race data, but this aligns with the publicly available data from the College Scorecard showing that 81% of GVSU students are white (U.S. Department of Education 2024). Thus, non-white students represent a minority of the population on this campus. About 9% were education majors and about 4% were out-of-state students.

V. Empirical strategy

Our field experiment was preregistered on the Registry of Efficacy and Effectiveness Studies (REES, #13360). We conducted a student-level randomization, stratified by their year in school (first year, sophomore, etc.) and whether they were enrolled in the summer 2022 term or not, resulting in seven strata. To assess the impact of assignment to the treatment on our outcomes, we used the following linear probability model:

$$Y_{ij} = \alpha + \beta_1 T_i + \gamma X_i + \delta_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

where Y_{ij} represents the outcome for study participant *i* within randomization block *j*, α is the constant, T_i is an indicator for assignment to one of the four intervention arms (in models looking at the effect of each individual conditions, T_i represents a vector of indicators for assignment to each of the four intervention arms), X_i represents a vector of baseline demographic characteristics for individual *i* including a student's sex, race (broken up by white and non-white), age (above or under 25), residency status (Michigan or non-Michigan resident), and whether a student has declared a major or minor in education, δ_j represents the randomization strata, and ε_{ij} is a random error term.

We also preregistered some of the exploratory analyses we intended to conduct, including exploring the heterogeneity of the treatment effect by student college level (for example, first year students), gender, race, and major (education vs. other). Additionally, we also conducted

descriptive analyses using student survey responses collected at the point of application. Only students who completed the application responded to these items, so these analyses only reflect a subset of undergraduate students who applied to serve as a tutor.

VI. Results

A. Descriptive statistics and randomization balance

As Table 2 shows, students assigned to each of the five conditions were balanced on available covariates. In the whole sample of 15,860 undergraduates, 69% of students opened the email, 3.9% of students clicked on the application, 1.3% applied to become tutors, 0.9% were hired, and 0.4% were working as tutors six months following the intervention. These descriptive statistics summarize engagement and applications observed during the study period. During the email recruitment period, the tutoring program received approximately 200 applications submitted through the email links and subsequently hired roughly 140 tutors.

B. Effects of intervention on college student behaviors

B1. Confirmatory Analyses

We first examined whether there was an overall treatment effect of messaging emphasizing any benefit of tutoring compared with the generic control group email. In Table 3 we report no overall treatment effect on email engagement, and a slight increase in application and hiring rates for students exposed to any treatment email. This effect is driven by the *monetary* condition, as we find large and statistically significant treatment effects of the monetary framing on nearly all outcomes.[3] We did not find statistically significant differences in whether students opened the email (column 1), suggesting the different subject lines did not drive behavior. However, students who received the monetary motivational message were 2.8

[3] Footnote: Results are consistent whether we include student controls or not.

percentage points more likely to click through to the application (a 72% increase off the control group rate of 3.9%; column 2). Conversely, students who received the *career* motivation message and the *social* motivation message were 1.3 and 0.8 percentage points less likely to click through, respectively. We found no statistically significant difference in click rates for students in the *prosocial* condition relative to the *control* group. These results are robust to different model specifications, including conducting logistic regressions instead of linear probability models.

Figure 1 illustrates the more active measures of engagement reported in Table 3. Students assigned the *monetary* condition were 1.7 percentage points more likely to complete an application (column 3; a 196% increase), 1.1 percentage points more likely to be hired as tutors (column 4; a 205% increase), and 0.6 percentage points more likely to be working as tutors six months later (column 5; a 286% increase).

B2. Exploratory Analyses

We then examined whether recruitment messages influenced application behavior within student subgroups to see whether the overall impact analysis masked meaningful patterns of response across the student population. Rather than testing for differences in responsiveness across groups, these analyses describe how students responded to recruitment messages. We were particularly interested in subgroups defined by gender, major, and race/ethnicity, which prior work has shown are associated with participation in education-related and helping professions.

For instance, prior research suggests that female students and education majors are disproportionately drawn to education-related and helping professions, including tutoring, due to differences in career interests, prior exposure, and alignment with prosocial and caregiving roles

(Kuhn and Wolter 2022). Education majors, in particular, may view tutoring as directly relevant to their anticipated career trajectories and as an opportunity to build human capital valued in teaching-related labor markets (Dickinson, 1999). Additionally, patterns of access to information and prior experience may shape which students encounter and consider tutoring opportunities. White students may be more likely to apply to tutoring roles due to differential access to information networks and prior experience with similar extracurricular or service-oriented opportunities, while students of color may face greater financial or informational constraints that shape which jobs they view as feasible (Ioannides and Loury 2004; Hamilton and Morgan 2018).

We examine treatment effects on applications within student subgroups in Table 4. Looking by major, we find positive effects of the *monetary* treatment for both education majors and other majors. Among education majors, the monetary framing resulted in a 4-percentage point increase in applications relative to the control condition, while among non-education majors it was associated with a 1.5-percentage point increase. Looking by sex, female students were more likely to apply for tutoring positions when they received the monetary framing (a 2.6-percentage point increase compared to the control group application rate of 1.3-percentage point). For male students, none of the framing conditions significantly affected application rates (and very few male students applied for tutoring even in the control group; 0.3% of male students compared to 1.3% of female students). Using the limited race data available, we found that both white and non-white students were more likely to apply for tutoring when they were assigned to the *monetary* treatment. Effects were qualitatively larger for non-white students—a 2.1 percentage point increase compared to a 1.6 percentage point increase for white students. In auxiliary regressions, we do find that the interaction between assignment to the monetary treatment and gender is statistically significant ($p < .001$), indicating that the association between

monetary framing and application behavior differs by gender. By contrast, interaction tests for major and race are not statistically significant, indicating no detectable differences in treatment effects across these groups.

C. Follow-up study

C1. Treatment description

After examining effects from our primary study, we collaborated with GVSU to conceptually replicate and extend our findings. Specifically, we designed the follow-up study to both replicate our results (for instance, whether the *monetary* messaging again outperformed the control group messaging) and to see whether the combination of monetary framing and other benefits had a differential effect on recruitment (for instance, whether *monetary + prosocial* had a different effect on recruitment compared to the *monetary* messaging alone). Given that the follow-up study occurred largely within the same pool of students as the primary study, we expected the effects of the intervention to be attenuated.

All students enrolled at GVSU in March 2023 received the recruitment email, recruiting students to apply to be tutors starting in the spring/summer of 2023. In addition to answering different causal questions, this outreach also enabled the research team and GVSU to descriptively understand the effectiveness of emails distributed during the academic year as opposed to those distributed after the school year had ended (as in the primary study). Recruitment emails looked similar in formatting to the primary study with the same GVSU sender information, and again varied in terms of the email subject line, email body description of the benefit, and the link text students could click on to apply. The four treatment conditions in the follow-up study were (with full message details in Table 5):

- *Monetary*: Emphasized that tutoring was a paid position

- *Monetary + Prosocial*: Emphasized the academic benefits to the tutored children in the community, in addition to the monetary message
- *Monetary + Career*: Emphasized that tutoring would impart career skills, in addition to the monetary message
- *Social*: Emphasized that students could meet more GVSU peers through the tutoring program, in addition to the monetary message
- *Control*: General recruitment

As in the primary study, students could sign up for tutoring by either clicking through the links sent via the intervention emails, or by navigating themselves to the tutor website. However, in the follow-up study the research team had access to de-identified applicant data received during the spring of 2023 that was not linkable to treatment status. Notably, in contrast to the primary study, GVSU quickly moved to implement other campus recruitment activities after the initial treatment emails were distributed. The K-12 Connect program was also more established by March 2023. Therefore, more students accessed the application outside the study emails than in the primary study.

C2. Empirical strategy

We preregistered our hypotheses and analytic plan for the follow-up study after observing the effects of the main analysis but prior to implementing the follow-up study. We examined the impact of each treatment arm compared to one another and the control group using the same model as the primary study. The only difference was that the randomization was stratified by just students' year in school (first year, sophomore, etc.) because enrollment status for the upcoming terms was not yet available.

C3. Descriptive statistics and randomization balance

Table 6 provides information on the characteristics of students in the follow-up study, as well as evidence of balance on observable characteristics across the treatment and control conditions. Overall, 60% of the sample were female, about 20% were non-white, 8% were over 25 years old, 4% were out-of-state students, and 8% were education majors. These are broadly similar to the demographics of students in the primary study and the overall GVSU population.

C4. Results

C4B. Confirmatory analyses

Overall, 77% of study participants opened the emails sent by K-12 Connect in March 2023, 2.3% clicked through the application, and 0.8% of the participants submitted an application. Email open rates were higher than in the primary June 2022 campaign (76% in March relative to 69% in June), but other engagement measures were slightly lower than the June 2022 campaign (2.6% of students clicked through in March relative to 3.9% in June).

In Table 7 we see that overall treatment effect replicated, showing that the pooled *monetary* messages increased the likelihood students applied to be a tutor (0.4 percentage points; a 50% increase). The fact that the monetary messages continued to induce higher engagement in the follow-up study suggests that additional outreach can be effective, even when many students were already exposed to the tutoring opportunity during the primary study.

Looking by condition, we found students in the *monetary + prosocial* condition were actually less likely to open the email relative to the control group, with no meaningful differences for other treatment conditions. However, students in the *monetary + prosocial condition* were more likely to apply to become tutors (a 0.6 percentage point increase compared to the control group mean of 0.8 percentage points; a 73% increase). Individuals in the *monetary*

only condition were also 0.5 percentage points more likely to apply than the control group, and the treatment differences for the *monetary + career* and the *monetary + social* conditions were also positive, although less precisely estimated. The treatment effects by condition are not statistically different from each other, thus we cannot say that the combination of monetary and other motivations is more effective than monetary framing alone.

C4A. Exploratory analyses

Looking at subgroups in Table 8 we found similar trends in treatment response as the primary study, with female, non-white, and in-state students having statistically significant treatment effects relative to null effects for male, white, and out-of-state students, respectively. The effects for non-white students were particularly strong—non-white students were more likely to apply to become tutors when assigned to the *monetary*, *monetary + prosocial, and monetary + social* conditions. Notably education majors receiving the treatment messages were not more likely to apply in the follow-up study, while they had a large treatment response in the primary study. Education majors may have had more exposure to the tutoring program in general—application rates for education majors in the control group was higher in the follow-up (3.2% of education majors in the follow-up applied to become tutors compared to 2.3% in the primary study)—indicating there may have been less room for intervention effects. In this round, only the interaction between assignment to the monetary treatment and race is statistically significant ($p = .004$).

E. Robustness check

We were able to identify which students were assigned to a condition in the primary study and, therefore, can explore how the intervention impacted students who a) were not present in the primary study and b) were assigned to the control group in the primary study. In Table 9

we present the results looking at these subsamples. Among the 5,601 students who were receiving the intervention for the first time in the follow-up study, we replicated our findings from the primary study. Students assigned to the *monetary-only* condition were 1 percentage point more likely to apply than students in the control group, translating to a 113% increase in applications. Limiting our sample to only students assigned to the control group in the primary study (n = 2,350), we see that the *monetary + prosocial* condition was most effective at increasing application rates (an almost 2 percentage point increase compared to the 0.7% of students who applied in the control group; a 181% increase). These results focusing on the undiluted subsamples suggest that the first introduction of this intervention is the strongest, and participants may react differently to subsequent rounds of outreach.

Visually we can see how the outreach affected applications, as illustrated in Figure 2 which maps applications by date relative to when the intervention emails were distributed. Looking at panel A, there are large spikes in applications the day following email distribution during the primary study. For example, the first emails went out the morning of June 24th, 2022, and on that day GVSU received 65 applications; on June 29th GVSU sent out the follow-up email and received 41 additional applications (over 50% of the applications were received on those two days).

In panel B of Figure 2 we distinguish between "matched" applications GVSU received (for instance, applications received via the email links we shared) and "unmatched" applications (for instance, applications students submitted after independently navigating to the application website, such as through Google search). We see similar spikes in applications during the first week of the intervention, with large numbers of applications after the first and second intervention emails were distributed. The K-12 Connect Team launched a broad campaign to

recruit tutors for the upcoming school year on March 23rd, 2023, resulting in a significant surge of applications on that day. The additional outreach campaign included sending targeted messages to current and former K-12 Connect tutors, as well as to previous applicants. The recruitment strategy also included direct communications to several student groups and campus organizations.

Figure 2 also illustrates the higher overall application numbers during the follow-up study in the first week of the intervention. This supports our prediction after the primary study that if all students received the monetary messaging, there would be higher applications. In the primary study's first week, K-12 Connect received 87 applications, yielding a 0.55% “early application rate.” In the first week of the follow-up study, K-12 Connect received 168 applications, resulting in a 0.97% early application rate—nearly double the number of early applications observed in the primary study. Only 17 “matched” applications were submitted in the follow-up study after the university engaged in additional outreach, which likely resulted in a lower overall application rate for each condition.

F. Descriptive insights

In addition to the impact analysis, we leveraged data on application patterns and from students’ applications to understand general trends in tutor recruitment such as who applies to become a tutor, why students report applying to become tutors, and how applications translate into hiring and tutor retention. These descriptive and conditional analyses provide valuable data for other institutions considering tutor recruitment strategies. These results come from the tutor application survey from the primary study (n = 195) and the follow-up (n = 566).

F1. Who applies to become a tutor?

In the primary study, 0.9% of all students in the control group applied to be a tutor. Looking at recruitment trends in the control group, we found consistent differences in application rates by student characteristics. Female students were more likely to apply than male students (1.3% vs. 0.3%), out-of-state students were more likely to apply than in-state students (2.7% vs. 0.8%), and education majors were more likely to apply than other majors (2.3% vs. 0.8%). We saw a similar pattern in the follow-up study, with an overall application rate of 0.8% in the control group and 1.1% of female students, 2.1% of out-of-state students, and 3.2% of education majors applying to be tutors. The high rates of applications among education majors suggest many students may want to tutor to develop specific career experience and skills.

In the primary study, first year students and seniors were the least likely to apply (0.5% and 0.3%, respectively) whereas sophomores and juniors were most likely (1.4% and 1.5%, respectively). Sophomores and juniors were again more likely to apply in the follow-up study (1.1% and 1% respectively), however we did not observe statistically significant differences in application rates across grade levels. As colleges consider email and other types of recruitment, keeping these general demographic trends in mind may help inform who is most likely to respond to general outreach and which groups may require additional, more targeted outreach.

F2. Why do students want to become tutors?

GVSU asked students on their application why they wanted to become a tutor. We present student responses from the primary study and the follow-up in Figure 3. Students specified the primary reason behind their decision to become a tutor. They could select from seven options, which aligned with the motivational messages: *prosocial*, *monetary*, *career*, and *social*. The *prosocial* category included responses expressing a desire to work with children (“I

get to work with children") and those that indicated interest in supporting the community ("I get to support the surrounding community"). The *monetary* category encompassed the option "It pays well," while the *career* section included choices such as "I will develop valuable skills," "It will look good on my resume," and "I am interested in becoming a teacher." Finally, the response "I will get to meet other GVSU students" aligned with the *social* messaging.

Despite the strong treatment effect of the monetary motivation in the primary experimental study in June 2022, only 2% said they applied to be a tutor because tutoring paid well. Half of applicants said they were interested in tutoring because they wanted to work with children and 31% reported they wanted to gain career skills.

Results were similar for the follow-up study. The most common reason given for signing up for tutoring was for prosocial reasons (49%) followed by developing career skills (44%). Again, few students reported wanting to tutor because it paid well (only 6% of the respondents' top reason). Tables S1 and S2 in the Appendix show how respondents answered by their intervention condition—self-reported reasons for applying did not consistently align with the salient messaging from the recruitment messaging.

Although these questions were flagged as not being an official part of the application, applicants may reasonably not want to flag to recruiters that they are only interested in the education-related job "for the money" (e.g., Ingersoll, 2009; Jones and Hartley, 2017; Margolis and Deuel, 2009), thus suppressing their true responses. Nonetheless, these survey insights highlight the importance of qualitative work alongside experimental tests. If the tutoring center had surveyed students *before* recruitment, they may have hypothesized that emphasizing the prosocial components of tutoring would be sufficient to recruit enough tutors, but the

experimental results show intrinsic motivations are not sufficient, and that highlighting the monetary benefit is a crucial component to prospective tutor outreach.

F3. Do applications translate into long-term tutoring commitment?

One concern raised when debating whether to emphasize intrinsic or extrinsic benefits in recruitment is that the students induced to apply from an extrinsic/monetary framing may be less dedicated employees. We ran two descriptive, conditional analyses using data from the primary study (where we observe downstream outcomes) asking (1) conditional on applying, which tutors were ultimately selected? and (2) conditional on hiring, which tutors continued working as tutors?

In Table 4 we observe that the monetary condition increased applications by 1.7 percentage points and hiring by 1.1 percentage points—very similar effects, suggesting the majority of the applicants were hired as tutors. As illustrated in Figure 4 Panel A, about 45% of applicants in the control group were ultimately hired as tutors, with slightly higher but not statistically different rates of hiring for students in the monetary, career, and social treatment conditions (where hiring rates were around 50-55%). The only notable difference was that students in the prosocial treatment were significantly more likely to get hired, conditional on application, than students in the control group—nearly 80% of students in the prosocial condition who applied were hired, a 35-percentage point difference relative to the control group. It is difficult to parse out why this may be—it could be that students motivated by prosocial framing are better fits for a tutoring position *or* that the prosocial framing signaled to prospective applicants that a prosocial mindset was desired by the tutoring center, and those applicants may have been more likely to talk about helping children and the community during their interview. We did not see any difference in the likelihood students would still be working as tutors six

months later by treatment condition, illustrated in Figure 4 Panel B. About 43% of students in the control group were still tutoring six months after getting hired, with no statistically significant differences by treatment condition. These data reveal the general challenges of tutor retention after hiring, but applicants for whom the monetary benefits were made salient were not more likely to leave the job than those in other conditions.

Our conditional analyses also highlight which margins of applications are most deterministic of future engagement. In our main analysis, there was a large treatment effect on email click-throughs for students in the monetary condition and all subsequent outcomes were significantly higher for those students.

VII. Discussion

College students must balance the goals of working to earn money and goals of contributing to the community, building career skills, and developing social relationships. Tutoring K-12 students can support each of these goals, benefiting both the tutored students and the college student tutors. Yet, college students often make job decisions with imperfect or incomplete information about the attributes of available positions, particularly compensation. As a result, they may use heuristics that lead them to ignore job characteristics that would affect their job choice. This research provides causal evidence that altering how job attributes are communicated can meaningfully change application behavior. More broadly, our findings suggest that recruitment strategies that make salient overlooked or misperceived job characteristics can increase applications and expand the pool of workers potential hires.

We studied recruitment using two randomized controlled trials and found large effects of emphasizing the monetary benefits of tutoring on the likelihood students applied for and subsequently were hired for tutoring positions. We found no evidence that emphasizing the

prosocial (helping the children and community), social (meeting other college students), or career (building professional skills) benefits alone increased applications beyond generic outreach. The monetary framing increased application rates by 1.7-percentage points relative to the control group (a 196 percent increase) and increased the likelihood of being hired as a tutor by 1.1 percentage points (a 205 percent increase). Notably, students recruited through the monetary messaging were equally likely to still be employed as tutors six months after the intervention as those assigned to other conditions, suggesting that the extrinsic motivator of money did not result in suboptimal hiring of uncommitted tutors.

While the importance of pay in college students' decision making is well established, our finding that pay-focused messaging changed behavior highlights two key dynamics: first, that college students often lack information when making job choices; and second, that they may rely on misleading heuristics—such as assuming jobs with non-pecuniary benefits offer lower pay—which can lead to suboptimal employment decisions. Making the monetary benefits salient may have been particularly effective in this case because it was surprising (Kahneman and Miller 1986)—it was likely unexpected to learn that tutoring was a well-paid position in the pool of potential jobs, driving application and subsequent hiring and persistence outcomes. Because our messages bundled the provision of information with increased salience, we cannot isolate whether effects reflect the novelty of pay information or increased attention to compensation; instead, we interpret the results as evidence that making compensation explicit and salient can correct misperceptions and shape recruitment outcomes. Additionally, because individuals often underestimate the salary and long-term labor market returns of public service jobs, such as teaching (Christian et al., 2024; Rothstein and Rouse, 2011; Linos 2018), our findings may have broader implications for the design of recruitment strategies that highlight job benefits—not only

in college employment contexts, but also in efforts to attract candidates to socially valuable careers.

One potential concern organizations may have with highlighting the monetary benefits of tutoring is that it would attract uncommitted tutors who may not persist in the job and displace more intrinsically motivated candidates (see, Dweck 1999). We find no evidence of this. Students in the monetary condition were significantly more likely to be hired and equally likely to remain as tutors six months later, and conditional on applying, were no less likely to be hired than students in the control group. Securing a well-paying job appears to be top of mind for college students, and emphasizing a good wage does not result in a less dedicated pool of employees, although we recognize we lack data on tutor quality or the program's ability to identify highly qualified candidates at the time of hiring.

In the follow-up study, we conceptually replicated and extended the primary study. We designed messages reflecting dual goals students may have for work opportunities to see whether messages highlighting the monetary benefits of tutoring could be even more effective if paired with emphasis on the other benefits of tutoring. Broadly the follow-up study supports our initial finding that students are more likely to apply to become tutors when they know tutoring is a paid position. Although the pool of students was largely the same as those in our primary study and thus had received messaging from our first study, we again found a treatment effect of the monetary messages on click-through rates and applications, and only inconsistent effects of the messages emphasizing the other job benefits.

In both studies, our exploratory analyses showed that the effect of the monetary framing was larger in magnitude for female students and non-white students. Offering a competitive hourly wage and highlighting the financial benefits of tutoring could effectively lower barriers

for many potential applicants who might be deterred due to financial constraints (Carver-Thomas 2018). The increased number of non-white applicants, a group traditionally underrepresented in the teaching profession (U.S. Department of Education 2022), highlights the potential for financial incentives to attract a more diverse pool of candidates. We also found suggestive evidence that for these subgroups of female and non-white students emphasizing the intrinsic rewards of supporting children and the local community, in addition to money, could induce additional applications.

One limitation of this study is that it focuses on a highly specific employment opportunity: a college-sponsored tutoring position. The structure of this job—including its alignment with students' schedules, pay rate, and its perceived social value—may not reflect the conditions of other enriching campus jobs or of longer-horizon post-college career decisions, such as entry into the teaching profession. Nevertheless, the mechanisms highlighted here likely extend beyond tutoring. Students' reliance on heuristics and their responsiveness to salient information about compensation and non-pecuniary benefits may shape decisions about a wide range of employment opportunities, particularly in settings where pay is uncertain, misperceived, or assumed to be low (e.g., peer advising, research assistantships, public service occupations). In labor markets such as teaching, where prior research shows that students substantially misestimate both teacher pay and counterfactual earnings (Christian, Ronfeldt, and Zafar 2024), effective recruitment may require not only increasing the salience of wages but also correcting inaccurate beliefs about compensation. However, context matters and we need more research to understand if salary-focused messaging alone would be sufficient to attract more individuals into teaching. More broadly, these findings suggest that the way job characteristics are framed could influence how young workers weigh financial security, career development, and community

engagement in their broader labor market choices, while also underscoring the importance of context in determining the magnitude of these effects.

Overall, email outreach worked in exposing students to a specific enriching job opportunity—tutoring—and garnering applications. Across all the conditions in our primary study, the tutoring program received about 200 applications. However, the large effects from the virtually costless modification of email subject line and introductory text indicate that colleges should think carefully about how they craft recruitment messages. We estimate that sending the control message to all students would have resulted in about 140 applications, whereas sending the monetary message would have resulted in about 410 applications. As many school districts struggle to recruit enough tutors to meet the demand, college students offer a promising and sustainable pool of highly-motivated, knowledgeable workers with flexible schedules.

Despite the consistent effect of the monetary messaging, we found that very few students said the reason they wanted to become a tutor was because of the money; applicants instead report that helping children and engaging in career exploration are the most important reasons for applying. This disconnect between behavior and self-reported motivations could be a result of students reporting what they believed hiring managers wanted to hear on their applications, having limited self-introspection into their own cognitive processes (Nisbett and Wilson 1977), or having a genuine interest in helping the community and advancing their careers, but just needing to find paid work. This pattern has important implications for recruitment into education-related careers more broadly, including teaching, where prospective entrants often express strong intrinsic motivations while simultaneously responding to changes in compensation or financial incentives (Christian et al., 2024). Whatever the reason, this disconnect between self-reported motivations and the strong treatment effect of monetary

messaging points to the limits of using self-report data alone to inform recruitment strategies and the need for rigorously testing different strategies, particularly in contexts where wages may be uncertain or socially downplayed.

Ultimately, college students develop their capacities and explore their interests in classes and in a range of extracurricular activities, including work. If students overlook enriching job options because they assume those positions will not meet their financial needs, they miss opportunities to develop skills, explore careers, and contribute to their communities—and those communities lose out on their contributions. This study demonstrates that low-cost recruitment strategies that make monetary returns explicit and salient can meaningfully expand the pool of students who pursue and persist in enriching campus roles.

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Tables

Table 1. Primary Study - Overview of the Initial Emails Sent to GVSU Students

Condition	Subject Line	Header	Hyperlinked Text	Message Hook
Monetary	Looking to earn money? Sign up to be a GVSU K-12 Connect Tutor	Earn Money.	Apply Now to earn up to US$17.50 per hour by working as a tutor	GVSU undergraduates can earn money working as a tutor this year.
Prosocial	Do you want to help Michigan children in the community? Sign up to be a GVSU K-12 Connect Tutor	Help a child. Support the community.	Apply Now to support communities across Michigan while making a difference in the lives of children.	GVSU tutors help thousands of kids in 56 Michigan counties succeed in school.
Career	Are you looking to build your resume? Sign up to be a GVSU K-12 Connect Tutor	Gain Leadership Skills. Build Your Resume.	Apply now to build your resume, expand your professional network, or explore a career in teaching.	GVSU tutors receive training and gain skills that will help them succeed in many careers.
Social	Looking to meet other GVSU students? Sign up to be a GVSU K-12 Connect Tutor	Connect with other GVSU Students.	Apply now to join the great community of Grand Valley undergraduates who tutor	700+ GVSU undergrads work together to provide tutoring for students in Michigan.
Control	Sign up to be a GVSU K-12 Connect Tutor	GVSU K-12 Connect	Apply Now to Be a K-12 Connect Tutor	GVSU's K-12 Connect program provides virtual tutoring to support students in Michigan.

Notes: This table displays the specific components of the first emails received by GVSU students in the primary round of the study. The columns represent the components of the emails, while the rows correspond to the details of the conditions.

Table 2. Primary Study - Experimental Sample, Balance

	Female	Non-White	Over 25 years old	Out-of-state	Pursuing Major/Minor in Education
Overall sample	0.599	0.188	0.087	0.041	0.088
Monetary	0.004	-0.008	-0.003	-0.004	0.007
	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.007)
Prosocial	-0.005	-0.006	0.002	-0.006	0.013+
	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.007)
Career	-0.006	0.001	-0.008	-0.007	-0.001
	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.007)
Social	-0.010	-0.005	-0.001	-0.009+	0.006
	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.007)
R^2	0.001	0.015	0.044	0.021	0.007
Observations	15,835	15,860	15,860	15,860	15,860

NOTES: The data presented in this table reflects the administrative data provided to the researchers by GVSU. Models include the left-out student covariates (sex, indicator for non-white, indicator for being older than 25, indicator for being an out-of-state student, indicator for summer and fall enrollment, and indicator for being an education major) and randomization block fixed effects (randomization was blocked by year in school and whether students were enrolled in the summer term). In impact analysis, we include the full sample with a missing female indicator.

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 3. Primary Study – Overall and By-Condition Effects

	Email Open Rate	Click-Thru Rate	Applied	Hired	Employed after 6 months
Control mean	0.690	0.039	0.009	0.005	0.002
Treatment	-0.002	0.000	0.004*	0.004*	0.002*
	(0.009)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)
R^2	0.035	0.019	0.012	0.011	0.007
Observations	15860	15860	15860	15860	15860
Monetary	0.015	0.028***	0.017***	0.011***	0.006***
	(0.011)	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Prosocial	-0.009	-0.007	0.001	0.003	0.001
	(0.011)	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Career	-0.008	-0.013**	-0.002	0.000	-0.001
	(0.016)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Social	-0.005	-0.008+	0.001	0.002	0.002
	(0.012)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)
R^2	0.036	0.024	0.016	0.012	0.009
Observations	15,860	15,860	15,860	15,860	15,860

Notes: All models control for student demographic covariates, including sex, indicator for non-white, indicator for being older than 25, indicator for being an out-of-state student, indicator for summer and fall enrollment, and indicator for being an education major. Each model includes a randomization block fixed effects (randomization was blocked by year in school and whether students were enrolled in the summer term). Standard errors in parentheses.
+p<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 4. Primary Study - Overall and By-Condition Effects on Applications, By Subgroups

	By Major		By Sex		By Racial Identity		By Residency	
	Education major	Other major	Female	Male	Non-white	White	Out-of-state	In-state
Control Mean	0.023	0.008	0.013	0.003	0.005	0.010	0.027	0.008
Treatment	0.019+	0.003	0.006*	0.001	0.008*	0.003	-0.010	0.005**
	(0.011)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.015)	(0.002)
R^2	0.025	0.004	0.011	0.008	0.016	0.013	0.047	0.013
Observations	1391	14469	9492	6343	2988	12872	656	15204
Monetary	0.040*	0.015***	0.026***	0.003	0.021***	0.016***	-0.009	0.018***
	(0.017)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.018)	(0.003)
Prosocial	0.011	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.008	-0.001	0.006	0.001
	(0.014)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.020)	(0.002)
Career	0.014	-0.003	-0.002	-0.001	0.002	-0.003	-0.018	-0.001
	(0.015)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.017)	(0.002)
Social	0.010	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.003	0.000	-0.019	0.002
	(0.014)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.018)	(0.002)
R^2	0.028	0.011	0.017	0.009	0.019	0.016	0.051	0.017
Observations	1,391	14,469	9,492	6,343	2,988	12,872	656	15,204

Notes: All models control for student demographic covariates, including sex, indicator for non-white, indicator for being older than 25, indicator for being an out-of-state student, indicator for summer and fall enrollment, and indicator for being an education major. Each model includes a randomization block fixed effects (randomization was blocked by year in school and whether students were enrolled in the summer term). Standard errors in parentheses.
+p<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 5. Follow-up Study - Overview of the Emails Sent to GVSU Students.

Condition	Subject line	Header	Hyperlinked Text	Message Hook
Monetary	Earn money. Sign up to be a GVSU K-12 Connect Tutor.	Earn Money. Sign up to be a tutor.	Apply Now to earn up to US$17.50 per hour by working as a tutor.	GVSU undergraduates can earn money working as a tutor next academic year.
Monetary + Prosocial	Earn money and help kids. Sign up to be a GVSU K-12 Connect Tutor.	Earn Money. Help a child. Sign up to be a tutor.	Apply Now to earn up to US$17.50 per hour while making a difference in the lives of Michigan children.	GVSU undergrads can earn money working as a tutor next academic year. As a tutor, you will build close connections with kids and play an essential role in helping your students succeed in school.
Monetary + Career	Earn money and build your resume. Sign up to be a GVSU K-12 Connect Tutor.	Earn Money. Build Your Resume. Sign up to be a tutor.	Apply Now to earn up to US$17.50 per hour and build your resume.	GVSU undergrads can earn money working as a tutor next academic year. As a tutor, you will receive training and gain skills that can help you succeed in many careers.
Monetary + Social	Earn money and meet GVSU students. Sign up to be a GVSU K-12 Connect Tutor.	Earn Money. Connect with GVSU Students. Sign up to be a tutor.	Apply Now to earn up to US$17.50 per hour and join a great community of Grand Valley undergraduates who tutor.	GVSU undergrads can earn money working as a tutor next academic year. As a tutor, you'll join a community of over 700 other GVSU undergrads working together to provide tutoring for students.
Control	Sign up to be a GVSU K-12 Connect Tutor.	GVSU K-12 Connect. Sign up to be a tutor.	Apply Now to Be a K-12 Connect Tutor.	GVSU's K-12 Connect program provides virtual tutoring support to children.

Notes: This table displays the specific components of the emails received by GVSU students in the follow-up round of the study. The columns represent the components of the emails, while the rows correspond to the details of the conditions.

Table 6. Follow-up Study – Experimental Sample, Balance

	Female	Non-White	Over 25 years old	Out-of-state	Enrolled in Fall 2023 Semester	Pursuing Major/Minor in Education
Overall sample	0.599	0.197	0.079	0.039	0.717	0.083
Monetary	0.011	-0.007	-0.002	-0.002	-0.009	0.001
	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.009)	(0.008)
Monetary + Prosocial	0.014	-0.004	-0.003	-0.007	-0.014	0.000
	(0.013)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.008)	(0.005)
Monetary + Career	0.001	0.002	0.005	-0.004	-0.013	-0.012
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.004)	(0.018)	(0.007)
Monetary + Social	0.004	-0.004	0.003	0.001	-0.013	-0.008
	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.013)	(0.007)
R^2	0.000	0.013	0.044	0.012	0.164	0.003
Observations	17,200	17,235	17,235	17,235	17,235	17,235

NOTES: The data presented in this table reflects the administrative data provided to the researchers by GVSU. Models include the left-out student covariates (sex, indicator for non-white, indicator for being older than 25, indicator for being an out-of-state student, indicator for spring and fall enrollment, and indicator for being an education major) and randomization block fixed effects (randomization blocked on grade level). Standard errors in parentheses. In impact analysis, we include the full sample with a gender variable that includes an indicator for missing.

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 7. Follow-up Study - Overall and By-Condition Effects

	Email Open Rate	Click-Thru Rate	Applied
Control mean	0.774	0.023	0.008
Treatment	-0.011	0.005	0.004*
	(0.008)	(0.003)	(0.002)
R^2	0.015	0.014	0.009
Observations	17,235	17,235	17,235
Monetary	-0.008	0.007+	0.005+
	(0.010)	(0.004)	(0.002)
Monetary + Prosocial	-0.025*	0.002	0.006*
	(0.010)	(0.004)	(0.002)
Monetary + Career	-0.008	0.002	0.002
	(0.010)	(0.004)	(0.002)
Monetary + Social	-0.005	0.008*	0.003
	(0.010)	(0.004)	(0.002)
R^2	0.015	0.014	0.009
Observations	17,235	17,235	17,235

Notes: All regressions encompass student controls and grade-level (block) fixed effects. Models include student covariates (sex, indicator for non-White, indicator for being older than 25, indicator for being an out-of-state student, indicator for spring and fall enrollment, and indicator for being an education major) and randomization block fixed effects (randomization blocked on grade level). Standard errors in parentheses.
+p<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 8. Follow-up Study - Overall and By-Condition Treatment Effects on Applications, By Subgroups

	By Major		By Sex		By Racial Identity		By Residency	
	Education major	Other major	Female	Male	Non-white	White	Out-of-state	In-state
Control Mean	0.032	0.005	0.011	0.003	0.006	0.008	0.021	0.007
Treatment	-0.007	0.005**	0.005*	0.002	0.014***	0.001	0.001	0.004*
	(0.011)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.013)	(0.002)
R^2	0.014	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.008	0.010	0.028	0.009
Observations	1472	15763	10300	6900	3390	13845	680	16555
Monetary	-0.010	0.006**	0.006+	0.003	0.019**	0.001	0.016	0.004+
	(0.013)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.007)	(0.003)	(0.020)	(0.002)
Monetary + Prosocial	-0.012	0.007**	0.009*	0.000	0.014*	0.003	0.000	0.006*
	(0.013)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.017)	(0.002)
Monetary + Career	0.010	0.001	0.002	0.002	0.006	0.001	0.003	0.002
	(0.016)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.018)	(0.002)
Monetary + Social	-0.017	0.005*	0.004	0.001	0.017**	0.000	-0.013	0.004
	(0.012)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.014)	(0.002)
R^2	0.017	0.008	0.008	0.007	0.009	0.010	0.033	0.009
Observations	1,472	15,763	10,300	6,900	3,390	13,845	680	16,555

Notes: All regressions encompass student controls and grade-level (block) fixed effects. Models include student covariates (sex, indicator for non-White, indicator for being older than 25, indicator for being an out-of-state student, indicator for spring and fall enrollment, and indicator for being an education major) and randomization block fixed effects (randomization blocked on grade level). Standard errors in parentheses.
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 9. Follow-up Study - Overall and By-Condition Effects by Primary Study Sample Restrictions

	Applied	
	Sample: Not in Primary Study	Sample: Primary Study Control Group
Control Mean	0.009	0.007
Treatment	0.007+	0.003
	(0.003)	(0.004)
R^2	0.008	0.008
Observations	5,601	2,350
Monetary	0.010*	0.001
	(0.005)	(0.006)
Monetary + Prosocial	0.006	0.012+
	(0.005)	(0.007)
Monetary + Career	0.002	-0.003
	(0.004)	(0.005)
Monetary + Social	0.008+	0.000
	(0.005)	(0.005)
R^2	0.009	0.011
Observations	5,601	2,350

Notes: All regressions encompass student controls and grade-level (block) fixed effects. Models include student covariates (sex, indicator for non-White, indicator for being older than 25, indicator for being an out-of-state student, indicator for spring and fall enrollment, and indicator for being an education major) and randomization block fixed effects (randomization blocked on grade level). Standard errors in parentheses.
+p<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Figures

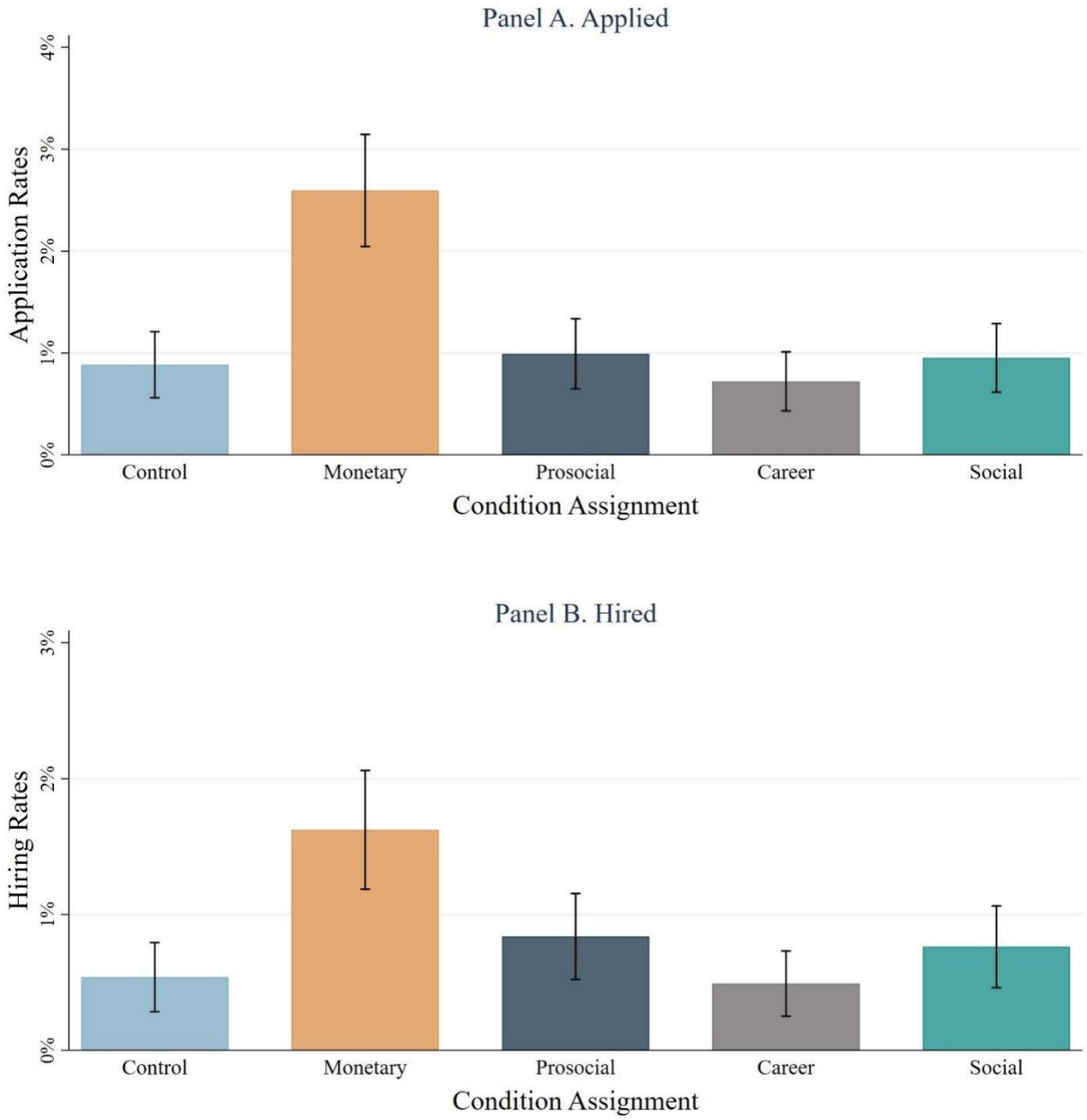


Figure 1. Impact of Condition Assignment on Application and Hiring Rates

Notes: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

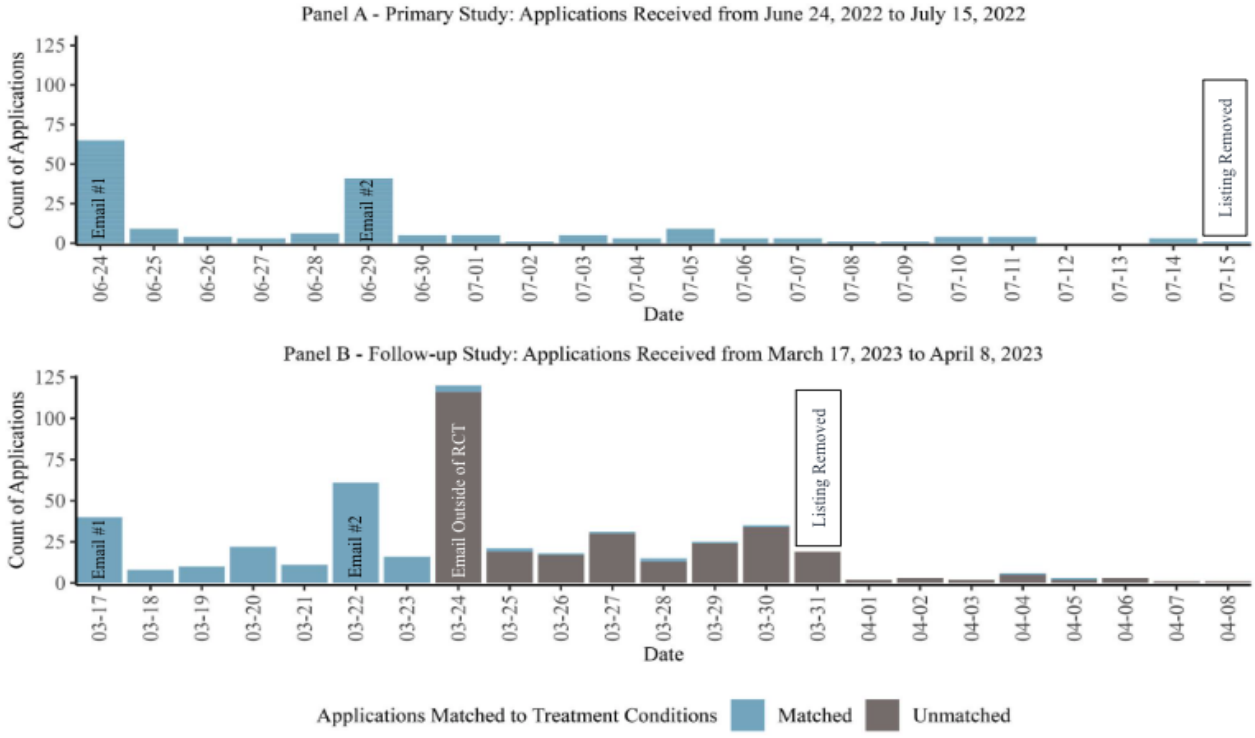


Figure 2. Timeline of Applications

Notes: The data presented in this figure illustrates the volume of tutoring applications received by GVSU in each round, with the primary round listed at the top and the follow-up round at the bottom. This visualization truncates the timelines at 23 days, corresponding to the duration for which the application was open in the initial study. In contrast, the application period in the subsequent study spanned 15 days. To indicate the dates when the applications were promoted via email, we have denoted the frequency of emails dispatched by the university to students. For instance, the inaugural email in the primary round was disseminated on June 24th, 2022, whereas in the follow-up study, it was on March 17th, 2023. Additionally, the graph marks the dissemination of reminder emails to students as "Email #2." The annotation "Listing Removed" in each figure signifies that the applications were no longer actively advertised by the university. It is important to note that a small number of applications were submitted post-removal of the listing. In the primary study, of the 195 applications received, 17 were post-listing removal. The follow-up study witnessed 514 applications, with 62 submitted after the listing ceased to be advertised. In the primary study, the research team only viewed applications that were accessed via the unique links emailed to the analytic sample, thereby we do not have information on unmatched applications. In the follow-up study we were able to view applications that were not accessed through the unique link, however we do not have access to their assigned condition.185 applications were traceable to the unique links sent to students. As the remaining applications could not be matched to the specific treatment assignments, they were excluded from the analytic sample.

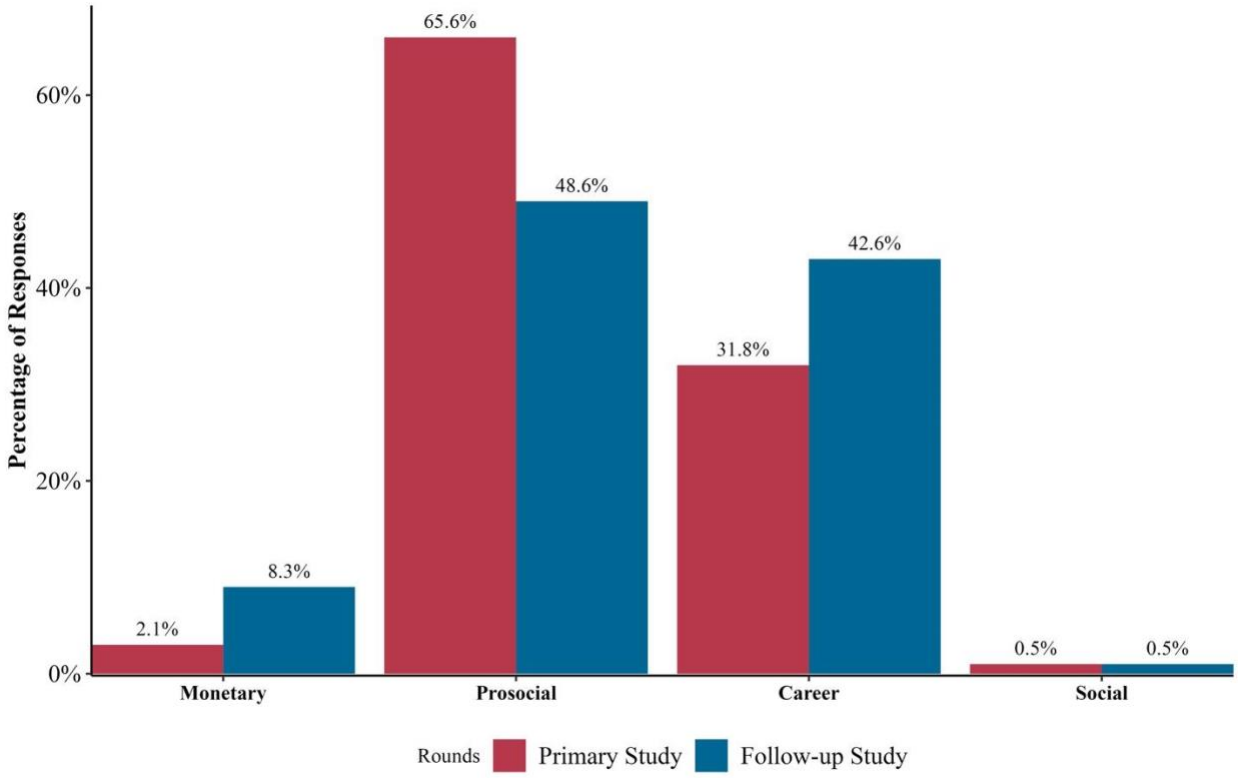


Figure 3. Self-Reported Motivations for Applying to be a Tutor

Notes: Data from the K-12 Connect Tutor application form, N=195 applicants for primary study, N=566 applicants for follow-up study. The motivations encompass the following questions: Monetary ("It pays well"; Prosocial (I get to work with children" and "I get to support the surrounding community"); Career ("I will develop valuable skills", "It will look good on my resume", and "I am interested in becoming a teacher") and Social ("I will get to meet other GVSU students").

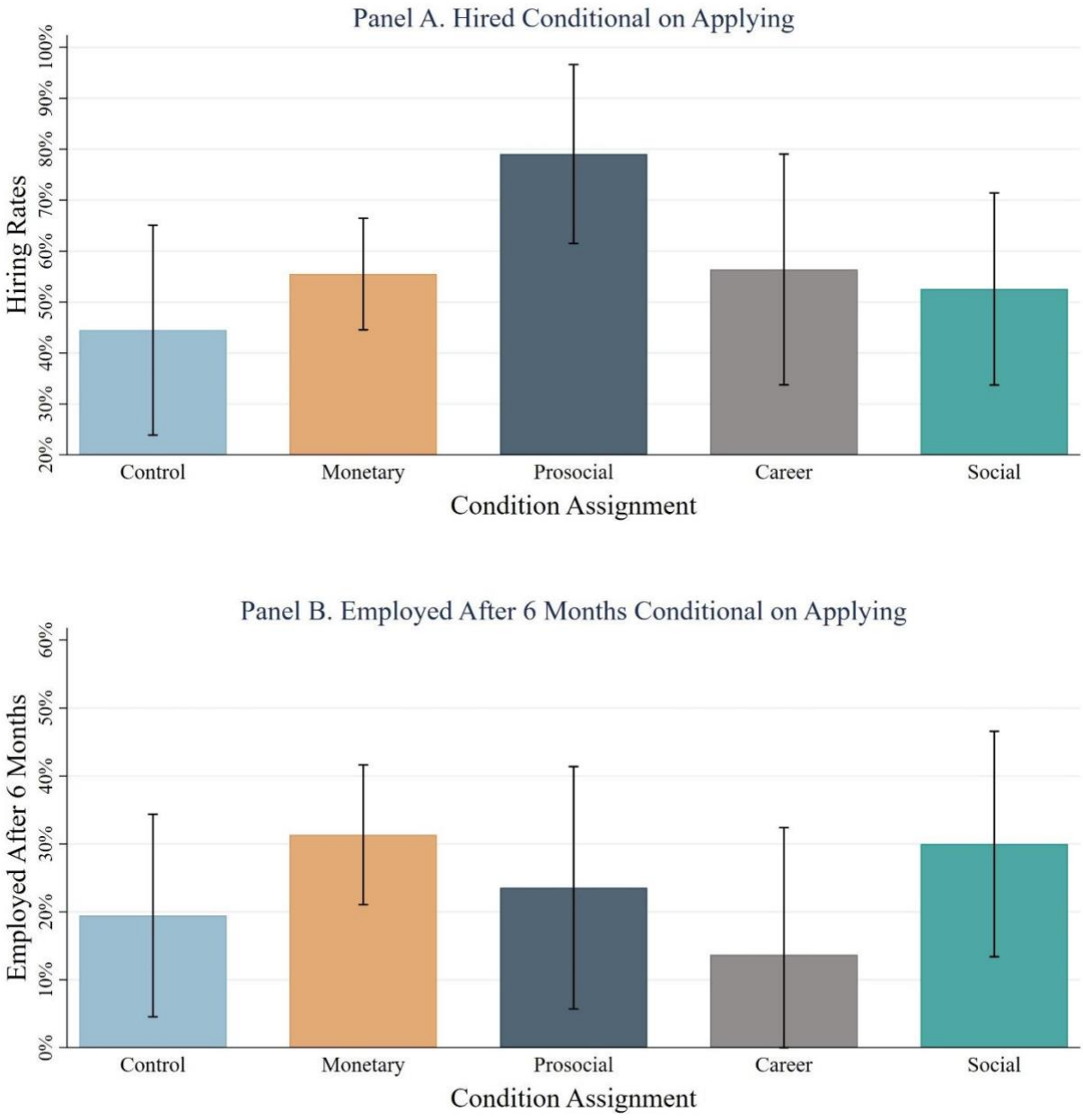


Figure 4. Impact of Condition Assignment on Hiring Rates and Employment 6 Months Later, Conditional on Applying

Notes: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Appendix

Table S1. Primary Study - Self-Reported Motivations for Applying to be a Tutor

Application Condition	Monetary[a]	Prosocial[b]	Career[c]	Social[d]	Total
Control	0%	71.43%	28.57%	0%	100%
	(0)	(20)	(8)	(0)	(28)
Monetary	4.82%	62.65%	31.33%	1.2%	100%
	(4)	(52)	(26)	(1)	(83)
Prosocial	0%	50%	50%	0%	100%
	(0)	(16)	(16)	(0)	(32)
Career	0%	59.09%	40.91%	0%	100%
	(0)	(16)	(9)	(0)	(22)
Social	0%	90%	10%	0%	100%
	(0)	(27)	(3)	(0)	(30)
Total	2.05%	65.64%	31.79%	0.51%	100%
	(4)	(128)	(62)	(1)	(195)

[a] "It pays well"

[b] "I get to work with children" and "I get to support the surrounding community"

[c] "I will develop valuable skills", "It will look good on my resume", and "I am interested in becoming a teacher"

[d] "I will get to meet other GVSU students"

Table S2. Follow-up Study - Self-Reported Motivations for Applying to be a Tutor

Application Condition	Monetary[a]	Prosocial[b]	Career[c]	Social[d]	Total
Control	6.45%	32.26%	61.29%	0%	100%
	(2)	(10)	(19)	(0)	(31)
Monetary	15.09%	41.17%	37.74%	0%	100%
	(8)	(25)	(20)	(0)	(53)
Monetary + Prosocial	7.49%	55.77%	36.54%	0%	100%
	(4)	(29)	(19)	(0)	(52)
Monetary + Career	10.26%	48.72%	41.03%	0%	100%
	(4)	(19)	(16)	(0)	(39)
Monetary + Social	0%	53.66%	43.90%	2.44%	100%
	(0)	(22)	(18)	(1)	(41)
Total	8.33%	48.61%	42.59%	0.46%	100%
	(18)	(105)	(92)	(1)	(216)

[a] "It pays well"

[b] "I get to work with children" and "I get to support the surrounding community"

[c] "I will develop valuable skills", "It will look good on my resume", and "I am interested in becoming a teacher"

[d] "I will get to meet other GVSU students"

Intervention Materials.

Control – Email 1

From GVSU K-12 Connect <k12connect@gvsu.edu>
Subject **Sign up to be a GVSU K-12 Connect Tutor**
To Philip Batty <battyp@gvsu.edu>
Reply | Reply All | Forward | More
6/23/2022, 2:25 PM

GVSU K-12 CONNECT

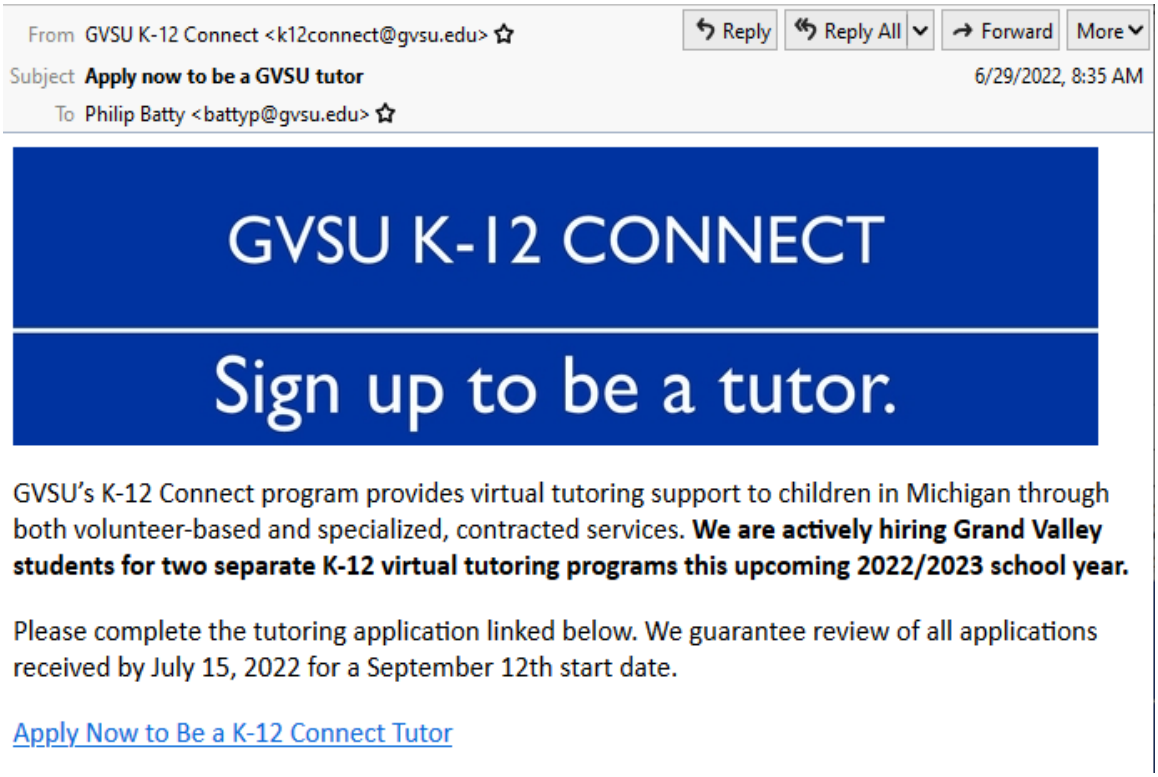
Sign up to be a tutor.

GVSU's K-12 Connect program provides virtual tutoring support to children in Michigan through both volunteer-based and specialized, contracted services. **We are actively hiring Grand Valley students for two separate K-12 virtual tutoring programs this upcoming 2022/2023 school year.**

Please complete the tutoring application linked below. We guarantee review of all applications received by July 15, 2022 for a September 12th start date.

Apply Now to Be a K-12 Connect Tutor

Control – Email 2



From GVSU K-12 Connect <k12connect@gvsu.edu>
Subject **Apply now to be a GVSU tutor**
To Philip Batty <battyp@gvsu.edu>

Reply | Reply All | Forward | More

6/29/2022, 8:35 AM

GVSU K-12 CONNECT

Sign up to be a tutor.

GVSU's K-12 Connect program provides virtual tutoring support to children in Michigan through both volunteer-based and specialized, contracted services. **We are actively hiring Grand Valley students for two separate K-12 virtual tutoring programs this upcoming 2022/2023 school year.**

Please complete the tutoring application linked below. We guarantee review of all applications received by July 15, 2022 for a September 12th start date.

Apply Now to Be a K-12 Connect Tutor

Monetary – Email 1

GVSU undergraduates can earn money working as a tutor this year. GVSU's K-12 Connect program provides virtual tutoring support to children in Michigan through both volunteer-based and specialized, contracted services. **We are actively hiring Grand Valley students for two separate K-12 virtual tutoring programs this upcoming 2022/2023 school year.**

Please complete the tutoring application linked below. We guarantee review of all applications received by July 15, 2022 for a September 12th start date.

Apply Now to earn up to $17.50 per hour by working as a tutor

Monetary – Email 2

GVSU undergraduates can earn money working as a tutor this year. GVSU's K-12 Connect program provides virtual tutoring support to children in Michigan through both volunteer-based and specialized, contracted services. **We are actively hiring Grand Valley students for two separate K-12 virtual tutoring programs this upcoming 2022/2023 school year.**

Please complete the tutoring application linked below. We guarantee review of all applications received by July 15, 2022 for a September 12th start date.

Apply Now to earn up to $17.50 per hour by working as a tutor

Prosocial – Email 1

From GVSU K-12 Connect <k12connect@gvsu.edu> ☆ Reply | Reply All | Forward | More

Subject **Do you want to help Michigan children in the community? Sign up to be a GVSU K-12 Connect Tutor** 6/23/2022, 2:25 PM

To Philip Batty <battyp@gvsu.edu> ☆

GVSU tutors help thousands of kids in 56 Michigan counties succeed in school. GVSU's K-12 Connect program provides virtual tutoring support to children in Michigan through both volunteer-based and specialized, contracted services. **We are actively hiring Grand Valley students for two separate K-12 virtual tutoring programs this upcoming 2022/2023 school year.**

Please complete the tutoring application linked below. We guarantee review of all applications received by July 15, 2022 for a September 12th start date.

Apply Now to support communities across Michigan while making a difference in the lives of children.

Prosocial – Email 2

From GVSU K-12 Connect <k12connect@gvsu.edu> ☆ Reply | Reply All | Forward | More

Subject **Apply now to support kids - be a GVSU tutor** 6/29/2022, 8:36 AM

To Philip Batty <battyp@gvsu.edu> ☆

GVSU tutors help thousands of kids in 56 Michigan counties succeed in school. GVSU's K-12 Connect program provides virtual tutoring support to children in Michigan through both volunteer-based and specialized, contracted services. **We are actively hiring Grand Valley students for two separate K-12 virtual tutoring programs this upcoming 2022/2023 school year.**

Please complete the tutoring application linked below. We guarantee review of all applications received by July 15, 2022 for a September 12th start date.

Apply Now to support communities across Michigan while making a difference in the lives of children.

Career – Email 1

GAIN LEADERSHIP SKILLS.
BUILD YOUR RESUME.

Sign up to be a tutor.

GVSU tutors receive training and gain skills that will help them succeed in many careers. GVSU's K-12 Connect program provides virtual tutoring support to children in Michigan through both volunteer-based and specialized, contracted services. **We are actively hiring Grand Valley students for two separate K-12 virtual tutoring programs this upcoming 2022/2023 school year.**

Please complete the tutoring application linked below. We guarantee review of all applications received by July 15, 2022 for a September 12th start date.

Apply Now to build your resume, expand your professional network, or explore a career in teaching

Career – Email 2

GAIN LEADERSHIP SKILLS.
BUILD YOUR RESUME.

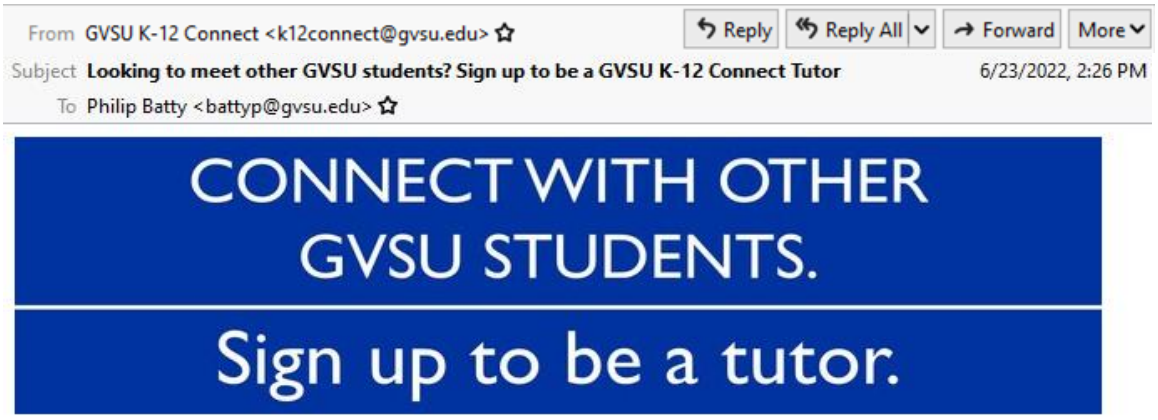
Sign up to be a tutor.

GVSU tutors receive training and gain skills that will help them succeed in many careers. GVSU's K-12 Connect program provides virtual tutoring support to children in Michigan through both volunteer-based and specialized, contracted services. **We are actively hiring Grand Valley students for two separate K-12 virtual tutoring programs this upcoming 2022/2023 school year.**

Please complete the tutoring application linked below. We guarantee review of all applications received by July 15, 2022 for a September 12th start date.

Apply Now to build your resume, expand your professional network, or explore a career in teaching

Social – Email 1


From GVSU K-12 Connect <k12connect@gvsu.edu>
Subject **Looking to meet other GVSU students? Sign up to be a GVSU K-12 Connect Tutor**
To Philip Batty <battyp@gvsu.edu>
Reply | Reply All | Forward | More
6/23/2022, 2:26 PM

CONNECT WITH OTHER GVSU STUDENTS.

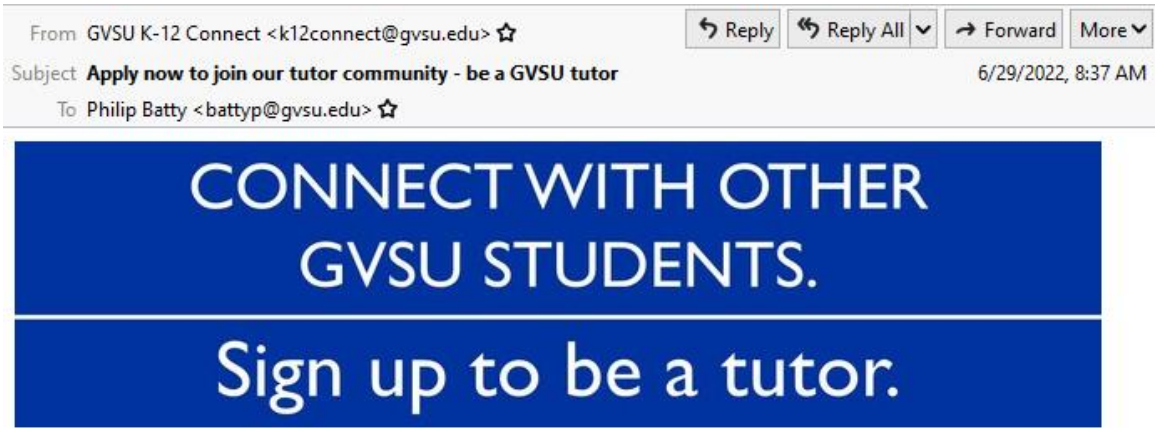
Sign up to be a tutor.

700+ GVSU undergrads work together to provide tutoring for students in Michigan. GVSU's K-12 Connect program provides virtual tutoring support to children in Michigan through both volunteer-based and specialized, contracted services. **We are actively hiring Grand Valley students for two separate K-12 virtual tutoring programs this upcoming 2022/2023 school year.**

Please complete the tutoring application linked below. We guarantee review of all applications received by July 15, 2022 for a September 12th start date.

Apply now to join the great community of Grand Valley undergraduates who tutor

Social – Email 2


From GVSU K-12 Connect <k12connect@gvsu.edu>
Subject **Apply now to join our tutor community - be a GVSU tutor**
To Philip Batty <battyp@gvsu.edu>
Reply | Reply All | Forward | More
6/29/2022, 8:37 AM

CONNECT WITH OTHER GVSU STUDENTS.

Sign up to be a tutor.

700+ GVSU undergrads work together to provide tutoring for students in Michigan. GVSU's K-12 Connect program provides virtual tutoring support to children in Michigan through both volunteer-based and specialized, contracted services. **We are actively hiring Grand Valley students for two separate K-12 virtual tutoring programs this upcoming 2022/2023 school year.**

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Apply now to join the great community of Grand Valley undergraduates who tutor