Math 1000 Quantitative Reasoning in Today’s World
Signature Assignment: The Price of Education

In this assignment, you will create an Excel spreadsheet that calculates the cost of your Bachelor’s degree from start to finish. This cost includes tuition and fees, textbooks, housing, transportation, food, healthcare, and bills.

Instructions

1. Gather the information you will need to complete this assignment. Essential expenses include tuition, fees, textbooks, housing (whether for on- or off-campus), transportation, groceries/food, and healthcare. You will need to do research on Cal State LA’s website (www.calstatela.edu) to find information about tuition, fees, and on-campus housing, as well as student healthcare provided by the Student Health Center (if you use it). For the purposes of this assignment, one academic year is counted as the fall and spring semesters, excluding summer.

2. Open a new Excel spreadsheet and create either columns or rows for the various expenses labeled above. Enter the dollar amounts of the expenses and use appropriate Excel formulas to calculate the overall expense of 4 years. When researching and inputting information, be sure that you don’t make the mistake of inputting the expenses for just one semester. If an expense doesn’t apply (for example, if you live with your parents and don’t pay rent), be sure to leave it out. Using Excel formulas, find the total expenses for one academic year. You can use Google to find out how to use Excel formulas to add things up in cells or multiply the value in a cell by a number. Both of these skills are required for this assignment.

3. Compare different expense plans. For example, suppose you complete a spreadsheet that assumes you live in an apartment off campus by yourself. Use the “Save As” function to create a second spreadsheet where you modify the Housing section so that you live on campus. How do the expenses compare?

4. Write a 1-2 page reflection (typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1-inch margins) about this assignment. How many different comparisons did you come up with? Why do you think it is important to have different scenario spreadsheets for comparison? How can you apply this activity to other areas of your life or future after you graduate?

5. Print your spreadsheets and reflection and turn them in. Be sure to staple them together and put your name and section on the first page.