Ronaz

The following is part of a memorandum from the president of Humana University.

“Last year the number of students who enrolled in online degree programs offered by nearby Omni University increased by 50 percent. During the same year, Omni showed a significant decrease from prior years in expenditures for dormitory and classroom space, most likely because instruction in the online programs takes place via the Internet. In contrast, over the past three years, enrollment at Humana University has failed to grow, and the cost of maintaining buildings has increased along with our budget deficit. To address these problems, Humana University will begin immediately to create and actively promote online degree programs like those at Omni. We predict that instituting these online degree programs will help Humana both increase its total enrollment and solve its budget problems.”

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The following argument is flawed for numerous reasons. Mainly, the argument is based on the unwarranted assumption that university of Humana and Omni are the same. Regarding to the main conclusion, Humana University will follow the Omni University’s success in order to increase its total enrollment and solve its budget problem by establishing online degree programs which is invalid.

The argument fails to provide any justification that the two universities are similar in terms of their reputation. Maybe the Omni University is famous among students compared to Humana University. This important difference can explain the success of the Omni University’s online program. More significantly, the argument states that the Humana University hopes to increase its total enrollment. If the Humana University is not a high-ranked university like Omni University, or it does not have any experienced professors which make it popular, then this assumption that its enrollment will increase is baseless. The argument would have been stronger if it had provided more information about the similarity in ranking of the both universities, and their popularity among students. Even that, the argument would have to further prove that the students like to enroll in Humana University’s online program.

Moreover, the argument claims without warrant that the reduction in the Omni University expenditure was the result of its online program. Maybe Omni University renovated its facilities, and painted all its classes and dormitory’s rooms two years before which is why the next year its expenditures for dormitory and classroom space were extremely low; in this way its expenses showed a significant decrease compared to the prior year. Therefore, if the Humana University can increase its enrollment, it cannot guaranty its expenditure’s reduction. The argument could have been stronger if it had given more detailed information about the Omni University’s expenses on those two consecutive years.

Finally, the third problem with this argument is that 50 percent increase does not necessarily indicate an improvement. Maybe the total number of the students who enrolled in the Omni University’s online program were few at first place; in this way, 50 percent of them will not a remarkable number. If we assume that both universities have similar situations, the argument is still lacking because with few number of enrollment the Humana University cannot solve its budget problem. The argument would have been more potent if it had provided more information about the exact number of the students who enrolled in Omni University’s online program in the first and second years.

Because the argument made several unwarranted assumptions, it failed to make convincing case that Humana University will reflect the same success in Omni University.