

# Mobile app connects college students, peer tutors on demand 24-7

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Ethan Keiser, 24, is founder of StudyTree, a mobile app that connects college students for on-demand peer tutoring. The student-to-student solution creates a marketplace enabling students to either make money as a tutor or save money as a student. The University Platform allows universities to manage their own tutors on a budget and provide students with flexible tutoring options. Keiser, a 2015 Drexel University graduate, founded StudyTree in January.

Q: How did you come up with the idea?

A: I was an athlete, and when you play a sport you have to dedicate time to classwork. I majored in computer science and needed help when it wasn't available, which was between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. So I came up with StudyTree.

Q: The startup money?

A: We've won several student-pitch competitions, which netted us \$9,000. We also got office space from Drexel.

Q: The biz model?

A: The app, available on iPhone and Android, is free, and we sell software-as-a-service to universities. They on-board the tutors to the app, then they get all the analytic data that show how they're doing. We license the software on a semester basis. Universities pay a sliding scale

based on the number of users we support.

Q: The value prop?

A: There's plenty of tutoring where you can pay money for help, plenty of peer-to-peer apps, but we haven't found one that connects [students](#) directly with university-provided tutors for on-demand tutoring and the university gets all the analytics. We enable universities to put fewer people in tutoring centers and put them on our app and thus the university only has to pay when [tutoring](#) actually occurs.

Q: Your customers?

A: Right now it's the LeBow School of Business at Drexel. We hope to expand through the Drexel platform. We have 1,000 users on the app now, and we've also launched at Penn and at Towson University in Maryland.

Q: Biggest challenge?

A: Initially, we had lots of students requesting tutors but didn't have enough tutors on the [app](#) in the specific fields of study that were needed to meet the demand. We went to Drexel and asked if they could provide tutors so students benefited.

Q: How big a biz?

A: In addition to myself, we have a technical team of three developers and I am currently focused on business development. They all have a small amount of equity and get a small stipend, as well. On the revenue side, we haven't charged the university yet because we're in the pilot phase.

Q: What's next?

A: A year from now we'd like to expand to three or four new universities, and we also think community colleges are a potential market.

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