**Econ 136: Working with Economic Data**

**Opportunity Cost Memo with Diagram**

**Due before you retire Wednesday night, February 19** (or by 3am Thursday).

In this assignment you are to **write a memo to a decision maker** who has a background in basic economics clarifying the opportunity cost of the decision they are about to make. My main purpose in assigning this is to give you practice in correctly creating a diagram representing the opportunity cost tradeoff, incorporating it into a document, and using the diagram to support and illustrate your explanation. Obviously, the memo is likely to be short, but you might give thought to whether there are any factors that might complicate the analysis the decision maker must consider in choosing.

Write your memo using the scenario linked to your name in the following table:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| First name | Last name | Scenario |
| Shamial | Ahmad | A |
| Finn | Arffmann | B |
| Jessica | Bernal | B |
| Simona | Clausnitzer | B |
| Johannah | CordonHill | C |
| Sara | Gladwin | C |
| Maria | Gomez Mercedes | B |
| Betsty | Helm | B |
| Liz | Kellam | A |
| Megan | Kilmer | C |
| Lisa | Merrick | B |
| Jenna | Myers | C |
| Ian | Oxenham | C |
| Anisa | Salat | A |
| Agatha | Sloboda | A |
| Alison | Spain | A |
| Sophia | Weinstein | C |
| Kelsey | Weymouth-Little | A |

A) Franklin Township recently has gained access to 100 acres of rolling, forested land dedicated as open space, i.e., permanently protected against commercial or residential development. The **Board of Supervisors** must decide how much of the land to use for soccer fields and how much for nature trails and bird sanctuary. Explain the opportunity cost of increasing the amount of land devoted to soccer fields.

B) Ms Millcuddy’s high school civics class (30 students) has volunteered to help PennEcoProtectors, an environmental activist organization. The PennEcoProtectors **volunteer coordinator** can use the students to stuff envelopes or distribute posters through out the surrounding neighborhoods. Explain the opportunity cost of increasing the number of volunteers allocated to envelope stuffing.

C) The Friends of the State-Line Serpentine Barrens (FSLSB) offer the **Director of the Nottingham County Park** a total of 40 hours of volunteer labor to remove greenbrier and other invasive plants from park land. The Director can use the labor to clear greenbrier from relatively isolated by environmentally fragile threatened serpentine savannahs or from exercise and picnic areas more heavily used by the public. Explain the opportunity cost of increasing the amount of work done in the latter public use areas.

**Assessment:** Please have following rubric in mind as you draft your memo.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Exemplary  5 | High Quality  4 | Adequate  3 | Needs Improvement  2 |
| Content | Persuasive or insightful argument | Accurately argued | Correctly  captures essence of analysis | Flawed explanation |
| Diagram | Flawless illustration of budget constraint | No more than one or two missing or flawed elements | Correctly  captures essence of analysis | Incorrect illustration of opportunity cost budget constraint |
| Integration of Diagram | Seamless integration of text and graph | Text supported by graph rather than describing it | Graph and text are mutually consistent | Poor placement or graph inconsistent with text |
| Attention to Presentation |  |  | Caught obvious flaws | No evidence of a final read through |

I want you to put most of your attention on creating a correct and complete diagram, next on the accuracy of the argument in the text and then integrating the diagram with the text including physical placement. While I am paid to read your work despite being tripped up by typos or unclear syntax, most of the readers of your work won’t be.