On September 21, 2017, UW Political Science Professor Anthony Gill wrote an article for FEE (Foundation for Economic Education) discussing the tragedy of the commons illustrated through donuts.

The tragedy of the commons is an economic theory where independent actors act contrary to the common good of all by depleting the resources through their collective action. In the situation Gill describes, the donuts and coffee running out is the commons being depleted. When one piece of donut is leftover people often refrain from grabbing the last piece for themselves. Gill says that this social norm of appearing generous prevents all the resources from being depleted. Gill then finishes with an explanation to prevent the tragedy of the commons is a system of defining property rights.