

LAC Connections

Volume VII

November 2011

Important Dates:

November 15
10am-12pm
Tutor Training

November 23-27
Thanksgiving

December 11
Last Day of
Tutoring

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Greetings from the Director

With all of the talk about the Completion Agenda, colleges across the nation have been challenged to look at their success rates and to implement strategies to move students forward to graduation, quickly. Open access community colleges are faced with a double challenge because many students who enter community college are deemed academically underprepared for college-level work (Attewell, Lavin, Domina, & Levey, 2006; Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). For a variety of reasons, the aforementioned statement rings true in the Learning Assistance Center because 30-40% of our tutoring requests are for developmental courses. Your work as tutors is crucial in helping developmental students to achieve some level of success in moving through their developmental coursework. And move they must, because according to Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, the majority of students who do enroll in developmental education stall halfway through and never reach the end of the sequence, much less move on to college-level courses and eventual completion of degrees.

So how are we doing at HCC in moving students through the developmental pipeline? Some of the statistics for the 2009-2010 academic year are as follows:

	Success Rate (% of students achieving an A, B, or C)	Benchmark
Developmental Math	56.9%	60%
Developmental English	71.7%	70%
Dev Ed Repeaters Math	47.9%	50%
Dev Ed Repeaters English	58.3%	60%

We are "getting there" and hope to make some future changes to the existing developmental structure so that students will be successful in (1) completing the sequence, without sacrificing important course content and (2) ultimately, reach their goals of achieving a college degree.

Happy Birthday

November

Carol Baldwin
Lucy Evelyn
Barbara Frazier
Kathy Loughlin

Grace Spry
Zahida Razvi
Pamela Wilson
Brandon Bannister

December

Katrina Grauze
Carol Greenhaus
Dr. Hassan Hodjati
Anu Rishi



Thanks to our Volunteer Tutors

We want to thank the following tutors for their kindness in the LAC and at HCC. They contribute about 4-6 hours a week of their precious time to tutor our students on a regular basis.

Mr. Bob Coley
Ms. Adeena Lopez
Dr. Marshal Levine

As a volunteer, you donate time, which is the most precious resource in our lives. Once you give an hour of your time it is lost forever and this hour can never be replaced. As a volunteer you bring much to the LAC—your skills, advice, experience, friendship, vision leadership, and inspiration, SO we thank

you for your amazing contribution to the LAC.

We are also very fortunate to have a few faculty members providing their office hours in the LAC this semester. These members are:

Ms. Debby Luquette
Dr. Kathleen Lilly
Dr. Francis Turner

“If nothing ever changed, there’d be no butterflies”

Author Unknown

LAC Welcomes New Members

Tatiana Budimirovic—Math
 Cynthia Caplin—Science
 Marry Dutterer—English
 Leslie Eurice—Math
 Lucy Evelyn—English
 Scott Farquhar—Music and Math
 Scott Ferguson—English
 Julie Forde—English
 Nahid Gooya—Anatomy and Physiology
 Emily Gospodarczyk—Math
 Katrina Grauze—Sign Language
 Dr. Saleem Herman—Nursing
 Elizabeth Johnson—Social Sciences
 Dinsha Joseph—Math and Sciences
 Mohammad Khan—Math

Chelsey Knox-Brown—English, Social Sciences
 Felipe Kohn—Math
 Luis Lee—Math, Sciences
 Moshafa Moghis—Social Sciences
 Bahman Nasser—CISCO
 Christopher Olsen—Geology
 Mark Oram—Sciences
 Elinor Oziel—Math
 Douglas Roth—Social Sciences, Spanish
 Melody Scott—Chemistry
 PauL Stephen—Math
 Anne Tschirgi—Sciences, Math
 Rosina Venek—Nursing
 Patricia Wheeler—Math and Sciences
 Patricia Winter—Nursing

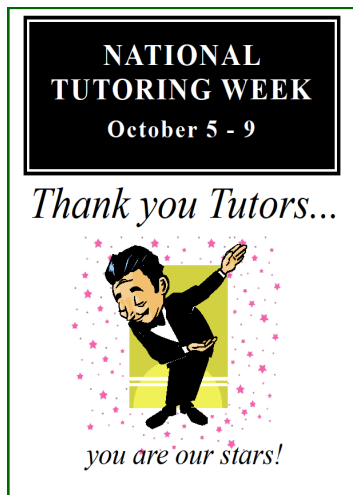


The number of students using the LAC services is increasing by leaps and bounds. This semester, the LAC is busier than ever before. Tutors

struggle to find an empty table since all the tables are occupied from the first session in the morning. Students find the LAC atmosphere welcoming and

comforting and our tutors are passionate about tutoring which is demonstrated by their propitious words and attitudes towards their students.

National Tutoring Week



Poster expressing our gratitude was displayed outside the LAC to announce the week.

National Tutoring week was celebrated enthusiastically by staff and students during the week of October 3– 7, 2011. The LAC planned several activities designed to express our gratitude for tutors’ hard work and dedication.



Lifesaver candy with a label stuck to it that read “Thank you for being a life saver”



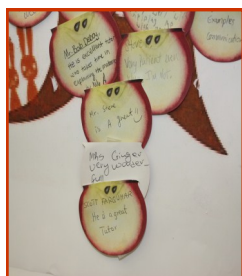
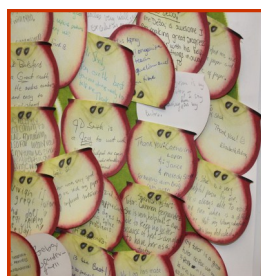
Tutors received a key light with “you light the way...From the LAC” inscribed letters expressing our gratitude for lighting up



A delicious lunch was prepared for tutors to acknowledge their tiresome jobs and dedication to their tuties. The lunch was prepared and paid for by Retention Services



A poem to thank tutors was displayed in the LAC



Tutees were asked to write down their appreciation for tutors. These “apples” were then attached to the appreciation “tree” in the LAC.



ConnectYard Online Tutoring



The LAC has successfully launched online tutoring through the ConnectYard platform. As advertised, we are offering online tutoring in Intermediate Algebra (MATH070); English Composition and Literature (ENGL121); General Microbiology (BIOL101) and

Microbiology (MICRO107). The online tutoring is offered throughout the year, so please encourage students to take advantage of this additional tool. Celia Shneier, Carol Baldwin, Catherine Laferriere and Brandon Bannister have been trained to use this

platform and respond to students in their respective areas. We may have more opportunities for other tutors if more students use this services. As of now 176 students have used this service.

On-Line Resources

Check out these online resources that will help students review their materials for tests/exams and/or will motivate them to think outside the box:

<http://www.quia.com/web>: various games to help students to review materials. Students can sign in for 30 days trial. There are already some games and you can also create your own.

<http://www.kidzone.ws/puzzles/cryptogram/>:-Create

your own cryptogram and use it during tutoring session to review a term, concept or definition.

http://www.edhelper.com/enter_word_list.htm: cross word puzzle for vocabulary.

<http://www.dltk-cards.com/bingo/bingo1.asp>: Bingo cards for group tutoring for review

<http://www.flashcardmachine.com/> - a good strategy to use for memorizing.

Writer's Critique Group...

Writers Wanted as participants in an informal monthly critique group. The purpose of the group will be to provide honest, constructive, and supportive feedback on drafts of original works. These works may include: poetry, lyrics, short stories, novels, plays, and/or scripts. If you are interested, please contact :

Contact:

Carol Baldwin

baldwin.ca@gmail.com

[\(301\) 335-9060](tel:(301)335-9060)

Quantitative Math Tests

Practice on sample problems.

Learn how to identify when to use a specific strategy to solve a problem.

When studying, try to solve the problem first then ask for help if needed.

*When you get the exam, write down key formulas on the test.

*Read the exam thoroughly It may be useful to underline key parts of the question.

*Use estimation to get an idea of the answer and compare your answer with the estimate.

*Show all work, particularly if you may receive partial credits.

*Don't erase your final answer as you may get partial credit.

Test Taking Tips

By Dr. Kathy Boyer-Shick

TEST PREPARATION SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS:

Preparation is the first area that occurs prior to even taking an exam. These include:

*Budget your time to make sure you have enough time to study and prepare for the test.

*Go to review sessions or tutoring. Pay attention to hints from the professor and even ask the professor to specify the information that will be on the test.

*Revisit materials from practice exams, homework assignments, the textbook, study guides, class notes, etc.

*Get enough sleep. Being well rested facilitates being focused and retaining information to perform well in school and especially on tests. Having food in your stomach will help you focus on the exam.

*Put the main ideas/information/formulas on a sheet of paper that can be reviewed over and over and facilitates remembering the needed information.

*Try to arrive at least 5 minutes before the test and make sure you have additional pens, pencils, etc. For math tests, don't forget your calculator!

*Keep a positive attitude before taking the exam.

Tips for Taking Essay Exams

Budget your time. For example, if you have 3 essay questions, devote no more than 2 minutes for each essay and if you have additional time, go back and review your responses and edit or correct your essays.

*Write an outline before answering an essay question. This will make your answer more organized and easier to follow. If you run out of time, the professor might give partial credit for the information in your outline.



*If you are unsure about an exact date or number use approximations.

For example, “In approximately...”

*Use one main idea per paragraph.

*An important tip when answering an essay question is to stay on

track and be sure to explain your points adequately.

*Write what you plan to say in the introduction, then put the salient points in the body of the paper, and restate the information in the conclusion

*Don't forget to ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do I have to reread the question?
2. Did I answer the question?
3. Did I include the important points?
4. Are there any words that I missed?

Test Taking Tips for True/False Questions

In general, there are more true answers than false ones on most exams.

*If you don't get penalized for guessing, you have a 50% chance of getting the correct answer.

*If the question is false, then the entire question is false.

*If the question include qualifiers such as “sometimes, usually” the answer tends to be true.

*When answering true/false exams, your first feeling is usually correct.

*Don't change an answer unless you are very sure of the change.

To help or not to help with certificates and other online homework?

In my day... We did scores of similar Math problems whether we needed to or not. This meant that we could repeat the same mistake until it was permanently installed in our heads, and we weren't aware of it. Hawkes 'Certificates' and other online homework packages provide instant feedback to let the student know if she is on the right track. If she correctly answers the first batch of problems, the computer knows she needs no more practice of this type, and gives her credit for the assignment. If she makes a mistake, the computer points out the error and encourages the student. An unending supply of unique problems will be handed out until the student improves the rate at which correct answers are given, and credit is awarded. In this way, the correct amount of practice is provided to the student so that she will pass the exam.

How does a tutor fit into this scheme? I believe it is never bad form to ask the student to show how he solved a problem. It quickly becomes clear how 'clueless' the student is. For the totally clueless, teaching the skill using assigned problems deprives the student of a lot of practice, leading to poor exam performance. Encourage the student to switch to 'practice' mode or 'try a similar problem' then go ahead and teach the skill. Be sure to use the same method you see in his notes, text or online example. When the formerly clueless student feels confident, he can proceed to his assignment without you. For students who have mastered the skill except for a small detail, a hint, question or clarification won't do much harm.

For paper homework, If you see a statement about not getting help or the words 'project', 'take home quiz', 'points,' etc., please do not even look at it. Doing so is a violation of the college's Academic honesty policy, and has dire consequences for the student.

When in doubt, contact the instructor or Catherine LaFerriere for info. (CLaferriere@howardcc.edu, 443-518-4548, or tutor mailbox)

Tutor of the Year

Vivian Stevens



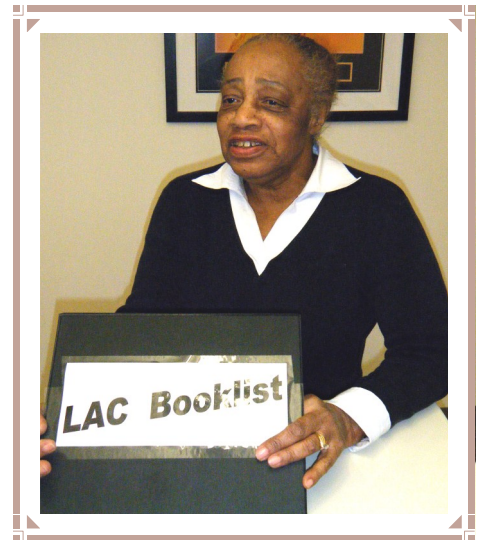
Ms. Vivian Stevens was awarded as the “Tutor of the Year” during the Student Support Services award ceremony which was held on May 3, 2011. She was presented with a plaque and the following description was read for her:

An energetic, vibrant, very active Vivian Stevens, who turned 80 this summer, is a trooper in a real sense. Vivian is an amazing tutor with astonishing qualities. It is rare to find such a tutor who doesn't consider tutoring as her job, but treats it as her ultimate goal to help students. When she works with students, she fosters zeal to succeed in life. Her amiable, and determined personality makes students work hard. Vivian is a perfectionist

who is highly dedicated and passionate. She doesn't believe in spoon feeding her tutees, but she enthusiastically motivates them to be independent learners. These qualities make her stand out in a crowd. Vivian has been connected with the LAC for more than 15 years. She is a cheerful, extremely caring, and knowledgeable tutor, who tutors many subjects including English, Speech, Theater, and Film.

Vivian goes beyond the call of her duties to assist the LAC in bringing about favorable changes. Vivian takes the challenging task of making her students reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and encourages them to improve on their weaknesses. Vivian's efficiency, passion, and endurance to help her “children” makes her a lovable and sweet angel.

Vivian is a great role model not only for her tutees, but also for her colleagues. Besides tutoring, she fulfills her civic responsibilities and helps



maintain the community where she lives. The sky is the limit for her; she keeps herself busy with taking care of her family, community, and students. She also keeps herself physically and mentally fit by keeping abreast of new advances in all walks of life, exercising, swimming, playing the Oboe and Piano. Vivian, we appreciate and adore you immensely.



Peer Tutor of the Year



Phillip Mills was awarded a “Peer Tutor of the Year” award on May 6, 2011 in Sheraton Hotel, Columbia, MD. Phillip was hired last year in the Learning Assistance Center as a tutor for Math and Accounting classes. Both the staff at the Learning Assistance Center and his tutees have been very pleased with his performance and those of us that work with Phillip know that he has many positive attributes and as such, truly deserves this recognition.

Phillip is an excellent tutor, mentor, coach and guide to his tutees. During his tutoring sessions, you will find Phillip totally engrossed and demonstrating his passion for teaching and learning. Phillip is a very calm person and is patient with every one of his tutees. He

not only motivates his tutees to succeed, but also helps them to believe in themselves. In a very short time span, he gained trust from many of his students due to his welcoming approach which really appears to make students less anxious about math. He has also become skilled at modifying his tutoring sessions to manage diverse learning styles. His professionalism and dedication to his own and others’ education are commendable.

Phillip is pursuing his studies in Business and Administration at Howard Community College and his current GPA is 3.6. Phillip has been awarded a Fulbright scholarship at the University of Baltimore for Business Administration with Accounting as the main focus for the fall of 2011. In addition to working as a tutor, he is also working as an Accountant Intern at Berman Goldman & Ribakow in Ellicott City, MD; he is an active member of Laurel Boys and Girls Bowling League and a volunteer at the Maryland Food Bank..In closing, we consider Phillip a true DEAR as in:

D- Dependable
E- Enthusiastic
A- Ambitious
R- Reliable.



Phillip is a positive role model for not only his students but for his fellow tutors as well and we are proud to have him with us. Please join me in congratulating Mr. Phillip Mills as Peer Tutor of the Year.