

Judy E. Ackerman Learning Center

Introduction

The Space. The Judy E. Ackerman Learning Center is located on the Rockville Campus in Science West (SW) 109, occupying the entire first floor. Within the Center, students will find the following instructional spaces:



- a circulation desk and sign-in stations where students can log in and out when entering;
- two small classrooms, one with a traditional furniture arrangement and a smart instructor work station (SIWS), and the other with flexible furniture;
- two computer labs, one with 32 seats that gives priority to students in engineering and computer science classes, and a general PC lab with 72 seats, both with a SIWS;
- six small group study rooms with capacity of 4 – 10;
- a quiet study room with seating for 29 students;
- open study area including 16 additional PCs;
- an anatomy and physiology model room;
- six tutor stations staffed by faculty, instructional staff, and student peer tutors; and
- the STEM Information Center.

Almost 4,100 reservations for small group study rooms were made in 2019.

Hours. The standard hours of operation during the fall, spring, and summer semesters are:

Semester	Days of the Week	Times
Fall & Spring	Monday-Thursday	8:00 am-8:00 pm
	Friday	8:00 am-4:00 pm
	Saturday	10:00 am-3:00 pm
Summer	Monday-Thursday	8:00 am-8:00 pm
	Friday	8:00 am-4:00 pm
	Saturday	Closed

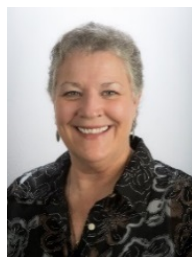
Resources. The Ackerman Learning Center provides the following resources:

- tutoring (all STEM disciplines; provided by faculty, staff, and student peer tutors);

- faculty-facilitated review sessions, both in the Center and in classrooms (for various math, chemistry, and biology courses);
- brain training sessions, focusing on teaching students how to study, take tests, reduce procrastination, etc.;
- extended tutoring sessions for chemistry and biology students every Friday;
- anatomy and physiology models;
- microscopes and slides;
- texts, solutions manuals, and other print materials;
- calculators, both graphing (TI-84) and non-graphing (TI-30XS); and
- 120 student computers.

The Ackerman Center Team

Staff.



Carol Burbage, Director. Carol has been with Montgomery College for over 33 years. She earned her bachelor's degree in General Studies with a concentration in Adult Basic Education from the University of Maryland College Park. In addition to her management duties, she is the Center's tutor trainer and is responsible for training all of the Center's student peer tutors every semester.

Emma Liu, Master Tutor. Emma started with the Ackerman Learning Center in January 2017 after serving as a member of the adjunct faculty for the Chemistry Department. She earned her PhD in Organic Chemistry from North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC. She completed her bachelor's degree in Chemistry at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China. She tutors chemistry, biology, some physics, and several courses in math. She regularly assists with tutor training.



Raizel Davis, Instructional Associate. Raizel started at the Center in January 2014 as a full-time Instructional Associate. She earned her bachelor's degree in Mathematics from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She is an experienced tutor who supports math, physics, engineering, and some biology courses. She is also the resident expert in MATLAB and frequently provides workshops for students who use MATLAB in both math and engineering.



Chris Guenther, Instructional Associate. Chris has been part of the Ackerman Learning Center since summer 2008, first as an adjunct faculty member for the math department, then as a full-time Instructional Associate beginning in December 2013. He earned his master’s degree in Applied Math and Scientific Computation from the University of Maryland College Park and his bachelor’s degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA. Chris tutors the full range of math courses and some chemistry and engineering courses.

Jeongrim Lee, Instructional Associate. Jeongrim also started as an adjunct faculty member in the chemistry department and faculty tutor in the Center, then became a full-time Instructional Associate in December 2013. She earned her PhD in Analytical Chemistry from Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI, and her bachelor’s degree in Chemistry from Ewha Womans University in Seoul, Korea. She tutors chemistry, math, and some biology courses.



Fred Katiraie, Faculty Coordinator. Fred Katiraie serves as the faculty coordinator and is a member of the full-time faculty in the mathematics department. Fred earned his PhD in Mathematics Education and his master’s degree in Mathematics from American University in Washington, DC. He attended the University of Maryland College Park and earned his bachelor’s degree in Electrical Engineering. He is also an alumnus of Montgomery College.

Tutors. Table 3.1 includes a list of faculty and student peer tutors (by discipline) who worked in the Center during the 2019 calendar year.

Table 3.1: Ackerman Learning Center Tutors by Discipline, 2019			
	Full-time Faculty	Part-time Faculty	Student Peer Tutors
Biology	Dr. Leah Allen	Dr. Mohammad Ahmed	Muna Birassa
	Dr. James Cosgrove	Prof. Steve Htet	
	Dr. Sara Kalifa	Prof. Ginny Crichton	
	Dr. Evdokia Kastanos	Dr. Dana Felice	
	Prof. Victoria Schneider	Prof. Kate Monzo	
	Dr. Aubrey Smith	Prof. Qazi Rahman	
	Dr. Gina Wesley	Dr. Robert Romano	
		Dr. Scott Waterman	

	Full-time Faculty	Part-time Faculty	Student Peer Tutors
Chemistry	Dr. Virginia Miller	Dr. Andrew Gomes	Shabnam Alavinaeeni
	Dr. Rachel Ndonge	Prof. Elena Wood	Mozhan Haghghatian
	Dr. Soumya Rastogi	Dr. Oscar Zimmerman	Jason Pittman
	Dr. Sripriya Seetharaman		Teresa Tseng
	Dr. Patricia Takahara		
Computer Science	Dr. David Kuijt	Prof. Rabiha Kayed	Tensay Alemu
			Troang Hoang
			Michael Lacanilao
			Lincoln Maene
			Yao Poudima
Mathematics	Prof. Colleen Ackermann	Prof. Mary Baxter	Daniel Abebe
	Dr. Alex Bathula	Prof. Amy Burgener	Amir Arefpour
	Dr. Maria Brunett	Prof. Sera Chon	Sethatevy Bong
	Dr. Okkyung Cho	Prof. Sushma Gunjal	Yiling Du
	Dr. Paul Duty	Dr. Jason Novick	Nima Nik Farjam
	Dr. Celia Evans	Dr. Daeshik Park	Yekta Kamali
	Dr. Franklin Gavilanez	Prof. Anil Pyakuryal	Jonathan Lieder
	Dr. Fred Katiraie	Prof. Sandra Rosenberg	Ninong Liu
	Dr. Richard Penn	Prof. Helen Salzberg	Lirane Mandjouda
	Dr. Monique Peters	Prof. Chris Smoot	Pasha Marvastian
	Prof. Claudinna Rowley	Dr. Whiting Wicker	Amy Musser
	Prof. Van Brown-Scott	Prof. Lisa Vaughnn	Sara Uttara
	Dr. Tom Sonnabend		Zachary Swint
	Dr. Yan Zhao		
Physics & Engineering	Dr. Arya Akmal	Dr. Joseph Connor	
	Dr. Palmyra Catravas	Dr. Raymond Fermo	
	Dr. Craig Mogren		

Student Aides. There were nine student aides who were an invaluable asset because they provide the first encounter most students have with the Center. Those students

were Deniz Akdere, Maria Diaz, Samuela Fotso, Setareh Farzinfard, Yekta Kamali, Siri Kamma, Stephanie Umutoni, John Woodward, and Yang Yu.

Advisory Board. The Advisory Board assists with ensuring the ALC is offering services and resources that are current and support the work the faculty do in the classroom. The Board is made up of representatives from each of the academic departments served, the instructional dean, the faculty coordinator, the Center director, and a student.

In the spring and fall, members were:

Dr. Ishrat Rahman, Biology	Ms. Muna Birassa, Biology Peer Tutor
Dr. Virginia Miller, Chemistry	Ms. Carol Burbage, Director, ALC
Dr. Ben Nicholson, Math	Dr. Fred Katiraie, Faculty Coordinator
Dr. Chiennan (Alex) Hou, Physics and Engineering	Dr. Muhammad Kehnemouyi, SET Unit Instructional Dean

Center Highlights

The numbers. The Ackerman Learning Center is a vital partner with the STEM disciplines (Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics, Engineering, and Computer Science). Students from all three campuses are welcome to use the services in the Center, although the majority of students served are taking their STEM classes on the Rockville campus. In 2019 the Center served 3,314 students with over 52,000 logins. It should be noted that the login information is underreported because students sign-in voluntarily (although with strong encouragement from staff and student aides). For tutoring, the Center provided 9,228 tutoring sessions and delivered 2,339 hours of tutoring. In addition, students in Computer Science (1,879 students), Chemistry (409 students on Chemistry Fridays) and Biology (91 students on Biology Fridays) received facilitated group tutoring on a daily or weekly basis.

The data is summarized in Table 3.2 and Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.2: Student Logins and Unique Users				
	Spring 2019	Summer 2019	Fall 2019	TOTAL
Student Logins	23,119	3,833	25,115	52,067
Unique Users	2,696	793	2,868	3,314*

*Total unique students served during the 2019 calendar year.

Table 3.3: Tutoring Logins and Total Tutoring Time								
	Spring 2019		Summer 2019		Fall 2019		TOTAL	
	Visits	Hours	Visits	Hours	Visits	Hours	Visits	Hours
Desk Tutoring	4,163	1,040.25	1,260	348.03	3,805	950.48	9,228	2,339
Chemistry Fridays*	241	--			168	--	409	--
Biology Fridays*	54	--			37	--	91	--
CMSC Tutoring*	798	--	151	--	930	--	1,879	--

*Sign-in information only. Tutoring is conducted using a facilitated group study model.

The Center also offered review sessions for specific courses on a regular basis. These included: BIOL 150 lecture and lab (weekly), BIOL 150 lab exam review (3 sessions, twice per semester), BIOL 212 lecture (weekly), BIOL 212/213 open lab (weekly), CHEM 099 lecture (weekly), MATH 150 (weekly), MATH 181 (weekly), MATH 182 (weekly), and Brain Training (multiple series). There were over 2,200 sign-ins for these workshops!

Super Sunday, May 5 and December 15. Super Sunday is an event coordinated by the Ackerman Learning Center on the Sunday before final exams during the fall and spring semesters. The Center is open from 12:00 – 5:00 for students to study individually or in groups, use print materials, or work on a computer. Two-hour review sessions are offered for a variety of STEM courses. The sessions are facilitated primarily by faculty, although two are facilitated by Ackerman Learning Center staff.

Spring – 8 sessions, 142 students

Fall – 10 sessions, 279 students

Collaborations. The Ackerman Learning Center collaborated with five groups this year:

- The ALC assisted coaches in the Achieving the Promise Academy initiative by providing space for them to meet students and conduct activities. We also provided meeting space for the Achieving the Promise Academy when they offered a career workshop in late fall.
- The ALC worked with the Learning Assistant program to provide LAs the space to meet with students and hold office hours. The ALC also co-facilitated training for LAs at the beginning of the Spring semester.
- The ALC continued to collaborate with Disability Support Services to provide temporary space for the DSS learning center since the CAB building was flooded and all units had to relocate. We anticipate the DSS learning center will share our space until the new Student Services building is completed in Spring 2020.

- New in Fall 2019, the ALC is hosting tutoring for students in Accounting. Two Accounting faculty come three days per week and are based either in the general computer lab or in one of the study rooms.
- In August, we provided space to the Single Parent Conference to offer workshops for that event.
- The ALC assisted the Department of Mathematics by supporting its Puzzle of the Week competition. Students were encouraged to complete a series of mathematical puzzles each week for nine weeks. The ALC posted the puzzles and the solutions, and collected completed puzzle packs every week.

Areas of Opportunity

Goals. The ALC had three primary goals for 2019:

- Expand delivery of tutoring services to include offering different modes and focusing on under-served courses, particularly MATH 117 and 120. Update: We had two student peer tutors that supported MATH 117, and all peer tutors have reviewed MATH 120 and have supported that course more effectively.
- Improve marketing of services, resources, and events to all students. This should include the use of social media and print media. Update: We have involved the College's Social Media Director, Stephanie Krasnoff, to help with marketing. She was successful in including different events on the College's Facebook page and Instagram posts. The Center also maintained its own Facebook page.
- Develop and improve the use of the STEM Information Center (SIC). This facility should be a "one stop shop" of information and support for STEM students, and the goal is to make it that. Update: The space is still underutilized, but this has been discussed with the deans and learning center managers. We are investigating using that room as a 'flex' space when needed. For example, we hosted the Office of Public Safety's Student ID-making office for the first few weeks of both the fall and spring semesters.

Goals. The ALC has the following goals for 2020:

- All of our goals from 2019 are ongoing as more work needs to be done in these areas.
- Establish more meaningful communication with individual departments by providing feedback on critical topics based on questions asked during tutoring sessions.
- Administer student satisfaction surveys for tutoring and general services provided by the Center.
- Review and develop the criteria needed to apply for the National College Learning Center Association's Center for Excellence certification.