The Henry & Edith Cerullo Learning Assistance Center
Rated #1 Tutoring Center in the Country

On October 2nd, The Cerullo Learning Assistance Center was awarded the Frank L. Christ Outstanding Tutoring Center award at the National College Learning Center Association’s annual conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

On hand to accept the award were Managing Director Khairia Fazal, CLAC Manager Margaret Maria Roidi, Writing Center Supervisor John Findura and STEM Grant Coordinator Luis De Abreu.

The CLAC team submitted an application offering an in-depth description and analysis of the tutoring services that stretched out over an 80-page document.

The purpose of the NCLCA Frank L. Christ Outstanding Learning Center Award is to give national recognition to the work done by learning centers and to foster their future growth and development.

Each year, NCLCA may recognize two learning assistance centers for excellence: one two-year college and one four-year college or university. Previous winners include Dutchess Community College, Purdue University, Ball State University, Clemson University and the University of Texas.

Frank L. Christ was the founder of the Winter Institutes for Learning Assistance Professionals and was actively involved with learning assistance for over 40 years. He was the founder and past coordinator (1972-1990) of the award-winning Learning Assistance Support System at CSU Long Beach. Frank was also a founder and past president of the Western College Reading Association, now known as the College Reading and Learning Association. Frank was a prolific author of books, monographs, and scholarly articles.
Along with the Office of Testing Services, the CLAC makes up the Learning Assistance Services branch of Academic Affairs.

The CLAC contains five centers: The Tutoring Center, The Math & Science Walk-In Center, The Writing Center, The English Language Resource Center (ELRC), and the Testing and Tutoring Center at the Meadowlands.

The CLAC employs over 150 part-time tutors. The Mission Statement is congruent with our division and institutional mission:

The Cerullo Learning Assistance Center (CLAC) is committed to providing quality academic support accessible to all Bergen Community College (BCC) students. The CLAC comprises the Tutoring Center, Math Walk-In Center, Writing Center, English Language Resource Center, and the Tutoring Center at the Meadowlands Campus; all centers offer various avenues of tutorial assistance to address the diverse needs of our student population. A dedicated and trained staff of Peer and Professional Tutors work together in a nurturing environment to foster independent learning while guiding students through their educational journey at BCC.

Our professional and clerical staff aim to support the CLAC’s mission. In addition to the tutorials offered, the CLAC accommodates the needs of the Intercultural Conversation Partners program; this initiative effectively utilizes student volunteers, who in turn receive service learning credits from the college.

Each year, we develop and follow a plan based upon feedback from students, faculty, and staff as well as internal program assessments.

The CLAC utilizes a Two-Year Assessment Plan that we share with the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

We use systematic annual assessments and program reviews using members of our staff, other college faculty and administration, and outside parties to cogently guide our department.

Our equipment and furnishings are excellent as we have individual computer stations, “quiet” cubbies, computers with specialized software for ESL students and hard of hearing students as well as art and computer animation specific stations. We are equipped with two smart rooms, numerous smart boards, a drafting table, and access to any technical equipment that a student may need.

The CLAC assists over 7,000 students each academic year through our numerous programs with over 40,000 individual student visits. Cohorts currently assisted include: Traditional, Non-traditional, Returning Veterans, OSS, EOF, TV, STEM, TPSID, ESL, CCDE, Apprentices, and Dual-enrolled.

The CLAC serves all currently registered BCC students, as well as college Faculty, Staff, the Administration, Foundation, and alumni.

Each semester, the CLAC gives an orientation presentation to all full-time and adjunct faculty members, highlighting our services and describing programs that we offer. Our supervisory team gives dozens of presentations, at faculty request, to sections of Developmental and College Level Math, English Basic Skills, Composition and Literature, Psychology, and hard sciences such as Chemistry and Physics. We also offer a presentation to each and every section of Success 101, a “first year experience” course the college offers. Upon request, we give in-class presentations on numerous topics ranging from MLA and APA formatting of papers, to conducting research and writing research papers.

Our full range of services includes:
One-On-One Tutoring, Mathematics & Science Walk-In, Writing Walk-In, Reading Comprehension Appointments, Supplemental Instruction, In-Class Tutoring, In-Lab Tutoring, Computer Software Tutorials, Online Tutoring (SMARTTHINKING), Study Groups, Workshops, ESL Conversation Groups, ESL Borrowing Library, Intercultural Conversation
Partners, Faculty Project Assistance (including thesis and dissertation assistance), Program-Specific Assistance (EOF Summer Program, Boot Camp, Basic Skills Review, Accuplacer Assistance), and Nursing/Pharmacology assistance.

The CLAC offers tutoring in 240 classes offered during the spring 2014 semester.

The CLAC offers 50 minute one-on-one sessions, walk-in assistance for all levels of mathematics, science, reading comprehension, writing across the curriculum, English literature, and the humanities. Tutors are always available for learning and study strategies assistance. We keep meticulous track of who our students are, who has referred them, what they require assistance with, and how we may best assist them.

Permanent Appointments are readily available for students registered with either the Office of Specialized Services or with the EOF office. This allows those students to concentrate on their studies without worrying about the need to make appointments on as “as needed” basis. Permanent Appointments may be initially scheduled either in-person or through our website.

The CLAC offers campus-wide workshops in numerous areas. Each semester we offer multiple workshops concentrating on the English Basic Skills Mastery Test; plus, we have recently offered workshops, led by either faculty and/or CLAC supervisory faculty, on Reading Strategies, Writing Strategies. From Text to Comprehension, Developmental Mathematics, College Level Mathematics, and Preparing Your Transfer Essay. We also offer Supplemental Instruction sessions (led by S.I. Leaders) and Study Groups in Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Pre-Calculus, Calculus I, and Calculus II.

The CLAC has also successfully created a Supplemental Instruction program for High Risk courses. Introduced in the early 1970s at The University of Missouri-Kansas City, Supplemental Instruction (SI) targets historically difficult courses and emphasizes collaborative learning based on the Socratic Method. SI sessions are facilitated by SI Leaders – trained tutors, who utilize purposefully selected techniques to improve learners’ skills and engage them in their learning process; the three main principles associated with this model of academic support lie in the SI Leaders’ cognitive abilities to effectively redirect questions, exercise wait time, and check for understanding.

The Leaders are expected to actively listen to students’ content-based concerns, identify critical areas for analysis as well as strategically engage learners during their peer-facilitated sessions. The effective development of these intellectual skills requires the implementation of thorough training procedures; it is crucial that SI participants are exposed to an optimal learning environment. The University of Missouri-Kansas City has recommended an extensive range of individual as well as group activities, which include the construction of concept mapping; SI Leaders are asked to showcase the connections among learning strategies and core course concepts by visually connecting relevant items as well as selecting strategies through which the material can be communicated to learners with ease.

Tutors offer a unique support system to learners as the peer-to-peer interaction promotes a sense of comradeship between the two parties. SI supports the utilization of carefully embedded strategies that can accomplish elements that were developed during the 1970s. SI Leaders attend every class of the participating course section and serve as model students, listening to the lecture and writing down the questions the students might have had in class to plan their sessions accordingly; thus, the connection between Leaders and learners is seamless. This model’s success relies on the trust the faculty members have entrusted on the program and the Leaders’ commitment to the Socratic Method.

In-Class Tutoring is a popular option for classes that do not need the intensive Supplemental Instruction
MISSION STATEMENT

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FALL HOURS OF OPERATION:

- Monday: 9:00 am — 8:00 pm
- Tuesday: 9:00 am — 8:00 pm
- Wednesday: 9:00 am — 8:00 pm
- Thursday: 9:00 am — 8:00 pm
- Friday: 10:00 am — 5:00 pm
- Saturday: 10:00 am — 4:00 pm

The Learning Assistance Center operates under the leadership of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. William Mullaney

Tutor Serves as Panelist at NYC ComicCon

On Saturday, October 11th, peer tutor Fatima Zenine Villanueva participated as an invited panelist at the NYC ComicCon. Fatima sat on a panel titled “The Mary Sue Presents – Strong Female Characters: The Women Shining in Geek Media,” put together by the website TheMarySue.com.

The description of their panel stated: “We often ask to see ‘strong female characters’ in our geek media and are critical when Creators fall short but this Panel will focus on the positive representations of women, both as they exist now and as they’ve evolved over time and those creating them. We’ll also be discussing the impact positive representations had on the lives of the Panelists and their hopes for the future.”

During the panel, they were asked about their experience with game development and the video game characters that have inspired them. They also talked about what to do when consuming media, and the importance of being a conscious consumer when it comes to video games, stating that it is good to think about what kind of games you are playing and it is okay to criticize and analyze these games.

Fatima spoke on behalf of Code Liberation Foundation, an organization that provides free programming workshop for anyone who identifies as a woman. The purpose of CLF is to even out the skewed gender demographics in the game industry. Only about 4% of game programmers are women, and they are trying to change that.

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In-Class Tutorial support is most successful with courses/sections in which students are given hands-on activities during class time.

Online tutoring, via SMARTTHINKING, is available for all currently enrolled BCC students and covers a wide number of subjects.

Distance education provides each individual with the opportunity to present aspects of his or her character and intellectual abilities through the careful selection of the written word.