

BREAKING BARRIERS WITH PHYSICS: Embedded Coaching Helps Light the Way for Engineering Students

"It's a challenging course. Students have to think differently than they have before."

The Achieving the Promise Academy's first newsletter is proud to feature embedded coaching specialist Dr. Raymond Fermo. With a background in physics and research, Dr. Fermo has over 5 years of experience teaching, but his passion these days is serving as a full-time embedded coach, specializing in Physics and Engineering. Raymond primarily coaches in General Physics 1 and 2, helping students master the foundational, calculus-based physics courses required for engineering degrees. Due to the challenging nature of these courses, they're a prime target for MC's embedded coaches to proactively offer academic support.

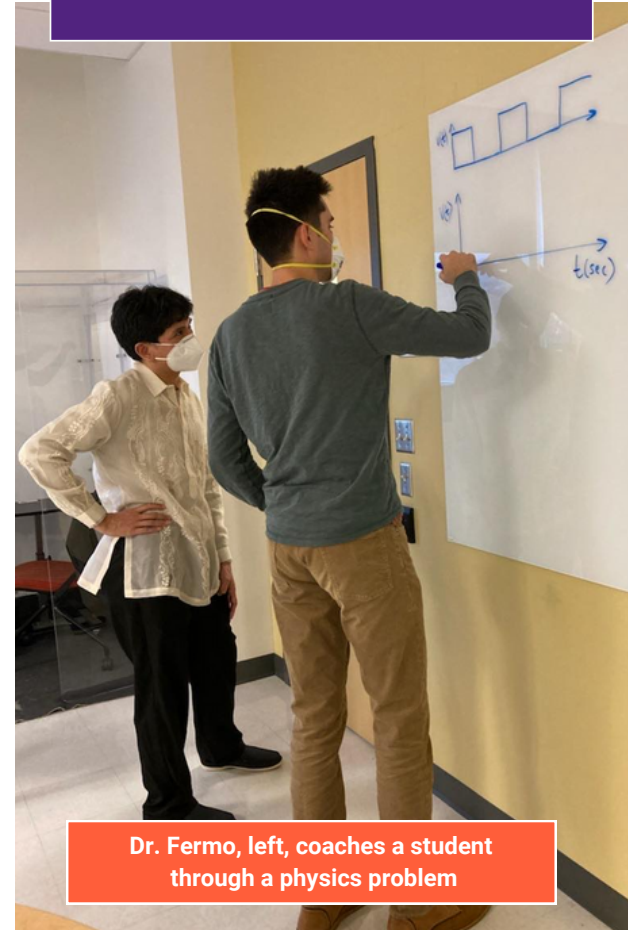
Academic coaches like Dr. Fermo aren't just available as extra help in these difficult courses; they truly "embed" within the courses in a variety of ways. Each semester, "host faculty" invite Dr. Fermo to classes where he introduces himself and explains the benefits of academic coaching. They partner to schedule strategic class visits and study sessions and support students at the earliest signs of academic distress. Each week, he sends students important reminders and encourages them to attend weekly study sessions or make coaching appointments; he's even on the Blackboard roster, keeping up with the course assignments and deadlines.

Dr. Fermo notes how this collaboration with host faculty and the departments themselves creates better outcomes for students, whether he's presenting at department meetings or working with host faculty to ensure students see him as part of the classroom: "My sessions are directly adjacent to the section. As class ends, the students see me enter, and they may be more likely to stick around, especially if their friends are staying."

Engineering major Erwin Tim shares just how vital this partnership to support MC student learning is: **"After attending some study sessions, my approach to the subject as a whole changed.** To put it into perspective, my first exam grade was 12.5/30. After attending numerous study sessions, my second exam grade was 22.5/30. It was a significant improvement for me and I have only gotten better and more comfortable with the subject. **I will go as far as to say it is a must have. A lot of my classmates go there too just to clarify doubts and it makes us all more comfortable with Physics as a whole."**

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE:

- Physics with Coach Raymond Fermo
- Recent Highlights: Raptor Day & More
- Semesterly Stories: Welcome, Baby Selena!
- Behind the Scenes with a Student Assistant
- Student Feature: Dolliya Sosmath



Dr. Fermo, left, coaches a student through a physics problem

Recent Highlights



CELEBRATING THE INAUGURATION OF DR. WILLIAMS

"I ask that we hold each other accountable. And I challenge you—from whatever role you are in—to be the change you want to see. I will bring my exhilaration for this role. And I will meet you there with a personal passion for social justice and an ambitious vision of achievement -- as, together, we build, **Our College, Our Community, Our Future.**"

PARTNERING TO COACH MC'S PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS

ATPA is proud to support **59 Presidential Scholars** with personal academic coaching this year



A TOUCHING MOMENT ON RAPTOR DAY

"This is the **first time I have ever met my ATPA Coach Chernet in person.** We always had virtual meetings or phone call meetings. We have known each other since Fall 21. I was super happy till the point where I did not introduce myself before hugging him. I said: "I will hug you first and then I will tell you my name". He is a wonderful person. He shaped me into a nice person for me both in my studies and my personal life. I love Coach Chernet."

Jean Claude Lokonon & Coach Chernet Weldeab

STRONG LIKE A MOTHER:

Welcoming Baby Selena!

ATPA student Jessica Guzman-Vives recently welcomed her second child, Baby Selena. Jessica has been working with her personal academic coach, Brenda Marcial, for two semesters, with the goal to earn a Medical Billing certification and work at a hospital.

Jessica's family has been navigating a lot these days: her husband is currently away at boot camp for the US Navy in Florida. While she and their children wait for him to complete his training and receive his permanent assignment, they're living with their in-laws. Along with classes and caring for her children, Jessica also works full time doing medical billing. Like many working parents, she is taking advantage of MC's online classes to complete her studies.

Please join us in celebrating our student parents and their dedication to pursuing their dreams. Congratulations, Jessica!

“

My coach has made a major impact in my life because she has helped me realize it's never too late to follow my dreams. My coach helped me realize [...] to always remember to never take time for granted and sacrifices sometimes have to be made but it will be worth it in the future. I am proud of myself to be able to be a hard working mom and be able to pass my classes."

”



welcome
little one!

BABY SELENA GUZMAN

Born: 11/8/22

Weight: 6lbs



SEMESTERLY
stories



Behind the Scenes

MALU VIERIA, WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING A STUDENT ASSISTANT?

"Being a Student Assistant for ATPA includes planning and hosting the weekly 30-Minute-Mingle after each week's LCH, with the intention of engaging students, planning other types of engagement like social media, email blasts, the coaching commons planning and organization, ATPA email inbox management, and overall assist staff members with other student questions.

Nik Sushka was the one that brought me in, both literally and figuratively. Previous to ATPA, Nik hired me as a Service-Learning Assistant for the Office of Student Life, where she coordinated my position for a year before moving to ATPA. After a couple of months, she reached out to me saying there was a position, and I was thrilled for the possibility to work with her again.

For the Coaching Commons, I participated in numerous team meetings to plan how they would be set up, some of these tasks included creating a shopping list of office and decoration supplies, putting up wall decals and decoration in the rooms, move supplies from/to other campus, and more.

At the moment my career goals after MC aren't fully concrete. I'm graduating General Studies after this semester, so I have some time to figure out what I want to do "when I grow up".



”

My favorite thing is being able to engage with other students. My favorite project was the virtual study rooms we did during Fall 2021, although short lived. I also enjoy the 30-Minute-Mingle we do weekly after the LCH, it's nice engaging with students and catching up on our academic lives.



DALLIYA SOSMATH

To NASA & Beyond: An Engineering Student
Thrives with Academic Coaching

My name is Dalliya Sosmath; I'm a mechanical engineering student who has utilized embedded coaching for this fall semester. I joined ATPA when realizing how much of a struggle STEM core classes can be, specifically physics, in my case. I wanted an academic coach to be able to have someone I could relay my questions to when I got stuck on studying the content we were learning in class, or when I couldn't solve a homework problem myself.

This semester, I noticed that the way I approach my academics has changed. I used to be quite timid in asking for help about things I didn't understand. I felt as though I was asking dumb questions since all the other students understood it. However, with ATPA and the help of my classmates, I found the confidence to ask more questions. A student can only learn by asking what they don't understand, while a teacher can only help a student by answering the questions that the students have. This is how students, and humans in general, grow.

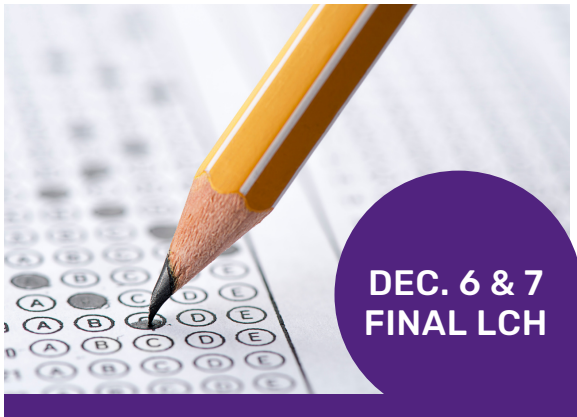
I am extremely grateful that such a program exists because it reduces the feeling of anxiousness I have when being unable to understand certain concepts. My professor holds office hours which I find convenient. However, having an ATPA coach also adds additional office hours to that of my professor's. I am given the opportunity to ask more questions and have them answered, along with receiving homework help too. **As a student who suffers from test anxiety, our ATPA coach holds review sessions prior to exams as well, which help me prepare better for an upcoming exam. I have a sense of peace and organization in mind, compared to when studying the content, myself.**

Although Montgomery College already provides students with many resources, ATPA is another marvelous resource which gives students a little push to complete assignments, have a better understanding, and prepare them for exams. These little steps result in successful completion of classes, which leads students towards achieving their future goals and dreams. These small resources are the ones that are helping students now, become something amazing in the future; whether it be a future engineer working for NASA, or a future physicist who wants to teach students who come after us.


Raptor

WRAP-UP

Save The Date 



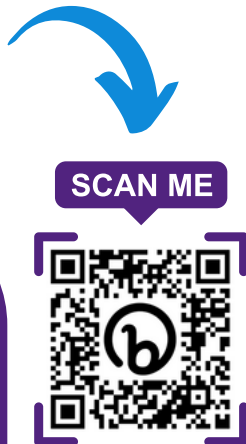
KEEP YOUR COOL & STAY ENERGIZED FOR FINALS

December 6th: 12 - 1pm 
December 7th: 4:30 - 5:30pm



COACH APPRECIATION WINTER POTLUCK RSVP HERE

December 14th: 12 - 2pm
Rockville South Campus Building, Room 006



Did You Know?



See MC students and community members perform diverse musical numbers at Rockville Performing Arts Center!

MC World Ensemble
December 7th, 7:30pm




PART-TIME FACULTY CONFERENCE

January 14, 2023
TP/SS Cultural Arts Center
Receive \$100 Stipend & Professional Development Credit!



ATPA SPRING VIRTUAL COACHES INSTITUTE

January 20, 2023 
Registration Coming Soon