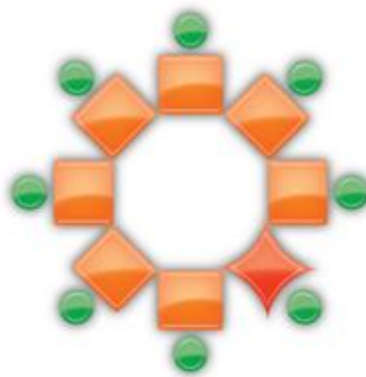


September 2022



PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

The Peer Leader

Issue No. 23 Contact: newsletter@pltlis.org

- **APLL Deadline for Second Issue Extended to Oct. 3**
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Message from the President

Dear PLTLIS Community,

The fall semester has officially started and with that we welcome new initiatives as well as open new opportunities for all PLTL practitioners around the world.

As you may know, our society operates through volunteers. We currently have five standing committees (Conference; Outreach; APLL Journal; Workbooks; and Research). The work done by the members of these committees is integral to what PLTLIS provides to practitioners. In my experience, being a committee member provides many benefits, such as learning and applying new skills, expanding professional networks, and participating in the development of new leaders. We thank the committee members for their contributions which make a significant difference to the PLTLIS network. Society activities such as our Annual Conference, our peer-reviewed journal *Advances in Peer-Led Learning*, and opportunities for professional development wouldn't be possible without committee members.

Strategic planning and the development of resources and events also wouldn't happen without our volunteer committee members. And the list goes on.

Working on your campus program is a great place to start. Starting a PLTL Society or Club on your campus will help strengthen the network of practitioners (see below). Each of us is an important part of PLTLIS, so you can help make PLTL more visible locally, and share your activities with other practitioners, we welcome your input.

The invitation is open! Join us on this video campaign and tell us what PLTL is ... to YOU.

Conversations at this year's annual conference about the founding of the Society have brought about a new campaign dedicated to reflecting on the meaning of Peer-Led Team-Learning to each of us. The founders of the society had a double meaning for the acronym *PLTLIS*, in which the "IS" from International Society could be used in its capacity as a verb to describe what *PLTL is...*

PLTL is sharing resources, PLTL is networking, PLTL is an excellent educational practice, PLTL is service, PLTL is helping students gain good foundations, and so much more. As the group of Peer Leaders joyfully expressed at the culmination of the closing ceremony, *PLTL is ... Family.*

The invitation is open! Join us on this video campaign and tell us what PLTL is ... to YOU.

As always, we are delighted to provide activities and resources for you. Please visit our website at www.pltlis.org to interact with your fellow practitioners through social media and email us at info@ptlis.org with any inquiries.

Have a great Fall Semester!

Milka Montes

President, Board of Directors

WWW.PLT LIS.ORG

Contribute to Advances in Peer-Led Learning (APLL)!

Deadline Extended: October 3 for Issue #2

Contribute to scholarship on peer-led learning! Report on your research in peer-led education methods! Submission guidelines are posted for the second issue of Advances in Peer-Led Learning (APLL) Journal, the peer-reviewed publication of the Peer-Led Team Learning International Society. Find out more at journal.pltlis.org.

PLTL is.... What Does PLTL Mean to You?

Share your experiences and ideas about Peer-Led Team Learning! Send a short video or picture completing the following statement: *PLTL is.....* You fill in the blank! Your entry may be featured on the

PLTLIS website and social media. Submissions are welcomed on a continuing basis, so capture those thoughts and send your short clip and/or picture to newsletter@ptlis.org with your name, campus, email, and phone number. Be sure to have your voice heard!

Start a PLTL Society on Your Campus!

A goal of PLTLIS is to connect with past, current, and future Peer Leaders all over the world. There are over 20,000 people who have been Peer Leaders since the 1990's. To reach all these Peer Leaders, we need you to take action by starting a PLTL Society on your campus. Campus organizations or clubs are not hard to start. We invite you to investigate how to set up your PLTL Society/Club by contacting your Student Government Association or Student Life/Affairs office. Find out what the requirements are. These often involve a signing up your colleagues – other Peer Leaders, identifying an advisor (a faculty or staff member), and drafting a constitution or bylaws. PLTLIS can supply you with sample documents and support through this process and your institution can make PLTL visible on your campus!

The fall semester is a great time to form your PLTL Society or Club. Starting this network at the campus level will be beneficial not only to PLTLIS but also your institution. As you start to grow your network you are also maintaining contact with alumni who could open doors to many opportunities for current Peer Leaders and serve as inspiration for Peer Leaders to pursue their future careers.

For more information, contact plrep@ptlis.org and our current Peer Leader Board Representatives, Reagan Hudson and Kaleigh Love, will respond to your questions. And don't forget to share all of your organization's activities on social media with PLTLIS!

Peer Leader Experience: Presentation at ACS

Being a part of a Peer-Led Team Learning program is a gateway to opportunity for Peer Leaders inside and outside of the academic environment. Reagan Hudson and Samuel Mota, Peer Leaders at the University of Texas Permian Basin (UTPB), honed their professional presentation skills at the American Chemical Society (ACS) Fall 2022 conference in Chicago, Illinois. Since the implementation of PLTL at UTPB three years ago, student success in General Chemistry has increased tremendously, and both Reagan and Samuel were excited to share their experiences and the progress of their program at the ACS conference.

Reagan commented, "It was very exciting to interact with others interested in peer leading and to hear that other universities may be ready to implement PLTL. I learned a lot from the conference and am more confident in wanting to apply to Ph.D. programs and even learned of more programs I can apply to! Maybe one day I can push to implement PLTL at a new university."

Sammy added, "I am not exaggerating when I say that my time in Chicago was life changing. I am glad that I was given the opportunity to go because it has made me realize just how little I have seen; this is meant both in terms of seeing the world but also finding out what research people around the world are doing. Needless to say, this experience has made me realize I have a lot to learn and for that I am eternally grateful to my school, my mentors, Peer-Led Team Learning International Society (PLTLIS), and of course the American Chemical Society (ACS)."



1 - Reagan (left) and Samuel (right) in front of their poster with faculty advisor Dr. Milka Montes (center) at the ACS conference in Chicago, IL.

Interested in presenting at an ACS conference yourself? The Spring 2023 ACS Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana is accepting abstracts until October 17, 2022. For more information, visit www.acs.org.

Campus Profile



PLTL at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Established in 2015, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley's (UTRGV) campus was built upon the two legacy institutions: the University of Texas Brownsville and the University of Texas Pan-American. UTRGV's goal for student success was to create a community that supports and enhances student learning and academic achievement. Subsequently, Peer-Led Team Learning was implemented in 2016 within two historically challenging courses, General Chemistry and College Algebra. With team collaboration being the backbone of the program, avidly engaged students soon fostered long-term thinking skills, effective communication, and most importantly, cultivated an encouraging environment for student success. The flourishing that PLTL aided in the students' achievements was undeniable. In 2022, just seven years after its first pilot, UTRGV now offers Peer-Led Team Learning in over 18 courses which include among others, Anatomy and Physiology, General Chemistry, College Algebra, Pre-Calculus, Elementary Statistical Methods, General Biology, Accounting, and Computer Science. Under the umbrella of the Student Success Center, the PLTL program currently is managed by three full-time staff and over 160 Peer Leaders. With such an expansion of PLTL, UTRGV continues to keep its students' success goals alive and truthful.

Kimberley Medina, Peer Leader Mentor



2 - Kimberley Medina

I joined the Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) program in the fall of 2019 for General Chemistry at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley after participating in the program as a student in chemistry. The program allowed me to better understand course materials while providing networking opportunities at a professional and academic level. I've had the opportunity to participate in PLTL as a leader for eight semesters, giving me the gratification of helping others through teamwork, collaboration, and relationship-building. PLTL gave me the tools necessary to branch out into academic research by empowering me to seek knowledge while remaining humble and adventurous in academia. I am forever indebted to the Learning Center and the PLTL program for allowing me to grow within the field by closely working with both faculty and students.

I graduated with my bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences with a focus in Chemistry in spring 2022. I am honored to be promoted to a mentoring position as I commence graduate school in the fall. Being part of PLTL as an undergraduate gave me the opportunity to develop professionally and academically. I look forward to the next two years as I navigate my new position and graduate school.

Sarah Walzer



3 - Sarah Walzer

Peer Leader for Anatomy & Physiology I

I was a Peer Leader for Anatomy & Physiology I in Spring 2022. I was only in my second semester of university when I started as a Peer Leader and hadn't found a solid group of friends yet since my first semester was completely online. The PLTL program has given me the chance to be part of a community

of other like-minded students who are passionate about learning and helping others like I am. Every other leader I've asked for help, whether it's directly related to PLTL, my own personal coursework, or future degree plans, has been more than happy to provide that assistance. It truly feels like a big group of friends that I know I can always turn to in a time of need, and I'm very grateful for that.

I'm looking forward to continuing to work in the program this coming fall semester!

The collaborative environment that we create in our classrooms during PLTL sessions lends itself well to learning and is something that students may otherwise not have access to. In high school and my first semester of university, I knew of other students who would get together into study groups, but I never felt like I could ask them if I could join the study sessions. PLTL takes that fear out of the equation and gives everyone an equal opportunity to work in groups and enjoy the benefits of doing so, like hearing other perspectives on certain topics. Seeing relationships between students develop over the course of the semester, as well as the improvement in their grades and the confidence in their knowledge of the material grow has been incredibly rewarding for me and made every bit of work I put into their learning worth it. I know that I would have benefitted from having a program like PLTL in high school and my first semester of university and am proud of myself for being able to provide that to students who are in that position now. I'm looking forward to continuing to work in the program this coming fall semester!

Nancy Navarro, Peer Leader Mentor



4 - Nancy Navarro

I've been with our program since fall 2018 for our math courses. I began as a quiet and shy leader, and by fall 2019, I became a Mentor for the program. When I first joined, PLTL was only offered for College Algebra and Math for Business courses. We have now expanded to include Elementary Statistics, Pre-Calculus, Calculus 1, and Calculus 2 as well as our prerequisites courses. To be able to grow with the program has just been an amazing opportunity.

Moving online during the pandemic was extremely hard but we made it possible. We weren't shutting down! It required hard work from Peer Leaders, Mentors, Supervisors, and anybody involved with the program to see all our work was transitioned to an online space. We all did great work, providing the best to the students when they needed us most.

I've been with our program since fall 2018 for our math courses.

As a Peer Leader, being able to reach out to students and help them when they feel most frustrated both with academics and with life can be a gratifying experience. As a Mentor, I can guide Peer Leaders to grow into their best possible selves and allow them to help their students and their own academics as well. My beliefs of following your dreams and pursuing what you really enjoy in life regardless of societal expectations are something I like to share with the Peer Leaders I mentor, as I have experience with this myself. My fellow co-workers helped me realize that it's okay to do something I really love even if it's not the most ordinary major. I became a Theater Major with a focus in Design Technology – my fellow peers accepted me with love and support for following my goals. I now get to do the things I love which is providing the best guidance to all new and returning Peer Leaders and Mentors, as well as pursuing a career in Theater – and believe it or not, mathematics is part of being a designer.

I wouldn't be where I am now if it weren't for the PLTL program and all the people I have met along the way. I have completed 8 full semesters with PLTL and 3 summers. I am in my last year before graduation, so I hope to continue to grow my mind and meet more people during my last two semesters. It's been a pleasure working with every single person who has come through our program. From a formerly quiet, shy Peer Leader to a currently strong, outgoing, high-spirited Mentor, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for showing me the way. One thing is for sure, PLTL will change your life for the better.

Connect on Social Media!

PLTLIS is proud to connect past and present Peer Leaders and all who are interested in Peer-Led Team Learning. We are excited to announce that we are now expanding this connection on two new social media platforms: Twitter and LinkedIn. What is happening at your campus? What opportunities do you know about where peer leading would be a valuable attribute? *Follow, like, and link* with us on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn:

Instagram: @pl_tl_is

Twitter: @LedPeer

Facebook: Peer-Led Team Learning Society

LinkedIn: Peer-Led Team Learning International Society

Have You Ordered Your PLTLIS Water Bottle?

The 17-ounce stainless-steel water bottles carry the PLTLIS and *APLL Journal* logos and feature copper plating insulation, allowing for your hot beverages to stay hot and your cold beverages to stay cold for longer. A perfect feature to keep your fall beverage hot!

You can purchase your own, available through the PLTLIS website. Go to shop.pltlis.org and order yours!

Contribute to the Peer Leader!

Do you want to share news with the PLTL community? Send news items, story suggestions, and updates from your campus Peer-Led Team Learning program to newsletter@pltlis.org.