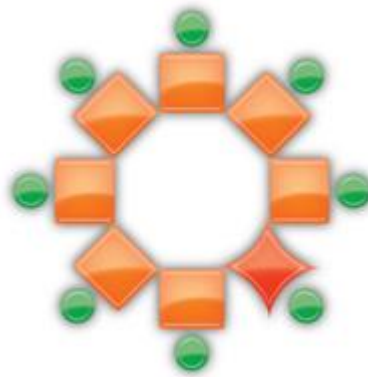


May 2023 – Conference Edition



PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

The Peer Leader

Issue No. 28 Contact: newsletter@pltlis.org

- **New Position of PLTL Coordinator at UTA: Apply!**
- **See You in Houston! Information to Plan Your Trip**
- **Conference Keynote Speaker: Dr. Athena Sherman**
- **Preview Conference Keynote Panels**
- **The WHOVA Platform**
- **View Recording from AAAS-IUSE Webinar on PLTL**
- **APLL – Third Issue Deadline: July 30th**

Message from the President



Dear members of the PLTLIS community,

The time for our Annual Conference is nearly here, an event we are all eagerly anticipating. We are looking forward to your active participation in the presentations, workshops, and panel discussions, as your expertise and insights will undoubtedly contribute to the success of this hybrid gathering whether from home or at the University of Houston Downtown, from Wednesday, May 31 through Saturday, June 3. And activities will include a scavenger hunt on Thursday evening, a reception with poster presentations and spotlights on alums and the UHD PLTL program on Friday evening, and more!

Our primary platform for communication, schedules, and other conference-related information will again be through the Whova app, which will be live a week before the conference for those attending in person or virtually. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the app as your engagement with this app will help facilitate a smooth and interactive experience for all attendees.

These past two years, it has been an immense pleasure and privilege to serve as your President, and I am deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to lead our extraordinary community. As we look forward to this conference and beyond, I am excited to continue working alongside each of you, fostering growth and innovation as PLTL practitioners. Thank you for your commitment and collaboration, and let's make this upcoming conference a memorable and transformative event for all of us.

Please visit our website at www.pltlis.org to interact with your fellow PLTLIS practitioners and email us at info@ptlis.org for any inquiries.

Warm regards,

Milka Montes

President, Board of Directors

WWW.PLTLLIS.ORG

New Position of PLTL Coordinator at UTA: Apply!

The University of Texas at Arlington is expanding its PLTL program and seeks a Coordinator to support its activities. Former Peer Leaders with administrative and organizational experience are especially encouraged to apply! [Coordinator I \(S04525P\)](#)

The Coordinator I, Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) assists with the oversight of the day-to-day operations of the PLTL program. This position reports to the Director of Academic Support Programs. This position is responsible for the development, implementation, administration and/or marketing of program/project function; works closely with faculty coordinators and serves as a liaison between students, faculty, staff, other departments and/or external constituencies on day-to-day programmatic, operational, administrative and/or fiscal issues. For more information, go to: [PLTL COORDINATOR AT UTA](#)

See You in Houston! Information for Your Trip

Lodging information and travel directions to and from the University of Houston, Downtown campus has been posted on the conference website. Book your lodging! Le Meridien Houston Downtown will have the group rate available until **May 10, 2023**. *The Marriott's booking deadline has officially ended, but conference participants may still be able to obtain rooms at the conference rate by calling the hotel.* For more information, go to www.pltlis.org/eleventh-annual-pltlis-conference and look for *Lodging Information* under the *Once You're Here* drop-down menu.

Early-bird registration rates end on **May 15!** Register for the Pre-Conference Workshop on Wednesday, May 31st to become familiar with the PLTL model and its implementation, as well as the Conference, from Thursday, June 1 to Saturday, June 3rd: <https://ptlis.org/registration-form/>

We look forward to meeting with all practitioners at this year's conference, offered in hybrid format!

Conference Keynote Speaker: Dr. Athena Sherman

Thursday, June 1, 2023

Safety for Diverse Students in Educational Environments: How Can PLTL Bridge Gaps and Promote Equity?

Social determinants of learning have a profound effect on one's ability to meet personal and academic goals. Moreover, the theory of intersectionality posits that our identities and social positions intertwine and overlap to influence the power or oppression we experience in society. Learning to create safe and brave spaces to nourish the aptitude of peers and reduce barriers to individual and group learning and growth is no small feat. Join our valued alum, as we discuss strategies to promote, maintain, and evaluate safety and equity for a diverse student populace.



1 - Dr. Athena Sherman

Athena D.F. Sherman, PhD, PHN, RN, CNE, (xe/they/she; First Gen) is an Assistant Professor at Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. Throughout their educational journey, Dr. Sherman spent many years as a PLTL Leader at San Jose City College and later brought the PLTL model to San Jose State University where they ran the Tutoring Center through the Educational Opportunity Program. Dr. Sherman's research focuses on examining how complex systems of racism, cisgenderism, and heterosexism influence health and health equity for racial, ethnic, sexual, and gender minoritized populations. Dr. Sherman seeks to lift the voices of LGBTQ+ violence survivors and co-create a foundation of research to improve LGBTQ+ healthcare delivery, with a focused lens on the impacts of stigma on psychological distress among transgender and gender diverse people violence survivors. Additionally, their educational research focuses on improving the inclusion of LGBTQ+ health content in nursing curricula locally and nationally. This work is all made possible through Dr. Sherman's community driven, interdisciplinary, and multi-institutional research team, which brings together community stakeholders, community-based partners, clinical partners, academic partners, and researchers across the nation.

Conference Keynote Panels

The eleventh annual PLTL conference will incorporate the theme *Strengthening Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through Sustainable PLTL Programs*. The three keynote panels featured in this year's conference agenda aim to encompass this theme. From current practitioners to alumni to ensuring support from administrators and new faculty, you can look forward to shared advice from experienced practitioners. Listed here are snapshots of the panelists and convenors for each session.

Friday, June 2, 2023

Securing Administrators' Support to Sustain Your PLTL Program

While many PLTL practitioners started their program with grants, some have been started through Learning Centers with the support of administrators concerned about retention and student success. The panelists will share the models that have developed and supported peer-led programs, allowing them to be institutionalized and sustained.

Convenor: Kimshi Hickman, Ed.D., is the Assistant Vice Provost for Retention and Completion at The University of Texas at Arlington. Kimshi has served in higher education for over 20 years in student affairs, enrollment management and academic affairs. Her career focus for the past 10 years has been on increasing retention and graduation rates through work in academic support programs such as Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) and Supplemental Instruction and through retention focused initiatives that address barriers students face in persistence.



2 - Kimshi Hickman, Ed.D.

Panelist: Nicholas Hammond, Ph.D., is the Director of the Learning Center at the University of Rochester. Combining his time in a hybrid teaching/research postdoctoral appointment with his work at UR on the PLTL 'Workshop' Program, he has now spent over thirteen years working with near-peer collaborative learning models. His other research has included alternative ways to assess near-peer leaders and the roles of self-efficacy and gender in students' success in chemistry courses.



3 - Nicholas Hammond, Ph.D.

Panelist: Mary Jo Parker, Ed.D., is a first-generation, Hispanic, and faculty member in the Natural Sciences at University of Houston-Downtown, a federally designated Hispanic-serving and Minority-serving institution. She is also the Executive Director of the Scholars Academy, an academic unit supporting STEM majors. She has been with UHD for 14 years. She currently is PI on several active federal and state awards involving mentored research, workforce development, and bridge programs for precollege students totaling \$1.8 M, which emphasize the power of PLTL.



4 - Mary Jo Parker, Ed.D.

Building Leadership Skills for Career Success: PLTL Alumni in Action

Friday, June 2, 2023

The panel of former Peer Leaders from University of Houston Downtown (UHD) and University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) will share their experiences and how PLTL has helped them to grow as leaders in their post-graduate careers.



5 - Allison McKee

Convenor: Allison McKee, Senior chemistry student with Texas certification as a pharmacy technician, CPhT, as of July 2017; current PLTL training coordinator at UHD.

Convenor: Sofia Delgado, B.S.in Biochemistry from UTEP in December 2022; Peer Leader for seven semesters. Member of the PLTLIS Board of Directors; starting doctoral program in Fall 2023.



6 - Sofia Delgado

Convenor: Azfar Vahidy, Senior at UHD, majoring in Data Science with a minor in Mathematics and Statistics; tutor in the Collaborative Learning Community Center, Scholars Academy Peer Mentor.



7 - Azfar Vahidy

Panelists

Kevin Castillo, K-12 Math Teaching

Nguyen (Blake) Lam, MD, DDS

Brian Holtkamp, PhD Candidate in CS, STEM Workplace: HTX Labs

William Holtkamp, PhD in CS, STEM Workplace: Shell

Eva Ruiz, STEM Workplace: Accenture

Amee Stevenson, STEM Workplace: Lockheed Martin

Farhad Zonoozi, DMD

Finding Your Replacement: The Next Generation of Champions

Saturday, June 3, 2023

To sustain a successful PLTL program at each institution takes trained peer leaders, interesting workshop materials created by faculty and peer leaders, funding, passionate champions, and supportive administrators. Our panelists will share how the baton has been passed at their institutions to ensure the continuation of their PLTL program; how they have identified and trained the next generations of peer leader coordinators and program managers, and how they kept their administrators' interest and support.



8 - Mitsue Nakamura

Convenor: Mitsue Nakamura is a lecturer of Mathematics at the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) and serves as faculty coordinator and advisor for PLTL.



9 - Katherine Shoemaker

Convenor: Katherine Shoemaker is an Assistant Professor of Statistics who teaches courses in both Statistics and Data Science at UHD.

Panelist: Megan Daschbach is a Teaching Professor with the Department of Chemistry at Washington University in St. Louis, and since 2011, for the General Chemistry (Chem 111A/112A) sequence. She directs the Peer-led Team Learning (PLTL) Program for General Chemistry I & II.



10 - Megan Daschbach



11 - Joseph Dinnocenzo

Panelist: Joseph Dinnocenzo is a Professor of Chemistry at the University of Rochester (UR). He has used PLTL for over 25 years when teaching organic chemistry lecture courses and, more recently, has pioneered the use of PLTL in first- and second-semester organic laboratory courses.



12 - Michael Saenz

Panelist: Michael Saenz is the Associate Director in the Student Success Center (SSC) at the University of Texas at Dallas. He oversees peer tutor and peer educator training and certification, including the Peer-Led Team Learning program, Supplemental Instruction, Peer Tutoring, Academic Success Coaching, Writing Center, and Communication Lab.

What is WHOVA? The Conference Platform

The hybrid Conference will be supported via the WHOVA Platform. Understandably, there is much information to examine in order to fully utilize the platform. This year's conference will be the second to be hosted both in person and online; information through WHOVA will help participants access schedules, event descriptions, and other features. Where can I **find the agenda**? Am I in the right

session? Where can I network? Access to Presentations, Networking, Direct Messaging, and other features are all available by using the WHOVA interface.

Conference registrants will be sent an invitation to link to the WHOVA platform prior to the conference, with the subject line: Access to WHOVA and PLTLIS Conference. Use the information to set up and access the WHOVA web and/or mobile apps. You will also need access to ZOOM if you are attending virtually. If you are presenting (in person or virtually) a member of the Conference Tech Team will be helping you to ensure that anyone attending can enjoy your presentation.

What happens after I'm done presenting?

Attend presentations of your choice. Some presentations are in-person or remote only, while others are livestreamed, offered in-person and virtually at the same time. There is a variety of content for you to enjoy. There are many presentations, keynote panels and talks, opportunities for networking, and even contests happening during the conference. To satisfy your thirst for knowledge of Peer-Led Team Learning, attend other presentations to learn more about what Peer Leaders and practitioners are doing!

Come to the **Conference Networking Sessions** to talk to others about their interests. Just attended a presentation that you enjoyed? Reach out using the **Direct Messaging** feature to set up a meeting without ever having to leave WHOVA! There is plenty to do during this conference so take advantage!

View Recording: AAAS-IUSE April Workshop

Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL): How Enlisting the Aid of Student Leaders Increases Student Success

On April 19, 2023, PLTL was the featured topic for a webinar hosted by the American Advancement for Advancement of Science through a grant from the National Science Foundation – Improving Undergraduate STEM Education (AAAS-IUSE). It was a great opportunity to share the PLTL model with faculty and administrators who were not familiar with PLTL. We invite you to view the recording and share it with colleagues: click [here](#).

Three speakers described how PLTL programs work, how a program can be created, and what can be accomplished by implementing PLTL.

Three speakers described how PLTL programs work, how a program can be created, and what can be accomplished by implementing PLTL. They were Dr. Ana Fraiman, Emerita Professor of Chemistry, Northeastern Illinois University, who shared how faculty can lead efforts to develop PLTL at their own institutions; Dr. Kimshi Hickman, Assistant Vice Provost for Retention and Completion, The University of Texas at Arlington, who worked with engineering and math faculty to use PLTL in Pre-Calculus that led to higher pass rates and positive student feedback. The PLTL program at UTA has now expanded to mathematics, chemistry, and engineering courses; and Dr. James Becvar, Distinguished Teaching Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of Texas at El Paso, discussed how faculty can nurture strong student leadership and capture the creativity and entrepreneurial value of student

leaders to facilitate learning in an environment that values diversity, equity, and inclusion. To view the recording, click [here](#).

Submissions to Advances in Peer-Led Learning (APLL)

Preliminary Deadline for Issue #3: July 30!

Extend and share your conference presentation, research, and practices by submitting a paper to the third issue of Advances in Peer-Led Learning. Published by the Peer-Led Team Learning International Society, this could be the opportunity you're looking for! Read the latest issue and submission guidelines at www.journal.pltlis.org.

Connect on Social Media!

PLTLIS is proud to connect past and present Peer Leaders and all who are interested in Peer-Led Team Learning. 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, Facebook and LinkedIn:

Instagram: [@pl_tl_is](#)

Facebook: [Peer-Led Team Learning Society](#)

LinkedIn: [Peer-Led Team Learning International Society](#)

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@ptlis.org.