

Peer-Led Team Learning International Society
Twelfth Annual Conference
University of Rochester, Rochester, New York
Wednesday – Saturday
May 29-June 1, 2024



Keynote Presentation: Thursday, May 30, 2024

***ENERGIZING PEER LEADING AND LEARNING
WITH COMPASSIONATE CHALLENGE***

When people are asked to tell a story about their favorite teacher in their educational journey, they nearly always describe an instructor or coach who was warm, funny, empathetic.... but who also challenged them to rise to high expectations of effort and success. We know from motivation research that the best goals are those that are specific and difficult, as setting a low bar for oneself can be enervating rather than energizing. How can we create learning environments that encourage students to set challenging goals for themselves, that mobilize energy and stimulate creativity, while also being compassionate and flexible regarding the many difficulties students face? In this interactive keynote, Sarah Rose Cavanagh will present research and food for thought based on her most recent book on creating learning environments of compassionate challenge, ending on practical tips for teaching self-determined seekers of knowledge.



SARAH ROSE CAVANAGH is the Senior Associate Director for Teaching and Learning in the Center for Faculty Excellence at Simmons University, where she also teaches in the Psychology Department as an Associate Professor of Practice. Before joining Simmons, she was an Associate Professor of psychology and neuroscience (tenured) at Assumption University, where she also served in the D'Amour Center for Teaching Excellence as Associate Director for Grants and Research. Sarah's research considers the interplay of emotions, motivation, learning, and quality of life. Her most recent research project, funded by the National Science Foundation, convenes a network of scholars to develop teaching practices aimed at greater effectiveness and equity in undergraduate biology education. She is author of four books, including *The Spark of Learning: Energizing the College Classroom with the Science of Emotion* (2016) and upcoming *Mind Over Monsters: Supporting Youth Mental Health with Compassionate Challenge* (2023). She gives keynote addresses and workshops at a variety of colleges and regional conferences, blogs for *Psychology Today*, and writes essays for venues like Literary Hub and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. She's also on BlueSky too much, at @SaRoseCav.



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