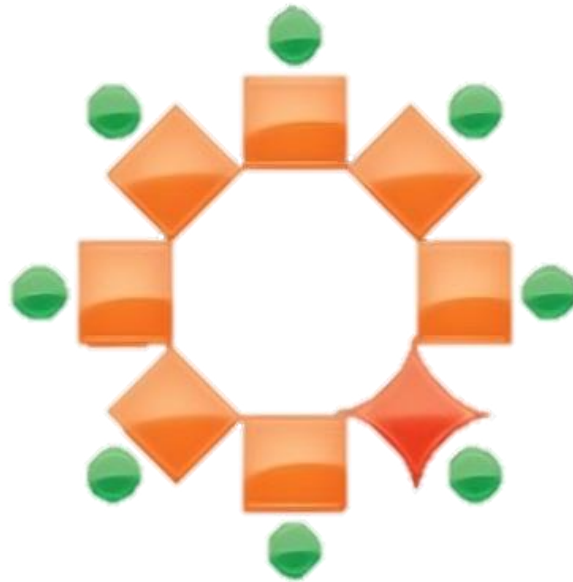


# Peer Leader May 2024



PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING  
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

**May 2024**

**The Peer Leader**

**Issue No. 34** Contact: [newsletter@pltlis.org](mailto:newsletter@pltlis.org)<sup>1</sup>

- **Nominations Open for PLTLIS Board of Directors**
- **Conference Information**
- **Register Now: It's Not Too Late!**
- **Highlights: Conference Speakers and Panels**
- **Campus Profile: Florida International University**

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<sup>1</sup><mailto:newsletter@pltlis.org>

## Message from the President



1 - Kimshi Hickman, Ed.D.

Dear members of the PLTLIS community,

I trust your semesters have all come to a happy conclusion. As we prepare to welcome you to the University of Rochester for this year's conference (it's not too late to register!), we encourage you to consider nominating a colleague or yourself to join the PLTLIS Board of Directors. The Directors are responsible for keeping our organization running through our dedication to our duties of care, loyalty, and obedience. For more information on what this role entails and nominations, see below!

The Conference Committee has been hard at work to ensure that whether joining us virtually or in-person from May 29 – June 1, 2024, you have a fantastic conference experience. From things to do in Rochester, to helpful information for participants and presenters alike, see below for all the Conference Committee has prepared for you, including exciting conference speakers and panels, which you can see below, and many presentations, workshops, and posters, from practitioners at many campuses. There will be something for everyone – faculty, staff, peer leaders and PLTL alumni. Our collective knowledge and expertise are what make our community truly exceptional, and this conference is an excellent opportunity to further strengthen our bonds and contribute to the advancement of peer-led learning and PLTL.

Speaking of our knowledge and expertise, submissions are now solicited for the fourth issue of *Advances in Peer Led Learning*, the PLTLIS Journal. We invite you to contribute your experiences to the expansion of peer-led learning and research in peer-led education methods and programs. For more information and submission guidelines, visit <https://journal.pltlis.org><sup>2</sup>.

Finally, we share with you a profile of the PLTL program at Florida International University.

On behalf of the PLTLIS Board, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your continued support and dedication. I am eager to witness the contributions each of you will make to our mission.

Warm regards,

Kimshi Hickman, Ed.D.

PLTLIS President, Board of Directors

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<sup>2</sup><https://journal.pltlis.org/>

**WWW.PLTLLIS.ORG<sup>3</sup>**

## Nominations Open for Candidates to the Board of Directors of the Peer-Led Team Learning International Society

Candidates are sought as stewards of the organization's mission - leaders with skills, talents, and perspectives of a broad and diverse range of backgrounds. Nominate a candidate to the Board of Directors of the Peer-Led Team Learning International Society. Candidates are sought as stewards of the organization's mission.

Nominations are open through Friday, May 27, 2024. Complete an individual nomination form for each person nominated. Your form will be submitted electronically. If you have any questions, please contact the Secretary, Catherine Unite, unitec@uta.

**To access the form, go to <https://forms.office.com/r/XSeFN5wSqB>**

The role of Director is vital to PLTLIS. Directors provide support and governance, protect, preserve, and develop the organization's resources. Each Director is expected to adhere to Fiduciary Duties:

**Duty of Care** – Each Director has a legal responsibility to participate actively in making decisions on behalf of the organization and to exercise their best judgment while doing so

**Duty of Loyalty** – Each Director must put the interests of the organization before their personal and professional interests when acting in a decision-making capacity on behalf of the organization

**Duty of Obedience** – Each Director bears the legal responsibility of ensuring that the organization complies with the applicable federal, state, and local laws and adheres to its mission.

A Director shall enhance PLTLIS by providing perspective and skills to:

- Maintain, monitor and strengthen the mission
- Establish and maintain overall policies
- Provide oversight, supervision, and guidance for the operations of PLTLIS
- Protect, preserve, and develop the organization's resources.

Responsibilities include:

- Attend all Board meetings (currently held monthly) and actively participate in committees and take on leadership roles
- Identify practitioners who have a demonstrated commitment to the vision and mission of PLTLIS, Peer-Led Team Learning, and peer-led learning.
- Network as a PLTLIS Ambassador and identify opportunities to introduce PLTLIS to their networks (funding, partnerships, administration, etc.)
- Support PLTLIS through the Annual Conference, promoting the Shop, and other means

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.pltlis.org/>

- Provide a minimum of 4-8 hours/month besides participation at Board meetings.
- Assess and evaluate their own participation and contributions on an annual basis.

**Term Limits:** Directors **serve for a three-year term and can then be nominated/self-nominated and elected again.**

## Third Issue of APLL Published!

*Advances in Peer-Led Learning*, the journal of the PLTL International Society, is online:  
<https://journal.pltlis.org/>

**The deadline for Issue #4 is July 31st**

**Send your submission to [journal@ptlis.org](mailto:journal@ptlis.org)<sup>4</sup>!**

***2024 Conference Theme:***

***PLTL IS: Inclusive, Engaging, and Meaningful Learning***

***In-Person or Virtual: Hybrid Format***

**Hosted by the University of Rochester, Rochester, New York**

**Wednesday – Saturday, May 29-June 1, 2024**

May is here and the University of Rochester is in bloom! There are only two weeks left before the doors of the Feldman Ballroom will open to PLTLIS Conference attendees. With two keynote plenary talks, two panel discussions, and over forty presentations including workshops, short talks, and posters there will be something to stimulate curiosity and discussion for everyone. Whether you are a peer leader, a faculty member, a learning specialist, or an administrator, you will find something to share with like-minded colleagues and something to take home to inform your practice.

We are looking forward to welcoming experienced and novice practitioners at this year's PLTLIS conference. For more about the Twelfth Annual Conference, go to <https://ptlis.org/twelfth-annual-ptlis-conference/>

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<sup>4</sup><mailto:journal@ptlis.org>





**Register Now:** <https://ptlis.org/registration-form-twelfth/>

### **Attending in Person: Lodging Information**

Lodging information and travel directions have been posted on the conference website. Go to:  
<https://ptlis.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024-Conference-Lodging-Information-Jan-19-2024.pdf>

### Tips for a Great Conference Experience

Whether attending in person or online, information on accessing the Conference platform, Whova, and answers to many of your questions are posted under the “Once You’re Here” bar on the Conference site:  
<https://ptlis.org/twelfth-annual-ptlis-conference>

## Highlights: Speakers and Panels

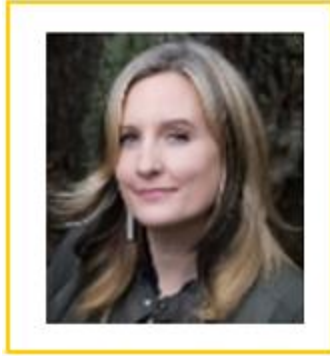
### **Keynote Presentations**

**To register: [www.ptlis.org/Conference](http://www.ptlis.org/Conference)**

2 - *Click Here*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup><https://ptlis.org/conferences/>



3 - Dr. Sarah Rose Cavanagh

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

Dr. 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.



4 - Dr. Tricia Shalka

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***CREATING TRAUMA - INFORMED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS' SUCCESS***

Dr. Tricia Shalka will explore how experiences of trauma in college create deeply embodied and affective moments of both struggle and resilience in terms of how students navigate their learning environments through the lens of threats to safety and integrity.

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**Keynote Panel: PLTL IN THE DISCIPLINES**

Panelists will explore the application of Peer-Led Team Learning in their respective disciplines, detailing adaptations made to accommodate the unique requirements of their course and programs. The initial 45 minutes will feature a structured Q&A session, addressing pre-determined questions. For the remaining 30 minutes, panelists will engage in individual or small group discussions during a tabling segment of the



event. This informal portion will delve deeper into the specifics of implementing the PLTL model in courses and disciplines.

#### Keynote Panel: AN ADMINISTRATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON INSTITUTIONAL PLTL VALUE

Administrators will discuss the value (and challenges) of the PLTL model at their institutions (e.g., faculty support, student learning, retention, persistence, ROI, etc.) and how they message that value to Chairs, faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders. Funding issues and requirements, assessment needs, and pain points from the 'upper admin' perspective will be explored. Insights on the large-scale impacts of PLTL at three institutions will be discussed.



#### **WEDNESDAY, MAY 29: PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP**

INTRODUCTION TO THE PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING MODEL

Register Now: <https://pltlis.org/registration-form-twelfth/>

In-Person or Virtual: Hybrid Format

Join Us!



## ***Consider Graduate Degree Programs at the University of Rochester:***

**Contact [info@pltlis.org](mailto:info@pltlis.org)<sup>6</sup> to Set Up a Meeting**

If you are attending the Conference in person you may want to meet faculty from a particular department to find out if you are considering pursuing graduate studies. If so, email [info@pltlis.org](mailto:info@pltlis.org)<sup>7</sup> to let us know so that UR's Office of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA) can arrange a meeting with you. The University of Rochester is a wonderful place for graduate studies! With 24 Ph.D. programs and 18 Master's programs, there is almost certainly space for you to find your grad school interests.

## ***So Much to Do! So Much to See in Rochester!***

Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, International Museum of Photography and Film, the Erie Canal, and so much more! An inviting brochure designed by the Conference Committee can guide you to the many facets of this fascinating city in upstate New York: <https://pltlis.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Roc-attractions-brochure-final-1.pdf>

## ***Campus Profile: Florida International University***

***Transforming Education Through Peer-Led Team Learning***



## ***An Overview of PLTL's Role at Florida International University, Miami, Florida***

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<sup>6</sup><mailto:info@pltlis.org>

<sup>7</sup><mailto:info@pltlis.org>

Introduced in 2000 and led by Thomas Pitzer, the Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) program at Florida International University (FIU) has revolutionized the educational approach in sciences. The program uses a centralized model to ensure consistency and quality across various courses, placing students at the center of the learning process and promoting a collaborative educational environment.

### *Program Overview and Historical Context*

The PLTL program at FIU was inspired during a regional conference funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to promote collaborative learning. It began within FIU's Department of Biological Sciences in the 2000s and supports over 1,500 students annually with about 150 Peer Leaders each semester. PLTL at FIU has demonstrated its adaptability and sustainability, expanding its scope to include a diverse array of science disciplines.

### *Structure and Operations*

The PLTL framework at FIU consists of multiple layers including students, peer leaders, supervisors, Group Discussion leaders, and Group Discussion chairs, all coordinated by the Program Assistants. This robust structure ensures effective session management and fosters leadership development within its ranks. The transition to digital operations has streamlined processes and improved data management, crucial for the program's scalability and effectiveness.

### *Impact and Success Stories*

#### *Data Insights - Fall 2020 to Spring 2024*

The program's growth and effectiveness from Fall 2020 to Spring 2024 highlight:

- **Leader Participation:** Over this period, the PLTL program has involved a total of 824 unique leaders, with an average of approximately 150 leaders actively participating each semester. This level of participation underscores the program's capability to attract and maintain a robust group of committed student leaders, who shape the supportive learning environment.
- **Session Offerings:** The program consistently offered around 140 sessions per semester, in a variety of courses. This indicates a sustained ability to meet the diverse needs of the student body and adapt to the growing demand for peer-led sessions.
- **Professional Development:** Significantly, 193 leaders took advantage of the opportunity to earn internship credits through their roles in the program. This highlights the program's dual role in supporting both academic performance and career preparedness, offering valuable professional development experiences.
- **Commitment:** Collectively, leaders contributed approximately 79,000 volunteer hours from Fall 2020 to Spring 2024, a testament to their dedication and the intensive engagement fostered by the PLTL program. This extensive contribution reflects the depth of the program's impact on students' academic journeys and personal growth.

### *Leader Impact*

While the numbers tell a compelling story of growth and engagement, the true essence of the PLTL program at FIU is best captured through the voices of those who have lived it. Firsthand accounts from three Peer Leaders underscore the transformative power of PLTL.

## JENNIFER SANTANA



5 - JENNIFER SANTANA

PLTL has revolutionized how I manage my time. As a leader responsible for holding sessions, I've had to meticulously schedule my days. This skill has been invaluable, especially as my courses have become more rigorous. As a Biology major, leading sessions on General Biology 1 has not only helped me solidify my foundational knowledge but also prepared me for upper-division classes.

## FINLEY DALLAS



6 - FINLEY DALLAS

Through PLTL, I've discovered what it truly means to be a leader. Initially, I was quite shy, but leading workshops and forming connections within the PLTL community boosted my confidence tremendously. I realized that being a good student was just the beginning; I could also be a leader. This program has

been crucial in reinforcing my learning, particularly in subjects I'm passionate about, which enhanced my retention well beyond the semester's end. As I look forward to a career beyond FIU, I'm confident in my abilities as a leader and educator, all thanks to PLTL.

### CARLOS RODRIGUEZ



7 - CARLOS RODRIGUEZ

PLTL has taught me invaluable lessons: learning is a process that often comes with challenges but overcoming these is what leads to understanding. I learned to value discussions; initially skeptical, I found that engaging actively with peers was key to reinforcing our collective understanding. Most importantly, I've learned the importance of kindness and patience. These qualities have made our sessions something we all look forward to. Additionally, as a pre-dental student, the reinforcement I received through PLTL has been instrumental in preparing for the DAT. The program's support has been pivotal in my academic and career trajectory.

### Challenges and Strategic Responses

The program faced significant operational challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, notably the shift to online learning and a temporary reduction in staff. These challenges were met with innovative solutions such as increasing in-person sessions and transitioning from paper-based to digital record-keeping, enhancing both efficiency and sustainability.

### Looking Ahead

The future strategy focuses on broadening the reach of PLTL to more academic departments and establishing collaborations with other universities. An integral part of upcoming projects includes a rigorous program evaluation plan aimed at continual improvement and adaptation to ensure that PLTL remains at the forefront of peer-led education.

PLTL at FIU stands as a beacon of innovative education, proving its resilience and adaptability through continuous growth and success. By maintaining high standards and embracing strategic expansion, PLTL is poised to enhance its impact both within FIU and in the broader educational community.

### 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](https://www.instagram.com/pl_tl_is/)<sup>8</sup>

**Facebook:** [Peer-Led Team Learning Society](https://www.facebook.com/Peer-Led-Team-Learning-Society-100076075061204/)<sup>9</sup>

**LinkedIn:** [Peer-Led Team Learning International Society](https://www.linkedin.com/in/peer-led-team-learning-international-society-851293247/)<sup>10</sup>

### 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](mailto:newsletter@pltlis.org)<sup>11</sup>.

### Memories from 2022 Conference at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri



**PLTLIS Annual conference: A place for professional growth...**



**...and immeasurable fun for all! Join us at the University of Rochester to be a part of all the fun!**

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<sup>8</sup>[https://www.instagram.com/pl\\_tl\\_is/](https://www.instagram.com/pl_tl_is/)

<sup>9</sup><https://www.facebook.com/Peer-Led-Team-Learning-Society-100076075061204/>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.linkedin.com/in/peer-led-team-learning-international-society-851293247/>

<sup>11</sup><mailto:newsletter@pltlis.org>