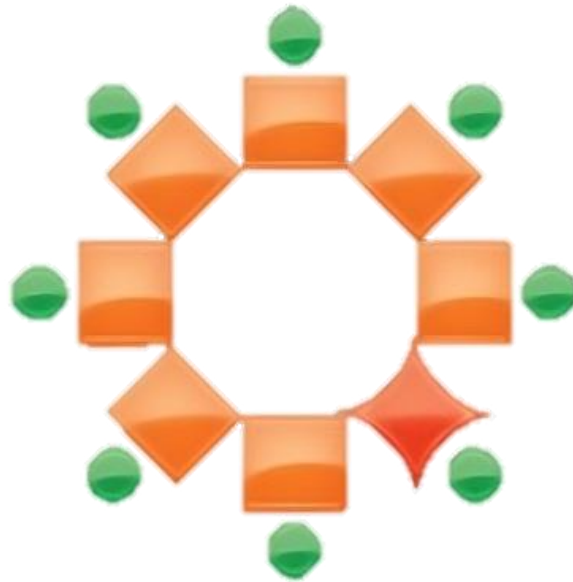


The Peer Leader March 2025



PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Issue No. 40 Contact: newsletter@pltlis.org

- *Advances in Peer-Led Learning* Issue #4 Online!
- Deadline Extended for Abstract Submissions to March 31
- Keynote Panel on AI Moderated by Ann Quiroz Gates
- 2025 PLTLIS Conference
- Early Bird Registration Open for Conference
- Call for Papers for MAA MathFest
- Great News: Longitudinal Study on PLTL!
- PLTL and Engineering: Best Paper Award by UTA Team
- PLTL at QMUL: Nominated for National Award
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- QMUL Festival of Education: PLTL Recognition

- Short Takes

Message from the PLTLIS President

Dear members of the PLTLIS community,

Spring has sprung! Whether you subscribe to the meteorological definition for the season of spring (3 months commencing on March 1st) or the astronomical definition (from the spring equinox on Thursday March 20th through to the summer solstice on Saturday June 21st), we can all see the changing flowers, hear the increased volume of bird song, and appreciate the lengthening days as we experience later sunsets and earlier sunrises.

One of the joys of spring is, of course, the PLTLIS annual conference. Will we see you, if not in person, then online, for this year's conference? I very much hope so! As in previous years, we have a very strong program. This year, the conference tackles how we can retain and build on the human and interpersonal aspects of PLTL in an increasingly technological age. Can PLTL help peer leaders and PLTL participants to develop human and emotional intelligence alongside the emergence of artificial intelligence? I am eagerly looking forward to discussing this and gaining different perspectives from around the world when we meet in May.



Have you had an opportunity to look at Issue 4 of the Society's open access journal, *Advances in Peer-Led Learning* (APLL) as yet? The latest issue, available at <https://journal.pltlis.org/>, contains 11 thought-provoking papers, several of which pick up on the theme of how PLTL

develops key employability skills and graduate attributes in peer leaders. If you've been a peer leader, these articles may help you to express just how this experience has helped you to develop as an individual, and specifically to develop key leadership skills which we know are highly valued by employers. In keeping with the theme of this year's annual conference, the latest issue of APLL also includes an article by Ana Fraiman and peer leader colleagues suggesting how AI, specifically Chat GPT, might assist us in the future design of PLTL materials.

Whether it's attending this year's PLTLIS annual conference or reading articles in APLL, I hope that you're inspired to head into the next season with fresh ideas on how you can develop your practice, and develop yourself, through PLTL. The Society, YOUR Society, is always here to help!

Sending every best wish for a productive spring that sees new ideas and new thinking blossoming alongside those spring flowers.

Tony

Prof. Tony Michael

PLTLIS President, Board of Directors

WWW.PLTLLIS.ORG

Advances in Peer-Led Learning Issue #4 Online!

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


New facets of the possibilities in peer-led learning are presented in eleven papers in the fourth issue of the PLTLIS journal, *Advances in Peer-Led Learning* or APLL. Moving away from the STEM fields, PLTL is shown to aid students in English composition courses using philosophical texts (Hendrickson et al.), and the long-lasting effects of the experience of peer leading surfaces for training new building construction personnel (Pinkhasik). Innovation in using AI to create workbook problems is demonstrated (Fraiman et al.). Leadership qualities developed through peer leadership are compared to habits of successful leadership (Michael et al.). Community is built at Sacramento State in California where PALS are fostered (Akhavan et al.), literal and linguistic boundaries are crossed (Carrera Hernandez) and interests are developed in higher aspirations (Baca). Discussion is key in selecting Peer Leaders (Daschbach et al.) and providing feedback at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri (Daschbach et al.). Various voices

present attributes of the richness of the experience of peer leading (Valenzuela, et al.), and developing language to share the emotional commitment to PLTL proves multi-faceted, honing in on relationships (Dreyfuss et al.). There is strength in sharing viewpoints, discussion, and despite the many possible paths, arriving at solutions that strengthen participants and understanding.

Let us hear from you! Comments, suggestions, amplifications are all welcomed by writing to the Editor at journal@pltlis.org.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON PEER-LED LEARNING!

Submission Guidelines: <https://journal.pltlis.org/>

 **Deadline for Submissions for Issue #5: Friday, August 1, 2025**

2025 PLTLIS Conference Call for Abstracts

 **Deadline Extended to Friday, March 31, 2025**

Submit Your Abstract for Presentations, Workshops, Posters

<https://pltlis.org/call-for-papers-thirteen-annual/>

2025 Conference Keynote Panel: Friday, May 30

Opportunities and Challenges in the Age of Technology-Enhanced Education

PART I: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly changing our world. Technologies driven by AI influence our personal and professional lives, and they are transforming how courses are taught and how students learn. Moderated by Dr. Ann Gates, the panelists will describe how AI can be used to personalize learning, enhance understanding and analysis of complex data, and support management of courses, knowledge, and peer learning. In addition, they will touch on the impact of AI on the workforce, including ensuring that graduates have competencies on the responsible and ethical use of AI. Following opening statements, a discussion will explore solutions to challenges that come with the rapid adoption of generative AI and ways to rethink how courses are delivered and how students learn.

PART II: This interactive session is structured as a gallery walk that allows attendees to move from station to station to meet with each panelist from Part I, ask questions, and share your own approaches in integrating AI into the classroom. The session provides attendees an opportunity to view demonstrations, review course materials, and gain a deeper understanding of exemplars that enhance teaching and learning with AI and emphasize implications of AI.



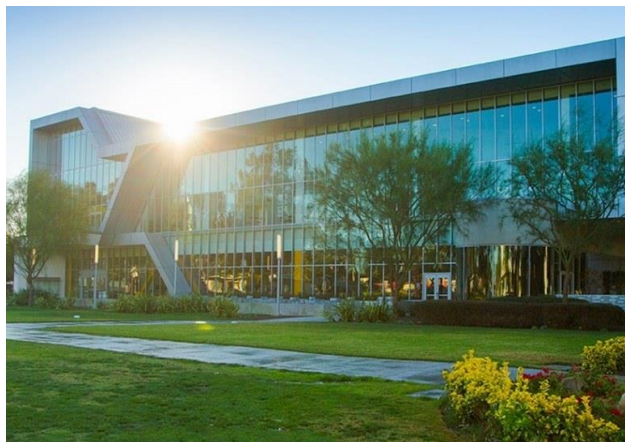
1 - Quiroz Gates

Panel Discussion Moderated by Ann Quiroz Gates. Dr. Gates is Senior Advisor to the Provost for Strategic STEM Initiatives and the past Senior Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs at the University of Texas at El Paso, where she holds the AT&T Distinguished Professorship. Dr. Gates also served as the Chair of the Computer Science Department and Associate VP of Research and Sponsored Projects. She is the Executive Director of the Computing Alliance of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (CAHSI), a nationally recognized network focused on the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Hispanics in computing. Gates serves on the NSF Committee on Equal Opportunities in Science and Engineering, the Advisory Committee for the NSF Office of Advanced Cyberinfrastructure, Research Council for the State University of New York system, and several study groups for the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine.

2025 PLTLIS Conference

Opportunities and Challenges in the Age of Technology-Enhanced Education

In-Person or Virtual: Hybrid Format



 **Hosted by California State University Dominguez Hills**

Carson, California (Los Angeles)

 **Dates:**

Wednesday – Saturday, May 28–31, 2025

Early Bird Registration Rates Available until April 28th

<https://pltlis.org/2025-pltlis-conference-registration/>

In-Person registration fees include breakfast, lunch, and breaks

 **Bring a Team to the PLTLIS Annual Conference!**

We are looking forward to welcoming experienced and novice practitioners in Los Angeles!

Contribute a Paper for Session on Peer Support at MAA MathFest!

Sacramento, California, August 6-9, 2025

Peer support includes all models of instruction using peers interacting with students to support their academic success. The aftermath of the pandemic and national trends away from remediation have reignited interest in this effective pedagogical tool. This session will introduce participants to the diversity of peer support models in use across the country, incorporating perspectives from faculty, staff, and students.

Corey Shanbrom, from California State University, Sacramento, is organizing the session titled *Peer Support in College Mathematics*, which will be held at the [MAA MathFest](#) in Sacramento, CA on August 6-9, 2025.

!!Abstracts are due April 15, and can be submitted [here](#).

We welcome any questions you may have: corey.shanbrom@csus.edu.

Thank you!

PLTL Reduces Achievement Disparities! An Amazing Study on PLTL in General Chemistry at Indiana University, Indianapolis, 24 Years in the Making

PLOSONe published a paper by Partha Basu, David J. Malik, and Steven Graunke in February 2025 which presents a longitudinal study of a two-semester General Chemistry sequence which, since 1998, has incorporated Peer-Led Team Learning at Indiana University Indianapolis (previously known as Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, IUPUI).

Abstract: The “First Year Experience” is a critical component of retention of STEM majors. Often, general chemistry has been labeled as a “gatekeeper” course for STEM careers due to a high attrition rate and a course that leads to increased time for graduation when students are inadequately prepared. We demonstrate that the active learning strategy *Peer-Led Team Learning* (PLTL) model increases student retention (%DFW calculated from earned grades A through F plus withdrawals, W) and success (%ABC calculated from earned grades A through F). We have analyzed approximately 24 years of data in general chemistry I (~20,000 students), using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), which showed progressive, significant improvement in both student success and completion metrics. A Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM), using a combination of course and student-level variables, demonstrated the impact of PLTL on internal exam metrics and overall course grades. Further, HLM modeling assessed the impact of PLTL controlling for various student demographics. PLTL strongly impacted URM student completion rates to a greater degree than well-represented students, reducing the URM/non-URM achievement gap.

 Read the paper: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0318882>

PLTL and Engineering: Best Faculty Paper Award at ASEE Gulf Southwest Conference

- Catherine Unite reports from the University of Texas at Arlington

I am excited to share that our joint PLTL paper with Dr. Haiying Huang (UTA Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering) won the Best Faculty Paper Award at the recent American Society of Engineering Education (ASEE) Gulf Southwest Conference, held March 9-11, 2025, which was hosted by the College of Engineering at the University of Texas at Arlington (<https://uta.engineering/asee-2025/>)

The award-winning collaborative paper, *Integrating Peer-Led-Team Learning (PLTL) and Design Thinking to Improve Student Success in Engineering Statics*, was authored by Dr. Haiying Huang, and Catherine Unite (Director, Academic Success Center), and Monica Franco (Program Manager, Academic Success Center), and is [available here](#).

Queen Mary University of London PLTL Team Nominated for a National Award

- Tony Michael reports from London

Across the United Kingdom, research in higher education is coordinated through Advance HE (formerly known as the Higher Education Academy, or HEA). Every year, this organization makes prestigious national awards under two different categories. Individuals can be nominated as “National Teaching Fellows” (NTF’s) and collaborative teams can receive a “Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence” (CATE).

Both the NTF and the CATE are highly competitive. For the latter, each university can only make a single nomination in any given year. Consequently, there must be an internal competition to agree on the university’s strongest team to go forward to the national judges. Hence, even being nominated for a CATE is recognition of exceptional collaborative work.

At Queen Mary University of London (QMUL), based in the heart of the East End of London, UK, the practice of PLTL is led by the university's QM PLTL Team, or "PLTL Advisory Group" (further details available [here](#)). It is with great pride that we share here that the "QM PLTL Team" has been nominated for a CATE this year. With only 15-20 awards made each year nationally (from a pool of between 100 and 200 universities across the UK), success is far from guaranteed.

As the "team leader," formally the QM PLTL Team Lead, I take this opportunity to recognize the fantastic contributions of everyone involved in the QM PLTL Team:

- Dr. Valentina Aparicio (Queen Mary Academy)
- George Borrie (Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry)
- Dr. Roussel de Carvalho (Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences)
- Prof Graham Easton (Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry)
- Dr. Sally Faulkner (Deputy Team Leader, School of Biological & Behavioral Sciences)
- Prof Lesley Howell (School of Physical & Chemical Sciences)
- Catherine Mills (Faculty of Science & Engineering)
- Dr. Ruth Rose (School of Biological & Behavioral Sciences)
- Redwan Shahid (Office of the Principal)
- Hannah Wilton (Senior Peer Leader, Faculty of Science & Engineering)
- Dr. Xue Zhou (School of Business & Management)

I look forward to authoring a follow-up article when we learn the outcome of this year's competition. Until then, I will struggle to type any articles at all, as I will have my fingers so firmly crossed!

Bringing PLTL to Organic Chemistry at UTEP: Built by Peer Leaders for Students

- Iliana Ramirez and Sophia Borrego report from the University of Texas at El Paso

Organic Chemistry can feel like an insurmountable challenge. For many students, it's not just another class, it's a wall standing between them and their dreams in science and healthcare. As

pre-med students, we understand that struggle. We've seen peers spend countless hours trying to make sense of difficult concepts, searching for resources, and feeling like they had nowhere to turn for the kind of structured support they needed.



2 - Iliana Ramirez

Major: Biological Science

Minor: Public Health

Collegiate Senator of Science



3 - Sophia Borrego

Major: Biological Science

Minor: General Business

Senator At-Large

As student leaders in the Student Government Association, we knew we had to listen. Over and over, students shared the same concern: Ochem was tough, and they felt like they were facing it alone. Those who had experienced Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) in General Chemistry spoke about how it had transformed their understanding, giving them not just knowledge but confidence. They didn't just want PLTL for Ochem—they needed it.

Making this a reality took months of work. We connected with university administrators, faculty, and General Chemistry PLTL leaders, and we were fortunate to receive the guidance of Dr. Fraiman and Dr. Dreyfuss, who, despite being from other universities, kindly agreed to help us bring this program to UTEP. Their support, along with the determination of our peers, made this possible.

This summer, PLTL for Organic Chemistry will finally happen. More than just a study session, it will be a space where students voluntarily work together, build each other up, and take control of their learning. The real reward isn't just launching the program, it's seeing our fellow students succeed, knowing they won't have to struggle alone. Organic Chemistry may be tough, but at UTEP, we lift each other up.

PLTL Recognized (Again!) at the QMUL Festival of Education

- Tony Michael reports from London

On Friday March 14, Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) held Day One of the annual "Festival of Education." As the Deputy Vice-Principal for Education at QMUL, it was my very great pleasure both to open and close last week's festival. The focus for Day One was "excellence in employability" and the festival opened with a panel discussion of how QMUL is acting to embed the development of graduate attributes and skills that promote employability in our curricula.



For the opening panel, in addition to Dr. Radhika Desai (Dentistry) and Professor Rachel Male (Economics & Finance), I was joined on stage by Dr. Sally Faulkner and by one of this year's PLTL peer leaders, Miss Amina Nur (Biological & Behavioral Sciences). Both Sally and Amina spoke with great enthusiasm and strong personal conviction on the ways in which PLTL develops self-efficacy, resilience, and other graduate attributes that are so prized by employers. This echoed themes that had been raised at last year's festival where our former senior peer leader, Hannah Wilton, had spoken on the value of PLTL with equal commitment.

Unsurprisingly, colleagues from across the university were queuing up to find out more about PLTL and to learn how this form of peer-led learning could change the lives of students in subjects ranging from A to Z (accountancy to zoology). It was, as ever, wonderful to have others see the power of PLTL as an educational approach that changes lives, particularly for peer leaders.

I very much look forward to continuing that conversation on Day Two of the festival (scheduled for June 10th, after this year's PLTLIS annual conference).

Short Takes

- **TIP:** Making a presentation? Include a final slide that mentions the PLTLIS Annual Conference and the Society's website: www.pltlis.org
- **TIP:** During Peer Leader Orientation at the beginning of every semester, each new Peer Leader signs up for "The Peer Leader" newsletter on the homepage of PLTLIS with their personal email (to keep in touch after graduation): Go to www.pltlis.org and sign up!
- Love social media? Already on LinkedIn? The PLTL International Society is looking for someone who would post updates, announcements, campus activities. Is that you? Contact info@ptlis.org to share your enthusiasm and spread the word about PLTL!
- **SHARE NEWS FROM YOUR CAMPUS!** Send news items, story suggestions, and updates from your campus Peer-Led Team Learning program to info@ptlis.org



At the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) "preview" meetings are held on Mondays and Fridays for all Peer Leaders to discuss topics to be covered that week and activities that could be implemented during workshop sessions to improve students' understanding. In this photo, Peer Leaders are working on one of the activities.