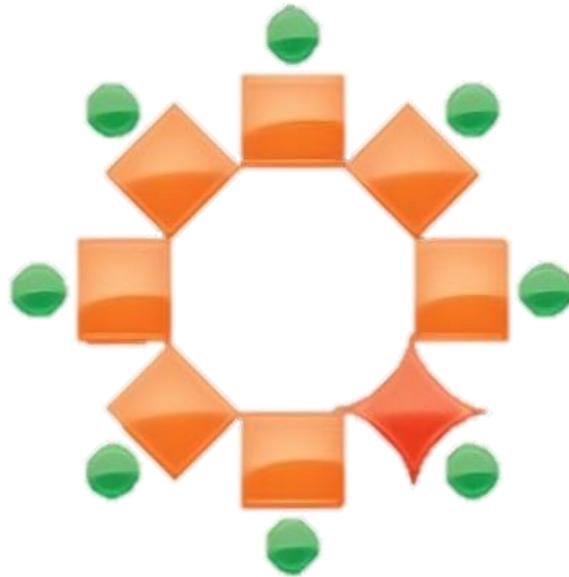


# The Peer Leader July 2025



PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING  
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

**Issue No. 42** Contact: [info@pltlis.org](mailto:info@pltlis.org)

- 📅 Advances in Peer-Led Learning Issue #5: Deadline Extended
- 📷 2025 Conference: Memories in Images
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## Message from the PLTLIS President

Dear members of the PLTLIS community,

As we move past the Summer Solstice and enter July, I pause to reflect on the month of May. This was a very big month for PLTLIS and the Peer-Led Team Learning community that the Society supports. Three reasons why May was such a key month for PLTLIS? First, the Society held another very successful annual conference, generously hosted at the California State

University – Dominguez Hills. On Thursday May 29, after very warm and welcoming opening remarks from the CSU-DH Provost, Dr. Phil LaPolt, and our gracious host, Professor Mohsen Beheshti, we were treated to an impressive array of speakers during the three days of the conference.



Day 1 began with Professor Joanna Wolfe (Carnegie Mellon University) sharing her expert insights into how teams can interact to harness “collective intelligence” before leading an interactive workshop that addressed the importance of “psychological safety” as a pre-requisite for learning. On the morning of Friday, May 30 (Day 2), Dr. Ann Gates (University of Texas at El Paso) facilitated an expert panel to explore the “Opportunities and Challenges in the Age of Technology-Enhanced Education.” Dr. Samar Gad (Kingston University London), Dr. Michael Pope (Harvard University), Ethan Debnath and Samar Ali (Pluto Learning), Professor Ana Fraiman (Northeastern Illinois University) and Sofia Delgado (Yale Graduate School) all shared insights into the benefits and risks associated with the use of generative artificial intelligence in education.

On the morning of Saturday May 31 (Day 3), Mohsen Beheshti chaired a second expert panel, this time on “Assessing Efficacy of Peer-Led Learning” where we gained insights on study design and data interpretation from Michele Dunbar (CSU-DH), Ryan Khoo (CSU-DH), Professor Corey Shanbrom (California State University at Sacramento), and Dr. Heather Thiry (University of Colorado at Boulder).

A pre-conference workshop, on Wednesday May 28, focused on how campus programs might prepare Peer Leaders for their dynamic role, and the need for credit-bearing courses to gain visibility; this thought-provoking session was facilitated by AE Dreyfuss in person, and online by Ana Fraiman, Karmen Yu, and Sofia Delgado. In terms of “lessons learned” from this year’s

meeting, it was apparent that while it was relatively easy to adapt and reschedule sessions on site, it was harder to keep remote / online attendees fully informed when sessions were delayed or overran. We will learn from this for next year's annual conference to be held in New York City. In addition to the keynote presentations listed above, this year's annual conference once again gave lots of opportunities to network and share thinking and findings on peer-led team learning among PLTL practitioners and peer leaders. We left the event with an understanding of how PLTLIS continues to provide a great platform for developing and maintaining a connected community of practice around the world.



**The second major development** in May was the formal launch of the Society's first ever Impact Report, available now to access or download from the PLTLIS website, <https://ptlis.org/>. This ambitious document summarises the positive impacts that the Society has had since the incorporation of PLTLIS in 2012. In addition to facts and figures that illustrate the role of the Society in growing the PLTL community, the document is brought to life with five perspectives: a student participant, a senior peer leader, a member of faculty, a learning center director, and a senior administrator. *We would appreciate hearing your thoughts on this document and how it might be improved, so please submit your comments either to [info@ptlis.org](mailto:info@ptlis.org) or to me at [a.michael@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:a.michael@qmul.ac.uk).*

**The third development** occurred at the PLTLIS Board of Directors meeting on May 31, when there was a “changing of the guard.”

Three Directors came to the end of their terms. We note, with thanks, the contributions made by:

- Sofia Delgado (formerly University of Texas at El Paso, now Yale School of Graduate Studies)
- Lisa Kuehne (Washington University at St Louis)
- Allison McKee (formerly University of Houston Downtown, now Nabors Industries)

The following four Directors were re-elected:

- AE Dreyfuss (New York City College of Technology, CUNY)
- Ana Fraiman (Northeastern Illinois University)
- Tony Michael (Queen Mary University of London)
- Catherine Unite (University of Texas at Arlington)

And three new Directors were elected to the Board, each having worked on one or more committees for at least a year:

- Megan Daschbach (Washington University at St Louis)
- Sally Faulkner (Queen Mary University of London)
- Karmen Yu (Montclair State University, New Jersey)

We welcome and thank the Directors for all that they have done (and will do) to help the Society adapt and thrive in an increasingly financially constrained climate. Everyone involved in PLTL at universities around the world benefits from all that the PLTLIS Board and committees do to support PLTL programs and practitioners. To circle back to the major message at this year’s conference, our strength lies in the networks and connections that we forge to better support our community of practice and deliver toward the vision, mission and strategic goals of the Society (<https://pltlis.org/vision-mission-goals/>).

Sending every best wish, as always,

*Tony*

**Prof. Tony Michael**

PLTLIS President, Board of Directors

[WWW.PLTLLIS.ORG](http://WWW.PLTLLIS.ORG)

 **Submit your paper to Advances in Peer-Led Learning!**

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**The journal of the Peer-Led Team Learning International Society**

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Have you made a presentation about Peer-Led Team Learning? Do you have aspects of your PLTL program to share? Are there practices of peer learning that should be disseminated to a wider audience?

 **ADD TO THE CONVERSATION ON PEER-LED LEARNING!**

 **Deadline for Submissions for Issue #5, Fall 2025 Extended to: Tuesday, September 2, 2025**

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

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

 **From the 2025 PLTLIS Conference in Images**

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**Opportunities and Challenges in the Age of Technology-Enhanced Education**

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Hosted by California State University Dominguez Hills

Carson, California (Los Angeles)

Wednesday – Saturday, May 28-May 31, 2025

**NOTE:** *Conference participants have access to the presentations for three months through the Whova platform*



1 - Wish you were here!



2 - Sharing practices in person and online: Pre-Conference Workshop



3 - Loker Student Union Staircase: Eyes on the Stars, Feet on the Ground



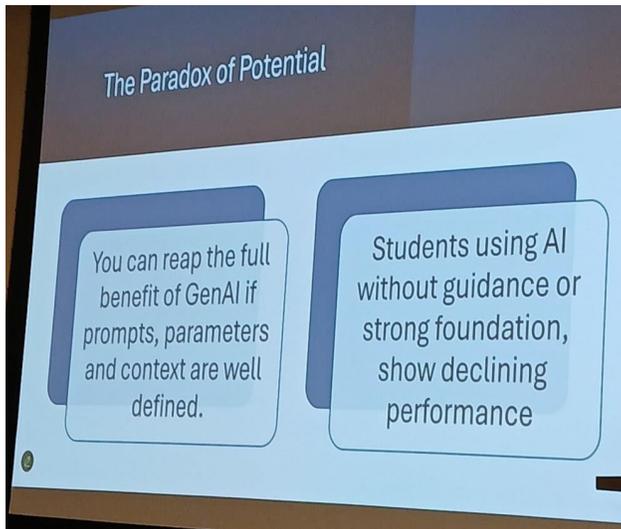
4 - Great Conversations



5 - Listening to a Presentation



6 - Discussing AI Applications



7 - The Paradox of AI Potential



*8 - Beautiful Jacaranda – California Flora*



9 - Poster Discussion

## The fundamental problem

- The naive approach to program assessment: students who took a PAL outperformed students who didn't, therefore PAL works!
- If your program is optional, then the two populations (those who opt in and those who do not) may differ in important ways, and outcomes cannot be directly compared!
- That is:
  - Not all students receive the treatment.
  - Some students are more likely to opt into the treatment.
  - Some students are more likely to be successful even without the treatment.
- For example:
  - Maybe all the students who took a PAL were already A students.
  - Maybe they don't work full time jobs or take care of family members.
  - Maybe they have better study skills or academic networks.
  - "All (three) of the students who came to my Friday night review session got an A on my exam!"

C. Shanbrom S / 11

10 - Issues in Assessment



11 - Greetings from the Pacific!



12 - See you next year!

## The Big Apple is Hosting the 2026 PLTL Conference

Wednesday, May 27 to Saturday, May 30

 Save the dates!

***—Plan Now to Come to New York City!***



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2026 PLTLIS Annual Conference at City Tech

New York City College of Technology, City University of New York

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*Can you tell which one is the peer leader? Come to next year's conference to receive this pin!*

*—An invitation from Mitsue Nakamura, from the University of Houston Downtown*

## Profiles: Directors Elected to the PLTLIS Board

Directors whose term ended in 2025 and who were re-elected to serve on the Board included AE Dreyfuss (New York City College of Technology, CUNY); Ana Fraiman (Northeastern Illinois University); Tony Michael (Queen Mary University of London) who was also re-elected as President; and Catherine Unite (University of Texas Arlington) who was also re-elected as Secretary.

Three new Directors were elected to the Board, each having worked on one or more committees for at least a year:

- Megan Daschbach (Washington University at St Louis)
- Sally Faulkner (Queen Mary University of London)
- Karmen Yu (Montclair State University, New Jersey)

Directors serve for three-year terms. Here are brief backgrounds of the seven newly-elected Directors and their statements of their expectations for service on the Board (in italics).

*NOTE: To serve on the PLTLIS Board of Directors, participate in the Society's activities for at least a year! For more information, email us at [info@pltlis.org](mailto:info@pltlis.org) to find out how your interests and time commitments can be matched with Society activities.*

—For a list of all members of the Board of Directors, go to <https://pltlis.org/board-of-directors/>

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### *Megan Daschbach*

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Teaching Professor in Chemistry at Washington University in St. Louis, in St. Louis, Missouri. She has served as the Director of the General Chemistry PLTL program at “WashU” for fourteen years and served on a number of governing bodies there. She was a member of the Host Committee for the 2022 PLTLIS Conference at WashU, has served as a reviewer of papers for *Advances in Peer-Led Learning*, and is a contributing author for two manuscripts in the Fall 2024 issue of *APLL*.

**—Washington University in St. Louis recently celebrated 20 years of PLTL. Now embedded in General Chemistry, Calculus and Introductory Physics courses, it is a staple of first-year STEM courses for our undergraduate students. It is important to me that our institution maintain close ties to the PLTL International Society and play a key role in the leadership of this pedagogical community. The educational landscape is facing significant changes. From the use of AI to the mandates to remove DEI programming, PLTL must stand strong and continue**

***to champion peer review and peer discussion as pillars of intellectual progress. It must defend its truths that the best solutions can only come when all voices are heard and elevated and when all perspectives are valued.***



13 - Megan Daschbach

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***A.E. Dreyfuss***

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Learning Developer in Adult Learning and Leadership. She was the Project Manager for the National Dissemination Project to disseminate the PLTL model in STEM disciplines funded by the National Science Foundation (1999-2006), and prepared some 800 Peer Leaders who facilitated learning for groups of students at City University of New York (CUNY) campuses over 15 years. In 2011, she co-founded the Peer-Led Team Learning International Society and was elected its first President (2012-2014). She is a co-editor, with Andrea McWilliams and James Becvar, of *Facilitating Team-Based Learning: A Peer Leader's Guide to Leading Learning Activities*, published by PLTLIS Press (2019). She is an Associate Editor of the PLTLIS journal, *Advances in Peer-Led Learning*; serves as a Workbooks Series Editor, edits *The Peer Leader*, the PLTLIS newsletter, and supports other PLTLIS committees.

***—I am excited that the Society is embarking on finding means to develop a stronger base, starting with the Impact Report, summarizing twelve years of creating a cross-institutional, cross-disciplinary, cross-hierarchical organization that is poised to grow.***



14 - A.E. Dreyfuss

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## Sally Faulkner

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Reader in Conservation and Ecology and serves as the Director of Education for the School of Biological and Behavioural Sciences (SBBS) at Queen Mary University of London. She introduced Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) to SBBS in 2021. Her particular interest lies in the skills development of peer leaders, especially in how the PLTL model enhances their confidence and self-efficacy. She is a member of the PLTL Advisory Board at Queen Mary University of London and advocates for both PLTL and PLTLIS within the UK higher education sector. Since introducing PLTL at SBBS in 2021, 30 peer leaders are engaged in reaching approximately 270 students annually across three undergraduate modules (semesters).

She currently serves as Chair of the PLTLIS Research Committee. She is committed to its vision—particularly in developing a community of practice around research into peer learning.

She has presented and led workshops at multiple PLTLIS conferences and contributes to the Society's scholarly community as both an author and reviewer for *Advances in Peer-Led Learning*.

***—I believe deeply in the power of Peer-Led Team Learning to transform student engagement, achievement, and confidence. As Director of Education at the School of Biological and Behavioural Sciences (SBBS) at Queen Mary University of London, I have led the implementation of PLTL across multiple undergraduate modules and witnessed its impact on both learners and peer leaders. I am particularly invested in the skills development and self-efficacy of peer leaders, and I see Board service as an opportunity to support and expand PLTLIS's mission globally. I also hope to contribute to the strategic integration of research, practice, and community building across the Society.***



15 - Sally Faulkner

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## Ana Fraiman

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Professor Emerita in Chemistry at Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois. She implemented the first Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) program in Organic Chemistry at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) in 2000 and then helped develop the PLTL workshop model in General Chemistry and Physical Chemistry in the Department of Chemistry. The workshop model was then disseminated to Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science at NEIU. As a Latina member of the faculty, she has sought opportunities to mentor minorities within the Sciences.

Since 2017, Ana has served as a Board Member of the Peer-Led Team Learning International Society (PLTLIS). Also in 2017, she served as the Chief Editor of the *PLTLIS Workbook for Organic Chemistry 1*, working with her former Peer Leaders to develop the first workbook publication for the PLTLIS Press Workbook Series. This workbook has been used at several universities in the USA. She is now one of the four Workbook Series Editors.

Ana's recent work focuses on integrating ChatGPT reliability in predicting the spectral data of organic molecules. A recent study found that ChatGPT's outputs were consistent with experimental data and existing databases, suggesting its potential as a tool for designing educational problems without infringing on copyrighted material. Her work exemplifies the growing intersection of artificial intelligence and education.

***—I am interested in disseminating and promoting the adoption and sustainability to PLTL programs across disciplines, providing coaching for faculty to execute the program with the best possible outcome; developing the certification of peer leaders after proper preparation of the faculty, and developing a certification online course for peer leaders.***



16 - Ana Fraiman

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### **Tony Michael**

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Deputy Vice-Principal for Education at Queen Mary University of London since 2019. He gained a BSc in Zoology (1988) and a PhD in Biochemistry (1991) from University College London and was first appointed to a faculty position in biochemistry and molecular biology (1994-1997) at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine. After serving as a Senior Lecturer at University College London (1997-2005), he changed focus toward an education leader, initially as Head of

the Graduate School and Deputy Dean for Education at St George's, University of London (2005-2013) and subsequently at Queen Mary University of London (2013-current). Having joined QMUL as a Director of Education (in the School of Biological & Chemical Sciences), he was appointed Dean for Education across the Faculty of Science & Engineering (2018-2023) and in 2019 promoted to his present position. In addition to being a senior administrator, he is a full Professor of Reproductive Biology and continues to teach final year students in biology, zoology and medical genetics.

Tony has been the senior academic champion for PLTL at Queen Mary University of London since 2017. He served on the PLTLIS Research Committee from 2019 to 2021, and has served on the PLTLIS Board of Directors from 2022 to 2025 (serving as President since September 2024), on the PLTLIS Finance Committee (as Chair) from 2024, and on the PLTLIS Conference Committee from 2024. In addition, he has reviewed manuscripts for the Society's journal, *Advances in Peer-Led Learning*.

***—As an experienced educator, I recognise and value the role that peer-learning offers to the personal and professional development of students, specifically the PLTL model. I am committed to do all that I can to enhance and promote the practice of PLTL around the world by serving on the Board of Directors and on one or more of the PLTLIS Committees. I want to continue to work with other Directors to stabilize and secure the future of the Society as the pressures on Higher Education mount and we're increasingly asked to improve education programs with increasing demands on staff time and increasing challenges to HE funding.***



17 - Tony Michael

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### ***Catherine Unite***

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Director, Academic Success Center, Division of Student Success at the University of Texas at Arlington. In Fall 2020, she was instrumental in launching the Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) program with two STEM courses. This academic year, the program supports fifteen courses with 79 PLTL leaders and nine mentors, and it is widely embraced by students, faculty, and university leadership as a high-impact practice that enhances learning and engagement. She has had over three decades of international experience in higher education, specializing in academic support

and peer-led learning across South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. She has served as an International Certified Trainer with the International Office for Supplemental Instruction (SI) at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and led the SI National Office for Southern Africa at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. In the U.S., she contributed as a faculty member for the Institute on Peer Educators, hosted by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. She also currently serves on the Advisory Council for Knack Tutoring and has served for over a decade as an international judge for the Australasian PASS Leader Awards, collaborating with colleagues from the former PASS National Centre at Manchester University and the European Centre for SI-PASS.

***—Throughout my career, I have had the opportunity to build programs from the ground up—including national centers and large-scale institutional initiatives—all rooted in a deep commitment to student success and transformative learning. Being part of the PLTLIS community continues to be a source of inspiration and professional growth. I am deeply committed to advancing best practices in peer education and value the Society’s role in fostering collaboration, promoting research-based strategies, and supporting excellence in teaching and learning. Over the past three years, I have had the privilege of contributing to the Society during a time of renewed momentum, innovation, and shared purpose. Supporting PLTLIS’s mission alongside a group of dedicated and forward-thinking educators has been deeply rewarding. As secretary, I have focused on ensuring clear communication, continuity, and organizational efficiency in support of the Board’s work. I would welcome the opportunity to build on this foundation and continue contributing meaningfully to the Society’s strategic goals. I believe in the transformative power of PLTL and in the vital role PLTLIS plays in strengthening and expanding this work both nationally and internationally. Continuing in this role would allow me to serve while continuing to learn and grow, contributing to a vibrant, student-centered community dedicated to impactful peer learning.***



18 - CATHERINE UNITE

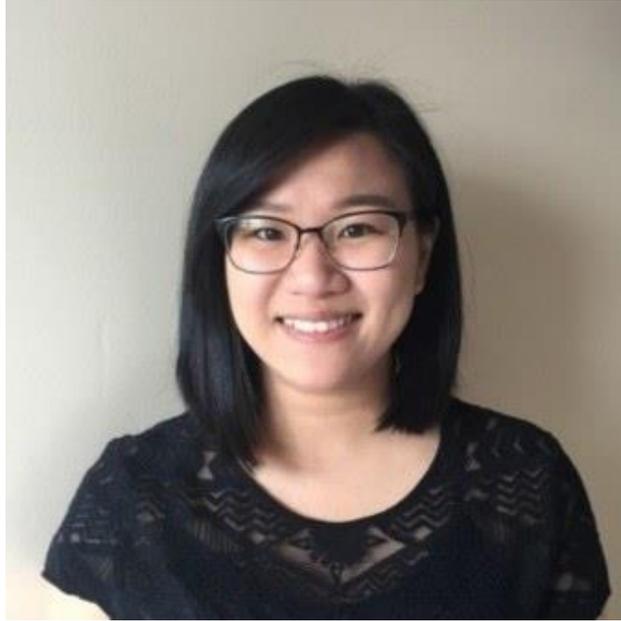
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*Karmen Yu*

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Teaches mathematics courses at Montclair State University (MSU) in Montclair, New Jersey, as an Assistant Teaching Professor. She also serves as the IBIS Workshop Coordinator, providing training and guidance to the Peer Leaders in the Department of Mathematics at MSU. Karmen was a PLTL Peer Leader as an Applied Mathematics undergraduate student at New York City College of Technology (City Tech), City University of New York (CUNY). As a Mathematics Education doctoral student at MSU, she contributed her PLTL experience to design, pilot, and implement the Inquiry-Based Instructional Support (IBIS) workshop model for Calculus I and II students. The design of IBIS Workshop was informed by the peer-led cooperative workshop models of PLTL and SI and the Complex Instruction (CI) (Cohen & Lotan, 2014) instructional approach. In her love of PLTL, Karmen focused her dissertation research to examining undergraduate Calculus I students' agentic participation in the parallel instructional spaces of coursework and IBIS sessions and completed her Ph.D. in 2024.

***—The practice of PLTL holds a special place in my heart. It taught me countless valuable life lessons, including project management and problem-solving skills, and developing a researcher and leadership mindset. It opened doors to research opportunities for me. Moreover, PLTL inspired me to fulfill my dream of becoming a mathematics educator who engages students in developing conceptual understanding. To this end, in the past year, I have served on the Workbooks Committee as a series editor with Jim Becvar, Ana Fraiman, and AE Dreyfuss focusing on the Calculus I workbook and working to transition the workbooks to an online printing and digital service. I also am interested in continuing as a member of the Research Committee in developing proposals to explore other facets of PLTL. I look forward to giving back to the PLTL community and supporting the Peer-Led Team Learning International Society (PLTLIS) in its effort to expand its mission.***



19 - KARMEN YU

 Inspired by PLTL! A Graduate Student's Reflections



20 - Jyotish Kumar

I came to know about the Peer Leader Program for the first time through undergraduate students in my lab and my research advisor, Dr. Mahesh Narayan. I came to know more about it during a short talk with Dr. James E. Becvar. The Peer Leader Program at UTEP is a transformative and empowering platform that acts as a bridge between professors and students and benefits both the undergraduate students and the Peer Leaders involved. I asked out of curiosity about how peer leaders get paid and Dr. Becvar explained to me that they have a website for selling general chemistry books and generating funds to pay Peer Leaders. It was quite impressive to see a self-sustaining system helping students to learn and grow at UTEP.

Transitioning to university was challenging for me as an undergraduate student. As part of the first-year experience, peer leading helps new students make a smooth transition into university life by providing them with someone who can offer academic guidance, emotional support, and practical advice from a student's perspective. At the same time, Peer Leaders themselves gain invaluable experience in leadership, communication, and skills that are essential in any academic or professional setting.

I've personally witnessed the power of leadership and mentorship in action through this program. There were many undergraduates in my lab who were very helpful in my initial training days in the lab as a graduate student. This included Sofia Delgado, who was accepted into many prestigious graduate programs, including Yale University, and recently started her PhD there after graduating from UTEP. Peer mentorship is not just helpful, it's essential. It fosters meaningful connections, boosts academic confidence, and builds a campus culture where students support each other and grow together. At UTEP, the Peer Leader Program truly exemplifies the kind of student-focused initiative that makes a lasting impact on individuals and the broader university community. Peer Leaders encourage students to learn more about the job responsibilities and application process and play a pivotal role in shaping their future.

Beyond the classroom, Peer Leaders become part of a supportive, team-oriented community where they build meaningful connections and grow both personally and professionally. The Peer Leaders program is an excellent example of a great initiative at UTEP and should inspire other universities to introduce this Peer Leaders program in their undergraduate courses.

## Short Takes



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 *SHARE THE QR CODE!*

*—GO TO [PLTLIS.ORG](http://PLTLIS.ORG)!*

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-  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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:info@ptlis.org)

# Generative AI in CS Education Consortium

- Educators, evaluators and industry leaders supporting educators
- Development and maintenance of high-quality models for integrating GenAI in CS
- Communities of practices to support dissemination & adoption

Join GMIS and the CAHSI session on Integrating GenAI into Your Curriculum

[cahsialliance@gmail.com](mailto:cahsialliance@gmail.com)



SAVE THE DATE: OCTOBER 2-4, 2025

2025 GMIS CONFERENCE  
SAN DIEGO, CA

The poster features a city skyline at night, a globe with mathematical symbols (delta, pi, infinity), and palm trees.

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☆ *Upcoming Conference*

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