CSUDH
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
DOMINGUEZ HILLS

2025

Peer-Led Team Learning International Society

Thirteenth Annual Conference Program

Opportunities and Challenges in the Age
Of Technology-Enhanced Education

Hosted by California State University Dominguez Hills

Carson, California May 28 – 31, 2025

Peer-Led Team Learning International Society

Vision

The vision of the Society is that Peer-Led Team Learning is integral to educational and learning practice.

Mission

The mission of the Society is to foster learning through peer-led teams by supporting practitioners and institutions.

Goals

To achieve the mission, the Society will transform formal and informal education by:

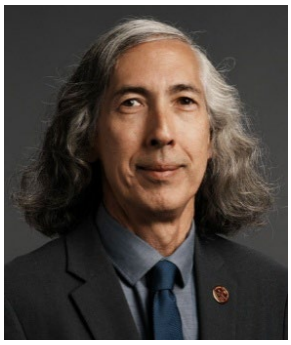
1. Maintaining and enhancing an international organization
2. Disseminating resources, practices, and research
3. Preparing practitioners and peer leaders
4. Supporting the implementation of PLTL programs across disciplines and institutions
5. Facilitating the incorporation of PLTL implementation in institutional strategic plans.

Advocacy, Networking, Resources

Welcome from Philip S. LaPolt

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

California State University Dominguez Hills



It is my distinct honor and privilege to welcome you all to California State University Dominguez Hills and to the 2025 PLTL International Society's Annual Conference. We celebrate and share the spirit of inquiry, discovery, and innovation that characterizes this conference, and defines our university.

It's clear that technology has and will continue to significantly influence peer-led teaching, reshaping how students collaborate, share knowledge, and learn from one another. Opportunities for increased accessibility and flexibility, enhanced collaboration tools, personalized learning on adaptive learning platforms, and assistive technologies must be balanced with concerns regarding ethical use, digital inequity, accuracy of information, and privacy. Beyond this, there is the ever-present need for effective assessment, teamwork, and the creation of emotional safety and well-being among all. The discussions and insights shared at this conference will do much to advance our collective understanding and practice of PLTL and are strongly aligned with our mission to support thriving students and educators while providing equitable access and a culture of care that supports the success of all.

Thank you for your participation and welcome again to the Toro Nation!

Sincerely,

Philip S. LaPolt, Ph.D

Welcome To The Thirteenth Annual Conference, PLTL Practitioners!

It is my honour to welcome you to the 13th Annual Conference of the Society. These conferences, held at the end of May of every year, are at the very heart of PLTLIS. They allow participants to meet and exchange ideas that serve to strengthen Peer-Led Team Learning around the world through the identification and sharing of best practices and innovations.

This year, we'll be focusing on the timely and topical issue of how we might embrace and harness artificial intelligence (AI) and other educational technology developments to improve PLTL (and other forms of peer learning). This is a fantastic opportunity to explore how we can balance increased use of ed tech against the crucial human elements of learning through PLTL. We are also launching the first Impact Report of PLTLIS, looking back over the considerable achievements of the Society over the last twelve years (from 2012 to 2024). There will be an opportunity to share your views on that report and your ideas for how the Society can continue to grow and develop over the next five to ten years.

The greatest strengths of our Society are the extensive international network of PLTL practitioners and the willingness of those colleagues and friends to share experiences and to develop new approaches. Nowhere is this generous sharing of ideas more evident than at our annual conferences. So I take this opportunity to welcome you to California State University Dominguez Hills for what I know will be a gathering – in person and virtually – that is as enjoyable as it is thought-provoking. If this is your first PLTLIS conference, welcome into our PLTL family. And if you have attended some or all of the annual conferences between 2012 and 2024, welcome back! PLTLIS is made richer by your support and participation.

Very best wishes for a great conference,

Tony

Prof. Tony Michael
PLTLIS President, Board of Directors

Welcome To The Thirteenth Annual Conference!

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

On behalf of the Conference Organizing Committee, we are pleased to welcome you to the 2025 Annual Peer-Led Team Learning International Society Conference!

This year's theme, **Opportunities and Challenges in the Age of Technology-Enhanced Education,** focuses on the transformative impact of technology on peer-led learning and education, and invites us to explore some of the most pressing questions in our field: What is the intersection of technology and human-centered educational practices? How can peer-led sessions foster engagement, camaraderie, and meaningful learning experiences in a world where technology is both a tool and a temptation? And at a time when student retention and involvement are under duress, how can we harness technological advances to strengthen our practices in higher education?

These are not easy questions, but they are timely, necessary, and deeply aligned with the mission of the Peer-Led Team Learning International Society. Over the coming days, a vibrant community of educators, peer leaders, students, and practitioners who are passionate about advancing collaborative learning through the Peer-Led Team Learning model and other inclusive, evidence-based practices will come together to share ideas, explore innovative teaching strategies, and celebrate the impact of PLTL in education.

We are honored to host such a diverse and dedicated group of participants. Whether you are a first-time attendee or a long-standing member of the PLTLIS family, we hope this experience will be both enriching and energizing. Let us use this time to connect, reflect, and move forward together toward a more empowering future in education.

Welcome to PLTLIS 2025!

Warm regards from the 2025 PLTLIS Conference Co-Chairs,

Mohsen Beheshti

Milka Montes

Pre-Conference Workshop
Wednesday, May 28, 2025
9:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Loker Student Union (LSU)

PREPARING PEER LEADERS TO FACILITATE SMALL GROUPS

This compressed hybrid session addresses selected experiential techniques and practices as the basis for a formal course that recognizes the interaction between and among the students in a learning group facilitated and led by a Peer Leader.

Participants will also examine how to develop a curriculum proposal for a credit-bearing course to be adopted at their campus.

Participants will:

- experience sample activities and assignments that can be incorporated in a peer leader preparation course
- discuss learning theories relevant to peer leader preparation
- examine examples of end-of-semester peer leader course artifacts
- work collaboratively to draft a course description proposal for peer leader preparation.

Facilitation of small groups is leadership development and is learned through experience based in learning theory, practice and reflection. The materials presented are part of a one-credit course developed and tested over 15 years.

Facilitators

AE Dreyfuss, Ed.D.
Ana Fraiman, Ph.D.
Karmen Yu, Ph.D.
Sofia Delgado

Program Overview – Day One
Thursday, May 29, 2025
Loker Student Union (LSU)

8:15 AM – 8:45 AM	**Welcoming Remarks** Tony Michael, President, PLTLIS Mohsen Beheshti, Conference Co-Chair **Philip S. LaPolt, Ph.D, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, CSU DH**
8:45 AM – 10:30 AM	**Introduction of Speaker** Milka Montes, Conference Co-Chair **Keynote Presentation** Harnessing Collective Intelligence and Managing Conflict on Your Team **Presenter: Joanna Wolfe**
10:45 AM – 11:45 AM	**Oral Presentations and Workshops** **Session A**
12:00 PM – 1:30PM	**Lunch & Discussion**
1:45 PM – 2:15 PM	**Oral Presentations & Workshops** **Session B**
2:30 PM – 4:00 PM	**Workshop** Running Team Meetings That Cultivate Psychological Safety **Presenter: Joanna Wolfe**

Program Overview – Day Two
Friday, May 30, 2025
Loker Student Union (LSU)

8:00 AM – 8:15 AM	**Opening Remarks** Mohsen Beheshti, CSU DH
8:15 AM – 9:30 AM	**Keynote Panel** Opportunities and Challenges in the Age of Technology-Enhanced Education **Moderator: Ann Quiroz Gates**
9:45 AM – 10:30 AM	**Gallery Walk** Uses and Practices of AI
10:45 AM – 11:15 AM	**Oral Presentations & Workshops** **Session A**
11:30 PM – 12:45 PM	**Lunch and Poster Presentations**
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	**Oral Presentations & Workshops** **Session B**
2:15 PM – 2:45 PM	**Oral Presentations and Workshops** **Session C**
2:50 PM – 3:20 PM	**Oral Presentations & Workshops** **Session D**
3:30 PM – 4:00 PM	**Plenary Discussion**

Program Overview – Day Three
Saturday, May 31, 2025
Loker Student Union (LSU)

8:15 AM – 8:30 AM	**Opening Remarks** Tony Michael, PLTLIS President
8:30 AM – 9:45 AM	**Panel Presentation** Assessing Efficacy of Peer-Led Learning **Moderator** Mohsen Beheshti, PLTLIS President
10:00 AM – 11:00 AM	**Oral Presentations**
11:15 PM – 11:30 PM	**Closing Remarks**
11:30 PM – 12:15 PM	**Lunch**
12:30 PM – 4:00 PM	**Meeting of the Board of Directors** **Peer-Led Team Learning International Society**

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2025

HARNESSING COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE AND MANAGING CONFLICT ON YOUR TEAM

Good teams are those that cultivate collective intelligence—the ability to coordinate and leverage the unique strengths, skills, and perspectives of their members—to achieve a complex goal. Achieving high collective intelligence requires teams to create plans that detail how they will align and build on each member's contributions. It also depends on individuals who can address disagreements and obstacles productively, turning challenges into opportunities for growth. This interactive presentation will describe planning strategies that teams can use to lay the groundwork for collective intelligence. Next, the presentation will model how to productively respond to team challenges, turning these into opportunities that can further improve the team. Participants will have an opportunity to reflect on their conflict styles and practice productively responding to a range of obstacles.

JOANNA WOLFE is Teaching Professor of English and Affiliated Faculty in Mechanical Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), where she designs communication and professional development courses for undergraduate and graduate students. The first edition of her textbook *Team Writing: A Guide to Working in Groups* has sold over 28,000 copies. A second edition of *Team Writing*, coauthored with Christopher Lam, was published alongside *Equity & Communication* in 2025 as part of the new *Bedford series in Technical and Professional Communication*. Dr. Wolfe is author of over 40 peer-reviewed publications. Her research on teamwork and collaboration has received funding from the National Science Foundation and received awards from the American Society of Engineering Education, the National Council for Teachers of English and the IEEE Professional Communication Society.

She is the Series Author of The Bedford Series for Technical and Professional Communication (2024): A series of in-depth, research-based books on technical and professional communication topics, including Writing about Data, Writing Proposals, Team Writing 2ed, and Equity and Communication.

Workshop Presentation
Thursday, May 29, 2025
Running Team Meetings That Cultivate Psychological Safety
Joanna Wolfe

Psychological safety is the belief that individuals can openly share ideas, ask questions, and admit mistakes without fear of negative repercussions. Teams with high psychological safety consistently demonstrate greater morale, collaboration, and productivity.

In this session, we will explore strategies for leaders to foster psychological safety within their teams. Participants will engage in role-playing activities to practice active listening and learn techniques for analyzing mistakes in ways that avoid defensiveness. Additionally, we will discuss methods for measuring psychological safety and review practical tools for structuring conversations that encourage open and honest communication.

KEYNOTE PANEL
FRIDAY, MAY 30, 2025
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.

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.

ANN QUIROZ GATES, MODERATOR, 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.

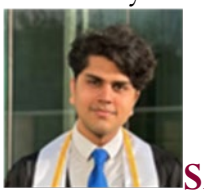
Gates received the 2021 Alfredo G. de los Santos Jr. Distinguished Leadership Award, 2015 Great Minds in STEM's Education award, CRA's 2015 A. Nico Habermann Award, 2010 Anita Borg Institute Social Impact Award, and 2009 Richard A. Tapia Achievement Award for Scientific Scholarship, Civic Science, and Diversifying Computing. She was named to Hispanic Business magazine's 100 Influential Hispanics in 2006 for her work on the Affinity Research Group model.

SAMAR GAD is Associate Professor at Kingston University London and an education consultant specialising in the intersection of finance, artificial intelligence, and higher education. She has pioneered the integration of AI technologies in financial education, combining personalised data analytics with career coaching to enhance student outcomes and employability. Her innovative work on technology-enhanced learning environments earned her recognition as a finalist for the PQ Magazine Public Sector Lecturer of the Year (2024) and the Best Emerging Paper Award at the BAFA Accounting Education Conference

(2019). Dr. Gad also consults with organisations including Pearson and the CFA Practice Analysis Working Body. Her students have secured positions at leading firms including Barclays, Goldman Sachs, and CBRE.

MICHAEL POPE IS a post-doctoral philosopher in the Embedded EthiCS program at Harvard University where he collaborates with an interdisciplinary team to integrate ethics education across the Computer Science (CS) curriculum. His primary research interests lie at the intersections of epistemology, applied ethics, and philosophy of science. He is especially interested in the nature and normativity of trust and trustworthiness.

ETHAN DEBNATH is a computer science senior and former Peer Leader at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA)



SAMI ALI is a graduate of UTA, majoring in Information Systems and Business, now working as a data analyst at Volvo Group.

ETHAN DEBNATH AND SAMI ALI are co-founders of Pluto Learning, an AI-powered study platform designed to improve student success by using AI ethically to form study groups and provide tutoring with 24/7 access. As students, they have experienced the pain points and heard from students in over five years in academic support, to develop a solution hundreds of students can use. Personalized course guides, and collaboration rooms are all seamlessly integrated into a college's curriculum with broad applicability across departments to address a wide range of institutional goals. Their idea won $40,000 from *MavPitch*, UTA's Shark Tank-style competition where students pitch business ideas. More at Plutolearning.com.

KEYNOTE PANEL
SATURDAY, MAY 31, 2025
ASSESSING EFFICACY OF PEER-LED LEARNING

Panelists will delve into the efficacy of peer-led pedagogical approaches through assessment methods, examining their impact on student success. We will explore the nuanced dynamics of peer-led teaching, focusing on models like Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) and Supplemental Instruction (SI). Panelists will present data-driven analyses and case studies, evaluating how these strategies foster collaborative learning environments, improve academic performance, and enhance student engagement. We will also discuss the methodologies used to assess the effectiveness of these programs, including metrics for student achievement, peer facilitator training, and overall program sustainability, ultimately aiming to identify best practices for implementing and evaluating peer-supported learning initiatives.

MOHSEN BEHESHTI, MODERATOR, is the Chair and Professor of Computer Science Department at California State University - Dominguez Hills. His research interests include Network Security, Big Data, Multidisciplinary research, and Curriculum Development. He is the director of Center of Excellence in AI, Cybersecurity, and Emerging Technology (CAE^2) to promote research and education. He has developed new graduate and undergraduate programs to better prepare students for the workforce, and their studies. He has extensive experience in developing supervised/closed laboratories and has developed course and lab manuals. Dr. Beheshti has received numerous grants to advance technology in education; and he has hosted a series of workshops for high school teachers to further promote computer science to high school students. He is also a member of IEEE, ACM, NCWIT, PLTLIS, and is a founding member of the Computing Alliance of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (CAHSI), a nationally recognized network focused on the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Hispanics in computing, and the lead for CAHSI INCLUDES West Region.

MICHELE DUNBAR is Director of Integrated Learning Assessment and Accreditation, and the Accreditation Liaison Officer at California State University Dominguez Hills. She supports assessment across the Division of Academic Affairs and leads a cross-divisional effort to conduct an integrated assessment of the First- and Second-Year Experiences in partnership with the Student Affairs Assessment Office. Michele completed WSCUC's Accreditation Leadership Academy in 2023, has completed the CSU Student Success Analytics Certificate program, and she earned a badge for completing the Student Affairs Assessment Leaders' "Applying & Leading Assessment in Student Affairs" course. She earned her Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Southern California in 2003, has taught sociology and first-year composition, and has a research portfolio of original published work in peer reviewed journals, in addition to her applied research in assessment and institutional research.

RYAN KHOO is Director, Toro Testing and Learning Center at California State University Dominguez Hills, where he works to support student achievement through thoughtful, equity-focused academic services. With a background in instructional design, tutoring, and educational leadership, he has contributed to initiatives that strengthen tutoring, supplemental instruction, and student engagement. He values collaboration and data-informed practice as tools to better understand and meet student needs. Informed by his early experiences in community college academic support, Ryan remains committed to fostering inclusive learning environments where all students feel supported. He continues to learn from colleagues and students alike as he works to improve access to meaningful academic support.

Peer Assisted Learning
at Sacramento State

COREY SHANBROM is a Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS). He earned his PhD in Mathematics at the University of California, Santa Cruz, in 2013. He has been involved in PLTL since 2013 and currently serves as Director of the Peer Assisted Learning program at CSUS.

HEATHER THIRY is Senior Research Associate at the University of Colorado at Boulder with Ethnography & Evaluation Research. For nearly two decades, she has conducted educational research and program evaluation of postsecondary STEM education initiatives in formal and informal settings. Her research interests focus on diversity and equity in STEM for underrepresented groups, departmental change efforts, STEM transfer pathways, and underrepresented students' navigation of institutions and career pathways. She serves as the external evaluator of the National Science Foundation-funded INCLUDES Alliance, Computing Alliance of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (CAHSI), and as principal investigator (PI) of a National Science Foundation-funded research study of STEM transfer. She is a co-author of the recent book, *Talking about Leaving Revisited*, a national study of student attrition from STEM majors. She also served on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's (NASEM) committee on undergraduate research.

PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS

THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2026

Session A – 10:45 AM – 11:45 AM

WORKSHOP

Filling in the gaps: Working hard on soft skills in PLTL

Richmond Apande, Bella Lares, Mouki Eddie
Peer Assisted Learning Program
Vincent Pigno
Department of Mathematics & Statistics
California State University, Sacramento, Sacramento, California

Abstract: Technological developments are changing the landscape of education. While helpful, these technologies are ineffective at teaching the myriad of 'soft skills' that students and Peer Leaders acquire as part of a PLTL program. PLTL Leaders in the Peer Assisted Learning program at Sacramento State work in small teams to create activities and presentations focused on development of these skills amongst their peers. Members of one such team, the Cultural Competency Ambassadors, will discuss and lead activities they have designed to cultivate a sense of belonging, cultural competency and personal connection. During this workshop, participants will have the opportunity to discuss the creation and implementation of similar activities in their own PLTL programs.

WORKSHOP

Holistic Support Through Academic Peer Coaching and SI for Incoming Freshmen

Ryan Khoo, Maria Amador, Stafford T. Mylia, Sam Te
Toro Learning and Testing Center
Sharon Lanaghan, Department of Mathematics
California State University, Dominguez Hills, Carson, California

Abstract: The Toro Learning & Testing Center piloted an Academic Peer Coach (APC) program alongside Supplemental Instruction (SI) in 2024-2025, focusing on a challenging freshman course (MAT 103) to improve student transition and retention. APCs received training incorporating emotional support strategies from psychological services, technology utilization for referrals and communication (email, TSC, Maxient, Canvas), and awareness of campus affinity centers to foster belonging. Preparation for peer-led sessions included guidance on metacognition, interpersonal, study, and organizational skills. This collaboration provided students with both content-specific

support (SI) and resource/skill development (APC); addressing emotional well-being and basic needs, thus promoting a more holistic support system. In this workshop, we will have audience members reflect on current practices and resources available on their campus. The participants will engage through a mock coaching session, where they will learn about some of the obstacles our students face, but also have them share what some of the obstacles their students are facing. The participants will be given examples of different resources here at CSUDH that the APCs utilized to address the students' obstacles and needs, and the participants will use that as a guide to think about their own college's resources and how they can utilize them to address their students' needs. You will hear firsthand experiences from Academic Peer Coaches, SI leaders, and faculty on providing these joint services and the professional growth they gained from this innovative approach.

TALK

Undergraduate Students' Agentive Participation in Calculus Coursework and Peer-Led Cooperative Learning Workshop: The Case of Boris

Karmen Yu
Department of Mathematics
Montclair State University, Montclair, New Jersey

Abstract: Historically, Calculus has been recognized as a "gateway course" for postsecondary students to enter STEM fields. To address this issue, researchers at Montclair State University designed a peer-led cooperative learning model to engage Calculus I students in collaborative problem solving on group-worthy tasks. The design of the workshop model was informed by features of an instructional approach called Complex Instruction (CI), and two other cooperative learning, peer-led, inquiry-oriented models of groupwork, Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) and Supplemental Instruction (SI). This multiple-case study set out to address the question, "What is the nature of undergraduate Calculus I students' participation in the parallel spaces of coursework and complementary instruction?" In this research presentation, the findings of Boris's case study will be shared, including characterizations of the different forms of agentive participation afforded to students in the two spaces, as well as their complementary nature relative to learning calculus with understanding.

TALK

Explaining Reduction and Oxidation Reactions (REDOX): Learning to Adapt Workshop Content Based on Student Experience

Nijad Gereige, Caroline Vo, Khang Quách, Illya A. Medina Velo, and Tessa J. Stewart
Department of Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics
Houston Christian University, Houston, Texas

Abstract: Houston Christian University (HCU) received an NSF award to develop and establish a PLTL program aimed at enhancing student success in Chemistry, Biology, and Calculus. For chemistry, the target course was General Chemistry I. In the Fall of 2024, 49% of General Chemistry I students were enrolled in PLTL workshops (PLTL group, n= 30) from a total of 61 students registered in the course. The 51% (control group, n=31) were required to attend at least

six sessions of tutoring at the Center for Student Success. The PLTL group completed 13 workshops during the semester. Among the workshops, redox reactions resulted in some challenges that will be discussed in this presentation. Overall, data from Fall 2024 indicated the effectiveness of PLTL, with final exam means 8 points higher for the PLTL group compared to the control group.

Session B – 1:45 PM – 2:15 PM

TALK

Saturday Workshop: Help Beyond the In-person Classroom

Samantha Zepeda, Paris Gastelum, James E. Becvar, Geoffrey B. Saupe, and Mahesh Narayan
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas

Abstract: Saturday PLTL workshop is a technology concept created as extra help for students. This online session is held weekly so students can join from home to ask questions and get practice on problems for their upcoming exams and do not have to travel to the university. The challenge of an online session is keeping students engaged. Being a voluntary extra session, we encounter students that are already motivated in getting help and making the most out of the 'extra' two hours. It is important to be good learning facilitators by not providing students with answers but with strategies they practice to develop their own solutions. Peer leaders are given additional training on how to use Zoom tools effectively and strategies for keeping things interactive online. Because Zoom chat questions are private, students are less afraid of asking questions or answering them. Saturday Workshop fosters a positive virtual community where students feel comfortable seeking guidance about concepts they may struggle to understand. Saturday Workshop also instills an inquisitive mindset in students. We will highlight the peer leader training process, share student testimonials, and present meaningful data on class performance to show the impact of the Saturday Workshop.

TALK

Supportive Peer Leader Behaviors That Improve Student Engagement in PLTL

Ethan Leach, Cassie Pham, Aarushi Pareek, Connor McNulty, Amer Abdelbaki, and Erin O'Brien
Center for Life Sciences Education
Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

Abstract: The success of PLTL lies upon two vital components—collaboration and active engagement, both of which can create barriers that hinder the forward progress for some students, such as language, introverted personalities, or dominant students. Thus, we have posed the question: "Which peer leader attributes make groups work more effectively than others?" In this presentation, we will explore this question from a comprehensive perspective, drawing on experiences from the peer leader training methods implemented at our institution. We will also

share preliminary results of a recent study investigating this same question. This study shows that our peer leaders use a variety of facilitation strategies to encourage student participation, such as think-pair-share, whiteboards, student facilitator, and round robin. Additionally, most students (93%) agreed that their peer leader's personality created a more effective learning environment. Overall, most students felt included (21.3%), interested (17.6%), and engaged (16.2%) during their PLTL workshops, whereas very few felt excluded (0.2%) or frustrated (1.3%). Lastly, we will ask audience members to share barriers they experience and discuss how these barriers can reduce workshop efficacy. Ultimately, we hope to create a discussion on how barriers develop within PLTL workshops and how peer leader training programs can resolve them to create more effective learning environments for students.

TALK

Redesigning Peer-Led Team Learning Workshops in Calculus I: Enhancing Workshop Scaffolding and Student Collaboration

David Meng
Department of Chemistry Mathematics and Physics
Tessa Stewart
College of Science and Engineering
Houston Christian University, Houston, Texas

Abstract: In 2024, Houston Christian University (HCU) received an NSF award to develop PLTL workshops in Calculus 1, General Biology 1, and General Chemistry 1 to improve student success and reduce DFW rates. For Calculus 1, fourteen workshops were piloted in the fall semester, with 54% of students (n=41) participating in PLTL workshops out of 76 total enrolled. Analysis of course outcomes, student surveys, and peer leader feedback revealed no statistically significant improvements in DFW rates, final exam grades, or final course grades between the PLTL and control groups. While the content and example problems were appropriate, the structure of the workshops limited collaboration and discussion, and peer leaders often functioned as tutors. To address these issues, we revised the spring semester workshops to include more scaffolding and encourage collaboration, with peer leaders focusing on facilitation. Preliminary feedback suggests improved engagement, and we await final data on course outcomes.

FRIDAY, MAY 30, 2026

Session A – 10:45 AM – 11:15 AM

TALK

Chegg & ChatGPT, Our Best Friend Or Worst Enemy

Maya Martinez, Yaretzi Estrada, Geoffrey Saupe, and James E. Becvar
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas

Abstract: Technology has impacted the educational system and the learning process of students. For several years CHEGG has purported to give strategies for problem-solving, but most often gives copyable answers so students do not need to learn to develop the processes of thinking. At the University of Texas at El Paso, the PLTL program has repeatedly discussed how the emergence of technological resources is affecting students, their content comprehension, and their thinking development. The question is, are students implementing technology as a tool to assist in their learning or abusing it to simply gain answers and achieve high scores? To investigate this, a survey is being conducted to examine how students are utilizing technology in their learning process. Determining the different technological resources that students utilize and comparing it to their performance on assessments will determine if technology is being used properly by students.

TALK

How Can I Embrace AI to Better Support My Students?

Ethan Debnath and Sami Ali
Department of Computer Science and Engineering and the Academic Success Center
The University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas

Abstract: As AI tools become increasingly present in higher education, Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) programs have a unique opportunity to evolve while staying true to their collaborative, student-centered roots. This session offers practical and ethical strategies for integrating AI into PLTL in ways that enhance—rather than replace—peer instruction. Drawing on our experiences as former PLTL leaders and mentors, we'll share how AI can support student engagement, personalized learning, and mentor effectiveness, both during and between sessions. We will spotlight Pluto Learning, an AI-powered platform we built and piloted with PLTL students to provide intelligent academic support, curated resources, and real-time guidance. By exploring how tools like Pluto have already improved learning outcomes, we'll demonstrate how thoughtfully designed AI can elevate the PLTL experience. Attendees will leave with actionable insights for responsibly incorporating AI into collaborative learning environments while maintaining academic integrity and advancing student success goals.

TALK

On Questions and Confidence: Why Peer Leaders Should Ask More Questions Than Their Students

Isaac Bartolo Martinez
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas

Abstract: This session introduces a Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) approach that focuses on questioning and peer debate to help students build confidence and deepen their understanding of complex chemistry concepts. Through structured group work, students collaboratively solve problems, present their solutions, and explain their reasoning. They are challenged to justify their approaches, defend procedures, and explain the theory behind their graphs and diagrams. For instance, a study published by Gabriela Szteinberg in CBE Life Sciences and Education, found that peer leaders who employ strategic questioning tend to help their students better grasp challenging subjects. Thinking long-term, these strategies increase student confidence, promote active engagement, and prevent the need to revisit previously learned material in more advanced courses. The session will highlight specific questioning techniques that promote student confidence and engagement and demonstrate how they can be adapted across disciplines. Drawing from direct experience in designing and facilitating workshops, examples and approaches that have proven effective will be shared. Participants will reflect on how intentional questioning can shape student learning and leave with strategies to support the development of confident, conceptually grounded learners in their peer-led sessions.

Session B – 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

WORKSHOP

Building Excellent Leaders

Samantha Zepeda, Donna Pliego, Sofia Gomez, Yocelyn E. Salcido, Jose O. Salazar, James E. Becvar, Geoffrey B. Saupe, and Mahesh Narayan
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas

Abstract: At the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), the Peer-Led Team Learning Program for both First and Second Semester General Chemistry offers a week-long training for new and experienced Peer Leaders (PLs) prior to every semester. This week is full of interactive activities planned by New Member Coordinators (NMC) that focus on preparing PLs for real-life scenarios they might encounter throughout the semester. In this session, attendees will participate in one such activity: working through a specific classroom challenge (e.g., helping a student who speaks a different language) and practicing how to respond effectively as a learning facilitator. During training, PLs develop and apply valuable skills in psychological safety, communication, and adaptability. Their performance is assessed throughout the semester by NMC ratings. The goal is to ensure PLs are confident, responsive leaders who can provide quick, supportive help in a variety of student situations.

PLs have encountered many scenarios, from students don't wanting to participate, to disruptive students, students struggling with a language barrier, and even students that want to get the PL phone number to invite them on a date. These are all real-life scenarios and hearing how experienced PLs have responded to these situations gives the newbies a sense of security that they now know what to do if these would happen to them. They can act with confidence, instead of trying to answer with uncertainty. These scenarios might be encountered during our "Mock workshop" or "Mock office hours" sessions during training week.

WORKSHOP

Human connection during the reign of AI: Emotional intelligence and mentorship in a world of Chat(GPT)

Avery Farlee, Aubrey Heldoorn, Sophia Schultz
Peer Assisted Learning Program
Corey R. Shanbrom
Department of Mathematics and Statistics
California State University, Sacramento, Sacramento, California

Abstract: While advances in technology can bring many academic benefits to students, it often comes at the expense of human interaction and the emotional component of learning. PLTL programs provide a strong counterbalance, offering consistent authentic interactions with peers. In this workshop we will consider this issue from the Peer Leader perspective, with an emphasis on the role of mentorship. A computer can never serve as a role model; thus, as more teaching and learning is interfaced through a screen, the function of Peer Leaders as mentors is more important than ever. In this interactive workshop, led by current Peer Leaders, participants will engage in two activities exploring these themes. In the first activity, groups will participate in human-led and AI-led problem-solving sessions with a lens on human connection, productive struggle, and critical analysis of generated answers. In the second activity, participants will examine Peer Leader stories demonstrating the need for emotional intelligence in effective mentorship, then discuss potential responses to real-world scenarios where these skills are required in the PLTL classroom and in the workplace.

WORKSHOP

Embedded Tutoring & Faculty Development: Strategies to Support Academic, Departmental, and Logistical Needs

Peggy Ozaki, Ryan Khoo
Toro Learning & Testing Center
Brian Kovalesky
History Department
California State University, Dominguez Hills, Carson, California

Abstract: Learn about an alternative student support service, Embedded Tutoring, and how it helped CSUDH's Toro Learning and Testing Center and History Department address student needs in a GE History course with high DFWs. Presenters will share how they piloted a service

that: 1) Can be cost effective, 2) Provides higher active engagement hours, and 3) Is faculty and learning center driven, so students benefit from course redesigns that enrich metacognition, learning outcomes and out of class learning. Presenters will share their planning method based and experiences, so those interested in creating similar services leave with 1) An understanding of an alternative service, 2) Strategies to plan a pilot and start collaborations, and 3) Suggestions on how to redesign course work and activities to utilize embedded services cost effectively.

Session C – 2:15 PM – 2:45 PM

TALK

Revolutionizing Exam Preparation: AI-Powered Custom Practice Tests for Enhanced Learning

Vanessa G. Barham, Graciela Ruiz, Geoffrey B. Saupe, James E. Becvar, and Mahesh Narayan
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas

Abstract: Revolutionizing Exam Preparation: AI-Powered Custom Practice Tests for Enhanced Learning AI provides a versatile tool to use past exam questions to create customized practice problems for workshops and exam practice. It identifies patterns in topics and question types essential for exam preparedness. Data collected with surveys asking about practice exam usage and grades produced on the exams can analyze correlation between preparation and success and it also allows for continuous improvement of the practice material. AI was used to generate topic-specific tests with prompts like “create a 20-question multiple-choice exam for chapter 13” or “generate a short-answer practice test covering key concepts from chapters 10 and 12.” Answer keys were created with the prompt “explain the correct answers with brief justifications.” These keys are reviewed by peer leaders to ensure accuracy of answers and problem-solving approaches. This data-driven approach optimizes study time, enhances learning outcomes, and ensures students are well-prepared for exams.

TALK

Fostering Emotional Well-being & Belonging Through PLTL

Sophia Andrade and Kamela Gallardo
College of Science and Engineering
Houston Christian University, Houston, Texas

Abstract: Houston Christian University (HCU) is a diverse campus that serves students from various socioeconomic backgrounds, including first-generation college students. The PLTL model has been implemented at HCU in specific gateway STEM courses to increase student understanding of foundational science concepts. Because the PLTL model leans heavily on peer mentors, there is an opportunity to promote a sense of belonging and foster emotional support among students. First year students often struggle with the transition to college. Many incoming students majoring in STEM may not be equipped to handle the emotional stressors of college, resulting in switching out of STEM majors or dropping out of college entirely. Peer Leaders are uniquely positioned to

provide emotional support and a sense of belonging among first year STEM majors through building rapport, ensuring a safe space for learning, celebrating students' unique strengths, and including perspectives from a diverse group of students and/or professionals.

TALK

Effectiveness of In-class Peer-Lead Team Learning (iPLTL) for Foundational Engineering Course

Paul Davidson, Haying Huang
Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
Adam Castillo
Department of Mathematics
Beth Fleener
Center for Research on Teaching and Learning Excellence (CRTLE)
Monica Franco, Catherine M. Unite
Division of Student Success
The University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas

Abstract: Student success in aerospace and mechanical engineering is closely tied to strong foundational skills in dimensional analysis, three-dimensional geometry, vector algebra and scientific problem solving. To help students build these essential skills, the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering (MAE) Department at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) has offered a one-credit hour course, Problem Solving in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, for the past four years.

In Spring 2025, as part of an NSF-funded initiative, one section of the course implemented in-class Peer-Led Team Learning (iPLTL). In this format, students are divided into teams of ten and guided by an in-class Peer Leader to collaboratively solve problems. The pilot study is designed to test the hypothesis that increased peer interaction enhances student performance and improves student outcomes in comparison to a control section receiving traditional, lecture-based instruction.

This presentation will describe the iPLTL approach and share preliminary findings on its effectiveness in supporting student success.

Session D – 2:50 PM – 3:20 PM

TALK

How PLTL and Technology Are Used in the First-year Experience Course

Edgar Llanas, Christina Hamilton, Mathematics and Statistics
Alexi Soto, Zara Uzman, Yuliana Santos-Ventura, Natural Sciences
Nigel Flowers, Jessica Gonzales, Computer Science
University of Houston-Downtown, Houston, Texas

Abstract: The purpose of the first-year experience course is to help incoming students acclimate to the college lifestyle by developing healthy habits. The uniqueness of our course is to use the Peer

led team learning (PLTL) workshops. We will describe the current structure of the course including how we help the students learn skills necessary for successful transition from high school to college. We will also share the technologies and examples of the workshop materials that are currently used in the course, and we will also share the new technologies that will be implemented in the course this fall including the use of AI and Machine Learning and the workshop materials.

TALK

Learning by Teaching

Ava Napier, Kailey Holen Paris Gastelum, James E. Becvar, Geoffrey B. Saupe, and Mahesh Narayan
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas

Abstract: Many students struggle to advocate for themselves, nervous to voice questions out of fear of being deemed 'unintelligent'. To create an effective learning environment, Peer Leaders in PLTL workshops must create a safe space 1) to provide opportunities for students to freely be curious and equally important 2) to practice the development of asking questions. Most students who are successful in general chemistry and other courses form study groups, working together to explain content to one another. The act of voicing these challenging topics to someone else requires students to not only understand the content but also be able to explain concepts effectively to students who may not understand the material. Some students may also explain content to a family member as practice in order to learn. By explaining content to others, students are able to advocate for themselves by teaching and learning simultaneously.

TALK

Sense of Belonging in PLTL: Student Perceptions of Peer-led Team Learning for Introductory Biology Courses

Erin O'Brien and Makenna Barcklay
Center for Life Sciences Education
Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

Abstract: The Biology PLTL program at Ohio State University was recently transformed from being a separate course to being fully integrated into specific sections of the introductory biology courses. The goals of this transformation were to improve (1) student recognition that PLTL was part of the course, (2) communication about PLTL, and (3) student perceptions of the benefits of PLTL. We invited former PLTL students from Spring 2021 to Autumn 2023 to complete a survey to assess their experiences with PLTL. The survey included both quantifiable questions with Likert-style responses and qualitative, free-response questions. Our results show that students most appreciated the positive learning environment created by PLTL. Lastly, we found that the integration of PLTL has improved students' awareness that PLTL was a part of the course, and that more students recognized the value of PLTL and felt comfortable discussing complex biological concepts.

SATURDAY, MAY 31, 2026

TALK

How ChatGPT Helps Prepare Workshops

Carlos Chihuahua, Alexis Aguirre, Michael Martinez, Kutaiebah Soueidan, Geoffrey B. Saupe, and James E. Becvar
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas

Abstract: Collaboration is a driving force at Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) workshops, but peer leaders often juggle the challenge of adapting to different learning styles and keeping discussions productive. AI models can help, not as a replacement for human interaction, but as a tool to enhance workshops. Imagine AI generating personalized practice problems, offering adaptive feedback, or helping peer leaders gauge group understanding in real-time. At the University of Texas at El Paso, some peer leaders have adopted this approach to make learning more engaging and tailored while keeping the peer-led dynamic intact. However, ethical considerations matter; AI should serve as a support system, not an authority. This presentation explores how AI can complement PLTL, strategies for practical integration, and ways to train peer leaders in leveraging AI effectively. By weaving AI into workshops, we can create more dynamic and efficient learning experiences that empower students and facilitators alike.

TALK

Repeated Use of Icebreakers During Workshop Fosters Engagement and Collaboration

Graciela Ruiz, Vanessa Barham, James E. Becvar, Geoffrey B. Saupe, and Mahesh Narayan
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas

Abstract: Using icebreakers repeatedly in workshop sessions can help create a relaxed and participation driven atmosphere, which enhances overall material comprehension. When students learn each other's names and initiate a conversation, icebreakers help create a 'safe' and supportive space. This can reduce stress about the workshop being seen like just another class and make students feel more comfortable asking questions. Increase of engagement then leads to an improved focus, more active participation, and a positive attitude towards the workshop. Educators who integrate icebreakers into sessions can cultivate an environment that lowers anxiety, promotes collaboration, and deepens understanding of the material. To measure this, we plan a semester-end survey comparing two workshops: one continuously using icebreakers and one without them. Students will rate their sense of safety and the environment on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, providing data to assess the benefits of incorporating icebreakers.

TALK

Evaluating the Impact of Student Workshops: Assessing Workbook Effectiveness and Peer Leadership in Enhancing Learning Outcomes

Kista Franco, Ethan Yager, Milka Montes
Department of Chemistry & Physics
The University of Texas Permian Basin, Odessa, Texas

Abstract: This study evaluates the effectiveness of student workshops through two separate surveys conducted with students and peer leaders at our university. The primary aim was to assess how the workbook used in the workshop serves as a valuable resource for students, as well as its overall impact on learning and development. The surveys gathered both quantitative and qualitative data, focusing on user experience, perceived usefulness, and areas for improvement.

The student survey targeted outcomes such as conceptual understanding of course material, confidence in problem-solving, and the ability to apply knowledge independently. Specific questions included: "Does the workshop help you with its associated course?", "Would you say that your workshop leader helps you understand the content better?", "How would you rate your workshop leader?", and "Do you use AI to assist you in this course?"

The peer leader survey assessed leadership development, communication skills, and peer-to-peer facilitation effectiveness. Questions included: "How would you rate your workshop experience?", "How did the staff and/or faculty affect your workshop experience?", "How has your relationship with other peer leaders benefited your academic journey?", "How has facilitating workshops improved your academic skills?", and "How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the workbook as a teaching tool?"

Statistical analysis of the survey results was conducted to determine whether the workbook meets its intended objectives and contributes positively to student engagement and academic success. The results indicate a positive correlation between workbook usage and improved student outcomes. Despite these encouraging findings, the study also identifies several areas for further enhancement, particularly in the workbook's content and delivery. By exploring these areas, this research seeks to provide actionable insights for improvement in supporting students.

POSTERS

Blooming Educational Growth Through Reflection

Karen Centeno, Donna Pliego, Ashley Villareal, and Natalia Garcia
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas

Abstract: Psychological safety is the ability to express thoughts, concerns, and emotions without fear of judgment. It is crucial for fostering trust and collaboration in group settings like Peer-Led Team Learning. Roses and Thorns provides a structured, reflective practice where participants share a positive experience ("rose") and a current challenge ("thorn"). Allowing students to share their individual stories and experiences each week allows students to bond over struggles they have in common and celebrate wins they have had recently. This activity normalizes struggles, encourages open communication, and strengthens interpersonal connections, creating an inclusive environment where individuals feel valued. Students are reminded that while obstacles are inevitable, every experience has positives. This reinforces the idea that a workshop is a space for support, without shame for sharing any struggles. By reducing hierarchical barriers and promoting a growth mindset, Roses and Thorns fosters psychological safety, which makes it an effective tool for workplaces, classrooms, and team-building settings. This presentation explores its benefits, examining its role in promoting vulnerability, empathy, and resilience, ultimately leading to better grades and stronger community engagement.

Common Challenges to Enhance Student Learning

Kamila Pineda, Joshua Palma, Noah Hlavinka, Mason Robertson, and David Meng
Department of Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics
Tessa Stewart
Director of Science Labs, College of Science and Engineering
Houston Christian University, Houston, Texas

Abstract: In fall 2024, Houston Christian University (HCU) launched Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) workshops in Calculus 1 to support student learning. Unlike traditional tutoring, peer leaders (PLs) guide 6-8 students through collaborative, active-learning sessions with scaffolded problem-solving activities, aimed at promoting independent thinking and confidence. This presentation shares our firsthand experiences as new PLs during the implementation of a new PLTL program, highlighting practical challenges such as managing group dynamics, encouraging participation, and aligning workshop and course content. We reflect on strategies that helped us build productive learning environments and adapt to different student groups' evolving needs. We emphasize the value of peer feedback and faculty collaboration for responsive facilitation. Lessons learned may inform institutions interested in launching/refining PLTL programs in mathematics or

other quantitative disciplines. By sharing our insights and questions for further exploration, we hope to contribute to broader conversations about effective peer-led instruction in introductory mathematics courses.

Review Sessions Improve Students' Performance and Should Be Incorporated in Workshop Time

Graciela Ruiz, Vanessa Barham, James E. Becvar, Geoffrey B. Saupe, and Mahesh Narayan
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas

Abstract: Chemistry II is a content-heavy course that requires extensive studying, and as it progresses, the material becomes increasingly complex. Many students struggle to balance their coursework, leading to difficulties in time management and academic performance. Given the amount of information covered and the challenge of finding effective study methods, integrating structured review sessions into workshop time before exams can significantly enhance student preparation and improve performance. These sessions provide an opportunity for students to clarify difficult concepts, reinforce key topics, and engage in active learning strategies such as problem-solving and group discussions. Additionally, review sessions can help alleviate test anxiety by giving students a structured approach to revision, ultimately leading to better retention and understanding of the material. Incorporating these sessions into workshop time creates a supportive learning environment that promotes academic success and ensures that students are better equipped to handle the rigorous demands of the course.

Fostering Growth and Belonging: The "SI Houses" Model for Peer Leader Development

Nathaniel Catbagan, Natalia Corrales, and Alyssa Marie Abando
Toro Learning & Testing Center
California State University, Dominguez Hills, Carson, California

Abstract: At the Toro Learning and Testing Center (TLTC), we have established a structured support system known as "SI Houses" to provide guidance and assistance to Supplemental Instruction (SI) leaders. Each semester, a new theme for "SI Houses" is introduced, featuring unique themes—such as movie genres, characters, or animals—that will be used to represent the incoming cohort.

SI leaders are put in cohorts, with each cohort assigned a mascot based on the theme. Each cohort is led by an experienced SI mentor. These mentors, having demonstrated leadership and expertise at the TLTC, are responsible for designing engaging activities, training and offer ongoing support to the SI leaders in their cohort. Cohorts earn points throughout the semester as an incentive for participating in training, "SI Houses" activities, and staying on top of their responsibilities. The primary goal of the "SI Houses" is to create a collaborative environment where

SI leaders can learn from one another, remain accountable, and enhance their professional growth through teamwork and shared experiences.

Assessing the Impact of Peer-Led Team Learning on Graduation Outcomes in Biology Education

Joseph Rahm, Dailier Ayuso, Katelyn Giraldo, Sabreen F. Khan, Lizt M. Valladares, Camila F. Monterrosa, Luis Del Prado, Thomas R. Pitzer
Department of Biological Sciences
Da'Nica M. Benaine
Department of Psychology and Department of Liberal Studies
Florida International University, Miami, Florida

Abstract: Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) enhances STEM education through structured peer discussions, providing additional support that may improve academic performance. This study examines the impact of PLTL participation on graduation rates and time to graduation at Florida International University (FIU) for Biological Sciences. Analyzing data from 2017 to 2022, we compare graduation timelines between PLTL participants and the general student population. A one-proportion Z-test, chosen for its suitability in comparing proportions, evaluates statistical differences. Preliminary results show that Peer Leaders graduate significantly faster, averaging 3.58 years compared to the university-wide four-year standard after 2015 (P-values < 0.05). While findings suggest a strong association between PLTL participation and accelerated graduation, further statistical modeling is needed to explore causality. These results highlight the potential of structured peer-led programs in improving biology education outcomes, emphasizing their role in promoting student success and timely graduation.

How Do Peer Leaders Help Create More Effective Learning Environments for Students in PLTL?

Aarushi Pareek, Ayla Sabbagh, Kassandra Drumm, and Erin O'Brien
Center for Life Sciences Education
Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

Abstract: In PLTL workshops, students and peer leaders from diverse backgrounds form small communities that collaborate to deepen their understanding of course material. However, some groups of students work very well together while others remain resistant to the PLTL model. This experience has led us to investigate how peer leaders are involved in creating effective learning communities and identify aspects of peer leader training that are most important creating these communities. In Spring 2025, we surveyed students and peer leaders for two introductory biology courses to determine the effect of peer leaders on student engagement and to identify peer leader behaviors that are beneficial to creating effective learning environments for the students. Preliminary results indicate that students are more likely to collaborate in small group settings, like

PLTL. Additionally, experienced peer leaders felt more confident fostering collaborative environments and were more likely to use different facilitating strategies during their workshops.

The Impact of STEM Identity on Student Performance in an Engineering Course

Shpat Halili, Melanie Villatoro, Dominic Kruszewski
Department of Construction Management & Civil Engineering Technology
New York City College of Technology, City University of New York, Brooklyn, New York

Abstract: This research highlights how STEM students' participation in Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) influences the development of STEM identity among them. It lays emphasis on dimensions such as recognition, interest, and performance. The participants in this study are enrolled in a gatekeeper first year engineering course. The academic outcome of this class is indicative of projected retention in the major. The study relies on a survey that is modeled from existing frameworks for determining STEM identities in engineering students. The emphasis leans on whether active members of PLTL display stronger STEM affiliations and if this has a correlation to higher academic performance; the project will contribute to our understanding of how PLTL can be beneficial to retention of STEM students. The results will demonstrate details about how PLTL fosters a notion of belonging and identity among students; this will potentially reveal methods to boost student engagement and retention within STEM.

Career Readiness and Workplace Success of Former Peer Leaders

Corey Shanbrom, Vincent Pigno, Richmond Apande, Avery J. Farlee, Aubrey N. Heldoorn, Bella E. Lares, Eddie N. Muoki, and Sophia M. Schultz
Department of Mathematics and Statistics
California State University, Sacramento, Sacramento, California

Abstract: Many studies have demonstrated the academic benefits enjoyed by PLTL Leaders, but few have tracked former Leaders into their post-graduation careers. We present the results of a survey taken by 158 "PALumni" currently in the workforce who were asked how their time as a Peer Leader helped them develop the skills necessary for success in the modern workplace. In particular, 94% of respondents agreed that working in our PLTL program helped them be successful in their careers. Moreover, we map specific experiences within the Peer Leader role to specific career competencies identified by the National Association for Colleges and Employers. We also consider how our results differ for those who served in advanced leadership roles within the program, and how the program served as a third space for our PALumni.

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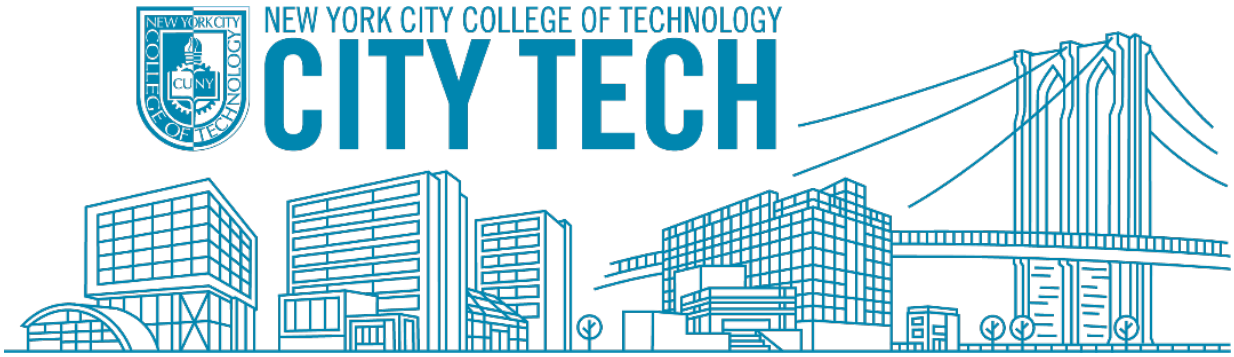

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