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Sustaining Models for PLTL Programs: Organizational Structures

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Sustaining Models for PLTL Programs: Organizational Structures

Catherine Unite, Michael Saenz, Ariane Kelly, Megan Daschbach, & Nicholas Hammond

Abstract

Many practitioners of Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) have launched their programs with grant funding. Others, however, have been established through Learning Centers with the support of administrators concerned with retention and student success. The sixth Critical Component of the PLTL model states that there should be institutional support. To sustain a successful PLTL program at each institution takes trained peer leaders, relevant workshop materials created by faculty and peer leaders, funding, passionate champions, and supportive administrators. Various models have been developed and support peer-led programs, allowing them to be institutionalized and sustained. This paper provides overviews of five universities that support their PLTL programs through institutional support. These overviews are models of sustainability and demonstrate the understanding of the importance of the PLTL program to student success. The models featured here are from:

- University of Texas at Arlington
- University of Texas at Dallas
- Johns Hopkins University
- Washington University in St. Louis
- University of Rochester

Editors' Note: This paper is based on a panel discussion at the 2023 Annual PLTLIS Conference, held at the University of Houston, Downtown, which was moderated by Dr. Kimshi Hickman. Dr. Hickman previously served as the Assistant Vice Provost for Retention and Completion at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). With over 20 years of experience in higher education, her career has encompassed roles in student affairs, enrollment management, and academic affairs. She also served as the previous President of Peer-Led Team Learning International Society (PLTLIS).

University of Texas at Arlington

Catherine Unite, Director
Academic Success Center

In 2019, Dr. Kimshi Hickman took on the role of Assistant Vice Provost for Retention and Completion at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). When she arrived at UTA, there was no PLTL, but having worked with this program for seven and a half years at another institution, she knew that it was needed and that it would make inroads in student success in many of the Gateway courses. Dr. Hickman's role as an administrator was to make sure that the program was successfully established and to ensure that it remained.

The Assistant Vice Provost (AVP) in the Division of Student Success oversees the Academic Success Center (ASC). The PLTL program was established in the ASC, originally with one PLTL Coordinator, and a second coordinator was hired in May 2025 due to the expansion of the program, because all the recruiting, hiring, training, and implementation requirements for the program. All of the funding for PLTL comes through tuition allocation dollars for our campus. We continue to have the support of the Provost since the inception of implementing this program.

What often happens with most institutions, the administrators leave and change and recently a new Provost and a new President arrived. What Dr. Hickman did initially was to inform the Provost of what PLTL was and what it could do. The Provost had come from an institution that had Supplemental Instruction and tutoring, and she had no idea what Peer-Led Team Learning was, and Dr. Hickman convinced her of the need for support of the PLTL program. It was also clear that the President was on board because when she had just finished her first year and she had to list some key Student Success measures, she picked PLTL to talk about when she made her presentation. So, they get it! The AVP's job is to make sure that all of our administrators understand the importance of PLTL, why we need it and why we need to keep it going.

The AVP also works with the Vice Provost of Division of Student Success and reaches out to the Dean or the Associate Dean, followed by the Department Chair for each subject area, who then assists with recommending a faculty liaison for each area, who is the one who actually contributes to the problem packets for the workshops. So, there are three levels: an administrator level, department chair level, and the actual Faculty Liaison.

One of the most important factors that helps us get support at higher levels is we collect the data. The data from PLTL speaks for itself. In addition to anything we might say because we are very passionate about this -- we'll speak to how skilled our leaders are, and all of the

training they're getting -- but the data talks, when administrators see black and white. The key for us is taking that data and then transforming it for upper-level administrators and what that means in terms of retention dollars. Because dollars also grab attention, when you point out that this many students were retained and we will be tracking retention until graduation for these students, and you put that dollar amount with that, that's one of the key pieces that helps us all with PLTL.

The funding for the UTA PLTL program comes from tuition allocation dollars that were given when students pay tuition. Usually, Student Affairs gets the fees and that gets distributed across all of Student Affairs. But for us, allocation dollars come to the Academic Affairs side and then decisions are made about where that pool of money goes. So, we are fortunate that we have that pool. It's what allowed Dr. Hickman to start PLTL.

We started with Pre-Calculus and Engineering, and then went on to Calculus I, Calculus II, and Calculus III. We have since expanded to support 15 STEM courses currently, and we're moving on from there. We still have some of that money because it's permanently allocated, but we are about to hit a ceiling with imminent budget cuts, with limited funding to the institution. We are hoping because we started in the Fall of 2020 during the Pandemic that we're embedded enough. And the reason Dr. Hickman kept us embedded and working with the administrators was to make sure they're involved at that level because at some point the Deans are going to have to start contributing to the PLTL courses for their college. And then we'll be able to talk about, "Hey, we've got this history, this is everything that has happened." And then we will have been established long enough for the faculty to help financially to support PLTL.

Initially, we had some disbelievers who started as faculty liaisons, realizing that they do not get course release time, and it is a lot of work. We have been fortunate that we pay for faculty to have a travel stipend and send them to conferences to present their research, and so forth. It is interesting to note that some of our initial disbelievers have become our strongest advocates because they have seen how PLTL impacts student success. They have begun to change their own pedagogy by promoting active learning in their classrooms. We have observed how some of the faculty liaisons facilitate their meetings with the PLTL Leaders, moving away from a traditional didactic approach. We are continuing to wage the battle to get full buy-in from new faculty because they have to take on a commitment to see students succeed.

Sometimes students do not go to class but try to use the PLTL sessions as a substitute, because we definitely have seen that happening on our campus as well, where they think that coming to PLTL sessions is a substitute, and "I really don't need to go to class, I'll just do this."

The beauty of what makes PLTL run is what Dr. Hickman called the "academic trinity:" it's the students who are participating, it's the Peer Leaders, and it's the faculty. You have to have those three pieces, and those three pieces have to be operating well to get the results we want. So, when the students are doing their part by attending regularly and participating, the peer leaders have to do their part by being well prepared and skilled facilitators, and our faculty are contributing to their part, and so it's keeping all three of our academic trinity going at the same time.

We've been using PLTL in STEM courses, yet, because of Dr. Hickman presenting data constantly for the Student Success Task Force, one of the department chairs got so jazzed just hearing about PLTL all of the time, that he wanted to start it in Accounting. PLTL was introduced in fall semester 2024 for Accounting 1 and 2, and this semester for Financial Accounting 3. And then an Associate Dean in Liberal Arts, who also saw the benefits, and is considering, "Well, let's go ahead and let's do something there." So, we may make inroads into the Humanities.

We're also talking with administrators about Career Readiness. This is a piece that everybody is concerned about for our students. We are embedding Career Education into the curricula in several different ways, but PLTL is a key piece. We're providing jobs for students and documenting how many dollars for jobs, and documenting what wages are being provided for the students is another area that's a good attention grab! And the fact is that we are preparing students. They are getting these leadership skills that are phenomenal. And as our leaders lead, they come back with these fantastic stories about their interviews for medical school, or interviews for jobs, and how having PLTL captured that interviewer's attention when they gave answers and talked about that program. So, it's like molten gold!

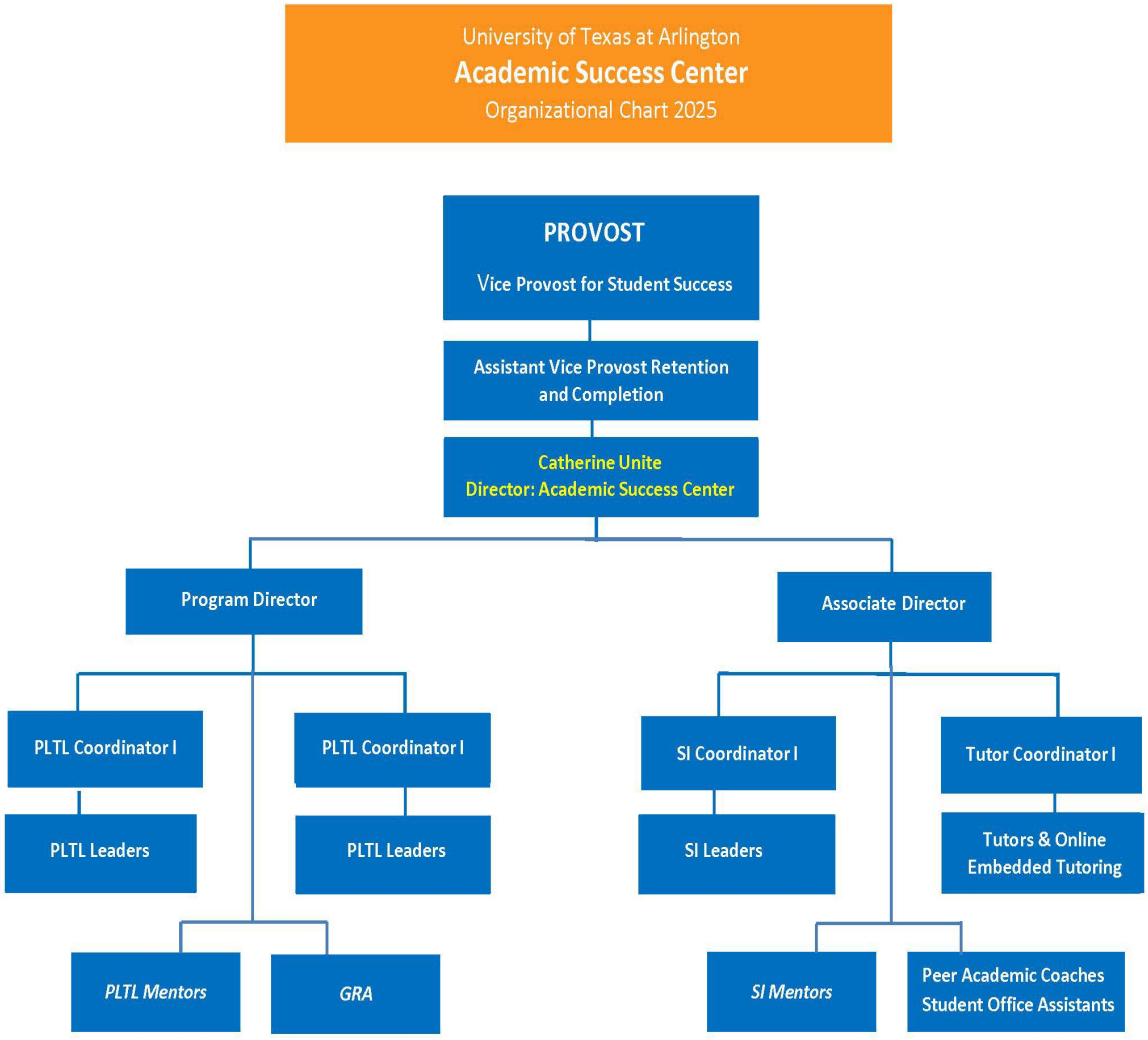
We're in multiple disciplines. Our sustainability is that it's permanently funded: for the student [leader] with wages; for the positions of PLTL Coordinators and a Program Director; and because it comes through the Academic Success Center, it's institutionalized. Having the AVP working with an Associate Dean, Department Chair level, and then our Faculty Liaisons, means that if we lose a Faculty Liaison, we have those other two [positions], the Associate Dean and the Chair, to help to find someone to replace them. Because sometimes somebody gets sick and they have to leave halfway through the term, and oh my gosh, what are we going to do? And so, their being involved is their contributing role, in addition, when the AVP reports to the Provost. The Provost adopts the role as the Executive Sponsor for PLTL, along with the three roles that faculty play in it; the AVP takes on the business owner role. The faculty roles are reflected in the reports to establish that this is a good practice for us.

Having those designated faculty roles contributes to keeping it going … they are there to help convince other faculty from their personal experience, and having colleagues learning about it from them helps get others on board and excited about what it can do.

What PLTLIS is trying to do: We have these Workshop workbooks (that are available on the website), and Monica Franco, our PLTL Program Director, provides the faculty with sample packets. We buy them from PLTLIS, and say okay, here you have a model, you're not starting from scratch, these are problem packets that you can build on. The more we can get more people to contribute toward that effort, the easier it is when we say, you've got to start, but you don't have to start from scratch. Here are some examples to go with now. When we're in disciplines that aren't covered with the workshop booklets that we have available through PLTLIS, we go and search and usually we can find and connect with people who are using PLTL in a discipline, like Calculus 3, we can find someone at another campus who's doing it, and then we make that direct connection and ask, "Would you be willing to share a few of your Workshop problems so that we can share that with our faculty as we get this going?" That practice helps the practitioners feel more at ease about jumping into things.

Working with our faculty, the key to getting ours on board is that we plan to partner with our Center for Research on Teaching and Learning Excellence (CRTLE) and begin to offer a routine every semester for faculty to come in and do training around how they can get involved with academic support. You blend it with talking about a flipped classroom and other things, and faculty think, "Oh, I think I really want to do PLTL; I didn't know I did, but by the time I finish with this Workshop with our Center for Teaching and Learning, I do."

Table 1. Organizational Structure of the Academic Success Center, University of Texas at Arlington, 2025



University of Texas at Dallas

Michael Saenz
Director, Student Success Center

This profile highlights how The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) has sustained and scaled its Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) program over more than fifteen years through intentional structure, shared responsibility, and adaptive leadership. The UTD model demonstrates how central coordination of hiring, training, and evaluation, paired with faculty-driven content expertise, can create a sustainable and resilient framework for peer-led learning. Drawing from insights shared during a PLTLIS conference panel, this account illustrates strategies for program continuity, faculty engagement, and quality assurance through CRLA certification (College Reading and Learning Association, https://www.crla.net), as well as lessons learned from the pandemic's disruption. It invites institutions to reflect on their own PLTL ecosystems and to consider the guiding question: *How is PLTL supported at your institution?*

For more than fifteen years, the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) has made Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) a cornerstone of its academic success strategy. What began as a small computer lab staffed by a handful of peer tutors has evolved into a large-scale, coordinated program serving tens of thousands of undergraduates across chemistry, mathematics, physics, and other disciplines.

The early transformation began when Dr. Kimshi Hickman was tasked with centralizing academic success programming across campus. Recognizing the potential of PLTL to improve student learning and retention, she and her team partnered closely with faculty champions like Dr. John Sibert in General Chemistry to build a sustainable administrative infrastructure. The model they designed divided responsibilities clearly: the Student Success team assumed leadership for hiring, training, and evaluating Peer Leaders, while faculty could focus on course-specific content. That clarity of roles, faculty for pedagogy, staff for program logistics, became one of the program's defining strengths.

Over the years, UTD's PLTL program has thrived on intentional partnership and continuity planning. Faculty transitions, once a common threat to program sustainability, are now managed proactively. When a key organic chemistry champion became department chair, she trained junior colleagues to shadow her PLTL work, ensuring that leadership shifted gradually rather than abruptly. As one administrator reflected, "It's easier to bring in new champions when they realize they're joining a system that already handles most of the heavy lifting."

Sustaining engagement across departments has also required creative collaboration. During the pandemic, UTD launched a Student Success Faculty Advisory Board to strengthen communication among departments. Representatives from Chemistry, Math, Physics, and other disciplines now meet each semester to share data, discuss challenges, and celebrate successes. Food, humor, and shared ownership have proven surprisingly effective tools for faculty engagement.

UTD's commitment to CRLA certification provides another layer of consistency and quality assurance. The certification framework guides hiring, training, session design, and evaluation, helping ensure that Peer Leaders graduate not just as facilitators, but as well-developed professionals. As one coordinator put it, "At first, I focused on PLTL outcomes, on student learning and retention, but eventually I realized our Peer Leaders are also students, and their development matters just as much."

Like many institutions, UTD faced challenges in the wake of the pandemic. With the shift to remote learning, attendance declined sharply, leading to fewer students applying to become Peer Leaders. The team resisted the temptation to lower standards, maintaining their rigorous hiring and training processes even as the applicant pool shrank. As the campus returned fully to in-person instruction, interest in PLTL began to rebound, evidence of the enduring appeal of collaborative, hands-on learning.

Not every discipline has remained steady. Physics PLTL was eventually paused after faculty turnover eroded participation and enthusiasm. The team learned a hard truth: sustainability depends as much on faculty buy-in as on administrative support. Yet even here, the structure of the broader Student Success ecosystem allowed the university to maintain academic support for physics students through alternative models.

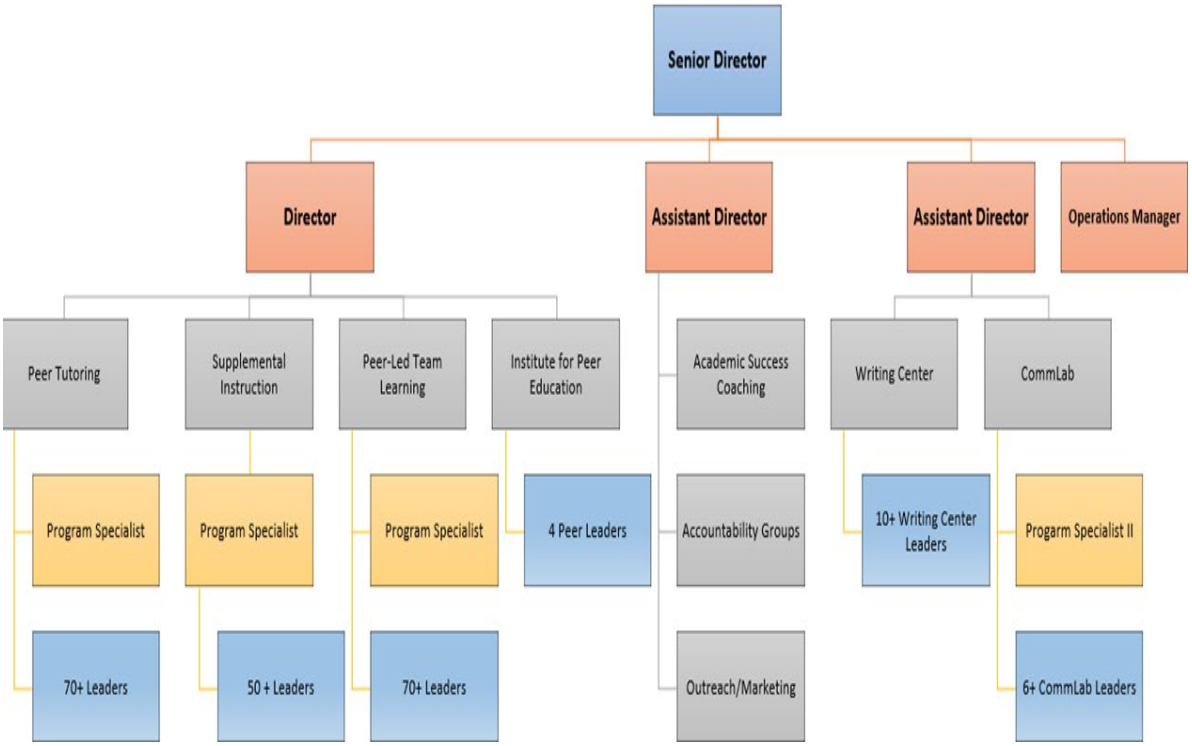
Finally, UTD's PLTL team emphasizes that the model is not universal. During freshman orientations, new students are encouraged to consider whether PLTL aligns with their learning style. "It's not for everyone," they note. "If you don't want to commit to weekly workshops or if you prefer solitary studying, there are other great options." This honesty about fit strengthens the program's integrity and ensures that those who do enroll are prepared to engage fully. Across its evolution, UTD's PLTL program reflects a mature ecosystem, one that values shared responsibility, data-informed decision-making, and intentional leadership development. The program's longevity owes much to its adaptable structure, where faculty, staff, and students each play defined and meaningful roles.

UTD's experience raises an essential question for other institutions: How is PLTL supported at your institution?

Is it a faculty-driven initiative, a centrally coordinated program, or a shared partnership like UTD's?

In exploring that question, institutions can reflect not only on *what* their PLTL programs achieve, but *how* they're sustained, through systems, champions, and the everyday work of collaboration.

Table 2. Organizational Structure of the Student Success Center, University of Texas at Dallas, 2025



Johns Hopkins University

Ariane Kelly
Director of Academic Support

At Johns Hopkins University, we do not have a brick-and-mortar learning center. Instead, the Office of Academic Support (OAS) has built an expansive, campus-wide model of academic engagement — transforming classrooms, study lounges, and other campus spaces into hubs of peer learning. Over the past decade, our Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) initiative — known at Hopkins as PILOT — has grown from a small pilot program into one of the university's most successful and visible academic support efforts.

When I joined Hopkins eleven years ago as an Assistant Director of Academic Support, I oversaw the PILOT program exclusively. At the time, it employed about 30 student leaders. Today, that number has expanded to more than 350 leaders who facilitate small group learning sessions for thousands of undergraduates. Each academic year, the program supports roughly 30 to 33 courses and welcomes between 2,500 and 3,000 voluntary student registrations.

From the start, PILOT was designed as a standalone program within the Office of Academic Support, not embedded directly into courses. This structure has allowed the program to remain flexible and student-centered, focusing on collaborative problem solving rather than lecture-style instruction.

Initially launched in 2008 through a grant out of our President's Leadership Funds, the program began with just Calculus I and II. Its success led to steady expansion across foundational STEM disciplines — and eventually into fields such as Economics, Genetics, Molecular Biology, and even foreign languages like Spanish and Portuguese. The foreign language partnerships have been particularly meaningful, providing students with structured opportunities to practice language skills in a collaborative, low-stakes environment.

For many years, one of our biggest challenges was securing institutional buy-in. Early on, some university leaders questioned why Hopkins students needed academic support. However, through data collection, persistence, and strategic relationship building, perceptions began to shift.

I built a network of faculty "cheerleaders" and established a Faculty Advisory Committee with representatives from Chemistry, Physics, and Math to advocate for the program at the dean's level. Over time, as the university's student demographics evolved and

the need for support became clearer, our leadership began to recognize the essential role of programs like PILOT.

A major turning point came in 2018, when Michael Bloomberg's $1.8 billion gift to the university dramatically increased the number of First-Generation, Limited-Income (FLI) students at Hopkins — from 7% to over 30% of the undergraduate population. With this transformation came a renewed focus on equity and access, and a recognition that academic support programs are central to student success.

At Hopkins, academic support has become part of the student culture. We collaborate closely with offices that engage incoming students — including First-Year Experience and Admissions — to introduce PILOT as early as possible. Our team participates in admitted student days, summer orientation programs, and first-year mentor training to ensure every student knows about available resources.

PILOT sessions open for registration on the first day of classes at 9:00 p.m. According to one Resident Assistant, students line up in hallways with laptops ready to claim a spot. In some of our largest STEM courses, participation rates reach as high as 97–98% of enrolled students.

The structure of the PILOT Program includes Head PILOT Leaders (HPL's) for each course who serve as liaisons between faculty, teaching assistants, and student leaders. Each week, the HPLs meet with course instructors or TAs to develop, review, and approve problem sets that align with current course content. They then facilitate a weekly leader meeting**,** where they guide their team of PILOT Leaders through the new problem set, model effective facilitation techniques, and discuss strategies for supporting students during upcoming sessions.

We also collect data on every aspect of our work — from attendance to grade outcomes — which has been instrumental in maintaining and expanding funding. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when most courses shifted online, PILOT remained one of the only small-group environments offering students meaningful academic and social connection.

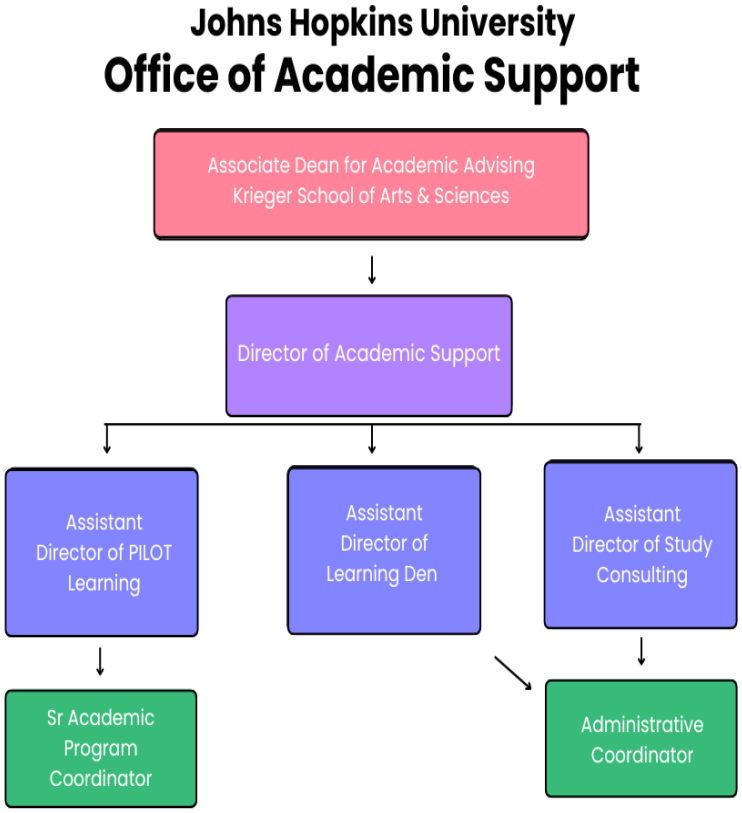
As our student population continues to evolve, so do our challenges. In recent years, we've noticed that some students entering PILOT sessions are less prepared, sometimes relying on peer leaders to reteach course content rather than engaging collaboratively. This shift — likely influenced by both pandemic learning loss and changes in academic preparation — has prompted us to reimagine how we meet the needs of students who fall "in the middle."

To that end, we're exploring other models of academic support and are in the beginning stages of facilitating review initiatives for Chemistry, Organic Chemistry and Physics as to reach students who may not yet benefit fully from the traditional PLTL approach.

What began as a small grant-funded pilot in 2008 has evolved into a cornerstone of the Hopkins academic experience. The program's growth reflects not only the demand for academic support but also a culture shift toward normalizing help-seeking behavior among some of the nation's most high-achieving students.

At Johns Hopkins, participation in academic support is no longer remedial — it's aspirational. As one faculty member put it, "PILOT isn't what students do when they're struggling; it's what they do when they want to excel."

Table 3. Organizational Structure of the Office of Academic Support, Johns Hopkins University, 2025



Washington University in St. Louis

Megan Daschbach, Ph.D.
Teaching Professor of Chemistry
Director of the General Chemistry PLTL Program

PLTL made its official debut at Washington University in St. Louis ("WashU") in 2002. PLTL was first offered in the General Chemistry lecture sequence in an effort to improve student learning outcomes, retain more students in the STEM pipeline, increase the students' sense of belonging in our course, and better engage students. The pilot program was extremely successful, and over the course of the last 20-plus years, PLTL has blossomed into a fully realized part of STEM culture here at WashU.

At present, PLTL is now being offered in General Chemistry, Principles of General Chemistry, Introductory Physics, Calculus I, Calculus II, and Calculus III. PLTL is an optional program in all of these classes, but on average, between 70-85% of enrolled students participate. These students have the option to earn an additional credit hour for their engagement in each of these programs (although this credit does not count towards a major or minor program, only towards the overall graduation requirement).

An Academic Learning Programs Manager (ALPM) who interfaces fully with each instructor team manages a majority of the logistics of their respective PLTL program including:

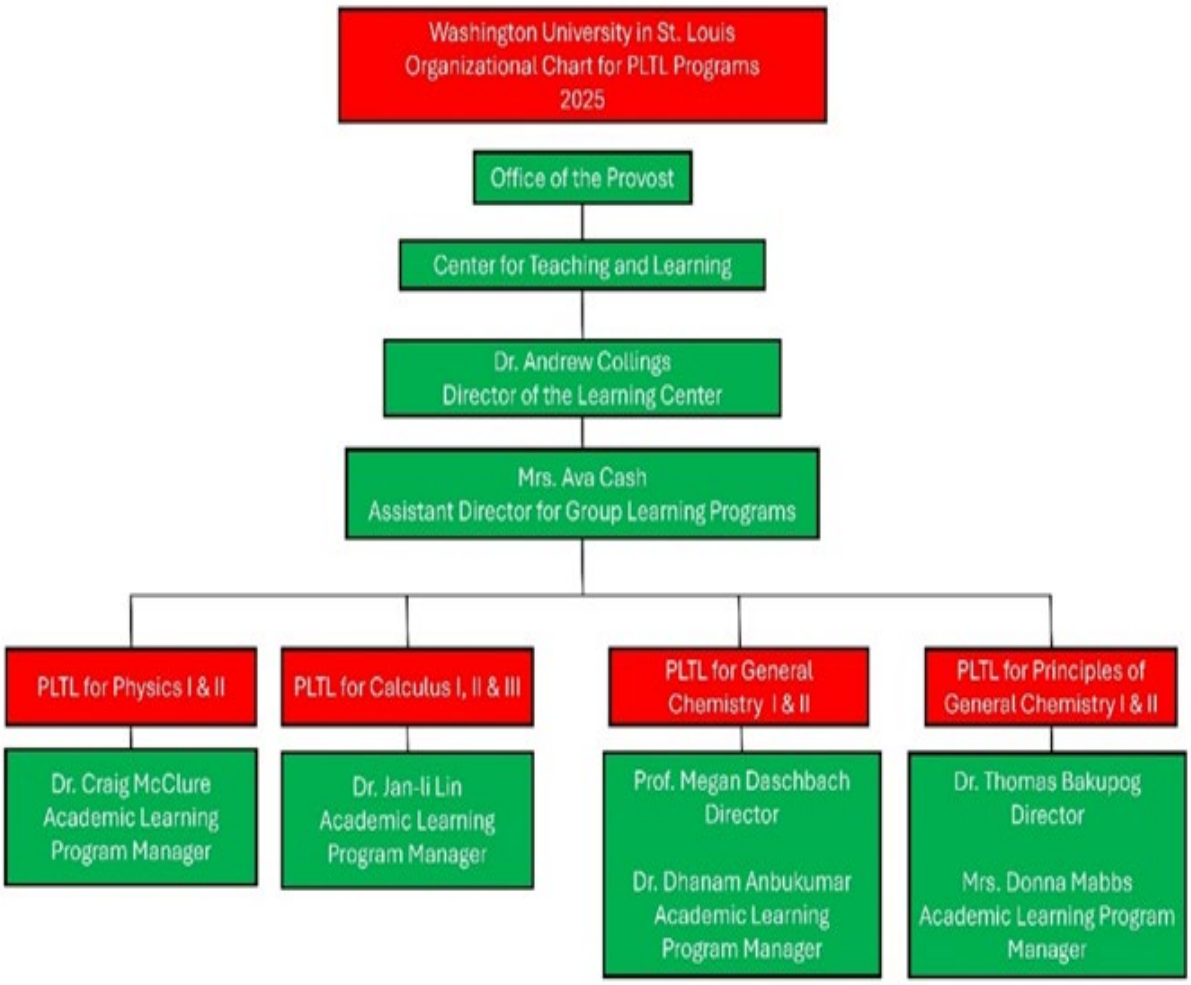
- The selection of problems for the PLTL packet;
- Sorting students into PLTL groups and maintaining student rosters;
- The selection and training of peer leaders: All peer leaders enroll in a 2-credit ongoing General Studies course for this training and a 1-credit General Studies course specifically for new leaders. The ALPM responsible for their PLTL program is the instructor of these training courses.

All PLTL programs are overseen by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), ensuring the PLTL philosophy is implemented properly and serving as a connector for program leadership. The CTL also manages payroll for all peer leaders who are compensated for facilitating their sessions. This partnership and oversight by a central unit has proved essential as PLTL spread to other courses and departments within WashU.

Across all disciplines, PLTL serves approximately 1400 WashU students every year with many of these students enrolling in two or more PLTL programs in any given semester. When transitioning from high school to undergraduate studies, many of the challenges faced

in all of our introductory STEM courses involve developing new skill sets in the areas of problem-solving, critical thinking, collaborative learning and precise communication. The development of these process skills relies heavily not only on individual study, but on a strong community of scholars. Our PLTL programs ubiquitously assist our students not only in mastering the material presented in the course, but in learning the value of group discussion, teamwork, and peer review in furthering one's own knowledge. Maintaining an impactful and high-functioning program in so many courses requires intentional coordination and communication among the departments and the CTL. We are very proud of the networks we have built and maintained for the benefit of our students over the last 23 years.

Table 4. Organizational Structure of the Center for Teaching and Learning, Washington University in St. Louis, 2025



The University of Rochester

Nicholas Hammond, Ph.D.
Director, The Learning Center

For some context, The Learning Center (TLC) at the University of Rochester provides academic support for undergraduate and graduate students across the University. In addition to the PLTL 'Workshops' program (as we refer to them), we also run programming for tutoring, study groups, and academic coaching. The PLTL program at URochester is quite large for the size of the University and we regularly describe our work as being that of a 'peer learning machine.' TLC staff train all PLTL peer leaders (~300 non-unique peer leaders last academic year) through a credit-bearing, four course sequence, while the academic departments take on the hiring, paying, and employment management of peer leaders. As you might guess there is a great deal of coordination involved and a lot of work to maintain consistency and quality across so many stakeholders. Our academic departments (the faculty and the administrative staff) are crucial collaborators with us to keep the PLTL model sustained. But I would say that having amazing professional staff whose job it is to run the training program has been the most critical component in the success of PLTL at URochester. Two full-time Assistant Directors (ADs) run the PLTL Workshop program, and part of two other ADs' time is also used to teach peer leader training courses. Staff in TLC are paid from allocated funds – we are not supported by any grants, which speaks to the incredible value that the University continues to receive from the PLTL model.

While PLTL is now very institutionalized and programmatic, it started as and continues to (slowly) grow in a manner that is more grassroots in nature. PLTL started in Organic Chemistry in 1995 because Professor Jack Kampmeier was dissatisfied with how his office hours were going and was guided to the PLTL model. It has been in continuous use in Orgo ever since. The model has expanded to many other courses (31 total courses in the '24/'25 academic year) and this growth has always been faculty- and student-driven. Our students clearly see the value (as evidenced by exceedingly high attendance rates, even when no course credit is provided for attending), and while they might not understand the pedagogical difference between a PLTL Workshop and a discussion section or recitation, students will relay to us that they absolutely feel a difference between these models and they then advocate for PLTL Workshops in their more challenging courses.

Faculty must independently decide that they want to use the PLTL model in their courses. We suggest to new faculty who are assigned a course that has already used PLTL that

they would benefit greatly from keeping the model, and we promise to fully support them. We would note that at our institution, faculty not having connection or buy-in, not having a readiness to put in the up-front effort of writing good questions, and not giving their time to the hiring process or to the weekly meetings are immediate barriers to the success of the PLTL model in a course. The peer leader training course is 50 minutes per week and is held at the same time as a meeting for course content refresher or other logistical needs the faculty has, which takes the Orgo meeting time to a total of 2 hours per week. Most other meetings are ~1.25 to 1.5 hours per week. We ask that some departmental faculty representation is present, if not also co-instructing during the time. We have found that this faculty presence ensures that the new peer leaders develop their buy-in after seeing and mirroring the faculty buy-in to the model. We did have a department that was team-teaching a very large enrollment course and that did not have a strong supporter among the team who was able to fill this role. The department eventually decided to withdraw from use of the PLTL model.

A key to developing champions has been getting stakeholders to talk about what their valuation of PLTL is. For example, the chair of our Linguistics department admitted to me that he didn't understand PLTL's value when he came on to teach a course that had used the model for some time. He did it because, "this is what was done," but then said, "Because I have these PLTL Workshop leaders, I'm actually able to cover more content in my course - my students are more prepared when they come to lecture." His claim to me was that he was able to get through something on the order of one-third more content than he was able to in previous semesters before he used the model. Clearly, he is now a champion for PLTL. We have also benefitted, over these last 30 years, from the fact that sometimes the faculty who use the model then go on to administrative roles at the University. Before a restructuring, the Dean of the College was a PLTL-championing faculty member who had used the model to great effect. Since then, the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Excellence has been steadfast in her support of PLTL. Having support for the model upward into central administration has helped immensely through the global pandemic and now two budget crises. It also balances with an increasing use of non-tenure track teaching faculty being used in large introductory courses that are more likely to use PLTL.

Having amazing departmental administrators (department coordinators, assistants, managers, etc.) who understand the value and purpose of PLTL has also played a role in making the program easier to fund by folks who are in senior administration. Having administrative staff who help do the paperwork, hire/onboard and pay the peer leaders, and keep things running on a day-to-day basis proves to be incredibly important. While we all think often about going 'upward' to secure the funding, we should also focus on going

'laterally' to have departmental staff who understand what the model needs to maintain. We have found that when your PLTL program "just runs," it makes it much easier for senior administration to say yes to the asks that you have for them.

Another consideration would be that of the workload for the peer leader trainers (ADs, in TLC). At one point, before the pandemic, we had hit a peak that was not sustainable. ADs were strained in terms of workload and commitments. I was an AD at the time, and I had six classes each week and was training 82 peer leaders in one semester, which is a lot of journals to read each week! That workload has decreased somewhat, with additional hiring in TLC and with some attrition on the part of departments using the PLTL model. TLC is currently within range of what we are comfortable supporting with our current staffing, but if a large-enrollment course (or a few smaller ones) decided to engage the PLTL model, we would likely have to decline those requests or face another bandwidth crisis among TLC staff.

The 'next step' for supporting PLTL at URochester will be carefully planning what growth in the use of the PLTL model can be supported while also maintaining the high-quality experience we already have. How can we prepare for the quantized nature of program expansion (i.e., you either gain a small course that has ~5 peer leaders to train or you gain a large course that might have ~30 peer leaders)? We already have PLTL in a diverse set of courses; Philosophy, Linguistics, the Simon Business School use the PLTL model. However, there are some targeted courses (Political Science, Economics, Math, and some other Humanities courses) that we would love to introduce or reintroduce PLTL to once the current crisis in higher education equilibrates.

Table 5. Organizational Structure, The Learning Center, University of Rochester, 2025