Welcome to the PERTG newsletter!

What and why is this?
This is the Summer edition of the biannual newsletter published by PERLOC to keep AAPT’s Physics Education Research Topical Group informed about important news. We think of this newsletter as taking on the role of the announcements historically made in the existing RiPE meeting and PERTG town hall, allowing those meetings to be more interactive and, well, useful! In addition to streamlining those meetings, this will also allow people who are not at the AAPT meeting to stay informed about what is going on in the community.

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What is PERLOC?

PERLOC is the leadership body of the PER Topical Group of the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT) founded in 2006. PERLOC was formed to address a growing need for communication and decision-making structures within the PER community, and a desire to promote and advance PER within AAPT and beyond. Many of the constituents of our organization are committed teachers (at universities/colleges, at high/middle/elementary schools, and in informal science learning settings) and/or scholars that research physics education across these many settings.

Who are we?

- Vashti Sawtelle (2017 - 2020) - co-Chair
- Chandra Turpen (2017 - 2020) - co-Chair
- Geoff Potvin (2018 - 2021) - Vice-chair/Treasurer
- Stamatis Vokos (2018 - 2021) - PERTG MiniGrants
- Hannah Sabo (2019 - 2021) - PERTG MiniGrants, PERCoGS rep
- Erin Scanlon (2019 - 2022) - PERC Liason
- Edward Price (2019 - 2022)
- Gina Passante (2019 - 2020), Ex-officio/RiPE chair

What does PERLOC do?

We find and support PERC Organizers...

PERLOC solicits proposals for the annual PER Conference and from these applications chooses the PERC theme and associated PERC organizing team. PERLOC works to maintain institutional memory from one PERC organizing team to the next, and assists the PERC organizing team in coordinating with AAPT to successfully run PERC.

We find and support PERC Proceedings Editors...

PERLOC solicits and selects editors for the PERC proceedings and works with the PERC editors to refine its operation. From the set of highly reviewed PERC proceedings papers, PERLOC selects a few “notable papers” to highlight to the community.

We handle PERTG’s $$$ and give out minigrants...

PERLOC coordinates with AAPT to collect and then spend the membership dues that it collects. A significant portion of these membership dues are fed back into community activities through the twice annual PERTG mini-grant solicitation.
We help maintain and grow the PER community...

PERLOC receives regular updates about the health and well-being of our primary publication venues (e.g. Phys. Rev. PER, American Journal of Physics, and The Physics Teacher) and considers any actions that might be prudent. PERLOC periodically reflects on the health and well-being of our community (such as considering appropriate actions that should follow the RiPE social activities survey). PERLOC also communicates and coordinates with: (a) its members (through the PERTG listserv, and updating our web presence on Compadre), (b) other AAPT committees, and (c) GPER within American Physical Society.

PERLOC wants YOU!

Serving on PERLOC is a great way to give back to the PER Community, while being the change you want to see! Please consider running for a position on PERLOC (next election will begin in August).

PERLOC’s guide to acronyms

AAPT = American Association of Physics Teachers

PERTG = Physics Education Research Topical Group (AAPT members who, as a topical group, assist the advancement, dissemination, and application of knowledge of physics education research)

PERLOC = Physics Education Research Leadership and Organizing Council (A committee of elected representatives who has the general charge of the affairs of the Topical Group.)

RiPE = Research in Physics Education (an area committee within AAPT appointed by AAPT Board)

PERGS = Physics Education Research Graduate Students

PERCoGS = PER Consortium of Graduate Students (a committee of elected representatives who has the general charge of the affairs of the PER Graduate Students).

APS = American Physical Society

GPER = Topical Group on Physics Education Research (a group within the APS whose objective is the advancement and diffusion of knowledge concerning the learning and teaching of physics).

PERC = Physics Education Research Conference (overseen by PERLOC, but organized separately by volunteer organizers each year). It has a conference proceedings that are organized by 3 volunteer editors (who serve 3-year terms).
PERLOC Announcements

Money Matters

Our finances continue to look good as PERTG membership is on the rise and PERC expenses have stabilized over the last few years. With increased financial stability, PERLOC has been making incremental changes to evaluate the effect on our budget. We have been working to reduce costs for graduate students and provide travel funding for PERC organizers and PERC proceedings editors. In 2019 we have hired an accessibility expert to provide feedback on changes we could make to improve accessibility for PERC attendees. We continue to consider additional proposed special projects - if there is something you would like PERLOC to consider please contact Geoff Potvin (gpotvin@fiu.edu). Thank you to all PERTG members for your active support.

Mini-grants

In Spring 2019 we funded or partially funded 13 proposals for PERTG Minigrants, including a number of travel awards and several organizer awards to PERTG members (see a list of awardees on PER Central). We continue to offer increased funding for international travel ($1000). Keep a look out for our Fall 2019 mini-grants solicitation through our website and the PERTG listserv.

CONGRATULATIONS to Chris Gosling, 2019 DUNCAN McBRIDE TRAVEL AWARD winner!
PERC 2020 Organization Team + Theme announced!

PERLOC is pleased to announce that the organizers of PERC 2020 in Grand Rapids, Michigan will be Beth Cunningham, Lin Ding, Alexis Knaub, and Steve Maier. Their theme is Insights, Reflections, & Future Directions: Emergent Themes in the Evolving PER Community.

2019 AAPT SM info

If you are at the 2019 AAPT Summer Meeting in Provo, UT, here are a few events and meetings that PERTG members should be aware of…

- **MONDAY**, July 22 8:30am - 10:30 am *Topical Discussion & Social for Students*
- **MONDAY**, July 22 8:30am - 10:30 am *International Perspectives for Laboratories (AN)*
- **MONDAY**, July 22 11:30am - 1pm *RiPE Committee Meeting*
- **MONDAY**, July 22 1:30pm - 3:30pm *Supporting Accessibility in Physics Education (BC)*
- **MONDAY** 9pm-11:59pm *Game Night* is now an official AAPT event at winter & summer meetings.

- **TUESDAY**, July 23 1:30pm - 3:30pm *Professional Skills for Graduate Students: Mentoring Undergrads and Junior Grad Students*
- **TUESDAY**, July 23 1:30pm - 3:30pm *PERTG Townhall* Come get and share important updates and have your voice heard!
- **TUESDAY**, July 23 1:30pm - 3:30pm *Towards Teaching a Structural Understanding of Science (EI)*

- **WEDNESDAY**, July 25 3pm - 4:30pm *PERC Bridging Session*, A Collective Exploration of Physics Beyond the Classroom & Making Through a Lens of Culture, Power, and Equity

Organizing an AAPT or PERC Session

One way that AAPT or PERTG members can contribute to an AAPT meeting and PERC is to organize a session. The two different conferences have different procedures for proposing a session.

For AAPT (summer or winter meeting), a proposed session must be sponsored by one of AAPT’s area committees (link to list of AAPT committees). This is done one year in advance. So if you would like to propose a session for the Summer 2020 AAPT meeting, the time is now (!) to submit that request. Contact the chair of the relevant committee for information on how to propose a session. (Note that you can have two committees co-sponsor a session and that makes it more likely for a committee to approve a session.)
For PERC, there is a call each winter for members to submit an abstract for a session. (This year the
deadline was Feb 22, but it will vary each year.)

Funding invited presentations:

When organizing a session, you might want to invite a speaker from outside the AAPT community and
want to help fund their participation. If you are inviting a speaker to AAPT who has not been a member
in 5 years, then they receive complimentary full meeting registration. For PERC, there are no funds set
aside to help fund invited speakers. (Remember, an attendee at PERC much also register for at least
one day of AAPT.) There are mini-grants available through both PERTG and APS GPER. You need to be
a member of the funding organization in order to apply. Both mini-grants have “organizer strands”
that are ideal for helping fund invited speakers at conferences.

PERC Accessibility

Over the next couple of years PERLOC will be assessing the accessibility of the PERC conference with
the intended goal of increasing the access and support for all people to attend PERC. We have
contracted with Dr. Arielle Silverman via her accessibility consulting firm, Disability Wisdom
(disabilitywisdom.com), to assist in this evaluation. Dr. Silverman will assist us with: 1) summarizing
the extant conference accessibility practices; 2) developing a PERC accessibility survey; and 3) writing
a plan for further accessibility investigations and sustainable practices to increase accessibility.

In Summer 2019 we are kicking off the project with a survey for past PERC attendees
(https://is.gd/PERCAccessibility) about their experiences with accessibility at previous PER
conferences. We are also recruiting volunteers to be interviewed about their PERC experiences with
accessibility (please contact Erin Scanlon (erin.scanlon@ucf.edu) if you are interested in participating).
At the end of this first phase, an executive summary of the survey findings and Dr. Silverman’s
evaluation will be shared with the community via the PERTG listserv. The longer term plan is to
implement sustainable practices to increase the accessibility of the conference. If you have questions
or thoughts about this initiative, please contact the current PERLOC task force members - Chandra
Turpen (turpen@umd.edu), Vashti Sawtelle (vashti@msu.edu), and/or Erin Scanlon
(erin.scanlon@ucf.edu).

Need a Letter to Support International Travel to AAPT/PERC?

For international scholars planning to attend AAPT/PERC it may be useful to have a letter showing your
participation in the meeting for VISA applications. AAPT will generate a letter for your upon request. To
request this letter, submit your abstract to AAPT for presentation at either Summer or Winter Meeting
and then email Cerena Cantrell (ccantrel@aapt.org) to request a letter. PERLOC is actively working on
a process for making a similar request for PERC meetings.
Community Announcements

PERC 20/20

PERC 20/20 will be held in Grand Rapids, MI immediately following the summer AAPT meeting July 22 – 23, 2020. Join us as we explore “Insights, Reflections, & Future Directions: Emergent Themes in the Evolving PER Community,” we look forward to seeing you there!

Emerging Reflections from the People of Color (POC) at PERC Discussion Space White Paper

In 2017, Geraldine Cochran and Alexis Knaub hosted a PERC parallel session called the POC in PER Discussion Space. POC in PER stands for People of Color in Physics Education Research. Both were becoming more aware of challenges that POC face in PER at all levels of the academy. The goals were to provide a space where POC could share their experiences and validate the experiences of others. The session was again held at the 2018 PERC. This white paper reflects a summary of the discussions that transpired in those sessions, with points for reflection and suggested actions for the broader PER community towards adopting anti-racist practices within our community. The paper is archived at: https://arxiv.org/abs/1907.01655v2

Physics education consultants directory

Looking for an external evaluator for a grant, a writer to help you get the grant, or someone to consult on diversity issues in your department? The PhysPort consultants directory has a list of experts-for-hire in a wide variety of areas; http://physport.org/consultants.

Physics Allies Dissolving

As the most recent leadership of the Physics Allies organization, we write to let the PERTG community know that we are dissolving the Physics Allies organization. This means that this organization will NO longer be supporting "safe walks" and formally fielding requests for support at the meeting. Though this organization started with good intentions and had some positive impacts, there were negative impacts that we both acknowledge responsibility for and do not see ways to resolve. We thank the
Establishing the PER Graduate Research Exchange And Training Network (PER GREAT Network)

At this year’s Foundations and Frontiers of Physics Education Research conference in Bar Harbor, several conference participants developed ideas about a PER Graduate Research Exchange And Training Network (PER GREAT Network). The goal of establishing the PER GREAT Network is to provide PER graduate students with the opportunity to visit other institutions for extended periods of time to be trained in a particular research methodology and to experience the culture of another research group (and/or advisor). We are currently exploring a variety of grant options for funding this program and will reach out to the community later in the year to solicit collaborating institutions. If you are interested in helping establish this program and pursuing grant funding for it, please contact us in the meantime at pergreatnetwork@gmail.com. Benedikt Harrer, Eleanor Sayre, Lauren Barth-Cohen

Physics Research and Education Gordon Conference Series

The Physics Research and Education Gordon Research Conference series has come to a close due to low attendance. This was a wonderful series, which started in 2000, covered many of the core topics in physics teaching, and produced 10 special editions of AJP.