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 (PERTG) 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 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?

- Geoff Potvin (2018-2021), Chair
- Hannah Sabo (2019 - 2021), PERTG MiniGrants, PERCoGS rep
- Trevor Smith (2020 - 2021), Ex-officio/RiPE chair, PERTG MiniGrants
- Stamatis Vokos (2018-2021), PERTG MiniGrants
- Edward Price (2019 - 2022), Treasurer, APS GPER Liaison
- Erin Scanlon (2019 - 2022), Vice-chair
- Adrienne Traxler (2020 - 2023), PERC Liaison
- Bethany Wilcox (2020 - 2023), PERC Liaison

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 money and award 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 PERTG MiniGrant program.
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 cycle will begin in August-September).

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).
**Money Matters**

Our finances have continued to look good in recent years as PERTG membership has slowly but steadily risen and PERC expenses have stabilized over the last few years. With increased financial stability, PERLOC has been making incremental changes over the past few years and then evaluating the effect on our budget (for example, we have reduced costs for graduate students and provided travel funding for PERC organizers and PERC proceedings editors). The COVID-19 pandemic introduced significant uncertainty this year to all of our lives and to the future of PERLOC finances as well. The existing budget situation and adjusted costs due to the conference changes has led us to reduce PERC registration fees for all participants in PERC 2020 (i.e., free for students, significantly reduced for other members) and offer a reimbursement for conference registration for members who request it.

In 2019, we hired an accessibility expert to provide feedback on changes we could make to improve accessibility for PERC attendees and this effort has continued in 2020. We have also recently created an anti-racism working group, and are working to contract an anti-racism expert to conduct a review of PERLOC, PERTG, and conference practices in a similar way to our accessibility working group.

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), Erin Scanlon (erin.scanlon@uconn.edu), or any other member of PERLOC. Thank you to all PERTG members for your active support!
**MiniGrants**

PERTG Minigrants were awarded this spring, though awards did not include travel-related funds to attend the conference this year. Unallocated funds will be used to defray expenses associated with the PERC 2020 conference. We also have updated the solicitation to include a call for off-cycle requests related to urgent, timely issues.

In Spring 2020, 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 2020 mini-grants solicitation through our website and the PERTG listserv.

**PERC 2021 Organization Team + Theme announced!**


**2020 AAPT SM info**

If you are attending the 2020 Virtual AAPT Summer Meeting, here are a few events and meetings that PERTG members should be aware of:

- **PERTG Town Hall** - the Town Hall meeting will occur on Tuesday, July 21 at 3:30 - 4:30 ET within the conference portal (underline.io) on the Main Stage. Please come!
- **Special events:**
  - *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Resource Room* (session SPEC04) [Resource room schedule](#)
  - *Virtual Game Night (session GAMES)* Mon 7/20, 4:30PM - 6:30PM (EDT)
  - *Meet-up for Members and Supporters of the LGBTQ Community* (session STPAR-9) Wed 07/22, 1:30PM - 2:30PM (EDT)

[The complete SM schedule is available here](#).

**Proposed Bylaw Change**

PERLOC is proposing a Bylaw change that is intended to eliminate a barrier to eligibility to run to be a PERLOC councilor. Currently, to be eligible to run for PERLOC, the Bylaws state that candidates must have been PERTG members for at least two (continuous) years before qualifying to stand in the PERLOC election. This requirement has led in recent years to a number of individuals being disqualified from running (e.g. members who inadvertently allowed their PERTG membership to lapse,
even briefly). Further, this requirement is not consistent with typical requirements for AAPT committees. Hence, PERLOC is proposing to replace this requirement with a simple eligibility requirement for all PERLOC Councilors (e.g., current membership in PERTG).

We will be making time to discuss this at the Town Hall meeting (July 21 from 3:30 - 4:30 EDT) and we expect to hold an electronic vote on this change later in the summer. We hope to complete this Bylaw change before the nomination period closes for the next election cycle (for terms beginning in January 2021). If you have any comments, you can send them to any member of PERLOC.

Organizing an AAPT or PERC Session

One valuable way that AAPT or PERTG members can contribute to an AAPT meeting and PERC is to organize a session at one of the conferences. 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 2021 or Winter 2022 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.)

Funding invited presenters

When organizing a session, you might want to invite a speaker from outside the AAPT community and want to help fund their participation (travel costs to the conference, offer an honorarium, etc). If you are inviting a speaker to AAPT who has not been a member for 5 years, then they receive complimentary full meeting registration. For PERC, there are no specific funds set aside to help fund invited speakers. (Remember, an attendee at PERC must also register for at least one day of AAPT.) However, MiniGrants are available through both PERTG and APS GPER. You will need to be a member of the funding organization in order to apply. Both MiniGrants have “organizer strands” that are ideal for helping fund invited speakers at conferences. If you plan to invite speakers and request these funds, make sure to account for all of the costs they might incur!

PERC Accessibility

Since 2019 PERLOC has been working with an external consultant to assess the accessibility of the PERC conference with the intended goal of increasing the access and support for all people to attend PERC. In 2019, we contracted with Dr. Arielle Silverman via her accessibility consulting firm, Disability Wisdom (disabilitywisdom.com), to assist in an evaluation of the current state of accessibility of the PER Conference. After this evaluation, Dr. Silverman generated a list of accessible conference planning practices and a summary of the findings from a survey and discussions with PERC 2019 attendees.
Through these documents, PERLOC identified multiple conference aspects to target time and resources toward. Due to the transition to a virtual meeting in 2020, we focused our efforts on creating a list of tips for accessible presentations, methods for processing accommodation requests, defining an accessibility accountability liaison role, and working with the virtual platform (Underline.io) to support access needs to presenters and attendees.

For 2021, we plan to continue working with Dr. Silverman to help PERLOC sustainably implement these accessible practices, conduct training for the community related to accessibility/disability, and to guide policy making. **We are actively looking for community members to join our working group!** If you are interested, please contact Erin Scanlon (erin.scanlon@uconn.edu).

If you have questions or thoughts about this initiative, please contact the current PERLOC working group members, including Erin Scanlon, Adrienne Traxler (adrienne.traxler@wright.edu), Chandra Turpen (turpen@umd.edu), Stephanie Williams (swillia7@terpmail.umd.edu), and Constance Doty (constance.doty@knights.ucf.edu).

**Community Announcements**

**PERC 2021**

PERC 2021 will be held in Washington, DC immediately following the summer AAPT meeting 2021. Join us as we explore *Making Physics More Inclusive and Eradicating Exclusive Practices in Physics*. We look forward to seeing you there!

**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.