Peer Leader Selection and Training
Peer Leader Selection

- Important attributes
  - Excellent interpersonal skills: Interactive, communicative, supportive, positive, responsive, respectful of others
  - Ability to adapt
  - Responsible
  - Experience with PLTL
  - Very good knowledge of materials
Where / How to Look

- Did well in PLTL course and other CS courses
- Peer leader recommendations
- Demographics you want to support
- Availability (initial training, weekly meetings, sessions)
- Personal invitations and/or application
- Interviews
- Formal commitment (Guidebook pp. 38-42)
Peer-Leader Training

- 1-day training via spring workshop
  - Get together with other schools doing PLTL
  - Experienced leaders help train new ones

- One or two half days just before semester starts
  - Review responsibilities and concerns
  - Have new leaders do some practice sessions (maybe with “role playing”)

- Weekly 2-hour meetings
  - Discuss problems, concerns, approaches
  - Go over this week’s exercises
Peer-Leader Training

- Expectations of a peer leader
- Peer leader goals and concerns
- Running peer-led sessions, esp. the first one
- Group Work
- Diverse student learning styles

(Guidebook pp 43-58)
The First Session

- New peer leaders generally very concerned about the first session
  - Need comfort with activities
    - Have them do the session
  - Time for reflection valuable

- Important to make first session a success
  - Pick activities to capture participants' interest

(pp. 16-23 of Handbook)
Expectations Of Peer Leaders

- Let's brainstorm on what you expect

**Things Done**
- Attend regular class
- Help with concepts
- Contact with faculty
- Create exercises
- Feedback to faculty?
- Student knowledge level (individual?)
- Know who work for

**Things Not Done**
- Not solve assignments
- No grading
- No academic recommendations
- No teaching?
- No lecturing
- No personal snitching
- Reporting cheating?
Expectations Of Peer Leaders

- These will vary by institution but some common ones are
  - Time with students, for meetings, prep time
  - Effectively run sessions
  - Keeping student attendance
  - Journal
    - Invaluable to coordinator
  - Honest feedback of sessions and their feelings
  - For some programs
    - Help prepare activities
    - Additional programs (dinners, trips, ...)

Boundaries

- Peer leaders need to know the boundaries in working with other students
  - Limit outside contact
    - Dealing with being friends with group member
  - Dealing with student requesting lots of other help
    - Personal issues, class work, ...
- When to refer student to others
  - Problems for coordinator to deal with
    - Emotional, out of control behavior, ...
Let's Break Up Into Groups

- How people work in groups
- Dealing with difficult participants
- Peer leader concerns
  - Running out of material or not finishing
  - Embarrassing self
  - Not knowing if doing right/wrong
  - Not being liked
  - Fear of public speaking
  - Knowing role: student/leader/....
  - Problems cannot deal with
  - Personal safety
  - Talking too much or not enough
Peer Leader Concerns

- Everyone is different, so get them to let you know what they are worried about
  - Remember, you pick overachievers who tend to worry!
- Some common areas
  - I’m not ready for this nor am I special
  - How do I create the right environment
  - How do I deal with hard questions
  - How do I deal with problem students
  - How will I get prepared for sessions
  - How much time will this take

(p. 44 of handbook)
Expectations Of Students

- Let's brainstorm on what to expect
Expectations of Students

- These were created by peer leaders (see handout)
- 1. Come to session prepared
- 2. Attend and be ready to participate by the beginning of the session and stay throughout
- 3. Be an active and engaged participant
- 4. Be patient with the process
- 5. Be willing to ask questions
- 6. Let your peer leader know what you like and dislike in the sessions
- 7. Respect others
- 8. Food allowed but use common sense
- 9. We take a 5-10 minute break during sessions
Thoughts, Questions, Other?