



# Physics Colloquium



Thursday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 pm in SC 234

**Dr. Eleanor Close**

*Texas State University, Department of Physics*

***Creating an inclusive teaching & learning community through  
the Learning Assistant program model***

In the physics department at Texas State University, we are in our fourth year of implementing a Learning Assistant (LA) program supporting research-based instructional changes in our calculus-based introductory course sequence. In this talk, I will describe the Learning Assistant model for course reform and teacher recruitment; implementation of the model at Texas State and at my previous (much smaller) institution, Seattle Pacific University, including a brief discussion of funding and logistical considerations; and themes of identity transformation emerging from our research on the impact of program participation. An overarching theme in both institutions has been the creation of an inclusive community around the practice of physics education, within an academic setting that includes formal learning environments that value and promote the development of interactive academic skills such as argumentation and group collaboration. At Texas State we are interested in examining how being part of the LA community changes participants' self-concepts and their day-to-day practice. We have found that in addition to becoming more confident and competent in physics, LAs perceive themselves to have increased competence in communication and a stronger sense of belonging to a supportive and collaborative community. Participation in the LA program also changes their ways of learning and of being students, both within and beyond physics.

Refreshments 3:00-3:20 pm in SC 103