



FALL EDITION



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## TOP NEWS

### ■ THE OTHER ENGAGEMENT PROBLEM

"Research links students' involvement in life beyond the classroom—in extracurriculars such as clubs and in co-curriculars such as service learning—to their overall success. So it's concerning that over a third of students (36 percent) haven't participated in a single extra- or co-curricular activity, according to new data from Inside Higher Ed's main annual Student Voice survey..."  
(Source: [Inside Higher Ed](#))

READ MORE [HERE](#).



## THEIR PROFESSORS CAUGHT THEM CHEATING. THEY USED A.I. TO APOLOGIZE.

"Confronted with allegations that they had cheated in an introductory data science course and fudged their attendance, dozens of undergraduates at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign recently sent two professors a mea culpa via email. But there was one problem, a glaring one: They had not written the emails. Artificial Intelligence had, according to the professors..."  
(Source: [The New York Times](#))

READ MORE [HERE](#).

## NET TUITION RISES AT COLLEGES, BUT COSTS ARE FAR BELOW THEIR PEAKS

"The average tuition and fees paid by students and their families after aid rose slightly for the 2025-26 academic year but remain well below historic peaks, according to the latest [higher education pricing study](#) from the College Board." (Source: [Higher Ed Dive](#))

READ MORE [HERE](#).



# UPDATES



## FL-IDN LATEST LIGHTNING ROUND WEBINAR: TWO PRESENTATIONS ON REVOLUTIONIZING ACCESSIBILITY & INTEGRATING A.I. IN TEACHING

Earlier this month, FL-IDN hosted a lightning round webinar with two presentations on revolutionizing accessibility and integrating A.I. in teaching. The first lightning round, **"Beyond Barriers: How AI is Revolutionizing Accessibility,"** was presented by Anastasia Bojanowski from University of Central Florida. The second lightning round, **"Empowering Educators: A 3-Step Process for Integrating A.I. in Teaching,"** was presented by Skylar Johnson, Holly Fremmen, and Chris Egan from University of Florida. The descriptions of each presentation and other information are provided on the [FL-IDN website](#).

Many thanks to all of our guest speakers for sharing their knowledge and experience with our IDN community.

In case you missed it, here are a couple resources below:  
[Recording](#) | [Presentation 1 Slides](#) | [Presentation 2 Slides](#)



## FL-IDN UPCOMING WEBINAR: UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING: BUILDING ACCESSIBILITY FROM THE GROUND UP

In December, FL-IDN will host a webinar, **"Universal Design for Learning: Building Accessibility from the Ground Up."** This session explores how to implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles from the beginning of course design rather than retrofitting accessibility features after courses are complete. Participants will examine the time and resource costs of the retrofitting approach and learn practical workflows that scale from individual documents to complete course components. Our guest speaker, Samantha Groh (University of Cincinnati), will include demonstrations of tools and case study examples that illustrate accessibility implementation in real-world contexts, along with strategies for presenting accessibility as an enhancement that benefits all students. Attendees will gain actionable resources for creating inherently accessible learning experiences.

December 2, 2025 | 2:00 - 2:50 PM (ET) | Register for free [here](#).

The recording and other resources related to this webinar will be sent to the FL-IDN and MCDLSS listservs as soon as they are made available.



## IT'S HERE! 2025-2026 DLSS MEMBERS COUNCIL PHOTO DIRECTORY

The photo directory can be found at: [MCDLSS Photo Directory 2025-2026.pdf](#). Feel free to bookmark or download it for easy access! If you would like to update your photo or information at any time, please email [Nicole Rawson](#).

## DR. JOHN OPPER RECEIVES DIRECTORS' AWARD FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE TO QUALITY MATTERS AT QM CONNECT 2025

Dr. John Oppen has worked tirelessly to build a foundation of collaboration and collective improvement for Florida state online educators. As the developer of the [Florida Quality Matters Consortium](#), he opened new doors for sharing expertise and resources between educational institutions — all with the aim of improving the quality of learning experiences. Since 2012, Oppen has served as the Executive Director for Distance Learning and Student Services at the Florida Virtual Campus, supporting QM professional development opportunities for over 2,000 educators and the earning of Quality Matters Certification for more than 1,700 online courses.

The 2025 QM Awards were presented in person at [QM Connect 2025](#) on November 3-5 at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, AZ.

## ■ INSTITUTION SPOTLIGHT: USF RELEASES NEW RENDERINGS OF FLETCHER DISTRICT AS PROJECT RECEIVES STATE-LEVEL APPROVAL

"The University of South Florida (last week) released four new renderings of the Fletcher District, the university's planned mixed-use destination featuring student and multifamily housing, restaurants, retail, a hotel and conference center, an academic research facility and recreation space. The fresh looks at the new district come as the Florida Board of Governors approved development plans for the project on Thursday.

"The Fletcher District will be a vibrant new hub of activity for our students, other members of the university community and the surrounding area," USF President Rhea Law said. "The project provides a unique opportunity to transform an underutilized part of our campus into a prime destination to live, work, learn and play."

The new renderings provide a more detailed look at the district, including street-level views and an image from the planned hotel offering a top-floor glimpse of the proximity to USF's new **on-campus stadium** scheduled to open in fall 2027. The Fletcher District will be located within walking distance of the stadium, allowing students, alumni and fans to come together before and after football games and other major events." (Source: [USF News](#))

Read more [here](#).



# UP NEXT

## ■ FLVC NC-SARA WORKSHOP EVENT

In December, FLVC will host a webinar, "**A Deep Dive into SARA: A Special Session with the NC-SARA National Team.**" This interactive session will cover the history and purpose and address the nuances of SARA compliance, including professional licensure disclosures, out-of-state placements, and recent policy updates. Get clarity on your institution's responsibilities and learn best practices directly from the source. This is a unique opportunity to strengthen your institution's compliance efforts and get answers to your most pressing questions.

Presenters: Dr. Marianne Boeke, President, NC-SARA and Jeannie Yockey-Fine, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, NC-SARA

December 4, 2025 | 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. (ET) | Register [here](#).





## FLVC NATIONAL VOICES IN DIGITAL LEARNING SPEAKER SERIES EVENT



In December, FLVC will host a webinar, **“Shaping the Future, Right Now: The Previous Year in AI and Higher Education Policy and Practice.”** This talk will examine the changing approaches to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in higher education over the past year. As college campuses transition from resistance to proactive deployment, AI and GenAI have become a cornerstone in how higher education envisions the future of education. This presentation will take up matters of policy, practice, infrastructure, and compliance in this shifting landscape.

Presenter: Dr. Sid Dobrin, Professor, University of Florida

December 12, 2025 | 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. (ET) | Register [here](#).

## MCDLSS MEMBER RESOURCE WEBINAR SNEAK PEEK: FLVC TO HOST WEBINAR ON FEB. 16, 2026 ON MICROSOFT TEAMS

A virtual orientation of the FLVC Members Council on Distance Learning and Student Services will be held on Monday, February 16 from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. on Microsoft Teams. Registration for virtual attendees is free, and any member is welcome to participate. This is a great opportunity for members, new and old, to learn about the benefits of membership, their responsibilities, FLVC services and resources, key distance learning state and federal statutes and regulations, current contracts and agreements, and much more.

This event will be recorded, and a link to the recording will be shared via the listserv at a later date.

To register, go [here](#). We hope to see you there!



## MCDLSS MEETING SNEAK PEEK: SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE TO HOST SPRING MEETING ON FEB. 25-26, 2026 IN AVON PARK, FL.



A regular meeting of the FLVC Members Council on Distance Learning and Student Services will be held on Wednesday, February 25 from 1 - 5 p.m. and Thursday, February 26 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at South Florida State College's main campus in Avon Park, Florida. Registration for in-person attendees will be \$60.00, and a separate email notification with further instructions will be sent to the members council as soon as the credit card link becomes available. We're looking forward to seeing each of you again—February will be here before we know it!



# SAN BOX

## ■ SAN RELEASES A NEW “HOW TO” HANDBOOK TO BUILD AN INSTITUTION’S STATE-TO-STATE AUTHORIZATION PLAN

The State Authorization Network (SAN) is excited to share SAN’s newest comprehensive resource, the State-to-State Institutional Approval for Distance Education Handbook, developed in partnership with Shari Miller, Institutional Compliance MATTERS. This handbook is the third major SAN report designed to demystify complex compliance requirements when institutions offer interstate opportunities, whether through online courses or experiential learning. All three major reports align with SAN’s concise one-pagers and charts available in the [Getting Started with Compliance Management Gateway](#) on the SAN website, so institution teams can develop practical action.

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December 4, 2025 | 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. (ET) | Register [here](#).

## ■ FLVC STATE AUTHORIZATION LISTSERV

FLVC recently launched the Florida State Authorization Network Listserv to help institutional contacts stay informed with timely updates, alerts, and developments related to state authorization. We also encourage you to use this Listserv to ask questions, share resources, and exchange best practices with your colleagues across the state. As a reminder, the Florida Virtual Campus provides an annual group membership to the State Authorization Network (SAN) for all Florida College System (FCS) and State University System (SUS) institutions. Since 2011, SAN—a division of WCET—has been a national leader in providing guidance, professional development, and support on regulatory compliance for out-of-state activities of postsecondary institutions. FLVC has periodically hosted SAN representatives at Members Council meetings to share expertise and insights.

You may access the **SAN Member Portal** [here](#).

**Username:** Florida Virtual Campus | **Password:** SANhelps1819



# ARTICLE DIGESTS

## ■ VIRTUAL CAREER FAIRS CONNECT STUDENTS TO EMPLOYERS NATIONWIDE

"In a 2025 Student Voice Survey by Inside Higher Ed and Generation Lab, 38 percent of students said they want their college to prioritize helping them find or access paid internships; an additional 30 percent of respondents want colleges to facilitate stronger connections with potential employers. Colleges and universities often host career fairs, inviting local or college-affiliated employers to meet soon-to-be interns and graduates. Now some campuses are extending the invitation to employers located miles away, encouraging them to participate in virtual events." (Source: [Inside Higher Ed](#))

## ■ UNLOCKING LEARNING POTENTIAL WITH CONCEPT MAPS

"Concept maps are powerful visual tools that help learners organize and connect ideas, transforming complex or overwhelming topics into clear, structured representations of knowledge. By mirroring how the brain naturally links information, they promote meaningful learning, critical thinking, and long-term retention. Research shows that students using concept maps outperform those relying on traditional note-taking, while researchers emphasize that concept mapping "makes thinking visible." Building a concept map involves identifying a central idea, branching into related subtopics, labeling connections, and refining relationships to reveal how ideas interconnect. Beyond classrooms, concept maps are used in fields such as healthcare, business, and education to support reasoning, planning, and collaboration." (Source: [Faculty Focus](#))

## ■ EDUCAUSE 2025: TOP 10 LIST HIGHLIGHTS HIGHER ED'S NEED FOR CONNECTION

"Each year, the EDUCAUSE Top 10 report outlines the biggest trends, opportunities and challenges in higher ed IT, covering the higher education IT workforce, highlighting lessons learned from the year prior and predicting what's to come in the year ahead." (Source: [EdTech](#))

## ■ REGURGITATIVE AI: WHY CHATGPT WON'T KILL ORIGINAL THOUGHT

"Generative AI may be powerful and convenient, but its strength lies in remixing existing ideas rather than creating new ones, meaning it cannot replace human originality or critical thought. Drawing parallels between AI and music sampling, Sybil Prince Nelson argues that while AI tools can assist with grammar, idea generation, and synthesis, they produce formulaic and uninspired results when tasked with creative or analytical writing. True innovation requires questioning assumptions and venturing beyond known data, something AI cannot yet do. Nelson advocates for using AI as a pedagogical partner rather than a substitute, suggesting strategies like designing assignments that test human-only skills, requiring reflections on AI use, and encouraging transparency in prompts and revisions..." (Source: [Faculty Focus](#))

## ■ DIGITAL TECH REVAMPS UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN DENTISTRY SCHOOL

"Dentistry at the University of Michigan has just gone digital. UM School of Dentistry students and faculty members can now access the university's new Digital Dentistry Center in Ann Arbor. The equipment includes machines that perform intra-oral scans and produce polished dentures and dental guards. "It used to take several hours to mill these teeth, now it takes five minutes," Dr. Carlos Gonzalez, associate dean for academic affairs at the UM School of Dentistry, said. "If you do it with one of the faculty, they can do it within 15 minutes." The opening comes as the school celebrates its 150th anniversary..." (Source: [GovTech](#))

## ■ EDUCAUSE ACTION PLAN LOOKS 10 YEARS AHEAD AT GENAI FOR EDUCATION

"In a new action plan, EDUCAUSE outlines skills, ethics and collaboration strategies to guide effective use and implementation of generative artificial intelligence on college campuses for the next decade." (Source: [GovTech](#))

## MOVIE MUST-SEE: NOW YOU SEE ME, NOW YOU DON'T

"The Four Horsemen return along with a new generation of illusionists performing mind-melding twists, turns, surprises, and magic unlike anything ever captured on film." Starring Jesse Eisenberg and Woody Harrelson. Now in theaters.

(Source: [Rotten Tomatoes](#))



## YOU GOTTA GO: WHIMZEYLAND

"[WhimzeyLand](#) is and has been a work in progress for over 20 years. It is a local landmark for those who live in the Tampa/St. Petersburg area and who like to seek out unusual places. We have a ton of different materials decorating our house: plexiglas sculptures, paintings, bottle trees, recycled material sculptures, and, of course, bowling balls. We often visit unusual places ourselves, so we started by painting the house really bright. Then, the ball really got rolling when we went to a flea market and came home with tons of free bowling balls. Since then, the house has slowly evolved into WhimzeyLand!" (Source: [KiaraLinda](#))



# FUN STUFF

## YOU GOTTA TRY IT: THE YEARLING

"The [Yearling Restaurant](#) was first open in 1952, just down the road from Marjorie Kinan Rawlings home in Cross Creek. The restaurant was named after her famous novel, The Yearling. Her home still stands in Cross Creek and is open to visitors year round. We have tried to capture the flavor and spirit of old Florida, as she portrayed it her books. Please stop by and sample old Florida, as it was where you can enjoy the sights and cuisine today just as they were, in the early 1900's." (Source: [Visit Gainesville](#))



## SPINE-BENDERS: MONTHLY PICKS FOR NOVEMBER

"Our [monthly picks](#) for November and December are here, and they are brimming with mystery, intrigue, magic and adventure. Espionage, code-breaking and post-apocalyptic worlds await beyond these pages. From secret portals to curious disappearances and WWII stories, we've rounded up a list of books that are worth your time. Whether you're craving chilling suspense or a new YA favorite, find them [here](#)." (Source: [Barnes & Noble](#))

