

DISTANCE LEARNING & STUDENT SERVICES NEWS

TOP NEWS

JOURNAL SUBMISSIONS RIDDLED WITH AI-CREATED FAKE CITATIONS

“References used to be one of the last things journal editors checked before publishing a paper. [According to this article, artificial intelligence is changing that.](#)”

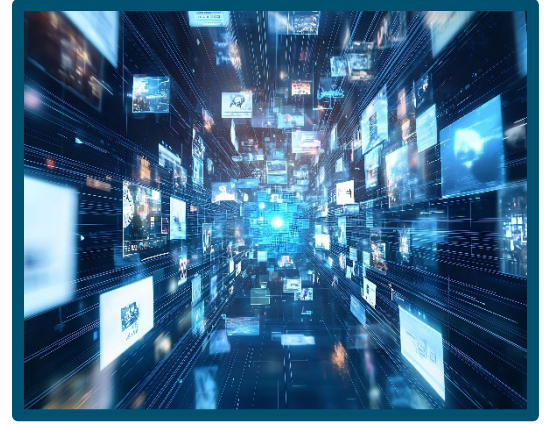
(Source: Inside Higher Ed)



REPORT: NO FOOLPROOF METHOD EXISTS FOR DETECTING AI-GENERATED MEDIA

“A [new research report](#) from Microsoft warns that no single technology can reliably distinguish AI-generated content from authentic media, and that deepening reliance on any one method risks misleading the public.”

(Source: Campus Technology)



AVOIDING SHADOW AI ON CAMPUS

“Universities can regain visibility and control by establishing technical and cultural changes. [This article suggests how.](#)”

(Source: EdTech Magazine)



DLSS UPDATES

NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING (NPRM) RELEASED – PELL/WORKFORCE PELL

Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) released the proposed rules for [Accountability in Higher Education and Access through Demand-Driven Workforce Pell: Pell Grant Exclusion Relating to Other Grant Aid; and Workforce Pell Grants \(AHEAD\)](#). These rules were developed during the first week of the AHEAD negotiated rulemaking committee meetings in December 2025 to implement new federal statutory direction from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OB3), enacted last July. During negotiated rulemaking, the committee reached consensus, meaning there were no dissenting votes on the regulatory language. As a result, except for technical edits, the proposed regulations are expected to reflect the consensus language developed by the committee in December.

Proposed rules are subject to a 30-day public comment period. An unofficial PDF version was released on March 6. The official notice was published in the Federal Register on March 9, which set the public comment deadline as April 8, 2026.

We want to draw the digital learning community's attention to several provisions regarding state-specific responsibilities for program approval and data collection. The specific state responsibilities for **program approval** will affect delivery of interstate distance education even though the institution may have **institutional approval** to serve students in other states through specific state institutional approval or reciprocity through SARA. It is important to understand the difference between program approval and institutional approval.

- 34 CFR 690.92 (d): requires program approval by the Governor of a state
- 34 CFR 690.93 (b): requires Governors to establish written policies and processes to evaluate whether a program meets the requirements under § 690.93 (a), includes:
 - Requirements for institutions to submit the necessary information for the Governor to access a program's completion rate and job placement rates;
 - Process for an institution to appeal the Governor's determination;
 - Require the Governor to submit an attestation that the State board was consulted when evaluating whether a program is an eligible workforce program.
- 34 CFR 690.93 (h): Allows the governors of two states to enter into a bilateral agreement regarding the enrollment of students located in one state into some or all programs offered in the other state.

(Source: WCET Policy Tracker)

CANVAS UNROLLS AI TEACHING AGENT

“Weeks after an outside agentic artificial intelligence tool called Einstein caused an uproar over its ability to complete entire courses in the learning management system Canvas, Canvas has unveiled [an agentic AI tool of its own](#). But instead of helping students cheat—or automating instruction—its creators say it’s designed to enhance teaching and learning.

Earlier this month, Instructure, the company that owns Canvas—which is used by more than 40 percent of higher education institutions across North America—announced the launch of its IgniteAI Agent. The new technology, which can automate “low-value” tasks for faculty such as rubric generation, content alignment and discussion reviews, “frees educators to focus more on mentoring, feedback and meaningful learning experiences,” Instructure said in a news release. Powered by Amazon Web Services, the IgniteAI Agent will be free for the U.S. Canvas customers through June 30; after that it will be available for purchase as part of Canvas’s premium offerings.”

(Source: Inside Higher Ed)

FL-IDN LATEST WEBINAR: IMPACTFUL INTERACTIONS IN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN MENTORSHIP

Earlier this month, FL-IDN hosted the webinar, “**Impactful Interactions in Instructional Design Mentorship**.” Mentoring, both formal and informal, is a powerful tool for professional growth – especially in the broad field of instructional design.

This webinar drew on findings from a doctoral research study that examined the specific types of interactions that new and less experienced instructional designers found most impactful for their professional development.

Our guest speaker, Melissa Dietrich, Ed. D. (Orbis Education), explored four key themes that emerged from the study: creating a nurturing environment, developing soft skills, developing hard skills, and helping career advancement.

Participants left with practical suggestions to foster meaningful mentor-mentee interactions and enhance or implement mentorship structures within their own organizations.

Many thanks to our guest speaker for sharing their knowledge and experience with our IDN community.

In case you missed it, here are a couple resources below:

- [Recording](#)
- [Presentation Slides](#)

SPRING TSAA NUMBERS SEE INCREASE

Transient Student Admissions Applications submitted during Spring 2026 (15,298) have surpassed last year's Spring applications (14,597) by 4.8 percent. The applications for Summer 2026 (3,498) so far are down 2.7 percent compared to the Summer 2025 period applications (3,596). This will increase and surpass last year as the term continues. There have been 34,191 applications created so far this academic year, which is a 3.9 percent increase compared to the same period for 2024-2025 (32,903).

Thank you for supporting the mission of the Florida Virtual Campus and for being a part of the Transient Admissions Application process to support your students. Please do not hesitate to contact the Florida Virtual Campus Help Desk, throughout the semester, for further assistance.

UWF LAUNCHES CENTER FOR CYBERSECURITY AND AI TO ADVANCE NATIONAL AND GLOBAL IMPACT

"The University of West Florida [recently announced](#) the official expansion of its nationally recognized Center for Cybersecurity to the UWF Center for Cybersecurity and AI, signifying the center's expanded mission to become a global leader in advancing secure, responsible and trustworthy digital and intelligent systems.

"By integrating artificial intelligence research and training into the Center, UWF is equipping the present and future workforce with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in today's increasingly AI-driven digital economy," said UWF President Manny Diaz Jr. "The Center for Cybersecurity and AI reflects UWF's commitment to leadership and impact in this space at a national and global level."

(Source: UWF News)

FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY LAUNCHING ATHLETICS PROGRAMS THIS SUMMER

"Florida Polytechnic University [will add sports this summer](#), making it the last public university in the state to add athletics.

Florida Poly, the newest state university, will launch men's and women's soccer, men's and women's cross-country, men's and women's basketball, baseball, and softball.

The Lakeland institution is seeking entrance to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and the Sun Conference. The university plans to compete as soon as August. Poly has already scheduled men's and women's soccer bouts in late August against New College of Florida in Sarasota."

(Source: Florida Phoenix)



UP NEXT

FL-IDN UPCOMING WEBINAR: O, HUMAN, HUMAN, WHEREFORE ART THOU? CULTIVATING & SUSTAINING HUMAN PRESENCE IN ONLINE COURSES IN THE AGE OF AI

Next month, FL-IDN will host the webinar, “**O, Human, Human, Wherefore Art Thou? Cultivating and Sustaining Human Presence in Online Courses in the Age of AI.**” Since the release of ChatGPT in late 2022, much of the conversation about generative AI in higher education has concerned academic integrity.

However, another impact of this technology on teaching and learning deserves further and deeper consideration as well: what it means for human presence in our courses. Generative AI challenges human presence in online learning, raising concerns about instructor presence and student engagement. This session explores strategies to sustain these elements, despite or with AI.

Participants will discuss challenges, solutions, and actionable steps to ensure meaningful interaction and engagement in the ever-evolving landscape of AI-enhanced education.

- April 7, 2026
- 2:00 - 2:50 PM (ET)
- [Registration is free.](#)

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.



SAN BOX

FLORIDA STATE AUTHORIZATION NETWORK LISTSERV

FLVC has 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.

- [SAN Member Portal Access](#)
- **Username:** Florida Virtual Campus
- **Password:** SANhelps1819



ARTICLE DIGESTS

AI TOOLS TO REDUCE COLLEGE DROPOUT RATES

“Roughly 3 in 10 college students drop out without earning any degree, resulting in higher unemployment and lower lifetime earnings than those who earn bachelor’s degrees. To help boost student retention, colleges and universities are using [a variety of artificial intelligence tools](#) that can help identify at-risk students early, offer customized learning, provide 24/7 assistance, and improve engagement.”

(Source: EdTech Magazine)

BEYOND THE HYPE: FIVE ACTIONABLE STEPS FOR HIGHER ED TO MASTER AI IN 2026

“The era of pontificating AI’s future impact on higher education is behind us. In 2026, AI has arrived as a powerful, pervasive reality, bringing with it a whirlwind of innovation, new tools, and pressing questions. This dynamic landscape can understandably feel like chaos, a rush of possibilities and challenges that leave many organization’s leaders wondering where to even begin. Instead of gazing into a crystal ball to see the future, institutions need concrete, [actionable strategies](#) to move beyond reactive observation and into proactive, successful integration.”

(Source: Campus Technology)

THE ROLE OF FACULTY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FUTURE

“Ask almost any adult to list the most influential people in their lives and a teacher always appears near the top—often more than one. Ask them about those teachers, and they rarely describe their teaching in terms of lecturing or helping students master a body of knowledge. Instead, they talk about how those

teachers took an interest in them as young human beings, how they gave them their time and attention and demanded more of them while supporting their efforts to meet those demands. Artificial intelligence (AI) makes it possible to bring [that principle](#) back to the center of higher education.”

(Source: Educause)

OPENAI ADDS INTERACTIVE MATH AND SCIENCE LEARNING TOOLS TO CHATGPT

“[A new ChatGPT feature](#) guides learners through math and science topics by showing how formulas, variables, and relationships behave in real time. The interactive visualizations, included across all subscription plans globally, are now available for more than 70 core math and science concepts, initially targeted to high school and college-level learners.”

(Source: Campus Technology)

WHAT DOES AN AI-READY CLASSROOM REALLY LOOK LIKE?

“When people hear about an artificial intelligence-ready classroom, it’s tempting to picture a room full of futuristic tools: AI tutors on demand, real-time transcription, automated analytics dashboards and next-generation collaboration platforms. But Micah Shippee, director of education at Samsung—and a former history teacher—[offers a view](#) that’s perhaps better grounded in reality.”

(Source: EdTech Magazine)

AI AND COURSE DESIGN: MACHINES CAN HELP, BUT ONLY HUMANS CAN TEACH

“Cue the irony: Students love and actively use artificial intelligence (AI), but [they still want humans in charge](#). A 2025 survey found that while 42 percent of students report using generative AI at least weekly, they overwhelmingly prefer human support when they need help. According to the survey, 84 percent of students said they primarily seek help from a person when struggling with a course concept, compared to 17 percent who primarily turn to generative AI. Despite the hype and fanfare, students continue turning to faculty they trust for guidance with academic matters and decreasingly use AI to help them understand concepts.”

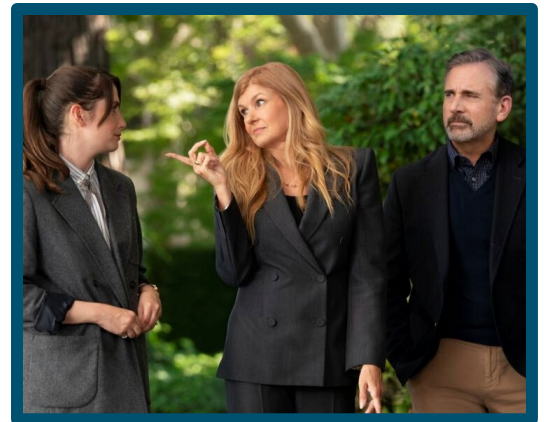
(Source: Educause)

FUN STUFF

TV MUST-SEE: ROOSTER

“Starring Steve Carell, [this new comedy series](#) focuses on the complicated relationship between a successful author and his daughter.” Now airing on HBO and HBO Max.

(Source: HBO Max)



YOU GOTTA TRY IT: RODRIGO'S CRAFT PIZZA

“[Rodrigo's Craft Pizza](#) opened in the Five Points neighborhood late in 2023 and quickly became one of Jacksonville's favorite pizza places. They do it by simultaneously making the city's slowest and fastest pizzas. The slow part is the dough, which ferments for a minimum of three days before it ever sees a sauce; the fast part is the cooking, which is done in a super-hot oven and takes about five minutes, tops.”

(Source: Sarasota Herald-Tribune)



YOU GOTTA GO: DEVIL’S DEN SPRING

“Dive into the captivating world of [Devil's Den Prehistoric Spring](#), one of Florida's premier scuba diving destinations. This underground spring is hidden within a 120-foot-wide cave. Like all Florida springs, it maintains a constant 72-degree water temperature year-round, making it a true oasis for water enthusiasts.”

(Source: Devil’s Den Spring & Campground)



SPINE-BENDERS: MONTHLY PICKS FOR MARCH 2026

“From darkly funny crime to sinister secrets to a heartwarming story about an unexpected animal friend, [our list of March picks](#) has books for every mood. From dark academia to edge-of-your-seat thrills and engrossing investigations, discover your next favorite read.”

(Source: Barnes & Noble)

