

DISTANCE LEARNING & STUDENT SERVICES NEWS

TOP NEWS

AI Fears Drive Some Young Adults to Grad School — ‘People Shelter in Higher Education,’ Expert Says

“As artificial intelligence restructures the workforce and reduces the number of entry-level opportunities, an alternative is emerging for recent college grads struggling to find jobs: [going back to school](#). Nearly 78% of those who are considering graduate school said they plan to enroll in a program within 12 months, according to a new Jenzabar/Spark451 survey, up from 69% who expressed similar plans a year earlier.”

(Source: CNBC)



Four Higher Education Leaders on AI's Biggest Benefits and Risks

“Artificial intelligence is rapidly progressing and poised to reshape the workforce in the near future. The higher education sector is in a unique position, as both an employer of millions of workers and a system that prepares students for the labor force. At the annual ASU+GSV Summit last week, [four college leaders talked to Higher Ed Dive](#) to weigh in on two questions: What about AI’s use in higher education are you most excited for? And what has you most concerned?”

(Source: Higher Ed Dive)



Department of Justice (DOJ) Extends Web Accessibility Deadline

“Citing heavy administrative burdens for institutions, the government is giving colleges, universities and other public entities [another year to comply with new federal accessibility guidelines](#) designed to reduce the hurdles students with disabilities face in accessing increasingly complex information on web pages and mobile apps.”

(Source: Inside Higher Education)





DLSS UPDATES

FL-IDN Latest Webinar: O, Human, Human, Wherefore Art Thou? Cultivating and Sustaining Human Presence in Online Courses in the Age of AI

Earlier this month, FL-IDN hosted a webinar that delved into cultivating and sustaining human presence in online courses.

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 explored strategies to sustain these elements, despite or with AI.

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

- [Watch the recording.](#)
- [View the presentation slides.](#)

New Articulation Content Added to FloridaShines Website

New content was recently introduced on the FloridaShines website to help students navigate their academic journey across Florida's colleges and universities. The Plan Your Path page on FloridaShines now includes an "Articulation 101" section detailing articulation pathways between institutions and how to ensure credits transfer and apply correctly toward a degree.

The section also provides guidance on reverse transfer opportunities and information to help students plan and stay on track to graduation.

The Plan Your Path section can be found at <https://www.floridashines.org/plan-your-path>.

FAU Approves New AI Bachelor's Program Focused on Ethics and Real-World Impact

"Florida Atlantic University's Board of Trustees unanimously approved a [new bachelor's degree program in interdisciplinary artificial intelligence](#) (last week), clearing the way for the school to launch the program in fall 2026.

The new program, formally titled the Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Artificial Intelligence, will be housed in FAU's College of Engineering and Computer Science and is designed to combine technical AI training with a second discipline such as philosophy. University materials say the goal is to prepare graduates who can design and deploy artificial intelligence systems while also understanding their ethical, societal, and human implications.

According to FAU's proposal, the degree will require 120 credit hours and give students training in programming, software design, data science, algorithms, and artificial intelligence, alongside coursework in logic, ethics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of science. The program will culminate in a capstone project in which students develop an AI solution to a real-world problem shaped by questions of fairness, accountability, and ethics."

(Source: West Palm CW 34)



UP NEXT

FL-IDN Upcoming Lightning Round Webinar Promotes Faculty Development

Lightning Round Presentation 1: Becoming a Faculty Whisperer: Strategies for Gaining Faculty Buy-In Around Teaching, Technology, and Access

Next month, FL-IDN will host a lightning round presentation that will introduce new initiatives in a way that resonates with faculty and encourages lasting adoption. This session explores faculty personas, communication strategies, and practical tools for building trust, reducing resistance, and fostering shared ownership. Ideal for instructional designers, academic technologists, administrators, and faculty leaders driving change. Janae Burkart, Associate Director for the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology at the University of West Florida, will be our guest speaker.

Lightning Round Presentation 2: Designing Flexible Training Courses for Faculty Engagement

Next month, FL-IDN will host a second lightning round presentation that will encourage faculty engagement through training courses. Faculty members have varying time demands, training needs, and preferences, so it's essential to provide training resources they can engage with according to their schedules and needs. Implementing a flexible course design can encourage faculty participation by providing multiple frameworks for engagement: they can access resources on demand as needed, progress through the course asynchronously on an individual basis, or support each other through the course as a cohort. This session will present a flexible training course model designed to accommodate different preferences for learning and engagement. Lesley Kamphaus and Ebony Collier, Instructional Designers at Seminole State College, will be our guest speakers.

Event Registration & Resource Information

- May 5, 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.

FLVC Hosts 2026 OER Summit Next Month

The theme of this year's Summit is “OER Understood the Assignment.” Join librarians, educators, instructional designers, and OER professionals from across Florida and the U.S. as we explore existing trends, look towards innovative directions, and discover how OER positively impacts students, faculty, and institutions.

- [View the agenda.](#)
- [Registration is free.](#)



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

Reminder: Update Institutional Point of Contact for 2026-2027 SAN Group Membership

[Kathleen Taylor](#) recently sent out an email regarding institutional point of contacts for the 2026-2027 State Authorization Network (SAN) membership year. As a reminder, FLVC purchases an annual group membership for FCS and SUS institutions and has to maintain an up-to-date contact list for the State Authorization Network.



ARTICLE DIGESTS

Students Are Speeding Through Their Online Degrees in Weeks, Alarming Educators

“Some online colleges allow students to take unlimited courses on their own time, leading to [quick degrees](#). Supporters of the approach tout it as an affordable, convenient way for people to earn credentials they need for their careers. Others, including some online students and academic officials, expressed concern about what the super-accelerated students are missing, and whether a quick path devalues degrees.” (Source: The Washington Post)

From Prompt to Practice: A Framework for Transparent GenAI Use in Higher Education

“[Transparency in GenAI use](#) is an imperative for institutional and academic integrity, a safeguard for trust, and a teaching opportunity. However, current transparency practices are uneven. Some people document every step; others offer vague acknowledgments, and many do not address GenAI use at all. This variability may partly be due to an absence of established guidelines that define what to document and how to disclose it.” (Source: Educause)

Grammarly Faces Lawsuit Over AI Tool Using Academics’ Identities

“Grammarly has pulled a [controversial tool](#) that used artificial intelligence to simulate written feedback “inspired” by academics and public intellectuals — both dead and alive — without their consent as it faces a class action lawsuit.” (Source: Times Higher Education)

Why GenAI Helps Some Students but Not Others (And What to Do About It)

“The debate over whether generative artificial intelligence helps or hinders learning continues, but [a clear pattern](#) is emerging from the research: it has positive effects on average, with substantial variance. Some students benefit significantly. Others show no gains or even regress.” (Source: Times Higher Education)

OpenAI Drops Sora Short-Form AI Video Platform

“[OpenAI is reportedly dropping Sora](#), its generative AI model that creates short video clips from text prompts, images, or existing video inputs. The move upends the company's December partnership with The Walt Disney Company, touted as a test case for how a Hollywood studio and an AI company might work together without years of courtroom warfare first.” (Source: Campus Technology)

NVIDIA Intros Open Source Tools for Building and Deploying AI Agents

“At its recent GTC 2026 conference, NVIDIA rolled out [a new open source software package](#) designed to help organizations build, deploy, and manage AI agents. The release is aimed squarely at developers and enterprises racing to turn generative AI into something more operational: agents that can sift through internal data, reason through multi-step problems, and act across applications.” (Source: Campus Technology)

As Confidence in Higher Ed Erodes, Students Still Say Their Degrees Are Worth It

“Public confidence in American higher education’s value has fallen sharply over the past decade. Yet the message from college students and graduates is different: Most say that their college experience is positive and worth it. [This gap between the American public and students’ experience](#) reveals a college value disconnect highlighted in a new Lumina Foundation and Gallup report, The College Reality Check, based on responses from about 4,000 undergraduates and 6,000 graduates.” (Source: The 74)



FUN STUFF

TV Must-See: Normal

“For Sheriff Ulysses (Bob Odenkirk), [his provisional posting to the quaint Midwestern American town of Normal](#) was meant to be a welcome respite from both his marital woes and recent moral injuries in the line of duty. But when a botched bank robbery interrupts the municipality's tranquil pace, a dark secret is inadvertently exposed, and Ulysses soon discovers that the town is anything but its namesake.”

(Source: Rotten Tomatoes)



You Gotta Try It: Star Fish Company (Cortez, FL)

“Star Fish Company in Cortez is [one of the best hole-in-the-wall restaurants in Florida](#). Loved by locals and tourists, customers consider it a top-rated place to enjoy the freshest caught seafood. The front of the restaurant doesn't give hints to what's behind it. As the saying goes: Business in the front, party in the back. Dining is out on the dock — which is out back — where you can breathe in the view of Sarasota Bay while munching on royal red shrimp, middleneck clams, or oysters caught from the waters of Cortez Village.”

(Source: Tasting Table)



You Gotta Go: Cedar Lakes Woods and Gardens (Williston, FL)

“Come and tour over [50 quaint, separate gardens with numerous waterfalls and koi ponds](#) that were born in a 100 year old lime rock quarry. The quarry walls are lined with concrete and rock planters filled with hundreds of species of plants and flowers to create a unique paradise. There are many benches and picnic tables to allow one to sit, rest, have lunch or just take it all in.”

(Source: Visit Natural North Florida)



Spine-Benders: Monthly Picks for April 2026

“April showers bring May flowers, and we bring you good books. From feel-good love stories and edge-of-your-seat thrills to the mysteries of nature and ancient secrets, [our list of April picks](#) has something exciting for every kind of reader. Unlikely friendships, chance encounters and magical adventures, your next page-turner awaits.”

(Source: Barnes & Noble)

