

DISTANCE LEARNING & STUDENT SERVICES NEWS

TOP NEWS

What the College Behind the AI Graduation Disaster Says About Inaccuracies

[“A graduation ceremony marred by an artificial intelligence malfunction at Glendale Community College in Arizona has drawn renewed attention to a risk the institution itself has previously warned about: that AI systems can produce inaccurate results with real-world consequences.”](#)

(Source: Newsweek)



Can Colleges Still Deliver in the Age of AI? One Ivy League School is Investing \$30 Million to Improve Career Outcomes

“Fears that artificial intelligence will upend students’ future career plans are reverberating across college campuses.

“Higher education needs to do better,” said Joseph Catrino, the inaugural director of Dartmouth’s Center for Career Design.

“We need to do better for our students — we need to step up and help students be prepared.”

[The Ivy League college recently raised \\$30 million](#) in endowed funds to support internship opportunities. Now students can access up to \$6,500 during any term to help finance unpaid or underpaid internships.”

(Source: CNBC)



Institutions Prepare for New Accreditation Regulations

“As the Department of Education heads into its second week of negotiations over accreditation policies, [the proposed regulations remain largely unchanged](#), higher education experts say. That has triggered concerns among institutions and their accreditors about the operational burdens that the sweeping regulatory proposal could impose.

The draft — first released in mid-April and updated on May 11 — could dramatically change how accreditors oversee colleges and what institutions need to do to comply.”

(Source: Inside Higher Education)





DLSS UPDATES

FL-IDN's May 2026 Lightning Round Webinars Promoted Faculty Development

Earlier this month, FL-IDN hosted a lightning round presentation, “Becoming a Faculty Whisperer: Strategies for Gaining Faculty Buy-In Around Teaching, Technology, and Access,” that introduced new initiatives in a way that resonated with faculty and encouraged lasting adoption. This session explored faculty personas, communication strategies, and practical tools for building trust, reducing resistance, and fostering shared ownership. The presentation was 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, was our guest speaker.

FL-IDN also hosted a second lightning round presentation, “Designing Flexible Training Courses for Faculty Engagement,” that encouraged 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 presented 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, were our guest speakers.

- [Watch the recording.](#)
- [View the first presentation's slides.](#)
- [View the second presentation's slides.](#)

Last week, FL-IDN hosted a third lightning round presentation, “From Silos to Synergy: Strategies for Meaningful ID-Faculty Co-Creation,” that explored how to transform the instructional designer role from simply a support model into a true partnership. Attendees joined the conversation about common barriers to ID-faculty collaboration and learned practical strategies for building trust, aligning goals, and co-designing impactful learning experiences. Drawing from research and real-world examples, they left with actionable tools to foster stronger, more effective relationships with faculty. Throughout the session, attendees tried out Top Hat as a tool to help them reflect and engage in the conversation. Dr. Carrie Hansel (Indiana University) was our guest speaker.

FL-IDN also hosted a fourth lightning round presentation, “Bridging the Gap: Selling Faculty on Pedagogical Practices Through SharePoint and Teams,” that explored how the University of South Florida’s Educational Technology and Assessment Office (ETA) in the College of Public Health is working to bridge the gap between their work as learning designers and the faculty. To increase awareness, communication, and collaboration with faculty, the ETA team developed a SharePoint site and a Microsoft Team GRP to share resources, introduce new tools, and provide expertise. Often described as a library and a book club, these platforms work together as one professional development and collaboration initiative in the College of Public Health. Hailee White and Sonya Crider, Learning Designers at the University of South Florida, were our guest speakers.

- [Watch the recording.](#)
- [View the third presentation’s slides.](#)
- [View the fourth presentation’s slides.](#)

UWF Professor Receives U.S. Patent for Early Alzheimer’s Detection Technology

“Dr. James Arruda, professor of psychology at the University of West Florida, [has received a Notice of Allowance from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for an electroencephalographic, or EEG, platform](#) capable of detecting mild cognitive impairment due to Alzheimer’s dementia, a milestone that brings a non-invasive, accessible early-detection tool one step closer to clinical use.

The allowed patent covers the Flash Visual Evoked Potential-P2, or FVEP-P2, platform, which Dr. Arruda developed and refined over the course of his research career. The technology measures the speed at which the brain responds to brief flashes of light, a response that is selectively delayed in patients with the type of mild cognitive impairment that often precedes Alzheimer’s disease. This neurophysiological marker may allow clinicians to detect abnormalities years before cognitive symptoms appear. Unlike diagnostic approaches such as positron emission tomography, or PET, imaging and cerebrospinal fluid analysis, the EEG-based platform uses widely available clinical equipment and offers a non-invasive, lower-cost alternative for identifying patients who may be at risk.”

(Source: UWF Newsroom)



UP NEXT

FL-IDN's Upcoming Webinars Will Promote AI in Education Awareness

Next month, FL-IDN will host a webinar, “Lights, Camera, AI: Accelerating Course Design with Generative Tools,” that will explore how a cross-functional team of learning designers and media specialists leveraged generative AI tools to design and develop a Spring 2025 course. The team utilized platforms like ChatGPT and HeyGen to develop key course assets, from course mapping and script writing to video production. Generative AI supported the creation and refinement of the course description, learning outcomes, weekly objectives, and video scripts.

With HeyGen, the media team produced high-quality video segments using minimal input from faculty, overcoming one common barrier in content development: instructor availability for on-camera work. This presentation will share behind-the-scenes insights into the collaborative process, highlight how each tool was used at different phases, and reflect on the opportunities and challenges of integrating AI tools into course development workflows.

Brianna Stines (University of Notre Dame) will be our guest speaker.

- June 9, 2026
- 2:00 – 2:50 PM (ET)
- [Registration is free.](#)

Later next month, FL-IDN will host another webinar, “Generative AI Meets Active Learning.” Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, and others are creating new opportunities to enrich active learning environments. In this webinar, we will explore practical ways instructional designers and educators can integrate AI into student-centered learning experiences that foster engagement, critical thinking, and collaboration. Participants will examine strategies for designing AI-supported activities while maintaining the essential human element in teaching and learning. Through real-world examples and thoughtful implementation practices, attendees will gain ideas for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of online learning.

Dr. Gloria Washington (University of South Carolina) will be our guest speaker.

- June 23, 2026
- 2:00 – 2:50 PM (ET)
- [Registration is free.](#)

The recordings and other resources related to these webinars will be sent to the FL-IDN and MCDLSS listservs as soon as they are made available.

Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW) to Host Webinar Next Month

As an institution that may be seeking accreditation with HLC, we invite you to join HLC staff members and representatives from Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW) to learn about the comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation.

Hear insights from an institution that recently completed the process and get an overview of requirements that are evaluated during the review. This presentation is for representatives from institutions involved in planning for an HLC comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation in the accelerated process taking place within the next 24 months.

HLC staff members Andrew Lootens-White and Marla Morgen will highlight key activities involved in the evaluation. Florida SouthWestern State College representatives will share how they prepared constituencies for the review through HLC’s accelerated process for seeking initial accreditation and insights gained before, during and after the on-site visit.

- June 1, 2026
- 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM (ET)
- [Registration is free.](#)



SAN BOX

SARA Institution Application Effective July 1, 2026

The [Application and Approval Form for Institution Participation in SARA](#) has been updated, and the new version will be effective July 1, 2026. Through June 30, 2026, please use the current application.

During the 2025 SARA Policy Modification Process cycle, proposals were approved that require changes as outlined below. Adjustments to the application have also been made to support the “electronic enhancements” initiative, which in part will provide information from the SARA portal (Salesforce) to institutions as they begin the annual SARA-participation renewal process (look for more information in late 2026).

To easily identify the updates and changes you will find a “redline version” of the July 1, 2026 institution application on the NC-SARA website. The latest SARA policy can be found in the [SARA Policy Manual](#).

- New disclosure requirement per [PMP25-0746: Submitting Teach Out Plans to States](#)
- Added language to the preamble at the beginning of the application per [PMP25-0750: SPE's Ability to Review a New Institution Applicant](#)
- New disclosure requirement per [PMP25-0751: Provisional Status Disclosure](#)
- New disclosure requirement per [PMP25-0753: SPE Notification of Changes to FRC Scores](#)

The current institution application will be utilized as long as it is either emailed to your SPE by 11:59 PM (MT) no later than June 30, 2026 or postmarked by June 30 if mailed to the SPE. Beginning on July 1, 2026 at 12:00 AM (MT), the updated institution application must be used.

Below is an example of an institution that is renewing during this application transition period.

Please contact your [SARA State Portal Entity \(SPE\)](#) with any questions.

Example:

XYZ University – Participation Period: July 2, 2025 to July 2, 2026.

1. Their renewal period opens 90 days before July 2, 2026, which is April 2, 2026.
2. As of April 2, 2026, the institution can submit their renewal application to the SPE.
3. If the institution submits to the SPE by June 30, 2026, they will use the current application.
4. If the institution submits on July 1, 2026, or after, they will use the updated application.

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

Listening to Skepticism: What Faculty Concerns About Generative AI Reveal

“Across higher education, conversations about generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) often begin with questions about how to adopt it, where to apply it, and how quickly to do so. For many faculty, however, that framing skips over a more basic question: [Should this be used in my teaching at all and, if so, under what conditions?](#)” (Source: EDUCAUSE)

How To Keep Hybrid Learning Cutting-Edge

“In the past two years, the number of college and university students taking hybrid courses has increased, with the majority of undergrads who attended them enrolled in one to six of such classes, according to an EDUCAUSE report. More than a quarter of students — 29 percent, up from 22 percent in 2023 — prefer options that feature a mix of face-to-face and online instruction... [To provide effective in-person and remote instruction](#), some schools have outfitted classrooms with tech resources that range from customizable cameras to dynamic speakers...” (Source: EdTech Magazine)

A Simple Weekly Question That Adds Curiosity and Critical Thinking to Online Courses

“Asynchronous online courses tend to follow a clear weekly pattern. Students often describe this structure as helpful and organized, yet they also note that the rhythm can feel a little flat. They move through the modules, complete the activities, and transition to the next week with few moments that feel spontaneous or fresh. I wanted to introduce [small moments of curiosity](#) into this predictable flow by taking a page from the K-12 playbook...” (Source: Faculty Focus)

Implementing Digital Learning Tools in College Courses: 8 Evidence-Based Approaches

“While most faculty development on digital learning begins with a solid foundation in the theory and vocabulary of its topic, busy faculty understandably are eager to discuss what tools to use and how to use them. Survey responses from a recent community of practice on digital learning give a peek at those daily course-level concerns. They show how faculty are connecting the science of teaching and learning to the practical work of selecting and implementing digital learning tools in their lessons. Here we’ve assembled [what participants shared during a recent community of practice on implementing digitally enabled, evidence-based teaching practices \(DE-EBTs\)...](#)”

(Source: Every Learner Everywhere)

Study: More Students Plan to Attend College, Not All Ready to Finance It

“[More students are planning to pursue college](#), as 72 percent of high school seniors intend to pursue an associate or bachelor’s degree this year compared to 63 percent in 2020, the results of a new survey show. The polling, led by Sallie Mae, a private student lender, and Ipsos, a global market research firm, also shows that students and their families are generally more prepared to apply for higher education, with 85 percent of families having taken steps such as touring university campuses or meeting with college counselors. That’s up from 77 percent in 2020. What prospective learners generally remain unprepared for is financing their education...”

(Source: Inside Higher Education)

What Will Gen Alpha Expect from Their Higher Ed Experience?

“Generation Alpha — broadly defined as born from 2010 through 2024 — isn’t ready for college just yet but will be soon. [Some forward-looking institutional IT teams are already considering just how these students’ expectations for connectivity and access may differ from the Gen Z cohort](#) that’s ahead of them. While Gen Alphas were born entirely in the 21st century — the first generation for which that was possible — the oldest among them grew up in the wholly digitally connected pandemic era, when snow days turned into e-learning days instead of fun. Those students may be more likely to expect hybrid instruction as their default higher education experience, along with seamless transitions between remote and in-person modes. All of that could result in colleges and universities needing more cloud-enabled platforms to support virtual labs, lecture capture, remote access, scalable app delivery and more. Cloud won’t deliver everything these students expect or need to succeed in higher education.”

(Source: EdTech Magazine)

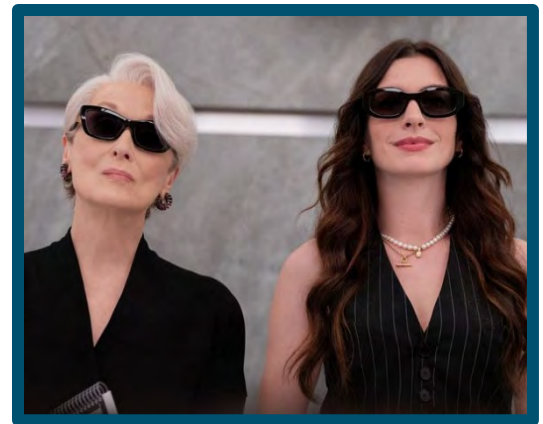


FUN STUFF

Movie Must-See: The Devil Wears Prada 2

“Twenty years after making their iconic turns as Miranda, Andy, Emily and Nigel — Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt and Stanley Tucci return to the fashionable streets of New York City and the sleek offices of Runway Magazine in 20th Century Studios’ [“The Devil Wears Prada 2,”](#) the eagerly awaited sequel to the 2006 phenomenon that defined a generation.”

(Source: Rotten Tomatoes)



You Gotta Try It: Yalaha Bakery (Yalaha)

“[Yalaha Bakery](#) is like stepping out of Lake County into a quaint German hillside village. Its design offers a charming mix of medieval Bavarian rural life and royalty captured by colorfully rustic decor.

The Bavarian bakery-deli-restaurant-gourmet shop is perfectly situated along the undulating hills of eastern Lake County, blending in with the picturesque village and countryside scenes depicted on the venue’s patio’s exterior murals.”

(Source: Florida Today)



You Gotta Go: Cape San Blas (Gulf County)

“Only a short 20-minute drive from Port St. Joe, [Cape San Blas](#) is your go-to destination for beautiful sites and seclusion.

Cape San Blas is a narrow stretch of land that extends out from Port St. Joe and curves around St. Joseph Bay. The locals will tell you that "the Cape" has a laid-back vibe offering up popular family-friendly activities such as fishing, kayaking, paddle boarding, biking, and hiking.

Some can't-miss attractions in the area include the Loggerhead Trail, an 8.7-mile paved pathway that runs the length of the Cape. You can catch the start of the Loggerhead Trail at Salinas Park. Located right on 30E (or CSB Road), Salinas Park boasts both Beach Access and Bay Access. You'll also find Serenity Trail, pickle ball courts, a playground, and screened-in pavilions for picnics.

You can't forget about the local stores and small businesses along 30E. You'll find restaurants peppered throughout the area and several convenience stores that keep their shelves stocked with any necessary items, including beach supplies and groceries. Plus, there are tons of options to find Cape San Blas and Gulf County souvenirs to take back home.”

(Source: Visit Gulf)



Spine-Benders: Monthly Picks for May 2026

“May is finally here, which means we have [a new set of Monthly Picks](#) that need to be on your radar. A tense family thriller, a sweeping story of art in 1920s France, the true story of a legendary journey and more must-read stories await. Get your shelves ready.” (Source: Barnes & Noble)

