

DISTANCE LEARNING & STUDENT SERVICES NEWS

TOP NEWS

FLAWED AI DETECTION IS BREAKING TRUST WITHIN PARTICULAR FAU CLASSROOMS

“Florida Atlantic University students are facing artificial intelligence detectors that professors rely on for grading. Independent research from professor-led studies and articles shows that AI detectors regularly misidentify human writing as computer-generated text, leading to allegations of academic dishonesty.

Platforms like Turnitin, a software used by schools and universities to check academic integrity and originality, have become standard classroom policy tools for professors. Though Turnitin markets its tool as 98 percent accurate,



students' lived experiences tell a different story. This technological gap is creating a growing friction between students and professors over how academic work is evaluated.

(Source: FAU University Press)

WHAT STUDENTS VALUE MOST ABOUT COLLEGE

“Students may assess the value of their college experience through a broader lens than financial returns and career preparation, according to a new report from Qualtrics and Buro Happold that finds personal growth, relationships and belonging are among the qualities students value most.

Based on a spring 2026 survey of 1,007 U.S. college students, researchers found that 74.2 percent of respondents reported receiving high or exceptional value from the purpose and personal growth they experienced in college, the highest among nine dimensions of the college experience. Economic return ranked lowest at 66.2 percent, even as concerns about college costs and career outcomes continue to dominate discussions about the value of higher education.”

(Source: Inside Higher Education)



MIT REPORT CALLS FOR AI-AWARE REDESIGN OF HIGHER ED

“A new Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) report argues that generative AI requires universities to reconsider how they design courses, assess learning and sustain the social experiences associated with campus education.

MIT's Ad hoc Committee on AI Use in Teaching, Learning and Research Training — which includes undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff — was commissioned in January to examine AI use by students and instructors. What members found prompted them to ask deeper questions, the report said, about the value of MIT education in the AI age.”

(Source: Government Technology)





DLSS UPDATES

FL-IDN'S LATEST WEBINAR EXPLORED LEVERAGING AI TO STRENGTHEN PRACTICE

Earlier this month, on October 13, FL-IDN hosted a webinar, “Evidence-Informed Instructional Design: Leveraging AI to Strengthen Practice.” Instructional design is often described as both an art and a science; however, in practice, many design decisions are influenced more by intuition, past experience, or trends than by rigorous evidence.

This webinar explored what it means to approach instructional design as a science by grounding decisions in empirical research and systematic inquiry. Participants examined the role of evidence in instructional design, including how to distinguish between scientific and anecdotal evidence and how each informs practice. The session also introduced practical strategies for using artificial intelligence (AI) tools to efficiently locate, synthesize, and critically appraise research to support instructional decisions.

In this session, Dr. Efren integrated evidence-informed approaches with AI capabilities, helping instructional designers to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and credibility of their work while making more transparent and defensible design choices.

Efren de la Mora Velasco (University of Central Florida) was our guest speaker.

- [Watch the recording from the FL-IDN webinar on October 13.](#)
- [View slides from the presentation on October 13.](#)



RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT: WCET AND SAN POLICY TRACKER

Tired of trying to track federal regulations across dozens of tabs?



Check out the WCET & SAN Policy Tracker — [a centralized resource for higher education digital learning policy](#). The Tracker is maintained by the policy experts at WCET and SAN; this tool breaks down executive orders, Department of Education rules, judicial actions, and statutes into bite-sized summaries complete with actionable compliance steps and timeline dates.

Explore the Policy Tracker to simplify your institutional compliance planning.

FIU RESEARCHERS BLASTED MOBILE HOMES WITH HURRICANE FORCE WINDS TO TEST HOW THEY FAIL – AND FOUND CLUES FOR MAKING AFFORDABLE HOUSING SAFER

“It’s 9:15 in the morning. The wind is roaring at 110 miles per hour (177 kph); the sound is deafening. Dust swirls through the air. We are watching a single-wide manufactured home rock back and forth, as it is pounded by turbulent wind.

Then, in an instant, the screws shear off and the entire unit tumbles backward, rolling two full revolutions before it stops.

In any other situation, this would be terrifying. But here, we are conducting a first-of-its-kind experiment at Florida International University’s Wall of Wind, a test facility that can reproduce wind speeds the equivalent of a Category 5 hurricane.

[We are testing a full-scale manufactured home to measure the effects of hurricane-force winds and identify strategies that can improve the safety of all mobile homes as disaster risk rises.](#) We want disaster-resilient and affordable housing – not just one, but both.”

(Source: FIU News)



FSU FILM SCHOOL RANKS NO. 1 FOR UNDERGRADUATE, NO. 3 FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN INAUGURAL NATIONAL RANKING

“Florida State University’s College of Motion Picture Arts has earned two top-three national rankings, with its undergraduate film program rated No. 1 and its graduate program No. 3 in FilmSchool.org’s inaugural data-driven ranking.

The ranking evaluates film programs using measures including student outcomes, affordability, selectivity, faculty and class size, and student and alumni satisfaction. [FSU was the only university with two programs among the top three.](#)

“This recognition reflects what has always been at the heart of our program: giving talented students the training, resources and opportunities they need to become working filmmakers,” said Reb Braddock, dean of the College of Motion Picture Arts. “We are especially proud that this ranking recognizes not only the quality of our programs, but the value we provide our students and the success they achieve after graduation.”



FilmSchool.org evaluated participating programs using data supplied by the schools along with student and alumni reviews.”

(Source: FSU News)

NEW COLLEGE AND CAREER HANDBOOK AVAILABLE ON FLORIDASHINES

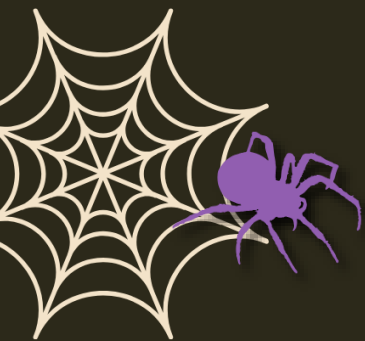
A new College and Career Handbook from FloridaShines offers students an interactive way to explore their options and start building a plan for the future.

Designed for students, families, and educators, the new resource helps students identify their interests and strengths while exploring options after graduation, including college, technical training, and entering the workforce.

Interactive activities and guided questions walk students through important decisions along the way, including how to explore colleges, navigate the application and admissions process, find ways to pay for college, and discover career preparation opportunities, tools, and training.

Whether students already have a plan or are still figuring out what comes next, FloridaShines' College and Career Handbook provides practical resources to help turn questions about the future into a clear path forward.

[Explore the College and Career Handbook today on FloridaShines.](#)





UP NEXT

FL-IDN'S UPCOMING WEBINAR WILL EXPLORE ENHANCING ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

Next month, on November 10, FL-IDN will host a webinar, “Designing AI Coaches to Enhance Asynchronous Learning.” Asynchronous learning environments offer flexibility but often lack personalized support that promotes deeper learning.

This webinar explores a practical, human-centered approach to designing AI learning coaches that enhance learning while preserving instructor oversight and learner agency. Participants will learn how AI modalities, cognitive scaffolding, and task design can be aligned with learning outcomes to support reflection, feedback, rehearsal, and higher-order thinking.

Drawing on instructional design, learning sciences, and responsible AI principles, the session will provide a framework for creating ethical, effective AI-supported learning experiences that complement, rather than replace, the role of educators.

Lynn Long (University of Waterloo) will be our guest speaker.

- November 10, 2026
- 2:00 – 2:50 PM (ET)
- [Registration for the FL-IDN webinar on November 10 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.

WCET'S UPCOMING WEBINAR SERIES - AI GOVERNANCE POLICY WORKSHOP SERIES

Move from scattered guidance to a clear, actionable AI governance policy for your institution. In this facilitated series of virtual working sessions, teams will use WCET's *AI Education Policy, Guideline, and Practice Ecosystem Framework* to assess current practices, align campus stakeholders, and draft an AI governance policy that can be implemented, evaluated, and iterated over time. The series culminates with each team presenting its final AI governance policy for peer learning and feedback.

Virtual sessions will cover:

- **WCET's AI Policy Governance Framework:** a practical roadmap for organizing policy conversations across governance, operations, and teaching/learning considerations.
- **Strategy for policy development and deployment:** who to include from your institution, how to coordinate input, and how to move from principles to usable policy language and practices.
- **Implementation roadmap:** timelines and milestones, change management considerations, and an approach for ongoing evaluation and iteration as AI tools, risks, and institutional needs evolve.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE?

WCET members exclusively. Teams of up to three people per institution are encouraged to ensure a cross-functional perspective and continuity. The initial cohort is limited to eight teams. Each team will receive up to seven hours of coaching across the series to support drafting, stakeholder alignment, and implementation planning.

SESSION 1 – INTRODUCTIONS (OPTIONAL)

- October 14, 2026
- WCET 2026, Minneapolis (In-Person)
- 45 minutes
 - During this optional session, participants will dive into WCET's Framework and connect with teams and coaches.

SESSION 2 – FOUNDATIONAL IMPERATIVES

- January 12, 2027
- Virtual
- 90 minutes
 - Using the Framework as a roadmap
 - Stakeholders and team members
 - Foundations of effective policies, including ethical and responsible use
 - Defining goals and milestones



SESSION 3 – STRATEGIC ENABLERS

- February 9, 2027
- Virtual
- 90 minutes
 - Crafting a strategy for the design and deployment of AI governance policy
 - Anticipating pitfalls
 - Balancing long-term planning and acceleration of AI tools and functionality

SESSION 4 – PROTOTYPING YOUR POLICY AND MOVING TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

- March 9, 2027
- Virtual
- 90 minutes
 - Implementation timeline and process for feedback
 - Planning for continuous improvement and iteration
 - Metrics for evaluating success
 - Highlighting effective and innovative use of AI

SESSION 5 – PRESENTATIONS

- April 13, 2027
- Virtual
- 90 minutes
 - Teams present final work product for peer assessment.

REGISTRATION DETAILS

Investment: \$300 for up to three team members from an organization.

[Complete the brief form on the WCET website to register your group for the AI Policy Workshop Series.](#)

The primary contact will receive the invoice.



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.

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

SAN'S UPCOMING WEBINAR SERIES - STATE AUTHORIZATION FOUNDATIONS: CULTIVATING COMPLIANCE

State authorization work starts with a clear understanding of out-of-state activity and the processes needed to manage it well.

This three-part webinar series introduces the core principles, practical tools, and campus partnerships that support effective compliance. Participants will learn how to identify obligations, research and manage requirements, and build the relationships needed to put compliance into practice.

Participants may register for one, two, or all three sessions at the same time.

(Attend all three sessions to earn a free book: *The SAN Blue Book; State Authorization of Colleges and Universities*; 3rd Edition)



SESSION 1 - PLANT THE FOUNDATION: UNDERSTANDING OUT-OF-STATE COMPLIANCE

On November 3, this session introduces the basics of out-of-state activity compliance, including how state and federal responsibilities intersect and how institutional activities may trigger compliance obligations. Panelists will also discuss institutional approval and other forms of oversight.

SESSION 2 - TEND THE PROCESS: MANAGING & IMPLEMENTING REQUIREMENTS

On November 4, this session focuses on how to research requirements, use reliable sources, and make well-supported compliance decisions. Panelists will share ways to document research, track obligations, and create processes that help institutions maintain compliance over time.

SESSION 3 - GROW YOUR NETWORK: BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

On November 5, this session focuses on building the campus relationships needed to support state authorization work. Panelists will discuss identifying stakeholders, forming effective workgroups, communicating with campus audiences, and helping compliance become a shared institutional responsibility.

Additional Foundations webinars on other topics, including professional licensure, global compliance, state-to-state institutional approvals, and managing reciprocity through SARA, are being planned for December, January, and February.

Participants may register for one, two, or all three sessions at the same time.

- November 3 – 5, 2026
- 1:30 – 3:00 PM (ET)
- [Registration for the SAN webinar series in November is free.](#)





ARTICLE DIGESTS

HIGHER ED'S AI INTEGRATION OVERHYPED, NEW DATA SHOWS

“Despite widespread hype about integrating artificial intelligence tools into college classrooms, faculty aren’t using them as much as other types of education-technology tools.”

That’s one of the big takeaways from a report Instructure — which owns the nation’s most popular learning management system, Canvas — released Tuesday entitled, ‘EdTech Top 40: Inside the U.S. higher education digital learning stack.’ It’s an analysis of de-identified data from 19.5 million U.S. higher education users between September 2025 and April 2026 and the Learning Tools Interoperability integrations they used during that time period. (LTIs are external tools capable of connecting with Canvas, or another LMS.)

According to the report, the five LTIs that reached the most users during that time period included McGraw Hill (11,369,232 users), Watermark Course Evaluations & Surveys (10,632,703 users), Zoom (9,051,162 users), Kaltura (8,592,923 users), and Panopto (8,333,378 users). By contrast, the most widely adopted dedicated AI tool — Google Gemini — didn’t even crack the top 100, reaching 87,788 users across 211 institutions.”

(Source: Inside Higher Education)



HIGHER ED ASSOCIATIONS RELEASE SURVEY ON FEDERAL STUDENT LOAN CHANGES

“A new survey conducted by six associations, including ACE, Navigating the One Big Beautiful Bill Act: Graduate and Professional School Responses to Federal Student Loan Changes, captures insights from campus administrators and leaders on how the elimination of Grad PLUS loans, the new borrowing limits for graduate and professional students, and the revised definition of professional degrees are all beginning to affect students and campuses.

These recent changes are only beginning to be felt by institutions, however. ‘Early evidence from across the graduate and professional education administrators surveyed suggests that the sector is in a transitional ‘wait-and-see’ phase as institutions, schools, and programs formulate strategic responses to OBBB,’ the survey authors write.

As many institutions brace for the potential impact on their programs, from enrollment to degree completion, highlights from the survey’s findings may prepare campuses for the financial changes their students will face in the coming months and inform what they can do to support their students.”

(Source: American Council on Education)

NEARLY HALF OF EMPLOYERS SAY AI WILL MAKE COLLEGE DEGREES MORE IMPORTANT

“Nearly half of surveyed employers — 48 percent — think higher education will become more important over the next five years amid growing use of artificial intelligence, while only 26 percent think it will become less important, according to data released on October 20 by Gallup and the Lumina Foundation.

Across industries, large majorities of employers said that college degrees would be at least as important as they are today.”

(Source: Higher Ed Dive)

INSIDE HIGHER ED’S WAVE OF PRICE RESETS AND FREE TUITION MODELS

“The cost of college has become eye-watering for many students, driving sector-wide conversations about the value of higher education. But many institutions are quick to distinguish their tuition sticker price from what students actually pay...

Large, well-heeled universities first popularized this kind of tuition pledge. But smaller colleges and those without massive endowments, like Washington, are increasingly turning to these kinds of affordability initiatives.

A recent Brookings Institution report found that many types of institutions — including four-year public colleges and those with large endowments — already award enough financial aid on average to cover tuition to students from households in the bottom quarter of the income distribution nationwide. The exception was private tuition-dependent colleges.”

(Source: Higher Ed Dive)





SPOOKY STUFF



MOVIE MUST-SEE: YOU CAN SEE EVERYTHING

“Thirty-four days before she's sent to prison, [notorious Silicon Valley founder Elizabeth Holmes invites a skeptical film crew to document her every move](#). What begins as an intimate portrait of an enigmatic felon becomes a mind-bending three-year journey into the abyss.”

(Source: Rotten Tomatoes)



YOU GOTTA TRY IT: EVERGLADES RESTAURANT

“[Using fresh, local ingredients and incorporating Florida flare into many traditional dishes, Everglades Restaurant outshines other restaurants on International Drive](#). Our chefs are always striving to offer the finest seafood, steaks and produce in our Orlando steakhouse. Our menu constantly changes. Regardless, visitors and locals alike enjoy the new daily specials created by our award-winning chefs. Inspired by the Florida Everglades, the subtropical wetlands in South Florida, Everglades Restaurant supports the green efforts and conservation that has earned Rosen Centre® Hotel a Two Palm Green Lodge distinction — among the first hotels in Central Florida to receive this recognition.”

(Source: Everglades Restaurant)



YOU GOTTA GO: VIZCAYA MUSEUM AND GARDENS

“Built between 1914 and 1922 as the winter home of farming manufacturer James Deering, [Vizcaya is one of the most intact remaining examples from the Gilded Age](#), when the nation’s most successful entrepreneur-built estates were inspired by the stately homes of Europe. Vizcaya features a Main House filled with a decorative art collection, 10 acres of formal gardens, a rockland hammock (native forest), mangrove shore, and a historic village that is being restored to tell Vizcaya’s full story and provide additional spaces for programs and community outreach, including those on agriculture.”

(Source: Visit Florida)



FRIGHTFULLY GOOD READS: KIDS HALLOWEEN BOOKS AND OTHER SPOOKY STORIES

“Spooky season is finally here, bringing plenty of fun and frights. [Trick or treat yourself to the best Halloween books](#), featuring a few of our favorite characters, like Frankenkitty, Jack Skellington and more. From hauntingly good gifts for kids to interactive activities and more, take a trip through our spooktacular collections.” Scroll to the bottom of the article for YA and Adult Horror recommendations.

(Source: Barnes & Noble)



NO TRICKS, JUST TREATS: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO FALL AND HALLOWEEN IN FLORIDA

“Although the temperatures may not quite call for sweaters, [Halloween spirit is in full swing across Orlando, Palm Beach County and Greater Miami](#). From pumpkin patches and fall festivals to haunted houses, immersive experiences and late-night celebrations, here’s where to make the most of the fall season.” (Source: Modern Luxury)

