END-OF-YEAR FAFSA LAUNCH COULD CAUSE MORE DELAYS

“The Education Department recently announced that the new FAFSA will launch by Dec. 31. The department also announced that higher education institutions will not get any student data from completed applications until the end of January. Students could receive aid letters in mid-to-late February at the earliest.” (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

Read more [here](#).
THIS WAS THE YEAR OF AI
Looking back for a major theme on this year, I think the title, Year of AI, probably has to be the winner. While a lot of activities have taken place, artificial intelligence, its impact on all areas of society, the policy conundrums it caused and the presence of the topic on almost all of the conference agendas validate such a claim. Artificial intelligence apps and the major functionality introduced by Open AI, Microsoft and Google for everyone has been a compelling if not somewhat disturbing development for those who watch technology and science fiction movies. And perhaps the even more interesting part is that the capabilities of the AI we have seen thus far are continuing to evolve.

EMPLOYERS, EDUCATORS ARE FILLING IN GEN Z’S ETIQUETTE GAP
"Studies indicate that 80% of workers see employers as post-secondary learning institutions. Looking at additional data, a picture of the current learning and development begins to appear: Higher education administrators and educators fill in the gaps left by generational differences, and employers have the opportunity to build on that foundation.”
(Source: Higher Ed Dive)
Read more here.

ONLINE ENROLLMENTS SPIKE AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES
"Federal data suggest larger shares of students at two-year colleges are enrolling online. Higher Ed experts say the trend calls for more online supports." (Source: Inside Higher Ed)
Read more here.
As the year draws to a close, we wanted to take a moment to express our gratitude and appreciation for the incredible support and cooperation we’ve received from each of you. It has been a truly productive year filled with exciting projects and successful initiatives.

Together, we’ve achieved milestones that have positively impacted our faculty, staff and most importantly, our students in Florida. Your commitment and dedication to advancing the services offered by FLVC have made a meaningful difference, and we are truly thankful for that.

This year was filled with projects to improve our technology infrastructure, our connections to your systems, expand the FloridaShines Catalog, develop new partnerships with national entities, and embark on new statewide initiatives like the Reverse Transfer System, and the expansion with our Career and Technical partners. We are excited about the potential for even greater achievements in the coming year.

Wishing you a joyous holiday season filled with warmth and happiness. Thank you once again for your outstanding contributions. Here’s to a fantastic 2024!

I wish you all very happy holidays.

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FOR THOSE OF US IN EDUCATION, THE IMPACT OF SUCH TECHNOLOGIES HAS HAD SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS ON HOW WE TEACH, HOW STUDENTS LEARN AND HOW WE SUPPORT THAT LEARNING. IN THE NEXT YEAR, I THINK WE ARE HEADING INTO SOME EXCITING AND YET UNKNOWN WATERS IN TERMS OF HOW OUR BUSINESS MIGHT CHANGE. FRESH OFF THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC, WE ARE STILL ADAPTING TO THE CHANGES WE SEE IN ENROLLMENT PATTERNS, STUDENTS SUPPORT NEEDS AND THE INSTRUCTIONAL MIX OF MODALITIES WE NOW OFFER. POST COVID, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN BLENDED AND ONLINE INSTRUCTIONAL MODALITIES HAS REMAINED STRONG AND IS AT LEVELS GREATER THAN WE SAW PRE-COVID. ADD TO THAT THE EMERGENCE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE APPLICATIONS FOR THE PUBLIC AND WE HAVE QUITE A LOT TO WORK ON. AS CAN BE SEEN BOTH IN THE VERY SUCCESSFUL SERIES OF WEBINARS ON GENERATIVE AI THIS SUMMER THROUGH THE IDN AND THE FRUITFUL DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE MEMBERS COUNCIL, WE ARE A STRONG COMMUNITY WILLING TO SHARE OUR KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES. FOR THAT AND MANY OTHER THINGS, I AM THANKFUL AND I LOOK FORWARD TO THE EXCITING CHALLENGES THAT 2024 MIGHT BRING.

I wish you all very happy holidays.

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A SUCCESSFUL YEAR BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT

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FLVC HOSTS FACTE TECHNICAL COLLEGE DIRECTORS MEETING

FLVC hosted the Florida Association for Career and Technical Education’s Technical College Directors meeting on Nov. 6-8 at its Tallahassee campus.

The meeting included representation from career and technical centers across the state, and FLVC staff gave a presentation to stakeholders about the efforts to expand CTE services.
Those efforts include the onboarding of a statewide coordinator, soliciting feedback from subject matter experts through the formation of focus groups and a steering committee, and the expansion of existing resources. Stakeholders were also informed of future efforts that will include a market scan to assess a CTE’s existing statewide resources and avoid a duplication of services.

### FL-IDN HIGHLIGHTED FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PILOT PROGRAM AT FLORIDA SOUTHWESTERN LAST MONTH

The IDN successfully hosted a “ChatGPT and Generative AI in Education” webinar series in summer 2023. Now, a lot of our instructional design and distance education peers are exploring innovative ways of transforming instructional design, content development, and faculty development processes with artificial intelligence (AI).

For instance, the Florida SouthWestern State College team started a faculty professional development pilot program, Tinker Time. In four hy-flex, mini training sessions, the team got faculty thinking about, experimenting with, and developing their own ideas about how to start incorporating generative AI into their courses.

On November 7, attendees had the opportunity to learn more about the design and delivery of this program, as well as what was accomplished and learned. Many thanks to the FSW training team members and IDN guest speakers, Anna Haney-Withrow and Heather Olson for sharing their expertise and experience with our community.

Watch it on [YouTube](#) | Download [Resources](#).

### FL-IDN EXPLORES CREATING ENGAGING MICROLECTURES WITH FACULTY IN LATEST WEBINAR

On December 5, attendees had the opportunity to explore how faculty can create engaging microlectures as an alternative to traditional instructional videos. They discussed the characteristics and benefits of microlectures and specific tools that can be used to create them. Additionally, they explored a planning template that can help faculty design more interactive and engaging microlectures for their students. This session also provided helpful tips and tricks for recording and sharing microlectures as well. Many thanks to our IDN guest speaker, Dr. Tolulope Noah from California State University, Long Beach, for sharing her expertise with our community and for showing us how microlectures can enhance instructional practices in any modality: online, on-site, hybrid, and flipped.

Watch it on [YouTube](#) | Download [Resources](#).
FLVC HOSTED MCDLSS FALL MEETING LAST MONTH

Time flies when you’re having fun. It’s hard to believe that the November meeting has come and gone, and that planning is already underway for the February meeting as well. This group keeps me on my toes, and I wouldn’t have it any other way. I’m acutely aware that the November meeting will be a hard one to beat... But I’ve never backed down from a challenge (even those that are self-inflicted!).

In November, FLVC had the pleasure of hosting the MCDLSS Fall Meeting at Hillsborough Community College’s Ybor City Campus in Tampa, Florida. This two-day event was crammed full with a variety of sessions that brought up fresh topics to learn about, opportunities to network with our community, meet some incredible people, and experience a portion of Tampa Bay’s historical and cultural roots in Ybor City.

My favorite part of the entire experience was the fact that I could provide memorable experiences for our members through the food and NEST/114 Gallery presentation. Who knew that our group would be so intrigued by bees?!

I will always be grateful to serve in this capacity and am completely biased when I say that we have one of the best groups of distance learning leaders around. A huge thank you to everyone that presented, that attended, and had a hand in helping me make this event possible.

FALL MEMBERS COUNCIL MEETING RESOURCES

- Pictures
- November 2023 Final Agenda
- Approved May 2023 Meeting Minutes
- November 2023 PowerPoint Presentation Slides for Day 1 and 2
- Current Standing Committee Rosters
- UF AI Presentation Slides
- UF Pathways to Online Teaching Excellence Handout
- Navigating the AI Landscape: A Guide for Faculty Handouts
- Quick Links to Institutional Inventory Tabs.xlsx
- Master Institutional Inventory.xlsx
- UF AI Resources:
  - K-12
    - https://ai.ufl.edu/about/ai-for-k-12/
    - https://www.eng.ufl.edu/flex/education-and-training/k-12-gator-outreach/ai-in-k-12-education/
  - Higher Ed
    - https://citt.ufl.edu/services/learning-innovation--technology/artificial-intelligence/
    - https://citt.ufl.edu/articles/tech-byte-ai-prompt-cookbook-generative-ai-recipes-.html
    - https://teach.ufl.edu/resource-library/50343-2/
  - Professional Development
    - https://pwd.aa.ufl.edu/ai/
    - Nico Rose, n.rose@ufl.edu
**Member Spotlights**

- **WELCOME TO THE TEAM | NEW PRIMARY AND ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVES**
  - Wendy Spradlin
    - Primary Representative
    - Instructional Technologist
    - Pensacola State College
  - Frank Asprer
    - Alternate Representative
    - Learning Management System Integration Technologist
    - Pensacola State College

- **HAPPY RETIREMENT | WE’RE SAD TO SEE YOU GO**
  - Holly Vaughn
    - Primary Representative
    - Senior Instructional Technologist
    - Pensacola State College

- **STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING THE NEXT MCDLSS MEETING IN FEBRUARY**
  - Our next Members Council meeting is scheduled for February 7-8 at Polk State College’s Center for Public Safety, Winter Haven Campus.
  - Keep a look out for additional information regarding our next Members Council meeting in January!

- **SHARE YOUR BIRTHDAY MONTH**
  - Share your birthday month and receive a special shout-out in our monthly newsletters.

- **JOIN A STANDING COMMITTEE**
  - If you currently serve on one of our standing committees and/or are interested in joining, please take a moment to fill out our form here.
  - According to our operating procedures, it is acceptable to invite colleagues that aren’t current members of the DLSS Members Council to join if you feel they have relevant experience and would make a great addition to our standing committees.
  - With that being said, please feel free to share the following link to anyone that you have in mind.
RECENTERING DIGITAL LEARNING AROUND STUDENTS AND THEIR NEEDS

“When Every Learner Everywhere and its partners meet with educators, we sometimes encounter the perspective that digital learning is synonymous with online courses or with a range of modalities that include hybrid, hy-flex, and flipped. Conversations about digital learning that define it as online courses also tend to focus on which tools to use...” (Source: Every Learner Everywhere)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2023 WCET ANNUAL MEETING IN NEW ORLEANS

“As my plane took off from the airport in New Orleans, LA a few weeks ago, I had a smile on my face. That smile was due to the wonderful experience of this year's WCET Annual Meeting. This year I attended several meetings and sessions that brought up fresh topics to learn about, networked with our community, met some incredible people, and visited a town I'd never been to before! The group dinners at local restaurants were a huge highlight for me! This was an outstanding year – it was not only the 35th anniversary of the Annual Meeting but it was also the first year that WCET hosted the Annual Summit for Women in eLearning (ASWE)...” (Source: WCET Frontiers)

NEW REGULATIONS WILL IMPACT GRADUATE ENROLLMENT

“The U.S. Department of Education is implementing new regulations designed to hold institutions accountable for the cost of their programs and alumni career outcomes. If a graduate program leaves alumni with loan payments greater than eight percent of net income or 20 percent of discretionary income, the department must notify students that they risk financial harm by enrolling in that program...” (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

OVERHAUL OF FINANCIAL AID FORMULA WILL BOOST PELL GRANT ELIGIBILITY

“A new report by the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association estimates nearly 220,000 more students will qualify for the Pell Grant under the pending new federal aid formula. The Pell Grant is a crucial tool that gives low-income students access to college. The increase in Pell-eligible students could mean more than $617 million in additional federal aid going to students and colleges...” (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

TURNITIN INTRODUCES ITHENTICATE 2.0 AND A NEW SIMILARITY REPORT

“Turnitin has announced its iThenticate 2.0 program and a redesigned and improved Similarity Report available across its writing integrity products. iThenticate 2.0 will screen over 19 million documents per year in scholarly manuscripts and 97 percent of the top 10,000 journals. iThenticate 2.0 will have these features for free until after January: identify AI-generated text and “research misconduct” like text recycling, upgraded collaboration for user groups and...” (Source: Campus Technology)

"WAZE" TO FIND THE DETOURS AND FAST LANES TO UNDERSTAND NEW U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GUIDANCE AND REGULATIONS

“This WCET and SAN member-only webcast gave attendees real-time updates on emerging Federal actions regarding postsecondary digital learning. In 2023, the U.S. Department of Education drove an unusually high number of digital and distance learning oversight activities. In late October, the Department released two new regulations that will have a big impact on institutions serving students in other states: 1) professional licensure and certification and 2) adherence to state institutional closure requirements and the impact that has on reciprocity. Speakers focused on those two issues and shared a little about what they saw coming around the corner.” (Source: WCET)

EDUCATION AT WORK GRANTED $500,000 FROM SALESFORCE TO HELP STUDENTS EARN WHILE THEY LEARN

“The Salesforce Foundation has awarded the nonprofit organization Education at Work (EAW) with a $500,000 grant to develop a hybrid “learn and earn” program that seeks to help students across the U.S. work part-time for Fortune 500 companies, learn new skills, and pay for college. EAW will build a new facility in Indianapolis to provide opportunities for 200 area students by 2025. Students can earn up to $5,250 in tuition assistance while gaining...” (Source: Campus Technology)
AMAZON PLEDGES TO TRAIN 2 MILLION PEOPLE IN AI SKILLS BY 2025

“Amazon recently announced a new initiative, ‘AI Ready,’ that will provide free artificial intelligence skills training and education to 2 million people globally by 2025. The initiative adds to the company’s existing investments in cloud computing skills, that has already provided free training to more than 21 million people for in-demand tech skills. It offers eight free AI and generative AI courses in subjects like “Generative AI Learning Plan for Decision Makers,” “Foundations of Prompt Engineering,” and “Building Language Models on AWS.” The AWS Generative AI scholarship will provide more than $12 million in scholarships to over 50,000 students from underserved communities...” (Source: Campus Technology)

FOUR UNIMAGINABLE WAYS AI WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, ACCORDING TO BILL GATES

“Bill Gates believes that in the next five years, you will have your own artificial intelligence assistant that will be a frequent voice in your ear and help you with everything from deciding where to go on vacation to managing your friendships. Gates defines an “agent” as a type of AI software that “responds to natural language and can accomplish many different tasks based on its knowledge of the user.” Along with this, he believes that your agent will get involved in your personal relationships and help you solve personal problems. He also foresees us not working with software or operating systems anymore...” (Source: Inc.)

YOUTUBE TO TEST GENERATIVE AI FEATURES, INCLUDING A COMMENTS SUMMARIZER AND CONVERSATIONAL TOOL

“YouTube recently announced that they will begin to experiment with new generative AI features. Paid subscribers can try out a new conversational tool that uses AI to answer questions about YouTube’s content, make recommendations, and summarize topics in the comments of a video. These features are available through YouTube’s hub for new experiments on an opt-in basis. YouTube will gather feedback on how consumers are using the new features over the next few...” (Source: TechCrunch)

DEVELOPING INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL AI POLICIES AND PRACTICES: A FRAMEWORK

“ChatGPT recently turned one and what a wild, first year it has been. Over the last twelve months, institutions have scrambled to not only better understand generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its impact on teaching and learning, but also to determine the best ways to provide guardrails and guidance for faculty, staff, and students. Many institutions have struggled to develop institutional-level policies. In a spring survey administered by WCET, only eight percent of respondents reported that their institution had developed and/or implemented at least one AI-related policy...” (Source: WCET Frontiers)

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF ONLINE EDUCATION IMPROVED SHARPLY POST-PANDEMIC

“A new report shows that nearly half of Americans have developed a better opinion of online education since the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall perception of online learning has drastically shifted since 2017 with nearly three-fourths of respondents believing it is a more reputable way to get an online degree now than five years ago. Forty-seven percent of the Gen Z population’s opinion has improved when asked if they had a better or worse opinion of online education compared to five years ago. While most of the results showed greater acceptance of and respect for online learning...” (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

SIX COMMON INSTITUTIONAL ONLINE LEARNING TRENDS

“Three experts have been collaborating over the past few years to observe common trends in online and digital education. One common theme is online learning as a strategic institutional priority. A second common theme is a shift of online learning leadership from individual divisions within a university to centralized leadership. Other common themes include a strong desire among leaders to develop internal online and digital learning capacities, increased skepticism of traditional online program management contracts, organizational changes to align with digital/online learning institutional priorities, and increased pressure to enhance and diversify revenue sources through online programs...” (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

ADVICE ABOUT AI IN THE CLASSROOM FOR THE COMING NEW YEAR

“Faculty must help their students use generative AI in effective, ethical ways in their learning and eventually in their careers and lives as citizens. Instructors can have students help them draft a plan in their syllabus for appropriate class use of generative AI and embed exploration of ethical practice into assignments. Faculty can deepen their practice by evaluating assignments through the lens of generative AI, adding a method or reflection component to...” (Source: Inside Higher Ed)
MOVIE MUST-SEE: FERRARI
“Ferrari is set during the summer of 1957. Behind the spectacle and danger of 1950’s Formula 1, ex-racer, Enzo Ferrari, is in crisis. Bankruptcy stalks the company he and his wife, Laura, built from nothing ten years earlier. Their tempestuous marriage struggles with the mourning for their one son. Ferrari struggles with the acknowledgement of another. His drivers’ lust to win pushes them out to the edge. He wagers all in a roll of the dice on one race, the treacherous 1,000-mile race across Italy, the iconic Mille Miglia.” Directed by Michael Mann and starring Adam Driver as Enzo Ferrari, the movie opens in theaters Dec. 25. (Source: Rotten Tomatoes)

YOU GOTTA TRY IT: MIRACLE AT MEZZO
During each holiday season, St. Petersburg’s Intermezzo Coffee and Cocktails transforms to Miracle at Mezzo, a Christmas-themed pop-up bar. This year, Miracle at Mezzo features 11 festive cocktails that will be available every day until New Year’s Eve. Miracle at Mezzo is located at 1111 Central Avenue in downtown St. Pete. (Source: St. Pete Rising)

YOU GOTTA GO: ST. AUGUSTINE “NIGHTS OF LIGHTS”
“The 30th Annual Nights of Lights dazzles with more than three million lights adorning every corner of the historic district for two months. This award-winning holiday lights display runs from Saturday, November 18, 2023, to January 28, 2024, in historic St. Augustine. During the seasonal display, businesses downtown stay open later, letting you dine in view of the lights and browse the shops of the decorated buildings. The trains and trolleys offer special seasonal tours that take you through the best areas, and there are also a variety of specialty tours — everything from walking to electric cart tours, and even tours to see the lights from the water and from the air.” (Source: Visit St. Augustine)
MAY YOUR DAYS BE
Merry & Bright
HAPPY HOLIDAYS