

# DISTANCE LEARNING & STUDENT SERVICES **NEWS**

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## TOP NEWS IN FL & BEYOND

### ■ **REPORT: ONLINE EDUCATION COMPLETION LAGS BEHIND FACE-TO- FACE INSTRUCTION**

"The University of Florida's Institute of Higher Education found students who enroll in exclusively online degree programs were less likely to complete a degree than peers who enrolled in some face-to-face courses. But certain actions can help promote online learning success." (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

[Read more here.](#)





## THREE POLICY DEVELOPMENTS COLLEGE LEADERS SHOULD KEEP AN EYE ON THIS YEAR

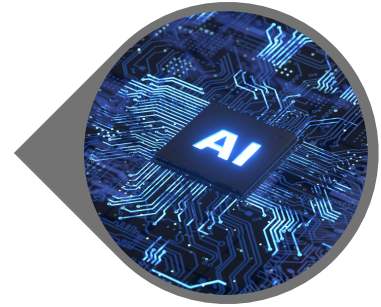
"Speakers at the Council of Independent Colleges' Presidents Institute highlighted changes to overtime rules, Title IX and the FAFSA."  
(Source: Higher Ed Dive)

[Read more here.](#)

### ■ NY GOVERNOR PROPOSES \$400M TO LAUNCH UNIVERSITY AI CONSORTIUM

"Hochul proposed the creation of Empire AI – a consortium of the state's research universities and other institutions that would form an artificial intelligence computing center in upstate New York."  
(Source: Forbes)

[Read more here.](#)



# DLSS UPDATES

### ■ TSAA APPLICATIONS SEE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE FOR 2023

Transient Student Admissions Applications created for fall 2023 (12,998) surpassed last year's fall applications (11,194) by more than 16 percent. For the calendar Year 2023, there were 55,497 applications created compared to 46,387 in 2022, an increase of 19.6 percent. Thank you for supporting the mission of the Florida Virtual Campus and 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.

### ■ WEBINAR ON NEW FAFSA SCHEDULED FOR FEB. 20

A free "Filling Out the New FAFSA" webinar is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 20 at 6 p.m. The free registration link will be available in our upcoming February issue for anyone that's interested in attending. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) has been updated for 2024 and is now live. Submitting the FAFSA can open students up to valuable grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study jobs, if they qualify. The FAFSA is a great way to make college more affordable. This online event is hosted by financial aid experts who will teach students – step by step – how to correctly fill out the FAFSA.

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## ■ FL-IDN HOSTS FREE WEBINAR ON JAN. 23

The past year has witnessed early adopters and educators' active exploration, adoption, and application of ChatGPT and other Generative AI tools in classrooms. This year, we expect such educational applications to become even broader, richer, and deeper across all disciplines as:

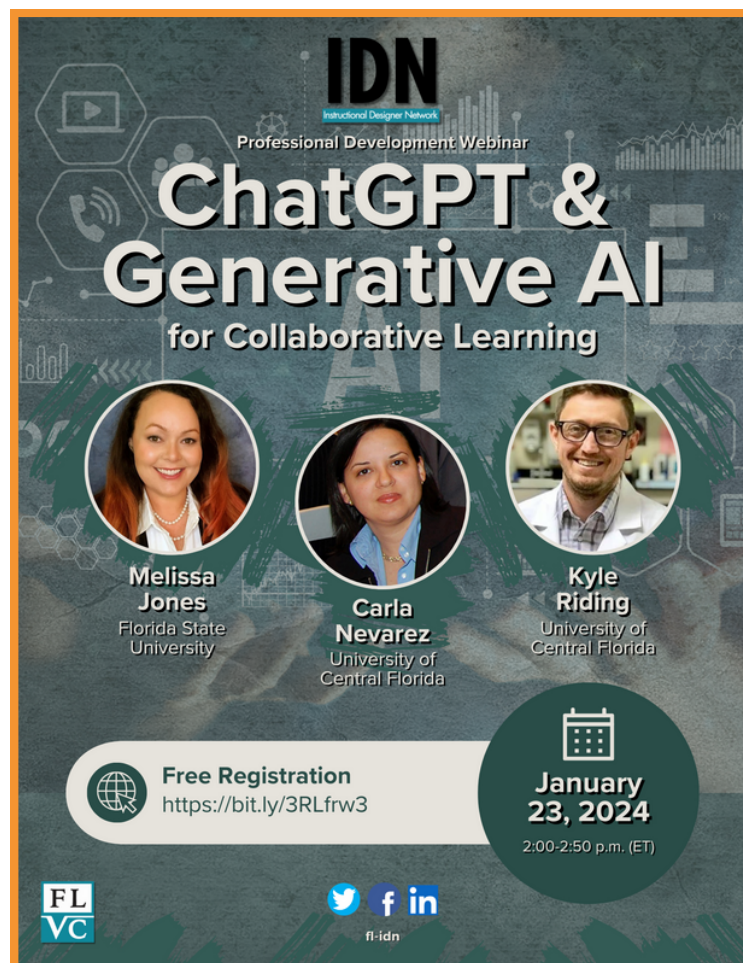
- AI technologies continue to swiftly evolve;
- More educational institutions release their official campus policies and guidelines on the use of AI in teaching and learning;
- More educators extend their comfort zone to embrace AI technologies;
- And last but not least, the ongoing student demand for faculty to use AI technologies in classrooms continues to rise.

On Jan. 23, attendees will have the opportunity to explore how generative AI tools can be used to support peer collaboration. Drawing on best practices in social learning theories, it's suggested that AI tools have the ability to enhance peer-to-peer and small group work in ways that foster engagement and support active learning. Our goal is to offer ideas that will inspire educators and designers to view AI tools through the lens of peer-to-peer learning and will assume a basic knowledge of generative AI platforms. Attendees will also delve into assessing both student and faculty perceptions of these tools and discuss methods to determine the effectiveness of the learning process.

Dr. Melissa Jones (Florida State University), Ms. Carla Nevarez, and Dr. Kyle Riding (University of Central Florida) will be our guest speakers. This event will begin at 2 p.m. (ET)

Don't miss your opportunity to [register](#) for the webinar today!

We look forward to seeing you on Jan. 23.







# UP NEXT: MCDLSS MEETING

## ■ POLK STATE COLLEGE HOSTS SPRING MEETING

Our next Members Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 7, from 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. (ET), and Thursday, Feb. 8, from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. (ET), at Polk State College in Winter Haven, Florida. Lunch will be served at 12 p.m. (ET) on the first day, and breakfast will be served at 8:30 a.m. (ET) on the second day.



## SPRING MEETING SNEAK PEAK: ■ CPS TOUR ON FEB. 7

In 2016, Polk State College held its grand opening for their \$30+ million state-of-the-art Center for Public Safety, conveniently located next to the Sheriff's Office headquarters and the Emergency Operations Center in Winter Haven.

The 101,450 square-foot center allows for all of the first responder training to be done under one roof and includes the Polk State Kenneth C. Thompson Institute of Public Safety, Criminal Justice program, Emergency Medical Services Program and the Fire Science Technology Program.

The building includes the following: a 3,600-square-foot training area with mock storefronts, a jail cell, and a movable wall system for creating training scenarios, 10 standard classrooms, three-tiered classrooms, two computer labs, a teaching/learning/computing center, a defensive tactics training space, a forensics crime scene lab, a firearms simulation space, an EMS skills lab and simulation training lab, a fitness center with lockers and showers, a 495-seat auditorium, and a physical training course with 16 obstacles.



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# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## ■ DLSS WELCOMES NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR TO THE TEAM

Kathleen Taylor recently joined the Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) team as Deputy Director for Distance Learning and Student Services. She was drawn to FLVC's mission of supporting student access, persistence and degree attainment efforts through its statewide distance learning and student services initiatives. Prior to her FLVC appointment, she served as Bureau Chief in the Division of Career and Adult Education at the Florida Department of Education and contributed to the advancement of adult education programs, apprenticeship programs and career and technical education programs and by extension, the students served by those programs in Florida.

Her previous experience includes working as a Career and Technical Specialist with Fairfax County Public Schools in Fairfax, Virginia; as Associate Director for Professional Development with the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) in Alexandria, Virginia and as an English language teacher in South Korea. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Florida State University and a Master of Education degree from the University of Virginia. Ms. Taylor grew up in Hialeah, Florida and resides in Tallahassee, Florida.



Welcome

## ■ SPRING MEETING REGISTRATION CLOSES ON JAN. 22

Our next Members Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 7, from 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. (ET), and Thursday, February 8, from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. (ET), at Polk State College in Winter Haven, Florida.

[Registration](#) closes on Monday, Jan. 22. The last day to cancel and receive a refund is Friday, Jan. 26.

## ■ 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](#).

## REMINDERS



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# ARTICLE DIGESTS



## ■ **EDUCATION DEPARTMENT UNVEILS POLICY PROPOSALS FOR ACCREDITATION, STATE AUTHORIZATION**

"The U.S. Department of Education [unveiled several regulatory proposals](#) earlier this month around accreditation, distance education and state authorization ahead of policy negotiations that began Jan. 8. The proposals are in part intended to ensure that accreditors and state authorizing agencies are adequately monitoring the colleges under their purview, the Education Department said in an announcement. They're also meant to make it easier for students to access federal financial aid..." (Source: Higher Ed Dive)

## ■ **ONLINE IS THE TARGET**

"2023 was a heck of a year for those interested in online learning in the US, with all kinds of new regulations and executive actions (and newsletter posts) coming out to fundamentally impact the delivery of online learning. But 2023 was just a warmup, a sideshow. This is because OPMs and for-profits are not necessarily the core focus of the Department of Education (ED) and its aligned activist organizations seeking to shape higher education. What is becoming more clear is the focus is online learning itself..." (Source: On EdTech)

## ■ **EXPERTS PREDICTED DOZENS OF COLLEGES WOULD CLOSE IN 2023 – AND THEY WERE RIGHT**

"Though college enrollment seems to be stabilizing after the pandemic disruptions, predictions for the next 15 years are grim. Colleges will be hurt financially by fewer tuition-paying students, and many will have to merge with other institutions or make significant changes to the way they operate if they want to keep their doors open..." (Source: The Hechinger Report)

## ■ **BRING TECHNOLOGY WITHIN REACH FOR HIGHER ED STUDENTS**

"Educause recently surveyed approximately 2,000 college students across 10 institutions to learn more about what students want from their technology experience in terms of flexibility, choice, and equity. The report found that access to internet connectivity is critical to students' perceptions of their technology experiences. Off-campus students were more satisfied with their internet than those on campus. Other findings show that off-campus students are more drawn to online and hybrid classes..." (Source: EdTech Magazine)

## ■ **THE ENROLLMENT CLIFF: HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP HIGHER EDUCATION CONFRONT IT**

"Experts predict that there could be an enrollment cliff as early as 2025 or 2026 due to economic uncertainty, fears about diminishing returns on tuition, and increased opportunities to work in the trades. Higher education institutions can adapt technology to fight the enrollment cliff by steering even more into online instructional opportunities, launching qualified students into the workforce sooner, using tech to facilitate more face-to-face interactions, and using the application process to select students based on fit..." (Source: EdTech Magazine)

## ■ **WHAT'S NEXT FOR ED TECH IN 2024**

"After a 2023 of metaversities, robots on campuses, and AI tools, what technology will we see take off in higher education this year? Expect to see instructors using more AI in the classroom, virtual reality expanding, and classrooms going high-tech. Instructors will use AI for a more personalized learning experience, and institutions will use it to streamline admissions and financial aid processes. Virtual reality is becoming more accessible in classrooms and increasingly common in science labs..." (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

## ■ **TEACHING IN A JETSON'S WORLD: OR, WHAT WOULD THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DO WITH ELROY'S ROBOTIC TEACHER?**

"It's safe to say, that in the future there is either no Department of Education or a Department that has made its peace with the role of technology-assisted instruction, or at least the role of artificial intelligence. As more and more faculty are experimenting with AI in their classes, institutions need to be increasingly careful that they are in compliance with federal regulations governing regular and substantive interaction (RSI) and Title IV financial aid eligibility..." (Source: WCET Frontiers Blog)



## TV MUST-SEE:

### TRUE DETECTIVE

The fourth season of HBO's crime drama anthology series True Detective, debuted Jan. 14.

"This season stars Jodie Foster and Kali Reis as a pair of cops in Alaska investigating the suspicious deaths of a number of scientists, and so far, it has earned rave reviews."

(Source: [Rotten Tomatoes](#))



(Source: [Rolling Stone](#))

## YOU GOTTA GO:

### BOK TOWER GARDENS

Historic Bok Tower Gardens, a national historic landmark in Lake Wales, features "two hiking trails, 50 acres of gardens, the 20-room El Retiro Estate and the 205-foot art deco and neo-Gothic Singing Tower carillon. Bok Tower Gardens has fascinated millions of Florida visitors since its opening in 1929."

Source: ([Visit Central Florida](#))



(Source: [Orlando Magazine](#))

# FUN STUFF

## SPINE-BENDERS:

"New Year, new reading. If your resolutions for 2024 include reading more, or reading authors and/or genres who are new to you, well, we have some recommendations for you. From debut novels inspired by world events, classic novels and poetry, to inspired coming-of-age stories and new novels from authors we've loved (and championed) for a very long time, to narrative nonfiction that will leave you smarter for having reading it, to poetry that will make your heart sing, [these](#) are the books you should start with this month." (Source: Barnes & Noble)

## YOU GOTTA TRY IT:

### HARRY'S OLD PLACE

Harry's Old Place has been a 30-year staple in Winter Haven offering some of the area's best seafood. "Whether it's Monkfish from Maine, Steelhead from the Olympic Peninsula, or Baked or Apalachicola oysters, clams & mussels," Harry's changes their menu every day to provide guests "with what's fresh, what's in season and well...what just tastes really good."

(Source: [Harry's Old Place](#))



(Source: [Visit Central Florida](#))