

DISTANCE LEARNING & STUDENT SERVICES **NEWS**

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TOP NEWS IN FL & BEYOND

■ PROFESSORS CAUTIOUS OF TOOLS TO DETECT AI-GENERATED WRITING

"As AI-driven fakery spreads—from election-related robocalls and celebrity deepfake videos to doctored images and students abusing the powers of ChatGPT—a tech arms race is ramping up to detect these falsehoods. But in higher ed, many are choosing to stand back and wait, worried that new tools for detecting AI-generated plagiarism may do more harm than good." (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

[Read more here.](#)





AS STATES DROP DEGREE REQUIREMENTS, DOES A FOUR-YEAR DIPLOMA'S VALUE CHANGE?

"Although new policies are propping up workers without degrees, experts say higher education will continue to play a role in hiring decisions and pay rates." (Source: Higher Ed Dive)

[Read more here.](#)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LENDS COLLEGES A HAND AFTER FAFSA BACKLASH

"The department is allocating \$50 million and deploying staffers to help institutions adjust to the rocky FAFSA rollout. College leaders are underwhelmed." (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

[Read more here.](#)



MCDLSS FEBRUARY MEETING: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

In case you missed it, FLVC staff gave updates on several projects and initiatives at this month's Members Council meeting. Those updates included the number of Zero Textbook Cost indicator courses now in the Catalog, progress being made on the ongoing RESTrofit project, program upload schedule reminders for the 2024-25 academic year, and revisions planned for the Common Prerequisites Manual. View the PowerPoint presentation below!



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[PPT Slides.](#)

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■ FL-IDN EXPLORES WAYS TO MASTER COMMUNICATION FOR INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS IN LATEST WEBINAR

FL-IDN hosted a free webinar, *From Resistance to Buy-In: Mastering Persuasive Communication for Instructional Designers*, on Tuesday, Feb. 13. This webinar aimed to equip instructional designers with the necessary tools and techniques to communicate persuasively with faculty members and to help them adopt innovative teaching practices.

Attendees had the opportunity to describe and apply principles of persuasive communication, identify the communication challenges they face when promoting innovation, develop effective communication strategies, and use storytelling and other persuasive techniques to increase adoption rates of new technologies and teaching strategies.

Many thanks to Skylar Johnson (University of Florida) and Kathryn Rush (University of Florida) for sharing their expertise and experience with our community.

The recording and other resources can be found below.



IDN

Instructional Designer Network

Watch it on [YouTube](#).

■ FL-IDN HOSTS FREE VIRTUAL CAPSTONE SESSION ON FEB. 21

Join the FL-IDN AI Workgroup at 2 p.m. (ET) on Wednesday, Feb. 21 as they share their challenges, innovations, and inspirations with AI in a free virtual capstone session. In this informal conversation, attendees will develop a sense of how other institutions and professionals are approaching the continuous adaptation to generative AI in higher education “in real-time.”

Collaboration, idea sharing, and spending time with your network are at the heart of this session. Your questions and ideas are encouraged.

The registration link can be found below. We hope to see you there!



IDN

Instructional Designer Network

Free Registration:
<https://bit.ly/3vNGZJV>

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UP NEXT: FAFSA WEBINAR



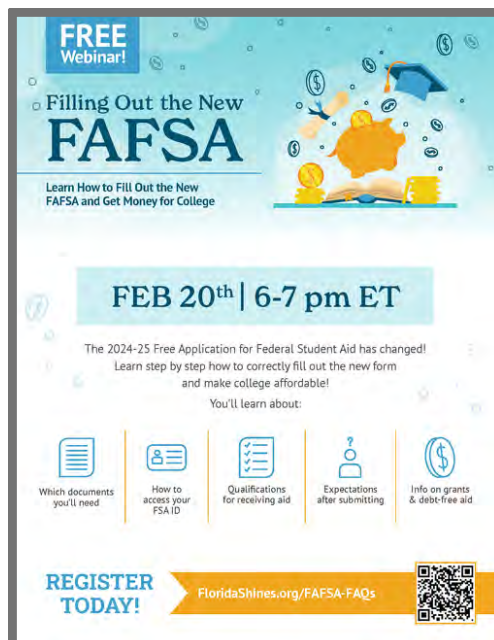
FILLING OUT THE NEW FAFSA WEBINAR COMING NEXT WEEK

There's still time to register for the "Filling Out the New FAFSA" webinar scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 20 at 6 p.m. (ET). 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.

Those who attend will learn what documents they'll need before they start filling out the FAFSA, how to get their Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID; which parent to include on their form, qualifications for receiving federal financial aid; what to expect after submitting the FAFSA; information about Pell Grants and other financial aid that never has to be paid back, and much more.

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.

To register, go to <https://www.floridashines.org/fafsa-faqs>.



FREE Webinar!

Filling Out the New FAFSA

Learn How to Fill Out the New FAFSA and Get Money for College

FEB 20th | 6-7 pm ET


The 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid has changed!
Learn step by step how to correctly fill out the new form and make college affordable!

You'll learn about:

- Which documents you'll need
- How to access your FSA ID
- Qualifications for receiving aid
- Expectations after submitting
- Info on grants & debt-free aid

REGISTER TODAY!

FloridaShines.org/FAFSA-FAQs



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UP NEXT: OER BOOTCAMP

■ FLVC OER BOOTCAMP TO BE HELD IN MARCH

FLVC Library Services will host its popular annual OER Bootcamp March 27-29 from 2-4 p.m. (ET) each day. Refresh your knowledge of Open Educational Resources, learn more about OPEN FL and other community support resources, and explore OER engagement features such as peer review, tenure/promotion, and more.

Day 1 of the Bootcamp, titled “Basic” will cover Creative Commons Licenses and the Spectrum of Open. Day 2, “Intermediate”, will detail OER and Tenure and Promotion. The final day of the Bootcamp will cover Peer Review of OER.

This event is open to librarians, faculty, staff, administrators, advisors, etc. Feel free to share this opportunity with your colleagues!

To register, go to <https://flvc.libcal.com/calendar/Master/oerbootcamp2024>.

FREE Webinars!

OER Bootcamp

MARCH 27 - 29
2 - 4 PM ET

Build your knowledge of Open Educational Resources (OER) and support, like the OPEN FL community, and engage with peer review, tenure/promotion, and more!

- Day 1 | Basic**
Creative Commons Licenses and the Spectrum of Open
- Day 2 | Intermediate**
OER Towards Tenure and Promotion
- Day 3 | Advanced**
Peer Review of OER

OPEN FL
FL LIBRARY
VC SERVICES

Register at [FLVC.org/Bootcamp2024](https://flvc.org/Bootcamp2024)

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ARTICLE DIGESTS



AFTER ROCKY LAUNCH, FAFSA IS NOW AVAILABLE FULL-TIME

"After a rocky launch, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is officially operating like normal. The new form changed substantially through a congressionally mandated simplification process and will be "continuously available except for routine maintenance, typical of any FAFSA cycle." Following a soft launch, the form was unavailable to students most of its first days and was offline for many hours each day, prompting a plethora of complaints from parents and counselors. The new FAFSA..." (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

REPORT: FOUR WAYS TO PROMOTE RURAL COLLEGE STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION

"Twenty-nine percent of adults 18 to 24 years old in rural areas are enrolled in higher education, 19 percentage points lower than their urban counterparts. Rural students face additional challenges like reliable transportation, food and housing insecurity, and access to high-speed internet and healthcare. Challenges for rural students interested in pursuing a college degree include affordability, college-readiness programs, college recruitment, long distances from colleges, and negative perceptions about the value of college..." (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

WHAT'S IN THE AI LITERACY ACT, AND HOW WILL IT IMPACT YOU?

"Federal lawmakers are taking steps to ensure equitable access to learning and using AI. Representatives introduced the bipartisan artificial intelligence (AI) Literacy Act that aims to classify AI as a necessary part of digital literacy and make it accessible via public schools, colleges, universities, and libraries. The first part will amend the Digital Equity Act of 2021 which defines digital literacy and identifies areas that need to be addressed to close the digital divide. After AI is established as something that everyone should be equitably educated about, it will focus on five main areas: skills, competition, education, equity, and accountability. See the original article to read a PDF of the nine-page bill." (Source: Technical.ly)

SCAFFOLDING VIRTUAL SIMULATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR CAREER-READINESS

"Post-secondary education serves as a cornerstone for personal development and plays a large role in shaping an individual's career path. Such an education provides the opportunity to increase a student's understanding of their chosen field and to develop important skills for their daily personal and work life. Experiential and practical experiences associated with a course or program helps keep students engaged, connects learning objectives to their real-world..." (Source: WCET Frontiers Blog)

ASU PARTNERS WITH OPENAI TO ENHANCE INSTRUCTION AND RESEARCH

"Arizona State University is the first institution to partner with OpenAI by adopting the enterprise version of the company's generative AI platform and working with its engineers on new tools. The partnership provides students and faculty with higher computation speeds, more security and data analytics, research, and internal operations. The university will ask the students and faculty to submit ideas for how to best utilize the platform. Do you think more institutions will start partnering with OpenAI?" (Source: GovTech)

THREE WAYS TECH CONSOLIDATION IMPROVES THE DIGITAL EXPERIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

"While budgets are being tightened across the country as enrollment struggles to return to pre-pandemic levels, IT departments continue to grow as hybrid work and instruction become entrenched in college life. A straightforward way to limit spending is through technology standardization. Standardizing the tools and technologies that institutions offer boosts security, supports IT teams' operational capabilities, and can save institutions money..." (Source: EdTech Magazine)

GETTING YOUR HIGHER EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE AI-READY

"AI has found its way into research in biochemistry, meteorology, pharmacology, and other research areas. There has been a lot of thinking and talking about AI in higher education, but little has been done about it. Colleges will need to invest in computing upgrades to have a certain AI footprint in the future. They will need more bandwidth and lower latency on their networks to ensure AI tools generate the outcomes they want. Along with this, AI tools will have a large pool of data to analyze and generate their own data..." (Source: EdTech Magazine)

THE FUTURE OF STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING

"Two of the co-authors of the most recent Horizon report from EDUCAUSE say two key themes that emerged this year were flexibility and student-centered learning. Students are asking if institutions provide the flexibility they need, and new technologies like AI are reinforcing the need to design teaching and learning around the student experience. Flexibility and centering students helps colleges and universities move closer to making education equitable for all students, say Kathe Pelletier, Director, Teaching and Learning Program at EDUCAUSE, and Jenay Robert, Senior Researcher at EDUCAUSE. But, as Robert points out, "Not everybody has the support they need when learning in a hybrid modality." She also notes that..." (Source: Every Learner Everywhere Blog)

EMPOWERING ONLINE INSTRUCTORS: A GUIDE TO CRISIS PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS

"Online learning is one of the most prevalent modalities in higher education today, but the rapid expansion of online learning means that many institutions overlooked campus safety procedures for faculty teaching online from remote locations. Faculty should be trained on crisis prevention and intervention, signs of distress in an online environment, and how to engage with students experiencing emotional distress. Through safety procedures, readily available contact information, and mental health support..." (Source: Faculty Focus)

STUDENTS DISTANCING FROM DISTANCE LEARNING

"New enrollment data shows that the number of students participating in online learning is declining. In the 2022-2023 academic year, 53 percent were enrolled in at least one online course, decreasing from 2021's fall enrollment of 59 percent of students in an online course. The decline was not unexpected given the surge of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Online enrollment will likely never return to pre-pandemic numbers. Does online learning continue to be popular at your institution?" (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION LOOKS TO CLAMP DOWN ON INCLUSIVE ACCESS

"The Biden administration seeks to roll back an Obama-era policy that allowed a procurement model for digital textbooks and course materials to flourish. This move alarms publishers and institutions, but student advocates believe it would give students more choices. Nearly half of all degree-granting institutions offer some sort of inclusive or equitable access to textbooks. The Education Department wants to take away colleges' ability to automatically bill students for their books and supplies and have students opt in instead. Do you think students should have to opt in to inclusive access to textbooks?" (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

WHAT'S NEW IN DIGITAL EQUITY: DOE UNVEILS NATIONAL PLAN FOR CLOSING DIGITAL DIVIDES

"A great source for digital equity and broadband news – this article takes a closer look at the National education Technology Plan, which is focused on closing digital divides; the large increase in municipal broadband networks, which is helping address digital equity challenges, and reviews several studies and opportunities on digital equity and access and digital skills..." (Source: Gov Tech)

NEW ALLIANCE TO UPSKILL GIRLS AND WOMEN IN AI, CODING, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

"Technovation has recently announced the AI Forward Alliance to increase support for females to work in the AI industry globally. They are launching it in 16 countries across five continents with a goal of educating 25 million young women in AI, coding, and educational programming. They hope that six million of them enter the tech workforce by 2030. See the original article to read more about Technovation's goals and major partners..." (Source: THE Journal)

TV MUST-SEE:

STUPID PET TRICKS

"Comic Sarah Silverman hosts a reimagining of the iconic David Letterman segment "Stupid Pet Tricks" that retains all the original charm, silly fun, and appreciation for the bond between humans and their animal friends. Infused with Silverman's unique comedic spin, each episode features a parade of pets performing ridiculous and extraordinary tricks." (Source: [Rotten Tomatoes](#))



YOU GOTTA GO:

SEALIGHT FESTIVAL

"Step into a dazzling world of light with more than 1,000 Chinese lanterns; all handmade by artisans with decades of experience. A whimsical walk-through experience in Miramar Beach to light up and warm up the season!" The festival runs until March 31 at Seascape Resort. For more information, visit their website [here](#). (Source: [Sealightfestival.com](#))



FUN STUFF

SPINE-BENDERS:

"If January's reads have kept you warm through the winter, just wait until you see what we have on the hearth for February. Whether you're looking to cozy up with a daring paranormal romance or feel the chill of a haunting dark academia retelling, there's something for you on [this list](#). Looking for a magical debut, or another dazzling tale from an author you already love? We've got enough to stoke the flames of all your literary desires." (Source: [Barnes & Noble](#))

YOU GOTTA TRY IT:

SE7EN BITES

"The menu at this cozy bakery tucked away in Orlando's Milk District extends beyond confections... Favorites include a chicken pot pie featuring a flaky, buttery crust stuffed with exquisitely seasoned chicken, mirepoix, potatoes and peas in a silky béchamel sauce. When it comes to dessert, there are plenty of decadent choices. One of the most indulgent options, however, is the Vanilla Bean Bourbon Bacon Moon Pie." (Source: [Food Network](#))

