



The CFD Monthly

Workshops, Events, Resources, and More

January 2026

A Letter from the Director



Happy New Year to you, and welcome back to campus! Before I get into our January programming and announcements, I want to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Melanie Leuty for her service to the faculty and staff through her work in the CFD. I'm so proud of her and look forward to collaborating with her in different ways as she begins her new role as Director in the School of Psychology. Much love, Melanie, and best wishes.

It's my privilege to continue the excellent work that the CFD does to support faculty and staff in their professional growth journeys. In November, I attended my first higher education conference that was, in my opinion, very much administrator-focused. In the course of the sessions, we heard

all of the 'buzzwords' around higher education right now...assessment, retention/recruitment, the cost of college (for students *and* for universities), issues of trust, career readiness, AI, badging/course designations, transfer pathways, student wellbeing, faculty burnout...all the things. I'm a very practical thinker and I found myself fighting against my initial thoughts of, "sure, these are all problems, but I can't do anything about them. I'm just a faculty member." And while that may be somewhat true, in that our scope of influence doesn't allow us to dive deep into the solutions to some of these larger current trends, I challenge us all (myself included) to look for those things that we *can* do. I *can* continue to focus on relationship-based teaching. I *can* find small things in my courses to continue to update and tweak, so that I'm doing my best to stay current and relevant to the field. I *can* make an effort to network with others outside of my building or build relationships with people inside my building so that I don't feel so isolated. I *can* take another look at my syllabus and try to make the alignments between content, readings, assessments, and career readiness as clear as possible. I *can* breathe and give grace to myself and others. I *can* seek mentorship to help me continue to grow in my scholarship or leadership. As we start the spring semester, I challenge us all to set some small, attainable goals that may positively affect our experiences (and our students' experiences) for the semester ahead of us.

To that end, take a peek below at the sessions and programming we are offering and/or kickstarting in the next few weeks. We have many wonderful things happening this semester. In addition to the startup of our Signature Programs, we are offering a spring Educators' Retreat, which focuses on career readiness and the curriculum. I promise that your courses already contain career-ready skills, but this workshop will, I hope, help participants identify and highlight those elements in more effective ways. We also have two guests joining us for training. Turnitin.com will be presenting a session on some of the new changes to the Canvas integration piece of Turnitin, and they will be providing some additional insight into Turnitin's AI detection elements and what it can and can't tell us about our students' works. We also have

Dr. Justin Carey joining us in February from UNC-Charlotte. Dr. Carey is the Program Director for CHAI: AI Analysis, Application, and Ethics in Society, an Interdisciplinary Studies degree program, and serves as an AI Fellow for their Center for Teaching and Learning at UNC-Charlotte. He will lead us in a hands-on session to build and train Gems, and I hope you can join us for that. Our Ctrl + Alt + Succeed series has been very popular; it will continue this spring with some Excel-focused training. Finally, *The Association of College and University Educators* (ACUE) has just released a new endorsement program called *AI for Higher Education*. We will be launching a new cohort that will work through these short courses together, so if you love ACUE and want more, this is your 'thing' for spring. Previous ACUE credentialing is not required, meaning you are welcome to join us whether you have completed other ACUE programs or not. For those of you who have completed ACUE, I will say that this new AI endorsement is much shorter and less of a time commitment, so plan accordingly. The information for all of these events is below in our newsletter, and we would love to see you!

Though not a CFD program, I also want to highlight that The Provost's Office is sponsoring a series of larger (\$2,000) grants that are earmarked for advancing teaching and learning. These grants are called Advancing Excellence in Teaching Grants, and they're exciting to me because the funding can be used for some things that are difficult to fund otherwise. The application information is below. I hope you will take advantage of these support opportunities.

The last advertisement that I have for you is that the CFD is hiring for three different positions. We are still searching for our Associate Director of the CFD, to begin after the Spring semester, and I'm thrilled to share that we also have two openings for CFD AI Fellows. If you are interested in being involved in the CFD, look below for more information about these positions. I'm always happy to chat, as well, if you have other questions.

I wish you the very best as you start classes. As always, the CFD is here to support you and we hope to see you soon!

Dr. Ashley D. Allen
Director, CFD

Upcoming Events

January 14
Educator's Retreat
8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. | EHH 120 | [Register](#)

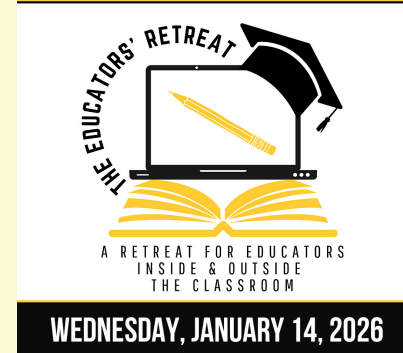
January 27
Show Up & Write!
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Teams | [Register](#)

January 30
The Proposal Writing Retreat
8:30 - 11:00; 1:00- 4:00 p.m. | Writing Center- Cook Library
[Register](#)

January 30
Turnitin Best Practices and Support
1:00 - 2:00 p.m. | Zoom | [Register](#)

February 13
GEMS, LLMs, and AI: Oh My!
Dr. Justin Carey, UNC-Charlotte
1:00 - 3:00 p.m. | Zoom | [Register](#)

SPRING 2026 EDUCATORS' RETREAT





Using an eBook and integrating courseware with Canvas can be challenging to navigate. Because each faculty member's course needs are unique, a one-size-fits-all approach to integrating courseware into one's Canvas course does not necessarily work. The Center for Faculty Development is building an [eBook and Courseware Canvas Integration Resources](#) page to connect faculty with the latest information and publisher representatives so you can navigate the process of integrating courseware specific to your course design. Our Barnes & Noble Campus Bookstore along with textbook publishers have helped pull this information together, to make it current, useful, and navigable for Southern Miss faculty. Check it out!



Announcing the *Advancing Excellence in Teaching Grants* Application

Application Deadline: March 2, 2026.

The Center for Faculty Development, sponsored by the Office of the Provost, are now accepting applications for Advancing Excellence in Teaching Grants! These awards provide funding of up to \$2,000 per applicant for the Spring 2026 semester.

Funding can be used to advance teaching through one or more of the following areas:

- Supporting travel to a teaching-focused conference or workshop
- Funding discipline-specific teaching development
- Supporting alumni or guest speakers in your courses
- Supporting discipline-specific teaching development
- Supporting community-engagement or service-learning in a course
- Aiding in the implementation of high-impact practices in the classroom
- Building career-readiness strategies into the classroom

Applicants must provide a detailed response to the questions below.

Grant recipients will be announced on or before March 31, 2026. Email any questions you have to CFD@usm.edu.

[Apply Here](#)



This Ctrl+Alt+Succeed video demonstrates ways to create a

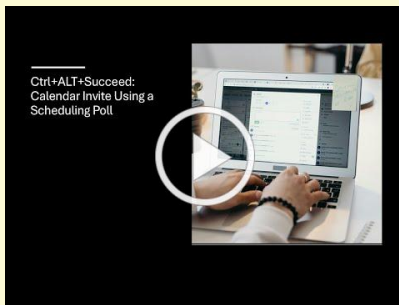


Turnitin Best Practices and Support

This workshop will be facilitated by Turnitin and will include not only how

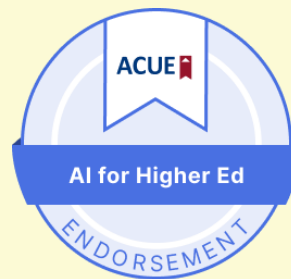
scheduling poll and check participants' availability in the Microsoft 365 Outlook Calendar.

to's in Turnitin, but also discussion and best practices related to the AI detector and scores.



Friday, January 30, 1:00 - 2:00 PM
Zoom

Register



ACUE: AI Cohort Series - Spring 2026

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Higher Education Endorsement

We are excited to announce that The Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) has added a stand-alone endorsement for AI in Higher Education! Here is ACUE's description of this new endorsement:

Endorsements are your ticket to demonstrating continued engagement, learning, and expertise in the most pressing, specialized areas impacting higher education today and the perfect complement to our nationally recognized ACUE Certification in Effective Teaching. You deliver exceptional teaching, and now we're helping you stay current and recognized for forward-thinking strategies. This is a fantastic opportunity to formalize and celebrate your commitment to innovative teaching and student success. Get started today! ***We can't wait to see you earn your first Endorsement!***

This Spring, join a cohort to earn your AI in Higher Ed endorsement. Cohorts will be led by a CFD AI Fellow and will meet for four weeks in March. Prior to each meeting, you will complete one ACUE Quick Study, which will take you approximately one hour. Then, you will meet with your group for 90 minutes to discuss the materials and applications you tried as part of the Quick Study for that week. Participation and attendance for each of the four sessions is expected; in-person and hybrid options are available. Upon completion, you will receive an ACUE endorsement for AI in Higher Education and will be honored at our annual ACUE Celebration and Faculty Awards Ceremony during Fall First Week. You **do not** need previous credentialing from ACUE to participate.

Tuesdays, 9:00 - 10:30, March 3, 10, 24, 31
Wednesdays, 2:30 - 4:00. March 4, 11, 25, April 1
Hybrid | IC 319 & Teams

Please register below and indicate what time works best for your schedule. Email any questions you have to CFD@usm.edu.

Register



Gemini Gems are customizable chatbots that can be created and trained in the Google Gemini AI tool. In this video, Dr. Ashley Allen walks through creating a Gem and discusses ideas about how to use them for teaching and learning. Join us on Feb. 6, from 2:00 - 4:00, for special guest presenter, Dr. Justin Carey from UNC-Charlotte. Dr. Carey will lead us in an interactive session that will take Gems to the next level. Click [\[here\]](#) for more information and to register for this virtual session.

GEMS, LLMs, and AI: Oh My!

Dr. Justin Carey, UNC-Charlotte

"You've always had the power, my dear, you just had to learn it for yourself." -Glinda the Good Witch

Navigating the Yellow Brick Road of Collaborative AI in Higher Education

Workshop Overview: The "Great and Powerful" AI doesn't have to be a mysterious force behind a curtain. In this hands-on, play-focused workshop, we move beyond the hype of generic AI-generated content to explore the power of Collaborative AI.

Instead of relying on the vast, unfiltered knowledge of a general LLM, we will focus on how educators can use their own faculty expertise to "curate the magic." In this workshop, participants will learn to guide tools like Gemini, NotebookLM, and



Custom Gems using their own original course materials, instructor-created content, and research. The goal is to build AI collaborators that are deeply connected to *your* voice and *your* curriculum, supporting responsible and context-aware use in the classroom.

From "Teaching the Tool" to "Adaptive Thinking": AI is always changing and will continue to do so but essential skills like critical thinking and learning to learn will remain constant. This session isn't just a software tutorial. We are focusing on the "Heart, Brains, and Courage" of AI use:

- **Brains (Critical Thinking):** Evaluating AI outputs against your disciplinary expertise.
- **Heart (Responsible Use):** Ensuring AI-human collaboration respects original scholarship and student learning.
- **Courage (Adaptive Thinking):** Building the "learning-to-learn" mindset that prepares you for whatever version of AI emerges over the horizon next year.

What to Expect: Play in the Land of Oz. This workshop is designed as a sandbox for exploration so participants can expect a low-stress, fun environment that does not require your 'strictly work' hat. You will have the time and space to:

- **Converse with Models:** Experience what it actually feels like to treat Gemini as a thought partner, not just a search engine.
- **Build Your Own "Gems":** Transform your syllabus or lecture notes into a specialized AI assistant that knows your specific teaching style.
- **Explore Multimodal Potential:** Experiment with Gemini in various modes—text, voice, and analysis—to see where it fits (and where it doesn't) in your workflow.

Takeaway Participants will leave not just knowing how to click buttons in a specific app, but with a foundational understanding of how to lead AI tools through the lens of your own expertise—no matter how much the technology shifts and changes.

Friday, February 13, 2026

1:00 - 3:00 PM - Zoom

[Register](#)



CFD AI Faculty Fellows-Spring 2026

The Center for Faculty Development will support two CFD Faculty Fellows for Spring 2026 to facilitate faculty training and programming related to artificial intelligence. The CFD AI Fellows will collaborate with the CFD director to identify topics for AI workshops, coordinate speakers, and guide the sessions throughout the spring semester. The fellows will be integral to staying abreast of AI best



Call for Applications - CFD Associate Director Position

The CFD is seeking an Associate Director to begin in May 2026. This administrative faculty position assists and supports the Center for Faculty Development's (CFD) director to execute the functions of the CFD in Hattiesburg, including the ongoing faculty workshop series, ACUE Faculty Development Institute, CFD signature programs, and other relevant efforts. The Associate Director serves as an

practices within the classroom and higher education.

The CFD AI Fellows will work closely with the CFD Director to:

- Plan and host faculty and staff development focused on AI
- Lead an ACUE cohort for the ACUE AI credential
- Produce monthly content for the CFD newsletter focused on AI
- Collaborate with the CFD to host guest speakers
- Work closely with the Provost's Office and Academic Integrity Officer to provide faculty with training on ethical use strategies for AI
- Support CFD functions as needed

The CFD Fellows are expected to hold 5-8 hours per week in the Center for Faculty Development, located on the Hattiesburg Campus, attend weekly planning meetings, and participate in the AI Taskforce. Fellows must be full-time, permanent faculty members. Each Fellow will receive a \$3,300 stipend for the spring 2026 semester. To apply, please [complete the application form by January 26, 2026](#).

[Apply Here](#)

advocate for the professional development of faculty and a resource on high-impact teaching practices.

The CFD Associate Director position includes 50% reassigned time over 9 months, resulting in continued teaching and/or service in their home unit. While negotiable with the applicant's home unit, this position includes two course releases per fall and spring semesters and compensation for 6 credits in the summer. Assigned time in the CFD is flexible over the summer, estimating 8-10 hours per week in June and July to help with CFD summer sessions, and increased availability in August to support the programming needs for the start of the academic year. The Associate Director must be a full-time, permanent faculty member.

Apply for the CFD Associate Director role through Cornerstone (req5073). To access the internal listing in Cornerstone, log in through [SSO: + Cornerstone OnDemand +](#); Then update the "Posting Audience" filter to "Internal." The priority application due date is February 15, 2026. Questions may be directed to Dr. Ashley Allen, Director, CFD.



University Libraries to Launch Scopus in the New Year

On January 1, 2026, University Libraries will launch Scopus, a large, multidisciplinary abstract and citation database created by Elsevier that indexes peer-reviewed scholarly literature like journals, books, patents, and conference proceedings.

With over 45,000 titles, Scopus combines a comprehensive abstract and citation database with enriched data and linked scholarly literature across a wide variety of disciplines. Scopus quickly finds relevant and authoritative research, identifies experts, and provides access to reliable data, metrics, and analytical tools.

By integrating cutting-edge technology with extensively curated knowledge bases, Scopus delivers detailed profiles of authors and organizations. Scopus provides an accurate view of

research activity, supporting more informed strategic decisions.

Starting in Spring 2026, University Libraries will offer on-campus and virtual Scopus training sessions. Be on the lookout for further updates in the coming weeks

Visit the [Scopus](#) database.

More information on Scopus: [Scopus LibGuide](#) - contains information on Scopus content, searching techniques, and metrics [Scopus Blog](#) - Updates on Scopus

For more information, contact Melissa Brooks, head of Technical Services at 601.266.4237 or Melissa.M.Brooks@usm.edu.

Call for Success Coaches-Spring 2026

The Center for Student Success invites faculty, staff, and graduate assistants to join our success coaching team for the Spring 2026 semester! Our office is seeking coaches dedicated to improving the student experience through their guidance and mentorship. While all undergraduate students on the Hattiesburg campus may apply to be a part of the coaching program, our primary focus is on students who may be struggling with their transition to college. We also aid students on the Gulf Park campus and online if coaches are available.



Those interested in becoming a coach can anticipate:

- Conducting four 1:1 meetings throughout the semester with your mentee(s) to help maximize their potential at USM.
- Using facilitation guides to discuss topics like goal setting, time management, study strategies, executive functioning skills, social development, and campus resources.
- Personalizing your meetings and conversations to meet students' individual needs.
- Helping students establish their own definition of success and motivate them to do their personal best.

If you are interested in becoming a coach, please submit your information via the [faculty and staff interest form](#). The interest form is set to expire on Monday, **January 26th at 11:59pm CST**. A short, asynchronous virtual training session that goes over the fundamentals of coaching must be completed in Canvas by late January to participate and facilitate timely student-coach pairings.

Should you have additional questions, feel free to reach out to Ashley.Burnside@usm.edu.





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