



# The CFD Monthly

Workshops, Events, Resources, and More

February 2026

## Educators' Retreat Recap



### Educators' Retreat Highlights Career Readiness Strategies for Student Success

Russ Willis, Associate Provost of Student Success, and Kelly Lester, Associate Provost of Faculty Success, presenting on "Ready for a Career in \_\_\_\_\_?" at the Educator's Retreat, January 14, 2026.

The Center for Faculty Development hosted the Spring 2026 Educators' Retreat on January 14, bringing together faculty and staff for "Purpose & Pathways: An Educator's Retreat for Fostering Career-Ready Students." This event featured experts across campus to discuss innovative strategies and ongoing initiatives for integrating career readiness throughout the curriculum.

T.J. Tesh, Associate Professor of Music and Spring 2025 Provost Faculty Fellow, opened the day with insights into curricular career readiness activities already underway at Southern Miss, offering actionable recommendations for deeper integration across programs.

Stephanie McCoy Smith, Interim Director of Kinesiology and Nutrition, examined career readiness beyond the classroom, highlighting best practices in applied experience, community engagement, professional development, and research activities. Her session provided peer institution comparisons and practical programming recommendations.

Associate Provosts Russ Willis and Kelly Lester collaborated on outlining strategies for implementing school-wide and program-level career readiness initiatives, introducing a curriculum mapping process through a Career Readiness Rubric to help departments identify and share effective practices.

Heather Glausier, Assistant Director of Career Education and Employment Readiness, wrapped up the event by leading an interactive session on integrating career competencies into one's curriculum. She updated the audience on the ways Career Services has been working to partner with faculty to bridge classroom learning with real-world professional skills. One such way is through a series of easily accessible, career-focused videos ([Career Ready Plug and Plays](#)) that faculty can tie into classroom learning at any point in their curriculum.

Every presenter offered actionable takeaways, many of them small adjustments to what faculty are already doing in their classrooms, to ensure every Southern Miss student graduates truly career-ready—prepared with both academic knowledge and the professional competencies employers value most.

# Upcoming Events

February 3,10,24

## Show Up & Write!

11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Teams | [Register](#)



February 13

## GEMS, LLMs, and AI: Oh My!

Dr. Justin Cary, UNC-Charlotte

1:00 - 3:00 p.m. | Zoom | [Register](#)

February 13

## The Proposal Writing Retreat

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. | Cook Library | [Register](#)

February 25

## Coffee & Conversations

8:30-10:30 a.m. | IC 319 | [Register](#)

February 26

## Ctrl+Alt+Succeed: Foundations of Excel Spreadsheet Skills

Christopher Lowe, Data Literacy Program Manager & Statistical Analyst, Office of Institutional Research

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. | IC 319 & Teams | [Register](#)

February 27

## Facilitating Experiential Learning in Online Classes

Christy Kayser, Director, Center for Community Engagement

Kendrick Buford, Associate Teaching Professor, Center for STEM Education and Director, Academic Integrity Office

Ann Marie Kinnell, School of Interdisciplinary Studies and Professional Development

Alexis Tymkiw Stoner, School of Marketing

1:00-2:15 p.m. | IC 319 & Teams | [Register](#)

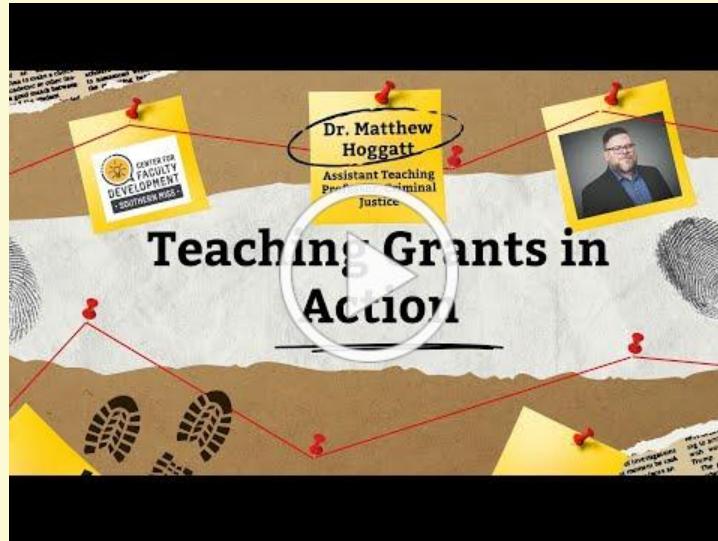


## Coffee and Conversations

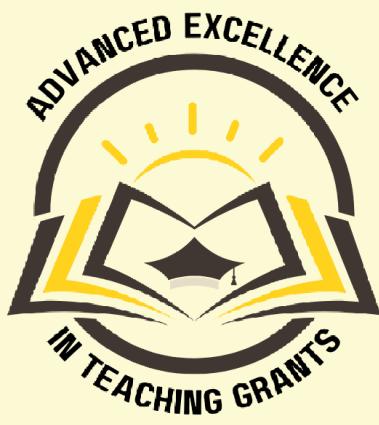
Join us in **International Center 319** for free coffee, pastries, and conversation with colleagues. This event is hosted in partnership with the CFD, CCE, and Office of Academic Integrity. Stop by, connect, and build community! We hope to see you there.

**Wednesday, February 25th from 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.**

[Register](#)



Dr. Matthew Hoggatt, Assistant Teaching Professor, was awarded a *Teaching Innovation Mini Grant* last year that provided funding for him to purchase fingerprinting kits for his courses. These kits allow students to learn hands-on skills that not only bring the content to life, but also help to prepare them for future careers in Criminal Justice. Though we are not currently taking applications for the *Teaching Innovation Mini Grants*, we are accepting applications for the *Advancing Excellence in Teaching Grants* (see below). We hope Dr. Hoggatt's experience inspires you to consider applying for these funds and we can't wait to see what you do to enhance students' learning through them.



## 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:

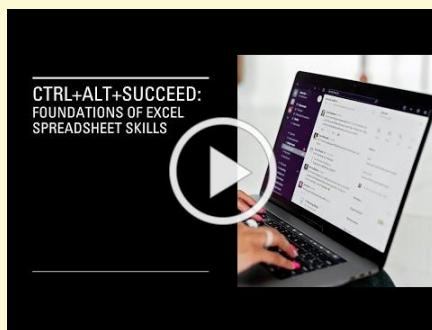
- Supporting travel to a teaching-focused conference or workshop
- Funding discipline-specific teaching development
- Supporting alumni or guest speakers in your courses
- Supporting discipline-specific teaching development
- Supporting community-engagement or service-learning in a course
- Aiding in 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](mailto:CFD@usm.edu).



The CFD in conjunction with the Office of Institutional Research are working together to bring a user-friendly Excel workshop series to you. This spring, Christopher Lowe, from the Office of Institutional Research, will introduce the essential tools you need to confidently begin working with spreadsheets in a one-time session on February 26th. ([Register here](#).) Stay tuned for a series of Excel workshops to be held in Fall 2026, led by Christopher Lowe. These workshops are designed for anyone who relies on Excel for budgeting, data and research, as well as any chart and analysis operations. Come ready for a hands-on Excel experience!



The University of Southern Mississippi will be the host institution for the 2026 **Women in Higher Education Mississippi Network Conference**. For more information or to register, visit their website or email Sirena Cantrell, Chair, Student Affairs & Dean of Students Office at [sirena.cantrell@usm.edu](mailto:sirena.cantrell@usm.edu).

[WHEMN WEBSITE](#)

## 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](mailto:CFD@usm.edu).



BRISK is a free, web-based, one-stop shop of AI tools made for educational purposes. In this video, Dr. Ashley Allen, CFD Director, demonstrates the uses and functionality of BRISK and how you or your students might use it for your courses.

## **GEMS, LLMs, and AI: Oh My!**

Dr. Justin Cary, 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.

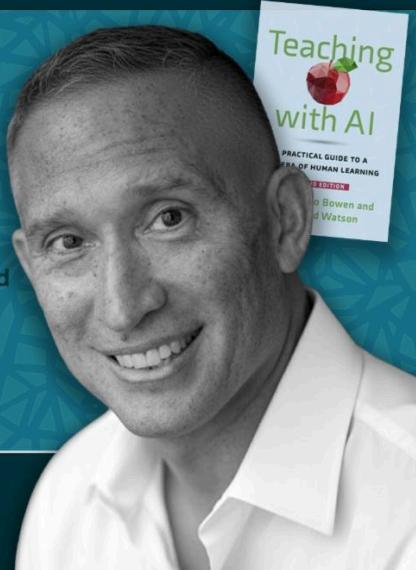
**Friday, February 13, 2026**  
**1:00 - 3:00 PM - Zoom**

[Register](#)

# AI Workshop with José Bowen

Bowen Innovation Group LLC, Stanford Distinguished  
Alumni Scholar, author of *Teaching with AI*

- 8:30–9:30 a.m. Thinking and Working with AI
- 9:45–10:45 a.m. Tools, Emotions, Agents & Beyond
- 11 a.m. –12 p.m. Teaching with AI: Customization, Writing & Reflection
- 1-2:45 p.m. Creativity, AI Assignments and Custom Bots



FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2026  
ELIZABETH HARKINS HALL 120

► Register at [usm.edu/cfd](http://usm.edu/cfd)

## Save The Date!

The Center for Faculty Development is thrilled to announce our Spring 2026 guest speaker, Dr. José Bowen, author of *Teaching with AI: A Practical Guide to a New Era of Human Learning* (2024). Dr. Bowen will lead a full day, hands-on training on best practices to incorporating AI in to your curriculum and course design. Lunch will be provided. More information about this training, as well as registration details, are linked below and can also be found on the [CFD's website](#). **Register by March 27** to receive a copy of *Teaching with AI: A Practical Guide to a New Era of Human Learning* (2nd ed). Books will be limited to faculty, and up to 100 registrants.

## About the Presenter

**José Antonio Bowen** has been leading innovation and change for over 45 years at Stanford, Georgetown and the University of Southampton (UK), as a dean at Miami University and SMU and as President of Goucher College. Bowen worked as a musician with Stan Getz, Dave Brubeck, and many others and his symphony was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in Music (1985). Bowen holds four degrees from Stanford and has written over 100 scholarly articles and books, including the *Cambridge Companion to Conducting* (2003), *Teaching Naked* (2012 and the winner of the Ness Award for Best Book on Higher Education), *Teaching Change: How to Develop Independent Thinkers using Relationships, Resilience and Reflection* (2021) and *Teaching with AI: A Practical Guide to a New Era of Human Learning* (2024; 2nd edn 2026) with C. Edward Watson. Bowen has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Forbes*, *The Wall Street Journal*, has three TED talks, and he has presented more than 500 keynotes and workshops in 47 states and 24 countries around the world. In 2010, Stanford honored him as a Distinguished Alumni Scholar and in 2018 he was awarded the Ernest L. Boyer Award for significant contributions to American higher education and is now a senior fellow for the American Association of Colleges and Universities. He lives in Dallas and also does innovation and inclusion consulting for a wide variety of Fortune 500 companies.

[Register](#)



## 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 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.



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