



Dear colleagues,

Welcome to our January newsletter. We thank Department liaisons for continuing to forward this mailing to their departmental colleagues.

Final Call for Proposals—UCF's "Teaching and Learning with AI" Conference (Special UCF Registration Price)

FCTL, CDL, and the UCF Libraries are hosting the fourth annual Teaching and Learning with AI, a conference dedicated to sharing teaching practices in the age of AI. We focus less on research than on practical ideas: what are YOU doing about AI. We welcome presentations that embrace AI, as well as those that discuss resisting AI, and everything in between.

The conference occurs June 11-13, 2026 at the Gaylord Palms near the theme parks. UCF faculty are not able to attend for free (given the catering costs), but there is a substantial discount: UCF registration is only \$250 (the same price whether presenting or simply attending).

The Call for Proposals is open **until January 30**: <https://aiforall.ucf.edu/teachwithai/#proposals>

Tip of the Month

Copilot's *Learning Coach* (which Microsoft somewhat misleadingly calls an "agent") can be configured to function like a tutor to your students in your particular discipline.

- Click on "create agent," then "view all templates," and scroll down to find Learning Coach.
- In the middle pane labeled "Describe," type how you'd like to customize it (for instance, tell it you want it to focus on (i.e. college algebra, or your own discipline).
- When ready, click CREATE at the top right.
- After it shows up in your menu on the left, click the triple-dots to find the share button.

Spring 2026 Call for Papers—Special Journal Issue

The journal *Frontiers in Computer Science: Human-Media Interactions* is calling for articles for a special topic, Transforming Education through Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies. [Call for Papers](#).

We're inviting high-quality papers exploring how AI and emerging tools are reshaping **teaching, learning, and equity**—from generative AI use to computational thinking, teacher preparation, and real-world classroom implementations.

If your recent research touches on **AI in education, human-AI collaboration, or emerging tech for learning**, please consider contributing—or sharing with collaborators.

Deadlines:

- Optional summary: **January 10, 2026**
- Full submission: **April 30, 2026**

Teaching and Learning with AI Conference [call for proposals](#). Questions can be sent to [Mike Borowczak](#).

UCF AI Spring Research Day—Call for Participation

February 6, 2026

Hosted by the UCF Institute of Artificial Intelligence (IAI) + AI for All Initiative

The Institute of Artificial Intelligence and the AI for All Initiative are pleased to announce UCF Spring AI Research Day which will be held on February 6, 2026.

This interdisciplinary event will showcase the variety and impact of researchers engaged in the core foundations of AI as well as those applying AI to various disciplines in science, engineering, business, medicine, humanities and arts, etc. This is a great opportunity for UCF IAI faculty, who are involved in foundational AI research, and other UCF faculty involved in applications of AI to connect and explore interdisciplinary research collaborations.

The day will feature:

- Keynote Talk: Ruben Villegas, Google DeepMind, We are all prompts: Simulating reality with video generation and world models
- Featured talks from leading UCF researchers.
- 90 seconds Lightning presentations highlighting projects and collaborations.
- A faculty panel discussion exploring the future of AI across disciplines.

We invite faculty engaged in AI research or applying AI within their fields to submit an abstract (up to one page) highlighting their work in areas where artificial intelligence is advancing discovery, creativity, or innovation.

Examples of AI research areas include, among others:

- AI in Natural Sciences: accelerating molecular discovery and reaction prediction; AI in Space and Astronomy

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- AI in Health and Medicine: predictive diagnostics, personalized treatment, medical imaging, and clinical decision support
 - AI in the Arts and Humanities: generative media, digital storytelling, cultural analytics, and creative co-design
 - AI in Business, Economics, and Education: market forecasting, adaptive learning systems, and organizational intelligence
 - AI in Science and Engineering: materials discovery, environmental modeling, robotics, inverse problems and smart infrastructure
 - AI in Social and Behavioral Sciences: human-AI collaboration, ethics, bias, and the study of social dynamics

Questions about the event or poster-selection process can be sent to melody.halbert@ucf.edu

Submit Abstract here by **January 15**: https://ucf.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9yOpSBo086ZTIZA

Abstract should not be more than 1 page. Please include research title, authors/co-authors, your department, and college.

College of Business AI Day

You're [invited to *The Wizarding World of AI: School of Data & Magic*](#), a faculty- and staff-focused summit designed around how academic work actually happens—teaching, research, and administrative overload. [Accessible transcript of the invitation](#).

This is not an AI “initiative” or technical training. Sessions are faculty-led, research-grounded, and practical, with an emphasis on saving time, supporting teaching and administrative duties, and making informed decisions about AI use.

February 2 from 8:30am–4:00pm, Classroom Bldg One

Come to learn about Defense Against the Dark Prompts, The Room of Administrative Requirement, Applied Spellcraft of AI in the Classroom, The Department of Research Mysteries, and Charms Class for Engagement that Works.

Coffee and light refreshments in the morning and lunch will be provided to registered attendants. Come for one session or stay for the full program.

No robes required. Curiosity encouraged. Apply here: https://ucf.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_blmTdNw56ftP8BE

Priority will be given to College of Business faculty, with others accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

If you have any questions, please contact Amanda Main at amanda.main@ucf.edu or Sean Robb at sean.robbs@ucf.edu.

Updates to AI Tools

- December 2025: ChatGPT 5.2 released
- December 2025: OpenAI partners with Disney to use its copyrighted material
- December 2025: Images 1.5 released on ChatGPT
- January 2026: Meta buys Manus

Articles and Studies

- **AI is Destroying the University and Learning Itself.** Students use AI to write papers, professors use AI to grade them, degrees become meaningless, and tech companies make fortunes. Welcome to the death of higher education. <https://www.currentaffairs.org/news/ai-is-destroying-the-university-and-learning-itself>
- **AI copyright battles enter pivotal year as US courts weigh fair use.** After a string of fresh lawsuits and a landmark settlement in 2025, the new year promises to bring a wave of rulings that could define how U.S. copyright law applies to generative AI. At stake is whether companies like OpenAI, Google, and Meta can rely on the legal doctrine of fair use to shield themselves from liability – or if they must reimburse copyright holders, which could cost billions. <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/ai-copyright-battles-enter-pivotal-year-us-courts-weigh-fair-use-2026-01-05/>

Faculty Spotlight: Manuel Rivera

Rosen College of Hospitality Management

Dr. Manuel Rivera, Associate Dean of Research at UCF's Rosen College of Hospitality Management, is leading an ambitious project to transform how educational content is produced and delivered. His initiative focuses on developing a cloud-based, AI-driven workflow that automates the creation of instructional videos from written training materials. By integrating AWS infrastructure with advanced AI tools such as Azure OpenAI and Synthesia, the system streamlines the traditionally time-consuming process of e-learning video production into an efficient, scalable solution. Dr. Rivera was supported on this project by the Office of Research Cyberinfrastructure Team for his AWS infrastructure, integration with Synthesia and workflow automation.



This work tackles critical challenges in workforce training for the hospitality and tourism industry while providing a scalable, replicable model for higher education institutions. The research follows a two-pronged strategy: first, accelerate speed to market by reducing production time by up to 75%, and

second, achieve cost efficiencies by leveraging AI and cloud-based workflows that streamline traditional processes. By making high-quality, accessible learning resources available at scale, this innovation positions UCF as a leader in applying AI to expand educational access and meet evolving workforce needs in hospitality and potentially beyond.

Many of you are receiving this newsletter from a colleague in your Department/School.

Everyone is also welcome to sign up to receive the newsletter directly.

Thank you for reading our current issue. We will be back next month with more insights and updates.

—Your *AI for All* team. Email us at ai@ucf.edu

AI for All: Where AI Fluency Meets Ethical Use and Collaborative Productivity

AI for All Initiative

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