

Fall Faculty Conference



2026-2027 Agenda

Monday, August 10, 2026 | 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Davis College of Business & Technology

8:00 - 9:00 AM Continental Breakfast, Lobby

9:00 - 9:50 AM Concurrent Sessions

SESSION	ROOM	PRESENTER(S)	TITLE & ABSTRACT
1A	114	Dr. Carolyn Strickland Dr. Kristie Gover	From Enrollment to Engagement: Incoming Class Trends and the JU Student Experience Today's college students arrive on campus with unique backgrounds, evolving expectations, and diverse pathways to engagement and success. This session will provide faculty with an overview of the incoming student profile at Jacksonville University while highlighting key engagement trends from the 2025-2026 academic year. Using institutional and student engagement data, the presentation will also explore how students are connecting with campus resources and experiences, including holistic student support services, student clubs and activities, and health and wellness programs. Faculty will gain insight into where students are most actively engaged, emerging student needs, and how co-curricular involvement intersects with student belonging, well-being, and success. The session is designed to help faculty better understand our students and the JU experience beyond the classroom, and to identify opportunities to support student engagement, connection, and persistence through meaningful faculty-student interactions.
1B	117	Dr. John Pauls	Designing for Digital Literacy: Strategic Use of Microsoft 365 for Learning The Microsoft 365 ecosystem offers more than just tools, it provides an integrated framework for intentional, high-impact learning design. This session will focus on aligning pedagogy with the platform by showing how Microsoft tools offered by JU integrate directly into the Blackboard learning environment. Participants will explore ways to streamline their learning processes while helping students build the skills needed in the modern workforce. Through real-world examples and design workflows, this session will demonstrate how to move beyond tool usage toward a strategic approach that enhances clarity, collaboration, and student success in virtual and hybrid settings.

1C	Swisher Library Anatomage Lab	Dr. Sandra Brown Olivia Hattan-Edwards	Cutting Edge Without the Cut: Anatomy and Science in the Digital Age Anatomage is already known for transforming anatomy and physiology education with its 3D virtual cadavers on the Anatomage Table and its portable Tablets, allowing students to take the cadavers “on the go.” Did you also know that Anatomage has now branched out into foundational sciences with the new SCIENCE TABLE? Did you also know that all these technologies are now available in the Swisher Library for Faculty and Student use? During this interactive, hands-on workshop at the Swisher Library, faculty can explore the Anatomage Table, Anatomage Tablet, and Science Table, all of which can enhance teaching through immersive learning. The Anatomage Table provides a life-sized, touchscreen platform for virtual dissection using real human and animal cadaver data, allowing users to visualize, manipulate, and explore anatomical structures, as well as an extensive case library, histology, and expanded functional anatomy and physiology programs. Complementing this, the Anatomage Tablet includes two full cadavers in a portable format, supporting flexible instruction and student engagement beyond the lab. The Science Table expands interactive learning into broader STEM domains, enabling collaborative, inquiry-based exploration across disciplines through experiments in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. This workshop will also outline the process for reserving and using this equipment within the Swisher Library, ensuring that faculty and students can confidently access and use these resources in their teaching.
New Faculty	128	Dr. Dee Thornton Dr. Colleen Wilson	New Faculty Welcome to JU! Welcome to JU! This engaging session will introduce you to resources and support systems to set you up for a successful transition into your new faculty role! We will get you up to speed on the array of technology systems and platforms crucial for a smooth transition into your teaching and administrative roles.

10:00 – 10:50 AM Concurrent Sessions

SESSION	ROOM	PRESENTER(S)	TITLE & ABSTRACT
2A	114	Dr. Kaylee Bloom	Career Design & Exploration: Partnering with Faculty to Enhance Student Career Readiness Career readiness is most effective when it is embedded throughout the student experience rather than isolated to a single office or event. This session will provide an overview of Career Design & Exploration, including key services, technologies, programs, employer engagement opportunities, internship support, experiential learning initiatives, and the Pathways career development framework. Participants will learn how faculty can partner with Career Design & Exploration to connect classroom learning with career outcomes, integrate career readiness into courses and advising conversations, and help students maximize available resources throughout their academic journey.
2B	117	Dr. Mini Zeng	AI in Future Workforce AI is actively reshaping the workforce, and educators must prepare students to work with it responsibly. A new role is emerging: The AI steward—professionals who ensure AI systems are ethical, secure,

			and aligned with organizational goals. This role spans all industries, not just technical fields. Beyond tool training, students need: • AI literacy and understanding of its limitations • Critical thinking and ethical reasoning to evaluate bias and risks • Data interpretation and decision-making skills • Cross-disciplinary collaboration Educators must equip students to question, manage, and lead with AI.
2C	119	Dr. Dee Thornton	Reclaim Your Time: Practical Productivity Strategies for Overwhelmed Faculty Faculty face more students, more administrative demands, more expectations, and the same 24 hours. This session cuts through productivity hype and delivers concrete, immediately actionable strategies that work within the realities of academic life. You'll discover practical approaches to reclaim time across your work, whether that's teaching, research, service, or administration. The focus is on working smarter, not harder, so you can redirect hours each week toward your true priorities.

11:00 - 11:50 AM Concurrent Sessions

SESSION	ROOM	PRESENTER(S)	TITLE & ABSTRACT
3A	114	Dr. Michael Axler	Why Explaining Like a First-Grader Makes Better Learners What if the best assessment of student learning was an assignment that forces them to master concepts so completely, they can teach them? This session introduces the Feynman Technique: asking students to explain course content at three progressive levels - 1st grade, 8th grade, and college/professional standards. Over two years of implementation, this deceptively simple assignment has delivered measurable results: improved comprehension, increased retention, and higher engagement. Students identify knowledge gaps while deepening understanding and cultivating critical transferable skills: public speaking, science communication, critical thinking, and leadership. Leave with a practical, adaptable framework applicable across any discipline, including assignment structure, efficient grading strategies, and authentic student examples.
3B	117	DaVina Hamilton Dr. Elise Zornow	Beyond the Syllabus: Faculty as Campus Community Anchors As we welcome a new academic year, this session provides faculty with essential updates across key areas of campus life, policy, and community responsibility. Designed to equip faculty with the knowledge and context needed to support students effectively, this presentation will address recent developments in student affairs, campus safety and security, and Title IX compliance. Throughout the session, the emphasis will be on faculty roles and responsibilities — recognizing that faculty are often the first point of

			contact for students navigating challenges. Attendees will leave with actionable guidance, updated policy references, and a stronger understanding of how their engagement contributes to a safe, equitable, and supportive campus community.
3C	119	Dr. Catherine Rushton	Using Blackboard's AI Features (BB Skills session for Online Teaching Credential) In this workshop, you will discover how Blackboard's built-in AI tools can streamline course design and enhance student engagement. We will explore practical applications of AI, including generating rubrics, creating assessments, designing discussion and journal prompts, and building full modules with ease. The session also highlights creative features such as AI-generated images and the AI Conversation tool, which provides role-playing scenarios and Socratic questioning. Through guided demonstrations and examples, you will leave with strategies to save time and personalize learning experiences by utilizing Blackboard's AI in your course.

Interactive Collaboration Luncheon
12:00 - 1:00 PM
Davis College of Business & Technology Conference Rooms

Join us for an interactive lunch that brings faculty from across disciplines together. Participate in a collaborative challenge that requires teamwork, creative thinking, and fresh perspectives. This is an opportunity to engage with colleagues across the university, tackle problems from new angles, and discover how interdisciplinary collaboration sparks innovation. Whether you're competitive or just looking to connect with faculty across campus over a meal, you'll leave energized and inspired. Lunch will be provided.

Tuesday, August 11, 2026 | 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Conference Presentations
Location: Davis College of Business & Technology

8:00 - 9:00 AM Continental Breakfast, Lobby
9:00 - 9:50 AM Concurrent Sessions

SESSION	ROOM	PRESENTER(S)	TITLE & ABSTRACT
4A	117	Dr. Laura Atkins Dr. Kaylee Bloom Prof. Shelley Grant Prof. Tiffany Leach Dr. Sarah Parker	Blueprints for Experiential Learning: Building and Enhancing Experiences That Work Join the Experiential Learning directors for an engaging session designed to help faculty develop impactful experiential learning courses and programs. This session will offer practical guidance on designing meaningful experiential opportunities that connect course content with real-world application, including internships, service learning, study abroad, and undergraduate research. While this session can be useful for all faculty, the content will mainly center around experiential learning at the undergraduate level. Participants will learn about course proposal requirements, timeline expectations, and best practices for creating high-quality experiential learning initiatives. The session will also highlight key campus

			resources that support both faculty and students in navigating and deepening their engagement with experiential learning. These include experiential learning scholarship funding to help make participation financially accessible for students; resources and support offered through the Office of Career Design & Exploration; and experiential learning-focused campus activities such as the JU Student Research & Scholarship Symposium.
4B	114	Dr. Michelle Ellis Dr. Seneka Gainer Dr. Ne'Shaun Borden	Beyond the Crisis: Building Resilience and Emotional Regulation in Gen Z Learners Anxiety disorders affect 40 million American adults annually yet remain undertreated—particularly among Gen Z college students. This cohort reports lower mental health ratings than previous generations and shows declining emotion regulation skills during their first two years of college. Despite seeking treatment at higher rates, they lack practical coping strategies. College educators and support professionals must bridge this gap by teaching emotional regulation strategies, recognizing signs of dysregulation, and creating supportive environments. This presentation offers evidence-based approaches to enhance student resilience and reduce barriers to treatment engagement. Participants will gain actionable tools to improve student mental health outcomes and academic success.
4C	119	Dr. John Pauls Dr. Dee Thornton	From Curiosity to Competence: Building AI Literacy with JU Resources Artificial Intelligence is no longer a future concept; it's part of today's classroom reality. This session will provide a comprehensive look at how instructors can move from uncertainty to confidence by leveraging a structured approach towards enhancing AI literacy at JU. Participants will explore the work of the JU AI Advisory Council, unpack the AI Student Guidance framework, and engage with the AI & You Literacy modular resource to support scalable, student-centered learning experiences. This session will also highlight the AI Explorers Program as a model for empowering both educators and learners to experiment safely and thoughtfully with emerging tools, as well as the P.H.I.N.S. Prompting Framework resource. Attendees will leave with practical strategies, ready-to-use resources, and actionable tips to build AI awareness, ethical understanding, and responsible use in their own contexts.

10:00 - 10:50 AM Concurrent Sessions

SESSION	ROOM	PRESENTER(S)	TITLE & ABSTRACT
5A	114	Rob Berwick	See It. Report It. Support It. Leveraging Starfish for Student Success Student success is a shared responsibility, and timely communication can make all the difference. This session will introduce (or reintroduce) faculty to Starfish and demonstrate how to report academic concerns, attendance issues, and other student support needs quickly and effectively. Participants will learn how Starfish connects students with the appropriate campus resources, promotes early intervention, and

			strengthens collaboration between faculty and student support offices. Whether you're new to Starfish or looking to make better use of its features, this session will provide practical strategies to help identify and support students before small challenges become significant barriers to success.
5B	117	Dr. Dee Thornton Prof. William Hill Renee Rossi	HiPerGator Essentials: From Access to Implementation Across Research and Teaching Unlock HiPerGator, the University of Florida's powerful high-performance computing resource, and discover what it can do for your research and teaching. This session starts with the fundamentals: what HiPerGator is, what computational problems it solves, and whether your work would benefit from its power. You'll get the practical roadmap; account setup, allocation requests, and available support. Learn where HiPerGator excels and where it's overkill. Explore the key differences between research and teaching/learning applications so you can make informed decisions about integration.
5C	119	Dr. John Pauls	Start Strong: Practical Learning Design Strategies for a New Year The start of a new semester sets the tone for the entire learning experience. This session will equip educators with high-impact, practical strategies for designing effective, engaging, and student-centered learning experiences from day one. Topics will include clear course structuring, alignment of outcomes and assessments, cognitive load considerations, and the intentional use of routines and feedback loops. Participants will also explore ways to build community early, foster learner autonomy, and incorporate flexible design elements that meet diverse learner needs. Attendees will leave with a toolkit of ready-to-implement design practices that increase clarity, engagement, and long-term success for both instructors and students.

11:00 - 11:50 AM

Concurrent Sessions

SESSION	ROOM	PRESENTER(S)	TITLE & ABSTRACT
6A	114	Dr. Wyndi Capeci	What If Grades Worked for Learning? Evidence-Based Alternatives in Higher Education Traditional point-based grading obscures learning. This session explores evidence-based alternatives—specifications of grading, standards-based grading, and contract grading—that prioritize student growth and clarity. Drawing on research and examples from communication sciences and disorders, the presentation highlights key pillars: reassessment without penalty, marks as progress indicators, structured feedback, and clearly defined learning standards. Alternative grading frameworks promote transparency, align assessment with learning objectives, and support deeper learning and motivation. Participants will learn practical implementation strategies, including defining competence criteria, designing efficient reassessment processes, and clearly communicating expectations. Leave with concrete, manageable changes that enhance equity, support diverse learners, and meaningfully improve student engagement and

			success, while addressing common faculty concerns about rigor and workload.
6B	117	Dr. LaTonya Summers Dr. Arpita Jadav Prof. Hillary Jones Dr. Caitlin Sockbeson Dr. Irina Toteva	The Present Professor: Engaging in Faculty Book Clubs for Community and Evidence-Based Instruction This presentation explores the dual impact of Elizabeth Norell's <i>The Present Professor</i>—both as a pedagogical framework and as a vehicle for building faculty community. At its core, Norell's work advocates a shift from performance-based teaching to presence-based engagement, encouraging educators to bring their authentic selves into the classroom to foster deeper connections with students. However, the application of these principles is not limited to the student-teacher dynamic; it is equally transformative for faculty peer relationships. Drawing on the Spring 2026 JU Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) book club, this session demonstrates how structured professional reading groups function as interdisciplinary Communities of Practice (CoP). Grounded in the evidence-based theories of Lave and Wenger, these groups provide an essential third space for faculty to mitigate the isolation often found in departmental silos. Participants in the book club moved beyond mere content review, using the text as a scaffold to share vulnerabilities, exchange clinical and classroom strategies, and provide mutual emotional support. The conclusion of this presentation asserts that faculty book clubs can serve as an intervention to sustain institutional health. By fostering a sense of belonging and collective efficacy, these initiatives act as a protective factor against burnout and faculty turnover. Attendees will leave with a roadmap for utilizing relational pedagogy to enhance both their instructional presence and their peer-to-peer support networks within the university.
6C	119	Dr. Catherine Rushton	Beyond Bullet Points: Tips for PowerPoint This workshop provides practical strategies to create more engaging and effective PowerPoint presentations. We will explore ways to simplify slide design, improve visual communication, and integrate technical features such as animations, multimedia, 3D models, and interactive elements to enhance student learning. Through real examples, you will learn how to transform text-heavy slides into dynamic teaching tools that support long-term retention and recall. You will leave with actionable techniques and a clear framework for revising existing presentations to better engage today's learners.

Convocation Luncheon

12:15-1:30 PM

Davis College of Business & Technology Conference Rooms

Welcome Back! Please join us for lunch as we recognize colleagues who were Board-approved for tenure and promotion in May and introduce faculty members who are new to JU.