

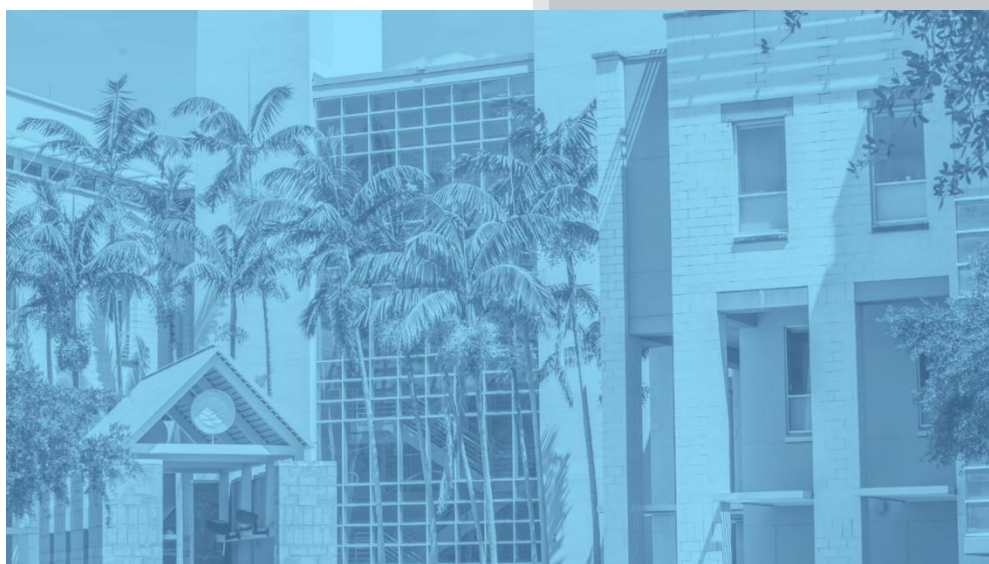
# EDUCATION CONNECTION

Florida Atlantic College of Education

March/April 2026 Vol. 6 Issue 4



A BIMONTHLY eNEWSLETTER



## Welcome Doctoral Students

Florida Atlantic College of Education welcomes all students who were accepted into its graduate and undergraduate programs this past year. Among them are 36 doctoral students in programs offered by four departments:

[CE](#) (Fall 2025 Students)

### **Ph.D. in Counseling**

Gigi Kean

Brittney Davis

Makenzie Moffett

[CI](#) (Fall 2025 Students)

### **Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction**

Mary Angelo

Khadijatul Kobra

Andrea Kowolski-Rospierski

Thao Kim Phan

Timothy Sebesta

(Spring 2026 Student)

### **Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction**

Ligia Balbino

[ELRM](#) (Fall 2025 Students)

### **Ph.D. in Educational Leadership with specialization in Higher Education Leaders**

Angela Almaguer

Janelle Freire

Suzanne Ffolkes

Jeanine Ortiz

Alonso Reyna Rivarola

Stephanie Shuey

*(Continued on page 2)*

## TOP STORIES

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### COE ONLINE MASTER'S IN ED. RISES IN RANKINGS

The *U.S. News & World Report* Online rankings show FAU COE online M.Ed. program ranked 36.

### COLLABORATIVE STUDY PUBLISHES FINDINGS

COE & CoECS Evaluate AR Integration into Workforce Training for Individuals with Disabilities.

### CESI FUELS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING, COLLABORATION

CESI at FAU Lab Schools prepares educators for the world ahead.

## COE Online Master's in Education Climbs in 'U.S. News & World Report' Rankings

The *U.S. News & World Report* Online rankings released on Jan. 27, 2026 shows FAU College of Education's online master's in education program rose to No. 36 (tie) in [Best Online Master's in Education Programs](#) nationwide for 2026 up from No. 46 in last year's rankings.

Now in its 16th year, the *U.S. News & World Report* "Best Online Programs" list is a resource for students and working adults who are increasingly seeking online education programs for degree completion and career advancement. Prospective students can use the searchable directory to explore factors such as tuition, program offerings and online services offered to enrolled students. ... [FAU Top Online Graduate Programs](#)



## Doctoral Students

(Continued from page 1)

[ELRM](#) (Fall 2025 Students)

**Ph.D. in Educational Leadership with specialization in School Leaders (K-12)**

Larry Harris  
Natasha Banton  
Shayla Dekle  
Lariell Farris  
Kristin Potter-Oliveri  
Winfred Porter  
Dionne Sterling

(Spring 2026 Students)

**Ph.D. in Educational Leadership with specialization in Higher Education Leaders**

Andrew Moreira  
Geoffrey Johnson  
Hope Maginley  
Joel Vander Horst  
Tootie Martin  
Samantha McGovern

[SE](#) (Fall 2025 Students)

**Ph.D. in Special Education**

Nicholas Carannante  
Adriana Jimenez  
Jacqueline Mullen  
Riane Santa Cruz De Melo  
Barbara Selimovic  
Nicholas Torres  
Chinwe Ugwuozor  
Amy Youngblood

## FAU Grants Two COE Retired Professors Faculty Emeritus Status

[Florida Atlantic University](#)'s Board of Trustees recently approved awarding the rank of Faculty Emeritus in the [College of Education](#) to the following retired professors:

- **Ira Bogotch, Ed.D.**, Educational Leadership and Research Methodology
- **Joseph M. Furner, Ph.D.**, Curriculum and Instruction

FAU President Adam Hasnwer personally thanked each of them, stating, "This recognition is a reflection of your remarkable scholarly achievements, your dedication to teaching, and the many years of meaningful service you've given to Florida Atlantic University. ... [Emeritus Faculty](#)

## FAU COE & CoECS Collaborate to Integrate Augmented Reality into Workforce Training for Individuals with Disabilities

Given that employment remains unacceptably low for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), research explored how Augmented Reality (AR) technology could address the challenges they faced in employment. The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of incorporating AR as a virtual job coach to enhance job training and monitoring, thus supporting the employability of individuals with IDD, promoting greater independence and improving performance on completing complex job tasks.

This study was a collaborative effort led by Ayse Torres, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Counselor Education, Biomedical Engineering and Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, and Kelly Kearney, Ed.D., Assistant Professor of Special Education. They collaborated with faculty and researchers from the College of Engineering and Computer Science, I-SENSE, and FAU Libraries, highlighting a strong interdisciplinary collaboration across the university. The study, conducted as part of a federally funded grant project awarded to Torres by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), was published in the [\*Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities\*](#).



## Research Symposiums & Competitions



March 2—application deadline Florida Atlantic's 16th Annual [Undergraduate Research Symposium](#) to be held April 3

March 18—submission deadline for [2026 Student Publication Ceremony](#) to be held March 25

Mid-late March—submission deadline for [Florida Atlantic Wave Competition Award Ceremony](#) to be held in April

April 16—25th Annual COE [Student Achievement Council \(SAC\) Research Symposium](#), virtual

## COE Launches Official GPA Calculator for Graduate Students

The College of Education launched an [official GPA Calculator](#) to support student success across all COE graduate programs, according to an announcement by Interim Dean Charles Dukes, Ed.D., Ph.D. on Jan. 30, 2026. This tool is designed specifically for COE graduate students to help them monitor their cumulative graduate Grade Point Average (GPA) and academic progress toward degree requirements at any time. Using this tool ensures that GPA calculations match those used by faculty and advisors and that graduate students can proactively make informed decisions in consultation with faculty and advisors.



## Center for Educational Strategy and Innovation Fuels Experiential Learning and Collaboration

The [Center for Educational Strategy & Innovation](#) at [Florida Atlantic University Lab Schools](#) serves as a launchpad for nationwide change through cutting-edge teacher training, leadership development, STEM program design and research partnerships, using Florida as a model.

The Center prepares educators for the world ahead, shaped by Artificial Intelligence, automation and innovation, to impact students across the state and nation. During the first half of the 2025-2026 school year, more than 180 educators were trained through the center, impacting more than 15,000 students across 113 schools:

- The center currently offers a [selection of workshops and opportunities](#) that provide teachers, school leaders and administrators with tools and resources to revolutionize student success in STEM, research and workforce readiness.
- The [Action Research Fellow Program](#) invites full-time K-12 educators from public and private schools across Florida to apply for the [2026-2027 Action Research Fellow Cohort](#) by March 31, 2026.

Educators are encouraged to engage in the Center's dynamic workshops and immersive experiences that continue to redefine education across Florida.

## RESEARCH

FAU Lab Schools Research  
Newsletters:

[January 2026](#) [February 2026](#)

FAU Stiles-Nicholson  
STEM Teacher Academy  
Newsletter:

[SNSTA Newsletter Repository](#)

[LAB SCHOOLS STUDENTS  
ADVANCE THROUGH  
COMPETITIVE FLORIDA DECA  
DISTRICT 8 EVENT](#)

FAU High School Students demonstrated exceptional skill and preparation at the [District 8](#) Florida DECA competition, a rigorous regional event representing top student talent from Palm Beach, St. Lucie and Martin Counties.



## GRANT FEATURE: NBEL Writing Project Enlists Undergraduates

Florida Atlantic College of Education undergraduate students have an opportunity to join a writing project and develop research skills thanks to a 2026 grant funded by the George Storer Foundation and secured by Project Director [Yash Bhagwanji, Ph.D.](#), Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. The Building National Capacity in Nature-Based Early Learning (NBEL) Studies: Call for Action in Higher Education grant provides the students with paid experience conducting literature searches, writing annotated bibliographies and writing summaries of findings with guidance and oversight by the project director.

“The findings will be integrated into the call for action, along with a toolkit designed to assist higher education faculty in integrating theories, knowledge and pedagogies relevant to NBEL,” explained Bhagwanji. The purpose of this new national leadership initiative is to instigate and support Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) in including substantive NBEL, with a particular focus on preschool and early education years, in undergraduate degree programs.

The idea about the call for action in higher education studies was inspired by Bhagwanji’s previous successes, which have included:

- [NBEL program evaluation process](#) in formal and non-formal education such as schools and nature centers,
- [NBEL curriculum model for schools](#),
- editor and founder of an international [NBEL journal](#), now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year,
- the nation’s first [NBEL certificate program](#),
- substantive integration of [NBEL electives](#) in an undergraduate early childhood education program, one of only three public universities recognized for doing so,
- creation of greater access to [NBEL studies and scholarship funding](#) open to students from all FAU colleges and non-degree students, and
- [professional competencies of environmental educators](#).

This year’s grant funding represents the 13<sup>th</sup> year of continuous funding from the Storer Foundation in support of Bhagwanji’s curriculum innovations, advancements in professional development and national leadership activities in nature-based early learning.

## COE Faculty Members Earn ACUE Cert.

Four faculty members, an adjunct instructor and a doctoral student in the College of Education recognized during Florida Atlantic’s Trailblazers in Teaching: ACUE Faculty Certification Ceremony on Jan. 8, 2026, in the FAU Owl’s nest at the Schmidt Family Complex for Academic and Athletic Excellence included the following:

- Anne van Zelst, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, CSD
- Ashley Weinkof, Coordinator, Administrative Services, Office of Appreciative Education, ELRM
- Brianna J. Miller, Ed.D., Instructor, Academy for Community Inclusion, SE (Advanced Credential)
- Bridgette G. Cassidy, Ph.D., Instructor, Early Childhood, CI
- Diego Rios, doctoral student, Ph.D. program in Curriculum and Instruction, CI
- Shernette Dunn, Ph.D., Adjunct, ELRM (Advanced Credential)

The Office of the Provost held the ceremony to recognize faculty who have successfully earned ACUE certification or the Advanced Credential during the period from January through December 2025 from the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE). The nationally recognized Certificate in Effective College Instruction prepares educators to use research-based practices shown to help students succeed. ACUE six-week asynchronous online courses or micros are offered year-round. ... [ACUE courses](#)

# FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EDUCATION CONNECTION

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## Awards

**Floyd, D.** (2025). Inaugural *Fellow of the Association for the Study of Higher Education* (ASHE). [ASHE Fellow](#).

## Publications

### Book Chapters

**Ramírez, A.** & **González, Y.** (2025). Translanguaging and its Application in TESOL Classrooms. Pearson. In E. Ariza (Ed.), *Not for ESOL Teachers: What Every Classroom Teacher Needs to Know About the Linguistically, Culturally, and Ethnically Diverse Student* (3rd ed.). Pearson.

**Ramírez, A.** & **González, Y.** (2025). Preparing for Reading: Accelerating Multilingual Students' Path to Academic Literacy in English. In L. De Oliveira (Ed.), *Applying a Functional Approach to Language Development in Teaching the Content Areas to Multilingual Learners in K-12 Classrooms*. Information Age Publishing.

**González, Y.** & **Ramírez, A.** (2025). Decolonizing Language Instruction Through Genre-Based Pedagogical Translanguaging in an EAL Colombian Classroom. In F. Ehlers-Zavala, M. Back, & Y. Ortega (Eds.), *Innovation in Decolonizing Language Learning and Teaching*. MacMillan.

### Peer-Reviewed Articles

**Fields, A. M.,** Emerson, M. R., Burge, S. A., Reed, J. R., Mathews, T. L., & Bjornsen-Ramig, A. L. (2025). A qualitative analysis of counseling and nurse practitioner trainee experiences engaging with an integrated behavioral health (IBH) training. *Teaching and Supervision in Counseling*. 7(2), 1-16.  
<https://doi.org/10.7290/tsc07qyqx>

(Continued on page 7)

## IMPORTANT DATES

### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FACULTY

April 10 –Faculty Assembly

### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FACULTY AND STUDENTS

APRIL 15—58<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL HONORS  
CONVOCATION

### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDENTS

March 16—Dissertation Defense  
Deadline

March 23—Spring Dissertation  
due in Dean's Office

March 23—Thesis Defense  
Deadline

March 30—Spring Thesis due in  
Dean's Office

April 6—Spring Dissertation due to  
University Graduate Dean

April 13—Spring Thesis due to  
University Graduate Dean

# Publications

(Continued from page 6)

## Peer-Reviewed Articles

- Floyd, D. L., Salinas, C., & Listermann, K.** (2026). *Catalyzing equity-center change: Research, challenges, and issues for community colleges*. Routledge.
- Lehman, P.** (2025). Morning Meeting as an Instructional Routine for Building Classroom Community and Engagement. *Florida Journal of Educational Research*, 62(2), 80–96. <https://doi.org/10.62798/HTIT6242>
- Miller, B., Berlingo, L., Adams, K., Kearney, K., Cruz, E., & Finnegan, L.** (2026). Using Video Modeling to Teach Romantic Relationships to College Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. *Sexuality and Disability*, 44(1), 12. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11195-025-09925-7>
- Powers, J., Brown, S., Musgrove, A., Brown, D., O'Sullivan, J., & Wuest, L.** (2025). From collaboration to creativity: Integrating educational robots into a STEAM and Science through Art curriculum. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education - Special Issue - Strengthening STEM Education: New Directions in Teacher Development*, 33(4), 691-719. <https://doi.org/10.70725/987421ipeqms>
- Restrepo, C., Salinas, C., Vasquez, M., & Rodrigues, S.** (2026). Latino men and psychology. "If you're Latino, you're not really expected to go to college": Understanding Latino men's psychosociocultural resilience in higher education. *Hispanic Journal of Behavior Sciences*, 48(1), 89-113. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07399863251383757>
- Schoorman, D.** (2025). Committing to education and research as counter-hegemonic praxis. In I. Bogotch & C. Shields, (Eds.), *International Handbook of Social [In]Justice and Educational Leadership*. Springer. It is currently available as 'Online First' at: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-56275-4\\_136-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-56275-4_136-1)
- Smith Hill, R. B., Fields, A. M., Lewis, O. J., Castle, M., Stinnett, C. V., Plotner, A. J., & Gilreath, R.** (2025). Counselor education and inclusive postsecondary education: Partnership model to support counselor disability competency. *Teaching and Supervision in Counseling*. 7(3), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.7290/tsc07uzfx>
- Torres, A., Kearney, K. B., \*Garbett, D., & \*Maluf Nunes, G.** (2025). What-Can I-Do: Teaching social problem-solving to young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *International Journal of Special Education*, 40(2), 161-173. <https://doi.org/10.52291/ijse.2025.40.29>
- Torres, A., Kearney, K. B., Galvez-Vega, A., Hassan, D., Neelakanta, M., & Kalva, H.** (2026). Augmented reality enhanced supported employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Focus on Autism and Developmental Disabilities*. Advanced online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10883576251407>
- Waddington, A. F., Fields, A. M., Schneider, K. M., Fratzke, V., & Smith Hill, R. B.** (2025). Development and application of cultural bias activities in a counselor education diagnostic course: A mixed methods feasibility evaluation. *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy*. Available online. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716X.2025.2595680>
- Waddington, A. F., Fields, A. M., & Ault, H. R.** (2026). Integrating clinical reasoning into mental health diagnosis: A conceptual framework for counseling practice. *Journal of Human Services Scholarship and Interprofessional Collaboration*. 3(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.25779/ceqv-n978>
- Zhu, X. & Contreras-García, N.** (2025). From aspirations to actualization: How engagement with supports, networks and services influence community college STEM students' self-efficacy and timely transfer. *Community College Review*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00915521251389940>

## White Paper

- Sacks, E. V., & Critelli, J. E.** ("2026"). Scoping Review of Journal AI Policies in Education Research. Florida Atlantic University, College of Education. [White paper]. [Please Log In](#)

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777 Glades Road, P.O. Box 3091, Boca Raton, FL US 33431-0991  
561-297-3564

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