2026 OKTOBERBEST

A Symposium on Teaching

Center for Teaching Excellence

Empowering Educators to Innovate Teaching and Inspire Learning

UNIVERSITY OF South Carolina





Innovate Your Teaching. Inspire Your Students.

Apply for the Innovative Pedagogy Grant by Monday, November 2, 2026!

- Up to 10 grants of $2,500 each to support course design or revision.
- Funding, instructional design, and pedagogical support for all delivery formats.
- Open to full-time faculty at USC Columbia and the Schools of Medicine.

Center for Teaching Excellence
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Learn More and Apply!

Scan to view eligibility, funding details, and the application.

Questions?
Contact Matt Thatcher
thatche1@cse.sc.edu

INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY GRANT



Students at USC often express how instructors make a positive impact on their life. The Thank-A-Teacher Program gives students a way to recognize instructors and teaching assistants who go the extra mile, challenge and inspire them, and make a difference in their educational journey.

Fall 2026 Submissions Open
Monday, November 2

How it works:

- The student completes a short Submission Form (or uploads a brief video message); submissions can be made anonymously
- The student thanks as many instructors or TAs as they want
- CTE sends a formal letter and certificate of appreciation to the instructor on the student's behalf

Scan to learn more

Center for Teaching Excellence
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

go.sc.edu/thankateacher

#Oktoberbest2026

A Symposium on Teaching
Friday, October 23, 2026

Schedule

8:15 – 11:40 a.m.

Center for Teaching Excellence
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Time	Location	Session
8:15 – 9:00 a.m.	University Conference Center Lobby	**Registration and Light Breakfast** University Conference Center Close-Hipp Building, 8th Floor
9:00 – 9:10 a.m.	Lumpkin Auditorium	**Welcome** **Matt E. Thatcher, Ph.D.** Director Center for Teaching Excellence
9:10 – 10:50 a.m.	Lumpkin Auditorium	Keynote Address **From Research to Recipe: Active Learning for Student Success** **Megan L. "Meg" Mittelstadt, Ph.D.** Assistant Vice President for Learning Initiatives Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning University of Georgia
10:50 – 11:00 a.m.	Transition to Concurrent Session Period 1	
Concurrent Period 1 11:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Summit West Room 839	**It Takes a Village: The Value of Guest Speakers in the Classroom** **Nicole Wojcik, M.L.I.S., M.S.** Graduate Student and School Library Fellow School of Information Science College of Information and Communications
	Summit East Room 840	**Retain, Revise, or Retire? Using Evidence to Improve Teaching and Learning** **Mara Sansolo, M.L.I.S., M.S.** Assessment Specialist of Student Success and Instructor Office of Student Affairs and Academic Support
	Westview Room 829	**From Fictional Company to Authentic Learning: AI-Supported Project-Based Course Design** **Ken Mulchahey, D.B.A.** Adjunct Faculty Integrated Information Technology Molinaroli College of Engineering and Computing
11:30 – 11:40 a.m.	Transition to Concurrent Session Period 2	

Save the Dates!

CAREolina

Connect, Share, and Build a Culture of Care

March 22–26, 2027

Website: event.sc.edu/care

Center for Teaching Excellence
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Join us for a week of events dedicated to helping educators explore empathy in teaching, learning, and campus life.



- **Interactive webinars hosted by the Center for Teaching Excellence and our CAREolina partner offices across USC campuses**
- **A collection of insights, virtual toolkits, and videos to help you encourage compassion and connection in your course**
- **Campus-wide collaborations focused on Universal Design for Learning, mental health and well-being, student success, and engagement in the classroom**
- **Tips and services that make sure you take care of yourself as well!**

Mark your calendar and be part of building an empathetic USC community!

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Design multiple means of
Engagement
The why of learning

Design multiple means of
Representation
The what of learning

Design multiple means of
Action & Expression
The how of learning

JOIN THE COMMUNITY
UDL Community of Practice

In-Person | Virtual | All USC Community Members

Collaborate with colleagues who are passionate about UDL. Share ideas, get ongoing support, and build more inclusive teaching practices together.

Next meeting: November 11

REDESIGN YOUR COURSE
UDL in Practice Short Course

Asynchronous | Online | 6 weeks | Instructors of Record

- **Dive deep into UDL for your own course(s)**
- **Co-revise materials with other instructors**
- **Plan for intentional growth in your teaching**

Application deadline: January 8, 2027

UDL Course (Re)Design Grant

For UDL in Practice graduates: apply the framework to a course you teach or plan to teach.

Learn more about our UDL programming

Scan the code to explore every UDL offering from the CTE.

#Oktoberbest2026

A Symposium on Teaching
Friday, October 23, 2026

Schedule

11:40 a.m. – 1:40 p.m.

Center for Teaching Excellence
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Time	Location	Session
Concurrent Period 2 11:40 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.	Summit West Room 839	**Learning as a Biological Process: Rethinking Course Design Beyond Evaluation** **Azadeh Sepahvandi, Ph.D.** Instructor Mechanical Engineering Molinaroli College of Engineering and Computing
	Summit East Room 840	**From Prompt to Pedagogy: A Four-Step Process for AI-Assisted Assignment Design** **Karen Edwards, J.D.** Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Student Affairs Senior Instructor | Retailing College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management
	Westview Room 829	**Activating Wellness in Education** **Denise O. Simpson, J.D.** Adjunct Instructor Joseph F. Rice School of Law **Cheryl Niccum, M.S.W.** Licensed Clinical Social Worker Executive Office for United States Attorneys U.S. Department of Justice
	Eastview Room 841	**Small Changes, Big Impact: Growth Mindset Strategies for Student Success** **Kunio Hara, Ph.D.** Associate Professor Music History School of Music **Sarah Carroll, Ph.D.** Clinical Associate Professor Economics Darla Moore School of Business
12:10 – 1:00 p.m.	Eastview Room 841 Westview Room 829	**Lunch and Networking** A double-sided buffet will be available outside Eastview
1:00 – 1:30 p.m.	Lumpkin Auditorium	**Garnet Apple Awards Recognition Ceremony**
1:30 – 1:40 p.m.	Transition to Concurrent Session Period 3	

CLASSROOM FEEDBACK

Enhance Your Teaching with Classroom Feedback

Want to know how your students are experiencing your course? Interested in a fresh perspective on your teaching? The Center for Teaching Excellence offers confidential classroom feedback services to help you strengthen engagement and improve learning.

- **Midterm student feedback to guide course adjustments**
- **Classroom observation from CTE instructional designers**
- **Peer observation training to strengthen department practices**

All services are confidential and focused on your teaching goals.

LEARN MORE

Center for Teaching Excellence
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA



Midterm Student Feedback | Classroom Observation | Peer Observation Training

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) Showcase

Save the Date!

Friday, February 19, 2027

University Conference Center
8th Floor, Close-Hipp Building

Discover how faculty fellows from the Provost's AI Teaching Fellowship are transforming teaching and learning through GenAI.



Showcase highlights include GenAI applications for:

- Inclusive learning experiences
- Ethical and responsible AI use
- Personalized feedback and tutoring
- Clinical reasoning and decision-making
- Critical thinking, research, and digital storytelling
- Student well-being, reflection, and independent learning

#Oktoberbest2026

A Symposium on Teaching
Friday, October 23, 2026

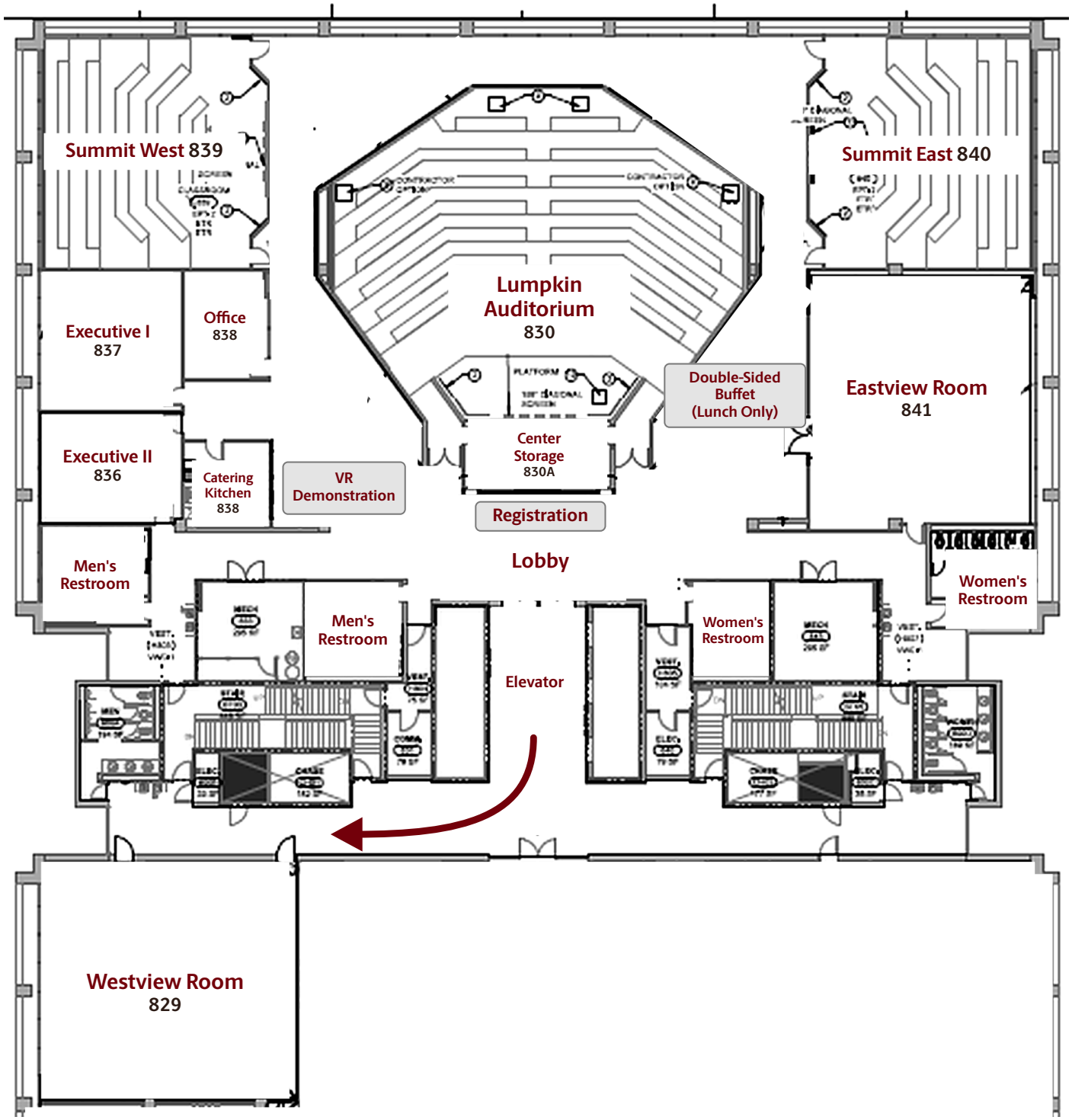
Schedule

1:40 – 3:15 p.m.

Center for Teaching Excellence
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Time	Location	Session
Concurrent Period 3 1:40 – 2:10 p.m.	Summit West Room 839	**Do I Know This? Designing Self-Assessment That Leads to Action** **Brie Dunn, Pharm.D.** Associate Dean for Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation Clinical Professor | Clinical Pharmacy and Outcomes Sciences College of Pharmacy
	Summit East Room 840	**AI Policies: Mind the Gap** **Jordon Brincko, M.B.A.** Assistant Director of Academic Integrity Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity **Alisa Liggett, M.S.** Assistant Dean of Students Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity
	Westview Room 829	**Game On: Gamifying Medical Education** **Danielle Goltermann-Hall, M.D.** Clinical Assistant Professor Family and Preventive Medicine Floyd School of Medicine **Andrew Vaughan, M.D.** Clinical Associate Professor Family and Preventive Medicine Floyd School of Medicine
	Eastview Room 841	**From Static Scenarios to Interactive Learning: AI-Driven Adaptive Cases in Nursing Education** **Kate Bernheisel, DNP** Associate Professor Advanced Professional Nursing Practice & Leadership College of Nursing **Rebecca Morrison, DNP** Assistant Professor Professional Nursing Practice College of Nursing
2:10 – 2:20 p.m.	Transition to Concurrent Session Period 4	
Concurrent Period 4 2:20 – 2:50 p.m.	Summit West Room 839	**Seeing Students: Strategies for Personal Engagement Despite Large Class Sizes** **Erin Davenport, Ph.D.** Instructor Sociology McCausland College of Arts and Sciences
	Summit East Room 840	**Creating AI-Powered Learning: A Practical Guide to Blackboard Conversations** **Michaela Almgren, Pharm.D.** Clinical Associate Professor Clinical Pharmacy and Outcomes Sciences College of Pharmacy **Mitchell Herring, Ed.D.** Instructional Designer Center for Teaching Excellence
	Eastview Room 841	**Fifty Dollars and Sticker Shock: Teaching Empathy Across Disciplines** **Kathryn Frankel, DNP** Clinical Assistant Professor Professional Nursing Practice College of Nursing
2:50 – 3:00 p.m.	University Conference Center Lobby	**Pretzel Bar Break**
3:00 – 3:15 p.m.	Lumpkin Auditorium	**Closing Remarks and Door Prizes!**

Venue Map


Summit West 839
Summit East 840
Lumpkin Auditorium 830
Executive I 837
Office 838
Executive II 836
Catering Kitchen 838
VR Demonstration
Center Storage 830A
Double-Sided Buffet (Lunch Only)
Eastview Room 841
Registration
Lobby
Men's Restroom
Men's Restroom
Women's Restroom
Women's Restroom
Elevator
Westview Room 829

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Megan L. “Meg” Mittelstadt, Ph.D.

University of Georgia



Dr. Mittelstadt is Assistant Vice President for Learning Initiatives, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, and affiliate faculty member of the Louise McBee Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia. She leads university efforts associated with educational development of faculty and graduate teaching assistants, learning technologies, classroom support and learning spaces, instructional media services, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Prior to joining UGA in 2017, Dr. Mittelstadt was the Director of Training and Education for the Landry Cancer Biology Consortium at Harvard University and a Lecturer of Genetics at Harvard Medical School. She earned her B.S. and Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from the University of South Carolina and conducted postdoctoral research in cancer epigenetics at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and Texas A&M Health Science Center.

KEYNOTE OVERVIEW

From Research to Recipe: Active Learning for Student Success

This keynote explores how instructors implement active learning in real classrooms while navigating the challenges of its definition and practice. Drawing on research and institutional experience, it examines how different understandings of active learning shape course design and influence student success. Central to this discussion is the importance of preparing both students and instructors, with particular attention to strategies that set clear expectations and mitigate student resistance.

The session also considers the transformative potential of active learning to foster deeper understanding, durable knowledge, and lifelong learning. Grounded in examples from a range of disciplines, it advances the idea that the “secret sauce” of active learning is not any single technique, but a thoughtful, reflective approach to teaching, one that brings evidence-based practices together in a coherent and adaptable way aligned with one’s teaching persona.

Join us in exploring the complexities of active learning and its transformative potential in higher education!

GARNET APPLE AWARD

For Teaching Innovation

2026 Award Winners



Betsy Blake
Clinical Professor
Director, Interprofessional Education for the Health Sciences

Clinical Pharmacy and Outcomes Sciences
College of Pharmacy



Amy Gerald
Assistant Professor

Humanities
USC Lancaster



Alison Huppmann
Clinical Associate Professor

Biomedical Sciences
School of Medicine Greenville



Ayse Ozturk
Clinical Associate Professor

Marketing
Darla Moore School of Business



Sarah Rogers
Senior Instructor

Criminology & Criminal Justice
McCausland College of Arts and Sciences



Stephanie Schaller
Clinical Assistant Professor

Professional Nursing Practice
College of Nursing

The Garnet Apple Award honors exceptional faculty members who demonstrate a commitment to best teaching practices and an ongoing record of developing innovative strategies to enhance student learning in their courses.

Do you know a faculty member who is highly creative and effective in developing new course materials, classroom methods, or pedagogical approaches? Please consider nominating them for the Garnet Apple Award for Teaching Innovation.

Scan the QR code for more information.
Nominations are due by 5:00 p.m. on **Wednesday, February 3, 2027.**

Session Overviews

11:00 – 11:30 a.m. | **Concurrent Period 1**

It Takes a Village: The Value of Guest Speakers in the Classroom

Summit West Room 839

Nicole Wojcik, M.L.I.S., M.S.
Graduate Student and School Library Fellow
School of Information Science
College of Information and Communications

Guest speakers can bring professional experience, new perspectives, and novelty into the learning environment. This interactive session provides a practical framework for incorporating guest speakers into in-person and online courses, from identifying and inviting speakers to scheduling, student engagement, day-of logistics, and follow-up. Drawing on lessons from a 13-session webinar series, the presenter will share examples, tools, templates, and mistakes encountered along the way. Attendees will leave with practical resources and the confidence to bring additional voices into their courses.

Nicole Wojcik is the School Library Fellow and a doctoral student in USC's School of Information Science. Her research interests include critical cultural competency, the curricular role of young adult literature, and social-emotional learning. Prior to her doctoral studies, she spent 12 years as a secondary school librarian and International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme subject teacher at international schools in Honduras and Panama.

Retain, Revise, or Retire? Using Evidence to Improve Teaching and Learning

Summit East Room 840

Mara Sansolo, M.L.I.S., M.S.
Assessment Specialist of Student Success and Instructor
Office of Student Affairs and Academic Support

Even well-designed lessons, assignments, and activities do not always produce the outcomes instructors expect. How do we determine whether to keep them, modify them, or let them go? This interactive session explores how evidence and curiosity can guide instructional decisions. Participants will distinguish between assumptions and evidence, identify indicators that a teaching practice may not be achieving its intended purpose, and apply a practical framework for deciding whether to retain, revise, or retire it. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies for reflective teaching and continuous improvement.

Mara Sansolo is an Assessment Specialist for Student Success, supporting assessment and evaluation across student success programs and initiatives. She holds an M.L.I.S. and an M.S. in Instructional Design and is pursuing an Ed.D. in Instructional Design. She also teaches University 101, bringing direct classroom experience and a student-centered perspective to her work. Drawing on her background in information science, instructional design, teaching, and assessment, she helps campus partners develop assessment strategies and translate findings into actionable insights that strengthen student learning and success.

From Fictional Company to Authentic Learning: AI-Supported Project-Based Course Design

Westview Room 829

Ken Mulchahey, D.B.A.
Adjunct Faculty
Integrated Information Technology
Molinaroli College of Engineering and Computing

What changes when students become newly hired professionals rather than simply completing assignments? This session explores an immersive course-design approach in which students carry one project through a fictional organization, respond to evolving challenges, and interact with structured AI stakeholder personas. Participants will examine how disconnected assignments can become a coherent project journey and practice designing a stakeholder interaction for their own teaching. The session emphasizes authentic decision-making, academic rigor, reflection, and practical adaptation across disciplines.

Ken Mulchahey is an adjunct instructor in USC's Integrated Information Technology program and an information technology program and project manager. He holds a Doctor of Business Administration in Strategy and Innovation, a master's degree in management with a concentration in project management, and the Project Management Professional (PMP) credential. He brings current industry practices and challenges into courses in project management, systems analysis and design, and IT management. His teaching emphasizes experiential learning, practical application, professional decision-making, and thoughtful use of artificial intelligence to prepare students for complex professional environments.

Session Overviews

11:40 a.m. – 12:10 p.m. | **Concurrent Period 2**

Learning as a Biological Process: Rethinking Course Design Beyond Evaluation

Summit West Room 839

Azadeh Sepahvandi, Ph.D.
Instructor
Mechanical Engineering
Molinaroli College of Engineering and Computing

Learning is a neurological and physiological process that influences memory, motivation, stress, and well-being. This interactive session explores how the biology of learning can inform course design and how an emphasis on evaluation may shift students' attention away from meaningful learning. Participants will examine learning-centered principles including curiosity, engagement, reflection, psychological safety, and meaningful feedback, then apply them to redesign an instructional activity while maintaining rigorous academic standards.

Azadeh Sepahvandi is an Instructor of Mechanical Engineering at USC. With a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering and experience teaching approximately 500 engineering students annually, she combines her scientific background, classroom observations, and student feedback to explore how the science of learning can inform instructional design. She is particularly interested in shifting the focus from evaluation-centered education toward learning-centered education to support meaningful learning and student growth.

From Prompt to Pedagogy: A Four-Step Process for AI-Assisted Assignment Design

Summit East Room 840

Karen Edwards, J.D.
Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Student Affairs
Senior Instructor | Retailing
College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management

This interactive session introduces a practical four-step process for using generative AI to create engaging, pedagogically sound assignments. Participants will explore refined prompting using Task, Format, Voice, and Context; apply the Transparency in Learning and Teaching framework; and evaluate AI-generated content for accuracy and pedagogical fit. Through demonstrations and hands-on activities, attendees will see how instructor expertise remains central to effective AI-assisted design and leave with a concrete checklist for creating meaningful, transparent, and rigorous assignments.

Karen Edwards is Associate Dean of Academic Programs and Student Affairs in USC's College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management and a Senior Instructor in Retailing. She teaches digital commerce, asset protection, and law-related issues affecting retailers and has developed numerous undergraduate and graduate courses. Edwards is a recipient of USC's Garnet Apple Award for Teaching Innovation, Faculty Integrity Award, and Harry E. Varney Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award. She has also led study abroad programs and previously served as Associate Director for Distributed Learning at USC's Center for Teaching Excellence.

Activating Wellness in Education

Westview Room 829

Denise O. Simpson, J.D.
Adjunct Instructor
Joseph F. Rice School of Law

Cheryl Niccum, M.S.W.
Licensed Clinical Social Worker
Executive Office for United States Attorneys
U.S. Department of Justice

This interactive session explores how wellness strategies can strengthen connection and support students' ability to engage fully in the educational experience. Participants will examine why wellness matters for learning, identify strategies that can be incorporated into educational settings, and consider when and how to implement them effectively. Through discussion and engagement exercises, attendees will experience practical approaches firsthand and consider how they might apply wellness strategies within their own teaching contexts.

Denise O. Simpson brings more than 30 years of healthcare-related legal experience to her roles as an Attorney Advisor with the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Legal Education and an Adjunct Instructor at the Joseph F. Rice School of Law. She spent 13 years as an Assistant U.S. Attorney specializing in healthcare fraud and served as national Healthcare Fraud Coordinator for all 94 U.S. Attorneys' Offices. Her experience also includes the Texas Attorney General's Office and Texas Medicaid Fraud Unit. She is a graduate of the University of Florida and Stetson University College of Law.

Cheryl Niccum is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, U.S. Department of Justice, currently assigned to the Employee Assistance Program at the National Advocacy Center in Columbia. She developed, and serves as Clinical Director of, the Project Safe Childhood Wellness Program and Peer Support Team. Niccum has more than 30 years of experience working with the Departments of Justice, Defense, and Veterans Affairs, with expertise in stress, resilience, trauma, secondary trauma, and wellness.

Session Overviews

11:40 a.m. – 12:10 p.m. | **Concurrent Period 2 (continued)**

Small Changes, Big Impact: Growth Mindset Strategies for Student Success

Eastview Room 841

Kunio Hara, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Music History
School of Music

Sarah Carroll, Ph.D.
Clinical Associate Professor
Economics
Darla Moore School of Business

Small changes in everyday teaching can make a meaningful difference in student success. This interactive session introduces evidence-based growth mindset strategies from the Student Experience Project that instructors can apply across disciplines. Participants will explore learning conditions that support student success and practice developing an assessment wrapper designed to promote confidence, persistence, and belonging. Attendees will leave with ready-to-use examples and practical strategies requiring minimal preparation that can be incorporated into online, hybrid, or face-to-face courses.

Kunio Hara is Associate Professor of Music History at USC. His research interests include the operas of Giacomo Puccini, musical representations of nostalgia, and music in anime. He is the author of Joe Hisaishi's Soundtrack for "My Neighbor Totoro" and has published on Puccini's operas, cross-cultural representation and transnational reception, and Japanese composers and filmmakers including Tōru Takemitsu and Isao Takahata. More recently, he has given public talks on *Madama Butterfly* for opera companies across the United States.

Sarah Carroll is a Clinical Associate Professor of Economics at the Darla Moore School of Business, where she has been a faculty member since 2017. She holds a B.S. in Economics from Philipps University of Marburg, an M.S. in Economics from Justus Liebig University Giessen, and a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. Her research focuses on applied economics with projects for the South Carolina Economic Policy Center and the Center for Sustainable Growth. In addition, she has served as a faculty lead for the Student Experience Project (SEP) for over a year, advancing evidence-based teaching practices that foster student belonging, engagement, and academic success.

1:40 – 2:10 p.m. | **Concurrent Period 3**

Do I Know This? Designing Self-Assessment That Leads to Action

Summit West Room 839

Brie Dunn, Pharm.D.
Associate Dean for Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation
Clinical Professor | Clinical Pharmacy and Outcomes Sciences
College of Pharmacy

Students may recognize that they are struggling without knowing what to do next. This interactive session explores how self-assessment can move beyond confidence checks by intentionally connecting reflection to appropriate next-step learning activities. Participants will experience a self-assessment-to-action approach used across classroom activities, interactive worksheets, tutoring, and AI-supported learning. They will then apply the model to their own teaching and leave with a practical strategy that can be incorporated into an existing course, activity, or resource without major redesign.

Brie Dunn is Associate Dean for Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation and a Clinical Professor in the USC College of Pharmacy. She teaches and coordinates courses across the Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum, creating intentional, engaging learning experiences that connect foundational knowledge with clinical decision-making. Her educational interests include student self-assessment and learning strategies, educational technology and AI-supported learning, active learning, and programmatic assessment. Dr. Dunn has been recognized for excellence and innovation in teaching and participates in university initiatives exploring the intentional use of artificial intelligence to support teaching and learning.

Session Overviews

1:40 – 2:10 p.m. | **Concurrent Period 3 (continued)**

AI Policies: Mind the Gap

Summit East Room 840

Jordon Brincko, M.B.A.
Assistant Director of Academic Integrity
Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

Alisa Liggett, M.S.
Assistant Dean of Students
Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

Students and faculty may share more uncertainty about appropriate AI use than they realize. Drawing on conversations with students through USC's Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, this session examines why syllabus policies do not always translate into clear expectations. Participants will evaluate sample AI statements, consider how students may interpret them, and explore strategies for communicating appropriate AI use through practical guidance. Attendees will leave with approaches for improving AI literacy, reducing confusion, maintaining academic integrity, and responding to suspected misuse.

Jordon Brincko is Assistant Director for Academic Integrity in USC's Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, where she works with students, faculty, and staff to resolve potential Honor Code violations. Her work emphasizes educational outcomes, accountability, and the importance of academic integrity. The increasing use of artificial intelligence in higher education has expanded her collaboration with faculty and staff to support student learning and development. Brincko also teaches University 101 and serves on the Student Affairs and Academic Support Professional Development Team. She holds a B.S. in Psychology and an MBA from Lander University.

Alisa Liggett is Assistant Dean of Students at USC, where she works proactively and responsively to address behaviors and circumstances that may affect students' personal and academic well-being. She oversees the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, Student Care and Outreach Team, and basic-needs initiatives including the Gamecock CommUnity Shop. During more than 25 years at USC, she has helped expand campus networks supporting students of concern and provided faculty training on classroom management, student behavior, academic integrity, and the use of technology. Liggett also teaches University 101 and serves as staff advisor for USC's chapter of Best Buddies International.

Game On: Gamifying Medical Education

Westview Room 829

Danielle Goltermann-Hall, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor
Family and Preventive Medicine
Floyd School of Medicine

Andrew Vaughan, M.D.
Clinical Associate Professor
Family and Preventive Medicine
Floyd School of Medicine

Gamification can transform medical education from passive didactics into active, experiential learning. Drawing on games inspired by *The Game of Life*, *Dungeons & Dragons* and escape rooms, presenters will demonstrate how clinical content can be redesigned around decision-making, realistic scenarios, problem-solving, teamwork, and immediate feedback. Participants will explore the game-development process, from identifying learning objectives through playtesting and refinement, and consider practical issues such as time, facilitation, and resources. Attendees will leave with a framework for developing meaningful game-based learning experiences.

Danielle Goltermann-Hall is a family physician and medical educator at Prisma Health and the USC Floyd School of Medicine. She is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Family and Preventive Medicine and serves as faculty lead for the didactics committee, where she has played an integral role in incorporating active learning into the residency curriculum.

Andrew Vaughan is a family physician and medical educator at Prisma Health and the USC Floyd School of Medicine. He is Clinical Associate Professor of Family and Preventive Medicine, Director of Student Education for Prisma Health Midlands Family Medicine, and Chair of the Floyd School of Medicine Curriculum Committee. His academic interests include curriculum development, clinical assessment, medical student accommodations, point-of-care ultrasound, primary care education, and educational scholarship, with an emphasis on preparing future physicians for evidence-based, patient-centered practice.

Session Overviews

1:40 – 2:10 p.m. | **Concurrent Period 3 (continued)**

From Static Scenarios to Interactive Learning: AI-Driven Adaptive Cases in Nursing Education

Eastview Room 841

Kate Bernheisel, DNP
Associate Professor
Advanced Professional Nursing Practice & Leadership
College of Nursing

Rebecca Morrison, DNP
Assistant Professor
Professional Nursing Practice
College of Nursing

This session explores an AI-powered platform that generates interactive, adaptive clinical cases for undergraduate and graduate nursing education. Participants will examine how cases can evolve in response to learner decisions, creating individualized opportunities to develop clinical judgment, engagement, and reflective thinking. Through demonstrations and discussion, presenters will share approaches for incorporating AI-generated patient scenarios into classroom and online learning. Attendees will leave with practical strategies and adaptable ideas for using emerging technologies to create more dynamic case-based learning experiences.

Kate Bernheisel is an Associate Professor in the USC College of Nursing and a Family Nurse Practitioner. She earned her DNP from Duke University and MPH from George Washington University, along with nursing degrees from Virginia Commonwealth University. Her clinical experience includes serving homeless and migrant populations and working in emergency, urgent care, and occupational medicine. Her interests include interprofessional community health, improving healthcare in underserved communities, and integrating innovative technologies – including virtual and augmented reality and artificial intelligence – into nursing education and healthcare delivery.

Rebecca Morrison is an Assistant Professor at the USC College of Nursing and a Family Nurse Practitioner. She earned her nursing degrees from USC including Doctor of Nursing Practice as well as a psychology degree. Her clinical experience includes acute care, public health and nursing administration. Her interests include community health nursing, artificial intelligence, and nursing regulation. Dr. Morrison previously served as South Carolina State Director of Public Health Nursing and has experience as a Family Nurse Practitioner serving underserved populations. She has also served on the South Carolina Board of Nursing and teaches across the undergraduate nursing curriculum.

2:20 – 2:50 p.m. | **Concurrent Period 4**

Seeing Students: Strategies for Personal Engagement Despite Large Class Sizes

Summit West Room 839

Erin Davenport, Ph.D.
Instructor
Sociology
McCausland College of Arts and Sciences

Personal connection with instructors can strengthen student engagement and learning but creating that connection becomes challenging as class sizes grow. This session shares practical strategies developed in courses of up to 70 students to help learners feel seen rather than like "just a number." Participants will explore the research behind instructor-student connection, consider the time and effort associated with different approaches, and brainstorm ways to adapt these strategies to their own disciplines and teaching contexts. Attendees will leave with practical ideas they can implement immediately.

Erin Davenport earned her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and teaches a range of sociology courses at USC. Her teaching is grounded in the philosophy that instructors and students co-create knowledge through an intentionally collaborative process. She encourages students to participate frequently and work together through classroom activities. She enjoys the energy and challenge of teaching and especially values opportunities to teach students across multiple courses and see their academic growth over time.

Session Overviews

2:20 – 2:50 p.m. | **Concurrent Period 4 (continued)**

Creating AI-Powered Learning: A Practical Guide to Blackboard Conversations

Summit East Room 840

Michaela Almgren, Pharm.D.
Clinical Associate Professor
Clinical Pharmacy and Outcomes Sciences
College of Pharmacy

Mitchell Herring, Ed.D.
Instructional Designer
Center for Teaching Excellence

Discover how Blackboard AI Conversations can support interactive, AI-powered learning. In this hands-on session, participants will explore Socratic questioning, role-play, custom AI personas, and effective prompt design while learning how to create and configure an AI Conversation. Presenters will also share findings from implementation in a Pharmacy Law and Ethics course, including student perceptions, faculty experiences, and educational outcomes. Attendees will leave with practical strategies and adaptable resources for incorporating AI Conversations into their own courses.

Michaela M. Almgren is a Clinical Associate Professor in the USC College of Pharmacy. She earned an M.S. in Pharmacy from the University of Florida and a Pharm.D. from USC. She teaches across the Pharm.D. curriculum, including Pharmacy Law and Ethics, Pharmacotherapy, and Pharmacokinetics. Her experience spans hospital pharmacy practice and the pharmaceutical industry, including product development, regulatory affairs, and manufacturing. Her background in clinical practice, industry, and academia provides a broad perspective that informs her teaching and preparation of future pharmacists.

Mitchell Dallas Herring is an Instructional Designer with USC's Center for Teaching Excellence. He earned an Ed.D. in Educational Practice and Innovation from USC, an M.A. in English: Composition and Pedagogy from the University of Maine, and a B.A. in English: Creative Writing from Anderson University. He collaborates with faculty and campus partners on teaching and learning initiatives including digital accessibility, universal design for learning, and the Student Experience Project. Herring currently chairs the Southern Regional Faculty and Instructional Development Consortium.

Fifty Dollars and Sticker Shock: Teaching Empathy Across Disciplines

Eastview Room 841

Kathryn Frankel, DNP
Clinical Assistant Professor
Professional Nursing Practice
College of Nursing

Cost becomes concrete when students must balance a $50 budget against nutrition, quality, and real-world constraints. This session examines a service-learning activity in which nursing students assembled emergency food boxes for families experiencing food insecurity. The presenter will share the activity's design, logistics, and mixed-methods evaluation of student empathy and reflection. Participants will explore how budget constraints, perspective-taking, and community partnerships can create experiential learning with real-world stakes and leave with an adaptable model for teaching empathy across disciplines.

Kathryn Frankel is a Clinical Assistant Professor in Professional Nursing Practice at the USC College of Nursing. She earned her DNP in Executive Health Leadership from USC, M.S. in Nursing Education from Clemson University, and BSN from Shepherd University. With nearly 20 years of experience spanning pediatrics, critical care, clinical education, healthcare quality, and nursing professional development, Dr. Frankel brings a practice-grounded perspective to her teaching. Her scholarship focuses on innovative, experiential pedagogy that builds clinical empathy and understanding of the social determinants of health.

Door Prize Donors

Thank You to Our Door Prize Donors!

Charleston Tea Garden
Frankie's Fun Park
Mast General Store
Nickelodeon Theatre
Nothing Bundt Cakes

SOUTHERN REGIONAL SRFIDC FACULTY & INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM

A gathering for educators and educational developers

51ST ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE

The Center for Teaching Excellence is hosting the Southern Regional Faculty & Instructional Development Consortium in March 2027.

VIRTUAL MARCH 5 | IN PERSON MARCH 8–9 | USC CONFERENCE CENTER, COLUMBIA, SC

Check out **SRFIDC.org** for more information.

UNIVERSITY OF 1ST GENERATION SOUTH CAROLINA

INAUGURAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE MEETING

Teaching First-Gen: Faculty-Led Conversations

WHEN	WHERE	FOR
Thursday, November 12, 2026 **3:00 – 4:00 p.m.**	**Maxcy College** **First-Generation Center**	**Open to all** **USC instructors**

Join USC colleagues for an in-person conversation about teaching first-generation students. In a World Café format, we'll share ideas, discuss challenges, and help shape a faculty community of practice.

To express interest or learn more, contact **Karen Edwards** (kedwards@hrsm.sc.edu) or **Mitchell Herring** (mdh11@mailbox.sc.edu).

Hosted by the **First-Generation Center** in collaboration with the **Center for Teaching Excellence** and **TRIO Programs**



ACTIVE LEARNING @ CTE

Our new webpage features the latest information about ready-to-implement resources, tips, videos, workshop schedules, the Active Learning certificate and more!

go.sc.edu/activelearning

Upcoming Webinars

Wednesday, Nov 4, 2026
Motivation Matters
3:30pm-4:20pm (webinar)

Thursday, Nov 19, 2026
Serious Play: Game-Based Learning
2:50pm-4:05pm (webinar)

EXCITE Center for Teaching Excellence
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Symposium Notes

2026 OKTOBERBEST

A Symposium on Teaching

Thank you for joining us.

Share the Fun

Post your photos from today and join the celebration!

#Oktoberbest2026

@uofsc_cte

linkedin.com/school/uofsc-cte

UNIVERSITY OF South Carolina