Summer Institute + AI Symposium 2025

May 14-16

Welcome to the 2025 Summer Institute for Teaching and Learning!

We are delighted to welcome you to the Center for Teaching and Learning's third annual Summer Institute, May 14-16, 2025, sponsored by the RIT Research Division and offered in partnership with the AI Hub. This year's theme, "**Creativity and Innovation**" in teaching and learning, reflects our commitment to advancing educational excellence at RIT.

In today's evolving educational landscape, creativity and innovation are essential qualities that empower us to meet student needs and prepare them for future success. The Summer Institute was designed with this in mind, leveraging the expertise our faculty demonstrate across campus.

The planning team has built a two and a half day series focused on four main **tracks**:

- Teaching and Supporting Students with Technology
- Creating Engaging Learning Experiences
- Advancing Faculty Success
- Exploring AI In Practice

We have three expert keynote speakers:

Melissa McCarron, Assistant Teaching Professor of Spanish at the University at Buffalo, will share her journey developing Spanish dialect-specific AI bots for medical scenarios. Her talk will highlight cross-disciplinary collaboration with pharmacy professionals in creating real-world applications of language and AI.

Marina Smitherman, Interim Dean of the School of Health Professions and Professor of Biology at Dalton State College, will address work-life balance for college faculty. Her talk will focus on wellness pillars and how attending to faculty members' mental, emotional, and relational needs supports professional success.

Andrew White, Co-Founder and Head of Science at FutureHouse, will speak on how AI is transforming scientific processes by automating discovery—from literature review to hypothesis generation—and what this means for researchers and academic training.

Key features include:

Day 1: PLIG Poster Showcase of last year's awardees, followed by the President's Farewell Reception with beverages and hors d'oeuvres.

Day 2: A panel of Eisenhart awardees sharing two decades of teaching perspectives at RIT, followed by a reception.

Day 3: Hands-on exploration of Generative AI integration in professional settings. Bring your laptop for training on today's powerful tools. We'll help you navigate the AI literacy curve with clear explanations of AI's strengths, limitations, and educational role. Join colleagues to explore implications and develop strategies for the challenges ahead.

We're hosting you in RIT's newest centerpiece - the Student Hall for Exploration and Development (SHED). This facility, together with the reimagined Wallace Library spaces, offers a state-of-the-art environment designed to foster creativity, hands-on learning, and interdisciplinary discovery.

We look forward to seeing you at this inspiring event!

Dr. Neil Hair
Executive Director, Center for Teaching and Learning

Dr. Ryne Raffaelle
Vice President of Research, Research Office

Dr. Christopher Collison
RIT Director of AI Hub and Initiatives

Keynote SPEAKERS

Melissa McCarron

Associate Teaching Professor of Spanish
University at Buffalo

Melissa J. McCarron, PhD (Associate Teaching Professor of Spanish) is a faculty member in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University at Buffalo (College of Arts and Sciences) specializing in Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP), Spanish for the Health Professions, proficiency-based language instruction, and the development and application of ethical and justice-oriented AI for the common good. She works at the intersections of health care systems, language access, and applied humanities. Her research and teaching focus on interprofessional, community-engaged research and the role of cultural competence in improving outcomes among communities most affected by health inequities.

Marina Smitherman

Interim Dean of the School of Health Professions and a Professor of Biology
Dalton State College

Marina Smitherman is Interim Dean of the School of Health Professions and a Professor of Biology at Dalton State College. With over two decades of college teaching experience, Dr. Smitherman has specialized in Educational Development; having served as Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Director of the Center for Academic Excellence, and Department Chair of Life Sciences. Dr. Smitherman won the University System of Georgia Felton Jenkins Jr. Faculty Hall of Fame Teaching Award in 2020. She is a co-author of "Taking Flight: Making your Teaching and Learning Center Soar" published with Stylus in 2020 and served as Editor-in-Chief of 'To Improve the Academy' the POD network journal. Originally from England, Dr. Smitherman holds a D.Phil. from the University of Oxford in Clinical Medicine and a master's degree in public health from the University of Manchester.

Andrew White

Co-founder and Head of Science
FutureHouse

Andrew White is co-founder and head of science at FutureHouse, a San Francisco AIxBio non-profit research organization and associate professor of chemical engineering at University of Rochester. Andrew White is a researcher with peer-reviewed publications and books across the domains of large language models in chemistry, explainable artificial intelligence, statistical mechanics, and chemical engineering. He has won junior investigator awards from the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health along with professional and teaching awards for excellence as a chemical engineer. Andrew is an active member of the scientific community as a peer reviewer for over 30 journals, multiple national and private grant awarding institutions, and serves on the Chemical Sciences Roundtable at the National Academy of Science. Andrew is also a science communicator with large followings on X and LinkedIn and has been interviewed in multiple publications such as the New York Times, Bloomberg, Nature, Financial Times, and Science. Andrew serves on multiple scientific advisory boards across biotech. He has contributed to the ongoing debate around safety of artificial intelligence as an OpenAI red teamer, speaking at multiple policy summits, and visiting the White House to advise the office of science and technology policy on the consequences of AI models.

Day 1 Schedule

8:00–8:25 AM

Location: SHED-1300 Maker Showcase

Registration & Breakfast
Premium Continental Breakfast

8:30-9:50 AM

Location: SHED-3300

Opening Address & Keynote
Christine Licata, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Keynote: Humanizing the Algorithm: Lessons in Innovation, Engagement, and Collaboration
Melissa McCarron, Associate Teaching Professor of Spanish, University at Buffalo

10:00-10:50 AM

Location: WAL-3420

Exploring Rhetoric, Representation, and Ableism in Pedagogical Practices
Jessica Hardin (COLA), Kaitlin Stack Whitney (COLA), Angeline Hamele (MFA in Industrial Design, student)

Location: WAL-3430

Thinking Outside the (Zoom) Box
Frank Marra (COLA)

Location: WAL-3440

Can Generative AI Help Students Learn? Let's Ask RIT Students.
Christine Ross (SOIS)

Location: WAL-3490

Hidden Signals: Mining Student Evaluations for Genuine Insight
Rajendran Murthy (SCB)

11:00-11:50 AM

Location: WAL-3420

Inclusive Learning in Groups: UDL Strategies for ~~Neurodiverse~~ ALL Students
Sandi Connelly (COS), Kendra Evans (DSO)

Location: WAL-3430

Online Discussions are Boring. Don't You Think You've Sawed That Log Long Enough?!
Serena Tucker-Cooke (NTID)

Location: WAL-3440

5 Ways AI Will Power Student Learning and My Productivity This Fall
Shaun Foster (CAD)

Location: WAL-3490

Gen Ed Revision and High Impact Practices
Leah Bradley (EEA), Elizabeth DeBartolo (KGCOE), William Middleton (COLA), Christine Shank (CAD)

TRACKS: Teaching with Technology | Engaging Learning Experiences | Advancing Faculty Success

Maps

Wallace Floor 3

Event Space
Non-event Space
Restricted Access

Elevator
Stairs
Drinking Fountain
Accessible
All Gender Restroom
Men's
Women's

Wednesday, May 14th

12:00-1:20 PM — **Location: SHED, 3rd floor Lobby**

Lunch
Boxed lunches, and beverages.
Seating available in SHED, Room 3300

12:30-1:20 PM — **Location: SHED-3300**

Provost's Learning Innovation Grant (PLIG) Showcase
Poster Showcase of the 2024 PLIG Recipients

1:30-2:20 PM

Location: WAL-3420

Remixing the Disciplines: Practical Strategies for Pedagogical Innovation
Melissa McCarron (Keynote Speaker)

Location: WAL-3430

Active Learning Through Case Studies—Applying Concepts to Real World Examples
Raymond Scattone (COLA), Kaitlin Stack Whitney (COLA), Eunju Kang (COLA)

Location: WAL-3440

Students Perceptions of Effective Use of myCourses
Neil Hair (CTL)

Location: WAL-3490

Happy Students, Happy Teachers: Strategies for Reducing Stress for Students and Faculty
Jessamy Comer (COLA)

2:30-3:20 PM

Location: WAL-3420

From Routine to Riveting: Ten Tips for Engaging Presentations
Jenna Sadue (CTL), Sandi Connelly (COS)

Location: WAL-3430

Roll a Persuasion Check: Using Games to Teach Rhetorical Appeal
Philip Anselmo (SOIS)

Location: WAL-3440

Kritik in the Classroom: A Hands-On Guide to Peer Assessment
Garret Arcoraci (GCCIS)

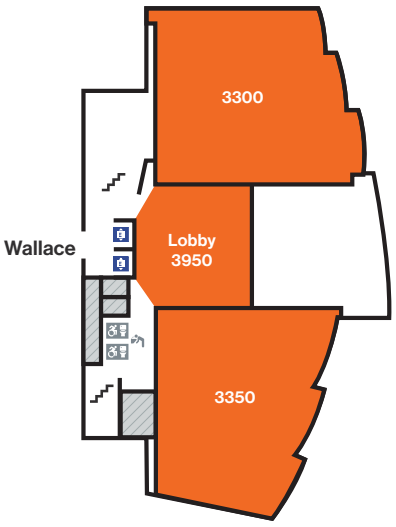
Location: WAL-3490

Evolving AI Together: A Faculty–Student Discussion on Embracing AI in the Classroom
Matthew Vollmer (SCB), Bella Blood (Student), Mickeyas Bayuh (Student), Evan Ranney (Student), Harrison Oliver (Student), Felix-Nadine Herweg (Student)

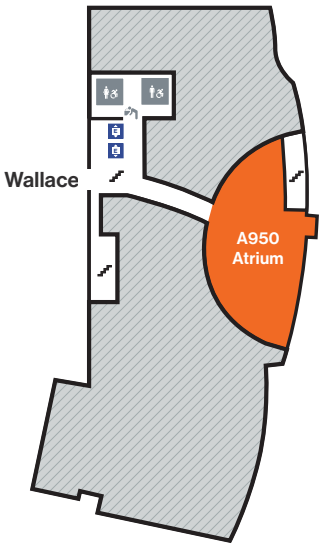
4:00-6:00 PM — **President's Farewell Reception**

TRACKS: Teaching with Technology ■ Engaging Learning Experiences ■ Advancing Faculty Success ■

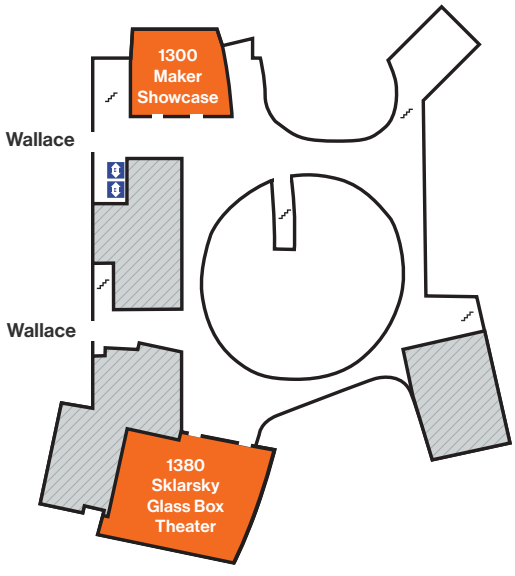
SHED Floor 3



SHED A-Level



SHED Floor 1



Day 2 Schedule

8:00–8:25 AM

Location: SHED-1300 Maker Showcase

Registration & Breakfast
Premium Continental Breakfast

8:30-9:50 AM

Location: SHED-3300

Opening Address & Keynote
Prabu David, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
David C. Munson Jr. RIT President
Keynote: Put your Own Mask on First: Flourishing as Faculty in Higher Education
Marina Smitherman, Interim Dean, School of Health Professions, Dalton State College

10:00-10:50 AM

Location: WAL-3420

Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) @ RIT
Joe Geigel (GCCIS), Erika Mesh (GCCIS)

Location: WAL-3430

Teaching that Evolves with Technology
Colin Mathers (COLA), Bob Shea (COLA)

Location: WAL-3440

Team Up for Learning: Active, Flipped & Student-Driven
Cindy Tawaf (CET)

11:00-11:50 AM

Location: WAL-3420

Using Improv for Student Engagement and Learning
Israa Thiab (SCB)

Location: WAL-3430

Tutorial: Gradescope Autograders for Programming Assignments
Richard Lange (GCCIS)

Location: WAL-3440

Using Starfish as an Instructional Tool for Student Engagement and Success
Sue Frizzell (University Advising Office), Lynne Mazadoorian (University Advising Office)

Location: WAL-3490

We Asked, You Answered: Insights from the 2024-25 Academic Technology Survey
Jenna Sadue (CTL), Ian Webber (CTL)

TRACKS: Teaching with Technology | Engaging Learning Experiences | Advancing Faculty Success

Maps

Wallace Floor 3

Event Space
Non-event Space
Restricted Access

Elevator
Stairs
Drinking Fountain
Accessible
All Gender Restroom
Men's
Women's

Thursday, May 15th

12:00-12:50 PM

Location: SHED, 3rd floor Lobby

Lunch
Taste of Italy lunch buffet, and beverages.
Seating available in SHED, Room 3300

1:00-1:50 PM

Location: SHED 3350

Strategies to Help with Larger Classes (in the SHED)
Mario Gomes (KGCOE)

Location: WAL-3430

Supporting Faculty in Designing Inclusive and Effective Presentation Assignments
Elizabeth Reeves O'Connor (COLA)

Location: WAL-3440

Creating Computer Animations for Improved Attention and Comprehension
Thomas Kinsman (GCCIS)

Location: WAL-3490

Breaking Through Barriers: Advancing Faculty Wellness with the Immunity to Change Framework
Marina Smitherman (Keynote Speaker)

2:00-2:50 PM

Location: SHED, Room 1380 Sklarsky Glass Box Theater

Panel Discussion: Teaching Excellence - Two Decades of Perspective
Moderator: Neil Hair
Panelists: Satish Kandlikar, James Mallory, David Neumann, Michael Yacci, Jayanti Venkataraman

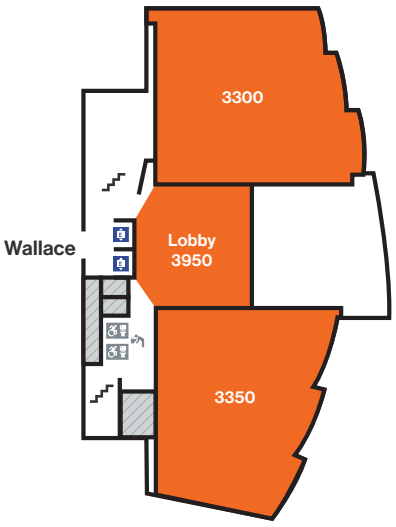
3:00-5:00 PM

Location: SHED-A950, Atrium

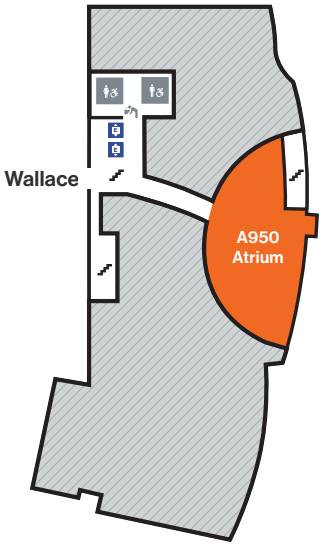
Reception
Open bar with cheese and crackers

TRACKS: Teaching with Technology | Engaging Learning Experiences | Advancing Faculty Success

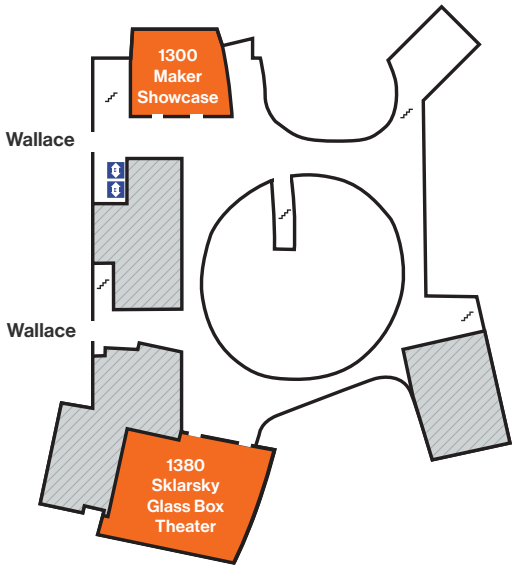
SHED Floor 3



SHED A-Level



SHED Floor 1



Day 3 Schedule

AI in Practice Series

Note: Participants are advised to bring laptops so that they may more effectively engage with some of the hands-on activities in the various sessions.

8:00-8:25 AM

Location: SHED-1300 Maker Showcase

Registration & Breakfast
Premium Continental Breakfast

8:30-9:50 AM

Location: SHED-3300

Opening Remarks
Chris Collison, RIT Director of AI Hub & Initiatives; Jane King Harris Endowed Professor, COS
Keynote: The Automation of Scientific Discovery with Artificial Intelligence
Andrew White, Co-founder & Head of Science, FutureHouse

10:00-11:15 AM

Location: SHED 3300

"Ask Me Almost Anything": Demystifying GenAI with Science, Art, and Answers
Chris Collison (COS, AI HUB),
Andrew White (Keynote Speaker),
Shaun Foster (CAD)

Location: SHED 3350

Everyday AI: Do More with Ease
Quinn Karley (ITS),
Garret Arcoraci (GCCIS)

11:30-12:45 PM

Location: SHED 3300

Beneath the Bot: Building Responsible AI Tools from Scratch
Chris Collison (COS, AI HUB),
Ryan Tolnay (RIT Libraries),
Gregory Ojiem (Computer Science student)

Location: SHED 3350

From Prompt to Performance: Build & Optimize Your Own GPT
Jennifer Freer (RIT Libraries)

TRACKS: Understanding AI (Theory, Ethics & Systems) | Hands-on AI (Tools, Practice & Prototypes) | AFRL /Griffiss Institute

Maps

Wallace Floor 3

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Non-event Space
Restricted Access

Elevator
Stairs
Drinking Fountain

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All Gender Restroom
Men's Women's

Friday, May 16th

Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) and the Griffiss Institute Series

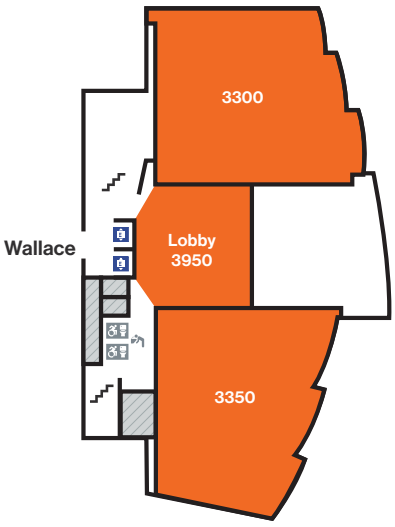
10:00-10:50 AM | **Location: WAL-3430**

Research Collaborations with the Griffiss Institute and the Air Force Research Laboratory
Michael Feng (Griffiss Institute) and Ryan Toner (AFRL)

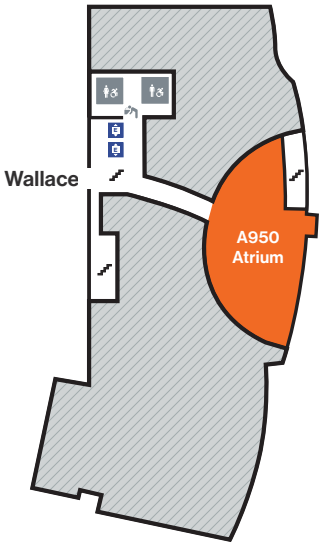
11:00-11:50 AM | **Location: WAL-3430**

Faculty Insights in Working with AFRL + Q&A
Cory Merkel (KGCOE),
Alexander Ororbia (COS),
Seth Hubbard (COS)

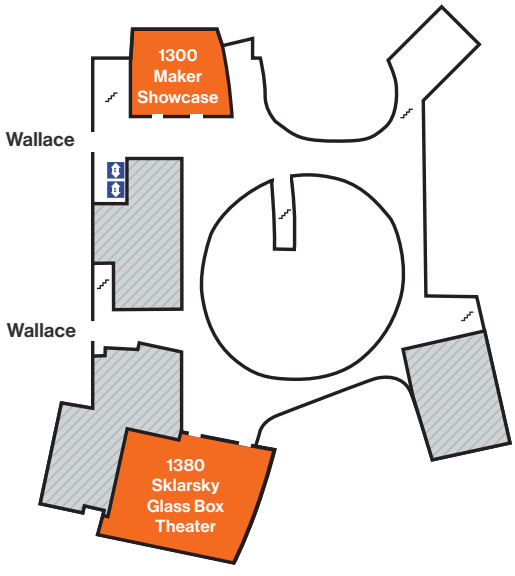
SHED Floor 3



SHED A-Level



SHED Floor 1



Program DETAILS

Registration & Breakfast

SHED-1300 Maker Showcase

8:00-8:25 AM

Premium Continental Breakfast
Be sure to check in when you arrive to pick up your name tag, if you haven't already, and the day's schedule, complete with maps. A complimentary continental breakfast will also be available to help you start your day.

Humanizing the Algorithm: Lessons in Innovation, Engagement, and Collaboration

SHED-3300

8:30-9:50 AM

Opening Address by Christine Licata, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Keynote by Melissa McCarron, Associate Teaching Professor of Spanish, University at Buffalo
While the American academic landscape is undeniably fraught with challenges, extending beyond the rising cost of higher education and low enrollments to the current presidential administration's aggressive pursuit of policies aimed at systematically curtailing research, dismantling diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, and the emergence of technologies that disproportionately favor data that is predominantly Western and English-speaking, language and area studies scholars like myself are presented with unique opportunities for critical reflection and transformative change. The chaos and uncertainty of the moment demand urgent and radical re-positionings of the role of higher education from passive observer of crisis to active source of resilience, inclusion, and innovation. Re-orienting language and area studies, and the Humanities more broadly, toward critical recalibration of our programmatic, curricular, and disciplinary identities has the potential to empower students to navigate the systemic crises of these times, provide rewarding learning experiences on campus, and facilitate impactful engagement within communities beyond it.

My approaches to teaching, programming, and scholarship reside at the intersections of (health)care systems, language access, and applied humanities with a heightened focus on interprofessional community-engaged collaboration and the role of cultural competence in improving outcomes among communities most affected by health inequities. In a time of institutional strain and uncertainty, it is my hope that these efforts offer evidence of vital signs of renewal and of the transformative potential of Applied Humanities approaches to language and area studies. In my presentation, I will argue that a commitment to experiential learning, sustained interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration, creative program design and outreach, inclusive pedagogy, and digital literacy ultimately represents an opportunity to reorient language and area studies toward more agile, expansive, and "undisciplined" programmatic and curricular initiatives. At the center of this argument for intentional disciplinary re-orientation is an overview of a multifaceted Spanish for the Health Professions initiative housed in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University at Buffalo (SUNY) and the research, pedagogical innovation, and programming for which it has served as a catalyst in recent years.

Exploring Rhetoric, Representation, and Ableism in Pedagogical Practices

WALLACE-3420

10:00-10:50 AM

Jessica Hardin (COLA), Kaitlin Stack Whitney (COLA), Angeline Hamele (MFA in Industrial Design, student)
This interactive session invites faculty to collaboratively examine how diverse identities, including disability, are represented in educational materials and pedagogical practices. Liberal Arts faculty, Kaitlin Stack Whitney (she/her) will share her research from a 2024-2025 NTID Dodge grant-supported project, to explore how disability is portrayed (or neglected) in educational resources across disciplines, such as biology and environmental science. Liberal Arts faculty, Jessica Hardin (she/her), will share her research on teaching the design process in engineering education. Angeline Hamele (they/them) will share their research on accessibility, pedagogy, and design. Participants should bring at least one of their own course textbooks or an assignment focused on the design process with them. They will then explore the messages and content in their own books and assignments. Learners will leave with a better understanding of their course materials and with resources to potentially enrich them. This can help that all students see themselves positively reflected in what they learn and promote equity in the classroom. **(Workshop)**

Thinking Outside the (Zoom) Box

WALLACE-3430

10:00-10:50 AM

Frank Marra (COLA)
"Death by Meeting" has now been replaced with "Death by Zoom." Meeting attendeesEmployees often sit silently, staring at a screen, for more than an hour. This leads to impaired engagement, lower productivity, and decreased attendee satisfaction. Bad (virtual) meetings can leave lasting, harmful effects on attendees.

Being a talking head on Zoom is no longer acceptable (or tolerable). This presentation shows participants how to easily create engaging online communication, such as meetings, teaching, training, or pre-recorded announcements. **(Presentation)**

Wednesday, May 14th

Can Generative AI Help Students Learn? Let's Ask RIT Students.

WALLACE-3440

10:00-10:50 AM

Christine Ross (SOIS)
In Spring 2025, I taught a WRT150 course asking students to consider whether generative AI helps them learn as a prelude to researching that topic. Some students are passionate advocates for it; some are adamantly opposed; most are somewhere in the middle. The course concludes with collaborative guidelines about generative AI use and writing. My panel will report on the class and what students have to say about AI use at RIT. I will briefly explain how the course was organized and what work students did. Most of my panel presentation will foreground what students have to say. **(Presentation)**

Hidden Signals: Mining Student Evaluations for Genuine Insight

WALLACE-3490

10:00-10:50 AM

Rajendran Murthy (SCB)
Student evaluations often carry a lot of weight – but do they really tell us how well students are learning? This session takes a closer look at when evaluations reflect actual teaching effectiveness and when they miss the mark. Whether you're an instructor, a department chair, or involved in policy decisions, you'll walk away with clearer insight into what these scores can (and can't) tell you, and how to use them more thoughtfully. **(Presentation)**

Inclusive Learning in Groups: UDL Strategies for ~~Neurodiverse~~ ALL Students

WALLACE-3420

11:00-11:50 AM

Sandi Connelly (COS), Kendra Evans (DSO)
Creating inclusive learning experiences for all students is essential particularly when engaging in group activities. This interactive 50-minute workshop will explore how Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles can be leveraged to foster equitable and effective group work environments that accommodate a wide range of learning needs. Through hands-on discussions and case studies, attendees will explore strategies for managing "challenging" classroom environments, designing collaborative activities, designing flexible participation structures, using AI-powered tools for facilitating adaptive collaboration, and scaffolding techniques that promote engagement and reduce barriers to learning. Faculty will leave with actionable strategies to create more inclusive, dynamic, and supportive learning environments that empower all students to thrive. **(Workshop)**

Online Discussions are Boring. Don't You Think You've Sawed That Log Long Enough?!

WALLACE-3440

11:00-11:50 AM

Serena Tucker-Cooke (NTID)
For years we have all heard the woes of online discussion boards. It is time to move past the outdated idea that online discussions are boring, meaningless and time consuming. Whether you teach online, face to face, or hybrid, thoughtfully designed online discussions not only provide learners with an opportunity to participate in a comfortable and inclusive environment but can also add to deeper learning and a sense of community.
In this session, you will learn creative techniques for designing discussion boards that utilize active learning, critical thinking, and reflection to engage students and enhance their learning. You will also leave with a plan for successful instructor engagement. **(Workshop)**

5 Ways AI Will Power Student Learning and My Productivity This Fall

WALLACE-3440

11:00-11:50 AM

Shaun Foster (CAD)
Explore how integrating AI streamlines your semester. Discover AI-powered syllabi that clearly outline learning objectives and due dates, alongside smart rubrics providing consistent, precise grading criteria. Learn how AI-driven "Tech-TA" assistance offers immediate support for project guidance. See how automated post-class quizzes and summary notes reinforce learning, enhancing retention. Finally, embrace AI-assisted logging for tracking student progress, engagement, and participation effortlessly. Join me to see practical demonstrations of how these AI tools transform the classroom experience, saving time and boosting both student achievement and instructor productivity. **(Presentation)**

TRACKS: Teaching with Technology ■ Engaging Learning Experiences ■ Advancing Faculty Success ■

Program DETAILS

Gen Ed Revision and High Impact Practices

WALLACE-3490

11:00-11:50 AM

Leah Bradley (EEA), Elizabeth DeBartolo (KGCOE), William Middleton (COLA), Christine Shank (CAD)
As part of its charge in fall 2024, the General Education Revision Taskforce has developed four models for campus feedback. We invite faculty and staff to join us for an open discussion on high impact practices in general education, including first year courses, ePortfolios and integrative experiences. As part of this session, we welcome faculty and staff input on possible components of the proposed models, including what RIT-branded "big-questions" that run throughout the curriculum or student learning outcomes in "digital/information literacy" and AI literacy might look like for RIT students. **(Workshop)**

Lunch

SHED 3rd floor Lobby

12:00-1:20 PM

Pick up your boxed lunch and beverage from Lovin' Cup and take some time to explore the beautiful surroundings of the new SHED building. You're welcome to find a comfortable spot—indoors or outdoors—to enjoy your meal. Seating is also available in SHED Room 3300.

Beginning at 12:30 PM in Room 3300, the 2024 Provost's Learning Innovation Grant faculty recipients will be showcasing their projects. Feel free to stay and engage with their work while you enjoy your lunch.

Provost's Learning Innovation Grant (PLIG) Poster Showcase

SHED-3300

12:30-1:20 PM

Discover innovative approaches to teaching and learning through this poster showcase featuring faculty projects funded by the Provost's Learning Innovation Grants. Stop by to engage with presenters and learn about their work.

For a full list of presenters, see page 20-21.

Remixing the Disciplines: Practical Strategies for Pedagogical Innovation

WALLACE-3420

1:30-2:20 PM

Melissa McCarron (Keynote Speaker)
This interactive 50-minute workshop explores practical, classroom-based strategies to support pedagogical innovation across disciplines. Participants will engage with topics such as transdisciplinary teaching, alternative grading models, inclusive rubric design, addressing the hidden curriculum, and the thoughtful integration of generative AI. You'll leave with fresh, adaptable ideas to remix and enhance your own teaching practices. **(Workshop)**

Active Learning Through Case Studies - Applying Concepts to Real World Examples

WALLACE-3430

1:30-2:20 PM

Raymond Scattone (COLA), Kaitlin Stack Whitney (COLA), Eunju Kang (COLA)
Students often ask, "how will I use this in the real world?". Case Studies, where students work in teams and get to apply concepts they learn in class to real world situations is an active learning strategy that can address this. This session will include a panel of 3 faculty that use Case Studies as a means of classroom learning. The faculty will discuss their experiences, student feedback, and field questions from the audience. We hope this session will encourage other faculty to engage in activities such as using case studies in their own classes. **(Panel Discussion)**

Students Perceptions of Effective Use of myCourses

WALLACE-3440

1:30-2:20 PM

Neil Hair (CTL)
Partnering with Student Government, CTL surveyed student perceptions of faculty's effective use of myCourses. Over 400 qualitative responses were obtained and coded. The study highlighted a range of key features and innovative examples of the ways faculty super-users at RIT are using the system to create an effective learning experience. Attendees will learn more about what students are looking for, how they can better structure their learning experience within the system, and identify innovative features of myCourses, all from a student perspective. **(Presentation)**

TRACKS: Teaching with Technology ■ Engaging Learning Experiences ■ Advancing Faculty Success ■

Wednesday, May 14th

Happy Students, Happy Teachers: Strategies for Reducing Stress for Students and Faculty

WALLACE-3490

1:30-2:20 PM

Jessamy Comer (COLA)
College courses often produce large amounts of stress for both faculty and students. Faculty often feel burdened with course preparation, grading, and e-mails from students, and students feel overwhelmed with the workload required of their courses. In this session, we will discuss research on the impact of stress in the classroom and the most common sources of this stress. We will also provide examples of practical strategies that can be used to help reduce the stress burden for both students and faculty. **(Presentation)**

From Routine to Riveting: Ten Tips for Engaging Presentations

WALLACE-3420

2:30-3:20 PM

Jenna Sadue (CTL), Sandi Connelly (COS)
Want to transform your presentations from routine to riveting? This interactive, faculty-requested session reveals ten proven strategies to elevate engagement and captivate your audience. Through hands-on activities, real-world examples, and lively discussion, we will explore what works and what does not when keeping students engaged. Bring your experiences, challenges, and best ideas—leave with a powerful toolkit of presentation techniques that will energize your teaching and keep students tuned in! **(Presentation)**

Roll a Persuasion Check: Using Games to Teach Rhetorical Appeal

WALLACE-3430

2:30-3:20 PM

Philip Anselmo (SOIS)
This workshop would be helpful for instructors interested in more engaging and hands-on ways to use writing, both in the classroom and on assignments — whether that writing is creative, journalistic, academic, or technical. In this workshop, we will use concepts and tools from the world of tabletop role-playing games (TTRPGs) — as well as from theatrical performance — to invent a set of authors and audiences, then "play through" various scenarios. Although we will be playing a game, the experience will be rooted in rhetorical theory and designed to get us (and our students) thinking more intentionally about how much a writer's success depends on audience appeal. **(Workshop)**

Kritik in the Classroom: A Hands-On Guide to Peer Assessment

WALLACE-3440

2:30-3:20 PM

Garret Arcoraci (GCCIS)
Looking to improve student engagement, encourage critical thinking, and streamline peer assessment? Kritik is a peer-review platform that goes beyond traditional grading, helping students engage in meaningful feedback while reinforcing their learning. In this session, I'll share how I've integrated Kritik into my courses at RIT, highlighting its impact on student learning and collaboration. We'll go over how the platform works—from assignment setup to evaluation and feedback—and discuss best practices to maximize its potential. **(Presentation)**

Evolving AI Together: A Faculty–Student Discussion on Embracing AI in the Classroom

WALLACE-3490

2:30-3:20 PM

Matthew Vollmer (SCB), Bella Blood (Student), Mickeyas Bayuh (Student), Evan Ranney (Student), Harrison Oliver (Student), Felix-Nadine Herweg (Student)
In this dynamic session, faculty and students come together as co-learners to explore the promises and pitfalls of generative AI in an academic setting. Our student panelists will discuss how they integrate AI tools into their study routines while reflecting on best practices and ethical boundaries. Faculty moderators will probe deeply, asking the tough questions: how can AI enhance students' critical thinking, and how might it undermine learning? This conversation will illuminate pathways for both students and educators to harness AI responsibly, collaboratively, and creatively in the classroom. By the end of this session, we expect to have "some" clarity on how instructors can adapt AI into their pedagogy to help students reach their learning objectives and be better prepared for their future careers. **(Panel Discussion)**

Program DETAILS

Registration & Breakfast

SHED-1300 Maker Showcase

8:00-8:25 AM

Start your day by checking in to pick up your name tag—if you haven't already—and the day's schedule, including maps. Enjoy a complimentary continental breakfast as you get ready for the sessions ahead.

Put your Own Mask on First: Flourishing as Faculty in Higher Education

SHED-3300

8:30-9:50 AM

Opening Address by Prabu David, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & David C. Munson Jr. RIT President
Keynote by Marina Smitherman, Interim Dean, School of Health Professions, Dalton State College
Faculty in higher education face unique challenges that can impact their health and wellness, from managing heavy workloads or student crises to navigating the complexities of juggling professional and personal responsibilities. This interactive keynote explores the seven dimensions of health and wellness; physical, emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, occupational, and environmental, and their interconnected role in fostering holistic wellbeing.

Using active learning techniques, participants will engage in reflective exercises, collaborative discussions, and practical goal-setting activities to explore strategies for enhancing their personal and professional wellness.

By the end of the session, attendees will leave with actionable insights and personalized goals to prioritize their wellness and flourish in their professional journeys.

Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) @ RIT

WALLACE-3420

10:00-10:50 AM

Joe Geigel (GCCIS), Erika Mesh (GCCIS)
Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) is an initiative that allows students to participate in long-term, faculty-led projects and receive academic credit for doing so. RIT joined an international consortium of schools employing this methodology in summer 2023 and ran its first set of VIP courses in the 2024-5 academic year. In this presentation, we will describe the VIP program, providing details on how the program is implemented at RIT and answer questions for faculty looking to get involved in the initiative by running their own VIP projects. Techniques and methods employed by existing VIP projects will be presented. **(Presentation)**

Teaching that Evolves with Technology

WALLACE-3430

10:00-10:50 AM

Colin Mathers (COLA), Bob Shea (COLA)
As technological change offers more tools for learners, instructors will want to help learners make the most of those tools and have a clear understanding of their limitations. In addition, teaching that evolves with technology sometimes also calls for a paradigm shift in teaching practices. In recent years, technologies that facilitate content delivery outside of class have motivated a movement toward flipped classrooms. How should classroom teaching evolve in response to the emergence of generative AI? Is another paradigm shift warranted? This workshop uses active learning to explore possibilities of rethinking our role in classrooms in the era of generative AI. **(Workshop)**

Team Up for Learning: Active, Flipped & Student-Driven

WALLACE-3440

10:00-10:50 AM

Cindy Tawaf (CET)
This workshop will provide ideas for improving student performance and engagement in small and large format classrooms. The methods include active and flipped learning, working in teams, and gathering regular student feedback and using it to gauge comprehension, identify students needing additional support and gather ideas for ongoing improvements.

The workshop will include the following activities:
- Concept Mapping Activity (team)
- In-class Exercise in teams at whiteboards (team)
- Feedback Survey (individual + everyone)
- LA/TA Discussion, including their student perspective (everyone)

Workshop participants will receive materials for the Concept Mapping Activity, other making/building hands-on activities, and survey examples that they can adapt for their own classes. **(Workshop)**

Thursday, May 15th

Using Improv for Student Engagement and Learning

WALLACE-3420

11:00-11:50 AM

Israa Thiab (SCB)
This interactive workshop introduces educators to improv-based strategies that encourage active participation, critical thinking, and adaptability in the classroom. Through hands-on activities, participants will explore ways to create a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment. Improv can help students build confidence, improve communication skills, and develop problem-solving abilities, all while having fun!

No prior improv experience needed. Come ready to play, experiment, and transform your teaching approach with the power of improv.
(Workshop)

Tutorial: Gradescope Autograders for Programming Assignments

WALLACE-3430

11:00-11:50 PM

Richard Lange (GCCIS)
Gradescope provides an "autograder" option for programming assignments. Students interact with the autograder by uploading their programming assignment solutions, and they then get nearly instant feedback about what is working and what isn't. I will share information about how to set it up from the instructor or grader perspective, the new lifecycle of developing and updating assignments, and some statistics about how students have felt about this type of assignment. **(Presentation)**

Using Starfish as an Instructional Tool for Student Engagement and Success

WALLACE-3440

11:00-11:50 PM

Sue Frizzell (University Advising Office), Lynne Mazadoorian (University Advising Office)
This session will explore best practices for integrating Starfish feedback into course design and focus on three areas to effectively leverage Starfish alerts: timing, tone, and content.

In this interactive presentation, participants will:
• Consider how early interventions through Starfish can help support student success and engagement
• Examine how to deliver communications at key points during the term to foster a positive learning experience
• Discuss strategies to encourage student participation and growth
(Presentation)

We Asked, You Answered: Insights from the 24-25 Academic Technology Survey

WALLACE-3490

11:00-11:50 PM

Jenna Sadue (CTL), Ian Webber (CTL)
The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at RIT invites all faculty to join us for a discussion about the future of academic technology at RIT. We will present key findings and recommendations from the faculty AY 2024-25 Academic Technology Survey, including feedback on current technologies - like myCourses- and opinions on future platforms to explore. The CTL academic technology team will also share our academic technology plans, including classroom technology modernization efforts, myCourses user interface upgrades, and potential investigations in student response systems and peer evaluation tools. We want your involvement in our technology selection process - join us for this important discussion! **(Presentation)**

Lunch

SHED 3rd floor Lobby

12:00-12:50 PM

Enjoy a delicious RIT catered Taste of Italy buffet, featuring a variety of Italian-inspired dishes. The buffet will be served in the SHED 3rd Floor Lobby, with seating available nearby in SHED Room 3300. Relax, recharge, and connect with fellow attendees over a flavorful midday meal.

Program DETAILS

Strategies to Help with Larger Classes (in the SHED)

SHED-3350

1:00-1:50 PM

Mario Gomes (KGCOE)
Teaching a large class can be intimidating but there are some things that can be done to make a smoother transition from a multi-section model to a single larger classroom. I'll discuss how to:
- increase student engagement with any TA's that are associated with the course
- use the dual screen setup and devices student's already have communicate effectively
- promote a sense of belonging for students in a large classroom
- use Gradescope to reduce administrative overhead and improve grading consistency
- employ targeted kinesthetic activities (in quantity) that are closely related to course content to engage students.

(Presentation)

Supporting Faculty in Designing Inclusive and Effective Presentation Assignments

WALLACE-3430

1:00-1:50 PM

Elizabeth Reeves O'Connor (COLA)
Presentations and speeches are powerful ways for students to demonstrate learning while building critical thinking and professional skills. However, faculty often face challenges in designing assignments, fostering engagement, and assessing presentations, especially when ensuring accessibility for diverse learners, including neurodivergent, Deaf and HH, and disabled students. This roundtable will provide a collaborative space for faculty to discuss challenges, exchange ideas, and explore best practices for designing inclusive and accessible oral communication assignments. We will cover strategies for assignment design, grading criteria, and leveraging peer consultations from the RIT Expressive Communication Center (ECC). Attendees will leave with practical tools, inclusive teaching strategies, and greater awareness of ECC resources to enhance student presentations for all learners. **(Roundtable Discussion)**

Creating Computer Animations for Improved Attention and Comprehension

WALLACE-3440

1:00-1:50 PM

Thomas Kinsman (GCCIS)
Do you ever wish you could create the exact precisely perfect picture or diagram for a talk? Typically, PowerPoint or Keynote is used to hand-make diagrams, which requires significant time investment. However, with a little programming knowledge, you can create precise images and diagrams. Furthermore, the ability to create animations shows how changes occur over time and avoids losing students when switching between presentation slides. The motions and changes direct student attention to specific regions, information, and concepts. Students understand the key points much faster.

In this workshop participants will be given example demonstration programs to create dozens of images and diagrams automatically. Attendees can then extend these concepts for use in presentations, web pages, LaTeX, myCourses quizzes, written quizzes, or wherever you need a precise diagram. **(Presentation)**

Thursday, May 15th

Breaking Through Barriers: Advancing Faculty Wellness with the Immunity to Change Framework

WALLACE-3490

1:00-1:50 PM

Marina Smitherman (Keynote Speaker)
Building on the insights from the keynote "Flourishing in Higher Education," this follow-up workshop offers a deeper dive into personal wellness planning using Kegan and Lahey's Immunity to Change framework. While many of us set wellness goals with the best of intentions, unseen internal barriers often prevent real change. This hands-on session helps participants identify those hidden assumptions and competing commitments or behaviors that can derail progress toward sustainable wellbeing.

Participants will revisit the seven dimensions of wellness and select one area where they want to experience meaningful improvement. Through reflective guided exercises, and peer coaching, each attendee will map out their own Immunity to Change diagnostic, shining a light on the beliefs and actions that hold them back. With the support of facilitators and colleagues, participants will reframe these internal roadblocks and build concrete strategies for making lasting change.

Ideal for faculty members who are ready to move from intention to action, this workshop empowers participants to take control of their wellness journey and model a culture of health and balance across their institutions. **(Workshop)**

Panel Discussion: Teaching Excellence - Two Decades of Perspective

Sklarsky Glass Box Theatre, SHED-1380

2:00-2:50 PM

Moderator: Neil Hair
Panelists: Satish Kandlikar, James Mallory, David Neumann, Michael Yacci, Jayanti Venkataraman

This session features five distinguished recipients of the Eisenhart Award for Excellence in Teaching who will examine the evolution of pedagogical practices in higher education and at RIT. The panelists will address perceived shifts in teaching and learning at RIT spanning their twenty years since their recognition of RIT's highest teaching honor. What has changed? What has remained the same? How will things look moving forward? What are their joys and concerns? Join this engaging group for a substantive discussion on educational excellence over the years at our institution.

Reception

SHED-A950, Atrium

3:00-5:00 PM

Join us in the SHED Atrium (Room A950) for a relaxed reception to close out the day. Enjoy an open bar along with a selection of cheese and crackers as you unwind and connect with fellow attendees in a casual, welcoming atmosphere.

TRACKS: Teaching with Technology ■ Engaging Learning Experiences ■ Advancing Faculty Success ■

Program DETAILS

AI in Practice Series

Note: Participants are advised to bring laptops so that they may more effectively engage with some of the hands-on activities in the various sessions.

Registration & Breakfast

SHED-1300 Maker Showcase

8:00-8:25 AM

Premium Continental Breakfast
Welcome to the final day! Be sure to check in at the registration table to pick up your name tag—if you haven't already—and the day's schedule, including maps. A complimentary premium continental breakfast will be available to help you start the morning refreshed and ready for the sessions ahead.

Keynote: The Automation of Scientific Discovery with Artificial Intelligence

SHED-3300

8:30-9:50 AM

Opening Remarks by Chris Collison, RIT Director of AI Hub & Initiatives, Jane King Harris Endowed Professor, COS
Keynote by Andrew White, Co-founder & Head of Science, FutureHouse
The intellectual bottlenecks of science are growing with exponential growth in research paper counts, complexity of papers, and a concurrent decline in scientific productivity and funding. The next major breakthroughs will increasingly rely on automation of the stages of scientific discovery. One approach has been scientific agents - AI models equipped with tools and data that a human expert would have. These are increasingly automating tasks such as literature research, hypothesis generation, and data analysis. They can scale in dimensions beyond what has been previously possible, like checking every claim of a paper against all previous literature for disagreement. But the most surprising recent progress has been on reasoning models that can be tuned to spend longer thinking on problems than a human might, and are dramatically saturating most benchmarks for intelligence. These models will disrupt the current trajectory of AI in STEM, and I'll share how they're inverting the current mismatch between academia and industry. Finally, I will discuss the changing role of an academic in an increasingly automated discovery world, and what the training will look like for the next generation.

"Ask Me Almost Anything": Demystifying GenAI with Science, Art, and Answers

SHED-3300

10:00-11:15 AM

Chris Collison (COS), Andrew White (FutureHouse), Shaun Foster (CAD)1
In this follow-up to the keynote, join three voices from science, design, and instruction for a dynamic, visual Q&A. We'll explain what's under the hood of GenAI — from tokenization and embeddings to temperature and transformers — and respond to audience curiosities with interactive demos. Think of it as ChatGPT with a pulse, tailored for faculty. No math, no jargon — just clarity.

Everyday AI: Do More with Ease

SHED-3350

10:00-11:15 AM

Quinn Karley (ITS), Garret Arcoraci (GCCIS)
Start using generative AI to make your academic workday smoother and more efficient. From organizing information to drafting communications, recommendation letters, managing meeting notes and agendas to brainstorming creative prompts and ways to use Gen AI to Project Management and building out presentations. This session highlights how Google Gemini, Google NotebookLM, Zoom AI Companion and Micosoft Copilot can help reduce friction in your daily tasks.

Beneath the Bot: Building Responsible AI Tools from Scratch

SHED-3300

11:30-12:45 PM

Chris Collison (COS, AI HUB), Ryan Tolnay (RIT Libraries), Gregory Ojiem (Computer Science student)
Peek under the hood of a real Research Amplifier bot — from scraping and APIs to RAG and vector search — then challenge its ethics. In this show-and-tell-me-why-it's-safe session, we'll walk through system design and put it under scrutiny: where did the data come from? How do we protect it? Can this be trusted? Featuring red-teaming, ethical interrogation, and a dose of honesty.

Friday, May 16th

From Prompt to Performance: Build & Optimize Your Own GPT

SHED-3350

11:30-12:45 PM

Jennifer Freer (RIT Libraries)
Want to build your own assistant, helper, or coach? This session walks you through how to use OpenAI's GPT Builder and Google's Gem Manager to create a custom "chatbot" — no code required. We'll cover how to write instructions that drive behavior, manage privacy settings, and test performance. You'll leave with a working prototype and a roadmap for further refinement.

Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) and the Griffiss Institute Series

Research Collaborations with the Griffiss Institute and the Air Force Research Laboratory

WALLACE-3430

10:00-10:50

Michael Feng (Griffiss Institute), and Ryan Toner (AFRL)
Representatives from AFRL-Rome and the Griffiss Institute will provide an overview of their mission, research priorities, and the various pathways through which the RIT community can engage—from collaborative faculty research to student internships. This is an excellent opportunity to learn how your expertise may align with federal research priorities in areas like AI, cybersecurity, data science, and human-centered technology.

Faculty Insights in working with AFRL + Q&A

WALLACE-3430

11:00-11:50 AM

Cory Merkel, KGCOE; Alexander Ororbia, COS; Seth Hubbard, COS
Hear from RIT faculty who have partnered with AFRL, sharing firsthand insights into how these collaborations began, what they've entailed, and how others can get involved. This informal discussion will include Q&A and offer practical advice on navigating proposal processes, working with government sponsors, and building sustainable research partnership.

TRACKS: Understanding AI (Theory, Ethics & Systems) Hands-on AI (Tools, Practice & Prototypes) AFRL /Griffiss Institute

RIT TEACHING CIRCLES

Teaching circles are faculty initiated and led discussion groups that meet regularly over a semester. They foster reflective practices about teaching and learning, and establish and strengthen relationships with colleagues across disciplines, colleges, and ranks.

rit.edu/teaching/teaching-circles-program

PLIG Poster Showcase

Active Learning (2024 PLIG)

Calculus B Materials Redesign
Susan Bateman, Carrie Lahnovych, Connie Fitch, Olga Tsukernik

Active Learning (2024 PLIG)

Development of Guided Examples and Hands-On Activities for Use in University Physics 2 Active Learning Classrooms
Michelle Chabot

Active Learning (2024 PLIG)

Re-Imagining a Graduate Developmental Psychology Course as an Online Active Learning Course
Jessamy Comer

Active Learning (2024 PLIG)

Individualized Cardstock Kinematic Mechanisms for large classrooms (theory and design)
Mario Gomes

Exploration Grant (2024 PLIG)

Improved Teaching Technology in the Jewelry and Metals Classroom
Laurel Fulton

Exploration Grant (2024 PLIG)

Experiential Learning and Beehive Sensor Data in a Non-Relational Database Course
Dean Ganskop

Exploration Grant (2024 PLIG)

Pilot Study for Writing Across Contexts and Time: A Longitudinal Study of Students' Perceptions and Educational Experiences with College-Level Writing
Matthew Houdek, David Yockel, Ruth Book

Exploration Grant (2024 PLIG)

Kinetic Artwork for Active Student Learning, Imagine-RIT (2025), and RIT Public Relations
Thomas Kinsman

Exploration Grant (2024 PLIG)

Expanding Advanced Computer-Aided Design Opportunities with Scrum
Kate Leipold

Exploration Grant (2024 PLIG)

Confronting Ableism in Public Speaking Instruction and Assessment
Elizabeth Reeves O'Connor

Exploration Grant (2024 PLIG)

3D Design and the SHED: Developing Curriculum and Content for Large Format Studios
Marissa Tirone

Exploration Grant (2024 PLIG)

Application of social design to environmental problem solving
Christy Tyler

Exploration Grant (2024 PLIG)

Catalyzing RIT: Establishing the Foundations of a Teaching Model for STEM Research Preparation
Obioma Uche, Jian Liu

SHED-3300

Generative AI (2024 PLIG)

Introducing Generative AI for Teaching and Learning Chemistry
Paul Craig, Ahmad Kirmani, Chris Collison

Generative AI (2024 PLIG)

Empowering Minds with AI: Innovating Education for a New Learning Paradigm
Shaun Foster

Generative AI (2024 PLIG)

Enhancing Writing Skills through Interactive Learning: A ChatGPT-Powered Writing Intensive Class
Julie Johannes

Generative AI (2024 PLIG)

Cross-Disciplinary, Introductory Undergraduate Seminar on Generative AI
Elizabeth Lawley

Generative AI (2024 PLIG)

Language Immersion: VR/AI Chatbot
Kevin LeBlevec

Generative AI (2024 PLIG)

Using ChatGPT for Undergraduate Data Science Education
Carlos Rivero

Generative AI (2024 PLIG)

Sketching and AI Visualization
Amos Scully

TAD (2024 PLIG)

SoFA Character Mosaic
Kevin Bauer, Mark Reisch, Atia Newman

TAD (2024 PLIG)

Designing and Delivering a course in Computational Music Theory and Computational Music Science
Thomas J. Borrelli

TAD (2024 PLIG)

Incorporating Mixed Reality (MR) to Robotics and Automation Course
MD Ahasan Habib

TAD (2024 PLIG)

Creating Character Skins for Games
Jesse O'Brien

TAD (2024 PLIG)

Integrating Gaming Animation and Architecture for the Preservation of Historic Sites
Atia Newman, Alissa De Wit-Paul

TAD (2024 PLIG)

Designing for Ephemeral Solids
Philip Szrama, Suzanne Peck

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