

2026 OFFICE OF ACADEMIC INNOVATION

SUMMER CONFERENCE

Human at the Core: Navigating AI in Higher Education

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3 -
THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 2026
8:30AM - 4:00PM



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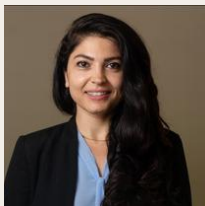
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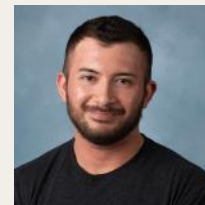
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KEYNOTE SPEAKER



DR. FRANK WUERTHWEIN

Director of the San Diego
Supercomputer Center, University of
California San Diego

Bio:

Frank Wuerthwein, Director of the San Diego Supercomputer Center, and Professor at UC San Diego. Dr. Wuerthwein received his PhD in physics from Cornell University, specializing in elementary particle physics, followed by a Millikan Fellowship at Caltech, and a junior faculty position at MIT. His interests today are in turning bytes into knowledge via data analysis and developing and operating globally distributed cyberinfrastructure to do so effectively.

DIGITAL ASSETS IN THE CLASSROOM, A REVOLUTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Abstract:

Digital Assets (Compute, Data, and AI) are revolutionizing what and how we teach in higher education. They bring us closer to the gold standard of education of a few students that actively engage with an instructor while at the same time maintaining economies of scale of hundreds to thousands of students per classroom. Initial evidence indicates substantial improvements of student engagement and learning outcomes, to the point where we predict that institutions that fail to adopt this trend will go bankrupt because nobody will want their education anymore. After arguing the above, we will show how every college in the nation can afford to embrace this trend and own the means of curriculum production and execution.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



DR. ANDREW CURRAH

Executive Leadership Executive,
Apple Inc.

Bio:

Dr. Andrew Currah is an Education Leadership Executive with Apple. Based in San Diego, he consults with higher education institutions across the US around the design and implementation of technology initiatives, with a current focus on expanding access to AI and Apple Intelligence. Prior to joining Apple, Andrew served as faculty in the Center for the Environment, University of Oxford. He holds an MA, MPhil and Ph.D. in economic geography from Downing College, University of Cambridge, England.

APPLE'S APPROACH TO AI: POSSIBILITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Abstract:

This session will provide an overview of Apple's approach to AI and explore opportunities for teaching, learning and research. In particular, the discussion will highlight Apple's integrated approach to hardware, software and services - and how this enables new AI-powered tools and workflows that are built around privacy and security. Participants will leave with practical examples and suggestions for developing their AI skills and maximizing the power of iPad and Mac in teaching, learning and general productivity.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



DR. TIFFANY ZHU

Assistant Professor, Global Ethics and
Technology, Old Dominion University

Bio:

Dr. Tiffany Zhu is an assistant professor of global ethics and technology in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Old Dominion University. Her research focuses on AI ethics and social epistemology, especially how generative AI represents social groups and social reality. She also studies normatively binding beliefs that hinder progress, including collective hypocrisy and forms of prejudice, and conducts empirical research in cognitive developmental psychology.

AI IMAGE GENERATORS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: PRACTICES AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Abstract:

As generative artificial intelligence tools powered by large language models become increasingly ubiquitous, educators are experimenting with new ways to integrate them into the classroom, such as creating teaching materials and supporting student creativity. While genAI tools may have the potential to enhance certain aspects of engagement and learning when integrated through intentional instructional design, guidance on how to use them effectively and responsibly, particularly when it comes to text-to-image generation models, remains fragmented across disciplines.

DAY 1 SCHEDULE:

Wednesday, June 3, 2026

-  **8:30AM** Check In and Breakfast
-  **9:00AM** Welcome
Provost Terri Gomez and Dr. Olukemi Sawyerr
-  **9:30AM** Keynote Speaker: Dr. Frank Wuerthwein
Digital Assets in the Classroom, a Revolution in Higher Education
-  **10:30AM** Break
-  **10:45AM** Keynote Speaker: Dr. Andrew Currah
Apple's Approach to AI: Possibilities for Higher Education
-  **11:45AM** Lunch
-  **1:00PM** Concurrent Sessions
 - Integrating AI Tools in Curriculum and Instruction: Hybrid Models and Applied STEM Strategies
 - Coding with AI: Codex for Research and Coursework Workshop
-  **2:00PM** Break
-  **2:15PM** Concurrent Sessions
 - AI Tools in the Research Process: Exploring Consensus and Research Rabbit
 - From Ideas to Impact Outside the Classroom: Using AI in your Daily Work
-  **3:15PM** Wrap Up

AI IN THE CLASSROOM

Day 1: Wednesday, June 3rd

Building 162 Room 1001

1:00PM-2:00PM

Integrating AI Tools in Curriculum and Instruction: Hybrid Models and Applied STEM Strategies

Speakers:

Dr. Mingheng Li, Professor, Chemical and Materials Engineering, College of Engineering

Dr. Shelli Wynants, Quality Online Inclusive Learning Design Coordinator, Faculty Development Center, Child and Adolescent Studies, Cal State Fullerton

Moderators:

Dr. Laila Jallo, Chair and Professor, Chemical & Materials Engineering, College of Engineering

Erick Zelaya, Sr. Multimedia Developer, Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence



This session brings together two presenters to share practical approaches for integrating generative AI into teaching across disciplines. Participants will explore a low-barrier hybrid model where AI supports low-stakes practice and feedback while instructors focus on higher-order thinking and applied work, along with examples of AI use in an applied STEM (chemical engineering) course. Attendees will leave with concrete strategies to enhance student learning, confidence, and engagement while maintaining the central role of instructor expertise.



2:15PM-3:15PM

AI Tools in the Research Process: Exploring Consensus and Research Rabbit

Shonn Haren, University Library

Dr. Indira Guzman, Assistant Professor, Computer Information Systems, College of Business Administration



In this hands-on workshop, participants will be introduced to two AI tools for finding and tracking citations: Consensus, and Research Rabbit. These tools can be very useful for preparing and organizing literature reviews and other sections in a research project. Participants are strongly encouraged to bring their own devices for exploration of these tools and to create accounts in them ahead of time.

AI OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Day 1: Wednesday, June 3rd

Building 162 Room 1002

1:00PM-2:00PM

Coding with AI: Codex for Research and Coursework Workshop

Dr. Yufan Lin, Assistant Professor, International Business and Marketing, College of Business Administration

Dr. Ken Zhang, Assistant Professor, Technology and Operations, College of Business Administration



In this hands-on workshop, Dr. Ken Zhang introduces participants to AI assisted coding with Codex, focusing on practical techniques for integrating AI into research. Participants will learn effective prompting, structured workflows, and best practices for using AI in coding and debugging and development tasks to support research and teaching

2:15PM-3:15PM

From Ideas to Impact Outside the Classroom: Using AI in Your Daily Work

Speakers:

Kevin Malone, Associate Director, Student Health Services

Jason Mejia Lu, Director, Bronco Leadership Center

Alice Tokunaga, Administrative Support Coordinator, College of Engineering

Moderators

Dr. Laila Jallo, Chair and Professor, Chemical & Materials Engineering, College of Engineering

Weston Prisbrey, Dean of Students



In this interactive session, staff from across campus will share how they're using AI in their day-to-day work and help you explore ways to apply it to your own role - whether for scheduling, data analysis, or streamlining operations. Bring your device and a project you'd like to improve using AI.

DAY 2 SCHEDULE:

Thursday, June 4th, 2026

-  **8:30AM** Breakfast
-  **9:00AM** Keynote Speaker: Dr. Tiffany Zhu
AI Image Generators in Higher Education:
Practices and Ethical Considerations
-  **10:00AM** Break
-  **10:15AM** Concurrent Sessions
 - AI in Research: Smarter Drones, Safer Aircraft, and Faster Research
 - Case Studies from Units Using AI Effectively
-  **11:15PM** Concurrent Sessions:
 - Faculty Panel: Navigating AI Policies in the Classroom
 - AI in Practice: A Community Discussion
-  **12:15PM** Lunch
-  **1:15PM** Joint Session
Industry Panel: AI Research Resources
-  **2:15PM** Break
-  **2:30PM** Joint Session
Student Voices of Innovation: Solving Business and Societal Challenges with AI
-  **3:30PM** Wrap Up and Survey
Dr. Nina Abramzon and Dr. Olukemi Sawyerr

AI IN THE CLASSROOM

Day 2: Thursday, June 4th

Building 162 Room 1001

10:15AM-11:15AM

AI in Research: Smarter Drones, Safer Aircraft, and Faster Research

Curtis Carpenter, Director, Advanced Computing, IT&IP

Dr. Shokoufeh Mirzaei, Chair and Professor, Industrial and Manufacturing, College of Engineering



Artificial intelligence is no longer just a buzzword – it is actively reshaping how engineers solve complex, real-world problems. In this talk, we explore two hands-on applications: predicting drone flight trajectories and forecasting structural loads on aircraft. Both challenges require understanding patterns that evolve over time, and we show how a type of AI called a Gated Recurrent Unit (GRU) tackles this elegantly – no prior AI background needed. We also introduce the newly launched campus computing cluster and demonstrate through direct comparison how it dramatically reduces model training time, turning what once took hours into minutes. Whether you are curious about AI, thinking of applying it in your own research, or simply want to see what is now possible with resources available right here on campus – this talk is for you.

11:15AM-12:15AM

Faculty Panel: Navigating AI Policies in the Classroom

Speakers:

Devon Hackleton, Lecturer, English Composition

Dr. Dana Marshall, Assistant Professor, Communications

Cindy Cordoba, Assistant Professor, Apparel Merchandising and Management

Dr. Randy Stein, Associate Professor, Marketing

Moderator:

Dr. Laura Massa, Associate Vice President, Academic Programs

At a time when AI tools are ubiquitous and reshaping expectations around student work, instructors are asking not just if but how to address AI in their syllabi and classes. Faculty are taking a range of thoughtful, pedagogically grounded approaches, from prohibiting AI use to intentionally integrating it into learning activities. This panel highlights that spectrum of practice through reflections on policies, assignments, classroom conversations, and ongoing dilemmas. Rather than prescribing a single approach, the discussion will explore key considerations, tradeoffs, and examples that faculty may weigh in shaping their own course policies and pedagogies.

AI OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Day 2: Thursday, June 4th

Building 162 Room 1002

10:15AM-11:15AM

Scaling Care: Human Centered Student Support in the Age of AI

Dr. DeVoneia Jordan, Lead Career Coach, College of Science
Beth Lee, Lead Career Coach, College of Business Administration
Cherrie Peters, Lead Career Coach, College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences



In this session we explore how the Career Center is using AI-enabled tools such as uConnect, VMock, Big Interview, and Focus 2 to expand student support, improve operational efficiency, and strengthen career readiness services at scale. The session will also consider how human-centered guidance, student touchpoint data, and digital badging can work together to support students in an evolving workforce.



11:15AM-12:15AM

AI in Practice: A Community Discussion

Dr. Emily Kiresich, Associate Professor, Nutrition and Food Science

This interactive session invites faculty, and staff to share experiences, questions, and challenges related to using AI in daily work. Participants are encouraged to bring their own use cases, concerns, and needs, creating a space for open dialogue and peer learning. Through guided discussion, the session will highlight practical examples of how AI has been used effectively, while also addressing common uncertainties and barriers. The goal is to foster a collaborative exchange of ideas and identify opportunities for responsible and impactful AI use across campus.

JOINT SESSIONS

Thursday, June 4th, 2026

Building 162 Room 1001

1:15pm-2:15pm

INDUSTRY PANEL AI RESEARCH RESOURCE

Speakers: Cris Lucero - Google | Jase Nosal - Supply Chain Optics |
Johans Acosta - Splunk | Alessandra Gonzalez - CrowdStrike

Moderator: Dr. Amar Raheja, Professor, Computer Science, College of Science



This session features case studies from industry partners on effective AI use in real-world settings, with a focus on how to prepare students for the workplace. Participants will learn how AI is used in industry and how academic programs can better equip students with the skills needed to use these tools responsibly and effectively.

JOINT SESSIONS

Thursday, June 4th, 2026

Building 162 Room 1001

2:30pm-3:30pm

STUDENT VOICES OF INNOVATION: SOLVING BUSINESS AND SOCIETAL CHALLENGES WITH AI

Speakers:

Timothy Gaines - Technical Operations Mgmt

Labibah Zaman - Business Analytics

Anderson Edmond - Computer Science

Akari Narikawa - Computer Science

Aung Phone Myat - Mechanical Engineering

Yaza Myo Tun - Business Analytics

Aspen Knox - Mechanical Engineering

Victor Lin - Digital Supply Chain Mgmt

Moderator: **Dr. Yufan Lin**, Assistant Professor, College of Business Administration



This session features student projects developed during an intensive AI Hackathon, followed by a moderated student panel discussion. Students will share their experiences, challenges, and successes in applying AI to solve real-world business and societal problems under time and resource constraints. Panelists will discuss innovation, teamwork, ethical considerations, and impact, offering firsthand insights into how students translate AI concepts into meaningful and responsible solutions



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all attendees, speakers, facilitators, and partners of the Academic Innovation Summer Conference! Your active participation, thoughtful contributions, and engagement helped make the conference a meaningful and successful gathering for Cal Poly Pomona and CSU colleagues.

Through hands-on sessions, insightful dialogue, and shared exploration of artificial intelligence in teaching, research, and student success, you helped create a collaborative environment centered on ethical innovation, workforce preparation, and keeping people at the core of an AI-enabled future. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to the organizing committee and support staff for their dedication, planning, and hard work in bringing this conference to life. Thank you for being part of this important conversation, and we look forward to continued collaboration and engagement in advancing academic innovation across our community.



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