THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Find insights to improve teaching and learning across your campus. Delivered on Thursdays. To read this newsletter as soon as it sends, sign up to receive it in your email inbox.

Sign Up

JULY 20, 2023

SHARE

From: Beth McMurtrie

Subject: Teaching: Preparing yourself for AI in the classroom

This week, I:

- Describe an online training program to help faculty understand AI.
- Share more resources around AI.
- Point you to three conferences on AI in teaching.
- Ask if you have found an effective way to use office hours — or get students to attend them.

Learning about AI

Now that summer is here, colleges have some breathing room to reflect on the first semester under ChatGPT and to plan for the fall. Recently I asked readers to tell us what is happening in their department, school, or campus when it comes to AI. I wanted to know who is creating new coursework or redesigning courses to respond to the existence of these tools.

At Auburn University, the Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning has produced an eight-module asynchronous course, Teaching With AI & Auburn. The center plans to offer the training to

other institutions in the Southeastern Conference and beyond.

Many colleges offered webinars and workshops this spring to start the conversation on campus around AI. But what stood out to me about Auburn's training program is how comprehensive it is. I spoke with Asim Ali, executive director of the Biggio Center, to find out more.

It turns out Auburn has some advantages that helped it move quickly. Ali was the founding director of Auburn Online, for example, so he has both the background and staffing to produce professionally done, self-paced courses for faculty members.

"They can engage on their own time at the level they're ready for, which I think is very important for transformational tools," Ali says. "It can't be the firehose, come and get all the information at once."

Auburn's modules cover the following questions:

- What do I need to know about AI?
- What are the ethical considerations in a higher-ed context?
- How will AI tools affect the courses I teach?
- How are students using AI tools, and how can I partner with my students?
- How do I need to rethink exams, papers, and projects I assign?
- How do I redesign my courses in the wake of AI disruption?
- What other AI tools or capabilities are coming, and how can I design for them?
- What conversations need to happen in my department or discipline, and what is my role?

Ali says he hopes this kind of training can help move the conversation around AI from one of fear to understanding. His aim isn't to encourage faculty members to embrace AI in the classroom — there are plenty of times where its use is inappropriate — but rather to understand how to work with it or around it. About 400 people — a quarter of the Auburn faculty — are already enrolled, he says.

"Our ultimate goal as faculty," he says, "is to ready our students to have the tools they need to face the challenges of the world they are going to be living in."

Ali says the program will be available to institutions within the Southeastern Conference in early August, and then to other institutions — at a modest cost — after that. If you want to find out more, write to the Biggio Center at biggio@auburn.edu.

Thank you to everyone who wrote in. And if your campus or organization has developed a plan to provide faculty members with training around AI, please write to me, at beth.mcmurtrie@chronicle.com, and your ideas may appear in a future newsletter.

Reader AI resources

In my last newsletter I shared a paper on how to use ChatGPT in teaching. Here are two more, suggested by Kevin R. Guidry, associate director for educational assessment at the University of Delaware's Center for Teaching & Assessment of Learning:

- How to Learn and Teach Economics With Large Language Models, Including GPT (preprint by Tyler Cowen and Alexander Tabarrok at George Mason University)
- Using ChatGPT and Other Large Language Model (LLM) Applications for Academic Paper Assignments (preprint by Andreas Jungherr at the University of Bamberg)

Conferences on teaching and AI

This spring saw a slew of webinars designed to help people get their heads around generative AI. Now several groups are organizing national conferences, hoping to bring together experts with learners. Here are a few that have come across my radar.

"AI x Education" is a free, student-run virtual conference. It will "strive to put a spotlight on the student perspective," as it looks at how higher-ed and K-12 educators will need to adapt to AI. The conference runs August 5-6.

"Teaching & Learning With AI" is an in-person conference hosted by the Karen L. Smith Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning and the Division of Digital Learning at the University of Central Florida. It will run September 24-25, in Orlando. Designed specifically for faculty, staff, and administrators around the use of AI in the classroom.

"Writing, Thinking, and Learning With AI: Exploring Relationships of Rhetoric and Artificial Intelligence" is a virtual conference hosted by the SUNY Council on Writing and the program in writing and rhetoric at Stony Brook University. It will run October 13–14, and they're taking calls for proposals through August 14.

Office hours

Have you found a creative way to use office hours to support students' learning? Do you have a good approach for getting to know students a bit better in this setting? How do you describe office hours to your students, and what (if anything) do you do to encourage them to attend? Has pandemic teaching — or something else — shifted your approach to office hours? Beckie is working on a story about how professors can make the most of this time and would love to hear from you. Email her at beckie.supiano@chronicle.com, or fill out this form. Thanks, as always, for your help!

Thanks for reading Teaching. If you have suggestions or ideas, please feel free to email us at beckie.supiano@chronicle.com or beth.mcmurtrie@chronicle.com.

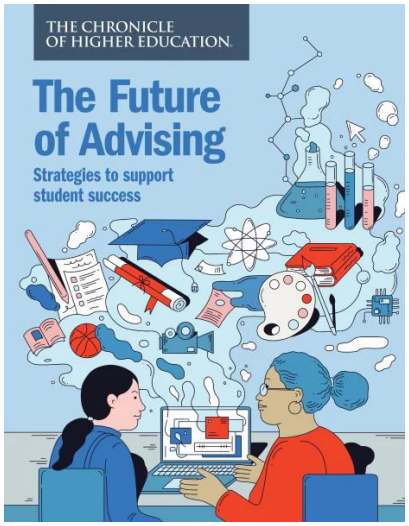
— Beth

Learn more about our Teaching newsletter, including how to contact us, at the Teaching newsletter archive page.

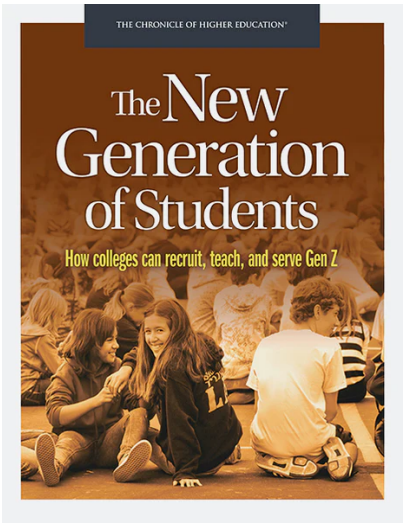
Beth McMurtrie

Beth McMurtrie is a senior writer for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, where she writes about the future of learning and technology's influence on teaching. In addition to her reported stories, she helps write the weekly Teaching newsletter about what works in and around the classroom. Email her at beth.mcmurtrie@chronicle.com, and follow her on Twitter @bethmcmurtrie.

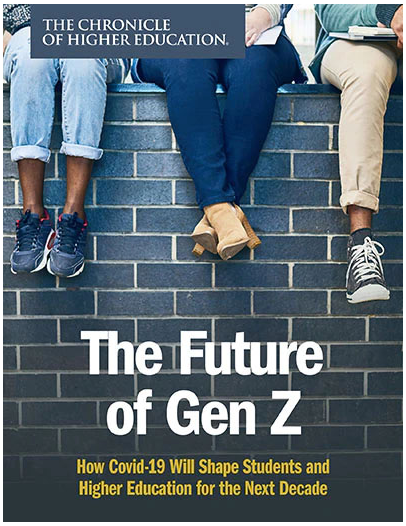
IN THE CHRONICLE STORE



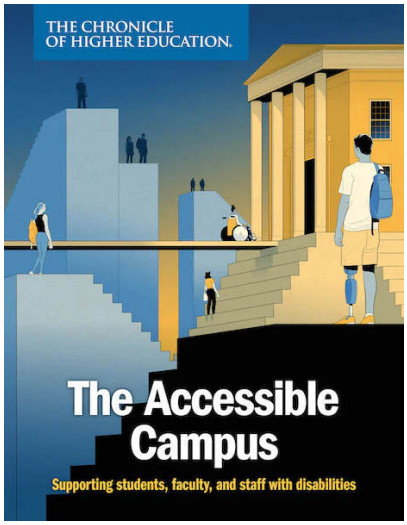
The Future of Advising



The New Generation of Students



The Future of Gen Z



The Accessible Campus

1255 23rd Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20037
© 2023 The Chronicle of Higher Education