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CCPI ATE STEM
Achieving Excellence in Workforce Education

CCPI-CAST HOST EXPLAINS AI FOCUSED WEBINAR SERIES

Dr. Elizabeth K. Hawthorne, cybersecurity professor and graduate program director at Northeastern University's Arlington, Virginia campus, instigated CCPI-STEM's leaders' decision to provide programming about artificial intelligence (AI) in fall 2025.

Hawthorne has been the host of CCPI-STEM's webcasts since the project began with an Advanced Technological Education (ATE) grant from the National Science Foundation in 2021. She is also a co-principal investigator of CCPI-STEM. Her expertise in cybersecurity education coupled with her experience as a community college educator—Hawthorne was senior professor of computer science and cybersecurity at Union College in New Jersey for 26 years—means she is well informed about AI, its evolving role in workplaces, and the important technician education work of science, technology, engineering and mathematics educators at community colleges. "AI is coming fast and furious, and colleges need to get engaged if they hope to shape this new technology in an ethical and responsible way. Students are already using AI," Hawthorne said.

She points out that an Insider Higher Education survey, College Students' Views on AI, found that students are concerned that faculty knowledge and competency in using AI tools are insufficient. Students are concerned about the quality of education, proper AI integration, and the loss of essential skills.

"CCPI-STEM leaders agree that community colleges have a moral responsibility to educate their students that best supports their potential employment in an AI-enabled workplace. CCPI-STEM leaders are also aware that community college educators and administrators are hungry for guidance on how to incorporate AI technologies into teaching and learning as well as administrative processes," Hawthorne said.

CCPI-STEM's AI in STEM Education four-part webinar series in fall 2025 responds to both community college students' and educators' needs.

The August CCPI-cast focused on how to use generative artificial intelligence (GAI) responsibly when developing any ATE grant proposal. The educational materials featured in this CCPI-cast were developed by the FORCCE-ATE in response to the December 14, 2023 NSF Notice to research community: Use of generative artificial intelligence technology in the NSF merit review process.

The September 2025 CCPI-cast "Transforming Teaching and Learning with AI: A Live Demonstration for Faculty, Staff, and Administrators" features Dr. John Sands, professor and chair of Computer Integrated Technologies at from Moraine Valley Community College in Illinois.

The October CCPI-cast features Dr. Antoino Delgado, vice president of Innovation and Tech Partnerships at Miami Dade College in Florida, explaining the professional development and resources offered by the National Applied AI Consortium. Miami Dade College is the host of consortium funded by the ATE program.

The November CCPI-cast "AI Excellence Institute" features Chris Prokes, director of the AI Excellence Institute at Sinclair Community College in Ohio.

See them all at ccpi-stem.org/webcasts-podcasts

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct. 17, 2025 | 1:00 pm ET
CCPI-Cast: The National Applied AI Consortium

Oct. 22-25, 2025
ACCT Leadership Congress

Oct. 31, 2025
ATE PI Conference: Affinity Group Meeting

Nov. 14, 2025 | 1:00 pm ET
CCPI-Cast: AI Excellence Institute

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BATON ROUGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE USES DATA AS BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

By Shalini Gogawale
Grants Administrator, Baton Rouge Community College

Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC) welcomed 40 representatives from 11 institutions in the Louisiana Community and Technical College System for the CCPI-STEM Southwest Regional Network's NSF ATE Grant Development Conference in March 2025.

The meeting was incredibly successful, resulting in a number of innovative ideas and outcomes.

It is a model for future CCPI-STEM regional meetings. The spirit of collaboration and openness among all the colleges was critical to the success of the meeting. The other noteworthy aspect of this gathering was the foundation upon which it was built: data. From start to finish, the agenda and the outcomes were informed by data.

As BRCC's grants administrator, I developed and distributed a pre-conference needs assessment in advance of the meeting, to ensure the agenda reflected participants' priorities. Responses revealed both enthusiasm and barriers: while faculty and staff were eager to pursue NSF ATE proposals, they faced constraints around time, staffing capacity, and financial processes. Nearly all also expressed a desire for stronger connections with colleagues and mentors, signaling high demand for collaboration and peer learning. These insights shaped the meeting's structure, guiding discussions and breakout sessions to focus on the real obstacles that colleges face. They also provided a roadmap for future initiatives and statewide collaboration.

From Ideas to Action with Data

With this groundwork in place, Dr. Jennifer Wimbish, chair of the CCPI-STEM Southwest Regional Network, led participants through Compression Planning, a structured process the identified three priorities: industry-driven credentials, stronger workforce partnerships, and statewide project management tools.
Discussion questions I developed to guide breakout sessions resulted in colleges sharing promising strategies such as proposal request forms, standardized budget templates, and boilerplate language.

The local focus was enriched by a national perspective. Shane Kirby, Director of Advancement Partnerships at Columbus State Community College, joined virtually to share lessons from Ohio's regional ATE collaborations. His remarks connected Louisiana's efforts to a larger national movement. Integration of pre- and post-conference surveys have created a continuous feedback cycle of meaningful dialogue and planning.

Building for the Future

Perhaps the most significant outcome was the commitment to launch a system-wide Grants Administrators Group to coordinate priorities, share resources, and foster collaboration across LCTCS. Combined with quarterly ATE support sessions, shared templates, and a collaboration tracker, this initiative will lay the groundwork for sustained statewide capacity building.

When vision is paired with perspective, when outcomes are anchored in data, and when evidence is translated into design, collaboration moves beyond aspiration and becomes action. This convening showed that when community colleges ground their work in data and collective problem-solving, the impact extends far beyond one workshop. It is now the foundation for a statewide culture of grant collaboration.

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BUILDING A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION IN LOUISIANA THROUGH CCPI-STEM

By Dr. Willie E. Smith, Sr.
Chancellor, Baton Rouge Community College

Collaboration. It's a concept that seems so simple but can be so elusive, especially in the competitive world of higher education.

Educational institutions within the same state often compete with each other for the best students, the most talented faculty, for limited state funds, and for highly competitive grants. So, they can sometimes be reluctant to collaborate.

But last spring, when Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC) hosted a CCPI-STEM in-person meeting of community and technical colleges from across Louisiana, collaboration proved to be the key to unlocking educational opportunities for students—and for colleges—in our state.

The CCPI-STEM meeting was a first-of-its-kind gathering that brought together chancellors, administrators, faculty, and grant professionals from the 11 campuses of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System to discuss STEM grants.

What struck me most was the openness in the room. The cooperation. The collaboration. When colleagues from across our state came together to share ideas, I witnessed the true strength of the Louisiana Community and Technical College system. The conversations, connections, shared challenges and outcomes that came from that day reaffirmed my belief in how critical it is to build a culture of collaboration on our campuses and across our systems of higher education.

One of the most encouraging outcomes of the meeting was the way campuses stepped up to support each other: Colleges with grant writers offered to assist those without grant writers; a campus leader who had secured an NSF award provided valuable insights on how to develop more competitive proposals; and the creation of a Grant Administrators Group to provide structure, continuity, and shared leadership across our system.

While outcomes like new templates and project management tools will certainly follow, the real achievement of this meeting was cultural.

By building trust, sharing resources, and lifting each other up—by fostering a *culture of collaboration*—we can expand what is possible for our institutions and for the students we serve.

As one meeting participant aptly said: "When we come together across campuses, we can accomplish far more than we can alone."

I have long been a proponent of intentional culture-building on my own campus at Baton Rouge Community College. We strive toward a culture of excellence, accountability, leadership and collaboration.

But this CCPI-STEM meeting proves that we must also turn that culture of collaboration outward, toward our entire systems and toward our states, to help shape a brighter future for higher education across the nation.

In Louisiana, collaboration is no longer just an aspiration. It is becoming our practice.

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CCPI-CAST EPISODE 17
ADVICE FOR USING AI RESPONSIBLY WHEN PREPARING ATE GRANT PROPOSALS

CCPI-CAST Episode 17 provides advice for using artificial intelligence (AI) responsibly to develop Advanced Technological Education (ATE) grant proposals to the National Science Foundation (NSF). The August 22, 2025, webcast is the first installment in CCPI-STEM's *AI in STEM Education Series.*

Dr. Elizabeth Hawthorne, the host of CCPI-STEM's webcasts and a cybersecurity professor at Northeastern University, said the priority for individuals preparing to submit proposals to the NSF ATE program is to understand NSF's guidance regarding AI.

In December 2023 NSF issued a statement to assure people submitting grants that NSF reviewers would not compromise proposers' ideas by putting them into a generative AI (gen AI) tool or otherwise disclosing them. NSF also expects proposers who use AI to disclose how they used it. In December 2024 NSF included this statement in the draft of the *Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)* for 2026 that is expected to be released in fall 2025:

> *RESEARCH MISCONDUCT means fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism (whether committed by an individual directly or through the use or assistance of other persons, entities, or tools, including artificial intelligence (AI)-based tools) in proposing or performing research funded by NSF, reviewing research proposals submitted to NSF, or in reporting research results funded by NSF. The Foundation's Research Misconduct Regulation is found at 45 CFR part 689.*

During the webcast Cindy Tucker, a retired professor of computer and information technologies, shared these tips for using AI responsibly when developing NSF grant proposals:

- Do not use AI in the intellectual merit section of the proposal.
- Do not rely solely on GEN AI to write any section of the grant proposal.
- Check the accuracy of all responses generated by AI, which is known to fill gaps in data sets and "hallucinate" content.
- Verify each reference generated by AI.
- Make sure that information generated by AI "is not someone else's idea that it got from the training data that it used. You don't want to accidentally plagiarize from some other individual."
- In the fee version of ChatGPT, turn off the model training option.
- Use grammar improvement tools, not ChatGPT, to polish text using the professional setting.
- Consider using AI for budgeting, creating timelines, and developing dissemination plans.
- Report near the beginning of the proposal if AI tools were used and how they were used.

Tucker's final caution had to do with hiring grant writers. "Make sure that you know how an external grant writer is using these tools so as not to introduce biases, not to introduce academic integrity issues, and plagiarism issues," she said.

For more detailed information see *Quick Tips for using GenAI to Assist with Writing NSF ATE Proposals* in the webcast section of CCPI-STEM's website: ccpi-stem.org

FORUM WILL AIM TO SHAPE AI AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

"From Roundtable to Roadmap: Shaping the Future of AI in Two-Year Institutions," is a forum the NSF NAIRR Pilot Conferences: Capacity and Community for Community Colleges plans to offer at the League for Innovations conference in March 2026.

This forum will explore how two-year institutions can contribute to and benefit from the National AI Classroom Resources and shape the future of inclusive AI research in technician education.

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