AI AT UF

In setting the standard for an AI university, the University of Florida is preparing AI-capable students in every discipline for the 21st century workforce while fueling life-changing discoveries by research faculty in every college. This work, guided by a strong foundation in ethics, is driving the creation of a diversified, technology-driven, high-wage economy in Florida and strengthening the country's competitiveness in a global market.

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AI at UF | Far-Reaching Impact

The University of Florida's AI initiative will make UF a national leader in AI and have far-reaching impacts for the university and its students and faculty.

Equally important, it will play a crucial role in educating and preparing the workforce for the fourth digital revolution to benefit our nation's economy, international ties, security, and to ensure the ethical use of artificial intelligence.

For Florida

From the development and training of an AI-enabled workforce to the application of AI against a wide array of pressing challenges, UF will serve a critical role in advancing and protecting the state we call home. AI will play a critical role in the transformation of Florida's economy into a diversified, technology-drive, high-wage economy. Strong AI infrastructure makes UF one of the best places in the country for researchers to conduct studies that will benefit citizens of our state and the nation.

For the University

UF's AI infrastructure is one of the strongest in the country. We are home to HiPerGator, the fastest supercomputer in higher education, along with 300 faculty members who are teaching Ai courses or using AI in their research. At the heart of AI research and teaching is UF's commitment to ethical AI to ensure that this technology benefits all humankind. We are providing upskilling to the existing workforce through professional development, educating K-12 students in AI fundaments, as well as college and university students on our campus and other campuses in the application of AI in their chosen discipline.

For Our Students

UF is committed to educating our students for the jobs of today and tomorrow. We are one of the first universities in the country to infuse AI courses across the curriculum. Here, AI is for everyone because AI is being used in all disciplines. We offer more than 200 AI courses and several undergraduate AI certificates. An AI Pathways Career Coach in our nationally ranked Career Connections Center can assist students with finding internships and jobs that will reward their AI knowledge. We also fund AI scholars annually who are working with an AI mentor in research.

Building an AI University

The University of Florida is one of the nation's first universities to offer its students AI Across the Curriculum with courses in artificial intelligence available in all 16 colleges. Our nation's need for a skilled AI workforce grows daily and can only be met by reaching new learners as well as upskilling existing workers. At UF, AI is for everyone with no need for backgrounds in engineering or data science. The university currently offers 230 AI and data science courses at the undergraduate, graduate and professional levels with many more in the developmental stages. These courses are in every college, from the arts to agriculture.

UF has been building a comprehensive, inclusive model to reach new K-20 students as well as upskilling the current workforce via a micro-credential (https://pwd.aa.ufl.edu/ai/) in artificial intelligence. As the state's premier Land-Grant institution, UF already had hundreds of existing faculty who were using AI in their teaching and research. This was expanded by hiring 100 new AI-focused faculty in 2020. Comprehensive AI research is supported with HiPerGator, one of the fastest supercomputers in higher education, gifted to UF by the NVIDIA Corp. This resource is available to all faculty and students, as well as other universities and industries. In 2022, the university also established centralized leadership of AI academic efforts via the establishment of the Artificial Intelligence Academic Initiative (AI2) Center (https://ai.ufl.edu/about/ai2-center/).

AI Across the Curriculum

UF students can begin their AI learning with our signature course, Fundamentals of AI, which requires no prior knowledge of artificial intelligence, engineering or computer science. Students can continue with more advanced AI courses in UF's many disciplines or enroll in UF's nine-credit certificate program in artificial intelligence (https://ai.ufl.edu/students/ai-certificate/). This model of teaching AI broadly across all disciplines is the foundation for Building an AI University and results in a larger and more diverse group of students who will graduate UF with AI knowledge. The goal of

AI Across the Curriculum is the creation of an interdisciplinary AI-ready workforce as well as preparing our students for the jobs of the future, many of which will require AI knowledge.

AI Research

UF's strong and diverse research portfolio is incorporating and applying AI and data science across disciplines. This infusion of technology will supercharge the university's successful research and development portfolio. In 2020, the university stimulated AI research activity by awarding 20 faculty teams in varied disciplines $50,000 each to pursue AI-related projects. With HiPerGator (https://rc.ufl.edu/about/hipergator/) at their disposal, UF faculty can analyze vast amounts of data and predict solutions to health, agriculture, engineering and educational challenges. To support student research, the AI2 Center is funding stipends for student AI Scholars to support their research with an AI faculty mentor.

Workforce Development and Career Readiness

Bringing skills and competencies to the forefront of our AI curriculum development links learning to professional employment needs. UF has an AI pathways career coach in its nationally ranked Career Connections Center to help equip students with the knowledge and connections needed for the AI-ready workforce. The center, which has connections with more than 2,000 companies, will educate students on the use of AI in the job recruitment process as well as facilitating internships and career opportunities.

Educational Partnerships

The University of Florida is committed to leveraging its artificial intelligence knowledge and resources by partnering with other institutions, K-20, thereby reaching far more people and having a far greater impact than it could alone. UF is partnering with the state's largest historically black university, Florida A & M, as well as the country's largest college enrolling Hispanic students, Miami Dade College, to collaborate with the colleges' faculty to create courses and integrate AI into their curriculum. This helps to ensure that a diverse AI-enabled workforce will be of varied interests, backgrounds, races, ethnicities. UF is also partnering with several state colleges, including Palm Beach State College, and the state's public-school districts to create an AI curriculum to educate their students. Florida is among the first states to adopt a K-12 artificial intelligence education program, and UF faculty are helping in the design of the curriculum, learning standards and benchmarks. As a leader of the Southeast Conference intelligence Consortium, UF is spearheading what may be the first athletics conference collaboration on AI. This collaboration will share educational resources, promote faculty and staff development and seek joint partnerships with industry seeking AI visionaries.

AI in Research

Over the past 10 years, UF has made significant computing infrastructure investments, including a $15 million data center to house the $3.4 million HiPerGator supercomputer. That work set the stage for UF's giant next step. In 2020, alumnus Chris Malachowsky and NVIDIA, the company he cofounded, gave UF more than $50 million in cutting-edge processing tools and training to build the most powerful Artificial Intelligence computer in higher education. Faculty and students now have access to the best AI technology on the planet, and the response from the UF faculty has been incredible. Researchers with existing AI expertise are accelerating their programs while others are quickly pivoting toward AI.

The World Economic Forum estimates AI will result in a net gain of 12 million jobs by 2025. By the end of the decade, the AI economy is expected to represent over $10 trillion in economic output. Through a combination of AI research and an innovative AI curriculum, UF is providing a whole generation of workers the skills to seize these new opportunities.

A Closer Look

Currently, UF's faculty has more than $10 million in AI-specific research grants, and with another $20 million-a-year from the Florida Legislature, we are now recruiting 100 new faculty with AI expertise. We expect many of those new faculty to bring AI research funding with them and to earn more once they are here. To encourage and facilitate even more external funding, UF Research created the AI Catalyst fund and chose 20 seed proposals totaling $1 million.

AI Student Groups

GAITOR Club

A student club focusing on artificial intelligence, machine learning and deep learning.
More Info (https://www.rc.ufl.edu/about/gaitor-club/)

Data Science and Informatics Club (DSI)

A multi- and inter-disciplinary student organization dedicated to promoting data science at UF.
More Info (https://informatics.research.ufl.edu/event/data-science-and-informatics-dsi-club/)

Additional Student Groups

Interested in starting an AI student group?
More Info (ai@ufl.edu)

AI Scholars

Undergraduate students who are interested in pursuing AI-related research with a UF faculty member are invited to apply for the AI Scholars Program through the Center for Undergraduate Research. The center manages the successful University Scholars Program that introduces UF undergraduates to partnerships with faculty in research endeavors across campus. Artificial intelligence is ubiquitous in the world around us, from voice-activated devices to autonomous vehicles; thus, there is a wealth of research potential in every UF department.

Scholars are selected to participate through a competitive process, which occurs in the spring. Students may apply to the AI Scholar Program without having first identified a faculty mentor; however, applications with AI faculty support are considered more competitive.

Hear from an AI Scholar (https://youtu.be/R_aGbtgFgmE/)