

April 2026



Promoting the improvement of the education & training of educational leaders through teaching, research, and service

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President’s Message  
Dr. Zorka Karanxha



Dear Members of FAPEL,

I want to thank you all for supporting FAPEL and its Board!

After three decades of FAPEL’s founding in 1995, it has continued to grow from 6 member institutions to 15 member institutions. We have built on past successes and have strengthened FAPEL both in membership growth and financial stability. As an organization, we are determined to have representation and participation in FAPEL’s committees of public, private, big, and small institutions across Florida. We also value the voices of faculty from tenure track positions to instructor/lecturer, to adjunct to be part of FAPEL’s decision making and service. Many of you serve on FAPEL’s five committees: Policy Committee, Nominating Committee, By-Laws Committee, Awards Committee, and Newsletter Committee.

In the 2025-26 academic year, we grounded our work around one theme: Navigating Shifting Policy and Informational Environments and Their Impact on Educational Leadership Preparation. We organized two conferences: The Fall Online Conference and the Spring Conference that took place in person at the University of South Florida, in Tampa. Both conferences were well attended and many of you found them to be worthy of your time. For the second year in a row, we also continued our celebration of faculty at the Awards Banquet. We are thankful to the University of South Florida (USF) for graciously hosting our meeting on the USF campus. We are also grateful to Pearson for sponsoring the Spring conference.

We have continued to work on supporting our purpose as an organization to promote the improvement of the education of educational leaders through teaching, research, and service. To this end, we are working in maintaining and strengthening our partnerships with different partner organizations such as FASA, ICPEL, and UCEA. We also continue our partnership with FLDOE in our efforts to prepare educational leaders that serve all students and their families in the state.

I hope that given the urgent and challenging issues that we are facing at the local, state, and national levels (e.g.: faculty members academic freedom and autonomy, shared governance, decrease in grant funding), working together and convening as a professional community is more important than ever. FAPEL has always aimed to make a positive difference to the future of education in Florida, through supporting educational leaders. This mission has never been more relevant or urgent.

I wish you a successful end to the spring semester!

FAPEL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President  
Zorka Karanxha, University of South Florida

President-Elect  
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Past President  
Sheila Moore, University of Central Florida

Secretary & Website Editor  
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Daniel Reyes-Guerra, Florida Atlantic University

Newsletter Call for Future Submissions

FAPEL Newsletter promotes the flow of information, ideas, and services among professors of educational leadership at Florida Colleges and Universities. We want to hear from you on the content most relevant. Please send us an email or complete the FAPEL survey and let your voice be heard!!!

We welcome the following submissions:

- Awards and new publications
- Job opportunities
- Resources
- Short pieces including op-ed, commentaries, research briefs and dissemination, etc.

Mario Jackson, Florida State University  
Sheila Moore, University of Central Florida  
FAPEL Newsletter Committee Chairs

ABOUT US

FAPEL is the Florida Association of Professors of Educational Leadership. The purpose of the organization is to promote the improvement of the education of educational leaders through teaching, research, and service within a program of activities including, but not limited to the following:

- to foster educational improvement through the inclusion of educational leadership in the teaching and learning process;
- to provide leadership in the effective implementation and evaluation of statewide projects and programs;
- to promote the flow of information, ideas, and services among professors of educational leadership in Florida;
- to work cooperatively and collaboratively with similar state, regional, national, and global organizations;
- to sponsor professional conferences and workshops on behalf of the membership;
- to provide an organized forum for experimentation, research, and development;
- to provide leadership in the development, implementation, evaluation, and redesign of educational leadership consistent with valued research and history, and most recent needs, research, and development; and
- to provide expertise drawn from the membership to help shape, define, implement, evaluate, and positively influence educational leadership policy and for all interested or affected stakeholders.

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# FAPEL 2026 SPRING CONFERENCE

## CONFERENCE THEME

“Navigating Shifting Policy and Informational Environments and Their Impact on Educational Leadership Preparation”

March 2, 2026  
University of South Florida  
Tampa, Florida

### Conference Summary

The conference brought together leadership scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to discuss how shifting policies, accountability needs, and technologies are impacting educational leadership in Florida.

### Highlights:

- Opening remarks from FAPEL leaders, USF officials, Pearson, and FASA executives.
- FAPEL Business Meeting covered presidential and financial updates, constitutional changes, and research collaboration.
- Keynote: Jose Castillo and Kelly Justice discussed MTSS as both a tool for special education eligibility and continuous improvement, encouraging leaders to see it as a dynamic system blending compliance, instruction, and equity.
- FLDOE Updates: Focused on FELE, educator recruitment, retention, accountability, and maintaining alignment between state policy and leadership programs.
- Generative AI Session: Jason LaFrance explained how AI can optimize faculty workflows and prepare future leaders for AI-integrated environments.
- Panel Discussion: Emphasized collaboration between K-12 and higher education to build leadership pipelines and address practical challenges.
- Innovative Practice: Laura Boilini led an interactive session on creativity and human-centered leadership.
- Closing Reflections: Participants discussed adapting to new policies, workforce issues, technology integration, and sustaining partnerships for equity and student success.

Takeaways: The conference stressed the importance of adaptive, equity-focused, and policy-responsive leadership programs. Attendees were urged to reimagine preparation, strengthen cross-sector collaboration, and leverage innovation for better educational outcomes.

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### CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



## FAPEL 2026 Award Winners

### *Tribute to Dr. Sheila Moore*



FAPEL honored Dr. Sheila D. Moore from the University of Central Florida for her distinguished leadership during her 2023–2025 presidency. In presenting the award, Dr. Daniel Reyes-Guerra offered a heartfelt reflection on Dr. Moore’s enduring impact on the association and the broader field of educational leadership.

Dr. Moore’s involvement with FAPEL spans more than a decade, beginning shortly after she joined Florida A&M University in 2011. Over the years, she served in several key roles including, Secretary, Bylaws Committee Chair, President-Elect, and President, demonstrating sustained commitment and a steady assumption of responsibility. Her influence extends nationally through leadership roles in ICPEL and AACTE, along with regular contributions to AERA and UCEA.

In his tribute, Dr. Reyes-Guerra highlighted the clarity, humor, and deep expertise that Dr. Moore brings to every interaction and meeting. He pointed to the last year’s Anniversary Awards Banquet as a defining example of her leadership: when a last-minute venue cancellation threatened the event, Dr. Moore acted quickly and decisively to adapt and ensure a celebration worthy of FAPEL’s history.

Dr. Reyes-Guerra closed by expressing gratitude on behalf of colleagues past and present, thanking Dr. Moore for her leadership, her resilience, and her example of what it means to lead with conviction and compassion.

### *FAPEL Excellence in Educational Leadership Award- Chris Curran*



FAPEL recognized Dr. Chris Curran with the Excellence in Educational Leadership Award for his contributions to bridging research, policy, and practice in Florida.

Dr. Curran serves as Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy, Associate Director of the School of Human Development and Organizational Studies, and Director of the Education Policy Research Center at the University of Florida. His scholarship applies quantitative causal inference, mixed methods, and data-science approaches to improve school safety and equity, with more than 50 peer-reviewed publications and over \$3 million in external funding.

His leadership includes creating the statewide School Safety Dashboard—Safe School for Alex and building accompanying training so leaders can interpret data and act on it. As Director of UF’s Education Policy Research Center, Dr. Curran has shaped state policy conversations through briefs on AI in district codes of conduct, reporting school incidents to law enforcement, and chronic absenteeism; that absenteeism brief led to invitations to brief Florida legislators.

His letters of recommendation were written by Jennifer Kent and Christopher Redding from the University of Florida, and Carolyn Herrington from Florida State University, all of whom noted the relevance and usability of Dr. Curran’s research across Florida schools.

### *FAPEL Distinguished Researcher Award-Vonzell Agosto*



FAPEL honored Dr. Vonzell Agosto (University of South Florida) with the Distinguished Researcher Award at the Spring Meeting, presented by Dr. Zorka Karanxha.

Dr. Agosto’s scholarship sits at the intersection of curriculum, leadership, and anti-oppressive education, examining how leadership can confront inequities and cultivate more just learning environments. Her work employs critical, qualitative, and arts-based methodologies to illuminate how leaders shape systems, communities, and lived experiences.

Her record reflects sustained research productivity and impact: co-edited books, dozens of peer-reviewed articles and chapters, editorial leadership (including service as Co-Editor, *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*), and public-facing scholarship that reaches interdisciplinary and international audiences.

Her two nominators underscored what distinguishes her contributions:

Dr. Bill Black (USF) highlighted a research agenda marked by “conceptual breadth, depth, and nuance,” spanning topics such as curriculum theory, social justice, Indigenous education, counter-storytelling, school discipline and closure, and disability studies.

Dr. Cynthia B. Bauman (FAU) pointed to the originality and transferability of Dr. Agosto’s work—from arts-based and interdisciplinary approaches that foster reflective, ethical leadership, to frameworks that inform leadership preparation and equity-oriented practice.

In recognizing Dr. Agosto, FAPEL celebrates a body of work that is rigorous, inventive, and research that strengthens leadership preparation, informs practice, and advances equity in education.

## The Rollout of Simple Syllabus in Florida's Public Universities



Florida's public universities including Florida State University (FSU), the University of North Florida (UNF), the University of Florida (UF), the University of South Florida, Florida Atlantic University (FAU), and Florida A&M University (FAMU) are continuing their transition to Simple Syllabus, a statewide effort driven by amendments to Board of Governors (BOG) Regulation 8.003. The policy requires that syllabi and lists of required and recommended instructional materials be posted online in a searchable format at least 45 days before the start of each term, and remain publicly available for five years (State University System of Florida, 2025).

According to state regulation documents, the primary stated goal is expanded transparency: enabling students to make informed enrollment decisions by reviewing course expectations, grading methods, and materials well in advance (State University System of Florida, 2025). Universities must ensure that syllabi are searchable by course number, instructor name, and general education status.

Across campuses, implementation details vary but converge on a standardized, Canvas-integrated template. UNF has required all instructors of credit-bearing courses to use Simple Syllabus starting Spring 2026, with exemptions for individualized courses and a public syllabus library already active (University of North Florida, n.d.). At FSU, the platform is active as of March 1st; however, automated imports of course objectives were paused due to reliability concerns during large-scale data transfer, so faculty were asked to enter those objectives manually for Spring 2026 (internal communication, 2026). USF began the implementation for Summer 2026 courses this spring with April 3<sup>rd</sup> the deadline to submit the simple syllabus for each course, the only exception being dissertation courses. UF's implementation will take place in Summer of 2026, with expectations for faculty to report course content, evaluation methods, and instructional materials (University of Florida, 2026).

### *Faculty Concerns*

Faculty at several institutions have raised concerns about the fixed 45-day deadline and about increased scrutiny of course content. The Tallahassee Democrat reports that FSU faculty Senate President Roxanne Hughes argued that the policy could chill academic freedom by enabling political and ideological monitoring of classroom material, adding fear and causing faculty to feel attacked (Jean, 2026). Some faculty note that making syllabi public long before classes begin means committing to reading lists and assignments earlier than pedagogically ideal. Similar themes appear in statewide and national coverage that traces the mandate's transparency rationale alongside worries about external pressure on course design (Atterbury, 2025). For James Beasley, President of the faculty association at the University of North Florida, his main concern is on faculty safety.

In contrast to some who see the policy as politically fraught, other faculty have characterized these worries as overstated, suggesting that public syllabi simply should not be problematic unless the underlying teaching raises its own concerns (Whitford, 2025). As universities refine their procedures and provide faculty development around the new requirements, the statewide rollout continues to evolve. The transition has highlighted the tension between transparency goals and the day-to-day realities of course preparation.

FAPEL welcomes your insights on how the use of Simple Syllabus has influenced your curriculum planning or pedagogical choices. Your experiences will help shape ongoing conversations about how to implement statewide policy while maintaining flexibility and instructional integrity.

### Sources

Atterbury, A. (2025, October 26). Florida wants to post more college syllabi online. \*Politico\*. <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/10/26/florida-wants-to-post-more-college-syllabi-online-professors-fear-whats-next-00621570>

Jean, T. (2026, February 27). 'Adds to the fear': FSU board OKs rule requiring faculty to post syllabus. \*Tallahassee Democrat\*. <https://www.tallahassee.com/>

State University System of Florida. (2025, September 11). \*Notice of proposed amended regulation: 8.003 Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability and Transparency\*. [https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Regulation\\_8.003\\_09\\_11\\_2025\\_PNOI\\_Final.pdf](https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Regulation_8.003_09_11_2025_PNOI_Final.pdf)

University of Florida. (2026, February 10). \*Summer and Fall 2026 textbook adoptions and new syllabus posting requirements\*. <https://administrativememo.ufl.edu/2026/02/summer-and-fall-2026-textbook-adoptions-and-new-syllabus-posting-requirements/>

University of North Florida. (n.d.). \*Simple Syllabus faculty support\*. <https://www.unf.edu/cirt/Simple-Syllabus.html>

Whitford, E. (2025, November 10). Fla. board says syllabi, reading lists must be posted publicly. Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/teaching/2025/11/10/fla-board-says-syllabi-reading-lists-must-be-posted>

## Membership Resources and Information

FAPEL is a non-profit organization that promotes the improvement of the education and training of educational leaders in the state of Florida through teaching, research, and service. Membership is open to any faculty member in any Florida college or university with assigned responsibilities in teaching, research, and service for educational leadership upon payment of annual dues. Graduate students in educational leadership and policy may also become members. Please, review the web-links that are available on our FAPEL website: <https://fapel-florida.org/>



### Member Institutions

Barry University

Florida Atlantic University

Florida Gulf Coast University

Florida International University

Florida Southeastern University

Florida State University

National Louis University

St. Leo University

Stetson University

University of Central Florida

University of Florida

University of North Florida

University of South Florida

University of Tampa

University of West Florida

### Member Accomplishments

*Chris Curran:* Cotman, A. M., **Curran, F. C.**, Harris-Walls, K., Killingsworth, M., Rieser, E., & Hunter, C. (2026). A Semiotic Examination of Conceptions of School Safety Data. *Urban Education*, 0(0).

*Daniel Eadens:* Mullen, C. A., & **Eadens, D. W.** (Eds.). (2026). *Improving Your College Courses: A Guide for Engaging in Digital Learning*. Myers Education Press. ISBN-13: 978-1975509354. ISBN-10: 1975509358.

*Zorka Karanxha:* Karanxha, Z., W. R. Black, & Danzig, A. (Eds.). (2025). *Navigating charter school landscapes: Growth and diversification across California, Arizona, and Florida*. Emerald Publishing.

*Sheila Moore:* **Moore, S.D.**, & Kenon, S. (2026). *Solving Contemporary School Leadership Challenges: A Case Learning Approach*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

### Nominations being accepted for FAPEL Treasurer

FAPEL is pleased to announce that nominations are now open for the position of **Treasurer**.

- The Treasurer serves as FAPEL’s financial officer and plays a vital role in maintaining the organization’s financial health. Responsibilities include managing membership and registration revenues, overseeing financial accounts, ensuring accurate bookkeeping, coordinating reimbursements and deposits, providing monthly budget updates to the Board, and supporting all required nonprofit reporting. The Treasurer also serves as a signatory on FAPEL banking accounts. This position carries a two-year term, beginning July 1.

The Nominating Committee Chair, Dr. Maysaa Barakat, invites all members to submit nominations using this link  
Nomination Form: <https://forms.gle/r3rSvVzFW4mCxwDx8>

### Upcoming Events

*November 18- 21, 2026:* University Council for Educational Administration, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

- Proposals deadline extended to May 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm

### Resources

*FASA Leadership Lounge Podcast* - <https://www.fasa.net/fasa-leadership-lounge-podcast>

Join FASA in the Leadership Lounge. Each week, we will discuss education leadership trends, legislative updates that impact you and your profession, speak with leaders from Florida and beyond, and much more!

*Chalk & Gavel-* <https://www.chalkandgavel.com/>

Chalk & Gavel is an education law podcast hosted by Drs. Chris Thomas (an assistant at the University of Florida, and Jamie Kudlats. Both professors of educational leadership and former K-12 educators, Chris and Jamie demystify the complex and evolving legal landscape that impacts our schools.

### Future Newsletter Features

FAPEL Newsletter promotes the flow of information, ideas, and services among professors of educational leadership at Florida Colleges and Universities. Please, email Mario Jackson at [mmj24b@fsu.edu](mailto:mmj24b@fsu.edu) if you are interested in being featured, have awards, new publications, job opportunities, and resources you would love to share with the broader FAPEL membership. We also invite short pieces including op-ed, brief research dissemination, scholarly briefs, commentaries, etc. We’d love to hear from you and remain in conversations about what our members are doing and welcome submissions on an ongoing basis.