

*Arkansas Tech's Annual*  
**TECH TALKS**

FERGUSON STUDENT UNION

20  
26

# Tech Talks Schedule

May 7, 2026

Breakfast in Rothwell Lobby starting at 8:00 AM

| Time:             | Rothwell 306                                                                                                                                  | Rothwell 311                                                                                                        | Rothwell 312                                                        | Rothwell 313                                                                           | Rothwell 317                                                        | Rothwell 456                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:15 AM-8:55 AM   | How to Get Funding for Undergraduates to Do Research with You and Earn \$750 Doing It!                                                        | The Power of Navigating OER                                                                                         | AI Pedagogy: An Open Conversation About What We Do and Do Not Know  | DOK: Not a hierarchy or a wheel                                                        | Why is My Stapler in Jello-O? Pranks and Professional Decorum       | Creating a Community for Faculty and Staff                                                                                                   |
| 9:00 AM-9:40 AM   | Oh GAG! It's a Group                                                                                                                          | Creating Accessible Documents in Blackboard                                                                         | Making use of ATU's NSF EPIIC-BUILD grant                           | The Hidden Work Behind ATU Spending: From Swipe to Record                              | American Government for Everyone!                                   | Allyship for Students During Uncertain Times                                                                                                 |
| 9:45 AM-10:25 AM  | Affirming Our Way Forward: Using Positive Affirmations and Habits of Mind to Support Faculty Well-Being and Effectiveness in Higher Education | Everything Everywhere All at Once: Navigating ARGOS, OneTech, and Excel in Pursuit of Clean and Understandable Data | Talk Panel/Q&A/Update from AI Taskforce                             | Freedom and Fear on Campus                                                             | DOK: Not a hierarchy or a wheel                                     | Caring Without Carrying: Faculty Boundaries in Student Support                                                                               |
| 10:30 AM-11:10 AM | Oh GAG! It's a Group                                                                                                                          | Creating Accessible Documents in Blackboard                                                                         | OneDrive and Office Online/Cybersecurity                            | How to Get Funding for Undergraduates to Do Research with You and Earn \$750 Doing It! | American Government for Everyone!                                   | How to Succeed in an Enrollment Cliff Without Really Trying: How Northwest Arkansas and Central Arkansas Can Boost Your Department (and ATU) |
| 11:15 AM-11:55 AM | Affirming Our Way Forward: Using Positive Affirmations and Habits of Mind to Support Faculty Well-Being and Effectiveness in Higher Education | New Connections in AI Research Tools – The Model Context Protocol                                                   | Considering the Possibilities for HyFlex Program Development at ATU | Caring Without Carrying: Faculty Boundaries in Student Support                         | Faculty Essentials: Accommodations, Testing, and Title IX Pregnancy | Creating a Community for Faculty and Staff                                                                                                   |

# PROGRAM

Rothwell  
Thursday May 7, 2026  
8:00 AM-12:00 PM

**8:00 AM- 8:15 AM**

**BREAKFAST ITEMS AND COFFEE SERVED IN THE  
FIRST FLOOR LOBBY OF ROTHWELL**

**8:15 AM- 8:55 AM**

## **HOW TO GET FUNDING FOR UNDERGRADUATES TO DO RESEARCH WITH YOU AND EARN \$750 DOING IT!**

**Dr. Michael Rogers**  
**Rothwell 306**

*Will explain the ADHE SURF funding available to undergraduates to do research while being mentored by an ATU faculty sponsor where both the undergraduate (\$2500) and the faculty member (\$760) can get paid! Applications are due every November and the pay is for the Spring and/or Summer following. Mentored undergraduate research is a HIPs (Higher Education Best Practice).*

## **THE POWER OF NAVIGATING OER**

**Dr. Carl Greco and Mr. Eric Rector**  
**Rothwell 311**

*Open Educational Resources (OER) empowers educators, instructional designers, and administrators to tackle the rising costs of traditional textbooks—which have surged over 800% since the late 1970s. Participants will define OER through the "5 Rs" framework (Retain, Reuse, Revise, Remix, and Redistribute) and demystify Creative Commons (CC) licensing covering the four CC building blocks—BY, SA, NC, and ND—to understand how "Some Rights Reserved" creates a legal engine for collaboration. We will also address the critical 2026 ADA Title II update, which mandates that all digital materials meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards by April 24, 2026. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies for finding quality resources in repositories like LibreTexts, OpenStax, and OER Commons, ensuring their course materials are both legally compliant and accessible to all students from Day 1.*

## **AI PEDAGOGY: AN OPEN CONVERSATION ABOUT WHAT WE DO AND DO NOT KNOW**

**Dr. Jeff Aulgur, Dr. Sean Huss, Dr. Phoebe Robertson, and Dr. Arwen Taylor**

**Rothwell 312**

*This informal Tech Talk encourages faculty to engage in an honest discussion about AI in education. Instead of a formal presentation, it promotes open dialogue to gauge colleagues' perspectives: What fears and frustrations are coming up? What is working well in practice? What is still unclear? As institutions adapt to rapid AI developments, faculty need a space to reflect on uncertainties, share experiences, and pinpoint the support they find most helpful. The session will focus more on listening, sensemaking, and understanding faculty needs than on providing final answers.*

## **DOK: NOT A HIERARCHY OR A WHEEL**

**Dr. Bill Morelan**

**Rothwell 313**

*"Depth of Knowledge (Webb; 1997, 2006) is "one of the most misinterpreted and misrepresented concepts in education" (Francis, 2017). Using easy-to-understand analogies, this session will clarify what DOK is and is not, and will show you how to correctly use DOK to increase instructional rigor in your classes."*

## **WHY IS MY STAPLER IN JELLO-O? PRANKS AND PROFESSIONAL DECORUM**

**Mr. Slade Dupuy**

**Rothwell 317**

*This presentation provides an HR perspective on office pranks - the good, the bad, and the ugly (potential) liabilities. Not all pranks are created equal, and while some pranks may be acceptable in the workplace, the wrong prank may get its perpetrator fired or sued. On the flip side, pranks may reveal something joyous or healthy about office environments and campus culture. Pranks can be carried out with the very best of intentions but still result in a horrific or devastating impact. This presentation will challenge the audience to focus on impacts over intentions.*

## **CREATING A COMMUNITY FOR FACULTY AND STAFF**

**Dr. Jay Post**

**Rothwell 456**

*Learn about the Faculty & Staff Well-Being Committee and how we bring faculty and staff together for events, outings, and sometimes meals. How can you be better informed? What do you all want to do next year? Let's build a better sense of community.*

## OH GAG! IT'S A GROUP

**Dr. Virginia Jones**

**Rothwell 306**

*From the colleague who brought you “Public Speaking, Spiders, and Death,” comes a Tech 2026 presentation dedicated to the much beloved (gag) student group project. After this workshop you’ll walk away with a new perspective on (1) relational aspects of group work (2) how to shift the focus to students taking ownership for the relational aspect that drives a successful task and (3) how to mentor and not mediate.*

## CREATING ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS IN BLACKBOARD

**Dr. Ashley Cooksey**

**Rothwell 311**

*This session will equip faculty and staff with practical skills for creating accessible course documents in Blackboard. Attendees will learn how to use Blackboard Ally to generate an accessibility score, identify problematic documents, and remediate common issues. Participants will learn how to properly structure Word documents using leveled headings to improve navigation for screen reader users and all learners. The session will also demonstrate the workflow for remediating PDFs to meet accessibility standards. These skills directly support Universal Design for Learning principles by ensuring course materials are perceivable and operable for all students, including those using assistive technologies. Step-by-step guides will be provided so attendees can immediately implement these strategies in their courses.*

## MAKING USE OF ATU'S NSF EPIIC-BUILD GRANT

**Dr. Newt Hilliard and Ms. Melanie Ewing**

**Rothwell 312**

*Arkansas Tech University (ATU) participates in the National Science Foundation's EPIIC-BUILD grant program partnered with the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB). The purpose of this grant is to encourage interaction between faculty and 'research' labs and centers across the state, the region and the nation. This encouragement includes introducing ATU faculty to the research labs/centers across the state, helping faculty make connections with leadership in those labs/centers, and guiding faculty to other resources across the state. This presentation will describe activities to date including our recent visits to UALR and UAMS labs. We will also seek input on future ATU faculty needs.*

## THE HIDDEN WORK BEHIND ATU SPENDING: FROM SWIPE TO RECORD

**Ms. Jennifer Warren and Ms. Brooklyn Bahena**

**Rothwell 313**

*When a PCard is swiped, a travel request is submitted, or a purchase order is issued, it may seem like a simple transaction. But behind the scenes, several steps quietly take place to make sure everything is accurate, approved, and properly documented.*

*This session offers a behind-the-scenes look at how Procurement, PCard, TCard, and Travel processes work together to support the university. We'll explore how purchases move through approvals, how spending is reviewed, and how records are maintained to ensure transparency and accountability.*

*Rather than a step-by-step training, this Tech Talk provides a broader view of how ATU manages spending responsibly — and how these processes are designed to protect departments, employees, and the institution as a whole.*

## AMERICAN GOVERNMENT FOR EVERYONE!

**Dr. Christopher Housenick**

**Rothwell 317**

*Stating in Fall 2027, every student attending ATU will be required to take American Government (POLS 2003) in order to graduate as part of their general education curriculum. This state-mandated change is going to cause a ripple effect across campus, and my Tech Talk will discuss this change for ATU's faculty and administrators. It will start by discussing what was changed during the 2025 legislative session, what will shape the impact of this mandatory change, and what departments and individual faculty across campus can do during the 2026 – 2027 academic year to prepare for this new mandated requirement.*

## ALLYSHIP FOR STUDENTS DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES

**Dr. Robert Stevens and Dr. Stephanie Swatzel**

**Rothwell 456**

*Students who identify as LGBTQIA+ are constantly seeing news about how their rights are being debated on the state and national scene. What can we do as faculty to make sure our LGBTQIA+ students feel welcomed and that ATU is a safe space for them? This presentation will take about some of the things that faculty and staff can do to make sure our student feel like ATU is a safe place for them to exist in the current societal turmoil over people in this community. Allyship will be discussed which research shows that LGBTQIA+ students will have reduced stress, have a feeling of safety, and build trust with allies to the LGBTQIA+ community. We will talk about how allyship reduces discrimination, boosts mental health, and makes LGBTQIA+ students feel like they belong.*

## **AFFIRMING OUR WAY FORWARD: USING POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS AND HABITS OF MIND TO SUPPORT FACULTY WELL-BEING AND EFFECTIVENESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Dr. Pam Dixon, Mrs. Lydia Rogers, and Ms. Lilly Rogers**

**Rothwell 306**

*This interactive session examines how research-based positive affirmations, aligned with Costa and Kallick's Habits of Mind, can support faculty well-being, resilience, and effectiveness in higher education. Participants will reflect on their professional experiences, explore practical strategies for using affirmations, and leave with tools they can apply in teaching, research, service, and collaboration with colleagues.*

## **EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE: NAVIGATING ARGOS, ONETECH, AND EXCEL IN PURSUIT OF CLEAN AND UNDERSTANDABLE DATA**

**Mr. Wyatt Watson**

**Rothwell 311**

*Have you ever needed specific student information but weren't sure where to start? This talk provides a practical "how-to" for navigating ATU's various data sources with a primary focus on ARGOS. We will explore how to find almost anything from broad enrollment trends to specific student demographics. Because locating the data is only the first step, we will demonstrate how to bring this data into Excel to be refined into actionable information. We will cover basic techniques to clean, filter, and reformat raw data into usable reports tailored to your specific needs. Whether you are a data novice or a frequent ARGOS user, this talk will equip you with a reliable methodology to locate, process, and present the information essential to your daily work. Join us to turn the question of "Where is that data?" into "Here is the insight."*

## **TALK PANEL/Q&A/UPDATE FROM AI TASKFORCE**

**AI Task Force**

**Rothwell 312**

*This session is a straightforward look at what we've done at Arkansas Tech over the past few months as we've worked to address AI institutionally. We started where most places do, with many questions and little structure, and have been building something more coherent and usable for faculty, staff, and students. We now have a public-facing AI hub, revised guiding principles, ongoing training sessions, practical resources, and a cross-campus structure treating AI as a university-wide issue. A big part of this work has been listening, including meetings with concerned students and departments across campus. What we are seeing is clear. Use is widespread, but so are concerns about accuracy, overreliance, academic integrity, information literacy, and skill development. Our approach focuses on human responsibility, information literacy, transparency, privacy, and a clear distinction between generative and agentic systems. At the same time, we are building a workable framework that includes principles, a review process, and short domain modules that can evolve over time. The goal is to institutionalize this work through a standing governance structure and end the task force. Faculty will begin receiving more specific guidance starting in Fall 2026. This session walks through what we've done, what we're hearing, where we're headed, and opens it up for questions.*

## **FREEDOM AND FEAR ON CAMPUS**

**Mr. Eric Walker**

**Rothwell 313**

*Colleges and Universities are built to be a marketplace of ideas-but what happens when those ideas create fear? "Freedom and Fear on Campus dives into the collision between the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and the modern expectation of safety and inclusion. This talk unpacks the real time decisions institutions must make when both speech and silence carry risk-and why no outcome leaves everyone satisfied.*

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## **CARING WITHOUT CARRYING: FACULTY BOUNDARIES IN STUDENT SUPPORT**

**Dr. Tiffany Nance**

**Rothwell 456**

*University instruction involves significant emotional labor, where faculty manage their emotions to meet professional expectations, such as demonstrating care, fostering student motivation, and managing classroom dynamics. This labor is linked to burnout and stress if not balanced, even as it can enhance faculty-student relationships. Let's discuss the issues, while learning about ways to combat burnout, over-involvement, and/or disengagement utilizing evidence-based strategies.*

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## **ONEDRIVE AND OFFICE ONLINE/CYBERSECURITY**

**Mr. Sean Carnahan**

**Rothwell 312**

*This presentation will focus on Cybersecurity topics and the use of OneDrive.*

## **HOW TO GET FUNDING FOR UNDERGRADUATES TO DO RESEARCH WITH YOU AND EARN \$750 DOING IT!**

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## **HOW TO SUCCEED IN AN ENROLLMENT CLIFF WITHOUT REALLY TRYING: HOW NORTHWEST ARKANSAS AND CENTRAL ARKANSAS CAN BOOST YOUR DEPARTMENT (AND ATU)**

**Dr. Patrick Hagge**

**Rothwell 456**

*For years, academics have talked of a coming “enrollment cliff”, a period in the late 2020s when the number of potential incoming freshmen will noticeably shrink across the US. While dire predictions are everywhere, ATU is fortunate to be located in between the rapidly growing regions of Northwest Arkansas and Central Arkansas. What can your department do – and what can ATU do as a whole – to increase enrollment during these expected lean years of the near future? (Answer: it's the geography, of course!) Come to this talk to learn useful strategies and to see interesting maps; leave this talk with a more optimistic view of future enrollment.*

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## **NEW CONNECTIONS IN AI RESEARCH TOOLS – THE MODEL CONTEXT PROTOCOL**

**Ms. Angela Black**

**Rothwell 311**

*If ChatGPT, Claude, or Copilot is your go-to for information, you may find it falling short in the task of academic research. While these LLMs offer the promise of synthesis and summarization, content is often limited to open-access articles, grey literature, or outright hallucinations. Enter the Model Context Protocol servers—a gateway to quality content from reputable publishers built within your favorite research assistant. In this session, you will learn how steer your AI agent into exploring academic research without ever leaving the same chat. I will provide demonstrations of how to set up the servers, compare different gateways, and discuss implications for the future of scholarly research.*

## **CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITIES FOR HYFLEX PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AT ATU**

**Dr. Gabriel Adkins**

**Rothwell 312**

*In this panel we will discuss recent efforts to expand ATU's outreach and partnerships via use of the HyFlex course offerings at ATU. We will discuss the potential for HyFlex to be a primary modality for reaching new potential student populations as well as to accommodate existing ones at ATU. The discussion will conclude with consideration as to whether or not HyFlex offers ATU opportunity for teaching excellence as well as sustainable growth for the future.*

## CARING WITHOUT CARRYING: FACULTY BOUNDARIES IN STUDENT SUPPORT

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## FACULTY ESSENTIALS: ACCOMMODATIONS, TESTING, AND TITLE IX PREGNANCY

**Ms. Ashlee Leavell**

**Rothwell 317**

*Faculty play a critical role in ensuring equitable access to education. This session will provide an overview of essential information faculty should know about Disability Services, Testing Services, and Title IX as it relates to pregnant students. Participants will learn how Disability Services supports students through approved accommodations and how faculty can effectively implement those accommodations in their courses. The session will also review the role of Testing Services in administering accommodated exams and outline best practices for coordinating with the office. Additionally, faculty will receive guidance on Title IX protections related to pregnancy, childbirth, and recovery, including their responsibilities when a student discloses pregnancy-related needs. By the end of the session, faculty will have a clearer understanding of campus resources, institutional processes, and best practices for supporting student access.*

## CREATING A COMMUNITY FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

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*Learn about the Faculty & Staff Well-Being Committee and how we bring faculty and staff together for events, outings, and sometimes meals. How can you be better informed? What do you all want to do next year? Let's build a better sense of community.*