Lunch with the VP

PRESENTED BY

Allen Parrish, Vice President for Research and Economic Development

October 26, 2026

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

FLAGSHIP OF THE GULF COAST.

USA & USA HEALTH

Rollout Launch • October 2026

INSTITUTIONAL ROLLOUT

USA Artificial Intelligence Institute

Connecting education, research, healthcare, and operations through shared AI capabilities.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

FLAGSHIP OF THE GULF COAST.

Education Research Healthcare Operations

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION

AI creates an existential challenge for universities

AI is changing the value of expertise, the meaning of credentials, and the work our graduates will do.

THE RISK OF STANDING STILL

Degrees lose relevance as AI democratizes learning and professions change

Assessment loses credibility without proof of learning

Research and service fall behind faster-moving peers

THE "AI UNIVERSITY"

Every graduate develops AI capability in their field

Faculty and staff share trusted tools and expertise

Education, research, and operations evolve together

Our future depends on making AI transformation an institutional priority.

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION

Why organize AI transformation through an institute?

An institutional priority needs a lasting organizational home with people and resources dedicated to moving it forward.

A DEDICATED HOME

Establish identifiable leadership, dedicated effort, and accountability for sustained progress.

A UNIVERSITY-WIDE REACH

Connect expertise across colleges and USA Health through a familiar interdisciplinary structure.

CAPACITY TO ACT

Provide a home for shared resources, seed initiatives, and external partnerships as support develops.

The Institute gives USA a practical starting structure for advancing AI across the institution, in partnership with the units responsible for each mission.

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION

How the AI Institute Advances AI

What an institute will specifically do to move us forward

Build Mutual Awareness

Build mutual awareness of what we are all doing across colleges so that we can discover new avenues for collaboration.

Magnify & Advertise Successes

Magnify and advertise our AI successes institution-wide, enabling external recognition and attracting future investment.

AI as an Integration Platform

Use AI as an integration platform to bring a diverse institution together around shared challenges and initiatives.

Collaborative Strategy & Tech Stack

Collaboratively build broad AI strategies, governance policies, and a common technology stack across all units.

WHAT THIS IS NOT

A replacement of successful efforts already underway

This initiative is designed to empower, amplify, and connect existing excellence without disrupting local authority.

INSTITUTIONAL PORTFOLIO

Your Projects. A Shared Institutional Portfolio.

The Institute makes AI work across South Alabama visible while preserving each project's leadership, home, and credit.

Projects remain with their teams

- Faculty and units retain project leadership and direction
- Projects keep their departmental, college, or clinical home
- Recognition stays with the people and units doing the work
- Teams choose whether to pursue more Institute collaboration

Visibility, connections, and support

The Institute builds the university-wide portfolio

- Identify AI projects and capabilities across the university and USA Health
- Showcase accomplishments with clear attribution to the teams
- Connect complementary efforts; help teams find resources and partners
- Identify gaps where new initiatives could benefit the institution

Inclusion in the institutional portfolio does not transfer a project to the Institute or require Institute membership.

FACULTY PARTICIPATION

Participation Is a Choice

Faculty decide their own level of involvement, and the whole university gains either way

Some Faculty Will Join the Institute

- Lead or join teams across key AI areas
- Connect with collaborators across colleges
- Gain visibility, resources, and support

Some Faculty Will Not Join

- Participation is voluntary, never required
- Existing work continues as it is today
- Doors stay open to join at any time

THE BOTTOM LINE

An institutional AI strategy benefits everyone

Embodied by the Institute, shared strategy, governance, and infrastructure lift every faculty member, whether they join or not.

University of South Alabama AI Institute (AI²)

Domain	Building AI knowledge and capabilities	Applying AI to improve practice
Education	**AI Education** Definition: Teaching students, faculty, and staff to understand, use, evaluate, and develop AI. Includes: AI literacy and fluency courses; advanced AI coursework; the BAS in AI and discipline-specific pathways; faculty and staff training; curricular adoption assessments; AI teaching and collaboration spaces.	**AI in Education** Definition: Using AI to improve teaching, learning, student success, and alignment between education and workforce needs. Includes: AI-supported instruction and tutoring; personalized learning; advising and student-success tools; workforce intelligence; analysis of career demand and curricular alignment; portfolio and credentialing tools.
Research	**AI Research** Definition: Conducting research that advances AI itself or develops new AI methods and applications to address disciplinary questions. Includes: New models, algorithms, and AI systems; AI-focused proposals and projects; discipline-specific AI applications; strategic research investments; interdisciplinary teams developing and evaluating new AI approaches.	**AI in Research** Definition: Using AI as a tool to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and capacity of the research enterprise. Includes: Literature discovery and synthesis; data analysis and coding assistance; research-team and funding-opportunity matching; proposal development; research administration; AI support for existing projects.
Healthcare	**Clinical AI Innovation** Definition: Developing and clinically validating AI solutions that address unmet needs in patient care and healthcare operations. Includes: Clinician–researcher collaborations; new diagnostic, predictive, and decision-support tools; clinical datasets and validation studies; clinical pilots; development partnerships; commercialization of promising solutions.	**AI in Healthcare Delivery** Definition: Implementing and evaluating AI tools to improve patient care and the operation of USA Health. Includes: Clinical documentation; workflow improvement; care coordination; patient communication and engagement; implementation of decision-support tools; scheduling and resource allocation; monitoring quality, safety, access, and efficiency.

Service Center

AI Technology Infrastructure

AI Internships (Campus, USA Health, Outside Organizations)

AI Venture Studio

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

USA AI² Institute

Structuring leadership and collaboration across key campus domains

	Building AI Knowledge & Capabilities	Applying AI to Improve Practice
Education	**AI Education** Teaching students & faculty to use, evaluate, and develop AI models.	**AI in Education** Enhancing learning, personalized tutoring, and student success tools.
Research	**AI Research** Advancing foundational AI algorithms, novel methods, and architectures.	**AI in Research** Utilizing AI as a tool for literature synthesis, analysis, discovery. research administration, and research development.
Healthcare	**Clinical AI Innovation** Developing & validating diagnostic and clinical decision-support tools.	**AI in Healthcare Delivery** Implementing tools for workflow, patient care, and operations.

Overarching "Service Center" Areas

AI Tech Infrastructure

Compute, platforms, and centralized tech stack support.

AI Internships

Campus, USA Health, and external org placements.

AI Venture Studio

Translating research & tools into commercial ventures.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

AI² As A Teams Organizer

Nine compartments, one box: every team has its place



AI Education TEAM	AI in Education TEAM	AI Research TEAM
AI in Research TEAM	Clinical AI Innovation TEAM	AI in Healthcare Delivery TEAM
AI Tech Infrastructure TEAM	AI Internships TEAM	AI Venture Studio TEAM

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

A Collection of Nine Teams

Structuring leadership and collaboration across key campus domains

Area	Leader	Working Group	Community
AI Education	●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
AI In Education	●	●●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

IMPLEMENTATION

Teams Develop a Portfolio for Each Area

Starting with current projects to identify where connection accelerates impact

Phase 1

Project Inventory

Map courses, clinical pilots, research tools, and unmet needs across units.



Phase 2

Connect Capabilities

Link complementary teams, share platform tools, and solve common barriers.



Phase 3

Focused Portfolio

Establish shared priorities, resource commitments, and measurable targets.



INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

AI² As A Team and Portfolio Organizer

Nine compartments, one box: every team and portfolio has its place



AI Education PORTFOLIO TEAM	AI in Education PORTFOLIO TEAM	AI Research PORTFOLIO TEAM
AI in Research PORTFOLIO TEAM	Clinical AI Innovation PORTFOLIO TEAM	AI in Healthcare Delivery PORTFOLIO TEAM
AI Tech Infrastructure PORTFOLIO TEAM	AI Internships PORTFOLIO TEAM	AI Venture Studio PORTFOLIO TEAM

IMPLEMENTATION

Institute and Institutional Portfolios – Inventory, Collaborate and Invest

Portfolios include existing assets and capabilities across the university plus new strategic capabilities

Area	Inventory: Existing Projects	Collaborate: Institute Organic Projects	Invest: Major Strategic Initiatives
AI Education			
AI In Education			
AI Research			
AI In Research			
Clinical AI Innovation			
AI In Healthcare Delivery			
AI Tech Infrastructure			
AI Internships			
AI Venture Studio			

Institution

Institute



ACTION PLAN

Four Initial Potential Strategic Initiatives

Concrete starting points connecting learning, infrastructure, and interdisciplinary teams

1. Curricular Integration

Education

3-level adoption model embedding literacy, fluency, and discipline pathways.

2. Shared AI Platform

Infrastructure

Supported environment to build, test, and deploy AI applications safely.

3. AI Internships

Talent

Hands-on student placements across university and health system units.

4. AI Venture Studio

Innovation

Interdisciplinary project teams bringing high-impact ideas to execution.

OPPORTUNITY #1

AI Curricular Integration Model

A common foundational structure with discipline-appropriate specialization

Level 3

PRODUCERS

Build & Engineer AI

MAJORS
Computer Science
Data Science
IS/IT
Systems Engineering
Math/Statistics
Computer/Electrical Engineering

OCCUPATIONS
AI/ML Engineer
AI Systems Engineer
Data/Knowledge Engineer
AI Platform Engineer
AI Research Engineer

Ground & Improve AI

MAJORS
Linguistics
Philosophy
Psychology
Sociology
Economics
Anthropology
Communication/Cognitive Science

OCCUPATIONS
AI Evaluation Analyst
Model Behavior / Alignment Specialist
Knowledge / Ontology Engineer
Conversation / HAI Specialist
Context / Policy Researcher

CONSUMERS

AI-Driven Practice

MAJORS
Medicine / Nursing
Law
Accounting
Engineering
Architecture
Pharmacy
Education/Sciences

OCCUPATIONS
Physician / Clinician
Lawyer
Accountant / Auditor
Engineer
Pharmacist
Educator / Scientist

AI-Driven Transformation

MAJORS
Management / Business Entrepreneurship
Public Administration
Health Administration
Operations / Supply Chain
Organizational Leadership

OCCUPATIONS
CAIO (AI Transformation Prof)
Product Manager
Entrepreneur
Operations Leader
Consultant
Innovation/Public-Sector Manager

Level 2: AI Fluency

Applying AI tools to discipline-specific problem solving & workflows

Level 1: AI Literacy

Universal baseline: principles, ethics, limitations, and practical usage

OPPORTUNITY #1

AI Curricular Integration Model

A common foundational structure with discipline-appropriate specialization

OPERATIONALIZING THE MODEL IN THREE STEPS

01

Build the Foundation

Create university-wide courses in AI Literacy and AI Fluency, and integrate them into the General Education curriculum.

02

Map Each Program

Determine where each program fits within the four top-level columns. Programs may fit multiple columns through multiple tracks.

03

Implement

Launch new content, courses, majors, and other credentials.

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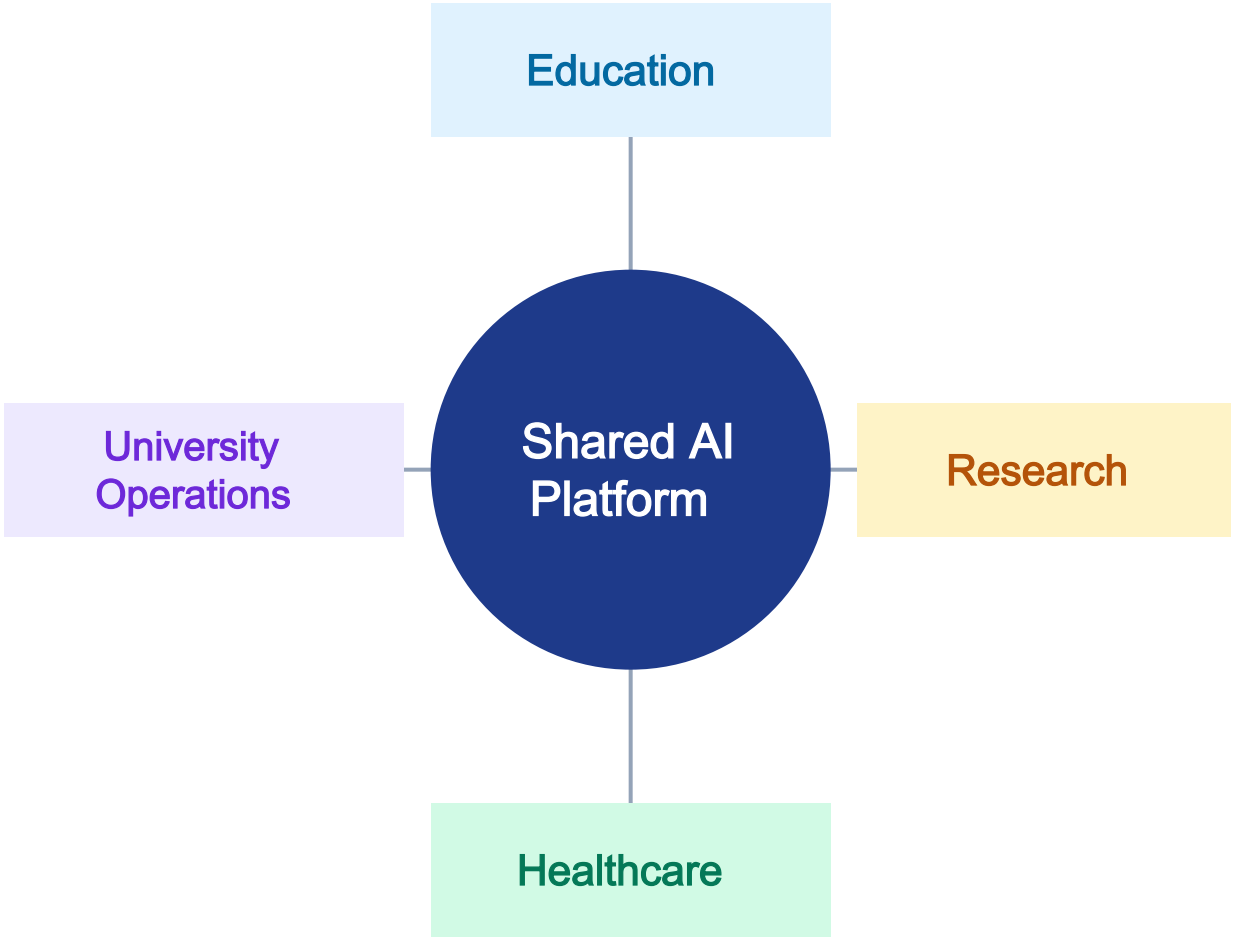
Interdisciplinary project teams bringing high-impact ideas to execution.

OPPORTUNITY #2

One Shared Platform for AI Creation

Make AI capabilities accessible across the university and USA Health

- A service center combining computing, software, secure data environments, and technical support
- Shared tools and interfaces to build, test, deploy, and operate AI applications
- A common foundation connecting education, research, healthcare, and university operations



OPPORTUNITY #2

Shared Resources, Flexible Access

Combine local capability with the reach of cloud and HPC partners

Local infrastructure

Shared GPU systems, data storage, and a private cloud workspace

External partnerships

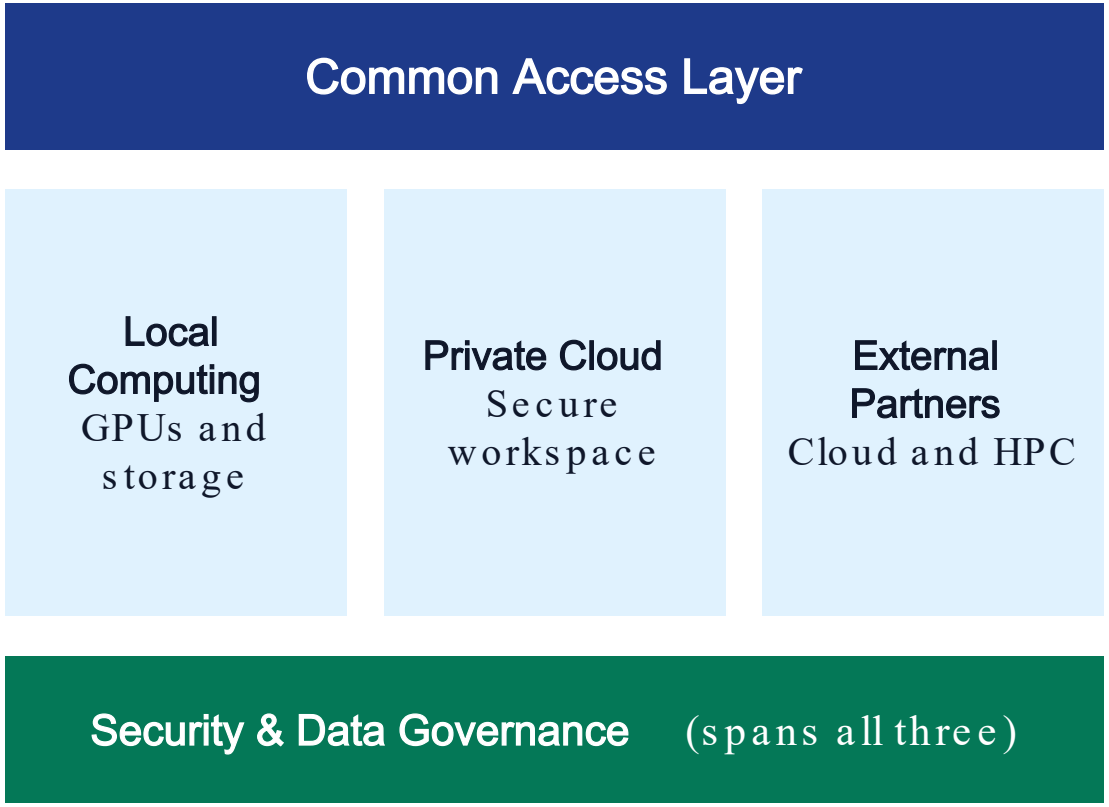
Negotiated access to cloud and high-performance computing

Coordinated investment

Pooled purchasing across units; brokered shared capacity

Flexible use

Project- or job-based access with transparent pricing and allocation



OPPORTUNITY #2

CreateAI : A Model for Shared Campus Capability

Give people a common environment to create, share, and scale AI tools

Build and customize

Create AI assistants using templates and approved models

Share and reuse

Discover and adapt applications through an internal marketplace

Shared AI Workspace

Connect knowledge

Ground responses in institutional documents, websites, and connected sources

Integrate and evaluate

Connect to university systems via APIs; assess usage, performance, and responsible AI practices

Govern and scale

Operate applications in a managed environment that supports institutional privacy and data control

Access multiple models

Use and compare many AI models from different providers in one common interface

Source: ai.asu.edu (Arizona State University CreateAI)

OPPORTUNITY #2

Start Focused. Expand with Demand.

Build a sustainable capability through phased investment

1 Establish the Foundation

- Begin with broadly useful tools and a few high-value pilots
- Provide sandboxes, reusable components, and technical expertise

2 Demonstrate Value

- Move successful prototypes into supported services

3 Expand

- Expand capacity as funding, demonstrated demand, and strategic opportunities emerge

Funding and demand guide every step: adoption, outcomes, utilization, and cost shape further investment

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OPPORTUNITY #3

AI Internships Across Our Institution

Students learn by contributing to real institutional AI challenges

Campus Operations

Instructional tool evaluation and admin automation.

USA Health System

Clinical workflow evaluation and data preparation.

External Partners

Industry placements solving real-world domain problems.

STRUCTURE OF AN INTERNSHIP BRIEF

Defined & Supervised Projects

- ✓ **Real Problem:** Clear operational or research need
- ✓ **Supervisor:** Faculty or health-system mentor
- ✓ **Deliverable:** Prototype, evaluation, or dataset
- ✓ **Learning Goal:** Applied AI skill in student's field

Talent at Scale

- Cohorts extend AI capacity across every unit
- Signature program draws students and employers
- Graduates enter the workforce AI-ready

Open to Every Discipline

- Recruits humanities and social sciences majors, as well as business, engineering and computing.
- Opens AI roles historically out of reach
- Values writing, ethics, and critical thinking

Common Training Core

- Shared onboarding: AI tools, ethics, data safety
- One skills standard for every intern
- Evolves into new AI literacy and fluency courses

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OPPORTUNITY #4

The AI Venture Studio

A sponsor brings a need; we build a prototype AI system to meet it

1 THE NEED

A Sponsor's Problem

A university unit, the health system, or an external partner brings a real, high-value need.

2 THE BUILD

Venture Studio Team

Problem owners, domain experts, technical staff, and student interns build a **prototype AI system** in response.

3 TWO OUTCOMES

FOR THE SPONSOR

A working AI response to their need

FOR US

Homegrown AI capability, skills, and reusable tools

How far the build goes depends on the problem and the system

PROTOTYPE — PRODUCTION

Proves value, sets realistic requirements, and benchmarks vendors before we buy

Deployed internally, extended through a sponsored partnership, or licensed via ORED

Along the way, students gain hands-on experience in AI, software, and entrepreneurship.

OPPORTUNITY #4

Real Options: Build Cheap, Decide Late

Every prototype is a low-cost option, not an obligation to maintain software

1. Low-Cost Build

Explore ideas on the $500K hybrid AI/Cyber Range

→

2. Market Probe

Test with users, red-team, and seek commercial LOIs

→

3. Gateway Decision

Commercial spin-out or license, or throwaway

COMMERCIAL PATH: SPIN-OUT / LICENSE

Clear market pull, such as a clinical partner co-funding trials or a buyer signing an LOI, moves the project to production via venture capital or tech-transfer licensing.

DISPOSABLE PATH: THROWAWAY / SUNSET

If no commercial pathway or outside capital emerges, the code and infrastructure are formally discarded. The university does not absorb production liability.

WHY DEFER THE DECISION: AVOIDING THE SUNK COST TRAP

$10K–$50K

Range prototype: student labor and local GPU compute

$500K –$2M+

Production product: HIPAA/FERPA, SOC 2, integrations, 24/7 SLAs

10:1 to 50:1

Prototype-to-scale cost ratio; labs avoid becoming maintenance shops

Source: USA AI Institute, The Academic Venture Studio Model, August 2026

OPPORTUNITY #4

Why "Throwaway" Prototypes Are Still Wins

Discarding code is not failure: four strategic assets stay with the university

1. Workforce & Student Talent

Students design, fine-tune, and red-team enterprise LLMs on real hardware, building strong career placements.

2. Academic Capital & Grants

Findings, benchmark datasets, and negative results fuel papers and NSF, NIH, and DoD proposals.

3. Intellectual Property

Novel algorithms, RAG schemas, and fine-tuning datasets stay with Tech Transfer for patents or licensing.

4. Procurement Intelligence

Empirical benchmarks prevent costly mistakes when evaluating commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) vendors.

SECTOR GATEWAY SIGNALS

Healthcare AI

Commercialize: IRB-approved clinical pilot partner or CPT reimbursement mapping
Throw away: clinical liability the university cannot insure

Educational AI

Commercialize: binding LOI or paid pilot from a university or K-12 district
Throw away: user enthusiasm but no budget or procurement sponsor

Source: USA AI Institute, The Academic Venture Studio Model, August 2026

ROLLOUT ROADMAP

The First Three Phases of Engagement

Map and prioritize, build the leadership, then stand up AI computing infrastructure

PHASE 1: MAP AND PRIORITIZE

Step 1

Identify Leaders

Confirm accountable contacts across the nine areas.

Output: Leadership Contacts

Step 2

Convene Communities

Gather interested faculty, staff, and clinicians.

Output: Participation Network

Step 3

Map Activity

Collect existing work, assets, and unmet needs.

Output: Institutional Map

Step 4

Select Priorities

Commit resources to initial shared projects.

Output: Shared Agendas

PHASE 2: BUILD THE LEADERSHIP

Install Leadership and People

- Install a **Director**
- Appoint part-time **Faculty Fellows**
- Engage **students**

PHASE 3: BUILD THE INFRASTRUCTURE

Procure AI Computing Resources

- Procure **hardware** for AI computing
- Procure **software** for AI computing

CALL FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Wanted: Builders for a Transformative University Initiative

We are recruiting committed entrepreneurs. Startup principles will drive how we work.

Ideas That Motivate Investment

Bold, high-value problems that sponsors want to fund

A Commitment to Building

Founders who want to ship real systems, not just study them

Lean Start, Staged Growth

Start small, prove value, then scale at each milestone

Scan to Take the Survey

Ready to build something that matters? Scan the code and tell us your idea, your need, or your expertise.

PERSPECTIVE

The Art of the Possible

Exploring future potential and concrete opportunities across higher education and health



Featured Speaker

Dr. Jim Locke

Keynote Address & Technical Perspectives

- Montgomery, Alabama native; researcher in AI education, MIS, and corporate strategy
- Auburn: B.A. Economics; M.S. and Ph.D. in MIS (neural networks, deep learning); Harvard Business School OPM program
- Senior Fellow, Petrie Institute
- Former Visiting Professor and Department Chair, Auburn University at Montgomery
- Collaborates with Air University's Innovation Accelerator, Maxwell AFB
- Co-author, *Introduction to AI and Machine Learning* (Wiley & Sons), for non-technical students

OPEN DISCUSSION

Questions & Collaboration

Where could we create the most value together?

What should we connect?

Existing local projects ready for broader scale.

What support is missing?

Key tools, resources, or regulatory guidance.

What to explore first?

High-value interdisciplinary opportunities.