

AAFCS 2026 Annual Conference

Artificial Intelligence Workshop

June 17-18, 2026

Louisville, KY

The Galt House

Date - Time	Title	Presenter
June 17 – 9-9:45am	Human-Centered Design Briefs in an AI World: Co-Creating Purposeful Solutions in FCS*	Dr. Jay Deagon, CQUniversity, Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia
June 17 – 10-10:45am	Exploring AI in Consumer Products, What to Look For and How They Work.	Manny Dekermenjian, PhD, PE, CFEI, Product Safety Manager - Google Nest
June 17 – 12-1:30pm	Break (Lunch on Own)	
June 17 – 1:30-2:15pm	Automating Risks	Ben Winters, Consumer Federation of America
June 17 – 2:30-3:15pm	Leveraging AI for Your Research	Travis Norton, Head of Content Strategy and Compliance Innovation, Compliance & Risks
June 17 – 3:30-4:15pm	Human-Centered AI Through a Family & Consumer Sciences Lens Ethics, Innovation, and FCS Leadership in the Age of Artificial Intelligence Session Description	Dr. Melanie Schmitt, CFCS, Assistant Professor of Practice, Texas Tech University
June 18	Micro-credential: The Principled AI Professional	Dr. Heather Carter, Pittsburg State University Joyce B. Miles
9-10am	Part 1: From Curiosity to Confidence: Building AI Fluency	
10:15-11:45am	Part 2: Prompt Power: How to Talk So AI Will Listen	
12-1:30pm	Break (Lunch on Own)	
1:30-3:30pm	Part 3: Exploring and Maximizing AI Tools for Everyday Use	

*Virtual presenter.



Speakers



Dr Jay Deagon

Dr Jay Deagon is a Senior Lecturer in Home Economics Education at CQUniversity, Australia, and an International Professional Home Economist (IPHE). Her scholarship focuses on wellbeing, sustainability, humanness, and transformative action across diverse everyday living contexts. Dr Deagon contributes to the advancement of global Home Economics through leadership roles within the International Federation for Home Economics and active engagement in national and international policy, curriculum development, and research. Her recent work examines how design briefs, creativity, and ethical Generative AI practices can enhance human capability, strengthen resourcefulness and resilience, and support individuals, families, and communities in navigating contemporary challenges in sustainable, authentic, and meaningful ways.

Presentation Synopsis:

Design briefs sit at the heart of Home Economics and Family and Consumer Sciences. They help us pause, think, and organise our intentions before we act - clarifying purpose, identifying available resources, and aligning our skills with the human needs we are trying to address. In an increasingly AI-enabled world, the design brief becomes a powerful tool for ensuring that the work we do remains purposeful, ethical, and grounded in the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities.

In this session, I will demonstrate how the design brief functions as a shared decision-making space where humans and Generative AI (GenAI) can co-create meaningful and contextually relevant solutions. A well-crafted design brief, supported by thoughtful prompting and strategic follow-up questions, helps GenAI understand what we already bring to the table: our expertise, our constraints, our materials, our values, and the real-world conditions in which we work. This collaborative approach strengthens, rather than diminishes, our human agency and professional judgement.

Drawing on recent examples, including a sustainable and authentic hand-made gift project developed with ChatGPT as a co-collaborator, I will show how design briefs and GenAI prompts can be used to enhance creativity, support reflective practice, and promote sustainable, resourceful, and culturally responsive decision-making.



Participants will learn practical ways to:

- Connect purpose, skills, resources, and constraints into a clear design brief.
- Use prompts and iterative questioning to guide GenAI toward human-centred and values-aligned outcomes.
- Integrate this approach across FCS contexts—from classrooms and community programs to consumer wellbeing and human services.
- Build GenAI literacy that supports transformative action and strengthens professional capability.

This session offers practical tools and adaptable templates to help participants use design briefs and GenAI collaboratively, ensuring small actions continue to make big impacts in homes, schools, and communities.



Manny Dekermenjian

Manny Dekermenjian, PhD, PE, CFEI, is a product safety manager at Google. He has experience investigating fires, product defects, engineering disasters, and incidents resulting in injuries or fatalities. He has worked on safety issues in various industries, applying fundamental scientific principles to identify root cause and opportunities for improvements.



Ben Winters

Ben Winters is the Director of AI and Privacy at the Consumer Federation of America. Ben leads CFA's advocacy efforts related to data privacy and automated systems and works with subject matter experts throughout CFA to integrate concerns about privacy and AI in order to better advocate for consumers. Ben is also an adjunct professor at the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law. Prior to CFA, Ben worked at the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, where he was an Attorney Advisor in the policy section focusing on algorithmic harm in the civil rights context and was Senior Counsel at the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) where he led the AI/Human Rights project and advocated for accountability through legislative and direct legal action.





Travis Norton

Travis Norton is the Head of Content Strategy and Compliance Innovation at Compliance & Risks. Travis has worked in the consumer products industry for more than 30 years. He has developed a global regulatory perspective while living in China, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. He has been involved with research & development and regulatory technical consultation for the certification and testing of consumer products for many of the leading global brands and retailers. He is an ASTM member and is currently the chair of

the subcommittee for Connected Products.



Melanie Schmitt

Dr. Melanie Schmitt serves as an Assistant Professor of Practice for the Family and Consumer Sciences Education program at Texas Tech University and as the Curriculum Specialist for The Curriculum Center for Family and Consumer Sciences. Prior to entering higher education, she spent 16 years teaching secondary Family and Consumer Sciences and leading Career and Technical Education programs, including the Pre-Educator program and FCCLA chapter in Hackett, Arkansas.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in Family and Consumer Sciences Education from Harding University, a Master of Science in Family and Consumer Sciences from the University of Central Arkansas, and a Ph.D. in Family and Consumer Sciences Education from Texas Tech University.

Dr. Schmitt's work centers on youth development and technology integration in education. Her research focuses on the social and emotional impacts of technology and social media on youth, along with strategies for responsibly integrating AI into homes, classrooms, and communities. She also contributes to curriculum design and educator training related to AI literacy and ethics and helped develop Texas Tech's new Human-Centered AI degree program.

Presentation Synopsis:

This session highlights how Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) contributes to the development and implementation of Texas Tech University's interdisciplinary Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HCAI) program. While the degree was created through campus-wide collaboration among multiple colleges and departments, FCS leadership played a key role in shaping the program's emphasis on ethics, human development, and social responsibility.



Participants will explore how “human-centered AI” is defined, how FCS values influenced program design, and how theory is translated into practice through coursework and credentialing. The session will feature two courses developed and taught by the presenter—Human-Centered AI: Ethical Decision-Making and Leadership and Practical Reasoning & Ethical Decision-Making in Human-Centered AI—along with the microcredential offered through TTU Online + Microcredential Program.

Early feedback, lessons learned, and practical strategies for FCS professionals will be shared throughout the session.



Heather Carter

Dr. Heather Carter is an Assistant Professor of Child and Human Development at Pittsburg State University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses, mentors Child Development students, and co-coordinates the M.S. in Career and Technical Education with a Family and Consumer Sciences emphasis. Her expertise includes child development, pedagogy, curriculum design, and the practical integration of AI into professional practice. She recently authored two OER textbooks and led major program innovations that expanded online access to programs at Pitt State and co-led efforts to increase graduate enrollment fivefold. Carter is recognized for her leadership in AI literacy, serving as an expert panelist for the Pitt State AI Symposium and presenting on how to use AI as a partner in learning at AAFCS 2025. A former Air Force Child and Youth Programs professional, she earned multiple AFMC Commander's Coins and the Civilian Lifesaver Award. She is also active in community leadership, a wife, and mom of three young boys.

Joyce B. Miles

Joyce B. Miles is a retired Family and Consumer Sciences Professional, 50-year member of AAFCS, and AAFCS Distinguished Service Award Recipient.