

# FOLC Fest 2025 explores Principled Innovation, leadership and learning at ASU

**Annual gathering brings together leaders, students to shape the future of education**

By Natalie Goebig, ASU News

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"Principled Innovation is about using our creativity, knowledge and resources to make decisions that ultimately benefit humanity — not just in the short term, but for generations to come."

That's what Nancy Gonzales, executive vice president and university provost, told a crowd of attendees as she kicked off Arizona State University's Future of Learning Community, or FOLC, Fest.

Now in its second year, FOLC Fest, hosted by the Office of the University Provost, took place Feb. 27–28 at the Omni Tempe Hotel at ASU. Nearly 1,300 faculty, staff and graduate students registered to showcase and explore how ASU's newest design aspiration, Principled Innovation, enhances student success.

With breakout sessions, research posters, hands-on demonstrations and panel discussions, FOLC Fest served as a hub for collaboration and practical application.

## **Transforming education through bold leadership**

Keynote speakers Paul Quinn College President [Michael J. Sorrell](#) and ASU President [Michael M. Crow](#) reinforced the critical role of ethical leadership and innovation in shaping the future of education.

Sorrell urged educators to step outside their comfort zones, take bold action and prioritize student and community success over personal ambition.

“Nothing great happens from places of comfort. It never has and it never will,” he said.

He emphasized that true leadership is built on service: “I don’t think you should lead people you do not love. If you lead people you don’t love, you won’t make the sacrifices necessary to dream big enough dreams for them.”

Building on this message, Crow highlighted the responsibility of institutions to actively shape the future of education.

“If we can’t contribute to that, then we’re not going to succeed in our present model. We will fall back to small groups of people making decisions,” he said.

During a student panel, Crow reinforced ASU’s commitment to access over exclusivity, challenging the selection-driven model of traditional universities.

“That’s not in the best interests of the United States if everyone takes that view. So we’ve taken this other view ... and so far, it has worked.”

## **Bringing PI into teaching and learning**

Beyond inspiration, FOLC Fest equipped attendees with practical tools and strategies to enhance their teaching and learning.

A lunch-and-learn panel, moderated by [Pauline Davies](#), professor of practice in the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, featured former [Provost Teaching Awardees Gregory Broberg](#), [Carolyn Cavanaugh Toft](#), [Heather Bateman](#) and [Jennifer Broatch](#). The discussion examined how PI shapes their teaching and enhances student learning.

Cavanaugh Toft, a teaching professor in the Department of Psychology, shared a simple but effective engagement strategy she picked up from a colleague.

“I send out a ‘Congratulations, you got an ‘A’ on the test’ email through Canvas, but then I also say, ‘Hey, can you share some information about how you prepared for this test ... to help some of your classmates who didn’t do so well?’ It makes the students feel good, and then I take that feedback ... and I let students know, ‘Here’s what people just like you in this class did to do well, and you can do it too.’”

The event concluded with a Principled Innovation discovery dice game, an interactive tool designed to spark meaningful dialogue and strategic planning through thought-provoking questions

guided by Principled Innovation's four pathways: moral, civic, intellectual and performance. A digital version of the dice will soon be available through the [PI toolkit library](#).

## Expanding FOLC Fest

To extend the impact beyond the annual event, a new FOLC Fest webinar series will launch soon at [folcfest.asu.edu](https://folcfest.asu.edu).

The series will initially cover AI-driven mentorship, virtual reality for deeper learning, ethical AI literacy, game-based learning and student success strategies.

"Adding a webinar series allows us to extend the conversations from FOLC Fest year-round, providing ongoing opportunities for educators to engage, collaborate and implement new ideas in real time," said Danielle McNamara, executive director of the Learning Engineering Institute and FOLC Fest co-chair.

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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

## Main image



A panel at the Future of Learning Community (FOLC) Fest on Feb. 28 included (from left) ASU President Michael M. Crow, graduate student Kofi Wood, undergraduate student Bella Faria and graduate students Farnaz Avarzamani and Jana Vandenberg at the Omni Tempe Hotel. Photo by EdPlus New Media

**Text image(s)**



For the second year in a row, Nancy Gonzales, executive vice president and university provost, welcomes attendees and kicks off FOLC Fest, ASU's teaching and learning conference hosted by the Office of the University Provost. Photo by Armand Saavedra





Michael J. Sorrell, president of Paul Quinn College, delivered a keynote address on Feb. 27 titled "From Chaos to Clarity: Innovation Strategies for Leading Through Uncertainty." Photo by Armand Saavedra



A lunch-and-learn faculty panel moderated by Pauline Davies (far left) featured former Provost Teaching Awardees (second from left to right) Jennifer Broatch, Carolyn Cavanaugh Toft, Heather Bateman and Gregory Broberg. Photo by EdPlus New Media

## Gallery



Presenters Cristy Guleserian, executive director of Principled Innovation at ASU's Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation, and Ted Cross, executive director of ASU's Office of University Affairs, highlight the core principles of the Principled Innovation framework.





Attendees play the PI discovery dice game as a fun new way to incorporate Principled Innovation into their work.



The vendor expo provided a space for FOLC Fest sponsors and ASU departments to connect with attendees.



Sarah Spencer, visual storyteller, illustrates live presentations bringing key FOLC Fest moments to life.