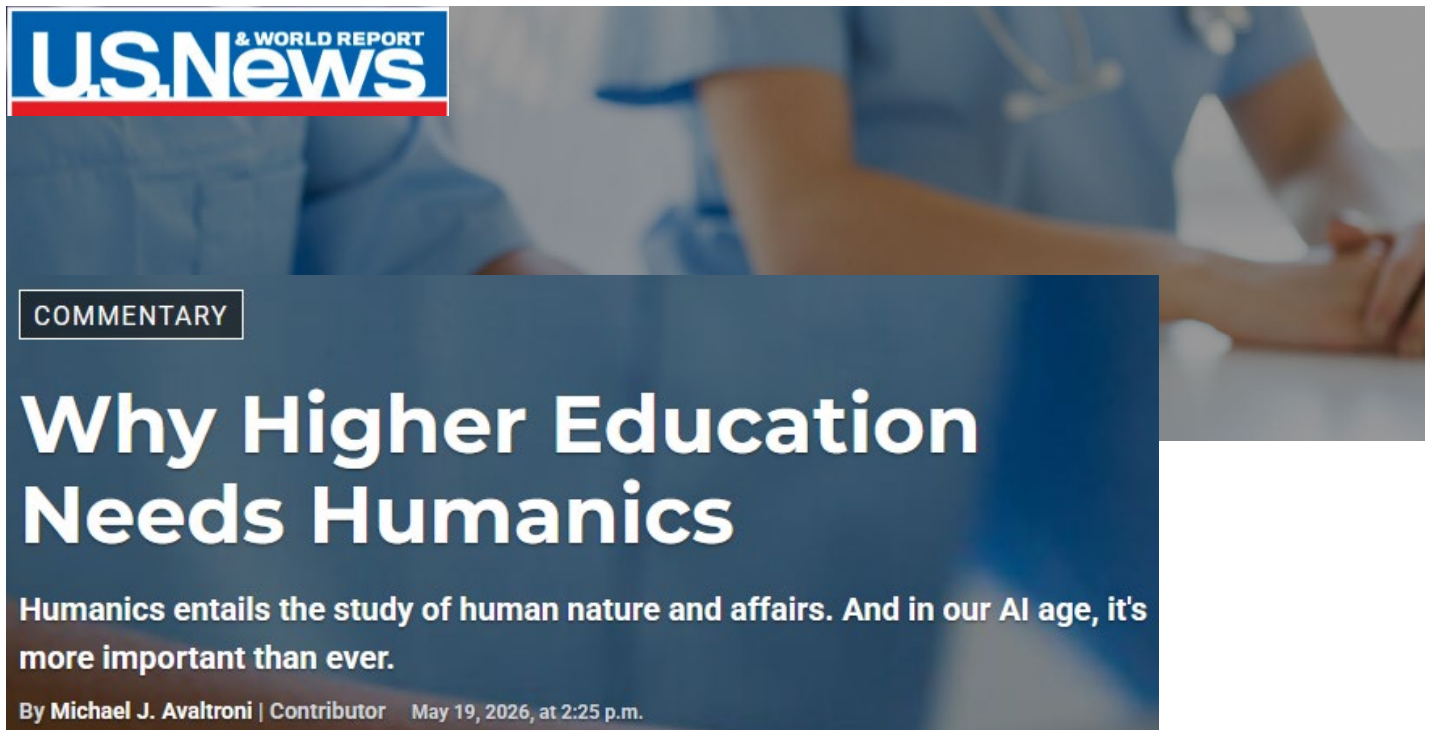


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In a world where artificial intelligence now permeates daily life and higher education, it has become essential to weave the human element throughout the delivery of instruction – particularly healthcare education.

Enter humanics.

The integration of [humanics](#) – often described as the study, understanding and development of key human qualities – represents a novel way to foster interdisciplinary collaboration in education, technology and the human component in an AI-driven world. It speaks to the urgent need to build healthcare teams that optimize all the advances in artificial intelligence with the humans in the middle – our students, clinicians and patients. It also speaks to the urgency to redefine higher education itself.

Through [embedding humanics at my university](#) – Fairleigh Dickinson University – we’re working to ensure our healthcare students graduate with both the technical mastery to use the tools of modern medicine and the human capacity to see, hear and care for the person in front of them. So we are focusing on the five pillars of humanics: empathy, agility, cultural competence, creativity and critical thinking. These are skills that technology can enhance but cannot fully replace.

There are those who equate humanics with teaching kindness, but that's not the whole story. Humanics as a concept emphasizes understanding human qualities such as empathy – toward yourself and others. Learning how to balance taking care of others while avoiding burnout is important.

Why is this the time to embed humanics in healthcare education? First, higher education has [been slow to adjust](#) to the world around us. Today, many are questioning the value of

college. We must adapt or face the possibility of becoming irrelevant. At the same time, the workforce of the future is quickly evolving in the digital age. We have a unique opportunity to redefine the role of education in a dynamically shifting landscape, and the time is now.

What are some of the common obstacles university leaders might come up against in going this route? Typically, they come from attempting to engage and persuade our on-campus colleagues who tend to embrace views that reflect one of two extremes: overreliance on AI as the answer to everything or the view of the technology as a sort of enemy – or at least highly suspect.

The prospect of getting bogged down by either of these extreme positions can feel like an uphill battle. Shifting the conversation toward the center, to the benefits of integrating the humanics as a way to balance AI, can help. Emphasize the crucial role of collaboration in all of this and the need for respectful, meaningful communication.

Can you bring the dean of the liberal arts programs together with the dean of the healthcare professions programs to talk about what this might look like? Those conversations can build understanding and also generate excitement that can be contagious and spark new ideas, suggestions and input among department chairs, faculty and others.

With contributions from experts like noted digital health advocate [Dr. Stephen Klasko](#), our humanics hub is designed to make our campuses active engines of experimentation, combining academic programs, well-being initiatives, employer partnerships and real-world problem-solving. The lab has already begun hosting collaborative design sessions, faculty engagement efforts and early pilots that will guide our broader rollout in the months ahead.

The ultimate goal is to empower students to tap into their understanding of human nature and the human condition, to be empathic in how they approach their chosen healthcare profession, and to think outside the box – and above all, to better understand and appreciate the important human impact of their work.

For higher education leaders considering integrating AI on their campuses, the lesson is simple: We need both tech and health to talk to each other. We also need universities to teach and mentor the leaders of the future by building the hubs we're creating to make sure that AI and humanics complement each other. We need to ensure that human performance will be enhanced – not replaced – by technology.

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