2026 AI IN HRM CONFERENCE

The Mountaineer Advantage: Leading the Future of AI-Enabled HR Management

Reynolds Hall | Morgantown, WV

April 10, 2026

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Thank you for your generous support!

Welcome to the 2nd Annual AI in HRM Conference!

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the second AI in Human Resource Management Conference, hosted by the John Chambers College of Business and Economics at West Virginia University. After the strong momentum and positive reception of our first conference, we are excited to convene once again a vibrant and interdisciplinary group of academic scholars and industry professionals to continue examining the growing influence of artificial intelligence on HRM.

Rapid advances in AI technologies are fundamentally changing how organizations approach human resource management. From recruiting and training to workforce analytics and managerial decision-making, AI is playing an increasingly central role in shaping how organizations support, evaluate, and develop their people. This second conference builds on the foundation established last year, offering a fresh forum to examine new trends, confront emerging concerns, and discuss responsible and ethical applications of AI grounded in both research and practice.

Over the course of the conference, participants will engage with inspiring keynote speakers, research-driven presentations, and hands-on sessions designed to encourage dialogue and collaboration. We are particularly pleased to welcome a number of new voices this year, while also creating ample opportunities for networking and exchange between participants from academic and professional communities.

We are deeply grateful to our sponsors, partners, and the outstanding team at the John Chambers College of Business and Economics for their continued commitment and support. We also extend sincere thanks to our invited speakers and presenters, whose insights and expertise will play a vital role in advancing our collective understanding of AI's implications for HRM.

As we begin this next phase of conversation and collaboration, we encourage you to actively participate, challenge assumptions, and connect with others who share an interest in shaping the future of human resource management. We hope this conference inspires new ideas, meaningful partnerships, and practical takeaways that extend well beyond the event itself.

Once again, welcome to the AI in Human Resource Management Conference. We are delighted to have you join us and look forward to an engaging and impactful experience.

Warm regards,

Jamie Field, Olga Bruyaka, and Xiaoxiao Hu
John Chambers College of Business and Economics
West Virginia University

Conference Schedule

Sessions will take place in Esbenshade Auditorium unless otherwise noted

Time	Agenda Item
08:00 – 08:45	Coffee and Registration (Reynolds Hall Atrium)
08:45 – 09:00	**Welcome Address** Speaker: Dr. Josh Hall Milan Puskar Dean John Chambers College of Business and Economics
09:00 – 10:00	**Morning Keynote Address – Sponsored by Vandalia Health** Introduction: Dr. Xiaoxiao Hu Speaker: Dr. Richard N. Landers (University of Minnesota) John P. Campbell Distinguished Professor of I/O Psychology Topic: Should Artificial Intelligence Augment or Replace Workers? Positioning HRM to Lead the AI Revolution
10:00 – 10:15	**Networking Break** (Reynolds Hall Atrium)
10:15 – 11:30	**Scholarly Presentations and Panel Discussion** Introduction: Dr. Olga Bruyaka Collignon Speaker #1: Dr. Louis Hickman (Virginia Tech) Topic: The Reliability of Large Language Models: Implications for Research and Practice Speaker #2: Dr. Chen Tang (American University) Topic: PolyGraph: A Multi-Graphical Algorithm for Faking Detection in Personality Assessments
11:30 – 12:45	**Networking Lunch** (Reynolds Hall Atrium) Sponsored by Synchrony
12:45 – 1:30	**Afternoon Keynote Address** Introduction: Dr. Jamie Field Speaker: DJ Casto (EVP and CHRO at Synchrony) Topic: Shaping Culture: Co-Designing the Future Together
1:30 – 1:45	**Networking Break** (Reynolds Hall Atrium)
1:45 – 2:45	**Afternoon Keynote Address** Introduction: Dr. Xiaoxiao Hu Speaker: Dr. Nathan Mondragon (President & CSO at ProboTalent) Topic: Practical Career Guidance with Stories of an Industrial Psychologist that Swiped Right on Technology
3:00 – 4:00	**Interactive Workshop - Option 1 (Reynolds Hall Room 5225)** Speaker: Louis Hickman (Virginia Tech University) Topic: Natural language processing and text analysis for HRM
3:00 – 4:00	**Interactive Workshop – Option 2 (Reynolds Hall Room 4205)** Speaker: Kellyn Smith (CVS Pharmacy) Topic: Executing Purposeful Performance Reviews with AI Tools
4:00	**End of Conference**

Morning Keynote Speaker

About: Richard N. Landers, Ph.D., is the John P. Campbell Distinguished Professor of Industrial-Organizational Psychology at the University of Minnesota and Principal Investigator of TNTLAB. His research concerns the use of innovative technologies including artificial intelligence and gamification to improve employee assessment, hiring, learning, and organizational research methods. He is President-Elect and a Fellow of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology. He has been featured in Forbes, Business Insider, and Popular Science, among others, and he consults in industry via Landers Workforce Science LLC (https://landers.tech) by providing guidance on employee selection and learning processes incorporating artificial intelligence and other advanced technologies.

Presentation Title: Should Artificial Intelligence Augment or Replace Workers? Positioning HRM to Lead the AI Revolution

Presentation Time: 9:00 – 10:00 AM

Take Away Points:
1. Artificial intelligence is certainly artificial but not "intelligent" - at least in the way a human is.
2. Adopters must carefully navigate four competing drives: a) striving for the legitimate gains AI can bring, b) avoiding unintended harm, c) keeping up with competition, and d) avoiding moral panic.
3. Successful artificial intelligence use in HRM requires a proactive, interdisciplinary approach focused on human-centered design.

Dr. Richard N. Landers

Summary of the Talk:
Rapid development of HRM-relevant AI tools has led to an explosion of products and platforms that promise to meaningfully improve or replace a wide variety of human organizational processes. At the same time, the threats and costs associated with AI adoption can bring significant negative consequences for individuals, teams, and organizations. These conflicting narratives leave potential AI adopters in a difficult position, but as usual, the truth is somewhere in the middle. In this keynote, Dr. Landers will explain how we ended up here, how this problem is not an altogether new one for HRM, and how organizations can successfully navigate this turbulent moment.

Academic Guest Speaker

About: Professor of Industrial-Organizational Psychology at Virginia Tech, a Visiting Academic at Amazon, and a Senior Fellow at University of Pennsylvania's Wharton People Analytics. He holds an M.S. in Computer and Information Technology, specializing in natural language processing, and a Ph.D. in Industrial-Organizational Psychology. His research focuses on applications and implications of machine learning, natural language processing, and artificial intelligence in selection, assessment, and training and development. His research twice won the Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology's Jeanneret Award for Excellence in the Study of Individual or Group Assessment. His achievements earned him the Association for Psychological Science (APS) Rising Star Award in 2025, granted to outstanding psychological scientists in the earliest stages of their research careers.

Presentation Title: The Reliability of Large Language Models: Implications for Research and Practice

Presentation Time: 10:15 – 11:30 AM

Take Away Points:
1. Learn about the ways that large language models (LLMs) can be used in HRM research and practice
2. Identify the major sources of measurement error in LLM ratings for various HRM purposes
3. Utilize best practices for minimizing measurement error in LLM ratings

Dr. Louis Hickman

Summary of Talk:
Large language models (LLMs) are increasingly used as alternatives to human raters in organizational research and practice. However, factors influencing their reliability and reproducibility remain unclear. I delineate the potential sources of inconsistency when working with LLMs then investigate the influence of these sources in a large-scale experiment (>5,000 conditions). Although minor changes to prompts cause some inconsistency, the largest source of measurement error is the specific LLM used. I use these findings to develop best-practice guidelines for ensuring that LLM-based ratings are reliable and reproducible, thereby increasing confidence in the conclusions drawn from LLM outputs in HRM research and practice.

Academic Guest Speaker

About: Chen Tang, PhD is an Assistant Professor at the Kogod School of Business at American University, with his PhD in Human Resources and Industrial Relations from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. His research interests lie at the intersection of HR analytics, machine learning, and computational modeling. Chen leverages advanced quantitative methods to address critical organizational challenges, such as improving the validity and reducing bias in predictive models that facilitate organizational decision-making. His work has appeared in *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Personnel Psychology*, and *Journal of Business Ethics*.

Presentation Title: PolyGraph: A Multi-Graphical Algorithm for Faking Detection in Personality Assessments

Presentation Time: 10:15 – 11:30 AM

Take Away Points:
1. Honest personality is complex and messy, whereas fakers produce unnaturally consistent, idealized response patterns
2. Based on this theoretical insight, we propose the PolyGraph algorithm, which detects faking by analyzing networks of relationships between answers rather than relying on high or low scores
3. Across multiple datasets, PolyGraph demonstrated high accuracy in distinguishing honest respondents from those attempting to fake good

Dr. Chen Tang

Summary of Talk:
People who answer personality tests honestly tend to show natural complexity in their responses—strengths come with trade-offs, and answers do not always line up perfectly. In contrast, individuals who try to "fake good" often produce overly consistent and simplified response patterns that mirror an idealized candidate profile. In this paper, we introduce a new way to detect faking that focuses on patterns of relationships among answers, rather than on individual scores or traits. By examining how responses connect to one another, our approach identifies when a person's answers look unnaturally clean or scripted. Across analyses, this method reliably distinguishes honest respondents from those attempting to manage impressions. The results suggest that faking leaves a structural "fingerprint" in the way answers fit together—one that can be detected even when individual responses appear reasonable. This offers organizations a new, theory-driven tool for identifying distorted responses in personality assessments without relying on obvious red flags or self-reported honesty checks.

Afternoon Keynote Speaker

About: Dr. Nathan Mondragon is the President & Chief Strategy Officer at ProboTalent, a leading AI-native talent intelligence platform. He is a science and technology leader specializing in technology enabled talent intelligence, psychometrics, and product innovation. He has an extensive 30-year history building scalable, enterprise technology solutions that transform how organizations hire, develop, and understand their workforce. Nathan was previously the Chief Innovation Officer at Hirevue, Chief I/O Psychologist with Taleo (acquired by Oracle), Senior OD Strategist at Dell Computer, and held various consulting and manager roles at Aon, SHL, and DDI. Nathan is a global thought leader that advises executives, boards, and government agencies on AI governance, fairness, and future-of-work implications. He has been featured in NPR, BBC, WSJ, Bloomberg, HBO, and U.S. Congressional briefings.

Presentation Title:
Practical Career Guidance with Stories of an Industrial Psychologist that Swiped Right on Technology

Presentation Time: 1:45 - 2:45 PM

Take Away Points:
1. How to evaluate career trajectory by prioritizing "sources of joy" as sustainable indicators of success
2. Understanding of the differences between Embedded AI and Native AI
3. Understand how the HR technology space is shifting from simple administrative automation toward "cognitive intelligence"

Dr. Nathan Mondragon

Summary of Talk:
To navigate a career in the rapidly shifting landscape of business and technology, you must treat your intrinsic motivations, interests, and sources of joy as your primary compass; in the long run, these internal drivers are often more predictive of success than technical skill sets or abilities alone. In this talk, I will use examples of my own career journey blending science with technology that started in 1996 as a pioneer of the first pre-employment test on the internet, bridging the gap between psychometrics and the nascent web. Twenty years later launching the first AI-based assessment by scoring video interviews, and today how Native AI is changing the software and HR technology landscape. A significant portion of this talk will discuss the architectural distinction between Native AI and Embedded AI as a critical inflection point for the modern HR technology stack, shifting the paradigm from administrative automation to cognitive intelligence.

Afternoon Keynote Speaker

About: DJ Casto is Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer of Synchrony, one of the nation's premier consumer financial services companies. DJ is responsible for engaging employees in Synchrony's strategic business imperatives and building people-led development programs that strengthen culture, drive business growth and nurture the company's talent as a competitive advantage. DJ is passionate about helping every employee live Synchrony's values and is committed to community service. He currently serves on the boards of Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) and buildOn, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering urban youth to transform their neighborhoods.DJ earned a master's degree in industrial relations and a bachelor's degree in business administration from West Virginia University, where he serves on the Master of Science in Industrial Relations and Human Resources Executive Alumni Board.

Presentation Title: Shaping Culture: Co-Designing the Future Together

Presentation Time: 12:45 – 1:30 PM

Take Away Points:
1. HR must lead enterprise AI readiness and workforce capability development.
2. Active employee listening strengthens responsible AI adoption.
3. A human-in-the-loop model ensures AI enhances, not replaces, human judgment.

DJ Casto

Summary of Talk:
Join Synchrony EVP and CHRO DJ Casto for a look at how AI is thoughtfully being integrated across the enterprise. DJ will discuss how HR plays a pivotal strategic role in championing AI adoption across the organization.

At Synchrony, AI is a powerful tool that can be leverage to spark new ideas. Employees are empowered to explore new ways to get work done so they can spend more time on the most fulfilling parts of their job. The session will explore how Synchrony utilizes active employee listening to identify opportunities, surface potential challenges, and shape responsible AI deployment strategies. DJ will also explain the importance of maintaining a "human-in-the-loop" approach as human judgment and decision-making is essential to unlocking the power of AI. Attendees will gain insight into how HR leaders can balance innovation with governance, build workforce trust, and position AI as a tool for enhancing both performance and employee experience.

Workshop Presenter

About: Professor of Industrial-Organizational Psychology at Virginia Tech, a Visiting Academic at Amazon, and a Senior Fellow at University of Pennsylvania's Wharton People Analytics. He holds an M.S. in Computer and Information Technology, specializing in natural language processing, and a Ph.D. in Industrial-Organizational Psychology. His research focuses on applications and implications of machine learning, natural language processing, and artificial intelligence in selection, assessment, and training and development. His research twice won the Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology's Jeanneret Award for Excellence in the Study of Individual or Group Assessment. His achievements earned him the Association for Psychological Science (APS) Rising Star Award in 2025, granted to outstanding psychological scientists in the earliest stages of their research careers.

Presentation Title: Natural language processing and text analysis for HRM

Location: Reynolds Hall 5225

Presentation Time: 3:00 – 4:00 PM

Take Away Points:
1. Explain the major approaches to natural language processing (NLP)
2. Identify potential applications of NLP to various HRM applications
3. Understand how to apply multiple NLP methods.

Dr. Louis Hickman

Summary of Workshop:
Organizational and psychological research increasingly uses language data to measure variables and test hypotheses in novel ways. This revolution has been brought on by the availability of open-source tools for analyzing language data (e.g., speech, emails, earnings call transcripts, social media content). I will walk attendees through a variety of natural language processing (NLP) methods for converting text data to quantitative data, including traditional, count-based approaches to NLP (dictionaries, n-grams), word embeddings (e.g., word2vec), document embeddings (e.g., BERT), and large language models (LLMs; e.g., GPT, Llama). These descriptions will be accompanied by example code for implementing these methods. Overall, attendees will come away with a variety of tools for applying NLP in HRM research and practice.

Workshop Presenter

About: Kellyn Smith is a Sr. Manager, Talent Management Business Partner in Pharmacy and Consumer Wellness at CVS Health, where she partners with senior field and HR leaders to design and execute talent strategies that build high performing retail leadership teams. Some of her primary responsibilities include creating and deploying content within field leadership development programs, succession planning, and performance management, with a strong focus on building sustainable pipelines of diverse, ready now talent. Her earlier career experiences include progressive roles in talent acquisition and learning and development across hospitality, retail, and academic settings. Kellyn holds a Master of Science in Human Resources and Industrial Relations from West Virginia University and resides in Morgantown with her husband, Nick, and puppies, Kamryn and Heyward.

Presentation Title: Executing Purposeful Performance Reviews with AI Tools

Location: Reynolds Hall 4205

Presentation Time: 3:00 – 4:00 PM

Take Away Points:
1. Leverage AI tools to efficiently gather, analyze, and summarize data for performance evaluations.
2. Apply structured, behavior-based feedback techniques supported by AI prompts and role play exercises.
3. Use AI responsibly to enhance clarity, minimize inconsistencies, and strengthen employee engagement during the performance review process.

Kellyn Smith

Summary of Workshop:
This session will equip attendees with practical strategies for conducting meaningful and forward-looking performance reviews by integrating AI tools into their workflow. Participants will explore how AI can streamline preparation, surface insights from scattered performance data, and support clear, behavior-based feedback. Through practical examples, the session highlights how AI can enhance human judgment, helping managers focus on coaching, colleague growth, and alignment with organizational goals. Attendees will leave with an understanding of how specific AI tools can increase review accuracy, help leaders prepare for feedback sessions, and improve the overall employee experience during the performance management cycle.

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