

Recommendations on the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence at Central Oregon Community College

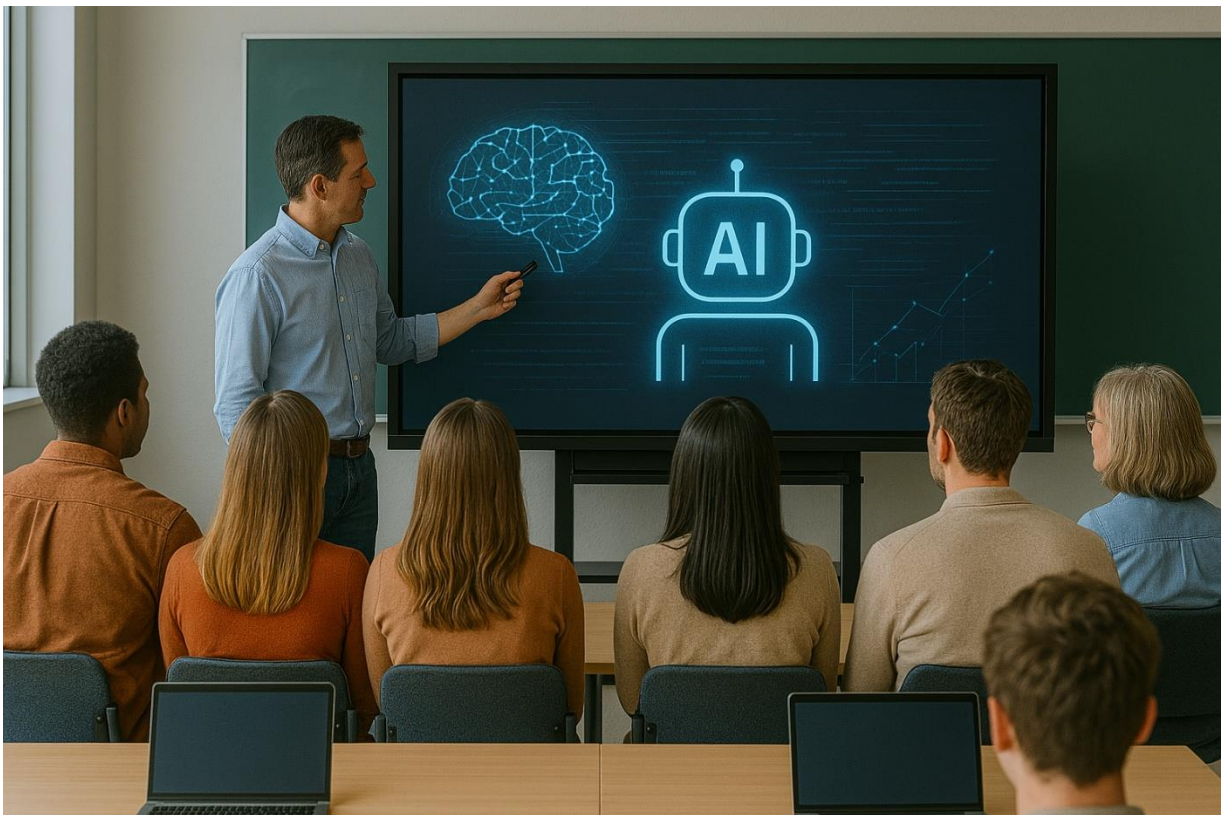


Figure 1: Image generated using OpenAI, ChatGPT 4o on April 7, 2025

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Philosophy

Central Oregon Community College (COCC) acknowledges the evolving landscape of artificial intelligence (AI) and AI's potential to enhance data management and insight generation while preserving the unique rhetorical and experiential dimensions that define human engagement. We also recognize that AI, while capable of processing and generating vast amounts of information, lacks the capacity alone for nuanced judgment, emotional intelligence, and the depth of understanding that arises from lived experience. Human interaction, creativity, and critical thinking remain foundational to education, and COCC is dedicated to ensuring that AI complements rather than substitutes these essential elements, while also being mindful of the associated risks of AI, including bias, misinformation, environmental concerns, and ethical dilemmas.

Therefore, COCC is committed to the responsible exploration and application of AI tools across all academic and administrative departments. COCC upholds the belief that authentic education is rooted in human discourse and in the irreplaceable value of human collaboration in fostering a learning environment that prioritizes reflection, ethical reasoning, and dynamic problem-solving. This commitment ensures that AI is used in a manner that aligns with and supports COCC's values as well as the broader mission of higher education—to cultivate critical thinkers, ethical leaders, and engaged global citizens. By integrating AI responsibly, COCC seeks to preserve the richness of academic discourse while leveraging AI's capabilities to enhance, rather than diminish, the development of human expertise and insight.

Risks and Concerns

Along with the promises of AI comes limitations, biases, and ethical concerns that should be taken into consideration when using and adopting this technology. Alongside college policies, principles, and values, the following context around AI's deficiencies and faults should be given careful review:

Environmental Impact: As this technology is still relatively in its infancy, it is difficult to accurately estimate the impact AI will have on the climate crisis. What is known, however, is that the large computer power of AI [significantly contributes to carbon emissions](#), requires a great deal of [resources like water and minerals that contribute to scarcity](#), and places these environmental burdens on areas already [disproportionately vulnerable to climate change](#). COCC has made a significant commitment to sustainability and responsible stewardship of our natural environment, and reconciling this value with responsible AI use that minimizes harm will be required to move forward. COCC acknowledges this impact and will respect any decision to utilize AI. However, as a widely held value, users are encouraged to consider their AI use through a lens of necessity.

Bias and Discrimination: Likewise, another COCC value and community principle is diversity and equity, which is a [known issue](#) for AI. The corpus used to train AI models reflects biases that exist in society, and AI doesn't just reflect but can also perpetuate and amplify discriminatory stereotypes, with [harmful, real-world consequences](#). The bias present in AI can also exacerbate marginalization, relying on data that already overrepresents certain cultural groups at the expense of ignoring and condensing others.

Worker Displacement: One promise of AI is removing the burden of repetitive tasks for greater productivity and efficiency in the workplace. However, that promise is also a concern for many employees whose departments or roles could be downsized or outright replaced.

Worker Exploitation: Conversely, while AI is often thought of as a human-free enterprise that can replace human workers, the vast underbelly of AI relies on [labor-intensive efforts performed by underpaid, exploited workers across the global south, in refugee camps, and prisons around the world](#). Referred to as "digital sweatshops," workers often earn below minimum wage in their countries to refine, label, and train AI to ensure responses on platforms like ChatGPT don't churn out gibberish for users.

Misinformation and Inaccuracy: Any reliance on AI comes with the risk that misinformation, inaccuracies, and unsupported claims could make their way into completed work. While AI is rapidly changing and improving, [one 2023 study](#) using ChatGPT-4 found that

approximately 20% of generated citations were hallucinations, and of the real citations, 25% contained substantial errors. Without transparency into confidence levels of outputs and with the ability to intentionally manipulate models to generate false or misleading information, there are serious negative implications for how people trust, verify, and interact with information.

Loss of Skill and Voice: At its core, the purpose of education is to teach learners to think intensively and critically. Over-reliance on AI can undermine this goal and interfere with the learning and teaching processes. Despite the presence of calculators, we teach children basic math skills for a reason; understanding the basics is essential for understanding advanced concepts and achieving long-term growth. AI is definitely faster, but fundamentally, students are not pursuing higher education just to get from Point A to Point B. Brainstorming, polishing, and summarizing, among other processes that can be farmed out to AI, are methods that give students the opportunity to learn how to think and develop expertise. Experts are able to distinguish truth from falsehoods, bring flexibility and creativity to problem-solving, make connections to and identify important concepts from various sources, and develop a voice and process unique to them. AI has the potential to stifle originality, and students could either fail to learn or forget how to perform essential skills or the rationale behind them. This concern is not limited to the classroom. There exist many functions at COCC where the unique rhetoric of human input is necessary. These functions rely on the interpersonal connections of colleagues to further their work. Feedback on work, debate around campus issues, and the vetting of job applicants, for example, rely on the spontaneous, authentic, and genuine input from real people. The loss of these voices to AI renders the work of the college flat and lifeless when it must maintain the robust anima of human input.

Plagiarism, Intellectual Property, and Copyright: Significant complications arise when discussing how to address issues of academic honesty, sourcing AI, and the data used to train models. Unsettled issues include: Is it possible to provide an ethical attribution to AI when copyrighted material was used to train models without the creators' consent; can you copyright work that used AI to generate content; are students plagiarizing when they use AI to generate or refine content; among many other questions that have no easy answers. Additionally, faculty who employ tools for detecting AI-generated text risk inaccurate accusations of use, which are [often biased against non-native English writers](#).

Privacy: The need for large data sets to train AI is a known requirement, and, as with any substantial collection of data, there are risks for privacy breaches and unauthorized use of personal information. Little is known about how private, confidential, or personal data is collected, stored, and utilized, and individuals have little recourse, or even knowledge, about

when their data has been shared in this way. COCC should be cautious about using AI in any way where de-identified student information could be re-identified.

Transparency: It is difficult to parse how current AI models train, interpret, use, and protect data. As a consequence of this underlying complexity and lack of transparency, the stated risks around Bias and Discrimination, Worker Exploitation, Misinformation and Inaccuracy, Plagiarism, Intellectual Property, Copyright, and Privacy are difficult to identify, and there are limited options for accountability.

Legal and Reputational Risks to COCC: If COCC employees use AI that produces biased or false information, there is a potential that the college could be exposed to legal liability or reputational damage. For example, if AI-generated communications or customer service interactions are not reviewed by a person with expertise and provide inaccurate or otherwise embarrassing information to a student. Or if AI exacerbates biases in hiring or admissions processes .

Greater Existential Concerns: Outside of these specific risks, more generally, [some experts have expressed concern](#) that the rapid development of AI could lead to unpredictable and potentially dangerous outcomes, and there needs to be greater regulation and safeguards before proceeding with large-scale adoption.

As a result of the outlined uncertainties of how AI might impact our institutional policies, principles, and values, this task force believes it is imperative that robust policies are instituted at various levels to mitigate these risks. The recommendations included in this report can allow COCC to provide leadership to our community in using AI in a meaningful, intentional manner while minimizing inherent risks.

Policy Recommendations

General Guidelines: Central Oregon Community College expects all community members to follow these guidelines when using AI tools

Procuring AI Tools/Software: Contact Central Oregon Community College Information Technology Services (ITS) before purchasing (or acquiring for free) AI products or products that rely on AI to operate. Central Oregon Community College Information Technology Services (ITS) will validate the product and verify that contract language does not introduce undue risk to the college. This process ensures compliance with data protection regulations and minimizes the risk of unauthorized access.

Individuals must follow the [G-22-0 Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources](#) policy.

Input Restrictions: Do not input any confidential or personal information into AI tools except when permitted by validated contract language and security controls approved by Central Oregon Community College Information Technology Services (ITS). This includes sensitive data such as student records, staff details, and other proprietary information. AI should be regarded as a third party to which FERPA regulations apply. Protect Intellectual Property (IP) rights and ensure inputs and outputs comply with copyright, patent laws, and data protection regulations.

Confirming Output Accuracy: Verify the accuracy of information generated by AI tools before relying on it. AI-generated content can be inaccurate, biased, or entirely fabricated (sometimes called "hallucinations"). Users are responsible for ensuring the reliability of AI-generated information before its use in academic or administrative work.

Bias and Fairness: Evaluate whether AI tools' inputs and outputs produce decisions with potential bias. Do not rely on outputs indicating possible bias or discrimination. Regular assessments should be conducted to ensure AI models promote fairness and do not perpetuate inequalities.

Use Disclosure: Individuals should disclose the use of AI tools when producing any written materials or other work products. Be transparent if you rely on AI outputs to ensure academic and professional honesty.

Intellectual Property Compliance: Intellectual property (IP) is the legal rights guaranteed to creators over their original work, in the form of patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets. There are two considerations of IP when it comes to AI: that of the user and that of the AI itself. Users must adhere to academic integrity guidelines by not presenting AI-generated outputs as their own original work. Documenting the use of AI tools (e.g., specifying which tool

was used and how it was used) can strengthen ownership claims and protect your intellectual property rights. Review the terms and conditions of any AI tool you use to understand the ownership rights of the generated output. Many AI models are trained on data with varying copyright and IP statuses, and the legal implications of this are still evolving. Consider using AI tools trained solely on licensed, public domain, or your own data whenever possible. Be aware that any information you input into an AI tool, including confidential or copyrighted material, may be used to train the model, potentially becoming part of its dataset and potentially accessible to other users. Always use AI tools responsibly and ethically, respecting the intellectual property rights of others.

Malicious Content Prohibition: Do not use AI tools to generate malicious content like malware, viruses, or other harmful software. Such actions violate ethical standards and can cause significant harm to individuals and organizations.

Training Data Opt-Out: Where possible, request AI systems not to use your inputs for further training of the AI model. This can help protect sensitive or proprietary data from being utilized without consent.

Syllabus Inclusion: Instructors must state their expectations regarding AI in their syllabus at the beginning of the semester. They may provide a list of approved AI tools for their courses at the start of the term. Statement examples are provided below.

Specific Guidelines for Administrators: Handling Sensitive Information: Administrators must not use AI to process sensitive student or payment data. Entering such data into AI systems can lead to regulatory violations and data breaches.

Prohibition on Prompts for Disclosure: Administrators are prohibited from prompting AI systems to disclose sensitive information. This ensures compliance with data protection regulations and maintains the integrity of the institution's information security protocols.

AI For Academics

While AI has myriad uses for students and instructors, it will become increasingly important to ensure that students are engaging with authentic learning experiences here at COCC. The use of AI in academic contexts is a complex and evolving issue. In general, the college advocates for the authentic education of students, regardless of the specific tools used.

While AI offers powerful tools for students and instructors alike, its integration into academics must prioritize authentic learning experiences that foster critical thinking, creativity, and personal growth. We recognize that AI can support learning by enhancing research, aiding in problem-solving, and offering new ways to approach complex concepts. However, it is essential that AI complements rather than replaces the development of foundational skills, original thought, and subject mastery.

Student Responsibilities: Students are expected to understand and follow the AI guidelines specific to each course. Faculty may have different expectations for AI use, so it's important to review syllabi carefully to stay in line with course requirements. Ignoring these guidelines can lead to academic integrity violations. ([Section G 33.3 in the GP Manual](#))

Specific Guidelines for Students

Using AI for Research: Students can use AI tools to assist with research, but they must verify the accuracy of AI-generated content. All outputs need to be critically evaluated and cross-checked with credible, peer-reviewed sources. Relying on AI alone without verification is not acceptable.

Transparency and Academic Integrity: Any use of AI in academic work must be clearly disclosed, including how it was used (e.g., brainstorming, drafting, summarizing). Failing to properly attribute AI-generated content may be considered plagiarism. When unsure, consult your instructor for proper citation guidelines.

Developing Critical Thinking: AI tools can support tasks like summarizing and idea generation, but students are expected to engage deeply with their work. Over-reliance on AI can hinder the development of independent thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential in both academic and professional settings.

Creating and Training AI Models: Students creating or training AI models must follow ethical guidelines, ensure data privacy, and address biases in their work.

Data Privacy: Use only legally sourced data and avoid including personally identifiable information (PII) unless proper consent has been obtained.

Bias and Fairness: Be aware of potential biases in training data and work to develop models that promote fairness, inclusivity, and ethical decision-making.

Transparency and Documentation: Keep detailed records of how AI models are created, including data sources, methodologies, and any ethical considerations involved.

Following these guidelines not only upholds COCC's academic standards but also helps students build the digital literacy and ethical reasoning needed to succeed in an AI-driven world.

Faculty Guidelines for the Integration of AI in Pedagogy

Clarify the Pedagogical Purpose: Critically assess whether the integration of AI in assignments is intended to facilitate skill development and deep learning, or if its use is primarily aimed at optimizing performance metrics.

Promote Equity and Access: Formulate strategies to ensure equitable access to AI resources, thereby mitigating potential disparities among students who may have differential availability of such technologies.

Mandate Transparent Disclosure: Establish explicit protocols regarding the disclosure of AI usage in academic work to foster a culture of transparency and academic integrity.

Design Resilient Assignments: Analyze the extent to which assignments can be executed through AI assistance, and accordingly modify the design of these tasks to preserve the integrity of the learning process.

Foster Critical and Independent Thinking: Deliberate on how AI may influence cognitive engagement by potentially substituting for critical analysis. Accordingly, delineate clear guidelines that define acceptable AI usage to ensure that students actively engage in higher-order thinking.

Encourage Metacognitive Reflection: Implement pedagogical practices that prompt students to critically reflect on their learning processes, particularly in the context of employing AI systems, thereby enhancing self-regulated learning.

Example Syllabus statements

Instructors must include a syllabus statement about AI use in their courses. Four sample statements are provided below.

Instructors may choose to:

1) Use one of these statements to outline their expectations for student use of AI in their course,

Or

2) Draft their own course policy outlining their expectations for student use of AI. This statement should clearly specify the instructors' expectations of AI use and highlight examples of proper and improper use, and any steps/procedures students must follow to align with the instructor's expectations.

Sample Syllabus AI Use Statements

The following are suggested examples of possible syllabus statements instructors may use, revise, or use as a guideline for their own syllabi.

Faculty may consider a Preamble statement acknowledging AI:

"Academic integrity is paramount. Submitting work generated by AI as your own without proper attribution constitutes academic dishonesty and will have serious consequences. The primary goal of this course is to develop your own critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. AI tools should be used to support and enhance these skills, not replace them.

If you use any AI tools in your coursework, you are expected to be transparent about their use. This may include acknowledging the use of AI tools in your work, such as stating 'This essay was assisted by ChatGPT for brainstorming and grammar checking,' and reflecting on how the AI tool helped or hindered your learning process."

The instructor should provide specific guidelines for the use of AI tools for each assignment. These guidelines may vary depending on the nature of the assignment, the learning objectives, and the specific skills being assessed.

Violations of an AI use policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to grade penalties and referral to the Office of Student Life. Instructors should outline the course of action in these cases of academic dishonesty.

The following statements each highlight various levels of AI use. Instructors are welcome to use these statements directly, revise them according to their own class, or develop their own statement.

A) "This course recognizes the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT and their potential to both enhance and hinder learning. While their use may be beneficial for certain tasks, it is crucial to understand their limitations and potential biases.

Allowed Uses (with guidance):

- Brainstorming and idea generation: AI tools can be helpful in exploring different perspectives and generating initial ideas.
- Outline creation: AI can assist in organizing thoughts and structuring arguments.
- Drafting and editing: AI can help identify grammatical errors, improve sentence structure, and refine the clarity of your writing.

Important Considerations:

- Critical evaluation: Always critically evaluate the output of AI tools for accuracy, bias, and relevance to the assignment.
- Original thought: AI tools should be used as a support tool, not to replace your own original thinking and analysis.
- Proper attribution: If you use any specific text or ideas generated by AI, you must properly cite the source (e.g., "Assisted by ChatGPT").
- Ethical considerations: Be mindful of the ethical implications of using AI, such as potential biases in the data used to train the models.

Prohibited Uses:

- Submitting AI-generated work as your own: This constitutes academic dishonesty and will not be tolerated.
- Using AI to complete assignments without any further analysis or critical engagement.

I encourage you to discuss any questions or concerns you have about AI use in this course with me. We can explore how to effectively and ethically utilize these tools to enhance your learning experience."

B). "The use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools in this course may be permitted for specific assignments or tasks at the instructor's discretion.

- If GenAI use is permitted: Clear instructions will be provided in the assignment guidelines, including: * Permitted GenAI tools (if applicable) * Acceptable uses of the

tools (e.g., brainstorming, drafting, editing) * Requirements for documenting the use of GenAI (e.g., citing sources, submitting drafts)

- If GenAI use is prohibited: Students are explicitly prohibited from using GenAI tools to complete any part of the assignment.

Academic Integrity:

Submitting work generated by GenAI without explicit instructor permission constitutes academic dishonesty. This may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to: * Grade penalties * Referral to the Office of Student Life.

If you have any questions or doubts regarding the use of GenAI in this course, please consult with the instructor."

C). "The use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools may be considered for certain tasks in this course, such as:

- Brainstorming and idea generation: AI can be used to explore different perspectives and generate initial ideas.
- Drafting and editing: AI can be used as a writing assistant to help with grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.

Important Considerations:

- GenAI output is not original work: AI-generated text, images, or code should not be submitted as your own original work.
- Proper citation is crucial: If you use any information or ideas generated by AI, you must properly cite the AI tool used (e.g., "Assisted by ChatGPT").
- Critical evaluation is essential: Always critically evaluate the output of AI tools for accuracy, bias, and relevance.
- Focus on learning: The primary goal is to learn and demonstrate your own understanding of the course material, not to rely solely on AI.

Prohibited Uses:

- Submitting AI-generated work as your own.
- Using AI to complete assignments without any further analysis or critical engagement.
- Using AI to circumvent learning objectives or academic expectations.

If you have any questions or concerns about the appropriate use of AI in this course, please do not hesitate to discuss them with me."

D). “Allow only original student work and never GenAI “

Students may not use GenAI tools in this course to produce course materials or assignments in whole or in part. All work you submit for this course toward completion of course requirements must be your own original work done specifically for this course and without substantive assistance from others, including GenAI. Work you’ve completed for previous courses or are developing for other courses this term also should not be submitted for this course.

In accordance with COCC's Academic Honesty policy, if I believe you’ve handed in work created in whole or in part by GenAI tools used without permission, I may submit a report of suspected academic misconduct to the Office of Student Life, and, if warranted, assess a grade penalty. If you have any questions or doubts, please ask!”

Use of AI Detection Tools:

- AI detection tools carry the risk of false positives, mistaking human-written text for AI-generated content, and should be used with caution. These tools should serve as guidelines rather than definitive grading metrics.

To ensure academic integrity for all students, it is essential that faculty clearly and explicitly define how AI tools can and cannot be used in their courses. Encouraging the ethical, practical, and sustainable use of AI can help students develop skills for engaging in a world increasingly reliant on AI systems while preserving the intellectual rigor and student learning within their courses at COCC.

Conducting Primary Research Guidelines:

For faculty or students working with faculty who conduct primary research using human subjects, it is essential to follow all ethical guidelines outlined in federal, state, and COCC’s Institutional Review Board regulations. These regulations are broad and can be applied to AI use in research generally, but agencies have not provided updates specific to AI ethical concerns. As a result, when planning research protocols, faculty should address the following ethical considerations:

- Participant data are not stored in or shared with AI programs that would link individual participants with the research. Data should be anonymous or de-identified to protect confidentiality, regardless of the level of risk associated with disclosure.
- Account for potential risks of using AI in your research, particularly in subject matter areas that may have a direct impact on human welfare (i.e., healthcare, criminal justice, etc.). These risks should be documented as part of your informed consent process for participants.

- Researchers are responsible for ensuring AI-produced information is accurate, reproducible, complete, and/or compliant with regulatory requirements or industry standards.
- Prior to using AI, researchers are responsible for understanding that AI's methodology is used to perform tasks, make decisions, and/or draw conclusions. This methodology should be transparent, particularly in regard to the data used by the model.
- Always disclose when, where, and how AI was used in the research process.

If you have questions about how AI fits into ethical research practices or IRB regulations, contact irb@cocc.edu.

RECOMENDATIONS

COCC Committee on Artificial Intelligence

The purpose of this Advisory Committee, as a subcommittee of College Affairs, is to primarily serve as an educational, advisory, and support resource for the college and its employees and students. Additionally, this committee will serve as the steward of COCC's AI ethical policies. As COCC is committed to the responsible exploration and application of AI tools across all academic and administrative departments and for our students, this committee serves as a resource for enacting and embodying that commitment.

This Committee is charged with:

- Recommend and maintain AI policies for the College;
- Support College Departments to develop their AI-related policies and practices;
- Work with and consult with ITS to recommend AI tools and technologies for the College, as well as to recommend tools and technologies to avoid.
- Continue to research AI and provide information through training, workshops, and educational materials for the College.
- Consult on cases of academic dishonesty where AI is involved, as requested by Student Services

This nonvoting advisory committee shall consist of 5-7 members and should be composed of:

- 1 representative from Administrative Employees (determined by SLT?)
- 2 representatives from Classified Employees
- 2 representatives from Faculty Employees (determined by Faculty Forum)
- 1 permanent or ongoing representative from IT or E-Learning

Syllabus Statements: Instructors must include a clear AI use statement on their syllabus as part of their course policies.

Digital Literacy Outcome and Core Competency: It is recommended that the college adopt a) a digital literacy outcome for students, which would include AI literacy as a component, and/or b) develop a core competency across various disciplines that highlights AI ethics.

Academic Honesty Statement: It is recommended that the Academic Honesty policy be revised to explicitly include AI use as a form of academic dishonesty when utilized in defiance of an instructor's classroom policies.

DEFINITIONS

General AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI): The simulation of human intelligence processes by machines or computer systems. This broad definition encompasses a wide range of capabilities, from basic decision-making to complex reasoning and problem-solving.

Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs): Computational models inspired by the structure and function of the human brain. They consist of interconnected nodes ("neurons") organized in layers that process information and learn from data.

Deep Learning: A subset of ML that utilizes artificial neural networks with multiple layers to learn complex patterns in data. Deep learning has been instrumental in achieving breakthroughs in areas like image recognition, natural language processing, and speech recognition.

Machine Learning (ML): A subset of AI that allows systems to learn and improve from experience without being explicitly programmed. ML algorithms use statistical techniques to identify patterns in data and make predictions or decisions based on those patterns.

Generative AI

Diffusion Models: A class of generative models that gradually "diffuse" noise into a desired output, such as an image or a piece of text.

Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs): A type of generative model that involves two competing neural networks: a generator that creates new data and a discriminator that tries to distinguish between real and generated data.

Generative AI: A type of AI that can create various forms of content, such as text, images, music, and code. It utilizes machine learning models, often deep learning models, to generate new data instances that resemble the training data.

Large Language Models (LLMs): A powerful type of generative AI model trained on massive amounts of text data. LLMs can understand, generate, and translate human language, and can be used for a wide range of tasks, including text summarization, question answering, and creative writing. (e.g., GPT-3, Gemini, Bard)

Key Concepts

AI Safety: Research and development aimed at ensuring that AI systems are safe and beneficial for humanity.

Bias in AI: AI systems can reflect and amplify biases present in the data they are trained on, leading to unfair or discriminatory outcomes.

Ethical Considerations: The ethical implications of AI development and deployment, including privacy, safety, fairness, and accountability.

Explainability: Understanding how an AI model arrives at a particular decision or generates a particular output.