Statement of Principles Guiding Informed and Responsible Adoption and Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

Standing Committee on Educational Services and Instructional Technology, University Senate, Stony Brook University, State University of New York

Preamble

On behalf of the University Senate, its Standing Committee on Educational Services and Instructional Technology (SCEDIT) recognizes that the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies offer opportunities for innovation while also posing profound educational, professional, and ethical challenges to higher education. Whereas specific types of AI technologies, especially as used by specialists with adequate expertise, or in specific contexts by faculty, staff, and students, offer unique benefits, the most broadly used generative AI (GenAI) requires guidance for responsible adoption by the overall university community. The disruptions and opportunities GenAI poses calls on all members of the university to be guided by sound principles of academic freedom, shared governance, relevant rights and responsibilities, expert oversight, and professional ethics – while abiding by relevant guidance from SUNY. Recognizing that members of the University community hold diverse perspectives, ranging from enthusiasm to concern, this statement seeks to identify common principles for fostering shared responsibility in adopting and responding to GenAI technologies. This statement is also informed by the recognition that GenAI is not a neutral technology: using and teaching with or about it requires addressing how it concentrates economic and political power; extracts data from human activity; exacerbates the environmental and social injustice; and operates within knowledge systems shaped by entrenched inequalities of language, culture, and geography. Responsible adoption, therefore, requires that the university account for these dynamics, toward preserving and advancing the public good.

Foundational Principles

a. On institutional governance, academic freedom, and labor

AI technologies are impacting higher education at a pace that tests long-established traditions of teaching/learning, research/scholarship, service/leadership, and day-to-day operations. AI-generated content carries inherent uncertainty and must be critically evaluated; it should augment without replacing human judgment, evidence-driven inquiry, and institutional and disciplinary knowledge, particularly in high-stakes educational and professional contexts. As the technology and its impacts evolve, its institutional adoption must also be guided by shared governance and continued consultation with faculty, staff, and students. Evidence-based adoption that seeks to preserve the rights and freedoms of faculty, staff, and students can also help

preserve disciplinary and professional expertise, strengthening the institutional mission. Administrative responsibilities regarding AI must be clearly established before operational questions are addressed. The intersections of AI with labor rights and faculty working conditions must be addressed in consultation with UUP. Faculty should be able to critically assess and decline specific AI tools based on ethical considerations, disciplinary standards, and pedagogical needs within their courses.

b2. On student rights, privacy, and trust

The professional relationship between students and the university rests on trust; as such, adoption/integration of, as well as guidance for use or avoidance of AI tools, must strengthen that foundation. Administrative, curricular, and pedagogical efforts must maintain and strengthen privacy protections for student data, ensuring confidentiality, transparency, and confidence in the learning environment. These efforts seek to strengthen integrity and motivation in learning, mitigating effects that may erode them. Instructional materials, learning activities, and the educational environment designed/updated to integrate or address the impacts of AI technologies must not impose undue burdens on students, beyond what the learning objectives and sound pedagogy justify. Surveillance/proctoring or AI-detection practices that lack transparency, risk high levels of false positives, and/or stifle academic freedom or privacy should also be avoided or reduced as they also undermine student learning, mutual trust, and community wellbeing. Faculty must not use AI suspicion as the sole basis for failing student work; established academic integrity policies and instructional responsibilities must be maintained and updated regularly for making norms and expectations of academic integrity clear and effective. Student data entered into AI systems may be re-identifiable even when apparently anonymized. Data security obligations extend beyond FERPA to active governance of all AI-mediated student interactions, including cybersecurity requirements for students working with sensitive data and alignment with SUNY-wide data policies.

c. On justice, fairness, and harm reduction

Innovation is meaningful when it advances justice, inclusion, and equity. AI adoption must account for potential harms to socioeconomic equity, linguistic and cultural richness, and epistemic diversity. When adopting and using AI technologies, universities should seek to reduce bias, exclusion, or environmental and economic harms. The pursuit of efficiency or novelty must not override commitments to fairness and the public good.[1] It is within the scope of education to educate students and to otherwise address the increasing political and financial clouts of the AI industry and its potential to perpetuate economic inequalities and unequal environmental and social impacts across the world. Efforts must be made to reduce or avoid social and environmental

[1]This phrase reflects the "public good" initiatives of SUNY and its faculty senate, signifying the broader mission of public universities to serve the public through teaching, research, and service.

harms that explosive growth and use of AI are causing. AI procurement processes should ensure transparent and competitive evaluation of AI vendors. Universities should continue to address the influences of money and power that may filter into procurement decisions, governance structures, and curricula in new and unique ways with AI. Finally, AI's impact on the integrity of the knowledge ecosystem – or, the norms that scholars and students use for effectively locating, adequately evaluating, and taking responsibility for information they share or create – is disrupting established standards of authority, validity, veracity, and risks. So, the adoption and use of AI by researchers/scholars and the university at large must address these issues, helping the university serve as a steward of the integrity of the knowledge ecosystem.

Therefore, Be It Resolved that

1. On transparency and accountability

Faculty, staff, and academic leaders model responsible AI use by disclosing, when feasible, whether and how AI tools are used in instructional, research and publication, and administrative work. To preserve students' and society's trust in disciplinary expertise and contribution of new knowledge, AI-generated content shall not be presented as expert knowledge without verification and accountability of qualified human experts. University AI deployments should include pre-adoption risk assessments covering data privacy, bias risk, cybersecurity exposure, accessibility compliance, vendor dependency, and intellectual property implications. The university must protect students' rights when sharing data, especially with vetted parties beyond the institution to fulfill and, when there's new risk, to protect student rights beyond FERPA requirements, such as their wellbeing. We must address causes underlying students' overuse, misuse, or abuse of AI, ranging from inadequate knowledge about AI, inability to manage time or lack of it, lack of motivation or clarity about the task or its purpose, concern of failure or low grade, cost of education, quality of instruction, and technology-induced distrust between teacher and student. Transparency, disclosure, and continued deliberation strengthen the credibility of our scholarly and pedagogical efforts in an evolving technological landscape. As such, AI tools adopted university-wide should be evaluated, using input and evidence from the community, to assess learning outcomes, equity impacts, faculty and student experiences, staff expertise and institutional memory, and potential harms.

2. On faculty autonomy and professional responsibility

Respect for faculty's autonomy and expertise, complemented by their professional responsibility, is foundational to academic excellence. Faculty retain autonomy in determining appropriate AI use in their course: while some instructors may restrict the use of AI based on sound principles, and others may guide their students as they integrate AI into courses/teaching, they should adopt or restrict AI in ways that have clear learning-outcome purpose and pedagogical rationales. In teaching, assignment

design and assessment practices – including necessary updates made to them in response to the impacts or opportunities of AI – should be informed by evidence and disciplinary context. Faculty must be fair in assessment, teaching students how to use or limit AI to support learning (instead of punitive measures alone), updating curricula and pedagogy, and examining how students' use of AI is impacting their learning. Faculty should be transparent about their own use of AI, explaining to students how, why, and which tools they used; this modeling is one of the most effective ways to promote effective and ethical use of AI in education. Faculty are further responsible for upholding disciplinary standards: they must ensure that AI use does not replace or undermine disciplinary expertise, that human mentors guide students, and that research methods and ethical guardrails are preserved to protect academic rigor and social responsibilities.

3. On educating and supporting students

Given AI's rapidly shifting and likely far-reaching impacts on education and students' careers, the university must take an educational approach, going beyond policies and punitive stopgaps. It must help both faculty and students to tackle the impacts and opportunities of AI through curricular updates, teaching and training initiatives, research and resource development, and ongoing dialogue and deliberation. As SUNY's GenEd framework for information literacy required core competency outlines, AI use must be grounded in established practices of information literacy, including: locate information effectively using tools appropriate to their need and discipline; evaluate information from a variety of sources with an awareness of authority, validity, bias, and origin; and demonstrate an understanding of the ethical dimensions of information use, creation, and dissemination, whether from traditional sources or emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence. These standards are outlined by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL),[2] which further guides the evaluation of bias within existing power structures and urges ethical, social, and environmental responsibility for its use. AI demands a recommitment to the teaching of critical thinking and information literacy, of which AI literacy is now such a vital part. Acknowledging the diverse approaches instructors take toward AI adoption, avoidance, and use, and given the discipline-specific impacts and opportunities of AI, departments and colleges should develop their own guidance and resources, facilitate training and deliberation, and advance pedagogical scholarship in their respective domains. Instructors must clearly articulate their expectations for AI use and align them with departmental policies when available. Faculty should not take punitive action against a student without due process, considering the use of CELT's guidance created in collaboration with the Academic Judiciary Committee,[3] or giving the student an opportunity to explain. It is increasingly

[2] Note that as of April 2026, ACRL has a first draft of the revision of their information literacy framework, which embeds critical AI literacy throughout.

[3] AI-Flagged Paper Evaluation Process

insufficient to only identify the strengths, weaknesses, and risks of AI: students should gain and exercise knowledge of how and when to incorporate AI in meaningful, responsible, and ethical ways. They should develop skills and cultivate habits of mind without becoming dependent on GenAI. Encouraging discussions around the power structures involved with technological change is critical. Teaching AI as part of literacy skills means equipping students to ask whether an AI tool is needed for a given task, what and whose data is being used to train models, who builds and benefits from the systems behind the models, what they were designed for, how far they can be trusted, and what social and environmental costs their use incurs. This knowledge is essential to ethical participation in the knowledge economy, and given AI technology's inherently political, economic, and social dimensions, curricular integration should prioritize critical AI literacy within and beyond general education, linking information literacy with civic responsibility.

4. On institutional support, oversight, and governance

Institutions bear the responsibility to help faculty, students, and staff navigate AI ethically and effectively through professional development, resources, and ongoing dialogue and shared governance. AI technologies procured or licensed by the university should undergo formal procurement review and vendor risk assessment before adoption. Reviews should involve relevant stakeholders, including information security, data privacy, accessibility compliance, legal, and academic representatives. College and unit-level decisions that impact their members also deserve similar reporting, feedback, and deliberation. A critically informed understanding of this technology’s impact on education and society must guide both the professoriate and university leadership/administration. For continued learning about artificial intelligence and its impacts on the educational, research, and other enterprises of the university, its members should turn to the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, University Libraries, DoIT, and other relevant units. The University should maintain a centralized inventory of AI models, systems, and tools used across academic and administrative units. The University should continue to elicit feedback to identify harms, correct course, and discontinue practices that undermine academic freedom, fairness, or trust.

5. On student responsibilities toward learning and society

At the heart of higher education lies a covenant of trust: provided adequate education and support, students should reciprocate the university’s investment in them with honesty and integrity. Academic integrity requires students to own their learning, maintain honest dialogue with instructors about AI use, and comply with course policy. Students must learn from their instructors whether and how each instructor expects them to use AI tools and why, within each course, specific assignments, and even parts of the assignment; they should cite or explain AI use where expected or appropriate. Sharing access to university systems, using AI to impersonate one’s work, or using AI for

dishonest purposes breaches both institutional and personal integrity. Becoming ethically grounded citizens also means using AI to enhance learning, to ask new questions, to explore and experiment with new ways of research, and to challenge the misuses and abuses of technology, including any adverse impacts on education, society, and the environment. By engaging critically with AI, students should affirm their agency as learners and contributors to the university's mission of advancing knowledge for greater good.

On the university's commitment to the public good

This statement of guiding principles, grounded in shared values, invites continual dialogue, experimentation, and collaborative deliberation as we navigate AI's evolving impacts on higher education. AI use by all members of the university community – faculty, staff, students, and administration – should reflect the University's mission to advance inquiry, cultivate critical thinking, and contribute to the public good. The University's systems of governance are stewards of the quality and integrity of its social mission, so the knowledge we create, share, and apply must be driven by and accountable to its broader societal mission.

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Note: ChatGPT5 was used as a web search tool to locate some of the above sources. GenAI was not used in the writing of this statement, which developed out of a robust university-wide discussion for almost a year.