Statement of Principles Guiding Responsible and Informed Adoption and Use of AI - SCEDIT, Stony Brook University

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 and especially generative AI (GenAI) offer opportunities for innovation while also posing profound educational, professional, and ethical challenges to higher education. The responsible adoption of and response to the impacts of AI, therefore, require that all members of the university 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 dialogue and shared responsibility for adopting and responding to AI technologies productively and responsibly.

Foundational Principles

1. 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, and day-to-day operations to disciplines and society. Institutional adoption of AI must be guided by shared governance and broad consultation with faculty, staff, and students. Initiatives that are launched with shared governance and consultations with, piloting by, and data gathering based on use cases from relevant stakeholders, enhance academic freedom, disciplinary and professional expertise, and faculty and staff labor rights. AI's probabilistic content cannot substitute for expert knowledge/educational content or institutional data, nor replace the scholarly, pedagogical, and professional labor of faculty and staff. AI use is effective when guided by human oversight and institutional accountability, especially when grounded in disciplinary expertise and collective deliberation.

2. On student rights, privacy, and trust

The professional relationship between students and the university rests on trust and intellectual partnership; as such, adoption/integration of, as well as guidance for use or avoidance of AI tools, must strengthen, not replace, that foundation. Administrative, curricular, and pedagogical efforts must maintain and strengthen privacy protections for student data, ensuring confidentiality, transparency, and trust in the learning environment. They must 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 create unjust burdens on students. 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 undercut those efforts to center student learning. Existing instructional responsibilities must be maintained, updating them regularly toward making norms and expectations of academic integrity clear and effective.

3. On justice, fairness, and harm reduction

Innovation is meaningful when it advances justice, inclusion, and the common good. AI adoption must account for potential harms to equity, linguistic and cultural richness, and epistemic diversity. Universities bear responsibility for ensuring that AI tools and policies do not reinforce bias, exclusion, or environmental and economic injustices. The pursuit of efficiency or novelty must not override commitments to fairness and the public good. It is within the scope of social responsibility of universities to educate students and otherwise address the increasing political and financial clouts of the AI industry, its foundations in long histories of knowledge politics, 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 harms that the explosive growth and use of AI are causing. These commitments invite continued examination of AI's benefits and burdens, ensuring that the knowledge we create, share, and apply remains accountable to the global good.

Therefore, Be It Resolved that

1. On transparency and accountability

Faculty, staff, and academic leaders must model responsible AI use by disclosing, when relevant, 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. The university must protect students' rights when sharing data, especially with vetted parties beyond the institution in order to fulfill and, when there's new risk, to protect student rights beyond FERPA requirements, such as their well-being. We further have the duty of care and harm reduction: we must address structural causes behind 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 disruption of trust between teacher and student. More technology alone is not always the solution. As such, AI pilots and deployments shall be evaluated empirically, combining qualitative and quantitative evidence to assess learning outcomes, equity impacts, faculty and student experiences, staff experience and institutional memory, and unforeseen harms. The university will be

a learning organization, ready to correct course as and when needed, discontinue harmful adoptions or projects of AI technology, and share lessons across the institution. Longitudinal evaluation will be built into adoption processes, ensuring that policies remain dynamic and responsive to evolving technologies and their impacts on education and society. Transparency, disclosure, and continued deliberation strengthen the credibility of our scholarly and pedagogical efforts in an evolving technological landscape.

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 courses. While some faculty may ban/restrict the use of AI based on sound principles, and others guide their students as they integrate AI into courses/teaching, faculty must not create undue burdens, such as workload, anxiety, or confusion for students in response to either beneficial or adverse impacts of AI.

Faculty should be transparent about their use of AI, explaining to students what tools they used, how, and why; this modeling is one of the most effective ways to promote effective and ethical use of AI in education. Faculty should also model norms of academic integrity, authorship, and professionalism. Faculty is further responsible to uphold disciplinary standards: it 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.

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 judgment. Faculty must be fair in assessment, adopting a teach-first approach (instead of punitive measures alone), updating curricula and pedagogy, and learning about how students' use of AI is impacting their learning.

3. On educating and supporting students

Given that AI technology is new and evolving and that its impacts on education and students' future careers are likely to be extensive, the university must take an education-first approach, going beyond just policies and punitive stopgaps. It must help faculty and students to tackle the impacts and opportunities of AI through policy and curricular updates, teaching and training initiatives, research and resource development, and ongoing dialogue and deliberation.

Through our general education courses, including the diverse approaches that instructors take toward AI adoption/avoidance and use, we must teach the various aspects of AI literacy, especially as an extension of information literacy and critical thinking abilities as now mandated by SUNY. Given the diverse and discipline-specific impacts and opportunities of AI, departments and colleges should further develop their own guidance and resources, facilitate training and deliberation, and advance pedagogical scholarship in their respective domains. Subsequent interdisciplinary exchange of pedagogies, resources, and dialogues can best advance the broader educational mission in the age of AI.

It is increasingly insufficient to just expose the flaws/pitfalls of AI, or the risks/wrongs of overusing/misusing it: students must gain and exercise knowledge, skills, and habits of mind like previous generations did, without becoming dependent on cognitive crutches. Broadly informed and practically grounded abilities are necessary, constituting a "critical AI literacy"with which students can navigate future evolutions and impacts of new technologies on their education and careers. Faculty must use reasonable approaches to discouraging misuse and abuse of AI: engagement over punitive action, support for learner agency, use of AI for enhancing learning and intellectual growth, and skills for drawing acceptable boundaries of ethics and responsibility.

4. On institutional support, oversight, and governance

Institutions bear a parallel responsibility to help faculty, students, and staff navigate AI ethically and effectively. The University will support faculty and staff through professional development, resources, and dialogue to align teaching and mentoring practices with evolving technologies while maintaining the integrity of learning and student rights. All AI systems adopted or procured by the University must undergo rigorous review for ethical, pedagogical, and equity impacts. The technology office and other offices making major technological adoption and update decisions affecting the broader university community shall report to the Senate or its designee, seeking feedback and deliberation. College and unit-level decisions impacting their members also deserve similar reporting, feedback, and deliberation. Given the inherently political nature, economic ramifications, and social and environmental impacts of AI technology, curricular integration should prioritize critical AI literacy within and beyond general education, linking information literacy with civic responsibility. The same critically informed view of this technology must guide both the professoriate and university leadership/administration. Administrative uses of AI must comply with privacy laws and institutional ethics standards. AI decision-making shall remain subordinate to human judgment, and data shared with external vendors must honor the rights of students, staff, and faculty, using transparent consent and opt-in mechanisms whenever feasible. AI adoption must be regularly assessed for its effects on learning, workload,

and equity. The University shall establish feedback mechanisms to identify harms, correct course, and discontinue practices that undermine academic freedom, fairness, or trust. Shared oversight reinforces collective learning: the University's systems of governance are not obstacles to innovation but guarantees for the quality/rigor and integrity of its work.

5. On student responsibilities toward learning and society in the age of AI

At the heart of higher education lies a covenant of trust: provided adequate education and engagement, students do reciprocate the university's investment in them with honesty and integrity. In the age of AI, students, as much as their professors, must renew and recommit to this mutual trust. Mere compliance to a statement of academic integrity is no longer adequate: without students taking ownership of their own learning, AI can easily blur established lines of integrity merely stated in policies, and ethical and transparent use of AI is also not possible without their open/trusting and ongoing dialogue with faculty. Taking responsibility for their own learning means actively engaging in the use, avoidance, and/or discourse about the role of AI; it means refusing to take cognitive shortcuts and instead going for the amount of "friction" that the learning goal demands. Going above and beyond merely upholding written codes of academic integrity means recognizing that educationally unproductive use of AI – including copy-pasting content, sharing credentials with AI tools, or becoming habitually dependent on AI – requires understanding that institutional guidelines and faculty expectations embody ethical foundation of the intellectual community (and not mere bureaucratic demands). Students must learn 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. Students who ask questions, seek support within and beyond individual classrooms, and embrace transparency in their use of AI can help complete the picture of a rich and responsible academic culture. Sharing access to university systems, using AI to impersonate one's work, or using AI for dishonest purposes of any kind breaches not just institutional but also personal integrity. By contrast, becoming ethically grounded citizens in a world that is constantly disrupted by technological change means using AI to enhance learning, to ask new questions, and to challenge the misuses and abuses of the emerging technology, including its adverse impacts on education, society, and the environment. By engaging critically with AI, students can affirm their agency as learners and contributors to the university's mission of advancing knowledge for the public good.

On the university's commitment to the public good

Ultimately, AI use by all members of the university community – faculty, staff, students, and administration – shall reflect the University's mission to advance inquiry, cultivate critical thinking, and contribute to social and global good. The university will regularly

review updates and integration of AI in current and new technologies in order to maintain the institution's educational, ethical, and operational integrity. Questions, critique, and shared and continued deliberation across disciplines are to be encouraged as central to this mission. As such, this statement of guiding principles, grounded in shared values rather than mandates, invites continual dialogue, experimentation, and collaborative deliberation as we collaboratively navigate the evolving landscape of AI and its various impacts on the mission of higher education.

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Note: ChatGPT5 was used as a web search tool to locate some of the above sources.