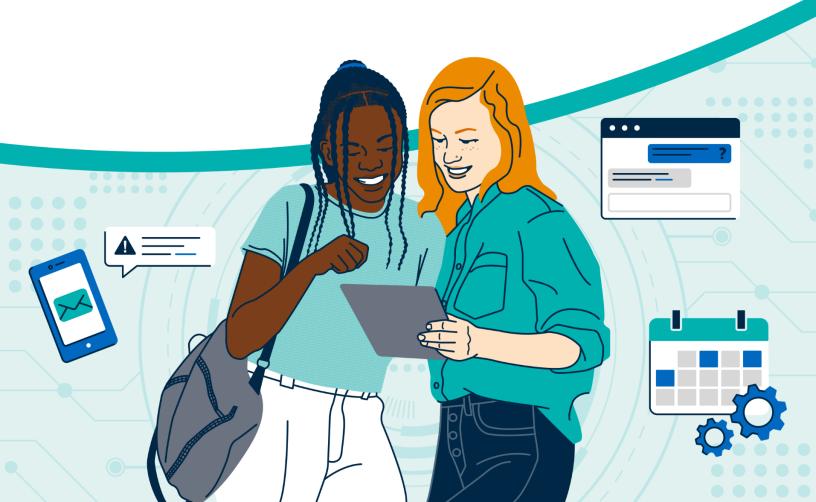


SURVEY REPORT

From Caution to Curiosity: Higher Ed Success Staff Weigh in on AI's Role in Student Success



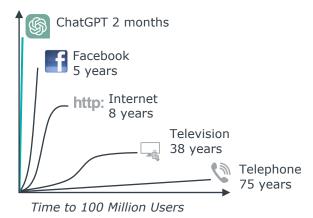
AI's Role in Student Success: Executive Summary

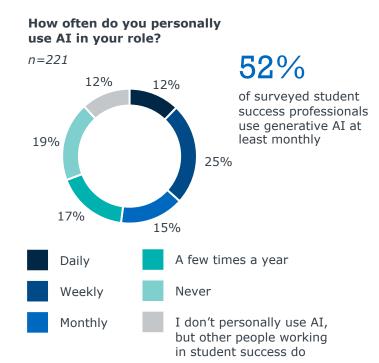
Generative AI Is More than Just Hype

Over the past year, generative AI has moved from a curiosity to a mainstream fixture—including in higher education. Generative AI has the potential to revolutionize student services by enabling personalized assistance, improving efficiency, enhancing accessibility, promoting inclusivity, and facilitating data-driven decision-making.

ChatGPT's Meteoric Adoption Rate Sets Historic Precedent

Time to 100M Users by Technology





Student Success Staff See Promise in AI-but Maintain the Importance of Human Input

With AI's rapid adoption have come both excitement and hesitation as education professionals try to understand the possibilities of generative AI and how to use it to improve their own efficiency and the student experience. Most student success professionals are reporting using AI at work within the past year, signaling that AI is here to stay.

Diving Right In

"I wish more people would realize **AI is our inevitable future**, just like Microsoft Excel made paper spreadsheets obsolete."

-Survey respondent

Dipping Their Toes

"While I think it's important for us to embrace new technologies, I also think it's important that student success-related activities be guided by humanistic practices that center students and their needs. I worry that this is not something that can be incorporated into AI. I also think it's important that AI be leveraged as a tool—not the tool—to support student success related activities."

-Survey respondent

About This Insight Paper

To better understand how student success professionals are using AI and what support they need from their colleges, EAB surveyed 221 student success professionals and executive leadership from across the country this spring. The respondents are diverse and include two-year and four-year colleges, HSIs, MSIs, and institutions of varying sizes.

In this paper, we'll share what we learned about how student success professionals are currently using "new" AI, concerns they have, and the potential they see for the future.

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In Their Own Words

Throughout the paper, look for this box to see how our respondents answered open-ended questions.





Understanding AI and the Opportunities It Creates

SECTION

- Understanding "new AI"
- Emerging AI strategies for student success

1

Understanding "New AI"

What is—and isn't—generative AI?

Generative AI is a branch of artificial intelligence focused on creating new content—such as images, text, audio, or video—that resembles human-generated data. It does this by perceiving patterns from large data sets and generating new instances based on those patterns. Commonly used examples of new AI include:

- ChatGPT
- Gemini
- DALLE
- · Character.AI

Additionally, generative AI (sometimes called "new AI") can understand questions posed to it in everyday language, meaning lay people can use the technology with minimal training. This ease of use is one of the main reasons AI has been adopted so rapidly, with ChatGPT reaching 100 million users in only two months.

Hallmarks of the New AI



Sophistication of output

Output of the new AIs is indistinguishable from text, speech, images etc. produced by intelligent, skilled, and highly knowledgeable humans.



Natural-language processing

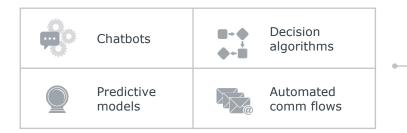
The new AIs can understand questions posed to them in casual, everyday language and can respond in kind. This lets laypersons make productive use of them with little training.

Advanced build features



- · Ability to self-optimize
- Incorporation of deep-learning neural networks
- Use of automated statistical analysis (versus manually defined rules)
- Trained on massive data sets

Examples of Things That Are Not AI



While these technologies may sometimes incorporate AI, they are **not necessarily or essentially AI**

The Future of AI in Student Success

Student Services Are the Next Frontier

While much of the conversation around AI and higher education has been focused on classroom implications, colleges are increasingly integrating AI across various aspects of student support and administrative processes. It's crucial that all departments, including student success, build AI literacy and consider how AI can simplify workflows to improve student outcomes.

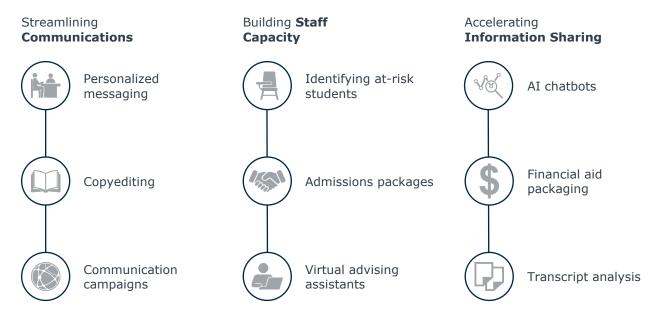
For example, emerging and future AI possibilities include:

- Analyzing academic performance and engagement data. AI algorithms can identify students at risk of falling behind or dropping out, enabling proactive interventions such as targeted advising sessions or tailored support programs.
- Increasingly, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants provide students with **instant assistance** on topics including course registration and financial aid, enhancing accessibility and efficiency.
- Technology that can **read student transcripts** and make assessments on which courses transfer, or which courses students have met the prerequisites for.
- AI can assist in **crafting student communications**, email campaigns, form letters, and help with copyediting.
- Using AI to **process and package financial aid** and to help students navigate the verification process.
- AI technology that can interpret admissions letters and applications to **expedite the acceptance process**.

These AI implementations aim to boost student retention and graduation rates and create a supportive learning environment while reducing administrative burdens on faculty and staff.



Emerging AI Strategies for Student Success





4 Notable Findings About AI for Student Success

SECTION

2

- 1. AI adoption is outpacing institutional coordination.
- 2. Staff want to learn about AI through collaboration with their peers.
- 3. Concern is shifting to how to do AI "right."
- 4. AI can make student success jobs easier.

Are You Leaving Good Ideas on the Table?

Success Staff Are Using AI—but There Are Few Forums to Share What Works

Curious student success staff are applying AI to many facets of their work, including the 69% of respondents who have used AI in their jobs over the past year. Survey respondents reported using AI to craft student communications, answer questions faster, and even help students with career research. And yet, staff often conduct this exploration without the explicit encouragement of their institutions. Respondents reported that their institutions rarely collect and distribute information on how staff are using AI, leaving few opportunities to widely share new ideas or success stories.

Which AI-powered strategies does your team use?

n=220; for full results see page 24



Improve communication efficiency

Reducing the time needed to draft student emails and communications

Writing and organizing multi-step 20% Writing and organizations campaigns



Fielding questions

Using AI-powered chatbots to field questions from students



Career preparation

Helping students to write cover letters or resumes

Assisting students with career search activities

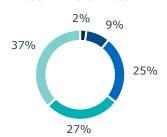


This is not tracked... There is definitely no coordinated strategy."

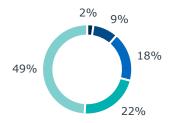
Currently, how often does your institution:

n=220

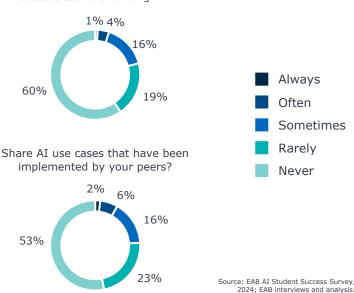
Encourage student success teams to use AI in their roles?



Encourage student success teams to share what they are learning about AI with their peers?



Collect information on how student success teams are using AI?



Success Teams Benefit from Experimentation

Coming out of the pandemic, student success staff are facing high workloads and seeking ways to maximize their time. But they also see exciting possibilities in AI. Given that, it's important to create time to explore: "experimentation time" and "peer examples" tied for the most common response when we asked success staff what would make them more comfortable using AI. As one respondent said:

"I just need time to learn it. Many of us are overworked, and it requires careful consideration."

Intentional collaboration spaces needed

Respondents also seek space to collaborate via institutional working groups. They rated "experimentation time," "peer examples," and "working groups" above "guidance from outside experts" and "encouragement from executive leadership."

It's important to note that while the majority of respondents cited collaborative opportunities and experimentation as top ways to learn about AI, 79% said their institutions rarely or never collect information on how teams are using AI.

Success Staff Seek Time to Explore

What would make you feel more comfortable using AI in your role?

n=221; for full results see page 25



62%

Time to experiment with AI technology



62%

Examples from peers who are using AI



52%

Institutional working groups that explore AI together



Not just examples but a well-designed series of webinars by department or functional roles to help staff, especially those reluctant to use AI, to see AI's value and how it can support their work. Areas: Admissions, Advising, Mentoring, Financial Aid, Tutoring, Classroom aids, etc."



A confidential 'sandbox' where we could enter student data without concerns that this information is shared beyond the institution."



Do you use AI in a way you want to share?

We're collecting tips to share in a publicly available library. Have you had success with a certain ChatGPT prompt?

<u>Click here to submit your idea</u> or visit www.eab.com/AIprompts

Student Impact Is Success Staff's Top Concern

As recently as last year, apocalyptic predictions that AI would take away jobs and ruin higher ed were common. But respondents' primary concerns weren't for job security or even the cost and time required for proper training; instead, their top concern was the potential that AI could cause harm to students.

Also of higher concern than job loss was job *change*: while only 13% of respondents were concerned that AI will render success staff redundant, 18% expressed concern that AI will change the character of student success work in an undesirable way.

Privacy Concerns Remain

While fewer respondents were concerned about the potential for AI to leak confidential information (35%), they did particularly call out the potential that AI could lead to FERPA violations.

One respondent also noted that open-source tools do not protect the data you input:

"I worry about using AI like ChatGPT because it retains that data that you input. I want to know that the data I am putting through is protected."

Respondents Are Wary of Bias and Miscommunication

What concerns do you have about student success teams using AI in their work?

n=221; for full results see page 22

Of higher concern

Of lower concern

64%

13%

Errors in AI communications could negatively impact students

AI will render student success staff redundant

56%

18%

AI-generated content might contain biases

AI tools and related staff training will be costly



AI is only as good as the information it is trained on, like our students. I am concerned that the AI may be built on populations that may not match out own, resulting in errors in student success actions or biases."

Despite Concerns, Success Teams See Value in AI

Which AI use cases would improve the student experience the most? [Select up to three.]

n=221; for full results see page 23

52%

Getting students faster answers to questions via chatbots or virtual assistants

62%

Identifying students who need interventions faster

AI as an Administrative Time-Saver

Quality, one-on-one interactions with students can increase a sense of belongingness and help students stay on track for graduation. However, many student success professionals may find that their face time with students is interrupted by administrative tasks.

Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that AI could make their jobs easier by reducing the amount of time spent on repetitive tasks, such as answering frequent questions or running student reports.

Advising Implications

Academic advising is often tasked with keeping students on pace for graduation, monitoring course selection, crafting academic plans, and providing interventions for students who may be struggling.

All these tasks can be laborintensive, and the majority of respondents see value in using AI to identify at-risk students and to nudge students toward personalized milestones. Over a third reported that AI could make their jobs easier by recommending academic pathways and courses to students.

Respondents Want Freedom from Repetitive Tasks

In what ways could AI make your student services role easier? [Select up to three.]

n=220; for full results see page 26



Reducing Repetition

Reducing the amount of time spent answering repetitive, high-volume questions

54% Automating repetitive tasks that were once completed manually (e.g., running reports)



Pathway Guidance & Interventions

Quickly identifying students who may need additional support

54% Automatically nudging students toward personalized milestones

Proactively recommending academic pathways and courses to students



Academic advising would be a great use. This task requires large teams that do repetitive tasks with a pre-determined set of rules... seems like a perfect task to automate using AI. This would reduce the time it takes to get those recommendations as students sometimes have to wait 3-4 weeks for an appointment."



Key Takeaways to Plan for the Future

SECTION

3

Recommendations

The good news for institutions is that success staff largely see the value of AI, both for themselves and for students. These recommendations can help your institution shape your AI strategy, build AI literacy, and prepare for changes in the AI landscape.

AI adoption is outpacing institutional coordination.

Centralize Your AI Best Practices



- Develop a cross-functional working team that collects best practices and AI strategies that are being used across the institution.
- Create an intuitive system for submitting strategies, practices, prompts, and use cases.
- Emphasize that strategies are being collected so they can be replicated, as opposed to AI usage being monitored for punitive reasons.

Staff want to learn about AI through collaboration with their peers.

Develop AI Collaboration Spaces



- Create dedicated time for AI professional development that covers ethics and use cases and highlights promising practices.
- Promote peer-to-peer "show and tell" where success staff can share strategies that have worked for them.
- Develop sandbox trainings that allow teams to experiment with AI in a controlled, supported environment.

Concern is shifting to how to do AI "right."

Define and Address AI Risks



- Openly discuss and address lingering success staff concerns about AI risks and how to use AI ethically.
- Develop examples of tested AI use cases to serve as entry points for cautious success staff.
- Engage your IT security experts in the creation of best practices and guidelines.

AI can make student success jobs easier.

Make AI a Strategic Priority



- Invest in AI technologies that can reduce the time spent on repetitive, high-volume tasks such as running reports and answering student inquiries.
 - Promote internal AI literacy as an institutional priority to affirm your alignment with success teams who are already using AI routinely.
 - Track the impact of AI best practices on efficiency and job satisfaction.

Charting a Path Forward with AI

Top-of-Mind AI Questions for Higher Education Leaders

If your institution is just getting started with AI, it can be difficult to know what questions to ask and where to begin. Consider the following questions as you begin your AI strategic planning.



Vice Chancellors

- · Where do we need to invest and how soon?
- Where are the risks I need to be aware of and mitigate?
- · Who's moving the fastest, who are the leaders in the AI space?
- How can AI augment our ability to reach best-fit students, world-class academics, and research funding?
- What impact will AI have on our campus culture? How can we preserve our high-touch culture?



Academic Leaders

- How can AI help free up academic time so they can focus more on supporting students, especially considering post-pandemic mental health concerns?
- How do we adapt our curriculum and prepare our academics across disciplines?
- How can we deploy AI to help us proactively manage our program portfolio and effectively intervene to support at-risk students?



Chief Information Officers

- How should we integrate AI into operations: leverage vendor products with AI features, use OpenAI API, or self-host open-source models?
- How will AI impact our cybersecurity and privacy risk environment?
- What foundational elements do we need (e.g., staffing, data, storage) to support AI innovation?



COOs/ Registrars

- What AI solutions have the most transformative potential to drive operational efficiency?
- · How should we be thinking about investments in generative AI capabilities?
- How can we use AI to improve persistence and predictability of net tuition revenue?
- Can we use AI to do the work of hard-to-fill, expensive roles?

Technology as an AI Asset

It can be difficult to know where to start as you build your college's AI strategy. EAB has developed resources, best practices, and technology innovations that can support your emerging AI user base. Use the resources below to assist in building your college's AI literacy and in expanding how you use AI to streamline workflows.

Emerging AI Best Practices

Learn about what practices are coming to the forefront and how they can accelerate student success.

- <u>AI For Enrollment Leaders</u> [Insight Paper]
- Unlocking AI's Potential in Higher Education [Infographic]
- 7 missteps university leaders must avoid in their AI approach [Blog]
- <u>6 Innovative Ways Higher Ed Can Embrace AI</u> [Blog]
- How Graduate Enrollment Teams Are Using AI [Blog]
- The case for ChatGPT: Leveraging AI for admissions tasks [Blog]
- AI and the Future of Higher Ed: What Every Cabinet Leader Needs to Know [Webinar]

Navigate360's AI Capabilities

To fully embrace the benefits of AI, institutions must have a strong foundational knowledge of AI best practices and how technology can complement their efforts. At EAB, we've invested in new artificial intelligence (AI) features within Navigate360, our flagship customer CRM software, to help timestrapped advisors provide more high-impact support to students.

These additions help students get faster and more accurate answers to common questions through a conversational AI knowledge bot, help advisors and other support staff write more effective student communications, and give administrators better tools to analyze institutional student success efforts.

Learn more about Navigate360's AI enhancements on the next page.



Inside Navigate360's New AI Features

Greater Efficiency and Personalization at Scale

Today's college students—and the students who will be enrolling at your campus in the coming years—expect an experience that recognizes their individual goals and needs at each step of the college journey. How can you engage students in a way that is simultaneously scalable and highly customized?

Navigate360's new AI-powered functionality will help you automate, scale, and personalize student support services—giving your teams the ability to hardwire connections and reach and empower students in new and impactful ways.



Message Content Creator

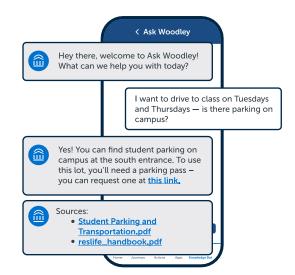
Simplify and optimize one of Navigate360's most powerful features, Campaigns and Messaging, by minimizing the time spent on creating message content. Use the tone enhancement option to then emphasize a particular sentiment.





Student Knowledge Bot

Reduce the time spent training chatbots and effortlessly provide students secure access to your support, instructions, and FAQs. The Knowledge Bot is fed only your proprietary institution-specific materials so you know your students see only the most secure, relevant answers.





Report Assistant

Using natural language prompts, easily create new reports with the conditions and report types built for you. Then use that generated report to leverage Navigate360's data visualizer for pivot tables and charts that provide quick, clear insights into the data.

Scale those insights with automated actions—such as messaging, alerts, and more—enabled directly from report results.

Al Report Assist Reports AB Show me all appointments with Biology majors in the last 7 days **(2)** My Saved Reports Standard Reports Standard Reports ☐ This is the report configuration we think you are **@** Report: Appointments Report Condition Statement: 1 and 2 1. MAJOR CONTAINS BIOLOGY 2. TIMEFRAME CONTAINS LAST 7 DAYS 1 > > EAB Privacy Policy ^A | Legal Disclaimer ^A | Terms of Use ^A | 0 2023 EAB. All Rights Reserved. Release Version: 23.2.6 Enter Prompt

Learn more at eab.com/navigate360.

About Navigate360

Recruit, Retain, and Empower Students in College and Beyond

Navigate360 is the leading student CRM for community colleges, a powerful technology that unites administrators, faculty, staff, and students in a collaborative network that supports the entire student experience, from recruitment to career. Navigate360 is powered by over a decade of student success research honed from billions of student interactions—and now, it's also amplified by AI.

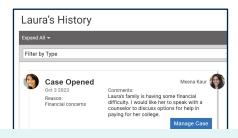


Reporting and Analytics

Staff Workflow and Automation

Empower staff to proactively engage with prospective and current students

- ✓ AI-Powered Messaging
- ✓ Complete Student Profile
- ✓ Coordinated Care Network
- √ Cases and Referrals
- Automated Alerts and Messaging
- √ Two-Way SMS
- ✓ Campaigns and Template Library
- ✓ To-Dos
- ✓ Appointments and Surveys
- ✓ Events
- ✓ Notes and Attachments
- √ Faculty Progress Reports
- ✓ Prospect Application Management



Student Engagement Hub

Provide your students with a onestop shop for self-service resources

- ✓ AI-Powered Knowledge Bot
- √ iOS and Android Apps
- ✓ Student Success Network
- √ Campus Resources
- ✓ Appointment Scheduling
- √ Class Schedule
- ✓ In-App Messaging, Notifications, and Surveys
- ✓ Career Match and Journeys
- √ Study Buddies
- √ Financial Planner
- ✓ Prospect Portal



Proactively identify opportunities for better student support

- ✓ AI-Powered Report Builder
- ✓ Advanced Query Builder
- ✓ Data Visualizer
- ✓ Templated and Scheduled Reports
- ✓ Automated Workflow from Reports
- ✓ Population Health Analytics
- ✓ Activity Analytics
- ✓ Intervention Effectiveness Analytics
- ✓ Historical Analytics
- ✓ Predictive Model
- ✓ Analytics Data Exports



OUR PARTNERS

850+
Partner institutions

10M+

Students served

OUR IMPACT

3.5%

Typical improvement in graduation rate

5: l

ROI based on 500 partner value stories

Schedule a Navigate360 demo at eab.com/Navigate360.



Survey Summary and Results

SECTION

4

- Participant Overview
- Survey Data

Survey Overview

As educators continue to experiment with AI, colleges and universities will need to navigate what successful AI usage looks like to develop best practices, recommendations, and training.

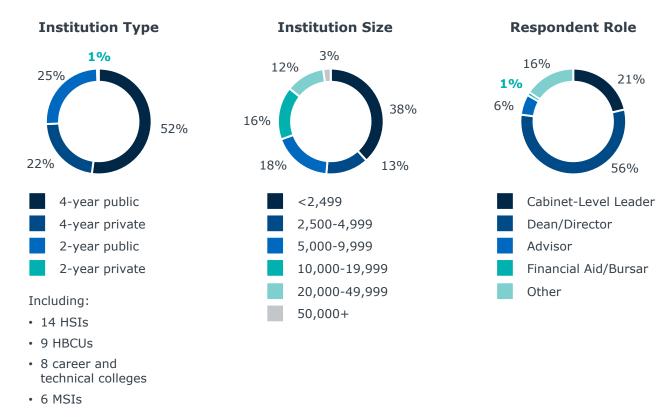
This survey sought to understand:

- · How student success professionals are currently using AI
- · What AI use cases student success professionals think hold the most promise
- · What institutional supports student success professionals need to feel confident in using AI

The survey was distributed in March and April of 2024 to student success professionals and executive leadership at colleges in the United States.

Who responded?

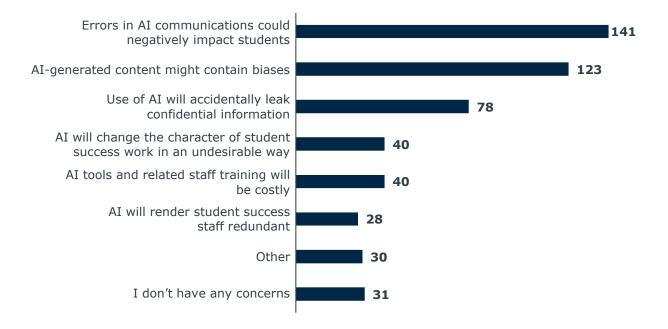
Two hundred twenty-one student success professionals responded to the survey.



Concern About AI

What concerns do you have about student success teams using AI in their work?

n=221; Respondents could choose all that apply



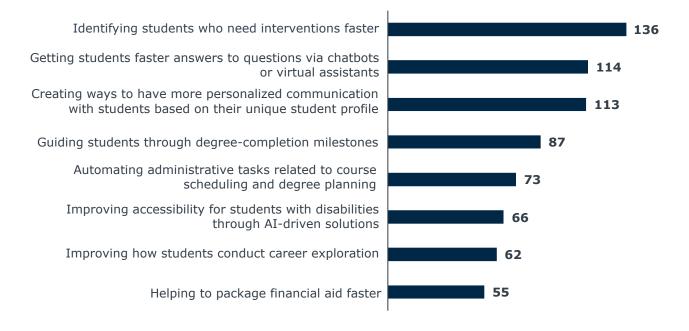
eab.com

Success Staff See Added Value for Students

Staff Are Optimistic That Students Can Benefit from AI Workflows

Which AI use cases would improve the student experience the most?

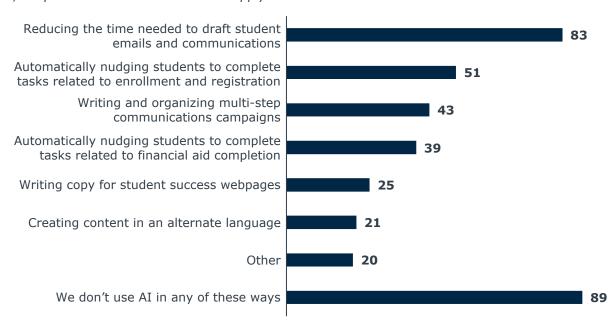
n=221; Respondents could select up to three responses



How Student Success Staff Are Already Using AI

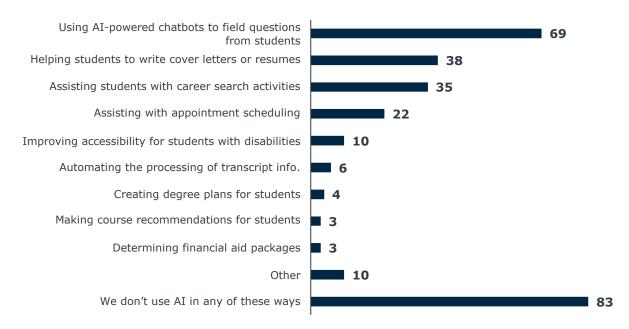
Which AI-powered strategies does your student success team use to improve communication with students?

n=220; Respondents could choose all that apply



Which AI-powered strategies does your institution use to improve efficiency in student services?

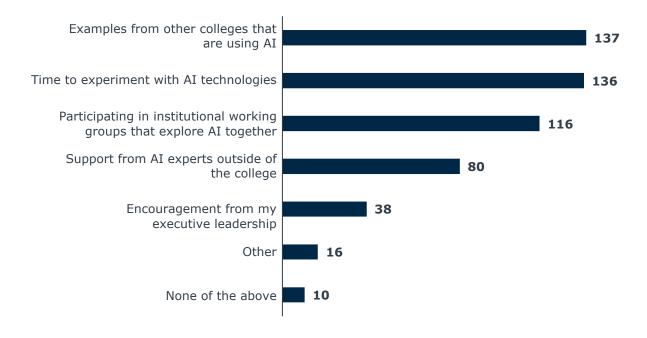
n=220; Respondents could choose all that apply



What Would Increase Comfort with AI?

What would make you feel more comfortable using AI in your role?

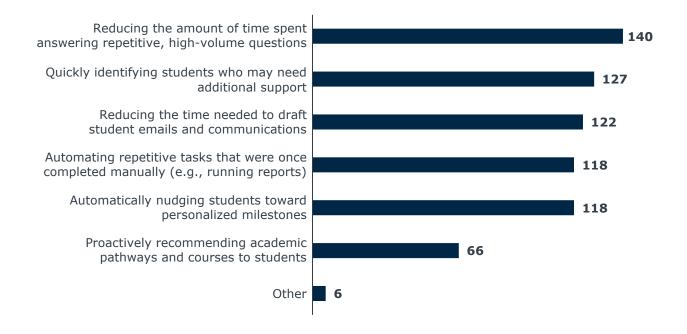
n=221; Respondents could choose up to two options



How Could AI Make Work Easier?

In what ways could AI make your student services role easier?

n=220; Respondents could choose up to three options



Navigate360

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