2026 CIO Roundtable

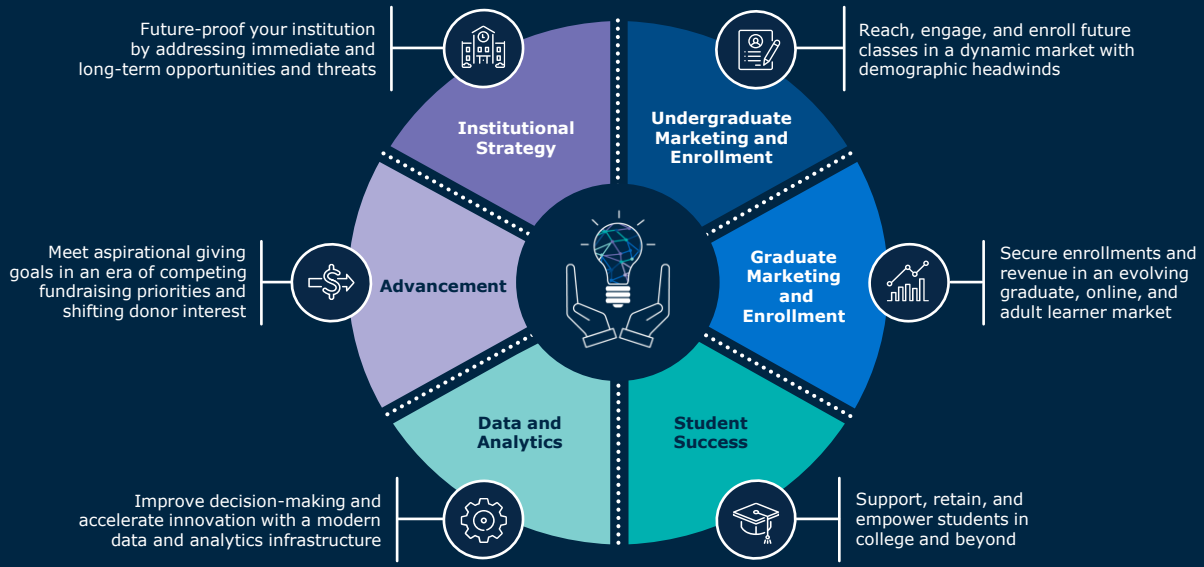
Dublin, Ireland

IT Strategy Advisory Services

EAB

Education's Trusted Partner to Help Schools and Students Thrive

Insight-Powered Solutions for Your Top Priorities and Toughest Challenges



We partner with 2,800+ institutions to accelerate progress, deliver results, and enable lasting change.

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Meet Your Presenter

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Director, Research and Advisory Services

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Where has Digital Transformation Gone?

"Why 50% of Gen Z students

"College grads earn 80% more

The Guardian

"Excessive financial risks threaten the survival of many universities"

techradar.

"Universities risk falling behind without a clear AI strategy"

"3 Ways Higher Education Can Flip the Scrip

The real reasons why "alarming" numbers of s are rejecting college"

ITPro.

"The higher education sector has a digital transformation problem"

CNBC "College is s research finds – although students are growing skeptical"

Washington Examiner n half of Americans llege degrees are waste of money"

THE

"Long way to go on digital transformation, universities told"

year degree"

THE

"Redifining university value in the era of AI and flexible learning"

Divide'"

EAB

Digital Transformation 2.0

Trend 1: Leadership Priorities Shifting to New Tech

Between Pandemic and AI, CTOs Increasingly Key to Institutional Priorities

Presidents' IT Priority in 2023

43% of presidents state **digital transformation** (DX) is a high or essential priority for their campus

Why Digital Transformation Stalled

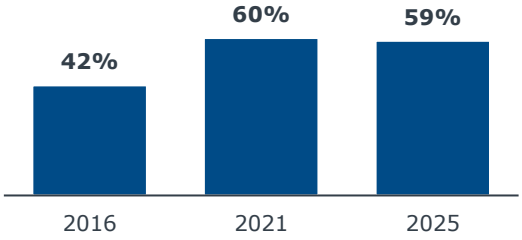
- DX initiatives sat on top of legacy administrative and governance structures
- Core processes and incentives for autonomous work (not data sharing) remained unchanged
- Students, faculty, and staff never saw more than incremental improvements

Presidents' IT Priority in 2025

82% of presidents report their institution has or is building an **AI taskforce and/or strategy**

59% of CTOs report being a member of the **president's cabinet** in 2025

CIO Representation on President's Cabinet Over Time[1]



1) 2016 and 2021 data come from Educause; 2025 data comes from *Inside Higher Ed* CTO survey.

Source: Sara Custer and Colleen Flaherty, eds., 2025 Survey of College and University Presidents, *Inside Higher Ed* and Hanover Research, 2025; Scott Jaschik and Doug Lederman, eds., 2023 Survey of College and University Presidents, *Inside Higher Ed* and Hanover Research, 2023; Inside Higher Ed, 2025 Survey of Campus Chief Technology/Information Officers; John O'Brien, "Higher Education in Motion: The Digital and Cultural Transformations Ahead," EDUCAUSE, October 18, 2022; EAB interviews and analysis.

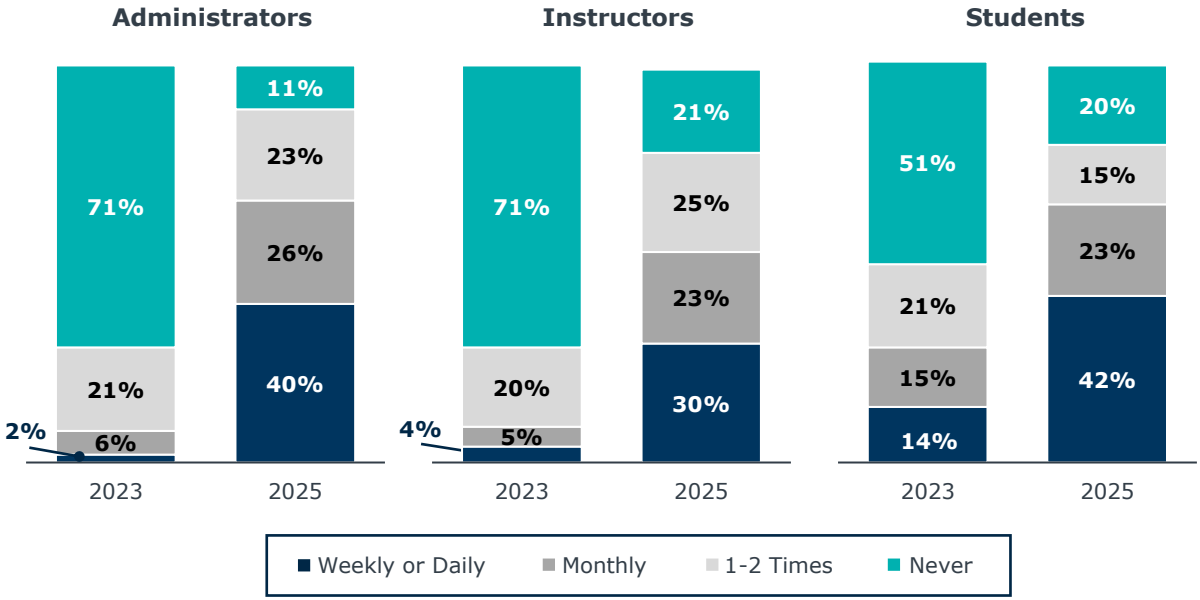
Questions?

- What is the current state of Digital Transformation efforts?
- Is AI the new Digital Transformation?

Trend 2: Rising Adoption of Gen AI on Campus

Gen AI Tool Usage Frequency[1]

Across Three Higher Education Stakeholder Groups



1) Survey question: "Which of the following best describes your own use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard/Gemini) for work?"

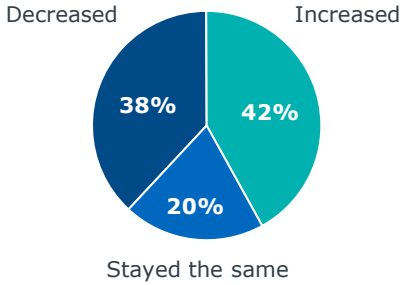
Source: Tyton Partners, *Time for Class: Empowering Educators, Engaging Students*, 2025; EAB interviews and analysis.

Trend 3: IT Budgets (Somewhat) Protected

But Growing Expectations, Financial Pressures Likely to Shift That

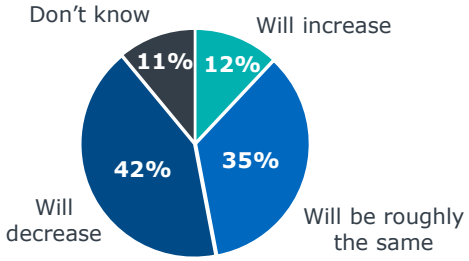
How 2024-25 IT Budgets Compared to Previous Year

Inside Higher Ed CTO Survey, 2025



Anticipated IT Budget Changes for the 2025–2026 Academic Year

Educause QuickPoll, 2025



33%

of institutions posted structural deficit in 2024[1]

AI to the Rescue?

"I've been charged with having AI do 40% of the university's operational non-teaching work over the next five years."

CIO, Regional Private University

1) 30% privates; 37% publics.

Source: Mark McCormack, "EDUCAUSE QuickPoll Results: Technology Budgets and Staffing," EDUCAUSE, April 21, 2025; Inside Higher Ed, 2025 Survey of Campus Chief Technology/Information Officers; EAB interviews and analysis of IPEDS FY24 data.

CIOs Pivoting Amidst Uncertainty

Uncertainty Is Driven By…

…Top-Down Pressure to Adopt AI

…Demands of AI-Enablement

…Evolving IT Cost Pressures

How This Manifests for IT Leaders:

- Pressure for an **AI strategy** with a powerful but rudderless mandate
- Tension between **existing and evolving** governance structures
- Need to **enable a growing number** of software, tools, and features
- Confronting a **rapidly evolving vendor landscape** of new vendors and more tenured players
- Continued **growth (even acceleration) in vendor costs** as companies account for AI features in licensing fees
- Questions of how to achieve AI aspirations **without substantial investment**

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

The Evolving Nature of IT Leadership

Technology Strategy

Chief Technology Officer

Oversees the institution's technology investments; most likely title to signal senior-most IT leader

Chief Digital Officer

Responsible for digital transformation; owns digital strategy, prioritization, and investment decisions

Chief Data Officer

Owns data governance initiatives as well as analytic and institutional research responsibilities

Institutional Strategy

Chief AI Officer

Oversees AI strategy, innovation, and oftentimes academic integration (e.g., digital and AI-driven learning)

Chief Innovation Officer

Explores new ways to deliver on institutional mission, with particular emphasis on AI

VP, Strategic Initiatives

Manges complex, cross-campus projects—and potentially oversees multiple functions beyond IT

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Shifting Norms Supporting Digital Transformation

CIOs Have Long Confronted Misperceptions

A Handful of Common CIO Refrains

"Cybersecurity is everyone's concern."

"Software must follow standard procurement rules—yes, always."

"Governance may be slow, but it is not optional."

"Buying more tools does not always add value."

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

"Our Job Is Enablement Across the University"

CIOs Must Increasingly Serve as Vetter to Ideas and Vendors

In 2024, LA Unified School District Launches Ed, Nation's First Personal AI Assistant for K12 Students

- Jane wakes up and Ed **informs her** that her bus is running five minutes late
- While at work, **Jane's father ask Ed for updates** on Jane's attendance and grades
- Ed notices Jane falling behind in reading and **recommends resources** for her to check out
- When Jane gets home, Ed **reminds her** she has an upcoming math test tomorrow

The New York Times

A.I. 'Friend' for Public School Students Falls Flat

July 1, 2024

"Los Angeles [Unified School District] agreed to pay a start-up company, AllHere, up to $6 million to develop Ed, a small part of the district's $18 billion annual budget. But just two months after Mr. Carvalho's April presentation at a glittery tech conference, AllHere's founder and chief executive left her role, and the company furloughed most of its staff. AllHere posted on its website that the furloughs were because of 'our current financial position.'"

Source: Howard Blume, "LAUSD's new student advisor is an AI bot that designs academic plans, suggests books", *Los Angeles Times,* March 21, 2024; Dana Goldstein, "A.I. 'Friend' for Public School Students Falls Flat," *The New York Times*, July 1, 2024; Mallika Seshadri, "LAUSD launches Ed, the nation's first AI 'personal assistant' for students", EdSource, March 20, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

More Complicated Than 'Build vs. Buy' Debate

CIOs Operate at Every Point on Spectrum—But Are Being Pulled to Right

Considerations of Various Approaches

IT Builds Everything ← → *IT Buys Everything*

Aspirations Outpace IT's Capacity	Partnership with New (Untested) Vendor	Large Vendor Deal as Stand-In for Strategy
		
Presidential Mandate for Adoption	*Open to New Vendor Partnerships*	*OpenAI or Microsoft Enterprise Agreement*
• Executive urgency does not create delivery capacity • Top-down interest forces prioritization, not blanket enablement • Requires IT leaders to evaluate, invest in staff development	• New vendors promise solutions but offer limited track record • Willingness to partner shifts risk to the institution (integration, data, continuity of service)	• Agreements accelerate access and experimentation • Vendor roadmaps substitute for institutional decision-making • Adoption rises, but differentiation and clarity may lag

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

"We Should Optimize for Single-Vendor Solutions"

Assumptions Underlying Single-Vendor Relationships Increasingly Don't Hold

Timothy Chester's Four Reality Checks

Assumption	Standardization created efficiency	Larger scale was equated with discounts	Fewer vendors meant better support	Long-term deals fostered trust
Reality	Standardization creates **inflexibility**	Scale brings **price hikes** without an exit ramp	Fewer vendors breeds **mass vendor fatigue** and risk	Long-term deals **handcuff innovation**

Source: Timothy Chester, "Breaking Scale," *Dispatches from an Internet Pioneer*, April 29, 2025; EAB interviews and analysis.

Case in Point: VMWare Price Hikes

Details of VMWare's Pricing Model Changes

Shift Mirrors Broader Industry Trend of Major Vendors Moving to Recurring Cost Model

- Broadcom Inc. purchases VMWare in 2023
- In April 2025, Broadcom announces substantial changes to VMWare pricing
- Minimum purchase increased from 16 cores to 72 cores (i.e., licenses)
- Pricing model shifts from perpetual license to subscription-based pricing, meaning recurring rather than one-time cost
- Includes penalties for customers that do not renew by anniversary date

Prices Up Across the Board

"It's crazy out there. We have seen software vendors increase prices up to 300% from one year to the next. We're trying to work across the University of Wisconsin System to secure more favorable terms."

Todd Shechter, CTO
University of Wisconsin–Madison

Source: O'Ryan Johnson and Steven Burke, "Broadcom VMware Ups Minimum Core Purchase 'Substantially,' Levies Late Renewal Penalties," *CRN*, March 28, 2025; Garrett Wiesenberg, "VMware Price Increase: What You Need to Know," *cloudtango*, November 3, 2025; EAB interviews and analysis.

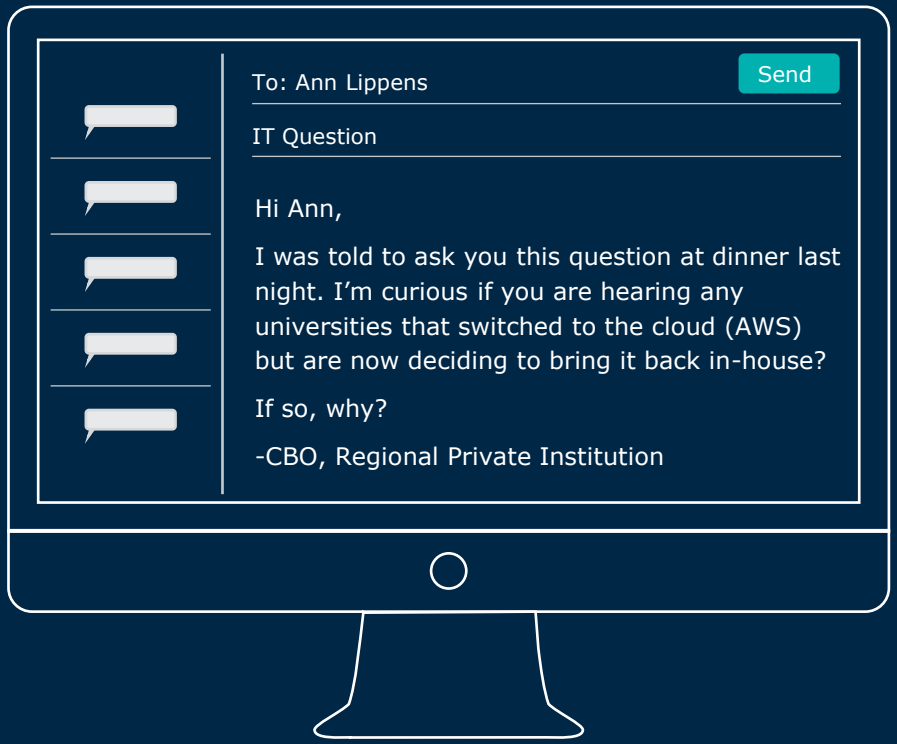
Questions?

- EU and UK schools have been concerned about digital sovereignty for some time. Does this represent most of the issues raised by questions about digital sovereignty?

- What other issues are important?

"It's Cheaper to Operate in the Cloud"

Some Leaders Selectively Revisiting On-Prem Deployment



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Why CIOs Are Souring on Cloud Reliance

Risk

AWS Outage

"While this [October 2025 AWS] outage caused inconvenience for consumers, it also carries a deeper warning for every enterprise and for the nation as a whole. **Cloud dependence has become total** and many industries would struggle to operate without it."

Forbes

Costs

Variable AI Use

"CIOs are having to mash up an end-user support model with a hyper-scale model of funding. Cloud computing prices can be complicated. It's already hard to explain why it costs so much to buy something. Now we've added variable utilization to the mix!"

Brice Bible, CIO

Capacity

Local Testing

"As our researchers use AI, their needs mainly raise hardware questions. They want to build their own models and run them locally—on-prem. So they want IT support to procure workstations, split GPU capacity, and train the models themselves."

Director

Source: Emily Sayegh, "The AWS Outage That Shook the Internet: What It Means for Cloud Resilience," *Forbes*, October 20, 2025; University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Digital Transformation: Data Governance as an Enabler

Widening Gap Between Data and Insight

Campuses Struggling to Capitalize on Data Explosion

Mounting Pressure For Campuses to Be Data-Driven…

…But Investments in Analytics Aren't Always Paying Off

Options Exploding

>300

vendors in the higher education technology landscape, as of 2018

Urgency Rising

57%

of higher ed CIOs ranked analytics as a **top priority** for their institution in 2018

Payoff Lacking

19%

of higher ed CIOs consider their investments in data analytics as "very effective"

Source: Eduventures Technology Landscape (2018); Kenneth Green, Campus Computing Survey (2018); EAB interviews and analysis.

Data-Informed Decisions Matter More Than Ever

Potential for Predictive Analytics, Dashboards Is Still There

Institutional Priority	Sample Analyses
Enrolment "With shifting demographics and more secondary students opting out of college, we must diversify our student population to survive"	Which recruitment strategies most effectively convert applications to enrollment? How do they vary by student population? What is the expected enrollment impact of different aid or scholarship scenarios?
Student Success "Student success is no longer just a moral imperative but a financial one. Retention is one of the few levers we can still pull with confidence."	Compared to other departments, do students underutilize tutoring, writing centers, and other support services? How do retention and persistence rates differ by major? When do student start disengaging?
Financial Sustainability "We are facing real challenges right now. We must cut costs wherever possible and eliminate spending that isn't clearly tied to impact."	What share of our portfolio consist of low-enrolled programs? How much would we save by consolidation? Are we using campus space effectively? Is there cost-saving in a shared services model?

Source: Liaison, How Predictive Analytics Supports Higher Ed Student Success, University Business, Why Data Science is Revolutionary for Higher Ed Finance; EAB interviews and analysis.

Value Confined to Operational Silos

Current Focus on Unit-Level Needs Over Enterprise Decision-Making

Data Definitions

- Varying definitions specific to each unit
- Data definitions for internal eyes only
- Staff only involved with data in their unit

Data Collection

- Data used for single unit purposes and value
- Place-holder data used for convenience of unit
- Data quality assumed and unverified by institution

Data Systems

- Static system structure aligned to business unit
- Inconsistencies among system implementation
- Siloed suboptimal shadow systems

- ✖ Multiple different definitions of "student" between departments
- ✖ Data definitions not publicly accessible or hidden unintentionally

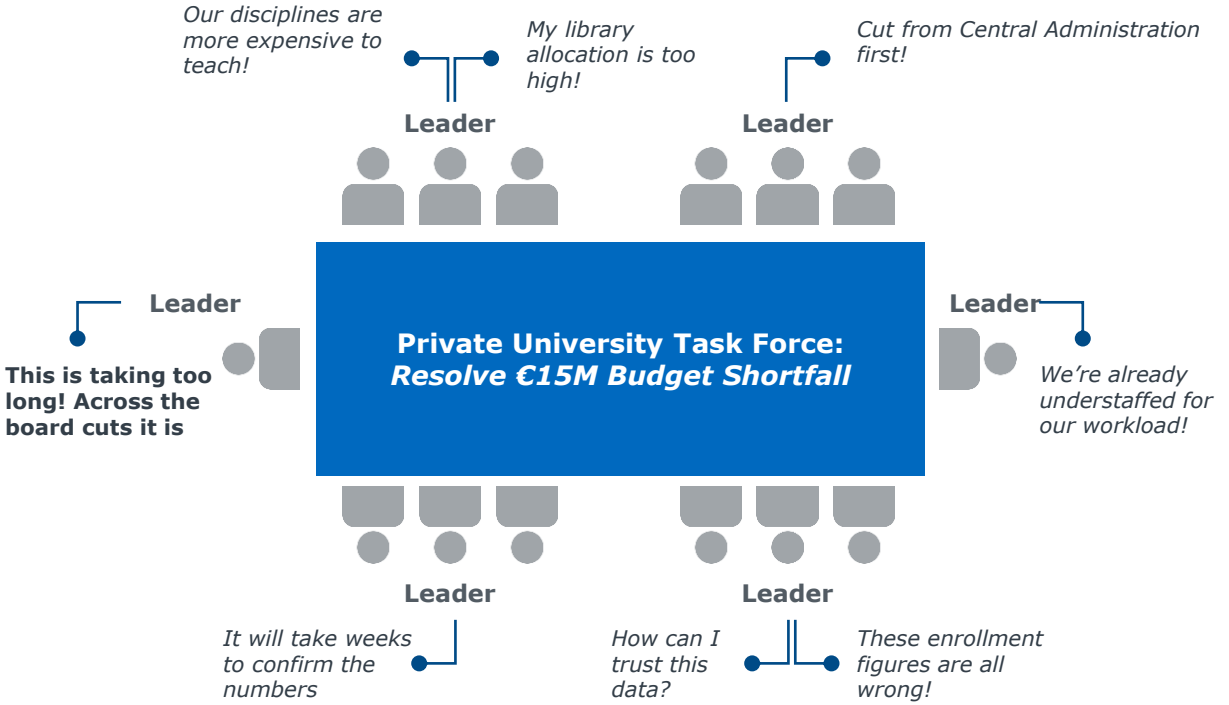
- ✖ Workarounds use open fields to record advisor names
- ✖ Low adoption of central data and reporting tools leading to data denial

- ✖ Excel spreadsheets stored on local analyst desktops
- ✖ Data errors only corrected in frozen data, not in source system

Source: Mark Gottfredson and Michael C. Mankins, "Four paths to a focused organization," Bain & Company (2013); EAB interviews and analysis.

Stuck in Unproductive Conversations

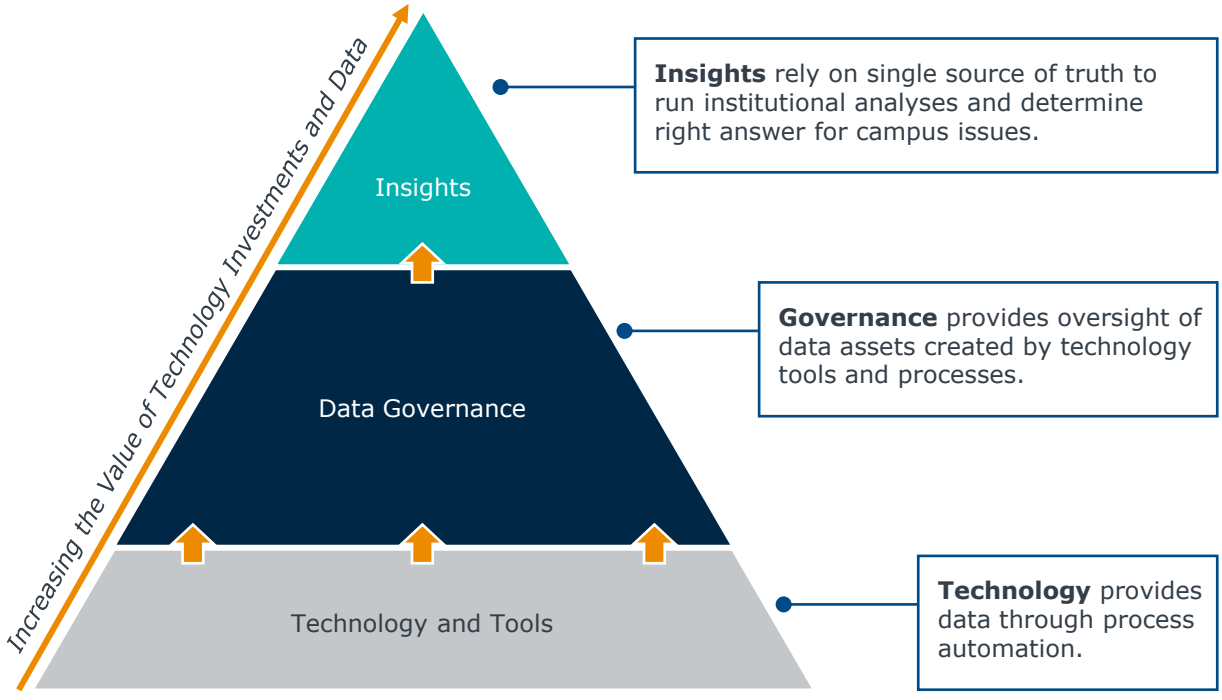
Data Denial, Quarrels over Allocations Consign Schools to Status Quo



Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Foundational Work Needed on Enterprise Data

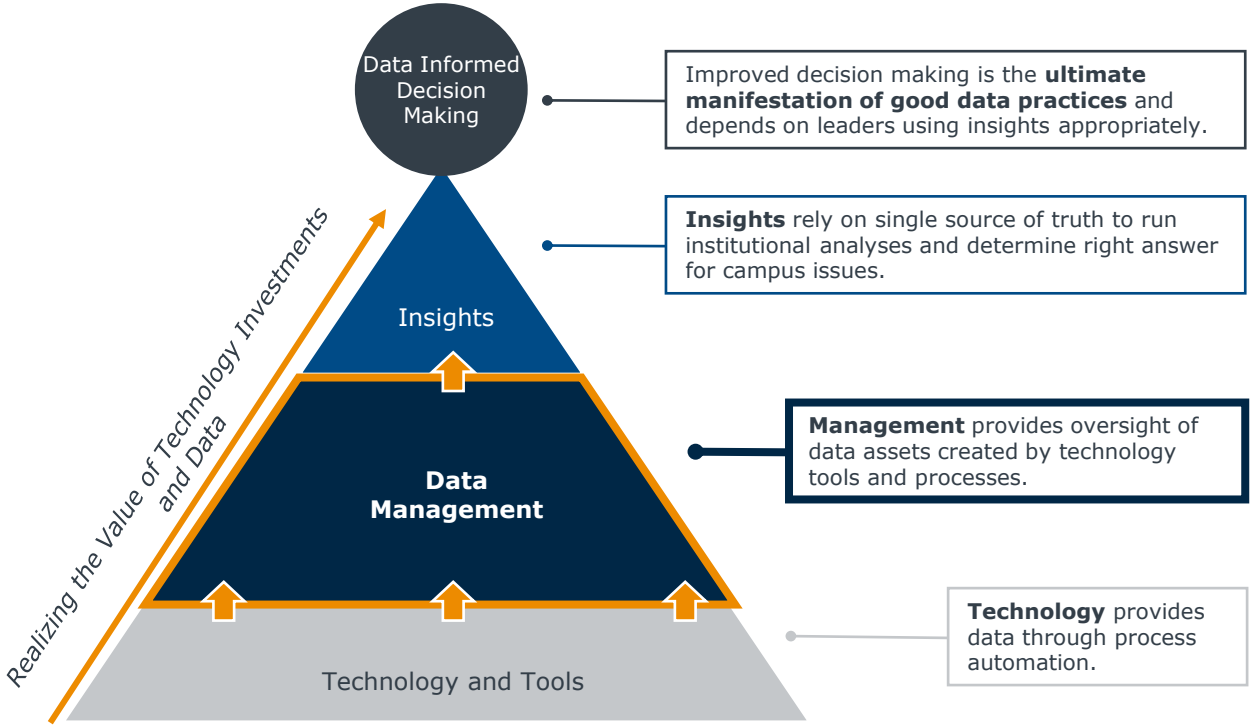
Getting Value From Data Requires Campus-Wide Investment



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Foundational Work Needed on Enterprise Data

Data Management is One Necessary Step Toward Data Informed Decisions



Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Questions to Consider in Crafting Your Strategy

What Components of a Data Strategy do You Have Set Up Already?

1 Vision and Goals

What do we hope to accomplish with our data strategy?
What will our data strategy allow us to do?

Discussed in meeting 1

2 Scope

What data is covered under our strategy?
What data is not covered (e.g., research data)?

Discussed in meeting 1

3 Guiding Principles

What values will we commit to upholding throughout our data policies and practices?

Discussed in meetings 1 & 2

4 Governance Structures

How will we enact our data strategy? What mechanisms are set up to allow us to implement improved data practices?

Discussed in meetings 2 & 3

5 Roles and Responsibilities

Who is responsible for implementing our data strategy? What role do data users across the institution play?

Discussed in meeting 3

Which of these are well articulated in your current data policies/strategies?

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Agile, Iterative Data Governance

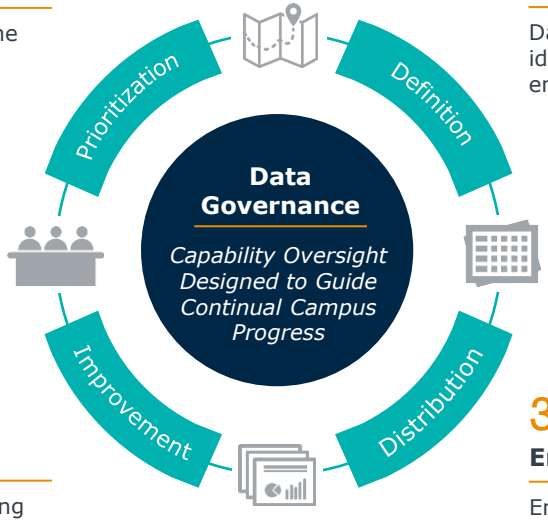
Focus on Enabling Capabilities to Drive Continuous Improvement Cycle

1 Setting Strategy

Campus leaders determine areas of focus for data governance work

2 Standardizing Data

Data governance workflows identify and define enterprise data objects



4 Improving Quality

Usage issues and emerging needs provide new areas of focus for data governance

3 Enabling User Access

Enterprise data and metadata are made available to end users for decision making

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Structure: Separate Strategy from Operation

Bicameral Data Governance

Strategic Oversight

Vision, prioritization, and sponsorship

Data Strategy Committee

- VP- to AVP-level, 5-10 leaders
- Senior leaders aligning data initiatives to institutional goals
- Determines data areas to prioritize, approves policies, monitors progress, resolves conflicts

Execution

Detailed, business-informed implementation

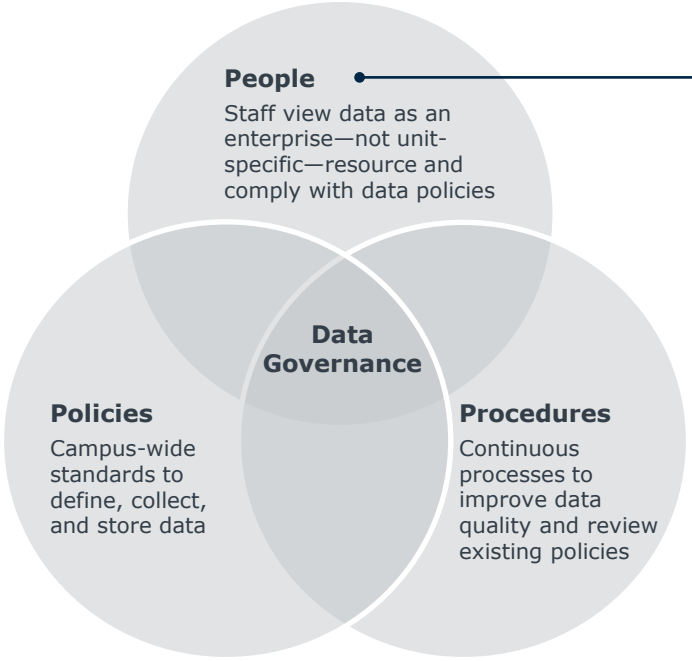
Data Governance Committee

- AVP- to director-level, 12-20 staff
- Functional leaders knowledgeable about data use and policy across
- Drafts and approves data definitions, manages data stewardship structure, drafts policy recommendations, sets access rules

Prerequisite to Data-Informed Decision-Making

Data Governance Critical, But Often Undermined by Poor Collaboration

Components of Effective Data Governance



Most Common Data Governance Failure Path: Committee Breakdown

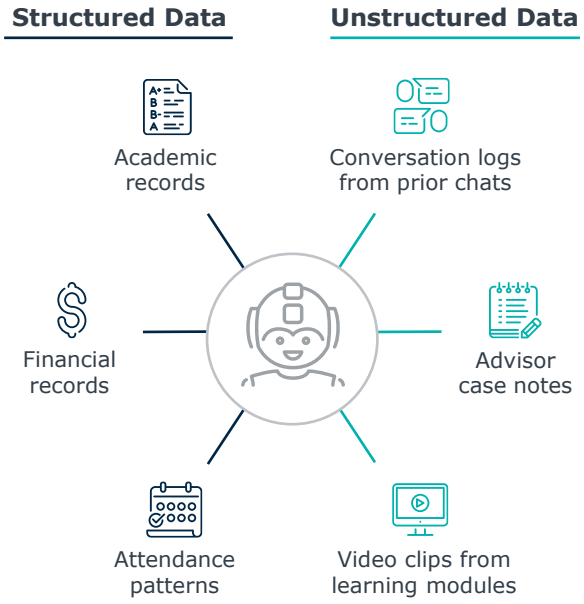
- Campuses on their second or third attempt at establishing effective data governance systems cite **committee breakdown** as leading failure path
- Common causes of committee failure:
  - Committees focus too much on planning rather than execution
  - Members lack accountability for attendance
  - Members stop going to meetings or send delegates too junior to make decisions

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

One Asset, Endless Demands

AI Requires New Campus Data Needs

Example of Data Needs for a Personalized Student Chatbot



And Piles Onto Already Growing Demands

Enrollment

- *Applications & admissions rates*
- *Retention rate*
- *Graduation rate*
- *Student demographics*

Academic Programs

- *Faculty headcount*
- *Labor market & student demand*
- *Annual performance*
- *Accreditation*

Student Outcomes

- *Earnings, debt*
- *Job outcomes*

Research

- *R&D expenditures*
- *Research funding*
- *Outputs & productivity*

Learning Experience

- *AI-personalized learning*
- *LMS engagement data*
- *Student intervention signals*

Institutional Finances

- *Revenue and resource allocations*
- *Financial sustainability indicators*

Sustainability

- *Campus emission and energy use*
- *Climate risk & resilience analytics*

Regulatory Compliance

- *IPEDS*
- *Title IV programs audit*
- *Foreign gift reporting*
- *Clery Act*

*Not an exhaustive list.

Source: EDUCAUSE, 2025 EDUCAUSE Horizon Reports Data and Analytics Edition; EAB interviews and analysis.

Is Data Warehousing and Governance Obsolete?

AI Hailed as Panacea for Data Warehousing and Governance

LinkedIn — *May 2025*

Is the Data Warehouse Era Over? How AI Agents and Unstructured Data Hubs Are Redefining Enterprise Intelligence

Medium — *Dec. 2025*

Microsoft Fabric Is Quietly Replacing Entire Data Teams — And No One Is Talking About It

snowflake — *April 2025*

The Future of Data Management is Agentic AI

Even Higher Education CIOs See a Radical Future

> It's possible that in a couple of years, AI will clean and manage our data. If that's the case, maybe it's not so urgent for higher education to invest in a unified data warehouse. We haven't been particularly successful anyway.

Chief Information Officer
Research Intensive Private Institution

Source: LinkedIn, Is the Data Warehouse Era Over?; Medium, Microsoft Fabric is Quietly Replacing Entire Data Teams; Snowflake, The Future of Data Management is Agentic AI; EAB interviews and analysis.

The New Frontier in Data Warehousing

Higher Ed Eager for Solutions to Leapfrog Past Data Siloes

Automating Data Extraction

University of Louisiana System

- Uses Scaffold DataX to **automate the ETL[1] process**, reducing time and resources spent on data management
- Extracts data into a neutral model with a built-in dashboard for faster insights

- Deployed at Grambling State, UL Monroe, and Louisiana Tech
- **System-wide rollout underway**

Decentralizing Data Ownership

University of St. Thomas

- Data mesh framework **assigns ownership of data to individual units**, central IT sets shared data standards
- Built an AWS-based data lake with AI-assisted querying to streamline data use and analysis

- **$20K** annual savings by removing the need for integration add-ons
- Saved each analyst **2 hours** per day

Automating Data Governance

ECU

- Uses Microsoft Purview to **automatically scan, catalog, and classify data assets across systems**
- Provides a data glossary on Microsoft Purview, ensuring consistent data definitions

- **Completed enterprise rollout in 2025**
- ECU publishes quarterly Purview resources to drive effective use

1) Extract, Transform, Load.

Source: East Carolina University, Purview Resources; EDUCAUSE, Pioneering a Data Warehouse Automation Solution for the University of Louisiana System, Government Technology, AWS Champions Program 2025: University of St. Thomas; EAB interviews and analysis.

Questions?

- Can you have successful Digital Transformation without good data?
- Are data issues preventing you from accomplishing IT strategy? If so, how?

Realistic AI Opportunities

Strategic Advisory Services

Discussion

- What is your biggest AI hurdle or barrier?

- What do you hope to address during today's discussion?

ROADMAP

1. Level Setting
2. AI Operationalizing AI
3. AI Governance
4. AI Postures
5. AI and People

Who's Afraid of AI?

Two Years of AI Breakthroughs…

Outperforming Future Lawyers

GPT-4 scored in the top 10% of Bar Exam test-takers, demonstrating advanced legal reasoning

Breaking Medical Barriers

ChatGPT helped doctors identify a rare genetic condition that stumped experts

Replacing Customer Agent Armies

CEO of fintech company Klarna cites AI is currently doing the equivalent work of ~700 full-time customer service agents

… and Embarrassing Foibles

Fabricating Court Precedents

Lawyer faces sanctions after submitting fake legal precedents that ChatGPT hallucinated in case to Federal Court

Making Billion-Dollar Blunders

Google's Bard AI falsely claimed the Webb Telescope captured the first exoplanet photo, causing a $100 billion drop in market value

Leaving Customers Exasperated

A TikTok video with 30,000 views shows a McDonalds customer repeatedly ask AI for ice cream, only for it to add multiple stacks of butter

Source: "Klarna CEO says AI can do the job of 700 workers. But job replacement isn't the biggest issue," *CBS News*, March 2024; "Latest Version of ChatGPT aces bar exam with score nearing 90th percentile," *ABA Journal*, February 2023; "How to fight antibiotic resistance," *Nature Medicine*, March 2023; "Air Canada ordered to pay customer who was misled by airline's chatbot," *The Guardian*, February 2024; "Lawyer Used ChatGPT In Court And Cited Fake Cases—A Judge Is Considering Sanctions," *Forbes*, June 2023; "Google shares drop $100 billion after its new AI chatbot makes a mistake," *NPR*, February 2023; EAB interviews and analysis.

Generative AI Already a Staple for Higher Ed

And We Are Only Getting Started…

While Students and Staff Embrace AI Tools…

86%

Of students use AI to augment learning and studying

69%

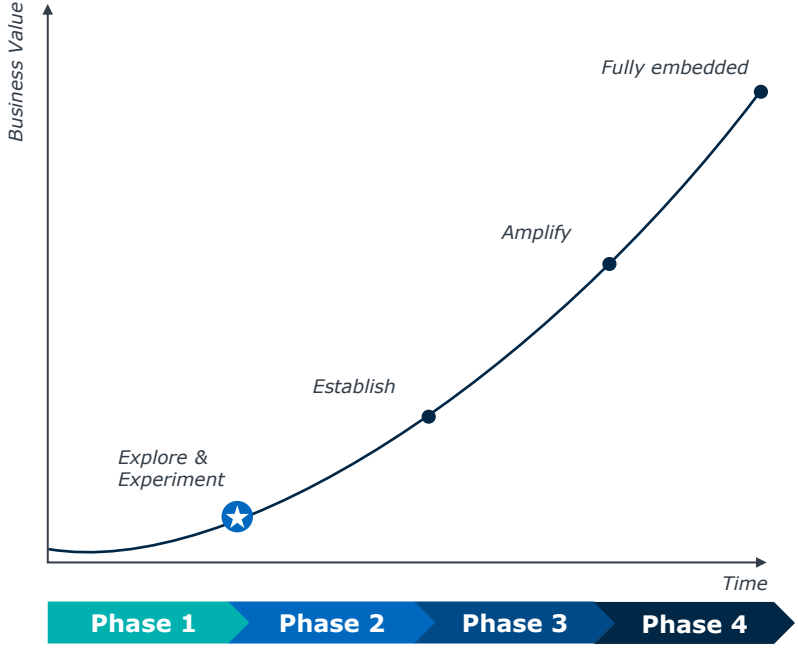
Of higher ed staff reported using generative AI at least once in the past year

52%

Of presidents report their institution has AI taskforce and/or strategy

…Higher Ed is Still in Phase 1 of AI Adoption

Arizona State University, AI Maturity Model, April 2024

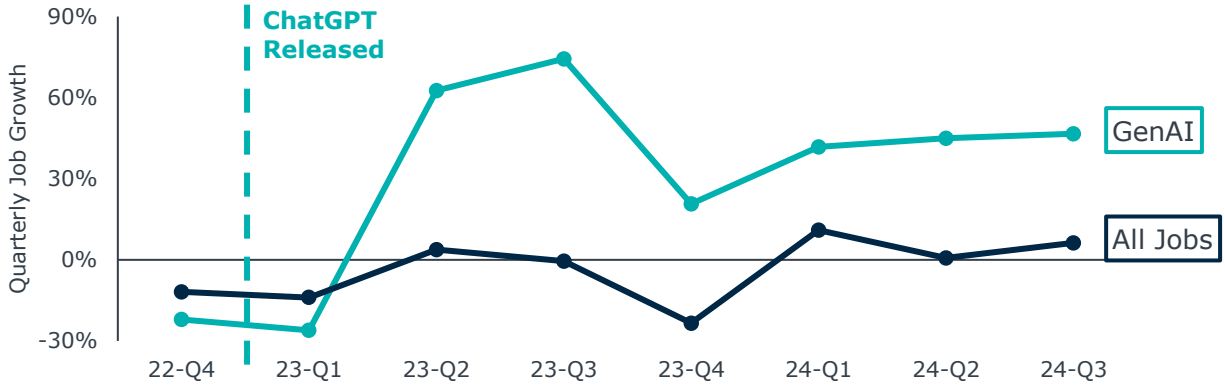


Source: ASU + GSV Summit, Is Your Strategy AI-Ready? Tips from ASU on Preparing for a New Normal, 2024; Digital Education Council, "Digital Education Council Global AI Student Survey 2024," August 2, 2024; EAB, Higher Ed Success Staff Survey, 2024; *Inside Higher Ed*, 2025 Survey of College and University Presidents; EAB interviews and analysis.

Today's Student is Tomorrow's AI Worker

Skyrocketing Demand for Generative AI Skills

Quarterly Growth of Job Postings Containing Generative AI Terms, October 2022 – September 2024



Monumental Growth for GenAI Skills Compared to Past High-Growth Fields

Growth in Monthly Relevant Job Postings as Field Interest Peaked

GenAI, 2024

644%

Oct 2022 – Sept 2024

Fintech, 2022

104%

Jun 2020 – Apr 2022

Smart Manufacturing, 2021

25%

Oct 2019 – Sept 2021

Source: Lightcast; EAB interviews and analysis.

Yet, Students, Employers Unable to Define AI Skills

Students Looking to Institutions for Guidance on AI Literacy

31% of undergraduates **don't know or are unsure** when or how to use GenAI to help with coursework

72% of students want their institutions to provide more training on **AI literacy**

41% of students are currently just using AI tools **for fun** (vs. learning or skill development)

Language in GenAI Job Postings Remains Vague

71% of relevant job postings in the past year did not include any other AI keywords beyond "**generative AI**" or "**ChatGPT**"

> We're seeking a visionary AI Product Marketing Leader to disrupt marketing and transform customer experiences **through cutting-edge AI**

> As a Senior UX/UI designer you will be responsible for designing solutions that responsibly **incorporate generative AI into user experiences** and address the goals of our business

> Ability to leverage **ChatGPT and other AI tools**.

> Technology enthusiast who is proficient in Microsoft Office Suite and has working knowledge of **generative AI tools such as ChatGPT**

Source: Ashley Mowreader, "Survey: When Should College Students Use AI? They're Not Sure," *Inside Higher Ed*, September 16, 2024; Rhea Kelly, "Survey: 86% of Students Already Use AI in Their Studies," *Campus Technology*, August 28, 2024; Lauren Coffey, "College-Bound Students Concerned About AI Skills," *Inside Higher Ed*, May 6, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

From Pyramid to Diamond

- Entry points are scarce, tightly gated, and reserved for already-skilled candidates
- Employers demand more polished, experienced hires from day one
- First jobs feel less like "learning roles" and more like immediate proving grounds

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Operationalizing AI in Academics and Administration

2

AI's Potential to Inflect to Key Goals in HE Sector

Increase Financial Sustainability

I.e., Reduce Costs

Long-Term Vision: Scaled Productivity Gains

Deploy AI applications across the enterprise at a scale that eliminates low-value activities, enables a greater output of work, and ultimately reduces operating costs.

More Immediate Vision: Individual or Team-Based Productivity Gains

Pinpoint areas where AI enables greater individual or team efficiency, laying groundwork for wider adoption.

Boosting Administrative Efficiency with AI

Increase Competitiveness

I.e., Grow Revenue

Long-Term Vision: Building an AI University

Faculty embrace AI and incorporate it into curriculum and research applications; prospective students seek out the institution as desired destination to prepare for an AI future.

More Immediate Vision: Enhancing Faculty (and Student) AI Literacy

Enable small-scale experimentation with AI as pedagogical tool as well as force transforming curriculum.

Engaging the Faculty with AI

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Artificial Intelligence 101 for Faculty

Many Visions for What AI Literacy Training Looks Like in Practice

Select Examples of AI Literacy Training, from Least to Most Tailoring—and Startup Cost—Involved

Out-of-the-Box Generalist Trainings

Grow With Google offers 10-hour, self-paced AI Essentials course on AI fundamentals, prompting, responsible use ($49/person)

Shared Training for Everyone on Campus

Vanderbilt offers free, extensive AI training (including workshops and online courses) for students, faculty, and staff

Teaching-Specific Instruction

Auburn's free, self-paced, interactive Teaching with AI course consists of 8 modules which take ~10 to 25 hours to complete; participants receive a badge

Targeted Opportunities for Most-Impacted Disciplines

U of Mississippi hosts paid ($1k stipend), two-day AI Summer Institute for writing instructors

What All Good AI Literacy Training Has in Common

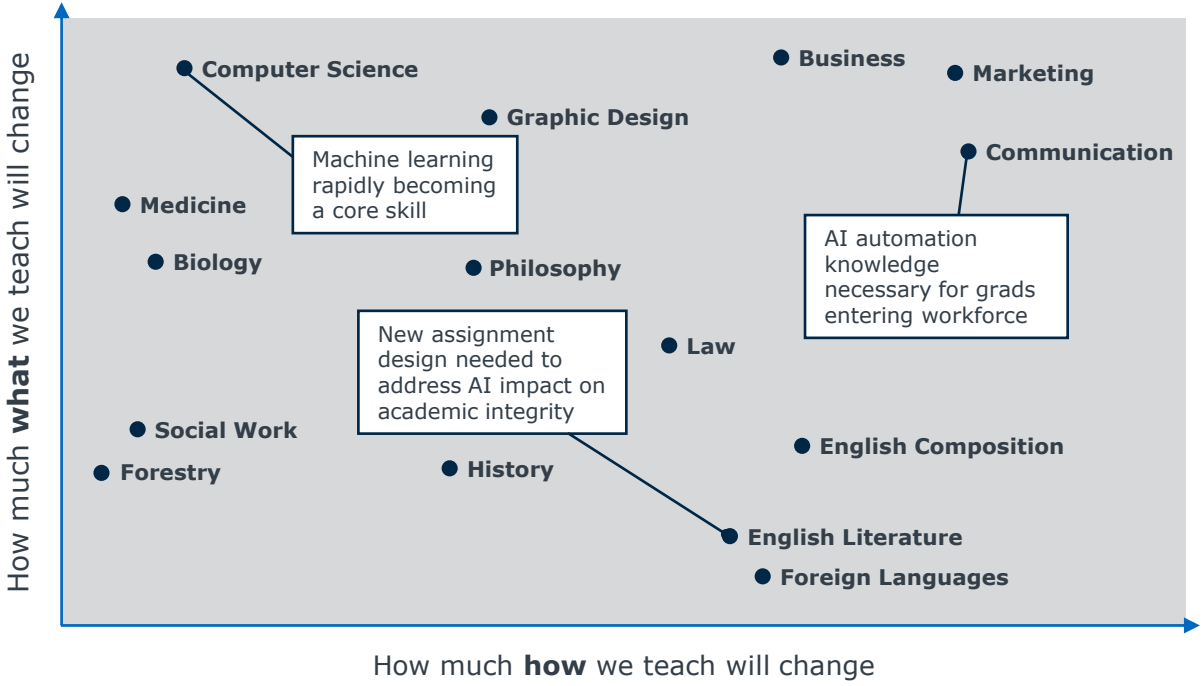
- ✓ Ensures faculty understand what AI and LLMs are…and what they're not
- ✓ Covers risks and biases behind using AI, and why engaging with AI is key to understanding these pitfalls
- ✓ Offers interactive, hands-on opportunities to use AI tools

Source: Biggio Center, "Teaching with AI @ Auburn," *Auburn University*, 2023; Vanderbilt University, "Vanderbilt launches free online ChatGPT course, shaping the future of AI education," *Vanderbilt University Research News*, May 24, 2023; "Google AI Essentials," Grow with Google; EAB interviews and analysis.

A Different Story in Each Discipline

Faculty Must Determine Where Their Discipline Lands on the Grid

AI Impact on Disciplines vis-à-vis How Much Curricula vs. Pedagogy Must Evolve



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Spanning the Gaps Across Fields

Multidisciplinary AI Minors Embed AI Skills Within Disciplinary Contexts

Iowa State University

Minor in Applied Artificial Intelligence

Required Courses:

- AI 2010X: Introduction to Applied AI
- AI 2020X: Ethical Design, Use, and Impact of AI

Electives:

- ECON 3830X: Economics of Innovation
- COMST 3300: Computer Mediated Communication
- ENGL 2220X: AI and Writing
- PHIL 3430: Philosophy of Technology
- …

VCU

Minor in Practical Artificial Intelligence

Required Courses:

- CMSC 225: Essentials of AI
  OR
  MATH 170: Language of AI
- PHIL 202: Ethics of AI
- IDST 370: Practical Artificial Intelligence Synthesis

Electives:

- MATH 370: Mathematical Foundations for AI
- HUMS 392: Artificial Intelligence in Mass Media
- BUSN 320: AI in Business
- …

University of Florida

AI Fundamentals and Applications Certificate

Required Courses:

- EEL 3872: Artificial Intelligence Fundamentals
- PHI 3681: Ethics, Data, and Technology

Electives:

- EDP 3211: Cognitive and Educational Science in AI
- BSC 4892: AI in Biology
- CLA 3811: AI in Antiquity and Today
- GIS 4123C: GeoAI – Geographic AI
- …

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Ask, Don't Accuse

Academic Misconduct Conversation Guide Eliminates Need for AI Detectors

Question Guide for Suspected Misconduct

1. Can you please tell me what your assignment is about? What is the main topic? What did you argue, discuss, or highlight? What was the focus of the assignment?
2. What was your favourite part of the assignment? What were some of the challenging parts of the assignment?
3. Tell me about your process for writing this assignment: did you complete it in stages? What kind of timeline?
4. If there is a reoccurring term or phrase, ask the student to explain what it means.
5. Provide the student with their reference list; select a source and ask why they chose that source. (If applicable)
6. Did you make use of technological tools in writing this assignment? (e.g. ChatGPT, Google Bard, Bing)

- ❑ Student cannot answer or demonstrates limited knowledge of most questions → ***contact Academic Misconduct Office***
- ❑ Student can answer or demonstrates excellent knowledge of most questions → ***likely the student's original work***

McMaster University

Benefits of McMaster's Approach

1. Used in lieu of (often faulty) AI detectors
2. Emphasizes human role in a post-AI world
3. Avoids bias via standard question set

Source: McMaster University, Question Guide for Suspected Academic Misconduct; EAB interviews and analysis.

An AI Solution to an AI Problem

McMaster Tool Automates Design of AI-Enabled (or AI-Proof) Assignments

McMaster University Assessment Partner

Assessment Format ▼
Research Projects / Group Projects

Discipline ▼
Plant Sciences: Botany

Level of Study ▼
Year 2

Generative AI Usage ▼
Incorporate Generative AI

User can customize inputs to suit a specific course

Integrative Written Assessment on Plant Sciences: Botany

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge Acquisition: Demonstrate a thorough understanding of key botanical concepts, including plant anatomy, physiology, ecology, and taxonomy.

….

AI tool generates full assignment including learning outcomes and rubric

Assessment Tasks

1. Literature Review (30%)

Select a topic related to botany, such as plant adaptation strategies, the role of plants in ecosystems, or the impact of climate change on plant biodiversity. Conduct a literature review summarizing key findings, current debates, and research gaps. Your review should include…

Grading Instructions

Source: McMaster University Assessment Partner, assessment-partner.com; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Quick-Start Ideas for Free/Low-Cost Tools

Opportunity	Case Study
1. Outline and draft strategic plan components	The Executive Vice Chancellor & University Provost at the **City University of New York System Office** uses ChatGPT in her strategic planning process to help craft a compelling narrative and develop clear, consistent themes.
2. Draft policies and policy manuals	The Director of International Services at the **University of Idaho** uses Google Gemini to create initial drafts of policies and to refine their language and tone in final reviews. For example, her team employed Gemini to draft and review an internal policy manual that was approximately 100 pages long, complete with images, diagrams, and data. The manual had been delayed for years due to limited staff capacity.
3. Produce and iterate on product designs	**Babson College**'s Chief Information Officer and faculty worked together to use DALL-E to develop new product designs for students and to continually test ideas throughout the design process.
4. Design art installations	The IT department at the **University of Nevada, Las Vegas** used DALL-E 2 to design a winning float for the homecoming parade.
5. Generate project visuals for facilities planning	**Texas State University**'s Chief Business Officer (CBO) leveraged DALL-E to create visual mock-ups of donor names on buildings. The CBO successfully created ten mock-ups based on the needs of the Advancement Office, which were then presented to the university's president along with one from their architect. The president ranked all of the CBO's renderings higher than the architect's.

Source: EAB, *Compendium of AI Applications in Higher Education*, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

Some Institutions Piloting Full Suite of Tools

Northern Arizona University Pilots Microsoft 365 Copilot

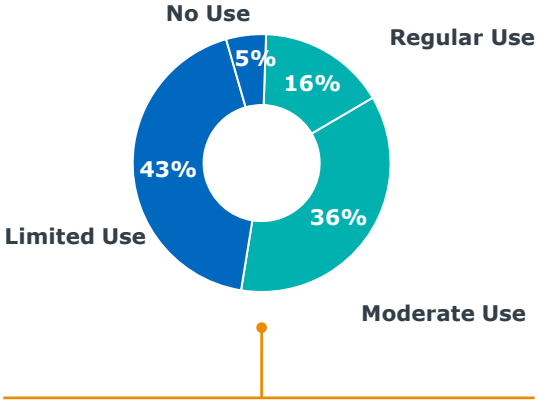
- CIO funds M365 with **107 participants (AI Pioneers)** for one year
- At $40 per user per month, pilot costs NAU approximately **$42K/year**
- CIO deployed **survey** at end of one semester to gauge impact

Excerpt of NAU's AI Statement

"NAU's approach to the use of artificial intelligence is rooted in the understanding that artificial intelligence technologies have the potential to significantly change the ways in which we work, teach, and learn."

"How would you describe your Copilot use on a day-to-day basis?"

n=56



- **Saved hours of manipulation** by structuring unorganized data into tables
- **Shortened project timelines** by drafting follow-up emails and task lists
- **Sped up presentation production** using loosely organized text to develop first draft slide decks

Source: Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ; EAB interviews and analysis.

USF's AI-Powered IT Service Desk Triage System

UNIVERSITY of SOUTH FLORIDA

USF's AI IT Service Desk

Problem: USF student workers manually sorted 100K tickets annually for USF's IT Service Desk; high volume demanded extensive student labor and attention.

Results

76%

Anticipated reduction in service desk operating costs ($90K to $21K)

Key Components

Automated Ticket Classification

Classifies incoming service tickets, automatically sorting requests based on status, service team, issue type, and priority

Targets Semantic Similarity

AI model compares new tickets to **historical data** and deploys the Completion API to generate a response

Continuous Improvement

Ticket information updates in Jira and creates a **feedback loop** that will improve classification over time

Source: Source: Jason Hair, "Revolutionizing the IT Service Desk: GPT-Powered Ticket Classification at USF," *EDUCAUSE*, October 11, 2023; EAB interviews and analysis.

Rice University's HR Chatbot

RICE

Rice University HR Chatbot

Problem: Low utilization of self-service resources leads to high volume of HR inquiries (~500/month); ~25% abandoned, distracting HR staff from higher skill work.

Results

400

conversations fielded by HR chatbot in first six weeks

Key Components

Vendor Partner Selected

In early 2024, Office of Transformational Technology & Innovation developed generative AI chatbot using **Ivy.ai** platform

Chatbot Trained on Common Questions

Rice employees trained chatbot on **250 most common HR questions** and evaluated answers to understand what types of responses to provide

Two Types of Responses

Chatbot answers straightforward questions with **prebuilt** response. More complex questions are sent to ChatGPT 4 for **custom** response

Source: Rice University, Houston, TX; EAB interviews and analysis.

The First Autonomous Fundraiser

Version2 Brings AI to the Frontlines

Version2 Launches the "World's First Fully Autonomous Frontline Fundraiser"

Mission: Create and accelerate the advancement of autonomous fundraising technology and mimic the cognitive functions of a fundraising staff.

Goal: Autonomously manage a portfolio of donors, similar to the way a traditional fundraiser would.

Process: Narrows donor pool, qualifies donors, builds relationships through personalized touchpoints, solicits, closes, and executes stewardship without human interaction.

Source: Kevin Leahy, "Version2 Launches with AI Lab Focused on Building World's First Fully Autonomous Nonprofit Fundraiser", *EIN Presswire,* June 20, 2024; *Verion2.ai,* 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

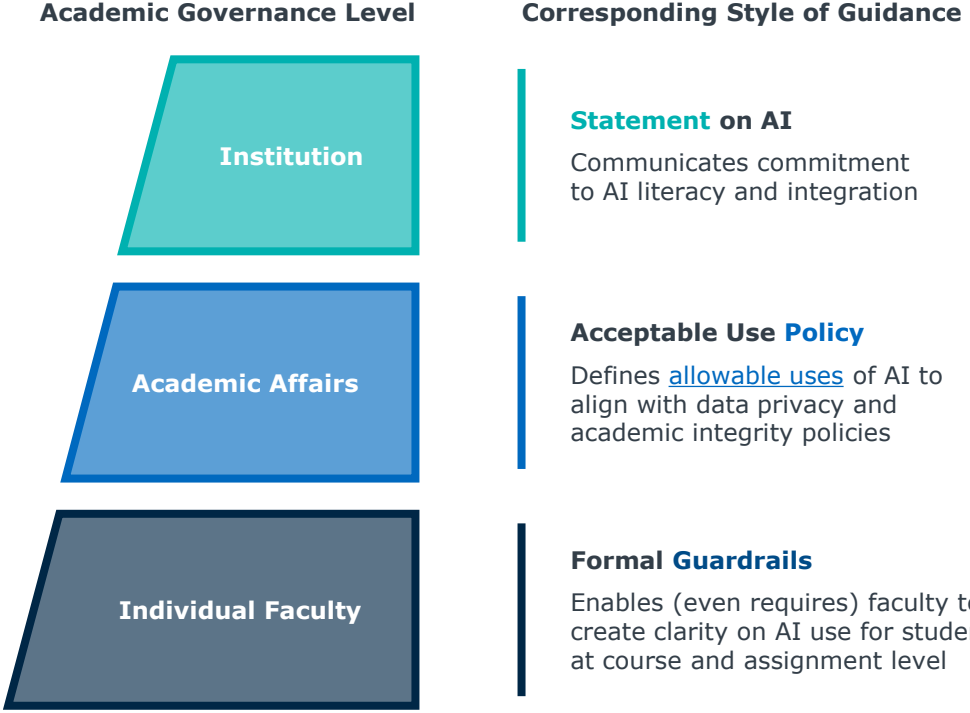
Challenges in AI Governance

SECTION 3

Establishing Levels of AI Governance

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

The Right Approach—at Every Level



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

AI Principles Serve as North Star for Campus

ELON UNIVERSITY **AI Principles**

1. People, not technology, must be at the center of our work
2. We should promote digital inclusion within and beyond our institutions
3. Digital and information literacy is an essential part of a core education
4. AI tools should enhance teaching and learning
5. Learning about technologies is an experiential, lifelong process
6. AI research and development must be done responsibly

Translating Principles to Action

Hired **Director of AI Integration** to integrate six principles on campus

- IT develops **first AI tool to help students with academic advising**
- IT provides **free access** to ChatGPT 4.0 and an AI sandbox for experimentation
- Elon, AAC&U[1] **publishes student guide to AI**
- IT establishes grant to **provide AI tool licenses (75% for teaching and learning)**
- Elon releases continuing education **course to help professionals** master collaboration with AI
- Research launches Imagining the Digital Future Center to **steer responsible research charting potential of AI** (e.g., impact on privacy)

1) American Association of Colleges and Universities.

Source: Elon NEXT, "Navigating the AI Revolution...;" Elon News Network, "Elon University Launches...," August 20, 2024; Elon University: "Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education;" "Elon, AAC&U Publish...," August 19, 2024; "Elon's Generative AI Statement;" "Higher Education's Essential Role...;" "Mustafa Akben...," August 7, 2024; "The Future of AI," March 1, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

AI Work Groups Support AI Adoption Across Campus

Penn

Develop AI Compliance Guides

Access and Integrity

- Defines scope of AI adoption
- Provides AI guidance for educators, students, and researchers

Wake Forest University

Provide AI Training on Campus

Staff and Faculty

- Offers 16 peer-led AI seminars for faculty to reflect on implications of AI on teaching and learning
- Shares faculty stories of AI adoption on-campus

University of Oregon

Integrate AI in Teaching

Student Learning

- Updates peer review tools and teaching evolution criteria based on AI capabilities and impact
- Develops course policy and activity guides

The University of Arizona

Implement Broad AI Solutions

Institution-wide

- Enables Process Automation Team to leverage process automation applications
- Identifies commonalities in AI solutions

Four AI Workgroups, Two Common Themes

- Standardizes AI compliance and usage guidance
- Unifies AI adoption and implementation on campus

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Accelerate Coordinated and Strategic AI Adoption

Colorado State University System's AI Task Force

***Charge**: Four-month deadline to produce 1-3 pilot proposals per subcommittee*

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

***Discovery** (Aug–Sept)*

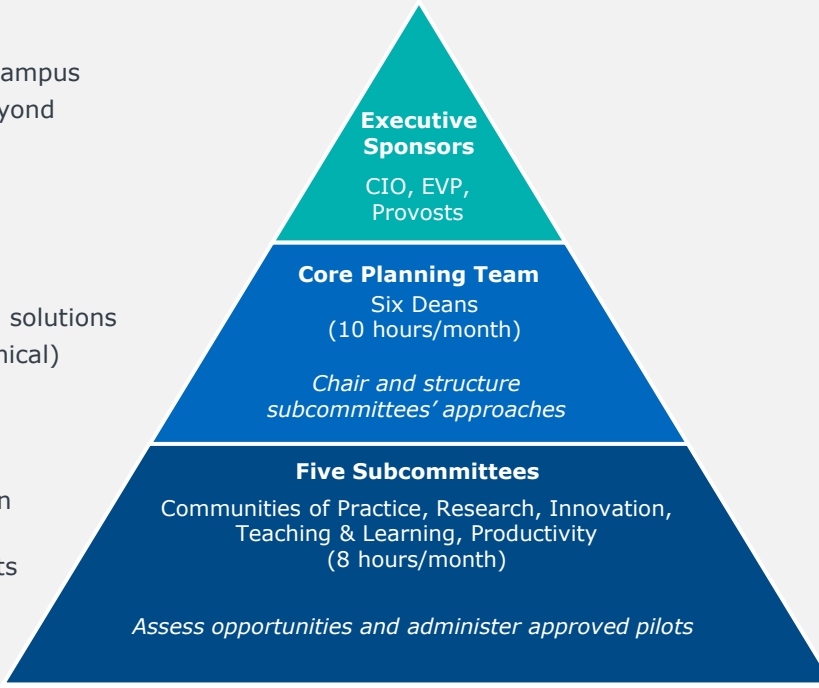
- Assess current AI usage on campus
- Scan for use cases in and beyond higher education

***Evaluation** (Oct–Nov)*

- Benchmark with peers
- Brainstorm opportunities and solutions
- Assess project risks (e.g., ethical)

***Implementation** (Dec)*

- Develop 1-3 pilot proposals in SBAR[1] form
- Outline resource requirements



1) Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation.

Source: Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO; EAB interviews and analysis.

AI Committees Separate Strategy from Operations

University of Oregon's Bicameral AI Governance Structure

Bicameral AI Governance

Strategic Oversight

Vision, prioritization, and sponsorship

AI Strategy Committee

- VP- to AVP-level, 5-10 leaders
- Senior leaders align AI initiatives to institutional goals and develop standard AI principles
- Determines AI processes, policies, and procedures to govern AI decision making

Execution

Detailed, business-informed implementation

AI Governance Committee

- AVP- to director-level, 12-20 staff
- Functional leaders knowledgeable about AI governance processes, policies, and procedures
- Operationalizes AI tools across campus, aligning with AI principles

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Designing a Federated Governance Model:
Aligning IT, Data, and AI Oversight

IT and Data Joint Areas of Oversight

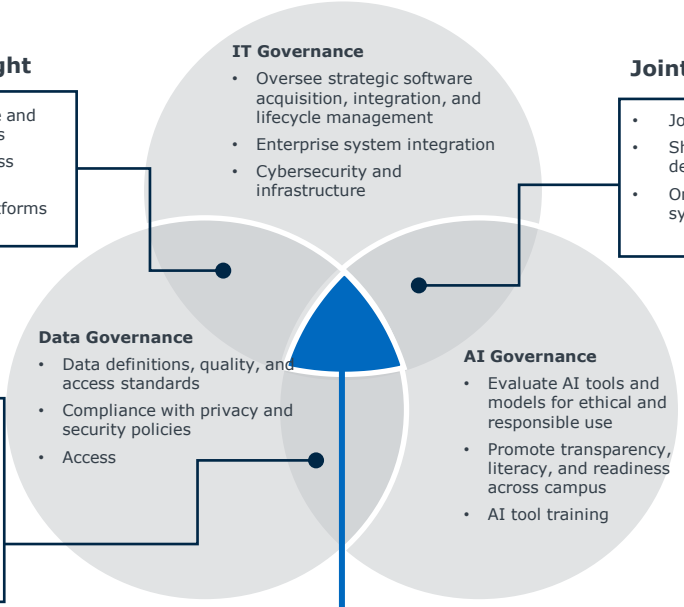
- Coordinate data architecture and system integration standards
- Align data security and access controls across systems
- Manage lifecycle of data platforms

IT and AI Joint Areas of Oversight

- Joint sign-off policy for purchase
- Shared oversight of AI system deployment and integration
- Ongoing monitoring of AI system performance and risk

Data and AI Joint Areas of Oversight

- High-quality, ethical data feeding AI models
- Transparent use of institutional data in AI applications
- Shared responsibility for campus education and engagement



Executive Governance Council

- Set institutional vision and priorities for technology, data, and AI enablement
- Define the principles and guardrails guiding responsible innovation
- Align resource allocation and investments to institutional strategy
- Resolve cross-domain tensions and elevate shared opportunities
- Evaluate institutional performance and maturity in digital governance

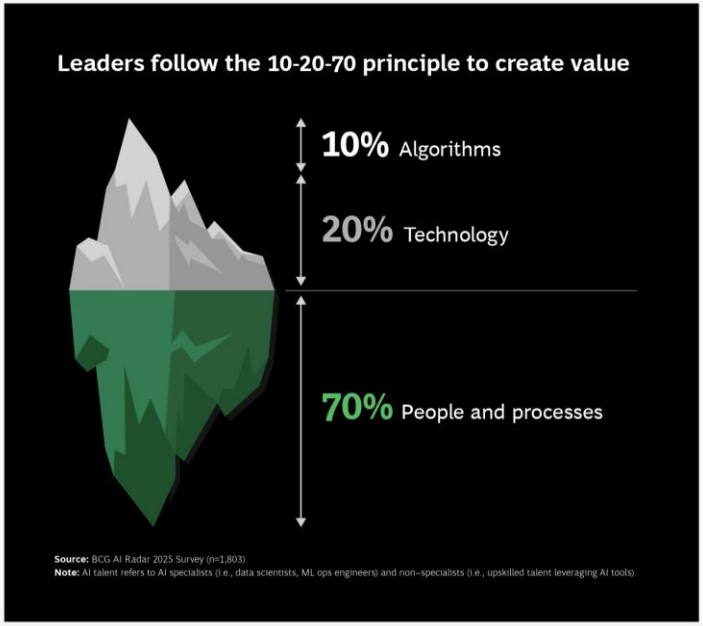
Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Thinking about AI Strategy

4

Even Corporations Are Struggling to Reduce Costs

BCG Survey of 1,800 Corporate Executives (Jan 2025)



... but

2 in 3

companies struggle to:

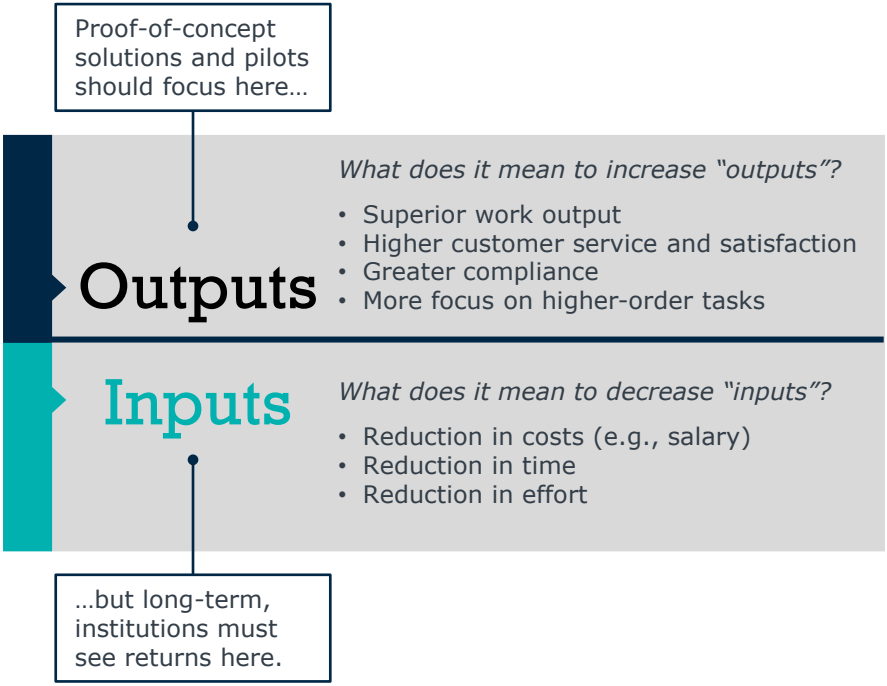
- Reimagine workflows and drive incentives, culture, and change
- Hire AI talent and upskill workforce

Less than 10% of executives expect a decrease in headcount due to AI automation

Source: https://www.bcg.com/publications/2025/closing-the-ai-impact-gap

Take an Expansive Definition of ROI

Productivity Gains Come from Reducing Input *and* Growing Output

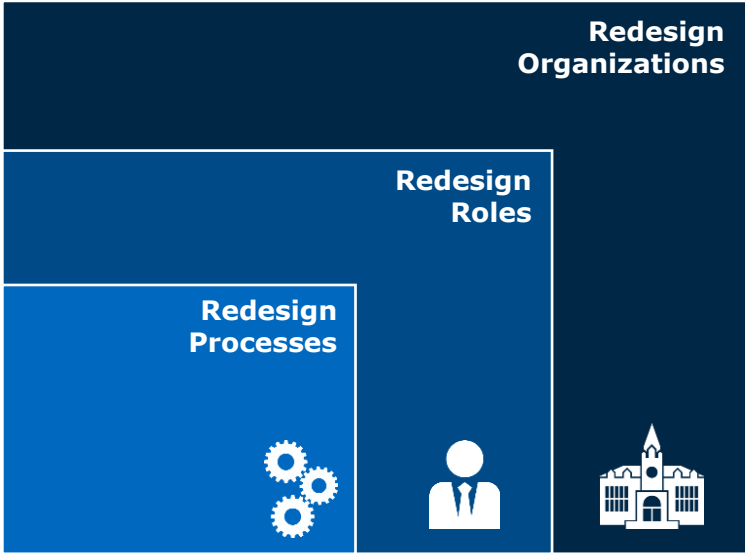


Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

The Real Challenge Now Is Redesign

AI Will Stimulate and Facilitate Changes to Processes, Roles, and Structures

- Don’t fall into the trap of constantly striving to do more with less
- Rethink both what you are doing and how you are doing it
- New tools like AI can be an occasion for rethinking how you work, not a simple substitute



Strategy Supported by AI, Rather than AI Strategy

Keep the University Focused on Institutional Priorities

Typical Questions about AI

- How are my peers using this technology?
- Which products should we use?
- How much/ how fast should I invest?
- What's the ROI?
- What are the risks?

Better Strategy Questions

- What are my university's or unit's top three priorities?
- What are the biggest barriers to success in each of those areas?
- Which activities are likely to have the greatest impact on achieving our top priorities?
- What contribution can my university or unit uniquely make?

Most institutions approach this conversation with an understanding that AI is a tool that solves problems, so they begin by asking what problems should we solve with it.

It should be the opposite of that. We have very specific problems that we have developed strategies to resolve. Can AI enhance or improve our solutions?

Addressing the Human Factor

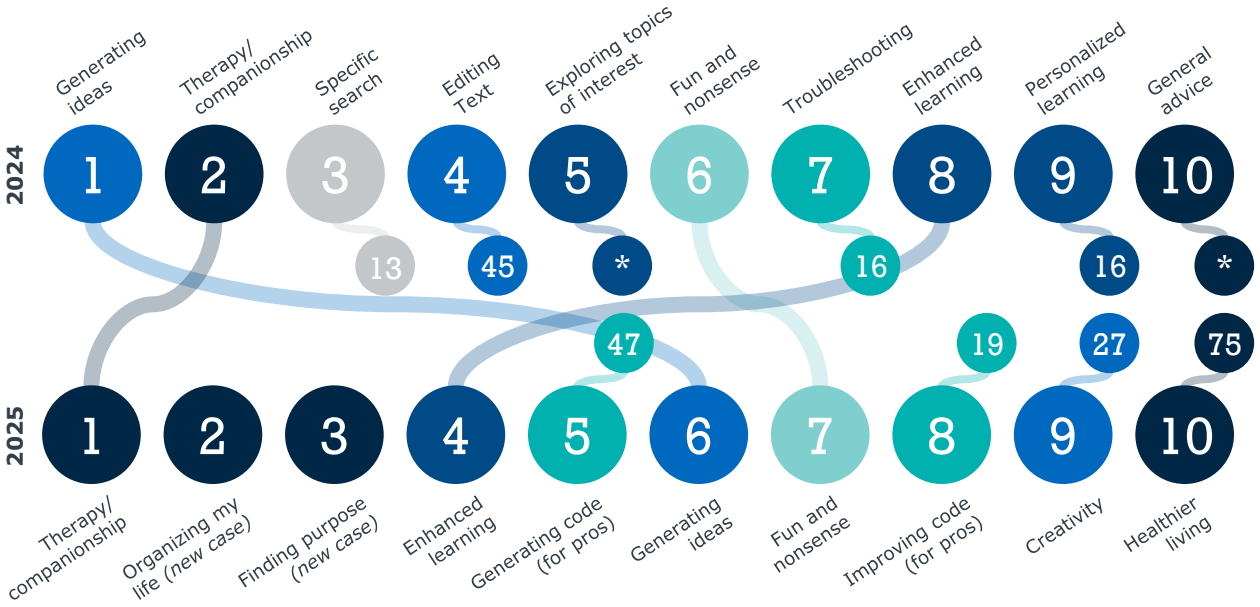
5

From Technical to Emotional Applications

Top 10 GenAI Use Cases

Themes:

- Personal and Professional Support
- Learning and Education
- Technical Assistance and Troubleshooting
- Content Creation and Editing
- Creativity and Recreation
- Research, Analysis, and Decision-Making



1) * = did not make list of top 100 use cases in 2025.

Source: HBR, Top 10 Gen AI Use Cases; EAB interviews and analysis.

Two Must-Haves to Activate Staff Experimentation

Reasons Why Employees Don't Tout AI Experimentation

From Ethan Mollick's Blog on 'Secret Cyborgs'

Received a scary talk about how improper AI use might be punished

Treated as heroes for their sensitive emails, rapid coding and don't want to lose that respect

Suspect that they (or colleagues) will be fired if company realizes that AI does some of their job

Suspect that if they reveal AI use, they won't be punished—but they won't be rewarded

Concerned that any productivity gains will become new baseline expectation

Incentivized to share their success but have no way of promoting it

Must-Do Activities to Facilitate Individual Adoption of AI

1 **Give end users permission and incentive to experiment.** Aim to reduce fears and align incentives to drive innovation.

2 **Provide hands-on training on using AI tools.** Staff will see more efficiency gains with orientation and training.

Source: Ethan Mollick, "AI in Organizations: Some Tactics," *One Useful Thing* (blog), October 4, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

Thank you for your time!

- Questions?
- Observations?

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EAB

Implications for the CIO Today

IT Strategy and Advisory Services

Blast From the Past

Current Realities Give New Urgency to Evergreen IT Org Questions

EAB Research Has Repeatedly Explored Organizational Issues in Past Decade…

…But Today's Financial Challenges and Tech Complexity Are Pushing Orgs to the Brink

Escalating Financial Challenges

33% of institutions posted structural deficits in 2024

8.7% SaaS[1] price inflation from 2024 to 2025

Increasing Complexity of Tech Ecosystem

170+ Average number of SaaS applications on a higher education campus

25-40 Average number of platforms, e.g., SIS[2], students interact with throughout university lifecycle

1) Software-as-a-Service.
2) Student information system.

Source: "EDUCAUSE QuickPoll Results: Technology Budgets and Staffing", *EDUCAUSE,* April 21, 2025; "IT Asset Management in Higher Education: Tracking SaaS and IT Assets Across Campuses", *Cloudeagle*, May 2025; "Student Success, The SIS and Where AI Fits Into All of This", *Gartner,* 2025; "The Great SaaS Price Surge of 2025", *SaaStr,* October 2025; EAB interviews and analysis of IPEDS FY24 data.

The IT Org's Dream and Nightmare: Generative AI

Rising AI Expectations (and Misconceptions) Collide with Org Realities

Misconception: **Implementing AI Will be "Plug and Play"**

Reality: **We Need to Rework Our Underlying Data to Truly Harness AI**

"We had to pull our chatbot when it was directing students to a policy page built in 1994"

Misconception: **All Our Campus Experimentation = Enterprise Impact**

Reality: **We Don't Have the Capacity to Support Every Pet Project Safely**

"Our faculty built an AI tutor that students quickly broke to get exam answers"

Misconception: **AI Is a Silver Bullet for Savings and Efficiency**

Reality: **Savings From AI Will Take Time, and Will Require People Change**

"My president expects me to improve operational efficiency by 40% in the next 5 years with AI"

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Reaping What We (Did Not) Sow

Lessons From Higher Ed's Response to Previous Tech Hype Cycles

Transformative Tech Cycle	Org Response	Consequences
The World Wide Web *Every unit races to spin up websites and custom developed systems*	Unmitigated innovation with minimal central oversight or standardization	IT saddled with **massive technical debt** from bespoke legacy systems built 25 years ago
Cloud-Based Vendor ERP Systems *Cloud ERPs become the foundation, and in some cases, reset for business operations*	Treated ERP as a tech implementation; ignored extent of business process assessment and transformation necessary	**7 years in and >$200M** into ERP implementation, Alpha University's[1] **ERP is still not functional**

1) Anonymized.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

You Know It, But Do They?

Common CIO Wisdom Not Readily Grasped by Other Stakeholders

1

Traditional IT Funding Model No Longer Works

Current annual, project-based IT funding models hinder today's institutional priorities, undermining financial oversight and risk management

2

Scaling AI Changes the Risk Equation

Moving from AI experimentation to scaling exponentially increases organizational support necessary to manage risks

3

Don't Let Excitement (or Mandates) Outpace the Business Case

Even flashy tech investments need long-term business cases, grounded in institutional processes and problems

EAB Executive Briefing Forthcoming

University Leadership's Guide to Enabling Sustainable Tech Innovation

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

No Magic Org Model, But Clear Paths Forward

Search for a New Higher Ed IT Org Panacea Comes Up Empty…

- Revolutionary operating models, service team structures
- Must-have, next-generation IT teams and roles
- Budget mechanism cure-alls

…But Analysis of IT Org Charts Signal Clear Trends and Opportunities

67%

of HE institutions have highly centralized IT orgs

8

Average number of central IT staff FTEs per 1,000 FTE students

>50%

of CIOs are a part of the President's cabinet

Share Your Org Chart With Your SL for Early Access to EAB's IT Org Chart Audit

The audit will evaluate your IT org chart against peers as well as best practice industry trends.

Source: C Herridge, IT Centralization Patterns, *EDUCAUSE Review*, August 5, 2024; M McCormack, EDUCAUSE QuickPoll Results: Technology Budgets, *EDUCAUSE Review*, April 21, 2025; M McCormack, 2025 EDUCAUSE Technology Leadership Workforce, *EDUCAUSE*, July 21, 2025; A McIntosh, Higher Ed Institutions Want Increased, *EdTech Magazine*, October 11, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

CIO's Urgent Questions Necessitate Org Change

CIO Challenge	Org Imperative
"How can we spend less time keeping the lights on and more furthering institutional priorities?"	**I. Optimize IT's Core Services to Increase Strategic Capacity**
"How can we move from experimentation to realizing enterprise gains from AI?"	**II. Organize for Agility and Enablement, While Limiting Long-Term Technical Debt**
"How can we govern increasingly urgent and overlapping IT, data, AI issues?"	**III. Implement Federated Governance for Shared IT, Data, and AI Oversight**

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

How IT Staff Are Getting Work Done: AI, Actually

IT Staff Find Ways to Apply AI in Their Day-to-Day Roles

AI Assistant Supercharges Student SOC[1] Workers

Oregon State University

- Student workers use Microsoft Security Copilot and its genAI-powered assistant to assist with:
  - Writing system queries
  - Summarizing threat intelligence
  - Analyzing code for malware
- Enables full-time staff to focus on higher-level process automation

Accelerated student workers' professional proficiency from two years to one month

"Vibe Coding" Saves Programming Teams Time and Tedium

University of Montana

- Programming team used Claude Code to review decades-old Banner code and fix bugs
- Generated documentation explaining code function

Streamlined future maintenance of ERP

University of Michigan Dearborn

Employed U-Maizey, University of Michigan's genAI tool, to help migrate system reports across platforms with different coding languages

Saved ~300 hours across 300 reports

1) Security operations center.

Source: "Faculty and Staff Using AI", *University of Michigan-Dearborn*, September 2025; Oregon State University, Corvallis, CO; University of Montana, Missoula, MT; "Using AI in Security Operations: Oregon State University's Experience with MS Security Copilot", *EDUCAUSE*, October 22, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

Unlock Productivity Through Automation

Case Studies	Organizational Impact
Email Threat Detection California Polytechnic State University deployed SlashNext, an AI-driven email service, to automate email threat detection.	Decreased malicious emails requiring staff review by 80%
Identity and Access Management GWU partnered with XMS to build on One Identity Active Roles to automate lifecycle account management for campus.	Reduced password reset times from ten minutes to near real-time; enabled active directory centralization
Endpoint Detection UBC developed EDgaR, an automation utility built using Tines and Crowdstrike Falcon, to identify unmanaged devices.	Replaced time-intensive manual CSV tracking; strengthens security posture
Help Desk Support Chico State built an IT Chatbot powered by Zammo.ai to respond to questions, open tickets, and connect users to live support.	Reduced service desk staff workloads

Source: "AI-Powered Email Monitoring Enables SOC Students to Improve Campus Security", *EDUCAUSE*, May 3, 2024; N Yousaf, "GWU Simplifies and Automates", *One Identity*; "UBC Cybersecurity", *The University of British Columbia*, June 20, 2025; EAB interviews and analysis.

Outsource the Right Functions for Your Context

Institutions Selectively Outsource to Refocus IT Staff Focus and Capacity

Dominican University of California

Entire IT Operations

- In 2024, Dominican outsourced all IT services to Collegis Education
- Collegis hired 25% of existing Dominican IT staff
- Gradual shift of IT services to Collegis' infrastructure and management

University of Dallas

Infrastructure Management and Security Operations

- University of Dallas partnered with OculusIT to outsource:
  - Infrastructure management
  - Security operations; 24/7 NOC[1] and SOC[2]
  - End-user support
- Partnership expanded security coverage and **modernized IT ecosystem**

Lycoming College

Network Services

- Lycoming outsourced all network management to Boldyn Networks, **significantly decreasing staff burden and enhancing services**
- Established model of regular check-ins to clarify partnership expectations

Six Considerations Before Outsourcing a Function

- Perform Value for Money (VfM) analysis
- Identify level of complexity of the function
- Consider value of incremental improvements (or decreases) to service levels
- Calculate expected frequency of activity
- Understand function's burdening staff
- Match strategic value of function to institutional goals

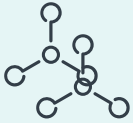
1) Network operations center.
2) Security operations center.

Source: Dominican University of California, San Rafael, CA; Lycoming College, Williamsport, PA; "University of Dallas Partners with OculusIT", *Oculus IT*, June 20, 2025; University of Dallas, Irving, TX; EAB interviews and analysis.

The Real Reason for the Skepticism

Unmet Service Expectations Fester Without Service Standardization

UNMET SERVICE EXPECTATION	CIO'S REALITY	SOLUTION
"IT is seemingly never able to deliver on our transformational aspirations." *CBO, Private R2*	**Insufficient resources**, e.g., staffing, funding	
"I need IT's help solving business problems, but our IT people are so preoccupied owning *their* systems." *CBO, Public RI*	Poor visibility into campus issues and **difficult to coordinate stakeholders**	
"We sidestepped IT because we knew they would hold up our AI pilot indefinitely." *Provost, Canadian Research*	**Experimentation is too risky**, need to pause to assess security and compliance concerns	



Service Standardization

Example

Uniform endpoint management systems and standards across units translates to:

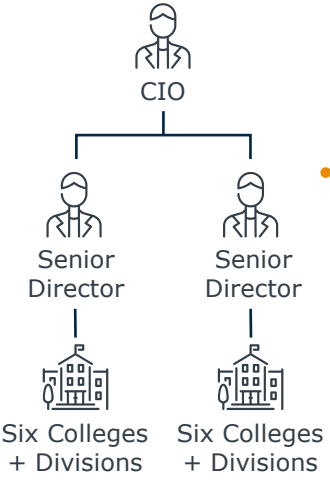
- Savings from duplicative licensing and staffing
- More staff that can surface and troubleshoot issues efficiently
- Safer risk environment, i.e., fewer weak links

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

New Org Structure Aligns Cybersecurity Centrally

CSU SYSTEM
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

CSU System's New IT Organizational Structure



Two Central Senior Directors Oversee Distributed IT

- Both newly promoted Senior Directors of Distributed IT oversee mix of six colleges, divisions
- Senior directors spend 75% assuming central role (e.g., driving cybersecurity alignment); 25% executing responsibilities from old college (e.g., academic tech, client services)

Central, Matrixed Service Teams Provide Professional Growth

- Infrastructure, Endpoint Management teams report to Senior Directors; existing central IT directors (e.g., Infrastructure) provide leadership oversight
- Service teams are associated with new central platforms, e.g., endpoint management (Intune)
- Mix of central and distributed IT staff for one-year stint (with supplemental pay)
- Teams will eventually be permanently incorporated within central IT org; planning is ongoing

Source: Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO; "CSU Cybersecurity Alignment Initiative enters implementation phase", *Colorado State University*, March 2025; EAB interviews and analysis.

Change Management Investment Pays Off

IT Change Manager Embedded Throughout Alignment Process

Reporting

Reports to IT Director of Communications and Change Management; sits on core cybersecurity alignment planning team

Key Responsibilities

- Developed communication and change management plans for all 34 cybersecurity alignment projects
- Solicited stakeholder input and proactively surface concerns by conducting:
  - Change management trainings
  - Customer surveys
  - Hundreds of one-on-ones
  - Focus groups

Tactic Spotlight: April 25, 2025 Cybersecurity Alignment Day

Goal

Raise awareness of CSU's cybersecurity posture and enhance system-wide collaboration

Highlights

- Convened 200 CSU staff, vendors, and visiting university representatives
- Provost and President's Chief of Staff affirmed support in keynotes

Source: Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO; "CSU Cybersecurity Alignment Initiative enters implementation phase", *Colorado State University*, March 2025; EAB interviews and analysis.

The Answer to All the Questions: AI

Demand for AI Investment Necessitates Difficult IT Org Changes

AI Really is the Urgency of the Moment…

Everyone Wants Their Own Custom AI Tool From IT – Now!

"Floodgates have opened with desire from units for AI use cases: finance, registrar, advising… everybody!"

Ready or Not, AI is Infiltrating All Your Tech Products

"Vendors put AI in all our tech products – whether we like it or not! Now we have to figure out what to do with them and how to pay for them!"

Cabinet View AI as Silver Bullet for Efficiency

"My president told me to increase operational efficiency by 40% in the next five years using AI!"

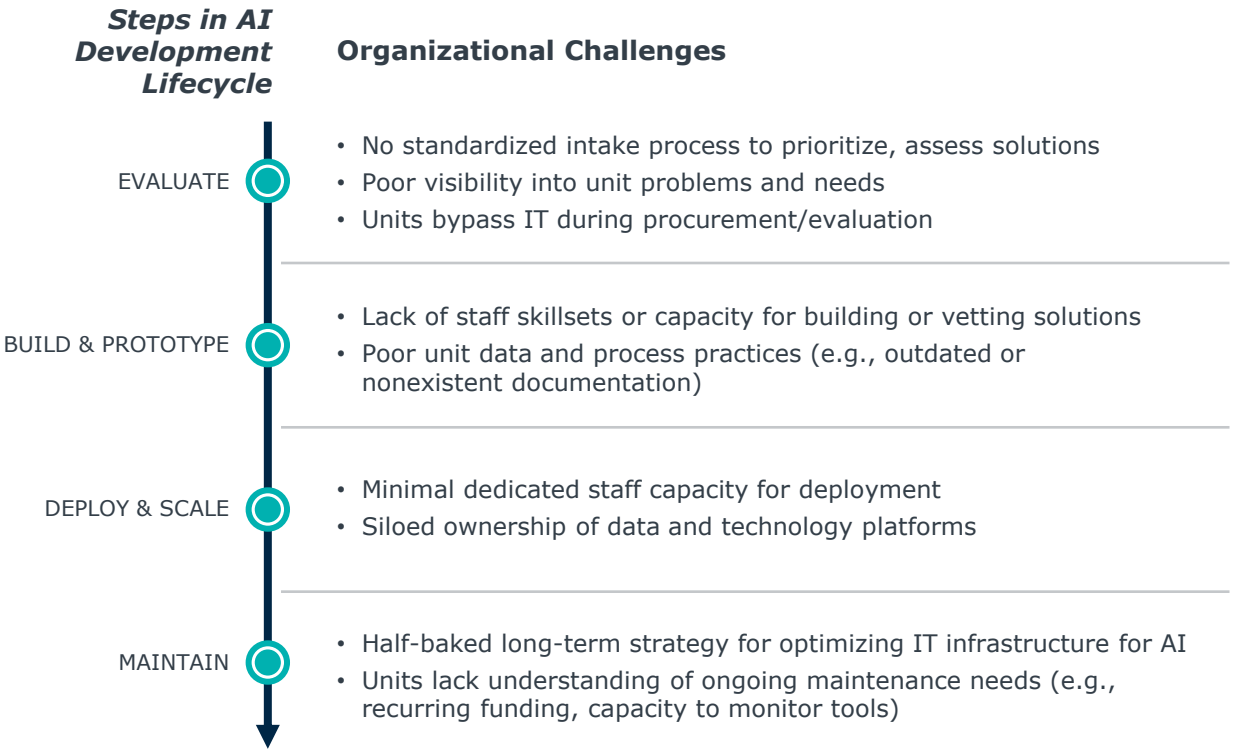
…But is Harder Than Historic IT Implementation

- **Democratized access**
- **Constantly evolving capabilities and use cases**
- **New in-kind privacy and security risks**
- **Immature vendor market**

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

What's Holding Us Back?

Internal Barriers to Sustainable, Enterprise AI

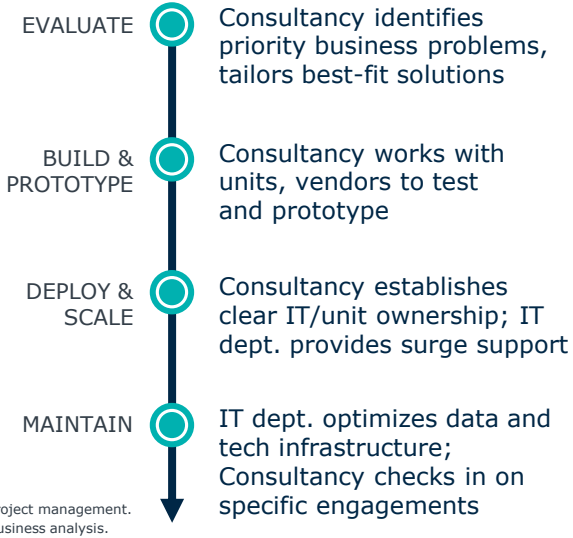


Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Skunkworks Internal Consultancy

- Internal consultancy, housing **dedicated business and technical skillsets**, prototypes and deploys solutions for unit ownership.
- Broader **IT department supports complementary long-term infrastructure** to ensure scalability of innovation.

Ownership Throughout Tech Deployment Lifecycle



1) Project management.
2) Business analysis.

Evaluating Institutional Fit

Advantages

- **Accelerates rapid innovation deployment** specific to campus needs
- Approaches **innovation with scaling in mind**, working with IT to account for long-term sustainability

Tradeoffs

- **Demands high financial commitment** to recruit and retain full team of experienced staff
- **Requires strong PM and BA muscle** to drive productive campus partnership

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Consultancy Investment Pays Off in Early Wins

Innovation Team Requests IT Integration to Further Scale

RICE UNIVERSITY

CBO's Office of Transformational Technology and Innovation (TTI) Delivers Early Wins…

- **Built Informational AI Chatbots on Registrar and Procurement Websites**
  TTI worked with Ivy.ai to deploy the chatbots to answer FAQs
- **Automated Faculty Grant Search Process with ML and AI**
  Process connecting faculty to grants based on background within SkyGrants

…But Scaling Impact Requires Deeper IT and Enterprise Integration

- ✖ Enterprise Data Architecture
- ✖ Data Governance and Privacy
- ✖ IT Staffing and Skillsets

Under CIO, TTI Extends Innovations Across Enterprise At Scale

Provides AI Chatbot Deployments as a Campus Service
Launched four more AI chatbots; now takes two months from request to deployment

Developing Replicable Automation Capability for Campus Processes
Streamlining the automation of low-hanging fruit processes using ML, RPA and in-platform agents (e.g., Oracle)

Launched WorkDNA, AI Job Description Platform
WorkDNA helps employees document core work areas and specialized skills, streamlining reviews and HR's ability to rewrite job descriptions

Source: Rice University, Houston, TX; EAB interviews and analysis.

Dual Data and Process Teams

- Data team, which owns data architecture and strategy, **builds solutions that use institutional data and AI to improve the campus experience.**
- Process team helps campus **leverage vendor tools and embedded AI features** to optimize processes, giving Data team time to focus on holistic data and AI needs.

Ownership Throughout Tech Deployment Lifecycle

EVALUATE
- **Data** scopes data applications
- **Process** evaluates vendor tool applications and processes

BUILD & PROTOTYPE
- **Data** develops prototypes
- **Process** architects using vendor tools

DEPLOY & SCALE
- **Data** deploys solutions while refining platforms
- **Process** ushers in tool and process changes for unit

MAINTAIN
- **Data** maintains in-house solutions and data architecture
- Unit manages vendor tools with **Process** check-ins

Evaluating Institutional Fit

Advantages

- **Develops staff expertise** and capacity for in-house experimentation and process improvement
- Data team facilitates **alignment between AI needs and data** infrastructure

Tradeoffs

- Requires **strong IT leadership** to coordinate teams' priorities
- Demands considerable **ongoing investment in staff development, hosted solutions**

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Ithaca Iteratively Refines IT Org to Bolster AI Capacity

Timeline of IT Org Changes and AI Development

ITHACA COLLEGE

IT Org Changes

IT and IR/Analytics Merged

- Created a single org responsible for data sources, repositories, governance, science and analysis
- Data centralized in institutional Data Lakehouse

Analytics Given Mandate to Explore AI

- 10-15% of Analytics staff dedicated to AI
- IT project coordinator promoted to guide initiatives

IT Project Management and Process Innovation Team Formed

Coordinator leads new team to scope and execute process projects using vendor AI tools

AI Developments

First AI Proof of Concepts

- Developed prototypes for Prospective Student Chatbot and IT Service Agent
- Learned from POCs; neither was intended for production

First AI App Launched

Debuts Nebula, an app that summarizes student backgrounds for ICare wellness counselors

Aurora, Agentic AI App Platform Established

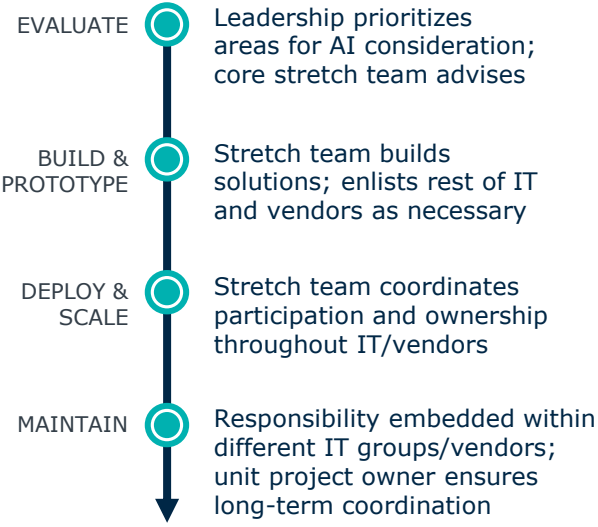
Multi-agent platform supports more use cases; will provide interface for student digital experience

Source: IT Strategy Advisory Services, "Compendium of AI Applications in Higher Education," *EAB*, 2024; Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY; EAB interviews and analysis.

IT Stretch Model

- CIO **creates core stretch team opportunities** (typically within enterprise systems) to drive leadership-designated projects.
- Core stretch team relies on **support of existing IT structures** (e.g., PMOs) and/or vendors to scale projects.

Ownership Throughout Tech Deployment Lifecycle



Evaluating Institutional Fit

Advantages

- **Develops staff skillsets** (across IT) for future projects
- **Organizational knowledge retained in-house**, streamlining future implementation and maintenance

Tradeoffs

- **Limited number of projects** without additional IT-wide staffing investments
- Without strong prioritization or governance, **risk of staff burnout**

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Amplifying IT's Capacity with Students

UMBC

UMBC CIO's Vision for Leveraging an Army of Graduate AI Business Analysts

> Let's **sign up 40 graduating seniors** for three-year contracts and train them up to be AI business analysts.
>
> We can start building a talent pipeline and march toward our AI goals now.
>
> *Jack Suess*
> *Chief Information Officer*

For more on UMBC's approach to student employment, see EAB's report, Fostering the Next Generation of IT Talent.

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Montana Employs Two Undergrads to Catalyze and Coordinate AI Projects

Student Role Responsibilities:

- Meet with faculty and staff to surface opportunities for AI improvements
- Coordinate between units and IT teams to drive AI initiatives forward

Case in Brief:
Bringing Halda AI Conversation Agents to Enrollment Marketing

- Students meet with Enrollment Marketing to identify pain points
- Brings CollegeVine, Halda to campus for product demos
- Coordinates between IT and Enrollment Marketing for review/testing of Halda

216% higher conversion rate on landing pages since implementation

Source: University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore County, MD; University of Montana, Missoula, MT; EAB interviews and analysis.

Vendor Partnership is Powerful….Done the Right Way

Vendor Partnerships Require Careful Set-Up, Especially With New Entities

You Can't Trust All Vendors for Everything, Despite Their Claims

> "We can build you a suite of campus-tailored AI agents, and implementation will only take a few days."
>
> *Anonymous Vendor CTO*
> *Serving Fortune 100 Companies*

Lessons for Cultivating Productive AI Partnerships

- Manage AI vendors like business service providers, not SaaS vendor implementers
- Identify priority campus AI use cases *before* looking for vendors
- Do not let vendors lock you into restrictive/exclusive arrangements
  - Ensure *favorable API Calls clauses* in contracts
- Demand continuity plans in the event of feature sunsetting/business closure

Source: Rutgers University, New Brunswick. NJ; EAB interviews and analysis.

EAB

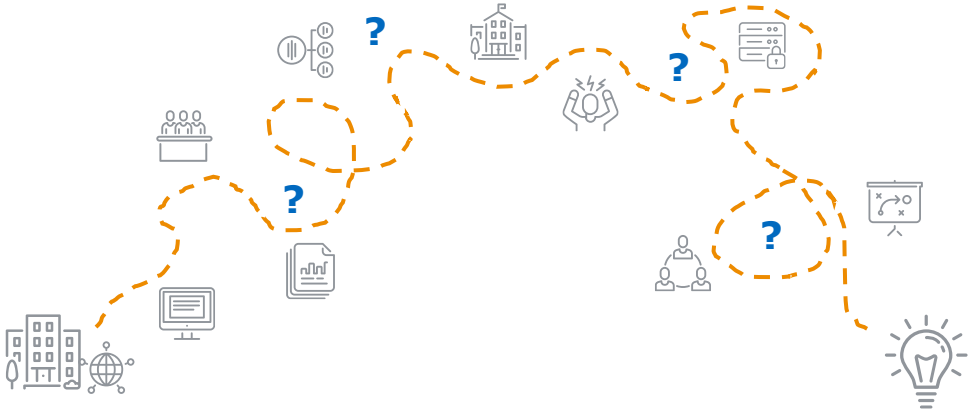
Implement Federated Governance for Shared IT, Data, and AI Oversight

A Higher Ed Model of Federated Governance

IMPERATIVE

AI Poses Daily Challenges to Current Governance

Example Scenario: Enrollment Builds AI Agents Using CRM[1] With Vendor



? *Did the proposal arrive through proper intake? Have IT and AI governance bodies been notified?*

? *When and how will CRM[1] system analysts understand the impacts to systems and business processes?*

? *Do data governance stewards know which data to standardize and upkeep?*

? *Are regular checkpoints established for IT/AI bodies to monitor and evaluate the partnership?*

1) Customer Relationship Management system.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Flavors of AI Governance Emerge

Institutions Test a Range of AI Governing Models, From Guiding Investments to Curating Policies and Proposals

Set Strategic Vision

- **Babson College's** AI Steering Committee ensures AI investments are institutionally aligned and releases quarterly AI reports

BABSON COLLEGE

Establish Responsible AI Guidelines

- **Virginia Tech**'s AI Working Committee reviewed 168 institutional policies and identified 18 requiring updates for AI integration

Kickstart First Wave of AI Initiatives

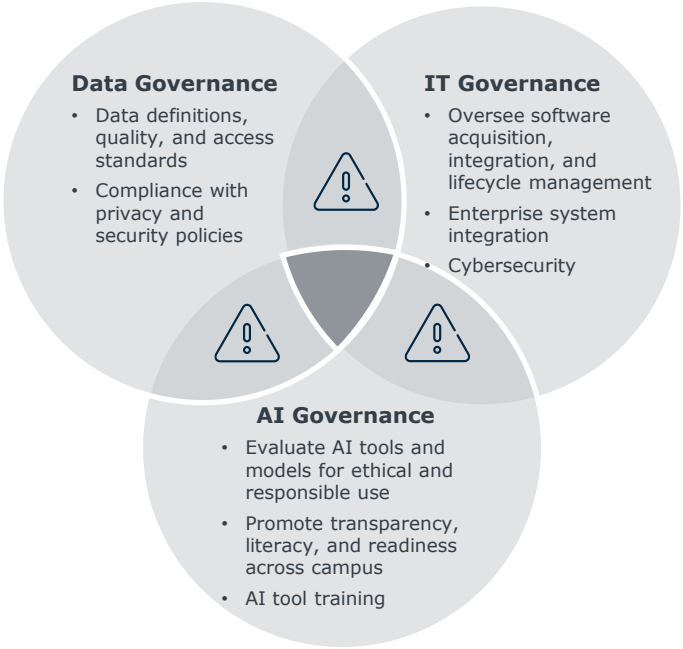
- Each of the five subcommittees comprising **Colorado State University System**'s AI Task Force identified and administrated pilot proposals

CSU SYSTEM
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Source: Babson College, Babson Park, MA; Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO; Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA; EAB interviews and analysis.

Shared Governance, Unclear Ownership

Joint Areas of IT, Data, and AI Oversight Often Neglected



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Shared Governance, Unclear Ownership

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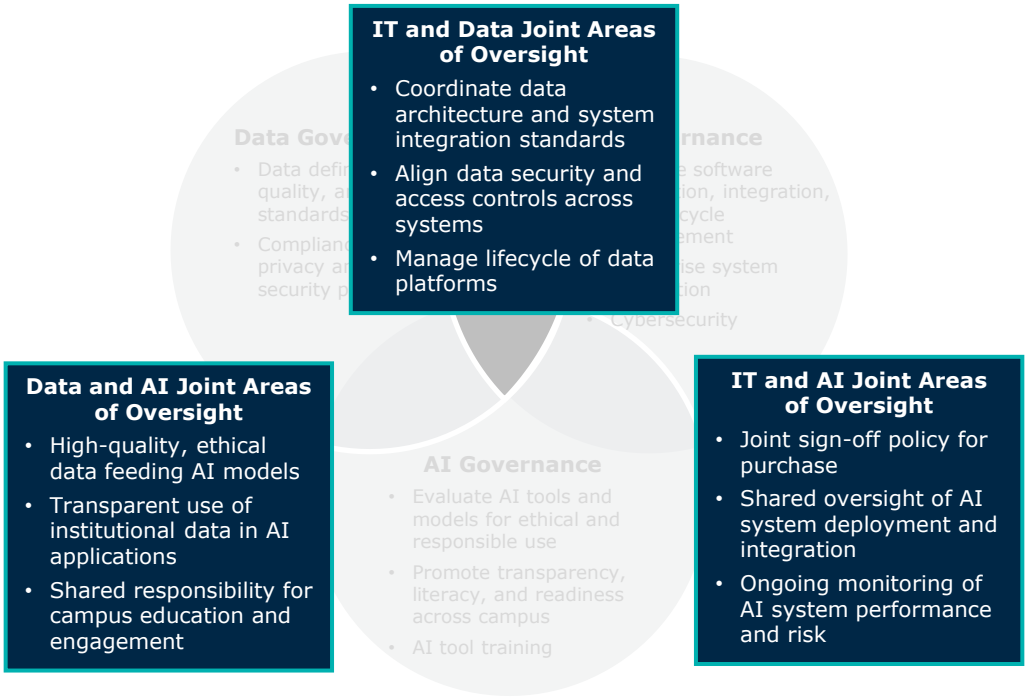

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Defining Federated Governance

A flexible model of establishing responsibility for joint areas of IT, AI, and data governance oversight by:

1. Defining joint areas of oversight
2. Clarifying decision-making responsibilities across domains
3. Reinforcing responsibilities through supporting processes and workflows

Benefits of Federated Governance

- Unified priorities, policies, and **standards across domains reduces fragmentation, risk, and inefficiency**
- Balance of central alignment while **preserving distributed autonomy encourages innovation**

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

What Federated Governance Looks Like in Practice

Example: Evaluating an AI Writing Support Feature Within the LMS[1] for Arts and Sciences

- AI Expertise Group evaluates proposal for risks (e.g., bias, plagiarism, data privacy) and opportunity
- Compliance, Accessibility provide technical feature review

Arts & Sciences submits feature proposal in unified intake form, routing first to Input parties

- IT Gov assesses integration with LMS, security standards
- Data Gov coordinates with IT, AI Gov to guarantee compliant inputs
- Faculty Advisory Group reviews proposal, IT and Data Gov assessments

- CIO makes final decision
- Proposal does not go to AI Steering Committee (AISC), because of limited scope, cost of feature

Periodically report progress to Data and AI Gov bodies

1) Learning management system.

Source: Bain & Company, RAPID® Decision Making; EAB interviews and analysis.

CLOSING QUESTION – GARY G's suggestion

Based on today's conversation, do you feel differently about your biggest challenge in the coming year -- either in terms of what the challenge will be, or how you will approach it?

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