

Statement of the Provost and Dean Generative AI and the Academic Program/Academic Units

During the course of the final two faculty meetings of the 24/25 academic year, several faculty members asked me to provide guidance, in the form of a statement or a policy, related to the uses of generative AI and related technologies. I have had similar requests from faculty and staff over the course of the past six months, through email and in conversation. Some of those requests have focused on seeking an articulation of an academic integrity policy; some have invited me to reflect on the opportunities and threats to scholarly production brought by these technologies; some seek a go-ahead for curricular innovation that will facilitate student growth in this area.

This document is an Academic Affairs centered response to those requests, focusing on the following areas: AI in teaching and learning; AI and curriculum development; AI in knowledge production and scholarly activity by faculty at the college; and AI in academic affairs workplaces outside of the classroom, lab, studio, or scholarly project. I urge faculty and staff to consult, in addition to this statement and the links embedded within it, the several reports created by the Presidential Working Group on Artificial Intelligence, and the subcommittees of that body.

Our approach to Generative AI must be grounded in the understanding that Dickinson College is a community of faculty and staff who are scholars, creatives, teachers, and learners dedicated to the transformative power of the liberal arts in the lives of our students and the broader community. We are here to teach our students – to help them learn the substance of the fields they are engaging, to help them learn the skills and habits of mind of leaders and scholars, and to help them learn how to think. We cannot allow them to short-cut that learning; nor can we short-change that learning by avoiding technological innovation. We must develop in our students the capacity to engage fruitfully with Generative AI tools.

As a scholar, teacher, and provost/dean of the college, I take very seriously my responsibility to offer a set of responses that meet these multiple needs, and to do so in a way consonant with my own values and practices. I take very seriously, too, the fact that the unit I lead, Academic Affairs, includes faculty, staff, and student constituents – all of whom will have different working relationships to the technology. There is not a one-size fits-all approach to these tools. But, any approach to generative artificial intelligence from academic affairs at the college must balance two imperatives: the protection of **academic freedom** and the protection of **academic integrity**.

These understandings lead me to the following positions, articulated more fully below:

- I. **Faculty and staff are empowered to decide for themselves which of their learning outcomes are furthered by the use of AI tools, and which aren't. This is essential to academic freedom. They must also safeguard**

academic integrity by writing syllabus statements that are clear about what they consider to be appropriate use, and what constitutes misuse.

- II. We cannot ignore the fact that our students will leave the college to enter careers and live lives that are impacted by these technologies. We must ensure that they leave Dickinson as AI-fluent global citizens, having critically and generatively engaged these technologies through a liberal arts curriculum.**
- III. The Faculty Personnel Committee is responsible for evaluating faculty at times of tenure, promotion, biennial and senior review. The committee should, through the course of academic year 25/26, work to develop a statement of guidance related to the uses of AI technologies in scholarly and creative production by faculty.**
- IV. The use of Generative AI technologies occurs throughout offices within Academic Affairs, apart from the classroom, and apart from scholarly and creative production. We must recognize the diversity of this legitimate use, seek to understand the impact of AI on those campus units, and offer development and opportunities for learning, related to that use.**

Section One: AI in Course Level Teaching and Learning

Faculty and staff are empowered to decide for themselves which of their learning outcomes are furthered by the use of AI tools, and which are not – this is essential to academic freedom. They must also safeguard academic integrity by writing syllabus statements that are clear about what they consider to be appropriate use, and what constitutes misuse.

Faculty have significant autonomy in their decision making, even within departmental contexts, and particularly at the level of individual course and assignment design. We have excellent resources on campus, to help faculty and staff make decisions about AI, to learn about potential uses, and to develop pedagogical responses to these technologies.

Wherever you fall on the continuum between wholehearted incorporation or complete prohibition of the use of GenerativeAI, it is incumbent upon faculty to make the parameters of appropriate use clear in their syllabi and assignments. Much like we have routine syllabus statements related to access and disability, and routine statements on academic integrity, faculty should – by spring '26 start – be ready to incorporate statements on AI use into all of their syllabi. I recommend connecting with Michele Kozimor (Center for Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship), John Katunich and Lucy McInerney (Eberly Multilingual Writing Center), James D'Annibale (Academic Technology), and Amy Ward (Waidner-Spahr Library) for support in designing syllabus

statements, assignments, and learning opportunities that both incorporate, and prohibit Generative AI.

I wholeheartedly endorse the following documents, created by James D'Annibale in consultation with multiple campus partners, to assist you in making decisions about AI and your courses:

[Syllabus Statement Guidance](#)

[Sample Syllabus Statements](#)

[Transparent Assignment Design](#)

[Citing AI sources](#)

In communicating with students about your decisions related to AI technologies, I urge you to read the changes made this summer to our **Academic Misconduct Policy**. The policy was revised by the joint efforts of Bridget Burnhisel, Amy Steinbugler, Melissa Sturm-Smith and Amy Ward. In addition to updating the practices and policies through which faculty might resolve academic integrity charges, the policy also now contains a section specific to the misuse of GenAI. This portion of the new policy reads:

“Misuse of Generative AI

The use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools including but not limited to ChatGPT, CoPilot, Gemini, and Grammarly in the learning environment may impede students' opportunities to explore a topic and engage in critical inquiry. Unless it is **expressly permitted** by your professor, articulated through the syllabus or other course documents, it is unacceptable for students to use generative AI tools on assignments or exams. Without this explicit permission, use of these tools constitutes a violation of Dickinson's academic misconduct policy.

Impermissible use of GenAI is its own form of academic misconduct. Depending on the design of the assignment within the context of the course, it may incorporate one or more related violations:

- Plagiarism: using the work created by GenAI, in part or in whole, and claiming it as your own, and/or failure to properly disclose use of GenAI.
- Cheating: assistance of GenAI on examinations and quizzes, and/or prohibitive use of GenAI on graded assignments.
- Forging/Falsifying Academic Documents: falsification of information sources and citations, and/or data or evidence used in assignments.

When GenAI use is allowed, professors may require that students disclose the nature and extent of use. Students are encouraged to discuss with their professors whether

any use of translation or artificial intelligence tools is appropriate for a specific assignment or exam.”

Our decision making about the introduction of AI in our classes, and permission for its use, should take into account the stage of student learning at which it is introduced, the skills we hope our students to learn prior to engaging it's use, the ways and times we want students to work through problems on their own (without AI partnership) in the service of their learning, and the ways that using AI can help them grow their skills and knowledge.

Section Two: AI and Curriculum Development

We cannot ignore the fact that our students will leave the college to enter careers and live lives that are impacted by these technologies. We must ensure that they leave Dickinson as AI-fluent global citizens, having engaged these technologies through a liberal arts curriculum.

To be AI-fluent liberal arts graduates, students in every discipline should be introduced to ways to the use of generative artificial intelligence tools and have a sense of the ways that they will encounter these technologies in their careers moving forward. They must also understand the ethical, environmental, and cognitive implications of such use.

To this end, even as faculty are empowered to decide for themselves about which – if any – of their learning objectives are furthered by the uses of GenAI tools, academic departments and programs must have sustained conversations about where, in the disciplines represented by your departments, the use of AI tools will be important for students. Each academic department should, beginning in academic year 25/26, have ongoing and structured conversations about the curricula of the majors and minors provided by its faculty, and a collective conversation about where, in those curricula, AI learning should be incorporated. Assessment conversations with Associate Provost Sarah Niebler are excellent places for these departmental conversations; your professional associations and disciplinary organizations almost certainly have guidance related to your unique fields, which could be tremendously important in coming to consensus about these tools.

Departments should use the various resources I outline above and engage the expertise of colleagues in the Center for Career Development, as well as in Academic Technology, to develop courses or sequences within courses, that meet the needs of our students and their futures. Through incentives I will announce in early fall 2025, I encourage faculty to engage, extra-departmentally and in a multi-disciplinary way, to explore the creation of a college wide distribution requirement related to Intelligence (writ large), that includes artificial intelligence as a focal point of learning. Further, I will provide a similar incentive for those staff and faculty willing to work on developing a sequence of courses that students, alumni, and community members could take, to certify their understanding of the limitations of, concerns with, and opportunities for, uses of Generative AI tools. Such a sequence would usefully cover fruitful ways to use

the technology across a range of disciplines and professions, as well as ethical – cognitive – and environmental concerns with its use.

Our students came to college using AI; they will continue to use it in future professional and educational settings. We have an ethical responsibility to teach them how to use AI in ways that support our goals for them: that they engage in interdisciplinary, innovative, and useful liberal arts learning with the goal of becoming ethical global citizens.

Section Three: AI in scholarly and creative production by faculty at the college

The Faculty Personnel Committee is responsible for evaluating faculty at times of tenure, promotion, biennial and senior review. The committee should, through the course of academic year 25/26, work to develop a statement of guidance related to the uses of AI technologies in scholarly and creative production by faculty.

As I work with FPC in the elaboration of this statement, I will advocate that the FPC privilege academic freedom balanced with a resolute protection of academic integrity. FPC's statement will need to recognize that some faculty may engage in legitimate use of these technologies to push the boundaries of their fields, and to innovate in their disciplines, while also insisting that faculty are clear about the origin and development of the work under review, in line with disciplinary norms and expectations.

Section Four: The use of GenAI technologies occurs throughout offices within Academic Affairs, beyond the classroom and scholarly/creative production.

We must recognize the diversity of this legitimate use, seek to understand the impact of AI on those campus units, and offer development and opportunities for learning, related to that use.

Academic Affairs will continue to partner with colleagues across campus (particularly within Academic Technology) to provide space for learning related to generative AI technologies, to enhance the work experience of all employees of the College. For instance, we will work to support our colleagues in offices as diverse as the Library and Career Development who have AI incorporated into services, systems, and databases provided by external vendors; colleagues working in administrative and contributor roles who may choose to use AI to record and summarize meetings, to prioritize tasks, to sort email, and to schedule appointments; and colleagues in Access and Disability Service who may see tremendous value in facilitating AI-assisted notetaking for our students, and wish to train faculty on the use of these tools.

Conclusion

A policy statement on AI is necessarily contingent, and a work-in-progress. The tools themselves are changing rapidly, as are our understandings of them. We will need to have continued conversation within academic affairs on topics ranging from best practices for syllabus and assignment design, to the impact of generative AI

technologies on our disciplines and sense of self. These conversations will help us articulate clear and consistent messages for students, while acknowledging the messiness we may feel as we encounter seismic changes in our fields and in our processes. As a College, I believe we must be responsive to cutting edge technologies – we cannot dismiss them nor ignore them – and we must teach our students ethical use consonant with academic integrity and developmental goals for their learning. That work is on-going, and I look forward to continuing to join you in it.

Acknowledgments

I am exceptionally grateful to the following folks (in reverse alphabetical order, for kicks) who read drafts of this statement and offered constructive feedback: Amy Ward, Melissa Sturm-Smith, Amy Steinbugler, Sarah Niebler, Jill Forrester, and James D'Annibale.

Author's Note

Early versions of this document began with my personal reflections on my professional refusal to use Generative AI technologies. I agree with several of my early draft readers who felt that such a set of reflections detracted from the important work of providing dispassionate guidance related to classroom practice, scholarly and creative production, academic freedom, and academic integrity. I also believe, though, that faculty and staff deserve the human connection facilitated by knowing how I approach the topic, and I understand some of the requests from the faculty meeting floor to be a request for me to elaborate something akin to a personal scholarly reflection. So, if you are curious about that, read on.

Here is where I stand:

I do not willingly use ChatGPT nor any other generative AI tool. I turn off all predictive and assistive text tools on all of my devices. I don't even let Spotify give me the generative AI DJ, despite the fact that it is oddly fascinating and might introduce me to some new music. The work of **thinking, learning, and creating** are fundamental to my well-being. I also believe that this work – even when done all alone – is **relational and reciprocal**. Indeed, I have a vision of you in my head as I write these words. Specifically, I see: Siobahn, Barry, James, Jill, Amy (all three Amy's!), John (Katunich and Jones), Sheelah Jane, Hans, Tom, Wendy (she's always in my head when I consider Dickinson, quite an accomplishment!) and Carol Ann. Along with the entire community, I write these sentences, specifically, *to you*. I further believe that the conversations we all have had about AI have made you co-authors in a way, your thoughts on AI have constituted my own. This is relationship. And it is important. And it is how I write.

I have read and am persuaded by the preliminary studies suggesting cognitive decline among AI users, when they use the technology in ways that lack nuance, and when they use it at the wrong stages of their process. I do worry about the threats to our ability to think, connect, remember, and create when we rely on the tools at different stages of our projects. I worry most about those of us who use the tools without using them well – the cognitive studies are on rudimentary uses by average people. I appreciate

conversations with James D'Annibale that have made me look more closely at these studies; for me, it boils down to an understanding that when used poorly, these technologies appear antithetical to the project of a liberal arts education – this is why I believe we must teach our students to use them in ways that support our goals for them. I believe we can teach our students (and ourselves) to use these tools appropriately and well, and I prioritize that teaching.

I worry, too, about the geopolitical implications of knowledge transfer and skill loss, and the potential for ever-more concentrated ownership of all the means of production (material, knowledge, creative). I am deeply concerned about the environmental implications of over-reliance on this technology. I am similarly deeply concerned about the human rights violations related to labor exploitation that new technologies have often eventuated.

At the same time, I know that moral panics around new technologies are commonplace, especially at times of global and national instability, and I want to take care not to contribute to this impulse towards a backlash against things that might make some parts of our lives better. And, I am skeptical of, and hesitant to participate in, the neoliberal self-responsibilization and individualized blame that comes with the environmental and human rights concerns. While virtuous, and arguably “good,” it was never enough that I not buy Nike, that I stopped eating meat, that I recycled my boxes and turned off the tap while brushing my teeth. Similarly, my refusal to proactively participate in the use of generative AI will not stop environmental degradation nor human rights violations. I do long for the return of a robust and reasonable regulatory state.

Crucially, I know that most of our students, and many of our colleagues, do not – and need not – share these views. Many good and smart people- faculty, staff, students, alumni, and employers – use AI technology to further their writing, note taking, thinking, and time management – and it works for them! I am persuaded that these tools are opening new – important – vibrant ways of thinking and experiencing the world for our students and our colleagues. When used to augment (rather than short-cut) learning, when used mindfully, and when used with appropriate levels of disclosure to ensure integrity, Generative AI tools may well enhance the learning and work of most who encounter and adopt them. My distaste for the technologies cannot and is not an excuse for me to refuse to learn about them and does nothing to sway my certainty that our students must graduate from the college having learned how, when, and why to engage them.

Resources

In addition to the resources linked above, I read and listened broadly on the topic of AI in higher education, as I prepared this statement. Here is a partial list of the additional resources I consulted:

Boulamwini, Joy. 2023. *UnMasking AI: My Mission to Protect What is Human In a World of Machines*. NYC: Penguin Random House.

Burnett, D. Graham. April 26, 2025. "Will the Humanities Survive Artificial Intelligence?" *The New Yorker*. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/the-weekend-essay/will-the-humanities-survive-artificial-intelligence>

Chow, Andrew R. June 23, 2025. "ChatGPT May Be Eroding Critical Thinking Skills, According to New MIT Study," *Time*. <https://time.com/7295195/ai-chatgpt-google-learning-school/>

Davis Institute for AI at Colby College. <https://davisinstituteai.colby.edu/>

Fritts, Megan. May 23, 2025. "What I Learned by Serving on My University's AI Committee," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. https://www.chronicle.com/article/what-i-learned-serving-on-my-universitys-ai-committee?utm_source=Iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=campaign_13784518_nl_Academe-Today_date_20250606

Jesse, Amy. May 16, 2025. "UMW Students Get Ahead with Complimentary 'Intro to AI Course' This Summer. *UMW Voice*. <https://www.umw.edu/news/2025/05/16/umw-students-get-ahead-with-complimentary-intro-to-ai-course-this-summer/>

Kosmyna, Nataliya, et. Al. 2025. "Your Brain on ChatGPT: Accumulation of Cognitive Debt When Using an AI Assistant for Essay Writing Task," unpublished draft of MIT paper.

McMurtrie, Beth. June 5, 2025. "Teaching with AI," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. https://www.chronicle.com/newsletter/teaching/2025-06-05?utm_source=Iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=campaign_13899607_nl_Academe-Today_date_20250617&sra=true

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Oxford Economics Research Briefing. 2025. "Educated, But Unemployed: A Rising Reality for College Grads." https://www.oxfordeconomics.com/resource/educated-but-unemployed-a-rising-reality-for-us-college-grads/?utm_source=Iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=campaign_13720185_nl_Daily-Briefing_date_20250602

Sacasas, L.M. Multiple 2024 and 2025 dates. *The Convivial Society* substack: <https://theconvivialsociety.substack.com/>

Sauer, Megan. May 31, 2025. "Harvard-Trained Educator: Kids Who Learn to Use AI Will Become Smarter Adults, If They Avoid This No. 1 Mistake," *CNBC*
<https://www.cnbc.com/2025/05/31/angela-duckworth-how-kids-can-use-ai-to-become-smarter-adults.html>

University of Virginia's Teaching Hub Collection of resources related to "Generative AI Teaching and Learning."

Walsh, James D. May 7, 2025. "Everyone is Cheating Their Way Through College," *New York Mag* <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/openai-chatgpt-ai-cheating-education-college-students-school.html>

Watson, C. Edward and Lee Rainie. 2025. *AAC&U Report. Leading Through Disruption: Higher Education Executives Assess AI's Impact on Teaching and Learning.*