

Open letter to District Governance Senate re AI:

This last fall, both Academic Senate and District Governance Senate agreed on a joint initiative to develop policies on AI. Since then, as far as I am aware, there has not been any progress. This letter is just my idea for kick-starting things.

AI is not waiting around for us to decide how to manage it. It is in our classrooms and organizational processes already. I recently attended a CCCO webinar on AI and the need to develop policies sooner, rather than try to catch up, was prominently on display:

- Students overwhelmingly wanted to know what they were allowed to do and what they shouldn't do. They want clear syllabus policies so they know where they stand and transparency if AI is used by the college.
- The presenters were all AI advocates, but they continually stressed the need for transparency in AI usage wherever that happens and policies in which all stakeholders had a voice in creating.

I want to stress that this letter is just my own opinion, but I think there are two levels of policy that need to be developed:

Level 1: I think there should be a district-wide umbrella policy (or policies) that sets the tone for ethical use of AI.

In my opinion, AI has no place in evaluations and grading, whether of students or employees, its use should always be transparent, and there may be other areas of concern as well. On the other hand, it might be quite useful to our marketing team, it might be employed to help direct people to resources, etc. The point is, there should be a policy that specifies when and how AI can be used at the district level and ensures transparency in that use.

Level 2: I think every division or department (including staff departments) needs to develop their own policies on AI ethics. The level 1 policy should allow for the academic freedom of faculty (and the workplace duties of staff) to set the ethical standards that apply to their field.

English, for example, has major concerns about cheating and plagiarism and it is not the only department with this worry. On the other hand, AI is a developing career field from which our students might benefit. Students could be taught AI literacy, too, something I am considering for my own critical thinking classes. Again, at this micro level, we need clear policies, especially syllabus policies, that support both our learning outcomes and academic ethics.

I do not know how to get started on this, but inactivity on our governance part just raises the nervousness factor, especially for faculty. I hope this letter encourages us to get things moving next semester.

Respectfully,

David Hurst