Supporting Faculty in the AI Era: Lessons from a New AI Pedagogy Role

Dr. Reza Ebadi, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Dr. Reza Ebadi is an Assistant Professor of Teaching in Mechanical & Materials Engineering and the AI Pedagogy Specialist with the Morgan Center at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. His teaching philosophy centers on balancing essential knowledge delivery, problem-solving skill development, and the thoughtful integration of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. Through his role as AI Pedagogy Specialist, Dr. Ebadi fosters a campus-wide conversation about the responsible and effective use of AI in teaching and learning, creating spaces for faculty and students to experiment, share insights, and build practical resources together.

Dr. Kimberly Lechasseur, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Dr. Kimberly LeChasseur is a researcher and evaluator with the Worcester Polytechnic Institute. She holds a dual appointment with the Center for Project-Based Learning and the Morgan Teaching and Learning Center. She holds a PhD in Educational Leadership

Jessica C Hill, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Dr. Hill directs Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Morgan Teaching & Learning Center in its mission to support faculty across all career stages as they provide transformational, theory and practice learning experiences as part of WPI's innovative project-based curriculum. She serves as an Assistant Editor of the POD Network's flagship journal, "To Improve the Academy: A Journal of Educational Development."

Supporting Faculty in the AI Era: Lessons from a New AI Pedagogy Specialist Initiative

Abstract

The current work presents the challenges and opportunities of instituting a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) Pedagogy Specialist position within the Morgan Teaching and Learning Center (MTLC) at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), a midsize private polytechnic university. The position was established to help faculty navigate the rapid adoption of generative AI in teaching. The role addresses three distinct but related challenges: supporting faculty in integrating AI into their own professional practice, empowering instructors to thoughtfully redesign assignments and assessments to preserve learning integrity in an AI-enabled environment, and building student-facing AI literacy across disciplines. Using the framework from the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network's "Defining What Matters" report on the functions of centers of teaching and learning, this paper explores how new roles focused on AI pedagogy can fit into existing infrastructure to support adoption in sustainable ways.

In its initial year, the AI Pedagogy Specialist has largely extended MTLC's sieve and incubator roles. As a sieve, the AI Pedagogy Specialist filters best practices for teaching AI literacy and promotes them among the faculty through a dedicated website, a faculty email listserv, and research-grounded programming. As an incubator of innovative education practices, the AI Pedagogy Specialist offers dedicated coaching support to help faculty redesign their assignments; this doubled the infrastructure in the center to support faculty in their course redesigns. The role is also engaged in the center's function as a major faculty hub on campus. Based on faculty requests, the AI Pedagogy Specialist has brought together early and late adopters to discuss ethics, assignment redesign, and AI policy, and has formed an AI advisory circle.

The full paper outlines several mechanisms through which these multiple functions are being carried out. The AI Pedagogy Specialist conducted needs assessment surveys with 155 faculty and instructors and 107 students in Fall 2025, establishing a baseline understanding of AI adoption, skill levels, and support needs across the institution. Analyses showed that faculty who responded were mostly using AI for managing their own work rather than for teaching. The findings informed four strategic priorities for the role. In response, the AI Pedagogy Specialist facilitated four programming sessions reaching 69 faculty and staff, conducted a faculty AI policy survey with 43 respondents, provided four individual consultations, and completed a student ambassador survey on AI literacy and support needs. These activities collectively reached a substantial portion of the instructional community in the role's inaugural year.

Keywords

Artificial Intelligence, Pedagogy, Faculty Development, AI

1 Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the landscape of higher education, impacting how students learn, how faculty teach, and how institutions operate. The Digital Education Council's 2025 Global AI Faculty Survey, one of the largest of its kind with responses from 1,681 faculty members across 52 institutions in 28 countries, found that while 61% of faculty have used AI in teaching, 88% of them do so only minimally [1]. At the same time, 86% of faculty indicated

they see themselves using AI in teaching in the future, suggesting we have not yet crested the adoption wave. This disparity between minimal current use and widespread intention to adopt AI suggests that faculty need support to move from experimentation to meaningful integration. Without structured guidance during the transition, faculty may default to surface-level uses that fail to leverage AI's pedagogical potential or abandon AI altogether after initial frustrations with ineffective implementations. The survey revealed that 40% of faculty feel they are just beginning their AI literacy journey and only 17% self-assessed at advanced or expert levels. Perhaps most strikingly, only 6% strongly agreed that their institutions have provided sufficient resources to develop their AI literacy, while 80% reported a lack of clarity on how AI can be applied in teaching within their institutions. These findings underscore a significant gap between faculty interest in AI adoption and the institutional support available to facilitate it [1].

A May 2025 report by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) further confirmed these concerns [2]. Based on a survey of 500 members across nearly 200 campuses, the report found that while 90% of respondents indicated their institutions are integrating AI into teaching and research, 71% reported that administrators overwhelmingly lead conversations about AI implementation with little meaningful input from faculty. The 2025 EDUCAUSE AI Landscape Study echoed these findings, noting that while attitudes toward AI are improving compared to 2024, more than half of responding institutions lack an institution-wide AI strategy [3]. Faculty concerns about student dependency on AI and academic integrity remain prevalent, highlighting the need for thoughtful policy development and training.

In response to these challenges, institutions have begun developing specialized roles and centers to support faculty in navigating AI integration. Arizona State University, the first university to partner with OpenAI beginning in January 2024, has activated over 500 AI Innovation Challenge projects across teaching, research, and operations, providing ChatGPT Enterprise and now ChatGPT Edu with GPT-5 to all students, faculty, and staff [4]. The University of North Carolina at Charlotte established an AI Faculty Fellow position within its Center for Teaching and Learning, tasking a faculty member with facilitating workshops, developing materials for practice-based AI recommendations, and supporting the institution [5]. Similarly, San Jose State University created an AI Faculty Fellow program with representatives across colleges to lead discipline-specific workshops and events [6]. These varied approaches reflect institutions' recognition that faculty need dedicated support structures to effectively integrate AI into their pedagogical practice.

The Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network's report *Defining What Matters: Guidelines for Comprehensive Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) Evaluation* provides a useful framework for understanding how centers for teaching and learning can support faculty development. The report outlines four key functions that CTLs can serve: hub (connecting people and resources), incubator (fostering growth of individuals or projects), temple (providing space for recognition and reward), and sieve (promoting evidence-based practice and offering expertise) [7]. This framework offers a lens through which to examine how emerging AI-focused roles can be integrated into existing CTL infrastructure.

The present work explores the challenges and opportunities of instituting a new AI Pedagogy Specialist position within the Morgan Teaching and Learning Center (MTLC) at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), a midsize private R1 university. Established for the 2025-2026 academic year, the position was created to help faculty navigate the adoption of generative AI in

teaching. The role addresses three distinct but related challenges: supporting faculty in integrating AI into their own professional practice, empowering instructors to thoughtfully redesign assignments and assessments to preserve learning integrity in an AI-enabled environment, and building student-facing AI literacy across disciplines. Drawing on the POD Network's framework, this paper examines how this new role extends MTLC's existing functions; particularly as a sieve for filtering and promoting best practices and as an incubator for supporting faculty course redesign, while also serving as a hub for connecting early and late adopters across the institution

2 Theoretical Framework

To guide the design and evaluation of this new role, we adopted the framework outlined in the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network's report, *Defining What Matters: Guidelines for Comprehensive Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) Evaluation* [7]. The POD Network report identifies four key functions that centers for teaching and learning can serve: hub, incubator, temple, and sieve [8]. As a *hub*, a CTL connects people and resources across an institution, fostering networks and facilitating communication among faculty, staff, and students. As an *incubator*, it supports the growth of individuals or their projects through activities such as orientations, mentoring programs, and small grants that enable experimentation and development. As a *temple*, it provides space for recognition and reward, celebrating excellence in teaching through awards, academies, and public acknowledgment. As a *sieve*, it filters and promotes evidence-based practice, offering expertise through curated resources, workshops and other events grounded in scholarship, and dissemination of research findings to practitioners.

This framework provides a useful lens for understanding how a new AI-focused role can be integrated into existing CTL infrastructure. Given the nascent stage of AI integration across higher education, the AI Pedagogy Specialist role was designed to primarily extend three of these four functions. As a *sieve*, the role filters the rapidly expanding body of research on AI in education and translates it into actionable guidance for faculty. As an *incubator*, it provides dedicated coaching support to help faculty both integrate AI into their own professional practice and redesign assignments and assessments to preserve learning integrity in an AI-enabled environment. As a *hub*, it brings together early and late adopters to share experiences, discuss challenges, and develop collective approaches to AI integration. The *temple* function, recognition and reward, has received less emphasis in this initial year, as the focus remained on building foundational capacity rather than celebrating established excellence.

While this framework guided the overall design of the role, the specific strategic priorities and programmatic focus areas were informed by a needs assessment conducted with the instructional community. The following section describes the methodology and findings of this assessment, which shaped the implementation strategies detailed in section 4.

3 Needs Assessment

To inform the strategic priorities of the AI Pedagogy Specialist role, a needs assessment was conducted with both faculty and students during Fall 2025. The assessment aimed to understand current AI usage patterns, self-reported skill levels, and specific areas where support would be most valuable. This section presents the methodology and key findings from both surveys, followed by a discussion of the advisory structures established to guide the initiative.

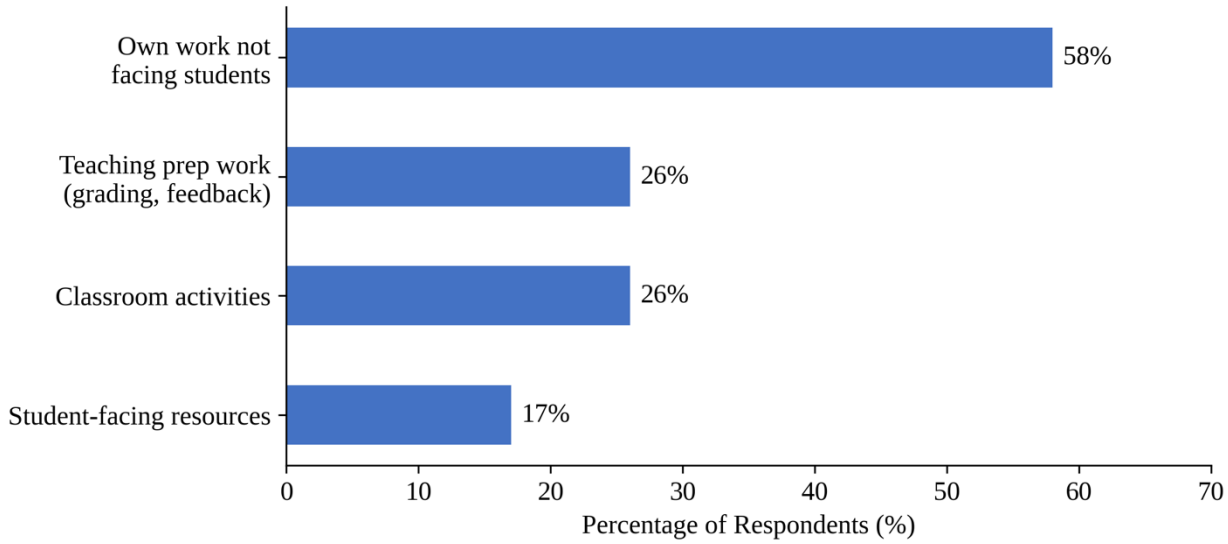

Figure 1 - Faculty AI use in teaching-related work (N = 155).

3.1 Faculty Survey

A survey was distributed to all faculty and instructors in Fall 2025. The survey included questions on AI tool usage frequency, self-assessed skill level, current applications of AI in teaching, and desired support areas. A total of 155 faculty and instructors responded, representing approximately 18% of the instructional community. The respondent pool represented a balanced distribution across career stages: 32% early career (0-6 years), 30% mid-career (7-15 years), and 38% senior faculty (16+ years). By employment status, 60% were tenured or tenure-track, 22% non-tenure track, and the remainder included postdocs, visiting faculty, and lecturers. Primary roles included dual mission teaching and research (45%), teaching mission (34%), and instructor/lecturer positions (14%).

Usage Patterns. Responses revealed a wide distribution of AI engagement among faculty. When asked how often they use AI tools in teaching-related work, 20% reported never using AI, 13% rarely, 19% occasionally (about once per term), 26% regularly (a few times per term), and 23% frequently (about once a week). This distribution suggests that while a majority of faculty (68%) have incorporated AI into their work at least occasionally, a substantial portion (33%) remain non-users or infrequent users.

Current Applications. A critical finding emerged from the question asking faculty to describe their current use of AI in teaching and learning. Respondents could select multiple options. The most common response, selected by 58% respondents, was using AI *for their own work not facing students* (e.g., research support, administrative tasks). In contrast, only 26% respondents reported using AI for classroom activities, 26% for teaching prep work outside the classroom such as grading support, and 17% for student-facing resources (Figure 1). Additionally, 28% respondents indicated they had tried AI a few times but do not use it regularly, while 12% reported being against the use of AI in all or most academic contexts. Analysis of response overlap reveals that 47% of respondents selected only one category, while 36% selected two categories and 17%

selected three or more. Of the faculty using AI for own professional work not facing students (e.g., research, administrative tasks), 60% also use it for at least one instructional purpose, while the rest use it exclusively for non-instructional professional. Conversely, only 23% of respondents reported using AI for instructional purposes without also using it for professional work. This pattern indicates that faculty adoption of AI has primarily occurred in professional contexts, with many faculty either limiting their use to their own work alone or as a gateway to instructional applications.

Skill Levels. Self-reported skill levels skewed toward the lower end of the spectrum. Among the 117 respondents who answered this question, 39% identified as beginners who are experimenting and learning the basics, 45% as intermediate users who apply AI for specific tasks, 9% as advanced users who integrate AI regularly and customize its use, and only 6% as experts who can create AI tools or guide others. These local adoption patterns are consistent with national trends, as the DEC global survey similarly found that 40% of faculty feel they are just beginning their AI literacy journey [1] .

Desired Support. When asked what AI-related support would be most helpful, the top response was ethical use and academic integrity guidance, selected by 56% respondents. Respondents could select multiple options. This was followed by classroom activities using AI (47%), assignment and assessment redesign (44%), course material preparation (38%), student-facing AI resources (29%), and AI tools for grading and feedback (24%). Only 12% respondents indicated they do not need AI-related support. Open-ended responses revealed additional interests including helping students use AI to support rather than impair their learning, understanding algorithmic limitations and biases, and recognizing when students are using AI in their writing.

3.2 Student Survey

A parallel baseline survey was administered to students to understand their AI usage patterns, skill levels, and support needs. A total of 107 students responded to the survey, primarily from engineering and computer science programs.

Usage Patterns. Student AI usage was notably higher than faculty usage within the survey samples. Similar portions of student respondents (21%) and faculty respondents (20%) reported never using AI tools; at the high-frequency end, however, 18% of students reported using AI every day and 27% regularly (a few times per week), indicating that nearly half of student respondents (45%) are frequent AI users. This contrasts with 23% of faculty who reported weekly use. Local adoption rates (79%) were somewhat lower than the 86% reported in the DEC Global AI Student Survey [9], which may reflect the self-selection bias noted earlier in student survey recruitment. The overall pattern of widespread but uneven use was nonetheless consistent.

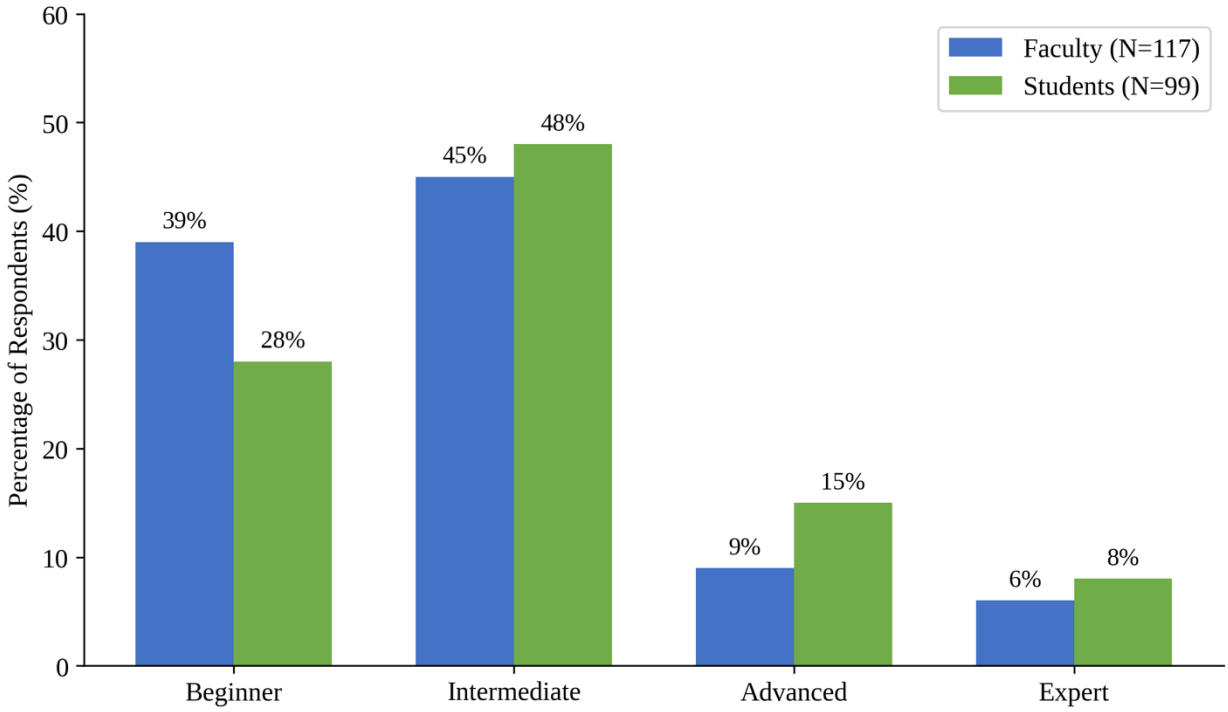

Figure 2 - Self reported AI skill levels among respondents to this item: faculty (N = 117) and students (N = 99).

Current Applications. Students reported using AI across a range of academic tasks. Respondents could select multiple options. The most common application was studying and reviewing material, selected by 49% respondents, including practice questions, summaries, and explanations. This was followed by writing support at 35% respondents, engineering and scientific problem solving at 35%, brainstorming ideas at 35%, coding and programming at 32%, and research support at 30% Notably, 34% respondents indicated they are against the use of AI in their academic work, a higher proportion than that of faculty who expressed similar views. Given the relatively low response rates, it is possible that self-selection biased these groups in opposite directions, with faculty against the use of AI choosing to ignore the survey request and students who are opposed to its use being more likely to do as they were asked and complete the survey. However, this was a noteworthy pattern deserving further attention by the AI Specialist.

Skill Levels. Student self-reported skill levels were somewhat higher than faculty. Among 99 respondents, 28% identified as beginners, 48% as intermediate, 15% as advanced, and 8% as expert.

Desired Support. The top support need identified by students was clear AI policies from instructors, selected by 50% of the 98 respondents who responded to the question. Respondents could select multiple options. This was followed by tips on using AI effectively for studying and projects (37%), workshops on ethical and responsible AI use (21%), and peer-made guides or resources (11%). Notably, 38% of the respondents indicated they do not need AI-related support, a higher proportion than faculty, possibly reflecting students' greater comfort with AI tools or a perception that support is less necessary. The prominence of AI policy as a student need directly

informed the development of a faculty AI policy survey and a dedicated AI Pedagogy Lab on policy dissemination, described in section 4.2.

3.3 Advisory Structures

Beyond the surveys, the needs assessment process included establishing advisory structures to provide ongoing guidance. The faculty survey included an invitation to join an AI Advisory Circle for faculty with AI expertise who could mentor and guide the initiative. Eight faculty members expressed definite interest and eleven indicated possible interest, resulting in the formation of an advisory board of AI specialists who provide guidance on strategic decisions a one-hour monthly time commitment.

Additionally, two student ambassadors were recruited to serve as liaisons between the AI Pedagogy Specialist and the student body. The ambassadors assist with disseminating information about AI pedagogy initiatives to students and, critically, provide the student perspective on AI-related issues in teaching and learning. This bidirectional communication channel ensures that programmatic decisions are informed by both faculty and student viewpoints.

3.4 Strategic Priorities

The needs assessment findings informed four strategic priorities for the AI Pedagogy Specialist role in its inaugural year. First, given that ethical use and academic integrity guidance was the top faculty support need (56%), the initial programming prioritized *ethics and academic integrity* as a foundational topic. Second, the finding that faculty primarily use AI for professional productivity outside of instruction, combined with 40% requesting assignment redesign support, indicated a need for *practical frameworks for integrating AI into teaching*. Third, clear AI policies was the top student need (50%) and faculty expressed uncertainty about what their policies should contain, indicating a need for *structured AI policy guidance and dissemination* across the instructional community. Fourth, the divergence between faculty and student perspectives, particularly the higher proportion of students opposed to AI, suggested the importance of creating *dialogue between faculty and students* about expectations and appropriate use, facilitated through a dedicated Food for Thought session. The following section describes how these priorities were translated into specific programs and initiatives.

4 Implementation and Evidence

This section describes how the strategic priorities identified through the needs assessment were translated into specific programs and initiatives. The implementation is organized according to the three CTL functions outlined in the theoretical framework: *sieve* (filtering and promoting best practices), *incubator* (supporting faculty growth), and *hub* (connecting the community).

4.1 Sieve Function: Filtering and Promoting Best Practices

The sieve function operates through two primary mechanisms: a dedicated website and research-grounded workshop materials. These mechanisms address the need for knowledge about how to emphasize ethics and academic integrity in teaching with AI, as well as the goal of providing practical frameworks for teaching practices leveraging AI.

AI Pedagogy Website

A dedicated website (aipedagogy.wpi.edu) was developed to serve as a curated resource hub for the initiative. The website provides news updates on AI in education, announcements of upcoming events and workshops, and access to all materials generated and referenced through the AI Pedagogy Labs and Food for Thought (FFT) Sessions. Pedagogy labs are monthly interactive sessions where faculty experiment with AI tools and explore pedagogical strategies in a supportive, judgment-free environment. Each lab focuses on a specific theme relevant to teaching and learning. FFTs are quarterly, informal discussion series that brings faculty and students together to explore how AI is shaping learning, teaching, and preparation for the future. Each session focuses on a timely theme in AI pedagogy and creates space for open conversation across roles and disciplines. Critically, the website includes a help request form that allows faculty to describe their needs and schedule one-on-one consultations with the AI Pedagogy Specialist. This creates a low-barrier entry point for individualized support while also generating data on common faculty concerns that can inform future programming.

Communication and Outreach

A dedicated email listserv (gr-pedagogy-ai) serves as a communication channel for disseminating AI-related news, resources, and event announcements to the broader faculty community. The listserv was generated through voluntary faculty participation before the Pedagogy Specialist position was established, reflecting organic interest in AI pedagogy prior to the role's establishment. Faculty-wide communications regarding surveys and workshops have been distributed through the institution's full faculty distribution list to ensure that all instructors, regardless of prior engagement with AI, have equal access to programming and resources.

Feedback from the community revealed that some faculty, particularly those newer to AI, feel overwhelmed by the volume and complexity of available information. In response, the initiative is exploring ways to better organize materials and communications based on faculty engagement level, with the goal of delivering simpler, more actionable guidance to those just beginning their AI journey without overwhelming them.

Faculty AI Policy Survey

To address the third strategic priority (*structured AI policy guidance and dissemination)*, the AI Pedagogy Specialist conducted a survey of faculty AI policies in Spring 2026. Faculty were invited to share their current course AI policies, and 43 responses were collected across five disciplinary groupings: Engineering, Science and Computing, Business, Humanities and Social Sciences and STEM Education, and Project-Based programs.

Analysis of the submitted policies revealed five dominant policy philosophies. The most common approach was tiered by assignment, adopted by 49% of the respondents, followed by full prohibition (19%), disclosure-first (14%), permissive with guardrails (9%), and pedagogically integrated (9%). The three most common policy components were explicit permitted uses (70%),

Figure 3. Faculty AI Policy Landscape (N=43)

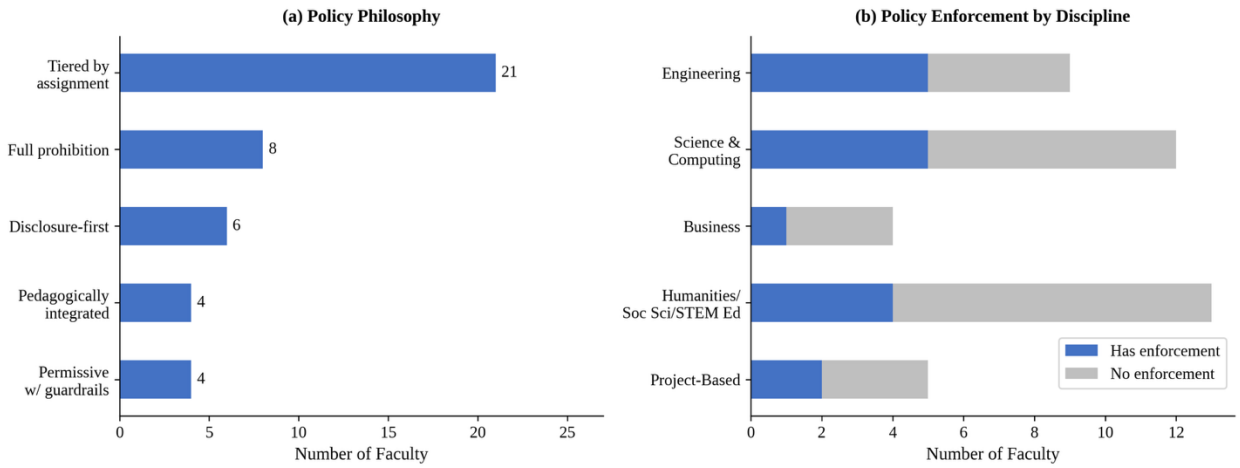

Figure 3-Faculty AI policy landscape (N = 43).

disclosure and citation requirements (63%), and exam and quiz prohibitions (60%). Notably, 60% of faculty had no enforcement mechanism in their policies, suggesting that most rely on trust and transparency rather than detection (Figure 3).

Satisfaction with current policies varied by discipline. Engineering and Science and Computing faculty reported the highest satisfaction, while Business faculty showed the most dissatisfaction. The survey findings were disseminated through AI Pedagogy Lab 3, described in section 4.2.

Unlike the needs assessment surveys conducted in Fall 2025, which identified faculty and student support needs, the AI policy survey collected and analyzed existing course policies to identify patterns, gaps, and transferable models across the institution.

4.2 Hub Function: Connecting the Community

The hub function is enacted primarily through the AI Pedagogy Labs and FFTs. These activities also provide a space for creating dialogue, in addition to focusing on sharing teaching practices, specifically focusing on ethics and academic integrity. This function meets all three identified needs.

AI Pedagogy Lab 1: Ethics and Academic Integrity

The first AI Pedagogy Lab, held in October 2025, directly addressed the first strategic priority: *ethical use and academic integrity guidance*. Seventeen faculty and staff members and one student participated in structured small-group discussions organized around five themes: Learning and Assessment, Equity and Access, Transparency and Responsibility, Privacy and Data Use, and Sustainability. Each theme was supported by a curated set of recent references, and discussions were facilitated to surface local perspectives and concerns.

The Learning and Assessment group examined how AI is reshaping evaluation in STEM fields. Participants noted that graduates with AI literacy report stronger job alignment, but warned that over-reliance on AI may erode core analytical and problem-solving skills. They observed visible differences in analytical depth when students rely heavily on AI and questioned whether traditional notions of cheating remain relevant when AI can complete many standard assignments. Suggestions for assessment redesign included reflection prompts, student-generated challenge questions, and low-stakes quizzes that capture process and growth rather than output alone.

The Equity and Access group identified multiple interrelated gaps that shape how students experience AI: financial (free versus premium models creating a two-tiered system), awareness (students often unaware of institutionally provided tools), bias (not all students possess the critical literacy to detect AI inaccuracies), and adoption (varying rates across disciplines). Participants questioned who benefits from AI's rise, observing that large technology companies gain most while marginalized students risk being left behind. Suggestions included embedding AI literacy into orientation programs and designing lessons that empower students to advocate for their own needs.

The Transparency and Responsibility group explored the ethics of disclosing AI use in teaching and assessment. Participants shared that transparency can paradoxically reduce student trust, as research suggests that disclosing AI use can diminish perceived credibility [10]. They agreed that the traffic light syllabus policies (green/yellow/red guidelines) lack nuance and often confuse students about expectations. Handling suspected misuse remains challenging, as verification demands significant time and sensitivity. The group favored inquiry-based assignments and open dialogue over surveillance or enforcement.

The Privacy and Data Use group found participants split on familiarity with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and related privacy regulations. They noted that major AI vendors often collect user data for product improvement and monetization, typically without meaningful consent. Practical suggestions included using incognito browsing, anonymizing data, and avoiding uploads of student information to public AI platforms. Several participants called for institutional policies modeled after stricter international frameworks such as General Data Protection Regulation **(**GDPR) and the EU AI Act.

The Sustainability group acknowledged the high energy and resource demands of AI systems but largely agreed that, in education, AI's environmental footprint is relatively minor compared to its learning benefits. Participants viewed sustainability awareness as important but not a deterrent to educational use, and some noted AI's potential to contribute positively through predictive modeling and energy optimization research.

Executive summaries and full documentation of each discussion theme, including supporting references, were published on the AI Pedagogy website to extend the reach of these conversations beyond the immediate participants.

AI Pedagogy Lab 2: Assignment and Assessment Redesign

The second AI Pedagogy Lab, held in November 2025, addressed the second strategic priority: *practical frameworks for integrating AI into teaching*. Eight instructors participated in a session

that began with an overview of the current state of AI capabilities in answering common assignment types. Participants represented a range of disciplines, career stages, and prior experience with AI in teaching, but all were in the early phases of redesigning their assignments for the AI era.

Participants received a discussion guide synthesizing recent studies on generative AI performance across assessment types. The guide drew on Nikolic *et al.*'s multi-institutional study examining how tools like ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini perform on engineering assessments [11], the Digital Education Council's framework distinguishing AI-Free, AI-Assisted, and AI-Integrated assessment models [1], Khalif *et al*.'s practical framework for assessment redesign developed from workshops with 155 faculty [12], and the HEPI survey finding that 92% of students use generative AI and 88% use it for assessments [13]. These materials enabled participants to ground their redesign efforts in evidence rather than intuition alone.

The session grouped participants by the assignment formats common in their courses: coding and computational tasks, labs and experiment-based tasks, problem-solving and analysis tasks, writing and reflection tasks, and design and project-based tasks. This cross-disciplinary grouping enabled faculty from different departments to share strategies relevant to similar pedagogical challenges. Within each group, instructors developed learning outcomes that align with AI while ensuring they meet course objectives.

Food for Thought Session 1: Navigating AI Together

The first Food for Thought session, held in February 2026, addressed the fourth strategic priority: *creating dialogue between faculty and students* about expectations and appropriate use of AI. It presented the needs assessment survey findings to a mixed audience of faculty, staff, and students, and facilitated structured discussion around the divergent perspectives revealed in the data. Twenty-nine participants attended, including two students. The session opened with a presentation of faculty and student survey results side by side to highlight points of alignment and divergence across the two groups.

Participant were then prompted to reflect on what in this presentation surprised them or matched their experience. Responses collected during the session revealed several recurring themes. Many faculty expressed surprise at the proportion of students reporting resistance to AI, questioning whether this reflected genuine concern about learning or response bias in a faculty-distributed survey. Several participants noted that vocal skeptics in faculty discussions may create a misleading impression of institution-wide resistance, while survey data suggests broader and more nuanced engagement. Faculty also reported spending significant time verifying AI-generated references that turned out to be fabricated, and several noted they could detect AI-generated work but felt unable to act without definitive proof.

A consistent theme across participant responses was uncertainty about AI policy. Faculty admitted difficulty drafting effective policies, while students described navigating policies of varying clarity across their courses. Several faculty said they would make AI policies more specific and explicit, address AI expectations in class, and incorporate student input. Others suggested experimenting with different AI integration methods and asking students for breakdowns of their contributions in assignments. This convergent finding across faculty and student perspectives confirmed that

structured policy guidance was among the most pressing needs in the community and directly informed the development of the faculty AI policy survey and AI Pedagogy Lab 3.

AI Pedagogy Lab 3: AI Policy Dissemination

The third AI Pedagogy Lab, held in March 2026, addressed the third strategic priority: *structured AI policy guidance and dissemination* across the instructional community. Fourteen instructors participated in a session built directly on the findings of the faculty AI policy survey. Participants reviewed survey data from 43 faculty across the institution, examined anonymized peer policies grouped by their own disciplinary cluster, and discussed in small groups before sharing observations with the room.

Several themes emerged from the discussion. Participants agreed that adopting an AI policy is the instructor's responsibility and should not be delegated to students. The group drew a useful distinction between policy and guidelines: a policy carries an enforcement expectation while a guideline is encouraged but not enforced. One participant questioned whether calling something a policy is meaningful without a realistic enforcement mechanism, echoing the survey finding that 60% of faculty currently have no enforcement mechanism in place. The room agreed that students engage more seriously with policies when they can see a direct connection between the policy and course learning objectives, and that customizing expectations at the assignment level produces better outcomes than a single blanket course statement. Each participant received a handout containing anonymized policies grouped by disciplinary cluster, providing examples they could adapt for their own courses.

4.3 Incubator Function: Supporting Faculty Growth

The incubator function focuses on supporting individual faculty members in redesigning their courses and assignments for the AI era. In this way, the incubator function most directly addresses the second need identified.

Assignment Redesign Worksheet

A key tool developed to support faculty growth is the Assignment Redesign Worksheet, distributed during the second AI Pedagogy Lab. The worksheet provides a structured framework for analyzing and redesigning individual assignments. It prompts instructors to specify their course information and original assignment, then guides them through a series of redesign questions: What is the new model (AI-Free, AI-Assisted, or AI-Integrated)? Where is the critical thinking in the assignment? Where is the decision-making? How will two students' responses differ meaningfully? What specific or custom information is uniquely embedded in the assignment? What must students explain or justify beyond their submission? How will the assignment be evaluated at scale? Is the redesign scalable given current course size and support?

The worksheet also prompts faculty to consider how they will verify that learning outcomes are met, suggesting approaches such as short written rationales, annotated code, flowcharts, or AI response critiques. A suggested rubric emphasizes reasoning shown in submission (10%), interpretation, reflection, and prediction (30%), evidence of process in submission (10%), evidence of reasoning and process post-submission (30%), and technical quality and accuracy (20%).

Finally, the worksheet includes suggested starting point for AI policy language that instructors can adapt to their course context:

> *AI may be used to support your work, but your grade is based on your demonstrated understanding. You must reference AI if it was used and be prepared to defend your work upon request. This tool translates research-based principles into a practical instrument that faculty can apply independently to their own courses.*

Faculty Consultations

Beyond group workshops, the AI Pedagogy Specialist provides one-on-one and small-group consultations to faculty seeking individualized support. Faculty can request meetings through the website's help form, where they describe their specific needs or challenges. In the inaugural year, seven consultations were conducted. Two focused on assignment redesign for specific disciplinary contexts. One addressed strategies for articulating AI expectations to students and designing reflection activities around AI use. One addressed strategies for responding to suspected student AI misuse. One involved a presentation and Q&A session with a group of online adjunct faculty concerned about students' AI use in coursework; practical strategies for integrating AI into the curriculum were provided alongside curated references for further exploration. One advised a faculty member on incorporating AI into a coding-intensive course, including a template lecture on AI policies and sample exam designs. One provided a faculty member with a structured evaluation of AI tools, resources, and training options within a defined budget.

4.4 Ongoing and Future Initiatives

Across its inaugural year, the AI Pedagogy Specialist role conducted two needs assessment surveys, one with 155 faculty and instructors and one with 107 students, to establish a baseline understanding of AI adoption, skill levels, and support needs across the institution. The role reached 69 faculty and staff through four programming sessions: an AI Pedagogy Lab on ethics and academic integrity (18 participants), one on assignment redesign (8 participants), one on AI policy dissemination (14 participants), and one Food for Thought session on navigating AI together (29 participants). In addition, four individual consultations were conducted, and 43 faculty submitted their AI policies for analysis and dissemination. The AI Advisory Circle continued to provide strategic guidance throughout the year.

Summer 2026 will be used to develop the next cycle of programming, informed by the accumulated findings from the needs assessment, policy survey, lab sessions, and FFT discussions. Future priorities include expanding faculty-student dialogue, continuing the AI Pedagogy Lab and FFT series, and developing tiered resources calibrated to different faculty engagement levels as described in the section 4.1.

References

[1] Digital Education Council, "Global AI Faculty Survey," 2025.

[2] B. Paris, C. Conti-Cook, D. Greene, K. M. L. Jones, B. Justie, M. Kirschenbaum, L. Kresge, E. May, A. Nguyen, R. Reynolds, S. Sargent, L. Weinberg, S. M. West and D. G. Widder, "Artificial Intelligence and Acaemic Professions," *Academe,* vol. 111, no. 3, pp. 49-59, 2025.

[3] J. Robert and M. McCormack, "2025 EDUCAUSE AI Landscape Study: Into the Digital AI Divide," EDUCAUSE, Boulder, CO, 2025.

[4] Arizona State University, "Artificial Intelligence," [Online]. Available: https://ai.asu.edu.

[5] University of North Carolina at Charlotte, "CTL Faculty Fellows on Generative AI," [Online]. Available: https://teaching.charlotte.edu/meet-the-new-ai-fellows/.

[6] San José State University., "AI Faculty Fellows," [Online]. Available: https://www.sjsu.edu/cfeti/teaching-resources/ai-pedagogies/ai-faculty-fellows.php.

[7] Network, P. O. D., "Defining what matters: Guidelines for comprehensive center for teaching and learning (CTL) evaluation," 2018.

[8] D. Hayward, C. Baumgarthuber, M. C. Wright and J. J. Kim, "Developing theories of change to advance center for teaching and learning work," *To Improve the Academy: A Journal of Educational Development,* vol. 43, no. 1, 2024.

[9] Digital Education Council, "Global AI Student Survey 2024," 2024.

[10] O. Schilke and M. Reimann, "The transparency dilemma: How AI disclosure erodes trust.," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes,* vol. 188, p. 104405, 2025.

[11] S. Nikolic, C. Sandison, R. Haque, S. Daniel, S. Grundy, M. Belkina, S. Lyden, G. Hassan and P. Neal, "ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, SciSpace and Wolfram versus higher education assessments: an updated multi-institutional study of the academic integrity impacts of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) on assessment, teaching and learning in engineering.," *Australasian journal of engineering education,* vol. 29, no. 2, pp. 126-153, 2024.

[12] Z. N. Khlaif, W. A. Alkouk, N. Salama and B. Abu Eideh, "Redesigning assessments for AI-enhanced learning: A framework for educators in the generative AI era," *Education Sciences,* vol. 15, no. 2, p. 174, 2025.

[13] J. Freeman, "Student generative ai survey 2025," 2025.