

College of the Canyons Academic Senate
Statement on Artificial Intelligence in Education

Approved by the Academic Senate on May 15, 2025

Prepared by the
Academic Integrity Committee

Shane Ramey
Chair

Regina Blasberg
Member

Sara Breshears
Member

Sylvia Duncan
Member

Adam Kaiserman
Member

Michelle LaBrie
Member

Scott McAfee
Member

Jennifer Overdevest
Member

Ruth Rassool
Member

The rapid development and proliferation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools bring significant changes and considerable challenges for higher education. As generative AI becomes increasingly integrated into the tools and workflows used by students and professionals, College of the Canyons recognizes its lasting impact on the educational landscape. This statement from the Academic Senate serves to articulate **guiding principles** for our faculty community as we navigate this evolving environment.

Principle: Recognizing AI's Role and Responding Thoughtfully

Artificial Intelligence is not a passing trend but a development with considerable effects on academia and the future workforce. Regardless of individual perspectives on its merits or drawbacks, AI tools are now accessible to our students and are influencing how information is generated, accessed, and utilized. Consequently, the Academic Senate asserts that all faculty should engage thoughtfully with AI's presence and proactively develop pedagogical strategies and clear course policies to address its use. This requires a commitment to balancing the potential benefits AI may offer for learning and efficiency with the critical need to mitigate risks to academic integrity, including heightened challenges related to plagiarism, cheating, and ensuring the authenticity of student assessment and grades.

Principle: AI Literacy and Life-long Learning

Effective engagement with AI necessitates AI literacy among faculty. The Academic Senate strongly encourages and supports the principle of life-long learning, recognizing that understanding AI is now an essential component of ongoing professional development. **AI Literacy**, in this context, involves understanding not only the capabilities and functionalities of current AI tools (particularly Large Language Models) but also their inherent limitations, potential biases, and the broader ethical considerations surrounding their use, including issues of data privacy, intellectual property, environmental concerns, and equity. This literacy is fundamental for making informed pedagogical decisions, designing relevant learning experiences, and guiding students responsibly.

Principle: Academic Freedom and AI Policies

The Academic Senate underscores that academic freedom is a cornerstone of higher education, affirming the right and responsibility of individual faculty members to determine the specific policies regarding AI use that are most appropriate for their courses, disciplines, and learning objectives. This includes the freedom to prohibit, restrict, permit with conditions, or integrate AI tools into coursework. This freedom is coupled with the crucial responsibility to develop **clear, unambiguous AI policies** for each course. Furthermore, these policies should be **communicated effectively and consistently** to students through syllabi, assignment instructions, and classroom discussion. Clearly articulated expectations are essential for avoiding confusion, preventing misunderstandings, and upholding academic integrity.

Principle: Upholding Educational Goals Through Adaptive Teaching

Across disciplines, College of the Canyons faculty strive to cultivate intellectual curiosity, foster creativity, and develop students' capacity for critical thinking, rigorous analysis, and effective communication. The emergence of AI does not alter this fundamental goal; rather, in light of the challenges AI presents to verifying original student work and ensuring authentic assessment, it requires us to adapt our methods

to ensure these essential skills are developed authentically. Faculty are encouraged to design assessments and learning activities that prioritize higher-order thinking, process over product, and the application of knowledge in ways that AI cannot replicate, thereby ensuring that technology serves rather than subverts our educational objectives.

Principle: Preparing Students Through AI Literacy Education

Parallel to developing our own literacy, faculty have a vital role in fostering AI literacy among students. This includes educating students on the definition, capabilities, limitations, and ethical dimensions of AI tools they will encounter both in academia and their future careers. Students should be guided on how to use AI effectively, responsibly, and ethically (if permitted under course policy), how to properly cite AI assistance when required, and how to critically evaluate AI-generated content. Preparing students to navigate an AI-influenced world and leverage these tools appropriately in their professional lives is an essential aspect of their education at College of the Canyons.

Principle: Providing Institutional Support and Fostering Collaboration

Navigating the complexities of AI in education is a collective endeavor. The Academic Senate, in partnership with our district and statewide colleagues, is committed to supporting faculty through professional development opportunities, access to resources, and ongoing dialogue. We encourage faculty to engage with these opportunities and with colleagues to share best practices, challenges, and innovative approaches.

Conclusion

The integration of Artificial Intelligence into education requires proactive, informed, and ethically grounded engagement from the College of the Canyons faculty. Embracing life-long learning, developing AI literacy, establishing clear course policies within the framework of academic freedom, adapting pedagogy to foster critical thinking while addressing integrity challenges, and educating our students responsibly for their future are all essential steps. Through these commitments, faculty can successfully navigate the complexities and leverage the opportunities presented by AI to fulfill our core educational mission. The Academic Senate encourages all faculty to approach this evolving landscape thoughtfully and collaboratively.

Approved by the Academic Senate on May 15, 2025