

**Salem State University Board of Trustees**  
**Off-Site Meeting**  
**Friday, December 12, 2025**  
**Hawthorne Hotel**

**Present** – Trustees Billings, Beckett, Cabral, Davis, DiPalma, Immelman, Kezer, Lampassi, Lancome and Morales (chair). Also present and participating MSCA President Chenault, President Keenan and Board Secretary Montague

Absent – None

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Morales called the meeting to order as a quorum was present. Emphasis was placed on the collaborative and interactive nature of this off-site session, distinct from routine university business meetings. Chair Morales highlighted the goal to foster open dialogue between trustees and university leadership, for the benefit of institutional advancement.

**The chair reviewed the agenda and then announced key dates**

- Committee Meetings: January 21, 2026
- Board of Trustees Meeting: February 4, 2026
- Job & Internship Fair: March 5, 2026, 4–6 pm
- Civic Engagement Hall of Fame: April 14, 2026
- Commencement Ceremonies: May 15 & 16, 2026 (Friday and Saturday; two on Friday, one on Saturday)

**President's Remarks** President Keenan highlighted major achievements (near \$70 million campaign goal, Project Bold construction, Horace Mann and Meier Hall projects, HSI designation and noted fiscal uncertainties tied to federal budget developments. He expressed optimism for Salem's 400th anniversary and the university's future.

**II. Ice Breaker**

Provost Silva facilitated an activity where trustees and attendees shared one word describing their outlook for the day (e.g., Optimism, Expectation, Hopeful, Confident). Each attendee reflected on a life-changing professor or class during their college years. The transformative power of mentorship and personal connection in education. Trustees as enablers of these experiences for current and future students a reminder of their critical governance role.

Provost Silva distributed an events calendar with a number of campus events (listed below). Chair Morles asked trustees to coordinate participation via Lynne.

- Martin Luther King Campus Celebration: (date and details provided on distributed printed material; all trustees encouraged to attend)

- Research Day (highlighted as signature annual event; includes undergraduate and graduate student participation, with faculty scholarship celebrated)

### **III. Governance (Dr. Steve Reno)**

#### **Trusteeship**

#### **Board Self-evaluation**

#### **Modality of trustee meetings**

##### **a. Trusteeship:**

Dr. Steve Reno led a discussion regarding the interdependence of governing board, administration, faculty, and students. He reiterated the core board duties:

- Mission oversight and strategic plan adherence.
- President appointment/support/evaluation.
- Major policy and plan review.
- Fiduciary responsibility
- Advocacy and community representation.
- Ongoing self-evaluation.

Reviewed faculty, president, and administrative responsibilities—emphasizing interconnected policy, accreditation, and resource management. Discussed the key issues and current trends in higher education.

Trends impacting higher education:

- Changing federal policy (including upcoming ACA extension decision on December 15, 2025).
- Public perceptions of ROI on college education versus employer value perceptions.
- Affordability and student debt.
- Declining traditional student populations—need for new credentialing models.
- Increased competition, declining state funding, and impacts from the pandemic (some positive, some negative).
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion pressures.
- Social media/tech (notably AI) and free speech/culture wars.
- Political engagement at the state level.
- Media scrutiny and handling institutional missteps with high public visibility.

##### **b. Board Self-Evaluation**

Dr. Reno reviewed the trustees' feedback on the recent board self-evaluation. Topics from feedback included:

- Practices around committees and policy-making.
- Importance of in-person meetings for deeper engagement.
- Technology for remote inclusion - current limits and potential solutions.
- The need for clear communication between the Board, administration, committees, and staff.
- Desire for more data to inform major decisions.

**c. Modality of trustee meetings** (in-person vs. remote)

Dr. Reno facilitated a discussion regarding the modality regarding the modality of meetings and there was a strong sentiment that in-person meetings foster relationships, trust, and richer discussion. Exceptions noted for remote participation due to health, distance, or unavoidable conflicts. Trustees appreciated the social interaction and reported more robust, engaged conversations in person. Student trustee emphasized that in-person meetings provide more effective communication, engagement, and awareness of nonverbal cues. Acknowledged limitations and needs for improved remote technology for hybrid attendance. Recognition of trends in the business world returning to in-person work, and similar benefits anticipated in board governance.

Inter-Committee Communication

- Identified a siloed approach within board committees, impeding information sharing and collaboration.
- Noted that actions/votes in one committee (e.g., budget) often have direct implications for other areas (e.g., student success).

Suggestions:

- Systematic communication of committee reports beyond required board presentations.
- Leadership team to explore improved information flow and shared learning between committees.

Data-Driven Decision Making, Budget, and Enrollment

- Trustees requested granular data connecting expenditures (marketing, public relations, campaign, outreach) with outcomes (enrollment, student retention, financial ROI).
- Specific strategic priorities discussed:
- Targeted enrollment growth via nursing and international students, supported by capital investments (Project Bold, the HSI initiative, new science labs).
- Recruitment pipeline from community college partnerships.
- Data's role in guiding program expansion and resource allocation (e.g., nursing program's cost structure and simulation lab efficiencies).
- President Keenan and others stressed need for clearer depiction of data use for strategy and policy, not just reporting.

Marketing and Recruitment Considerations

- Discussion expanded on the effectiveness of current marketing spend.
- Noted that outcome-focused marketing (e.g., employment rates, salaries, real-world career benefits) may be more compelling than features like accreditation, though the latter remains a valuable differentiator (e.g., only 5% of business schools with certain accreditation).
- Need for clearer messaging to distinguish benefits and features—helping potential students make “final choice” decisions.

### Board Engagement and Succession Planning

- Recognition that trustees’ role in fundraising could be enhanced with targeted training.
- Need to address succession planning to align trustee appointments with university diversity commitments.
- Trustees desire more opportunities for campus engagement and greater understanding of student perspectives.

### Public Role and Strategic Positioning

- Trustees requested more visibility into how the university’s public/state role intersects with internal decision-making.
- Calls for transparency around how strategic decisions respond to external (political, economic) pressures and how these are communicated to the board.
- Acknowledgment of unique responsibilities for regional economic contribution and workforce development.

## ACTION ITEMS

- Calendar Sharing: Lynne to distribute updated calendar of important events to trustees.
- Participation Coordination: Trustees to contact Lynne regarding attendance at commencement and key campus events.
- Inter-Committee Communication: Leadership to evaluate and propose mechanisms for sharing committee deliberations and relevant insight before full board meetings.
- Remote Modality Review: Explore upgrading technology for hybrid meetings, focusing on optimizing remote trustee experience.
- Data Reporting: Administration to provide more detailed analyses on cost/ROI of marketing, enrollment, and retention initiatives—with comparative figures where feasible.
- Trustee Fundraising Training: Assess interest and develop training for trustees engaged in advancement efforts.
- Succession & Diversity Planning: Review succession planning process to further diversity on the board, in alignment with university commitments.

### Follow-up Points

- Lunch Presentation (EAB): Attendees to be present and engaged for Dr. Motley's session on sector-wide challenges and opportunities in higher education.
- Board Self-Evaluation: Trustees may submit additional feedback or clarification on the evaluation, particularly regarding committee work and communications.
- Future Board Topics: Suggestions to schedule dedicated sessions on university's broader public policy role, and how external pressures shape strategy.
- Project Bold Tour: Organize board walkthrough for the new Horace Mann building and other capital projects (possibly in a future meeting).
- Strategic Plan Review: Continued emphasis on linking all policy, budget, and innovation discussions explicitly to goals in the university's strategic plan.

#### **IV. Strategic Priorities and Innovation**

**Adopting/Implementing AI for Student Outcomes and Operational Effectiveness,  
Assistant Provost for Faculty Success and Academic Innovation, Center for Teaching  
Innovation Eliza Bobek**

##### Integrations and Impact of AI on Campus

- Discussion emphasized teaching responsible AI use, the return of oral/in-class assessment, risks of “agentic” AI, and the necessity of preparing students for workplaces that demand AI fluency.
- Completion of a year-long faculty/staff AI advisory group and a three-phase implementation plan (currently in Phase 1)
- Formation of an AI Steering Council chaired by Provost Silva
- Survey data showing heavy student use of generative AI, coupled with significant ethical concerns
- Thoughtful faculty integration of AI across disciplines while preserving critical thinking and academic integrity
- Operational pilots (e.g., Microsoft Copilot for email triage)
- *Multidisciplinary Engagement*
  - Over 20 faculty and staff from various disciplines are involved, with emphasis on a multidisciplinary approach.
  - Environmental scan conducted on AI use across departments, classroom practices, and generative AI literacy/fluency.

##### *Campus Sentiments and Strategic Reports*

- AI adoption has elicited a complex emotional response: excitement, dread, grief, and

opportunity identified among faculty and students.

- A report covering five strategic areas was prepared, with teams splitting into subgroups to draft recommendations.
- Recommendations were presented over the summer to the President's Executive Cabinet with input from external consultants.

#### *Strategic Recommendations and Implementation Phases*

- Phase 1: Building on existing AI campus support (MySpace, Center for Teaching Innovation, CAR, ITS).
- Recommended: Establishment of an AI task force (now evolving into an AI Steering Council, led by Provost Silva).
- Develop an external web presence (AI@ssu SalemState.edu) for updates, resources, and transparency.
- Need for comprehensive campus data collection on AI tool usage, procurement, security, and privacy.

#### *Student and Faculty AI Usage & Perceptions*

- National and internal survey data reveal increased student AI usage from 2024 to 2025, with STEM, CS, and Business majors most active.
- Main uses: text generation (e.g., ChatGPT), writing enhancement (e.g., Grammarly), summarization/note-taking.
- Students show heightened ethical concerns (intellectual property, copyright, environmental issues), with majority expressing at least some reluctance to integrate AI into academic work.
- Faculty policies on AI use vary widely; each course/assignment may have different expectations, creating confusion among students.

#### *Pedagogical Opportunities and Challenges*

- Concern over “illusion of learning” and cognitive offloading: students may appear competent but lack deep understanding.
- Bloom’s Taxonomy referenced as a guide; AI may help higher-level tasks, but could mask lack of deeper learning.
- Faculty encouraged to turn potential misuse of AI into learning opportunities, employing nuanced academic integrity policies emphasizing education and remediation over punishment.

#### *Fear, Surveillance, and Policy*

- Noted student anxieties: fear of wrongful AI use allegations (e.g., students record themselves writing as proof).

- AI detection tools not recommended due to inaccuracy and risk of false positives; emphasis is on building a supportive, not punitive, campus environment.

#### *Parallels to Past Technology Adoption*

- Faculty/staff drew analogies to earlier disruptions (Internet, calculators, Excel, self-checkout) and discussed how adaptation, rather than replacement, is key.
- Dialog emphasized the need to teach students both the responsible use of AI and the essential human skills AI cannot replace.

#### *Faculty and Operational Innovations*

Examples shared include:

- Advanced computer science courses requiring mastery both with and without AI tools.
- Utilization of AI (Gemini) for academic advising suggestions.
- Music and Arts integration: co-creating with AI, addressing concerns around artistic originality and value.
- Operational pilots: Microsoft Copilot trialed for email summarization and workflow, albeit with mixed results.

#### *Next Steps: AI Steering Council*

- Provost Silva to lead the newly established AI Steering Council.
- Initial framework drafted (with AI assistance) and being circulated for senior leadership feedback.

## **V. Strategic Planning and Institutional Progress through 2028 Vice President and University Counsel Rita Colucci**

#### *Strategic Plan Overview*

- Current plan covers 2023-2028; now in Year 3 of implementation.
- Annual reports produced; Year 1 available in print, Year 2 forthcoming.
- Key strategic priorities: BOLD campus projects (notably capital/construction), major fundraising, HSI/MSI advancement, and civic engagement.

#### *Resource Allocation and Stakeholder Engagement*

- \$470,000 allotted in Spring 2024 for strategic projects proposed by faculty and staff; additional funds for small projects (<\$5K/project).

- Student Success Funds from the state complemented these allocations.
- High engagement in proposal process, demonstrating campus-wide interest and innovation.

#### *Major Accomplishments to Date*

- Experiential learning: 121 programs reviewed to confirm integrative approaches (internships, research, clinicals, etc.).
- Course tagging system piloted to help students identify course attributes (e.g., low/no cost, experiential, modality).
- Advising model restructured; ongoing improvements.
- Initiated comprehensive General Education curriculum review.
- Data infrastructure enhanced with a campus-wide accessible dashboard.
- Submitted and recognized for the Carnegie Classification in Civic Engagement.
- HSI/MSI roadmap influenced practice both within SSU and among peer institutions.
- Inclusive Excellence Council (formerly D-PAC) reconstituted to address issues including LGBTQ inclusion, bias reporting, faculty retention.
- Sustainability: North Campus decarbonization (geothermal wells, solar) underway.
- Student wellness: Staff increases to address mental health; recognizing heightened demands post-pandemic.
- Technology upgrades: 650 student lab computers; 370 employee workstations replaced.
- Exceeded 78% of \$75M fundraising goal (figure now higher; major HSI gift imminent).

#### *Forward-Looking Priorities*

- Increased focus on advising, addressing challenges in data governance/system integration.
- Strategic planning for student enrollment and housing; filling residence halls and forecasting demographic shifts.
- Next capital projects under review.
- Enhancing event space logistics and campus management.
- Marketing and brand identity discussed as an area for significant development.

### **Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI/MSI) Initiatives and Student Diversity** **Assistant Vice President Elisa Castillo**

#### **Strategic Positioning & Institutional Identity**

- Salem State has purposefully coordinated efforts to be an intentional HSI, focusing on institutional transformation rather than merely meeting eligibility numbers.
- Emphasized holistic student support: social mobility, equity, inclusion, and civic

engagement integrated into strategic plan.

### **Institutional & Statewide Leadership**

- Salem State stands out as the only New England institution with a dedicated HSI leadership position.
- As of 2025, 28% of undergraduates identify as Latino/Hispanic; 33% of new students fall into this demographic.
- The university contributed to launching the Massachusetts HSI/MSI Consortium—17 institutions participating for shared resources, grant writing, and PD.

### *Programs and Engagement for HSI/MSI Students*

- Developed a comprehensive roadmap, now emulated by other regional institutions.
- Planned expansion of translation protocols, orientation sessions, and campus tours in Spanish and Portuguese to better serve multilingual families.
- Outreach for broader support: targeting not only Latino students but also Haitian, Asian American, LGBTQIA, nontraditional students, and others facing unique barriers.

### *Retention and Graduation*

- Analysis of retention/gap issues reveals strong first-year retention and graduation rates among Latino students (historically, no gap vs. overall, though 2018-2024 cohort showed dip due largely to COVID-19 impact).
- Private grant partnership initiated retention coaching services for sophomores.
- Preparation underway for applying to the Seal of Excelencia recognition, striving to be the first in New England, highlighting leadership and outcome excellence among HSIs.

### *Faculty and Staff Initiatives*

- Launching a faculty mentoring program to support culturally competent pedagogy and support for HSI/MSI students.
- Reinforced need for professional development and institutional capacity-building, aligning with best practices in intentional servingness.

### **Forward Looking Priorities**

- Implement and scale translation and orientation support services (Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole) for family engagement by AY 2026.
- Maintain momentum in retention initiatives (e.g., Insight Track partnership), especially targeting sophomore/junior persistence gaps.
- Complete and submit Excellencia “Seal” application; disseminate progress updates.

- Convene regular inter-institutional meetings of the new Massachusetts HSI/MSI consortium.
- Continue professional development and faculty mentoring initiatives focused on culturally responsive education for HSI/MSI students.

## VI. Questions and Wrap up

Chair Morales asked the trustees and MSCA leadership for general reflections on the morning session and what they had heard and what they had not heard but wanted to hear.

Board and MSCA Leadership Feedback:

- Strong appreciation for collaborative, bottom-up approaches - AI pilots, HSI roadmap, and inclusive governance.
- Recognition that complexity of AI and demographics render not a one size fits all - approach unworkable; discipline-specific strategies favored.
- Emphasis placed on marketing, brand identity, and increased visibility as critical next steps.
- Trustees emphasized need for regular, granular dashboard access, especially on key metrics: student retention, graduation, enrollment, and faculty diversity.
- Calls for regular public communication of academic excellence, faculty research, student success stories.

### *Challenges and Concerns Raised*

- Managing impacts of AI on academic integrity, faculty workload, student anxiety, and learning quality.
- Navigating demographic shifts, mental health crises, and technology-driven student isolation.
- Financial sustainability, particularly given the evolving landscape of HSI/MSI federal funding and changing state/national demographics.
- Ensuring continuous investment and storytelling around Salem State's unique value and student-centered culture contrasted with competition in the region.

## ACTION ITEMS

### *Strategic Planning & Operations*

- Increase visible, accessible reporting of retention, graduation, and other core metrics (potential dashboard access for trustees and public).

### *Follow-Up*

- Explore organizing additional, in-depth sessions on:
- Financial sustainability amid demographic shifts
- Detailed retention analysis and benchmarking to sister institutions
- Success stories of academic excellence, faculty research, grants, and student outcomes
- Update to be provided on soon-to-be-announced (mid-December 2025) major HSI-targeted philanthropic gift.

## **Additional Notes**

- Trustees expressed gratitude for the high level of candor, depth, and collaboration in all presentations and conversations.
- MSCA President Chenault and trustee representatives highlighted ongoing challenges but praised staff dedication and student-centered culture.

## **VII. Presentation by Dr. Brittany Motley, EAB: “Navigating Upheaval on All Fronts in Higher Education”**

### **Main Topics Discussed**

#### ***1. External Accountability & Public Perception***

##### **Summary of Discussion:**

- Decline in Public Confidence: Gallup data reveals public trust in higher ed has dropped from 60% to 38% over the past decade. Slight improvements have emerged in the last year, mainly tied to communications about research and innovation.
- Persistent Public Concerns: Criticisms linger regarding cost, student loan debt, politicization of education (“liberal agenda” under scrutiny), and leadership.
- Value Proposition Challenges: Confidence wanes in higher education’s promise to prepare students to get ahead.
- Administrative Policy Disruption: The past year saw rapid, significant changes—student loan policies, immigration/international enrollment, research funding, accreditation, and campus culture all impacted.
- Institutions respond variably: some “blend in” (especially in red/conservative states), others “push back” (blue/progressive states); the majority wait and watch, lacking a standard playbook.
- Proposed “Low Regrets” Actions:
- Promote “targeted universalism”—frame initiatives for broad value regardless of social identity (example: “curb cut effect”).
- Anchor all statements and actions to institutional mission (not political winds).

- Institutionalize protocols for timely, organized response to crises.
- Political Landscape and 2028 Outlook: Broad distrust of both major parties; 73% of Democrats and 91% of Republicans view their party favorably—a historic low/high.
- Higher ed positioned amid a national “trust deficit”; anticipated continued bipartisan scrutiny on DEI, free speech, immigration, research funding, and accreditation.

## ***2. Financial Sustainability: The Higher Ed Business Model Crisis***

Summary of Discussion:

- Synchronized Compression: Simultaneous pressure on both revenue (primarily tuition & government funding) and costs (especially post-COVID).
- Costs (utilities, materials) spiked in 2022, remain high, and are forecasted to rise again in 2025.
- Wages surged post-COVID, currently at a historic decade-high of 4.2% growth.
- Capital expenditures soared as deferred COVID projects resumed.
- Tuition discounting has risen: for every \$1 charged, 56¢ on average is discounted.
- Cross-Subsidy Model Under Threat: Erosion in revenues from “net contributors” (international students, master’s programs, etc.) destabilizes subsidy of research, athletics, and other programs.
- Labor as “Cost Elephant”:
  - Over 50% of expenses are labor (mostly instructional); administrative “fat” largely trimmed post-COVID.
  - Sector now being forced to “right-size the academy”—including academic programming, not just administrative areas.
- Examples: Stanford, Duke (cost-cutting, layoffs), West Virginia (eliminated \$45M deficit via program/staff cuts), University of Lynchburg (proactively pared down academic portfolio in stable times, rather than in fiscal crisis).

*Key Cost-Control Strategies:*

- Hardwiring portfolio discipline (regular program P&L assessment)
- Managing cost per graduate and per completer
- Investing in productivity/process improvement
- Capping space growth (maximize existing facilities)
- Outsourcing/partnerships (“borrow and scale” instead of building new)
- Structuring contracts/time-bound hiring for greater cost flexibility

## ***3. Market Relevance: Enrollment & Future Workforce***

Summary of Discussion:

Enrollment Landscape:

- Undergraduate numbers are rebounding post-pandemic, but gains are uneven. Large,

selective, and online providers are gaining share; smaller/open-access and some public institutions are losing.

#### Five Central Challenges to Enrollment:

- Demographic Cliff: A projected 1.4M drop in 15–19 year-olds by 2025 (Nathan Grawe). Impacts differ by region; Northeast and South hardest hit.
- Declining College Readiness: Scores and preparedness lagging due to COVID learning loss (noted in 4th and 8th graders), expected to persist for a decade.
- Non-Consumption: More high school graduates are opting out of college, especially young men.
- Four non-consumer mindsets (per Gates Foundation research): ROI skepticism, cost-consciousness, low self-efficacy, “contentment” with current circumstances.
- Political polarization also impacts college-going intent (the “Trump effect” leads to a 31% gap between strongly Democratic and Republican males' aspirations for four-year degrees).
- Ability & Willingness to Pay: Loan availability faces sharp cuts in 2026 and beyond; Sally Mae research shows “affordable” to families often means “free.”
- International Enrollment Drop: US attractiveness is waning due to geopolitical tension; Chinese & Indian markets declining despite population booms; each lost international student requires ~2 domestic replacements for equivalent tuition revenue.

#### Who's Winning?

- Online giants (Western Governors, SNHU) and elite privates (Ivy Plus group) dominate enrollment growth.
- Market “bimodalization”: success is concentrating among those differentiating on quality or cost; undifferentiated “middle” institutions are squeezed.
- Capacity overhang: more open seats than students (= cost drag for many institutions).

#### Opportunities Noted in Discussion:

- Growth among Hispanic and other underserved populations, especially in “gateway” communities.
- Community college partnerships and articulation, especially leveraging free community college and new online offerings.
- International recruitment, especially targeted programs or regions (recent China and Puerto Rico initiatives).

#### **4. Market Relevance: Preparing Students for the AI Economy & Evolving Value**

## Summary of Discussion:

- Gen Z Challenges:
  - Delayed milestones (driver's licenses, markers of adulthood), social isolation (exacerbated for young men), declining extroversion.
  - Dramatic reliance on technology for social fulfillment ("parasocial" relationships with AI and ChatGPT for therapy, advice, companionship).
  - "Doomerism": lower optimism about the future, driven by economics, politics, social media.
  - Cognitive and emotional support needs expected to be high; K-12 phone bans in 34 states are a recent silver lining.
- Workforce Dynamics:
  - Bachelor's degree still delivers earnings premium (\$32K/year as of 2024), but underemployment and time-to-career-entry gap have grown.
  - Prevalence of underemployment: those underemployed at six months tend to remain so a decade later.
  - AI to automate many entry-level (especially lower-wage) jobs and augment higher-level roles; AI literacy now foundational.
- Institutional Imperatives:
  - Tech, data, and "human" literacies (interpersonal skills) are critical across all disciplines.
  - Experiential learning (internships, co-ops) is 'the' employment differentiator post-graduation.
  - Lifelong learning orientation is essential (opportunity for recurring engagement with alumni via upskilling/certification).
  - Social capital (intentional network-building) is a strategic currency.

## Academic Programs:

- Historically "safe" majors (programming, computer science, etc.) now face volatility (28% drop in programming completions in two years).
- Perceived revival of liberal arts, contingent on demonstrable, workforce-linked value in critical thinking, ethics, creativity.

## ***5. Institutional Agility: Capabilities for Thriving During Turbulence***

## Summary of Discussion:

- Change Resistance & Fatigue: Low morale, initiative fatigue, relationship strain, and leadership turnover are prevalent.
- Six Key Attributes for 'Agility':
- Decision Resolve: Accelerate decision-making without sacrificing core values; right stakeholder engagement is crucial.
- Unapologetic Focus: Stop non-essential activities; laser focus on a clear institutional priority

and portfolio logic.

- Portfolio Logic: Know academic P&L (profit and loss), be responsive in program management.
- Change-Ready Systems: Support rapid iteration; give permission to innovate and “fail fast.”
- Urgent Long-Termism: Simultaneously act on immediate needs and plan for the future.
- Executive Resilience: Address leadership churn (average provost tenure now 3 years, presidency 5); emphasize succession planning and knowledge management.
- Leadership Philosophy: The right decision should supplant the easy, cheap, or popular one; respect follows integrity and courage in leadership.

## ***6. Discussion & Questions***

Key Points from Q&A and Trustee Comments:

- Demographic Trends: Not all communities face the same decline; Hispanic “gateway” communities remain a source of growth.
- International Recruiting: Still viewed as a viable opportunity if strategically targeted; success noted in recent China initiatives and planned Puerto Rico activities.
- Alternative Enrollment Strategies: Online programs (e.g., partnership with Holyoke CC), articulation with community colleges, and leveraging swelling CC ranks.
- Generational Value Creation: Consistent with historic patterns; institutions can play key roles in upward mobility.
- Impact of Trade Schools and Non-college Pathways: The rise of blue-collar opportunities (e.g., high-earning trades) and online influencers challenge the ROI narrative for college.
- Online Education as Cross-Subsidy: Trustees discussed building a “portfolio” where online programs with higher margins help subsidize high-cost, low-margin programs (e.g., in-person nursing).
- Data Resources: EAB.com and related research recommended for follow-up.
- Advances in Online Delivery: Anticipation of more immersive “online video” experiences; improving sense of belonging and connection for distance learners.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- Trustees and Leadership
- Review and further explore EAB research resources for data-driven strategies (eab.com)
- Continue expansion of online program offerings as a margin source.
- Pursue targeted international student recruitment, with attention to market trends and program fit.
- Maintain and develop partnerships with community colleges, especially leveraging online modalities.
- Cultivate and communicate a differentiated institutional value proposition based both on quality and cost.
- Institutionalize “portfolio discipline” - regular review of program financials and relevance.
- Develop and reinforce change-ready systems and decision-making capacity.

- Expand and promote experiential learning across all majors.
- Address needs of Gen Z students (academic, mental health, social integration).
- Follow-up Presentations/Research
- Trustees to follow up on suggested data resources and request additional topic deep-dives as needed.
- Continue to monitor and discuss impact of AI on academic programming and workforce prep.

### **Event Acknowledgments**

- Follow up with all meeting participants; distribute slides and presentation materials.

### **Follow-Up**

#### *Future Meetings/Discussion:*

- Planned leadership trip to Puerto Rico (March).
- Monitor impact and effectiveness of recent international recruiting (e.g., China) & community college partnerships.
- Continued board engagement with EAB and additional external research partners.

#### *Requested:*

Additional data on online vs. in-person program costs, margins, and cross-subsidy opportunities.

Chair Morales expressed appreciation and acknowledgment to all trustees for volunteer service and participation (noted travel from Texas, time off work). She extended special thanks to Dr. Brittany Motley, Dr. Reno, Assistant Provost Bobak, President Keenan, and Salem State's leadership and MSCA President Chenault.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

Having completed the board's agenda, Chair Morales called for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Lampassi made the motion and Trustee Lancome seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm.

Chair Morales expressed gratitude for attendees' service and engagement.



## Salem State University Trustees: Save the Date(s)

### A sampling of major campus events at Salem State University in Spring 2026

<b>JANUARY 2026</b>					
Day	Date	Time	Event	Location(s)	Brief Description
Mon	1/26/26	Multiple Events	36 <sup>th</sup> Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Campus Celebration	Locations across North Campus	Events honoring Dr. King, including Convocation & Community Conversation at 11:00 AM (See 2 <sup>nd</sup> page).
<b>FEBRUARY 2026</b>					
Wed	2/04/26	5:00 PM	Board of Trustees Meeting	Petrowski Room	
Week of...	2/09/26	Multiple Events	Darwin Festival	Locations across North Campus	A week honoring the work of Charles Darwin, with sessions from leading researchers celebrating the field of biology and its impact on today's world. <a href="https://www.salemstate.edu/darwinfestival">https://www.salemstate.edu/darwinfestival</a>
<b>MARCH 2026</b>					
Tue	3/3/26	1:40 PM	Advocacy Day Plenary	MLK Room	Kick-Off Meeting for Advocacy Month (March)
Thu	3/19/26	11:00 AM	Berry IOP Reunion for SSU Alumni in Politics / Public Service	Room 428, State House, Boston, MA	Reunion for Salem State Alumni working in politics and public service, and friends of the Berry IOP. This event takes place during the annual alternative spring break trip to the Massachusetts State House.
<b>APRIL 2026</b>					
Week of...	4/06/26	Multiple Events	Earth Days	Locations across Campus	Events include a judged research poster competition, an art exhibition and competition, and a series of lectures, panels, films, and activities. <a href="https://www.salemstate.edu/offices-and-services/sustainability/earth-days">https://www.salemstate.edu/offices-and-services/sustainability/earth-days</a>
Wed	4/08/26	5:00 PM	Board of Trustees Meeting	Petrowski Room	
Thu...	4/09/26	5:30 PM	BSB Business Pitch Competition	Recital Hall, Classroom Bldg., Harrington Campus	An evening of entrepreneurial spirit & innovation: students go head-to-head as they pitch business ideas & compete for more than \$10,000 in prizes.
Tue	4/14/26	5:00 PM	Civic Engagement Hall of Fame	Veterans Hall, Ellison Campus Ctr	Induction ceremony for UG, G, Faculty, Staff, and alumni into the Civic Engagement Hall of Fame
Thu	4/16/26	6:00 PM	International Culture Night	Veterans Hall, Ellison Campus Ctr	Our international students share performances, dress, and food from their home countries.
<b>MAY 2026</b>					
Fri	5/01/26	All Day	Research Day	Locations across campus	<b>A showcase of research by undergraduate students (morning) and graduate students (afternoon), with recognition of the faculty's scholarly excellence and achievements.</b>
Wed	5/06/26	7:00 PM	45 <sup>th</sup> Annual Creativity Awards Celebration	Sophia Gordon Center	A celebration of the arts honoring 10 students across art + design, creative writing, dance, music, & theatre, as selected by their respective faculty. Includes live performances by the honorees!
Thu	5/07/26	6:00 PM	Veterans Stole Ceremony	Veterans Hall, Ellison Campus Ctr	A recognition of those SSU graduates who have rendered military service to the nation.
Thu	5/14/26	3:00 PM	International & Study Abroad Student Graduation Ceremony	Veterans Hall, Ellison Campus Ctr	A celebration of globally engaged achievements by students, including international degree candidates, domestic students who studied abroad, & those awarded the Global Engagement Seal.
Fri	5/15/26	10:00 AM	Commencement 1	O'Keefe Center	Maguire Meservey College of Health and Human Services
Fri	5/15/26	3:00 PM	Commencement 2	O'Keefe Center	Bertolon School of Business College of Arts & Sciences (selected majors)
Sat	5/16/26	10:00 AM	Commencement 3	O'Keefe Center	McKeown School of Education College of Arts & Sciences (selected majors)
Wed	5/20/26	9:00 AM	CTI Teaching & Learning Symposium	North Campus	Annual, conference-style showcase and celebration of faculty, librarian, and staff teaching innovations, reflections, and achievements. Featuring lightning talks, poster sessions, and panel discussions.
<b>JUNE 2026</b>					
Wed	6/03/26	5:00 PM	Board of Trustees Meeting	Petrowski Room	

For details about the many events in the performing & creative arts, visit <https://www.salemstate.edu/campus-life/arts/arts-calendar>.

To view which Arts & Sciences majors will be recognized at each of the two ceremonies, visit <https://www.salemstate.edu/commencement>.



## THE 36<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CAMPUS CELEBRATION

### Monday, 26 January 2026

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The Inclusive Excellence Office warmly invites students, faculty, staff, and community members to join us for the 36th Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Campus Celebration.

This year's theme, ***Mission Possible II: Building Community, Uniting a Nation in a Nonviolent Way***, invites us to reflect, connect, and engage in meaningful dialogue that strengthens our shared commitment to justice, equity, and belonging.

Throughout the day, participants are encouraged to take part in our day of programs designed to foster community, spark conversation, and inspire action—celebrating Dr. King's enduring legacy while exploring ways we can continue his work on campus and beyond. Please see the full day of programs below. This Salem State University tradition offers something for everyone to feel included, inspired, and empowered.

#### COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

9:30 am - 10:30 am | Ellison Campus Center MLK Jr. Room

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Join us as we kick off the day of celebration and connection with breakfast.

#### CANDLELIGHT VIGIL AND FREEDOM MARCH

10:30-11 am | Ellison Campus Center Lobby

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We invite all members of our community to join us as we march from the Ellison Campus Center to the Sophia Gordon Center, where Convocation will take place. A short vigil will take place in the Lobby prior to the march.

#### CONVOCATION AND COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

11 am-12 pm | Sophia Gordon Center

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Convocation will feature a keynote address followed by an interactive community conversation exploring what preserving democracy and nonviolent collective action is like here at Salem State and beyond.

#### LEADERSHIP LUNCHEON & AWARDS

12:30-2 pm | Ellison Campus Center Veterans Hall

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Come connect with community members over a delicious lunch and celebrate outstanding SSU leaders and City of Salem Public Schools Dr. MLK Jr. Essay competition winners.



# Trusteeship: Keeping True to Mission in Challenging Times

December 12, 2025

Stephen Reno, Chancellor Emeritus, University System of New Hampshire

# The University: It's Where We Are and What We Are About

**“The university is the place where the seeds of speech first grow  
And where most of us first begin to find a voice.**

**It is neither a paradise nor the worst spot we have ever been in;  
It is a good place that continues to want to make her children better.”**

*A Bartlet Giamatti, President of Yale*

# How A University Functions

The variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an **inescapable interdependence** among governing board, administration, faculty, students, and others. The relationship calls for **adequate communication** among these components, and **full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort**.

(Statement on governance of Colleges & Universities)

# Factors Affecting US Higher Education Currently

- **Rapidly changing federal position relative to higher education**
- **Changing perceptions of ROI of a college education**
- **Affordability and student indebtedness**
- **Steady decline in the number of traditional college-age students**
- **Increased competition among colleges and universities**
- **Declining state support for higher education**
- **Pandemic's positive and negative impacts on higher education**
- **Alternative models for credentialing**

# Factors Affecting US Higher Education Currently

- **Relative lack of diversity among students and faculty**
- **Impact of social justice and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion movements**
- **Culture Wars, Intellectual Freedom, Free Speech**
- **Overall impact of Social Media and Technology**
- **Legislative and gubernatorial engagement in institutional affairs**
- **Missteps and Media Attention**

# Review of Respective Responsibilities

Board Responsibilities

Presidential Responsibilities

Faculty Responsibilities

# Responsibilities of the Board

- Ensure fulfillment of the university's Mission
- Appoint, support, assess the performance of the president
- Review all major institutional policies and plans
- Fulfill fiduciary responsibilities by approving & monitoring the annual budget, protecting the university's assets, and audit
- Relate the university to the community it serves
- Serve as advocates for the university's needs
- Assess the Board's own performance

# Responsibilities of the President

- Chief Executive Officer of the University
- Development of the university's strategic plan and attainment of its goals
- Ensures effective communication and collaboration
- Represents the university to its many constituencies
- Administers the resources of the university
- Ensures that all policies and procedures are observed
- Maintains current and secures new resources for the university

# Responsibilities of the Faculty

## With review and approval by Provost & President

- Establishment of the curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, and research
- Ensure quality of teaching, and research
- Set requirements of degrees and certificates and determines when the requirements are met
- Faculty status: recommendations in appointments, review, reappointments, promotion, tenure, and dismissal.

# Values Critical to Shared Governance

- Shared commitment to the Mission of Salem State University
- Clear understanding of and adherence to **respective roles**
  - The Board **governs**
  - University leadership **manages**
- Regular engagement with the Strategic Plan
- Regular, timely, and clear communication
- Mutual respect
- Regular assessment

# Advice From an Old Chancellor

Expect the  
unexpected



# Feedback from the Board Self-Evaluations

- General Practices
  - Apart from convenience, drawbacks to non-in-person meetings
    - Loss of informal, interpersonal exchanges (“Body Language”)
    - Technology for remote meetings should be higher quality
- Committees
  - Need to relate committee work to the Strategic Plan
  - Need greater cross committee communication
- Board Policy Making Practices
  - Need right balance between information sharing and decision making
  - Ensure policy making decisions are related to Strategic Plan (Measurables)

# Feedback

- Understanding Key Areas
  - How are **innovations** in technology (e.g., AI) affecting teaching and learning as well as administration
- Board and Mission
  - Appreciate the President's prioritization of the SSU Strategic Plan
  - Strengthen the use of Key Performance Indicators for SSU and set them in the context of comparable institutions

# Feedback

- Fiscal Health
  - Appreciate reports on investment returns, but **need comparable information on Operating and Capital budgets**
  - **Need more information of activities that affect revenue** (e.g., marketing, public relations, major campaigns, outreach efforts, so trustees can help)
  - What is being done to **increase enrollment and retention?**
- President and Senior Management Relations
  - Very good communication at present between Trustees and President
  - More in-person meetings would enhance communications overall

# Feedback

- Fundraising
  - Trustees are not engaged in **fundraising, but with training could help.**
- Shared Governance
  - Need to discuss Board succession planning to ensure appointments align with SSU's commitment to diversity
- Communication Modalities With SSU Community
  - Need better understanding of students' perspective to align priorities
  - Need more in-person contacts with the campus community
- Training
  - Need to know how SSU's budget relates to state contract negotiations

# Some Suggestions

- **Ensuring the Board's work is visibly tied to student success, enrollment growth, and innovation (e.g., AI readiness)**
  - *Suggestion: Discussion at a Board Meeting identifies for further consideration a topic related to one of the three areas noted above*
- **Strengthening collaboration and providing clearer pathways for Trustees to contribute.**
  - *One or two Trustees volunteer to work with Administration, Faculty, and Students on the chosen topic and report at the next (or forthcoming) Board Meeting.*

# SSU's AI Advisory Group

## Recommendation Report (July 2025)

### Introduction

What should Salem State University prioritize when considering the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on our community? This recommendation report draws on the perspectives of a cross-institutional collective of SSU faculty and staff who spent the 2024-25 academic year engaged with this question. A small team of advisory group members also participated in the 2024-25 [AAC&U Institute on AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum](#). Some funding for AI Advisory Group work was provided by an SSU Strategic Plan Small Project Grant.

This document is a condensed version of a longer report, prepared for the SSU President's Executive Council (PEC) in July 2025 by Eliza Bobek, Director of SSU's Center for Teaching Innovation (CTI) and Instructional Designer Jim McGrath.

### SSU AI Advisory Group Members

Lisa Bibeau (Center for Accessible Academic Resources), Eliza Bobek (Director, CTI), Allan Brockenbrough (Computer Science), Damien Boutilon (First Year Experience), Cami Condie (McKeown School of Education), Darlene Crone-Todd (Psychology), Al DeCiccio (English, Writing Center Coordinator), Felicia Hayden (Advancement), Anurag Jain (Marketing and Decision Sciences), Youn Jung Huh (Childhood Education and Care), Abby Machson-Carter (CTI), Steve Maser (Career Services), Jenny McDowell (CAAR), Jim McGrath (CTI), Eric Metchik (Criminal Justice) Scott Nowka (English), Youqin Pan (Marketing and Decision Sciences), Rukmal Ryder (Library), Steve Swartz (CIO, Information Technology Services), Mike Testa (Music and Dance), Jill Turcotte (Occupational Therapy), Amy Wachsmuth (Nursing), Anneliese Worster (Childhood Education and Care)

We have organized our recommendation report around five topics that we believe to be essential areas to consider when assessing the implications of AI for SSU:

- 1. Ethical Implications of Generative AI in Academia**
- 2. Generative AI's Impact on Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum**
- 3. Generative AI's Impact on Research and Scholarship**
- 4. Generative AI Literacies/Skills and Workforce Development**
- 5. Generative AI Usage in Operations/Administrative Contexts**

# What should AI literacy look like at SSU?

We view "AI literacy" as a university priority to help our community understand this emerging technology and its implications for our personal and professional lives. AI literacy includes understanding the **ethical, legal, and professional responsibilities and implications** of AI usage. **AI literacy does not always result in AI usage.** In fact, a commitment to understanding these technologies can help us understand when or why we may want to avoid particular tools or use-cases for ethical or pedagogical reasons. **Intentional teaching of AI literacy** is an important way of promoting equity and inclusion, particularly for marginalized populations who may have less access to these GenAI tools.

We have placed a particular emphasis on **generative AI**, which is the form of AI that has most immediately impacted our community since the launch of Open AI's ChatGPT tool in November of 2022. ChatGPT and other "**chatbots**" like Google Gemini and Microsoft Copilot have been a core priority due to their ubiquity and to the ease with which users can access these tools in online spaces. Tools like Copilot also allow users with emerging AI literacies to create customized **agents** trained on particular data for particular audiences and use-cases. And we are increasingly seeing **AI integrations** with other commonly-used technologies on campus: in writing and research tools, in programs used to create presentations and multimedia, in data analysis and visualization contexts (among other areas).

## Recommendations:

- Moving from "AI" in the abstract to considerations of specific AI tools and use-cases in our classrooms, fields, and work at SSU
- Identifying "ethical implications" in specific contexts and in relation to core SSU community values (sustainability and civic engagement, among others) and SSU's HSI-MSI status
- Developing learning outcomes that address the impact of AI tools and use-cases by students, faculty, and staff
- Reviewing specific implications for higher ed (teaching, assessment, emerging K-12 classroom AI use-cases, campus administrative workflows, student support)
- Human-centered approaches to AI usage should be taken to augment current work by the SSU community and to acknowledge concerns about overreliance on AI technologies.
- Accepting that "AI literacy" is ongoing and what it entails will change as new tools, use-cases, and perceptions continue to emerge and change.
- Providing the SSU community with clearer and more centralized guidance related to AI's impact on campus life (like a [salemstate.edu/AI](https://salemstate.edu/AI) webpage subdomain that is visible and easy to disseminate, for example) containing important information related to AI usage and available technologies; campus AI support resources; perspectives on AI from students, faculty, and staff with emerging AI literacies and expertise.

# Ethical Implications of Generative AI in Academia

AI has noteworthy potential for SSU, but we also want to highlight important cautions when exploring use-cases. Understanding and addressing the ethical considerations is crucial for ensuring responsible use of AI technologies within the university. In matters of ethics, no simple answer will ever be correct. The SSU community benefits from a nuanced understanding of AI usage and its implications when considering ethical applications of these emerging technologies.

## Recommendations:

- Ensure that many voices (for and against) AI usage from all stakeholders are heard through frequent, on-going, multidisciplinary, and action-based dialogue with the SSU community (students, faculty, staff, administrators).
- Acknowledge that many students, faculty, and staff may view AI as a threat or challenge to their investments in particular careers, types of work, forms of creativity, modes of communication, professional and personal identities.
- Consider data privacy implications of AI usage and the importance of knowing what information is safe to use with SSU-vetted AI tools and integrations.
- Consider the environmental impact of AI usage on local, national, and global contexts to ensure that AI usage aligns with university investments in sustainability. Ask questions regarding environmental and climate impact to companies looking to expand AI usage in higher education.
- Consider concerns about intellectual property and copyright when using particular AI tools and generating particular outputs (textual outputs as well as multimedia like images, presentations, video, audio, etc.).
- Be wary of marketing and hyperbole around AI tools (and AI detection tools).
- Be transparent with students and staff regarding instructor and administrative leadership perspectives on the affordances and limitations of AI implementations.
- Provide opportunities for individuals with ethical concerns regarding AI usage to opt out of AI usage when completing required coursework or required campus work whenever possible.
- Demonstrate the benefits of AI tools when relevant to the SSU community, with particular attention paid towards strategic plan priorities, commitments to accessibility and civic engagement, SSU's status as a Hispanic-Serving and Minority-Serving Institution.
- Develop clear guidance and communication regarding appropriate usage of AI tools that are vetted by SSU's Information Technology Services (ITS). Ensure that guidance acknowledges the wide range of campus digital literacies and that some campus community members may require additional support.
- Offer professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to consider the ethical implications of AI usage in their respective work.

# Generative AI's Impact on Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum

AI literacy is an emerging priority for SSU faculty, even when instructors do not want particular AI usage in their courses. A tension has emerged in parts of campus between faculty and students regarding perceptions of unsanctioned AI usage to complete course assessment activities. Conversely, some students have noted that there is a sense of distrust around their class contributions if an instructor suspects that AI tools have played some role in generating or revising content. Instructors at SSU seem interested in ways to integrate AI into coursework, efforts to resist AI-generated submissions that might meet prior assessment criteria or rubrics, and occasions to pilot and reflect on AI outputs in the context of coursework. Whatever their perspective on AI, faculty surveyed by the AI Advisory Group generally believe that their students need more AI guidance and that they themselves would stand to benefit from additional AI literacy resources and guidance. An AI syllabus statement is a helpful first step in campus AI literacy efforts, but more support would be beneficial to our instructors and our students.

## Recommendations:

- Clearer guidance should be developed and assessed by faculty governance, by relevant parties in departments, and in faculty support roles (CTI, ITS, among others) regarding SSU-sanctioned AI tools and potential use-cases of those tools in the development of course materials.
- AI syllabus statements and their development, reception, and impact should be surveyed to help instructors refine language and identify relevant AI literacy needs and priorities.
- Responses to AI's presence in courses should align with course objectives, SSU strategic plan priorities, and equitable pedagogy. Instructors should reflect on the negative implications of surveillance tactics and attempts to "AI-proof" courses.
- Instructors should consider where and how AI literacy efforts may be scaffolded into individual courses as well as degree tracks at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Transparency should be a priority for AI resources shared with students and with faculty. AI guidance should acknowledge the range of AI literacies in classrooms and on campus, and additional faculty support should be provided to help instructors develop effective communication and dialogue with students and colleagues around AI's impact.
- Student perceptions of AI and appropriate usage should be surveyed in relevant department, program, and course contexts. Attention should be paid to fostering appropriate and ethical AI usage in course contexts.
- Faculty should reflect on why students may be relying on unsanctioned AI outputs and their reasons for doing so, with attention paid to course redesign and student support needs.
- Ongoing K-12 efforts in AI literacy should be surveyed and assessed.
- Online learning contexts (particularly online asynchronous courses) may require additional guidance and support to help faculty and students assess AI's impact.

# Generative AI's Impact on Research and Scholarship

Academic research methodologies and publication practices are among the various areas impacted by widespread usage of generative AI tools. Some publishers and academic journals have developed AI policies, and academic organizations like MLA and APA are providing (and refining) guidelines related to AI citation standards. In addition to research materials and written content solicited and generated by chatbots, we have also seen an uptick in AI integrations and augmentations across digital research and writing products and platforms. Even SSU community members who would prefer not to use generative AI technologies may discover that digital tools they presently use (Microsoft Word, academic research databases) are increasingly considering and implementing AI integrations. As the SSU community assesses how to provide our students with AI best practices in relevant research and scholarship contexts, many of us are also simultaneously navigating AI's immediate impact on our own research and academic writing.

## Recommendations:

- University and departmental policies and procedures related to academic honesty and academic integrity should be re-assessed in the wake of AI's ongoing impact on research and writing. Particular attention should be paid to current limitations of so-called "AI detection" tools and their tendencies towards "false positives" and bias, the potential negative implications for accessibility via the usage of "blue books" in attempts to resist AI's impact, and the potential negative pedagogical implications of surveillance technologies in assessment contexts.
- Departments and programs should actively assess emerging AI policies relevant to academic publication guidance, citation policies, academic integrity, and tenure and promotion publication expectations (among other areas), with the understanding that these policies may change and iterate as AI technologies change and iterate.
- Campus support sectors who provide guidance on research and writing best practices (Frederick E. Berry Library and Learning Commons, Mary G. Walsh Writing Center, Salem State Center for Research and Creative Activities, among others) should internally review AI implications and implementations and develop relevant public-facing guidance for the SSU community re: AI's ongoing impact on relevant areas like research databases, citation guidelines, concerns about misinformation and AI "hallucinations," and the development and use of open educational resources.
- Campus support sectors like First Year Experience and faculty who work with first-generation college students should consider student AI needs and concerns.
- AI's impact on writing and research by students, faculty, and staff who self-identify as multilingual writers should be assessed. Particular attention should be paid to concerns about bias in reception of Standard English writing by multilingual community members, perceived benefits of digital tools and AI integrations by community members, and relevant guidance to faculty and staff reviewing writing by multilingual authors.

# Generative AI Literacies/Skills and Workforce Development

What does "workforce development" entail when considering the impact of generative AI on particular fields, careers, and employment opportunities? Some of our students are already encountering AI tools and use-cases in employment contexts. Others may be curious about potential applications of AI to professional contexts, particularly innovative and creative integrations of AI that resonate with potential employers. Some students view AI's sudden ubiquity as a potential challenge or obstacle to desired career paths, and they may in turn want to know how to discuss and amplify the negative effects of AI usage within professional spaces. Some instructors may still be assessing how AI impacts their own professional work, in addition to needing perspectives on where and how AI is being integrated or avoided in workplaces valued by our students. Attention to workforce implications of AI usage should be ongoing and should incorporate perspectives of relevant professionals, especially SSU alumni and regional employers of recent graduates. Instructors should also be empowered to analyze and critique AI use-cases in professional contexts, in order to help students demonstrate their own emerging AI literacies to employers and to improve their professional environments.

## Recommendations:

- Assess the implications of "workforce development." Define and address AI literacy skills for our students to navigate AI contexts they presently encounter and AI contexts they might encounter after graduation
- Identify particular considerations of adult learners at SSU and other digital literacy needs/contexts
- Leverage alumni networks and connections to regional employers of SSU graduates. Connect with alumni and other relevant professionals for speaking engagements, department consultations/programming for students and faculty
- Consider experiential learning contexts and implications around AI usage. For example, explore opportunities for students to collaborate with regional/national/international employers and community partners to learn more about AI implications (or to model their own emerging AI literacies).
- Develop partnerships with public and private sector organizations. Leverage companies' expertise; ideally, combine with scholarships and internships from local industry.
- Develop AI education programs to train special interest groups in the use of AI tools, such as veterans and senior citizens looking to re-enter the workforce. Investigate the potential for continuing education opportunities (aimed at reskilling the existing workforce).

# Generative AI Usage in Operations/Administrative Contexts

The university should prioritize establishing standards for the responsible and ethical use of AI in administrative operations at Salem State University (SSU). This guidance should apply to all faculty, staff, contractors, and third-party vendors who utilize AI-powered tools for administrative purposes, including—but not limited to—decision-making, process automation, data analysis, communications, and student services. We have seen potential for incorporating AI tools into operations and administrative workflows, particularly in ways that enable employees to save time on structured and repetitive tasks. We have also seen concerns related to the appropriateness of AI usage in certain contexts, questions regarding AI tool features and limitations, and requests for guidance when working with sensitive employee or student data. SSU should create professional conditions that guide community members towards appropriate AI usage when relevant to campus work, encourage self-assessment and self-critique related to the piloting and prototyping of AI workflow integrations, and ensure that a human-centered approach is taken when developing AI guidance and protocols.

## Recommendations:

- AI usage in operations and administrative contexts should align with SSU's mission, strategic objectives, and ethical standards.
- Transparency, fairness, and accountability should be prioritized in all administrative considerations of AI usage.
- Areas to consider AI usage in administrative contexts may include process automations and streamlining workflows, data analysis, student, faculty, and staff service support, human resources workflows, and campus communications.
- AI should not be used for autonomous decision-making, surveillance, or in contexts without human review and reflection on potential bias or ethical concerns.
- Relevant training, documentation, and communication should be provided by administrative leadership to relevant employees when considering AI use-cases in operations contexts. AI usage should be clearly piloted and assessed in ways that align with documented employee expectations as well as ethical considerations.
- A system for defining, reporting, and analyzing AI-related incidents should be developed and should include relevant campus stakeholders to help SSU document, assess, and respond to AI misuse, malfunctions, security breaches, or unexpected outcomes.
- AI usage should protect institutional and personal privacy by default; no institutional data should be stored or shared without authorization.
- AI usage must adhere to applicable legal and regulatory obligations, including FERPA, HIPAA, and Massachusetts data protection laws.
- AI services procured from third-party vendors must comply with SSU's data governance and cybersecurity standards. Vendors must provide clear documentation of algorithm behavior, bias mitigation strategies, and data handling procedures. All contracts must include explicit language detailing vendor accountability for AI-related risks or incidents.
- AI usage in these contexts should be reassessed at regular intervals.

# Appendix I: AI @ SSU

AI's impact on higher education is already being addressed, assessed, and debated across various campus sectors. Below is a survey of initial campus AI literacy efforts, a survey of emergent use-cases of AI tools, and a snapshot of faculty and staff publications and presentations. This list is not comprehensive but we hope it provides PEC with relevant context on considerations of AI at Salem State.

## Initial Campus AI Literacy Efforts

### AI@CTI

SSU's [Center for Teaching Innovation](#) has developed a [Teaching In The Age of AI resource page](#), which presents faculty-facing resources and highlights recent and ongoing programming. Information on this page includes:

- [Guidance on AI Course Policies](#)
- [ADAPT, CTI's Generative AI Course Design Checklist](#)
- An overview of core AI literacy topics and contexts relevant to teaching and learning: links and information on emerging tools, an overview of [chatbots](#) and prompts, advice on addressing student usage of AI that may deviate from course policies
- Information on upcoming programming and resources from previous sessions; topics covered include "Getting Started with Generative AI," generative AI course policies, and AI implications for course design and assessment

Additional programming and support from CTI includes:

- A Fall 2024 Faculty Innovation Showcase on Generative AI in The Classroom, featuring reflections from a range of SSU faculty ([recording available](#))
- Two Faculty Professional Learning Communities (FPLC) on "Teaching In The Age of AI" (2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years)
- Classroom guest lectures and course-specific AI resources for undergraduate and graduate courses
- Consultations with departments and individual faculty on topics like AI course policies, potential AI use-cases, student perceptions of AI, and emergent AI literacies relevant to fields and programs

## AI Resources and Support Elsewhere at SSU

- Lisa Bibeau and Jenny McDowell ([CAAR](#)) provide eligible students with access to [Jamworks](#), an AI note-taking app
- Youqin Pan (Marketing and Decision Sciences) has prototyped Stat Tutor, an AI agent created with Microsoft Copilot that provides student support in Statistics undergraduate courses (agent created with the support of a Strategic Plan Small Project Grant)
- Rukmal Ryder (Library) has developed a [Libguide on AI and Information Literacy](#)
- Steve Swartz, (CIO) is on the Steering Committee of the [Massachusetts Artificial Intelligence Collaborative for Higher Education](#) (MACH)
- [Career Services](#) provides students with access to [Quinncia](#), an AI tool that provides advice on resumes, cover letters, and job interviews
- SSU's Computer Science department has been teaching [courses](#) in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, among other topics (courses that pre-date the rise of generative AI)

## SSU Faculty and Staff Presentations and Publications on Generative AI

In cases with multiple authors or presenters, SSU faculty and staff are highlighted in bold. This list is not necessarily comprehensive; we received citations from members of the AI Advisory Group after requesting them.

- **Bibeau, Lisa and Jenny McDowell.** "The History of Educational AI and How We Can Use Current Tools to Support Educational Outcomes." Postsecondary Disability Training Institute (PTI). June 2024.
- **Brockenbrough, Allan**, Feild, H. Salinas, D. "Exploring LLMs Impact on Student-Created User Stories and Acceptance Testing in Software Development." ACM Technical Symposium on Computer Science Education (SIGCSE 25). 2025.  
[doi/10.1145/3641555.3705183](https://doi.org/10.1145/3641555.3705183)
- **Brockenbrough, Allan**, Salinas, D. "Using generative AI to create user stories in the software engineering classroom." IEEE CSEE&T 2024;  
[doi.org/10.1109/CSEET62301.2024.10662994](https://doi.org/10.1109/CSEET62301.2024.10662994)
- **Brockenbrough, Allan.** "Developing a Custom AI Tutor Using Your Own Instructional Materials—No Coding Required." CTI Spring Teaching and Learning Symposium, Salem State University, May 2025.
- Huh, Youn. J. "Using AI to foster critical self-reflection and anti-bias perspectives in early childhood education." CTI Spring Teaching and Learning Symposium, Salem State University, May 2025. Poster.
- Mack, Amanda. "Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into a Writing III Research-based Course." CTI Spring Teaching and Learning Symposium, Salem State University, May 2025. Poster.
- McGrath, Jim. "Fast and Furious Futures: Campus Digital Literacies, AI, and Changing Technologies." Massachusetts Colleges Online 2023 Conference. June 2023.

- McGrath, Jim. "Melting Wizards: AI, Digital Storytelling, and Data Literacy in Online and Hybrid Education." Massachusetts Colleges Online 2025 Conference. June 2025.
- Pan, Youqin. "Leveraging AI for Success: The Role of AI in an Undergraduate Statistics Course." Western Decision Sciences Institute 2025 Conference. April 2025.
- Tang, Z., von Seekamm, K., **Colina, Fernando E.**, & Chen, L. "Enhancing Student Retention with Machine Learning: A Data-Driven Approach to Predicting College Student Persistence." *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 0(0). 2025 <https://doi.org/10.1177/15210251251336372>
- Testa, Mike. "Harmonizing AI with Equity and Inclusion in Music Education Through a Bourdieusian Lens" Audio Engineering Society International Symposium on AI and The Musician. Berklee College of Music. June 2024.

## Appendix II: Suggested Readings and Resources on AI and Higher Ed

- [AI Coverage \(Inside Higher Ed\)](#)
- [Technology Coverage \(Chronicle of Higher Education\)](#)
- [The AI Con: How to Fight Big Tech's Hype and Create the Future We Want](#). (Emily Bender and Alex Hanna; HarperCollins; 2025)
- [Artificial Intelligence and Academic Professions](#) (American Association of University Professors; July 2025)
- [Artificial Intelligence and Education: A Reading List](#) (Anna Mills; JSTOR Daily; September 2023)
- [AI Language Models are Rife with Political Biases](#) (Melissa Heikkilä, *MIT Technology Review*, August 7 2023)
- [AI Now Institute](#)
- [Aligning Servingness Goals with AI Possibilities](#)
- [Distributed AI Research Institute](#)
- [Explained: Generative AI's Environmental Impact](#) (*MIT News*; January 2025)
- [HSIs, Community Colleges, and AI Chatbots](#)
- [MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on Writing and AI](#)
- [More Than Words: How To Think About Writing in the Age of AI](#) (John Warner; Basic Books; 2025)
- [Teaching with AI](#) (EDUCAUSE Resource Page)
- [Teaching With AI: A Practical Guide to a New Era in Human Learning](#) (José Antonio Bowen and C. Edward Watson; John Hopkins UP; 2024)
- [Unmasking AI: My Mission to Protect What is Human in a World of Machines](#) (Joy Buolamwini; Random House; 2023)
- [Welcome to Campus. Here's Your ChatGPT](#) (*New York Times*; June 2025; gift link)

# Adopting/Implementing AI for Student Outcomes and Operational Effectiveness

Board of Trustees Meeting  
Dec. 12, 2025

Eliza Bobek, PhD  
Assistant Vice Provost, Faculty Success and Academic Innovation  
Executive Director, Center for Teaching Innovation

# Advisory Group Overview

- **Membership:** 20+ faculty & staff across disciplines.
- **Approach:** Multidisciplinary dialogue, environmental scan, SSU outreach.
- **Focus:** Generative AI literacy, campus impact, student success.

# Five Strategic Areas

- Ethical implications of AI in academia
- Impact on teaching, learning, curriculum
- Impact on research and scholarship
- AI literacies & workforce development
- AI in operations/administrative contexts

# Call to Action

- AI is creating ongoing challenges and opportunities for innovation; clear articulation of campus trajectory needed.
- Need to acknowledge critiques and concerns about AI from students, faculty, staff sectors.
- Need for expanded cross-campus communication and centralized, accessible resources.

# Implementation Pathway

- **Phase 1 (2025–26):**
  - Build on existing AI support (CTI, CAAR, ITS, etc.).
  - Create AI Task Force and clear charges.
  - Launch AI@SSU web hub.
  - Campus data collection (perceptions, concerns, AI tools in use on campus, emerging use-cases).
- **Phase 2 (2026–28):**
  - Support piloting and innovation with campus resources.
  - Workforce partnerships and experiential learning opportunities.
  - Policy integration across research, admin, curriculum.
- **Phase 3 (2028+):**
  - Continuous reassessment of AI implications.

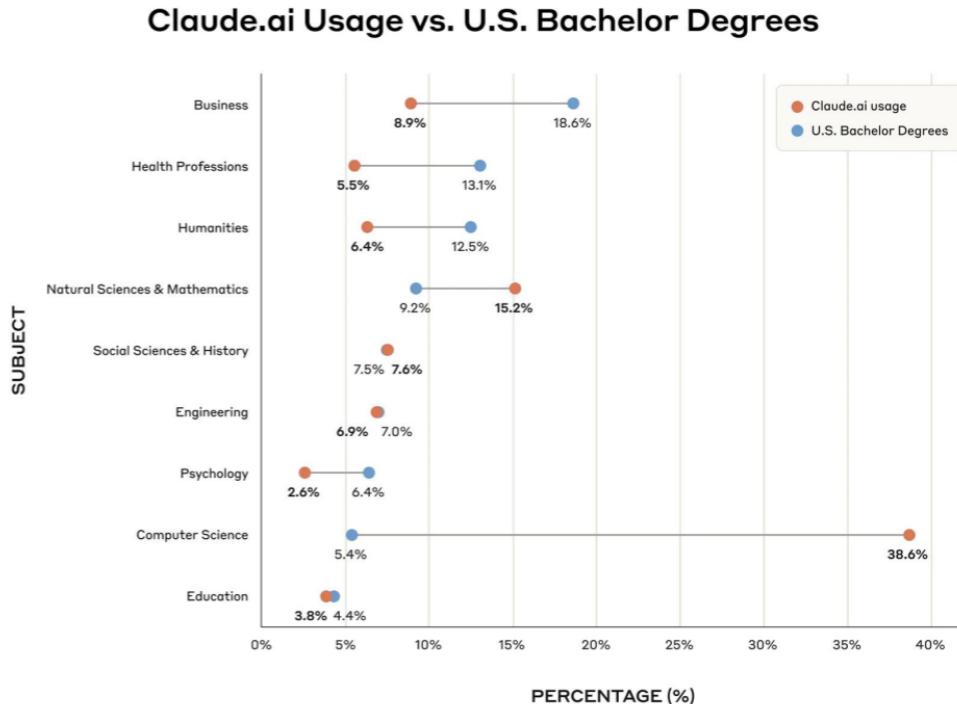
# Phase 1: Emerging AI Needs

- SSU Student Perspectives on AI
- AI Access at SSU
- Sustainable forms of AI Support at SSU
- AI at an HSI: Particular Needs, Concerns, Opportunities
- Continued AI Dialogue Across Campus Sectors
- Connections with SSU Alumni and Relevant Local/Regional Job Sectors

# Student AI Use

## AI Use Varies by Major

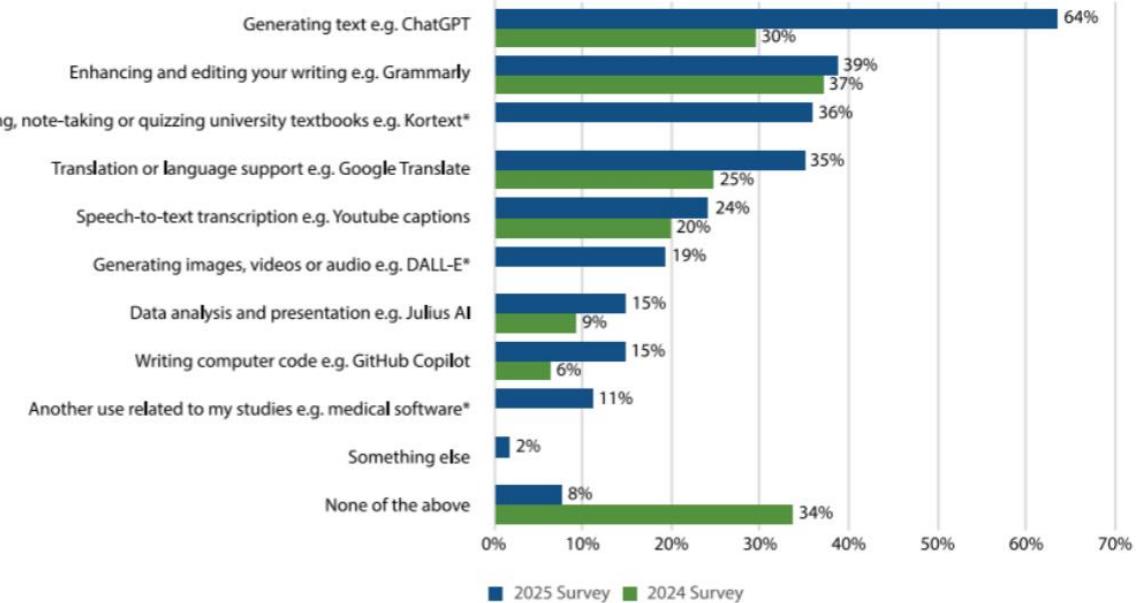
- STEM, computer science and business (according to Chronicle article)
- Humanities use AI less



# How are students using AI

- Large changes from 2024 to 2025
- Large numbers using AI to generate text

Figure 1 What have you used AI for?

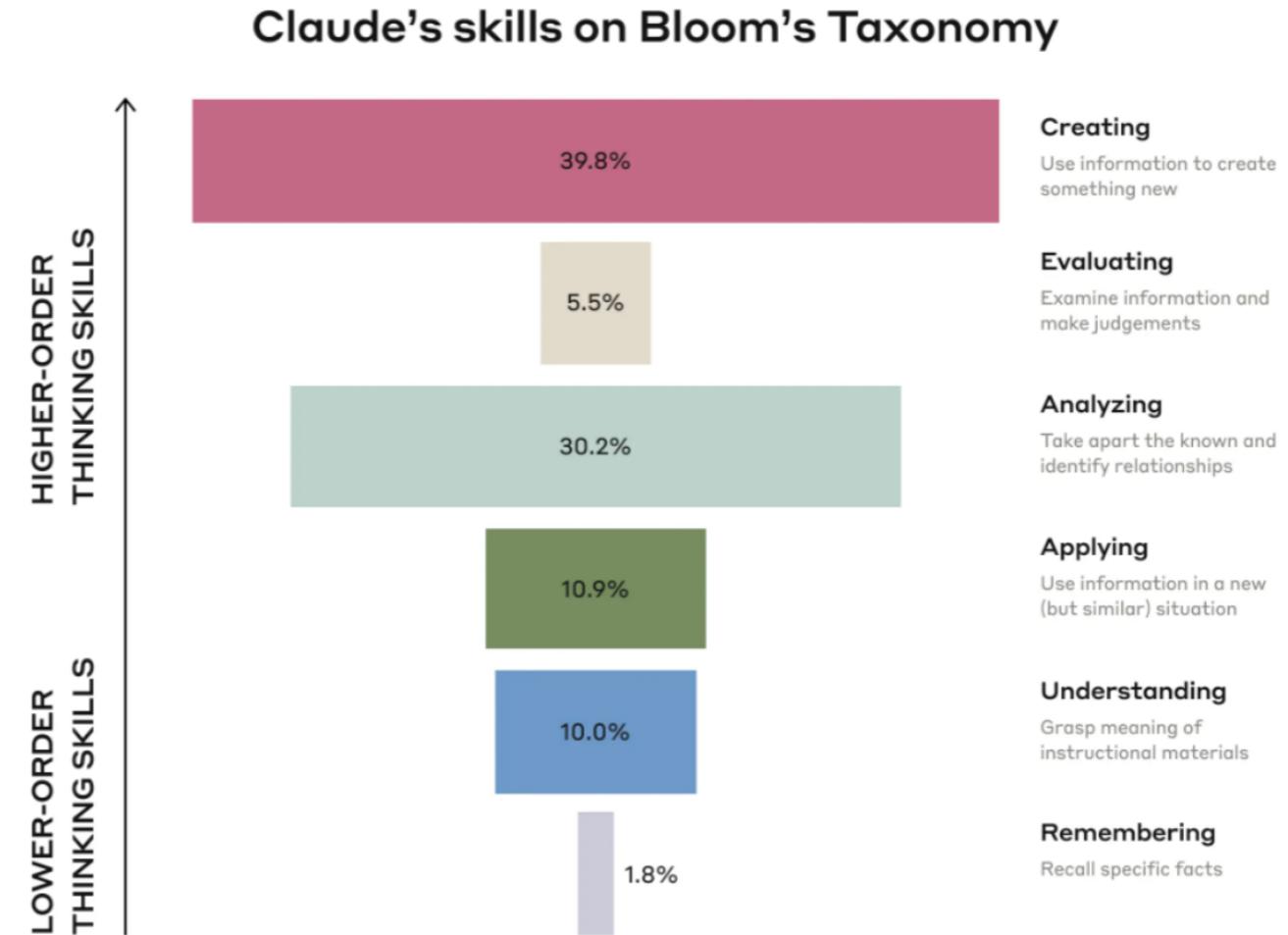


*'Which of the following have you used artificial intelligence (AI) for this academic year? (Include AI used for any purpose, including your studies, employment, hobbies and so on.)' \* indicates the option is new in 2025. Some options have been updated in small ways to reflect technological developments*

Freeman, J. (2025). Student generative AI survey 2025. Higher Education Policy Institute: London, UK.

# AI being used for higher-order skills

- AI can provide students with the ‘illusion of competence’ and ‘cognitive offloading’



The cognitive skills that are exhibited by Claude in conversations with students, based on Bloom's Taxonomy. Descriptions of skills from [University of Florida's Center for Instructional Technology and Training](#).

# AI Student Survey

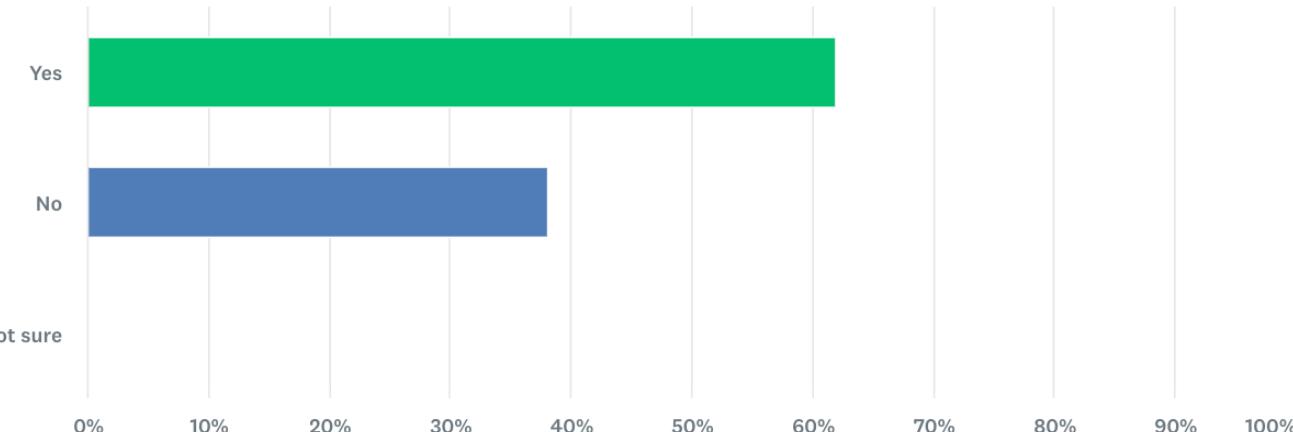
Q2

Customize

Export ▾

Have you or do you currently make use of generative AI tools (chatbots like ChatGPT or Microsoft Copilot, among others; AI integrations in other digital tools) as part of your studies at SSU during the 2024-25 academic year or during the Fall 2025 semester?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



# AI Student Survey

Q7

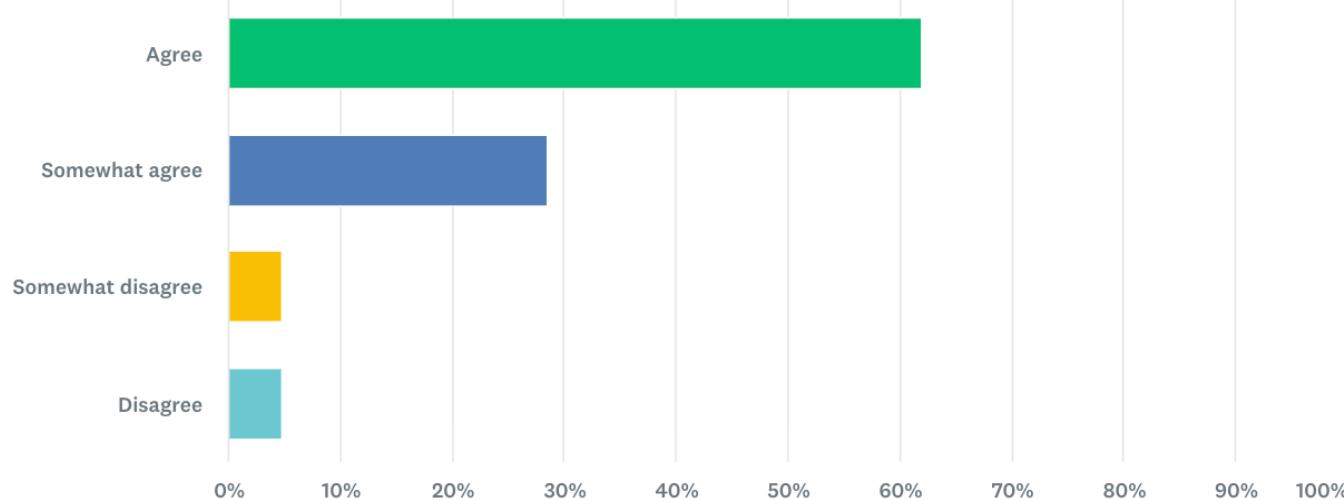


Customize

Export ▾

I have ethical concerns about AI's usage that make me reluctant to incorporate it into my work at SSU.

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



# AI Student Survey

- "...Human beings can write emails, read documents, analyze text, create art - it's kind of our whole thing. If someone cannot send a professional email without the help of ChatGPT, their issue should not be solved by asking ChatGPT to do it for them. If a student at a state institution cannot write a 5 page essay, they need a tutor, not a ChatGPT subscription to "generate an outline" like I've heard some educators encourage. There are advertisements for Google Gemini where a father uses Gemini to generate a bedtime story for his kid. Like come on! Come up with a story! ..."

# AI Student Survey

"I'd like AI to be used for practical reasons such as simplifying tasks, explaining concepts in a simple way, or summarizing large amounts of information. any other uses will tend to just backfire and cause more harm than good."

# AI Student Survey

"As an artist and musician, I think using AI to create art or even copy it for classes is destructive and harmful to human creation. Artists make a living from the creativity only they can produce, and AI is making that individuality seem like it is useless. On the other side of things, using AI to complete assignments is harmful to human knowledge and education. I have seen many students copy and paste what ChatGPT generates and pass it in without a second thought. Copying is not learning. I understand the use of students using it as a way to get ideas for where to start, but that's where it should stop."

# AI Student Survey

"There is no such thing as ethical usage of AI. Justify it to yourselves all you want, pass it off as a new progression of technology that “everyone will have to use eventually,” but it’s inherently evil and a huge step backward in human progression, efforts to create a cleaner/healthier planet, and the beauty of art. The more we excuse even the smallest uses of AI the closer we get to a world where people no longer write their own essays, a world where every painting is a self-fed mashup of human and inhuman works, and even the people we see and their voices that we hear online will all be fake."

# Student Engagement



## SALEM STATE AI LEAGUE LAUNCH EVENT

**Tuesday, January 27 – 11:30 AM  
Veterans Hall**

### **COME LAUNCH S<sup>2</sup>AIL WITH US!**

Join us as we kick off the Salem State AI League (S<sup>2</sup>AIL) – a new community for students interested in Artificial Intelligence, technology, and innovation.

#### **EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:**

-  **Guest Speaker** – Inspiring talk on AI, innovation, and the future of work
-  **Small Business Owners Discussion Panel**
  - Hear how local business owners are using AI
  - Learn about real-world applications and opportunities
-  **Lunch & Social** – Enjoy food, connect with fellow students, speakers, and community partners  
Meet the S<sup>2</sup>AIL leadership team and learn how to get in

# Generative Academic Insights

Fall '25 series co-facilitated by CTI's Jim McGrath

**Student Perceptions of AI** (Nick Geron, Geography and Sustainability)

**AI as a Teaching Partner** (Allan Brockenbrough, Computer Science)

**AI, Linguistic Bias, and Other Critiques / Concerns** (Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello, Interdisciplinary Studies and American Ethnic Studies)

**Thinking With AI** (Jonathan Fitzgerald, English)

# Faculty Integration Examples

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Computer Science: Prof. Allan Brockenbrough has developed AI tutor prototype tools and engages undergraduates in AI's implications on programming in courses.

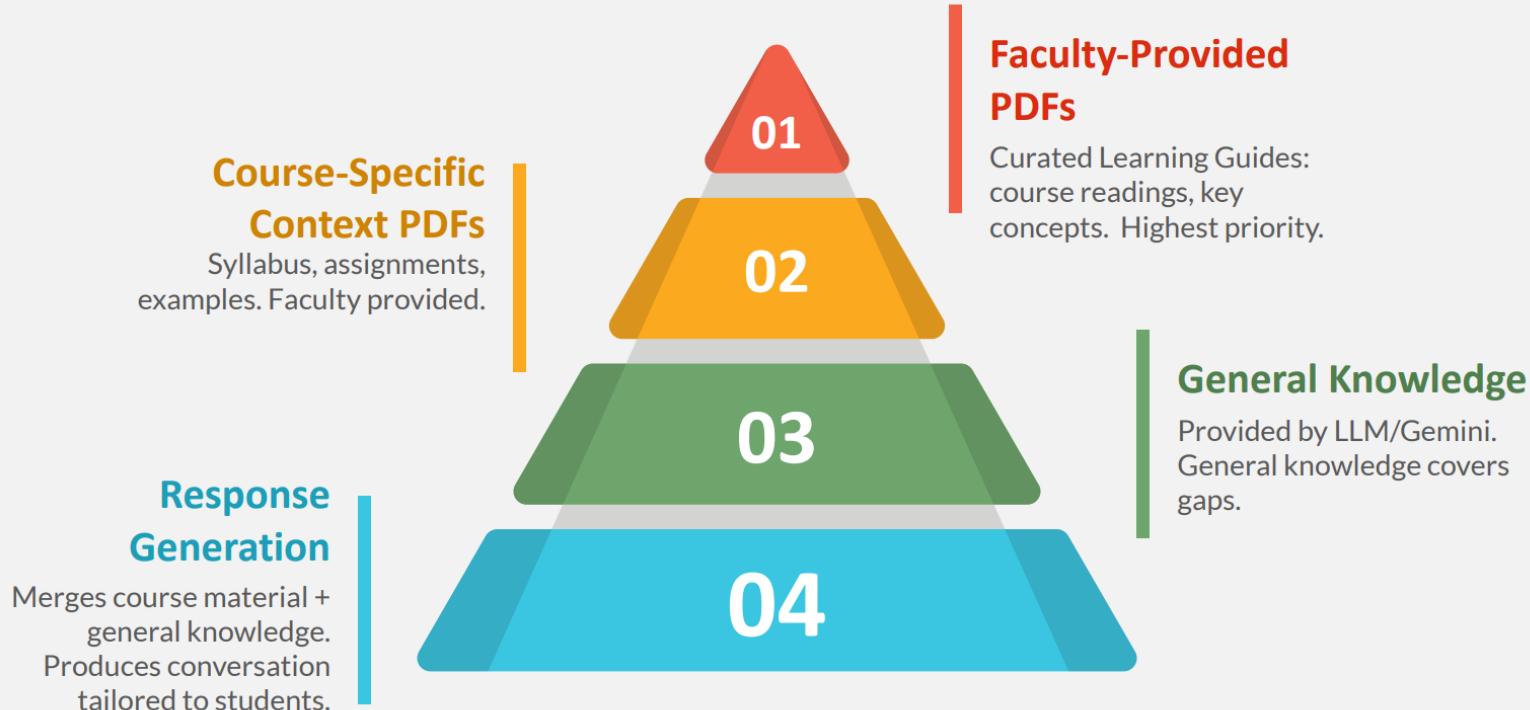
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Early Childhood Education: Prof. Youn Jung Huh focuses on AI implications with graduate students in Critical Issues and Controversies in Early Childhood Education.

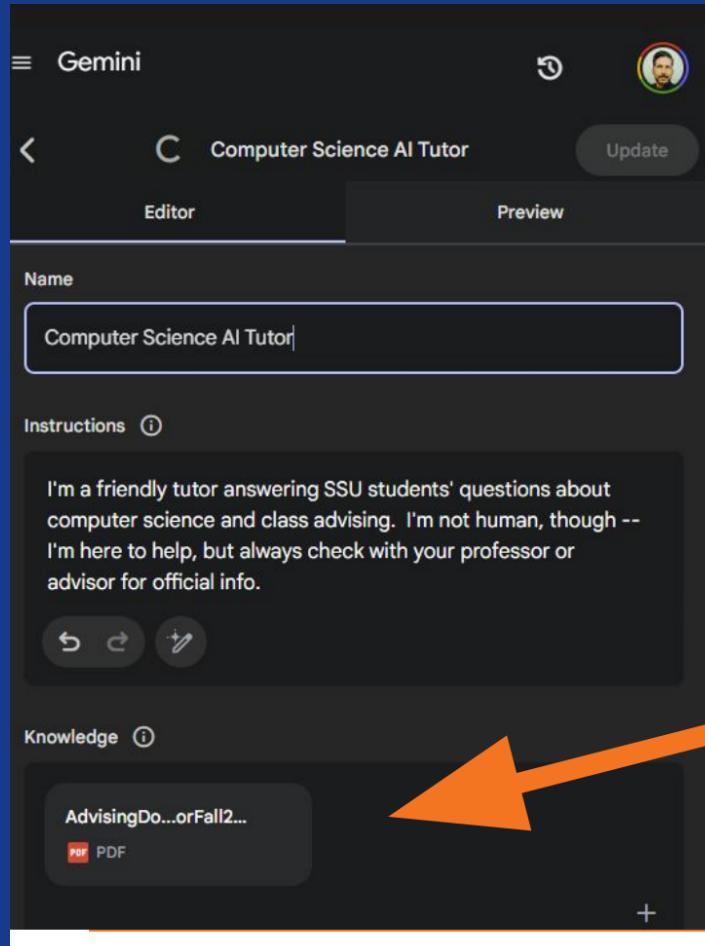
# Seven Ways to Use AI in the Classroom



# How Customized Information Works



Reduces risk of chatbot giving misinformation. Faculty provided PDFs serve as the base.



The screenshot shows the Gemini AI interface. At the top, it says "Gemini" and "Computer Science AI Tutor". Below that, there are tabs for "Editor" (which is selected) and "Preview". The "Name" field is set to "Computer Science AI Tutor". The "Instructions" section contains the following text: "I'm a friendly tutor answering SSU students' questions about computer science and class advising. I'm not human, though -- I'm here to help, but always check with your professor or advisor for official info." The "Knowledge" section shows a PDF titled "AdvisingDo...orFall2..." with a "PDF" button next to it. There are also "Edit" and "Preview" buttons at the bottom of the configuration area.

# Mechanics: Example Doing This Using Gemini

1. How I want the tutor to behave. The **kickstart prompt**

2. **Your PDFs.** Give the tutor the information you want it to use. I'm giving it department info on requirements for majoring in CS at SSU



# Faculty Integration Examples

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**English:** Prof. Jim McGrath is teaching a graduate-level course in Topics in Digital Humanities with an emphasis on AI in Summer 2026; students are primarily K-12 educators in MA.

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**Geological Sciences:** Prof. Doug Allan has developed custom AI bots and tools for use in data literacy contexts with students.

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**Psychology:** Prof. Mia Tran is redesigning a Statistics for Psychological Research undergraduate course to incorporate a personalized AI tutor for student use

# Faculty Integration Examples

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**Music and Dance:** Prof. Mike Testa has created a course titled AI in Audio, Video, and Social Media Production (approved by the department and coming soon).

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**Occupational Therapy:** Prof. Twyla Fink has piloted use of Research Rabbit in undergraduate research course contexts with students.

# Faculty Integration Examples

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**Accounting:** Zlatinka Blaber works with CGA Creative and utilizes Riipen with undergraduates in a First Year Seminar course on a project called "Sustainability Storytelling with AI."

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**Marketing and Decision Sciences:** Youqin Pan has developed an AI Stat Tutor with students in a Quantitative Analysis undergraduate course.

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# Cross-campus AI Integration

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English Department: CTI is developing student-facing English Department AI resources for faculty to use and assess in Spring 2026.

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Social Work: Prof. Monica Leisey has assembled a team of Social Work instructors, technical specialists, and instructional designers to develop AI resources for use in graduate-level social work course contexts.

# Operational Effectiveness

- Senior leaders piloting Microsoft CoPilot
- e.g. Automated Assistant
- Prompt: "summarize my email from the past week. make sure the email is one that I have not already responded to. quantify the importance of the email on a scale of 1 to 5. Prioritize a set of actions for follow up on these emails. If the priority is 3 or greater, draft an initial reply."



I found **14 unread emails from the past week**. Below is a prioritized summary with importance ratings (1 = low, 5 = high), suggested follow-up actions, and draft replies for those rated **3 or higher**:

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**High Priority (Importance: 4)**

**[New Webinar] Plan Lessons That Stick: Boost Retention and Engagement Through Smarter Course Design**

**From:** Webinars, Harvard Business Impact

**Summary:** Invitation to a free webinar on December 11 about improving course design and student engagement. Includes actionable frameworks for faculty.

**Action:** Register if interested; share with faculty colleagues.

**Draft Reply:**

*"Thank you for sharing this opportunity. I'm interested in attending the webinar on December 11. Could you confirm if registrants will receive access to the recording afterward?"* External: [New Webi...]

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**Medium-High Priority (Importance: 3)**

**The AI Teammate: Three Roles to Build Student AI Fluency**

**From:** Faculty Focus

**Summary:** Article and conference details on integrating AI into teaching responsibly. Includes strategies for critical thinking and ethical use.

**Action:** Consider registering for the December 2–3 conference; share insights with instructional design team.

**Draft Reply:**

*"Thank you for this resource. I'm exploring ways to integrate AI responsibly into our curriculum. Could you provide more details on session recordings and pricing for the December conference?"* External: The AI Tea...

---



I found **several emails you have not replied to**. Here's a prioritized summary with importance ratings (1 = low, 5 = high), suggested follow-up actions, and draft replies for those rated **3 or higher**:

**High Priority (Importance: 5)**

**Reminder - BOT Off-site presentation materials due to the President's Office Monday, 11/24**

**From:** Lynne Montague

**Summary:** Reminder to submit Board of Trustees Off-site presentation materials by noon today.

**Action:**

- Confirm if your materials were submitted. If not, send immediately.

**Draft Reply:**

*"Thank you for the reminder. I'll finalize and send my presentation shortly. Please confirm if any additional formatting or file type requirements apply."* Reminder - BOT Off...

**Medium-High Priority (Importance: 4)**

**Follow up Seal of Excelencia**

**From:** Elisa Castillo

**Summary:** Suggests meeting in December or January to discuss CTI contributions to the Seal report and future collaboration.

**Action:**

- Propose meeting dates and agenda.

**Draft Reply:**

*"Thank you for reaching out. I'd be happy to meet to discuss CTI's contributions and collaboration opportunities. Would the week of December 9 work for you?"* Follow up Seal of Ex...

**Medium Priority (Importance: 3)**

# Implementation Pathway

- **Phase 1 (2025–26):**
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  - Policy integration across research, admin, curriculum.
- **Phase 3 (2028+):**
  - Continuous reassessment of AI implications.

# Further Reading on AI

- Artificial Intelligence and Academic Professions (American Association of University Professors / AAUP, 2025)
- Building a Culture for Generative AI Literacy in College Language, Literature, and Writing (MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on AI and Writing, 2024)
- College Student Views on AI (*Inside Higher Ed*, 2025)
- How AI is Changing Higher Education (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2025)
- Integrating Artificial Intelligence (Massachusetts AI Task Force Recommendations, 2024)



# Center for Teaching Innovation

- [Artificial Intelligence and Academic Professions](#) (American Association of University Professors / AAUP, 2025)
- [Building a Culture for Generative AI Literacy in College Language, Literature, and Writing](#) (MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on AI and Writing, 2024)
- [College Student Views on AI](#) (Inside Higher Ed, 2025)
- [How AI is Changing Higher Education](#) (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2025)
- [Integrating Artificial Intelligence](#) (Massachusetts AI Task Force Recommendations, 2024)

# Advancing Salem State's Strategic Plan

Prepared by: Rita P. Colucci  
Vice President and General Counsel

# Strategic Plan Goals

1. Academic Excellence and Active Learning
2. Civic Engagement and Public Good
3. Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
4. Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action
5. Campus Community and Culture
6. Operational Excellence and Infrastructure
7. Financial Vitality and Sustainability

# Timing of Strategic Plan

- Plan is 2023 to 2028
- Completed two years of implementation
- Currently in year three of implementation

# Determining Progress and Priorities

- Senior leaders meet twice a year for a three or four hour meeting to review:
  - Discuss progress on the year's Must-Do's
  - Discuss priorities for next academic year

# Annual Reports

- Produced each year
- Appended to this presentation

# FY25 Must-Do's

- **Experiential Learning**
  - Reviewed all 121 programs; nearly all require experiential courses
  - Expanded internships, COIL, study abroad
  - New Internship Policy; course tagging underway
  - Riipen expansion in progress

**Status:** Ongoing
- **Online Learning Hub**
  - Hub and redesigned Canvas template underway
  - Assistant Director hired
  - Faculty cohorts + workshops launched
  - Exploring micro-credentials

**Status:** Ongoing
- **Year of Advising**
  - Expanded peer advising
  - 40+ Academic Planner trainings
  - Clearer advising roles; KPIs identified

**Status:** Ongoing

# FY25 Must-Do's

- **Career Readiness & CliftonStrengths**
  - 41 participants; culturally affirming workshops
  - NACE competencies integrated
  - Expanding into FYS and alumni/employer engagement
  - **Status:** Ongoing
- **General Education & Assessment**
  - PAGE established; FYS and PGR assessments piloted
  - QUEST branding launched; workflows strengthened
  - **Status:** Ongoing
- **Data & AI Initiatives**
  - Data Dashboard launched
  - AI Advisory Group formed; faculty AI programming expanded
  - AI tutor funded
  - **Status:** Ongoing
- **Civic Engagement**
  - Carnegie application submitted
  - Civic learning study completed (77 programs)
  - Major HSI/MSI civic events hosted
  - **Status:** Ongoing/Completed
- **Justice, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**
  - HIP tracking systems in development
  - Preparing first HSI grant (Jan 2026)
  - Inclusive Excellence Council restructured
  - Early-career faculty mentoring launching 2025
  - **Status:** Ongoing

# FY25 Must-Do's

- **Environmental Stewardship**
  - Geothermal and decarbonization projects underway
  - Solar arrays installed/expanding
  - 102+ trees planted; Tree Committee in place
  - Sustainability tagging completed
  - **Status:** Ongoing/Completed
- **Campus Community & Culture**
  - Dining access improvements
  - 15+ staff trained in Title IX/threat response
  - ERG budgets doubled; participation strong
  - Equity audit prep underway
  - **Status:** Ongoing
- **Operational Excellence**
  - 370+ employee computers replaced
  - “Take-A-Class” launched
  - PageUp implemented and training underway
  - BOLD funded (\$56.2M) and construction started
  - **Status:** Completed/Ongoing
- **Financial Vitality**
  - \$58.8M raised (78% of campaign goal)
  - Financial aid policy overhaul completed
  - Budget tools and reserve training underway
  - Conference revenue strategy in development
  - Global engagement staffing expanding
  - **Status:** Ongoing/Completed

# FY26 Must-Do's

- **Goal 1: Academic Excellence**

- Redesign and evaluate First Year Seminar (FYS); develop shared outcomes and templates
- Define assessment outcomes at course and program levels
- Build a 3-year roadmap for online and adult education
- Expand experiential learning integration
- Establish a shared international recruitment roadmap
- Launch early-career faculty mentoring program
- Strengthen academic identity and pathways (HS → SSU → workforce/grad school)
- Update AI ethics, policies, and syllabi requirements

- **Goal 2: Civic Engagement**

- Make engaged dialogue a visible campus practice
- Integrate civic learning across curriculum
- Launch institutional civic learning outcomes and assessment plan
- Strengthen community-engaged research (CER) practices
- Leverage SSU's reputation to boost enrollment

# FY26 Must-Do's

- **Goal 3: Justice, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**
  - Define campus-wide “servingness” and align HSI and Inclusive Excellence
  - Implement scaled servingness training
  - Build infrastructure to support HSI/MSI and IE initiatives
  - Use NISS partnership to guide retention strategy
- **Goal 4: Environmental Stewardship**
  - Advance decarbonization, solar, EV, HVAC, and sustainability curriculum
  - Submit Arboretum application; replace EV stations
  - Expand partnerships with DCR and Salem Sound
- **Goal 5: Campus Community & Culture**
  - Strengthen safety training, communication, and emergency readiness
  - Improve student-facing services—dining, IDs, weekend activity options
  - Complete and share the campus climate survey
  - Launch inclusive professional development plan
  - Promote resilience, 24/7 support, and mental health pop-ups

# FY26 Must-Do's

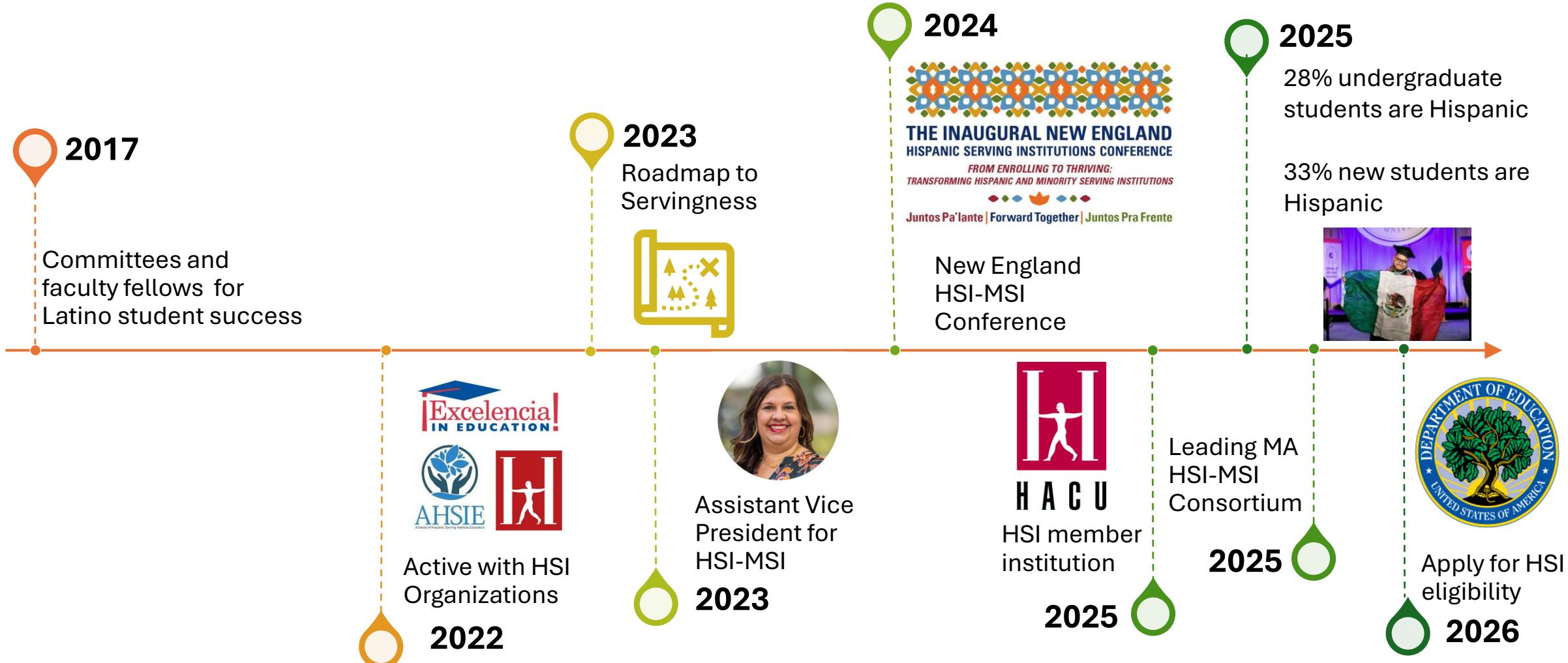
- **Goal 6: Operational Excellence**
  - Launch Viking Connect and StarRez
  - Complete Windows upgrades
  - Improve space planning, reservations, purchasing, AP, and budgeting systems
  - Advance BOLD implementation
- **Goal 7: Financial Vitality**
  - Align BOLD fundraising with department needs
  - Grow unrestricted philanthropy
  - Expand summer conferencing and online program enrollment
  - Monitor federal funding volatility and prep for potential debt issuance
  - Improve structured grant oversight and accountability

# 2028 Priorities

- Advising Model
- AI
- Data Governance and Data Systems
- Student Enrollment and Housing
- Capital Project
- Event Spaces

# Questions?

# Salem State's Journey – first Public 4-year HSI





# What we are doing this year

## Enrollment

- Increase language access for first generation families that are English Language Learners
- Strengthen relationships with community colleges (HSIs)

## Retention

- Increase coaching supports for sophomores (Inside Track)
- Increase culturally affirming programing and leadership opportunities
- New faculty mentoring program focused on Servingness.

- Reviewing campus data

- To identify and close gaps
- tell our story – apply for the Seal of *Excelencia*
- Seek funding opportunities that will make an impact

- Helping to launch a MA HSI-MSI consortium

- 17 institutions
- support from DHE



EAB

Salem  
STATE UNIVERSITY

# Navigating Upheaval on Four Fronts

EAB's 2025 State of the Sector

Strategic Advisory Services

Joining You Today...



**Brittany Motley, PhD**  
Director,  
EAB Strategic Research

[bmotley@eab.com](mailto:bmotley@eab.com)

# Navigating Upheaval on Four Fronts

EAB's 2025 State of the Sector

## External Accountability

*Adapting to Tenuous Public Support and Heightened Political Scrutiny*

## Financial Sustainability

*Confronting Business Model Strain Amid Dual Revenue and Cost Shocks*

## Market Relevance

*Preparing Students for an AI-Transformed Knowledge Economy with Fewer Jobs*

## Institutional Agility

*Driving Campus Change to Unlock Opportunity in a Disrupted Sector*



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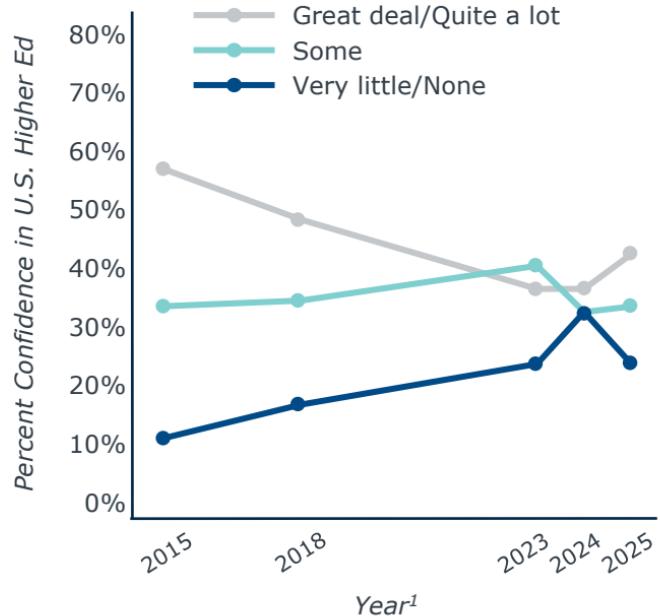
*Preparing Students for an AI-Transformed Knowledge Economy with Fewer Jobs*

## **Institutional Agility**

*Driving Campus Change to Unlock Opportunity in a Disrupted Sector*

# Finally Making Some Inroads on Public Trust

## After a Decade of Decline, Confidence in Higher Ed Shows Signs of Rebounding...



## ...But Underlying Drivers Reveal Plenty of Work Left to Be Done

✓ Communications about higher ed's contributions to research and innovation helped move the needle

✓ Chipped away at critiques about being too expensive and loan debt

✗ Lost ground with those who are not confident about political agendas (e.g., too liberal) and poor leadership

✗ Lost ground with those who are confident about the need for a degree and preparing students to get ahead

1) Gallup survey data is only available for 2015, 2018, 2023, 2024, and 2025.

# What's Changed?

## A Decade's Worth of Disruption in Just One Year



### Student Loans & Aid

- Grad PLUS eliminated
- Parent PLUS capped
- New student loan conditions
- Hardship provisions removed
- “Workforce Pell” created



### Immigration & Intl Enrollment

- Social media screening for visas
- 6000+ student visas revoked
- ICE raids now allowed on campuses
- Some local police deputized as immigration agents



### Research Funding

- 4000+ research grants cancelled
- 15% cap on F&A attempted by four agencies
- Forward funding policy at NIH
- Political appointees reviewing grant applications



### Accreditation & Accountability

- Accreditation transition streamlined
- Program-level earnings accountability tests



### Campus Culture & Climate

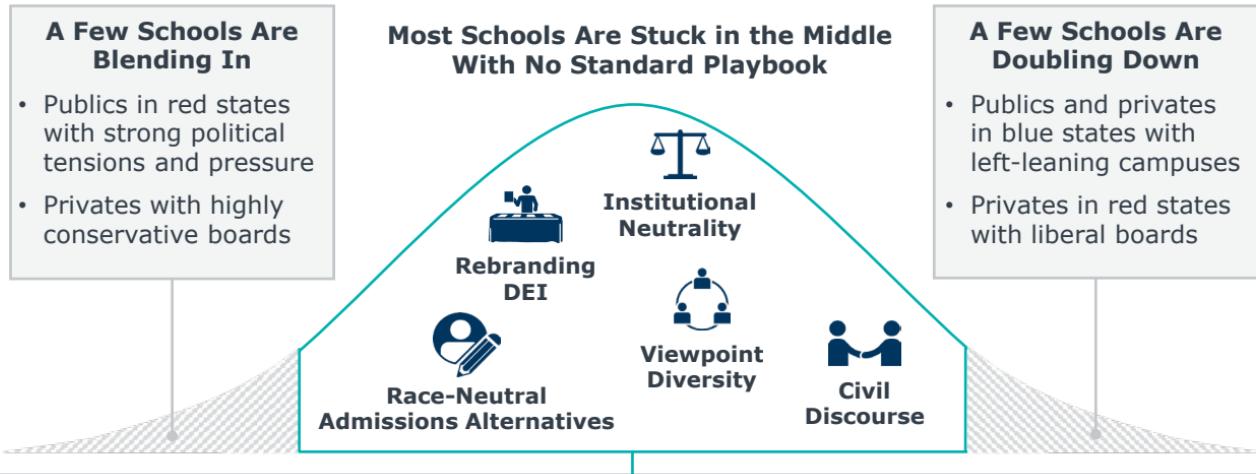
- Race-based practices labelled as illegal DEI
- Anti-Semitism task force formed
- 100+ civil rights investigations initiated

**75%**

Alignment between Trump Administration's policy changes and Project 2025 playbook



# Responding to Accusations of Ideological Bias



## Low-Regrets Actions

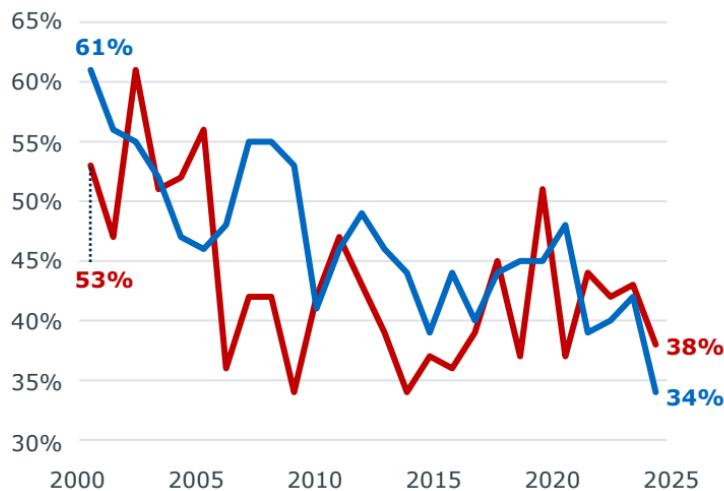
- Promote Universal Benefits and Supports**
  - ❑ Reposition as helping all students thrive
  - ❑ Frame around shared outcomes, not identity
  - ❑ Show efficiency and fairness in resource use
- Apply a Mission Test for Institutional Statements**
  - ❑ Limit to cases that defensibly link to core mission/operations
  - ❑ Default to silence in gray zones
  - ❑ Ground in values (not neutrality)
  - ❑ Encourage individual expression
- Create Viewpoint Neutral Protest/Speaker Protocols**
  - ❑ Emphasize business continuity and TPM<sup>1</sup> stipulations
  - ❑ Codify the escalation and enforcement ladder
  - ❑ Commit to equal access for counter-protesters

<sup>1</sup>) Time, place, manner.

# More Staying Power Than You Might Think

## Democratic Favorability at a Historic Low... And Unlikely to Swing Back by 2028

Percent of US adults with a favorable opinion of the Republican Party and Democratic Party<sup>1</sup>, Gallup



**73%**

Of Democrats hold a favorable opinion of their own party, compared to 91% of Republicans—another **historic low** for Democrats

## Bipartisan Issues That Will Outlast Party Shifts



**Program value:** Demand for completion gains, provable outcomes, and debt-to-earnings accountability



**DEI & free speech disputes:** Continued legal challenges, scrutiny in red states, and lasting program rollbacks



**Immigration uncertainty:** Slow recovery of inflows alongside persistent, heightened security vetting



**Research funding politics:** National-interest priorities and rising pressure to prove ROI on federal dollars



**Accreditation pressure:** Expectations for measurable outcomes and clear reporting

<sup>1</sup> Participants were asked if they have a favorable, unfavorable, or no opinion of each party.

# EAB's State of the Sector

## Navigating Upheaval on Four Fronts

### **External Accountability**

*Adapting to Tenuous Public Support and Heightened Political Scrutiny*

### **Financial Sustainability**

*Confronting Business Model Strain Amid Dual Revenue and Cost Shocks*

### **Market Relevance**

*Preparing Students for an AI-Transformed Knowledge Economy with Fewer Jobs*

### **Institutional Agility**

*Driving Campus Change to Unlock Opportunity in a Disrupted Sector*

# Synchronized Compression Hits Higher Ed Budgets

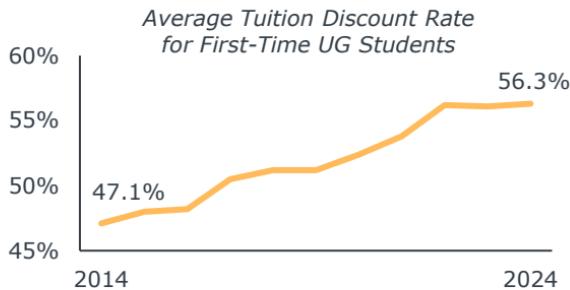
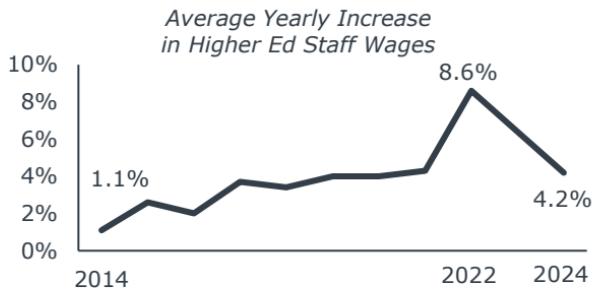
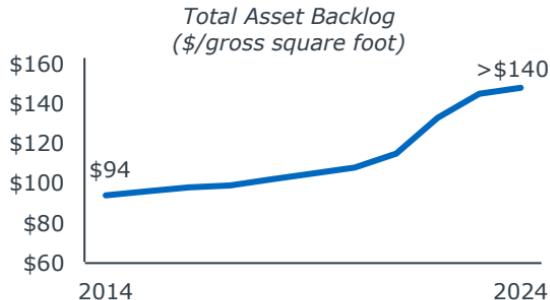
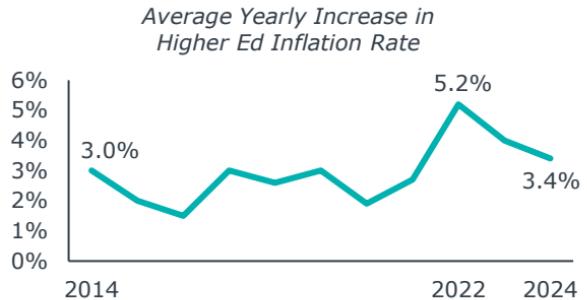


Institutional Expenses			Institutional Revenue		
Source	Outlook	Pressures	Source	Outlook	Pressures
Instruction		<i>Salary growth outpacing revenue; static workload and delivery models</i>	Tuition & fees		<i>Demographic decline; global volatility; ROI skepticism</i>
Academic & student support		<i>High labor costs; growing demand for high-touch support</i>	Government funding		<i>Federal policy pressures (especially research), weakened state budgets</i>
Institutional support		<i>Escalating compliance, legal, technology costs</i>	Auxiliaries		<i>Margins compressed by inflation; uneven across units</i>
Research & public service		<i>High-cost infrastructure; new compliance mandates, federal cuts</i>	Private gifts		<i>Major donors holding steady; political scrutiny and fatigue looming</i>
Auxiliaries		<i>Capital renewal and deferred maintenance burdens</i>	Investment returns		<i>Endowment taxes; inflation; market volatility reducing real value</i>
Financial aid		<i>Rising aid demand amid discounting wars; waning federal support</i>	Private grants & contracts		<i>Dependent on federal flows; shifting priorities post-election</i>



# Converging Cost Challenges Squeeze Budgets

Cumulative Nature of Costs Means Even Declines Wouldn't Be Felt for Years



Source: Commonfund Institute, [Higher Education Price Index May 2025](#); Gordian, [The State of Facilities in Higher Education, 12th Edition](#); NACUBO, [2024 Tuition Discounting Study](#); EAB interviews and analysis.



# Cross-Subsidization a Double-Edged Sword

## Higher Ed Has Long Depended on Certain Revenue Streams...



Full-pay and  
intl students



Master's  
programs



Lower-division  
courses

## ...to Underwrite More Resource-Intensive Parts of the Enterprise



Research  
Enterprise



Athletics  
Portfolio



Upper-division  
seminars

## Strategic Opportunities

### Portfolio buffer

- ▶ Smooth volatility across units to enable long-term bets despite short-term swings

### Scale catalyst

- ▶ Channel surplus from strong performers to expand reach and brand impact

### Access engine

- ▶ Reallocate margin to broaden affordability and inclusion for more students

### Innovation runway

- ▶ Provide space for new ideas and programs to develop before self-sustaining

## Potential Risks

### Legacy default

- ▶ Concentrate dollars in outdated priorities based on past precedent

### Tradeoff blindness

- ▶ Mask real resource choices, crowding out intentional decision-making

### Performance cover-up

- ▶ Obscure underperformance and disincentivize improvement

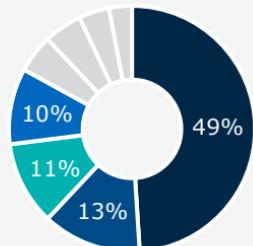
### Shock multiplier

- ▶ Spread a single shock across entire campus through hidden linkages

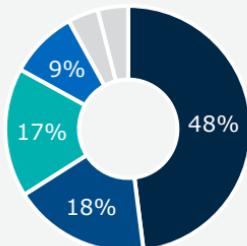
# Cost Rigidity Sets Higher Ed's Real Budget Ceiling

## 56% of All Expenses Are Labor, With Half Dedicated to Instruction

Breakdown of Total Salary Expenditures by Category<sup>1</sup>



Public Institutions



Private Institutions

## Shifts in Cost Management Mark a New Era of Cost Discipline

### Prestige No Longer a Shield



"Stanford Lays Off 363 Employees"



"Duke Doubles Down on Cost-Cutting"

### Academic Labor Fair Game



"WVU Board Approves Dramatic Academic Cuts to Address \$45M Deficit"



"William Paterson Plans to Lay Off 100 Full-Time Professors"

### Legislating Labor Productivity



"Florida university system approves new tenure policy, spurning faculty critics"



"4/4 Teaching Load Becomes Law at Most of Wisconsin's Public Universities"

<sup>1</sup> Other expenditures in public graph: Research (5%), Auxiliary Enterprises (5%), Public Service (4%), and All Other Categories (3%). Other expenditures in private graph: Auxiliary Enterprises (4%) and All Other Categories (4%).

# Addressing a Program Proliferation Problem

## University of Lynchburg Takes Bold Steps to Better Position Itself for the Future

**70%**

Of undergrads are  
studying in **eight** majors



**95%**

Of undergrads are  
studying in **21** majors

**5%**

Of undergrads are  
studying in **30** majors

“

Other schools are cutting programs, and for the sake of our future, we must too. But we are going a step further. For the sake of our people—our students, faculty, and staff—we are **restructuring the entire university** around them.”

*Alison Morrison-Shetlar  
President*

**25**

Minors eliminated

**12**

Undergraduate  
programs eliminated

**5**

Graduate programs  
eliminated

**40**

Faculty positions  
eliminated (over  
3-year period)

**40**

Staff positions  
eliminated

**4**

Vice president  
positions eliminated

# What Thriving Schools Will Do



## Hardwire Portfolio Discipline

Make pruning and reinvestment the norm, reallocating resources to high-demand, high-completion programs



## Cap Space Growth

Impose net-zero space policies or pivot to alternative delivery models to reduce dependency on facilities



## Manage Cost Per Graduate

Measure efficiency by total spend per completer, linking cost management to retention and outcomes



## Borrow (Don't Build) Scale

Default to shared services, consortia, and outsourced functions rather than duplicating infrastructure



## Invest in Productivity

Use process improvement and digital tools to bolster faculty and staff capacity and service quality



## Engineer Cost Flexibility

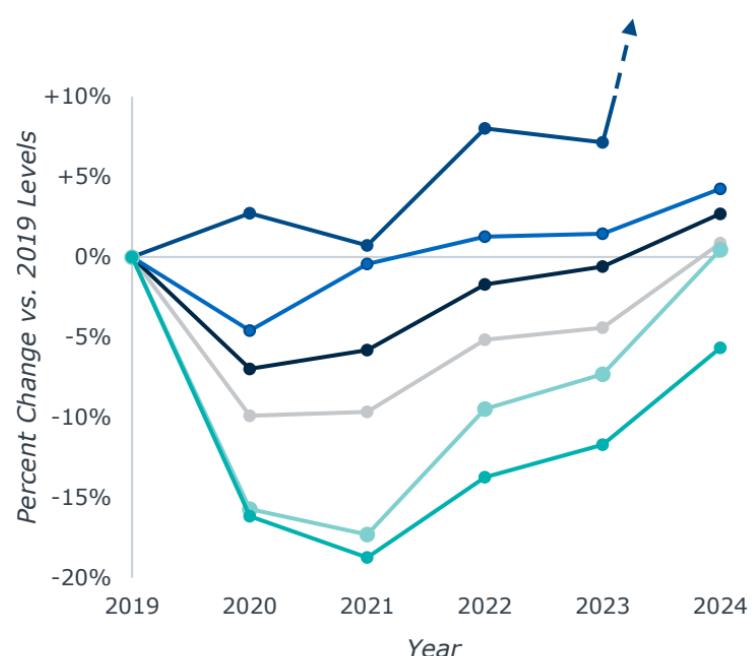
Replaced fixed costs with variable ones (e.g., time-bound contracts) so budgets flex with shocks

To see EAB's latest research on cost containment, download [\*\*Cost Containment Playbook: 130+ Tactics for Immediate Cost Savings in Higher Education\*\*](#)

# We're (Almost) Back to 2019 Enrollment Levels



## Percentage Change in First-Time Undergraduate Enrollment Levels<sup>1</sup> Compared to Fall 2019 Levels



## Percent and Total Change by Segment, Fall 2019-Fall 2024

Private For-Profit 4-Year	+35%	+14K
Private Non-Profit 4-Year	+4.3%	+19K
Public 4-Year	+2.7%	+25K
All Institutions	+0.9%	+21K
Public PAB <sup>2</sup>	+0.5%	+1K
Public 2-Year	-5.7%	-47K

1) Includes all full-time and part-time undergraduate enrollments.

2) Primarily Associate's Granting Baccalaureate Institutions.

# The Big (Public) Institutions Keep Getting Bigger



## Change in First-Time Enrollments by Number, Fall 2019-Fall 2023

	Public 4-Year	Private Non- Profit 4-Year	Private For-Profit 4-Year	Primarily Online Institution <sup>2</sup>
<i>Number of Institutions<sup>1</sup></i>	806	1,542	265	153
Large, More Selective	+19,623	+2,117	+1,495	+1,775
Large, Less Selective	+34,390	+1,937	-455	+5,041
Large, Open Access	-7,357	-822	+4,958	+4,040
Small, More Selective	+665	+1,416	-19	+255
Small, Less Selective	-5,503	-7,103	-669	+828
Small, Open Access	-3,503	+1,571	+577	+3,055

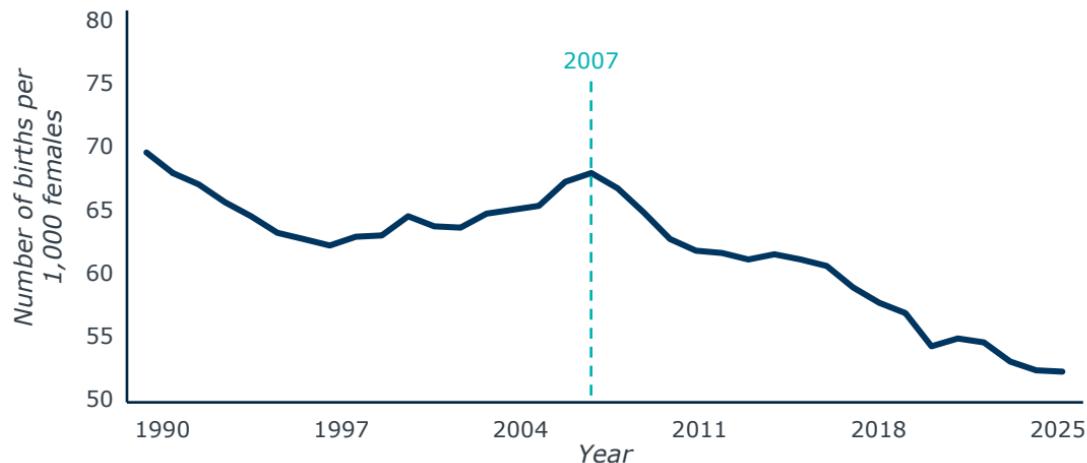
*Greater Decline*  *Greater Growth*

1) Large institutions have greater than 10K total enrollments. More selective institutions admitted fewer than 65% of applicants in Fall 2023.

2) Primarily Online Institutions enrolled >90% of all students online in Fall 2023.

# Long-Predicted Demographic Cliff Hits Next Year

## U.S. Birth Rates Continue to Decline, Hitting All-Time Low in 2025



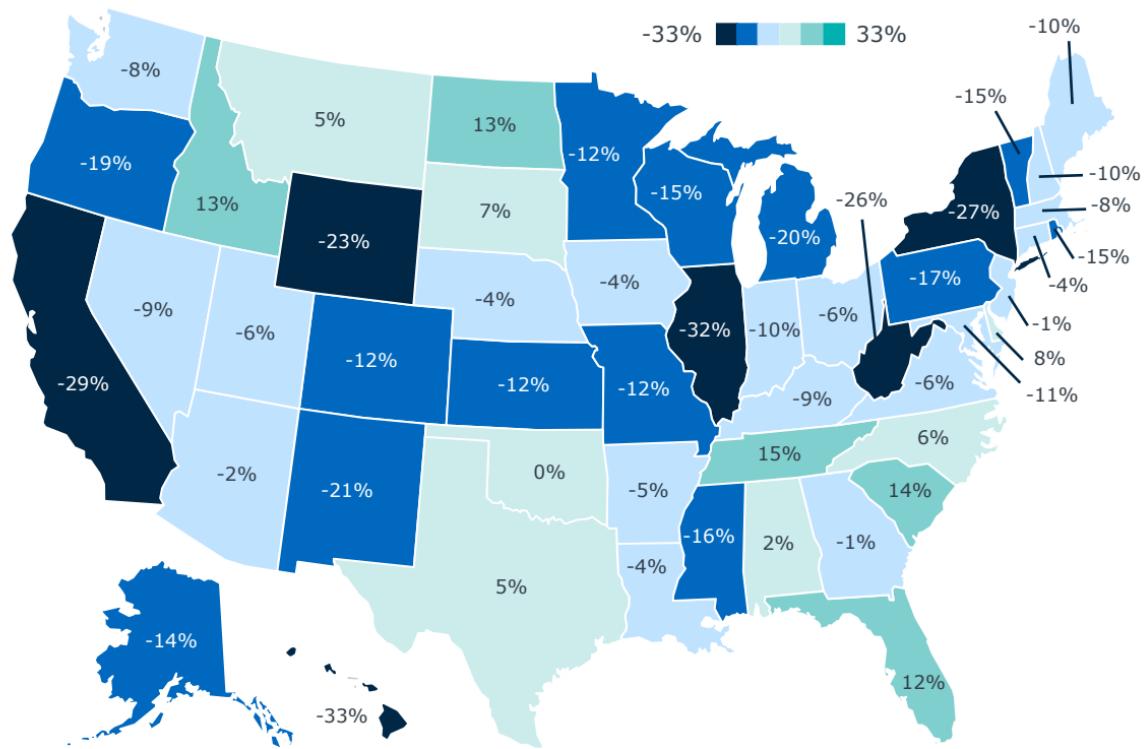
“

If we choose to continue as if it's just business as usual, **I don't know how colleges could expect to not see major enrollment declines**...[The good thing] is we have an enormous lead time to try to do things differently—it's not as if birth rates dropped 17 percent in one year. We just have to choose to **put ourselves on a new path.**"

Nathan Grawe  
Carleton College

# High School Graduates in Short Supply

## Projected Percent Change in Number of High School Graduates, 2023-2041

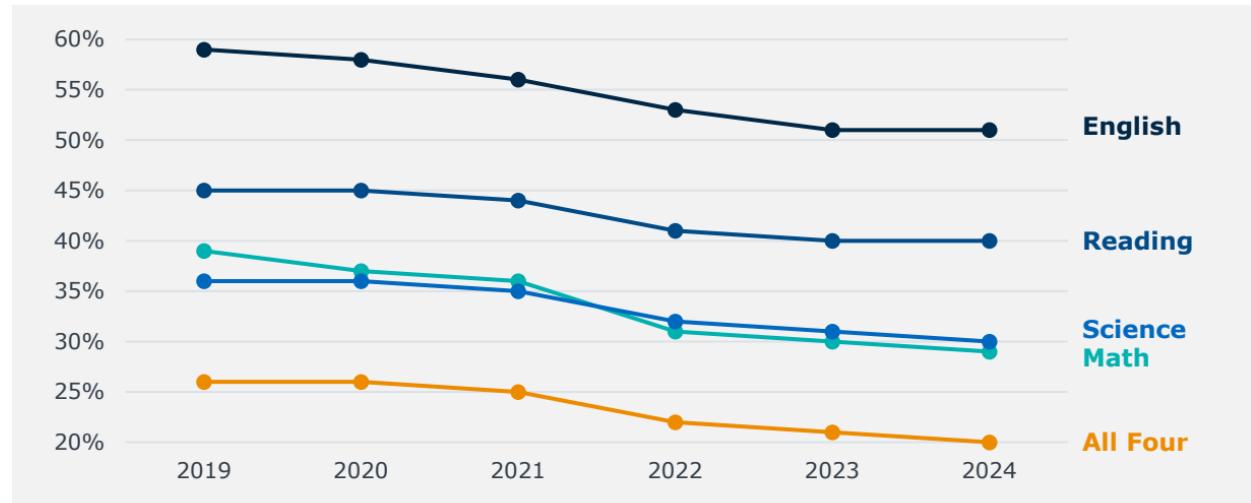




# A Shrinking Pool of College-Ready Applicants

## Fewer High Schoolers Are Academically Prepared for College

Percentage of Students Who Met College Readiness Benchmarks, By Subject



## Upstream Indicators Suggest Readiness Challenges Will Only Get Worse

**24%** Of 4<sup>th</sup> graders performed below basic level on NAEP<sup>1</sup> math assessment (2024)

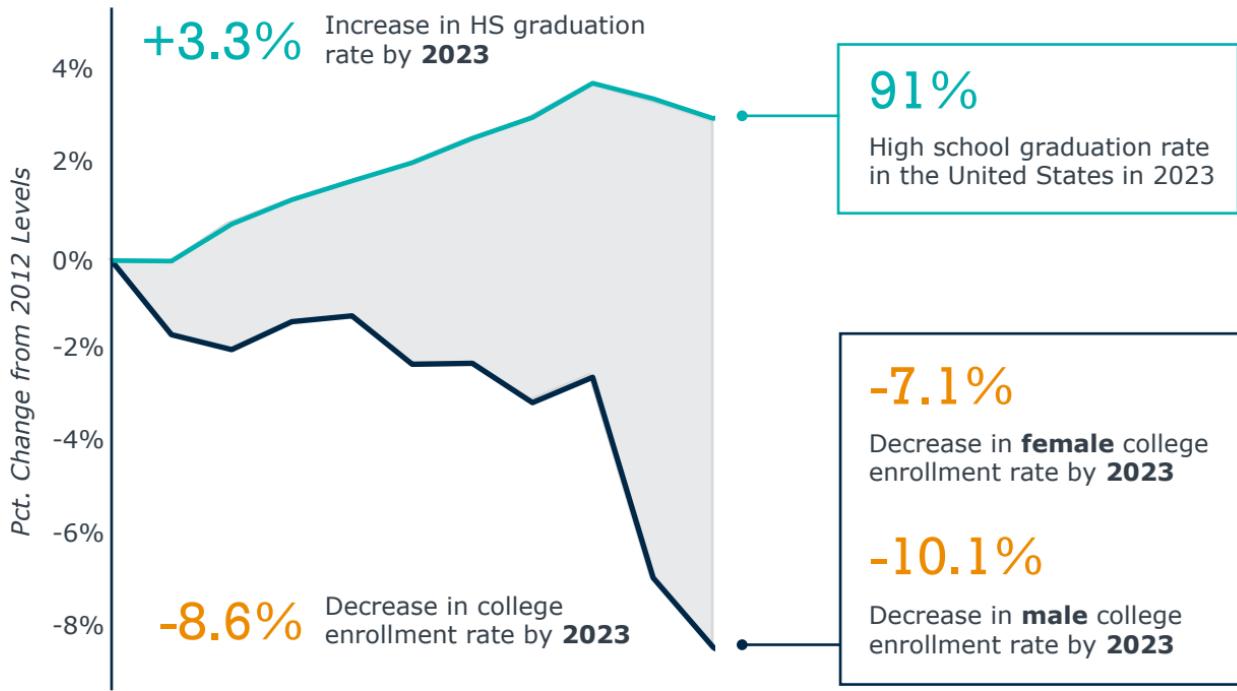
**39%** Of 8<sup>th</sup> graders performed below basic level on NAEP math assessment (2024)

1) National Assessment of Educational Progress.

# Non-Consumption Comes to Higher Ed

## Despite Rising High School Graduation, College-Going Rate Continues to Decline

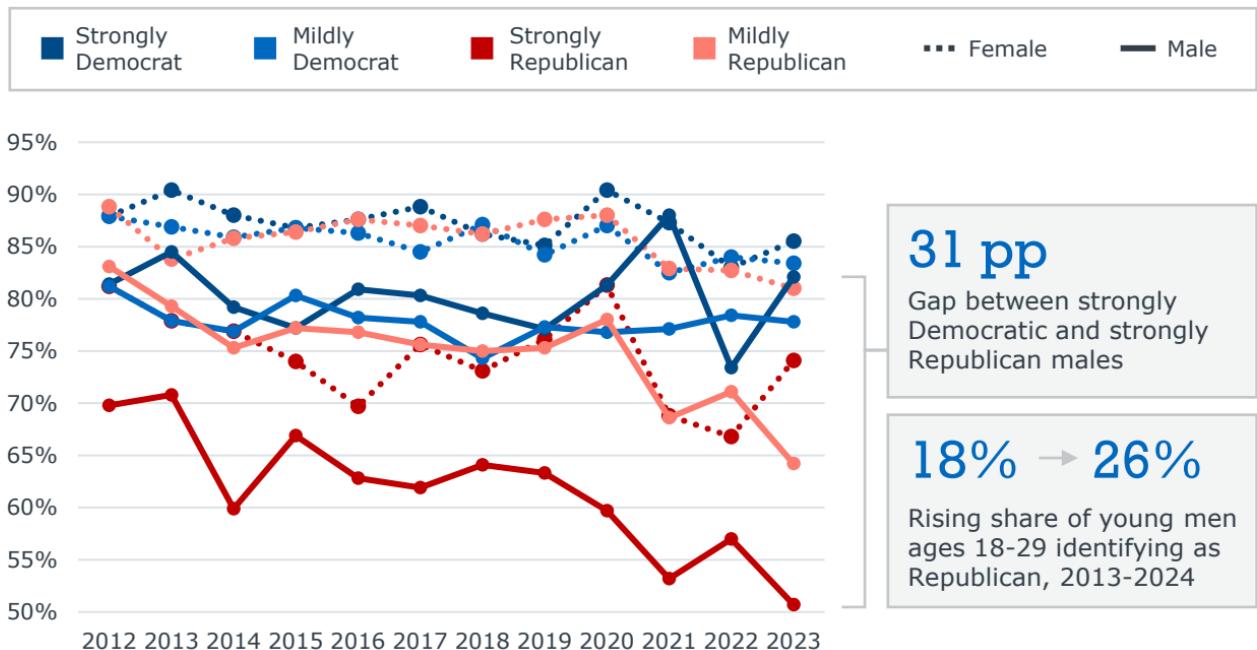
Percent Change in K-12 to College Pipeline, American Community Survey, 2012-2023



# Politics Increasingly at Play

## Political Identity a Growing Predictor of Postsecondary Plans

Percent of High School Seniors Who Would Want To Graduate From a Four-Year College, Given Nothing Stands in Their Way, The Burning Glass Institute's Analysis of Monitoring the Future Survey, 2012-2023

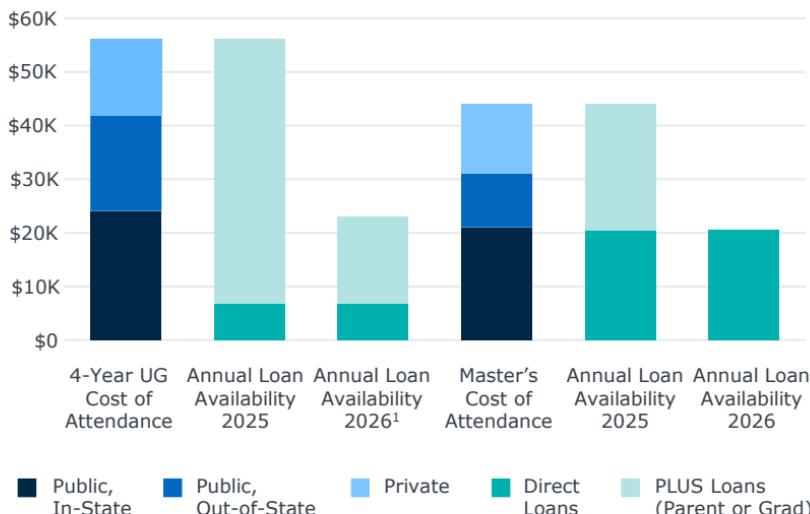


# Loan Changes Ringing Alarm Bells

But Repayment Changes Likely to Deter Borrowers Across the Board

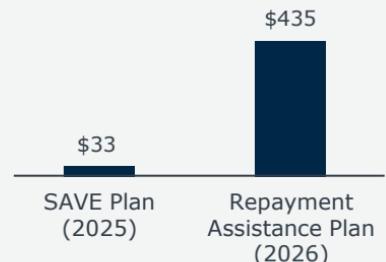
## New Loan Caps Will Limit Access to More Expensive Schools and Programs (i.e., Out-of-State and Private)

*Annual Loan Availability for Undergraduate and Master's Degree Programs vs Average Cost of Attendance in 2024*



## Direct Loan Payments Will Increase for Most Borrowers

*Monthly Repayment for a Median U.S. Household, SAVE Plan vs Repayment Assistance Plan*



**5.4M** Student loan borrowers 90+ days delinquent

**1K+** Schools at risk of losing loan access due to CDR<sup>2</sup>

Source: AEI, [Over 1,000 colleges could lose access to federal student aid](#); Education Data Initiative, [Average cost of college & tuition](#); Protect Borrowers, [Deep Dive: The OBBA Law Makes Paying for College More Expensive and Risky](#); TransUnion, [Federal Student Loan Borrowers Indicate They Could Prioritize Their Student Loans](#); EAB interviews and analysis.

<sup>1</sup>) Assumes that borrowers spread the \$65K maximum Parent PLUS loan evenly over 4 years.

<sup>2</sup>) Cohort default rates exceeding 30% for 2 out of 3 consecutive years.

# International Fallout Will Create Food Chain Effects



## NAFSA<sup>1</sup> Projections for Fall 2025

**30-40%**

Decline in new  
international students

**15%**

Decline in total  
international students

## Private Elites and Flagships Have the Most Exposure...

International students account for **6%** of  
total student population in 2023, but:

**27%**

Of total students  
at Ivy+ schools

**15%**

Of total students  
at large privates

**9%**

Of total students  
at state flagships

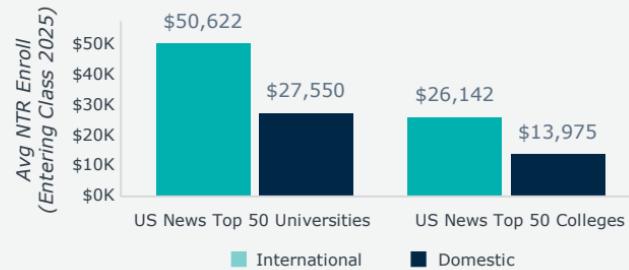
## ...And Their Efforts to Offset Losses Will Trigger Trickle Down Effects

Replacing lost NTR would require nearly **2** domestic  
enrolls for every lost international enroll

*Int'l to Domestic NTR Ratio:*

**\$1.84 to \$1**

**\$1.87 to \$1**

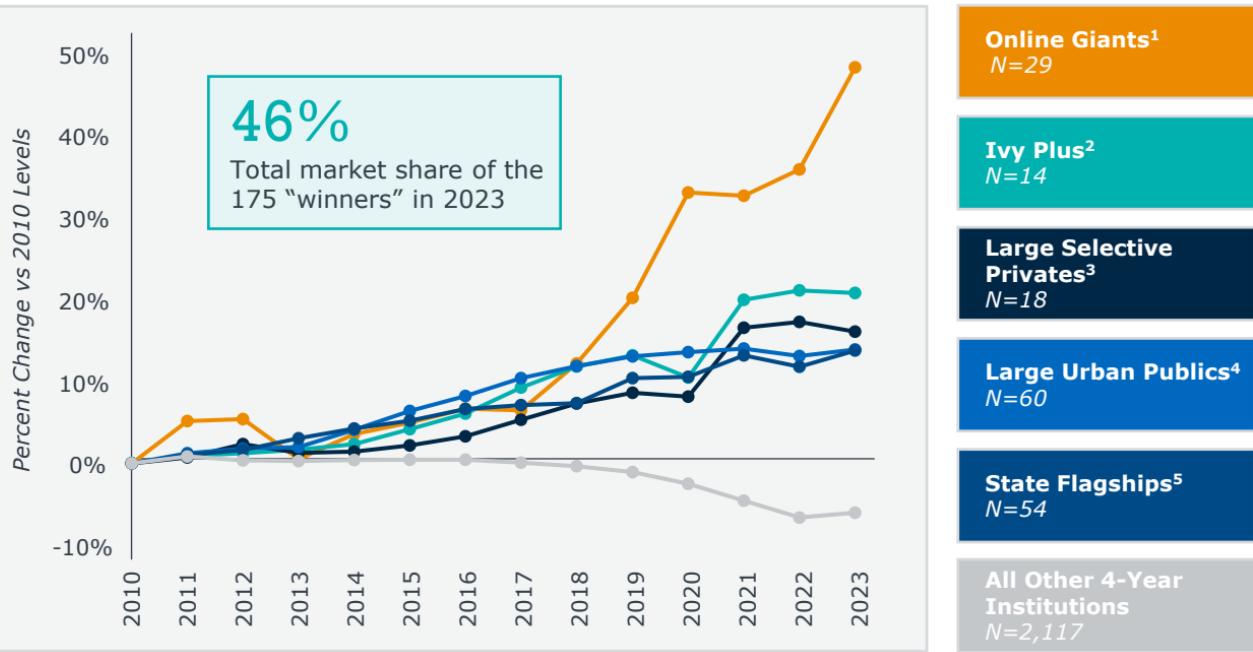


<sup>1</sup>) Association of International Educators.

# Who Is Winning in This Market?

## Growth in Total Enrollment Highly Concentrated in Five Groups of "Winners"

Percent Change in Total Enrollment (Undergrad and Grad), IPEDS, 2010-2023



1) >10,000 UG and G, >75% online. Western Governor's Southern New Hampshire

2) Ivy League institutions plus Johns Hopkins University, Stanford University, University of Chicago, Duke University, MIT, and CalTech.

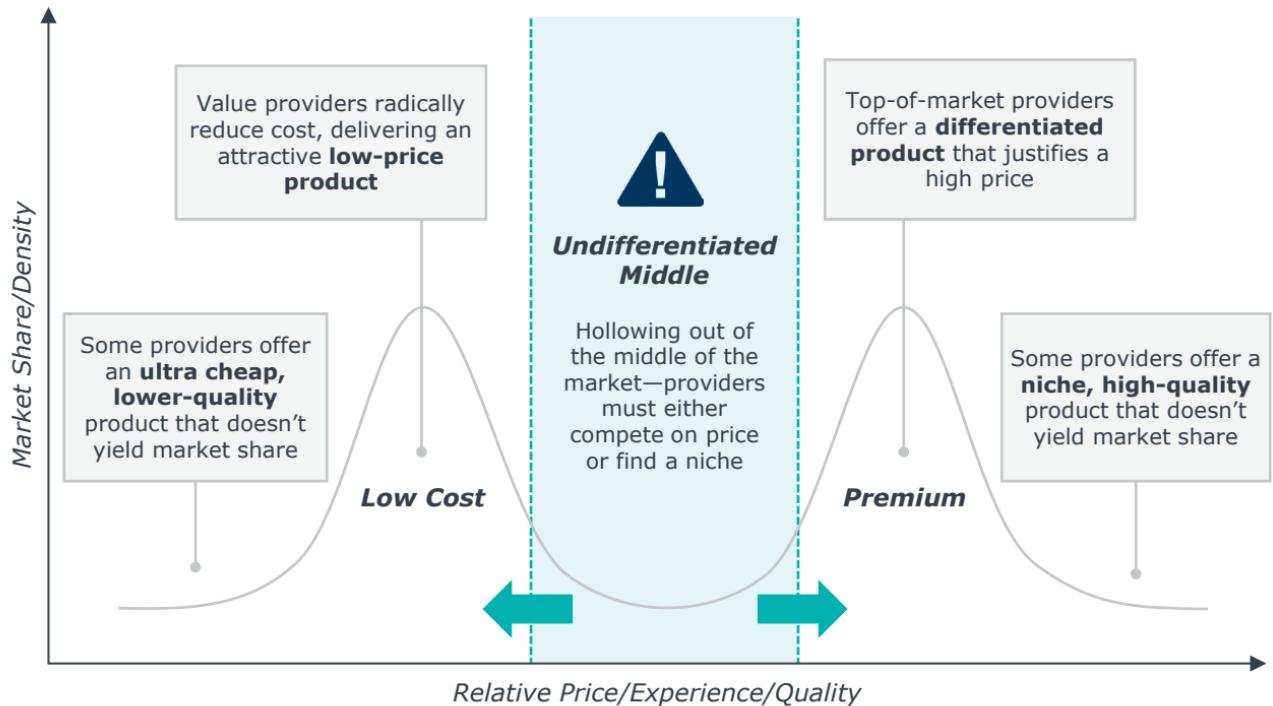
3) >8,500 UG and G, <25% selectivity. Rice University, Northeastern, Vanderbilt

4) >20,000 UG and G, <75% online, in a city. Georgia Tech, Arizona State, UNLV

5) Includes dual flagships in Texas, California, Virginia, and New York.

# Towards an Increasingly Bimodal Future

Market Rationalization Yields Fewer Dominant Players With Big Market Share



# Same Process, Stretched Across Decades

## Key Forces That Have Buffered Higher Ed From Market Rationalization

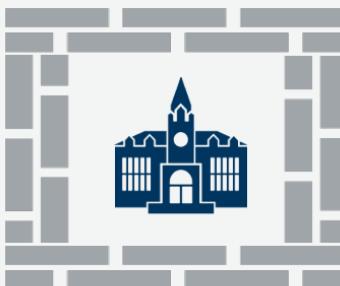
### New Threat:

Policy headwinds,  
federal and state cuts



### High Exit Barriers

- Extensive infrastructure prevents simple exit
- Accreditation, teach-outs, tenure complicate closure



### New Threat:

Unsustainable costs,  
no government bailouts



### Social Contract

- Widely viewed as serving broad societal good
- Receives public subsidies and support



### Durable Value Prop

- Degrees deliver strong wage and mobility premium
- On-campus experience remains unrivaled

### New Threat:

New social contract,  
weak public confidence



### Anchor Attributes

- Major contributors to local, regional economic growth
- Closures trigger outsized symbolic impact and fallout

### New Threat:

Skepticism about ROI,  
available alternatives

# EAB's State of the Sector

## Navigating Upheaval on Four Fronts

### **External Accountability**

*Adapting to Tenuous Public Support and Heightened Political Scrutiny*

### **Financial Sustainability**

*Confronting Business Model Strain Amid Dual Revenue and Cost Shocks*

### **Market Relevance**

*Preparing Students for an AI-Transformed Knowledge Economy with Fewer Jobs*

### **Institutional Agility**

*Driving Campus Change to Unlock Opportunity in a Disrupted Sector*

**Gen Z:**  
Born 1997-2012  
(12-28 years old in 2025)



### Key Observations



Delayed markers of adulthood



Social isolation, particularly among young men



Declining extroversion and conscientiousness



Growing political polarization, which social media exacerbates



Increased reliance on parasocial substitutes (i.e. AI companions)



Economic pessimism driven by rising costs of living

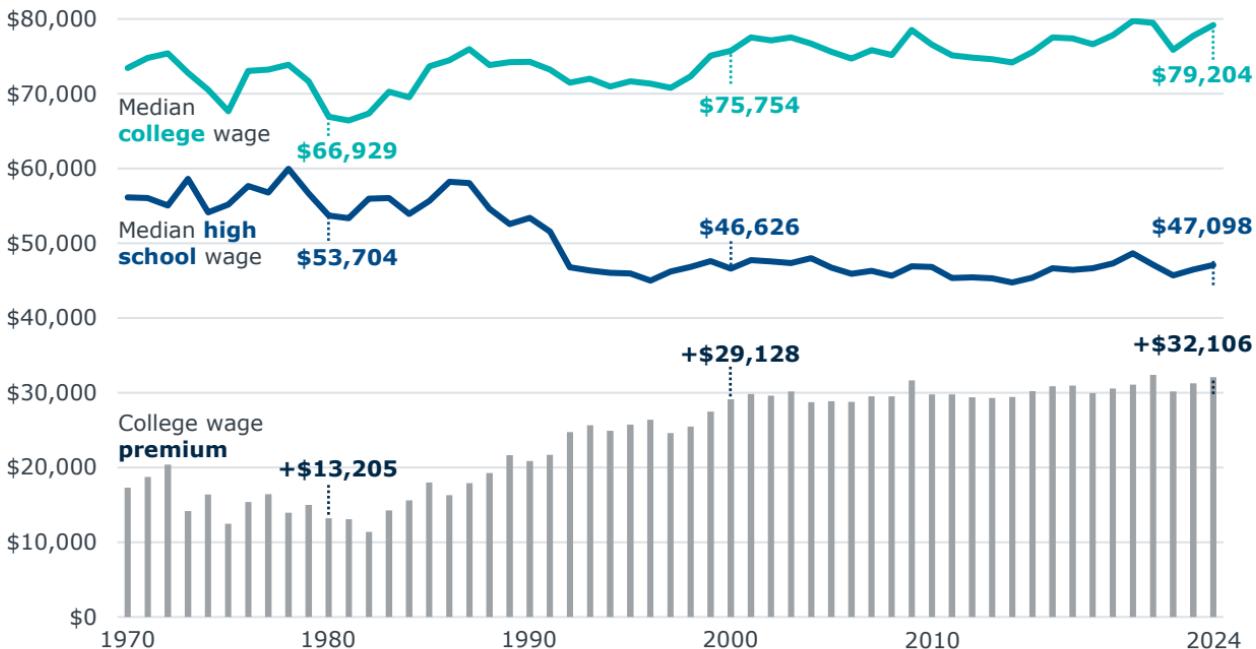


A silver lining—positive early results from K12 phone bans



## College Still a Good Investment (On Average)

College Wage Premium<sup>1</sup> Remains Near Its All Time High



**12.5%**

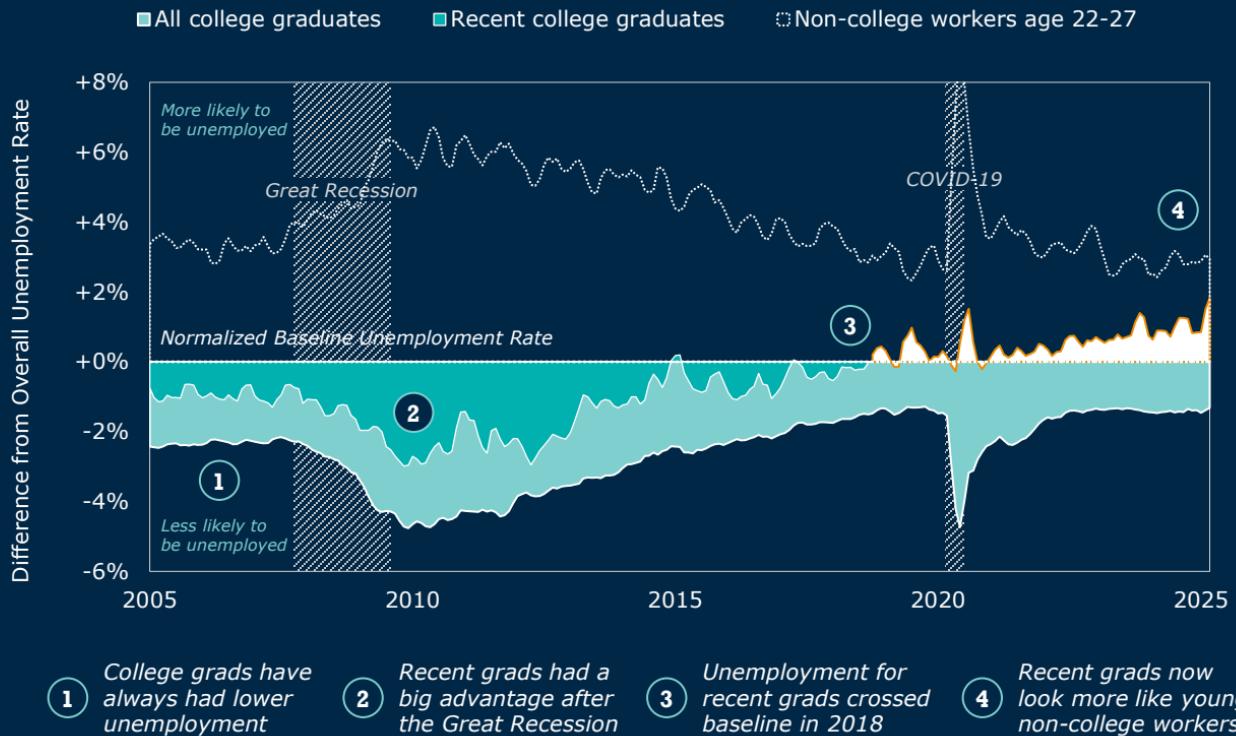
Internal rate of return<sup>2</sup> for median college graduate in 2024 – a rate that's held steady for past three decades and exceeds long-term return of stocks (8%) and bonds (4%)

<sup>1</sup>) Difference between median high school wage and median college wage, expressed in 2024 dollars.

<sup>2</sup>) Measure investors use to gauge profitability of investments.

# College Doesn't Provide the Cushion It Once Did

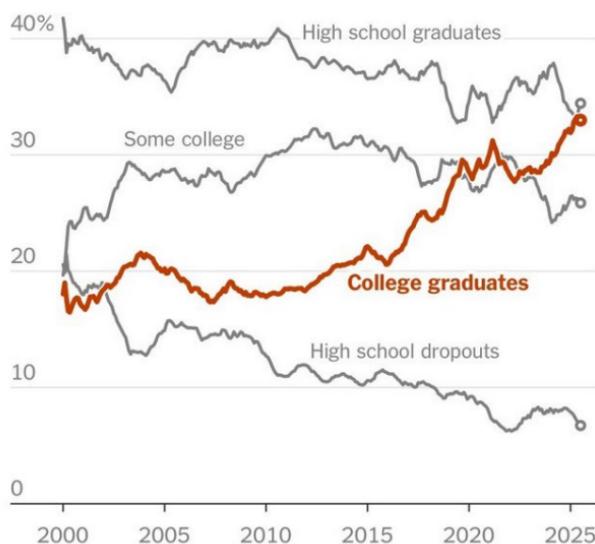
## Eroding Employment Advantage for Recent College Grads



# Two Additional Trends Causing Concern

## College Grads Make Up a Growing Share of "Long-Term Unemployed"

Out of work for 6+ months<sup>1</sup>



## More than Half Start Their Careers Underemployed<sup>2</sup>

Burning Glass Institute, 2024

**52%** Of college graduates are underemployed one year post-completion

**73%** Of college graduates who start underemployed remain so 10 years post-completion

### The New York Times

"There are simply **more college graduates today** than there were 10 years ago, and the **job market for people without college degrees improved**, reducing their share of long-term unemployed."

**But employers also appear to have less need for college-educated workers**, driven by technological change, automation, and... President Trump's cuts to federal workers and funding, which have disproportionately affected the college educated."

1) 12-month rolling average from the Current Population Survey

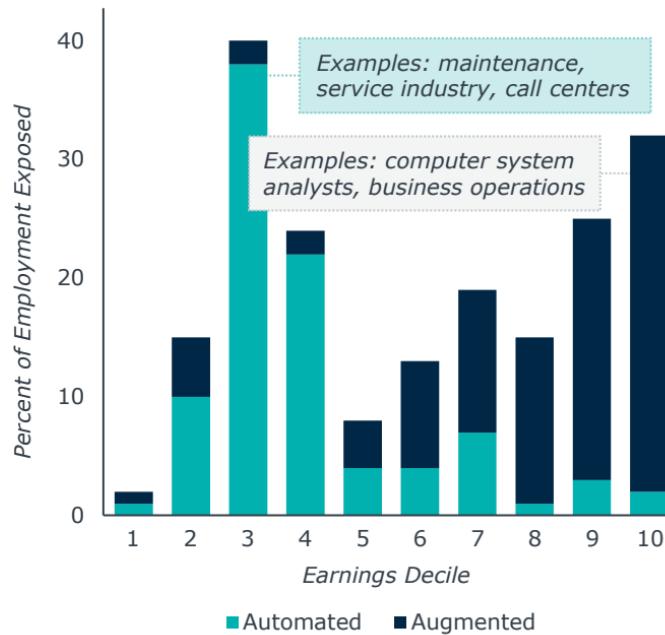
2) In an occupation that does not require a bachelor's degree or for which the majority of workers do not have a bachelor's degree

# AI Ushers in a New Era of Employer Expectations



## No Role Immune, But Entry-Level Most at Risk

Percent of Employment in High AI Exposed Occupations by Earnings Decile (Department of Labor)



### Key Implications:



AI literacy will be a **baseline skill** for all knowledge workers

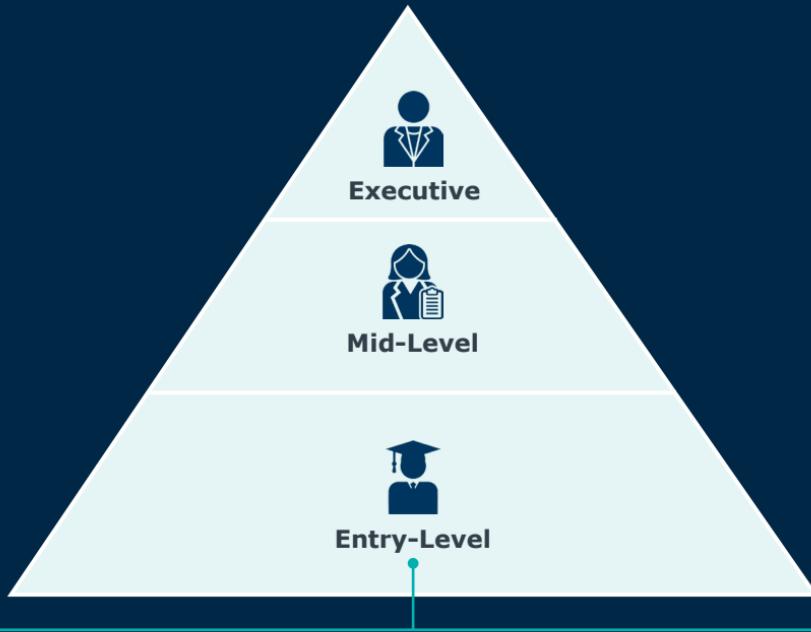


High-income jobs will likely be transformed, and entry-level roles will likely **resemble today's second level roles**

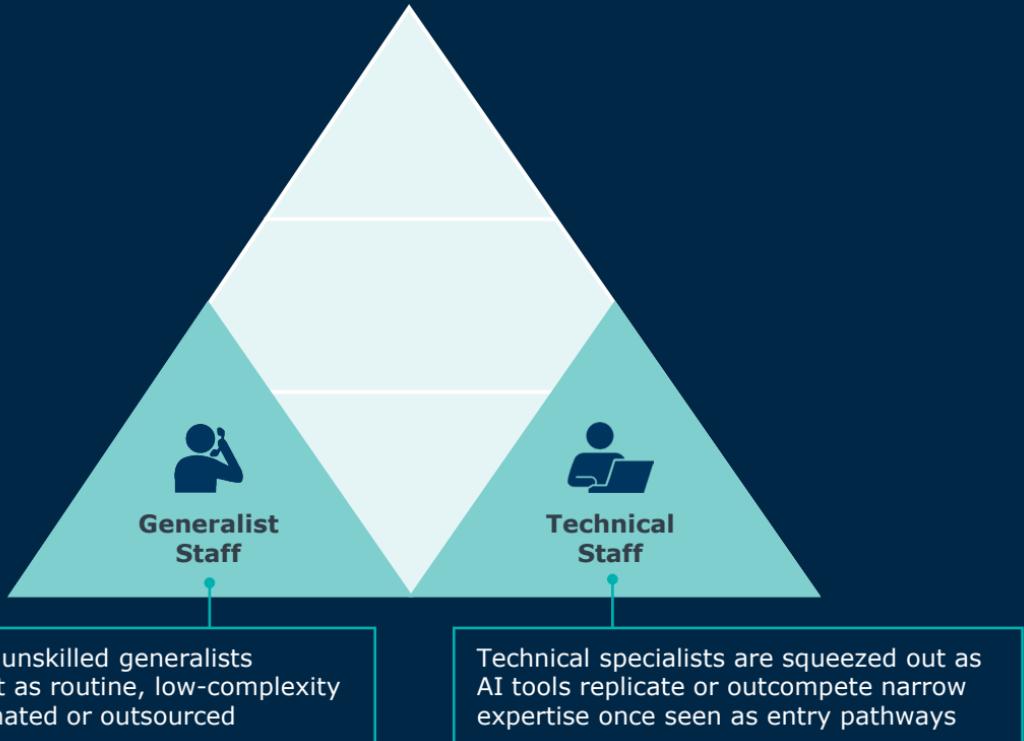


Employees will be held to a **higher bar on interpersonal skills** and emotional intelligence

# The Old Career Ladder



- Abundant, accessible starter jobs
- Accessible with minimal professional experience or polish
- Progression assumed—time and loyalty yield advancement
- Employers expect to train and socialize junior hires



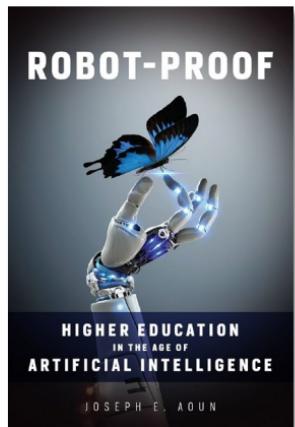
# From Pyramid to Diamond



- 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

# Towards a “Robot-Proof” Graduate

Years Before AI Took Center Stage, Joseph Aoun Sketched the Playbook



2017



“

Instead of educating college students for jobs that are about to disappear under the rising tide of technology, twenty-first-century universities should liberate them from outdated career models and give them ownership of their own futures.”

## ***Humanics Curriculum***

- Integrate tech, data, and human literacies across the curriculum
- Prioritize cultivating literacies and competencies over content delivery
- Increase interdisciplinary, applied, project-based learning in classroom

## ***Experiential Learning***

- Connect classroom learning with practical, real-world experiences
- Expand co-ops and internships, recognize co-curriculars as learning
- Provide a secondary transcript to document applied learning

## ***Lifelong Learning Mindset***

- Offer reskilling to help grads thrive amid ongoing tech changes
- Support alumni with lifelong access to learning and career services

# A Return to Relationships

## Students Are Frustrated With Job Postings... And So Are Employers

**61%**

Of Gen Z job seekers submit at least 100 applications

**11K**

Applications per minute on LinkedIn, hundreds of applications per post

**43%**

Of HR professionals use AI to manage volume of applications

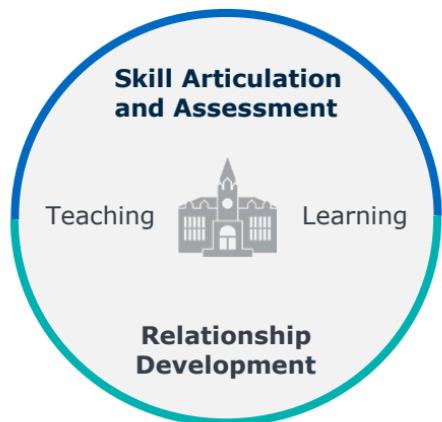
**25%**

Of job applicants worldwide could be fake by 2028

## Networks May Matter More Than Ever

- ✓ Referred applicants have a **50%** chance of advancing past resume review (compared to 12% for non-referrals)
- ✓ Employers are investing more in referral programs to boost verified candidates
- ✓ Recruiters are posting fewer jobs publicly to avoid application overload, fake profiles
- ✓ Smaller, local firms may hire junior talent at higher rates moving forward

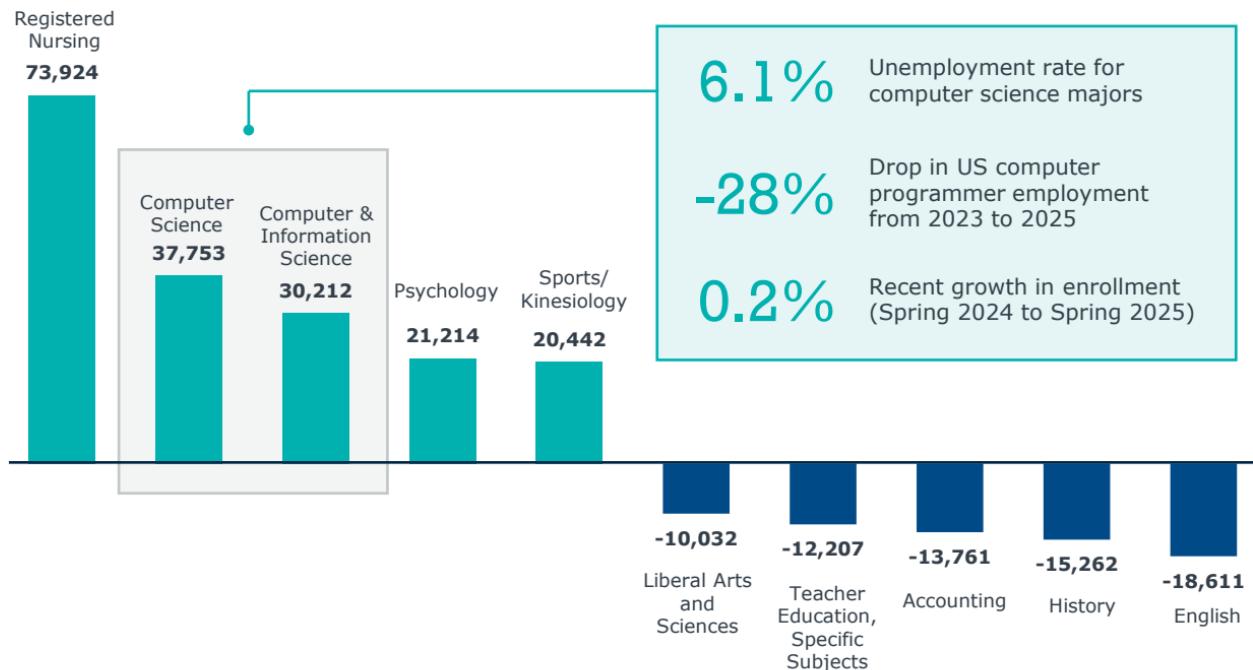
## Higher Ed's Pivotal Roles



# Some Historically “Safe” Majors Under Pressure



## Top and Bottom Five Bachelor's Programs by Change in Completions, 2010-2024

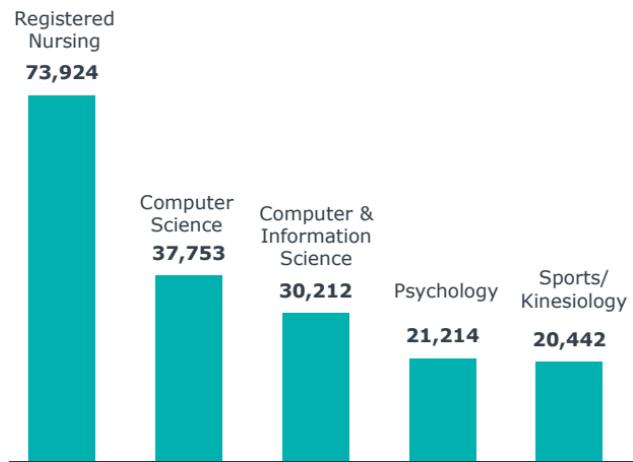


Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York, [Labor Market Outcomes](#); NSC, [Current Term Enrollment Estimates \(Spring 2025\)](#); NYT, [Goodbye, \\$165,000 Tech Jobs. Student Coders Seek Work at Chipotle.](#); The Atlantic, [The Computer-Science Bubble Is Bursting](#); The Washington Post, [More than a quarter of computer-programming jobs just vanished](#); EAB analysis of IPEDS data.

# Some Historically “Safe” Majors Under Pressure



## Top and Bottom Five Bachelor's Programs by Change in Completions, 2010-2024



### Potential for a Liberal Arts Revival...

- ✓ Associated with critical thinking, ethics, creativity, and discernment
- ✓ Untethered to rapidly expiring technical skills

### ...But It Isn't Guaranteed

- ✗ Curriculum often focused on discipline and content, not translatable skills
- ✗ Lower earnings and lack of workforce integration deter prospective students

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York, [Labor Market Outcomes](#); NSC, [Current Term Enrollment Estimates \(Spring 2025\)](#); NYT, [Goodbye, \\$165,000 Tech Jobs. Student Coders Seek Work at Chipotle.](#); The Atlantic, [The Computer-Science Bubble Is Bursting](#); The Washington Post, [More than a quarter of computer-programming jobs just vanished](#); EAB analysis of IPEDS data.

# What Thriving Schools Will Do



## Hardwire AI Literacy

Embed AI literacy across every discipline as a graduation requirement, rather than an optional add-on



## Guarantee Work Experiences

Hardwire applied learning into every program and create portfolios that help students articulate acquired skills



## Elevate Relational Intelligence

Make perspective-taking, trust-building, and conflict navigation core learning outcomes, not just soft skills



## Reimagine Career Services

Transition from a coaching center to a talent broker that actively connects students with employers



## (Re)design for a Dual-Edge

Ensure all majors equip students with technical fluency and human differentiation



## Scaffold Network-Building

Incentivize, enable, and track professional networking with the same intentionality as degree progress



## Incentivize Faculty Innovation

Recognize and reward faculty who co-design with employers and integrate AI/technology into instruction



## Enable Lifelong Learning

Rebuild degrees as launchpads with on-/off-ramps that allow students to pause, re-start, and regularly upskill

# EAB's State of the Sector

## Navigating Upheaval on Four Fronts

### **External Accountability**

*Adapting to Tenuous Public Support and Heightened Political Scrutiny*

### **Financial Sustainability**

*Confronting Business Model Strain Amid Dual Revenue and Cost Shocks*

### **Market Relevance**

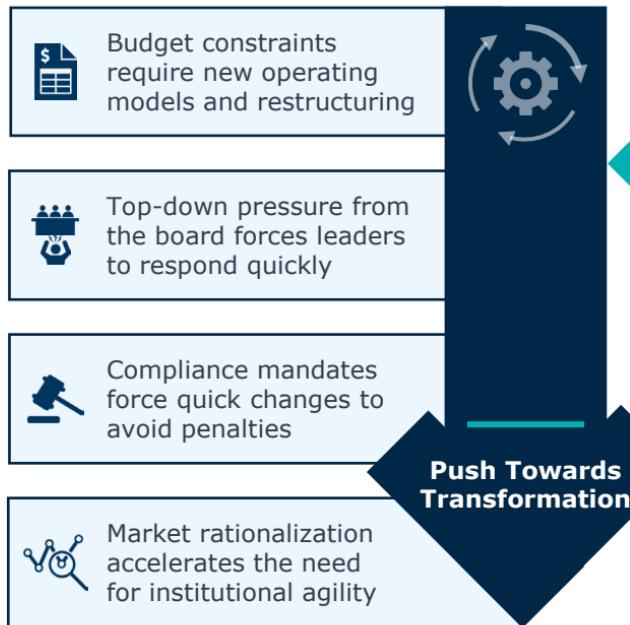
*Preparing Students for an AI-Transformed Knowledge Economy with Fewer Jobs*

### **Institutional Agility**

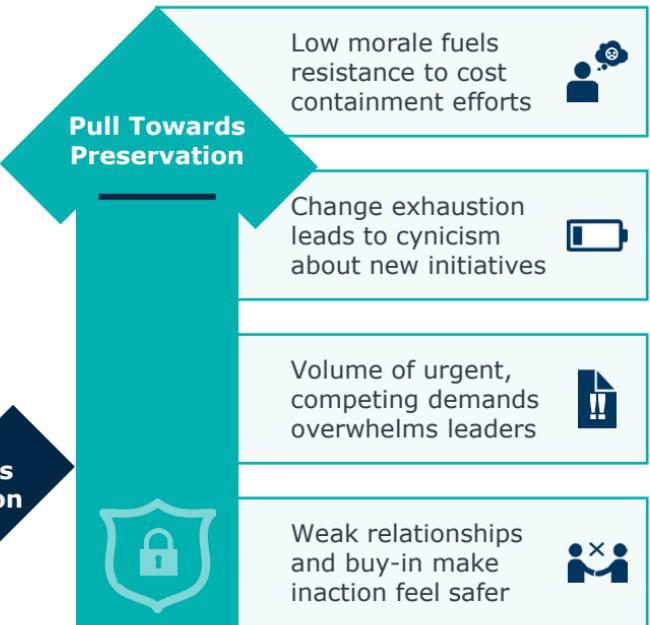
*Driving Campus Change to Unlock Opportunity in a Disrupted Sector*

# Navigating the Push and Pull

## Financial and Market Pressures Demand Bolder, Faster Changes...



## ...At the Same Time That Campus Constituencies Crave More Stability



# Six Attributes of a Thriving Institution



# Leadership Is Action Amid Ambiguity

“...do not ask, ‘What is the easy thing to do?’ or ‘What will cost the least money?’ or ‘What will make me the most loved or popular by those affected by the decision?’

**Just ask what is the right decision, all things considered...then just do it**, decide it, no matter how difficult it is, no matter how costly, no matter how unpopular.

In the long run, whatever the immediate uproar or inconvenience, **people, your people, will respect you...for doing what you thought right**, even though they do not agree with you.”

—*Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C., President of the University of Notre Dame (1952–1987)*