



TO: Chief Executive Officers, Chief Instructional Officers, Chief Student Services Officers, Academic Senate Presidents, Chief Technology Officers, Chief Business Officers, Chief Human Resources Officers, and other interested parties

FROM: Craig Hayward, Vice Chancellor, AI Strategy & Digital Transformation

RE: Developing AI Literacy Across the California Community Colleges

Purpose

This memo provides guidance to support the development of AI literacy across all roles within the California Community Colleges. As generative AI (GenAI) and other artificial intelligence tools rapidly transform the workforce, it is imperative that our colleges equip students, faculty, staff, and administrators with the knowledge and skills to engage with these technologies ethically, effectively, and equitably.

Background

AI is currently reshaping every sector of the economy and society. From healthcare and logistics to education and the creative arts, AI is altering how work is performed, how decisions are made, and what skills are in demand. In this context, AI literacy has emerged as a critical competency for 21st-century learners and educators alike.

AI literacy encompasses more than technical proficiency. It includes the ability to use AI systems responsibly, evaluate their outputs critically, understand how they function, and recognize their ethical, social, and economic implications. As a system committed to equitable access and student success, we must ensure that our approach to AI is guided by human-centered values and aligned with the California Community Colleges' [HUMANS principles](#)¹ for ethical AI adoption.

Institutional Actions

To support a culture of AI literacy, colleges are encouraged to:

- ✓ Establish or designate an AI governance body with cross-functional representation and clear leadership to coordinate, ensure accountability, and update policy as needed.
- ✓ Utilize AI sandboxes for testing and evaluation before institution-wide adoption.
- ✓ Adopt or adapt the HUMANS principles to guide local AI implementation and policy.
- ✓ Develop and maintain transparent guidance that addresses AI-related learning outcomes and academic integrity questions in light of generative and agentic AI use, with examples and guidance for institutional, departmental, and classroom levels.

¹ <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/GenAI-and-the-future-of-learning>

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- ✓ Support mechanisms for sharing effective practices, lessons learned, and evolving understandings across departments and colleges.
- ✓ Ensure that all students, faculty, and staff have access to role-appropriate AI literacy training and resources.
- ✓ Monitor the impact of AI on student learning outcomes, equity, and institutional operations, and adjust strategies accordingly.

AI Professional Development Resources

A curated list of professional development opportunities and implementation tools is continuously being updated to support colleges in building a culture of AI literacy on campus.

The links below include several key resources:

- [AI Professional Development and Learning Opportunities](#)²
- [Teaching and Learning Faculty Professional Development](#)³
- [California Community Colleges CVC@ONE](#)⁴
- [VRC \(Vision Resource Center\) Calendar - Artificial Intelligence](#)⁵

Additionally, an AI microsite is coming soon to serve as a hub for additional resources and community engagement. It will provide a curated collection of professional development opportunities and practical tools to help colleges foster a strong culture of AI literacy. Colleges are encouraged to share additional resources and promising practices with the Chancellor's Office to support systemwide learning and continuous improvement.

Core Competencies: The PEOPLE Framework as a Foundation for AI Literacy

The PEOPLE framework provides a shared foundation for AI literacy with six essential competencies that all members of the college community should develop:

- P – Prompt with Purpose:** Learn to communicate effectively with AI tools by crafting clear, intentional prompts that yield useful, accurate, bounded, and relevant responses and actions.
- E – Ensure Ethics:** Understand and apply ethical principles, institutional policies, and societal considerations when using all forms of AI, including issues of data privacy, bias, intellectual property, equity, accessibility, and culturally responsive use of AI tools.
- O – Observe and Verify:** Cultivate critical thinking, factchecking and outcome-verification habits to identify inaccuracies, rogue behavior, hallucinations, or bias in AI-generated content or actions.

² <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/GenAI-and-the-future-of-learning/AIPD>

³ <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/teaching-learning-faculty-professional-development>

⁴ <https://onlinenetworkofeducators.org/>

⁵ <https://visionresourcecenter.cccco.edu/events/month/?tribe-bar-search=ai>

- P – Processor, not Person:** Recognize that AI is a tool, not a sentient being. Avoid anthropomorphizing AI agents and bots and maintain a clear understanding of their limitations and tendencies.
- L – Learn the Fundamentals:** Develop a working knowledge of how AI operates, including generative and agentic AI systems, how they use data, and what they are capable of, including concepts like training data, large language models (LLMs), and probabilistic outputs.
- E – Evolve Continuously:** Stay informed about emerging tools, capabilities, and risks. AI is evolving rapidly, and literacy requires ongoing learning and adaptation.

These competencies, grounded in national and statewide guidance, including that of the MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on Writing and AI and the California Community Colleges' HUMANS framework, provide a minimum standard of fundamental AI literacy.

Conclusion

The rise of generative and agentic AI presents both opportunities and challenges. By embedding AI literacy into our teaching, operations, and governance, we can empower our communities to use AI responsibly and shape its future in alignment with our shared values. We recognize and appreciate the meaningful work already underway across the system to harness AI's potential while guarding against its excesses. To ensure that our colleges remain at the forefront of innovation while upholding our commitment to equity and student success, we must act swiftly, with foresight, coordination and care.

This memo is the first part of a series of guidance materials and resources to support students, faculty, staff, and administrators as we navigate AI and the future of teaching and learning in alignment with our Vision 2030 framework. As the second 'E' in the AI literacy acronym PEOPLE reminds us, AI technology will continue to evolve, and while we don't have all the answers today, we're committed to learning together, staying informed, and keeping our community's well-being at the center of every innovation we embrace. We look forward to continued collaboration.

Craig Hayward

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