California Community Colleges

SYSTEM WEBINAR SUMMARY:

Nectir AI and Playlab Pilots (Nov. 2025)

This webinar focused on the opportunities revealed through the ongoing Nectir AI and Playlab pilot programs. Guest presenters included Diana Ortiz and Luis Guerrero of Palomar Community College, Jacqueline Hestor of San Diego Miramar College, and Elli Constantin of Cypress College.

What are the Nectir AI and Playlab Pilot Programs?

- The Chancellor's Office has been running these pilot programs for the last year to examine potential implications and opportunities presented by the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools in the classroom.
- The Nectir AI pilot allows interested faculty to have hands-on experience with a secure GenAI assistant integrated into their classes, embedded in the Canvas platform (outside-of-Canvas access to the tool is also an option). Participating faculty can create custom chatbots, upload their course materials, decide how the AI tutor will interact with students and what content and materials it will focus on. The pilot includes a rigorous quantitative and qualitative evaluation component to ascertain the potential of GenAI to generate improvements in student success.
- The Playlab pilot aims to empower educators and support instruction by allowing participants to develop and customize their own AI bots to support student learning and handle administrative tasks. Workshops help faculty and students understand the possibilities and risks of AI. A goal of the system's pilot effort is to understand how AI can be leveraged to create accessible and universal design for learning (UDL) environments that can improve the learning environment for students with variable learning disabilities.

What are Some Results and Implications of the Nectir AI Pilot?

- The evaluation of the 2024-25 pilot involved a rigorous research design that matched each instructor's use of the GenAI tool in a course with at least two previous instances of the same course taught by that instructor in the same modality, allowing for conclusions to be drawn about the impact of the tool on student success. The pilot involved 272 instructors, with over 8,000 students enrolled in their classes.
- Students in the pilot classes interacted with a chatbot designed to help with their course assignments, provide study tips and guidance, and answer course-related questions. The content material accessed by the AI tutor was uploaded by the instructors in a secure manner, keeping the information protected and FERPA

compliant. Faculty controlled whether the tool could use information beyond that uploaded content in responding to student questions (e.g., information gathered from general AI tools like ChatGPT).

- While faculty could not see the details of individual student interactions with the tool, they could see the level of use and engagement by each student and a summary of key topics and questions students were asking.
- Participating faculty reported several benefits of the tool, including that it 1) allows faculty to control the content students encounter, 2) protects students' identities, and 3) enables students to get reliable help with course content on demand, avoiding harmful or biased AI responses. Faculty appreciated the templates provided in the tool that helped them set up controls on the content and interactions with students.
- The evaluation showed some initial positive results. Despite very limited training of the participating faculty in use of the tool, it had a significant impact on course success (71.6% vs 68.5%) and course retention (86.4% vs 85.1%) compared to the control courses previously taught by these faculty.

What are Some Results and Implications of the Playlab Pilot?

- The Universal Access Bot developed for the pilot can be used to make content UDL-friendly, providing multiple options for how students engage with material and show their learning. The tool can revise materials for Canvas to be fully ADA compliant. It is trained in the OER rubric, can convert PDFs to accessible HTML, and can apply Canvas styles for improved readability (e.g., chunking, call-out boxes, bulleted lists).
- The bot provides faculty with an interactive process, allowing them to keep prompting the tool until the course assignment or other content they are designing appears as desired.

How Can Colleges Get Involved in these Pilot Programs?

- Join the second wave of pilot use and evaluation of the Nectir AI assistant, getting underway for 2025-26 and open to 900 faculty participants.
- Attend the webinar on January 14, 2026 that will provide information on how to participate in the next Playlab cohort.
- Save the date for the GenAI and Human-Centered Teaching for Today's Learners conference on March 14, 2026 at Palomar College. A call for proposals is currently open.
- In addition to these pilots, use of Google AI is also expanding at the institutional level, with some colleges getting involved in that effort this year or planning to do so next year. The Chancellor's Office is working to track the various AI options campuses are getting involved with in order to learn what works best for colleges,

faculty, and students.