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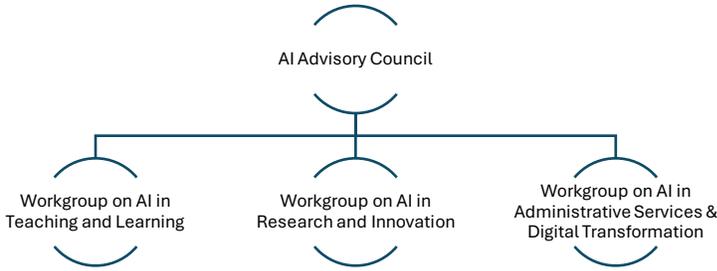
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**AI Advisory (AIA) Council**

The rapid rise and advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies have the potential to fundamentally reshape how UC Merced fulfills its missions of teaching, learning, and research, while thoughtful applications of AI in institutional operations can create the efficiencies and process improvements necessary to guide us through a changing higher education landscape. Simultaneously, AI is also an academic domain inasmuch it is something that we study, build, and innovate in. This rapid advancement of AI presents both unprecedented opportunities to enhance our mission and significant challenges that require careful consideration of ethics, equity, privacy, and responsible implementation. Recognizing limited resources, it is equally important that institutional investments provide maximum value and return on investment to the campus community.

To address these opportunities and challenges, UC Merced establishes this AI Advisory Council to shape and accelerate the university's approach to AI integration. Bringing together diverse perspectives from academic and administrative units and technical experts, the Council will serve as a collaborative body to share knowledge, surface and promote work already underway, and champion the acceleration of responsible AI investments. The Council will convene three workgroups in the areas of teaching/learning, research, and administrative operations to identify work underway, develop guidelines for effective deployment, and recommend necessary investments in training and infrastructure for success. The Council will solicit proposals and award small grants for AI pilot projects in each focus area. This 3-part structure is intended to create agile, narrowly focused teams of subject matter experts who can make rapid progress on promising ideas and quick recommendations to leadership on the most effective ways to invest limited University resources.



**Executive Sponsors:**

Betsy Dumont, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost  
 Nick Dugan, Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer  
 Gillian Wilson, Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development

**Charge:** Advise executive sponsors, select recipients of pilot grants, develop campus communications plan.

**Deliverables:**

- Facilitation of selection process and awarding of pilot grants
- Campus engagement and communication plan
- Campus showcase of pilot project outcomes
- Recommendation to executive sponsors for continued investments and governance

**Council membership:** Co-chairs of workgroups for AI in Teaching and Learning, Research, and Administrative Processes. The Council will be chaired by Avi Badwal, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enterprise Technologies, Office of Information Technology.

**Meeting cadence:** monthly

**Timeline:**

Campus announcement, invitations to participants, and council convening – January  
 Call for pilot project proposals - February  
 Notify recipients of pilot grants – March  
 Receive deliverables from workgroups – May 15  
 Pilot project showcase and report-out – September

**Support:**

Logistical support to be provided by the Provost’s office.  
 OIT to be responsible for web page updates and communications.

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## Workgroup on AI in Teaching and Learning

It's been three short years since the launch of ChatGPT and generative AI has already had a profound impact on teaching and learning. A recent student survey by *Inside Higher Ed* found that 85% of students used it for coursework in the past year. Both student speakers at UC Merced's own spring 2025 commencement thanked "our friend, ChatGPT." Faculty are also using AI in assignments, to craft syllabi, quizzes and exams, to offer 24/7 access to tutoring and, in some instances, in assessment. AI is here to stay and it's time for us, the newest and most nimble UC, to meet the moment and clarify how we are going to use it.

### Charge

This workgroup is charged with engaging stakeholders to inventory current uses and potential future opportunities to use AI in teaching and learning, to interface with the Academic Senate on the development of guidelines for the use of AI in teaching and learning, and to identify support and infrastructure that faculty and academic staff will need to effectively and ethically integrate AI into teaching and learning. In doing this work, the workgroup shall stay true to UCM's values and keep equity, accessibility, transparency, and ethics in mind at every step.

- Engage stakeholders (faculty, academic staff and students) to:
  - Inventory current use cases of AI in teaching and learning at UC Merced.
  - Identify opportunities to further explore the use of AI in teaching and learning.
  - Understand concerns around the use of AI in teaching and learning.
  - Identify and recommend support, professional development, training and infrastructure that faculty and academic staff need to effectively and ethically integrate AI into teaching and learning.
- Interface with the Academic Senate (specifically UGC and GC) on the development of guidelines for:
  - Using AI to develop and delivery of course content, interact with students, and assess learning outcomes.

- How students can leverage AI to advance learning outcomes while maintaining academic integrity.
  - Establishing transparency, mutual expectations, and disclosure about the use of AI by faculty and students.
  - Ethical concerns such as data privacy, algorithmic fairness, and ownership of course-related materials and data.
- Outline next steps in implementing recommendations.

**Deliverables:**

- Brief report that includes:
  - What was learned through stakeholder engagement with sections summarizing use cases of AI in teaching and learning, opportunities to use AI in teaching and learning, and concerns around the use of AI in teaching and learning.
  - Feedback on guidelines and best practices developed by the Senate on the use of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning.
  - Recommendations for support, professional development, training, and infrastructure that faculty and academic staff need to effectively and ethically integrate AI into teaching and learning.
  - Three to five next steps in addressing AI in teaching and learning.

**Workgroup membership**

- Senate co-chair: Mindy Findlater (SNS), UGC Representative
- Administrative co-chair: Amy Bergerson, Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education
- GC rep: Zach Grossman (SSHA)
- SSHA rep (provided by dean): Carolyn Jennings
- SNS rep (provided by dean): Sylvain Masclin
- SOE rep (provided by dean): Siddaiah Yarra
- Non-Senate Academics Council Rep: identified by Non-Senate Academic Council: Shauna Bennett
- Library representative: Bronwen Maxson
- Admin unit reps at the discretion of unit leads: Grad Div, CETL, Student Affairs and Engagement.

**Timeline**

Early February – Convene workgroup and establish work plan

Early March – Review and score proposals for pilot projects

May 15 – Target deadline for Senate report identified by UGC and GC. Deliverables due to Advisory Council

### **Support**

Logistical support for workgroup meetings will be provided by Maggie Faris of the Division of Undergraduate Education.

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## **Workgroup on AI in Research & Innovation**

The rapid development of AI tools is transforming research methodologies across disciplines and is a research frontier in and of itself. AI may be utilized in idea generation, writing, and editing, analyses, modeling, and management of data, and ethical compliance. These opportunities will enable new discoveries in fields as diverse as genomics, biomedicine, engineering, climate science, social sciences, and the humanities. Together, AI is increasingly becoming central to research innovation. At the same time, issues of reproducibility, transparency, equity of access, and responsible use remain critical. As the newest UC and an R1 university, UC Merced is well positioned to be agile, thoughtful, and inclusive in shaping how AI contributes to our research mission.

### **Charge**

This workgroup is charged with engaging stakeholders to identify current and emerging uses of AI in research at UC Merced, exploring opportunities for cross-disciplinary applications, and addressing ethical, technical, and infrastructure challenges. The workgroup will recommend guidelines for responsible AI research practices, develop strategies for supporting faculty and student researchers, and identify priority areas for investment in training, infrastructure, and partnerships.

In carrying out this work, the workgroup should remain attentive to issues of equity, reproducibility, transparency, and ethical conduct, while also identifying opportunities to accelerate discovery and broaden participation in AI-enabled research recognizing that research in AI is also a form of enablement, both cross-cutting and foundational to the other sectors.

- **Engage stakeholders** (faculty, postdocs, graduate students, research staff, ORU directors) to:
  - Inventory current use-cases of AI in research at UC Merced.
  - Identify opportunities for innovative, cross-disciplinary applications of AI.
  - Understand concerns around research reproducibility, ethics, and access.
  
- **Develop guidelines** for responsible use of AI in research, addressing:
  - How researchers can engage and learn from their professional communities about standards for transparency, reproducibility, and documentation of AI-driven results, as well as appropriate authorship and credit for AI-assisted contributions.
  - Data governance, privacy, and security practices in research using AI.
    - Engage in operational model documentation and data provenance to enable research.
    - Create a research compliance pathway for AI that encompasses any IRB, export control, IP, and/or dual use issues.
  - Equitable, transparent, and ethical access to AI tools, training, and computational resources
    - Leverage existing AI frameworks (NIST, OSTP, EU governance models).
  
- **Identify and recommend support and infrastructure**, including:
  - Training and professional development for faculty, postdocs, and students.
    - Strategy for faculty recruitment and cluster hires
    - Create training pipeline as AI fellows, AI certificates, and PhD tracks
  - Research computing resources and shared platforms for AI applications.
    - Develop research-grade compute strategy (from campus HPC compute, to CENIC, to cloud, to national lab & NSF/DOE/HPC interoperability).
  - Partnerships with national labs, industry, and other UC campuses.
    - Position UC Merced for long term investment with external funding strategies to include federal, state, industry, and philanthropic pathways.
    - Align activities to strategically position for future large-scale proposal opportunities, research centers, and industry partnerships.
  
- **Outline next steps** in implementing recommendations and integrating AI more fully into UC Merced's research enterprise.

## **Deliverable**

- Brief report that includes:
  - Current use-cases of AI in research at UC Merced, differentiating AI as research vs. AI as a tool for research.
  - Opportunities for new and cross-disciplinary applications.
    - Identify where shared methods and compute could accelerate research and/or collaboration
    - Identify emerging clusters as signature areas for further growth
  - Concerns and challenges identified by researchers.
    - Technical
    - Regulatory
    - Workforce
    - Administrative/Operational
  - Guidelines for responsible AI research practices.
  - Recommendations for training, support, infrastructure, and partnerships to advance AI in research.
  - Outline of 3–5 next steps for UC Merced in addressing AI in research.

## **Workgroup Membership**

- Senate co-chair: Brad LeVeck (SSHA) CoR Rep
- Administrative co-chair: Josh Viers, Associate Vice Chancellor for Interdisciplinary Research and Strategic Initiatives
- GC Rep: Wan Du (SOE)
- SSHA rep: Colin Holbrook
- SNS rep: Teamrat Ghezzehei
- SOE rep: Stefano Carpin
- Non-Senate Academics Council Rep: identified by Non-Senate Academic Council: Parveen Kumar
- Library: Erin Mutch
- Admin unit reps at the discretion of unit leads: VCR's designee (Leslie Teixeira-Porto), Grad Div.

## **Timeline**

Early February – Convene workgroup and establish work plan

Early March – Review and score proposals for pilot projects

May 15 - Deliverables due to Advisory Council

## **Support**

Logistical support for workgroup meetings will be provided by Margie Gallo in the Office of Research and Economic Development.

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## **Workgroup on AI in Administrative Services & Digital Transformation**

Creating efficiency and institutional process improvement is an often-touted benefit of generative AI. Technology firms are racing to include AI in their products at a breakneck pace, often with questionable results and return on investment. Additionally, AI cannot solve this problem for us on its own – properly leveraging AI for operational improvements will require significant upskilling and training investments in existing staff, who will need to change the way they work in response to these advancements. Per Educause’s 2025 AI Landscape report, only 1% of respondents are addressing institutional AI needs by primarily hiring new faculty or staff. Given this reality, choosing where to make investments in administrative AI improvements requires attention not only to where the greatest need is, but also organizational readiness to effectively embrace a new way of doing things.

## **Charge**

This workgroup is charged with engaging stakeholders to inventory current uses and potential future opportunities to use AI in administrative operations, developing readiness assessments for deployment of administrative AI, and identifying support and training needs for faculty and staff to effectively adopt AI-driven business processes.

- Engage stakeholders (staff, faculty, system owners) to:
  - Inventory current use-cases of AI in administrative systems and processes at UC Merced.
  - Identify opportunities to use AI in administrative operations and business processes for further exploration.
  
- Develop guidelines for the responsible and efficient use of AI that address:
  - Using AI to reduce administrative burden on faculty and staff

- Using AI to reduce manual processing and repetitive tasks for administrative staff
  - Identifying and selecting appropriate business processes or administrative tasks that will benefit from AI
  - Ethical concerns such as data privacy and security, algorithmic fairness, and accessibility
- Identify and recommend support, professional development, training and infrastructure that faculty and staff need to effectively and ethically integrate AI into administrative operations and business processes.
  - Outline next steps in implementing recommendations.

### **Deliverable**

- Brief report that includes:
  - What was learned through stakeholder engagement with sections summarizing use-cases of AI in administrative operations, opportunities to use AI in administrative operations, and concerns around the use of AI in administrative operations.
  - Feedback on guidelines and best practices for evaluating and implementing AI in administrative operations.
  - Recommendations for support, professional development, training, and infrastructure that administrative units need to effectively and ethically integrate AI into campus business operations.
  - Three to five recommended next steps in addressing AI in administrative operations.

### **Workgroup membership**

- Senate co-chair: Catherine Keske (PROC member, UGC Vice Chair, SOE)
- Administrative co-chair: Avi Badwal, AVC for Enterprise Technologies, OIT
- SSHA staff or faculty rep: Becky Smith
- SNS staff or faculty rep: Angie Salinas
- SOE staff or faculty rep: German Gavilan
- Staff Assembly rep: identified by staff assembly - Robert Romero, Staff Assembly Vice President and Senior Systems Administrator with the OIT
- Library Representative: Tom Bustos

- Admin unit reps at the discretion of unit leads: DFA, POPD, EM, APO, CIE, SAE, EJIE, HR, etc.) Workgroup chairs to finalize roster to balance group size and representation. Workgroup chairs to finalize roster to balance group size and representation.

**Timeline**

Early February – Convene workgroup and establish work plan

Early March – Review and score proposals for pilot projects

May 15 - Deliverables due to Advisory Council

**Support**

Logistical support for workgroup meetings will be provided by Beth Bennett of the Office of Information Technology.