

# AI Taskforce Executive Summary

As artificial intelligence (AI) rapidly reshapes higher education, Kutztown University (KU) has a timely opportunity to leverage AI in ways that enhance its mission of student success, access, and institutional excellence. Unlike larger research universities, KU need not aim to develop cutting-edge AI technologies; rather, it can adopt AI thoughtfully to drive operational efficiency, enrich teaching and learning, and better support students and staff within our resource constraints. To that end, the Taskforce on AI was convened in early 2025, bringing together faculty and administrators across campus to develop a university-wide AI initiative. The Taskforce organized six working groups, each focusing on a critical domain of AI integration: (1) Academic Integration and Learning Outcomes, (2) AI Awareness and Strategic Communication, (3) AI Competency Development, (4) Infrastructure and Technology Readiness, (5) University Operations and Student Affairs, and (6) Student Success and Career Readiness. This comprehensive report synthesizes the work of those groups, presenting a cohesive strategy for the university.

**Rationale:** The Taskforce's work is driven by the recognition that AI is not a passing trend but a transformative force in higher education and the workforce. Our graduates will enter jobs where *basic AI understanding and human skills to use it effectively* will be expected. Internally, AI offers tools to improve how we teach, advise, and run campus operations. If approached proactively, AI can be an "enabler of sustainable, student-focused innovation" rather than a threat. However, embracing AI also brings challenges: ensuring ethical use (avoiding bias, protecting privacy), preparing faculty and students to use AI appropriately, and upgrading infrastructure and policies to accommodate these new tools. These challenges underscore the need for a coordinated institutional response.

**Themes and Findings:** Several cross-cutting themes emerged from the six working groups' analyses:

- **Building AI Literacy and Skills:** Every group identified a need to educate our community about AI – its benefits, limitations, and responsible use. Faculty, staff, and students must develop at least a baseline AI literacy so they can confidently and ethically use AI tools relevant to their roles. Currently, knowledge gaps and uncertainties about AI are common, which the Taskforce addresses through training programs, awareness campaigns, and integration of AI into curricula.
- **Academic Integration with Support:** In the curriculum, faculty are eager (and under some pressure) to integrate AI into teaching and assignments, given workforce expectations that graduates know how to use AI. The Academic Integration group emphasized that this must be done carefully and with institutional support. Faculty face heavy workloads; they will need resources, professional development, and recognition to adopt new AI-based pedagogies. The group outlined strategies like grant incentives for AI-related teaching innovation and a peer mentorship network of "AI-fluent" faculty to aid others.
- **AI Policy, Ethics, and Governance:** A unanimous finding was that robust policy frameworks and oversight are essential. AI blurs traditional lines in areas like academic integrity (e.g. use of AI in writing assignments), data privacy (AI tools often handle sensitive data), and decision-making bias (AI used in admissions or hiring). The Infrastructure/Tech Readiness group's review confirmed KU has a solid IT foundation but needs stronger data governance and security

controls before scaling up AI. They and the Ops/Student Affairs group recommend establishing cross-functional governance structures (e.g. an AI ethics committee) to set guidelines and evaluate AI use cases. Ethical use – ensuring transparency, fairness, and human oversight – is a guiding theme in all recommendations.

- **Infrastructure and Tools:** For AI to flourish at KU, we must invest in the technological infrastructure and tools that enable it. This includes both computing resources (software, hardware, data systems) and security measures. The Tech Readiness group implemented initial “guardrails” such as an AI Acceptable Use Policy and data sensitivity labeling to protect information. Looking ahead, they recommend creating an “AI Innovation Hub” – a secure environment where students, faculty, and staff can experiment with AI technologies for learning and research. Additionally, expanding campus access to AI software (through licensing or cloud services) is critical so that hands-on experience with AI becomes part of the KU experience.
- **Operational Efficiency and Student Support:** The University Operations/Student Affairs group found that many universities are already using AI to streamline services – from predictive maintenance in facilities to chatbots that answer student questions 24/7. These applications can save time and improve service quality if implemented responsibly. KU’s opportunity is to deploy such AI solutions to augment our staff (not replace them), targeting areas where our staff are stretched thin. For example, an admissions chatbot could handle routine inquiries, freeing staff to focus on high-touch recruitment efforts. Importantly, any efficiency gains should be balanced with KU’s human-centered values: AI should enhance personalized support for students, not create a cold or automated campus experience.
- **Student Success and Career Readiness:** The Student Success/Career group highlighted that our students must be prepared for an AI-infused workforce in two ways. First, they need direct AI knowledge and skills (e.g. knowing how to use AI tools in their field, how to critically evaluate AI outputs, and how to mention AI proficiency on a resume). Second, because AI is accelerating automation of routine tasks, students’ human skills – like communication, teamwork, ethical judgment, and emotional intelligence – become even more crucial to their success. Employers will value graduates who can *work alongside AI* effectively, exercising human creativity and empathy in tandem with AI tools. KU’s strategy thus pairs technical AI training with a renewed emphasis on soft-skill development in curricula and student programming.

**High-Level Recommendations:** In light of these findings, the Taskforce proposes a coordinated set of actions to position KU as a leader among regional comprehensive universities in embracing AI responsibly. At a high level, we recommend:

- **Integrating AI into Teaching and Learning:** Update curricula and learning outcomes to incorporate AI competencies and digital literacy across disciplines. Provide faculty with model guidelines for AI use in coursework (when to encourage or limit AI assistance) and share examples of effective AI-related assignments. In parallel, offer students new learning opportunities – such as a first-year seminar on AI basics or micro-credentials like “*AI Essentials for College Students*” – ensuring every KU graduate achieves baseline AI literacy.
- **Comprehensive AI Training for Faculty and Staff:** Launch an AI professional development program to build faculty and staff capacity. This includes workshops, online modules, and certificate programs covering from foundational AI concepts to advanced applications and ethics. Establish incentives (certificates, digital badges, recognition in annual evaluations) to

encourage participation. The goal is a workforce that is “AI-aware and AI-confident,” able to utilize AI tools in their roles and guide students in doing the same.

- **Robust Communication and Culture-Building:** Implement an ongoing AI awareness campaign to demystify AI and foster a positive, informed campus culture. This involves regular communications highlighting AI success stories at KU, open forums for discussing concerns, and clearly articulated messages about how AI aligns with our educational mission. By addressing fears and emphasizing a growth mindset (“adapting together, advancing together”), KU will build stakeholder trust and enthusiasm for AI initiatives.
- **Investing in Infrastructure and Data Governance:** Allocate targeted resources to upgrade technology and guard against risks. This includes funding for an AI Innovation Hub (a secure sandbox environment), purchasing or licensing vetted AI tools for campus-wide use, and strengthening data protections (monitoring systems to prevent unauthorized data sharing via AI, strict access controls). These investments ensure we can scale AI usage safely, protecting sensitive information and complying with regulations (e.g., FERPA) as we innovate.
- **Enhancing Student Support and Success with AI:** Deploy AI in student services to provide more personalized and proactive support. Examples include AI-driven early alerts for at-risk students (using predictive analytics on academic and engagement data), adaptive learning or tutoring systems that supplement classroom instruction, and AI-assisted career services (such as resume analyzers and interview chatbots) to better prepare students for job markets. Each deployment should be coupled with human oversight (e.g., advisors acting on AI alerts) to ensure empathy and judgment remain central.
- **Continuous Ethical Oversight and Alignment with Mission:** All AI efforts will be guided by ethical principles and KU’s core values. We will establish a cross-functional oversight committee to review AI implementations for fairness, transparency, and alignment with our mission of access, affordability, and student-centered education. This committee (an extension of the Taskforce or a new body) will regularly update policy, address unintended consequences, and include diverse voices (faculty, IT, students, compliance officers) to maintain a 360-degree perspective on AI’s impact.

Each of the following sections provides more detail on the six working group areas, including strategic priorities, key recommendations, implementation strategies, and needed resources. The report concludes with overarching recommendations that cut across all groups and a phased implementation timeline (2025–2030) that maps out how and when major initiatives will unfold. The tone and proposals are crafted for consideration by university leadership – cabinet members and trustees – who will ultimately authorize and champion this initiative. By taking the steps outlined, Kutztown University can proactively adapt to the AI era, ensuring we harness these technologies to enhance our educational environment while upholding our commitment to student success and ethical leadership.