

Transcript

Jahan Culbreath:

Hello and welcome. I'm your host Jahan Culbreath. I'm the director of federal relations here at the Council of Higher Education Accreditation. So thank you for joining us with today's session: "Confronting the Unspoken, the Impact of AI Adaptation on Institutional Policy and Accreditation." As artificial intelligence continues to influence higher education from teaching and learning to operations and policy, it's crucial that institutions and accrediting bodies stay ahead of the curve. Today's conversation will unpack the evolving role of AI and how it's shaping institutional policy and accreditation standards. So if there's any questions during the presentation, please put them in the chat. So right now, I'm pleased to be joined by two dynamic leaders, Laurie Shanderson and Leamora Kahanov. So Laurie, it's all yours.

Laurie Shanderson:

Welcome every one, and thank you so much for joining us. I'm so happy to be here with you. Leamora and I presented this information well, some of the information, we've had some significant updates--in January at the CHEA conference, and it was a great session. Well received. That's why we are here with you today. So a little bit about myself. I am now a consultant. I consult with Accreditation Insights is the name of my organization, and we also host a podcast. We co-host Accreditation Insights. I'm sure many of you are familiar with it, but we have everyone in the accreditation space on the show and that have contributed so many interesting things, and that really is how this work started from all of the guests that we've had and all of the information that they've shared. And as AI started to become just more popular, we wanted to have a conversation with those leaders to find out what they were thinking.

So we'll talk a little bit more about that. But relative to my background, I've been in higher ed for almost 30 years, if not 30 years as a program director, faculty member, assistant dean, associate dean, a founding dean, college chancellor, and now consultant. I've served as a site visitor. I currently serve as a site visitor for CAMHE. They certify healthcare management programs. I've sat on the Board of--I sit on the Board of CAMHE as well as AUPHA. They accredit undergraduate healthcare management health administration programs. I've also written some training documents for accreditation and just spent a lot of time in this space. But it was really interesting to begin the conversation about the impact of AI and what that would mean for all of us. Leamora?

Leamora Kahanov:

Thank you, Laurie. It's a pleasure to be here today. It was wonderful to speak at CHEA, which gave us the opportunity to engage with you today. I am a specialist in Accreditation Insights and a co-host for our podcast. And my day job is provost at Alvernia University in senior Vice President of Academic Affairs. This is my third time that I've been a provost, but as Laurie, I've been a founding chair and a dean, and you feel free to look rather than go down the litany. Feel free to look me up on LinkedIn if you would like. But with that, I will let Laurie go ahead and get started and look forward to your questions.

Laurie Shanderson:

So a little bit more about the project, again, just the interest in what is everyone thinking? All of these individuals that represent these accrediting bodies, what are their concerns relative to AI and what are we talking about? What are the fears, the pain points? What are the questions? And I think this work was interesting for me because I am going to admit that I was terrified and still have a lot of reservations

about the impact and the import of AI. I know that it's very powerful and I know that I don't understand it still because now we talk about different aspects of AI to really feel comfortable with it. I know that we've had guests on the show that have talked about academic integrity, they've talked about assessment, many different things, but how do utilize AI and how to use it properly and how do we adopt it and how do we think about it as it relates to policy? There's just so much to think about and we could talk about it for days, but Leamor and I wanted to just share our thoughts based on the conversations that we had. So let me share my screen.

So just to kind of set the stage, I want to ask a couple of questions just to see where you are relative to your understanding of AI. And because this changes daily, some of these answers I believe now may have changed. Oh, all right. You saw the answer to that one. So here's the first trivia question. Some accrediting agencies currently use AI systems to perform initial screening of compliance reports. So what do you think about that? True or false? I think I might've shown you the answer by accident, but the answer is true. Some accrediting agencies that have started experimenting with AI to automate initial screening of documents, they use it for very simple things right now, but really to help manage the flow of documents and to help prevent errors with data collection and all these other things. And I'm happy that we're incorporating AI in that way.

All right. Here's the second question. There is a universally accepted ethical framework for using AI in higher education accreditation. What do you all think about that one? A universally accepted? Yeah, false, as you might believe. I mean from institution to institution, the way we look at AI and how we use it is just so different. So no, there's absolutely no one way to do it and there's no one way to adopt it. And I know that the statistic that I've heard last is that while many institutions have adopted and appreciate AI, it's not used in the classroom as much as we think it is. I think the last number I heard about was about 23% of AI is actually occurring in the classroom. So there's going to be some more ramp up time for implementation and to understand how to use it effectively.

All right. AI can completely replace the need for site visits during the accreditation process. I know many were worried about this. So what do you think? Might be a little bit of an obvious one. False. AI can enhance aspects of the accreditation process like data analysis and other tasks that we mentioned earlier, but there's so much context that comes from a physical visit. Even as a site visitor, I can tell you I'll get documents that I read and it still does not paint the entire picture. The site visit has to happen. You have to hear things in context, you have to speak to faculty, staff, and administration to truly get a picture. And AI just cannot replicate that process at this time. And I'm not sure it ever will. You need to hear things in context, historical context, all that.

Alright, AI integration, the integration of AI into the accreditation process can help reduce biases in decision-making. Now, this was a controversial one that we talked about when we were face-to-face, so I'm curious to know what you think about that. The integration of AI and the accreditation process can help reduce biases and decision-making. False, and we will debate that some more. And if those of you that have questions about that, please feel free to chime in right now if you'd like to, because this really is an interesting one when we talk about subjectivity and AI and what that actually means.

Jahan Culbreath:

Yeah, Laurie, we've got a question. I'm curious to know if the accrediting bodies who use AI to review initial documents have any extra protections to keep the school's information private?

Laurie Shanderson:

So I don't have any specific data on what they're doing. I know that many institutions just in light of cybersecurity breaches have bumped up security in that way. I would like to imagine that AI would be a huge consideration in that aspect, but we are looking at different things. Some AI is tailored specifically. Some programs have been specifically tailored towards institutions. So all of the information is staying in-house. So if there's a question or you want a process to be automated, it's automated based on that organization's data and tools. So I think there's less of an opportunity to have any type of incident, but not being a tech person, I'm not sure, but that's a great question. Leamor, did you want to chime in on that one?

Leamor Kahanov:

I'll do my best. I think you are very appropriate in that response as well as a lot of the data that is shared with accrediting bodies is shared through their portal, and it also comes under the scrutiny of maintaining cybersecurity and keeping the information intact. No one can prevent some of the cybersecurity breaches, but knowing that we are dealing with student data and institutional data, I believe that all of the accrediting bodies as well as the institutions, take that very seriously and are doing what they can to keep that information private

Laurie Shanderson:

Accreditors currently have standardized AI competency requirements for educators within accredited institutions. True or false? Standardized AI competency requirements. Yeah, I think you knew that one was false. There currently no standardized AI competency requirements across accrediting bodies. And while some institutions may start incorporating AI literacy into their criteria, it's not widespread standardized practice and accreditation. And we spoke a lot about AI at the CHEA conference, and it was really interesting because prior to the conference, CHEA had a statement, and I'm not going to jump ahead. And then afterwards, not too long afterwards, there was more direction, and I'll share that shortly. But relative to the data, and this is based on the conversations that we had with all of the presidents and all of the senior administrators and leaders at institutions, there were some that said no, they were not going to adapt AI. There was some that were kind of lukewarm with the process, and then there were others that were full yeses.

So I wanted to share some of that with you. So these were some of the nos. They said that they hadn't discussed AI yet. They don't currently have a position, but they're looking into it and they believe that there's a whole lot of middle ground. These were the, we're not really going to do anything right now. And that was interesting. These are only the three that I captured, but many of the other comments fit into one of these categories, and that's why I said, these are the nos. And these were the gos. These were the full yeses. Then they were like, we're incorporating AI into our discussions. We are running towards the storm, not away from it. We understand that AI is going to be ubiquitous in our students' lives, and we also use our current reaffirmation accrediting process to expand our understanding. So you really see in these responses that some institutions are saying, we can't get away from it.

We definitely have to work to understand it and to work to incorporate it, and then to be responsible stewards of how we use AI at our institutions. And then this last group, these are the so sos, they were

like, well, we'll kind of see what we're going to do. So I don't think we have a choice about whether or not to adopt AI in the curriculum or practice. It's going to be a matter of how we do it. And it's important to know that some institutions really were intentional about bringing up the ethical piece of AI and how much they really cared and were concerned about that. And then the second response, we haven't really had enough cross-campus conversations about when to use it when it's appropriate. We know that AI for cheating is inappropriate, and we know that using AI to respond, and you'll see the response there. Now, again, back to the podcast that I'll direct you to it at some point, accreditationinsights.com, you'll see that there were a lot of podcasts where we talked about the ethical use of AI and in some instances about academic integrity. What constitutes academic integrity when you are using AI in the classroom? So there's a lot of discussion here. Jahan, I think you have a question?

Jahan Culbreath:

Yeah. Yes. How can institutions better prepare themselves for AI and what's coming?

Laurie Shanderson:

Leamor, you could jump on to help me with this one if you'd like. I think the common sentiment that we've heard is by being educated about it and because it is so huge right now, and you can use it in so many ways, I think the first step is looking at how you want to implement it. And that discussion has started primarily with the faculty and what they wanted to do with AI and how they felt that it could be utilized best in their programmatic offerings. Leamor?

Leamor Kahanov:

Thank you. Well, this is exactly what my half of this presentation is. How do we make those decisions and how do we institute policy and starting with the foundation of what are the non-negotiables for the institution? And that hits many different targets at the institution. The faculty in the classroom may be one segment. How we use it in admissions is another, how we use it for finance and auditing. That may be another area. And across the institution, how are we going to use it and what are our non-negotiables for meetings? Can we use AI for a dictation service or is that something that the institution as a whole doesn't want to adopt? And what is the mission and the ethics of the institution? That's the foundation. So these are institutional conversations, and I don't think you have to know exactly how it works, but you have to know how you want to engage with it.

Jahan Culbreath:

With that said, to jump back to the accreditors and how institutions can upload things and do that, do institutions have to have certain platforms in order to do that if accreditors are using a particular platform for AI?

Laurie Shanderson:

No. We've not seen any requirements or heard from any of the major accreditors or even the programmatic accreditors that there's any specific requirement to have any certain types of data.

Jahan Culbreath:

Okay.

Laurie Shanderson:

So this was the actual message from CHEA, and this was at the time of the CHEA conference, and this is the direction or just the statement I guess from CHEA about AI. And you can see what CHEA is saying here. I think they're acknowledging AI is here. It's something that we are going to have to embrace at some point, but there should be sound principles and regulations for its use. And I really believe that that's the best guidance if you're going to use it, you just need to make sure that you use it appropriately because CHEA of course supports innovation and academic in higher education processes. But then I'd like to show you this one. This is the new document that CHEA produced, and this is, as you can see, the guiding principles for artificial intelligence and accreditation and recognition. And to the right where you see this side of the screen, I pulled out these important, I mean it's all important, but these aspects that really speak to the guidelines that should be followed. And they mostly center around the opportunity to be innovative, but also to be responsible. And I think that's very important. So from the time initially of the first CHEA conference to now, you can see that there's been a development of how we use AI and what we're saying about it just to be more, I think, intentional about the direction that we give.

Laurie Shanderson:

Jahan, did you have a question or Leamor?

Jahan Culbreath:

Yes, I do. So SACS-COC in the US has released an AI policy statement that prohibits evaluators from uploading institutional documents into their AI until there is an internal AI platform that is implemented. Are you aware of anything like that with any other accreditors at all?

Laurie Shanderson:

I am not aware of anything like that, but I am sure we're going to start to see a lot of different ways that institutions and organizations decide how to manage their own AI processes. Because I think what each institution does with it and how they use it is going to vary. As Leamor said, sometimes it's used mostly in administrative offices to help with repetitive tasks. Other times it's used for experiential learning with students other times in classrooms. And I think the level of the use will determine, I think the protection or the steps that the institution takes to remain safe in those spaces. Leamor, I didn't know if you wanted to chime in.

Leamor Kahanov:

Yeah, I think that whatever the platform is to use SACS vernacular, you really can't institute a platform without having institutional understanding and policies of how we're going to use that platform and what it's going to be used for. So I think that that statement alone helps institutions understand that if we're going to move forward with a platform, we have to have a global institutional understanding of what it's used for and how it presses us to create institutional policies around this and governance over cybersecurity and what that looks like for the institution.

Laurie Shanderson:

Again, on the minds of the accreditors that we've spoken to, these were some of the topics that they talked about, specifically ethical use and data privacy, what you're all mentioning now and quality and integrity, regulatory and political challenges that may impact how AI is used, bias and inequity in terms of how it's used and what it can do. Faculty roles and employment, adaptation to rapid technological

change, and lobbying and influence on accreditation standards. These were the common themes that we pulled from their responses to our inquiries. And again, I was surprised that there really was so much diversity in their responses. We didn't speak to one institutional organization that said the same thing as another based on what they do. They had different feedback and different fears and different, I think confidence levels in what AI could do. And that was refreshing to see, but it also told us that there's so much yet to unpack. There's so much that doesn't have a strong scope around it to be able to say, this is what we do, this is what we all know are best practices. And it's really interesting to watch this evolve.

Leamor Kahanov:

So with that foundation of how accreditors use the information we need to move into how the institution is internalizing AI and that use across a campus community and the institution, if you could move that forward, Laurie, I'd really appreciate it. So how do we develop comprehensive AI policy? And this is where I come from. I don't know all of this. I am not a technology individual, but you have these experts on campus and it's really important at this point to have some type of institutional technology committee that has representatives from across the campus to give their input and understanding or lack of understanding and then filter that back out to the institution. Developing a policy in AI is no different than any other institutional policy. Lean on what that process is for your institution. I think where we're stumbling right now is that this is so new and it is evolving so quickly. I call it the quickening, that every time you think you have an understanding, it moves forward faster in a faster pace. But we can create some overall arching policies around this or maybe several policies. Maybe you need a policy for the classroom that is different for how we use it for administrative tasks or how we engage with external entities when they record the vendors, for example, when they record meetings. So those are the things to think about while creating a policy.

I think there's a question, Jahan, if we want to respond to it.

Jahan Culbreath:

Yes. To my recollection, the Higher Learning Commission provides guidance on this topic. Given that we may not be able to fully control how accreditation content is used, stored, or disseminated once it is uploaded to or processed by an AI system, such use is discouraged.

Leamor Kahanov:

So again, a lot of this, even though that is guidance, it really is up to the institution how they want to engage with AI. So if the institution has controls around this and has created a policy like any accrediting body, whether that is for institutional accreditation or programmatic accreditation, we lean on the policies of the institution. So that is global guidance, but your institution may have some ways that they engage with AI that then would inform the accrediting body as to how we're going to use AI and how we're going to engage with external entities in the use of AI. And that all the more reason why it's critical that the institution has some global policies. Next slide please. So in developing an AI policy, there are several things that we lean on. What is the ethical framework and creating clear guidelines in the academic setting.

So I'll give you my institution for example. If we look at the classroom, the faculty got together and decided they would have three clear ways that students could engage with AI in the classroom that the faculty would institute as part of their syllabi, whether they would like students to not engage at all, sort of a medium engagement for certain activities. And then it is clearly a part of the course, say teaching a

cybersecurity course, maybe one of those instances. And then we also have some other, we have a note taking policy on when using AI note taking is allowed at the institution. And then we have how AI is overall. What is the ethical framework for use within your working environment? Jahan?

Jahan Culbreath:

Yes. We've got another question. A lot of responsible use of AI outside of certain dedicated AI ethics conversations seem okay with accepting certain additional harms such as increasing environmental destruction and bias in generation as well as ignoring copyright and intellectual property issues. Why do you think these increasing harms are ignored or considered acceptable to so many and what individuals can do to raise these issues productively while these technologies are new and there are most opportunities for harm migration?

Leamor Kahanov:

I think that question one has an assumption that it's well accepted to ignore those. I think this is part of why the policies are so important and that may very well be happening, but I think that's why the policies are important in holding both students and employees to those policies and creating that ethical framework. We are or aren't going to allow for, say, me to use AI to put this presentation together or we are or are not going to use it in the classroom or in other operational functions. I think that is very important in order to protect the copyright and intellectual property of others. And if we move this to my area as a provost, how does that play out when we're evaluating faculty and their works? How does that evaluate when we have symposia on campus and we identify individuals are or are not ignoring copyright?

We have to stick to those things, but we have to have policies around them. Otherwise what happens when you do discover someone is not using it at your institution per your ethical framework, or maybe you haven't defined that ethical framework and that makes it even more difficult 'cause now we can't have conversations about whether you believe it is a violation or not a violation and new hires have to understand that as well. So I think that your question is really appropriate for this presentation and how important it is to have foundational work as to an understanding of what our ethical responsibility is on that particular campus. I hope that answers that question because then it goes straight into, now how do you articulate that? What is your implementation strategy? And I can't say enough about how important a communication strategy is at this point, like we call it on our campus and in marketing a drip campaign, so that individuals are following the process and they really are understanding where we are and identifying our non-negotiables and our ethical framework.

And then working that once you start that campaign and that communication strategy to the campus that we have to identify how we are going to use AI in our institution and who the experts on campus are and what the fallibilities are per cybersecurity and engaging with external, for example, generative AI that may be a public source. All of that has to be socialized to get to the governance structure that now will evaluate the policy, not only the policies but the details in those particular policies. And then once you've identified those and created a framework to go through the governance structure, engaging with the rest of the stakeholders is really important because if you have an outlier, we all know this, you have an outlier that hasn't read their emails for an entire year and then all of a sudden says, when did that happen?

It needs to, particularly for something that's as evolving as AI, this needs to be socialized well, and it needs to go through the governance structure to the Board to make sure everybody understands the framework and how we've identified the use for us. If you could go to the next slide, please. And this is so quickly evolving that I think it's important that this is reviewed more regularly at this point than some other policies where we sit there and we let them languish for 10 years because they're general understood policies. So this may be one where you have to review more frequently. So as we lay the groundwork for the committee formation, I said this earlier, but an AI committee may be a subset of a technology committee on campus. And the technology committee should be representative of the whole campus, someone from staff, someone from finance, someone from advancement, everyone from different offices. But out of that, you need some experts that have understanding of AI and then representatives on a specific AI committee that are key stakeholders for that institution. And it may even include some external community members.

Jahan Culbreath:

Okay, we've got another question. I think most people don't understand the environmental harm, extra use of energy and everything that goes with that. They're causing with each other the use of AI platforms. Somehow this information needs to be more widely disseminated.

Leamor Kahanov:

I agree wholeheartedly. All the more reason why you have a group of individuals that can identify this and inform, not only inform, but these committees and these discussions as you're putting together your plan for the institution and what your institution feels, how your institution feels responsible for the environmental harm, that needs to be part of the conversation and the feedback that you receive in putting this together as well as routine updates. Because as this advances, there may be additional environmental harms that we're not conceiving of today. And so I think that's a really, really good point that that needs to be included in the conversations that are had and the reasons why you may need to routinely review some of these policies as AI progresses in different ways.

I think that also your question also leads to a couple of the other boxes on the screen, and that is we need to assess what our current AI use is. We may not even know some of the ways that AI are being used. So I will take myself as an example. Last year, maybe the beginning of the fall, all of a sudden the note taking device came up on several meetings and how is that being used? What is the impact to the campus? And the question came up, do we really want every single word that we say to be dictated in a meeting when it's to be discussion or brainstorming, etc? So assessing how we use it, doing surveys across your institution because you may not even realize how some people are using it, I think is really important. And then planning for the future, as I've discussed, what is the long-term vision for how we may use this and interceding along the way as AI advances?

Jahan Culbreath:

Leamor, it sounds like the AI committee is vitally important because AI is constantly, if not daily, changing with things almost faster than I think some other areas. So it sounds like the committee is really important just to stay on top of things as things constantly will pop up.

Leamor Kahanov:

I couldn't have said it better--a hundred percent--because as we go about our daily work, not everyone is focused on this, right? I'm not focused on this every day as I'm doing my daily work, but to have

individuals that are responsible for this, and identified responsible for this, helps inform changes that may need to happen. Laurie?

Laurie Shanderson:

One of the things that came up when we were in person, I remember this, we talked about the technology and how quickly it was evolving. So if you use a certain type of program or software and they've created a change or an enhancement that changes how AI can be utilized, that is one of those things that has to go back to the committee as you mentioned, how to plan for its integration to be discussed. And these things happen and they seem pretty innocent when they do. But to your point, Leamor, the note taking that was like a new feature that popped on that hadn't been discussed prior to, and then now we have to create policies around its implementation and use.

Leamor Kahanov:

Absolutely. And again, I'll use myself as an example. We weren't sure the implications of using it, the environmental aspects of it. And until we came up with a policy, which we did rather quickly, we asked the entire campus to cease using that function for the next month while we came up with how we wanted to engage with it as a campus community. So that may be something your campus would choose to do or not do, but it was one way that we decided to move forward when a new application, we saw a new application burgeoning on campus.

Jahan Culbreath:

Okay, we've got another question. For example, Zoom uses, well, an AI notetaker that we just chatted about and that would need to be included, correct?

Leamor Kahanov:

Correct. And you can, every campus does this different. You can have that included in a general policy on AI. We chose to have a specific policy on notetaking that details both how or to use it internally and how you need to use it in the classroom or not use it in the classroom, as well as how you engage with it with external vendors that may be using the note taking function external to your institution. So I think we all think more of these kind of things are going to be popping up that we didn't anticipate and couldn't necessarily anticipate as the general populace on a campus. And we have to be flexible and reflexive to that when those things happen and create policies and committees to whoever asked the question previously that has an understanding, meets regularly, and can provide that information to the appropriate people on campus.

Jahan Culbreath:

Yeah, I see how it's evolved since our CHEA conference in January in this short window and how quickly things are constantly changing and evolving.

Leamor Kahanov:

Absolutely. And automated, right? So it used to be you had to click on the note taking device as an example, and now it automatically populates in many of the applications and you have to make the decision to turn it off. So those types of things continue to evolve and we need to make sure we're messaging that. So even though we've created a policy, and I'm going to ask Laurie to move on to the

next slide, but even though we've created a policy, you may now have to lean on your AI or technology committee to send out routine updates when new applications or advances are made to say this is how it fits in our policy. We have a policy, this new application has come through, we see people are engaging with it. This is how it fits in our policy moving forward as an interpretation manual or communication.

Jahan Culbreath:

Another question here, I was in CAAHME (acronym), a webinar when someone's AI recorder popped into chat and Mike asked the person to turn it off due to potential security issues. How can we protect ourselves when in webinars with other institutions?

Leamor Kahanov:

Well, I think that's a great question as far as when you are doing things as an institution as a whole with somebody else that's an external entity, we, I'll give you our example. We say that we ask them to turn it off. When you're doing something like this and there's a recording, you individually are going to have to determine whether you want to engage with that or whether you're allowed to engage with it per your institutional policies. I can't tell you which one is right or wrong. You, our institution has to create a policy as to how you want the members of your campus community to engage when those things happen and you as an individual are going to have to make that decision as well. So I think that there are security issues, there are individuals that have different issues compared to others, and there's institutions that don't want that kind of engagement either. So that's part of the conversation that has to happen and the ongoing conversation is this becomes more prevalent. I don't have an answer for you because this is part of that ethical build-up and the non-negotiables we talked about at the very beginning.

Jahan Culbreath:

Okay. Go back to the change and you had mentioned about keeping up and reaching out to someone on your campus with the change. For those that don't have anyone that they can reach out to, are there platforms that people can go to now to get updates and stay ahead of the curve a little bit?

Leamor Kahanov:

I think that's a really good question. I think each of our associations as well as the accrediting bodies, they have statements that are coming out and they have these professional developments. There's not like so many other things that we've been doing for so long, there's not a repository of go there and you'll find the answer. Right now we're really kind of piecemealing it together, pulling from different places and different statements are coming out and you have to make the decision as to which one of those, aside from the technical components and the cybersecurity, which one of those are appropriate for you and your campus. I will say though, that's on the slide, the one thing I didn't touch on is please make sure that your legal and compliance offices are involved in this as well because that can have an impact to your institution as to how you are creating policies and applying them. And it's going to be a little different for every institution. It's unfortunate right now that there isn't a place that has the AI committee that has national committee prominence on AI and higher ed. We're pulling from different spaces. Laurie?

Laurie Shanderson:

I was trying to find the name. We've had some guests on the show that have groups and collectives where they talk about AI as it relates to, again, academic integrity and assessment and other areas. So I would invite you all to visit our website, www.accreditationinsights.com, and you'll see the list of the podcast there. And there are several on AI and they talk about the groups that they have galvanized to address different concerns.

Leamor Kahanov:

I think that's a really good point and thank you for bringing that up, that we had some exquisite speakers specifically on AI and integration and what it means for the future of higher ed and accreditation. And there are quite a few of them and they also gave some references to other places to look as well. But that brings to point maybe what Laurie and I should do is put together a reference sheet on different areas to look to inform your decision making. I think that's a really good point that we need to put something like that together. I'm not going to go through this slide in particular, but it is a reference and I know that the slide deck is going to be sent out on really who are the key stakeholders and what kind of essential expertise should be on those committees. And they may not always be at your institution to the person who asked the question. Sometimes you have to seek external individuals to help inform some of your committees as ex-officio. Next slide please. So AI assessment, what is it that you're assessing in order to make some of these policies? So one, what are your policy gaps?

AI and the use of AI may actually fit into some of your policies. Let's use copyright infringement. That may actually already be covered in your copyright infringement policy. You just need to make sure that you articulate to the campus community that AI use in this particular way comes under, is already covered under your copyright policy if you have one. What's your infrastructure analysis? Evaluate the technical capabilities and security measures you already have. Your CIO should be doing that as part of that committee and routine conversation with administration as to how we are keeping the campus secure and what are our technical capabilities. If there's some tech debt, what do we currently have and how does that fit into our policies? I already talked a little bit about academic applications. That really is something that the faculty are going to have to participate in. What is the tolerance level globally and what are faculty able to do individually in their classrooms?

And then the resource assessment, documenting the existing AI investments in the support systems because they are used across the campus. How are they used? Where are they used? And it's continually continuing to evolve. So this is going to have to be kept up to date and referenced back to your policies routinely. Next slide please. Some of this we already went over, but the next part is what's a little scary, and Laurie and I have talked about this a lot, is what's to come next? What's going to drop out of the sky that we aren't anticipating, at least those of us not in the technology world are not anticipating, as we go about our work at a higher-ed institution. And that is how do we create a strategic vision for the future of AI? So it really does start with a resource planning. What are the resources we have?

What are we intending to use as far as technology? What is the finances we've put forward to advance our technological footprint across campus? And then how does that, and that all ties into the ethical and sustainable piece of how we want to deploy that as a campus community and what our general milieu is. What are the risks? Then what is the implementation framework? So how are we structuring the

implementation of new AI and what is our strategic vision for that? Do we want to be completely automated? Are we an institution like mine is that is incredibly relational and we want a good mix? Are we an institution that has decided begrudgingly we're going to use it where it's needed in order to interact with our external and internal constituents? What is that vision that will help inform everything below that and the policies that we have to create?

Next slide please. So this is the last slide that I have before questions. And it is the same on most campuses. It may have a little bit of a different recipe or taste to it, but once you've collected all of that information and you have people in place for your committees and information, you want to draft a policy. You want to have some sort of internal review through the governance structure so that everybody can take a look at it and provide feedback. You want to gather that feedback because there are individuals across campus that you may not have thought of having an integral part in AI. We want to test that policy and then make full implementation. And that full implementation comes with that little PSA that says this could change at any time depending on what is happening out there in the development of more AI tools and how we engage with it. So that should follow pretty closely how most places enact new policies that have to be enacted. Jahan?

Jahan Culbreath:

We've got another question. Our institution's legal team has been meeting with our state senators as well to ensure we remain locally compliant, excuse me, yeah, locally compliant with the potential regulations. I would highly recommend this for all committees.

Leamor Kahanov:

I think that's a really good recommendation. We'll add it to the slide deck. Yeah, I think that goes for just about everything we do, right? There's always components, governmental components and governmental relation, whether they're state or federal that are evolving that we have to have conversations and we have to make sure that we're complying and not just complying, that we're part of the conversation in the process and that we have institutions have agency to have those conversations of how it impacts us. There's not always an understanding of how different areas of industry are impacted by compliance and regulatory oversight.

Jahan Culbreath:

Yeah, it sounds like this institution is, so my grandmother would say we're really on the ball with some things. Which leads me to this question. So on your campus, when AI hit everybody at one time, how did your campus respond and what were some of the initial steps that your institution took and or challenges that you might've had with questions?

Leamor Kahanov:

Sure. So I'm on a smaller campus. I have been on a very large campus before, so I know that how the response time is a little different. We are incredibly relational. We have touch points all over campus. And so as this was evolving, there were questions that started coming up and the questions were really relevant as how are we supposed to, is this note taking feature okay? or hey, I found this new great thing I've instituted and then everyone says, is that good to institute or bad to institute? It really was groundswelling up as to how are we supposed to engage with all this new technology that's happening? And then we also had, as every campus does, a couple of luddites that said, what's a computer? And so they don't necessarily want to engage in any way, but it really was a groundswell up and it got to a point

on our campus where we didn't know enough and we had to pause. And I think I spoke about that earlier where we sat there and said, wait a second, this could be potentially dangerous to our students, to our privacy, to the student information, to following FERPA guidelines or HIPAA guidelines or whatever they are. So let's pause. Let's send this back to our committee of experts to inform us on how we might want to move forward. And then we started a different, we kind of channeled the energy in a different way to solving the problem.

Jahan Culbreath:

Very good.

Leamor Kahanov:

Laurie, do you want to pop back on there you are.

Jahan Culbreath:

We've got another question. Should institutions anticipate updates to accreditation standards and guidelines that incorporate AI usage and policies?

Leamor Kahanov:

I would imagine so. Go ahead, Laurie.

Laurie Shanderson:

I think that's going to be standard and as AI continues to be everywhere and have something to do with academics and administration and utility, and I think we're going to have to adapt and incorporate policies. I think we're going to see it everywhere. And I think there'll be more guidelines is basically my statement on that. More guiding principles.

Leamor Kahanov:

I agree. I think there are going to be quite a few guiding principles for institutions from accreditors and regulatory oversight, but I think it's not going to necessarily challenge the hard conversations we have to have. And if I use academic affairs as an example, is it okay to have complete AI grading? Now we already use that a little bit with automated say multiple choice, but should we be using it for essays, for example? So that's a very discreet example, but I think each individual campus is going to have to start having that conversation. Those kind of discreet items are not going to come from guidance documents.

Laurie Shanderson:

I'd like to add in because I was vulnerable at the conference and I still want to speak to my comfort level with AI. It's been a journey, but it made me very uncomfortable in the beginning. I'm one of those people that really had a hard time when we went to eBooks because I went through school with tabs in my books and highlighted annotated notes in the margins. And when we moved away from that as an administrator, I had to become comfortable with it because this is what the students were using and they were used to it. It didn't bother them to do that, but it was really difficult for me. And while I couldn't really appreciate it, I know that I needed to understand it. And so I'd say the same thing needs to be true with AI. While you may be fearful of it and not understand its power, you have to embrace it at least enough to be protected and to know how to use it properly and to make sure that you have policies that support its appropriate and ethical use on your campuses.

Leamor Kahanov:

And I think this is why we make such a good team 'cause I'm on the other end of the spectrum, Ooh, there's a new fun tool. Let's use it. Let's start it. Let's move forward. And then I need to be pulled back and there's a place in the middle, of wait a second, I want to use this. And I've started using it, but now I have to back up and be thoughtful because we may need some policies, we may need some guardrails. This may be to somebody's question earlier, creating environmental harm. So Laurie and I are on the opposite ends of the spectrum, but we have to make sure that everybody's pulled to the middle to move these kind of new initiatives forward and new policies that have to be made. Jahan, are there any other questions?

Jahan Culbreath:

Well, it just keeps sounding like to me, Leamor, that a lot of things keep coming back to your AI committee to kind of help balance things, whether it's policy, whether it's new AI technologies and how you need to just be able to maneuver and keep reaching for the future, but keeping everything in perspective.

Leamor Kahanov:

Absolutely. But I think it's also very important not just to go back to that committee, but to have a holistic view of your campus culture and the humanity that is on your campus and how you want to implement AI based on that. What is the campus culture? How do you touch students and other employees and the external community? And in an acting AI and AI policies, are we true to who we are? So it's not just how ethically we want to engage, it's also how socially we want to engage by instituting these policies so that we don't take away from who we are as an institution and the culture that we've created and why students come to this institution in particular, or another institution in particular. We don't want to create a transactional environment by instituting these AI policies. So I think that's at the crux of the humanity piece that this committee needs to embody as part of giving us information and helping us find a step forward.

Laurie Shanderson:

I think I would add that you have to be inclusive with the members of the committee and those that you socialize the information about AI with, it's so important to make sure that you have individuals at the table that represent the concerns of those that are not as comfortable with AI. What will it look like? How will you socialize its message? How will we use it? I think you have to be intentional and purposeful about those conversations and with whom you have them.

Jahan Culbreath:

We've got another question. How is the business community working with AI? Are they as deliberate in the information of policy and guiding principles, or are they generally more proactive and learning and leaning into the potential of this new technology?

Laurie Shanderson:

I can only speculate on that, and I'd say, and my guess would be we look at things differently in higher ed because we always have to think about the students. And I think in the business world, we think about customers and so we want to protect customers, but protecting students and protecting customers, I think it lands a little differently. So I'm not sure what companies are doing, and I can't speak to how much they care or not care, but I do know that we probably look at it differently.

Leamor Kahanov:

And speaking from the perspective of who we engage with as external companies, be them companies where our students have internships, apprenticeships, co-ops, they do engage with AI differently, but it's the same spectrum as higher ed. Some are ahead of the curve and charting the course and others are lagging for whatever reason, whether they are scared of it, don't want to implement. So I don't think it's much different than higher ed, but it's our decision in higher ed as to how we want to engage with that and how we want our students to engage with that. And I think that's where I would focus. It's regardless of what they're doing, is that how we want to engage as an institution with them? I have a question for you. We have this podcast and we have all these wonderful people who come on and talk about it. What do you see as the next subject in AI that we should probably address?

Laurie Shanderson:

Oh my goodness. One that's been popping up a lot has been assessment, and we've had some guests that talked about assessment, and that's because I think most institutions find assessment to be one of those areas that causes them a bit of frustration. And to have a way to automate or to innovate assessment I think is important. And I know that there's a lot of work being done with AI and assessment and proper use around AI there. So I'd say that's one place that I could think of right now just off the top of my head.

Leamor Kahanov:

And I think there's varying abilities there. So we would really like assessments to automatically roll up and tell us what we need to be doing or what resources we need. And I don't think we're completely there yet. We're in that in-between stage and I can't wait for that next stage where it becomes just a little bit easier. But you said something earlier about this that I think is really important and that is that even though we have AI doing some of the operational work, we still need the individuals on the ground to read it, to review it, to give context, and to put it within the framework that we all want to live within. And I think we're not to the space where AI can do that for us at this time.

Laurie Shanderson:

Yeah, I would agree because you can read a report and it can be as detailed and as you like, but I think without hearing the narrative of how some things came to be without understanding the historical context of some of the relationships and some of the institutional history, I think you don't come away with the same type of experience or understanding. But I do have a question for you now.

Leamor Kahanov:

Oh no, you're throwing it back at me. Okay.

Laurie Shanderson:

On campus though, what has been your most challenging aspect of implementing AI?

Leamor Kahanov:

So I think it depends on the office. I think some offices really want to implement and they are hindered by our slow process, and we work really fast at Alvernia, the slow process and taking two months to get a policy out, and those are some of the functional offices, automating financial aid, automating, auditing, some of those pieces. Also our chat bots and how we're reaching out to admission students.

They may be feeling a little hindered by our slow policies. And then there's the faculty who are trying to be incredibly inclusive and thoughtful in creating policies around this and are a little bit slower trying to pull in all of the potential perspectives to reach all types of students that we may have. And they're a little bit slower, and so we may be ahead of them with the policies and they're trying to catch up saying what these policies may not work for us. So I think it's that in-between place, between where individuals across campus are, because there are different functions. It's a city. Those gaps I think are the hardest part for us to navigate, not the particular AI application itself.

Laurie Shanderson:

I have a question for the audience or those that have joined us today. If you could type in the chat box, what's the most different or innovative use that you've encountered relative to someone wanting to use AI maybe at your institution? I'm curious to know what's the most creative use? How has someone said, we want to use AI to do this or that? That'd be interesting to talk about.

Leamor Kahanov:

I think that's a question that has really make people digest and think through how they're using it

Jahan Culbreath:

At me here, thinking about my usage of it, which is interesting. And I think I use AI in some capacity almost daily. While we're waiting for the audience to ask them, give us their responses. What are some of the platforms that the two of you, what's your go-to platform for things?

Laurie Shanderson:

Well, AI--I've only used, I mean I've only used the ChatGPT thing. I mean, I'm slow to this and I am still significantly fearful. I will admit it about its use and so I'm going slow.

Jahan Culbreath:

Yeah, it's probably better.

Leamor Kahanov:

So I think I don't have one go-to. I think using it for different purposes. So I work a lot with our enrollment and our student affairs, and so we're using it to help us identify students that have a high affinity for us so that we know who we may reach out to more often. We're using it a lot in our institutional research for predictive analytics and analysis of retention of our students, and we're automating that so anyone on campus on our internal portal can go in and see what's happening with the aggregate student body. Those are the ways that we're using it, and I think it's still faculty choice as to how they're using it right now within the context of our guidelines. But really I think it depends on the application of what we need it for that day.

Jahan Culbreath:

We've got some responses here, ladies. My guess is that people's most creative proposals are the ones they want to keep proprietary and under wraps. Another response is we have a chat box that answers students' questions about their assignments, and it has cut faculty questions in half. Also, my office primarily uses AI to guide our software development work and how to do things in SharePoint. Content analysis of the responses to the questions on a round table to identify points of pride of the institution.

Simple but effective compliance document analysis. Is this document file path complaint (compliant) with these requirements? A few of our communities have decided to use AI through Microsoft Teams as reporting secretary and follow-up during committee meetings. This has not been adopted throughout the campus. However, each chair is determining their use case for all AI meetings. The Library and Academic Success Center utilizes AI-driven tutoring to enhance student support in general education courses, learning new accreditation standards, and summarizing that learning--oops, that leaning into, sorry about that. Let me read that again. Learning new accreditation standards and summarizing that learning (leaning) into new resources for schools, and those are some of the ways people are using it.

Laurie Shanderson:

I love it. I mean, when I hear things like this, it makes me more comfortable each time to know that AI has this type of impact. Because typically I think as faculty members, there was a lot of discussion about students are going to use it to cheat, they're going to use it for this. And it was like one-track mind when it comes to AI and what it means and why we should be afraid of it. So to know that we're using it in many different ways, and I know this was the same type of sentiment when we started using the internet. Everything is there. We can just find this. We don't need to go to Encyclopedia Britannica anymore. And so I know the same type of fear was present. This is just so much more powerful and I think that's why it's caused me so much concern.

Leamor Kahanov:

And yet at the same time, we need to figure out our guardrails as far as educating students into how we want to use, this is going to be their world. This is going to be what they know, and it's an integral part. So to your point, Laurie, becoming more comfortable is really important because as we progress forward and as they become the individuals in our workforce, this is the world they're going to live in. So what's the appropriate use and what are the guardrails we can put around that to help them understand that? I think that's going to be important moving forward for our employees too. But we did the same thing with the internet. I think we can replicate that as well. Or when TV started, all of these new technologies come with that. How are we going to use this ethically and appropriately.

Jahan Culbreath:

We've got a couple more. Our institution permits the use of Copilot and it has been incredibly helpful in identifying formulas for data analysis and streamlining reports generated. Also, I attended a Zoom AI summit last week and they showcased and gave live demos on many new AI functions for classroom use. Some uses were instructor can ask Zoom AI, which students are in the highest engaged created quiz of what was covered so far in the class. It was an IA, excuse me, AI-created quiz from transcript and included files and created a form with URL in less than two minutes and many other uses. We have incorporated AI-specific assignments in order to teach our students the proper way to use AI. Right. Remember back when it was considered risky and unprofessional to send a business communication through an email? Zoom AI also included a notetaking function so that when students can spend more time listening and engaging instead of writing or typing. And the last one right now we have, we have used it to do a quick analysis of text data received from surveys to our stakeholders.

Leamor Kahanov:

I think all of those, and there's continual professional develop on many of these that you were talking about are wonderful examples of the positive benefit of using AI. And what I've used our technology committee for is not only to evaluate what the positive benefits are, but what the potential risks are in

using some of those. So AI notetaking is a really good example when you're using it for an institutional committee that is discoverable. So if you are having conversations around some sensitive information, you may not want notetaking to be on at that particular time. So we have to balance and we have to have those conversations. And I found that our technology committee that has a legal representation on it really helps us kind of balance what are the amazing benefits and what do we have to make sure that we are aware of.

Jahan Culbreath:

We have another comment. We must have a clear division between assignments where AI cannot be used such as paper tests and ones where it should be used, such as AI conversations. I do not think it should be either or, but this means that we have to reformulate the way we give assignments.

Leamor Kahanov:

It's a struggle.

Leamor Kahanov:

I think we are in some uncharted territory, particularly depending on the discipline that you are in. I think there's a balance. But I also think that there are some times that you have to choose one or the other where I had a faculty member that is now gone back to Blue Books for those of you who remember those because of the outcomes that that professor wants. And then I have another one that has leaned into completely using AI in the classroom. So I think we have a responsibility to make sure students use it appropriately moving forward, but there may be times you want to use one more than the other. And I think that's a really good point

Laurie Shanderson:

That made me comfortable was incorporating AI into an assignment by allowing the students to use it for part of the assignment, but then expecting them to do the other part independently. And they used it as a way to kind of brainstorm a topic so they were able to feed it certain parameters to help them come up with a topic for what they wanted to do. And they would require then to turn in their chat history as to how they came up with that topic and then they had to generate the rest of the work independently. I mean, I think it is going to take a lot of creativity.

Leamor Kahanov:

So here's a place where I think our current policies need to be evaluated per our current reality. And that is it's in the classroom. AI detection is not as robust as it could be. And when you know you have students that are turning in work that is very similar or it doesn't sound like their work or there's two parts and they completely show their lack of acumen in the subject matter, but then their essay is perfect, but you can't prove it. And so as far as saying a student did something they cheated or that they use other people's intellectual property, you can't do. So how do we modify the policies that we have to incorporate how AI is used by our students? If that is what you want to do, that's a policy we now have to look at. And that's a pinch point. And so that's one of those gaps I talked about earlier, that institutions have to have conversations around

Jahan Culbreath:

Ladies, we unfortunately are out of time, but I want to give you two a chance to give some closing remarks.

Leamor Kahanov:

Well, I'll start because Laurie's the heavy hitter. She can finish it up. We are all in this process, working through it together. It is relatively new. It's happening faster than we like in higher ed to move typically. And it is a work in progress and there's not one way to do this right, but continuing to communicate and making sure that you adhere to the values of your institution and yourself. I think that's the grounding mechanism here to always go back and center around.

Laurie Shanderson:

And I'd like to just close off by saying, don't feel bad if you are afraid of AI or you are walking timidly towards it, because I think that's a real place to be. And trying to understand it is challenging and trying to embrace it I think is even more challenging. And I have to say that constantly because as much as I appreciate it and the things that I've heard today that give me more comfort, I'm not sure if I'll ever feel like AI isn't a part of the Black Mirror reality of the world that we live in. It's just something that's going to take some time. But I do feel comforted by appropriate use and ethical use of AI. I just want to let our audience know, if you want to know more about our podcast, please go to accreditationinsights.com. You'll see season one, season two if you'd like to be a guest on our podcast, there's also a place where you can put a form on there as well as we provide institutional support for our accreditation processes. So we'd love to discuss any projects that you have. And thank you for joining us.