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Artificial Intelligence in Graduate Education



✱ **NORC** Education

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Introduction

The rapid evolution of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI and large language models (LLMs), is reshaping the landscape of higher education. U.S. graduate schools, having accelerated their adoption of digital technologies during the COVID-19 pandemic, now face a new frontier, integrating AI into academic and administrative processes. This shift presents both opportunities and challenges, especially in the context of fairness and access in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) graduate education. As AI becomes increasingly embedded in university systems, from admissions procedures and curriculum design to student support and performance analytics, it is imperative to understand how these technologies are being deployed, regulated, and experienced across institutions. The urgency of this inquiry is underscored by the potential for AI to either mitigate or exacerbate existing disparities, depending on how it is implemented and governed.

To address this information need, NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) conducted a comprehensive national survey of graduate deans at leading STEM PhD-granting institutions across the United States. The survey participants were senior officers for graduate education on their campuses, a role that encompasses a variety of titles. The most common of these is graduate dean, which is the term used throughout this project to refer to this position. The survey explored the current status and implementation of AI-related policies and processes across all domains of graduate education, including administrative operations, curriculum development, research practices, and student conduct standards.

Subsequently, NORC hosted a convening in November 2025 that brought together over 100 graduate education leaders from across the nation to explore how AI is being integrated into graduate STEM education and examine its implications for innovation and access in the field. The convening featured both in-person and virtual participation, creating a diverse forum for dialogue among institutional leaders grappling with similar challenges and opportunities.

This final paper presents the findings of the survey enriched by insights from the November 2025 convening, offering both quantitative data and qualitative perspectives on the evolving role of AI in STEM graduate education. Artificial intelligence tools were used in a limited, supportive role to assist with synthesizing and summarizing transcripts from the convening. All substantive analysis, interpretation, conclusions, and data verification were conducted by the project team.

Report Terminology

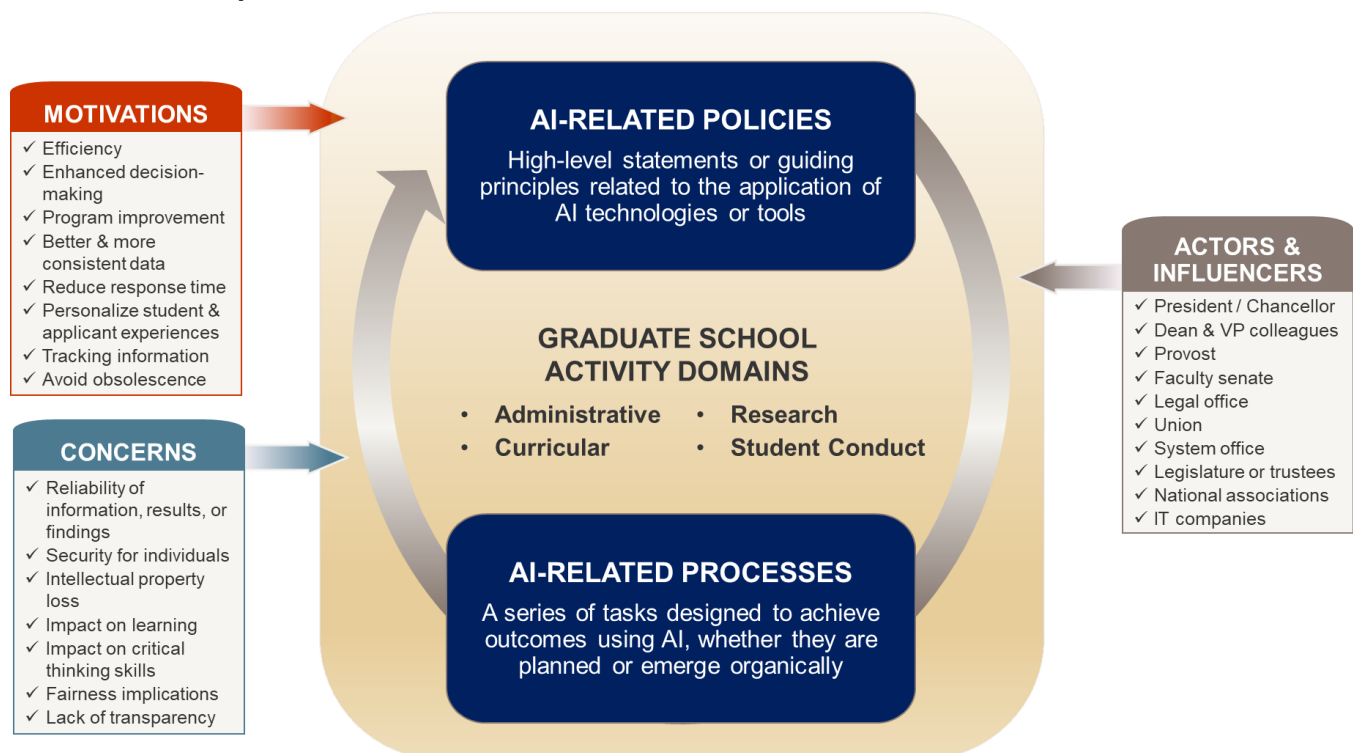
The terms “graduate school dean,” “dean,” “graduate school leader,” and “leader” are used interchangeably throughout this report; all refer to the senior officer for graduate education on campus.

The term “graduate school” is used to represent institution-wide perspectives and actions on graduate education, including at institutions that do not use that terminology.

Conceptual Framework

This research is grounded in a systems-level approach to graduate education, informed by fairness and access principles and a commitment to community-based inquiry. Drawing on grounded theory methodology, the study seeks to map the current landscape of AI applications in graduate schools, focusing on institutional policies, processes, and motivations. The conceptual framework in advance of developing the survey and convening agenda (see Figure 1) emphasizes the dual nature of AI and its capacity to enhance mission attainment, efficiency, and personalization, and its risk of reinforcing bias and unfairness. By examining how graduate deans perceive and respond to AI policy and process development as well as integration, the study aims to generate a taxonomy of AI use and develop guidelines that promote fairness and access. This framework positions graduate schools not only as sites of innovation but also as stewards of inclusive academic environments.

FIGURE 1. Conceptual Framework



Research Questions

The study was guided by two central research questions (RQs):

RQ1: What AI-related policies and processes are currently in place or being considered at the institutional level?

RQ2: What are the central features of community-grounded guidelines that universities could use to assess the impact of AI applications within U.S. graduate schools?

These questions aimed to uncover both the strategic and ethical dimensions of AI use in graduate education, with a particular focus on how institutional actions align with broader goals of fairness and access.

Data Collection Methods

Quantitative Institutional Survey

Institutional Sample

This landscape study focuses on graduate schools and their leadership: specifically senior officers for graduate education, a position that often includes a variety of different titles. The most common of these is graduate dean, which is the term used throughout this project to refer to this position. Graduate deans are uniquely positioned to provide comprehensive insights into AI policies and practices, as graduate schools influence institutional behaviors across individual programs, departments, and the university as a whole. They can offer meaningful perspectives on how AI is being adopted and governed throughout their institutions.

The invited institutional sample was designed to reflect the most productive institutions producing STEM graduates at the doctorate and master's levels. The final sample of 299 institutions included:

- 263 doctoral institutions that graduated at least 20 STEM doctoral students in 2023 (NCSES, 2023);
- 25 masters-level institutions awarding the most master's STEM degrees in 2022 (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.); and
- 11 additional minority-serving institutions (MSIs), such as historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), in recognition of their importance in diversifying the STEM pipeline and professional ranks.

The sample included 261 Research 1 (R1) and Research 2 (R2) institutions and 103 MSIs across all institution types:

- 186 R1 institutions, of which 48 were also MSIs;
- 75 R2 institutions, of which 34 were also MSIs; and
- The 38 remaining institutions consisted of colleges and universities that fell into other Carnegie Classifications (of which 21 were MSIs).

Contacting information for the graduate school's dean for each institution was sourced from publicly available information. Of the 299 invited institutions, 159 completed the survey, resulting in an overall 53.2% response rate. Table 1 shows the invited sample, participating institutions, and response rates by institutional characteristics.

The [2025 Carnegie Classification](#) system updated its definition of R1 and R2 institutions:

- **R1 institutions** are defined as those with very high levels of research activity—specifically, an average of at least \$50 million in annual R&D spending and at least 70 research doctorates awarded per year.
- **R2 institutions**, by contrast, meet a lower threshold: at least \$5 million in annual R&D spending and at least 20 research doctorates awarded.

TABLE 1. Survey Sample and Response Rate by Institutional Characteristics

Institutional Characteristics	Sample Size	Participating Institutions	Response Rate
OVERALL	299	159	53.2%
INSTITUTIONAL CONTROL TYPE			
Public	204	125	61.3%
Private	95	34	35.8%
CARNEGIE CLASS			
Research 1: Very High Spending and Doctorate Production	186	111	59.7%
Research 2: High Spending and Doctorate Production	75	37	49.3%
Other Institutional Carnegie Classification	38	11	28.9%
MSI STATUS			
Minority-Serving Institution (MSI)	103	56	54.4%
Non-Minority-Serving Institution	196	103	52.6%
MAJOR RESEARCH UNIVERSITY STATUS*			
Yes, member of either organization	192	116	60.4%
<i>AAU</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>68.6%</i>
<i>APLU</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>63.1%</i>
No	107	43	40.2%

* Major research university status is defined as membership in either Association of American Universities (AAU) or Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). There were 38 institutions in the sample who were members of both AAU and APLU.

Survey Development

The survey instrument was developed to ensure comprehensive coverage of AI applications, policies, processes, and motivations within graduate education (see Figure 1 for the conceptual model). It included both closed- and open-ended questions designed to capture:

- **Policy:** high-level statements or guiding principles related to AI use.
- **Process:** specific tasks or activities involving AI.
- **Motivation:** drivers behind particular policy or process decisions.
- **Actors/Influencers:** individuals, committees, or organizational units shaping or guiding AI adoption and practice.

Content was informed by literature, prior NORC work with graduate deans, and input from the project's Expert Advisory Committee. Before full launch, the research team conducted six cognitive interviews with graduate deans to test the programmed survey for clarity, flow, and length. Feedback from these interviews was used to refine question wording, improve response options, and ensure the instrument was accessible to participants from a variety of institutional contexts.

Survey Administration

The survey launched on March 3, 2025, and closed on June 17, 2025. Survey invitations were sent via email, followed by 16 reminder messages sent at regular intervals. Telephone prompting was used to encourage in-progress participants or individuals who had not started the survey to complete it before the end of data collection. These outreach efforts contributed to achieving a robust institutional response.

Qualitative Analysis

An inductive approach was used to thematically code and analyze open-ended survey responses. This analytical strategy allowed themes and patterns to emerge organically. This approach is particularly well-suited for exploratory research and ensures findings authentically reflect participants' perspectives and experiences. All qualitative data analyses were conducted using MAXQDA 24, a comprehensive qualitative data analysis software package that facilitates systematic coding, retrieval, and analysis of textual data. Trained research staff with expertise in qualitative methods performed all coding activities. Prior to coding, coders participated in calibration sessions to establish shared understanding of the coding approach and ensure consistency in application. The coding process proceeded through multiple iterative phases.

- **Initial Open Coding.** Coders began by conducting line-by-line review of responses, applying descriptive codes to meaningful segments of text. During this phase, coders remained open to all emergent concepts without imposing predetermined categories.

- **Code Development and Refinement.** As coding progressed, the research team held regular meetings to discuss newly identified themes. Throughout analysis, codes were added, merged, or refined as new patterns emerged from the data.
- **Final Theme Development.** The research team collaboratively reviewed all coded data to identify final overarching themes, determine theme prevalence, and select representative quotations that captured the essence of each theme.

Throughout analysis, the coding team documented coding decisions to show the evolution of the analytic framework.

Quantitative Analysis

The survey data were cleaned and prepared for data analyses, including recoding variables and coding missing data. Counts and percentages for all items' response options were calculated for the overall dataset.

Participating institutions were grouped into three distinct categories based on their implementation status of AI-related policies or guidelines within their graduate school, and select cross-group comparisons were conducted using these implementation status groupings.

1. **AI Policies/Guidelines Implemented.** This includes 70 graduate schools that have implemented AI-related policies or guidelines.
2. **AI Policies/Guidelines in Development.** This includes 46 graduate schools that had not implemented any AI-related policies or guidelines but were currently developing such policies or guidelines at the time of the survey.
3. **AI Policies/Guidelines Not Developed.** This includes 43 graduate schools that had not implemented any AI-related policies or guidelines and had not begun developing such policies or guidelines at the time of the survey.

These three categories were derived from responses to a single survey item asking about the status of AI-related policy or guideline development. This survey item allowed participants to select multiple response options. As a result, graduate school deans who reported their institution had implemented AI-related policies or guidelines and who were also developing AI-related policies or guidelines were categorized in the "AI Policies/Guidelines Implemented" group. Additionally, this select-all-that-apply survey item drove the skip logic for follow-up questions about policy implementation. When multiple responses were selected or the implementation status was described in the open text field associated with the "other" response option, some follow-up items were skipped over per the survey logic.

Graduate Education Leadership Convening

Convening Description

The first day of the convening opened with an in-depth discussion of the foundational concerns associated with integrating AI into the work of graduate schools. Day 1 was conducted under the Chatham House rule to encourage candid exchange; the graduate deans were asked to consider several critical topics through the lens of their institution's values and mission: the limitations of AI, the potential advantages of AI, and strategies for managing AI going forward. Consistent with the Chatham House rule, deans identified key considerations, including the reality that AI systems reflect the data they are trained on and may inadvertently carry forward historical patterns or gaps in representation; the considerable variation in student access to AI tools and training both across and within institutions; and concerns regarding adequate oversight structures to govern AI.

Despite raising a number of concerns with the integration of AI, participants also identified promising applications, particularly positioning AI as a check on human error rather than a decision-maker, such as using AI to generate candidate lists for human committee review to surface applicants who might have been overlooked due to fatigue or bias.

Day 2 of the convening was open, on record, and recorded via Zoom. NORC's research team presented findings from the recent survey and included panel discussions with senior officers for graduate education, who were invited to reflect on the survey findings in relation to their institutional contexts.

The convening meeting agenda is included in Appendix D.

Integration of Convening Insights

Since the convening largely followed the organizational structure of the survey, the insights and observations from participants are incorporated throughout this paper as contextual elements that further illuminate the survey findings. Where convening discussions provide supporting evidence, reveal implementation challenges, or offer alternative perspectives on the survey data, these insights are presented alongside the quantitative findings to provide a more complete picture of the AI landscape in graduate education. Direct quotes from convening participants, shared under Chatham House rules and attributed only as "graduate dean," are included to capture the nuanced experiences and concerns of institutional leaders as they navigate AI integration.

Key Survey Findings Enriched by Convening Insights

The primary aim of this report is to identify and examine the policies and processes that are currently in place or are being considered at the institutional level regarding the integration of AI into the management and practices of graduate education, as reported by graduate deans between April and June 2025 and further discussed during the November 2025 convening. We also examine some of the driving factors shaping the integration of AI into the management and practices of graduate education, including the motivational factors, the key stakeholders involved, and participants' personal concerns. These findings are designed to support graduate education leaders as they identify, develop, and implement community-grounded guiding values that assess AI applications at their institutions.

The survey's findings and related insights from the convening are presented in three sections:

- **SECTION 1:** The Current Landscape of AI-Related Policies and Guidelines in Graduate Education

The report begins with a general overview regarding current AI-related policies or guidelines within graduate education. It focuses on the implementation status of AI-related policies or guidelines within the participating graduate schools and examines the focus areas of the policies or guidelines from institutions that already have them in place and those from institutions with them in development.

- **SECTION 2:** Implementation of AI-Related Processes in Graduate Education Practice and Expectations for Impact

The analysis next examines the implementation of AI-related processes within graduate education to provide a clearer understanding of how AI is being integrated into day-to-day practices, particularly administrative functions. This provides an understanding of how AI is being used *regardless of the status of policies or guidelines*.

- **SECTION 3:** The Motivations, Influencers, and Concerns Related to the Adoption of AI in Graduate Education

Building on the insights from Sections 1 and 2, this section examines differences in: 1) the motivations behind the use of AI within graduate schools, 2) the key actors and influencers shaping the integration of AI within graduate schools, and 3) graduate deans' personal concerns regarding the integration of AI within their graduate school.

The findings categorize the 159 institutions into three distinct implementation status groups: 1) AI policies/guidelines implemented, 2) AI policies/guidelines in development, and 3) AI policies/guidelines not developed. The analysis in Sections 1–3 compares these groups across AI applications,

implementation motivations, involved stakeholders, and participants' concerns about AI use in graduate schools.

SECTION 1: The Current Landscape of AI-Related Policies and Guidelines in Graduate Education

Participating graduate deans reflected on the policies related to the use of AI within the context of their graduate school. Policy refers to high-level statements or guidelines that shape the decisions and actions regarding AI implementation at participants' graduate schools, whether these policies or guidelines are exclusive to the graduate school or part of broader, institution-wide policies.

Major Takeaways about the Status of AI-Related Policies and Guidelines:

- ✓ Graduate schools are at varying stages in developing AI-related policies or guidelines: 44.0% have policies already in place, 28.9% are in the process of creating them, and 27.0% have yet to begin developing such policies.
- ✓ Among schools without policies in development, most expressed intentions to do so, with a particular focus on policies related to research integrity, proper citation of AI, and appropriate use in coursework.
 - However, the timeline for when these policies would be developed generally remains uncertain.
 - Of schools without policies in development, nearly one-third reported no plans to do so, with most instead preferring to leave decisions to faculty or departments.
- ✓ Existing and emerging policies most often address graduate student use of AI in research, academic integrity and disciplinary concerns, and data security, though schools currently drafting policies place greater emphasis on disciplinary issues compared to those with established guidelines.
- ✓ Existing policies are typically communicated through syllabi, internal websites, or graduate school web pages.

1.1 Development Status of AI-Related Policies and Guidelines in Graduate Education

The survey provided valuable insight into the implementation of AI-related policies or guidelines throughout graduate schools in the United States. Indeed, findings revealed that nearly half (44.0%) of the graduate schools had currently implemented policies or guidelines related to AI (see Table 2). Such policies or guidelines could be specific to the graduate school or part of broader, institution-wide policies or guidelines. Another 28.9% of the graduate schools were in the process of developing policies or guidelines related to AI. Lastly, more than a quarter (27.0%) of the graduate schools had yet to begin developing any AI-related policies or guidelines.

TABLE 2. Implementation Status of AI-Related Policies or Guidelines at Participating Graduate Schools (n = 159)

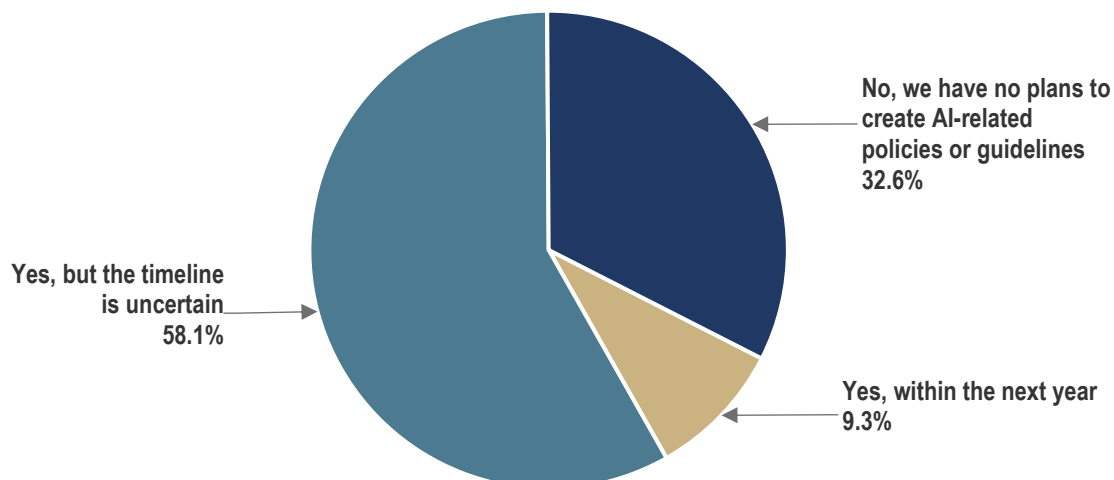
Implementation Status	Count	Percent
AI Policies/Guidelines Implemented	70	44.0%
AI Policies/Guidelines in Development	46	28.9%
AI Policies/Guidelines Not Developed	43	27.0%

NOTE: Due to rounding, percents do not sum to 100%

The convening revealed that some institutions have deliberately chosen flexible, principle-based frameworks rather than prescriptive policies. One graduate dean explained their institution's approach: *"We view AI as both a transformative opportunity and a serious responsibility. Our approach rests on two principles: academic freedom and responsible innovation. We do not have a single prescriptive AI policy. We have guiding principles that promote transparency, ethical use, and disciplinary flexibility."*

This philosophical variation helps explain why institutions at similar stages of policy development may produce very different policy documents reflecting not inaction or uncertainty, but fundamental differences in governance philosophy.

The survey also explored whether graduate schools that had not yet developed AI-related policies or guidelines had any plans to do so in the future (see Figure 2). Of the graduate schools that had not yet developed AI policies or guidelines, over half (58.1%) plan to do so but lacked a definitive development timeline. Another 9.3% indicated their graduate school had plans to do so within the next year.

FIGURE 2. Any Plans to Develop AI-Related Policies or Guidelines in the Future (n = 43)

NOTES: Only graduate schools that had not developed any AI-related policies or guidelines were asked if there were plans to develop them in the future. Missing values are excluded.

Leaders from graduate schools planning to develop AI policies identified the focus areas for these future guidelines. The most prevalent focus area for new AI-related guidelines would be research applications, particularly in thesis and dissertation work and proper AI citation practices. Secondly, future policies or guidelines would be developed to clarify the appropriate and approved use of AI. Other areas that future policies or guidelines would address include coursework and academics, internal processes, and external communications.

As part of the policy development process some institutions surveyed students to assess their needs for guidance on AI use. One graduate dean shared findings from such an institutional survey:

“Graduate students expressed, essentially, they wanted some level of guidance from their faculty members.... Students who felt that their faculty were not providing any guidance for AI had a high level of fear of using AI. They were worried about judgment from their faculty, judgment from students, academic dishonesty, and they just didn’t know what to do. About 60% of such students had that fear.” The same dean noted the impact of providing guidance: *“On the other hand, students who said they had reasonable or some amount of guidance from their faculty, about half that amount, about 30%, had those fears, so it just reflected that students want some kind of guidance from their faculty.”*

This insight underscores that students’ need for clarity extends beyond institutional-level policies to the guidance they receive from individual faculty members in their coursework and research.

While most graduate schools without AI policies plan to develop them, nearly a third (32.6%, $n = 14$) have no such plans. When asked why, some leaders cited resource constraints or uncertainty about effective AI regulation. However, the majority (64.3%, $n = 9$) indicated their graduate schools simply prefer to give faculty, teaching assistants, and/or departments full autonomy over AI guidance.

Convening attendees revealed a significant implementation challenge; faculty members within the same department may have vastly different AI policies, ranging from complete prohibition to unrestricted use, leading to student confusion and concerns about fairness. But one dean responded to the implementation challenge by simply expressing the need to act: *“We’re not waiting for perfect policy, because we have no idea what ramifications implementation of AI throughout campus will have, so ... we’re moving forward.”*

This within-institution variation complicates the landscape for students, who must navigate inconsistent expectations across their courses and research activities, especially when their institution has adopted a decentralized approach to AI governance.

1.2 Focus Areas of AI-Related Policies and Guidelines

Graduate school leaders were asked to identify the primary focus areas of AI policies and guidelines when they were already developed or in development.

Among schools with implemented AI policies, the most common areas addressed were graduate student use of AI in research (79.7%), disciplinary concerns such as academic integrity and plagiarism (71.2%), and data security risks (57.6%). These schools typically published their policies in syllabi (50.0%), on internal institutional websites (37.9%), and on graduate school websites (36.2%).

Schools developing AI policies prioritized the same three areas, though with different emphasis levels (see Figure 3). A notable distinction emerged regarding disciplinary concerns: schools currently developing policies placed substantially greater emphasis on disciplinary issues than schools with already-implemented policies (83.7% versus 71.2%, respectively).

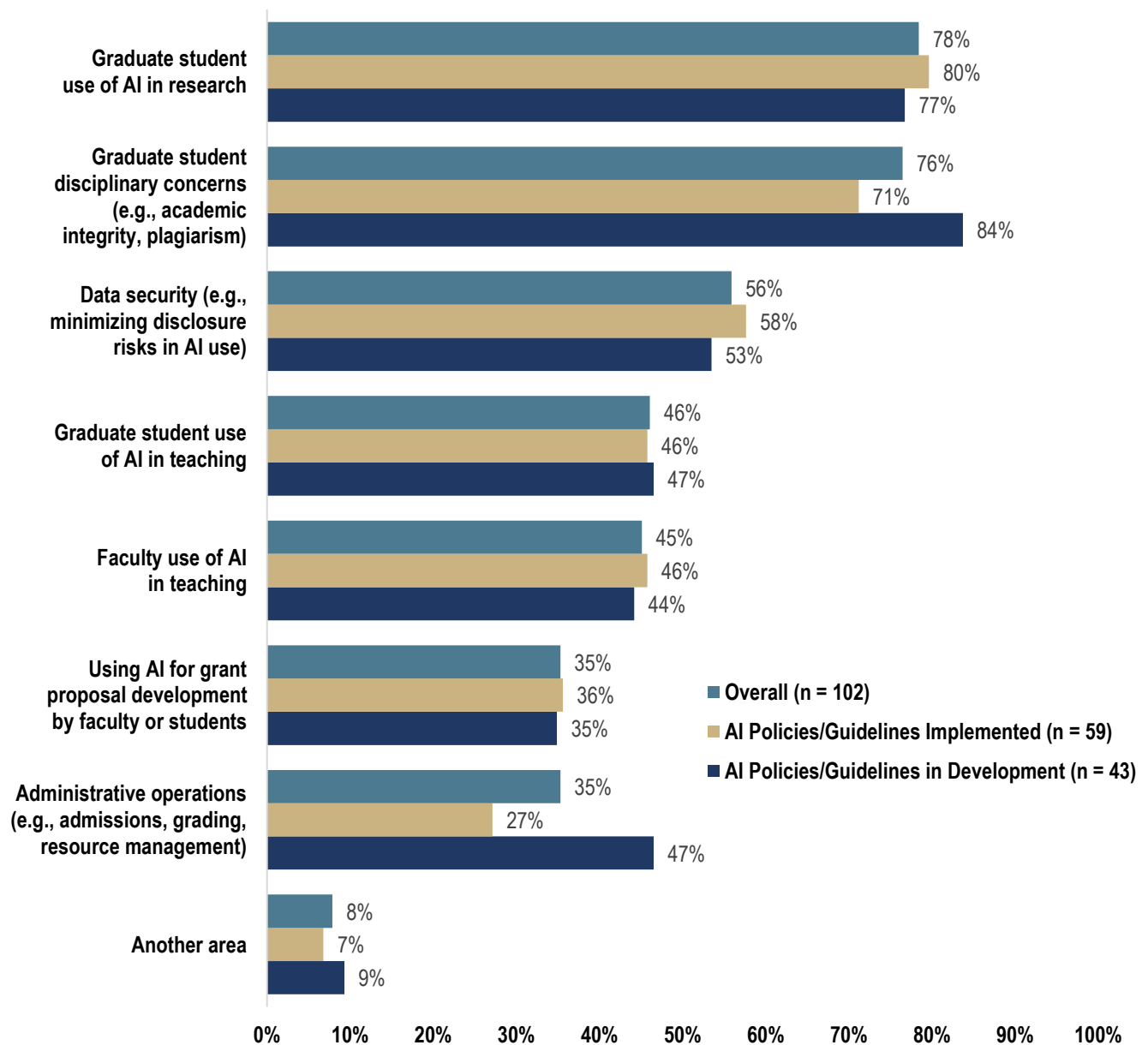
Convening attendees identified a critical gap between policy development and implementation. Detection and enforcement of AI usage policies remains a critical unresolved challenge. Some institutions have largely abandoned AI detection tools due to unreliability and high rates of false positives, leaving graduate deans without effective mechanisms to verify compliance or adjudicate disputes. One attendee noted, “[If] we are accusing student of violating a policy ... the burden of proof has to be on the faculty.” This enforcement gap raises fundamental questions about the viability of restrictive AI policies, particularly those focused on disciplinary concerns.

This convening takeaway suggests that the higher emphasis on disciplinary policies among schools currently developing guidelines may face practical implementation barriers that earlier adopters have already encountered.

Survey Insights

Graduate schools currently in the processes of developing their AI-related policies or guidelines (83.7%) placed a greater emphasis on policies related to disciplinary concerns than graduate schools that had already implemented AI-related policies or guidelines (71.2%).

FIGURE 3. Focus Area of AI Policies or Guidelines by Implementation Status



NOTES: Only institutions that had implemented or were developing AI-related policies or guidelines were asked to report the policy focus area(s). Multiple responses could be selected, so total percentages exceed 100%. Missing values are excluded.

SECTION 2: Implementation of AI-Related Processes in Graduate Education Practice and Expectations for Impact

Graduate school deans reported on the administrative practices that use AI at their institution and reflected on the anticipated benefit or concern about incorporating AI into these practices. “Practices” refers to the specific actions, procedures, or processes undertaken to implement AI in key administrative areas to achieve a particular outcome within a graduate school. All leaders were asked about AI implementation practices at their institution, regardless of whether their school had developed policies or guidelines governing AI use.

Major Takeaways about the Implementation of AI Processes:

- ✓ Nearly half (46.0%) of graduate schools surveyed have incorporated AI into administrative functions, most commonly in office operations (27.7%), communication with students/student support services (26.4%), and recruitment (17.6%), with smaller shares using AI in admissions/enrollment management (16.4%).
- ✓ In office operations, AI is primarily used for routine tasks, student engagement, and program reporting.
 - Anticipated benefits include improved data analysis, streamlined communication, and enhanced process efficiency.
- ✓ For student communication and support, AI is often implemented through chatbots, automated emails, and interactive FAQs.
 - Anticipated benefits include improved response times, personalization, and access to services.
- ✓ In recruitment, AI supports personalized outreach, international efforts, and candidate targeting.
 - Anticipated benefits include gains in efficiency and applicant engagement.
- ✓ In admissions and enrollment management, AI is being applied to personalize experiences, screen applications, track student outcomes, and support equity by mitigating bias.
 - Anticipated benefits include greater efficiency, improved decision-making, and stronger enrollment outcomes overall.

Regardless of policies and guidelines, the survey explored how AI has been incorporated into graduate school administrative functions and leaders' expectations about its impact. Nearly half of leaders (46.0%) indicated their graduate school was using AI for administrative functions, while others were unsure (11.9%) or reported no AI use (42.1%; see Table 3). The most common administrative applications were office operations (27.7%), graduate student communication and support services (26.4%), and recruitment (17.6%).

Convening attendees acknowledged that efficiency gains driving AI adoption must be balanced against workforce anxieties. One graduate dean articulated this tension, *“And one of the challenges we have is that we’ve had to undergo a reduction in force recently. There’s a lot of fear about AI and the potential for AI to eliminate people’s jobs. That’s not the intention. The intention is to leverage AI so that people can be freed from the kind of routine, rote, boring stuff and get to do the really fun, creative, exciting stuff.”*

This observation extends the survey findings by revealing that the anticipated efficiency benefits come with significant change management challenges that may affect implementation success.

TABLE 3. Use of AI in Administrative Functions (n = 159)

Administrative Function	Count	Percent
YES, AI IS USED IN ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION(S)	73	46.0%
Office operations	44	27.7%
Communicating information to graduate students or student support services	42	26.4%
Recruitment	28	17.6%
Admissions/enrollment management or financial awards (e.g., fellowships, assistantships)	26	16.4%
DON'T KNOW	19	11.9%
NO, AI IS NOT USED FOR ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS	67	42.1%

NOTES. Multiple administrative functions could be selected, so total percentages exceed 100%. Missing values are excluded.

2.1 Office Operations

2.1.1 Office Operations – Implementation in Practice

Over a quarter of the graduate school leaders (27.7%) reported their institution had incorporated AI into office operations. Within this subset of schools using AI for office operations, the most common applications were routine administrative tasks (93.0%), student communication and engagement (72.1%), and graduate program reviews and reporting (30.2%; see Table 4).

TABLE 4. How AI Is Being Used for Office Operations (n = 43)

AI-Supported Activity	Count	Percent
Routine administrative tasks	40	93.0%
Student communication and engagement	31	72.1%
Graduate program review/reporting	13	30.2%
Another activity	< 4	s

NOTES. Multiple AI-supported activities could be selected, so total percentages exceed 100%. Counts between 1–3 (and corresponding percents) are suppressed for confidentiality and data reliability reasons. Suppressed counts are denoted with < 4, and suppressed percents are denoted with “s.” Missing values are excluded.

Convening discussions revealed specific applications of AI in program review and curriculum development that align with 30.2% of institutions using AI for graduate program reviews and reporting. Graduate deans described AI as particularly valuable for analyzing large datasets and identifying patterns in curriculum. One dean explained, *“I was sitting down with another vice provost with an enormous list of courses related to sustainability and climate science, and we thought, ‘We’re going to try and come up with some concentrations for some new degrees.’ We just asked AI to look at all these courses and tell us where the focus areas and strengths are. It came up with a great list that we could hone down. This would have taken us hours and hours — AI got us off the ground very quickly.”*

However, attendees noted AI is not yet widely implemented in program review, though there is clear recognition that it could significantly reduce the time burden associated with reviewing lengthy program reports and ensuring alignment in course proposals and curriculum documentation, making this a near-term opportunity worth pursuing.

Additionally, convening discussions also touched on building curricular models pairing AI with existing disciplines, along with certificates and standalone courses. While convening attendees noted some challenges such as AI blurring content between graduate and undergraduate-level work, they also cautioned that AI is a rapidly moving target, requiring curricula to emphasize lifelong learning rather than treating it as a fixed body of knowledge.

2.1.2 Expectations for Impact

Deans whose graduate schools have incorporated AI into office operations reported the benefits they expect to gain from it. Three primary themes emerged:

IMPACT ON DATA. Deans mentioned a variety of ways they anticipate AI assisting in office operations regarding data, including its collection, interpretation, and analysis. For instance, one dean commented on how the use of AI in office operations will allow for *“increased efficiencies ... in [the] analysis of data relevant to strategic planning.”* Relatedly, another response highlighted how the use of AI in office operations will make it *“easier to interpret”* data, leading to overall improvements in efficiency.

IMPACT ON COMMUNICATION. These leaders shared a variety of ways they anticipate communications will be enhanced through the use of AI in office operations, including the streamlining of communications. They also detailed how the use of AI processes in office operations can lead to ***“faster processing of responses to student questions,”*** especially if staff members had the ability to ***“automate initial student interactions with graduate studies office staff.”***

IMPACT ON PROCESSES. Deans shared a variety of ways they anticipated internal processes will be enhanced by the use of AI in office operations. The most common way shared was increased efficiencies and streamlining of existing processes. For instance, while explaining the benefits of AI in office operations, many leaders explained how AI will help to streamline functions, thereby ***“reducing the time it takes to complete tasks”*** and ***“enhancing efficiency in routine tasks.”*** Another very common response was assistance in writing, including reports, documents, meeting notes, and communications. As one leader explained, ***“AI is helpful for refining documents, brainstorming titles for new programs, assisting in creating outlines, or generating ideas for new courses.”*** Another leader highlighted the role AI could play in drafting communications that facilitate conversations between students and faculty, especially in circumstances that ***“could be contentious.”*** Still another dean further explained how the increased efficiency resulting from the use of AI in office operations will allow staff members to focus on ***“interactions where [a] human touch has benefits.”***

The convening discussion also reflected the experimental approach the deans are taking to the implementation of AI, consistent with the survey finding that many schools are still developing their AI practices. Additionally, the discussion in the convening turned to the importance of inclusive implementation, best reflected in this observation of one dean: ***“The most effective way to take best advantage of this new technology really is a combination of the top-down, bottom-up, not one, not the other, but really both. And it’s one in which ... you really want everyone, whatever their roles are, to be able to bring their best selves.”***

These perspectives affirm that institutions view AI adoption as an evolving process requiring flexibility, stakeholder engagement, and continuous learning rather than a fixed implementation plan.

2.1.3 Additional AI Applications in Graduate School Operations: Insights from the Convening

Insights from the convening suggest the survey’s focus on current administrative applications captures only a portion of the AI landscape in graduate education, with emerging applications in academic processes likely to expand significantly in coming years. Beyond the administrative functions captured in the survey, convening attendees discussed AI applications in the below three core areas of their work that merit attention for future implementation guidance:

DISSERTATIONS. Institutions are moving more quickly in this area, with several already piloting or implementing AI tools to automate formatting and accessibility checks of dissertations at submission and using commercial platforms to detect plagiarism and AI-generated content. However, concerns about sensitive or proprietary data and the need for human oversight remain critical, particularly when

assessing the originality and scholarly contribution that are central to the dissertation’s role in demonstrating doctoral-level research competency.

ALUMNI DATA AND CAREER OUTCOMES. The current reality is more mixed in using AI to track career outcomes of alumni. Some institutions have invested in vendor solutions to scrape the Internet and systematically track graduate outcomes at scale, while others are experimenting with using general AI tools like ChatGPT to source the information with limited success, running into technical constraints like session timeouts and data gaps.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND DATA CHALLENGES. A consistent theme emerged across all application areas; the potential of AI to save time and surface insights from large datasets is widely recognized, but progress is uneven. Graduate schools face siloed data systems that complicate cross-university analysis, unclear data ownership structures, and the recognition that AI implementation requires “enormous” and growing infrastructure investments. One institution explicitly considers sustainability in its AI development, while others acknowledge that energy costs and infrastructure needs represent future budget challenges. While deans recognized that these issues may be seen as “somebody else’s problem,” the success of the graduate school’s effort will hinge on effective solutions to these problems.

2.2 Communicating Information to Graduate Students and Student Support Services

2.2.1 Communication and Support to Students – Implementation in Practice

Over a quarter of leaders (26.4%) reported using AI for graduate student communication or student support services, with 20.8% specifically using AI for student communication. Among schools using AI for student communication, the most common applications were virtual assistants such as chatbots (87.1%), AI-enabled email responses (67.7%), and interactive FAQ systems (61.3%; see Table 5).

TABLE 5. How AI Is Being Used to Communicate Information to Graduate Students (n = 31)

AI-Supported Activity	Count	Percent
Virtual assistants (e.g., chatbots)	27	87.1%
AI-enabled email responses	21	67.7%
Interactive FAQ system	19	61.3%
Personalized notifications and alerts	15	48.4%
Social media posts/communications	14	45.2%
AI-enabled marketing campaigns	13	41.9%
AI-created video responses to FAQs	5	16.1%

AI-Supported Activity	Count	Percent
Another activity	< 4	s

NOTES. Multiple AI-supported activities could be selected, so total percentages exceed 100%. Counts between 1–3 (and corresponding percents) are suppressed for confidentiality and data reliability reasons. Suppressed counts are denoted with < 4, and suppressed percents are denoted with s. Missing values are excluded.

A smaller share of graduate schools (9.4%) are incorporating AI-related processes into student support services. Among these schools, AI is most commonly used to provide 24/7 support via virtual assistants (73.3%), enhance student engagement (46.7%), and assist with career services and job placement (46.7%; see Table 6).

During the convening, one dean shared that simply using AI to improve the message content was surprisingly helpful in more effectively communicating with students: *“We were trying to find unique ways to reach graduate students so that we weren’t just simply writing the same kinds of communications over and over again.... And we were finding that the suggestions that we were getting back from AI were significantly better than what we could have come up [with].... It was just simply a time saver.”*

TABLE 6. How AI Is Being Used for Student Support Services (n = 15)

AI-Supported Activity	Count	Percent
24/7 support with AI virtual assistants	11	73.3%
Enhancing student engagement	7	46.7%
Career services/job placement	7	46.7%
Mental health and well-being support	4	26.7%
Accessibility and disability services (learning accommodations)	< 4	s
Another activity	< 4	s

NOTES. Multiple AI-supported activities could be selected, so total percentages exceed 100%. Counts between 1–3 (and corresponding percents) are suppressed for confidentiality and data reliability reasons. Suppressed counts are denoted with < 4, and suppressed percents are denoted with s. Missing values are excluded.

2.2.2 Communication and Support to Students – Expectations for Impact

Deans whose graduate schools have incorporated AI into communication and support services to students shared the impact and improvements they anticipated gaining from AI. The below three primary themes emerged:

IMPACT ON COMMUNICATION. Leaders shared ways they anticipate improved communication by implementing AI into communications with graduate students and/or student support services. The most common way shared was by saving time in communications, including *“instant answers”* and *“automated messages.”* One dean specifically anticipates AI will provide *“real-time information that*

is tailored to students' requests, more [of a] 'concierge' service." Relatedly, leaders on both the survey and at the convening cited the ability to create personalized and customized messages, particularly *"conversational AI agents trained using retrieval-augmented generation (RAG)."* A few stated the use of chatbots would improve communications, explaining that chatbots will *"help students find relevant information on websites," "provide 24/7 responses to students,"* and answer *"FAQs"* or *"general questions."* Others focused on how AI could be used to generate social media and marketing content.

IMPACT ON OUTCOMES. Leaders mentioned a variety of ways they anticipate better outcomes by incorporating AI into communications with graduate students and/or student support services, including personalized support and increased awareness and access of services offered. Regarding communications with graduate students, one dean highlighted the ability to utilize social media as well as automated messages to pass along information. Regarding student support services, one explained how the incorporation of AI will lead to *"greater interactions, better solutions, [and] improved matching of needs and services"*—outcomes that can be critical for students in need.

IMPACT ON PROCESSES. Deans shared a variety of ways they anticipate internal processes being enhanced by the use of AI in communications to graduate students and/or student support services. The most common way shared was increased efficiencies and streamlining of existing processes. For instance, while detailing the benefits of AI for existing staff, one leader explained how AI *"enables more streamlined and manageable processes that can be handled by existing staff."* Another common response was assistance in writing, particularly for under-resourced employees, with another dean explaining how the use of AI can help *"a small, overworked staff draft/edit internal communications."*

Relatedly, one convening attendee anticipates positive impact from incorporating AI into student communication processes: *"There are a lot of benefits to being able to use AI, especially as it pertains to being able to deal with some of the routine messages that come in, but then also really being able to spend time on those personalized responses."*

2.3 Recruitment

2.3.1 Recruitment – Implementation in Practice

Overall, 17.6% of deans reported using AI for recruitment at their institution. Among these schools, AI was most commonly used to send personalized outreach and engagement messages (78.6%), target candidates for enrollment goals (57.1%), and support international recruitment processes (42.9%; see Table 7).

TABLE 7. How AI Is Being Used for Recruitment (n = 28)

AI-Supported Activity	Count	Percent
Sending personalized outreach and engagement	22	78.6%
Targeting candidates for enrollment yield purposes	16	57.1%
Supporting international recruitment	12	42.9%
The application process	9	32.1%
Broadening impact in graduate education	4	14.3%
Another activity	< 4	s

NOTES. Multiple AI-supported activities could be selected, so total percentages exceed 100%. Counts between 1–3 (and corresponding percents) are suppressed for confidentiality and data reliability reasons. Suppressed counts are denoted with < 4, and suppressed percents are denoted with s. Missing values are excluded.

2.3.2 Recruitment – Expectations for Impact

Leaders whose graduate school has incorporated AI processes into recruitment provided their expectations for benefits or improvements they expect to gain from AI use. The following two primary themes emerged:

IMPACT ON COMMUNICATION. Deans shared the different ways they anticipate improved communication by incorporating AI into recruitment. A very common response related to the ability to personalize or customize messages. For instance, while commenting on the potential benefits of incorporating AI into recruitment, one leader explained that AI will *“allow large outreach that is more tailored to applicants’ interests and goals.”* Another leader detailed how the incorporation of AI into recruitment will lead to *“faster reply times to applications.”*

IMPACT ON PROCESSES. These leaders shared ways they anticipate internal processes being enhanced by the use of AI in recruitment. Many responses focused on increased efficiencies in the ability to identify and engage with promising applicants. For instance, they highlighted the ability to focus recruitment efforts on the types of students *“who normally choose our institution,”* or the ability to *“identify target audiences for specific programs.”* Relatedly, one dean described the ability for programs to use AI to *“compare competing programs with their own.”* Many leaders also commented on how the increased efficiency stemming from the incorporation of AI into recruitment will free up staff/personnel time.

During the convening, one dean shared this about their school’s recruitment procedures and hope for future impact after incorporating AI, *“There’s a wish list versus what we’re actually doing.... Our wish list is really efficiency and high-fidelity decision-making.... We’ve got some very, very small units that admit just a few people and others that get thousands [of applications].... With that variability, students are getting very different experiences, and the people [running those*

programs] are very different in their preparation, so, trying to help our customer, not just the students, but the people [running] the programs.”

2.4 Admissions/Enrollment Management

2.4.1 Admissions/Enrollment Management – Implementation in Practice

Overall, 16.4% of leaders reported using AI for admissions and enrollment management, with 11.3% specifically using AI for admissions. Among schools using AI for admissions, the most common applications were personalizing the admissions experience (81.3%), screening applications and evaluating qualifications (50.0%), supporting international admissions (37.5%), and broadening admissions impact (37.5%; see Table 8).

TABLE 8. How AI Is Being Used for Admissions (n = 16)

AI-Supported Activity	Count	Percent
Personalizing the admissions experience	13	81.3%
Application screening and/or evaluating qualifications	8	50.0%
Supporting international admissions	6	37.5%
Broadening impact in admissions	6	37.5%
Predicting likelihood of enrolling if admitted	4	25.0%
AI-assisted interviewing	< 4	s
Another activity	< 4	s

NOTES. Multiple AI-supported activities could be selected, so total percentages exceed 100%. Counts between 1–3 (and corresponding percents) are suppressed for confidentiality and data reliability reasons. Suppressed counts are denoted with < 4, and suppressed percents are denoted with s. Missing values are excluded.

Convening discussions revealed both alignment with survey findings and important qualifications regarding AI use in admissions. The use of AI in admissions and recruitment reveals both promise and areas for caution. Institutions are experimenting with predictive analytics to forecast enrollment yield and identify optimal admission timing, while simultaneously recognizing that AI can help surface historically overlooked candidates. However, institutions strongly emphasized that AI should not make admission decisions, even programs with AI expertise use it only to understand human reviewer patterns, not to replace human judgment. This represents a crucial qualification to the survey finding that 50.0% of institutions use AI for “application screening and/or evaluating qualifications.” The convening clarified that screening support differs fundamentally from decision-making authority.

Convening attendees also revealed potential shifts in the application process. Personal statements are increasingly seen as obsolete in the AI era, with calls to replace them with more specific, harder-to-

falsify materials. This emerging perspective suggests that AI’s impact on admissions may extend beyond process efficiency to fundamentally reshaping what constitutes credible application evidence.

These convening insights emphasize that while AI offers valuable support in admissions processes, maintaining human judgment at decision points remains a core principle across institutions. As one dean confirmed, **“There’s human checking at every point. And I believe there’s cross-checking of humans as well in the process.”** Hence both “checks” can be instructive.

“It will help the entire admissions funnel, which includes recruitment. We expect that students will have a tailored experience from inquiry to program start and that it will follow them until graduation.”

Additionally, 10.7% of leaders reported using AI for enrollment management at their institution. Among these graduate schools, AI was most commonly used to monitor student retention (76.9%), track degree completion (53.8%), and manage enrollment goal attainment (53.8%; see Table 9).

TABLE 9. How AI Is Being Used for Enrollment Management/Planning (n = 13)

AI-Supported Activity	Count	Percent
Monitoring student retention	10	76.9%
Monitoring degree completion	7	53.8%
Managing attainment of enrollment goals	7	53.8%
Broadening participation	< 4	s
Enrollment forecasting	0	0.0%
Another activity	0	0.0%

NOTES. Multiple AI-supported activities could be selected, so total percentages exceed 100%. Counts between 1–3 (and corresponding percents) are suppressed for confidentiality and data reliability reasons. Suppressed counts are denoted with < 4, and suppressed percents are denoted with s. Missing values are excluded.

2.4.2 Admissions/Enrollment Management – Expectations for Impact

Leaders whose graduate school had incorporated AI processes into admissions and/or enrollment management/processes described the expected benefits or improvements they expect to gain from AI use in this area. The following four primary themes emerged:

IMPACT ON DATA. Leaders mentioned a variety of ways they anticipate AI assisting in admissions and/or enrollment management regarding data, including the collection, interpretation, and analysis. For instance, one leader explained how the use of AI within enrollment management will provide a **“better understanding of time-to-degree for graduate students and better predictions on new matriculants and future enrollment.”**

IMPACT ON COMMUNICATION. Leaders shared many different ways they anticipate improved communication by incorporating AI into admissions and/or enrollment management. A very common response related to the ability to have improved applicant engagement, including ***“consistent communication.”*** Other ways that leaders anticipate AI improving communication include enhanced customer service.

IMPACT ON OUTCOMES. One leader cited increased enrollment as a beneficial outcome of incorporating AI into admissions. And another dean noted the value in broadening outreach by “targeting marketing to new audiences” (e.g., broadened outreach).

IMPACT ON PROCESSES. Leaders shared a variety of ways they anticipate internal processes being enhanced by using AI in admissions and/or enrollment management, including increased efficiencies, the ability to save time, and bias reduction. For instance, regarding bias reduction, one dean commented on the potential to ***“counteract human bias by identifying and mitigating bias in the training datasets.”*** Likewise, another leader commented on how the ***“ultimate goal is to streamline admissions decision-making while maintaining equity and minimizing bias.”*** Other responses included improvement in specific processes, including identifying applicants likely to succeed, tracking student progress over time, and overall informed decision-making.

SECTION 3: The Motivations, Influencers, and Concerns Related to the Adoption of AI in Graduate Education

3.1 Motivations Driving the Adoption of AI

To better understand motivations behind AI use in graduate schools, leaders were asked how important various outcomes were in their graduate school's implementation or development of AI-related policies, guidelines, and practices. Deans were also asked how motivated their graduate school is by various external influences to incorporate AI into these areas.

Major Takeaways about the Environment Surrounding AI Adoption:

- ✓ Graduate schools are primarily motivated to adopt AI to improve operational efficiency, student communications, and student tracking; additionally, institutions currently developing AI policies perceive AI will be an important influence on strategic decision-making.
- ✓ External pressures, particularly industry and labor market demands, are the strongest motivators across all institutions, while graduate schools already adopting AI also cite government and accreditation standards as key drivers.
- ✓ Students, Chief Information/Technology Officers, and faculty emerge as the most engaged stakeholders in shaping AI integration, though deans/VPs play a particularly influential role at institutions currently developing policies.
- ✓ Despite these motivations, significant concerns remain, including unreliable data and outputs from AI systems, data security risks, potential negative effects on student learning, and unequal access to AI tools.
 - Qualitative responses further underscore worries about faculty expertise, ethical use, and the pace of institutional decision-making, with some noting that efforts are often fragmented and driven by individuals working outside their formal roles.
- ✓ Overall, findings suggest a complex balance between strong institutional and external incentives to adopt AI and deep concerns about its risks, implementation, and long-term impact on graduate education.

Leaders identified four key motivations driving AI incorporation: increased operational efficiencies in areas like admissions and business processes (69.0%), improved student communications (65.0%), enhanced student tracking capabilities (65.0%), and AI-based communication with current and prospective students (61.6%).

Patterns varied by policy implementation status (see Figure 4). Deans from schools with implemented or developing AI policies similarly prioritized operational efficiencies (65.9%–71.2%), improved student communications (64.5%–65.9%), and enhanced student tracking (64.3%–65.5%). However, leaders from schools currently developing policies also emphasized gaining new insights for strategic decision-making in areas like enrollment and recruitment (66.7%).

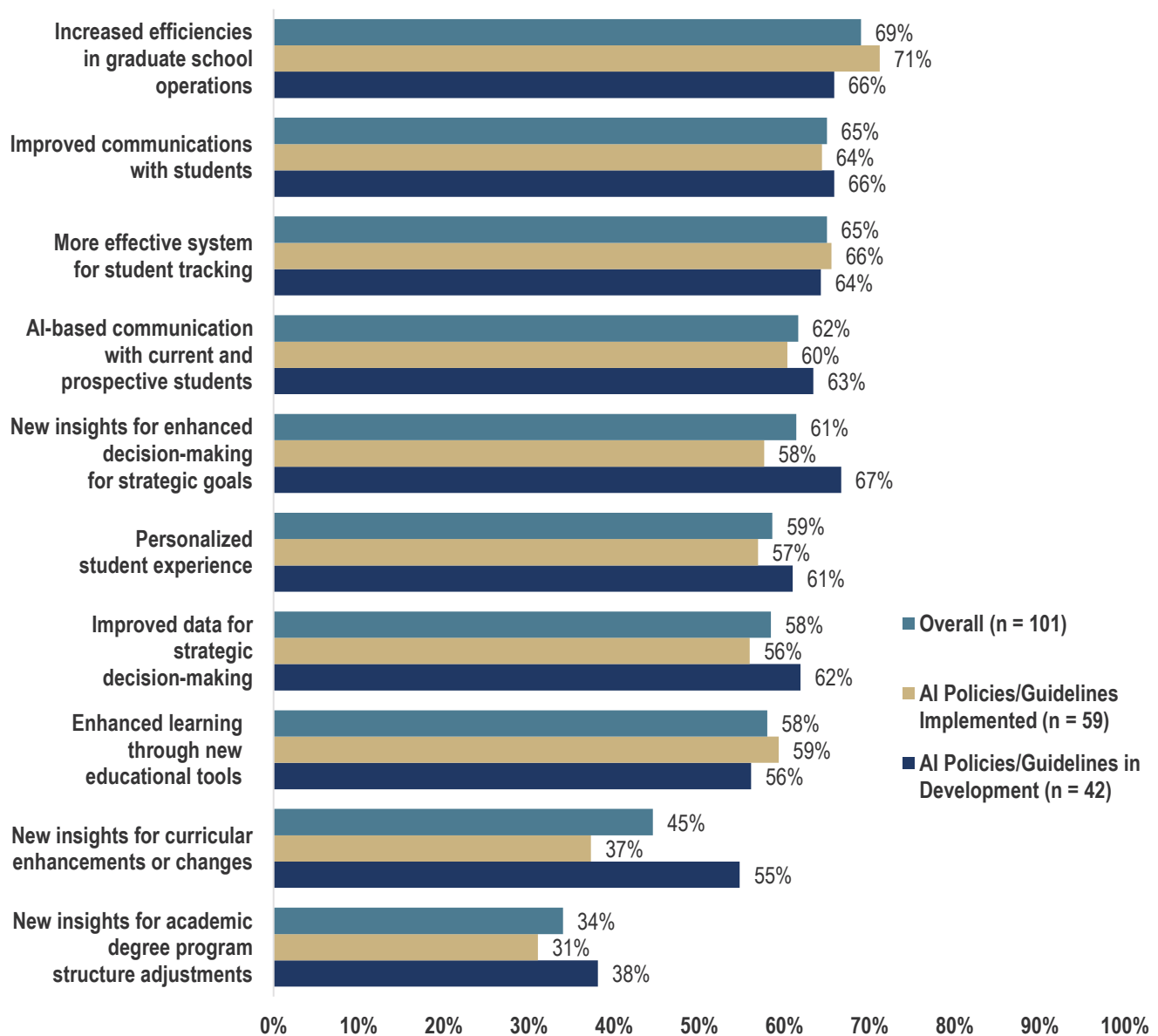
These survey findings suggest that while both groups prioritize operational efficiency and student engagement, schools developing AI infrastructure show particular interest in AI's potential for strategic decision-making.

While graduate schools that have implemented or are developing AI-related policies or guidelines may both have a strong focus on operational efficiency and communicating with and/or tracking students, graduate schools that are currently developing their AI infrastructure have a particularly strong interest in the potential ability to use AI for strategic decision-making.

The convening revealed that workforce preparation and industry alignment are primary motivations for AI adoption, extending beyond the operational efficiency emphasized in survey responses. Institutions are creating new degree programs, certificates, and specialized centers (such as Iowa State's AI Center for Resilient Agriculture) to ensure graduates possess the AI competencies employers increasingly demand, though industry engagement on AI varies significantly by region and sector.

One graduate dean powerfully illustrated the intensity of industry demand: ***“We talked to some of the leaders in the state of Indiana of our large companies, and they are 100% into Gen AI. We heard from one of them that said the first thing that they look at for any employee is how proficient they are in the use of AI tools. Because they see that as the future.”***

This finding provides critical context for the survey data showing industry and labor market demands as the strongest external motivators (62.9%–66.7%), revealing that these pressures are not abstract but reflect concrete employer expectations that are directly shaping institutional priorities.

FIGURE 4. Perceived Importance of Motivations in the Incorporation of AI into Policies and Practices

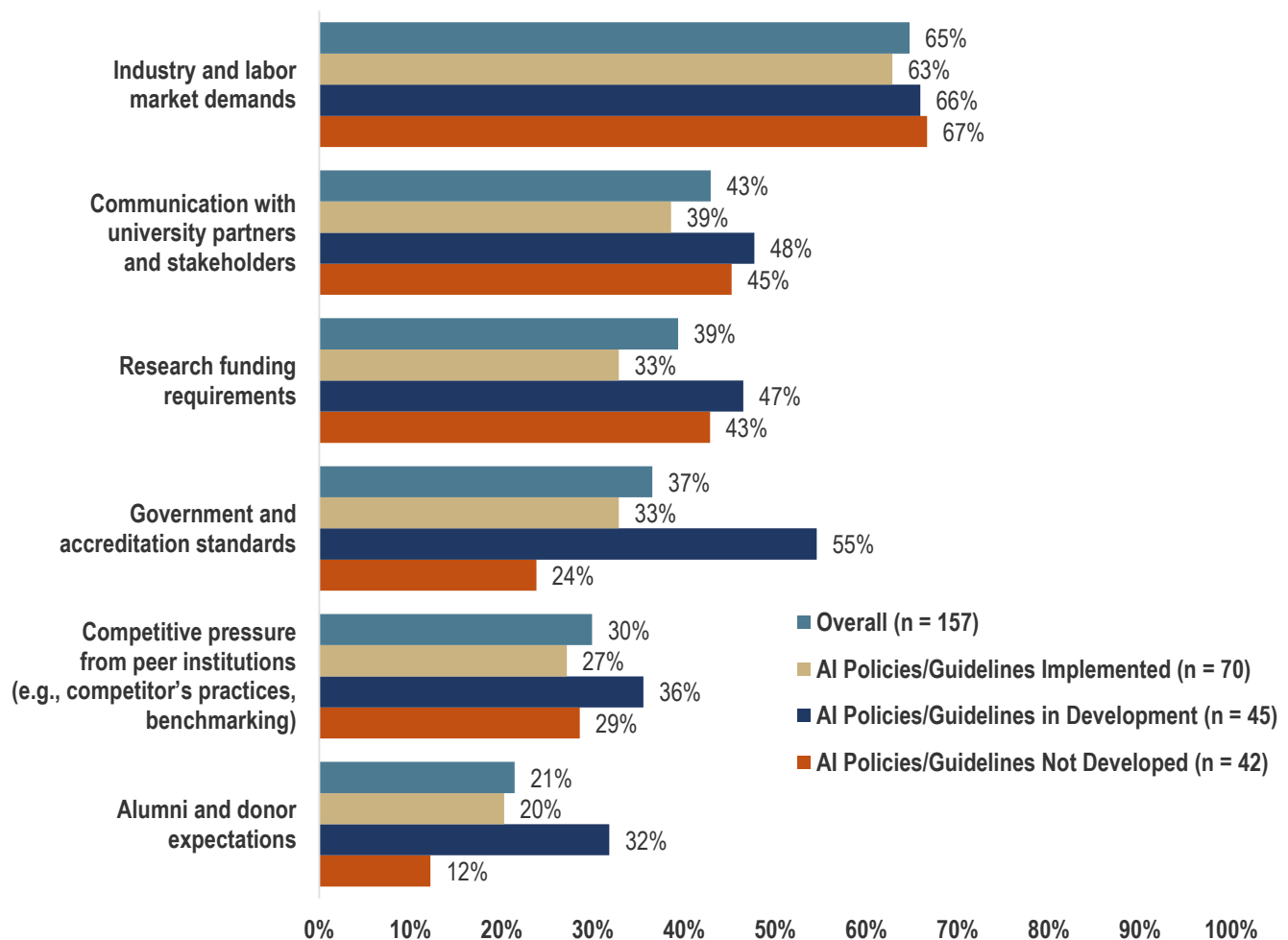
NOTES: This question was only asked to those whose graduate school had implemented or was currently developing AI-related policies or guidelines. Values represent the combined percentages of graduate school leaders who reported "Very" or "Extremely" to the question, "How important are the following outcomes in incorporating AI into policies and practices at your graduate school?" Missing values are excluded.

Regarding external motivators, leaders at all stages of AI policy development most frequently reported that their graduate schools are driven to adopt AI policies and practices by factors such as industry and labor market demands (62.9%–66.7%), along with engagement and communication with university partners and stakeholders (38.6%–47.7%).

An interesting difference emerged for graduate schools that had either implemented or were currently developing AI-related policies or guidelines. The leaders of those schools also cited government and accreditation standards as key external motivating factors (32.9%–54.5%). This suggests government and accreditation standards may have been an early influential factor motivating those graduate schools that currently have AI-related policies or guidelines to implement them and may still serve as a pivotal motivating factor in why other graduate schools are currently developing such policies or guidelines.

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FIGURE 5. Perceived Influence of External Factors in the Incorporation of AI into Policies and Practices



NOTES: Values represent the combined percentages of graduate school leaders who reported "Very" or "Extremely" to the question, "How motivated is your graduate school by each of the following external influences to incorporate AI into policies and practices?" Missing values are excluded.

To complement the quantitative findings, leaders also provided qualitative insights into additional outcomes or influences that motivate their graduate school to integrate AI into policies and practices. They most frequently cited the need to prepare students with AI skills, as these will be essential for success in their future careers. One dean shared, ***"The main motivation is our internal belief that efficient and ethical use of AI is needed to function in the future job market, and we owe it to students to facilitate their competence."***

While survey participants emphasized efficiency as a primary motivation, convening discussions revealed an important tension: institutions are balancing efficiency goals with concerns about dehumanization and skill degradation, recognizing that while AI tools can dramatically accelerate work (e.g., reducing coding timelines from six months to two days), over-reliance may erode fundamental competencies in areas like

statistics, programming, and critical thinking if students never learn underlying processes before using AI assistance.

This convening insight both supports the survey finding that efficiency is a key driver while also complicating it by revealing graduate deans' awareness that efficiency gains must be carefully managed to avoid unintended negative consequences on student learning and skill development, a concern that also emerged in survey responses about AI potentially impeding student learning (44.2% of schools developing or without policies).

Leaders also discussed budget implications, faculty and student demands, and the ability to enhance the graduate experience by incorporating AI policies and practices. Another common response was that individual departments or units typically make these types of decisions, so some schools are trying to develop ***“a more comprehensive, campus-wide approach.”*** Other responses included staffing cuts and shortages, plagiarism, complaints about lack of guidance, legislative influences, and national trends.

Deans and VPs may play a pivotal role in AI initiatives impacting graduate education within those graduate schools that are currently developing AI-related policies or guidelines.

The convening identified a significant issue not explicitly addressed in the survey: a mismatch exists between classroom policies and workplace expectations, particularly in professional programs where working students report being encouraged to use AI extensively in their jobs while facing restrictions in coursework, creating tension around academic integrity policies. One dean noted this is especially true for the computer sciences regarding code generation. He reflected that the academic requirements for developing code without relying on AI do not align with industry standards that promote efficiency and code reuse.

This finding reveals a critical implementation challenge that helps explain some of the policy development delays reported in the survey. Institutions must navigate conflicting expectations from industry partners (who are strong external motivators, per survey data) and traditional academic integrity frameworks, making policy development more complex than the survey data alone suggests.

3.2 Key Actors and Influencers Driving the Adoption of AI

To better understand the key actors and influencers shaping the integration of AI within leaders' graduate schools, particularly when it comes to those involved in decision-making, policy development, or program implementation, the survey probed how engaged various internal and external stakeholders were in AI initiatives impacting graduation education at their institution.

Overall, leaders cited students (61.5%), the Chief Information/Technology Officer (or equivalent) on campus (60.3%), and faculty (57.1%) as the most engaged actors/influencers in AI initiatives impacting graduate education at their institution. Some similarities and unique differences emerged when examined based on the current implementation status of any AI-related policies or guidelines (see Figure 6). For instance, like above, leaders whose graduate schools had implemented, were

developing, or had not developed AI-related policies or guidelines indicated students (50.0%–70.5%) and Chief Information/Technology Officers (or equivalent) on campus (50.0%–64.3%) are among the most influential actors/influencers when it comes to shaping the integration of AI-related policies or guidelines. Interestingly, while leaders whose graduate schools had either implemented or not developed AI-related policies or guidelines cited faculty (47.6%–60.0%) as another major actor/influencer, leaders whose graduate schools were currently developing such policies or guidelines instead cited deans/VPs (65.1%) as another major actor/influencer. This suggests deans and VPs may play a heightened role in AI initiatives impacting graduate education while graduate schools are in the process of developing AI-related policies or guidelines.

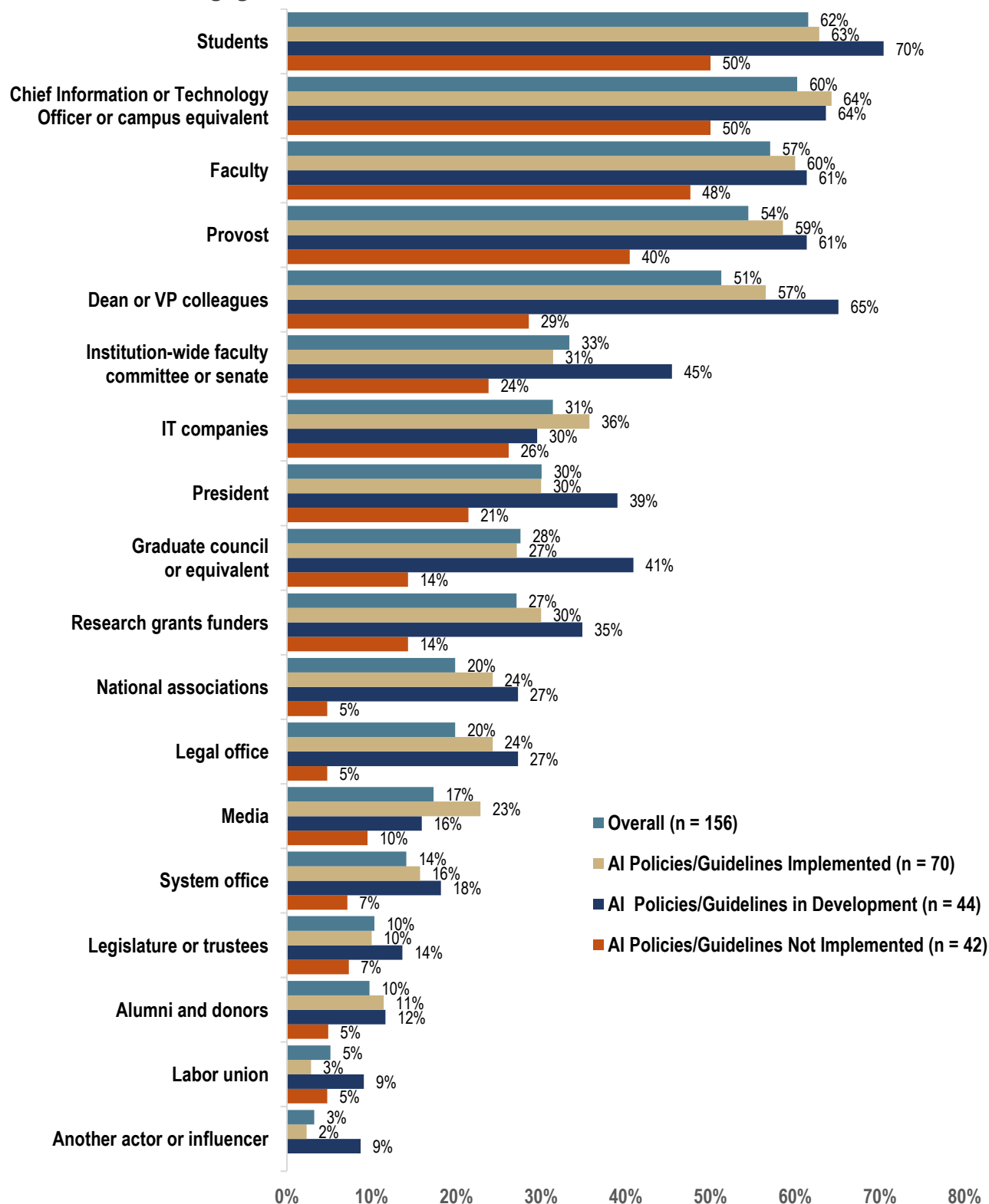
The convening revealed important nuances about how stakeholder engagement actually unfolds in practice. One dean emphasized the importance of bottom-up adoption through “super users” and early adopters. ***“A lot of what we’ve done has been bottom-up and not top-down.... The first adopters that were just looking at—not an overall strategy or drivers—but this is a fun new tool, what can I do with it, and how can it help me in my job? And there was a great deal of information [as well as] our policies and guidance came from that. And then [these uses] started guiding [our strategies] from the bottom up.”***

This insight extends the survey findings by revealing that while CIOs, students, faculty, and deans are all engaged (as survey data shows), effective AI integration requires intentional coordination between grassroots experimentation and institutional leadership—a dynamic not fully captured in the engagement metrics alone.

Convening discussions revealed an emerging stakeholder group not prominently featured in survey responses: strategic integration requires coordinating multiple enterprise systems and stakeholder groups, with institutions working to connect AI-enabled platforms (Slate, Navigate, curriculum management systems) while engaging diverse constituencies, including students, CIOs, faculty, deans, and increasingly libraries as “digital navigators” who can provide discipline-specific training and access to specialized AI research tools.

This finding suggests that the stakeholder landscape for AI integration may be broader than the survey captured, with support units like libraries playing increasingly important roles in implementation and training.

FIGURE 6. Perceived Engagement of Actors or Influencers in AI Initiatives



NOTES: Values represent the combined percentages of graduate school leaders who reported "Very" or "Extremely" to the question, "How engaged are each of the following actors/influencers in AI initiatives impacting graduate education at your institution?" Missing values are excluded.

3.3 Concerns about the Integration of AI

To better understand leaders' personal concerns regarding the integration of AI within their graduate school, they were asked how concerned they were about various criticisms in the literature related to the integration of AI into graduate education.

Overall, deans reported their biggest concerns related to the integration of AI were unreliable data on which LLMs are built (63.6%), decreased data security (61.7%), and unreliable output (60.4%). Interestingly, some similarities and unique differences emerged when examined based on the current implementation status of any AI-related policies or guidelines (see Figure 7). For instance, similar to above, leaders whose graduate schools had implemented, were developing, or had not developed AI-related policies or guidelines identified unreliable data on which LLMs are built (61.0%–65.7%), decreased data security (58.6%–67.4%), and unreliable output (56.1%–62.8%) as their biggest concerns related to the integration of AI into graduate education.

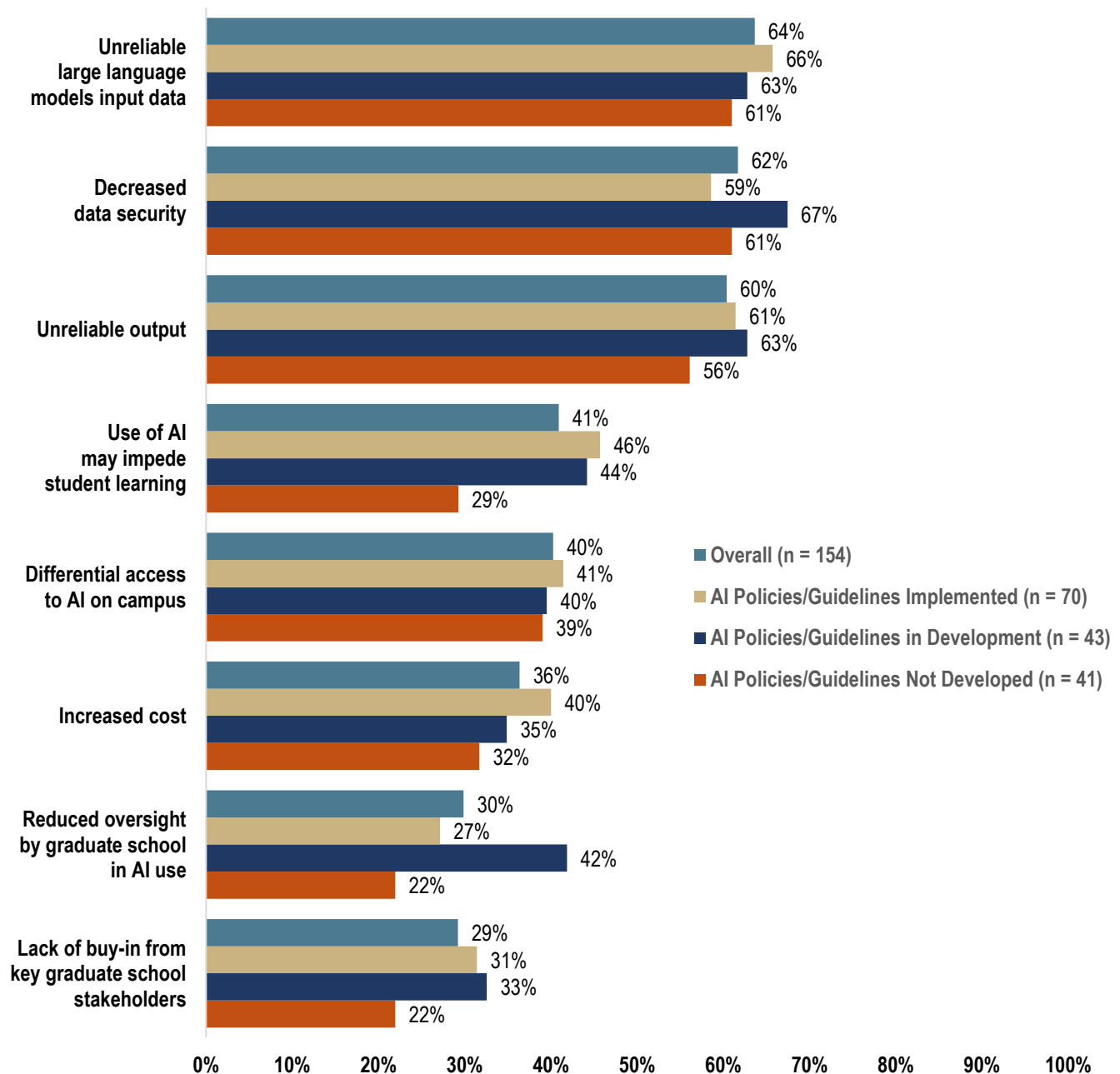
Concerns about the impact of AI on student learning as well as the accessibility of AI to all students on campus may play key factors in either a graduate school's delayed investment in developing AI policies or guidelines or a graduate school's overall disinterest in implementing any AI-related policies or guidelines in general.

Notably, those whose graduate schools were either currently developing or had not yet developed any AI-related policies or guidelines were very or extremely concerned about the possibility that AI use may impede student learning (29.3%–44.2%) and differential access to AI on campus (39.0%–39.5%) related to the integration of AI into graduate education. These findings suggest that concerns about the impact of AI on student learning as well as the accessibility of AI to all students on campus may play key factors in either a graduate school's delayed investment in developing AI policies or guidelines or their overall disinterest in developing any AI-related policies or guidelines.

The convening provided important context for understanding the faculty concerns mentioned in survey responses. Faculty resistance stems from multiple sources requiring differentiated responses, including legitimate concerns about what is lost in automation, uncertainty about the technology itself, and fear of being left behind, with successful strategies focusing on lowering barriers to engagement, providing professional development (such as Indiana's GenAI 101 course for all stakeholders), and emphasizing student benefit rather than forced compliance.

This finding extends the survey data on faculty expertise concerns by revealing that "lack of faculty expertise" (mentioned in qualitative survey responses) is actually a multifaceted issue requiring nuanced institutional responses rather than simple training interventions.

FIGURE 7. Personal Concerns about the Integration of AI into Graduate Education



NOTES: Values represent the combined percentages of graduate school leaders who reported “Very” or “Extremely” to the question, “How concerned are you about each of the following criticisms of integrating AI into graduate education?” Missing values are excluded.

To complement the quantitative findings, deans also provided their insights into additional aspects of integrating AI into graduate education that concern them. The most common aspect of concern shared among leaders was faculty motivations or abilities, with some leaders citing **“lack of faculty expertise and experience with using AI in their teaching.”** Another common aspect of concern shared was the ethical use of AI and concerns around academic integrity, with one leader stating, **“[We] want to**

ensure students understand the ethical component and how AI can impact their learning, i.e., using AI as an enhancement tool versus using it to make learning easier. Another leader explained, ***“Recent research suggests that AI use reduces critical thinking and increases dependency. We need our PhDs to know how to do things, how to think, and how to generate new human knowledge.”***

Convening discussions revealed a foundational question underlying many of the concerns expressed in survey responses. The pace of technological change creates fundamental questions about optional versus essential adoption, with institutions grappling with whether AI literacy should be treated like past transitions (calculators, computers, internet) that moved from optional to essential, while acknowledging the accelerated timeline means graduates must prepare for jobs that don't yet exist or may be replaced by AI. And while graduate schools have always adjusted to new technologies, some expressed the view that the integration of AI is different. As one dean observed, ***“[AI] is a technology and epistemology. This technology has epistemology attached to the hip, which is different from most [other] technologies.”***

This convening insight provides broader context for the survey findings about concerns regarding student learning impacts (44.2%) and differential access (39.0%). These concerns are not merely technical or implementation issues but reflect deeper uncertainty about whether AI represents a fundamental shift requiring universal literacy or a tool that students can selectively adopt.

Some leaders expressed that because AI changes so rapidly, they feel they are behind and have gaps in knowledge, with one leader expressing,

“I am concerned that the pace with which we take to make decisions is putting our institution at risk if we [cannot] get AI tools vetted and approved for our stakeholders to pilot, use, and critically evaluate. Faculty/academic senate have barred rollouts of viable AI tool pilots to students and for faculty for academic use. In the meantime, our stakeholders (e.g., faculty, staff, and students) are using consumer tools on their own without protections of a contract.”

Other concerns mentioned include bureaucracy at the institution, students becoming dependent or reliant on AI, inconsistent policies between faculty and departments, and assessment of learning in AI-supported learning environments. One leader shared the concern that:

“Individuals leading (crucial and much-needed) AI efforts on our campus are largely doing it as ‘volunteer’ effort outside the scope of their official duties. This informal approach limits our institution’s ability to respond in a meaningful and sustainable way to the needs of campus.”

The convening validated survey participants’ concerns about rapid technological change and institutional pace, while also revealing that many institutions are deliberately adopting experimental approaches. One graduate dean described this mindset: ***“So, you know, it’s like any new technology, where you kind of go and you see where it works, see what the limits are.”***

This perspective supports the survey findings showing uncertainty about timelines for policy development (58.1% plan to develop policies but lack definitive timelines) by revealing that some of this “delay” may actually reflect intentional experimentation rather than institutional inertia.

Wrap-Up

Summary of the AI Landscape in Graduate Education

This study examined the current landscape of AI-related policies, guidelines, and practices across U.S. graduate schools, exploring the unique motivations, key actors, and concerns impacting the integration and accessibility of AI within graduate education. The survey findings, illuminated by discussion occurring in the convening, not only provide insight into the current state of AI integration within graduate education but also suggest an important shift: graduate schools need an adaptable framework to guide their AI policy and practice integration, rather than the fixed guidelines our research originally aimed to produce.

Findings revealed a rapidly evolving but uneven AI landscape across graduate schools. While most surveyed institutions have implemented or are developing AI-related policies, over a quarter (27%) had not yet begun. Existing policies are most likely to address research integrity, academic misconduct, and data security, yet many institutions remain uncertain about how to establish fair and enforceable guidelines. This unevenness raises critical concerns, as students and faculty face inconsistent expectations, resources, and rules across institutions—and even across departments within the same institution.

Tension between the motivation to incorporate AI within graduate education and concerns regarding fairness and accessibility was a consistent theme. Motivations for adopting AI frequently centered on efficiency, improved communication, and labor market alignment. But fairness and accessibility were also considerations. Some leaders viewed AI as an opportunity to reduce human bias in processes like admissions, while others worried about reinforcing inequities through biased datasets or uneven policy enforcement, and in some cases, a single leader held both perspectives simultaneously.

Graduate school leaders—both survey participants and convening attendees—offered unique insights into the key actors and influencers driving AI integration at their institutions. Students, faculty, and Chief Information/Technology Officers play critical roles in shaping the integration of AI within graduate schools. However, findings revealed that decision-making processes often lack broad stakeholder engagement. This raises concerns about whose perspectives are prioritized in shaping AI policy, as one dean explained, ***“On our campus the faculty and students are saying, ‘YES, YES, YES,’ to AI, while our very-high-security paranoid IT department is saying, ‘No, No, No,’ causing quite a problem.”*** This tension underscores how differing stakeholder perspectives can significantly shape the pace and direction of AI adoption. Relatedly, between students, faculty, and Chief Information/Technology Officers, it remains unclear the way in which their influence is being exercised.

For instance, whereas students and faculty may influence decision-making through their observance of current practices and perspectives on the utilization of AI, Chief Information/Technology Officers may be more likely to utilize their expertise and perspective to inform university policies and practices. This is a notable distinction that is important to recognize when attempting to understand how graduate schools are reacting to each source of influence.

In summary, these findings have important implications for fairness and accessibility. Though AI integration into graduate education is accelerating, the trajectory is not uniform across institutions. Despite many graduate schools having already developed or begun developing AI-related policies, others remain without clear guidance, creating an uneven landscape that risks reinforcing existing disparities in access to resources, training, and support. On one hand, AI has the potential to democratize access to information, streamline administrative processes, and provide new learning supports that benefit all students. On the other hand, without intentional safeguards, the benefits of AI may accrue disproportionately to institutions and individuals with greater resources, technological infrastructure, and faculty expertise. Addressing this will require more than policy development. It will require deliberate, inclusive stakeholder engagement. As findings revealed, students, faculty, and Chief Information/Technology Officers each shape AI integration in distinct ways, yet decision-making processes often fail to engage them broadly or equitably. The findings in this report underscore both the promise and the hesitancy surrounding AI in graduate education and highlight the need for community-grounded discussions that might bring together the diverse perspectives identified in this research. The goal would be to ensure consistent, transparent, effective, and fair AI practices that advance access while preserving the integrity of graduate learning experiences.

Next Steps: From Guidelines to Guiding Values

The second of the two questions framing this research asked: **What are the central features of community-grounded guidelines that universities could use to assess the impact of AI applications within U.S. graduate schools?** However, based on survey responses and rich discussions at the convening, which brought together over 100 senior officers for graduate education from across the nation, it became clear this question required reframing.

As the leaders who gathered at the convening reflected on the kind of guidance they needed to incorporate AI across various aspects of graduate education, terms like “guidelines” felt too rigid and constraining. The attendees fully recognized that AI is a fast-moving phenomenon, laden with risk to be sure, but also replete with opportunity. What emerged from their discussions was the need for guiding values in tension: a framework that acknowledges the collaborative, value-driven journey toward AI implementation while emphasizing flexibility and adaptability rather than rigid rules.

Values in tension refers to the need to balance principles that arise when individuals or organizations face dilemmas, particularly in diverse cultural or situational contexts.

The term “guiding values in tension” also reflects the agency and leadership identity of graduate deans that came through clearly at the convening. The assembled deans shared how they navigate value-driven choices daily. They understand their roles to require active decision-making after considering complex choices, not simply compliance with directives. Given they operate in a world of disciplinary diversity and decentralized decision-making, what is more helpful is a shared understanding of the “values in tension” that can anchor principled decision-making within their institution.

Where guidelines might imply uniformity and top-down mandates, values in tension invite ongoing dialogue, local adaptation, and community ownership, providing a common ethical and pedagogical foundation from which institutions, programs, and faculty can make context-sensitive decisions without sacrificing the consistency and fairness that all stakeholders deserve.

From the survey findings and rich discussions at the convening, three critical guiding values in tensions emerged that institutions must navigate:

1. Balancing Academic Freedom with Institutional Consistency

Institutions face a fundamental tension between maintaining academic freedom and ensuring consistent, responsible AI use across their communities. While decentralized approaches preserve disciplinary autonomy and enable faculty-driven innovation, they risk creating confusing inconsistencies for students navigating different courses and advisors with vastly different AI policies and requirements. Survey findings revealed that even faculty members within the same department may hold vastly different positions on AI use, ranging from complete prohibition to unrestricted use, leading to student confusion and concerns about fairness. In one institution students expressed wanting “some level of guidance from their faculty members,” with 60% of these students lacking such guidance reporting high levels of fear about using AI. This paradox extends beyond pedagogy into operational concerns: institutions recognize the need for centralized data security protocols and ethical guardrails yet fear that top-down mandates will stifle the creativity and disciplinary specificity that makes AI integration valuable.

One institution captured this balance well, describing an approach that “rests on two principles: academic freedom, and responsible innovation,” eschewing a single prescriptive policy in favor of guiding principles that promote transparency, ethical use, and disciplinary flexibility. This points toward what might be called “constrained flexibility” frameworks: clear institutional values around transparency, equity, and security that faculty can interpret through their own disciplinary lenses. Realizing this approach requires addressing within-department inconsistencies that create anxiety for students, providing faculty development opportunities that lower barriers to engagement and emphasize student benefit rather than forced compliance, and creating mechanisms for sharing effective practices across departments while respecting disciplinary differences.

2. Navigating the Pace of Change While Building Sustainable Governance and Infrastructure

A critical disconnect has emerged between workplace expectations and academic policies, particularly acute in professional graduate programs where working students face daily contradictions. Some students report being encouraged, even required, to use AI tools extensively in their jobs while simultaneously facing academic dishonesty charges for similar usage in coursework, creating what one panelist described as *“a mismatch and a lack of engagement.”* One dean noted this gap is especially stark in fields like computer science, where industry standards embrace AI-assisted work for efficiency while some classrooms treat it as a form of cheating. Survey data revealed that industry and labor market demands are among the strongest external motivators for AI adoption, with graduate deans reporting that employers increasingly treat AI proficiency as a baseline hiring requirement. Yet institutions must balance this workforce preparation imperative with deeper concerns about skill development—whether students are genuinely mastering foundational competencies or merely learning to prompt AI tools. At its core, this tension raises enduring questions about graduate education’s purpose: are institutions preparing students for the workforce as it currently exists, or cultivating fundamental competencies that will outlast any particular set of tools?

AI’s accelerating pace of change adds another layer of complexity. Higher education institutions are designed for deliberative, slower-moving policy development and curricular change, yet what can be taught about AI in September “looks very different in December or January.” Traditional curriculum review cycles take years, and policy development can require 12 or more months of governance approvals. Survey data showed that of those who plan to develop AI policies in the future, 58.1% lack any definitive timelines. This reflects both the uncertainty inherent in rapid change and, as convening discussions revealed, the deliberate choice by some institutions to experiment before formalizing policies. This mismatch extends to every aspect of graduate education: tools that work in testing environments fail upon scaling; vendor capabilities transform between contract signing and implementation; and the very nature of competencies worth teaching remains uncertain.

Convening attendees emphasized that the most effective response combines top-down and bottom-up approaches, with bottom-up adoption through early adopters organically revealing both opportunities and policy needs. Moving from fixed frameworks to values-based guidance, investing deliberately in data systems and computing infrastructure, addressing data silos that complicate cross-university analysis, and emphasizing lifelong learning over fixed bodies of AI knowledge are all essential elements of building the sustainable infrastructure this moment demands.

3. Ensuring Human Oversight, Equity, and Accountability

AI’s promise of operational efficiency, whether processing thousands of applications, providing instant responses, or simply compressing months of work into days, exists in productive tension with concerns about authenticity, human connection, and equitable access. Survey findings revealed that leaders’ most pressing concerns include the reliability of data underlying large language models (63.6%),

decreased data security (61.7%), and unreliable output (60.4%). Leaders at institutions still developing AI policies expressed particular concern about AI impeding student learning (44.2%) and unequal access to AI tools across campus (39.0%).

This tension deepens considerably as AI moves into the highest-stakes arenas of graduate education, including admissions, advising, fellowships, and student support. AI can surface applicants who might have been overlooked due to reviewer fatigue or unconscious bias, flag students in need of support, and draft communications at scale—but only if humans remain meaningfully in the loop at every consequential decision point. Even institutions with deep AI expertise limit its role to understanding human reviewer patterns rather than replacing human judgment, underscoring a principle the Convening endorsed broadly: AI should function as a check on human limitations, not as a decision-maker.

Yet realizing this potential responsibly requires institutional readiness that most graduate schools are still developing. AI systems reflect the data on which they are trained, potentially carrying forward historical gaps or patterns of underrepresentation. Data governance challenges, including siloed systems, privacy and consent obligations under FERPA and HIPAA, security risks from decentralized tool adoption, and the ethical implications of using student behavioral data for predictive modeling, remain largely unresolved. Access to AI tools and training varies considerably both across and within institutions, creating meaningful inequities in who benefits from AI's efficiencies and opportunities. Closing these gaps demands not only formal governance structures but broad stakeholder education. While not all fall under the graduate dean's area of oversight, these needs extend beyond faculty and administrators to include students and staff, as well as libraries positioned to serve as digital navigators offering discipline-specific training and access to specialized research tools.

Conclusion

This study revealed widespread enthusiasm for AI implementation across graduate institutions in the United States, with activity spanning admissions, student services, research support, and curriculum development. This reflects AI's expanding role across the full spectrum of graduate education operations. The landscape survey generated rich insight into current practices, and the subsequent convening provided a critical forum for substantive, "on-the-ground"—based discussion about harnessing AI's capabilities while preserving graduate education's core mission. Yet as the convening made clear, what these leaders are navigating is not primarily a technical challenge but a values-driven leadership mandate that demands new frameworks for decision-making, governance, and fairness.

However, this study finds graduate deans are not waiting, and cannot wait, for perfect conditions or complete consensus before acting. They are making consequential decisions now, decisions about pedagogy, policy, admissions, advising, and institutional culture, often without overarching governance structures, consistent institutional guidance, or reliable tools for oversight. Three critical "values in tension" define this landscape: the pull between academic freedom and institutional consistency; the

gap between academic policies and processes and workforce realities; and the promise of operational efficiency set against the urgent need for human oversight, equity, and accountability.

What emerged most clearly from these leaders is they do not need a checklist but a shared framework for navigating these values in tension, one broad enough to honor disciplinary diversity and faculty autonomy while providing the common ethical understanding that students, staff, and institutions require. The guiding values and critical tensions presented here offer not a fixed destination but a framework for navigating the path forward, one that graduate deans can adapt to the specific contexts and needs of their institutions. In the hands of graduate deans, this framework becomes a decision-making tool that names the tensions, honors the complexity, and keeps institutional values at the center of every choice about integrating AI into the work of graduate schools.

The path ahead demands that humans remain at the center of consequential decisions, that access to AI tools and training be treated as an equity imperative, and that governance structures be built with the same intentionality and urgency that AI adoption itself demands. By continuing to share challenges, successes, and emerging practices, the graduate education community can ensure that AI serves to advance, rather than undermine, the fundamental mission of preparing the next generation of scholars, professionals, and leaders for an evolving world.

Acknowledgements

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We extend our sincere thanks to the senior officers for graduate education who generously contributed their time, expertise, and perspectives by participating in both the survey and convening activities that informed this work. Their insights were invaluable in helping us better understand the opportunities, challenges, and emerging priorities facing graduate education institutions.

We also offer special thanks to the members of the Expert Advisory Committee (see Table 10), whose guidance and thoughtful feedback strengthened the design, implementation, and interpretation of this research. Their contributions helped ensure the rigor, relevance, and impact of the final report. We are grateful for the collective expertise, leadership, and commitment of these individuals and the many stakeholders who contributed to this project. Their engagement has been instrumental in advancing understanding of the evolving landscape of graduate education.

TABLE 10. Expert Advisory Committee

EAC Member	Institution
Suzanne Barbour Dean, The Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education	Duke University
Wojtek Chodsko-Zajko Dean, Graduate College	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Bonnie Ferri Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Education	Georgia Institute of Technology
Mark Garrison Dean, Graduate School	Morgan State University
Clay Gloster Vice Provost for Graduate Research and Dean of The Graduate College	North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
William Graves Dean, Graduate College	Iowa State University
Peter Harries Dean, Graduate School	North Carolina State University
Ambika Mathur Senior Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and Dean of the Graduate School (<i>retired</i>)	University of Texas at San Antonio
Michael Solomon Dean, Rackham Graduate School and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs—Graduate Studies	University of Michigan

Authorship

Erin Knepler directed project execution and administration. Debra W. Stewart led the conceptual and theoretical development of this work. Karen Grigorian contributed significantly to data analysis, writing, and review. Mehmet Celepkolu contributed essential advice and expertise on various aspects of AI integration. Richard Smith and Alicia Taylor made critical contributions to quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

Appendices

Appendix A: Invitation Email

Subject: AI in Graduate Education Survey from NORC

Dear **[DEAN NAME]**,

Current higher education working conditions are extremely difficult, and I want to acknowledge the stress you are likely experiencing both personally and professionally.

In these unprecedented times, we need to utilize all the tools we have at our disposal. In an effort to help, we want to provide you and the higher education community with knowledge and high-quality research about the current policies and practices surrounding Artificial Intelligence (AI) in graduate education. I am emailing to invite you to complete this important survey funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

The purpose of this research study is to gather data about the policies and practices currently in place or being considered at your institution regarding the utilization of AI in the administration and process of graduate education. Your participation is essential to illuminating the current landscape regarding AI in graduate education across the US. It will help inform your own practices regarding AI utilization going forward.

Share your institution's perspective by clicking on this survey link:

[INSERT LINK]

This survey is voluntary and confidential. Your decision to participate in this survey is voluntary; we estimate the survey will take 15-20 minutes to complete. Your institution name as well as information about your school's policies and practices will not be shared publicly or included in our study's findings. Our team will only present aggregated, de-identified information (i.e., information collected across all of our study's participating institutions) to describe and contextualize institutional policies and practices.

If you have any questions about the survey or our study, please reach out to our NORC research team at AI-GradEd@norc.org. I or a member of our team will respond promptly.

Thank you for your time,



Debra W. Stewart | Senior Fellow & AI in Graduate Education Co-PI
NORC at the University of Chicago
President Emerita, Council of Graduate Schools
Debra-Stewart@norc.uchicago.edu | (919) 368-4125

✶NORC Education

- This research is funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation; award number is G-2024-25540.
- This research is being conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago and guided by Principal Investigator (PI) Erin Knepler and Co-PI Debra W. Stewart.
- The findings from the landscape analysis will be shared with your institution.
- Visit the project webpage to learn more about this [research study](#).
- This research has received an exempt Institutional Review Board determination. If you have any questions about your rights as survey participant, please email IRB@norc.org.
- The decision to participate in this research survey is strictly voluntary.
- Institution-level data as well as the names of survey participants will be kept confidential and not publicly shared. The landscape analysis findings will only present aggregated results that do not disclose individual institutions.

ID: [PARTICIPANT ID]

Appendix B: Example Reminder Message

Subject: AI survey closes on Tuesday, 6/17 – we need to hear from all universities

Dear **[DEAN NAME]**,

This is a final reminder to participate in an important national survey on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in graduate education, closing Tuesday, June 17.

As AI continues to transform higher education, research universities are facing new and complex challenges. To better understand how institutions are adapting—particularly in terms of policies, practices, and academic innovation—we are conducting a comprehensive landscape study. Many leading research universities have already shared their perspectives. However, your insights from **[INSTITUTION]** are critical to ensuring a complete and representative picture. Your input will help shape the future of graduate education in the age of AI.

The survey takes less than 15 minutes:

[LINK]

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the study further, please feel free to reach out to me at Debra-Stewart@norc.uchicago.edu. I'd be happy to connect.

Thank you for your time and valuable input on this important initiative.



Debra W. Stewart | Senior Fellow & AI in Graduate Education Co-PI

NORC at the University of Chicago

President Emerita, Council of Graduate Schools

Debra-Stewart@norc.uchicago.edu | (919) 368-4125

✶NORC Education

- The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation funds this research; award number is G-2024-25540.
- This research is being conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago and guided by Principal Investigator (PI) Erin Knepler and Co-PI Debra W. Stewart.
- The findings from the landscape analysis will be shared with your institution.
- Visit the project webpage to learn more about this [research study](#).
- This research has received an exempt Institutional Review Board determination. If you have any questions about your rights as survey participant, please email IRB@norc.org.
- The decision to participate in this research survey is strictly voluntary.
- Institution-level data as well as the names of survey participants will be kept confidential and not publicly shared. The landscape analysis findings will only present aggregated results that do not disclose individual institutions.

ID: **[PARTICIPANT ID]**

Appendix C: Survey Instrument

Section 1: Informed Consent & Definitions



Artificial Intelligence in Graduate Education Survey

This survey is supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation (award number: G-2024-22540) and conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC). It seeks to collect information about the guidelines, policies, and practices currently in place or being considered at your institution regarding the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) in graduate education administration and processes.

This is a confidential survey. All survey data will be de-identified so there is no link between your survey responses and your name, email, or IP address. The results will be presented in summary form so no individual can be identified. The study materials, data collection processes, and data security measures have been reviewed and approved by NORC's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

This voluntary survey should take about 15-20 minutes to complete. If needed, you may stop at any time and resume from where you left off. While we hope you answer fully, you may skip over any questions you do not wish to answer or refuse to participate without penalty.

- If you have any questions about this survey or broader study, email at AI-GradEd@norc.org.
- If you have any questions about your human subject rights, email IRB@norc.org.

Survey findings will be presented in late summer/early fall 2025. All those asked to participate in the survey will be invited to attend this convening. Your survey responses will help ensure the event meets your needs.

To participate in this survey, select the "I AGREE" button. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, please select the "I DISAGREE" button. After making a selection, press the **orange arrow** at the bottom of the page.

- I AGREE and I DO want to participate in the survey.
- I DISAGREE and do NOT want to participate in the survey.

Thank you for agreeing to participate. This survey explores eight dimensions of AI adoption related to: 1) graduate school policies, 2) graduate school processes, 3) academic offerings for artificial intelligence, 4) motivations driving AI adoption, 5) actors/influencers affecting AI adoption, 6) concerns and worries about AI adoption, 7) resources for graduate schools.

SURVEY DEFINITIONS:

- For the purposes of this survey, AI includes a broad range of applications such as tools like generative AI for creating text and images, predictive analytics using historical or real-time data for forecasting, and machine learning for finding patterns. It also includes applications like chatbots, virtual assistants, language translation, text summarization, and speech-to-text systems.
- This survey is intended for senior officers with oversight of graduate education at their institution and asks about activities and areas of responsibility under the domain of the senior officer. Throughout the survey, the senior officer is referred to as the “Graduate School Dean” although a different title may be used at your institution.

Section 2: Graduate School Policies or Guidelines

In this section, we ask you to reflect on the policies related to the use of AI within the context of your graduate school.

Policy refers to high-level statements or guidelines that shape the decisions and actions regarding AI implementation at your graduate school whether these policies or guidelines are exclusive to the graduate school or part of broader, institution-wide policies.

2.1 Does your graduate school currently implement **any** AI-related guidelines **or** policies?

These may be specific to the graduate school or part of broader institution-wide policies or guidelines.

- The graduate school currently implements AI-related guidelines or policies
- The graduate school does not implement any AI-related guidelines or policies
- The graduate school is in the process of developing some guidelines or policies
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

2.1a [If “The graduate school currently...” OR “The graduate school is in...” to Q2.1] What are the primary areas these AI guidelines or policies address or will address?

Select all that apply.

- Graduate student disciplinary concerns (e.g., academic integrity, plagiarism, creating deep fakes of faculty/other students)
- Administrative operations (e.g., admissions, grading, resource management)
- Graduate student use of AI in teaching
- Faculty use of AI in teaching
- Graduate student use of AI in research (i.e., as a research tool)
- Faculty use of AI in research (i.e., as a research tool)
- Faculty or graduate student use of AI in grant proposal development
- Data security (e.g., risk of sharing sensitive information with an AI tool)
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

2.1b [If "The graduate school currently..." to Q2.1] Where are these guidelines or policies published?

- Syllabus
- Graduate student handbook/policy guide
- Graduate school catalogue
- Internal institution website
- Graduate school website
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

2.1c [If "No, the graduate school does not implement any AI-related guidelines or policies" to 2.1a] Are there plans to develop AI-related guidelines or policies that may impact graduate education in the future?

- Yes, within the next year
- Yes, but the timeline is uncertain
- No, we have no plans to create AI-related guidelines or policies

2.1d [If "Yes, within the next year" or "Yes, but the timeline is uncertain" to 2.1c] What areas will the new AI-related guidelines or policies primarily address? [TEXT BOX]

2.1e [If "No, we have no plans to create AI-related guidelines or policies" to 2.1c] What are the reasons the graduate school has not implemented any AI-related guidelines or policies??

Select all that apply.

- AI is not yet widely used by graduate students or faculty
- Lack of available resources to develop policies
- Uncertainty about how to regulate AI effectively
- Preference to give faculty, graduate student instructors, and/or departments full autonomy
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

Section 3: Graduate School Processes

In this section, we invite you to reflect on the administrative and curriculum/program-related practices regarding the use of AI in your graduate school.

Practices refers to the specific actions, procedures, or processes undertaken to implement AI in key administrative and curriculum/program-related areas to achieve a particular outcome within your graduate school.

Administrative Practices

3.1 To your knowledge, does your graduate school currently incorporate AI processes in any of these **administrative functions**?

Select all that apply.

- Recruitment
- Admissions
- Student support services (e.g., tutoring support)
- Enrollment management/planning
- Office operations
- Communicating information to graduate students
- Financial awards (e.g., fellowships, assistantships, tuition remission)
- Don't know [Exclusive response]
- No, AI is not used for administrative functions [Exclusive response]

3.2a [If "Recruitment" is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Is the use of AI in **recruitment** currently under development?

- Yes
- No

3.2b [If "Recruitment" is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Does your graduate school perceive any potential benefits to incorporating AI processes in **recruitment**?

- Yes, we think there are benefits
- We are not sure of the benefits, but we are considering what they may be for the future
- No, we do not think there are any benefits
- We have not considered this

3.2c [If "Recruitment" is SELECTED in 3.1] What benefits or improvements do you expect by incorporating AI processes into **recruitment**? [TEXT BOX]

3.2d [If "Recruitment" is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Which AI-supported **recruitment** activities are currently being developed at your graduate school?

- Sending personalized outreach and engagement
- Targeting candidates for enrollment yield purposes

- The application process
- Broadening participation in graduate education
- Supporting international recruitment
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

3.3a [If “Admissions” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Is the use of AI in **admissions** currently under development?

- Yes
- No

3.3b [If “Admissions” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Does your graduate school perceive any potential benefits to incorporating AI processes in **admissions**?

- Yes, we think there are benefits
- We are not sure of the benefits, but we are considering what they may be for the future
- No, we do not think there are any benefits
- We have not considered this

3.3c [If “Admissions” is SELECTED in 3.1] What benefits or improvements do you expect by incorporating AI processes into **admissions**? [TEXT BOX]

3.3d [If “Admissions” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Which AI-supported **admissions** activities are currently being developed at your graduate school?

- Application screening and/or evaluating qualifications
- Predicting likelihood of enrolling if admitted
- Broadening participation in admissions
- Personalizing the admissions experience
- AI-assisted interviewing
- Supporting international admissions
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

3.4a [If “Student support services” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Is the use of AI in **student support services** currently under development?

- Yes
- No

3.4b [If “Student support services” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Does your graduate school perceive any potential benefits to incorporating AI processes in **student support services**?

- Yes, we think there are benefits
- We are not sure of the benefits, but we are considering what they may be for the future
- No, we do not think there are any benefits
- We have not considered this

3.4c [If “Student support services” is SELECTED in 3.1] What benefits or improvements do you expect by incorporating AI processes into **student support services**? [TEXT BOX]

3.4d [If “Student support services” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Which AI-supported activities related to **student support services** are currently being developed at your graduate school?

- Career services/job placement
- Mental health and well-being support
- Accessibility and disability services (learning accommodations)
- 24/7 support with AI virtual assistants
- Enhancing student engagement
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

3.5a [If “Enrollment management/planning” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Is the use of AI in **enrollment management/planning** currently under development?

- Yes
- No

3.5b [If “Enrollment management/planning” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Does your graduate school perceive any potential benefits to incorporating AI processes in **enrollment management/planning**?

- Yes, we think there are benefits
- We are not sure of the benefits, but we are considering what they may be for the future
- No, we do not think there are any benefits
- We have not considered this

3.5c [If “Enrollment management/planning” is SELECTED in 3.1] What benefits or improvements do you expect by incorporating AI processes into **enrollment management/planning**? [TEXT BOX]

3.5d [If “Recruitment” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Which AI-supported **enrollment management/planning** activities are currently being developed at your graduate school?

- Enrollment forecasting
- Managing attainment of enrollment goals
- Broadening participation
- Monitoring student retention
- Monitoring degree completion
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

3.6a [If “Office operations” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Is the use of AI in **office operations** currently under development?

- Yes
- No

3.6b [If “Office operations” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Does your graduate school perceive any potential benefits to incorporating AI processes in **office operations**?

- Yes, we think there are benefits
- We are not sure of the benefits, but we are considering what they may be for the future
- No, we do not think there are any benefits
- We have not considered this

3.6c [If “Office operations” is SELECTED in 3.1] What benefits or improvements do you expect by incorporating AI processes into **office operations**? [TEXT BOX]

3.6d [If “Office operations” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Which AI-supported activities related to **office operations** are currently being developed at your graduate school?

- Routine administrative tasks
- Student communication and engagement
- Graduate program review/reporting
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

3.7a [If “Communicating information to graduate students” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Is the use of AI in **communicating information to graduate students** currently under development?

- Yes
- No

3.7b [If “Communicating information to graduate students” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Does your graduate school perceive any potential benefits to incorporating AI processes in **communicating information to graduate students**?

- Yes, we think there are benefits
- We are not sure of the benefits, but we are considering what they may be for the future
- No, we do not think there are any benefits
- We have not considered this

3.7c [If “Communicating information to graduate students” is SELECTED in 3.1] What benefits or improvements do you expect by incorporating AI processes into **communicating information to graduate students**? [TEXT BOX]

3.7d [If “Communicating information to graduate students” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Which AI-supported activities related to **communicating information to graduate students** are currently being developed at your graduate school?

- AI-enabled marketing campaigns
- AI-enabled email responses
- Virtual assistants (e.g., chatbots)
- Personalized notifications and alerts

- Interactive FAQ system
- AI-created video responses to FAQs
- Social media posts/communications
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

3.8a [If “Financial awards” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Is the use of AI in **financial awards** currently under development?

- Yes
- No

3.8b [If “Financial awards” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Does your graduate school perceive any potential benefits to incorporating AI processes in **financial awards**?

- Yes, we think there are benefits
- We are not sure of the benefits, but we are considering what they may be for the future
- No, we do not think there are any benefits
- We have not considered this

3.8c [If “Financial awards” is SELECTED in 3.1] What benefits or improvements do you expect by incorporating AI processes into **financial awards**? [TEXT BOX]

3.8d [If “Financial awards” is NOT SELECTED in 3.1] Which AI-supported activities related to **financial awards** are currently being developed at your graduate school?

- Allocating fellowship funding
- Allocating tuition awards or funding
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

Curriculum/Program-Related Functions

3.9 To your knowledge, does your graduate school currently incorporate AI processes in any of these **curriculum/program-related functions**?

Select all that apply.

- Mentoring practices (e.g., research advisor, peer mentor)
- Monitoring student progress (e.g., dashboard of trends)
- Learning tools (e.g., course-specific chatbots, tutoring supports, self-guided professional development)
- Don’t know [Exclusive response]
- No, AI is not being used for curriculum or program-related functions [Exclusive response]

3.10a [If “Mentoring practices” is NOT SELECTED in 3.9] Is the use of AI in **mentoring practices** currently under development?

- Yes
- No

3.10b [If “Mentoring practices” is NOT SELECTED in 3.9] Does your graduate school perceive any potential benefits to incorporating AI processes in **mentoring practices**?

- Yes, we think there are benefits
- We are not sure of the benefits, but we are considering what they may be for the future
- No, we do not think there are any benefits
- We have not considered this

3.10c [If “Mentoring practices” is SELECTED in 3.9] What benefits or improvements do you expect by incorporating AI processes into **mentoring practices**? [TEXT BOX]

3.10d [If “Mentoring practices” is NOT SELECTED in 3.9] Which AI-supported activities related to **mentoring practices** are currently being developed at your graduate school?

- Academic advising
- Course planning
- AI-enabled IDP (Individual Development Plan)
- Career pathway options
- Well-being monitoring
- Advisor supports (e.g., drafting a research plan, drafting a research paper, conducting literature reviews, giving presentations, providing feedback on paper drafts)
- Assessing student performance
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

3.11a [If “Monitoring student progress” is NOT SELECTED in 3.9] Is the use of AI in **monitoring student progress** currently under development?

- Yes
- No

3.11b [If “Monitoring student progress” is NOT SELECTED in 3.9] Does your graduate school perceive any potential benefits to incorporating AI processes in **monitoring student progress**?

- Yes, we think there are benefits
- We are not sure of the benefits, but we are considering what they may be for the future
- No, we do not think there are any benefits
- We have not considered this

3.11c [If “Monitoring student progress” is SELECTED in 3.9] What benefits or improvements do you expect by incorporating AI processes into **monitoring student progress**? [TEXT BOX]

3.11d [If “Monitoring student progress” is NOT SELECTED in 3.9] Which AI-supported activities related to **monitoring student progress** are currently being developed at your graduate school?

- Attrition tracking
- Assessing performance and research productivity
- Skill development tracking
- Tracking time to degree
- Tracking milestone attainment
- Tracking career placement
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

3.12a [If “Learning tools” is NOT SELECTED in 3.] Is the use of AI in **learning tools** currently under development?

- Yes
- No

3.12b [If “Learning tools” is NOT SELECTED in 3.9] Does your graduate school perceive any potential benefits to incorporating AI processes in **learning tools**?

- Yes, we think there are benefits
- We are not sure of the benefits, but we are considering what they may be for the future
- No, we do not think there are any benefits
- We have not considered this

3.12c [If “Learning tools” is SELECTED in 3.9] What benefits or improvements do you expect by incorporating AI processes into **learning tools**? [TEXT BOX]

3.12d [If “Learning tools” is NOT SELECTED in 3.9] Which AI-supported activities related to **learning tools** are currently being developed at your graduate school?

- Tutoring supports
- Simulated lab environments
- Writing and research assistance
- Coding and technical skill practice
- Data analysis and visualization
- Presentation and public speaking coaching
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

3.13. Please indicate other areas where AI is being used or being considered as a tool in any aspect of graduate education. [TEXT BOX]

Section 4: Artificial Intelligence Academic Offerings

This section focuses on academic offerings in your graduate school and if AI is being integrated into existing graduate programs or curriculum.

4.1 Is AI currently being integrated into existing graduate STEM programs as a research, analytical, management, or stand-alone tool?

- No
- Yes
- Don't know

4.1a [If "No" to 4.1] Does your institution plan to integrate AI tools into any STEM graduate programs in the future?

- Yes
- No

4.1b [If "No" to 4.1 AND "No" to 4.1a] What are the reasons for not integrating AI tools into your STEM graduate programs? [TEXT BOX]

4.2 Is AI currently being integrated into the curriculum of the following graduate programs?

- Master's programs
- Doctoral programs
- Certificate programs
- Don't know [Exclusive response]

Section 5: Motivations

This section asks you to consider the motivations behind the use of AI in your graduate school's current and future policies and practices.

Motivations refers to the underlying reasons or drivers that influence the development and implementation of specific AI-related policies or practices.

5.1 [If “The graduate school currently...” OR “The graduate school is in...” to Q2.1] How important are the following outcomes in incorporating AI into policies and practices at your graduate school?

Motivations	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Very	Extremely	Don't know
[1] Improved data for strategic decision making						
[2] New insights for enhanced decision-making for pursuing strategic goals (e.g., enrollment, data management, recruitment)						
[3] New insights for curricular enhancements or changes						
[4] New insights for academic degree program structure adjustments						
[5] More effective system for student tracking						
[6] Improved communications with students						
[7] Increased efficiencies in graduate school operations (e.g., admissions, business processes, policy development)						
[8] Enhanced learning through new educational tools (e.g., tutoring supports)						
[9] Personalized student experience						
[14] AI-based communication with current and prospective students						

5.2 How motivated is your graduate school by each of the following external influences to incorporate AI into policies and practices?

Influences	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Very	Extremely	Don't know
[10] Competitive pressure from peer institutions (e.g., learn about competitor's practices, benchmarking)						
[11] Industry and labor market demands						
[12] Research funding requirements						
[13] Government and accreditation standards						
[15] Alumni and donor expectations						
[18] Communication with university partners and stakeholders						

5.3 Are there any other outcomes or influences that motivate your graduate school to integrate AI into policies and practices? [TEXT BOX]

Section 6: Actors/Influencers

This section asks about key actors and influencers shaping the integration of AI at your institution. When responding, consider those who are involved in decision-making, policy development, or program implementation.

6.1 How engaged are each of the following actors/influencers in AI initiatives impacting graduate education at your institution?

Actors/Influencers	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Very	Extremely	Don't know	Not Applicable
President							
Dean/VP colleagues							
Provost							
Chief Information/ Technology Officer or equivalent on campus							
Students							
Faculty							
Graduate council or equivalent							
Institution-wide faculty committee/senate							
Legal office							
Labor union							
System Office							
Legislature or Trustees							
National Associations							
IT companies							
Alumni and donors							
Funders for research grants							
Media							
Other actors/influencers: [TEXT BOX]							

Section 7: Concerns about AI

This section focuses on identifying any concerns regarding the integration of AI at your institution.

7.1 Below is a list of criticisms raised in the literature regarding the integration of AI in higher education. How concerned are **you** about each of the following criticisms of integrating AI into graduate education?

Concerns	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Very	Extremely	Don't know
Unreliable output						
Increased cost						
Unreliable data on which large language models (LLMs) are built						
Differential access to AI on campus						
Decreased data security						
Reduced oversight by the graduate school in the use of AI						
Use of AI may impede student learning						
Lack of buy-in from key stakeholders at your graduate school						

7.2 Are there any other aspects of integrating AI into graduate education that concern you? [TEXT BOX]

Section 8: Resources for Graduate Schools

8.1 NORC is organizing a convening in fall 2025 to present the findings of this survey and share valuable resources for graduate schools. To ensure the event meets your needs, we would like to hear your input. In addition to presenting the survey results, what tools or resources would most benefit you as you navigate the integration of AI in graduate education?

*Please select the **3 resources** in which you are most interested.*

- Best practice frameworks for AI utilization in graduate education
- Best practice frameworks for AI utilization in graduate school operations
- Case studies of successful AI implementations in graduate programs
- Information on whether/how graduate schools have integrated AI
- Workshops or training sessions on appropriate uses of AI
- Access to research and literature on AI's impact on learning and broadening participation in graduate education
- Collaboration platforms for sharing AI experiences and AI resources with other institutions
- Advice from other campus leaders on creating AI-related policies in the graduate school
- Data collection and analysis tools for assessing AI impact
- Workshops for campus leaders regarding upcoming AI advances and workforce implications
- Other (please specify): [TEXT BOX]

8.2 Finally, if you would like to add any comments about this survey or its subject matter for our research team, please do so here. [TEXT BOX]

Appendix D: Convening Agenda

Artificial Intelligence in Graduate Education

Two-Day Convening

November 5 and 6, 2025

DAY 1 – Wednesday, November 5, 2025 (In-Person ONLY)

SESSION TITLE & DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TIME (CT)
IN-PERSON REGISTRATION	Main Lobby (enter from Monroe St.)	2:00 PM – 5:30 PM
SESSION 1: Foundational Concerns of AI Use on Fairness and Access This session will explore how AI is shaping U.S. graduate education and its potential to either support or hinder fairness and access. Following the Chatham House Rule, participants will discuss emerging practices, challenges, and ethical considerations to inform future policy, practice, and research. Moderators: Debra W. Stewart (NORC) Erin Knepler (NORC) Mehmet Celepkolu (NORC)	31 st Floor Room 3141	3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
RECEPTION	Conference Center on Lobby Level	5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

DAY 2 – Thursday, November 6, 2025 (In-Person or Virtual Options)

SESSION TITLE & DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TIME (CT)
IN-PERSON REGISTRATION AND CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST	Register in Main Lobby Proceed to 31 st Floor, Room 3141	8:30 AM – 9:00 AM
WELCOME AND CONVENING OVERVIEW Moderator: Debra W. Stewart (NORC)	Room 3141 and Virtual	9:00 AM – 9:15 AM
SESSION 2: Policy Framework This session will examine how AI-related policies and governance structures are evolving across institutions. Participants will share approaches to developing responsible AI guidelines, address institutional challenges, and explore utility of guidelines or policies. Presenter: Richard Smith (NORC) Moderator: Mehmet Celepkolu (NORC) Panelists: Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) Clay Gloster (North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University)	Room 3141 and Virtual	9:15 AM – 10:15 AM
BREAK		10:15 AM – 10:30 AM

SESSION TITLE & DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TIME (CT)
SESSION 3: Process Implementation In two parts, this session will explore how graduate education offices are leveraging artificial intelligence to enhance operational efficiency and student engagement. Participants will discuss the use of AI in streamlining administrative workflows, improving communication with graduate students, and supporting student services. The conversation will specifically examine how AI is being incorporated into recruitment, admissions, and enrollment management strategies, with attention to ethical considerations. Presenter: Erin Knepler (NORC) PART 1. Office Operations and Communicating with Graduate Students/Student Support Services Moderator: Erin Knepler (NORC) Panelists: Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) Elizabeth Mayer-Davis (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) Scott Adler (University of Colorado Boulder) Suzanne Barbour (Duke University)	Room 3141 and Virtual	10:30 AM – 11:30 AM
CATERED WORKING LUNCH	Room 3141	11:00 AM
SESSION 3: PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION (CONTINUED) Presenter: Erin Knepler (NORC) PART 2. RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS/ INCORPORATING AI INTO ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT Moderator: Erin Knepler (NORC) Panelists: Bonnie Ferri (Georgia Institute of Technology) Mark Garrison (Morgan State University) Peter Harries (North Carolina State University) SESSION 4: Drivers and Influencers This session will examine the underlying motivations and key influencers prompting the adoption of AI across graduate education. Participants will explore how institutional priorities—such as improving efficiency, enhancing student outcomes, and advancing strategic goals—are shaping AI implementation. The discussion will highlight how AI can	Room 3141 and Virtual	11:30 AM – 12:30 PM
	Room 3141 and Virtual	12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

SESSION TITLE & DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TIME (CT)
support data-informed decision-making, foster innovation, and align with broader institutional missions, while also addressing potential risks and fairness considerations. Presenter: Richard Smith (NORC) Moderator: Mehmet Celepkolu (NORC) Panelists: William Graves (Iowa State University) Bonnie Ferri (Georgia Institute of Technology) David Daleke (Indiana University Bloomington)		
BREAK		1:30 PM – 1:45 PM
SESSION 5: Strategic Directions This last working session will synthesize insights from across the convening to begin shaping a set of guiding principles for the responsible and equitable use of AI in graduate education. The discussion will focus on shared values, institutional priorities, and practical considerations that can inform future policy, practice, and collaboration. This session aims to lay the groundwork for a collective understanding to support innovation while safeguarding fairness, transparency, and student success. Moderators: Debra W. Stewart (NORC) Erin Knepler (NORC)	Room 3141 and Virtual	1:45 PM – 2:45 PM
CLOSING: Synthesis and Next Steps Moderator: Debra W. Stewart (NORC)	Room 3141 and Virtual	2:45 PM – 3:00 PM