

## DIALOGUE CONSIDERS AI A COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP ISSUE



Dr. Rufus Glasper opened CCPI-STEM's Thought Leaders' Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Thought Leadership by framing the use of AI at community colleges as a leadership issue, not a technical issue.

Calling the wave of changes instigated by AI a "windstorm," Glasper cautioned community college leaders against tool-chasing. Instead he recommended focusing "on three simultaneous priorities: the institution-wide AI strategy, and not just individual pilots; policy frameworks that balance both innovation and responsibility; and thirdly, the risk realism—that understanding [of] what could go wrong."

Glasper is president and CEO of [The League for Innovation in the Community College](#), which is a partner of the [Community College Presidents' Initiative in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math \(CCPI-STEM\)](#). CCPI-STEM is a [U.S. National Science Foundation](#)-funded [Advanced Technological Education](#) project that shares best practices to galvanize, enlighten, engage, and inspire community college leaders to support regional STEM education and workforce development on their campuses.

### More Advice for Moving Forward with AI

While moderating the 90-minute dialogue via Zoom, Sylvia Jenkins likened the quick evolution of AI since ChatGPT was released in November 2022 to the Internet in the 1990s. "We were all kind of flustered," Jenkins recalled of the changes that came with widespread use of the Internet. She is President Emerita of [Moraine Valley Community College](#) and now serves as the Business Industry Liaison of CCPI-STEM.

In response to the Internet, Jenkins said, community colleges implemented policies and programs, offered professional development, and addressed governance issues. She and other speakers urged community college leaders to act strategically now about AI.

"Risks are inevitable. However, we live in that world where we take risks to make sure that we continue to move our colleges forward," Jenkins said.

Glasper encouraged the Thought Leaders' Dialogue participants to "stress intentional education across all elements of the college. And with that, I mean faculty, staff, students, and community. We must tie to the public trust. ... we must think about this in a holistic fashion so that as we engage in our community, as we engage in our students and our faculty and our staff, we must have a common theme, a common level of interest, and a common level of urgency...

"We must reinforce that AI does not—let me repeat—does not replace faculty. It augments human expertise. And as we engage faculty to get more in their understanding and influence and also experience, we want them to help us keep them engaged, and we want the organization to embrace both sides of the house."

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## College Aims for Across-the-Board AI Use



Dr. Bobby Pace, Provost and Vice President of Academic Success at the [Community College of Aurora](#), explained the tactics leaders of the Colorado community college utilized to promote across-the-board use of AI in ways that foster a “culture of shared knowledge and organizational efficiency.”

The college identified five, cross-functional AI champions to lead institution-wide adoption of AI. Inclusive AI literacy training was also offered to everyone affiliated with the college. And, at the suggestion of faculty, the college created an AI-dedicated librarian position and hired a person for this role to help faculty, students, and staff navigate optimal use of AI. Pace noted that the college’s AI literacy efforts

“needed folks to ultimately embrace agile leadership. ...We needed to have folks that would have lower defensiveness on the idea of what was possible when it came to AI and to test some things out.”

The Community College of Aurora is one of four community colleges that participated in the [Harvard Project on Workforce and Education Design Lab](#) that examined how the colleges use “labor market information and emerging technologies to advance economic mobility for their students.” A case study of the Community College of Aurora’s AI implementation is included in [Data and Technology in Action: Community Colleges Advancing Economic Mobility](#), the report published in February by the Harvard University’s Kennedy School.

## Insights About What Students & Faculty Want Regarding AI



During her presentation, Kelsey Behringer, CEO of [Packback](#), shared information about [Purdue University’s](#) instituting of a comprehensive AI strategy, [Miami Dade College’s](#) increasing of its online enrollment by labeling AI-enhanced courses, and the [Allegany College of Maryland’s](#) shifting from policing for AI to leveraging AI.

Behringer explained that Packback “started as a discussion platform, and we used AI to automate certain workflows, but we also used AI to help give students real-time feedback as they were writing, improving the critical-thinking research skills. Since then, the product has really exploded in scope. We now support long-form writing.”

Rather than focus on her company’s products, Behringer shared her insights from conversations with students and educators about AI. She acknowledged, “Some students are using it as a cheating tool and that’s just life. But I think we all know that at this point in time, the majority—if not all students—are utilizing AI for some purpose.” She pointed out that students, faculty and staff members, and administrators have an array of emotions about AI as they feel pressure from different sources about either using AI or avoiding its use. “The confusion is leading to fear. The confusion is leading to a lot of negative emotions when it comes to their academic experience,” she said, summarizing what students have told her.

“They want transparency from their faculty members and they want reciprocity. If we’re encouraging faculty and institutions to use AI, students want to feel encouraged to use AI. And if we’re asking students to disclose their use of AI, they want faculty to disclose use of AI. They want reciprocity and transparency because those two things help cut through confusion,” she said.

Behringer said that while many educators are using AI, they are also concerned with AI’s impact on student learning and authenticity. “They want to embrace AI, but they don’t know how to do it in a way ... that still captures and preserves critical thinking. And what I hear more than often is faculty want clarity about how they can use AI in a way that captures [the] upside.”

The full report of the Thought Leaders’ Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be posted on CCPI-STEM’s website later this spring.

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