

Dr. Kenneth Lutchen, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer ad interim

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TO: Boston University Faculty and Staff

FROM: Kenneth Lutchen, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer ad interim 

DATE: September 7, 2023

SUBJECT: Announcement of the Boston University AI Task Force

I write today to announce the appointment of a new University-wide task force focused on developing best practices and shared approaches around the use of generative AI at BU.

All of us are witnessing in real time the rapid emergence of generative AI across so many aspects of daily life, including its potential to transform the quality of education, learning outcomes, and experiences in both promising and concerning ways. Moreover, while the technology presents remarkable opportunity for innovation and knowledge creation, so too it presents challenges in areas like academic integrity, intellectual property, and job security. Throughout the country, universities have been steadily formulating guidance on positive ways to engage generative AI in classwork and research, with some already having published institution-wide approaches.

At Boston University, work is well underway within several schools, programs, and units in the Provost's Office to develop similar initiatives and policies – all very positive efforts. However, most of these efforts are independent and not necessarily connected to one another, and their goals vary from simply setting policies for how AI can and cannot be used by students to providing guidance on how to constructively engage AI. To this end, I am convening a task force of faculty experts from across the University to help create a coordinated approach and set of best practices that enable BU to harness the great potential for this technology, guide its creative, positive use, and guard against the possibility of abuse.

The charge to the task force will include the following:

1. Gather information about initiatives throughout BU and effective practices being adopted at other major research universities that are likewise focused on balancing the creative, multidisciplinary, and ethical use of generative AI.
2. Develop specific recommendations for how generative AI can be used to amplify learning outcomes in undergraduate and graduate education and for faculty and students in research.

3. Create a set of recommended policies and best practices that can be adopted – and adapted – University-wide regarding the use of AI by students and faculty and help prevent its misuse or negative impact on learning outcomes or in research.
4. Lay groundwork for a University-wide repository of examples of positive uses for generative AI that others can adopt, as well as misuses others should want to avoid.

I realize the efforts the task force will undertake are complex and will involve faculty and staff from across the entire University. I would like to thank, in advance, the members of the task force for their service and give special acknowledgement to **Yannis Paschalidis**, distinguished professor of engineering and director of the Rafik B. Hariri Institute for Computing and Computational Science & Engineering, and **Wesley Wildman**, professor of philosophy, theology, and ethics, who have agreed to serve as co-chairs.

It is my hope to have a set of interim recommendations from the task force by December 31, 2023, and a full report during the spring 2024 semester. I look forward to working with the task force and want to thank you as well for your participation in this important effort as we seek sensible pathways for the use of this transformative technology in our community.

Boston University AI Task Force

Co-Chairs:

Yannis Paschalidis, Distinguished Professor of Engineering, College of Engineering; Director, Rafik B. Hariri Institute for Computing and Computational Science & Engineering

Wesley Wildman, Professor of Philosophy, Theology, and Ethics, School of Theology

Members:

Mary Churchill, Associate Dean for Strategic Initiatives & Community Engagement; Professor of the Practice and Program Director, Higher Education Administration, Wheelock College of Education & Human Development

Mark Crovella, Professor of Computer Science, College of Arts & Sciences; Chair of Academic Affairs, Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences

Anne Danehy, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs; Master Lecturer of Mass Communication, Advertising & Public Relations, College of Communication

Pary Fassih, Senior Lecturer, Arts & Sciences Writing Program, College of Arts & Sciences

Juliet Floyd, Borden Parker Bowne Professor of Philosophy, College of Arts & Sciences; Director, BU Center for the Humanities

Priya Garg, Associate Dean, Office of Medical Education, Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine

Amie Grills, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs; Professor of Counseling Psychology & Applied Human Development, Wheelock College of Education & Human Development

Tal Gross, Associate Professor of Markets, Public Policy & Law, Questrom School of Business

Wendy Heiger-Bernays, Clinical Professor of Environmental Health, School of Public Health

Keith Hylton, William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor; Professor of Law, School of Law

Daniel Kleinman, Associate Provost for Graduate Affairs; Professor of Sociology, College of Arts & Sciences

Gail McCausland, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs; Clinical Professor of Periodontology, Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine

Matt Parfitt, Associate Professor of Rhetoric, College of General Studies

Wilson Wong, Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering, College of Engineering

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