

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: April 11, 2024

SUBJECT: Report of the Boston University AI Task Force and Next Steps

Last fall, as you may remember, I [appointed](#) a University-wide task force to assess and make recommendations for the future of Generative AI in education and research at BU. Chief among the [Boston University AI Task Force's](#) goals was to research current practices in place across the University and at other major research institutions and develop proposals that best position BU to amplify learning and research outcomes through the use of Generative AI while helping to prevent its misuse or negative impact. The task force has completed its work and created an exceptionally thoughtful and substantive [report](#), which can be found on our website.

The report of the Boston University AI Task Force makes several recommendations for how BU should engage future use of Generative AI in our courses and research. A few of the top messages and recommendations from this report that you will see are that:

1. The future workforce in any field will require individuals that know how to use AI. BU needs to embrace this and ensure our graduates are ready and competitive.
2. Rather than universally prohibiting or restricting the use of Generative AI tools, we should work to “*critically*” embrace the use of this technology and acknowledge that learning and work in the future of virtually every discipline will be impacted by it.
3. All of our units and departments should create AI policies consistent with this *critical embrace* concept and should inform students through syllabi of their Generative AI policy for individual courses. In situations where the technology is not allowed, faculty should provide a clear rationale for why that’s the case relative to desired course learning outcomes.
4. Virtually all disciplines should work to support AI literacy and use among faculty and students, including being aware of how it can be used to enhance learning and research outcomes. This will require us to develop creative approaches for providing such educational and experiential knowledge to our students.

The report contains many other important observations, policy proposals, and best practices guidelines, as well as examples for where caution is warranted. I encourage you to take some time to [read the report](#) when you can.

Next steps are to get feedback from the faculty community on the report takeaways and recommendations. I will be engaging the Council of Deans soon to discuss areas for moving forward with the task force's recommendations, inclusive of feedback from their faculty. Soon after, we will stand up some initiatives to begin implementation.

As AI continues to rapidly revolutionize and, in many ways, redefine the way we work and learn as a society, it is imperative that we innovate in education and research sooner rather than later. As a premier global research institution, educational innovator, and launching pad for future scholars and professionals, Boston University should lead the way in equipping our students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the future workforce.

I want to thank members of the Boston University AI Task Force for their dedication and hard work over the last year.

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

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Pary Fassihi, 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

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

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