Executive Summary: AI Task Force Final Report

From Spring 2025 through Spring 2026, Salisbury University's (SU) AI Task Force undertook a comprehensive examination of Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration across the institution, in conjunction with the University System of Maryland (USM). The Task Force was structured around four working groups: (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Research and Scholarship, (3) Student Support, and (4) Operations and Administration—each addressing distinct yet interconnected aspects of AI implementation.

Detailed findings, methodologies, and recommendations from each working group will be included in their attached individual reports.

MISSION AND CHARGE

Charge: The AI Task Force is charged with developing and guiding the implementation of a comprehensive AI strategy for Salisbury University. The Task Force examines how AI technologies can enhance or diminish teaching, research, and operations while maintaining the university's core values and educational mission. The Task Force identifies opportunities to use AI to improve student learning outcomes, increase operational efficiency, and prepare students for an AI-influenced workplace. The Task Force recommends policies for responsible AI use, ensures privacy and security in AI applications, and addresses equity concerns in AI implementation. The work of the Task Force is guided by relevant data and campus input and facilitated through information sharing and collaboration.

Mission: The Salisbury University AI Task Force supports the core mission of the university, which states that "Our highest purpose is to empower our students with the knowledge, skills, and core values that contribute to active citizenship, gainful employment, and life-long learning in a democratic society and interdependent world." Toward that mission, the task force advises the campus on the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy to responsibly integrate artificial intelligence, where appropriate, across teaching and learning, research and scholarship, student success, and operations and administration. Through collaboration with campus and external stakeholders, the task force uses data-informed decisions and the shared governance process toward AI literacy, privacy, security, equity, and ethical use for campus members.

KEY FINDINGS

Teaching and Learning: Fall 2024 SU survey data revealed varied AI familiarity across campus, with 68.1% of faculty, 61.9% of staff, 63% of undergraduates, and 52.9% of graduate students reporting being familiar with AI. Current AI usage was "Sometimes" (43.3% average) campus-wide, with Writing and Communication Support being the primary application (25%). Respondents identified both opportunities, such as Conceptual Understanding and Learning Support (27% among undergraduates), and concerns, particularly Overreliance and Dependency as the primary drawback, plus Academic Integrity and Ethical Concerns as major threats to education's future. SU could repeat this survey every few years to update community member AI familiarity and perspectives.

Research and Scholarship: Some faculty currently employ Generative AI tools like ChatGPT for literature reviews and grant proposal development, with machine learning models increasingly utilized in research projects, particularly within Computer Science. Salisbury University needs to develop a cohesive framework for supporting AI-related scholarship, cross-disciplinary initiatives, and researcher training to ensure ethical AI use in research.

Student Support: Preliminary surveys across student services revealed minimal formal AI usage, with most departments—including Advising, Counseling Center, Student Health, and Office of Access and Accommodations reporting no current implementation. Salisbury University needs policies to guide AI integration in student-facing services, particularly with sensitive data like FERPA and HIPAA compliance.

Operations and Administration: Current AI utilization remains minimal across administrative units, with limited adoption in Admissions/Recruitment (within SLATE/CRM) and initial implementations in EAB Navigate for predictive student advising. Vendor-provided AI features exist but remain largely unevaluated and disabled pending comprehensive review. Campus lacks formal AI policies, with USM draft guidance expected to direct future institutional policies. Significant opportunities exist for automation, predictive analytics, enhanced cybersecurity, and 24/7 self-service interfaces through chatbots.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The AI Task Force developed phased recommendations across all four working groups:

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (0-6 MONTHS):

- Formulate SU AI Policy aligned with USM requirements (See USM AI Policy Draft v.3)
- Develop guidelines to align AI usage with SU mission, vision, and values
- Create tiered AI use guidelines for course syllabi (AI Inclusive, AI Conditional, AI Restrictive)
- Establish a university-wide database of Generative AI tools with capabilities, costs, and data handling information
- Promote AI literacy training campus-wide to upskill faculty, staff, and students, such as Google/NASH
- Prioritize faculty/staff training on Generative AI and data privacy, particularly FERPA compliance
- Support AI-focused sessions at campus conferences (Teaching and Learning Conference, Faculty Development Day, Student Success Summit, SUccess, SU Student Research Conference) and Faculty Learning Communities
- Update Student Academic Misconduct Policy to address AI-specific violations

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (6-12 MONTHS):

- Secure funding for pilot and evaluation projects of vendor-offered AI enhancements, such as publisher course content
- Launch University-wide AI Tools for Research Seminar Series
- Identify governance structure for AI policy review and approval through shared governance
- Provide specialized training through USM AI Fellows and ID&D workshops
- Develop evaluation procedures for AI enhancements in existing systems
- Continue AI Exchange participation with the University of Baltimore and Frostburg State University

LONG-TERM ACTIONS (1-2 YEARS):

- Continually evaluate additional AI solutions that could provide campus benefit to implement, as needed
- Transition the AI Task Force to an ad hoc committee or working group
- Create an AI faculty development program for ongoing training and policy governance
- Consider an SU AI Institute in conjunction with CAFE and ID&D, like the University of Baltimore's Center for AI Learning and Community-Engaged Innovation (CAILI)
- Develop a sustainable AI policy review and revision framework
- Consider external AI consultant/advisory services for strategic guidance
- Integrate AI literacy into academic programs and/or general education requirements
- Consider using operational AI predictive analytics like *budgeting and spending trends, and future semester seat count and sections predictions*
- Deploy domain-focused chatbots for 24/7 customer service in Registrar, Admissions, and HR

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

The successful implementation of these recommendations requires coordinated investment across several areas:

Technology Infrastructure: High-performance computing resources with GPU capabilities, expanded storage systems for large datasets, secure cloud computing integrations, enhanced networking infrastructure with high bandwidth and low latency, specialized hardware for domain-specific research, and approved software licenses for AI/ML frameworks and tools.

Budget Allocations: Funding for AI training with vendors and curriculum development, software licenses not included in existing contracts, professional development programs, external consulting services, faculty release time for AI Faculty Development Center staffing, and pilot project evaluations.

Staffing: Dedicated staff for AI policy oversight and governance, administrative support to create an Interdisciplinary AI Research Center, instructional designers for course integration support, IT personnel for infrastructure management and tool vetting, and faculty time for working groups and policy development.

Professional Development: Ongoing workshops and seminars on AI tools and ethical use, AI literacy training for all campus stakeholders, discipline-specific training sessions, documentation and resource repositories, and scholarly communication channels for sharing best practices.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Task Force identified several critical policy needs:

NEW POLICIES REQUIRED:

- Comprehensive SU AI Policy complying with USM requirements
- Vetting process for new AI tools across campus
- Guidelines for AI use in student-facing services
- Data privacy and security protocols specific to AI applications
- Intellectual property policies addressing AI-generated content

EXISTING POLICIES TO UPDATE:

- Student Academic Misconduct Policy (definitions of lying/fabrication, cheating, plagiarism) and AI syllabi statements
- Office of Sponsored Programs policies on intellectual property and research conduct
- FERPA compliance guidelines incorporating AI considerations
- Academic integrity standards across all levels

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES:

- SU-level review board for project categorization and risk assessment
- Standing committee or task force for ongoing AI policy oversight
- Clear designation of policy approval pathways through shared governance
- Regular review cycles with defined triggers for policy reassessment

CROSS-GROUP COORDINATION AND DEPENDENCIES

Successful AI integration requires collaboration across multiple campus stakeholders:

Internal Coordination: Information Technology for infrastructure and security, University Libraries for information literacy instruction, and digital scholarship support, Office of Sponsored Programs for grant support and compliance, Office of Academic Affairs for curriculum integration, Instructional Design and Delivery for faculty support, and University leadership for strategic alignment and resource allocation.

External Partnerships: Identify potential partners in the region for strategic collaborations with expertise and resources that complement the university's strengths. Industry collaborators would draw from regional businesses for organizational structure and resources, government agencies for funding and policy guidance, nonprofit organizations for community engagement, peer institutions within USM and beyond for shared learning, and vendors for tool evaluation and implementation support.

Shared Governance: Faculty Senate for academic and operational policy review, Staff Senate for operational policy input, Student Government Association and the Graduate Student Council for student perspective, and relevant standing committees for specialized oversight. Immediate need for shared governance review of AI syllabi statements.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

FEBRUARY 2026 - MAY 2026:

- Based on the AI Task Force charge above, form working groups in the academic units to continue this work
- Initiate policy review and drafting process
- IT conducts infrastructure needs assessment
- Secure budget allocations for pilot projects
- Finalize tiered AI use guidelines for syllabi to begin Fall 2026

JUNE 2026 - DECEMBER 2026:

- Potential Faculty Development Day programming
- Launch AI Tools for Research Seminar Series
- Starting Fall 2026 semester, implement tiered AI use guidelines for syllabi
- Establish AI Fellows training programs
- Participate in AI Exchange with partner institutions
- Present policy recommendations for leadership approval
- Plan Teaching and Learning Conference with AI streams
- Create database of AI tools

JANUARY 2027 - MAY 2027:

- Determine need for AI Task Force, ad hoc committee, or shared governance committee
- Deploy evaluated AI solutions campus-wide
- Integrate AI literacy into curriculum
- Conduct comprehensive program evaluation

IMMEDIATE REQUESTS

After reviewing the initial and short-term recommendations of the working groups, five funding themes emerged: faculty training and presentation support, pool of AI account licenses for learning and experimentation, pilot chatbot for gaining experience and learning, professional external AI use training for the campus, and engaging AI expertise (consulting) to provide strategic guidance. There was also an additional, unfunded, immediate need for shared governance review of AI syllabi statements, ideally providing a three-tier AI sample syllabi statement to the Faculty Senate before the April 14 meeting for consideration in time for fall 2026 courses.
The estimated budget is listed below.

- Faculty training and presentation support $50,000
- Pool of AI account licenses $60,000

- Pilot chatbot supporting Enrollment $50,000
- Professional on campus AI training $50,000
- Engaging AI consulting $50,000

CONCLUSION

Salisbury University stands at a critical juncture in AI integration. The recommendations put forth by the AI Task Force provide a roadmap for responsible, ethical, and effective AI adoption that maintains the institution's commitment to student-centered education while preparing the campus community for an AI-influenced future. Success requires sustained leadership commitment, adequate resource allocation, meaningful stakeholder engagement, and adherence to the university's core values throughout implementation. The phased approach allows for iterative learning, adjustment based on outcomes, and scalable growth as AI technologies and institutional capacity evolve.

This executive summary synthesizes key points from all four working group reports. Readers are encouraged to review the individual working group reports when they become available for comprehensive findings, detailed recommendations, specific implementation steps, appendices with research data, and draft policy language.

Submitted by: Ken Kundell, Chief Information Officer; Chrys Egan, Interim Director of the Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence; Angela Lookabill, Faculty Affairs and Professional Development Coordinator