AI TASK FORCE REPORT

Spring 2026

Salisbury UNIVERSITY

AI Task Force Final Report: Research & Scholarship

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Salisbury University is actively expanding AI use across research, teaching, and operations. Faculty already employ generative AI tools such as ChatGPT to support literature reviews and grant writing, and machine learning models are increasingly central to research and undergraduate projects — most notably within Computer Science. Participation in the Salisbury University Student Research Conference (SUSRC) and the summer research showcase reflects growing interest in AI across diverse academic areas.

A cohesive institution-wide structure to support AI research initiatives does not yet exist. Key challenges include limited cross-disciplinary coordination, infrastructure gaps, insufficient faculty training, and the absence of policies governing AI use and ethics in research.

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Member	Role	Department / School
Xiaohong (Sophie) Wang	Chair	Computer Science
Nikki Cummings	Member	Art
Wenxiu (Vince) Nan	Member	Information Systems and Operations Management
Shuangquan (Peter) Wang	Member	Computer Science

Summary of Recommendations

- Immediate (0–6 months): Introduce AI-focused sessions within SUSRC and Faculty Learning Communities to highlight current projects and foster collaboration.
- Short-term (6–12 months): Launch a university-wide AI Tools for Research Seminar Series to build shared understanding of emerging technologies and best practices.
- Long-term (1–2 years): Establish an Interdisciplinary AI Research Center as a central hub for collaboration, external partnerships, and student engagement.
- Supporting work includes a formal AI tool vetting policy, updates to sponsored programs policies, expanded computing infrastructure, and an AI Faculty Development Center. Strengthening internal coordination and external partnerships with industry, government, and regional sectors will further advance SU's capacity for responsible AI leadership.

CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT

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 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.

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 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.

KEY FINDINGS

Existing Practices

Faculty use generative AI tools in literature reviews and grant proposal development. Machine learning models are widely applied in research and undergraduate projects, primarily within Computer Science, though adoption in other disciplines is growing — as evidenced by SUSRC and summer research showcase submissions. Established best practices from professional societies (ACM, IEEE) and funding agency requirements (NSF) are followed where applicable.

Identified Gaps

There is a pressing need for consistent AI policies and initiatives across the institution to support cross-disciplinary collaboration, faculty development, and ethical oversight of AI in research and scholarship.

Opportunities

Generative AI and machine learning models can enhance research across disciplines — supporting data analysis, simulation, and prediction in healthcare, environmental science, business, and the humanities. AI creates strong conditions for interdisciplinary collaboration, enabling faculty and students to address complex real-world problems.

Risks and Challenges

Over-reliance on generative AI poses a significant risk to critical thinking and problem-solving development. The value of research lies in the processes of brainstorming, debating, and learning from mistakes; outsourcing these to AI systems could undermine independent reasoning and creativity.

Current budget constraints may limit faculty time and the financial or human resources needed to address these challenges effectively. This reinforces the importance of resource-sharing and strengthened collaboration with internal and external partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **PRIORITY 1: Immediate Actions (0–6 months)**
  - AI Research Showcase
  - Integrate a dedicated session on AI-related projects into SUSRC and the Faculty Learning Communities, providing faculty and students a central platform to present their work and make interdisciplinary connections.
  - Policy Implications: No policy changes required. SUSRC and FLC organizers should be informed to incorporate this into planning.
  - Resources Required: None beyond coordination.
  - Implementation Steps: Contact SUSRC and FLC organizers to communicate this initiative and confirm incorporation into upcoming event planning.
- **PRIORITY 2: Short-term Actions (6–12 months)**
  - AI Tools for Research Seminar Series
  - A university-wide seminar series focused on AI tools for research — covering emerging technologies, best practices, and ethical considerations. The series will help bridge technically oriented departments with those in the humanities, social sciences, health, and professional fields.
  - Policy Implications: None.

- Resources Required: Existing IT lab infrastructure should be sufficient. External speakers may involve costs.
- Implementation Steps: Establish faculty working groups at each school to organize the series. Working groups communicate regularly and may plan joint sessions.

- **PRIORITY 3: Long-term Actions (1–2 years)**
  - Interdisciplinary AI Research Center
  - A central campus hub for interdisciplinary AI research bringing together faculty from across schools and enabling partnerships with industry, government, and regional sectors to apply AI to real-world problems. The Center would provide undergraduate and graduate students hands-on experience with cutting-edge AI tools while supporting their career readiness.
  - Policy Implications: No immediate policy changes required. If approved, operational policies for the Center will need to be developed.
  - Resources Required: Budget for faculty positions affiliated with the Center.
  - Implementation Steps: Bring to leadership for approval. Upon endorsement, develop operational structure and staffing plan.

New Policies Required

A formal policy on the vetting process for new AI tools, both generative AI and traditional machine learning tools, used within the university.

Existing Policies to Update

Policies under the Office of Sponsored Programs, including those on intellectual property, misconduct in scholarly work, technology-mediated instructional material, and standards for the conduct of scientific research should be updated to address the use of generative AI tools.

Governance Structures

A dedicated staff member or working group within Academic Affairs should be designated to lead AI policy development, tool vetting, and procedure establishment.

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Technology Infrastructure

1. Hardware
AI research — particularly projects involving large datasets and complex models — requires high-performance computing (HPC) infrastructure: CPU/GPU computational clusters, high-capacity storage systems, and in some disciplines, specialized hardware (edge AI devices, AR/VR equipment, control systems). The Henson School currently operates an HPC lab, but a systematic evaluation is needed to identify gaps and plan for broader university needs. Faculty should be encouraged to integrate cloud-based platforms (AWS, Google Cloud, Microsoft Azure) to supplement local resources.

2. Software
Research depends on a broad ecosystem of tools: programming languages (Python, R, MATLAB); AI/ML frameworks (TensorFlow, PyTorch, scikit-learn); workflow and data management tools; visualization and simulation platforms; collaboration and reproducibility tools; and research support tools for literature exploration and academic writing. Access to scholarly publication databases (Elsevier, IEEE, ACM, Springer, and discipline-specific databases) is also essential. The university should evaluate needs carefully and consider targeted licenses or shared access models rather than universal campus-wide licensing.

3. Networking
Core needs include a high-bandwidth, low-latency campus backbone; robust data center networking for distributed GPU and HPC workflows; secure remote access (VPN, zero-trust models, federated identity); and strong data security measures (encryption, firewalls, monitoring) to ensure compliance with HIPAA and FERPA requirements.

4. Budget Estimates
To be determined following infrastructure assessment.

5. Professional Development

AI Faculty Development Center (AIFDC)
A centralized hub for building institutional AI capacity and promoting AI literacy. The AIFDC would provide resources and programs for teaching, research, and professional development, and could also serve as a governance body ensuring all AI initiatives align with institutional policies, legal requirements, and ethical standards.
Scholarly Communication and Dissemination
Internal learning communities, colloquia, and institutional publications to foster networking, share best practices in AI pedagogy and research, and enable cross-disciplinary collaboration.
Workshops and Seminars
Regular offerings covering specific research skills (machine learning, deep learning, AI-assisted literature review) and broader issues (data privacy, AI intellectual property, hybrid writing with AI). These provide timely learning opportunities as AI capabilities advance.
Online Resources
An online repository with on-demand, self-paced learning — recorded tutorials, ethical guidelines, and discipline-specific case studies. This would also serve as a living reference library for AI policy and governance, including institutional guidelines, compliance checklists, and resources on national and international regulations.

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 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.

Human Resources: Dedicated staff for AI policy oversight and governance, administrative support for the 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.

COLLABORATION AND DEPENDENCIES

Cross-Group Coordination
1. Cultivate Collaboration Culture
The university should recognize and reward cross-group research, encourage faculty mentoring and peer exchange, and create joint initiatives that build trust across disciplines.

2. Facilitate Cross-Disciplinary Activities
Regular colloquia, workshops, and informal meet-ups where researchers from different fields can share ideas. Professional development opportunities in AI methods can build a shared foundation of knowledge.

3. Encourage Interdisciplinary Research Projects
Support cross-disciplinary teams with seed funding or small grants to catalyze novel ideas and establish proof-of-concept studies.

External Partnerships

- **Identifying Potential Partners**

Industries central to the Delmarva Peninsula — agriculture, fishing and aquaculture, tourism — present significant AI research needs. SU can leverage its regional position through joint projects, shared facilities, and technical expertise. Government agencies and nonprofits provide funding and domain-specific knowledge. Systematic mapping of expertise will align potential partners with academic priorities.

- **Building Relationships and Collaborations**

Faculty and administrative offices should build on existing relationships while pursuing new connections. On-campus events — research showcases, guest lectures, facility tours — can demonstrate SU's capabilities and attract collaborators. MOUs can outline shared goals; formal contracts should address intellectual property, data sharing, and funding.

- **Sustaining Partnerships**

An Office of Research Partnerships can coordinate agreements, manage compliance and intellectual property, and support collaborative initiatives. Effectiveness should be tracked via joint publications, external funding secured, student involvement, and technology transfer outcomes.

Campus Stakeholder Engagement

- **Information Technology:** Computing infrastructure, storage, security, and streamlined software/license support.
- **University Library:** Data management, compliance, open access publishing, and digital literacy for student researchers.
- **Office of Sponsored Programs:** Proposal development, compliance, post-award management, and grant writing workshops.
- **Office of Academic Affairs:** Connecting AI research with teaching and learning; professional development for faculty as mentors and researchers.
- **University Leadership:** Strategic alignment, infrastructure investment, partnership encouragement, and recognition of research achievements.

NEXT STEPS:

Immediate Actions Required

Communicate AI Showcase plans to SUSRC and FLC organizers for inclusion in upcoming event planning.
Form faculty-led working groups across all schools to coordinate AI-related activities and plan the Seminar Series.
Initiate a review of existing research and IP policies under the Office of Sponsored Programs.
Conduct an initial audit of computing, software, and networking capabilities to identify gaps.

Decision Points

Leadership approval to form a working group under Academic Affairs for AI policy development, tool vetting, and compliance.

Budgetary allocation for faculty professional development, infrastructure upgrades, and the Seminar Series.

Approval to designate resources for the AI Faculty Development Center.

Leadership endorsement to establish the Interdisciplinary AI Research Center.

Follow-up Timeline

- 0–3 months: Communicate AI showcase plans; form working groups; begin policy and infrastructure assessments.
- 6–12 months: Launch AI Tools for Research Seminar Series; present assessment findings to leadership.
- 12–24 months: Begin planning the Interdisciplinary AI Research Center and AIFDC; compile an annual progress report.

APPENDICIES

- Appendix A: Research and Data Sources

- Annual Student Research Conference (SUSRC) | Salisbury University
- Posters on the Bay | Salisbury University
- Summer Student Research Showcase | Salisbury University
- Appendix B: Best Practices Examples
- Artificial Intelligence Policies: Guidelines and Considerations — Duke Learning Innovation & Lifetime Education
- U.S. Department of Education Guidance on Artificial Intelligence Use in Schools
- Artificial Intelligence: Federal Efforts Guided by Requirements and Advisory Groups | U.S. GAO
- Generative AI Literacy — Artificial Intelligence for Research and Scholarship | Harvard Library
- Not A Blank Space: Policy Considerations for AI in Research — Office of Science Policy
- Artificial Intelligence and Academic Professions | AAUP
- AI for Education — AI Institutes Virtual Organization
- National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource Pilot | NSF
- Guidelines for Using ChatGPT and other Generative AI tools at Harvard | Office of the Provost
- Research with Generative AI — Generative AI @ Harvard
- Appendix C: Draft Policy Language
  To be developed, focusing on vetting processes for new AI tools and updates to Office of Sponsored Programs policies.
- Appendix D: Stakeholder Feedback
  To be compiled

CONCLUSION

Salisbury University stands at a meaningful moment in its relationship with artificial intelligence. Faculty are already using AI tools across research domains, students are engaging with machine learning in their projects, and interest in AI-assisted scholarship continues to grow across disciplines. What has been missing is a coordinated structure to support, guide, and amplify that momentum.

The recommendations in this report offer a practical, phased path forward. Near-term actions, such as integrating AI into SUSRC and Faculty Learning Communities, require no new funding and can begin immediately. The AI Tools for Research Seminar Series builds shared knowledge across schools and disciplines. And the Interdisciplinary AI Research Center, while requiring longer-term investment and leadership endorsement, offers SU a vehicle for meaningful external partnerships and student career preparation that no single department can achieve alone. Underlying all of this is a commitment to responsible AI use — one that preserves the critical thinking, scholarly rigor, and ethical accountability that define quality research. Policy updates, infrastructure investment, and faculty development are not obstacles to progress; they are what make progress sustainable. With the right coordination among Academic Affairs, IT, the Library, Sponsored Programs, and university leadership, SU can position itself as a thoughtful and capable institution in an era increasingly shaped by AI.