AI Task Force Final Report: Student Support

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Initial outreach to student-facing units — Advising/CSA/Housing, Counseling Center, Student Health, Office of Academic Affairs, Registrar, Financial Aid, and Cashier/Bursar — indicates that AI tools are not currently in use within these areas. No AI-specific policies are in place across student support functions. Key concerns include sensitivity of student data and compliance requirements under FERPA and HIPAA.

This working group's recommendations center on establishing foundational structures before AI adoption occurs: a values-aligned decision heuristic, a tiered syllabus AI use framework, a university-wide AI tool database, staff training, and a governance pathway for ongoing policy development.

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Member	Title / Role	Department / Office
Jen Pepper	Chair	Art Department
Alyssa Leventer	Member	Center for Student Achievement
Jeff Dean	Member	University Writing Center
Jungho An	Member	Information Technology
Wendy Jin	Member	Academic Advising

Summary of Recommendations

- Immediate (0–6 months): Develop a values-aligned AI use heuristic; adopt a tiered syllabus framework; create a university-wide AI tools database; launch mandatory staff training on generative AI and data privacy.
- Short-term (6–12 months): Establish clear governance structures for moving AI policies through shared governance with Faculty Senate involvement.
- Long-term (1–2 years): Create a sustainable AI policy review framework; contract with an external AI consultant to assist with ethical frameworks and vendor vetting.

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 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.

KEY FINDINGS

Existing Practices

Outreach to student support units returned the following:

- Advising / CSA / Housing: Not currently using AI tools.
- Counseling Center: Not currently using AI tools.
- Student Health: Not currently using AI tools.
- Office of Academic Affairs: No response received at time of report.
- Registrar / Financial Aid / Cashier-Bursar: Under review.

Survey forms are available as an addendum to this report.

Identified Gaps

- Survey results did not produce quantitative data sufficient for trend analysis.
- No AI policies are in place in student support units based on current survey results.

Opportunities

Specific opportunities within student support units are to be identified through a more robust survey and stakeholder engagement process. Generally, AI holds potential to streamline administrative workflows and improve accessibility of information for students.

Risks and Challenges

- Counseling Center: Significant data sensitivity concerns; FERPA and HIPAA compliance requirements create meaningful constraints on any AI deployment.
- Pace of adoption: Risk that AI tool adoption outpaces the development of human and procedural safeguards across student-facing offices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PRIORITY 1 — IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (0–6 MONTHS)

Recommendation 1: AI Use Heuristic — Guiding Principles

Develop a values-aligned heuristic to guide decisions about AI tool adoption across student support functions, ensuring alignment with the SU mission, departmental values, and student wellbeing.

Policy Implications:

Provides a consistent, values-grounded process for any area of campus considering AI adoption.

Resources Required:

A team to draft, review, and approve the heuristic; training or workshop support for rollout.

The working group proposes the following questions as a starting point for reflection before any AI tool is implemented:

- How does this use of AI align with the University mission and values, or help further them?
- How does this use of AI align with applicable department or programmatic policy and values?
- How does this use of AI support a student learning outcome?
- Does this use of AI create any negative outcomes for someone other than the AI user or the people who will benefit from its use?
- Does a supervisor, departmental team, or approval committee know about this use and agree that it is appropriate, ethical, effective, and aligned with university policy?
- What are the ethical uses of this particular AI tool? What are some possible unethical uses?
- Is there a different product that accomplishes the same general tasks more effectively, efficiently, or ethically, or that aligns better with university policy and values?
- Is this AI tool approved or supported by IT or another SU consultant who can assess security risks, ethical issues, and error rates?
- How does this AI tool handle the material fed into its prompts?
- Does use of this tool make intellectual property available in ways the creators may not condone?
- What measures of reliability exist for this tool, and have they been consulted?
- What errors does this AI tool make, and what measures are in place to identify and correct them?

- What procedures exist to identify and rectify AI-generated errors — particularly those that harm students, deliver misinformation, or expose sensitive information?
- Will use of this tool be transparent, and can we explain how and why it is being used, and for whose benefit?
- To the extent determinable, what is the environmental impact of this tool? Are there alternatives with a lighter impact?
- Is this use of AI bringing humans closer together, or pushing them farther apart?
- Why is this use of AI necessary? What justifies it?
- Is this use of AI actually accomplishing the desired outcome? How is this known, and how will it be monitored?

Recommendation 2: Generative AI Use Framework for Course Syllabi
Adopt a tiered syllabus framework that gives faculty a structured, consistent way to communicate AI expectations to students, while preserving academic freedom. A shared framework also helps student support offices quickly understand what is and is not permitted in a given course.

Policy Implications:
A common framework is adopted institution-wide; individual faculty select the appropriate tier for their course and document it on their syllabus. All tiers must align with FERPA, academic integrity policy, and data privacy standards.

Resources Required:
Drafting of tiered framework and syllabus templates; approval through shared governance; regular review cycle as technology changes.

Proposed Four-Tier AI Use Policy for Courses:

Tier	Description	Example Use Cases / Restrictions
Tier 1: Open Use	Public GenAI tools permitted for internal, non-sensitive, and creative tasks involving no PII, confidential data, or non-public institutional information.	Brainstorming marketing slogans, drafting presentation outlines from public information, creating templates for internal announcements. All outputs must be reviewed by staff.
Tier 2: Guided Use	GenAI permitted to augment standard workflows and general communications. Strict prohibition on PII or restricted data.	Summarizing non-confidential meeting notes, drafting FAQ documents or email templates. Departments should log task types; all outputs reviewed by staff.
Tier 3: Restricted Use	GenAI permitted for institutional non-public (but non-PII) data in specific, department-approved cases requiring formal human-in-the-loop review.	Analyzing anonymized usage statistics, approved secure AI tools for workflow automation. Each use case requires department head approval and registration in a centralized institutional system.
Tier 4: Prohibited Use	GenAI tools are strictly prohibited where data sensitivity, student privacy, and the need for qualified professional judgment are paramount.	Prohibited: inputting PII, academic records, financial aid details, disciplinary data, or health information; decisions on admissions, financial aid, academic standing, or student conduct.

Recommendation 3: University-Wide AI Tools Database
Create a searchable, centrally maintained database of available AI tools, including costs, capabilities, data handling practices, and privacy considerations.

Policy Implications:
Reduces duplication of effort and supports more consistent, informed decision-making across the institution.

Resources Required:

A team to gather and compile data; a designated home for the resource; defined update and review cadence.

Implementation Steps:
Form team; gather data on available tools (capabilities, costs, data handling, privacy); determine resource location; design and publish; establish workflow for additions and edits; create semester or annual review cycle.

Recommendation 4: Staff Training on Generative AI and Data Privacy
Prioritize mandatory, recurring training for all student services staff on the responsible use of generative AI tools, with particular focus on FERPA compliance and institutional data governance.

Policy Implications:
Requires review and potential update of institutional data privacy policies, staff conduct expectations, and acceptable use policies. A formal policy on mandatory recurring training for staff who interact with student data should be established.

Resources Required:
Budget for professional development trainers or online training platforms; multi-tiered curriculum (foundational AI concepts; advanced module on ethical use and FERPA); access to approved, secure AI tools for practice.

Implementation Steps:
Assemble cross-functional working group (IT, Legal, Student Services, HR) to develop curriculum and review policy; build core curriculum; conduct initial mandatory training for all student services staff within next fiscal quarter; establish ongoing training schedule; formalize policy changes and communicate to staff.

PRIORITY 2 — SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (6–12 MONTHS)
Recommendation 1: Governance in Practice — Moving AI Policies Forward
Establish clear structures for how AI policy proposals move through shared governance, and who holds decision-making authority when policies affect the broader campus community.

Policy Implications:
AI policies may need to move through existing shared governance bodies. The university must clarify who drafts, reviews, and enforces these policies. Oversight of AI tools used across campus should include representatives from all major stakeholder groups.

Resources Required:
Clear documentation of which governance bodies are involved in AI policy approval; background materials for informed decision-making by representatives; administrative and IT support.

Implementation Steps:
Map where AI policies should go for review and approval; form a cross-representative subcommittee for AI governance coordination; create a clear process for proposals to move from working groups to governance review; share updates regularly across campus.

PRIORITY 3 — LONG-TERM ACTIONS (1–2 YEARS)
Recommendation 1: Sustainable AI Policy Review Framework
Create a structured, ongoing framework for regularly reviewing and revising AI policies at Salisbury University. The framework should define review cycles, oversight responsibilities, and triggers for reassessment (changes to mission, technology, or regulatory requirements).

Policy Implications:
New governance policies required defining: frequency and scope of AI policy reviews; the body or committee with ongoing oversight responsibility; processes for stakeholder consultation; documentation requirements for policy changes and their rationale.

Resources Required:
A standing committee or task force with clear charter; administrative support for coordinating reviews and documenting changes.

Implementation Steps:
Establish governance structure and charter; define review schedule and cadence; develop policy assessment criteria aligned with SU mission; create feedback channels for faculty, staff, and students.

Recommendation 2: External AI Consultant / Advisory Services
Contract with a consultant or firm experienced in higher education AI strategy to serve in an advisory capacity, assisting with ethical frameworks and vendor vetting.

Policy Implications:
The consultant is advisory only — final decisions remain with shared governance. Recommendations must align with campus values, compliance requirements, data privacy, and equity standards.

Resources Required:
Budget for consulting contract; a point of contact within IT, Academic Affairs, or Governance; access to institutional data, stakeholders, and governance meetings.

Implementation Steps:
Issue RFP for consultants with higher-ed AI experience; vet proposals for relevant academic work; establish contract with clear deliverables, timelines, and review points; coordinate consultant meetings with governance bodies; assess value at contract close.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

New Policies Required
To be determined as the working group's survey and stakeholder outreach is completed.

Existing Policies to Update
To be determined following policy inventory and gap analysis.

Governance Structures
Shared governance must be incorporated into all AI policy processes. Faculty Senate involvement is essential; policies with broad campus impact should not be implemented without appropriate due process.

Compliance and Legal Considerations
FERPA and HIPAA compliance are the most pressing legal considerations for student support functions. All AI tool evaluations and deployments in these areas must account for these requirements.

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Technology Infrastructure
To be determined following completion of unit surveys and identification of pilot use cases.

Budget Estimates
To be determined based on training program scope, consulting engagement, and tool decisions.

Professional Development
Staff training on generative AI and data privacy is the immediate priority. Longer-term, training on specific approved platforms should be made easily accessible to all faculty, staff, and students.

COLLABORATION AND DEPENDENCIES

Cross-Group Coordination
This working group's recommendations should not stand alone. The AI use heuristic, tiered syllabus framework, and governance structures all connect with and should align with outputs from the Teaching & Learning, Operations & Administration, and Research & Scholarship working groups. Coordination across all four groups is essential to avoid inconsistency.

External Partnerships
Considerations under active discussion: AI expert consultant engagement; connection with other USM institutions; vendor relationships with AI/LLM providers (pricing, capabilities, data handling).

Campus Stakeholder Engagement

- Faculty Senate: Shared governance is not optional. Policies affecting the wider campus community must move through appropriate channels.
- IT: Security review, tool vetting, and staff training coordination.
- Student Services units: Advising, Counseling, Student Health, Registrar, Financial Aid — all must be involved in evaluation and implementation planning for their areas.

NEXT STEPS

Immediate Actions Required

- Communicate AI Showcase plans to SUSRC and FLC organizers for inclusion in upcoming event planning.
- Form working groups to develop the AI use heuristic and tiered syllabus framework.
- Assemble cross-functional team to develop staff training curriculum.
- Conduct unit surveys to identify gaps and inform policy development.

Decision Points

- Leadership direction regarding priority recommendations.
- Governance approval of AI use heuristic and tiered framework.
- Budget allocation for training programs and consulting engagement.

Follow-up Timeline

- 0–3 months: Develop AI use heuristic; begin policy inventory; launch staff training planning.
- 6–12 months: Establish shared governance pathways for AI policy; publish AI tools database.
- 12–24 months: Issue RFP for external consultant; establish sustainable policy review framework.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research and Data Sources

- Unit survey forms (addendum). Full survey results to be compiled.

Appendix B: Best Practices Examples

To be compiled.

Appendix C: Draft Policy Language

To be developed, informed by the heuristic and tiered framework described in Recommendations.

Appendix D: Stakeholder Feedback

To be compiled upon completion of unit outreach.

CONCLUSION

Student support functions at Salisbury University are at an early and consequential point in their relationship with AI. The absence of current AI adoption is not a gap to rush past — it is an opportunity to build the right structures first. The tiered use framework, values-aligned heuristic, and governance pathways recommended here are designed to ensure that when AI tools do enter student-facing offices, they do so with appropriate safeguards, clear accountability, and the trust of the campus community.

The sensitivity of student data — particularly in Counseling, Health, Financial Aid, and Advising — means that FERPA and HIPAA compliance cannot be afterthoughts. They must be foundational to every tool evaluation and every training program. The working group's recommendations place those obligations at the center of a manageable, phased approach.

Sustaining progress will require cross-group coordination, Faculty Senate engagement, and leadership commitment to both governance and resource allocation. With those elements in place, SU can move forward responsibly — improving service to students without sacrificing the privacy protections and professional judgment that make those services trustworthy.