

AI Readiness Listening Sessions: Perspectives on AI from Faculty and Staff

Co-facilitated by Teaching and Learning Technologies and the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning

Executive Summary

Between January and April 2025, our teams conducted 9 listening sessions with faculty departments and 4 listening sessions with staff representing various administrative departments, listening for the opportunities and challenges they were navigating in response to the ever-expanding and changing AI landscape. AI adoption is broad but uneven in both contexts, with some individuals identifying as heavy AI users while others use AI sparingly. A third group of staff and faculty expressed ethical, equity, and bias-related concerns that influenced their decision not to engage with AI. For staff, they identified the benefits of AI for supporting and streamlining workplace tasks such as email drafting, crafting agendas, and data and document review, while faculty spoke about using AI for assignment and assessment design and teaching AI literacy as an additional student learning objective in their courses. Both groups expressed strong interest in structured learning opportunities and a desire for increased institutional messaging and policies around acceptable AI use. More detailed summaries from each set of listening sessions are below.

Faculty Departmental Listening Sessions Summary

Between February and April 2025, the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning partnered with Teaching and Learning Technologies and the Director of AI Integration to conduct nine 30 - 45 minute listening sessions with departments across all six schools of the university. The goal of these listening sessions was to better understand general and discipline-specific opportunities and challenges for teaching and learning at Elon in the changing AI landscape. The following themes emerged from those conversations.

Faculty integration of AI into their teaching varies broadly. Across departments but also within the same department, current faculty adoption of AI falls along a very wide continuum, ranging from comprehensive engagement with AI to intentional disengagement from AI. When faculty are incorporating AI into their teaching, some common approaches they are employing include:

- *AI as a Course Design Assistant* -- Formulating learning goals, drafting syllabi, creating course reading lists
- *AI as a Support for Crafting Course Materials* -- Designing assessments and rubrics, rewriting reading materials at appropriate proficiency levels
- *AI as an Efficiency Support* -- Crafting feedback language, organizing notes, streamlining repetitive tasks
- *AI Competency as a Learning Goal* -- Building assignments and in-class activities that ask students to use AI to generate assignment ideas, summarize texts, refine their project plans, learn coding and other analytic skills, and enhance critical reflection skills through engagement with AI-generated content
- *AI as an Inclusive Teaching Tool* -- Providing AI resources to support neurodiverse learners and those with less background knowledge in the subject, such as AI-generated reading summaries, note-taking tools, and AI chatbots

Many faculty see AI as somewhat at odds with their, and Elon's, educational mission. While faculty recognize the pervasiveness of AI in modern life, they named several concerns related to AI and the classroom:

- *AI can undermine foundational learning processes* -- Entry-level students often over-rely on AI, leading to gaps in core skills and reduced readiness for advanced coursework. As AI is generally better at entry-level tasks, students may not experience the productive struggle needed to learn core competencies.
- *AI can strain human connection* - Faculty voiced concerns about the potential impact of AI on their relationships with students. Specifically, they mentioned

the tension of not wanting to convey, through assignment design and pedagogical decisions, that they did not trust students, while also feeling like they needed to make changes to their approaches to discourage academic misconduct.

- *AI can reinforce bias and limit perspectives* -- AI tools often overlook cultural, linguistic, and artistic diversity, privileging dominant ways of knowing.
- *AI is a limited tool* -- Faculty mentioned concerns related to AI's unreliability when performing complex or high-stakes tasks.
- *AI's environmental impacts are broad and not fully understood.*

Faculty desire ongoing professional development and transparency about institutional AI goals and values. Many faculty have taken individual initiative to learn about and build their AI capacities, and they named several areas of institutional support that would help them further develop and refine their practices at this time:

- *Tailored Training* - Workshops, toolkits, and communities of practice focused on discipline-specific applications of AI, not just general overviews.
- *Time and Institutional Support* – Protected time or incentives for faculty to explore, experiment, and reflect on AI use.
- *Ethics Guidance* - Clear and consistent policies and messaging to students and faculty about ethical use of AI, in the classroom and more generally at the institution.

Staff Listening Sessions Summary

Between January and April 2025, Teaching and Learning Technologies conducted four 30-minute listening sessions with staff representing 11 departments. These departments included Admissions, Accounting, Purchasing, University Advancement, Student Life, Human Resources, University Communications, Inclusive Excellence, Belk Library, Global Education Center, and Information Technology.

Each participant was polled to understand their **comfort level with AI usage at work**:

- 70% identified themselves as explorers of AI and were not afraid to experiment
- 20% identified themselves as advanced users but acknowledged room for growth
- 10% expressed being beginners who had only used it once or twice.

Staff are actively exploring AI across a variety of professional contexts:

- *Communication & Writing*: AI is widely used for drafting and refining emails, adjusting tone, and generating bullet points or summaries.
- *Instructional & Planning Support*: Staff use AI to build meeting agendas, create presentation outlines, and brainstorm workshop content.
- *Creative & Scenario-Based Thinking*: Some participants use AI to role-play scenarios, uncover blind spots, and generate ideas by assigning personas to the AI.
- *Administrative & Data Tasks*: AI is applied to document review, resume writing, and even compliance-related tasks like visa documentation.

Across all sessions, **staff voiced the following concerns about the ethical use of AI to complete tasks at work**:

- *Data Privacy & Security*: There's widespread caution about entering sensitive information into AI tools, especially student data and compliance-related content.
- *Bias & Accuracy*: Participants are wary of AI-generated content being inaccurate or biased, and emphasized the need for critical evaluation of outputs.
- *Ethical Impact*: Concerns were raised about the ethical implications of AI, especially in creative and academic contexts.
- *Environmental Impact*: Concerns were raised about AI's energy consumption.
- *Misuse & Overreliance*: Some worry about AI being misused or becoming a crutch, particularly in leadership or decision-making roles.

Staff expressed interest in receiving structured and accessible professional development opportunities to enhance their understanding and use of AI tools. When asked, "What type of training or support do you hope to see from TLT?", they named:

- *Prompt Crafting*: Participants want guidance on how to write effective prompts to get better results from AI tools.
- *Tool Familiarity*: Many expressed a desire for hands-on sessions, newsletters, and tip sheets to build confidence and fluency with AI platforms.

- *Ethical & Responsible Use:* Training on what data is appropriate to input, how to verify AI outputs, and how to use AI responsibly in sensitive contexts is a recurring need.
- *Student-Facing Guidelines:* There's interest in developing clear, equitable policies for student use of AI, including how to avoid plagiarism and ensure access.

Staff see a clear role for the university in shaping the AI landscape in the following ways:

- *Guidance:* There's a call for university-wide guidance on acceptable AI use, especially for students and staff handling sensitive data.
- *Equity & Access:* Ensuring all community members have access to AI tools and training is a priority.
- *Ongoing Engagement:* Many are already participating in pilots, lunch-and-learns, and professional development opportunities, and want to see these continue and expand.