

## University Senate



### University Senate President's Statement before the Board of Trustees

June 2nd, 2026, *as prepared*

I am pleased to have this opportunity to address the Board of Trustees.

We regularly hear about threats facing higher education, issues such as the demographic cliff, financial pressure, and the erosion of public trust. Today, I want to focus on an issue that I believe is already shaping nearly every aspect of higher education: the technological disruption of artificial intelligence and the challenges it brings to teaching, learning and assessment.

I find myself returning to this issue frequently because AI is already reshaping how students learn, how employees work, how knowledge is produced, and how institutions operate. There is an inherent tension between the way higher education has traditionally approached change—deliberately, thoughtfully, and through shared governance—and the pace at which AI technologies continue to evolve. The changes are extraordinary, yet institutions are still determining how to respond responsibly, and in ways that remain faithful to their educational mission.

In a recent issue of *Trusteeship* published by the Association of Governing Board of Universities and Colleges, Josem Diaz argues that successful AI integration requires coordinated policy development, faculty engagement, and clear governance framework rather than isolated experimentation. That observation resonates deeply with me because I do not believe any institution can navigate this moment effectively through fragmented or disconnected efforts.

At the same time, I want to emphasize that the University Senate stands ready to be a constructive and collaborative partner in this work. For example, the University Senate's Generative AI Committee has been examining a wide range of emerging questions related to AI. They have been working closely with the Committee for Just and Sustainable Practices, in addition to the AI Working group led by the Provost's office and OIT.

Indeed, when it comes to AI in teaching and learning, there are many issues to be considered and addressed.

Among the issues is the use of AI not simply as a learning-support tool, but as a means to automate the completion of academic work. In some cases, AI is being used to accelerate credential completion while minimizing engagement with course materials, learning activities, and the intellectual work that higher education is intended to cultivate.

This misuse of AI brings renewed attention to a longstanding challenge: students focusing on completion rather than learning. While this challenge predates wide availability of generative-AI, these tools create a major change of circumstances. Moreover, the issue is not whether students will use AI. They already do and will continue to do so. The larger challenge is to assure that our assessment methods, instructional practices, and curricular structures continue to support and measure meaningful learning, competency development, critical thinking, and disciplinary understanding in an environment where AI assistance is increasingly embedded into the everyday.

These concerns may be particularly significant in online learning environments, where much of the responsibility for authentic engagement rests with students themselves. When AI can summarize readings, answer questions, and generate assignments with minimal effort, institutions must carefully consider how to preserve authentic learning experiences and maintain confidence in the value of their educational offerings.

This feels urgent, yet institutions across the country are still learning how AI is reshaping student behavior, teaching practices, assessment, and expectations surrounding academic work. As evidence continues to emerge, there are unlikely to be simple or universal solutions. In the face of unknowns, a multi-prong approach may provide solutions more effectively, in addition— what works in one discipline, program, or instructional modality may not work in another. This is precisely why broad participation and shared governance are so important.

These conversations require faculty expertise, staff insight, administrative support of effective governance, and ongoing engagement across the institution. They also require trust. Faculty and staff need confidence that institutional decisions about AI will be developed transparently, collaboratively, and with a clear understanding of the educational mission of the university.

This moment presents significant challenges, but it also presents an opportunity. If approached thoughtfully, AI use can encourage us to reexamine what we value most in higher education: meaningful learning, human judgment, creativity, ethical reasoning, mentorship, and genuine intellectual engagement.

I believe our institution is capable of approaching this moment with both seriousness and care. But doing so will require coordinated governance, sustained collaboration, and a shared commitment to protecting the integrity of teaching and learning as this technology continues to evolve.

The challenge before us is not simply technological. It is a governance challenge, an educational challenge, and ultimately a mission-centered challenge. Addressing it successfully will require all parts of the institution working together.

Thank you for your attention and your commitment to the university. I look forward to continuing these conversations in the coming academic year, and I wish you all an enjoyable summer.