University Leadership Brief

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Supporting Evidence

Evidence Landscape

This analysis draws from 725 articles published in higher education contexts during November 18-24, 2025, representing approximately 47% of the 1,557 AI-related articles tracked that week. The evidence base reveals significant methodological diversity, ranging from large-scale surveys documenting workforce perspectives on AI adoption to mixed-methods studies examining student anxiety and accessibility concerns. Notably, [3] highlights systematic gaps between administrative AI enthusiasm and faculty skepticism, while [4] provides quantitative evidence of student psychological impacts previously documented only anecdotally.

[3] Data Shows AI "Disconnect" in Higher Ed Workforce

[4] Exploring the Impact of Gen-AI Usage on Academic Anxiety Among Vocational Education Students: A Mixed-Methods Study for Sustainable Education Using …

However, the evidence exhibits critical limitations. Most studies focus on immediate implementation challenges rather than longitudinal outcomes, making it impossible to assess whether current AI strategies achieve their stated educational goals. The research overwhelmingly examines traditional four-year institutions, leaving community colleges and vocational programs—which serve the majority of post-secondary students—largely unstudied. Furthermore, while technical capabilities receive extensive documentation, evidence on actual pedagogical effectiveness remains sparse and contradictory.

Stakeholder Perspective Gaps

The evidence architecture reveals a complete absence of documented perspectives from key stakeholder groups. Without representation from students with disabilities, part-time faculty, or support staff, institutional AI strategies risk perpetuating systemic inequities. [9] remains one of the few studies addressing accessibility, yet it focuses on technical solutions rather than lived experiences. This absence undermines both policy legitimacy and implementation feasibility—decisions made without input from those most affected typically face resistance, workarounds, or outright failure. The missing voices represent not

[9] The use of generative AI by students with disabilities in higher education

peripheral concerns but central operational realities of modern higher education.

Documented Failure Patterns

While the evidence base lacks systematic failure documentation, emerging research reveals concerning patterns. [5] documents how AI-powered accessibility tools can create new barriers while claiming to remove them—a pattern likely replicated in educational contexts. [6] demonstrates the fundamental unreliability of AI detection systems many institutions now deploy for academic integrity, raising questions about false accusations and their disproportionate impact on non-native English speakers.

[5] FTC Catches up to #accessiBe — Adrian Roselli

[6] Navigating the Shadows: Unveiling Effective Disturbances for Modern AI Content Detectors

The absence of comprehensive failure tracking itself represents an institutional blind spot. Without systematic documentation of what goes wrong—from biased grading algorithms to inaccessible interfaces—leadership operates without crucial risk management data. The few documented cases suggest implementation failures stem less from technical limitations than from inadequate consideration of institutional context and human factors.

Power and Framing Analysis

The dominant narrative frames AI as an inevitable force requiring institutional adaptation, obscuring the active choices being made about educational values and priorities. [1] explicitly challenges this framing, revealing how AI adoption can perpetuate colonial knowledge hierarchies. The "tool" metaphor pervading institutional discourse—evident in titles like [10]—obscures AI's role in reshaping educational relationships and redistributing agency. When AI systems fail, individual users bear responsibility; when they succeed, institutions claim innovation credit. This attribution pattern shields decision-makers from accountability while placing risk on faculty and students.

[1] Algorithmic Dependence and Digital Colonialism: A Conceptual Framework for Artificial Intelligence in Education and Knowledge Systems of the Global South

[10] Understanding generative artificial intelligence adoption in higher ...

Research Gaps Affecting Strategy

Leadership requires evidence the current research cannot provide. No studies adequately address ROI calculations for AI investments, leaving budget decisions to vendor promises rather than empirical validation. [8] raises sustainability concerns but lacks the lifecycle cost analyses administrators need. Questions about AI's impact on critical thinking development, creativity cultivation, and knowledge retention remain largely unexamined. Most critically, research has yet to establish whether AI-enhanced education produces better learning

[8] Sustainable AI-Driven Assessment in Higher Education

outcomes or merely more efficient content delivery—a distinction with profound implications for institutional mission.

Secondary Tensions

Beyond the primary efficiency-ethics divide, the evidence reveals unresolved tensions between standardization and differentiation, automation and human judgment, access and quality. [7] suggests gender-based adoption differences that standardized policies cannot address. [2] demonstrates how AI systems embed biases that conflict with diversity goals. These tensions resist simple trade-offs—institutions cannot simply choose efficiency over ethics or access over quality without fundamentally compromising their educational mission. The interplay between these competing values demands nuanced strategies the current evidence base cannot adequately inform.

[7] Research Finds Women Use Generative AI Less, Due to ...

[2] Automatic Classifiers Underdetect Emotions Expressed by Men

References

1. Algorithmic Dependence and Digital Colonialism: A Conceptual Framework for Artificial Intelligence in Education and Knowledge Systems of the Global South
2. Automatic Classifiers Underdetect Emotions Expressed by Men
3. Data Shows AI "Disconnect" in Higher Ed Workforce
4. Exploring the Impact of Gen-AI Usage on Academic Anxiety Among Vocational Education Students: A Mixed-Methods Study for Sustainable Education Using …
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