University Leadership Brief

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Executive Summary

Your AI policy decisions this term sit on a documented contradiction in the evidence base our analysis of 6135 sources surfaces: 90% of faculty report AI is weakening student learning [1], yet institutions are simultaneously accelerating enterprise procurement under vendor-authored adoption frameworks [3] that pre-define what "governance" means before your shared-governance bodies see a draft. The missing voices in this discourse — students, contingent faculty, and independent critics — are precisely the constituencies whose buy-in your accreditation cycle will eventually require.

[1] 90% Of Faculty Say AI Is Weakening Student Learning: How ... - Forbes
[3] AI adoption for Microsoft and Azure - Cloud Adoption Framework

The strategic challenge. The governance gap is not abstract: peer institutions are being told they can close it in 90 days [15] while the underlying assessment infrastructure they're buying — AI detectors — has produced active litigation [4] and millions in spend on tools documented as unreliable [8]. Meanwhile the value proposition you sell to incoming students is being undercut from the labor side: entry-level hiring — the bridge between your credential and a career — is the segment AI is hitting first [21]. Agentic browsers now sit inside the assessment perimeter most institutions have not yet defined [7].

[15] Here's How College Leaders Can Close The AI Governance Gap ... - Forbes
[4] AI Detection Lawsuits: Every Student Case, Outcome, and What the Data ...
[8] Colleges pay millions for AI detectors that are flawed - CalMatters
[21] The Real Job Destruction from AI Is Hitting Before Careers Can Start
[7] Colleges And Schools Must Block And Ban Agentic AI Browsers ... - Forbes

What this briefing provides. Policy framework options with implementation evidence, the documented failure patterns — detector litigation, faculty-confidence collapse, vendor-defined scope — your governance process must avoid, and the resource implications your cabinet needs before the next procurement cycle closes the decision for you.

Critical Tension

The Strategic Dilemma

The governance problem isn't that you lack a framework. Microsoft will sell you one — the [12] treats AI governance as a checklist of pol-

[12] Govern AI - Cloud Adoption Framework | Microsoft Learn

icy, security, and platform controls bolted onto existing cloud posture. The problem is that the framework's vendor has a structural interest in the answer to your strategic question, and the question itself is harder than the framework admits: are you adopting AI to optimize for efficiency and scalability, or to preserve and foster the deep cognitive processes that justify the credit-hour in the first place? Those two goals do not converge with more pilot money. They diverge.

The evidence pulls hard in both directions. Ninety percent of faculty in one survey report AI is weakening student learning [1], and NPR's coverage of K-12 risk assessments concludes risks outweigh benefits at the school level [19]. Simultaneously, the entry-level labor market your graduates enter is being hollowed out before careers begin [21], which makes refusing AI fluency a defensible-only-on-paper position. This is a hard dilemma, not a medium one. No additional dashboard resolves it, because the underlying disagreement is about what a degree is for.

[1] 90% Of Faculty Say AI Is Weakening Student Learning: How ... - Forbes

[19] Report: The risks of AI in schools outweigh the benefits : NPR

[21] The Real Job Destruction from AI Is Hitting Before Careers Can Start

Why Peer Institutions Aren't Helping

Peer scanning will mislead you. The 90-day governance playbook circulating in trade press [15] sits next to UCL Laws' more cautious work on assessment redesign [5] and ARL's findings that research libraries are still inventorying use cases rather than governing them [10]. The sector is not converging.

The visible failure pattern is AI detection. Institutions spent millions on detectors that don't work [8], then absorbed the legal exposure when students sued over false positives [4]. Copying a peer's detection policy in 2025 imported a Title IX-adjacent due-process liability that nobody's general counsel had priced in. The same shape is forming around agentic browsers, where the recommended posture has already flipped to "block and ban" [7] before most institutions have written a first policy. Borrowed policies carry borrowed failure modes.

[15] Here's How College Leaders Can Close The AI Governance Gap ... - Forbes

[5] Artificial Intelligence, Education and Assessment at UCL Laws: Current Thinking and Next Steps for the UK Legal Education Sector

[10] Findings from ARL's 2026 AI Quick Poll

[8] Colleges pay millions for AI detectors that are flawed - CalMatters

[4] AI Detection Lawsuits: Every Student Case, Outcome, and What the Data ...

[7] Colleges And Schools Must Block And Ban Agentic AI Browsers ... - Forbes

What Complicates Navigation

The evidence base under your decisions is structurally tilted. Across the corpus informing this briefing, students appear in 3.76% of the discourse, parents in 0.29%, external critics in 0.29%, and — notably — vendors in 0.29% of the visible discourse despite authoring the dominant frameworks. The asymmetry matters: Microsoft's strategy documents [9] and agent-governance guidance [14] shape institutional defaults far more than their 0.29% surface presence suggests,

[9] Create your AI strategy - Cloud Adoption Framework

[14] Governance and security for AI agents across the organization

because they are *infrastructural* rather than argumentative. The vendor doesn't need to win the debate; it needs to win the procurement.

What's missing from your decision inputs is the population the decision lands on. Incoming students arrive with AI fluency the institution didn't credential and didn't measure [24]. Parents — paying tuition — are nearly absent. Critics writing in venues like the AAUP [22] raise structural questions about academic labor that don't appear in vendor frameworks at all. The dominant institutional metaphor is "AI as tool" — neutral, electable, instructor-controlled — which is exactly the framing that lets governance be delegated to IT procurement. A more accurate framing, surfaced in work on algorithmic risk-and-retention systems [20], is AI as infrastructure: once integrated, it sets the conditions for advising, admissions, and academic-standing decisions in ways that are no longer electable by individual faculty. The tool framing obscures the infrastructure decision. That is the decision you are actually making.

[24] What incoming students actually know about AI

[22] What Does AI Do?

[20] Risk, Retention, and the Algorithmic Institution: Artificial Intelligence as a Policy Response to Higher Education in Crisis

Actionable Recommendations

Leadership Briefing — Where to Spend the Next Two Semesters of Political Capital

You are being sold a great deal of AI strategy this year. The framing in most vendor decks — "establish a comprehensive AI strategy" — is the framing to refuse first. Microsoft's own Cloud Adoption Framework, the most-cited playbook on provost desks right now, defines governance as a continuous risk-control loop tied to platform services your institution does not own [12]. That is not a neutral starting point. The recommendations below assume you have finite governance capacity, a faculty senate that will not be rushed, and a 2026 enrollment picture that does not forgive theatrical spending.

[12] Govern AI - Cloud Adoption Framework | Microsoft Learn

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1. Close the policy gap by binding it to procurement, not to a task force

The common institutional approach — convening a Presidential AI Task Force to produce a values-and-principles document — fails because it leaves the actual decisions to whoever signs the next enterprise license. Recent reporting estimates that the majority of US institutions still lack enforceable AI governance, even after eighteen months of working groups [15]. The hidden complexity: governance

[15] Here's How College Leaders Can Close The AI Governance Gap ... - Forbes

written at the values layer cannot constrain a contract already signed at the procurement layer. Vendor EULAs are doing your policy work.

Recommended alternative: route every AI-touching contract — LMS add-ons, tutoring agents, advising platforms, library discovery layers — through a single review with binding authority over renewal.

Implementation framework:

- Phase 1 (Month 1–2): inventory every contract with an AI feature flag, including features added by silent update since signing. ARL's 2026 poll shows research libraries are already tracking this drift in their own vendor stack [10].
- Phase 2 (Month 3–4): designate a procurement-governance committee with CIO, general counsel, faculty senate chair, and a student representative. Give it veto over renewal, not advisory voice.
- Phase 3 (semester end): publish the contract register internally. Sunlight is the enforcement mechanism.

[10] Findings from ARL's 2026 AI Quick Poll

Required resources: 0.5 FTE for inventory work, existing counsel time, faculty senate release time. No new platform spend. Success metrics: percentage of AI-touching contracts reviewed before renewal; number of features disabled at contract level; reduction in shadow-IT AI tools reported by IT. Risk mitigation: watch for the CIO office quietly reclassifying "AI features" as "platform updates" to evade review.

This is the move because the governance you outsource to vendor EULAs is the governance you do not have. [16] describes the same structural dynamic in a different domain: concentrated ownership shapes the editorial space inside which "choices" then happen.

[16] Manufacturing Consent

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2. Stop paying for AI detection. Pay for assessment redesign.

The obvious approach — license a detection tool, instruct faculty to use it, treat positive hits as actionable — has now produced a measurable trail of lawsuits and reversed sanctions, with detectors shown to misfire on multilingual writers and neurodivergent students [4]. California public institutions alone have spent millions on tools whose accuracy claims do not survive audit [8]. The hidden complexity: detection turns every grading decision into a Title IX-adjacent due-process exposure, with the institution carrying the burden.

[4] AI Detection Lawsuits: Every Student Case, Outcome, and What the Data ...
[8] Colleges pay millions for AI detectors that are flawed - CalMatters

Recommended alternative: redirect the detection-tool budget into faculty stipends for assessment redesign, focused on in-process, oral, and artifact-based evidence of learning [6], [17]. UCL Laws has published one of the more concrete frameworks for redesigned legal-education assessment that does not pretend AI doesn't exist [5].

Implementation framework:

- Phase 1 (Month 1–2): cancel or non-renew detection contracts; communicate the rationale to faculty senate to preempt the "the administration went soft on cheating" reading.
- Phase 2 (Month 3–4): fund 30–50 course redesigns at $2,000–$4,000 stipends, prioritizing high-enrollment gateway courses where the detection-arms-race was hottest.
- Phase 3 (semester end): require redesigned courses to publish assessment maps to the curriculum committee.

Required resources: roughly equivalent to one mid-tier detection-suite license — $80K–$200K depending on institutional size. Success metrics: number of redesigned courses; reduction in academic-integrity cases referred to formal hearing; faculty survey on confidence in grading judgment. Risk mitigation: faculty union concerns about workload — make the stipend real, not symbolic, and count the redesign toward tenure/promotion service.

This addresses the contradiction that 90% of faculty report AI is weakening student learning [1] — the weakening is not principally about cheating; it is about assessments that were already proxy measures and are now hollow.

[6] Beyond Detection: Redesigning Authentic Assessment in an AI ... - MDPI

[17] PDF Authentic Assessment in the Age of AI - marcbowles.com

[5] Artificial Intelligence, Education and Assessment at UCL Laws: Current Thinking and Next Steps for the UK Legal Education Sector

[1] 90% Of Faculty Say AI Is Weakening Student Learning: How ... - Forbes

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3. Treat agentic browsers as a network-security event, not a pedagogy debate

The obvious approach — letting individual instructors decide whether to permit agentic AI browsers in their courses — fails because these tools execute actions inside authenticated sessions on your LMS, your SIS, your library proxy. The decision is not pedagogical; it is a session-hijack risk that current acceptable-use policies do not name [7].

Recommended alternative: have the CISO classify agentic browsers under existing remote-access policy and route the decision through information-security governance, not academic policy. Then communicate the decision to faculty rather than asking them to ratify it.

[7] Colleges And Schools Must Block And Ban Agentic AI Browsers ... - Forbes

Implementation framework:

- Phase 1 (Month 1): CISO assessment of agentic-browser categories against existing data-classification policy.
- Phase 2 (Month 2–3): network-level controls plus an exception process for documented research use, routed through IRB-adjacent review where student data is in scope.
- Phase 3 (ongoing): quarterly review as the agent-tool category mutates.

Required resources: existing CISO and IT-security staffing; minimal new spend. Success metrics: logged session anomalies in LMS/SIS; number of documented exceptions and their justifications. Risk mitigation: this will be read by some faculty as IT overreach into pedagogy. Get ahead of that by separating "tools students may use to learn" (faculty decision) from "tools that may operate authenticated sessions on institutional systems" (security decision).

The Microsoft governance documentation for agentic systems, even read skeptically, names the same boundary [14].

[14] Governance and security for AI agents across the organization

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4. Reposition career services before the entry-level pipeline closes

The obvious approach — adding an "AI skills" workshop series to existing career services — fails because the labor-market change is not a skills gap. Yale SOM's tracking of recent-graduate hiring shows the entry-level rungs themselves are being removed, with AI absorbing the work that used to train the next cohort [21]. A workshop does not reverse this.

[21] The Real Job Destruction from AI Is Hitting Before Careers Can Start

Recommended alternative: fund cooperative-education and applied-research placements at scale, particularly in fields where the entry-level analyst job is collapsing fastest. The institutional differentiation is supervised work experience, because that is what employers can no longer cheaply produce internally.

Implementation framework:

- Phase 1 (Month 1–2): map programs where 12-month post-graduation employment has slipped 5+ points since 2024.
- Phase 2 (semester): redirect career-services budget from workshops to employer-relationship FTE and stipend support for un-

paid/underpaid placements (an equity move; without stipends, only wealthy students take the placements).

- Phase 3 (annual): tie program review to placement structure, not placement rate alone.

Required resources: 2–4 FTE redirect within career services; stipend pool sized to program scale. Success metrics: number of credit-bearing placements; placement persistence at 12 and 24 months; equity gap in placement access. Risk mitigation: institutions facing the retention-and-revenue squeeze documented in recent CPP work [20] will be tempted to substitute an algorithmic advising tool for this human-intensive work. The algorithmic tool is cheaper and will not move the placement number.

[20] Risk, Retention, and the Algorithmic Institution: Artificial Intelligence as a Policy Response to Higher Education in Crisis

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5. Build faculty AI literacy as a measured construct, not a compliance module

The obvious approach — a mandatory online module with a completion certificate — fails because it produces compliance, not capacity, and faculty already see through it. Incoming students arrive with uneven, often confidently wrong models of what these systems do [24]; faculty arrive with the same problem and a defensive posture.

[24] What incoming students actually know about AI

Recommended alternative: adopt a validated self-efficacy instrument such as T-GASE [2] to baseline faculty AI literacy at the department level, then fund targeted CTL programming against the measured gaps. Pair with disciplinary communities of practice rather than centralized workshops.

[2] A theory-driven scale for assessing text-based generative AI literacy from a self-efficacy perspective (T-GASE)

Implementation framework:

- Phase 1 (Month 1–2): IRB-light baseline survey using the validated scale.
- Phase 2 (Month 3–6): department-level programming designed against the result, with the CTL as convener not curriculum-owner.
- Phase 3 (annual): re-measure; report at the department level only, never the individual.

Required resources: CTL programming budget; one survey administration cycle. Success metrics: shift in measured self-efficacy at department level; uptake of redesigned-assessment stipends (recommendation 2) as a downstream indicator. Risk mitigation: do not let

HR convert this into a performance instrument. The moment the data is individually identifiable to deans, faculty stop answering honestly and the measurement is dead.

Supporting Evidence

Evidence Landscape

This week's category pull surfaced 2,224 higher-education-relevant items from a base of 6135 articles. The strongest signal clusters are in three places: assessment integrity and the detection-tool economy; governance frameworks (predominantly vendor-authored); and a thickening empirical literature on student and faculty AI use. The evidence quality is uneven. Peer-reviewed work on assessment redesign is now substantive — see the MDPI piece on rebuilding authentic assessment around process rather than artifact [6] and the UCL Laws working paper on the UK legal-education sector [5]. The governance literature, by contrast, is dominated by vendor documentation — Microsoft's Cloud Adoption Framework alone supplies six of the most-cited governance artifacts this week [12], [9], [14].

[6] Beyond Detection: Redesigning Authentic Assessment in an AI ...
[5] Artificial Intelligence, Education and Assessment at UCL Laws

[12] Govern AI - Cloud Adoption Framework
[9] Create your AI strategy
[14] Governance and security for AI agents across the organization

What this evidence can tell leadership: where harm has materialized, where vendor framings are being adopted as policy defaults, and what assessment redesign looks like at the course level. What it cannot tell you: institutional ROI on enterprise AI licenses, longitudinal effects on degree-holder labor outcomes, or whether your accreditor will treat AI-mediated coursework differently in the next cycle.

Stakeholder Perspective Gaps

The contradiction-mapping and missing-perspectives passes returned no formally coded gaps this week, which is itself a finding: the literature is overwhelmingly written *about* students, faculty, and contingent staff rather than *by* them. Advance HE's survey of incoming students [24] is one of the few sources where student-reported practice — rather than faculty assumptions about it — drives the analysis. Adjunct and graduate-instructor voices are nearly absent from the governance literature, even though they teach the courses where detection tools and AI policies are operationally enforced. Policy built without them tends to fail at the seam between syllabus statement and grading practice.

[24] What incoming students actually know about AI

Documented Failure Patterns

Three failure categories are now well-documented enough to count as risk-management baselines, not anecdotes. First, detection-tool failure: CalMatters' reporting documents institutions spending millions on AI detectors with substantial false-positive rates [8], and a growing case docket of student lawsuits has followed [4]. Second, pedagogical failure: Forbes' reporting on a faculty survey finds 90% of respondents believe AI is weakening student learning [1], and an NPR-covered K-12 report — relevant as a feeder-system signal — concludes risks outweigh benefits at the school level [19]. Third, labor-market failure for new graduates: Yale SOM's analysis finds the entry-level destruction is hitting before careers begin [21] — a direct enrollment-value-proposition problem.

[8] Colleges pay millions for AI detectors that are flawed

[4] AI Detection Lawsuits: Every Student Case, Outcome, and What the Data ...

[1] 90% Of Faculty Say AI Is Weakening Student Learning

[19] Report: The risks of AI in schools outweigh the benefits

[21] The Real Job Destruction from AI Is Hitting Before Careers Can Start

These are not failures of adoption pace. They are failures of the standard adoption playbook: license a tool, write a policy, buy a detector.

Power and Framing Analysis

The governance vocabulary your strategy committee is about to use was largely written by the firms selling the underlying infrastructure. When Microsoft's framework defines "AI governance" as a configuration problem on its own PaaS layer [13], the institutional question of *whether* to adopt is quietly converted into a question of *how* to configure. Forbes' 90-day governance-gap piece accepts this framing wholesale [15]. The dominant "tool" metaphor obscures that these are infrastructural dependencies with version cycles measured in weeks against curriculum cycles measured in years — the temporal mismatch [16] makes legible. Credit for AI-enabled gains flows to vendors and central IT; blame for integrity erosion flows to faculty and students.

[13] Govern Azure platform services (PaaS) for AI

[15] Here's How College Leaders Can Close The AI Governance Gap

[16] Future Shock

Research Gaps Affecting Strategy

Leadership needs evidence that does not yet exist: comparative cost-per-FTE data across enterprise AI licensing models, accreditor-validated assessment designs that survive AI-assisted completion, and retention effects of algorithmic advising at institutions outside the early-adopter set — the open question behind [20]. Microsoft's own AI Diffusion Report flags a widening adoption divide that maps onto institutional resource gradients [11], but no source connects that divide to graduation or transfer outcomes.

[20] Risk, Retention, and the Algorithmic Institution

[11] Global AI Adoption in 2025 - A Widening Digital Divide

Secondary Tensions

Beyond the headline integrity-versus-access tension, three quieter conflicts will shape strategy choices: literacy investment (instruments like the T-GASE scale [2]) versus detection spend; agentic-browser bans [7] versus accessibility commitments to AI-mediated personalization [18]; and library-led literacy infrastructure [10] versus IT-led tool deployment. These are not problems to optimize. They are value choices the budget will make for you if you do not make them deliberately.

[2] A theory-driven scale for assessing text-based generative AI literacy
[7] Colleges And Schools Must Block And Ban Agentic AI Browsers
[18] Personnaliser l'apprentissage pour les étudiants handicapés
[10] Findings from ARL's 2026 AI Quick Poll

References

1. 90% Of Faculty Say AI Is Weakening Student Learning: How ... - Forbes
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