Exploring the Future of AI at Liberal Arts Colleges

May 9, 2025

Bowdoin College

Program

Registration Begins at 8:15 *in Studzinski Recital Hall*

Poster and Pastries *open at 8:30 AM*

Part I: Welcome, Keynote Speaker & Panel Discussion

9:00 AM

Studzinski Recital Hall, Bowdoin College

Welcome Sherri Castanzo, Deputy CIO for Digital Innovation at Bowdoin College

Remarks Michael Cato, CIO, Bowdoin College

Keynote Presentation Stacy A. Doore, Clare Boothe Luce Assistant Professor of Computer Science, Colby College

"Responsible AI: Research, Teaching, and Innovation in Emerging Technologies"

Panel Discussion with The American Association of Colleges and Universities Institute for AI, Pedagogy and the Curriculum Team Members from Bates and Bowdoin Colleges

Facilitator: Sherri Castanzo, Bowdoin College

Lindsey Hamilton, Director of Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning, Bates College; Dale Syphers, Professor of Physics, Bowdoin College; Beth Hoppe, Research, Instruction, & Student Engagement Librarian, Bowdoin College; John Paul Kanwit, Associate Director of the Baldwin Center for Learning and Teaching, Bowdoin College

Looking Ahead: The Hastings Initiative for AI and Humanity

Eric Chown, Sarah & James Bowdoin Professor of Digital and Computational Studies, Bowdoin College

Posters and Pastries

Poster 1: Partnering to Understand Student GenAI Usage over Time at Bowdoin

Presenter: Christina Finneran (Senior Vice President for Institutional Research, Analytics and Consulting, Bowdoin College)

Co-Presenters: Chloe Qian (Research Analyst, Bowdoin College)
Sam Burke, (Associate Director of Assessment, Bowdoin College)
Format: Poster Presentation

Description:
Bowdoin College's Office of Institutional Research, Analytics and Consulting (IRAC) provides assessment to support the Committee on Teaching and Classroom Practice (CoTCP)'s work to both encourage faculty to be clear with students on the permitted use of Generative AI in their courses and to foster innovative ways to use GenAI that will enhance critical thinking skills. Through different types of surveys and questions (closed-ended and open-ended), IRAC has been measuring Bowdoin students' adoption of GenAI and their understanding of course expectations regarding GenAI.

In this poster, IRAC will present survey results regarding students' GenAI experiences since Fall 2023. The results show students' increased understanding of their course expectations about using GenAI, likely attributable to CoTCP's work encouraging faculty to address these expectations in their syllabi. In addition to close-ended numeric results, the ideas elicited from students about how faculty might use GenAI in their courses, both to improve teaching and to engage students, will be shared. These data have been collected primarily through Bowdoin's Polar Bear Feedback Team (PBFT), a panel of about 100 students who are randomly chosen and representative across class years and demographic groups. With the PBFT, Bowdoin has a convenient way to measure students' reported behaviors and opinions over time.

Learning Outcomes:

Poster visitors will learn how partnering with Institutional Research offices and integrating questions into existing surveys and assessments has potential to increase the understanding of AI on campus, and how students are important partners in thinking about innovative ways to use GenAI in liberal arts college courses.

Poster 2: Spotting Spot in Public Spaces: How Use Case Affects Bystander Perception in Robot Encounters

Presenter: Alexandra Gillespie (Student, Colby College)
Format: Poster Presentation

Description:
Robots are everywhere, from food delivery to classrooms. As they enter public spaces in greater volumes, researchers need to consider how people feel about the robots all around them. An important first step in this process is identifying how the use case of a robot affects the perception of people in that robot's immediate vicinity. We collected 125 survey responses from people in public places with Boston Dynamics' Spot robot being physically present. Results indicated a significant difference in how the robot was perceived depending on the use case we indicated (Blind/Low Vision Navigation Aid, Law Enforcement Aid, or nondescript), positioning future work on how signaling use case could help increase the public's comfort level around the robot. We also collected Focus Group feedback on how knowing how researchers use Spot affects their perspective on the robot, focusing specifically on the feeling of safety. Since our findings suggest that how researchers use the robot effects the general public's attitude towards that robot, researchers should consider how they can indicate their area work and think critically about what areas they should research, taking into consideration the comfort levels of their own community.

Learning Outcomes:
The research on a technology's impact on local communities is just as important as the research into a technology itself. Researching one cannot exist without the other and understanding how people respond to embodied AI agents will allow researchers to continue ethical and respectful work.

Poster 3: AI and the Common Good: Creating a Short Course for Students to Explore Ethics, Impact, and Responsible Use

Presenter: Beth Hoppe (Social Sciences Research & Instruction Librarian, Bowdoin College)

Co-Presenter: Juli Haugen (Digital Accessibility Consultant, Bowdoin College)
Format: Poster Presentation

Description:
Our poster provides an inside look at the creation of a short course for students called "Using Generative AI Responsibly at Bowdoin and Beyond" The module invites students to critically evaluate the ethical impacts of Generative AI tools on society, education, and individuals.

Learning Outcomes:

Participants will:

1. Gain insight into how the "Using Generative AI Responsibly" module was conceptualized, structured, and how and who we received feedback from.

2. Reflect on how Generative AI tools impact society and individuals, and the connection to societal values and the Common Good.

Part II: Breakout Sessions

Mills Hall, Bowdoin College

Session 1: Expanding Digital Archives with Multimodal LLMs – 10:15 AM – 11:00 AM, Mills 103

Presenter: Michael Yankoski (Colby College)
Co-Presenter: Matt LeVan (Digital Archives Librarian, Colby College)
Format: Oral Presentation/Breakout Session (45 minutes)

Description:
Colby Libraries–in partnership with the Davis Institute for Artificial Intelligence–has developed a novel pipeline to utilize multimodal LLMs to process Colby Digital Archives and expand the searchability of archival resources for student and faculty researchers. This includes photo annotation, transcription, and topic / keyword extraction. This workshop will demonstrate the power of our novel data processing pipeline, will explore questions regarding how Colby has ensured that the use of AI does not harm student employment opportunities, and will provide a space for others to learn about the unique partnership between Colby Libraries and the Davis Institute of Artificial Intelligence.

Learning Outcomes:

Participants will:
1. Gain increased knowledge about how Multimodal LLMs can be used to expand Digital Archives availability for both student and faculty researchers.
2. Gain increased understanding of how to create and integrate a novel AI powered data processing pipeline into existing Digital Archives infrastructure.
3. Engage in discussion about how to balance student employment, technological evolution, and increased research data availability.
4. Gain increased awareness about differences between and importance of terms and conditions from LLM inference providers.

Session 2: Generative AI for Career Exploration and Discovery - 10:15 AM – 11:00 AM, Mills 127

Presenter: David Ding (DavisConnects STEM Advisor, Colby College)
Format: Oral Presentation/Breakout Session (45 minutes)

Description:
In the career advising space, advisors and faculty often hear that students are using Chat GPT and generative AI for resumes, applying to opportunities, and more. While concerns of AI use in this area can range from AI hallucinations to misleading students, generative AI can still be a useful tool to jump-start a student's career exploration. In this session, we will look at one model of career exploration to highlight a few ways in which generative AI can provide helpful analysis and insight for the initial career exploration process with the guidance of an advisor.

Learning Outcomes:

1. See one framework of Career Exploration with AI
2. See several modules of using AI for career discovery
3. Sample ChatGPT prompts for generating career exploration insight
4. Postulate other uses of AI for Career Exploration

Session 3: German-Language Creativity with Artificial Intelligence: Theories and Practices in the Intermediate Second-Language Classroom - 10:15 AM – 11:00 AM, Mills 105

Presenter: Rebecca Jordan (Visiting Assistant Professor of German, Bowdoin College)
Format: Oral Presentation/Breakout Session (45 minutes)

Description:
I will be presenting my paper titled "German-Language Creativity with Artificial Intelligence: Theories and Practices in the Intermediate Second-Language Classroom." Using my Fall 2024 intermediate German class at Bowdoin as an example, I will argue that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools can be utilized by Humanities students for creative projects that also requires their critical thinking skills and input. This paper is a reaction to the research that I have found that suggests AI hinders student creativity. I will offer project examples that instructors may find helpful if they wish to integrate AI tools in their classes.

Learning Outcomes:
Develop background information of various AI platforms, learn how to utilize AI tools in the Second Language classroom for creative projects, understand limitations of AI tools in language learning

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Session 4: AI-Supported Translations across the Liberal Arts: A Critical Inquiry into Opportunities, Limitations, and Pedagogical Applications (Part I) - 11:15 AM – 12:00 PM, Mills 127

Presenter: Joyce Bennett (Associate Professor of Anthropology, Bates College)
Co-Presenters: Hanna McGaughey (Japanese Language and Asian Studies, Bates College), Anelise Shrout (Digital and Computational Studies, Bates College)
Format: Oral Presentation/Breakout Session (45 minutes)

Description:
This panel addresses the use of AI for translation work in the context of liberal arts colleges. With colleagues from the languages, humanistic social sciences, and digital and computational studies, the panel lays the groundwork for understanding how AI translators work, potential uses within liberal arts curriculum, and case studies exploring the results of implementing AI in our classrooms.

Learning Outcomes:
From this panel, attendees will understand the basics of how AI translation software operates, question what AI translation software is and is not capable of and compare how faculty employ AI translators in the classroom across disciplines.

Session 5: Finding AI's Place in Working Towards More Accessible Technology - 11:15 AM – 12:00 PM, Mills 129

Presenter: Juli Haugen (Digital Accessibility Consultant, Bowdoin College)

Co-Presenter: Jason Moreau (Associate Director of Systems Development & Integration, Bates College)
Format: Oral Presentation/Breakout Session (45 minutes)

Description:
A showcase of ways AI can be used as a way to remove barriers to accessibility. In this session we will explore creative uses of AI from our specific professional lenses of software development and purchasing and digital accessibility in course materials.

Learning Outcomes:
Have a framework and tools to apply to accessibility challenges and barriers
Identify ways in which AI can be used to demonstrate efficiencies in work
Identify pitfalls or imperfections in using AI to increase accessible content

Session 6: Approaching AI in Film and Media Studies - 11:15 AM – 12:00 PM, Mills 105

Presenter: Tanya Goldman (Visiting Assistant Professor of Cinema Studies, Bowdoin College)
Format: Oral Presentation/Breakout Session (45 minutes)

Description:
This presentation will discuss how film and media scholars approach AI. It will pursue this from two angles: (1) how documentary scholars and the documentary industry have approached the often controversial use of the AI in recent films (i.e., how it complicates notion of indexicality and "truth") and (2) how film and media studies teachers are redesigning assignments to promote critical thinking in an age where students are tempted to use AI to complete basic assignments.

Learning Outcomes:
Upon completion of the presentation, attendees will
- be familiar with how AI has transformed film and media studies pedagogy and the documentary industry
- think more critically about redesigning assignments to counteract temptation among students to use AI

Session 7: AI-Supported Translations across the Liberal Arts: A Critical Inquiry into Opportunities, Limitations, and Pedagogical Applications (Part II) - 12:15 PM – 1:00 PM, Mills 127

Presenter: Joyce Bennett (Associate Professor of Anthropology, Bates College)
Co-Presenters: Chris Agbonkhese (Digital and Computational Studies, Bates College), Reed Johnson (Russian, Eastern European, and Eurasian Studies, Bowdoin College)
Rebecca Jordan (German, Bowdoin College)
Format: Oral Presentation/Breakout Session (45 minutes)

Description:
This panel addresses the use of AI for translation work in the context of liberal arts colleges. With colleagues from the languages, humanistic social sciences, and digital and computational studies, the panel lays the groundwork for understanding how AI translators work, potential uses within liberal arts curriculum, and case studies exploring the results of implementing AI in our classrooms.

Learning Outcomes:
From this panel, attendees will understand the basics of how AI translation software operates, question what AI translation software is and is not capable of and compare how faculty employ AI translators in the classroom across disciplines.

Session 8: AI vs. In Person Tutoring: Implications for the Writers and Writing Support – 12:15 PM – 1:00 PM, Mills 103

Presenter: Ghada Gherwash (Assistant Professor of Writing and Director, Farnham Writers' Center, Colby College)

Co-Presenter: Said Castro- Solano (Tutor, Farnham Writers' Center
Format: Oral Presentation/Breakout Session (45 minutes)

Description:
This study compares AI-simulated and traditional tutoring with a multilingual writer, revealing differences in feedback style, writer agency, and error identification. AI feedback is writing-focused and may encourage passivity, while in-person tutoring is writer-focused and gradual. Findings highlight AI's impact on writing, expression, and overall student learning.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Consider the broader implications of AI feedback on writing development and student learning.
2. Assess how different tutoring approaches impact multilingual writers' agency and engagement

Session 9: The Consciousness Threshold: Opportunities and Challenges in the Evolution of AI - 12:15 PM – 1:00 PM, Mills 129 (Overflow room, Mills 105)

Presenter: Nadia Celis (Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies, Bowdoin College)

Co-Presenter: Fernando Nascimento (Assistant Professor of Digital and Computational Studies, Bowdoin College)
Format: Oral Presentation/Breakout Session (45 minutes)

Description:
Artificial intelligence (AI) and consciousness are at the forefront of contemporary debates, intertwining technological advancements with profound philosophical inquiries. The prospect of AI systems developing consciousness presents both significant opportunities and ethical challenges. Consciousness, often described as the state of being aware of and able to think about one's own existence, thoughts, and surroundings, remains a complex and debated concept. In the realm of AI, consciousness refers to the hypothetical ability of machines to possess subjective experiences or self-awareness. Developing artificial consciousness would require AI systems to emulate certain characteristics of human cognition, including self-referential processing,

emotional understanding, and autonomous learning.
This session will explore the potential for integration of the liberal arts ethos into AI development. Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences provide essential insights into the implications of artificial consciousness, that may guide the creation of AI that supports a sustainable future for humanity and Earth. Skills cultivated through a liberal arts education—critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and empathy—are also indispensable to develop AI systems that are not only intelligent but also aligned with humanistic values. Can liberal arts institutions contribute to the responsible development of AI? How can they help anticipate and mitigate potential risks associated with artificial consciousness?

Learning Outcomes:

This session will welcome conversation on questions such as:
What ethical considerations arise if AI systems develop consciousness?
How would conscious AI systems alter human relationships with technology?
What impact might this have on social structures and individual behavior?
How can the development of conscious AI be aligned with environmental sustainability and the well-being of future generations? In what ways can liberal arts institutions contribute to the responsible development of AI consciousness and its effects?

Thank *you* for attending!

WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY AT BOWDOIN

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