

Report on the Sac State AI Steering Committee

Summary of Work, Outcomes, and Recommended Next Phase

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Period covered	Initial committee design in Fall 2025 through Spring 2026
Purpose	Document the work accomplished, clarify what the committee produced, and recommend a practical next phase for responsible AI adoption at Sacramento State

Executive Summary

The Sac State AI Steering Committee was established to create a university-wide forum for responsible, coordinated, and equity-minded use of artificial intelligence across teaching, learning, student services, research, and operations. A key outcome was the development and refinement of the committee's charge, which clarified scope, governance boundaries, and institutional priorities while establishing a foundation for campus-wide engagement.

The committee confirmed that its appropriate role is advisory and coordinating—not policy-making or execution. Policy authority resides with existing governance bodies, and effective implementation requires clear ownership, defined decision rights, and alignment with operational units. Early misalignment with the Academic Senate underscored the importance of establishing governance roles upfront.

The work highlighted a central tradeoff: broad participation builds awareness but limits execution. Open membership improved representation but did not consistently align with decision-making authority or strategic priorities. Future efforts should align participation with defined outcomes and accountability.

The committee identified immediate, high-demand needs from faculty—particularly guidance on generative AI syllabus statements and training. Meeting this demand will require dedicated ownership and resourcing rather than committee-based development.

Significant operational gaps were also identified. Fragmented and inconsistent AI guidance across campus creates confusion and erodes trust, indicating the need for a coordinated, policy-aligned communication model. In addition, the absence of clear processes for evaluating and adopting AI tools slows progress and introduces risk. Defined intake, review, and approval pathways are essential.

System-level insights from the CSU AI survey confirmed that AI use is already widespread among students, faculty, and staff, while concerns are increasing. These now extend beyond academic integrity to include workforce impacts, implications for higher education, environmental effects of AI infrastructure, and escalating privacy and ethical risks. This reinforces the need for ongoing monitoring and proactive institutional response.

The committee also identified strong interest in faculty-led showcases to demonstrate applied use cases. While not executed, these represent a high-impact opportunity to accelerate peer-driven adoption. CSU AI Commons resources further provide a foundation to avoid duplicative effort and move more quickly.

Overall, the committee's work demonstrates that a large representative body is effective for alignment and insight generation but not for execution.

Bottom line: The AI Steering Committee delivered critical foundational insights on governance, demand, and risk. The next phase should be leadership-directed: campus leadership should define clear, achievable goals, establish a focused charge aligned with governance structures, and provide the resources required for execution. Success will depend on aligning authority, accountability, and resourcing from the outset.

1. Background and Original Intent

The committee was designed to respond to a fast-moving institutional challenge: generative AI was already reshaping classroom practice, academic integrity, student expectations, information work, and administrative workflows. Sacramento State needed a way to avoid fragmented activity across colleges and divisions while also respecting shared governance, labor obligations, privacy/security rules, and academic freedom.

The original design created a broad cross-campus group co-chaired by the Dean of the College of Business and the Vice President/CIO. Membership included representatives from Academic Affairs, IRT, the Center for Teaching and Learning, the University Library, Student Affairs, Engineering and Computer Science, Health and Human Services, Arts and Letters, ASI, the College of Business, the College of Education, Inclusive Excellence, the Academic Senate, and Advancement. The early drafts also identified additional units to consult as needed, including Information Security, Institutional Research, the Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions, Human Resources and Labor Relations, Procurement and Accessibility, University Counsel, Marketing and Communications, and Research and Economic Development.

The working aspiration was to position Sac State as a leader in inclusive digital learning and AI-enabled education while preserving human judgment, advancing equity, and keeping the institution aligned with CSU guidance and campus values. That aspiration remains sound, but the implementation structure needs to be more focused than the original committee model.

2. Evolution of the Charge

The charge developed through multiple drafts. The earliest versions were comprehensive and ambitious. They asked the committee to articulate a five-year AI vision, complete a campuswide AI assessment, coordinate AI web resources and training, support two to three pilot projects, and support campus AI policy development. Those drafts also identified potential training pathways for students, faculty, staff, and managers and proposed pilot areas such as the College of Business graduate admissions chatbot, a student AI front door for One-Stop services, faculty teaching copilots in high-enrollment courses, administrative paperwork relief, and an advisor/staff knowledge copilot.

Later versions expanded the strategic lens to include measurable outcomes, annual assessment, Academic Affairs priorities, tool inventory and review, privacy/security/compliance, and alignment with CSU AI Commons. These versions helped frame AI adoption around measurable outcomes rather than novelty: student success, faculty effectiveness, administrative efficiency, equity, accessibility, and responsible experimentation.

The final proposed revised charge narrowed the committee's role. It defined the committee as a university-wide advisory and convening body focused on communication, coordination, and strategic sensemaking. It explicitly clarified that the committee would not replace the Academic Senate, CFA, HR, staff unions, or other formal governance and labor processes. This revision was important because it brought the committee's scope into better alignment with what a broad advisory group can realistically and appropriately do.

3. Summary of Accomplishments

A. Created a cross-campus AI leadership network

- Established an inclusive stakeholder map across Academic Affairs, IRT, CTL, Library, Student Affairs, colleges, ASI, Senate, Inclusive Excellence, and Advancement.
- Identified key units that must be consulted for AI implementation, including Information Security, Institutional Research, Admissions, HR/Labor, Procurement/Accessibility, University Counsel, and Marketing/Communications.

- Created a forum for surfacing campus opportunities, concerns, duplications, and governance questions related to AI.

B. Developed an initial institutional vision and strategy framework

- Articulated a working vision for Sac State as a campus that advances inclusive digital learning and AI-enabled education in ways that augment human potential and preserve institutional values.
- Connected AI work to teaching, learning, research, student support, operations, equity, accessibility, and workforce readiness.
- Aligned the AI agenda with Academic Affairs strategic priorities, including faculty-led digital pedagogy innovation, AI-enhanced learning and teaching, digital literacy across disciplines, flexible course design, and the longer-term School of Innovation concept.

C. Clarified governance boundaries

- Established that the committee should be advisory and should not become a substitute for formal policy-making, shared governance, labor consultation, or technical approval processes.
- Clarified that academic AI policy should remain connected to the Academic Senate and appropriate faculty governance channels.
- Clarified that staff/MPP use guidelines, role impacts, and workflow changes require HR/Labor involvement and should not be handled informally by an ad hoc AI group.
- Clarified that tool adoption, privacy, security, accessibility, procurement, and IT prioritization must proceed through existing review structures.

D. Established guiding principles for responsible AI adoption

- Adopted a CSU-first approach: use CSU AI Commons and system guidance where possible rather than recreating materials independently.
- Emphasized evidence over hype: pilot quickly where appropriate, measure outcomes, and scale only when results justify it.
- Emphasized people-first and accessible-by-design implementation, including human review for decisions affecting students or employees.
- Emphasized academic freedom and transparent expectations rather than policing teaching through AI-detection tools.

E. Identified priority workstreams

- Campus AI resources: support an 'AI at Sac State' hub that catalogues AI initiatives, tools, training, guidance, and expertise.
- Training and literacy: coordinate rather than duplicate student, faculty, staff, and manager training resources, drawing from CSU AI Commons, CTL, Library, IRT, HR, Student Affairs, ASI, and colleges.
- Assessment: analyze existing CSU and campus survey results and consider targeted follow-up only if needed.
- Pilots: identify high-value, measurable pilots where the institution can learn before scaling.
- Policy support: provide research, benchmarking, and operational input to the bodies with formal policy authority.

F. Developed an initial pilot portfolio

- College of Business Graduate Programs Office admissions chatbot, using Gecko, to support prospective student questions and improve response capacity.
- Student AI front door concept for One-Stop services, potentially strengthening existing chatbot/knowledge-base infrastructure.

- Faculty teaching copilot concept for gateway or high-challenge courses, with assessment tied to student success measures.
- Administrative paperwork relief concept for summaries, first drafts, meeting notes, job postings, and similar high-volume writing tasks.
- Advisor/staff knowledge copilot concept using vetted policy documents, citations, logs, and human review.

G. Surfaced compliance, risk, and implementation requirements

- Identified privacy, security, accessibility, accuracy, and role-impact risks as core issues that must be managed before scale.
- Recognized the need to keep protected student, personnel, and institutional data out of public tools unless approved safeguards are in place.
- Recognized the importance of accessibility conformance review, approved sources, quality checks, and human-in-the-loop processes.
- Flagged the need to account for CSU policies, campus standards, IT project prioritization, and state requirements related to high-risk automated decision systems.

H. Generated a practical College of Business execution model

- The work led directly to a narrower COB AI Task Force model focused on what the College can influence or implement within existing constraints.
- The COB Task Force charge emphasizes AI readiness and pain-point assessment, faculty/staff enablement, and problem-centered pilots rather than abstract AI promotion.
- Parallel COB implementation has also moved forward through AI-related curriculum work, including the AI concentration, and through applied pilots tied to student service and administrative effectiveness.
- The College of Business is positioned to serve as a practical pilot lab for AI adoption, beginning with the Gecko graduate admissions use case and expanding only through well-scoped, measurable pilots.
- COB is also planning a Fall AI industry experts panel to connect students, faculty, and staff with practical external perspectives; the session should be recorded so it can become a reusable learning asset.

I. Advanced campus and system visibility

- The committee work and related COB initiatives have helped position Sac State as a campus thinking seriously about responsible AI implementation rather than merely reacting to AI disruption.
- A related Insights into Higher Ed AI piece was featured by the Chancellor's Office in its thought leadership news category, creating an opportunity to elevate Sac State's visibility in CSU and higher education conversations.
- The work created a foundation for future CSU-level sharing, including the possibility of contributing practical pilot lessons, templates, and training resources through CSU AI Commons or related system forums.

4. Work Products and Tangible Outputs

The committee and related implementation work produced or informed the following tangible outputs.

Work product	Status	Value created
Original AI Steering Committee charge	Completed draft	Defined initial vision, membership, cadence, workstreams, pilots, risks, and principles.
Revised AI Steering Committee	Multiple iterations completed	Clarified strategy, outcomes,

charges		privacy/security, tool review, and alignment with Academic Affairs strategic priorities.
Final proposed revised charge	Completed draft	Narrowed the committee to advisory/convening functions and clarified governance boundaries.
Campus AI stakeholder map	Developed through charge work	Identified the units needed for policy, training, security, accessibility, procurement, communications, and implementation.
Pilot portfolio	Defined conceptually	Provided candidate use cases to test AI before scaling.
COB AI Task Force charge	Completed proposed revised version	Created a practical adoption engine for the College of Business.
COB Gecko graduate admissions pilot	In implementation planning	Provides the first concrete test case for AI-enabled student/prospective-student service improvement.
COB Fall AI industry panel	In planning	Connects AI learning to industry practice and creates a recorded resource for later use.

5. Lessons Learned

A broad representative committee is useful for sensemaking, not execution. The committee helped reveal campus opportunities and concerns, but implementation requires smaller groups with authority, resources, and direct ownership of decisions.

Governance boundaries are essential. AI touches academic freedom, student data, privacy, accessibility, labor, procurement, technology, and compliance. A steering committee cannot and should not displace the bodies already responsible for those areas.

Campus AI adoption should be problem-centered. The most productive path is to start with specific student, faculty, staff, or operational pain points and then evaluate whether AI is an appropriate tool. Tool-first enthusiasm creates risk and diffusion.

Resource constraints matter. A committee without dedicated staffing, budget, project management capacity, or implementation authority will struggle to move from ideas to results.

Colleges and units are the right places for early pilots. Well-scoped pilots can move faster when owned by the units closest to the problem, provided they follow campus review processes and report back on outcomes.

6. Recommended Next Phase

We recommend that we not continue the AI Steering Committee in its original campuswide form. Instead, Sac State should preserve the value of the committee's work by transitioning to a lighter, more accountable implementation structure.

The recommended model is to assign AI-related responsibilities to the appropriate owners, while maintaining a modest coordination mechanism to avoid duplication and keep campus leadership informed.

Area	Recommended owner(s)	Recommended action
Academic policy and classroom guidance	Academic Senate, Academic Affairs, CTL	Continue faculty-led policy/guidance development; provide examples, benchmarking, and implementation support as requested.
Technology, security, privacy, and tool review	IRT/CIO, Information Security, Procurement/Accessibility, University Counsel	Use existing review and prioritization processes; document approved/evaluated tools and use cases.
Faculty development	CTL, Library, colleges	Curate practical resources and workshops; avoid duplicating CSU AI Commons materials.
Student AI literacy	Academic Affairs, Library, Student Affairs, ASI, colleges	Develop practical guidance for responsible use, research practices, academic integrity, and privacy.
Staff/manager workflow guidance	HR, IRT, divisional/unit leaders	Develop safe workflow examples and training tied to approved tools and labor-sensitive implementation.
Pilots and evidence-building	Colleges and operational units	Run 2-3 well-scoped pilots with owners, safeguards, metrics, and 90-day learning reports.
Campus coordination and visibility	Provost/CIO light-touch coordination	Maintain an AI resource hub and periodic check-ins rather than a standing large committee.

7. College of Business Next Steps

The College of Business will continue to move forward on AI adoption in areas it can influence directly. This approach aligns with the committee's strongest lessons: start with concrete problems, use approved review pathways, measure outcomes, and scale only when the evidence supports it.

- Launch the COB AI Task Force with a faculty chair and staff/operations co-chair.
- Complete a Fall 2026 AI readiness and pain-point assessment across teaching, research, student service, and administrative work.

- Build a COB AI resource hub/playbook that curates CSU, campus, and business-specific resources.
- Run a Fall/Spring series of practical AI sessions, including AI Fridays or similar coffee-hour sessions, external experts, and internal showcases.
- Continue Gecko graduate admissions deployment planning as the first active COB pilot, with success metrics tied to student/prospective-student experience, response time, workload, adoption, cost, security readiness, and scalability.
- Explore one or two additional pilots only after readiness assessment and review of feasibility, risk, and ownership.
- Potentially delay the second AI hire, focused on AI governance, to Fall after the initial applicant pool was deemed insufficiently qualified by the hiring committee; this reinforces the importance of recruiting the right expertise rather than filling the line prematurely.

8. Conclusion

The AI Steering Committee accomplished useful and necessary work. It created the scaffolding Sac State needed: a campuswide conversation, a vision, a stakeholder map, guiding principles, governance boundaries, risk categories, training concepts, and pilot ideas. It also produced a clear lesson: AI implementation will not advance through a large advisory group alone.

The next phase should be more practical, accountable, and evidence-based. Sac State should retain the committee's principles and work products, sunset the standing committee structure, and move toward direct collaboration among the units with clear authority and responsibility. The College of Business is prepared to continue as an early pilot environment and to share lessons learned with Academic Affairs, IRT, and the broader campus.