AI TECHNOLOGIES AT BARD COLLEGE:

AN INVESTIGATION OF STUDENT PRACTICES AND PERSPECTIVES

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last several years, the development of artificial intelligence (AI) and, more recently, the advent of generative AI have led to much soul-searching and policy-making among academic institutions. Since the November 2022 release of ChatGPT, particularly the use of this tool and others with similar functionality, has become commonplace.

What role should generative AI play in education, and how can it be incorporated effectively into academic life? The rapid pace at which these tools are becoming available and often being embraced by students – as well as some faculty – makes it imperative that the academy investigate the implications of these new technologies for higher education.

Bard College faculty, like their peers in other colleges and universities, are currently grappling with the impacts of generative AI on both student learning and their own teaching. The tips and resources on AI that were provided to Bard faculty by the administration in late 2024 made two important observations: that specific data on how Bard students are using AI is "sparse," and that it is nonetheless clear its use among students "is increasingly perceived as normal.

To address knowledge gaps about how Bard students use and view AI tools, a targeted research project was developed in Fall 2024. Bard's Language, Culture and Justice Hub, in collaboration with the Bard Language Center and Department of Anthropology, launched the project in January 2025, after approval by the College's Institutional Review Board.

Over Spring 2025, a group of seventeen Bard undergraduates, with faculty and staff guidance, undertook ethics and ethnographic training and devised a set of appropriate questions. The researchers then conducted 34 qualitative, one-on-one interviews with their fellow students—selected based on their availability and willingness to participate—which were subsequently transcribed and analyzed. The interviews, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes, covered a range of topics, including the kinds of AI tools typically used, understandings of the nature of AI, reasons for turning to generative AI, the impacts of AI on the Bard learning experience, sense of student control over the technologies, and stigma and shame attached to their use. Both domestic and international students were part of the interviewee pool.

During Summer 2025, a handful of Bard students, under close supervision, further analyzed the transcripts and produced this report. Comments excerpted from interviews are identified using a code that protects the interviewee's identity; the initials in the code refer instead to the interviewer. Readers will notice that the class and/or majors of cited interviewees are frequently referenced in this report. This is to show the diversity of the interviewee pool, not to suggest that particular AI usage habits or views can be attributed to a given discipline or cohort at Bard College. The project's small number of interviewees does not allow this kind of predictive association.

Notwithstanding this limitation, we hope that our study will foster a better understanding of where Bard students stand regarding AI tools in the academic sphere. Such an understanding could subsequently assist the College as it shapes effective and fair policy around AI technologies in the years to come.

Report Authors
Arghawan Bani ‘26
Caroline Der ‘26
Leigh Swigart, Coordinator, Language, Culture and Justice Hub

Research Team
Angel Brito Arias ‘28
Arghawan Bani ‘26
Samira Hussaini ‘25
Sabina Chiva ‘25
Naira Chopra ‘25
Caroline Der ‘26 – Project Coordinator
Nia Jorbenadze ‘26
Robin Kaikull ‘26
Liza Eristavi ‘25
Kateryna Panikhina’26
Fatima Rahimi ‘26
Saba Kvinikadze ‘26
George Matitashvili ‘26
Francesca Oppenheimer ‘28
Ángel Ramirez ‘25
Sayed Zubair Sadat ‘26
Keta Tavartkiladze ‘26

Project Supervisors
Stephanie Kufner, Academic Director of the Bard Center for Foreign Languages and Cultures
Laura Kunreuther, Associate Professor of Anthropology
Theresa Law, Assistant Professor of Computer Sciences
Leigh Swigart, Coordinator, Language, Culture and Justice Hub

SECTION 1
BARD STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON AI

"I think of AI as that friend who can catch the mistake that you weren't able to catch. Because when you're writing an essay and retreating [for] an hour or something, your mind is so focused on one idea that you might miss a lot of points. So, any kind of AI can help you catch it…Yeah, I use AI. It's my best friend" (CD_1).

Both the popular press and more scholarly articles and reports abound with descriptions of how young people have quickly adopted, and even become dependent upon, a variety of AI tools to complete their academic work. It is, however, rare to find any mention of how students themselves view and make sense of these tools and their decisions to use them. Section 1 provides insights into Bard students' perspectives on AI and its expanding role in education, drawing on interviewees' experiences.

1.1 How do students understand AI?

When asked by interviewers to explain AI as a phenomenon, many students had some knowledge, often through hearsay, but were largely unable to articulate their understanding of what AI is and how it functions. "I think it's a robot—or something that's not human—that generates writing and answers for you, based on what you ask and how specific your question is" (NJ_1), explains one interviewee. Another says, "It means some sort of intelligence that isn't human to me" (FO_3). A third student offers an equally uncertain explanation: "I guess it's a form of technology or software that can be utilized to…I don't know, help you learn or create solutions to questions you might have," and continues, "I don't really know how it works. I just know it's supposed to be really bad for the environment and that it uses a lot of water every time it generates a response" (RK_2). One interviewee had observed different types of generative AI tools more closely, likening them to other familiar phenomena in the educational sphere: "ChatGPT is more like ADHD, it's all around, it's scattered, it gets information from everywhere. And I would say NotebookLM is more like ADHD on Adderall, when you are hyper-focused on just the text, and every information you get is straight from the text" (FO_2).

Interviewees were not consistent in their statements about some basic features of AI tools, including ideas of whether work assisted by these tools is "original" or not. One student rather fuzzily notes, "I don't think ChatGPT specifically what it, like, generates like an essay or something for you. I don't think it, like, strictly takes other people's work that is found on the internet and then puts it in the paper. I don't think it does that" (SK_2). Another interviewee arrives at the opposite conclusion: "AI just takes whatever has been uploaded to the internet and, like, collects all that, then gives you the answer based on those responses. So, it takes other people's work to create your own. But essentially, it's not your own work because you're using someone else's materials for that" (RK_3).

In response to questions about the nature of AI, many interviewees simply came back to describing its efficiency and usefulness, as if its ability to serve students superseded all other

considerations. “So generative AI is, like, extremely, extremely creative. And it can, I guess, generate, or edit, rather, ideas that people have spent years or decades researching. So that can really, I mean, that could, like, change your life overnight if you were in that field” (KT_1). “For me, artificial intelligence it's just kind of a mediator in a lot of ways between human labor and artificial labor… I see it as something very helpful” (NJ_3). “Artificial intelligence, I think for me, it's like an innovative tool that helps me in a lot of ways, I would say, and that it's, you know, it is helpful to a lot of people” (SK_2).

Several students also expressed the view that AI tools, although new and rapidly evolving, are not something to be feared, even suggesting that older generations are unnecessarily alarmed by their use. A Politics major offered this perspective: “It’s a tool that humans create. It depends on how they are using it… I don’t fear it to be anything” (RR_2). “Educational institutions are so slow to change and so fearful of it,” declares a Classics major. “That I don't understand. I don't get it. I don't know, I just don't think the professors here need to be that scared about its future” (KT_1).

An Economics student expanded on this idea, “AI is nothing more than ... the collective subconscious, basically, the collective knowledge of all of humanity with extremely advanced technology,” and provided an example, “I think it reminds me of my grandmother trying to use an iPhone. It's more like a fear of not understanding it, and that leads to hatred. But I don't see any credible arguments against the use of AI other than in an artistic context, because AI, large language models, are excellent for scientific research” (FO_2).

1.2 Which AI Tools Are Popular Among Bard Students?

Large Language Models (LLMs), AI applications trained on massive data sets, are by far the most common tools that the students in this project use. Nearly all interviewees were very familiar with the following LLMS: ChatGPT, DeepSeek, and NoteBookLM. Students also described frequent usage of language technologies, such as Google Translate and Grammarly, with the latter, as one student observes, “just, like, automatically on my computer” (KT_1). Another student explains, “It’s installed, so it does [the corrections] by itself when I'm writing an email or essays or something” (SH_1). Yet another interviewee observes, “some sites and some platforms have incorporated [AI] to an extent that you don’t know that it’s AI” (SK_2). Google’s Gemini was cited in this regard.

An LLM like ChatGPT, in contrast, “is the one that you're aware of” (SK_2), presumably given the necessity to provide precise prompts to obtain a desirable outcome. This suggests that, at least to some degree, students may make distinctions between categories of AI tools and the different implications of their use. As students incorporate these tools into their lives with increasing frequency, however, such distinctions may begin to blur. “[When ChatGPT came out] I was like, okay, I'm just going to use it and see what happens, you know? [Now], I really overuse them. I have to take a step back and be, like, ‘no, I can just do this on my own. I don’t have to use ChatGPT for this.” (SK_2).

1.3 Why Do Students Turn to AI?

AI as a time saver

Project interviewees frequently cited the ability to save time as an important reason for using generative AI tools for course assignments. Below are some typical comments from Bard students.

- "I would rather use the useful tool than waste time" (CD_1).
- "It just, like, simplifies the process" (FO_1).
- "I think it's just so much quicker and it takes less time… And then I just get a short answer. So, I think it's just efficient if you don't have that much time" (AA_1).
- "Yeah, I think time pressure has a lot to do with [using AI]" (AR_1).
- "If I'm short on time, then I may refer to it as help, to do some, like, technical things that will require me more time to do" (SC_1).
- It can be an extremely amazing tool if you know how to use it to do the work of 100 people over 100 days in about ten minutes" (FO_2).

There was a strong belief among our interviewees that assignments, projects, senior projects, and even personal journals would "take ages [without AI] and, like, I'd be nowhere compared to where I am now" (CD_1), as one student puts it. Says another, "if I have less time, I'm going to use it more. Definitely!" (AA_1).

The manner in which college students perceive AI as a seductive "time saver" was similarly described in an August 2025 article in *The Atlantic*:

> … the many moral questions that AI provokes—for example, whether it is exploitative, or anti-intellectual, or ecologically unsound—take a back seat to the simple truth of its utility. [A Washington University senior] characterized the matter as pragmatic above all else: Students don't want to cheat; they certainly don't want to erode the value of an education that may be costing them or their family a small fortune. But if you have seven assignments due in five days, and AI could speed up the work by tenfold for the cost of a large pizza, what are you meant to do? (https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2025/08/ai-college-class-of-2026/683901/)

The correlated idea that students tend to use generative AI when feeling stressed or tired also entered frequently into Bard interviewees' statements. For example, a politics and psychology major notes, "when I'm too tired to come up with anything myself, that's when I resort to that option (RK_3). This suggests that feelings of physical or emotional fatigue may impact a decision to turn to AI tools. The same interviewee remarks that generative AI can assist when one is having difficulty organizing and clarifying ideas for an assignment. "Sometimes it's hard to get your thoughts together, and it's kind of nice to have something there to organize them" (FO_3).

Another student openly describes their use of ChatGPT in such circumstances:

> Yes. I've had instances when I am like, I don't have time at all, I have zero inspiration, and I'm like, 'ChatGPT, can you please tell me ideas, what story you would write, etc.?' Which is good at the moment because it saves me so much time and energy. But then

> sometimes I just let my brain turn it off and let the AI do the whole thing, and then I edit it. It's not like I wrote it or thought about the sentences and ideas (AA_1).

A science-oriented student goes into more detail about why she sometimes chooses to use generative AI: "I usually plan everything ahead, but for the courses that I'm in right now, some of them involve writing a discussion prompt of the readings that we're doing. If I'm actually in a rush, I do sometimes use AI to develop my first or general sort of thoughts" (AA_2). The same student is a non-native speaker of the English language and reflected on what AI translation tools have done for her: "It's a technology that brings a tremendous change to my life because, back in the days when I had to learn English, I at least had to try hard learning it in order to communicate with people. But now you can just use a translator, you know, on your phone, and you could just communicate with people with basically zero barriers" (AA_2).

The fact that one's peers are also using generative AI may be a powerful influence during times of stress. "I wouldn't say anyone is pressuring me to use AI," explains one student, "but most people would be, like, if I'm sitting around my friends and complaining about this assignment, that 'Oh my God, I need to do it, I have ten pages to write in two days!' They're like, 'oh, just throw some things in ChatGPT.' Like it always comes up as advice" [FO_1].

Alongside these mostly positive perspectives on using generative AI, however, were those from students expressing hesitation or concern. "I think if you don't have time and you're, like, stressed, then you can definitely rely on it too much" (AA_1). This interviewee clearly recognizes the danger of becoming overly dependent on AI tools for completing coursework. Another student concurs. "ChatGPT is free, it's accessible, and anyone can use them, which makes it, which is, I think, the main factor for why it's such a slippery slope. It's just so easy to use if you type in a question and it gives you the answer in so many different ways" (RR_1). This student also describes how he was initially hesitant to use generative AI tools but then experienced firsthand what they could accomplish.

"I remember when I heard about that, I had a big, like, negative outlook on it. I was always, like, 'I would never use them. I think that's like a bad thing to use.' Like, technically, that kind of technology for homework. But when I first used [it] I was, like, 'Oh wow. Like now I see why everybody uses it." (RR_1). An Economics student asserts that she may use AI but maintains control over this decision: "I'm not dependent on it. But if I need it, I'll use it" (CD_1). Another student came to recognize that the notion of time-saving may be a trap: "At first it was like an illusion of saving time, but taking so much time to prompt it has definitely evened out the effort" [GM_1].

AI as a learning partner

Another commonly expressed reason for using AI tools is their capacity to provide an educational "service" that is not immediately accessible through more conventional academic channels. Services like personalized academic support, which would otherwise be accessible only through expensive tutors or limited office hours with professors, are now available anytime, anywhere, with a couple of clicks.

One student explains, “I like the fact that I can interact with it verbally and in writing, and it definitely gives me 24/7, you know, like live help” (SS_1). Several students in computer science classes discuss AI use for coding: “I can ask, and it shows me how to do [the problem]. I actually learn through it” (CD_1). Another interviewee agrees with this view. “When I can't get a code right, I just ask it to debug it and ask what was wrong with it. And I think that’s really, really helpful because I don't have to go to a professor, like ask him to help me out” (SK_2).

Interviewees in language learning classes were also enthusiastic. One elaborates on her generative AI practices when studying Latin. “When I was studying with ChatGPT, I didn't feel like it gave me anything that I couldn't get from a classroom. But because I was doing it alone, it was really helpful to have that thing to bounce off of … I find that incredibly helpful” (AR_1). This student continues, “I went through a phase where I was getting ChatGPT to give me prompts to do charts of verb conjugations or declensions… It actually, like, worked really well and was super helpful …I use some of those language softwares to quiz me” (AR_1). Another interviewee uses AI similarly: “I've only used ChatGPT to help me with testing myself. Quizzing myself, or making, like, practice worksheets or little cheat sheets for French” (RR_1). Echoes another, “AI tools, especially ChatGPT, help my learning just because I get extra practice if I want to brush up on my skills. Sometimes, with one-on-one help, the professor isn't always available” (RR_1).

Some Bard students are quite intentional in how they use AI to enhance their learning and writing. “I think [AI] is a really good resource… What I mostly use it for is to explain what's happening if I don't understand something. And I've also used it, like, ‘This is what I have to learn. Can you write me a possible quiz and then test me on it?” (AA_1). Another interviewee notes that AI “definitely helps me be more concise with assignments. Like when I write something, because I tend to, like, write really long sentences and try to share so much information… it definitely helps me make it more concise” [SS_1]. Yet another observes that AI could help with expanding vocabulary in a writing assignment. “Because if I have this word that I'm consistently typing in, again and again, in the essays, I'm like, ‘change this specific term with something [different]’” (FO_1).

A member of the project research team, noting an interviewee’s comments on the “learning partner” capacity of AI tools, observed: “I’ve also used ChatGPT to explain concepts, practice problems, or even help structure an assignment when I’m stuck. The comments of some interviewees show how AI can actually support learning when you're on your own and don’t have access to a teacher.” Another student researcher reflected on the statement of an interviewee who called AI “a best friend” (CD_1). “This might sound dramatic at first, but I get it. When you’re overwhelmed with deadlines, having a tool that can summarize articles or check your grammar feels like a lifeline.”

As one student noted, AI offered a way to express ideas they already had, but struggled to articulate in English. One student noted, “I guess maybe Grammarly could help if you’re writing in [a second] language and want to check the grammar” (RK_2). Another interviewee, herself an international student, observes, “Most of the international students use it. We don't have that kind of understanding of how to phrase a sentence, how to construct a paragraph… Some of my friends, like they use it to correct the grammar, or to make it sound more professional” (KT_1). While this interviewee characterizes the use of

AI in this situation as a way to bridge communication gaps rather than as a shortcut, there may be an unintended consequence of such AI correction. “They expect us to be students who don't speak English perfectly. And when you give them something perfect, they feel like something’s off” (KT_1).

Another international student used his interview to suggest a new use of AI for incoming Bard students, recognizing a gap in his own experience.

> We can try to incorporate some kind of assistance for newcomers who are closed in themselves —many students, I believe, are — and instead of pushing them to different ice-breaking games or something like that, I believe it's sometimes better to make some kind of AI assistance that they can talk to about questions at Bard. So, for example, till the end of the first year, I didn't know that I have Bard Bucks, and that I can spend them in the Down the Road Café. I just didn't know this… And I believe that if there existed an AI that had some kind of knowledge about Bard College services, it would be, like, amazingly helpful for me, and I'm definitely sure I'm not alone. It would be amazingly helpful for many students (KP_1).

Despite a widespread openness to using AI tools in a variety of ways, there were interviewees who were clearly more circumspect about them. Explains an environmental studies and biology major, “I would say practicing with my classmates or my professors is much, much better than practicing with a computer… I think because, like, ChatGPT for example, is missing that personal touch” (RR_1). A first-year student observes, “It’s just that when you’re not in the classroom, it’s easy to fall back on those tools” (RK_2). The same student adds another drawback to AI: “I try to only use it when I really don't know where else to turn to, because I feel so hyper-conscious about the fact that it's bad for the environment” (RK_2). A fourth-year student voices a similar sentiment: “At this age, especially, people want to be in college because they don’t know what to do. And we all want human social interaction and contact. I think 90% of people cannot just learn from a computer and feel satisfied with it, and feel good about themselves, first in their body and obviously in their mind” (KT_1). Another senior offers a very different but powerful criticism: “I have a personal issue with AI, and I think most women do – that AI has a lot of biases” (SS_1).

AI as a tool for preparation, brainstorming, and quick feedback

Students often describe using generative AI tools for the preliminary stages of their work. Cutting down on the time and effort needed for required reading is particularly popular. “I use generative AI like ChatGPT or DeepSeek to just feed it with the article that I have to read or the readings I have to do for the class and my notes that I took from the reading”, explains one student [AA_2]. “I just asked it to give me a short biography of Marco Polo in Italian in simple terms, because I was reading it off Wikipedia and it was, like, very hard to understand” [SC_1], confesses one student. “It's pretty helpful actually,” says another who uses it for class preparation. “It gives me notes from different perspectives on the text and I find it really helpful and it makes it easier for me to discuss it in the class and ask more additional questions to the professor” (RK_3).

For a student working on their senior project, NotebookLM became especially helpful. “You basically upload the article PDF and it does everything you want, summarizes, analyzes it. So, I didn't have to read, like, thousands of articles only to use ten. I just read the summary analysis and then pick the article and read it” [CD_1].

Using AI for brainstorming is also common. Students turn to AI tools for inspiration and guidance when they are having trouble getting started with work. A music major explains, “I’ve used it to help me get started on essays before, to give me a general knowledge of something. I was trying to write something and I couldn’t come up with an idea.” (KT_2). A history major describes her personal strategy: “Like maybe I'd use ChatGPT to ask, ‘what should I write my essay [about]?’ Because sometimes you get stuck on the idea and, like, you need some kind of a push to continue working. But yeah, I don’t need ChatGPT to write my essays.” (CD_1). Such observations raise the question of whether some students are becoming overreliant on AI for the critical beginning phases of their coursework, or whether this is something that educational institutions should accept as part of evolving learning practices.

Receiving feedback as assignments are prepared is yet another “service” that students seek from generative AI. Interviewees often described copying their work into the chat box to “polish” and make their sentences “grammatically correct” [RK_3], but they also asked for an evaluation of their work in ways that resemble human interactions. “I asked for a grade and it tells me. ‘How do you think I should improve it?’ And then it's like, oh yeah, like a sentence doesn't flow or something like that” [SK_2]. Says another interviewee, “When I write the essay, I put in the question and then input my essay and make ChatGPT grade it as if it were a professor. Like ‘if you were professor what would you give it out of 10?’ And if it’s a 7, I would say ‘why?’, it would say ‘work on this topic’, and I’ll take that into consideration” (CD_1).

Reasons one student, “I mean, if I don't have AI tools and if I cannot access my professional language professor immediately, then I would say, leave it. I will learn about it tomorrow or something like that. But if I have the AI tools, then I'm like, hey, I can ask this tool to see if I'm right or wrong” (SH_2). The use of generative AI as a personalized, obedient assistant and 24/7 tutor clearly holds wide appeal.

Students also discussed other factors in their decision to use AI, including their level of interest in the course material and the kind of subject they are studying. For some, AI is a way to engage more deeply with appealing material. “I think for me, when I get really interested in a course, I want to learn more about it and learn more about the content. So, I either do a Google search or an AI search, which is now kind of replacing Google in a way, to learn more about the material” [RR_1]. As already noted, students taking language classes use generative AI tools to enhance their mastery, asking for correct pronunciation, stem verb charts, translation, and colloquial expressions. A computer science major describes how AI can help in his particular field. “In computer science, I don't use [AI] for writing the description or something. I mainly use it to ask, like, how do I approach this problem? Or I tell it, ‘I have this assignment. I'm planning to approach it this way. Do you think it's a nice idea to approach it this way?’” (SH_1). Another interviewee observes that their use of AI “depends on the class as well. I feel like it's more appropriate… to use it for comp sci, math classes where your point of view doesn't matter that much. And if I'm trying to solve this equation, like, it doesn't matter.” (FO_1)

It is noteworthy that some students seem to interact with generative AI models in something increasingly resembling trust, not least as a way to affirm their work. “I sometimes use AI to check if I did my work correctly” says one student, who, later in their interview went on to elaborate, “My use of AI is to prevent me from doing that assignment in the wrong way” (AA_2).

Conversely, one interviewee asserts that they had to train AI to do its work correctly, demonstrating that they could use it in a way that replicated their own writing style: “I have taken my best writings. I have given it to ChatGPT and said, ‘hey, memorize this, memorize my style. This is the style, the pattern you should imitate when you're writing for me.’ That way, everything ChatGPT writes, even if I do not touch, sounds exactly like my best writing…however, the important part is that you have to prompt the AI also to clarify it” (FO_2).

1.4 Evaluating the product and process of AI tools

It is clear that many Bard students avail themselves of AI tools for class-related activities. This does not mean, however, that they use such tools blindly or without some skepticism, particularly concerning the reliability of what the tools produce. Below are some comments that reflect this skepticism:

- “I definitely don't think it's always reliable or trustworthy.” (NJ_3).
- “When I get a new piece of information from AI, I always try and fact-check it somewhere, because it has given me wrong or misleading information before” (RK_2).
- “AI will give you something where the majority of it is correct, but there is stuff inside it that is incorrect. And because it looks correct, you will believe it” (KT_2).
- “If it's scanning the internet, it's going to be scanning things that are misinformation, disinformation... There’s been many cases of it saying like the most absurd, ridiculous stuff” (FO_3).
- “I think I’m very much aware of how AI does not really understand what’s true or false. So, whenever I’m asking for something, I never just take it as a truthful and honest answer” (AA_1).

Beyond questioning the reliability of AI tools, interviewees expressed concerns about AI's limitations and emphasized the continued importance of human judgment and critical thinking. One Bard student asserts that AI cannot replace individual critical thinking: “It’s, like, really surface level... you have to be really detailed to get a good product out of it” (AA_1). Another observes, “Some of the things that [AI] does are very illogical, making it too complex. I might just get help to get started on something, but I’m actually the person who is finalizing it, based on my own knowledge.” (RK_1). This interviewee elaborates further, “I don't think the usage of AI is inappropriate. It's a tool to help you. But it's mostly you who choose how to use it. Like, do you want to use it in a way that is helping you, or do you want to use it in a way that's not helping you at all to learn anything?” (RK_1). A first-year student expressed similar misgivings about what AI can accomplish when she uses it as a testing tool: “I was trying to get [AI] to do very specific things to test me, based on what I was learning. But I never wanted it to actually teach me anything” (AR_1).

Some students clearly recognize the need to shape generative AI's output in order to use it appropriately or successfully. At the same time, they may question what the very use of AI is doing to them. An interviewee expressed a range of sentiments on these questions, reflecting perhaps the novelty of using this technology as well as the experience of adjusting to both its possibilities and limitations. "It is kind of scary," observes the student when noting Chat-GPT's ability to translate between colloquial forms of her first language and English. "But also, like, it can never really do what a person does" (SC_1). She continues, "[AI] doesn't disrupt my own ideas because, like, half of the information or the ideas it gives me, I just don't agree with. And I think it's not very smart because I have to double check the information, of course. And I have my own twist on the things that it gives me" (SC_1). But the same student then reflects further: "But sometimes it *is* kind of disruptive, disruptive of my own thought process because it gives me so many random ideas that I feel like then I'm losing my own" (SC_1).

While many students have integrated generative AI into their writing process, others deliberately avoid it to preserve their individual voice and creative autonomy. "I write a lot," explains a student. "And I like how I write. I have a style and all of those things. And, like, even when I have fiddled around on ChatGPT, I don't like anything it produces of the ideas. It just doesn't work for me" (KT_1). Another student declares, "I would say that none of the AI tools are useful for your research" (CD_1). Another asserts of AI, "It is taking away your time to actually think about something" (RK_1).

A number of interviewees clearly believe that they are able to maintain agency while using AI tools, adamant that the user ultimately controls the process. "I would say that I am definitely fully in control," asserts a first-year student. "At the end of the day, I choose what to use, how to use it and whether it's useful or not" (RK_3). Another declares, "I exert some type of control over what I ask for, sure. I definitely don't have any control over the information. But over what I ask, it's full control" (SS_1). Another interviewee elaborates on her sense of guiding the AI process:

> I have been doing a lot of data analysis right now where [AI] has given me a wrong answer a lot of the time, then I corrected it. But there's times where if I'm in the same window, for example, if ChatGPT keeps giving me the wrong answers, I just open up a new window and ask the question again, and then usually it gets it right. So, I get that sometimes when it gets too much information, it might get overloaded. Yeah, it might give me a wrong answer. But I feel like I have a control because I always try to correct it if it's wrong and, you know, that trains the program (SK_2).

It was not always clear, however, why and how an interviewee might distinguish between the reliable or helpful outputs of generative AI tools and those that are incorrect or misleading. A studio arts student recounts:

> I went to AI and I asked, like, 'okay, what do you think about this painting?' And I read what it gave me, and most of the points, like, some of the points were the same as mine. But some of them just made no sense to me. So, I just disregarded them. But some of them were, like, 'oh, yeah, I haven't thought about this.' And then maybe taking that initial idea from the AI, then I would, like, go deeper with my own thoughts into that (SC_1).

In considering this interviewee's statement, one of the project researchers posed some astute questions: "What is the process by which the interviewee makes choices between which AI points to use and which to disregard? And in particular, between the ones that do not make sense versus the ones that they 'haven't thought about'? And why does the interviewee believe themselves able to distinguish between nonsense and genuinely provocative points?" It would seem that students do not tend to ask themselves such questions, instead choosing to believe they can be discerning and appropriately selective when using AI for their academic work.

1.5 Conclusion

Through the medium of student-to-student interviews, Bard students had the opportunity to express a wide range of thoughts and opinions about generative AI and the role it plays in their academic lives. Far from using AI tools thoughtlessly, most interviewees appear to question what AI produces and to grapple with the implications of these new technologies on not only their daily academic routines but also their personal development as thinkers and learners.

SECTION 2
USING AI: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND EMOTIONAL REACTIONS

"I don't feel pressured into using it. I do feel pressured somehow into not using it—in the sense that, whenever I've thought about, like, 'Oh, I might use ChatGPT for this,' my friends will be like, 'No, don't do that, just do it yourself'" (KT_2).

Students' moral and emotional responses to the use of AI reveal a complex interplay of competing values, practical concerns, and evolving norms. While some students see generative AI as just another tool, like Google, others express significant concerns about the ethics of using this new technology, as well as misgivings about what AI means for academic integrity and the potential loss of genuine learning (which will be covered in the next section). They also often mention the negative views associated with the use of AI and how such views may affect their sense of self. Such a wide range of perspectives and lived experience underscores the challenges that academic institutions face as they work to establish fair, effective and healthy AI policies.

2.1 Discerning Appropriate and Inappropriate Use

Students struggle to define clear boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate use of generative AI. The context of a course assignment often determines whether AI use feels ethical. A first-year history major suggests, "I think it's appropriate to use [AI tools] in the planning stages" (AR_1), indicating that preparatory ideation appears to be an acceptable use. However, a first-year student majoring in politics and psychology draws a firmer line: "I feel like writing essays, like actually writing them, that's when I find the usage of AI unethical" (RK_3). An art history and computer science major echoes this view: "But in essays, you can't say, 'Oh, my friend helped me write this essay.' So, I feel like it's the same way. You kind of have to credit AI" (FO_1). Such views recall the comments highlighted in Section 1, where AI takes on the role of "partner in learning." Some students clearly feel that there is a point beyond which a partner becomes the author.

The type of academic task seems to matter in determining appropriateness. A fourth-year economics and Global and International Studies (GIS) major explains, "I think definitely, if it has anything to do with exams, you know, like tests, exams, I feel like it's not appropriate because it violates a code of ethics. Like, you are literally cheating." (SS_1). Similarly, a first-year student majoring in chemistry and biochemistry notes, "It is inappropriate to use AI in a Spanish exam [for example]" (AA_2). These examples show broad agreement that AI use during formal assessments crosses ethical boundaries.

However, students also recognize legitimate uses of AI in academic contexts. The same student clarifies her view: "But if you're generally asking it to find the sources for you so you can have a better understanding towards something, I feel like that should be fine" (AA_2). A third-year student majoring in biology and computer science adds nuance: "Use of AI might be okay to, not change, but revise the writing style to fit the article criteria. As long as the ideas are coming from the writer, actual writer, and not the AI" (SH_1).

The spectrum of appropriateness extends from completely acceptable to clearly unacceptable uses. A fourth-year student put it succinctly: “It’s probably inappropriate to use it to fully do something for you” (NJ_2). An international student from Spain distinguishes between assignment types: “I think that for small assignments, something casual that is not really going to affect anything from your grade or whatever, I think that’s fine. But when it comes to bigger stuff, that is, like an exam or a paper that is gonna determine your grade, in those cases I do think that it’s incorrect to use it” (KT_2).

Some students question, however, whether AI use should ever warrant serious ethical concerns. A student from The Republic of Georgia uses humor to illustrate boundaries: “I don't know, if you're asking me to, like, plan a murder and hide the body, maybe that’s inappropriate. But like, otherwise, ethically, I don't think it’s inappropriate because, for me it’s a new Google. Five years ago, if you needed any information, you would Google it, but now you would ask generative AI, and Google was never an ethical problem” (CD_1). This comparison to Google reflects a generational shift in how some students view generative AI as just another information technology rather than a fundamentally different tool.

Interviewees thus seem to perceive a certain line between when AI should be used and avoided, even if the exact position of the line may be hazy at best and sometimes in place to avoid repercussions rather than maintain integrity. As one interviewee openly stated, “I haven’t really used it to write full texts because I’ve seen how people are just gonna notice, so I don’t think there’s really much of a point in that” (KT_2). Another student fears that professors “are going to catch you and you're going to get zero” (CD_1).

A number of interviewees drew comparisons between AI and other academic support tools to justify or question their use of AI tools. These comparisons revealed underlying assumptions about what constitutes legitimate academic assistance. The most common comparison equates AI with tutoring services. A student from Nepal asks, “if I'm asking for a tutor to help, it’s the same thing. You know what I mean? If I go for a tutor with help in formulating my essay, to see if a sentence structure is right, to discuss ideas with them, maybe that will not be considered, you know, unethical. But if I'm asking AI, that would be unethical” (AB_2). This student perceives an inconsistency in how different forms of academic support are evaluated.

However, not all students agree with this viewpoint. A first-year interviewee argues that certain skills require human interaction: “I feel like with communication and collaboration, using AI isn't appropriate because those are the skills that you need people for, those are the skills that are only developed if you communicate with actual people and not AI” (RK_3). This suggests that while AI might replicate some functions of tutoring, it cannot replace the relational and communicative aspects of human learning.

Students who work as peer tutors or writing fellows may face particular ethical dilemmas when they encounter use of generative AI in student work. This role may pit peer relationships against institutional loyalty as the tutors navigate the boundary between appropriate and inappropriate usage. An interviewee who had served as a writing fellow for two years describes his approach: “I'm not, like, anybody's boss or anything. So, I just talk to them. And I'm, like, ‘yeah, hey, is this all AI generated?’ Yeah, I just tell them and then, you know, I like giving people a chance

before I … I don't want to report people for plagiarism. I don't want that" (SK_2). This comment reveals a preference for peer conversation and education over formal reporting, with the tutor viewing himself as a fellow student rather than an enforcer of academic policy.

Whether or not using AI in one's work constitutes plagiarism is a contested question among Bard students. Traditional definitions of plagiarism do not seem to map neatly onto AI-generated content, creating confusion about when and how to cite AI. A fourth-year biology and environmental studies major was able to draw a clear line in his head: "I would never copy [AI derived material] down and summarize it as my own because to me that's plagiarism" (RR_1). However, a third-year computer science major questions citation requirements for partial AI use: "So, I don't think that I should cite it. Like, I have not taken something fully from ChatGPT, [in order] to say, 'okay, this is a ChatGPT'" (RK_1). These two interviewees clearly have different notions about whether *any* AI use requires citation or only *complete* use of AI-generated content.

A first-year history major addresses the fundamental question underlying the determination of whether using AI constitutes plagiarism: "I don't know if it's technically plagiarism – it's not anyone's words, but it's also not your words. It's just formulas" (AR_1). This observation captures the unique nature of AI-generated text, it belongs to no one and everyone simultaneously. The question of plagiarism as it plays out in interactions between Bard students and faculty will be discussed in Section 4 of this report.

2.2 Fairness and equity

The question of fairness in AI use generates conflicting perspectives among students. Some argue that AI's accessibility makes its use inherently fair, while others contend that it creates unfair advantages regardless of availability.

A fourth-year economics major makes a strong case for fairness based on universal access:

> It's my decision that I'm using it and it's your decision that you're not doing it. Like, it's there. No one kind of put a ban on it. It's not, like, in a box that only five people have access to. Everyone has access to it. And it's, like, freedom of your action. It doesn't cost a hundred dollars. Then you would say that it's unjust that some students can use it and some students can't use it; but it's free, it's accessible for everyone. If you want to use it, you do. It's your own decision. And you can't judge anyone else for using it. Because it's becoming kind of an inseparable part of our life, just like the internet, computers and search engines or video became 10 or 15 years ago (CD_1).

Another interviewee echoes this perspective: "I think it is fair because, I mean, you can use AI if you want to, but if you don't want to use AI for your homework, or for whatever, then you can't really be mad at somebody else for using AI" (RR_1). An economics major offered a comparison: "It's like if I use a boat to cross the Atlantic Ocean for free, it's accessible to everybody. They have infinite free boats. And then someone swam over. They tell me, 'You didn't swim, you did not earn this.' It's the exact same situation. If you want to go only to the library and just study there, that's up to you. I think that's everybody's personal decision" (FO_2).

A biology and environmental studies major acknowledges, however, some limitations to the argument that AI is out there and its use is just a matter of choice. At the same time, he is clearly torn between contrasting viewpoints:

> I guess it is a little bit unfair when somebody who does not do any readings or doesn't put any effort into the class is getting an A on something that they have no knowledge on, but AI did it for them. I think perhaps that's a little unfair because, you know, they're getting that easy grade but without any effort… I think that is like a personal problem, to be honest. If I did that, I'd feel really guilty about it, that I didn't put any effort and got the straight A and got away with it. So, I think it is unfair to use it. But at the same time, people can also [use AI to] get on the same level, use the same resources. But I think they should just do that in a responsible manner" (RR_1).

Other interviewees focus on how AI may create unfair competitive advantages in classroom dynamics. A first-year Film major expresses concern about the comparative aspect: "It impacts my learning because it's hard for me to... kind of judge myself in comparison to classmates when they're not… It's almost like it's not an equal playing field. Because I know of so many people that are using it, then, you know, how do I know that what they've produced is actually, you know, to their skill level?... And I know that's, like, more of a personal academic, competitive thing, but it does come up for me" (FO_3).

A fourth-year international student described a specific scenario where AI creates unfairness: "I think this is very contextual. I think if a professor asks a question, for example, and someone just looks it up on AI and uses it to answer the question, and then the person is seen, like, better in class and gets a higher grade just because they keep asking questions with the help of AI, I think that's unfair to the other students" (SS_1). She continues, "if everyone would do it and the professor would be fine with it, then that's good. Yeah, that's fair for everyone" (SS_1). This suggests that transparency and universal permission might resolve concerns around fairness.

A student majoring in art history and computer science takes a pragmatic stance: "I wouldn't say that it's fair. I wouldn't say that it really matters that much because, like, life is not fair. Yeah, but in full seriousness, I feel like, you know, there could always be someone who has this very academic background and things like that. And they will do better with certain assignments than other students" (FO_1). This perspective contextualizes AI use within broader educational inequalities that arise from students attending the same college with different educational backgrounds.

The fairness question becomes more complex when accounting for the unequal starting points students bring to the classroom. Not all students have benefited from the same educational and financial resources or have the possibility of devoting themselves to their studies with equal attention. Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, for instance, may face difficulty as they balance academic demands with working multiple jobs to support their families. In other cases, students in the Bard community who have fled conflict may find themselves juggling financial responsibilities, navigating academic life in a second language, adjusting to a new

country, and/or living with a high level of uncertainty. Such pressures are not accounted for by most institutional policies.

One student draws a contrast between the experiences of Bard students in difficult circumstances and those who come from more typical backgrounds. "I think it is kind of hard because [the former] have no other way. If they fail, then they're going to get kicked out of the college. But the students who are just having friends, partying, going here, going there, and just using AI, I hate it" (NC_1). It is clear that questions of intent, effort, and situation deeply shape how students perceive fairness and equity in AI use.

2.3 Secrecy, stigma, and peer pressure around the use of AI

In discussing the role of AI in higher education, some students interviewed for this project mentioned negative associations with its use and how this negativity affects their sense of self. Their comments suggest that the use of AI may contribute to harmful self-talk, feelings of isolation, and even shame. Such responses make it more challenging for some students to seek guidance on determining the appropriate limits of AI use.

Concealing the use of AI

While every student brought a unique experience to their interview, a common understanding across the interviewee pool was that the topic of AI use was sensitive. Everyone was clear that, in some circumstances at least, using generative AI should be kept private and shared only within close circles of others who are using it, without judgment. Indeed, many students see generative AI as something to be used strictly in secret, as open use may create a sense of the need to justify it.

A fourth-year biology and environmental studies major remarks that peers are often surprised by how frequently the tools are used. This makes silence easier than disclosure. At the same time, she points out that "AI is integrated into everything (RR_1)," from Google to Quizlet to basic smartphone apps. Even auto-fill in Google Docs blurs the line between AI and non-AI.

A first-year history major describes always feeling the need to explain herself: "I have to immediately defend myself (AR_1)" when mentioning the use of AI, even if for minor assistance. Still, she argues that stigma can open conversations about setting boundaries. She adds, "So, you should just use it and have it help you" (AR_1), suggesting that resistance might mean missing out on its benefits.

A student from Georgia says she feels uncomfortable using AI in front of professors. She describes hesitating before opening ChatGPT on her computer and called it "a little embarrassing" (AA_1). She explains, "I would never say to a professor that I'm using it" (AA_1), yet she felt no such discomfort with close friends. Her words show how context matters. With peers, she feels safe, but in classrooms, she hides her use. She believes students should learn to use AI responsibly, without letting stigma dictate behavior. Still, her careful awareness of surroundings shows that external opinion may have an impact nonetheless.

Ethical quandaries and stigma surrounding the use of AI

Overall, many Bard students seem to associate stigma with the use of AI, connecting it in some cases with poor academic integrity. A third-year photography major articulates the common concern among students about AI's reputation in academic circles. Such stigma creates a tension between AI's potential benefits and its perceived risks vis-à-vis academic honesty. In his own words: “AI has an association with poor academic integrity. You have to be careful when you use it, but in many cases, it has the potential to be helpful. There's definitely a stigma” (NJ_2). Another interviewee comments on what AI use does to one’s own self-image, saying that AI makes them “feel less smart” and like they are “cheating” (SS_1). A first-year film major says she acknowledges the “ethical stigma (FO_3)” around AI because it matches her moral concerns. Ethical stigma for her refers to concerns about fairness, bias, job loss, and human responsibility.

A fourth-year classics major suggested that citing AI use can help reduce guilt: “I think if you cite it, then get rid of guilt” (KT_1). Still, students remain unsure about when and how to cite AI sources. She observes that broad negativity toward AI paints it as “inherently evil.” While using AI to generate a full paper might be “outrageous” and “questionable,” she still thinks such cases should be taken seriously and judged with care. “You need to get to know a human being in order to pass judgment on an action,” she asserts. She reminds her peers that being in college is a privilege, stating, “We’re all, like, really lucky people. [College] is, like, such a luxury. So, I don’t know. I think it’s to be taken seriously” (KT_1).

A first-year music major describes guilt after using AI to generate answers he already knew. He reports losing self-control even when capable of completing tasks independently. He admits that sometimes generative AI becomes a shortcut: “I feel like I’m not putting all the work that I should—or that I could—into the work that I’m doing” (KT_2).” He blamed laziness and the tool’s convenience.

A first-year psychology student took the reflection further. He suggests AI does not cause insecurity but exposes it. Feelings of inadequacy, fear of failure, and poor time management already exist. Generative AI tools just make them more visible and their effects intensified. He observes, “It’s less of AI being the issue, I feel, and more of other confounding variables in our society that strip people of their ability to do what AI can do very quickly” (AB_3).

One third-year art history and computer science major tied stigma attached to AI use to environmental concerns. He worried about its role in climate change and its use of scarce water resources. He reports that he had “cut down on [my] use of AI to not contribute” to global warming (FO_1).

There are clearly real feelings of guilt associated with AI use in academic settings, for example through the sense that one is wasting learning opportunities or causing environmental impacts. While these feelings stem from both internal values and external pressure, it remains unclear whether such guilt effectively reduces AI use or merely prompts temporary reflection. Students may experience these feelings situationally without fundamentally altering their AI use patterns over time.

A student from India draws a distinction, however, between the use of AI in an academic setting and the workplace, highlighting how institutional context shapes emotional responses to AI usage. She explains these guilt feelings in academic contexts: “I think in school, you probably feel more guilt because something about this environment takes that sort of action very seriously, which I totally understand” (KT_1). She notes that workplace environments are “encouraging it more” than educational institutions, suggesting a cultural divide between academic and professional AI acceptance.

Several interviewees suggest, on the other hand, that stigma may be variable according to discipline as well. A third-year biology and computer science student states, “I don’t think there’s a stigma in my field (SH_1).” This sentiment is echoed by a student from Georgia, who describes her experience in computer science classes and expressed no hesitation about using ChatGPT: “If anybody asks me, I'll just tell them that I use it” (SK_2).

The influence of peers

Peer groups have a significant influence on behavior, both in terms of encouraging certain actions and discouraging others. A first-year student compares her high school in The Republic of Georgia with Bard. In Georgia, everyone used AI, and so did she. At Bard, fewer students used it, and that discouraged her. In her own words, “When I see people not using AI, it also pushes me not to use it as well, so I think that's good about Bard” (RK_3). Her reaction illustrates how a learning environment can shape behavior.

A first-year student from Spain shares how his friend group keeps him accountable. Whenever he considers using AI, they advise him, “No, don’t do that, just do it yourself” (KT_2). The pressure he feels comes from their encouragement to push his own limits instead of relying on AI for help. Similarly, another first-year student expresses that she receives a clear message from her peers that it is not advisable to use AI tools. “I definitely feel pressure to *not* use them” (AR_1).

Another student in her fourth year at Bard described changing her mind. She once avoided AI because of “all of the, like, the negative stigma around it.” Later, after seeing many students use it, she started using it more often: “And then at one point I just decided to give it a try and I've been using it since.” Even then, she sometimes felt guilty. This late adoption stemmed from observing peers who were frequent users of generative AI tools. The student further explains that creating titles should be a task for her, not AI: “I think that it should not be used for that, like asking what title it would give it or something like that.” By contrast, other students felt no problem letting AI generate all their titles (SK_2).

2.4 Anticipating the future

Many students consider that resistance to AI is futile and that future success will depend on learning to use it effectively and ethically. This forward-looking perspective suggests that current debates about whether to allow AI may be less important than discussions about how to integrate it responsibly.

A first-year student from Hungary predicts: “I am saying, though, that now it's considered controversial by certain people, but in 5 to10 years, anybody who has not done that [used AI] is going to be way less productive, way less efficient than anybody who *has* done that (FO_2).” This perspective frames AI literacy as essential for future competitiveness.

However, concerns about AI's broader implications extend beyond academia. The same student shares a troubling experience: “Also another risk, which I have tried and is very concerning to me, I exported about two days’ worth of text messages with my ex-girlfriend, and I put in the instruction to imitate my tone, my style, and the responses were texts, and it was over a day until she had realized she was not talking to me” (FO_2). This experiment demonstrated to the student that generative AI can closely mimic an individual's writing style, making it difficult to identify AI-generated content. This raises concerns about the potential erosion of human relationships and prompts important questions about identity and authenticity that go well beyond issues of academic integrity.

Another student expresses alarm at the erosion of human autonomy:

> Somebody used ChatGPT to write an email. Oh, Lord Jesus, we are lost! We are in scary times. Using ChatGPT to write an email. And then they were saying, and I know it was probably a joke, they were probably being hyperbolic, but then they were saying, ‘Oh, even that's too hard.’ Babe, wow, we need to seriously reevaluate what we're doing! Like, at a time in the world where people are constantly trying to sink their claws into our autonomy, you're just going to give away your human right to think, like you're just gonna give it away that easily? No, we gotta figure something out! (AB_3).

The student illustrates a broader concern about what we lose when we outsource even our simplest thoughts to machines. This matters because we already live in a world where human autonomy, over work, attention, and decision-making, is under pressure from many directions. Giving away the ability to write an email may seem small, but it signals something larger about how easily we surrender what makes us human: the ability to think and write.

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the ethical landscape surrounding AI use in academic settings is complex and contested. Students navigate competing values of efficiency and learning, fairness and individual choice, innovation and self-worth. While some view AI as simply another tool in an expanding technological toolkit, others worry about its impact on genuine learning, academic integrity, and human autonomy.

SECTION 3
THE IMPACTS OF AI ON LEARNING AT BARD

"I feel like there's a sanctity to knowledge… I care about, and I pride myself on the knowledge in that class. I don't like looking at it and then knowing that I cheated on it, knowing that I didn't answer with my full brain power" (AB_3).

The common denominator among those interviewed for this project was their conscious decision to study at a small liberal arts college like Bard College and their investment in an intimate learning experience. It was thus not surprising that most interviewees expressed some sense of concern about the role of AI in contemporary education and what it might mean for their educational journeys.

- "I do view AI as a very crucial part of my studies at Bard... I just try not to have AI think for me" (AA_2).
- "I try to not rely on [AI] too much with my coursework because it can get dangerous in a way. Because you can become too dependent on it and take advantage of it, and it can replace your learning in a way that's not beneficial to you… at the end of the day, you're not learning anything" (RR_1).
- "I kind of think it to be slightly dishonorable in classes …I feel like I'm taking the easy road, and I'd rather learn how to do it properly" (FO_3).
- "I'd rather just have human interaction. I don't know, I just think it's kind of weird. I don't want to be in front of a screen all day talking to someone who doesn't exist" (KT_1).
- "I feel like at some point if you use ChatGPT too often, it becomes harder for you to come up with answers on your own. So that's why I choose not to use it too often" (RK_3).
- "Sometimes I am just way too tempted to not use it… It feels like you switch out this part of the brain. You just tell AI to do that instead of you" (SH_1).
- "Sometimes you might lie to yourself that, 'oh, I'm using AI [for] translating, and I'm actually learning something.' But you're just lying to yourself. You're not learning anything" (SH_1).
- "I think that people use [AI] more as a crutch and less as a general tool"(AB_3).

A fourth-year interviewee expressed significant discomfort with various aspects of AI in education:

> These AI tools will just kill the motivation in your mind. They will make you lazy. They will make you just go straight forward to the answer without thinking, like, how you get that answer and just accept that answer. You never know if that is correct or not. I mean, yeah, AI gives correct answers, but sometimes you need critical thinking to understand why this answer is correct … But what is really important is that you understand the assignment yourself. You understand the materials yourself. And even if you don't get the full grade, it is something that will come back to you and you have in fact gotten the full grade because you have understood the materials (SH_2).

3.1 Relation of AI use to personal interest and course difficulty

As noted earlier in this report, students often defaulted to defending their use of AI as a time-saving measure. But they sometimes also elaborated on these statements with a qualifier: how heavily they used AI depended on their interest and engagement in the assigned material.

- "I think I'm going to use AI no matter if I'm interested or not, but if I'm *really* interested in something, I'm maybe not gonna use it as much" [AA_1].
- "If I'm 100% interested in a class, I wouldn't rely on AI. I would take the time to study and engage with the material on my own. But if I'm not interested in a class and just want to get through it, I'm more likely to use AI" (LE_1).
- "Probably there is something related to the time, but I don't think it's the main thing. I think I have enough time to do the stuff that I'm assigned without asking AI. It's more about the stuff that I'm not really interested in from what I'm assigned. I'd just rather go the easy way—ask, get some ideas, and then just write it myself. But then, when it's about stuff that I'm really interested in, I really don't use it" (KT_2).

Some students were adamant about using AI as a tool to outsource what they perceived as tedious tasks, so they could have time for other interests. An interviewee in the Social Sciences division comments, "Honestly, at a certain point you just have to pick and choose your priorities...if I'm taking my analysis of art credit and I have to read 15 million pages on Cubism, yeah, I might go to ChatGPT" (GM_1).

Students' level of familiarity with subject matter also appears to be a significant factor. When students feel competent in an area, they are more likely to question or limit AI use; in unfamiliar territory, they may use it more heavily, without necessarily evaluating its effectiveness. A fourth-year biology major explains. "I don't really use AI for biology, just because I try to generate my own ideas for biology, simply because it has to be really critical, close reading. And that's what I believe AI cannot do, to be honest" (RR_1).

Another science-oriented student expresses a similar view. "Classes like philosophy and literature with a lot of readings are complex or have a high level of difficulty for me. So, I would actually tend to use more AI for that. But if it's more courses that I am quite confident with, like math and science, I would actually go to real people to ask for help, like the professors or upperclassmen [other students]" (AA_2). A third-year computer science student agrees that human assistance is better than AI assistance: "In terms of understanding *everything*, it's easier to ask a professor or your friends or classmates who have taken the class rather than using ChatGPT" (RK_1).

One notable pattern that emerged from interviews was students' tendency to rely on their own discernment to regulate their use of AI tools. Rather than following clear guidelines or external standards, many seem to trust their intuition to judge when AI is helpful or counterproductive. Such self-assessments may be inconsistent and even arbitrary, shaped largely by their existing familiarity and confidence with a given subject. When asked if he used AI more with lower-level classes, an interviewee outlined his strategy:

> Lower level, yes. Higher level becomes more intellectually engaging. And those are: there's less use for AI, less necessity. I think higher-level classes do not... AI doesn't work with them because AI has a limitation on its ability to write on a professional level with information density. And the specificity that higher-level courses require…[AI] is great with general texts, but if it's not familiar in a specific context, it cannot predict the next word accurately. That means if you try to write specifically, very scientifically, it's not going to work (FO_2).

Paradoxically, students may forgo using AI for subjects and courses in which they feel confident, leaning more heavily on it for subjects in which their lack of knowledge may leave them vulnerable to AI's oversights and hallucinations.

3.2 Concerns around the loss of critical thinking

A significant concern in higher education today is how the use of AI may reduce the hours of effort widely considered essential for genuine learning to minutes of prompt perfection. In the pursuit of ease and the illusion of saving time, students may be missing out on the "joy of learning". When asked whether AI could lead to student dependency and create a slippery slope, several Bard students openly shared their concerns.

A first-year and a fourth-year student both worry that relying too much on AI could erase individuality in student work. One puts it simply: overuse means you "lose your sense of self in your work" (AA_2). The other notes that through using AI, he risks losing the satisfaction of "constructing something myself" (RR_1). Students also experienced anxieties about losing the capacity to think critically: "Sometimes it's kind of disruptive of my own thought process because it gives me so many random ideas that I feel like I'm losing my own" (SK_2). This fourth-year international student continues, "I also feel kind of weird about it sometimes, where I've seen people say that it's just taking away our creative powers and our critical analysis skills" (SK_2). A first-year film major comments that AI can also change what happens in the classroom. For example, during a peer review assignment in a classroom, giving feedback to a peer is meaningless if the task has been accomplished by AI, because "it's not your writing, so it won't be helpful to you regardless" (FO_3). AI use may thus undermine collaborative learning when it replaces authentic student work.

Some interviewees invoked the association between true learning and "struggle." One reflects, "Some of these courses, it's about the struggle. My one friend told me before that perhaps it's the moment that it's the moment that we don't understand something that the most learning happens, right? And he had sounded way more profound in deep coming out of his mouth than it did mine just now. But, um, I feel like the struggle is a part of the journey, you know? And of course, we don't like struggling, we don't like struggling, but that's when the most education does happen, when we don't understand something, and then that moment finally clicks, and we're like, 'that makes complete utter sense now.' And now I can tell the world about it, you know?" (AB_3).

Interestingly, this observation closely mirrors the views expressed in recent op-eds by teachers and academics on AI's harmful impact on higher education, many of whom argue that students need to wrestle with their subjects to truly learn them. It would seem that the "attitude gap"

between educators and students about what it takes to achieve learning goals may be smaller than assumed.

Nonetheless, students clearly experience a tension between the immediate convenience of using AI and a commitment to independent thinking and long-term educational goals. A student from Georgia candidly acknowledges this: “I think most of the time I've used [AI] a lot to be, like, ‘bring me ideas of what you would write about this book,’ for example. And I think it’s helpful. But also, I think, at the end of the day, you're just not using your brain anymore that much. And it’s harder and harder the more you use [AI] to go back to coming up with ideas for yourself” (AA_1). The negative effects of AI overuse can also be seen as primarily self-inflicted. An economics major says this about his peers: “I think they are primarily harming themselves because, first of all, it’s going to show. AI still shows if you don't edit; it's going to be obvious. Second of all, if you're paying tens of thousands of dollars a year to be here, I don't think it's worth it” (FO_2). This perspective mainly views the misuse of AI as a squandering of educational resources.

3.3 Acceptance of AI and views on its inevitability

This project also encountered some students, of course, who reject the idea that AI may have detrimental impacts on their learning: “It just helps. I don't think that it's taking away from my ability to learn. It has helped me expand the ways that I *can* learn” (AR_1). One student suggests an analogy: “Having access to the internet ... worsens everybody's ability to go to the library and read through journals from the 14th century or something. If you define worsening our learning ability or our research abilities like that, that could be said. But I think AI affected my research ability the same way as having a lighter affected starting flint and stone fires in the forest” (FO_2).

Some student reflections on the use of AI seemed to be shaped by views on the larger higher education ecosystem in the US. “I feel like universities in general are so much of a business… were we ever really deluded that people were here [for] more than just a career, [especially] if you’re using ChatGPT to that extent?” [GM_1]. This student’s cynicism about higher education’s ability to fulfill its stated mission frames AI use as a symptom of a broader dilemma. Students’ disengagement from their learning may stem, implicitly, from broader cultural values that treat college degrees as prerequisites for entering the workforce, one student argues. “[Employers] need someone who can think critically. Which is really interesting because that's kind of what we're taught at college. But even at college, people are just using AI. So, who's going to be thinking critically, you know, in five years’ time?” (FO_3). Though students increasingly recognize and at times recoil from the impact of AI on their own and their peers’ learning experiences, many struggle to abstain from its use entirely. Doubts and realizations often arrive long after they have already experienced consequences and are heavily dependent.

As mentioned earlier in this report, a number of interviewees expressed acceptance of AI's use because they feel its role in higher education is simply inevitable. “It just became a very mundane thing for me,” confesses a first-year student. “I think it’s just a college experience. AI is very much helpful in that way” (NJ_3). A religion student declared, “[AI] is something that won’t go away, but I think it will be a good tool to use if used correctly” (SS_2). He adds, “I

think some are less honest than others, but from what I know, I'm sure every student has used it at one point." A biology and computer science student underscored the ubiquity of AI: "It's readily accessible because it's free. It's, like, online everywhere" (SH_1). A psychology major reasoned out his approach to AI like this: "It doesn't make you any less of a person…It's just something that you use. It's a tool" (AB_3).

3.4 Conclusion

It should be clear that the Bard students interviewed for this project have thought, if to varying degrees, about AI and what its use may mean for their own education. While some respondents were quite relaxed in their views of this technology, others used the interview process to make explicit, perhaps for the first time, a range of nuanced attitudes and concerns about the role AI is assuming in their everyday lives. In the short term, the College should perhaps heed this practical suggestion from a Global and International Studies student: "Maybe we should get education on how to use AI." They went on to clarify, "but it's not something to be suppressed… it's just like office hours sometimes" (GM_1). In the longer term, Bard might address more philosophical or even existential questions surrounding the use of AI, such as those suggested by this economics student's statement: "I don't want to believe in the fact that robots will rule us in like 15 or 20 years. I hope that humanity won't get to that point. But it's possible" (CD_1).

SECTION 4
FACULTY AND STUDENT INTERACTIONS AROUND AI

"I think [AI policies] are very reasonable. I just don't think that they're realistically enforceable" (FO_3).

The August 2025 Bard College Policy on Academic Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence states the following:

> It is the responsibility of faculty to make clear if, when, and how GenAI will play a role in any particular course or assignment, and to set expectations, if applicable, for appropriate acknowledgement and/or citation of GenAI tools. It is the responsibility of students to clarify any questions they have regarding the use of GenAI in a course and the instructor's expectations for acknowledgement and/or citation.

Bard College faculty now consequently include in their course syllabi at least a general statement, if not more detailed guidelines, about what they consider acceptable student use of AI for coursework. Notably, in a document providing sample statements about AI use in Bard syllabi – circulated by the College administration at the beginning of the Fall 2025 semester – the interdiction of using generative AI to complete writing assignments appeared almost omnipresent. The acceptability of using AI for other tasks, however, was more variable.

Through our interviews, it became clear that interactions between faculty and students in the classroom, during office hours, or in casual conversations often provide critical additional guidance on how AI, generative and otherwise, should or should not be used. Students were able to share insights and perspectives on how they navigate a disparate set of AI policies provided by their instructors, make sense of new notions of "authorship," and consider possible College policy changes for AI use.

4.1 Transparency and communication with professors

When it comes to interactions between Bard faculty and students, transparency about AI use is emphasized, and many interviewees agree on the importance of citing AI. However, Bard students encounter complex dynamics when attempting to be transparent about their AI usage.

A third-year student majoring in computer science explains the challenge of transparency: "It's kind of tricky to be citing something straight away from ChatGPT because, like, the professors have a very… (pause) tense reaction" (RK_1). This 'tense reaction' can be tied to professors not knowing how AI software is used, creating a need for clearer communication about usage. A first-year student majoring in Politics and Psychology offers a technique for addressing this challenge: "I meet [my professors] in person and tell them that I have used it as a starting point" (RK_3). This face-to-face approach allows for a more nuanced explanation of AI's role in the student's work.

Some students may proactively inform professors about their use of AI during office hours. A fourth-year student relates, "I have spoken with my professors," and "I do acknowledge [my use]

when I go to office hours" (RR_1). A detailed example of his approach occurred when he worked on an assignment for a translation course: he first translated a text from French to English himself, then asked an AI to translate, and finally compared the two versions. During office hours, he discussed this process with his professor. "My professor said, 'that's not accurate,' and 'just use your own text, what you said, which is actually better.' So that was kind of surprising" (RR_1). This student's experience aligns with his belief that "human interaction is so needed to succeed, to just continue developing" (RR_1). It illustrates how proactive communication can lead to valuable learning experiences and reinforce the importance of human judgment over AI-generated content. Interacting with professors represents one of the most essential human skills that students can develop, one that AI cannot replicate. Unfortunately, for students who are more reserved about conversation, AI might replace those moments of building rapport with professors, potentially limiting their personal academic development.

There are professors who also challenge their students on the topic of AI use. In response, some students feel that AI detection tools may flag legitimate grammar assistance as problematic use. A first-year student from China relates that her professor requested a meeting with her and then inquired about any writing difficulties she was having. The student used ChatGPT to correct grammar, resulting in a high AI usage percentage when the professor ran the assignment through an AI detection tool. This experience made the student realize that she "shouldn't use it as much or find a better way to refine my work. So, we sorted it out together" (AA_2). This particular student confessed to not knowing about academic support resources at Bard beforehand: "So, now, I would just go to my professor or another resource for help" (AA_2). A third-year student shares that one of her professors mentioned in class that "she thinks there were one or two persons that have used ChatGPT [for an assignment]. And it's just, like, what she thinks. There's no way to prove that!" (RK_1). This comment highlights the challenge for faculty in incorporating AI into assignments, given that even grammar corrections can alter word and sentence patterns to resemble those of large language models, potentially triggering false positives in detection tools.

A number of project participants noted that the required levels of transparency and documentation vary across courses and academic disciplines. Some suggested that the sciences and technical fields may have more structured approaches to AI transparency than other fields. For example, an interviewee shares her experience in a computer science class where detailed AI disclosure is standard practice. "We were really asked, at the beginning, to see how we use AI specifically, like for what line of code and why we asked AI to tell us what to do" (SS_1). Another computer science student mentions that the course outline serves as his compass, as it's very detailed and requires students to write a statement on AI use: "We have this statement that we put in before every assignment that you need to credit if you've used AI" (FO_1). A biology and environmental studies major discusses an agreement between faculty and students in the biology Department: "We have to be transparent and cite AI in our sources" (RR_1). Such a practice may allow students to use AI within certain limitations, which many students consider a more realistic approach, and that demonstrates how departments can create workable frameworks for AI integration.

Another interviewee noticed an inconsistency in AI practices across disciplines. "I feel like there's a lot of hypocrisy when it comes to AI for the written arts versus AI for STEM, and also

for, like, art. There are very different opinions about when AI should be used, how it's used, and the extent to which it's used in all three of those disciplines" (AB_3). But student experience with disciplinary variation is itself variable. A studio arts major says of her creative courses, "I don't recall being asked not to use [AI] in my classes. Actually, like, I was asked to use it to generate some arts exercises" (SC_1). While different fields may share some general norms regarding AI use, diverse instructor styles and practices exacerbate confusion for students who move across disciplines.

There may be another kind of differentiation at play within the Bard faculty that influences openness to AI use. One economics student suggested a generational divide among professors. Older faculty tend to resist AI entirely, she asserts, refusing to accept it as "an inseparable part of our life just like search engines became" (CD_1). Younger faculty, in her experience, are more open to letting students try it. Although this observation may be qualified more by personal experience than age, the perception of a generational gap regarding AI usage has influenced students'ideas and expectations about the course itself.

Despite the obvious concern many interviewees express about openly using AI, some reject transparency altogether. One interviewee relates with laughter that she never documents her AI use because it is limited to understanding complex ideas, not using content generated by AI: "Because I don't take it and put it in my writings, for example. I just use it to make sense of things if I'm confused. And then I do things on my own after that. So, it's not like I copy and paste" (AA_1). She explains that, as a shy person, asking questions in class has always been a challenge; therefore, she relies on AI to break down and answer questions for her. AI can thus serve as a private learning tool for students who struggle with classroom participation. Putting herself in the shoes of a professor, however, this same interviewee confesses that she would reject her own behavior. "As a professor, I think I would be like, if you're using AI, let me know!" (AA_1). But she goes on to highlight a fundamental dilemma: "Then again, which student would want to admit that they used AI, even if it's just for some ideas?" (AA_1).

4.2 Concerns about academic honesty and plagiarism

The uncertainty and inconsistency around citing AI-generated content may raise concerns about academic honesty among faculty and students alike. A third-year student majoring in biology and computer science claims that "everyone uses" AI (SH_1) and follows by stating that his usage limits are defined by what is written in the course outline, which also prohibits him from generating ideas: "I'm just using it for the revisioning," (SH_1) he asserts, although what is exactly meant by that term is unclear.

Confusion about authorship is a common theme among students, leading to uncertainty about which uses require disclosure. Some ask, what distinguishes AI editing from going to a tutor for help or paying someone to edit one's work? A fourth-year classics major asserts that using AI "is not as clean-cut as plagiarism" (KT_1). A first-year music major seems more certain in his interview, differentiating the two: "It's not the same, because you're not copying from anyone. But at the same time, it's not your own work" (KT_2). In further attempting to explain his reasoning, however, he shifts his point of view. "I guess, yeah, it *is* the same as plagiarism, even though it's not exactly it" (KT_2). Despite his confusion, the interviewee acknowledges

responsibility: “If you're gonna generate text with it, you should cite it because if it's not your own work, then you should make that clear” (KT_2).

How plagiarism is defined, then, in the context of co-authorship with AI remains a burning question for many students. A third-year student majoring in art history and computer science defined plagiarism as “when you credit someone else's idea as your own” (FO_1), but expresses uncertainty about AI, noting “it's not like you're taking away someone else’s ideas” (FO_1). Further reflection brought him to understand that AI should, in fact, also be considered plagiarism, because “AI takes away all those other existing ideas and it crafts this one really curated and specific response to you” (FO_1). Such input, this student asserts, needs to be acknowledged and credited.

These reflections, confused and shifting, illustrate how students are grappling with complex questions about intellectual property and originality in the age of AI. The traditional definition of plagiarism is narrow and doesn't encompass co-authorship with AI, leaving students to navigate these questions independently through conversations with peers who may or may not guide them correctly. In this age of technology, students need their professors more than ever as they traverse this new technological landscape while maintaining academic honesty and integrity.

4.3 Managing a wide spectrum of AI policies

As will be understood from the foregoing discussion, there is a lack of consistency among faculty members vis-à-vis their respective policies and practices around AI use. While many professors may have strict policies against it, others may accept or even encourage it. A fourth-year student majoring in economics explains, “Some of my professors don't even mention it on the syllabus, and some others are just, like, ‘if you use it, give me a note’” (CD_1). Another fourth-year student shares that, in his courses, AI is seen as a legitimate tool for learning: “Most of my professors have been really, like, I wouldn't say pushing for it, but they have suggested using AI for creative ideas, and that's what I've been using it for” (SK_2). Such inconsistency requires students to follow each professor’s unique stance and expectations around AI and develop appropriate strategies for each course they take. This may create uncertainty about what is acceptable and anxiety about how to remain in compliance.

This uncertainty may be heightened if Bard's AI policies and practices stand in contrast to what students encountered in high school or another educational institution. A first-year student elaborates on her experience, noting that her “teacher in high school was super pro” and that this attitude allowed her to experiment with AI, using ChatGPT much as she would Google. This experimental approach went even further into co-writing an essay with AI: “We had a whole assignment where we were basically working with ChatGPT to write an essay” (AR_1). The interviewee continues, “so, I came in already using AI, like, for a wide variety of different things, personal and academic” (AR_1). Starting at Bard, therefore, required an adjustment as she needed to follow each course’s guidelines on AI use. The contrast between the interviewee’s high school and college environments led to a significant shift in her expectations regarding AI. She found it particularly surprising that students at Bard didn't seem to experiment with AI in class.

Receiving differing messages from one's professors may also discourage students from being open about their AI use. A first-year student majoring in politics and psychology explains, "because of the other policies that are too harsh on AI usage, [students] can't understand that some professors might actually be okay. That's why I think some people would opt out and choose not to inform the professor" (RK_3). In other words, overly strict policies on AI in some courses may prevent students from taking advantage of more lenient policies elsewhere, and they may also create a chilling effect on transparent communication about their AI use.

Course-by-course variation in AI policies may also affect those who support students. A writing fellow recounts being unsure of how to respond to the use of AI. "Every professor has different policies involving AI. But none of my professors has asked me to put somebody's essay in an AI checker or something like that. Never. I usually read students' drafts. I don't read their final work. And if I think that somebody has… like all of their essay is generated, I usually mention it to them. I don't tell the professor. I don't like telling the professor" (SK_2).

Even in courses with a relaxed stance on AI use, students may still recognize the need for self-regulation and critical reflection on their learning process. An interviewee has this comment about her own AI use. "There should be a boundary that you set with yourself, where you're like, 'I won't go past this.' I've broken my own boundaries before. But then I was like, 'yeah, I don't think I'm actually learning anything from this.' And I'm in college, and I have to learn, you know?" (SK_2). But the same student speaks appreciatively of a professor who models effective integration of AI into their own teaching. "One of my professors, this was even before I started using any AI tools, she used AI in a stats class, and she told us to use it in certain ways. She would generate data, for example. And then we could play around with that data. I think professors can use [AI] to their advantage" (SK_2). Faculty who themselves use AI as part of their pedagogy may prove influential by showing students how AI can be used productively in the classroom.

4.4 Toward better AI policies

Again, most interviewees agree that AI is not going anywhere. Some students thus feel that the next logical step is to design policies informed by student perspectives and that allow for experimentation. A fourth-year student majoring in economics notes, "if there are common rules and structures that students or professors should follow, then you get that integrity" (CD_1). In other words, clarity would help students understand which uses are acceptable and maintain academic standards across the institution.

Some students simply react viscerally to the idea of an outright ban on AI. A first-year student asserts that "just saying totally that it shouldn't be used in the classroom is not a good approach. I think we need to consider how we can use it positively and try to push people towards using it in a way that's actually helping them, versus being, like, 'don't use it all'" (AR_1). This comment advocates a pragmatic approach that harnesses AI's educational potential while addressing legitimate concerns about academic integrity.

However, there remains debate about whether universal policies are even feasible or desirable. A fourth-year classics major strongly argues that "you can't come up with a general policy for

something like this" (KT_1). She feels that while general policies can inform college-wide practices, personalized course-by-course policies still provide students with clear boundaries of use for each specific course and acknowledge diverse needs and pedagogical approaches across disciplines.

The challenges around AI extend beyond policy creation to implementation and enforcement. A first-year student majoring in film puts it succinctly: "I think [AI policies] are very reasonable. I just don't think that they're realistically enforceable" (FO_3). This observation highlights a gap between institutional intention and practical application, suggesting that policies must be both comprehensive and enforceable.

The diverse types of assistance available from AI tools can create additional challenges for policy development. A third-year biology and computer science major notes that existing policies often have "holes," meaning they do not provide guidance for all types of use. In his view, generating an idea or content with AI should be cited, but he questions the need to do so for simpler uses: "To find a synonym of a word or to, like, grammatically refine a sentence, I don't know. How could you even cite that?" (SH_1). In any given policy, it may prove difficult to draw clear lines between different types and levels of AI assistance.

Such challenges suggest that policies should evolve continuously as technological advancements unfold. As AI capabilities expand and become more sophisticated, academic institutions will need to regularly reassess and update their guidelines to remain relevant and effective. The key lies in creating flexible frameworks that can adapt to changing technology while maintaining academic integrity and supporting student learning.

4.5 The role of faculty

Student perspectives on how faculty might integrate AI into their professional tasks reveal a complex set of hopes and fears. When discussing how professors might incorporate AI into their teaching, some interviewees propose creative approaches that could enable faster feedback, reduce workload burdens, facilitate innovative activities, and assist with grading and course design. However, as this report has consistently highlighted, student opinions lie on a spectrum; some declare themselves completely opposed to AI use in academic settings, while others advocate for thoughtful integration that enhances rather than replaces human learning.

Students also recognize the importance of maintaining authentic academic experiences. A film major expresses some definite views about what should and should not involve AI. While recognizing that professorial workloads are high, she rejects the idea that a professor might offload tasks to AI. Students have parallel responsibilities, she argues. "I signed up for college, so I'm going to be writing a lot. So [faculty] should be able to write assignments" (FO_3). For this student, core academic work should remain human-centered. Likewise, a Classics major advocated for transparency: "I would also tell my students something like, we're on a loan…This is expensive. And if you want to make the most of your education, I would personally recommend doing x, y, z if you are going to use AI tools, you're just not going to get the most out of this experience" (KT_1).

At the other end of the spectrum, an economics and GIS major explains how using AI would help faculty members. “It's going to be inevitable for professors. I think it’s going to be really helpful for them in the future, because it's going to help them do everything way faster” (SS_1). She discusses specific ways they might use technology, from grading assignments to course design. “It could definitely be helpful for professors to use [AI], because I think it could definitely give them ideas about how to make the class more innovative” (SS_1). Another student echoes this view. “I would love to see professors use it [for] creating new activities for students, especially in language learning, because it can be very repetitive, the exercises that you're doing in class. So, bringing in something new and creative could help” (SC_1).

Of course, some students have already experienced a course in which professors encourage the use of AI for educational purposes. A third-year computer science major shares an anecdote about when her professor, during office hours, asked her to use AI to generate problem sets when she requested more examples to help her understand the concepts. “He was saying, ‘go ahead and ask ChatGPT to give you questions and then try to work on the examples that it's giving to you’” (RK_1). Such an approach demonstrates how AI can serve as a personalized learning tool under faculty guidance.

4.6 Conclusion

The consensus is that AI is a double-edged sword; it can be beneficial, but it requires careful and transparent use. Ongoing discussions between students and faculty about best practices for incorporating AI into academic settings will create a roadmap for its future integration while upholding academic integrity, personal identity, critical thinking, and writing skills.

SECTION 5: STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL AI POLICY

The following recommendations emerged from this report. The findings were discussed by a group of research team members along with other selected Bard students in December 2025. These students identified the most significant points from the report and articulated action points for the College.

1) **Students request that they become active partners in decision-making as the College develops policies around the use of AI in learning and teaching.**

Students believe that it is important for the College to approach AI policies with balance and moderation. They clearly recognize that AI is not a temporary debate topic in higher education, but an ongoing dialogue. From the student perspective, the question facing educational institutions is not whether to allow AI, but how to help students use it responsibly in ways that enhance rather than replace genuine learning. Such an approach requires clear policies that acknowledge AI's legitimate uses while protecting academic integrity, along with ongoing dialogue between students and faculty about evolving norms and expectations. The goal should be to prepare students for a world where AI literacy is essential while preserving the critical thinking, creativity, and human connection that remain irreplaceable.

2) **Faculty should adopt more consistent guidelines around the use of AI across disciplines and individual courses, as this will assist students in successfully navigating a rapidly evolving technological landscape.**

The College should work to provide clear guidance through a campus-wide AI policy. Students have stated that in the absence of meaningful support and structured guidance from the College, they are left to grapple with the complexities of AI use on their own.

A more comprehensive College policy would help establish clear ethical boundaries and remove the burden from professors of communicating and ensuring compliance with their own stated policies. If a particular course calls for a policy different from the College-wide one, it is the professor's responsibility to communicate this and include it in their syllabus.

A related recommendation is that professors engage productively with students whom they suspect of integrating AI into their work. This approach will help faculty to understand the limits and motivations behind AI use, as well as the roots of habitual use or resistance among students.

3) **The College should define clearly what constitutes plagiarism, more generally, a violation of academic integrity in an age of increasing co-authorship with AI.**

Students wish to experiment with AI and be included in current technological innovations. Detailed guidance from the College on how to appropriately and honestly acknowledge AI use in coursework would be beneficial to all. Such guidance would recognize that AI is becoming a

permanent fixture in academic and professional landscapes, and that it requires thoughtful integration rather than avoidance.

4) **The College should develop tutorials, workshops, seminars, and other programs that treat AI literacy as a core educational competency.**

The use of AI should not be regarded solely as a policy-compliance challenge. The College should design programming for both faculty and students that educates the campus community about AI capabilities and acknowledges that AI competence will become increasingly important for college graduates. Such programming might be better integrated into Language & Thinking and Citizen Science activities as introductory programs for newcomers. Program topics might include the effects of AI on learning and thinking, the environmental impacts of AI use, and how AI fits into Bard's goal of being a sustainable campus.

Faculty advisors for this AI project at Bard project noted that Carleton College has developed excellent resources to help faculty navigate course design in a time of growing generative AI use: https://www.carleton.edu/writing/resources-for-faculty/working-with-ai/assessing-your-assignments-for-genai/.

5) **Further investigation should be undertaken around the impacts and potential of AI on learning and teaching at Bard.**

Both students and faculty should be involved, and collaboration with nearby institutions of higher education would be optimal.