SUNY New Paltz is developing a set of AI guidelines to help guide decision making around AI for staff, faculty, and students. With the help of materials from other schools, especially SUNY's Empire State, the SUNY New Paltz AI Inquiry Group (with lots of work by Rich Mcelrath) started drafting informational guidelines. Additional faculty, staff, and administrators from Computing Services, the Office of Academic Affairs, and multiple academic departments have started offering revisions to the guidelines. In the fall of 2025, the plan is to move through a more complete revision process with the Committee on Educational Technology and key campus stakeholders before bringing a version of the guidelines to the Faculty Senate. The goal is eventual agreement, approval, and publication for the campus. The partial, draft version included here is still in an early feedback stage and your thoughts are welcome now and throughout the process.

SUNY New Paltz Early Draft AI Guidance:

General AI Use Guidance

When using AI tools and handling data, it's important to follow some commonsense guidelines to ensure safe, ethical, and effective use. Here are some key principles:

Understand the Tool: Familiarize yourself with the AI tool's capabilities, limitations, and intended use.

Privacy: Always respect privacy laws, regulations, work and school policies, guidelines and instructions. Ensure that any data you use is anonymized and that you have the necessary permissions to use it. Avoid sharing sensitive or personal information. Look for tools that respect user privacy by being transparent about the data collected and how it's used.

User Data Autonomy: Allowing users to opt out of AI experiences without losing access to the product.

- Users should have the option to decline data sharing.
- Users should be able to change their data-sharing preferences at any time, ensuring they have control over their personal information.

Transparency: Be clear about when and how AI is being used. If you're using AI to generate content or make decisions, inform the reviewer.

Bias and Fairness: Be aware of potential biases in the data and the AI model. Strive to use diverse and representative datasets to minimize bias and ensure fairness.

Accuracy and Verification: AI-generated content should be verified for accuracy. Cross-check information with reliable sources to avoid spreading misinformation.

Ethical Use: Use AI tools ethically. Avoid using AI for malicious purposes, such as generating fake news, deepfakes, or engaging in discriminatory practices.

Feedback and Improvement: Provide feedback to AI developers about your experience. This helps improve the tool and address any issues or limitations.

Continuous Learning: Stay updated with the latest developments in AI technology and best practices. Engage in continuous learning to enhance your understanding and use of AI.

Human Oversight: Maintain human oversight over AI systems. AI should assist, not replace, human judgment and decision-making.

User Autonomy: Allowing users to opt out of AI experiences without losing access to the product.

- Users should have the option to decline data sharing.
- Users should be able to change their data-sharing preferences at any time, ensuring they have control over their personal information.
- Users should not share confidential or personal information

Ethical Academic use of AI at SUNY New Paltz guiding principles:

- **Academic Integrity** – Understand when AI assistance is allowed and when independent work is required. Follow university, college/school, department, and course policies on AI use in coursework. It is important that there may be differences in how a professor treats AI in different courses that they teach for different assignments. So, at every level, you need to understand the expectations of each assignment in each course for each professor.
- **Transparency** – If you use AI for writing, research, or brainstorming, disclose it when appropriate (e.g., in citations or acknowledgments).
- **Critical Thinking** – Don't take AI-generated content at face value. Verify facts, question biases, and refine outputs with your own expertise.
- **Bias Awareness** – AI can reflect societal biases. Be mindful of fairness, inclusivity, and potential ethical concerns when using AI-generated content.
- **Privacy and Security** – Avoid inputting sensitive or personal data into AI systems. Respect others' privacy when using AI tools.

AI Use Responsibilities

To create a balanced approach to AI in education, community members should focus on intent, transparency, and guidance:

- **Faculty Responsibilities:**
  - Define AI use expectations in syllabi (e.g., permitted vs. restricted uses).
  - Encourage AI literacy by discussing its strengths and limitations in the classroom.
  - Adapt assessments to emphasize critical thinking and original contributions.
- **Student Responsibilities:**
  - Use AI as a learning aid rather than a shortcut.
  - Disclose AI usage when required by instructors.
  - Do not use AI where or in ways that are prohibited in course, syllabi and assignments or stated elsewhere. (e.g., permitted vs. restricted uses).
  - Critically evaluate AI-generated content for accuracy and bias.
  - The person using AI is the person responsible for the AI output
  - Contact your instructor if you have questions.
- **Institutional Responsibilities:**
  - Regularly update academic policies to reflect evolving AI technologies.
  - Provide workshops and resources on ethical AI use.
  - Engage in ongoing discussions about AI's role in academia.