

Weekly AI in Higher Education Report

June 5, 2026

1. Executive Summary

- **AI Agent Concerns Emerge:** The shift from generative AI to "agentic AI" (AI that can autonomously complete multi-step tasks) is raising new alarms, as these tools can now navigate Learning Management Systems (LMS) and complete assignments with minimal human intervention [1].
- **Sweeping AI Bans at Elite Law Schools:** UC Berkeley School of Law has implemented a strict ban on AI use for all exams and credited coursework, effective Summer 2026, due to an increase in hallucinated citations and flawed legal analysis [2].
- **Statewide Policy Mandates:** Idaho has enacted the first statewide AI framework for K-12 and education, mandating policies on privacy, procurement, and AI literacy, while Mississippi launched a comprehensive framework connecting K-12, higher education, and workforce readiness [2].
- **Student Usage Outpaces Faculty:** A recent study reveals a massive gap in AI adoption: 76% of students use AI for studying compared to 45% of faculty, and 92% of students use it for tasks like patient notes, despite a lack of formal training for either group [2].
- **AI Market and Investment:** The market for AI in education continues to grow rapidly, expected to reach \$7.57 billion by the end of 2025. However, there is skepticism about whether AI will revive the struggling Online Program Management (OPM) market [3] [4].
- **Syllabus Policy Necessity:** Experts are strongly advocating for clear, detailed AI policies in course syllabi—covering acceptable use, necessary citations, and consequences for nonadherence—as a critical first step while institutions develop broader frameworks [5].

2. Major News and Developments

The Rise of Agentic AI in Online Learning

The conversation around AI in education is shifting from generative AI (like ChatGPT) to agentic AI. Unlike generative models that require continuous prompting, agentic AI can work autonomously to achieve goals. Testing by instructional designers revealed that AI agents can navigate Learning Management Systems (like D2L), read materials, and complete various assignments, including discussions and quizzes, with passable quality [1]. This development challenges current detection methods and emphasizes the need for authentic, metacognitive assessment strategies rather than relying solely on technological stopgaps.

Accreditation Overhaul Targets AI Misconduct

The U.S. Department of Education's Accreditation, Innovation, and Modernization (AIM) rulemaking committee has proposed new rules requiring accreditors to evaluate institutions' research integrity procedures specifically regarding AI-related misconduct. This includes plagiarism, citation manipulation, and fabricated findings. If finalized,

these rules will take effect in July 2027, forcing institutions to rapidly develop robust AI governance frameworks [2].

Debate Over "Writing as a Proxy for Thinking"

A recent piece in *Inside Higher Ed* tackled the debate over whether writing is merely a proxy for thinking or if writing *is* thinking. The author argues that both perspectives miss the mark regarding generative AI. Writing is described as a technology used to manage the cognitive load of language. Generative AI fundamentally alters this by offloading the actual generation of language, potentially distancing students from their own ideas and impairing the critical cognitive processes involved in traditional writing [6].

The OPM Market and AI

Online Program Management (OPM) companies are increasingly adopting AI (70% currently deploy it) for coaching, content creation, and tutoring. However, analysts are skeptical that AI will save the "stale" OPM market, which has suffered from reputational damage, declining university partnerships, and increased regulatory scrutiny. While AI may improve operational efficiency, it is unlikely to drive the significant growth private equity owners seek [4].

3. Institutional Implementations

UC Berkeley School of Law's Strict Ban

In a significant move counter to the trend of AI integration, UC Berkeley School of Law has banned generative AI for all graded work and exams starting Summer 2026. The policy was enacted after a documented spike in hallucinated citations in student submissions. The default is prohibition, placing the compliance burden heavily on faculty and students [2].

California State University's OpenAI Partnership Struggles

CSU's \$17 million deal to provide ChatGPT Edu to its students and faculty has met significant resistance. A university-wide survey showed that 65% of students and 59% of faculty are skeptical of AI's overall benefit to education. Furthermore, 80% of students expressed discomfort turning in AI-generated work as their own, citing ethical, environmental, and job-security concerns. Despite this, CSU renewed the contract for another three years [7].

University of Utah's "UGuide"

The University of Utah has developed UGuide, an AI-enabled tool designed to help students explore academic pathways and career opportunities. The tool provides personalized guidance and real-time workforce insights, addressing the common disconnect between choosing a major and understanding future career prospects. Utah plans to share its insights with the broader University Innovation Alliance network [8].

4. Research and Studies

Warning Messages Increase Help-Seeking

A study published on arXiv investigated the effect of a simple transparency cue in an intelligent tutoring system. Students who were shown a warning message stating that the pedagogical agent "can make mistakes" requested significantly more hints than those who did not see the warning, even though the system's behavior was identical for both groups. This suggests that lightweight interventions can effectively encourage a more cautious, metacognitive approach to AI assistance [9].

The Gap Between Student and Faculty Usage

A study at the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine highlighted a stark contrast in AI adoption. While 76% of students use AI for studying, only 45% of faculty do. More concerning is that 92% of students use AI for tasks like patient notes, compared to 5% of faculty. The study noted that only 2.6% of students had received formal AI training, emphasizing an urgent need for structured AI literacy programs [2].

Global AI Usage Statistics

Recent data indicates that 86% of students globally use AI for their studies. The usage rate jumps to 94% among university students. ChatGPT remains the dominant tool (66% usage). However, concerns remain: over 30% of students may become overly dependent on these tools, and 33% face accusations related to excessive AI use and plagiarism [3].

5. Policy and Guidelines Updates

The Importance of Syllabus Policies

With institutional policies lagging, faculty are urged to include explicit AI frameworks in their course syllabi. Experts recommend a three-component approach:

1. **Acceptable Use:** Clearly defining which tools are permitted and for what tasks.
2. **Necessary Citations:** Requiring formal or informal disclosure of AI use.
3. **Nonadherence Policy:** Outlining the consequences for violating the guidelines.

This localized approach helps reduce student cognitive load and sets clear expectations while broader institutional frameworks are developed [5].

State-Level Frameworks

- **Idaho:** Enacted SB 1227, directing the state education department to create a comprehensive K-12 AI framework covering privacy, procurement, academic integrity, and AI literacy [2].
- **Mississippi:** Launched a Statewide AI Framework organizing AI skills into 11 domains, mapping competencies from foundational understanding to application in priority industries, aiming to bridge the gap between K-12, higher education, and the workforce [2].

6. Emerging Trends

- **The Agentic AI Threat:** The evolution of AI from generative to agentic—capable of autonomously completing complex, multi-step tasks within digital learning environments—is forcing educators to rethink assessment entirely, moving away from tasks that an AI agent can easily automate [1].
- **Focus on AI Literacy and Equity:** Organizations like Every Learner Everywhere are emphasizing that AI adoption must not reinforce existing barriers. There is a growing push for AI literacy frameworks that teach students not just how to use tools, but how to understand their limitations, biases, and ethical implications [10].
- **Pushback Against Tech Solutionism:** The resistance seen at institutions like CSU indicates that students and faculty are increasingly wary of top-down

technological mandates. There is a growing demand for evidence-based implementation rather than adopting AI simply for the sake of innovation [7].

7. Source Links

- [1] [Am I Teaching a Robot? Mapping the Agentic AI Problem](#)
- [2] [Latest AI in Education News and Policies | April-May 2026](#)
- [3] [81 AI in Education Statistics 2026 \[Global Usage & Impact\]](#)
- [4] [Will AI Help Revive the ‘Stale’ OPM Market?](#)
- [5] [Do I need an AI policy in the course syllabus?](#)
- [6] [Writing Is Proxy v. Writing Is Thinking: What Both Get Wrong About Generative AI](#)
- [7] [California State University Made a Huge Deal With OpenAI and It’s Been a Disaster](#)
- [8] [Testimony of Bridget Burns, Ed.D. - U.S. House of Representatives](#)
- [9] [Warning About AI Fallibility Increases Help-Seeking in an Intelligent Tutoring System](#)
- [10] [Every Learner Everywhere - Artificial Intelligence](#)