Proposed Framework for University AI Guidelines

Introduction and Purpose

This document outlines a proposed framework for developing comprehensive AI guidelines at CU Denver. Drawing on best practices from other institutions, particularly MSU Denver and McMaster University, these guidelines aim to support ethical and effective use of AI while maintaining academic integrity, protecting data privacy, and enhancing the educational experience.

Our approach emphasizes:

- Building upon existing university policies rather than creating entirely new frameworks
- Providing clear guidance for both instructors and students
- Balancing innovation and experimentation with ethical considerations
- Creating educational resources to support implementation

Integration with Existing CU Denver Policies

This framework is designed to work within CU Denver's established policy ecosystem rather than replacing or duplicating existing governance structures. Throughout this document, we reference specific CU Denver policies that provide the foundation for our AI guidelines, ensuring institutional consistency and leveraging established procedures.

Core Components for AI Guidelines

1. Guiding Principles for AI Use

- **Augment, Not Replace**: AI should enhance human judgment and creativity, not substitute for it
- **Transparency**: Clear disclosure of AI use in academic and administrative contexts
- **Fairness**: Ensuring AI systems are used in ways that avoid bias and discrimination
- **Privacy**: Protecting sensitive university data and personal information
- **Academic Integrity**: Maintaining scholarly standards while embracing innovation
- **Accessibility**: Ensuring AI tools and guidelines are accessible to all university community members

Policy Connection Statement: *These guiding principles align with multiple existing CU Denver policies, including Policy 5012D (Digital Accessibility), which establishes accessibility standards; Policy 3057 (Personally Identifiable Information), which outlines privacy requirements; and Policy 7050 (Academic Integrity), which defines academic standards. Additionally, these principles support Policy 3040 (Whistleblower and Retaliation Policy) by*

encouraging transparent disclosure of AI use and protecting those who raise concerns about improper AI applications.

2. Faculty Guidelines for AI Use in Teaching

2.1 Required Syllabus Statement on AI Use

- Mandatory inclusion of an AI policy statement in all course syllabi
- Providing faculty with template language that can be customized based on course needs
- Clear articulation of permitted and prohibited AI use for the specific course

Policy Connection Statement: *In accordance with Policy 1031 (Syllabus), which establishes syllabi as "essential components of good teaching, student learning, and outcomes assessment," all course syllabi must include a statement regarding AI use expectations. The AI syllabus statement will become a required component of the syllabus template, similar to other required elements such as course objectives and assessment methods. Faculty will select from approved template language options or customize statements with department chair approval.*

2.2 Faculty Disclosure Requirements

- **Proposed Threshold for Disclosure**: Faculty should acknowledge AI use when:
    - AI provides ideas, analysis, or content incorporated into teaching materials
    - AI is used to create assessments or evaluation criteria
    - AI is used to provide feedback on student work
    - *Minimal disclosure needed for minor uses (e.g., spelling/grammar checks, formatting)*

Policy Connection Statement: *These disclosure requirements align with Policy 1026 (Evaluating Qualifications of Instructional Faculty), which establishes standards for faculty qualifications and expectations. By requiring transparent disclosure of substantive AI use, these guidelines reinforce faculty responsibility while acknowledging the evolving nature of teaching tools. The differentiated disclosure thresholds recognize the difference between minor editing assistance and substantial content creation, consistent with the university's commitment to academic honesty and transparency.*

2.3 Sample Syllabus Statements (Multiple Options)

- **Option 1: AI Prohibited**
    - Clear statement prohibiting AI use with reference to academic integrity policy
    - Explanation of reasoning tied to learning objectives
- **Option 2: Limited AI Use**
    - Specification of permitted AI uses (e.g., brainstorming, editing, translation)
    - Required citation/disclosure process
    - Consequences of unauthorized use
    - Citation and disclosure expectations
- **Option 3: Integrated AI Use**

    - Guidelines for appropriate AI use as a learning tool
    - Requirements for critical evaluation of AI outputs
    - Citation and disclosure expectations
- **Option 4: Experimental AI Use**
    - Framework for using AI as part of course experimentation
    - Documentation requirements
    - Learning reflection components
    - Citation and disclosure expectations

Policy Connection Statement: *These sample syllabus statements provide faculty with standardized language options that comply with both Policy 1031 (Syllabus) and Policy 7050 (Academic Integrity). The multiple options accommodate different pedagogical approaches and disciplinary needs while maintaining institutional consistency. Faculty may select the option that best aligns with their course learning objectives, modifying as needed with department chair approval, consistent with existing syllabus development processes.*

3. Student Guidelines for AI Use in Learning

3.1 Clear Expectations Framework

- General principles for ethical AI use in academic contexts
- Default position at the University level on AI use if not specified in a course syllabus
- Process for seeking clarification about permitted AI use

Policy Connection Statement: *Building upon Policy 7003 (Student Code of Conduct), these guidelines establish clear expectations for student AI use. When course-specific AI policies are not articulated in a syllabus, the default university position will apply. Students retain the responsibility to seek clarification from instructors about permissible AI use in coursework, consistent with their responsibility to understand course expectations under the existing Code of Conduct.*

3.2 Citation and Acknowledgment Guidelines

- Standardized format for citing AI assistance in academic work
- Threshold for required disclosure (e.g., substantial assistance vs. minor editing)
- Examples of appropriate and inappropriate AI use

Policy Connection Statement: *These guidelines establish a disclosure threshold for AI use in academic work, wherein minor uses (such as spelling or grammar checking) may not require disclosure, while substantive uses (generating ideas, drafting text, or solving problems) must be properly cited. This approach is consistent with Policy 7006 (Transferring Undergraduate Credit), which establishes methods for acknowledging academic work from external sources.*

3.3 Academic Integrity Connection

- Reference to existing academic integrity policies

- Clarification on how AI misuse relates to academic misconduct
- Optional honor pledge language for assignments
- Guidelines for questioning students about suspected academic dishonesty

Policy Connection Statement: *In accordance with Policy 7050 (Academic Integrity), unauthorized or undisclosed AI use may constitute academic misconduct. This policy already defines academic misconduct as including "plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and facilitating academic dishonesty," all of which may apply to improper AI use. The AI guidelines clarify, rather than replace, these existing standards. The honor pledge options provided in these guidelines reinforce the commitments already expected under the Academic Integrity policy.*

4. Data Privacy and Security

4.1 Protected Data Guidelines

- Clear prohibition on inputting sensitive university data into public AI tools
- Reference to existing data classification policies
- Guidelines for use of AI with unique student generated content
- Guidelines for use of AI with third party content
- List of data types that should never be shared with AI tools, including:
    - Student records (FERPA-protected data)
    - Health information (HIPAA-protected data)
    - Financial data
    - Personal identifiable information

Policy Connection Statement: *These AI guidelines reinforce and extend Policy 3057 (Personally Identifiable Information) and Policy 5001 (Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources). Public AI tools are explicitly categorized as external systems where protected university data should not be shared. Consistent with existing policies, all FERPA-protected student information, HIPAA-protected health information, financial records, and personally identifiable information are prohibited from being input into non-university-approved AI systems. This prohibition aligns with the university's existing obligations under Policy 3008 (Online Privacy Policy) to protect confidential information.*

4.2 Approved AI Tools

- List of university-approved AI platforms with appropriate privacy safeguards
- Process for requesting access to specialized AI tools
- Guidelines for using university-wide AI licenses

Policy Connection Statement: *In alignment with Policy 5014 (Application Software Acquisition), which requires "identifying software that requires special consideration in its implementation prior to procurement," all AI tools must undergo appropriate privacy and security review before university-wide deployment. The Office of Information Technology will maintain a list of approved AI platforms that meet university security standards, similar to other approved software applications under Policy 5015 (Enterprise Application).*

4.3 Experimental Tool Guidelines

- Process for faculty and staff to experiment with new AI tools not yet officially approved
- Risk assessment requirements
- Data limitations for experimental AI use
- Documentation and reporting expectations

Policy Connection Statement: *While encouraging innovation with emerging AI technologies, these guidelines establish clear boundaries for experimentation with non-approved AI tools. Faculty may test new AI tools for educational purposes while adhering to data limitations consistent with Policy 6001 (Procedures for Evaluating Conflicts of Interest and Commitment) and Policy 5001 (Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources). Any experimental use must involve only non-sensitive data, require appropriate disclosure to students, and include documentation of the experimental nature of the tool.*

5. Resources and Support

5.1 "Getting Started with AI" Resource Center

- Educational materials for AI beginners
- Best practices for different AI applications
- Ethical considerations primer
- Regular workshops and training opportunities

Policy Connection Statement: *Consistent with Policy 1015 (New Faculty Orientation), which establishes the university's obligation to introduce policies and procedures to new faculty, the "Getting Started with AI" Resource Center will provide essential guidance for faculty at all levels of AI experience. This resource center extends the university's commitment to faculty development and complements existing orientation programs by addressing this emerging technological area.*

5.2 AI Learning Community

- Faculty mentor program for AI integration
- Regular discussion forums on AI developments
- Repository of successful AI integration examples

Policy Connection Statement: *Building upon Policy 1012 (Differentiated Annual Workloads), faculty participation in the AI Learning Community may be recognized as a service contribution in workload assignments. This approach recognizes the significant time investment required to develop AI expertise and mentor colleagues, while ensuring that AI innovation is appropriately valued within the university's existing faculty workload framework.*

5.3 Technical Support

- Dedicated support for university-approved AI tools

- Consultation services for course-specific AI implementation
- Assessment redesign assistance

Policy Connection Statement: *Technical support for AI tools will be integrated into existing university support systems established under Policy 5001 (Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources). The Office of Information Technology, in collaboration with the Center for Faculty Development and the Office of Digital Education, will provide specialized consultation services to assist faculty with AI implementation in teaching and research contexts.*

Note: These recommendations were generated based on feedback of the AI Strategy Working Group for Teaching & Learning with the help of Claude.ai