



LEHIGH
UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

What to do about ChatGPT?

Dear Colleagues,

As we look to the spring and ongoing work on strategic planning, recruiting faculty and students, and other projects, one topic that has caught my attention (and the attention of many in higher education) is the emergence of some easy-to-use generative AI tools such as Chat-GTP and DALL-E. **Here I am writing to recommend that all faculty discuss the use of these tools in their classes with students and to invite submissions of ideas about potential uses of these technologies.**

For those of you who might not have followed some of [the recent press](#), Chat-GTP is a software tool that generates text in response to a prompt or question. It is one of a number of recently developed or improved tools in the area of generative AI. The text that is generated by ChatGPT is often good enough to pass as human-generated and good enough to get favorable grades when turned in for college-level assignments. Some examples of use cases for ChatGPT and other generative AI tools are here in [a presentation that I gave](#). Uses that have potential impact on higher education include [writing essays](#) for college applications, writing [scientific abstracts and even papers](#).

Some have asked, shouldn't we stop students from using these tools? Indeed, the New York Public Schools have [banned ChatGPT](#). Faculty have the right to (within reason) make decisions about how they will assess students. For example, we can tell students whether they can or cannot use a calculator on a particular assignment. **I recommend that all faculty explicitly address the use of ChatGPT and similar tools with their students and at least have a statement in their syllabus about appropriate use in the context of their class.** This will avoid ambiguity that may otherwise arise and result in conflict around issues such as academic integrity.

In my view, outside of special cases, attempting to ban tools like ChatGPT would be short sighted and likely impossible to enforce. Students are going to be living and working in a world where these tools are in use and employers and others will expect that their employees generate the best possible work using all the tools available, including generative AI tools. So while it may be appropriate to place restrictions on use of these tools in specific cases to meet particular learning objectives, generally we should embrace their use and train our students to be adept and creative in using these and similar tools.

Development of these generative AI tools in fact create opportunity for those universities willing to run towards rather than away from these new technologies, not unlike the early adopters of online learning who were able to get ahead of their peers in addressing the time and space affordances of the early internet. What if Lehigh students were the best in the world at using these tools to enhance their creativity or productivity? What if a typical Lehigh grad gave more effective presentations or wrote more clearly and compellingly because they were good at using these kinds of tools. What if Lehigh grad students wrote papers twice as fast because they were able to use these tools to automate aspects of their work? At the very least AI tools will invite us to ask whether what we are assessing is simply replication and mimicry rather than original thought and voice.

Given this context, I would like to encourage people across campus to focus on a few questions that I think are fundamental to higher education.

1. How might we use generative AI tools to enhance student learning at Lehigh?
2. How can we best prepare students for a world and workplace in which use of tools like these will be commonplace?
3. How might we as faculty and staff use these tools to make all our work more efficient and effective outside of the educational context?
4. How will these generative AI tools shape the production and assessment of research and scholarly activity? How will they change the quality of research produced?

In order to foster conversation about these tools I would like to invite anyone on campus (faculty, staff or students) submit a video or podcast (up to 5 minutes long) that answers one of the questions above. A small group of faculty and staff will review the submissions and award travel grants in each of these categories. These travel grants will cover the costs (up to \$2,500) for the winner to travel to a meeting or conference focused on educational innovation or educational technology, such as ASU+GSV or SXSW EDU. Winners and select other submissions will be asked to participate in a workshop on creative uses of these technologies later in the semester. The deadline for submissions is 10 February 2023. Please send links to the video or audio of these submissions to: provost@lehigh.edu with the subject line "Generative AI ideas". Use of these tools in creating answers to these questions is allowed and even encouraged.

Best,
Nathan