



7 ways higher education can harness AI's potential

Executive summary



Forward-thinking colleges and universities are looking for ways to incorporate and embrace Gen AI ... in ways that can enhance efficiency and improve outcomes across the academic enterprise, from operations and research to student services and learning.⁵

Higher education institutions today face mounting pressure on every front. Enrollments are declining, driven by demographic shifts and growing skepticism about the value of a degree¹. At the same time, competition is heating up – not just from other institutions, but from non-traditional education providers and alternative credentialing platforms. These pressures are compounding long-standing financial constraints, pushing schools to reevaluate their budgets and find smarter ways to operate².

Meanwhile, faculty and staff are stretched thin. Rising workloads are leading to stress and burnout, making it harder to retain talent. Staff spend too much time searching across fragmented systems and repeating manual tasks. Faculty are under pressure to publish more, manage more, and quickly adapt to AI-powered hybrid learning. According to a recent survey by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) institutional leaders are broadly concerned about faculty aren't yet equipped to use AI tools in their teaching and administrative work – posing a real challenge to modernization⁴.

To stay competitive, ease budget pressures, and attract and retain talent, institutions need to take a proactive approach. That means using AI not just to keep up, but to unlock better teaching models, smarter operations, and more personalized experiences.

In this paper, we explore seven key ways higher education can apply AI to drive real transformation. And we show how Glean, the leading Work AI platform, helps institutions move faster, work smarter, and build for the future.

In addition, expectations around teaching and learning are changing fast. Today's student population is more diverse than ever, including non-traditional learners and digital natives. They expect personalized, flexible, and accessible educational experiences – learning models that institutions historically have not delivered at scale⁴.

1 [2025 EDUCAUSE Horizon Report](#)

2 [Deloitte Insights, 2025 Higher Education Trends](#)

3 [Deloitte Insights, How higher education can realize the potential of Generative AI](#)

4 [Deloitte, Preparing students for an AI-driven workforce and the future of work](#)

5 [Higher Education Leaders Navigate AI Disruption](#)

Table of contents

Enhance each student's learning journey	Transform the faculty teaching experience	Increase student recruitment and retention
01	02	03
Streamline administrative services and boost efficiency	Optimize academic medical center workflows	Modernize research and insights across the institution
05	06	07
Ensure data privacy, compliance, and responsible use of AI tools		
09		

Enhance each student's learning journey

Today's students arrive at college with a new set of expectations. They've grown up with personalized digital experiences, and now expect the same from their education. For them, they don't view this technology as a nice-to-have – it's central to how they learn.

They also expect institutions to meet them where they are. That means offering education that fits into their lives, supports their individual learning styles, and provides help when they need it – not only during office hours. Traditional models like fixed schedules and one-size-fits-all curricula are no longer enough. As Deloitte put it: “Today's modern learner expects to be able to commence, pause, and conclude their studies in alignment with their personal and professional commitments⁶.”

In a competitive education landscape, institutions can use AI to reimagine student engagement by:

- **Tailoring educational content to individual needs.** AI can analyze each student's progress and performance to identify specific knowledge gaps and learning patterns, then generate customized practice problems, interactive exercises, and supplemental materials that support their specific needs..
- **Closing digital equity gaps with inclusive tools.** Disparities in access, digital literacy, and learning accommodations can hold students back – especially in tech-driven environments. . Inclusive tools help level the playing field, ensuring that every student can fully participate.
- **Providing on-demand learning support.** AI-powered tutoring systems can adapt to different learning styles, offer targeted explanations, and detect when a student is struggling, so they can get help exactly when they need it.
- **Deploying an AI-powered, institution-wide knowledge base.** Students often struggle to make sense of the complex array of program requirements and prerequisites. A central, AI-powered knowledge base can offer personalized, step-by-step guidance while easing the load on advisors and faculty.
- **Improving access to student services.** From answering FAQs to scheduling appointments, AI can deliver quick, consistent support across every touchpoint – boosting both satisfaction and efficiency.

How Glean helps transform the student experience

Glean connects the dots across campus. A generative Work AI platform, it pulls together institutional knowledge from across systems and connects to 100+ everyday apps – including Canvas, Google Workspace, Microsoft Office, Workday, Salesforce, ServiceNow, Slack, Box, and DropBox – to create a centralized, AI-powered knowledge base for the entire academic community.

⁶ [Deloitte Insights, 2025 Higher Education Trends](#)



Technology as groundbreaking as AI has the potential to disrupt or fundamentally transform higher education. AI might become an institutional differentiator, providing some colleges and universities a competitive advantage⁷.”

With Glean, students get more than answers – they get support that’s responsive, personalized, and available when they need it. The result? Higher engagement, less friction, and a smoother learning journey from start to finish.

- **Tailored educational content:** Glean creates personalized learning materials based on each student’s knowledge gaps, skills, and learning styles. With adaptive practice problems and targeted, responsive content, students stay engaged and perform better.
- **Personalized learning support:** Through intelligent tutoring, Glean gives students explanations tailored to how they learn, helping them master complex topics at their own pace.
- **Comprehensive access to student services:** Whether students need academic advising, career support, or mental health resources, Glean helps them find answers quickly through an AI-powered, institution-wide knowledge base.

Transform the faculty teaching experience

Faculty are under increasing pressure. Budget cuts have led to heavier teaching loads and less administrative support – leaving many stretched thin. At the same time, expectations are shifting. Instructors are being asked to deliver more engaging, tech-enabled, and flexible learning experiences, but often lack the time and resources to keep up.

AI offers a path forward, but only if it’s implemented thoughtfully. In a recent AAC&U survey, large majorities of higher education leaders saw Gen AI tools delivering myriad benefits for faculty: improved quality of assignments to students, relief from routine work, and assistance with research⁸.

To realize those benefits, faculty need space to learn new tools and reimagine how they work. By carefully integrating AI use cases into faculty workflows, institutions can begin to rebalance the teaching experience – reducing administrative burdens, enhancing pedagogical capabilities, and creating more sustainable faculty workloads⁹.

⁷ [Deloitte Insights, 2025 Higher Education EDUCAUSE: AI Procurement in Higher Education: Benefits and Risks of Emerging Tools](#)

⁸ [AAC&U: Higher Education Leaders Navigate AI Disruption](#)

⁹ [EdTech: 5 Ways To Implement AI Effectively Into Faculty Work](#)

How Glean helps
faculty improve
the teaching
experience

Increase student recruitment and retention

Colleges and universities can use AI to improve the faculty experience by:

- **Reducing administrative load.** AI tools can take routine tasks off faculty plates – like drafting emails, writing letters, or organizing calendars – so they can focus their attention on teaching and researching.
- **Speeding up course development.** With AI-powered tools, it's easier to refresh course content, adjust to new learning needs, and incorporate emerging topics without starting from scratch.
- **Automating assessments.** AI can handle time-consuming tasks like initial grading and plagiarism checks, freeing up faculty to focus on higher-value feedback and instruction.

Keeping faculty up to speed. A centralized knowledge base makes it easy for faculty to stay current on both academic research and the latest in education technology, without spending hours digging for updates.

-
- **Task automation and time savings:** Glean helps automate everyday tasks, like replying to emails or drafting letters of recommendation, using the latest institutional knowledge. Glean has saved as much as 110 hours per user per year with its search and Gen AI capabilities¹⁰.
 - **Faster course development:** Glean makes it easy to build, revise, and adapt course content – helping faculty keep pace with new teaching formats like hybrid, remote, or microlearning.
 - **Smarter assessments:** Glean connects to and organizes automated assessments that complement faculty input, giving real-time insights into student performance and enabling more targeted support.

Quick access to research and resources: With a centralized knowledge base, faculty can stay current on academic developments and evolving AI tools making it easier to discover, create, and share new ideas.

Many colleges and universities are confronting a tough enrollment landscape. As demographics shift, fewer students are enrolling – and those who do are more skeptical than ever about the value of a degree. Today's prospective students are showing unprecedented skepticism about the value of a college degree¹¹. Facing significant financial investment to enroll, they demand clear evidence that educational institutions are responsive to changing workforce needs.

At the same time, today's student population is increasingly diverse, with more first-generation, nontraditional, and historically underserved learners. These students often need flexible learning options and personalized support. Institutions that meet those needs can stand out in a crowded market. Those that stick to one-size-fits-all models may find it harder to reach enrollment goals.

¹⁰ [The Total Economic Impact™ Of Glean](#)

¹¹ [Deloitte Insights: How higher education can realize the potential of Generative AI](#)

Forward-thinking institutions know that embracing AI isn't just about improving efficiency. Leadership in AI can enhance both market positioning and appeal to students looking for more modern, responsive learning experiences. "Schools are competing for resources and students not only against each other but also against a declining perception of higher education's social and economic value. To maintain global leadership, postsecondary education in the United States should embrace pedagogical transformation – with a boost from emerging technologies^t."

Colleges and universities can use AI to strengthen recruitment and retention by:

- **Modernizing curriculum and teaching strategies.** AI helps institutions keep courses aligned with real-world needs – analyzing workforce trends, spotting gaps in existing programs, and enabling more dynamic learning approaches like personalized pathways and immersive simulations.
- **Streamlining admissions.** AI can analyze applicant data to support more strategic enrollment decisions and automate candidate sorting, making it easier to build strong cohorts while reducing manual work. Personalized communications also help schools engage prospective students more effectively.
- **Supporting diverse student needs.** AI-powered tools can identify when students are struggling – whether it's academically, financially, or personally – and connect them to the right resources. This kind of proactive, tailored support improves outcomes and expands access for underserved populations.

How Glean helps increase student recruitment and retention

- **Institution-wide visibility for leadership.** Glean's AI-powered search and knowledge base centralize insights from over 120 systems, helping institutions surface academic strengths, benchmark against peers, and lead with confidence in AI-enabled education.
- **Faster curriculum innovation.** Glean uses generative AI to support curriculum gap analysis, create personalized learning paths, and update content in real time, pulling insights from lectures, research, and student feedback to accelerate redesign.
- **Smarter admissions.** Glean streamlines the admissions process with AI-driven candidate sorting, personalized outreach, and predictive modeling to identify applicants most likely to succeed. These tools reduce manual work and keep efforts aligned with institutional goals.
- **Support for diverse learners.** Glean includes accessibility features like automatic transcription, multilingual support, and curated resource hubs designed for nontraditional and underserved students.
- **Improved applicant experience.** Schools can extend Glean to prospective students, giving them faster, easier access to key information, and helping drive more applications.

12 [Deloitte Insights: How higher education can realize the potential of Generative AI](#)

Streamline administrative services and boost efficiency

“

AI offers the opportunity to bend the cost curve of administrative work in higher education¹³.

Administrative operations are often where higher ed institutions feel the most pressure. Resources are tight, complexity is growing, and staff are spending too much time chasing down information across disconnected systems. Manual processes can't keep up with shifting regulations, rising expectations, and day-to-day demands, slowing down teams and creating bottlenecks across the organization.

Financial strain only adds to the challenge. With revenues flat or declining and costs on the rise, universities need to find smarter ways to operate. The goal isn't to cut corners, but to improve efficiency without compromising the student experience or institutional competitiveness.

AI offers a more sustainable path forward. By automating workflows, reducing duplication, and unlocking data across departments, institutions can work more efficiently, deliver better service, and create more fulfilling roles for the people who keep things running.

Institutions can use AI to streamline administrative services and improve how information is shared across departments:

- **Improve efficiency and reclaim time.** Staff often lose hours searching through fragmented systems. AI-powered knowledge management makes it faster to find information and apply consistent policies, freeing teams to focus on higher-impact work.
- **Use resources more effectively.** AI can highlight inefficiencies, automate repetitive tasks, and help redirect staff time toward work that matters most. This leads to faster decisions and smoother workflows across the institution.
- **Do more with constrained budgets.** AI tools that span departments offer a scalable way to meet budget challenges. Instead of fixing isolated issues, institutions can resolve systemic inefficiencies and make better use of their technology investments.
- **Simplify training and communication.** AI-enabled platforms support personalized, on-demand training for faculty and staff. New hires ramp up faster, and existing employees stay up to date with less effort.
- **Strengthen student support.** With proactive analytics, institutions can turn success data into action, identifying at-risk students, validating new learning models, and ensuring support resources are used where they're needed most.

How Glean helps increase administrative efficiency and productivity

- **IT support teams** benefit from faster access to information, which speeds up ticket resolution by up to 20%¹⁴. Glean also lowers overall ticket volume by making accurate answers more accessible to everyone on campus.
- **Student and employee onboarding managers** save significant time by streamlining access to key resources. With faster access to key resources, new hires and students can hit the ground running. In one study, Glean saved 36 hours per employee on onboarding¹⁵.

¹³ [Deloitte Insights, 2025 Higher Education Trends](#)

¹⁴ [The Total Economic Impact™ Of Glean](#)

¹⁵ [The Total Economic Impact™ Of Glean](#)

Optimize academic medical center workflows

- **Recruitment, admissions, and enrollment leaders** use Glean to align strategies across departments by searching and comparing past campaigns, enrollment reports, and application cycles – all in one place.
- **Academic and student affairs leaders** gain quicker access to policies, course evaluations, student feedback, and support resources, helping them improve student services and speed up scheduling and reviews.
- **Policy and compliance teams** can surface legal opinions, compliance training, and historical case data in seconds. Glean helps reduce institutional risk by making approved documentation easy to find and apply.
- **Finance and operations leaders** make faster decisions with instant access to budget models, vendor contracts, and capital project files across systems, helping teams make faster decisions and spend less time tracking down documents.

Advancement and alumni relations leaders can instantly pull up donor histories, campaign notes, and board meeting materials to deliver more personalized, consistent outreach.

Academic medical centers are a core part of many university systems, and they come with unique complexity. These institutions sit at the intersection of healthcare delivery, medical education, and clinical research. Clinicians are expected to balance patient care, train future healthcare professionals, and contribute to research, often while working within workflows built for one mission, not all three.

AI can help close that gap. From powering shared knowledge systems to supporting clinical decisions and accelerating research, AI tools offer new ways to reduce administrative strain and streamline operations. AI tools allow clinicians to focus more attention on direct patient care and student instruction, improving care quality and educational outcomes without additional resources¹⁶.

Academic medical centers can use AI to modernize workflows and improve coordination across clinical, educational, and research teams:

- **Break down information silos.** Disconnected systems slow the flow of knowledge between departments. With a centralized knowledge base, clinicians can access the latest research, researchers can spot emerging clinical challenges, and educators can bring real-world cases into the classroom.
- **Improve operational efficiency.** AI can help teaching hospitals make better use of their resources without sacrificing quality. Tools like predictive models and automated scheduling systems can forecast patient volumes and align staffing with demand.
- **Translate academic research into clinical practice faster.** AI agents can scan internal research and external medical literature to identify findings with clinical relevance, then synthesize and surface that information for practicing clinicians.

How Glean helps
teaching hospitals
empower stakeholders
and modernize
workflows

- **Medical students** use Glean to access personalized learning materials. Adaptive practice problems and interactive exercises help students stay engaged and improve academic performance with content tailored to their needs.
- **Clinicians and staff** rely on Glean to quickly find hospital protocols, procedures, and HR policies. Faster access to accurate documentation gives clinicians more time with patients and supports greater consistency in care.
- **Patient financial services representatives** use Glean to search insurance manuals, underwriting guidelines, and internal procedures. Its deep semantic search understands natural language, even when phrasing doesn't exactly match the source – improving accuracy and efficiency.
- **Hospital operations staff** get fast answers to routine questions like equipment procedures or on-call schedules. With quick access to internal documentation and systems, staff can reduce administrative delays and lighten their daily workload.
- **Healthcare providers** use Glean to deliver faster, more consistent patient support. By giving front-desk staff and call center agents instant access to workflows, policies, and next steps, Glean helps teams resolve billing, scheduling, and referral questions quickly and accurately. Staff can also view a patient's prior interactions and open ticket history, making each exchange more informed and personal. Glean supports common troubleshooting, summarizes open tickets, and drafts personalized follow-up emails to reduce wait times, prevent escalations, and ease the burden on support staff.
- **IT teams** at hospitals resolve issues faster with Glean by accessing past incident reports, live troubleshooting guidance, and internal documentation. AI assistants handle common L1 and L2 tickets – such as password resets or workstation access – by answering FAQs and generating clear, consistent responses. Quicker resolution keeps clinical teams focused on care and supports key performance metrics, including Hospital Compare and CMS Star Ratings.

“

AI is a major transformational force for healthcare...
Generative artificial intelligence (genAI) alone is projected
to grow faster in healthcare than any other industry¹⁷.

Modernize research and insights across the institution

At research-intensive universities, turning knowledge into action is a key advantage. But data often lives in silos – spread across labs, libraries, and administrative systems that don't talk to each other. Faculty may search through multiple portals to find preprints, grant submissions, or experimental results. Meanwhile, institutional researchers rely on manual data extracts to build models for enrollment, space usage, and other strategic needs. This fragmentation slows discovery, leads to duplicated work, and delays critical decisions.

17 [World Economic Forum: The Future of AI-Enabled Health: Leading the Way](#)

At the same time, the rise of data-driven AI brings new responsibilities. As institutions begin to use machine-generated insights in decisions like tenure reviews, funding allocation, or student interventions, they must address important questions about accuracy, bias, and inclusion.

Taken together, institutions understand they need a unified data strategy that enables accurate, data-driven decisions. Building this strategy also requires a broader framework for ethical data use, transparent governance, and AI accountability. By modernizing their research and analytics infrastructure, institutions can increase efficiency while protecting academic rigor and institutional trust.

Institutions seeking to promote responsible, AI-enabled knowledge discovery can use AI to:

- **Accelerate the research lifecycle.** Faculty often juggle multiple responsibilities that can limit time for research. AI tools support every stage of the research process – helping discover relevant literature, summarize findings, and generate early drafts – so researchers can move faster without sacrificing quality.
- **Empower the community to build custom AI assistants.** With the right tools, administrators, staff, faculty, and students can build personalized agents tailored to their roles. These assistants can draw from both institutional and public data to surface insights, automate tasks, or support daily work.
- **Establish clear policies for AI usage.** Rather than allowing fragmented or ad hoc adoption, institutions can take the lead by setting policies and standards that encourage responsible, coordinated AI implementation.

Turn campus-wide data into strategy. By analyzing both structured and unstructured data across departments, institutions can uncover trends, identify opportunities, and make more informed decisions that drive efficiency and impact.

How Glean helps power research and insights

- **Ask questions in plain language.** Faculty and staff can query research summaries, experiment results, and licensed journal content using natural language. Glean's semantic search surfaces relevant information quickly, helping reduce duplication and shorten research cycles.
- **Streamline and enhance research workflows.** With a unified knowledge base, Glean makes it easier to find, analyze, and act on information. Researchers can break down silos, access insights faster, and accelerate discovery across departments.
- **Drive smarter decision-making.** Glean brings together structured data from platforms like Databricks and Snowflake with unstructured content from tools like Gmail, Google Drive, Jira, and Slack – giving teams full context in one place.
- **Enable custom AI agents.** Administrators, researchers, and students can build personalized AI assistants with role-based access to institutional and public data. These agents help automate routine tasks, uncover insights, and support daily work.

Ensure data privacy, compliance, and responsible use of AI tools

As colleges and universities adopt AI, they face the challenge of balancing innovation with the responsible use of data. The sensitive nature of institutional data – encompassing student records, research findings, health information, and financial details – creates heightened obligations for privacy protection and regulatory compliance¹⁸.

These risks are especially relevant in AI implementations, where powerful analytics often rely on data governed by FERPA, HIPAA, GDPR, and state-level privacy laws. “As AI becomes increasingly integrated into academic, administrative, and operational activities, institutions must address the risks AI products might pose and ensure that AI tools align with institutional values, priorities, and governance frameworks¹⁹.”

Institutions seeking to promote responsible use of AI tools can:

- **Centralizing access through a secure digital hub.** A single, permissions-based platform can unify fragmented data systems and simplify access, helping ensure consistent security and compliance across departments.
- **Implementing strong governance controls.** With institution-wide policies and global governance tools, schools can protect sensitive information, maintain compliance with privacy regulations, and ensure appropriate data use.
- **Improving visibility into AI activity.** Centralized monitoring helps surface issues early – such as algorithmic bias, accuracy concerns, or compliance gaps – so teams can respond proactively and reduce institutional risk.
- **Safeguarding AI models and agents.** Defined parameters and role-based permissions help control how institutional data and AI agents are used, ensuring every action aligns with policy and intent.

How Glean helps ensure data privacy and responsible AI use

- **Builds trust in AI across the institution.** Glean Protect supports data privacy, compliance, and responsible AI through a robust security strategy and single-tenant architecture. Sensitive information stays protected, regulatory standards are met, and stakeholders can rely on a system designed for transparency.
- **Streamlines access with granular controls.** Glean offers centralized data management and fine-grained permission settings, giving institutions full control over who can see and use data. Built-in monitoring makes compliance simpler and more consistent.
- **Regulates AI agent usage.** Glean Protect enforces agent-building permissions, checks intent against institutional policies, and verifies access before use – ensuring agents operate within the right boundaries.
- **Supports ethical AI at scale.** Glean’s inclusive and scalable tools empower users across the institution. Rigorous validation processes ensure every AI initiative aligns with the institution’s ethical standards and values.

¹⁸ [Inside Higher Ed: Benefits, Challenges, and Sample Use Cases of Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education](#)

¹⁹ [EDUCAUSE: AI Procurement in Higher Education: Benefits and Risks of Emerging Tools](#)

Seize the AI opportunity for your institution

Higher education institutions are focused on harnessing the power of AI to create a more responsive, efficient, and personalized educational ecosystem. This includes everything from streamlining administrative services and modernizing research capabilities to reinventing teaching hospital workflows and enhancing student engagement²⁰.

The seven use cases we've covered in this paper show how thoughtfully applied AI can improve institutional effectiveness, elevate learning outcomes, and support more sustainable operations – all while staying grounded in academic values and mission-driven goals.

Glean gives institutions the intelligence and tools to lead that transformation. As a Work AI platform that connects stakeholders to data and automates workflows, Glean provides a centralized, AI-powered knowledge base that helps everyone – from administrators and faculty to researchers, clinicians, and students – find what they need to work smarter and move faster.

Contact our education team at education@glean.com

20 [Internet2: Higher Ed Enters a New Phase of AI Adoption](#)