

Responsible AI Board Briefing

Questions and assurance for higher education trustees

Use this briefing to prepare a board discussion about institutional AI direction and assurance. The immediate task is to identify the evidence and decisions the governing body needs, within its actual authority.

The board's work

Set expectations for responsible institutional direction. Ask management to account for consequential uses, risks, learning outcomes and the resources needed to meet commitments. Confirm what requires board approval under institutional and system rules. Leave operational approval with the properly authorized people.

The assurance to request

Request a short account of significant deployments, their owners and purpose; unresolved risks and incidents; evidence of effective human review and access; and the decisions, resources or policy changes requiring board attention. Avoid a presentation that substitutes the number of tools or training participants for evidence of responsible use.

A productive board discussion

Begin with one consequential campus case. Ask who decides, what information is involved, how a person can challenge the outcome and what would cause leadership to stop the use. Then examine whether the institution's governance arrangements can answer those questions consistently.

Ten questions for institutional oversight

1 What institutional purpose are we advancing

Ask for a clear connection to learning, student opportunity, service quality or another mission outcome.

2 Who is accountable for significant uses

Expect named executive and service owners, with a clear distinction between recommendations and approvals.

3 Where does AI influence consequential decisions

Ask which uses affect access, academic standing, financial support, employment or comparable interests.

4 What protects the information entrusted to us

Expect assurance about approved information flows, vendor arrangements, access and incident response.

5 Can a person obtain an explanation or correction

Ask leadership to demonstrate a usable human route, including for difficult and exceptional cases.

6 Are we preserving and improving learning

Look for evidence of student understanding and performance, including independent capabilities.

7 Who could be excluded or disadvantaged

Ask about accessibility, costs, support, language and patterns of unequal outcomes.

8 Are people prepared for their responsibilities

Expect preparation and evidence of readiness matched to the work, not just training attendance.

9 What remains unresolved

Request an honest account of significant uncertainties, incidents, limitations and decisions needing attention.

10 What will cause us to change course

Expect monitoring, review triggers, time-limited exceptions and authority to restrict or retire a use.

A practical request to leadership

For the next appropriate governance discussion, provide a concise account of significant AI uses and their purposes; accountable owners and approval conditions; human review and support routes; outcomes, incidents and unresolved risks; and the decisions or resources requiring board attention.

Use one consequential campus case to demonstrate how the arrangements work. Explain what the institution knows, what remains uncertain and what would cause it to change course.

How to read this guidance

HumanSkills recommendations combine institutional precedents, official guidance and authored implementation advice. The source-linked institutional examples are selected comparisons, not a nationally representative policy census or an established overall overlap percentage. Scenarios are illustrative. Institutional approval, specialist review and implementation remain local.

Supporting sources

[Purdue University / Artificial Intelligence Use](#)

[River Parishes Community College / Use of Artificial Intelligence](#)

[North Shore Community College / Artificial Intelligence Principles and Policies](#)

[National Institute of Standards and Technology / AI Risk Management Framework](#)