Team H
AI Diffusion Project
Analysis & Recommendation

MKT382 AI for Competitive Advantage

November 3, 2025

Contents

Executive Summary – Context & Purpose

AI is rapidly transforming business education. McCombs has the opportunity to lead by integrating AI in a way that enhances learning, preserves academic rigor, and prepares students for modern career demands.

Our project explored how faculty can adopt AI responsibly and sustainably. We combined faculty interviews and multi-semester survey data to test key hypotheses about readiness, support needs, and how AI can strengthen, not diminish, critical thinking.

Objective: Recommend a structured approach to AI adoption that supports faculty, ensures equity, and empowers students to build real-world AI fluency.

Executive Summary – Hypothesis & Recommendation

Our hypotheses going into the project were:

- **H1:** Faculty believe AI has learning value but may weaken foundational thinking skills if not guided and structured thoughtfully
- **H2:** Providing faculty with practical training, examples, and tools will increase adoption and confidence in using AI in the classroom
- **H3:** Clear, consistent expectations for AI use in the classroom will reduce hesitation and help faculty feel confident incorporating AI into their teaching
- **H4:** Students will use AI more ethically and effectively when equitable access and onboarding support are provided school-wide

Our analysis led us to the following recommendations:

- Implement a structured AI enablement model that includes:
    1. Faculty capability-building programs
    2. A tiered AI usage framework for syllabi
    3. Ready-to-use teaching templates and rubrics
    4. Equitable student access and AI onboarding

This approach ensures McCombs leads in ethical AI adoption while strengthening academic rigor and student career readiness.

The Challenge & Our Approach

The Challenge

- **The core conflict:** Faculty are caught in a paradox. They feel pressure to adopt AI because it is critical for students' future careers, but they are deeply concerned it undermines the core mission of teaching critical thinking. Survey data has confirmed this as follows:
    - The #1 reason for non-adoption is "I want students to learn to think for themselves and do original work" in Fall 2025 survey.
    - Adopters are split: 20 faculty believe AI *hinders* critical thinking, while 18 believe it *enhances* it.
- **Significant barriers:** This conflict is amplified by both internal and external barriers preventing faculty from moving forward.
    - **Policy ambiguity:** Faculty and students report "no formal policies" , "mixed messages" , and widespread "confusion" , creating a grey zone that discourages action.
    - **Faculty gap:** Another barrier is a lack of time for faculty, or they don't know how to properly integrate AI into class materials.

The Challenge & Our Approach

Our Approach

- **Project goal:** To identify the root causes of the adoption gap and provide actionable recommendations for increasing the effective and ethical adoption of AI at McCombs.
- **A 360-degree view:** To move past assumptions, we synthesized data directly from the stakeholders on the frontline:
    - **Qualitative Interviews:** We conducted in-depth interviews with 5 faculty and 4 students based on our assumption, supplementing these with resources from other teams' work.
    - **Quantitative analysis:** We analyzed three semesters of faculty survey data (Fall 2024, Spring 2025, Fall 2025) to identify statistical trends, barriers, and perceived impacts.
- **The output:** This presentation synthesizes these findings to pinpoint the core challenges and propose targeted, data-driven recommendations.

Key Insight 1: The Core Conflict - Critical Thinking

Faculty are caught in a paradox. They know AI is essential for students' careers but are deeply concerned it is undermining the fundamental skill they are hired to teach, which is critical thinking.

What the Interviews Said (The "Why"):

- **An existential threat:** Faculty expressed deep concern that AI "hinders“, "limits“, or "bypasses" critical thinking. It was called a "potential existential threat" to higher education.
- **Students feel it, too:** Students are highly self-aware of this conflict. They admitted AI "makes it harder for me to have critical thinking skills" and that they can get lazy.
- **The career mandate:** This fear is balanced by the reality that "employers increasingly expect students to have AI competencies" and that AI skills are essential for future jobs.

What the Surveys Found (The "What"):

- **#1 and #2 barriers for non-adopters:** The top two reasons faculty did not integrate AI in Fall 2025 survey result were ”I want students to learn to think for themselves and do original work” (21 faculty) and “I'm concerned about the potential for students to use AI tools to cheat” (15 faculty). This is the quantitative proof of the "critical thinking" fear.
- **Adopters are deeply divided:** The faculty who do use AI are the most conflicted. When asked about AI's impact on critical thinking skills, the results were split almost 50/50:
  - 20 adopters said AI had a Negative Impact (Hindered).
  - 18 adopters said AI had a Positive Impact (Enhanced).

Key Insight 2: The Internal Barrier - Faculty Readiness

The biggest internal hurdle to adoption is not a lack of desire, but a lack of time, confidence, and relevant skills among many faculty, especially senior and tenured professors.

What the Interviews Said (The "Why"):

- **The time famine:** The most common complaint was a "lack of time" to learn and integrate new tools during an already maxed semester.
- **The confidence gap:** Many faculty admitted they "didn't know how to use AI tools effectively" or felt they were still at a "(advanced) beginner's level".
- **The adoption divide:** There is a clear "generational and role-based" split. Tech-savvy faculty, "practitioners" , and non-tenure track "lecturers" are adopting faster. "Senior faculty" and those who have "taught the same way for years" are more resistant.

What the Surveys Found (The "What"):

- **#2 and #3 barriers for non-adopters:** The second most-cited reason for not integrating AI was “Lack of time to properly integrate AI into course material” (15 faculty) and the third was “I didn't know how to use AI tools effectively in my courses” (11 faculty).
- **This directly quantifies the "skill gap" identified in the interviews:** It proves that a significant portion of faculty feel they lack the basic training and confidence to get started.

Key Insight 3: The External Barrier - Universal Policy Ambiguity

A lack of clear, consistent AI policies is the top external barrier to adoption. This creates confusion and risk aversion for faculty, while students are left to navigate a chaotic, class-by-class set of rules.

What the Interviews Said (The "Why"):

- **A grey zone:** Faculty and students repeatedly described the policy landscape as "opaque“, "confusing“, and a "totally a grey zone".
- **Wide inconsistency:** Policies "vary widely by professor and class“. Some professors ban AI, others require it, and many have no rules at all.
- **Student frustration:** This inconsistency makes it "hard to keep track" and leaves students with "no idea if I'm breaking any sort of rules".

What the Surveys Found (The "What"):

- **#4 barrier to adoption:** "I haven't received clear guidance from department/McCombs on how to use AI" was the fourth most-cited reason (9 faculty) for not integrating AI in the Fall 2025 semester.
- **The ideal policy:** The data from both interviews and surveys suggests a desire for a "Clear Principles, Flexible Practice" model:
  - **School-level principles** for academic integrity, disclosure, and data privacy.
  - **Instructor-level autonomy** to design assignments and set specific rules that fit their course.

Strategic Recommendations - Structured Enablement for Responsible AI Use

To meaningfully accelerate AI adoption while protecting academic rigor, McCombs should shift from informal, individual experimentation to a structured enablement model. Our recommendation is a four-pillar strategy that supports faculty and students with clarity, training, and equity:

1) Launch a Faculty AI Teaching Accelerator
2) Implement a Tiered AI Usage Policy (Syllabus Standard)
3) Provide AI-Ready Assignment Templates
4) Ensure Campus-Wide Equitable AI Access

This approach addresses the core barriers surfaced in faculty interviews and multi-semester survey data — time constraints, skill gaps, policy ambiguity, and equity concerns — while reinforcing critical thinking as the anchor skill of the curriculum.

Strategic Recommendations Part 1:
Launch a Faculty AI Teaching Accelerator

Objective: Build faculty confidence and capability to use AI effectively in teaching
Format: Three-module learning sprint + weekly AI office hours

Key Components:

- Practical demos for teaching workflows (grading rubrics, prompt scaffolds)
- Discipline-specific training tracks (quant, strategy, creative, coding)
- Hands-on sandbox and peer practice circles
- Dedicated AI Teaching Assistants for live support

Why This Matters:

- Directly addresses time + knowledge barriers (Hypothesis 2)
- Enables responsible adoption vs superficial AI use (Hypothesis 4)
- Builds a shared toolkit to reinforce critical thinking rigor (Hypothesis 1)

Outcome: Faculty move from curiosity → confidence → applied classroom integration

Strategic Recommendations Part 2: Implement a Tiered AI Usage Policy (Syllabus Standard)

Objective: Provide clear, consistent, and flexible guardrails for responsible AI use across courses.

Format:

- Add standardized AI policy language and icons to all syllabi
- Canvas setting to tag assignments as “AI-Free / AI-Assisted / AI-Enabled”
- Built-in student AI disclosure field for submitted work
- Instructor guide + 1-page decision tool to help map assignments to tiers
- Faculty workshop + quick-start video on applying the policy

Key Components:

- Three-tier model: AI-Free, AI-Assisted, AI-Enabled
- AI use protocols: when allowed, when required, when prohibited
- “Show your process” requirement (reasoning logs / drafts / citations)
- Academic integrity language tied to AI usage expectations
- Example assignments for each tier across disciplines (e.g., strategy cases, coding labs, analytics exercises

Why This Matters:

- Removes adoption hesitancy due to policy ambiguity (H3)
- Protects critical thinking while embracing innovation (H1, H4)

Outcome: Faculty confidence ↑, AI confusion ↓, student clarity ↑

Strategic Recommendations Part 3: Provide AI-Ready Assignment Templates

Objective: Enable seamless faculty integration of AI while preserving academic rigor.

Format:

- Downloadable Canvas templates
- Discipline-specific versions (quant, writing, coding, ops)
- Embedded rubrics + reasoning logs

Key Components:

- Pre-built assignment structures
- AI-interaction instructions
- “Show your process” sections
- AI critique + reflection prompts
- Academic integrity checklist

Why This Matters:

- Reduces prep time + adoption friction (H2)
- Ensures AI strengthens thinking, not shortcuts it (H1)

Outcome: AI used to *enhance*, not *replace*, cognitive development

Strategic Recommendations Part 4: Ensure Campus-Wide Equitable AI Access

Objective: Ensure every student has equal access to AI tools, training, and safeguards.

Format:

- Campus-wide GPT/Copilot licenses
- Mandatory student AI onboarding module
- Usage dashboards + equity monitoring

Key Components:

- Enterprise-grade tools
- Responsible use micro-module
- Privacy & safe-compute routing

Why This Matters:

- Prevents inequity & shadow-AI use (H4)
- Builds foundational AI literacy for all students (H2)

Outcome: Equitable student AI readiness + ethical adoption at scale

Implementation Timeline: 12-Month Rollout

Q1 (Jan–Mar) — *Pilot & Foundations*

- **Stand up RAIC** (Responsible AI Committee): faculty (3), students (2), IT, Teaching & Learning Center (TLC). Charter in 30 days.
- **Faculty AI Teaching Accelerator (Cohort 1)**: 3 modules + weekly office hours; 30 seats prioritized for *Innovators* and *Early Majority*.
- **Tiered AI Policy (Syllabus Insert)**: publish 1-pager + disclosure template; TLC adds to Canvas course shell.
- **AI-Ready Assignment Templates v1**: 12 templates (writing, analytics, coding, ops). Include prompt scaffolds, reasoning logs, critique section.
- **Access & Onboarding**: provision campus licenses (Copilot + GPT); launch “AI 101” micro-module for students (≤60 minutes).

Q2 (Apr–Jun) — *Pilot Evaluation & Tooling*

- **Course pilots**: 25 courses across 6 departments use policy + templates.
- **AI TA Program**: train GTAs as “AI TAs” to coach workflow adoption; create Office Hours calendar.
- **Safety & Integrity**: deploy Canvas plug-ins (disclosure field; reasoning log upload) and private model routing to reduce data leakage.
- **Template v2**: add discipline-specific variants (e.g., finance modeling, marketing copy A/B, code review).

Implementation Timeline: 12-Month Rollout

Q3 (Jul–Sep) — *Scale & Incentives*

- **Accelerator Cohort 2 (+50 faculty)**; micro-credential issued by TLC; $1k micro-grant or 0.25 course-release equivalent in grading support.
- **Department Playbooks**: 1-pager per department with exemplar assignments and tier mappings.
- **Student Orientation**: add AI 101 to new-student onboarding + refresher for returning students.

Q4 (Oct–Dec) — *Institutionalize*

- **Minimum Viable Consistency**: tiered policy required on all syllabi; at least 1 AI-ready assignment per core course.
- **Centers of Excellence**: name 6 faculty fellows per school area; run monthly show-and-tell sessions.
- **Budget/renewals**: right-size licenses via telemetry; lock next-year spend.

Implementation Plan

Segmentation & “How” We Support Each Group

- **Faculty Innovators (15%)**: early pilots, co-design templates, showcase case studies; incentive = recognition + fellows.
- **Early/Late Majority (70%)**: plug-and-play templates, AI TA office hours, micro-credential, grading support; incentive = time-savings + micro-grant.
- **Skeptics (15%)**: AI-free tier preserved for assessments; integrity guardrails; optional short clinics.
- **Students**: required AI 101; equitable access via campus licenses; clarity via tiered policy.

Owners, Enablers, Resourcing

- **Executive Sponsor**: Academic Dean. **Program Owner**: TLC + RAIC.
- **Enablers**: IT (licenses & data), Departments (playbooks), Library (privacy & sources), Student Affairs (orientation).
- **Resourcing (Year 1 est.)**: Licenses $150k; Faculty micro-grants $50k; AI TA stipends $60k; TLC content/ops $80k; Training & events $20k → **Total $360k**.

Measuring Success: KPI Scorecard (track monthly; review each term)

Adoption & Enablement

- % courses with tiered policy on syllabus (Target: 90% by Q4)
- faculty completing Accelerator (Target: 80 in Y1)
- courses using AI-ready templates (Target: 120 in Y1)
- Student AI 101 completion rate (Target: 95% of new students)

Teaching Quality & Integrity

- Avg. “critical-thinking rubric” score on AI-enabled assignments (baseline +10% by Q4)
- Misconduct cases related to AI per 1,000 students (-30% vs baseline)
- % assignments with AI disclosure + reasoning log attached (≥85%)

Measuring Success: KPI Scorecard (track monthly; review each term)

Efficiency & Experience

- Faculty prep/grading time saved per course (hrs) (Target: −12 hrs/course)
- Faculty confidence index (survey, 1–5) (≥4.2)
- Student clarity index on AI rules (survey, 1–5) (≥4.3)

Career & Equity

- % students with AI artifacts in portfolios/LinkedIn (≥60%)
- Internship/FT postings citing AI skills engaged via career services (↑ YoY)
- License utilization parity across segments (no >10% gap by demographic/degree)

Measuring Success

North-Star Outcomes

- **Learning & Integrity**: stronger critical thinking, transparent AI use, reduced misconduct.
- **Confidence & Equity**: higher faculty confidence; equal student access.
- **Career Readiness**: demonstrable AI fluency in portfolios/resumes.

Data Sources & Cadence

- Canvas analytics (template/disclosure usage, rubric scores)
- License telemetry (seats, active use, features)
- TLC/RAIC pulse surveys (wk 5 & finals week each term)
- Academic integrity system logs; Career Services artifacts

Success Gates & Decision Rules

- **By Q2**: ≥25 pilot courses, ≥70% satisfaction from faculty; proceed to Cohort 2.
- **By Q3**: ≥60% courses using at least one template; maintain misconduct flat or better; scale policy requirement.
- **By Q4**: Hit 90% syllabus compliance + measurable rubric gains; renew licenses; expand fellows.

Measuring Success

Risks & Mitigations

- **Faculty overload** → opt-in accelerator, templates, AI TA support, micro-grants.
- **Integrity concerns** → tiered policy, disclosure, reasoning logs, private model routing.
- **Equity gaps** → campus-wide licenses, mandatory AI 101, utilization monitoring.

Reporting

- **RAIC Dashboard** (PowerBI): live KPIs, department drill-downs; termly brief to Deans + Faculty Council.

Measuring Success: ROI Model (Year 1)

Costs: ~$360k. **Quantifiable Benefits**

- **Faculty efficiency**: 12 hrs saved/course × 200 courses × $80/hr blended cost ≈ **$192k**
- **Grading support offset**: 0.25 FTE/course equivalent via AI TA tooling across 80 courses ≈ **$120k**
- **License right-sizing**: telemetry-driven reduction vs list price ≈ **$40k**
- **Enrollment & placement lift (conservative proxy)**: 0.5% improvement in yield/placement value ≈ **$50k Total Benefits ≈ $402k → Net ≈ +$42k in Y1** (payback <12 months), with larger gains in Y2 as adoption scales.

Conclusion

- McCombs can turn AI from a source of confusion into a strategic advantage that strengthens critical thinking and instruction quality
- A structured enablement model equips faculty with the skills, clarity, and tools to integrate AI confidently and ethically
- Students gain equal access and clear expectations, ensuring every graduate leaves with practical AI fluency and career readiness
- The 12-month rollout delivers measurable results including positive ROI, stronger learning outcomes, and scalable adoption
- McCombs will position itself as a national leader in responsible, data-driven AI education and a model for future MBA programs

Call to Action

- **Empower Faculty**: Support participation in the AI teaching acceleration and recognize early adopters as champions of innovation
- **Standardize Practice**: Require the tiered AI policy and integrate assignment templates across all core courses for consistent expectations
- **Invest in Access**: Sustain campus-wide AI licenses and training modules to ensure equity and responsible use for every student
- **Monitor Progress**: Use the RAIC dashboard to track KPIs, share insights, and continuously improve based on data and feedback
- **Lead the Conversation**: Position McCombs as a national thought leader in ethical AI education through partnerships, research, and public engagement

Supporting Research

1 Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Teaching and Learning, www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/documents/ai-report/ai-report.pdf. Accessed 3 Nov. 2025.

- **"Education-focused AI policies at the federal, state, and district levels will be needed to guide and empower local and individual decisions about which technologies to adopt and use in schools and classrooms"**

Sciencedirect, rss.sciencedirect.com/publication/science/0266352X. Accessed 3 Nov. 2025.

- **"Following the public release of ChatGPT, many universities initially adopted a cautious, wait-and-see approach. However, as GAI tools have become increasingly accessible to students, the necessity for well-defined guidelines and policies has become apparent"**

Swns. “Majority of Students See Responsible AI Use as Key to Career Success, New Research Says.” *New York Post*, New York Post, 29 July 2025, nypost.com/2025/07/29/tech/majority-of-students-see-responsible-ai-use-as-key-to-career-success-new-research-says/.

- **"Although 69% of the students at schools with an AI policy said that 'all' or 'most' of their professors have discussed the policy, only 11% said their professors actually encourage them to use AI"**

Lin, Lucas, and Ananya Pinnameneni/the Chronicle. “Duke University Pilot Project Examining Pros and Cons of Using Artificial Intelligence in College.” *AP News*, AP News, 5 Sept. 2025, apnews.com/article/artificial-intelligence-colleges-and-universities-alice-mary-baldwin-general-news-e0037fe9d6731010894bb6d4b52f9665.

- **"Students noted that AI chatbots can serve as supplemental took to learning but they also cautioned against over relying on such technologies**

“Artificial Intelligence in Education.” *UNESCO.Org*, 4 Sept. 2025, www.unesco.org/en/digital-education/artificial-intelligence.

- **"UNESCO's mandate calls for inherently for a human-centered approach to AI. It aims to shift the conversation to include AI's role in addressing current inequalities regarding access to knowledge, research and the diversity of cultural expressions and to ensure AI does not widen the technological divides"**