CSU Announces Landmark Initiative to Become Nation's First and Largest AI-Empowered University System

2/4/2025

AI tools and training will be available to all 460,000 students and 63,000 faculty and staff.

Today, the California State University (CSU), the largest and most diverse public four-year university in the country, announced a first-of-its-kind public-private initiative with some of the world's leading tech companies, including **Adobe**, **Alphabet (Google)**, **AWS**, **IBM**, **Instructure**, **Intel**, **LinkedIn**, **Microsoft**, **NVIDIA**, **OpenAI**, and the **Office of California Governor Gavin Newsom** that will leverage the power of artificial intelligence to create an AI-empowered higher education system that could surpass any existing model in both scale and impact.

The CSU's unprecedented adoption of AI technologies will make trainings, learning, and teaching tools—including ChatGPT—available across all 23 CSU universities, ensuring that the system's more than 460,000 students and 63,000 faculty and staff have equitable access to cutting-edge tools that will prepare them to meet the rapidly changing education and workforce needs of California. The CSU expects to make these tools available within the next few weeks.

"We are proud to announce this innovative, highly collaborative public-private initiative that will position the CSU as a global leader among higher education systems in the impactful, responsible and equitable adoption of artificial intelligence," **said CSU Chancellor Mildred García**. "The comprehensive strategy will elevate our students' educational experience across all fields of study,

empower our faculty's teaching and research, and help provide the highly educated workforce that will drive California's future AI-driven economy."

The CSU's contribution to California's workforce and economy underscores its vital role in shaping the state's future as the CSU awards nearly half of the state's bachelor's degrees, and helps create more than 209,000 jobs annually, and one in 10 employees in California is a CSU alum. But while over 30 of the top 50 AI firms in the world are based in California, over 50% of the AI workforce in the United States is international. The CSU is taking a bold step to develop the AI workforce for California.

At the heart of this groundbreaking effort is the **AI Workforce Acceleration Board**, a collaboration with nearly a dozen of the world's leading tech companies and Governor Newsom's Office that will identify and advocate for AI skills needed in California's workforce and its economy. The advisory board will also include CSU representatives who will collectively work to foster innovation and drive interdisciplinary practical applications of AI by organizing a series of AI challenges. These events will be guided by the advisory board and encourage CSU students and faculty to work together on pressing issues such as climate change and housing affordability, leveraging AI technologies to create impactful solutions. The CSU expects to add more tech companies to the advisory board in the coming months.

The CSU will also work with OpenAI to deploy ChatGPT Edu, a version of ChatGPT offering advanced tools, security, and controls for educational institutions. This effort ensures that all 23 campuses within the nation's largest public four-year university system—from Cal Poly Humboldt in Northern California to San Diego State University in the south—will have equitable access to ChatGPT, enabling students, faculty, and staff to use AI to accelerate learning, optimize workflow efficiency, and foster cross-departmental collaboration.

"The latest AI technologies can be used in many contexts, from academia to the workforce and we are excited to work with industry leaders to help the CSU build on our success in an AI-driven economy," **said Ed Clark, CSU's Chief Information Officer**. "At the CSU, we have two imperatives: to equip our students with the skills to leverage these powerful tools, and to transform our own institutional practices through AI to better serve the largest public university system in the nation."

Key CSU AI Strategies:

- **AI Commons Hub:** The CSU has [created a dedicated platform](#) that offers AI tools, training programs and certifications, and CSU-developed solutions to all students, faculty, and staff at no cost, ensuring a broad and inclusive approach to skill-building across the university system.

- **AI Educational Innovations:** The CSU will partner with its faculty to enhance teaching, learning and research by empowering faculty with AI tools, resources, and training. This strategy will enable transformative teaching methods, foster groundbreaking research, and address key concerns about AI adoption within the academic environment.

- **AI Workforce Training:** Students attending the CSU will have opportunities to work in AI technology-enabled organizations through apprenticeship programs within the industry, gaining valuable real-world experience to enhance their employability. These opportunities will serve as a pipeline of AI-skilled graduates ready to meet the demands of California's future economy.

AI Workforce Acceleration Board Member Statements

- *"A rapidly growing creator economy and breakthrough AI technologies have increased the demand for AI literacy and creative skills across all industries. In California alone, the creator economy employs more than 800,000 people, or 4.6% of the state's workforce, and supports nearly 875,00 local service jobs. Adobe has long been a champion of California's creator economy and education system, and we are proud to partner with the California State University (CSU) in ensuring that CSU students are equipped to succeed as creators, creative thinkers, and innovators in an increasingly digital world that is powered by AI."* **- Brian Johnsrud, Director of Education, Learning and Advocacy, Adobe**

- *"I am honored to join the California State University AI Workforce Acceleration Board. Embracing AI is vital to advancing education, supporting students, driving research, and fostering innovation. I look forward to working with fellow board members to promote adoption, access, and security across the State University system."* **- Mary Strain, AI Strategy, Amazon Web Services**

- *"At Google, we're incredibly excited to partner with the CSU on this groundbreaking initiative. On the Google for Education Team, we're committed to providing tools that are trustworthy, tailored for education, and ever-evolving in an AI powered future. We believe that democratizing access to safe and cutting edge technologies for educators and students is key to fostering innovation and preparing for the future. We're proud to support the CSU in its mission to empower the next generation of AI leaders."* **- Drew Sidel, Head of North America, Google Workspace for Education**

- *"This is an inspiring example of education, private industry and government coming together to implement a bold solution that ensures students are prepared for the workforce in California and nationwide. By leveraging experiential learning and innovative teaching and learning practices, this initiative will be a model for other education systems and states looking to ensure future generations are AI-ready and empowered."* **- Melissa Loble, Chief Academic Officer at Instructure**

- *"AI is reshaping work and creating demand for emerging jobs and skills. LinkedIn data shows that AI hiring has grown 30% faster than overall hiring over the last year and 300% over the last eight years. Beyond AI jobs, AI has the potential to make a vast array of work more efficient, accelerating the pace of change in the skills we need and spurring innovation. But these changes cannot and will not happen on their own. We must equip our future workforce with tools and insights to land the jobs of the future."* **- Kory Kantenga, Head of Economics, Americas, at LinkedIn**

- *"California State University system is demonstrating leadership in preparing Californians to thrive in the AI-empowered workforce. The scale of this effort is an example of the art-of-the-possible when universities, industry and government work together."* - **Elka Walsh, Americas Higher Education Transformation Lead for Microsoft**

- *"AI and accelerated computing are pivotal to a new industrial revolution that will benefit industries and communities across the state and country, and around the world. Working with CSU, NVIDIA will train faculty and students to use these advanced technologies to help unlock economic opportunities and drive innovation."* **- Louis Stewart, head of strategic initiatives, NVIDIA**

- *"We're still in the early stages of AI adoption in education, and it is critical that the entire ecosystem—education systems, technologists, educators, and governments—work together to ensure that all students globally have access to AI and develop the skills to use it responsibly. CSU is setting a bold and powerful example for the education sector."* **- Leah Belsky, VP and General Manager of Education at OpenAI**

About the California State University

The [California State University](#) is the nation's largest four-year public university system, providing transformational opportunities for upward mobility to more than 460,000 students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. More than half of CSU students are from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds, and more than one-quarter of undergraduates are first-generation college students. Because the CSU's 23 universities provide a high-quality education at an incredible value, they are rated among the best in the nation for promoting social mobility in [national college rankings](#) from U.S. News & World Report, the Wall Street Journal and Washington Monthly. The CSU powers California and the nation, sending nearly 125,000 career-ready graduates into the workforce each year. In fact, one in every 20 Americans holding a college degree earned it at the CSU. Connect with and learn more about the CSU in the [CSU newsroom](#).

Source: https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/news/Pages/CSU-AI-Powered-Initiative.aspx?utm_source=sunshinefm.beehiiv.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=csu-launches-groundbreaking-ai-initiative-across-california