AI in Education — Weekly Briefing

Week of April 21–27, 2026 (US Eastern Time)

For university faculty and staff. ~10 minutes to read.

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1. This week in 30 seconds

- 🎓 **Higher Ed:** A new Quinnipiac national poll finds 75% of Americans want students taught how to use AI — but only 42% trust them to use it for learning.
- 🎓 **Higher Ed:** More universities are quietly switching off Turnitin's AI writing detector, citing false-positive rates they say are unsafe for adjudication.
- 🌍 **Global:** The UK's London School of Innovation became the first new institution granted degree-awarding powers built around AI tutors instead of human lecturers.
- 🎓 **Higher Ed:** The University of Alabama announced a campus-wide AI fluency program for every student, faculty, and staff member, launching this fall.
- 🏫 **K-12:** Pennsylvania's House Education Committee held its first hearing on AI in schools as 33+ states have now created AI-in-education task forces.

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2. Main stories

🎓 Higher Ed · More universities are turning off AI detectors

Findskill: AI detection false positives — what teachers should do instead (Apr 26, 2026)



Image source: Nano Banana 2

The brief:

A growing list of universities — Vanderbilt, Yale, Johns Hopkins, UCLA, and most recently Curtin (Australia, January 2026) and reportedly Washington State — has disabled Turnitin's AI writing detector, citing unreliable performance in real-world classrooms. The same week, Wired profiled a competitor (Pangram) claiming a 1-in-10,000 false-positive rate, fueling debate over whether any detector is reliable enough to support misconduct cases.

The details:

- Findskill's April 26 review names Vanderbilt (disabled 2023), Yale, Johns Hopkins, and UCLA as having officially disabled Turnitin AI detection on their campuses.
- Curtin University in Australia confirmed it would disable Turnitin's AI writing detection from January 2026 while keeping originality (text-matching) checks in place (EdTech Innovation Hub, Apr 9).
- Independent benchmarks continue to show high false-positive rates on ESL student writing — reportedly up to 61% in one Pangram-cited study (walterwrites.ai, Apr 20).
- A Purdue computer-science professor's mass AI-cheating accusation last weekend caused more than half the class to drop the course; the incident is now being reviewed by the department (Journal & Courier, Apr 21).

Worth noting:

Pangram Labs claims its newer Chrome-extension detector has near-zero false positives and outperforms Turnitin and GPTZero in third-party audits. The dispute is whether even a 0.01% error rate is acceptable

when applied across millions of student submissions. What would resolve this: independent, reproducible benchmarks on student writing across language backgrounds, with public methodology — currently rare across the detector market.

What this means for your campus:

If your institution still relies on a single AI-detection score to open misconduct cases, expect that policy to be challenged this term — by faculty, by ESL student advocates, or by your own general counsel.

🎓 Higher Ed · Quinnipiac poll: Americans want AI in college, but don't trust how it'll be used

Quinnipiac University Higher Ed Poll, Apr 22 · Inside Higher Ed coverage, Apr 23



Image source: Nano Banana 2

The brief:

A new national Quinnipiac poll, released April 22, finds Americans are pulled in two directions: 74% say it is important for college students to be taught how to use AI, but 47% think students will mainly use AI to avoid learning, and 52% oppose colleges using AI to tutor students.

The details:

- 78% of adults with at least an associate's degree still say their degree was worth it — the highest reading in the poll's recent history.

- Younger adults (18–34) are the most skeptical of student AI use: 58% think students will use it to avoid learning, vs. 35% of adults 65+.
- Most respondents prefer human admissions and tutoring over AI, even after controlling for prior AI familiarity.
- Quinnipiac framing: “Americans want students to know how to use AI, but say keep it old school” for selecting and supporting students.

What this means for your campus:

When you write a memo or syllabus statement justifying an AI-aware course design, you now have national polling that supports teaching AI fluency — and a clear public expectation that humans, not algorithms, still make the consequential calls about each student.

🌍 Global · UK regulator approves AI-tutor-led degrees

Times Higher Education, Apr 21



Image source: Nano Banana 2

The brief:

The London School of Innovation (LSI) was granted degree-awarding powers and will launch in June with a model that replaces traditional lecturers with AI “private tutors”, overseen by human module leaders and a student success team. It is the first UK institution explicitly built around AI-led instruction.

The details:

- Postgraduate students will work through modules with an AI tutor, ending each unit in a "Socratic dialogue" about the content with the AI.
- Three layers of human support remain: module leaders, a student success team, and personal tutors.
- LSI is also building an internal academic innovation cluster to research how AI affects learning outcomes — meaning the institution intends to publish on its own model.
- Director of education Paresh Kathrani says legacy universities are "beginning to shift away" from policies limiting AI use.

Worth noting:

The Hechinger Report, also this week, reported that students are using AI tutors less than the industry hoped — and not asking the kinds of questions that lead to learning. The LSI experiment will be the first natural test of whether a fully AI-led curriculum can avoid that pattern.

What this means for your campus:

Whether or not you believe in AI-only instruction, LSI just became the regulatory precedent everyone — accreditors, boards, and competitors — will cite when proposing AI-heavy program designs in the next academic year.

🎓 Higher Ed · Alabama makes AI fluency a campus-wide expectation

University of Alabama News, Apr 21



Image source: Nano Banana 2

The brief:

The University of Alabama unveiled the “UA AI Experience”, a campus-wide initiative launching this fall to give every student, faculty member, and staff member a baseline of AI fluency. UA frames it as a shared vocabulary and common expectations for AI use across academic, research, and administrative work.

The details:

- UA says the program is one of the first in the country to extend mandatory AI training beyond students to the entire campus community.
- It is positioned as a foundation for “informed and principled AI engagement,” not a single course or certificate.
- UA leadership ties the launch to readiness for an AI-impacted job market and consistency across departments.
- UA is the second large public R1 in two weeks to commit to campus-wide AI training, after Indiana University opened its Kelley School’s GenAI 101 to the public on April 16.

What this means for your campus:

The center of gravity is moving from “optional faculty workshops” to baseline competence required of everyone who works at the institution — a shift your provost or HR partners will likely raise within the next year.

⚖️ Policy · Pennsylvania holds first state hearing on AI in K-12

Government Technology, Apr 22



Image source: Nano Banana 2

The brief:

On April 21, the Pennsylvania House Education Committee held its first hearing on AI in K-12 schools, with educators and researchers warning the state is “falling behind” peers. By the latest count from the Education Commission of the States, 33+ states and DC have created AI-in-education task forces; 35+ have published guidance.

The details:

- Pittsburgh Public Schools hosted the hearing in Oakland; legislators asked educators what state-level guidance districts most need.
- Idaho passed a 2026 bill requiring its state DoE to develop a statewide framework for generative AI in education.
- Maryland’s AI Ready Schools Act, taking effect June 1, 2026, mandates state-level AI guidelines for K–12.
- Common themes across state guidance now: AI literacy, educator training, and ethical use — with very little prescription on assessment redesign.

What this means for your campus:

K-12 policy is the early-warning system for higher-ed policy. Whatever Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Idaho mandate at the school district level this year is a preview of what state systems and accreditors will eventually expect from your faculty handbook.

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3. How others are doing it

Item 1 — Indiana University opens its flagship AI course to the world

- **Who:** Brian Williams, accounting professor and chair of the Virtual Advanced Business Technologies Department, IU Kelley School of Business.
- **What they did:** Released GenAI 101 — eight self-paced modules with an animated AI co-teacher ("Crimson") — free to anyone worldwide on April 16.
- **What happened:** Internal enrollment passed 114,000 since launch in August. Public release was prompted by inbound demand from employers, governments, and other universities.
- **What you could borrow:** The Crimson co-teacher format — using AI alongside the instructor on camera so students see a working professional model how to question, fact-check, and disagree with AI in real time.

Item 2 — A composition professor goes back to in-class blue books

- **Who:** A composition instructor venting on r/Professors after grading another batch of indistinguishable AI-assisted essays.
- **What they did:** Switched most graded writing to in-class, handwritten blue-book essays and added a syllabus rule: any group of essays sharing the same outline structure loses points.
- **What happened:** Students reported they actually preferred handwritten in-class work because the time constraints reduced expectations and increased learning. Several other professors in the thread reported similar moves, especially for foundational courses.
- **What you could borrow:** The structural-similarity rule. It side-steps detection software and asks a question every academic can defend — were these essays independently produced?

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4. From the research

Item 1 — Heavy GenAI users report lower confidence in their own reasoning

- **What was studied:** Sarah Baldeo, a PhD candidate at Middlesex University (UK), examined how patterns of GenAI use correlate with self-reported confidence in independent reasoning, with brain-activity readings on a sub-sample. Coverage: AfroTech / Time, Apr 21.
- **What they found:** Users who accepted AI suggestions with little revision reported lower self-confidence in their own reasoning. Users who modified AI suggestions more heavily reported higher confidence. Ethan Mollick (Wharton) summarized it bluntly: "If the AI solves a problem for you, you don't think and you don't learn."

- **What you could do with this:** Design assignments that require visible revision of AI output — with the rationale documented — rather than acceptance or rejection. The cognitive benefit is in the editing, not the prompt.

Item 2 — A review of ~250 AI-graded test studies finds almost none check for bias

- **What was studied:** John Whitmer of Learning Data Insights presented at three California education conferences a meta-look at roughly 250 studies of AI-generated test questions and AI-assisted scoring (covered by Hechinger Report, Apr 23).
- **What they found:** Of about 250 studies, only one looked at whether AI scoring is biased against specific student groups. Whitmer called the gap a "big miss" for the field.
- **What you could do with this:** If your department is piloting an AI grading or item-generation tool this term, add a basic bias check — score distributions by demographic group, regraded by a human on a sample. It is the cheapest insurance against a future Title VI complaint.

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5. Try this week

- Audit one AI-detection score before acting on it: regrade the same paper using a second tool and a sample of the student's prior writing.
- Add one syllabus line that defines "acceptable AI use" in your course in plain language — not by tool name.
- Spend 30 minutes inside IU Kelley's free GenAI 101, just to see the Crimson co-teacher model in action.

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6. Quick hits

- Stanford launches $1M AI in Teaching and Learning seed grants — Three tracks (Course Development up to $100K, Innovation with Evidence up to $50K, Thought Leadership up to $3K), explicitly open to AI skeptics.
- Anthropic expands Claude Campus Program — Builder Clubs and Campus Ambassador roles let students lead AI initiatives with API credits and direct product feedback channels.
- OpenAI ships ChatGPT Images 2.0 with usable text rendering — Multilingual, slide-friendly images and 2K exports; Wharton's Ethan Mollick says the quality bar has shifted.
- Google to invest up to $40B in Anthropic — Compute capacity expansion that will affect Claude availability for student and research tiers in the coming year.

- Pangram's AI-detection Chrome extension goes public — Wired tested it on a viral Pope tweet and confirmed the post was AI-generated; the tool now labels social-media posts in real time.
- Inside Higher Ed: AI-powered platforms for civil dialogue on polarized campuses — Constructive Dialogue Institute warns these tools concentrate power in the design of the AI itself.
- Times Higher Education frames a four-dimensional model for AI in teaching — From Nanyang Technological University's Tan Seng Chee: a usable continuum from passive consumption to active synthesis.
- New Yorker: parents and cognitive scientists push back on AI-in-classroom inevitability — Useful counter-narrative for any committee debating an AI-everywhere strategy.

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7. Talk about it

- **What is our institution's threshold for action on an AI-detection score?** If a single Turnitin flag is enough to open a misconduct case, would we still defend that policy after Vanderbilt, Yale, Johns Hopkins, UCLA, and Curtin disabled the same feature? (Tied to Story 1.)
- **Are we training the whole faculty, or only the early adopters?** UA and IU just made institution-wide fluency the baseline. Where does our department sit, and who is excluded by our current model? (Tied to Story 4 and the IU Kelley quick hit.)

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8. On my radar

- **June 2026:** London School of Innovation enrolls its first cohort under AI-tutor-led instruction. First sector-watched test of an AI-only curriculum at degree level.
- **September 2026:** Boston Public Schools rolls out mandatory AI fluency across all high schools — first major US city to do so. Funded by a $1M gift from Paul English.
- **Fall 2026:** Stanford AIMES seed-grant cycle opens for the second track. Eligible to faculty across all disciplines, including AI critics.
- **End of 2026:** US withdrawal from UNESCO takes effect — relevant for institutions tracking global AI-in-education governance, since UNESCO has been the lead convener of cross-border AI ethics in education.

Compiled from primary news sources, peer-reviewed and pre-print research, university press releases, EDUCAUSE/UNESCO/Brookings publications, and verified practitioner posts. Search range: April 21–27,

2026 US Eastern. Items marked *[Unverified]* could not be confirmed against a primary source as of compilation; the broader trend is documented elsewhere in the issue.