The Hastings Initiative for AI and Humanity Summer 2025 Report to Faculty

This summer, we have focused on laying the foundation to support the Bowdoin community's engagement with and critique of artificial intelligence by welcoming new scholars and fellows, funding innovative research and teaching projects, and conducting listening tours to better understand campus needs and concerns. We have also launched a website, created practical tools and reports, and are planning a range of upcoming events to deepen conversations around AI and its ethical, social, and academic dimensions. The following provides an overview of our key accomplishments and plans for the fall semester.

New Hires

This summer, we successfully hired four new members of the initiative: two postdoctoral scholars and two postbaccalaureate fellows. These additions to our team reflect Bowdoin's people-first ethos, ensuring that members of our community can connect directly with knowledgeable specialists as they consider how they might want to engage with AI and its ethical challenges.

We are pleased to welcome Adrienne Kinney, who recently received her PhD in Applied Mathematics at the University of Arizona and comes to us from Sandia National Laboratories, where she co-developed a machine learning trust certification framework. We also welcome Collin Lucken, who recently completed his PhD in Philosophy at the University of Cincinnati and brings expertise in AI democratization and public science engagement. Both postdoctoral scholars will begin their appointments in early September and will serve as valuable members of both the initiative and the broader college community.

Additionally, we are excited to have hired two new Bowdoin graduates as postbaccalaureate fellows: Jenna Barac, who majored in Digital and Computational Studies and Economics, and Anya Workman, who majored in Digital and Computational Studies and Anthropology with a minor in Music. Along with the postdoctoral scholars, they will collaborate with the Hastings committee to develop and deliver AI-literacy workshops, colloquia, and other support for faculty, staff, and students across the College.

Grants and Funding

We have been providing year-long research and education grants to faculty and staff through two grant categories this summer. Our Explore AI Grant (up to $1,500) supports initial exploration and engagement with AI tools, with most recipients purchasing subscriptions to experiment with AI or funding AI-focused events. Our Project Seed Funding (up to $5,000) supports larger AI-related projects. Current projects include using AI to monitor storm-petrel populations on Kent Island, a project juxtaposing machine learning with Shakespeare through performance, and work using AI to predict human poverty from satellite imagery. This summer, we have approved almost twenty grants in total. We will continue to award research and

education grants in the fall, while preparing to launch a larger grant program later this year to support more ambitious AI-related projects.

Listening Tours

This summer, we conducted a series of listening tours across the college community to understand how the initiative can foster and support intellectual activities relating to AI and humanity. These conversations revealed both excitement and apprehension. People are experimenting with AI in teaching, research, and operations, but consistently expressed the need for training, ethical guidelines, and secure infrastructure. The tours highlighted opportunities for collaboration, raised concerns about equity, privacy, and sustainability, and revealed a shared desire for the initiative to serve as a hub for guidance, resources, and leadership. This process has positioned the initiative to align its next steps with the community's most pressing needs.

Hastings Initiative Website

To increase the visibility of the initiative and share resources with the community, we created an [initiative website](#) that currently includes information about the initiative, available research grants, events, news, and team member profiles. Our postbaccalaureate fellows, Jenna and Anya, are actively expanding the site's content by adding research projects supported by Hastings grants, curating helpful resources for community engagement with AI, and maintaining a collection of relevant news articles that the initiative is monitoring. We hope our website will serve as a hub for the community to access information about our work and stay informed about AI developments and ethical challenges. We also recognize the important work being done by CoTCP and are working on complementing that work and working with them collaboratively.

Report and Resource Creation

We have developed several key resources this summer to better understand the current landscape of AI technologies and their implications while providing practical guidance for our community. We created an AI glossary, an AI tool guide, and a guide to help faculty new to AI technologies explore potential applications. We have also produced research reports examining AI implementation in high school education and an environmental brief addressing the ecological impacts of AI technologies. Currently, we are working on researching how AI is being used in various fields across the College. These resources will be available on the initiative website.

Additionally, we have done extensive research analyzing other institutions' AI policies, access to AI tools, and AI initiatives, which will serve as references for the College's decisions. This research revealed that while some schools have established official institutional policies around AI, many simply provide guidance and allow faculty to make their own decisions. We also found that other institutions tend to provide access to multiple AI tools and/or develop platforms that integrate multiple AI tools into a single interface. We will continue to develop additional

resources and reports to support our community's engagement with AI and its ethical challenges.

Looking Ahead

This fall, we will extend our listening tour to academic departments. This will allow us to learn about faculty interests, concerns, and needs regarding AI in teaching and research, and to explore how the initiative can best support your work.

Additionally, we will begin our programming with a launch event including a guest speaker and potential workshops. We are also organizing our first book group, featuring *The Alignment Problem: Machine Learning and Human Values* by Brian Christian, which may be integrated into the launch event. Campus discussions about the book will culminate in a visit from the author.

For students, we plan to establish a cohort of Hastings ambassadors and collaborate with them to develop events and workshops. We hope to provide diverse opportunities for the Bowdoin community to engage meaningfully with AI topics, laying the foundation for ongoing exploration, innovation, and critical reflection across campus.