

Curricular Integration of Generative Artificial Intelligence in a Community College Business Program: A Stakeholder Analysis

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[Abstract] As generative artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly permeated modern existence, educators have grappled with whether and how to integrate use of this ubiquitous technology into the curriculum. Even those institutions who have been receptive to AI adoption as an enabling technology have struggled to discern whether it should be used in tandem with existing course learning outcomes or as a specific skill to be taught. In this article, the authors synthesize considerations in the implementation of AI into the curriculum of a community college business program utilizing the stakeholder model of corporate social responsibility as a framework. A stakeholder analysis, a common tool used in both project management and policy analysis, is presented. This analysis identifies the relevant stakeholder groups and discusses their respective interests and perspectives on the topic. Finally, the authors discuss considerations in the application of this analysis across business programs more broadly.

[Keywords] generative artificial intelligence, stakeholder model of corporate social responsibility, stakeholder theory, stakeholder analysis, business program curriculum

1. Introduction

The term artificial intelligence (AI) dates back to the 1950's, originating with machine learning and referring broadly to the use of computers to perform tasks otherwise requiring human intelligence (NASA, n.d.; Stryker & Kavlakoglu, 2024). Generative AI, the newest breakthrough of the technology emerging in the early 2020's, utilizes deep learning, a more advanced version of machine learning that mimics the function of the human brain, and large quantities of available data to create original, realistic content akin to what a human could produce (Eastwood, 2026; Notre Dame Learning, n.d.; Stryker & Kavlakoglu, 2024). Generative AI outputs include a range of seemingly creative results, including text, images, audio, video, and even computer code. Generative AI produces such outputs in response to prompts input by the user. Publicly available generative AI platforms include ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini among others (Notre Dame Learning, n.d.). Discussion of AI and use of the term AI in this article will refer to generative AI specifically unless otherwise specified.

In this article, we discuss the application of generative AI in a community college business program, using the stakeholder model of corporate responsibility as a framework. AI is rapidly evolving, changing the landscape of higher education and workforce expectations. We examine the perspectives of various stakeholder groups, including students, faculty, college leadership, IT and educational technology departments, transfer institutions, and workforce partners through a stakeholder analysis. Understanding these unique perspectives serves as an important consideration in crafting an approach to AI integration that creates shared value among all stakeholders while balancing competing priorities including workforce preparedness, academic integrity, and teaching and learning.

Academic programs should integrate AI into curriculum in a way that aligns with transfer institutions and workforce partners, with the understanding that the workforce and academic application of Generative AI continue to evolve, as well as the expectations of usage. Academic rigor and integrity must remain at the forefront of education; however, in Business programs, Generative AI should be intentionally integrated, preparing graduates for careers in business. Finding a balance between preserving academic rigor and integrity, while also embracing evolving technology creates shared value for all stakeholder groups.

2. Background: The Stakeholder Model of Corporate Social Responsibility

The basis of the stakeholder model of corporate social responsibility is that companies, and in this case community colleges, have a responsibility to a broad range of stakeholders within their communities and to society as a whole (Freeman, 1984; Freeman, et al., 2017; Hartman et al., 2025). Stakeholders include groups or individuals who are impacted by or who have an impact on an organization's success (Freeman, 1984). Stakeholders include both those internal to the organization such as the employees and stockholders and those external to the organization including customers, investors, and the broader community.

The Stakeholder Model of Corporate Social Responsibility expands upon and thus contrasts with the classic economic model of corporate social responsibility, which limits a firm's obligations to the stockholders and focuses on producing goods and services to maximize profits while abiding by any legal or regulatory requirements (Freeman, et al., 2017; Hartman et al., 2025). The stakeholder model of corporate social responsibility is the basis for such organizational activities as ethical labor and environmental practices, philanthropic giving, and volunteering, as these efforts are all intended for the benefit of society (Freeman, et al., 2017).

2.1 Stakeholder Theory

Under the umbrella of corporate social responsibility, stakeholder theory, an adjacent concept, narrows in on the organization's more immediate stakeholders (Freeman, et al., 2017). Stakeholder theory posits that the firm has a responsibility to operate in the best interest of each of these stakeholders. Moreover, a central tenant of stakeholder theory is that stakeholders are interdependent to one another (Freeman et al., 2010; Mahajan, 2023). Therefore, stakeholder theory focuses on the development of relationships with relevant stakeholders and the creation of

shared value among them. As such, organizational leaders should strive to coordinate the interests of stakeholders (Freeman et al., 2017). Just as companies must consider the requirements of shareholders, stakeholder theory expands an organization's responsibility to also meet the needs of its stakeholders (Freeman, 1984).

2.2 Stakeholder Analysis Tool

Stakeholder theory argues that organizations can achieve success by acknowledging relevant stakeholders, understanding and managing their various needs and preferences, and working in the interest of developing shared value (Mahajan, 2023). To this end, a stakeholder analysis is a useful tool used to identify and understand the interests, preferences, and perspectives of key stakeholders (Smith, 2000). Commonly used in project management and policy analysis, the primary purpose of a stakeholder analysis is to identify the key stakeholders and their primary needs and expectations (Hoory, 2025). Further, it can also be useful in understanding or predicting stakeholder actions, identifying needed resources, assessing feasibility of a project or policy, reducing risk, and developing strategies for managing and implementation of initiatives (Burgha et al., 2000; Smith, 2000).

The process begins with identifying relevant stakeholders and then analyzing their respective interests, potential impact, and influence on the project as well as their assumptions and risks involved (Hoory, 2025). A stakeholder analysis should be completed early in a project initiative and repeated at various stages as the project progresses.

2.3 Stakeholder Analysis

What follows is a stakeholder analysis of key stakeholders in the integration of AI into a community college business program. We identify key stakeholders as those who have a particular interest in the business curriculum at a community college and those to whom the program holds a responsibility to create shared value as interdependent constituents. The primary stakeholders are students, faculty, college leaders, university transfer partners, and employers.

Students. Our first group of internal stakeholders includes *students*. We define students as those seeking certificates, technical certificates, associate's degrees, and dual-credit students within the School of Business. Students receive instruction, knowledge, and career preparation from their professors. As our most important beneficiary, we must consider how students are impacted by the use of AI, within their education, and within the expectations that they will face once they enter the workforce. Students enter an academic program with the intention of learning skills, knowledge, and application of such, allowing them to pursue a future career or continued study. Students must know instructor and institutional guidelines for using AI within the classroom and on assignments. With baseline AI fluency becoming more of an expected competence for entry-level employees, and many entry-level positions are being replaced by AI, students will likely need to have a basic understanding of and ability to use AI, upon graduation. College students are not unfamiliar with AI. A new Handshake report found that the majority of college students nearing graduation, 85%, had adopted the use of AI tools, a figure that shows

more than 30 percentage points of growth since 2024. In fact, nearly a third of these students use AI tools daily (Bay, 2026). According to Inside Higher Ed's most recent Student Voice Survey of two- and four-year college students, students are primarily using AI platforms for coursework-related tasks, including utilizing it as a tutor to ask questions, brainstorm ideas, and create study materials (Flaherty, 2026).

However, increased student familiarity with AI tools should not be confused with confidence in the skillset as AI usage has also given rise to student confusion, concern, and anxiety about the topic (Bay, 2026; Flaherty, 2026; Palmer, 2026). This is best illustrated by the 2026 graduates who made headlines as they famously booed commencement speakers broaching the topic (Palmer, 2026). Though most students are using AI, 40% of students also report that they are concerned about their dependency on AI tools (Flaherty, 2026). To date, most student AI skills have been self-taught (Bay, 2026) as students do not feel their institutions are helping them to navigate AI successfully (Flaherty, 2026). Further, students have struggled to navigate mixed signals from institutions and faculty that seem to simultaneously restrict or prohibit the use of AI while also encouraging its use to build job skills (Bay, 2026).

Overall, only 28% of 2026 graduates reported feeling that AI was meaningfully integrated into their academic programs, and most, 58%, believe they will need to enhance their AI skills to be successful in the workplace (Liu, 2026). The majority of students also report having anxiety about landing jobs due to concerns about AI adoption leading to fewer entry level positions (Bay, 2026). Generative AI is being used to automate routine and repetitive tasks, create reports, gather data from multiple systems, build meeting agendas, draft email replies, and other tasks that would traditionally be completed by entry level employees. For entry-level jobs that are not eliminated by AI, employees will be expected to increase productivity, with the use of AI. (Cengage Group, 2026; St. John's University, 2025).

Faculty. Our next group of internal stakeholders are *faculty*. At the community college level, business faculty are made up of both full-time instructors and adjunct faculty who typically work in industry and teach part-time. To date, AI usage in academia primarily falls on the shoulders of faculty to learn, create best practices, and teach (Hoffman, 2025). Many colleges across the U.S., including Harvard, are leaving AI decisions up to the professor, with sample syllabi statements that describe varying levels of AI usage allowed, and clarification that students are responsible for the academic integrity of all submitted work, including accuracy, originality, and citation (Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Office of Undergraduate Education, n.d.).

Faculty must evaluate and determine the appropriate level of AI usage for students at this level. Students need to be able to use generative AI systems such as Claude, ChatGPT, CoPilot to create reports, automate repetitive tasks, and draft documents. In addition, students also need to learn course material in a way that allows them to interpret and review the documents, automation, and reports that come from AI. Faculty must ensure classes include a strong foundational understanding of business concepts, allowing students to make effective decisions and think critically, using workplace specific context. A disproportionate reliance on AI could mean that

students are not creating a strong foundation of learning for core topics in business. Insufficient integration of technology might indicate that both the college and the graduates of its business programs are not adequately prepared to meet industry needs and employer expectations. Students need to be able to use generative AI as described above, while also actively learning, avoiding plagiarism, and identifying hallucinations.

Hallucinations occur when an AI output mistakenly contains inaccurate or nonsensical information (IBM, 2026). Faculty will also be charged with making curricular decisions that balance teaching essential disciplinary knowledge, with integration of AI, in a way that will allow graduates to be prepared for the workforce and maintain an appropriate level of subject matter expertise. Guidance from the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs, a global postsecondary business education accreditor, states that faculty are “...encouraged to foster AI literacy among faculty, staff, and students to improve student success outcomes, strengthen academic quality, drive innovation, and build workforce readiness through the thoughtful integration of AI into curricula and professional development.”

Academic integrity is largely threatened by AI usage. This concern has led many faculty to institute course policies that focus on AI restriction (Hoffman, 2025). Faculty are also tasked with the heavy burden of evaluating student work and determining whether AI has been used in instances where AI use is prohibited. This approach has been complicated by AI detection programs that have been predominantly unreliable (Caswell, 2026). Recently, the use of multiple AI detection programs have been discontinued by institutions due to the programs’ low accuracy which results in both false positive and false negative AI detection, especially in the evaluation of shorter assignments and work by multilingual students (Caswell, 2026).

Creating new standards around assessment will be critical. Many faculty will prefer in-person testing when possible; however, with the rising popularity of online learning, online instructors must resort to requiring students to visit in-person testing centers or video and browser monitored testing options. Without these requirements in place, students taking online exams will have easy access to AI embedded browsers or AI access by utilizing multiple devices.

Finally, faculty will be tasked with evaluating AI usage in their own work. A 2026 EDUCAUSE report found that 63% of faculty are using AI for tasks including the creation of learning activities and assessments (Watson, 2026). Faculty must be up to date with changes in technology, as the fast-paced environment of teaching in higher education will become more efficient with AI usage. Despite that, professors must be transparent in acknowledging their own AI usage, especially in relation to grading tools and student communication. FERPA compliance will need to be evaluated with each and every usage of student data, work, and information within all AI platforms used by faculty (Yale University Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, n.d.). Students deserve human interaction with faculty, and although AI can craft emails, create grading comments, and enhance lesson plans, we must not let it take away from personal, meaningful opportunities for students to learn from and interact with professors.

College Leadership. *College leaders* are stakeholders who bear responsibility for leadership and operations of the institution. Their influence on resource allocation will impact on what AI tools are made available college-wide, as well as what training is received by faculty and staff to make AI platforms accessible and usable. Academically, administrators will also have an interest in confirming that curriculum aligns with both accreditors' standards and workforce demands, while also allowing faculty autonomy to own their curriculum and integrity of student learning. Since the emergence of AI, institutions have struggled to keep pace as AI usage has outpaced higher education governance decisions (Watson, 2026). Across the industry, higher education employees are using a variety of AI tools. ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, and Claude are among the most common.

Senior Level Administrators will particularly be interested in AI programs that keep student information secure, so as not to violate FERPA, and possibly to reduce the need for various entry-level positions that could cut costs for the college if replaced by AI. However, people leaders of the college must also acknowledge the benefits of authentic human interaction and that AI cannot replace personally written emails, in-person conversations, providing mentorship, problem solving, and fostering trust with students and colleagues.

Educational Technology and Information Technology Departments. *Educational technology and information technology departments* will ultimately take on the responsibility of managing AI systems that are adopted by colleges. These teams will work with administrators to ensure access to appropriate parties and ensure proper integration with college learning management platforms.

The choice of which AI tools to integrate will be a multifaceted decision, highly influenced by these experts, based on the considerations of cost, learning management integration, FERPA compliance, abilities and features, and continuous improvement. We know that AI is evolving exponentially (Chang, 2025) and the choice of a platform that meets college needs, minimizes environmental impact, meets budget constraints, and will remain current will likely be the primary considerations. Given their specialized knowledge and skills, their feedback can shape organization decision making and successful implementation of AI policy and usage within the college.

Transfer Partners. *Transfer colleges* are key external stakeholders, as they accept community college graduates, and prepare them to earn a bachelor's degree. They expect to welcome students who have a strong foundation of knowledge, critical thinking skills, and the academic integrity necessary to be successful in 300 and 400 level coursework. Thoughtful AI usage can strengthen student's digital literacy, while excessive AI reliance may leave students underprepared in foundational knowledge. Alignment between institutions is important to ensure students are academically prepared for the next step in their education.

AI competency is growing in importance across four-year institutions, and Indiana is no exception (Ethier, 2025; Sali, 2026). Indiana University's Kelley School of Business recently published an AI Playbook, a document that serves as a guide for faculty to integrate generative AI into teaching

and other academic-related work in an ethical manner (Ethier, 2025). The playbook emphasizes ethical and transparent use of technology as well as discernment in teaching students when AI use is appropriate and not appropriate for the task. The goal of this approach is to teach students how to use AI both effectively and ethically in their future careers. To this end, Purdue University has also just announced one of the first AI graduation requirements in the country (Sali, 2026). The institution reworked nearly 200 plans of study, retooling courses as needed, to embed an AI competency requirement into every curriculum.

Employers. Workforce partners are *employers* who will hire community college graduates, with the expectation that they are equipped to meet the demands of an evolving labor market. While employers increasingly value AI literacy, they also expect graduates to have interpersonal competencies and professional skills such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. Consequently, colleges must balance the integration of AI with instructional practices to meet the needs of employer demands. Ongoing collaboration with workforce partners will allow colleges to keep a relevant curriculum that is aligned with academic and industry expectations.

Company adoption of AI in the workplace has been credited with various positive business outcomes. Companies including Microsoft, Shopify, and others now mandate the use of generative AI in the workplace as a means of increasing employee productivity and lowering labor costs (Hoffman, 2025). As employee use of AI has grown across business-related industries, a survey conducted by Slack found that employees who use AI report increased productivity as well as employee satisfaction (Hoffman, 2025).

Demand for AI skills in the workforce has seen explosive growth as Handshake reports that the number of entry level positions on the platform requiring AI skills in 2026 has doubled in just one year (Bay, 2026). Similarly, the 2026 National Association for Colleges and Employers (NACE) Job Outlook Report found that 16.5% of entry level job descriptions include AI skills as a qualification. However, job descriptions alone may underestimate employer demand for AI skills as the results of employer surveys in the same report found that 35% of entry level jobs require AI skills, a figure that has nearly tripled since fall 2025 (Gratta, 2026; NACE, 2026).

Skills have taken center stage in the hiring process, as 70% of employers are now using skills-based hiring practices (NACE, 2026). While AI skills are important, human skills still take precedent with employers ranking communication, teamwork, and critical thinking as the top 3 skills for new hires. Technology skills came in at number 5, and AI skills were 8th on the list. Of these skills, employers rate recent graduates lowest on AI skills as “somewhat proficient.” Currently, a majority of employers, 69%, say graduates are only somewhat prepared to use AI in the workplace. Overall, 28% of employer respondents reported that they are seeking candidates with AI skills. Specifically, employers are looking for employees proficient in using AI tools appropriate to the task; developing effective AI prompts; analyzing and revising AI outputs; and developing AI tools that boost productivity (NACE, 2026).

The relationship between intern hiring and AI skills suggests that employers may be looking to colleges and universities to shore up their AI workforce skills. Handshake reports that the percentage of internship postings listing AI skills as a requirement exceeds that of full-time positions at 10% (Bay, 2026). Further, NACE (2026) also reports that nearly 60% of employers assign interns to projects that use AI tools.

3. Strengths and Limitations

The stakeholder analysis provides a framework for identifying the groups that are most impacted by the curricular adoption of AI in community college business programs; however, it must be interpreted within the context of AI's rapid evolution. Stakeholder interests, including students, faculty, administrators, technology departments, and transfer partners, may change over time. Expectations are likely to evolve as technology, regulations, common education practices, and accreditation criteria change. Consequently, this analysis represents a snapshot of stakeholder relationships at this current point in time, rather than an exhaustive analysis.

Similarly, corporate social responsibility and stakeholder theory imply that community college business programs do have an ongoing responsibility to consider competing priorities of stakeholders, with student learning being at the forefront. As AI rapidly evolves, colleges must re-evaluate stakeholder needs, and update curriculum to incorporate new technology and maintain quality instruction and learning.

4. Conclusion

Within corporate social responsibility, stakeholder theory provides a framework for how organizations must consider the impact of decision making on their stakeholders. Community college business programs must strive to create shared value among their stakeholders when deciding when and how and what to incorporate AI usage into business programs and curriculum by considering the perspectives, needs, and preferences of a variety of stakeholder groups. Educators are tasked with determining how to incorporate AI usage into the curriculum while also helping students to develop collegiate level business-based knowledge and critical human skills such as communication and teamwork.

Students are the most valuable stakeholders for colleges, and they encounter contradictory messages related to academic AI usage, leaving them to feel precarious about incorporating it into their work and underprepared to use AI in a professional setting. Faculty must find balance between incorporating AI usage in meaningful ways to meet workforce needs while also focusing on teaching students' foundational business knowledge and maintaining academic rigor and integrity. College leadership, IT, and educational technology departments must choose platforms most appropriate for their institution, and subsequently provide guidance, support, and access to faculty, staff, and students. Lastly, programs must incorporate AI in alignment with the expectations of transfer and workforce partners at the next level while recognizing that these needs will continue to evolve with the advancement of available technology. In conclusion, academic rigor and integrity must remain at the forefront of education; however, thoughtful integration of

AI must be incorporated to support continued academic advancement and the evolving demands of business-focused careers for the creation of shared value among all stakeholders.

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