AI Advisory Board – Kickoff Meeting Agenda

MSU Denver
Friday, November 14
11:30–1:00 p.m. (via Teams)

1. Call to Order:
    a. 11:35am
2. Welcome and Opening Remarks
    a. Samuel M. Jay, Executive Director of Digital Learning and AI Strategy, opened the inaugural meeting by outlining the purpose of the AI Advisory Board:
        i. To provide diverse professional, industry, and academic insight into how artificial intelligence is reshaping learning, work, and society.
        ii. To help MSU Denver prepare students, faculty, and staff for an AI-impacted future.
        iii. To develop institution-wide clarity about appropriate use cases, risks, opportunities, and curricular implications of rapid AI adoption.
    b. Sam emphasized that AI is already changing workplace expectations, educational processes, and human workflows. Higher education must proactively articulate where AI adds value, where it does not, and how to preserve human judgment, creativity, and ethics within an AI-saturated environment.
    c. He also introduced MSU Denver's student population profile—predominantly adult learners, working students, caregivers, and first-generation students—and framed AI readiness as essential to supporting social mobility and equitable opportunity.
3. Roll Call / Introductions of Members
    a. Each board member introduced their professional background, described how AI is currently affecting their sector, and identified one contribution they hope to make to MSU Denver.
    b. Key Themes Across Member Introductions:
        i. AI is already embedded in multiple industries, including cybersecurity, hospitality, manufacturing, communications, public relations, education, biological research, and enterprise operations.
        ii. Critical thinking, research literacy, and human judgment remain irreplaceable. Several members noted that AI accelerates output but narrows creativity or reinforces reductive thinking if used uncritically.

iii. Students and early-career workers are demonstrating gaps in critical thinking, independent problem-solving, research practices, and the ability to operate without highly prescriptive instructions.
iv. AI's proliferation is outpacing workforce norms. Some sectors see efficiency gains; others experience over-automation, over-promising from vendors, or workforce displacement efforts.
v. Human-AI relationship building—learning when to trust, question, supplement, or reject AI output—was identified as a core competency MSU Denver must teach.

4. Individual Insights from Board Members
    a. Higher Education & Business Perspective
        i. Ethan Waples underscored that the Board's charge is aligned with MSU Denver's mission as an engine of social mobility. Students must leave with the ability to assess, direct, and critique AI outputs within the workplace—not simply operate the tools.
    b. Marketing & Public Relations
        i. Michelle Baum highlighted:
            1. AI is rapidly entering content creation workflows, including specialized GPTs for executives and brand-specific messaging.
            2. The largest deficits among new graduates are critical thinking and research competence.
            3. AI's capacity to spread misinformation magnifies the need for evidence literacy and human editorial judgment.
            4. Some companies are already considering replacing large teams with AI-driven content systems, raising urgency around student preparation.
    c. Emergent Tech & Explainable AI
        i. Crystal Street emphasized:
            1. Students need a healthy and informed relationship with technology, grounded in ethics, privacy, and human identity.
            2. Smaller, domain-specific models (e.g., trust-layered small LLMs like Bast AI) are often more appropriate for academic and enterprise use.
            3. AI risks extracting human voice and emotional nuance from communication unless students intentionally preserve it.
    d. K–12 Education
        i. Todd Madison, Denver East High School, shared:

1. Generative AI poses severe risks to writing development, reading engagement, and independent thinking.
2. Students often use AI despite disliking it because of workload pressure and perceptions of efficiency.
3. Parents increasingly encourage AI usage to assist with homework, intensifying process-avoidance behaviors.
4. Educators must reinforce process-based learning rather than product-only assessment.

e. Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering
    i. Jeff Connors noted:
        1. AI has limited application on the manufacturing floor today but is emerging in design and administrative functions.
        2. Hiring reveals a widening divide between applicants who demonstrate curiosity and passion versus those who demonstrate only technical conformity.
        3. The most valuable future employees will pair technical skills with human creativity and the ability to challenge or refine AI output.
f. Hospitality & Enterprise Technology
    i. Nasim Mansurov described:
        1. Hospitality uses AI extensively for pricing, demand forecasting, and customer sentiment analysis.
        2. Vendor overselling and AI "gold-rush" hype require universities to teach students discernment, not blind trust in technology.
        3. Employees often adopt AI enthusiastically, then abandon it when its practical usefulness is unclear—reinforcing the need for guided instruction.
g. Biomedical Research
    i. Dr. Michael Oliphant explained:
        1. AI is becoming essential for interpreting multimodal biological data at the single-cell level.
        2. New researchers struggle significantly with failure tolerance; AI may unintentionally worsen this if students expect frictionless solutions.
        3. Preserving experimentation, iteration, and discomfort is essential to scientific training.
h. Cybersecurity, Identity, and Enterprise AI
    i. Alex Weinert shared deep insight into:

1. Generative AI's limitations, including factual instability, reductive outputs, and its dependence on outdated training data.
2. The staggering increase in attack surface created by AI adoption; universities must prepare for AI-driven cyber threats.
3. Long-term workforce opportunity in cybersecurity, especially for diverse pipelines of non-elite institutions like MSU Denver.
4. The need for students to understand probability-based output, hallucination risks, security vulnerabilities, and model-driven bias.

5. MSU Denver Report
    a. Sam provided an overview of current university initiatives:
        i. AI-enabled Advising (with Bast AI): A small language model trained on MSU Denver's curricular data will help students prepare for advising appointments by identifying requirements, missing courses, timelines, and degree progress—freeing advisors to focus on human coaching, mentoring, and decision-making.
        ii. AI-assisted Course Development (Curie and GrayDI): Tools designed to accelerate course refresh cycles, lighten instructional design load, and offer structured recommendations while preserving faculty control.
        iii. Operational AI Exploration: Investigations into budget analytics, workload automation, and administrative process improvements—all tempered by concerns about data quality.
        iv. Data Integrity Challenges: Sam emphasized that poor data quality is currently the institution's largest barrier to responsible AI use; improving data pipelines is essential before scaling additional AI tools.
6. Discussion: Workforce Needs, Student Preparation, and Emerging Skill Gaps
    a. Ethan initiated a conversation on the most urgent skill gaps observed in industry hires.
    b. Members identified:
        i. Critical Thinking and Judgment
            1. A universal theme: new graduates struggle to evaluate information, identify weak reasoning, or work through ambiguity.
        ii. Research Literacy

1. Students often lack the ability to independently investigate claims, evaluate sources, or detect inaccuracies in AI-generated content.

iii. Comfort with Failure
1. Students entering scientific or technical fields often demonstrate minimal experience with iterative processes, experimentation, or productive struggle.

iv. Professional Fundamentals
1. Several members noted deficits in:
a. workplace communication norms
b. meeting participation
c. Accountability
d. project ownership
e. self-direction

v. Creativity, Adaptability, and "Inventive Thinking"
1. AI accelerates rote work but narrows originality. Graduates must be able to produce novel ideas, adapt quickly, and maintain curiosity.

7. Understanding AI's Limitations and Risks
a. Students must recognize:
i. When not to use AI
ii. When to question it
iii. How to fact-check it
iv. How to identify bias
v. How to manage privacy and data security
vi. How AI may conceal or amplify inequities

8. Broader Concerns Raised by the Board
a. Threats to the Writing Process and Humanistic Education
i. AI enables students to bypass reading, interpretation, and sustained engagement with texts. The Board noted that generative tools risk hollowing out essential cognitive development unless educators redesign assignments around process rather than product.
b. Industry Over-Automation and Job Displacement
i. Some employers are already experimenting with AI-only content pipelines and staff reductions. Students must understand strategy, ethics, and human-centered design to remain viable in such environments.
c. Societal and Security Implications

        i. Members representing cybersecurity and emerging tech noted a rapidly expanding threat landscape, including identity attacks, model exploitation, misinformation, and AI-augmented cybercrime.
    d. Equity and Opportunity
        i. Board members emphasized that institutions like MSU Denver—serving diverse learners and non-traditional students—have a critical role in shaping equitable access to AI literacy and AI-resilient careers.
9. Closing and Next Steps
    a. Sam and Ethan thanked members for their participation and candor. Key next steps include:
        i. Determining topic focus areas for upcoming meetings (potential early priorities: cybersecurity, AI ethics, curricular redesign, and workforce alignment).
    b. Scheduling the next meeting for mid- to late-February 2026.
    c. Identifying additional Board members, particularly from the arts or creative sectors.
    d. Continuing to surface high-value use cases and potential blind spots for MSU Denver's AI strategy.
    e. The meeting adjourned with appreciation for the Board's expertise, commitment, and willingness to help MSU Denver navigate this critical moment in higher education.