

AI Infrastructure Initiative

Proposed Framework for Academic Year 2026–27

Draft for Governance Discussion: Academic Senate, Classified Senate, and College Council

Purpose. De Anza already has significant work underway around artificial intelligence through faculty leadership, Academic Senate and committee work, institutional research, districtwide efforts, ETS, and related work at Foothill. The challenge is not a lack of activity, but rather making sure these efforts are connected, that work is not duplicated, and that faculty, students, classified professionals, and administrators have clear ways to participate and know where questions should go.

This framework proposes a coordinated collegewide infrastructure for that work. It is intended to create a common structure while respecting existing governance roles, academic freedom, and the different ways disciplines are responding to AI.

1. Vision and Guiding Commitments

The goal is to build the human infrastructure, including people, shared knowledge, policy, professional learning, and processes, that allows the De Anza community to make deliberate, informed, and equitable decisions about AI and emerging technologies.

The college should not begin from the assumption that AI must either be adopted or rejected. The focus should be critical AI literacy: understanding what these systems can and cannot do, deciding when their use supports learning or college work, recognizing when they should not be used, and examining their broader consequences.

- **No mandated use.** Faculty retain their academic freedom to determine whether and how AI is used in their courses, consistent with college and district policy. The initiative should support faculty who use AI as well as faculty who choose AI-free approaches.
- **Critical inquiry is part of the work.** Questions about bias, privacy, data extraction, labor displacement, environmental impact, accessibility, academic integrity, cybersecurity, and the economic and social implications of AI should be part of the conversation.
- **Equity is built into decisions.** Access to paid tools, accessibility, surveillance, privacy, and the disproportionate impact of technology on students who already face barriers should be considered whenever we evaluate tools, practices, or policies.
- **Different perspectives are welcome.** The infrastructure should intentionally include colleagues who are enthusiastic about AI, those who are cautious, and those who are skeptical of its use.

2. Proposed Structure

The proposed structure has three connected levels: the AI Faculty Fellow provides day-to-day leadership; a Steering Committee provides collegewide coordination and oversight; and Division AI Ambassadors create a two-way connection with faculty across the academic divisions. Existing offices, constituent groups, governance teams, advisory groups, and bargaining units continue to retain responsibility for work that belongs within their established roles.

AI Faculty Fellow

The AI Faculty Fellow, Chesa Caparas, will coordinate the initiative at 50 percent reassigned time. The Fellow will convene the Steering Committee, coordinate the overall work plan and calendar, serve as the primary point of contact across college and district efforts, and help move work to the appropriate governance or operational body. The Fellow will also lead the policy/governance and community/trust strands described below.

AI Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will be a collegewide oversight and coordination body, co-chaired by the Vice President of Instruction and the AI Faculty Fellow. It is not intended to replace existing governance teams, constituent bodies, advisory groups, or operational structures. Its role is to connect the different parts of the initiative, identify gaps and duplication, and make sure work is routed through the appropriate college processes.

Proposed representation includes Academic Senate, Classified Senate, an instructional dean or AVPI, ETS, the Office of Equity and Engagement, Professional Learning/Online Education, De Anza Student Government, and a Foothill AI/ETI liaison. The committee should also ensure diverse perspectives on AI are represented.

The Steering Committee will meet monthly and will:

- coordinate the overall direction of the initiative and hear updates from the major areas of work;
- identify professional learning needs for faculty, students, classified professionals, and administrators;
- develop a mission statement for De Anza's AI infrastructure;
- guide development of the De Anza AI webpage and shared resource repository;
- help resolve overlap or gaps among college and district efforts; and
- route academic and policy matters through the appropriate participatory governance processes.

Division AI Ambassadors

One faculty AI Ambassador will represent each of the nine participating academic divisions. Ambassadors are not expected to be AI advocates or technical experts. Their primary role is to create a two-way communication channel between their divisions and the collegewide initiative.

- **Listen.** Meet with colleagues and surface what is actually happening within the division, including questions, concerns, experimentation, AI-free approaches, discipline-specific needs, and areas where support is needed.
- **Translate.** Share relevant college and district information in ways that make sense within the disciplines represented in the division, and bring division perspectives back to the initiative.
- **Curate.** Identify useful resources and contribute to a shared repository without overwhelming colleagues with the volume of material being produced about AI.
- **Support dialogue and professional learning.** Beginning in Winter Quarter, hold drop-in hours and, where useful, facilitate division conversations or Communities of Practice.
- **Report and document.** Provide regular updates to the AI Faculty Fellow and Vice President of Instruction and maintain a simple log of Ambassador activities.

Ambassadors will meet biweekly as a cohort. The anticipated commitment is approximately 20 hours per quarter, with compensation of \$1,000 per quarter. Full participation, attendance, regular reporting, and documentation of the work are expected.

Classified Professionals and Administrators

Classified participation should occur within the regular work week and through existing structures, with supervisor support and a clearly bounded time commitment. Representation should include areas where AI questions are already affecting student-facing and operational work, such as Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, Counseling, the Library/LRC, and Student Services.

Administrator engagement will occur primarily through representation on the Steering Committee and regular updates at Deans' meetings rather than through a separate cohort.

3. Five Areas of Work

The initiative is organized around five connected strands. The intent is not to create five new committees, but to give the work a clear home and connect it to existing college structures.

1. Professional Learning

Develop coordinated professional learning for faculty and staff. Faculty offerings should include pedagogy, assessment and feedback, critical AI literacy, and approaches for courses in which instructors choose not to permit AI. Staff offerings should focus on appropriate workflow uses, verification, privacy, and FERPA. All offerings will include cybersecurity as an important component. Delivery should use existing Professional Learning and Online Education structures wherever possible.

2. Policy and Governance

Bring AI-related academic and policy questions through the appropriate governance pathways rather than creating parallel processes. Where useful, De Anza can review and adapt existing work from Foothill, the Chancellor's Office, and the district instead of starting over. Instructor and student guidance, syllabus-related matters, curriculum, and academic integrity questions should be routed through Academic Senate and relevant faculty committees. Issues affecting classified professionals should be brought to Classified Senate. Collegewide recommendations and matters that cross constituent or governance areas should be brought to College Council. Operational, privacy, procurement, and FERPA matters should involve ETS, the appropriate governance or advisory bodies, and district processes as needed.

3. Tools, Evaluation, and Shared Resources

Create a transparent way to distinguish among three questions: what tools people are currently using, how tools should be evaluated, and how tools move through district review. Evaluation should consider accessibility, privacy and FERPA, cost and equity of access, vendor data and security practices, and educational value. A maintained Canvas site or college webpage can serve as the shared resource repository rather than creating a new standalone portal.

4. Students, Ethics, and Civic Engagement

Develop student-facing AI literacy resources that faculty may choose to use and create opportunities for students to examine AI critically. This work should include how AI systems operate and fail, ethical use and disclosure, bias, labor and data issues, environmental impacts, and circumstances in which choosing not to use AI is appropriate. Student engagement should connect with existing structures such as De Anza Student Government, VIDA, the Villages, learning communities, and existing paid student roles.

5. Community, Trust, and Assessment Culture

Create opportunities for faculty and students to discuss how AI is changing teaching, learning, and assessment while maintaining trust and connection. This strand can include assessment-focused programming, faculty office hours, resource events, and exploration of a De Anza chapter or partnership with Foothill's Emerging Technologies Institute rather than building a separate institute.

4. Governance and Decision-Making

A central principle of this framework is that the AI initiative should not become a substitute for De Anza's governance or organizational pathways. De Anza governance is built on participation by faculty, classified professionals, students, and administrators, with governance teams making recommendations to College Council and College Council making recommendations to the President. The AI infrastructure can identify issues, coordinate information, develop drafts, and make recommendations, but decisions should continue to move through the bodies that have responsibility for them.

Area	Primary pathway
Instructor and student guidance, syllabus, curriculum, academic integrity, assessment, and pedagogy	Academic Senate and appropriate faculty committees, including Curriculum Committee and Committee on Online Learning when the subject falls within their charge
Issues affecting classified professionals, classified professional development, and staff practice	Classified Senate, with operational or district partners as appropriate
Student perspectives and student-facing implementation	De Anza Student Government and existing student engagement structures
Equity implications and disproportionate impacts	Equity Action Council and Division of Equity and Engagement, in coordination with the relevant decision-making body
Technology planning and collegewide technology recommendations	Technology Committee and ETS, with recommendations routed through College Council when appropriate
Resource allocation or program planning implications	Resource Allocation and Program Planning when the work requires prioritization or allocation through that process
Collegewide recommendations or matters crossing multiple constituent and governance areas	College Council
Operational guidance, FERPA, privacy, procurement, security, and district-approved tools	ETS, college administration, appropriate governance or advisory bodies, and district processes as applicable
Workload, evaluation, compensation, or other bargaining-related matters	Referred to the appropriate bargaining process. The AI initiative does not negotiate collective bargaining matters

5. Coordination and Non-Duplication

Useful work is already underway, so the first question should be whether something can be connected, adapted, or synthesized before something new is created. For example, rather than launching another broad AI survey, the initiative should synthesize existing faculty and student information and use Ambassador

conversations to identify gaps. Similarly, policy work should build from existing district, Chancellor’s Office, Foothill, and De Anza work where appropriate.

The AI Faculty Fellow will serve as the primary De Anza liaison to districtwide AI efforts. As district roles and responsibilities become clearer, the Steering Committee will use that information to distinguish district responsibilities, such as procurement, legal requirements, FERPA, and tool vetting, from college responsibilities related to pedagogy, curriculum, professional learning, and campus practice.

6. Proposed 2026–27 Timeline

Term	Primary work
Fall 2026	Establish the Steering Committee; onboard and train Division AI Ambassadors; begin division listening; launch the first version of the shared resource repository; clarify governance and district coordination; begin professional learning and community/assessment programming.
Winter 2027	Ambassadors summarize emerging division needs; begin division-based drop-in hours and Communities of Practice where useful; bring initial guidance through appropriate governance pathways; pilot student AI literacy resources; continue professional learning and tool evaluation work.
Spring 2027	Refine and scale resources and professional learning; continue governance work; update the repository; assess what has been learned from divisions and students; and develop recommendations for the 2027-28 academic year.

7. How Will We Measure Success?

For the first year, measures should remain modest and focus on whether the infrastructure is making the college’s AI work more coherent and useful. Indicators should include:

- whether every participating division has an active Ambassador and a functioning two-way communication channel;
- whether faculty and staff can more easily find reliable guidance and know where to take questions;
- whether professional learning reaches colleagues with a range of perspectives and needs;
- whether we reduce duplicate surveys, committees, and disconnected requests;
- whether policy and academic questions move through clear governance pathways; and
- whether colleagues who are skeptical or critical of AI believe their perspectives are genuinely represented in the work.

8. Questions for Governance Discussion

This framework is being brought to Academic Senate, Classified Senate, and College Council for discussion. Feedback is particularly sought regarding:

- whether the proposed structure appropriately respects faculty governance, academic freedom, classified professional participation, student voice, and existing college governance responsibilities;
- whether the Division Ambassador role provides a useful way to bring discipline-specific perspectives into the work;
- whether the five areas of work capture the most important questions facing the college community;

- where clearer boundaries, additional constituent involvement, or a different governance pathway may be needed; and
- whether the proposed routing among Academic Senate, Classified Senate, College Council, De Anza Student Government, the Equity Action Council, the Technology Committee, and other existing bodies is clear and appropriate.

The intent is to build an infrastructure that helps De Anza respond to AI thoughtfully without presuming a single institutional position on its use. The structure should provide a way for the college community to learn together, make decisions in the appropriate places, and adjust as the technology and understanding of its impact on teaching, learning, and college operations continue to change.

Note: this document was drafted by Ram Subramaniam and Chesa Caparas and includes some revisions using Claude. The final document was thoroughly reviewed and revised to reflect the authors' original intent and voice.