Messiah University's Institutional AI Statement

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The capabilities of artificial intelligence (AI) compel the Messiah community to face fundamental questions about the nature not only of education, but of knowledge itself and of what it means to be human. Some hail AI's promise to accelerate learning and productivity and to increase educational access, while others highlight its potential to undercut the formation of critical thinking and human-to-human relationships. As we prepare students to cultivate personal maturity and to serve the common good, we approach AI with discernment and with eager commitment to our shared mission. In pursuit of that mission, we affirm several core values that inform appropriate engagement with AI, ensuring we remain rightly ordered in relation to God, creation, and society.

- ***Purpose.*** We endeavor to do all things to God's glory because God is the supreme good—all things are of him, through him, and to him.[1]
- ***Creativity & Embodiment.*** We esteem the creative process—not merely the final product—as intrinsically valuable because God is the Creator and has made humans as creative beings.[2] We affirm the goodness of the material world, and of our own existence as embodied souls, not disembodied minds because God made the physical world very good and took on flesh in becoming human.[3]
- ***Truth & Wisdom.*** We seek to further truth, not undermine it, and to acknowledge God as the ultimate source of truth. We aim not merely to amass facts or to harvest the "right answers," but to mature in true wisdom[4] because Christ is the very wisdom of God and wisdom is more precious than rubies.[5]
- ***Service & Reconciliation.*** We seek to serve and care for the creation and our neighbors, not to harm or exploit them. Instead of degrading, alienating, or replacing others, we aim to deepen human relationships and nourish genuine community. The persons of the triune God are in perfect union with each other and pursue loving relationship with us.[6] Therefore, true education is not the mere transfer of information but is deeply rooted in trust and relationship.

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The University's utilization of AI should be shaped by these core Christian values and inspired by its Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions, which ground our everyday work towards the University's mission.

Our use of AI should actively promote justice and peace in the world and wisely steward resources. Given the sinful human propensity to misuse technology, we resist any efforts of government, companies, or even ourselves to control others through AI. While recognizing the potential of AI to reduce work, we affirm that many talents and tasks are intrinsically worth pursuing, even when technological advances make it possible to forego them. We respect those who have reservations about the use of AI; those who conscientiously object to its adoption should be treated as full members of the educational community.

Our educators and students should encourage the pursuit of character over grades, avoiding the use of AI to enhance the latter at the expense of the former. All members of our community ought to be encouraged to cultivate personal habits of prayer and meditating on scripture—outside of the classroom—without dependence on AI. Vibrant personal faith ought to encourage the cultivating of self-control and developing of wise limits that guide when to use or to abstain from using AI. Who we become when we use AI is just as important as how we use it.

Our ultimate hope depends in neither the deployment nor the regulation of technology but in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about transformation of the human heart and of social structures. When using AI, all members of the community should foster a posture of honesty and accountability. All AI use should be motivated by our shared commitment to serve creation and our neighbors, to deepen human relationships, and to nourish genuine community.

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Messiah University calls our entire community to further the collective work of preparing for a world increasingly influenced by generative AI. This includes modeling wise engagement of AI in the classroom, library, and other educational settings and contributing to the larger conversation around AI usage in society. It also involves advocating for the importance of the person and the priority of human relationships as technologies emerge.

We must also remain attentive to the potential hazards of AI, including environmental and economic impacts, harms to mental health and relationships, privacy and security risks, embedded biases, and inaccurate or misleading results. Even when free from those threats, AI's ability to provide quick and effortless results has the danger of undermining deep contemplation and critical judgment, essential dimensions of intellectual growth.

Although members of our community will develop different perspectives on AI and cultivate a variety of practices related to its use, we are united by our honoring of the image of God in human beings, our commitment to the common good, and our faith in God's redemptive plan for the world. Encouraging each other to approach AI with wisdom and integrity will help us fulfill our mission to "educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character, and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation in church and society."

Sources

https://libguides.messiah.edu/AI

https://www.messiah.edu/sider-institute/the-three-traditions-that-shape-our-mission-and-why/

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[1] Cf. Romans 11:36. The preeminence of Christ means that divine intelligence will always supersede artificial intelligence. God deserves our worship; we neither fear nor glorify AI.
[2] Cf. Genesis 1:26. Our belief that humans are made in the image of God requires us to uphold the dignity of others in the ways we represent them through images, text, or other means.
[3] Cf. Galatians 4:4.
[4] Cf. Ephesians 3:17–19.
[5] Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:24; Proverbs 3:15. Wise approaches to AI will vary not only across disciplines and stages of learning, but also across the sequential elements involved in thinking, writing, or working.
[6] Cf. John 17:21. AI tools may offer compelling opportunities to serve Christ and to advance his reconciling work in the world.