

Academic Quality Committee Report

September 15, 2026

Summary: The Academic Quality Committee meeting began with introductions and updates from members. Missy discussed a draft letter of support for the university's AI committee, which the group agreed to review and provide feedback on. Brooke and Sarah raised concerns about the reduction in library faculty and resources, requesting committee support to address these issues. The committee also discussed a request from Jennifer Walton-Hanley regarding a list of university software licenses, with Missy agreeing to follow up with IT. Concerns about Greek life activities conflicting with academics were raised, and it was suggested that this issue might be better addressed by Student Affairs. The committee briefly discussed the potential benefits and challenges of banning cell phones and computers in classrooms, agreeing that it should remain at the discretion of individual instructors. Finally, Missy announced she would need someone to chair the next meeting on October 20th due to a conference, and Catherine volunteered for the role.

I. Letter of Support for the University AI Committee: The letter of support has been drafted and will be sent to members for feedback. Rob Hale explained that the university has formed an ongoing committee led by Matt Shake and Jenny Redifer to address AI issues in education, rather than creating specific policies due to the rapidly evolving nature of AI technology. The committee will provide annual reports and best practices, including potential syllabus statements.

Brooke discussed student feedback mechanisms including survey data, feedback forms, and Mentimeter data that show students are interested in research support. She mentioned that a previously discontinued personal librarian program was recently reintroduced this semester, with 61 students already opting in. Brooke expressed concern that while facilities and building hours are important, the focus on maintaining operations might overshadow instruction and information literacy components.

II. Library Concerns: Brooke Gross presented concerns about the decline in library faculty at WKU, noting the loss of three librarian positions over her tenure that have not been replaced. She highlighted the current ratio of 3,184 students per librarian compared to an average of 1,900-to-1 at peer institutions, and expressed worry about providing adequate information literacy instruction, particularly with AI literacy becoming important. Brooke requested support from Academic Quality in the form of a letter or statement to help push administration to address these staffing gaps.

III. Software License Management Discussion: The committee discussed Jennifer Walton-Hanley's request for a comprehensive list of university software licenses with login

information to help faculty determine if institutional licenses are available before using course fees for individual licenses. The group explored the current process for software requests, which involves submitting IT ticket requests, though they noted the specific contact person may have changed. Brooke shared that the library previously evaluated options like Mentimeter and Kahoot, ultimately choosing a single-user premium account shared among staff as it provided better value than a site license. Rob mentioned that Mentimeter remains expensive for site licenses but suggested a potential grant program might allow one-year trial access.

IV. Missed Classes Due to Greek Life Events: The Academic Quality Committee discussed two main issues. Regarding Greek life concerns, faculty members shared experiences of students being pressured to miss class for events, though they determined this might be better addressed by student affairs rather than academic quality.

V. Phones and Commuters Use During Class: The committee also considered policies around cell phone and computer use in classrooms, ultimately deciding to support faculty choices with optional syllabus language rather than implementing a universal ban.

VI. Chair (Missy Travelsted) Unavailable for October Meeting: Catherine volunteered to chair the next meeting on October 20th while Missy attends a conference, and Marrison will ensure someone from her advising area attends in her place.

VII. Adjournment

Letter of Support for the University AI Committee

To: WKU Artificial Intelligence Committee

From: Academic Quality Committee WKU Faculty Senate

As the Academic Quality Committee (AQC) for WKU Faculty Senate, it is our responsibility to support and promote academic integrity, rigor, and excellence across the University. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has rapidly influenced nearly every aspect of our personal and professional lives, presenting both opportunities and challenges. Its impact is especially significant in higher education, where institutions must carefully balance concerns regarding academic integrity and rigor with opportunities to enhance student learning and prepare graduates for an increasingly AI-integrated professional environment.

Over the last two years, the use of AI in teaching and learning has been a consistent topic of discussion within the AQC, Senate Executive Committee, and Faculty Senate. With the formation of the Artificial Intelligence Committee (AIC) by WKU in Spring 2026, the University has an important opportunity to develop thoughtful guidance, resources, and support for faculty and students as we navigate the rapidly evolving role of AI in higher education.

The AQC supports the work of the AIC and encourages an approach that recognizes the diverse academic, professional, and accreditation needs represented across the University. While university-wide principles regarding ethical AI use, transparency, academic integrity, privacy, and responsible practice are valuable, we believe that a single prescriptive or “blanket” standard for AI use across all departments, programs, courses, and assignments would not adequately reflect the differences among academic disciplines. Faculty and academic programs must retain the ability to determine when, where, and how AI may appropriately be incorporated into curriculum or even restricted from the learning environment based on course objectives, student level, professional expectations, accreditation requirements, and the competencies students are expected to demonstrate independently.

Rather than establishing uniform restrictions, we encourage the AIC to provide a framework of resources and support that empowers faculty to make informed, discipline-specific decisions. Such resources might include guidance for developing clear syllabus and assignment-level AI policies; strategies for maintaining academic integrity and rigor; examples of appropriate and inappropriate AI use; ethical standards for AI-assisted work; guidance related to privacy, security, bias, attribution, and transparency; faculty development opportunities; and instructional strategies that help faculty redesign learning activities and assessments in response to emerging AI capabilities.

Equally important, the University should consider AI not only as an academic integrity concern but also as an educational opportunity. Our responsibility is not simply to prevent inappropriate AI use; it is also to teach students how to use these technologies appropriately, critically, ethically, and effectively. Students need opportunities to develop AI literacy, evaluate the accuracy and limitations of AI-generated information, recognize bias and misinformation, protect confidential information, exercise independent judgment, and understand when reliance on AI is inappropriate. Faculty likewise need access to training and resources that enable them to thoughtfully incorporate AI tools into teaching, learning, assessment, scholarship, and professional preparation.

This balance is particularly important in professionally oriented disciplines such as nursing and other healthcare professions. AI is increasingly becoming part of the environment in which our graduates will practice. Healthcare professionals must be prepared to interact with AI-supported technologies while continuing to apply clinical judgment, evidence-based practice, ethical reasoning, communication skills, and professional accountability. Prohibiting or broadly limiting students' exposure to AI throughout their education could leave graduates less prepared for the realities of contemporary practice. Conversely, unrestricted AI use could interfere with the development and assessment of essential knowledge, skills, and professional competencies. The appropriate approach therefore depends upon the learning objective, the competency being assessed, and the professional context.

For example, there will be learning activities in which students must demonstrate their own knowledge, clinical reasoning, writing, calculation, communication, or decision-making abilities without AI assistance. There will also be learning experiences in which appropriate use of AI can strengthen students' abilities to evaluate information, compare evidence, identify inaccuracies, explore alternatives, improve efficiency, and prepare for technology-enhanced professional practice.

Faculty are best positioned to distinguish between these circumstances within their disciplines when provided with appropriate institutional guidance and support.

The AQC therefore encourages the AIC to pursue a university framework that establishes shared principles while preserving appropriate faculty and program-level autonomy. Such an approach can protect academic integrity and rigor without limiting innovation, recognize disciplinary and accreditation differences, promote ethical and responsible AI use, provide meaningful resources for faculty and students, and ensure that our graduates are prepared for professions in which AI will increasingly influence how work is performed.

AI will continue to evolve, as will its applications in higher education and professional practice. Our institutional response must therefore be equally adaptable. We support the AI Committee's efforts to provide leadership in this important area and encourage the development of a flexible, educational, and forward-looking framework that enables faculty to maintain high academic standards while preparing students to use emerging technologies responsibly and effectively.

The AQC appreciates the opportunity to provide its support and perspective and looks forward to continued collaboration with the AIC, Faculty Senate, faculty, students, and University leadership as these guidelines and resources are developed.

Sincerely,

Academic Quality Committee
WKU Faculty Senate