



Carleton University
Academic Staff Association

February 24, 2026

Dr. David Hornsby
Vice-Provost (Academic and Global Learning)
Carleton University

Re: CUASA Feedback on Draft AI Framework for Carleton University

Dear Dr. Hornsby,

I am sending this feedback on the [Draft AI Framework for Carleton University](#) in the name of the Carleton University Academic Staff Association (CUASA). It follows the principle, mutually acknowledged by CUASA and Carleton University in the Preamble of our [Collective Agreement](#), that “the goal of the University is the attainment of the highest possible standards of academic excellence in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, to be achieved principally through teaching, scholarship/research and community service;” and in recognition that the Association and the University have agreed “to cooperate in the promotion and enhancement of the University and to encourage a climate of freedom, responsibility and mutual respect in the pursuit of these goals.” The concerns and recommendations expressed in this document stem from an examination of the draft framework in view of the Collective Agreement.

This feedback is not intended to address the larger implications of the increasing use of AI. On this broader issue for which universities have a crucial role, CUASA reaffirms its position of a holistic approach involving all stakeholders on campus through university-wide technology committees, including students, and community allies.

Purpose and Scope

Because the purpose and scope of the AI Framework is to “provide guidance,” CUASA understands that the Framework imposes no obligation on CUASA’s members.

With this understanding **the list of alignments in the section on “Purpose and Scope” of the framework should clearly reference the rights and responsibilities of Academic Staff as outlined in their Collective Agreement with the University.** Further, while the “Framework in Practice” section stipulates that “Carleton University Leadership” should “Proactively engage with stakeholders ... to ensure alignment on the use of AI across the university”, **it fails to outline any concrete pathway for the cooperation between the Association and Carleton University recognized in the Collective Agreement.**

Should policies be developed out of this AI Framework, CUASA must, and is keen to, collaborate in their development. Meaningful consultation will help ensure the Collective Agreement is followed and will prevent potential infringements.

With respect to the AI tools Carleton University adopts for use on its campus, the University should refrain from placing itself in a position of dependence to a single provider of AI tools. **The framework should reaffirm the longstanding object and purpose of Carleton University to use public money and public data to serve the public interest**, as the advancement of learning and the dissemination of knowledge are public goods.

Equity

The framework should include a commitment to consider the impact of Carleton's use of AI on Indigenous lands in full cooperation with Indigenous knowledge keepers. The "Indigenous knowledge systems as outlined in the Kinàmàgawin [Learning Together] Calls to Action," recognised in the "Purpose and Scope" section of the AI Framework, demand that "research conducted by Carleton faculty, students and staff take Indigenous governance, legal and cultural protocols into account," (Call 37) and calls on Carleton University "to incorporate environmental sustainability as a fundamental institutional value to guide its current operations and future development" (Call 30).

In solidarity with the contract academic staff, we recommend that the framework acknowledge that AI tools may have a greater negative impact on Contract Instructors due to the precarious nature of their work.

The University and CUASA have the joint responsibility to ensure "No Discrimination" (CA Article 5) with respect to the work of its academic staff. While the AI Framework affirms the principle of the "inclusive and equitable" use of AI that "must NOT reinforce bias or inequity", **the framework provides no assurance that the university has adopted mechanisms, verifiable by CUASA, to ensure that the AI systems do not and will not perpetuate or increase biases or inequities with respect of the work of its academic staff.** This includes, for instance, the use of AI tools in management of personnel, including the process of hiring.

Similar concerns apply to the approval of "tools for confidential personal and institutional data" referenced in the AI Framework's guiding principles of "responsible and ethical use". **The AI Framework fails to specify how AI tools will be examined for their potential impacts on equity or accessibility. CUASA asserts that data mining should be restricted, except if consented to by the relevant academic staff association.**

Governance

As guaranteed by the Collective Agreement faculty members retain the right to participate in the governance of Carleton University. This requires that Senate have the opportunity to meaningfully consider any policy concerning the academic use of AI. **The timeline for the development and approval of any such policy must allow Senate to fully exercise its role in the academic governance of the University.**

The 2024-2027 Collective Agreement includes an obligation for the Employer to **consult with CUASA regarding "implementing changes related to AI use on campus with a significant impact on employees' working conditions"** (Article 20.9). The current AI Framework fails to outline how this obligation of ongoing consultation will be fulfilled. Workers should have rights and access

over the data they produce; Carleton University must adopt precise policies requiring the disclosure of all use of AI, including the specific tools and platforms that are used and their purposes.

Carleton University must involve academic staff, including contract academic staff, in collegial decision-making for the governance of existing AI policies. Representatives of the academic staff association must be invited to participate in institutional committees that are formed or tasked with the mandate to adopt, govern and or review AI policies. These representatives should have a vote in all policy decision-making related to AI.

The six bodies listed in the “Governance” section of the framework do not make for meaningful participation by academic staff at all levels. In several cases, the processes of appointing members to these committees are unclear, their current membership is poorly communicated, the frequency and scheduling of their meetings insufficient to meaningfully keep up with the pace of AI developments or to seriously monitor the efficiencies that AI tools promise to deliver. The agendas, recommendations, and the fate of recommendations are inadequately communicated, and this undermines meaningful and collegial participation and accountability. The outlined governance structure does not correspond to the AI Framework’s principle that the use of AI be transparent and explainable. In addition, its design does not sufficiently recognize or seek to make use of the considerable AI expertise among academic staff.

The section on the “Framework in Practice” confers to the “Carleton University Leadership” the main roles in monitoring processes, ensuring that principles are followed and making sure that members of the university are engaged. The language here is unclear. Is the leadership those bodies outlined on Carleton’s [Governance and Administration](#) page exclusively?

The Vice-President Academic & Research Committee (VPARC), a 13-member governance body in charge of approving “strategic directions and priorities of AI implementations on campus” and “ensuring that they are aligned with the university’s strategic priorities and transformation efforts,” raises important questions about the extent of independent faculty representation on the VPARC, given that two of the three tenured faculty and librarians currently hold administrative positions. Similarly, there are no academic staff in the Digital Steering Committee (DSC) to which “Academic Departments” can also “propose items for VPARC’s consideration and approval.” Yet the DSC meets monthly to “discuss and guide the overall AI strategy related to teaching, learning, research, and administration.” Finally, faculty members and librarians are included on only two of the four Committees that meet each term to provide the DSC with “regular input and recommendations about the use of AI to be prioritized in their respective areas”. On the Teaching and Learning Technology Committee (TLTC), faculty and librarians make up only six of the 11 members, alongside four administrators and one student. Finally, on the Research Computing Committee (RCC), faculty members and librarians only account for 4 of the 12 members; the other appointments are determined through consultation by the VPRI.

The Framework in Practice

CUASA members are concerned about their right to determine whether and how to incorporate AI in their research or teaching. CUASA members’ entitlement to academic freedom (Article 4) should be stated in the AI Framework.

In principle, the framework “aims to foster a safe environment where academics, staff, and students can [...] voice their concerns about specific aspects of AI use.” In practice, however, **the framework does not give enough attention to the challenges and disruptions that AI brings to the governance of the University and faculty labour.**

AI tools have the possibility of complicating and increasing the work of all CUASA members. Yet the framework only mentions cases where AI can be used “to streamline repetitive tasks (e.g., summarizing, drafting, data analysis).” **The AI Framework should include a corresponding and explicit commitment to ensure a fair workload**, as one crucial way to honour its commitment to “utilize AI tools in ways that are fair and equitable.” Such an acknowledgement would strengthen the collaborative spirit in which CUASA and the University already work at the Joint Workload Committee, where we seek to identify and review various administrative factors, supports, and processes that can influence employee workload. CUASA trusts that the University will work collaboratively to devise mechanisms to ensure a fair workload for its members as AI tools are introduced.

The question of academic integrity and student conduct as it relates to the submission of work done with the assistance of AI is of major concern to CUASA members. CUASA understands that Carleton’s Academic Integrity Policy is currently under review. We recommend that Carleton considers how the increased use of AI will increase the number of scholastic offences. Revisions to the policy must acknowledge that the identification of these offences cannot result in increased workload for academic staff without appropriate compensation. Such revisions should also carefully address the effect that policing unauthorised use of AI might have on the results of students’ experience questionnaires.

In the “Inclusive and Equitable” part of the AI Framework, there is a commitment to “uphold privacy and academic integrity standards” as a way to support “responsible and ethical use,” of AI, and to ensure the “secure” use of AI tools. As it stands, the AI Framework is incomplete because it does not address and limit the use of AI for surveillance, security cameras, location devices or digital keycards on campus. **The use of AI for surveillance or monitoring of academic staff cannot be permitted.**

As the guardian of its members’ **Intellectual Property**, CUASA must be provided with the means to ensure that these rights are not infringed (Article 13). To rely on “Carleton University Leadership” alone to “ensure that cybersecurity and data governance protocols, along with AI guidance and considerations, are updated regularly to reflect advancements in AI” is not enough. CUASA must have the means to ensure that “the image and voice, and professional and academic works, of an academic staff member should not be reproduced, distributed, or monetized by the institution without the authorization of the academic staff member. No content development contracts for online courses should have a clause granting the university license to use the author’s image and voice beyond the course in question. To apply these protections in practice, CUASA should have access to important information, including copies of the contracts between the University and the providers of technologies that include AI, as well as clear disclosures regarding the scope of and use of AI projects.

The AI Framework does not mention the implications of the adoption of AI tools for the work of supervision of graduate and undergraduate research done by academic staff. CUASA maintains that applicable policies and collective agreement clauses must clearly set out the implications of the use of AI as regards recognition of the intellectual contribution of faculty and student collaborators to the research methodology or outcomes, to ensure compliance with ethics considerations as well as applicable provincial and federal laws, e.g., patent and copyright.

Process

CUASA regrets that the authors of the AI Framework did not engage with the Association while drafting this document. At the January 2026 meeting of Senate, the President of the University stated that the AI Framework would be presented to Senate, with the expectation that there would be meaningful deliberations. But Senate's role was unclear, particularly about whether the AI Framework would be up for Senate's approval. **The very process by which this framework was drafted runs counter to the principles of collegial decision-making on academic matters.** Members worry that the production of the draft AI Framework might reflect broader weaknesses and a lack of transparency in how the governance structures outlined in the AI Framework operate in practice. Further, the **authorship** of the framework should be clearly presented. References to "we" or "Carleton" are not sufficient to account for the processes by which this document was developed.

CUASA academic staff, alongside members of other academic staff associations, have provided significant input during the consultation about this framework. CUASA asks that the results of the consultation be shared in full detail.

CUASA trusts that you will carefully consider the feedback we have offered here. Ultimately, use of generative AI by Carleton or CUASA members must be consistent with the collective agreement, transparent to those affected by its use and subject to human oversight and accountability.

Thank you for your consideration of this feedback as you update the draft framework.

Sincerely,

Dominique Marshall

Dominique Marshall
President
Carleton University Academic Staff Association

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