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posIT

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COLUMN EDITOR'S NOTES. This JLA column posits that academic libraries and their services are dominated by information technologies, and that the success of librarians and professional staff is contingent on their ability to thrive in this technology-rich environment. The column will appear in odd-numbered issues of the journal, and it will delve into all aspects of library-related information technologies and knowledge management used to connect users to information resources, including data preparation, discovery, delivery, and preservation. ✉ michalr@gbc.edu

AI Policies in U.S. Universities: A Critical Analysis of Policy Gaps and Library Involvement

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ABSTRACT

As generative AI technologies proliferate across higher education, many U.S. universities are still developing institutional policies to address their ethical, pedagogical, and accessibility implications. This *posIT* column critically examines AI policies and resources at 50 four-year universities—one from each U.S. state—to assess alignment with the Association of Research Libraries' (ARL) Guiding Principles for Artificial Intelligence. Through content analysis of LibGuides, AI taskforce membership, campus events, and public-facing policies, the study reveals widespread adoption of AI resources but a significant lack of clarity, consistency, and librarian involvement in policy development. While most institutions meet baseline criteria related to privacy, plagiarism, and algorithmic transparency, fewer address AI's potential harms to marginalized communities or its impact on accessibility for students with disabilities. Notably, fewer than half of the AI taskforces surveyed included library staff, despite librarians' expertise in digital literacy and ethical information use. This column urges academic librarians to actively seek leadership roles in institutional AI governance to help shape inclusive, responsible, and human-centered AI policy frameworks.

KEYWORDS

Academic librarianship; artificial intelligence policy; higher education; accessibility; AI ethics; library leadership; AI ethics; information governance

Introduction

The use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in higher education has brought up debates around academic integrity (Oravec, 2022; Gralha & Pimentel, 2024), what qualifies as plagiarism (Liu et al., 2023), copyright issues (Li et al., 2024), and how

to prevent the technology from spreading misinformation (Bridges et al., 2024; Maathuis et al., 2024). AI has also been criticized for perpetuating racism and racial stereotypes by using biased data to make decisions (Scott et al., 2023; Stokel-Walker, 2022; van Niekerk et al., 2024; Yang, 2025). While some higher education institutions around the world have taken a very firm stance on AI, many universities in the U.S. are still drafting policies and figuring out if they should shun or embrace the technology (Wang et al., 2024).

Although generative AI raises valid concerns, when used responsibly, it can offer significant benefits to academic librarians, students, and faculty. Common applications include support for writing and brainstorming (Memmert & Tavanapour, 2023; Rana & Cheok, 2025; Tsufim & Pomerleau, 2024), personalized learning assistance (Bagade et al., 2024; Khan, 2024), research and analysis capabilities (Michalak & Ellixson, 2024; 2025; Ndungu, 2024; Ringvold et al., 2024; Sáez-Velasco et al., 2024), grammar and editing improvement (Michalak, 2024; Michalak & Ellixson, 2025), teaching generative AI image generation (Ali et al., 2024; Berg et al., 2024; Michalak & Ellixson, 2025; Vartiainen & Tedre, 2023), and meeting transcription (Chan & Hu, 2023). AI technologies also enhance information accessibility through tools such as text-to-speech applications for visually impaired users and translation services for multilingual learners (Marshall & DuBose, 2024). Heidt (2024) highlights the value of generative AI for researchers with disabilities or those who are neurodivergent, noting its capacity to facilitate a wide range of academic tasks. As universities develop AI policies, it is essential that they consider the specific needs and rights of students and faculty with disabilities who depend on assistive technologies. Academic librarians and faculty must also ensure that the AI tools they recommend comply with accessibility standards, promoting equitable access for all users.

To address the challenges and opportunities AI presents to higher education institutions, universities need to implement clear AI policies to guide the responsible and effective use of generative AI tools by students and faculty (Moore & Lookadoo, 2024). Michalak (2023) argues that involving academic librarians in AI policy development is crucial to ensure that AI technologies are developed and used to promote social responsibility, respect for human rights, and the common good. Academic librarians' expertise in information ethics, privacy, and intellectual freedom can provide unique and valuable insights and perspectives that are necessary for the development of comprehensive and ethical AI policies. Bridges et al. (2024) also argue that university libraries are uniquely positioned to communicate across institutional silos, such as academic departments and patron groups, and this position should be leveraged for facilitating conversations on AI policies.

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL), an organization of 127 research libraries and archives in major public and private universities, federal government agencies, and large public institutions in Canada and the U.S., issued a set of guiding principles that are intended to serve as a foundational framework for the ethical and transparent use of AI (Hudson Vitale, 2024). Examples of the principles include preserving the scholarly use of digital information, prioritizing users' security and privacy in AI tools, understanding where distortions and biases are present in AI models, and advocating for openness and transparency in AI algorithms. These guidelines are a helpful framework for universities as they are developing AI policies and should also

be used by academic librarians to inform library instructional sessions and resources, such as LibGuides.

Research questions

This research aims to analyze four-year universities' AI policies and resources to determine potential gaps and opportunities for academic librarians to fill these gaps. The research seeks to answer the following research questions:

- Do university policies and university library resources align with ARL's AI guidelines?
- Are AI resources and policies focused on accessibility? Do these resources and policies highlight how AI can address accessibility barriers for students and/or faculty with disabilities? Do these resources and policies mention accessibility challenges AI platforms could cause for students and/or faculty with disabilities?
- Do AI policies or resources discuss how AI algorithms can perpetuate racial bias or prejudice toward marginalized groups?
- Do the analyzed universities have an AI task force, committee, or working group designed to guide AI policy development and best practices for students and faculty who use AI? If so, are library staff in leadership positions for these groups?

Methodology

A content analysis was conducted of AI policies, statements, and resources of 50 four-year undergraduate higher education institutions in the United States—one institution per state—based on information publicly published on the university and university library websites (see [Appendix A](#) for the full list). Institutions were selected by reviewing a list of four-year universities for each state and randomly choosing one that had both an AI policy or public stance on AI use and accessible AI-related resources (e.g., LibGuides, event listings, or policy pages) on their website. If a university did not meet this criterion (i.e., no publicly posted AI policy or AI-related resources), it was excluded from the sample, and another university from the state list was selected. The number of institutions that were excluded during this process was not recorded. The final selection included a mix of public and private universities; however, the majority were public institutions. This trend likely reflects the greater resources, stakeholder demand, and public accountability often present at larger public universities, particularly those with robust STEM programs, compared to smaller private liberal arts colleges.

Content analyzed included policies and statements on if and how students and faculty can use AI tools, accessibility service pages that mention AI, documents with recommended syllabus language professors can use on students' use of AI for course assignments, university blog posts, promotion and mentions of AI-focused university events on the university or university library website, and AI focused LibGuides by the university libraries. It was also noted whether accessibility concerns—such as AI tools that do not comply with accessibility guidelines—or opportunities—such as the use of AI assistive technologies to support students with disabilities—were mentioned.

The following outlines the criteria used to assess whether the policies and resources align with the Association of Research Libraries' guiding principles:

Library commitments and reflective Questions on Artificial intelligence integration

Democratizing access and fostering digital literacy

Libraries play a vital role in democratizing access to AI tools and technologies to promote digital literacy for all.

- Does the university library provide a LibGuide or other resources that explain what artificial intelligence is and outline the various AI tools available?
- Do AI-related policies or resources acknowledge accessibility needs, or offer a curated list of AI tools that support accessibility for users with disabilities?
- Do these policies or resources highlight opportunities to promote equity and inclusion through the use of AI?

Addressing bias and ethical awareness

Libraries are committed to recognizing and addressing distortions and biases in AI models and applications.

- Do AI policies or resources inform users about the presence of bias in generative AI tools?
- Do they explicitly address how such biases may affect marginalized or underrepresented groups?

Promoting transparency and information integrity

Libraries champion transparency in AI and uphold the integrity of information.

- Do the resources or policies advocate for transparency in how AI algorithms function and produce results?

Emphasizing human oversight

Libraries believe in the principle “no human, no AI,” reinforcing the importance of human judgment in AI use.

- Do policies or resources include statements encouraging human involvement in evaluating and fact-checking AI-generated content, particularly for students?

Ensuring privacy and security

Libraries prioritize the protection of user data when interacting with AI tools and platforms.

- Do AI-related resources or policies warn users about privacy and security risks, such as the dangers of entering confidential or sensitive information into AI systems?

Navigating copyright and academic integrity

Libraries affirm that U.S. and Canadian copyright laws are robust enough to address emerging AI-related issues.

- Do the policies or resources address the copyright implications of using AI tools?
- Do they offer guidance on avoiding plagiarism and properly citing AI-generated content?

Advocating for scholarly use and fair use

Libraries negotiate to protect the scholarly use of digital content in the age of AI.

- Do AI policies and resources discuss fair use rights and how they apply to academic and research contexts involving AI tools?

Libraries play a critical role in guiding the ethical and informed use of AI by offering resources that clarify fair use rights in academic and research contexts involving AI tools. To determine whether librarians or library staff have an active leadership role in shaping institutional AI policies and best practices for research and teaching, we examined whether universities have established AI-focused committees, task forces, working groups, or advisory groups—and whether librarians or library personnel are included as members of these entities.

Results

Where universities are with their AI policy development

Instead of having a blanket policy that students can or can't use AI for their coursework, all the analyzed universities let professors decide, based on the discipline and learning objectives for the course, if and to what extent students are allowed to use AI. Forty-five of fifty of the universities provided recommended written statements professors can include in their syllabi around AI policy, providing several options, including no AI use for coursework, AI use for specific contexts, or assignments that require AI use. Professors were strongly encouraged, but were not required, to include their stance on AI use for class assignments in the syllabus.

Since the universities are leaving it up to the professors to decide classroom AI policy and have only formed university groups to provide recommended best practices and policy suggestions on AI use, about 42 of the universities (84%) analyzed are in the beginning stages of their AI policy development. This is defined as universities that provide guidance, principles, and suggestions to students, faculty, and professors on AI use and how professors communicate the AI policies they select for their individual classes, but don't have firm AI policies and regulations that apply across the university

ecosystem. The one exception is that universities in the beginning phases of policy development still state that students who violate their professors' class AI policies, use AI for assignments without permission, or try to pass off content created by AI as their own are in violation of the academic honor code. Universities in the beginning stages noted that additional guidance on AI use would be provided to students, faculty, professors, and administrators as needed and available, and as suggestions are provided by the AI policy task forces/working groups. The additional eight universities who were in the middle stages of AI policy development also shared guidance and left AI use in the classroom and for assignments up to professors, but also shared firm policies on AI use for mitigating privacy and security issues, including confidential information that should not be entered into AI platforms that could violate laws like FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), AI tools that professors and students should and shouldn't use because of potential security risks, and the process for reporting violations to these policies.

Forty-seven of the university library websites provided LibGuides on AI. Common topics covered in these LibGuides include an overview of what AI is, examples of generative AI tools, an introduction to AI literacy, information on citing AI resources, and benefits and limitations of AI. Many of these LibGuides explore themes present in the ARL guidelines such as bias, privacy and security, copyright, plagiarism, and other ethical issues. Some of them provide guidance and best practices on how to best use AI tools. For instance, the University of South Carolina AI LibGuide included guidance on prompt engineering, the practice of designing inputs for generative AI tools that will produce optimal outputs.

All 50 universities publicized on their university or university library website events focused on AI, including virtual and in-person events, workshops, or webinars. Most of the events explored applications for AI and/or AI use cases for different industries ($n=40$). Events exploring the opportunities, challenges, and use cases for AI in an education setting were one of the most popular topics ($n=42$). For instance, USF offered a workshop for faculty exploring "a series of GenAI use case tutorials and offering hands-on experience with prompting on a variety of GenAI platforms in the context of teaching and learning" (University of South Florida, 2024). Exploring ethical questions around AI ($n=24$) and highlighting applications for AI in research ($n=20$) were also common event topics.

Regarding specific AI tools in policies or resource pages, ChatGPT was mentioned by every university. This is unsurprising as the rise of popularity and increased use of the platform is likely what pushed most higher education institutions to make statements on student and faculty AI use. Other tools commonly mentioned include DALL-E, Copilot, Google Gemini (formerly known as Bard), Claude, and Adobe Firefly. Most universities listed these tools as examples and didn't give an outright endorsement or ban on using these AI models (see Figure 1).

Alignment with ARL guidelines

The universities provided broad guidelines and best practices around AI use, which mostly followed the ARL guidelines that were measured (Figure 2). Below is a breakdown of how the universities aligned with each of the ARL guidelines.

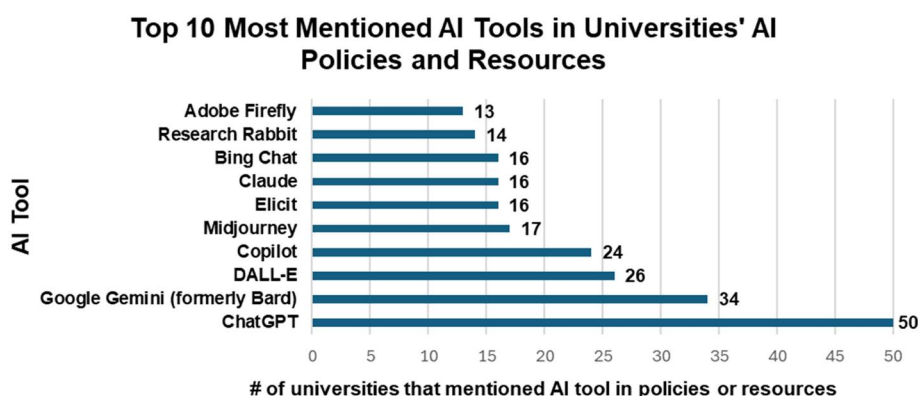


Figure 1. Chart on the number of the 50 universities analyzed that have AI policies or resources that are aligned with the ARL guidelines. View the methodology section for how alignment is defined.

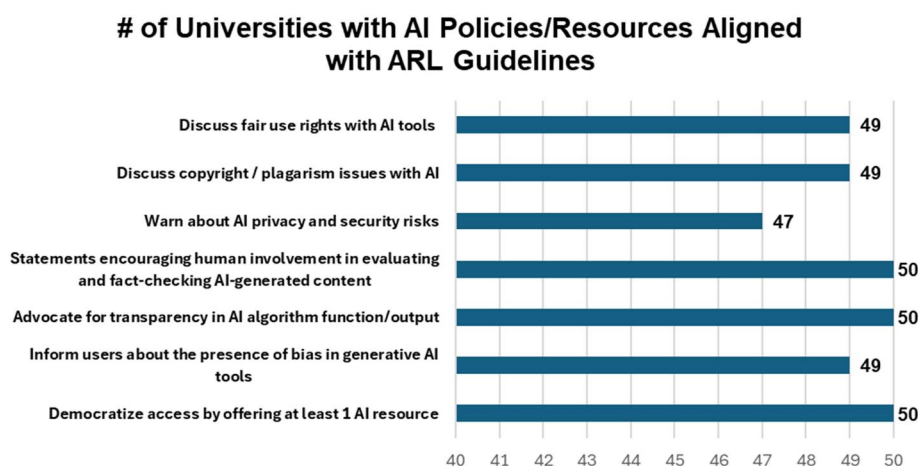


Figure 2. Chart on AI tools that were most frequently mentioned in the 50 analyzed university AI policies and resources.

Democratizing access and fostering digital literacy

All the universities democratized access to information on AI by offering at least one free AI resource promoted on their website, either in the form of a LibGuide or event (Figure 3). sections below address how universities measured up in terms of acknowledging accessibility needs and inclusion.

Addressing bias and ethical awareness

All but one university ($n = 49$) had policies and resources that warned users of how AI can perpetuate biases and inaccurate information. Thirty-five of them (70%) (Figure 4), such as the University of Washington, explicitly discussed how this bias negatively impacts marginalized groups and discussed racial issues in how the AI algorithms are created (University of Washington, 2024). Purdue University's AI teaching module page discussed the implicit bias in AI that is strengthened by "an AI workforce that is overwhelmingly male and white or Asian" (Purdue University, 2024).

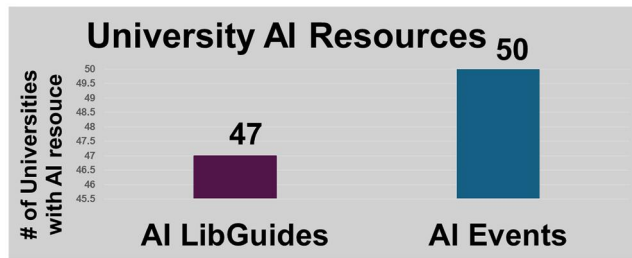


Figure 3. AI resources offered by universities and university libraries. AI events include virtual and in-person events, such as webinars, workshops, presentations, conferences, lectures, and other in-person and virtual educational sessions.

Mentions of Racial Bias in AI Algorithms in University Policies and Resources

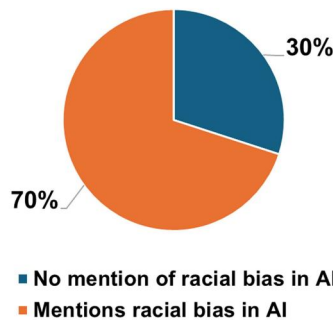


Figure 4. Chart on how many of the analyzed universities discuss racial bias in AI algorithm output.

Louisiana State University’s AI LibGuide had a section on how to critically evaluate, and fact-check information from AI so students can be aware of the information they are consuming, producing, and sharing. This section emphasizes that students should “open the dialogue to be more inclusive of historically excluded groups, including voices from Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, LGBTQIA+ communities, and women” (Louisiana State University, 2024).

Promoting transparency and information integrity

All the universities had some statement in their policies or resources advocating for transparency in how AI algorithms function and produce results, and/or that students and faculty strive to use platforms that are transparent about their algorithms. West Virginia University, for instance, recommends that students select tools that are transparent about the data sources and learning algorithms. The University of Oklahoma recommends that students and faculty use Microsoft Copilot since it provides responses with verifiable citations for transparency.

Universities also expect students and faculty to be transparent about their AI use. For example, some sample syllabus language requires students to label which sections of their assignment they used AI for. The University of Kentucky OER Grant LibGuide

states that in addition to authors labeling any use of generative AI, they should also note where the tool gets the material it generates output from, if possible.

Higher education institutions like the University of South Florida and the University of New Mexico have discussed on their websites the challenge of ensuring AI-generated content is transparent. The University of New Mexico notes it's "difficult to trust or challenge AI-generated content since "many AI systems are 'black boxes' where the decision-making process is opaque" (University of New Mexico, [n.d.](#)).

Emphasizing human oversight

All 50 universities included statements in their policies or LibGuides that students need to apply critical thinking and research skills when using AI and fact-check information instead of believing any information provided by generative AI tools like ChatGPT. This is often paired with discussions of how students should be aware of bias in AI algorithms and how output can sometimes be inaccurate statements that are particularly harmful to marginalized groups.

Ensuring privacy and security

Almost all university policies and/or resources (47 out of 50) discussed issues around security or privacy when using AI tools, such as recommending or requiring students and faculty not to enter confidential information into AI tools, particularly information that would violate FERPA.

Navigating copyright and academic integrity

49 out of 50 universities discussed issues around copyright, plagiarism, and proper citation when using AI tools. Several universities, while not banning professors from using these tools, did note that there are currently no reliable AI detection tools. Universities noted in their policies that students trying to pass off content created by AI as their own without acknowledging they used AI tools would be in violation of the academic honor code. Some LibGuides explained the copyright issues surrounding using content generated by AI and how to properly cite AI for assignments, if the use of AI is permitted.

Advocating for scholarly use and fair use

49 out of 50 universities discussed in their AI policies and resources fair use rights and how they apply to academic and research contexts involving AI tools. This was typically discussed alongside copyright laws around AI.

Acknowledgment of accessibility challenges/opportunities

Thirty-one (62%) of the universities discussed accessibility in AI use in terms of how it impacts people with disabilities ([Figure 5](#)). The majority of these universities ($n = 18$) discussed both how AI can increase accessibility in educational environments for students with disabilities and how AI tools can create barriers for people with disabilities

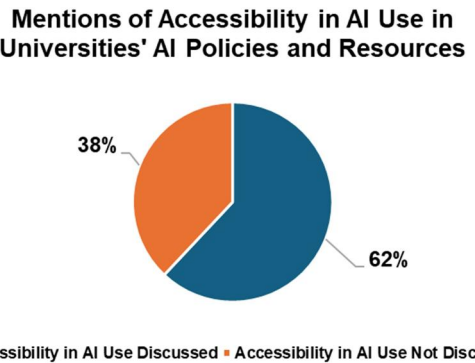


Figure 5. Chart on how many of the analyzed universities discuss in their policies and/or resources accessibility issues and opportunities in AI use for people with disabilities.

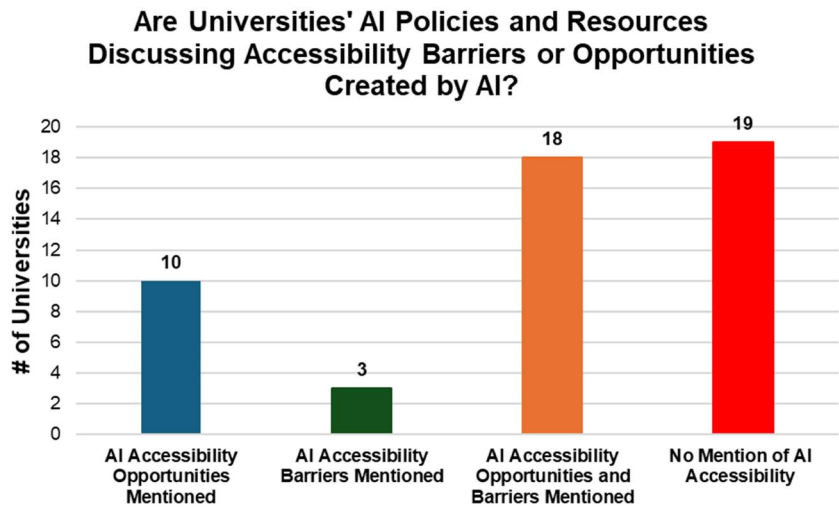


Figure 6. This chart analyzes how universities are discussing accessibility in AI use in their AI policies and resources to see if they focus more on the opportunities or challenges AI presents for people with disabilities.

since not all of them follow accessibility guidelines (Figure 6). The most common way the relationship between accessibility issues and AI was discussed was through assistive technology pages by university accessibility departments that list generative AI resources for students. Cornell University had a page dedicated to discussing generative AI as an accessibility resource and how to ensure accessibility principles and practices are applied when using generative AI in the classroom. The University of Texas at Austin published an article on how ShortScribe makes video content accessible by transforming visual elements into audio descriptions (Erales, 2024). Lindsay Onufer, program manager and senior teaching consultant in the University Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Pittsburgh, published an article on University of Pittsburgh’s University Times website on how to use generative AI to create more accessible student learning experiences, such as following the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework.

While universities are exploring how AI can benefit students with disabilities, they also acknowledge the need to ensure AI tools are accessible and follow inclusive design practices. A University of Michigan campus committee studying generative AI found that ChatGPT wasn't fully compliant with the web accessibility technical guidelines the university uses, which meant it wasn't ideal for the screen reader technology that many students rely on. In response, University of Michigan built its own closed generative AI tools to address accessibility, privacy, and affordability issues (O'Connell, 2024). University of California, Irvine (UCI) also deployed a customized generative AI solution called ZotGPT Chat to allow UCI affiliates to explore AI in a safer, secure environment, however the university did not publicly acknowledge if this platform addresses any of the accessibility barriers presented by popular AI platforms (UC Irvine, 2024).

A main barrier to AI tools being accessible, according to The University of Maryland, is that the datasets used to train and build AI algorithms often do not include the faces, voices, or preferences of people with disabilities. The University of Maryland is working to close this gap and reduce machine learning bias by generating datasets sourced from people with disabilities.

Librarian representation in university AI policy groups

While the universities analyzed left it up to professors to decide if and how AI is used for their classes, many of the universities lacked detailed guidelines for how professors and students can best use AI in an educational environment, outside of giving a broad overview of the opportunities, challenges, and risks that come with AI. To address this gap, 42 of the universities (84%) have an AI taskforce, committee, or working group designed to make recommendations on university AI policies and guidelines. However, only 20 of the 50 universities (40%) have a librarian or library staff member publicly listed as a member of these groups (Figure 7). These groups mostly consisted of

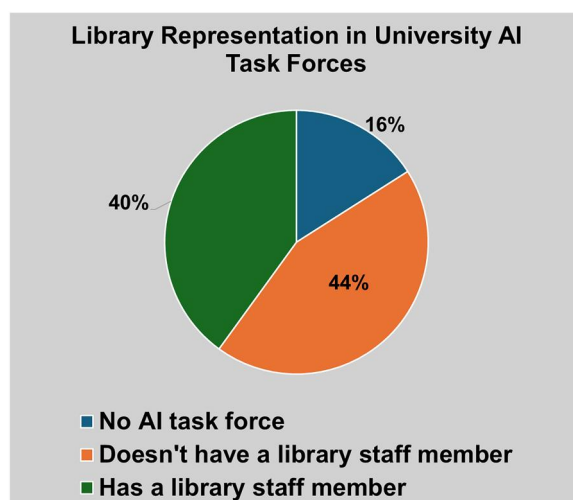


Figure 7. This graphic looks at how many universities have a group to guide AI policies and resource development, and library staff representation in them..

professors, predominantly STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine) departments and IT faculty ($n = 37$).

Discussion

Most of the universities ($n = 42$) analyzed are still in the early phases of developing their AI policies and resources, as AI technology is still evolving and university AI working groups are developing policy recommendations. Universities in the middle stages have only integrated AI into existing policies and still need a more robust and detailed AI policy that provides standardization and eliminates ambiguity for professors and students. Unclear policies and the confusion of having each professor determine the AI policy for each course could lead to negative consequences. Especially since professors are generally only “strongly encouraged” but not required to include their AI policy in the syllabus. For example, Reveille, Louisiana State University’s student media news site, reports that Louisiana State University’s AI policies have resulted in complaints from students that the policy is unclear and, at times, may unfairly accuse students of academic dishonesty. The article states, “Professors at LSU are not all on the same page when it comes to AI, as a result, some students say the lack of clear policies leaves them vulnerable to unfair accusations” (Quite, 2025).

While there weren’t explicit mentions that AI policies were based on the ARL AI guidelines, only four of the 50 universities did not have a resource or statement on their website that was aligned with each of the seven ARL AI guidelines. For example, similar to the ARL principle “Libraries believe no human, no AI,” the universities assert that students are responsible for verifying and validating the outcomes produced by AI, ensuring they are accurate and reliable.

All 50 of the analyzed universities had some type of resource on AI, such as a university event on AI, and most of them had an AI LibGuide that included information on best practices on AI and AI tools that students could use to become familiar with the technology. Two universities, the University of Michigan and the University of California, Irvine, have even deployed their own AI tools for students to address barriers like access, affordability, and security. This shows efforts to democratize access to AI technology.

To further democratize access to AI tools, more universities need to have policies and resources focused on AI accessibility. This could include guidelines for how to use generative AI to create more accessible student learning experiences, such as the ones offered by the University of Pittsburgh and Cornell University, and resource pages that list free and reliable AI tools students can use to increase accessibility. All the universities analyzed let their professors decide if and how AI tools are used in the classroom and for class assignments, but the policies do not clarify if professors are allowed to deny students with disabilities from using AI in class for accessibility reasons, such as speech to text notetaking services for students who are hard of hearing. As universities develop more comprehensive AI policies, this is an area that will need to be addressed. Academic librarians should collaborate with the university’s accessibility department to assess what AI tools can help students with disabilities and should incorporate how to use these tools in library instructional sessions.

One of the main growth areas as universities continue to navigate AI use best practices and allocation toward AI tools is including librarians and library staff in leadership positions on AI policy decisions. 84% of universities had a group dedicated to developing AI policies and/or developing AI educational programs, but less than half of these groups included a librarian or library staff member. Currently, most of these task forces ($n = 37$) are dominated by STEM and IT professors and faculty. As discussed by Michalak (2023), it is important for academic librarians to be involved in developing university policies and decisions around AI due to their expertise in teaching information literacy and assessing research tools. This lack of library representation indicates that university leaders do not recognize the importance of librarians providing their expertise and insights early in the development and decision-making process. These study findings show that librarians at universities need to speak up and advocate for leadership positions in these groups and educate faculty and university administration on the unique expertise they can bring. This research didn't explore how AI university task forces, or equivalent groups, are formed. It's unknown if the universities that do have library representation in their task forces are because librarians were asked or had to push for inclusion. Future research could explore if and how librarians at academic libraries are being asked to weigh in on decision-making and implementation of AI tools and if they feel empowered to speak up for leadership positions around AI policy development.

Due to most of the universities' AI policies and resources being very broad and lacking detailed public AI guidelines and best practices, for the most part, there isn't a significant difference in the public AI content analyzed between universities that have librarians on AI taskforces versus universities that don't have library staff on taskforces or a taskforce at all. The few universities that did not meet all the guidelines outlined by ARL ($n = 3$) were universities that either did not have an AI taskforce or did not publicly list a library staff member on the taskforce. Nine of the 16 schools (56%) that did not mention racial bias, and 12 of the 20 schools (60%) that did not discuss accessibility AI topics were also universities that either didn't have an AI taskforce or did not publicly list library staff on the taskforce. There is not enough evidence of a relationship between AI policies and resources and librarians as active members in university AI policy groups, but as universities release more detailed policies and guidance on AI use, there could be a more notable difference between institutions providing decision-making and leadership positions to librarians and those who do not.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the analysis was based primarily on publicly available documents and institutional websites, which may not reflect the full extent of internal policy discussions or informal practices related to AI governance. Second, the sample skewed toward institutions with greater public visibility or robust digital infrastructures, potentially overlooking approaches adopted by smaller or less resourced colleges. Third, while this study highlights the current marginal role of librarians in AI policy development, it does not capture the full range of informal influence librarians may exert through instruction, advocacy, or advisory committees. Future research could benefit from interviews with key stakeholders and comparative studies across

institutional types to provide a more nuanced understanding of librarians' contributions and emerging leadership roles in shaping AI governance.

Future research

Building on the findings of this study, future research should explore the evolving role of academic librarians in institutional AI governance through more direct, qualitative methods. Interviews or focus groups with librarians, faculty, and administrators involved in AI policy development would provide richer insights into the informal contributions, barriers to participation, and advocacy strategies used across institutions. Longitudinal studies could track how librarian involvement changes over time as institutional policies mature and AI tools become further integrated into teaching and research.

Comparative case studies across institutional types—such as community colleges, liberal arts colleges, and R1 universities—would help illuminate how context, resource availability, and organizational culture shape AI policy formation and librarian engagement. Additional research is also needed to assess the effectiveness of AI education and literacy programs led by libraries, particularly in terms of their impact on student understanding, ethical awareness, and equitable tool usage. Finally, exploring collaborations between libraries and offices of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) may offer important insights into how librarians can help ensure that AI adoption reflects institutional commitments to social justice.

Conclusion

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly embedded in the fabric of higher education, colleges and universities must grapple with the ethical, pedagogical, and operational implications of its use. This study reveals that while many institutions have made initial strides—through drafting policies and offering educational resources that align with the ARL's guiding AI policy principles—there is a pressing need for deeper engagement with issues of equity, bias, and inclusion. Critically, the findings underscore that academic librarians remain underrepresented in AI policy development, despite their expertise in information ethics, digital literacy, and equitable access.

To ensure AI adoption in higher education reflects academic values and serves the full breadth of campus communities, librarians must actively position themselves as leaders in institutional policy development. Their insights are essential not only for safeguarding academic integrity but also for shaping AI frameworks that prioritize transparency, accessibility, and justice.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Appendix A

Table A1. List of universities analyzed.

State	University
AK	University of Alaska Fairbanks
AL	University of Alabama
AR	Arkansas State University
AZ	University of Arizona
CA	University of California, Irvine
CO	University of Denver
CT	Yale University
DE	University of Delaware
FL	University of South Florida
GA	Georgia Tech
HI	University of Hawaii at Manoa
IA	University of Iowa
ID	Boise State University
IL	Northwestern
IN	Purdue University
KS	University of Kansas
KY	University of Kentucky
LA	Louisiana State University
MA	Harvard
MD	University of Maryland
ME	University of Maine
MI	University of Michigan
MN	University of Minnesota
MO	University of Missouri
MS	Mississippi State University
MT	University of Montana
NC	Duke University
ND	University of North Dakota
NE	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
NH	University of New Hampshire
NJ	New Jersey Institute of Technology
NM	University of New Mexico
NV	University of Nevada, Las Vegas
NY	Cornell University
OH	Ohio University
OK	University of Oklahoma
OR	Oregon State University
PA	University of Pittsburgh
RI	University of Rhode Island
SC	University of South Carolina
SD	University of South Dakota
TN	Vanderbilt University
TX	University of Texas at Austin
UT	Brigham Young University
VA	Virginia Tech
VT	University of Vermont
WA	University of Washington
WI	University of Wisconsin-Madison
WV	West Virginia University
WY	University of Wyoming