

SRJC Academic Senate debates the role of AI in the classroom

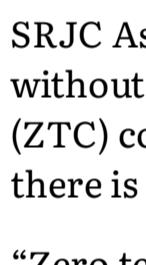


Destiny Quiroz-Lindauer, Reporter • March 9, 2025



Courtesy SRJC

SRJC Academic Senate members discussed their concerns with the college's strategic action plan at their meeting on April 16.



Santa Rosa Junior College Academic Senate members discussed best practices for implementing artificial intelligence policies into course syllabuses and formed a new task force to oversee future AI decisions during their meeting on March 5.

Senate members concluded that instructors wouldn't be required to adopt policies regarding student use of AI but recommended they include one of the sample policies developed by the company, GenAI.

"Our responsibility is to develop the culture of and education with our students, and their responsibility is to act with integrity when they are producing work," Academic Senate member Aylin Atilgan Relyea said.

Senate members emphasized concerns about AI's potential impact on critical thinking skills rather than the technology itself. They discussed how AI policies within syllabuses could help clarify for students which AI tools are allowed for a specific course.

Members also passed a motion to establish a long-term task force focused on future AI-related decisions.

SRJC Associate Librarian Katrina Smith, who oversees degree pathways without textbook costs, reported a 17% increase in Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) courses at SRJC between fall 2023 and fall 2024. She added that there is an additional \$320,000 in funding for two more ZTC pathways.

"Zero textbook costs help improve student success, student engagement, enrollment and retention as it relieves the administrative and financial burden that students face with commercial textbooks," Smith said.

Robert Holcomb, vice president of academic affairs, updated members on efforts to address SRJC's current budget deficit. SRJC reduced its deficit from \$1.4 million in 2022-2023 to its current deficit of \$450,000. Holcomb's goal is to reduce this deficit further to less than \$250,000 by 2026.

Academic Senate members questioned if SRJC was on a trajectory similar to Sonoma State University; officials there **announced earlier this year** that the college would cut multiple majors and all inter-collegiate sports teams because of a \$23.9 million deficit.

"I think the question is, is SRJC going to be in distant dire strikes that we've seen at SSU?" Holcomb asked.

He later assured the group that he believes drastic cuts similar to SSU's can be avoided at SRJC and added that he aims to fix the deficit without eliminating classes.

Holcomb plans to present a detailed budget-reduction plan at the Academic Senate's April 2 meeting.



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Destiny Quiroz-Lindauer, Reporter

Destiny Quiroz-Lindauer is currently in her first semester at The Oak Leaf, pursuing a degree in journalism. After completing her credits at Santa Rosa Junior College, she plans to transfer to a four-year university. Outside of school and writing, Destiny loves discovering new coffee spots, attending music festivals, and spending time with friends, whether it's relaxing at home or exploring new places together. While she's always been a strong academic writer, she's eager to improve her work and dive deeper into the world of journalism!