T.A.R.A

Your guiding star through grad school and beyond

ORLJ5199001
AI IN ORGANIZATIONAL CONSULTING
PRASHASTI TRIPATHI

BACKGROUND

Graduate education in U.S. universities is more global than ever, with international, first-generation, and underrepresented students facing complex academic, social, and career challenges. Despite growing demand for personalized guidance, traditional advising models struggle with limited capacity and resources (Columbia University, 2023). Meanwhile, advances in AI have made it possible to deliver **personalized, emotionally intelligent, and culturally sensitive mentorship at larger scale** complementing human mentors and enhancing graduate student experiences (Stanford University AI Index Report, 2024).

DIAGNOSIS OF CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

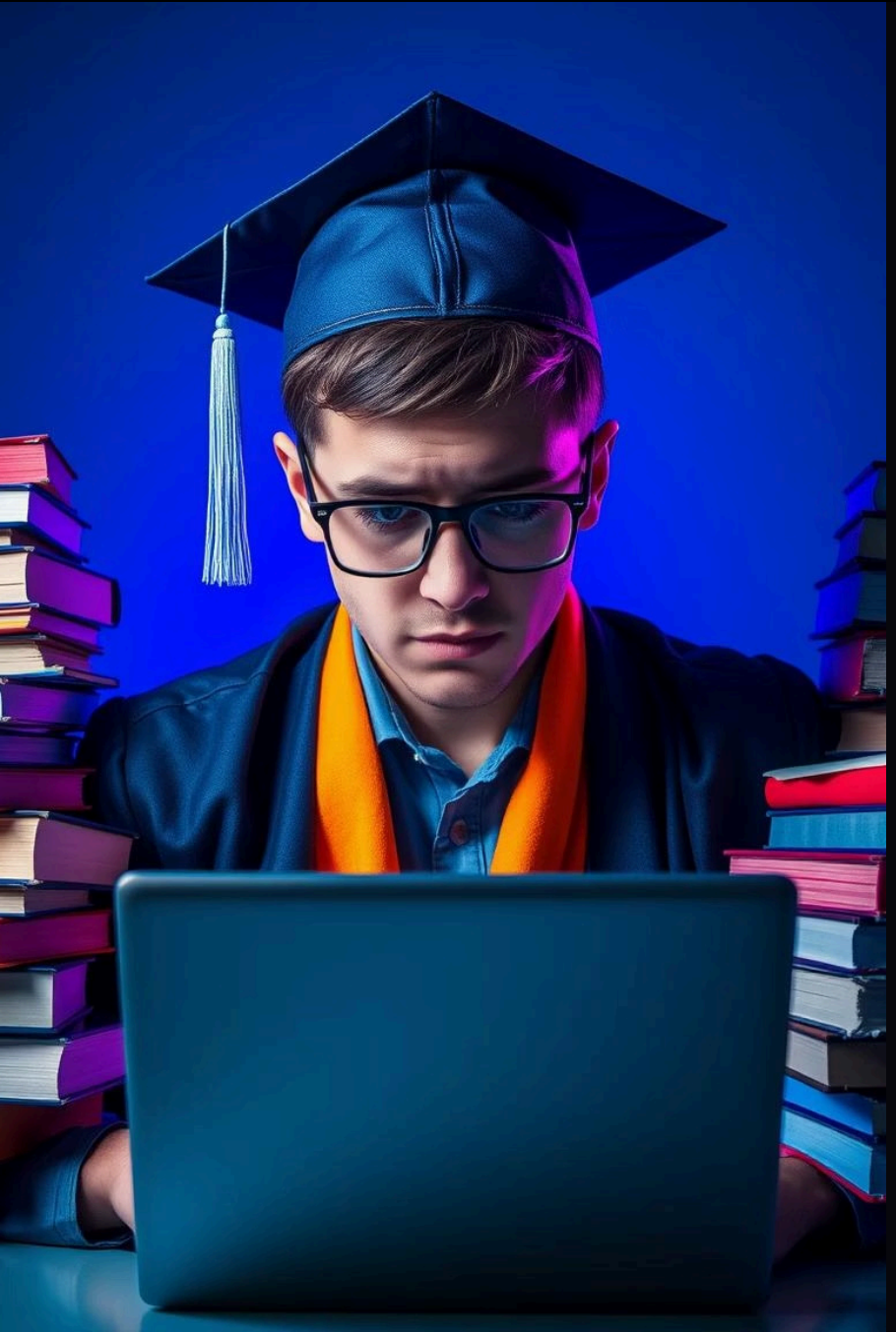
Maintaining the status quo risks missing key chances to boost graduate student success

Opportunities

- **Enhanced Academic Performance** : AI solutions can enhance academic performance by 10–15 percentile points equivalent to an extra year of schooling at ~$5 per student (Henkel et al., 2024).
- **Scalability and Accessibility:** 24/7 support ensures inclusive access regardless of background.
- **Data-Driven Insights:** Real-time data insights enable proactive, smarter interventions and policy decisions.

Risks

- **Risks of Inaction:** Mental health challenges are rising, with 36% of young adults reporting anxiety, 29% depression, 58% a lack of meaning (Weissbourd et al., 2023).
- **Limitations of Traditional Mentorship:** Traditional mentorship struggles to meet diverse, evolving student needs.
- **Risk of Falling Behind:** Universities rejecting AI risk losing talent and competitive edge.



PROBLEM STATEMENT

Mentorship Gaps

Graduate students in US universities **lack timely, personalized, emotionally and culturally sensitive mentorship.**

Without AI support, many risk disengagement disengagement, inequitable experiences, institutional disadvantage (Stanford AI Index, 2024).

Graduate Student Support Survey Insights

Top challenge: Balancing academics, work, and life (**50%** of students).

70% seek digital mentors to help manage these demands.

PROPOSED SOLUTION : T.A.R.A

T.A.R.A (Transformative AI Resource for Advancement) embodies my Indian heritage and global mission. It provides **culturally sensitive, personalized mentorship that is emotionally and socially intelligent**— guiding graduate students in their academic and personal growth without clinical intervention.

Origin

Named after Dhruvtara, Sanskrit for guiding pole star, symbolizing direction without control.

Cultural Identity

Rooted in Indian culture with a global mission

Mentor v/s Therapist

Serves as a mentor, not a therapist, focusing on guidance and not clinical support or intervention

T.A.R.A'S KEY FEATURES

T.A.R.A integrates advanced **AI technologies (the head)** and **evidence-based psychological frameworks (the heart)** to deliver personalized, emotionally, socially intelligent, and culturally sensitive mentorship to graduate students in U.S. universities (https://poe.com/BOT2497)

24/7 Availability

Available at all times, eliminating constraints of time zones and scheduling conflicts, ensuring consistent access to guidance (Bazigos, 2025)

Personalization

Leverages AI to analyze user data, preferences, and feedback, continuously adapting responses to align with each student's evolving goals

Emotional Intelligence

Based on Goleman's Emotional Intelligence (1995) model, uses NLP to detect emotional cues and provide empathetic responses attuned to users' emotional states

Social Intelligence

Embodies Albrecht's Social Intelligence (2006) model, detecting social cues to engage in appropriate interactions, adjusting tone and approach accordingly

Cultural Intelligence

Incorporates Hofstede's (2001) Cultural framework, adapting communication styles to be culturally relevant and sensitive to diverse backgrounds

Ethical Alignment

Follows ethical AI principles, focusing on supporting, not replacing humans, ensuring mentorship stays personal, student-centered (Bazigos, 2025)

HOW T.A.R.A WORKS

1

User Onboarding

Students share academic background, career goals, cultural context, and preferences to help T.A.R.A personalize guidance from the start

2

Understanding User Needs

T.A.R.A uses advanced AI tools, including Large Language Models (LLMs), Natural Language Processing (NLP), and Sentiment Analysis to interpret queries, detect emotional tone, and understand cultural nuances, ensuring meaningful and sensitive responses

3

Personalized Mentorship

- T.A.R.A offers tailored advice based on each user's prompt
- *Personal Development* ***example*** : I am stressed what to do?
- *Professional Development* ***example*** : How do I interact with my American Professor?
- Can be integrated with university systems like LMS, career portals, and student support services

4

Learning and Adapting

Using Machine Learning (ML), T.A.R.A learns from interactions to improve response relevance and personalization over time

5

Ethical and Responsible AI Use

Follows ethical guidelines by communicating clearly, protecting user data, and applying AI responsibly in all interactions (Bazigos, 2025)

6

Pilot Study

- The system will launch initially with select groups to test and enhance usability, cultural relevance, and university system integration
- Feedback will help refine and prepare for wider rollout (Bazigos, 2025)

7

Future Rollouts

Post-pilot, T.A.R.A will expand to offer advanced support including financial security advisement and assistance for international students (eg. Immigration, CPT, OPT Policies)

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

T.A.R.A provides valuable AI mentorship but faces challenges needing careful management for responsible and effective use (Bazigos, 2025).

Subtle Emotional & Cultural Cues

AI may miss nuanced feelings, causing generic replies

Solutions:

- Human oversight in early stages
- Continuous retraining with diverse datasets

Balancing Personalization & Privacy

Data collection raises privacy concerns

Solutions:

- Privacy-by-design with minimal data
- Anonymize data and communicate clearly

University System Integration

Technical challenges connecting LMS and services

Solutions:

- Phased integration with non-critical systems
- Collaborate with IT for security and compatibility

Content Relevance

Risk of outdated advice without updates

Solutions:

- Establish governance team for regular updates

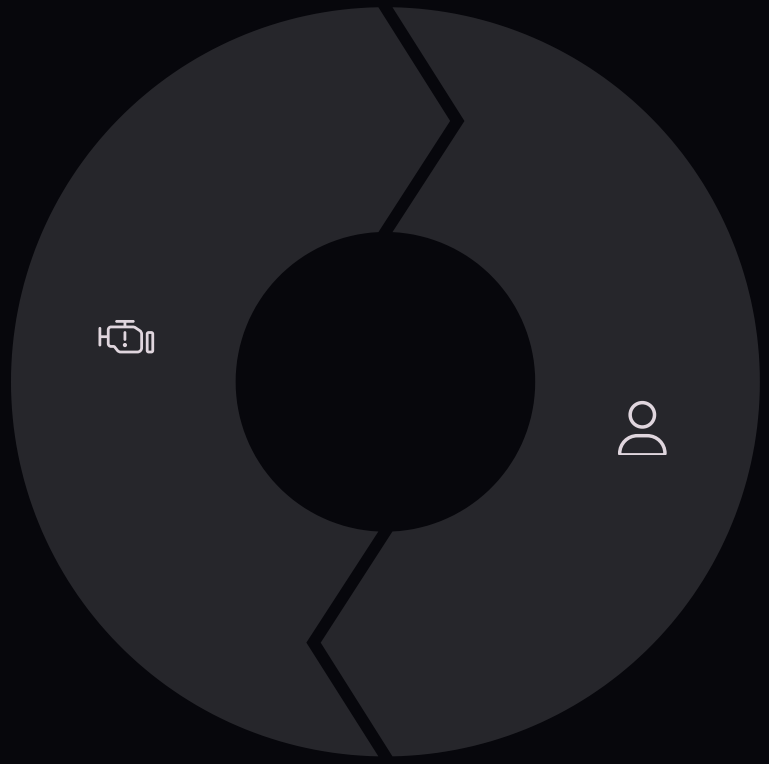
SAFETY RISKS AND MITIGATION

Risk: Misinterpretation of sensitive queries

If a student shares, "I'm really struggling lately," AI might miss the seriousness,offer surface-level tips.

Mitigation:

Use sentiment analysis and escalation protocols to detect distress and refer students to human advisors when needed.



Risk: Overreliance on AI

Students may begin depending solely on T.A.R.A, missing out on valuable human mentorship and connections.

Mitigation:

Encourage balanced support by suggesting faculty, peer groups, and campus resources in responses. Reinforce the importance of human guidance in developmental conversations.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Risk of AI Bias

- Conduct regular bias audits and include diverse data sources during AI training
- Involve diverse reviewers in content evaluation.

Lack of Transparency

- Allow users to ask, “Why did you suggest this?” fostering trust and understanding.

Role Boundaries

- Define clear scope during onboarding, reinforce T.A.R.A’ s mentorship-only role
- Redirect non-mentorship queries to appropriate university services

Safeguarding Data

- Use end-to-end encryption, strict privacy protocols
- Give users control over their data with options to view, edit, or delete information

Thus, while complexities, risks, and ethical challenges are inherent in AI mentorship solutions, T.A.R.A will address these **proactively through layered safeguards, responsible AI design, and strong integration of human oversight and user empowerment strategies** (Bazigos, 2025)

T.A.R.A Demo on POE

Chatbot Link:
https://poe.com/chat/j012fecw3oou3urtdg

References

Albrecht, K. (2006). *Social intelligence: The new science of success.* Jossey-Bass.

Bazigos, M. (2025). *Ethical AI deployment frameworks and AI-in-organizations principles.*

Columbia University. (2023). *International Students and Scholars Office annual report 2022–2023.* Retrieved from **https://isso.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/annual%20reports/ISSO-Annual-Report-23-WEB.pdf**

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ.* Bantam Books.

Henkel, L., et al. (2024). *AI tools improve academic performance across multiple subject areas.* Stanford SCALE. Retrieved from **https://scale.stanford.edu/genai/repository/learning-student-support**

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Stanford University. (2024). *The 2024 AI index report.* Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence. Retrieved from **https://hai.stanford.edu/ai-index/2024-ai-index-report**

Weissbourd, R., Batanova, M., McIntyre, J., & Torres, E. (2023). *On edge: Understanding and preventing young adults' mental health challenges.* Harvard Graduate School of Education, Making Caring Common Project. Retrieved from **https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/reports/on-edge**