



Comprehensive Gies AI Strategy

Introduction

In 2025, Dean Brooke Elliott assembled a task force to develop a strategy surrounding use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) Gies College of Business.

The charge from Dean Elliott to this GenAI task force was as follows:

“Define a strategy (and perhaps a framework) so that we are continuously identifying, piloting, perhaps building, and definitely implementing AI for IMMEDIATE impact on our stakeholders (learners, faculty, staff, and alumni).”

This task force is comprised of staff and faculty members within the College. Since February 2025, the task force has met, at a minimum, every other week to discuss and develop this strategy. In developing this document, we leveraged industry reports, reached out to other business schools, and some company contacts.

The members of this task force are also involved with projects and committees across Illinois (Gen AI Dialogues, OLAC, AI Solutions Hub, Student focus groups, etc.), so we leveraged that knowledge as well. While membership has evolved over time, people who have contributed to this strategy include:

- Brook Corwin
- Adam King
- Jamie Nelson
- Steven Pratten
- Vishal Sachdev
- Chris Tidrick
- Martin Mauer

This document outlines the task force's recommended approach to building a comprehensive GenAI strategy for the College. This integrated approach addresses:

1. The practical implementation process (how to get things done)
2. The skills development pathway (how to build capabilities)
3. The specific applications and impacts for stakeholders (what value is created)

Getting Things Done: “Identify, Implement, Impact” Framework

The “Identify, Implement, Impact” framework creates a continuous cycle to deliver immediate value to our stakeholders and drive practical implementation of GenAI initiatives at Gies Business.



Identify

These actions will allow Gies Business to identify opportunities for AI to create the most immediate value to our learning community.

- **Opportunity Scanning:** Establish a quarterly scan and scoring process of emerging GenAI tools and topics relevant to workstreams, business learning, teaching, research, and administrative operations.
- **Stakeholder Needs Assessment:** Conduct regular surveys and conversations with students, faculty, staff, and alumni to identify pain points that AI could address.
- **Competitive Analysis:** Monitor how peer institutions are implementing GenAI.

Implement

These actions will allow Gies Business to implement AI solutions into our curriculum and business functions and test their effectiveness.

- **Pilot Selection:** Choose high-impact, low-implementation-barrier initiatives per semester informed by a balanced scorecard and workstream connections.
- **Rapid Prototyping:** Implement time-bound pilot programs with clear metrics to test longer-term viability, effectiveness, and impact with lowered barriers in favor of quicker experimentation.
- **Build or Adapt Tools:** Set clear criteria for deciding when to build in-house AI capabilities versus when to adopt or adapt existing solutions.
- **Faculty/Staff Champions:** Designate and support early adopters who can demonstrate use cases.

Impact

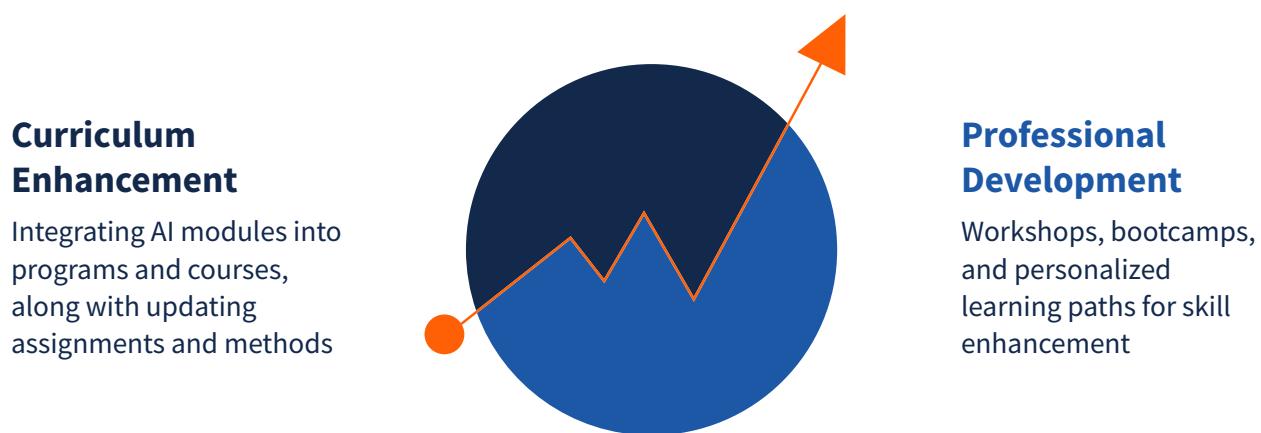
These actions will allow Gies Business to maximize and demonstrate the value of AI solutions to stakeholders.

- **Measure and Learn:** Prioritize and evaluate AI implementations that deliver clear, immediate, and measurable value to stakeholders.
- **Scale Winners:** Rapidly expand successful pilots college-wide.
- **Communicate Progress and Successes:** Track outcomes, and share wins and lessons learned across all stakeholder groups and the broader community (campus, system, industry).

Building Capabilities: Professional and Learner AI Skills Development Framework

To roll out and leverage generative AI effectively, Gies College of Business should expand and support AI skill development for learners and professionals throughout the College. Enhancing capabilities will happen through two primary initiatives:

1. **Professional Development:** Workshops, bootcamps, hackathons, personalized learning paths, and ongoing development opportunities
2. **Curriculum Enhancement:** AI modules integrated into programs, certificates, courses, along with updates to assignments and methods



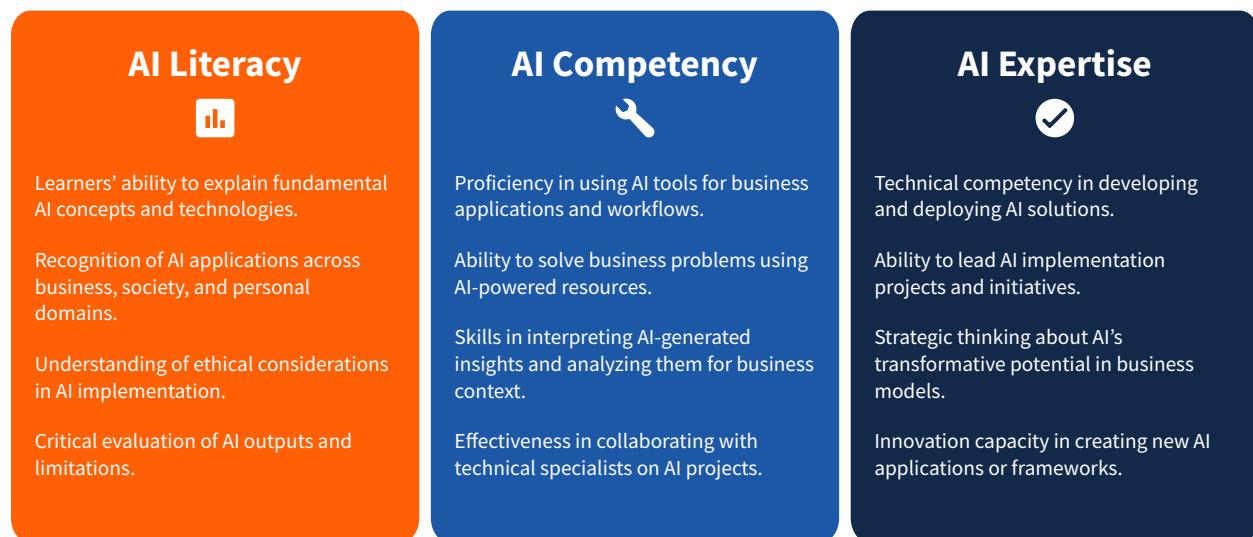
The [AI Skills Development framework](#) illustrates progressive skills development to support fluency, implementation, and synergies of Gen AI technology and will help stakeholders at Gies Business establish clear and measurable goals for professional development and curriculum enhancement throughout the College.

The framework illustrates how individuals move from basic AI literacy to expertise:

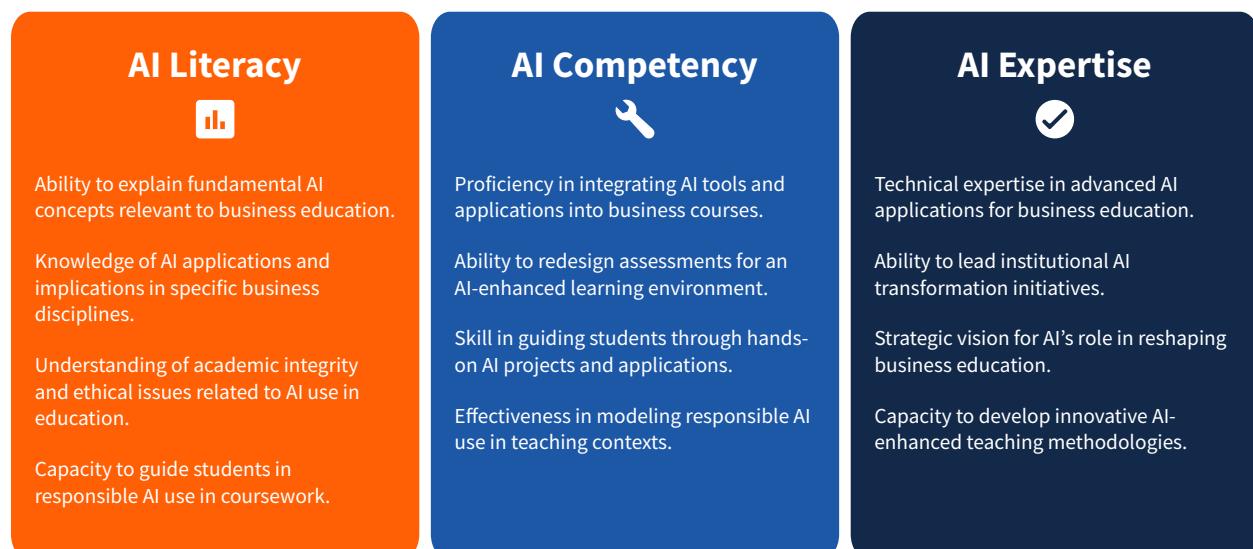
- **Literacy** is achieved when an individual possesses foundational understanding of GenAI concepts, capabilities, and limitations (broad base).
- **Competency** is achieved when an individual possesses practical application skills for using GenAI tools effectively in specific contexts.
- **Expertise** is achieved when an individual possesses advanced capabilities in developing, customizing, and optimizing GenAI solutions.

We have adapted this framework for relevancy to Gies Business learners, faculty, and (soon) staff.

Skill Framework for Gies Business Learners



Skill Framework for Gies Business Faculty: Teaching



Skill Framework for Gies Business Faculty: Research and Scholarship

Framework graphics adapted from UNESCO's AI Competency Framework.

AI Literacy



Ability to generate ideas and accelerate problem discovery and framing.

Knowledge of AI tools for literature discovery.

Understanding of data acquisition and basic cleaning with AI scaffolding for routine analysis.

Capacity to use AI to support scholarly writing while maintaining authorship integrity and transparent AI documentation.

AI Competency



Integrate AI into the research workflow for tasks such as data acquisition, cleaning, and coding support with human validation.

Use AI as a research methods coach such as brainstorming analytic approaches or researching methodologies.

AI Expertise



Apply advanced techniques such as fine-tuning, retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), and multimodal approaches (text, audio, and imaging) with robust validation.

Use AI to suggest novel research topics, designs, or interdisciplinary connections that spark new directions.

Build customized AI agents with distinct roles that collaborate like members of a research team to increase innovation and efficiency.

Capacity to develop field-advancing tools, datasets, and methodologies that drive disciplinary AI adoption.

Skill Framework for Gies Business Staff

AI Literacy



Understanding of basic AI concepts and how they might impact organizations.

Knowledge of currently and outlook AI Use Case, and understanding requirements, regulations, and risks of AI.

Ability to identify opportunities where AI can improve productivity in daily tasks.

Capacity to direct family/teams AI awareness.

Basic ability to create "simple AI root concepts and policies".

AI Competency



Ability to use AI tools to streamline routine tasks like drafting emails or creating presentations.

Skill in applying AI tools for data tasks and simplifying processes.

Capacity to appear faculty, learners, and other staff use of AI tools within established policies.

Ability to identify and eliminate AI use cases without negative impact of one functional area.

AI Expertise



Ability to lead discussions about AI strategy, initiatives or communications with or collaborate productivity.

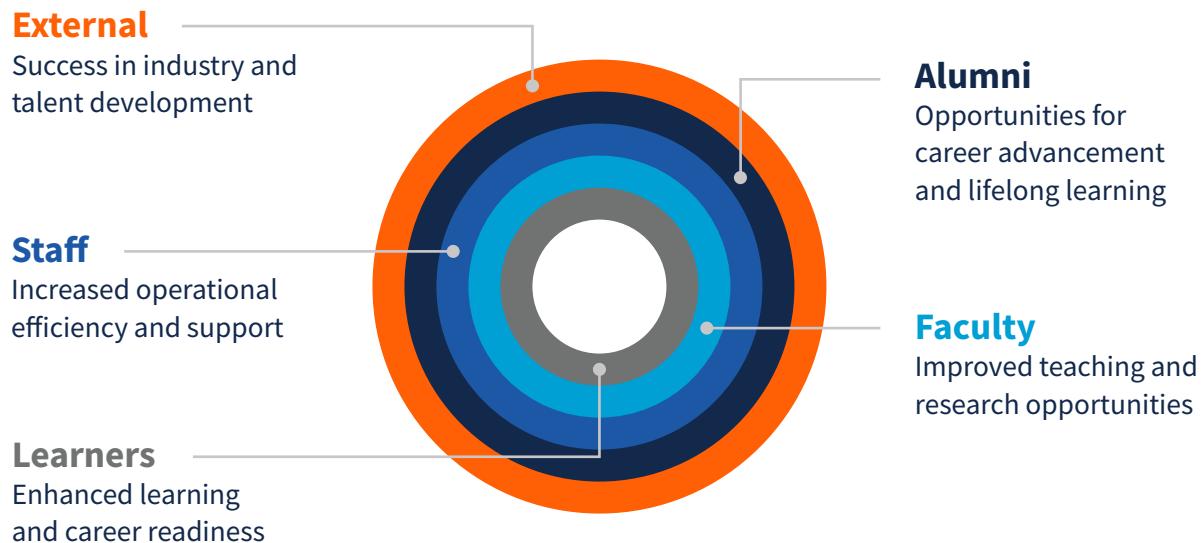
Skills to analyze AI tools and making recommendations or acting education.

Competent AI decision development within their functional area.

Ability to train, department development and level AI policies and best practice guidelines across enterprise.

Creating Value: Stakeholders & Applications

The strategy drives specific value for each stakeholder group:



- **Learners:** Learning enhancement, career readiness, and job placement
- **Faculty:** Teaching enhancement and research amplification
- **Staff:** Operational efficiency and support enhancement
- **Alumni:** Career advancement and lifelong learning
- **External:** Industry success and talent development

Governance Structure & Resources

The frameworks are supported by the following organizational structures and resources:

- **GenAI Steering Committee:** Cross-functional team ensuring initiatives support the five key commitments of Access, Excellence, Innovation, Inclusion, and Engagement
- **Ethical AI Guidelines:** Framework ensuring responsible AI use and adoption
- **Skills Development Program:** Regular training for all stakeholders
- **Budget:** Funds to support GenAI pilots, experimentation, communication, and tools
- **Space:** A dedicated lab space for purposeful GenAI innovation and collaboration that challenges assumptions and pushes boundaries

Rapid Implementation Timeline Example

An example roll-out timeline is included below. In practice, we would sync certain elements to the academic calendar and return to certain activities on a cyclical basis. Stakeholders would be engaged in every phase which could include trainings, hackathons, build to learn, and other events.

Phase 1: Foundation (Next 3 months)

- Establish governance structure
- Collect stakeholder needs & examples
- Industry & opportunity scan
- Develop ethical guidelines
- Develop resource ask

Phase 2: Launch (Months 4–9)

- Fund first pilot projects
- Implement skills development programs
- Expand stakeholder engagement

Phase 3: Acceleration (Months 10–12)

- Scale successful pilots
- Evaluate first-year outcomes
- Refine strategy based on learnings
- Plan second-year initiatives

“Big Motivational Ideas”

In keeping with our commitment to purposeful innovation, this task force has generated a list of high-impact goals to sit at the center of this strategy and motivate the College to connect GenAI initiatives with existing workstreams. To develop the following list of goals, we drew inspiration from [Babson’s Big Ideas](#), [NEOMA AI Acculturation](#), and [UF’s AI for Everyone](#).

Consider tie-ins to faculty/staff professional development opportunities in the performance review process.

- “**100% AI-Ready: Every Gies Business Graduate Proficient in Business AI by 2026**”
 - This establishes a clear goal of transforming the Gies Business curriculum and student experience to ensure every single graduate enters the workforce with practical AI literacy and application skills.
- “**10X Research Impact through AI by 2027**”
 - This sets a quantifiable goal of using AI to dramatically increase the reach, citation, and practical application of Gies Business faculty research over the next few years.

- “**AI for 10,000: Expanding Access to Business Education through Intelligent Systems**”
 - This builds on our past scaled approaches for iDegrees and our successful Investment for Growth funding initiatives, by setting a specific target for how many additional learners we can reach in a program like the Business Minor (or iDegrees) through AI-enhanced educational offerings.
- “**GenAI in Every Course: Reimagining 100% of Our Curriculum by 2026**”
 - This creates a clear, measurable goal of integrating GenAI into every single course at Gies Business, whether as a learning tool, a subject of study, or both. This goal can be integrated into the course quality standards workstream.
- “**50 Industry AI Partnerships [or iVenture startups?] by 2027**”
 - This establishes a specific target for creating meaningful collaborations with businesses, giving Gies Business students and faculty access to real-world AI applications.
- “**1,000 AI Business Leaders: Developing the Next Generation of Ethical AI Executives**”
 - This focuses on creating a certificate, badge, concentration or specialized pathway that will produce a specific number of graduates with advanced AI leadership capabilities. The focus on creating “AI Leaders” goes beyond just equipping students with a baseline understanding of AI and could be novel in the marketplace. Consider partnerships with The Grainger College of Engineering, National Center for Supercomputing Applications, and others on campus.
- “**Triple AI Return: Every \$1 Invested in GenAI Yields \$3 in Value**”
 - This establishes a measurable financial efficiency and effectiveness goal for Gies Business AI investments, creating a clear business case.
- “**Zero AI Barriers: Eliminating Every Obstacle to AI Literacy for All Gies Business Stakeholders**”
 - This sets a clear goal of identifying and systematically removing all barriers to AI literacy across faculty, staff, students, and alumni.