What We are Doing

Roaring SSU Engagement: EDUCAUSE AI Landscape Study

Moving from reaction to action, Savannah State University (SSU) is currently exploring the opportunities afforded by AI for HBCUs in teaching, learning, and job market skills while maintaining a sense of caution for the vast array of risks AI-powered technologies pose. To aid in these efforts, EDUCAUSE presented their inaugural EDUCAUSE AI Landscape Study, in which they summarize the higher education community's current sentiments and experiences related to policies and procedures, workforce, and the future of AI in higher education. This survey was distributed from November 27 to December 8, 2023, and focuses on the impacts AI has had on higher education since the mainstreaming of generative AI tools.[1]

Despite the growing focus on AI, there is still a lack of formalized training at institutions: only 56 percent of universities train their faculty members in AI, with the numbers dipping for staff (49 percent) and students (39 percent).

There's also a lack of long-term focus and goals, according to the report, which found only seven (7) percent of institutions are working to establish AI-focused senior leadership positions and just 14 percent are budgeting for long-term AI costs.[2]

SSU is answering the call for knowledge and skills training collaborating with Tennessee State University (TSU). A cohort of staff and faculty are preparing for the AI for ALL Conference 2024 hosted by TSU this summer.

Who We Noticed

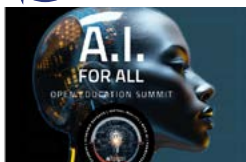### Take a Closer Look: Jora McDonald

We've noticed academic advisor Jora McDonald's love of Savannah State University (SSU). Jora's dedication to advisement goes far beyond her daily job. She attends important events for her students – from plays to recitals to sports – she lets students know that she cares. Her commitment is an extension of understanding as a first-generation college student. She believes that relationship connections will help provide support when the challenges of balancing school and life ultimately happens. She lives by the motto "if you don't know, ask" and tries to instill that in the students she advises.

Jora and her husband Johnny met on our campus while she was working in athletics for Shed Dawson as a student worker. Although it was not "love at first sight," her mother's intuition seemed accurate from the moment she met Johnny – long before

they even dated, her mom invited the tour guide, Johnny, to stay at their home in Atlanta anytime he wanted to visit. Although this invitation shocked Jora, she came to see what her mother knew all along when she and Johnny eventually started dating. Jora and Johnny's engagement happened by the beautiful plan of Johnny in Tiger Arena, where they first met. The "tiger love" is strong in that marriage as evidenced by the fact that Johnny brought his wife lunch as we met for the interview for this article. We are excited to learn that Jora and Johnny are expecting their third child, due in October. We look forward to hearing more about this little tiger cub.

Jora was recently inducted into Delta Sigma Theta sorority. She is also completing a second master's degree in Strategic Leadership Development from Clayton State University. Please join us in celebrating Jora McDonald with her amazing tiger spirit!

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The offfices for The Center for Professional Excellence are located in suite 203 of Whiting Hall on the beautiful Savannah State University campus.

1 2024 Educause Ai Landscape Study. EDUCAUSE. https://www.educause.edu/ecar/research-publications/2024/2024-educause-ai-landscape-study/introduction-and-key-findings

2 Coffey, L. (n.d.). How ai has begun changing university roles, responsibilities. Inside Higher Ed | Higher Education News, Events and Jobs. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/tech-innovation/artificial-intelligence/2024/02/13/how-ai-has-begun-changing-university-roles