

# Curiosity *in Action*

*Exploring AI with purpose, skepticism, and shared imagination*

---

**Don Daves-Rougeaux** · Senior Advisor, Workforce Development, Strategic Partnerships & Generative AI  
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

# AI in Admissions & Records

---

## *From Curious to Capable*

40-Minute Presentation for A&R Professionals

CACCRAO Conference

## Quick Poll

**How many of you have used an AI tool — ChatGPT, Copilot, anything — in the last 30 days?**

*Let the room reveal itself.*

*Lets begin —*

# An AI agent completed an assignment last night.

*It took 4 minutes. The student received a B+.*

---

*What does this tell us about the assignment?*

# *I* In Recognition

*Women, wisdom & the question*

## *The women who show us how to do this.*

### **Ada Lovelace**

1815–1852

---

*“First algorithm. First AI ethics warning.”*

Wrote both in the same breath.  
Machines can only do what we know  
how to order them to do.

### **Safiya Umoja Noble**

Present

---

*“Algorithms of Oppression”*

The data is not neutral. The harm is  
not hypothetical. Changed how a  
generation reads AI.

### **Dorothy Vaughan**

1910–2008

---

*“Hidden Figure. Visible impact.”*

Taught herself FORTRAN, then taught  
her entire computing section —  
because the future was coming.

*Through-line: the people most often excluded from the room have, again and again, been the sharpest analysts.*

*“The question was never whether the technology  
was powerful.*

The question was always:

**Powerful for whom?”**

---

*Not: is AI here? (It is.)*

*Not: is it changing education? (It already has.)*

*But: are we the ones doing the shaping — or just receiving the shape?*

# ***II***

## **Punch Cards to Podiums - A Reluctant Scholars Journey**

*From North Hollywood to the Chancellor's Office*

## North Hollywood High School

Computer Science student

*First sat in front of a machine and thought: I want to understand how this works. How can I apply to my board games?*

## Los Angeles Valley College

Declared major: Computer Science

*My first community college. The place that said "you belong here" before I knew I needed to hear it. Faculty derailed - Coach sent a lifeline.*

## Fresno State → UC Santa Barbara

Student organizer · Doctoral work in History\ PhD stop out

*How education systems open doors or lock them — and for whom. The past shapes the future.*

## Faculty · Coach · UC System · College Board · Bay Area CCC Consortium · Philanthropy

Building teams and systems across institutions

*Each role a different vantage point on the same question.*

## CCC Chancellor's Office

Sr. Advisor · Workforce, Strategic Partnerships & Generative AI

*115 colleges. 2.2 million students. Still asking: who is this technology actually for?*

Not an AI optimist.  
Not an AI pessimist.

---

# A steward.

**115 colleges, 2.2M students**

The largest public higher education system in the United States.

**5 AI Literacy Initiatives**

Faculty, Classified Professionals, Students, Community Engagement, CEO Tech Tours

**The through-line**

Every decision about AI runs through: does this work for the people who need it most? Or does it make their situation harder to see?

# *III* The Provocation

*AI is not a tool*

# Who Gets Left Behind When AI Goes Systemwide?

*“New Directions for Community Colleges (2026) found that the AI-driven digital divide is multifaceted — encompassing not just device access, but AI skills access and equitable outcomes in the design, adoption, and application of AI. AND - that community colleges are simultaneously the most exposed to this risk and the most essential institutions for closing it.”*

*Who at your college is most exposed? What are you doing about it?*

First-gen and minority students report higher perceived benefit from AI tools — but lower ability to transfer those skills to new contexts. Why might that gap exist?

*MDPI, 2025*

83% of institutions report concern about widening the digital divide as an AI risk — yet most lack faculty AI training at scale. What do we do with that contradiction?

*Educause AI Landscape Study, 2025*

The CCC-Google partnership gives all 2.2M students FERPA-compliant access to enterprise AI. Does access to tools equal equity in AI? What else is required?

*CCC-Google Partnership, 2025*

# AI is not a tool.

*A hammer is a tool.  
A spreadsheet is a tool.  
A projector is a tool.*

## AI is a condition —

*a new epistemic environment in which  
your students are already living.*

We don't get to choose whether that reality exists.  
We only get to choose what role we play inside it.

### What students are actually doing:

Thought partner at 2am

Writing tutor without an appointment

Code debugger & study buddy

First draft of things hard to say

Most responsive learning relationship  
some students have ever had

# Three failure modes – and a fourth path.

0  
1 **Ignore it**

Students use AI unsupported, without critical frameworks or context.

0  
2 **Over-police it**

Detection systems and integrity policies that treat the symptom, not the condition.

0  
3 **Uncritically adopt it**

Every vendor demo as curriculum solution. No questions about design, data, or who profits.

*There's a fourth path. It's harder. It requires you. It requires curiosity — in action.*

# The Two-Lane Assessment Model

Northeastern University / University of Sydney / TEQSA — 2026

## **LANE 1 - The Learned Pathway: comfort** *Assured / Foundational*

*Verifies baseline human capability without AI*

- Supervised environments
- Proctored exams & oral presentations
- In-class writing & demonstrations
- "Can the student do this without AI?"

## **LANE 2 - The Unlearning Pathway: Curiosity** *Integrated / Relevance-Focused*

*Develops professional competencies with AI*

- AI engagement is transparent
- Human contribution is measurable
- Iterative projects, reflective writing
- "Can the student think critically with AI?"

SECTION 04

# *IV* Global Leadership

## **Regional Stakes & Human Implications**

## *San Diego's sectors are already being transformed.*



### **Biotech & Life Sciences**

AI-accelerated drug discovery, genomics — UCSD & local industry moving fast



### **Hospitality & Tourism**

AI concierge, demand forecasting — major San Diego employment sector



### **Defense & Aerospace**

Autonomous systems, AI logistics, cybersecurity — region's largest employer base



### **Healthcare**

AI triage, documentation automation — CNA, Med Assist, Nursing all affected



### **Logistics & Supply Chain**

Predictive analytics already displacing entry-level coordination roles



### **Fusion Energy**

San Diego emerging as a national hub — TAE Technologies & next-gen clean energy careers

# Human Skills: The New Competitive Advantage

WEF Future of Jobs Report 2025 • America Succeeds / 80M+ Job Postings Analysis

8

of the top 10 core skills  
of 2030 are human skills

WEF FoJ Report 2025

## Creative Thinking

AI generates; humans innovate, evaluate, and make meaning

## Metacognitive Skills

Knowing what you know — and don't know — is irreproducible by AI

## Leadership & Social Influence

Human trust, motivation, and culture-building cannot be automated

## Resilience & Adaptability

Navigating ambiguity is human; AI models patterns, not disruption

## Analytical Thinking

Critical evaluation of AI output requires deeper human judgment

## Empathy & Active Listening

Relational skills become the differentiating factor in AI-mediated environments

### Community College Daily — February 2026

"The workforce is not asking graduates to avoid AI, fear it, or embrace it uncritically. It is asking them to use judgment, communicate clearly, evaluate responsibly, and collaborate thoughtfully. Those are human skills. Community colleges are uniquely positioned to lead this work. We do not go around AI; we go through it."

The equity argument

**The difference is not in the technology.**

---

*The difference is in the pedagogy.*

**And the pedagogy is yours.**

---

**“Our students are not the test case for AI.  
They’re the reason AI has to work for  
everyone.”**

# **V You Are Not Behind**

*Classified Professionals & Faculty*

# Classified professionals are essential constituency.



## Administrative & front-line staff

Often the first person a student interacts with. They know who is struggling before anyone else does.



## IT, operations & facilities

Navigating AI-driven workflow changes in scheduling, procurement, and communications right now — often without support.



## Financial aid & student services

Helping students navigate impossible situations. AI is already changing these workflows.

*“You are not support staff in this conversation. You are essential constituency.”*

*Faculty authority in the AI era.*

# You are not an AI user. You are AI quality assurance.

*“Curiosity is not a personality trait. It is a professional practice.”*

## **Disciplinary expertise is irreplaceable**

You know what rigor looks like in your field. You know when a student is thinking versus performing understanding. No model has that.

## **Pedagogical design is yours**

The assignment that AI makes easier reveals what you actually want students to do. Redesigning for AI is a faculty act, not a compliance task.

## **Evaluation is the core skill**

The most valuable AI competency isn't prompting. It's interrogating the output. That requires exactly what your training built.

## **The classroom relationship is non-transferable**

Trust, mentorship, the moment a struggling student feels seen — these are irreplaceable and still the center of what learning is.

# What you know that no AI system has.



How to build trust in a classroom or office



How to read someone who is struggling



How to sequence a question so thinking deepens, not shortcuts



The difference between understanding and performing understanding

*“That knowledge lives in you. And right now, it is more valuable — not less.”*

# **VI** Three Moves

*A curiosity framework for the year ahead*

# Curiosity in Action: Three Moves

01

## **Get curious before you get policy. *Get jiggy with it!***

Use the tool before writing a syllabus statement. Fail with it, get frustrated, be delighted. Bring first-hand experience into your decisions.

“Policy without practice is just anxiety in font.”

02

## **Ask who benefits — in every direction. *Joyful Interrogation.***

Vendor demos → whose data trained this?  
Student submissions → what thinking happened here?  
District adoption → who gains access, who gets watched?  
And ask it about your staff, too.

03

## **Build with, not for. *Tech Native & Community UX Excellence.***

Students as designers. Faculty and classified staff as architects. Community voices before rollout, not after resistance.  
Shared imagination is not a metaphor. It is a method.

# Futures Summit 2026

*Human Skills in an Autonomous World*

## DATE

September 9–10, 2026

## LOCATION

Santa Clara Convention Center

## HOST

CCCCO & the Digital Center for Innovation, Transformation & Equity

Register: [californiacommunitycolleges.cventevents.com](https://californiacommunitycolleges.cventevents.com)

# AI Reel Futures

## Student AI Film Competition

---

01

### Record a short film about AI or with AI

Your students, their work. How are they using, viewing or experiencing AI? Cash prizes and Adobe licences for winners

02

### Submit to the CCC portal on Film Freeway.com

Videos will be curated and featured across the system — at the Futures Summit, on the AI microsite, and in statewide communications and conferences

03

### Inspire the 2.2M

Showcase our student talents, vision, imagination, critical inquiry and creativity

Submit your reel at Film Freeway: <https://filmfreeway.com/>

# *VII* Closing Remarks

“We do not go around AI.

*We go through it.*

And we help our students do the same.”

— Community College Daily, February 2026

# The Work Has Always Been This

---

- ❖ **Ada Lovelace** didn't have a roadmap. She had a machine no one understood and questions no one else was asking.
- ❖ **Dorothy Vaughan** didn't wait for permission. She learned the future — then taught it.
- ❖ **Safiya Noble** didn't accept the algorithm's self-description. She interrogated it until it told the truth.

*“To see clearly. Act boldly.  
Refuse to design a future that doesn't include everyone.”*

**Thank you for the courage it takes to be here. Now let's get to work. The Time is Now**

# Research & Resources Referenced

*Everything cited in today's discussion — for follow-up and further reading.*

System

CCC Vision 2030 AI Work Plan (July 2025)

Assessment

Northeastern Univ.: Assessment in an AI-Ubiquitous World (March 2026)

Equity

Siddiqi: New Digital Divide in the Age of AI (New Directions for CC, 2026)

Equity

Educause AI Landscape Study: Into the Digital AI Divide (2025)

Human Skills

WEF Future of Jobs Report (2025)

Human Skills

Community College Daily: Fostering Student AI Fluency (Feb. 2026)

CCC

CCC-Google Systemwide AI Partnership (2025)

Assessment

El Khoury: Seven Waves of GenAI Assessment (Oct. 2025)

Assessment

Chronicle of Higher Ed: Will Agentic AI Break Higher Education? (March 2026)

Equity

MDPI: AI in Higher Ed — Bridging or Widening the Gap (May 2025)

Equity

BERA: Digital Equity in the Age of Generative AI (2025)

Human Skills

America Succeeds: Durable Skills Framework (2025)

CCC

ASCCC: AI-Powered Education & Authentic Assessments (2025)

Equity

Syracuse University: 2024–25 AI Fluency Report

# Questions & Conversation

*15 minutes*

---

*What's a question about AI you haven't felt safe enough to ask — until now?*

*What's one thing you're bringing back to your classroom, office, or department this week?*

*Where do you feel most stuck? Where do you feel most ready?*