



## IUP 3rd Annual AI Summit: Detailed Schedule

Tuesday, April 7th, 2026 – 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

The 3rd Annual AI Summit builds on the success of our previous events and is open to all students, faculty, and staff at IUP. This year's Summit expands to four tracks, adding a new AI in Business and Industry track featuring external (featured) speakers alongside our returning AI Exploration, AI Pedagogy, and an expanded AI Research, Tools, and Ethics track:

### **AI in Business & Industry (Stabley 201 and online:**

**<https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/3853748181>)** New for 2026, this track features speakers from industry and the professions who are applying AI to transform business operations, strategy, and decision-making. Sessions cover cybersecurity, project management, organizational intelligence, and profitability analytics, offering the campus **community** insight into how AI is reshaping the professional landscape. This track is ideal for students preparing to enter the workforce, faculty exploring industry partnerships, and anyone interested in the real-world applications of AI beyond the academy.

**AI Exploration (Stabley 202 and online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/9266336254>)** Open to all members of the campus community but geared towards IUP students, this track provides an interactive space for discovering and engaging with AI technologies. Whether you're new to AI or looking to expand your understanding, this track offers hands-on opportunities to explore AI tools, develop foundational AI literacy, and build practical skills in prompt engineering and context engineering for academic and professional settings.

### **AI Pedagogy (Stapleton 113 and online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/2622583898>)**

Designed for current faculty, future educators (undergraduate and graduate students), and educational support staff, this track focuses on the role of AI in teaching and learning. Through workshops, panels, and discussions, participants will explore AI policy development, responsible student use of AI, critical digital pedagogy, and strategies for integrating AI into instruction while preserving academic integrity and the human dimensions of education.

### **AI Research, Tools & Ethics (Stabley 210 and online:**

**<https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/5228208169>)** Intended for faculty, students, and staff interested in the intersections of AI with research, scholarship, and ethical inquiry, this expanded track provides a platform for exploring AI's role in knowledge production, the ethics of human-AI collaboration, and emerging questions about AI welfare and cognition. Sessions cover AI research tools, co-authorship, the long-term impact of AI on expertise development, and reflective practices for navigating AI's challenges.

*The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual AI Summit is hosted and organized by the **IUP Center for Scholarly Communication** with support from the IUP Libraries, Research and Innovation, the AI Summit Planning Committee, and the Center for Teaching Excellence.*

Luncheon is sponsored by the KSA Group (<https://www.ksagroupllc.com/>).



## Workshops and Presentations

9:00 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.

### Cybersecurity in the Age of AI

#### *Featured Speaker*

*With Brad Messner, PhD, EA, Professor, University of Pittsburgh School of Business; Owner, Messner & Fox, LLC; Founder, Financial Guardians, LLC*

Track and Location: AI in Business & Industry – Stabley 201 and Online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/3853748181>

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping business and research, but one area few are talking about is how AI is impacting cybersecurity, in many areas outpacing our current defense and privacy models. We'll discuss growing threats such as AI-powered, enhanced social engineering and phishing attacks as well as what happens to our data when it is entered into an AI platform. You'll leave with practical steps to protect your work and keep your data private.

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### AI Prompt Engineering

*With Amiranda Adams, Taylor McKelvey-Hughes, and Crystal Conzo*

Track and Location: AI Exploration – Stabley 202 and Online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/9266336254>

Effective AI use begins with crafting clear, strategic prompts. This hands-on workshop guides participants through the principles of prompt engineering, teaching techniques to optimize AI responses for different tasks, including writing, research, and creative projects. Attendees will experiment with real-time prompts, refine their approaches, and leave with practical strategies for maximizing AI's usefulness in their work.

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### AI Policy Panel

Track and Location: AI Pedagogy – Stapleton 113 and Online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/2622583898>

#### **Presentation 1: Developing AI Policies for Educators**

*With Arsh and Rebecca Williams, Doctoral Students, Counseling and Human Development*

This session focuses on understanding AI's role in students' educational journey. Understanding the impact of AI on the student experience will allow participants to conceptualize AI as friend, not foe, and promote tools for effective use rather than demonizing AI. Participants will learn how viewing students with an empathetic lens can help promote original thought and decrease the need for generative AI in the classroom. Participants will also explore essential developmental considerations to take into account when addressing AI use, emphasized through a focus on an instructor's practices and policies of integrating AI use in their courses. This session will discuss initiatives and considerations that professors and instructors can take to help students utilize AI efficiently. Participants will engage in conversations about developing their personal policies and philosophies around AI and its integration into coursework and assignments. An interactive demo will be conducted during the session to help attendees understand AI's advantages and limitations, and how those can be utilized to further educate students and create an AI-sustainable learning environment.

#### **Presentation 2: Considerations and Characteristics in GenAI Policy Construction**

*With DeAnne Ruiz and Deb Lewis, Doctoral Students, Composition and Applied Linguistics*

Classroom policies and expectations around generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), such as ChatGPT, are confusing for both faculty and students. So far, many universities have issued vague, indecisive statements regarding AI use, leaving more definitive rules up to individual instructors to decide but often not providing guidance by which to construct them. In this context, we encourage faculty to use their afforded freedom to customize their policies for their particular disciplinary and course needs and affordances. By deconstructing the stages of reasons, considerations, construction processes, and components, we illuminate how educators can craft productive policies and communicate them clearly to students. After all, whatever your expectation for students' use of GenAI, they won't be able to follow your guidelines if they don't know what your guidelines are. Especially as positions on GenAI use become further polarized, with some instructors fully integrating the technology into their courses and others banning its use entirely, students' understanding and respect for the rules depend on contextually reasoned and clear syllabus policies, as well as integrated best practices.

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### **Considering AI Welfare**

*With Hans Pedersen, Professor of Philosophy, Department of History, Philosophy, Political Science and Religious Studies, IUP*

Track and Location: AI Research, Tools & Ethics – Stabley 210 and Online:  
<https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/5228208169>

The development of AI deserving of moral rights has long been a staple of science fiction, and while it remains a fringe view that current AI models deserve full moral rights, there is now serious consideration of whether current AI models meet the criteria for the lower standard of having wellbeing. Some environmental ethicists argue that very simple animals and maybe even plants, which are not conscious as far as we know, have wellbeing insofar as we can say their lives are going well or not. Some philosophers and researchers in the tech industry apply a similar argument to current AI models, arguing that these models have wellbeing without necessarily having consciousness. The implication is that if AI models have wellbeing, they deserve some level of moral consideration—that is, we should be concerned with their welfare. This presentation will explore the arguments for considering AI welfare and invite discussion about the merits of these arguments and the implications of potential AI welfare for our interactions with it.

**10:00 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.**

### **Synthetic Intelligence: Architecting the Organizational Mind**

*Featured Speaker*

*With Robert Sheesley, Chief Information Officer and Board of Directors, Bump Connect; Senior Consultant, Future Point of View*

Track and Location: AI in Business & Industry – Stabley 201 and Online:  
<https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/3853748181>

“Synthetic Intelligence: Architecting the Organizational Mind” explores the next phase of AI adoption, where companies shift from using standalone AI tools to embedding a comprehensive “Organizational Mind” layer into their processes and data streams. This concept, popularized by Scott Klososky at Future Point of View, envisions a central, intelligent system that acts as the “brain” of an organization—storing knowledge, making decisions, and interacting with humans and other systems. Key capabilities of the Organizational Mind include autonomous decision-

making that moves beyond human-only decisions, knowledge management for storing and retrieving organizational knowledge, and contextual understanding that enables interaction with users and devices based on deep, real-time understanding of the business.

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## **Writing as Infrastructure: Context Engineering Across Disciplines**

### ***Featured Speaker***

*With Jacob Williamson Rea*

Track and Location: AI Exploration – Stabley 202 and Online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/9266336254>

This talk explores the evolution from prompt engineering to context engineering: the practice of structuring knowledge, expertise, and constraints to shape how AI systems process input and generate output. As the field moves toward agentic workflows, the ability to encode domain expertise into context has become essential infrastructure across disciplines. Drawing on examples from scientific research, software development, and creative practice, we'll examine how writing—the deliberate structuring and dissemination of language as part of learning and planning—underpins effective context engineering. Notably, the practice of building context is itself a form of learning: building and articulating expertise for an AI system often clarifies and deepens one's own understanding.

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## **AI in the Academy: How Should Students Use AI—Responsibly and Well?**

*With Kenneth Sherwood, Professor of English, Department of Language, Literature, and Writing, IUP*

Track and Location: AI Pedagogy – Stapleton 113 and Online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/2622583898>

Generative AI is reshaping higher education, prompting students to consider whether—and how—to use it. This presentation introduces the AAC&U guidelines for responsible AI use as a practical framework for decision-making. Through this lens, we examine student practices in relation to academic integrity, privacy, and social impact, with attention to responsible use both in college and beyond.

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## **Jumping off the Cliff: Embracing AI Research Tools with Joy and Trepidation**

*With Dr. Crystal Machado, Professor, Professional Studies in Education; Emmanuella Musiime, Doctoral Candidate; Cheryl Harris, Doctoral Student; and Teodolinde (Linda) Jian, Doctoral Student, Professional Studies in Education, IUP*

Track and Location: AI Research, Tools & Ethics – Stabley 210 and Online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/5228208169> (Virtual Presentation)

The session blends demonstration, exploration, and reflection, offering a supportive space to navigate the rapidly evolving AI landscape with both curiosity and confidence. We will begin with an interactive “emoji chat storm,” giving everyone a playful way to express their real feelings about AI—whether that’s enthusiasm, skepticism, or something in between. Four presenters will then guide attendees through a curated tour of their favorite AI research tools: Keenious, Elicit, NotebookLM, ChatGPT, and CoPilot. Each presenter will highlight what makes their chosen tool stand out, from unique features to practical applications that can streamline and elevate the research process. Participants will get hands-on time to experiment with at least two tools, compare their strengths, and discover which tools best support their own research needs.

**11:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.**

## **AI in Project Management: Case Studies and Insights**

### ***Featured Speaker***

*With Roberto Piedra, Technology & Risk Transformation Consultant*

Track and Location: AI in Business & Industry – Stabley 201 and Online:

<https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/3853748181>

This presentation explores how Artificial Intelligence is transforming the field of project management and reshaping the future of work. It examines AI's core capabilities including automation, intelligent scheduling, predictive risk analysis, and real-time insights, and demonstrates how these tools reduce administrative burden while enhancing strategic decision-making. Through real-world case examples and applied scenarios, the session highlights how AI is evolving from a support tool into a collaborative digital co-pilot within project environments.

The discussion further analyzes the impact of AI on project managers' roles, emphasizing a shift from manual coordination and reporting toward leadership, stakeholder engagement, and high-value judgment. Ethical considerations, governance risks, and the importance of human oversight are addressed to ensure responsible adoption. Finally, the presentation outlines the emerging skill sets students and early-career professionals must develop—including AI literacy, analytical reasoning, and human-AI collaboration—to remain competitive in an increasingly AI-enabled workforce.

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## **Tips for Using IUP Approved AI Tools to Streamline and Simplify Your Work**

*With Todd Cunningham, Chief Information Officer, IT Services, IUP, and Emily Smeltz*

Track and Location: AI Exploration – Stabley 202 and Online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/9266336254>

In this interactive session, attendees will learn practical, real-world ways to use AI tools available at IUP to reduce administrative burden, improve writing, and work more efficiently. Participants will receive a brief overview of what AI can (and can't) do well, followed by hands-on guidance in developing effective prompts that generate clearer, more useful results. You will have dedicated time to practice with your own real work examples, refine your prompts, and learn from others' approaches. We will also explore a few creative and helpful ways AI can support personal, non-work tasks—from meal planning to trip planning to schedule organization. Attendees are welcomed to come with a laptop and be prepared with one task or challenge you would like to practice with during the session (e.g., an email to draft, notes to summarize, an agenda to build, or a document to refine).

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## **When Cognitive Offloading Replaces Deliberate Practice: GenAI's Impact on Learning and the Development of Expertise Over Time**

*With Dana Lynn Driscoll, IUP*

Track and Location: AI Pedagogy – Stapleton 113 and Online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/2622583898>

As GenAI technologies continue to radically reshape education in a few short years, we do not yet have longitudinal research that explores long-term outcomes of AI impact and use. One big elephant in the room is how extensive AI use, dependency, and cognitive offloading may impact learners long-term. Drawing from longitudinal research and expertise studies, this session will explore the traditional development of expertise pre-AI, compare this to current research on the

impact of AI on short-term thinking and cognition, and explore ways to integrate AI into the classroom in meaningful ways without potentially disrupting the long-term development of expertise in a range of disciplines.

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## **Panel: Research on Human-AI Co-Authorship and GenAI Tools**

Track and Location: AI Research, Tools & Ethics – Stabley 210 and Online:

<https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/5228208169>

### **Presentation 1: Researching and Writing with ChatGPT: Tracing the Ethical Complexities of Human-AI Co-Authorship**

*With Isaac Adubofour, Ph.D. Candidate, Language, Literature, and Writing Department, IUP*

This presentation reports on a post-qualitative investigation of how human-AI collaboration unfolds with tools like ChatGPT across academic and professional contexts, revealing that such collaboration is far more complex than narratives of efficiency or simple “tool use” suggest. Drawing on archived human-AI interactions and nine months of reflective journaling, the study traces a recurring helical process of Emergence, Negotiation, Disruption, Reconfiguration, and Reflection as users navigate AI’s affordances, limitations, and institutional pressures. Findings show that AI does not streamline composition or decision-making but instead redistributes cognitive, emotional, and ethical labor, requiring users to monitor accuracy, maintain continuity, evaluate credibility, and manage forms of invisible work such as judgment, stance-taking, and ethical reasoning. The presentation argues for flexible, context-sensitive ethical frameworks that foreground process and offer practical implications for teaching, campus-wide AI literacy, and institutional policy, positioning AI as a site of inquiry rather than a shortcut or threat.

### **Presentation 2: Mapping FYC Instructors’ Ethical Use of GenAI Tools and Classroom Policy Implementation**

*With Mahmoud Othman and Islam Farag, Ph.D. Candidates, Composition and Applied Linguistics, Languages, Literatures, and Writing Department, IUP*

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is now widely available to both students and faculty, intensifying long-standing concerns in first-year composition (FYC) around academic integrity, trust, authorship, and assessment. This presentation reports findings from a mixed-method study that combines survey data with analysis of participants’ GenAI course policies in FYC. Results reveal a meaningful division among instructors regarding whether and how to disclose their own GenAI use in teaching; most participants (68%) report disclosing GenAI use to students, while a substantial minority do not. Beyond disclosure, participants’ policies demonstrate varied approaches to integrating GenAI critically and ethically—ranging from restrictive models focused on misuse prevention to pedagogical models that treat GenAI as an object of inquiry and a tool for rhetorical decision-making. The presentation concludes by offering practical implications for writing teachers, including policy language strategies, disclosure options that support classroom trust, and instructional moves for teaching critical and ethical GenAI use without reducing AI to a plagiarism-only frame.

**12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.**

*Pre-registration in advance required.* Luncheon for AI Summit Presenters and Guests will take place at North Dining Hall Tower Room. Luncheon is sponsored by the KSA

Group (<https://www.ksagroupllc.com/>).



**1:30 p.m. – 2:20 p.m.**

**The Intelligent Enterprise: AI's Impact on Modern Business Disciplines**

*With Veronica Paz, CPA, CITP, CFF, CGMA, Professor of Accounting and Information Technology, Center for Teaching Excellence Co-Director for AI, Online Learning, and Technology, IUP*

Track and Location: AI in Business & Industry – Stabley 201 and Online:  
<https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/3853748181>

Artificial intelligence is no longer a futuristic concept—it is a present-day strategic driver reshaping every major business discipline and business decisions. This session explores how AI is transforming accounting, finance, economics, marketing, and management by enhancing decision-making, automating complex processes, uncovering predictive insights and analytics, and enabling data-driven strategy at unprecedented speed and scale. Attendees will discover how organizations are leveraging AI tools to detect fraud, optimize financial forecasting, personalize customer experiences, model economic trends, and strengthen operational leadership. This session demonstrates how AI is evolving from a support technology into a core business partner—one that is redefining competitive advantage and reshaping the future of enterprise performance. Participants will leave with practical insights, strategic perspectives, and innovative ideas for integrating AI across functional areas to drive smarter, faster, and more fabulous business outcomes.

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**From Topic to Sources: Exploring AI-Assisted Research Discovery with Keenious**

***Featured Speaker***

*With Anders Rapp, COO of Keenious*

Track and Location: AI Exploration – Stabley 202 and Online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/9266336254>

This exploratory demonstration introduces Keenious, an AI-powered research discovery tool that supports topic development and literature exploration. Participants will see how natural language input can be used to identify relevant scholarly sources, uncover related concepts, and broaden or refine research questions. The session invites discussion about where AI-assisted discovery fits within responsible workflows and how such tools may complement, rather than replace, traditional library-supported research practices.

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**Critical Digital Pedagogy in the Age of AI**

*With Jacqueline McGinty and Amar Mmoud, IUP*

Track and Location: AI Pedagogy – Stapleton 113 and Online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/2622583898>

Critical Digital Pedagogy is an urgent yet unmet need, as educators are already struggling to keep up with instructional technology. Regardless of our perspectives on Artificial Intelligence (AI), it is already embedded in most digital tools. AI is a rapidly evolving trend across the digital landscape, with generative AI tools further disrupting our traditional pedagogical approaches. This presentation will explore how to address existing digital skill gaps and provide practical strategies to prepare learners for a future in which AI is widely used, while fostering creativity, critical thinking, and responsible decision-making. In this session, we will examine concerns

such as privacy, copyright, bias, and ethics, as well as useful techniques for navigating AI as an educator. Attendees will leave with practical ideas for human-centered, ethical approaches to AI in teaching and learning.

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## **Reflect, Reframe, Recover: Using AI to Address Burnout and Imposter Feelings in Teaching and Learning**

*With Ashley McClelland, Ph.D. Candidate, Composition & Applied Linguistics, Department of Language, Literature, and Writing, IUP*

Track and Location: AI Research, Tools & Ethics – Stabley 210 and Online:  
<https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/5228208169>

Burnout and imposter feelings are increasingly common across higher education, affecting both students and educators. This interactive workshop explores how AI tools, when used intentionally and ethically, can support reflective practice, cognitive reframing, and sustainable professional habits within academic settings. Rather than positioning AI as a mental health solution, this session frames it as a structured reflective scaffold that helps individuals externalize self-doubt, examine internal narratives, and practice growth-oriented thinking. Participants will explore how AI-assisted journaling prompts, guided self-check-ins, and low-stakes reflective exercises can be integrated into courses, personal lives, and professional development spaces. Through brief hands-on activities and scenario discussions, attendees will leave with adaptable prompts, strategies for establishing ethical boundaries around AI use, and practical approaches for fostering reflective resilience in teaching, learning, and professional life.

**2:30 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.**

## **From Data to Decisions: How AI Is Transforming Profitability Analysis in Business**

*Featured Speaker*

*With Raef Lawson, Ph.D., CPA, CSCA, FCMA, CAE, Executive Director, Profitability Analytics Center of Excellence (PACE)*

Track and Location: AI in Business & Industry – Stabley 201 and Online:  
<https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/3853748181> (2:30-3:00)

Every business wants to be more profitable—but most organizations are swimming in data without knowing how to use it. AI is changing that. In this session, we explore how artificial intelligence is being deployed in finance and accounting functions to unlock insights that were previously buried in complexity. We will examine how AI-powered analytics tools are helping companies identify their most—and least—profitable customers, products, and business lines. We will look at what this means for how finance teams operate, how decisions get made, and what skills today's students will need to thrive in AI-augmented workplaces. Whether you're studying business, technology, or something else entirely, the core message is simple: AI doesn't replace good judgment—it makes good judgment possible at a scale we've never seen before. Come learn how the future of business decision-making is being written right now.

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## **AI Sandbox: Hands-on Exploration of AI Tools and Technologies**

*With the Jones White Writing Center*

Track and Location: AI Exploration – Stabley 202 and Online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/9266336254>

Have questions about AI and writing? Drop in for a one-on-one conversation with Writing Center tutors to explore AI tools, ask questions, and experiment with simple AI-assisted tasks. Whether you're curious about AI's role in academic writing, want to test different systems, or need guidance on ethical AI use, Writing Center tutors can provide guidance.

### **Exploring AI Tools with Computer Science Students**

Poster and tool demonstrations:

Megan Seaman: Painting AI Pink: Utilizing Artificial Intelligence in Breast Cancer Diagnoses.

Kate Powell: AI Stylist: AI-powered personal stylist that can help a user generate new creative outfits with the clothes already in their closets.

Jacob Vanluven: Hand Navigation System: A system that uses computer vision-based hand tracking and gesture recognition to control your computer.

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### **Teaching Teachers AI Instruction**

*With Tyler Nuñez, Rodolfo "Rudy" Barrett, and Rachel Cofield, Ph.D. Students, Composition and Applied Linguistics, Languages, Literatures, and Writing Department, IUP*

Track and Location: AI Pedagogy – Stapleton 113 and Online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/2622583898>

This presentation offers motivational scaffolding, project ownership, and BoodleBox, a specific AI platform, as potential interventions to mitigate common ethical concerns. The presentation offers a theoretical foregrounding of concepts related to student overreliance, some relevant learning science strategies, and advice on the BoodleBox platform that will be useful to instructors. Throughout this presentation, the presenters remain conscious and vigilant of the issue of overreliance on technology, which can take away from student learning, as well as the ethical and economic challenges associated with the AI sector. Many ethical concerns regarding the data and energy use of AI tools may be mitigated by BoodleBox.

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### **Applications of AI in Science and Industry**

*With Sam Grieggs, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, Mathematical and Computer Sciences, and Michael Barber, Instructor of Computer Science, IUP*

Track and Location: AI Research, Tools & Ethics – Stabley 210 and Online: <https://iupvideo.zoom.us/j/5228208169>

Artificial intelligence tools are rapidly transforming how researchers, educators, and practitioners approach everyday tasks, but knowing which tools to use and how to integrate them meaningfully into existing workflows remains a challenge. The panelists, Sam Grieggs and Michael Barber, are Computer Science professors at IUP, both specializing in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, and through their work have a technical perspective on utilizing AI Tools effectively and ethically, especially when it comes to data privacy, for research, teaching, and general productivity.

Panelists will share practical examples drawn from real use cases, including leveraging AI-powered research modes for literature review and citation discovery, building custom tools from scratch using AI that can be run locally or on the cloud, and using agentic coding assistants to rapidly develop software workflows. Rather than a formal presentation, the session is designed as a conversation. Attendees are encouraged to bring questions about their own workflows, and

panelists will draw on live demonstrations and their technical expertise and experience to ground the discussion in tangible examples.

## Featured Speaker Biographies

### **Brad Messner**

*Cybersecurity in the Age of AI – 9:00 a.m., AI in Business & Industry Track*

Brad Messner, PhD, EA is a Professor in the University of Pittsburgh School of Business as well as a third-generation owner of Messner & Fox, LLC and founder of Financial Guardians, LLC. With over 30 years of experience in technology and tax preparation, Brad pairs deep accounting expertise with a strong background in cybersecurity, AI, automation, and information systems.

He is an Enrolled Agent, board member on several AI startups, and a Department of Defense NSA NCAE-C scholar for his PhD research on blockchain and financial system security. Named the 2023 Tax Professional of the Year by the National Association of Tax Professionals, Brad is also a nationally recognized speaker on tax, AI, automation, ethics, and cybersecurity in finance. Through his work leveraging technology, he has helped thousands of individuals improve their understanding of artificial intelligence and its impact on business and financial systems. As AI-based systems continue to evolve, Brad remains steadfast in his dedication to ensure data integrity and protection at all stages of AI-enabled processes.

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### **Anders Rapp**

*From Topic to Sources: Exploring AI-Assisted Research Discovery with Keenious – 1:30 p.m., AI Exploration Track*

Anders Rapp is the Chief Operating Officer of Keenious, where he leads operational strategy and partnerships to expand the company's AI-powered research discovery platform. With a background in technology commercialization and international business development, Rapp focuses on bringing innovative tools to universities and research institutions worldwide. His work centers on improving how scholars and students discover relevant academic literature, helping integrate AI-driven solutions into library services, research workflows, and higher education ecosystems.

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### **Robert Sheesley**

*Synthetic Intelligence: Architecting the Organizational Mind – 10:00 a.m., AI in Business & Industry Track*

Robert Sheesley is an award-winning technology executive and CIO currently serving as Chief Information Officer and Board Member of Bump Connect, a next-generation social community and commerce platform, and as a Senior Consultant with Future Point of View, where he provides fractional CIO and advisory services. Known internationally as The Blue-Collar CIO, Rob brings decades of experience leading transformational change at mid-market and Fortune 500 companies, big four consulting firms, and private equity-backed organizations. As CIO of Wrench Group, he built an award-winning technology organization during the company's historic growth, earning recognition including Georgia CIO of the Year (2023) and a Global CIO 100 designation (2024). A U.S. Marine veteran, Rob holds an MBA and BS from Clarion University of Pennsylvania and certifications in Cyber Security Leadership and Enterprise Architecture from Carnegie Mellon University. He serves on the Business Advisory Council of IUP's Eberly College of Business and Information Technology and is a Forbes Technology Council member and co-author of the leadership anthology *Wired for Success*.

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## **Jacob Williamson Rea**

*Writing as Infrastructure: Context Engineering Across Disciplines – 10:00 a.m., AI Exploration Track*

Jacob is a Senior AI Engineer at Microsoft Research's Creative Technology Team, working at the intersection of advanced AI systems, product-grade engineering, and creative exploration. He specializes in translating complex research into real-world prototypes that inform decisions, shape product direction, and surface new possibilities—work that has been showcased at major conferences including Microsoft Build and Microsoft Ignite. Jacob holds an MA from Johns Hopkins University and a BA from the University of Pittsburgh, and has taught through MIT's Office of Engineering Outreach Programs and at the University of Pittsburgh.

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## **Roberto Piedra**

*AI in Project Management: Case Studies and Insights – 11:00 a.m., AI in Business & Industry Track*

Roberto Piedra is a PMP and ACP-certified Project Manager and Lean Six Sigma Black Belt with over 14 years of experience delivering technology, compliance, and operational transformation initiatives in regulated environments. He specializes in enterprise reporting, internal controls automation, ERP optimization, and AI-enabled governance solutions.

Roberto has led cross-functional programs supporting SOX compliance, IT general controls, and business intelligence modernization. He designs scalable KPI dashboards, automated control frameworks, and data-driven reporting ecosystems that enhance audit readiness, improve transparency, and strengthen executive decision-making.

With a background spanning financial services, healthcare informatics, and military operations, Roberto brings structured problem-solving, quantitative rigor, and disciplined project execution to complex transformation initiatives. His approach integrates Agile delivery, Lean process engineering, and governance alignment to drive measurable operational and risk reduction outcomes.

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## **Raef Lawson**

*From Data to Decisions: How AI Is Transforming Profitability Analysis in Business – 2:30 p.m., AI in Business & Industry Track*

Raef Lawson, Ph.D., CPA, CSCA, FCMA, CAE, is Executive Director of the Profitability Analytics Center of Excellence (PACE), a non-profit community of professionals dedicated to helping organizations make better decisions through the use of data analytics and integrated, causal models.

Dr. Lawson previously served as Vice President of Research and Policy at IMA (the Institute of Management Accountants), where he led the organization's global research efforts for more than 15 years. He is an award-winning author, global speaker, and media contributor in the areas of performance management, profitability analytics, sustainability, business ethics, corporate governance, and accounting education. He holds an MBA and a Ph.D. from New York University's Leonard N. Stern School of Business.