

UCHRI AI Research Lab Statement on the UC's Approaches to AI
UCHRI is the UC-systemwide Humanities Research Institute

This is a defining moment in higher education's relationship with artificial intelligence. As a leading public research institution, the University of California has both the opportunity and the responsibility to shape how AI serves educational priorities and to set a global standard for ethical technological integration. The decisions made now—about infrastructure, data, procurement, and pedagogy—will define the conditions of knowledge production at UC for a generation or more. They deserve the same deliberative seriousness the university brings to its most consequential commitments.

AI is a cultural, epistemological, and political phenomenon as much as it is a technical one. It is transforming how knowledge is produced, how language circulates, how authority is constructed, and how institutions understand their own purposes. These are questions the humanities have studied for centuries, and they are precisely the questions that must inform AI governance now. AI systems at UC should be treated as public intellectual infrastructure—shared, durable, and accountable to the university's educational mission and public trust—rather than as a purely corporate product governed by external incentives.

Humanities scholarship provides the interpretive frameworks needed to understand how large statistical and algorithmic systems encode values, construct narratives, and reconfigure the conditions of human knowledge and agency. Our disciplines study how technologies reshape culture, labor, and institutional life. We train students to read critically, argue with precision, and evaluate claims about progress, efficiency, and inevitability—capacities that are indispensable when institutions face enormous pressure to adopt AI tools without adequate scrutiny.

This expertise must inform AI governance at every level. Infrastructure decisions—what systems UC builds, licenses, and contracts for—carry profound implications for academic freedom, intellectual property, data privacy, and the educational mission itself. To fulfill its public mandate, UC should adopt a framework of active stewardship, informed by humanistic scholarship and grounded in five principles:

1. **Support Interdisciplinary Experimentation.** Computational resources must be scalable and interoperable, enabling collaborative research across humanities, social sciences, and STEM. AI should function as shared intellectual infrastructure, not as a siloed asset owned by a single department or campus.
2. **Center Humanistic Expertise in AI Governance.** Faculty from the humanities must have meaningful representation in existing IT governance and procurement structures responsible for decision-making. Humanistic expertise is essential not only to help anticipate downstream harms, but to ensure that AI technologies serve educational values and institutional goals.
3. **Protect Data Sovereignty and Privacy.** Implementation of all AI technologies requires robust opt-in consent protocols and transparent data-use categories. Contracts must impose clear limits on data collection, storage, retention, and use in model training.

Student and faculty intellectual output must not become proprietary training material without informed consent. In this, we endorse the [findings](#) of the Academic Senate's AI Workgroup and share their conclusion that decision-making must prioritize data rights and academic autonomy.

4. **Prioritize Transparency Over "Black Boxes."** Commercial partnerships and infrastructure contracts must guarantee meaningful auditability. The UC should prioritize systems that allow for third-party scrutiny, modification, and accountability mechanisms essential for research integrity.
5. **Leverage Institutional Precedent.** AI governance requires the same active stewardship that secured UC's publishing rights in the Elsevier negotiations (2021), avoiding the pitfalls of the passive procurement that enabled Turnitin's exploitation of student writing (2019).

By adhering to these principles, the UC can ensure that its AI infrastructure protects the public trust while advancing world-class research. We ask that these principles be integrated into the University's broader digital strategy, so that technical expansion remains grounded in our institutional values.

UCHRI AI Research Lab Statement

Pranav Anand, Professor and Director, The Humanities Institute, UC Santa Cruz
Ilya Brookwell, Assistant Professor, UC Riverside and Chair of Senate's Systemwide UCACC
Qian Du, Associate Professor of Teaching, UC Irvine
Jaimey Fisher, Professor, UC Davis, and Director of UCHRI
Peter Krapp, Professor, UC Irvine
Angela Li, Assistant Professor, UC Riverside
Cynthia McLeod, Assistant Professor, UC Berkeley
Marit MacArthur, Continuing Lecturer, UC Davis
Ramona Naddaf, Associate Professor, Koshland Jr. Distinguished Chair in Writing, UC Berkeley
Fabian Offert, Asst. Professor & Dir., Center for the Humanities and Machine Learning, UCSB
Lisa Parks, Distinguished Prof. & Director, Global Media Technologies and Cultures Lab, UCSB
Todd Presner, Professor, Ross Endowed Chair in Division of Humanities, UCLA
Rita Raley, Professor, UC Santa Barbara
Kriss Ravetto, Professor, UCLA
Danny Snelson, Associate Professor, UCLA
Eric Schwitzgebel, Distinguished Professor, UC Riverside
Kara Wittmann, Associate Teaching Professor, UC Berkeley
Zac Zimmer, Associate Professor, UC Santa Cruz