

AI in Higher Education

From Experimentation to Campus-Wide Impact

Higher education institutions are under pressure to do more with less while supporting research growth, improving student outcomes, modernizing operations, and protecting increasingly complex digital environments.

AI is quickly becoming a practical tool for addressing those challenges. The opportunity is not simply to adopt another platform. It is to identify high-value use cases, connect them to the right data and infrastructure, and build a responsible path from pilot to production.

As part of Connection, the CNXN Helix™ Center for Applied AI and Robotics extends the organization's capabilities into applied AI, helping higher education institutions align strategy, infrastructure, data, and execution.

Where Higher Education Institutions Are Applying AI Today

Research Acceleration and Advanced Computing

Universities are using AI to support research teams working with large data sets, complex models, and high-performance computing environments. This includes AI workstations, GPU-enabled infrastructure, advanced storage, and purpose-built environments for experimentation, modeling, simulation, and analysis.

For research-intensive institutions, AI is becoming part of the next-generation research foundation.

Grant Development and Research Administration

AI can help faculty and research teams identify funding opportunities, summarize requirements, support proposal development, and streamline administrative workflows. Rather than replacing human expertise, AI can reduce the manual burden around grant discovery, documentation, and compliance support.



Student Services and Engagement

Institutions are exploring AI to improve how students access information and support. Use cases include intelligent assistants for common questions, personalized guidance, faster routing to the right department, and improved visibility into student needs.

The goal is not to remove the human relationship. It is to help students get answers faster while giving staff more time for higher-value interactions.

Administrative Efficiency

Many institutions are still relying on manual processes, disconnected systems, spreadsheets, and institutional knowledge held by a limited number of people. AI can help improve workflows across finance, procurement, HR, facilities, enrollment, and IT by summarizing information, identifying patterns, reducing errors, and accelerating routine tasks.

This is often where institutions can build early trust because the use cases are practical, measurable, and have lower risk than classroom-facing applications.

Campus Operations and Facilities

AI can help institutions analyze operational data across facilities, transportation, maintenance, energy usage, asset tracking, and space utilization. These use cases can support better planning, faster response times, and more informed decision-making across campus environments.

Cybersecurity and Risk Management

As institutions adopt more digital tools and generate more data, security teams need better ways to detect threats, prioritize alerts, and respond quickly. AI can support security operations by helping teams identify unusual behavior, summarize incidents, and strengthen response workflows.

Responsible AI Governance

Higher education leaders are also focused on how AI should be used, not just where it can be used. Institutions need clear governance around data privacy, model usage, academic integrity, intellectual property, accessibility, and ethical implementation.

A responsible AI strategy helps create consistency across departments while giving faculty, staff, and students room to innovate safely.



How Connection and CNXN Helix Help

Connection has long supported higher education institutions with the technology, services, and partner ecosystem needed to modernize campus IT environments. CNXN Helix builds on that foundation, helping institutions move from AI interest to AI execution.

Together, Connection and CNXN Helix help institutions identify the right use cases, assess readiness, and align infrastructure, data, and security to support successful AI initiatives—from early pilots through scaled deployment.

A Practical Starting Point

The best AI initiatives usually do not begin with a broad platform conversation. They begin with a specific challenge:

Where are teams spending too much time?

Where is data difficult to access or understand?

Where are manual processes creating delays, risk, or inconsistency?

Where could better insight improve the student, faculty, or staff experience?

From there, Connection and CNXN Helix help institutions define a realistic path forward.

Ready to Identify Where AI Can Create Real Impact?

To learn how Connection and CNXN Helix can help your institution identify high-value AI use cases, assess readiness, and build a practical path from pilot to production, connect with your Connection Account Team today.

Whether you're exploring research computing, operational efficiency, student services, or responsible AI governance, we can help you move forward with clarity and confidence.



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