

Seneca Polytechnic professors offer expertise in generative artificial intelligence

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“The forces of digitization and automation are unceasing ... The impact of artificial intelligence and robotics is accelerating across virtually every sector. In every moment of wrenching change there can also be promise, and we see opportunities abounding.”

– The Next: A Strategic Plan for Seneca Polytechnic

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) technology has led to transformative changes in the classroom and the workplace. How information is collected, articulated and absorbed has evolved, and there is no going back.

Seneca Polytechnic is working with academic leaders and industry partners to ensure our students are well prepared to succeed in a future where GenAI will be an everyday tool.

With the drastic emergence of GenAI, there are lots of questions, and some uncertainty. To help faculty guide our students effectively, Seneca has created two roles focused on GenAI under the leadership of Marianne Marando, Vice-President, Academic and Students.

“Our great faculty members work tirelessly to ensure their curricula reflects the latest in industry trends and emerging technologies,” said Ms. Marando. “We put a call out for thought leaders to help professors find innovative ways to incorporate GenAI into their courses. And we found them.”

Professors Panos Panagiotakopoulos (School of Human Resources & Global Business) and Kent Peel, (School of Legal & Public Administration) have been appointed as Seneca’s first-ever AI Thought Leaders. They bring a combined 30 years of teaching experience at Seneca to their roles, as well as expertise in international business, sustainability, entrepreneurship, law and small business systems.

“I can’t think of an academic program where GenAI won’t have an impact,” said Mr. Peel. “That’s why this initiative is so important. We will help Seneca stay ahead of it as best we can.”

Mr. Panagiotakopoulos and Mr. Peel will share their insights and learnings on the latest GenAI-related issues, including how it can enhance the learning experience and what will be

needed to prepare students for the world of work where GenAI is the norm.

The two will work with program advisory committee members, industry partners and other postsecondary institutions to develop forward-looking learning opportunities, act as Seneca representatives at conferences and collaborate on AI-related projects. They will also lead forums for faculty to think creatively about GenAI and imagine ways to fuel innovation at Seneca — when it comes to teaching, applied research, industry collaborations and more.

“AI is affecting the teaching process and the learning process,” said Mr. Panagiotakopoulos. “It’s transformative. Seneca, as always, is at the forefront, working to understand this technology and leverage its many benefits. Our students need to be prepared, and we will make sure they are.” Mr. Panagiotakopoulos and Mr. Peel have formed a fast friendship and share a commitment to an approach to AI is flexible and built from the bottom-up, with a focus on students, collaboration and design thinking.

“Students are going to be driving this as much as faculty,” said Mr. Peel. “Already we see they are adopting AI-influenced solutions. It will filter up.”

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