ACADEMIC YEAR 2025–2026

Annual Report

Institute for Applied Artificial Intelligence

AI-related activities of the Institute for Applied AI (IAAI) and the Kogod School of Business, American University — May 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026.

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Executive Summary

Academic year 2025–2026 was the Institute for Applied Artificial Intelligence's (IAAI) first full year of operation, and it established the Kogod School of Business as a recognized first-mover among business schools on the integration of AI into teaching, research, and operations. Working from a single mission — to position American University and Kogod as global leaders in AI education and research — the Institute moved on every front at once: it rebuilt the curriculum around AI, equipped faculty and staff with tools and training, funded a wave of grassroots innovation, convened the campus and the wider field, and secured a portfolio of industry partnerships that few peer schools can match.

By year-end, AI was being taught in every department, every major, and every degree program at Kogod; more than 50 courses had been infused with AI; the Institute had recruited over 30 affiliate faculty fellows from across all of the university's schools; and a 30-month enterprise agreement had put advanced AI tools in the hands of every Kogod student, faculty member, and staff member. Three flagship efforts anchored the year: a **Teaching and Operations Innovation Minigrant Program** that deployed $45,300 across 19 faculty- and staff-led projects; a funded **Google–Kogod research partnership** on assessing AI learning outcomes that produced a published framework and a working software tool; and an inaugural pair of university-wide **AI Teaching and AI Research conferences**.

The school also set its longer-term course. A faculty-led strategy committee — **Reimagining Kogod in the Age of AI (RIKAI)**, chaired by Erran Carmel and Bill Bellows — delivered a strategy in January 2026 that positions Kogod to become "The Business School for the AI Economy," with school-wide course-redesign pilots beginning in Fall 2026. AI executive education also emerged as a significant external-facing push, as Kogod translated its expertise into AI training for corporate, sports, government, and policy clients.

The sections that follow document the Institute's activities and the broader AI work of the Kogod School over the year, organized by curriculum and pedagogy, capacity building, the minigrant program, convening and community, research and thought leadership, executive education, strategic partnerships, what students told us, operations, the school's forward strategy, and the road ahead.

The Year at a Glance

30+ Affiliate faculty fellows	**54** Courses infused with AI	**19** Innovation minigrants	**$45.3K** Minigrant funds deployed
6 Industry partnerships	**2** Inaugural AU AI conferences	**253** Students in 2026 AI survey	**100%** AI courses with AI outcomes

Figures reflect activity reported through June 2026; several minigrant projects and partnership initiatives remain in progress.

About the Institute

Mission. To position American University and the Kogod School of Business as global leaders in AI education and research.

The Institute for Applied Artificial Intelligence was stood up in early 2025 and grew into a university-wide hub over the 2025–2026 academic year. It pursues a deliberately broad mandate that spans the classroom, the research enterprise, day-to-day operations, and the school's external relationships.

Goals

- Integrate AI across academic curricula in every department and program.
- Promote innovative and effective teaching practices that use AI well.
- Develop ethical guidelines for the responsible use of AI.
- Support high-impact, interdisciplinary AI research.
- Foster experiential learning opportunities for students.
- Serve as a hub for community engagement through speaker series, competitions, and workshops.
- Build strategic partnerships with industry leaders.

Leadership and People

Director. Gwanhoo Lee (Kogod).

Associate Directors. Angela Virtu (Kogod) and Bei Xiao (College of Arts and Sciences).

Advisory Committee. A standing external advisory committee was assembled during the year and met on January 7, 2026 and May 13, 2026 to guide the Institute's strategy on agentic AI, governance, and the skills students will need.

Affiliate Faculty Fellows. The Institute recruited more than 30 affiliate faculty fellows from across all of American University's schools — including Kogod, the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of International Service, the School of Communication, the School of Public Affairs, and the Washington College of Law — along with external fellows from peer institutions and industry. This cross-campus fellowship is the backbone of the Institute's interdisciplinary reach.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

The most visible change of the year was structural: Kogod rebuilt its academic offerings so that AI runs through the entire student experience rather than sitting in a single elective. Kogod is now one of the only business schools in the country to offer a dedicated set of AI credentials.

New AI Credentials (launched Fall 2025)

- **AI Major (undergraduate) —** A full undergraduate major built around applied AI.
- **AI Minor/Concentration (undergraduate) —** An undergraduate minor/concentration designed to be accessible to students across the university.

- **MS in Business Analytics and AI —** A graduate degree that integrates analytics with applied AI.
- **AI Badges and Certificates —** Stackable credentials that recognize AI skills for students and professionals.

A Scaffolded Approach

Rather than front-loading AI into one course, Kogod scaffolds it across the degree. Undergraduates move from the responsible and ethical use of AI in year one, to using AI across business verticals in year two, to major-specific tooling and a deep dive in year three, and finally to an AI-infused capstone in year four. Graduate students begin with an orientation to general AI tools, ethics, and methods, then move into deep, program-specific integration.

AI in the Curriculum — By the Numbers

All	54	15	>50%
Departments, degrees, majors & minors	Courses infused with AI	Courses using Perplexity Spaces	Faculty using AI in class

Every AI-designated course carries explicit AI learning objectives (100%). Internally, faculty distinguish **"sage" courses** (50%+ of the course built around AI) from **"artisan" courses** (a deliberate touch of AI) and **"coach" courses** (basic AI), giving the school a shared vocabulary for how deeply each course leans on the technology.

From Generative to Agentic AI in the Classroom

By spring 2026 the leading edge of classroom work had moved from generative to agentic AI — systems that plan and execute multi-step tasks. Examples include:

- **Business Process Analysis (Ann Parambil) —** students analyze multi-agent orchestration in AU's HR hiring workflows and evaluate agentic process-modeling tools.
- **Advanced Quantitative Methods and ML in Finance (Ali Sanati) —** students build agentic AI systems and automated multi-step workflows for end-to-end financial analysis and reporting.
- **Brand Strategy and Advertising (Kelli Frias) —** students build a content-creation and revenue-generation platform using Perplexity and develop marketing plans with Anthropic's Claude.

Agentic methods also reached operations-focused teaching and administration, including AI agents that draft entity-relationship diagrams from a business scenario, standardize external marketing/admissions data for the school's CRM, automate graduate-outcome tracking from LinkedIn, and flag first-year students at risk of attrition for personalized intervention.

Building Faculty and Staff Capacity

Curriculum change only works if faculty and staff are equipped to deliver it. The Institute paired the school's enterprise tools with a steady cadence of training and a set of always-on community channels.

Tools and Training

- **Enterprise AI access.** Following a 30-month agreement with Perplexity, every Kogod student, faculty member, and staff member received free access to Perplexity Enterprise Pro, with accounts activated at perplexity.american.edu.
- **Perplexity training and Spaces.** The Institute planned and delivered training for faculty, staff, and students through spring 2025 and rolled out Perplexity Spaces, now used in 15 courses.
- **Targeted faculty workshops.** Sessions included AI for academic research (April 8, 2025) and a hands-on Perplexity workshop led with the Perplexity team (April 22, 2025).
- **AI Summer Challenge series.** A summer-long faculty training program (July–August 2025) helped instructors prepare AI-forward courses for the fall.

An Always-On Community of Practice

- **AI Friday ("Second Friday") Online Forum.** A recurring, well-attended monthly forum where faculty share their AI teaching approaches and specific classroom use cases.
- **AI Daily Brief.** A curated daily briefing on AI developments, produced with student-assistant support since March 2025.
- **KSB AI Discussion Forum on Canvas.** A standing online space, launched in August 2025, for faculty and staff to exchange questions and practices.

The Teaching and Operations Innovation Minigrant Program

The Institute's signature grassroots initiative — funded by a $125,000 gift from the Special Competitive Studies Project (SCSP) — made small, fast awards (up to $2,500, two to six months) to put AI directly into the hands of faculty and staff. Across two cohorts the program funded **19 projects and deployed $45,300**, split almost evenly between faculty-led teaching projects and staff-led operations projects. As of June 2026, 10 final reports had been received, with the remaining 9 projects still within their grant periods.

The early returns point to three patterns: the program is building real **AI literacy** (grantees repeatedly describe learning when *not* to use AI and keeping human judgment in the loop); the outputs are **reusable and scalable** (openly licensed starter kits, deployed apps, and pipelines); and the reporting is **candid and rigorous**, documenting security pivots and honest user feedback alongside successes.

Selected Outcomes Reported to Date

- **AI-Enabled Interactive Business Case Studies (Carmel & Ulstrup) —** an openly licensed "agentic case-study starter kit" deployed across three sections in two programs; the interactive simulation drew roughly 95% student engagement.
- **Chat-SEC (Spyridopoulos) —** a live web app that answers plain-English questions grounded in real SEC filings and doubles as an AI-literacy lesson via a visible token counter.

- **Personalized Video Avatars for Admitted Students (Wilson & Hushek) —** AI-avatar greetings achieved a 44.6% open rate against a 25–30% industry benchmark, at roughly $1 of compute per video across 1,250 videos.
- **Vendor List Data-Cleaning App (Wudarzewski & Irwin) —** a two-hour build projected to save 17–33 staff hours per year while removing manual-entry errors.
- **KAI Yield Chatbot (Hushek) —** sustained an already-deployed admissions chatbot through a high-traffic recruitment window, serving 1,800 prospective-student conversations.

Full Minigrant Portfolio

#	Project	Lead(s)	Type	Status
1	Modelling Reporter Interest to Optimize Media Pitching	Lianna Serko	Staff	Reported
2	The Courtside Classroom: Basketball Analytics	Bakowicz / Simon	Faculty	Reported
3	AI-Enabled Interactive Business Case Studies	Carmel / Ulstrup	Faculty	Reported
4	Professional Development in AI Healthcare for Marketing	Kelli Frias	Faculty	In progress
5	AI Applications in Accounting Case Competition	Yinqi Zhang	Faculty	In progress
6	Enhanced Course Forecasting (Grad & Undergrad)	Dan Prengel	Staff	In progress
7	Accelerating SET and Grade Distribution Analysis	Afflu / Akman / Gibson	Staff	In progress
8	A Cloud-Based Financial Consolidation App	Yijiang Zhao	Faculty	Reported
9	An AI Coaching Tool for Negotiating Complexity	Alexandra Mislin	Faculty	In progress
10	Student / Career Outcomes Automation	Marks / Janzen	Staff	Reported
11	Integrating Agentic AI into FIN-480/680	Ali Sanati	Faculty	Reported
12	Chat-SEC: Analyzing SEC Filings with AI	I. Spyridopoulos	Faculty	Reported
13	AI-Driven Website Optimization & Content Tool	Katya Popova	Staff	In progress
14	AI-Enhanced Interventions for At-Risk First-Years	Jonathan Akman	Staff	In progress
15	Video Avatar — Admitted Undergrad Greeting	Taylor Wilson	Staff	Reported
16	AI App — Vendor-Provided List Clean-Up	Wudarzewski / Irwin	Staff	Reported
17	KAI Yield Chatbot — Prospective First-Year	Betsy Hushek	Staff	Reported
18	Talking Tree — Local LLM Sustainability Kiosk	Benjamin Root	Staff	In progress
19	AI-Enhanced Financial Modeling & Valuation	Octavian Ionici	Faculty	In progress

Convening and Community Engagement

The Institute served as a campus convener, bringing faculty, students, and external partners together around AI.

Inaugural AU AI Teaching Conference — November 6, 2025

The Institute organized American University's first AI Teaching Conference. It drew 26 proposals and featured 19 use-case presentations representing every school at the university, a faculty panel, and a student/alumni panel, with opening remarks from President Alger, Provost Wilkins, and Dean Marchick. More than 250 faculty members registered for this conference.

AU AI Research Conference — February 19, 2026

A companion conference convened the university's AI research community to share work and build interdisciplinary collaborations. It drew a keynote, 20 research presentations representing every school at the university, a faculty panel, and an industry panel, with opening remarks from Dean Marchick. More than 200 faculty members registered for this conference.

Student Challenges and Community Events

- **AI-Driven Sustainable Community Impact Student Challenge (October 18, 2025) —** co-sponsored with the Veloric Center for Entrepreneurship, bringing together entrepreneurship, AI, and sustainability.
- **NVIDIA watch party (October 28, 2025) —** a community event tied to NVIDIA's AI announcements.
- **AACSB engagement —** Kogod presented its AI integration at an AACSB workshop (April 29–30, 2025), hosted 50+ business schools in an AACSB forum on AI and education, and presented again at AACSB's Orlando conference (January 2026).

Research and Thought Leadership

The Google–Kogod Learning Outcome and Assessment Project

Supported by a $220,000 grant, the Institute partnered with Google to tackle a problem facing all of higher education: generative AI simultaneously creates a new learning outcome (genuine AI literacy) and undermines the assessments educators use to certify what students independently know. The project's June 2026 white paper, *"A Framework and Tool for AI Learning Outcomes and AI-Resilient Assessment in Higher Education,"* treats these as a single problem. It adopts the Digital Education Council's AI Literacy Framework, introduces a practical "secure-to-open" continuum for matching each assessment's security to its purpose, and situates the work in AACSB accreditation practice.

The headline deliverable is a working application that reads a course syllabus, maps it onto AI-literacy pillars and developmental levels, generates AI learning outcomes benchmarked against AACSB-aligned standards, and recommends where each outcome should sit on the secure-to-open continuum — producing an outcome–assessment matrix faculty can edit and export for Assurance of Learning documentation. A white paper for this work will be published and distributed in August 2026

The Google Team's Visit to Kogod

On April 8, 2026, a delegation of senior Google leaders spent a full day at Kogod to see the school's AI work first-hand. Running from a morning opening in the Dean's Suite through an afternoon leadership debrief, the program was designed to show — not just describe — how AI now runs through Kogod's teaching, research, and operations. It built on relationships developed when a Kogod delegation visited Google's Mountain View campus in January 2026.

After a welcome and framing from Google and Kogod leadership, the visitors fanned out across three concurrent faculty-and-student sessions: Tommy White on AI-forward pedagogy, with

Casey Evans and Christina Eid on architecting AI into the undergraduate curriculum; Matt Bakowicz, Jay Simon, and the basketball coaching staff on AI for Division I sports analytics, alongside Katya Popova, Lianna Serko, and Jonathan Akman on AI in marketing operations; and Ioannis Spyridopoulos building with Google Colab, with Kelli Frias's advertising students demonstrating AI tools for brand ambassadors. Yan Lau and David Stillerman then presented the design of a controlled experiment testing how an AI economics tutor affects student outcomes, followed by a live class in which Angela Virtu's undergraduates used AI to build R Shiny apps.

Over lunch, Dean David Marchick hosted a fireside chat with Ben Gomes, Google's Senior Vice President for Learning and Sustainability, on AI, culture change, and leadership. The day closed with a faculty roundtable on the struggles and triumphs of moving from individual experiments to shared practice, facilitated by Sarah Mady, and a leadership debrief on next steps. The Institute also shared preliminary results from its 2026 student AI survey with the Google team during the visit.

External Voice and Field Leadership

- Presented Kogod's AI journey at the Ai4 Conference (August 2025), the AACSB Meeting (January 2026), and the ASU-GSV AI Summit (March 2026).
- Represented AU's AI work at a meeting — requested by the DC Mayor's Office (DMPED and WDCEP) — with an AI company exploring a Washington, DC presence (August 2025).
- Secured media and podcast placements for Kogod's AI leaders, including Dean Marchick, and faculty Gwanhoo Lee, Casey Evans, and Angela Virtu.

AI Executive Education

AI executive education emerged as a major external-facing push in 2025, as Kogod translated its classroom and institutional AI expertise into training for working professionals. Led by faculty including Kelli Frias, Angela Virtu, and Aarushi Sahejpal alongside Institute Director Gwanhoo Lee, the school built a growing portfolio of executive engagements spanning the corporate, sports, government, and policy sectors — several already delivered, others newly won or in the pipeline.

Programs Delivered

- **Xylem (2025).** Angela Virtu supported the rollout of an AI training program for 150 executives at Xylem, designed to serve as a model for AI-adoption programs at other corporations.
- **Korean government officials (August 2025).** The Institute Director led an executive training program on AI transformation for Korean government officials.
- **Brown Advisory (April 2026).** Angela Virtu delivered a culture-and-innovation training for the investment firm Brown Advisory.

New Wins and Pipeline

- **Council on Foreign Relations (2026).** Kogod won an executive-education contract with the Council on Foreign Relations for AI training in 2026, with faculty including Angela Virtu and Aarushi Sahejpal preparing the live sessions.
- **Washington Spirit.** The Kogod–Washington Spirit AI training partnership, co-led by Aarushi Sahejpal, delivers live AI sessions for professionals at the Washington Spirit soccer club.
- **Bahrain (proposal).** Proposals were developed for an AI training program in Bahrain.

The Council on Foreign Relations and Washington Spirit engagements both involve substantial preparation for live AI sessions with working professionals — reflecting a deliberate shift from one-off talks toward structured, repeatable executive curricula that extend Kogod's AI expertise well beyond the classroom.

Strategic Partnerships

Kogod secured an unusually deep set of AI partnerships for a business school, spanning product access, funded research, thought leadership, and executive training.

Partner	Focus	What it delivered this year
Perplexity	Enterprise tools	30-month agreement giving every Kogod student, faculty, and staff member free Enterprise Pro access; joint training and ideation.
Google	Research & assessment	$220,000 grant to study AI learning outcomes; co-developed framework, white paper, and tool; April 2026 leadership visit; broader partnership in discussion.
SCSP	Innovation & policy	$125,000 gift funding the 19 minigrants; collaboration on AI-and-competitiveness thought leadership and an AI Expo.
LinkedIn	Future of work	Collaboration and co-authored thought leadership on AI and the future of work.
NVIDIA	Community & teaching	On-campus AI engagement, including a watch party tied to NVIDIA announcements.
Xylem	Executive training	Trained 150 executives on AI adoption, designed as a model for other corporate programs (see Executive Education).

Listening to Students: The 2026 AI Survey

To keep the school's AI strategy grounded in the student experience, the Institute ran its annual student AI survey, drawing **253 respondents in 2026** (up from 174 in 2025), roughly 17% of the Kogod student body. Results were prepared to share with senior Google leaders during their April 2026 campus visit. Key findings:

- **Confidence is high.** Over 90% of students believe they have AI skills and over 80% feel prepared for an AI-shaped workplace.
- **Classroom signals are positive.** Over 80% report their instructor has a clear AI policy, and about 75% say AI helps them in the course.

- **Tool landscape.** Perplexity and ChatGPT each exceed 80% usage, Gemini follows near 37%, and Claude is especially favored by graduate students (68%). Graduate students tend to be "power users" drawing on multiple models.
- **What students want to learn.** Prompt engineering and model strategy is the most-requested skill, followed by coding and technical development.
- **What students worry about.** Top concerns are the cognitive and educational impact of AI, a notably rising concern about environmental impact, and career and employment effects; more than half express some concern about academic-integrity use of AI.

AI in Operations

Beyond the classroom, Kogod used AI to improve how the school runs. Deployments and pilots over the year included:

- **A website AI chatbot** already responding to admissions questions, and a related yield chatbot (KAI) supporting recruitment.
- **An AI "faculty manual"** — a Perplexity Space trained on faculty policies, AACSB accreditation, curriculum assessment, and performance-evaluation materials.
- **Operational pilots** in development and advancement (research and gift-agreement assistance), a research-to-content "translator," an AI writer trained on Kogod's house style, AI interview prep and academic advising for students, and Perplexity Spaces for student organizations.

Many of these operational gains were seeded by the minigrant program — for example, the media lead-scoring app, the career-outcomes automation, the personalized admissions avatars, and the vendor-list cleaning tool described earlier.

Reimagining Kogod: The RIKAI Committee

Alongside the Institute's programmatic work, Kogod convened a faculty-led strategy committee — **Reimagining Kogod in the Age of AI (RIKAI)** — to define a distinctive, school-wide AI strategy. Chaired by Erran Carmel with Bill Bellows as vice chair, and drawing roughly sixteen members from every department alongside ex-officio leaders in technology, instructional design, communications, assessment, and partnerships, the committee (distinct from the Institute's external Advisory Committee) was charged with reimagining business education in the age of AI across teaching, scholarship, and service — with teaching as the urgent priority.

Charge and Vision

Anchored in a vision set out by Senior Associate Dean Parthiban David — that Kogod be recognized as a leader in business education by empowering students to thrive and lead in an AI-driven world — the committee set out to immerse every student in an AI-driven curriculum that emphasizes the responsible use of AI across every discipline and degree program. Its charge was to research the internal and external context, benchmark what has worked at

leading schools, understand the needs of Kogod faculty, students, and employers, and make actionable recommendations on AI strategy, policy, and implementation to the Dean.

A "Design Foresight" Method

Rather than a conventional planning exercise, RIKai used a "design foresight" method that blends design thinking — empathy, ideation, and prototyping — with foresight, including trend and scenario analysis. The committee worked through horizon mapping, synthesis, scenario creation, prototyping, and testing, grounding the work in ethnographic stakeholder research:

- **KSB ecosystem —** structured interviews with recent student interns, recent alumni, and faculty and staff actively engaged with AI, plus a broader student and alumni survey.
- **External ecosystem —** interviews with employers, AI-focused peer institutions, AI-in-education thought leaders, and AI/ed-tech companies.

Interviews ran from August through early October 2025, followed by a full-day synthesis sprint in late October and a prototyping phase, culminating in a strategy report delivered in January 2026.

The Strategy — "A Business School for the AI Economy"

The committee's report set an ambitious positioning: by 2030, Kogod aims to be known as **"The Business School for the AI Economy."** Its central argument is that as intelligence, information, and analysis become abundant, *judgment* becomes scarce — so the core work of business education shifts to capability formation: developing students' ability to question AI output, test assumptions, interpret results in context, explain their reasoning, and take responsibility for decisions. Kogod's differentiation, the committee argued, will come not from what tools students can access, but from how well they think, decide, and act with them.

Drawing on national engagement research (the SERU survey administered by UC Berkeley), the report frames Spring 2026 as an institutional alignment phase — organizing the many AI efforts already under way, clarifying expectations and acceptable-use standards, defining faculty training, and putting governance in place — ahead of full transformational course-redesign pilots beginning in Fall 2026.

The "Dozen" Foundational Commitments

The strategy is operationalized through a set of foundational commitments, many already under way, including:

- **AI-use documentation** in most substantive assignments, so students show reasoning and decision trails — not just outputs — with at least one AI-integrated assignment in every course.
- **A first-semester AI Fluency experience** for all incoming students, plus an AI Learning Ladder and AI Learning Objectives (AILOs) embedded in every syllabus.
- **Assessment aligned to judgment —** rubrics tied to AILOs, a shift toward portfolio-worthy work, and external-facing evidence such as oral defenses and employer feedback.

- **An evolving faculty operating model —** faculty as “learning architects” and coaches, reflected in recognition and incentives — underpinned by clear AI ethics, integrity, and documentation standards.

Execution is organized through dedicated “tiger teams” — Pedagogy, Student Learning, Consistency and Classification, Faculty Training, and Governance — under a steering committee that will own a 12–18 month AI execution roadmap. The system is to be defined by April 2026, introduced to faculty in May, supported with tools and training over the summer, and executed at scale in Fall 2026.

Looking Ahead

The Institute enters 2026–2027 with momentum and a clear set of priorities surfaced by its Advisory Committee, the RIKAI strategy committee, its partners, and its own grantees.

- **Execute the RIKAI roadmap.** Finalize the school-wide course-redesign system by April 2026, introduce it to faculty in May, build tools and training over the summer, and launch the first transformational course pilots in Fall 2026.
- **Govern the shift to agentic AI.** The Advisory Committee is weighing how to integrate agentic AI across curriculum, operations, and research while managing faculty-readiness gaps, infrastructure cost, reliability and error risk, privacy and security, academic integrity, and governance.
- **Complete and scale the minigrant portfolio.** Nine funded projects will report over the coming months, and several reusable tools are candidates to scale across departments and into the new AI Online MBA.
- **Disseminate the Google–Kogod assessment work.** Revised framework publications and validated assessment tools are slated for broad release, with conferences and workshops to share evidence-based practice.
- **Deepen the SCSP relationship.** Plans include a joint thought-leadership piece on AI and national competitiveness, a campus speaking appearance by SCSP’s CEO in the fall, and a proposed joint survey with the State Department — in partnership with the School of International Service — on the strategic application of AI in diplomacy, targeted for a Fall 2026 rollout.

Across all of these, the Institute’s formula for the year ahead remains the one that defined its first: make AU and Kogod students AI-ready by combining communication, AI fluency, and deep domain expertise — and keep human judgment firmly in the loop.