



Digital Master Plan 2026

Creating Human Connection in Digital Spaces

DMP Working Group 2026

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PART I · THEMES & FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The re-envisioned Fort Hays State University Digital Master Plan (DMP) is a living document built on the belief that meaningful change requires meaningful participation. From the outset, the working group has been guided by a commitment to inclusion, ensuring that the voices shaping this plan extend well beyond the working group itself. Through a cohesive working group, faculty listening sessions, hosting an engagement series, contributions from outside stakeholders, and open review processes, the group intentionally created multiple entry points for the broader university community to be heard.

Every conversation and data point gathered reflects our conviction that a truly effective Digital Master Plan cannot simply be written *for* the community; it must be written *by* the community.

DMP Background

More recent data from the Online Student Government Association surveys (OSGA, 2025, 2026) reflect the same concerns first identified during the pandemic. Online students commonly report feeling disconnected and wanting clearer communication about grading expectations and timelines. They also report that uncertainty in these areas contributes to stress and concern about their grades. These findings show that FHSU's digital learning ecosystem needs more than awareness; it needs intentional, strategic reimagining.

The original Digital Master Plan (2024), first incorporated into the FHSU Strategic Plan in July 2021 and formalized in 2024, responded to that moment with five foundational recommendations: actionable data for equitable online learning, consistency in online course design and delivery, intentional opportunities for student connection, improved support for faculty digital competencies, and streamlined communication for online learning success. Those recommendations remain robust and continue to guide institutional priorities. What has changed is the landscape in which they must be implemented.

Since the original plan was conceived, generative AI has fundamentally altered how students, faculty, staff, and institutions engage with teaching and learning. Simultaneously, implementation experience has deepened the working group's understanding of the sustained structural effort these recommendations require. Faculty and staff are increasingly expected to accomplish more amid tightening resource constraints, and students arrive with greater needs, including a sustained, documented need for guidance, belonging, and connection in digital spaces. Research continues to affirm that students who feel connected to their institution, their peers, and their instructors are more likely to persist and succeed, and that digital environments, when intentionally designed, can foster rather than diminish that sense of community. What the original plan identified as challenges, lived experience has confirmed as infrastructure problems, requiring coordinated, community-driven solutions rather than just individual programming responses.

The 2026 FHSU DMP update builds directly on the original DMP foundation, reframing the five original recommendations in light of what has been learned and what has changed. Drawing on faculty listening sessions, findings from varied communities of practice such as the AAC&U Institute on AI, Pedagogy, and Curriculum, the Digital Teaching Champions, student survey data from the Online Student Government Association, and broad stakeholder engagement, this updated plan reflects the conviction that meaningful institutional change requires meaningful participation (see Appendix IV). The voices shaping this document extend well beyond any single working group; they represent the broader university community whose experience, expertise, and investment are essential to making this plan not just a written vision, but a living, practiced reality. Appendix I displays a crosswalk between the DMP and the strategic plan.

Central Themes

The seven themes identified by the DMP Working Group converge on a single claim: the conditions that make learning relational are the same conditions that make it transformative, and those conditions must be intentionally realized, designed, supported, and sustained together.

Ethic of Care and Human Connection

Theme One grounds the plan's north star, "*Creating human connection in digital spaces*", in an institutional obligation to design programs and courses that foster both belonging and human connection, and the capacity of learners to think, judge, and know for themselves.

Communication, Transparency, and Shared Governance

Theme Two establishes the principle that learning data belongs first to the faculty and students who generate it, distinguishing data used to improve teaching from data used for institutional accountability and ensuring that the former is not conscripted into the latter without consent.

Faculty Growth and Capacity and Institutional Infrastructure for Sustained Innovation

Themes Three and Four name the structural prerequisites. Faculty growth requires infrastructure time, workload recognition, peer learning, measurable teaching evaluations to adjust instruction, and space for informed adoption and non-adoption, not simply more programming. Institutional innovation requires that the platforms FHSU has deployed ([EAB Navigate](#), Blackboard Ultra, Tiger-2-Tiger) be coordinated around shared relational purposes rather than distributed without connection to one another.

Technology and Data Literacy in Service of Connection

Theme Five provides the governance frame: the platform ecosystem exists to enable meaningful interaction, collaborative inquiry, and networked learning, with human connection as the design priority. Technology and the data it generates are windows into the learning experience.

Program-Level Identity as the Lever of Change

Theme Six locates the operational unit of change at the program level, where institutional commitments become disciplinary practice.

Students as Partners in Their Own Learning

Theme Seven completes the plan's account of what students contribute. Care and connection are what the institution provides; agency is what students develop through it. Learners are not recipients of support; they must be active participants in shaping their own educational experience.

Together, these themes argue that FHSU's digital future is a question about whether the institution can build and sustain relational networks through which meaningful learning occurs.

Digital Master Plan (DMP) Themes

Theme One: Ethic of Care and Human Connection

This theme centers on what is essentially human in our work: an ethic of care, an online sense of belonging and community, student connection, and the FHSU DNA of "we support each other." It also includes the challenge of sustaining student voice and the gap between on-campus and online student experience.

The purposeful design of online courses that support students' inherent need for human connection also creates meaningful examples that carry forward into students' professional lives. As FHSU continues to value student choice in online course enrollment, we must also acknowledge that students' need for supportive, interactive, and collaborative spaces is at the forefront of ensuring high-quality educational experiences. Moreover, faculty continue to engage in and hone [Regular and Substantive Interaction](#) (RSI) to ensure online courses infuse instructor-led, academically engaging, and frequent interaction, thereby distinguishing quality online education from correspondence courses.

Meaningful collaboration is student-to-student learning: the work of building understanding together through sustained peer interaction. It is distinct from RSI, which describes the instructor's academically engaging contact with students. Both matter, and they are not the same channel. Collaboration is also not a synonym for the group project. A group project is one structure that can hold collaboration, but assigning a shared deliverable does not by itself produce it. What makes collaboration meaningful is the process: students responding to each other's thinking, questioning, and revising their understanding in community, rather than dividing a task into parts and reassembling them at the end.

The opportunity for students to connect, collaborate, and learn from one another is just as vital as the content itself. Meaningful peer engagement deepens understanding, builds interpersonal skills, and speaks to a deeper human need: the need to belong. A strong sense of community does not happen by accident in digital spaces; it must be intentionally cultivated through course design that prioritizes relationship-building alongside learning. When students feel seen and connected, they are more likely to persist and succeed at FHSU.

As noted, online course design should focus on student-first learning, meaningful collaboration, and human connection, versus what they describe as a "checklist of items to be completed" based on the research and report shared by the Digital Teaching Champions. As the Data and Equity Report points out, online instructors cannot "read the room," so students may feel invisible unless intentional design efforts and digital teaching strategies are implemented to foster collaboration, connection, and a sense of belonging (a community within).

AI literacy and AI integration must center the learner before the tool. While AI offers meaningful opportunities to enhance teaching and learning, it is equally important to recognize and respect that not all faculty, staff, and students will choose to engage with these technologies, nor should they be expected to. Holding space for informed non-adopters is not a barrier to progress; it is an expression of care (Daniels, 2025). A truly inclusive digital environment is one in which individuals feel empowered to make thoughtful, autonomous decisions about their relationships with AI, free from pressure or judgment. At the heart of this approach is trust between adopters and non-adopters, between students and faculty, and between the university and its community. As FHSU navigates the evolving landscape of AI, our commitment to human connection reminds us that technology should serve people, not define them.

Several FHSU systems have been implemented before and after the initial DMP, focusing on student connection, tracking, and support. Tiger-2-Tiger, the OSGA survey, UNIV 101, and EAB Navigate are all mechanisms for care, but without coordination and communication, gaps arise, leaving some

students at risk of potentially falling through the cracks. Many people rely on programs and tools without shared communication about how they are used, who uses them, and who has access. Nor is there training on what various programs do, the data they might supply, and how they can benefit teaching and learning, which students requested in the OSGA survey data.

The Faculty Senate Listening Sessions (2026) noted that the DMP could better frame faculty professional development and support needs while also supporting instructor autonomy. The listening sessions themselves were a testament to leaning in, hearing faculty needs, and using those to support and frame the current DMP.

The Digital Pedagogy and Course Design Report frames it as a central question: how do we create meaningful digital pedagogy "while remaining irreducibly human in learning?" The Student Connection and Community Report documents the gap directly, noting that on-campus students taking online courses report less comfort communicating and building connections in digital environments, while fully online students show greater confidence in those spaces. The Digital Teaching Champions Initiative Summary Report found that online students reported lower levels of belonging and connection compared to on-campus students, and that students described online discussion boards as checklist tasks rather than meaningful collaborative experiences. The Data & Equity Report describes this as a structural condition of the medium: online teaching strips away the cues that face-to-face instructors rely on, and online students who are struggling are the least likely to reach out. The AI Integration & Literacy Report specifically raises the student voice challenge, noting that efforts to avoid tokenizing student involvement have also limited the integration of student voice in shaping initiatives. The Faculty Senate Listening Sessions Report reinforces that faculty are not opposed to digital innovation but are seeking recognition of their expertise and meaningful involvement. The Strategy and Communication Report positions the DMP itself as an expression of this ethic.

Theme One, Ethic of Care and Human Connection, aligns with the current Academic Affairs Priorities (Fort Hays State University, 2025) through Priority 2 (Student Success as a Shared Responsibility), where student connection and belonging are preconditions for the retention and success outcomes this priority aims to achieve. Moreover, the ethic of care and the "we support each other" culture are part of the institutional identity that Priority 1 (Embody Our Regional Purpose) asks FHSU to define and advance.

Theme Two: Communication, Transparency, and Shared Governance

Theme Two centers on the role of trust, open communication, and faculty voice in shaping the DMP. It calls for transparency in decision-making, clarity about why tools are adopted, and communication from leadership that includes rationale and reflects faculty input.

The most common roadblock to communication has been the misconception that the plan calls for data to measure teacher effectiveness. The revision of the data recommendation is designed to shift that focus. However, that has not yet changed the perception. One shift we can promote is distinguishing between data to support faculty and institutional data. We need to intentionally move institutional data into the strategic plan. At this point, we were looking at only two kinds of data: that which serves faculty (DMP) and that designed for institutional accountability (Strategic Plan). The faculty evaluation/teacher effectiveness mechanisms fall outside the purview of either, as does other data that could inform university decisions. Moreover, current faculty teaching evaluations that do not target only online courses may not help faculty understand how their course design and pedagogy best serve their online students versus their face-to-face students.

The Strategy and Communication Report speaks most directly to this theme as its entire purpose was to ensure the DMP was written "by the community, not just for the community," through a large working group and outside efforts such as the Faculty Senate listening sessions, Academic Affairs' engagement series, plus an open drafting process and listening session with the entire DMP Working Group.

The Faculty Senate Listening Sessions noted that this plan could better frame faculty professional development and support needs while also supporting instructor autonomy. The listening sessions themselves were a testament to leaning in, hearing faculty needs, and using those to support and frame the current DMP. (This is also reported in 1: Ethic of Care)

The working group recommends general messaging and a tool matrix that reaches the whole campus, covering the tools we have, their purpose, how they are used, who uses them, the data that can be extracted, and how that data might be used for program improvement, course redesign, student support, course management, grading analytics, etc.

The Faculty Senate Listening Sessions Report identifies trust and professional respect as foundational concerns and makes clear that the legitimacy of the DMP depends on inclusive, collaborative processes. Faculty want meaningful involvement in decision-making, recognition of their expertise, and governance structures that reflect shared ownership. The Strategy and Communication Report represents the most direct institutional response to this need. The team centered its work on open dialogue and inclusive participation, conducted listening sessions, engaged the Academic Affairs' Engagement Series, and invited input from online student leadership through OSGA, working toward a plan written by the community rather than for it. The team also flagged an important insight: "emails, workshops, and even landing pages do not mean the content was communicated," signaling a need to rethink how the institution approaches communication itself. The Data & Equity Report illustrates what this looks like in practice, describing how the original data recommendation was perceived as administrative monitoring and has since been strategically reframed around course-level, faculty-centered insights. The AI Integration & Literacy Report takes a similar approach, recommending that messaging around AI emphasize discovery and shared learning rather than compliance. Across reports, the pattern is consistent: when communication is grounded in faculty perspective and framed as support rather than evaluation, engagement follows.

Theme Two aligns with the Academic Affairs Priority Alignment, encompassing Priority 4 (Leverage Existing Data Resources), whose success depends entirely on resolving the trust and communication failures documented here. Academic Affairs explicitly frames it as "enhancing our expertise with relevant information" rather than replacing academic judgment, which mirrors the reframing the reports call for. Additionally, aligning with Priority 1 (Embody Our Regional Purpose) pertains to cultivating a "leadership is for all" culture, which requires the shared governance structures and transparent communication this theme demands.

Theme Three: Faculty Growth and Capacity

This theme reframes professional development as an infrastructure problem rather than a programming one. It includes data literacy, digital and AI literacy, adjunct education and support, peer learning through CoPs, and new faculty orientation (NFO)/onboarding. It also asks how we measure faculty performance across modalities. This includes a needed review and reset of FHSU's current instructor evaluation framework, which appropriately distinguishes between undergraduate and graduate courses but does not yet distinguish by modality. Online and face-to-face sections are evaluated using the same instrument, leaving faculty without the modality-specific information they need to understand and refine their online teaching and course design. Developing modality-aware versions of expanded evaluation instruments, led by Faculty Senate and other stakeholders, is part of the infrastructure that makes faculty growth possible. Critically, we must address the challenges that enable growth: time, workload, release time, and burnout.

The Digital Teaching Champions, an initiative of the 2024 DMP, became the flagship example of the Engage & Elevate model. Their standalone report demonstrated that "small manageable changes" and lowering barriers to participation could help instructors build a community of practice (CoP). The need for large-scale redesigns can cognitively overwhelm and scare faculty, but small changes (e.g., do one small thing) can have a significant impact on online learners. Moreover, through their professional

development (PD) and workshop series, these skills and supports are in high demand. The Digital Pedagogy and Course Design Report reinforces the need for communities of practice, highlighting the Social Work redesign as a program-level model and noting that "faculty need structured support and time to develop new digital competencies while sustaining current teaching loads."

The AI Integration & Literacy Report also identified gaps in AI coordination, workshops, and workshop facilitation, and ongoing PD with no formal workload associated with the actual work, as well as sustainability concerns.

AI literacy emerges as a critical dimension of faculty development that requires both institutional scaffolding and sustained support. As outlined in the AI Report, FHSU must continue exploring AI literacy frameworks that guide faculty and all institutional stakeholders in understanding, evaluating, using, and responsibly managing artificial intelligence technologies. This work encompasses four interconnected areas: university policies addressing responsible AI use and academic integrity; transparent course-level guidelines that empower faculty to communicate expectations around student AI use; a flexible AI literacy framework that departments may adopt at their discretion; and ongoing training and communities of practice that ensure AI literacy remains a living, evolving institutional conversation. Treated not as an add-on but as a foundational competency, AI literacy must be woven into FHSU's broader capacity-building efforts alongside digital teaching champions, peer learning communities, and new faculty onboarding.

In the Faculty Senate Listening Sessions, faculty expressed a desire for peer-learning structures and autonomy. Faculty development, as both a need and an opportunity, surfaces in every report. The Digital Teaching Champions Initiative Summary Report provides the strongest model, demonstrating that faculty-led, small-change approaches to professional growth generate strong engagement. Both workshop sessions reached capacity almost immediately after registration opened, and even when full implementation was not feasible due to competing priorities, participants reported that the initiative fostered meaningful professional dialogue. The Digital Pedagogy and Course Design Report builds on this, noting that online teaching requires fundamentally different competencies than face-to-face instruction and calling for continued education and structured support. It highlights the Social Work program redesign as evidence that faculty need dedicated instructional design time and recognition when undertaking this work. The Data & Equity Report identifies a specific literacy gap and calls for professional development in DigCompEdu areas 4.2 (Analyzing Evidence) and 4.3 (Feedback and Planning) to help faculty interpret and act on course-level data.

The AI Integration & Literacy Report names the capacity problem directly: AI coordination, workshop facilitation, and professional development efforts have largely been absorbed into existing roles rather than formally recognized in position responsibilities or workload structures. Again, the Faculty Senate Listening Sessions Report reinforces this from the faculty perspective, describing increasing expectations without corresponding support and calling for alignment between expectations, resources, and accountability structures. The Student Connection and Community Report specifically raises the adjunct question, asking whether training opportunities focused on effective online instruction are reaching beyond full-time faculty workload.

Theme Three aligns with three Academic Affairs priorities. It most directly supports Priority 3, Academic Program Innovation and Digital Transformation, because thoughtful integration of emerging technologies requires the faculty development infrastructure described in this theme. It also advances Priority 4, Leverage Existing Data Resources, by building the data literacy faculty need to make informed decisions, a need identified in the Data & Equity Report. Finally, it supports Priority 2, Student Success as a Shared Responsibility, by preparing faculty to use tools such as EAB Navigate for proactive advising and early intervention.

Theme Four: Institutional Infrastructure for Sustained Innovation

This theme captures the structural systems required to move from isolated pockets of excellence to a shared culture. It includes incentivization, institutional buy-in from deans and chairs, permanent roles for this work, course buy-out, and long-term sustainability. We must value innovation and expertise beyond words.

People have varied access to varied tools, and there are times when neither the tools nor the people talk to each other. The problem is access: to systems, data, processes, and communication.

The formation of Communities of Practice via the Digital Teaching Champions has demonstrated the effectiveness of working together as a collective to research, support, and apply their work across colleges in varied spaces. The Digital Teaching Champions research, implementation, and PD Series demonstrate how even without full program redesigns, a cohort model within disciplines enables faculty to connect institutional frameworks (Community of Inquiry, DigCompEdu, [ISTE](#)) to their specific disciplinary contexts.

Similar issues arise from AI's dynamic nature. The rapid changes in AI are fundamentally affecting and reshaping how we view digital technologies, including our LMS, at FHSU. For FHSU, this shift carries both promise and risk. While these capabilities offer real efficiencies for faculty and more personalized experiences for students, they also introduce a quiet but significant danger: as the LMS grows more capable of simulating instruction, feedback, and even dialogue, the temptation to let the platform substitute for genuine human presence becomes harder to resist. FHSU must engage AI-enhanced LMS development not simply as a technical reality to manage, but as a pedagogical question to answer, one that asks where human connection must remain centered in the design, regardless of what the technology makes possible.

The Data and Equity Report highlighted underused course-level analytics within Ultra courses. Again, this points to a theme of data access and data literacy at all levels at FHSU. All are housed under the Technology and Data Literacy theme below.

The AI Integration & Literacy Report is the most explicit, stating that AI-related contributions to curriculum development and task force participation are not formally recognized in workload or service expectations, and that sustaining momentum will require either incorporating these responsibilities into existing positions or dedicating new personnel to the work. It frames this as a risk: without structural recognition, the institution could lose the capacity that has driven its progress to date. The Digital Teaching Champions Initiative Summary Report illustrates the tension from the faculty side. The initiative was led by faculty volunteers, and participation varied depending on workload and competing responsibilities. When [ADA Title II accessibility](#) requirements emerged as an immediate priority, some faculty had to redirect their efforts away from the initiative entirely, highlighting how innovation and compliance compete when there is no protected time for either. The Digital Pedagogy and Course Design Report calls for dedicated instructional design time and recognition for participating faculty and names the Social Work redesign as a model that requires sustained partnership between departments and Teaching Innovation and Learning Technologies (TILT) to succeed. The Student Connection and Community Report raises structural coordination as a distinct concern, noting that efforts are distributed across units with limited coordination and that organizational separations between online operations, recruitment, student success, and student engagement hinder cross-functional collaboration. The Faculty Senate Listening Sessions Report frames this as a misalignment between investment in tools and actual needs, with faculty identifying insufficient investment in human support, such as instructional designers, media specialists, and discipline-specific expertise.

Theme Four demonstrates Academic Affairs Priority Alignment with Priority 3 (Academic Program Innovation and Digital Transformation) as this priority calls for modernizing the academic portfolio and integrating emerging technologies, but the reports make clear that innovation at scale requires infrastructure, not just aspiration. Course buy-out, permanent roles, and workload recognition are the mechanisms that make this priority actionable. Additionally, Priority 1 (Embody Our Regional Purpose),

where sustaining FHSU's growing role as a regional leader in AI and digital learning depends on formalizing the work that has driven that recognition, rather than continuing to rely on individual effort and goodwill.

Theme Five: Technology and Data Literacy in Service of Connection

Theme Five addresses platform fatigue, the problem of too many tools, inadequate knowledge of Blackboard and TigerTech support, equitable and accessible technology, and where EAB and accessibility functions should sit organizationally. The underlying question is how we make decisions about technology holistically, in alignment with the FHSU Strategic Plan and desired student competencies, rather than adopting tools simply to "use a tool".

The ecosystem exists to provide opportunities for RSI, Community of Inquiry, and Networked Learning. These three name distinct kinds of interaction, and the distinction matters for design. RSI is the instructor's channel to students, the academically engaging contact that defines quality online teaching. Community of Inquiry and Networked Learning describe the student-to-student channel, where learners build understanding together through social and cognitive presence rather than through the instructor alone. Meaningful collaboration lives in this second channel. It is a property of the learning process, not of any single activity format, and it is not interchangeable with the group project. The purpose and intentionality of the connection come first; tools enable it. This cuts across multiple themes as they have been laid out here (Themes 1,3,4,5, and 6)

The Student Connection and Community Report discusses competition or an internal debate between existing platforms (e.g., Workday and EAB) that could be diverting energy from maximizing the platforms' capabilities or how we use the platforms/data to inform.

Data governance is also a pedagogical challenge because it distinguishes between institutional data (which potentially serves leaders/planners) and course-level actionable data (which serves instructors), with real practical implications. Whether that data is accessible and "readable" is a different challenge.

Two tensions run through the reports on this theme. The first is between the number of tools the institution has adopted and the support infrastructure behind them. The Student Connection and Community Report names this directly, noting that both students and faculty have raised concerns about the proliferation of digital tools, and recommends a regular audit of the current tool landscape to streamline platforms and prioritize integrated workflows. The report also surfaces the EAB Navigate versus Workday debate as an example of how unresolved platform questions consume institutional energy and argues that adequate IT support for EAB is essential because the platform cannot be treated as optional when every student, advisor, and instructor needs to use it. The Faculty Senate Listening Sessions Report frames the same problem from the faculty perspective: an overemphasis on technology platforms alongside insufficient investment in the human support needed to use them well.

The second tension is about data itself. The Data & Equity Report argues that the institution needs to distinguish between institutional data used for planning and course-level data used for teaching. It identifies specific tools already available to faculty, including Blackboard Ultra Course Analytics, Panopto statistics, and Yellowdig engagement metrics, but argues that access without literacy is insufficient. The report calls for professional development in interpreting and acting on this data. The AI Integration & Literacy Report adds another layer, noting that faculty and staff have expressed interest in AI tools that require API access and institutional infrastructure that does not yet exist, pointing to a gap between what faculty want to use and what the institution can currently support.

What makes Theme Five distinct from the others is that it is fundamentally a governance question. The reports do not lack tools or data sources. What they describe is an institution that has not yet built the decision-making structures to evaluate, adopt, support, and retire technology coherently.

Academic Affairs Priority Alignments include Priority 4 (Leverage Existing Data Resources), as this theme serves as the operational foundation for that priority. The Academic Affairs' call to convert institutional data into actionable strategies requires both platform coherence and the data literacy development described in the reports. This theme also aligns with Priority 3, Academic Program Innovation and Digital Transformation, because implementing "digital-first learning environments in alignment with the Digital Master Plan" requires resolving the platform governance questions raised in this theme.

Theme Six: Program-Level Identity as the Lever of Change

Theme Six acknowledges that FHSU is navigating a larger identity question. What is our competitive advantage, and what does the FHSU experience mean for online learners? While these are institutional questions, the operational unit of change is the program. Department retreats, chair-level accountability, data-informed program evaluation, and culture shift within programs are where identity becomes established in practice. The DMP should name the institutional challenge directly, then make the strategic case that programs are where it is resolved.

The Social Work BSW/MSW redesign is a "proof of concept." The redesign has been a faculty-led, program-level initiative integrating open education resources (OER), generative AI, professional competencies, and intentional digital pedagogy. The Digital Pedagogy and Course Design Report frames it as a transferable model for others at FHSU.

The Faculty Senate Listening Sessions provided the rationale that "effective teaching varies significantly across disciplines" and that "uniform mandates" are less likely to succeed than "flexible, department-informed approaches."

The AI Integration & Literacy Report also focuses on departments that exemplify AI integration at the discipline-specific level, where those disciplines are also connecting AI literacy and use to industry advisory boards, accreditation frameworks (e.g., College of Education CAEP Accreditation), and broader field demands (e.g., Social Work Program Redesign).

The institutional identity question is most visible in the Student Connection and Community Report, which challenges the traditional distinction between online and on-campus students as increasingly blurred and warns against swinging too far toward online student needs, to the point that on-campus needs are ignored. The report asks the institution to find approaches that serve the broadest possible student population, a question that can only be answered at the program level, where students actually experience the curriculum. From a recruitment perspective, the report notes that prospective students are asking more about their classes than about involvement opportunities, which places the burden of identity squarely on course and program design.

The strongest evidence for programs as the lever comes from reports documenting it already happening. The Digital Pedagogy and Course Design Report presents the Social Work BSW/MSW redesign as a model of program-level transformation: faculty-led, grounded in disciplinary values, partnered with TILT, and organized around six core themes that reflect the program's professional identity. The report positions this not as an isolated success but as a demonstration project for what responsible, program-level innovation looks like. The Digital Teaching Champions Initiative Summary Report presents a different version of the same principle: faculty from across disciplines collaborate within a shared framework while applying changes within their own programmatic contexts. The AI Integration & Literacy Report offers a third model, AI Across the Curriculum, that invites academic programs to map their curricula to shared AI literacy competencies while maintaining disciplinary ownership.

The Faculty Senate Listening Sessions Report provides the caution. Faculty emphasized that effective teaching varies significantly across disciplines, and that standardized approaches do not consistently meet diverse needs. This reinforces the argument for program-level rather than institutional-level

implementation, but it also means the DMP needs to make that case explicitly so that program-level flexibility is understood as the strategy, not as a lack of one.

Theme Six, Program-Level Identity as the Lever of Change, aligns with three Academic Affairs priorities. Priority 1, Embody Our Regional Purpose, asks FHSU to define and advance its distinct role as a regional public university. Its emphasis on mission-aligned signature programs and clear academic value propositions places much of this work at the program level. Priority 3, Academic Program Innovation and Digital Transformation, identifies program review as a catalyst for continuous improvement and cross-disciplinary collaboration, directly reinforcing this theme. Finally, Priority 2, Student Success as a Shared Responsibility, treats programs as the units for establishing and monitoring retention targets, making them central to both analysis and accountability.

Theme Seven: Students as Partners in Their Own Learning

While the "ethic of care" addresses what the institution and faculty do for students, this theme addresses what students bring and what they need to develop for themselves (with support). Students are the central focus of what we do and also have agency as learners and participants in the process.

The AI Integration & Literacy Report raises the parallel challenge of students using AI to bypass genuine competency development. To effectively utilize AI, students need AI literacy to be responsible digital citizens and to meet the demands and expectations of future employers.

The Student Connection and Community Report notes that on-campus students taking online courses report less confidence in digital communication than fully online students, complicating assumptions about who needs support. We assume online students have the digital skills to take courses in an online environment.

The Digital Pedagogy and Course Design Report frames AI risk partly as a threat to students' development of "critical thinking and problem-solving," as well as to the networks in which learning takes place (e.g., Agentic AI and Blackboard). This theme would allow the DMP to speak directly to students as agents in their own learning, not just recipients of institutional services.

The reports surface student agency in two ways. The first is evidence of it already emerging. The AI Integration & Literacy Report documents students leading research initiatives, producing the AI @ FHSU magazine (now in its second year), and participating in the AI Hackathon. The Digital Pedagogy and Course Design Report describes students who, after being introduced to NotebookLM in one course, independently built their own notebooks to support learning in other subjects. These are examples of students taking ownership of tools and applying them beyond the contexts where they were assigned.

The second is evidence of the structures students need to develop that ownership. The AI Integration & Literacy Report describes the AI Across the Curriculum initiative, which would allow students in participating programs to earn an AI Literacy Digital Badge tied to competencies from Lo's (2025) AI Literacy Framework. This moves AI literacy from something students encounter in a single course to something they build across a program. The Student Connection and Community Report positions UNIV 101 as a key onboarding vehicle but acknowledges it cannot carry the full weight of student development and that not all students will take it, raising the question of where else the institution creates on ramps. The Data & Equity Report names a harder truth: online students who are struggling are the least likely to reach out, experiencing disconnection as a private condition. Building student agency in this context means designing environments where students learn to seek support, rather than environments where support is simply available.

The thematic listening discussion notes captured this tension directly: students are not monolithic. Some seek engagement while others want a more transactional experience. The DMP should set expectations for what an FHSU learner develops and how they engage, not just what an FHSU learner receives.

Theme Seven aligns with three Academic Affairs priorities. Priority 2, Student Success as a Shared Responsibility, recognizes that building a culture of student success requires participation across the institution. Theme Seven extends that shared responsibility to students by ensuring they are equipped and expected to participate actively in their own learning and progress. Priority 1, Embody Our Regional Purpose, calls for aligning academic offerings with workforce needs, including the digital and AI competencies employers increasingly expect. The AI Integration & Literacy Report supports this work by connecting competency development with employer partnerships and First Destination Survey data. Finally, Priority 3, Academic Program Innovation and Digital Transformation, creates an opportunity to develop an AI Across the Curriculum (AxC) Badge and expand microcredentials, making student competency development a measurable outcome of program innovation. For an overview of the DMP's alignment, see Appendix II.

PART II · RECOMMENDATIONS

Five Measurable Recommendations

The five recommendations below are directly derived from the DMP's seven themes and aligned with the four Academic Affairs Priorities. Each recommendation is written to be actionable, audience-specific, and measurable.

These recommendations are organized to answer four questions for each: What should we do? How will we know it worked? Why does it matter in the context of the DMP themes? Which key tools and partners are needed?

Overview Table

	Recommendation	Themes & Audience	Academic Affairs Priorities
R1	Course-level data practice & data governance	Themes 1, 2, 3 & 5 <i>Academic Leadership, Faculty & Staff</i>	P1, P2, P3, P4
R2	Pathways and community	Themes 3 & 4 <i>Academic Leadership, Faculty & Staff (full-time and adjunct)</i>	P2, P4
R3	Course Design for human connection	Themes 1 & 6 <i>Faculty, Staff & Instructional Designers</i>	P1, P2, P3
R4	AI literacy competency	Themes 3 & 7 <i>Faculty, Staff, & Students</i>	P1, P2, P3
R5	Program digital identity	Themes 2 & 6 <i>Academic Leadership, Faculty & Staff</i>	P1, P3, P4

DMP Recommendations at a Glance

R1 — Course-level data practice & data governance

Themes 1, 2, 3 & 5 · Academic Affairs Priorities: P1, P2, P3, P4 · Academic Leadership, Faculty & Staff

What

Adopt a "start small" approach to course-level data, focused on tools faculty already use — Blackboard Ultra, Panopto, Yellowdig, FeedbackFruits, GoReact — which already generate data showing where students need support. The work is helping faculty discover, interpret, and act on existing data, not building new systems or asking faculty to become analysts: one useful indicator in one course is enough to begin. A data culture grows through peer-to-peer exchange in the communities of practice established under R2, where faculty share useful discoveries from real teaching questions.

In parallel, FHSU names course-level learning data as its own governed data domain and charges that data governance now underway with developing the model: a Data Owner with real decision rights, and governed gates that release only aggregated, de-identified data for institutional use while identifiable course data stays with faculty and is not used in their evaluation. The "Your Course, Your Data, Your Judgment" principle keeps faculty in control of whether and how they use these tools (Appendix III).

How we measure

Faculty engagement with course-level data is tracked through participation in the DMP CoP Data track and the discoveries those members document and share in the TILT Hub. TILT reports the number of consultations, workshops, and platform-specific guides that support faculty use of course-level data. The completion of a modality-specific course evaluation.

Why it matters

Operationalizes the ethic of care (Theme 1) by making struggling students visible through data already present in the LMS ecosystem (Theme 5). Connects to the "just one small thing" approach proven by the Digital Teaching Champions. The governed data domain converts "Your Course, Your Data, Your Judgment" from a cultural promise into a formal governance commitment (Theme 2), removing the ambiguity that causes faculty to disengage from course-level data entirely. Without varying modes of teaching evaluation distinction, faculty cannot use evaluation data to understand or refine the practices specific to online instruction, leaving online teaching either over-generalized or invisible in the very feedback meant to support their growth (Theme 3).

Key tools & partners***

- Blackboard Ultra, Panopto, Yellowdig, FeedbackFruits, GoReact
- Communities of Practice (peer-to-peer data exchange, established under R2)
- TILT coaching & Digital Teaching Champions
- Data governance engagement (domain definition, owners, and gates)
- Faculty Senate

***May not be inclusive of all Key tools & partners

R2 — Pathways and community

<i>Individual Learning Pathways + Peer-Led Tracks in the DMP Community of Practice</i> Themes 3 & 4 · Academic Affairs Priorities: P2, P4 · For: Academic Leadership, Faculty (full-time and adjuncts) & Staff	
What A two-layer professional learning model. Layer One (Individual Learning Pathways) offers just-in-time training through TILT: short, asynchronous modules; monthly department lunch-and-learns; HR-aligned New Faculty Onboarding; and open-door designer consultations. The Community layer expands the Digital Teaching Champions model into a single Community of Practice with four Year 1 tracks encompassing: Data, RSI, AI, and Academic Leadership. Tracks are mentored by the founding Digital Teaching Champions. In Year 2, the community deepens: alumni co-facilitate, and new tracks potentially open as member demand warrants.	How we measure Active tracks (target: 4 in Year 1; total community membership; completion rates by full-time vs. adjunct status; deliverables per track; cross-track interaction; Year 2 alumni co-facilitation rate; Communities of Practice Symposium at the end of Year 2.
Why it matters Reframes professional development as institutional infrastructure (Theme 3) and requires institutional buy-in through workload recognition and stipends rather than volunteer goodwill (Theme 4). The Pathways layer ensures quick access to digital PD, focusing on best practices for "one small change," how-tos that are within reach, and "what others are doing." The Community layer facilitates boundary crossing and inter-unit collaboration. The layers feed each other, making the model self-sustaining and addressing the adjunct access and education gap.	Key tools & partners*** · TILT Hub · Digital Teaching Champions (track mentors) · HR partnership for onboarding alignment · Communities of Practice Symposium (Year 2)

***May not be inclusive of all Key tools & partners

R3 — Course Design for human connection

Themes 1 & 6 · Academic Affairs Priorities: P1, P2, P3 · Faculty, Staff, & Instructional Designers

What

This recommendation builds on the Digital Teaching Champions (DTC) initiative in two connected ways. First, expand DTC into a second cohort, with current Champions serving as mentors to the incoming group; cohort size, structure, and program relationships are shaped by faculty input to preserve the grassroots, faculty-led character that made the first cohort work. Second, use Blackboard Ultra's new Learning Object Repository (LOR) to develop durable, high-quality exemplary course modules that are built by faculty collaborators from the communities of practice and tagged by interaction type, Community of Inquiry presence, and discipline so faculty can find relevant examples and adapt them on their own terms. These are examples, not mandated templates.

How we measure

Because both efforts are intentionally faculty-shaped and not yet finalized, Year 1 measures progress and early outputs rather than fixed targets: second DTC cohort launched with mentor roles defined; cohort cycle completed through a culminating summit; first one to two exemplary modules published to the LOR with companion guides; faculty feedback gathered on module usefulness and discoverability before scaling. A scalable production process for future CoP-built modules is defined by the end of Year 1.

Why it matters

Extends belonging by design (Theme 1) into faculty practice, where connection-centered course design actually takes shape. The DTC model demonstrated that small, manageable changes grounded in the Community of Inquiry framework improve student engagement and connection; expansion extends that to a second cohort and embeds it at the program level (Theme 6) through department-chair connections. Exemplary modules answer a consistent faculty request for concrete examples of good practice and make the communities of practice productive beyond their own membership.

Key tools & partners***

- Digital Teaching Champions (mentors + second cohort)
- Engage & Elevate model
- Community of Inquiry framework
- Blackboard Ultra Learning Object Repository (LOR)
- TILT instructional designers
- Communities of Practice (R2)
- Department chairs & program leadership

***May not be inclusive of all Key tools & partners

R4 — AI literacy competency

Themes 3 & 7 · Academic Affairs Priorities: P1, P2, P3 · Faculty, Staff & Students

What

FHSU builds faculty and staff AI literacy capacity through a sustained AI Literacy CoP, structured professional development, program-level support, and institutional guidance. This work is grounded in Lo's AI Literacy Framework and supports informed, context-sensitive decisions about when to use AI, when to limit it, and when to abstain. Recommendation 4 focuses on the faculty and staff capacity, program support, and institutional infrastructure needed to make that student-facing work possible.

How we measure

Number of faculty and staff participating in AI literacy professional development or the AI Literacy CoP. Number of programs mapping curriculum or course-level expectations to an AI Literacy Framework through AI Across the Curriculum. Tracked through TILT, the FHSU AI Task Force, and participating academic programs, with a Year 1 baseline.

Why it matters

Builds AI literacy as a foundational competency across disciplines (Theme 3) and positions students as active, responsible agents in their own digital education rather than passive recipients (Theme 7). Responds to employer-readiness data from the First Destination Survey.

Key tools & partners***

- AI Literacy CoP
- AI Across the Curriculum (AIXC) Incentives
- Lo's AI literacy framework
- Daniels' Faculty Critical Engagement Framework
- TILT
- FHSU AI Task Force

***May not be inclusive of all Key tools & partners

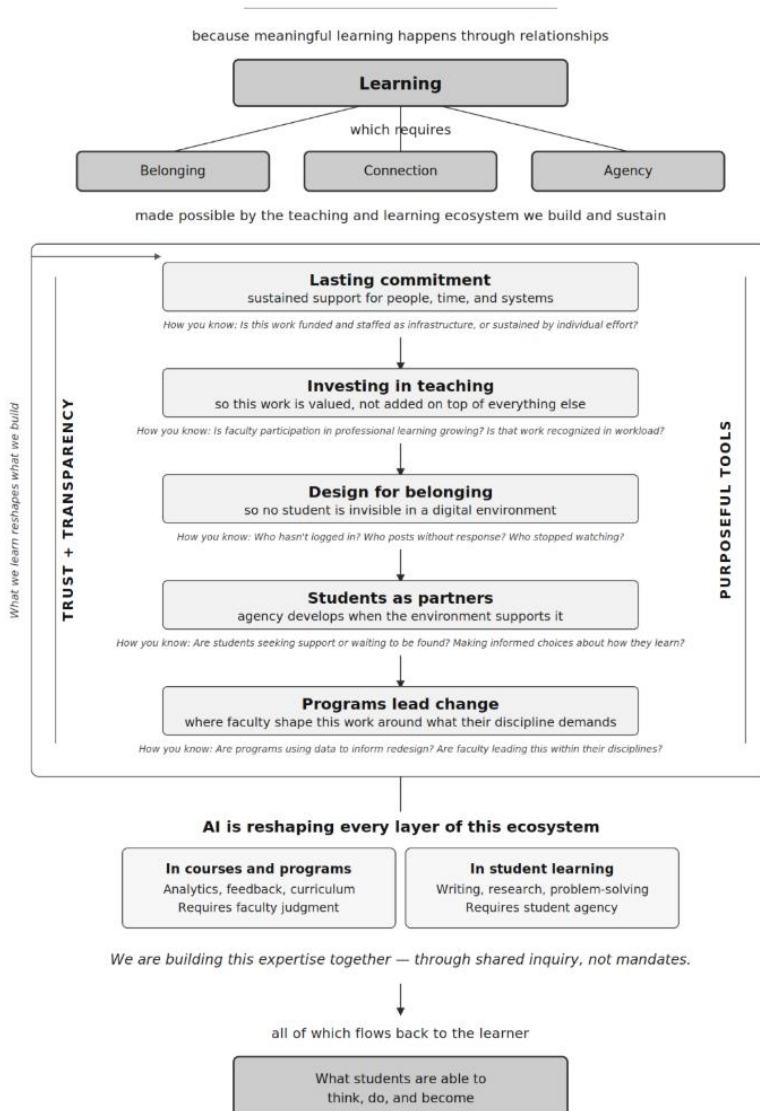
R5 — Program digital identity Themes 2 & 6 · Academic Affairs Priorities: P1, P3, P4 · Academic Leadership, Department Chairs, Deans & Faculty	
What Each academic program holds at least one structured retreat or working session per year where faculty collectively define what the FHSU digital experience means for their specific discipline, addressing course design consistency, student expectations, adjunct resources and support, online vs. on-campus experience, and competitive identity relative to peer institutions.	How we measure Number of programs that document and submit a program-level digital identity statement or action plan annually, tracked through Academic Affairs with chair-level accountability. Year 1 baseline count established.
Why it matters Grounds shared governance and communication (Theme 2) at the program level, where institutional commitments become disciplinary practice (Theme 6). Responds to Faculty Senate feedback that effective teaching varies across disciplines and that department-informed approaches succeed where uniform mandates do not.	Key tools & partners*** · Department retreat facilitation (TILT) · Chair-level accountability framework · Academic Affairs program tracking · Social Work redesign as a transferable model

***May not be inclusive of all Key tools & partners

A Note on Process

These recommendations were developed through a multi-stage community-focused process that encompassed focused DMP working group reports based on expertise, faculty listening sessions hosted by the Faculty Senate, an engagement series hosted by Academic Affairs, contributions from the Online Student Government Association (OSGA), and thematic walk-throughs and three open reviews by the full DMP Working Group. Each recommendation is grounded in evidence gathered across seven reports. The DMP Working Group holds to a core conviction: a truly effective Digital Master Plan cannot simply be written for the community; it must be written by the community.

The DMP Re-envisioning Process



Note. The flowchart represents the complexities and iterative considerations of the DMP re-envisioning process that guided the working group toward its five recommendations.

DMP Recommendations in Detail

Recommendation 1: Course-Level Data Practice & Data Governance

Recommendation R1.1: Course-Level Data Practice

The Digital Master Plan (DMP) recommends adopting a "start small" approach, focusing on tools faculty already use within the FHSU ecosystem, such as Blackboard Ultra, Panopto, Yellowdig, FeedbackFruits, and GoReact. These platforms already generate course-level data that can help faculty identify where students may need support. The core work involves helping faculty discover, interpret, and act on this existing data, rather than building new systems. This aligns with the "just one small thing" concept, emphasizing that faculty do not need to become data analysts; rather, they need a single, useful indicator in one course to provide valuable insight into their students.

This targeted approach means faculty can uncover valuable insights concerning their students without adopting a comprehensive analytics practice. A data culture can grow through peer-to-peer exchange in communities of practice (CoP), where faculty share useful discoveries based on real teaching questions. Ultimately, course-level analytics in the DMP exist solely to help instructors support their students, framed by the "Your Course, Your Data, Your Judgment" principle. This principle ensures faculty maintain control over whether and how they use these tools, with TILT's primary role being to make the data visible, interpretable, and safe to engage with (Appendix III).

Recommendation R1.2: Course-Level Data Governance

The "Your Course, Your Data, Your Judgment" principle establishes intent. The Digital Master Plan recommends naming course-level learning data as its own data domain, assigning it a Data Owner with real decision rights, and defining a governed gate at each point where the domain connects to an institutional system. Aggregated and de-identified data crosses the gate to support institutional accountability, including comparisons of efficacy across course modalities. Identifiable course data stays in the domain and is not accessed or referenced in tenure, promotion, annual evaluation, or any other review of an individual faculty member. This protects faculty trust without blocking the aggregate reporting the institution needs.

The data governance charter now being developed is the appropriate mechanism for codifying this model. The domain definition, its Data Owner, and the specific gates will take shape over the first year of that engagement, so the Plan commits to the model in general terms and leaves the detail to the governance work. The principle is clear even before the details are set: course-level data serves faculty and students, and its movement into institutional use is governed, not restricted.

Course-level learning data has a named owner who is accountable for protecting it and keeping it in service of teaching, not evaluation. That accountability is set by the governance charter and attaches to a role rather than a person, so the protection faculty rely on holds as people change.

Recommendation R1.3: Modality-Specific Instructor Evaluations

Course-level data practice (R1.1) and the data governance (R1.2) address the data faculty generate as they teach. A third, parallel question concerns the data the institution generates about teaching: student evaluations of instruction. FHSU currently distinguishes between undergraduate and graduate course evaluations, which is appropriate. What the current instrument does not fully distinguish is modality. Online and face-to-face sections are evaluated using the same instrument, even though the teaching practices, student experiences, and indicators of effective instruction differ between the two.

This creates a consequential gap. Faculty who teach online cannot use evaluation data to understand or refine the specific pedagogical choices that shape an online course, such as discussion design, asynchronous communication, video presence, feedback cadence, and Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI). A single instrument designed for both modalities tends to ask questions that apply

most clearly to one of them, leaving online teaching either over-generalized or invisible. The result is an evaluation system that asks faculty to grow as teachers without giving them the modality-specific information that growth would actually require.

The DMP recommends a review and reset of the current instructor evaluation framework, undertaken in partnership with Faculty Senate and other stakeholders. The goal of the review is to develop a framework in which undergraduate and graduate evaluations each have a modality-aware version: one calibrated for face-to-face instruction and one calibrated for online instruction. Hybrid and flex courses would need their own thoughtful treatment within that framework if deemed necessary by the group.

Like R1.1 and R1.2, this work is grounded in the principle that data exists to support faculty in their teaching. Modality-specific evaluations are not an additional accountability layer; they are an additional source of useful information for faculty who want to teach their online courses well, and a structural acknowledgment that online teaching is its own craft.

Potential Steps:

- Convene a working group co-led by Faculty Senate and other stakeholders to review the current evaluation instrument and identify which items translate well across modalities, which items do not, and what is missing from the online experience
- Examine peer institution practices and the broader research literature on modality-specific evaluation instruments
- Develop modality-aware versions of both the undergraduate and graduate evaluation instruments, with clear treatment of hybrid and flex courses
- Pilot the revised instruments in willing programs before institution-wide adoption
- Coordinate with the data governance engagement (R1.2) so that the data governance principles apply consistently to evaluation data and course-level analytics alike

Recommendation 2: Pathways and Community

Recommendation R2.1: Learning Pathways

Professional development at Fort Hays State University should operate through two connected layers: Individual Learning Pathways and a single, institution-wide Community of Practice (CoP). The Pathways layer is a just-in-time training layer that includes short, asynchronous modules through TILT, monthly department lunch-and-learns, New Faculty Onboarding pathways aligned with HR, and consultations with instructional designers. This pathway ensures no faculty or staff member is ever stuck because they cannot find a quick, targeted answer to current questions about tools like Blackboard Ultra, building a course for accessibility, or developing greater RSI. Additionally, on-demand training is built in-house. Faculty and staff can earn incentives that legitimize their learning. The Pathways layer is intentionally low-commitment and high-availability, accommodating both deeply engaged faculty and those whose roles touch digital learning more occasionally. Traditional PD is not abandoned in this model; it is modernized and made genuinely accessible through a one-stop shop, the TILT Hub, communicated to all faculty and staff.

Recommendation R2.2: The Digital Master Plan Community of Practice (DMP CoP)

The Community layer is where the institution's professional learning model innovates, expanding the Communities of Practice approach that the Digital Teaching Champions proved viable at FHSU during AY 2025–2026. The four original Champions became peer experts through sustained collaborative inquiry, and their tacit knowledge of how a CoP actually develops and functions (application criteria, protected time, shared inquiry, expectations of public sharing, and trust built over months) is the seed for what comes next. Communities of practice work across the organization, facilitating boundary crossing and inter-unit collaboration in ways traditional PD cannot. They build trust, surface, and elevate colleagues' expertise across departments and divisions, and support the sharing of good practices that generate real innovation. This cross-functional power is what distinguishes a CoP from a workshop or a committee: it is a structure designed for collective learning.

Rather than launching several small, separate communities, FHSU convenes one overarching Digital Master Plan Community of Practice (DMP CoP) with four tracks: Data, RSI, AI, and Academic Leadership (the leadership track is detailed in R2.3). A single relational container maximizes the cross-track connections that the plan's north star depends on. A faculty member who joins to explore engagement data sits in the same community as colleagues examining AI literacy and RSI practice, and ties formed across those tracks are themselves the mechanism of institutional change. One community also pools momentum rather than dividing faculty attention, TILT capacity, and recruitment energy across several fragile simultaneous launches, and it prevents overwhelm for faculty who would otherwise face multiple competing invitations.

In Year One, all four tracks launch within the one community. The faculty-facing tracks (Data, RSI, and AI) are open by application to faculty and staff, with adjunct participation explicitly encouraged, and together carry up to 20 stipend-based participants. The four founding Digital Teaching Champions may serve as mentors across these tracks, carrying forward the community-building knowledge the DTC initiative developed. Each track meets regularly, while the full community gathers at defined moments across the year: a launch gathering, a mid-year cross-track share-out, and an end-of-year wrap-up. The core of each track remains its organic foundation, grounded in shared member interests and community-defined goals.

Each stipend-based member commits to the community's shared deliverables, adaptable by track: a public sharing session at Professional Development Day, a documented artifact others can adopt (housed in the TILT Hub), and at least one dissemination for the FHSU community. A limited number of

non-stipend-based members may participate in the CoP tracks. Allowing for agency in varied deliverables is essential. Upon completion, each stipend-based member receives recognition that formally acknowledges the time, intellectual and creative labor, and institutional contribution their participation represents.

By the end of Year Two, FHSU will host its first institution-wide Communities of Practice Symposium and disseminate related work through at least three external presentations or manuscript submissions.

Recommendation R2.3: The Academic Leadership Track

The CoP model is not only for faculty. The original DMP placed much of the responsibility for digital change on individual faculty. Yet, many of the barriers faculty face are structural and connect closely to the conditions academic leadership helps to shape and support. Deans and chairs contribute to developing faculty Annual Statement of Responsibilities (ASRs) with ongoing support, along with scheduling, recognition, and how program expectations are communicated. The Academic Leadership track, the fourth track within the single CoP, builds that same capacity for leadership, so that what the DMP asks of faculty is matched by the conditions that make it possible. Housing leadership within the same community, rather than in a separate structure, is deliberate.

In Year One, the leadership track convenes department chairs and deans. The leadership track meets regularly to fit leadership schedules. Rather than a teaching change, each member commits to one programmatic change. This may be structuring support for faculty to use their course-level data, make regular time for faculty to share their “one small thing”, facilitating the development of a digital program identity, or creating resources and support for adjunct faculty. The track commits to two deliverables: a documented practice that will be housed in the TILT Hub, and a report shared with the Academy of Academic Leadership (AAL). Recognition comes through visibility and sharing rather than a stipend. Over time, the leadership track and the faculty tracks reinforce each other, and the responsibility for digital change is shared across the institution rather than carried by faculty alone.

Pathways and Community, One System

The two layers are deliberately connected. The Pathways layer feeds the Community as faculty and staff discover deeper interests through quick technical sessions and need-to-knows. The Community feeds the Pathways layer as each CoP track generates training modules also housed in the TILT Hub, and as tracks focused on RSI, data, and AI co-build resources with TILT support. The CoP model runs at two levels: the practice of teaching, led by faculty and staff in the Data, RSI, and AI tracks, and the conditions that make that practice possible, led by chairs and deans in the Academic Leadership track. This is how the model becomes self-sustaining: the Digital Teaching Champions multiply not through replication but through mentorship and facilitation, and the institution's most engaged faculty continuously generate the practices and knowledge that everyone else can draw on. Leadership development and faculty development sustain each other, and the result is one community rather than two audiences.

Within two years, the DMP CoP will have four established tracks, a developmental cycle in which completing members co-facilitate the next, and resources housed within the TILT Hub. Lastly, both layers allow for legitimizing and supporting the ongoing education of faculty and staff, potentially through tenure and promotion support.

Recommendation 3: Course Design for Human Connection

Recommendation R3.1: Expanding the Digital Teaching Champion Model

The Digital Teaching Champions (DTC) initiative demonstrated that faculty development focused on small, manageable changes to digital teaching practice produces results. The Engage & Elevate model, grounded in the Community of Inquiry framework, gave faculty a shared language for examining how course design, communication, and interaction influence student learning. Both workshop sessions reached capacity almost immediately. Faculty reported increased awareness of how targeted instructional adjustments could improve student engagement and connection. The initiative built a cross-departmental CoP centered on digital teaching, which is exactly the kind of peer-led, discipline-informed professional learning the DMP envisions.

Based on this success and as proposed in Recommendation 2, we recommend expanding the DTC model into a second cohort, with the current Digital Teaching Champions serving as mentors to the incoming group. The process for this expansion has not been finalized. The design of the second cohort, concerning its size, structure, relationship to specific programs, and integration with other DMP priorities, should be shaped by significant faculty input and interests. The DTC initiative succeeded because it was grassroots and faculty-led. Expanding it requires the same approach.

Potential Steps:

- Consult with the current DTC cohort on what worked, what they would change, and what the mentor role should look like in practice
- Gather broader faculty input on the structure, size, and focus of the second cohort through the DMP Working Group, department chairs, and existing professional development channels
- Define the mentor relationship: whether current champions co-facilitate workshops, advise on planning, observe and debrief, or some combination shaped by the cohort's own preferences
- Determine cohort size and composition — balancing cross-departmental diversity with enough disciplinary proximity that participants can learn from each other's courses
- Establish a cohort cycle with defined phases: orientation, course examination, "one small thing" implementation, and a culminating summit modeled on Engage & Elevate
- Identify funding requirements: mentor stipends, second-cohort stipends, and conference participation for dissemination
- Define how the expanded DTC connects to department chairs and program leadership so that faculty participation is visible and valued at the program level

Recommendation R3.2: Identifying and Modeling Exemplary Courses

Faculty have consistently asked for exemplary courses they can look at, learn from, and use as models for building their own engaging online courses. This is not a request for mandated templates. It is a request from faculty who want to improve their teaching and are looking for concrete examples of what good practice looks like in action.

Blackboard Ultra's June release of Learning Object Repository (LOR) components now makes some of this possible, with full course templates being on Blackboard's roadmap. With the LOR supporting custom modules and folders, faculty can create high-quality exemplary modules built around specific use cases.

RSI is a federal requirement for distance education courses under Title IV, but it also distinguishes a correspondence-style course from an engaging and effective online learning experience. Faculty need clear guidance and concrete, discipline-relevant models for how to implement RSI in ways that are meaningful, sustainable, and appropriate to their course contexts. Exemplary LOR modules would provide faculty with practical examples of RSI in action rather than abstract compliance language alone.

Potential Steps:

- Conduct a survey of faculty through the DTC community, department meetings, and DMP channels to identify the specific use cases they most want to see modeled
- Prioritize the first one or two use cases based on faculty demand and feasibility
- Pair an instructional designer with a faculty collaborator from the DTC community to develop an exemplary module, documenting the design process as they go
- Test the module with a small group of faculty users before publishing to the LOR, gathering feedback on what is useful, what needs adaptation, and what is missing
- Define the review and maintenance workflow: who updates modules when platform features change, who reviews new submissions, and how quality is maintained without creating a bottleneck
- Publish the first module to the LOR along with a brief companion guide explaining the design rationale so faculty understand not just what the module contains but why it was built that way
- Use what is learned from the first module to define the scalable process for future modules produced by subsequent CoP cohorts

Recommendation 4: AI Literacy Competency

FHSU's AI literacy work is grounded in Lo's framework and treats literacy as the capacity to evaluate, use, and critically engage with AI tools. Informed non-adoption of AI is part of that capacity. A faculty member, staff member, or student who has examined AI tools and chosen not to use them has demonstrated literacy, not avoided it. The institution's task is to create the conditions for informed choices: definitions, pathways, infrastructure, and time.

This recommendation is structured around three populations with different needs. Students require curricular and co-curricular pathways that meet them where they are, regardless of major or entry point. Faculty and staff require sustained, low-barrier opportunities to develop and apply AI literacy in their own work. Programs require the autonomy to determine how AI literacy fits within their disciplinary identity, accreditation expectations, and employer landscape. No university-wide AI requirement will be imposed on students, and no expectation of AI adoption will be imposed on faculty or staff. What FHSU commits to is the infrastructure that enables engagement for those who choose it, at the scale and pace that fit their context.

Recommendation R4.1: Student Pathways

UNIV 101 includes an AI module that introduces first-year students to Lo's AI Literacy Framework, core concepts, and the ethical questions AI raises in academic and professional contexts. This module will be maintained and updated as the technology and the surrounding research evolve. UNIV 101 will not reach every student; however, the recommendation accounts for this. INF 190 offers a fuller introductory experience as a standalone course open to any student, including transfer and graduate students who did not take UNIV 101. Programs may also embed AI literacy outcomes into existing courses, develop capstone AI experiences for senior students, or recognize AI literacy work completed through co-curricular activities. The *AI @ FHSU* magazine, the AI Hackathon, and student-led research with the AI Research Lab are existing co-curricular pathways already in place.

We will facilitate AI Literacy for all FHSU students through a combination of qualifying coursework, co-curricular contribution, or program-embedded learning. This will be mapped to Lo's AI Literacy Framework and earned through demonstrated competency rather than seat time. Programs that wish to align graduation with AI literacy may do so by adopting an AI program learning outcome, but this remains a program-level decision.

Recommendation R4.2: Faculty AI Literacy ASR

As AI continues to shape teaching, scholarship, and service, AI literacy can be woven into the Annual Statement of Responsibilities (ASR) process as part of each faculty member's professional development planning, developed in consultation with their chair. This is not a new performance metric or a means of tracking AI use; it is a structured opportunity each year for faculty to reflect on how AI literacy intersects with their own professional work. In keeping with Lo's AI Literacy Framework and the principle of informed non-adoption (Daniels, 2025), engagement may take many shapes, such as developing course-level AI guidelines, integrating AI into learning activities or research projects, evaluating AI tools, articulating reasoned non-adoption, or contributing to disciplinary conversations about responsible AI use. Because the FHSU–AAUP Memorandum of Agreement establishes that ASR weighting and merit criteria are developed at the departmental level in consultation with faculty, departments retain full autonomy in determining how, or whether, AI literacy is reflected in their merit conversations. The DMP recommends this approach as an institutional invitation rather than a mandate, allowing AI literacy to live inside the existing professional development infrastructure rather than as a separate compliance layer.

Recommendation R4.3: Faculty and Staff Capacity

FHSU will establish an AI Literacy CoP for faculty and staff. The CoP is framed around implementation, experimentation, and informed non-adoption as full and equal positions. Faculty who have chosen not to use AI in their teaching will be welcomed as members whose reasoning informs the community's work, not as outliers to be persuaded. The CoP will operate in coordination with Recommendation 2 (Pathways and Community) rather than in parallel programming, so AI-specific work will be delivered through the existing PD infrastructure with recognized workload.

Faculty and staff AI literacy includes the ability to recognize how AI is being used in their disciplines and in student work, to design assignments and workflows that account for AI's presence, to communicate course-level expectations to students with clarity, and to make and defend informed decisions about their own AI use. Staff working in advising, registration, student support, and other student-facing roles will be included in this work, given the increasing presence of AI in the platforms and workflows used daily.

Recommendation R4.4: Program-Level Adoption

Programs that choose to integrate AI literacy at the curricular level will be supported through the AI Across the Curriculum initiative, which invites academic programs to map their existing curricula to Lo's Framework and identify where AI literacy fits within their learning outcomes. Instructional design support will be available for programs developing capstone AI experiences, embedding AI competencies in existing assignments, or revising program learning outcomes to reflect industry expectations and accreditation guidance.

Recommendation R4.5: Institutional Infrastructure

Faculty and students need access to vetted AI tools to do this work. FHSU will continue to evaluate, license, and document the AI tools available to the campus community, with attention to data privacy, accessibility, and instructional fit. Course-level AI guidelines will be developed and maintained to help faculty consistently communicate expectations to students across courses while preserving faculty autonomy in their own classrooms. The AI Research Lab, the FHSU AI Task Force, and TILT will continue to coordinate the institutional work that supports this recommendation.

Recommendation R4.6: Adaptability

AI literacy is a moving target. Competencies, course content, and learning outcomes will be reviewed annually to reflect changes in technology, industry expectations, and guidance from Kansas Board of Regents and accrediting bodies. The work outlined here is the starting structure, not the final form, and FHSU's posture will be one of continued revision as the field develops.

Recommendation 5: Program Digital Identity

A program's digital identity is the shape its online experience takes for students: which technologies students will encounter, how community is built among them, what RSI looks like in practice, and what evaluative standards apply to the faculty who teach in it. These are decisions FHSU cannot make at the institutional level, nor can individual courses make them in isolation. They belong to programs, and FHSU's role is to enable program-level work.

This recommendation cannot be enforced and is not intended to be. It is a structured invitation. Programs that choose to engage in this work will have a defined pathway, instructional design partnership, and monetary incentive comparable to the existing TILT redesign pathways. Programs that do not will continue to operate as they currently do. The institutional bet is that demonstrated value at the program level will draw additional programs into the work over time.

The Social Work BSW/MSW redesign is FHSU's first attempt at this kind of program-level work and remains the only example to date. The redesign integrates course design, OER, AI integration, professional competencies, data collection, and program-level evaluation into a single, coordinated effort, led by faculty with a TILT partnership. It is not a model that other programs must follow; it is an example that other programs may learn from as they define what program-level work looks like in their own disciplines.

Potential Steps:

- Establish a TILT pathway for program-level redesign that includes monetary incentives for participating faculty, comparable to existing course-level redesign pathways. Define eligibility, scope, expected deliverables, and timeline.
- Provide an instructional design partnership throughout program redesigns, scaled to the program's size and complexity.
- Create a tool matrix describing their purpose, how they are used, who uses them, the data that can be extracted, and how that data might be used for program improvement, program and course redesign, adjunct education, student support, course management, grading analytics, etc.
- Scaffold PD specific to the needs of faculty engaged in program redesign work and adjunct faculty who may teach the courses, drawing on the Recommendation 2 (Pathways and Community) infrastructure and tailored to the program's discipline and stage of work.
- Support programs in developing Blackboard templates that reflect program-level decisions about course design, technology, and student experience, available for adoption by full-time faculty and adjuncts teaching within the program.
- Support programs in building intra-program student community structures (program-specific Tiger-2-Tiger spaces, peer mentorship networks, cohort experiences) that complement institutional community offerings.
- Support programs in defining program-level RSI expectations and in developing peer mentorship structures that help full-time faculty and adjuncts implement those expectations consistently.
- Support programs in developing evaluative outcomes that reflect program priorities, including how online teaching is weighted in merit and promotion decisions for faculty teaching in the program.
- Continue the Social Work BSW/MSW redesign as a demonstration of program-level work and document the process, decisions, and outcomes in a form usable by other programs considering this pathway.
- Identify and recruit additional programs interested in this pathway, with attention to programs whose accreditation, employer landscape, or student population would benefit most from coordinated program-level redesign.

Conclusion

The re-envisioned DMP is not a redesign, a new platform, or a mandate. It's simply one small thing chosen by the person who will try it and share their experience and outcomes with someone else.

Together, the five recommendations identify practical entry points for improving teaching and learning. They call for using existing course-level data to guide improvement (R1); building a CoP that fosters change through collegial modeling rather than mandate (R2); designing courses for human connection (R3); determining when AI advances the work and when it does not (R4); and helping programs define what a meaningful digital learning experience looks like (R5).

Communicating the work is as important as we all engage in experimenting, sharing, and trying to implement “one small thing”. The DMP aims to create a culture where successes and failures are shared and celebrated.

The 2024 DMP placed most of the responsibility for digital change on individual instructors, and much of what stopped them was structural: no time, no recognition, and evaluation criteria that made experimenting a risk. When the conditions do not change, the practice does not either. Conditions to feel supported come first, then a change in practice follows.

What Chairs and Deans Offer

Chairs and deans hold the levers that determine whether this work is possible – discussions around faculty ASRs, meeting agendas as space to share successes and failures, scheduling, and what gets named for consideration in a program review. Faculty cannot set these conditions for themselves, and they cannot be set from the top. Much of that work is clearing an obstacle before a faculty member reaches it, whether that means protecting time for a redesign or writing digital teaching effort into the annual statement of responsibilities. A standing agenda slot is the simplest path forward: a planned time for colleagues to describe a strategy or change in their course they tried, including when it worked and when it did not work.

What TILT Offers

TILT’s role is not simply to create workshops. Workshops alone do not create change. Faculty told us that they want to learn from their peers, hear about their successes, and understand what did and did not work. TILT can facilitate spaces for peer learning while building and maintaining shared resources. It will do so by convening the DMP CoP and its four tracks, maintaining the TILT Hub so others do not have to begin from a blank page, supporting the program redesign pathway, and coordinating AI literacy efforts across the institution. The practice itself belongs to the people experimenting and doing the work.

The Shared Work

Faculty, whether full-time or adjunct, are the ones who choose a manageable change and try it in practice. Adjunct faculty must be included from the beginning. They teach a substantial share of FHSU’s online courses and are often the first instructors students encounter in a digital classroom. Their access to the same development opportunities, communities, and recognition cannot be an afterthought.

Staff maintain the systems, data, and support that allow faculty to experiment. Chairs and deans make room for the work and help remove obstacles. TILT connects these efforts by developing shared resources, documenting what faculty learn, and helping effective practices reach others.

Students are the fourth partner and the reason that the other three stakeholders matter. FHSU must create digital learning environments where the ethic of care and human connection are evident and where students are expected and supported to exercise agency. The goal is not merely to make help available. It is to prepare students to think, decide, and act for themselves.

Online learning and student success belong to everyone who teaches, supports, or learns at FHSU. As we stated at the outset, this is a living plan. We will revise it as we learn what works, what does not, and what our community needs. Our commitment to the Digital Master Plan, however, will remain.

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Appendix I

Strategic Plan ↔ Digital Master Plan Crosswalk

How the two plans connect — and where they deliberately do not

Why you are reading this

FHSU plans through two documents. The Strategic Plan (2024–2027) sets institution-wide direction for enrollment, student success, finance, partnerships, and measures of progress. The Digital Master Plan covers the teaching and learning ecosystem, focuses on the digital dimension of that work, and measures progress with course- and faculty-level outcomes.

The two plans were written to connect, and during drafting, DMP content was deliberately woven into the Strategic Plan. That instinct was right, but it created a problem: it is now genuinely hard to tell which plan owns which piece of work. The same initiative can appear to live in both places, which produces double-counting, unclear ownership, and — most damaging — the assumption that the DMP is simply the "digital chapter" of the Strategic Plan. It is not. It is a separate plan with a different scope and a different altitude of data.

This crosswalk resolves that. For each Digital Master Plan recommendation, it names the Strategic Plan strategy it connects to and the part that matters, *what kind* of connection it is. Not every link is the same. Some DMP work is the mechanism that delivers a Strategic Plan goal; some add digital detail to a goal stated only in general terms; one is a boundary that deliberately keeps the two apart; and some work belongs to only one plan, with no counterpart in the other.

Three distinctions drive the entire crosswalk

- **Scope.** The Strategic Plan operates at the whole institution; the DMP operates within the teaching and learning ecosystem.
- **Digital specificity.** The Strategic Plan is modality-agnostic; the DMP supplies the digital translation of what a strategy means online and in hybrid courses.
- **Data altitude.** The Strategic Plan measures institutional outcomes; the DMP works with course- and faculty-level data. These are different kinds of data with different owners and purposes which is why course-level data is governed as its own domain, with a governed gate where it meets the institutional layer.

How to read the crosswalk

The matrix on the following page lists each DMP recommendation, its Strategic Plan counterpart, and a relationship type. There are six. In plain terms:

Contributory	DMP work is the mechanism that delivers a Strategic Plan outcome.
Specification	DMP supplies the digital detail for a strategy that the Strategic Plan states only in general terms.
Scale-and-boundary	Same topic at two altitudes — and, for the governed data domain, a relationship that is a deliberate separation, not an alignment.

Handoff	The point where DMP jurisdiction ends and Strategic Plan accountability begins.
Co-ownership	Genuinely jointly held work — both plans name leads, so ownership must be stated explicitly.
Orphan	Work that belongs to only one plan, with no counterpart in the other.

Two items also travel across the whole crosswalk:

Tiger-2-Tiger is treated as cross-cutting connective infrastructure rather than belonging to one recommendation — it is operationally a Strategic Plan asset, conceptually the origin of the DMP, and referenced inside the DMP. Orphans are listed in both directions, so no reader assumes the DMP is a complete digital expression of the Strategic Plan, or that the Strategic Plan fully contains the DMP.

The Crosswalk

Each row pairs a Digital Master Plan recommendation with its Strategic Plan counterpart and names the kind of relationship between them. The DMP carries five recommendations (R1–R5), several with sub-recommendations; the "seven" in the source title refers to the seven themes that feed them.

DMP Recommendation	Strategic Plan Counterpart	Relationship Type	Boundary / Handoff Note
R1.1 Course-level data practice	SP 2.1 Actionable Data for Equitable Online Learning	Scale-and-boundary	Same topic, two altitudes. Course-level data feeds the institutional measure, but R1.1 is a faculty-facing diagnostic, while 2.1 is institutional accountability.
R1.2 Course-level Data governance (domain and gate)	SP 2.1 / the data governance engagement	Specification and governed handoff	The governed gate releases aggregated, de-identified course data to SP 2.1 while identifiable data stays in the domain. Related by governed connection, not by a wall.
R1.3 Modality-Specific Instructor Evaluations	SP 2.1 Actionable Data for Equitable Online Learning	Scale-and-boundary	Modality-aware evaluation results serve faculty growth; SP 2.1 reports institutional accountability. Aggregated results may cross the gate; individual results do not.
R2.1 Individual Learning Pathways	SP 1.1 Centralized TILT-organized professional development (65% target)	Contributory + Specification	SP 1.1 owns the participation metric; R2.1 supplies the just-in-time digital PD content that participation consists of.

R2.2 The Digital Master Plan Community of Practice (DMP CoP)	SP 1.1; touches SP 2.3	Contributory + Specification	CoP participation counts toward 1.1's target. CoP co-build of Blackboard Ultra templates touches 2.3 — flag as co-ownership.
R3.1 Expanding the Digital Teaching Champion model (formerly DMP 2.3, 2021)	SP 1.1	Contributory + Specification	DTC cohorts are PD participation. R3.1's own measures — cohort launched, summit completed — stay DMP-altitude process measures; they feed 1.1's headcount but are not themselves SP metrics.
R3.2 Identifying and modeling exemplary courses	SP 2.3 Innovation in Course Design (Blackboard Ultra optimization step)	Specification + Co-ownership	R3.2 and SP Goal 2 are led by members of TILT. Plan who and what reports the work between the two.
R4 AI literacy competency (R4.1–R4.6)	SP 2.3 (responsible AI integration step); SP 1.1 via R4.3	Specification	SP 2.3 names AI integration only in general terms; R4 is the full digital specification — the AI literacy incentives, Lo's Framework, student and faculty pathways. R4.3's AI Literacy CoP routes through R2.2 to SP 1.1.
R5 Program digital identity	SP 1.3 Program review; secondary to SP 2.3	Specification + Co-ownership	R5 is program-level; SP 1.3 is the institutional review mechanism it informs. Chair- and dean-led — co-owned with Academic Affairs.

Tiger-2-Tiger: A Cross-Cutting Row

Tiger-2-Tiger does not sit inside any single recommendation and forcing it into the DMP because it is based on digital connection would be a mistake. It holds three positions at once, and the crosswalk records all three rather than choosing one.

Position	Belongs to	What this means
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Operational home	Strategic Plan Strategy 2.2 (Student Support)	University-wide, student-facing, out-of-course peer connection — 1,200+ online students per semester. Its belonging and connection metrics are institutional-altitude SP measures. If Tiger-2-Tiger appears as an owned line item, it belongs here.
Conceptual origin	DMP north star	The 36% post-pandemic disconnection finding led to Tiger-2-Tiger, which seeded the weak-ties research trajectory and the DMP's commitment to "creating human connection in digital spaces." This is lineage, not ownership — record it as a footnote to the north star.
Referenced inside the DMP	R3 and R5	R3 names Tiger-2-Tiger as a key tool and partner; R5 proposes program-specific Tiger-2-Tiger spaces. The DMP names and extends the platform without governing it.

In short: the DMP references Tiger-2-Tiger; the Strategic Plan owns it.

Orphans — What Does Not Cross

Listing orphans in both directions prevents two false impressions: that the DMP is a complete digital expression of the Strategic Plan, and that the Strategic Plan fully contains the DMP.

DMP work with no Strategic Plan home

- **R2.2 — the Communities of Practice Symposium** and the internal TILT Hub infrastructure. Institutional teaching-ecosystem mechanics with no institution-level strategic correlate.

Strategic Plan territory with no DMP correlates

- **Strategic Plan Themes 3, 4, and 5** — enrollment, finance and facilities, and partnerships are not as aligned to the teaching and learning ecosystem that the DMP governs.



Appendix II

DMP Alignment Table

Alignment of DMP Recommendations with DMP Themes, Academic Affairs Priorities, and the FHSU Strategic Plan 2024–27

Recommendation	DMP Themes							Academic Affairs Priorities				FHSU Strategic Plan 2024–27			
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	P1	P2	P3	P4	Strat. 1.1	Strat. 2.1	Strat. 2.2	Strat. 2.3
R1 · Course-Level Data Practice & Data Governance <i>Themes 1, 2, 3 & 5 · Academic Leadership, Faculty & Staff</i>	•	•	•		•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
R2 · Pathways and Community <i>Themes 3 & 4 · Academic Leadership, Faculty & Staff</i>			•	•					•		•	•	•		•
R3 · Course Design for Human Connection <i>Themes 1 & 6 · Faculty, Staff, & Instructional Designers</i>	•					•		•	•	•		•		•	•
R4 · AI Literacy Competency <i>Themes 3 & 7 · Students, Faculty & Staff</i>			•				•	•	•	•		•		•	•
R5 · Program Digital Identity <i>Themes 2 & 6 · Academic Leadership, Faculty & Staff</i>		•				•		•		•	•	•		•	•

- A dot indicates alignment between the recommendation and the column.

Key

DMP Themes T1 · Ethic of Care & Human Connection T2 · Communication, Transparency & Shared Governance T3 · Faculty Growth & Capacity T4 · Institutional Infrastructure for Sustained Innovation T5 · Technology & Data Literacy in Service of Connection T6 · Program-Level Identity as the Lever of Change T7 · Students as Partners in Their Own Learning	Academic Affairs Priorities P1 · Embody Our Regional Purpose P2 · Student Success as a Shared Responsibility P3 · Academic Program Innovation & Digital Transformation P4 · Leverage Existing Data Resources	FHSU Strategic Plan 2024–27 Strat. 1.1 · Provide pertinent, effective professional development opportunities (Goal Theme 1: Academic Excellence) Strat. 2.1 · Decide upon and compile actionable data for equitable online learning Strat. 2.2 · Student Support — comprehensive, data-informed strategies including advising, EAB Navigate, and online orientation Strat. 2.3 · Innovation in Course Design & Delivery across all modalities — Blackboard Ultra, AI literacy, and accessibility
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Appendix III

Data Recommendation: Learning Analytics for Faculty Use

Recommendation

The DMP's approach to learning analytics should start small, stay grounded in tools faculty already use, and be guided by the "Your Course, Your Data, Your Judgment" principle. The platforms in the FHSU ecosystem that utilize Blackboard Ultra, Panopto, Yellowdig, FeedbackFruits, and GoReact already generate course-level data that can help faculty understand what is happening in their courses and where students may need support. The work ahead is not building new systems. It is helping faculty discover, interpret, and act on data that exists within the tools they already use for teaching.

This is consistent with our "just one small thing" approach. Faculty do not need to become data analysts. They need one indicator, in one course, that tells them something useful about their students. That is the starting point.

The Data Recommendation is anchored in Themes 1, 2, 3, and 5, though it touches all seven. **Theme 1** (Ethic of Care and Human Connection) is the foundation — the recommendation's emphasis on identifying students who feel invisible and using course-level data to reach them before they fall through the cracks is a direct operationalization of the ethic of care. **Theme 2** (Communication, Transparency, and Shared Governance) is where the governed data domain and the "Your Course, Your Data, Your Judgment" principle live; governed transparency and the explicit separation of faculty-serving data from evaluative data are governance commitments, not just cultural aspirations. **Theme 3** (Faculty Growth and Capacity) provides the delivery mechanism — the "just one small thing" approach, the Digital Teaching Champions as peer intermediaries, and the framing of data literacy as professional growth rather than compliance all sit squarely in this theme's reframing of professional development as infrastructure. **Theme 4** (Institutional Infrastructure for Sustained Innovation) is implicated by the recommendation's insistence on socializing tools rather than just deploying them — the DMP Working Group heard repeatedly that platforms are distributed without coordination, education, or even awareness, and the Data Recommendation treats socialization as a structural commitment. **Theme 5** (Technology and Data Literacy in Service of Connection) is the most operationally connected: the recommendation is organized around five specific ecosystem platforms and the data they already generate, grounding analytics in the ecosystem's purpose of enabling RSI, Community of Inquiry, and Networked Learning. **Theme 6** (Program-Level Identity as the Lever of Change) grounds the recommendation at the program level: when faculty across a program each surface "one small thing" from their own course data, the pattern that emerges — not any single instructor's finding — is what gives a program evidence for its own digital identity work, turning individual discoveries into a shared disciplinary picture no one instructor could see alone. **Theme 7** (Students as Partners in Their Own Learning) is the necessary complement to this recommendation's faculty-facing design: course-level data helps faculty notice a struggling student, but noticing is only half the equation. The Data and Equity Report's finding that struggling online students are the least likely to reach out means this recommendation's value depends on students also building the agency to respond when faculty do reach out. Equity runs beneath the entire recommendation. Designing analytics that surface students who are least likely to reach out, who carry the most competing responsibilities, and who are most affected by inconsistent course quality is equity work, whether or not the word appears on the dashboard.

What Is Already Available

Blackboard Ultra provides the richest set of course-level analytics faculty can access today. Through the Analytics tab and the Student Overview page, instructors can see time-in-course data, weekly activity logs, and submission trends. The Activity Matrix and Scatter Plot provide visual comparisons of individual time spent on a course against overall grades. This is a simple way for an instructor to identify students who are present but struggling, or absent, and at risk. Student Overview profiles offer individualized progress tracking, showing whether a missed deadline or low grade correlates with inconsistent access. Ultra also includes automated alert and messaging tools: instructors can set score thresholds and engagement triggers that prompt direct outreach to students who fall behind, miss submissions, or drop below engagement standards. These are not administrative surveillance tools. They are instructor-facing features designed to help faculty reach students who might otherwise remain invisible.

Panopto provides viewing analytics at the video and student level. Faculty can see which students watched a lecture, how much of it they watched, where they dropped off, and whether they returned to specific segments. For an instructor wondering whether students are engaging with asynchronous content — or which portions of a lecture are losing attention — this is immediately actionable information. One small thing: check whether students are actually finishing the videos before the week's discussion opens.

Yellowdig tracks participation patterns in peer-to-peer discussion communities, including post frequency, response patterns, and point accumulation over time. Because Yellowdig is designed around sustained interaction rather than single-post-and-reply discussion board formats, its data reflects the kind of student-to-student connection the DMP prioritizes. One small thing: look at which students are posting but never receiving responses; those are the students at risk of feeling invisible in the community.

FeedbackFruits generates data on peer review quality, completion rates, and the timeliness of feedback exchanges. For courses that use structured peer review as a learning activity, this data shows whether students are engaging substantively with each other's work or completing the task superficially. One small thing: review the completion-versus-quality gap in one peer review assignment to see whether the activity is producing genuine learning or just compliance.

GoReact captures data on performance-based assessments — video submissions, time-stamped feedback, self-review engagement, and rubric-based scoring patterns. For programs where professional competency demonstration matters (education, communication sciences, social work), GoReact's analytics connect directly to student development over time. One small thing: compare early and late submissions within a semester to see whether students are improving specific competency markers.

The Approach: Just One Small Thing

Faculty members do not need to adopt a comprehensive analytics practice. One small indicator, in one tool they already use, in one course, could uncover valuable information about their students. Ideally, through communities of practice, faculty who discover something useful will share it with colleagues. That is how a data culture grows, through peer-to-peer exchange grounded in real teaching questions.

Course-level analytics in the DMP exist to help instructors support their students. The question is "What can I learn about my students from the data my course already generates?" The "Your Course, Your Data, Your Judgment" principle means faculty decide whether and how to use these tools. TILT's role is to make the data visible, interpretable, and safe to engage with.

Establishing a Governed Data Domain

The “Your Course, Your Data, Your Judgment” principle establishes the intent. A governed data domain establishes the structure. FHSU should govern course-level learning data as its own data domain, with a named Data Owner accountable for its policies, access, and definitions. The domain sets up a purpose-based boundary that separates course-level analytics used by faculty to support their teaching from institutional processes used to evaluate faculty performance. The domain makes explicit that data generated within a course belongs to the instructor's professional practice, and that course-level engagement metrics, student activity patterns, and interaction data will not be accessed, aggregated, or referenced in tenure, promotion, annual evaluation, or any other personnel review process.

This is not an abstract concern. The DMP Working Group, the Faculty Senate Listening Sessions, and the Data & Equity Report all identified the same dynamic: when faculty believe course-level data could be used to judge their performance, they disengage entirely from the data. The result is the loss of professional intentionality that makes course-level analytics valuable in the first place. A governed data domain removes ambiguity. It converts a cultural promise into a governance commitment.

The Huron Consulting Data Governance engagement, now underway, is the appropriate mechanism for defining a domain and its governed gates. The group's work on data policies, ownership roles, and workflows should inform how the domain is owned and how each gate operates. In the near term, the DMP should name course-level learning data as a governed domain and charge the governance framework by defining its owner and its gates over the first year. The principle is clear even before the details are finalized: course-level data serves faculty and students, not institutional evaluation of faculty.

What This Does Not Include

This recommendation excludes institutional-level analytics: persistence rates, achievement gap indices, enrollment trends, and program-level performance measures. Those that belong to the Strategic Plan and will be addressed through the Huron Consulting engagement and Academic Affairs Priority 4. The DMP's data work serves faculty and students at the course-level. The Strategic Plan's data work serves institutional accountability and strategic decision-making.

Sequencing

Near term: Develop short, platform-specific guides that show faculty the two or three most useful data points for each tool (Blackboard Ultra, Panopto, Yellowdig, FeedbackFruits, GoReact). Integrate these into Digital Teaching Champions programming and existing professional development. Pilot the “just one small thing” approach in willing programs. Name course-level learning data as a governed domain in the DMP and establish the governed transparency principles in writing.

Medium term: Expand to additional programs and departments as faculty share what they have learned through peer networks. Connect course-level analytics to the RSI and Community of Inquiry work, so that data use is embedded in pedagogical purpose rather than treated as a separate initiative. Convene the Learning Data Governance Framework to formalize policies on data access, use, and protection, including naming the domain's Data Owner and defining its governed gates.

Longer term: As the Huron engagement matures, the institution's data architecture and governance, FHSU should explore connections between the DMP's course-level data and the Strategic Plan's institutional data — not by collapsing them into a single system, but by building bridges that allow diagnostic questions to be informed by both streams. The aspiration is an institution where faculty insights from their own courses inform strategic decisions and where institutional trends prompt targeted support at the course-level, with appropriate governance protecting both.

Appendix IV

Reports and Resources

1. [Data & Equity Report](#)
2. [Digital Pedagogy and Course Design Report](#)
3. [Strategy and Communication Report](#)
4. [AI Integration & Literacy Report](#)
5. [Student Connection and Community Report](#)
6. [Digital Teaching Champions Initiative Summary Report](#)
7. [Faculty Senate Listening Sessions Report](#)