NACE 2026 • Denver, Colorado • Track: Preparing a Career-Ready Workforce

Beyond ChatGPT

Teaching Students to Use AI Ethically in Their Career Journey

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30-MINUTE SESSION

nace26 conference + expo

Meet Your Presenters



Kimberly Sullivan

Primary Presenter

Co-developer of GENS 401. Curriculum design and career readiness programming with a focus on technology integration. Certified career coach.



Megan O'Connor

Co-Presenter | SHRM-CP, CPRW

Co-developer of GENS 401. HR professional, and workforce readiness leader. Brings the employer perspective on AI ethics and ATS systems to every course session.



Danielle Bonczewski

Co-Presenter | CPRW

Co-developer of GENS 401. Career readiness specialist, focused on authentic professional relationship-building in digital career landscapes.

Interactive → Audience Poll — Google Student AI Use Poll

How are your students currently using AI in their career search?

A. Most haven't started yet

B. Using AI occasionally, without any guidance

C. Using AI regularly, with some training in place

D. We have a structured ethical AI curriculum.

- 78% of companies now use AI in at least one business function - up from 55% one year prior (McKinsey & Company, 2025).
- 98.4% of Fortune 500 companies use ATS systems (Jobscan, 2024). AI is already on the employer side of the hiring equation.

The Authenticity Gap

What Employers Are Seeing

- AI-polished resumes with no identifiable human voice
- Interview answers that collapse under behavioral follow-up
- LinkedIn profiles disconnected from the actual student.

What Students Are Missing

- The irreplaceable value of their own authentic story
- Critical thinking behind real career decisions
- Career adaptability that only lived practice builds.

→ *AI that replaces authentic voice produces candidates who cannot advocate for themselves in real time.*

GENS 401: The Course That Grounds This Work

At a Glance

Format:	Online, asynchronous.
Duration:	8 weeks, 1 credit hour.
Students:	Juniors and seniors.
Points:	380 total across 12 assignments.
Assessment:	Every major deliverable includes a 200–300-word reflection.
AI Thread:	GPS framework applied in every session.

Why This Is Evidence, Not Just Curriculum

+ **We implemented it**
  Fall 2025 launch. Spring 2026 revision. Real students, real results.

+ **We revised it in real time**
  Word counts, point values, and AI integration levels refined between semesters.

+ **Assignments build on each other**
  Students cannot fake a reflection on lived experience they never had.

+ **It is scalable**
  One assignment. One advising conversation. One workshop. Start there.

GENS 401: Session-by-Session Structure

#	Topic	How AI Is Used & What Students Own
PRE	**Networking Activity Selection**	Students choose a real networking event before the course begins — commitment before curriculum.
1	**AI Ethics & the AI Quiz**	GPS metaphor, Five Rules, privacy, academic integrity — the ethical foundation for everything that follows.
2	**Job Search Strategy**	Boolean search, ghost jobs, Google alerts — AI researches, students evaluate and decide.
3	**Day in the Life Exploration**	O*NET + AI for career research — students verify outputs and connect to their own goals.
4	**Professionalism & Personal Branding**	AI brainstorms brand statements — students revise until the language sounds like them.
5	**LinkedIn Profile Development**	AI for keyword optimization — students write their own content; AI does not write the profile.
6	**Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)**	JobScan / SkillSyncer — students learn why formatting matters, not just that it does.
7	**Resume Tailoring & Optimization**	AI surfaces keyword gaps — students decide what to include and how to frame it authentically.
8	**Networking Activity & Reflection**	Real-world event + follow-up — AI cannot build the relationship; students do the work.

The GPS Principle

1

AI Is The Navigation Tool

AI can surface options, flag gaps, and process volume at scale.

2

The Student Is Always The Driver

But AI cannot decide what matters to you, what story is yours, or whether a role is right for your life.

3

AI Suggests Routes. Students Set The Destination

Every career document must pass a simple test: Can you defend every word in an interview?

4

Students Make Every Turn

If the answer is no, AI drove and you were a passenger.

5

Students Own Every Outcome

The GPS Principle keeps students in the driver's seat, every session, every assignment.

The GPS Principle:
AI is a powerful tool. Your career belongs to you.

Interactive → Appropriate or Over-Reliant? (4 minutes)

With your partner: Is this appropriate AI use or over-reliance?

A A student pastes a job posting into ChatGPT and asks it to rewrite their entire resume to match. They submit without reading the output.



B A student uses AI to identify 10 keywords in a job posting, then edits their own resume to incorporate the most relevant ones in their own words.



C A student asks AI to draft a LinkedIn message to a recruiter they met at a career fair and sends it word for word without editing.



D A student uses AI to research a company before an informational interview, then writes their own questions based on what they learned.



→ **Debrief:** What distinguishes AI as a thinking tool from AI as a replacement for thinking?

Interactive → Small Group Discussion

What ethical dilemmas have you encountered with students using AI in their career materials?

Consider situations like:



Student submits AI-generated cover letter verbatim, cannot discuss it in follow-up.



Interview answers are polished but the student cannot expand or give examples.



LinkedIn profile no longer sounds like the student, presence and profile do not match.

→ *Take 3 minutes with your table. We will hear 2 to 3 responses before moving on.*

Coach, Don't Police: Assessing Ethical AI Use

Conversation-Based Assessment

Ask students to walk through their AI process. Over-reliance surfaces when they cannot explain their own content.

Process Documentation

Require students to save prompts and outputs alongside final work, no surveillance tools needed.

Reflection Assignments

Every major deliverable is paired with a 200–300-word reflection. AI cannot fabricate lived experience.

Anchor in Principles, Not Platforms

Build around transparency, accountability, and critical evaluation. Those principles outlast every platform change.

Q&A Roundtable • ~10 minutes • Open Discussion

Your Turn

1. What implementation challenges do you anticipate at your institution — and what would it take to start small?
2. How are you currently handling AI use in student career materials, and what is working?
3. What does responsible AI use look like in your advising practice right now?
4. What would it take to pilot one element of this framework in the next academic term?

→ Kim facilitates | Megan: HR, employer, policy questions | Danielle: networking, student engagement, LinkedIn.

What You Can Take Back Tomorrow

Everything you need to get started adapting this to your organization — available now via QR code:

Customizable AI Ethics Quiz

Adapted from GENS 401, Session 1. Covers transparency, bias, privacy, and fact-checking. Usable as a standalone advising tool.



→ **QR Code:**
Material is free and customizable.

Thank You!

University of Southern Indiana

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