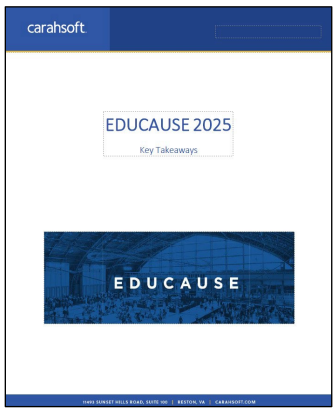

Educause 2025 Key Takeaways

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EDUCAUSE 2025

Key Takeaways

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Executive Summary

The EDUCAUSE Annual Conference brought together higher education leaders, academic administrators, and technology partners to explore the next chapter of digital transformation. A clear throughline emerged: technology now sits at the center of institutional reputation and trust. Discussions focused less on "What's the newest tool?" and more on questions like, "What kind of institution do we want to be in an AI-driven, data-saturated world?" and "How can we use AI and data to improve learning and student support without compromising privacy, trust, or academic integrity?"

Across sessions, a common set of priorities surfaced: building AI and data literacy for students, faculty, and staff; redesigning assessment around authentic, iterative work; strengthening shared governance and procurement practices; and using AI to enhance accessibility and student support not just to drive efficiency. The conversation also moved beyond simply "adding more online programs" toward raising the quality of online and hybrid learning, with faculty time, student agency, and intentional tool selection at the center of most discussions.

Common themes across all sessions were:

- Responsible AI & Data Literacy
- Quality Online/Hybrid Learning
- Student Experience, Belonging & Agency
- Accessibility & Inclusion by Design
- Faculty Enablement & Time Savings
- Governance, Privacy & Security
- Data Quality, Analytics & Early Risk Detection
- Practical Pilots & Measurable Impact

Please reach out to Violetta.hordzich@carahsoft.com or the Market Research Team at Research@carahsoft.com if you have any questions or would like more information.

EDUCAUSE 2025 – Technology Trends & Leadership Focus

Predicting technological trends in higher education requires looking at current AI, data, and ed-tech practices, understanding emerging risks, and turning them into actionable roadmaps. Campus technology leadership is encouraged to maintain a multi-year plan that anticipates new tools (AI, ERP automation, chatbots), governance needs (privacy, FERPA, IP), and workforce skills. **[Session – What Keeps Higher Ed Leaders Up at Night: Ed Tech Edition]**

A foresight approach can strengthen this planning: collect signals, trends, and drivers, analyze what is happening now and what might happen next, and build scenarios (probable, plausible, possible, and preferable futures) with strategies to move toward the preferable future. Signals like "living intelligence" (biological computers using brain cells and silicon) and rapid AI advancement highlight how quickly the landscape may shift and why higher ed needs to scan, test, and adjust early—rather than reacting after the fact as roles, skills, and expectations change toward 2035. **[Evolve or Be Replaced: Your Job in 2035]**

Trends were described as the result of multiple, overlapping forces:

- **Social:** Student isolation in online programs, demand for flexible/online learning, expectations for 24/7 support, and the need for stronger belonging and agency in virtual environments.
- **Technological:** Rapid growth of AI inside ERPs, AI-powered chatbots, AI-driven data cleaning, and no-code tools, alongside concerns about surveillance, cybersecurity, and legacy systems.
- **Organizational / Economic:** Limited staff capacity, especially in cybersecurity and data roles; pressure to do more with constrained resources; and the need to prove ROI and time savings for any new tool or pilot.
- **Policy & Governance:** Heightened attention to privacy, IP address governance, vendor contracts, and FERPA obligations in a cloud- and AI-driven environment.

Across these EDUCAUSE 2025 sessions, the following technological trends emerged as especially relevant for the next several years:

Technology Trend (FY25/35)	Summary	Example Institutional Actions
Responsible AI & Data Literacy	Build AI/data literacy into curriculum and staff development, including when not to use AI and how to keep humans in the loop.	Add AI/data units to gen ed and majors; run AI literacy workshops; publish "when not to use AI" guidelines for staff and faculty.
AI-Enabled Student Experience	Use social microlearning, chatbots, and analytics to reduce isolation, support accessibility, and personalize outreach in online and hybrid programs.	Pilot social microlearning in online programs; deploy trained course chatbots; use analytics to target nudges to at-risk students.

AI in Core Systems & Data Pipelines	Embed AI in ERP systems and data workflows to automate operations, clean data, surface risk early, and support real-time decision-making.	Launch an "AI inside ERP" pilot (advising/chatbot); use AI-driven data cleaning for survey data; build early alert dashboards.
No-Code & Flexible Workflows	Leverage no-code tools (e.g., Airtable, Zapier) to bridge system gaps and quickly support faculty and graduate data tracking.	Replace ad hoc spreadsheets with Airtable bases; use Zapier to connect forms, approvals, and reporting; prototype new workflows without full IT builds.
Privacy, Security & Compliance by Design	Treat privacy, IP governance, cybersecurity, and FERPA as front-end design requirements—not back-end legal checks—with human-centered security and clearer vendor standards.	Create a privacy-by-design checklist; review vendor contracts for data use and IP; involve security and privacy early in tool selection.
Human Skills in an AI World	Prepare leaders, staff, and students to reinvent themselves, build resilience, and lean into uniquely human strengths as AI becomes part of everyday work.	Offer workshops on reinvention and resilience; embed communication/critical thinking in programs; create career development tracks focused on "working with AI."

[Session – Future-Proofing Your Career: Reinvention, Resilience, and Long-Term Success in the Age of AI]

Over the next several years, **EDUCAUSE 2025** takeaways point to a landscape where AI is everywhere, but trust is everything. Institutions will need to pair responsible AI and data literacy with student-centered experiences, using tools like chatbots, social microlearning, and analytics to support learners without sacrificing privacy or integrity.

At the same time, AI will move deeper into core systems and data pipelines, supported by no-code workflows that let campuses adapt quickly. Success will depend on building **privacy, security, and compliance** by design and investing just as heavily in human skills resilience, communication, and judgment forward leaders, staff, and students can navigate an AI-rich future with confidence.

Artificial Intelligence

- Building AI literacy across general education, majors, and staff development helps institutions move from "cheating/tool hype" to intentional use. This includes teaching when not to use AI, what tasks should stay human-led (grading, advising, high-stakes decisions), and how to keep a clear human-in-the-loop for academic and ethical judgment. **[Session – What Keeps Higher Ed Leaders Up at Night: Ed Tech Edition]**

- Clear expectations for permissible AI use (for example, “green / yellow / red” examples) support student agency and academic integrity. When students and faculty know where AI is encouraged, where it is limited, and where it is not allowed, conversations can shift from “Is this cheating?” to “How does this support learning?” **[Session – What Keeps Higher Ed Leaders Up at Night: Ed Tech Edition]**
- Responsible AI literacy also means understanding the role of AI inside systems—such as ERPs, chatbots, and accessibility tools—so staff and faculty can interpret AI-generated alerts, nudges, and recommendations rather than accepting them blindly. Pilots with defined success metrics (e.g., fewer help-desk tickets, better pass rates) help people learn how to work alongside these tools. **[Session – *Intelligent ERP Systems: How AI is Transforming Higher Education ERP Systems*]**
- AI-powered accessibility tools, like trained course chatbots and real-time ADA checkers, require faculty and staff to understand both their strengths and limits. AI literacy here includes knowing what the bot can answer, when to escalate to a human, and how to monitor patterns in student questions to improve course design. **[Session – *Empowering Accessibility Through AI: ChatBots and Real-Time Compliance Tools*]**
- Preparing individuals to work in an AI-rich environment is part of AI literacy: staff and students need to see AI as a tool they can question, redirect, and augment—not a replacement for their own judgment. This connects directly to career skills like reinvention, resilience, communication, and critical thinking. **[Session – *Future-Proofing Your Career: Reinvention, Resilience, and Long-Term Success in the Age of AI*]**

Cybersecurity & Privacy

- Higher education is one of the most targeted sectors for cyberattacks, especially through third-party software and cloud tools. Institutions rely heavily on technology and the data that comes with it, but many are understaffed in cybersecurity, and staff often adopt new tools without fully considering privacy or long-term risk. **[Session – Privacy and Surveillance in HigherEd: Applying a T&L and Cybersecurity Lens]**
- The growing use of edtech and AI has created a “datafied learner,” raising questions about surveillance, agency, and control. Many tools and long-term contracts were not designed for modern privacy expectations, which forces institutions to rethink how they select vendors, manage data, and support instructors who want to experiment with new tools that may not be private or secure. **[Session – Privacy and Surveillance in HigherEd: Applying a T&L and Cybersecurity Lens]**
- Speakers called for human-centered security, including clear privacy notices that explain what data is collected, why it is collected, how long it is stored, and who can access it. They also argued for stronger standards or certifications for privacy in edtech, so institutions can move beyond simple compliance toward ethical, transparent practices that build trust with students

and faculty. **[Session – Privacy and Surveillance in HigherEd: Applying a T&L and Cybersecurity Lens]**

Data Analytics

- Data analytics is seen as essential for informed decision-making and student success, but many institutions struggle because their data is messy and inconsistent. Manually entered surveys and form data often contain typos and ambiguous categories, leading data professionals to spend up to 80% of their time on cleaning instead of analysis, which slows down insights for advising, evaluation, and planning. **[Session – Enhancing Data Quality in Higher Education: AI-Driven Automated Data Cleaning]**
- An AI-driven approach to data cleaning combines ChatGPT for spelling and label correction with fuzzy text matching to align responses to standardized categories. This pipeline transforms raw student feedback into clean, structured data ready for immediate analysis, improving accuracy, reducing preparation time and cost, and making analytics more actionable across the institution. **[Session – Enhancing Data Quality in Higher Education: AI-Driven Automated Data Cleaning]**
- At the same time, presenters stressed that AI for data cleaning is a starting point, not a final authority. Human review and clear governance are still required so that institutions understand when to accept model suggestions and how to prevent new errors. Leadership sessions also highlighted the need to connect analytics to defined metrics such as learning outcomes, faculty time saved, adoption vs. impact, and accessibility/privacy incidents so data work is clearly tied to institutional value. **[Session – Enhancing Data Quality in Higher Education: AI-Driven Automated Data Cleaning; What Keeps Higher Ed Leaders Up at Night: Ed Tech Edition]**

Network Governance

- IP address governance and engagement with ARIN are increasingly recognized as part of the security and reliability foundation for campus networks. Proper management of IPv4 space and use of tools like RPKI strengthen data integrity, reduce risk from third-party IP brokers, ensure predictable costs, and support long-term administrative continuity. **[Session – *Understanding ARIN: What Universities Need to Know About IP Address Governance and Network Security*]**
- Regional service organizations such as Intermediate Unit 28 demonstrate how centralized infrastructure support can help K–12 districts manage consortium-wide WANs, broadband, managed IT services, helpdesk, server management, technology planning, and content subscriptions. This model shows the value of shared infrastructure, coordinated planning, and network governance for both resilience and efficiency. **[Session – *Understanding ARIN: What Universities Need to Know About IP Address Governance and Network Security*]**

Workforce

- Leadership sessions stressed that AI is not only a technology issue but also a workforce and change-management challenge. Institutions must support faculty and staff with training, sample policies, vetted prompts, and time-saving workflows, instead of expecting individuals to navigate AI tools alone. This includes embedding AI/data literacy into curriculum and ongoing professional development. **[Session – What Keeps Higher Ed Leaders Up at Night: Ed Tech Edition]**
- The closing fireside chat emphasized that long-term success in an AI-rich world depends on human skills: reinvention, resilience, communication, creativity, judgment, and the ability to adapt. As AI reshapes roles and workflows, professionals and organizations will need to continually rethink how they work, leverage technology wisely, and stay focused on the unique human strengths that AI cannot replace. **[Session – Future-Proofing Your Career: Reinvention, Resilience, and Long-Term Success in the Age of AI]**

Application Development & No-Code Platforms

- No-code platforms are being used to build integrated systems that connect faculty workload tracking, graduate student data, and reporting workflows. At the University of Alaska Fairbanks, this approach supports complex academic processes and strategic goals such as pursuing R1 status, without requiring large development teams. **[Session – Tracking Success in the Last Frontier: No-Code Solutions for Faculty and Graduate Student Data]**
- These no-code solutions consolidate multiple workflows into a single, user-friendly environment, streamline collaboration across departments, and make it easier to evolve systems based on user feedback allowing institutions to adapt their data and reporting structures much faster than traditional custom development cycles. **[Session – Tracking Success in the Last Frontier: No-Code Solutions for Faculty and Graduate Student Data]**

Students Experience

- Institutions are using technology to address isolation and belonging in online programs. FIU's online MBA, for example, uses a social microlearning app to create frequent, low-pressure interactions that help students build connections, practice networking skills, and form meaningful professional relationships in a fully virtual environment. **[Session – FIU's Approach to Overcoming the Isolation Dilemma in Online Programs]**
- AI-powered course chatbots and real-time ADA compliance tools are emerging as key accessibility solutions. A trained chatbot can provide 24/7 support, guide students through technical barriers (such as enabling screen readers), explain accommodations and rights under ADA, and offer tailored strategies, for example, time-management tips for students with ADHD

or reassurance when a student feels they are falling behind. **[Session – Empowering Accessibility Through AI: ChatBots and Real-Time Compliance Tools]**

- These tools not only improve equity and independence for students but also reduce repetitive questions for faculty, easing the implementation burden and supporting more inclusive teaching practices anchored in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. Institutions still need to invest in training, cost-effectiveness analyses, and long-term partnerships with technology providers to sustain these gains. **[Session – Empowering Accessibility Through AI: ChatBots and Real-Time Compliance Tools]**

Future & Foresight: Higher Education Through 2035

- Higher education can prepare for FY26 and beyond by using a foresight framework: **collect signals, trends, and drivers;** analyze what is happening and what might happen; then build probable, plausible, possible, and preferable futures and design strategies that move the institution toward its preferable future, instead of reacting late to external change. **[Evolve or Be Replaced: Your Job in 2035]**
- One example signal is the emergence of a biological computer that combines human brain cells with silicon ("living intelligence"). It illustrates how fast technology is moving, how the line between biological and digital intelligence is blurring, and why higher education must continuously scan weak signals, experiment thoughtfully, and avoid assuming today's models of learning and work will stay stable. **[Evolve or Be Replaced: Your Job in 2035]**

Looking at 2035 jobs and landscape transforming skills:

- AI will change education, but not as fast as many people claim.
- We can't ignore it just because the conversation around it is overwhelming; some tools will become core infrastructure.
- Our job is to be strategic: decide which technologies to pilot now and which to watch and wait on.

The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs report shows jobs and skills are shifting faster than ever. Roles are disappearing, new ones are appearing, and "get a degree, then do one thing for 20 years" no longer works. People will need continuous learning and the ability to pivot careers multiple times.

New roles are already emerging in this direction, including:

- AI-augmented administrators, who rely on AI for routine data pulls, scheduling, and policy questions so they can focus on vision, change management, relationships, and complex decisions that truly require human judgment.
- Learning experience architects (faculty and instructional designers) who design entire learning ecosystems combining courses, micro-credentials, work-based learning, and social learning and use data and AI to personalize, measure, and continuously improve these pathways.

Underneath these changes, several key drivers (highlighted by Knowledge Works) shape the future of learning:

- **Automating choices** – AI systems increasingly making or nudging decisions.
- **Civic superpowers** – people organizing and acting collectively using digital tools.
- **Accelerating brains** – enhanced cognition, brain–computer interfaces, and performance augmentation.
- **Remade geographies** – remote work, virtual communities, and climate-driven migration reshaping where and how people learn.

The core message: these futures are not theoretical; they are already emerging at the edges of today's systems. Every role in education faces a choice: evolve intentionally into more strategic, human-centered work that leverages AI and data wisely, or risk being sidelined or replaced by the very forces and tools we choose to ignore. This is a call for institutions and individuals to act now, using foresight to steer toward a preferable future rather than simply absorbing whatever future arrives by default.
[Evolve or Be Replaced: Your Job in 2035]

Appendix: EDUCAUSE 2025 Sessions Attended

To engage with session speakers, please view the LinkedIn profiles attached below.

Wednesday, November 12th

What Keeps Higher Ed Leaders Up at Night: Ed Tech Edition

- *Colleen Flaherty, Senior Editor, Special Content Inside Higher Ed.*
- *Tawnya Means Strategic Innovation & AI Advisor to the Provost and Dean, Bowling Green State University.*
- *Glenda Morgan Analyst, Phil Hill & Associates LLC*
- *Ravi Pendse, VP for Information Technology & Chief Information Officer, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor*
- *Lee Rainie Diecto, Imagining the Digital Future Center, Elon University*

Intelligent ERP Systems: How AI is Transforming Higher Education ERP Systems

- *Tirumala Chimpiri, Senior Program Analyst, Stony Brook University*

Enhancing Data Quality in Higher Education: AI-Driven Automated Data Cleaning

- *Iamis Ghoualmi, Software analyst University of Tennessee*

Thursday, November 13th

Privacy and Surveillance in HigherEd: Applying a T&L and Cybersecurity Lens

- *Kim Arnold, Director, Teaching & Learning Program, EDUCAUSE*
- *Isaac Galvan, Community Program Director, Cybersecurity and Privacy, EDUCAUSE*

Understanding ARIN: What Universities Need to Know About IP Address Governance and Network Security

- *Joe Westover, Chief Experience Officer, ARIN*
- *John Sweeting Senior Director, Customer Experience and Strategy (CXS), American Registry for internet Numbers*

FERPA in the Age of Uncertainty: Navigating Shifting Federal Priorities

- *Amelia Vance, Professor, The College of William & Mary*

Evolve or Be Replaced: Your Job in 2035

- *Stuart Collins, Professor, Purdue University Global*

- *Maricel Lawrence Innovation Catalyst, Purdue University Global*