

AI for Arizona: Sun Devils help lead state's first policy task force

Experts from the university will play a key role in shaping how artificial intelligence is used

By Molly Loonam, ASU News
June 3, 2025

Several Arizona State University faculty members and alums will help guide Arizona's AI-related policies to ensure ethical and transparent use across the state as part of the state's first Artificial Intelligence Steering Committee.

Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs announced the names of the 19 members on May 21.

"It speaks volumes about what the governor thinks of ASU and W. P. Carey to place me on the committee, said [Greg Dawson](#), clinical professor of accountancy and one of the committee members. "It says she thinks we have something to add and that our voice is welcome at the table."

Appointed ASU alumni are:

Loretta Cheeks, '17 PhD in computer science, CEO of the technology firms DS Innovation and Strong TIES.

Ryan Johnson, '10 BS in liberal studies, chief privacy officer, vice president and associate general counsel at the education company Savvas Learning Company.

Faculty and staff appointees are:

[Diana Bowman](#), professor and associate dean of applied research and partnerships at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law.

[Bill Gates](#), executive director of the Mechanics of Democracy Laboratory at the School of Public Affairs and professor of practice

[Kyle Bowen](#), deputy chief information officer at ASU's Enterprise Technology.

"This is our moment to shape AI so it opens doors, not closes them. I'm excited to collaborate with leading experts to meet the moment with creativity, responsibility and a shared commitment to serving everyone," said Bowen, who leads ASU's [technology and AI strategy](#), oversees the university's AI Acceleration team and provided executive leadership for the ASU AI Innovation Challenge.

The AI Steering Committee held its first meeting last month and will present its initial findings next spring.

ASU News talked to Dawson to learn more about his expertise and the committee's goals for the coming year.

Related story

[ASU lab to train elections officials on using AI effectively](#)

Question: What might your role on the committee involve?

Answer: In our publications on public-sector AI, my research colleagues and I often say that AI is fundamentally about two things: gas and brakes. The gas encourages AI use, develops use cases and finds opportunities. The brakes involve governance, ensuring transparency, explainability and fairness. To succeed in AI, we must be smart about both. Any solution that focuses on only one is bound to fail.

That said, I have been asked to focus on evaluating existing policies on AI use in state government. A part of this is defining oversight roles to ensure responsible AI and building procurement and audit toolkits to support transparent and accountable AI implementation.

Q: How do you envision contributing your expertise to discussions about AI deployment and public-private partnerships?

A: During my time as a partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers' government consulting practice and director of Gartner's state and local government practice, I oversaw hundreds of public-sector technology implementations. I learned what worked and what didn't. My dissertation focused on public-sector technology implementation, and over the past 10 years, my research has exclusively focused on how countries are adopting AI.

Most recently, under a grant from the IBM Business of Government, my research colleague, Kevin Desouza, and I collaborated with the Australian government to identify ways to implement public sector AI within the country. Our biggest takeaway from that — that the job of government is to provide services and that AI is simply a tool for doing so — is likely to be front and center for Arizona.

Q: What do you hope this committee will accomplish in the short and long term?

A: We've been tasked with creating a plan for the responsible use of AI across the state within 12 months. While any good plan is a living document, our plan should strike the right balance between AI's gas and brakes in a way that benefits the people of Arizona. With this plan, the state can move forward in responsibly implementing AI and related legislation.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).