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AI Research on Campus Helps Shape WP's Newest MBA Concentration

By William Paterson University News

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An interdisciplinary team of faculty, staff, and student researchers at William Paterson University is advancing research on how artificial intelligence is influencing business approaches to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues — work that is helping inform the University's newly launched ESG concentration within its Master of Business Administration program.

William Paterson's Cotsakos College of Business is the No. 1 producer of MBA graduates in New Jersey, and the new ESG concentration reflects the University's continued emphasis on aligning graduate education with evolving business practices and workforce needs.

“Our ESG concentration reflects the depth of expertise among our faculty and the importance of preparing students to navigate complex, data-driven business environments,” says Anthony Bowrin, dean of the Cotsakos College of Business. “By connecting interdisciplinary research with graduate education, we’re ensuring that students are engaging with the same questions organizations are actively confronting.”

The interdisciplinary research team includes:

- Peter Caiazzo, associate director, Russ Berrie Institute for Professional Sales
- Rajiv Kashyap, professor of marketing
- Andrey Kretinin, professor of management: analytics
- Cyril Ku, professor of computer science
- Raza Mir, professor of management: strategy
- Ali Saghiri, assistant professor of computer science
- Ana Cristina Siqueira, professor of management: entrepreneurship
- Mehmet Turkoz, assistant professor of management: analytics
- Michael Aviles '27, undergraduate Honors College student, computer science

Rather than focusing on a single outcome, the research examines how AI tools can support ESG-related decision-making — from identifying inconsistencies in sustainability reporting to surfacing risk signals embedded in unstructured data such as social media posts, regulatory filings, and corporate communications. Other projects explore how AI may help organizations assess efficiency gains, identify

emerging sustainable technologies, and strengthen governance and compliance processes.

In addition to informing the new MBA concentration, the research also supports William Paterson's online, 12-credit ESG Certificate program.

“There’s a lot of interest in ESG across the business world,” said Kashyap. “In finance, professionals are paying close attention to ESG not only because of impacts on stock prices, but also because of the potential to dampen volatility - a highly valued attribute in today’s uncertain economic environment. Such ESG-driven topics are really driving our graduate students in terms of both their academic interests and professional motivations.”

The research also provides students with opportunities to engage directly in applied, faculty-led projects at the intersection of technology and business — experience that faculty say reflects the evolving expectations of today’s graduate and undergraduate learners.

Aviles, an undergraduate computer science major and Honors College student who has worked on the project, says the experience of collaborating with multiple professors both in his department and beyond has been very rewarding.

“This project is helping me understand that artificial intelligence extends much further than personal use and has a significant impact on the business world,” he adds. Aviles notes that the project has also

subsequently made him realize just how integral AI, and his knowledge of it, will be in his career someday.

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