SC Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date: September 24, 2025; 10am-noon
Location: SCI

Present: Derry, , Schultz, Bruck, Murphy, Emerson, Luppert, Schellhorn, Neubauer, Lewis, Byicaza, Cortz, , Bozer, Cox, Mathrubutham
Guests: Jan Lockhart, Jolie Pelds, Rob Burnett
Absent: Wise, Corrigan

I. Welcome by Derry
II. Stage-setting by Derry: The Governor recently updated the Executive Order for STEM, and it includes new language emphasizing AI. I'd like to use our September meeting to establish some baseline common understanding of AI and collectively create some guiding values to use as we approach whatever the future asks of our advisory team.
III. AI Introduction/Overview (SCI / Pelds, Burnett)
IV. Things in Rings (SCI)
V. The Nature of Technology in Education
VI. AI in Industry (Ken Bozer, Fareway Inc.)
VII. What Makes Us Human Activity (SCI)
VIII. Discussion led by Derry: Synthesis – Guiding values
IX. Meeting adjourned at noon.

The newsletter article was created from the content of the board's visit.

"Stay curious to stay human."
--SCI on AI

The SC STEM Hub Advisory Board wanted to learn more about AI's impact in education and STEM in general. To find out more, they convened at the Science Center of Iowa (SCI), where SCI leaders **Rob Burnett** and **Jolie Pelds** are working hard to understand and get ahead of this dynamic technology.

"AI has transformed from an academic curiosity to a cornerstone of business," Pelds. "And we're just beginning. It's the tip of the ice berg for what these tools could do."

AI = The Age of Imagination
SCI looks at the AI as the Age of Imagination, taking the advent as a personal challenge. Burnett framed the new technology in a very human way. People speak to their fears of AI, but the same fears we question in AI are the fears we also question in being human. "AI may be the most honest

mirror we've ever built," said Burnett, "because it reflects us without judgment and has access to everything we've ever created."

So how can AI be used to benefit society, especially education? To answer that, consider what this moment is asking of humanity and to what end does education serve? The SCI's AI motto of *Stay curious to stay human,* calls upon all of us to do better. "We need to challenge ourselves to polish the mirror so that it becomes the society we'd like to see reflected," added Burnett.

Game: Things in Rings
To understand more about how AI is programmed to think and see the relevance in having many eyes on this early programming procedure, Pelds introduced a game called *Things in Rings*. The game uses a Ven Diagram format with Guessers (students) and Knowers (teachers), in which the group determines why certain cards fit in the areas on the Ven Diagram.

Technology & Education
The second speaker, Dr. Jessie Wilcox, an associate professor of biology at the University of Northern Iowa, lead a talk entitled "Nature of Technology and Education," noting that new technology will always change the classroom. He studies the impact AI has on his current studes.

"Technology is more evolutionary than revolutionary," said Wilcox. He's developed a table to help folks think through their intersection. He's concerned that general society might accept the new tool AI too quickly. "It's important that we teach students how to use AI responsibly, without damaging their learning."

Impact on Pre-Service Teachers
After 25 years of teaching students who want to be teachers, he really hasn't seen any big shifts in students' abilities to plan and teach a lesson.

Wilcox noted that some debate rather AI is just the newest thing or a cataclysmic change? He said most experts agree that it's a game-changer. But one thing that won't change? Relationships. Wilcox added, "Teachers interacting with students to help them understand won't change." Because, in the end, all humans seek connections with other humans.

AI in Business
The final speaker was SC Board Member Ken Bozer, who offered an industry perspective on AI. He feels, "The power in AI is in the processing." Never have humans had a tool that could access so much data so quickly to come up with an answer.

Bozer also noted that AI still lacks "trust." He used the analogy of people who, early in the days of GPS, trusted their phone and then ended up in the wrong place. "AI tools will get better," he concluded, "and we'll be able to trust them more."

So, if we don't equip students now with how to interpret AI, they won't know how to digest the answers they get. Metaphorically, they'll be following the wrong directions and end up in the wrong place.

The Human Continuum
Pelds led another SCI exercise that looked several traits (like love, communication, morality, memory, senses, etc.) on a spectrum from *Least Human* to *Most Human*, then she asked: "Where do we want to *stay* in the human parts of this?"

So What?
The board closed with a group discussion, when Bozer mentioned how business looks at new things: *What, So What*, and *Now What*. If the *What* is AI, then perhaps the *So What* and *Now What* are the roles education plays in helping students integrate AI. If AI can help with knowledge, then perhaps education's role is to help students develop skills.

Now What…
If you, too, are now contemplating AI in your life and in the lives of students across Iowa and the world, then we invite you to come to the Iowa STEM Summit on October 17. Several sessions are dedicated to AI in Education. We don't have all the answers, but we do know many voices are needed at the table to figure them out.

The what is AI – the "so what" and the "now what" might be where teachers fill in the blanks.
Learning was gaining knowledge and building skills. Knowledge is accessible and suspect. The skill part is still the educator.
Teaching students how to discern the data to apply it to an assignment or decision, "ANN
If people feel they can get the right answer so quickly, will they become overconfident and ignore other people's ideas.
JOE: algorithms – already throw us into one side or the other.
COX: Give me 5 answers to this question. Convince others it's a good idea

X. If other things come to mind, send thoughts to Sarah.
XI. SUMMIT – reserve tables for lunch. Oct. 17 Friday. 20-30 minutes to touch base. Not a formal agenda.

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As it turns out, defining what makes us human is harder than you might think.

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