Critical A.I. Literacies Collective Fall Town Hall Meeting on A.I. in Education
PRESS RELEASE

The Critical A.I. Literacies Collective (CALC) will hold a fall town hall meeting on Monday, November 17 in Parks Hall 146 from 4:00-5:00 PM on "A.I. in Education." This event is open to all Western faculty, staff, and students. Dr. Caroline Hardin, professor of Computer Science and SMATE (Science, Math, and Technology Education) will give opening remarks on "Large Language Models and Learning," and the majority of the time will be dedicated to an open town-hall-style discussion moderated by professors Claudia Johnson (Fairhaven), Amites Sarkar (Math), Emily Spracklin (Western Libraries), and Xi Wang (Environmental and Energy Studies). The event will be followed by a coffee and tea reception from 5:00-5:30 to encourage more informal conversations and connections.

The idea for this open meeting comes from feedback the collective received during the October 6 teach-in on "A.I. in Education: Dreams, Nightmares, Realities." During the teach-in, participants worked in small groups to share their ideas on topics to explore in more depth at future events. A large portion of participant responses centered on A.I. in education. For example, participants reported wanting to talk more about

- A.I. in education generally
- How to respond to the idea that "students need to learn A.I."
- How to detect if a student is using A.I. to cheat
- A.I. in elementary education
- A.I. in computer science education
- Loss of critical thinking
- How to address structural issues that lead students to cheat using A.I.
- How to de-motivate "easy" and motivate "hard"

Professor Hardin is well-positioned to lay the groundwork for a conversation about "A.I. in education generally" and about "how to respond to the idea that students need to learn A.I.," since she has a Ph.D. in computer science and teaches technology education classes to future K-12 teachers.

At the same time, the most important goal of the event is to create a forum for participants to speak and listen to one another. CALC affirms that there is no single person who can answer every question on A.I. in education, and there is no single department or area of expertise that offers a comprehensive understanding of this topic. By talking with members of our campus community across various disciplines and areas of practice, CALC hopes to explore the local and global impacts of generative A.I. CALC rejects the false binary that we are either "for" generative A.I. or "against" it and instead aims to build critical A.I. literacies grounded in a shared commitment to creating life-affirming futures for all of us together on this planet.

CALC is planning future teach-ins for the Winter and Spring quarters to address other topics of interest to past teach-in participants, including generative A.I. and water use, legal issues around A.I. tools and privacy, and the impacts of chatbots on users' health and well-being.