

ChatGPT's Influence on Higher Education

By ChatGPT, an OpenAI software

Interviews compiled by Aminah Jenkins, Editor in Chief, and Freya Dahlgren, Associate Editor

ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence (AI) language model developed by OpenAI, has gained widespread popularity for its ability to generate human-like text in response to a given prompt. However, its use in higher education has raised concerns about academic integrity and the potential impact on student learning. To better understand the views of faculty members at Meredith College, *The Herald* interviewed two professors from the English Department, Dr. Julie Schrock and Professor Ashley Hogan.

When asked about her first encounter with ChatGPT, Dr. Schrock said, "I first heard about it over the break between semesters on Twitter." Dr. Schrock also mentioned that there has been little discussion among faculty members about the AI software's existence and use at Meredith. "From my perspective, it is too new to evaluate its impact."

Professor Hogan first heard about ChatGPT in December 2022. "My understanding is that it is a computer application that uses artificial intelligence to perform searches, answer questions and create documents by taking user

input and cross-checking that against public information on the internet." When asked about the potential impact of the program on higher education, Professor Hogan said, "I think it has the potential to do both [good and bad], depending on how we use it." She added, "With time, we may be able to find ways to incorporate it into our instruction and assignments as a tool that students can use in the idea- or drafting- phase of writing."

Regarding the impact of the program on their areas of work, both faculty members had similar views. Dr. Schrock said, "It has not influenced my work thus far." She added that many of her students' assignments involve analyzing what happens in classrooms, which ChatGPT cannot do. Professor Hogan mentioned that while she had experimented with inputting her assignments into the program, she found that "even if a student used ChatGPT for a writing assignment, they would have to tweak and develop the essay a great deal to end up with a strong essay."

When asked whether it is easy to tell if a student has used the software for an assignment, both faculty members agreed that they

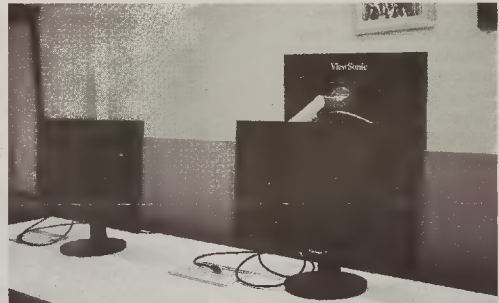
did not have enough experience to determine this. "The result I got when I experimented with the app did not read like most student writing and wasn't nearly as developed as I require," said Professor Hogan.

Both faculty members emphasized the need to explore how ChatGPT can be used as a tool to support learning, rather than how it can be used to police whether or not students are using it. "I have not, and don't intend to try, to police the use of it," Dr. Schrock stated.

"My view is that, the more stronger our AI gets, the more

we will need human intelligence to understand how to use these tools ethically," said Professor Hogan, and "They aren't going anywhere, so we need to learn how we can use AI to enhance instead of replace learning."

This article was written in collaboration with OpenAI's ChatGPT. The overall generation process involved a series of 13 questions and answers with the program, including the sending of full interview responses two times in order to generate a full article. This article also received standard content and copy edits per *The Herald's* publication process.



As ChatGPT takes the world by storm, some have begun to question if students in higher education will benefit from it (Photo by Grayson Morris)

Students Impacted by HVAC Issues

By Riley Heeb, Reporter

The weather in Raleigh is often unpredictable. From days of extreme heat to weekends with severe thunderstorms, it can be difficult to navigate the natural elements. At Meredith, these changes have caused issues with the heating and cooling systems. HVAC systems have needed repairs that have impacted class scheduling and students' living situations.

Many students, including Cambria Chandler, '26, had complaints regarding the temperature irregularities. She stated that "the temperature in the residence halls has been awful" and that the heat has made it difficult to sleep at night. As a student athlete, Chandler commented on how the heat impacts her and her teammates after conditioning.

She stated that they are "often very hot and overheating" and that "the halls are brutal to walk through for how hot it is in them." Chandler also noted how unreliable

the HVAC system can be. "It took a week for the [HVAC system] to switch to cooling for it to not even work," she stated.

Todd Lechner, Director of Facilities Services, explained that the buildings are on a computer-controlled system and that they "follow the industry standard of 72 degrees for [Meredith] set points for all buildings."

Lechner stated that "the residence halls have a unique configuration that requires our HVAC technicians to manually perform the changeover from heating to cooling and cooling to heating." He explained that Facilities Services have to consider other factors, such as how long the change takes and how occupants on higher floors in residence halls will be impacted. "The facilities department makes its recommendation to Residence Life and The Residence Life team ultimately makes the decision on the appropriate time to execute the

switchover from heating to cooling or vice versa," he explained.

The variability of weather in North Carolina also plays a role in how effective the HVAC system is. Lechner noted that these temperature changes impact their decision-making year round. "This makes it difficult to determine the appropriate timeframe to execute the heating versus cooling decision for the residence halls," he stated.

The Herald reached out to Donna LaHaye and Sam Distefano from Residence Life for comment, but did not receive a response at the time of publication.

Beyond weather-related changes, there were also repairs made to the HVAC system in Lux in early February. The building experienced extremely high and low temperatures that led to most classes being held on Zoom or cancelled altogether.

Lechner stated that "the HVAC team has replaced multiple steam control thermostats on the radiant heaters throughout the building which allow[s] the wall radiant heaters to modulate the temperature independently" and that since then there have been no further issues.

Regarding the heat in the academic buildings, Chandler stated that "even some classes are hot and make it hard for students to focus on their studies when they are worried about overheating just sitting in their classrooms."

Chandler also added that she believes an update to the heating and cooling system is necessary because it appears "out of date and not efficient." However, Lechner believes that "with the various heating systems installed, we are very fortunate to have such a highly skilled HVAC team to evaluate and repair these very different types of equipment."