

ESEs in a Changing World

Community Retreat 2026



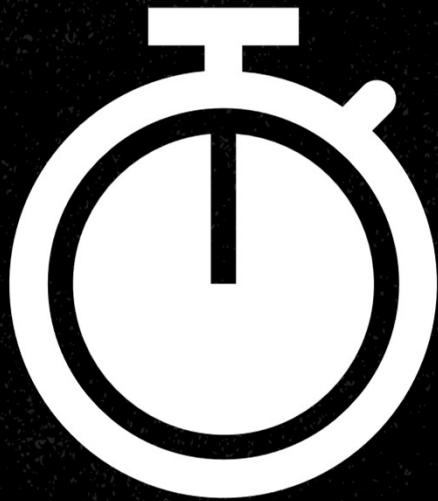
Agenda

- Welcome & Setup

- Objectives and Session Focus
- Employer Partners: Inspiring Action vs. Discouraging Partnership
- AI and the Changing Landscape of Work: Exploring Recently Released Research
- Closing

FEATURED ESE: [Hopeworks](#)

TIME TO BREAK THE ICE: SPEED ROUND



At Your Table Share

- Your Name
- Your Role
- What your ESE does in ~10 words or less

OBJECTIVES FOR TODAY'S SESSION

1. **Increase awareness** of common challenges and provide language that can be used with peers and stakeholders
2. **Review and actively use research** that can be brought back to your ESEs
3. **Develop one concrete next step** based on peer discussions





Let's Get Into It

RDX

redefine
ALLIANCE

A Changing World – Challenges and Opportunities on the Horizon

We asked our ESE Advisory Council “What are the top challenges and opportunities you are seeing right now that need to be addressed?” and here’s what surfaced:

AI, Automation, and Changing Entry-Level Work

AI is creating both challenges and opportunities for every organization, raising important questions about what is most critical to adapt.

Shifting Employer Investment in Partnerships and Employees

As the job market tightens, employers may demand clearer ROI and be more challenging to engage.

Rising Costs

The cost of producing products and delivering services has continued to rise, creating a need to reevaluate processes and materials.

Changing Public Funding Availability and Requirements

Shifting public funding priorities and requirements are creating uncertainty and increasing pressure on organizations to demonstrate impact.

We heard two of these were a top priority right now:

**AI, Automation, and
Changing Entry-Level Work**

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**Shifting Employer Investment in
Partnerships and Employees**

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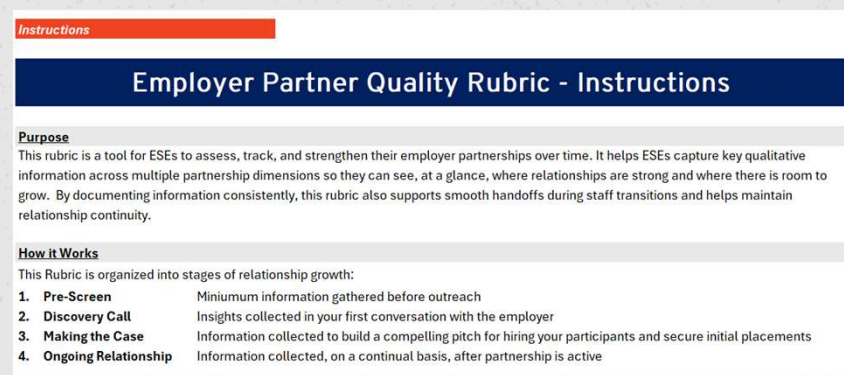
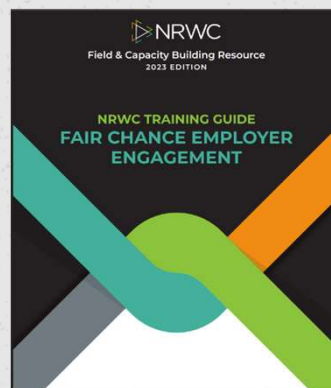
Both employer engagement and AI are signals of a changing external environment, let's explore how your ESE has adapted and will need to continue to adapt to this shift

We'll follow the same format across both topics:

- 1. Review Recent Research**
- 2. Reflect Individually on Implications of the Research**
- 3. Discuss in Small Groups at Your Table**
- 4. Debrief Together**

Shifting Employer Investment in Partnerships and Employees

There are a multiple resources for developing and maintaining quality employer partnerships, and most are ESE specific



But, at the highest level, what is most important when trying to engage with employers and build strong partnerships?

We have distilled all the resources into three high level themes:

- 1 Use Data and Make a Robust Case for Hiring:** Use labor market data to validate demand for the jobs you are preparing individuals for. Deeply understand the value and return on investment (ROI) for employers and don't forget the clear business value (e.g., talent pipeline, retention, productivity).
- 2 Codesign and Continued Engagement with Employer Partners:** Employers want to be part of the design process and help design solutions, not just receive candidates. Once a partnership is established, continue conversations in a structured way to make refinements and continue to build the relationship.
- 3 A Few Deep Relationships are Better than Many Shallow Relationships:** It is easy to spread your resources too thin if you are focused on too many employer partners. Instead, focus on partners that have the potential to provide great insights, hire consistently, and forgive when something goes wrong.

These three themes in practice – let's make it real:

1 Use Data and Make a Robust Case for Hiring

- Aggregated labor market data (e.g., Lightcast)
- Regular engagement with key stakeholders (e.g., local chamber of commerce)
- Interviews with employers to understand value

2 Codesign and Continued Engagement with Employer Partners

- Deeply understanding the skills that make people successful employees & intentionally building practice of those skills at your ESE.
- Hosting employer feedback sessions (e.g., visits)

3 A Few Deep Relationships is Better than Many Shallow Relationships

- Define what makes a good employer partner fit (both for your ESE and for the employer)
- Outline mutual expectations of employer partners and your ESE

Questions to Consider:

1. What are you doing today that strengthens employer partnerships?
2. Where might you be unintentionally making it harder for employers to engage?
3. What is one shift you want to make (start or stop) coming out of this conversation?



Individual Reflection



Small Group Discussion



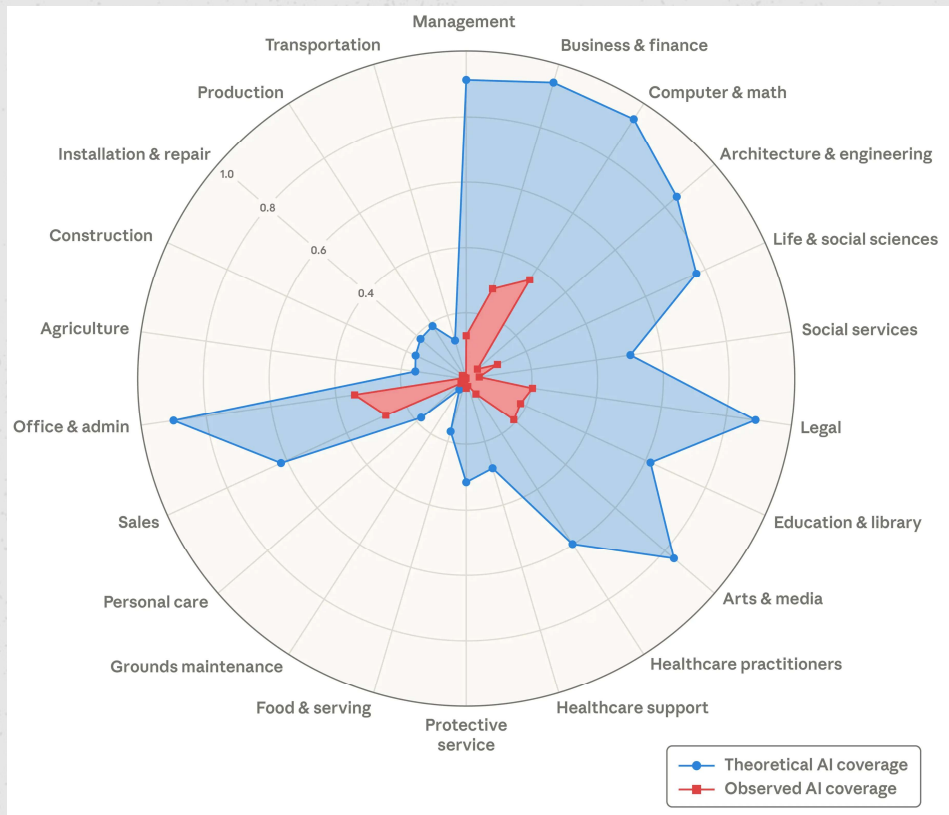
Share Out

AI, Automation, and Changing Entry-Level Work

How do you feel about AI?

- 1 – Hate it, want nothing to do with it**
- 2 – Dislike it, but will use it if needed**
- 3 – Like it, but have some hesitations**
- 4 – Love it, actively using it where possible**

There is a lot of hype around AI, so let's take a look at the current state
Theoretical capability is the amount AI could impact each occupational category.



AI's Potential Impact is Largest in:

- Management
- Business & Finance
- Computer & Math
- Arts & Media
- Life & Social Sciences
- Architecture & Engineering
- Office & Admin
- Legal

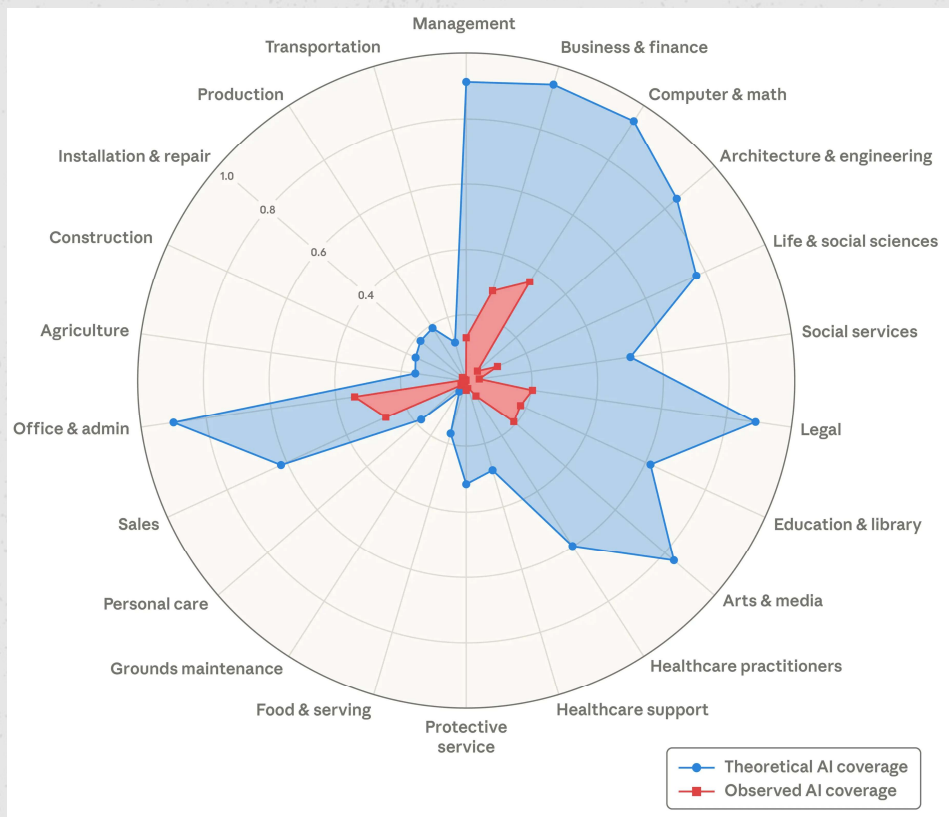
AI's Potential Impact is Medium in:

- Social Services
- Education & Library
- Healthcare Practitioners
- Sales

AI's Potential Impact is More Limited in:

- Protective Services
- Food & Serving
- Grounds Maintenance
- Personal Care
- Agriculture
- Construction
- Installation & Repair
- Production
- Transportation

There is a lot of hype around AI, so let's take a look at the current state
Actual capability shows the degree AI has already impacted each occupation to date.



AI's Actual Impact is Largest in:

- Business & Finance
- Computer & Math
- Legal
- Education & Library
- Sales
- Office & Admin

Burning Glass Institute went deeper into early tech positions; we'll review their research and frameworks that can be applied to other industries



Source: Burning Glass Institute

Burning Glass Institute went deeper into early tech positions; we'll review their research and frameworks that can be applied to other industries

Understanding AI's Impact: Framework for Analysis

AI is having an outsized impact on the entry-level talent rung, as LLMs increasingly automate the well-defined tasks that once characterized early-career work

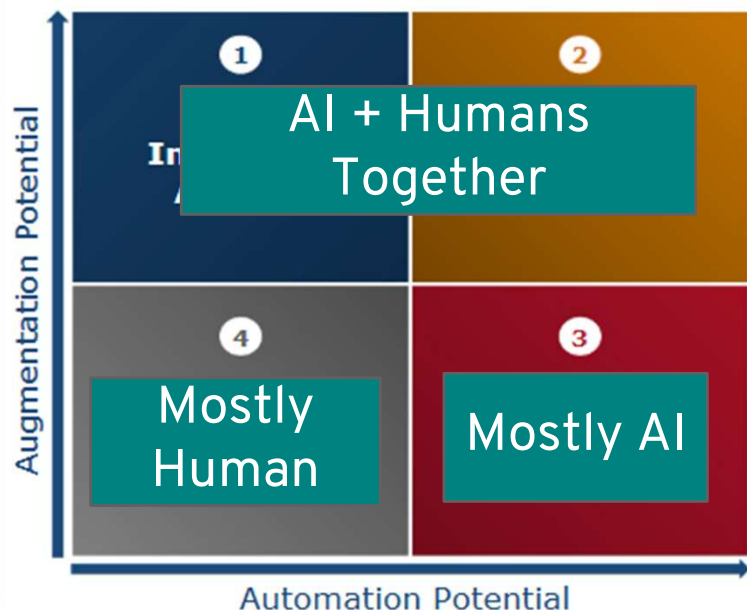


- 1 High Augmentation, Low Automation**
Highlights skills that are enriched, but lack the efficiency gains of automation
- 2 High Augmentation, High Automation:**
Skills in the top right deliver the greatest productivity gains and competitive advantage
- 3 Low Augmentation, High Automation:**
These skills are increasingly commoditized, expected for all as AI lowers skill barriers
- 4 Low Augmentation, Low Automation:**
Skills that remain human-centered with limited AI enhancement and automation exposure, including many skilled trades and foundational knowledge.

Burning Glass Institute went deeper into early tech positions; we'll review their research and frameworks that can be applied to other industries

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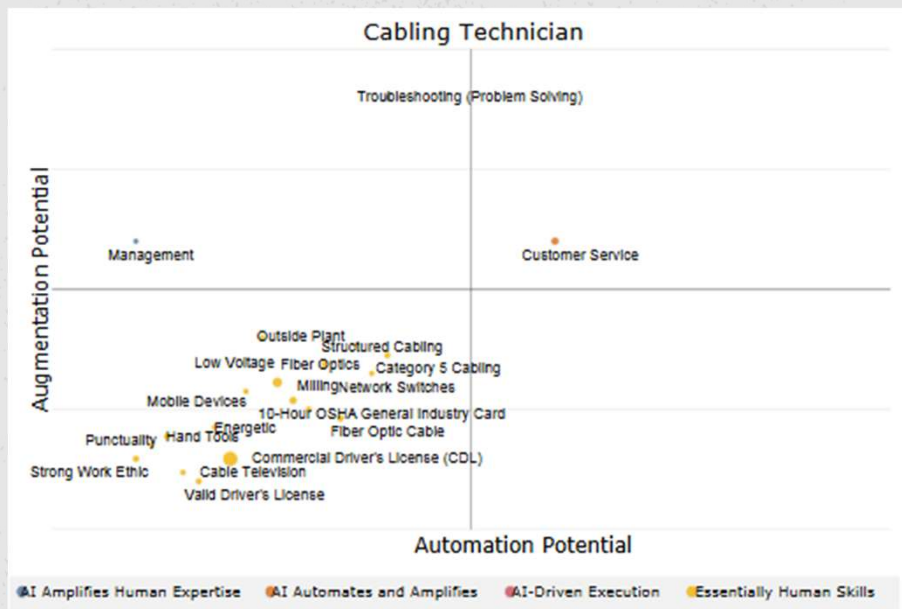
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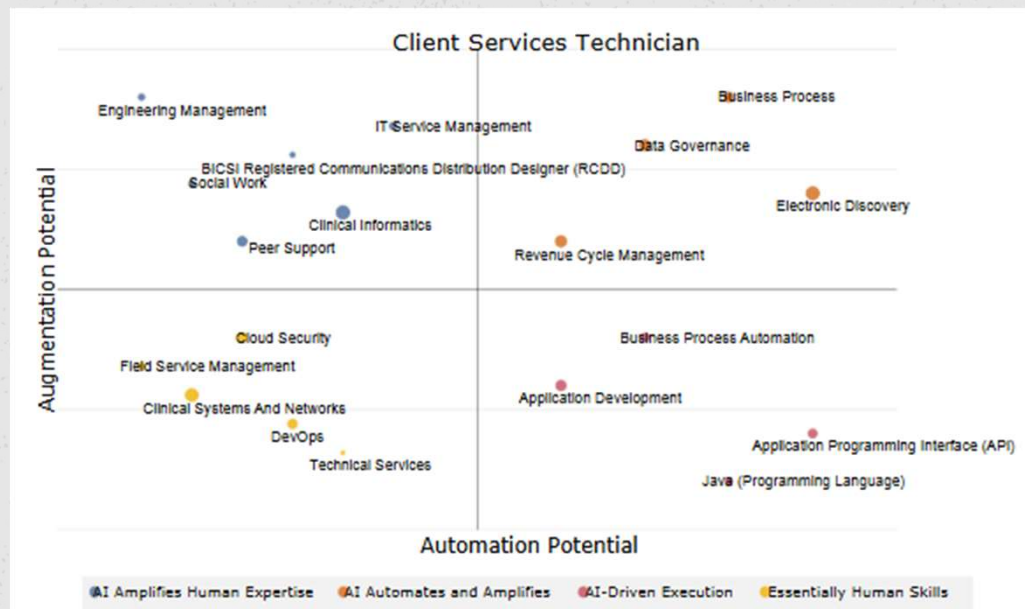
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Let's explore one example of how different two roles in the same industry can be in terms of AI impact and use

Skill Breakdown for Cabling Technician



Skill Breakdown for Client Services Technician



Let's jump out of the research and take a step back and get into some high-level themes around AI presented at ASU + GSV

- 1 Durable Skills, Not Hard or Soft skills, are the Future:** The things ESEs teach, like communication, critical thinking, judgment, and problem solving will become more important than hard skills and traditional soft skills as AI use grows.
 - 2 Career Lattices In | Career Ladders Out:** The traditional “start at the bottom and work your way up” path is breaking down. Workers will need to lattice across roles that require similar durable skills and domain fluency.
 - 3 Wrap Around Supports are Becoming More Important than Ever:** Individuals need structure to support them as they navigate new job opportunities, quickly changing expectations, and work within their communities.
 - 4 Apprenticeships are a Solution to Upskilling Individuals to Meet Changing Work:** Skills-based pathways are becoming more important as on-ramps into career fields, regardless of AI Impact on the work and role.
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Questions to Consider:

1. How does this research expand your thinking about AI's impact on your ESE and the jobs people are preparing for?
2. Where do you see opportunities — not just risk — for the people you work with as AI reaches its potential?
3. What action do you think you need to take (e.g., get even more informed, map jobs, delegate, meet)?



Individual Reflection



Small Group Discussion



Share Out



Our Time
Together is
Ending, but
Before You Go...

redefine
ALLIANCE

Reflect and Write Down:

- 1. What is one thing that has stuck with you from this session?**
 - 2. What is one commitment you want to make based on today's session (e.g., learning more, applying concepts learned today, sharing concepts with others)?**
 - 3. Who will be your accountability buddy?**
- 



Exit Ticket

Please let us know how we did!

