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## GATEWAY TO FUTURE

### CMU launches AI-based learning initiative with Gates Foundation

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Students have sat at the crux of artificial intelligence discussions from the day ChatGPT shattered the status quo in November 2022 — suddenly, essays that took students all night to write appeared on their screens, word by word, in just a few seconds.

Ever since, teachers and schools have shifted concerns from how to ban AI in learning, to how to regulate its use and now, figuring out how to leverage the technology.

Carnegie Mellon University believes it just might have the answer.

With a \$55 million investment by the Gates Foundation, CMU is launching Learnvia, a free, AI-enabled learning resource for college students across the country. Learnvia wraps lessons, homework, activities and an AI tutor “into a single digital environment built to complement in-person instruction and empower faculty with real-time student insights,” the university announced Thursday.

“For decades, Carnegie Mellon University has served as a global leader at the intersection of AI, research innovation and learning science,” said CMU President Farnam Jahanian. “With support from the



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Carnegie Mellon University is launching a new learning initiative called Learnvia, a nonprofit aimed at college students struggling to pass gateway courses. The Gates Foundation invested \$55 million.

Gates Foundation, Learnvia is using this expertise to develop cutting-edge, AI-enabled courseware that is designed to improve outcomes at scale and help students across the nation not just endure gateway college courses but thrive in them.”

“Gateway courses” are the mandatory, introductory classes with high enrollment in which passing is required. For many students, the courses are barriers rather than gateways.

“In the United States, gateway courses derail the academic progress and degree completion for approximately 30% of learners across higher education,” the university said. “One subject in particular — introductory mathematics — is the greatest barrier to student

success in higher education, according to the Mathematical Association of America.”

Calculus I will be the first initiative, with expansion to other levels over the next three years.

One of the core resources in Learnvia is a “context-aware AI-powered” tutor that allows each student to receive guidance based on their own performance. Such a continuous feedback loop is intended to “advance — but not replace — great teaching.” Instructors also have access to teaching resources and analytics dashboards to track student progress.

The Gates Foundation has worked with CMU on learning innovation for more than 15

years, and its \$55 million investment is a historic one, marking “the largest grant to a single entity in the foundation’s higher education portfolio.”

“The Gates Foundation is investing deeply in math education and in partnerships that bring high-quality, tech-enabled tools into classrooms,” said Allan Golston, president of the United States Program at the Gates Foundation. “In partnership with Carnegie Mellon University, our focus — ensuring all students are taught using high-quality curriculum and that teachers receive professional learning tied to that curriculum — is based on evidence of what works to improve student outcomes.”

Learnvia is integrated into a network of 38 high education institutions — “from a five-campus community college in Texas, to a private university in North Carolina serving 1,300 students, to a large public research university in California with more than 46,000 students.”

The priority is on partnerships with community colleges, two-year colleges and “broad access” four-year institutions. The nonprofit aims to double that number in the next academic year, the announcement said.