# Can AI improve how institutions serve students?

Blackboard partnered with University Business to develop and deploy a survey of higher education leaders in the UB audience in January 2020. Nearly 130 respondents participated, describing how artificial intelligence (AI) and chatbots could impact their institutions.

The struggle is real
All respondents were asked if there were repetitive tasks that they believe could be handled by artificial intelligence (AI), enabling them to do higher-level work. **76% said that they believed AI could handle some or even a significant amount of those tasks.**

Respondents were also asked if their institution struggles to keep up with the volume of student inquiries, such as questions about financial aid, admissions or other areas. **Some 27% said "Yes, definitely,"** while 58% said **"Yes, somewhat or at certain times,"** and only 16% said "No." When asked if the majority of student inquiries are repetitive, or essentially asking about the same topics and requiring similar answers, some **87% of respondents** answered "Yes."

Do you believe that your institution struggles to keep up with the volume of student inquiries (questions about financial aid, admissions, IT, etc.)?

16% No
58% Yes, somewhat or at certain times
27% Yes, definitely
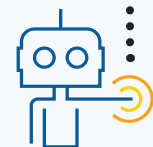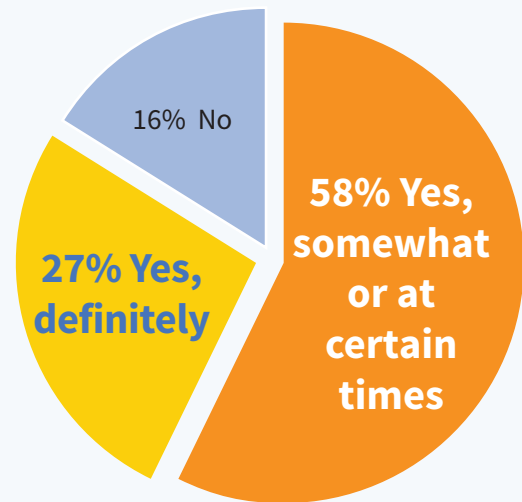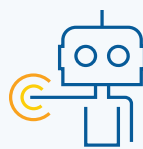
Would you say that the majority of student inquiries are repetitive, essentially asking about the same topics and requiring similar answers?

87% Yes | 13% No

Let's chat? More institutions exploring AI
In response to the need to address this high volume of repetitive student inquiries, a growing number of Institutions are using chatbots, which use AI to provide immediate answers to commonly asked questions. **While most of the respondents (75%) answered that their institutions were not currently using chatbots, some 74% percent of them said that chatbots would "probably" or "definitely" be helpful to their students and staff members.**

Those respondents who are currently using chatbots in some capacity at their institutions were then asked if this had been helpful to their students and staff members. 22% said "Yes, definitely," while another 59% said "Yes, somewhat," for a total of **81% of chatbot users saying this had been helpful.**

Is your institution currently using chatbots to respond to student inquiries, providing immediate answers to commonly asked questions?

2% Yes, extensively
23% Yes, in a limited capacity
75% No
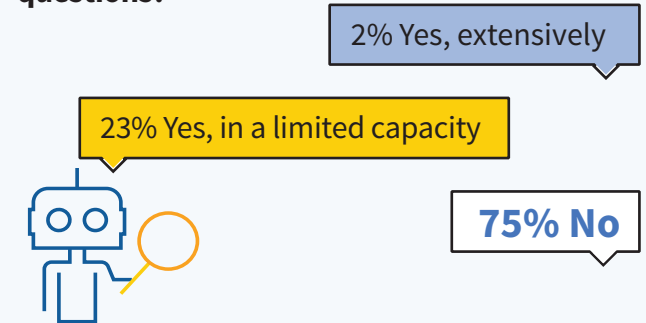
Do you believe that using chatbots in this capacity would be helpful to your students and staff members?

11% Yes, definitely
63% Yes, probably
7% No, probably not
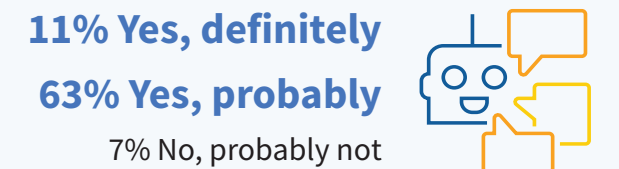
"The survey demonstrated that higher education leaders know that AI could be a useful tool, both for them and their students," says Daniel Woodcock, Director of Help Desk Strategy at Blackboard Student Services. **"Many institutions struggle to handle a large volume of student inquiries, many of which are repetitive."**

"Blackboard Student Services provides a solution, through a chatbot that allows students to receive immediate answers to their most common questions. As a result, students can spend more time on learning, and staff members can focus more energy on strategic initiatives and higher-level work, resulting in greater student and institutional success."

Blackboard Student Services partners with institutions to leverage innovative technologies and services to make measurable and sustainable impacts on the student experience. This leads to increased ROI, better management of costs, and more efficient and strategic use of resources to ensure the long-term success of both the institution and student.

To learn more, go to blackboard.com/studentservices

*Data taken from the survey of UB subscribers, "AI and Student Services," conducted in January 2020, with 126 respondents participating.

Student Services
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