Dear Colleagues,

The College of Natural Science is pleased to announce the Students Mastering AI Responsibly and Thoughtfully (SMART) Fellowship for Summer 2026.

The SMART Fellowships will be awarded by competitive process to graduate student-mentor pairs who commit to dedicating a portion of their efforts to AI-driven study during summer semester, 2026 (US26). The fellowship will cover student stipend for US26 (equivalent to 1/2-time assistantship). Project mentors can be the primary research advisor/guidance committee chair or another appropriately qualified faculty/staff person at MSU.

Expectations for the SMART Fellows, and their mentors during spring semester 2026 include:

- At least 25% student effort toward a project using AI in research and/or professional development
- Weekly one-on-one meetings with AI Mentor
- Biweekly meetings of the SMART Fellows cohort with members of the NatSci Dean's Office
- Mid-summer written progress report
- Final presentation to MSU community

Eligibility:

- Graduate students must be in good standing in a NatSci graduate program or NatSci-affiliated major (e.g., EEB, MPS, PhmTx)
- AI projects may use existing tools or may use novel machine learning approaches

To apply:
Submit the following five documents, submitted as a single PDF, in this order to starn@msu.edu by 3/25/2026 at noon

Application materials:

1. Student CV highlighting scholarly achievements

2. Student-written proposal for AI project. The plan should address the following elements (in any order) in 1-3 pages:
   a. Purpose or goals of the AI project and how many hours per week will be spent pursuing the project goals.
   b. Description of how the AI project provides an advantage over traditional approaches to the project goal(s).
   c. Description of how the project will benefit your own success.
   d. Description of how the approach could be broadly applied to improve graduate student success.
   e. Description of your current/past experience with AI, if any.

f. Description of how your project will benefit from participating in this program as a member of a cohort.

3. Mentor CV

4. Letter of support to participate in the program from primary research advisor/committee chair

5. Letter of commitment from AI mentor, if different from the research advisor. The AI mentor should highlight their own experience using AI or machine learning tools, if any.

6. Most recent graduate guidance committee report or student annual performance review (no older than 12 months prior to nomination due date).