CSUNny — Cal State Northridge's AI Text-Messaging Chatbot: A Four-Year RCT Finds Administrative Nudges Work but No Effect on GPA or Persistence

AI in Education · Good practice · United States of America

Quality score: 47/100

Evidence strength: Moderate

Summary

CSUN's AI chatbot CSUNny texts students reminders and answers their questions. A four-year RCT (about 8,700 first-years) found much higher completion of time-sensitive tasks, e.g. +34 pp on-time course registration, but no effect on GPA, credits, persistence or graduation.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Evidence of learning impact	1/3
Equity & inclusion	1/3
Transparency, ethics & data protection	2/3
Teacher capability & pedagogy	1/3
Scalability & sustainability	2/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

C-NAPSE web research — accessed 2026-11-17

California State University, Northridge (CSUN); Mainstay (platform); Annenberg Institute at Brown University (evaluator) — accessed 2026-11-17

EdWorkingPaper 26-1409 — Scaling student support with conversational AI (Mata, Russell & Page, 2026) — accessed 2026-11-17

CSUN Admissions and Records — CSUNny — accessed 2026-11-17

LAist — CSUN's new chatbot nags students to show up for class — accessed 2026-11-17

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