

Old Dominion University and Google Public Sector Launch AI Incubator to Advance Research and Drive Student Success

Powered by Google Cloud, multi-year initiative strives to establish ODU as the model for AI-powered university innovation and smart campuses nationwide

NORFOLK, Va. and WASHINGTON, Oct. 29, 2025 [PRNewswire](#) -- **Google Public Sector Summit '25** -- Old Dominion University (ODU) and Google Public Sector today announced the creation of a first-of-its-kind incubator, known as MonarchSphere, that embeds artificial intelligence (AI) into the core of university research, teaching, operations, and workforce innovation. With MonarchSphere, ODU is creating an initiative that enables educators, researchers, and faculty to integrate AI across the university's systems to accelerate discovery, personalize learning, and provide students with new credentials and career opportunities.

Powered by Google Cloud's portfolio of AI offerings including the Vertex AI platform, Google's advanced family of AI models, including Gemini, and agentic AI services, the MonarchSphere incubator is now the university's centralized innovation hub that powers personalized education and connects ODU's entire academic, research, and operational environment through a unified digital intelligence system.

"This partnership with Google Public Sector marks a defining moment for Old Dominion University — demonstrating how a forward-focused, future-ready institution can harness the power of cloud and AI to reimagine learning, accelerate discovery, and expand opportunity for students and communities across higher education and beyond," said Dr. Brian O. Hemphill, President of Old Dominion University.

For ODU, MonarchSphere is a key initiative for exploring AI innovation and developing new credentialing programs. For students, it is a direct pathway to AI career readiness, offering hands-on experiences, practical skill development, and valuable micro-credentials that meet workforce needs.

"By partnering with Old Dominion University, we are creating a new model for innovation at every level - from research, to student learning, to operations," said Brent Mitchell, Vice President, Go-to-Market, Google Public Sector. "ODU's commitment to creating an integrated approach to AI innovation will help cultivate the next generation of leaders. By empowering students, researchers, and educators to foster a culture of innovation, this incubator will benefit the ODU community and serve as a model for institutions nationwide."

The MonarchSphere incubator will focus on several key areas:

- **Accelerating research and innovation:** ODU researchers now have access to powerful computational capabilities through Google Cloud, dramatically reducing the time required for the integration of complex AI and big data projects. Faculty researchers can run models more efficiently—in days or even hours, rather than waiting months. For example, genomic AI research training that previously took 24-40 days on ODU's on-premise clusters can be completed in 2-3 days using Google Cloud, a 12-16x improvement, accelerating discovery in health sciences, coastal resilience, and cybersecurity.
- **Google AI for Education Accelerator:** ODU is an early member of the [Google AI for Education Accelerator](#), an initiative to support institutions bringing the latest AI and career-ready training to higher education institutions nationwide. This includes no-cost access to the [Google Career Certificates](#) and [AI training](#) and access to learning opportunities from Google teams, as well as other leading institutions. ODU is distinguished by its intentional integration of these AI learning opportunities across the curriculum, faculty development, and workforce programs—transforming them from standalone offerings into an integrated, institution-wide framework for AI fluency and innovation.
- **Student success and career pathways:** ODU is using Google Cloud to enhance student success at every stage of their academic careers, from course creation to career placement. By mapping ODU's course catalog with Google Cloud career pathways tools, students can identify career opportunities and academic paths that align with their goals. ODU and Google are also developing a new AI-powered transcript evaluation tool to streamline the advising process for both new students and those with prior college experience, helping them navigate courses and career paths. Finally, to prepare students for AI-driven careers, ODU faculty are piloting Google Colab Enterprise in advanced AI courses, giving students access to GPUs powerful enough to train deep learning models, previously impossible with on-prem systems.
- **Enhanced course development and delivery:** With the use of Google Cloud tools—including Gemini Pro and Notebook LM—ODU has streamlined course development, enabling instructional designers and faculty to generate course summaries, outlines, and learning materials in minutes instead of weeks. This generative-AI workflow accelerates collaboration, reduces production timelines, and enhances consistency across academic programs. In collaboration with Google Public Sector, ODU is also developing an AI course assistant tool for both online courses and technology-enhanced classrooms. The tool provides real-time support, guidance, and personalized feedback to learners. This human-

in-the-loop approach ensures instructional quality, empowers faculty to focus on pedagogy and creativity, and creates a more adaptive and impactful learning experience across the university.

"We've already seen tremendous success in integrating Google Cloud technology across our institution," said Dr. Chrysoula Malogianni, Associate Vice President of Innovation at ODU. "We're focused on creating a truly integrated ecosystem where students, researchers, and faculty can harness the power of AI to solve real-world problems and build a more dynamic, responsive learning environment. We've moved beyond a one-size-fits-all model to create a personalized experience that equips everyone with the skills to thrive in the modern workforce."

In addition to supporting students, faculty, and educators across campus, MonarchSphere is designed to extend its impact into the Virginia community. The AI incubator will offer external organizations, such as local municipalities and small businesses, the opportunity to utilize AI for enhancing business operations and efficiency. Many of these entities would otherwise lack the resources to implement such advanced systems independently. This open model supports ODU's mission as a public R1 institution to benefit the wider community and enable real-world research implementation.

For more information on how Old Dominion University is leveraging AI for societal impact, visit <https://www.odu.edu/artificial-intelligence>. To learn more about how Google Public Sector is driving innovation in education, visit goo.gle/higher-ed.

About Google Cloud

Google Cloud is the new way to the cloud, providing AI, infrastructure, developer, data, security, and collaboration tools built for today and tomorrow. Google Cloud offers a powerful, fully integrated and optimized AI stack with its own planet-scale infrastructure, custom-built chips, generative AI models and development platform, as well as AI-powered applications, to help organizations transform. Customers in more than 200 countries and territories turn to Google Cloud as their trusted technology partner.

About Old Dominion University

Old Dominion University (ODU), located in Norfolk, is Virginia's forward-focused public doctoral research university with more than 24,000 students. A top R1 research institution offering rigorous academics, ODU is recognized nationally for academic excellence, social mobility and access. Military friendly and home to an energetic residential community and robust initiatives that currently contribute \$3.8 billion annually to Virginia's economy, ODU is a leader in the commonwealth. Macon & Joan Brock Virginia Health Sciences at Old Dominion University, founded July 1, 2024, represents the most comprehensive health sciences center in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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