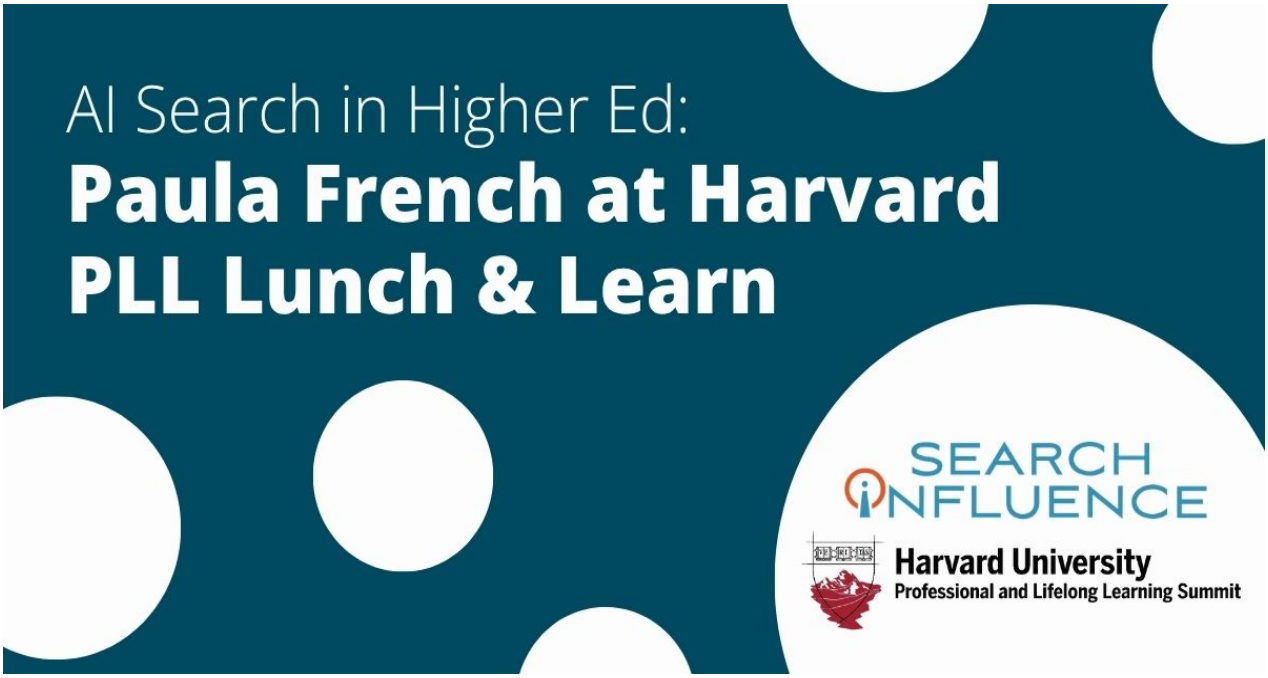

Search Influence Director Paula French Presents on AI Search at Harvard Professional & Lifelong Learning Lunch & Learn

July 14, 2026

NEW ORLEANS, LA - July 14, 2026 -
Paula French, Director of Sales and Marketing at Search Influence, was invited to present a Lunch & Learn session on AI search for Harvard University's Professional & Lifelong Learning community earlier this spring. Her presentation, Winning AI Search, examined how AI tools are reshaping the way prospective students discover and evaluate programs, and what institutions can do to stay visible as that shift accelerates.

Harvard's Professional & Lifelong Learning division spans the schools and units that serve working professionals and lifelong learners. Its Lunch & Learn sessions give the teams responsible for marketing and enrollment a chance to hear from practitioners working on emerging challenges, and French was asked to lead a session on AI search.

Search Influence works within the Harvard ecosystem as the digital marketing partner for the Program on

Negotiation (PON) at Harvard Law School. The agency's higher education digital marketing work also includes institutions such as the Tulane School of Professional Advancement and Tufts University College, giving French a close view of how AI search is changing program discovery for online and continuing education audiences.

French's session drew on Search Influence and UPCEA?s research study, AI Search in Higher Education: How Prospects Search in 2025, which found that half of prospective students now use AI tools as part of their research process, 79% read Google's AI Overviews, and 56% are more likely to trust institutions that appear as AI-cited sources. Traditional search engines remain the most common starting point, at 84%, but AI tools have taken on a role that increasingly shapes which programs make a student's short list.

The session stayed practical. French walked through how organic search underpins AI search visibility, the content structures that align with how students prompt AI tools, and the signals institutions can strengthen across the channels they already manage ? a starting point she framed as workable for teams of any size.

"Being asked to present to Harvard's professional and lifelong learning community was a real honor, and it speaks to how seriously institutions are now taking AI search," said French. "What I hope people took away is that this isn't as daunting as it can feel. Universities have more control over their AI visibility than they realize, and much of the work builds on the organic search foundations they already have."

French joined Search Influence in 2009, when the agency was a nine-person team, and has helped grow it into a nationally recognized higher education digital marketing agency. She has spent her career helping institutions align digital marketing strategy with how prospective students actually search, and has presented at UPCEA and the AMA Symposium for the Marketing of Higher Education.

Learn more about Search Influence's work in higher education at searchinfluence.com.

About Search Influence

Search Influence is a woman-owned, ROI-focused digital marketing agency that helps institutions drive prospects into and through the recruitment funnel with analytics-backed strategies, including organic and AI SEO and paid digital advertising. Founded in 2006, Search Influence's core purpose is to optimize potential. The agency collaborates with well-regarded brands and institutions both nationally and locally in New Orleans, Louisiana. Clients include the Tulane School of Professional Advancement, Tufts University College, Associated Hearing Professionals, Greater Baton Rouge Signs, New Orleans & Company, Center for Restorative Breast Surgery, and Audubon Nature Institute.

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Search Influence

Search Influence, a national SEO and digital advertising agency since 2006, delivers demonstrable ROI for clients. Specialties include SEO, Paid Advertising, and Analytics. In-house experts collaborate with clients for results. Also an informative blog.

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