

Data Governance and Systems of Record

The University is the authoritative source of all data rather than any particular system. Individual departments are stewards of the data within their spheres of responsibility; the University Data Committee (UDC) is the overall governing body for data and provides guidance when data management and usage intersects departmental stewardship.

Each area should have access to the data they need in order to perform their essential functions. Departments that share responsibility for maintaining specific data need to collaborate to collect and maintain that data.

The UDC works alongside departments to:

1. Help them determine what data they steward,
2. Define where the intersections of department data stewardships exist, and
3. Provide guidelines for best practices to synchronize the places where those intersections exist.
4. Review and approve any new system to ensure we don't already have appropriate systems in place.

Review Guidelines

When an office is considering the need to purchase new software, especially when the purpose is to acquire and maintain data, the office should consult both IT and the UDC in advance to discuss the following questions:

- Are there sufficient human resources in IT to support the product?
- Is the system compliant with FERPA, GDPR, and other privacy regulations?
- Does the system duplicate other systems available on campus?
- Are there alternative lower cost solutions or other solutions already available on campus?
- Will the system need to intersect with other data systems on campus?
- Will the office be maintaining data used by other offices on campus?

For relatively minor items, only the chair of the UDC needs to be informed. He or she will determine if there is a need for additional review. For more complex systems or those that will clearly intersect with other systems, the UDC will review the proposal. Requests that require expedited approval may necessitate review by three members of the committee.

System of Record

The University is the authoritative source for data rather than any one system. Data that is maintained or used by multiple areas needs to be synchronized among the different approved systems that need it; all systems must have the most accurate and up-to-date information. Data is owned and stewarded by offices rather than belonging to a particular system. This approach to data management is steward-centric rather than software-centric.

However, although data is stewarded by offices, it is stored within systems. A system of record is the authoritative source for a data field, when that field can exist in multiple systems within the organization. There can only be one system of record for any given field. Within a steward-centric system, it is the responsibility of the data steward to ensure that other areas that need the data can be

assured of data accuracy and availability. When new software is acquired, it is incumbent on the data steward(s) to ensure that it will work with other system and that the associated data is accurate.

Each field in the system of record has a specific definition and specific attributes. These include where the data element is stored, maintained, and how it is synchronized among systems.

An office that is pushing data is responsible to make sure the data is moving correctly; an office receiving data is responsible for making sure the data is being received correctly. The primary responsibility is on the office that is purchasing a new system to ensure that the data definitions and standards of the receiving office are being met. IT is uniquely positioned to work with offices that need to synchronized their data.

In general, Colleague is currently considered the default system of record for student, vendor, financial, and employee information. More importantly, other systems may be used to maintain that data as long as it has been vetted by the committee, the department using it, and the University administration. Data stewards are the Offices of the Registrar for student data, Financial Aid for financial aid data, HR for employee, Advancement for donations, Admissions for admission data (trad or nontrad), Athletics for athletes, etc.

For existing systems, offices should continue to work together to identify any data management issues, determine questions of data ownership, and ensure smooth synchronization. When offices are unable to reach a common solution, they should come to the UDC to resolve any conflicts.