University of Maine System

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE LETTER

SUBJECT: Data Governance

**Purpose:** The administrative practices described herein establish the structure, expectations, and authority necessary to ensure that the University of Maine System (UMS) has a comprehensive data governance strategy encompassing all UMS campuses.

**Overview:** As highly complex organizations, universities rely on data from an array of sources to manage and improve on all aspects of university operations, such as finance, admissions, facilities maintenance, advancement, scheduling, student performance and retention, information technology, etc. Maximizing the effectiveness of all decisions underpinned by institutional data requires a multi-faceted Data Governance framework, consisting of a collection of policies, procedures, standards, management expectations, security requirements, and reporting methods – all of which are designed to guarantee the integrity and ethical use of data across the UMS. In particular, data standards that delineate the manner in which data are defined, stored, managed, accessed and distributed are essential constructs requiring fastidious attention and adherence from all parties. Standards exist to guarantee that available data are, at a minimum, valid, consistent, and reliable (i.e., data integrity), as well as easily understood and accessible across campuses.

**UMS Data Governance Structure:** The goals of the Data Governance structure are twofold: (a) to establish a decision-making channel and (b) to provide a framework for all UMS universities to collaborate, discuss, and provide input regarding issues of data governance. To meet these goals, the UMS data governance structure consists of three organizational levels for input and decisions: the University Functional Committees (UFC), the Data Advisory Committee (DAC), and the Data Governance Council (DGC).

A. **University Functional Committees (UFCs)** - The UFCs are multi-campus groups of employees who perform similar roles at each UMS University. As such, these multi-campus committees represent functional areas in common across the UMS universities: Finance, HR, Student Records/Registrar, Student Financials/Bursar, Admissions/Recruitment, Financial Aid, Institutional Research, System Wide Advising, Transfer Officers, and Advancement/Development.

B. **Data Advisory Committee (DAC)** – The DAC is a multi-university group that collects issues, and discusses opportunities, threats, and solutions regarding the stewardship of UMS data. Future appointments to the DAC will be made by the DGC on the basis of nominations from the UFCs and DGC direct appointments that maintain coverage of additional areas, such as, but not limited to, Provosts, Faculty, and Enrollment Managers.

C. **Data Governance Council (DGC)** - The DGC serves as the executive governing body for issues pertaining to data governance throughout the University of Maine System. The DGC reports to and advises the UMS Chancellor on matters of data governance, but also receives input and recommendations from the DAC for action, with the understanding that not all issues...
necessarily require DAC input. The Chancellor will bring issues to the President's Council for input on an as-needed basis.

The collective action of these committees is predicated on three principles:

- all data generated from the campuses in the University of Maine System (UMS) are system-wide assets, protected and leveraged to benefit all UMS institutions and stakeholders. This policy applies to all public and confidential data, including both original and reproductions, generated across the UMS in the course of System universities' operations. This APL does not apply to data created, collected, or analyzed for the purpose of research that does not require the use of Institutional Data.

- the three-tier committee structure provides opportunities for input from the campus through system levels.

- on the basis of input from, and collaborative deliberation with, the UFCs and the DAC, the DGC serves as the authority, under the Chancellor's supervision, for all matters related to data governance to be used across the UMS campuses, e.g., policies, procedures, standards, management, security, and reporting. Accordingly, campus personnel will be accountable for the implementation of standards and processes approved by the DGC. UMS Data Governance is not intended to supersedes federal and state rules and regulations, but to promote and reinforce them.

**Process:** Requests for review of a data standard, policy, reporting requirement, etc. should be submitted to the Chair of the DAC. Normally, requests would come to the DAC through one of the UFCs. On the basis of the request, the DAC will perform an initial review and prepare a pre-proposal for consideration by the DGC. If the pre-proposal is approved by the DGC, the request will be prioritized into existing work of the DAC for further inquiry and appropriate action or recommendations. Changes to existing data standards or adoption of new standards require final approval by the DGC through this process.

Reference:

Employee Protection of Data

Data Policy Issues Process

APPROVED: __________________________

Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

*Appointments to the DAC are determined by the DGC on the basis of nominations from the UFCs. The DGC may appoint additional members to the DAC as needed. The DGC will appoint a Chair on the basis of nominations from the DAC. The DAC Chair will appoint an Operations Assistant. The DAC will meet monthly via video conferencing. The DAC Chair may schedule additional meetings when necessary to fulfill the duties of the committee.*
**Membership of the DGC will be determined annually by the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs according to the issues under consideration and the needs of the UMS. Typically, membership will be selected from senior administrative officers, such as the Chief Information Officer, the Chief Student Affairs Officer, the Associate Vice Chancellor or Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Director of Institutional Data Management, or other appropriate staff (possibly including campus leadership as appropriate). Annually, the DGC will elect its chair from the DGC membership.**