

Data Governance & Strategy Council – Charter

Purpose

This Data Governance and Strategy Council framework outlines the formal and informal roles and responsibilities of those who lead, manage, control, and utilize data at Montana State University (MSU). The Council is sponsored by the Vice President of Information Technology & Chief Information Officer, with delegated responsibilities to the Chief Data Officer as Chair.

The data governance and strategy council is charged with carrying out the building blocks of a data culture, data practices, data infrastructure, and data strategy to drive impact at MSU.

Goals

Collectively this Council will:

- Advance a culture where data are understood as an asset, valued, secure, and used.
- Sets priorities for data governance and analytics strategy, aligned with institutional information needs and goals.
- Review and approve data governance policies and practices (i.e. data classification, permission and access, data dictionary).
- Inform the prioritization and development of Edify IDW.
- Work to apply new or refined business processes for data quality and reporting.
- Inform the prioritization and development of a 3-year Data Roadmap following Edify implementation.
- Champion data governance and data use to their areas.
- Reconcile data conflicts and achieve consensus on use of information system data fields.

Council Membership

Additional details of these members are located in the Appendix A: Roles & Responsibilities section.

- Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, Ryan Knutson
- Chief Data Officer (Chair), Luke Schalewski
- Associate Chief Data Officer, Mary Kate Blake
- Chief Information Security Officer, John Williams
- Associate Chief Information Officer, Justin van Almelo
- Faculty Representatives, Sara Mannheimer & Elizabeth Johnson
- Vice Provost Curriculum, Assessment, and Accreditation, Tracy Dougher
- Data Stewards (below)

Data Governance Roles and Accountability Structure

While not all data governance roles hold seats on the Council, the University's data governance framework is organized around four core roles that provide accountability across data domains and subdomains. Additional details of these roles are located in the Appendix A: Roles & Responsibilities section.

- **Executive Sponsor (Strategic Oversight):** Provides strategic leadership for the data domain, ensures alignment with institutional priorities, and champions effective and responsible use of data across the university.
- **Data Steward (Decision Authority):** Holds primary decision-making authority for data policies, standards, governance practices, and analytics prioritization within the data subdomain. Appointed by Executive Sponsors.
- **Data Custodian (Implementation Governance):** Implements governance practices, manages data definitions and quality, maintains data within operational systems and performs day-to-day data management activities.
- **IT Lead (Technical Configuration and Advisory Role):** Provides technical guidance on system configuration and implications. Advises Data Custodians and Data Stewards on technical setup, tests viability, and recommends alternatives that support effective data use and system functionality.

Governance Structure Roles by Data Domain and Subdomain

Data Domain	Data Subdomain	Executive Sponsor	Data Steward	Data Custodian(s) (TBD)	IT Lead(s) (TBD)
Academic & Faculty Affairs	Courses	Elizabeth Burroughs, Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost	Tony Campeau, Registrar	—	Jen Moser, Nate Fromelt
Academic & Faculty Affairs	Faculty Retention, Promotion & Tenure; Academic Technology	Elizabeth Burroughs, Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost	Durward Sobek, Vice Provost	—	Ann Robinson, Taylor Coghlan
Academic & Faculty Affairs	Graduate Admissions	Elizabeth Burroughs, Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost	Matthew Lovern, Vice Provost and Director of the Graduate School	—	Laura Collins, Jen Moser, Nate Fromelt
Academic & Faculty Affairs	Library	Elizabeth Burroughs, Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost	Doralyn Rossmann, Dean of Library	—	—
Administration & Finance	Auxiliaries	Terry Leist, Vice President of Administration & Finance	Duane Morris, Associate Vice President Auxiliary Services	—	—
Administration & Finance	Budgets	Terry Leist, Vice President of Administration & Finance	Mackenzie Seeley, Budget Director	—	Elizabeth Olson, Tom Hoffman
Administration & Finance	Employee Records	Terry Leist, Vice President of Administration & Finance	Jeannette Grey Gilbert, Chief Human Resources Officer	—	Ann Robinson, Taylor Coghlan
Administration & Finance	Facilities Management	Terry Leist, Vice President of Administration & Finance	John How, Associate Vice President of University Services	—	—
Administration & Finance	Financial Services	Terry Leist, Vice President of Administration & Finance	Megan Lasso, Associate Vice President Financial Services	—	Elizabeth Olson, Tom Hoffman

Data Domain	Data Subdomain	Executive Sponsor	Data Steward	Data Custodian(s) (TBD)	IT Lead(s) (TBD)
Administration & Finance	Residence Life	Terry Leist, Vice President of Administration & Finance	Jeff Bondy, Director University Student Housing	—	Elizabeth Olson, Tom Hoffman
Administration & Finance	Student Accounts	Terry Leist, Vice President of Administration & Finance	Ryan Christensen, Director of Student Accounts	—	—
Administration & Finance	University Police Department	Terry Leist, Vice President of Administration & Finance	Mike Stanley, Chief of Police	—	—
Information Technology	Cybersecurity	Ryan Knutson, Vice President of Information Technology and CIO	John Williams, Chief Information Security Officer	—	—
Legal	Legal	Kellie Peterson, Legal Counsel	Kellie Peterson, Legal Counsel	—	—
Research	Research Administration	Alison Harmon, Vice President for Research and Economic Development	Dale Huls, Associate Vice President for Research Administration	—	—
Research	Research Compliance	Alison Harmon, Vice President for Research and Economic Development	Kirk Lubick, Associate Vice President of Research Integrity and Compliance	—	—
Student	Student Records	Steve Swinford, Vice President for Student Success	Tony Campeau, Registrar	—	Jen Moser, Nate Fromelt
Student	Dean of Students	Steve Swinford, Vice President for Student Success	Matt Caires, Dean of Students	—	—
Student	Financial Aid	Steve Swinford, Vice President for Student Success	James Broscheit, Director of Financial Aid	—	Joe Dayse, Nate Fromelt
Student	Undergraduate Admissions	Steve Swinford, Vice President for Student Success	Mike Ouert, Director of Admissions	—	Jen Moser, Nate Fromelt
Student	Wellness	Steve Swinford, Vice President for Student Success	Betsy Asserson, Associate Vice President, Student Wellness	—	—

Appendix A: Roles & Responsibilities

Executive Sponsors

Executive Sponsors are senior university leaders who provide strategic leadership and oversight for data governance within their assigned data domains and help guide the institution's broader data strategy.

Responsibilities

- Ensure data governance and analytics priorities align with institutional strategy and operational needs.
- Identify strategic data opportunities that support institutional priorities such as student success, financial sustainability, research growth, and operational efficiency.
- Define data subdomains within their domain.
- Appoint and support Data Stewards within their domain.
- Champion responsible data management and data-informed decision making across their divisions.
- Promote adoption of institutional analytics, dashboards, and shared data assets.

Data Stewards

Data Stewards are senior university officials responsible for policy authority, strategic oversight, and operational governance of institutional data within their data subdomain. They hold decision-making authority for data, establish and enforce governance practices, and ensure data supports institutional priorities, compliance, and decision-making.

Responsibilities

- Provide authority and accountability for institutional data within their data subdomain.
- Establish and approve policies, standards, and governance practices for data within their subdomain.
- Ensure institutional data within their subdomain supports strategic planning, reporting, and regulatory requirements.
- Establish and maintain data definitions, business rules, and metadata within their subdomain.
- Maintain consistent terminology and shared definitions across systems.
- Set expectations for data accuracy, completeness, and consistency.
- Monitor and address data quality issues in coordination with Data Custodian(s).
- Classify data within their subdomain according to sensitivity and security requirements.
- Approve access and appropriate use of sensitive or restricted data within their subdomain.
- Support development of shared institutional metrics and reporting aligned with strategic priorities.

- Collaborate with other Data Stewards to resolve cross-domain data issues.
- Provide direction to Data Custodians responsible for operational data management.
- Partner with CDO and ACDO to advance institutional data governance and data strategy initiatives.
- Resolve escalated governance or policy issues in coordination with the CDO.

Data Custodians

Data Custodians are operational staff responsible for the day-to-day management, maintenance, and technical handling of institutional data within systems. They implement standards, definitions, and procedures established through the data governance program.

Responsibilities

- Maintain and update data within operational systems in their subdomain.
- Follow approved data definitions, standards, and business rules across systems.
- Ensure data is entered and maintained according to established standards.
- Identify, report, and resolve data errors, inconsistencies, or quality issues in their subdomain in coordination with Data Stewards.
- Coordinate with IT, the IT Leads, and analytics teams supporting data systems and reporting.
- Work with the University Data & Analytics team to maintain the data dictionary and Edify SQL models.

IT Leads

Provides technical guidance on system configuration and implications. Advises Data Custodians and Data Stewards on technical setup, tests viability, and recommends alternatives that support effective data use and system functionality.

Responsibilities

- Technical configurations and implications to reflect existing definition and data needs for systems
- Technical guidance and consultation role to provide direction to data custodians and stewards on how to setup a system to meet business process needs
- Evaluate solutions on data application, review viability, test, and recommend alternatives

Chief Data Officer

The Chief Data Officer (CDO) provides institutional leadership for the University's data governance program and enterprise data strategy, ensuring institutional data is trusted, accessible, and effectively used to support planning, decision-making, and innovation.

Responsibilities

- Lead and oversee the University's data governance program.
- Develop and advance the institution's enterprise data and analytics strategy.
- Establish and maintain the institutional data governance framework.
- Develop and manage data policies, standards, and governance processes.
- Coordinate governance activities across the Data Governance & Strategy Council, Executive Sponsors, Data Stewards, Data Custodians, and IT Leads.
- Identify and prioritize institutional data initiatives that support strategic planning, student success, financial sustainability, and research growth.
- Promote responsible data management and a culture of data-informed decision-making.
- Align governance, analytics, and technology initiatives with institutional strategy.
- Advise senior leadership on institutional data needs, capabilities, and opportunities.

Associate Chief Data Officer

The Associate Chief Data Officer (ACDO) supports implementation and operational coordination of the University's data governance program and enterprise data strategy.

Responsibilities

- Support implementation and day-to-day coordination of the data governance program.
- Facilitate collaboration among Executive Sponsors, Data Stewards, Data Custodians, and IT Leads.
- Coordinate governance councils, working groups, and data initiatives.
- Support development and maintenance of institutional data policies and standards.
- Assist in identifying and implementing high-impact data and analytics initiatives.
- Promote best practices in data management, data quality, and analytics.

Vice Provost Curriculum, Assessment, and Accreditation

The Vice Provost for Curriculum, Assessment, and Accreditation provides academic leadership and institutional expertise related to curriculum, academic assessment, accreditation, and academic quality. This role ensures that data governance and analytics priorities support academic planning, continuous improvement, institutional effectiveness, and accreditation expectations.

Responsibilities

- Provide leadership and subject matter expertise on curriculum, academic assessment, accreditation, and institutional effectiveness within data governance and analytics discussions.
- Ensure data definitions, metrics, and reporting practices related to curriculum, programs, learning outcomes, assessment, and accreditation are accurate, consistent, and aligned with institutional needs.
- Advise on data needs and reporting expectations associated with accreditation, academic program review, assessment of student learning, and continuous improvement.
- Support development of shared institutional metrics related to academic quality, instructional effectiveness, student learning, and program outcomes.
- Promote alignment between academic governance processes, accreditation requirements, and institutional data governance practices.
- Support resolution of cross-domain data issues involving academic programs, curriculum, assessment, accreditation, and institutional reporting.

Chief Information Security Officer

The Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) oversees the security and protection of institutional data and information systems.

Responsibilities

- Ensure the security, integrity, and availability of institutional data systems.
- Implement technical safeguards and security controls protecting institutional data.
- Support compliance with applicable regulatory and security requirements.
- Collaborate with data governance leadership to align data policy, security practices, and technology systems.
- Provide guidance on data protection, risk management, and information security practices.

Faculty Representative

The Faculty Representative provides faculty perspectives related to teaching, research, academic assessment, and scholarly data use are reflected in institutional data governance and analytics decisions.

Responsibilities

- Represent faculty interests, priorities, and concerns in data governance and strategy discussions.
- Provide input on how institutional data policies, standards, and analytics initiatives relate to faculty experiences

- Offer faculty perspective on data definitions, metrics, and reporting related to student outcomes, instructional activity, research productivity, and academic performance.
- Help identify opportunities where shared data assets and analytics can enhance teaching effectiveness, student success, research insight, and academic planning.

Data Conflicts, Escalation, and Appeals

Purpose

Data governance conflicts may arise when there is disagreement or uncertainty regarding data access, data definitions, data quality, reporting standards, appropriate use, stewardship responsibilities, or the interpretation of institutional data policy. Conflicts may involve Data Stewards, Data Custodians, IT Leads, requesting units, Executive Sponsors, or other offices with compliance, privacy, security, or operational responsibilities.

Initial Resolution Process

Conflicts should first be addressed through discussion among the involved Data Steward(s), Data Custodian(s), IT Lead(s), requesting unit, and other relevant subject matter experts. The Chief Data Officer will facilitate this process by clarifying the issue, identifying the affected data domain(s), documenting the concern, gathering relevant information, identifying policy or compliance considerations, and supporting alignment among the involved parties.

Escalation to Executive Sponsor(s)

If the conflict cannot be resolved through facilitated discussion, the Chief Data Officer will prepare an escalation summary for the appropriate Executive Sponsor(s).

The escalation summary should include:

- The issue or decision needed
- Affected data, systems, reports, or processes
- Involved parties
- Relevant policies, standards, or definitions
- Areas of agreement and disagreement
- Known risks
- Compliance, privacy, or security considerations
- Available options
- Any recommendation from the Chief Data Officer and/or Data Steward(s), as appropriate

Executive Sponsor Decision-Making

Executive Sponsors are responsible for resolving conflicts within their data domains and for ensuring that decisions align with institutional priorities, compliance obligations, privacy and security expectations, reporting integrity, and responsible data use. When a conflict spans multiple data domains, the relevant Executive Sponsors will make a joint decision. CIO and VP University Information Technology should be consulted as needed. If Executive Sponsors are unable to reach agreement, the issue may be referred to President Tessman for final decision.

Documentation of Decisions

Decisions will be documented by University Data & Analytics.

Documentation should include:

- The issue
- Affected data, systems, reports, or processes
- Involved parties
- Decision authority
- Final decision
- Rationale
- Conditions of use, if applicable
- Implementation steps
- Responsible parties
- Effective date
- Review or expiration date, where applicable
- Required follow-up actions

Appeals and Reconsideration

A party directly affected by a decision may request reconsideration if there is:

- New information
- A material change in circumstances
- Evidence that relevant policy or compliance requirements were not considered
- Concern that the decision creates significant institutional risk

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Chief Data Officer.

Appeal Review and Final Decision

The Chief Data Officer will coordinate review by the appropriate Executive Sponsor(s) and any relevant compliance, privacy, security, legal, or policy offices.

Appeal outcomes will be documented and communicated to the affected parties.

Unless otherwise specified by institutional policy, the appeal decision is final.