

## Washington State University Policies and Best Practices for the use of Academic Analytics Data

Academic Analytics (AA) collects data about individual faculty scholarship (including publications, citations, and external funding) from public databases and organizes the information so that intra- and inter-institutional comparisons can be made for PhD-granting institutions. AA data can be used to help understand strengths and weaknesses of academic programs relative to peer institutions. Faculty member productivity can be viewed relative to others within their departments/schools and to others at peer institutions. These data can help us identify and enumerate strengths and establish goals for building areas of excellence, but the limits of the tools must be fully understood by all stakeholders, and the tools must be used with transparency by institutional leadership. And while the baseline data provided by AA is collated from public sources, WSU can work with AA to incorporate additional institutional data and correct data errors.

Importantly, while AA data provide important baseline information about scholarly contributions, it will be used in combination with other information including resource allocations and constraints to understand our programs, their context, and their scholarly productivity. Furthermore, there are no public databases related to faculty service and teaching and direct institutional comparisons are not possible for these activities. Consequently, while AA provides valuable new information and tools, it should not be used as a substitute for expert human judgement during decision making.

We will use the following principles and best practices to guide our use of the new AA information while inviting transparency and open discussion with Deans, Chairs and Directors, and Faculty Senate about how AA data should or should not be applied. The opportunity to articulate shared principles will be useful as we make best use of this data.

### Issues that will be addressed using Academic Analytics data:

- Identify meaningful peer and aspirational peer institutions.
- Benchmark departments against peers to draw attention to WSU excellence when advertising units and recruiting faculty and graduate students.
- Identify extramural grant opportunities related to Washington State University strengths.
- Help Chairs and Directors spur award nominations for under-recognized faculty.
- Identify weaknesses in extramural grants and funding areas relative to peers to increase grants training and administrative support.
- Facilitate fact finding by chairs and directors for strategic planning. For example, Chairs and Directors might follow up on the AA data by doing site visits with peer/aspirational peer institutions to find out what has been done differently and proven to be successful at their institutions.
- Provide information for Deans and unit directors to construct data-informed proposals for funding initiatives, programs, and faculty recruitment.
- Provide the government relations team with information for data-informed proposals for biennial and supplemental budget requests.
- Inform decisions about retention offers.

### AA data will not be used by Deans, Chairs or Directors to:

- Drive promotion and tenure deliberations.
- Establish individual merit increases.

### Who will get access to the data?

We are still working on access and data governance policies. At a minimum, data for all academic programs will be accessible to the President's Office, the Provost's Office and the Deans.