

Governance Roles for Utah Center for Data Science

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Overview

This document describes procedures for the Election of the Governing Offices of the Utah Center for Data Science. It also outlines basic responsibilities and expectations of each office.

There will initially be 4 positions of governance in the center.

1. Director
2. Associated Director of Research
3. Associate Director of Outreach
4. Associate Director of Student-Involvement

We will re-evaluate these positions, and roles annually. We may add or contract some roles as it is determined they are redundant or too broad. In recent years many of the activities and responsibilities associated with these roles have shared and handled as they arose. This document is an attempt to add structure to these responsibilities as the center grows.

The term for each position will last for one academic year, roughly September through August. Members can hold positions for more than one consecutive term, and it may be good practice for the same person to hold a role for about 3 consecutive years.

The roles of core and affiliated members are described in the document Membership Plans for Utah Center for Data Science. In short core members are expected to consistently take part in the main center activities, and occasionally serve in leadership roles. Whereas affiliate members are expected to occasionally participate in the main center activities and serve as liaisons to other data-focused areas around the university. Only core members may serve in leadership roles, and vote in electing these leaders and other center business.

Responsibilities of Governance Roles

We overview the intended responsibilities of each governance role here.

Director

The director's role will be to oversee all operations, ensure Associate Directors are on track assisting when necessary, and coordinate budgetary and membership issues. All decisions not explicitly listed otherwise under other roles will be made by the director.

The director will report to the Dean of the College of Engineering (CoE), who oversees the UCDS operations. The director will provide an annual report on center members, activities, and budgets to the Dean of CoE. The UCDS director will have autonomy over the use budget (following university guidelines) and HR issues, but on dispute that cannot be resolved among core members, the Dean of CoE will help resolve issues.

Following the document Membership Plans for Utah Center for Data Science, the director will initiate new core or affiliate membership proposals at the start of each Spring and Fall semester. The meeting may either be over email, or may be called as an in-person meeting.

While each other Associate Director has roles which may require a budget, the Director will be in charge of overseeing the entire budget of the center, and can make small decisions about unexpected expenses which arise. At the start of each director term, the Director will assign an approximate budget to the tasks associated with each Associate Director; these should generally be planned with each Associate Director.

It is also expected that the director should take an active and leading role in securing ongoing funding sources. This includes from local companies, from associated departments and colleges, and by organizing funding proposals from national agencies (e.g., NSF) and endowments.

Associate Director of Research

The Associate Director of Research (ADR) will primarily be in charge of running and overseeing the "Data Science Seminar." This includes organizing a speaker for the series, updating a webpage with a schedule for the series, coordinating its advertising, and encouraging involvement.

The Seminar should aim to be held roughly once a week, for weeks when the university is holding classes. The ADR may choose to have fewer seminars than once a week to maintain a high quality.

It is expected that the ADR be afforded a budget appropriate to invite several speakers from outside of the Utah. However, speakers within the University of Utah or the state of Utah (who may not require funds to support their travel) who speak to advances in data science (either the development of core techniques or informative use cases) are also appropriate for the seminar.

Associate Director of Outreach

The Associate Director of Outreach (ADO) will coordinate outreach activities of the center.

Initially these outreach activities will be centered around a Utah Data Science Day. Initial versions of these event took place in January 2017 and September 2018, and provided an event where data science researchers around campus can share recent research and skills, to help find new collaborations and share knowledge and resources. Previous variants have coordinated with computing/data-science career fairs which also attracts representatives from local companies.

The ADO should help coordinate a space for this event, attempt to secure sponsorship, arrange for speakers/panels/research fair to take place, and advertise the event. Hopefully industrial sponsorship will pay for most expenses, the ADO can coordinate with the director to use center funds to cover some expenses as needed.

The ADO will also represent (or coordinate representatives) for other opportunities for outreach. This may include representing the the Utah Center for Data Science at other events such as engineer days or meet-ups.

The ADO will also serve as a coordinator with Affiliate Members and handle their membership proposals as laid out in the document Membership Plans for Utah Center for Data Science.

Associate Director of Student-Involvement

The Associate Director of Student-Involvement (ADSI) will coordinate with students and student clubs to encourage student involvement in various data science activities.

The recently formed Utah Data Science Club, which is primarily student led, presents a great opportunity to organized various student activities. These can include events such as company presentations, hack-a-thons, tutorials, and demos. The ADSI will serve as faculty liaison to this club.

The ADSI will coordinate with the Director for budgetary needs to help promote these student involvement activities.

The ADSI should connect with student leaders in data science, and more generally be in charge of advertising to students appropriate events for them.

Appointments, Elections, and Terms

The director will be appointed by the Dean of CoE. The appointment will be for one year, and it will generally be expected that the director will be annually re-appointed to this role for multiple consecutive years. When a new director needs to be appointed, there will be vote, by meeting or email. This will be overseen by the current director, or if there is a conflict of interest or vacancy, this will be overseen by the Associate Director of Research. These votes will be provided to the Dean of CoE, who will use them as guidance to appoint the new Director.

Within 1 month of the start of each Fall semester, an election will be held for each Associate Director position. The director will be in charge of organizing such an election, and in particular will be in charge of finding volunteers among core members to potentially serve each role. Then the Director will hold a vote, and each position can be approved with a plurality vote among core members; ties will be broken by the director.

While the director is responsible for finding some volunteer, any member can nominate themselves for any role. An email to all members is sufficient.

Each term will last for the academic year, until the next vote. Members may serve in roles for multiple consecutive terms – and serving for about 3 consecutive years may be good practice to promote continuity, especially for the role of director.

Creating New or Contracting Old Roles

As the center evolves, certain roles may become more broad or less necessary than currently held. As such these positions and their roles may evolve over time. While there should always be a Director to assume all final responsibility for the center, it may be necessary to create new or contract old Associate Director roles.

Such a creation or contraction can be proposed prior to the vote at the start of the Fall semester. It should be done by proposing an amendment to this document. It requires at least 2/3 of members to approve to amend this document, and hence the set of governing roles.