Principles for Use of Academic Analytics Data at Northeastern University (7/26/19)

Founded in 2005, Academic Analytics LLC (http://www.academicanalytics.com) is a provider of high-quality, custom business intelligence data and solutions for research universities in the United States and abroad. Academic Analytics collects objective scholarly output data produced by individual faculty members (including publications, citations, and external funding), combines those data by department or research center/institute and compares it to aggregate data for like programs at other U.S. universities in the same disciplines. Access to the data is via subscription to an online portal and is password protected. The data will also populate an external-facing website for faculty expert profiles. The faculty expert profiles website (External Discovery Site) shows complete research profile information for each faculty member plus their collaborative network and includes a keyword search function. (See Appendix for a table describing the Academic Analytics suites.)

These data can be used to help enumerate strengths and establish goals for building areas of excellence, but the limits of the data must be fully understood by all stakeholders, and the tools must be used with transparency by university leadership. Because the system includes data on individual faculty members, it is crucial for institutions to specify who has access to which data and for what purposes.

The following principles address the acceptable use of Academic Analytics data at Northeastern University. We are committed to engaging the Northeastern community in exploring constructive uses for this new resource and ensuring that it will be used in ways that are transparent and open to evolution and change.

Data and Data Use

1. The Academic Analytics database captures measures of research activity; other critical activities of faculty members are not measured, including teaching, service, and engagement.

2. In certain disciplines - especially the arts and humanities - there are forms of faculty scholarly activity that are not captured in the Academic Analytics database.

3. When indices of research activity are employed, the components are weighted appropriately using discipline-specific weights derived from nationally recognized sources such as the National Research Council (NRC). However, users of Academic Analytics data have the ability to customize metrics' weights to reflect their own understandings of the discipline, and to account for local variation from national discipline trends.

4. Each faculty member will have access to their own data via the Faculty Insight portal so they can review it for accuracy, designate any data they wish to remain private, internally available, or externally available, and submit requests for correcting omissions or errors. This is an important step for faculty to perform, as the data flows from the Faculty Insight portal to the External Discovery Site.

5. Faculty Insight does not contain any evaluative metrics or benchmarking data and the use of Faculty Insight as an evaluative tool is prohibited.

6. Metrics and comparative data about persons other than oneself will **not** be available to department/division/school faculty members or other individuals. Department chairs will be able to access data from their own departmental programs only relative to peer departments.

7. Metrics and comparative data about persons other than oneself will be available **only** to the Provost and Senior Vice Provost for Research and specific administrators that they designate in the Office of the Provost and Division of Research; College & School Deans/Associate Deans/Assistant Deans; and Provost-designated administrators including the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, the Senior Vice Provost for Budget, Planning and Administration, and research data analysts. Access will be limited to the scope needed for the responsibilities of the position.

8. Any employee of Northeastern who has been granted access to specific data will have permission to view those data only. The specific data may only be shared among individuals at Northeastern who have completed the WebEx training. Metrics regarding individual faculty members should not be shared with others, with the exception of the faculty member.

9. **Allowable, constructive uses for Academic Analytics data at Northeastern include** (exceptions allowed in consultation with the Faculty Senate):

   Use of aggregate, program-level data for strategic planning purposes such as:
   - Analysis of department level strengths and weaknesses in relation to peer departments as part of divisional or departmental reviews
   - Benchmarking units against peers in order to draw attention to Northeastern excellence when advertising the department and recruiting faculty and graduate students
   - Identifying strengths and weaknesses of programs or departments in extramural grants and funding areas relative to peer programs or departments
   - Identification of peer and aspirational peer institutions
   - Academic planning

   Uses of person-level data for purposes such as:
   - Identification of meritorious or under-recognized faculty for honorific award nominations
   - Identification of relevant grant opportunities for faculty
   - Identification of individuals' interdisciplinary relationships and collaborative networks

10. **Northeastern administration at the university, college/school, or department level will not use Academic Analytics for:**

    - Setting salary or merit increases
    - Decisions over retention offers
    - Internal funding decisions
    - Decisions on allocations of faculty lines
    - Promotion and tenure deliberations

11. As per our license with Academic Analytics, Northeastern may display our own content publicly. However, we may not reference specific data or rankings of other institutions by name. Acceptable uses include the following:

- Rankings are listed in units of ten as a minimum (top 10, top 20, etc.)
- No more than three similar institutions may be referenced
- The database year must be stated
- The particular metric is stated

For example, a program could share the following information publicly:

"*Based upon Academic Analytics' 2017 database, Northeastern's program in X is ranked in the top 20 institutions for articles per faculty member, and is in the company of universities such as University A and University B*." It is not permitted to state that Northeastern's program or department ranks higher than specific institutions or groups of institutions (such as the Colonial Group).

Also, it is not permitted to state that "Academic Analytics ranks Northeastern" as better than any of other institution or group of institutions.

Academic Analytics has the right of prior approval for any institutional promotions of this sort. Northeastern will submit any proposed promotional materials to Academic Analytics for approval via University Decision Support. In practice, this approval from Academic Analytics takes 2-5 days.

Processes and Oversight

1. The Associate Vice Provost for Institutional Research and Decision Support will serve as the primary contact between Academic Analytics and Northeastern University.

2. Individuals are required to read this document and complete a WebEx training presentation before access to the Academic Analytics system is granted. Additional training opportunities will be available on campus through University Decision Support as well as occasional campus visits by Academic Analytics.

3. Each dean will choose a designee to serve as the college/school's point of contact for Academic Analytics. College deans and the corresponding College Designee will be granted access to only the data for their College. Others in the Dean's Office who would like access require approval from the Dean and will be granted access to all of the data for their college.

4. University Decision Support will generate the annual official faculty list for Academic Analytics each year, inclusive of tenured/tenure-track and NTT research faculty. This list provides the basis for which faculty "belong" to Northeastern in the Academic Analytics database. Deans and other academic administrators (e.g., Provost, Vice-Provosts) will also be included. Joint appointments plus affiliations with a center or institute will be noted along with the tenure home. This faculty list will be shared with the College Designees for verification.

5. Based on recommendations from the Provost and Senior Vice Provost for Research, specific members of the Office of the Provost and Division of Research staff may have access to all Academic Analytics data.

6. Department chairs, upon approval of the Dean, will have access to their own department's metrics and comparative data, but not to other departments' data.

7. Individual faculty members will have access to their own data via the Faculty Insight portal. They should review their data for accuracy and submit requests for correcting omissions or errors from the Faculty Insight portal.

8. College requests (e.g. training, custom analyses, access) should be submitted to the user's College Designee, who will send requests via University Decision Support to Academic Analytics.

9. Requests for custom analyses for non-college units (e.g., Institutes) should be submitted to Academic Analytics via University Decision Support (academicanalytics@northeastern.edu).

10. A user group will be constituted and will meet regularly to share best practices and suggest training and reporting needs.

11. This document will be reviewed and updated annually each summer. For questions or comments, please contact Rana Glasgal, Associate Vice Provost for Institutional Research and Decision Support, r.glasgal@northeastern.edu or (617) 373-8565.

Please read and acknowledge the statement below and add your name and the date. Send a scanned copy as an email attachment to academicanalytics@northeastern.edu.

☐ I have read the *Principles for Use of Academic Analytics Data at Northeastern University* and understand the proper uses and limitations of the data I will have access to.

Name: Enter your name here

Date: Enter the date here

Appendix

Overview of Academic Analytics suites and functions

	Benchmarking Suite	Discovery Suite
Modules	Academic Analytics benchmarking portal containing data for over 400 research universities in the U.S., organized by institution and discipline, with standardized, aggregated metrics of comparison	Faculty Insight Portal, Research Insight Portal, External Discovery Site
Used for	Strategic planning, high-level benchmarking against peer universities, department review support	Finding subject matter experts within an institution or externally, building research teams, showcasing faculty scholarly activity, and identifying federal funding and honorific award opportunities
Audience	High-level administrators: Provost and applicable Vice Provosts, Deans, Associate Deans for Research	Faculty Insight Portal: Northeastern faculty Research Insight Portal: Northeastern research administrators and analysts; department chairs (only relative to peer departments) External Discovery Site: the public
Data	Academic Analytics comparative database	Faculty Insight and External Discovery Site: Academic Analytics faculty data, faculty self-entered data, and Northeastern data (from Digital Measures, ePAWS, Banner Courses and other sources) Research Insight: Academic Analytics database