

Institutional Data Council

Issue Decision Summary Report: *Aggie Experts Inclusion of Researcher Data*

May 2022

Introduction

The UC Davis strategic plan, *To Boldly Go*, includes a goal of creating a support system to help campus researchers recognize new possibilities for collaboration and initiate partnerships, in support of *Achieving the Next Decade of Research Excellence*. To implement that goal, the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor charged the Library to lead the development of a new online platform, in collaboration with the Office of Research, IET, and various academic and research units.

[Aggie Experts](#) is a pilot project to create a public-facing website for researcher profiles that includes information about UC Davis faculty and other researchers along with their research interests. This includes basic directory information; information about work products such as publications, preprints, conference papers, software, datasets, exhibits, and performances; awards and grants; courses taught; and areas of research expertise (see Appendix I). Faculty have control over the visibility of their entire profile and of individual data elements, e.g., specific publications. A fully comprehensive database of UC Davis researcher contributions does not now exist, and available records will be a continual work in progress as more inputs are added; the user interface is also being further developed to provide greater flexibility and functionality.

Most data in Aggie Experts are acquired from existing computer applications, including campus and systemwide databases, and much of it is routinely available on public websites. Other data will be optionally and voluntarily self-reported by individual researchers. All data can be redacted by the individual researcher. No intellectual property (e.g., articles or datasets) will be included directly in the Aggie Experts.

Faculty and researchers are not required to provide any data to Aggie Experts and can opt out or redact data as needed. The project's goal is for the benefits of participation to create incentives to contribute optional data and actively manage profiles such that expertise can be identified for potential research collaborations, media inquiries as vetted through Strategic Communications, etc.

Aggie Experts is funded as a 3-year pilot to develop the platform and test it with a sample of research-producing units across campus. The College of Engineering is the current pilot partner and other research centers are in discussion to join later this year. The platform is incorporating new data sources in phases with input from faculty on the prioritization of data elements.

To complete the pilot project and comply with UC policy, it is necessary to resolve the question of governance of these data about UC Davis researchers and how the campus authorizes varying uses of it. Specifically, the IDC considered several issues related to faculty data included in the Aggie Experts application:

- Per UC [policy](#), an institutional data “proprietor” must be identified for all data governed by the university. For data about faculty and academic personnel, is the most appropriate UC Davis official for this role is the Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor as the chief academic officer?
- Is the “common core” of public data about researchers and research activities openly sharable by default, with provisions for individual opt-out?
- What guidelines are needed for third parties to access the data, e.g., via an API, to avoid the necessity to review individual access requests?
- What institutional policies and usage agreements should be developed to govern how third parties may request, acquire, and reuse aggregated data from Aggie Experts? Third parties include both campus applications, e.g., MIV, and potentially external commercial or non-profit organizations.

Process and Decisions

In Spring Quarter, 2021, a formal consultation of the Academic Senate was conducted for the faculty’s perspective on these questions. The IDC subsequently discussed the response and developed the following recommendations, now approved:

1. The UC Davis official who serves as the ultimate Trustee (and IS-3 Proprietor) for data about faculty and academic personnel is the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, as the chief academic officer of the university. The Provost may delegate Trustee responsibility to senior academic leadership, e.g., the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, for some academic personnel data.
2. A “common core” of data about researchers and research activities should be designated as openly shared by default, with provisions for individual opt-out. See appendix I for a list for data to be included in the “common core”.
3. While Aggie Experts includes only “common core” and voluntarily contributed data about researchers, access to the API and reuse of retrieved data will be limited by policy to personal, scholarly, and UCOP or UC Davis-specific administrative uses, and exclude access to data redacted by the profile owner.
4. Posting data use terms (e.g., a Data Usage Agreement) on the Aggie Experts website is not required and would likely not be legally enforceable without a ‘click through’ page that requires user acknowledgement of the terms in order to access the database. The California Information Practices Act already prohibits UC from distributing names and addresses of individuals for commercial purposes, from selling or renting the data, unless authorized by another law. This does not, however, prevent third-parties from taking the publicly available data and commercializing it, because this law may not apply to the third-party. It is, however, possible to post a statement of expectation, such as the [Privacy](#)

[Notice](#)¹ posted on the UC Davis Online Directory. While minimally legally enforceable, it expresses the University's wishes and signals to the subjects and providers of the data that the University will respect privacy and protect it to the extent possible.

¹ **Privacy Notice:** This campus directory is the property of University of California, Davis. To protect the privacy of individuals listed herein, in accordance with the State of California Information Practices Act, this directory may not be used, rented, distributed, or sold for commercial purposes.

Appendix I – Data in the “common core”

Aggie Experts includes a “common core” of public data related to researchers and research activities, with opt-out provisions.

Data planned for inclusion:

Biographical

- Name
- Home Department
- Current position
- Additional Affiliations
- Photo (if provided by individual)

Research output metadata²

- Publications (via UC Publication Management System)
- Datasets
- Software
- Exhibits
- Performances
- Conference Papers
- Preprints or other grey literature

Teaching

- Courses taught (via Banner)

Receipts

- Patents
- Grants (via KFS and other sources)

Other/Descriptive (optional and self-reported unless otherwise noted)

- Awards
- Collaborators, by institution and country
- Collaboration interests
- Professional memberships
- Websites of note, e.g., personal, lab or research center sites
- Outside professional activities
- Research interest keywords (automatically generated based on research outputs but can be self-provided)

² Aggie Experts will not directly include primary material such as articles or datasets, only metadata that describes those materials, for example, article or data citations. Metadata will be sourced from trusted external databases or self-reported.