Data Governance Terms and Definitions

Data Classification
Data classification provides a basis for understanding and managing institutional data based on the level of criticality and required confidentiality of the data

Data Dictionary
A reference tool in electronic form that provides full transparency to all GW users of all the data elements and their alias names. A data dictionary usually contains a business definition of each element, business rules, the values that are allowed, source, security and privacy requirements for the data element, and additional metadata deemed important for an organization to maintain about its data assets. (See Appendix A – GW Data Dictionary template)

Data Element
A single property or attribute of an object (entity). For example, name is a data element frequently associated with the entity person; course grade is an attribute associated with a student and a specific class.

Data Integrity
The qualities of validity and reliability conjoined with the accuracy of values. The overall completeness, accuracy, and consistency of data

Data Model
A diagrammatic representation of the objects and their properties that are needed within an organization to accomplish its mission. Also frequently called an Entity/Relationship ("E/R") Diagram.

Data Security (Information Security)

The confidentiality, integrity, availability and regulatory compliance of non-public data/information stored, processed and/or transmitted at the enterprise.

(See the George Washington University Information Security Policy)

Data Value
An instance of a data element. For example, John A. Smith is a name of a specific person.

Departmental/Unit/Local Data Repositories
Various George Washington University departments or units copy institutional data from Systems of Record into their own departmental, unit, or local data repositories. Any Departmental/Unit /Local Data Repository that contains a copy of institutional data are subject to the same policies and procedures which govern the use of institutional data.

Domain
The set (collection) of all possible data values for a specified data element. For example, M and F may be the domain for the data element Gender.

ETL

Processes used to extract, transform and load data in to the data warehouse.

Institutional Data (University Data)
"Institutional Data" is defined as all data elements that are created, received, maintained, or transmitted by GW. Institutional data can be contained in any form, including but not limited to documents, databases, spreadsheets, email and websites; represented in any form, including but not limited to letters, numbers, words, pictures, sounds, symbols, or any combination thereof; communicated in any form, including but not limited to handwriting, printing, photo copying, photographing, and web publishing; and recorded upon any form, including but not limited to papers, maps, films, prints, discs, drives, memory sticks and other computing devices.

Institutional Data Warehouse Repositories
Institutional data is often copied from systems of record into other systems, for ease of access, or to facilitate historical storage of data. GW's UDW is an example of this type of additional data repository. Since systems of record may purge institutional data on defined schedules, these types of additional data repositories contain institutional data that survives beyond what the system of record contains. They then become a system of record holding official values of institutional data. These additional institutional data warehouse repositories are designated by data stewards and are subject to the same policies and procedures that govern the use of institutional data.

Institutional Metadata
"Institutional Meta-data" is additional data collected, maintained, and used that generally describes and defines the processes around the management of institutional data. Examples of institutional metadata include:
- Definitions regarding the purpose, usage and context of institutional data.
- Identification of which system is the official system of record of institutional data.
- Who is responsible for management of institutional data.
- How institutional data is transferred, derived, and stored.
- What security and privacy practices are used to safeguard institutional data.
- Risk and compliance classifications for institutional data.
- Rules around retention of records and data.

Metadata
Data about data. Metadata describes how and when and by whom a particular set of data was collected, and how the data is formatted. Metadata is essential for understanding information stored in the UDW.

Metadata (MDM) Repository
Information about the data in an organization's electronic systems. The repository is used to catalog the meta-data or to enable software development tools and operational systems to assess the meta-data. Data dictionaries are forerunners to repository.

The GW MDM repository will also provide automated workflow to support the process of collecting, triaging, changing, approving and managing data.

System of Record
A "system of record" is an information system that is designated by data stewards as holding official values of institutional data. Official values are the data designated as the most accurate representation of the meaning and context of institutional data elements, which are recorded as facts. Official values are not necessarily the originally entered values, and as such, a system of record may not necessarily be the system where values are originally entered. When questions arise over the meaning or interpretation of data elements or their values, the system of record is used to resolve discrepancies.

University Data Warehouse
A single, trusted, authoritative source of clean, integrated, certified and up-to-date data from various administrative systems.

The business glossary is used to define, collaborate and align critical business definitions. The business glossary helps to improve our understanding of business terminology so we can communicate more effectively across the institution.