Data Governance Committee Update

Spring 2017

Submitted by Dave Paul, Vice President for Student Services, Skagit Valley College

DGC continues to work on a number of issues that are of interest to WSSSC.

First, the DGC is working on a protocol to bring greater uniformity to Course Attributes and Student Groups codes in PeopleSoft. These codes allow for tracking characteristics of courses or students. I’ve attached the latest proposal, and the DGC is hoping for initial feedback prior to our May 25th meeting. Ruby and I can discuss the proposal more in depth at our summer Commission meeting.

Here’s a summary of the issues.

Course Attributes are global codes that are not associated to a specific college. For example, if one college creates a Course Attribute of LCOM to track their learning communities, all other colleges using PeopleSoft will have access to view and use this code. Depending upon the level of security, employees from other colleges may also have the ability to change the description of this code, not realizing that it was originally created for a different college’s purpose.

The Data Governance Committee believes it is necessary to implement a data governance/management approach for these Course Attribute codes before it becomes an unmanageable situation. It is the recommendation of the Data Governance Committee to create a Course Attribute for each college in the PeopleSoft system. This Institution Course Attribute code can then contain that college’s locally defined values. Each college may then locally determine and monitor their own values.

In addition, colleges can use **Course Topics** codes to allow students search for specific types of classes. Course Topics are locally controlled codes and do not affect the broader system. Using Course Topics would allow a college to have a mechanism for students to search for, say, an English 101 class with a STEM emphasis.

**Student Groups** are institution specific and can have code level security applied to limit the access, ability to update and the use of the code. This makes Student Groups much less problematic than Course Attributes; however, we still need to consider the best approach for managing these codes. Unlike Course Attributes, a Student Group does not have values associated to it; each Student Group has its own code. We currently have 408 active Student Group codes available in the system.

Student Groups are effective dated codes. The use of effective dating differs between operational and reporting purposes. For example, the globally defined Student Group codes are used for reporting to the SBCTC Data Warehouse and the Student Group code effective dating is term begin and end date dependent. Locally defined Student Groups may require the effective dating to be set prior to the term begin date for student communication purposes. Because the business use of the Student Groups may differ, it is important that there be a subject matter expert(s) defined by the college to guide the use of these codes. Therefore, we recommend the implementation of a local data governance program for this additional purpose.

The DGC is participating in a WebEx presentation on Monday, May 1st at 2pm for a demonstration on course attributes to support the proposal. Others are welcome to join the webinar as well.

To learn more about best-practices in local data governance, the DGC met earlier this quarter with a representative from Gartner. The presentation was helpful, and the DGC will continue to consider recommendations for college-level data governance protocols regarding:

* The creation, consumption, and storage of data.
* Creating local data groups that include stakeholders who “own” data (such as in Student Services, HR, and Business Office), as well as stakeholders from IT and IR.

Other DGC work:

* DGC has created an Absence Reasons workgroup that is considering a request from TCC to change codes for employee absences. Representatives from HR and BAC are working on a response to the request.
* DGC is considering a request to provide some standardization of people with more than 3 names (first, middle, last).
* DGC is considering how we better communicate with councils, such as ARC and FAC.