

DATA CURATION NETWORK

Governance Model

Adopted June 30, 2023

Version 3

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Version 2, <https://hdl.handle.net/11299/228245>

Adopted: July 20, 2021

Version 1, <https://hdl.handle.net/11299/225742>

Introduction

A key element of [DCN's Sustainability/Transition plan \(Nov 2020\)](#) from a fully grant-supported initiative to a sustainable organization will be the adoption of a **governance model** that will address current and future [mission](#) and [values](#) of the DCN and enable the organization to work towards [strategic goals](#).

We designed the model¹ with the understanding that it may need to be amended or altered as the DCN undergoes its transition into a membership based organization. The DCN Governance model will be reviewed on no less than an annual basis by the DCN Governance Board. Updates or changes to the Governance model will be voted on by the Governance Board, to ensure it accurately reflects and represents the culture, practices and needs of the DCN.

Essential qualities and characteristics of DCN governance

- Governance must embed and uphold the values of the DCN
- Governance will need to be robust enough to support the operations and activities of the DCN, but flexible and lightweight enough to support growth and innovation.
- Governance must enable the DCN not only to survive but to prosper as key individuals transition to different roles or leave the DCN.
- Individual members should have opportunities to participate in DCN governance to the extent that they wish to do so.
- The [DCN Code of Conduct](#) governs member behavior and how we interact with one another.

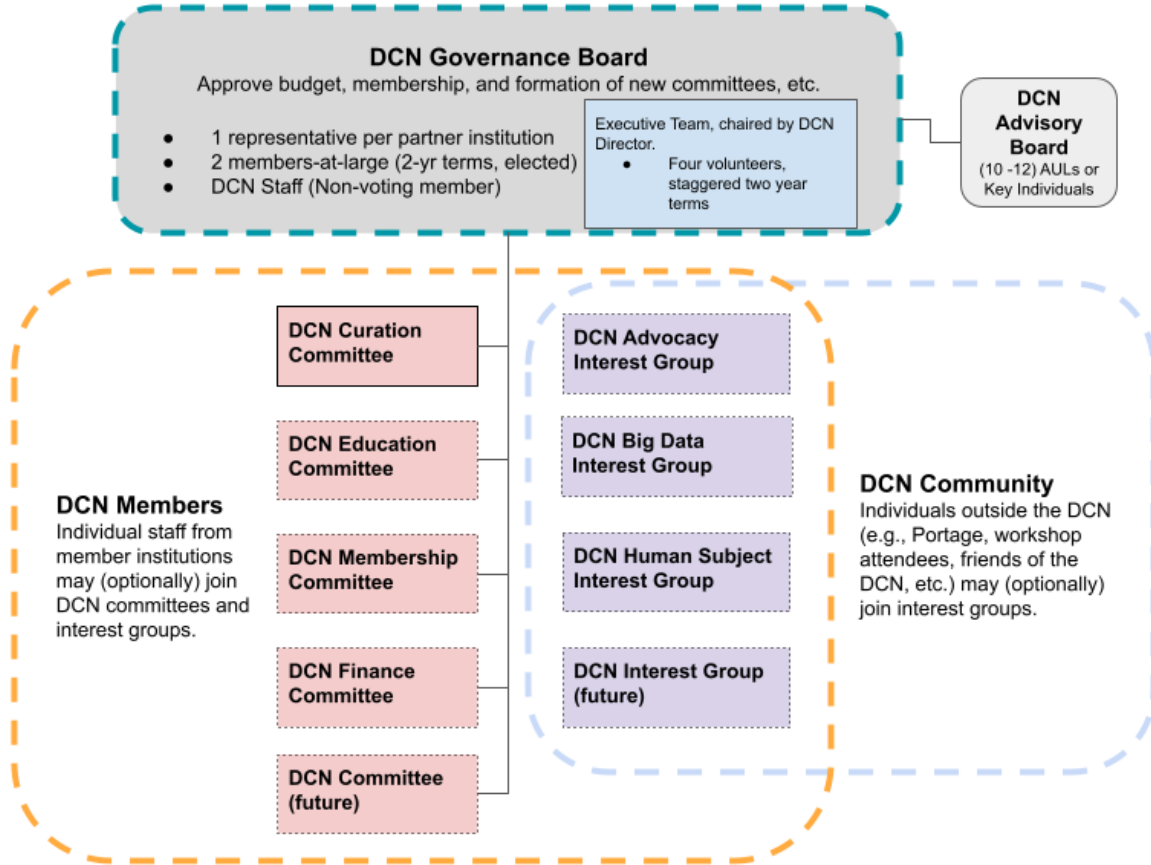
Important assumptions that influenced the development of this governance model

- The DCN is not itself a legal entity, as defined in the [membership agreement](#) with the University of Minnesota. The University of Minnesota will continue to have a central administrative and

¹ To support this process, members of the DCN performed research in the fall of 2020 of various governing structures in place at Texas Digital Library, Hathi Trust, Dryad, IIF, GoFAIR, Portage, The Carpentries, Library Publishing Coalition, ReShare, Samvera, PyCon, and EarthCube.

financial role in the operations of the DCN. This includes employing the DCN Director and other future DCN staff.

- Transitioning the DCN away from being primary grant funded to primarily member-sustained will require a continuity of services, workflows and leadership, especially in the initial phases of the transition.
- We recognize the importance of the need for new voices and perspectives to be brought into services and workflows.
- Committees and leadership is required to coordinate the committee activities and ensure the contribution to the larger mission.
- Individual members should have options to participate in DCN governance, but should not be required to participate.
- As the DCN is still a young organization and is transitioning from a grant based model to a membership driven one, we will need to revisit and revise our by-laws and structures on a regular basis, particularly during our first year of operation.
- Transparent communication is key to the success of our model; boards, committees, and interest groups are encouraged to share information at regular intervals as appropriate.



[PPT SLIDE TO UPDATE IMAGE](#)

DCN Membership

Eligibility, Rights, and Termination for Institutional Members.

Eligibility for membership in the DCN is defined on the “[Membership](#)” page on the DCN website and codified via a [contractual agreement](#) between the [University of Minnesota](#) and the member institution. Approval of new members is required by the DCN Governance Board. Applicants provide a written expression of interest demonstrating how they meet [published criteria](#) for membership. The Membership Committee will review letters of interest and provide a recommendation for interested institutions; the governance board will vote to approve new members.

Institutions who have agreed to the terms and conditions of membership at the “Sustainer” tier, are in good standing, and have paid or made arrangements to pay their fees are eligible to participate in DCN Boards and Committees. Exceptions to this requirement may be made by the Governance Board, such as inviting institutions to participate in beta-testing membership.

Membership in the DCN is not required to participate in DCN Interest Groups.

Each member institution will appoint a representative to sit on the DCN Governance Board. It is expected that the institutional representative will coordinate and communicate regularly with the institution's curators and represent the interests, needs and concerns of curators on the Governance Board. Institutional representatives are expected to stay current on matters under discussion in the DCN Governance Board through regular attendance in Board meetings or by reviewing the meeting minutes if they are unable to attend meetings. Representatives should also arrange for another institutional member to attend meetings when necessary.

Communication Expectations

- Communication across the DCN is necessary to ensure informed membership. The DCN Executive Committee, Governance Board, Advisory Board, Committees and Interest Groups will operate as transparently as possible.
- Institutional representatives also are responsible for effective communications about DCN activities back to their local institution and stakeholders.
- Communication will be provided openly through shared notes within the organization, and summarized for external purposes in the DCN newsletter as appropriate.

DCN Governance board

Roles and Responsibilities of the Governance Board

The Governance board has a broad set of responsibilities, including:

- The business affairs of the DCN, including ultimate approval for business and financial decisions as well as resource allocation in support of DCN activities.
- Oversight of the DCN Governance, financial and operation structures. The Governance Board has the power to propose and approve changes to DCN governance, business and operations.
- Approve new member recommendations from the Membership Committee.
- Reviews and approves of proposals for new committees and registers new interest groups. Works with and stays informed of work being done in committees and interest groups to ensure continuity, access to resources as needed and steady progress as appropriate.
- Reviews and approves DCN participation in external projects or grants (This does not preclude members of the DCN to pursue projects or grants individually or in collaboration with each other outside of the DCN).
- Representation of the DCN to the world at large including facilitating partnerships with other institutions and organizations.

- Coordinates with the UMN on financial matters relating to the support of the DCN and its staff. Sets the annual budget for delivery to the University of Minnesota for administration.
- Determines and sets dues amount annually based on membership levels and central operations.
- Set strategic directions for the DCN as an organization.

Appointment process

The Governing Board of the DCN is composed of

- Members of the Executive Committee
 - Transition: Calls for volunteers for the Executive Committee of the DCN Governance Board will be held annually prior to the DCN All Hands Meeting.
- One (1) representative appointed from each DCN Partner institution in good standing
 - Transition: Serve at the pleasure of your organization. Continuity is preferred.
- Two (2) at-large members elected to serve 2-year terms. Terms will be staggered to support continuity of service.
 - Transition: Replacements will happen in the next election cycle rather than mid-cycle due to the overhead costs.
- DCN staff also serve as non-voting members.

Nominations and Elections

Calls for Volunteers for the Executive Committee and elections for the Member-at-Large positions in the DCN Governance Board will be held annually prior to the DCN All Hands Meeting. Individuals interested in running for the Governance Board should declare their candidacy at least two weeks in advance of the DCN All-Hands Meeting and provide a statement of interest to the DCN Newsletter.

Any institutional representative associated with a DCN member institution in good standing may volunteer for the Executive Committee. If a position on the Executive Committee becomes vacant, volunteers to complete the remainder of the term will be solicited from the Governance Board.

Each of the Members-at-Large will serve a two year term on the DCN Governing Board. The terms will be staggered to promote continuity of service.

If a Member-at-Large position becomes vacant before the term of service expires, the Governance Board will strive to fill the seat with one of the non-elected nominees from the previous year's election, in the order of the number of votes they received. If this effort fails, the Governance Board may appoint someone to fill the vacancy.

Decision making

Each Board member is given one vote. The chair may call the board to put any matter to vote. Items up for a vote by the Governance Board will be brought up for discussion at the Governance Board Meetings. The ballot will stay open for five (5) business days following the board meeting so

representatives have time for conversations locally. Results of the vote will be published in the newsletter. A majority of the full Governance Board constitutes a quorum and the vote passes with a general majority (>50%). Board members may vote yes, no, or abstain. An abstention is a decision not to vote and does not count for or against the count.

The Governance Board will vote on such matters as:

1. New members joining the network
2. New committee formation and charter approval
3. Approve annual budget or unexpected financial expenditures over \$5,000.
4. Institutions may be removed from the DCN for failure to pay partnership fees in a reasonable amount of time, or for other reasons, as decided by a super majority vote of the Governing Board (75%). Individual members may be removed from the DCN for violations of the Code of Conduct, or for other reasons as decided by a super majority vote of the Governing Board (75%).

DCN Executive Committee

Roles and Responsibilities of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee, described below, serves two year terms with staggered terms. The Executive Committee is a five-person committee, with the Director serving by virtue of their position as a standing member, with four rotating positions. This team is expected to meet weekly, discuss proposed partnerships, share the responsibility of chairing and running Governance Board Meetings, and is empowered to make some decisions to keep the DCN nimble. Members must be willing and able to attend weekly meetings (with some flexibility) on a regular basis.

Membership on this committee is composed of volunteers from the Governance Board. A member's term of service begins directly after the annual DCN All Hands Meeting. Volunteers are solicited prior to the start of the two year term of service and filled on a first come, first serve basis.

Executive Committee members are expected to represent the needs of the DCN as a whole and act in its best interests. Other responsibilities include:

- Call the Governance Board together, set agendas, and initiate votes as needed.
- Draft responses and review requests for collaboration at the organizational level.
- Engage with the DCN Advisory Board to ensure they are informed of DCN happenings and to gather information and insights from them on DCN activities.
- Gather and synthesize information to be shared internally to DCN members, through the DCN newsletter.
- Preview and evaluate requests for collaborations, including participation in grant projects, to determine feasibility, provide a recommendation for collaboration, and send to the Governance Board for final review.
- Communicate items up for a vote by the Governance Board to DCN membership prior to the vote. Ensures that results of the vote will be published in the newsletter.

DCN Staff

DCN Staff are considered to be Members of the DCN and are eligible to run for other leadership positions in the DCN. DCN Staff are employees of the University of Minnesota (UMN). UMN is responsible for administering salary, benefits, supervision, etc. as they would for any other employee. Responsibilities of DCN Staff are outlined below, however their official roles and responsibilities are defined in their job descriptions with the UMN library.

Should a DCN Staff Member decide to leave their position, the DCN Governance Board will work with UMN to review the position in light of current needs and make any necessary adjustments. UMN will then conduct a job search with the assistance and support of the DCN members.

DCN Director (100% FTE membership funded, see [job description](#))

The DCN Director is a formal full-time position that serves on the DCN Governance Board indefinitely by virtue of their position. The Director is the primary representative of the DCN, advocates for the work of the DCN, represents the DCN for external facing outreach, and oversees funds and manages the business relationship between our fiscal agent (the University of Minnesota). The DCN Director is also responsible for building the curator community and monitoring and supporting the data curation work performed by the DCN curators (serving as chair of the Curation Committee) as well as coordinating the operations and internal communications for the DCN. Additional duties include:

- Liaise between the University of Minnesota and DCN Governance board.
- Responsible for maintaining high quality standards of DCN operations and services.
- In collaboration with the Executive Committee, ensures appropriate communication to the external stakeholder community (e.g., national groups, potential new partners).
- Review and oversee the implementation of the DCN code of conduct
- Monitors the financial health of the DCN and makes recommendations to the DCN Governance Board.
- Coordinates with the University of Minnesota on financial matters relating to the support of the DCN and its staff.
- Chairs the DCN Executive Committee
- Working with the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, plans for and oversees the annual DCN meeting.
- Builds and sustains the curator communities, namely by:
 - Onboarding and training of individual members in coordination with the Education and Membership Committees.
 - Technology administration (Jira, Slack, Wordpress)
 - Working with others in the DCN, produce a newsletter containing information about and outcomes of activities from the DCN Governance Board, Committees and Interest Groups

- Project management for ongoing and new projects led by the DCN (excluding grants unless specifically designated)
- Organizing elections for (2) Members-at-large for the Governance Board and soliciting volunteers for the Executive Committee

DCN Advisory Board

The DCN Advisory Board serves as a means for the DCN to understand the value and benefits of the DCN from the perspective of academic library administrators and the larger community. At a high level, communications with the Advisory Board help the DCN stay abreast of shifting trends and directions in academic libraries and data curation fields and inform how the DCN might respond. At a ground level, the Advisory Board can provide feedback on specific questions or issues, such as the perceived value of institutional membership to the DCN or the impact of the DCN advocacy work. The Advisory Board does not have any approval or oversight authority over the work of the DCN.

The DCN Advisory Board is composed of leadership representing member institutions (University Librarians, Associate-University Librarians, or equivalent level of authority), or individuals from organizations that are active and important to the data curation community. Advisory Board Members are invited to serve by the DCN Governance Board at their discretion for a two year term. Chaired by an appointed member of the Advisory board with the DCN Director as a non-voting member. There is not a requirement for a fixed number of Advisory Board members, however there should be no fewer than five members and no more than twelve at any given time.

The nature and amount of communication to the DCN Advisory Board will vary depending on the needs of the DCN Governance Board, but will at minimum consist of a meeting once every six months and a maximum of quarterly, and include regular updates as to significant DCN accomplishments, activities and challenges. One of the scheduled meetings will occur at the DCN All Hands Meeting, typically scheduled during summers.

Communication

Ahead of Advisory Board meetings, the chair of the Advisory Board and the DCN Director will develop an agenda, which will be shared with DCN Membership. Following DCN Advisory Board meetings, the DCN Director will report back to the Governance Board and provide a summary of the topics discussed. This summary will be made available through the DCN newsletter.

Transition

DCN Advisory Board Members serve at the pleasure of the DCN Governance Board and at the will of the individual. DCN Governance Board will invite new members based on the needs of the Data Curation Network.

DCN Committees

The DCN committees are responsible for ensuring that critical functions of the DCN are thoroughly considered and successfully carried out and to make recommendations on issues within their defined purview.

Committees are charged and overseen by the DCN Governance Board. Committee charters will be written defining a committee's purpose, responsibilities and membership within three months of the first committee meeting.

Any DCN member, including DCN Curators and Staff, are eligible to serve on or chair a committee.

Each committee can decide if one chair or co-chairs are most appropriate. Co-chairs are encouraged to ease the responsibility of individual members. Committee (co-)chair positions will be held by volunteers and determined through discussions by committee members.

Communication Expectations for Committees

- Meeting minutes should be open to DCN members unless sensitive information is being discussed.
- A brief summary of activities should be submitted to the DCN Newsletter on a regular basis.

Some examples of committees include:

Curation Committee

The Curation Committee is chaired by the DCN Director indefinitely to provide consistency for DCN operations that support the data curation exchange work performed by DCN curators. The scope of operations that the DCN Curation Committee are responsible for may expand and evolve over time as approved by the DCN Governance Board.

- Oversees the provision and operation of curation services of the DCN
- Develops and monitors quality control efforts for DCN operations and services
- Working with DCN interest groups, investigates and proposes new curation services for the DCN to the Governing Board for approval

Education Committee ([Detailed Charge](#))

The Education Committee oversees both the internal training activities for the DCN and the education programming the DCN offers externally, including the curator workshops. Responsibilities of the Education Committee include:

- Develops and oversees the educational programs and services of the DCN, including the Data Curation Workshops.
- Works with the Membership Committee to onboard and train new DCN curators

- Recruits and trains instructors for DCN's educational offerings
- Works to coordinate creation of the DCN Primers (e.g., recruit and assign mentors)
- Works to coordinate the publication of the DCN Primers.
- Manages and maintains the Primers, currently in GitHub (e.g., approves and implements pull requests).
- Maintains an up-to-date contributors guide.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is a committee that articulates the principles and tenets of DCN membership*, establishes and reviews membership criteria, and engages with current and prospective DCN members on issues related to sustainable membership growth. The focus of the Membership Committee will evolve as the DCN grows and by aligning its work with the DCN's current and future strategic plans. .

The membership committee reviews all incoming applications to join the DCN during the annual open window. The committee submits the recommendation for which new members to accept and the Governance Board votes to approve that recommendation.

Responsibilities of the Membership Committee include:

- **Market Research:** Understanding the data curation needs in the broader academic community so that the committee's work reflects the needs that the DCN is fulfilling for current members and could fulfill for potential members.
- **Membership Model:** Drafting new or revised membership paths that address data curation needs consistent with the mission and vision of the DCN, with special attention to strategic growth and addressing membership gaps.
- **Existing member engagement:** Engaging with current DCN members on adoption of new/revised paths, plans, and processes so that we are moving thoughtfully as an organization in ways that current DCN members can, and will, support.
- **Communication/Outreach:** Facilitating the work of DCN staff and other members by communicating needs and ideas that will help the organization engage in activities that fulfill the needs of current and potential membership

Finance Committee

The DCN Finance Committee is responsible for fiscal oversight of the Network and assisting the Governance Board and Executive Committee in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities. This committee will be composed of no fewer than four members, with the DCN Director chairing. Responsibilities include:

- **Risk management:** Collaborating with the DCN Director to develop and present an annual budget to the Governance Board for approval.
- **Fiscal responsibility:** Reviewing ad hoc expenses identified by the Director.
- **Organizational growth:** Collaborating with the Membership Committee about target growth .

Annual Meeting Planning Committee

- Working with the DCN Director and others, plans for and oversees the annual DCN meeting.

DCN Interest Groups

<https://datacurationnetwork.org/special-interest-groups/>

DCN Interest Groups are a way for topics and activities of interest and importance to the DCN to receive dedicated time and support from the DCN. Whereas Committees would focus on matters of importance to the regular operational work of the DCN and the provision of its services, Interest Groups may address any topic of relevance and interest to the DCN or to data curation more broadly.

Interest Groups would not necessarily have a defined set of objectives or an end point, although they would be encouraged to develop projects or activities that would produce measurable results on an annual basis and to inform DCN membership of their work. Interest groups may form solely to discuss or explore areas of mutual interest among participants.

Individuals within the interest group will determine if a chair is needed and if so will select a chair(s) themselves.

Interest Groups may serve as a means to engage membership, or individuals interested in the topic who may not be directly affiliated with the DCN. Serving on an Interest Group is potentially open to anyone and would not require institutional membership with the DCN. However, there are stipulations for non-members participating in DCN Interest Groups:

- Individuals serving on DCN Interest Groups are required to agree to abide by the provisions of the DCN Code of Conduct. Failure to do so could result in dismissal of the individual from the Interest Group.
- Non-DCN affiliated individuals must be invited by the Interest Group in order to serve on it. Each Interest Group should provide contact information on the DCN website for individuals to use as a means of expressing interest in joining the Interest Group.
- Individuals affiliated with commercial publishers or other for-profit entities, if invited to join an interest group, may not use the interest group as a means to sell or promote products or services, nor should the invitation be considered an endorsement of any kind by the interest group or the DCN.

Announcements inviting new membership should make it clear that interest group members do not have to be a DCN member, nor attend annual All-Hands meetings.

The formation of an Interest Group would require registration of the DCN Governance Board. The DCN Governance Board may request additional information about the intended Interest Group in the registration process. The DCN Governance Board has the authority to deny an Interest Group from

forming or to dissolve an Interest Group after it has been formed. The DCN Governance Board may check in annually with Interest Groups to determine if they are still active. If the Interest Group is determined not to be active, the DCN Governance Board may dissolve the Interest Group.

Communication Expectations for Interest Group

- Meeting Minutes, if kept, should be open to DCN members unless sensitive information is being discussed.
- A brief summary of activities should be submitted to the DCN Newsletter on a regular basis as appropriate.

DCN Interest Groups have included:

Campus Advocacy

- Studies the current landscape of data management, sharing and preservation at academic institutions and looks for opportunities to promote the value of data curation, the values of the DCN and the role of research libraries in this landscape.

Racial Justice

- Explores topics related to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility (DEAI) with a focus on data ethics and racial justice.

Big Data

- Looks at issues and common practices related to large data, including compression techniques (e.g., zip) and file transfer.

Curation Tools

- Conducts environmental scans of existing tools that are or could be used in data curation work and explores how they might be used in the DCN. The Curation Tools group may also work on defining or developing curation tools themselves.

Human Subjects Data

- Explores issues and challenges surrounding the management, sharing and curation of data derived from human subjects. Develops protocols, practices, workflows or resources that could be used by curators to work with sensitive data.

End User Satisfaction

- Developed an instrument to survey depositors to DCN repositories to better understand their satisfaction and experience with the data curation process.

Value of Curation

- Developed a survey of US-based data repository staff analyzing the level of curation their repository provides and the perceived value this adds.

Definitions

DCN Membership Tiers

- DCN Sustainer Institution: Institutions that join the DCN at the highest tier of membership.
- DCN Ambassador Institution: An institution that hosts a DCN workshop. Workshop attendees automatically become DCN Community Members.
- DCN Sponsor: an entity that financially supports the DCN

Individual roles in the DCN

- DCN Representative: An individual appointed to serve on the Governance board to represent the interests of a DCN Partner Institution and help shape the DCN.
- DCN Advisory Board Member: An AUL or leader from a DCN member institution that stays informed of DCN activities, provides guidance and advice, and advocates for the DCN where possible.
- DCN Curator: An individual staff member of a DCN member institution who may run for elections or serve on committees and interest groups.
- DCN Staff
 - DCN Director: Provides leadership in the DCN. Full-time staff member for the DCN that manages day-to-day operations and communication across DCN to ensure informed membership.

Structures in the DCN

- DCN community of practice – All individuals actively participating in the DCN, even those not affiliated with a member institution. Invited to webinars, future events, and/or interest groups.
- DCN Executive Committee – Sub committee of the DCN Governance Board of volunteer members.
- DCN Governance Board or “DCN Board” - Comprising of appointed DCN Representatives and elected members at large to vote on important matters in the DCN.
- DCN Advisory board - external stakeholders/AUL's; help advance DCN goals; provide feedback
- DCN Committees - official groups where work happens. Individuals from member institutions in good standing can join.
- DCN Interest Groups: Informal working groups. Anyone may suggest the creation of the interest groups. Groups will be announced on the DCN website and may be open to non DCN community members to join.
- All Hands Meeting or “AHM”: Annual meeting for the DCN Community.