Implementation of the Provost’s Initiative in Data-Driven Discovery

For a description of the Data-Driven Discovery Initiative please refer to 

The objective of the Initiative is to stimulate the hiring of faculty members who conduct cutting edge research on methodologies for data-driven discovery, and whose teaching and outreach will put advanced tools and techniques into the hands of UW’s broad base of outstanding researchers. To be clear: We are looking for “producers” of Big Data methodology and not for “consumers.” A new faculty member applying state-of-the-art methodology to problems in her research domain may be highly desirable for her department, but that is not what the Provost’s Initiative aims to support. We seek to hire individuals who develop new methodology and help spread it through teaching, consulting, and collaborative research.

We expect faculty members hired under the Initiative to be qualified for a (joint) appointment in a methodology department like Applied Mathematics, Computer Science & Engineering, or Statistics. The emphasis here is on “qualified.” There is no expectation that everybody hired under the Initiative will need to hold such a joint appointment.

The Initiative will provide up to 50% funding for 4-5 new hires. The decision whether to support a specific hire will be made by the Provost, assisted by an Advisory Group consisting of Ginger Armbrust (Oceanography), Tom Daniel (Biology), Mark Ellis (Geography), Ed Lazowska (Computer Science & Engineering), and Werner Stuetzle (Statistics). Faculty hired under the Initiative will have a teaching and outreach obligation to the eScience Institute – the campus-wide “home” for this Initiative – proportional to the fraction of salary provided under the Initiative. (The model is similar to that employed by the University Initiatives Fund to create units such as the Astrobiology program, the Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences, and the Center for Nanotechnology.)

Units seeking to participate in the Initiative should contact the Provost (provost@uw.edu) and the Advisory Group (ddd-advisory@uw.edu) as early as possible. Timely feedback regarding the likelihood of specific hires being appropriate for support under the Initiative will minimize wasted effort and expense.
We anticipate three scenarios that could lead to an appointment partially funded by the Initiative:

**Targeted Data-Driven Discovery search:** If a unit intends to carry out a search with the specific intent of identifying a faculty member partially supported by the Initiative then the Advisory Group must be involved in all aspects of the search starting from the composition of the advertisement, must have a representative on the search committee, and must be given the opportunity to participate in the interview process.

**Opportunistic Data-Driven Discovery hire:** If, in the context of a broader search, a unit identifies a candidate considered potentially appropriate for Initiative support, then the candidate’s file (CV, research and teaching statements, letters of reference, teaching evaluations, etc.) must be provided to the Advisory Group at the earliest possible time and the Advisory Group must be given the opportunity to participate in the interview process.

**Advisory Group initiated Data-Driven Discovery hire:** The Advisory Group may proactively identify faculty candidates and present them to academic units with the assurance that the hire would be supported if the unit was to go forward.

– Ginger Armbrust (Oceanography)
  Tom Daniel (Biology)
  Mark Ellis (Geography)
  Ed Lazowska (Computer Science & Engineering)
  Werner Stuetzle (Statistics)