External Requests

General Principle

All external requests for official or public data, including to media and news outlets, should go through IR, with specific exceptions noted below. Whether the IR office completes the request itself or coordinates the request with another office will be based on the expertise of the IR staff in the topic area, access to relevant University of North Alabama data, and expertise in working with the particular University of North Alabama data.

What is data? "Data" refers to numerical summaries of aspects of our institution, for example, number of students enrolled, retention/graduation rates, number of degrees awarded, credit hour production, etc. Examples of information that would generally not be considered data are directory information about staff or faculty, or narrative descriptions of programs, policies, or facilities.

What are official or public data? Figures are considered official or public if they are mandated by state or federal guidelines (e.g. the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE); the national Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS); are collected routinely by recognized higher education agencies or consortia (e.g. AAUP, CSRDE, US News, Moody's, ACT, NCES, NCAA, Peterson's, College Board, etc.); provided for grant application or renewal purposes; will be presented to the University of North Alabama's administration or Board of Trustees; requested of discipline specific accreditation agencies, as well as the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC); or will appear in publications that are widely available (e.g. admissions guidebooks).

Exceptions

With the exception of ACHE and IPEDS reporting, mandated routine reporting specific to an individual area should be conducted by that area. (The responsible official in that area should, however, consult with OIR whenever figures outside of that area (e.g. student demographic data, enrollments, CHP, degrees awarded, retention, etc.) are required for a form.) Examples of reporting that should by conducted not by IR, but by the appropriate office include: athletics reporting, crime reporting, tax forms, human resource work utilization reporting, etc. In general, f the

information requested on a form may be of general interest or may be made public, it would be helpful if a copy were provided to OIR. When information may be used in various other ways,

Who Gathers the Data?

Whether a particular external request should be

Request: The US Department of Education requests the reporting of crime statistics. **Recommended Action:** The survey should go to the Director of Public Safety, who should confer with OIR for any enrollment, demographic information, etc. that may be requested. A copy of the completed survey should be sent to OIR.

Reason: This is an office-to-agency report that requests data for which the OIR office has no access or expertise. A copy should go to OIR since these data are publicly available and it's easy to conceive of it being used in ways other than intended by the collecting agency. (For example, a college ranking publication may decide to add crime rate to the factors considered.)

Request: Someone from another college calls to see if our applications for admission are up or down as of a certain point in time.

Recommended Action: The requestor should contact OIR for this information, as we are the official point for year over year preliminary data needs.

Reason: OIR has worked with the Office of Admissions, as well as the Office of Graduate Admissions on developing official dashboards for application data, year over year.

Guideline crafted and created from Swarthmore College's Institutional Effectiveness, Research & Assessment office (August 21st, 2023).

Presented to the Council of Academic Deans (COAD) on November, 6th, 2023.