FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DIGITAL MEASURES

WHAT IS DIGITAL MEASURES “ACTIVITY INSIGHT”? (DIGITAL MEASURES or DM for short)
A web-based database program that makes it easy for faculty to keep track of and report their activities and accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, and service. An annual Faculty Activity Plan or Faculty Activity Report can easily be generated from this information, as well as other customized reports or documents (e.g. a list of publications, or a C.V.) to better showcase one’s work. This program, considered the “gold standard” for software in higher education, is currently being used by more than 2000 schools and colleges (including all colleges at GVSU) around the world, but at GVSU many colleges have customized it for their own particular needs. By allowing faculty to input information over the course of the year, it should significantly alleviate the burden of collecting, organizing, and formatting this information all at once when the Faculty Activity Report is due. It will should also streamline the creation each year of a Faculty Activity Plan.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?
- Faculty can access the database 24/7 from any computer with an internet connection to enter information about their activities; if activities and accomplishments are recorded regularly throughout the year, an end-of-year report can be easily and quickly printed.
- Enter data only once, use it to generate different kinds of personal reports/documents (e.g. an annual Faculty Activity Report; a curriculum vita; tenure and promotion documents).
- Instead of continually querying faculty for information about their activities, the unit head or dean can use the database to gather the information quickly and generate reports for accreditation bodies, faculty awards received, assessment, memberships in professional associations, etc.
- This database will allow us more easily to identify areas of faculty interest, expertise, and research so that we can better publicize possible funding opportunities, facilitate collaboration across the college, and advocate for additional resources.

WHO HAS ACCESS TO THE DATA?
Only these people will have access:
- The faculty member him/herself, or anyone to whom they grant access
- The unit head will have access to the data of faculty in that unit only
- Within each college, a designated administrator in the Dean’s office (usually an associate dean), who has access to the data of faculty in that college only
- A university-wide Digital Measures coordinator, who can access individual faculty accounts to assist faculty. University requests for university-wide data must first be approved by the DM coordinator and a university-wide DM advisory board.

HOW ACCURATE IS THE DATA?
Some data (basic Banner personnel records, e.g. faculty name, e-mail, phone, employment start date, tenure date, college, department, and scheduled teaching assignments each
semester) is loaded into DM from Banner at the start of each semester. Faculty should double-check this information to ensure that the uploaded data is accurate. All other data about faculty activities is entered by faculty members themselves, and they can (and should) update it at any time, for example changing the status of a publication from “under consideration” to “accepted” or “forthcoming”. Data for a faculty member reflects only what he/she has chosen to enter; no changes will be made to the data except changes made by the faculty member.

HOW WILL THIS DATA BE USED?
- Data entered can be used by the faculty member to generate an annual Faculty Activity Report, Faculty Activity Plan, a Curriculum Vita, or other specialized individual reports such as a list of all papers delivered, all unit service activities, etc.
- Unit heads can use it to generate reports about various activities of their unit’s faculty (faculty publications, memberships, governance positions held, etc.) Such information is periodically requested by the administration; with DM the unit head can compile the information more quickly, without having to query each faculty member.
- The dean’s office can use it to generate reports about various activities of college faculty (all publications, all association memberships, all governance positions held, all awards and honors received, the range of academic degrees held by college faculty, etc.) Such information is periodically requested by the administration for purposes of accreditation or publicity. It is also used in the college’s publicity and advancement efforts.
- The data will be for individual or for aggregate purposes only; it will not be used to draw comparisons between individual faculty members or between units.

WHAT ABOUT PROPRIETARY INFORMATION OR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY?
Faculty enter only the information they wish to enter. If a project is sensitive or proprietary there is no need to include it; one can, if one wishes, indicate any work in progress simply with a general identifying title, or not include it at all. The database will not ask for any personal information or confidential information, and faculty can decline to include any information requested.

HOW SECURE IS THE DATA?
The DM servers are managed by Sun Microsystems in a Sun owned and managed datacenter. The following security measures are in place:
- All data transferred over an SSL-encrypted connection
- Locked, caged server room protected by armed security guards who are present at all times
- Servers are firewalled and located behind an intrusion detection system
- Redundant fire suppression and climate control systems used at all times
- Redundant power and internet connections

A warm standby site is always running in case a disaster takes place at the primary datacenter. If this were to happen, DM is able to fail-over to this standby site extremely quickly, losing no more than five minutes worth of data.

In addition to these security measures regarding the servers, DM also performs secure nightly backups to five geographically-dispersed locations owned by Sun and Iron Mountain. In addition to these backups, you are able to download a full copy of all of your data at any time as often as you like; you can even put a secure process in place to do this on an automated basis.
Digital Measures is compliant with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**HOW MANY YEARS WORTH OF DATA MUST BE ENTERED?**
The more faculty who use DM and the more data they enter, the more complete, accurate, and useful all any DM-generated reports will be. The amount of work a faculty member must complete to use DM is strongly correlated to the number of years of historical data that they enter. While entire vitas can certainly be entered, the final decision on how much data we would like to include is entirely up to us. At a minimum, we expect faculty to enter (or have entered for them) their activities for the prior, and then maintain that data on a going-forward basis. This will allow one to quickly generate a Faculty Activity Report for last year, and for subsequent years. We strongly recommend, however, that data from the previous 5 years be entered, although entering historical data can be done at any time, at one’s own pace. Some colleges and units have made staff available to assist faculty in entering data, or have entered data for them.

**TECHNICAL SUPPORT**
The DM system is relatively simple, intuitive, and easy to use, there is an on-line tutorial, and a set of instructions and other aids will be posted and available to everyone. Anyone who has problems or questions can contact the Campus Coordinators (currently Gary Stark, starkg@gvsu.edu, and Paul Stephenson, stephenp@gvsu.edu; after January 2015, Paul Stephenson)