

Questions and Answers

How did DataNet come about?

Sponsored as part of the 2002-03 UNLV Planning Initiative Awards, DataNet was developed by the Office of Institutional Analysis and Planning (IAP) to extend its capacity to provide management information to UNLV administrators and faculty. As a project, DataNet entailed the creation of a data warehouse populated with student information and the development of applications that make the data directly accessible to campus users via a secure, user-friendly website. The Student Information System (SIS) remains the official data repository for UNLV student information.

Where do the data come from?

The data stored on DataNet come from SIS which is maintained by staff from Student Enrollment and Financial Services and the UCCSN Computing Center. The IAP data warehouse contains extracts of data from SIS, a subset of all of the data available in SIS.

DataNet uses census data—a snapshot of the data at a specific point in time. Most of the data are extracts from official census files, or *statfiles*, that are prepared for official reporting by the campus. Census files should be distinguished from production files, which are constantly changing as a result of campus updates. Census data are most useful for trend reporting, while production data are most useful for obtaining real-time information. Another important distinction is the difference between DataNet data and official data. Official data are edited as needed to meet the requirements of reporting to the Regents and Legislature. DataNet data are not edited, and therefore reflect the way that data are housed on SIS.

What kind of data is available in DataNet?

DataNet provides users with the ability to generate custom student FTE, course, and headcount enrollment reports, as well as student listings beginning with the fall 1998 semester. In addition to delivering the data, DataNet facilitates access by offering the first centralized, comprehensive reference for a wide range of student data elements in an easily navigable, searchable form. This technical and interpretive documentation allows users to query the system more efficiently and effectively.

Who is DataNet for?

DataNet is designed for UNLV employees who have a solid understanding of SIS data attributes, and report definition and design. Those individuals who are most likely to benefit from DataNet are typically in positions that have intensive SIS reporting requirements such as those found in accreditation reporting, planning documents, survey completion, and assessment efforts. In addition, users should have experience with spreadsheet and database applications such as Excel and Access. Finally, users should have a PC or Mac with IE 6.x or Netscape 7.x with JavaScript and cookies enabled.

How do I get access to DataNet?

To get access to DataNet, simply visit the IAP website at ir.unlv.edu and click the DataNet link in the lower left-hand corner of the homepage. You will find a link to request access. Instructions are provided for the electronic approval process, which requires IAP approval, a signature and rationale of your supervising Dean or Director, and final approval from the Registrar. After approval, you will participate in a mandatory training session that covers user responsibilities and hands-on training with the application.