Graduate Tracking with LinkedIn

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Project Background

- Growth in interest in graduate tracking and career placement.

- This project is modeled on a study of Postdocs at UCSF.

  - Silva, et. al., "Tracking Career Outcomes for postdoctoral Scholars: A Call to Action" *PLOS Biology* 14(5).

Project Goals

- Gather accurate student and alumni career information
  - Provide data to our campus community about the career trajectories of our graduate students.
  - Design programming that meets our students' career needs.
  - Maintain a network of alumni whom we can ask to serve as panelists for PD Programming
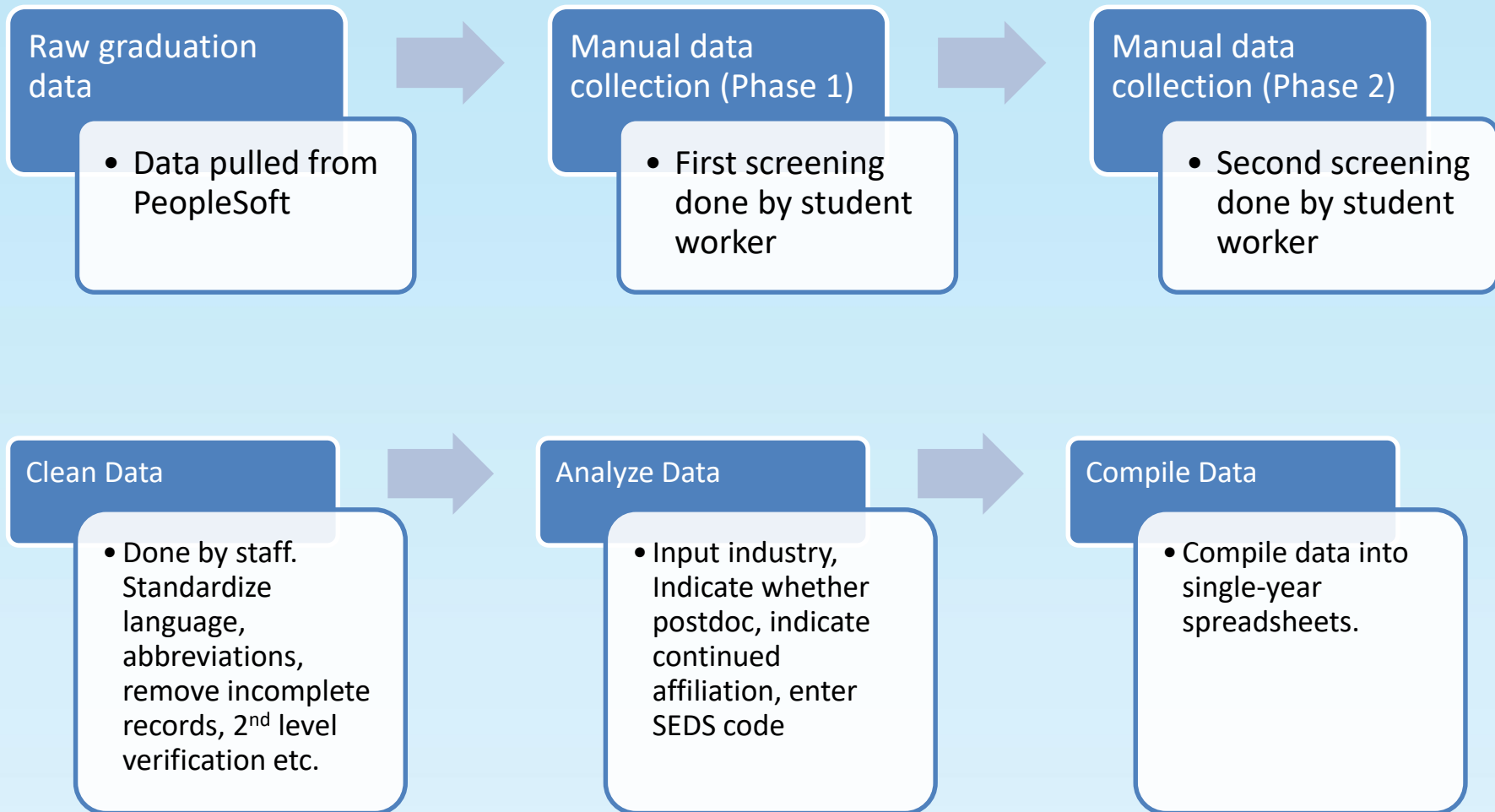
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A Few Caveats

- Worked with colleagues at UT Arlington before coming to UT Dallas.

- All data pulled is publicly available.

- Data is at this time only used for internal purposes.

- Potential uses may not be evident yet.

- Lots of lessons learned along the way.

Questions that Shape the Project

- What kind of information to collect?
- What about inconsistent, unreliable, contradictory, absent information?
- What mechanisms to maximize data accuracy?
- How often to collect new information such as job changes, etc.
- Which groups of alumni to prioritize (i.e. year, degree program, degree level, etc.)?
- Data management plan?
- How to classify career paths?

LinkedIn Data Process

Raw graduation data
- Data pulled from PeopleSoft

Manual data collection (Phase 1)
- First screening done by student worker

Manual data collection (Phase 2)
- Second screening done by student worker

Clean Data
- Done by staff. Standardize language, abbreviations, remove incomplete records, 2nd level verification etc.

Analyze Data
- Input industry, Indicate whether postdoc, indicate continued affiliation, enter SEDS code

Compile Data
- Compile data into single-year spreadsheets.

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Data pulled from the Data Warehouse

ID	Last	First Name	Middle	Sex	Compl Term	Confer Dt	Degree	Degr Stat	Acad Plan	Acad Plan Descr	Plan Owner	Ethnicity

- ID number
- Name
- Sex
- Graduation Date
- Degree
- Academic Plan
- Department
- Ethnicity

Data pulled from LinkedIn

	N	O	P	Q	R	S
	LinkedIn URL	Current Job Title	Current Company/Organization	First Job Title	First Company/Organization	Notes
	https://www.li	Assistant Professo	Lone Star College			
	https://www.li	Postdoctoral Fello	UT Austin	Research Assoc	UT Arlington	
	https://www.li	International Logis	Halliburton			

- LinkedIn URL

- Current Job Title

- Current Company/Organization

- First Job Title after Graduation

- First Company/Organization after Graduation

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Data Analysis

- Classification of career paths by "industry"
  - Business
  - Academic Tenure Track
  - Academic Non-Tenure Track
  - Academic Other
  - Government
  - Non-Profit
  - Hospital
- SEDS Code
- Postdoc or Not?
- Continued affiliation with doctorate-granting institution?

An example of a confusing job history on LinkedIn

Visiting Assistant Professor
Oklahoma City University
Aug 2015 – Dec 2015 • 5 mos
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Area

Lecturer in Music History
University of North Texas
Aug 2012 – May 2015 • 2 yrs 10 mos
Denton, TX

Liberal Arts Faculty
New England Conservatory
Sep 2011 – May 2012 • 9 mos
Boston, MA

Lecturer in Music History
Brandeis University
Aug 2011 – Dec 2011 • 5 mos
Waltham, MA

Graduate Teaching Assistant
Brandeis University
May 2006 – Jun 2011 • 5 yrs 2 mos
Waltham

InfoPoint Assistant, Library and Technology Services
Brandeis University
2007 – 2010 • 3 yrs

Both jobs held concurrently in 2011.

Graduated in 2011

Education

Brandeis University
Ph.D., Musicology
2005 – 2011
Activities and Societies: Early Music Ensemble (tenor viol, bass voice), GSAS
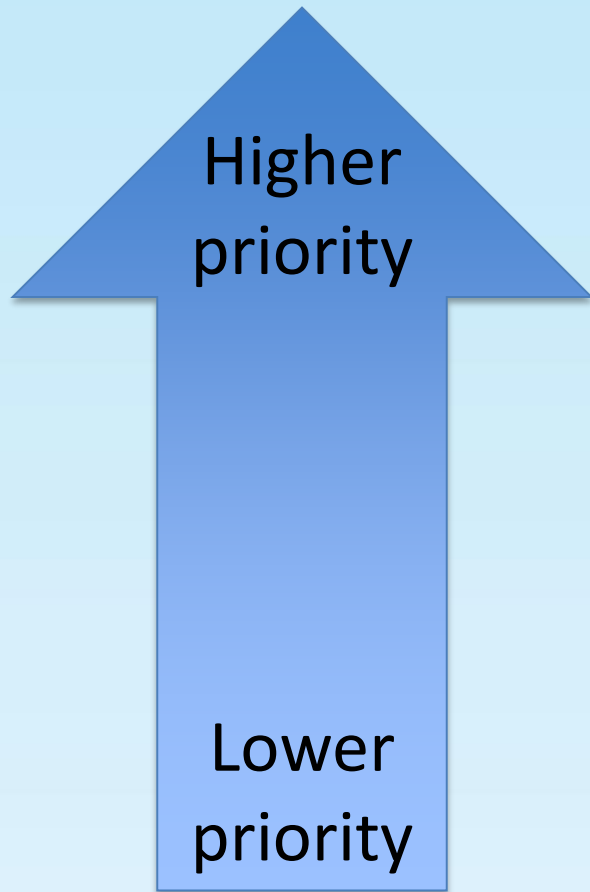
Received M.F.A. in 2008

University of California, Davis
B.A., honors, Music
2001 – 2005
Activities and Societies: Music Department, UCD Symphony Orchestra, trumpet, Academic Peer Advising

Received Departmental Citation, 2005

How we classify conflicting or concurrent job entries:

Higher priority

Lower priority

Positions at doctorate-granting institution

Postdoctoral positions or adjunct positions

All other concurrent positions described in "Notes" field.

Challenges and Solutions

- When an individual's LinkedIn page is out-of-date:

  - We save the URL (it may be updated in the future), but remove from data.

- When an individual cannot be found on LinkedIn:

  - We do not include this individual in the database.
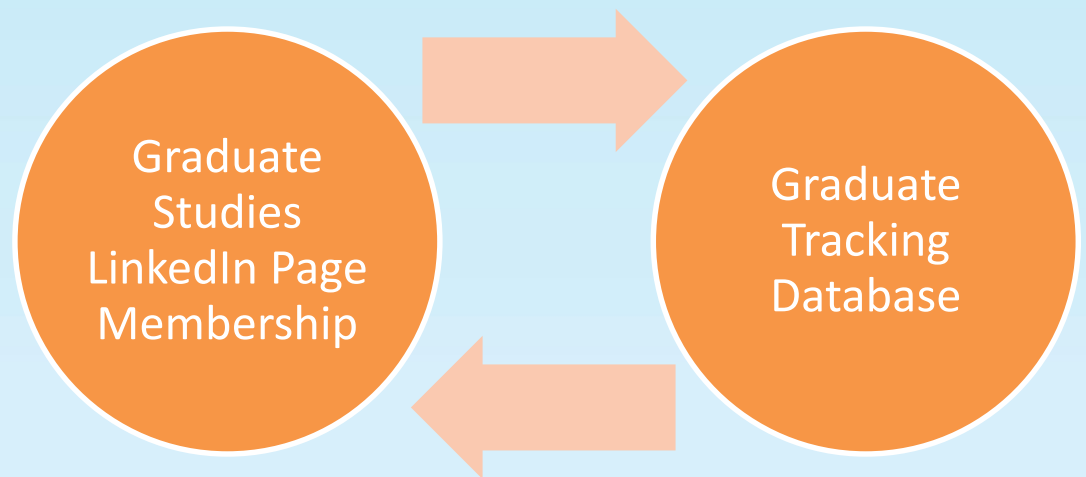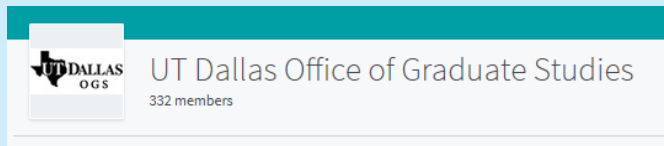
More Challenges and Solutions

- Data Management
  - Files broken down by graduation semester.
  - Manager assigns files each day.
  - Cumulative work tracked on a paper spreadsheet.
  - Files named consistently
    - LIn-2142-170922-rdp.xlsx

- Student Worker Training
  - Regular interventions, checklists, and double-checking.

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Future Plans

- Integration with an alumni survey instrument.

- Visualization of data along the lines of a similar project at UBC, Wayne State, and others.

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Future Plans

- Greater integration between UT Dallas LinkedIn alumni group and graduate tracking.
  - Direct invitations to graduate student alumni to join group?

UT Dallas Office of Graduate Studies
UT DALLAS OGS
332 members

Graduate Studies LinkedIn Page Membership

Graduate Tracking Database

- Tracking Master's and Non-Degree students career outcomes.

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