Governance, Staff and Funding

1. Governance

DataFirst is a university-wide facility, but we are based in the Faculty of Commerce for administrative purposes. Our director reports to the Dean of the Commerce Faculty. Our UCT governance structures also include an Internal Advisory Committee consisting of the Heads of UCT Research entities that engage in quantitative Social Science research, as well as Deputy Deans of the Faculties of Commerce and Humanities at the University of Cape Town. Our Advisory Board is made up of the representatives from South Africa's National Planning Commission, National Statistics Agency the South African Department of Science and Innovation and four South African research universities, Rhodes University, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Pretoria, and University of the Witwatersrand. Our Internal Advisory Committee members are also members of the Board. International members of the Board are the Directors of two highly-respected Social Science Data Repositories, the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan, US, and the UK Data Service at the University of Essex, UK, as well as the Director of the Kenya-based African Economic Research Consortium.

2. Staff

DataFirst's Director is a member of the University's academic staff and has overall responsibility for DataFirst. The Data Services section of DataFirst has 2 full-time and 2 part-time staff (3 FTE). Our Director is the line manager for our Manager of Data Services and Operations. Our Data Services Manager (see Curriculum Vitae) is responsible for data infrastructure and data services and reports to the Director of DataFirst. Other data services staff are one full-time Data Analyst who has a Master's Degree in Econometrics, and two part-time Data Analysts (Economics Masters Students). DataFirst's Administrator is also our Web and Social Media Manager and works closely with the Data Services Team to publish web-content and customise our repository application software. Figure 1 is an organogram of governance infrastructure and staffing at DataFirst.
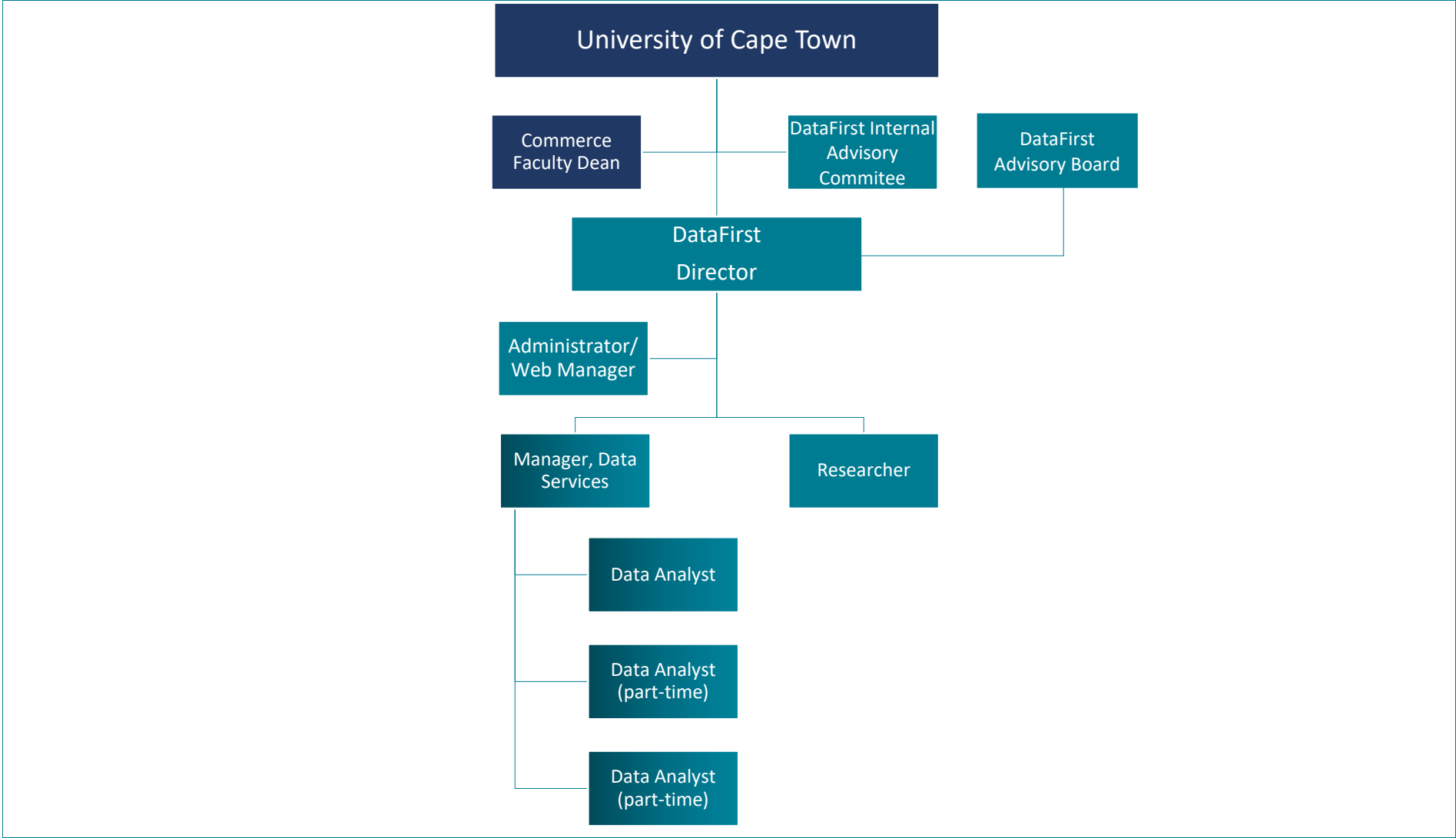
Figure 1. DataFirst's Organogram 2022

3. Institutional Infrastructure Support

Retention of datasets includes archival storage but also managing of archival copies, backing up and long-term maintenance. At DataFirst the aim of archiving or storage is to preserve the accession, storage, and use copies of a dataset according to repository standards to ensure their integrity and continued accessibility. Our server infrastructure includes first, one virtual server, our Preservation Server, which houses our datasets and is hosted by the eResearch Department at the University. Second, our infrastructure includes one physical server with our dissemination software application and dissemination copies of datasets. Third, we have a physical server which is a secure server for hosting our restricted-access datasets. The physical servers are housed in a secure facility in our IT department on campus. Figure 2 shows our links with insourcing partners at UCT, including eResearch and the Commerce IT Department and the DataFirst servers they host. The Commerce IT Department also supports DataFirst with purchases and installations of hardware and software beyond those related to our servers.
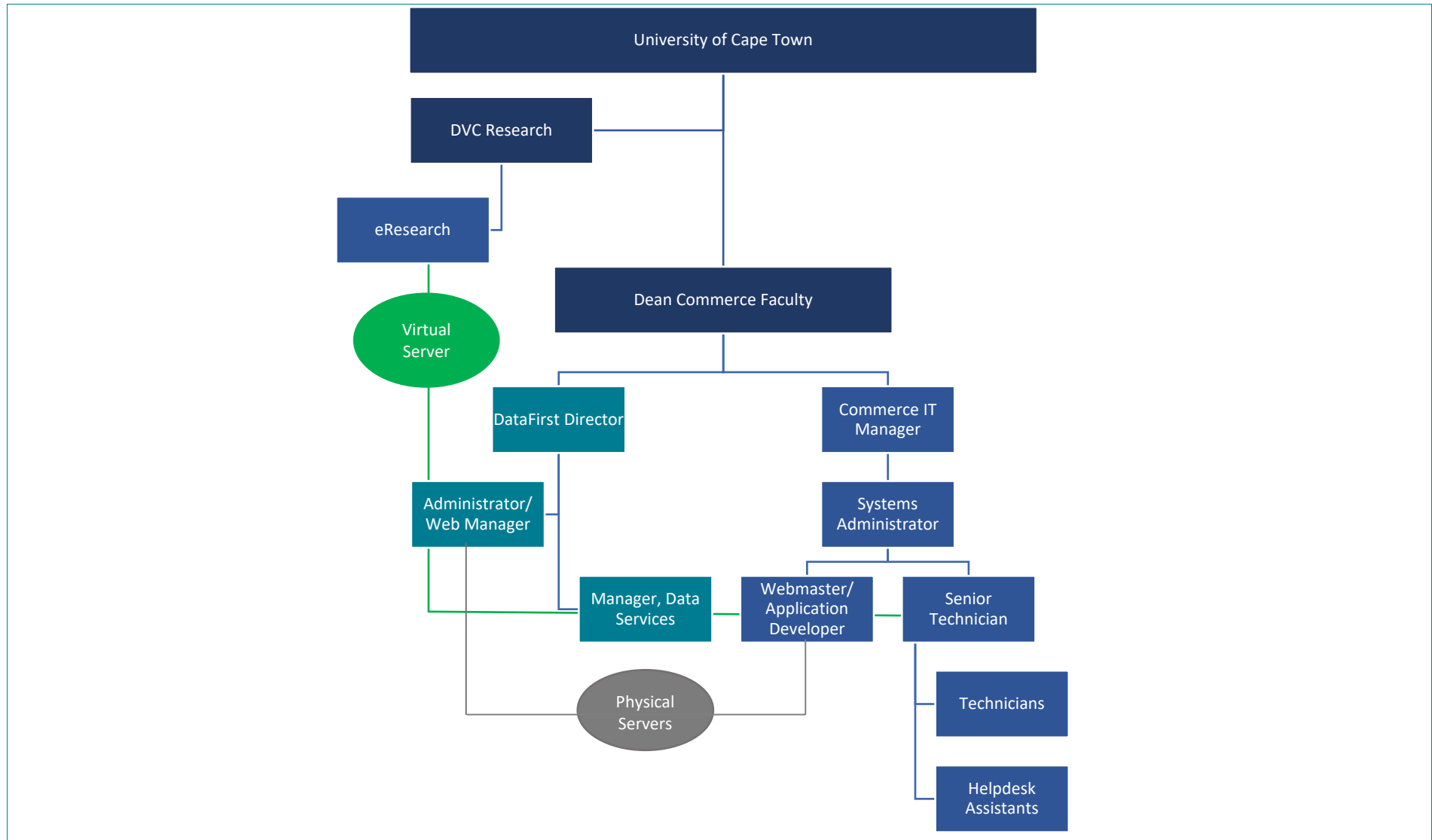
Figure 2. Institutional partnerships for infrastructure support (servers and other hardware and software)

4. Funding

DataFirst's repository and repository staff are funded through various funding streams, including from the University's General Operating Budget (University Council approved funding), soft funding (grants and project funding) as well as fees from our training workshops. We do not charge researchers for data access, but we also have a sliding scale of fees for hosting datasets for Depositors. The percentage of repository work covered by the different funding streams is not stable as we apply for and receive grants or undertake projects over one to five-year periods. Funding Streams at DataFirst include:

UCT General Operating Budget
The Data Services and Operations Manager's salary is funded by the Faculty of Commerce through their General Operating Budget. This funding is ongoing.

Grants
The repository infrastructure was established with a Mellon Fund grant and subsequent Mellon grants supported the establishment of the Secure Research Data Centre and a percentage of the "data rescue" digitisation projects we have undertaken. We have received UCT funding grants for our administrative and data infrastructure through the Faculty of Commerce for several years. We have also received Research Support Grants for equipment replacements and upgrades.

Training Fees
We charge for data analysis and data curation training workshops, and these funds support our curation work.

Data Hosting Fees
We do not charge the end-user for data. However, we charge depositors a once-off fee for preparing and hosting data and metadata. Our fees are on a sliding scale determined by the extent of data preparation involved and the ability of depositors to source curation funds. Our service-level contracts with large University projects include multi-year funding agreements. Charges are levied for preparing data files and metadata and creating branded pages for Depositors who want to highlight their datasets and for providing Depositors with annual statistics on downloads of their datasets, by country, institution-type and use type.