

# Notes on Operations

## Improving Subject Headings for Iowa Indigenous Peoples

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*By authorizing outdated terms for North American Indigenous peoples, the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) vocabulary deprioritizes or ignores the preferred names of the peoples being described. As a result, cataloging and metadata professionals constrained by LCSH often must apply names imposed during colonization. For example, in many library catalogs, works about people of the Meskwaki Nation in Iowa are labeled with “Fox Indians--Iowa” and “Sauk Indians--Iowa,” and Ioway peoples are described as “Iowa Indians.” As part of a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiative at Iowa State University Library, a working group in the Metadata Services department undertook a project to build, publish, and use a controlled vocabulary of preferred terms for Indigenous communities with ties to land that is now part of the state of Iowa. This paper describes the working group’s research, outreach efforts, published vocabulary, and process for adding the preferred subject headings to library metadata.*

Terminologies used to label Indigenous communities are subject to cultural bias and can convey different connotations, degrees of accuracy, and social acceptability for individuals of different backgrounds. Many are exonyms—names originating from outside groups—and can even be understood as pejorative. This paper describes a project Iowa State University Library undertook to rectify this issue for American Indian nations with ties to the state of Iowa. To accomplish this, Metadata Services librarians reached out to Indigenous community representatives to inquire which terms are preferred by community members and updated the headings used in its library catalog to match these suggestions.

In summer 2019, Metadata Services librarians identified several strategic opportunities, one of which was diverse, equitable, and inclusive (DEI) metadata practices. As a result, they formed the DEI Metadata Work Group (DMWG) with the goal to make DEI metadata a priority. Areas for focus included undocumented immigrants, LGBTQ+ terminology, and preferred names for Indigenous peoples.

The decision to commit to this project was driven by several factors. First, by ensuring that library resources were described with culturally appropriate terminology, it supported the library’s mission of “advancement and celebration of DEI in the library system through our diverse collections, inclusive programming, responsive services offered, and other means.”<sup>1</sup> Second, as a public institution, the team members were interested in undertaking a project of local historical and cultural value; hence, the project’s scope was limited to tribes with connections to Iowa. It is this group’s hope that this project inspires other institutions to pursue similar work (e.g., specific to their geographic region or area of specialization). Finally, the authors hoped that information ascertained from this project will benefit library and information science scholars and practitioners. This is particularly important as the subject of DEI and the description of library

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resources remains a dynamic, relatively new area with much still to offer.

Several goals guided this project. First, the DMWG sought to identify unacceptable terms and their more culturally appropriate equivalents. Second, they planned to supplement the old terms with the new ones in the local library metadata. The main reason for focusing on local metadata was that Metadata Services had not done authority work in-house for more than a decade, and had no experience with submitting Subject Authority Cooperative (SACO) subject heading proposals. While the DMWG recognized the importance and need for improving name and subject authorities, they also wanted to keep this project manageable. They decided that authority work was out of scope, but that it could be a future phase. Finally, the DMWG determined two additional goals: build successful relationships with American Indian nations, and share information ascertained from the project with other libraries in the hope of assisting similar work.

## Literature Review

Over the past decade, information professionals have contributed to a growing body of scholarship pertaining to diverse, equitable, and inclusive metadata.<sup>2</sup> Librarians and archivists have made various efforts to better represent and describe Indigenous peoples, other marginalized communities, and topics related to these communities. This reckoning with outdated and inequitable descriptive practices has led to a variety of approaches. One strategy is to update Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH). Others focus on building a broad set of new terms, either by amending and extending LCSH or by creating a new vocabulary from scratch. Still others focus on narrower areas, such as name authorities, languages, or identifying individuals in historical photograph collections.

The Cataloging and Metadata Services Unit of Oregon State University Libraries and Press (OSULP) has undertaken a project to establish headings for Indigenous peoples in what is now Oregon who were not represented in LCSH. The project also aims to update relevant bibliographic records in WorldCat and the OSULP catalog with the new headings to improve discoverability.<sup>3</sup>

The First Nations House of Learning Subject Headings (FNHL), Manitoba Archival Information Network (MAIN) vocabulary, Pathways thesauri, Anti-Racism Digital Library Thesaurus, and Inclusion Metadata Schema all take a broad approach by creating vocabularies that cover a spectrum of headings. The FNHL was created for the X̄wi7x̄wa Library, an Aboriginal library at the University of British Columbia, and includes topic headings, demographic group headings, geographic headings, and chronological headings

to describe a collection of Indigenous materials covering British Columbia.<sup>4</sup> The MAIN vocabulary extends LCSH by emending headings and deleting headings to avoid perpetuating outdated and offensive terminology in favor of headings that better reflect the communities they describe. The MAIN vocabulary also adds headings to fill in gaps in LCSH.<sup>5</sup> Focusing on the Indigenous peoples of Australia and the Torres Strait, the Pathways thesauri cover topical subjects, place names, and Indigenous languages.<sup>6</sup> The Anti-racism Digital Library Thesaurus applies a similar approach to headings connected to anti-racist topics, including policies, organization, demographic groups, and time periods.<sup>7</sup> The Inclusion Metadata Schema consists of a small set of headings covering seven categories, including age- and education-level-based demographic groups.<sup>8</sup>

Another approach has been to create vocabularies that specifically focus on demographic group terms. This is the tack employed by the Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms (LCDGT). The LCDGT covers a broad range of demographic terms, based on aspects including age, occupation, language use, ethnicity, national origin, and other characteristics.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, LCDGT includes updated names for some groups that improve upon LCSH, such as using “Muscogee (North American people)” while the LCSH term for the same people is “Creek Indians.” However, LCDGT includes terms for only a few Indigenous peoples at present.<sup>10</sup>

A fourth approach is to create name authorities, either for social units or individuals. The First Nations Métis and Inuit Indigenous Ontology (FNMIIO) includes names of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities across Canada and is intended to better reflect how those communities refer to themselves.<sup>11</sup> The Iwi Hapū Name List provides standardized terms for Māori social units.<sup>12</sup> Project Naming, which seeks to identify Inuit individuals depicted in the photographic collections of Library and Archives Canada, is not an authority list per se, but could serve as a conduit for the creation of authority records for Inuit individuals.<sup>13</sup> Although not an Indigenous name authority, the Union List of Artist Names (ULAN) includes demographic group information about the people named in the list, including several Indigenous groups with ties to Iowa.<sup>14</sup>

While many existing vocabularies show promise for improving discovery of materials by and about Indigenous people, none solved the problem of describing Indigenous communities with ties to Iowa. Those vocabularies with the most thorough coverage of Indigenous demographic groups were limited to peoples in Canada or Oceania. The vocabulary with the best coverage of Indigenous groups with ties to Iowa, ULAN, lacked total coverage and is not intended as a demographic group vocabulary.

## Research and Planning

Much of the literature reviewed was collected and shared during the exploratory period after the formation of the DMWG. While reviewing these resources, the DMWG remarked on the trailblazing work by Canadian libraries to identify and establish vocabularies aligned to the preferred names for First Nations in Canada. To establish an achievable scope and project outcome, the DMWG elected to focus on Indigenous groups with ties to Iowa, using the twenty-two communities listed on the school's American Indian Faculty and Staff Association (AIFSA) webpage.<sup>15</sup> The DMWG divided research and exploratory work to build lists of potential contacts, both known names and alternate names and spellings, current geographical information, and current LCSH related to each community.

The DMWG surveyed tribal government websites to compile a list of contacts. The DMWG decided that directly contacting tribal-recognized representatives, as opposed to other individuals with existing tribal connections, was the best way to ensure that the group would receive authoritative feedback from the communities. The first group of contacts consisted primarily of tribal leadership. After discussion, a decision was made to focus Indigenous community outreach on library and museum staff, language program staff, and educators where possible. The DMWG believed that this second approach would be less presumptuous than direct outreach to the leaders of sovereign nations. Additionally, a direct message to a colleague might be more effective than a form letter to a government leader. The second survey resulted in identifying one or more personal contacts for most nations. However, some websites included only a single generic email or contact form. In the case of El Nacimiento de la Tribu Kikapú, no website could be located.

Table 1 lists each Iowa-related Indigenous community with their current geographic locations and corresponding LCSH. The LCSH typically indicate broad communities and often, but not always, align with federally recognized names. In some cases, multiple LCSH will apply to an Iowa Indigenous community. For example, when describing resources about the Meskwaki, both the "Fox Indians" and the "Sauk Indians" would be included in the bibliographic metadata. These LCSH do not reflect the geographic location, historical or present; therefore, a geographic subdivision, such as Iowa, would be added to distinguish resources about the Meskwaki Nation (based in Tama, Iowa) from resources about other Meskwaki communities. In just a few cases, LCSH were also available for related subgroups, such as "Fox women" or "Potawatomi children." Many communities also had related topical headings, such as "Fox art," that the DMWG included under the scope of this project.

After informal search testing, it was clear that the preferred names for Iowa Indigenous communities needed

**Table 1.** Indigenous communities with ties to Iowa and related headings

Community name (per official website)	Current geographic location(s)	Library of Congress Subject Heading(s)
Meskwaki Nation: Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa	Iowa	Fox art Fox dance Fox Indians Fox women Sauk Indians
Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska	Kansas Nebraska	Iowa Indians Iowa language
Bah Kho-Je: Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Iowa Indians Iowa language
Otoe-Missouria Tribe	Oklahoma	Oto Indians Oto language Missouri Indians
Sac and Fox Nation	Oklahoma	Fox art Fox dance Fox Indians Fox women Sauk Indians
Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska	Kansas Nebraska	Fox art Fox dance Fox Indians Fox women Sauk Indians

to be searchable and to display to the public. Adding these preferred names as subjects to library metadata would be a valuable step in making catalogs and metadata more equitable and inclusive and would improve the discoverability of these resources. Yet the DMWG knew that they could not simply replace the broad LCSH with current names of Indigenous nations. Without further research, a cataloger would not know to which of several present-day nations a subject such as "Fox Indians" referred. Moreover, using the name of a current geopolitical entity as a subject might not be accurate for a resource focused on history or culture, considering that historical territories and cultural regions do not correspond neatly to the political boundaries of today. Therefore, the DMWG decided to develop potential subject headings that roughly corresponded with the LCSH listed in table 1. Like the existing LCSH, the new headings would be broad; they would refer to peoples, rather than political entities.

The DMWG referred to scholarly resources and online resources (i.e., official Indigenous community websites) to devise and propose new, local headings that would reflect communities' preferred names. The proposed terms are listed in table 2 and were included in the authors' outreach letters as described below. The proposed terms were constructed from the name the community appeared to use to refer to themselves as a people, followed by the suffix

**Table 2.** Updated names for and outreach responses from Indigenous communities with ties to Iowa

Community name (per official website)	Response	Proposed subject heading (for which the DMWG sought approval via outreach)	Preferred subject heading (at time of writing)
Meskwaki Nation: Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa	None yet	Meskwaki (North American Indigenous peoples)	Meskwaki (North American Indigenous peoples)
Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska	Acceptable	Ioway (North American Indigenous peoples)	Ioway (North American Indigenous peoples)
Bah Kho-Je: Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma	Acceptable; tribe officially granted consent	Ioway (North American Indigenous peoples)	Ioway (North American Indigenous peoples)
Otoe-Missouria Tribe	Acceptable; additional name provided	Otoe-Missouria (North American Indigenous peoples)	Jiwere-Nut'achi (North American Indigenous peoples)   Otoe-Missouria (North American Indigenous peoples)
Sac and Fox Nation	None yet	Meskwaki (North American Indigenous peoples)	Meskwaki (North American Indigenous peoples)
Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska	Acceptable	Meskwaki (North American Indigenous peoples)	Meskwaki (North American Indigenous peoples)
Omaha Tribe of Nebraska	Acceptable	Omaha (North American Indigenous peoples)	Omaha (North American Indigenous peoples)
Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska	None yet	Ho-Chunk (North American Indigenous peoples)	Ho-Chunk (North American Indigenous peoples)
Ho-Chunk Nation	Acceptable	Ho-Chunk (North American Indigenous peoples)	Ho-Chunk (North American Indigenous peoples)

“(North American Indigenous peoples)” in place of “Indians.” The parenthetical language was suggested originally by one of Iowa State’s AIFSA co-chairs.

The working group drafted a letter to send to representatives of Indigenous peoples with ties to Iowa. The letter briefly introduced the library’s efforts to create new subject headings that accurately reflect the names used by Indigenous communities. It then explained that the library catalog typically has used exonyms to describe Indigenous peoples, and provided an example of a LCSH related to the community being addressed. The letter next proposed the alternative local subject heading for the community and asked whether this term was an acceptable description of the community’s people and their kinship groups. The DMWG decided to include the proposed heading in the letter, rather than asking the community for a preferred name, mainly because the group wanted to ensure it had a well-researched alternative term to use if the community did not respond. The DMWG also wanted to limit the burden placed on respondents, and responding to a proposal is typically easier than providing fresh information. Finally, the letter welcomed questions, corrections, and suggestions and provided contact information (email address and phone number).

Before finalizing the letter, the DMWG solicited feedback on the draft from colleagues knowledgeable in

DEI and American Indian studies. One reviewer, Omar Poler, a librarian, and the American Indian curriculum services coordinator at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, emphasized the importance of establishing a reciprocal relationship. He cautioned against requesting information from community staff members, who handle many public inquiries and may be overworked, without providing anything meaningful in exchange. Instead, the library could offer communities a selection of relevant library materials as a gesture of appreciation for their feedback on the proposed subject heading.

On Poler’s advice, the DMWG planned to draft a bibliography as a possible resource to offer in appreciation. They surveyed Iowa State’s holdings to collocate resources with LCSH corresponding to the Iowa Indigenous communities. A total of 482 titles were found; most were books, but there were also video recordings, sound recordings, and a few e-books. Upon reviewing the publication information and the LCSH in use with the resources listed in this draft bibliography, it was clear that the metadata (not to mention the collection) was in a sorry state. The resources varied in age, raising concerns about which items would be appropriate to list in offering. Additionally, a high number of titles focused on “Ojibwa Indians,” although “Fox Indians,” “Ho Chunk Indians,” “Iowa Indians,” “Kickapoo Indians,” “Menominee Indians,” “Miami Indians,” “Omaha Indians,” “Ottawa

Indians,” “Oto Indians,” “Potawatomi Indians,” “Sauk Indians,” and “Winnebago Indians” were also present, each representing a few titles. When sharing the draft bibliography with the library’s Associate Dean of Equity and Inclusion, Susan A. Vega García, for vetting and feedback, she also noted this disproportion. A possible explanation for this phenomenon may be an indication that more scholarly research and output focusing on the Ojibwe people have been available than those focusing on other Indigenous peoples. Also noteworthy is that additional LCSH outside the DMWG’s scope were present, such as “Cree Indians.”

After the disappointing initial effort to use LCSH to create a bibliography, the DMWG pivoted to a different approach. The list of twenty-two Iowa-related Indigenous peoples was divided among the librarians, who each researched authors, scholars, and other prominent persons from these groups. This research validated some of the initial results, but revealed additional resources, including scholarly works, literature, documentaries, newsletters, and more, both print and electronic. After the second round of research, the DMWG had more confidence in the appropriateness of the resources it had selected to offer during the outreach process.

Vega García also suggested offering free Interlibrary Loan (ILL) services to the twenty-two identified communities. The DMWG met with their ILL colleagues to describe the project and the outreach scope and to determine whether offering free ILL would be feasible. Overall, the library was in favor of providing this as a free service to these communities, as it aligned with Iowa State’s outreach and extension mission. A challenging aspect of providing ILL was that not all twenty-two communities had libraries, museums, or cultural heritage centers available. Nevertheless, many communities had cultural or education departments or contact persons who could serve as the library surrogate should anyone want to accept the ILL offer. At the time of writing, no requests have been made through this service.

While the DMWG was conducting these preparatory activities, Iowa State’s Digital Press disseminated their new diversity statement. The DMWG realized their emphasis on “authors from underrepresented groups, in languages other than English, and voices from outside academia,” made them an ideal service to highlight.<sup>16</sup> The DMWG reached out to colleagues in Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA), and received recommendations of relevant and appropriate collections to include. With a vetted list of works and resources to include, and additional services to offer or highlight, the DMWG created a LibGuide as the final product to offer in appreciation during outreach. This LibGuide was not part of the library’s general LibGuide collection, and would be publicly available by direct link. For the most part, the DMWG handled the content and organization of the LibGuide, and

an ILL staff member had access and provided content for their page.

An early version of the LibGuide was shared with the AIFSA co-chairs, the library stakeholders mentioned above, and the Scholarly Communications Team (SCT). The feedback was positive overall. Many of the suggestions were corrections, word choice improvements, or menu tweaks. Some feedback was very specific and helpful; for example, SCT members recommended a subject area, “environmental activism,” to research for possible inclusion. After verifying that Iowa State held some items on this topic, a few titles pertinent to the Iowa area were selected and added to the LibGuide. Vega Garcia indicated the need for a welcome message to Indigenous users and needed improvements for the Indigenous user experience on the page providing information about ILL services. The DMWG and ILL incorporated these improvements.

The final LibGuide, “Resources and Services for Iowa Indigenous Peoples” (see figure 1), opens with an introductory page.<sup>17</sup> The main content includes a welcome message, an overview of the project and LibGuide, a land acknowledgement statement that is based on Iowa State’s official version (and expanded with land cession information), and concludes with appreciation for people who contributed or provided feedback.

Sidebar content is available throughout the LibGuide. The left sidebar underneath the navigation menu consists of a list of all twenty-two community names, and all but one of which are linked to their official website (as mentioned above, *El Nacimiento de la Tribu Kikapú* does not appear to have a web presence). The right sidebar contains two boxes, the first lists DMWG members and a hyperlinked contact email, and the second is a content warning cautioning audiences about possible offensive descriptions or negative stereotypes in the library’s collection.

The next LibGuide page, “Free Interlibrary Loan Services,” prepared by ILL staff, provides an overview of the service, a quick start guide on how to place an ILL request, and a FAQ to provide additional information. A downloadable, static PDF copy of this page is provided to give users additional options for bringing or communicating this information to their community, library, or borrowing agent. The “Publish with ISU Digital Press” page provides an overview emphasizing the Digital Press’s commitment to publishing DEI content in diverse voices plus links to the Digital Press website and contact page.

The remaining three LibGuide pages showcase DMWG-curated resources. First, “Select Works Held by ISU” (see figure 2) lists thirty-eight books authored by, edited by, or about the Iowa Indigenous communities that the library has in its collection. “Online Resources” likewise lists fourteen online resources, most of which are freely available, including Indigenous community newsletters in

addition to streaming video and scholarly resources by or about community members. The last item is licensed by the library but may be available through ILL or requested through another library. Both these pages categorize the lists by community name. The last page, “Archival Resources at ISU,” lists several finding aids to highlight collections with content of possible interest. Instructions are provided at the top for people to contact SCUA directly. The archival collections include records, papers, and photographs from rural organizations, the campus intercultural center, an Iowa State professor who developed and taught courses on Iowa history, and a few more notable people and organizations.

## Results

### Outreach and Responses

As the DMWG completed the LibGuide, they also revised the outreach letter to enable them to begin contacting Indigenous communities in June 2021. The final draft (see Appendix) not only requested approval of the proposed subject heading, but also provided a link to the guide and highlighted the library’s offer of free ILL services and digital publishing opportunities. As the DMWG undertook these revisions, it considered whether to mail the letters or to use email, whether to call before or after sending the letters, or to use some combination of these methods. The

group ultimately preferred to send emails when possible, to be clear and consistent in its messaging, and to follow up with phone calls as needed. Sending emails also was more efficient than making calls, as messages could be distributed at once, and responses could easily be tracked.

After completing revisions to the outreach letter, the DMWG divided the list of contacts for the twenty-two identified communities and customized the letter for each community to be contacted. The customization process involved inserting the community’s name as shown on its official website, the proposed subject heading to be used for the community and related groups, and the existing LCSH to be replaced. It was important to use the correct terms in each letter, as some headings describe several related communities. For example, the proposed subject term “Meskwaki (North American Indigenous peoples)” describes not only the Meskwaki Nation in Iowa, but also the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma and the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska, both historically and in present contexts. Moreover, the DMWG chose to list related communities in the letter for context, and to be transparent about the group’s intent to describe multiple communities with the same broad term. To show respect and

The screenshot shows the landing page of the "Resources and Services for Iowa Indigenous Peoples" LibGuide. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for INDEX, HOURS, MY LIBRARY CARD, and GIVE. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with categories like RESEARCH & COLLECTIONS, BORROWING, HELP & SERVICES, OFF-CAMPUS ACCESS, LIBRARY GUIDES, and ASK US!. The main heading is "Resources and Services for Iowa Indigenous Peoples", with a sub-heading "A guide prepared by ISU librarians for tribal members with ties to Iowa".

The page is divided into several sections:

- Introduction:** A vertical list of links including "Free Interlibrary Loan Services", "Publish with ISU Digital Press", "Select Works Held by ISU", "Online Resources", and "Archival Resources at ISU".
- Welcome:** A message welcoming individuals of American Indian heritage and thanking them for using the resource.
- Project and Guide Overview:** A section explaining the use of North American Indigenous Peoples (NAIP) terms and the library's commitment to using authentic names and providing services like interlibrary loan and digital publishing.
- Land Acknowledgement:** A section where Iowa State University expresses its commitment to a welcoming environment and acknowledges the ancestral lands of the Meskwaki and Sauk nations.
- ISU Library Metadata Services:** A section with a "Contact us!" link and a list of librarians: Heather Campbell, Christopher Dieckman, Wesley Teal, and Harriet Wintermute.
- Content Warning:** A section stating that the library collects, preserves, and provides access to materials from various sources, some of which may contain offensive or negative stereotypes.

A sidebar on the left titled "Indigenous Peoples of Iowa" lists 20 tribes, including Meskwaki Nation, Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, Sac and Fox Nation, Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, Ho-Chunk Nation, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma, Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas, Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas, El Nacimiento de la Tribu Kikapú, Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, Miami Nation of Indiana, Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, and Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians.

Figure 1. Landing page of the “Resources and Services for Iowa Indigenous Peoples” LibGuide

understanding, it was crucial that those lists were accurate, complete, and correctly spelled.

The DMWG then attempted to email the customized letters to specific representatives of each community. If contact information for a person associated with a library, museum, education office, or historic or cultural preservation department could not be located, the librarian contacted other representatives, including language experts, elected officials, administrators, and general contacts. In some cases, the only available contact method was a form on the group's website. Some contacts responded by email within days, and a small number contacted a librarian by phone. However, most did not immediately reply.

After a few weeks, the DMWG used several strategies to try to elicit responses: follow-up emails, emails to additional contacts, and phone calls. This effort yielded several replies, but still only about half of the contacted communities had responded by this time. More than a month later, the group made a third attempt to contact communities that had not yet responded. This time, follow-up phone calls and letters sent to newly-located email addresses resulted in a few additional replies.

Following three months of outreach efforts, the DMWG received replies from thirteen of the twenty-one communities (62 percent) that it had contacted. At this point, the group decided to proceed with implementing the recommendations, with the understanding that further responses could later arrive.

Most respondents represented cultural or educational departments, and included a cultural resources officer, a cultural librarian, a director of archives and records, a language coordinator, a director of the community's language department, and a higher education program coordinator. A few respondents, including an executive director and a tribal secretary and enrollment coordinator, represented the tribal government. In one case, a recipient forwarded the request to the tribal government, which added the proposal to an official agenda and reached a consensus to "grant consent."

The responses varied widely in content and complexity. Several simply accepted the proposed term. Others agreed to the proposal, but suggested a change in spelling. Some proposed an entirely different name. Replies ranged from a respondent's

single sentence to multiple messages from several representatives of the same community. Many respondents provided supporting evidence for their decision, such as a consultation with a community linguist, a reference to their official website or constitution, or a description of historical considerations. For instance, one noted that variant spellings resulted from the fact that their language had not included a written alphabet until about a century ago. Others noted the differences between the name as represented in the community's language and the name recognized by the federal government or the name of the legal entity representing the community.

Several respondents referred to related communities. Some asked about other communities' responses; for example, the Otoe-Missouria representative asked whether the Ioway had responded because, as she noted, they are kin to her community. She especially wanted to know whether the Ioway proposed using their traditional name and the broader term proposed by the working group. Others alluded to the autonomy and distinctiveness of related communities. Several said that they could not speak for others. One noted that the proposal was a touchy subject; two communities that had been split since the era of relocation might not want to be grouped under a shared name. Another quoted a phrase overhead at a tribal council: "When you have met one tribe, you have met one tribe."

The screenshot shows the Iowa State University Library website. The main heading is "Resources and Services for Iowa Indigenous Peoples". Below this, there is a search box and a "Select Works" section. The "Select Works" section lists three books with their covers and titles: "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants" by Robin Wall Kimmerer, "Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses" by Robin Wall Kimmerer, and "Nature Love Medicine: Essays on Wildness and Wellness" by Thomas Lowe Fleischner (Editor). To the left of the "Select Works" section is a "Free Interlibrary Loan Services" section. Below the "Select Works" section is a "Citizen Potawatomi Nation" section. To the right of the "Select Works" section is an "ISU Library Metadata Services" section with contact information for librarians. At the bottom right is a "Content Warning" section.

Figure 2. Partial view of the "Select Works held by ISU" page in the "Resources and Services for Iowa Indigenous Peoples" LibGuide

There were responses that hinted at frustration with non-Indigenous society's continued lack of awareness of present-day Indigenous peoples and cultures. One respondent recommended against using the word "tribe" because "that is the way mainstream society looks at the Native American people today," and encouraged the working group to check the nation's websites for further information. Another advised using the name "as stated in our name."

Yet several other respondents thanked the working group for its communication. Some noted their appreciation of resources offered in the LibGuide. Others expressed gratitude for the consideration of their community's language and culture, and several offered greetings and salutations in their language. For example, a representative of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians wrote, "Miigwetch (thank you) for inquiring and being a stand-up university for genuinely including the Native perspective. Our cultural identity is based strongly on how we see ourselves in the world."

### Implementation

The DMWG then designed and implemented an automated process to add the newly identified terms as supplemental subject headings to the library's catalog. The library's

system, Ex Libris Alma, uses normalization rules (NR) to batch edit metadata in MARC records. Because the NR needed to make multiple edits, it included several subrules individually created to handle each of the existing LCSH (see figure 3 for a partial NR). When the subrule matches for an LCSH, it adds the corresponding community's supplemental heading, coded as local, to the record. For example, "Myaamia (North American Indigenous peoples)" is a supplement for the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, and when the LCSH for that community—"Miami Indians"—is found in any 650 subfield \$a, the supplement is added to the record in a new 650 field with a second indicator of 7 and a subfield \$2 with the value "local." Before and after examples in public display are shown in figures 4 and 5 respectively. To prevent duplicate fields, a condition was added to each subrule that would stop it from adding the new heading if it already existed in the record. Once the NR was finalized, an Alma job checked every record in the catalog and applied the NR as needed. Additionally, Alma's import process was updated to incorporate this NR so the supplemental headings would be added automatically to every applicable imported record, removing the need for manual intervention. The full NR rule is publicly available in GitHub.<sup>18</sup>

```
rule "add 650_7 $$a Iowa (North American Indigenous peoples) $$2 local"
when
  (exists "650.{*,*}.a.Iowa Indians*")
  AND
  (not exists "650.{-,7}.a.Iowa (North American Indigenous peoples)")
then
  addField "650.{-,7}.a.Iowa (North American Indigenous peoples)"
  addSubField "650.2.local" if (exists "650.{-,7}.a.Iowa (North American Indigenous peoples)")
end

rule "add 650_7 $$a Meskwaki (North American Indigenous peoples) $$2 local"
when
  (exists "650.{*,*}.a.Fox Indians*|Sauk Indians*|Fox women*")
  AND
  (not exists "650.{-,7}.a.Meskwaki (North American Indigenous peoples)")
then
  addField "650.{-,7}.a.Meskwaki (North American Indigenous peoples)"
  addSubField "650.2.local" if (exists "650.{-,7}.a.Meskwaki (North American Indigenous peoples)")
end
```

Figure 3. Alma normalization rule (partial)

## Discussion

### Challenges

The variety of names for Indigenous peoples presented one of the largest challenges of the project. The existing LCSH cannot be directly mapped to updated names, as many outdated and preferred names lack a one-to-one relationship. Some preferred names are broader than the existing LCSH—for example, Meskwaki encompasses “Fox Indians” and “Sauk Indians,” and Ho-Chunk covers both “Ho-Chunk Indians” and “Winnebago Indians.” Other LCSH can be mapped to more than one preferred name. For instance, the LCSH “Ottawa Indians” currently is applied to several communities, but the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians both prefer the broader heading Anishinaabe as a replacement, while the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians prefer Odawa. Additionally, some communities accept the broader updated subject headings but also would like to be identified by a more specific name in their language—e.g., the Otoe-Missouria Tribe recommends both Otoe-Missouria and Jiwere-Nut’achi as preferred headings. However, as languages have evolved over time, some older names may remain in use but have a different meaning. The respondent for the Citizen Potawatomi Nation confirms that Bodwéwadmik is an acceptable name while also identifying Neshnabek as “our original name for ourselves”; yet because the respondent clarified that today Neshnabek means “native,” the DMWG decided not to include it as an alternate subject heading.

While a variety of preferred names can be accommodated through the automated addition of one or more subject headings to a record, other preferences cannot be as easily addressed. At least one community, the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska, approves of the name (Meskwaki) proposed by the working group but also requests acknowledgement of the distinctiveness of individual federally recognized tribes. In certain cases, resources pertaining to a present-day tribe, such as the Sac and Fox Nation, could be assigned the broader preferred heading along with the federally recognized name as listed in LCNAF (“Sac & Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska”) as subjects. However, it would be historically inaccurate to apply a present-day federally recognized name as a subject when the resource being described pertains to events that occurred before the establishment of that name. Such cases may require an individual librarian’s attention rather than an automated solution.

Spelling posed another challenge. In several cases, the working group proposed spellings that were corrected by the respondents. The Citizen Potawatomi Nation and the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation recommended the spelling

Bodwéwadmik over Bodewéwadmik, which the group had proposed as a replacement for the LCSH “Potawatomi Indians.” Myaamiaki, the proposed update to “Miami Indians,” turned out to be a plural form used to refer to a gathering rather than the name of the tribe; representatives of both the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma and the Miami Nation of Indiana recommended Myaamia instead. A respondent representing the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians rejected another proposal, Daawaa, by explaining that their name could be transcribed several ways, including “Daawaa,” “Odaawa,” or “oDaawa,” but that “Odawa” was the most common spelling in the Michigan area. Where multiple versions were acceptable, the DMWG would have liked to provide context or at least note the existence of alternate spellings. However, the current scope of the project—automatically applying the preferred names as additional headings in relevant MARC bibliographic records, rather than creating new or updated authority records containing variants, sources, and other background information—meant that the group needed to settle on a single accepted spelling.

The outreach effort and response represented further challenges. The process of locating contact information for twenty-two communities, attempting to contact them, following up, and tracking responses, consumed many hours. Moreover, because the organizational structure and available contacts differed for each community, the respondents did not hold equivalent positions of authority. Some represented leadership, while others held cultural or educational positions. Additionally, several respondents mentioned consulting with others or forwarding the request to the tribal government for approval, but others made no mention of a broader consensus. One respondent disclosed discomfort with making any recommendations on behalf of the tribe. Despite the differing roles and approaches of the respondents, the DMWG was pleased to receive any

Title	Sac, Fox, and Iowa Indians.
Subjects	<a href="#">Sauk Indians &gt;</a> <a href="#">Fox Indians &gt;</a> <a href="#">Iowa Indians &gt;</a>

Figure 4. Public display before applying Alma NR

Title	Sac, Fox, and Iowa Indians.
Subjects	<a href="#">Sauk Indians &gt;</a> <a href="#">Fox Indians &gt;</a> <a href="#">Iowa Indians &gt;</a> <a href="#">Meskwaki (North American Indigenous peoples) &gt;</a> <a href="#">Ioway (North American Indigenous peoples) &gt;</a>

Figure 5. Public display after applying Alma NR

response and so accepted every recommendation. When no response was received, the working group determined that it would implement its proposed subject heading with the idea that changes could be made if communication with a community later occurred.

## Conclusion

At the end of their project to improve subject headings for Iowa Indigenous peoples, the librarians of the DEI Metadata Work Group had met their main goals. They identified more culturally appropriate subject headings to replace existing LCSH that described Indigenous peoples with ties to Iowa. They designed and implemented an automated process to supplement the LCSH terms with the improved terms in the local library metadata. They forged reciprocal relationships with several American Indian nations through outreach and the creation of a guide highlighting resources and services offered by Iowa State University Library to Iowa Indigenous communities. Finally, they began to share their work with other libraries.

As a small step toward transparency and a library linked data environment, the DMWG has made the list of preferred subject headings for the twenty-two Iowa Indigenous communities available as a Google Sheet.<sup>19</sup> The Google Sheet lists the community's federally recognized or legal name, hyperlinked to their website where available, alternative names and spellings, the preferred subject heading(s) the DMWG is using to supplement Iowa State's library metadata, and the equivalent LCSH. One last column notes the community response in standardized format, such as "acceptable" or "no response." Any institutions wishing to improve their metadata for resources related to these twenty-two communities are welcome to employ the supplemental headings provided in the Google Sheet.

The DMWG envisions several possibilities for additional DEI metadata work in the future. It plans to submit SACO proposals to improve LCSH authority records related to the twenty-two Iowa Indigenous communities, and to enhance each community's name authority record in LCNAF. Beyond using an Alma NR to update MARC records, the DMWG will use other tools (e.g., Python scripts, oXygen, or OpenRefine) to update other library metadata, such as digital collections in Islandora and SCUA's finding aids in ArchivesSpace, where needed. Eventually, as Iowa State's library technology infrastructure increases, the list of Iowa Indigenous preferred subject headings, and other DEI vocabulary initiatives, will be published as a linked data vocabulary similar to the University of Houston's Cedar project.<sup>20</sup> This vocabulary will make it possible to include the scope and background notes mentioned above, which the Google Sheet does not currently handle.

Moreover, as part of continuing efforts to improve Iowa State's library metadata, the DMWG is considering other DEI vocabulary areas to research and implement as updates to local records or share as linked data vocabularies. Some examples the DMWG is considering include the addition of Homosaurus terms for LGBTQ+ resources, the application of LCDGT and other vocabularies to describe authors belonging to minoritized groups, and a new round of outreach to improve LCSH for the Iowa-related Indigenous communities' languages.<sup>21</sup>

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## Appendix A: Letter template

Greetings [name if available],

I am [name], a librarian at Iowa State University. We are working to update our catalog with the most accurate names for American Indian nations. As you may know, library catalogs rarely reflect the names Indigenous peoples use for themselves, but instead use names imposed on them, like “[LCSH heading].”

To rectify this issue, we would like to use [proposed subject heading] in our catalog. Is this a name that you would use to describe the [name used by tribe] as well as [name(s) of related tribe(s)]?

Please let us know at your earliest convenience if the proposed name is acceptable. You may contact me with any corrections, questions, or suggestions at: [contact information].

As an expression of our gratitude for your help, we have compiled the following guide to selected materials by and about the Indigenous peoples of Iowa: <https://go.iastate.edu/UAREL3>.

We are offering free access to our physical and electronic materials through our interlibrary loan service, which normally includes a fee for non-university members. Your community also may be interested in our digital publishing services. Please see the guide for details.

We look forward to improving our collection and making sure it accurately represents your community. Thank you for your time and willingness to help us in this effort.

Sincerely,  
[name]