

# OCUL Collaborative Futures Decolonizing Description Implementation Working Group – Terms of Reference

## Background

### **Background on OCUL Collaborative Futures**

Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) has undertaken the development of a shared vision of the future of library management systems in Ontario's academic libraries- a vision that articulates new possibilities and builds on a decade's long history of collaboration and cooperation. This vision involves radical collaboration to help OCUL libraries face the challenges of today: the transformation of scholarly communication and higher education, rapid developments in information technology, and declining or limited resources.

### **Background on CFLA-FCAB Indigenous Matters Committee**

In 2017, Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB) created an Indigenous Matters Committee to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's recommendations for Libraries, Archives and Cultural Memory Institutions. This committee provides an overarching framework for decolonizing activities for individual libraries and archives or consortia.

### **Background on OCUL CF Decolonizing Descriptions Working Group**

In Fall 2021, OCUL Collaborative Futures (CF) established the Decolonizing Descriptions Working Group for the purpose of surveying the current conversation on

decolonizing library catalogues, exploring the constraints of our current controlled vocabularies, consulting with Elders and members of the Indigenous community at partner institutions, and investigating how Alma might be used to implement these changes. The group presented a report with recommendations to the CF Metadata Management and Standards Subcommittee (CFMMS) and subsequently the CF Steering Committee (OCUL-CFSC) in Spring 2022.

## **Rationale for the OCUL CF Decolonizing Descriptions Implementation Working Group**

In their report, the Decolonizing Descriptions Working Group listed several recommendations for implementation of the work surrounding decolonizing the descriptions in Collaborative Futures. Many of these recommendations need to happen at the institution level, including relationship building with local stakeholders and decisions surrounding the choice of existing vocabularies to use. Several recommendations are best carried out at the CF-level. In particular, the recommendations surrounding sharing local headings among CF members and developing local authorities in the Alma Network Zone will require centralized organization. Additionally, individual institutions may need help implementing changes. An implementation working group can establish preferred practices and create documentation for implementation of decolonized vocabulary in Alma and Omni.

## **Purpose**

The CF Decolonizing Description Implementation Working Group (DDIWG) supports reparative metadata remediation work in the Network Zone.

## **Responsibilities**

The working group will take on projects and ongoing work related reparative descriptions, including:

1. Establishing a framework for the implementation of decolonized vocabulary and reparative descriptions at the OCUL CF Network Zone level. This would include

exploring the development of local authority records in the Alma Network Zone to determine feasibility and/or recommendations for enhancement.

2. Specific projects to identify and support decision making on which authority vocabularies should be implemented and maintained in the Network Zone and how to modify harmful language in existing vocabularies.
  - a. Recommending procedures and best practices for conducting reparative description work in Alma.
  - b. Identifying a shared space to store suggested and accepted vocabulary.
3. Ongoing maintenance work required to ensure the language used in Network Zone descriptions is respectful and no longer harmful.
4. Identify knowledge sharing and training opportunities for Omni libraries to support their local consultation work.

## Decision Making

In general, the working group makes decisions by consensus with votes only undertaken in rare and exceptional circumstances. The working group makes decisions according to its terms of reference and reports to the Collaborative Futures Metadata Management and Standards subcommittee (CFMMS).

The working group will make recommendations on policy, best practice, procedure to CFMMS and will develop and deliver training and support material for the Omni partners as it relates to its terms.

The working group will consult with Omni libraries, the CF Expert Advisory Network (CFEAN), CF Network Zone Metadata Maintenance Working Group (CF-NZMMWG) and other relevant OCUL groups and experts as appropriate in the course of its work.

## Membership

The membership of the working group will be 6-8 representatives from OCUL Collaborative Futures partner libraries with experience with or interest in decolonizing

descriptions, reparative description and familiarity with metadata standards and practices.

Indigenous peoples or those with experience working with Indigenous communities, and people with DEIA roles/experience are particularly encouraged to volunteer for the group. Metadata knowledge and experience is not required but beneficial.

There will be (1) OCUL *ex officio* member on the working group, either the OCUL Assistant Director or designate. Ex-officio members will be non-voting.

## Appointment Process

Participation in the working group is open to individuals from all participating CF libraries (librarians and staff). Individual members are selected for their expertise in addressing the intention of the working group, taking into consideration broad institutional representation, and providing equal opportunities for working group participation.

Working group members will be identified locally and nominated via the established OCUL nomination process, with final confirmation by the OCUL Collaborative Futures Steering Committee.

## Term

Membership will be for a two-year period with opportunity for renewal.

Staggered approach for recruiting new members to provide the Working Group with continuity of expertise. Recruitment will take place to maintain a quorum of members and ensure the continuity of the group.

## Chair

A chair/co-chairs for the Working Group shall be appointed from among the members of the Working Group at the discretion of the Working Group, with the agreement of OCUL-CFSC.

The Chair will be responsible for:

- Setting meeting agenda
- Ensuring minutes are recorded and posted to OCUL wiki (SPOTdocs)
- Communicating progress with CFMMS and OCUL-CFSC on behalf of the Working Group
- Representing the working group at OCUL-CFSC and other relevant committees' meetings as invited.

## Meetings

- Meetings will occur as frequently as needed, but at least once a month.
- Meetings will take place via video or teleconference.
- Agenda and meeting notes will be made available on the OCUL wiki (SPOTDocs).
- Between meetings, Working Group members will undertake specific work tasks related to the terms.
- The Working Group members will consult between meetings, by telephone or email.

## Reporting

Regular updates will be provided to CFMMS.

The Working Group will consult with appropriate groups with related goals such as the OCUL Truth and Reconciliation Committee and the National Indigenous Knowledge and Language Alliance (NIKLA), if appropriate, to request assistance with setting up consultation at institutions.

## Resources and Budget

Service on the Working Group is non-remunerative. Travel and meeting expenses for the Working Group members are reimbursed according to the Travel and Expense policies of their home institution.

The Working Group will have a dedicated wiki presence on SPOTDocs and will have access to the OCUL Zoom account for meeting and webinar purposes in support of its work.

## **Policies**

Members of the Working Group will comply with Director approved governance and appropriate organizational policies.

## **Terms of Reference Review**

The Working Group Terms of Reference will be regularly reviewed in coordination with the CFMMS at least every 3 years.

**Approved by:** V03 – OCUL-CFSC; V02 – OCUL- CFSC; V01 – OCUL- CFSC

**Approved on:** V03 - April 24, 2026 ;V02 – June 21 2024; V01 – September, 2022