ALA Core Subject Analysis Committee (SAC)
SAC Working Group on External Review of LC Vocabularies

Submitted by Violet Fox, co-chair, June 2022

Background

At the January 2022 SAC meeting, a new topic was brought up for discussion asking if SAC might want to make a statement to encourage the Library of Congress Policy, Training, and Cooperative Program (PTCP) Division to create an editorial board or group with non-LC representation to review LCSH and LCC proposals. This would be a follow-up to an idea presented by Judith Cannan, Chief of Cooperative and Instructional Programs at Library of Congress, at the February 2021 PCC Participants Meeting.

In April 2022, SAC discussed that possibility via ALA Connect and voted to form a working group to make such a statement. The working group's charge is "providing some kind of recommendation to the Library of Congress to create an editorial board with non-LC representation for vetting LCSH and LCC proposals." This working group "will have the latitude to investigate a wide variety of possibilities and will determine the form that the recommendation takes."

Membership

A general call was made for members, resulting in 27 members of the working group, along with two co-chairs. Eight additional people are part of a separate advisory group, which will provide feedback at several times throughout the year. Members include long-time catalogers, newer catalogers, reference librarians, MLIS students, and others. There is representation from the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and Australia on the working group and advisory group. The co-chairs hope this broad representation will provide lots of potential for brainstorming ideas about how the LC vocabularies might include external perspectives.

Co-chairs:
Violet Fox   SAC member
Jamie Carlstone   Northwestern University

Working group members:
Allison Badger   Idaho State University
Allison Bailund   San Diego State
Alyssa Key
Aparna Ghosh   University of South Florida
Carrie Evans
Crystal Casparis   UNC Chapel Hill
Emory LaPrade
Jeanette Claire Sewell Rice University
Jennifer Parsons   Central Methodist University
John Keogh   Johnson County Library (Johnson County, KS)

Julia Bullard	University of British Columbia
Leanne Finnigan	Temple University Libraries
Melissa De Fino	
Michael Stewart	University of Delaware
Michele Lamorte	
Nicola Cook	Wellcome Collection
Paul Richmond	Emerson College
Rebecca Saunders	Western Carolina University
Robin Lowell	
Sara McEachern	
Shana McDanold	DC Public Library
Stephanie Leary	University of Washington iSchool
Stephanie Luke	University of Illinois
Stephanie M. Roach	San Mateo County Community College District
Sue Luftschein	University of Southern California
Tina Gross	North Dakota State University
Victoria Lowe	SUNY Albany

Advisory group members:
Alissa McCulloch	
Bri Watson	University of British Columbia iSchool / Homosaurus
Israel Yáñez	California State University, Sacramento
Kalani Adolpho	University of Miami
Kat Louro	University of Northern British Columbia
Teresa Helena Moreno	University of Illinois at Chicago
Tim Thompson	Yale University
Whitney Buccicone	University of Virginia

Progress and Future Plans

In late May and early June, several optional information sessions were held for working group members who wanted more information about the current LCSH, LCGFT, etc. submission & approval process, as well as more information about the goals of the working group. These small groups discussed the criteria by which LC's PTCP Division evaluates proposals, as well as the advisory group set up for Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms (which began their advisory role in January 2022).

Next steps for the working group will include researching potential alternative advisory bodies, such as review boards or editorial committees, and brainstorming potential representation models that could work for LC's vocabularies. These ideas will be developed in a report, potentially with pros and cons discussed for idea. The co-chairs intend to have a report ready for SAC's evaluation by January 2023.

Questions or comments should be addressed to the co-chairs, Violet Fox <violetfox@gmail.com> and Jamie Carlstone <jamie.carlstone@northwestern.edu>.