

# LIS Education and Tribal Libraries, Archives, and Museums Roundtable

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## Abstract

This roundtable discussion will explore the unique value of incorporating Indigenous information issues in LIS education. Moreover, the discussion will elicit participants' own experience in LIS education while raising awareness regarding this important topic. The discussion will provide a forum for participants to network, share ideas for advancing Indigenous information in iSchools, and consider how the study of tribal cultural institutions and knowledge often forces a reassessment of traditional LIS education.

## Keywords

LIS Education, Tribal Libraries, Indigenous Information Studies

## 1. Background & Topic

Since April 2008, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS) graduate students have increasingly engaged in Indigenous information issues, a highly overlooked area of library and information studies. Since the fall of that year, the motivated students have developed a new and innovative course on tribal cultural institutions. Known as the Tribal Libraries, Archives, and Museums (TLAM) project, the class provides an overview of, and most importantly, practical experience with current issues facing tribal cultural institutions, as well as their history and development.

TLAM began as an independent study project of three SLIS students. Through funding from both the Kauffman Entrepreneurship Community Internship Program and UW-Madison SLIS, the students completed an interest and priorities assessment for the Red Cliff Ojibwe community to determine the potential future role of their library. Through the work in this initial project, the students, along with new recruits, have continued the experience by designing a new course for SLIS. Through this statewide project, the students have broadened their education through experiential learning and have sought to create connections and relationships not only among UW-Madison and the Red Cliff Ojibwe, but also the library and information studies community and several of the eleven federally recognized tribes and bands throughout Wisconsin.

The UW-Madison TLAM course challenges traditional LIS education in a number of ways. It looks beyond the University to tribal librarians, archivists, museum curators, and other community leaders as highly qualified educators on the topic. It is a non-hierarchical network of knowledge seekers teaching one another; there is no "one teacher," but rather it relies on the

contributions of all of its participants—students and professionals alike. It is organized around a combination of participatory classroom gatherings, guest speakers, and local events relevant to the course. Experience is especially emphasized through visiting communities, their tribal cultural institutions, and spending time with tribal members. Overall, it is structured as a service learning experience that seeks to create mutually beneficial relationships between tribal communities and LIS. TLAM continues to be offered at UW-Madison SLIS and is an ongoing development.

This roundtable discussion will explore the unique value of incorporating Indigenous information issues in LIS education. Moreover, the discussion will elicit participants' own experience in LIS education while raising awareness regarding this important topic. The discussion will provide a forum for participants to network, share ideas for advancing Indigenous information in iSchools, and consider how the study of tribal cultural institutions and knowledge often forces a reassessment of traditional LIS education. Relationship-building with tribal cultural institutions often also provides an important opportunity for student internships and service learning that can result in mutually beneficial skill sharing.

## 2. Possible Questions

After a brief presentation on our own participation in Indigenous information issues, there will be a roundtable discussion with attendees, which will likely include the following questions:

- Have you worked with tribal communities?
- In your experience, has your LIS program engaged with tribal communities and/or incorporated Indigenous information issues?
- How can we advocate for tribal cultural institutions within LIS education?
- What resources might help LIS schools develop their own course on tribal archives, libraries, and museums?
- What resources might help LIS schools develop continuing education programming and courses for current tribal cultural institution practitioners?
- What outreach and recruitment efforts might be most effective for building and maintaining networks around this topic?
- Are there additional opportunities for tribal communities and LIS schools to collaborate?

### **3. Post-Conference Follow-Up**

Interested participants will be asked to engage in a network of students, scholars, practitioners, and other interested persons working to inspire and better incorporate the presence of tribal cultural institutions and indigenous information issues in LIS curricula. A few of the opportunities for follow-up will include working with the American Indian Library Association (AILA), becoming AILA members, and encouraging participation in national tribal archives, libraries, and museums conferences. Participants may also opt to be added to our TLAM network database.