

Preferred Names: Advancing Inclusivity in Purdue University's Digital Platforms

Principal Investigator (PI)

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Project Summary: Names and acts of naming are creative expressions, but they also signify one's identity, heritage, and personal history. At Purdue University, people may want to use an identification other than their legal names. However, online platforms at Purdue are currently not sufficiently inclusive in accommodating the needs of faculty, staff, and students with preferred names. Purdue has no streamlined system that allows its community members to register their preferred names across digital platforms. Thus, the university's digital space may be unsafe for those who no longer associate their identities with legal names. The proposed project will survey the need for a more inclusive digital platform at Purdue. Research results will be used in recommending steps to create a more inclusive digital space at Purdue. The Principal Investigator has communicated with the Director of Identity and Access Management at Purdue University's Systems regarding this project.

Introduction and Background of the Proposed Project

People do not choose preferred names only out of whim. Names and acts of naming are creative expressions, but they are also signifiers of one's identity, heritage, and personal history. Both research and popular media widely document how names and naming link with experiences of exclusion, racism, homophobia, et cetera. For example, Hewan Girma (2020) looks at how Black immigrants navigate naming practices in the context of racialized discrimination, and migrant assimilation and incorporation in the United States.

The university mirrors some of the struggles experienced by particular groups in the wider society. At Purdue, people may want to use an identification other than their legal names. However, digital platforms at Purdue are currently not sufficiently inclusive in accommodating the needs of faculty, staff, and students with preferred names. Purdue has no streamlined system in place that allows members of its community to register their preferred names across digital platforms. Thus, the digital space may be unsafe for those who no longer associate their identities with legal names.

People use preferred names for reasons such as the following:

Gender and Identity. Facing one's name from the past may upset those trying to transition to a new identity. Transgender students, for example, might experience anxiety when navigating university online spaces displaying legal names which they no longer use (Hope 2016).

Resistance to Assimilation. Research shows that immigrants assimilate to minimize the experience of anti-immigrant hate (Hartlep 2013; Hsu 2015). Naming practice, for many immigrants, is a racially constructed process. Immigrant parents may give their children Western names to facilitate assimilation and reduce the experience of othering. As adults, people may want to reclaim their heritage & revert to names closer to their cultural heritage.

Decolonization. Naming practices may be influenced heavily by colonialism. The colonial project works toward Indigenous erasure, including traditional naming practices. This was the case in the Philippines when islanders were assigned surnames from a catalog published by the Spanish colonial government (Ichimura 2019). Until today, Filipinos are given Christian names at baptism. However, people may change their religion as adults or prefer a decolonial name.

It is difficult for people to change their names because of a lack of resources and difficulty in navigating bureaucracy, among other reasons. Within principles of inclusion, universities address limitations by creating possibilities to accommodate the needs of those with particular preferences.

Project Goals

The goals of the proposed project include:

- 1) To survey the need for a more inclusive digital platform at Purdue;
- 2) To publish a white paper on preferred names and nondiscrimination and recommend steps aligned with Purdue University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion principles, and;
- 3) Communicate research results to offices tasked with developing policy related to identity and access management.

Significance

Purdue University needs to urgently implement a system of registering preferred names due to the following reasons:

- 1) The recognition of preferred names aligns with Purdue University’s “Nondiscrimination Policy Statement” (Purdue University n.d.)
- 2) It has been five years since the Department of Education issued a “Dear Colleague” letter that reminded institutions about Title IX’s clause on nondiscrimination, especially for gender-nonconforming community members (Bantz et al. 2016; Higher Education Information Security Council 2016).
- 3) Other institutions of learning, such as Harvard University, the University of California Los Angeles, the University of British Columbia, and many others, already have systems allowing members of their community to register their preferred names.

Current Context and Research Plans

The process of registering preferred names at Purdue is currently very challenging. In my own experience, I first requested the university’s IT Team for assistance to register my preferred name on May 1, 2019. It was October 10, 2021 when we closed the process of recording my preferred name across all Purdue platforms. What would have been a simple process for preferred name registration took a total of six months at Purdue. As an example, the University of British Columbia (UBC) has instituted a one-step process for registering preferred names. A student only needs to enter a preferred name online, which would then appear in several places automatically, such as the following: university ID, class lists, learning management system, library, and other university services. At UBC, legal names appear only in official documents such as the university diploma and transcript.

On September 24, 2021, I met with Mandi Witkovsky, Director of Identity and Access Management at Purdue, to discuss my questions about, and possibilities for, accommodating preferred names at Purdue. Witkovsky expressed her support in my planned project and said that the results of my research would be useful in potentially implementing a university-wide process for recording preferred names.

To ensure the timely delivery of research results, I would like to recruit two Graduate Research Assistants who will provide research support. A university-wide survey will serve as the main instrument in gathering project-related information. The survey results will be used in writing a white paper to be published in Butler Center’s *Working Paper Series*.

Budget

Resources	Cost (USD)	Justification
2 Graduate Research Assistants (45 hours/month at approximately USD25/hr)	3,500	Graduate Research Assistants will assist in data collection, analysis, and management.
Editorial and proofreading fees for ensuing publications	500	Editorial services will speed up information dissemination.
Miscellaneous	1,000	Unforeseen expenses such as producing digital materials for distributing research results, conference registration for presenting research to the public, etc.
Total	USD5,000	

Project Timeline

Dates	Activity
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PI recruits 2 Graduate Research Assistants• PI writes survey questions
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PI and GRAs edit survey• PI and GRAs write and submit IRB
January to Mid-February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GRAs distribute survey using Purdue mailing lists• GRAs compile survey results
Mid-February to March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PI writes white paper for publication in Butler Center's <i>Working Paper Series</i>

How the project supports the mission of the Butler Center and Outcomes

The Butler Center for Leadership Excellence helps create an inclusive environment at Purdue, especially for those identifying with underrepresented minorities. If granted funding, the proposed project will expand conversations about inclusion in the university, and will potentially help the university take further steps in making the digital spaces at Purdue more inclusive for everyone.

The outcomes of the project include the following:

1. Publish a white paper in Butler Center's *Working Paper Series*.
2. Train two graduate students in research, collaboration, and advocacy for underrepresented minorities in higher education.

References

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- Girma, Hewan. 2020. "Black Names, Immigrant Names: Navigating Race and Ethnicity Through Personal Names-." *Journal of Black Studies* 51 (1): 16–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934719888806>.
- Hartlep, Nicholas Daniel. 2013. *The Model Minority Stereotype: Demystifying Asian American Success*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Higher Education Information Security Council. 2016. "IT Considerations in Implementing Preferred Name Policies." Higher Education Information Security Council. <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2016/11/it-considerations-in-implementing-preferred-name-policies>.
- Hope, Joan. 2016. "Implement a Preferred Name Policy to Support Transgender Students." *The Successful Registrar* 16 (6): 7. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tsr.30209>.
- Hsu, Madeline Y. 2015. *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ichimura, Anri. 2019. "Find Your Family Name in This Catalog of Historical Surnames From the Spanish Colonial Era." *Esquiremag.Ph*. November 2, 2019. <https://www.esquiremag.ph/culture/books-and-art/surname-spanish-catalog-a00304-20191102>.
- Purdue University. n.d. "Nondiscrimination Policy Statement." Purdue University. Accessed October 10, 2021. https://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.php.

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Migration and Diaspora, The Philippines, Southeast Asia, Critical Multimodality, The Global South, Social Justice, Transnational Family, Development Studies, Precarity Studies, Diversity and Inclusion

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Anthropology, 2018, Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, Canada.

M.A. in Human Security Studies, 2008, Department of Cultural Anthropology, Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies, University of Tokyo, Japan.

B.A. in Journalism, 2003, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Philippines.

PUBLICATIONS

Forthcoming

Docot, Dada. (2022). Decolonial Repair and Healing in a Colonized Hometown. In, *Emerging Perspectives in Philippine Studies: A Reader*. Edited by Stephen Acabado and Clement Camposano. (Accepted; Under revision).

Docot, Dada. (2022). Remittances (Dictionary Entry). *SAGE Encyclopedia of Filipina/x/o American Studies*. (under contract)

Under Review

Docot, Dada. Carceral and Colonial Memory during Pandemic Times in the Philippines: Perspectives from the Diaspora. *Commoning Ethnography Journal*.

Docot, Dada and Matthew C. Go. Grave Reverberations: COVID-19 and Postcolonial Sanitation Regimes in the Philippines. *Philippine Studies Journal*.

Peer-reviewed Journal Articles

Docot, Dada. 2019. Taking the Long Route: Ethnographic Metacommentary as Method in the Anthropological Film Practice. *Current Anthropology* 60, no. 6: 774-795. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/706564>

Docot, Dada. 2019. Urban 'Clutter': Stairway Landings of Shanghai. *Streetnotes* 26, no. 1: 250-264. Permalink: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/84v4p49j>

Docot, Dada. 2017. Negative Productions during Fieldwork in the Hometown. *GeoHumanities* 3, no. 2 (2017): 307-327. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/2373566X.2017.1370385>

Invited Essays in a Journal

Docot, Dada. 2021. Multimodal Extractivism. *American Anthropologist*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.13626>.

Docot, Dada and Matthew C. Go. Fire and fear: 2021. Rapid cremations in the Philippines amidst COVID-19. Forensic Science International: Synergy 3: 100132. (equal authorship)
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsisyn.2020.100132>

Chapters in Edited Collections

Docot, Dada. 2017. Bamboo Baskets Industry in Nabua, Camarines Sur. In *Kabansayan: Contemporary Arts from the Regions – Bicol, Philippines*. T. Valiente and D. Gonzaga, eds. Pp. 25-28. Naga City, Philippines: Ateneo de Naga University Press, Philippines.

Docot, Dada. 2008. On Identity and Development: Filipino Women Entertainers in Transit in Japan. In *Development in Asia: Interdisciplinary, Post-Neoliberal, and Transnational Perspectives*. D. Nault, ed. Pp. 107-134. Florida, USA: Brown Walker Press.

Public-facing Editorials

2020. Docot, Dada and Mark Sanchez, [OPINION] “Responding to the Anti-Terror Law from the United States,” *Rappler*, July 22, 2020. <https://rappler.com/voices/ispeak/opinion-responding-anti-terror-law-from-united-states>

2020. Docot, Dada. [OPINION] “Anti-Black attitudes Among Filipinos in the Context of the U.S. Empire,” *Rappler*, June 23, 2020. <https://rappler.com/voices/ispeak/opinion-anti-black-attitudes-filipinos-united-states-empire>,

2020. Docot, Dada. [OPINION] “Extraordinary Occupational Hazards: PH Migrants During the Pandemic,” *Rappler*, April 25, 2020 <https://www.rappler.com/move-ph/ispeak/258927-opinion-filipino-migrants-coronavirus-pandemic-occupational-hazards>

2020. Docot, Dada [OPINION] “Demystifying the Campus Visit,” Conditionally Accepted Column, *Inside Higher Ed*, February 7, 2020. <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/02/07/advice-preparing-campus-job-visit-opinion>

SELECTED GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2021 Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, Tokyo College, the University of Tokyo (USD58,000)
- 2020 Purdue Research Foundation, Purdue University. USD6,000
- 2020 Purdue Faculty Women of Color Travel Grant, College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University
- 2020 Aspire Research Enhancement Grant, College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University USD2,500
- 2019 Aspire Research Enhancement Grant, College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University USD2,500
- 2019 Aspire Research Enhancement Grant, College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University USD2,500
- 2017 Reginald and Annie Van Fellowship for Dissertation Writing, St. John’s College, University of British Columbia. CAD3,000
- 2016 Li Pai Lin Memorial Graduate Scholarship, St. John’s College, University of British Columbia. CAD500
- 2016 Mobility Travel Award, Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore-Working Group on Migration, University of Basel, Switzerland (flight and accommodation)
- 2014 Bottom Billion Fieldwork Fund, Liu Institute for Global Issues, University of British Columbia, CAD 3,000
- 2011 Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship, Social Science, and Humanities Research Council, Government of Canada. CAD150,000 (2011-2014)
- 2011 Liu Fellowship, Liu Institute for Global Issues, University of British Columbia. Organizing grants for the UBC Philippine Studies Series with grants up to CAD10,000/yr (2011-2016)
- 2011 Premiere 4-Year Fellowships for PhD Students. University of British Columbia. CAD18,000 + tuition for 4 years (2011-2014)
- 2010 International Tuition Award, University of British Columbia. Approximately CAD1,000/term (2010-2018)
- 2010 Travel Award, Asian Research Institute, National University of Singapore (flight and accommodation)
- 2005 Graduate Scholarship for Researchers. Japanese Ministry of Education, Government of Japan. ¥6,120,000 (2005-2008)