The Government Information Services Team has been charged to review current government information programs, encompassing public and technical services, and to develop a plan extend the reach of these services by integrating all or parts of the current Government Documents operations into the larger Library organization. While we are pleased with our progress to date, the Team recognizes that much remains to be done. This interim report represents our best thinking to date.

All members of the Team approached this task with a firm belief that government information is an essential component of information services in virtually every research discipline. Therefore our goal is to assist in the broader dissemination and utilization of government information by all users of the University Library. To accomplish this task the Team first engaged in an effort to understand the many unique facets of government information from the U.S. depository library programs, other national and international government information projects, and resources such as Government Information Online. We then considered numerous possible public services options, the implications of incorporating government documents technical services workflow into the Library’s central Technical Services Division, related staffing assignments that would continue the high level of service currently provided to users of government information, and models to further promote usage of government information throughout the Library. Tasks remaining for the team include detailed implementation planning and gathering input from users to design new government information services attuned to current and emerging needs.

Government Information Services Location

The Team developed a set of criteria for evaluating a new location for government information reference services. Our criteria included synergies with regard to service profile (e.g. mission, scope of services populations served), collections, and proximity to the government documents collection in the Main Library book stacks. The Team readily identified four library units that best matched these elements and focused on examining these in-depth. The units are: Central Reference, Education & Social Sciences, Business, Economics and Labor, and Map and Geography.

Small groups from the Team visited each of these libraries, met with the librarians from each unit, and compiled data on all the units to help assess the compatibility for incorporating the primary public service point for government information into their public service program. A table, attached to this report as Appendix I, includes the data compiled on each unit. Following extensive discussion based on this information, the Team decided to recommend both a short-term and a long-term proposal. The short-term recommendation would allow near immediate implementation of a merged service point and closure of the Government Documents Library’s service point in room 200 South. [Addenda (April 21, 2009): The long-term proposal, which involved combining Government Information and Map and Geography when appropriate space
became available, was tabled after an earlier version of this document was vetted within the Library.]

**Recommendation for Immediately Viable Implementation:** The Government Information Services Team recommends the merging of the Government Documents Library’s public services with Central Reference beginning in June 2009. As of July, 2009, the Central Reference and Government Information Library will be launched. A plan for assessing the impact of this new configuration of services will be developed and the results and future recommendations reported to the University Librarian regarding this model by December, 2009.

The rationale for this recommendation recognizes that both units serve a broad range of subject areas represented by a very diverse group of users. Because of their current physical proximity, the two units have already engaged in some cross-training. The expanded service point libraries would remain close to the government information circulating collections in the Main Library book stacks, as well as to reference collections. No significant renovation or extensive move of collections is required. Government Documents users, accustomed to the current location of the Government Documents Library, will still find the expected services in close proximity.

The merger of these two units will require more in-depth training on the use of government information by the Central Reference librarians and staff, and cross-training will be required for current Government Documents librarians and staff.

The Government Information Services Team suggests that this initial recommendation and any later service configurations create opportunities for designing new service models employing the government information specialists. They can provide enhanced virtual services, work more closely with librarians in all units to promote and support the use of government information sources in all relevant fields, and provide strong stewardship of the government information resources dispersed throughout the Library in print and electronically.

The Government Documents librarians will participate in reference services at the Central Reference Information Desk, both in person and virtually, while continuing to fulfill their specific user services responsibilities related to government information, e.g., training, instruction, collection development, management. They can continue to insure compliance with United States (federal and state), Canada, Great Britain and International Documents depository obligations. Librarians may be able to take on new assignments, such as other working with information from IGOs, foreign national information, but specifically GIS and Data Services. The Team anticipates that the minimum of on-desk hours will be 4-5 hour per week.

The Government Information Services Team further recommends that “office hours” be used by Government Information librarians, creating a consistent time when a specialist is available to answer in-depth questions for users. The Team also recommends the use of online chat software, such as IM Collaborator, to enable Government Information librarians to be available “virtually” while being physically located in their own offices. The use of these new models for service will be imperative to maintaining the high level of service for which our current Government Documents Library faculty and staff are known.
It should be noted that useful synergies with the Education and Social Science Library (ESSL), Business and Economics Library (BEL) and Map and Geography were also found, however, none of these units presented an optimal situation due to specific subject focus (ESSL, BEL) and/or space issues (Map and Geography).

**Long Term Recommendation:** *We recommend that Government Information and Map and Geography be combined when appropriate space is available.* [Addenda (April 21, 2009): This recommendation was tabled by the Library Executive Committee upon their review of this interim report, after this document went out for comment.]

These units contain unique information sources of interest to a broad spectrum of users. If the space currently occupied by the Business and Economics Library (BEL) becomes available, for example, that location would create much needed visibility for the Map and Geography collections and services, and Government Information Services as well. These “working collections,” cover many subject areas, in some cases from local to global, have special multiple formats, have their own unique classification and access tools, and use ranges from historical materials to current items. The services provided to users to access, interpret, and utilize these collections often require extensive one-on-one interaction and engagement. In addition, these are collections and services used by the non-university community.

If BEL remains in place, an alternative would be to relocate Government Information Services and Map and Geography into Library 111, once the Library Business Office is transferred to another floor. BEL’s service point could then be extended to include government information, spatial data, and maps, and possibly GIS as well.

**Technical Services**

The Technical Services Coordination and Consolidation Team recommendation #5 states, “...development of a plan for bringing materials currently processed in the Government Documents Library into the central technical services workflow by July 2009.” Government information sources are a unique body of publications that requires knowledgeable treatment in the areas of acquisitions, processing, and cataloging and classification. The possibility of dividing of these intertwined operations raised concerns among the Government Information Services Team members. Michael Norman and Lynn Wiley were each invited to meet with the team to work through these issues. Together we arrived at an overview of a technical services workflow that takes advantage of the larger staff and resources of Content Access Management (CAM) while incorporating the expertise of the government information librarians and staff related to depository operations, guidelines, and procedures necessary to fulfill the unique requirements of government information sources.

**Technical Services Recommendation:** *Government information technical services are to be incorporated into the central Technical Services workflow by establishing a Government Documents Cataloging and Processing team or unit located in room 220 that will handle the acquisition, receipts, processing, cataloging, and check-in for serials and other items at the piece level as per depository standards. The unit’s productivity, along with addressing issues of*
any current or future backlogs, special collections, gifts, etc., will be augmented through cross-training with other CAM staff.

The Government Information Services Team continues to discuss how to integrate the technical services tasks for government documents into the larger CAM policies and workflow while insuring that a formal role exists for the government information specialists to insure the necessary direction and compliance required by the various depository agreements.

Staffing

The Government Information Services Team is developing a staffing model, employing the current level of resources, that would insure the University Library continues to meet all requirements of the various depository agreements; to offer the highest levels of services to government information users; to process and manage optimally the government information collections; and to train both the larger University Library staff and users on access and use of government information sources.

All the librarians currently working in Government Documents would be assigned reference duties in Central Reference and Government Information in addition to other specific responsibilities. They will also provide more training and continuing education to Central Reference faculty, graduate assistants, and staff, subject specialists, and other librarians to make sure that all users, ranging from researchers to students to the community-at-large have access to the appropriate government information resources and tools.

These responsibilities and targets for the actual percent of time spent working in each task/area will need to be determined and clearly articulated in the implementation report. Our preliminary recommendations for roles and responsibilities of the current faculty and permanent staff, in addition to their Central Reference service point assignments, are as follows:

A more detailed position description is being developed.

David Griffiths—International Documents Librarian 70%, Original Cataloger 30%
Karen Hogenboom—GIS/Data Services and State Documents Librarian
Kevin McLaughlin—CAM
Mary Mallory—Coordinator of Government Information Services, Access and Collections
Paula Reveal—CAM 70%; Government Information Services 30%

**Staffing Recommendation:** The Government Information Services Team recommends the creation of a position, Coordinator of Government Information Services, Access, and Collections. The position will have responsibility for insuring the dissemination of government information to users across campus and in the community, and maintaining the integrity of all depository arrangements. Other than a commitment to spend a set number of hours per week participating in reference services at the Central Reference and Government Information Desk, the position would not be assigned to any particular library unit. The person in the position would instead work with all libraries and units to insure that government information is known, integrated into disciplinary guides and tools, and available to all users in all libraries.
A more detailed position description is being developed.

**Government Information Standing Committee Recommendation:** The Team recommends the formation of a standing committee, led by the Coordinator, that will focus on government information access, collections, and services library-wide. Standing Committee members will be liaisons from appropriate libraries, units, etc. A major purpose of this group will be to develop effective reference and instructional services using government information within the context of disciplines.

*In addition, the Coordinator should have responsibility for oversight of the government documents collections, both current and retrospective, holistically across all locations in the Library.*

**Continuing Activities**

The Government Information Services Team charge requires a detailed implementation plan which the Team will complete by June 2009. This plan will address the integration of user services functions and recommendations for staffing, including the articulation of specific roles and responsibilities for all current Government Documents faculty and staff. The Team will also contribute to the tasks outlined in Appendix B of the Technical Services Coordination and Consolidation Team, specifically working with “Acquisitions, CAM and Government Documents Library … to identify specific steps needed to transition to an integrated workflow, and, in written agreement, work out a detailed plan as to how to pull the technical services personnel into Room 220.”

Another aspect of the charge regarding, “Responsibilities for ongoing management of the SuDoc, UN, and related collections should also be considered in the staffing plan, as well as the need to monitor professional developments pertaining to the management of such collections (e.g., the CIC cooperative storage program)” will also be addressed in the implementation plan. However, for the time being, the team recommends that these responsibilities be managed and handled by the Coordinator and the Technical Services government information unit staff.

We also plan to consult more broadly with teaching faculty, other librarians, and staff about ways to enhance government information services. The first step is to conduct a survey of Government Information users, followed by interviews with a focus group this spring.

The members of the Government Information Services Team are keenly aware that significant work still needs to be accomplished to fulfill our charge. Creating an implementation plan will likely challenge some aspects of our current recommendations. In that light the Team would like to emphasize that this is an interim report representing our best thinking to this point.