

International and Area Studies Implementation Team

Working Group on Staffing Summary

December 7, 2009

Present: Terri Barnes, Kit Condill (for Helen Sullivan), Nancy O'Brien (Convener and Note-taker), Marek Sroka, Karen Wei

Guests: Michael Norman, Lynn Wiley

1. After introductions, Lynn Wiley began by talking about the integration of staff into the Acquisitions unit from the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) and the Slavic and East European libraries. She said that the transferred staff mostly focused on firm orders, blanket orders, periodicals (including check-in), and payment of invoices. In addition, Silda Andrick has taken on creating short records for Latin American blanket order items. Silda meets with Paula Carns to discuss issues related to acquisitions and collections for LAC.

Naza Agassi handles blanket order items for Slavic, some firm orders, and facilitates the work of the Slavic graduate assistants in Acquisitions. Language skills are critical in this type of work that involves claiming items, tracking firm orders, and centralized handling of serials.

Lynn pointed out that more lead time is needed for planning to integrate staff into other units. It would have been helpful to have more meetings with transferred staff to discuss work flow, expectations, and culture of the work place. She suggested that the Working Group on Staffing might find it helpful to meet with Silda and Naza regarding their perspectives.

In response to questions, Lynn confirmed that language skills are essential for correct processing of materials in non-Roman script; that 85-90% of LAC and Slavic material is received on blanket order while the rest are firm orders; and that Acquisitions maintains responsibility for replacing staff with language skills who resign or retire. For transfer of staff on a larger basis, it would be very helpful to have a programmatic integration based on a timeline and planned orientations. Acquisitions currently provides training through a mix of in-person and digital tutorials (via Camtasia) that accommodate different learning styles. The buddy system for in-person training works well, especially given limited resources for developing training schedules. Some consideration may be needed in the final report for providing resources for training and scheduling to assist units accepting transfers of staff.

Karen Wei noted that the Asian Library places firm orders more than it uses blanket orders, with the exception of South Asia purchases. Due to the variety of languages covered by the current Asian Library, there are complex issues related to reassigning staff to work in other units where there may not be immediate access to colleagues with language expertise. Communication with and training by Asian librarians will be essential for staff working in other units who are designated to work with Asian language

material. Members of the working group discussed possibly needing more centralized space for Acquisitions and CAM to integrate the language-focused staff into their units. It might be helpful to have a facilitator to assist in the integration of staff and to make sure that the right skill sets are in place.

Michael Norman noted that CAM is not as far along in its integration of staff from other units as they had hoped. He mentioned that the document related to Technical Services Coordination

http://www.library.illinois.edu/nsm/techserv/Technical_Services_Report_With_Appendix_B.pdf was ambitious in its scope, and implementation would benefit from longer timelines for planning the integration. Space for adding people into CAM is at a premium, and CAM, Facilities, Acquisitions, and IT should be involved in any discussions regarding staff being moved. One concern is having enough computer equipment available, even with shared computers for part-time employees. As Michael noted, transition is difficult for people regardless of how amenable they are to change. Asking people to move to new spaces is hard as well, so it is important to provide adequate space for people in the centralized units.

In regard to training, CAM uses a mixture of a buddy system, pairing a knowledgeable staff member with a recently transferred employee; formal training; and, digital Camtasia tutorials.

CAM is anticipating six retirements within the next few years that will provide more flexibility in assigning job duties, space, and equipment. CAM has a large number of upcoming projects but has been able to utilize staff in the Information Processing and Management unit for assistance with large projects.

Michael reiterated that CAM needs more space for people, for shelving for material, and for equipment. The technical staff recently merged with CAM from three units (Music, Slavic, and Government Documents) have increased output since the transfer, but more time is still needed to integrate fully. In response to a question about how cataloging statistics are recorded, and if it is possible to separate out cataloging data needed by the Area Studies Centers for reporting purposes, Michael indicated how reports can be generated in a number of ways to get this type of information.

In response to another question about where funding for catalog records for e-books comes from, Michael indicated that central collections funding is provided to purchase those types of catalog records.

CAM does have staff with language skills, but most of those staff currently focus on English language material.

2. In a very brief discussion of a survey to be sent to staff in the IAS units, the purpose of the survey is to get input from those individuals who will be affected by the creation of the IAS Library. Working Group members will discuss this further by email.
3. The meeting adjourned at 12:25pm; future meeting dates and times will be determined.