NSM Reference Services Implementation Team
Meeting summary, March 28, 2011

Members present: Frances Harris (Chair), Merinda Hensley, Sarah Shreeves, Nancy O’Brien, David Ward, Pat Allen, Sue Searing

This meeting was devoted to discussion of subcommittee progress. Each charge was discussed in order of timeliness factors previously determined.

**Charge 8** (location of the physical reference desk).
Frances shared Scott’s suggestion about clarifying the reference to nearby office space.
Committee members suggested alternative language.

**Charge 6** (charge and composition for Reference Services Committee).
Overall: The subcommittee is making good progress. Merinda will put the proposal into standard bylaws language. There is a tension between wanting a smaller sized group (i.e., more nimble) and the desire for reasonable representation. Team members agreed that there needs to be a systematic way of keeping the committee vibrant and effective.

More specifically: Initially, the subcommittee decided that membership on the Reference Services Committee should resemble CDC, with one member from each division with the exception of Law. The larger group felt that Law should be included. There was extensive discussion about the options for composition of the Reference Services Committee, but divisional representation seemed to be the most equitable. The Technical Services representative might be drawn from Library IT, personnel dealing with licensing issues, or others who can contribute due to the role they have in administering the back end of reference services. The ex officio member will be the Staff Training Coordinator.

The chair of the committee will be elected from within and function as a rotating position. This person will automatically be placed as ex officio on the Services Advisory Committee.

The committee will advise the AUL for Services to ensure relevance and strong leadership.

**Charge 2** (staffing model).
The group agreed that the levels of service at each of the four reference desks and virtual desk should be determined by a combination of the level of questions coming in (Tier 1, 2, and 3) and the activity at the desk, i.e. the reference desk should be staffed adequately to manage the typical activity for that period of time. Each of the desks should define the level of service available during specific times in order to establish defined service expectations.

The group also agreed that the implementation plan should specify the positions attached to each reference desk, but not the number of hours that a librarian would be expected to serve on the desk. While we will specify service expectations for peak times, it will be up to each of the desks and Reference Services Committee guidelines and recommendations to define how the staffing is implemented. The group recommended that each hub will specify a minimum number of scheduled reference service hours that the personnel belonging to the hub will provide. “Service
hours” are defined broadly as in-person desk shifts, embedded hours, virtual shifts, consultation/office hours, etc. These hours represent a regular time when patrons who need to locate a subject/other specialist can expect to find the person, in addition to sending questions by email and other asynchronous communications.

The group discussed how we should acknowledge and include the reference activities of liaison librarians and especially embedded librarians who may be conducting extensive reference activities within other spaces or via email. We agreed that these activities need to be part of the larger implementation plan.

We also discussed having librarians in the Research Support Services (or whatever it will be called) being available to staff the other desks outside of the Main Library.

We also agreed that ongoing assessment of the staffing model should be conducted by the Reference Services Committee.

**Charge 3** (referral model).
This subcommittee has primarily worked on developing content and are populating a spreadsheet with existing data drawn from the fund manager list. Their next step is to write recommendations and some specs for a more detailed version, which would include additional features such as a searchable database, links to directory entries for specialists, and a few other things that aren’t possible for the NSM team to accomplish given the scope of its charge and its timeline.

**Charges 4, 5, and 7** (name for new unit, position description for head, and assessment methods). The team did not have time for in-depth discussion of these charges. Members agreed to discuss the name issue over e-mail.

Revised subcommittee reports will be due by the next meeting.

**Postscript:** Because the next meeting couldn’t be scheduled until Thursday, April 7, team members are to share reports via e-mail and respond online as well.