New Service Models: Reference Services Implementation Team

Meeting Summary

March 9, 2011

225B Main Library

10-11am

Members present: Frances Harris (Chair), Pat Allen, Merinda Hensley, Nancy O'Brien (recorder), Sue Searing, Scott Walter (Administrative Liaison), David Ward

Frances opened the meeting by reminding everyone that the purpose was to discuss the Team’s Charge 8, “Determine the optimum location of the physical reference desk in the Main Library.”

The group began by discussing the optimal criteria for a reference desk in any location. These include:

- Needs to be easily findable (and to be easy to give directions to reach it)
- Needs to be in a position that has adjacencies or proximity to other units such as humanities, social sciences, and so on
- Needs proximity to, or integration with, other services such as circulation and reserves
- Needs adequate space to conduct reference interactions and help people at nearby public computers
- Needs to be in reasonable proximity to scanning stations, public printers, etc.
- Needs to be co-located near technology assistance, scholarly commons assistance, etc.
- Would be helpful to be near the virtual service desk site so that consultation can occur
- Consideration of quiet versus some background noise for public working space

Pat brought up the issue of what other service points will be doing and how it fits into the reference service model. There was brief discussion of “Specialty Service Desks” and their role in reference service.

The group discussed whether the Main Library reference desk should be located on the first or second floor. After lengthy discussion of the pros and cons, there was consensus that the second floor was the better option at this time, since it allowed for co-location near other important services such as central circulation and reserves, and since it allowed for the new reference operation to have a distinct “brand” separate from the Social and Applied Health Sciences services planned for the first floor locations.

The Team felt that the location of the current Information Desk was the best option for the next two to three years. Subsequent changes in the Main Library (specifically reassignment of operations and space in Room 220), may make it desirable to move reference services into the Reading Room located in Room 200.
Further discussion will need to address where office space will be for the virtual reference services operation, and for personnel assigned to the new unit. Discussion of virtual services and easy access to subject and language specialists resulted in consideration of using Skype and video cameras for some of these interactions to make them more user-friendly.

Frances volunteered to write up some of the discussion, and will arrange for the next meeting of the entire Team. Working groups are meeting independently to address specific charges.

The meeting adjourned at 11am.