Reference Services NSM

Librarian-initiated Reference Subgroup Meeting

March 16, 2010

Attending: Paula Carns (subgroup leader & minute taker), Lisa Hinchliffe, Lura Joseph, and Lynne Rudasill,

Agenda

I. Discussion of subcommittee charge. The subgroup revised the charge to be:

Librarian-initiated reference subgroup will look at current activities related to reference and will make suggestions for improving them, a sort of best practices for librarians. These activities might also relate broadly to instruction and information literacy and entail: webguides, webtutorials, subject specialists pages on Library Gateway, Library search tools, and marketing. The proposed members are: Paula Carns (subgroup leader), Lynne Rudasill, Lura Joseph, and possibly Lisa Hinchliffe, Bill Mischo and Wendy Shelburne.

The primary objection to the earlier charge was that it conflated reference and instruction, as if a single activity. While the subgroup felt that reference and instruction are inherently intertwined and cannot be separated, it acknowledged that many librarians may see them as separate functions. The possibility of merging reference and instruction into a combined entity, perhaps even headed by the Information Literacy Coordinator, was discussed without resolution.

II. Principles for proposed reference activities. Before compiling a list of suggested reference activities, the subgroup felt that it needed to establish a set of principles and came up with the following:

- The Library as a whole should provide resources for undergraduate students as well as graduate students and faculty.
- The Library should have an evolving, robust technological infrastructure, such as for mobile reference, which would include computer hardware but not be limited to it.
- A key role of UIUC librarians should be to connect patrons not only with library materials of relating to courses but also to current and world events through various services, such as web portals.
- The nature of reference will vary across disciplines and consequently no one model will apply.
• Any future organization of reference should enable the sharing of ideas across all libraries

• The Library should acknowledge that there is an inherent relationship between reference and instruction.

III. The subgroup brainstormed a list of reference activities, both current and proposed, and grouped them in four categories:

• Outreach: on-site service, virtual presence through various technologies, marketing, fieldtrips, inserting links to our services and collections into Wikipedia

• Resource guide development: Easy Search (a portal for info); Libguides for topics, including current events, course materials, and departmental offerings, including syllabi and assignments, webtutorials, handouts (such as for the OPAC), Learn site.

• Selective dissemination of information: technologies: RSS, Twitter, Facebook
content: new books, new databases, new library services, book and journal articles of particular interest to faculty

• Referral; create contact LibGuides for faculty work on interdisciplinary topics

• Ongoing assessment