Reference Services NSM

Librarian-initiated Reference Subgroup Meeting

March 30, 2010

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

Agenda

I. Reviewed and amended minutes from previous meeting. In particular we discussed the relationship between reference and instruction and concluded that they are two separate but intertwined activities that might employ the same tools and even might occur at the same time.

II. The committee continued to develop its list of librarian-initiated activities for consideration at the UIUC Library (many are already in practices in various units) around the proposed categories of outreach: resource guides development, selective dissemination of information, referral, and ongoing assessment. It added the category of training to the list. The committee felt that each activity adopted by the Library should have a best practices policy, which might be crafted from existing internal or external documents (This was also a suggestion from the Reference Retreat).

Summary: Librarian-initiated services vary widely across the library and even within departmental libraries. While librarians in some units work together on developing reference practices and tools, others work alone. The result is that most librarians are unaware of the excellent work of their colleagues and there is uneven distribution of reference practices and tools across the Library. The following list is both a summation of current known practices as compiled by the Librarian-initiated Subgroup with a few suggestions for new practices. The point of this list is simply to have a baseline of activities that might inform future discussion by the Reference Services NSM Team or other groups.

A. Outreach. The role of outreach with regards to reference is to encourage queries from that they can ask librarian questions and, if instruction is involved, to maximize patron self-service of the library.

Outreach activities might include:
- on-site services
- virtual presence through various technologies
- marketing
- inserting links to Library services and collections into Wikipedia and other online portals
- announcements
- Lightening talks to Library faculty (This was also a suggestion from the Reference Retreat)
For departmental liaisons, outreach might entail:
working closely with faculty on developmental activities, such as developing
curricula, participating in grant-awarding committees (excellent way to learn about
graduate student and faculty research)
departmental functions—participating in departmental functions such as fieldtrips
(site visits), conferences, co-teaching, events such as ”journal club” (reading group
around scholarly topics) and “grand rounds” 

B. Resource guide development:

Types of guides:
procedural
instructional
bibliographic
training
Library webportals such as Easy Search, Libguide homepage

Content for guides:
academic subjects
course material
departmental offerings, such as courses, workshops, lectures, conferences
current events

C. Dissemination of information:

Types of technologies:
Facebook
Twitter
RSS
blogs
listservs

Types of Content:
new, discontinuing, and changing library services
new books
new databases
trial databases
items of note, such as expensive collections
major relocation of materials
books and journal articles of interest to faculty

D. Referral (This was also a suggestion from the Reference Retreat)
Referral policy for librarians (also could be used by patrons) plus tools for making
referrals, such as a Library referral website with policy, list of subject specialist and
contact info

Referral tools to connect faculty working across disciplinary lines

E. Training:
Librarians
Staff
Graduate Students
Student Assistants

F. Ongoing assessment of all the above (This was also a suggestion from the Reference Retreat)