Reference Service NSM Team
Minutes  Feb. 22, 2010
Meeting Leader: Kathleen Kern
Minute Taker: Paula Carns

Attending: Peggy Glatthaar, Karen Hogenboom, Lura Joseph, Kathleen Kern, Lynne Rudasill, Sue Searing, Ellen Swain, David Ward, Greg Youngen, Scott Walter (Administrative Liaison)

Agenda:

I.  Introductions

II. Overview of charge and timeline. The charge is multifaceted but can be reduced generally down to the following questions proposed by the Team Leaders:

1.  Does the Team need to do assessment of current reference services and, if so, what should be assessed?

2.  What are reference activities?

3.  Who should perform reference activities?

4.  How should these individuals perform these activities?

5.  How should these individuals be organized/related?

6.  How should these individuals be organized physically?

Discussion of question 1: Is the team charged with assessment of the current situation or merely a description? The Team leaders will begin to compile existing data and based on this information, look into doing assessment for needed information in the short time allotted

Discussion of questions 5 and 6: To what ends are these questions being asked? It is important to keep in mind the “why” of any plans put forward.

III. Open Discussion around two questions:

1.  Why are you interested in serving on this team? That is, what do you hope to contribute and/or to get out of participation in this NSM Team?

2.  Given the complexity of our charge, what do you think are the two or three most pressing issues that we should address? Or rather, what do you think we can reasonably accomplish in the short time we have?

Four general themes emerged from the discussion. Members tended to speak in terms of what they think needs to be done and thus many statements are framed as needs.
Perceptions of changing face of reference
Librarian are not the only information providers, nor usually the first stop for patrons
Each library unit is experiencing changes in reference differently
Patrons have diverse and changing needs
Patrons are using new technologies to get help with reference
Reference questions are becoming more interdisciplinary
Reference is also instruction and a potential relationship between patron and librarian

Assessment: two areas
Patron needs
Need rich data about patron’s actual (and not apparent) needs
Need to be aware of new and emerging types of reference questions
Need to be able to describe the current state of reference
Need to know how each departmental library is experiencing changes in reference
Need to know the diverse and changing needs of patrons

Current Library Services
Need for rich data about current services in Library

Organization/relationship between libraries
Need to have consistency of reference service across libraries
Need to share knowledge about new technologies across libraries
Patrons need to be connected to subject specialists
Need to define the relationships between subject specialists and generalists, as well as specialists like those in the Scholarly Commons or RRGIS who are not subject specialists.
Need a referral policy
Need to break down barriers between central reference and departmental libraries
Need a “group-think” model
Need to have different models for each discipline
Need to prevent a cookie-cutter approach to reference
Robust webpages can serve as the first stop for patrons
Workforce at library is shrinking
Need a mechanism for sharing ideas about reference across the various libraries
Need for dispersion and adoption of new modes of reference across libraries

Innovation—or best practices to meet the emerging needs
Librarians who perform reference need to be more in sync with the new technologies used by patrons
Need to provide new reference services, such as having librarians be embedded in teaching units,

IV. Homework: for next time everyone is to come with two or three of their most radical ideas and to design a plan for reference at the Library starting from scratch.