Reference Services NSM Team
Minutes
April 22, 2010

Attending: Paula Carns (minute taker), Karen Hoggenboom, Kathleen Kern, Ellen Swain and David Ward

I. Reference Organizational Models

The Team discussed the two organizational models presented at the recent NSM Stuff Session (Model A or the Cluster Model: individual libraries in the Main Library and in other buildings offer all levels of reference services; Model B or Single-Desk model: there is a single desk in the Main Library for all subjects). The Stuff session did not permit time for many comments or questions. One comment/question was about the viability of the Model A in the current economic crisis.

The Team felt itself between two forces: on the one hand, it must take into account that the Library will have fewer librarians, staff, and student workers and must come up with a model that is viable. On the other hand, the Team acknowledges that many librarians, especially those in the Arts and Humanities, prefer to continue offering all levels of reference in their units. With these two factors in mind, the Team discussed a hybrid model for the Main Library. Libraries outside of the Main Library would follow Model A..

The features of this model with regards to Main Library and the Undergraduate Library (UGL) are:

1. Single reference desk in Main Library that answers Social Science and general questions at tier 2; located in ESSL or somewhere on the first floor; staffed by librarians, staff and graduate students from RRGIS, ESSL and UGL.

2. A reference desk in UGL for tier 2; staffed by second-year graduate assistants.

3. Arts and Humanities and Area Studies reference: under this model, reference for libraries in these units will be done in the units. Questions received at the main reference desk pertaining to these subjects will automatically be referred to these units and not answered, as is currently the practice. However, questions received at UGL will be handled directly. Libraries in these divisions will thus exclusively handle all reference in their areas. However, those librarians or libraries wishing to be part of central reference can do so. The team felt that it would be important for librarians in these divisions to offer cross-training to individuals at the central reference desk.
II. The Team offered thoughts on writing the report.

a. For the report, flesh out the three tiers of reference as defined by the Patron-initiated subgroup.