

**Reference Management Team  
Annual Report, July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2015  
Appendix: Main/UGL Reference Hub**

**I Unit Narrative**

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**A. Major Activities and Accomplishments**

On June 1, 2015, the members of the Reference Services Committee and the Main/UGL Reference Hub Management Team submitted their recommendation to create a Reference Management Team.<sup>1</sup> In their recommendation, members from both groups sought to integrate decision making process and a single body to oversee library-wide reference services. This recommendation was approved by Library Executive Committee. The Reference Management Team is composed of 8 librarians from reference hubs and divisions. Current members are:

Erin Kerby (Life Sciences Hub)  
David Ward (Central Public Service Division)  
Melanie Emerson (Arts & Humanities Division)  
Ali Krogman (Physical Sciences and Engineering Hub)  
Beth Sheehan (Social Sciences Division)  
Carissa Phillips (Interim Head, Research and Information Services)  
Cara Bertram (Special Collections Division)  
Joe Lenkart (International and Area Studies Division)

**Specific accomplishments in 2015 – 2016 include:**

- 2016 Reference Services Retreat (Tuesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016)<sup>2</sup>  
The Reference Management Team followed up on an organizational need listed in the Reference Roadmap event report, which was organized by the Reference Services Committee in 2014, and called for an event dedicated to reference services once a year.  
In addition to individual presentations, this collaborative event consisted of six panel discussions:
  1. Reference Service Models (18 registered participants);
  2. Patron Privacy at Service Points (17 registered participants);
  3. Training Opportunities for Service Hubs (14 registered participants);
  4. Strategies for Library Assessment (18 registered participants);
  5. Consultation Models and Services (16 registered participants);
  6. Marketing and Outreach (17 registered participants).

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<sup>1</sup> See: Recommendation to Establish a Reference Management Team - [http://www.library.illinois.edu/committee/exec/supplement/2014-2015/reference\\_management\\_team.html](http://www.library.illinois.edu/committee/exec/supplement/2014-2015/reference_management_team.html)

<sup>2</sup> Working in close consultation with the AUL for Services and the Library Staff Development and Training Coordinator, Erin Kerby, David Ward, Melanie Emerson, and Joe Lenkart organized the Reference Services Retreat on behalf of the Reference Management Team.

- **Man/UGL Reference Hub Potential Service Model Proposal<sup>3</sup>**  
On January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the Associate University Librarian (AUL) for Services asked the Reference Management Team “to look at ways to share and Main Library unit heads in 2015.”<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the AUL for Services requested that RMT come up with alternative service and staffing models. This proposal was submitted to the AUL for Services on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, and it contained the following points:
  1. Establish a single physical location on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Main Library Building;
  2. Reduce staffing and introduce a tiered service approach;
  3. Fully integrate referral and appointment model;
  4. Pilot new models for GA mentoring;
  5. Create a pool of shared project hours for graduate students.
  
- **Reference Training Series<sup>5</sup>**  
Working on behalf of the Reference Management Team, Beth Sheehan, Ali Krogman, and Melanie Emerson have redesigned reference training to be more inclusive and receptive to needs of service providers within the library system. The revamped training series will be unveiled in fall 2016. This series will support reference hubs and departmental libraries by providing continuous training to maintain service standards and competencies required at service points. In addition, this sub team has also collaborated with the Staff Development and Training Coordinator to update the Graduate Assistant Orientation program.
  
- **Library Research Consultations Framework (Pilot Phase)<sup>6</sup>**  
In order to improve user research experience at reference hubs, departmental service points, and virtual outlets, the Reference Management Team has been working with the AUL for Services to restructure library research consultations and introduce an integrated scheduling system, which will connect teaching faculty, students, and staff with subject expertise in the library system. During the initial process, David Ward and Ali Krogman have incorporated feedback from stakeholders to revise the framework document. Under this proposed plan, affiliated patrons will be able to schedule research consultations through the following means:
  1. Self (Patron) Initiated via web form;
  2. Mediate Requests at any service point.

## **B. Challenges**

- Lack of a functioning and up-to-date referral directory for reference hubs.
- Reduction in GA allocations at the departmental level, which impacts contributions to reference hubs and service coverage at participating units.

## **C. Assessment**

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<sup>3</sup> David Ward, Carissa Philips, and Beth Sheehan developed this proposal in consultation with the Reference Management Team.

<sup>4</sup> Chair, Reference Management Team, personal communication, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Beth Sheehan has led the Training Sub Team for the Reference Management Team. She has made significant contributions to improve training at reference hubs.

<sup>6</sup> David Ward and Ali Krogman have taken the lead in formulating this framework for the team members.

- **Impact of library reference service use on patron research projects** (ongoing assessment study)<sup>7</sup>  
The purpose of this study is to examine “how users of library reference services incorporate the information and feedback they receive from library staff into their research projects.” The findings from this study will be used to improve training methodologies and service structures at reference hubs.

#### D. Goals for FY17

- Continue to work with the AUL for Services to develop a robust service plan on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, as also stated in the 15Y Annual Report.
- Select a compatible scheduling software for the research consultation pilot program.
- Introduce, market, train, support, and assess the Library Research Consultation Pilot Program.
- Incorporate local, regional, and national trends in reference training.
- Continue to work with Web Team Delta to develop a reliable referral directory and collaborate with them to improve user experience.
- Continue to develop an integrated reference metrics platform to assess service desks and the needs of user groups.

### Appendix: Main/UGL Reference Hub

Based on the recommendations of the Reference Services Implementation Team, the University Library currently supports three reference hubs: Life Sciences Hub (based in Funk ACES Library), Physical Sciences and Engineering Hub (based in Grainger Engineering Library), and Main/UGL Reference Hub. As part of this vibrant service network, the Main/UGL Reference Hub provides year-round multimodal (chat, phone, email, and in person) research assistance to faculty, students, and staff at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Moreover, it supports the immediate research needs of the residents of the State of Illinois and researchers outside of Illinois. This dynamic reference service point serves as a focal point for collaboration between subject specialists, reference librarians, and graduate students engaged in pre-professional training. Since its inception in 2012, the Main/UGL Reference Hub has sought ways to improve user experience at the University Library.

## II Statistical Profile

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### 1. Facilities

#### Number of hours open to the public per week:

VR Desk & Info Desk inclusive hours: Monday – Thursday: 8:30 am – 10:00 pm; Friday: 8:30 am – 6:00 pm; Saturday: 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm; Sunday: 1:00 pm – 10:00 pm.

Fall 2015 and spring 2016: **76.5 hours**

### 2. Personnel

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<sup>7</sup> David Ward is the Principal Investigator for this assessment study. Ali Krogman and Joe Lenkart are the other investigators.

Analysis of DeskTracker records from Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 showed that no hour of the day was consistently, or even frequently, experiencing traffic at a level that warranted four people (two on the Info Desk and two on VR) to be scheduled concurrently. By reducing four-person shifts to three-person shifts, capping staffing levels after 5:00pm to two people, and other adjustments, the net staffing reduction to be realized beginning in fall 2016 is 35 hour/week on the Main/UGL Hub desks. This reduction was allocated proportionately across all units contributing to the Main/UGL Hub when requests were made for fall 2016 participation.

Because of the reduced staffing, additional consideration was needed for the location of workers, which will number at most three on any shift. It was decided that the VR corner of Room 204, established in the prior year, would be discontinued, and that all Main/UGL Hub activity would originate from the Info Desk. This is intended to have the effect of increasing the interactions between all of the workers on a shift, and provide additional opportunities for the GAs to gain rapid exposure to a wide variety of reference questions while also increasing their opportunities to be mentored by librarians, APs and staff members at the Info Desk

Weekly contributions by units

<b>Contributions to Info &amp; VR Desk Hours During Fall &amp; Spring Semesters: *</b>				
<b>Percent of Total Desk Hours**</b>				
<b>Unit</b>	<b>2012-2013 (FY13)</b>	<b>2013-2014 (FY14)</b>	<b>2014-2015(FY15)</b>	<b>2015 – 2016 (FY16)</b>
Acquisitions	n/a	n/a	n/a	2%
Business Information Services	2.4%	0.7%	1%	1%
Communications Library	0.7%	0.7%	1%	n/a
Government Information Services	2.4%	0.7%	3%	1%
History, Philosophy & Newspaper Library	0.8%	1.4%	2%	3%
International & Area Studies Library	2.5%	4.3%	4%	6%
Literatures, Languages & Linguistics Library	1.7%	2.1%	2%	1%
Research & Information Services	44.7%	49.5%	40%	46%
Scholarly Commons	n/a	n/a	1%	2%
Social Science, Health & Education Library	5.9%	5.3%	4%	4%

Office of Services	2.5%	2.8%	2%	2%
Undergraduate Library	36.4%	32.6%	42%	32%

\* The statistics are for fall and spring semesters only, since those are the times when these service points are staffed by the Hub. RIS & UGL staff these service points during summer sessions, interims, breaks, and reduced service days.

\*\*During the first year of operation, unit target hours were tied to GA allocations. Since FY2014-FY2015, target hours have been based on librarian and AP FTEs. Research and Information Services and the Undergraduate Library provided additional hours beyond the required minimum both years

### 3. User Services

#### Information Desk<sup>8</sup>

	1	2	3	4	5	6	unspecified	total
Data Assistance	1	3	10	3	1	0	1	19
Database/eJournal, SFX Access Problems	9	71	308	36	1	0	4	429
Directional/Hours	3408	823	43	2	0	0	62	4338
Finding specific library materials	84	1507	1266	167	5	0	74	3103
Library policies and services	318	2397	693	48	2	0	36	3494
Other	189	446	240	22	3	2	40	942
Ready Reference	38	311	412	17	1	0	4	783
Research Assistance	13	124	909	368	45	0	11	1470
Technical Issues (printers, scanners, software)	89	808	132	16	0	0	35	1080
unspecified	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	60
total	4149	6490	4013	679	58	2	327	15718

<sup>8</sup> These figures were calculated by Jen-chien Yu (Library Assessment Coordinator). A different analysis conducted by RIS showed different results for the same reporting period. We will conduct a thorough analysis for the next report.

VirtualDesk							
	1	2	3	4	5	unspecified	total
Data Assistance	3	2	6	7	2	0	20
Database/eJournal, SFX Access Problems	3	78	385	25	1	5	497
Directional/Hours	142	78	8	0	1	6	235
Finding specific library materials	22	743	1129	161	10	40	2105
Library policies and services	43	979	369	10	1	15	1417
Other	54	152	148	15	3	16	388
Ready Reference	17	109	208	22	1	5	362
Research Assistance	4	71	1041	464	25	8	1613
Technical Issues (printers, scanners, software)	10	72	47	7	0	3	139
unspecified	0	0	0	0	0	76	76
total	298	2284	3341	711	44	174	6852

For the reporting period July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2015, the Main/UGL Reference Hub successfully reported 22,570 reference transactions. There was an increase in the number of transactions reported since FY2015 (up by 2287 transactions). Moreover, the reference transactions reported by the Virtual Desk received higher READ scores (4 and above) than the Information Desk, which confirmed that the Virtual Desk, as a mode of interaction, is able to taken on difficult research inquiries.