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## It Takes a Village to Manage the 21st Century Reference Department

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# It Takes a Village to Manage the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Reference Department

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# It Takes a Village to Run a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Reference Department

Paula McMillen and Loretta Rielly

## Summary:

Reference services at Oregon State University's Valley Library have undergone several reorganizations in response to institutional changes, shifting service needs and patron demands. Part of this history includes training for and functioning in team-based management. We have now evolved to a management model that utilizes workgroups and an advisory and coordinating council to assist in running the department. We find this model provides flexibility, sharing of the workload and professional development opportunities, all of which are essential in today's tumultuous reference environment. We will describe the functioning, potential hazards and multiple advantages of this model.

Keywords: management models, reference services, participatory management, professional development, team management

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The reference services literature proclaims that change is THE major character in this unfolding drama with ambiguity playing a supporting role. David Lewis and others remark on the “radical changes” (Lewis, 1994, p.445) generated by new technologies, mushrooming amounts and kinds of accessible information, shifting demographics and increasing size of our patron base, greater demands for traditional and new services, and static or declining budgets and staffs (Barnello, 1996; Nofsinger & Bosch, 1994; Papandrea, 1998). The reference department at Oregon State University is certainly not unique in its quest to merge new and traditional services and to accommodate the expanding needs of its local and distant users. However, after mergers and expansions of departments and programs, creation and dissolution of formal and informal teams, the destination we’ve reached is somewhat unique: a hybrid management model that addresses the complexity of our work

We’ll briefly describe the changing reference scene, some alternative models of reference service and our evolution to the current configuration. Finally we’ll talk about our use of a Reference and Instruction Council that shares accountability and decision making. We’ll discuss the advantages and potential problem areas for using such a model.

## What needs to be managed?

The basic character of reference, providing “assistance to individuals seeking information and ideas” (Bunge & Bopp, 2001, p.6) has remained constant throughout the history of reference services. Of course the extent and nature of that assistance varies from institution to institution depending on size, mission and patrons. According to Lewis (1994), the head of public services at a major university, reference services include working with patrons at a desk, collection selection and management, liaison, bibliographic instruction and implementation of electronic services. Kibbee (1991) similarly typifies reference services as encompassing collection development, information services, user education and special collections and services. Barnello (1996) more narrowly defines the work into 5 categories: directions & general reference; technical assistance; information look up (ready reference); research consultation; and library instruction.

Management of the reference department includes not just the services, but also the service providers. Nofsinger & Bosch (p. 88, 1994) suggest the role of reference manager must cover 3 major areas: “management of reference personnel; implementation and adaptation of new technologies while maintaining traditional means of information access, and leadership and planning for anticipated changes in the future”. Because more and more

demands are being placed on reference staff, the job of managing them becomes more complex (Dunshire, 2001). Spalding (1990) and others state that, in addition to department level functions of coordinating activities, securing resources, serving as an advocate for the unit and otherwise providing a vital node in the communication network, reference managers must serve as a model for and mentor to individual reference staff (Nofsinger & Bosch, 1994). This includes exhibiting fair behaviors that work in support of clearly stated institutional values and job expectations, socializing to the institutional culture, providing constructive performance evaluations, and offering professional development opportunities. Because the technology integral to reference work changes at breakneck speed, the need for ongoing learning and enhancement of technical skills on the part of staff has accelerated tremendously. Professional development can be promoted internally through such actions as shared jobs, rotating job duties, project work or temporary appointments as well as the more traditional training opportunities. Spalding (1990) also outlines the responsibilities of the individual to know her/himself and seek out those experiences that will keep her/him a valuable and engaged professional.

### The changing reference landscape

In today's often conflicting climate of simultaneous expansion and contraction, David Lewis (1994) says it is "urgent" that we change how



reference services are provided even though we're not yet clear about the extent of the problems or their answers. Barnello (1996) rightly points out that many of the changes in academic libraries are responding to changes in higher education – distance education being a notable example. Others note that libraries reflect the cultural and political environment in which they exist (King et al., 1991) and certainly the proliferation of information noise in American culture is commonly acknowledged (Urigo, 2000). Almost all would agree that technological changes are having the most profound impact. Stuart and Hutto (1996) put it succinctly when they say that reference is moving from a “collection-based to a service-based orientation” (p.xiii)

In addition to all the traditional functions, successful academic reference service in the future will expand to include:

- more consultation
- more project work related to electronic services and products
- a greater emphasis on subject specialization to facilitate consultation and liaison
- a need to constantly upgrade skills, especially technical skills
- increasing demand for instruction in the use of the libraries resources
- use of more automation and lower skilled professionals to serve patrons
- serving more remote and more diverse patrons (Lewis, 1994).

Consistent with these observations and predictions, others suggest that librarians must play a more active role in shaping the electronic interfaces between

patrons and our services and products (Stuart & Hutto, 1996). Most believe that, in spite of the increasingly self-service nature of many information resources, the need for instruction and mediation services between patrons and information will be an increasing demand (Dunshire, 2001; Katz, 1997, p.xvi). One writer even suggests that, given libraries philosophical underpinnings as an educational institution dedicated to preserving an informed citizenry, "education in the use of libraries and the information resources at their disposal may be considered even more basic a service than traditional reference service..." (King et al., 1991, p.38)

Not surprisingly, it is also proposed that a new mix of skills will be required in order to manage these constantly evolving services. Gordon Dunshire (2001) refers to them as "meta-skills" which will replace library-specific expertise. Papandrea (1998) comments that these changes require expanded focus on both external factors and internal factors resulting in an increasingly complex management job. Whatever the particulars, most would agree that reference services is not the place for the faint of heart or those seeking predictability (Dunshire, 2001). An added challenge comes from the increased value placed on knowledge management skills in the broader marketplace; this means that many of those who might have come to libraries fresh from their masters program are now finding it more lucrative to take jobs in the private sector. Both recruitment and retention are becoming significant concerns. Since library salaries are unlikely to increase to competitive levels in the near future, it is truer

now that ever before that “management, in partnership with staff, must continually examine organizational structure and communication for their impact on professional development and satisfaction.” (Spalding, 1990, p.231)

### Alternative models of managing and organizing reference

“Defined in operational terms, *management* is the act of directing and organizing to accomplish a goal.” (Kibbee, 1991, p.196)

While there is some evidence that university libraries are confined to hierarchical management structures (ARL, 1991, cited in Lewis, 1994, p.52; Kibbee, 1991), various iterations of team and participatory management, at least in reference departments, have been tried. In general the hierarchical model, in which all authority and decisions emanate from the department head, has the advantage of efficiency. Typically less time is spent in consultation and decision making because this model does not necessitate seeking and using input from the staff (Kibbee, 1991). A common drawback is the feeling of disenfranchisement and lowered morale among professional staff

Both the general management and library literature promote participatory management, i.e., a greater involvement of staff in departmental or organizational decision-making. Kibbee (1991) suggests, for example, that the structure under the head of reference is comparable to a web --- “a multifaceted organization, in which it is not uncommon for individual reference librarians to hold multiple responsibilities and to assume managerial roles for the administration of specific functions” (p.193). Postulated benefits are improved

morale, increased motivation and involvement, development of diverse and flexible skills, greater recognition and respect among colleagues and avoidance of burnout (Perdue & Piotrowski, 1986; Spalding, 1990). The benefits to patron/ customer service are promoted as well. Potential drawbacks include the increased time required to make decisions and negative reactions when staff input is not the determining factor in major decisions.

Collective management represents the other end of the continuum; here, authority and responsibility rest with the group as a whole. Problems with accountability make this a difficult model to maintain in large departments, although it has been successfully used in at least some college settings (Comer et al, 1988, cited in Kibbee, 1991, p.198). The advantages reported were improved morale, good staff development opportunities, greater ownership of the mission, goals and work. Drawbacks are variable levels of management skills, additional responsibility for the head of public services and a difficult decision making process when opinions are divided.

Some specific examples of non-traditional reference management in academic libraries have been described in the literature. Gilles & Zlatos (1999) and Perdue & Piotrowski (1986), at Washington State University and West Florida, respectively, have decided to share the head of reference responsibilities by rotating tenured (or equivalently qualified) librarians through the position . In both settings, the acting reference head maintained most or all of their other

librarian responsibilities. It is noteworthy that at Washington State, they do have a permanent position, Head of User Services, which would probably encompass a significant amount of the work that normally falls to a head of reference. The report does not detail the duties of the person in the 3-year rotating position so it's difficult to make direct comparisons. They go on to note that this is a facilitator position and suggest that the department operates as a team in much of the decision-making. West Florida has also been happy with their rotating reference head and notes the advantages usually cited in connection with other team-based or highly participatory models. In addition, these managerial rotations provide avenues for developing administrative skills and promoting institution-wide perspectives among staff. Potential problems noted are the lack of financial remuneration for additional responsibilities, the difficulties of balancing administrative work with other responsibilities and some individual's unsuitability for the role of management. Both articles suggest that it is essential to have a supportive group of colleagues and that the positions be voluntarily taken on. Perdue & Piotrowski (1986) also believe the size of the department might play a crucial role in the ability to use this model.

Papandrea (1998) feels the major flaw with the rotational approach is that it "does not overcome the limitations of individual weaknesses . . . or fully take advantage of individual strengths." (p.124). She recommends instead letting people specialize in those areas in which they have the strongest interest and greatest strengths and to cross-train in other areas. This would look like a system

of assistant managers, at least functionally if not on an organizational chart. Everyone would have a slightly different job; there would be no standard or typical reference librarian.

Below the level of department head, there have also been numerous experiments with how the work in the department is organized and carried out (Bunge & Bopp, 2001; Kibbee, 1991). The Brandeis or two-tiered model is probably the most notable. Paraprofessionals offer the first point of interaction with patrons at the desk while professional librarians are available for more complex questions or lengthier consultation. Both successes and failures have been described in the literature (Nassar, 1997). Although this model attempts to address some of the challenges to reference noted above, they don't really alter the fundamental management structure.

Other debates center around whether or not reference services should be centralized or de-centralized throughout the institution and Kibbee (1991) provides a good overview of the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

David -, Head of Public Services at the University Libraries, Indiana University- Purdue University, Indianapolis, argues compellingly for a model, which brings the programmatic and budgetary authority right down to the front line of reference in academic libraries. The current hierarchical management structures of most universities and their libraries stifle professionalism and initiative; therefore what is needed is a professional bureaucracy, more akin to the

organization of a law firm. Library hierarchies should be flattened, equivalent support services must be offered at all levels and public services planning and priority setting must be done by reference. If we are at the forefront of technological changes in information services, as we like to present ourselves, then we must adapt our organizations to support this position or risk failure. He believes that without this shift, the demands for changing the work of reference will be unrealized.

Geraldine King, who was the first chair of the Management of Reference Committee of ALA's Reference and Adult Services division, believes there is an inherent contradiction in seeking to share the workload of the reference department.

Reference librarians are reluctant to take on managerial duties or become reference managers ...They like being reference librarians; they like working with one client, researching a subject and hunting for information. They want someone else to solve the nitty gritty problems...  
(p. 407)

And yet, they must do so. She believes it is essential that reference managers have experience as reference professionals in order to most effectively manage the 'practice of reference librarianship'. Her proposed solution is for every reference librarian to take on a piece of managing the reference department, perhaps scheduling, training or a subject subdivision. One possibility is what she

calls matrix management where each librarian is simultaneously being a manager in some areas and a 'managee' in others. This allows the individual to still function as a reference librarian while developing other skills.



## Evolution of reference organization & management at OSU

Both desire and necessity have prompted changes in the organization and management of reference services at the Oregon State University Libraries in the past 15 years. Our experiences have taught us that size matters (large groups cannot function efficiently or effectively), training in facilitation and other meeting skills does make a difference, and communication is critical. We have also confirmed that "collegiality" is a core value that overlays all our activities and the choices we make.

Earlier models were typically hierarchical with several layers of management: office managers, assistant heads, department heads, division heads. In earlier versions we provided reference service at several different desks: sciences, social sciences and humanities, information, maps, government information, a CD center. These have been variously combined and re-aligned over the years until we reached our present configuration of a main reference/technical assistance desk and a government information, maps and microforms desk. A branch library 55 miles distant has always supported our marine sciences programs, and a new branch campus in central Oregon will share facilities and services with the local community college.

In the mid-1990's, while still retaining department heads and library-wide administrative groups, the library's public services departments formed into teams for Access, Frontline Services, Electronic Resources, and User Education.

Each team was headed by a public services department head. This structure more or less overlay the traditional hierarchical structure and the teams consisted of members from each of the public services departments. For example, the Library User Education Team included staff from Government Documents, Access, Reference, and Research Services. A Public Services Council consisting of the Associate University Librarian for Public Services, the team leaders/department heads, and a representative selected by each team coordinated the activities of the team. This initial experiment with Public Services Teams was an attempt to eliminate barriers to communication and workflow between departments and foster staff participation in goal setting and decision-making.

Shortly after the Public Services Teams were formed, the Library was integrated into Information Services (IS) along with Computing, Communication Media, and Telecommunications. A formal team structure across all units was initiated, and the library's public services teams were absorbed into this larger organizational structure.

Several of the IS Teams were composed of members from what previously had been different departments throughout IS in an effort to integrate similar functions and reduce duplication. For example, the IS Frontline Team consisted of individuals who staffed information and reception desks in all IS units. Some staff served on more than one team and all staff received extensive team training. Department heads were eliminated and replaced with team sponsors,

who retained budgetary authority and responsibility for personnel assignments and evaluation. Major fiscal problems in IS eventually spelled the end of this model although former departments began re-emerging before teams officially disappeared.

Today, the Reference and Instruction (RI) Department is managed by a department head, who reports to the Associate University Librarian for Public Services and Innovative Technology, and is a member of the Library's management group. A newly designated assistant head of reference also meets with library management and leads the Reference Services Workgroup, the largest of three workgroups in the department. The department head convenes and leads the RI Council, which includes the assistant department head, the Distance Education/ Outreach Services Librarian, RI's representative on the Library Web Group, liaisons from Library Technology and Collection Development, the coordinators for the Instruction and Publications/Communication Workgroups, and a member of the administrative support staff. The Council meets twice a month, alternating weeks with full RI Department meetings. The frequency of workgroup meetings varies depending on current workload; the Instruction Workgroup, for example, has been meeting three times a week throughout the summer to develop a new course-integrated instruction program for the university's freshman composition courses.

Of the three workgroups in the RI Department, the largest, Reference Services, is responsible for two service desks (Reference/Technical Assistance,

Government Information, Maps and Microforms), the print reference collections, email reference, and the Information Commons. The Information Commons includes the Electronic Reference Center (32 workstations), and 64 general computing and e-mail workstations. As noted earlier, this workgroup is led by the Assistant Head of Reference, unlike the other two which have rotating coordinator positions.

The Instruction Workgroup is responsible for coordinating all aspects of the instruction program, including course-related teaching, credit courses, a web tutorial, and instructional facilities and equipment. This workgroup includes the Distance Education / Outreach Services Librarian, who provides liaison to community and school groups and the university's program for first year students in addition to supporting Distance and Continuing Education students. The Publications/Communication Workgroup oversees the creation and production of print and electronic publications, library information included in university publications, content of the library web's Research Gateway, and "emergency" signage. The Publications/Communications Workgroup includes RI's representative on the Library Web Group and a technical writer.

#### Shared managerial responsibilities: Who does what?

In "Roles of the Head of Reference," Nofsinger and Bosch identify three broad categories typically assigned to department heads: personnel management, implementation and adoption of new technologies, and

leadership and planning for future changes (1994, p.88). At OSU, the RI Council and workgroups either assist in or take primary responsibility for most of these functions.

### ***Personnel Management***

“Training and coordination” (ibid, p.88) are shared activities. Training of new staff is coordinated by the direct supervisor, which is the department head in the case of tenure-track librarians, and other librarians or professional faculty in the case of classified and temporary staff. The actual training is developed and provided by the workgroups and individuals with specific work assignments. The department head coordinates and approves the professional development and continuing education done outside the library, usually at the request of an individual staff member or, occasionally, upon the recommendation of a workgroup. The groups represented on the Council, however, carry out the majority of in-house training and continuing education. Reference Services and Instruction Workgroups have offered sessions on such topics as case law, creating lesson plans, using the electronic classroom, and presentation skills. Additionally, the Reference Services Workgroup has developed a manual for Reference Desk procedures, trains the pool of on-call librarians who substitute at the Reference Desk, and oversees the customer service and reference-related training of the student assistants who work at the Reference Desk. Collection Development’s liaison to the Council facilitates training for new electronic

products, and Library Technology's liaison has coordinated and presented workshops on web page development.

"Socialization and the corporate culture" (ibid, p.89) is ideally a function of the department head, especially with regard to the promotion and tenure process. Other bodies in the Library support this process, including the Promotion and Tenure Committee and the Library Faculty Association's Research and Writing Group. Likewise, more senior faculty often serve as informal mentors to junior faculty. As Nofsinger and Bosch note (p.89), the values of an organization are intangible and often an outcome of organizational history; other staff can communicate organizational history, but the department head is the person best suited to advise on how to be successful in a given environment.

A large number of tasks are included in the category, "Supervision and daily operations" (ibid, p.89). Groups represented on the Council do some of these and some remain the purview of the department head. For example, scheduling of the service desks, implementing new services, collecting data for evaluation, reporting on progress for projects, and development of procedure manuals are all carried out by the workgroups. Monitoring the budget, making final determinations of staff workload, monitoring personnel behaviors and attitudes, and some reporting out of departmental work remain primarily with the department head and assistant department head.

“Communication” (ibid, p.89) is also a shared function. Workgroup coordinators are expected to move information back and forth between their members and the Council, which of course includes the department head. Council meetings serve to facilitate coordination between the workgroups, committees and departments interfacing with reference. Primary responsibility for communicating between reference and other areas of the library, including administration, is the duty of the department head.

“Performance evaluation,” which Nofsinger and Bosch call “the most sensitive area of communication,” (1994, p. 90) is also shared, to an extent, in that all members of the department provide feedback regarding their co-workers on the basis of their work at the reference desks, in workgroups, and, via a peer observation process, in instruction. Ultimately, the head of reference integrates this information into both a written and oral presentation for the individual and ties it to an annual review and work plan.

Nofsinger and Bosch also speak to managing “conflict and stress” (ibid, p.90) as a primary role for the department head. Certainly, the department head is responsible for the emotional health of the department and, as noted above, monitors personnel behaviors and attitudes. Council and the workgroups address these areas by coordinating and assigning pieces of work to assure equitable workloads. The workgroups provide small-group forums for problem solving and decision-making, addressing a frequent contributor to stress: perceived lack of control. As an example, in 2000 those working on the

reference desks advocated for and were given approval to hire a pool of substitutes reference librarians, thus relieving librarians of the need to continually add to already heavy work assignments when colleagues were absent.

Members of several workgroups were involved in the recruitment, interviewing and training of our substitutes. As mentioned earlier, we rely on a strong departmental sense of collegiality and mutual commitment to service quality.

### ***Technology Facilitator***

Although the head of reference is nominally responsible for the Information Commons, the area in which many of the new technologies are made available and utilized, a number of other groups share the workload.

“Utilization of technologies” (ibid. p.92) related to user access to information resources is supported by the Library Technology Department who install and maintain CD resources, production software, and computers in the Information Commons and classrooms which provide access to resources. The Electronic Resources Librarian and subject librarians, through Collection Development decide on which resources to prioritize for purchase.

“Development of staff expertise” (ibid, p.93) is shared by all RI workgroups and library departments. For example, the Reference Services Workgroup sponsored training in legal reference, Library Technology conducted HTML and web editor training, and the Instruction Workgroup offered workshops on lesson design. All play a part in facilitating professional development and in helping to keep staff current in new technologies, products and services.



Various workgroups share in the "assessment of user needs" (ibid, p.94) by collecting statistics, evaluating classes, and tracking use of electronic resources. Via the Council, the constantly shifting demands for services can be coordinated and prioritized and recommendations made to the department head for new equipment, service hours, level of staffing, and so forth. The department head is responsible for coordinating such equipment and service requests vis a vis the current budget.

### ***Leading for Future Change***

Ideally, the head of reference will lead as well as manage, providing strategic direction for the department and the library. The input of Council, both during meetings and from documentation created in the workgroups, helps frame these strategic decisions. Recently the instruction Workgroup created a mission and goals statement that served as a model in a department wide retreat. Reference Services is currently refining a similar document. The assistant head of reference chairs an Information Commons Visioning Group that is developing a mission statement to help guide future priorities and services. The department as a whole will determine our priorities based on these documents and general discussions in meetings and retreats. In the other direction, the department head works with the Council to determine how to implement strategic decisions made at the administrative and institutional levels.

### The advantages of organizing and managing this way

Clearly, our model is a version of participatory management and, as Papandrea has advocated, “shares the burden, shares the power and shares the fun” (1998, p.124). It caters to people’s strengths and interests. It provides opportunities for people to more fully develop management and leadership skills. A larger number of people are more familiar with the priorities and processes involved in coordinating the functioning of a large department than had been the case in previous models. Council members who were interviewed attest to the broadened perspective provided by that role. Those who write about professional development for reference librarians are virtually unanimous in promoting participatory management as an effective mechanism for this (Fulton, 1990; Spalding, 1990).

King (1987) and Katz (1986) also believe that having staff manage portions of the work brings the essential front line perspective of reference librarians to the management of those services. Another advantage is that the department head has multiple perspectives from which to draw. Ridgeway (1986) notes that the typical conditions of managing reference are antithetical to creativity; however, one creativity technique is brainstorming and the Council provides a forum for this.

Several authors have spoken of the necessity for sharing and shifting work to avoid burnout (Bunge & Bopp, 2001; Jones and Reichel, 1986). It is important

that individuals have the opportunity to move in and out of levels of responsibility for a time, depending on other career demands; an example in our situation is allowing people to step out of Council positions to meet obligations related to getting tenure. When interviewed, staff are unequivocal in their support of the workgroup structure as the most effective way to get things done. People can be involved in areas that interest them and the groups are small enough to be focused and productive. Most believe there is simply too much work for a single person to be responsible for.

Flexibility is an advantage from the perspective of organizational responsiveness as well. Our model allows us to add or subtract members from Council as needed to address both departmental and service needs. For example, as we plan for library services at a new branch campus, the reference librarian on the library-wide planning group meets with the Council.

Dixie Jones (1997) tells us that to have excellent reference service, we must have a collegial and well-functioning team. Our model fosters several of the factors she identifies as contributing to creating an effective team: communication, feeling included, and having strengths and contributions recognized. Finally, opportunities to participate meaningfully in departmental decision-making could potentially serve as a powerful recruitment and retention tool in an era of increasing competition for qualified staff.

### Cautionary notes

There are always potential downsides to any organizational model. Concerns expressed in interviews with staff and faculty include a continuing perception of communication problems. Comments suggest that information is perceived as getting stuck in Council and not always passed on to the department in general. As one staff member said, the existence of the Council "can make it feel like communication has taken place when it really hasn't." Others would like to see mechanisms for more regular communication from the rest of the department to the Council. To facilitate communication, workgroups have begun posting minutes of their meetings on the library's intranet. Our acting head of reference also implemented a brief but popular "This Week in Reference and Instruction" newsletter sent to the entire library staff. In a related concern, the department head was, until recently, solely responsible for channeling communication to and from the library administration and other managers. Now, the assistant head also meets with administrators and managers, relieving the department head of some of the burden while still not overwhelming administration.

If some people are more included by being on the Council, others may feel more excluded. One of the ways we have addressed this is by allowing flexibility in the membership of the various workgroups, which in turn can result in changes in coordinators who participate in the Council meetings. Another

strategy instituted in the last year has been to have half or full day departmental retreats where we discuss common goals, identify departmental priorities and plan future services.

During one of our earlier organizational iterations, the Office Manager position was eliminated. Many felt this was a major error in terms of staff productivity. Even with our current model, there remained a pressing need for this level of administrative support, so we lobbied for and achieved reinstatement of a full-time position.

As noted by Perdue and Piotrowski (1986), there is the risk that people will not want to take on the extra responsibilities and/or time commitments when there is no financial incentive to do so. To date we have not found that to be a problem. We agree that it is important to make positions on Council voluntary as much as possible. However, certain essential functions need to be represented in the communication and decision making process; therefore, some positions cannot be voluntary because there is only one person who can serve.

There is always the concern that people who are not particularly skilled in communicating, coordinating or leading will be put in positions that require these skills. Fortunately, nearly all staff have participated in extensive team training, resulting in a high percentage of people with leadership and facilitation skills. We have also found that strong workgroup members and a strong department head can mentor those who feel they are not ready to take on these roles. The fact that most of these positions are not permanent and that

many of them are rotated mitigates these risks. Council exposes members to several models of leading, coordinating, and facilitating. Although there are never guarantees that you can develop someone into an effective manager, at least the opportunities are offered.

A major concern is that workgroup coordinators and other members of Council are often given responsibility without accompanying authority, which can slow down project implementation, especially when other library departments are involved. We will be hiring a new head of Reference soon, having been without a regular full-time person for over a year, and the hope is that s/he will be in a better position to advocate on behalf of Council-identified projects and issues.

### Conclusion

As with other organizations confronted by changing external demands, libraries must find more flexible and responsive organizational structures than the traditional hierarchies (Papandrea, 1998). Through trial and error we have arrived at a working model for managing reference services that provides this flexibility. Our Council and workgroup arrangement truly provide the opportunity for the entire Reference and Instruction 'village' to be involved and share in the increasingly complex job of managing an ever-expanding array of services. It provides professional development opportunities for staff and brings the front line perspective to decisions affecting our work. Our model may be

more difficult to implement in a setting that does not have such a strong history of teamwork and collegial staff relations; certainly this model will not work for everyone. We acknowledge there are potential pitfalls but have found that these can be mitigated if attention is paid. For us, this model incorporates many of the advantages of participatory management while avoiding many of its problems.

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